

**Mass Insight State Development Network School Turnaround Diagnostic: Kentucky**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this brief report is to provide an overview of the findings from Mass Insight Education's State Development Network (SDN) diagnostic review of the Kentucky Department of Education (KYDE) work on school turnaround. The diagnostic process is driven by the SDN framework for school turnaround; it is designed to explore and gauge the state's effectiveness and ability to drive and support turnaround efforts statewide through the seven core components of a comprehensive state-level strategy, structure, and process. The accompanying chart provides a summary of findings based on the SDN framework components and identifies potential high leverage areas for action. The SDN will serve as a professional learning community for the state as it identifies its priorities and develops an action plan to enhance work on school turnaround.

**Diagnostic Process:** The evidence for this analysis was collected from a series of stakeholder interviews conducted by Mass Insight Education on a state site visit in May 2016. Interviewees included representatives from the KYDE, school and district leadership, and a statewide citizen's group. In addition to the interviews, Mass Insight Education collected relevant data and documents to inform the diagnostic process.

**How to Read this Report:** The chart below organizes the diagnostic findings across each of the seven components of the SDN Framework for School Turnaround. The summary analysis for each component provides additional detail on specific sub-elements of each component. The chart also displays qualitative ratings of the state's current status in addressing the elements of each component. Component elements can receive a rating of *Needs Improvement (NI)*, *Developing (D)*, or *Proficient (P)* based on the preponderance of evidence. Overall component ratings are also provided at the end of each section. The findings are not meant to suggest that the state must address each of these areas immediately, but rather provide an overall framework and assist in identifying priorities and high leverage areas that may be appropriate to address first. The final section of the report describes four areas that could, with some attention, positively impact KYDE's work with chronically low-performing schools and districts.

| 1. Policy: Cultivate a policy environment, governance structure, and operational and staffing flexibility necessary for dramatic school turnaround.                       |   |           |
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| Guiding Questions   | Evidence & Analysis   | Summary   |
| <p>a. Does state law and SEA policy, regulations and practice provide LEAs with the school-level <b>operational and staffing flexibility</b> required for turnaround?</p> | <p>The implementation of state laws and regulations has created a culture of continuous improvement and clear theory of action to assist focus and priority schools. Statue authorizes the turnaround model and the state board approved regulations in 2011 and 2012. The current assessment and accountability system was launched during the 2011-2012 school year. Focusing on “next-generation learners” the model rates schools based on six factors depending on the grade levels of the school – achievement, gap, growth, college readiness, college/career-readiness rate, and graduation rate. Schools are then rated either distinguished, proficient, or needs improvement. KYDE provides assistance to priority schools/districts and focus schools/districts, leveraging findings from a detailed diagnostic review to revise district and school improvement plans to focus on identified areas of concern.</p> <p>LEAs have choices of turnaround approaches. The district diagnostic analyzes district capacity and the school review analyzes the capacity of the principal and school staff. State regulations authorize the commissioner, following a formal review process to assess the school leader’s capacity to lead a turnaround. The state can replace the school leader if they determine that he/she is not up to the task. School leadership must choose one of four turnaround models and must show “meaningful” community input into the selection process. Following approval of the turnaround plan, operational and staffing decisions are made at the school level.</p> <p>State statue authorizes state takeover of districts under conditions of extreme mismanagement. Upon a finding of significant deficiencies in student performance, lack of capacity, and/or governance and fiscal mismanagement, the Commissioner is authorized to order a management audit which may result is state takeover of a district.</p> | <p>P</p>  |
| <p>b. Do SEA and other state-level leaders provide <b>public support and political cover</b> for dramatic school turnaround?</p>  | <p>Kentucky has been a national leader in education reform since the passage of its comprehensive law in the 1990s and the law changed the culture of education in the state. Over the years, a consensus emerged that schools should be preparing students for college and the workforce. The expectation was that school improvement would help KY produce more skilled workers to compete in the future, with school accountability a key strategic priority. A changing political environment, however, has made this work challenging.</p> <p>The new state commissioner is aware of the political challenges ahead and is focused on improving external communication with stakeholders. Implementation of ESSA creates opportunities for broader discussion about accountability and role of KYDE with citizens, legislators, and business and community leaders,</p>  | <p>NI</p> |

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|   | <p>building a new consensus around KYDE’s commitment to continuous improvement. Transitioning to the new federal law and new priorities of the state’s political leaders, may result in changes to state turnaround policy. It is important that KYDE finds a way to maintain its commitment to continuous improvement during the transition and to “stay the course.”</p> <p>KYDE’s Commissioner is leading a statewide communications effort to engage stakeholders in the implementation of ESSA, and the new assessment and accountability provisions. There is support for moving from an accountability system that rates schools by a single number to a dashboard accountability system.</p> <p>Media, especially in Jefferson County, is very focused on school rankings which is both good and bad. On the one hand, public ranking of schools can make collaboration more difficult. On the other, it can bring more attention and focus to issues affecting school improvement. Media about school rankings helps sustain a sense of urgency on school improvement but also tends to be negative.</p> <p>A big challenge in the years ahead will be maintaining a sense of urgency about the need to improve schools. Economic changes are dramatically changing communities. Rural and urban poverty is increasing and business is less engaged with driving change. Across the board, the lack of district and school capacity remains a key issue.</p> |          |
| <p>c. Does the SEA have the <b>authority and resources to take responsibility</b> for turning around low-performing schools, authorize charter schools and control the allocation of innovation funds to build capacity in chronically low-performing schools where district efforts have failed?</p> | <p>KYDE currently has significant authority to provide assistance to low-achieving schools. Authority is codified in statute and organized around four strategic priorities – next-generation learners; next-generation professionals; next-generation support systems; and next-generation schools and districts. The explicit goal is to create learners who are college and career ready. In recent years, annual reporting on student outcomes, reported by subgroups of students, has expanded beyond math, reading and science to include student growth, college and career readiness, high school graduation rates, and student achievement in writing and social studies.</p> <p>Statutes and regulations authorize KYDE to assist Priority and Focus schools/districts. The process begins with a diagnostic review that identifies areas needing improvement and leads to one of four intervention options: external management, re-staffing, school closure, or transformation. The intervention option is selected by school leadership following “meaningful” family and community input into the selection of an intervention. School leaders, with support from KYDE, then develop a 30/60/90 plan to focus the turnaround work. Comprehensive School or District Improvement Plans (CSIP/CSDP) are revised</p>   | <p>D</p> |

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|   | <p>addressing the areas required for improvement and aligned with accountability standards.</p> <p>Additional supports are mandated for Focus schools and districts that are identified as Focus for three or more consecutive years (schools) or four or more consecutive years (districts). These include: participating in improvement strategies; accepting a KYDE mentor/partner accepting ongoing resources through the year as approved by KYDE. The objective is to provide support to build local capacity.</p> <p>Charter schools are not currently authorized in KY. However, the state’s governor has expressed strong support for charter schools.</p>   |                |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>   |   | D              |
| <b>2. Strategy: Commit to a comprehensive, cohesive, agency-wide vision, mission, and set of aligned activities to turn around the state’s lowest performing schools.</b>       |   |                |
| <b>Guiding Questions</b>  | <b>Evidence &amp; Analysis</b>  | <b>Summary</b> |
| <p>a. Does the SEA have a clear <b>school turnaround theory of action</b>, i.e., description of the elements of a turnaround and the expected short and long-term outcomes?</p> | <p>KYDE leadership has effectively leveraged state statute and regulations to establish a very unique culture of continuous improvement as their theory of action. It was evident during our interviews that continuous improvement, based on the Baldrige continuous improvement model, is valued by leaders and practitioners alike. It drives KY’s turnaround theory of action and is an area of strength for the department.</p> <p>KYDE documents state that “The assessment and accountability model is a balanced approach that incorporates all aspects of school and district work and is organized around the Kentucky Board of Education’s four strategic priorities: Next generation learners, next-generation professionals, next-generation support systems and next generation schools/districts.”</p> <p>District 180 is responsible for building sustainable systems that improve student learning and to drive continuous improvement to Priority and Focus schools and districts. Its mission is to “build sustainable systems that will drive a continuous improvement approach to focus on student learning in each of Kentucky’s Priority Schools, Focus Schools, and Focus Districts.”</p> | P              |
| <p>b. Is there an <b>SEA-wide commitment to and coordination of</b> a comprehensive, cohesive set of SEA activities to support turnaround?</p>                                  | <p>Leadership within KYDE is strongly committed to SEA activities to support turnaround. A strength of the department is the stability at the associate commissioner level which has allowed the department to develop and implement a comprehensive system over time. Focus is on equipping the field staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to work with schools and districts. There is also a strong emphasis on building systems that support students. Work is coordinated through District 180. District 180 is staffed by over 60 professionals, 58 of which serve as Educational Recovery Staff in the field.</p> <p>District 180 coordinates a school diagnostic review and the development of school improvement goals.</p>  | P              |

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|   | <p>Reviews conducted by a team consisting of KYDOE staff, teacher, principal, parent and university faculty. An outside partner, AdvancED manages the review process. An annual improvement plan is then linked to specific 30, 60, 90 day goals. Monitoring progress toward meeting the goals is fundamental to KYDE’s continuous improvement strategy and a tool to assist with coordination. According to KYDE, monitoring is “foundational to having common communication in the work.” During the interviews, staff from across the department clearly bought in to this process as a key strategy to support their turnaround work.</p> <p>KYDE staff outside District 180 generally see the value of the turnaround work.</p>   |          |
| <p>c. How do the actions of the SEA lead to changes in <b>instructional practice</b> in turnaround schools? What is the system for moving change from SEA [to region] to district to school to classroom?</p> | <p>KY has made a strong commitment to working with their low-achieving schools. KYDE staff is deployed in schools to support turnaround. The work of Education Recovery Leaders and Specialists is the foundation of this work. The focus is on fidelity to the improvement plans and 30, 60, and 90 day goals, all monitored up and down the system. The goals provide the structure for improving student outcomes. It is expected that plans focus on three key priorities—or “Big Rocks”—such as academic focus, school culture, and use of data. Baked into the culture of school improvement is a “Plus/Delta” tool that encourages reflection on what’s going well and what’s not in meeting improvement goals. It is expected that, by identifying deltas, adjustments can be made to improve instructional practice and focus professional development.</p>   | <p>D</p> |
| <p>d. How does the SEA <b>determine root causes</b> of school under-performance and match appropriate state and/or external supports?</p>   | <p>KYDE partners with AdvancED to conduct school and district assessments. KYDE classifies schools into three categories: distinguished, proficient, and needs improvement. The accountability model also measures “individual gap groups” and authorizes state intervention in schools/districts that are flagged for student subgroup underperformance. Principals reported that the AdvancED assessments are useful and align with District 180 supports.</p>   | <p>P</p> |
| <p>e. What is the nature of the <b>school improvement plan</b>?</p>   | <p>Comprehensive School/District School Improvement Plans (CSIP/CDIP) serve as the foundation for school improving planning. KYDE requires plan to be published on school and district websites.</p> <p>The diagnostic review is an important lever to help schools develop 30/60/90 day plans and CSIP’s and establishing improvement goals. The diagnostic review, coordinated by AdvancED, and conducted by a team consisting of educators and stakeholders which includes KYDE staff. The goal of the review is to assess the conditions and practices that affect student performance. The review includes data review, classroom observations, and interviews with school, district, and external stakeholders.</p> <p>30/60/90 day improvement plans are developed as part of the Diagnostic review. Plans include a list of “Improvement Priorities” that consist of items such as developing and implementing an instructional process that sets clear learning standards and expectations, models examples of high quality student work,</p> | <p>P</p> |

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|   | <p>and uses data from multiple measures to provide feedback about student learning; implementing a process for monitoring the effectiveness of implementing priorities and monitoring results; developing, implementing, and monitoring a process of stakeholder engagement; developing and implementing a process to provide timely feedback to instructional staff; and ensuring that all students have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum.</p> <p>Plans are monitored through a review process coordinated by Education Recovery (ER) staff. It is based on seven categories of a high performing system. ER staff are trained to use a “Plus/Delta” tool to address issues and assess progress. The Plus/Delta system is an integral component of the continuous improvement culture embedded in KYDE.</p>      |                |
| f. How is the SEA <b>learning</b> from both school turnaround successes and failures?   | KYDE’s commitment to continuous improvement and use of the Baldrige model is a national model for school improvement. Throughout our interviews, state, district and school staff enthusiastically supported the model to drive change in schools. It is evident that the department thrives on a culture of learning and utilizes a Plus/Dental program to continuously assess their strengths and weaknesses in implementing their turnaround program. In addition, the new Hub high schools program should help deepen and disseminate learning about turnaround within the department and, more broadly, across the state.  | D              |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>   |   | P              |
| <b>3. Organizational Structure: Design a structure that empowers a unit of state government with the capacity to turn around schools.</b>   |   |                |
| <b>Guiding Questions</b>  | <b>Evidence &amp; Analysis</b>  | <b>Summary</b> |
| a. Are respective <b>SEA and district roles</b> and responsibilities for school turnaround clearly understood within the SEA and in school districts?                                 | KYDE and school/district leadership expressed strong support for a process of continuous improvement that is baked into the department’s culture. ER staff serve coach school leaders and model effective instructional practices. If the Commissioner determines that the school principal is not to be removed and has the capacity to implement the improvement plan, they become responsible for implementing the plan, retaining responsibility for day-to-day decision-making in the building. School leadership implement systems thinking, utilize a “plus/delta” tool to assess progress, and establish Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to support school-based professional development.  | D              |
| b. Does the SEA provide resources and incentives for the <b>development of turnaround partners</b> , both external lead partners and internal district turnaround offices, to support | At the state level, KYDE has engaged three partners. AdvancED coordinates the diagnostic review process for KYDE. The review is organized based on the AdvancED standards for educational improvement. The standards assess the conditions and effectiveness of implementing practice that affect student achievement. The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) partners with the state on the professional development of school leadership. Jim Shipley and Associates have worked with state leadership on the development and implementation of the Baldrige continuous improvement program. School and district leaders described these partnerships as effective and valuable. Several described the work with NISL as “sticky” and “life changing”; i.e., the work was integrated and aligned with KYDE’s goals | D              |

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| districts and schools with expertise and capacity?   | and program.  |                |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>  |   | D              |
| <b>4. Communications: Design a coherent agency- wide turnaround message and communicate it consistently.</b>   |   |                |
| <b>Guiding Questions</b>   | <b>Evidence &amp; Analysis</b>  | <b>Summary</b> |
| a. Do school and district leaders understand the SEA <b>turnaround strategy</b> ?  | Interviews with practitioners seem to indicate that turnaround strategy is understood by practitioners in the field. The state has benefited by a model reform law that, over the years, has served as a foundation for school improvement. In addition to the nuts and bolts of turnaround policies, several interviewees from districts and schools commented on the culture of continuous improvement advanced by KYDE. In addition, senior leadership in KYDE’s turnaround office has provided steady guidance to state, district, and school staff about the implementation of turnaround. Having a respected and steady hand guiding this work is a key factor in sustaining the state’s turnaround strategy.   | P              |
| b. Has the SEA effectively communicated with and engaged <b>parents and community stakeholders</b> about school turnaround?  | KYDE requires “meaningful” family and community input into the selection of a turnaround intervention strategy by the LEA.<br><br>KYDE maintains a very useful website on school turnaround that explains the process and provides resources for those seeking additional information or support.   | D              |
| c. Does the SEA have an effective system for sharing <b>turnaround lessons learned</b> across schools and districts? Does the SEA support cross-district professional learning communities to build the capacity of educators in turnaround schools? | The state’s new Hub school program serves as a model to demonstrate improvement in quality instruction, college and career readiness, use of data, and communication to stakeholders. There are three Hub schools, all of which are high schools designated as Priority that have demonstrated continuous improvement by aligning instructional systems. The goal is to connect the Hub schools with Focus schools in their region, serving as a “lab of support and Hub of learning activity.” Hub schools provide professional development opportunities for school staff and model new programs to support students. State also organizes an annual conference on continuous improvement to share best practices.<br><br>There is no comparable process for sharing good practices in middle and elementary schools. | P              |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>  |   | D              |

| 5. Resources: Focus time, energy, and funds where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact.  |   |           |
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| Guiding Questions  | Evidence & Analysis   | Summary   |
| <p>a. Does the SEA <b>allocate turnaround resources</b> based on district and school commitment and capacity to reach ambitious performance goals?</p>   | <p>KYDE has received adequate resources for providing state support. School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding was leveraged and distributed based on rubric that evaluated improvement plans. Recently, however, there have been efforts by the legislature to redirect accountability funding.</p> <p>Going forward, KYDE plans to utilize expanded Title 1 funds under ESSA to support turnaround work. In addition, funding for District 180 has also been one of five priorities requested by the state board as part of an effort to restore line-item funding. However, the legislature has yet to approve this request.</p>  | <p>NI</p> |
| <p>b. Does the SEA provide LEAs and schools with <b>useful technical assistance</b> to support turnaround?</p>   | <p>KYDE has an impressive staffing model to work with Priority and Focus schools. Education Recovery (ER) staff work with schools to implement turnaround plans. ER staff are highly skilled educators who have been recruited to work with Priority and Focus schools. More than fifty are deployed across the state and organized in regions to coordinate work. ER staff, however, may be shared across regions to address school needs. ER staff serve in a variety of roles depending on the needs of the school. They monitor progress toward meeting improvement goals and work on sustainability plans.</p> <p>The new Novice Reduction Program for Gap Closure is an innovative approach developed by KYDE to reduce the number of students scoring Novice on state assessments. Novice Reduction Coordinators work with schools and districts to meet reduction targets and monitor progress through KYDE's 30/60/90 day continuous improvement planning process. The program is currently being piloted at 12 sites.</p> | <p>P</p>  |
| <p>c. Does every turnaround school establish and regularly report to stakeholders on a limited number of <b>performance targets</b> that include measures of both fidelity of implementation and student outcomes?</p> | <p>The continuous improvement program adopted by KYDE includes provisions for reporting performance results to stakeholders. Updated Comprehensive School and District Improvement Plans are required to be posted on the school or district website. KY also has a unique model of school-based councils that include parents and other stakeholders. This presents another vehicle for reporting results to stakeholders. The media reports on the annual rankings of school performance.</p>   | <p>D</p>  |
| <p>d. Does the SEA provide incentives to encourage turnaround in <b>community-based clusters of schools</b>?</p>   | <p>The state does not have the authority to establish community-based turnaround clusters. However, KYDE has embraced a systemic, district wide approach in its turnaround strategy. The continuous improvement model has proven to be an effective incentive to get districts and schools to focus on turnaround.</p>  | <p>P</p>  |



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| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>   |  | D              |
| <b>6. Accountability:</b> Develop an accountability system that sets clear standards and performance targets for schools, LEAs and the SEA, monitors and reports on progress, and incentivizes dramatic reform. |  |                |
| <b>Guiding Questions</b>  | <b>Evidence &amp; Analysis</b>   | <b>Summary</b> |
| <p>a. Does the SEA have a clear and transparent <b>process and criteria for identifying schools</b> in need of turnaround?</p>  | <p>Described as a “balanced approach” by KYDE leaders, the current assessment and accountability system was launched during the 2011-2012 school year and fully implemented in 2014-2015. The state’s goal is to achieve 100 percent proficiency for all students. Each school and district is required to improve on its Annual Measurable Objective (AMO). Improvement goals are calculated by averaging the overall score for all of the state’s schools and establishing a standard deviation. To ensure that all subgroups are factored into the calculation, 95 percent of students must participate in testing. KYDE has established the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile as the cut score for Proficient.</p> <p>State support is provided to schools in two categories. Priority schools and districts consist of schools/districts that have been consistently lowest-achieving pursuant to state law. Districts that have failed to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last three consecutive years and score in the bottom five percent are designated as Priority.</p> <p>Focus schools/district are identified based on the following criteria. First, schools with the lowest 10 percent of student group gap scores is designated as a Focus school. Second, because KY is focused on individual gap groups, schools with gap groups scoring in the third standard deviation below the mean (referred to as the Third Standard Deviation Model) is designated as a Focus school. Third, any high school with a graduation rate below 80 percent for two years in a row is designated a Focus school. Districts with gap scores in the bottom 10 percent are designated Focus.</p> <p>Each school receives an annual score based on a 100-point scale, based on weighted ratings for next-generation learners (70%); next-generation instructional programs and support (20%); and next-generation professionals (10%). The emphasis on learners makes clear that accountability requires schools to focus on student learning. KYDE’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) requires schools to work toward improving their overall rating each year. Goals are established for a five-year time frame to provide schools with the time and support for continuous improvement.</p> <p>The turnaround process begins with notification by the commissioner that the school/district requires support. This action triggers a diagnostic review of the school/district coordinated by AdancED, and</p> | P              |

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|  | <p>conducted by a team consisting of educators and stakeholders which includes KYDE staff. The goal of the review is to assess the conditions and practices that affect student performance. The review includes data review, classroom observations, and interviews with school, district, and external stakeholders. Following the review, a 30/60/90 day plan is developed and the Comprehensive School/District Improvement Plan is revised. For Priority schools, the commissioner determines whether or not the school has capacity to implement a turnaround program. This is also based on the findings of a diagnostic review.</p> <p>Focus and Priority schools/districts are then required to implement a set of approved improvement strategies, accepting a KYDE mentor or partner, and using resources approved by KYDE to improve capacity and instruction.</p> <p>Schools/districts exit Priority status by meeting their AMO for three consecutive years, and are no longer in the lowest 5 percent, and at or above a 70 percent graduation rate (high schools). Schools exit Focus status by meeting their annual AMO goal for two consecutive years, by being above the lowest 10 percent category, and by achieving a graduation rate greater than 70 percent. Districts exit Focus status by being above the lowest 10 percent category.</p> <p>Currently, KYDE identified 27 Priority schools, 282 Focus schools, and 17 Focus districts identified during the 2015-2016 school year.</p> |          |
| <p>b. Does the SEA have an <b>accountability system</b> that sets clear expectations, monitors progress, and provides incentives for turnaround?</p> | <p>KYDE’s accountability system sets clear expectations for schools and district performance. The department has developed and staffed a unit, District 180, to monitor progress and support turnaround in school and districts. Since the passage of the state’s landmark education reform law, accountability has been a key priority for the department. State law and regulations clearly define the process for holding schools and districts accountable.</p> <p>Incentives for turnaround include the Hub school program, which recognizes three of the state’s high schools for demonstrating significant improvement in student learning. Hub schools serve as “labs of support” for other Priority/Focus schools throughout KY. Another is recognizing best practices at the annual Continuous Improvement Summit organized by KYDE. Capacity training and participation in the NISL program also provide incentives. Finally, the widespread acceptance of the continuous improvement model serves as a major incentive for schools and districts.</p>  | <p>P</p> |

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| <p>c. Are there substantial <b>consequences</b> for both failure to implement improvement plans with fidelity and failure to improve student outcomes?</p>        | <p>If school districts demonstrate “a critical lack of efficiency or effectiveness on governance or administration” the state may takeover districts under provisions outlined in the Management Improvement Program. If KYDE identifies “significant deficiencies” while conducting a review of instructional and operational data, KYDE staff conduct an on-site review in the district on a range of issues including governance, instruction, fiscal management, facilities, and community support. Following the on-site review, the commissioner may authorize a comprehensive management audit. Upon receiving the audit, the commissioner may recommend to the state board that the district is declared “state-assisted” or “state-managed” requiring the development of an improvement plan approved by KYDE’s board.</p> | <p>P</p>       |
| <p><b>OVERALL RATING</b></p>  |   | <p>P</p>       |
| <p><b>7. Human Capital: Invest in highly effective teachers and leaders to drive turnaround at the district and school levels.</b></p>                            |   |                |
| <p>Guiding Questions</p>  | <p>Evidence &amp; Analysis</p>  | <p>Summary</p> |
| <p>a. Do state <b>certification and licensing policies</b> support efforts to place highly effective teachers and school leaders in turnaround schools?</p>       | <p>KYDE staff, as well as district and school leaders, expressed concern about recruiting teachers to fill vacancies across the state. There are no specific policies and programs, with the exception of a partnership with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), to develop school leaders.</p>  | <p>NI</p>      |
| <p>b. Does the SEA have effective <b>partnerships with external organizations</b> to provide high quality teachers and school leaders for turnaround schools?</p> | <p>The state’s partnership with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) supports a professional development program to improve school leadership in low-achieving schools. AdvancED collaborates with KYDE on the continuous improvement summit. Partnerships with higher education institutions, with the possible exception of the University of Louisville, are weak and not effective.</p>  | <p>P</p>       |
| <p>c. Are <b>evaluation systems</b> being used to ensure that students in turnaround schools have the best educators available?</p>                               | <p>The diagnostic review does review teacher effectiveness and school improvement plans include provisions for monitoring teachers to ensure fidelity to the plan. Priority school principals have received extensive training from KYDE in the Professional Growth Effectiveness System (PGES) to monitor and evaluate teachers.</p>   | <p>P</p>       |
| <p>d. Does the SEA encourage and support the use of <b>differentiated compensation</b> to encourage effective</p>   | <p>The state has not used differentiated compensation as a lever to support turnaround. This would be subject to collective bargaining agreements. However, the union in Jefferson County, in the face of 30 percent turnover in Priority schools, is working with district leadership on an incentive program to encourage effective teachers to remain in Priority schools.</p>   | <p>NI</p>      |

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| educators to work in turnaround schools?  |  |   |
| e. Does the SEA have a strategy to recruit and develop district and school-level <b>turnaround leadership</b> ? | The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) partners with the state on the professional development of school leadership. Interviewees spoke highly about the effectiveness of the partnership in developing school leaders; one interviewee called the program “life changing.” | D |
| <b>OVERALL RATING</b>   |  | D |

## Recommendations

The SDN will work to support Kentucky as it identifies priorities and develops an action plan that will guide its work over the coming months. These action areas are presented only as suggestions for consideration, as the state must determine how to proceed.

1. **Continue to adapt the state’s exemplary school turnaround system to new conditions.** We were impressed with the culture of continuous improvement that permeates District 180 and that has been institutionalized by the Department. KYDE staff and stakeholders clearly understood how continuous improvement is implemented and the planning and monitoring tools that are utilized to improve low-performing schools and districts. They also understood how this work benefits students. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that the current turnaround program remains central to the state’s efforts to improve schools as the state adapts to ESSA and a changing political climate. KYDE’s program is a national model of turnaround practice and we recommend that the department stay the course.
2. **Continue to communicate urgency about school turnaround to stakeholders.** In order to educate and engage stakeholders, the Commissioner has made communication a priority. This is an opportunity to share with a broader audience the successes of the state’s work to date and to get input about what might need to change under ESSA. Parents, business leaders, and the legislature are key audiences for this outreach effort. One goal of this effort should be to secure broad support for restoring line-item funding for the state’s turnaround program.
3. **Establish a strategic talent pipeline to recruit teachers with turnaround capacities.** KYDE should seek out and establish formal partnerships with in-state teacher colleges, out-of-state programs, and other external talent development programs. Current state incentives to support National Board Certification should be reviewed and adjusted to accommodate growing interest in the program. In addition, model incentives should be developed with the state union to support capacity building in low performing schools.
4. **Redouble efforts to engage parents in turnaround.** Since the passage of the state’s education reform law, Kentucky has emphasized the important role that parents play in site-based management and in developing turnaround plans. KYDE is coordinating with partners to ensure stakeholders are educated about ESSA and any changes to the assessment and accountability system resulting from the new federal law.
5. **Expand the Hub school program to middle and elementary schools.** The state’s new Hub high school program serves as model to demonstrate improvement in quality instruction, college and career readiness, use of data, and communication to stakeholders. The model should be expanded to include grades K-8.