Empowered Educators: A Design Guide for Texas Transformation Zones

Supporting Information for the Inaugural Texas Transformation Zones Grant Competition to Improve Persistently Low-Performing Schools

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A Design Guide for Texas Transformation Zones

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Introduction

With the introduction of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to reserve seven percent of Texas's Title I funds to turn-around struggling schools. As part of TEA's plan to do so, TEA will support districts through a new Transformation Zone grant competition. The purpose of the grant competition is to improve schools that underperform, namely, schools classified as "priority" or "focus" schools by TEA's definition. Educators leading and teaching in Transformation Zone schools supported by the grant will receive greater autonomy over school governance, budgeting, teacher management and support, academic program, and student culture, in exchange for accountability to achieve ambitious results.

TEA will award planning grants to districts that prove to have bold and compelling plans for improving student outcomes through the creation of Transformation Zones. This competition, along with the School Redesign Fund, replaces the old School Improvement Grant (SIG) competition and the Texas Title One Priority and Focus School (TTIPS) grant competition.

Unlike the SIG or TTIPS competitions, this competition does not prescribe specific turnaround "models." Instead, schools will utilize new governance structures to increase autonomy that will enable innovative school-based strategies that will improve student outcomes, but they will be judged, in part, on the school's willingness to make *significant* departures from current practices and *simultaneously* tackle the biggest barriers to student achievement. New governance structures coupled with bold strategies that tackle specific shortcomings in school performance have potential to send schools on upward trajectories.

The then-acting Superintendent of Denver Public Schools said of the Luminary Learning Network, Denver's first Innovation Zone (structured similarly to the Texas Transformation Zone described here), "If you want something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done."[1]

The Texas Transformation Zone planning grant competition will launched on October 2, 2017. Applications are due November 30, 2017[2].

[1] http://www.llndenver.org/news/state-approves-joining-four-schools-first-dps-innovation-zone
[2] More details about the program are available on the TEA website (https://tea.texas.gov/DSSI/).

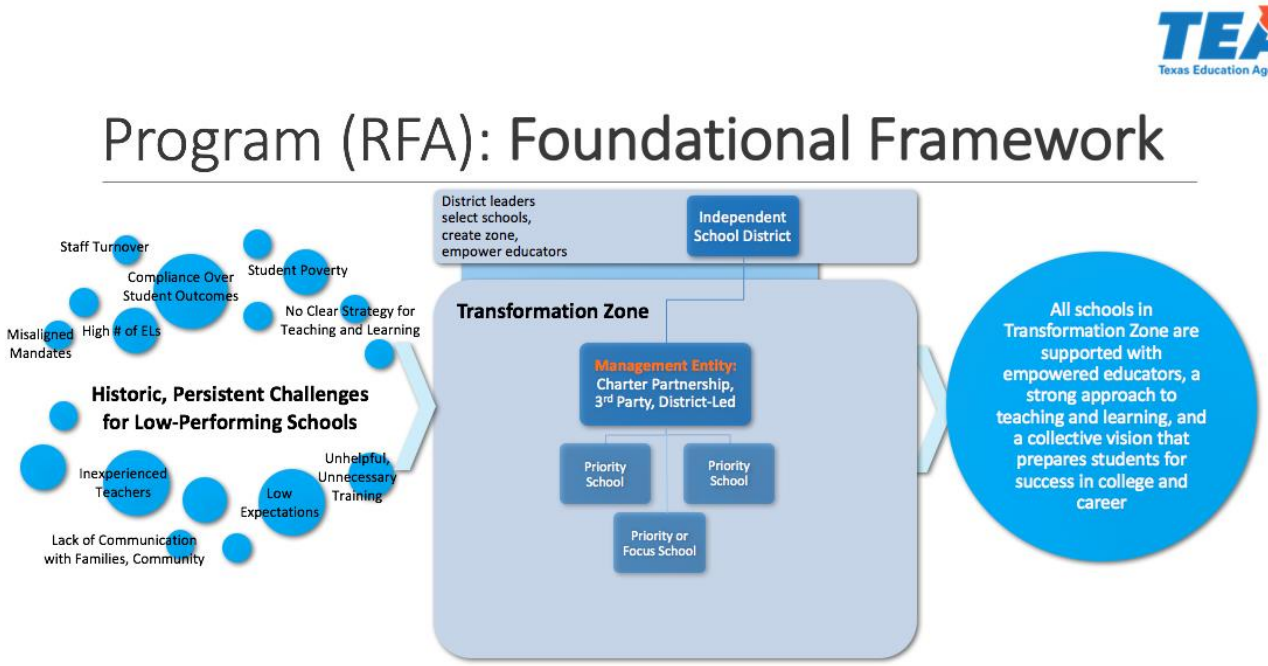
Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this document is to guide applicants to the Transformation Zone program by synthesizing information on existing innovative turnaround designs around the country in hope that the content will be useful to Texas's district leaders. School and district leaders can use this document to guide the creation of a Transformation Zone plan that addresses a school's most critical needs.

Transformation Zones Overview

A Transformation Zone is a group of Transformation Zone schools that have historically experienced a range of challenges that have resulted in low student achievement. These challenges include high teacher turnover, significant student poverty, unclear curriculum, and poor communication with families. Schools within Transformation Zones are selected by district leaders, and then a management entity provides significant autonomy to educators at the school-level. These principals, teachers, and other staff members are empowered with a set of flexibilities related to talent and academic program—developing and implementing a strong approach to teaching and learning, that ultimately prepares students for success in college and career. See Figure 1 below for the foundational framework for Transformation Zones.

Figure 1: Transformation Zone Foundational Framework



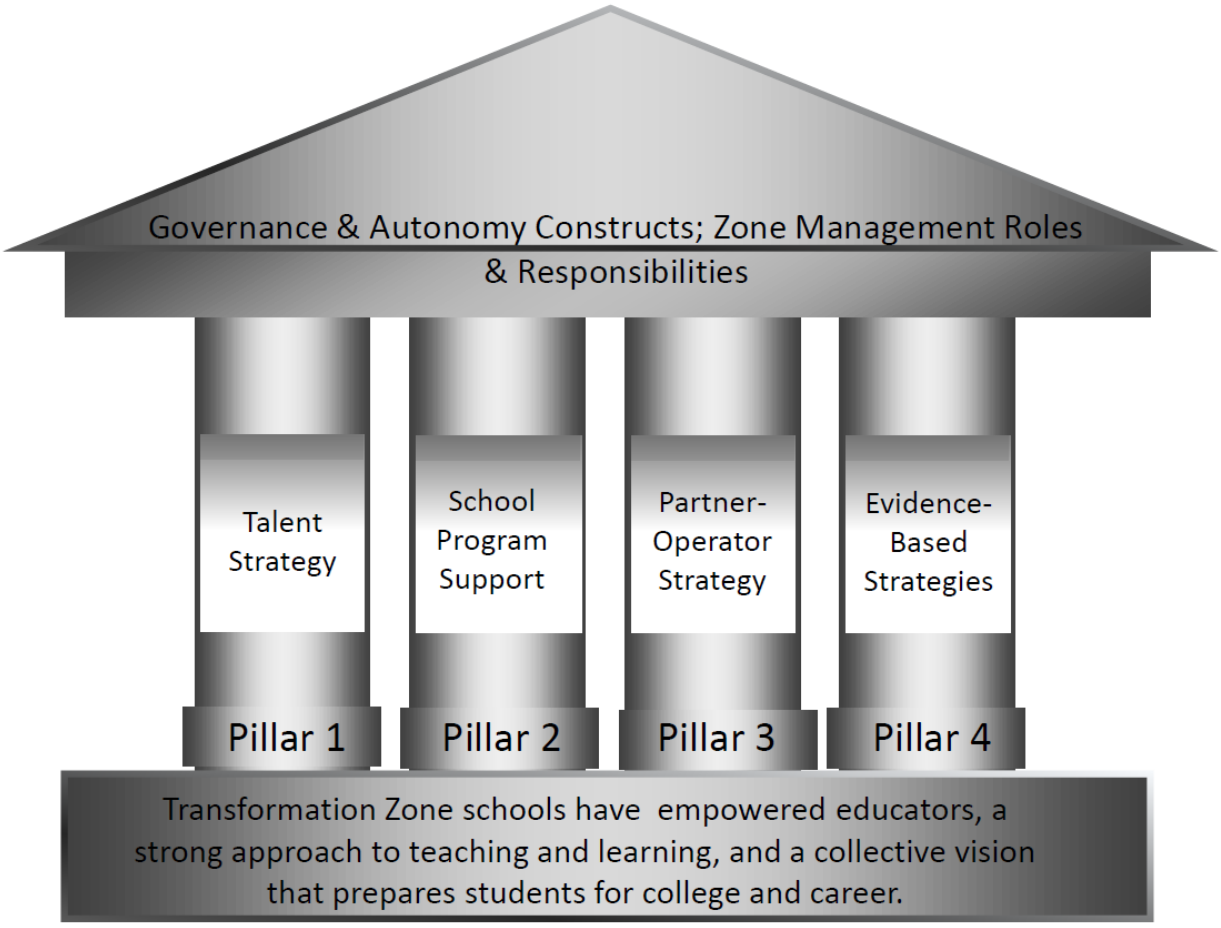
The concept of a Transformation Zone school is not unrelated to the concept of a turnaround school. However, "turnaround schools" too often implement *modest* governance and management changes for *modest* improvements in student achievement at a single campus. Transformation Zone schools are clusters of schools with educators that are fully empowered to make decisions about staffing, curriculum, schedule, and their budgets, and held accountable for their results. Leaders of

Transformation Zones and schools within them think BIG; they aim to perform in the *highest* percentiles while building 21st century skills and preparing students for success in college and career. There are six primary components to a Transformation Zone strategy:

1. Governance and Autonomy Constructs;
2. Roles and Responsibilities for Transformation Zone Management;
3. Talent Strategy;
4. School Program Support;
5. Partner-Operator Strategy; and,
6. Evidence-Based Practices.

Building a Transformation Zone is like building a house. The governance (#1) and management structure (#2) are the roof and shingles, respectively, while Talent Strategy (#3), School-Program Support (#4), Partner-Operator Strategy (#5), and Evidence-Based Strategies (#6) are the pillars. Alone none of the components provide shelter. However, when all six are crafted in tandem, they fit together seamlessly to allow the building to stand-alone. In other words, utilizing the new flexibilities and autonomies provided by alternative governance structures, Transformation Zone schools are able to implement meaningful interventions to create a high-achieving, performance-based culture that gets results for students who need it most.

Figure 2: Building the House



Indeed, a key feature of Transformation Zone schools is that they utilize innovative governance constructs to increase school-level autonomy. Once autonomy is achieved, Transformation Zone schools can innovate in new ways. Whichever the governance structure, Transformation Zone schools should have full autonomy over the majority of school-based decisions, practices, and policies. In turn, this puts the onus for student outcomes on the individuals and partners leading the Transformation Zone.

Next, new governance and management features (roofing options) are reviewed. Promising strategies within the four pillars are discussed after.

Examples of Governance Structures and Partnership Features in Texas

Texas state law permits several different types of innovative government structures, many of which can be used in combination and modified to suit the needs of the Transformation Zone schools. Whatever the legal structure selected, strong Transformation Zone governance models include **full autonomy for schools** over decisions related to staff, budget, time, etc.; **decision making that is independent** from the district; is **durable and build to last** to allow multiple years of improvement; and is **accountable** for

performance relative **to ambitious outcome goals**. Table 1 outlines governance features that are currently available or utilized by exemplar Transformation Zones[3].

Table 1 Governance Structures

Governance Structure	Description	Advantages and Disadvantages	Legal Authority
Turnaround Partnership under Senate Bill 1882	The district's board of trustees contracts with an eligible entity (non-profit, governmental entity, university) or open-enrollment charter holder.	This specific type of partnership allows the Transformation Zone to opt for whichever funding formula is most advantageous (district or charter) and permits a 2-year accountability waiver. However, the accountability waiver does not apply to the grant's performance requirements (nor the CSP-SEA Start-Up funds requirements should a district choose to apply).	Senate Bill 1882
Third Party Led Partnership	The district's board of trustees contracts with a new or existing entity to run all or part of a school or group of Transformation Zone schools. The contract could be whole-school or for specific services like "Road to College" or reading.	This could be a group of high-performing individuals with a record of results, current district leaders who create a non-profit organization. (Note: New organizations must apply for a charter to enjoy full or partial charter school autonomies, unless the district opts for District of Innovation status.) It is unclear whether new charter holders or new non-profits will be eligible for TRS.	Chapter 12, Texas Education Code, Section 12.0521 (if new campus or program); 12.0522 if existing campus
District/ Charter Partnership	The district board contracts with an existing charter school operator to run all or part of the Transformation Zone schools. The contract could be whole-school or for specific services like "Road to College" or reading. This is a subcategory of a Third-Party Led Partnership.	The district can select and negotiate with a charter-operator with a record of results for improving student outcomes. Historically, cultural rifts have limited the success of these partnerships; both entities must abandon the culture of competition that infiltrates and is stereotypical of these partnerships. The charter operator must hold a campus charter under Subchapter C, Chapter 12, Texas Education Code (even if it already holds a state charter) in order to have the benefit of charter flexibilities	Chapter 12, Texas Education Code, Section 12.0521 (if new campus or program); 12.0522 if existing campus

[3] Transformation Zone Advisors are available to answer questions about governance structures.

Governance Structure	Description	Advantages and Disadvantages	Legal Authority
		while serving district students or the district must opt for District of Innovation Status.	
Independent Zone Governing Board	The school(s)/district establish an independent governing board that has decision-making authority over the Transformation Zone school(s). The contract with the campus board is up for renewal on a periodic basis. Renewal is based school performance.	This arrangement grants full autonomy to the independent board through a contractual agreement with the district's board of trustees. In cases where state or federal requirements are violated or the district's fiduciary obligations are at-risk, the board of trustees is responsible and can step in to resolve the issue. Performance contracts must be extremely explicit.	General Authority of Board of Trustees
District of Innovation Status (DOI)	A super-majority of the district board opts-into "District of Innovation" status. Depending on the terms of the board's approval, the whole district or zone within the district may have the same flexibilities or a subset of those available to charter schools.	This gives charter school flexibilities without contracting a charter operator or 3rd party to run the school; it may also extend charter school flexibilities beyond the grant-eligible schools. Requires near-unanimous approval of the board. A district will need to authorize the school as a campus charter school in combination with DOI status in order to be eligible for funding under the federal CSP grant.	Ch. 11A, Texas Education Code If charter structure also used: Chapter 12, Texas Education Code, Section 12.0521 (if new campus or program); 12.0522 if existing campus
Local Exemption Schools	The district exempts schools in the Transformation Zone from local policy (to the extent permitted by state law).	This allows the district to grant full autonomy to schools provided the district exempts schools around policies regarding staffing, budget, etc. Local Exemption Schools that do not provide for Zone independence can be revoked at any time by the district.	N/A

By incorporating one or more of the governance features above, Texas Transformation Zones are generally organized as one of three types. All three structures prioritize school-level autonomy and accountability, and in each category the outcomes for students in Transformation Zone schools are counted as part of the district's outcomes. There may be other variations of these structures possible, as well, but any governance strategy must promote school-level autonomy paired with meaningful accountability for performance.

The three categories are:

A **District-Led Transformation Zone** is one in which the district grants as much autonomy as it is willing to grant, within the limits of its ability to do so under state law, to the Transformation Zone. The district may undergo a reorganization through which it sets up an internal management structure for the new Zone, and may contract with partners to help in the execution of turnaround efforts, but there is no independent, contracted third-party entity with operational and managerial control over the schools in the Zone.

A **District Partnership Transformation Zone** is one in which the district enters a contractual agreement with a third-party organization (e.g., another governmental entity, a charter management organization, or a non-profit). The third-party organization is delegated managerial and operational control of the schools within the Zone and is accountable to the district for the performance of schools within the Zone.

In this arrangement, the district remains an important partner and receives regular updates on Zone progress. The contract ensures the independent organization has the guarantee of sustainable and predictable autonomy for the term of the agreement, while preserving the right of the district to intervene and change course if material violations of state or federal law are evident in Zone schools.

The amount of autonomy a district can grant schools may be limited in a direct contractual arrangement like this one, but the addition of independent governance makes this structure a more robust and innovative option than a District-Led Transformation Zone.

An **Autonomous Transformation Zone** also features independent, third-party governance of the schools within the Zone. This delegation of operational and managerial control over Zone schools is joined with another, state-sanctioned avenue for school autonomy, however, further enshrining the schools' autonomy as long as they are performing.

Schools in an Autonomous Transformation Zone may be empowered, for example, under Senate Bill 1882 or through a formal District/Charter Partnership. While the organization contracted to manage the Zone would still provide regular updates to the district and would still be accountable to the district, the enabling framework beyond simply a district-third party contract would likely give the Zone access to broader autonomies. There may be other benefits to this arrangement, such as access to increased funding and an accountability grace period under Senate Bill 1882.

This pathway provides the most robust access to school autonomy while preserving the accountability of the Transformation Zone to the local district and the state.

Promising Strategies within the Four Pillars

Promising tactics, strategies, and tools that districts might consider when planning a Transformation Zone are outlined below. The appropriateness of the strategies mentioned below will depend on the gaps that need to be filled in each school setting. The list is *not* exhaustive and innovative strategies are *not* "one size fits all". One key feature of Transformation Zones is that there is autonomy to select the

strategies that will yield the biggest gains for students. Thus, districts may choose to pursue strategies not mentioned here.

Talent Strategy

Creating the appropriate governance structure and implied autonomies is necessary, but alone insufficient to significantly improve student outcomes. Transformation Zones must use this autonomy to improve teaching and learning in two ways: First, they should provide a significant infusion of teachers who are better prepared to succeed in low-performing schools. They could accomplish this by providing financial incentives for well-prepared teachers or by recruiting from teacher residencies or other teacher preparation programs. Second, zones should focus attention on teachers' daily work with students to improve teaching and learning. Whatever approach a zone pursues to improve teaching and learning, the zone leadership should ensure that the approach provides ongoing instructional supports and professional learning opportunities for teachers.

- **Innovate within the human capital pipeline through strategic hiring and professional learning**[4]. Ensure leaders have full autonomy over school staffing. Offer incentives to effective teachers and leaders to move to low-achieving schools. Ensure all teachers and leaders alike have individualized professional development plans that are tailored to each employee's needs. As an example, the *Teacher Excellence Initiative* in Dallas provides the opportunity to align teacher compensation with student learning and growth through a robust development, support, and evaluation system. Similarly, in the Springfield Empowerment Zone in Massachusetts, part of the talent strategy is to create a "teacher career pathway" and to improve teacher recruiting through a partnership with TNTP[5].
- **Pick leadership characteristics based on the specific needs of a school.** Early-on in designing a Transformation Zone, a diagnostic should be conducted to determine where school is falling short. The needs assessment or diagnostic should address all facets of the school environment that may adversely affect student outcomes. For an example diagnostic, visit the Center for School Turnaround's "Diagnostic Review Rubric" [6].
- **Allow teachers who don't believe in the model to "opt-out".** Consider establishing a non-punitive route for teachers to "opt-out" of the Transformation Zone if they are unwilling to put in the extra effort or do not believe in leadership's vision for improvement
- **Provide opportunities for educators to collaborate and share effective instructional practices based on data.** Develop pipelines of effective instructional leaders and pathways for those leaders to progress in their careers, in part, by mentoring less-experienced or ineffective

[4] Schools that made effort to build human capital in years 1 and 2 of school transformation under the SIG grant were more likely to improve their organizational capacity (or sustain their already higher capacity). More information on outcomes of SIG programs can be found here: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20164002/index.asp.
[5] **http://springfieldempowerment.org/**

[6] http://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CO.Turnaround.NetworkSchool.Conditions.pdf

leaders. Create a "train the trainer" culture where struggling teachers are empowered to seek the advice and support of highly effective teachers and leaders.

School Program Support

Districts may determine that the desired capacity to support improvement may be beyond the current areas of expertise within the district. As such, a zone may seek to match schools with external partners, or partner schools with high-quality charter management organizations that have a track-record of success in turning around low-performing schools.

- **Partner with external organizations to aid innovation in school programs.** Partner organizations bring expertise in specific sub-areas of school program such as curricula, professional development, college readiness, health and wellness, and community and parent engagement. For example, Phalen Leadership Academies in the Innovation Network in Indianapolis have a partnership with the Mind Trust to implement project RESTORE and bring talented leaders to the turnaround schools[7].
- **Partner with an organization with a history of turning around low-performing schools.** Some organizations are specialists in turning around low-performing schools. Consider partnering with an organization with a record of results in solving similar problems and serving a similar student demographic. The Mastery Charter School network serving students and families in Philadelphia and Camden is an example of an organization with this expertise and record of results.

Partner-Operator Strategy

All school districts interested in creating a Transformation Zone will work with a Zone Design Partner to help design the Partner-Operator Strategy. The following bullets are examples of what school districts will work on with the Zone Design Partner:

- **Set ambitious short and long-term goals.** The goal of the Transformation Zone is not to improve student achievement by two or even five percentage points; it is to catapult student learning into the upper echelons of all schools in the state over time. Set quarterly and yearly goals with this long-run vision of making demonstrable improvement in student achievement in mind.
- **Create conditions for empowerment of school improvement.** A large part of ensuring the teachers in Transformation Zones are empowered and able to implement change is to remove barriers and increase autonomies through new governance structures. However, schools might also enlist teachers to share their experiences, opinions, and feedback to help iterate and refine the innovation strategies. Creating conditions for empowerment can also mean that resources are set aside to ensure the school can respond to specific wants or needs when they arise.

[7] To read more about Project RESTORE and Phalen Leadership Acadamies, see: http://www.phalenacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/Fixing-Failing-Schools-1.pdf and http://www.phalenacademies.org/

- **Streamline resources.** A Transformation Zone school should be united by a central vision for the future, and resources should be aligned toward that vision[8]. Streamlining resources will ensure that strategies proposed under the Transformation Zone do not conflict with strategies proposed elsewhere. Strategic alignment of resources can also increase collaboration and decrease isolation of personnel. For example, districts might consider leveraging Title I, Title II, or Title III funds to supplement innovative strategies.
- **Consider phased interventions**. What works in the first year of turnaround may not work in the fourth year of turnaround; constantly assess what is needed and adjust your strategy. For example, in the second phase of school turnaround, districts (or the zone board, as applicable) may consider aligning elementary, middle, and high school programs such that students experience continuous, high-quality instruction.
- **Create a sustainable, scalable program**. Both in the public and private sectors, establishing a return on investment is an important consideration when allocating scarce resources. Commit to continuing effective reforms beyond the grant period by evaluating their successes relative to the status quo, ending ineffective practices. Consider low-cost interventions like alumni-tutoring, a volunteer workforce, or integrating programs from non-profits with their own funding sources.

Evidence-Based Strategies

Zones should ideally seek to employ evidence-based practices when appropriate. When evidence-based practices are not available or applicable, districts might identify a process of continuous improvement by the regular use of formative and summative data to support ongoing improvement.

- **Focus on instructional quality through data analysis and progress tracking**. This could be as simple as a teacher tracking daily exit slips to ensure students mastered daily learning objectives, and re-teaching students who failed to demonstrate mastery. Hiring a data-analyst to analyze interim assessment results to determine which teachers need additional professional development and which students need extra support may be another strategy for using data to improve instructional quality. Integrating data-driven practices into school culture lends itself to developing individualized learning plans for students (and individualized professional development plans for teachers).

- **Provide additional learning time through extended day or year models**, and make use of the extra time by implementing effective teaching strategies and curricula designed to engage students[9]. Extending the school day or year in and of itself will not change student outcomes. But increasing the number of *high-quality instructional hours* can directly impact student achievement. Schools may choose to elongate the regular school day, or create after school, Saturday, or summer school programs. Creating a program that complements the regular school day program, employs qualified staff, receives adequate and sustainable funding, and

[8] http://chiefsforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/School-Improvement-Strategies-Under-ESSA.pdf
[9] http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/mf_PB04_ExtendedLearning.pdf

evaluates its successes and improves upon shortcomings has potential to improve student achievement.

Lastly, selecting "best-fit" strategies does not guarantee that the strategies will lead to improved student outcomes; a district *must* also focus on high-quality implementation. Think of effective implementation as the walls of the house; walls shield from inclement weather and protect the investment. The roof and the pillars must fit together to create a stable, stand-alone house before the walls are installed.

Existing Transformation Zones

Table 3 below outlines the basic features of three well-known, innovative turnaround programs, much like the programs that are possible under the Texas Transformation Zone planning grant competition.

Table 2 Existing Innovation Zones- Three Examples

Existing Transformation Zone	Memphis iZone	Academy of Urban School Leadership	Renaissance Schools
Location	Shelby County, TN	Chicago, IL	Camden, NJ
Number of Schools	23 schools	Grew from 1 to 31; now serves 17,000 students	5 Mastery Sites; 4 KIPP Sites; 1 Uncommon School
Governance and autonomy constructs; Roles and Responsibilities for Transformation Zone Management	In-district partnership serving priority schools with maximum autonomy over financial, programmatic, and staffing decisions while reporting to the regular school board	Third party partnership; independent non-profit with guaranteed autonomies under 5-year performance agreements with the district	Third party partnership with existing charter operators KIPP, Uncommon, and Mastery; Approved in 2012 under the Urban Hope Act
Talent strategy; School support organizations; Partner-operator strategy; Evidence-based strategies	Teacher signing and retention bonuses; Extra hour in the school day, and additional specialists for literacy, math and behavior;	Urban Teacher Residency Program; Principal and staff replacement; comprehensive coaching; content coordination; buy-in from parents and community members; feeder program; positive culture around core values; data-driven instruction	Varies by charter-operator

Existing Transformation Zone	Memphis iZone	Academy of Urban School Leadership	Renaissance Schools
Results to Date	Promising: iZone schools grew achievement 6 percentage points per year, three times the rate of non-priority schools	Positive: two-thirds of schools moved from lowest rating to Level 1 and Level 1+; between 2013-2016, the percentage of students reading and doing math at or above grade level grew from 29% to 44% and 30% to 43%, respectively	Overall positive
Homepage	http://www.scsk12.org/izone/	http://auslchicago.org/	http://www.nj.gov/education/renaissance/ar/camden/16/

How to Design a Transformation Zone[10]

This guide is meant to help school and district leaders design Transformation Zones. Ideally, all school districts with low achieving schools would take the following step-by-step actions.

- **Step 1: Identify the challenges that hold back the lowest performing schools from success.**
- **Step 2: Envision what educators would do with additional autonomy.**
- **Step 3: Identify a TEA-approved Transformation Zone Design Partner that can support the planning grant.**
- **Step 4: Apply the Transformation Zone design principles described in this guide to provide autonomies to educators.**
- **Step 5: Work with the design partner to write the planning application.**

Guiding Questions and Key Considerations

The following questions are designed to help districts through the step-by-step process; they are guiding questions, and there is no single "right" answer. By the time the grant is submitted, the hope is that each applicant is able to provide comprehensive and convincing answers to each of these questions.

[10] The strategies mentioned here are adapted from http://chiefsforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/School-Improvement-Strategies-Under-ESSA.pdf (pages 4-5) and a forthcoming publication by the Bridgespan Group titled, *"A New Wave of District Innovation Zones: A Promising Means of Increasing Rates of Social Mobility"* by Nithin Iyengar, Kate Lewis-LaMonica, and Mike Perigo. The paper will be available at www.bridgespan.org.

1. *Where can I learn more about Zone efforts around the country?*

Please see the list of Additional Resources at the end of this document. Also consider asking a Transformation Zone Advisor, who is well-versed in Transformation Zone efforts around the country.

2. *Why should I consider/how can I select a Zone Design partner?*

TEA has finalized a list of approved Transformation Zone Design Partners to help applicants with their Partner-Operator strategy. A list of approved advisors is available on the Transformation Zone website.

3. *How should I set goals for a zone?*

The objective of a Transformation Zone is to fundamentally change the level at which students are achieving, catapulting them into the upper echelons of performance. Also remember that change happens slowly. Think long-term about creating a high-performance culture. Do not expect these changes to be a "quick fix" for student achievement. Seek long-term, sustained student achievement gains.

4. *How can we ensure effective governance of the zone and autonomy for the schools?*

Questions the district might consider answering to ensure effective governance of the zone and autonomy for the schools are: How will schools ensure autonomies for the schools? What is the relationship of the zone/zone schools to rest of district? Consider that schools in Transformation Zones need protection from interference in decision-making. Also consider that schools in Transformation Zones need an unbiased and objective board to report to that supports the Transformation Zone concept.

5. *What are the key considerations in the zone strategy?*

Questions the district might consider answering to ensure effective zone strategy are: How will you ensure high quality talent is working in the zone schools? Which external school support partners make the most sense to support schools in the zone? How could we turn over management of some schools to partner operators? What evidence based strategies should be considered?

6. *How should the zone schools be managed/supported/overseen?*

Should the zone management team provide support or accountability or both? Should the zone management team be internal, external, or some mix? Consider that all three are possible.

7. *Which schools should be selected for the zone?*

The purpose of the grant program is to turnaround chronically low-performing schools. However, consider that schools performing at any level may benefit from additional autonomies and innovation. In fact, having schools that are not "turnaround" status in the innovation zone may provide useful opportunities for collaboration and comparison.

8. How can I select/develop a diagnostic review of each school in the zone?

The needs assessment or diagnostic should address all facets of the school environment that may adversely affect student outcomes. However, also consider that an existing diagnostic can be adapted or modified to a specific context depending on the district's needs. For an example diagnostic, visit the Center for School Turnaround's "Diagnostic Review Rubric" [11].

9. What should I consider in aligning existing LEA resources to schools in the zone?

A Transformation Zone school should be united by a central vision for the future, and resources should be aligned toward that vision[12]. Streamlining resources will ensure that strategies proposed under the Transformation Zone do not conflict with strategies proposed elsewhere. Strategic alignment of resources can also increase collaboration and decrease isolation of personnel. For example, districts might consider leveraging Title I, Title II, or Title III funds to supplement innovative strategies. A district might also consider speaking with philanthropic donors about the possibility of contributing to the turnaround efforts.

10. How should we communicate about the zone to students, teachers, parents, and the community?

It's never too early to gain buy-in from stakeholders on innovation school strategies. It is a best practice to gain support from teachers, students, and parents for the short and long-run vision for school improvement. When a policy change takes away a benefit or tradition it is likely to generate conflict and be the subject of negotiation[13]. The likely advantages and disadvantages of any particular solution must be discussed and evaluated when deciding upon a turnaround solution.

[11] http://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CO.Turnaround.NetworkSchool.Conditions.pdf

[12] http://chiefsforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/School-Improvement-Strategies-Under-ESSA.pdf

[13] https://crpe.org/sites/default/files/crpe-city-firsts.pdf

The authors would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of Nithin Iyengar and Mike Perigo of the Bridgespan Group, as well as Brett Alessi of Empower Schools for supporting the development of this guide. A number of the design features and examples of districts across the country are informed by a forthcoming Bridgespan publication titled, "A New Wave of District Innovation Zones: A Promising Means of Increasing Rates of Social Mobility". Once released, the paper can be found at www.bridgespan.org. The authors would also like to thank Christi Martin of Martin Policy, LLC for her expert knowledge on Texas state policy as it pertains to innovation school governance mechanisms.

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Additional Resources

1. **http://chiefsforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/School-Improvement-Strategies-Under-ESSA.pdf**
2. **https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2016/05/02/izone-chief-sharon-griffin-on-fixing-memphis-most-challenging-schools/**
3. **http://tsdmemphis.com/news/2017/jul/24/tennessees-turnaround-district-gets-new-leadership/?page=2**
4. **http://progressivepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/District-Innovation-Funders_First-Draft-4-28-17.pdf**
5. **http://crpe.org/sites/default/files/crpe-city-firsts.pdf**
6. **http://www.progressivepolicy.org/issues/education/springfield-empowerment-zone-partnership/**
7. **http://apluscolorado.org/blog/the-power-of-a-network/?utm_source=1%2F2017+Rambles&utm_campaign=1%2F2017+rambles&utm_medium=email**
8. **http://www.educationcities.org/wp-content/uploads/Governance-Reform-Paper-1.pdf**