

School Redesign Models

A GUIDE TO RESTART

Outline

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School Redesign Fund (SRF)

The Texas Education Agency is committed to **relentlessly focusing on the students in low-performing schools.**

To this end, the School Redesign Fund (SRF) *aims to increase the number of students in highly rated campuses by supporting districts committed to transforming low-performing schools and creating better options for students.*

SRF provides competitive grant opportunities and technical assistance with the intent to empower and support districts with comprehensive and bold school redesign plans.

School Redesign Conditions

Exceptional applicants will present a strong plan for comprehensive and bold school redesigns. Each of the redesign options has advantages and drawbacks that districts should weigh given their own context and that of the schools they hope to improve. While rigorous evaluation shows that many efforts can improve student outcomes, no single approach is the clear “winner.”

All school redesigns require:

- The **will** to make changes to practice
- The **flexibility** to put in place more effective strategies
- The **capacity** to execute the turnaround plan
- The **community support** to sustain changes over time

All school redesign approaches hinge on good planning and implementation.

School Redesign Models

The Division of System Support and Innovation currently provides competitive grant funding and technical assistance to eligible schools developing and implementing one of the following school redesign models:

- 1. Restart** - Close the low-performing school and open a new school under a charter operator, charter management organization (CMO), or education management organization (EMO).
- 2. Turnaround** – Identify a new principal and engage in a comprehensive change in staff and instructional model.
- 3. Closure/Consolidation** – Close a low-performing school and subsequently enroll students in higher-rated school(s).

Restart Model

Overview: The district closes a low-performing school and opens a new school under an in-district charter operator, charter management organization (CMO), or education management organization (EMO). The implementation of the new school is phased-in one or several grades at a time until the whole campus has been replaced by the new model OR takes place across all grade levels at once and immediately replaces the original campus. A restart model should aim to enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend.

Goal: The goal is to create a new and improved learning environment that increases student and school performance.

Planning Timeline: Ideally, the district and selected in-district charter operator, CMO or EMO will engage in a thorough planning process for up to one year before implementation of a restart.

Governance: The district through a performance contract substantially transfers management and staffing of the school to an in-district charter operator, CMO, or EMO. A performance contract usually includes the school and student performance expectations and the district's obligations related to operational flexibility.

Components of Restart

District Capacity

Extensive Community Engagement

Education Plan

Talent Plan

School Culture Plan

Performance Management

Components of Restart

District Capacity – Districts need dedicated, senior staff members who have knowledge of school restart implementation and experience overseeing contracts.

Guiding Questions –

- Who in the district can best serve as the district project manager? Does the district need to hire someone new?
- Is the district project manager well-positioned to effectively support and hold accountable the school restart partner?
- What services, if any, will the district provide to the school restart partner (e.g. food, busing, enrollment, special education)?

Components of Restart

Extensive Community Engagement - Districts leaders need to engage with families, students, educators, and community leaders to understand what they value and include those needs when recruiting and selecting a school restart partner.

Guiding Questions –

- What is the public criteria for the district selecting a campus for restart and how is that communicated?
- How will the district and new principal generate enthusiasm for a restart school with new supports?
- How will a restart partner learn about the values and needs of the school community?
- How will families, students, educators, and community members have access to potential restart partners to learn about their programs?
- How are families, students, educators, and community members part of an advisory group that shapes relevant district and school decisions?
- How are families affected by a restart contacted by the district and made aware of their enrollment options?

Components of Restart

Education Plan - Restart partners have varying ideas on how to improve academics. All restart models should raise expectations for students, increase the rigor and quality of instruction, and build strong school cultures.

Guiding Questions –

- Does the restart partner have a clear academic model (e.g. liberal arts, STEAM, credit-recovery, project-based, single-sex, dual-language)? What evidence supports this approach?
- Does the restart partner have a plan for phase-in or whole-school implementation? If phase in, are the management responsibilities for phase-out grades clear?
- Does the restart partner have a clear formative assessment strategy?
- How is student data collected, updated, and used by teachers and principals?
- Is there clarity on how the restart partner will serve specific subpopulations well?

Components of Restart

Talent Plan – The restart partner creates strategies to develop the strong people already at the campus and seeks new talent from a wide array of sources, including the best districts, charter schools, and training programs.

Guiding Questions –

- How will the school restart partner select a new leader, and what experience, training, and skills will the new leader be expected to possess? What is the district's involvement?
- How will the restart partner attract teachers from the strongest proven pipelines?
- How will the restart partner develop current teachers and staff?
- How will the district provide support to staff that are reassigned to other schools as a result of the restart?

Components of Restart

School Culture Plan – Restart partners have varying ideas on how to improve student culture. All restart models should raise expectations for students, increase the rigor and quality of instruction, and build strong school cultures.

Guiding Questions –

- Does the restart partner have a clear approach to student culture (e.g. “high expectations”/highly-structured, “love and logic”/nurturing)? What evidence supports this approach?
- Has the restart partner articulated the core values of the schools?
- Does the restart partner have a plan for meeting the socio-emotional needs of students?
- How does the restart partners’ approach to student culture shape instructional practices?

Components of Restart

Performance Management – In a restart model, the district sets transparent performance measures for the restart partner in a performance contract.

Guiding Questions –

- What school and student performance expectations (e.g. student performance, student progress, school climate, student engagement, student equity/access) will be contractually specified for the in-district charter operator, CMO or EMO?
- Is the district prepared to terminate the contract if performance expectations are not met?
- How will the restart partner's performance be a factor in other restart decisions?

Case Study: Academic revival of former Marshall Elementary School to UP Academy Dorchester

In 2013, Boston Public Schools sought proposals to restart John Marshall Elementary School (K-6) in Dorchester as a within-district charter school. UP Education Network was selected to serve as the independent provider in the same school building and has operational flexibility to make changes to the academic program without needing district approval. Eighty-five percent of families chose to reenroll their children in UP Academy Dorchester in the 2013-14 school year, which was higher than past reenrollment rates.

HOW IT WORKS

New leadership – A new principal, Lana Ewing, who had served as a principal-in-residence at another UP school, was hired and spent a year planning. She began holding meetings with Marshall Elementary School parents and others to explain UP’s philosophy. She focused on educator recruitment and 2,000 people applied for more than 80 positions. Staff from the old school were asked to reapply for jobs but only a few did.

Continuous professional development - Once a week, school goes for half-a-day to give teachers time for planning and professional development. Instructional personnel return from summer vacation early to focus on building a strong and unified culture among the adults.

Character education AND data-driven academic curriculum – Students learn TIGER: Teamwork, Integrity, Grit, Engagement and Respect and discuss how their behavior matches the school principles. A school-wide tracking system allows teachers to access student information, such as behavior, academic performance, and history of completing home-work.

Improved special education services – Staff conducted a focused review of IEPs and the school-wide tracking system allows accurate monitoring of IEP implementation. UP Academy increased inclusion to the maximum extent appropriate for each student.

UP Academy Dorchester Demographics

	Enrollment	% SPED	%FRL
Pre-2012-13	688	15.6	78.3
Post-2013-14	562	15.5	85.8

See case study sources on slide 18.

UP Academy Dorchester Proficiency Levels

	% ELA Proficiency	% Math Proficiency
Pre – 2012-13	14	13
Post-2013-14	40	60
Post-2014/15	44	51

UP Academy Dorchester ranked first in their state for single-biggest growth in student math scores at an elementary school (2013-2014).

Additional Resources

UP Academy Dorchester Case Study Resources:

- [A Boston Breakthrough: UP Academy Goes from Failing to First](#)
- [Special Education in the Turnaround Context: UP Education Network Schools in Massachusetts](#)
- [The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership – Progressive Policy Institute](#)

National Restart Resources:

- [Chartering Turnaround – National Alliance for Public Charter Schools & The Center on School Turnaround WestEd](#)
- [School Restarts Guide and Examples – Public Impact and EdPlex](#)
- [The Role of Charter Restarts in School Reform - New School Venture Fund](#)

For More Information

Grant Information

Please refer to the program guidelines and resources available on the [TEA Grants Opportunities Page](#).

School Redesign Resources

School redesign guides can be found on the [DSSI website](#). The program area will also use twitter to facilitate a shared collaboration on school redesign resources. Applicants may access and contribute resources via the hashtag - #schoolredesignTX.