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# **Study of School Turnaround: Fall 2011 ELL Data Collection Instruments**

April 2014

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# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## District Administrator Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per interview. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>
<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Interviewee's Role:</b>

### Interview: District Official

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

*[If not previously interviewed]* As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants under ARRA. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees.

We want to continue learning about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because district administrators play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG grant program.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording, it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Different schools and districts have had different experiences and have chosen different improvement strategies as a result of the SIG grants, so some of the questions may be more or less applicable to your situation. If at any point, you'd like clarification on any of my questions, feel free to interrupt me.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

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## DISTRICT CONTEXT

**Note to interviewer:** We will likely only be interviewing the district administrator who has primary responsibility for SIG and in many cases it will be the same person as in spring 2011. Based on what you've already learned, you may be able to scale back some questions, or you may need to probe more deeply on others. Tailor the protocol accordingly.

This first set of questions on district context is only asked of district administrators who are being interviewed for the first time, unless clarification is needed. If a district administrator was interviewed previously, start with Question 5.

1. *[If not interviewed previously]* **How do you view your role as a district leader?**  
*[How does the district rep conceptualize his/her role?]*

**Listen for:**

- Fostering a coherent instructional vision and strategies
- Supporting the schools in the change process
- Creating opportunities for professional learning

2. *[If interviewed previously]* **How do you view your role as a district leader this year?**  
*[How does the principal conceptualize his/her role?]*

3. *[If not interviewed previously]* **From your perspective, how would you briefly describe your district to someone who has never been here before, including its strengths, challenges, and priorities?**

**Listen for:**

- The students?
- The schools and differences among schools?
- The faculty? (Quality? Shortages?)
- The fiscal context?
- Relationship with the school board?
- Administrator turnover?
- Other school reform efforts?

4. *[If not interviewed previously]* **What is your understanding of why the persistently low-performing schools in your district have remained low-performing year after year? What has hindered improvement efforts in the past (prior to receiving SIG funds)?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How do elementary schools differ from high schools in what contributes to low performance, and what they need to improve?
- Are there any federal, state, or district policies, practices, and/or contractual agreements that may have (inadvertently) contributed to these schools' low performance? (for example, seniority rules, school choice options, etc.)
- Does the district have any cohort 2 SIG schools?

**Listen for:**

- Characteristics of the students; parents; community?
- Leadership?
- Teacher capacity?
- Resources?
- School climate (e.g., safety, discipline policies)

5. *[If not interviewed previously]* **Generally speaking, what do you think these persistently low-performing schools need to improve performance (e.g., funding, expertise, staff capacity, etc.)?**
6. **Were there any changes in your district's student performance during spring 2011 testing? At the *[core and ELL schools in the district]*? *[If changes]*, how does this influence how you are thinking about your work this school year?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Extent to which district/school analyzed student data in planning for the school year
- Extent to which examination of student data influenced instructional programs
- Were the test scores different than what you and school leaders expected at the end of last year?

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## **GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES FOR 2011–12**

I'd like to follow up on our conversation from last spring and talk about the district's goals and key strategies for this school year. In particular, I'm interested in hearing from you about changes in *[case study schools in district]* from last year, brought about by SIG and/or other factors.

7. *[If interviewed previously]* **Thank you for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation from last spring and talk about key improvement strategies in your district for this school year. You discussed *[insert 2 or 3 strategies here]* last year. *[If not interviewed]*, we heard about *(insert 2 or 3 strategies here)*.] **To what extent has there been continuity or change in the strategies in your district from last year to this year? Why?****

**Listen for:**

- What is similar and what is different?
- Any big contextual changes?
- Union contract changes
- Student assignment policy changes
- Student demographic changes at core and/or ELL schools in district
- Changes in Teacher hiring or evaluation policies/practices
- Changes in Teacher replacement/assignment
- Changes in curriculum/instructional practices district-wide
- Changes in state/district support? Other support?

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Did your experience last year contribute to refining or re-focusing this year's strategies? If so, how?
- Were there particular issues with implementation of strategies that you are trying to change this year?
- *[If changes]* What role have you/the district had in these changes? Who at the school/district determines the changes?
- *[If changes]* Have these changes been welcomed or not? Why

**8. What do you see as the district's primary goals for *[core and ELL schools in district]* for this school year? What do you hope to see accomplished by the end of this school year? Why?**

**9. *[If not previously interviewed:]* What key activities or strategies do you expect to the district will implement this school year to help you accomplish your goals? Why?**

**Listen for:**

- Strategies targeted at any particular subgroups (e.g., ELLs, special ed, African American boys)

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How will you ensure that the strategies that you employ will be well implemented? (e.g., *has he/she assigned specific staff to be responsible for implementation*)?
- To what extent are you satisfied with these strategies?
- Which of these strategies/activities will be funded through SIG

**10. How are these key strategies in SIG schools different from changes you've tried to make in the past? How do the strategies under the SIG program align with your previous reform efforts?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- *[If similar to past reforms:]* Do you expect different outcomes? Why?
- *[If different from past reforms:]* Why do you expect the new strategies might be more successful?

**11. *[If not mentioned]* How will the district support these changes in the SIG schools this year?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Are you providing different guidance for SIG schools compared to other low-performing schools in the district?
- To what extent do the instructional strategies and district support and guidance differ by intervention model (i.e., turnaround, restart, transformation)?

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## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

This fall we are focusing on leadership/governance and decision-making roles among district and school leaders.

**12. Who made decisions about what would be included in the Year 2 SIG budget? Did this change from last year? If so, how? How is this different from how expenditure decisions are usually made, if at all?**

**13. How do decisions get made within the district? Who makes the final decisions about key aspects of the school, such as improvement strategies, staffing, curriculum, and professional development? Why or why not?**

**Listen for:**

- Selection of improvement strategies
- Staffing/hiring
- Curriculum and instruction
- Professional development

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Who is involved in decision-making for SIG schools
- Who sets priorities

**14. Now turning to the leadership at the school level. Why do you think the principal [at each of the core and ELL schools in district] was selected for the school? What are the principal's strengths and weaknesses as a school leader?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What are the leadership challenges [at core and ELL schools]?
- How is the school leader equipped to plan key strategies?

**15. Is there a school leadership team [at each of the core and ELL schools in the district]? [If yes:] Please describe. [If no:] Does the principal need support from a leadership team. Please describe.**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How is the school leadership team equipped to plan key strategies?

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## STATE ROLE

I'd like to ask one question about state support.

**16. Interviewer note:** *This is the only question on all protocols (other than the state administrator) where we ask about the state role, so be sure to ask it of at least one district administrator.* **Has the support and guidance your state department of education is providing to your district to administer the SIG initiative changed since last year? If so, how?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What has been most helpful this year? What has been least helpful?
- Has the state issued specific rules about the implementation of the SIG program in year 2?
- About distribution or uses of funds?

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## SCHOOL SUPPORT

I know that SIG schools are trying to implement a lot of ambitious change strategies. I'd like to talk a bit about support that is provided to SIG schools as they go through this change process and how it has changed since last year.



**17. What type of support is the district providing to SIG schools this year? Have there been any changes since last year?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What is emphasized at [each core school in district]?
- To what extent is this support different from that of non-SIG schools, if at all?
- How does the district support school leaders/leadership team?
- Has the district hired additional staff for the purpose of supporting SIG schools?

**18. [Only ask of districts that we know are working with Education Management Organizations or Charter Management Organizations, and only ask if not addressed in response to the previous question] How would you characterize the district's relationship with this [EMO/CMO] this year? How does the district coordinate with the [EMO/CMO]? Have there been any changes since last year?**

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## **ELL ISSUES**

***[Note to interviewer]:*** The district may have high concentrations of ELL students whereas the lite core schools do not. At these lite core schools, ask general questions about the ELL student population but do not spend too much time discussing these issues.

Another focus area for this fall's data collection is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students in your district and the ways in which you go about addressing their needs.

**19. [If not already mentioned] First, can you tell me a bit about the students in your district?** [Let the district leader describe the student population before asking specifically about ELL students.]

***Listen for:***

- Any other subgroups mentioned, e.g., special ed, African American boys, etc.

**20. How would you describe the ELL students in particular?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Size and nature of ELL population (including multiple cultures/languages represented, language backgrounds and levels, levels of prior education)
- What are the strengths and needs these students bring to the district?
- Are there important differences within the ELL population (e.g., newcomers vs. long-term ELLs)

**21. [If not previously mentioned:] In this district, are there any goals or priorities specific to ELL students? If so, what are they?**

**22. [If not previously mentioned:] Are the key strategies that we discussed earlier addressing the needs of your district's ELL students? Please explain.**

**23. What activities or strategies, if any, are in place district-wide to specifically address ELLs? At [each case study school in district]? What is the rationale behind these strategies?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How do these strategies differ from previous practice?
- To what extent are teachers prepared to implement these strategies?
- How were these strategies selected? Who was involved in making the decisions?

**24. What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students in your district? And how do you address them?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How does instruction for ELLs fit into the larger vision for instructional improvement in the district and in the core schools?

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## USE OF FUNDS

I'd like to talk briefly about the use of SIG funds in *[core and ELL schools in your district]*.

**25. [For SIG funds that do not go to the schools] How are SIG funds being spent at the district level this year? What is the rationale behind these expenditures? How are the SIG funds being used to support or stimulate specific improvement strategies? [Interviewer note: Following are some examples but do not explicitly state them: instructional coaches, additional/new teachers, professional development student supports, etc.]**

**Listen for:**

- Changes in how SIG funds are being used from last year to this year

**26. [Core schools only] Are there any district restrictions on how *[core and ELL schools]* are allowed to use the SIG funds?**

**27. [Core schools only] What other sources of revenue will be used to support improvement efforts at *[core and ELL schools in the district]* this year? [Interviewer note: Following are some examples but do not explicitly state them: Title I, Title III, state general fund, categorical funds, foundations, etc.] Are the different sources applied to different strategies?**

**Listen for:**

- Changes in how SIG funds are being used from last year to this year

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## CLOSE

**28. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG grant program and/or *[core and ELL schools in district]* that you'd like to comment on?**

Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## District ELL Coordinator Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

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<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>
<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Interviewee's Role:</b>

### Interview: District ELL Coordinator

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research, and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants under ARRA.

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse set of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because district administrators play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG grant program.

**Our visit this fall particularly focuses on practices related to English language learners (ELLs). The participation of your school, along with 10 others across the country, will provide us with an in-depth understanding of how the SIG process plays out in schools with high numbers of ELL students.**

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adheres to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

**Notes to Interviewer:**

Not all districts will have a designated ELL Coordinator. You will need to work with the district to identify the best respondent for this interview. It should be the individual who has the most responsibility and/or knowledge of ELL students, programs, and initiatives in the district.

In some cases, the district ELL coordinator may not be familiar with the individual schools in our study. In those cases, questions regarding individual schools could be posed to the district representative being interviewed (for core schools). Alternatively, some of the questions regarding individual schools could be posed in the interview with the school ELL coordinator, school principal, or school instructional coach(es).

The protocol assumes that the respondent has not previously been interviewed. Therefore, the questions on this protocol should be adapted if this individual has already been interviewed. They also need to be tailored to build on the information gathered in previous interviews at this school. Based on what you've already learned, you may be able to scale back some questions, or you may need to probe more deeply on others.

When questions ask about "ELL schools and core schools," we are asking the respondent to think about the schools in the study's core sample and ELL special topic sample. In most districts, this should be four or fewer schools

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**BACKGROUND AND ROLE**

**Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I'd like to start by asking a bit about your background and your role in the district.**

**1. Can you tell me a bit about your background?*****Probe if not mentioned:***

- How many years have you been in the district?
- Have you worked with ELL students or worked on issues related to ELL students?
- Experience with low-performing schools

**2. What is your role in the district? What is your role with regard to the implementation of SIG in your district? What is your role with regard to [ELL schools and core schools]?*****Probe if not mentioned:***

- What are your typical day-to-day activities?
- To what extent do you work with your colleagues in the district office who are leading the SIG reforms?
- Do you work with the principals at [ELL schools in our study]?

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**DISTRICT CONTEXT****3. Next, I'd like to talk about your district as a whole. Can you tell me a bit about the students in your district?*****Listen for:***

- Any subgroups mentioned, e.g., ELLs, special ed, African American boys, etc.

**4. How would you describe the ELL student population in your district?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Background on district, including size and nature of ELL population
- Ways in which ELLs are distributed across the district (i.e., do they tend to be grouped in certain areas and schools? Or spread throughout the district?)
- Size and nature of ELL population (including language backgrounds and levels, levels of prior education)

**5. What do you see as the primary strengths that ELL students bring to the instructional environment in this district?**

**6. What do you see as the primary needs of ELL students in this district?**

***Probe of not mentioned:***

- What are the district initiatives, programs or practices that address ELL students?
- What challenges, if any, do you face with regard to improving academic outcomes of the ELL students at your school?

**7. How does your district go about meeting the needs of your ELL students? Is there a district wide approach for meeting the needs of ELL students in your district? Please explain.**

***Listen for:***

- District wide programs, policies or initiatives that target ELLs
- Any differences between schools with high proportions of ELL students and schools with low proportions of ELL students

**8. Does the district have specific priorities and principles that guide the work with ELL students in the district? If so, what are they? If not, what guides this work?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How does the ELL instruction fit into the larger vision for instruction in the district?
- How do the priorities play out at elementary and secondary levels?

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## **INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

Now I'd like to ask questions about specific improvement strategies that address the needs of ELL students – that is, what the district is doing in the *[ELL schools and core schools]* in order to improve the outcomes of ELL students.

**9. Within the context of our broader study of schools receiving SIG funds, we are doing a focused look at schools serving large numbers of ELL students. As part of this focus, we will be visiting *[ELL schools and core schools]* and are particularly interested in your reflections on these schools. Can you tell me about *[ELL schools and core schools]*? Why do you believe these schools have remained low performing year after year? What has hindered improvement efforts in the past (prior to receiving SIG funds)?**

**Listen for:**

- Characteristics of the students, parents, community?
- Leadership?
- Teacher capacity?
- Resources?
- School climate (e.g., safety, discipline policies)
- Performance of ELL students

**10. Generally speaking, what do you think these persistently low-performing schools need to do to improve performance (e.g., funding, expertise, staff capacity support for ELL students, etc.)?**

**Listen for:**

- The extent to which the district identifies the needs of ELLs as an improvement goal

**11. For [each ELL school and core school], what instructional improvement strategies are being planned/implemented for ELL students? What is the rationale behind these strategies?**

**Listen for:**

- Any differences between SIG and non-SIG schools?
- Any differences between schools with high proportions of ELLs and schools with low proportions of ELLs?
- Any differences between elementary and secondary schools?

**12. How did these schools arrive at the strategies you've described? In what ways are these strategies different from those you've used in the past?**

**Listen for:**

- How prescriptive is the district on these changes? How much flexibility do schools have?

**13. How has the district supported these improvement strategies in [ELL schools and core schools]?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Are you providing different guidance for SIG schools compared to other low-performing schools in the district?
- Any variation in support provided for schools with high proportions of ELLs vs. schools with low proportions of ELLs?
- Any differences between elementary vs. secondary schools?
- Any ways in which the support has changed over time?

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## **STAFF**

**Now I'd like to learn more about the teachers and principals at [ELL schools and core schools], the extent to which you believe teachers are prepared to teach ELLs and principals to lead schools with high concentrations of ELL students; the ways in which teachers are distributed in schools across the district; and professional development that is provided for teachers and principals.**

**14. [If interviewee has worked with principals at our schools]: To what extent do you feel the principals at [ELL schools and core schools] have the skills and knowledge needed to successfully lead schools with high concentrations of ELL students? What are their strengths? In what areas do they need to improve?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Were these principals selected for their schools based on their ELL expertise?
- Any differences between schools with high proportions of ELL and schools with low proportions of ELL students?
- Any differences at the elementary and secondary levels?

**15. To what extent do you feel teachers at [ELL schools and core schools] have the skills and knowledge needed to successfully teach the ELL students in this district? What are their strengths? In what areas do they need to improve?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Were teachers at these schools selected based on their ELL expertise?
- Any differences between schools with high proportions of ELLs and schools with low proportions of ELLs?
- Any differences at the elementary and secondary levels?

**16. [If not addressed in response to the question above]: In your district, how do you ensure that ELL students are taught by teachers who are knowledgeable about both content and ELL instruction?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Extent to which stronger teachers are in schools with high proportions of ELL students?
- Extent to which the teachers have the qualifications, (i.e., ELL certification; experience working with ELL students)?
- Do teachers of ELL students have different levels of experience or qualifications?

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## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Next, I'd like to ask about the professional development opportunities that are available for teachers and principals in your district. I'm specifically interested in professional development that relates to ELL issues.**

**17. Generally, what are the main types of professional development available for teachers of ELL students in your district? Is any professional development specifically focused on issues related to ELL students? What are the main goals of these professional development opportunities?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What is the focus of the PD?
- To what extent do teachers and school administrators participate in these PD activities?
- What is the district's role in providing these opportunities?
- Any differences at the elementary and secondary levels?
- Any differences in what is provided for ELL teachers vs. content area teachers?
- How do these activities differ for SIG schools and other district schools?



**18. What are the main types of professional development available for principals in your district? Is any professional development specifically focused on issues related to ELL students? What are the main goals of these professional development opportunities?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What is the focus of the PD?
- To what extent do principals participate in these PD activities?
- What is the district's role in providing these opportunities?
- How do these activities differ for SIG schools and other district schools?

**19. [If not already mentioned]: As a district leader, where do you turn for assistance on ELL issues or to build your own professional knowledge in this area?**

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## **SCHOOL SUPPORT**

**I know that SIG schools are trying to implement a lot of ambitious change strategies. I'd like to talk a bit about support that is provided to SIG schools for ELL students as they go through this change process.**

**20. I'm interested in hearing about the types of support that principals receive for ELL students and their school staff who work with ELL students. If I were a principal of a SIG school in your district, what kinds of support (other than professional development) would I receive from the state and/or district to foster improvement for ELL students?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What is emphasized at *[each core or ELL school]*?
- To what extent is this support for ELL students different from that of non-SIG schools, if at all?
- Has the district hired additional staff for the purpose of supporting ELL issues in SIG schools?

***Listen for:***

- Support designed to address specific needs of ELL population
- Consistency/coherence with school's SIG intervention model

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## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**21. Are there any district-wide programs or supports targeted for parents of ELL students? Please describe.**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Which parents are targeted for these programs? Who provides the support, the focus, etc.?
- To what extent do ELL parents access them? In what ways do they benefit parents of ELLs?
- Do parents receive communications in their own language? Is there someone at the district or school(s) the parents can talk to who speaks their language?

**22. Are there any particular strategies that *[ELL schools and core schools]* use to encourage the involvement of parents of ELL students?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Any differences between strategies used in SIG schools vs. non-SIG schools?

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**CLOSE**

**23. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG program and ELL students that you'd like to comment on?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## Principal Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>
<b>Interviewee:</b>	

### Interview: Principal

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

#### *Study of School Turnaround (SST)*

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are under contract with the U.S. Department of Education to study how School Improvement Grant (SIG) implementation unfolds, and more specifically, the decisions and strategies schools, districts and states undertake, and the constraints they face as they work to implement intervention models intended to improve student outcomes. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on SIG implementation experiences from a diverse array of SIG grantees

**Our visit this fall particularly focuses on practices related to English language learners (ELLs). The participation of your school, along with 10 others across the country, will provide us with an in-depth understanding of how the SIG process plays out in schools with high numbers of ELL students.**

#### *Privacy*

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions.

#### *Recording*

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team would hear the tape, it would just be for my own reference. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)** it is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

**Note to interviewer:** This protocol will be used to interview principals of all schools in the ELL sample (which includes some core and some non-core schools). Some questions are intended for principals who were previously interviewed. Other questions are intended for principals who were not previously interviewed. Questions for these targeted respondent types are indicated at the beginning of the questions. In most cases, questions without a specific respondent type should be asked of all respondents.

The interviewer will build on responses from the spring 2011 interview to tailor the questions for this interview. Based on what you've already learned, you may be able to scale back some questions, or you may need to probe more deeply on others.

## Principal and School Background

This first set of questions on principal background is **only asked of principals who are being interviewed for the first time**, unless clarification is needed. If a principal was interviewed previously start with Question 5.

1. [If not interviewed previously:] **Can you tell me a bit about your background in schools? When and how did you come to be a principal at this school?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How many years of experience do you have working as a principal?
- Do you have experience working in schools that are similar to this one?
- Did you work in the school before becoming principal? If yes, for how long and in what capacity?

2. [If not interviewed previously] **What are the circumstances that brought about the change in principal at your school this year?**

3. [If not interviewed previously:] **I know that every school is unique, with unique circumstances that influence daily life. How would you briefly describe your school to someone who has never been here before, including its strengths and challenges?**

**Listen for:**

- Faculty: capacity (e.g., teacher knowledge and skills), commitment, turnover
- Structures (e.g., Departments/clusters, specialized classes)
- Students (diversity of student population, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ELL, SPED, any other subgroups)
- Community
- Funding level

4. [If not interviewed previously:] **What is your understanding of why this school has remained low-performing year after year? What has hindered improvement efforts in the past (prior to receiving SIG funds)?**

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## GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES FOR 2011–12

*The first question on changes in key strategies is only asked of principals who have been interviewed previously.*

5. *[If previously interviewed:] Thanks for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation from last spring and talk about key improvement strategies for this school year. You discussed [insert 2 or strategies here] last year (or if not interviewed, we heard about [insert 2 or 3 strategies here]). To what extent has there been continuity or changes from last year to this year? Why?*

***Listen for:***

- What is similar and what is different?
- Any big contextual changes?
- Changes in staff capacity?
- Changes in climate (e.g., teacher morale, student behavior) changes?
- Changes in state/district support? Changes in SIG support?

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- To what do you attribute these changes? *{trying to get at whether it's SIG-related}*
- Did your experience last year contribute to refining or re-focusing this year's strategies? If so, how?
- Were there particular issues with implementation of strategies that you are trying to change this year?
- *[If changes]* What role have you/the district had in these changes?
- *[If changes]* Have these changes been welcomed or not? Why?

6. **I'd like to learn how you began the school year this fall. How did you and the teachers at your school get ready for this school year?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Extent to which principal and teachers analyzed student data in planning for the school year
- Extent to which examination of student data influenced instructional programs
- Extent to which they talked about lessons from the previous year and adjustments they should make.
- Were the test scores different than what you and your staff expected at the end of last year?

7. **What is the vision for this school? How about 5 years from now? What is your role as a school leader in moving the school in that direction?**

8. **What do you see as the school's primary goals for this school year? Why? What do you hope to accomplish by the end of this school year?**

9. *[If not previously interviewed:] What key activities or strategies do you expect to use/implement this school year to help you accomplish your goals? Please describe.*

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How will you ensure that the strategies that you employ will be well implemented? (e.g., will he/she monitor instruction in the classroom, has he/she assigned specific staff to be responsible for implementation)?
- To what extent are you satisfied with these strategies?
- Which of these strategies/activities will be funded through SIG?

**Listen for:**

- Any strategies/activities that specifically address the needs of ELL students
- Any strategies/activities that specifically address the needs of other subgroups, e.g., special ed students, African American boys, etc.)

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## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

This fall we are focusing on the principal's role and how you view leadership/governance and decision-making roles.

**10. [If not interviewed previously] [How do you view your role as principal? [How does the principal conceptualize his/her role?]**

**Listen for:**

- Fostering a coherent instructional vision and strategies
- Supporting the faculty and staff members in the change process
- Creating opportunities for professional learning, e.g. PD, coaching, fostering collaboration
- Monitoring instruction and monitoring student learning, e.g., observing classrooms, meeting with teachers to discuss students' progress, tracking progress of individual students, etc.
- Managing the internal environment, e.g., building a leadership team, motivating students and teachers, managing facilities, etc.
- Managing the external environment, e.g., meeting with parents, communicating with the district, building support from external organizations, etc.

**11. [For core schools only, if interviewed previously] How do you view your role as principal this year? [How does the principal conceptualize his/her role?]**

**12. Who else provides leadership in this school?**

**Listen for:**

- Is there a formalized leadership team?
- What is the leadership structure?

**13. How do decisions get made within the school? As the principal, do you make the final decisions about key aspects of the school, such as staffing, scheduling, curriculum, professional development, and budget? Why or why not?**

**Listen for:**

- Selection of improvement strategies
- Staffing/hiring
- Curriculum and instruction
- Control over the school schedule
  - Length of the school day

- Length of the school year
- Other?
- Professional development
- Selection of external/support providers
- Selecting texts, technology, etc.

**14. As principal, how much input did you have into the SIG application for year 2 funds? Were you able to decide how the SIG funds would be used? Who else makes decisions about how the SIG funds are used in the school? Did this change from last year? If so, how?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What guidance did you receive about how SIG funds are to be used?
- From whom did you receive the guidance?
- So far, have you been able to allocate funds to support everything you believe your school needs to succeed?

**15. How much autonomy does your school have relative to the district office? Is it different in SIG schools than other schools in the district?**

## **ELL STUDENTS**

Next, I'd like to turn from the school to the students. A primary area of focus for this fall's visit is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students at your school and the ways in which you go about addressing their needs.

**16. First, can you tell me a bit about the students at your school? [Let principal describe the student population before asking specifically about ELL students.] How would you describe the ELL students in particular?**

***Listen for:***

- Any other subgroups mentioned, e.g., special ed, African American boys, etc.

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Size and nature of ELL population (including multiple cultures/languages represented, language backgrounds and levels, levels of prior education)
- What are the strengths and needs these students bring to the school?
- Are there important differences within the ELL population (e.g., newcomers vs. long-term ELLs)

**17. What do you see as the primary strengths that ELL students bring to your school? What do you see as the primary needs of your ELL students? Do these differ substantially among different groups of ELLs? How are those needs addressed?**

**18. What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students at your school? And how do you address them?**

**19. What opportunities or advantages do you have in addressing the needs of ELL students at your school? (e.g., a particularly knowledgeable staff, active parents, community-based organization, etc.)**



**20. [If not previously mentioned:] At your school, are there any goals or priorities specific to ELL students? If so, what are they?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How does instruction for ELLs fit into the larger vision for instructional improvement at the school?

**21. [If not previously mentioned:] Do any of the key strategies you mentioned earlier address the needs of ELL students? What activities or strategies, if any, are in place at your school specifically targeted at ELL students' unique needs? What is the rationale behind these strategies?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Are these new or pre-existing strategies? If new, how do these strategies differ from previous practice? If pre-existing, have they changed since SIG?
- To what extent are teachers prepared to implement these strategies?
- How were these strategies selected? Who was involved in making the decisions?

**22. In what ways are the parents of ELL students involved in their child(ren)'s education? Are there any programs or supports in place at your school that benefit parents of ELL students?**

***Listen for:***

- Ways in which ELL parents are encouraged to become involved
- Supports in place that benefit ELL parents, such as parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, parent liaisons, etc.
- Extent to which parents access the supports
- Ways in which the unique needs of ELL parents are accommodated (such as, communication in home language).

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## **STAFF CAPACITY**

**23. How would you describe teachers' capacity to meet the needs of ELL students at this school? In what areas are they strong? And in what areas do they need to improve?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Any differences between capacity of content teachers and ELL teachers
- Any changes in teacher capacity over time

**24. Next, I'd like to ask you to describe any professional learning activities available at your school that are designed to improve teachers' work with ELLs. What are the main professional learning activities for teachers? And how are they intended to help teachers to improve their work with ELLs?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How does the PD relate to the priorities expressed earlier?
- What role do you play in planning or providing the PD described?
- Any differences in what is provided for ELL specialist teachers vs. content area teachers?

**25. As a school leader, to what extent do you feel prepared to address the needs of ELL students at your school? Where do you turn for assistance on ELL issues?**

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## **USE OF FUNDS**

I'd like to turn to a few questions on SIG funds.

**26. Are you aware of how the SIG funds are being used at your school? [If yes:] What do the SIG funds allow your school to do that you would not otherwise be able to do?**

**27. [For core schools only:] Is what you are spending SIG funds on this year different from last year? If so, how? Why?**

*Probe as necessary:*

- Are there any line items in the SIG budget that are no longer planned? Why not?

**28. [For core schools only:] Are there other SIG-funded activities and strategies that are paid for at the district level and not in the school SIG budget?**

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## **CLOSE**

**29. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the school or the SIG initiative that you'd like to comment on?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## School ELL Coordinator Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per interview. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>
<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Interviewee's Role:</b>

### Interview: School ELL Coordinator

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research, and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants under ARRA.

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse set of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because ELL coordinators play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

**Our visit this fall particularly focuses on practices related to English language learners (ELLs). The participation of your school, along with 10 others across the country, will provide us with an in-depth understanding of how the SIG process plays out in schools with high numbers of ELL students.**

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adheres to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

**Notes to interviewer:**

This interview should be tailored toward the role of the person being interviewed. Most schools will not have a designated ELL Coordinator. You will need to work with the school to identify the best respondent for this interview. It should be the individual who has the most responsibility and/or knowledge of ELL students, programs, and initiatives at the school. For example, it may be a lead ELL teacher, instructional coach, administrator, or some other role.

Some questions are intended for respondents who were previously interviewed. Other questions are intended for respondents who were not previously interviewed – questions for these targeted respondent types are indicated at the beginning of the question. In most cases, questions without a specified respondent type should be asked of all respondents.

You should carefully review the school context and background of the person you interview and adapt the questions on this protocol to make them appropriate for your respondent and to build on the information gathered in previous interviews at this school. Based on what you've already learned, you may be able to scale back some questions, or you may need to probe more deeply on others.

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**BACKGROUND, ROLE AND CONTEXT**

**[Note:** If the respondent was interviewed in spring 2011, start with Question 1. If not interviewed previously, start with Question 3.]

**[If interviewed previously]: Thanks for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation [the conversation you had with my colleague] last spring to talk about any overall changes that may have occurred at your school this year, and then particularly with regard to your role.**

- 1. [If interviewed previously]: First, to what extent have there been any overall changes at your school from last year to this year? Why? Please explain.**
- 2. [If interviewed previously]: Has your role changed at all since we last spoke [since you were last interviewed]? If so, in what ways?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- To what extent do you provide support to the ELL teachers, content teachers with ELL students, or ELL students?

**[If not interviewed previously]: Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I'd like to start by asking about your role at this school and then a bit about your background. [We want to get a better understanding about this staff member's role at the school before we discuss his/her background.]**

- 3. [If not interviewed previously]: What is your role in the school? What is your role with regard to the implementation of SIG in your school?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What does your role entail? What are your typical day-to-day activities?
- Can you describe your work with teachers? With students?

4. *[If not interviewed previously]:* **Can you tell me a bit about your background?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How many years have you been in the district?
- Have you worked with ELL students or worked on issues related to ELL students?
- Experience in low-performing schools

5. *[If not interviewed previously]:* **Now let's talk about your school as a whole. What would you say are its key strengths? In what ways could it improve?**

***Listen for:***

- Familiarity with history/prior reforms of the school
- Awareness of social context of the school
- Fit between perceived challenges and coach's skill set/experience
- Stability of leadership

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## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

6. **What are the key priorities at your school this year?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Who decides on the main priorities?
- Would all or the majority of staff agree that these are the main priorities?
- To what extent do you think the staff is committed to achieving them?

7. **Are there any goals or priorities specific to ELL students? If so, what are they? What is the rationale behind these priorities?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How does instruction for ELL students fit into the larger vision for instructional improvement at the school?
- How were the priorities selected? Who selected them?

8. **Next, I'd like to talk specifically about the improvement strategies being implemented at your school. Last year we heard about *[insert 2 or 3 strategies here]*. Can you describe some of the improvement activities or strategies that are being implemented this year?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How/why were these activities or strategies selected? Who selected them?
- To what extent do the activities or strategies fit the needs of the school and/or students?
- What is your role in implementing these strategies?
- Have these strategies changed from last year, and if so, how? Why?
- *[If changed]:* Have the changes been welcomed or not? Why?
- *[If haven't changed]:* To what extent are you satisfied with these strategies?

9. **Have there been areas in which the school improved from last year to this year? *[If yes:]* What do you consider the areas in which the school improved the most during the last year? In what areas does the school still need to improve? How do you know?**

**Listen for:**

- Improved teacher morale
- Leadership/teacher stability
- Improved student attendance/behavior
- Improved student performance on tests
- More parent/community involvement
- More use of data
- More student supports

**10. I know some of the initiatives are relatively new to your school, but do you have any reflections on the strengths and weaknesses so far?** *[Interviewer provide examples of how the SIG resources have been used based on improvement strategies discussed in the earlier questions]*

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Do you feel that certain components might be more difficult to implement than others?
- What are some of the challenges to implementation?

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## **ELL STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTION**

**Next, I'd like to turn from the school to the students. A primary area of focus for this fall's visit is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students at your school and the ways in which you go about addressing their needs.**

**11. First, can you tell me a bit about the students in your school?**

**Listen for:**

- Any subgroups mentioned, e.g., ELLs, special ed, African American boys, etc.

**12. How would you describe the ELL students, in particular?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Size and nature of ELL population (including multiple cultures/languages represented, language backgrounds and levels, levels of prior education)

**13. What do you see as the primary strengths that ELL students bring to your school?**

**14. What do you see as the primary needs of your ELL students?**

**15. What are the main instructional programs and supports in place for the ELL students at your school? Please describe any specialized classes, programs and/or instructional supports available for ELLs.** *(This could include bilingual program, ESL classes, sheltered content classes, newcomer classes, individual tutors, bilingual aides, etc.)*

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What is the focus?
- Which students participate?
- How long have these programs been in place?

- How were the priorities selected? Who selected them?
- What is their perceived effectiveness? How do you know if they are effective?
- Use of native language in classes with ELL students?
- Are there specific interventions available to ELL students who are struggling beyond the classroom? (such as, Response to Intervention or RtI)

**16. How is content made accessible for ELL students?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Can you give examples from specific teachers?
- How is instruction individualized for ELL students in content classes?
- How English language instruction is integrated with content instruction?

**17. [If not already mentioned]: How does your school or teachers address the language needs of your ELL students?**

*Listen for:*

- Use of native language
- ESL classes, individual tutors, bilingual aides, etc.

**18. Taking into account the activities and strategies being implemented at your school this year, and the programs and practices in place for ELL students in particular, how well do you think your school is addressing the needs of ELL students? Please explain.**

**19. What challenges, if any, do you face with regard to improving academic outcomes of the school's ELL students?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students at your school? And how do you address them?

**20. How do you determine if the school is achieving its goals for ELL students?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- How do you assess progress made with ELL students?

**21. What is your role in the implementation of the strategies, activities, or programs that we've been discussing? Do you feel prepared to implement the strategies, activities, or programs?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What preparation did you get in advance of implementing these strategies?
- How clear was the guidance that was provided to implement the strategies?
- What is /was your role in preparing and guiding teachers as they implement these strategies?

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**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**22. In what ways are the parents of ELL students involved in their child(ren)'s education? Are there any programs or supports in place at your school that encourage parents to become involved?**



***Listen for:***

- Supports in place that benefit ELL parents, such as parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, parent liaisons, etc.
- Extent to which parents access the supports
- Ways in which the unique needs of ELL parents are accommodated (such as, communication in home language).

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## **STAFF CAPACITY**

**I'd now like to turn to talking about the staff in this school and each of your abilities to meet the needs of ELL students.**

**23. How would you describe teachers' capacity to meet the needs of ELL students at this school? In what areas are they strong? And in what areas do they need to improve?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Any differences between capacity of content teachers and ELL teachers
- Any changes in teacher capacity over time

**24. What are the main types of professional development available for teachers in your school? Is any professional development specifically focused on issues related to ELL students? If so, please describe it.**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What is the focus of the PD?
- To what extent do teachers and school administrators participate in these PD activities?
- What role do you play providing the PD described?
- Any differences in what is provided for ELL specialist teachers vs. content area teachers?
- Is any PD mandatory? Are there incentives to participate in PD?

**25. Where do you turn for assistance on ELL issues or to build your own professional knowledge in this area?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What kinds of PD do you participate in? What is the focus? Who provides it?
- Do you formally or informally communicate with other ELL staff in the district? How frequently? What do you discuss?

**26. In what ways does the school leadership support you in your work? What support do you receive from the district, external support providers, or other sources?**

***Listen for:***

- Any support specifically related to ELL students and their teachers? If so, what?
- Any support the school receives from the state, district, external support provider or other source

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**CLOSE**

**27. Taking into account everything we've discussed, what are your thoughts on the progress of ELL students at your school? What do you think would be needed to ensure greater progress for these students?**

**28. Is there anything else I haven't asked that you'd like to tell me about your school or your ELL students?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## External Support Provider Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per interview. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>Support Provider(s):</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School(s):</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>

### Interview: External Support Provider(s)

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me.

As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA. The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collection information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because external support providers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I've just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

**Note to the interviewer:** Not all schools will have an external support provider. You will need to work with the school to identify the best respondent for this interview, if any. There are many different types of external support providers who may be working with SIG schools. Some may be affiliated with a private organization that specializes in management of low-performing schools. Others may be under contract with the district to focus on a specific aspect of the school, such as mathematics, special education, or leadership. Still others may be affiliated with the state, and have worked through the state system of support in the past. Before conducting this interview, you should obtain background information on the key support providers, their affiliation, and role in the school, so you can appropriately tailor these questions.

Some questions are intended for external support providers who were previously interviewed. Other questions are intended for external support providers who were not previously interviewed – questions for these targeted respondent types are indicated at the beginning of the question. In most cases, questions without a specified respondent type should be asked of all respondents.

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## SUPPORT PROVIDER(S) BACKGROUND AND ROLE

**[Note:** If this external support provider was not interviewed in spring 2011, start with Question 1. If interviewed previously, start with Question 6.]

**[If not interviewed previously]: Thanks for taking the time to talk with me today. I'd like to start by asking a bit about your background and your role in supporting the work at [this school].**

1. **[If not interviewed previously:] First, I'd like to know a bit about your background. What is your expertise? What kind of training have you had?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What is your background in education? Were you ever a teacher or administrator?
- Do you have a particular area of expertise? Please describe.
- What types of schools do you work with most often? (Elementary, middle, high? Traditional vs. charter?)
- How many years have you been involved with support for low-performing schools?

2. **[If not interviewed previously, and if the external provider is part of an organization] How long have you been affiliated with [name of organization]? What is the background or expertise of the organization? What kind of training does your organization provide?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How many low-performing schools does your organization work with?
- Does the organization only work in the district, or state? In how many other districts/states does the organization work?

3. **[If not interviewed previously:] How many schools are you personally currently working with? How many are low performing?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How many SIG schools, specifically?
- Do you focus on a particular aspect of support? [e.g., leadership, instruction, etc.]

4. *[If not interviewed previously:]* **How and when did you come to be the support provider for the *[insert name]* school?**

*[Note: Try to get specific information for how a provider is matched or connected with a school and listen for the history of the school.]*

**Listen for:**

- *[If working for a larger organization/or state]* Are you assigned a particular region or state?
- Did you respond to a request from the state or district for proposals to become a provider for this particular district/state?

*[If interviewed previously]:* **Thanks for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation from last spring to talk about any changes that may have occurred.**

5. *[If interviewed previously:]* **Has your work with *[school]* changed at all since we last spoke (or, since you were last interviewed)? If so, in what ways?**
6. *[If not interviewed previously]* **What are your main responsibilities/roles within this school? To whom are you responsible? Has your role changed during the last year? ?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How and to whom are you held accountable for the work you do?

7. **What are your main priorities for your work with this school this year? Who sets these priorities? How were these priorities chosen?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Any priorities specifically related to ELL students and their teachers? If so, what are they?
- Have there been any changes to your priorities since last year?
- *[If changes:]* Did your work last year contribute to the changes you made this year?

8. **Please describe a typical week of work *[or visit]* to the school. Who do you work with, and what are your specific activities? Why? What do you hope to accomplish?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Who is being targeted? Why?
- Who decided that these should be the people targeted?
- Do you work with different staff each time? Why?

9. **I'd like to learn how you began the school year this fall. What specific activities did you start with this school year? Why?**

**Listen for:**

- Did you look at data? (test scores, etc.) or conduct a needs assessment in your first introduction to the school?

**Next, I'd like to ask about the role of any other support providers to the school and your relationship with them. Are there any other support providers working with the school?**

10. *[Ask if there is more than one external support provider—ask only if new providers or at schools where another provider was added]* **Does your role differ from the role of the other external support provider(s)? How do you interact and share information with one another?**
- 

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

*[Note: Tailor these questions to the type of external support provider being interviewed. Some may not know about the changes to the school.]*

11. *[If not interviewed previously:]* **Let's talk about this school as a whole. What would you say are its key strengths? In what ways could it improve?**
12. *[If previously interviewed]* **What would you say are this school's key strengths this year?**
13. **What challenges does the school face this year? How, if at all, are these different from last year?**
- 

## GOALS AND KEY STRATEGIES

*[Note: The external provider support provider may be working with several case study schools in a district or across the state. In these instances, the following questions should be asked for each core and ELL school.]*

14. **In your opinion, is there a clear set of goals for the school as a whole? If so, what are they?**
15. *[If previously interviewed:]* **Thanks for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation from last spring and talk about key improvement strategies for this school year. You discussed *[insert 2 or strategies here]* last year (or if not interviewed, we heard about *[insert 2 or 3 strategies here]*). To what extent has there been continuity or changes from last year to this year? Why?**

*Listen for:*

- What is similar and what is different?
  - Any big contextual changes?
  - Changes in staff capacity?
  - Changes in climate (e.g., teacher morale, student behavior) changes?
  - Changes in state/district support? Changes in SIG support?
- 

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

16. **I'd like to ask you about the principal and other leaders at this school. Let's start with the principal. What role does he/she play at the school?**
17. **Who are the other leaders at the school, and what role(s) do he/she/they play? Do you have any interaction with them?**

**Listen for:**

- Who is involved in decision-making
- Who sets priorities
- What are the leader(s)' strengths/weaknesses

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## ELL ISSUES

One of the focus areas for this fall's visit is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students at this school and the ways in which you and the school go about addressing their needs.

**18. Are there any goals for the school specific to ELL students? In what ways does your work with the school support those goals?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Do you feel prepared to work with this group of students?
- Have you received any training in ELL instruction?
- As a support provider, where do you turn for assistance on ELL issues or to build your own professional knowledge in this area?

**19. [If not already mentioned, for ELL schools only:] Are there any key improvement activities or strategies specifically related to ELL students? If so, what are they? What is the rationale behind these strategies? And to what extent do you feel they are effective?**

**Listen for:**

- How were these strategies decided upon/designed?
- Were you involved in these decisions?

**20. What challenges, if any, does this school face with regard to improving academic outcomes for ELL students?**

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## STATE AND DISTRICT ROLES

**Note to interviewer:** Ask these questions only if the external support provider has not been interviewed previously.

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**21. [If not previously interviewed] What support or guidance has the state provided you in working with this school, if any? Please describe.**

**22. [If not previously interviewed] In your role as a support provider for the SIG school(s), do you work with district staff? If yes, how are the district staff engaged in your work?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How much time is spent with district staff?
- What is the primary purpose for working with the district staff (e.g., procuring resources, building relationships, etc.)?
- [If the respondent works with more than one SIG school] Does this level of involvement vary by school?



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## REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

**23. Considering your earlier comments about how the school changed from last year to this year, have there been any improvements? [If yes:] What do you consider the biggest improvements? In what areas does the school still need to improve? How do you know?**

***Things to listen for:***

- Improved teacher morale
- Leadership/teacher stability
- Improved student attendance/behavior
- Improved student performance on tests
- More parent/community involvement
- More use of data
- More student supports

**24. Is there anything I haven't asked you about the SIG initiative or ELL practices [for schools in ELL study] in this school that you'd like to comment on?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## Instructional Coach Interview Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per interview. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>
<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Interviewee's Role:</b>

### Interview: Instructional Coach

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA.

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because instructional coaches play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

**Our visit this fall particularly focuses on practices related to English language learners (ELLs). The participation of your school, along with 10 others across the country, will provide us with an in-depth understanding of how the SIG process plays out in schools with high numbers of ELL students.**

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

**Notes to interviewer:**

Some questions are intended for instructional coaches who were previously interviewed. Other questions are intended for coaches who were not previously interviewed – questions for these targeted respondent types are indicated at the beginning of the question. In most cases, questions without a specified respondent type should be asked of all respondents.

In some cases, you may interview a coach who is not new to the school, but who was not interviewed previously due to a scheduling conflict or because (s)he had a different job last year. Therefore, you should carefully review the school context and background of the person you interview and adapt the questions on this protocol to make them appropriate for your respondent and to build on the information gathered in previous interviews at this school. Based on what you've already learned, you may be able to scale back some questions, or you may need to probe more deeply on others.

If there is more than one instructional coach and they focus on different topics/subjects, (e.g., literacy or math), interview both of them. If the instructional coach is a peer coach, tailor the questions appropriately.

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**BACKGROUND AND ROLE**

**[Note:** If this coach was not interviewed in spring 2011, start with Question 1. If interviewed previously, start with Question 5.]

**[If not interviewed previously]: Thanks for taking the time to talk with me. I'd like to start by asking a bit about your background and your role as an instructional coach.**

1. **[If not interviewed previously:] What were your teaching experiences before working as an instructional coach? How long have you been a coach?**

**Listen for:**

- How many years have you worked at this school and district? In what capacities?
- How did you become a coach at this school?
- Do you have any particular expertise related to ELL students?

2. **[If not interviewed previously:] Did you receive any specific training to be an instructional coach?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Who conducted the training? How long did it last?
- How long ago did you receive this training?

3. **[If not interviewed previously] What are the main priorities for your work with teachers? Why?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What are your goals for working with teachers? What do you want them to learn or to accomplish?
- How do you know if you have been successful with the teachers you work with?

4. **[If not interviewed previously] How were those priorities determined? By whom?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Were data from assessments—for example standardized tests or teacher observations--used to identify these priorities?
- What was your role in identifying what to focus on? What role did the principal, other school leadership, and the district play, if any?

*[If interviewed previously]:* **Thanks for talking with us again this fall. I'd like to follow up on our conversation [the conversation you had with my colleague] last spring to talk about your role and any changes that may have occurred at your school this year.**

- 5. I'd like to know about your role in the school and your relationship with the teachers. What can you tell me about your responsibilities and how you provide support to teachers? How do you determine which teachers to work with?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Can you describe when and how you work with teachers? (*What context, how frequently*)
- Do you work with teachers with particular characteristics – novice teachers, teachers with large number of ELL and special ed students, teachers of a certain grade?

- 6. *[If interviewed previously]:* To what extent have there been changes at your school from last year to this year? Has your role changed at all since we last spoke [*since you were last interviewed*]? Why? Please explain.**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- To what extent do you provide support to the ELL teachers, content teachers with ELL students, or ELL students?

- 7. *[If interviewed previously]* Last spring you mentioned that some of your priorities were [*insert 2 or 3 priorities here*]. What are the main priorities for your work with teachers this year? Why?**

**Listen for:**

- Have priorities changed during the last year?

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What are your goals for working with teachers? What do you want them to learn or to accomplish?
- How do you know if you have been successful with the teachers you work with?

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## **SCHOOL CONTEXT AND KEY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES**

*[Note: Coaches may not be familiar with all aspects of the strategies the school is adopting, in which case the phrasing of these questions may need to be modified to more generally refer to the school's improvement efforts this year and to ask about those strategies that are most relevant to this respondent. In addition, if the respondent was previously interviewed, tailor the questions below to build on what the respondent already said – probe on specific implementation plans for this school year and the coach's role in those plans.]*

**Next, I'd like to talk about your school as a whole, and then we'll touch on the key activities and strategies being implemented in your school this year, particularly those strategies most closely related to instruction and your work with teachers.**

8. *[If not interviewed previously.]* **What would you say are [ school's] key strengths? In what ways could it improve?**

***Listen for:***

- Familiarity with school history and prior reform efforts at the school
- Awareness of social context of the school
- Fit between perceived challenges and coach's skill set/experience
- Stability of leadership

9. **I'd like to learn how you began the school year this fall. How did you and the teachers at your school get ready for this school year?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Extent to which principal, teachers and/or coaches analyzed student data in planning for the school year
- Extent to which examination of student data influenced instructional programs
- Extent to which they talked about lessons from the previous year and adjustments they should make.
- Were the test scores (from spring) different than what staff expected at the end of last year?

10. **Is there a clear set of goals for your school as a whole? If so, what are they?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Are the goals academic or behavioral in nature?
- To what extent do school staff share a common vision?
- Is responsibility for the school improvement goals shared among all staff?

**I'd like to talk about whether there has been continuity or changes from last year to last year to this year, particularly those most closely related to instruction and your work with teachers.**

11. **Last year we heard about *[insert 2 or 3 strategies here]*. Can you describe some of the improvement activities or strategies that are being implemented this year? To what extent are these strategies different or the same from what was in place last year? Why? Please explain.**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Was data used in making decisions in selecting activities or strategies? If so, what types of data?
- Any strategies/activities that address (or will address) the needs of ELL students, or other subgroups, e.g., special ed, African American boys, etc.
- How/why were these activities or strategies selected? (Listen for data used in making decisions.)
- Who selected them?
- To what extent do the activities or strategies fit the needs of the school and/or students?
- *[If changed]:* In what ways have they changed? Why?
- *[If changed]:* Have the changes been welcomed or not? Why?
- *[If haven't changed]:* To what extent are you satisfied with these strategies?

**12. Have there been areas in which the school improved from last year to this year? [If yes:] What do you consider the areas in which the school improved the most during the last year? In what areas does the school still need to improve? How do you know?**

*Listen for:*

- Improved teacher morale
- Leadership/teacher stability
- Improved student attendance/behavior
- Improved student performance on tests
- More parent/community involvement
- More use of data
- More student supports

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## **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

**13. [For core schools only] Who provides leadership for instruction at your school? In what ways do each of the individuals you mentioned provide leadership? In what areas do they provide leadership?**

*Listen for:*

- How are decisions made in selection of activities or strategies, e.g., staffing/hiring, curriculum and instruction, control over the school, PD, etc.
- Who is involved in decision-making?
- Who sets priorities?

**14. To what extent are you involved in the school's decision-making process? What avenues are available to coaches to provide their input? Please describe.**

**15. In what ways does the school leadership support you in your work?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Any support specifically related to ELL students and their teachers? If so, what?

**16. What type of support do you receive from the district, external support provider or any other source?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Any support specifically related to ELL students and their teachers? If so, what?

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## **ELL STUDENTS**

**Next, I'd like to turn from the school to the students. A primary area of focus for this fall's visit is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students at your school and the ways in which you go about addressing their needs.**

**17. [If not already mentioned] First, can you tell me a bit about the students at your school?**

**Listen for:**

- Any subgroups mentioned, e.g., ELLs, special ed, African American boys, etc.

**18. How would you describe the ELL students, in particular?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What is the size and nature of the ELL population? (e.g. multiple cultures/languages represented, language backgrounds and levels, levels of prior education)

**19. What do you see as the primary strengths that ELL students bring to your school?**

**[Interviewer note: Pause between asking these two sub-questions] What do you see as the primary needs of your ELL students? How are those needs addressed?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Do these needs differ substantially among different groups of ELLs? If so, how are the needs of each of these groups addressed?

**20. [If not already mentioned:] Earlier you mentioned some goals for your school as a whole. Are there also goals specific to ELL students? If so, what are they?**

**21. What are the main instructional programs and supports in place for the ELL students at your school? Please describe any specialized classes, programs and/or instructional supports available for ELLs. (This could include bilingual program, ESL classes, sheltered content classes, newcomer classes, individual tutors, bilingual aides, etc.)**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What is the focus?
- Which students participate?
- How long have these programs been in place?
- How were the priorities selected? Who selected them?
- What is their perceived effectiveness? How do you know if they are effective?
- Use of native language in classes with ELL students?
- Are there specific interventions available to ELL students who are struggling beyond the classroom? (such as, Response to Intervention or RtI)

**22. [If not already mentioned:] You also mentioned some activities or strategies for your school overall. Are there also activities or strategies in place to specifically address ELL students? What is the rationale behind these strategies?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Are these new or pre-existing strategies? [If new] How do these strategies differ from previous practice? [If pre-existing], have they changed since SIG?
- How does instruction for ELL students fit into the larger vision for instructional improvement at the school?

**23. How is content made accessible for ELL students?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Can you give examples from specific teachers you coach??
- How is instruction individualized for ELL students in content classes?
- How English language instruction is integrated with content instruction?



**24. What challenges, if any, do you face with regard to improving outcomes of the ELL students at your school (e.g. academic and language outcomes)? How do you address them?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students at your school? How do you address them?

*Listen for:*

- Data used to assess outcomes for ELLs

**25. [If coach has a role in working with parent; not necessary to ask if asked of school ELL coordinator:] In what ways are the parents of ELL students involved in their child(ren)'s education? Are there any programs or supports in place at your school that benefit parents of ELL students?**

*Listen for:*

- Ways in which ELL parents are encouraged to become involved
- Supports in place that benefit ELL parents, such as parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, parent liaisons, etc.
- Extent to which parents access the supports
- Ways in which the unique needs of ELL parents are accommodated (such as, communication in home language).

---

## **STAFF CAPACITY**

**I'd now like to turn to talking about teachers in this school and their abilities to meet the needs of ELL students.**

**26. How would you describe teachers' capacity to meet the needs of ELL students at this school? In what areas are they strong? And in what areas do they need to improve?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Any differences between capacity of content teachers and ELL teachers?
- Any changes in teacher capacity over time?

**27. What are the main types of professional learning activities available at your school that are designed to improve teachers' work with ELL students? How are they intended to help teachers to improve their work with ELL students?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What is the focus of the PD?
- To what extent do teachers and school administrators participate in these PD activities?
- What role do you play providing the PD described?
- Any differences in what is provided for ELL specialist teachers vs. content area teachers?
- Is any PD mandatory?

**28. As a coach, where do you turn for assistance on ELL issues or to build your own professional knowledge in this area?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Have you received professional development related to ELL teachers or students?
  - Do you formally or informally communicate with other instructional coaches in the district, state? How frequently? What do you discuss?
- 

**CLOSE**

**29. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your school's priorities with regard to ELL students, your role in this school, and/or the activities or strategies that I haven't asked you?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## Teachers of ELL Students Focus Group Protocol (Elementary and High School)

ELL Special Topics  
Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School(s):</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>

### Focus Group: Teachers of ELL Students

Teacher Name	Grade	Subject Area

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [*nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research*], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA.

#### *Study of School Turnaround (SST)*

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24 districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because teachers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

The focus of today's visit relates specifically to English language learners. During our conversation, I'll be asking you about your students, your school, your approaches to instruction, any professional development you are involved in, and the role of parents – paying particular attention to your ELL students.

Are there any questions right now about the study or why we are here?

#### *Privacy*

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adhere to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

#### *Today's Discussion*

Next, I'd like to say a few things about the process for this discussion.

I'll be asking you some questions and *[other site visitor]* will be taking notes. We'd like to give everyone a chance to express their opinions. We want you to feel comfortable in saying what you really think and feel, as your ideas and opinions are important to us. It is OK to disagree with one another. We'd like to hear everyone's perspective.

As we've already mentioned, we will not share what we discuss here with other people at your school or district. Whatever you express in this room stays in this room and we're asking that you make the same commitment. Please keep today's discussion confidential and do not repeat it to others in your district or at your school. That way people can feel safe being honest. Agreed?

#### *Recording*

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes (except where noted)**. It is likely that the respondents will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

#### **Note to interviewer:**

*In some ELL core schools, the teachers participating in this focus group may have been interviewed previously. If so, ask them to verify their current role at the school, in case there have been any changes.*

*The teachers participating in the focus group may be teachers who specialize in ELL instruction or content teachers who have ELL students in their classes. The discussion will need to be tailored toward the role of the participating teachers.*

*Further, some questions should be tailored depending on whether the group are elementary or secondary teachers.*

---

## **TEACHER BACKGROUND AND ROLE**

- 1. Let's start by talking a bit about your background, including how long you've been a teacher and what your role(s) has been in this school. I'd like to ask each of you to introduce yourselves by saying your first name and the subjects and grades you teach. Also, please specify your role in teaching English language learners, if you have one (such as, sheltered content teacher, ELL specialist, etc.).**

**Listen for:**

- How many years have you worked at this school? In what capacities, e.g., dept. chair, coach, group leader, technology mentor?
- How many years have you worked in this district? [*If teacher is new*, Where were you teaching prior to this school? How were you recruited?
- If teacher serves additional role(s) (e.g. instructional leader), what are your responsibilities for those role(s)?

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- Can you tell me a little about the students in your classes?

---

## INSTRUCTION FOR ELL STUDENTS

As I mentioned, a primary area of focus for this fall's visit is English language learners. So, I'm interested in learning about the ELL students at your school and the ways in which your school goes about addressing their needs.

2. I'll ask specifically about ELL students in a minute, but first, can you tell me a bit about the students in your school?

**Listen for:**

- Any subgroups mentioned, e.g., ELLs, special ed, African American boys, etc.

3. How would you describe the ELL students in your school, in particular?

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- [*If not mentioned earlier*] How many ELL students are in your classes? What are their language levels and backgrounds?
- [*If not mentioned earlier*] Do you have any particular background in teaching ELL students?

4. What are the main instructional programs and supports in place for the ELL students at your school? Please describe any specialized classes, programs and/or instructional supports available for ELLs. (*This could include bilingual program, ESL classes, sheltered content classes, newcomer classes, individual tutors, bilingual aides, etc.*)

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- What is the focus?
- Which students participate?
- How long have these programs been in place?
- How were the priorities selected? Who selected them?
- What is their perceived effectiveness? How do you know if they are effective?
- Use of native language in classes with ELL students?
- Are there specific interventions available to ELL students who are struggling beyond the classroom? (such as, Response to Intervention or RtI)

5. **Next, I'd like to get a sense of how you address the instructional needs of ELL students in your classes. How do you address the needs of ELL students? What strategies and resources are available within your school to help you meet the needs of your ELL students?**

*Listen for:*

- School/district initiatives that relate to ELLs
- Any specific approaches indicated by state or external providers

6. **How do you go about deciding what you'll teach and how you'll teach it? Is there a specific approach you are expected to use for serving ELL students?**

*Listen for:*

- Use of native language in classes with ELL students
- Language support for ELL students
- Content support for ELL students

7. **What challenges, if any, do you face with regard to improving academic outcomes of your ELL students?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students in your school? And how do you address them?
- What challenges and constraints do you face in addressing the needs of ELL students in your classroom? And how do you address them?

8. **What kind of academic and social supports are available at your school to help the students in your class(es) succeed (e.g., tutoring, after-school programs, wraparound services, community based intervention services, college/career counseling)? Are any supports specifically targeted toward ELLs?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Are these services helpful? Why or why not?
- Are there additional supports that you think need to be put in place for ELL students?

---

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

9. **In what ways are the parents of ELL students involved in their child(ren)'s education?**

*Listen for:*

- Ways in which ELL parents are encouraged to become involved
- Supports in place that benefit ELL parents, such as parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, parent liaisons, etc.
- Extent to which parents access the supports
- Ways in which the unique needs of ELL parents are accommodated (such as communication in home language).

---

## YOUR SCHOOL

**10. Next, I'd like to talk about your school as a whole. What would you say are [school's] key strengths? In what ways could it improve?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What did you hear about the school before you started teaching? Is it different from what you are experiencing now?
- Does your school have academic and behavioral standards? Do they promote or hinder success?

**11. Is there a clear set of goals for your school as a whole? If so, what are they? Are there any goals specific to ELLs? If so, what are they?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- To what extent do school staff share a common vision?
- Where do the goals come from and how do they affect what you do in your classroom?
- Do the goals include academic and behavioral standards?
- Does the school have high expectations for its students?
- Is responsibility for school improvement goals shared among all staff?

**12. [For core schools only]: Who are the key leaders for instruction in this school, and to what extent do you think they are effective in advocating for and supporting your work with ELL students?**

*Listen for: [Leadership in]:*

- Providing instructional leadership?
- Spending sufficient time in classrooms?
- Supporting the needs of ELL students?
- Developing vision or goals for the school?
- Motivating teachers and students?
- Evaluating teachers?
- Building relationships with parents of ELL students and others outside the school?
- Making sure that things run smoothly on campus?

**13. To what extent are teachers at this school involved in the decision-making? What avenues are available to teachers to provide their input? Please describe.**

---

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

**14. How are teachers at this school assigned to work with ELL students? Do you feel prepared to teach the classes you've been assigned?**

*Listen for:*

- Levels of teacher experience and qualifications with regard to ELL instruction and extent to which those are considered in assigning teachers to classes with ELLs
- Attitudes toward being assigned ELL classes



**15. What are the main professional learning activities available to teachers? In what ways are those professional learning activities helpful to you (or not) for meeting your specific needs regarding your ELL students?** [Please describe each activity in terms of who provides it, who participates, amount and length of time, and the content.]

*Listen for:*

- Types of professional learning available to teachers of ELLs and extent to which they access it
- Extent to which professional development specific to ELL students is part of school wide approach to improvement
- Any differences in what mainstream vs. ELL teachers receive
- Who provides the professional learning (school, district, external support provider, etc.)
- Are there adequate opportunities during the school day/week for you to interact with others regarding teaching?
- Has the support been enough for you to feel prepared to teach ELL students? Will you be getting additional support?
- Are the supports you received this school year different than prior support? Explain.

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**CLOSE**

**16. To close, is there anything I haven't asked you about your school and/or your ELL practices that you'd like to comment on?**

**Thanks again for your time. We very much appreciate your participation in this important study.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## Parents of ELL Students Focus Group Protocol

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

District:	Interviewer:
School(s):	Date/Time:

### Focus Group: Parents of ELL Students

#### Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me this morning/afternoon. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background on our work, and answer any questions you might have for me. As you probably know, I work for an independent non-profit research organization called the American Institutes for Research [*nonpartisan research organization called Mathematica Policy Research*], and we are conducting a study for the U.S. Department of Education on the implementation of the School Improvement Grants (called SIG) under ARRA.

#### *Study of School Turnaround (SST)*

The study is taking place in 6 states, 24, districts, and 60 schools throughout the country; they were selected so that the study could collect information on implementation of the SIG from a diverse array of SIG grantees. More specifically, we want to learn about the change process that schools go through as they are working to turn around a history of low performance. Because teachers play an important role in this process, we want to gain your perspective on the SIG program.

We are not evaluating your school or your children but are trying to learn lessons that help make the program better. To do this, it is important that we hear not only from teachers and administrators but also from parents and community members. We see this as an opportunity for you to voice your opinions to the federal department of education. The focus of today's visit relates specifically to English language learners. During our conversation, I'll be asking about your children, your school, and the role of parents – paying particular attention to how issues affect ELL students.

#### *Privacy*

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adheres to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). **The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.** We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

I'd like to ask you to sign a consent form before we begin. It outlines some of the issues I just mentioned with regard to privacy. Please take a minute to read it and let me know if you have any questions. There are two copies, one is for your records, and the other, to be signed by you, is for me to keep in my files.

#### *Today's Discussion*

Next, I'd like to say a few things about the process for this discussion.

I'll be asking you some questions and [*other site visitor*] will be taking notes. We'd like to give everyone a chance to express their opinions. We want you to feel comfortable in saying what you really think and feel, as your ideas and opinions are important to us. It is OK to disagree with one another. We'd like to hear everyone's perspective. We would really like to hear from each of you. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in all of your

opinions and feelings. We ask only that one person speak at a time during the discussion. If at any time you would like clarification about any of the questions, please feel free to interrupt.

#### *Recording*

If you don't mind, I would like to record this interview simply for note-taking purposes. No one outside of our research team will hear the recording; it is only for my own reference to improve the accuracy of my notes. If you would like me to turn off the recorder at any point, just let me know. Would that be OK?

Do any of you have any questions before we begin?

**Note to interviewer:** *Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.*

#### **Notes to interviewer:**

*It is important that the group be comfortable and that they be fully aware of the purpose of the discussion and how the focus group will proceed. Time is limited, so be sure to allocate time accordingly. Strive for an informal atmosphere, and encourage broad participation to the extent possible. Pass out paper and markers to make name tag tents. Then go around the room so everyone can say their first name.*

*In some ELL core schools, the parents participating in this focus group may have been interviewed previously.*

---

## **BACKGROUND**

- 1. Let's start by introducing ourselves. Please tell me your first name, the language you speak at home, and the grade(s) your children are in.**

#### **Probe if not mentioned:**

- Grade levels for children attending this school
- How long they've had children at the school

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## **STUDENT SUPPORTS**

**I'd like to ask you about your children who attend this school and any school programs they participate in, especially programs to help them learn English.**

- 2. Do your children participate in any special programs or classes for students who are learning English? Please describe.** *[This question can be tailored to what you already know about ELL programs in place at the school.]*

#### **Listen for:**

- School practices specifically designed for ELLs, such as ESL classes, bilingual classes, sheltered content, etc.
- Any ELL instructional practices, programs or supports mentioned by school staff

- 3. Do you have a choice about what program(s) your child is enrolled in? How did you make that choice?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What information did you receive from the district or school to help you make the decision?
- How was that information communicated to you?

**4. How do you know whether your child is doing well in school? How do you know what they need help with? How is that information communicated to you?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Does your child's teacher or other school staff talk to you about how your child(ren) is doing?
- Are you pleased with the school staff's availability and willingness to talk with you about your child(ren) and the school?
- Is the communication adequate? Would you like more?
- Do you receive communications in your own language? Is there someone at the school you can talk to who speaks your language?
- In what ways could the school be more "open"?

**5. When you have a question about your child's progress at school, who do you go to? How often? For what purpose?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- Extent to which the needs of ELL parents are accommodated
- What type of help do you receive? Is it useful? Why/why not?

**6. Does your school offer any support or recognition for students who are doing well in their classes (e.g., honors programs, awards, enrichment activities, etc.)? If so, which ones have your children utilized? Are they helpful?**

**7. If your child is having difficulty in school, who can they turn to for help (e.g., teacher, another student, parent or family member, community group, etc.)? Has this been helpful? Why or why not?**

**8. Does your school offer any programs or supports for students who are having difficulty in their classes (e.g., after school program, tutoring, etc.)? If so, which ones have your children utilized? Are they helpful?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What type of help do they receive? Is it useful? Why/why not?
- Is there any specific help for students who are learning English? Is it useful? Why/why not?
- Any additional supports, such as tutoring, afterschool programs, wraparound services, community services, etc.?

**9. Do you feel that your children are getting the help and attention they need? Is there anything that would be helpful, but not offered at your school?**

---

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

**10. Next, please tell me a little bit about this school in general. Do you think this is a good school? What are the school's strengths? What would make this a better school?**

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- How about safety? Is this a safe school?
- Do you think the school environment is conducive to learning? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the school leadership? Teachers?
- What kinds of things are there for children to do after school?

**11. Have you seen any changes in the school in the past couple of years? If so, what are your impressions of these changes? Do you think they'll help improve some of the issues in the school that we've talked about?**

***Probe if not mentioned*** [focus on what other respondents have mentioned on the site visit]:

- Changes in school leadership? Changes in staff?
- Changes in instruction?
- Use of assessments?
- Student attendance?
- School climate, e.g., discipline, safety?
- School facilities?
- Student supports?
- Other resources?
- Parent/community involvement?
- Teacher professional development, e.g., training?
- Teacher evaluations?

---

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**12. Do parents have a say in what happens at the school? In what ways do parents provide input?**

***Listen for:***

- Role of ELL parents in decision-making at the school and what types of decisions they are involved in
- Ways in which ELL parents are encouraged to become involved
- How are parents involved in decision-making, including involvement in parent organization or leadership team at the school?

**13. Do you feel involved in the education of your child(ren) at this school?**

***Listen for:***

- Range of ways in which ELL parents are involved, such as help with homework, attending parent conferences, maintaining native language at home, volunteering in classroom, etc.

**14. Do you face any challenges in becoming involved in the education of your child(ren)? If so, what are they?**

**15. Do you participate in any programs, classes or supports for parents at your school? If so, how do they help you?** [This could include parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, parent liaison, etc.]

***Listen for:***

- Programs and supports that specifically target parents of ELLs
- Perceived effectiveness

**16. [If not already mentioned]: Do you participate in any programs or supports that specifically benefit parents of ELL students? Are they useful?**

***Listen for:***

- Supports in place that benefit ELL parents, such as parent outreach programs, parent classes, language classes, bilingual parent liaisons, etc.; extent to which parents access the supports
- Ways in which the unique needs of ELL parents are accommodated (such as, communication in home language).

---

**CLOSE**

**17. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about this school and/or your child(ren)'s learning that I haven't asked you?**

**Thank you for sharing your thoughts and your time today. You have each been extremely valuable in helping us understand more about the school.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## ELL Students Focus Group Protocol (High School Only)

ELL Special Topics  
Fall 2011

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per focus group. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208



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## Study of School Turnaround (SST)

<b>District:</b>	<b>Interviewer:</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>Date/Time:</b>

### Focus Group: ELL Students

Student Name	Grade	Gender

### Introduction

Thank you for speaking with us today. My name is [your name] and I am here with [other site visitor]. We are part of an independent research team contracted by the U.S. Department of Education to study how schools are improving education for their students. We are studying 60 schools across the country, including yours, to learn more about how an initiative is working. We are not evaluating your school or you, but are trying to learn lessons that can help make the program better. To do this, it is important that we hear not only from teachers and administrators but also from students. We see this as an opportunity for you to voice your opinions to your school system and to the federal department of education.

I want to assure you that all research staff on this study adheres to the confidentiality and data protection requirements of IES (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). The data we collect will be used for research purposes only. We will not provide information that identifies you, your school, or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. We will NOT report results in any way that would permit them to be identified with you or any other specific individual. We also will not share what you and I discuss with other people in this district. Our study will identify the states that we visit, but will not disclose the names of the districts or schools in each state. Also, you should know that your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to respond to any questions you do not want to. Please let us know at any time if you would prefer not to participate.

During our session today, we will record the discussion in case we miss something in our notes, but no one outside of the research team will have access to the tape. This session will give you a chance to express your opinions about your school. We want you to feel comfortable in saying what you really think and what you really feel. We hope all of you will give us your ideas since each of your opinions is important to us. There are no right or wrong answers. You might disagree with each other and that's okay since different people often have different experiences and different opinions. It's really okay to disagree with someone but please do it respectfully.

Also, it will also help me if you speak clearly and if you will speak one at a time. The discussion should last about one hour. Finally, I ask that none of you share what you hear with others outside the group, so everyone can feel safe about being honest.

Are there any questions before we get started?

**Note to interviewer:** Throughout the interview, possible probes are set aside following each general question. Asking these questions may help to move the interview pace or may prompt a less talkative respondent. However, **do not feel you need to ask each of these probes**; it is likely that the respondent will cover many of these issues when responding to your initial inquiry. Keep the tone conversational and comfortable.

**Note to interviewer:**

It is important that the group be comfortable and that they be fully aware of the purpose of the discussion and how the focus group will proceed. Time is limited, so be sure to allocate time accordingly. Strive for an informal atmosphere, and encourage broad participation to the extent possible. Pass out paper and markers to make name tag tents. Then go around the room so everyone can say their first name and their grade level.

---

## BACKGROUND

1. **First, I'd like to ask each of you to introduce yourselves by saying your first name, the grade you're in, and any languages you speak in addition to English.**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How long they've been at the school
- How long they've been in the U.S.

---

## SCHOOL CLIMATE

2. **Next, I'd like to ask how you feel about your school. How would you describe your school to a friend who goes to a different school? What do you like best? Least?**

**Probe if not mentioned:**

- How would you describe the other students at your school? Do you generally get along with one another? In what ways do you help one another?
- How would you describe your teachers? Your principal? Extracurricular activities?
- Do you feel that it's a safe place to learn? Why or why not?

3. *[For students who have been at the school for a couple years]:* **Have you seen any changes over the past couple years?**

---

## INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

4. **All of you mentioned that you are bilingual (i.e., you know a language other than English). Do you think this puts you at an advantage at your school? Or at a disadvantage? Why?**
5. **Next, I'd like to ask about the classes you are taking. Do you take any classes that are specifically for students who are learning English? What are they?**

**Listen for:**

- Classes specifically designed for ELLs, such as ESL classes, bilingual classes, sheltered content, etc.
- Any ELL instructional practices or supports mentioned by school staff

6. *[If not already mentioned]*: **What other classes are you taking?**

7. **Are you classes easy or hard for you, particularly your classes that are specifically for students who are learning English? Why?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What makes your classes hard? Is it related to the level of English the teacher uses?

8. **Describe a class (any class) where you feel you learned a lot. What did the teacher do to help you learn?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Can you give examples of teachers doing a good job of providing the help you needed?

9. **Are most of your classes taught in that way? Why/why not?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What makes the difference? The type of class? The teacher? The method of teaching? Etc.?
- Do you think your teachers know what helps you to learn? Why/why not?
- Do you feel that you are learning subjects that are important? Interesting?
- Do you work in groups with other students?
- Do you have one-on-one time with teachers?
- Do you do projects that help you learn?

*Listen for:*

- Extent to which instruction is differentiated based on individual needs of ELLs
- Language support in content classes
- Explicit language instruction

10. **Do you think that teachers at this school want students to do well in school and after graduation? Do teachers think that all students will succeed or just some students? How can you tell?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Are you and your classmates challenged by your teachers to do well? Do you feel that your teachers set high expectations for you and other students?
- Do teachers expect you to do well in class? Do they expect you to graduate? What do you think they expect you to do after graduation?
- Do you think teachers have different expectations for different kinds of students?

11. **How do you know if you're doing well in school, or what you still need to work on?**

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Does your teacher or other school staff talk to you about how you are doing?
- How are you tested? How often?
- Do ELL students have the same tests as other students?
- Do you think your tests are fair? Why or why not?

---

## SUPPORTS FOR ELL STUDENTS

Next, I'd like to find out where you go, and who you can turn to, when you need help with your classes and with learning English. This could include help you get at school and outside of school.

12. If you are having difficulty in your classes, where do you go for help? Is there someone you can turn to (e.g., teacher, another student, parent or family member, community group, etc.)? Has this been helpful? Why or why not?

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Do you get any help outside of school from your parents, other family members, or community programs? If so, what?

13. Does your school offer any programs or supports for students who are having difficulty in their classes (e.g., after school program, tutoring, etc.)? If so, which ones have you utilized? Are they helpful?

14. *[If not already mentioned]:* Does your school offer any specific help as you're learning English? If so, is it helpful?

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- What type of help do you receive? Is it useful? Why/why not?
- As an English language learner, do you get support in your classes? What kind of support? Is it helpful?

15. Is there anything that would be helpful to you, but not offered at your school? What would that be?

---

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

16. In what ways are your parents involved in your education?

*Probe if not mentioned:*

- Are you parents encouraged to become involved in your education? If so, how?
- Do your parents ever meet with your teachers or the principal? If so, why?
- Do you know if your school offers any parent outreach programs, parent classes, such as language classes?
- Do you know if your school attempts to communicate with your parents in their home language?

---

## POST-GRADUATION GOALS

17. What do you think you would like to do after you graduate from high school? What do you expect to do after graduation? How do you think your experience in high school is helping you to achieve your goals after graduation?

***Probe if not mentioned:***

- What are your post-graduation goals?
- How did you arrive at those goals?
- Are your teachers aware of your goals? Parents?

---

**CLOSE**

**18. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about being a student here?**

**Thank you for sharing your thoughts and your time today. You have each been extremely valuable in helping us understand more about your classes, your teachers, and your school.**

# Study of School Turnaround (SST)

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## Teacher Survey

### ELL Special Topics Fall 2011

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Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20208.



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## Study of School Turnaround

Dear Teacher,

We are asking you to complete this survey as part of the Study of School Turnaround. You are receiving this survey because your school has received funds through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

We greatly value the opinion of teachers and hope you will answer this questionnaire. By responding to this survey, you can help policy makers, educators, and researchers better understand how SIG schools are working to improve outcomes for all students.

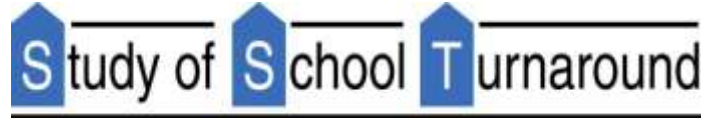
This survey is voluntary. You can decide not to participate, or you can discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, but we encourage you to answer as many as you can. There are no known risks to participating in this survey. This survey is confidential. Your answers will be combined with those of other teachers, and your individual responses will never be linked to you. We will not provide any information that identifies you or your school to anyone outside of the study team, except as required by law.

This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonprofit research organization, in cooperation with Mathematica Policy Research and Decision Information Resources (DIR). This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. For more information about the study, please contact the evaluation team at [SST@dir-research.com](mailto:SST@dir-research.com). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact [IRBChair@air.org](mailto:IRBChair@air.org) or call toll-free 1.800.634.0797.

***Thank you for your participation in this very important effort!***

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1850-0878. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per survey, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

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## TEACHER SURVEY

*Note:* Although terms vary across school districts, for the purposes of this survey, we are using the term *English language learners* (ELLs) to refer to those students who come from a language background other than English and are still acquiring English (i.e., students who have not yet achieved full proficiency in English). This may include students who are fluent in speaking English, but still require support for reading and writing in the content areas.

### Professional Background and Current Teaching Assignment

***Please be sure to answer questions only for the school where you received the survey. We will refer to the school where you received this survey as “this school.”***

**1. How do you classify your main teaching assignment at this school during the current school year (2011–12)?**

***(Select only one response.)***

- Full-time teacher working at this school in a full time teaching capacity
- Full-time teacher working at this school with release time for other duties (e.g., administrative, coaching, etc.)
- Part-time teacher working at this school
- Itinerant teacher (e.g., your assignment requires that you provide instruction at more than one school)
- Long-term substitute (e.g., your assignment requires that you fill the role of a regular teacher on a long-term basis, but you are still considered a substitute)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?**

	Number of years
<b>a.</b> Teaching in total	<input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/> years
<b>b.</b> Teaching at <u>this school</u>	<input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/> years



**3. In the current school year (2011–12), what grade levels do you teach?**

*(Check all that apply.)*

Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Ungraded
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. In the current school year (2011–12), what is your main teaching assignment at this school? That is the field in which you teach the most classes.**

*(Select only one response. If your teaching time is equally divided among 2 or more fields, choose one.)*

- Self-Contained/All Subjects
- English/Language Arts/Reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Sciences (History/Government/Civics/Geography)
- Foreign Language
- Arts/Music
- Special Education
- English as a Second Language (ESL/Bilingual Education)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**5. At this school, how many classes or sections did you teach during your most recent full week of teaching?**

*Note: Please enter in the number of different classes or sections you teach. For example, if you are an elementary school teacher with one class for the full day, please fill in “1”. If you teach multiple classes during the day, please fill in the number of classes you teach over the course of one week.*

Total number of classes or sections:

**6. At this school, how many students do you teach over the course of a week?**

*Note: For example, if you are a grade-level teacher with one class of 25 students, please fill in “25”. If you teach one class with three different sections of 15 students each, please fill in “45”.*

Total number of students:

**7. Counting this year, how many years have you taught at least one class with 15% or more ELLS?**

*(If none, enter 0.)*

Total number of years:

8. In this school, across all your classes how many of the students are ELLs?

Total number of students:

(If none, enter 0.)

If None → Skip to question 15

9. Of the academic classes that you teach at this school, how many classes (or sections) are classified in each of the following categories:

10. (Enter the number of classes in each box below or, if “0,” enter “0” in each row. If you are a teacher of a self-contained classroom, please check “NA” in each row)

Category	Number of classes	NA
a. English as a second language (ESL) or English language development class.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Sheltered content class (i.e., a class where the focus is acquisition of content knowledge in English but scaffolding techniques are used to make the content comprehensible for ELLs).	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Mainstream (non-sheltered) content class with some ELL students.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Mainstream content class with no ELL students.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Class taught in student’s primary language (other than English).	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Class taught in English with some support provided in student’s primary language (such as instructions or clarifications provided in a language other than English).	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Other (please specify):	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Not including English, do you speak any of the home languages of your students?

No → Skip to question 12

Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ → Go to question 11

12. Do you have academic proficiency in any of the languages you listed in question 10 (i.e., able to read and write in an academic setting using these languages)?

No

Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>a.</b> I include topics in my instruction that are relevant to the experiences of ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> When I teach ELL students, I use the same content but with less complex language to make it easier to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> When I teach ELL students, I usually pre-teach (or “frontload”) key vocabulary in order to support their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> When needed, I use my ELL students’ native language to clarify directions or instructional content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> Many of my ELL students are too far behind academically to catch up with their peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> Because ELL students must learn English in addition to content, they should be graded more easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g.</b> I am able to cover as much material with my ELL students as with my English only (EO) students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>a.</b> I have adequate instructional time to effectively address the needs of ELL students in my classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> I have adequate preparation time to effectively address the needs of ELL students in my classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> I have received adequate training on effective instructional practices for teaching ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> I have access to adequate curriculum and instructional materials to address the needs of ELL students in my classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> I have adequate support from other personnel (such as instructional aides or a resource teacher) to address the needs of ELL students in my classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> My school and district provide adequate support services for ELL students and their families (such as translation services, parent outreach programs, parent classes, parent liaisons, home visits, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g.</b> My school and district provide adequate academic supports for ELL students (such as tutoring, academic counseling, before and after school programs, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>h.</b> My school has a clearly defined plan for providing instruction to ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>i.</b> I am able to adequately communicate with the parents of my ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>j.</b> I have adequate knowledge about how students learn an additional language (second language acquisition).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>k.</b> I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the challenges of teaching ELLs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>l.</b> I have strong knowledge about each of my students' home cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**15. In your school, how important is each of the following goals for the education of ELL students?**

	Very important	Moderately important	Not very important	Not at all important
<b>a.</b> Ensuring that all students meet academic performance standards established by the state or district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> Ensuring that all students become proficient in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> Developing students' competence both in the primary language and in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> Providing supports as needed to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Professional Development

**16. Did you participate in any professional development activities during the summer of 2011?**

- No → Skip to question 20  
 Yes → Go to question 16

**17. During the summer of 2011, approximately how many hours total did you spend in each of the following professional development activities?**

*If the answer is “none”, please enter 0.*

Professional Development Activities	Number of hours
<b>a.</b> Workshops, Conferences, Institutes or Seminars.	<input type="text"/>
<b>b.</b> Professional learning community or meeting of colleagues deigned to enhance professional learning.	<input type="text"/>
<b>c.</b> Formal coaching or mentoring.	<input type="text"/>
<b>d.</b> Course extended over several weeks, such as a college course.	<input type="text"/>
<b>e.</b> Other (please specify):	<input type="text"/>

**18. During the summer of 2011, approximately how many of the professional development hours which you mentioned in question 16 were related to the teaching of ELL students?**

**Total number of hours:**

**19. During the summer of 2011, to what extent did the professional development activities in which you participated in focus on any of the following topics related to ELLs?**

	Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	Not at all	N/A
<b>a.</b> Ways to use assessment data to plan instruction for ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> Selecting appropriate instructional materials for ELL students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> Specific instructional strategies to use with ELL students <i>to advance their English proficiency.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> Specific instructional strategies to use with ELL students <i>within content classes.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> Training in language development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**20. During the summer of 2011, to what extent have your professional development activities:**

	Large extent	Moderate extent	Small extent	Not at all	N/A
<b>a.</b> Improved your effectiveness as a teacher of ELLs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> Helped you implement curriculum standards with your ELL students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> Improved your ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of your ELL students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> Increased your expectations of what ELL students can achieve?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>e.</b> Increased your confidence in your own ability to address the needs of ELLs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>f.</b> Helped you to understand the diversity of backgrounds and needs within the ELL population in your class/school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Your Background

**21. Did you participate, or are you currently participating in an alternate route to certification/licensure (fast-track) program?**

- No  
 Yes

**22. Please describe the certification(s)/ license(s)/ credential(s)/ endorsement(s) you hold.**

***(Check all that apply in each column.)***

A. Level(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement	B. Subject endorsement area(s)	C. Certification/ licensure/ credential/endorsement for teaching special populations	D. Type(s) of certification/ licensure/ credential/ endorsement
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Middle 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ _____	1 <input type="checkbox"/> English 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/language arts 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Science 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Social sciences 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign languages 7 <input type="checkbox"/> No subject area certification 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ _____	1 <input type="checkbox"/> ESL or bilingual 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Special education	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced (e.g., National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification) 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Regular or standard 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary (e.g., Probationary, Preliminary, Provisional, Emergency, Waiver, etc.) 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ _____

**23. Do you have a bachelor's degree?**

***(Check one box and write in year if applicable.)***

- No → Skip to question 26.  
 Yes → If yes, write in year bachelor's degree was received.

**24. What was your bachelor's field of study?**

***(Write in bachelor's field of study)***

**25. Do you have a graduate degree?**

**26. Please answer “Yes” if you have a master’s degree, doctorate or professional degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., J.D., etc.).**

No → Skip to question 26.

Yes → If yes, write in year graduate degree was received.

**27. What was your graduate degree’s field of study?**

**(Write in graduate field of study)**

### **Wrap-Up**

**28. Is there is anything else you would like to tell us about improvement strategies and the School Improvement Grant (SIG) in your school?**