THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TURNAROUND MODEL:
LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE FIRST YEAR

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THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL

IMPROVEMENT TURNAROUND MODEL:

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By

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ASHLAND UNIVERSITY, 2013

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There exists a considerable lack of school improvement literature related to the implementation of the Turnaround Model. This exploratory case study illuminates the perceptions and experiences of principals, instructional coaches and teachers associated with the process and impact of the school improvement Turnaround Model during its first year of implementation in three urban, Midwestern elementary schools. Participants’ perceptions were explored using interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Responses were analyzed based on their alignment with predetermined themes derived from the model, as well as with regard to the gaps exposed within the model by emerging themes. Participant perceptions highlighted the significance of human capital engagement and leadership development. The results of this study are employed for formulating clear recommendations for future building level implementations of the model, as well as for providing considerations for further research and policy development.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the hard working teachers and leaders who fight every day to turn around our nation’s low performing schools. You are truly changing our children’s lives on a daily basis.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

By specifying an increase in student academic achievement as one of four key improvement areas, President Barack Obama’s Blueprint for School Reform, a framework for the reauthorization of NCLB, heightened the critical focus on improving the country’s lowest performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Although the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 provided the historical foundation for turning around the country’s lowest performing schools by supplying grants for improvement efforts, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) represented a historic investment in low performing schools by making the School Improvement Grant (SIG) the beneficiary of an extra $3 billion in stimulus funds. From a policymaking perspective, these increases in funding represented the government’s considerable interest and investment in the public education system. Embedded in ARRA, schools receiving these School Improvement Grants were required to implement one of four school improvement intervention models: Closure, Restart, Transformation, or Turnaround. Although providing direction for low performing schools, these models and strategies highlight the role of the federal government in education (Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard & Redding, 2008; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah & Tallant 2010; Perlman & Redding, 2009).

The following dissertation explored the process and impact of the Turnaround Model in its first year of implementation at three elementary schools in a large, urban Midwestern school district. Chapter I provides a background for the exploratory case
study, problem statement, professional significance, overview of methodology, researcher positioning, limitations and considerations of the study, and key terms.

**Background of the Study**

The school improvement Turnaround Model is a culmination of lessons learned from past policy events geared at restructuring low performing schools during the years 1965 to present. Since the inception of Title I in 1965, the American public education system has exerted a continuous, intense focus on turning around low performing schools (Duke, 2006; Herman et al, 2008). The Title I program states “the Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance...to expand and improve...educational programs by various deprived children” (Public Papers of the President of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965). This premise is found at the heart of Title I, designed for assisting communities with a high concentration of low income families by raising per pupil expenditures and, thus, providing one of the initial federal funding programs for turning around persistently low achieving schools. Title I funds can be used for a variety of purposes: for classroom instruction; for hiring additional staff, or for purchasing equipment.

During the early years of Title I, there was no consensus on how government aid and resources should best be employed (Ravitch, 2001). As a result, Title I funds were allocated for a broad variety of programs including teaching innovations, cultural and social enrichment programs, parental involvement activities, and social and medical services. Once funds were allocated, the lack of federal government support proved to be a major obstacle in the first iteration of Title I (Borman, Stringfield, & Slavin, 2001). Over time, federal legislation enactments, bureaucratic regulations, and court mandates in
education became increasingly numerous and prescriptive (Corallo & McDonald, 2002). As a result, the federal government’s influence over schools grew significantly. The federal government enacted subsequent policy events with the purpose of turning around persistently low achieving schools.

In 1998, one attempt at restructuring low performing schools, known as Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) focused on undertaking research based, whole school reform efforts (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). CSR became a significant component of the growing federal movement to support research-based efforts for reforming low performing/high poverty schools across the nation. The program provided $1 billion in grants for schools with high concentrations of poverty and low levels of achievement. In general, the funding sources supporting the implementation of CSR were targeted toward high poverty schools with low student test scores. CSR focused on reorganizing and revitalizing entire schools, rather than on implementing a number of specialized, and potentially uncoordinated, school improvement initiatives (Borman et al., 2003).

Though this was considered an improvement over previous reform efforts (Doherty, 2000), U.S. Department of Education (2002) found that only one third of the schools that received CSR funding fully implemented all the required program components. The overall achievement gains, therefore, in the CSR funded schools were no larger than those in schools with similar demographics. According to the report, learning gains were nonexistent in CSR elementary schools, marginally lower than comparison schools in middle school mathematics, and no different from comparison schools in middle school reading (Orland, Hoffman, & Vaughn, 2010). Before its end, the
program provided over 7,000 grants to schools across the country. Due to the inflexibility and lack of federal guidance, Comprehensive School Reform lays the foundation for No Child Left Behind, strategies relative to school restructuring and, ultimately, the Turnaround Model. Specifically, the CSR program reflected several important facets of the school Turnaround Model, including: providing high quality professional development, support and shared leadership for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff through a broad base of responsibility for reform, meaningful involvement of parents and other stakeholders in planning and implementing school improvement activities, creating community partnerships for sustaining the school reform effort, and using high quality technical support and assistance (Borman et al., 2003; Duke, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Specific strategies of the Turnaround Model first appeared in The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which narrowed the focus with the introduction of criteria for restructuring schools failing to increase student achievement. Through the implementation of annual academic progress, report cards, standards for highly qualified teachers and established funding priorities, NCLB expanded the federal government’s role in turning around low performing schools (Kutash et al, 2010; Manwaring, 2010). Through standardized testing and increased accountability, NCLB exerted a focus on groups of students who might have otherwise been marginalized during previous reauthorizations of Title I, including: Economically Disadvantaged, African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Students with Disabilities and students with Limited English Proficiency (LEPs). Schools receiving federal Title I funds through NCLB must increase academic proficiency in disadvantaged subgroups by the year 2014
NCLB imposed consequences for schools failing to meet established criteria known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools are identified for school improvement after failing to meet AYP goals for two consecutive years, and school districts must take corrective action (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Districts are required to provide technical assistance and school choice options for these schools. After three years of not meeting school improvement goals, schools are required to offer tutoring and supplemental academic enrichment services.

A precursor of the Turnaround Model was previously imposed as corrective action for schools failing to meet AYP for four or more years. After four years of not meeting AYP and in addition to previous consequences, schools must implement one of the following corrective actions: replace school staff contributing to failure; implement new curriculum; decrease management authority at building level; appoint outside experts to advice schools; extend school day or school year; and/or change the school’s internal organization. After five years of consecutive failure to achieve AYP, schools must be restructured by adopting one of the four specific school restructuring models: reopen school as charter or community school, replace all or most of school personnel contributing to failure (including principal), state takeover of school, or other major restructuring that makes fundamental reforms in school operations (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) outlined the Turnaround Model as an opportunity for developing technical assistance and support for the implementation of school improvement efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).
ARRA’s focus on improving student achievement through school improvement and reform had created a competitive culture focused on school improvement. Race to the Top (RttT), the core education program embedded in ARRA, is a competitive grant process to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers, and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

School Improvement Grants totaling $3.5 billion dollars, targeted at the lowest 5% of schools identified as persistently low performing, raised the school improvement standard set by No Child Left Behind. Schools accepting funds earmarked for school improvement were charged with implementing organizational changes and developing an increased focus on educational interventions, adopting standards and assessments that promote college and career readiness, building data systems that improve instruction, and building organizational capacity through effective recruitment and talent management. For the possibility of increased educational funding, states and school districts across the country support a variety of school improvement efforts previously viewed as unattainable (Perlman & Redding, 2009). Specifically, school improvement was required through one of four intervention models:

School Closure: The school district closes the school and enrolls the students in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.
Restart Model: The school district converts or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.

Transformation Model: The school district replaces the principal (except in specified situations); implements a rigorous staff evaluation and development system; institutes comprehensive instructional reform; increases learning time and applies community oriented school strategies; and provides greater operational flexibility and support for the school.

Turnaround Model: The school district replaces the principal and rehires no more than 50% of the staff; gives greater principal autonomy; implements other prescribed and recommended strategies.

**Problem Statement**

The Turnaround Model is one of four approved sets of prescriptive strategies approved by the government and aimed at turning around low performing schools. School improvement research supports many of the key components of the model, however little research exists examining the effectiveness of the model as a comprehensive system of school reform (De la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Duke, 2006; Herman et al., 2008). This study addressed the absence in the existing knowledge base. As such, it explored and described the process and impact of the Turnaround Model after one year of implementation in three Midwestern urban, public elementary schools using funding from the School Improvement Grant.
Professional Significance of the Study

The current body of educational literature is saturated with research on school improvement (Byrk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton., 2010; Duke, 2006; Elmore, 2000; Herman et al, 2008). Little research existed, however, on the Turnaround Model being prescribed by the U.S. Department of Education (De la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Kutush et al. 2010). This large investment in education through the School Improvement Grant represented an interest in the implementation and impact of this model as a strategy for school improvement for persistently low performing schools. This exploratory case study added to the scarce body of research literature addressing the effectiveness of the Turnaround Model in the field of educational reform. In addition, this study provided valuable strategies for implementation while increasing the capacity of decision makers’ understanding of school improvement concepts related to the Turnaround Model.

This study was unique in that it explored a phenomenon taking place in the State of Ohio. Regional and district personnel conducted activities within the state as a means of increasing Ohio educators’ capacity for understanding Turnaround concepts relative to instructional decision making. This topic was as relevant as it was timely. Subjects participating in the study benefited from structured reflection regarding the implementation of the Turnaround Model on their respective educational organizations. This information was utilized for planning and shaping further implementations of the Turnaround Model.
Overview of Methodology

Through surveys, focus groups and interviews, the current exploratory case study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies for illuminating the initial stages of the implementation of the Turnaround Model in three urban, Midwestern elementary schools. Subjects were comprised of teachers, instructional coaches, and principals who were in their first year of implementing the model. The case study investigated the first year of implementation in these three schools and took place between August 2011 and June 2012. Because of the timing and the focus of the study, student achievement data were neither available nor used. Given that the purpose of the study was to investigate the nature of implementation rather than student performance on academic achievement assessments, these data were not included in the case study. The discussion of the nature of implementation will take place in Chapter V of this dissertation.

Researcher Positioning

In my role as School Improvement Grant Coordinator, I served as a district representative and liaison with the Ohio Department of Education. I provided technical assistance to eleven schools receiving the School Improvement Grant (7 Transformation, 3 Turnaround and 1 Restart). Included in this group were five high schools, two middle schools, and four elementary schools (three of which are included in the current study). In addition to providing technical assistance, I also provided direct support and assisted in the completion of compliance documentation related to the School Improvement Grant. This role allowed me the opportunity for working closely with building principals. Prior to my role as the SIG Coordinator, I was a special education teacher involved in the
initial stages of implementation of the School Improvement Grant at one of the district’s high schools. Despite my involvement with and support of these schools, I do not believe principals and teachers viewed me as a supervisor in an evaluative role. In all of my communications with school personnel, I was extremely clear that my role was one of support and not evaluation (that was the responsibility of Regional Executive Directors). In fact, many welcomed my technical assistance and support on a frequent basis.

**Limitations and Considerations of the Study**

The current exploratory case study includes two limitations and one consideration. The first limitation deals with the nature of the researcher’s role as both participant and observer. Although being a participant-observer in the case study provided a unique perspective on the experiences of those implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model, participant observations are largely subjective in nature and, ultimately, contain biases which impact findings and interpretations of data (Merriam, 2002). Though my role as both participant and observer provided a unique perspective, the observations included in the study are subjective in nature. The second limitation is related to the methodology employed in this study. Because the results of the exploratory case study are descriptive in nature, it is left to the reader as to how they might be transferred to other populations. The reader should use caution in applying lessons learned from this case study to the implementation of the Turnaround Model in other settings.

The small sample size of schools included in this case study is not a limitation, however it is a consideration. This is a consideration given the qualitative nature of this study. Essentially, the study examined only the leaders, teachers, and instructional
coaches in three urban Midwestern elementary schools. Although the response rate for the survey was approximately 80%, a small sample size does not accurately represent the general population.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

The following terms were defined for the purpose of this exploratory case study:

1. **Data Driven Instruction**: teachers, principals, and administrators systematically collecting and analyzing various types of data, including demographic, administrative, process, perceptual, and achievement gap, to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and schools” (Perlman & Redding, 2009, p. 46)

2. **External Providers**: outside providers who deploy certain services that are necessary for full implementation of a model (U.S. Department of Education, 2009)

3. **Governance Structure**: framework through which high quality leadership can be exercised throughout the educational system (Knapp, Copeland, Honig, Piecki, & Portin, 2010)

4. **Impact**: resulting outcome of the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model

5. **Increased Learning Time**: increasing the length of the school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours devoted to academic and enrichment activities (Perlman & Redding, 2009)

6. **Instructional Model**: organizing appropriate instructional scenarios to achieve instructional goals and provide procedural frameworks for the systematic production
of instruction; guidelines or sets of strategies on which the approach to teaching by instructors is based (Schmoker, 2011)

7. Job Embedded Professional Development: refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and is designed for enhancing teachers’ content specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995)

8. Process: acts and activities associated with implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model

9. Restructuring: occurs after five consecutive years of a school not meeting their academic achievement targets under NCLB. When a school undergoes restructuring, they are expected to plan and adopt an intervention model that will show significant growth in at least two years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002)

10. Socio-Emotional and Community-Oriented Supports and Services: partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith and community based organizations, health clinics, and other State or local agencies to create safe school environments that meet students’ social, emotional, and health needs (U.S. Department of Education, 2009)

11. Turnaround: district managed replacement of a school leader and staff who are relevant to failure in a low performing school (Perlman & Redding, 2009)

12. Turnaround Competencies: competencies used as part of a rigorous recruitment, screening, and selection process for identifying educators with the unique qualities that equip them to succeed in the turnaround environment while helping ensure a strong match between teachers and particular turnaround schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)
13. Turnaround Model: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff; grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach for substantially improving student outcomes (U.S Department of Education, 2009)

**Research Questions**

The proposed case study will answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the processes by which these three schools have implemented the Turnaround Model?

Research Question 2: In what ways has implementation of the Turnaround Model impacted these three schools?

**Summary**

Chapter I provided an introduction, the background information, the problem statement, the professional significance, the research questions and an overview of the methodology along with key terminology used. Chapter II will provide a review of the literature describing both the purpose of the Turnaround Model during its initial stages of implementation, as well as research that supports key strategies of the Turnaround Model.
CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section provides a context for understanding the origins of the Turnaround Model and, ultimately, sets the stage for its development. As this exploratory case study focuses on exploring the first year implementation of the Turnaround Model in three urban, Midwestern elementary schools, a deep grasp of the research contributing to each theme of the model is imperative for effectively providing a context for discussing the individual categories of the model. This understanding will help district and school leaders, as well as policymakers in Ohio, increase the probability that the school improvement Turnaround Model will be more than simply complied with, but rather used as a mechanism for building human capacity and increasing student achievement. The second section provides the research basis for the inclusion of each of the four categories of the Turnaround Model: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance. A discussion of fidelity of implementation of the model appears in the third section, while the fourth section includes a conceptual framework for the current exploratory case study.

Background of the Turnaround Model

Purpose of the Turnaround Model

For at least four decades, school districts have wrestled with the challenge of turning around America’s lowest performing schools (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Duke, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Many of these schools have been permitted
to fail for a long time. Identified through No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measuring stick, over 10,000 schools are in need of improvement, while 2,000 are in need of ultimate restructuring due to underperformance (American Institutes for Research, 2010). Given the sheer number of failing schools, the government has no choice but to act. As the 2014 NCLB deadline for 100% proficiency approaches, these numbers will continue rising. The goal of creating a globally competitive, economically sustained citizenry exists at the core of American public education. The need for a strategy for addressing this aim is paramount to turning around low performing schools, especially given where the U.S. currently stands internationally (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Despite years of reform and a steadily increasing urgency, efforts at turning around these schools have largely failed (Rhim, Kowal, & Hassel, 2007). Systemic solutions, ranging from site based management to high stakes accountability, have not led to transformation of these schools (Calkins et al., 2007).

Although some aspects of NCLB and its implementation are favorably received, broad consensus suggests that NCLB’s plan for improving failing schools has proven largely ineffective (Herman et al., 2008). Still, while providing the necessary financial support for backing up their interests, both federal and state governments continue exerting a rapidly intensifying focus on low performing schools (Rhim et al., 2007). As a result, turning around struggling schools is becoming an increasing priority for the federal government. This was most recently highlighted in 2009 when the Obama Administration announced its intention to funnel $5 billion dollars to turn around 5,000 of the nation’s poorest performing schools over the course of five years through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) (U.S. Department of Education,
This resulted in a bold challenge to America’s education sector. Although providing a strong policy direction for school turnaround, it has not resulted in dramatic change on a large scale (Calkins et al., 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In response, education experts developed and implemented new approaches for improving schools, however, turnaround work is in its early stages, and its implementation is highly fragmented (American Institute for Research, 2010).

Defining the concept of turnaround was difficult. Turnaround is used generally to refer to the discipline of improving schools and, more specifically, to the Turnaround Model created by the U.S. Department of Education. Turnaround is a “dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years, and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high performance organization” (Calkins et al., 2007, p. 3). Customarily, this sudden intervention is focused on producing significant gains in academic achievement and is couched in performance improvement for a whole school system. Turnaround is focused on the most consistently underperforming schools and involves rapid change that must occur or the school will be closed or taken over by the state (Herman et al, 2008).

The concept of turning around a low performing school remains separate from the Turnaround Model, itself. The Turnaround Model is one of four key strategies for restructuring low performing schools, specified by the Obama Administration in ARRA (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The purpose of the Turnaround Model includes the identification of strategies that rapidly accelerate an increase in student achievement.
Additionally, the Turnaround Model includes providing the federal government specific strategies for turning around low performing schools (Perlman & Redding, 2009).

President Obama and policy makers at the federal level have made turning around low performing schools a priority. If the goal includes an accelerated, rapid increase in student achievement in these schools, we can no longer afford to go slowly. Though the process of improvement is a deliberate one, turnaround is exactly the opposite, an immediate intervention implemented at a time when schools have no time to react (Calkins et al., 2007; Kutash et al., 2010). It is not very often, however, the U.S. government awards money without a specific plan attached. Both NCLB and ARRA include highly prescriptive, U.S. Department of Education-funded intervention practices that hold states and school districts accountable while providing them with roadmaps for the significant increase of student achievement, a shift away from regulatory, isolated guidelines to a group of strategies aligned together as frameworks (Learning Point Associates, 2010). The assumption at work in the mind of the federal government is that multiple strategies in a robust framework, a model, will result in gains in student achievement (Perlman & Redding, 2009). In order for a school to continue receiving funding, it must implement its selected model according to plan.

With ARRA, in particular, schools are expected to implement with fidelity the entire framework (the model, along with all of its strategies), rather than implementing one strategy over an extended period of time (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Federal education policies have increased with respect to control and span of influence, while providing a prescriptive approach to school improvement. Many of these strategies (remnants of NCLB), including the Turnaround Model, lack the research support
necessary for implementation with fidelity, and ultimately, call into question the substantial investment by the federal government.

**New American Schools Development Corporation (NAS)**

In 1991, along with growing policy and research support, then-President George H. W. Bush announced the creation of a private sector, non profit organization called the New American Schools Development Corporation (NAS). The mission of New American Schools is to increase student achievement through comprehensive school improvement. Comprehensive improvement includes many of the core tenets of the Turnaround Model, including: (a) leadership, management and governance, (b) resource allocation, (c) professional development, (d) evaluation and accountability, and (e) educator, family and community engagement (Kearns & Anderson, 1996).

Using a business model, NAS requested proposals for new whole school restructuring models of American schools that would enable world class achievement in core academic subjects for all students while addressing all aspects of school operation (Borman et al, 2003). NAS supported specific approaches for turning around low performing schools, similar to models, which it referred to as designs. The driving idea behind this concept included improving student performance by launching comprehensive, research based approaches. Two things became clearly apparent, however: (a) individual school improvement cannot be isolated from district wide improvement, and (b) the designs, themselves, would not turn around low performing schools (Kearns & Anderson, 1996). Based on this experience, the NAS design teams then enacted plans for providing support and technical assistance for schools and leadership teams in the implementation of designs.
Comprehensive School Reform (CSR)

In 1998, building on research from New American Schools, the U.S. Department of Education again awarded grant funds to high poverty, low achieving schools through another demonstration program known as Comprehensive School Reform (CSR). The goal of CSR included boosting the effectiveness of school improvement efforts through a focus on eleven CSR components, some of which are strikingly similar to specific tenets of the Turnaround Model:

1. Employ proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that is based on scientifically based research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools;

2. Integrate instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management;

3. Provide high quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training;

4. Include measurable goals for student academic achievement and establish benchmarks for meeting those goals;

5. Support teachers, principals, administrators, and other staff throughout the school;

6. Provide support for teachers, principals, administrators, and other school staff by creating shared leadership and a broad base of responsibility for reform efforts;

7. Provide for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning, implementing, and evaluating school improvement activities;
8. Use high quality external technical support and assistance from an entity that has experience and expertise in school wide reform and improvement, which may include an institution of higher education;

9. Include a plan for the annual evaluation of the implementation of the school reforms and the student results achieved;

10. Identify federal, state, local, and private financial and other resources available that schools can use to coordinate services that support and sustain the school reform effort; and

11. Meet one of the following requirements: the program has been found, through scientifically based research, to significantly improve the academic achievement of participating students; or the program has been found to have strong evidence that it will significantly improve the academic achievement of participating children (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The scaled up nature of the components, along with a host of national developments motivated the expansion of CSR, including: the movement toward systemic and standards based reform further propagated by NCLB, as well as new federal legislation allowing the use of Title I funds (Borman et al., 2003), the primary source of federal assistance to low performing, high poverty schools for the last four decades. During its 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act, CSR was named a key strategy for turning around low performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Congress provided funding streams and flexibility for Comprehensive School Reform efforts. As a result, schools utilized funding for the
development of specialized pull out programs and additional supports to subgroups of students with the greatest academic needs.

While providing a flexible framework for turning around low performing schools, CSR also provided an evidence based model and standards for school improvement. As with school turnaround, CSR is most effective when individual school reform is couched in a district initiated improvement effort (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Critics of CSR cite its fragmented implementation as evidence that the program was not wholly effective in boosting student improvement (Borman et al., 2003).

**The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)**

Over time, the school Turnaround Model found its way into federal policy and legislation as a process for improving low performing schools. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 provides the historical foundation for both the turnaround process and for the Turnaround Model. Seeds of the model first appear as a consequence in 2007, when NCLB requires schools to “restructure” after failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five consecutive years (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Because of NCLB, the visibility of these schools (along with the failing grades assigned to them) has put turning them around at the top of the federal policy agenda. According to Calkins et al., (2007), the numbers are arresting. Under NCLB, schools that do not meet annual achievement goals (“Adequate Yearly Progress” or AYP) enter into a series of categories of under performance, triggering more intensive forms of intervention. Schools failing to meet AYP for a fifth consecutive year must initiate plans for restructuring (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). This may include replacing all or most of the school staff, reopening the school as a charter school, or turning over school
operations either to the state or to a private company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness. The timeline, along with delays in various states’ implementation of the law, accounts for why it has taken a while for schools to move in any great numbers into the restructuring category (Calkins et al., 2007). The Turnaround Model, then, derived specifically from the inflexible restructuring consequences presented in NCLB, provides one prescriptive framework for turning around low performing schools (Kutash et al, 2010; Perlman & Redding, 2009).

**American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 and School Improvement Grants**

The Obama Administration’s unprecedented investment in education reform through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009 expands the federal government’s role in education. A framework for the reauthorization of NCLB, President Obama’s Blueprint for School Reform consequently heightens the critical focus by highlighting an increase in student academic achievement in the country’s lowest performing schools as one of four key improvement areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). According to its most current iteration, low performing schools are improved using one of four models: Transformation, Restart, Closure or Turnaround. While providing direction for low performing schools, these models (or strategies) highlight the role of the federal government in education (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

ARRA is proof the Obama Administration has bought into the notion that turnarounds are key for improving low performing, high poverty schools. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has said that if the nation could turn around 1,000 schools annually for five years, “[w]e could really move the needle, lift the bottom and change
the lives of tens of millions of underserved children” (U.S Department of Education, 2009, p. 1). Increased attention was placed on these schools when the School Improvement Grant (SIG) became the beneficiary of an extra $3 billion in stimulus funds, aiding schools in NCLB improvement status. The Administration then requested an additional $1.5 billion in the 2010 budget. This, on top of funding from existing funding streams, has been used for turning around low performing schools. Thus, the most current version of the Turnaround Model appears in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program of 2009, which presents four models for school improvement: Transformation, Restart, Closure and Turnaround. Specifically, the Turnaround Model relies on several key tenets, including Teachers and Leaders, Instructional and Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance.

**Four Themes of the Turnaround Model**

The following key categories of the Turnaround Model formulate the basis for themes discussed in this exploratory case study: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This section highlights the research basis and provides the categorical alignment for each of the categories.

**Teachers and Leaders**

The strategies aligned with the Teachers and Leaders theme address the important correlation between highly effective teachers/leaders and student achievement. The assumption at work behind replacing the principal is that new leadership will provide the catalyst for school wide change. Using locally adopted turnaround strategies provides the leader the opportunity for replacing previous staff while selecting individuals whose
skills and attitudes match the school’s vision (Hassel, Hassel, & Rhim, 2007). The last strategy highlights the importance of strategic human capital management, including recruiting, placing and retaining staff.

Elements associated with successful turnaround initiatives include replacement of managers with leaders that have specific capabilities relative to engineering change: a rapid cycle of improvement focused on problem solving, measuring and driving results, as well as on changes in environmental factors essential for enabling turnaround. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found school leadership “the most important school based variable affecting student achievement, second only to classroom instruction” (p.12). The school leader plays a central role by creating a learning organization focused on high expectations and affects the instructional quality of a staff through hiring decisions and professional development activities (Marzano, 2007). According to Hall and Hord (2001), highly successful leaders rely on contributions from many others in their organizations. Principals and teachers, alike, count on each other for leadership and collaboration during the turnaround process. Illustrating this, principal support and effectiveness plays a key role in teachers’ decisions to remain in the field (Fullan, 2007). Though principal leadership is crucial to turning around low performing schools, there has been little investment in recruiting, preparing and supporting leadership development, particularly in high poverty districts and schools (Byrk et al., 2010).

Descriptive research consistently shows strong leadership is at the core of the turnaround approach (Aladjem & Borman, 2006; Bryk et al., 2010; Herman et al., 2008). Herman et al., (2008) suggest that case studies of turnaround schools indicate schools using turnaround principals show dramatic gains. According to Hassel et al. (2007),
turnaround principals generally have turnaround specific training and make a visible break from their previous leadership strategies, exhibiting more involvement in classroom instruction and making very public commitments to school improvement. These leaders share common characteristics including thriving on challenge, staying focused on goals and motivating others toward those goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Successful turnaround leaders at both the district and school levels strive for organizations that support and sustain the performance not only of students, but that of teachers and administrators, as well (Hassel et al., 2007). Such practices assume the school’s organizational purpose should match the nature of the school’s improvement agenda, including strategies associated with strengthening district and school cultures through the building of collaborative processes. Leadership comes from many sources, and efforts to improve recruitment, training, evaluation, and job embedded professional development should be considered effective approaches to successful school turnaround (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Along with this, leaders must aim to ensure that policies relative to leadership development, as well as those related to recruitment, training and retention, are identified and equitably implemented.

In this regard, education lags behind other industries when it comes to recruiting and retaining highly effective principals and teachers. Ringo, Schweyer, DeMarco, Jones, and Lesser (2008, p. 9) argued that “the education field was found to be the least likely to engage in enlightened talent management practices”. MacMillian (2008, p. 21) suggested that the “turnaround [...] of low performing districts into high performing learning systems is a robust human capital strategy at the district level, coupled with high quality interventions at the school level”. As a result, districts must recruit and retain a large
number of highly effective principals and teachers (or human capital) that will lead to increased student achievement (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Research consistently shows students from high poverty and minority backgrounds, many of whom attend low performing schools, have less access to highly qualified, experienced teachers (Imazeki & Goe, 2009). Attrition is worst in small, high poverty schools in urban and rural locations when compared to middle class, suburban schools (Ingersoll & Perda, 2009). These shortages result in an inequitable distribution of teachers between high and low need student populations (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The financial cost of teacher attrition, as well as movement from school to school is nearly $5 billion annually across the country, underwritten mostly in part by taxpayers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

Approximately 46% of all teachers leave the profession within their first five years (Ingersoll, 2003). In some schools, over a five year period, as much as 85% of the teacher staff will have left (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009). Special education teachers are two and a half times more likely to leave the profession than teachers in other disciplines, and new special education teachers are more than twice as likely as other teachers to leave the profession (Butler, 2008). Teacher attrition, coupled with movement from school-to-school, costs the country more than $4.8 billion annually (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). To the extent that frequent turnover in the existing teacher pool is the result of teacher dissatisfaction with both their districts and the profession, in general, districts must address the issues teachers claim affect their decision to remain in a district or in a profession, including student discipline and motivation, school leadership support, working conditions, salaries, and staff collegiality,
to name a few (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2003). New special education teachers note inadequate support with IEPs and other relevant paperwork among the primary factors for leaving the profession, while the tremendous pressure to increase English fluency while meeting annual yearly progress requirements impacts ELL teacher retention (Billingsley, 2007).

Research supports the effectiveness of local control over specific areas of recruiting and retaining staff while creating the right working conditions for turnaround (Borman et al, 2003). Districts must also develop high standards for the recruitment and retention of candidates while reaching out to all possible arenas when staffing for particularly challenging positions (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Although some studies point to driving for results through the implementation of “strategies even when they deviate from established organizational practices” (Adelman & Taylor, 2010, p. 28), still others point to control over budget through “funneling more time and money into successful tactics while halting unsuccessful tactics” (Hassel et al., 2007, p. 10). Additional research highlights the importance of acting “in relentless pursuit of goals, rather than touting progress as ultimate success” (Hassel et al., 2006., p. 82).

**Instructional Support Strategies**

Instructional support strategies found in the Turnaround Model include the selection and implementation of an instructional model, an emphasis on job-embedded professional development, and the continuous use of data for informing and differentiating instruction. School improvement research suggests that “chronically low preforming schools need to maintain focus on improving instruction” (Herman et al., 2008, p. 14). Instructional quality, therefore, plays the most significant role in the school
improvement process (Elmore, 1996). Effective turnaround schools focus on two strategies that have a direct impact on improving instruction: (a) using data to improve instruction and (b) involving teachers in aligning the curriculum to the State standards (Herman et al., 2008). These schools use formative assessments and data for tracking progress toward clear goals. According to Herman et al. (2008), successful turnaround schools not only “identify staff needs for individualized professional development, [they also] identify needs for reteaching individual students specific content and skills.” Using rigorous, standards based curricula, teachers are actively involved in aligning the curriculum, which according to Aladjem and Borman (2006), seems to help teachers in turnaround schools, where instruction is the most critical factor to achieving success.

Because high quality instruction matters, Darling-Hammond (2000) asserted teachers are the most important factor in the school improvement process and suggested an emphasis on teaching and learning. Additionally, Elmore (1996) highlighted the importance of instruction through his discussion of the instructional core by suggesting “student learning increases when the level of knowledge and skills that the teacher brings increases” (p. 24). Understanding the importance of instruction remains critical in the development and implementation of an instructional model. Schmoker (2011) suggested that effective lessons have a core structure, including: a clearly stated objective, teaching and modeling, guided practice, and checks for understanding. His conceptualization of effective instruction remains consistent with that of Marzano (2007). In this view of instruction, teachers must develop a systematic way of delivering content to students. As Elmore (2000) proposed, “we are too quick to assume that good teaching is a mysterious process that varies with each teacher” (p. 16). Marzano (2007) also concluded that
instructional practices should have “routine components in every lesson” (p. 180). Because of varying levels of skills and knowledge, teachers must learn engaging and evidence based instructional practices for increasing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The Instructional Support Strategies theme also underscores the role of providing job-embedded professional development (JEPD) for the purposes of ensuring effective instructional delivery (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Professional development provides the vehicle for improving teacher instructional quality while building capacity and, therefore, is a critical element in the school improvement process (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanis, 2009). In addition to these characteristics, high quality professional development “provides adequate time while ensuring that the extended opportunities to learn emphasize observing and analyzing students’ understanding of the subject matter” (American Educational Research Association, 2005, p. 2). Professional development, as defined in the School Improvement Grant, is professional learning that occurs at a school as educators engage in their daily work activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). It is tightly coupled with the skills and knowledge gained from learning, connected with educators’ individual practices and can be immediately transferred in to the classroom environment. In this vein, the Turnaround Model focuses on providing strategies centered around instructional delivery. In order to implement instructional models with fidelity, teachers must receive sustained, job relevant professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2000). According to Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, and Powers (2010), “job-embedded professional development refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice, is designed to
enhance teachers’ content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning” (p. 2), and comprises one form of instructional support that effectively builds teacher capacity, thus, increasing achievement.

Additionally, the Turnaround Model promotes job-embedded professional development for teachers en route to facilitating conditions necessary for effective improvement. School districts across the country invest billions of dollars creating engaging opportunities for educators based on needs of the school, perceived impact, and/or interests of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). These professional development opportunities are fragmented and implemented largely in isolation without any real impact on increasing student achievement (Croft et al., 2010). Effective professional development fills instructional gaps and provides interventions that can be directly recycled into the classroom for meeting the needs of students (Marzano, 2007). Elmore (1996) suggested “the quality and impact of professional development depends on what teachers are being asked to learn, how they are learning it, and whether they can make the practices they are being asked to try work in their classrooms” (p. 24). There are a variety of formats for job-embedded professional development: action research, coaching, data teams, examining student work, mentoring, professional learning communities, and study groups. To illustrate this, employing instructional coaches remains a form of professional development that provides both immediate and specific feedback teachers use in their planning and delivery and, thus, directly impacts student achievement. Job-embedded professional development provides the opportunity for advancing student learning and, therefore, should focus on building capacity for understanding subject matter focus on the instructional content teachers will be delivering (Schmoker, 2011).
Professional development geared at helping staff reach the school’s goals remains an essential element of all school reform efforts and should be part of turnaround schools. Darling-Hammond (2009) believed that improving professional learning is a critical factor in transforming schools. According to Darling-Hammond, professional development should be organized and planned so that all teachers can be actively engaged and, as a result, impact student achievement. The literature on high quality professional development consistently highlights the following characteristics: alignment with school improvement goals and priorities, core content teaching strategies, active and continuous learning, opportunities for collaboration, feedback and follow-up (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002). The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2011) suggested that, in order to be characterized as high quality, “professional development must be delivered in a way that yields direct impact on teacher practice” (p.3).

The Turnaround Model not only highlights the implementation of an instructional model that addresses student needs, as well as job-embedded professional development, but also the continuous use of data for informing and differentiating instruction (Schmoker, 2011). The need for utilizing data to inform instruction directly relates both to the instructional model, as well as to the need for professional development for supporting quality instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Effective school leaders and teachers systematically monitor and use data as a tool for increasing student achievement (Duke, 2006). Lachat and Smith (2005) suggested that schools focused on school improvement continually use data for improving instructional delivery. There are a variety of ways teachers can use data for guiding instructional practices. Schmoker
(2011) highlighted the need for teachers to use checks for understanding and formative assessments to “see how many students have mastered a particular step” (p. 54). The information allows teachers to make real time course corrections and provide individualized interventions.

**Time and Support**

The Turnaround Model emphasizes the need for extended learning time for both teachers and students, as well as the need for engaging families and the community (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In fact, extended learning opportunities (ELOs) for teachers and students is a common theme in the literature of school improvement (Duke, 2006; Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010; Perlman & Redding, 2009). ELOs include a broad range of after school, weekend and summer programs that provide children with academic enrichment and/or supervised activities beyond the traditional school day and, in some cases, beyond the traditional school year (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). These programs are structured for meeting the needs of students at high risk of academic failure and for extending the normal school day, so students may receive additional homework assistance and practice identified weaknesses (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010).

By expanding the school day, the school week, or even the school year, extended learning opportunities provide additional time for students to understand core academic content (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000). Given the number of activities taking place during traditional hours, some low performing schools extend the school day or the school year for the purpose of providing additional support for both teachers and struggling students (Beckett et al., 2009). Because the normal school day provides neither enough time for teacher collaboration nor for necessary support for struggling students,
low performing schools must carve out additional time after the school day for these activities. The most effective programs focus on a small number of goals, use data and provide individualized support for students (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). In addition to providing students with extra time for high quality academic assistance, ELOs provide teachers with time for discussing data and assessing student work (Lachat & Smith, 2005).

Research illustrates that minority students are less likely to access high quality external educational resources than their more affluent peers, and therefore, minority students may benefit from increased educational time (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). Increasing in-school time while providing out of school programming addresses the achievement gaps of even the most low achieving students (Posner & Vandell, 1994). ELO programs provide an increasingly valuable link between the needs of low income students and the demands of standards based school reform, because they address both the academic and social development of students (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). Because they intentionally focus on students’ assets as a foundation for building self-awareness and self-esteem, successful ELOs both strengthen the skills and boost the academic achievement of at-risk students (Beckett et al., 2009).

Students’ participation in after school programs has proven highly beneficial to their academic achievement and social development (Pierce, Hamm, & Vandell, 1999). Unless students spend time in high quality programs where they are actively engaged in learning, simply adding time connected to current school structures and resources will not increase achievement (Pattall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). Effective ELOs provide additional opportunities for students to practice skills after the school day, actively
engaging them in learning while targeting enrichment as an extension of skills that are being taught during the school day, rather than simply repeating the activities from earlier in the day (Beckett et al., 2009).

After school programs comprise the most frequently implemented form of extended learning for both students and teachers (Posner & Vandell, 1994). Although they offer a safe environment in which students can practice academic skills after the school day, they also meet the child care needs of many low income and nontraditional families (Huang et al., 2000). The National Institute on Out of School Time suggests that “high quality after school programs focus on the development of the whole child, integrating academic supports such as literacy skills into programming that also promotes children’s social, emotional and physical development” (Hynes, O’Connor, & Chung, 1999, p. 1). Relative to this, ELOs implemented during the early grades have been found to have a significant positive impact on both academic achievement and self esteem. Although some research has discovered students who participate in after school programs incur lower criminal activity rates (Goldschmidt, Huang, & Chinen, 2007), other research suggests the rate of participation in after school ELOs is directly relative to achievement on standardized tests in mathematics, reading, and language arts (Huang et al., 2000).

Much in the same vein as after school ELOs, summer programs with a specific focus on enriching student development and command of skills positively increase student achievement. A meta-analysis conducted by Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, and Muhlenbruck (2000) found that summer programs intentionally focused on “lessening or removing learning deficiencies” (p. 23) positively impact the knowledge and skill acquisition of participating students. Summer programs with minimal class sizes that
focus on the small group and/or individualized instruction have the greatest impact on student outcomes (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, & Muhlenbruck, 2000). Many traditional summer programs only focus on remedial, infrequent support for students who are victim to low academic expectations, limited planning and emphasis on core academic skills and a disconnect between both the regular school year curriculum and that included in the summer program (Posner & Vandell, 1994). Those summer programs focused on enrichment rather than remediation, however, have the greatest impact on students (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010).

Although summer programs have been found to affect students from middle class backgrounds, those with evidence of careful planning, design and implementation facilitate the skills necessary for minority students to experience academic success (Beckett et al., 2009). Cooper’s (2001) research indicated that summer school exerts “positive academic effects on both middle income and low income students” (p. 56). Research shows that summer ELOs bridge gaps in academic achievement between wealthy and disadvantaged children (Patall, Cooper, & Allen, 2010). Their impact, however, becomes greatest when they exert an emphasis on reading and math skill enrichment in an individualized or small group setting (Beckett et al., 2009). One positive effect of summer ELOs, therefore, includes reducing learning loss, specifically for low income students (Posner & Vandell, 1994).

Teachers and students need more time for learning and placing new skills into practice. In school improvement, the focus is on providing extended learning opportunities (Duke, 2006). Although both after school and summer ELOs provide many advantages for struggling students, they also provide distinct benefits for teachers (Huang
et al., 2000). Research has shown that common planning time for teachers improves instruction and student discipline (Duke, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Extended learning programs provide a unique opportunity for teachers to collaborate while sharing key instructional practices and analyzing student data (Lachat & Smith, 2005; Marzano, 2007). They also facilitate time for professional development on relevant topics that are only briefly highlighted in traditional staff meetings (Beckett et al., 2009). Teachers differ in their capacity for understanding and implementing effective instructional practices and use of data (Lachat & Smith, 2005). Essentially, ELOs provide an important opportunity not only for teachers to problem solve school specific issues, but also for them to keep the focus on student achievement (Marzano, 2007).

In addition to propagating meaningful ways for teachers to communicate effective instructional strategies, successful school improvement creates ways of increasing meaningful parental and community engagement (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011). The community can be leveraged as an effective resource for school improvement. By employing community partners in support of school improvement efforts, a district or school can create a broad base of support for and understanding of improvement and restructuring measures (Perlman & Redding, 2009). Support can come from a variety of sources, including school based personnel, community partners, parents, and volunteers. All of these entities are valuable resources to schools in need of improvement.

Many schools develop working partnerships with various community stakeholders (businesses, universities, faith based and nonprofit organizations, senior citizens and parents with non-school aged children) and receive support in the form of volunteers for tutoring, donations of school supplies, and assistance with after school programs
One example of community support connects chronically absent students in an effort to reduce student absenteeism (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011). In some instances, SIGs provide funds for hiring a school nurse and social worker for assisting the school and parents to address students’ physical, social and emotional needs. Research also shows that schools can improve student achievement by engaging parents in a way that directly relates to their children’s academic progress, maintaining a consistent message of what is expected, and reaching parents directly, personally and with a trusting approach (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parent involvement is vital for all students at all grade levels, and even more so for those with disabilities and English language learners (Epstein, 1995). Family involvement in the field of educational reform has become a standard, appearing in the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, as well as in the national PTA (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011).

Research suggests family and community involvement is related to higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales, enrollment in more challenging academic programs, more classes passed and credits earned, better attendance, improved behavior at home and at school, better social skills and adaptation to school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 24). Additionally, Henderson and Mapp (2002) suggested that increased family supports play an important role in children’s achievement and academic progress. Connecting with the community can help high school students engage in and see the relevance of their coursework. According to Perlman and Redding (2009), effective socio-emotional and community-oriented services and supports also have the following positive outcomes:
- increased empathy, self-awareness, and self-management skills;
- greater motivation to learn and deeper commitment to school;
- increased time devoted to schoolwork, better classroom behavior, and improved attendance;
- reductions in disruptive class behavior, aggression, delinquent acts and disciplinary referrals.

In addition, evidence shows that students with disabilities benefit greatly from community employment experiences, including work study jobs, paid work experiences, and high school vocational education experiences (Stodden et al., 2001).

In summary, as school reform evolves, so does the concept of extended learning time and socio-emotional and community-oriented services and supports. While the research base sufficiently indicates a link between high quality ELOs and academic outcomes, additional research becomes necessary for determining which program characteristics, when sustained over the long term, are most significant at positively impacting student achievement. Many successful programs utilize key partnerships with both families and community organizations; others seek innovative ways of maximizing learning opportunities for students.

**Governance**

The Turnaround Model places emphasis on creating new governance structures and providing operating flexibility that removes many of the barriers faced by low performing schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This flexibility allows schools to focus on strategic goal setting and implementing effective practices (Kowal & Hassel, 2005).
Ideally, structures exist by which school teams provide information for district teams (Elmore, 1996). Schools do not, however, require only structural reinvention (Duke, 2006). That being the case, schools must therefore alter the ways in which they are organized for the purposes of initiating and managing interventions (Herman et al., 2008). Effective school leaders promote staff collaboration in teacher teams (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In low performing schools, “teachers were often left completely alone to plan what to teach, with little guidance from their senior colleagues and little coordination with other teachers” (Rutter et al., 1979 p. 11). Schmoker (1996) recommended that teams of teachers continuously implement, assess, and adjust school policy. Team planning and decision making requires access to timely and relevant information, as well as time for monitoring the parts of the system for which the team is responsible (Marzano, 2003). One basic structure for team planning and decision making includes the School Leadership Team (Redding, 2006).

Although encouraging somewhat rigid accountability and authority and creating a focal point of responsibility for student learning, the School Improvement Grant highlights the need for school districts to provide greater building level flexibility with regard to staffing, scheduling and budgeting (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The SIG’s resounding message is that both accountability and authority are tightly aligned with student learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In addition to being the main indicator of how authority and accountability interact within the system of school reform, organizational structures provide the framework by which school decisions are made and implemented, accountability is determined, channels of communication are propagated and institutional intent becomes clear (Kowal & Hassel, 2005). Just as
organizational structures either facilitate or stifle constructive decision making, changes in these structures do not automatically lead to better achievement for students (Elmore, 1996). When school districts address the challenge of restructuring low achieving schools, designing or changing organizational structures is the first agenda item (Duke, 2006). When effectively organized, supervised and prepared, both district and school level teams provide an infrastructure for continuous improvement (Herman et al., 2008).

Turnaround leaders often request flexibility and autonomy for improving their schools. Two perspectives on autonomy for struggling schools exist: (a) providing more structure and oversight to compensate for lack of leadership or expertise within the school, or (b) provide more autonomy for allowing staff to make necessary changes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Found in many descriptive case studies investigating school turnaround, ARRA’s solution includes coupling greater flexibility with higher accountability. In its study of effective school turnarounds, Calkins et al., (2007) found “benefits to providing chronically low performing schools with the flexibility to enact changes for improving the school” (p. 10). Allowing leaders more flexibility for making decisions about staffing and budget enables them to focus resources where they are most needed.

SIG most strongly attributes student learning to instructional practices and management, delivery of the curriculum, and classroom structure (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). These variables, however, do not encompass organizational structure (Schmoker, 1996). Here, changes in organizational structures are only a precondition for school improvement (Duke, 2006; Elmore, 1996). Effective implementation of organizational change produces the desired results (Redding, 2006). Operational changes,
therefore, must always follow structural changes (Duke, 2006). Districts are uniquely positioned to facilitate the right conditions for effective school improvement (Elmore, 1996). According to the Mass Insight Education & Research Institute, “states and districts can engineer more effective turnaround at scale by creating space that supports outside-the-system approaches, focused inside the system” (as cited in Calkins et al., 2007, p.11).

The top lesson learned from high performing, high poverty schools includes “[c]learly defined authority to act on what’s best for children and learning, i.e. flexibility and control over staffing, budget and curriculum” (Calkins et al, 2007, p.12).

**Research on Implementation**

The way in which turnaround strategies are implemented, especially in terms of their coherence and fit with school needs, makes the difference between success and failure in school improvement. Getting the right fit between specific strategies within the school context is a key element in implementation. Most ineffective education reforms and practices can be attributed to poor implementation (Gresham 1989; Levin, Catlin, & Elson, 2005). In their case study research, Scott and Kober (2009) found that no single intervention works in every case, and strategies that are found effective in one school may not succeed in other schools. In a recent study of eleven low performing schools, Aladjem and Borman (2006) found that matching both the improvement approach and the implementation strategy to the school is a significant factor for success.

In fact, research highlights the connection between fidelity of implementation and program effectiveness (Foorman & Moats, 2004; Kovaleski, Gickling, & Marrow, 1999; Telzrow, McNamara, and Hollinger, 2000). Although fidelity of implementation of the process at the school level is significant, fidelity of implementation of instruction and
progress monitoring at the teacher level is also important. Although these studies investigate the effectiveness of various strategies, their results suggest three variables contribute to increased student achievement: (a) fidelity of implementation of the process at the school level, (b) degree to which the selected interventions are empirically supported, and (c) fidelity of intervention implementation at the teacher level (Protheroe, 2009). Partial implementation of the Turnaround Model without fidelity to its essential categories, therefore, often results in ineffective reform. A high rate of fidelity in the implementation of curriculum and effective instruction reduces this variable with regard to student achievement (Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006). Essentially, implementation of the model as it was designed and with regard for how individual strategies correspond with school needs results in increased student achievement.

**Conceptual Framework**

Strategies outlined by the SIG Turnaround Model inform the conceptual framework for this exploratory case study. The strategies of SIG originate in Title I, Section 1116 of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. With regard to NCLB, these strategies initially appear as corrective actions used by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) for schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four consecutive years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). These strategies, which later appear in the Turnaround Model, include but are not limited to extending learning opportunities for students and staff, providing job embedded professional development for educators, highlighting teacher and principal leadership, and using data in a purposeful way for guiding instruction and increasing student achievement. The framework also includes providing increased learning time and community supports for both staff and students.
The use of new organizational structures and the importance of operating flexibility for school leaders remains a significant element. Though cobbled together and not necessarily based on research, these strategies, again reinitiated and infused with funding by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provide one prescriptive model for turning around low performing schools. Herman et al., (2008) suggested that the elements of school reform include models for school improvement imposed by the federal government. Perlman and Redding, (2009) suggested that because these reform models are, by and large, prescriptive and forcibly imposed upon the school or the school district, they lack the capacity for facilitating automatic support. Creating effective systems around instruction and data remains key in developing effective schools (Byrk et al., 2010; Perlman & Redding, 2009).

**Summary**

Several key policy events over the past twenty years have shaped school reform efforts with respect to turning around our nation’s low performing schools. This process for rapid, rather than incremental, change has created a sense of urgency for states and school districts to engage in these school wide intervention strategies. Given the lack of research on the Turnaround Model and the current policy direction of the US Department of Education, gaining a better understanding of the process and implications makes this exploratory case study both a timely and relevant endeavor.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

Models of school improvement as structures for turning around America’s lowest performing schools have become increasingly more prevalent over the past two decades (Borman et al., 2003; Hassel et al., 2006; Herman et al., 2008; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; U.S Department of Education, 2009). Through the School Improvement Grant of 2009, the U.S. Department of Education introduced four models of school improvement: Transformation, Turnaround, Restart, and Closure. Of particular interest is the Turnaround Model, the second most frequently selected and one of the more disruptive models in terms of implementation, requiring the hiring of a new principal (if the current principal has been there longer than two years) and the replacement of at least 50% of the staff (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Embedded in the Turnaround Model are the following overarching themes: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance. Given that the Turnaround Model is a relatively new school improvement strategy, little research existed examining its implementation. This exploratory case study not only aimed at adding to the scarce body of already existing research, it also attempted to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of principals, instructional coaches, and teachers who were part of the model’s first year of implementation in three urban, Midwestern elementary schools. Furthermore, the results of this study will be employed in formulating clear recommendations for future implementations of the school improvement Turnaround Model, as well as for providing considerations for further research and policy development.
Research Design

This exploratory case study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches by providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of the school Turnaround Model through surveys, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. Data for the current study were collected over a six week period, starting at the end of the first year of model implementation (May 2012-June 2012). The present lack of research relative to the implementation of this model necessitated the use of both methodologies. The combined use of both methods also included data that may be missed in either purely qualitative or purely quantitative analyses (Patton, 2002).

According to Creswell (2008), qualitative research “relies on the views of participants, asks broad and general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (p. 46). Quantitative research, on the other hand, “asks specific, narrow questions; collects quantifiable data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics, and conducts inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner” (p. 46). While a qualitative approach examines the process but not the outcome, a quantitative approach examines the outcome but not the process. Creswell (2008) asserted that the “basic assumption is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in combination provides a better understanding of the research problem and questions than either method by itself” (p. 552). By combining both approaches, the researcher can examine, measure, and describe multiple experiences and perceptions.
Exploratory Case Study

Creswell (2008) defined a case study as:

an exploration of a bounded system or a case, or multiple cases, over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. Case studies tell detailed stories, rich in descriptive text that enable readers to visualize the experiences [...] A case study also involves elements of human experience. (p. 37)

Case studies can provide a deeper understanding of a situation through the examination of cases within the boundaries of time and place. In addition, case studies can involve elements of human experience. Merriam (2009) also stated that a case study is “selected for its uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to” (p. 33). Because of the nature of the case at-hand, this research used a case study format, a bound exploration of the experiences and perceptions involved in the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model in three urban elementary schools.

After a case study research design was selected, the next step included determining what type of case study should be used based on the questions posed by the researcher. Yin (2003) concluded that “how” questions are “more exploratory and are likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and/or experiments as the preferred research strategies” (p. 6). Likewise, he asserted, “A ‘what’ question is a justifiable rationale for conducting an exploratory study” (p. 6). In order to effectively address this type of question in an exploratory case study, Creswell (2008) recommended that researchers use multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to
provide corroborating evidence. Given the focus of the research questions, an exploratory case study using multiple sites, as well as a blended qualitative and quantitative approach, was selected.

**Co-Researchers**

Each of the two co-researchers in the study were employed by an Educational Service Center and had at least fifteen years of experience working in the educational field. Both had Master’s degrees and extensive backgrounds in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, as a function of their professional work experiences on the evaluation of numerous educational research projects throughout the state. Neither of the co-researchers had any connection to the school district or to any of the schools included in the study. Both co-researchers were informed of the purpose of the study and each took part in opportunities for reviewing and practicing established data research procedures.

**Research Questions**

The research questions posed within the study cover a variety of themes in the review of literature in order to develop a deeper understanding of school staff experiences with and perceptions of the Turnaround Model and its implementation:

Research Question 1: What are the processes by which these three schools have implemented the Turnaround Model?

Research Question 2: In what ways has implementation of the Turnaround Model impacted these three schools?

**Setting**

This study took place in three elementary schools identified as persistently low achieving by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) during the 2010-2011 school
year, due to reading and math performance over the previous five years. Because of this designation, these schools were eligible to apply for the School Improvement Grant in April, 2010. The superintendent decided to implement the Turnaround Model in each of the three schools. As a result, each school was awarded between $1.2-$1.4 million dollars from the Ohio Department of Education for its first year of implementation (renewable for two additional years). After the selection process was completed, I was appointed project coordinator and assigned to work with all School Improvement Grant schools, including the three schools participating in the study. I had no impact on the decision to implement the Turnaround Model in the three schools (see Chapter 1 for further information regarding researcher positioning). The three schools were selected because they represented a readily-available, convenient sample, based on their similar geographic locations, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, academic trends, and implementation of the same school improvement intervention model in the 2011-2012 school year.
Table 3.1 Enrollment and Demographic Data for Turnaround Model Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School A Enrollment =252</th>
<th>School B Enrollment =292</th>
<th>School C Enrollment=364</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the 2011-2012 Local Report Card Data, Table 3.1 highlights both the average student enrollment and demographic information for each school in this study. All three schools were similar in composition with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

Participants

Eighty-one teachers, instructional coaches, support staff, and administrators at the previously referenced three elementary schools with varying total years of experience completed the School Improvement Survey. Three principals participated in one-on-one interviews. Five instructional coaches participated in focus groups.
Table 3.2 Study Participant Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 indicates the number of participants in each of the critical roles specified by the model; teachers, coaches, support staff, and administrators. Eighty one out of a total of 92 staff (88%) participated in the study. Subjects were selected based on their employment at the three elementary schools implementing the Turnaround Model.

Table 3.3 provides a summary of the demographics of the participants in the study. The total population of all three schools is included.
Table 3.3 Study Participant Demographics (Participants = 81)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Data</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 55</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ years</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population was heavily female (85.2%) and very experienced (61.7%) with 11 or more years of experience. The predominate ethnicity was White (not Hispanic) with 60.5%.
A total of sixty teachers participated in the School Improvement Survey (Table 3.4). The vast majority of participants were White females with eleven or more years of experience in education, however less than three years in their current school buildings. Table 3.4 presents teacher demographic data for teachers who took part in the study. A total of five instructional coaches (two each at Elementary School A and Elementary School B and one additional coach at Elementary School C) also participated in the study. Each of the first two schools featured both a math and a reading instructional coach, while the third featured only a math instructional coach. The coaches’ educational experience totaled ten or more years. All coaches were female and represented diverse ethnicities. At the time of the study, all coaches were completing their first year in their respective school buildings.

A total of thirteen support staff completed the School Improvement Survey. The individuals in this category were comprised of general education and regular education instructional assistants. Their primary role included providing instructional support to students in either one-on-one or in small group settings.

In addition, the three participating principals in this study represented both genders, and each had over four years of administrative experience. Two of the three principals were in the process of completing their first years in their respective school buildings. All principal participants had advanced degrees: one with a Ph.D. and the other two with Masters in Educational Administration.
Table 3.4 Participant Years of Experience in Current School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Worked at School</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One critical aspect of the population is the years that participants had worked in the school. Table 4 provides a summary of the years of experience in the school for all eighty one participants. The predominant range of experience is less than 3 years in the school.

Table 3.5 Teacher Demographic Data (Participants = 60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Data</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 20-29</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 55</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5 presents the descriptive demographic data for the teachers participating in the study at all three schools. The teachers are predominately female (63.0%) and predominately White/non-Hispanic (48.1%). Another sixteen percent are Black. The majority of the teachers were in the age range from 30 to 59 years of age (50.7%) and
48.2% have eleven or more years of experience. Over fifty percent have been at their current school assignment for 3 or fewer years.

**Instrumentation**

**School Improvement Survey**

The School Improvement Survey encompassed the four key themes of the Turnaround Model: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance (Appendix E). It consisted of fourteen questions given to administrators, teachers, instructional coaches, and support staff at three elementary schools. The survey was designed for gathering information regarding school improvement activities aligned with the four themes of the Turnaround Model taking place at each elementary school during the first year of implementation, including information relative to performance based incentives, school instructional model, data driven instructional practices, professional development, and extended learning opportunities, as well as socio-emotional and community supports, as well as demographic, multiple choice, and open ended questions (some with multiple parts). All of the questions from the survey directly corresponded with strategies embedded in the Turnaround Model.

**Content Validity**

To increase the validity of the instrument, the School Improvement Survey (Appendix E) was reviewed and approved prior to its administration by an outside expert and field tested by two administrators and ten teachers from a variety of academic content areas (including Reading, Mathematics and Special Education) in another School Improvement Grant School in its second year of implementing similar model
components. Reviewers provided written feedback for the survey. I debriefed reviewers and asked questions for clarification in areas where participants posed questions or concerns. Each of the reviewers provided feedback. This information was reviewed with an expert and two additional educational professionals outside of the current study. As a result of this field test, feedback was used in removing questions changing format of the survey, adding description to participant instructions, and clarifying several survey questions.

**Research Procedures**

Prior to the beginning of the study, permission was obtained by the school district (Appendix A), and approval was granted by the Human Subject Review Board at Ashland University (Appendix B). School Improvement Surveys were then completed in the three identified elementary schools during three separate after-school staff meetings. Prior to completion, I obtained informed consent for survey participation, surveys and participant consent forms were placed in envelopes with no identifiable markings, and participants in the study were informed that completion of the study was optional and they could stop at any point. I reviewed the purpose of the survey with potential participants at each of these sites, and participants were given the option of not taking part in the study. After the explanation, envelopes were distributed to staff by another teacher. I was not present during completion of the survey. Completion time of the survey ranged from ten to twenty minutes. In order to avoid a conflict with principal collection of surveys and to elicit the most genuine responses possible, participants exiting the staff meeting returned surveys in their original envelopes, which were then collected by a
researcher designated teacher. I retrieved these envelopes at a later date. All survey responses were kept confidential.

**Principal Interviews**

Principals at each of the three elementary schools participated in one-on-one audio taped interviews completed in principals’ offices. Interviews were conducted on an individual basis at each respective school. Before completing the attached consent form, principals were asked for permission to audio tape each interview, as well as whether or not they had additional questions for me. I then posed the following questions in the order they appear on the Interview Guide:

1) What are your views on the role of leadership in the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model?

2) What successes have you experienced this year as a result of implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model?

3) What challenges have you faced this year as a result of implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model? Discuss the nature of these challenges and how you overcame them.

4) What components of the school improvement Turnaround Model have had/will have the biggest impact on student achievement this year? What evidence do you have to support that these components are effective?

5) How would you modify the school improvement Turnaround Model for future implementation?

These questions aimed at describing the schools’ implementation, including leadership, successes and challenges, biggest impact and suggestions for modification of
the Turnaround Model. In addition to audio taping interviews, I captured themes and significant points through the use of field notes, as well as by observing participants’ body language. I reviewed the accuracy of the field notes with the principals, who were given the opportunity for providing suggestions for additions, deletions, and clarifying statements relative to the responses they provided during their interviews. The purpose of using this process is to determine if the description gathered by the researcher is “complete and realistic” (Creswell, 2008, p. 267). Member checking was performed several days subsequent to the interviews, and principals were provided written copies of their notes for further review. Interviews were not transcribed; researchers listened to audio tapes multiple times and used field notes in corroborating defined and emerging themes.

Focus Group Interview

Because instructional coaches played a significant role in the implementation of the instructional components of the school Turnaround Model, they were also included in audio taped focus groups. There were two groups: one containing three participants, the other containing two participants. In order to avoid distraction, focus group interviews were conducted outside of the school at the district professional development building. Before beginning each focus group, the purpose of the study was explained and consent forms were reviewed and completed. Instructional coaches included in the survey group answered four questions aimed at describing their experiences with the implementation of the Turnaround Model at their respective elementary schools:

1) As an instructional coach, describe your role in the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model this year. What successes have
you experienced this year as a result of implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model?

2) What challenges have you faced this year as a result of implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model?

3) What components of the school improvement Turnaround Model have had/will have the biggest impact on student achievement this year?

4) What evidence do you have to support that these components are effective?

These questions examined the role of the instructional coach, successes and challenges, and biggest impact of the implementation of the Turnaround Model. Additionally, I observed and took note of participants’ body language. In order to ensure accuracy and that important details were not omitted, information obtained during the focus groups was reviewed with instructional coaches.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The School Improvement Survey multiple choice responses were analyzed for frequency of responses. Each response was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet and used in the numerical analysis using descriptive statistics (frequency distribution) found in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were compiled and reviewed. Each multiple choice item in the survey was paired with related open ended questions. Tables were added as appropriate in the theme discussions. All tables can be reviewed in Appendix G.
Qualitative Data Analysis

Derived from the Turnaround Model, the following themes served as initial, preexisting broad categories for coding of open ended survey, interview, and focus group questions: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance.

The Turnaround Model overview, the data protocol used by the researcher and co-researchers, was based on the four preexisting turnaround themes: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance. Appendix D provides information relative to the Turnaround model predetermined themes. Participant responses were categorized according to the predetermined themes. These themes served as the initial filter for all of the participant responses. A separate table column was used for the responses that did not align with the four preexisting themes. Additionally, space was provided for recording items that did not match those themes. Data that did not correspond with the predetermined themes derived from the model was used to develop a sense of what additional themes might emerge and formulated the basis for the emerging themes. Both co-researchers and I participated in the data sorting process. No data was discarded, and no discrepancies were indicated between participant responses and their correlation to predetermined and/or emerging themes.

Further analysis led to emerging categories of information. Merriam (2009) asserted that “themes arise after the researcher’s initial observations are refined and endlessly shaped into categories that describe a phenomenon based on people’s experiences” (p. 176). Creswell (2008) suggested descriptions of a case can be recorded using various forms of documentation: observations, interviews, documents, and audio
tapes. I used field notes for collecting data related to the preexisting themes defined by the Turnaround Model. Some of the information gathered was outside the preexisting themes. I also began identifying emerging common themes during interviews and focus groups. These emerging themes included organizational culture, leadership development, alignment of structures, and flexibility. Reviewing audio taped responses also provided me deeper understanding of the interview content. The co-researchers, with no connections to either the schools or to the study itself, coded qualitative and quantitative data.

For both audio recordings of principal interviews and instructional coach focus groups, as well as for open-ended answers from the School Improvement Survey, both the researcher and co-researchers identified key words and phrases frequently employed by participants. This identification was done focusing on direct references to the Turnaround Model, as well as on other frequently occurring words and phrases. The coding was based on two criteria: (a) the preexisting themes and (b) the analysis of key words and phrases not included in those themes but leading to the emerging theme concepts. A list of key words and phrases was developed with the compiled lists of bulleted items using Microsoft Word in a tabular format and then merged. Key words and phrases were analyzed for the frequency with which the responses occurred, as well as based on the extent to which the responses were in agreement with one another. I compared each of the co-researchers’ coded data. A substantial amount of the coding showed significant agreement. Where there was disagreement, it primarily occurred in the language use of the co-researchers rather than in the content of participant responses. The process then involved a review of the items of difference. As a result of the
discussion of these discrepancies, a common language for analysis emerged. After this comparison, I engaged co-researchers in a peer debriefing process for the purposes of clarifying data. The co-researchers and I then used this information for two purposes: (a) aligning participant responses to predetermined themes and classifying them based on the process or impact of implementation, and (b) grouping responses together in order to generate emerging themes.

Themes

Predetermined Themes

As previously discussed, the Turnaround Model broadly outlines four themes for school improvement: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support and Governance. Teachers and Leaders addresses leadership and the use of locally adopted turnaround strategies for recruiting and retaining talent. Instructional Support Strategies examines the selection and implementation of an instructional model, job-embedded professional development, and the continuous use of data for instruction. Time and Support includes providing increased learning time and community supports for both staff and students. Finally, Governance highlights the use of new organizational structures and the importance of operating flexibility for school leaders. Prescribed by the Turnaround Model, these four strategies served as predetermined themes, framing the analysis of principal interviews, survey and focus group data.

Emerging Themes

In addition to the above predetermined themes, several additional themes emerged from the data analysis. Not every participant response was aligned with predetermined themes. Serving as a basis for the study’s emerging themes, these particular responses
were grouped utilizing a peer review and member checking process. The emerging themes were focused on the importance of organizational culture, leadership development, alignment of structures, and flexibility. These specific themes will be further discussed in Chapter IV.

**Researcher’s Lens**

Adding to the discussion provided in Chapter I of this exploratory case study, the researcher’s lens is the way in which the researcher conceptualizes his or her world and, therefore, frames possible research questions (Merriam, 2009). As a result, understanding my own insights played a critical factor in understanding what was being studied and impacted not only the types of questions asked, but also the outcome of the study. Rather than relying on instruments for gaining information, “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Therefore, reflexivity becomes a critical approach, especially the process of reflecting critically on the ways in which the researcher’s background or position shapes the research at every step of the investigation (Merriam, 2009).

Specifically, my own organizational positioning played an important role in understanding the lens through which I interpreted the research. My professional experience, as well as the relationships I developed throughout the study, increased participants’ willingness to honestly answer questions. Because my professional role increased the potential for bias and impacts the lens through which the data is interpreted, building trustworthiness became increasingly important.

A journal, a major tool for reflexivity, was also utilized for tracking events relative to the sequence of implementation activities taking place at each of the three elementary schools. The journal provided a method of tracking how principals,
instructional coaches, and teachers responded to the first year implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model. Regular entries were made throughout the research process, but particularly after principal interviews, after instructional coach focus groups, and throughout the course of analyzing the School Improvement Survey, specifically noting the influence of participants’ accounts of the process and impact of implementation. Methodological decisions, the structure of the study, and my reflections on the data obtained throughout the study were recorded in the journal, which ultimately served as a reflective tool for reducing bias inherent in qualitative research. The journal was also used for reflecting upon what was happening in the study, relative to my values and interests. I was surprised at how candidly participants spoke about the lack of support they received from the school district, not just at one point during the school year, but consistently throughout the duration of the study. I was also surprised that, even though teachers recognized the potential impact of using data for informing instruction, they did not know specific ways of utilizing the data for informing their instructional decisions. Early journal entries focused on areas of weakness for participants; later responses focused more on strengths for building instructional leadership capacity, rather than on deficits. This realization was helpful in promoting my understanding of the significance of human capital growth and development.

**Trustworthiness**

Issues of trustworthiness are closely coupled with the way the researcher views the world, rather than concerns with validity and reliability seen in quantitative research (Patton, 2002). Merriam (2002) recommended several strategies for building trustworthiness, including triangulation and member checking. These were the primary
strategies employed in substantiating reliability and accuracy of findings when interpreting data (Creswell 2008). Creswell (2008) defined triangulation as the “process of corroborating evidence for different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in description and themes in qualitative research” (p. 266). The current exploratory case study triangulated multiple data sources for ensuring accuracy of information. Responses from principal interviews, instructional coach focus groups, and open-ended surveys were cross-verified for the purposes of increasing credibility.

Member checking is defined as a course of action that summarizes feedback from participants to confirm if interpretations are fair representations of what was presented during the interview or focus group (Creswell, 2008). In the current study, member checking was performed throughout principal interviews and instructional coach focus groups. At the conclusion of these activities, I restated and summarized data and followed up with participants regarding the accuracy of their responses. Approximately one week later, participants received a written summary of their responses and were given an opportunity to make additions or deletions, correct any erroneous information, and challenge my perceptions. This process provided a chance for asking additional questions about participant responses. It is important to note that none of the participants made corrections to my notes. After data were analyzed, emerging themes were identified, I conducted member checking with all three principals and four out of the five instructional coaches for the purposes of sharing participant responses regarding the process and impact of Turnaround Model implementation and discussing the alignment of those responses with predetermined and emerging themes.
Summary

This chapter addressed the employed research methodology while thoroughly summarizing the design, context, and purpose of the study. Additionally, school profiles and subject information, as well as the instrumentation used for conducting the study and data collection and analysis procedures were discussed. Study participants were selected because they were staff members at three urban, Midwestern elementary schools in their first year of implementing the school Turnaround Model. Participants’ perceptions were gathered in multiple ways: via a 14-item School Improvement Survey, through one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. After analyzing results, predetermined themes were analyzed based on alignment with Turnaround Model components, and emerging themes were determined.
CHAPTER IV

Results of Data Analysis

Introduction

This exploratory case study provides a deeper understanding of the processes employed during the first year of Turnaround Model implementation and their impact on principals, instructional coaches and teachers. In Chapter V, the results of this study will be used for formulating clear recommendations for future implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model, and for providing considerations for further research and policy development. Participants were comprised of principals, instructional coaches, and teachers in their first year of implementing the model. This chapter presents summaries of the experiences and perceptions shared through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. In addition to soliciting general information, the interviews, surveys, and focus group data collection activities provided each of the eighty-one (81) respondents an opportunity for describing his or her personal perceptions relative to both the process and the impact of the Turnaround Model through the first year of implementation. The interview participants included principals who provided leadership and support for model implementation.

Focus group participants included instructional coaches, who were responsible for providing support for the implementation of the instructional framework, professional development, and data strategies of the model. Finally, surveys were given to principals, instructional coaches, and teachers for the purpose of gathering information relative to school improvement activities aligned with the four categories of the Turnaround Model.
Overall, qualitative data from principal interviews, instructional coach focus groups, and open ended survey responses proved most useful in the study. The examination and analysis of most quantitative data did not reveal additional information, but rather supported participant responses. The relevant data obtained from quantitative analysis and subsequent tables align with and supports the predetermined themes.

Findings were organized around themes, both predetermined themes resulting from the Turnaround Model, itself, as well as themes emerging from participant responses occurring outside of the scope of the model. This chapter is organized into sections for the purposes of providing: (a) an overview of participant perceptions relative to the first year implementation of the Turnaround Model; (b) responses to interviews, focus groups, and surveys by principals, instructional coaches, and teachers; (c) a discussion of the initial analysis of predetermined themes based on the process and impact of the early stages of Turnaround Model implementation, and; (d) an overview of the emerging themes resulting from analysis of the qualitative data. In addition to qualitative interviews, focus groups, and survey responses, a quantitative analysis is presented.

Upon a review of the interview, focus group, and survey summaries and analyses, the following research questions were answered:

Research Question 1: What are the processes by which these three schools have implemented the Turnaround Model?

Research Question 2: In what ways has implementation of the Turnaround Model impacted these three schools?
For the purpose of this study, process is defined as the acts and activities associated with implementing the Turnaround Model. Impact, in this case, is defined as a resulting outcome of the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model.

**Predetermined Theme 1: Teachers and Leaders**

The first predetermined theme resulting from the Turnaround Model was Teachers and Leaders. This theme highlights the importance of effective teachers and leaders in the school turnaround process and is comprised of three prescriptive strategies to be employed by districts and schools implementing the model. The strategies included in the Teachers and Leaders theme are: (a) Replace principal; (b) Use locally-adopted “turnaround” competencies to review and select staff (rehire no more than 50% of already existing staff); and (c) Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff.

These strategies frame a discussion of participant responses relative to the process and impact of Turnaround Model implementation.

When implementing the three strategies aligned with the Teachers and Leaders theme, the school district replaced two of three principals in participating elementary schools. The third principal had only served in administrative capacity for only one year prior to model implementation. The U.S. Department of Education does not require school districts replace a principal serving for less than two years in a school implementing the Turnaround Model. The staffs in all three buildings were removed from their current positions, and principals interviewed for new placements, which could and did include teachers who had previously fulfilled those instructional positions. An additional round of outside hiring took place from June through August until all teacher positions were filled. The school district implemented a performance incentive for
teachers working in these buildings based on either the results of the Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAAs) in Math and Reading or closure of the achievement gap.

Principal interview responses highlighted several perceptions aligned with turnaround strategies relative to the Teachers and Leaders predetermined theme. These responses were sorted into two groups, process and impact, based on the research questions. With respect to process, the majority of participant responses clustered specifically around the strategy for using turnaround competencies for review and selection of staff. Principals agreed that the process of selecting high quality teachers and tutors was important to implementation. With regard to this particular strategy, principals further noted the significance of selecting people who best exhibit the competencies necessary for implementation. The competencies noted included (a) results oriented and (b) focused on student achievement. Additionally, principals cited the value in identifying teachers who worked in the school prior to model implementation and could play a role in the turnaround process. Likewise, principals addressed the importance of retaining highly effective staff relevant to the third strategy in the predetermined theme of Teachers and Leaders, by suggesting the significance of providing an environment that reinforces teachers’ choice to remain in a particular school building.

Information obtained from both instructional coaches and teachers addressed the process of implementing strategies in the Teachers and Leaders theme of the Turnaround Model. Instructional coaches identified the importance of signaling the need for a change in direction through action resulting from the creation and communication of a clear vision, rather than from the replacement of the principal, “The principal came in at the beginning of the year and made it clear that this year was going to be different and that
our sole focus was building a solid foundation through increasing reading and math achievement” (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). Teachers’ perceptions in alignment with replacing the principal highlighted the instrumentality of the principal in the initial stages of model implementation: “The principal was highly involved in every aspect of the turnaround efforts at my school. It was different than the previous principal who took a more hands off approach” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Most coaches’ and teachers’ responses focused on the impact of turnaround strategies related to Teachers and Leaders theme and will be discussed later in this section. The lack of process oriented responses may be attributed to the placement of coaches and teachers in the organizational structure of the school building. Because the principal was so deeply involved in the decision making processes generated from the implementation of strategies in the Teachers and Leaders theme, teachers and coaches may not always have an awareness of or be included in the implementation of this particular set of strategies.

With regard to the impact of the first turnaround strategy in Teachers and Leaders predetermined theme, principal respondents agreed with instructional coaches that a signal for a change in direction is necessary, however that signal results from the first strategy of replacing the principal. One of two new principals in the three participating elementary schools commented on the role of the new principal in the change process, “This building had struggled for several years before I arrived and had a culture of low expectations” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Ultimately, there is consensus that replacing the principal indicates a change in the school’s vision, and thus, its direction. In keeping with the strand of effective teachers and leaders, principals
agreed about the importance of distributive leadership, “My role as building principal is to be the leader of leaders, and to empower the staff to work together as a team, and to develop informal and formal leaders” (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012). When leadership is distributed to others through a team approach, the burden of accountability does not solely rest on the principal, however it lies with the collective. Distributing responsibility to others creates shared ownership and a collaborative culture of leadership.

Again with regard to the impact of the third strategy in the Teachers and Leaders theme of the Turnaround Model, instructional coaches extended the principals’ perceptions of the importance of selecting highly effective teachers and leaders who exhibit competencies necessary for implementation by stating that selecting staff who best match the needs of the school based on the Turnaround Model demands is also significant. Responses garnered from focus groups were in close alignment with those obtained during principal interviews. Coaches cited the role of the principal as an essential component in impacting the school change process: “The principal played a huge part in the implementation of almost every aspect of the Turnaround Model” (Focus Group 1, personal communication, June 13, 2012). Additionally, results from the School Improvement Survey support these results. Table 4.1 highlights that 98.0% of participants in the study indicated their perception of the important role the principal played in the school improvement process.
Table 4.1

Does this person (principal) play an important role in the school improvement process at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are consistent with responses from focus groups and open-ended survey response data. Relative to this, instructional coach respondents further defined principals’ perception of the significance of providing an environment that reinforces teachers choosing to stay. They highlighted positive interpersonal relationships as the key component in influencing teachers’ decisions to remain in a particular school building.

Teacher survey responses illuminated the impact of principals’ and coaches’ experiences in implementing those strategies in the Teachers and Leaders theme. Teachers agreed that providing an environment that reinforces their decision to stay in a particular school building is important, however they were not motivated by the pay for performance agreement between the school district and the teachers’ union. In fact, only 44% (36 out of 81) respondents were aware of the performance based incentive before taking their positions. One teacher noted, “The reason I choose to stay has nothing to do with money, but rather how much I love this school and these students” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21 2012). Teachers’ lack of motivation for taking advantage of the performance incentive may be attributed to the fact that one full school
year passes between the beginning of implementation and compensation. Teachers agreed with principals about the importance of distributive leadership: “In a turnaround school, everyone needs to step up and provide leadership, not just the principal” (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). Indeed, the responsibility of turning around a low performing school does not just reside with just one person or one position

**Predetermined Theme 2: Instructional Support Strategies**

The second predetermined theme resulting from the Turnaround Model was Instructional Support Strategies. This theme highlights the importance of quality instruction and its relationship to increases in student achievement. Strategies associated with this predetermined theme include: (a) Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs, (b) Provide job-embedded professional development designed to build capacity and support staff, and (c) Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction. Together, these Instructional Support Strategies provide an entry point for participants’ discussion of the process and impact of implementation of this particular turnaround theme.

**Instructional Model**

Schools participating in the study implemented similar instructional models (See Appendix H). Each included: (a) a clearly stated objective, (b) teaching and modeling, (c) guided practice, and (d) checks for understanding (Schmoker, 2011). Principal responses supported the implementation of an instructional model that is (a) clearly defined, (b) progressive in implementation, and (c) meets the needs of students. Principals noted the implementation of an instructional model is developmental in nature. In their interviews,
two of the three principals focused on building teacher capacity for deliberate implementation of each component of the selected instructional model. Once teachers had a clear understanding of how to implement that component in their individual classrooms, they were able to bolster their understanding through their own classroom practice while moving forward to the next component of the instructional model. They also highlighted the importance of the instructional framework addressing student needs:

The instructional model we developed as a staff provided an overall structure for the informal practices of many teachers. I have always been a proponent of quality instruction, but was impressed that implementing and formalizing this process had such a positive benefit to our daily classroom instruction (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Instructional coaches were in agreement with principals that the instructional model should be student-friendly and based on individual needs. Additionally, coaches noted an existing tension between math and reading as instructional priorities. This tension could be attributed to the higher priority placed on reading instruction by the school district, as well as to the increased accountability for math achievement scores in grades 3-5.

Although teachers agreed with both principals and instructional coaches that the instructional model must be based on individual student needs, confusion resulted between teachers’ understanding of the school’s instructional model in contrast to the school’s intervention model (Turnaround Model).

Principals noted the impact of instructional model implementation for providing a focus on prioritizing and arranging instruction and, furthermore, recognized the adoption of an instructional model as a characteristic of effective schools: “The instructional
model was critical, because we wanted to be like highly effective schools across the state” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012). Both coaches and teachers pointed to the role of their school’s model in providing instructional focus. Instructional coaches also noted the benefits of adopting an instructional model for guiding classroom practice, citing that an instructional model not only creates a common language for discussing the work among staff and students, but that it also leads to fidelity of implementation of the Turnaround Model. “The implementation of an instructional model allowed for teachers to focus lessons in a systematic and systemic way. Teachers had a better understanding of how to deliver high quality instruction to students” (Focus Group 1, personal communication, June 13, 2012). When coupled with small class sizes and the autonomy for creating small and flexible groupings, teachers believed the use of an instructional model provided the framework for the implementation of already existing, research based best practices.

**Professional Development**

These schools adopted similar instructional models, however, their approaches to professional development and the use of data for informing instruction varied. Two of the schools utilized both external providers and coaches for facilitating professional development, while the third school relied solely upon instructional coaches for the delivery of professional development. Principals expressed the need for building human capacity through the meaningful use of job-embedded professional development, as well as for supporting staff in the effective use of data. Instructional coaches, as well, highlighted a need for relevant professional development based on building needs, specifically activities used for facilitating teacher growth. Instructional coaches also
recognized their role in providing job-embedded professional development. Table 4.2 highlights that 91.3% of participants in the study indicated the important role instructional coaches played in the school improvement process. These results are consistent with responses from principal interviews and open-ended survey response data.

Table 4.2

Does this person (Instructional Coach) play an important role in the school improvement process at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all three participating schools, instructional coaches facilitated professional development by (a) organizing after school and Saturday workshops, (b) by modeling the effective use of data, and (c) by assisting in the analysis and disaggregation of student formative assessment data:

Since we were not assigned to a group of students, we were able to support teachers in both reading and math by providing professional development. We focused on working with teachers on skills rather than topical professional
development that was not connected to their work (Focus Group 1, personal communication, June 13, 2012).

Professional development occurred in large group settings, small group settings, and one-on-one setting, instructional coaches were not tied to any particular classrooms and therefore, were free to meet diverse teacher needs. The majority of teachers participated in personalized professional development opportunities developed by instructional coaches and external providers. Table 8 highlights that 67.9% of participants took part in more than five professional development opportunities at their school (not including those provided by the district).

Table 4.3 Not including district professional development, how often have you participated in after school professional development opportunities this year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not attend</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 times</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 times</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 times</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers did not comment on the process of providing job-embedded professional development for building human capacity and supporting staff. This could be because
teachers were focused on their needs and the impact of professional development, rather than the process of providing professional development.

According to principals, one of the benefits of providing high quality professional development includes its impact on teachers’ increased and effective use of formative instructional practices. One principal noted, “We used professional development as a strategy for building teacher capacity around the use of student data. As teachers began to understand the purpose of using data, they started asked for more professional development to support them in the classroom” (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012). Instructional coaches highlighted the role of professional development in building collaborative structures, and, again, suggested the need for professional development directly linked to employing turnaround strategies. One coach noted the need for professional development not only linked to the Turnaround Model, itself, but also related to instruction, “At first, professional development helped teachers learn more about themselves, as well as more about their colleagues. This created a safe space for teachers to understand their individual professional needs” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Teachers, likewise, expressed a need for instructionally relevant professional development and requested support for (a) the implementation of Common Core State Standards, (b) behavioral management, (c) the use of technology, and (d) reteaching and differentiated instruction.

**Use of Data**

Although each of the three schools adopted similar instructional models, their approaches to using data for informing instruction varied. All three of these schools had a variety of structures for assessing math and reading progress, and each exerted a focus on
different grade levels. Two of the schools assessed students in grades K-5, while the third school strategically focused on grades 3-5 (the grades in which students were required to engage in state wide, high stakes testing). Additionally, with regard to the use of assessment data for informing instruction, all three schools used results obtained from teacher generated formative assessments, however they varied in terms of the inclusion and use of district driven assessments for informing instruction. Principal respondents highlighted the need for providing support for implementation of other Turnaround Model elements, specifically the third focus of using data for informing and differentiating instruction:

As professionals, we have discussed the use of data driven instruction for many years, but we took for granted that teachers had the skills needed to engage in these practices. As a result, we decided to provide every teacher with the support they needed to analyze data and make instructional changes (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Principal responses also highlighted using data in a variety of ways for impacting instruction, both in the classroom and after the school day. According to one participant, “Data is no longer an end product, but rather, an active tool” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012). One method of using data cited by principals includes the use of data by coaches and teachers for forming flexible ability and performance groupings. Because principals were directly involved in implementing structures and directing the work of classroom teachers, principals recognizing the use of data in formulating these groups makes sense. Principals have a unique, bird’s eye
perspective outside of the classroom that allows them to more objectively view data for helping facilitate teachers’ understanding of how to best group students for meeting individual needs and increasing achievement. One principal responded, “I feel that my position in the building allows me to see the big picture and how to best implement particular instructional strategies that are effective” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Principals also recognized the importance of utilizing instructional data at the classroom level in order to determine the content, type of instruction and alignment of programs taking place outside of the school day.

All three participant groups agreed upon the importance of data gained from formative assessments for informing and differentiating instruction. Eighty-eight percent (72 out of 81) of respondents reported using formative assessments and progress monitoring to inform their instructional practices. Formative assessments are a required part of the school improvement process, one that poses unique challenges for staff. According to one principal, “In the building of this process, the development of formative assessments proved to be a challenge that lead to a great deal of frustration for teachers. Many teachers had never developed or written these types of assessments” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Teachers struggled with the level of rigor relative to these assessments, as well as the assessments’ alignment with appropriate standards. An additional (and somewhat more artificial) challenge involved the requirement of these assessments must be aligned with the Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAAs). Essentially, requiring these types of assessments was too narrow, because it did not take into account the fact that teachers should be engaging in formative
instructional practices on a daily basis, rather than infrequent assessments every two to three weeks as required by the Ohio Department of Education.

In their survey responses, teachers noted various instructionally relevant purposes for the process of using data for informing and differentiating instruction. These purposes included: (a) tracking and monitoring the progress of students, (b) planning instruction, (c) creating small and flexible student groupings, and (d) providing intervention and enrichment activities (specifically those relative to Reading and Mathematics achievement). Again, both teachers and coaches highlighted the significance of the role of the instructional coach as data manager, specifically with regard to the dissemination of data and providing turnaround relevant professional development. Because teachers’ primary role includes delivering instruction on a daily basis, and because teachers are responsible for putting data to direct use in their classrooms, most of their responses centered around the process of using data for informing instruction.

Principals agreed that the impact of using data for informing and differentiating instruction benefits both students and teachers. In one of the three participating elementary schools, students used their own assessment data for charting individual progress. The impact of using data also exerted a distinct impact on teachers, as noted by instructional coaches. Coaches perceived teachers’ lack of knowledge and discomfort both with the process of using data for driving instruction, as well as with regard to the use of daily formative practices for the ongoing collection of student assessments. Teacher responses centered mainly around the process (rather than the impact) of using data for informing and differentiating instruction, possibly because teachers were not
always comfortable employing data for making instructional decisions. One teacher noted discomfort with using data for informing and differentiating instruction, “Our district collects a tremendous amount of student data. Many of us struggled with what data to use and how to use it” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). Ultimately, both coaches and teachers observed a shift in using data for driving instruction relevant to the implementation of this turnaround strategy.

**Predetermined Theme 3: Time and Support**

Time and Support was the third theme predetermined by the Turnaround Model. This predetermined theme emphasizes the significance of providing additional instructional time for staff and students and recognizes that socio-emotional support for addressing non academic barriers is important. The strategies in this theme include: (a) Provide increased learning time (staff and students), and (b) Social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports. These turnaround strategies provide a framework for participants’ discussion of the process and impact of their implementation. Though there are many ways of implementing extended learning programs, all three schools chose an after school format led by classroom teachers and coaches. In addition to an after-school program, one school implemented a Saturday extended learning opportunity that ran from January through April, focused on grades 3, 4, and 5. Developing or implementing extended learning opportunities proved a challenge for each of the participating elementary schools. The competing interests of other turnaround strategies forced a focus on implementing strategies relevant to the Instructional Support theme. Though the participating schools experienced challenges in implementation, each
met the 225 hour time requirement for extended learning opportunities and Math and Reading prescribed by the Ohio Department of Education. In order to provide more comprehensive social-emotional supports for students, each of the school staffs included a full-time counselor, nurse, and social worker. Two schools also had full-time school psychologists.

During their interviews, principals highlighted the notion that school turnaround work cannot be performed in isolation. Schools must leverage both the support and potential resources that can be garnered from community partnerships. Principals were clear that this does not necessarily translate into additional funding, but rather the coordination of support that align with their improvement goals and areas of focus. One principal noted the role of community partnerships in supporting improvement goals and areas of focus, “Turning around a struggling school is hard work. I knew that I had to engage community stakeholders, many of whom have not been asked, to help with this work” (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012). Though instructional coaches and teachers agreed that extended learning time should be directly aligned with the varied needs of staff and students, they did not comment on the process of implementing increased learning time. This lack of response could be due to the fact that schools participating in the study experienced challenges implementing their extended learning programs. Teachers highlighted the challenges of implementing extended learning programs in their school buildings, “Even though we were required to provide extended learning opportunities for our students, our primary focus was professional development for teachers that would support instructional changes in the classroom. Extended learning opportunities were not our primary focus” (School B, school
Two schools relied solely upon classroom teachers to work after school, while one partnered with a community organization to provide extended learning opportunities for students. These programs did not commence, however, until late October or early November after students had been in school for several months. The structures of these programs were not fully embedded into or totally aligned with each individual school’s culture. The real challenge was recruiting teachers to work after school.

Although these extended learning opportunities required teachers stay after school to make their implementation work, teachers were oftentimes too burned out to stay. One teacher illuminated the challenge of engaging in professional growth opportunities while sustaining motivation for participating in extended learning opportunities taking place after the school day:

Our extended learning program did not get off to a great start. Many of my colleagues were already overwhelmed with the amount of work and time devoted to professional development, they did not want to commit to staying after school to participate in after school programming (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012).

Principals reported that instruction taking place during these after school programs was inconsistent with that which occurred during the school day, “The instruction teachers provided in our after-school program lacked alignment to student needs and was often little more than homework help or extra practice” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012). In fact, only 57% of respondents (46 out of 81) indicated that their after-school extended learning opportunity had an impact on student achievement. In addition
to the lack of instructional quality, the impact of the extended learning opportunity on increasing academic achievement was unclear, because there were no metrics set up for measuring program effectiveness.

Both principals and instructional coaches agreed upon the importance of providing extended learning time connecting to school day instruction, as well as the individual needs of students and staff. One instructional coach highlighted the significance of providing extended learning time related to the specific needs of staff and students, “We knew that providing extended learning opportunities was an important turnaround strategy and needed to be implemented successfully in our building” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). All three participating schools exerted an extended learning focus on providing homework help, which allowed students to complete their homework after school. The challenge with this focus, however, is that it is not necessarily aligned with what students need to be successful in school. In addition, schools struggled with motivating students to participate in these after school opportunities. One school provided an opportunity for students to engage in health and wellness activities after completing their academic requirements. Students were highly-engaged in physical activity, but not necessarily focused on the academic requirement. The most well-attended extended learning opportunities included a wellness component or extra-curricular activity, such as an athletic activity. This particular after-school program was also reliant upon college students for facilitating the extended learning opportunity. College students lacked training and knowledge on effective instructional and classroom management practices for students on all sides of the spectrum, and as a result, students largely engaged in instruction through the use of district selected
computer programs, such as Study Island and Plato, that were a part of the intervention provided to all elementary schools and were not designed for meeting the individual needs of students.

As is the case with students, staff also need collaborative time for practicing and developing skills. Principals commented on the importance of providing common planning time for staff. One principal noted the significance of providing common planning time as an extended learning opportunity for staff, “Creating a structure that allows for teachers to meet led to an increase in the amount of collaboration I saw throughout the building. This was even true for teachers that resisted the idea of planning discussing student work together” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012).

Common planning time is intentionally scheduled time during the school day for teachers to collect, analyze, and make decisions as a result of student data. Most common planning time occurs in horizontal, grade-level teams. Oftentimes, this opportunity for collaboration does not exist; however when built into the school schedule, common planning time creates an opportunity for extended time and a focus on making collective instructional decisions.

Principals also agreed that family support plays an important role in increasing academic achievement. Though instructional coaches’ responses did not center around the implementation of the social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports strategy, teachers highlighted the role of the Parent Consultant in engaging families within the school community. One teacher noted, “Our parent consultant played a huge role in helping us engage our parents.” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). Two of the three participating elementary schools employed a parent
consultant, whose responsibility included working collaboratively with other parents in support of student success, the building administrator, counselor, and other staff. Parent consultants worked actively with other stakeholders to clearly communicate the message of change, asking others to provide support for school improvement efforts aligned with the needs of the school building. Like principals, teachers also recognized that the work of school improvement is collaborative, “I learned really early in this process that we were only going to create change if we worked together, rather than in isolation” (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012).

Teachers highlighted the multi-functional role of the school counselor in providing support for addressing non-academic barriers such as helping link students and families with mental health supports and services in the community and implementing student groups that addressed identified needs, including anger management and violence. In addition, teachers viewed school counselors, nurses, and social workers as “links” to the community. Over 96% (78 out of 81 respondents) of participants in the School Improvement Survey indicated school counselors, nurses, and social workers played an important role in the school improvement process. Table 9 highlights participant effectiveness rating of socio-emotional supports provided for addressing student non-academic barriers. According to the survey results, 37.0% and 48.1% of participants rated these supports either highly effective or effective.
One teacher commented on the role of counselors, nurses, and social workers as community links, “The additional support staff in our building this year has positively impacted our students. These individuals are great resources and have supported us tremendously in addressing non-academic barriers and linking parents with a variety of community resources” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012).

According to teachers, school counselors, nurses, and social workers linked: (a) the student to the school, (b) the student to her or his family, (c) the student to her or his community, and finally, (d) the school to its community. All of these supports and services provided by social workers were centered around creating the right conditions for students. Social workers were engaged in providing a variety of services including bringing in outside community organizations and partners that supported students and families, coordinating bags of food and clothing for students to take home, making home visits, and picking and dropping of students.
All participants agreed that providing social-emotional supports increased readiness and provided benefits for students. Instructional coaches, in particular, noted the benefits of not only an awareness of, but also a staff dedicated to family and community needs. One instructional coach highlighted the benefits of the work of human support staff, “Having support staff in our building has allowed me to focus on providing instructional support for teachers” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Instructional coaches and teachers, in particular, noted the impact of the school social worker on increasing student attendance. Social workers in each of these schools were responsible for linking students and families with services that increase student readiness for school, as well as attendance. After the first year of implementation, teachers viewed the school as an agency and expressed a need for additional full-time support staff for each of the three participating elementary schools, regardless of the fact that this staff was funded via a grant. One teacher commented on the need for more full-time support staff, “This is the first time in my teaching career that I feel we are addressing the needs of the whole child. Every school should have full time support staff” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012). Information from these conversations highlighted the importance of providing additional resources (both extended time and additional staff) for increasing student readiness and will be used to make further recommendations in Chapter V.

Predetermined Theme 4: Governance

The fourth predetermined turnaround theme is Governance. Governance, here, is defined as the selection and management of each school’s leaders, as well as the policies affecting multiple schools, both during and after the turnaround process. The turnaround
model necessitates school districts employ the following strategies: (a) adopt a new governance structure and (b) grant flexibility for school leaders. The four most important factors in turnarounds include: (a) choosing the right school turnaround leader with competencies associated with successful turnaround, (b) establishing a school turnaround office that provides timely support and aligned systems, (c) allowing the Turnaround Model flexibility for implementation of necessary changes and programs, and (d) establishing an accountability for expected improvement within an accelerated time frame (Learning Point Associates, 2010). Successful school turnarounds are essentially about securing support at district-level for the schools who most need assistance.

The district created some supports for the three participating elementary schools (as well as other SIG schools). School Improvement Director and Coordinator positions were established by the district for providing technical support, as well as for removing bureaucratic obstacles for these buildings. Both the director and the coordinator served as liaisons between the school district and the Ohio Department of Education.

Participants did not register many responses in the area of Governance. This is likely because, other than employing a couple of additional staff, schools were, by and large, treated the same and lacked autonomy from the district. Principals and instructional coaches only commented on the process of granting flexibility to the school leader, especially with regard to providing operational flexibility. Both parties agreed that the ability for the school leader to allocate resources according to building needs is significant. One principal discussed the need for providing operational flexibility for principals, “Our principal needs to be able to make important school-level decisions without having to ask the district for permission” (Principal 1, personal communication,
June 5, 2012). The three participating elementary schools were required to fulfill the same pre-existing district expectations as other schools not implementing the Turnaround Model, in addition to implementing all of the strategies associated with the Turnaround Model.

Principals noted the impact of this resulted in challenges associated with autonomy for the school leader. For example, principals had little or no control over the instructional support and personnel provided by the district and could not challenge staff allocations and how portions of their school improvement funds were spent. Another principal addressed district-created challenges associated with autonomy, “The district often stated that I could make my own decisions for my building, but it failed to back me up on many of those decisions and, in fact, made it nearly impossible to implement innovative new strategies developed by teachers and building leadership team members” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Teachers also offered various perspectives on the role of district leadership provided during the turnaround process: “The district has vowed to support our school by allowing us to develop our own structures, but when we go to them with innovative ideas they seem to balk” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012). One teacher pointed out the paradoxical role played by the school district during the school turnaround process, “The school district seemed supportive, but they did not allow us to make the changes we felt were best for our students” (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). Only 58% (47 out of 81) of respondents to the School Improvement Survey found district officials played an important role in the Turnaround implementation process at their schools. In this case,
participants viewed district leadership as a support and a hindrance to the school turnaround process.

**Emerging Themes**

The four emerging themes highlight participant needs for implementation that occur outside of the Turnaround Model: (a) Collective Organizational Culture, (b) Flexible Implementation with Fidelity, (c) Human Capital Engagement and Development, and (d) Alignment of Collaborative Systems. Participant responses focused mainly on the impact of turnaround implementation, rather than on the process of implementation, itself. The Turnaround Model does not provide specific timelines or guidance for implementation of its individual components, nor does it provide a recommended sequence for how and when these school improvement activities should occur. According to participants, the Turnaround Model illustrates the influence of instruction on student achievement, rather than the powerful impact of human capital and leadership development on implementation for alignment purposes. In this case, it appears as though the relationship between leadership development and alignment is an equation resulting in implementation with fidelity. The only turnaround strategy that addresses leadership development appears in the Teachers and Leaders theme and calls for replacement of the principal. Especially in the theme of Governance, participants expressed the need for more leadership development and flexibility, as well as alignment between building-based school turnaround efforts and larger district improvement efforts. Governance, with regard to the Turnaround Model, does not necessarily suggest alignment, therefore the emerging themes illustrate a movement from the individual to the collective.
It then becomes clear the model takes into account neither the complexities of human capital engagement development nor the unique needs of schools. In that it aims at changing procedures not people, the Turnaround Model is merely a roadmap for organizations, rather than a concrete implementation plan for human capital management. These themes also highlight the need for external support for human capital growth and establish district-level support as the most powerful opportunity for developing leadership potential. Rather than compliance components, the themes emerging outside of the model represent actionable strategies.

**Emerging Theme 1: Collective Organizational Culture**

Collective Organizational Culture was the first theme emerging outside of the Turnaround Model. Collective Organizational Culture comprises the values or norms of the school and/or organization as a result of model implementation. Schein (2010) refers to organizational culture as

> [a] pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solve[s] its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 10)

These shared norms and values are manifestations of change generated by the implementation of the Turnaround Model. Strategies embedded in this emerging theme include: (a) Create a culture of mutual respect, high expectations, and shared accountability for outcomes, and (b) Facilitate a shared understanding that moves beyond compliance to cultural embeddedness. When grouped together, these strategies highlight
a shift of responsibility from a single individual or small group to shared ownership and accountability for an accelerated, rapid increase in student achievement.

When creating a culture of mutual respect, high expectations and shared accountability for outcomes, participants stressed the importance of school expectations taking into account a global perspective. Teachers underscored the importance of school expectations reflecting this: “In order to gain trust and respect, leaders need to have an understanding of their teachers as individuals and take into account their diverse perspectives” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). Taking into account various points of view leads to the development of a collective organizational culture that is widely informed. Understanding diverse perceptions and experiences assists in the development of leadership and human capital. One principal expressed how feeling valued assists staff in carrying out the work of school change, “Staff want to know their experiences and opinions are valued by those leading school change. Knowing this, I wanted to engage every staff member in the turnaround process” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012). Respect for individual experiences ultimately enhances the school culture. Once an individual feels her experiences and opinions are valued, she is more likely to commit to the school improvement process, and therefore, exhibit behaviors and actions in alignment with school goals. When people feel valued and empowered as leaders, a shared excitement and an intrinsic motivation toward change takes place. One teacher discussed the shared excitement and motivation toward change that existed in the school building, “My principal worked to empower all staff. I think this empowerment led to a positive culture where all staff wanted to come to work every morning” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012).
In one school, specifically, participants were actively engaged in the implementation process when motivated by a sense of commitment to their particular school and its students. One teacher talked about how love of schools and students serves as a motivator, “I love our school and want to work hard to provide the best learning environment for our students. This perception is shared by many of my colleagues” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). Based on participant responses, intrinsic motivation for school and students is seemingly the most powerful influence in the work of school improvement, and through the shared excitement of participants committing to the turnaround process, drives model implementation.

Compliance is the most basic, minimal level of engagement in the school turnaround process; however the aim is commitment, not only to the process, but also to increasing the level of achievement for the students the process affects. In facilitating a shared understanding that moves beyond compliance to cultural embeddedness, school leaders must facilitate a common understanding regarding the purpose of the work of school improvement. “The clear vision set by our principal signaled a change in the way we approached our work” (School A school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). Principals stated that they began the work of implementation because they were required to do so, however once they saw the benefits for staff and students, they began to value the nature of the work: “At first many of my teachers only implemented turnaround strategies because I asked or because they were required” (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Coaches and teachers both expressed similar perceptions regarding the movement from compliance to commitment. “Teachers began to find value in several of the
strategies they were asked to implement. This increased value led teachers to use these strategies more often” (Focus Group 1, personal communication, June 13, 2012). Once coaches and teachers embraced both the purpose and shared common understanding regarding the implementation of the Turnaround Model, the school improvement process became embedded in the school’s culture.

Each of the three participating schools developed unique organizational cultures with needs authentic to those schools. Ultimately, because participants indicated their school was different from other schools not engaged in the turnaround process, principals, teachers and coaches recognized the need for making decisions relevant to their particular collective cultures: “Every school has a different culture and therefore individuals in these schools have an important and unique perspective that should be taken into account when making school level decisions” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Here, rather than flexibility, we are discussing creating an environment in which student results lead to staff autonomy. Autonomy, in this case, is defined as the freedom for making instructional and operational decisions that directly impact student achievement and, oftentimes, are controlled by the school district. When given the ability for making autonomous decisions for increasing student achievement, more people commit to the process of improving their schools. This shared commitment results in a collective organizational culture focused on student outcomes.

Emerging Theme 2: Flexible Implementation with Fidelity

The second theme that emerged was Flexible Implementation with Fidelity. Just as students have individualized needs, so do teachers, leaders and the schools within which they work. The two strategies in this theme include: (a) Personalize
implementation by taking into account individual and collective needs, and (b) Develop monitoring strategies that ensure fidelity of implementation. Together, these strategies address the need for personalization and ongoing monitoring of the Turnaround implementation process. School improvement initiatives are often implemented without concern for either the human capital employed in the process or without pre-set strategies for progress monitoring. Though most school improvement or turnaround efforts commence with good intentions, oftentimes these efforts fall short due to the challenges of personalization and monitoring. Most school improvement models fail at taking into account the individuals involved in the change process; these same models also fail at developing monitoring structures in advance of the implementation process. When the fidelity of implementation is measured and monitored, schools are able to know when they need to make course corrections.

Repeatedly, participants stressed the fact that the Turnaround Model did not take into account their individual or school needs and circumstances. Principals, instructional coaches, and teachers all stressed the need for personalization of the implementation process. One instructional coach discussed the need for individualizing the turnaround implementation process, “There is not a one-sized model to fit this work. When implementing any change, the process needs to be personalized for particular schools” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Furthermore, participants highlighted the need for all-inclusive implementation, citing collaboration as the key element in the turnaround process. Relative to this point, one teacher noted, “Everyone in the building has a role to play, and collaboration is key in the implementation process” (School B, school improvement survey, May 31, 2012). As previously discussed, the
Turnaround Model is a collection of strategies imposed on school organizations. Although the model relies on human capital for carrying out implementation of these strategies, it does not take into account the unique needs of people or schools. The work of implementation will not always be carried out perfectly, especially because it is being carried out through the use of human capital. Ultimately, participants highlighted the need for monitoring structures that determine progress and demonstrate course correction needs, “We needed a system in place that would have let us know when we needed to make adjustments and course corrections” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012). According to participants, these monitoring structures should not be put in place simply for the sake of monitoring, but rather for holding people accountable for implementing turnaround strategies with fidelity. By providing information that illustrates to leaders when implementation is not occurring with fidelity, leaders are able to make adjustments when a change in course is necessary -- in real-time, not weeks and months after the change is needed.

Initially, when under the impression they must complete the work of turnaround implementation in a prescriptive manner without a clear timeframe for the process, participants became frustrated. It was not until near the end of the school year that principals, instructional coaches, and teachers recognized the process was developmental, needing pre-implementation activities as well as regular planning activities. One principal discussed the progressive nature of implementation, “After having gone through one year of the Turnaround Model, it is clear that the process is developmental” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Schools that started meeting and having conversations during the summer prior to model implementation reported they were more
prepared for the process. Two of the three schools met weekly throughout the months of July and August, while the third school did not begin pre-implementation activities until the week before school started. One instructional coach highlighted the role of pre-implementation activities in setting the tone for the school year, “The time we devoted in the summer played a huge part in getting us off on the right track” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012). Schools beginning pre-implementation activities early in the process reported having better understanding of the work. Additionally, participants recognized the significance of having a venue for sharing and monitoring successes, because it increased the likelihood of transparency and provided schools with a way of communicating both the what and the how of implementation. This also increased the school leader’s understanding of what was happening during the implementation process. This type of personalization and meaningful monitoring of turnaround implementation increases the likelihood that the process will be implemented with fidelity, thus holding true to the primary goal of the Turnaround Model: increasing student achievement.

**Emerging Theme 3: Human Capital Engagement and Development**

The third emerging theme addresses Human Capital Engagement and Development. This theme highlights an increase in instructional quality through development of human capital. Human capital remains key to fidelity of Turnaround implementation. Because humans are at the core of school improvement, the focus must reside in changing human perceptions, behaviors and instructional practices. Although this theme is woven throughout participant’s responses, it also warrants its own theme because it highlights the role leadership plays in Turnaround model implementation.
Leadership sets the tone, especially with regard to supporting instruction. Leadership, in this case, does not just refer to building principals, rather it includes teacher leaders, as well. Principals and instructional coaches identified teachers who exemplified leadership behaviors. Teachers were considered important to the implementation of the Turnaround Model. The following words were used by participants to describe leadership behaviors exhibited by teachers: problem solvers, decision makers who listened, shared, and inspired.

Facilitating the work of school improvement is not up to the building principal, alone. Teachers and instructional coaches have the responsibility for facilitating professional growth experiences for their colleagues. Oftentimes, teachers and instructional coaches were viewed by their colleagues as professional development facilitators: “I was so used to receiving professional development from a consultant or vendor. It was extremely helpful to have skilled teachers in the building to provide job-embedded professional development opportunities” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). Principals noted that teachers served as instructional models for their colleagues, “Our instructional coaches provided a tremendous amount of support for teachers. This support included modeling lessons and co-teaching with some of our less effective teachers” (Principal 1, personal communication, June 5, 2012). This was especially true for instructional coaches. Instructional coaches modeled effective, research-based classroom practices that exerted an impact on student achievement. This modeling took place in teacher classrooms, where instructional coaches facilitated large and small group instruction. As a result of this, instructional coaches reduced performance anxiety for teachers. Ultimately, instructional coaches provided direct
support through their work, allowing teachers to build their teaching capacity. Here, as a result of Turnaround implementation, support for the growth of teacher capacity directly impacts classroom instruction.

The inherent challenge of implementation lies in principals’ recognizing the diverse needs of teachers while aligning the appropriate supports for their development. Teachers, in specific, reported feeling supported when their needs were met through the vehicle of professional development. Ultimately, when professional development met the needs of teachers, they were more likely to put turnaround strategies to use in their individual classrooms.

**Emerging Theme 4: Alignment of Collaborative Systems**

Alignment of Collaborative Systems is the fourth emerging theme. During the course of the study, participants routinely cited the need for collaborative alignment between school turnaround efforts and larger district improvement processes. Relative to this, one participant stated, “Our efforts need to be aligned with the school district, rather than isolated” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Here, alignment is different from governance, in that governance suggests a vertical, bureaucratic structure, and alignment highlights a more horizontal, interdependent relationship between various schools, districts, states, and other external structures. Three strategies are embedded in the Alignment of Collaborative Systems emerging theme: (a) Align reform efforts with school-wide and larger district efforts, (b) Provide both internal and external targeted technical assistance for use in addressing clear gaps in implementation, and (c) Use of leadership for establishing alignment between stakeholders, including community and
private partnerships that support human capital development. In order to ensure optimum success, all of these supports must be aligned.

Participants often felt they were carrying out the work of school improvement separate from larger district efforts. Building implementation was not aligned with the larger district context for school improvement, and the district lacked an understanding of what specific resources and support it could and should provide for schools. This disconnect contributed to a high level of frustration, due to a lack of context regarding how implementation of the Turnaround Model aligned with the school district’s larger goals. Because the district was so far removed from the school improvement process and lacked accurate knowledge regarding specific building needs, it was unable to provide appropriate supports and resources. One participant commented on the lack of support from the school district, “Even though the district had a great deal of resources and human capital at its disposal, it did not provide us with many supports” (Focus Group 1, personal communication, June 13, 2012). Schools were forced to fit into the district’s cramped operations perspective, and the school district failed at aligning its resources with the needs of particular school buildings. Oftentimes, rather than systemic approaches for rapid increase of student achievement, the school district provided support in the form of individual, isolated efforts that took the form of canned programs and commercial vendor products. These approaches lacked evidence of impact on student achievement. In fact, many of these products were the same ones offered by the district at schools that were not low-performing. With the exception of providing support from a few, skilled individuals, the district still did not modify its approach to technical assistance, even after principals and building leadership teams (BLTs) continually
expressed concern with this lack of differentiated support. When schools proposed innovative solutions for their specific challenges, they perceived a delayed lack of response from the school district, which was often interpreted as the absence of support. According to one principal,

[t]he district would not usually come right out and say ‘no’, but would rather not give us an answer, which ultimately, would delay the process and have the same effect. Oftentimes, I wished they would have just told me ‘no’, in the first place (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012).

Teachers, especially, saw the district-level bureaucracy as an obstacle to effective implementation.

In terms of clear communication regarding staff responsibility and the nature of the work relative to turnaround implementation, participants expressed the school district lacked not only clear structures for information transfer, but also did not provide a larger context for the turnaround process. One instructional coach commented on a lack of informational context for carrying out Turnaround implementation, “When I applied for my job at this school, I had no idea the intense amount of work I would be doing. It was never made clear to me” (Focus Group 2, personal communication, June 20, 2012).

Participants cited the significance of collective decision making, as well as its impact on the turnaround process, “Because we knew collaboration was important and that there was strength in numbers, most of the building decisions were made by our leadership team” (School C, school improvement survey, May 21, 2012). According to the School Improvement Survey, 91% (74 out of 81) of participants responded that members of the Building Leadership Team played an important part in the decision making process in
their respective school buildings. Ultimately, coupled with the alignment of collaborative structures, collective decision making exerts a profound impact on turnaround implementation, because individuals are given responsibility for making decisions that directly impact the school and its students.

Based on what participants perceived as a lack of support, they expressed a need for both internal and external targeted technical assistance for use in addressing clear gaps in implementation. Internal support includes those individuals within the school district who can provide training and professional development on a variety topics, mostly curricular and content-based that is not turnaround specific, but could ultimately assist with implementation of the Turnaround Model. Other internal support includes coaches and district employees, who contribute their expertise to target school and individual needs. External support, on the other hand, is comprised of outside providers and consultants, including individuals from the State Department of Education, who contribute a variety of skills, some of which are relevant to turnaround implementation.

The first level of internal support originates with the Building Leadership Team, a group of individuals responsible for assessing building needs and making collective decisions regarding the coordination of support and resources. Participants expressed the need for a multitude of supports, “Teachers in our building have diverse needs, and as a result, they need a variety of supports” (Principal 3, personal communication, June 15, 2012). Because their needs are diverse, there exists no singular strategy or way for providing support for teachers. Support is best provided on a multitude of levels in a variety of ways. This assistance must be tightly matched to communicated areas of teacher need, not just through random efforts.
According to participants, there existed a level of top-down bureaucracy that impeded the work of turnaround implementation. Ultimately, participants expressed that this level of bureaucracy must be removed in order for the work to take place. In this view, rather than making decisions about day-to-day operations, the district’s only role includes providing timely, strategic support through the use of its vast connections and large arsenal of resources. By basing decisions on individual needs and incurring a better understanding of the work of turnaround implementation, the district could realign existing resources for providing strategic support for schools while collecting a return on investment. Because the school district has a considerable stockpile of resources and human capital at its disposal, it would make sense to deploy resources to the lowest-performing schools.

Large districts have networks of content experts at their disposal. Content experts are those who write and communicate curriculum on a daily basis. The best use of these individuals would be to support the particular needs of schools and teachers. Given the top-down organizational structure of the district, this strategy proved challenging to implement.

External partners and providers often brought a different perspective and external level of expertise that was lacking at district-level. Because these entities approached and supported district turnaround efforts from the outside, they were not connected to the bureaucracy and accompanying pressure that those inside of the district experienced on a daily basis. Principals reported that all external partnerships began with a needs assessment that allowed partners a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities in each building. One principal discussed the ways in which needs
assessment informed partners of challenges and opportunities, “Having an external perspective proved to be extremely helpful in identifying building needs. Some of their observations aligned with what we already knew, but also illuminated challenges we had not even considered” (Principal 2, personal communication, June 12, 2012). This personalization allowed for the support provided to be narrowly-focused and aligned with specific building needs. As a result schools were able to move away from topical and generic professional development to support that could be immediately utilized. In most cases, these needs were directly related to the needs of teachers in the classroom.

Teachers expressed appreciation when working with many of these external partners. Rather than evaluatory in nature, teachers viewed these partnerships as professional growth experiences. The majority of teachers viewed external partners and providers as having a positive impact on the turnaround process. According to one teacher, “Our external provider was key in supporting teachers” (School A school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). External partners served in the role of professional development providers. Most professional development centered around content, lesson design, and use of formative assessment practices for increasing student achievement -- all of which teachers reported were central to their needs.

While the majority of participants expressed a favorable opinion of external partners, the same could not be said for the interaction between participants and The Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Participants viewed the role of the ODE external consultant as less important and more compliance-based than that of other external providers. Teachers, in particular, reported actions exhibited by these individuals, such as walkthroughs and conversations at staff meetings, did very little to change behaviors.
Principals reported technical assistance provided by the district was helpful for providing a better understanding of the turnaround process and its required components, but did very little to remove district barriers. In addition to external consultants from ODE, the State Department of Education required building leadership teams attend three two-day technical assistance sessions throughout the school year. Principals reported these sessions lacked organization and specific strategies relevant to the turnaround process. Principals expressed these sessions would have been more successful if they included more relevant content. Teachers also expressed a need for more turnaround and classroom relevant strategies. Principals, coaches, and teachers alike, expressed an appreciation for meeting with others who were going through the same school improvement process.

Teachers established the principal as instrumental in the turnaround process. Results of the School Improvement Survey show 99% (80 out of 81) of respondents indicated the principal played an important role in the Turnaround Model implementation process. One teacher discussed the role of the principal by saying, “The principal plays an important role in the turnaround process, and their fingerprints can be seen in all areas of the school” (School A, school improvement survey, May 29, 2012). Principals, however, reported this work could not be done in isolation. All expressed the significance of identifying supports from the community that align with their building needs.

Teachers also indicated that having more support is always better; support must be personalized and relevant to both building and personal needs. They also expressed appreciation for the coordination of these supports by their building principal, who they viewed as having an understanding of the bigger picture, “The principal is the best
position to coordinate and align school supports” (Focus Group 1, personal
communication, June 13, 2012). Participants expressed that support must take a form
focused on building needs, and furthermore stated the principal’s instrumentality in
securing focused support for individual buildings by asking community partners how
they could best assist their schools by helping with identified needs. When principals take
this approach, rather than cobbling together a host of unrelated, random programs, this
strategic focus provides a more targeted focus on schools, while increasing the likelihood
of successful implementation. Teachers also indicated that having more support is always
better. Support must be personalized and relevant to both building and personal needs.

Summary

This exploratory case study investigated perceptions and experiences of
principals, teachers and instructional coaches as they related to the first year of
implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model in three urban elementary
schools. The chapter presented results of eighty-one surveys, two focus groups and three
interviews distributed between the three locations. Specific examples of survey, focus
groups, and interview quotations highlight themes, both predetermined and emerging,
that resulted from these data collection methods. Appendix F illustrates a breakdown of
both the predetermined and emerging themes that resulted from the data collection
process. The majority of responses occurred in both the Teachers and Leaders and
Instructional Support Strategies predetermined themes, suggesting a connection between
leadership and quality instruction. Four themes emerged from the survey, focus group,
and interview data. Theme 1 highlights the importance of Turnaround implementation in
facilitating shared norms and collective behaviors. Theme 2 furthers the notion of taking
into account collective needs through the personalization of implementation, as well as through the development of monitoring strategies that ensure fidelity of implementation. Theme 3 catalyzes the impact of exerting a focus on human capital engagement by ensuring quality instruction through a focus on leadership development, and Theme 4 leverages leadership in providing alignment and support for Turnaround implementation.

Ultimately, the data collection process provided participants an opportunity for giving voice to their Turnaround perceptions and experiences. Though the work was initially challenging, participants provided valuable insight into the turnaround process. Tacit recommendations emerged relative for Turnaround implementation improvement. This new knowledge indicated the significance of personalizing the implementation process while developing leadership.
CHAPTER V

Summary and Discussion

This exploratory case study examined perceptions and experiences associated with the first year of school improvement Turnaround Model implementation processes, as well as the impact of these processes on principals, instructional coaches and teachers in three urban, Midwestern elementary schools. Results of the study are employed in this chapter for formulating clear recommendations for future building-level implementations of the model, as well as for providing considerations for further research and policy development. This chapter provides a review and discussion of key findings of the study in its entirety, along with the researcher’s interpretation of these results, organized in the following sections: (a) review of methodology employed in the study, (b) restatement of the study’s guiding research questions, (c) connections between the research questions and emerging themes, (d) recommendations for future implementations of the school improvement Turnaround Model, (e) implications for future research and policy development, and (f) conclusion.

Review of Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory case study included documenting the first year of Turnaround Model implementation at three urban, Midwestern elementary schools. It also describes participants’ perceptions of both the process and the impact of model implementation, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the Turnaround Model, itself. Taking place in three elementary schools with similar geographic locations, percentage of economically-disadvantaged students, academic trends, and identified by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) during the 2010-2011 school year as
persistently low achieving, the study explores the experiences and perceptions of principals, instructional coaches, and teachers and utilizes a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches: interviews, surveys, and focus group questions.

This case study highlights eighty-one participants, 61 teachers (including 12 instructional assistants), 5 instructional coaches, and 3 administrators with varying total years of experience. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys were designed for gathering information relative to school improvement activities taking place at each school and encompassed the four predetermined Turnaround Model themes: Teachers and Leaders, Instructional Support Strategies, Time and Support, and Governance. Principals at each of the schools provided responses through recorded, one-on-one interviews. The perceptions of instructional coaches and teachers were examined through focus groups and surveys. Findings were organized around the predetermined Turnaround Model themes. Responses were coded and analyzed based on whether or not they addressed the process or the impact of Turnaround Model implementation. I had knowledge of the activities taking place during implementation, as well as how these activities affected the process and participants, and this provided a deeper understanding of implementation. In addition, participant reflections on the process and impact of implementation illuminated gaps not taken into account by the Turnaround Model. Responses outside of the scope of the model formed the basis for the emerging themes.

**Restatement of Research Questions and Connections to Themes**

The research questions aimed at investigating the process and impact of Turnaround Model implementation at three elementary schools. If we are interested in exploring the model’s implementation, wanting to know more about not only the process
that takes place, but also about its impact, only makes sense. Because they provide us with additional useful information about the implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model, both of these questions are significant. This exploratory case study examined perceptions and experiences of principals, instructional coaches, and teachers relative to the following research questions:

**Research Question 1: What are the processes by which these three schools have implemented the Turnaround Model?**

As previously discussed, process is defined as the acts and activities associated with implementing the Turnaround Model. According to School Improvement Survey participant responses relative to predetermined themes, the three participating elementary schools utilized the following processes while implementing the school improvement Turnaround Model. The school district selected three principals to implement the Turnaround Model using unspecified qualifications or competencies. Principals were expected to implement the model and its highly prescriptive strategies rapidly and without any specialized training. The school district did not provide the leadership development or the support necessary for implementing the Turnaround Model.

The only training that occurred for principals throughout the entire first year of implementation included: two generic technical assistance sessions, The Executive Principal Leadership Academy, and a requirement that principals attend these workshops. The program including these elements was a partnership between the Ohio Department of Education and a local university. Throughout the course of interviews and surveys, principals consistently reported they were ill equipped and unprepared to lead the turnaround process. Two of the three principals contracted external providers to fulfill
this need and provide support for leadership development. The role of the external provider included facilitating professional development on instructional delivery, literacy instruction, and effective use of data. As a result of the lack of leadership development and support, principals found themselves relying on each other and outside resources rather than on support they could have received from the school district.

Also in regard to the Teachers and Leaders predetermined theme, the three schools facilitating teacher leadership through a focus on quality teachers and tutors, selected staff who best exhibited skills for implementation, and employed the leadership of the foundational team of people were in the school before the model. Principals found assistance from instructional coaches to be the most effective form of support received throughout the first year of model implementation. Because the principal is the major decision maker in the implementation of the turnaround process, it was common for the principal to be overwhelmed with the exceptionally high level of need in these low-performing schools. It seems unlikely that one individual, the principal, could provide support and attention to each of the people implementing the model while still functioning as the instructional leader of the building.

Instructional coaches provided direct support to teachers on a frequent basis, something the principal would not have been able to do. Teachers reported the support provided by instructional coaches was an important facet of the turnaround process. Many times, the instructional coaches carried out the work that directly supported both the principal’s vision for the school, as well as the implementation. This occurred in two ways, specifically: (a) through the instructional coaches’ disaggregation of data to support instruction, and (b) through the use of instructional coaches as professional
development facilitators that addressed teacher needs. Instructional coaches were not an additional layer of top-down bureaucracy. Instead they provided the second level of requested support and fostered a team approach to model implementation, ensuring that the principal was not the only one carrying out the work.

Relative to the Instructional Support Strategies predetermined theme, schools implemented clearly defined frameworks for instructional delivery that were student friendly and developmental in nature and provided front line instruction that addressed the individual needs of students that were largely lacking before the Turnaround Model implementation and likely impacted to the schools previously identified low performance. Participants often made reference to their school’s instructional model as a framework for providing effective instructional delivery to students. The instructional model ultimately provided teachers ownership of their own classrooms by giving them authority and responsibility for making decisions about what approaches and content would best meet student needs. These decisions must also be supplemented by the effective use of data disaggregated and provided by instructional coaches. The increased effective use of data assisted teachers in determining small and flexible groupings while honing in on which skills must be practiced and retaught.

Teachers’ secure knowledge of which skills and concepts students must further practice assisted in the further development of teachers’ confidence. The instructional model also provided for consistency throughout the building, because each teacher implemented the same instructional framework. This consistency allowed for collaboration and for the core elements of instructional delivery to be refined and perfected through professional development.
In addition, schools provided professional development that was Turnaround Model relevant, matched professional development activities with teachers’ diverse needs, and recognized the impact of high quality, job embedded professional development. Participant responses clearly indicated that generic professional development, such as the Executive Principal Leadership Academy and other opportunities provided by the school district, were not particularly effective as a Turnaround strategy. This approach does not take into account individual teachers’ needs. Professional development that addresses teachers’ needs, on the other hand, seemed to be more effective. When teachers were asked what instructional support and professional development they needed, and when this professional development was tailored to meet their turnaround needs, teachers were able to learn from these opportunities and directly apply this information to their individual classrooms.

Instructional coaches played an important role in this type of professional development by assisting in the effective disaggregation and use of data, as well as collaborating with teachers to determine areas of professional growth. This use of instructional coaches increased cost effectiveness relative to implementation. Because instructional coaches were aware of teacher needs, outside contractors did not need to be hired to facilitate teachers ‘professional development growth. This view of professional development is centered around the individual growth of teachers and how it relates to increasing student achievement, rather than enforcing compliance and mandatory attendance to professional development that does not meet teacher needs. With regard to the use of data for informing and differentiating instruction included in this predetermined theme, schools implemented formative assessments for the purposes of
informing instruction, and used data for forming flexible performance groupings, as well as for extending the school day. Participants highlighted the role of family support in relation to the implementation of the Time and Support theme. Furthermore, participants highlighted the role of providing flexibility of operations as central to the Governance predetermined theme.

**Research Question 2: In what ways has implementation of the Turnaround Model impacted these three schools?**

Impact is defined as the outcome of Turnaround Model implementation. Here, it is important to note that participant responses relative to the impact of model implementation formulated the basis for this case study’s emerging themes. Relative to the predetermined themes, however, participants noted the importance of distributing leadership and providing an environment in which teachers chose to stay as essential to the impact of the Teachers and Leaders theme. With regard to the impact of turnaround implementation relative to the Instructional Support Strategies theme, participants suggested the importance of prioritizing and arranging instructional delivery and further highlighted the implementation of an instructional model as a characteristic of effective schools. They also cited the importance of high quality, job embedded professional development as an activity that is integral to the implementation of this particular theme and noted that this type of professional development results in an increase in teachers’ effective use of formative instructional practices. In addition, participants noted the role and impact of the effective use of data in increasing both teachers’ and students’ confidence.
Participant responses regarding the Time and Support predetermined theme underscored the impact of providing increased learning time for staff and students, as well as the benefits of Human Support Services staff in removing non-academic barriers and increasing student readiness. In their discussion of the impact of the Governance predetermined theme, participants illustrated the challenges associated with granting autonomy to the school leader.

The emerging themes were derived from participant responses that occurred outside of the model. These themes reflect the participants’ perceptions of the impact of Turnaround Model implementation and serve as recommendations for future implementations of the school improvement Turnaround Model. Most principals’ and instructional coaches’ responses obtained from surveys, interviews, and focus groups were relevant to the process of implementation, while teachers mainly commented on the impact of implementation. Given participants’ varied proximities to the implementation process, the nature of these responses is not surprising. Participant responses highlighted the principal as an instrumental constant in each of the four predetermined Turnaround Model themes. Coupled with his or her leadership in all aspects of the turnaround process, the principal’s unique perspective likely leads to these results. Teachers, on the other hand, have a much narrower perspective and are largely focused on the instructional management of their own classrooms. Instructional coaches often serve as liaisons between teachers and principals, who charge them with carrying out individual classroom and whole school improvement efforts. Data collection instruments were designed for eliciting responses which were then analyzed for their level of alignment to the already-existing predetermined themes. Participant responses were then coded based on whether
they addressed the process or the impact of Turnaround Model implementation (Appendix F). Responses that neither addressed the process nor the impact of model implementation served as the basis for the emerging themes. Given the importance of analyzing the predetermined themes based on the process and impact of turnaround implementation, the emerging themes will also be discussed in this manner. Emerging themes make actionable those strategies necessary for effective turnaround implementation that are not included in the Turnaround Model.

The following emerging themes align with the process of Turnaround Model implementation: (a) Flexible Implementation with Fidelity, and (b) Alignment of Collaborative Systems. The strategies included under the Flexible Implementation with Fidelity emerging theme include personalizing implementation and developing monitoring strategies. According to participants, the school district failed to put into place structures for personalization and monitoring, therefore these strategies highlight what was missing during the process of Turnaround Model implementation. The Alignment of Collaborative Systems emerging theme also highlights organized, systemic support missing during the process of Turnaround implementation: (a) alignment of reform efforts with larger district efforts, (b) internal and external technical assistance in addressing implementation gaps, and (c) use of leadership for establishing alignment between stakeholders, including community and private partnerships that support human capital development. One emerging theme, Collective Organizational Culture, addressed participants’ responses with regard to the potential impact of turnaround implementation, if the aforementioned supports were put into place by the school district: (a) a culture of mutual respect, high expectations, and shared accountability for outcomes, and (b) a
shared understanding that moves beyond compliance to cultural embeddedness. The school improvement Turnaround Model does not focus on or mention school climate and culture. There is no mention of vision, mission or purpose contained in the model. In order to impact the school’s culture, participants in the case study recommended identifying school leadership and engaging external partners early in the implementation process.

Human Capital Engagement and Leadership Development was embedded in each of the predetermined and emerging themes. This emerging theme focused on instructional quality through leadership development. Engaging others through the process of cultivating individual and collective leadership occurred frequently enough in participant responses to necessitate its inclusion as an emerging theme in the case study. The majority of participants, regardless of whether they were principals, instructional coaches or teachers, often highlighted the connection between leadership and instructional innovation, stating that people were developed naturally as a result of the turnaround process. The energy of this process invited participants to take on a multitude of leadership roles: group decision making, problem solving, and professional development facilitation. Participants employed the following verbs as descriptors for their colleagues’ behaviors during the implementation process: support, listen, share, inspire.

The Turnaround Model is a prescriptive approach intended to change processes rather than people. Because the model failed at taking into account the complexities of people and organizations, it lacks a human component. Throughout the course of the study, participants seemed to indicate that human beings were the most important factor in carrying out the work of school turnaround. In addition, the majority of participants,
regardless of their positions in the school, requested specific support relevant to instructional growth and the turnaround implementation process. When considering human capital engagement and leadership development, the model can be implemented with fidelity based on the level of support that is provided. Given these responses, it makes sense that if school districts continue ignoring the impact of human capital development on the implementation process, an increase in student achievement is highly unlikely.

**Recommendations for Future Implementations of the School Improvement Turnaround Model**

The responses from this exploratory case study show us that the Turnaround Model does not fully take into account the teachers and leaders carrying out such intense and challenging work. In this case, the school improvement model becomes less important than creating favorable conditions for promoting its successful implementation. Many organizations, particularly schools, have well-developed and well-intentioned plans. The struggle, however, lies in the implementation of these plans. The disconnect between understanding implementation and the need for human capital development has resulted in less than desirable outcomes for students, which is why this study focuses mainly on implementation. Given this disconnect, school districts must develop strategies for taking into account both the developmental nature of implementation, as well as the individuals taking part in this process. School districts must consider the nature of the work humans must carry out when implementing the Turnaround Model and be prepared, in advance, to support this work. The process of implementation occurs over a developmental and incremental time period. The Turnaround Model, however, ignores
the developmental nature of implementation by not providing a temporal framework. In addition to this, the model does not communicate strategies in an incremental way. It is important, therefore, to set short-term and long-term goals while benchmarking success. Given the complexities of school improvement and that humans are the underpinnings of this work, districts and schools must ultimately create conditions that promote successful implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model before, during and after the process.

The following recommendations serve as a holistic overview by taking into account the study’s emerging themes: Flexible Implementation with Fidelity, Alignment of Collaborative Systems, Collective Organizational Culture, and Human Capital Engagement and Leadership Development. By illuminating the need for instructional leadership and human capital development ignored by the Turnaround Model, the emerging themes shape these recommendations. Like the emerging themes, the recommendations comprise actionable strategies, rather than fragmented, research-based words and phrases.

Recommendations for creating the right conditions for human capital growth and development before the Turnaround Model implementation process include:

1.1. Understand the developmental and incremental nature of the work of school improvement Turnaround Model implementation.

1.2. Develop an awareness that each school has individual needs that differ from other schools, even other schools implementing the Turnaround Model.
1.3. Recognize the role human capital plays in the school improvement process, and develop clear strategies for human capital and instructional leadership development.

1.4. Exercise a powerful focus on leadership that impacts both the fidelity of implementation, as well as the development of human capital.

1.5. Place effective teachers and leaders with evidence of success in corresponding schools with the appropriate levels of encouragement and support.

1.6. Align collaborative systems and develop monitoring strategies for teachers and leaders before implementation and before enforcing accountability.

1.7. Engage internal and external partners and clearly communicate their role in the turnaround implementation process.

The results of the study indicate the need for supports and school alignment with district-based reform. Participant responses from the study are translated into recommendations districts and schools must put into place during the turnaround implementation process:

1.1. Empower teachers and leaders with autonomy and flexibility for academics and operations decisions that take into account individual and collective needs at school level.

1.2. Promote an awareness of and play an active role in supporting and removing barriers for students, teachers, and leaders, so they can drive accelerated change during the turnaround process.

1.3. Dispatch to individual buildings targeted support that makes sense and grows human capacity for implementation.
1.4. Personalize job-embedded professional development that focuses on strong instructional and collaborative skills, as well as facilitates professional growth for teachers and leaders.

Participants were unanimous in expressing that the most powerful opportunity for creating the right conditions for implementation lies at the district level. Participants indicated that district officials often provide an obstacle during the implementation process, therefore school districts must allow schools to make decisions and build appropriate structures for personalized implementation. These recommendations serve to guide those individuals in central office who support the work of school improvement, including my role as a district liaison for the schools implementing the Turnaround Model. The lessons learned from the study are used to inform district officials about how to create the right conditions for supporting not only the three schools included in the study, but also other schools currently implementing the model. Coordinated central office support is essentially important in the work of turnaround implementation. As previously stated, participants did not feel district-level support was adequate. In my role as liaison, I was not able to support the many needs that arose in the three schools included in the study. In order for implementation to occur successfully, systems must be informed about the conditions of individual turnaround schools and highly focused on providing support that ultimately has an impact on student achievement. In terms of my work, this study provided a clear framework of how to provide support and technical assistance to schools for creating the conditions most conducive to successful implementation of the model. Together, these recommendations illuminate the important role districts and schools play in the turnaround implementation process.
Implications for Future Research and Policy Development

The federal government has invested billions of dollars with the goal of turning around the country’s lowest performing schools. There exists little evidence, however, that this investment has resulted in systemic and sustainable organizational change in many of these school buildings. Schools around the country are in the initial stages of implementing the Turnaround Model, one model of school reform. This highly-prescriptive model of change outlines several key, research-supported strategies. It does not take into account, however, the role human capital plays in the implementation process. Developing policies and legislation without consideration for the people carrying out the work of implementation is clearly a shortsighted recipe for failure and does not provide for a return on the government’s investment of funds. Although it remains unlikely, the federal government, which largely exerts a focus on compliance, can have a profound impact on changing schools and districts by working on developing the right conditions for increasing the chances of Turnaround implementation with fidelity.

Given this large investment from the federal government, more people must conduct research on factors that create effective implementation of the school improvement Turnaround Model, as well as its effects on increasing student achievement in low-performing schools. A variety of qualitative and quantitative methods should be employed for gaining a better understanding of other aspects of the model. This case study explored not just the model, itself, but more importantly, its implementation. More specifically, research must further investigate the relationship between human capital development and its relationship with implementation. With little existing evidence of the
Turnaround Model’s overall effectiveness, the U.S. Department of Education cannot and should not continue investing billions of taxpayer dollars on such school reform efforts. Rather than creating overly prescriptive policies and legislation aimed at turning around our nation’s lowest performing schools, the U.S. Department of Education, as well as its counterparts at the state level, must begin recognizing the important role human capital plays in carrying out school improvement efforts.

**First Year of Turnaround Model Implementation**

At the end of the first year of Turnaround Model implementation, all three schools in the study met basic level of compliance requirements set forth by the Ohio Department of Education. As required by the implementation of this model, leaders were changed in two of the three schools (one was retained because they were only there one year). Each of the schools adopted and implemented instructional models designed to meet the individual needs of students. Schools also offered teachers professional development opportunities designed to improve instructional practices. There was an increase in the use of data driven decision making in these schools. Schools hired full-time counselors, social workers, and school psychologists that provided additional socio-emotional support for students. Schools attempted to offer extended learning opportunities for students, however all three schools reported this strategy to be one of the most challenging to implement because of the lack of alignment to meet student needs as well as the lack of staff willing to work after school. Parents and families were not included in the model selection or implementation. Schools did little to go above and beyond traditional strategies for engaging parents and families. This represents a significant missed opportunity for the district and the schools, but most importantly, for the students
in these schools. If Turnaround Model success is simply based on checking off a list of completed model components, then each of the schools completed this task. Unfortunately, these factors alone only lead schools to become compliant with school improvement strategies. Compliance is not enough to ensure increased student achievement. Schools and the people who carry out the work of turnaround must be committed to the fidelity of implementation, rather than just simply enacting the model strategies. This fidelity of model implementation can only be achieved through the individualized training and support designed for creating the right conditions for success for both students and teachers.

From this perspective, it becomes less about policies and more about creating the appropriate conditions for success. Many of these conditions occur before the implementation of any school improvement efforts. If we know, at least according to participants in this study, that human capital is the most important factor in the implementation of the Turnaround Model, then funding for these reform efforts should be strategic and address both academic and non-academic challenges. Any policies and guidance that does come from the U.S. Department of Education should take into account the developmental nature of such reform processes, and as a result, distribute strategic funding over a longer time period (five years rather than the current three years). Additional years of funding with the appropriate autonomy and accountability would provide a longer time period for schools to move toward full implementation.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, implementation of the Turnaround Model impacted the culture of the three participating elementary schools. The work of school improvement cannot be done
by schools and districts alone. Participants in this study have demonstrated that human
capital matters, especially with regard to the implementation of the school improvement
Turnaround Model. According to principals, instructional coaches, and teachers, it is
clear that school districts have more responsibility for human capital engagement and
leadership development than they are currently exercising. Ideally, according to
participants in this exploratory case study, school districts must leverage their widespread
influence and resources for creating the right conditions for turnaround implementation
while creating support that meets the needs of individual schools and leaders.

The impact of Turnaround Model implementation is only as effective as the
individuals who are carrying out the process. Given the complex interactions between
adults and students in schools and districts, it is unlikely that one could legislate his or
her way to school improvement. Rather than the prescriptive strategies recommended by
the Turnaround Model, districts and schools should be provided the opportunity for
selecting school improvement efforts that meet their unique needs and challenges.
Districts and schools should work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop strategies
that ensure both the placement of highly effective teaches and leaders, as well as the
appropriate supports for creating a culture of success for both adults and students.
REFERENCES


National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. (2011). Recruiting staff and attracting high quality staff to hard-to-staff schools. In C. L. Perlman & S.
Redding (Eds.). Handbook on effective implementation of school improvement grants, (pp. 89-90). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.


APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER FROM SCHOOL DISTRICT
May 10, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I have reviewed Rodney Harrelson’s Dissertation Prospectus and supporting materials, and I am in support of this project being conducted in Columbus City Schools.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gene T. Harris, Ph.D.
Superintendent/CEO

The Columbus City School District does not discriminate based upon sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, ancestry, familial status or military status with regard to admission, access, treatment or employment. This policy is applicable in all district programs and activities.
APPENDIX B

APPROVAL LETTER FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD
TO: Rodney Harrellson  
FROM: Brent Mattingly, HSRB Summer Chair  
DATE: June 1, 2012  
SUBJECT: Human Subjects Review Board Approval  
PROJECT TITLE: Impact of the School Improvement Turnaround Model at Three Urban Elementary Schools  
HSRB APPROVAL CODE: 05-12-090

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research proposal you submitted. You may proceed with the project.

The primary function of the HSRB is to ensure protection of human research subjects. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you pay close attention to the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence when establishing your research proposal. These ethical principles pertain specifically to the issues of informed consent, fair selection of subjects, and risk/benefit considerations.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Brent Mattingly, Ph.D.  
Phone: 419-289-5342  
E-mail: bmatting@ashland.edu
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Mr. Rodney Harrelson in Ashland University’s Schar College of Education is conducting a research study for the purpose of exploring the impact and lessons learned from the first year of implementation of the school improvement turnaround model. The data obtained will be used for his dissertation and possibly published in the future.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a 20 item survey, 60 minute focus group, or 60 minute interview. The focus groups and interviews will be audio recorded.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no risks or discomforts in the research study and no personal identification data will be collected.

D. BENEFITS

The results of this study will be used to understand and evaluate the first year of implementation of the school improvement turnaround model.

E. COST

There will be no cost to you as a result of taking part in this study.

F. PAYMENT

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

G. QUESTIONS

If you have additional questions regarding this study, please contact Rodney Harrelson by phone at 614-288-4595 or by e-mail at rharrelson2932@gmail.com or Dr. Ann Shelly at 419-289-4142 or ashelly@ashland.edu

H. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in the study or withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status.

If you agree to participate, you should sign below.

________________________________________  ____________
Signature                                           Date
APPENDIX D

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TURNAROUND MODEL
Turnaround Model Overview

Teachers and Leaders
- Replace principal
- Use locally adopted “turnaround” competencies to review and select staff (rehire no more than 50% of existing staff)
- Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff

Instructional Support Strategies
- Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs
- Provide job-embedded PD designed to build capacity and support staff
- Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction

Time and Support
- Provide increased learning time for staff and students
- Social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports

Governance
- New governance structure
- Grant flexibility to school leader
APPENDIX E

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SURVEY
School Improvement Survey

Gender: Male Female
Age: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-55 55 and above
Ethnicity: White Black Hispanic Asian
Other:_____________
Employment Status: Teacher Instructional Coach Support Staff
(circle one) Administrator Other:

Years of Experience: 1-3 years 4-6 years 7-10 years 10-15 years
(circle one) 15+ years

Directions: This survey is designed to gather information on school improvement activities that have taken place at your school this year. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the questions below completely and to the best of your ability. Circle and/or list items when appropriate.

1) At what school are you currently employed?
   a. 
   b. 
   c.

2) How many years have you worked at this school?
   a. Less than a year
   b. One to three years
   c. Three to five years
   d. More than five years

3) How many years has your principal worked at the school?
   a. Less than one year
   b. One to two years
   c. Two to three years
   d. Don’t know

4) Which school improvement intervention model is being implemented at your school?
   a. Transformation
   b. Turnaround
   c. Restart
   d. Closure
   e. Don’t know

5) In terms of effectiveness, how would you rate your school’s implementation of the school improvement intervention model?
a. Highly Effective  
b. Effective  
c. Ineffective  
d. Highly Ineffective  
e. Don’t know

6) What role(s) do the following person(s) play in the school improvement process at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Does this person play an important role in the school improvement process at your school?</th>
<th>What, specifically, does this person do to support the school improvement process at your school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Leaders</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of School Leadership Team</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Consultant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE Specialists</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Provider/Consultant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does this person play an important role in the school improvement process at your school? | What, specifically, does this person do to support the school improvement process at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Officials</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) How did you receive your position at this school?
   
   a. Interviewed
   b. Job Fair
   c. Placed by Human Resources
   e. Other? Please specify: ____________________________.

The following questions address performance-based incentives at your school.

8a) Were you aware of the performance-based incentive before taking this position?
   
   Yes | No

8b) If so, in what way did it impact your decision to take the position?
   
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

8c) What are the ways that the district could encourage or support you to stay at your current school? If so, list them below.
   
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
The following questions address your school's instructional model.

9a) What instructional model is currently being implemented in your school?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

9b) Please briefly describe the ways in which the model has impacted the way you have taught this school year.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The following questions address data-driven instructional practices.

10a) Briefly discuss how you use data to inform your practice.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

10b) How were you using data before this school year?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
The following questions address professional development.

11a) Not including district professional development, how often have you participated in after school professional development opportunities this year?
   
a. Did not attend  
b. 1 to 3 times  
c. 3 to 5 times  
d. More than 5 times

11b) On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent did this professional development opportunity impact your instructional practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Topics</th>
<th>Highly Ineffective</th>
<th>Highly Effective</th>
<th>Check if your school did not offer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Model</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-Driven Instruction/Use of Data</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Questioning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated Instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-Taking Strategies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11c) What additional professional development opportunities would you like to see offered next year?
The following questions address extended learning opportunities.

12) Rate the effectiveness of your school’s extended learning opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extended Learning Opportunity</th>
<th>On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent did these extended learning opportunities impact student achievement?</th>
<th>Check if your school did not offer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly Ineffective</td>
<td>Highly Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following questions address social emotional and non-academic support.

13a) How effective is your school at providing social/emotional supports to address student’s non-academic barriers?

   a. Highly Effective 
   b. Effective 
   c. Ineffective 
   d. Highly Ineffective 

13b) Please provide examples of how your school provides supports to address non-academic barriers.
The following questions address community supports.

14a) How effective is your school at providing community supports for students?
    a. Highly Effective
    b. Effective
    c. Ineffective
    d. Highly Ineffective

14b) What additional supports would you suggest?

Thank you participating in the School Improvement Survey. All responses will be kept confidential.
APPENDIX F
DATA ANALYSIS CHARTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers and Leaders</th>
<th>Instructional Support Strategies</th>
<th>Time and Support</th>
<th>Governance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replace principal</td>
<td>Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs.</td>
<td>Provide increased learning time.</td>
<td>New governance structure</td>
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<td>Clear, goal framework for instructional delivery.</td>
<td>Staff and students</td>
<td>Grant flexibility to school leader.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Client-centered model based on individual needs.</td>
<td>Importance of providing increased learning time</td>
<td>Role of providing flexibility for operations</td>
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<td>Use locally-adapted &quot;turnaround&quot; competencies to reviewer and select staff (rehire no more than 50% of already existing staff.</td>
<td>Developmental ratings or instructional model implementation.</td>
<td>Role of community partners in providing extended learning time</td>
<td>Challenges associated with autonomy for school leader</td>
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<td>Institutional model characteristics of effective schools.</td>
<td>Importance of common planning time for staff</td>
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<td>Selecting people who best exhibit the skills to implement (results-oriented and focused on student achievement).</td>
<td>Providing leadership that meets individual needs.</td>
<td>Social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports</td>
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<td>Significance of planning and arranging instruction.</td>
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<td>Implement strategies to recruit, place and retain staff.</td>
<td>Provide job-embedded PD designed to build capacity and support staff.</td>
<td>Removing non-academic barriers increases student readiness</td>
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<td>Instructional Support Strategies</td>
<td>Time and Support</td>
<td>Governance</td>
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<td>Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction</td>
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<td>- Benefits of problem-based PD</td>
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<td>- Use of data to effectively extend the school day</td>
<td>- Importance of student monitoring of academic progress</td>
<td>- Benefits of problem-based PD</td>
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<td>- Provide support through a network of content experts</td>
<td>- Importance of student monitoring of academic progress</td>
<td>- Benefits of problem-based PD</td>
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<td>- Roles of leadership in supporting instruction</td>
<td>- Benefits of problem-based PD</td>
<td>- Benefits of problem-based PD</td>
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<td>Collective Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Flexible Implementation with Fidelity</td>
<td>Human Capital Engagement and Leadership Development</td>
<td>Alignment of Collaborative Systems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Create a culture of mutual respect, high expectations and shared accountability for outcomes.  
  • Importance of school expectations taking into account a global perspective  
  • Significance of shared excitement for and intrinsic motivation toward change | Personalize implementation by taking into account individual and collective needs.  
  • Flexibility for personalization  
  • Significance of human component to implementation  
  • Collaboration as key element in implementation  
  • Significance of implementation being all-inclusive | Ensure instructional quality through a focus on leadership development.  
  • Role of leadership in supporting instruction  
  • Connection between teacher leadership and instructional quality  
  • Connection between leadership and innovation  
  • Teacher development as a result of implementation  
  • Importance of recognizing the diverse needs of teachers  
  • Teacher leaders as PD facilitators  
  • “problem solvers”  
  • “decision makers”  
  • “support”/”guidance”  
  • “listen”/”inspire”  
  • “important”  
  • “sharing”/”share” | Align reform efforts with school-wide and larger district efforts.  
  • Development of systemic and systematic approach for increasing academic achievement, rather than isolated programs.  
  • Role of Building Leadership Team (BLT)  
  • Importance of collective decision making  
  • Create clear information structures that communicate a context for the Turnaround process  
  • Formalization of previously-informal processes |
| Facilitate a shared understanding that moves beyond compliance to cultural embeddedness.  
  • Facilitate a common understanding regarding the purpose of the work/“Buy-In”  
  • Importance of creating environment in which student results lead to staff autonomy | Develop monitoring strategies that ensure fidelity of implementation.  
  • Developmental nature of implementation  
  • School Improvement Plan as framework for implementation  
  • Fostering implementation success through pre-implementation activities and other structures for needed course correction  
  • Provide a venue for discussing and sharing improvement successes and challenges  
  • “intentional”  
  • “measurable and observable”  
  • “meaningful and relevant” | Provide both internal and external targeted technical assistance for use in addressing clear gaps in implementation.  
  Internal  
  • Importance of providing direct support for teachers  
  • Assistance of district-level support in removing bureaucracy  
  • Need for support/resources from the district  
  • Role of Building Leadership Team (BLT) in developing school structures  
  • Provide support through a network of content experts.  
  External  
  • Importance of providing direct support for teachers  
  • Confusion regarding role of ODE Specialist (enforce compliance or provide technical assistance?)  
  • Significance of outside technical assistance from state and district  
  • Role of external provider as PD facilitator | Use of leadership for establishing alignment between stakeholders, including community and private partnerships that support human capital development.  
  • Role of principal in creating alignment between stakeholders  
  • Principal as constant in the model |
APPENDIX G

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SURVEY QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS TABLES
6i-1) Does this person play an important role in the SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT process at your school? External Provider/Consultant

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>No response</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

6j-1) Does this person play an important role in the SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT process at your school? Social Worker

<table>
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<td>81</td>
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6k-1) Does this person play an important role in the SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT process at your school? District Officials

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6L-1) Does this person play an important role in the SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT process at your school? Principal

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7) How did you receive your position at this school?

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8a) Were you aware of the performance-based incentive before taking this position?

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9a) What instructional model is currently being implemented in your school?

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<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
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<td>clear learning objectives; teaching, modeling, demonstration; guided &amp; independent practice; checking understanding through formal/informal assessments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>clear learning objectives; teaching, modeling, demonstration; small group &amp; assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schmoker</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schmoker &amp; AAA</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<td>small group interventions at the classroom level &amp; checking for understanding through assessments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.2</td>
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11a) Not including district professional development, how often have you participated in after school professional development opportunities this year?

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### 11b-2) PD topic: Data-driven Instruction/Use of Data

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### 11b-4) PD topic: Higher-Order Questioning

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<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
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### 11b-5) PD topic: Differentiated Instruction

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### 11b-6) PD topic: Test-Taking Strategies

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<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Missing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 11b-7) PD topic: Other

| Frequency |  
|------------|---
| 3          | 1  
| 4          | 7  
| 5          | 4  
| Total      | 12 
| Missing    | 69 
| Total      | 81 

### "Other" specified

| Frequency |  
|------------|---
| No response| 75  
| Bx Interventions| 1  
| classroom management| 2  
| Curriculum Mapping| 1  
| Daily 5/Café| 1  
| ESL modifying| 1  
| Total      | 81 

### 13a) How effective is your school at providing social/emotional supports to address students' non-academic barriers?

| Frequency |  
|------------|---
| 1          | 30  
| 2          | 39  
| 3          | 3   
| 4          | 4   
| Total      | 76  
| Missing    | 5   
| Total      | 81  

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<tr>
<th>14a) How effective is your school at providing community supports for students?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Behaviors</td>
<td>Student Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clear Learning Objectives</strong></td>
<td>*Set high expectations for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Designs lessons around essential questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Post Learning objectives student friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Establishes a positive relationship with every student and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Establish rituals and routines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching, Modeling, and Demonstration</strong></td>
<td>*Differentiate Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Encourage student participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Set High Expectations for behavior and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Uses effective questioning techniques (Bloom’s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guided and Independent Practice (Small Group)</strong></td>
<td>*Provides opportunities for students to construct meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Promotes a student centered environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Encourages accountable talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Checking for Understanding Through Formal and Informal Assessments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reflect continuously</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Uses assessment to plan and monitor instruction</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Design lessons around essential questions based on the common core</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One on one conferences to review student assessments and set new goals (Understand Assessments)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reflect continuously</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One on one conferences to review student assessments and set new goals (Understand Assessments)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Uses assessments to monitor progress towards meeting goals</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Uses content language</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Reading scoring guides (Based on OAA) posted</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Short term goals for reading and math posted (BOY, MOY, EOY) and (MBOY, MMOY, MEOY)</em></td>
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