



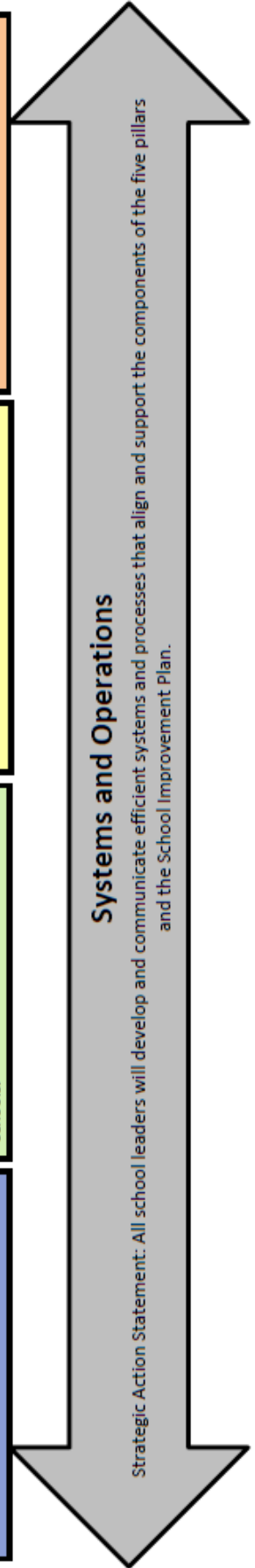
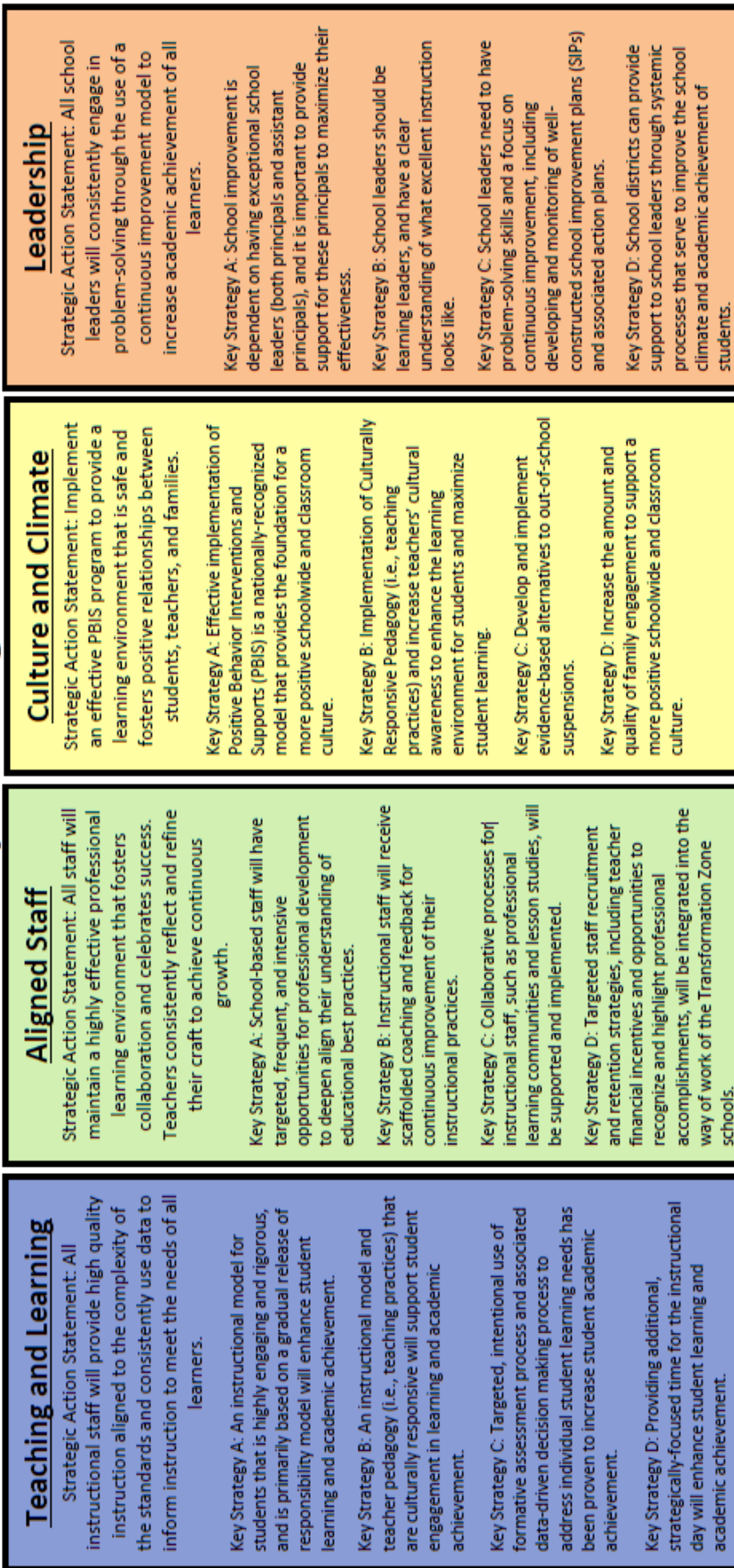
## **Pinellas County Schools *Transformation Zone Theory of Change, August 2016***

Pinellas County School's Transformation Zone (TZ) consists of schools that may need more support as they strive to ensure that students are prepared and poised for 100 percent success during their educational journey. Within the TZ, educators at all levels work collaboratively to build strong schools that enable all students to achieve at or above grade level. This document provides a summary of the evidence-based practices and research that have been identified to implement at the Transformation Zone schools starting in the 2016-2017 school year.

The TZ has a staff that includes a director and assistant director of school transformation, an assistant director of human resources and professional development, an evaluator/researcher, and five instructional staff developers to support multiple subject areas. There are eight elementary schools in Pinellas County that are part of the TZ, with five schools receiving the most intensive supports. These five elementary schools were previously part of the Scale Up for Success initiative from the fall of 2014 to the spring of 2016. They are Campbell Park, Fairmount Park, Lakewood, Maximo, and Melrose. The intensive school turnaround supports for these five schools currently include a more extended instructional day and paraprofessionals as a primary part of their staffing models. The other three elementary schools that are part of the TZ are High Point, Midtown Academy, and Sandy Lane. These three schools are receiving similar but less intensive supports. They have a slightly longer instructional day, leadership guidance, and supports for curriculum and instruction.

The work of the TZ is built upon evidence-based practices and research on school turnaround, which provide the foundation for the Transformation Zone Theory of Change. The work of school turnaround is an ever-evolving field and has gained more attention in recent years. As such, PCS is committed to being on the forefront of using innovative practices to support schools to maximize learning for students. This document provides an in-depth overview of the research behind the theory of change. This research has also led to the creation of a logic model for the Transformation Zone work, which is found in a separate evaluation overview document. The figure on the following page provides an outline of the five pillars of school turnaround within the Transformation Zone Theory of Change. The five pillars are *Teaching and Learning*; *Aligned Staff*; *Culture and Climate*; *Leadership*; and *Systems and Operations*. Four of the five pillars have been extensively researched to help guide the initiative, and there is a corresponding theory of change table for each of these. The only pillar that does not have an associated theory of change chart is *Systems and Operations*, since this pillar is primarily focused on how to support efficient processes for implementation. All research referenced throughout this document is provide in endnotes, which can be found on the last two pages.

# Transformation Zone Theory of Change



## Theory of Change for Teaching and Learning

Strategic Action Statement: All instructional staff will provide high quality instruction aligned to the complexity of the standards and consistently use data to inform instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

### Key Strategies and Assumptions to Support Teaching and Learning Goals

<p><b>Key Strategy A:</b> An instructional model for students that is highly engaging and rigorous, and is primarily based on a gradual release of responsibility model will enhance student learning and academic achievement.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Framework is a research-based framework based on a meta-analysis of instructional best practices<sup>i</sup>. The instructional practices outlined within this framework serve as a guide for developing and implementing highly engaging lessons for students that demonstrate high expectations for learning, and in addressing the Florida Standards<sup>ii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ The gradual release model for instruction, which is also known as scaffolding instruction, is defined as, “an interactive process that occurs between teacher and student who must participate actively in the process”<sup>iii</sup>. It typically moves from teacher responsibility when introducing the concept to joint responsibility to individual student responsibility, and is built upon Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development<sup>iv</sup>.</li> <li>▪ By employing these evidence-based instructional approaches, students will be more likely to meet high expectations for learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy B:</b> An instructional model and teacher pedagogy (i.e., teaching practices) that are culturally responsive will support student engagement in learning and academic achievement.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Definition of culturally responsive teaching: “Culturally responsive teaching facilitates and supports the achievement of all students, and refers to teaching that, uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them . . . it teaches to and through the strengths of these students”<sup>v</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Villegas and Lucas identified six characteristics that define culturally responsive teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are socio-culturally conscious;</li> <li>○ Have affirming views of students from CLD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds;</li> <li>○ See themselves as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools responsive to all students;</li> <li>○ Understand how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting this in their students;</li> <li>○ Know about the lives of their students; and</li> <li>○ Use their knowledge about students’ lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar<sup>vi</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy C:</b> Targeted, intentional use of formative assessment process and associated data-driven decision making process to address individual student learning needs has been proven to increase student academic achievement.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The best way to make decisions about how to teach is to teach, and gather data on the relative effectiveness of alternative instructional approaches or interventions. Essentially, the task is to monitor progress and use data to make instructional modifications”<sup>vii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Using data to inform instructional decisions has been shown to have a positive effect on student learning, when done in a systematic way—such as using schoolwide processes. This is especially true in schools that serve a high percentage of students with low socioeconomic status<sup>viii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ A systematic formative evaluation process for individualized instruction, both one-on-one and in targeted small groups, can have a significant positive effect on student learning<sup>ix</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Data-driven decision making is most effective when it is precisely measures students’ mastery of a specific learning objective, employs benchmark assessments that allow for frequent monitoring, and incorporates ongoing progress monitoring to evaluative students’ skills<sup>x</sup>.</li> <li>▪ “The most important concept in any RtI model is the idea of matching the intensity of the intervention to the severity of the problem and the resistance of that problem to change. RTI is based on the premise that measures and domains should be determined by their relationships to child outcomes. Useful and appropriate measures and domains have a documented relationship to positive child outcomes”<sup>xi</sup></li> <li>▪ In the state of Florida, Response to Intervention is referred to as a <i>Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)</i> that targets the application of “high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs using learning rate over time and level of performance to inform instructional decisions”<sup>xii</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy D:</b> Providing additional, strategically-focused time for the instructional day will enhance student learning and academic achievement.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Strategy D:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A systematic literature review of studies on extended day suggests that, “Findings suggest that extending the school time can be an effective way to support student learning, particularly, (a) for students most at risk of school failure and (b) when considerations are made for how time is used”<sup>xiii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Additional time spent on learning, whether in out-of-school time programs or with an extended school day, can significantly increase student academic achievement<sup>xiv</sup>.</li> </ul>

## Theory of Change for Aligned Staff

Strategic Action Statement: All staff will maintain a highly effective professional learning environment that fosters collaboration and celebrates success. Teachers consistently reflect and refine their craft to achieve continuous growth.

### Key Strategies and Assumptions to Support Teaching and Learning Goals

<p><b>Key Strategy A:</b> School-based staff will have targeted, frequent, and intensive opportunities for professional development to deepen align their understanding of educational best practices.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When a teacher engages an average of 49 hours of professional development in a single school year focused directly on curriculum, student achievement increases 21%<sup>xv</sup>. Greater effects have been found with an increase in the amount and quality of professional development<sup>xvi</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Based on a review of the literature, high-quality professional development exhibits the following five characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities including formative teacher evaluation</li> <li>○ Focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content</li> <li>○ Inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies</li> <li>○ Provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers</li> <li>○ Inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback<sup>xvii</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy B:</b> Instructional staff will receive scaffolded coaching and feedback for continuous improvement of their instructional practices.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While professional development sessions have been shown to increase knowledge for instructional staff, a process of providing model classrooms to see actual classroom methods in action, microteaching sessions, and feedback on video lessons can improve teacher’s implementation of best practices—ultimately leading to greater increases in student achievement<sup>xviii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ In addition, having mentors, coaches, and lead teachers at school sites, especially for novice teachers, has been shown to enhance student learning and to reduce attrition rates in teachers<sup>xix</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy C:</b> Collaborative processes for instructional staff, such as professional learning communities and lesson studies, will be supported and implemented.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) involves, “teachers working collectively to influence decisions about school improvement, curriculum, instruction, and professional development”<sup>xx</sup>. PLCs involve a process of reflective professional inquiry and collaboration<sup>xxi</sup></li> <li>▪ These collaborative processes are most successful when provided with a structure and support for the process, such as a lesson study format<sup>xxii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ In addition to enhancing teacher’s skillset, teacher collaboration supports a higher level of congeniality, sense of belonging, and professionalism among staff<sup>xxiii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ School leaders can support collaboration among teachers by providing common learning time, distinct from common planning time<sup>xxiv</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy D:</b> Targeted staff recruitment and retention strategies include teacher financial incentives and opportunities to recognize and highlight professional accomplishments will be integrated into the way of work of the Transformation Zone schools.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Strategy D:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three policy suggestions are consistently emphasized in the literature to support the recruitment and retention of hard-to-staff schools including the implementation of (a) effective leadership, (b) financial incentives, and (c) increased opportunities for mentorship and collaboration. Highly qualified teachers highlight their preference for salaries and signing bonuses as attractive incentives for teaching in high-needs schools, in addition to working collaboratively with other teachers in a more positive and enriching context<sup>xxv</sup>.</li> <li>▪ In order to retain and recruit effective teacher, high-minority districts need to take both salary levels and working conditions into account<sup>xxvi</sup>.</li> <li>▪ A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education found that a transfer incentive program was successful in attracting high performing teachers to low-performing schools and retaining them beyond two years, while likewise significantly raising math and reading test scores<sup>xxvii</sup></li> <li>▪ Large-scale school improvement and capacity building amongst staff must also be supported through a stable education system, “which means one that is respectful of all participants, comprehensive, coherent, and aligned.” For example, a critical element to Ontario school district’s turnaround focused on building respect for staff and for professional knowledge and highlighting the good practices taking place within each school<sup>xxviii</sup>.</li> </ul>

## Theory of Change for Culture and Climate

Strategic Action Statement: Implement an effective PBIS program to provide a learning environment that is safe and fosters positive relationships between students, teachers, and families.

### Key Strategies and Assumptions to Support Teaching and Learning Goals

<p><b>Key Strategy A:</b> Effective implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a nationally-recognized model that provides the foundation for a more positive schoolwide and classroom culture.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PBIS is a systemic, data-driven school-wide prevention strategy of improving school environment/climate to reduce discipline and foster a safe learning community<sup>xxxix</sup>. Positive school climate has been associated with decreased discipline rates, reduced absences, and increased academic achievement<sup>xxx</sup>.</li> <li>▪ School-wide positive behavior support consists of several components, which include (a) organizing and training a SWPBS support team, (b) defining behavioral expectations, (c) teaching behavioral expectations, (d) implementing systems to encourage expected behaviors and discourage inappropriate behaviors, and (e) collecting data to make decisions and evaluate effectiveness<sup>xxxi</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Alternatives to out-of-school suspensions can help students stay in school more and engage more in learning. There are several approaches which look at several elements of a potential In-School Suspension program, such as diagnosing the root cause of the behavior, academic tutoring and support, and even a more therapeutic model, which involves reflection, coping and student recognition<sup>xxxii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Research suggests that Social and Emotional Learning programs are linked to decreased truancy, less drug use, lower dropout rates improved academic performance, and few behavioral problems<sup>xxxiii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ To build student-teacher relationships, interventions must focus on (a) building mutual respect and (b) instilling enjoyable time together. Respect is established when a teacher conveys an ambitious expectation of students<sup>xxxiv</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy B:</b> Implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (i.e., teaching practices) and increase teachers' cultural awareness to enhance the learning environment for students and maximize student learning.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gay (2006) discusses culturally responsive teaching and classroom management and points to research that demonstrated how teachers view challenges of school norms as serious infractions worthy of serious discipline could be based on cultural misunderstandings<sup>xxxv</sup>.</li> <li>▪ PBIS may improve school climate overall, but without addressing some of the other layered-causes of racial disproportionality, such as the conscious or unconscious biases of school staff, racial climates of schools, or school leader perspectives on discipline, effective implementation of PBIS alone may not be enough to reduce racial disparities in suspensions<sup>xxxvi</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy C:</b> Develop and implement evidence-based alternatives to out-of-school suspensions.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alternatives to out-of-school suspensions can help students stay in school more and engage more in learning. There are several approaches which look at several elements of a potential In-school Suspension program, such as diagnosing the root cause of the behavior, academic tutoring and support, and even a more therapeutic model, which involves reflection, coping and student recognition<sup>xxxvii</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy D:</b> Increase the amount and quality of family engagement to support a more positive schoolwide and classroom culture.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Strategy D:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most effective discipline models call for family/parental involvement. Families should be notified when their children are contributing positively to the school environment and parents/families should be notified as to discipline infractions and consequences that students are receiving at school<sup>xxxviii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Parent University is an opportunity for parents to sharpen their skills as they work in one of life's most important and demanding roles. Sessions focus on child development, what children are learning in schools, advocacy, parent leadership and effective parenting skills.</li> <li>▪ Mapp (2003) describes building relationships with families is built on trusting and respectful relationships<sup>xxxix</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Dr. Karen Mapp of Harvard University provides foundational trainings for family engagement.</li> </ul>



## Theory of Change for Leadership

Strategic Action Statement: All school leaders will consistently engage in problem-solving through the use of a continuous improvement model to increase academic achievement of all learners.

### Key Strategies and Assumptions to Support Teaching and Learning Goals

<p><b>Key Strategy A:</b> School improvement is dependent on having exceptional school leaders (both principals and assistant principals), and it is important to provide support for these principals to maximize their effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal”<sup>xi</sup>.</li> <li>▪ “Leadership training should not end when principals are hired. It should continue with high-quality mentoring for new principals and with professional development for all principals to promote career-long growth in line with the evolving needs of schools and districts”<sup>xii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Peer study groups around problem-solving and school improvement are one way to enhance school leaders’ understanding of best practices<sup>xiii</sup>. For example, school leaders can engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and visit exemplary school sites to expand their knowledge base.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy B:</b> School leaders should be learning leaders, and have a clear understanding of what excellent instruction looks like.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy B:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “(Principals) can create a climate that encourages learning and achievement, not just in a single classroom but throughout a school... Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without the intervention of a powerful leader”<sup>xliii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Turnaround administration must build staff capacity and quality feedback through classroom observations to gain direct insight on what is happening in the classroom environment<sup>xliiv</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy C:</b> School leaders need to have problem-solving skills and a focus on continuous improvement, including developing and monitoring of well-constructed school improvement plans (SIPs) and associated action plans.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Key Strategy C:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principals who have a higher rating of leadership effectiveness, one may anticipate that 62.5% of their students would pass their state standardized tests. In comparison, principals who are rated on the bottom half of leadership effectiveness would be likely to have only 37.5% of their students pass the same state standardized tests<sup>xliv</sup>.</li> <li>▪ “The ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of the SIP and its process has a tremendous impact on educational practices and outcomes”<sup>xlvi</sup>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Strategy D:</b> School districts can provide support to school leaders through systemic processes that serve to improve the school climate and academic achievement of students.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions that Support Strategy D:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “High-poverty schools, especially large high-poverty schools, need leadership development programs tailored to their specific needs. These are difficult leadership contexts that require additional interventions and support”<sup>xlvii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ According to Douglas Reeves there are four “right drivers” for learning leaders that must form the foundation and guiding principles of action for change in schools. These include fostering intrinsic motivation, engaging teachers and students in continuous improvement, inspiring collective action or teamwork, and affecting all teachers and students<sup>xlviii</sup>.</li> <li>▪ In order to support successful turnaround, districts must take an active leadership role in order to support the administrators who are driving change at each school by doing the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commit to success – student learning is prioritized above all else;</li> <li>○ Give school autonomy – provide turnaround leaders the opportunity to make staffing decisions, scheduling changes, and budgeting;</li> <li>○ Proactively engage the community – Establish active communication with local stakeholders;</li> <li>○ Maintain leader accountability – Hold turnaround leaders to high standards; and</li> <li>○ Establish a talent pipeline – Proactively recruit, carefully select, and strategically place leaders into turnaround schools<sup>xlix</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Research indicates that leaders can improve individual capacity when the right training is aligned to outcome goals<sup>i</sup>.</li> </ul>

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