



School Turnarounds



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION





PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Every child in America deserves a world-class education.

Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

We must do better. Together, we must achieve a new goal, that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves—this must be a national priority. We must ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a distinct "O".



School Turnarounds

Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

To help achieve President Obama's stated goal of ensuring that every student has meaningful opportunities to choose from upon graduating from high school, the administration has designed a blueprint for a reenvisioned federal role in education through the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*.

This new vision considers that, while all states have developed and implemented standards as required under the current *ESEA*, in many cases these standards do not reflect the knowledge and skills needed for success after high school, either in further education or a job.

Furthermore, while states have developed assessments aligned with their standards, in many cases these assessments do not adequately measure student growth or the knowledge and skills that students need, nor do they provide timely, useful information to teachers.

The solution to these conditions that the administration proposes is to reward the success of schools that are making significant progress, ask for dramatic change in the lowest-performing schools, and address persistent gaps in student academic achievement and graduation rates.

To accomplish dramatic change in the lowest-performing schools, the proposed ESEA will make available significant grants under the College- and Career-Ready Students program that help states, districts, and schools implement the rigorous interventions required in each state's lowest-performing Challenge schools. These schools are identified as in need of specific assistance because they are not making progress toward improvement. The College- and Career-Ready Students program is a \$14.5 billion request for the reauthorized Title I, Part A, currently Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies.

There are approximately 5,000 schools in this chronically underperforming category, roughly 5 percent of the total. About half are in big cities, maybe a third are in rural areas, and the rest are in suburbs and medium-sized towns. This is a national problem—urban, rural, and suburban. I won't play the blame game, but I also won't make excuses for failure. I am much more interested in finding ways to fix these schools than in analyzing who's at fault.

—U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, remarks at the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools Conference, June 22, 2009

States will receive funds by formula and may reserve funds to build their capacity to improve low-performing schools, including developing and implementing effective school quality review teams to assist schools in identifying school needs and supporting school improvement. States will award the remainder of funds competitively to districts or partnerships of districts and nonprofit organizations to implement one of the following intervention models, to be selected locally, to ensure significant changes in the operation, governance, staffing, or instructional program of a school:

- ▶ ***Transformation model:*** Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.
- ▶ ***Turnaround model:*** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.
- ▶ ***Restart model:*** Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
- ▶ ***School closure model:*** Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher-performing schools in the district.

Districts and their partners will receive three-year awards to fully and effectively implement one of these intervention models, and will be eligible for two additional years of funding to support a school's ongoing improvement if the school is showing progress.

In addition, the secretary will reserve a portion of School Turnaround Grants for additional activities designed to enhance state, district, and nonprofit capacity to improve schools, such as investing in model school quality review teams to identify school needs and support school improvement.

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