Office of Student and School Success

Initial Action Plan for *Priority, Focus, and Emerging Schools*

The Office of Student and School Success is committed to collaborating with leaders and staff in schools identified through the *ESEA Flexibility Request* because of their persistent low performance on state assessments or low graduation rates among their "all students" group or subgroups. Research and experience affirm that *courageous leadership* and *transformational teaching for learning,* when implemented in the *context of a district and its community,* are keys to turning around low performance and ensuring *equality of outcome for all children.* The primary goal of our office is to support leaders and teachers to grow as much as they can, so that all of their students—including English language learners, students with disabilities, and historically underserved groups of students—achieve *equality of outcome*. We can change performance outcomes for the children across our state, so that *all 1.1 million* graduate with college- and career-readiness skills and knowledge.

> **We can whenever, and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need, in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.**
>
> **Ron Edmonds,**
> **Harvard professor who put the term "Effective Schools" on the map**
> **with his speech "Some Schools Work and More Can" (1978)**

Research Describes Attributes and Actions in High-Performing Schools

Research, such as OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007), articulates *attributes* of schools effective in ensuring *each student*, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from historically underserved subgroups, achieves to rigorous standards. Recent research, such as *The Turnaround Challenge* (Calkins et al., 2007), identifies *actions* essential to turning around persistent low performance, whether among all students or among subgroups of students. OSPI refers to these *actions* as "Student and School Success Principles." When implemented fully and effectively, these principles guide school leaders and teams in their efforts to turn around low performance and build and sustain systems and practices consistent with *attributes* of high-performing schools.

Student and School Success Principles Provide the Roadmap

These include the turnaround principles described in federal guidance for *ESEA Flexibility Requests* and an additional principle that specifically addresses culturally competent practices. Together, these principles provide a roadmap to dramatically change performance. Principles include:

1. Provide strong leadership;
2. Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction;
3. Increase learning time;
4. Strengthen the school's instructional program;
5. Use data to inform instruction;
6. Establish a safe and supportive school environment;
7. Engage families and community; and
8. Build and sustain equitable and culturally competent systems and practices for all students.

Note. Principles are numbered to support school teams in their dialogues and in writing their action plans. However, *there is no hierarchy among the principles*, that is, *each* must be fully and effectively

implemented in order to turn around persistent low performance and transform into a high-performing school.

Initial Action Plan Forms Basis for Ongoing Turnaround Efforts
We believe that leaders and teachers are doing the best work they can on behalf of their students. However, the consistent low performance of these schools indicates they have yet to fully and effectively implement these essential principles. With this in mind, OSPI's Office of Student and School Success created a multi-step process to support Priority, Focus, and Emerging Schools in creating and implementing strategies and approaches to significantly improve learning outcomes. Steps include:
1. Develop an Initial Action Plan with a limited number of focused strategies anchored in several high-leverage actions.
2. Engage in a Needs Assessment process based on the Student and School Success Principles.
3. Create, implement, and monitor a Student and School Success Action Plan that reflects recommendations in the Needs Assessments, current research, and locally developed data.

High-Leverage Actions Signal Change
While all eight Student and School Success Principles must be addressed over time, several merit special consideration for principals and school teams as they determine initial steps with their staff and school community. These "high-leverage actions" are intended to signal the need for the significant changes essential to substantially increase learning outcomes for all students, including all subgroups of students. These high-leverage actions are embedded in the following principles:
- Provide strong leadership (Principle #1);
- Use data to inform instruction (Principle #5);
- Strengthen the school's instructional program (Principle #4); and
- Establish a safe and supportive school environment.

In their dialogues, leaders and teams should also view each high-leverage action through the lens of Principle #8: Build and sustain equitable and culturally competent systems and practices for all students.

Note. Although these high-leverage actions are *necessary* conditions for turning around low performance, they are not *sufficient*. Hence, teams will use the final "Student and School Success Action Plan" to identify actions related to each of the eight principles. The final plan will be submitted after school teams receive the report from their Needs Assessment. *Note.* Guidance and the template for completing the final plan will be provided at a later time.

Turning around Persistent Low Performance Requires Bold Action – on the Part of Adults
Both research and experience surface the same finding: In every case, schools in which students are not served equitably share at least one of the following:
- Lack of will
- Lack of skill
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of social intelligence
- Lack of emotional intelligence

…On the part of the adults in the school.

The next sections provide information that will support leaders and school teams as they complete their Initial Action Plan.

Directions for Using the Template

The Office of Student and School Success developed this "Initial Action Plan" template to support principals and leaders in accelerating turnaround efforts in their Priority, Focus, or Emerging School. The initial plan serves several purposes:

- When completed, it will describe specific high-leverage actions that leaders, staff, and community will take to (a) signal the school's commitment to turn around low performance, and (b) build capacity to ensure all students across the school engage in rigorous, standards-based curriculum and receive high-quality instruction and interventions essential for success.
- The completed plan will also be used by the Needs Assessment Team during its on-site review.
- Finally, the completed plan will inform development of the final Student and School Success Action Plan.

Please note that the final plan will be written after schools receive the report from their Needs Assessment.

The template includes the following features:

1. **Resources and Rubrics**: These are intended to support principals and teams to understand research and best practices around the high-leverage action; assess their current practices; and develop strategies to accelerate their improvement/turnaround efforts. Resources include the Center on Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit* that was developed to support schools implementing the federal school transformation model as part of their School Improvement Grant and OSPI's *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools.*
2. **Differentiated Timeline:** School teams will schedule specific strategies through the first several months of school, until the final Student and School Success Action Plan is completed. Because efforts and outcomes from the initial plan will impact the final plan, the template also provides space for teams to briefly describe activities and approaches they will implement for the remainder of the 2012-13 school year.
3. **Expanding Textboxes to Describe Strategies:** These allow teams to (a) detail proposed strategies related to that action; (b) describe what each strategy will look like when implemented with fidelity, (c) outline evidence of effective implementation of each strategy; (d) name persons responsible; and (e) request resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) for each strategy. *Note.* While the template includes text boxes for three strategies per high-leverage action, teams should select the number of strategies based on research and their school's context and data.

Before completing the template, principles and their leadership teams should review the research, rubrics, and/or tools associated with each high-leverage action. They will also want to identify strategies and approaches from their current "School Improvement Plan" that are consistent with the high-leverage actions found in the template.

As they complete the template, principals and their teams are encouraged to identify several "quick wins" they can implement. Essential to continuing the cycle of positive change, these quick wins should rally the staff and keep morale boosted. For additional information on quick wins, see *Successful School Turnarounds—Seven Steps for School Leaders.* **Kowal et al., 2009, p. 1-7.** It can be reviewed on line at the following website:
http://schoolturnarounds.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=16. *Note.* OSPI does not have permission to copy this article.

Funding to Support the Initial Plan

Funding sources to support the initial plan include (a) Title I, Part A funds, (b) Title II funds, and/or (c) other local funds. Priority and Focus Schools may also apply to use up to 25% of their total iGrant amount: up to $12,500 (25% of $50,000) for Priority Schools and up to $5,000 (25% of $20,000) for Focus Schools.

Requirements for Submitting the Plan to OSPI

- **Priority and Focus Schools:** Submit the completed template to OSPI through the appropriate iGrants Form Package (FP 636 for Priority Schools. FP 637 for Focus Schools, and FP 638 for Flexible Schools Grants) by **August 31, 2012.** Priority and Focus Schools will submit their final Student and School Success Action Plan through iGrants after they receive their report from their Needs Assessment.
- **Emerging Schools:** We recommend principals and leadership teams complete the Initial Action Plan and use it until they (a) complete their Internal Needs Assessment, (b) create their final Student and School Success Action Plan, (c) submit the final plan to OSPI, and (d) receive approval of their final plan from OSPI.

Support for Completing the Template

We encourage leaders to contact our office with questions about the process or the template. You may contact Andy Kelly, Assistant Superintendent, Student and School Success, at Andrew.kelly@k12.wa.us or call (360) 725-4960. Additionally, leadership from our office will conduct a **webinar on August 22 at 9:00 a.m**.; the webinar will be posted to the OSPI Website shortly thereafter. The purpose is to provide additional information to principals and school teams to support them in their initial planning process. Schools may also contact their regional Educational Services Districts for assistance in their planning.

How do high-performing, high-poverty schools do it?

They foster a student's readiness to learn, focus staff's readiness to teach, and expand their readiness to act.

Mass Insight Education and Research Institute (2009)

Principle #1: Provide strong leadership

High-leverage action: The principal models and communicates the expectation of improved student learning through commitment, discipline, and careful implementation of sound practices.

Resources:
- Center for Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit* – **Monitoring and Evaluating Transformations, Aligning Project Plan with Indicators (Center for Innovation and Improvement, 2011): Section K-2.**
- *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* **(Shannon & Bylsma, 2007): See sections related to** *Clear and shared vision, Effective school leadership,* **and** *High standards and expectations for all students.*
- *Turnaround Leadership* **Facilitator's Guide, Participant's Packet, and PowerPoint presentation (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2012)**

Rubric:
- **SPR Rubric Internal Review: See sections related to** *Clear and shared vision, Effective school leadership,* **and** *High standards and expectations for all students.*

Brief Description of Each Strategy	**August (Include current strategies)**	**September**	**October**	**November or until final plan is approved**	**Remainder of 2012-13 school year**
1.					
2.					
3.					

Details: (Write your details for each strategy. Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured. Include persons responsible and funding and other resources essential to support the strategy).
Use an asterisk (*) to denote "Quick Wins" for this high-leverage action.

Strategy #1:

Strategy #1 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured.

Strategy #2:

Strategy #2 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured.

Strategy #3:

Strategy #3 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice

Principals can no longer simply be administrators or managers. They must be instructional leaders focused on improving student achievement. They must be the force that creates collaboration and cohesion around school learning goals and the commitment to achieve those goals.

The Wallace Foundation (2009)

Principle #5: Use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement

High-leverage action: State assessment) data are disaggregated and analyzed by subgroups (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities, gender, race/ethnic groups, and economic level) to identify students with unmet learning needs.

Resources:
- Center for Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit* – **Monitoring and Evaluating Transformations, Aligning Project Plan with Indicators (Center for Innovation and Improvement, 2011): Section K-5.**
- *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* **(Shannon & Bylsma, 2007): See section related to *Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned to state standards.***

Rubric:
- **SPR Rubric Internal Review: See section related to *Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned to state standards.***

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Strategy #3:

Strategy #3 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured.

Principle #4: Strengthen the school's instructional program

High-leverage action: Tier I or Core instruction-represents the instruction provided to 100% of students in ALL classrooms.

Resources:
- Common Core State Standards: Application to Students with Disabilities (Common Core State Standards Initiative)
- Common Core State Standards: Application of the Standards for English Language Learners (Common Core State Standards Initiative)
- Center for Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit* – **Monitoring and Evaluating Transformations, Aligning Project Plan with Indicators (Center for Innovation and Improvement, 2011): Section K-8.**
- *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* **(Shannon & Bylsma, 2007): See sections related to** *Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned to state standards* **and** *High standards and expectations for all students.*
- *Reading Systems Professional Learning Resource Guide* **(Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011)**
- *Mathematics Systems Improvement Framework* **(Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2011)**
- *Language Acquisition Strategies for (Standard/Academic) English Language Learners* **(Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)**
- *A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological Framework with English Language Learners* **(Center on Instruction, 2008)**

Rubrics
- SPR Rubric Internal Review**: See sections related to** *Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned to state standards* **and** *High standards and expectations for all students.*
- *NCRTI Implementation Integrity Rubric*; *NCRTI Implementation Integrity Self-Assessment*, **both from the National Center on Response to Intervention (2011).**

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Strategy #2:

Strategy #2 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured.
Strategy #3:
Strategy #3 - Expected Outcome for the first 90 days and through remainder of the school year: Describe the changes in staff behavior and/or practice that will occur as a result of this strategy, as well as how these changes will be measured.

We can heal the system, in service of the 1.1 million students in Washington, if each of us commits to care for every child as much as we care for our own. **Andy Kelly,** **Assistant Superintendent** **Office of Student and School Success**

Principle #6: Establish a safe and supportive school environment

High-leverage action: School leadership develops and fully implements school-wide classroom management and discipline policies and procedures to provide a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment.

Resources:
- Center for Innovation and Improvement's *Transformation Toolkit* – **Monitoring and Evaluating Transformations, Aligning Project Plan with Indicators (Center for Innovation and Improvement, 2011): Section K-11.**
- *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007): See section related to *Supportive learning environment.*

Rubric:
- SPR Rubric Internal Review: See section related to *Supportive learning environment.*

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Quite frankly, in schools in need of dramatic turnaround, a strong infusion of hope, expectation, discipline, and candor…can provide the jolt that gets early improvement which the other work must be built upon and sustain.

Sam Redding, Director for Center for Innovation and Improvement
Northwest Education*, NWREL (2009)*