

Turnaround Efforts in NC

North Carolina Governor's Commission on
Access to a Sound Basic Education

Pat Ashley
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The Turnaround Challenge

Significantly Increasing Student Achievement
in Sustainable Ways

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History of NC Turnaround Efforts

- +Continuous since beginning of accountability model
- +Recognition/interest from legislative, judicial and executive branches of government
- + Support from state and federal levels

BUT often multiple initiatives at once *with competing components*

- Definitions of what is a low -performing school
- Definitions of what is a successful school turnaround
- Key strategies to foster continuous improvement
- Resources to support initiatives
- Local district levels of engagement

The History of **Assistance** to NC's Low-Performing Schools: The First 10 Years- 1996-2006

1996: Assistance began with the ABCs, a statutory definition of low-performing schools and the formation of assistance teams

2001: NCLB layered Adequate Yearly Progress expectations for districts and schools on top of the state expectations

2005-06: The executive branch and the courts under *Leandro* questioned whether schools with very low proficiency were providing a sound basic education. 66 high schools and 37 middle schools became part of NC Turnaround

2006-07: Assistance was redesigned to focus additionally on *districts* with high numbers of students in poverty, low student achievement and high numbers of schools identified for either state or federal intervention as low performing (District Transformation)

<p>By 2006-07 there were multiple types of identified “ low achievement” using different metrics and these models stayed in place until RTTT in 2010:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Low-performing Schools (101) (statute) 2.NC Turnaround Schools (103) (court) 3.District Transformation (6 districts with 108 schools) (state initiative) 4.NCLB Corrective Action Schools (federal) 5.NCLB Corrective Action Districts (40) (federal) <p>* There was significant overlap in these lists, with efforts to coordinate transformation through the newly developed Statewide System of Regional Support. Numbers shifted year by year until RTTT in 2010.</p>	
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<p>Race to the Top TALAS: 2010 to 2015 (Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools) and Districts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on bottom 5%. Race to the Top Application required state to identify the bottom 5% of schools as low achieving • Four federal turnaround models replace SSIP. Schools identified as low-achieving were required to implement one of four federal turnaround models in their entirety as their plan (Transformation, Turnaround, Restart or Closure) • Additionally, our state focused on bottom 10% of NC districts. Identified districts received a District Transformation Coach to assist in building the district’s capacity to support and sustain school turnaround. 	<p>(c)P Ashley 2018</p>
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Race to the Top TALAS 2010 to 2015

NC proposed other interventions to support increased student achievement in identified schools and districts:

1. The development of three **leadership academies** to train principals to increase the pipeline for low achieving schools in high needs areas of the state
2. A **new teacher support program** to provide induction for new teachers beginning in low achieving schools
3. A district **teacher recruiting and retention** initiative
4. Funds for **bonuses for student growth in low achieving schools**, and
5. Funds for **hiring incentives** for highly qualified teachers.

These initiatives are administered separately from the direct assistance to low achieving schools and districts.

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Post Race to the Top

- **New definition** of low-performing schools and districts based on A-F designation
- **Larger Number of Identified Schools/Reduced Proportion of Intervention:** In 2016, 581 identified low-performing schools, 75 received in school support from DPI. Schools in largest 10 schools districts are not included for direct service. Sixteen districts designated as low-performing. By 2018, number receiving support has dropped to 35. District and School Transformation division eliminated and resources consolidated in Educator Support.
- **Modified Service Delivery Model:** Begins with School Improvement Plan (SIP) developed by school or district, followed by Comprehensive Needs Assessment , deep data dive including student survey and CNA unpacking. Professional development and coaching tied to SIP.
- **Service Support Teams** serve as coordinating mechanism for providing assistance to schools and districts across the state

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Post Race to the Top

- **Achievement School District** implemented in statute then reimaged and renamed **Innovation School District (IDS)**. Includes one elementary school in Robeson County and can assume responsibility for additional schools in future years.
- **RESTART and The Innovation Project (TIP)**: Using a state revision of the Restart model implemented under RTTT, a district can apply to implement their own school Restart, giving a school/district some charter-like flexibility to create a locally initiated Turnaround plan for a school within flexible parameters. This strategy grew rapidly as districts saw advantages in local control, flexibility of funding and protection from selection for ISD. Restart efforts are supported by The Innovation Project, which districts can elect to join.

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What data exists ?

Annual reports to SBOE and General Assembly

Multiple research studies by multiple authors

Most successful model/effort may have been Turnaround and Transformation model prior to RTTT

Final Results of NC Turnaround 2006-2012

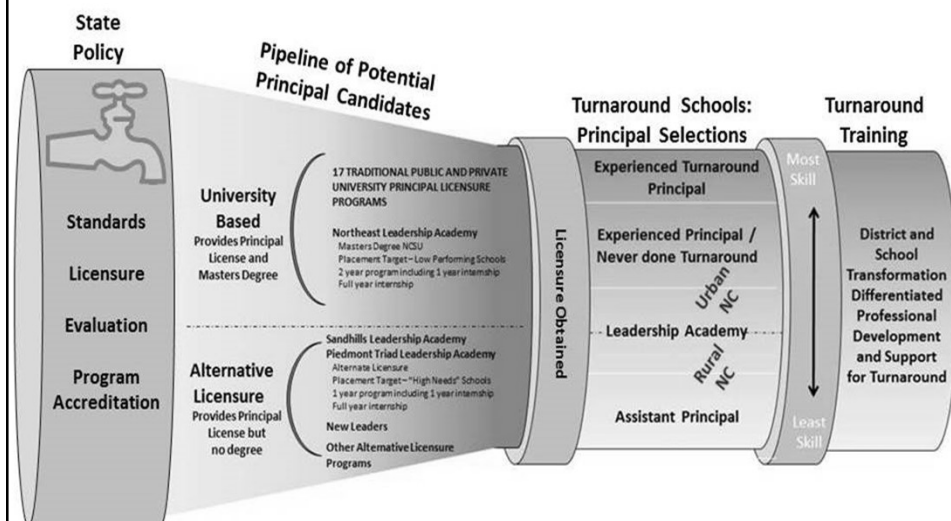
Longitudinal Performance Composite Data for the 66 High Schools in North Carolina Turnaround								
Percent Proficient	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
2011-12 (64 schools)*	0	0	2*	3	25*	15	16	3
2010-11 (63 schools)**	0	1	3	7	19	19	11	3
2009-10 (65 schools)***	0	1	3	11	14	24	12	0
2008-09 (68 schools)	2	5	11	20	21	9	0	0
2007-08 (68 schools)****	0	9	17	27	13	1	1	0
2006-07 (65 schools)*****	1	9	35	18	2	0	0	0

* E E Waddell closed in 2011-12. West Charlotte and Harding University High did not test at least 95% of their respective students and do not have an officially reported Performance Composite for 2011-12.
 ** E E Waddell and West Mecklenburg High did not test at least 95% of their respective students and did not have an officially reported Performance Composite for 2010-11.
 ***Garinger, Northampton High West and Weldon closed in 2009-10.
 **** Northampton High West STEM and Weldon STEM opened in 2007-08.
 ***** Academy at High Point Central was part of the original 66 high schools but did not have an officially reported Performance Composite for 2006-07.

Source: State Board of Education, NC Department of Public Instruction (2013). *Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the Implementation of the ABCs.*

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NC Principal Pipeline and Placement for Turnaround Schools under RTTT



Takes Leadership at Multiple Levels

Many schools and districts improved substantially

Some did not, and a few slipped further

There was a story for each school

The story ended quickly if there was not an effective principal getting central office support

Two Decades of Learning: What Works

- **Flexible, multi-year turnaround models**, specific to school need
- **Customized School Improvement Plan utilizing continuous improvement strategies**
 - **Developed by engaged stakeholders**
 - **Refined collaboratively over several years to address root causes**
- **Efforts to enhance principal and teacher pipelines** to increase supply for low-performing schools and enhance quality of preparation

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What Worked (continued)

- **Professional development for existing principals and district leadership team, followed by on site in-school coaching to develop capacity** for implementation of effective strategies
- **Customized, on site professional development for teachers** followed by **modeling and coaching** in the classroom targeting math, ELA, science and social studies
- **Support to low performing districts** to develop district capacity

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Broadening the Lens

- **Focusing not just on academics, but whole child** (nutrition, physical and emotional health)
- **Engaging the community** in/with the school
- **Connecting schooling to the future**

What Didn't Work

- **Single year** intervention models
- **Assuming the responsibility**, instead of capacity building
- **Too many competing initiatives** in a school at one time
- **School improvement plans** on shelves **without specified practices/targets** for improvement and coaching support for implementation

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What Didn't Work (continued)

- **Reform partners who lacked the capacity** to provide the depth of support needed in the lowest performing schools
- **Creating "businesses"** to generate income diverting the energy and focus from improving student achievement
- **Inflexible**, rigid turnaround **models**
- Some of the incentive programs to reward principals and teachers for relocating to low-performing schools

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Follow the Data over Time

- Schools and districts, identified as low performing under current A-F guidelines are not the same general group of schools that were identified for NC Turnaround and RTTT
- Many of the NC Turnaround and RTTT schools and districts have sustained higher achievement over a significant period of time

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Sustained Turnaround

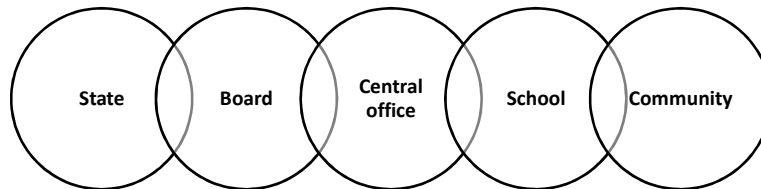
A belief that all children are capable of learning

and

- High quality school leadership over time
- Availability/selection of well-prepared teachers
- Adequate supplies, resources, facilities
- Ongoing professional growth of teachers and school leaders
- District support and focus on student achievement (Central Office and Board)

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Most people assume Turnaround is just the individual school's responsibility.
 Actually, it is the responsibility of a **chain of stakeholders:**



- Any weak link in this chain diminishes the Turnaround's success
- In a charter situation, this chain is shortened
- Effective leadership at each level is critical

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Leadership at the school level controls **only a portion** of the many critical variables of the Turnaround process

- School climate and culture
- Selection of staff
- Daily curriculum and instructional process
- Professional development
- Interface with parents and community
- Management of allocated resources

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The **district** (board and central office) **controls** a different portion of **critical variables** of the Turnaround process

- Who will be principal
- Who will support the principal (especially if inexperienced)
- Teacher hiring process/sometimes assignment
- Budget and allocation of resources
- Any local accountability systems such as benchmark assessments
- Relevant policies such as suspension and attendance
- School calendar and school hours

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The State plays a significant role in ensuring a sound basic education

- Establishes the teacher and principal pipelines
- Establishes the accountability system
- Establishes the definition of low-performing
- Establishes the framework for support and allocates resources
- Determines priority of Turnaround efforts among competing initiatives

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The “pressure” to motivate improvement needs to be balanced by the “support” needed to make change happen

- NCLB was more about sanctions and corrective action than about support and help for change
- Big influxes of money (ex. SIG) for short period of time does not equal sustainability
- Schools and districts at bottom experience more challenges as well as more churn of leaders and teachers
- Without external pressure, some schools and districts might put adult interests before kids’ needs

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The definitions of “low-performing” schools and districts matter

- Should pass a common sense test
- There needs to be a match between definition “scope” and resource allocation

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Support needs to be permanent (or long-term) to sustain Turnaround achievement gains

Conclusions

TALAS

- Positive effects on proficiency and value-added
- Positive effects on graduation rates but not statistically significant due to small sample size (17 high schools)

Teacher labor force (high turnover and limited experience), uneven capacity of NC school districts, and large concentrations of economically disadvantaged and minority students in many NC schools mandates school turnaround as permanent part of NCDPI activities

- Low-achieving schools and districts cannot sustain gains in student achievement
- Turnaround services, including Comprehensive Needs Assessments, School Improvement Planning, Instructional Coaching, School Leadership Coaching, District Leadership Coaching, and Professional Development will be required for the foreseeable future to ensure adequate education for all student in North Carolina



Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation—North Carolina

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Source: Henry, G. T. et al. (2015). *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools & 2015 North Carolina Transformation IES Proposal*. Presentation to the North Carolina State Board of Education, September 3, 2015.

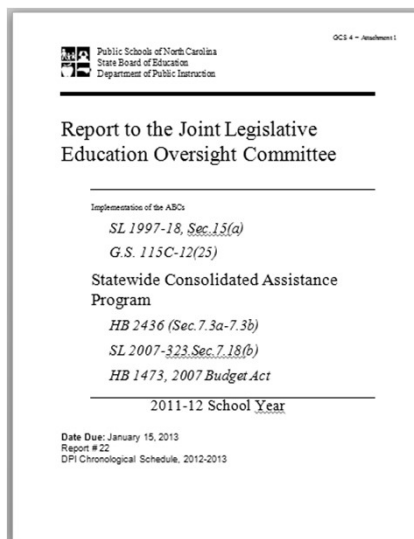
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Basing the evaluation of Turnaround efforts on *averages* may not adequately measure success

- Primary measure should be significant increase in student achievement
- The success or failure of any individual Turnaround effort may hinge on multiple factors
- Every individual school Turnaround effort should be evaluated to determine what went right and what went wrong
- Simultaneous efforts at the school and district levels provide the best chance of sustainability over time
- There are wide differences in the challenges of rural and urban districts and schools
- In some instances, extra funding associated with Turnaround initiatives may create a perverse incentive: districts and schools don't want to risk losing the supplemental funding, so they never truly attempt the Turnaround to continue eligibility

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Additional Resources: Reports to the JLEOC



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Additional Resources: NCDPI Jones County video



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