The Going Gets Tough: State Capacity To Support Federal School Turnaround Principles

Caitlin Scott and Nora Ostler
AERA 2015
On September 23, 2011, who said:

“I am writing to offer you the opportunity to request flexibility.”
On September 23, 2011, Arne Duncan said:

“I am writing to offer you the opportunity to request flexibility.”
Federal turnaround policy

OUT
NCLB

IN
Turnaround principles
Federal turnaround policy

OUT–NCLB

• Identifying ALL schools below standards
• School choice for low-performing schools
• Other

IN–Turnaround principles
Federal turnaround policy

**OUT–NCLB**
- Identifying ALL schools below standards
- School choice for low-performing schools
- Other

**IN–Turnaround principles**
1. Provide strong leadership
2. Ensure teachers are effective
3. Extend learning time
4. Use an effective curriculum
5. Use data to inform instruction
6. Establish a safe environment
7. Engage parents & community
Research questions

- To what degree do state leaders report their state supports federal school turnaround principles?
- Do leaders’ reports differ from 2013 to 2014?
Data sources and methods

CST Annual State Survey
All 50 states, DC, American Samoa, BIE, Virgin Islands
Federal turnaround principles

1. Provide strong leadership
2. Ensure teachers are effective
3. Extend learning time
4. Use an effective curriculum
5. Use data to inform instruction
6. Establish a safe environment
7. Engage parents and community
Federal turnaround principles

1. Provide strong leadership
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7. Engage parents and community

16 survey questions
Stages of implementation (Fixsen)

**Exploration**
Assessing options

**Installation**
Planning and preparing

**Initial**
First year

**Full**
Second year or beyond
In what stage is your state in **assisting or monitoring** district implementation of the following “turnaround principles”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exploration (assessing options)</th>
<th>Installation (planning &amp; preparing)</th>
<th>Initial implementation (first year)</th>
<th>Full implementation (second year or longer)</th>
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<td>Providing principals operational flexibility</td>
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Leaders reporting full implementation in 2014

Evaluating teachers using data
- No Implementation: 16%
- Exploration: 8%
- Initial Implementation: 11%
- Full Implementation: 38%

Percentage point change in “full implementation” from 2013:
- Evaluating teachers using data: ↑ 16
- Providing professional development: ↓ 8
- Retaining effective teachers: ↓ 8

Providing professional development
- No Implementation: 8%
- Exploration: 8%
- Initial Implementation: 25%
- Full Implementation: 25%

Retaining effective teachers
- No Implementation: 8%
- Exploration: 8%
- Initial Implementation: 11%
- Full Implementation: 11%
Leaders reporting full implementation in 2014

- Replacing the principal: 26% (↓ 12)
- Evaluating principals using data: 19% (↓ 12)
- Operational flexibility: 15% (↓ 26)

Percentage point change in “full implementation” from 2013.
Leaders reporting full implementation in 2014

Percentage change in “full implementation” from 2013

- Using data: 36% (↓ 24)
- Aligning instruction and standards: 34% (↓ 10)
- Establishing safety and discipline: 32% (↓ 14)
- Collaborating on data: 31% (↓ 18)
- Strengthen instructional programs: 28% (↓ 18)
- Addressing non academics: 25% (↓ 10)
- Expanding teacher collaboration: 23% (↓ 14)
- Expanding learning time: 21% (↓ 16)
- Engaging family and community: 17% (↓ 20)

Legend:
- Red: No Implementation
- Gray: Exploration
- Brown: Installation
- Orange: Initial Implementation
- Green: Full Implementation
Did state capacity change?

Or, did leader *perceptions* of capacity change?
Proposed explanations

CST and
OST observation

OST observation
Proposed explanations

CST and OST observation

• 2013 survey conducted prior to monitoring
• 2014 survey conducted during monitoring
• So, perceptions changed due to monitoring

OST observation
Proposed explanations

CST and OST observation

• 2013 survey conducted prior to monitoring
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• So, perceptions changed due to monitoring

OST observation

The move to Common Core assessments and standards may make using data difficult
Significance

• 2014 was a tough year
• States need help supporting school turnaround
• Policymakers need to pay close attention to, and not overestimate, state capacity
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