

ESEA Flexibility

Five Key Areas of Effectiveness Defined

Effective schools and districts perform well in each of five key areas, which closely align to the USED seven turnaround principles. Oregon's definitions of the five key areas, and corresponding turnaround principles, are provided below. Oregon educators consider it important that turnaround principle five (v) – using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data – be woven throughout all of the five key areas. Therefore, this turnaround principle is not listed separately.

1. Technical and Adaptive Leadership

Effective leaders have the technical skills needed to guide, direct, and motivate educators toward high student achievement -- using data to inform and drive improvement. Afforded the proper authority to make necessary decisions, they adapt their approach depending on context and build a collaborative and supportive environment that empowers others to broaden their skills and become more effective. High expectations are set, while productive and respectful relationships are built and maintained within the organization and with stakeholders. These leaders promote and engage in necessary mentoring, supporting other educators with continuous and constructive feedback, with the goal of creating a professional learning community that provides adequate time for improvement and implementation of changes to occur.

Turnaround principle (i) – providing strong leadership by: 1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; 2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the state education agency (SEA) that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and 3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget.

2. Educator Effectiveness

Effective educators exhibit five interconnected qualities. First, in their interactions with students, effective educators inspire students to become lifelong learners. They are culturally competent and create a caring environment where connections to family and community are evident. Next, it is imperative that educators manage the classroom in such a way as to prepare the learning environment and curriculum so students feel safe and respected, and are engaged and motivated to achieve. Third, with regard to style of instruction, effective educators have extensive knowledge of the content. They deliver that content through teaching methods that approach the curriculum with fidelity and make connections to other content areas. The content is enhanced with aspects of critical thinking and problem-solving that challenges students to reach beyond their personal expectations. Fourth, effective educators use multiple assessment measures reflecting student achievement of intended outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of

instruction and make appropriate adjustments. Last, effective educators focus on continuous improvement of practice. They reflect and collaborate with the leadership and with peers on strengths and weaknesses and use these data to make improvements as a result.

Turnaround principle (ii) – ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: 1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; 2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and 3) providing job-imbedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs.

3. Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching and learning is an interdependent compact between students, teachers, and academic content. Teachers guide and support students as they learn and apply content that is rigorous, relevant, aligned to standards, and differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners as data are gathered and analyzed. Multiple assessment measures provide needed data in support of learning. The content includes the concepts, reasoning processes, skills, and procedures that students are expected to learn and apply. A high quality instructional program is one that cohesively spans pre-kindergarten through transition to college, is aligned to college and career ready standards, contains developmentally appropriate rigor, and consists of evidence-based elements.

Turnaround principle (iv) – 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.

4. District and School Structure and Culture

For district and school structure and culture to be effective, a sustainable plan for school access and student opportunity is needed. Long-term goals for improvement are created. Periodic perception checks with students and staff, as well as the gathering of other data on overall school climate, are used to evaluate progress on goals and make adjustments as necessary. Scheduling is flexible and responsive to student's needs with expanded learning options throughout the year. The curriculum is academically rigorous, with high expectations of achievement for all. A respectful environment provides safety for those who work and learn there. When needed, student discipline is reinforced with support for positive behavior. Non-academic factors such as social, emotional, and health needs are addressed to the extent possible. Cultural awareness and an understanding of diversity among students, staff, and community is an integral part of the shared vision at both district and school levels.

Turnaround principle (iii) – redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration.

Turnaround principle (vi) – establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs.

5. Family and Community Involvement

Successful family involvement efforts bring families and educators together in a collaborative relationship supporting student achievement. Engagement is linked to learning, addresses community and cultural differences, supports student-family-teacher communication and developing a system of sharing power and decision-making. In addition, successful family involvement efforts address equity by ensuring that the school community is accessible and engaging for all parents and students throughout the student’s educational career. Districts ensure family engagement is infused in data collection, planning, and decision-making processes. Community partners working collaboratively with districts, schools, and families provide needed external supports that build relationships and capacities that enhance student academic achievement.

Turnaround principle (vii) – providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.