

Digging Into Transformation

Implementation of Federal School Improvement Grants in Oregon

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Nationally, the majority of schools receiving federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) chose the “transformation model.” But, how are schools implementing the 11 required activities? What successes and challenges do participants perceive? And, what do early achievement trends show? Using school improvement plan indicators and surveys from school coaches and principals, this study examined the transformation model in Oregon’s 17 SIG schools. Across the 17 schools, the study found:

1. District involvement helped with some activities

- Using technical assistance from the district (2 indicators, 96% fully implemented)
- Using flexibility provided by the districts (5 indicators, 91% fully implemented)
- Providing professional development (2 indicators, 87% fully implemented)

2. SIG activities related to staffing were implemented less fully

- Providing incentives, opportunities, and flexible conditions (3 indicators, 85% fully implemented)
- Identifying and rewarding positive performance (2 indicators, 84% fully implemented)
- Replacing the principal and improving leadership (4 indicators, 82% fully implemented)
- Creating a teacher and leader evaluation system and removing ineffective educators (5 indicators, 74% fully implemented)

3. Intensive programmatic changes may need more time

- Using data to plan instruction (2 indicators, 53% fully implemented)
- Engaging family and community (2 indicators, 50% fully implemented)
- Increasing learning time for students (3 indicators, 50% fully implemented)
- Aligning curriculum to standards and assessments (4 indicators, 47% fully implemented)

4. **Coaches and principal reported success with SIG, but they said they faced challenges implementing staff changes**
5. **Secondary SIG schools had rising proficiency rates** (+20 percentage points in math and +27 percentage points in reading)

Recommendation: Policy makers and education leaders should use positive perceptions of SIG to leverage fuller implementation and more rigorous evaluation.

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