

School Turnaround Teachers: *Competencies for Success*

Part of the School Turnaround Collection from Public Impact
Fall 2016 Update

Now Includes Links To:

- ☑ *More on Instructional Leadership, the Heart of a Successful School Turnaround*
- ☑ *Free “Opportunity Culture” Tools*
- ☑ *Competencies Aligned with Career Paths for Teachers, Teacher-Leaders, and Principals*

Acknowledgements

This updated document incorporates links to materials for instructional leadership, teacher-leaders, and Opportunity Culture roles for teacher-leaders. In addition, the competencies have been aligned with the matching competency and selection materials for principals: *School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success* and *School Turnaround Leaders: Selection Toolkit*, and *teacher-leaders*, so that educators and districts may use all in seamless career paths.

The updates are heavily informed by our experience working with high-poverty turnaround schools and those in the **Opportunity Culture** national network that have achieved swift, dramatic improvement in student growth and achievement. We are grateful to the teachers and principals who have led that work and shared their lessons, providing examples of how principals and a team of teacher-leaders can effect rapid student learning gains in the most challenging circumstances.

All competencies derived from: Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). *Competence at work: Models for superior performance*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

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Other Resources

For more help selecting turnaround teachers, see the *School Turnaround Teachers: Selection Toolkit*.

For help selecting and developing teacher-leaders/multi-classroom leaders for turnarounds (and more detail on teachers), see the *Opportunity Culture Selection Toolkit* and *Evaluation, Accountability and Professional Development in an Opportunity Culture*.

For help selecting and developing principals in turnaround schools, see the *School Turnaround Leaders: Selection Toolkit* and *School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success*.

For more help redesigning schools for successful turnarounds, see OpportunityCulture.org.

For additional tools and materials to help with school turnarounds, see the Public Impact website's [Turnarounds](#) page.

Competencies in all of these materials are aligned. Some principal competencies have an additional, sixth level, while all teacher and teacher-leader competencies have five levels.

Contents

Making the Most of This Guide: What You Need to Know	5
Why Are Teachers So Important in a Turnaround?	5
What Does This Guide Include?	5
Using Competencies and Actions for School Turnaround Teacher Success	6
What Is a “Competency”?.....	6
How Is a “Competency” Different from “Actions” that Lead to Success?.....	6
How Should Competencies Be Used to Enhance School Learning Results?	6
The Role of Knowledge and Skills	6
Competencies Included in This Guide.....	7
Turnaround Actions: Consistent Cross-Sector Findings	8
The Most Important Turnaround Actions.....	8
Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Four Clusters of Competence	10
Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Driving for Results Cluster	11
<i>Achievement</i>	12
<i>Initiative and Persistence</i>	14
<i>Monitoring and Directiveness</i>	16
<i>Planning Ahead</i>	18
Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Influencing for Results Cluster	20
<i>Impact and Influence</i>	21
<i>Interpersonal Understanding</i>	23
<i>Teamwork</i>	25
Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Problem-Solving Cluster	27
<i>Analytical Thinking</i>	28
<i>Conceptual Thinking</i>	30
Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Personal Effectiveness Cluster	32
<i>Belief in Learning Potential</i>	33
<i>Self-Control</i>	35
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	37
<i>Flexibility</i>	39
Methodology	41

Making the Most of This Guide: What You Need to Know

Why Are Teachers So Important in a Turnaround?

Individual teachers have the largest single school effect on student performance. Documented experience also indicates that individual teachers in high-poverty schools can effect rapid, dramatic student learning improvements within their own classrooms. Organization-wide change of a similar magnitude takes a broader effort with bold leadership and persistent, achievement-oriented collaboration among staff.

This guide aims to help schools attempting turnarounds understand the underlying characteristics of teachers likely to succeed in this unique context. Interestingly, the characteristics identified by early research on star *teachers* in high-poverty schools are remarkably similar to the competencies exhibited by turnaround *leaders* across sectors. This is not surprising given the similarities of the roles, explained further within this guide. As more schools succeed in turnarounds, increasingly accurate, detailed descriptions of teachers who are successful in this context will be possible.

What Does This Guide Include?

This guide provides a summary of turnaround teacher actions, definitions of competencies, and detailed descriptions of increasing levels of effective competence. We also provide teacher examples of actions and competencies, including ones gathered from successful Opportunity Culture turnarounds-in-progress and other school turnarounds. Competencies are strong predictors of work performance and can be very effective guideposts for selection, development, and promotion.

Find more free tools to help with turnarounds and leading excellent schools on PublicImpact.com/school-turnarounds and OpportunityCulture.org. Of special note for readers is the *School Turnaround Teachers: Selection Toolkit*.

Using Competencies and Actions for School Turnaround Teacher Success

What Is a “Competency”?

A competency is a pattern of thinking, feeling, acting, or speaking that causes a person to be successful in a specific job or role.¹ Research indicates that previous demonstration of competence to achieve success is one of the best predictors of future performance in a related role. Competencies may be developed, but they are most powerful when used to select people who are already a good fit for the job.

The sources used to determine the competencies included here are described in the Methodology section on page 41, but in summary include studies of high-performing teachers in typical schools and high-poverty schools, as well as cross-sector studies of bad-to-great turnarounds. Quantitative studies comparing successful and less successful turnaround teachers (and teacher-leaders) will become increasingly possible and can provide more examples and refined competencies and levels.

How Is a “Competency” Different from “Actions” that Lead to Success?

This material includes the consistent, cross-sector actions found to occur in successful bad-to-great turnarounds, and actions observed and documented in interviews with principals and teacher-leaders in these schools. In successful school turnarounds, teachers implement these actions collaboratively across grades and subjects while acting as turnaround leaders within their classrooms and the classrooms they share with colleagues. Some competencies include patterns of action, while others are patterns of thinking and feeling. Thus, the competencies and turnaround actions do overlap.

How Should Competencies Be Used to Enhance School Learning Results?

Competencies may be used for selection, professional development, promotion, or extending teachers’ reach to more students (e.g., via teacher-leadership), outplacement and, in more limited cases, pay. Among candidates who have taught before, prior results—namely, strong student growth among students who started behind grade-level standards—also are important for selection and career advancement decisions. But because teacher turnover in high-poverty schools is particularly high, many turnaround attempts today will still involve teachers who have not worked in such a setting previously. The competencies included here are phrased to be general enough that they can be used to select teachers who have shown the right combination of competencies in other roles, but who have not yet participated in a school turnaround attempt. The competencies also will help teachers understand and address their strengths and weaknesses as they embark on the turnaround challenge.

The Role of Knowledge and Skills

Competencies, or habitual patterns of behaving and thinking, enable teachers to use their content knowledge and instructional skills to improve student learning. Some of the competencies included here cover elements commonly included in the definition of “instructional skill,” such as motivating students.

Others, more directly related to content knowledge and mastery of specific instructional practices, are not included here. These are covered well in other sources,² and in most professional jobs technical skills and knowledge are more modest predictors of high performance than distinguishing competencies.³ These competencies determine whether individuals do what is needed to succeed in their jobs, including acquiring and using the skills and knowledge required to perform.

For example, think of a teacher with a very high level of the competency *Initiative and Persistence*, which is the drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task. This pattern of behavior would make this teacher, even in a school providing little support, more likely to: 1) use a variety of instructional strategies to ensure that all students meet challenging learning goals; 2) adapt instruction to individual learners as needed; and 3) use ongoing, regular assessments to evaluate student progress. A teacher with too little of this

competency would not engage in these behaviors often or well enough, regardless of content knowledge, which would lead to continued failure by many students.

While instructional skills and content knowledge can be learned, deeper-seated, ongoing patterns of behavior ensure that skills and knowledge are used to achieve high levels of student learning.

Competencies Included in This Guide

The competencies included here are the best currently known, measurable distinguishers between very high performers and more typical or lower-performing teachers in a turnaround setting. The list we provide does not include all capabilities needed to perform. Instead the list here focuses on competencies that would likely distinguish between very successful teachers and the rest in a turnaround situation.

Turnaround Actions: Consistent Cross-Sector Findings

The actions listed in this section are those found consistently in cross-sector studies of turnarounds, or successful bad-to-great transformations.⁴ This research documented and analyzed cases in which public and private organizations that were failing by many measures made very rapid, dramatic performance improvements. This stands in contrast to slower, incremental improvements in already-strong organizations.

In a school turnaround, teachers will be on the leadership team responsible for implementing these actions under a new or newly empowered principal, and the magnitude of turnaround success will hinge in part on their effectiveness in this task. Teachers are essentially the turnaround leaders of their classrooms, with the additional responsibility of collaborating to implement successful tactics and reduce failed ones across the entire school.

In recent examples of school turnarounds, an increasing number of teachers are taking on *formal* teacher-leader roles, in which they lead a grade or subject team while continuing to teach (typically with reduced direct-teaching load but more students for whom they are accountable). With a reallocation of the budget and a new school schedule, they have time to lead instructional and cultural change in the school and to work as a small team of leaders to support the principal. Competencies specifically for these teacher-leaders, or “multi-classroom leaders,” can be found on OpportunityCulture.org.

This guide focuses on competencies of teachers operating either in a traditional one-teacher-one-classroom school structure or serving as members of a collaborative teaching team, with or without a formal teacher-leader.

The Most Important Turnaround Actions

The steps toward turnaround success are very consistent across sectors. The complete list of critical actions appears on the following page. But teachers and school leaders trying turnarounds must stay focused on accomplishing the most *critical, consistent success actions*.

In nearly all cases, leaders of successful turnarounds **focus on a few, visible early wins** with big payoffs to gain momentum. While these “wins” are limited in scope, they are high-priority, not peripheral, elements of organization performance.

Successful leaders also **break organization norms or rules** to deploy new tactics needed for early wins. Failed rules and routines are discarded when they inhibit success.

Successful leaders also quickly **try new tactics, measure results, discard failed tactics, and do more of what works**. Time is the enemy when the status quo is failure.

1. Focus on a Few Early Wins; Use the Momentum

- **Collect & Analyze Data:** Successful turnaround leaders are focused, fearless data hounds. Initially, turnaround leaders personally analyze data about the organization’s performance to identify high-priority problems that can be fixed quickly.
- **Make Action Plan Based on Data:** Turnaround leaders make an action plan that includes annual goals and major steps, with enough detail that each group in the school knows specifically what to do differently. This allows people to focus on changing what they do, rather than just worrying about impending change. Plan should cover years 1–3, with more detail for year 1.
- **Focus on a Few Early Wins for Year 1:** Successful turnaround leaders choose a few high-priority goals with visible payoffs and use early success to gain momentum. Although limited in scope, these “wins” are high-priority, not peripheral, elements of organization performance, and they are bold in their speed and magnitude of change. Early wins are critical for motivating staff and disempowering naysayers.

2. Lead a Turnaround Campaign

- **Communicate a Positive Vision:** Turnaround leaders start their turnaround campaign by

communicating a clear picture of success and its benefits. This motivates others to contribute their discretionary effort.

- **Gain Support of Key Influencers:** Turnaround leaders gain support of trusted influencers among staff and the community, then work through these people to influence others.
- **Silence Critics with Speedy Success:** Turnaround leaders use early wins not just for successes in their own right, but to cast vocal naysayers as champions of failure. This reduces the leader's time spent addressing "politics" and increases time spent managing for results.
- **Help Staff Personally Feel Problems:** Turnaround leaders use various tactics to help staff empathize with—or "put themselves in the shoes of"—those whom they serve, to truly feel the problems that the status quo causes and feel motivated to change.

3. Get the Right Staff, Right the Remainder

- **Require All Staff to Change:** When turnaround leaders implement an action plan, change is mandatory, not optional, beginning with accountable team leaders in the organization.
- **Make Necessary Staff and Leader Replacements:** Successful turnaround leaders typically do not replace all or most staff, but often replace or carefully select new team leaders who organize and drive change. After initial turnaround success, staff who do not make needed changes either leave or are removed by the leader.

4. Drive Decisions with Open-Air Data

- **Measure and Report Progress Frequently:** Turnaround leaders set up systems to measure and report interim results often. This enables them to rapidly discard failing tactics and increase the successful tactics that are essential for fast results.
- **Require Decision-Makers to Share Data and Solve Problems:** Turnaround leaders share key staff results visibly and often. All key staff, starting with team leaders, must share periodic results in open sessions, shifting discussions from excuse-making to problem-solving.

5. Break Organization Norms

- **Break Organization Norms:** In a failing organization, existing practices often contribute to failure. Successful turnaround leaders break rules and norms to achieve success. Deviating to achieve early wins shows that new action gets new results.

6. Do What Works; Raise the Bar

- **Focus on Successful Tactics; Halt Others:** Successful turnaround leaders quickly discard tactics that do not work and spend more money and time on tactics that do. This pruning and growing process focuses limited resources where they will best improve results
- **Resist Touting Progress as Ultimate Success:** Turnaround leaders are not satisfied with partial success. They report progress, but keep the organization focused on high goals. When a goal is met, they are likely to raise the bar. Merely better is not good enough.

Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Four Clusters of Competence

These are the competencies—or consistent patterns of thinking, feeling, acting, and speaking—needed for teacher success in a turnaround. Some level of many of these competencies would be needed to perform well teaching in any school. But in a turnaround situation, where failure has become an entrenched way of life for students and staff, teachers need stronger and more consistent habits in these critical areas to transform the wide-scale failure to learning success.

These competencies are arranged into four clusters of related capabilities.

Driving for Results Cluster—This cluster of competencies is concerned with the turnaround teacher’s strong desire to achieve outstanding student learning results and the task-oriented actions required for success.

- **Achievement:** The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.
- **Initiative and Persistence:** The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.
- **Monitoring and Directiveness:** The ability to set clear expectations and to hold others accountable for performance.
- **Planning Ahead:** A bias toward planning in order to derive future benefits or to avoid problems.

Influencing for Results Cluster—This cluster of competencies is concerned with motivating others—students, other school staff, and parents—and influencing their thinking and behavior to obtain student learning results.

- **Impact and Influence:** Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.
- **Interpersonal Understanding:** Understanding and interpreting others’ concerns, motives, feelings, and behaviors.
- **Teamwork:** The ability and actions needed to work with others to achieve shared goals.

Problem-Solving Cluster—This cluster of competencies is concerned with teachers’ thinking to plan, organize, and deliver instruction.

- **Analytical Thinking:** The ability to break things down in a logical way and to recognize cause and effect.
- **Conceptual Thinking:** The ability to see patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

Personal Effectiveness Cluster—This cluster of competencies is concerned with the teacher’s self-management of emotions and personal beliefs that affect student learning.

- **Belief in Learning Potential:** A belief that all students, regardless of circumstances, can learn at levels higher than their current achievement indicates.
- **Self-Control:** Acting to keep one’s emotions under control, especially when provoked.
- **Self-Confidence:** A personal belief in one’s ability to accomplish tasks and the actions that reflect that belief.
- **Flexibility:** The ability to adapt one’s approach to the requirements of a situation and to change tactics.

Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Driving for Results Cluster

This cluster of competencies is concerned with a turnaround teacher's strong desire to achieve outstanding student learning results and the task-oriented actions required for success. Major actions include setting high goals for oneself and one's students; making persistent, well-planned efforts to achieve these goals despite barriers and resistance; holding others accountable for doing their part to achieve success; and putting in extra effort to ensure success when others fall short.

Why it matters

Without significant strength in this cluster, a teacher in a turnaround school is unlikely to achieve a sharp increase in student results, since former practices have not worked and must be changed, and multiple, significant barriers must be tackled to ensure student learning.

Driving for Results Cluster—These enable a relentless focus on learning results.

- **Achievement:** Achievement is the drive and actions to set high goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers. Achievement is often shown by an individual acting alone—the person craves being the best and acts to achieve this. In a leader, by contrast, achievement includes setting high performance goals for the team or organization, prioritizing the group's actions to achieve the highest benefit relative to cost, and working to meet goals directly and through the group.
- **Initiative and Persistence:** Initiative and Persistence include taking personal responsibility and doing more than is required to accomplish a difficult task or reach a challenging goal. It includes both directing action and enlisting the extra help of others, and may include bending the rules, taking personal risks, and acting without authority when needed to meet a goal.
- **Monitoring and Directiveness:** Monitoring and Directiveness is used selectively by the best managers. It includes such behaviors as assertively demanding high performance, issuing specific directives and standards, publicly monitoring work against standards, and exacting consequences for failure to perform. Being able to set clear expectations and hold others accountable for performance is critical.
- **Planning Ahead:** Planning Ahead is a bias toward planning for future benefit or to avoid problems. It includes both anticipating situations and dealing with them in advance. This does not include mere routine or required planning, but is done voluntarily to achieve more success and avoid problems.

Achievement			
<i>The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.</i>			
Related interview question: Think about a time when you felt very successful or proud of something you accomplished at work. Tell me the story.			
Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Low Concern for Work or Quality	Does not express concern for quality of work, Or expresses concern but cannot describe specific actions taken to do good work.
Neutral Zone	1	Wishes To Do Job Well	Expresses desire to do the job well but does not try to make improvements.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Works Toward and Improves Others' Quality Goals
		3	Sets Own Modest Standards for Quality
	Superior	4	Prioritizes Challenging Goals and Tasks
		5	Sets High-Risk and Challenging Goals

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Achievement—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The drive and actions to set challenging goals and reach a high standard of performance despite barriers.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Achievement is often expressed as an individual competency—the person craves being the best and acts to achieve this alone. In a turnaround teacher, who must influence others to succeed despite previous organizational and academic failure, achievement includes setting high performance goals for students, individually and as a group; prioritizing instructional activities to focus on those that will achieve the highest learning results in the shortest amount of time; using a variety of strategies to meet student goals, including direct action, others’ efforts (students, parents, other staff) and other available resources; regularly monitoring own and students’ performance against high standards; and identifying and making needed changes in instruction and classroom management.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Achievement actions may be far more important in turnaround teachers than in teachers whose students make progress more easily, because using only typical teaching actions—without more ambitious goal-setting, thoughtful planning, and persistence—on mostly failing students will only lead to continued student failure.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who have a strong Achievement drive use every opportunity to engage students in learning. They show this in their relentless desire and actions to plan instruction that meets the needs of all their students. No one is left out, from the student who needs extra help to the student who needs more challenging work. These teachers set a high goal for every student that leads to individual and whole-class progress. Their standards for the level and pace of learning are high. They plan lessons that engage students in critical thinking and plan assessments that align with a high-bar curriculum. They constantly monitor student performance, formally and informally, to better meet students’ learning needs. They often spend significant additional time with students to help them succeed. They meet with students outside of school, or work with them online, to either help them learn important concepts or to pursue interests that motivate them to learn.

Initiative and Persistence			
<i>The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.</i>			
Related interview question: Think about a time when you accomplished something satisfying at work despite one or more obstacles. Tell me the story.			
Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Avoids Required Work	Does not show up for work reliably or requires extra supervision to get work done.
Neutral Zone	1	Works Independently	Completes assigned work as required and without extra supervision, Or does not give up without trying one or two steps when a simple obstacle arises.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Invests Extra Effort Works extra hours to complete work even when not required, Or takes on voluntary work tasks, Or routinely tackles moderate obstacles as they arise in routine work.
		3	Invests Significant Extra Effort Voluntarily initiates and follows through on new work project (not just a discrete task) that is not assigned by others, and tackles obstacles as they arise.
	Superior	4	Invests Extraordinary Effort Acting without formal or explicit direction, commits significant personal time and bends organization norms or rules to accomplish a work objective (with emphasis on improving organizational outcomes, not on defiant rule-breaking), and persists despite significant obstacles or early failure.
		5	Engages Others in Extraordinary Effort Involves others in Level 4 effort, including people over whom the person has no formal authority.
<p>Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.</p> <p>Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.</p> <p>Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: Threshold behaviors are needed for moderate success, while Superior performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.</p>			

Initiative and Persistence—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The drive and actions to do more than is expected or required in order to accomplish a challenging task.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Initiative and Persistence include taking personal responsibility and doing more than is required to accomplish a difficult task or reach a challenging goal. In a turnaround setting, it includes taking responsibility for significantly improving student learning in a short amount of time, taking multiple actions to achieve this goal, and enlisting the extra help of others when necessary; it may also include bending the rules, taking personal risks, and acting without authority when needed to meet a goal.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Teachers in a turnaround school need Initiative and Persistence to identify and tackle numerous obstacles when ready-made solutions to students’ learning barriers are not available, and others responsible for student learning (the child, parent, other staff, others) do not initially act as desired.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who show exceptional Initiative and Persistence have boundless energy and enthusiasm for their subjects. They teach every day as if the material is exciting and new, and they are genuinely interested in students’ responses to the subject matter. Because they believe that they can always find more engaging, rigorous activities that will better help students learn, they are constantly on the lookout for new approaches and believe that they can always do a better job. They focus on removing barriers to student learning and engagement whenever possible, and they are adept at getting their students the resources they need to succeed, even if it means bending the rules. Getting students eyeglasses, dental screenings, classroom materials, social services, and field trips are a few examples of this. It is not uncommon for these teachers to apply for grants, even for relatively small amounts of money, so they can provide their students with additional resources. If assessments or lesson plans are not aligned with the curriculum or standards, they create their own to ensure that students learn. They find digital resources to fill gaps.

Monitoring and Directiveness

The ability to set clear expectations and to hold others accountable for performance.

Related interview question: Think about a time when you set a standard for someone else's work and held that person accountable for adhering to that standard. Tell me the story.

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Avoids Direction	Gives in to others, even if conflicts with work goals, Or does not give directions or communicate expectations. (May justify by expressing concern with others liking them, hurting people's feelings or making others feel bad.)
Neutral Zone	1	Gives Routine Directions	Gives directions about routine work, Or provides some direction that is not very explicit or detailed.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Gives Detailed Directions
		3	Asserts Needs
	Superior	4	Asserts High Standards
		5	Confronts Others About Performance Problems

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Monitoring and Directiveness—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The ability to set clear expectations and to hold others accountable for performance.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Monitoring and Directiveness are used to obtain essential, urgent actions by others where Impact and Influence behaviors have failed or are likely to fail. It includes such turnaround behaviors as assertively demanding high performance, issuing specific directives and standards, publicly monitoring work against standards, and exacting consequences for failure to perform.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Teachers in turnaround schools need to be able to set rigorous and clear expectations for behavior and performance and closely monitor whether students are meeting these expectations, and they need to be able to articulate when and why students have not met the standards, to the students themselves and to parents, administrators, and others. In addition, turnaround teachers need to develop and implement logical consequences for performance failures. This competency enables students who have experienced consistent failure to experience both the rewards of meeting high standards and the logical consequences of not meeting expectations.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who get students to meet very high standards of behavior and performance are exceptionally clear and consistent about their expectations. They ensure that students understand why the standards exist, and they work hard to create opportunities whenever possible for students to experience success meeting the standards. At the same time, these teachers anticipate that students will make mistakes, that they will not meet their behavior and learning goals, and that they will engage in negative behaviors. Therefore, these teachers monitor students closely for these failures, tell students when they have failed to meet standards, and are consistent about imposing logical consequences (e.g., subjecting them to closer monitoring, removal of privileges and choices about work).

Planning Ahead

A bias toward planning in order to derive future benefit or to avoid problems.

Related interview question: Think about a time when you had to think ahead to accomplish something satisfying at work. Tell me the story. (Clarify time frame: When did the thinking ahead occur in relation to the anticipated events in the future? How far in advance?)

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors	
Red-Flag Zone	0	Does Not Think Ahead	Fails to see and address current needs and opportunities, Or focuses on immediate needs, tasks, and problems only when forced.	
Neutral Zone	1	Addresses Current Needs	Acts quickly, decisively, and completely to address current problems and crises as they arise.	
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Plans Up To 2 Months Ahead	Voluntarily identifies future needs and potential problems or opportunities and plans ahead to address these within a two-month time frame.
		3	Plans 3–12 Months Ahead	Voluntarily identifies future needs, potential problems or potential opportunities that will occur 3 to 12 months in the future that are not obvious to others, and takes action to plan or act in advance to address these.
	Superior	4	Plans 1–2 Years Ahead	Voluntarily identifies future needs, potential problems, or potential opportunities that will occur 1 to 2 years in the future that are not obvious to others, and acts in advance to address these (for example, students’ needs at next grade level; future needs of teaching team).
		5	Plans 2+ Years Ahead	Voluntarily identifies future needs, potential problems, or potential opportunities that will occur two or more years in the future that are not obvious to others, and acts in advance to address these (for example, students’ needs at much later grade levels; future teaching team needs).

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Planning Ahead—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

A bias toward planning in order to derive future benefit or to avoid problems.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Planning Ahead includes both anticipating situations and dealing with them in advance. This does not include mere routine or required planning, but that which is done voluntarily to achieve more success and avoid the many problems that occur in a turnaround setting. It requires heavy use of the Problem-Solving cluster to think through steps in advance and to prioritize among competing, urgent demands. For this reason, it also involves making judgments about wise use of the teacher’s and students’ limited time in school.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Teachers in turnaround schools must set ambitious goals for student learning to propel those students who are significantly below proficiency in a particular area up to and beyond grade level. But instructional time is limited. Therefore, turnaround teachers will need to plan how to reach these ambitious goals by breaking them into measurable units, mapping where students will need to be at different points in the year, and organizing their instructional activities accordingly.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who are exceptional at Planning Ahead are able to plan backward by determining long-term, ambitious student learning goals and then planning units and lessons that will enable students to meet those goals. They also choose or create lesson, unit, and other interim assessments that allow rapid adjustments in instruction. This involves allocating time appropriately, using time effectively, and, most importantly, having alternative plans if students do not learn the material as expected. Teachers who plan effectively also invest a lot of time, particularly early in the year, designing classroom procedures that enable students to know what they should be doing at all times. In turnaround schools, this attention to procedures is a schoolwide effort that is reinforced consistently by all the adults in the building (such as how to move between classroom activities, how to move through the hallways from one class to the other). This minimizes distractions and enables the teacher and students to focus on instructional tasks.

Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Influencing for Results Cluster

This cluster of competencies is concerned with motivating others—students, other school staff, and parents—and influencing their thinking and behavior to obtain student learning results. Turnaround teachers cannot accomplish change alone, but instead must influence the work of others. They must use a variety of influencing tactics—inspiring students who have become resistant and apathetic from repeated failure, grasping and responding to unspoken student needs and motivations, and simultaneously supporting and prodding colleagues to collaborate on the path to schoolwide success—as the situation requires.

The relationships they form are for the purpose of influencing others to enhance student learning, not just for the purpose of personal bonding.

Why it matters

Teachers in a turnaround school must induce behaviors from students (and others) that are significantly different from those previously exhibited. Obtaining more and different effort from others is critical to obtaining better student learning results. They cannot obtain all of these new and enhanced behaviors by being directive (see *Directiveness*), but instead must identify and tap the needs, wants and underlying motives of students and others

Influencing for Results Cluster—These enable working through and with others.

- **Impact and Influence**
- **Interpersonal Understanding**
- **Teamwork**

Impact and Influence

Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.

Related interview question: Think about a time when you influenced another person or people in a way that was satisfying to you. Tell me the story.

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Uses Personal-Gain Tactics, Or Does Not Act	Uses negative behaviors for personal gain, Or does not act to influence others.
Neutral Zone	1	Acts Without Adaptation to Audience	Prepares and presents information to make one or more arguments or points in a discussion, But <u>does not tailor</u> argument to make it appealing or influential to the specific audience.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Takes Single Calculated Action to Influence
	Superior	3	Takes Two Calculated Actions to Influence
		4	Takes Multiple Calculated Actions to Influence
		5	Uses Complex Influence
Thinks ahead about likely reactions and <u>adapts or tailors communication</u> to appeal to level and interest of audience, But takes only <u>one step or action</u> to obtain desired impact in each situation; common actions include adapting words or appearance.			Thinks ahead about likely reactions and <u>adapts or tailors communication</u> to appeal to level and interest of audience, And takes <u>two steps or actions</u> to obtain desired impact in each situation; common actions include adapting words or appearance and taking a dramatic step to influence others.
Thinks ahead about likely reactions and <u>adapts or tailors communication</u> to appeal to level and interest of audience, And takes <u>three or more steps or actions</u> to obtain desired impact in each situation. Actions at this level may begin to be more varied, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting words and appearance to influence others Taking dramatic steps to influence others Using third parties and “experts” to influence Getting support behind the scenes in advance Choosing what to share and not (and when) Changing one’s own role or others’ roles / positions 			Uses level 4 actions with the intention of creating domino effects—engaging in multiple actions to <u>influence chains of people</u> (influencing one person or group for the purpose of influencing another) to obtain wanted behaviors from many parties.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Impact and Influence—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

Acting with the purpose of affecting the perceptions, thinking, and actions of others.

What It Looks Like

In a turnaround school, the ability to motivate students to achieve at high levels where they have previously experienced failure requires high levels of Impact and Influence. Impact and Influence includes empathizing with others and anticipating likely responses to situations, tailoring actions and words to create an intended impact, giving and withholding information to obtain specific responses, assembling support from multiple people to influence another, taking multiple steps to obtain an intended response, and using others to influence third parties. (It differs from *Monitoring and Directiveness*, which does not consider the perspective of the other party.)

Why It Matters

Because many of the students in turnaround schools have not experienced high levels of academic curiosity or success, turnaround teachers need to be particularly skilled influencers. First and foremost, turnaround teachers need to motivate students to become engaged with and learn the material they are teaching. If they are going to ensure that students have support beyond the walls of their classroom, and/or if they work on a teaching team, it is also critical for turnaround teachers to influence the other adults in the building as well as students' family members.

Putting It Into Action

Examples from practitioner interviews:

Teachers who are able to influence and motivate students successfully are highly skilled at making the material relevant to the students they are teaching. As much as possible, these teachers bring the outside world into the classroom. They engage students by getting them to think about issues that are important to their community and their lives. They also motivate students by modeling their own enthusiasm for learning, work, and personal interests. . They influence students and their families by seeking opportunities to communicate with parents about their children's successes, by inviting parents to share their expertise, and by listening to their ideas. They provide students with increasing choices about learning as a reward for making good choices about behavior and doing well on assignments. They form personal relationships with students that build trust needed to be forthright and directive with students when difficult feedback must be given.

Interpersonal Understanding

Understanding and interpreting others' concerns, motives, feelings and behaviors.

Related interview question: *Think about a time when someone else's feelings or emotions affected their work and you dealt with the situation to your satisfaction. Tell me the story. (Notes: Interviewer must probe especially well for what the interviewee was thinking and feeling at the time.)*

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Lacks Understanding	Does not understand or misinterprets other peoples' feelings or actions, Or dismisses value of others' feelings and concerns, Or views other people through the lens of racial, cultural, or gender stereotypes.
Neutral Zone	1	Identifies Feelings	Recognizes peoples' current feelings or their actions, but not able to understand how their actions and feelings are related to each other.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2 Aware of Connection Between Feelings and Actions	Understands when others explicitly express how feelings are related to their actions, Or identifies peoples' current feelings by observing clear actions and behaviors.
		3 Aware of Underlying Meaning	Understands unspoken or hidden thoughts and feelings and why people are acting in certain ways, even when they are giving mixed messages.
	Superior	4 Understands Patterns of Behavior	Understands the reasons, both immediate and long-term or indirect, behind peoples' ongoing behaviors, attitudes, and feelings.
		5 Classifies Patterns of Behavior	Objectively and accurately describes a "profile" of a person's specific strengths and weaknesses and the underlying causes.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Interpersonal Understanding—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

Understanding and interpreting others' concerns, motives, feelings, and behaviors.

What It Looks Like

This is the accurate perception of other people's emotions, motives, needs, and wants determined by observing their words, body language, and actions (or inaction). In the emotionally challenging turnaround setting, understanding both the explicit and unspoken concerns of others is critical to determining how to motivate and inspire students and others whose support is vital for student success. This competency supports *Impact and Influence* and *Teamwork*.

Why It Matters

Teachers in turnaround schools need to overcome many interrelated obstacles to student learning, some of which are internal (such as students' lack of interest and motivation) and some of which are external (such as issues related to poverty). The ability to discern the root causes of behaviors that prevent students from learning (for example, risk avoidance, acting out, and lack of engagement) is critical for teachers to determine how to overcome these barriers.

Putting It Into Action

Examples from practitioner interviews:

Teachers with high levels of Interpersonal Understanding are keen observers. They collect information about students and other key influencers (parents, staff members, etc.) and use it to build respectful relationships and make decisions based on individual students' needs. They are able to identify individual students' interests and use this information to select, or encourage students to select, learning activities that will be engaging and effective for each student, and they are able to act when students have significant personal problems. In addition, these teachers recognize that students who feel truly understood are better able to take the risks that are required for learning to occur. Teachers who model high levels of Interpersonal Understanding also enable students to develop their own ability to understand and interpret other people's behavior.

Teamwork			
<i>The ability and actions needed to work with others to achieve shared goals.</i>			
<i>Related interview question: Think about a time when you participated in a group or team of people to accomplish work that was satisfying to you. Tell me the story.</i>			
Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Harms Team	Damages team morale and functioning by acting in an unhelpful and disruptive way.
Neutral Zone	1	Participates Willingly	Shares relevant information with other team members, participates willingly in team activities, and follows through with work assigned by team.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2 Expresses Support for Team	Expresses belief that team will be successful, and speaks respectfully about other team members.
	Superior	3 Solicits Information from Team Members	Values, solicits, and uses information from other team members to make plans and solve problems.
		4 Empowers Team	Gives credit publicly to team members who have performed well.
		5 Resolves Team Conflicts	Openly recognizes and acknowledges conflicts on the team and works actively and successfully to resolve these conflicts, And protects team reputation when speaking to others.
<p>Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.</p> <p>Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.</p> <p>Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: Threshold behaviors are needed for moderate success, while Superior performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.</p>			

Teamwork—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The ability and actions needed to work with others to achieve shared goals.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	In a turnaround setting where there is a collective effort to dramatically improve student performance quickly, Teamwork includes willingness and ability, as well as the actions needed to work cooperatively and supportively (rather than independently or at odds) with a range of people involved, including students, parents, other staff members, and administrators, in pursuit of common student learning goals.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Teamwork is important for teachers in a schoolwide turnaround effort to achieve common, dramatic, rapid improvements in student learning. Teachers can identify and overcome the numerous barriers to student learning present in turnaround situations more quickly and successfully by sharing and using the best thinking and approaches found among the staff team as a whole. Teamwork in a turnaround school does not include sacrificing student learning to maintain personal relationships among staff, but rather supporting other staff to achieve student learning. This competency is especially important in turnaround schools using team teaching, where instructional planning and teaching are collaborative and accountability for students is shared.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Turnaround teachers with high levels of Teamwork competence view others (colleagues, parents, students) as valuable resources and engage with them in actions that further student success. They look for opportunities to work with others to better engage and motivate students, present the material more effectively, and ensure that students’ social and emotional needs are met. Parents are seen as vital resources about children (what they are interested in, what will motivate them); colleagues are seen as a source of teaching ideas; and administrators are seen as important partners in establishing a schoolwide culture that supports student learning. Equally important, effective teamwork conveys to students the importance and value of belonging and contributing to a community. Teamwork includes keeping others informed, getting input, airing problems, and solving problems together.

Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Problem-Solving Cluster

This cluster of competencies is concerned with teachers' thinking to plan, organize and deliver instruction. It includes analyzing data to determine student learning needs and next steps; considering alternatives for materials, methods, and levels of instruction; making clear, logical, step-by-step plans that both the teacher and students can follow; aligning annual and interim goals, assessments and lessons; and clarifying the connection between school learning goals and classroom activity.

Why it matters

Teachers in a turnaround classroom use these competencies to identify instructional priorities, understand which tactics are working, identify and consider alternative approaches, and clarify steps to make instructional changes for individuals and groups of students. The thinking competencies also are needed for higher levels of Driving for Results competencies and Influencing for Results competencies.

Problem-Solving Cluster—These enable solving and simplifying complex problems.

- **Analytical Thinking**
- **Conceptual Thinking**

Analytical Thinking

The ability to break things down in a logical way and to recognize cause and effect.

Related interview question: *Think about a time when you had to solve a problem or figure something out that involved a lot of information, data, or steps. Tell me the story.*

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Does Not Analyze or Plan	Responds to tasks as they arise; does not break work into steps or create lists, Or only follows steps created by someone else.
	1	Creates Lists	Creates simple lists of tasks or items, without prioritizing importance or timelines.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Makes Limited Connections Breaks a problem or task down into a few parts; Or understands that A causes B; Or prioritizes a relatively simple list of tasks.
		3	Makes Multiple Connections Organizes a complex activity into steps in a logical way (based on time, importance, resources needed, or other factors), Or understands several possible causes of events or results of events, Or anticipates multiple next steps and likely barriers.
	Superior	4	Does Complicated Planning and Analysis Breaks apart a complex problem or process into categories and subcategories to identify multiple sets of steps or parts, Or analyzes a difficult problem from several perspectives before arriving at a detailed solution.
		5	Does Highly Complex Planning and Analysis Does Level 4 analysis—uses several approaches to analyze a problem, comes up with multiple solutions—and weighs value of each.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Analytical Thinking—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The ability to break things down in a logical way and to recognize cause and effect.

What It Looks Like

Analytical Thinking is breaking a problem into smaller parts or a logical order based on time sequence, cause-effect relationships, or priorities/importance. It includes analyzing basic data to understand what is important and how it relates to student goals, recognizing cause-effect relationships of instructional activities and results, and making plans that logically and sequentially deploy materials, time, and other staff. Turnaround teacher tasks requiring Analytical Thinking may include but are not limited to: identifying students' current levels of achievement; identifying next steps in students' learning; identifying barriers to students' current learning; identifying solutions to each learning barrier; organizing whole-class, small group, and individual instruction to make the best use of instructional time; identifying and using materials and activities to ensure learning progress; and planning assessments that match goals and lessons—all of these done to ensure maximum learning progress by each student.

Why It Matters

Analytical Thinking is important for teachers in a turnaround school who are confronted with multiple barriers to student learning. They must grasp data (qualitative and quantitative) about student performance for decision-making and make plans with steps to implement, assess, and improve instruction to accelerate student learning during each year.

Putting It Into Action

Examples from practitioner interviews:
Teachers with strong analytical thinking skills break down the subject matter to be taught in multiple ways in order to help all students (those who are struggling and those who grasp material quickly) reach a more advanced understanding of the material. They plan lessons that logically match assessments and the learning goals they measure. They are comfortable with data and use it regularly to inform their teaching strategies and their instructional goals, but they are also adept problem-solvers who rarely run into brick walls, because they use logical reasoning to respond to situations as they arise. These teachers manage and plan for multiple learning activities at one time, so it is common to see their students working independently or in small groups on tasks appropriate to their learning needs. In addition, amid all the competing demands for their time, they are able to set priorities and address what is most important to achieve their goals.

Conceptual Thinking

The ability to see patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

Related interview question: *Think about a time when you were confronted with a lot of information and had to figure out what was most important. Tell me the story.*

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors	
Red-Flag Zone	0	Thinks Concretely or Uses Others' Concrete Rules	Expresses thinking very literally, Or does not apply past experiences to very similar situations.	
Neutral Zone	1	Applies Basic Rules of Thumb	Uses only common sense or very similar personal experiences to draw conclusions and make decisions about how to approach a new situation or problem.	
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Sees Patterns	Notices patterns, similarities, differences, or gaps in information, Or identifies when a current situation is similar to a past situation.
	Superior	3	Applies Existing Concepts	Applies past knowledge of similarities, differences, gaps, and trends to analyze new situations, Or uses a known method of categorizing complex data (such as assessment instruments, scoring rubrics), to identify what is most important or how things are related.
		4	Simplifies Complex Ideas	Can see a pattern within complex information, Or crystallizes the meaning and importance of a lot of complex data into a simple and understandable explanation (but not a new, complete model for others to use), Or sees the most important issue in a complicated situation.
		5	Creates New Concepts	Creates a new and useful explanation for a complex problem, Or organizes information in an original way that is not borrowed from other sources or obvious to others.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Conceptual Thinking—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The ability to see patterns and links among seemingly unrelated things.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Conceptual Thinking is understanding how seemingly unrelated things are related, seeing the big picture, judging what’s important, and seeing how steps in a process connect to each other. It includes recognizing patterns and trends, simplifying and clarifying complex information, identifying critical issue(s) among many, and resolving conflicts among data. Turnaround teacher uses of this competency may include: understanding how learning standards up to and beyond grade level are connected to one another; seeing key patterns, such as similarities and differences in students’ learning needs; and identifying similarities and differences in instruction that should be used with different students (methods, materials, student groupings, and level of content difficulty), leading to appropriate whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction to achieve learning.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Conceptual Thinking is important for teachers in a turnaround school, who must identify, categorize, and simplify the most critical issues that affect student learning progress and achievement so they can set priorities among competing demands. In addition, teachers in turnaround schools need to be able to structure learning for previously failing students by providing them with a conceptual “map” of the material they are covering so they can see the big picture of what they are studying—both within the content area as well as how different parts of the curriculum are related, and how they connect to larger learning goals and students’ current and future lives.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who are strong conceptual thinkers are able to move easily between concepts and implementation. They grasp the big picture (e.g., ideals such as holding high expectations for students) and also know what concretely to do in a classroom to make these broad concepts a reality (such as asking challenging questions that require students to take a position and defend it). Their understanding of how different learning standards are related, both across disciplines and at different grade levels, enables them to ensure that their daily work is always connected to these standards. In addition, they are creative about thinking of new ways to explain complex material to students in simple terms.

Turnaround Teacher Competencies: Personal Effectiveness Cluster

This cluster of competencies is concerned with the turnaround teacher's self-management of emotions and personal beliefs that affect student learning. Major elements include exhibiting self-control over behavior when faced with stressful, uncomfortable and unfamiliar situations; maintaining confidence in oneself and a willingness to keep improving despite the many small failures that are likely to accompany such a challenging role; actively embracing the constant changes needed to ensure student learning in a high-challenge, high-change situation; and holding and maintaining a strong belief in the human potential for learning and improvement, despite significant pressure to settle for less.

Why it matters

Without strength in this cluster, a turnaround teacher is likely to experience extreme stress and act less effectively than desired in response to the enormous emotional challenges in this role

Personal Effectiveness Cluster— This cluster of competencies is concerned with the teacher's self-management of emotions and personal beliefs that affect student learning.

- **Belief in Learning Potential**
- **Self-Control**
- **Self-Confidence**
- **Flexibility**

Belief in Learning Potential

A belief that all students, regardless of circumstances, can learn at levels higher than their current achievement indicates.

Related interview question: Tell me about a time when you helped another person, someone whom others were not sure could improve, become more successful.

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors	
Red-Flag Zone	0	Has Negative Expectations	Expresses negative expectations based on race, gender, culture, or past achievement about who can and cannot learn and achieve, Or expresses resentment toward students and/or their families.	
Neutral Zone	1	Goes Through the Motions	Follows teaching routines without making attempts to raise the learning level of some students, especially those who have not succeeded in the past.	
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	States Belief in Others' Abilities	Makes positive comments about all students' ability to learn more, even those who have been previously unsuccessful.
		3	Offers Significant Support	Supports all students by offering them detailed instructions and practical support for tackling challenging tasks.
	Superior	4	Provides Developmental Feedback	Gives specific feedback, both positive and negative, making sure that it is always phrased in behavioral not personal terms, Or reassures students after a setback, providing negative feedback but expressing positive expectations for future performance.
		5	Scaffolds Learning	Scaffolds learning experiences so that all students can experience success in tackling increasingly difficult tasks, Or designs unusual learning assignments to foster individual students' development, Or builds all students' confidence and skills by giving them increasing latitude to design their own learning experiences, including the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes in a noncritical setting.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Belief in Learning Potential—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

A belief that all students, regardless of circumstances, can learn at levels higher than their current achievement indicates.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Belief in Learning Potential is a strong commitment to the guiding belief that all people—students, teachers, and other staff—can learn and achieve at levels higher than their current achievement and circumstances indicate.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	In a turnaround situation, Belief in Learning Potential is critical for teachers who must feel motivated to take determined action to induce student learning results despite a lack of prior learning. This includes an explicit rejection of commonly accepted learning constraints, such as: previous achievement, current achievement, one-year-of-growth for one-year-of-school, disabilities, language differences, poverty, and parentage as limits on potential for learning. In schools where most students are of a minority race or ethnicity, ELL, or from a low socio-economic background, it also means explicitly rejecting race, poverty, or ethnicity as a factor in achievement potential.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who truly believe that all children can and will want to learn if they are well-taught naturally set high expectations for themselves and their students. They are constantly seeking activities that will spark their students’ interest and effort. They embrace other disciplines as vitally important to engage students’ interest and further their achievement, and do not accept the idea that non-proficient students should be taught a narrower range of subjects or critical thinking skills. Rather than seek to convince students that they need to learn the material in order to earn some immediate or future reward, teachers who believe in the learning potential of all students want students to learn so they can experience the pleasure and satisfaction of having their natural curiosity and effort rewarded through better understanding. In this way, they seek to support their students’ ongoing interest in learning.

Self-Control

Acting to keep one's emotions under control, especially when provoked.

Related interview question: Think about a time when you felt a strong, negative emotional reaction, but you were able to address the situation to your satisfaction. Tell me the story.

Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors	
Red-Flag Zone	0	Reacts Inappropriately	Loses emotional control easily, Or expresses extreme anger or hostility in common, frustrating situations.	
Neutral Zone	1	Avoids Stressful Situations	Avoids stressful or difficult situations or people.	
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Holds Emotions in Check	Controls strong emotional reaction (such as anger, frustration) when provoked or when faced with hostility but does not take constructive action. May walk away or otherwise remove self from situation.
		3	Acts Calm Under Pressure	Talks or acts in a calm way even when feeling negative emotions (such as anger, frustration, stress) after being provoked or when faced with hostility.
	Superior	4	Proactively Monitors and Addresses Stress	Takes steps to manage stress in an ongoing way (such as taking time for relaxing activities, exercising regularly) in order to respond more constructively to difficult situations and to avoid burnout, And controls strong emotions effectively.
		5	Defuses Situation	Able to identify and respond effectively to the source of serious conflict, Or able to defuse a highly stressful situation by managing one's own emotions and calming down the other people involved.

Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.

Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.

Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: **Threshold** behaviors are needed for moderate success, while **Superior** performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.

Self-Control—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

Acting to keep one’s emotions under control, especially when provoked.

What It Looks Like

Self-Control is maintaining personal composure when faced with potentially stressful, angering or otherwise emotional situations, particularly interactions with other people who are likely to be upset by some of the changes they experience in a turnaround school. This may include calming others who are faced with emotionally challenging situations.

Why It Matters

Turnaround teachers need Self-Control to engage successfully with students, parents, teachers, and other staff who may be angry, doubtful, or apathetic after years of failure and disappointment or when large changes are happening in a school.

Putting It Into Action

Examples from practitioner interviews:

Teachers with high levels of Self-Control are able to react to stressful situations objectively, and their observable behavior is not ruled by their emotions. They anticipate that students and other adults will exhibit negative behaviors when faced with the stresses and changes associated with a turnaround, and they are able to de-escalate conflict and reduce stress by responding to the immediate situation in a way that enables the other person to move beyond the negative behavior (for example, taking them aside and speaking to them alone, listening patiently to their concerns, providing an immediate solution). By modeling Self-Control with their students, these teachers also teach their students an important life skill—how to manage their emotions and respond reasonably when other people are behaving in negative ways or when faced with failure or stress.

Self-Confidence			
<i>A personal belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks and the actions that reflect that belief.</i>			
<i>Related interview question: Think about a time when another person or people stood in your way to get something done and you addressed the situation to your satisfaction. Tell me the story.</i>			
Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Feels or Acts Powerless	Publicly expresses lack of confidence in self, Or defers to others inappropriately, Or avoids challenges because of fear of failure.
Neutral Zone	1	Conducts Tasks Without Hesitation	Does work independently as needed.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Acts Decisively and Forcefully Makes decisions despite disagreements with peers or subordinates, Or acts outside explicitly granted authority (without breaking rules).
		3	States Confidence in Self, Defends Self Openly states confidence in own expertise, thinking, or positive qualities compared with others, or importance, Or stands up for self and own positions in conflicts, Or follows statements with actions for the purpose of justifying confident claims.
	Superior	4	Seeks Challenges Expresses positive feelings about challenging assignments, Or seeks more challenge and responsibility, Or makes decisions and confident statements despite disagreement with those in power (boss, influential people).
		5	Seeks Extreme Challenges Confronts others in power bluntly when needed, Or seeks extremely challenging situations.
<p>Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.</p> <p>Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.</p> <p>Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: Threshold behaviors are needed for moderate success, while Superior performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.</p>			

Self-Confidence—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

A personal belief in one’s ability to accomplish tasks and the actions that reflect that belief.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Self-Confidence includes presenting oneself to others with statements of confidence, putting oneself in challenging situations (such as the turnaround itself), taking personal responsibility for mistakes that occur during the implementation of the turnaround, and following up swiftly with analysis and corrective action.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Self-Confidence is important for teachers in a turnaround school. They must both feel and appear strong and committed when inducing very different behaviors by students, parents, teaching colleagues, and other staff, who often may feel defensive about making changes and may be accustomed to disappointment and failure. The ability to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them is also critical in a turnaround school, where the adults in the building are attempting new approaches to solving problems that they and others have failed to resolve previously.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers with high levels of Self-Confidence are absolutely clear about their role in the classroom and the importance of what they are doing, and they communicate this to students and other stakeholders. By projecting clarity with confidence, they are able to build students’ shared commitment to the work they are doing so that students take responsibility for their own learning. At the same time, teachers with high levels of Self-Confidence are willing to own up to their mistakes. They acknowledge and express regret about situations when they misjudged a student, for example, and they are willing to make amends publicly and apologize. In this way they teach students that it is acceptable to make mistakes and learn from them. Teachers with Self-Confidence also recognize their own limits, take time to nurture themselves, and do not waste time and energy on problems they know they cannot address effectively.

Flexibility			
<i>The ability to adapt one's approach to the requirements of a situation and to change tactics.</i>			
<i>Related interview question: Think about a time when a situation changed at work and you were able to deal with it to your satisfaction. Tell me the story.</i>			
Zone	Level	General Description	Specific Behaviors
Red-Flag Zone	0	Unwilling to Change	Not willing, even when confronted with contrary evidence, to change one's position or opinion, Or does not recognize the validity of other people's views.
Neutral Zone	1	Can Be Objective	Understands other people's perspectives on an issue.
Potential Hire Zone	Threshold	2	Willing to Change Willing to change position or ideas when others present new information or evidence.
		3	Applies Rules Flexibly Proactively judges when bending rules or procedures will get an important goal accomplished better or more easily.
	Superior	4	Tailors Actions Repeatedly reaches important work goals by tailoring responses from scratch to the needs of particular situations (not just working from pre-existing procedures or protocols).
		5	Adapts Organization to Situation Makes long- or short-term adjustments or changes to the organization, not just own actions, in response to the needs of a specific situation.
<p>Red-Flag Zone: Red-flag behaviors indicate a severe mismatch for this role.</p> <p>Neutral Zone: These levels do not indicate a match if they are the highest levels of behavior shown.</p> <p>Potential Hire Zone: These behaviors enable some level of success in this role: Threshold behaviors are needed for moderate success, while Superior performers use these behaviors when the situation requires.</p>			

Flexibility—as Applied to Turnaround Teachers

The ability to adapt one’s approach to the requirements of a situation and change tactics.

<i>What It Looks Like</i>	Flexibility in a turnaround involves working with a wide variety of people and varying situations and making needed changes in one’s viewpoints, actions, and plans quickly and without resistance. In an organization in the midst of great change where new approaches are being tried and evaluated for their impact on student learning and growth, it includes the ability to understand and appreciate different and opposing perspectives on an issue.
<i>Why It Matters</i>	Teachers in a turnaround school need Flexibility to adapt to the rapid pace of experimentation, learning and improvement during a turnaround. This includes but is not limited to adopting new schoolwide teamwork and instructional tactics into classroom priorities; and changing instructional levels, materials, and tactics to adapt to new information about student progress and learning needs.
<i>Putting It Into Action</i>	<i>Examples from practitioner interviews:</i> Teachers who are highly flexible are able to adapt to current circumstances. They see situations from multiple perspectives and do not apply a rigid set of values to new situations. They are willing to bend the rules for students when following the rules would cause harm. This ability to see things from multiple viewpoints enables them to respond creatively when they are confronted with problems, and it allows them to build relationships with people who are different from themselves. At the highest levels, teachers with great flexibility are able to use immediate, real-world material (such as current events or issues that arise in class) in ways that enhance student learning. They make many changes in their approaches, but this flexibility does not mean they lower learning standards.

Methodology

The research team identified several sources of information for this project. These sources include: 1) research on competencies of high performing teachers; 2) research on competencies of high performing teachers in high poverty schools; 3) interviews with practitioners who select or mentor teachers in high-poverty settings; 4) interviews with school officials who directly support the efforts of turnaround teachers; and 5) interviews with Opportunity Culture teachers, multi-classroom leaders, and principals.

Research

Initially, the study team contacted several well-known education researchers⁵ and asked if they could identify any rigorous empirical studies that compare very successful teachers with other teachers in an effort to determine what actions or characteristics separate the very successful ones. We were searching in particular for studies in which the dependent variables were actions or deeper qualities measured via structured observations, structured interviews, or validated assessment instruments, rather than paper characteristics such as degrees earned and certification. Ideally, we hoped to find studies that looked specifically at teachers in turnaround situations, where “success” meant significantly improving the performance of previously low-performing students.

This caucus of national experts indicated that no published (or known unpublished) study applies this level or higher of research integrity to the question of what competencies distinguish high/average/low performing teachers in successful turnaround schools or classrooms. Thus, here we applied the best available research on competencies of high-performing teachers and high-performing teachers in high-poverty schools. This research was used to identify the competencies most likely to distinguish high-performing teachers in a turnaround setting. Examples come from interviews with teachers, teacher-leaders, principals, and other experts.

The following are primary sources used to develop the list of teacher competencies. For a complete list of all sources, see the bibliography at the end of this section.

All of the following sources used comparison groups and differing structured methods to analyze correlated (and potentially causal) differences in behaviors or characteristics. All are recommended as companion resources for users of this guide.

Teacher Competencies

Research into Teacher Effectiveness: A Model of Teacher Effectiveness. Report by Hay McBer to the UK Department for Education and Employment (2000).⁶ *Comparison Groups:* “effective” and “highly effective” performers as measured by value-added data supplemented with assessments from their principals. *Method:* structured behavioral event interviews coded for competencies and analyzed for statistical difference in frequency and level of competence between these two groups. Study summary and details published.

Hay Group U.S. teacher competency study summary (*Competence at Work*, Spencer and Spencer, 1993). *Comparison Groups:* “typical” and “very high” performers. *Method:* structured behavioral event interviews coded for competencies and analyzed for statistical difference in frequency and level of competence between these two groups. Study summary published (contained in a book summarizing numerous job competency studies using the same methodology).

High-Poverty Teacher Competencies

Star Teachers of Children in Poverty. Martin Haberman (2005). *Comparison Groups:* very low and very high performers. *Method:* Original study was observation and structured interviews; researcher used observed characteristics of high performers that low performers never exhibit (and vice versa) to draw contrast. Study summary and some details published.

Teach for America. *Comparison Groups:* TFA teachers who get superior academic results with students and TFA teachers who get average and below average academic results with students. *Method:* Statistical analysis of selection criteria versus performance. Study details not published.

Interviews

These education professionals, leaders and experts shared their opinions about what teacher characteristics they think are needed to perform in a high-poverty, turnaround situation or what teacher characteristics distinguish those who perform best from others. These sources were used primarily to articulate examples of the teacher competencies that appear in the research sources above:

Alan Anderson, Josh Anderson, Cleo Aquino, Lionel Allen, Dom Belmonte, Lorraine Cruz, Melissa DeBartolo, Josh Edelman, Denise Gamble, Kavita Kapadia, Tabatha Koylass, Michael Lach, Kimberly McNeal, Jordan Meranus, Mike Milkie, Lynne Moore, Drew Pandel, Amanda Rivera, Brian Sims, Nancy Slavin, Jim Sorensen, Victoria Van Cleef, and Lisa Vahey.

And numerous Opportunity Culture interviews; some of these are memorialized in videos, vignettes and blog posts, all linked at OpportunityCulture.org.

Other

Turnarounds with New Leaders and Staff. (2005). Public Impact for the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

School Turnarounds: A Review of the Cross-Sector Evidence on Dramatic Organization Improvement. (2007). Public Impact for the Center on Innovation and Improvement.

School Turnaround Leader Competency Model and Selection Kit. (2016; original 2007). Public Impact for The Chicago Public Education Fund.

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- Haberman, M. (1996). Selecting and preparing culturally competent teachers for urban schools. In J. Sikula (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (747–760). New York: Macmillan.
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- Hobby, R., Crabtree, S., and Ibbetson, J. (2004). *The school recruitment handbook: A guide to attracting, selecting and keeping outstanding teachers*. London and New York: Routledge.
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McKinney, S., Haberman, M. Stafford-Johnson, D., & Robinson, J. (2008). Developing teachers for high-poverty schools: The role of the internship experience. *Urban Education*. 43(1), 68–82.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, retrieved from http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards

Quartz, K., & TEP Research Group. (2003). Too angry to leave: Supporting new teachers' commitment to transform urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 54(2), 99–111.

Rowan, B., Correnti, R., & Miller, R. (2001). *What large-scale, survey research tells us about the effects of teachers and teaching on student achievement*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Study of Instructional Improvement, Research Note S-5. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. (A version of this paper also appears in *Teachers College Record*, 104(8), 1525–1567).

Schechtman, Z., Godfried, L. (1993). Assessing the performance and personal traits of teacher education students by a group assessment procedure: A study of concurrent and construct validity. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 44(2), 130–138.

Public Impact for the Center on Innovation and Improvement. (2007). *School turnarounds: A review of the cross-sector evidence on dramatic organization improvement* (2007).

Snipes, J., & Horwitz, A. (2007). *Recruiting and retaining effective teachers in urban schools*. The Council of Great City Schools Research Brief.

Song, K. (2006). Urban teachers' beliefs on teaching, learning, and students: A pilot study in the United States of America. *Education and Urban Society*, 38, 481–499.

Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). *Competence at work: Models for superior performance*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

Stotko, E., Ingram, R., & Beaty-O'Ferrall, M. E. (2007). Promising strategies for attracting and retaining successful urban teachers. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 30-51.

TAP Program Teaching Skills, Knowledge and Responsibility Standards. (1999). Santa Monica, CA: National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.talentedteachers.org/tap.taf?page=researchsupport4>

Talbert-Johnson, C. (2006). Preparing highly qualified teacher candidates for urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*. 39(1) 147–160.

Public Impact for the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. (2006). *Turnarounds with New Leaders and Staff*.

Walsh, K., & Tracy, C.O. (2004). *Increasing the odds: How good policies can yield better teachers*. Washington D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality. Retrieved from http://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/nctq_io.pdf

¹ These four works are sources for the competencies provided here and are recommended as companion guides: Crabtree, S., Hobby, R., & Ibbetson, J. (2004). *The school recruitment handbook: A guide to attracting, selecting and keeping outstanding teachers*. Routledge; Haberman, M. (1995). *Star teachers of children in poverty*. Kappa Delta Pi Publications; Public Impact for The Chicago Public Education Fund. (2007). *School turnaround leader competency model and selection kit*. The Chicago Public Education Fund. Retrieved from <http://publicimpact.com/teachers-leaders/competencies-of-high-performers/>; Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (1993). *Competence at work: Models for superior performance*. John Wiley and Sons.

² For example, see the Illinois Continuum of Teacher Development, developed as part of the Induction for the 21st

Century Educator Program in 2005 by the New Teacher Center; The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, retrieved from http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards; Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development; and the TAP Program Teaching Skills, Knowledge and Responsibility Standards developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching and the Milken Family Foundation as part of the Teacher Advancement Program, retrieved from <http://www.talentedteachers.org/tap.taf?page=researchsupport4>.

³ Research also indicates a positive relationship between content knowledge in secondary math. Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2004, April 27). *Can teacher quality be effectively assessed?* Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute; Walsh, K., & Tracy, C. O. (2004). *Increasing the odds: How good policies can yield better teachers*. Washington D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality. Retrieved from http://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/nctq_io.pdf. These works include extensive review and citations to studies examining the effects of various teacher characteristics on performance and retention.

⁴ Public Impact: Kowal, J., & Hassel, E. A. (2005). *Turnarounds with new leaders and staff*. Washington, DC: Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502903.pdf>; Public Impact. (2007). *School turnarounds: A review of the cross-sector evidence on dramatic organization improvement*. Center on Innovation and Improvement. Retrieved from <http://www.centerii.org/survey/downloads/turnarounds-color.pdf>

⁵ Experts contacted included: Dr. Dan Goldhaber, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington; Eric Hirsch, New Teacher Center; Dr. Katherine Merseth, Senior Lecturer and Director of Teacher Education, Harvard University; Dr. Arthur Levine, President of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation; and Dr. Susanna Loeb, Stanford University.

⁶ Hay/McBer. (2000). *Research into teacher effectiveness: A model of teacher effectiveness*. UK Department for Education and Employment. Retrieved from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4566/1/RR216.pdf>