

# School Turnaround and Leadership Development Act

*U.C.A. Title 53A, Chapter 1, Part 12, School Turnaround and Leadership Development Act*



Prepared by the  
Utah State Board of Education

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## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENT**

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U.C.A. Section [53A-1-1210](#) requires the State Board of Education (Board) to submit an annual report to the Education Interim Committee on or before November 30 of each year.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Schools are engaging in a series of actions that are fundamentally different than prior actions. These actions are predicated upon a thorough analysis of a school's performance that is conducted by a school turnaround expert. Working with the education consultant groups has helped schools in a number of ways, including providing schools with thinking partners who can help schools make sustainable change and providing professional development to principals enhance their leadership skills. The analyses conducted by school turnaround experts justified a need for parent engagement interventions. As a result, the first cohort of turnaround schools has begun engaging in evidence-based parent engagement interventions.

Although the first cohort of turnaround schools just recently completed their planning year, the majority are showing promising improvements. Seventeen schools that were designated in the first cohort moved out of the lowest performing 3% of schools statewide. The majority of the first cohort of turnaround schools (23 of 26) increased the percentage of points earned under school grading from school year 2014-15 to school year 2015-16.

## **IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

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In 2015, the Legislature enacted S.B. 235 Education Modifications, which created the School Turnaround and Leadership Development Act (the Act). The Act requires the Board to annually designate the lowest performing 3% of schools statewide according to the percentage of points possible under the state's School Grading Act. The Act also requires schools that have been designated to take certain actions over a three-year period to improve student performance. The first cohort of turnaround schools was designated in the fall of 2015, has completed their planning year, and is in their first implementation year. The majority of the first cohort of turnaround schools (23 of 26) increased the percentage of points earned under school grading from school year 2014-15 to school year 2015-16.

First Cohort of Turnaround Schools		
Elementary and Jr. High		
District	School	Percentage increase*
Alpine	Cedar Valley Elementary School	15%
Canyons	Midvale Elementary School	0%
Carbon	Mont Harmon Middle School	21%
Charter	CS Lewis Academy	14%
Charter	Dual Immersion Academy	8%
Charter	Entheos Academy (Magna Campus)	5%
Charter	Mana Academy	8%
Davis	Vae View Elementary	6%
Granite	Granger Elementary	8%
Granite	Lincoln Elementary	11%
Granite	Oquirrh Hills Elementary	3%
Granite	Redwood Elementary	2%
Granite	Roosevelt Elementary	5%
Granite	South Kearns Elementary	-13%
Granite	Thomas Jefferson Jr. High	7%
Granite	Thomas W. Bacchus Elementary	-1%
Granite	West Lake Jr. High	4%
Granite	Woodrow Wilson Elementary	4%
Kane	Big Water	14%

Ogden	Bonneville Elementary	15%
San Juan	Bluff Elementary	9%
San Juan	Tse'Bii' Nidzisgai Elementary	12%
High Schools		
Charter	Pioneer High School	14%
Charter	Utah Connections Academy	4%
San Juan	Monument Valley High	10%
San Juan	Whitehorse High	9%

\*Percentage increase in the percentage of points earned under school grading from school year 2014-15 to school year 2015-16.

The second cohort of turnaround schools was designated in the fall of 2016 and is beginning their planning year.

Second Cohort of Turnaround Schools	
Elementary and Jr. High	
Charter	Guadalupe School
Emery	Book Cliff Elementary School
Granite	Harry S. Truman Elementary School
Granite	Hillsdale Elementary School
Granite	Hunter Jr. High School
Granite	Jackling Elementary School
Granite	John F. Kennedy Jr. High School
Granite	Pioneer Elementary School
Salt Lake	Meadow Lark Elementary School
Salt Lake	M. Lynn Bennion Elementary School

Salt Lake	Riley Elementary School
Washington	Coral Cliffs Elementary School
Washington	Springdale Elementary School
High Schools	
Charter	East Hollywood High School
Charter	Paradigm High School
Charter	Utah Virtual Academy
Granite	Granger High School

Analyses conducted by school turnaround experts justified a need for parent engagement interventions. Additionally, school leaders reported lacking strong parent engagement in school appraisals. As a result, the first cohort of turnaround schools has begun engaging in evidence-based parent engagement interventions.

Eighteen of the 26 schools in the first cohort are implementing the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) model. The APTT model is a research and evidence-based framework that has transformed the way schools engage families in student learning by aligning grade level concepts, student performance data, and family-teacher communication and collaboration. This new and more successful approach to parent engagement is one where families and schools are intentionally and systematically interconnected to meet the monumental responsibility of educating children. Classroom teachers invite all families in for three 75-minute meetings held in the fall, winter and spring and one 30-minute individual session. During APTT meetings:

- teachers share student performance data that are actionable;
- review grade-level foundational skills; and
- demonstrate concrete activities that families can do at home to help students master the target concepts.

The families practice the activities with other families in the class, and each family sets 60-day academic goals for their student. Using this best practice is an improvement opportunity for our schools in turnaround.

Another evidence based practice schools are participating in is conducting home visits. A study conducted by Johns Hopkins University<sup>1</sup> in 2015 found:

- students whose families received a home visit had 24% fewer absences than similar students whose families did not receive a visit; and
- these same students were more likely to read at or above grade level compared to similar students who did not receive a home visit.

Currently, 23 out of 26 schools in the state are conducting home visits using the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project model. Under this model:

- Visits last 30 minutes and are voluntary for everyone (teachers and families).
- Educators are trained and compensated.
- Educators go out in pairs.
- All students (or a cross section) of students are visited (no negative targeting).
- Visits focus on shared vision and values for success of students.

As of November 2016, 770 teachers have been trained in the model and 1,180 visits in the state have been completed.

#### School Leadership Development Program

The Act also created the School Leadership Development Program, which provides leadership development training to increase the number of highly effective school leaders capable of initiating, supporting, and sustaining school improvement efforts. The Board selected, through a request for proposals process, the Utah Education Policy Center, the Center for School Turnaround and the West Comprehensive Center at WestEd to provide for the training, called

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<sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins University, *Parent Teacher Home Visits Make Significant Impact on Student Outcomes*, 2015.

Leadership and Inquiry for Turnaround (LIFT). Leadership trainings will begin November 4, 2016. Turnaround school principals are required to participate in leadership development training. This collaboration gives school leaders access to national expertise and resources as well as deeply contextualized knowledge of Utah schools and communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Although the state turnaround effort is in the early stages of implementation, school leaders have felt this model of school improvement gives them more extensive help leading to sustainable school improvement. Schools are narrowing their focus on creating strong curriculum and interventions and increasing parent engagement. Working with the education consultant groups has helped schools in a number of ways, including providing schools with thinking partners who can help schools make sustainable change and providing professional development to principals enhance their leadership skills.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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