

V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

IMPROVING LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS: LESSONS FROM FIVE YEARS OF STUDYING SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING UNDER NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Caitlin Scott, Center on Education Policy, December 2009

This report synthesizes five years of research on state and local efforts to improve persistently low-performing schools in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act. CEP conducted this research in six states – California, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Ohio – and in 23 districts and 48 schools within those states. Among its recommendations at the school, district, state, and federal levels, the report urges: (A) the use of multiple, coordinated strategies that are well matched to the needs of the school and students; (B) that reform efforts be evaluated and revised over time in response to school and student needs; (C) that data be analyzed frequently and the frequent regrouping of students in response; (D) that staff be replaced only when: 1) there is an adequate pool of applicants; 2) there is a plan to help the school repair its reputation and attract qualified staff; 3) there are effective hiring systems; and 4) there is a partnership with the teachers unions to help resolve stumbling blocks.

THE TURNAROUND FALLACY

Andy Smarick, *Education Next*, Winter 2010

This article argues that, because the work of school improvement is so difficult and efforts have so often failed, the better strategy is to close them. The author suggests that, done right, this strategy could both help the students assigned to these failing schools and also have a cascading effect on other policies and practices, ultimately helping to bring about healthy systems of urban public schools.

DOES CLOSING SCHOOLS CAUSE EDUCATIONAL HARM? A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Gail L. Sunderman and Alexander Payne, George Washington University Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, December 2009

In reviewing the research on school closures as a reform strategy, this information brief rebuts the central premise behind these policies: that students will necessarily be better off in leaving a low-performing school. To the contrary, the author finds that “any one of these options—closing a school and reopening it as a charter school, taking it over by EMO, or reconstitution—could be considered to cause educational harm if students perform worse than they would have in their current school. The literature suggests that this is a distinct possibility...” The brief concludes that this is a policy option that should be undertaken with extreme caution and offers suggestions on the measures school administrators can take to mitigate the negative effects of changing schools.

ESEA FLEXIBILITY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

U.S. Education Department, October 3, 2011

This document offers guidance on the Education Department’s offer of waivers to “specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction.”

A BILL TO AMEND THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY ACT OF 1965

Senators Tom Harkin and Mike Enzi, et.al. October 2011

These are excerpts from legislation to reauthorize ESEA, including language pertaining to school accountability and improvement. A summary of the provisions for turning around low-performing schools can be found in Section I of this briefing book.