

# Restart a Struggling School

## GETTING BACK ON TRACK



Restarting a school creates a pathway for community and district leaders to provide existing students with new opportunities. Restarting a school means there will be new teachers and a new campus number, providing a blank slate for the school community to improve student outcomes. This option allows districts to leverage existing resources and allow students to remain in the same school building from year to year while improving the quality of their school options. The Center for School Actions encourages districts to be responsive to the needs of their communities and do what is best for their students and families, particularly in restart situations.

### School Actions

To add or expand the number of great schools ...

- CREATE A NEW SCHOOL
- REPLICATE A GREAT SCHOOL

To dramatically improve a school ...

- RESTART A SCHOOL**
- REASSIGN STUDENTS TO BETTER SCHOOLS

### Annual School Actions Planning Process

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graph TD; A[Analyze School Performance] --> B[Analyze Community Need and Demand]; B --> C[Evaluate Options]; C --> D[Select School Actions]; D --> E[Plan School Action]; E --> F[Execute School Actions]; F --> A; A --- AS[QUALITY SEATS ANALYSIS]; C --- SI[SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT OR SCHOOL ACTION];
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### WHY RESTART?

Restarting a struggling school can be a powerful path toward creating new opportunities for students with highly-qualified teachers getting the school back on the right track. While restart can be difficult, it has proven to be one of the most effective pathways to improving student achievement in persistently low-performing schools, making it a worthwhile effort on the part of district and community leaders.

## Benefits of Restart

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Restarting a school brings new life into a building, reinvigorating the school community and creating new opportunities for students. When a long struggling campus is restarted, the students in that school are given new opportunities and a chance to create a new legacy for the school and its community.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

School restart can be a catalyst for bringing more community partners to the table to support students and teachers. While restart is a difficult school action, community partners can provide guidance and resources in the early days and beyond.

### ACADEMIC DIVERSITY

When restarting a school, districts and partners have the opportunity to create more academic and curricular diversity for students. Restart models in other states have included dual language, STEM, arts-focused, and college preparatory focused models.

## Key Elements

1 A community or neighborhood whose students would benefit from a model with new teachers and a reinvigorated mission and vision.

2 Restarts are only eligible for School Action Fund grants if the district is implementing a turnaround partnership or the ACE model. The ACE model can either be district or partner managed.

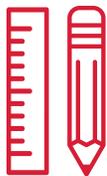
3 Turnaround partnerships must be partner-managed.

4 Restarts must have a new academic program, school leadership, and instructional staff.

# Funding Available to Restart Struggling Schools

All districts that choose to restart struggling school models through partner-managed models are eligible to apply for both the School Action Fund and the Charter School Fund. Schools that opt to restart a school through a district-managed ACE model are only eligible for School Action Fund grants. Districts must apply on behalf of the schools that are seeking to restart or the turnaround partner.

## SCHOOL ACTION FUND



### PLANNING GRANTS

**Amount** \$300,000  
**Grant Term** 1 year



### IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

**Amount** \$500K – \$2M  
**Grant Term** 2 years

## CHARTER SCHOOL FUND

<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Must be a Texas Partnership School</b>
<b>Amount</b>	<b>\$600K – \$800K</b>
<b>Grant Term</b>	<b>2 years</b>

All grant recipients will be matched with a TEA vetted technical assistance provider throughout the term of the grant.

### Spotlight: TURNAROUND PARTNERSHIP

In 2017-18, Fort Worth ISD launched its first five Leadership Academies. Building off of Dallas ISD's successful ACE model, the Leadership Academies invited highly effective teachers and leaders to reconstitute the campuses which had been previously identified as Improvement Required for consecutive years. These teachers and leaders were incentivized with stipends, while the schools received additional supports. The Leadership Academies were given informal autonomy to operate differently from the rest of the district campuses.

In its first year, the program saw strong results; all five of the Leadership Academy campuses moved from Improvement Required to Met Standard in a single year. In fact, four of the five schools started the 2018-19 school year with overall grades of B on the TEA Accountability System. But the district knew that it wouldn't be able to sustain the Leadership Academy model indefinitely; both financial and political constraints could erode the success of the program over time. Early the following school year, Fort Worth ISD issued a Call for Great Schools seeking an "internally cultivated partner to assume governance of a network of five existing Leadership Academies."

Through a careful process and months of community engagement and partnership exploration, the district officially selected Texas Wesleyan University to be the nonprofit partner to operate the Leadership Academies. Fort Worth ISD was especially confident about a partnership with Texas Wesleyan University because Texas Wesleyan's leadership fully understood and supported the philosophy and program design of the Leadership Academies. Texas Wesleyan University will officially begin operating the Leadership Academy Network for the 2019-20 school year.

## PARTNER-MANAGED



Eligible for Texas Partnership benefits



Operate under a Performance Contract



Increased accountability



Increased campus autonomy

## DISTRICT-MANAGED



Traditional method for school management



Conditions vary by district

## Restarting with a Texas Partnership

To restart a school with a Texas Partnership, the district will contract with a new or existing partner to launch and operate the school. Before starting the process of restarting with a Texas Partnership, the district should set a vision for the restarted school in concert with the existing school community, particularly with the existing students and parents. Upon identifying the needs of the school, the district should publish a call for quality schools to invite potential operators to apply. Those operators that apply could be existing operators that work with other districts in the state or new teams that do not yet operate schools. After the call for quality schools has been published, the district should proceed to evaluate the applications through a formal evaluation process.

## Find Out More

Read more about restarting a struggling school, other school actions, and how to apply for financial support at [www.centerforschoolactions.org](http://www.centerforschoolactions.org)

Read more about Texas Partnerships and partner-managed schools at [www.txpartnerships.org](http://www.txpartnerships.org)

## Contact Us

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# ACE Programmatic Pillars

Schools implementing an ACE model restart must adhere to the following five programmatic pillars with local flexibility encouraged within each for a minimum 3-year period per campus.



## EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

- Campuses should be fully reconstituted and strategically staffed to include effective principal and teaching staff, as identified by teacher evaluation system or data analysis identifying teachers with a demonstrated record of significant student growth year over year.
- 3-year financial incentives are provided to ACE educators.
- Teachers and leaders receive targeted and differentiated professional development.
- Schools have an emphasis on mission and purpose.



## INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Teachers and leaders focus on data analysis and professional learning communities.
- Teachers have specified planning and collaboration time with other teachers in grade level and subject alike settings.
- Schools have a culture of frequent observation, coaching and feedback.



## EXTENDED LEARNING

- Schools have an extra hour embedded into the instructional day, specifically for reading and math interventions.
- Campus remains open until 6pm for interventions, student enrichment, and safety.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served to all students.



## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- The model places an emphasis on creating and maintaining positive relationships between adults and students.
- ACE encourages a reduction of student suspensions and disciplinary issues through restorative justice practices.
- Creation and implementation of joyful incentives for students is encouraged in the model.



## PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Increase communication protocols between educators and parents/community members.
- Schools create new partnerships with community organizations providing wraparound services, including but not limited to, faith-based organizations, municipal/city organizations, charities, and early education programs.
- Schools engage in campus beautification efforts both internally and externally.

### Spotlight: ACE

In 2015-16, Dallas ISD launched its first seven ACE academies, which invited highly effective teachers and leaders to reconstitute campuses, identified as Improvement Required by TEA, or those with significant achievement gaps by family income/race that needed intensive support to improve student outcomes. These teachers and leaders were incentivized with stipends to join the schools, while the schools received additional supports such as extended learning time, parental and community engagement, afterschool enrichment and social and emotional support. Additionally, the schools received extensive support from the district to ensure they had the teachers they needed, tools to track data on performance, and differentiated professional development in areas that would be relevant to the staff.

In its first year, the program saw strong results. It is important to note that these interventions were sufficient in a single year to get all but one of the ACE campuses to move from Improvement Required to Met Standard according to the TEA and Level I, II, and III disciplinary referrals decreased by 67 percent from the previous year. Dallas ISD has implemented two additional cohorts of ACE campuses since the initial launch.

When asked about why the schools have been so successful, leaders often point to the shared culture of teachers in the building. ACE teachers make a strategic and thoughtful decision to choose to teach in an ACE school and are committed to the success of that school. The culture supports student learning and teacher engagement and therefore supports student outcomes.