



Study of School Turnaround: Year 1 Data Collection Instruments

April 2014

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District Administrator Interview Protocol

March 2011

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MATHEMATICA
Policy Research, Inc.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School:	Date/Time:
Interviewee:	Interviewee's Role:

Interview: District Official

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants under ARRA. The study is taking place in 5 states, 12 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. We have collected as much information as possible through publicly available documents such as *[Interviewer: give examples of documents reviewed]*.

More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because external support providers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG grant program.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording, it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Different schools and districts have had different experiences and chosen different improvement strategies as a result of the SIG grants, so some of the questions may be more or less applicable to your situation. If at any point, you'd like clarification on any of my questions, feel free to interrupt me.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

DISTRICT CONTEXT

[Note to interviewer: Depending on the district, you will be interviewing 1-3 district administrators, including those who have primary responsibility for SIG. Tailor the protocol accordingly.]

1. I'd like to start by asking you to tell me about your district. How would you briefly describe your district to someone who has never been here before, including its strengths, challenges, and priorities?

Things to listen for:

- The students?
- The schools and differences among schools?
- The faculty? (Quality? Shortages?)
- The fiscal context?
- Relationship with the school board?
- Administrator turnover?
- Other school reform efforts?

2. [If not addressed in question 1] About how many schools in your district would you describe as persistently low-performing?

3. Why do you believe these schools in your district have remained low-performing year after year? What has hindered improvement efforts in the past (prior to receiving SIG funds)?

Probe as necessary:

- How do elementary schools differ from high schools in what contributes to low performance and what they need to improve?
- Are there any federal, state or district policies, practices and/or contractual agreements that may have (inadvertently) contributed to these schools' low performance? (for example, seniority rules, school choice options, etc.)

Things to listen for:

- Characteristics of the students; parents; community?
- Leadership?
- Teacher capacity?
- Resources?
- School climate (e.g., safety, discipline policies)

4. Generally speaking, what do you think these persistently low-performing schools need to improve performance (e.g., funding, expertise, staff capacity, etc.)?

SIG MODEL SELECTION

I'd like to talk about the School Improvement Grants more specifically. I understand that you have [insert number] of schools in your district that are receiving SIG funds.

5. Just to confirm, were you involved in the process of selecting schools to include in the district's SIG application?

6. Did you believe that the list of SIG-eligible schools (as determined by the state) targeted the schools that were most in need of improvement? Why or why not? Were there schools left off the list that you thought needed SIG funds and assistance?

7. What was the district's strategy for identifying the schools to include in the SIG application? Were there any SIG-eligible schools for which the district did not seek funding? If so, why did the district make this decision? Why was [each case study school in district in core sample] chosen? [Interviewer note: Keep in mind that here were also some SIG schools that were not awarded funds.]

Probe as necessary:

- Who made these decisions? Did the state provide any guidance?
- Were schools and/or the community involved? If so how?
- What was the rationale for selection of schools? Their past efforts to improve?
- For how many schools did you apply for SIG funds? Did you decide to try to serve all of these schools in their SIG grant? Why or why not?
- If SIG-eligible schools were not funded, was it because they did not wish to adopt any of the intervention models (e.g., because they wanted to retain the current principal)?

Things to listen for:

- Tier I, II, III schools
- Availability of funds from other funding streams and how these relate to SIG funds.

8. [Site visitors will have definitions of the models to refer to as necessary.] What was your involvement in the decisions about which intervention model—school closure, turnaround, restart, or transformation—each SIG school would implement? Who else was involved in making these decisions?

Probe as necessary:

- Who made these decisions? Did the state provide any guidance?
- Were schools and/or the community involved? If so, how?
- Have you (or your district) had any prior experience with reconstitution?

9. How did you and/or your colleagues decide which intervention model to use in which SIG schools? What criteria were considered in the decision? What was the rationale for the choice of model for [each case study school in core sample]?

10. [Site visitors should know this information ahead of time] Were any SIG schools in your district closed? Which schools did you close, and why? What did this process entail?

Probe as necessary:

- To which schools are their students now assigned?
- Where did the principals and teachers go?
- Who made these decisions?
- Are there any plans underway to monitor how the students from these closed schools are faring in the schools to which they have been transferred?

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Now I'd like to ask questions about specific improvement strategies—that is, what you are doing in the [case study school in core sample] in order to improve student outcomes.

11. Is there a district-wide approach to instructional improvement planned/being implemented for the SIG schools? To what extent is the approach different from that of non-SIG schools, if at all? What specific strategies are involved in this approach? Please explain.

Things to listen for:

- Curriculum changes
- Pedagogical strategies
- Change in use of time/time for instruction (before or after or during the school day/extended day or year)
- Parent/community involvement
- Support for at-risk students

12. [If not answered in Q11] For [each case study school in core sample] what instructional improvement strategies were planned/implemented this school year? What is the rationale behind these strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- How prescriptive is the district on these changes? How much flexibility do schools have?

13. [If not answered in Q11] How will the district support these changes?

Probe as necessary:

- Are you providing different guidance for SIG schools compared to other low-performing schools in the district?
- To what extent do the instructional strategies and district support and guidance differ by intervention model (i.e., turnaround, restart, transformation)?

14. How are these instructional improvement strategies different from changes you've tried to make in the past, or from previous instructional approaches? How do priorities under the SIG program align with your previous reform efforts?

STAFF

Now I'd like to talk a bit more about the teachers and principals in SIG schools, and teacher recruitment and retention in your district.

15. Could you tell me a bit about the process for hiring teachers in your district? Generally, how are they assigned to or hired for specific schools? Have these policies changed for the SIG schools?

Probe if not mentioned:

- What is the role of principals in selecting teachers for their schools? [For high schools] For selecting department chairs?
- How are teachers evaluated?

16. Has turnover among principals or teachers been a challenge at schools in your district? In any low performing schools? At any of [the case study schools in core sample] in particular? Please describe.

17. Have you removed staff from any of the SIG schools?

18. [IF APPLICABLE] In SIG schools in which the principal and many staff members were replaced, how were decisions made about which staff to keep and which to let go? What was the rationale?

Probe as necessary:

- Who was involved in these staffing decisions? (*Things to listen for:* principals? Who else at the district?)
- If teachers from a SIG school were dismissed, were they allowed to transfer to another school in your district? [*probe if not mentioned*]
- For the SIG schools, where did you find replacement staff? Did you have any trouble finding the kind of teachers and administrators you needed for these schools?

19. Do you have any strategies in place to recruit and retain high quality/effective teachers and principals? To improve the knowledge and skills of teachers and principals through professional development? How, if at all, do these strategies differ for SIG schools and other district schools?

Probe, as necessary:

- Use of financial incentives: for which teachers? How much? What are the requirements for these teachers?
- Union relationships and contracts
- Strategies to improve teacher working conditions
- Have they instituted professional development and/or professional learning communities?

20. Are any changes in policy being made/planned that might impact the district's teaching staff? If so, please describe?

Things to listen for:

- Flexibility (in staffing, budgeting)
- Union relationships/policies
- Tenure
- Evaluation
- Teacher compensation
- Teacher licensure/certification
- Teacher replacement/assignment

STATE ROLE

21. [Interviewer note: This is the only question on all protocols (other than the state administrator) where we ask about the state role, so be sure to ask it of at least one district administrator] What support and guidance is your state department of education providing to your district to administer the School Improvement Grant?

Probe as necessary:

- What has been most helpful? What has been least helpful?
- Has the state issued specific rules about the implementation of the SIG program overall or about specific intervention models?
- About distribution or uses of funds?
- Are there new reporting requirements to the state for SIG districts?

SCHOOL SUPPORT AND MONITORING

I know that SIG schools are trying to implement a lot of ambitious change strategies. I'd like to talk a bit about support that is provided to SIG schools as they go through this change process.

22. [If not answered in Q13] If I were a principal in a SIG school in your district, can you tell me what type of support I would receive, whether from the state, the district, or another support provider?

Probe as necessary:

- What is emphasized at [each case study school in core sample]?
- To what extent is this support different from that of non-SIG schools, if at all?
- Has the district hired additional staff for the purpose of supporting SIG schools?

Things to listen for:

- Professional development for principals/leaders (e.g., form, content, intensity?)
- Professional development for teachers (e.g., form, content, intensity?)
- Intensity of support services (how often?)
- Fit between support provider and school needs
- Consistency/coherence with school's SIG intervention model

23. [Only ask of districts that we know are working with Education Management Organizations or Charter Management Organizations, and only ask if not addressed in response to the previous question] For [each of the case study schools district in core sample], how would you characterize the district's relationship with this [EMO/CMO]? How does the district coordinate with the [EMO/CMO]?

Probe as necessary:

- Which educational decisions are made by the [EMO/CMO] and which by the district?
- To what degree are the [EMO/CMO]'s philosophies and strategies aligned with the district's?
- How is the [EMO/CMO] evaluated?
- What level of support is provided by the [EMO/CMO]?
- Are the staff qualified to provide support?
- Is the support consistent with the SIG intervention model?

USE OF FUNDS

I'd like to talk about the use of SIG funds in the case study schools in your district that are in the core sample.

24. How are the SIG funds being used to support or stimulate specific improvement strategies? *[Interviewer note: Following are some examples but do not explicitly state them: instructional coaches, additional/new teachers, professional development student supports, etc. Are there any district restrictions on how [case study schools in core sample] are allowed to use the SIG funds?*

25. What other sources of revenue will be used to support improvement efforts at [case study schools in core sample in the district]? *[Interviewer note: Following are some examples but do not explicitly state them: Title I, Title III, state general fund, categorical funds, foundations, etc.] Are the different sources applied to different strategies?*

26. I understand that the district retained [\$XXXXXX] of the total the district received from the SIG at the district level. *[Interview note: Karen will be able to help you find this figure.] What is this money being spent on? What is the rationale behind these expenditures?*

CLOSE

27. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG grant program that you'd like to comment on?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

[ASK IN FALL 2011]

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING ROLES

1. Do you think the school leadership is strong enough [at case study schools in district in core sample] to initiate these improvement approaches and strategies? How do you know? To what extent do you think the principal has the appropriate leadership skills? Why?

Probe as necessary:

- What are the leadership challenges [at case study schools in core sample]?
- How are the school leader/leadership team equipped to plan improvement strategies?

2. What was your involvement in the decisions about specific instructional improvement strategies for SIG schools? Who else was involved?

3. Who made decisions regarding how SIG funds should be spent in schools—the district? The principal? Others? How is this different from how expenditure decisions are usually made, if at all?

Probe as necessary:

- What was the district's strategy for distributing these funds across the identified schools?
- Did the guidance districts gave to schools regarding how to spend SIG funds differ by intervention model?
- Do schools have the same flexibility in use of SIG funds that they do with other funds?

Listen for:

- School involvement

4. How will the district measure and monitor SIG schools' success?

Probe as necessary:

- How will you know if SIG schools have been successful?
- What student indicators will you use?
- What data is used, and how? (e.g., student outcomes, implementation, observation of classrooms?)
- Who uses the data?
- Does the district provide any data or data interpretation training to schools?

[ASK IN FUTURE YEARS]

1. I know that SIG funds will only last for three years. In choosing improvement strategies, have you given thought to sustaining the change after the SIG program?)

Probe as necessary:

- Are strategies under SIG carrying over to other schools in the district?

2. What are your expectations for where [the case study schools in core sample] will be in a year's time? In three years' time?

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

High School Principal Interview Protocol

March 2011

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School:	Date/Time:
Interviewee:	

Interview: High School Principal

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are under contract with the U.S. Department of Education to study how School Improvement Grant (SIG) implementation unfolds, and more specifically, the decisions and strategies schools, districts and states undertake, and the constraints they face as they work to implement intervention models intended to improve student outcomes. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on SIG implementation experiences from a diverse array of SIG grantees

Privacy

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions.

Recording

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team would hear the tape, it would just be for my own reference. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)** it is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

PRINCIPAL BACKGROUND AND SCHOOL CONTEXT

1. Can you tell me a bit about your background in schools? When and how did you come to be a principal at this school?

Probe if not mentioned:

- *How many years of experience do you have working as a principal?*
- *Do you have experience working in schools that are similar to this one?*
- *Were you in a low performing school before this one?*
- *Do you have experience successfully turning around a school?*
- *Did you work in the school before becoming principal? If yes, for how long and in what capacity?*
- *When did you become the principal of this school? [month/year]*
- *Did you work in the district (at central office or in another school within the district) before becoming principal of this school? If yes, for how long and in what capacity?*

2. I know that every school is unique, with unique circumstances that influence daily life. How would you describe your school to someone who has never been here before, including its strengths and challenges?

Things to listen for:

- Faculty: capacity (e.g., teacher knowledge and skills), commitment, turnover
- Structures (e.g., Departments/clusters, specialized classes)
- Students (diversity of student population, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ELL, SPED)
- Community
- Funding level

3. Why do you believe this school has remained low-performing year after year? What has hindered improvement efforts in the past (prior to receiving SIG funds)?

4. Generally speaking, what do you think your school needs to improve student performance (e.g., funding, expertise, staff capacity, etc.)?

Things to listen for:

- Funds
- Expertise (e.g., about effective practices, struggling students, etc.)
- Data needs
- Staff capacity
- Teacher quality
- Parent involvement

5. This Fall we will be focusing on the principal's role and how you view leadership/governance and decision-making roles. Today I'd like to talk about the big picture. What is your main priority as principal?

Things to listen for:

- Fostering a coherent instructional vision and strategies
- Supporting the faculty and staff members in the change process
- Creating opportunities for professional learning, e.g. PD, coaching, fostering collaboration

- Monitoring instruction and monitoring student learning, e.g., observing classrooms, meeting with teachers to discuss students' progress, tracking progress of individual students, etc.
- Managing the internal environment, e.g., building a leadership team, motivating students and teachers, managing facilities, etc.
- Managing the external environment, e.g., meeting with parents, communicating with the district, building support from external organizations, etc.

6. [If not answered in Q5] What are your activities in a typical week?

Probe as necessary:

- What percentage of that typical week is spent on instruction and learning (what's going on in the classroom) and what percent is taken up by the "external environment"?
- How much time do you spend in the classrooms during a typical week?

7. I would like to turn to the supports you receive. From within the school, what support do you receive (or have access to) to implement the changes in your school? From the School Improvement Team? Other school staff? Do you think you have the support you need to achieve your goals? Why or why not?

REFORM AND SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

8. I'd like to talk about how the school is using the School Improvement Grant (SIG). First, how was the [insert name of SIG intervention model] selected as the SIG model to implement in this school? Who was involved in the decision?

Probe as necessary:

- Do you know what the rationale for this choice was?
- How were you involved in this decision?
- Were your school's departments/clusters or staff involved in this decision?

9. Could you describe the specific improvement strategies your school has implemented this school year? How have you prioritized these strategies? [Interviewer note: The focus of this question is on the current improvement efforts in the school, regardless of the funding source (e.g., even if they are not funded by SIG).]

Probe as necessary:

- Why were these strategies or combinations of strategies chosen (e.g., after an assessment of needs?) first? [Interviewer note: The focus of this probe is on leverage points, theories of action]

Things to listen for:

- Overall strategies (class size reduction? Additional supports for low-performing students?)
- Staffing changes
- Improving instructional programs
- Professional development [both for staff and principal]
- Use of data
- Supplies/materials/technology
- Extended learning time
- School climate issues
- Community engagement

- Facilities improvements
- Other support

10. [Lower priority] How is your high school organized? [Interviewer note: Do not assume that departments or clusters are the only way a high school is organized] Is it organized into departments or clusters? If yes, what role do the departments/clusters have in the implementation of these strategies aimed at improving student outcomes?

Things to listen for:

- Instructional/pedagogical strategies
- Curriculum changes (which subjects?)
- Changes in use of time (before, after, or during the school day)
- Personnel changes
- Discipline policies
- School safety

Probe as necessary:

- Is the role of the departments/clusters in implementing these strategies shared equally? Why or Why not?
- Did departments/cluster participate in the selection of these strategies (e.g., after an assessment of needs?)?
- How will the departments/clusters share responsibility for implementing these strategies?

SUPPORT FROM DISTRICT AND EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

11. What services has your district provided to you this year as a SIG school? To what extent are these additional services, i.e., services non-SIG schools don't receive or services you didn't receive last year?

Listen for/probe if appropriate:

- What technical assistance has been provided so far? (content, frequency, etc.)
- Have particular departments/clusters been targeted for district support? Which ones?
- Are there additional resources available to you for professional development? For other purposes? Please explain.
- Has the district supported any facilities improvements or are any planned?

12. [Restart schools only] Can you describe your work with the Charter Management Organization or Education Management Organization?

Probe as necessary:

- How would characterize the school's relationship with [name of organization]?
- When did they begin working with this school?
- How were they selected to work with this school?
 - [ask if principal not employed by CMO/EMO]:
- Who made that decision? Were you involved in the decision?
- How satisfied are you with the work of this organization to date? Why?

13. Who, other than the district and outside of the school staff (e.g., state staff, outside organizations, external commitments, etc.), provides support or assistance to your school? Please describe them and the type of support or assistance they provide.

Things to listen for:

- Multiple providers w/ multiple types of supports v. one provider providing comprehensive support
- Intensity and stability of support providers
- How long has external provider(s) been involved with the school?
- How often are they at the school?
- Perceived fit with school needs
- Types of support
 - Leadership Coaching [*Interviewer note*: probe if not mentioned]
 - Professional/staff development
 - Improvement facilitator/
 - Curriculum/instruction
 - Other

14. How useful/relevant has the assistance provided this year from each source been in addressing identified needs? Why, or why not?

STAFF

15. I'd like to turn to a few questions about your staff. How would you describe the staff in this school?

Probe if not mentioned:

- Strengths and weaknesses of staff, e.g., has the school been able to find the kinds of qualified teachers you need for your students; in particular content areas or specialties? If yes, which ones?
- Do the staff have the capacity to implement the new reforms being asked of them? If no, why not?
- Where there any changes to personnel [*i.e., staff turnover*] this school year? As part of SIG implementation or any other changes?
- How would you characterize the feelings of the school staff toward the school's improvement efforts? Do they support them?

16. [As part of the school's improvement strategies this year, or in general] Were any teachers or other staff replaced? If so, when and which staff were replaced, and why? Where did replaced staff go? Where did new staff come from?

Probe as necessary:

- [*If not mentioned above*], what was the process for replacing the staff?
- How were these decisions made?
- Who made these decisions, e.g., how many were initiated by the teachers themselves, as opposed to the district/school replacing or reassigning them?
- Have there been any challenges with the replacement process?
- Any changes in policies regarding teacher licensure/certification and/or teacher replacement/assignment?

17. *[If there is time; if not, we will ask about PD in the fall]* **Are the staff in your school participating in professional development or learning activities designed to help them implement the SIG-funded strategies? Please describe them for me.**

Things to listen for:

- What is the form of professional development, e.g., in-person, off-site, distance learning?
- Who participates?
- Who provides?
- What is the content?
- How frequent, over what time frame, how many hours?
- Embedded in the school day?

USE OF FUNDS

[THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED OF BOTH BASE SAMPLE AND CASE SAMPLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. For case sample schools only: The Interviewer will need to obtain the school's SIG budget prior to the interview.]

18. **How has the amount of funding your school has received this year (2010-11, a.k.a. since receiving SIG funds) changed compared to last year (2009-10)?** *[Interviewer note: inquire about change in funding because of SIG.]*

19. *[For base sample schools: ask only if there is time]* **I know some decisions are probably made by the district and some by the school, which we will talk further about in the Fall. Can you tell me how you (or the district) have applied different sources of funds to different improvement strategies, including those you've already mentioned?** *[Interviewer note: This question is asking both about what funding streams they are using and how generally they made these decisions. Following are some examples, but do not explicitly state them: ELL resource teachers paid for by Title III, SIG paid for additional professional development, SIG paid for consultants to focus on instructional coherence, etc.]*

20. *[If not explicitly discussed in Q19 response]* **How have you used the SIG funds in your school this year?** *[Interviewer note: Although question 9 is not explicitly about SIG funds, the principal may discuss SIG-funded strategies earlier. This also provides another way to identify school improvement priorities, coherence, focus]*

Things to listen for:

- Overall strategies (class size reduction? Additional supports for low-performing students?)
- Did you hire additional staff? For what purpose? (e.g., instructional coaches, tutors)
- Improving instructional programs
- Extending learning time
- Supplies/materials/technology
- Professional development
- Facilities improvements
- Other support?

[For core sample schools only: At this point, interviewer asks specific questions to clarify information in the SIG budget. Since we are asking this at the end of the school year, what the principal says they are using SIG funds for may be different than in the budget. Ask the principal to tell you what has deviated from the original budget. (If the school has sent you an updated budget, it should reflect more closely what they are actually using SIG funds for.)

CLOSE

21. I know the SIG initiative is relatively new, but do you have any reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the effort so far? [Interviewer may provide examples of how the SIG resources have been used based on improvement strategies and budget allocations discussed in the earlier questions]

Probe as necessary:

- To what extent are you satisfied with the progress made this school year?
- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others?
- What are some of the challenges to implementation?

22. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG initiative that you'd like to comment on?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING ROLES

1. To what extent do you rely on other school staff to assist you with your leadership responsibilities (e.g., department heads, teacher leaders, etc.)? Who are the other school leaders and what are their leadership roles?

Things to listen for:

- Fostering a coherent instructional vision and strategies
- Creating opportunities for professional learning, e.g. PD, coaching, fostering collaboration
- Monitoring instruction and student learning, e.g., observing classrooms, meeting with teachers to discuss students' progress, tracking progress of individual students, etc.
- Managing the internal environment, e.g., building a leadership team, motivating students and teachers, managing facilities, etc.
- Managing the external environment, e.g., meeting with parents, communicating with the district, building support from external organizations, etc.

2. How much discretion do you have to make decisions about key aspects of the school, such as staffing, scheduling, curriculum, professional development? Do you feel you have a sufficient level of autonomy in these areas?

Things to listen for:

- Selection of improvement strategies
- Staffing
- Curriculum and instruction
- Control over the school schedule
 - Length of the school day
 - Length of the school year
 - Other?
- Professional development
- Selection of external/support providers
- Selecting texts, technology, etc.

3. Do you have discretion or authority to hire staff for your school? If so, is your discretion greater than before the SIG grant? Different from other schools in the district?

4. How much discretion do you have to allocate funds in your school budget? Did this change over the past year, or will it change for the coming year? If so, how?

Probe as necessary:

- Over which types of expenditures do you have discretion?
- As you have allocated resources in your school, have you been able to blend funds from different sources for the same purpose?
- Are you able to make changes to budget allocations based on identified needs over the course of the school year?

5. How much discretion do you have to allocate SIG funds in the school? Besides yourself, who makes decisions about how the funds are used in the school? Did this change over the past year? If so, how?

- What guidance did you receive about how SIG funds are to be used?
- From who did you receive the guidance?
- So far, have you been able to allocate funds to support everything you believe your school needs to succeed?

MONITORING

6. How is the school monitoring its progress? How will you know if your school is successful? Who is responsible for monitoring?

Probe as necessary:

- Do the departments/clusters play a role in monitoring progress?
- What indicators of student success will be used? What will be the data sources?
- How do/will you assess students' instructional needs?
- How do/will you assess and improve staff capacity, i.e., evaluate teachers?
- What data will you use? How will you use the data?

[ASK IN FUTURE YEARS]

Have you been able to allocate funds to support everything you believe your school needs to succeed?

Probe as necessary:

- Do you believe you have enough funds to ensure improved academic achievement?
- Do you believe funds are being used efficiently and effectively?
- *[If no:]* What are the barriers to that ideal resource allocation?

ELL STUDENTS

These questions focus on the ways that principals in SIG schools seek to meet the needs of ELL students.

1. I'd like to get a sense of the overall approach to ELL instruction at your school. Are there designated programs, specialized classes, supports and/or curriculum that are used school wide? How/why were they selected? Are there any strategies or programs that you have found to be particularly effective?

Probe as necessary:

- Any programs or curricula indicated by the district
- Whether there is a mandated/intended curriculum in place
- Use of native language in classes with ELL students
- Interventions available to ELLs who are struggling (such as, after school program, tutoring, mentoring, academic counselors, Response to Intervention, etc.)
- Whether there is a designated ELD time during the school day and a description of what takes place during that time.

2. Do you feel teachers at your school have the skills and knowledge needed to be successful with the ELL students at your school? Why/why not?

Probe as necessary:

- Extent to which the most skilled teachers are the ones teaching the classes with the largest numbers of ELLs
- Distribution of high quality/effective teachers in classes with the most ELLs
- Challenges, such as turnover, understaffed, resistance to change, etc.

3. Do teachers at your school engage in professional learning that specifically addresses ELL instruction? If so, what? What is the district's role?

Probe as necessary:

- Professional development initiatives identified by the district
- Any differences in what mainstream vs. ELL teachers receive.
- Supports provided by district and/or any assistance provided by state

4. I'd like to get a sense of the kinds of resources (financial, human, or other) you draw on in addressing the needs of ELL students at your school. Do you receive financial resources that are targeted for ELLs? What other resources do you draw on?

Probe as necessary:

- Resources identified by the district
- Any challenges associated with securing resources needed
- How resources from multiple sources—Title I, Title III and others--are coordinated and utilized to support ELLs

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

Union Representative Interview Protocol

March 2011

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School:	Date/Time:
Interviewee:	Union Name/Affiliation:

Interview: District Union Representative

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

As you probably know, we are part of an independent research team contracted by the U.S. Department of Education to study the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (SIG), which are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus package). More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. The study team, in consultation with ED, selected [list selected schools in district] for the study. Because teachers' unions can play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the implementation of the SIGs.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

1. Can you tell me a bit about your background in schools? How did you come to be a union representative? Is this a full-time position for you?

[Note: There are different types of union representatives; some might be full-time positions, some might be part-time (especially in smaller districts). You may need to tailor the remaining interview questions based on this context.]

DISTRICT CONTEXT

2. I'd like to start by asking you to tell me more about your district. How would you describe your district to someone who has never been here before, including the primary issues it is facing, its educational priorities, its teaching staff?

Things to listen for:

- The characteristics of teachers?
- The schools, and differences among schools?
- External instructional and professional supports (after school programs, universities, etc.)?

3. What would you say are this district's top three strengths? Top three challenges?

4. To what extent is teacher turnover a problem in this district? In particular schools? *[In the case study schools?]* What do you think are the main reasons teachers leave the district or particular schools?

5. Why do you believe *[the case study schools]* are low-performing? What has contributed to their low performance year and after? What has hindered improvement? How is this different from other low-performing schools in the district?

6. What do you think it would take for *[each case study school]* to improve?

UNION-DISTRICT RELATIONSHIP

7. How would you describe the union's relationship with the superintendent and other district officials? With principals?

Things to listen for:

- What are the biggest strengths and challenges in this relationship?
- How much do district and union officials collaborate?

Probe, if necessary:

- On what issues or in what areas does the union work with the district?
- Has this relationship changed in recent years?

SIG REFORM STRATEGIES AND UNION INVOLVEMENT

[Site visitors will have definitions of the models to refer to as necessary.]

8. [Number] schools in this district are now implementing major reforms through the School Improvement Grant program. To what extent was the union involved in decisions about which schools to include in the SIG application and which intervention models (for example, converting to charter, or replacing teachers and the principal) they should implement?

Probe, if necessary:

- *[If the union was not involved]:* Did the union ask to be involved in these decisions?
- Were teachers involved? How were they involved?

9. How would you describe the intervention model chosen for [each case study school]? To what extent do you believe these are aligned with the challenges you believe these schools face?

10. Separate from the intervention models themselves, how would you describe any new specific instructional strategies being implemented in [each case study school]? To what extent do you believe these are aligned with the challenges you believe these schools face?

Probe, if necessary:

- Do you think these new reforms—the intervention models and the new specific instructional strategies-- will be successful in each school? Why or why not?

IMPACT ON STAFF

11. Do you believe teachers in this district have the capacity and support necessary to be successful implementing these reforms? What support is the district providing to staff? Is the state providing any direct support to schools? What additional support do you believe will be necessary?

Things to listen for:

- Additional professional development being provided to staff
- What districts are looking for in recruiting new teachers
- Differences between elementary and high school needs

12. I understand some SIG school(s) in this district had many of their faculty replaced. Was the union involved in the decision to do this? Was the union involved in choosing which staff was to be replaced? In hiring new staff? How were they involved?

Probe, if necessary:

- Where did staff who were let go from [this school/these schools] go?
- Does the new staff have the skills needed to meet the needs of students in these schools? To implement the new reforms?
- How was new staff recruited? Were there any challenges in hiring new staff for these schools? Could you describe these challenges?

13. [For restart schools only] I understand [number] SIG school(s) are now operating [as charter schools/under a new management organization]. Was the union involved in this decision? How were they involved? How did this decision impact teachers in your school? In the district overall?

14. Over the past year, have there been any changes to how teachers are assigned to schools or positions? How would you describe these changes?

Probe, if necessary:

- Has the district added any incentives for teachers to work in particular schools?
- Have there been any new retention or recruitment efforts?

15. Have there been any recent changes in or discussions about the district's approach to teacher compensation? Please describe. What was the impetus for these changes? What has been the union's involvement in these discussions or decisions?

CLOSE

16. Is there anything else regarding these reforms or the School Improvement Grant program that you would like to comment on?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

External Support Provider Protocol

March 2011

Note to the interviewer: *There are many different types of external support providers who may be working with SIG schools. Some may be affiliated with a private organization that specializes in management of low-performing schools. Others may be under contract with the district to focus on a specific aspect of the school, such as mathematics, special education, or leadership. Still others may be affiliated with the state, and have worked through the state system of support in the past. Before conducting this interview, you should obtain background information on the key support providers, their affiliation, and role in the school, so you can appropriately tailor these questions.*

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Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20208.



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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

Support Provider(s):	Interviewer:
District:	Interviewer:
School(s):	Date/Time:

Interview: Support Provider(s)

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collection information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because external support providers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

I have four main areas that I would like to discuss with you today. First, I would like you to tell me about your own background in education and how you became a school support provider. Next, I'd like to talk about the structure of the support you provide to SIG schools including your role and responsibilities, and how you interact with the principal and teachers at the SIG school or schools you support. Finally, I'd like to know what you think might be some potential outcomes of the support you provide to the schools.

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

SUPPORT PROVIDER(S) BACKGROUND

1. First, I'd like to know a bit about your background. What is your expertise? What kind of training have you had?

Probe as necessary:

- What is your background in education? Were you ever a teacher or administrator?
- Do you have a particular area of expertise? Please describe.
- What types of schools do you work with most often? (Elementary, middle, high? Traditional vs. charter?)
- How many years have you been involved with support for low-performing schools?

2. [If the external provider is part of an organization] How long have you been affiliated with [name of organization]? What is the background or expertise of the organization? What kind of training does your organization provide?

Probe as necessary:

- How many low-performing schools does your organization work with?
- Does the organization only work in the district, or state? In how many other districts/states does the organization work?

3. How many schools are you currently working with? How many are low performing?

Probe as necessary:

- Do you work specifically with low-performing schools? How did you come to work with struggling schools?
- How many SIG schools, specifically?

4. [If working with multiple schools] Do you primarily focus on a particular type of low performing school?

Probe as necessary

- Do you focus on high schools or elementary schools?
- Do you support schools with a particular need based on your expertise? [e.g., reading, ELL]
- Do you focus on a particular part of support? [e.g., leadership, instruction, etc.]

5. How and when did you come to be the support provider for the [insert name] school?

[Note: Try to get specific information for how a provider is matched or connected with a school and listen for the history of the school.]

Probe as necessary

- [If working for a larger organization/or state] Are you assigned a particular region or state?
- Did you respond to a request from the state or district for proposals to become a provider for this particular district/state?
- When did you start working with this district and/or [case study] school(s)?
- How are you received by principals and faculty?
- Did you look at data? (test scores, etc.) or conduct a needs assessment in your first introduction to the school?

6. What are your main responsibilities/roles within this school? To whom are you responsible?

Probe as necessary.

- Who hired you/your organization? The state, district, school?
- What are your responsibilities as listed in your contract?
- To what extent are your current responsibilities different from previous responsibilities [*since SIG grant*]
- How and to whom are you held accountable for the work you do?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

[Note: The external provider support provider may be working with several case study schools in a district or across the state. In these instances, the following questions should be asked for each case study school.]

7. Let's talk about the [case study] school you're working with. Can you tell me a little about the school context? What do you think are the key features that we should know about the school? [*Note: early in the process, the support provider may still be learning about the school context.*]

Probe as necessary:

- What are the top three challenges facing this school? Why do you think the school has remained low performing year after year?
- What do you know about reform activities the school has been working on already?

8. In your opinion, what are the key improvement strategies that are being implemented in [*insert name*] school through the SIG grant? Is there a specific sequence of intervention strategies?

Probe if not mentioned: [*Note: Let the respondent "tell the story" of the change process in the school, but follow up with probes that capture these details.*]

- Reference to specific SIG models and activities associated with the model (changes in personnel, leadership issues, instructional practices, data use/assessments, professional development, efforts to improve school climate, etc.)
- Stakeholder engagement and buy-in to change strategy
- Familiarity with SIG guidelines
- Are the improvement strategies aligned to the challenges faced by the school?
- Are the improvement strategies aligned to the needs of ELL students?
- [*If the interviewee works with multiple schools*] What are common strategies in all the schools you work with?
- [*If applicable*] To what extent are specific interventions unique to the SIG school?

10. [*Only ask if know provider has history with school*] What was your role in helping the school or district determine the appropriate school improvement strategies for this school?

11. Do you know how the SIG funds are used to support school improvement activities? Do you know if there are additional funding sources that support improvement strategies in this school?

Probe as necessary:

- Do you know if resources are sufficient? Have funds arrived on time?
- Do you have any concerns about the use of funds?

12. Who are the primary people that you work with in supporting this school? How frequently do you communicate with them?

Probe as necessary:

- How often are you in the school, working with staff?
- What kind of rapport have you developed with school staff?

Things to listen for:

- Teachers, administrators, school improvement team, specialists, staff members, parents, businesses, students, other community groups
- Listen for which groups the interviewee *omits* as well

13. If there is more than one support provider in [insert name] school, do your roles differ from one another? How do you interact and share information with one another?

Probes as necessary:

- How do the support providers interact and communicate?
- With what frequency do support providers discuss the school's needs and support strategies?

STATE AND DISTRICT ROLES

14. Does the state education agency or district provide or procure training for the support providers? If yes, please describe the training.

15. Does the state or district provide any guidelines for your role in the school, or tools that structure the SIG improvement process?

Things to listen for:

- School improvement framework, on-line planning tools, data tools, etc.
- SEA priorities and ways in which the SEA seeks to frame the SIG process (e.g., punitive vs. support)
- Extent to which the district shapes what the provider does in the school and provides direction

16. In your role as a support provider for the SIG school(s), do you work with district staff? If yes, how are the district staff engaged in your work?

Probe if not mentioned:

- How much time is spent with district staff?
- What is the primary purpose for working with the district staff (e.g., procuring resources, building relationships, etc.)?
- *[If the respondent works with more than one SIG school]* Does this level of involvement vary by school, or by Tier?

17. *[This may not be applicable for all support providers, depending on the organization with which they are affiliated.]* **Aside from the state or district training you described, what other support do you receive professionally? Do you interact with other support providers to learn more about how they are working with SIG schools?**

18. **Are you held accountable for improvement in this school? If so, for which indicators or outcomes?**

Probe as necessary:

- Are there benchmarks that you are expected to attain?

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

19. **Based on what you've observed so far, do you anticipate seeing improvement – either in test scores or other areas, like school culture or morale, student engagement – due to the SIG strategies over the next year? The next three years? Why or why not?**

20. **I know the SIG initiative is relatively new, but do you have any reflections on the strengths and weaknesses so far?**

Probe as necessary:

- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others?
- What are some of the challenges to implementation?

21. **Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG initiative that you'd like to comment on?**

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

School Improvement Team Focus Group Protocol

March 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

State:	Interviewer:
Date/Time:	Interviewee:

Focus Group: School Improvement Team

Introduction

Good afternoon/morning. My name is _____ and I am from AIR/Mathematica Policy Research. I am part of an independent research team that is studying schools' use of the school improvement grants awarded in 2010. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on the implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees.

To help us better understand how [SCHOOL NAME] is using its school improvement resources, we would like to ask you some questions about the school's improvement efforts and the role of the school improvement team in these efforts.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'm recording the discussion so I don't have to take detailed notes and can listen carefully to what you are saying. No one outside of the research team will have access to the tape. We will not share this recording or notes from this session with the school or district administration. In addition, our reports will never identify you by name. Instead, we will combine information from this discussion with information from discussions our team is holding in other schools. Participants' comments will be reported as, "One person felt that. . ." or "About half of the participants did not agree with..." The recording is just to help me remember what you say.

I hope you will feel free to be open and frank in our discussion. I ask that none of you share what you hear with others outside the group. It will also help me if you speak clearly and if you will speak one at a time. The discussion should last about one hour.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Let's get started. [HIT THE RECORD BUTTON].

I have hit the record button. Everyone in the room has consented to being recorded.

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)**; it is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

INTRODUCTIONS

1. Let's start by introducing ourselves. Please tell me your name, your position at the school, how long you have been at the school, and how long you have been on the school improvement team.

THE SCHOOL

2. What would you say are the school's three best features? Why?

3. What are the three biggest challenges the school is facing?

4. In general, how would you characterize the feelings of the school staff towards the school? How about students? The community?

5. How would you describe the leadership at this school?

Probe as necessary:

- Who provides leadership?
- To what extent does the principal delegate leadership/management responsibilities to others?

6. In general, how supportive do you feel the district is towards the school?

7. Why do you think this school has remained low-performing year after year? What has hindered improvement?

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

8. What is the mission of the SIT? Who provides guidance to the SIT on its specific responsibilities?

9. What are the SIT's specific responsibilities?

Probe as necessary: How is the SIT involved in:

- Analyzing and using school-, teacher-, and student-level data?
- Improving instructional practices?
- Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
- Assessing availability/access to student supports?
- Identifying professional development needs and opportunities and other teacher supports?
- Evaluating teachers?
- Considering alternative teacher compensation/incentive packages?
- Improving the school climate (e.g., safety, school discipline?)

10. *[Note: If some have continued to serve on the SIT]:* How have these responsibilities changed over time? Why?

11. Are there other efforts underway at the school in which the SIT is not involved but you think it should be? Please describe.

12. To what extent does the work of the SIT influence the school's policies and improvement strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- Can you provide some examples of improvement strategies?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Now, I'd like to hear from you about the school's improvement efforts and the SIT's role in those efforts.

13. How do you think [the SIG improvement approaches/strategies identified for the school] will address the issues we discussed facing the school? Please describe how you think specific improvement strategies are working, or will work, to improve the school.

14. How are these strategies different from others the school has tried and/or implemented in the past? To what extent have the previous strategies been successful? Why?

15. To what extent do you think the school and its leadership have the capacity to implement these improvement approaches and strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- Does the principal have the appropriate leadership skills?

16. How do you see the [SIG/school improvement approaches and strategies] affecting your work at the school?

Probe, if not already addressed:

- As a member of the SIT?
- As a teacher/or other staff role?

17. How are other school stakeholders—i.e., other school staff, parents, the community—providing input or involved in the school's improvement efforts?

Probe, if not already addressed:

- Have you been satisfied with their level of involvement? Why or why not?

18. [Ask only if have time] What is the school's plan for assessing how the current plan/efforts affect the school's and its students' performance? To what extent is the SIT involved in these plans/efforts?

USE OF FUNDS

[Note: The member of the SIT may not know about funds, depending on the responsibilities and composition of the team. Please be attuned to team responsibilities and tailor these questions appropriately.]

19. Do you know what sources of revenue will be used to support the improvement efforts? Are the different sources applied to different strategies, e.g., instructional coaches, additional/new teachers, professional development, student supports, etc. How is this different from previous years, if at all?

20. To what extent will the SIG be supporting these strategies? Do you know if there are any *restrictions* on how the school uses the SIG funds?

21. What was the SIT's role in developing the school's plans for using the SIG funding? Please describe.

SUPPORT FROM STATE, DISTRICT AND EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

22. How would you characterize the quality of the assistance the SIT or school has received in its efforts to improve the school? Please indicate the source of the assistance—district, state, or external support provider.

Probe as necessary:

- *[If an external support provider]* What was the SIT's role in selecting the external support provider?
- *[If an external support provider]* What is the SIT's role in assessing the external support provider's ongoing work in the school and its teachers?
- Please provide specific examples of the type of assistance.
- Have you felt that the provider understood your school and its needs?
- If you've initiated a request for help, to what extent was the assistance in line with the issue for which you sought help?
- Was the assistance provided in a timely way?

CLOSE

24. Are there any other comments you'd like to share with us about the SIG grant program specifically or your school improvement efforts in general?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

Instructional Coach Interview Protocol

March 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per interview. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20208.



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Policy Research, Inc.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School:	Date/Time:
Interviewee:	

Interview: Instructional Coach

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA.

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24, districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because external support providers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

BACKGROUND

[Note: If there are more than one instructional coach and they focus on different topics/subjects, e.g., literacy, math, try to interview both of them. If the instructional coach interviewed is a peer coach, tailor the questions appropriately.]

Questions 1 and 2 will only be asked in spring 2011, or the first time a coach is interviewed if he or she is new in subsequent years.

1. I'd like to start by talking a bit about your background. What were your teaching experiences before working as an instructional coach? How long have you been a coach?

Things to listen for:

- How many years have you worked at this school? In what capacities?
- How many years have you worked in this district? In what capacities?
- *[If coach is new]*, Where were you working prior to this school? How were you recruited to work at this school?
- How were you recruited to be a coach/learn about being an instructional coach?
- Do you have a particular area of expertise [later, listen for the extent to which coach's expertise fit the school challenges]

2. Did you receive any specific training(s) to be an instructional coach?

Probe, if necessary:

- Who conducted the training? How long did it last?
- How long ago did you receive this training?

3. What kinds of ongoing training or professional development for instructional coaches have you participated in over the past year?

- What ongoing training is required for your job?
- Do you formally or informally communicate with other instructional coaches in the district, state? How frequently? What do you discuss?

COACH ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4. I'd like to know about your role in the school and your relationship with the teachers. What can you tell me about your responsibilities and how you provide support to teachers?

Probe, if necessary:

- What are your goals for working with teachers? What do you want them to learn or to accomplish?
- How do you know if you have been successful with the teachers you work with?
- Can you describe when and how you work with teachers? (*What context, how frequently*)

5. How do you (or others) determine which teachers to work with?

Probes, if necessary:

- Who determines which teachers you work with?

- Do you work with teachers who have not been determined high quality/effective? If so, how is teacher quality/effectiveness determined? E.g., student achievement, classroom observations, other?
- Do you work with teachers with particular characteristics – novice teachers, teachers with large number of ELL and special ed students, teachers of a certain grade?
- How many teachers do you work with? How well do you get to know each one of them?

SCHOOL CONTEXT

6. Now let's talk about the whole school. Can you tell me a bit about this school? How would you describe this school to someone who has never been here before? What are its key strengths and challenges?

Things to listen for:

- Familiarity with history/prior reforms of the school
- Awareness of social context of the school
- Fit between perceived challenges and coach's skill set/experience
- Stability of leadership

7. As an instructional coach, to what extent are you satisfied with the support you get from the school leadership? Teachers? Please explain the ways in which support is evident or not evident.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Note to the interviewer: Coaches may not be familiar with all aspects of the strategies the school is adopting, in which case the phrasing of these questions may need to be modified to refer to the school's improvement efforts this school year more generally.

8. Are there some broad approaches that the school as a whole is following to reach its improvement goals? What are they and do you think they are appropriate or likely to be effective?

9. Can you describe some of the specific improvement strategies that are being, or will be, adopted this school year?

Things to listen for:

- Are there specific processes or strategies the schools are expected to implement?
 - Leadership
 - Instructional/curricula_approaches
 - Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
 - Additional staff positions; support staff, e.g., guidance counselors
 - Professional development
 - Use of data/assessments
 - Discipline policies
 - School safety
 - Student supports
 - Community/parental involvement

- How are these strategies similar or different from prior practice?
- Do you know why this school is embarking on these strategies?

10. What is your role in the implementation of these strategies? Do you feel prepared to implement these new improvement strategies?

Probes:

- [If not already addressed] What preparation did you get in advance of implementing these strategies?
- [If not already addressed] How clear was the guidance that was provided to implement the strategies?
- What is /was your role in preparing and guiding teachers as they implement these strategies?

11. Do you think teachers in your school are prepared to implement these strategies?

Things to listen for:

- Have the new strategies placed any greater demands on teachers? On you? If so, how?
- With what teachers is implementation most likely to be successful (probe for experienced vs. novice teachers, differences among content areas and grade levels, other)

REFLECTIONS

12. To wrap up, I'd like to reflect on how you feel about acting as an instructional coach in this school. What do you like about working here? What do you find difficult or frustrating?

Probes:

- Are there monetary or other incentives for you to stay at this school?
- What could make your job easier or more satisfying?
- How likely is it that you will stay at this school?

13. I know these improvement initiatives are relatively new to your school, but do you have any reflections on the strengths and weaknesses so far? [Interviewer provide examples of how the SIG resources have been used based on improvement strategies discussed in the earlier questions]

Probe, if necessary:

- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others?
- What are some of the challenges to implementation?

14. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your role in this school, and/or the improvement strategies that I haven't asked you?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

High School Teacher Interview Protocol

March 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 45 minutes per interview. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School(s):	Date/Time:

Interview: High School Teacher

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are under contract with the U.S. Department of Education to study how School Improvement Grant (SIG) implementation unfolds, and more specifically, the decisions and strategies schools, districts and states undertake, and the constraints they face as they work to implement intervention models intended to improve student outcomes. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on SIG implementation experiences from a diverse array of SIG grantees

Privacy

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions.

Recording

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team would hear the tape, it would just be for my own reference. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)** it is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

1. *[Interviewer: This question will only be asked in Spring 2011, or the first time a teacher is interviewed if he or she is new in subsequent years.] I'd like to start by talking a bit about your background, including how long you've been a teacher.*

Probe as necessary:

- How many years have you worked at this school? In what capacities, e.g., dept. chair, coach, group leader, technology mentor?
- What do you currently teach at this school (grade/subject area)?
- How many years have you worked in this district?
- *[If teacher is new]*, Where were you teaching prior to this school? How were you recruited?
- *[If teacher serves additional role(s) (e.g. instructional leader)]* What are your responsibilities for those role(s)?

YOUR CLASSROOM

2. **I'm interested to learn about your students. How would you describe the students in your class?** *[If teacher has multiple classes, ask him/her to select one class, e.g., the first class in the a.m.]*

Probe as necessary:

- What is the range of student backgrounds and abilities?

3. **What were your goals for your students this year? What did you want them to accomplish and how will you know if you have succeeded?**

Probe as necessary:

- Could you give me some examples of how you know you are successful with the students in your classroom?
- Have your goals changed at all over the past year or two? Why?
- In a typical class period, how likely is it that you are you able to meet your goals for that class?
- What proportion of your students typically are able to meet the class goals?

4. **How do you decide what you teach, especially given the range of students you've described?**

5. **What instructional/curricula approaches do you rely on most? Do you intend on making any changes in your approaches?**

Probe as necessary:

- What pedagogical approach, e.g., direct instruction vs. constructivism
- What curriculum, e.g., content area, scope and sequence
- What strategies do you use for meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students

6. **What types of challenges do you face with regard to improving your students' academic outcomes?**

7. Please describe the students who are struggling in your class. How do you address their needs? *[If teacher has multiple classes, ask him/her to select one class, e.g., the first class in the a.m.]*

Probe as necessary:

- What kinds of problems do students have? Academic problems, i.e., keeping up with material? Behavior problems?)

8. What kind of academic and social supports are currently in place to help the students in your class succeed? (e.g., tutoring, after-school programs, wraparound services [or community-based intervention] services)

Probe as necessary:

- Are these services helpful? Why or why not?
- Are there additional supports that you think need to be put in place for students?
- What programs are there for ELL and special education students?

YOUR SCHOOL

9. Now let's talk about the whole school. Can you tell me a bit about your school? How would you describe this school to someone who has never been here before? What are its key strengths and challenges?

10. *[Lower priority]* Are you part of a department or some other cluster within the high school? If yes, what are the strengths and challenges of your particular department or cluster?

Probe as necessary:

- How does your department/cluster interact with other departments or clusters?
- Are the school improvement strategies different across the departments or clusters?

11. Is there a clear set of goals for the school as a whole? If so, what are your school's goals? In particular, what are your school's improvement goals? What are your department/cluster's improvement goals *[lower priority]*?

Probe as necessary:

- Where do the goals come from and how do they affect what you do in your classroom?
- Do the goals include academic and behavioral standards?
- Does the school have high expectations for its students?
- Is responsibility for school improvement goals shared among all staff?
- Is responsibility for school improvement goals shared among the various departments/clusters?
[lower priority]

12. How would you describe the teaching staff at this school? What are their strengths and weaknesses as a staff? *[If not clear, ask which teachers are being referred to, i.e., which grade, subject, etc. and make sure to ask about their peers in the same grade.]*

Probe as necessary:

- Are there staff members with whom you plan or teach lessons or assess your students? What does this working together look like?

13. How would you characterize the leadership of this school? Who are the key leaders, and what do they do to move the school forward and support you as a teacher? To what extent do you think they are effective in leading particular aspects of the school?

[Interviewer provide examples: the principal, leadership team, department heads, cluster leaders, other teachers, coaches, etc.]

Things to listen for: *[Leadership in]:*

- Providing instructional leadership?
- Spending sufficient time in classrooms?
- Developing vision or goals for the school?
- Creating opportunities for professional learning?
- Motivating teachers and students?
- Evaluating teachers?
- Building relationships with parents and others outside the school?
- Making sure that things run smoothly on campus?

14. To what extent can staff/teachers at this school get involved in the decision making? What avenues are available to teachers to provide their input? Please describe.

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Note to the interviewer: Teachers may not know about SIG, and/or be familiar with all aspects of the strategies the school is adopting, in which case the phrasing of these questions may need to be modified to refer to the school's improvement efforts this school year more generally.

15. *[Linking back to question 11]* Are there some broad approaches or strategies that the school as a whole is following to reach its improvement goals? *[e.g., changing the reading curriculum]* What are they and do you think they are appropriate or likely to be effective?

16. Can you describe some of the specific improvement strategies that you know are, or will be, adopted at your school this school year as part of the SIG grant?

Things to listen for:

- Are there specific processes or strategies the school is expected to implement in:
 - Instruction/curriculum
 - Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
 - Use of time (e.g., during, before or after school) for training, common planning time, implementing programs, etc.
 - Staff; additional positions; support staff, e.g., additional counselors
 - Professional development
 - Use of data/assessments
 - Student supports
 - Community/parental involvement
 - School climate (e.g., discipline, safety)

17. *[Lower priority]* Can you describe some of the specific improvement strategies that you know are, or will be, adopted by your department or cluster this school year (or as part of the SIG grant)?

Things to listen for:

- Are there specific processes or strategies the department/cluster is expected to implement in:
 - Instruction/curriculum
 - Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
 - Use of time (e.g., during, before or after school) for training, common planning time, implementing programs, etc.
 - Staff; additional positions; support staff, e.g., additional counselors
 - Professional development
 - Use of data/assessments
 - Student supports
 - Community/parental involvement

Probe as necessary:

- Are these strategies similar or different from prior practice?
- Do you know why your school is embarking on these strategies?
- How are the improvement strategies prioritized?

18. How have you heard about the schools' plans for implementing these different strategies? What is the process for informing departments/clusters and individual teachers about reforms and/or new developments [lower priority]?

19. What has been your role in selecting, developing, or implementing any of these strategies? Which strategies in particular?

20. [Lower priority] What has been your department/cluster's role in selecting, developing, or implementing any of these strategies? Which strategies in particular?

21. What types of supports have you received to implement these strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- What kind of support do you receive support from external providers/organization?
- What kind of support do you receive from the district? From the school? From your department/cluster?
- What kind of support do you receive from the state education agency
- Tell me about the professional development you have participated in this year (e.g., content, frequency, format i.e., embedded in the school day)

22. Do you feel prepared to implement these new improvement strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- How have the supports you just described prepared you?
- Have the new strategies placed any greater demands on you as a teacher? If so, how? Has it required you to put in more time or effort, or work harder? How about other teachers?
- What preparation did you get in advance (e.g., orientation meetings; professional development?
- How clear was the guidance that was provided to implement the strategies?
- Are you going to continue to develop your skills to implement the strategies? How?

REFLECTIONS

23. I'd like to turn to your thoughts about teaching at this school. What do you like about this school? Can you provide me with examples that would make teaching better at this school?

Probe if not mentioned:

- Are there monetary or other incentives for you to stay at this school?
- How likely is it that you will stay at this school?

24. I know these improvement initiatives in your school are relatively new, but do you have any reflections on the strengths and weaknesses so far? [*Interviewer provide examples of how the SIG resources have been used based on improvement strategies discussed in the earlier questions*]

Probe as necessary:

- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others?
- What are some of the challenges to implementation?
- Do you feel that these initiatives will help the school improve?
- Is there an innovation or strategy that you feel the school should implement but is not? Please describe.

25. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your classroom, your school, and/or the improvement strategies that I haven't asked you?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

High School Teacher Focus Group Protocol

March 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20208.



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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School(s):	Date/Time:

Focus Group: Elementary School Teacher

Teacher Name	Grade	Subject Area

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)** it is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are under contract with the U.S. Department of Education to study how School Improvement Grant (SIG) implementation unfolds, and more specifically, the decisions and strategies schools, districts and states undertake, and the constraints they face as they work to implement intervention models intended to improve student outcomes. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on SIG implementation experiences from a diverse array of SIG grantees

Privacy

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy considerations. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions.

Recording

If you don't mind, I would like to record our discussion simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team would hear the audio file, it would just be for my own reference. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK? Do you have any questions before we begin?

TEACHER BACKGROUND

1. I'd like to start by talking a bit about your background, including how long you've been a teacher and what your role(s) has been in this school.

Things to listen for:

- How many years have you worked at this school? In what capacities, e.g., dept. chair, coach, group leader, technology mentor?
 - What do you currently teach at this school (grade/subject area)?
 - How many years have you worked in this district? [*If teacher is new*], Where were you teaching prior to this school? How were you recruited?
 - [*If teacher serves additional role(s) (e.g. instructional leader)*], What are your responsibilities for those role(s)?
-

YOUR SCHOOL

2. Now let's talk about the whole school. Can you tell me a bit about your school? How would you describe this school to someone who has never been here before? What are its greatest strengths and challenges?

Probe as necessary:

- What did you hear about the school before you started teaching? Is it different from what you are experiencing now?
- Does your school have academic and behavioral standards? Do they promote or hinder success?

3. Do you think the school staff share a common vision about the ways to approach these challenges? If so, what is that vision? If not, why not?

Probe as necessary:

- Do you think teachers and school leaders share a common vision?
- Do you think teachers share a common vision?

4. [*Lower priority*] Is your high school organized by departments or clusters? If yes, do you think there is a common vision across the departments or clusters?

5. To what extent do you think the school's environment is conducive to teaching and learning?

Probe as necessary:

- How does the school leadership deal with behavioral issues? Safety issues?
- Does your school have academic and behavioral standards? Do they promote or hinder success?
- What kinds of support do you have in dealing with behavioral issues?
- Does the school have high expectations for its students?

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Note to the focus group leader : Teachers may not be familiar with all aspects of the strategies [intervention model] the school is adopting, in which case the phrasing of these questions may need to be modified to refer to the school's improvement efforts this school year more generally.

6. Can you describe some of the specific improvement strategies that were, or will be, adopted at your school this school year?

Things to listen for:

- Are there specific processes or strategies the schools are expected to implement?
 - Instructional/curricula_approaches
 - Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
 - Use of time (e.g., before, during or after school) for training, common planning time, implementing programs, etc.
 - Staff, additional positions; support staff, e.g., guidance counselors
 - Use of data/assessments
 - Student supports
 - Community/parental involvement
 - Improve school climate (e.g., discipline, safety)

Probe as necessary:

- Do you know why your school is embarking on these strategies?
- Do you know the order in which the strategies are/will be implemented and why?

7. [Lower priority] Can you describe some of the specific improvement strategies that were, or will be, adopted at your department/cluster this school year?

Things to listen for:

- Are there specific processes or strategies the department/cluster is expected to implement?
 - Instructional/curricula_approaches
 - Meeting the needs of specific groups of students, e.g., ELLs, special education students, the lowest performing students
 - Use of time (e.g., before, during or after school) for training, common planning time, implementing programs, etc.
 - Staff, additional positions; support staff, e.g., guidance counselors
 - Use of data/assessments
 - Student supports
 - Community/parental involvement
 - Improve school climate (e.g., discipline, safety)

Probe as necessary:

- Do you know why your department/cluster is embarking on these strategies?
- Do you know the order in which the strategies are/will be implemented and why?

8. Do you think the improvement strategies fit the needs of the school and/or students? Do they fit the needs of the departments/clusters [lower priority]? Are these strategies similar or different from prior practice?

9. [Lower priority] How are the departments/clusters involved in selecting these improvement strategies?

10. Who, at the school level, is expected to be involved in implementing these strategies? Who at the department/cluster level is expected to be involved in implementing these strategies [lower priority]? As teachers, what was/is your role in implementing these strategies? Please explain.

11. How did you find out about the reform efforts that are taking place this school year in your school? How were teachers kept informed?

Probe as necessary:

- Who let you know?
- Do you feel like you received adequate information?
- Do you feel like your opinions and experiences were taken into account?
- Are all teachers on board?
- What are your expectations?
- What role does the department/cluster play in this?

12. What types of support have you received this school year to assist you in your teaching and to implement the reforms?

Probe as necessary:

- Who do you turn to for assistance?
- Where does this support come from (e.g. state, district, community partnerships, support provider, PD)?
- Are there adequate opportunities during the school day/week for you to interact with others regarding teaching?
- Tell me more about the professional development you have participated in this year (e.g., content, frequency, format i.e., embedded in the school day)?
- Any professional development specific to ELL students?
- Has the support been enough for you to feel prepared to make changes? Will you be getting additional support?
- Are the supports you have received this school year different than prior support? Explain.

13. What do you think is the likelihood that the recently adopted or planned improvement strategies will have an impact in your department/cluster and/or school (and/or students) over time? Why or Why not? If so, what do you think the impact will be?

Probe as necessary:

- Short term within this year
- Long term within a few years

14. What will be the greatest challenges to implementing these strategies?

Probe as necessary:

- What are your thoughts on why this school has remained low performing year after year? What has hindered improvement?

CLOSE

15. I know these improvement initiatives in your school are relatively new, but do you have any reflections on the process so far? *[Interviewer provide examples of how the SIG resources have been used based on improvement strategies discussed in the earlier questions]*

Probe as necessary:

- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others? Why?
- Do you think that certain components are what the school needs? Why or why not?

16. Is there anything I haven't asked you about your school that you'd like to comment on?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

Parent/Community Focus Group Protocol

March 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School(s):	Date/Time:
Interviewee(s):	

Focus Group: Parent/Community

Note to interviewer: It is important that the group be comfortable and that they be fully aware of the purpose of the discussion and how the focus group will proceed. Time is limited, so be sure to allocate time accordingly. Strive for an informal atmosphere, and encourage broad participation to the extent possible. Pass out paper and markers to make name tag tents. Then go around the room so everyone can say their first name.

Introduction

Thank you for speaking with us today. My name is [your name] and I am here with [other site visitor]. We are part of an independent research team contracted by the U.S. Department of Education to study school improvement. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country. The purpose of the study is to collect information related to the implementation, impact, costs, and benefits of the School Improvement Grant (SIG), which is part of the federal stimulus act. We are trying to understand whether and how these grants are helping schools improve education for their students.

We are not evaluating your school or your children but are trying to learn lessons that help make the program better. To do this, it is important that we hear not only from teachers and administrators but also from parents and community members. We see this as an opportunity for you to voice your opinions to the federal department of education.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

Would it be all right if we record our discussion for note-taking purposes? No one outside the research team will hear the recording. If at any point anyone would like me to turn the recorder off, just let me know.

We would really like to hear from each of you. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in all of your opinions and feelings. We ask only that one person speak at a time during the discussion. If at any time you would like clarification about any of the questions, please feel free to interrupt.

Do any of you have any questions before we begin?

Note to interviewer: Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

BACKGROUND

1. Let's start by introducing ourselves. Please tell me your name, and if you are a parent, the grade(s) of your child(ren) and how many years your child(ren) has/have been at this school.

2. How are you involved in the school? Are you part of a parent organization or leadership team at this school? If so, could you tell me a little bit about what your role is?

SCHOOL CONTEXT

3. Can you tell me a little bit about this school? How would you describe this school to someone who has never been here before? What are the major strengths (what makes this a good school)? Are there some things you would like to see that would make this school better?

Probe, if necessary:

- How about safety? Is this a safe school?
- Do you think the school environment is conducive to learning? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the school leadership? Teachers?
- What kinds of things are there for children to do after school hours?

4. *[For parents]* How does the school communicate with you about your child(ren) and what you can do to help *[him/her/them]* to do well in school?

Probe, if necessary:

- Are you pleased with the school staff's availability and willingness to talk with you about your child(ren) and the school?
- Is the communication adequate? Would you like more?
- *[If there are parents of ELL students]* Do you receive communications in your own language? Is there someone at the school you can talk to who speaks your language?
- *[For community members]* What does the school communicate to you about? Is it adequate? Would you like more?
- In what ways could the school be more "open"?

5. *[For parents]* Is there someone at the school that you can go to for additional help for your child(ren) if need be? Who? How often have you met with him/her/them? For what purpose?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

6. Is the school doing anything to address the kinds of things you mentioned earlier that you would like to see improved?

7. What other kinds of activities to improve things for students at this school have you observed or heard about?

Probe, if necessary (focus on what other respondents have mentioned on the site visit):

- Changes in school leadership? Changes in staff?
- Changes in instruction?

- Use of assessments?
- Student attendance?
- School climate, e.g., discipline, safety?
- School facilities?
- Student supports?
- Other resources?
- Parent/community involvement?
- Teacher professional development, e.g., training?
- Teacher evaluations?

8. What are your impressions of these changes? How do you think they'll help improve some of the issues in the school that we've talked about?

9. In what ways are parents/community members involved in making decisions about what happens at the school? Have you been involved in any of these decisions?

Probe, if necessary:

- If yes, can you give me some examples of decisions that have been made with the help of parents/community members?
- Would you like to be more involved in decision making? How?
- What role would you like to play in making improvements at this school?

CLOSE

10. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about this school, the community, and/or your child(ren)'s learning that I haven't asked you?

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

High School Student Focus Group Protocol

March 2011

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Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School:	Date/Time:

Focus Group: High School Students

Student Name	Grade	Gender

Note to interviewer: *It is important that the group be comfortable and that they be fully aware of the purpose of the discussion and how the focus group will proceed. Time is limited, so be sure to allocate time accordingly. Strive for an informal atmosphere, and encourage broad participation to the extent possible. Pass out paper and markers to make name tag tents. Then go around the room so everyone can say their first name and their grade level.*

Introduction

Thank you for speaking with us today. My name is [your name] and I am here with [other site visitor]. We are part of an independent research team contracted by the U.S. Department of Education to study how schools are improving education for their students. We are visiting 25 schools across the country, including yours, to learn more about how the initiative is working. We are not evaluating your school or you, but are trying to learn lessons that can help make the program better. To do this, it is important that we hear not only from teachers and administrators but also from students. We see this as an opportunity for you to voice your opinions to your school system and to the federal department of education.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

During our session today, we will record the discussion in case we miss something in our notes, but no one outside of the research team will have access to the tape. This session will give you a chance to express your opinions about your school. We want you to feel comfortable in saying what you really think and what you really feel. We hope all of you will give us your ideas since each of your opinions is important to us. There are no right or wrong answers. You

might disagree with each other and that's okay since different people often have different experiences and different opinions. It's really okay to disagree with someone but please do it respectfully.

Also, it will also help me if you speak clearly and if you will speak one at a time. The discussion should last about one hour.

Finally, I ask that none of you share what you hear with others outside the group, so everyone can feel safe being honest.

Are there any questions before we get started?

[Press record button]. I have hit the record button. Let's begin by going around the room and having each person introduce him or herself by first name.

Note to interviewer: *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

BACKGROUND

1. Please tell me what grade you're in and how long you have been at this school.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

2. We'd like to know about how you feel about your school. How would you describe your school to a friend who goes to a different school?

Probe, if necessary:

- How would you describe:
 - Your teachers?
 - Your principal?
 - Students?
 - Extracurricular activities?

3. Do you feel your school is a safe and comfortable place to learn? Why or why not?

Probe, if necessary:

- Are there many disruptions in your classes?
- Are there any problems associated with substance abuse or violence in your school?

4. What is your school doing to provide a safe school environment? Do you think they're doing enough? Why or why not? Have you noticed any changes in the past year?

Probe, if necessary:

- Possible strategies:
 - Security measures
 - Disciplinary procedures (i.e., zero tolerance)
 - Service-learning (i.e., linking classroom learning to community service)
 - Health and counseling services

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

5. What are your classes like?

Probe, if necessary:

- Do you feel that you are learning subjects that are important? Interesting?
- Are you and your classmates challenged by your teachers to do well? Do you feel that your teachers set high expectations for you and other students?
 - Do teachers expect you to do well in class? Do they expect you to graduate? What do you think they expect you to do after graduation?
 - Do you think teachers have different expectations for different kinds of students?
- How does what you learn in your classes relate to your experiences?

6. I would like you to think about one or two teachers who you think of as good teachers. What is it about these teachers that makes them good?

7. Can you tell me a little about how your classes are taught? Do you get a chance to do interesting projects or have good discussions, or is the teacher typically leading the class?

Probe, if necessary:

- Do you work in groups with other students?
- Do you have one-on-one time with teachers?
- What kinds of classes do you like best? Why?
- What kinds of classes do you like least? Why?

8. How do you know if you're doing well in school, or what you still need to work on?

Probe, if necessary:

- Does your teacher or other school staff talk to you about how you are doing?
- How are you tested? How often?
 - [To ELL students, if appropriate] Do you have the same tests as other students?
 - Do you think your tests are fair? Why or why not?

STUDENT SUPPORTS

10. If you are having difficulty in your classes, who can you turn to for help (e.g., teacher, another student, parent or family member, etc.)? If you have, has this person been helpful? Why or why not?

Probe, if necessary:

- [To ELL students, if appropriate] Do you have someone you can turn to for help?

11. Other than classes, what other kinds of supports can you get at the school? Were you referred to these supports? Are they required?

Probe, if necessary:

- How about tutoring?

12. What other kinds of activities does the school offer? How much do you and your classmates participate in these activities? Why?

Probe, if necessary:

- What kinds of sports or school clubs are offered? Do you participate?

13. Are there other activities that you wish were offered but aren't? Please describe. ?

[Note: Tailor the following question based on what changes the school is implementing, e.g., replacement of principal and teachers, plans to extend the school day, etc.]

14. What do you know about any changes that they're talking about at this school? What do you think about them?

POST-GRADUATION GOALS

15. Now, I would like to ask you to think about what you would like to do after you graduate from high school. How do you think your experience in high school is going to help you to achieve your goals after graduation?

Probe, if necessary:

- What are your goals?

CLOSE

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about being a student here?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and your time today. You have each been extremely valuable in helping us understand more about your classes, your teachers, and your school.

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

Elementary Teacher Survey

Year 1

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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Study of School Turnaround: Elementary Teacher Survey

Dear Teacher,

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of the Study of School Turnaround. You are receiving this survey because your school has received funds through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

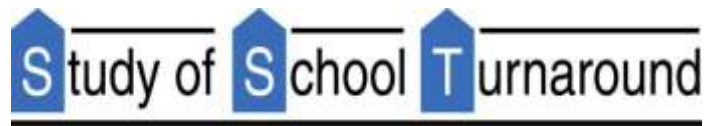
We greatly value the opinion of teachers and hope you will answer this questionnaire. By responding to this survey, you can help policy makers, educators, and researchers better understand how SIG schools are working to improve outcomes for all students.

This survey is voluntary. You can decide not to participate, or you can discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, but we encourage you to answer as many as you can. There are no known risks to participating in this survey. This survey is confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other teachers, and your individual responses will never be linked to you. We will not provide any information that identifies you or your school to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law.

This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonprofit research organization, in cooperation with Mathematica Policy Research and Decision Information Resources (DIR). This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. For more information about the study, please contact the evaluation team at SST@dir-research.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact IRBChair@air.org or call toll-free 1.800.634.0797.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per survey, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY

Professional Background and Current Teaching Assignment

Please be sure to answer questions only for the school where you received the survey. We will refer to the school where you received this survey as “this school.”

1. How do you classify your main teaching assignment at this school during the current school year (2010–11)?

(Select only one response.)

- Full-time teacher working at this school
- Part-time teacher working at this school
- Itinerant teacher (e.g., your assignment requires that you provide instruction at more than one school)
- Long-term substitute (e.g., your assignment requires that you fill the role of a regular teacher on a long-term basis, but you are still considered a substitute)
- Other specify: _____

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have:

	Number of years
a. Teaching in total	<input style="width: 80px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> years
b. Teaching at <u>this</u> school	<input style="width: 80px; height: 25px;" type="text"/> years

3. In the current school year (2010–11), in what grades are the students that you teach in this school?

(Check all that apply.)

Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	8 <input type="checkbox"/>	9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>

4a. At this school, how many classes or sections did you teach during your most recent full week of teaching?

Total number of classes or sections:

4b. At this school, what is the total number of students enrolled in the class(es) you taught during your most recent full week of teaching?

Total number of students:

5. In this school, how many of the students you teach are considered:

(Enter the number of students or check one box in each row.)

	Number of students	None	Don't know
a. Students with individualized education programs (IEPs)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Students classified as limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learners (ELLs)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your School Climate and Culture

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your school environment.

(Select one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. At this school, we have a common understanding of the objectives we're trying to achieve with students.	1	2	3	4
b. Goals and priorities for this school are clear.	1	2	3	4
c. Most teachers at this school have values and philosophies of education that are similar to my own.	1	2	3	4
d. Most of my colleagues share a focused vision for student learning.	1	2	3	4
e. Once we start a new program, we follow up to make sure that it's working.	1	2	3	4
f. I worry that we are adopting too many different programs and practices in this school.	1	2	3	4
g. This school generally chooses only those school improvement opportunities that fit with our improvement goals and strategies.	1	2	3	4
h. If teachers in this school work hard, we can meet our school's goals for student achievement	1	2	3	4

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your principal.

(Select one response in each row.)

The principal in my school...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Carefully tracks students' academic progress	1	2	3	4
b. Understands how children learn	1	2	3	4
c. Makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals	1	2	3	4
d. Sets high expectations for student learning	1	2	3	4
e. Actively monitors the quality of teaching in this school	1	2	3	4
f. Presses teachers to implement what they have learned in professional development	1	2	3	4
g. Knows what is going on in my classroom	1	2	3	4

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your principal.

(Select one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers.	1	2	3	4
b. I trust the principal at his or her word.	1	2	3	4
c. The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers.	1	2	3	4
d. The principal looks out for the personal welfare of the teachers.	1	2	3	4
e. The principal places the needs of children ahead of personal and political interests.	1	2	3	4
f. The principal at this school is an effective manager who makes the school run smoothly.	1	2	3	4

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

(Select one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I usually look forward to each working day at this school.	1	2	3	4
b. I wouldn't want to work in any other school.	1	2	3	4
c. I would recommend this school to parents seeking a place for their child.	1	2	3	4
d. Teachers in this school are comfortable discussing beliefs about teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
e. Teachers in this school are willing to question one another's views on issues of teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
f. Teachers in this school trust each other.	1	2	3	4
g. I know how to engage even the most difficult or unmotivated student.	1	2	3	4
h. If a student in my class becomes disruptive, I know some techniques to redirect him or her quickly.	1	2	3	4
i. I can provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused.	1	2	3	4

School Improvement

10. How often do you engage in the following activities?

(Circle one number in each row.)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
a. Review student achievement data to guide my instructional planning	1	2	3	4
b. Read about educational research findings or best practices	1	2	3	4
c. Consult with other teachers about challenges I am facing in the classroom	1	2	3	4
d. Ensure that the academic content of my classes is aligned with state content standards	1	2	3	4
e. Share the content of my lesson plans with other teachers	1	2	3	4
f. Put in extra hours of work outside of instructional time	1	2	3	4
g. Inform parents of opportunities to become involved in the school and resources that are available to them	1	2	3	4
h. Discuss what I've learned in professional development activities with other teachers	1	2	3	4

11. How much of a challenge is each of the following to your efforts to improve student performance?

(Select one response in each row.)

Type of Challenge	Not a challenge	Minor challenge	Moderate challenge	Major challenge
a. Large class size and/or case load	1	2	3	4
b. Inadequate or substandard facilities	1	2	3	4
c. Too few textbooks and other instructional materials	1	2	3	4
d. Textbooks and instructional materials that are not aligned with state standards	1	2	3	4
e. Poor student discipline	1	2	3	4
f. Insufficient parent involvement	1	2	3	4
g. Large number of student transfers into this school or your class at various points during the year	1	2	3	4
h. Low student motivation	1	2	3	4
i. Low staff morale	1	2	3	4
j. Low and/or erratic student attendance	1	2	3	4
k. Other: _____	1	2	3	4

Your Background

12. Did you participate, or are you currently participating in an alternate route to certification/licensure (fast-track) program?

- 1 No
 2 Yes

13. Please describe the certification(s)/ license(s)/ credential(s)/ endorsement(s) you hold.

(Check all that apply in each column.)

A. Level(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement	B. Subject endorsement area(s)	C. Certification/ licensure/ credential/endorsement for teaching special populations	D. Type(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	1 <input type="checkbox"/> English 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/language arts 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Science 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Social sciences 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign languages 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Music/arts 8 <input type="checkbox"/> PE/health 9 <input type="checkbox"/> No subject area certification 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	1 <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Special education	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced (e.g., National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification) 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Regular or standard 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Probationary or preliminary 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency or waiver 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Interim waiver 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Other

14. Do you have a bachelor's degree?

(Check one box and write in year if applicable.)

1 No → GO TO Question 18.

2 Yes → If yes, write in year bachelor's degree was received.

15. What was your bachelor's field of study?

(Write in bachelor's field of study)

16. Do you have a master's degree?

1 No → GO TO Question 18

2 Yes → If yes, write in year master's degree was received.

17. What was your master's field of study?

(Write in master's field of study)

Wrap-Up

18. Is there is anything else you would like to tell us about improvement strategies and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) in your school?

19. If you have any comments on how we could improve any of the questions in this survey, or questions we should consider adding to this survey, please write your suggestions below.

Thank you very much for responding to this important survey!

Study of School Turnaround (SST)

High School Teacher Survey

Year 1

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Study of School Turnaround: High School Teacher Survey

Dear Teacher,

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of the Study of School Turnaround. You are receiving this survey because your school has received funds through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

We greatly value the opinion of teachers and hope you will answer this questionnaire. By responding to this survey, you can help policy makers, educators, and researchers better understand how SIG schools are working to improve outcomes for all students.

This survey is voluntary. You can decide not to participate, or you can discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, but we encourage you to answer as many as you can. There are no known risks to participating in this survey. This survey is confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other teachers, and your individual responses will never be linked to you. We will not provide any information that identifies you or your school to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law.

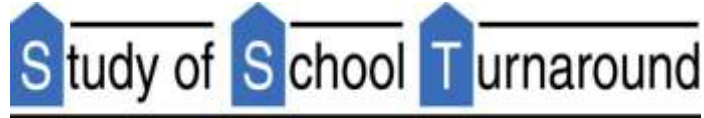
This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonprofit research organization, in cooperation with Mathematica Policy Research and Decision Information Resources (DIR). This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. For more information about the study, please contact the evaluation team at

SST@dir-research.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact IRBChair@air.org or call toll-free 1.800.634.0797.

Thank you for your participation in this very important effort!

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per survey, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20208.



HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY

Professional Background and Current Teaching Assignment

Please be sure to answer questions only for the school where you received the survey. We will refer to the school where you received this survey as “this school.”

1. How do you classify your main teaching assignment at this school during the current school year (2010–11)?

(Select only one response.)

- Full-time teacher working at this school
- Part-time teacher working at this school
- Itinerant teacher (e.g., your assignment requires that you provide instruction at more than one school)
- Long-term substitute (e.g., your assignment requires that you fill the role of a regular teacher on a long-term basis, but you are still considered a substitute)
- Other specify: _____

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have:

	Number of years
a. Teaching in total	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px; display: inline-block;"></div> years
b. Teaching at <u>this</u> school	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80px; height: 25px; display: inline-block;"></div> years

3. In the current school year (2010–11), in what grades are the students that you teach in this school?

(Check all that apply.)

Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	8 <input type="checkbox"/>	9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>

4. In the current school year (2010–11), what is your main teaching assignment at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?

*(Select **only one** response. If your teaching time is equally divided among 2 or more fields, choose one.)*

- English/Language Arts/Reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Sciences (History/Government/Civics/Geography)
- Foreign Language
- Arts/Music
- Special Education
- English as a Second Language (ESL/Bilingual Education)
- Other specify: _____

5a. At this school, how many classes or sections did you teach during your most recent full week of teaching?

Total number of classes or sections:

5b. At this school, what is the total number of students enrolled in the class(es) you taught during your most recent full week of teaching?

Total number of students:

6. In this school, how many of the students you teach are considered:

(Enter the number of students or check one box in each row.)

	Number of students	None	Don't know
a. Students with individualized education programs (IEPs)	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Students classified as limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learners (ELLs)	<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your School Climate and Culture

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your school environment.

(Circle one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. At this school, we have a common understanding of the objectives we're trying to achieve with students.	1	2	3	4
b. Goals and priorities for this school are clear.	1	2	3	4
c. Most teachers at this school have values and philosophies of education that are similar to my own.	1	2	3	4
d. Most of my colleagues share a focused vision for student learning.	1	2	3	4
e. Once we start a new program, we follow up to make sure that it's working.	1	2	3	4
f. I worry that we are adopting too many different programs and practices in this school.	1	2	3	4
g. This school generally chooses only those school improvement opportunities that fit with our improvement goals and strategies.	1	2	3	4
h. If teachers in this school work hard, we can meet our school's goals for student achievement	1	2	3	4

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

(Circle one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I usually look forward to each working day at this school.	1	2	3	4
b. I wouldn't want to work in any other school.	1	2	3	4
c. I would recommend this school to parents seeking a place for their child.	1	2	3	4
d. Teachers in this school are comfortable discussing beliefs about teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
e. Teachers in this school are willing to question one another's views on issues of teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
f. Teachers in this school trust each other.	1	2	3	4
g. I know how to engage even the most difficult or unmotivated student.	1	2	3	4
h. If a student in my class becomes disruptive, I know some techniques to redirect him or her quickly.	1	2	3	4
i. I can provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused.	1	2	3	4

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your principal.

(Circle one response in each row.)

The principal in my school...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Carefully tracks students' academic progress	1	2	3	4
b. Understands how children learn	1	2	3	4
c. Makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals	1	2	3	4
d. Sets high expectations for student learning	1	2	3	4
e. Actively monitors the quality of teaching in this school	1	2	3	4
f. Presses teachers to implement what they have learned in professional development	1	2	3	4
g. Knows what is going on in my classroom	1	2	3	4

10. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your principal.

(Circle one response in each row.)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers.	1	2	3	4
b. I trust the principal at his or her word.	1	2	3	4
c. The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers.	1	2	3	4
d. The principal looks out for the personal welfare of the teachers.	1	2	3	4
e. The principal places the needs of children ahead of personal and political interests.	1	2	3	4
f. The principal at this school is an effective manager who makes the school run smoothly.	1	2	3	4

School Improvement

11. How often do you engage in the following activities?

(Circle one number in each row.)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
a. Review student achievement data to guide my instructional planning	1	2	3	4
b. Read about educational research findings or best practices	1	2	3	4
c. Consult with other teachers about challenges I am facing in the classroom	1	2	3	4
d. Ensure that the academic content of my classes is aligned with state content standards	1	2	3	4
e. Share the content of my lesson plans with other teachers	1	2	3	4
f. Put in extra hours of work outside of instructional time	1	2	3	4
g. Inform parents of opportunities to become involved in the school and resources that are available to them	1	2	3	4
h. Discuss what I've learned in professional development activities with other teachers	1	2	3	4

12. How much of a challenge is each of the following to your efforts to improve student performance?

(Circle one response in each row.)

Type of Challenge	Not a challenge	Minor challenge	Moderate challenge	Major challenge
a. Large class size and/or case load	1	2	3	4
b. Inadequate or substandard facilities	1	2	3	4
c. Too few textbooks and other instructional materials	1	2	3	4
d. Textbooks and instructional materials that are not aligned with state standards	1	2	3	4
e. Poor student discipline	1	2	3	4
f. Insufficient parent involvement	1	2	3	4
g. Large number of student transfers into this school or your class at various points during the year	1	2	3	4
h. Low student motivation	1	2	3	4
i. Low staff morale	1	2	3	4
j. Low and/or erratic student attendance	1	2	3	4
k. Other: _____	1	2	3	4

Your Background

13. Did you participate, or are you currently participating in an alternate route to certification/licensure (fast-track) program?

- 1 No
 2 Yes

14. Please describe the certification(s)/ license(s)/ credential(s)/ endorsement(s) you hold.

(Check all that apply in each column.)

A. Level(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement	B. Subject endorsement area(s)	C. Certification/ licensure/ credential/endorsement for teaching special populations	D. Type(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	1 <input type="checkbox"/> English	1 <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/bilingual	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced (e.g., National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification)
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/language arts	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Special education	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Regular or standard
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics		3 <input type="checkbox"/> Probationary or preliminary
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Science		4 <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Social sciences		5 <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign languages		6 <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency or waiver
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Music/arts		7 <input type="checkbox"/> Interim waiver
8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4	8 <input type="checkbox"/> PE/health		8 <input type="checkbox"/> Other
9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5	9 <input type="checkbox"/> No subject area certification		
10 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
11 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7			
12 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8			
13 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9			
14 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10			
15 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11			
16 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12			
17 <input type="checkbox"/> Other			

15. Do you have a bachelor's degree?

(Check one box and write in year if applicable.)

1 No → GO TO Question 19.

2 Yes → If yes, write in year bachelor's degree was received.

16. What was your bachelor's field of study?

(Write in bachelor's field of study)

17. Do you have a master's degree?

1 No → GO TO Question 19

2 Yes → If yes, write in year master's degree was received.

18. What was your master's field of study?

(Write in master's field of study)

Wrap-Up

19. Is there is anything else you would like to tell us about improvement strategies and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) in your school?

20. If you have any comments on how we could improve any of the questions in this survey, or questions we should consider adding to this survey, please write your suggestions below.

Thank you very much for responding to this important survey!