

Name of the Organization	Empower Schools
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About the Organization	Empower Schools is a nonprofit organization with a track record of designing and supporting Zones that accelerate success for students. Empower Schools believes schools and communities thrive when great educators are empowered to run schools and are simultaneously supported and held accountable for student results.
Approach to Designing Transformation Zones	Empower Schools has developed expertise in supporting districts to create Empowerment Zones - clusters of autonomous and accountable schools under a shared governance model that provides educators the flexibility to design, implement and continuously improve school programs to best meet student need. The Zone model is flexible and designed to enhance existing district priorities; schools could be led by existing educator teams, include redesign or restart efforts led by newly recruited teams, or include partnerships with proven school operators. Empower Schools helps communities set up the Zone structure, contracts, and strategy, recruit the Zone staff, attract best-fit partner organizations, and sustain a continuously improving Zone.
Transformation Zone Experience(s)	<p>As the design and launch partner for Lawrence Public Schools, Empower played a key role in Massachusetts’ most successful district-wide turnaround. Since 2012, Lawrence has increased their percentage of students in Level 1 schools from 8% to 42%, passing over 100 Massachusetts districts. A 2016 National Bureau of Economic Research study (Scheuler, Goodman, and Deming) concluded that Lawrence “undoubtedly provides an encouraging proof point that the improvement of chronically underperforming districts serving primarily low-income and ESL students is indeed possible”. Empower captured the enabling conditions of the successful Lawrence turnaround in a “Zone” framework in order to apply it in other settings.</p> <p>Springfield, MA: Empower Schools served as the design, launch, and initial implementation partner for the groundbreaking Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership (SEZP). SEZP was created to transform nine underperforming schools serving ~5,000 majority Hispanic, high-poverty students. SEZP’s strategy employs school level autonomy, tailored school supports, and a shared governance structure. In launching SEZP, Empower supported three key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Contracts & Strategy:</i> Aligned stakeholders around a strategic vision, codified operating principles, crafted Zone contracts, and facilitated redesign efforts • <i>Partners:</i> Formed partnerships with school support and technical assistance providers such as TNTP, New Classrooms, UnboundEd, Teach for America, Relay Graduate School of Education, Achievement First, and local school operators • <i>Talent:</i> Launched new teacher and leader pipeline programs, streamlined hiring practices, and negotiated new teacher compensation models <p>Denver, CO: Empower partnered with Denver Public Schools and the Gates Family Foundation to launch Denver’s 1st Innovation Zone, the Luminary Learning Network (LLN). Three of the four schools met their 3-year performance goal in the first year.</p>