



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

SCHOOL TURNAROUND IN MN



PREPARED BY

**Dan Cooley and
Katie Barrett Kramer**
with Tierney Carroll



Acknowledgements

Authors

The School Leadership Project



Founding partners Katie Barrett Kramer and Dan Cooley are MN-based education strategy and support consultants whose work proceeds from the belief that schools can and must play a critical role in the work of social justice. For more on The School Leadership Project, please visit www.theschoolleadershipproject.org.

Tierney Carroll



The board chair of LoveWorks Academy during its turnaround process, Tierney is a leader in the regional work of community-driven school turnaround through her leadership in the Regional Turnaround Strategy Group and her pioneering work in turnaround board governance.

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The John and Denise Graves Family Foundation

The Graves Foundation provides financial, networking and operational resources to our partners, so children in Hennepin County have access to the resources they need to thrive as students and sustain through adulthood. The Graves Foundation's goal is an equitable and sustainable future for all, created through a web of connected, passionate individuals who uplift our youth, their families, and the communities we serve as a whole. For more on the Graves Foundation, please visit www.jdgravesfoundation.org.

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The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. We use all our resources to attend, unite, and empower those we serve. For more on the McKnight Foundation, please visit www.mcknight.org.

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Brandie Burris-Gallagher and Josh Crosson, EdAllies
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Welcome

Greetings Colleagues,

My name is Tierney Carroll, and I am the current Board Chair at LoveWorks Academy for Visual and Performing Arts. I'd like to take this moment to welcome you into our discussion on community-driven school turnaround. As a pioneering member of the LoveWorks Academy turnaround initiative, the story of community-driven turnaround is, in part, my story, too. LoveWorks' turnaround journey has been a challenging and rewarding one, and it's my privilege to be able to share my perspective and my lessons learned about community-driven turnaround through this Field Guide.

As a parent and grandparent, I have always been passionate about ensuring my students had the best education. In my search for quality education, my journey took me down the road to LoveWorks Academy for Visual and Performing Arts. When I selected the school for my daughter, the school was one which the community supported, where academics and arts were held to high standards and where the students were nurtured and cared for. Even after my student graduated, my admiration for LoveWorks and its accomplishments was the driving factor in my continuing support for the school.

In 2013, I was given the opportunity to serve the school and my community by joining the LoveWorks Academy Board. To my dismay, during my second year of service, the Board received the news from our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools (PUC) that due to our "continued low academic performance", our school would have to undergo a restart, transformation or possibly closure, if immediate improvement was not made.

I was disillusioned to hear that the school which I held in high regard for years had not been delivering quality education to its students and that there had been years of failed internal attempts to rectify its academic performance. LoveWorks was identified as one of the lowest performing public charter schools in the state. I felt like I had been looking at the school with rose colored blinders on, cherishing the memories of the school I once knew, while not noticing what the school had become. One thing was certain, we were committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that LoveWorks Academy didn't close. LoveWorks is a cornerstone in our community, and we owe it to our students and their families to fulfill our

promise to give their students a quality education. The Board and administration agreed that closure of “our school” was not an option!

Over the next several months, with the assistance of The School Leadership Project (TSLP) and with the support of our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) the voices of the LoveWorks Academy school community came together, and we diligently collaborated to effect dramatic change for our school. We knew that, as parents and community members, we are our students best educational advocates. The LoveWorks school community actively engaged in and drove school change. We visited several high performing schools in the district, learning what the common attributes were that make up an effective school. We clearly defined who we were as a community and a school and identified what we valued most at LoveWorks Academy. Teaming with TSLP, we created and lead a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process and engaged in interviewing charter management organizations who could drive academic improvements at our school, while respecting the culture and our community and engaging our parents.

LoveWorks Academy will make such an impact in the Twin Cities area that leaders and people of importance will inquire about our success and how we accomplished it. We are Somebody. Our playing small will not serve the world. We are strong and smart. We respect ourselves and others. We will always do our best at a place where strong academics are a must and college is in our future.

Deja Phillips, Parent - LoveWorks Academy

As a LoveWorks parent and community member, I firmly believe that it is extremely important to involve those most impacted by a school’s turnaround in the process of school change. Parents, teachers, staff and community members are assets in improving our students’ education. They can help identify, plan and implement turnaround strategies which are tailored to their students,



families and community. These partnerships are crucial resources for individual student achievement, but also for bringing about and sustaining school improvement. This engagement builds and sustains school culture, supporting the health and wellness of every student.

Parents and community members have raised their voices to school boards and administrative leadership, demanding more transparency and broader participation in decisions concerning their schools. LoveWorks Academy's successful implementation of its Community-Driven Turnaround has created the space for family and community engagement, reiterating the importance of community input in shaping school turnarounds.

As Board Chair, I take great pride in all the hard work and dedication that our team put into our community-driven turnaround. It is resulting in positive changes in our students' academic achievements and other key aspects of their development. There has been a positive culture shift, creating a favorable learning environment and increased family and community engagement. Our Board of Directors supports the fact that family and community engagement is an important component for student success, and it is key to driving school wide improvements. Our engagement with our parents, families and community members in the education of our children has recreated a positive bond between the home and the school.

The end of our story has yet to be written, but our mission and vision is for LoveWorks Academy to be a community-driven, world-class public arts school, dedicated to nurturing students pursuing their artistic dreams with a solid personalized academic foundation.

It only takes one to "LISTEN," to hear the "VOICES" of its community.

Sincerely,

Tierney Carroll

LoveWorks Academy Board Chair

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LoveWorks Academy Board Members

LoveWorks Academy Parents

Community Members

Executive Summary

Community-driven turnaround is a strategy that derives from the national promise of charter school restart and the spirit and practice of community leadership in school reform efforts. The strategy is unique in the ways it provides families, school staff and other stakeholders in the school community the knowledge and decision-making power to choose new organizational leadership for their school in accordance with the will of their school community. It is predicated on the idea that members of a school community can and should have access to the same levers for school change that education professionals and reformers have pulled for and against them for generations.

Historically, school restarts across the country have been characterized by district and state action “closing one underperforming school and opening a new school to serve the same students under new management.”¹ The Title I School Improvement Grants (SIG) identified restart as one of four grant-eligible interventions; the federal definition of restart demanded that the state or district “close the low-performing school and open a new school under a charter operator, charter management organization (CMO), or education service provider (ESP) and give prior students guaranteed enrollment to the new school.”² In typical restarts, a district or state agency prescribed the shape and leadership of the turnaround effort and its selected CMO or ESP assumed the charter, often changing the school’s identity as well its academic program.

¹Public Impact & EdPlex. (2016). School restart authorization process guide. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact, and Denver, CO: EdPlex. Retrieved from www.schoolrestarts.org

²Ibid

By contrast, in the community-driven turnaround efforts thus far in MN, authorizers³ have mandated the comprehensive academic and operational turnaround implied by the federal definition of restart as an alternative to school closure. In each instance, they've done so with chronically low-performing schools that are often, nevertheless, important community institutions for the students and families they serve.

In community-driven turnaround efforts, the school community itself, as represented by its school board, directs the process of identifying, selecting and seating an operator⁴ to meet the terms of the authorizer's mandate in ways that preserve the core identity of the school through the process of dramatic academic improvement. In accordance with MN state statute, the school board retains the school's charter and turnaround operators report to the school's board, not a state or district agency. In these ways, MN's first community-driven turnaround efforts represent an innovation in the work of school turnaround, transforming the traditional process from one that is initiated and directed by a state, district or authorizing body to one that is initiated by authorizers but directed and realized by families and community members in service of their students. Using this approach, community-driven turnaround efforts provide a pathway for school community members to act in pursuit of dramatically improved school outcomes at the academically low-performing school serving their students by leveraging the leadership and practices of national and regional charter school operators while also preserving the unique cultural identity and community value of their school.

The community-driven turnaround strategy has been pursued in the Twin Cities of Minnesota by three school communities. Two of the state's largest authorizers, Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools and Audubon Center of the North Woods, have initiated community-driven turnarounds within their portfolios. In Minnesota, a state with a significant charter market comprised largely of single-site schools serving culturally and geographically distinct communities, this strategy enables communities to pursue dramatic school improvement in ways that preserve the self-determination of those communities.

³There are currently 14 approved authorizers in Minnesota. An authorizer can be a school board or intermediate school district school board, other education districts, charitable organizations, institutions of higher education, a nonprofit corporation subject to Chapter 317A or a single-purpose authorizer. Retrieved from: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/chart/>.

⁴For the purposes of this guide, "operator" will designate the new leadership selected by the school board to meet the terms of its authorizer's community-driven turnaround mandate. In accordance with the mandates used in MN's community-driven turnaround initiatives, an "operator" could be a CMO, EMO, or an individual or group of individuals with a proven track of successful academic leadership who is the sole report to the board of directors.

In response to the promise and challenge of the state's first community-driven school turnaround initiative at LoveWorks Academy - and the potential for turnaround to play a transformational role in a region where few schools serving low-income students and students of color demonstrate proficiency on standardized measures - public school stakeholders in the Twin Cities formed the Regional Turnaround Strategy Group in 2016. The group includes authorizers, policy makers, funders, teacher talent organizations, community organizers and community-driven school turnaround board chairs. This group has worked to define the principles and practices necessary to bring a regional community-driven turnaround strategy to scale and now collaborates to advance those principles in its support of community-driven turnaround efforts in the region. The members of this group are united by their belief that families and school community members have unique insights into the talents and needs of their students and the capacity to lead the processes of school improvement to the same outcomes as education professionals.



As the state and the school communities within it continue to pursue dramatic academic transformation in service of addressing one of the country's largest opportunity gaps, this Field Guide seeks to offer timelines and process insights gleaned by the people closest to Minnesota's first community-driven efforts. It is our hope that this Field Guide honors the efforts and experiences of the strategy's pioneering leaders and that it makes a contribution to the field of charter school restart and turnaround practice by outlining a site-based turnaround process that is particularly well-suited to states with multiple authorizers and statutory regulations favoring hyper-local board governance, where most board members are parents, staff or school community stakeholders. Further, we hope this guide serves as an invitation to regions and organizations seeking transformational school change to redesign the processes by which they pursue that change, centering the perspectives and decisions of the people directly affected by those changes.

To fulfill its promise as a strategy for both educational and social justice, community-driven turnaround will demand a significant re-orientation of the traditional relationships between family and community members and educational professionals: it requires that educational professionals support and follow the will of families and community leaders who have historically received rather than led education reform efforts. In this spirit, our hope in publishing this guide is that school community leaders and education professionals can use the process that follows to collaborate and coordinate their site-based school turnaround efforts in the service of school and system transformation.

Guiding Principles

LIMITLESS STUDENT POTENTIAL, UNTAPPED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Students have limitless potential to learn and achieve; similarly, family and community members have limitless capacity to learn about the work of schooling and to lead processes of school transformation that are responsive to the unique assets and needs of their communities.

NATIONAL EXPERTISE, CAPACITY FOR TURNAROUND

Education reform activists, alongside state agencies and philanthropists, have created leadership and infrastructure and concentrated talent in CMOs and EMOs throughout the country, many of whom have taken on school turnaround as a path to expansion. Their actions have created a pool of turnaround talent that can be engaged in community-driven turnaround efforts.

IMPACT MATTERS, PROCESS MATTERS

Nationally, turnaround operators have most frequently been deployed and matched with low-performing schools by state agencies and authorizers through processes led and executed by education professionals outside of the school community. In many cases, while operator-led turnaround initiatives have resulted in improved school culture and student academic outcomes, their processes have also resulted in community resentment and anger.

PROMISING MODEL, NEW DECISION-MAKERS

By vesting decision-making authority within the school community itself, community-driven turnaround seeks to leverage the promise of the operator-led turnaround model in ways that respect a school community's will and values.

COMMUNITY LEARNING, INFORMED LEADERSHIP

Community-driven turnaround relies on community members having the opportunity to learn about the practices of effective schools, set a shared vision for their school and select an operator. Participating in this foundational work fosters informed leadership within the school community. In turn, partnership with a proven operator creates immediate and substantial improvement of the school's climate, operations, and academic program. The shared and reciprocal work of school community members and the school's operator in the turnaround effort - and the successful improvement of the school's performance - creates momentum for educational justice and community leaders who are capable of contributing to regional and national conversations about education policy, practice and reform.

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH, A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

CDT depends on robust stakeholder education, a regional base of support that can marshal financial and talent resources, a pool of interested and aligned operator candidates and rigorous selection processes that ensure authentic community leadership. These significant demands imply deliberate coordination and collaboration between a number of committed partners in support of a school's turnaround effort: a school community that is actively seeking meaningful transformation; education professionals that can co-create and navigate a turnaround path with the school community; philanthropic resources and/or state funding that provide on-time support for the front-end learning and selection work and for turnaround implementation; and an authorizer who is willing to make a responsible decision to close the school or to renew the school's contract depending on the merits of the school's turnaround efforts.

REORIENTING SYSTEMS, EMPOWERING NEW LEADERS

In the context of the historical and intentional disenfranchisement of people of color, indigenous people and people from low-income communities - and the ways a hierarchical education system tends to recapitulate systems of power and oppression - a scaled CDT approach in a region will require significant understanding and investment on behalf of education professionals, authorizers, policy makers and philanthropists, all of whom will need, at once, to maintain rigorous standards for turnaround outcomes and protect the integrity of a community-driven process that empowers non-traditional leadership in educational decision-making.

Process

A Process for Community-Driven Turnaround in MN

This field guide is organized into seven broad phases that characterize the years leading up to the initiation of a community-driven school turnaround effort, the process of community learning, visioning and decision-making to plan for the turnaround, and the first year of turnaround implementation. These phases are outlined in the Community-Driven Process Map. This process map is intended to provide a succinct overview of a multi-year community-driven turnaround effort and a point of conversation for stakeholders learning about - or joining in - the work of community-driven turnaround as they consider how they might approach the work and where their leadership, expertise and support might be of greatest use.

In the narrative guide that follows, each phase includes a description of its component actions and conditions for success, those factors and inputs that have an outsized impact on success of the turnaround effort, as well as a set of priorities, the outcomes and developments stakeholders should focus on as they work to improve learning and life at the school and create strong foundations for the work that follows.

Additionally, each phase includes a bank of key lessons learned by the community and family members, board members, school staff, and other supporters and practitioners of the work of community-driven turnaround as it has unfolded. The narrative is accompanied by words of advice, reflection and encouragement from those closest to the work.

Process Map



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TURNAROUND

Phases



36-24 Months prior to turnaround

Phase 1: Acknowledging performance, identifying concerns

JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

Authorizer issues notice of concern identifying necessary improvements

School board of directors recruits new community leadership for board & committee service in support of improvement efforts. Board may request a third-party School Quality Review (SQR) in support of targeted & strategic improvement efforts as a complement to the authorizer's formal review of the school



24-12 Months prior to turnaround

Phase 2: Working to improve from within

JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

Authorizer issues notice of deficiency, indicating lack of improvement and probationary status

School attempts series of interventions to remedy performance and reach benchmarks possibly including: new administrative leadership or leadership structures; new board membership or new board roles; new programs, programmatic focus or expectations for staff and students; new roles and opportunities for community leadership

School's board and leaders within the school community engage in ongoing conversations with the broader school community about the school's performance, improvement efforts and opportunities for community leadership; board notifies community



Phase 3: Mandating turnaround, planning for change

Authorizer gives turnaround mandate if improvement benchmarks remain unmet

School's board identifies dedicated leadership for turnaround selection process - possibly in the form of external process management support

School's board prepares & submits turnaround plan for submission to authorizer

Board continues to recruit new community leadership for board and school turnaround committee (STC) service

New board members voted onto board

School's board notifies school stakeholders, especially families, of the authorizer mandate and the board's intended plan of action

School's board engages potential sources of financial support to identify adequate funding for turnaround implementation

Stakeholders

- Authorizer
- School Turnaround Committee
- School Board
- New Leadership/Operator

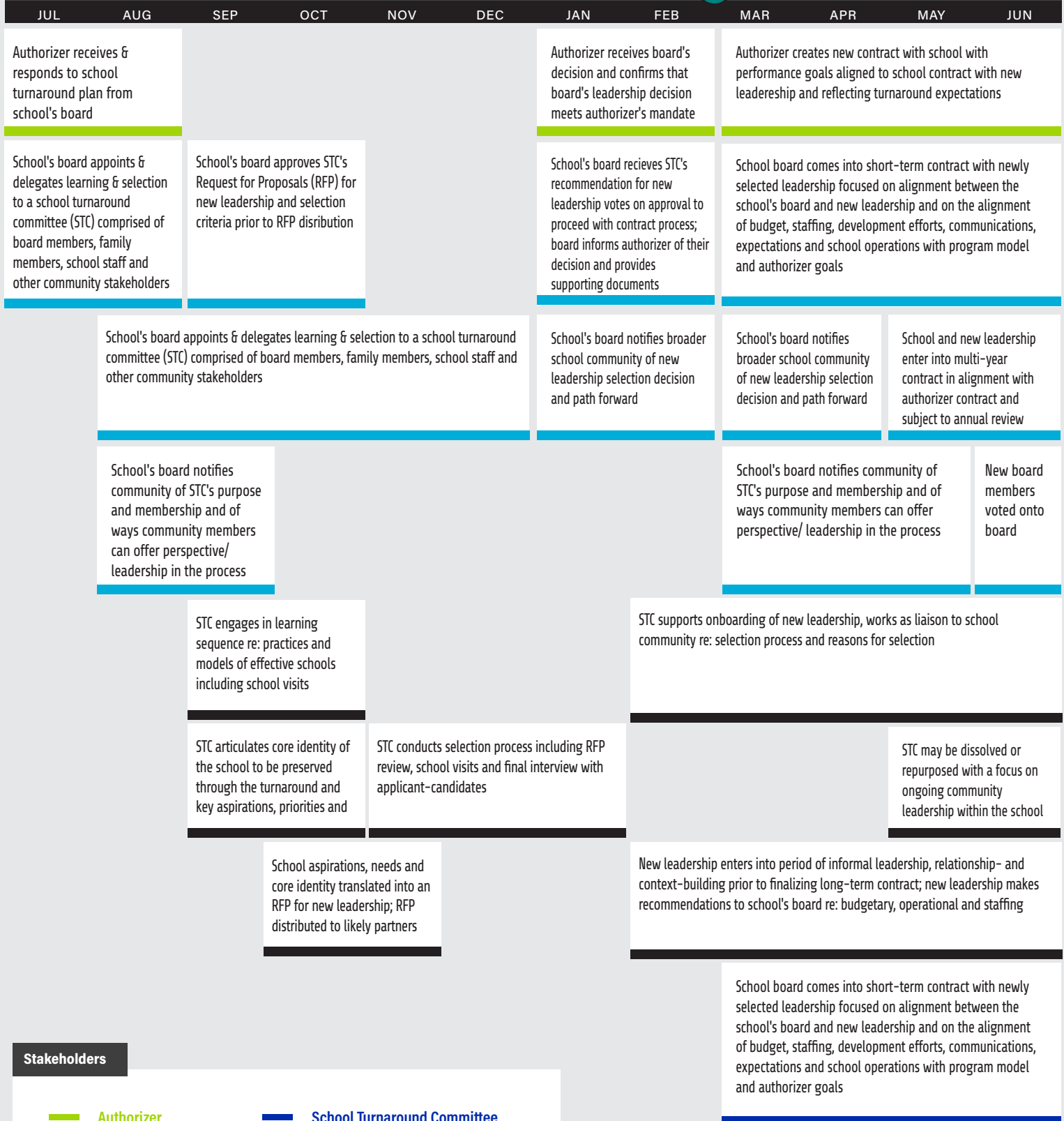


12-0 Months prior to turnaround

Phase 4: Learning, vision-setting and selecting new school leadership



Phase 5: Seating turnaround leadership



Stakeholders

Authorizer

School Turnaround Committee

School Board

New Leadership/Operator



First 12 months of turnaround

Phase 6: Beginning turnaround implementation, fortifying turnaround governance



Phase 7: Evaluating, learning and sustaining

JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

Authorizer ensures clarity with and between board and new leadership regarding authorizer expectation, supports and evaluation processes for the year ahead

Authorizer conducts ongoing informal evaluations to ensure progress toward benchmarks

Authorizer conducts formal annual review to ensure adequate progress in first turnaround year

Authorizer informs school of evaluation outcomes

Board engages in concerted process of ongoing development (creation of committees, board goals, etc.) and learning (re: governance, finance, school turnaround, a reintroduction to the school's model, etc.) in support of successful turnaround and long-term sustainability

Board conducts a formal review of the new leadership in service of continued improvement and relationship-building

STC members support and provide periodic feedback to new leadership, work as liaisons to school community and may serve in any number of board capacities (board of directors, board committees, etc.) including on a community leadership committee or similar

New leadership formally receives leadership of the school

School staff are provided with intensive professional development and onboarding to new model, systems and expectations

Stakeholders

Authorizer
School Board

School Turnaround Committee
New Leadership/Operator

Phase 1



Acknowledging performance, identifying concerns

(24-36 months prior to turnaround)

The charter school contract between authorizer and school is designed to ensure that there are clear goals and metrics for success in every area of school functioning: academic performance, operational performance, board governance and community engagement. When a school has struggled to meet performance expectations in any area, the authorizer is responsible for identifying and conveying concerns to the charter school board of directors in order that they can take appropriate remedial action in service of improved performance for students and community. These concerns may be conveyed through a notice of concern, an official communication to the board that highlights any contract goals that have not been met or any areas of acute or chronic performance concern.

Conditions for success	Priorities
The authorizer offers regular and clear communication to the board of directors about the school's performance	The school board understands its fiduciary and governance responsibility for school performance
The school board investigates areas of underperformance and attempts to address their root causes	The school board has resources and capacity to pursue effective school improvement

Developing a shared understanding of academic and operational performance concerns amongst board members, authorizers, and community members as well as clear school improvement timelines, metrics and thresholds for continued intervention
School board and community accessing available school improvement guidance and resources to focus action on identified concerns

Key Lessons

- Consistent authorizer performance metrics and messaging about progress toward contract goals and their potential ramifications for the school create a strong foundation of shared understanding with the school board and community for future interventions.
- This stage represents a significant opportunity for relationship-building between the authorizer and the school board and school community. If the authorizer and the school board can create a sense of shared purpose and accountability around school improvement, the two entities can travel the school improvement road together, whether it ends with effective internal remediation or continues toward more intensive turnaround interventions or school closure.
- If the authorizer and the school board develop an adversarial relationship at this stage of school improvement, the pathway to intervention is likely to be governed procedurally through notices of concern and deficiency rather than collaborative problem-solving.
- Authorizers can support the CDT process by honoring the “autonomy for accountability” agreement by providing regular communication about school performance and by affirming that the ultimate responsibility for school performance rests with the school Board.



School closure disrupts communities, and there is little evidence that kids go to a higher performing school when their school closes. Our goal is to light a fire under the school's leadership and parent community and catalyze authentic and dramatic change.

Antonio Cardona - Director, Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools

Phase 2



Working to improve from within

(17-24 months prior to turnaround)

When remediation efforts do not yield sufficient progress against authorizer metrics, statute allows for the authorizer to issue notices of deficiency and to inform the school of its probationary status. By doing so, the authorizer signals a shift from a phase defined by incremental, internal school improvement efforts to another that will be defined by more dramatic interventions. These interventions are likely to build off earlier efforts but are generally pursued with more urgency; examples might include new or reorganized school leadership, board development and reorientation, and significant school policy or programmatic changes.

Implicitly, this phase acknowledges that the school's initial, internal strategic planning, leadership and resources have not been not sufficient to provoke the intensity of change necessary to meet school improvement goals. At this point, the authorizer signals the necessity for dramatic change in order to stave off closure, and they may begin to introduce the concept of community-driven turnaround - including partnership with a turnaround operator - but does not yet mandate that course. In order for the school's authorizer, board and community to move forward with more intensive interventions, the possibility for non-renewal must be made clear by the school's authorizer, acknowledged by the school board and communicated with the school community.

Conditions for success	Priorities
Concise and compelling summary school performance data that describes the situation at the school and can be shared with a diversity of audiences	Fostering community understanding of school performance, authorizer oversight and internal improvement efforts

Continued...

Conditions for success	Priorities
Clear authorizer communication in intervention notices and board and community conversations about the school's deficiencies and their implications as well as potential pathways to improvement	Reaching consensus and/or clarity between the authorizer and the school board and community that the path of internal school improvement has been insufficient to meet performance goals
Sufficient time dedicated to authorizer and school board communication and conversations	Authorizer articulating next stage options, including the pathways to closure and school turnaround, and offering clarity about their decision criteria in weighing these options
Clear plans for internal school improvement efforts	
Clarity about the authorizer's decision points in evaluating next stage pathways, including the viability of pursuing community-driven turnaround vs. school closure	
Authentic self-reflection on behalf of the school's board and administration about whether their existing structures and capacity for leadership and governance can lead to the degree of improvement necessary to meet the mission of their school and the authorizer's conditions for renewal	

School and board-led internal improvement efforts & interventions

The capacity of the board and the school to address critical concerns comes into clear view in this phase of the school turnaround process. In many cases, the lack of resources and capacity that rendered the school unable to meet its performance goals and metrics similarly prevents the school from creating and pursuing an effective approach to school improvement. Accordingly, this period represents an important opportunity to expand the perspective and capacity of the board to include members with governance or technical expertise and with connections to community resources and/or family members.

Ideally, as the board and the school community pursue improvement to address the authorizer's notices of deficiency and probationary status, strategic conversations can and must focus on the additional support and resources that will be required to meet performance goals and, most importantly, to deliver the caliber of educational experience students need and deserve.

It is at this stage that school community members who have pursued school improvement with integrity may acknowledge that “we need more help.” When this is the case, a school community can enter into the next stage of remediation with pride in its efforts and its self-determination intact, making community-driven turnaround a logical extension of internal school improvement efforts.

This approach seeks to surface bottom-up solutions rather than institute top-down decisions that are not supported by a school community. A school community may choose to bring in an external partner, but that is after an intentional visioning and selection process.

Antonio Cardona, Director - Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools

Board communications with the school and educational communities

At this stage, community members may have different levels of understanding about the school's situation, ranging from awareness and anxiety to being wholly unaware of the school's statutory relationship with its authorizer, the authorizer's school review findings or the notices of concern and deficiency that have been issued to the school. In the spirit of community self-determination, authorizers and board members should collaborate to ensure

that family members and community members understand the concerns raised by the authorizer, the pathways to remediation being pursued by the school and the range of intervention possibilities.

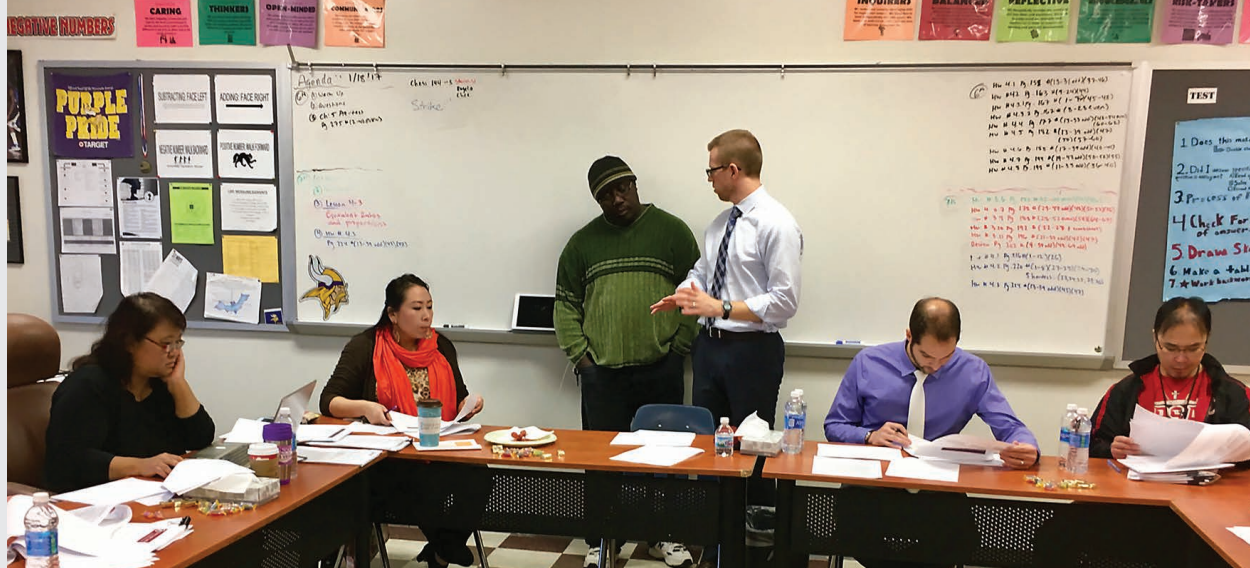
The trust between parents in a school setting is one that should be nurtured and supported to not only ensure a strong family culture in the school but also as a necessary partnership during time of academic struggles. During times of academic struggle, parents need to be informed, involved and heard by those with just as much at stake as themselves: other parents.

Latasha Gandy, Founder - Parents Radically Organized

As the school improvement process changes course in the direction of external interventions, like school closure or community-driven turnaround, community stakeholders - including education service providers, philanthropists, policy makers, community-based organizations, school talent organizations and reform organizations - should be strategically engaged in the school, board and authorizer conversations and planning processes to ensure that appropriate resources are able to be deployed to support potential pathways to resolution.

I continue to learn that community-driven turnaround requires substantial leadership by authorizers at this phase, and that school boards are critical to their ultimate success. We have not fully developed how to ensure school boards are prepared to do this work. As a region, we need to continue to support effective governance for all charter schools, and especially for those going through a community-driven turnaround.

David Greenberg, Director of Charter School Authorizing - Audubon Center of the North Woods



Key Lessons

- School communities need and deserve clear communication from their school's board of directors about the realities of the school's probationary status as well as an honest discussion of the pathways available to the school. Through whatever means necessary, the school board, school community and the authorizer must arrive at a shared understanding of the substance of the authorizer's concerns and interventions and their ramifications on the school and its continued operation.
- When there has been a lack of a clarity about school performance and the ramifications of continued under-performance - or a misunderstanding or disregard for performance improvement goals at the school board or community level - this stage is a difficult one for authorizers and school communities.
- School boards should foster shared understanding and ownership of the school's status and begin to cultivate the leadership necessary for a community-driven school improvement effort. The possibility for successful community-driven turnaround is measurably increased if this stage results in a shared sense of urgency and possibility about the potential for the school's board and community to act decisively in pursuit of dramatic school transformation.
- As a school community considers the community-driven turnaround opportunity, the school board should begin assessing the practical and financial viability of selecting and seating an operator. If a school community has the will to lead a community-driven turnaround but lacks the necessary technical or financial resources to do so independently, initial conversations with philanthropists and technical service providers must begin at this stage.

Phase 3



Mandating turnaround, planning for change

(13-16 months prior to turnaround)

When a school has been unable to meet improvement benchmarks and the authorizer has determined that a school has the enrollment stability, community stature, board capacity and financial resources necessary to pursue community-driven turnaround, the authorizer will issue a turnaround mandate. This official communication from the authorizer outlines the turnaround opportunity for the board as an alternative to school closure. If the school chooses to pursue a turnaround effort, this mandate initiates the process of turnaround planning and community organizing necessary to meet its stipulations.

Conditions for success	Priorities
Communication with families and school community members that balances transparency about school outcomes and the turnaround with assurances about school stability	Building awareness of the national and regional work of school turnaround and the particular promise and challenge of community-driven school turnaround
A clear authorizer turnaround mandate that describes the rationale for turnaround, the requirements for a community-driven process and operator selection, and the criteria that will guide the authorizer's decision about whether or not to renew the school's contract	Intensifying ongoing efforts to recruit potential operator applicants, including local and national community-based organizations, charter management organizations and successful school leaders

Continued...

Conditions for success	Priorities
Sufficient community resources - most notably project management, board development support and financial resources - to execute a successful community-driven turnaround process and to effectively seat an operator	
A pool of potential operators who have expressed interest in expanding their work and impact through school turnaround in MN	

Authorizer turnaround mandate

The turnaround mandate describes the rationale for the turnaround and details the criteria by which the authorizer will evaluate the success of the process and outcomes of the board's community-driven turnaround initiative. These criteria may include: enlisting appropriate process management support, creating a turnaround committee that is representative of the school community and the families it serves, identifying an operator with a demonstrated track record of academic success and of engaging in board governance or board member/capacity building during the course of the turnaround process. The specificity of the mandate is critical because it compels action at the school level and determines the community-driven character of the school turnaround initiative. A sample turnaround mandate can be found in the appendix to this guide.

I was hoping to spark disruptive change that would lead to real community engagement and decision-making, leadership change, and school improvements culminating in lasting, improved outcomes for students.

-David Greenberg, Director of Charter School Authorizing - Audubon Center of the North Woods

New board & committee leadership for turnaround

The school board receives the authorizer's turnaround mandate and is charged with translating that mandate into a community-driven turnaround process at the school level. The character of this process - and the diffuse leadership base it creates within the school - lays a foundation for the short-term transformation of the school and the long-term development of parent and community leadership at the school. Accordingly, a school board should work to carefully identify additional, representative leadership from its parent community, its staff and its broader community in service of the turnaround effort. These school stakeholders may join the board of directors in service of strengthened school governance at this early stage of the turnaround effort or may opt to offer leadership on board committees, including a School Turnaround Committee (STC) tasked with carrying out the school's turnaround plan.

Turnaround plan & resources

In addition to formally identifying and charging the STC with the work of operator selection, the board's turnaround plan establishes a critical path timeline for the turnaround initiative. Further, this plan defines the work and artifacts the STC is tasked with creating, which may include a statement of the school's core identity, its vision for turnaround, its operator selection criteria and a Request for Proposal document that describes the school and the turnaround opportunity.

The biggest assets of community driven turnaround lie in its potential to produce lasting change, to restore belief, possibility and hope for a community. By putting key stakeholders front and center in the decision-making process, communities become empowered and shift mindsets from despair and disappointment to passion and possibility.

Mary Stafford, Executive Director - True North Education Partners

Communication of authorizer mandate and turnaround plan

The school board should be in regular communication with the school community via written communication, social media, traditional media and community meetings to keep the school community abreast of their turnaround status, progress and outcomes. By communicating

what turnaround actions are required at each stage of the process - and how the school is addressing those requirements - the board can stave off panic and dispel rumors of school closure, both of which are common results of a turnaround mandate and may lead to teacher and student attrition.

Cultivation of turnaround operators

In order that the STC's selection process result in the selection of a qualified operator that can successfully execute a high-stakes turnaround in a community-driven context, school community members should work collaboratively with regional and national educational partners to cultivate a high-potential pool of respondents in advance of the Request for Proposals deadline. The community-driven turnaround opportunity can be an attractive one for national charter school management organizations who have historically come into their turnaround leadership with the support of a state agency or authorizer, but without the support of the school community. Additionally, for high-performing local schools, the turnaround opportunity can be an attractive pathway for replication or expansion.

First and foundational to all transformative work is building a culture based on the core values of the community it serves. We believe in harnessing the power of community to facilitate long-lasting authentic change. As an organization, True North's foundational beliefs are uniquely aligned with the emerging model of community driven turnaround. True North reimagines schools through the hearts and minds of their communities.

Mary Stafford, Executive Director - True North Education Partners

Hmong American Partnership (HAP) responded to the RFP because of a number of reasons: parents and community members had reached out to HAP for support and consideration as they knew of HAP's work in education and our wrap around services; the work aligns with HAP's Education Priorities, both at the local and national levels; HAP was already working with another Hmong charter school; and HAP wanted to expand on our Education in the School efforts in a more impactful way.

Bao Vang, President & CEO - Hmong American Partnership

Key Lessons

- In an authorizer-initiated turnaround effort, it is critical that authorizers are credibly willing to close a school should the school decline the turnaround opportunity or be unable to meet the terms of the turnaround mandate. To that end, authorizers and communities should exhaust all other intervention options and enter into community-driven turnaround with a shared understanding that the initiative is an alternative to school closure, not merely another intervention.
- There has been sufficient and increasing regional and national interest from potential school turnaround operators including successful national charter management operations - in each of Minnesota's community-driven turnaround efforts. Many organizations cite the community-driven character of the initiative as its most appealing characteristic; they note and appreciate the novelty of being invited by a school community rather than a government agency.
- While community-driven turnaround opens up the possibility that school communities and operators might enter into their work as peers and colleagues, the traditional power dynamics in education reform and school turnaround must be confronted to realize that possibility. The realities of operators, who often hail from well-resourced charter management organizations or large-scale non-profits, reporting to a community-based board in a low-income community, community of color or indigenous community, often requires new mindsets and skill sets.
- The school board must, at once, support a rigorous selection process and anticipate the challenges of turnaround implementation by focusing in this phase on operator recruitment and securing financial support.



Phase 4



Learning, vision-setting and selecting an operator

(5-12 months prior to turnaround)

During this time, the school is actively engaged in the process of sourcing and selecting an operator to execute its community-driven turnaround so the work of the School Turnaround Committee (STC) begins its work in earnest. The STC and its work represents the core innovation of community-driven turnaround. Through this body, families and community members engage in a process of learning together and lead a process of identifying and selecting an operator to recommend to the board of directors for approval.

I agreed to work with the School Turnaround Committee to serve and preserve our school. First, I wanted to share with the committee the needs of the school: what the school needs to change and what kind of expertise we need to fill the gap. Also, I wanted to compare Dugsi with other schools who had experienced similar problems, engaged in turnaround, and became some of the best schools in the country. I wanted to observe and learn from the experiences of these schools, learn from them, and apply their experiences to Dugsi.

Khalif Warsame, Academic Advisor - Dugsi Academy

Conditions for success	Priorities
A board that can cultivate an STC that authentically represents the school community	School stakeholders feeling ownership and agency in the turnaround process

Conditions for success	Priorities
Support in organizing and managing the process of learning, vision-setting and selection	The STC's work reflecting their own experiences, perspectives and priorities within the school
A pool of potential operators that meet the authorizer's mandate and may match the mission, identity, aspirations and needs of the school	STC members finding ways to share their role, vision and progress with school stakeholders, board members and the school's authorizer so all stakeholders have the information they need to know that the school is on-track to meet the authorizer's mandate and secure future operation of the school
	Potential operators understand the mission, core identity and priorities of the school and its community and become invested in the community-driven and self-determined nature of the school's improvement effort

School turnaround committee (STC)

The STC is made up of a cross-section of invested school stakeholders including family members, school staff, board members, broader school stakeholders and, when appropriate, current students and alumni. It is a committee of the school's board and functions as the primary working group charged by the school's board of directors with executing the school's turnaround plan. With the support of community experts, STC members engage in the learning and vision-setting necessary to honor the responsibility they've assumed: recommending a new turnaround operator for the school to the school's board.

Turnaround would have been very different without a committee. Without the committee, there would not have been a right way to find the turnaround operator for the school. It was the committee's job to find a suitable operator for the school by looking at different ways to make change. In terms of experience, track record, cultural competence – all of these factors were taken into account when looking. If that committee would not have been selected, the school would probably not exist right now.

Khalif Warsame, Academic Advisor, Dugsi Academy



STC program of learning and vision-setting

The first focus of the STC members' shared work is to identify the key programmatic, operational and leadership levers necessary for dramatic school improvement. To do this, members should dedicate time learning about the practices of successful schools as well as studying the work of school turnaround nationally. To augment their learning, STC members may visit local high-performing schools as a committee to build their shared understanding of effective instructional and operational practices. Even as they are learning about the work of education and education reform, STC members should also dedicate significant time and attention to distilling the core identity of their school so that it can be preserved through the process of turnaround.

STC members will combine their learning about high-performing schools and their knowledge about the unique spirit and value of their own school into a vision for turnaround, an aspirational statement about what their school should be when its core identity is upheld and its students are meeting their limitless potential academically. Ultimately, the STC will translate its learning, its articulation of the school's core identity and its vision for turnaround into an operator selection process.

The key learning was for us to identify our goals for the school. We were looking for the right change and the person who could bring that change. The leader we selected was the right person. Since their arrival we have seen an improvement in education, discipline, the way the classes are structured, the way the teachers are teaching, and now we have a quiet and calm learning environment. The way Dugsi Academy is now is different from the old Dugsi--both academics and student behavior. I am seeing a lot of progress take place and hopefully, in the future, we will continue to experience more.

Aden Ahmednur, Parent Liaison - Dugsi Academy

Turnaround operator selection

Following a process of learning and vision-setting, STC members, with appropriate technical support as needed, codify their vision for turnaround into a phased operator selection process driven by the selection criteria and artifacts the committee has created. Using these tools, STC members work as a committee of the board to evaluate candidates, assessing their alignment with their criteria and the demands of authorizer's turnaround mandate.

Typically, the selection process begins when the STC solicits initial letters of interest from regional and national operators who have been cultivated by regional education leaders familiar with both the processes of community-driven turnaround and the national constellation of potential operators. From there, the STC issues a Request for Proposal (RFP) document and requests applications from the highest-potential candidates.

The community-driven RFP describes the historical performance of the school, the authorizer's mandate and the current context at the school; it also affirmatively communicates the STC's articulation of the school's core identity and its vision for turnaround. The RFP includes an application that invites interested operators to detail their interest in the turnaround opportunity, their readiness to execute a turnaround on the timetable provided, the current capacity of their team as well as their turnaround experience and their school, network, or personal track record of academic and operational achievement. Notably, community-driven RFPs also ask candidates to describe their alignment with the principles of community-driven school change and their ability and intention to preserve the school's core identity. Applicants' responses to these areas of the RFP form the foundation for the remainder of the selection process which typically also includes school visits to finalists' schools and in-person interviews.

In my opinion the operator must have a national perspective and deep knowledge of best practice. Equally important, the operator must have experience and knowledge of the local landscape. Importing prescriptive models without understanding the needs and aspirations of the local community is a recipe for disaster. The operator's support team needs to be a part of the daily life of the community it serves. Turnaround is complicated work that needs to be built on trust and solid relationships. It requires immediate and comprehensive responses given its urgent nature.

Mary Stafford, Executive Director - True North Education Partners

At the conclusion of their review process, members of the STC seek to arrive at a consensus operator recommendation to the school's board of directors. The board receives the STC's recommendation and supporting documentation and votes to approve or reject the committee's recommendation based on its alignment with the approved selection criteria and the authorizer's mandate and evidence of a rigorous and carefully executed process. Upon approval, the board of directors notifies the school's authorizer of their selection decision and also notifies the selected first-choice operator applicant to begin the process of contracting and onboarding.

It is worth the effort, but it is essential to have people on board who can see it through to the end. It is also critical to build the capacity of the school community in a genuine way. When given the right tools and information, families are able to make the right decisions for their kids. Traditional education reform tells them, "We know better than you."

Antonio Cardona, Director - Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools

We look for authentic community buy-in as a key measure of success for our grantmaking. CDT has consistently uncovered that support. I would say this process has helped solidify our emerging perspective around the importance of community buy-in/ownership.

Bill Graves, President - John and Denise Graves Foundation

Key Lessons

- Family and community members will dedicate the considerable time and energy required by the community-driven turnaround process when the opportunity is well-defined and when real responsibility for its outcome is vested in their hands.
- Authorizers must offer clear guidance about the characteristics and capacities of an operator that will meet their mandate in order that the STC and the school board can use these criteria to anchor their selection process.
- While the majority of the operator selection work belongs to the STC, the board and the broader school community need to be informed about and invested in the STC's vision for transformation and criteria for selection. Thoughtful and frequent communication with stakeholders builds confidence that the work of the STC will be embraced by the board and the community.
- The core work of the STC focuses on the recommendation of an operator; nevertheless, their learning and development process should help them arrive at a self-determined vision for excellence, not just a pathway to avoid school closure. It is this aspirational vision that will animate the work of school change and justify the sometimes difficult work of turnaround in the months and years to come.

I also firmly believe and live by this motto and that is "Our children are our future." I believe that by investing in our children and their well-being, we are investing in our future. I myself have been affected by these changes, I learned that for everything that is good, it takes a significant amount of time, and this process of change has made me humble, as well as diligent, with the hard and tough parts of this process.

Abdirizak Said, Parent - Dugsi Academy



Phase 5



Seating a turnaround operator

(1 to 4 months prior to turnaround)

During this period, the school board, the School Turnaround Committee (STC), the authorizer, alongside other collaborating regional partners, orient the newly identified operator to the school through a process of relationship and context-building and developmental assessment. A key focus for the operator during this transition period is the creation of a short and longer-term turnaround vision and plan. The vision and plan are created through exploration of school documents and artifacts, formal and informal staff conversations, classroom observations and, potentially, coaching as well as from focus group conversations with families, students and other stakeholders. As the operator translates their learning into a concrete turnaround plan, they are in regular and close conversation with the board to set shared performance goals and to anticipate the board actions required to execute their plan and meet those goals.

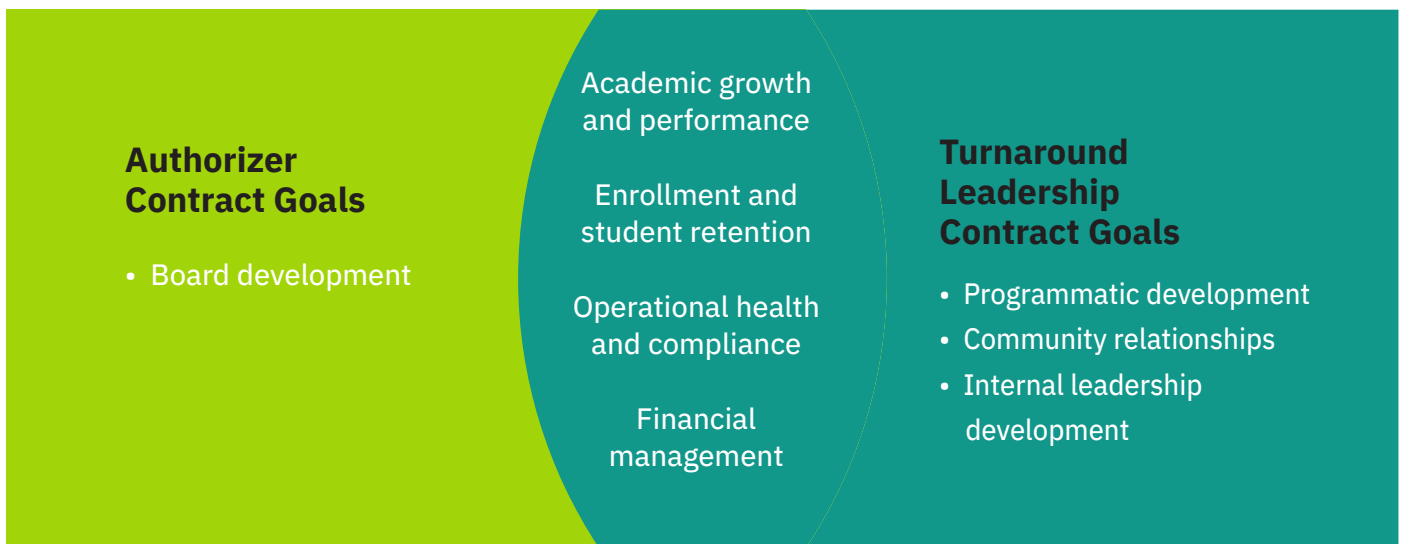
Conditions for success	Priorities
Regular and clear internal communication between the board, the STC, the authorizer and the operator about the school's turnaround progress	Creating consistent, affirmative external messaging about the vision and work of community-driven turnaround
School board members are able to effectively lead simultaneous and aligned processes of contract development with their operator and their authorizer	Articulating a short-term and long-term turnaround vision and developing related goals and performance metrics that can invest the board and the community in the work of transformation

Conditions for success	Priorities
Financial support is sufficient to carry out the comprehensive assessment and planning necessary for an effective and planful transition to the operator's leadership	Ensuring alignment across authorizer contract, operator contract and school board's performance goals
	Securing financial support for the new operator's transitional work

Contracts for re-authorization and operator

After the board approves the selection of an operator for the school, the authorizer will evaluate the selected operator's adherence to the terms of the mandate as well as the fidelity of the school's turnaround process implementation to the process outlined in the turnaround plan. Presuming alignment, the authorizer will move to re-authorize the school for a term of 1 to 3 years. The new contract terms will focus on nationally-recognized leading indicators of school turnaround success, including school culture improvement, academic growth, measures of parent and staff satisfaction, student enrollment stability or increase, staff retention and operational stability indicators. At the same time they are renewing their authorizer contract, the school board will also be executing a contract with its selected operator to formalize the role the operator will play in school turnaround and to outline the measurable objectives they hope to meet over the course of the contract term.

While there may be subsets of goals that are only appropriate for the authorizer contract and others that are only appropriate for the contract with the school's new operator, alignment across authorizer contract goals and operator contract goals in key academic and operational domains supports aligned action. Further, this alignment provides a foundation for the school board's meaningful formative and summative assessment of its operator's impact in the months and years to come.



It is critical at this stage that the operator and the board arrive at a shared understanding, not just of technical contract terms, but also the structure and spirit of their relationship. Under MN charter school statute, an operator serves at the will of the board and, thus, the operator needs to understand its role as executing the vision of the board; at the same time, board members need to understand the centrality of the operator's vision and actions to their school improvement effort. This understanding can undergird an effective and efficient collaborative relationship and enable the nimble and trustworthy decision-making required for successful school turnaround.

Operator onboarding

In order that the school's identified operator is able to execute the board's vision for school turnaround, it is advantageous to have the operator onsite, conducting asset and needs assessments, building relationships with school and community constituents and formulating an initial action plan as soon as possible after their selection. That said, the arrival of a new operator in an existing school context must be handled with sensitivity, presuming the trepidation of staff who may fear for their jobs, the cautious optimism of parents and community members who are weighing the dual possibilities of staying for the turnaround and exploring other options, as well as the watchful eye of turnaround advocates and funders who will make investments in accordance with early signs of turnaround success. Accordingly, the operator and the school's board members must work together to construct a shared understanding of the context for turnaround and the operator's approach to working within that context. This shared understanding allows the operator to stay in productive and dynamic relationship with the board as it executes its early stage turnaround actions, including staffing and programmatic changes.

The process was an inclusive process that involved all stakeholder groups (parents, students, community founder and leaders, staff, and board); HAP uses the “Appreciative Inquiry” model by asking powerful questions in all of our engagement efforts that was instrumental and works best with our community. This enabled us to focus on the history and purpose of the school. We took time and really met people where they were at instead of them meeting us where we’re at. HAP has deep roots and credibility in the community, which helps with our presence and grounding of the work.

Bao Vang, President & CEO - Hmong American Partnership

Preparing for implementation

During this stage, the operator envisions and executes a plan to create the operational, academic and staffing foundation necessary for successful turnaround. After conducting a thorough asset and needs assessment, the operator should present an initial turnaround plan to the school’s board of directors, ideally with STC members in attendance to share their leadership and perspective, in order that the operator and their team might receive important insights and feedback to improve their plan. Pending reasonable adjustments, the board should use this initial turnaround plan as a short-term roadmap to guide its own meeting schedule and agenda creation in order to offer oversight and support for the operator’s critical, initial turnaround efforts.

My leadership perspective has adjusted from a firm authoritative style to a firm motivation style. Essentially, my previous experiences left me to believe that all organizations required structure and execution. Yet, within a turnaround scenario, all stakeholders have experienced trauma from much change and possibility of loss (school closing). Such understanding requires sensitivity, patience, education, and belief that the community can grow with support.

Arthur C. Turner, III, Principal - LoveWorks Academy

Key Lessons

- Given the differential social capital of community-based school board members and operators, many of whom represent large-scale non-profit organizations - and the ways board and operator relationships are forged across lines of race, class and power - it is vital that the board and the operator arrive at not only a contract that governs performance, but also operating principles that are grounded in the principles of community self-determination.
- This is a period when misconceptions and misinformation about a school's status and future are susceptible to spreading in the absence of clear communication by the school's board, authorizer, operator, outgoing leadership and informal leaders within the school community. The school community needs to hear: a message of stability - what will change, what might change, and what won't change in the weeks and months ahead; a message of confidence in the school's new operator from vested leaders in the school community, including board and STC members and, possibly, the outgoing leaders of the school. Most importantly, school community members to need to receive a clear message from the school's board and authorizer that the school will remain open in the year ahead to ensure enrollment stability.
- While conventional timelines and expectations for school turnaround and restart generally include significant staffing changes and full model implementation heading into the first year of turnaround, there are alternate paths available. Depending on the timeline for operator selection, the school's current status and priorities and regional talent and funding conditions, a more gradual launch of turnaround implementation - and a responsive set of first-year benchmarks - may be advisable.

This approach is very sensitive given how close and tight we are as a Hmong community. I always have a plan, but to start off by facilitating meetings and conversations to get to the plan, where it makes the ownership of the process be held by parents, community, teachers and staff, really stretched me as a leader. The process we have taken builds a community instead of taking from the community, one of many reasons as to why the region should support and expand efforts such as this. This is the second year for us as PSA, and I'm super excited to see some of our work being implemented.

Bao Vang, President & CEO - Hmong American Partnership

- A thoughtful and well-described turnaround reporting structure offers the school board clarity about how to carry out its oversight and evaluation responsibilities, school staff stability and security in their work and family and offers community members direction about how to engage with the school's staff, operator and board.
- Predictable, dedicated turnaround funding that supplements the school's general operating revenue is crucial in creating a predictable and sustainable path for turnaround implementation and the additional staffing, professional development and materials such efforts require. The scale of this funding should be commensurate with new school start-up funding as, through turnaround, the school is, effectively, re-starting.
- Operators that come from outside of a school community should anticipate the unique opportunities and challenges of working with a new community. Successful community-driven turnaround operators dedicate the time and resources necessary to understand the processes of decision-making, sources of informal leadership, and habits and rituals that are valued in a cultural or school community. Dedicating this time will allow operators to build the knowledge, relationships and systems necessary to tailor their approach to meet the specific needs and aspirations of the school community.

A good school operator candidate in a community-driven turnaround appreciates, honors and celebrates milestones that the school has made and has the sophistication and leadership to build rapport and trust quickly. The organization does not claim to have all the answers, but builds bridges to enhance the strengths of the school and its leaders in a different way.

Bao Vang, President & CEO - Hmong American Partnership

- School operators coming from another state should pay particular attention to the work of special education, ELL services and trauma-informed teaching - and the divergent ways those support services are delivered across different states and regions - as they consider how they will create systems that honor the potential of all of their students.

Phase 6



Beginning turnaround implementation, fortifying turnaround governance (1 to 7 months into turnaround)

During this time, the school is in the earliest stages of turnaround implementation and its board, operator, students, families and staff are engaged in the transformation of school culture systems and rituals, instructional delivery and school operations. Ideally, all of these critical stakeholders are working collaboratively in a process of continuous improvement to ensure progress toward short and long-term turnaround goals. To ensure effective oversight and sufficient support - and potentially to reorient board policies and procedures to the pace of turnaround and the demands of managing a significant vendor in the form of the school's operator - the board may augment its capacity by pursuing developmental growth opportunities and adding members with particular expertise or leadership skills.

This turnaround has made an impact on the community of the school in several areas. The outside playground area is under construction, the appearance of the hallways is inviting, the t-shirts and uniforms are so well organized. LoveWorks is creating an atmosphere for success and involvement of the community. I have also acquired a new position as president of the PTO team. In this turnaround, I'm looking forward to the future.

Deja Phillips, Parent - LoveWorks Academy

Conditions for success	Priorities
Financial resources for increased staffing, staff development, new curricula, operational, facilities changes and parent engagement as demanded by the turnaround effort	Developing school culture and systems in alignment with the school's mission, core identity and aspirational vision for change
Continuous communication that builds trust and alignment between the school's operator, the school's board and the broader school community as changes are made in the school	Recruiting staff who are committed to the vision and work of turnaround and have the capacity to lead school transformation at the classroom level
Creating sufficient trust between the school board, the school community and the operator to enable the nimble and dramatic decision-making and action required for effective school turnaround	Creating sufficient time and effective systems for staff development that can efficiently prepare teachers and staff to realize the instructional, school climate and operational turnaround goals
	Growing and developing the school board to build its governance, development and performance management capacity
	Creating new systems for accountability and data tracking that are accessible by all parties and that proceed from shared goal-setting

Operator receives responsibility for management & outcomes of school

At this stage, the school board charges the operator with primary responsibility for meeting the school's academic and operational performance goals, in accordance with the vision for turnaround that guided their selection by the School Turnaround Committee (STC). While the

school board (which, at this stage, may include past STC members) maintains its statutory and fiduciary responsibilities for school performance, it codifies the opportunity of community-driven turnaround by contractually tasking the operator with meeting the performance goals defined in the charter contract.

To ensure that the relationship between the school board and the operator is strong enough to support dramatic school improvement, the operator must respect the board's governance and oversight role, and the board must protect and respect its new operator's leadership and agency. If the school board has taken on some degree of leadership and management within the school during the early stages of turnaround and staff selection in service of stabilizing the school, this may also be a time where the board needs to intentionally shift back toward the work of governance, even as it continues to play a leadership role in the broader school community and turnaround effort.

Prior to True North's leadership, structure was in place, but the system for middle school was frequently changing. Staff were constantly assigned to new classrooms, middle school behavior became a huge concern, and the students weren't learning. The students weren't learning because of inconsistency from staff, ineffective behavior systems, and poor classroom management. After True North and Arthur Turner (the school leader) took over, I slowly began to see a difference throughout the building. The students were understanding/-following the school-wide expectations, consequences were given to students who didn't follow the behavior system, and they became more enthusiastic about learning.

Bionca Brown, Paraprofessional - LoveWorks Academy

Continued board development & support for turnaround governance

In order to fulfill their statutory and fiduciary responsibilities as board members in a new context of school turnaround, school board members will likely require additional developmental support in the areas of school finance, organizational development and management, human resource management, school and contract law, facilities and operations and fundraising. Given that the boards of the schools identified for turnaround interventions have typically lacked the internal capacity, systems or structures to provoke or sustain academic or operational success, this period represents an important opportunity to refresh or even restart the board.

It has been an amazing opportunity to lead from a community focus. This method of approach allows generational impact for our students, staff, families, and community members. The operator-led turnaround has been effective, as our operator uses a mentoring approach which empowers the school leader to remain the face of the organization. Yet, the load required for true improvement is lessened with supports received from operator.

Arthur C. Turner, III, Principal - LoveWorks Academy

In order to imbue the board's growth and development with the community-driven character of the overall turnaround initiative, board training should be grounded in the same principles of community self-determination that defined the work of operator selection and seating. Board development in this stage will likely take the shape of adding new board members, seating new board officers (possibly including members of the STC), clarifying the charges of existing officers, revising board policies and attending and creating focused board trainings. Relevant trainings during this time will likely include standard areas such as governance, finance and HR, but should also include learning opportunities specific to school turnaround and the school's new academic program and success metrics. Importantly, given the volume and complexity of board decisions during a turnaround effort, the board must create and empower relevant committees, moving the work of the board from a "committee of the whole" approach to a functional committee structure.

Developmental evaluation of turnaround progress

Nationally, research suggests that early signs of turnaround success include improved school culture and enrollment stabilization. To ensure both, the board and the operator will need to lead quickly and decisively in the first months of the turnaround. Reaching consensus between the board and the operator about the impetus and pace of change in this period is essential; without this consensus, the operator may feel hamstrung in bringing the change they were contracted to bring or the board may feel that the community-driven character of their turnaround initiative is under threat.

The school transformation is one that is exciting as well as inspiring-not only did the youth in our school improve academically, but in other aspects as well. The school transformed into a place where children feel accepted and that encourages their own individual uniqueness.

Abdirizak Said, Parent - Dugsi Academy

After the intense days of transition to the operator’s leadership, the board and the operator should organize their aligned authorizer and operator contract goals into interim milestones. These interim benchmarks create shared reference points for the school board and school community regarding their progress toward school model implementation, student academic and social emotional outcomes, student enrollment, family engagement and leadership, financial stability and growth, facilities maintenance and procurement and public relations.

Once performance goals and metrics - and incremental milestones - have been created and approved by the board and the operator, all parties should agree on the progress monitoring structures that will enable an ongoing cycle of learning and evaluation. When the board and its committees are full partners in the school evaluation process, it offers the possibility for continuous improvement cycles to carry forward the community-driven character of the turnaround initiative.

From my perspective, the transformation during the course of the school turnaround has been a “healthy” process. I remember the first day I saw True North in the building in mid-October 2017. The team would walk through the build with a notebook and a pen. I would always wonder, are they taking notes on the negative things they notice? Are they taking notes on me? But after a while, I realized they were focused on creating different ways to improve the school! The professional development trainings were more useful, which increased classroom management. The staff was willing to redevelop the school culture, apply better professionalism, and sought support from administration. The arts team made sure students were prepared and ready to perform at the school Winter/Spring showcase. Parent engagement had increased during parent/teacher conferences and school-wide events.

Bionca Brown, Paraprofessional - LoveWorks Academy



Key Lessons

- Creating a culture of “quick wins” and regularly sharing progress and success with the school board, the school staff, families and students keeps morale and momentum high and galvanizes people for the hard, ongoing work of school turnaround.
- Frequent acknowledgement of the school leadership team and school staff bolsters confidence and allegiance to the turnaround effort and contributes to a healthy talent development culture.
- The realities of a struggling school partnering with an experienced and successful operator - with their natural connections to existing educational networks, processes and systems - has the potential to create a power imbalance that challenges the community-driven nature of the turnaround effort. To counterbalance these power dynamics, it is important that the school develop a strong, functional school board that both represents the school community and is connected beyond that community.
- Before and during the operational phase of school turnaround, the school board should actively seek and nurture their own connections to funders, talent partners and other ecosystem partners so that they can partner with the operator in leveraging these relationships for the benefit of the school.
- The development of a well-informed, community-focused school board offers promise for effective turnaround governance in the short-term and, as board members grow in their leadership, for a pipeline of new educational leaders who are advocates, not only for their school, but for the region’s broader efforts toward educational justice.

Over the course of the turnaround I have seen greater accountability and communication. There is also a better culture of calm. In that first year it was chaos. We had over 30 staffing changes over the course of the year, and that is simply not sustainable. We have created a strong core of staff members that are here for the kids first and everything else is secondary. There is much more love in everything that we do.

Thomas Ward, Second Grade Teacher - LoveWorks Academy

Phase 7



Evaluating, learning and sustaining

(8 to 12 months into turnaround)

During this time, the operator is executing the turnaround through day-to-day management of the school; their work is focused on developing their staff members' instructional skills and habits in service of full programmatic implementation and on systematizing operational and school culture processes. At the same time, the school board and authorizer - in collaboration with the operator - begin to assess the impact and key lessons from the first year of implementation. Presuming their assessment indicates positive progress, this coalition, in collaboration with regional partners, can begin to turn their attention to the future, considering long-term investments in their school's talent pipeline, financial planning, board membership, and community partnerships.

Conditions for success	Priorities
Shared commitment on behalf of the school's board, authorizer and operator to measuring progress against turnaround benchmarks	Developing a school culture and systems that reflect the aspirational vision for the school and its community
Honest evaluation of the school's progress and a willingness to identify obstacles and pursue solutions	Increasing academic growth over the course of the year so that by the end of the first year, students are growing at a pace that is predictive of proficiency within 3-5 years

Conditions for success	Priorities
Capacity on behalf of the board to collect key data relevant to school and operator performance and assess progress against a shared vision and reasonable expectations for early-stage turnaround efforts	Developing the skills and practices of board governance at the board level and the skills of collaborative organizational leadership at the operator level
Clear opportunities for ongoing community leadership and guidance as the turnaround effort proceeds	

Authorizer evaluation for contract renewal

The authorizer’s contract renewal process represents a critical benchmark in assessing whether the school has demonstrated the leading indicators of turnaround success and whether, through that work and in the plans articulated for the future, there is evidence to suggest that the trajectory and pace of change are likely to continue for a longer (3-5 year) contract term.

Board evaluation of the operator

Employing the shared progress monitoring schema that the school board and the operator have devised and realized over the course of the first year of turnaround activity, the board creates and executes an evaluation of its operator that encompasses academic and operational outcomes as well as the ways board members and community members have experienced the turnaround. A robust evaluation will draw information from diverse sources - authorizer, school staff, families, funders, fellow school leaders at other schools, contracted providers, etc. - to arrive at a holistic understanding of the operator’s impact on the school and its community. Evaluation findings and any ramifications (i.e. rescoping of role, proposed salary changes or contract renewal concerns) should be shared by the board chair or, potentially, an ad-hoc committee of the board dedicated to operator evaluation, with the operator. After that conversation, the operator will process these findings and return to the full board with reflections and, as necessary, amendments to key facets of the turnaround plan.

Sustained community leadership

In this stage, the community members who selected an operator for their school during the early stages of community-driven turnaround must find new avenues to sustain and grow their leadership. The School Turnaround Committee (STC) might remain a standing committee of the Board, extending its tenure to oversee turnaround progress and providing critical insights over the course of the initiative. Alternatively, STC members may opt to create new Board committees or community leadership structures including parent & teacher and community outreach organizations. STC members, alongside other participating parent leaders, may lead in the areas of communication and social change, lending their voices to storytelling initiatives, social media campaigns and policy initiatives. They may also elect to help members of other school communities in pursuing community-driven school change.

The operator can play a critical role in provoking and making space for the growth of community leadership by elevating the voices and perspectives of the community members who made the turnaround possible and by intentionally honoring the community-driven character of the school change.

Community Driven School Turnaround work offers the unique opportunity to make sure parents are the drivers of change and the drivers of the communication for that change. It is not enough to simply include parents in this work; grass top leaders have to be serious about involving parents and letting those who want to lead represent other parents as ambassadors, ensuring all parents have a positive, affirming, and meaningful relationship during a school turnaround that is rooted in real power and not symbolic power. When this occurs, parents become invested beyond the turnaround and place personal accountability on themselves for the sustainability of positive academic outcomes for all kids.

Latasha Gandy, Founder - Parents Radically Organized

We have found great value in having the community engaged early in the process, and really appreciate that there are more defined processes and approaches for this work to happen. It is a critical component of a successful turnaround, especially in Minnesota. We do believe in the potential of CDT, but believe that the community-driven process needs to continue well beyond the decision-making process and the first year of implementation.

Jennifer Stern, CEO and Sheilah Kavaney, Director - Great Minnesota Schools

Key Lessons

- The school's board, authorizer and operator should identify metrics and milestones that represent the entirety of what they care about - including the quality of the relationship between the school's operator and its board as well as the ways the operator creates and nurtures relationships with community members within the first years of turnaround - before turnaround implementation is underway.
- Because community-driven school turnaround doesn't take a "clean slate" approach but instead builds upon existing strengths and values, the initial priorities, developmental milestones and timeline for academic performance will differ across each school, even with their shared emphasis on dramatically increasing academic performance

I think the most important lesson in education is patience. The results may not happen right away, and students will challenge you every day. If you approach the process with calm and compassion, you will see growth in the end.

Thomas Ward, Second Grade Teacher - LoveWorks Academy



Conclusion

As the board chair of Dugsi Academy, I have played a part in Dugsi Academy's turnaround strategy. The process was lengthy. It required forming a task force and eventually choosing an operator, and, not to mention, diligent work by a community of people who want the best for the students of Dugsi Academy. In a sense, it was a community-led effort, and all the success of the turnaround strategy belongs to the community, which in turn empowers them and encourages them to take on an active leadership role in the success of Dugsi Academy.

Shukri Hassan, Board Chair - Dugsi Academy

Beyond the first year: Questions and reflections

The work of community-driven school turnaround is still in its earliest stages at each of the three pioneering community-driven turnaround school sites in MN. While the school communities, practitioners and other stakeholders who are committed to community-driven school change are working to learn as quickly as possible, many questions remain. Amongst them:

- What values, commitments and structures support sustained family and community learning, engagement and leadership after the initial stages of a community-driven turnaround effort?
- How can the relationship and decision-making pathways between the school's board and operator - both of whom are likely accustomed to making most of the core decisions regarding their school autonomously - be cultivated so that each entity experiences the agency, clarity, ownership, transparency and efficiency required by a collaborative, urgent and complex change effort?

- How should philanthropy consider grant making for turnaround, an initiative that, necessarily, requires the release of funds to schools that have a history of significant academic and operational underperformance? How can we develop evaluation schema that can offer insight into the predictive success of school turnaround at the earliest stages of community-driven turnaround efforts in order that schools and school communities can receive on-time support?
- Is there a particular ratio of board turnover and board continuation that is most predictive of success? Should board renewal efforts be mandated as part of the turnaround effort or subject to the will of the existing school board?
- What are the budgetary demands of community-driven turnaround beyond a school's normal annual expenditures in the year before turnaround implementation and in the first three to five years of turnaround implementation? What combination of the school's fund balance, philanthropy and state support for turnaround efforts is most likely to lead to sustainable funding for predictable and successful turnaround efforts at each site? What regional, state or national structures and policies could be put in place to facilitate public and private turnaround funding in ways that are scaled to support multiple, simultaneous turnaround efforts and the nimbleness and responsiveness demanded by each community-driven turnaround effort?
- What metrics and benchmarks most clearly indicate that a community-driven turnaround effort is on-track at each key moment - at the point of selection, leadership transition, and during the first, third, sixth, twelfth, etc. months of implementation?

These are big questions, the answers to which will emerge over the years ahead.

Nevertheless, there are efforts to expedite learning related to questions currently underway.

These efforts include:

- Developing a learning and evaluation framework for community-driven turnaround that incorporates the best practices from around the country for turnaround evaluation of academic progress and supplements those metrics with indicators especially relevant to community-driven turnaround, such as ongoing community leadership, a sense of community ownership and hope, and continuity of student enrollment and family engagement;

- Expanding regional leadership for community-driven turnaround to include representation from cultural and civic organizations working beyond and across school communities to expand and enliven the conversation about the strategic role for turnaround, priorities within a turnaround effort, and paths to robust and enduring community leadership and engagement; and
- Creation of this field guide to tell the story of community-driven turnaround and invite conversation and learning with a broad range of regional and national colleagues that hopefully, will catalyze further community-driven school change efforts in MN and beyond and contribute to our collective knowledge of the potential and demands of this work.

As these intermediate efforts get underway in service of broadening the community-driven school change movement and enriching our learning about the success of community-driven school turnaround efforts to date, they will benefit from a broad coalition of supporters and practitioners to inform and advocate for community-driven change.

LoveWorks Academy is on a great path to reaching our academic goals with the help of a dedicated team!! I'm starting to see more parents throughout the week, whether they're visiting the school to attend a meeting, purchase uniform shirts, or doing random pop-ups to check on their child. And they're also finding ways to establish a better learning experience for their child by immediately dealing with any behavior concerns. Honestly, I've been seeing growth from staff, students, and parents! So, it is very important for staff to keep the dynamic of the school flowing in the right direction!!

Bionca Brown, Paraprofessional - LoveWorks Academy

I would love to see more schools follow this model. Up until now, the approach to low-performing schools has been to leave them be, close them, or tinker around the margins with no meaningful change. We need a new approach that prioritizes community voice and brings about a more extensive and sustainable change for the benefit of kids.

Antonio Cardona, Director - Pillsbury United Communities - Office of Public Charter Schools

Appendix

The resources below represent core artifacts in the early work of community-driven turnaround in MN as well as a handful of frameworks from around the country that have informed CDT work in MN. These resources include:

- **MN Authorizer Mandate for Community-Driven Turnaround**
- **MN Regional Turnaround Strategy Group: Context, Charge and Membership**
- **MN Regional Turnaround Strategy Group’s Definition of “Community-Driven School Turnaround”**
- **CDT Communications: A Framework**

Authorizer Mandate for Community-Driven Turnaround

Each community-driven turnaround effort to date has been initiated by the school’s authorizer. This initiation has taken the form of a “mandate” that, while worded differently in each case, always defined the requirement that the school’s board identify new leadership with a track record of improving academic outcomes and that the school meaningfully engage the school’s families in the turnaround process. The sample authorizer mandate below is representative of those presented to each of the three schools:

The board, in collaboration with the contracted external consultant, will develop a Performance Improvement Plan. This must include:

- a. A plan that results in new leadership that is the sole report to the school’s board of directors. This leadership will have demonstrated experience and success in raising student achievement in a public school and have authority to make educational program, staffing, and resource decisions to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement.
 - i. This could be a “school operator” such as a charter management organization, or an individual or group of individuals not currently employed by the school.
 - ii. This new leadership must be identified through a process identified in the Performance Improvement Plan and in place for the start of the next academic year or sooner.
- b. A plan to inform the parents of current and future enrolled students of the status of the school’s Probationary Status, and to involve them in the process to develop the Performance Improvement Plan.



MN Regional Turnaround Strategy Group: Context, Charge and Membership

Context:

The Regional Turnaround Strategy Group was convened in the midst of the first two community-driven turnaround efforts in Minnesota to ensure that as the strategy grew in our region, we would have a dedicated group of educational stakeholders and professional prepared to support the work of community-driven turnaround from their respective vantages, including authorizing, philanthropy, talent development, organizing, public policy, and governance. The group continues to meet and grow its membership in service of learning, advising and acting in accordance with the principles of community-driven turnaround.

RTSG Charge:

To work together to learn, advise and act in of establishing the conditions and coordination needed for the effective implementation and expansion of a community-driven school turnaround strategy in our region.

Membership:

Brandie Burris-Gallagher and Josh Crosson, EdAllies
Antonio Cardona and Larry McKenzie, Pillsbury United Communities
Tierney Carroll, LoveWorks Academy
Latasha Gandy, Parents Radically Organized
Erin Gavin, McKnight Foundation
Bill Graves, Kyrra Rankine & DeSeandra Sheppheard, Graves Foundation
David Greenberg, Audubon Center of the North Woods
Shukri Hassan, Dugsi Academy
Sheilah Kavaney, Great Minnesota Schools
Katie Barrett Kramer & Dan Cooley, The School Leadership Project
Molly McGraw Healy and Aaliyah Hodge, University of St. Thomas
Betsy Ohrn, Minneapolis Public Schools
Patrice Relerford, Minneapolis Foundation
Jillian Stockmo, Teach for America – Twin Cities
Kevin Xiong, Prairie Seeds Academy

MN Regional Turnaround Strategy Group’s Definition of “Community-Driven School Turnaround”

As a significant part of the Regional Turnaround Strategy Group’s early work together, members collaborated to define community-driven school turnaround in ways that reflected the early-stage work at CDT schools, the group’s learning about the national work of school turnaround, and the group’s shared values and aspirations for what community-driven turnaround could be for the schools that pursued it.

Our definition of “community-driven school turnaround”:

Community-driven school turnaround is a process that is shaped and led by members of a school community with the primary objective of dramatic improvement of student academic outcomes at that school. By placing authentic leadership for school change in the hands of the families, community members and other key stakeholders of the school, community-driven school turnaround establishes paths to academic improvement that are uniquely responsive to the students and context of a particular school, thereby disrupting traditional power dynamics in our educational systems and contributing to the broader work of educational and racial justice.

Community-driven school turnaround is characterized by:

- **Authentic community decision-making:** The families of students currently served by the school – in concert with the school board of directors, staff and broader community – determine the new leadership of the school through processes designed to create community leadership in the turnaround.
- **Broad and transparent community engagement:** Time and resources are dedicated to ensure that families and community members are provided clear and accurate information about the academic performance of the school and the turnaround process and that families are presented with opportunities to engage and lead in the turnaround process.
- **Building leadership capacity:** Members of the school community – especially those tasked with decision-making about the school’s leadership and future – have the opportunity to build a shared lens for school change and their capacity for educational leadership by exploring the strategies and characteristics of highly effective schools and the work of school turnaround.
- **Responsiveness to context:** The context, history and existing assets of the school its

broader community are incorporated into the approach and leadership of the turnaround process.

- **Continuity of students and community:** The turnaround process intentionally seeks to ensure that students and families maintain their enrollment at the school through the turnaround process and that the school continues to serve students and families from the same community.
 - **Enduring community leadership:** The turnaround process strengthens the community's formal and informal leadership of the school through community members' roles in operator selection and collaborative vision-setting processes and through board leadership by members of school's broader community throughout and beyond the turnaround process.
-

CDT Communications: A Framework

Community-driven turnaround efforts are characterized by a series of dramatic, complicated and weighty moments in the life of the school and its community. Each of these moments demand sensitive and timely communication with a diversity of stakeholders across the school community.

The table below highlights key communication milestones within the overall community-driven turnaround process as well as some of the considerations in preparing and executing an aligned and responsive communications strategy at each milestone.

In most cases, communications will come from the board, often alongside the school's existing administrative leadership, and, when possible, trusted parent and staff leaders who are working closely with - or members of - the school's board. Depending on the milestone, school climate and public awareness of the school's status, communications should be tailored to address the most relevant concerns of each intended audience (staff, families, authorizer, broader community). Additionally, where the school invites input or leadership from stakeholders within the school community, it should be clear how their input or leadership will influence the trajectory of the school and its change efforts.

In most cases, communications will come from the board, often alongside the school’s existing administrative leadership, and, when possible, trusted parent and staff leaders who are working closely with - or members of - the school’s board. Depending on the milestone, school climate and public awareness of the school’s status, communications should be tailored to address the most relevant concerns of each intended audience (staff, families, authorizer, broader community). Additionally, where the school invites input or leadership from stakeholders within the school community, it should be clear how their input or leadership will influence the trajectory of the school and its change efforts.

In order to create stability for the school community - especially its students - in the context of ongoing and impending change, it is critical to balance transparency about the school’s performance and mandated improvement efforts with messages that convey stability and project an aspirational tone about the school and its future.

Further, creating equality of information about the progress and opportunity of school turnaround across the diversity of school communities - board members, families, staff, students, service providers - predicts a school community united in purpose and capable of reaching the fullness of its vision for community-driven turnaround.

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
Authorizer notices of concern and deficiency	<p>Need for improvement: authorizer evaluation processes and outcomes</p> <p>Goals and additional supports that respond to authorizer notices</p> <p>Anticipated experience of the improvement efforts for each stakeholder group</p> <p>Confidence in school, opportunity for improvement</p> <p>Opportunities for community leadership: on board or committees, on PTO, etc.</p>	<p>Our school and our students have the potential to learn and achieve at the highest levels; our current programming has not met this potential</p> <p>As a school, we are governed by a performance contract with our authorizer that holds us to performance expectations in order that we continue to operate - we have not met those expectations but we know we can</p> <p>In order to meet our authorizer’s performance expectations, and to honor the potential of our students, we are actively engaging in school improvement and we will pursue all resources and pathways to meet our aspirations as a school</p>

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
		<p>In order to realize the promise of our school improvement work, we will need the support and engagement of every member of our community; we encourage you to take a leadership role in the following opportunities</p> <p>Throughout the process of school improvement, we will communicate our progress with you and strive to maintain an atmosphere of stability and calm for our students and staff</p>
<p>Authorizer turnaround mandate</p>	<p>Clarity of mandate: new leadership that reports to the board, preservation of school's core identity, alternative to school closure</p> <p>Turnaround path and opportunities for community input and leadership</p> <p>Continued board oversight of school and community-based leadership of board</p>	<p>The school has not met its contracted performance goals; accordingly, statute allows the authorizer to close the school</p> <p>Because the school has an important role in its community and the loyalty of parents committed to its core identity and offerings, the authorizer offers the community-driven turnaround opportunity as an alternative to school closure</p> <p>The school's past track record suggests that its current academic and operational leadership has been insufficient to provoke the scope of school improvement necessary; accordingly, in order to re-authorize, the authorizer demands that the school community identify and seat new leadership for the school that has a track record of leading high levels of student achievement in a public school</p> <p>The authorizer requires that the school community be actively engaged in the process of school turnaround and affirms the decision-making ability of school community members in selecting new leadership for the school</p>

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
		<p>The authorizer supports the school’s community-driven turnaround initiative and, presuming it aligns to rigorous process and outcome expectations, will honor the school community’s new leadership selection decision and allow the school to continue operation</p> <p>Community-driven school turnaround is an opportunity for the school community to own and shape the process of keeping their school open and helping its live into the highest aspirations for excellence</p>
During learning & selection process	<p>STC role, path and membership</p> <p>School’s core identity and aspirations for the turnaround effort as articulated by the STC and approved by the board</p> <p>Opportunities to engage with the STC and board during the turnaround process</p> <p>Authorizer validation of the school’s progress against the turnaround mandate</p> <p>Leadership selection process, timeline and criteria</p>	<p>Representative leadership from the family, staff and school community are driving the community-driven turnaround process and making the decision, alongside the school board, about new leadership for the school</p> <p>There is a committee of the board who is charged with defining the core identity of the school and its vision for turnaround; they are working hard on behalf of the school and its students and they will communicate on a regular basis about what they’re learning and the work they are completing</p> <p>There are opportunities to engage with the turnaround process that will be led by the board and its turnaround committee</p> <p>The community is coming together to ensure that the school stays open and that it can grow into one that honors the potential of the students its serves</p> <p>The selected new leadership aligns to shared school community values and its aspirations for excellence</p>

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
New leadership approved by school's board	<p>Key strengths of selected new leadership and areas of alignment with the school's mission, needs and core identity</p> <p>How new leadership will get to know the school and school community</p> <p>Decision-making and expected changes in the months following selection until new leadership is fully seated</p> <p>Process of transitioning leadership and role of existing administrative leadership in transition</p> <p>School needs heading into turnaround implementation</p>	<p>The new leadership understands and respects the history and core identity of the school and has a track record of managing schools that have achieved high levels of academic success</p> <p>You can meet our new leadership and share your stories and perspective with them in a variety of ways during this transition period</p> <p>The new leadership is eager to work with our school community to understand its assets and challenges; they will engage with families and staff in a variety of ways in the first months after selection and we'd welcome your participation in as many or as few of these opportunities as is feasible for you</p> <p>Our school has a proud history, and, alongside the new leadership, the board is eager to honor that history as it creates a bold new plan for the future with the new leadership selected by school community members</p> <p>We will maintain continuity in programming and school processes even as we engage in programmatic improvement - you should expect core school systems around busing, lunch, conferences and enrollment to remain the same</p> <p>In order to show what we can do as a school community - and in order that your children experience the richness of the experience we'll provide for them through the turnaround process - we need you. Please fill out re-enrollment forms as soon as possible so we can begin planning for your child's needs and growth in the year to come.</p>

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
New leadership takes over management of school	<p>Strengths and priorities of the school</p> <p>Role of core identity and how it will be honored</p> <p>Expected student, staff, family & broader community experience in the first months & years of turnaround effort</p>	<p>The board vests responsibility for reaching the goals of the school turnaround in the new leadership that has been selected by the school community; it will support the new leadership in reaching its goals and hold them to account for reaching them along the timeline they've approved for the turnaround</p> <p>The school will remain committed to its core identity and values and it will celebrate them in new ways</p> <p>The initial focus of the turnaround will be X; you should expect to see and experience the following changes... in the school and its classrooms</p> <p>We are honored to carry out our turnaround with the longtime leadership of X and we're delighted to welcome to the team new members who bring particular values and capacity necessary for our work</p> <p>We will report and celebrate the progress of our turnaround on a regular basis as a community; please mark your calendars for the following events, each of which will feature student performances and perspectives...</p> <p>There will be times when this process is hard or painful for us as a community - we need to take care of each other during this transition. Accordingly, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts and concerns with X at any point in the process.</p>
Ongoing turnaround implementation	<p>Evolving priorities and celebration of early wins</p> <p>Invitation for continued - and possibly growing - role of community leadership as turnaround effort proceeds</p>	<p>Family and community leadership enabled our community-driven turnaround and we are committed to continuing to foster community leadership at our school. Please consider contributing your leadership in one of the following ways this year...</p>

Milestones	Examples	Examples of Key Messages
		<p>We have written a powerful story of family and community leadership with our community-driven turnaround initiative and we would like to enlist your help in telling the story more broadly through the following social media, traditional media, legislative and parent organizing channels</p> <p>As you know, we have communities and families throughout our region who are currently experiencing low-performing schools - please join us in leading the work of bringing the community-driven turnaround opportunity and joining in advocacy for high-quality schools in those communities</p> <p>The following municipal, state and federal offices are looking for elected leaders, given the leadership role you've played in community-driven turnaround, we hope you might consider running for one of those offices</p>