



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

School Turnaround

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Handbook on effective implementation of SIG
- How to select the right Intervention Model
- SIG Webinars
- District examples of what's working
- School turnarounds in action



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Handbook	2
Toolkit for Implementation	2
Selecting the Model	2
SIG Webinars	3
District Examples	3
Videos of School Turnarounds in Action	3

Welcome to the School Turnaround Newsletter!

Hello! My name is Dr. Thelma Melendez and I am the Assistant Secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Here at the Department of Education, we are hard at work ensuring that each student receives a quality education in an excellent learning environment.

There are times however, when in order to create that excellent environment, we must exchange our current systems for those that yield more positive results. I cannot stress enough the difficulty that lies with turning around our nation's persistently lowest achieving schools. There is no step-by-step manual to turning around a school—each school has its own set of unique needs.

Resources

Located within this newsletter are a number of resources that will assist you in learning more about School Improvement Grants (SIG), school turnarounds, effective practices, and how to better implement both at the school district level.

The main goal of this newsletter is to link SEAs and LEAs with tools and resources that will help them succeed in turning around their persistently lowest achieving schools. The more resources and know how we have available to our SEAs and LEAs, the more

quickly successful school turnarounds will occur.

Dr. Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana,
Assistant Secretary



I am confident that if we work together, we will be able to create some of the best classrooms our



The resources included in this newsletter range from planning tools to webinars to information about what other school districts are implementing in their areas to achieve success.

We hope that you will use these resources in a way that will bet-

students have ever entered.

This newsletter is the first of a series that aims to provide assistance and support to SEAs and LEAs as they seek to improve their schools through the School Improvement Grant. I hope that the resources found in this newsletter will be helpful to you.

Thank you for all of your work thus far and we look forward to working with you to ensure every child is successful in school and in life.



ter inform you about school turnarounds and SIG as well as guide you to a possible path to take as you implement school turnarounds using SIG.



“Today, I am challenging you to adapt your educational model to turning around our lowest-performing schools”
- Secretary Arne Duncan



1) SIG Handbook

Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants

This 200-page handbook is designed to help states, districts, and schools understand and implement the components of the federal School Improvement Grants programs.

Part I provides resources for selecting interventions and differentiating supports. The remaining chapters address key

topics in school improvement efforts, including Leadership and Decision Making, Scheduling and Learning Time, and Human Capital— Personnel and Professional Development. Each chapter summarizes the research base and provides practical suggestions and resources.

Users can download the entire handbook, individual chapters, or resources by topic.

The handbook is available at: <http://www.centerii.org/handbook/>



2) A Tool for the LEA

Selecting the Intervention Model and Partners/Providers for a Low-Achieving School: A Decision-Making and Planning Tool for the Local Education Agency

Local education agencies are responsible for selecting the SIG intervention models with the greatest potential to dramatically improve student outcomes in

their lowest-performing schools.

This tool assists districts in making the best decisions. It can be modified to make local conditions, and also contains useful forms for gathering and documenting infor-

You can access this tool at: <http://www.centerii.org/leamodel/>



3) A Toolkit for Implementation

Toolkit for Implementing the School Improvement Grant Transformation Model

This tool walks districts and schools through the component requirements for implementing the Transformation Model using School Improvement Grant funds. Although it is primarily designed to support Transformation

Model implementation, it contains forms, resources and suggestions that are applicable to all school improvement efforts. Among the eleven topics addressed are:

- Establishing and orienting the District Transformation Team
- Moving toward school autonomy

- Working with stakeholders and building support for Transformation
- Contracting with External Providers
- Providing rigorous staff development

The Toolkit is available at: <http://centerii.org/resources/Transformation-Toolkit-0409.pdf>

4) SIG Webinar Series



This series of pre-recorded webinars is designed to share information about the key components of the four School Improvement Grant intervention models:

- Transformation
- Turnaround
- Restart
- Closure.

Two additional webinars address the essential topics of how to select the right model and how to communicate with stakeholders about school reform initiatives. Each webinar can be used “as is” or can be used in conjunction with a live webinar presentation. Power Point slides are available for each. The webinars and Power Point slides can be found at:

<http://centerii.org/webinars/>



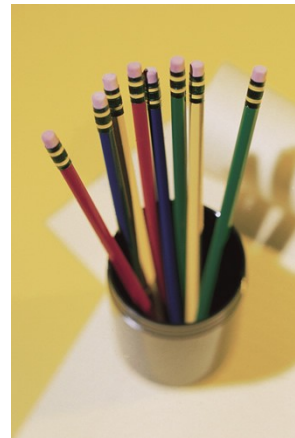
“A good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite”
— President Obama

5) What are Districts Doing?



The Center on Innovation and Improvement searched the websites of major cities and districts to find out what tools and processes are in use to help with the rapid improvement of low-performing schools. Link to strategies in play in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and the District of Columbia are available at:

<http://www.centerii.org/WhatAreDistrictsDoing/>



6) School Turnarounds in Action

The Office of Communications and Outreach created a number of videos to provide SEAs and LEAs with some real-life success stories of school turnarounds. These videos spotlight a number of schools that chose to implement one of the four turnaround models. In each case, their attempts were successful and students’ scores skyrocketed.

To view these videos of successful school turnarounds as well as learn more about the SIG program, go to:

<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/03/whats-possible-turning-around-americas-lowest-achieving-schools/>





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The Department of Education is focused on promoting student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education strives to enhance educational opportunities and equity for all America's children and families as well as improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing leadership, technical assistance, and financial support.

E-mail any questions or concerns concerning SIG or school turnarounds to askdrt@ed.gov



FAQs



Since we know many of you may have questions regarding SIG, we have recently updated the Frequently Asked Question page on our website. This new version of the FAQs incorporates all of the Q's and A's from previous addendums so that everything is now easily accessible. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/faq.html>

We hope this will answer many of the questions you have had about SIG. Please continue to send your questions regarding SIG to us at: sigquestions@ed.gov

