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THE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT IN THE MANAGERIAL, ENTREPRENEURIAL, AND STRATEGIC STATE

Sam Redding and Carlas McCauley

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Acknowledgements

About Academic Development Institute (ADI)

121 N. Kickapoo St., Lincoln, IL 62656

217-732-6462

www.adi.org

Located in Lincoln, IL, The Academic Development Institute (ADI) is a non-profit corporation founded in 1984 with the mission of assisting families, schools, and communities with children's academic and personal development. ADI focuses on three areas of research and practice: The dynamics of change (improvement, innovation, transformation); personal competencies that propel student learning; and the school as a community, including family engagement. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them so that all children become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them.

About the Authors

Sam Redding

Sam Redding, formerly the executive director of the Academic Development Institute (ADI), is now the Chief Learning Scientist at ADI. He holds a doctorate in educational administration from Illinois State University, which later honored him with the Benjamin Hubbard award for leadership in public education. A former high school teacher, college dean and vice president, and senior research associate at the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University, from 2005 to 2012 Dr. Redding was director of the Center on Innovation & Improvement. In 2012, he received the Wing Institute's award for Exemplary Practice and Research in Evidence-Based Education. Dr. Redding served on the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) expert panel on school turnarounds, was associate director of the Center on School Turnaround at WestEd from 2012 to 2019 and was a member of the 2012 U.S. contingent to South Korea for an exchange on turnaround methods in the two countries. He was the founding leader of CCSSO's state study group on state supports and interventions in 2013. Dr. Redding has published widely on family–school relationships, school improvement, personalized learning, systems of support, strategic performance management, innovation, instruction, the effects of poverty, and school turnaround.

Carlas McCauley

Carlas McCauley, EdD serves as Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Sponsored Programs in the School of Education at Howard University. His research focuses on school reform, education policy, school finance, and school resource allocation. Previously, he served as the Director for the National Center on School Turnaround, a federally funded national center that created the Four Domains for School Turnaround. Previously, Dr. McCauley was also a senior official at the U.S. Department of Education where he led the $6 billion School Improvement Grant program.

THE STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Thesis

The "statewide system of support," a feature of Congress's 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provided an organizational framework for a **managerial** approach to school improvement that was accelerated in No Child Left Behind (2001). When Congress temporarily flooded states with economic recovery money in 2010, the surge of resources fed a reform zeal and **entrepreneurial** attitude that systems of support helped contain. When the flow of money subsided, patience with federal imposition withered, and frustration with languid academic outcomes mounted, ESEA was reauthorized. This time it was called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, and the system of support was no longer named. The structure of a system of support, however, proved useful for states that were now more independently **strategic** in how they guided and assisted their districts and schools. As programs, projects, and initiatives within state departments of education rise and fall with shifts in legislative emphasis and educator favor, a systems approach to school improvement provides coherence, economy, and strategic discipline.

Enlisting States to Extend Opportunity

Congress's periodic reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) typically reflects and consolidates the dominant stream of thought at the time. In 1965, however, the initial enactment of ESEA was as much a spur to change as a reflection of the prevailing sentiment. A critical piece of the Great Society legislation aimed at equal opportunity for minority groups and people living in poverty, ESEA consisted of six Titles, chief among them Title I which became the federal government's primary vehicle for financial support for primary and secondary education. The funds were administered through states and targeted to districts serving students from low-income families (also called educationally deprived children), including basic (formula) grants and incentive grants.

Title V, Grants to Strengthen State Departments of Education, provided for grants to "stimulate and assist States in strengthening the leadership resources of their State educational agencies, and to

assist those agencies in the establishment and improvement of programs to identify and meet the educational needs of States." This provision, key to later introduction of statewide systems of support, enabled states to apply for federal grants to support:

1. Educational planning on a statewide basis;
2. Management of educational data systems;
3. Dissemination of information;
4. Educational research and demonstration programs and projects on:
   a. Evaluating curriculum;
   b. Promising practice; and
   c. Improvement of legal and organizational structures and management;
5. Publication and distribution of curricular materials;
6. Programs to improve quality of teacher preparation;
7. Studies of the financing of public education;
8. Statewide programs designed to measure educational achievement;
9. Training for education leaders at state and local educational agency levels; and
10. Providing local educational agencies and schools with technical assistance.

(See Appendix A: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.)

The Managerial State

Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)–1994

The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, a full reauthorization of ESEA, was the most significant change to ESEA since its enactment 30 years before. The reauthorizing act accompanied in the same timeframe the Goals 2000 Act (1994) and the 1998 Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD). All three of these Congressional actions addressed the national cry for school improvement and better outcomes for all students, a shift in emphasis from the equal opportunity stress of the 1965 ESEA. Under both IASA (1994) and the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA as No Child Left Behind, the state assumed a **managerial** approach to the improvement of schools, tightening down the expected stepwise progression toward an ultimate goal of all students testing proficient in reading and mathematics and locking in levels of state support and sanction to match each school's improvement trajectory.

Statewide systems of support (SSOS) for improvement of schools (later refocused on districts) entered the mainstream of state education functions, however tentatively, with the IASA. For vanguard states in the quest for better school performance in 1994, the SSOS provided a structure for their already aggressive movement into standards-based education and public accountability. For states assuming a more traditionally passive relationship with their local education agencies (LEAs), the SSOS requirement in the chief federal funding mechanism was a nudge toward greater state resolve to own the outcomes for students in their schools.

Although the original 1965 ESEA legislation included the word "system" only three times, once related to "data systems" and twice to "school systems," the 1994 reauthorization uses the word and its extensions more than 200 times, including at least 59 different applications.

(See Appendix B: Uses of "System" in Improving America's Schools Act of 1994.)

System thinking was big in 1994, along with its cousins—networking and collaboration—as the internet was breaking loose and spreading its massive network across the globe, a system of nodes and branches. IASA envisioned state systems that operated as networks of support encompassing schools and controlling variables with the data that new technologies brought to the eye of the corporate manager and the education leader.

Of the many systems cited in IASA, two were designated as statewide:

1. Statewide systems of family support for families of children with disabilities
2. "Statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for schools receiving funds under this part, including schoolwide programs and schools in need of program improvement, in order to increase the opportunity for all students in such schools to meet the State's content standards and student performance standards." (Sec. 1117, A(1); see Appendix C)

Goals 2000 established within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) an Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination to identify and disseminate exemplary and promising programs. Goals 2000 attempted to clarify the role of the federal government relative to the states and localities, stating that it: "Reaffirms that responsibility for control of education is reserved to the States and local school systems and other State instrumentalities and that no Federal action under this Act would reduce, modify, or undercut such responsibility." (Sec. 319)

Goals 2000 asserted that schools were to improve by:

1. Pursuing national goals to be achieved by the year 2000, with progress reported annually by a National Education Goals Panel.
2. Adopting content standards established by their state in accordance with national guidelines.
3. Marking their progress by performance on standards-based assessments provided by their state.
4. Accessing reform grants targeted to LEAs with high percentages of disadvantaged students.
5. Accessing parent training and support programs funded through grants from the Department of Education to nonprofit groups.
6. Utilizing best practices identified by research.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program enacted in 1998 injected incentives and resources for change into the improvement process by funding state-administered grants to schools to adopt validated reform models which were coherent and comprehensive in addressing all areas of a school's operation. Thus, research that validated reform models would be taken to practice across the country to achieve national goals. CSRD ended its funding in 2005.

(See Appendix C: Statewide System of Support in Improving America's Schools Act [1994].)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)–2001

ESEA was again reauthorized in 2001 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB): "To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind." The term "system" was still prominent, as in IASA seven years earlier, but now more often took the form of an adjective rather than a noun. For example: school-level systemic reform, state and local systemic reforms, systemic improvement and reform, systematic observations by teachers, and systematic consultation with parents.

More now, under NCLB, was to be done "statewide," including a statewide system of technical assistance and support for LEAs, statewide annual measurable objectives, a single statewide State accountability system, and a statewide long-range strategic educational technology plan. In only two instances did NCLB combine the terms "statewide" and "system."

"Statewide systems" in NCLB were:

1. Statewide system of technical assistance and sustained support for LEAs and schools, and
2. Statewide accountability system.

Thus, the system of support carried forward from IASA was more firmly tied to the state's accountability system, which NCLB reinforced with stronger sanctions for low-achieving schools through corrective actions and restructuring. NCLB also added recognition of progress to the equation, a nod toward incentivizing and rewarding improvement performance. Section 1117, which in IASA was State Assistance for School Support and Improvement and contained the "system for support," in NCLB was titled School Support and Recognition and again included the "system for support."

Significant changes in Section 1117 of Title I from IASA to NCLB were:

1. The system of support in IASA focused on Title I schools but in NCLB was extended to the LEAs that included these schools.
2. The "State's content standards and student performance standards" in IASA were, in NCLB, called "State's *academic* content standards and student *academic achievement* standards."
3. NCLB prioritized the system of support's particular corrective actions to assist schools whose LEAs failed to carry out their responsibilities.
4. NCLB required that school support team members be "persons knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice on teaching and learning and about successful schoolwide projects, school reform, and improving educational opportunities for low-achieving students," including highly qualified or distinguished teachers and principals, pupil services personnel, parents, representatives of institutions of higher education, representatives of regional educational laboratories or comprehensive regional technical assistance centers, representatives of outside consultant groups, or other individuals as the State educational agency, in consultation with the LEA, determined appropriate.
5. In NCLB, the functions of the school support teams were expanded and specified as:
   a. Review and analyze all facets of the school's operation.
   b. Collaborate with parents and school staff and the LEA serving the school in the design, implementation, and monitoring of a plan that, if fully implemented, can reasonably be expected to improve student performance.

c. Evaluate, at least semiannually, the effectiveness of school personnel assigned to the school, including identifying outstanding teachers and principals.

d. Make additional recommendations as the school implements the plan.

e. After one school year, from the beginning of the activities, recommend that the school support team continue to provide assistance to the school, or that the LEA or the State educational agency, as appropriate, take alternative actions with regard to the school.

6. The Distinguished Schools and Distinguished Educators provisions of IASA were, in NCLB, under the heading State Recognition as:

a. Academic Achievement Awards program for making academic achievement awards to recognize schools that significantly closed the achievement gap or exceeded their adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years.

b. Distinguished schools—schools meeting criteria for Academic Achievement Awards that made the greatest improvement and can serve as models.

c. Awards to teachers—financial awards to teachers teaching in a school described as consistently making significant gains in academic achievement in the areas in which the teacher provides instruction, or to teachers or principals designated as distinguished.

7. NCLB added a special allocation rule for schools in high-poverty areas.

To accommodate NCLB's revisions to what IASA had described as a "statewide system of support" and provide guidance for states, the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII), part of the U.S. Department of Education-funded system of technical assistance centers, published the *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support* (Redding & Walberg, 2007) with a conceptual framework, case studies of states, and an inventory to determine the current status of a state's system and plan its development. The conceptual framework (Rhim et al., 2007) centered around three pillars, described as a three-legged stool, that sought to balance the state's direct capacity-building resources and services with incentives to motivate improvement efforts and opportunities for innovation. Innovation was encouraged through regulatory reform and education options including charter schools, pilot schools, and lighthouse projects. The *Handbook* also promoted differentiation of state services based on the school's specific performance trends and characteristics. CII consultants assisted more than 30 state education agencies (SEAs) in incorporating these ideas into their evolving systems of support.
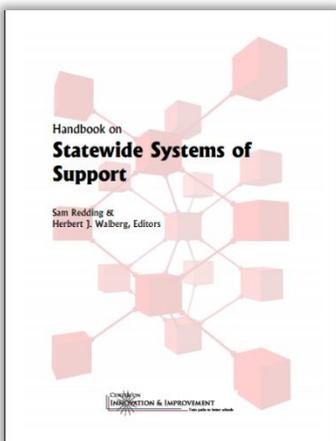
CII followed the release of the Handbook with a series of practice briefs and reports on the variations states were applying to their systems of support (see, for example, Corbett, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Kerins et al., 2008; Lane, 2010; Tandy, 2010). Seeing the need for states to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of their systems of support, CII released *Evaluating the Statewide System of Support with Rubrics, Explanations, and Exemplars* (Hanes et al., 2009). As the system of support was taking root in states, the seeds of discontent with NCLB were already being sown, as evidenced in reports such as one from the Center for Education Policy (2009) that drew lessons from school restructuring, a key intervention under NCLB.

The Entrepreneurial State

Frustration with NCLB and the Call for Urgency

Within a few years of its enactment, frustration with actual progress under NCLB's steady plodding toward outcome goals and irritation with the federally imposed lockstep of state responses spawned a search for something different. As the nation was sinking toward the financial collapse of 2008, failing businesses were restructured and subjected to turnaround interventions to keep them solvent. Education reformers wondered if the same approaches might salvage our lowest-achieving schools.

In 2004, under the leadership of then Governor Mark Warner, the Virginia Department of Education (VA DOE) began to develop a school turnaround specialist program. The VA DOE sponsored the two-year program through which districts with low-performing schools sent principals and district central office staff members to the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville to obtain executive education and related skills to assist them in turning around low-performing schools.

In 2007, ADI's CII published a synthesis of research across sectors identifying key leader actions in successful turnaround efforts and made recommendations for districts embarking upon focused turnaround efforts (Public Impact). Also in 2007, Mass Insight published *The Turnaround Challenge* (Calkins et al.), a call-to-action report that highlighted the need for intervention in America's lowest-performing schools. The report outlined structures within states and districts to focus on school turnaround and advocated the engagement of lead partners (external service providers) to bring special expertise to the work.

In 2008, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) released a practice guide, prepared by an expert panel, titled *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools* (Herman et al.). The report stated that no well-designed, control studies were available and based its conclusions on case studies. From these case studies and the analysis by the panel, the report suggested four interrelated turnaround practices:

1. Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership;
2. Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction;
3. Make visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins); and
4. Build a committed staff.

The new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, in a 2009 speech to the assembled Governors, set the nation's sights on dramatic reform of the lowest performing schools, with states leading the charge. Federal offers of flexibility in state compliance with NCLB and a flood of money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) sought quick gains; disruption was in order. An **entrepreneurial** attitude for the state was now in favor, with incentives for change, innovation, expanded options, choice, and the engagement of reform groups external to the school system.

Flexibility and ARRA Funds

NCLB underwent a major regulatory change that channeled the ARRA funds to state-administered School Improvement Grants in 2010 to amplify urgency and resources in fixing the most dysfunctional schools. The ARRA funds also fueled the Race to the Top program that awarded states significant funds
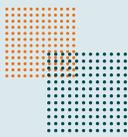
through highly competitive grants for major reform that encompassed aspects of school improvement and the systems of support. At the same time, the system of support, reflecting both NCLB and its amendments and regulatory changes, became a "system of recognition, accountability, and support," recognizing the need to make improvement efforts coherent with the state's accountability measures and recognition for progress.

In 2010, CII published the *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants* (Perlman & Redding; revised in 2011) to provide guidance for states and districts in utilizing the new federal grant initiative. The *Handbook* included chapters from all five of the national content centers, with a stated purpose to:

> *bolster the effective implementation of the intervention models and strategies outlined in the 2010 School Improvement Grant (SIG) program—section 1003(g) of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—in order to achieve the program's clear goal—rapid improvement of persistently low-achieving schools. Especially, this Handbook offers succinct and practical explanations of the SIG's required and recommended models and strategies, references to the underlying research, and connections to useful resources. (p. i)*
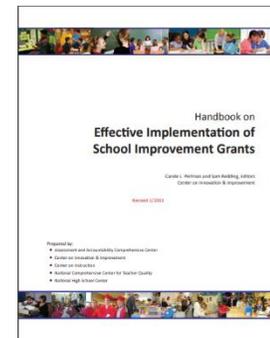
The *Handbook* was also a valiant effort to maintain the centrality of statewide systems of support as the organizing framework to incorporate and bring order to the dramatic strategies encouraged by the SIGs to reverse the decline of the lowest-performing schools. For example, a turnaround office within an SEA could provide a unique and specialized service within a coherent system of support that provides differentiated services appropriate to each school. Different from previous descriptions of statewide systems of support, the *Handbook* asserted the benefits of both state and district systems of support:

> *While the turnaround office enables the state or district to address the particular contexts and conditions of persistently low-achieving schools with strategies that are unique to rapid improvement, the offices should be connected conceptually and operationally with other state and district improvement efforts. In other words, the turnaround office provides a unique and specialized service within a coherent system of support that provides differentiated services appropriate to each school. (p. xx)*

An early survey of state implementation of SIGs (Rhim & Redding, 2011) reported that the nine states studied, "see their state system of support as a building block for successful implementation of their SIG program. For instance, personnel and systems in place as a result of building the system of support were reportedly well positioned to support goals of the SIG program" (p. 20).

Flexibility Waivers

In light of delays in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act and growing concerns about the majority of schools across the nation being identified as not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), in 2011, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) extended SEAs the option to request flexibility from specific aspects of the law. The flexibility was offered in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students,

close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. The flexibility guidance included the U.S. Department of Education's Turnaround Principles:

- **Leadership.** Providing strong leadership by reviewing the performance of the current principal, replacing the current principal, or ensuring the principal is a change leader and providing the principal with operational flexibility;
- **Effective Teachers.** Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by reviewing all staff and retaining those determined to be effective, carefully selecting new teachers including transfers, and providing job-embedded professional development informed by teacher evaluations;
- **Extended Learning Time.** Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- **Strong Instruction.** Strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards;
- **Use of Data.** Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
- **School Culture.** Establishing a school environment that improves safety and discipline and addresses students' social, emotional, and physical health needs; and
- **Family and Community Engagement.** Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. (U.S. Department of Education, 2011)

Thus, the idea of the statewide system of support introduced in 1994 expanded to accommodate a tighter conformity to the state's accountability policies and a sharper attention to the lowest-performing schools. Rhim and Redding (2011) described a more expansive but agile state role that:

- Develops college- and career-ready standards and assessments.
- Provides support for effective leadership and instruction, including performance-based staff evaluations.
- Tailors supports to individual district and school needs.
- Develops sophisticated measurement systems to assess student achievement and turnaround strategies for the lowest-achieving schools.

With state education leaders taking the central role in managing bureaucracies as they also sought innovation, Redding (2012), with sponsorship from the Wing Institute, produced a guidebook for state leaders, *Change Leadership: Innovation in State Education Agencies*. In 2013, Redding recast the three-legged stool proffered for systems of support in the 2008 *Handbook* with a framework for a system of recognition, accountability, and support (SRAS) with five levers for change:

1. **Opportunities** for improvement by reducing regulatory burdens and encouraging innovation.
2. **Incentives** (positive and negative) for districts and schools to take the reins in their own improvement.
3. **Systemic capacity** development, including data and planning systems and policies that promote the supply of high-quality leaders and teachers.
4. **Local capacity** to identify gaps in operational effectiveness and professional practice in districts and schools, and provide supports to address them.

5. **Interventions** that direct the most aggressive turnaround tools toward the most persistently low-achieving schools and districts. (Redding, 2013, p. 12)

The Center on School Turnaround

When the U.S. Department of Education recompeted its system of comprehensive technical assistance centers in 2012, the five original content centers were replaced by seven content centers to match the Department's priorities. This being at the high-water mark for enthusiasm over turnaround, a Center on School Turnaround was established. The Center's initial publication, a book titled *The State Role in School Turnaround: Emerging Best Practices* (Rhim & Redding, 2014), set a foundation for its work. The editors touted the statewide system of support as the organizational home for state turnaround initiatives.

> *To provide effective and meaningful technical assistance, SEAs need to identify, leverage, and repurpose existing resources, as well as those of other agencies and groups, on topics that are critical to turnaround success. SEAs also need to institute statewide systems of support and assistance through which they can effectively share these resources. (p. 17)*

Heading into 2015 and before the enactment of ESSA, the U.S. Department of Education released new guidance for states to apply for SIGs, addressing earlier concerns about haphazard preparation for serious change by adding an optional planning year. The Center on School Turnaround published *School Improvement Grants: Guidance and Tools for the 2015 Amended Regulations: Maximizing the Optional Planning/Pre-implementation Year* (Redding et al., 2015). Better planning for implementation also enabled greater integration of turnaround efforts into more comprehensive systems of state support for school improvement.
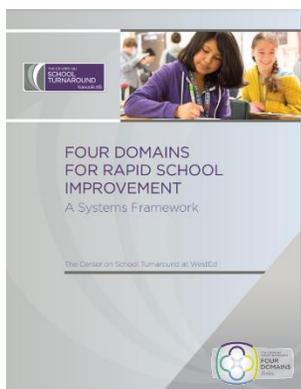
When enthusiasm for turnaround as instituted through the federal SIGs began to wane, the Center on School Turnaround applied what had been learned about school turnaround to the development of *Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: A Systems Framework* (2017). Carefully constructed over the course of nearly two years under the guidance of Dr. Carlas McCauley, the center's director, the book outlined four domains, each with three practices (which might be considered strategies under ESSA terminology) for the state, the district, and the school. In effect, a system of support had been constructed by delineating the complementary roles of the state, district, and school relative to a common set of domains and practices.

A year after the release of *Four Domains*, the Center on School Turnaround published *Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: Indicators of Effective Practice* (Redding et al., 2018). This practice guide provided for each of the practices identified in the original publication a set of specific indicators and sources of implementation evidence. Among the indicators, one for the state practice of customizing and targeting support to meet needs stated that "State's system of support is sufficiently differentiated in identifying and
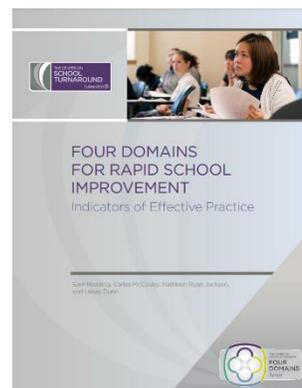
responding to improvement needs of districts and schools" (p. 11). Sources of evidence for the implementation of this indicator were given as: "Operations documents for the state system of support, including its theory of action, needs assessment processes, and methods for identifying and responding to each district and school's improvement needs" (p. 11).

The Four Domains framework was adopted by more than half the states as a conceptual framework for their systems of support and school improvement.

The Strategic State

Performance Management

The Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center), another content center funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 2012 to 2019, revamped CII's evaluation rubric for systems of support and released *Managing Performance in the System of Support* (Hanes et al., 2013). The rubric signaled the emergence of performance management in the Race to the Top initiative and in professional literature at the time. The authors of the revised rubric noted:
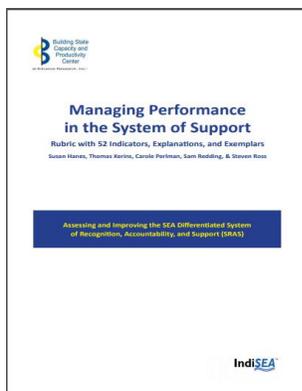
A strong state system of recognition, accountability, and support will prune away ineffective programs, policies, and regulations, and create effective initiatives to spur district and school improvement. States adopting a systems approach to school improvement align their organizations, resources, and staff to fulfill their new performance-driven missions. These structural alterations are a rudimentary form of performance management. The next step is fine-tuning the SRAS processes and system components in response to operational and outcome data. (p. 11)

State Approaches to School Improvement on the Eve of ESSA

In January of 2015, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released a survey of 37 specific state actions to improve school performance organized within the five categories of a system of support.   The system of support concept introduced in 1994 under IASA and given heft under NCLB in 2001 had been set aside in more recent years in favor of more direct state action to fix the lowest performing schools. What, then, were states actually doing at this time?

The CCSSO study (made possible by a grant from the Sandler Foundation), *State Supports to Districts and Schools: How SEAs Rate the Impact* (Corbett & Redding, 2015) examined state use of specific strategies within the categories of support set forth in *The SEA of the Future: Leverage Performance Management to Support School Improvement* (Gross & Jochim, 2013) as revised from the 2007 *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support*. The list of specific supports in the study captures the accumulating array of possible state actions influenced by two decades of shifting federal directions and divergent state emphases. SEA administrators from 34 states responded to the survey. Further,

the "survey instrument asked respondents for a subjective valuation of the impact of any given support" (Corbett & Redding, 2015, p. 9). A leverage score was then calculated to give most weight to state supports rated of high impact by the most states.

(See Appendix D: Table of Results from CCSSO Study of State Reported Supports [2015].)

The study also probed the SEA representatives on how they evaluated the effectiveness of the SEA-provided supports, concluding the following:

> *Evaluating the Effectiveness of SEA-provided Supports*
>
> *Virtually all states responded that they do some form of annual review cycle to assess the improvement of their schools and/or districts. Many of those states also request quarterly monitoring reports. Few (n = 9) states distinguished that they use those overall assessments of school or district improvement to evaluate the effectiveness of the SEA-provided supports. Several SEAs specifically cited their online planning tools as a way to monitor implementation by adults and the impact of the SEA-provided supports on schools and districts. Stakeholder feedback meetings and focus groups were also cited as common data points to assess impact. Two states responded that external vendors were brought in specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of SEA supports and practices. Two other states wrote that they were in the process of developing a comprehensive evaluation plan to evaluate the SEA supports. (Corbett & Redding, 2015, p. 12)*
>
> *Determining the Cost Effectiveness of SEA-provided Supports*
>
> *Only 29% of survey respondents indicated that their SEA assesses the cost effectiveness or return on investment of SEA-provided supports for low-performing schools and districts. Several states reported that this analysis is in its infancy. Of those who expanded on their positive responses, the most frequent methodologies used are quarterly or annual reports and reviews of school improvement plans. (Corbett & Redding, 2015, p. 12)*

Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

ESEA was reauthorized again in 2015 as ESSA, a stroke of humility on the part of the federal government, pulling back on both the regulatory incrementalism of NCLB and the hyper-dynamism of turnaround. ESSA eliminated from Title I most of the language that had described a system of support in the previous two reauthorizations (1994 and 2001). States were given more flexibility to determine their means and methods for administering Title I's school and district improvement provisions. The center of gravity shifted toward the LEAs to devise their improvement plans and engage approved vendors (and the state) for services. Today, some states have maintained a good portion of what once defined a system of support, such as school support teams and distinguished educators, even though these services might by now carry different names. Other states established school improvement offices or turnaround centers or transformation departments within their SEAs and devised procedures for LEAs to plan the improvement of their schools and engage approved vendors and the state in improvement activities.

By the time ESSA was legislated, NCLB had already been significantly modified to accommodate the focus on the lowest-achieving schools and the ramping up of data systems. The harsher measures, complicated compliance requirements, and elevated federal and state roles had brought pushback from localities, and so ESSA provided greater flexibility and encouragement for states to innovate. More prominent now were provisions to support the creation of charter schools, greater community engagement in school improvement, and more local initiative.

Section 1117 of Title I, which carried the text for systems of support in the previous two reauthorizations of ESEA, was eliminated from ESSA, and school improvement functions were tucked into Section 1003: School Improvement, including "State educational agency's statewide system of technical assistance and support for local educational agencies."

There were now, in ESSA, only two statewide systems, and each was mentioned only once in the legislation:

1. Statewide system to support the opening of new charter schools, and
2. Statewide system of technical assistance and oversight.

Under ESSA, the State role is primarily to approve applications and plans from LEAs and monitor the use of funds and implementation of the approved plans. School support teams, a major component of systems of support since 1994, are mentioned only once as an optional, possible, locally chosen method for school improvement. ESSA designates two categories of schools for priority attention via application from their LEAs to the State for: (1) "comprehensive support and improvement activities," and (2) "targeted support and improvement activities."

The State may, with the approval of the LEA, directly provide or arrange for the provision of services through other entities such as "school support teams, educational service agencies, or nonprofit or for-profit external providers." The State is to "use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with whom the local educational agency will partner." ESSA's Section 1003 (School Improvement) and Section 1003A (Direct Student Services) encapsulated what had previously been in the statewide system of support.

VanGronigen et al. (2022), in a review of state applications for ESSA funding, considered whether states, in fact, took advantage of their new "freedom" to act under ESSA by innovating in their approaches to school and district improvement, especially for the lowest-achieving schools. They concluded that "a majority of SEAs espoused to take a mildly to moderately active role in school and district improvement efforts. Indeed, SEA approaches and categories of support for improvement in the ESSA era seem similar to those used since NCLB's passage" (p. 19). In other words, the incremental, managerial approach that began with IASA in 1994 and was entrenched with NCLB in 2001 remained strong in states, even after the entrepreneurial experiments with turnaround. The door that ESSA opened to strategic performance management remained largely unentered.

(See Appendix E: School Improvement in Every Student Succeeds Act [2015].)

Strategic Performance Management for the System of Support

The term "evidence-based strategies" is strewn throughout the ESSA legislation, a signal for school improvement to be grounded in strategies that work. Although this did not settle in everyone's mind which strategies are evidence-based and under what conditions any of them might be most effective, the point was clear that strategies rather than programs were to form the thrust of change for states, districts, and schools to achieve better results than had been accomplished under NCLB or its regulatory permutations. Loosening of the federal mandates and regulatory stipulations around state accountability, supports, and sanctions further acknowledged that each level of the education system deserved the freedom to select strategies that best fit that particular organization's context, desired direction, and goals. Strategies should be chosen with care, tied to performance measures, and implemented competently. Their effects should be tracked and the course of change altered as necessary to enhance performance.

The BSCP Center had carried the system of support into the era of performance management with the 2013 publication of *Managing Performance in the System of Support* (Hanes et al., 2013). The Center continued to flesh out the concept of strategic performance management with a series of publications and with consulting work with SEAs.

In 2017, Layland and Redding further wed strategic performance management to the system of support framework in a publication sponsored by the BSCP Center and the Center on School Turnaround (WestEd), writing that:

> *The pivot point for educational change is now firmly placed with the district, rebalancing the position of the state and the school relative to the local education agency (LEA). The state education agency (SEA) has been shifting its emphasis for decades, from a compliance-focused authority to a change agent equipped with systems, processes, training, and support to heighten the progress of the local district and its schools. A strategic approach to performance management fits neatly in this new organizational environment. Ideal for organizing people and their work in one entity (SEA, LEA, or school), strategic performance management is equally suited to a multi-organization system where interlaced data and responsive supports are critical. A state system of support is such a system. (p. 3)*

For more on how strategic performance management facilitates systems of support, please see Appendix E: Excerpt from *Casting a Statewide Strategic Performance Net: Interlaced Data and Responsive Supports* (Layland & Redding, 2017). Layland and Redding (2021) more recently published, through Information Age, an updated guidebook for strategic performance management (SPM): *Managing Performance Strategically in Education Agencies*.
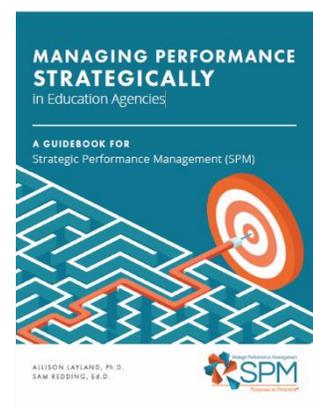
Influence of ESSER Funds and COVID

Then, of course, came the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of 2020, schools across the nation shut down, and students of all ages experienced a huge disruption to their education. Moreover, and as widely reported and documented, the coronavirus pandemic hit schools hard, resulting in lower academic achievement (Lewis et al., 2021), lower college-going (Harwin & Sparks, 2021), school staffing shortages (Lieberman, 2021), and social and emotional challenges among students and staff alike (Steiner & Woo, 2021). During that time, teachers, schools, districts, and states learned that, in most cases, they lacked the systems and skills to sustain effective teaching and learning while completely shutting down, as well as when they were in various phases of hybrid or CDC-guided in-person learning (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

To address challenges caused by COVID-19, the U.S. Congress created and funded the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), providing an unprecedented level of resources to states and districts ($13.5B ESSER, $54.3B ESSER II, and $122.7B ARP ESSER; see U.S. Department of Education, 2021), with minimal guidance on how the money could be spent. The U.S. Department of Education has provided on their website numerous resources to help state departments of education, school districts, and schools understand and wisely use these resources and is monitoring spending through regular reports and a planned reporting form.

The COVID pandemic paused many aspects of regulatory school improvement and added another influx of funds to be managed through the states including the ESSER funds. Initially states and districts were provided with funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act. The CARES Act provided new "one-time" funds and was distributed to states to distribute to districts with wide spending flexibility. The funds aimed to provide emergency monies to schools and districts to assist during the COVID-19 crisis. However, these funds were meant to be distributed one time and should have been invested wisely, given the challenge of sustaining any effort once the funds run out and the lack of evidence that exists surrounding how best to wisely invest one-time funding sources.

There was hope by many that school year 2021–22 would see more students attending school in person, which in and of itself caused many logistical challenges for schools and districts. The bigger concern, however, during that time became the potential learning loss of students for the 2021–22 school year while facing significant budget shortfalls during that time (Modan, 2021). In part, the ESSER funds were meant to address unfinished learning, as federal guidelines require LEAs to allocate significant portions of the funding to learning recovery. Unfortunately, the pandemic exacerbated continued divides across schools that experienced challenges for improvement for decades. Given the consequences of the pandemic, the funding should be used to drive change across schools, in particular schools in high poverty communities where COVID was most impactful.

The COVID pandemic occurred on the heels of the passing of ESSA and implementation of new strategies designed to improve schools. Shortly prior to the pandemic, the revisions for Title I schools in ESSA identified Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools, requiring that each school implement a school-specific comprehensive intervention plan that is developed by its district and is approved and monitored regularly. As states across the nation were cutting billions of dollars from their budgets due to COVID-related revenue losses, schools were facing the difficult and expensive task of reopening while addressing the many academic and social–emotional needs of their students and teachers. While the ESSA plan called for additional funding to be provided to support implementation of a reform to ensure change, many districts were likely experiencing difficulties competing with the demands that surfaced from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite additional federal funds created to support districts in pandemic recovery in the form of the CARES Act, during the early days of COVID, districts were still asked to address more challenges with reduced budgets. Moreover, similar to ESSA, the ESSER funds were widely distributed through the Title I program through the states to distribute to districts, adding to the complexity of the competing agendas to improve a school from its previous position while addressing the additional needs that surfaced as a result of the pandemic.

States continue to play a significant role in the pandemic recovery. States, along with districts and schools, can spend ESSER funding over six academic years. At the state level, the ESSER reserve is subject to different state governance and fiscal management processes, and this context matters. Some state agencies can develop their own budgets, while many require authorization from the state board of education or the legislature before they can make awards.

The large influx of funding creates another chance to accelerate the role of the state and opportunities for learning. The efforts to mitigate learning loss should be coupled with efforts to improve schools and systems, to best support every student.

Conclusions

The statewide system of support (SSOS), an organizational structure and operating philosophy for states to provide guidance and assistance to districts and schools in their improvement efforts, is also a structure for engaging external partners in the most orderly and productive fashion. Introduced in 1994 through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the statewide system of support has morphed to accommodate the heightened regulatory regimes of NCLB, the urgent scramble to fix the lowest-achieving schools in the revamped School Improvement Grants, and each state's contextual strategies in its relationship with its local education agencies encouraged in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Some states have established, built, and refined systems of support for more than a quarter of a century. These states are, in fact, systematic in their coordination of improvement efforts by the state itself, the districts, the schools, and partner organizations. Other states have maintained the structure and philosophy of a system of support while calling it something else. Still other states have abandoned the idea of a system of support altogether.

The U.S. Department of Education, acting in consort with Congress's legislative umbrella at the time, has overseen two reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which was

enacted before the Department was formed. Likewise, various amendments to the Act and a multitude of regulation and guidance have flowed from the Department and influenced the position of the State Education Agency relative to the federal government and to the local education agencies and schools in each state. Looking across the past three decades, we see federal influences, typically reflecting directions already chosen by vanguard states, first erecting **managerial** scaffolds of rules, goals, metrics, and defined sanctions and supports that the system of support embraced. When impatience with the lagging performance of the bottom tier of schools combined with the availability of emergency funding, states became **entrepreneurial** in forming partnerships with reform groups, pressing for innovation, and taking stronger action for change. The system of support provided a ready structure for incorporating turnaround strategies within the spectrum of improvement initiatives. At last, the fever for rapid change subsided, and the states were encouraged to become more **strategic** in setting their own directions for change and to assist their districts and schools in also strategically managing their performance.

Our contention is that the statewide system of support, whatever it might be called, remains a viable construct for organizing a state's strategies for the improvement of its districts and schools, and one that can facilitate strategic management of performance by each district and each school. We wonder, however, just how effective each iteration of a system of support might be, and how each state determines if its system functions as it is intended.

Graphic of Major Influences on State Formation of a System of Support

Managerial
(IASA, NCLB)
Systems, order, control, predictability, incrementalism, continuous improvement, standards, assessments, measurement, targets, goals, effective practice, planning, implementation, capacity building

Entrepreneurial
(Turnaround)
Innovation, dynamism, options, external providers, change, fresh start, variation, turnaround, transformation, disruption, flexibility, incentives, opportunities

Actual State policies and practices in district and school improvement, as potentially incorporated into a statewide system of support.

Strategic
(ESSA)
Organizational autonomy, performance management, role definition, performance measures, evidence-based strategies, implementation data, technology, rapid course correction, short-cycle planning, change management, ongoing progress assessment and feedback

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Congress's periodic reauthorization of the ESEA typically reflects and consolidates the dominant stream of thought at the time. In 1965, however, the initial enactment of ESEA was even more a spur to change as a reflection of the prevailing sentiment. A critical piece of the Great Society legislation aimed at equal opportunity for minority groups and people living in poverty, ESEA consisted of six Titles, chief among them Title I, which became the federal government's primary vehicle for financial support for primary and secondary education. The funds were administered through states and targeted to districts serving students from low-income families (also called educationally deprived children), including basic (formula) grants and incentive grants.

Title V, Grants to Strengthen State Departments of Education, provided for grants to "stimulate and assist States in strengthening the leadership resources of their State educational agencies, and to assist those agencies in the establishment and improvement of programs to identify and meet the educational needs of States." This provision, key to later introduction of statewide systems of support, enabled States to apply for federal grants to support:

1. Educational planning on a statewide basis;
2. Management of educational data systems;
3. Dissemination of information;
4. Educational research and demonstration programs and projects on:
   a. Evaluating curriculum;
   b. Promising practice;
   c. Improvement of legal and organizational structures and management;
5. Publication and distribution of curricular materials;
6. Programs to improve quality of teacher preparation;
7. Studies of the financing of public education;
8. Statewide programs designed to measure educational achievement;
9. Training for education leaders at state and LEA levels;
10. Providing LEAs and schools with technical assistance.

ESEA, and the funds that flowed from it, served to advance the centralization of education policymaking from the local level to the state and federal levels. It should be noted that the word "system" or any of its extensions appears only three times in ESEA 1965, once related to "data systems" and twice to "school systems."

Major Amendments to ESEA
- In 1966, Title VI was amended to the ESEA as Aid to Handicapped Children and became Title VII.

- In 1967, Title VIII was devoted to Bilingual Education.
- In 1974, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act contributed defining language to ESEA to clarify ESEA's safeguards against racial discrimination and to strengthen initiatives for bilingual education and special education, which were supported also in separate acts. The Act charges school districts to take action to overcome barriers to students' equal participation.

Appendix B: Uses of "System" in Improving America's Schools Act of 1994

1. Systemic reform
2. State assessment systems
3. System of school support teams
4. Statewide system of support and improvement
5. Statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement
6. System of regional comprehensive technical assistance centers
7. Support system to ensure continued education of at-risk students
8. School-level systemic reforms
9. Elementary and secondary education systems
10. System of clearinghouses
11. Telecommunications systems
12. Comprehensive system for technology
13. Communication systems
14. Systemic reform strategies
15. Systemic statewide plan
16. State and local systemic reform
17. Systems for collecting and reporting information
18. Systemwide policies
19. Systematic consultation with parents
20. Systemwide improvement grants
21. Data systems
22. Data management and monitoring systems
23. Language-based public school system
24. Buddy System Computer Project
25. Comprehensive, systemic education reform
26. Integrated service-delivery system
27. Nation's system of government
28. Systemwide policies and practices
29. Rural school system
30. Suburban school system
31. Urban school system
32. Systematic, comprehensive inservice training programs
33. National technical assistance and dissemination system
34. Networked system of 15 comprehensive regional technical assistance centers
35. Federal technical assistance system
36. National diffusion network effective programs and promising practices system
37. System of validating effective programs and promising practices
38. Closed circuit television systems
39. Model data systems
40. Criminal justice system
41. Educational systems of States

42. National data system
43. State comprehensive, coordinated, interagency system of family support for families of children with disabilities
44. System change activities
45. Statewide system of family support
46. Service system
47. Quality improvement systems
48. Data collection and evaluation systems
49. Family-directed systems
50. Education delivery systems
51. Systemic technology planning
52. System of reporting standards
53. System for routine preventive maintenance
54. Retirement and leave system for educators
55. Computerized management information system
56. School-based budget system
57. Efficient school systems
58. Cooperative education statistics system
59. High-performance workplace systems

Appendix C: Statewide System of Support in Improving America's Schools Act (1994)

SEC. 1117. STATE ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT

A. SYSTEM FOR SUPPORT

(1) STATE SUPPORT. —Each State educational agency shall establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for schools receiving funds under this part, including schoolwide programs and schools in need of program improvement, in order to increase the opportunity for all students in such schools to meet the State's content standards and student performance standards.

(2) MEETING REQUIREMENTS. —Funds reserved under section 1003(a) or appropriated under section 1002(f) shall be used to meet the requirements of this section. In addition to such funds a State educational agency may use State administrative funds reserved under section 1603(c) to meet such requirements.

B. REGIONAL CENTERS

Such a statewide system shall work with and receive support and assistance from the comprehensive regional technical assistance centers under part A of title XIII and the educational regional laboratories under section 941(h) of the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994.

C. PROVISIONS. —The system shall include at a minimum, the following:

- SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS. —
  o Each State educational agency, in consultation with local educational agencies and schools, shall establish a system of school support teams to provide information and assistance to schoolwide programs and to assist such programs in providing an opportunity to all students to meet the State's student performance standards.
  o If funds are sufficient, school support teams shall provide information and assistance to—
    1) schools—
       – in which the number of students in poverty is equal to or greater than 75 percent of the total number of students enrolled in such school; and
       – identified as in need of improvement under section 1116(c)(1); and
    2) other schools in need of improvement.
  o Each such team shall be composed of persons, including teachers, pupil services personnel, representatives of organizations knowledgeable about successful schoolwide projects or comprehensive school reform (especially distinguished educators described in paragraph (3)), and other persons who are knowledgeable about research and practice on teaching and learning, particularly about strategies for improving the educational opportunities for low-achieving students (including alternative and applied learning), such as representatives of institutions of higher education, regional educational laboratories or research centers, and outside consultant groups.

- o A school support team shall work cooperatively with each school and make recommendations as the school develops the school's schoolwide program plan or school improvement plan, review each plan, and make recommendations to the school and the local educational agency.
- o During the operation of the schoolwide program or during school improvement activities, a school support team shall—
    1) periodically review the progress of the school in enabling children in the school to meet the State's student performance standards under this part;
    2) identify problems in the design and operation of the instructional program; and
    3) make recommendations for improvement to the school and the local educational agency.
- DISTINGUISHED SCHOOLS. —
    - o Each State shall designate as a distinguished school any school served under this part which, for three consecutive years, has exceeded the State's definition of adequate progress as defined in section 1111(b)(2)(A)(i), and any school in which—
        1) virtually all students have met the State's advanced level of student performance; and
        2) equity in participation and achievement of students by sex has been achieved or significantly improved.
    - o Schools designated under this paragraph may serve as models and provide support to other schools, especially schoolwide programs and schools in school improvement, to assist such schools in meeting the State's student performance standards.
    - o States shall use funds reserved under section 1003(a) and funds made available under section 1002(f) to allow schools identified under this paragraph to carry out the activities described in subparagraph (B) and may use such funds to provide awards to such schools to further such school's education programs under this part, provide additional incentives for continued success, and reward individuals or groups in the school for exemplary performance.
    - o A local educational agency may also recognize the success of a distinguished school by providing additional institutional and individual rewards, such as greater decision-making authority at the school building level, increased access to resources or supplemental services such as summer programs that may be used to sustain or increase success, additional professional development opportunities, opportunities to participate in special projects, and individual financial bonuses.
- DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS. —
    - o In order to provide assistance to schools and local educational agencies identified as needing improvement and schools participating in schoolwide programs, each State, in consultation with local educational agencies and using funds reserved under section 1003(a) and made available under section 1002(f), shall establish a corps of distinguished educators.
    - o When possible, distinguished educators shall be chosen from schools served under this part that have been especially successful in enabling children to meet or make outstanding progress toward meeting the State's student performance standards, such as the schools described in paragraph (2).

- Distinguished educators shall provide, as part of the statewide system, intensive and sustained assistance to the schools and local educational agencies farthest from meeting the State's student performance standards and to schoolwide programs as such programs develop and implement their plans, including participation in the support teams described in paragraph (1).

D. IMPLEMENTATION. —In order to implement this section funds reserved under section 1003(a) and funds made available under section 1002(f) may be used by a State for release time for teachers and administrators, travel, training, and other related costs.

E. ALTERNATIVES. —The State may devise additional approaches to providing the assistance described in paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (c), such as providing assistance through institutions of higher education and educational service agencies or other local consortia, and the State may seek approval from the Secretary to use funds reserved under section 1003 and funds made available under section 1002(f) for such approaches as part of the State plan.

Appendix D: School Improvement in Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

SEC. 1003. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.

A. Use of Funds

95 percent of the funds are to make grants to local educational agencies on a formula or competitive basis, to serve schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities or, with the approval of the local educational agency, directly provide for these activities or arrange for their provision through other entities such as school support teams, educational service agencies, or nonprofit or for-profit external providers with expertise in using evidence-based strategies to improve student achievement, instruction, and schools. The State educational agency shall award each subgrant under subsection (b) for a period of not more than 4 years, which may include a planning year.

To receive an allotment under subsection (b)(1), a local educational agency shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such form, and including such information as the State educational agency may require. Each application shall include, at a minimum—

1. a description of how the local educational agency will carry out its responsibilities under section 1111(d) for schools receiving funds under this section, including how the local educational agency will—
2. develop comprehensive support and improvement plans under section 1111(d)(1) for schools receiving funds under this section;
3. support schools developing or implementing targeted support and improvement plans under section 1111(d)(2), if funds received under this section are used for such purpose;
4. monitor schools receiving funds under this section, including how the local educational agency will carry out its responsibilities under clauses (iv) and (v) of section 1111(d)(2)(B) if funds received under this section are used to support schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans;
5. use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with whom the local educational agency will partner;
6. align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with funds received under subsection (b)(1); and
7. as appropriate, modify practices and policies to provide operational flexibility that enables full and effective implementation of the plans described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d); and

B. Priority

The State educational agency, in allocating funds to local educational agencies under this section, shall give priority to local educational agencies that—

1. serve high numbers, or a high percentage of, elementary schools and secondary schools implementing plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d);
2. demonstrate the greatest need for such funds, as deter- mined by the State; and
3. demonstrate the strongest commitment to using funds under this section to enable the lowest-performing schools to improve student achievement and student outcomes.

C. Reporting

The State shall include in the report described in section 1111(h)(1) a list of all the local educational agencies and schools that received funds under this section, including the amount of funds each school received and the types of strategies implemented in each school with such funds.

[The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) was amended by inserting after section 1003 (20 U.S.C. 6303) the Sec. 1003A. DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES.]

SEC. 1003A. DIRECT STUDENT SERVICES.

A. Use of Funds

''(A) STATES. —Each State educational agency, after meaningful consultation with geographically diverse local educational agencies described in subparagraph (B), may reserve not more than 3 percent of the amount the State educational agency receives under subpart 2 of part A for each fiscal year to carry out this section.

''(B) CONSULTATION. —A State educational agency shall consult under subparagraph (A) with local educational agencies that include—

''(i) suburban, rural, and urban local educational agencies;

''(ii) local educational agencies serving a high percentage of schools identified by the State for com-prehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i); and

''(iii) local educational agencies serving a high percentage of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans under section 1111(d)(2).

''(2) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION. —Of the funds reserved under paragraph (1)(A), the State educational agency may use not more than 1 percent to administer the program described in this section.

''(b) AWARDS. —

''(1) IN GENERAL. —From the amount reserved under sub-section (a) by a State educational agency, the State educational agency shall award grants to geographically diverse local educational agencies described in subsection (a)(1)(B)(i).

''(2) PRIORITY. —In making such awards, the State educational agency shall prioritize awards to local educational agencies serving the highest percentage of schools, as compared to other local educational agencies in the State—

''(A) identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i); or

''(B) implementing targeted support and improvement plans under section 1111(d)(2).

''(c) LOCAL USE OF FUNDS. —A local educational agency receiving an award under this section—

''(1) may use not more than 1 percent of its award for outreach and communication to parents about available direct student services described in paragraph (3) in the local educational agency and State;

''(2) may use not more than 2 percent of its award for administrative costs related to such direct student services; ''(3) shall use the remainder of the award to pay the costs associated with one or more of the following direct student services—

''(A) enrollment and participation in academic courses not otherwise available at a student's school, including—

''(i) advanced courses; and

''(ii) career and technical education coursework that—

''(I) is aligned with the challenging State academic standards; and

''(II) leads to industry-recognized credentials that meet the quality criteria established by the State under section 123(a) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102);

''(B) credit recovery and academic acceleration courses that lead to a regular high school diploma;

''(C) activities that assist students in successfully completing postsecondary level instruction and examinations that are accepted for credit at institutions of higher education (including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses), which may include reimbursing low-income students to cover part or all of the costs of fees for such examinations;

''(D) components of a personalized learning approach, which may include high-quality academic tutoring; and

''(E) in the case of a local educational agency that does not reserve funds under section 1111(d)(1)(D)(v), transportation to allow a student enrolled in a school identified for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i) to transfer to another public school (which may include a charter school) that has not been identified by the State under such section; and

''(4) in paying the costs associated with the direct student services described in paragraph (3), shall—

''(A) first, pay such costs for students who are enrolled in schools identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i);

''(B) second, pay such costs for low-achieving students who are enrolled in schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans under section 1111(d)(2); and

''(C) with any remaining funds, pay such costs for other low-achieving students served by the local educational agency.

''(d) APPLICATION. —A local educational agency desiring to receive an award under subsection (b) shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time and in such manner as the State educational agency shall require. At a minimum, each application shall describe how the local educational agency will—

''(1) provide adequate outreach to ensure parents can exercise a meaningful choice of direct student services for their child's education;

''(2) ensure parents have adequate time and information to make a meaningful choice prior to enrolling their child in a direct student service;

''(3) in the case of a local educational agency offering public school choice under this section, ensure sufficient availability of seats in the public schools the local educational agency will make available for public school choice options;

''(4) prioritize services to students who are lowest-achieving;

''(5) select providers of direct student services, which may include one or more of—

''(A) the local educational agency or other local educational agencies;

''(B) community colleges or other institutions of higher education;

''(C) non-public entities;

''(D) community-based organizations; or

''(E) in the case of high-quality academic tutoring, a variety of providers of such tutoring that are selected and approved by the State and appear on the State's list of such providers required under subsection (e)(2);

''(6) monitor the provision of direct student services; and

''(7) publicly report the results of direct student service providers in improving relevant student outcomes in a manner that is accessible to parents.

''(e) PROVIDERS AND SCHOOLS. —A State educational agency that reserves an amount under subsection (a) shall—

''(1) ensure that each local educational agency that receives an award under this section and intends to provide public school choice under subsection (c)(3)(E) can provide a sufficient number of options to provide a meaningful choice for parents;

''(2) compile and maintain an updated list of State-approved high-quality academic tutoring providers that—

''(A) is developed using a fair negotiation and rigorous selection and approval process;

''(B) provides parents with meaningful choices;

''(C) offers a range of tutoring models, including online and on campus; and

''(D) includes only providers that—

''(i) have a demonstrated record of success in increasing students' academic achievement;

''(ii) comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws; and

''(iii) provide instruction and content that is secular, neutral, and non-ideological;

''(3) ensure that each local educational agency receiving an award is able to provide an adequate number of high-quality academic tutoring options to ensure parents have a meaningful choice of services;

''(4) develop and implement procedures for monitoring the quality of services provided by direct student service providers; and

''(5) establish and implement clear criteria describing the course of action for direct student service providers that are not successful in improving student academic outcomes, which, for a high-quality academic tutoring provider, may include a process to remove State approval under paragraph (2).''

Appendix E: Table of Results from CCSSO Study of State-Reported Supports (2015)

Table 1. State Supports Provided to Low-Performing Districts and Schools

	Priority		Focus		Other	
	District (*n* = 20)	School (*n* = 31)	District (*n* = 19)	School (*n* = 27)	District (*n* = 19)	School (*n* = 19)
A. OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES						
1. The SEA has policies to encourage innovative schools, programs, or practices	90%	81%	95%	81%	58%	84%
2. The SEA provides streamlined reporting or compliance requirements	60%	61%	47%	67%	37%	47%
3. The SEA prioritizes SEA services (i.e., priority over other school/district requests for additional SEA supports, e.g., SPED, ELL, data use, coaching)	50%	65%	53%	56%	42%	58%
4. The SEA provides access to additional funding streams (besides 1003a & 1003g)	45%	42%	47%	48%	32%	37%
5. The SEA requires public disclosure of school performance	90%	90%	100%	100%	79%	100%
6. The SEA provides recognition and rewards for school or district accomplishments & improvements	35%	61%	42%	67%	42%	58%
7. The SEA provides public status reports/updates as improvements are made	35%	42%	42%	44%	47%	47%
8. The SEA provides decreased reporting requirements	5%	23%	11%	22%	21%	21%
9. The SEA provides decreased monitoring requirements	10%	13%	11%	15%	21%	21%
B. SUPPORTS TO BUILD SYSTEMIC CAPACITY						
1. The SEA provides statewide data systems	65%	77%	68%	85%	63%	95%
2. The SEA provides web-based planning and implementation tools	85%	81%	84%	89%	74%	89%
3. The SEA created, or influenced the creation of, a pipeline for turnaround leaders	55%	42%	47%	37%	32%	32%

	Priority		Focus		Other	
4. The SEA created, or influenced the creation of, a pipeline for turnaround teachers	30%	23%	21%	22%	11%	11%

	Priority		Focus		Other	
	District (*n* = 20)	School (*n* = 31)	District (*n* = 19)	School (*n* = 27)	District (*n* = 19)	School (*n* = 19)
5. The SEA allows for alternate routes to certifications (for staff working in low-performing schools)	40%	42%	53%	44%	47%	53%
6. The SEA allows for flexibilities, waivers, or exemptions of state policies related to time (e.g., use of time, instructional time, etc.; this does not relate to an LEA's decision or requirement to extend the school day)	35%	39%	42%	37%	42%	47%
7. The SEA completes a preapproval process for external vendors, if applicable (i.e., Lead Turnaround Partners)	30%	29%	21%	19%	5%	16%
8. The SEA provides a template for MOU/contract between LEAs and external vendor, if applicable (i.e., Lead Turnaround Partners)	25%	23%	16%	11%	5%	11%
9. The SEA shares best or promising practices being implemented in state with SEA staff and contractors providing supports across schools and districts	75%	68%	79%	70%	58%	68%
C. SUPPORTS TO BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY						
1. The SEA completes an audit or assessment of strengths and weaknesses of both capacity and practice	60%	71%	53%	59%	37%	42%
2. The SEA provides specific trainings on rapid improvement/turnaround process, including strategies to implement	75%	71%	74%	63%	47%	58%
3. The SEA provides on-site support/coaching on rapid improvement/turnaround process and strategies	80%	77%	74%	59%	42%	53%
4. SEA-hired contractors provide on-site support/coaching on rapid improvement/turnaround process and strategies	60%	61%	47%	48%	42%	58%
5. SEA provides on-site leadership team support or coaching	65%	61%	53%	41%	47%	42%

| | 60% | 58% | 47% | 37% | 37% | 42% |

6. SEA-hired contractors provide on-site leadership team support or coaching	60%	58%	47%	37%	37%	42%

	Priority		Focus		Other	
	District (n = 20)	School (n = 31)	District (n = 19)	School (n = 27)	District (n = 19)	School (n = 19)
7. The SEA codifies and shares best or promising practices being implemented in state with other schools and districts across state	60%	68%	58%	59%	53%	68%
8. The SEA provides training on rapid improvement/turnaround to local school boards	35%	23%	26%	15%	26%	26%
9. The SEA provides community engagement or advocacy in communities	30%	29%	37%	26%	26%	32%
10. The SEA has ability to require entity to report to state board of education on progress	40%	29%	32%	26%	26%	26%
11. The SEA regularly requests entities to report to state board of education on progress	20%	19%	16%	19%	21%	21%
D. INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS						
1. The SEA has ability to complete a state takeover of entity	30%	39%	16%	15%	42%	37%
2. The SEA has ability to shift management of entity to an extraordinary authority district (i.e., Recovery School District, etc.)	20%	23%	16%	11%	32%	26%
3. The SEA allows use of external vendors (LTPs)	55%	65%	53%	52%	53%	63%
4. The SEA requires use of external vendors (LTPs)	25%	13%	11%	7%	21%	21%
5. The SEA has ability to close or dissolve entity	10%	10%	5%	4%	26%	26%
6. The SEA has ability to remove local school board members	15%	13%	16%	7%	26%	21%
7. The SEA has ability to remove a leader (school level = principal, district level = superintendent)	15%	13%	16%	11%	37%	37%
8. The SEA has ability to re-staff an entity	15%	10%	16%	11%	26%	32%

Table 2. SEA-Rated Leverage (Impact) of SEA-Provided Supports

	Leverage Score	Support
A. OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES		
High Leverage	2.52	The SEA prioritizes SEA services (i.e., priority over other schools' or districts' requests for additional SEA supports, like SPED, ELL, data use, coaching)
	2.38	The SEA requires public disclosure of school performance
Moderate Leverage	2.34	The SEA provides access to additional funding streams (besides 1003a & 1003g)
	2.18	The SEA provides streamlined reporting or compliance requirements
	2.13	The SEA has policies to encourage innovative schools, programs, or practices
	2.04	The SEA provides recognition and rewards for school or district accomplishments & improvements
	2.00	The SEA provides decreased reporting requirements
	2.00	The SEA provides public status reports/updates during/as improvements are made
B. SUPPORTS TO BUILD SYSTEMIC CAPACITY		
High Leverage	2.46	The SEA shares best or promising practices being implemented in state with SEA staff and contractors providing supports across schools and districts
Moderate Leverage	2.34	The SEA provides statewide data systems
	2.19	The SEA created, or influenced the creation of, a pipeline for turnaround leaders
	2.14	The SEA created, or influenced the creation of, a pipeline for turnaround teachers
	2.14	The SEA provides web-based planning and implementation tools
	2.05	The SEA allows for alternate routes to certifications (for staff working in low-performing schools)
Low Leverage	1.94	The SEA completes a preapproval process for external vendors, if applicable (i.e., Lead Turnaround Partners)
	1.94	The SEA provides a template for MOU/contract between LEAs and external vendor, if applicable (i.e., Lead Turnaround Partners)
	1.79	The SEA allows for flexibilities, waivers, or exemptions of state policies related to time (e.g., use of time, instructional time, etc.; this does not relate to an LEA's decision or requirement to extend the school day)
C. SUPPORTS TO BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY		
High Leverage	2.60	The SEA provides on-site support/coaching on rapid improvement/turnaround process and strategies
	2.54	SEA-hired contractors provide on-site support/coaching on rapid improvement /turnaround process and strategies
	2.50	SEA-hired contractors provide on-site leadership team support or coaching
	2.46	SEA provides on-site leadership team support or coaching
	2.42	The SEA provides specific trainings on rapid improvement/turnaround process, including strategies to implement
	2.40	The SEA completes an audit or assessment of strengths and weaknesses of both capacity and practice

Moderate Leverage	2.20	The SEA codifies and shares best or promising practices being implemented in state with other schools and districts across state
	2.13	The SEA provides training on rapid improvement/turnaround to local school boards
Low Leverage	1.95	The SEA provides community engagement or advocacy in communities
	1.94	The SEA regularly requests entities to report to state board of education on progress
	1.89	The SEA has ability to require entity to report to state board of education on progress
D. INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS		
Moderate Leverage	2.15	The SEA has ability to complete a state takeover of entity
	2.08	The SEA has ability to remove local school board members
	2.00	The SEA has ability to shift management of entity to an extraordinary authority district (i.e., Recovery School District, etc.)
Low Leverage	1.78	The SEA allows use of external vendors (LTPs)
	1.75	The SEA has the ability to close or dissolve the entity
	1.75	The SEA has ability to remove a leader (school level = principal, district level = superintendent)
	1.63	The SEA requires use of external vendors (LTPs)
	1.55	The SEA has ability to re-staff an entity

Appendix F: Excerpt from *Casting a Statewide Strategic Performance Net*
(Layland & Redding, 2017)

Interlaced Data and Responsive Supports

The pivot point for educational change is now firmly placed with the district, rebalancing the position of the state and the school relative to the local education agency (LEA). The state education agency (SEA) has been shifting its emphasis for decades, from a compliance-focused authority to a change agent equipped with systems, processes, training, and support to heighten the progress of the local district and its schools. A strategic approach to performance management fits neatly in this new organizational environment. Ideal for organizing people and their work in one entity (SEA, LEA, or school), strategic performance management is equally suited to a multi-organization system where interlaced data and responsive supports are critical. A state system of support is such a system.

Strategic Performance Management (SPM) . . . is a kind of performance management that flows from the organization's strategic mission and aims at its strategic goals and transforms the way people work within the organization. Applying SPM to a network of organizations can be equally transformative, but not in a "Big Brother," command-and-control sort of way. Quite to the contrary, a networked application of SPM sharpens each organization's unique direction, enhancing that organization's productivity in pursuing its own goals. Networked SPM, however, adds a multiplier effect to the potency of the whole. Interlaced data create rapid circuits of information that activate responsive supports. Sound mysterious? Read on.

Consider a statewide system of support for district and school improvement. Yes, it is an old concept and one we have never completely mastered in practice. But the concept presents a visual of a large array of organizations—state, districts, schools, service providers, community groups—in a constructive relationship to one another for the purpose of improving educational experiences for students. In reality, the system too often short-circuits, with too little data too tardily transmitted to act upon. Further, the information is variously structured, organization by organization, making meaningful aggregation impossible.

The principal nodes in a statewide network are the districts, with their schools functioning as satellite nodes. With SPM, each node claims its due share of autonomy, determining its organizational goals, strategies, performance measures, and actions. These core elements of SPM are structured in a way that implementation and performance data can flow between district and school and between both and the state, making possible responsive supports.

In a multi-organizational application of SPM, the state agency itself adheres to the same principles of continuous improvement as districts and schools. The SPM processes generate useful, timely data to guide decision-making and course correction within each organization and across them.

Performance management is "the systematic process by which an agency involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of agency mission and goals" (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, n.d., para. 1). Dean Nafziger (2013), director of the Building State Capacity and Productivity (BSCP) Center, contributes the term "strategic" to this

definition, calling performance management "a strategic approach to improvement in which the entire organization shares the same set of objectives" (p. 1).

In our technical assistance manual (Redding & Layland, 2015), we explain the strategic approach to performance management this way:

> *Strategic Performance Management (SPM) weds strategic planning with performance management in a living system that provides direction for people's work while allowing for innovation and course adjustment to produce better results more efficiently. SPM includes elements of strategic planning and connects them to performance measures, productivity considerations, and ongoing processes for gauging progress, improving practice, and exceeding expectations. (In press)*

We belabor the definitions to emphasize the fact that strategic performance management is not aimed at the evaluation of individual performance (for personnel or students) or for determining district or school status in an accountability system. SPM engages personnel, operating in units or teams, in work aimed at organizational milestones, strategies, and goals, all in carrying out the stated organizational mission. These teams develop their own action plans to achieve the milestones and conduct regular (usually monthly and quarterly) performance reviews to check progress and make adjustments in course. Performance measures for goals and strategies provide quantitative markers for annual progress.

The crux of the SPM approach is that performance can be strategically managed across many organizations at different levels of the system (state, district, school, for example) if their plans and operational procedures include common elements. Note that this system does not dictate the content of the work, for example the goals chosen, or the strategies employed. It is the structure of a process that results in routine flow of two kinds of data:

- Implementation data in the regular performance reviews of progress status for actions and milestones;
- Outcome data in the performance measures for strategies and goals.

This operational structure and data protocol establish high-quality performance management in each organization (state, district, school) and enable routine reporting of each organization's implementation and performance. Routine and consistent reporting makes possible precise targeting of supports and interventions, adjustment in course, innovation, and efficient allocation of resources. (pp. 3-4)