



School Turnaround Policies and Practices in Australia, Canada, England, and New Zealand: *Overview and Implications* ▸

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Spurred by new Federal priorities and resources, states and school districts across the U.S. are intensifying efforts to turn around their lowest performing schools. The federal School Improvement Grants¹ (SIG) program offers formula grants to states to identify their “persistently lowest achieving schools” and to fund school districts to turn them around by employing one of four school improvement models:

Turnaround. This model replaces the principal and rehires no more than 50 percent of the preexisting staff, and grants the principal sufficient flexibility to implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

Restart. This model converts a school to a charter school managed by an operator, charter management organization, or education management organization selected through a rigorous review process.

Transformation. This model replaces the principal, takes steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, institutes comprehensive instructional reforms, increases learning time, creates community-oriented schools, and provides operational flexibility and sustained support.

School Closure. This model closes a low-performing school and disperses its students to other, higher achieving schools.

In addition to the nationwide SIG program, each of the 12 states receiving federal Race to the Top awards is implementing a plan for turning around its lowest performing schools by using one of the four school improvement models.

The school turnaround challenge is as daunting as it is urgent, and the track record of success is not strong. A recent analysis of low-performing schools that received federal assistance under the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR D) program (a predecessor program to the SIG, the objective of which was to foster school improvement) found that less than 5 percent were able to make substantial and sustainable gains in student achievement (Orland, 2010, pp. 8–9). A recent set of case studies of successful school turnaround conducted by WestEd and the American Institutes for Research, *Achieving Dramatic School Improvement: An Exploratory Study* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), did reveal a set of “success factors” common across such schools (p. 68); however, it also observed the need for each school to adapt its particular strategy to the complex and dynamic setting in

which it operates. Consequently, there was no “one best way” identified for implementing and sustaining successful school turnaround across multiple and diverse school contexts (p. 69).

One generic factor consistently noted in the *Achieving Dramatic School Improvement* case studies as an important contributor to school turnaround success was having a supportive external policy environment for implementing needed reforms. Help from school districts, states, and the federal government was manifest in a variety of ways, including through financial assistance, consultations, professional development, and accountability requirements (pp. 53–54).

As policymakers throughout the nation continue scouring the landscape for models of systems support with which to ground their own school turnaround efforts, it makes sense to look not only across America but also abroad, to other developed countries that struggle with similar challenges. Looking at ▸

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¹ In the President’s 2012 budget, the name of the School Improvement Grants program is changed to the School Turnaround Grants program.

the experiences of other nations, especially those with important similarities to our own, allows us to avoid problems of “myopia” that can come from viewing a limited range of alternative policies and practices observed through a purely domestic lens.

With that in mind, the U.S. Department of Education requested that WestEd follow up on the research captured in *Achieving Dramatic School Improvement* by examining how a number of other developed countries approach the challenge of improving their low-performing schools.

To undertake this study, we asked national experts in Australia, Canada, England, and New Zealand to develop a case study that summarized how their respective national or, in the case of Canada, regional, jurisdictions have approached identifying, evaluating, and supporting low-performing schools. The experts were asked to focus specifically on the roles of leadership, school climate, instructional strategies, and external support. In addition, they provided an overview of the education structure, current policy context, and research conducted in their respective countries. They also provided specific examples of how the approach was working in particular schools or systems of schools. Note that these cases were developed as a snapshot in time, as of summer 2009, and have not been updated.

This paper offers a brief analysis of common themes and characteristics across these jurisdictions and key implications for turnaround policies and strategies in the U.S. It concludes with brief summaries of each case.²

Common themes, distinctive characteristics, and implications for U.S. turnaround efforts ▸

A number of common themes, as well as noteworthy distinctive characteristics in school turnaround policy, are evident across the four jurisdictions covered in the case studies:

Policies for identifying and categorizing low-performing schools. Each jurisdiction employed some form of a formal categorization process that allows for differentiating school performance. Similar to in the U.S., in England and Ontario these categories refer to some proportion of students within a given school performing at or below a target level on a jurisdictionally administered examination in reading or mathematics. In Australia and New Zealand, however, the classifications were based on both local achievement measures *and* other indicators of concern, such as school finances, staffing, school climate, and operations.

Policies for evaluating low-performing schools. In each of these four jurisdictions, unlike in the U.S., representatives of government agencies conduct comprehensive site visits or inspections that examine the entire operations of low-performing schools. Responsible entities include the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Australia), the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (Ontario, Canada), the Educational Review Office (New Zealand), and the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, Ofsted (England). Particularly in Australia, Ontario, and New Zealand, inspections are conducted in the context of professional development and support

and constitute a critical resource of their school improvement strategy.

Policies for supporting and monitoring school improvement. Each of the four jurisdictions has well-specified policies for assisting low-performing schools through an improvement process. Steps to support improvement may include the assignment of an external expert or advisor, inclusion in a school improvement network, support to diagnose school challenges, resource sharing across schools, implementation of a specific improvement intervention, and continuous progress monitoring with the possibility for the school to no longer be categorized as low performing.

- » In Ontario, Canada, designated low-performing schools are assigned Student Achievement Officers (SAO) who provide diagnostic assistance and five to eight on-site visits each year for two years. SAOs are charged with tailoring their support based on specific needs of schools. Schools may then be removed from low-performing categorization. Achievement data are examined annually.
- » In New Zealand, all schools undergo reviews once every three years by the Educational Review Office. Schools exhibiting poor operations and low student performance are placed under supplementary review or statutory action. Schools receive assistance from contractors who are often former school administrators with management experience to resolve staffing and operation issues, as well as matters of teaching and learning. In addition, many schools are voluntarily organized into clusters to encourage regional networking and mutual support. Student performance on local tests and school operations data for low-performing schools are reviewed annually.

² The full cases will be available online in late spring 2011 at <http://www.WestEd.org/cs/we/view/rs/1076>.

- » In England, the National Challenge program identifies schools below the floor target (i.e., less than 30 percent of a school's pupils achieving at least a "5" on subject-area qualification examinations) and assigns a National Challenge Advisor to provide assistance based on the needs of the school. Schools may become part of a federation or trust, be partnered with a strong school nearby, or be replaced by a new school. Student performance is reviewed annually.
- » In Australia (Victoria), schools with outcomes below expectations receive special independent reviews of current performance and practice. Guidance from these reviews anchor school improvement efforts, which are supported by school networks providing collective aid through information sharing, professional development, and resource pooling.

Here in the U.S., the federal government, states (especially those receiving Race to the Top grants), and school districts might want to consider these types of policies as they design systems of support for school turnaround. In addition, they might wish to pay attention to the following four broad considerations for successful school turnaround that were culled from the recommendations of case study authors for creating systems that support dramatically improved school performance.

1. Balancing local autonomy with capacity and external support.

Recommendations from each of the four case studies highlight the importance of providing levels of local autonomy that are aligned with school capacity in order to implement improvements effectively. Fostering such capacity is often seen as a government responsibility. In Australia, government schools have high levels of autonomy

but are also recognized as having leaders with the capacity to set priorities, use system-wide tests to improve student performance, and allocate resources. Ontario reports that the primary factors contributing to dramatic school improvement are the intensity of support and the balance between central and local autonomy. While Ontario principals and board leaders oversee their own improvement efforts, they also have support from national ministries as needed and requested. Observations from New Zealand similarly challenge the notion of autonomy and external support being mutually exclusive concepts, as schools in a charter-like governance system are provided considerable help and guidance in instruction and school operations. And, finally, the England case study stresses the importance of appropriately balancing centrally imposed goals with locally developed strategies and plans.

2. Establishing professional cultures of development.

Perspectives from the Australian case study point to the importance of fostering a "performance and development culture" where schools, principals, and other school leaders see school review and improvement as integral to the education profession. Authors of the Ontario case study also observe the central role of a collaborative model of sharing professional learning and a focus on professional responsibility versus a sole reliance on externally imposed accountability standards.

3. Using data. The Ontario authors stress the importance of using common data across schools to facilitate school-level instructional decision-making. Recommendations from England point to the value of relying on effective self-assessments by schools, using pupil-level data, and the tracking of individual students

on a regular basis as a critical school improvement tool. In Australia, the author cites American scholar Richard Elmore (a consultant in Victoria), who contrasts Australia's heavy reliance on data to guide human-capital investment decisions with the U.S.'s apparent focus on identifying schools for rewards and sanctions.³

4. Investing in leadership. While each author acknowledges the importance of school leadership in dramatic school improvement, each also recommends that reform strategies look beyond solely replacing a school head. Any necessary changes in leadership should extend beyond the principal to include key teachers and other administrative staff. The England case study in particular observes that leadership change is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for school improvement. Among England's low-performing schools in "Special Measures," distributed leadership among staff was viewed as key to achieving success. Similarly, the author of the Australia case study highlights the importance of building human capital among all school staff, while the New Zealand author recommends government support for developing school leaders.

It is clear from this review that American policymakers are not alone in attempting to foster significant improvements among their lowest achieving schools. Each of the four jurisdictions studied has robust policy systems in place for addressing this issue. Some components, such as using standardized achievement measures in literacy and numeracy for identifying schools in greatest need of improvement, are similar to current U.S. policies. Other components, such as relying heavily on school reviewers or inspectors to

³ Retrieved August 20, 2009 from: Elmore, R. (2007). *School improvement in Victoria*. Prepared for the Office of Government School Education, Department of Education, Victoria. Available at http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/staffdev/schlead/Richard_Elmore-wps-v1-20070817.pdf.

examine schooling conditions and guide tailored improvement strategies, are very different from prevalent American models. It is also apparent that, despite important differences in educational and governance contexts, both the challenges and broad policy strategies being pursued in these countries can be relevant to U.S. policymakers. As with the successful diffusion of any reform, the goal should not be to “replicate” the policy in another setting, but rather to “adapt” it to fit prevailing domestic contexts of governance and service delivery.

Summaries of case studies from the four jurisdictions ▀

Australia

Summarized from original case study by Brian J. Caldwell

In Australia, constitutional powers related to education lie with the country’s six states and two territories, though the federal government plays a major role, with power to levy income taxes and make conditional grants to states and territories. While school improvement has long been a national priority, a “new federalism” emerging in the late 2000s prompted a state and federal partnership in “an education revolution” focused on turning around low-performing schools. Under a newly formed agency, a first-ever national curriculum was to be implemented in 2011, along with a national testing and reporting system, with each school’s performance publicly available online, along with comparisons to “like” schools. The greater federal role is a notable departure from a long-standing decentralized approach to education, dating to a landmark 1973 report (the Karmel

Report) on inequities in school quality. The urgency for policy change arose from concerns about national productivity in the face of a decline from 2003 to 2006 in the performance of Australian students on the Program for International Student Assessment; underperformance linked to disadvantage; and a decline at the top levels of student achievement.

The state of Victoria, which, in 2008, supported 1,585 primary and secondary schools, has established a comprehensive and coherent approach to school improvement, with strategies for testing and reporting that mirror those in the national agreement. Over three decades, Victoria has steadily decentralized education decision-making; in the 1980s, elected school councils were given authority to set policies and approve budgets within a centralized framework and, in the 1990s, these powers were extended to include decision-making authority over more than 90 percent of the state’s operating budget for government-funded schools. School budgets are based on a per-student “learning allocation,” with a rural-school adjustment factor and an “equity allocation,” based on such student indicators as family income, mobility, student disability, and English learner status. The funding focus is on aligning resources to individual student learning needs to improve outcomes.

Victoria’s school accountability and improvement framework includes an expert, independent analysis of current school performance and practice. By examining achievement data and the results from parent, teacher, and student surveys, a regional officer from the state Department of Education and Early Childhood Development determines which one of four types of review will be required for each school: 1) negotiated review, for schools with student outcomes

above expectations; 2) continuous improvement review, for schools with satisfactory outcomes but with room for improvement; 3) diagnostic review, for schools with outcomes below expectations; and 4) extended diagnostic review, for schools performing below expectations and needing more time for the improvement process. The reviewers — former school or system leaders or university experts — base their judgments on large amounts of data, including the percentage of students who meet or exceed literacy and numeracy standards and how the school’s results compare with those of “like schools.” This rich array of data is then used by principals and teachers to guide improvement. Schools must also issue and distribute to all parents an annual report on outcomes.

Within this improvement framework, Victoria’s regions have reconfigured the way schools work together. The schools in each of the state’s nine regions are divided into multiple networks, with each network serving as a collective support structure for its member schools; the aim is for these lateral connections to augment the traditional top-down or bottom-up lines of authority, responsibility, accountability, and support that are so common to education. A standout example of network success is the rural region of Hume in northeast Victoria, which has about 160 schools. The seven elements of Hume’s network model are 1) professional leadership, 2) a focus on teaching and learning, 3) strategic stakeholder partnerships, 4) shared moral purpose, 5) high expectations for all learners, 6) a focus on continuous improvement, and 7) strategic use of resources. Each network includes several school clusters, with the principals of each school sharing responsibility for all students from schools in the same cluster. The result is a norm of collectively building professional

knowledge, addressing issues of common concern, and pooling resources. Principals and other school leaders participate in “the common curriculum,” a professional learning program to build knowledge, skills, and a shared language about teaching and learning. Learning communities within clusters target literacy or numeracy, with their network providing resources and support. In state surveys, Hume’s educators are consistently positive in their responses, especially about the culture of professional growth and their extensive involvement in implementing change in their cluster, network, and region.

Ontario, Canada

Summarized from original case study by Don Klinger and Lesly Wade-Woolley

In Canada, provincial governments are responsible for K–12 public education, including establishing broad education policy, developing and implementing curriculum, and monitoring performance. In the province of Ontario, the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) policy goals are to ensure high levels of student achievement, to reduce achievement gaps, and to increase public confidence in the education system. The provincial premier set a goal that, by 2008, 75 percent of grade 6 students would reach the designated proficiency standard on the province-wide assessments and 85 percent of students would graduate from secondary school. Although this goal was not reached by 2008, overall achievement appears to be moving slowly in the right direction.

The MOE also oversees policies for special education, English-as-a-second-language students, assessment, and evaluation and reporting. Curriculum documents, developed by the MOE in conjunction with teachers and curricular experts, define

learning expectations by subject and grade level and specify guidelines for student assessment and evaluation. The MOE provides related materials and professional development.

Ontario has four types of publicly funded school jurisdictions: 1) secular, 2) Catholic, 3) Francophone, and 4) aboriginal. Each jurisdiction is overseen and supported by one of the province’s 99 geographically based school boards or authorities (akin to local school districts in the U.S.), which, themselves, are governed by elected trustees, who serve the same role as local school board members in the U.S. The trustees, in turn, hire a director of education who, like local district superintendents in the U.S., lead board operations. School administrators are hired, deployed, and supported through board offices, and board-employed curriculum consultants work directly with teachers, providing instructional leadership, support, and professional development.

In 2004, Ontario’s MOE established the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat to support improved student achievement in these two key content areas. Secretariat staff work with school boards to develop achievement targets and plans for meeting them; provide professional learning opportunities for principals and teachers; share research on effective teaching; develop parent materials (in 14 languages); and build partnerships with principals’ councils, teachers’ federations, and education faculties at institutes of higher education. The Secretariat’s approach has been characterized by an emphasis on professional responsibility and accountability, rather than on external accountability.

This same non-punitive approach to raising achievement was evident in the MOE’s Turnaround Schools Program, initiated at the same general time as the Literacy and Numeracy

Secretariat. In this model, focused on grades K–3, underperforming schools in especially challenging conditions could opt into the program to receive extra funding, external expertise, and other resources to help address problems that hamper student success. Underperformance was defined as a school in which less than 34 percent of its elementary students had attained the grade-3 proficiency standard in two of the previous three years. Subsequent evidence indicates that the program’s targeted support yielded substantial increases in student achievement.

In 2006, the Turnaround Schools Program was modified and expanded under the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat to become the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), which takes a whole-school approach to improvement and focuses on grades K–6. OFIP mandates support for schools performing at three designated levels: OFIP 1, for schools in which less than 34 percent of students achieved standard in grades 3 and 6 reading examinations for two of the past three years; OFIP 2, for schools in which 34–50 percent reached standard, with declining or static results for three years; and OFIP 3, for schools in which 50–74 percent reached standard, with declining or static results. In 2007–08, OFIP was serving 1,064 schools.

Funding levels for the Turnaround Schools Program were not considered sustainable in the long run. So the OFIP strategy was to reduce the amount of funding for each school, but to provide OFIP 1 and OFIP 2 schools with two years of support from the program’s Student Achievement Officers. These program staff members work with schools and boards to build school- and district-based improvement strategies. They continually track and share their

experiences, seeking effective, affordable, and sustainable improvement strategies. They also provide school staff with access to professional development, relevant resources, and instructional guidance.

Evidence suggests the overall efforts of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat have been successful. In 2003, only 53 percent of elementary students met the literacy standard. In 2007 (latest results available), 64 percent did. Similarly, the number of schools in which fewer than 34 percent of students achieved the provincial standard fell from 19 percent in 2003 to 5 percent in 2007. In 2003, 13 percent of elementary schools had 75 percent of their students reaching the standard; 25 percent of schools did so in 2007. In sum, while there were more low-achieving than high-achieving schools in 2003, the opposite was true in 2007, and the lowest achieving schools have seen the greatest improvements.

England

Summarized from original case study by Simon Day and Sue Hackman

In England, education is overseen by the country's Department for Children, Schools, and Families, and in 1988, a national curriculum was introduced. The policy context for dealing with poor school performance dates to the early 1990s when the government began issuing an annual report of each school's standardized test and national examination results — an approach that helped fuel a drive to improve performance. A regular school inspection cycle also was launched, under the aegis of an independent inspectorate, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services, and Skills (Ofsted). Schools that do not meet a minimum level of performance (based on students' performance on the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination) are identified as "schools

below the floor target" and become the focus of improvement efforts.

Although schools in England have a high degree of autonomy and are largely responsible for making their own decisions on budgets, admissions management, and instructional practice, local authorities have a school oversight role and are responsible for intervening in the case of failure. Recent Acts of Parliament have strengthened their powers. For example, they can now issue warnings to schools about performance, compel schools to get assistance from external partners, appoint additional parties to a school's governing body, or take away budget authority.

The government has also established the National Strategies, a system of support for local authorities and schools that is aimed particularly at improving student achievement in English and mathematics. The Strategies initially focused on primary schools, providing materials for teachers to use daily to enhance students' literacy and numeracy. Following a 17 percent increase between 1997 and 2009 in the number of primary school students nationwide who achieved the expected level of performance, the Strategies system was expanded to include secondary schools and to address wider issues of teaching and learning. Recently, the government also created the supportive role of "school improvement partner" — typically a recently retired head teacher — to both support and challenge schools, engaging school heads in professional dialogue and helping to ensure that schools receive tailored support.

England has had a number of specific programs aimed at improving failing schools, such as the *Academy Programme*, in which schools are established, or revamped, and managed by sponsors, including

philanthropists, businesses, and universities. The intent is to make a complete break from traditional ways of running schools and from cultures of low aspirations for students. Academies receive public funding, but are freed from many of the requirements under which other government-funded schools must operate. In addition, sponsors set up an endowment fund, with proceeds used to counteract the effects of poverty. Most academies replace existing underperforming schools, though some are entirely new and a few have joined together high- and low-performing schools as an improvement strategy. Between 2002, when the first academy opened, and 2009, the program had expanded to 200 academies. Despite intense debate about effectiveness, test data show school improvement at twice the rate of other schools nationally. Many academies have received Outstanding or Good Ofsted reports, and, even in formerly unsubscribed schools, three students now apply for every available academy opening. Success has been attributed less to academies' freedom from requirements than to the establishment of what are effectively new schools with strong leadership and fresh thinking.

Another improvement program, the *London Challenge*, was launched in 2003 to improve the performance of that city's lowest-performing secondary schools. It focuses on schools performing below a target level in five key boroughs and on a series of city-wide activities supporting improved school leadership, cultural activities for students, and teacher recruitment through housing subsidies. Highly experienced senior advisors work with each targeted school, checking on progress and ensuring tailored support. In addition, local authorities are challenged to create radical solutions for schools of greatest concern. Within two years, London's schools exceeded

the national average performance, with the strongest contribution coming from schools in the Challenge program, and these improvements have been sustained. The approach has now been extended to London primary schools, as well as to other English cities through the *National Challenge* program, started in 2008.

Many of the advisors and other support providers serving England's low-performing schools come out of the National Leaders of Education program run by the National College of School Leaders, the aim of which was to identify and deploy human capital to support school improvement efforts. Accomplished school leaders with successful schools of their own, these individuals sign on (with the staff of their home school) to help develop leadership capacity in low-performing schools. About a third take full charge of a poorly performing school, while the majority serve in a range of supportive roles. Their numbers grew from 68 in 2006 to 180 in 2008, and there are plans to further expand this infrastructure support program.

New Zealand

Summarized from original case study by Cathy Wylie

In New Zealand, a small country with a national education system, there are no school districts, just individual schools, each operating under its own charter. Four national government agencies have roles in education: 1) The Ministry of Education (MOE) advises on and implements policies under which schools operate, including the New Zealand Curriculum and the National Education Guidelines. It also allocates funding and other resources. Its regional offices monitor and advise schools, but normally have no direct authority over them. 2) The Education Review Office independently evaluates

school performance. 3) The New Zealand Qualifications Authority sets and reviews standards, administers national examinations, and approves courses. 4) Finally, the New Zealand Teachers Council registers teachers, renews their practicing certificates, and approves teacher education programs.

Each school is governed by its own elected board of volunteer trustees, largely parents, and each school establishes its own program within a national framework, such as the high school framework for awarding the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. National literacy and numeracy standards for each primary year of schooling were being developed as of summer 2009 (and were introduced in 2010), but there is no single national test. Individual schools are accountable to the MOE and to their school community through charters that include self-set targets.

Identification of low school performance occurs primarily in three-year cycles of review carried out by the Education Review Office (ERO). Low performance is indicated when an ERO review concludes with a decision to review the school more often. Recent analysis indicated that 18 percent of all schools had come into the supplementary review category twice since the mid-1990s, and 4 percent had come into this same category four or more times over that period, suggesting chronic low performance by those schools and, thus, the need for intervention aimed at improvement. A recent New Zealand Auditor General's report noted the need for all schools to be reviewed more frequently than every three years, asserting that in all likelihood it would reveal that more than 4 percent of New Zealand's schools require attention and support.

The most common triggers for school intervention are a school's poor ERO

review, financial problems, or personnel management problems. A decision to intervene is made by the Minister of Education (a political role) or the MOE's Secretary for Education (a professional role), based on MOE staff reports. Among the least intrusive of six different types of intervention — all targeting the governance level — are the school board being told to engage "specialist help" or to develop and implement an action plan. Among the most intrusive interventions is the dissolution of the school board and the appointment of a commissioner to take its place. In the middle on the intervention continuum is the appointment of a *limited statutory manager* — usually a former principal or board chair — to assume some, but not all, board powers and to work with the board on school improvement. Intervention ends when identified goals are achieved. MOE staff have identified three elements as key to the success of intervention: 1) multilevel interventions; 2) working *with* boards rather than imposing support or intervention; and, 3) if an outside manager must be appointed, making sure the manager's skills, knowledge, and personality are a good fit for the situation.

Another school improvement strategy, dating to the 1990s, is clustering schools for mutual support and regional networking. Cluster members can be identified by the MOE, by schools themselves, or, in part, by ERO reviews. Working with MOE school improvement staff, clusters develop a business plan and receive additional funding in return for regular reports on progress toward agreed-upon targets. The funding is used for professional development and to free up staff time to work together to analyze student needs and identify better ways to meet them. ▀▀

One example of this last strategy is the Achievement in Multicultural High

Schools (AIMHI) school cluster. Started in 1995, this nine-school cluster consists of secondary schools serving low-income, multicultural urban areas. Among them were schools that struggled with major issues and made little headway on their own. Six schools had what New Zealand educators refer to as a vulnerable enrollment. Three of the schools had very negative ERO reports, but two had positive reputations and were concerned that, by joining the cluster, they would be seen as failing schools. Once the cluster was formed, however, all schools benefitted from MOE funding for professional

development and classroom coaching. They gained research support for collecting and analyzing needs assessment data, as well as for formative evaluation of programs that they put in place under their action plans. Extra funding afforded them external expertise for changing school organization and classroom strategies. All nine schools in this cluster remain on the normal ERO review cycle. Student engagement and achievement levels, as evidenced by secondary school qualification levels, have improved. Enrollments that were once declining are now stable. ■

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