

**Student Voices:
Implications for School Turnaround in Urban High Schools**

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THESIS

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This dissertation is dedicated my Harper High School family—my former colleagues and students who taught me everything I know about what it means to be a teacher and part of a school community.

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JO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. The Persistence of Low Performing Schools.....	1
B. Turning Around Low Performing Schools.....	1
C. Defining School Turnaround.....	5
D. The Turnaround Movement.....	7
E. Purpose of the Study.....	9
F. Organization of Dissertation.....	11
II. THE LITERATURE	13
A. A Turn Towards turnaround.....	13
B. The implementation of SIG funds.....	16
C. The Four Models.....	17
1. School Closure.....	17
2. School Restart.....	18
3. Transformation.....	20
4. Turnaround	21
D. The History of Reconstitution/Turnaround.....	21
E. Lack of Evidence.....	24
F. The Challenge of Replacing Staff.....	25
G. Student Performance.....	29
H. When is turnaround successful?.....	33
I. Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research.....	37
III. THEORETICAL LENSES.....	41
A. Schools as Organizations.....	41
B. Failing Schools as Organizations.....	42
1. Race, Class, and Community.....	42
2. Teachers	45
3. Leadership.....	47
C. Understanding Failing Schools: Barriers to School Change.....	48
1. Social Barriers.....	49
2. Micro-Political Barriers.....	50
3. Organizational Barriers.....	51
D. Planned Organizational Change.....	53
E. The Meaning of Organizational Change.....	59
F. Focus on Students.....	61
1. Benefits of Student Voice for Students.....	63
2. Benefits of Student Voice for Schools.....	65
3. Benefits of Student Voice for Policymakers.....	67
4. Reform with Students.....	69

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	71
A. Research Questions.....	71
B. Research Design.....	72
C. Site Selection.....	74
1. Morgan High School.....	76
2. Harrison High School.....	77
3. High School Context.....	78
D. Phase I: Surveys.....	79
1. Survey Goals and Design.....	79
2. Survey Implementation.....	81
3. Survey Considerations.....	82
a. Consideration #1: School Schedule and Calendar.....	82
b. Consideration #2: Attendance Rates.....	83
c. Consideration #3: Age of Students.....	83
4. Distributing Surveys at Morgan.....	84
5. Distributing Surveys at Harrison.....	87
E. Phase II: Interviews.....	92
1. Interview Goals and Design.....	92
2. Interviewee Selection.....	93
3. The Participants.....	96
4. Conducting Interviews and Morgan and Harrison.....	97
F. Phase III: Focus Groups.....	99
1. Focus Group Goals and Design.....	99
2. Conducting Focus Groups at Morgan and Harrison.....	100
G. Data Analysis.....	101
1. Quantitative Data Analysis.....	102
2. Qualitative Data Analysis.....	104
a. Step 1: Organize and Prepare Data for Analysis.....	104
b. Step 2: Read Through all the Data.....	106
c. Step 3: Code the Data.....	106
d. Step 4: Use Codes to Generate Themes for Analysis.....	107
e. Step 5: Consider how to Present Data.....	109
f. Step 6: Interpret the Data.....	109
3. The Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data.....	110
H. Strategies to Address Issues of Trustworthiness and Credibility.....	112
I. Limitations.....	113
J. Delimitations.....	113
V. FINDINGS.....	115
A. Quantitative Findings.....	115
1. The Survey: Part One.....	116
2. The Survey: Part Two.....	121

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)		
<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
	a. Survey Item 11.....	123
	b. Survey Item 12.....	124
	c. Survey Item 13.....	125
	d. Survey Item 14.....	126
	e. Survey Item 15.....	127
	f. Survey Item 16.....	128
	g. Survey Item 17.....	129
	h. Survey Item 18.....	130
	i. Survey Item 19.....	131
	j. Survey Item 20.....	132
	3. Survey Summed Scores.....	133
	a. Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior.....	135
	4. Independent <i>t</i> -tests to Compare the Schools.....	135
B.	Qualitative Findings.....	138
	1. Morgan High School.....	140
	a. Students' Perception of School Turnaround.....	140
	b. Organizing Component 1: Organizing Arrangements.....	143
	1) Security and Safety.....	144
	2) Student Pushouts.....	145
	c. Organizing Component 2: Social Factors.....	147
	1) School Climate	147
	2) School Supports.....	150
	3) Teachers.....	151
	4) Classroom Environment.....	156
	5) Leadership.....	158
	d. Organizing Component 3: Physical Setting.....	163
	1) The Physical School Building.....	163
	e. Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors.....	164
	1) Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors.....	164
	2. Harrison High School.....	167
	a. Students' Perception of School Turnaround.....	167
	b. Organizing Component 1: Organizing Arrangements.....	172
	1) Security and Safety.....	172
	2) Student Pushouts.....	174
	c. Organizing Component 2: Social Factors.....	175
	1) School Climate	175
	2) Student Supports.....	178
	3) Teachers.....	180
	4) Classroom Environment.....	183
	5) Leadership.....	185
	d. Organizing Component 3: Physical Setting.....	188
	1) The Physical School Building.....	188
	3. Factors Promoting and Inhibiting Positive Change.....	192

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Turnaround Transition..... b. Wholesale Staff Replacement..... c. Security and Safety: Discipline Policies and Procedures..... d. Student Pushouts..... e. School Climate f. School Supports..... g. Teachers and Classroom Environment..... h. Leadership..... i. School Building Improvements..... j. Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior..... k. Similarities and Differences Between the Schools..... 	193 193 194 195 196 197 197 199 200 200 201
C. The Intersection of Quantitative and Qualitative Data.....	204
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transformation of Qualitative Data into Quantitative Data..... 2. Intersection of Survey Responses and Student Quotations..... 3. Reconciling Divergent Findings..... 	205 207 212
VI. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	216
A. Organizing Component 1: Organizing Arrangements.....	218
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety and Security: The Importance of Student Safety..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 2. Pushouts: School Turnaround at Whose Expense?..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 	218 218 221 222 222 224
B. Organizing Component 2: Social Factors.....	225
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 2. Teachers and Classroom Environment..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 3. Leadership..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 4. Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior..... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion..... b. Implications for Policy and Future Research..... 5. Final Discussion..... 	226 226 228 229 229 234 234 234 238 240 240 243 243

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
REFERENCES.....	250
APPENDICES.....	279
Appendix A.....	279
Appendix B.....	281
Appendix C.....	284
VITA.....	287

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. FEDERAL TURNAROUND MODELS.....	3
II. CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL TURNAROUND IMPLEMENTATION.....	34
III. BARRIERS TO SCHOOL CHANGE.....	49
IV. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS.....	58
V. BENEFITS OF STUDENT VOICE.....	69
VI. SURVEY RESPONSE RATE.....	82
VII. DATA COLLECTION AT MORGAN AND HARRISON.....	91
VIII. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....	97
IX. INTERVIEWS AT MORGAN AND HARRISON.....	99
X. GENERATING THEMES FROM CODES.....	108
XI. THEME CATEGORIES.....	109
XII. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TIMELINE.....	111
XIII. STUDENT RESPONSES TO SURVEY PART ONE.....	117
XIV. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR OVERALL SCHOOL SATISFACTION.....	119
XV. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.....	120
XVI. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR TEACHER SCORES.....	121
XVII. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL TURNAROUND.....	133

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

TABLE	PAGE
XVIII. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND BEHAVIOR.....	135
XIV. INDEPENDENT <i>T</i> -TESTS SUMMARY.....	138
XX. STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF TURNAROUND CHANGE AT MORGAN AND HARRISON.....	203
XXI. OCCURRENCES OF THEMES IN STUDENT QUOTES.....	206
XXII. INTERSECTION OF MOST PREVALENT THEMES IN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA.....	208
XXIII. INTERSECTION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA.....	212

FIGURE	LIST OF FIGURES	PAGE
1.	Choice of Turnaround Models.....	5
2.	A Theoretical Model of the Dynamics of Planned Organizational Change.....	56
3.	Visual Model for Mixed Methods Sequential Exploratory Design Procedures.....	73
4.	Interviewee Selection Process.....	96
5.	Frequencies of Students' Overall School Satisfaction Scores.....	119
6.	Frequencies of Students' School Environment Scores.....	120
7.	Frequencies of Students' Teacher Scores.....	121
8.	Student Responses to Survey Item 11.....	123
9.	Student Responses to Survey Item 12.....	124
10.	Student Responses to Survey Item 13.....	125
11.	Student Responses to Survey Item 14.....	126
12.	Student Responses to Survey Item 15.....	127
13.	Student Responses to Survey Item 16.....	128
14.	Student Responses to Survey Item 17.....	129
15.	Student Responses to Survey Item 18.....	130
16.	Student Responses to Survey Item 19.....	131
17.	Student Responses to Survey Item 20.....	132
18.	Percentage of Student Scores on Perception of School Turnaround.....	134
19.	Organization of Qualitative Findings for Each School.....	140
20.	Divergent Findings in Quantitative and Qualitative Data.....	213

SUMMARY

This study draws upon planned organizational change theory to better understand how students experience school turnaround in urban high schools. An exploratory sequential mixed methods research design was employed to examine how students experienced turnaround policy and explore student perspectives of how the policy promoted or inhibited positive change within their schools. Senior students at two turnaround urban high schools were surveyed in order to gain the perspectives of as many students as possible. Individual interviews followed to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences. Student focus groups were then utilized to give students the opportunity to refute or support initial findings and add further insights. Used together, these data sources provided a comprehensive picture of students' experiences.

Students' perspectives suggest turnaround is unlikely to happen as rapidly as policymakers expect. Students recognized initial improvements within their schools such as increased security, strong leadership, and an improved school culture. At the same time, they questioned the necessity of wholesale staff replacement, recognized the need to address the broader societal context of their schools, and called for a more rigorous curriculum. In considering students' experiences and acknowledging student voice as an important component in the school turnaround process, this study offers a perspective on school change that can support and improve school turnaround policy.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Persistence of Low Performing Schools

Providing a quality education to all students in all schools has become the most enduring challenge facing American education. Increased attention and efforts to improve the nation's lowest performing schools emerged as a national priority as high stakes testing and accountability policies have increased the number of schools termed 'failing' or 'chronically low performing.' Murphy and Meyers (2008) assert that the term failing school surfaced in the 1990s "as the accountability movement began to take root" (p. 252). Murphy and Meyers suggest further that the term 'failing schools' has become interchangeable with 'underperforming schools', 'low-performing schools', 'schools in decline', and 'troubled schools.' While states have varying criteria for identifying failing schools, in the current high stakes policy environment these terms generally refer to schools where large numbers of students do not meet state standards. Ultimately, in the current policy environment, when students fail to meet state standards, schools are deemed failing. Despite increased attention and efforts to improve the lowest performing schools, students and schools continue to fail.

Turning Around Low Performing Schools

While states, districts, and schools have historically played the most significant role in improving low performing schools, school turnaround is currently at the center of the US education reform agenda, and "the size of the U.S. federal government's current investment in education has put the federal government in a strong position to incent policy change and to set expectations for the types of turnaround strategies that states and local education agencies use" (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010, p. 4).

Since 2009, more than \$4 billion dollars have been awarded through Title I School Improvement Grants (SIGs) to hundreds of schools across the country. The SIG program challenges states and districts to make drastic changes in schools, while acknowledging that turning around the nation's lowest performing schools is unlikely to be successful without considerable changes in both leadership and personnel. The SIG program is the largest federal investment in public education in our nation's history, with \$3.5 billion budgeted in the first year of the program, bringing unprecedented attention to the school turnaround movement.

The SIG program is not the first federal program to attempt to improve low performing schools. However, it is different in its approach than previous programs. Compared to *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), which identified a large percentage of the nation's schools as failing in 2001, the Obama administration designed the SIG program to target the lowest 5 percent of the nation's schools, including high schools with graduation rates consistently lower than 60 percent (Kutash, et al., 2010). Current state SIG applications suggest that 16 percent of all schools are actually eligible, 15,277 schools in total nationwide (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). The SIG program allows states to select schools they deem most in need, and apply for SIG funds to support implementation of one of four prescribed turnaround models. The models include school closure, school restart as a charter school or under a school operator, school turnaround with a new principal and staff, or school transformation with a new principal and a slate of reforms (Kutash, et al., 2010). Table One presents an indepth description of each model. The underlying idea behind all four turnaround models is that tweaking and tinkering will not be enough to turnaround the lowest performing schools (Duke, 2012).

Instead, the lowest performing schools are required to use drastic measures to create meaningful change.

Limited research exists on the four prescribed federal turnaround models. There are examples of schools making dramatic gains in a small number of schools, but they are the exception, not the rule. Some schools have had limited success, but “to date, researchers have not identified any school interventions that consistently help all students succeed” (Herman, 2012, p. 25). To be sure, turnaround has not seen success at scale (Hansen & Choi, 2011; Herman, 2012; Stuit, 2010). According to Herman (2012), “Although there are decades of school reform research to draw on, there is very little strong research on the specific branch of school reform that attempts to make large improvements in persistently low performing schools quickly” (p. 29). Given the current federal emphasis on school turnarounds, it is reasonable to question if turnaround is a viable school improvement strategy on a large scale.

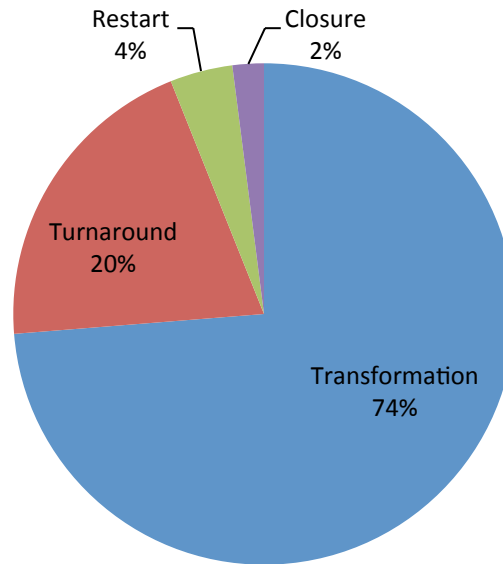
Table 1. Federal Turnaround Models

FOUR FEDERAL TURNAROUND MODELS	
Closure	Close the school and enroll students in higher-achieving schools.
Restart	Transfer control of, or close and reopen a school under a school operator that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
Turnaround	Replace the principal, rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff, and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including staffing, calendars, schedules, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach that substantially improves student outcomes.
Transformation	Replace the principal, take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, institute comprehensive instructional reforms, increase learning time, create community-oriented schools, and provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Note. From “The School Turnaround Field Guide” by J. Kutash, E. Nico, G. Emily, S. Rahmatullah, and K. Tallant, 2010, Social Impact Advisors.

Thousands of applications were received in the first year of the expanded SIG program. School districts that would otherwise not be able to afford to implement such costly reforms now have the opportunity to apply for funds to support implementation of one of the four turnaround models. The level of funding is unprecedented, as it is the largest amount of federal money ever budgeted for improving low performing schools. To date, there are 1,609 schools from 49 states and the District of Columbia that have been selected as SIG grantees, and the combined grants are expected to serve 594,117 students (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012; Jambulapati, 2011). The second most prevalent model has been turnaround, with 20% of SIG awarded schools having implemented the turnaround policy in 27 states and Washington D.C, as shown in Figure One. Unquestionably, the SIG program has effectively entrenched the turnaround model within the current policy environment.

Figure 1. Choice of Turnaround Models



Note. From: "School Improvement Grants: Analyses of State Applications and Eligible and Awarded Schools," by S. Hurlburt, S.B. Therriault, and K.C. LeFloch, 2012, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Defining School Turnaround

School turnaround is still a relatively new concept and is not often well defined (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Turnaround is often used to describe both specific turnaround models and the rapid improvement of low performing schools. In either definition, turnaround is distinct from earlier school improvement efforts in its focus on rapid dramatic improvement in the lowest performing schools. While the term continues to be debated, it is widely used in relation to the current movement to rapidly increase student performance in chronically low performing school systems and schools (Kutash, et al., 2010).

One use of the term turnaround refers to the process of rapid improvement in a school (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Simmons,

2006). Turnaround has been defined as “a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that produces significant gains in student achievement within two academic years” (Calkins, et al., 2007, p. 69). Hassel and Kowal (2005) argue that “in public schools, a successful turnaround produces a dramatic increase in student achievement in a limited amount of time” (p.5). Simmons (2006) offers yet another definition, describing turnaround as a school “that had more than a threefold increase in improvement rate...compared to their three year average before . . . and significant improvement in culture” (p. 3). The varying definitions add uncertainty to the discussion, but ultimately each definition focuses on a school that has seen rapid improvement in student achievement.

Turnaround is also used as a term to identify a specific federal intervention policy (Calkins et al., 2007; Kutash, et al., 2010). As defined in Table 1 above, this policy includes replacing the principal and the majority of the staff and includes giving the principal flexibility in day-to-day operations and implementing new curriculum (Kutash, et al., 2010). It is this specific turnaround model that is at the center of this dissertation. Utilizing this school turnaround policy as a strategy to improve chronically low performing schools is not new. The specific turnaround policy of replacing the principal and majority of the staff grew from the policy of reconstitution that was implemented in the 1980s and 1990s that involved “removing a school’s incumbent administrators and teachers (or a large percentage of them) and replacing them with educators who, presumably, are more capable and committed” (Malen, Croninger, Redmond, & Muncey, 1999). Replacing the school staff with a more capable and committed staff aims to improve the human capital in low performing schools (Rice & Malen, 2003). In theory,

this new staff and administration will be more willing to implement a more rigorous instruction and increase student achievement. In addition to a new staff, the turnaround policy also includes additional resources that seek to enhance the capacity of the schools. These combined efforts should, in theory, increase student achievement.

Those who support the turnaround policy claim that by changing the entire staff of an ineffective school, the learning environment can be improved. By bringing in new enthusiastic staff members, advocates argue, the school and its students can have a fresh start and can create a new student-centered culture where failure is not an option. Some say that turnaround is the only option left for schools that have been chronically underperforming for numerous years (Ziebarth, 2002). On the other hand, those who challenge the turnaround policy assert that the policy can “stigmatize and demoralize” the entire school body, including the students and effective educators, who take the blame for a very complicated problem (Rice & Malen, 2003). Additionally, opponents argue, it discriminates against minority and low-income communities without concern for their circumstances (Ziebarth, 2002). The policy has been implemented in many schools without the input of teachers, parents, or community members, despite significant opposition to the policy in some school communities (Hendrie, 1998).

The Turnaround Movement

The school turnaround movement is in its early stages. Early evaluation efforts suggest that elementary schools have seen limited success, but that high schools have proven more difficult to turnaround (Center on Education Policy, 2012b; Herman, 2012). The success of the turnaround movement will in part be dependent on examining early turnaround efforts and learning from the successes and failures of these early turnaround

experiments. Understandably, there is urgency to turnaround our nation's lowest performing schools, and the Obama administration is funding these efforts with unprecedented amounts of money. Yet, there seems to be little thought about whether or not the models being used are actually effective. In fact, not one of the four federally prescribed models has led to successful turnarounds on a large scale (Herman, 2012). The implementation of the turnaround policy is complex and difficult. Evidence from the modest amount of empirical research that has been done on the policy has shown that the gains in student achievement at turnaround schools are sporadic and unpredictable (Herman, 2012; Stuit, 2012). Despite the current trend to utilize turnaround as a policy to improve low performing schools, empirical data on the effects of the policy are rare. There needs to be a more complete understanding of the policy and the impact the policy has on schools and the students who attend them.

The examination of turnaround efforts is especially important at the high school level, as high schools have been persistently resistant to change (Payne, 2010). Further, urban high schools serving low income minority students are more likely to receive SIG funds (Hurlburt, LeFloch, Therriault, & Cole, 2011), so the examination of turnaround efforts in these schools is particularly important. While elementary schools have a much stronger track record in turnaround, there are few examples of high school turnaround (Center on Education Policy, 2012b; Stuit, 2012). In fact, in terms of academic achievement, little progress has been made at turnaround high schools (de la Torre et al., 2012). Many low-income minority students enter high school years behind in academic skills, and these students only have four years to address academic struggles that have accumulated over many years. Perhaps another reason high schools have been more

difficult to change is what Balfanz (2009) terms the “two-tiered system.” As Balfanz points out, many large urban districts separate out high and low achieving students at the end of eighth grade as students transition to high school. In these districts, students who test at grade level or above attend selective enrollment high schools, while their counterparts are left to attend neighborhood schools, which, “by definition . . . are left to educate only students with low test scores, low grades, poor attendance, or poor behavior” (Balfanz, 2009, p. 22). With this in mind, it is understandable that these non-selective neighborhood high schools are often in the lowest 5% of low performing schools. A disproportionate amount of SIG funds have been awarded to high schools that have previously been impervious to change efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory sequential mixed methods research study is to examine students’ perspectives of planned organizational change in two turnaround high schools. The study investigates how students experienced school turnaround and explores students’ perspectives of change in two urban high schools. While often overlooked, students’ perspectives offer unique insight into how school turnaround moves from theory to practice. The literature on school turnaround efforts is growing as the early evaluation of turnaround schools has gained attention (Duke, 2012; Hansen, 2012; Herman, 2012; Hochbein, 2012; Meyers, Lindsay, Condon, & Wan, 2012). Noticeably missing from early evaluations is how students have experienced turnaround policies. With this in mind, this study aims to focus on students as participants and observers within the process of change. Given the current investment by the federal government in school turnaround, it is worth asking how students experience the changes in turnaround

schools. Considering these gaps in the literature, this study addresses two research questions:

- How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change within their schools?
- How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school?

Using student surveys, individual interviews, and focus groups, this study focuses on students as participants in the change process and examines their perspectives of organizational change in two turnaround high schools. Vivid accounts of how high school students experience organizational change in two turnaround high schools emerge in this study. The analysis allows for examination of the differences between the two schools and how the students experienced the changes in their schools within two different contexts.

Change is a complex social and cognitive process of developing new shared meaning and new shared subjective realities (Fullan, 2007) and changes of individuals' beliefs and understanding are at the core of achieving meaningful lasting reform (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007). With respect to school reform, these individual changes include the teachers, principals, and perhaps most importantly, the students. As Fullan (2007) points out, "meaning must be accomplished at every level of the system, but if it is not done at the level of the student . . . all is lost" (p. 187). This research study on turnaround schools is unique because it suggests that student voice be utilized to inform school turnaround policy and implementation. In considering students' experiences and seeing student voice as an important component in the school turnaround process, this study offers a perspective on school change that can support and improve school turnaround policy.

Students' perspectives about what factors promote or inhibit positive change within turnaround schools offer educators and policymakers a unique point of view that should be included in the complex discussion of turning around low performing schools. Student voice provides a unique perspective that may enhance the ability to make informed decisions about how to turnaround or improve low performing schools.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. The literature review begins with a discussion of low performing schools, before turning to the recent efforts aimed at turning these schools around. Chapter two looks further into the history of the school turnaround movement, including characteristics of successful turnaround efforts and lessons learned from early evaluations of turnaround implementation.

Chapter three focuses on the theoretical lenses that guided this study. It begins with a discussion of schools as organizations, focusing specifically on failing schools as organizations and the barriers to improve them. The chapter then moves on to the discussion of how planned organizational change policies attempt to improve the learning conditions for students. Chapter three concludes with a discussion of the benefits of utilizing student voice to inform school reform efforts.

Chapter four focuses on the methodology employed in this study, including detailed information about the ideas that drove the research design and the implementation of the methods. The chapter describes each phase of the data collection. In describing the research design, I outline how I used both quantitative and qualitative data to best answer the research questions that guided this study.

In chapter five, I present the findings of this study. The chapter is organized into three distinct sections: quantitative findings, qualitative findings, and the intersection of the two data sets. In each of these sections, the two high schools are examined individually as well as attention paid to the comparison of the two schools.

Finally, in chapter six, I turn to the discussion of the findings, including implications for future research on school turnaround and student voice. In this chapter, I draw upon existing school turnaround and organizational change literature to contextualize the students' experiences in their high schools.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature on school turnaround. The chapter begins with a discussion of how the movement to improve low performing schools has moved toward school turnaround. The discussion follows with how turnaround schools are identified before turning to an examination of the four SIG turnaround models. The chapter ends with an in-depth look into the turnaround model, the policy at the center of this study.

A Turn Towards Turnaround

The School Improvement Grants (SIG) program was originally established under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001. The SIG program offered funding to low performing schools in need of restructuring or improvement, and the money was spread out widely across states. The SIG program was significantly revised under the Obama administration in 2009 with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The updated SIG program included clear options for turnaround practices and targeted the lowest performing schools. While SIG funds were previously available to all schools in need of improvement, in 2009 the focus turned to turning around the 5 percent lowest performing schools or high schools with graduation rates below 60 percent (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). This new focus on school turnaround is a new approach to school improvement as it uses drastic policies to incite rapid improvement in the lowest performing schools.

School turnaround emerged as the priority of the U.S. Department of Education during Obama's first term. An unprecedented amount of money, new drastic models, and rigid requirements for schools and districts are evidence of the federal government's shift and commitment to school turnaround. School improvement efforts have long attempted

to increase student achievement in low performing schools. Low performing schools have seen various reform strategies implemented in an effort to improve student achievement. While these less drastic policies, such as school improvement planning and hiring outside experts, are less costly and politically challenging, they have not been successful in making dramatic gains in student achievement. Furthermore, as Stuit and Stringfield (2012) suggest, many of these former school reform efforts have been “unevenly implemented, or poorly sustained, or both” (p. 2). The questionable record of success of former school improvement efforts led to a new approach to school reform, school turnaround. With a new focus on drastic changes and rapid improvement, the school improvement movement has morphed into the school turnaround movement.

The SIG requirements make it clear that turnaround is distinctive from former school improvement efforts. To begin with, the SIG program focuses narrowly on the lowest performing schools and limits the models to be implemented in these schools. Further, the program stresses the importance of human capital, as it requires staff replacement in at least two of the four models. While principal replacement is not a requirement in the restart model, many principals are replaced when these schools convert to charter or privately managed schools. Ultimately, the SIG program is grounded in the assumption that one of three turnaround models (turnaround, transformation, or restart) can rapidly improve student outcomes in low performing schools. If not, districts can turn to the fourth model, school closure, and students will be transferred to other schools within the district.

When the SIG program was first announced in 2009, it was targeted to turnaround the lowest 5% of low performing schools. An examination of SIG application two years

later revealed that 16% of schools are actually eligible to receive SIG funds (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Efforts to identify the lowest performing schools have become increasingly important, as an increasing number of schools are applying for SIG funds. Included in the identification of the lowest performing schools, is the categorization of schools into tiers, which represent the level of priority of SIG funds (Perlman & Redding, 2010). Tier I schools, which include schools receiving Title I funds, are given top priority for SIG funds. Schools are ultimately chosen for turnaround based on high-stakes standardized test scores, but eligibility requirements for SIG vary from state to state. Some states examine only one year of data to identify the lowest performing schools, while others examine up to seven years of data (Hulburt, Le Floch, Therriault, & Cole, 2011). The unsystematic approach has left critics concerned about which schools are targeted for turnaround, and Hansen (2012) has called the haphazard approach to identifying turnaround schools ‘dangerous.’ States and districts have used a variety of approaches to identify the lowest performing schools to target for turnaround, but there is no standard definition or approach (Hansen, 2012).

While it is true that only low performing schools are chosen for turnaround, it is impossible to examine school policies in isolation from the social, political and economic context in which they exist. Some argue that turnaround policies resonate with current trends around economic restructuring, global competition, and urban inequality (Lipman, 2004; Mollenkopf & Castells, 1991; Rury & Mirel, 1997;). Lipman (2002) argues that in Chicago, the “policy agenda and the discourses that surround it are part of a larger cultural politics of race that both serves development interests and has a life of its own rooted in Chicago's racialized history” (p. 409). While the goals of the policy may be

worthwhile, some argue the consequences of such policies may exacerbate the inequalities within many cities and marginalize low-income and minority families (Cucchiara, 2008; Karp, 2010).

The Implementation of SIG Funds

In the first year of implementation, 820 schools received SIG funds (Hurlburt, Le Floch, Therriault, & Cole, 2011). By 2011 the number of SIG awarded schools jumped to 1,228 schools nationwide, only a fraction of the 15,277 schools eligible to apply for the SIG program (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Funding varied from state to state, in terms of per pupil spending and average amount awarded. In Kentucky, for example, 105 of 108 eligible schools were funded compared to Illinois where only 10 out of 738 eligible schools were funded (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Schools that receive SIG funds tend to be in urban areas with high minority populations. The majority of SIG grantees (58%) are schools in urban areas, perhaps because urban areas have more options, and some would say an advantage over rural districts with more access to foundations willing to fund schools and to a larger pool of qualified teachers and principals (Jampulabati, 2011). Conversely, only 18% of SIG grantees are in rural districts, conceivably because they arguably have fewer options for partnerships and a limited pool of qualified staff.

The SIG program has the potential to reach a large number of schools and students, but not all four turnaround models are viable options for all districts. For instance, schools in rural schools that are geographically isolated are unlikely to attract high quality staffs to replace teachers or principals (Klein, 2010). Even in urban areas, replacing the staff and administration has been a challenge (Center on Education Policy,

2012d). Further, the restart model is not an option in some states where state laws restrict charter schools or limit the number of charter schools (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2006). These factors have clearly been taken into consideration in choosing which model best suits the needs of a school and district, as can be seen in the low percentage of schools that have implemented the school closure and restart model. Below are brief discussions of each of the four federal turnaround models. The model known as turnaround will be discussed in length, since it is the policy at the center of this study.

The Four Models

School Closure

Closing a school is one option under the federally mandated turnaround models in the federal SIG program, with the goal of sending the students to higher performing schools (Kutash, et al., 2010). As of 2011, only two percent of all SIG grantees implemented school closure, making it the least common of the four turnaround models. School closure has faced intense opposition in many communities, as parents and community members protest school closings in their neighborhoods. In large cities like Chicago and New York, low performing schools have been closed in greater numbers. Critics argue that these school closures put students at risk as they travel to other low performing schools in the district that are not any better than their former school (de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009; Duke, 2010; Zelon, 2010).

In 2009, the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) found that when school closure policy was implemented in Chicago, most students who were displaced transferred into equally low performing schools (de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009). While some of the schools that they transferred to had higher achievement levels than their

previous school, the displaced student generally ended up at some of the lowest performing schools in the city, including 40 percent of displaced students enrolled in schools on probation (de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009). The report also noted that in the year that the closings were announced, student learning was disrupted. The most important factor in student achievement following school closings is the quality of the receiving school. The CCSR study states that “displaced students who enrolled in new schools with high average achievement had larger gains in both reading and math than students who enrolled in receiving schools with lower average achievement” (p. 3). Without high achieving schools for students to transfer to, school closings have not been found to be a practical option for improving student achievement.

School Restart

The school restart model includes transferring control of the school to an outside organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process. These outside organizations include charter school operators, charter management organizations, or educational management organizations (EMOs). An important feature of the restart model is the flexibility of charter and EMO schools. Theoretically, this flexibility allows schools to meet the needs of their students without the constraints of district requirements. This flexibility promotes innovation and has been seen as an important factor in improving low performing schools (Calkins et al., 2007).

Only four percent of all SIG grantees have opted to implement the restart model, totaling 33 schools nationwide. Critics of the restart model argue that the model favors urban school districts, where charter school operators and educational management

organizations are prevalent (Klein, 2010). Another obstacle to the restart model are state laws, as some states have no charter authorization within the state or caps on the number of charter schools. For example, in Mississippi, North Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia there are no state charter authorization laws, limiting these states to the other three turnaround models (Center on Education Policy, 2012f).

Over 1.5 million students attend charter schools in 39 states and Washington D.C (Center for Education Reform, 2010), about six percent of all students nationwide. Despite the growing number of charter schools nationwide, research on charter school outcomes is mixed (Arkin & Kowal, 2005; Hoxby & Murarka, 2007; Sass, 2009). Further, most charter school research focuses on charter schools in general, not those specifically targeting turnaround in low performing schools (Arkin & Kowal, 2005; Kowal & Arkin, 2005). Some charter schools have seen significant gains in student outcomes (Hoxby & Rockoff, 2005) while others haven't performed any better than their counterparts (Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, & Dwoyer, 2010; Loveless, 2003; Sass, 2006). Additionally, there is research that some charter schools have negative effects on student achievement (Bifulco & Ladd, 2005).

Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) are, for the most part, for-profit firms that offer schools and districts with "whole-school operation" services. Like evidence on charter schools, research on Education Management Organizations (EMOs) has focused on all EMOs, not those specifically engaged in turnaround efforts. Similarly, like charter schools, research reveals mixed results in student outcomes across EMOs (Peterson & Chingos, 2009). In Philadelphia, where EMOs have taken over large number of schools, student achievement results have been mixed (Peterson & Chingos, 2009).

Transformation

The transformation model has proven to be the most widespread of the four turnaround models in the SIG program. To date, 74% of SIG grantees have implemented this model (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). The model includes replacing the principal, taking steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, instituting comprehensive instructional reforms, increasing learning time, creating community-oriented schools, and providing operational flexibility and sustained supports. While the model requires the replacement of the principal, the staff remains in the school and growth in student learning is required as a part of teacher evaluation.

One possible reason for the widespread use of the transformation model is that there are fewer barriers to implementation than for restart or turnaround models, especially in rural areas. Compared to urban areas, isolated rural districts have fewer qualified teachers and principals to replace current staffs. While 74% of all SIG awarded schools implemented the transformation model, 96% of SIG awarded schools in rural areas adopted the transformation model. In Idaho, the transformation model has been the only model chosen. Considering the rural context of the SIG awarded schools in Idaho, the other turnaround models presented too many obstacles to implementation (Center on Education Policy, 2012c). In Washington, when strong principals were hired to lead transformation schools, there was an improvement in school culture and an increase in student achievement (Yatso, Lake, Nelson, & Bowen, 2012). Still, without strong leadership, other transformation schools struggled to make meaningful changes in their schools. While there were incremental changes in these schools, they were not drastic or rapid, as the turnaround policy portends.

Turnaround

Short of closure, the most radical of the prescribed federal models is turnaround, requiring the replacement of the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff. In addition to staff replacement, the model also includes significant instructional reforms and principal flexibility and support. Twenty percent of all SIG awarded schools have implemented the turnaround model. In rural and geographically isolated areas, a lack of qualified teachers and principals has prevented many schools from implementing the turnaround model. In contrast to the 26% of SIG awarded schools in urban areas that have implemented the turnaround model, only 4% of SIG awarded schools in rural areas have implemented turnaround (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Even in urban areas, staff replacement has been a challenge to implementation (Center on Education Policy, 2012d).

Recall from earlier that the turnaround policy grew from the policy of reconstitution, which also relied on the influx of improved human capital to improve student achievement. Like turnaround, reconstitution focused on bringing in new dedicated staff members to incite changes in low performing schools. This section begins by examining reconstitution, the precursor to the turnaround policy.

History of Reconstitution/Turnaround

The policy of reconstitution began in San Francisco in the early 1980s, primarily resulting from a court ruling on desegregation within San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). In 1983 the school district established a school improvement pilot program with the goal of improving the student performance of the city's lowest performing schools (Rojas, 1996). Reconstitution was included in this pilot program,

allowing the district to replace the entire staff and create new philosophies and curriculum in an attempt to turn around chronically low performing schools within SFUSD (Ziebarth, 2002). The SFUSD superintendent, who oversaw the schools and advocated for the policy, steered San Francisco's initial use of reconstitution (Fraga et al., 1998). The district recruited staff members nationally, invested heavily in faculty planning time and professional development, reduced class sizes, and brought in new technology and instructional materials into the reconstituted schools (Rojas, 1996).

Reconstitution gained momentum as a means to improve chronically low performing public schools in the early and mid-1990s. In 1993, the principal and staff at Rusk Elementary School in Houston were reassigned, after years of being one of the lowest performing schools in the district (Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Olson, 1999; Ziebarth, 2002). In 1997, newly reconstituted schools opened in Cleveland, Chicago, Denver, Prince George's County, Md., and San Francisco. In 1997, Maryland reconstituted six schools in Prince George's County, the same year that Chicago Public Schools reconstituted seven high schools (Brady, 2003; Hess, 2003). New York City avoided utilizing reconstitution, but the district used its own less extreme version to overhaul their low performing schools. In 1996 the district targeted ten schools, and that number doubled to 20 for the 1997-98 school year (Hendrie, 1997). Under the weight of growing political and public pressure to address the chronically low performing urban schools, school districts responded with accountability measures and sanctions like reconstitution.

Just a few years later, many school districts began rethinking reconstitution as a strategy, which did not surprise Gary A. Orfield, who has spent years studying school segregation and desegregation. Orfield suggests that many districts did not commit the

time and resources into making reconstitution work. Orfield suggests that reconstitution benefits, “don't come until three or four years down the road, but the costs are immediate, so it's very difficult politically. What seems like a simple idea turns out when you do it to be a lot more complicated” (Hendrie, 1998). With this in mind, school districts across the country abandoned the policy of reconstitution and focused their efforts on other reform efforts. While the sanction of reconstitution seemed to fall by the wayside, the policy reemerged nearly a decade later in cities across the country. The reemergence of the policy came with new terminology. In its newest form, the policy is largely known as “turnaround” rather than “reconstitution”.

Even before the SIG program was announced in 2009, the policy of replacing teachers at low performing schools was being implemented in schools across the country. However, since the announcement of the SIG program, turnaround has become increasingly widespread and entrenched in federal policy discourse. Since the SIG program was announced in 2009, school staffs have been replaced in 27 states and Washington DC (Jambulapati, 2011). While the policy has gained momentum, there is little information about how the policy impacts the schools or the students who attend them. As increased numbers of schools are undergoing turnaround, there is little clarity about the impact of the policy or what factors might promote or impede its success. While there has been a lack of evidence on both waves of this reform, there is a growing body of research that is evaluating the early turnaround efforts associated with SIG funded turnaround.

Lack of Evidence

The available empirical studies on reconstitution, or turnaround as it has most recently been termed, are “limited in scope and uneven in quality” (Rice & Malen, 2010). The empirical studies that exist from the initial experiences of reconstitution in the 1980s and 1990s are limited. Likewise, while growing, research on SIG funded turnaround efforts is in early stages and does not offer a definitive picture of whether or not the turnaround policy could be reliably replicated. To be sure, there are parallels between the research on reconstitution and the initial research on more recent turnaround efforts. For example, in studies on reconstitution, some anecdotal evidence suggests that the policy brought a much-needed sense of order and stability to some schools in addition to increased parent and community involvement (Peterson, 1999). Likewise, a recent study by the Center on Education Policy (2012a) suggests that improvements in school culture were the first indicators of progress in SIG funded turnaround schools. Continued research needs to be done to better understand how the consequences of the most recent form of the policy.

While there is little theory or research in education to guide school turnarounds, turnarounds within other organizations can shed light into turning around failing schools. Murphy and Meyers (2008) argue that “lessons from turning around other institutions . . . can help us more effectively undertake recovery work in failing schools” (p. 4-5). Lessons from other organizations suggest that turnaround is risky with a high chance of failure. Murphy and Meyers suggest that a better understanding of why schools fail and the context of failure provide a clearer picture of what it means to turnaround an organization or school. Among other lessons, Murphy and Meyers suggest that context is

essential to turnaround efforts and that turnaround is very difficult work. These two lessons from organizational turnaround are likely to transfer to school turnaround settings as well.

The Challenge of Replacing Staff

Replacing the entire staff is at the center of turnaround, with the expectation that the new staff will be more energetic, more competent and capable. When examining reconstitution efforts, there is some evidence that the new staffs work long hours and put in a good deal of effort (Doherty & Abernathy, 1998), but there is a lack of evidence that the new staff is more motivated or competent than the previous staff (Malen et al., 2002). In fact, some research has found that ironically after reconstitution, schools generally have fewer experienced highly qualified teachers. Newly hired staffs in many reconstituted schools may be less prepared and less committed than the teachers they replaced (Hess, 2003; Rice & Croninger, 2005). A recent study on SIG funded schools in Idaho, Maryland, and Michigan suggests that the new principal and staff were critical in improving student achievement in turnaround schools (Center on Education Policy, 2012c). The Center on Education Policy report (2012c) implies that staff replacement in turnaround schools was necessary to incite positive changes in the schools in Idaho, Maryland, and Michigan.

In earlier reconstitution efforts, it was difficult for schools to attract experienced staff (Borman, 2000; Doherty & Abernathy, 1998; Hardy, 1999; Rozmus, 1998). Many reconstituted schools reopened with largely inexperienced teachers, because those with more experience did not wish to be tainted by association with a school singled out as failing (Hess, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2003). Hess (2003) reported that in Chicago, there

were not enough qualified teachers to fill the vacancies, and some schools ended up either hiring teachers that were let go from another reconstituted school or filling positions with substitute teachers for years. Recent studies on SIG funded turnaround schools are consistent with this research on reconstitution. At Fremont High School in Los Angeles, which was turned around in 2010, the vast majority of the teacher positions were filled with displaced teachers from other districts (Blume, 2010). Likewise, many districts in Michigan have had difficulty in replacing teachers and principals due to the lack of motivated and energetic teachers and principals, resulting in staff members shifting from one turnaround school to another (Center on Education Policy, 2010d). Attracting and retaining high quality teachers has been a major obstacle in SIG schools in Idaho, Maryland, and Michigan (Center on Education Policy, 2012c). Many school districts have found that they simply don't have a pool of new talented principals and teachers waiting in the wings. Schools "relying on a magical pool of 'excellent teachers' to spring forth and replace them is naive at best and desperately misguided" (Rice & Malen, 2010, p. 1). Rice and Malen have concluded that reconstitution has not been a reliable policy for "attracting and maintaining large pools of highly qualified educators in low-performing schools" (p. 6). Likewise, SIG funded turnaround schools have faced challenges in attracting and retaining high quality educators (Center on Education Policy, 2012c).

The challenge of replacing the staff at turnaround schools is exemplified in geographically isolated rural areas (Klein, 2011) where there are few qualified teachers to replace school staffs. Some researchers have argued that all four turnaround models are centered on urban schools (Klein, 2012) and ignore the needs of rural districts. As

mentioned earlier, in response to the challenges that rural schools face in implementing the turnaround model, most rural school districts opt for the transformation model.

In general, the newly hired staffs at reconstituted schools were less experienced and had less credentials than the original staff, as new, mostly inexperienced teachers were hired in reconstituted schools, roughly 75% in the first year (Rice & Malen, 2003). Rice and Malen also found that in some schools, many of the teachers had not received their state certification at the beginning of the school year and attended night and weekend classes to meet the requirements of the state board. The influx of new inexperienced teachers did not end in the first year at reconstituted schools. As teachers left the school in the first few years of the policy, faculty replacements tended to be inexperienced teachers instead of experienced veteran teachers. Rice and Malen also found that veteran teachers in most cases chose to not reapply for their jobs, leaving the inexperienced teachers with little guidance. While veteran teachers were able to reapply for their jobs, many of them chose not to, citing that they were “shocked,” “insulted,” “angered,” and “deeply hurt”. Some excellent teachers looked elsewhere for jobs instead of facing a school where they felt unwanted. One teacher noted:

Lots of dedicated professionals who knew the curriculum and the students and had their classroom management strategies intact left because they would not succumb to the insult; they would not tolerate the disrespect, the mistreatment. (Rice & Malen, 2003, p. 645)

While reconstitution most likely did move some bad teachers out of failing schools, many effective experienced teachers left with them, leaving behind a staff that was not prepared for the task ahead of them. Even when the newly hired teachers were capable and committed, schools that replaced an entire staff were likely to struggle without the guidance of veteran teachers (Goldstein et al., 1998). Without the help of

experienced veteran staff members, many of the newly appointed principals and teachers were lost. They reported feeling ill-prepared, swamped and overwhelmed (Hess, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2003). More recently, school and district officials in Maryland reported that replacing the school staff was disruptive and had a negative impact on the school such as lowered school morale, disruptions to instruction, distracted teachers' who were concerned about their job security, and extreme stress placed on the principal (Center on Education Policy, 2010). Additionally, Borman et al. (2000) found there were clear tensions between the new teachers and the returning veteran teachers who were hired back.

Recent case studies on SIG funded turnaround schools suggest that retaining quality teachers is an additional challenge (Center on Education Policy, 2012d). Consistent with literature on low performing schools in general, SIG funded schools have seen high teacher turnover rates within the first few years of implementation (Center on Education Policy, 2012d), disrupting positive change efforts in the schools. In addition to staff turnover, principal turnover has also been an obstacle at many turnaround schools (Center on Education Policy, 2012d).

San Francisco became the first city to utilize reconstitution as a reform strategy in 1983 (Rojas, 1996). When San Francisco reconstituted staffs at six schools, the district attempted to recruit the most committed staff through a national recruitment effort, provided professional development and provided significant time for faculty planning. In his 1996 doctoral dissertation, Rojas (1996) reported that the newly hired staffs were better equipped to meet the needs of the students due to stronger academic qualifications,

making San Francisco's initial implementation the possible exception to the lack of highly qualified staff in reconstituted schools.

The challenge of attracting and retaining new more capable and committed staffs has gone largely unmet in both reconstituted and turnaround schools (Center on Education Policy, 2012d; Hess, 2003; Klein, 2011; Rice & Malen, 2003). Reconstituted schools found it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified teachers in previous school reform efforts. Similarly, it has proven equally difficult in recent turnaround efforts (Center on Education Policy, 2012d; Klein, 2011).

Student Performance

The impact of reconstitution on school performance or student achievement is mixed and sporadic. Overall, the results of the policy have been different in every setting (Peterson, 1999) and offer no conclusive findings. The policy has been effective in improving student achievement in some schools, but has little or no impact on student achievement in others (Brady, 2003; Hess, 2003; Peterson, 1999). In some elementary schools, the policy has proven to be successful in raising student test scores, but there has been very little improvement in high schools that have undergone reconstitution. Brady (2003) found that as an intervention strategy, reconstitution can work and has worked in some instances, but its success rate is limited.

Evidence on the impact of the policy on student achievement is discouraging. There are some studies that credit reconstitution for increased student achievement, but the studies do an inadequate job of attributing increased student achievement to the replacement of the staff (Archibald & Odden, 2000; Rojas, 1996). Rojas (1996) who wrote glowing reports of San Francisco's experience with reconstitution in his

dissertation was partially responsible for the initial growth of the policy as the superintendent of the SFUSD from 1992 to 1999.

Other initial reports of turnaround also inflate the policy's positive impact on student achievement. Sherman and Harvard Elementary Schools in Chicago have both gone through the turnaround process and have been praised for increased student achievement (Bowker, 2008). Chicago Public School officials suggest that the new staff and an innovative curriculum at Sherman have been important factors leading to rising test scores. While it is true that the school saw a 6% increase in test scores in the first year following the turnaround (Bowker, 2008), in the year before turn around the scores had risen by 4% (www.cps.edu). It is difficult to attribute student gains to the policy when the school saw similar increases the year before the policy was implemented. Additionally, even though there have been some initial gains, both Sherman and Harvard Elementary schools still rank as some of the lowest performing schools in the city.

Hess (2003) conducted one of the most comprehensive research studies on reconstitution, examining the seven high schools that were reconstituted in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in 1997. All of the high schools were already on probation, only 6% or less of their students meeting national norms in reading (Rossi, 1997). Hess found that there was little structural change in the seven reconstituted schools. In some classrooms, intermediate grade textbooks were being used in high school classrooms. Hess also found that the seven schools, on average, made modest increases in reading achievement, gaining 7.8% in the proportion of students reading at or above national norms. While these numbers seem encouraging, Hess warns that they actually only mean that the average reconstituted high school had about 38 total students reading at the

national norms and they were split between the 9th and 10th grades. Furthermore, Hess found only 43% of the students who began 9th grade in reconstituted high schools in Chicago were on track to graduate by the time they reached 11th grade. In the case of Chicago, Hess concluded that reconstitution for these seven high schools turned out to be not particularly successful, either in creating significant change in the academic press in the schools or in having an impact on significant improvement in student achievement.

The results have been similar in other cities as well. Brady (2003) reported on the results of reconstitution efforts in Prince George's County, Maryland. In three years of implementation, Brady reported that two of the six reconstituted schools outpaced the average gain for the state. One of the schools, Benjamin Stoddert, made average progress proportionate with the state gain. The remaining three schools saw little progress and continued to lag behind statewide gains. In Prince George's County the results of reconstitution efforts have proven to be mixed (Brady, 2003). Reconstitution in Baltimore City Public Schools had similar results. While there were gains over time in reading, writing and mathematics, there were still major gaps in achievement between reconstituted schools and other schools in Baltimore (Butler, 2003).

In most cases, it is elementary schools that have seen improvement after reconstitution. Rusk Elementary School in Houston, for example, is cited as having shown dramatic improvement within a year after being reconstituted (Doherty & Abernathy, 1998). Hardy (1999) reported on the successful outcomes of San Francisco's first four reconstituted schools, all elementary schools. Bacon (1999) suggests that the schools in San Francisco benefited from increased funding, reduced class sizes, and

parent agreements to get their children to school on time and to offer homework assistance.

In SIG funded turnaround schools, there is little evidence that turnaround has had a positive impact on student achievement. Still, there is some evidence of progress in some turnaround schools (Hansen & Choi, 2011; Herman et al., 2008; Stuit, 2010). Most of the research done thus far has been in the form of individual case studies of schools, and success in terms of student achievement has not been the norm (Herman, 2012). While Stuit (2010) found some evidence of dramatic improvement in student achievement, those schools were the exception, not the rule. Few low-performing schools turned around in terms of student achievement, and those that were able to make gains were at the elementary level (Stuit, 2010).

At best, these empirical data suggest that reconstitution and turnaround have been sporadic in improving student achievement or positively impacting the human capital in the school. There are few benefits that have been documented. Due to a lack of empirical evidence that points to the effectiveness of the strategy, Rice and Malen (2010) suggest “restraint in the deployment of this strategy until we have a stronger theoretical and empirical understanding of and justification for this reform” (p.9). Despite Rice and Malen’s suggestion for restraint, there is growing emphasis on turnaround as a policy to rapidly improve low performing schools. There is a growing body of research on school turnaround (Duke, 2012; Hansen, 2012; Herman, 2012; Hochbein, 2012; Meyers et al., 2012; Stuit, 2010; Stuit, 2012), but there is a lack of rigorous evidence that supports the continued use of the turnaround policy. The newest form of the policy is in its initial stages, and more research is needed to fully understand the consequences of the policy.

When is Turnaround Successful?

There has been recent debate surrounding how to best identify schools that have made substantial gains in turnaround schools or how to determine success in a turnaround school (Center on Education Policy, 2012f; Hansen, 2012). The definition of turnaround varies across studies, making it difficult to assess school turnaround progress. While turnaround success is often narrowly defined as improvement in student test scores, it has been suggested that indicators such as attendance rates, graduation rates, drop out rates, and teacher mobility should also be considered in the discussion of when turnaround is successful (Hansen, 2012; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). A recent study by the Center on Education Policy (2012) argues that “using gains in students’ test scores as the primary gauge of the effectiveness of SIGs focuses too narrowly on just one element of success and ignores important improvements in school climate” (p. 14). Still, many studies narrowly focus on student achievement, as measured by standardized tests, to identify schools that have turned around. In addition to the factors suggested above, Hansen (2012) further suggests that the use of student level data is more useful than school level data when measuring student performance. More specifically, Hansen (2012) suggests that using student growth measures best captures a school’s effectiveness. How to best measure school turnaround is a conversation that needs to continue. Further, how to define turnaround success should be considered in future studies on school turnaround.

To be sure, turnaround schools have faced significant challenges due to the dynamic nature of students and school context (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009; Hess, 2003; Mead, 2007; Rice & Malen, 2003). Despite these challenges, some schools have seen limited success and there are certain factors that have been linked to contributing to

successful outcomes of the policy. Factors that contribute to successful student outcomes after a school is reconstituted are linked to the fidelity of implementation of school reform, teacher perceptions of student ability, amount of fiscal inputs, community support, and the use of a research supported reform mode (Borman et al., 2000). These factors are important in any school, but even when they are effectively implemented in reconstituted urban schools, positive results are hard to come by (Borman et al., 2000). The characteristics of successful school turnaround implementation are outlined in Table Two.

Successfully replacing the majority of a school's staff has been one of the biggest obstacles in the implementation of the policy. When schools have been able to effectively replace a school staff, there were several important factors contributed to the availability of staff. First, the schools were located in areas where the student population was either stable or declining. Further, the community had no principal and teacher shortages generating a substantial pool of applicants for both teachers and principals (Jennings, Scott, & Kober, 2009; Scott & Kober, 2010). These same successful schools had a clear vision for the school that was widely publicized in an attempt to rejuvenate its reputation as a failing school and attract new applicants (Jennings, Scott, & Kober, 2009; Scott & Kober, 2010).

Table 2. Characteristics of Successful School Turnaround Implementation

Characteristics of Successful School Turnaround Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidelity of implementation of school reform • Teacher perceptions of student ability • Amount of fiscal inputs • Community support • The use of a research supported reform mode

- Stable student population
- No teacher or principal shortages
- Substantial pool of applicants
- Clear vision for the school that was widely publicized
- Negotiated with the union to resolve stumbling blocks
- Effective hiring system that did not rely on principals alone

There is an extensive amount of information on school turnarounds in the form of how-to guides, books and government publications. While all of these studies and publications can be informative, it is important to read them with caution and to remember that the empirical research on this turnaround model is in fact limited. Additionally, many of these publications use the term turnaround to include the many different models of turnaround, not just the reconstitution model that is the focus of this study. One of the most extensive turnaround guides written, ‘The Turnaround Challenge’, was published by Mass Insight, in 2007. The 100 page document analyzes research and offers recommendations and a framework for turning around low performing schools. Mass Insight (2007) suggests that the following characteristics are essential to a successful school turnaround:

- Clearly defined authority to act based on what’s best for children and learning-- i.e. flexibility and control over staffing, scheduling, budget and curriculum
- Relentless focus on hiring and staff development as part of an overall “people strategy” to ensure the best possible teaching force
- Highly capable, distributed leadership--i.e. not simply the principal, but an effective leadership team
- Additional time in the school day and across the school year

- Performance-based behavioral expectations for all stakeholders including teachers, students, and (often) parents
- Integrated, research-based programs and related social services that are specifically designed, personalized, and adjusted to address students' academic and related psycho-social needs (p. 11)

There are various additional reports that focus on turning around low performing schools. These publications generally put forward a set of overarching lessons about turnaround. These lessons are informative, but in many cases are broad and vague. My analysis of these publications found many commonalities in their lessons to be learned about turnarounds. These lessons include:

- School leadership is essential to the success of the turnaround (Brady, 2003; Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; Rivero, 2009; Spreng, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2008; Wolk, 1998).
- No single strategy is universally successful at turning around low performing schools (Brady, 2003; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Spreng, 2005).
- It is important to build capacity at all levels in the school (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007; Doherty & Abernathy, 1998; Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010; Mazzeo & Berman, 2003; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Rudo, 2001; Spreng, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2001; Wolk, 1998).
- Community outreach and support are important to success (Borman et al., 2000; Bowles et al., 2002; Doherty & Abernathy, 1998; Kowal & Hassel, 2005).

- Schools need to maintain a focus on improving classroom instruction (Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Doherty & Abernathy, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Some of these reports rely on the empirical studies referred to earlier, including the studies done by Hess (2003) and Rice and Malen (2003). Others draw upon school improvement literature in general. These publications and reports offer insight into the very complicated problem of turning around low performing schools and can be useful to inform turnaround strategies of all types.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

The fact that reconstitution was used as a reform strategy in the 1980s and 1990s and has recently returned, suggests that the initial reform may have failed (Cuban, 1990), especially when considering that in some cities, schools have actually gone through the reconstitution process more than once. In Chicago, two high schools have the dubious distinction of going through staff replacement two times in only 11 years. Both high schools went through the process in 1997 during the first round of reconstitution and the staffs were displaced again in 2008 (Hess, 2003; Rossi, 2008). In some instances, the same teachers that had been fired, reapplied and re-hired in 1997 went through the same process again in 2008. In San Francisco, Charles Drew Elementary has the same distinction. It was one of the first reconstituted schools in 1983. Twenty-one years later in 2004 the staff at Drew Elementary was once again removed under the Dream Schools initiative (Knight, 2004). The first wave of the reform was largely unsuccessful, yet it has returned as a federal model of improving low performing schools. Perhaps policymakers are not focusing on the problem, but on the politics of the problem instead (Cuban, 1990).

The current turnaround policy implicates teachers for the low performance of a school, defining the teachers as the problem in the school. Teachers are often blamed for the problems in low performing schools and are cited as being resistant to change (Evans, 2001; Payne, 2010), but in a case study of 15 turnaround schools, Duke (2007) found that:

The vast majority of teachers in each of the (turnaround) schools displayed a willingness to step up their efforts to raise student achievement. They were open to staff development aimed at improving their instructional, assessment, and classroom management skills. They were willing to devote hours of time each week to meeting with colleagues to review data, diagnose problems, and plan interventions. They were receptive to new work arrangements, including teaching literacy skills in longer blocks of time, providing tutoring during planning periods and after school, and delivering instruction alongside colleagues with special expertise in assisting struggling students. Turnaround teachers did not shun leadership responsibilities when principals called on them for help. Teacher support for turnaround efforts clearly was critical in sustaining improvements beyond the first year. (p. 28)

Research suggests that replacing the majority of a school's staff is complex, difficult and often ineffective (Abernathy & Doherty, 1998; Herman et al., 2008; Hess, 2003; Rice and Malen, 2003). In fact, "the school turnaround case studies and the business turnaround research do not support the wholesale replacement of staff" (Herman et al., 2008, p. 28). Education historian Diane Ravitch suggests that "there is zero support in research or practice for this mindless, punitive scheme to demean teachers. Improve schools. Don't fire teachers without individual evaluations" (Blume, 2010, para. 11). Simply replacing the teachers in a school will not turnaround a low performing school or increase student achievement. Abernathy and Doherty (1998) suggest that "patterns of failure, low expectations, poor community relations, deteriorating physical plant, and general demoralization" (p. 49) have all become deep-rooted in within the school

community by the time reconstitution becomes a possible sanction. New teachers aren't going to erase the history of the school or community.

The turnaround policy requires an enormous amount of resources, skills, knowledge and leadership. There must be more to improving a low performing school than simply replacing the teachers and administrators. The policy needs to offer more to the students, school and community. The strategy needs to include high quality teachers and leaders, not just new ones, in addition to an investment in both academic and social supports for students. If not, turnarounds will likely just be more failed school reform experiments.

Holding schools and teachers accountable should not be a strong enough argument for the further implementation of the policy. Yet, it is evident that this policy has expanded despite the lack of evidence to support it. Without more clear data about how the policy is being implemented in schools and how students are experiencing the policy, it may be too early to decide whether or not turnaround is a viable approach to school reform. There is a pressing need for more empirical research on the policy so that we can have a stronger understanding of how reconstitution impacts student achievement. Rice and Malen (2010) suggest that school reconstitution is “a risky strategy” and call for “restraint in the deployment of this strategy” (p. 9). They suggest that if the policy is going to be implemented, it should only be done so if certain conditions are met:

- An adequate supply of administrators, teachers, and staff who are, by some standard, more capable and committed and who are “waiting in the wings” to take positions in reconstituted schools.

- Valued resources and meaningful support structures to make reconstituted schools “magnets” for high-quality educators.
- Additional resources that are sufficient to bolster the capacity of these schools to improve performance and that are flexible so site educators can employ them in ways that are aligned with their priorities.
- Sufficient time to ensure that the above conditions can be met. (pp. 9-10).

Rice and Malen (2010) conclude that if policymakers are going to implement reconstitution as a turnaround strategy, they need to evaluate each experience so that we can build a better understanding of the policy. There is a need for ongoing research, particularly on the newest wave of the policy, so we can develop a complete understanding of reconstitution and the conditions in which it could possibly become a viable approach for school turnaround.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL LENSES

This chapter focuses on the theoretical lenses that helped guide the development of this study. The chapter begins with an examination of schools as organizations in an effort to better understand how to improve low performing schools. Specific attention is paid to low performing schools as organizations and the barriers to improve them. As mentioned in Chapter one, the term ‘low performing school’ is often synonymous with ‘failing school’. These terms are used interchangeably in this chapter in response to how each term is used in the literature. This chapter further explores planned organizational change theory as it relates to school turnaround. Finally, this chapter turns to the importance of student voice and the benefits of utilizing student voice to inform school reform efforts.

Schools as Organizations

In order to understand how to change, improve, or turnaround schools, it is first necessary to understand schools as organizations. Schools are particular organizations, not necessarily unique but different from other types of organizations. Tyack & Cuban (1995) suggest that there is a “grammar of schooling” that has remained extremely stable over the years. “Little has changed in the ways that schools divide time and space, classify students and allocate them to classrooms, splinter knowledge into subjects, and award grades and credits as evidence of learning” (p. 85). The organization and structure of schools has become the way we know and expect schools to be, and schools tend to be quite similar in terms of organization of classrooms and rationale for learning (Sarason, 1990). Schools are characterized by traditions, values, and beliefs that identify them as schools and that differentiate them from other kinds of organizations (Weick &

McDaniel, 1989). Schools are sometimes thought of as hybrid professional organizations where non-routine information is common in everyday interactions and teachers frequently make decisions based on judgment or inspiration (Weick & McDaniel, 1989).

While it is necessary to understand schools as organizations, for the purposes of this study, it is even more important to understand low performing schools as organizations because only low performing schools are subject to the turnaround policy. Murphy & Meyers (2008) have suggested that “as is the case with organizational decline in other sectors, school failure stems from both external and internal causes” (p. 258). It is important to understand these causes to better understand low performing schools and the strategies to improve them. While well-intended, many strategies to improve low performing schools are unsuccessful, perhaps because they generally jump from problems to solutions with little or no thought about the problems and issues that created the failure in the first place (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Understanding why schools fail is important in the discussion about how to turn around low performing schools. Murphy & Meyers (2008) have identified both external and internal causes to school failure. Below is a discussion of these causes.

Failing Schools as Organizations

Race, Class, and Community

Failing schools are most often found in urban areas with a high concentration of both minorities and poverty (Borman, 2000; Forster, 1997; Hassel & Steiner, 2003; Lashway, 2003). Living in a low-socioeconomic community with few resources creates additional challenges for the students who attend these schools, including problems associated with poverty that require significant services that are often unavailable to the

students (Lashway, 2003; McColskey & Monrad, 2004; Shannon & Bylsma, 2002).

Students in these communities come to school less prepared to learn and face daily family stresses that interfere with their learning.

Failing schools are generally found in urban and rural areas (Hassel & Steiner, 2003; Orlofsky, 2002), with the majority being in large urban cities. Nearly every large urban city has an abundance of persistently low performing schools (Borman, 2000; Forster, 1997). In large cities like Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Houston students are persistently failing and efforts at turning around schools they attend are largely unsuccessful. It is in these urban areas where high concentrations of minority and poor students attend schools, resulting in failing schools serving an unequal amount of minority students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Malen and Rice (2004) found failing schools to be overwhelmingly minority, with between 65% and 95% of students being minority in the schools they studied. Mintrop and MacLellan (2002) found similar demographics, with over 80% of African American students failing in the Maryland Schools.

Low performing schools are nearly always found in areas of low socioeconomic status (Corallo & McDonald, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Areas with concentrated poverty are more likely to have schools that are underperforming and some research links a causal relationship between high poverty and low performing schools (Picucci et al., 2002). In fact, at most failing schools at least 50% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch and it isn't uncommon for the percentage to be as high as 100% in some failing schools (Mac Iver et al., 2003; Malen & Rice, 2004; Mintrop & MacLellan, 2002; Picucci et al., 2002; Wang & Manning, 2000).

Children who grow up in poverty enter school with fewer academic skills and are less likely to come to school prepared to learn (Stipek & Ryan, 1997). The differences in early childhood experiences have a significant impact in children entering school ready to learn (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Children who grow up in poverty generally are not exposed to the same amount of language or vocabulary as their middle class counterparts (Hart & Risely, 1995; Lareau, 2003). According to Hart and Risley (1995), low socioeconomic parents speak to their children considerably less, in both quantity and quality. The research by Hart and Risely (1995) shows that low income families not only speak less to their children, but when they do they use fewer words, creating a greater risk for their children to fall behind in literacy. Similarly, the discrepancy in children's vocabulary growth from ages one to three can be attributed to both the quality and quantity of vocabulary used by their mothers (Hoff, 2003). In addition to living in less stimulating learning environments, children who come from economically disadvantaged families are also less likely to be enrolled in early education programs, putting them at a greater disadvantage (Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004). For instance, children whose mothers have a college degree are nearly twice as likely to be enrolled in an early education program as children whose mothers did not complete high school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

Unemployment, divorce, and alcoholism are all more prevalent in poor families. These family stresses can result in the lowering of a child's self-esteem, which can lead to discipline issues at school (Snow et al., 1991). These family stresses often make it difficult for students to come to school ready to learn. Additionally, anxiety over these family issues can also affect a students' attendance. Students often miss school in order to

babysit younger siblings or because they don't have money to take the bus. According to Lipsky & Gartner (1989), it is common for up to a third of the student body to be absent on any given day in an urban school. While the community context does play a significant role, some high poverty high minority schools do succeed (Calkins et al., 2007; Chenoweth, 2007; Jerald, 2002). Such research suggests that demographics need not determine a school's success or failure. There are more than demographics in understanding why schools fail.

Teachers

Children living in disadvantaged communities and homes start out behind, and when they become students, they attend schools that are lower in quality, have larger classes and less experienced teachers (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Lee & Burkam, 2002). What do these failing schools look like? According to Payne (2010), teaching and learning in large urban areas includes:

Too many classrooms flat-out wasting huge amounts of time, too many classrooms where instruction is repetitive, undemanding, devoid of intellectual challenge or interest; a picture of a system where the neediest children are housed in large, unfocused institutions; places where adult mobility is high, where teachers don't communicate with one another, and where curriculum is fragmented and disconnected; and where a cloud of low expectations pervades everything and guarantees that adults will consistently underestimate what kids can do. (pp. 90-91)

A great deal of research points to poor teacher quality as a factor in school failure (Cibulka, 2003; Housman & Martinez, 2001). Teacher quality matters, and it matters even more in low performing schools (Presley, White, & Gong, 2005). The effectiveness of a teacher has been found to be a strong determinant in student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996) yet, in many low performing schools, teachers do not have the necessary

skills. In Chicago, 48% of high school teachers were found to have such poor skills that in a class of 20 students, they were able to only “reach” 5 or fewer (Simmons et al., 2001). This is especially troubling, since research shows that students’ likelihood of passing state standardized tests is strongly related to having fully qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Fetler, 1999; Fuller, 1998).

Low performing schools often have a disproportionate number of inexperienced teachers (Goldstein, Keleman, & Koski, 1998; Lashway, 2004; McRobbie, 1998; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). So, while the students at these schools are in the most need of quality teaching, they are the least likely to receive it in the schools they attend. Even if the teachers are adequately trained at their college or university, these new teachers face an uphill battle at low performing schools. Teachers are often not adequately prepared for all of the responsibilities that being a classroom teacher includes (Ediger, 2004; Lenz, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

According to Mazzeo and Berman (2003), few colleges and universities prepare teachers to work in low performing schools, where new teachers are more likely to be assigned to teach. Additionally, low-performing schools by and large have the least qualified teachers (Cibulka, 2003) and have more teachers teaching out of their subject area or out of the grade level that they were prepared to teach (Lashway, 2004; Mac Iver et al., 2003).

Because of a lack of experienced teachers, teachers in low performing schools are often asked to teach classes or take on responsibilities that they are not trained to do.

Consequently, teachers in low performing schools often do not have the necessary content knowledge in their subject areas.

When low performing schools are able to hire highly effective teachers, they often don't stay (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). High turnover rates and an influx of new teachers are common in low performing schools. In Chicago, about 40% of new teachers leave teaching within five years (Payne, 2010) and in New York City, 44% of new teachers are gone within only four years (Winerip, 2005). Borman et al. (2000) found turnover rates as high as 80% in some low performing schools. Perhaps due to the high stress of teaching in a low performing school, high teacher turnover is often a big problem (Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Watts, 2000). It can be difficult to attract quality teachers to low performing schools, and can be even more difficult to keep them. Teachers in low performing schools often feel overwhelmed and unprepared for the challenges of teaching, contributing to high attrition rates in these schools. With a revolving door of teachers, students at these schools lack stability, the opportunity to build on prior success and the chance to develop relationships with their teachers. Teacher and principal turnaround, inadequate resources and inexperienced teachers all contribute to low morale in a school and lack of a sense of ownership (Mintrop & MacLellan, 2002). While the teachers play an important role in school success, some argue that it is the school leadership that is even more important to the success of a school (Leithwood, 2005).

Leadership

According to recent research, the success of a school depends greatly on the leadership and culture of the school (Borman et al., 2000) and ineffective leadership is often cited as a cause of failing schools (Mintrop & MacLellan, 2002; Watts, 2000). Principals often lack both the skill and the knowledge that it takes to run an effective

school, motivate teachers and be an instructional leader (Brady, 2003; Lashway, 2004; Mazzeo & Berman, 2003). The high stresses of the job often lead to high principal turnover (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005). It is well documented that leadership is key to the success of a school (Waters et al., 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004). Yet, in many failing schools the principals lack the necessary authority and resources they need (Calkins et al., 2007), making ineffective leadership another reason why many schools are low performing.

Understanding Failing Schools: Barriers to School Change

Considering the factors discussed above, it is not a surprise that there is often a low morale and a lack of sense of ownership at low performing schools and that these schools are so difficult to change. Teachers and staff often feel discouraged by the compounded forces fueling the school failure. The challenges in these schools are formidable and reforming them has proven to be complex and difficult. Without a doubt, “all schools do not start in the same place, and those that are truly disadvantaged have enormous barriers to overcome” (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 25). These barriers are not widely understood, leading to a lack of a clear understanding of the problem or school culture (Cuban, 1990; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Sarason, 1990). In fact, “there is a mammoth disconnect between what we know about the complex, self-reinforcing character of failure in bottom-tier schools and the ultimately simplistic thinking behind many of the most popular reform proposals” (Payne, 2010, p. 46). In many cases, reforms fail because policymakers fail to diagnose problems and promote correct solutions (Cuban, 1990; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Educational reforms of the past have only tinkered at the problems within schools, resulting in little or no change (Sarason, 1990; Tyack & Cuban,

1995). Charles Payne (2010) suggests that there are many social and micro-political barriers to changing low performing schools with a deep rooted history of failure. Table three summarizes these social and micro-political barriers to school change.

Table 3. Barriers to School Change

Barriers to School Change	
Social Barriers	Micro-political Barriers
Lack of social comfort among parents, teachers and administrators Low mutual expectations Predisposition to suspicion of outsiders Distrust of colleagues Tensions pertaining to race, ethnicity, age Generalized anger, consequent withdrawal as coping strategy Poor internal communications Emotional fatigue	Perception of principal patronage, favoritism Tendency to protect existing power arrangements, formal or informal Staff not willing to take part in decision making Principal not open to criticism Reluctance to talk about issues for fear of offending the principal

From: "So Much Reform, So Little Change" by C. Payne, 2010, Harvard Educational Press: Cambridge, MA.

Social Barriers

The prevalence of these social and micro-political barriers (Payne, 2010) essentially portrays a negative professional school culture, making it unrealistic and unreasonable to expect organizational improvement within a school. Pessimism, instability, and an overarching sense of futility preside in a dysfunctional atmosphere within many low performing schools. This atmosphere undermines both teaching and learning and leads to divisions among the staff, resulting in a negative and unsupportive learning environment (Payne, 2010). In such a negative learning environment, teaching becomes an isolated competitive practice with little collaboration, trust or caring between teachers (Leonard & Leonard, 2003).

Teaching among other teachers who love to teach and working in a supportive school culture have been cited as the most important conditions that can support effective teaching (Simmons et al., 2001). A collaborative professional community where teachers share information and reflect on their practice is essential to classroom success (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Moreover, Fullan (2007) suggests that education reform can only be successful if teachers are invested in the success of other teachers and the whole school, not just their own classrooms and Hargreaves (2009) argues that teachers will only really learn when they connect with other teachers. The quality of the relationships among the adults in a school is important to school outcomes (Bryk et al., 2010). Meaningful participation and collegiality have the potential to improve a school (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007), but in a school where there is a lack of social comfort among adults, low mutual expectations, anger, fatigue and distrust, reforms cannot be successful. Payne (2010) reasons that “leading change in a demoralized environment is among the most daunting jobs imaginable” (p. 35).

Micro-Political Barriers

Besides impeding effective teaching and learning, demoralized school environments have a negative impact on the power relations within a school. District bureaucracy and rigidity are often cited as barriers to school reform (Anyon, 1997), but often it is the political struggles within a school that obstruct meaningful school reform. The internal struggles of the staff and principal often lead to reluctance to talk about issues for fear of offending the principal (Payne, 2010). Issues such as scarce resources, instructional decisions, and shared decision often lead to conflict and tension among the staff and principal in many low performing schools.

Schools are layered with well meaning reforms, leaving teachers and principals with conflicting signals about what is expected from them. When new school reform or policies are introduced, the residue of former policies often clouds the purposes and goals of the new policies. This problem of incoherence is magnified by shifts in educational policy priorities and changes in leadership (Hess, 1999). In fact, “reform in American public schools, especially urban schools, has historically made schools more complex, less understandable, less stable, more fragmented, less personal, more politically charged places for children and adults to live and work in” (Elmore, 2006, p. 94). The incoherence of policies and initiatives and the instability of school politics have made the sustainability of reforms questionable (Cuban & Usdan, 2003).

Organizational Barriers

Organizational change is highly complex, and in fact, most organizational changes are not successful because they are so difficult to implement (Burke, 2010). Change is very complicated and as Boonstra (2004) points out, “many of the explanations given why organizational change programs fail pay insufficient attention to the complexity of change processes” (p. 1). Organizational change in any organization is difficult, but some argue that it is even more difficult to accomplish in a school (Robertson & Seneviratne, 1995). Payne (2010) affirms that there is a “persistent difficulty appreciating how damnably hard it is to change urban schools” (p. 45). Sarason (1990) further suggests that “the characteristics, traditions, and organizational dynamics of school systems (are) more or less lethal obstacles to achieving even modest, narrow goals” (p. 12).

Schools, like all organizations, are open systems that are in constant interaction with their external environment (Burke, 2010). When thinking about changing any organization, it is important to keep in mind that organizations exist within their environment and the current political, economical and social context. With thinking specifically about schools, Hargreaves (2009) reminds us that the “greater proportion of effects on student achievement comes from outside the school . . . and the strongest and most effective schools are the schools that work with and affect the communities that affect them.”(p. 98). The external environment has a significant influence on the school and the culture of the school, making it difficult to successfully change a school.

Yet another barrier to school change is the fact that change initiatives rarely consider “the lived realities of the educators who must accomplish change or to the practical problems of institutional innovation” (Evans, 1996, p. 91). Without doubt, there is a lack of voice from true participants in educational reforms. In order to be successful, reforms must gain the support of parents, school boards, parents, students and community. Failure to enlist their support will undoubtedly impede the success of the reform (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Sarason (1990) suggests that policy makers may not have a complete understanding of schools in that “those outside the system with responsibility for articulating a program for reform have nothing resembling holistic conception of the system they seek to influence” (Sarason, 1990, p. 26). At the same time, “being a part of the system in no way guarantees that one understands the system in any comprehensive way” (Sarason, 1990, p. 26).

It is not surprising that teachers, who are often omitted from educational policy discussions, would modify, adjust or even ignore policies and initiatives. As ‘street level

bureaucrats' teachers have a great deal of control over the implementation of policies, and "when educators view reform demands as inappropriate, they are skilled in finding ways to temper or evade their effects" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 79). In fact, Evans (1996) argues that it might be unreasonable for anyone to expect teachers to embrace changes that are vast and complex, lack focus and clarity and seem neither desirable nor feasible.

"Change where it counts most--in the daily interactions of teachers and students--is the hardest to achieve and the most important" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 30). To be sure, if teachers and students don't find meaning in school reform, it doesn't have a chance of successfully changing the school organization. Evans (1996) reminds us that while "reform may promise many improvements . . . it always causes uncertainty and confusion" (p. 66). Success of any school improvement will depend highly on successfully helping the members of the school, like teachers and students, cope with the change. Fundamentally, improving low performing schools is a problem of organizational change, and without a realistic understanding of failing schools as organizations the problem of improving our lowest performing schools will continue to evade us and turnaround efforts will fail.

Planned Organizational Change

Organizational change focuses on changing the way an organization does things. Organizational change is natural and fundamental and involves the intentional or unintentional change to an organization's systems, structures, or processes (French & Bell, 1990; Sutton & Staw, 1995; Weick, 1995). Without a doubt, any change process is complex and messier than most people would imagine. While most change is unplanned

and natural (Burke, 2010), with the increased urgency about turning around low performing schools, many school districts are implementing planned organizational change policies in low performing schools.

Planned organizational changes in schools, like the turnaround policy, focus on improving the learning conditions for students with the ultimate goal of improving student learning and outcomes. Planned change “originates with a decision by the system to deliberately improve its functioning” (Levy, 186, p. 6) and, like the current turnaround policy, commonly concentrates on developing the organization’s capabilities and capacity. Researchers have noted several purposes of a planned organizational change, all focusing on improvement in the organization. Huse & Cummings (1985) suggest that the purpose is to improve the effectiveness of the organization, while Beer (1980) argues that the purpose is to increase the organization’s capacity. Porras & Robertson (1992) reason that planned change has two main purposes: improving the organization’s ability to perform and improving the development of the members of the organization.

The model of planned organizational change (see Figure 2) used as a framework for this study was developed from a change perspective and assumes that organizations are contexts within which individuals behave (Porras & Robertson, 1992). An essential element of this model is the fact that:

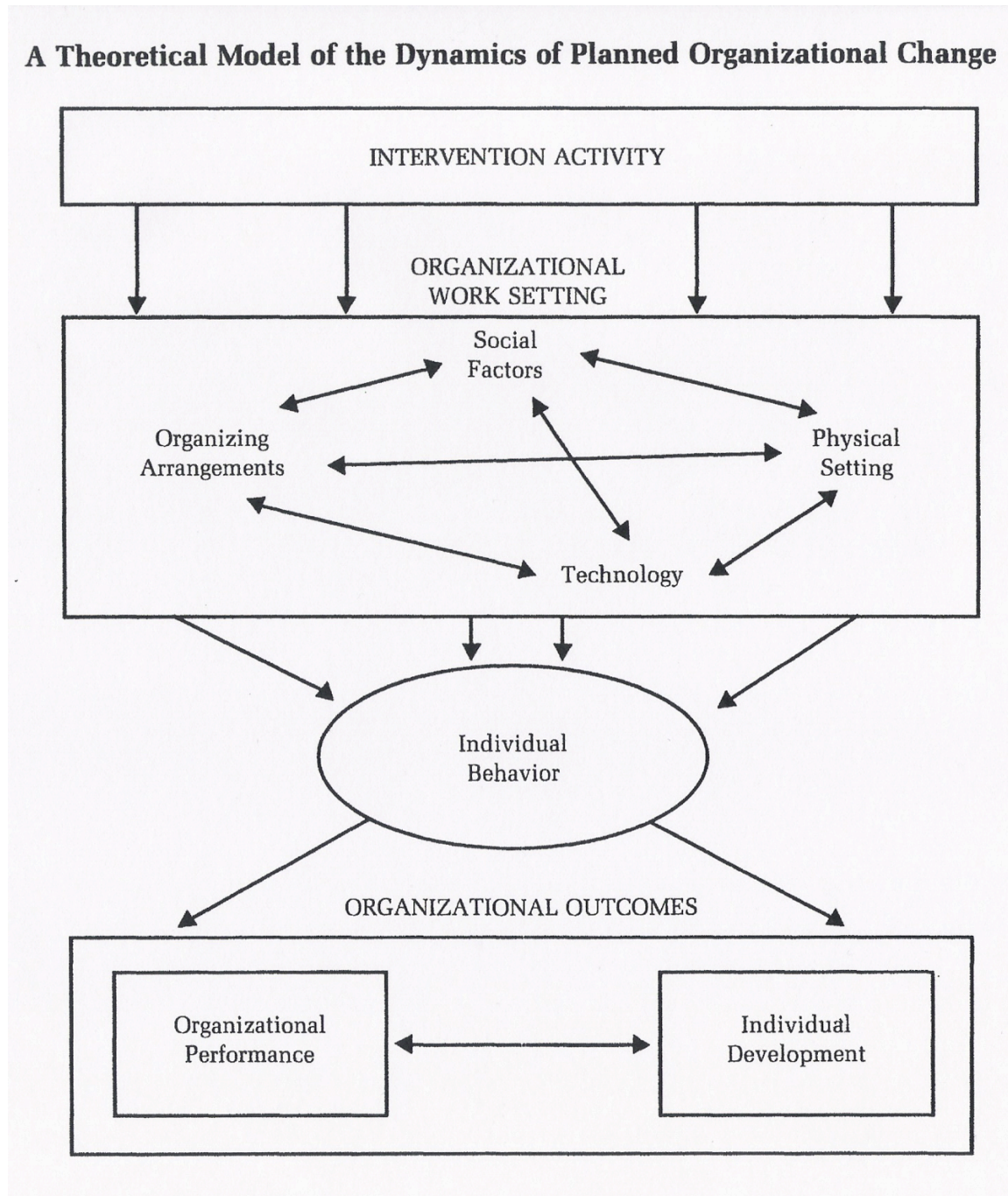
Change in the individual organizational member’s behavior is at the core of organizational change and, therefore, any successful change will persist over the long term only if, in response to changes in organizational characteristics, members alter their on-the-job behavior in appropriate ways. (Porras & Robertson, 1992, p. 724)

It is only when the people within an organization change their behavior that change becomes long lasting and meaningful. Changes in organizational work settings are

useless, unless the people within the organization change their behavior (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007). This study focuses on the students as members of the school organization. The turnaround model replaces the majority of the staff with new teachers, leaving the students as the only members of the organization who have actually experienced the change process. It is the students who ultimately have to change their beliefs and their behavior if the turnaround policy is going to be successful. While the turnaround policy replaces the staff, the students in the school remain and are left to make sense of the changes.

According to Porras and Robertson (1992), if change in individual behavior is influenced by the nature of the changes within the organizational environment, then changing the organizational setting is the best way to change individual behavior. Porras and Robertson (1992) argue that planned organizational change happens in three phases. First, planned organizational change creates changes in the characteristics of the organization itself. The second phase is based on the idea that the organization provides the context within which individuals behave. Along these lines, appropriate changes in this context will lead individuals to change their behavior. Lastly, individual behavior changes will have an impact on organizational outcomes since it is these behavior changes that are key determinants of organizational outcomes. These phases are depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A Theoretical Model of the Dynamics of Planned Organizational Change



From: "Dynamics of planned organizational change: Assessing empirical support for a theoretical model" by P.J. Robertson, D.R. Roberts, & J.I. Porras, 1993, *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(3), 619-634.

Porras & Robertson (1992) describe four interrelated subsystems in their model of planned organizational change: organizing arrangements, social factors, technology, and physical setting. They argue that these subsystems are present in organizational work settings and all have an impact on the behavior of individuals, like students, within an organization. Porras and Robertson (1992) define the four categories as follows:

Organizing Arrangements: The organizing arrangement category contains the formal elements of the organization which are developed to coordinate the behavior of people and the functioning of various parts of the organization.

Social Factors: The social factors encompass the characteristics of the people in the organization individually and in small groups, their patterns and processes of interaction, and many of their features as larger social groups.

Technology: The technology of the organization encompasses all of the factors that directly enter into the transformation of organizational inputs into organizational outputs.

Physical Setting: The physical setting describes the concrete structures and objects of the nonsocial/nontechnical part of the environment, which influences the way people behave at work. (pp. 728-733)

The four categories identified by Porras & Robertson (1992) “define the characteristics that, if changed, will induce change in on-the-job behaviors of individual(s)” (p. 728). It is individual behavior within an organization that determines the organizational outcomes: The level of organizational performance and the level of organization members' individual development (Robertson, Roberts, & Porras, 1993). The environment in which individuals work is fundamental in determining their behavior.

Porras and Roberston (1992) give examples of themes that fit into each of these four categories. These four components and the corresponding themes are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Organizational Components

Organizing Arrangements	Social Factors	Technology	Physical Setting
Goals Strategies Formal Structure Administrative Systems Formal Reward Systems Ownership	Culture Interaction Processes Social Patterns & Networks Individual Attributes Management Style	Tools, Equipment & Machinery Technical Expertise Job Design Work Flow Design Technical Policies & Procedures	Space Configuration Physical Ambiance Interior Design Architecture Design

From: "Organization Development and Transformation" by J.I. Porras & R.C. Silvers, 1991, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 42, p. 56.

If these work settings are changed, but the people within the organization, like the students in a turnaround school, fail to change their behavior, then the change is meaningless (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007). It is only when individuals (i.e. teachers and students) change their individual behavior that that organization will see improved performance. Planned organizational changes focus on the work settings defined above in an effort to change the behavior of the people within the organization, which as a result should have an impact on the effectiveness of the organization (Porras & Robertson, 1992). Then, following this logic, it is specifically the behavior of the individuals within an organization that is central to the planned change. Without this change in behavior, there will be no long-term benefits to the planned change. When looking at the turnaround policy specifically, there can be new teachers, a new principal, and a new curriculum and books, but if the students in the school do not change their individual behavior, the policy will not have the intended impact of improved student achievement. The change process in a turnaround school is dependent on the individual behavior

changes in the teachers and students within the school. For this reason, in this study, these work setting changes will be examined through the perspectives of the students in the schools.

The Meaning of Organizational Change

Change is a complex social and cognitive process of developing new shared meaning and new shared subjective realities (Fullan, 2007) and individual changes in beliefs and understanding are at the core of achieving meaningful lasting reform (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007). The success of school turnaround efforts will depend highly on successfully helping the teachers and students cope with the myriad emotions that come with the turnaround process. When thinking about educational change, many researchers focus on the everyday realities of the teachers, arguing that they are the ones who must make change happen (Evans, 2001; Fullan 2007). Reasonably, this argument should also be extended to the students in the school, who are central participants in the change process.

Evans (2001) contends that “any transition engenders mixed feelings and understanding these feelings is vital to the successful implementation of change” (p. 26). Any change, positive or negative, planned or unplanned “upsets the pattern we are accustomed to and thrusts us into new roles, new relationships, and new perceptions, challenging the way we cope with life” (Evans, 2001, p. 27). To be sure, school turnaround thrusts students into new relationships with new teachers and new perceptions of their school. The context of their school, their relationships within their school, and their individual circumstances all impact how students experience the school change. It is the students who have the most to gain or lose from the success or failure of school

turnaround efforts. Regardless of what the turnaround policy does or what changes are made a school, if students do not change their individual meaning and behavior, no turnaround efforts will be successful. School change is influenced to a great extent by students' expectations (Hull & Rudduck, 1990).

How students experience the change will depend on their understanding of the change and how they construct meaning within the context of their school. The meaning of change is cumulative, building on our past experiences and is embedded in emotions, feelings and experiences (Evans, 2001). Before students can accept changes and adapt to them, they must discover their own meaning within the context of the change. This can be difficult, given that change often challenges competence and creates confusion and conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The meaning of change is not always positive, and "meaningful does not necessarily mean positive" (Evans, 2001, p. 30). While change is often seen as a positive thing, the change process often involves a combination of loss, confusion, frustration, unpredictability, conflict, negotiation, and compromise (Evans, 2001).

If increased student achievement is the goal of school turnaround efforts, it stands to reason that how students make sense of the change will have an important impact on the success of those efforts. Fullan suggests "working on the meaning and definition of change is all the more important these days because larger-scale and more complex reforms are being attempted, and thus, more is at stake" (Fullan, 2007, p. 35). School turnaround is indeed a complex reform, and motivating and engaging students in school change is essential not only to student learning, but also to the success of the school turnaround. Fullan (2007) further suggests that "when it comes to change, new

approaches are needed that attract all students to become engaged with their own learning” (p. 179). An important piece of Fullan’s argument that students are central participants in the change process is that when students are treated as people whose opinions matter, “we come very close to living the academic, personal and social educational goals that are stated in most official policy documents” (Fullan, 2007, p. 187). Students’ individual changes in beliefs and understanding are essential to school turnaround success.

Focus on Students

School reform efforts are extensive, focusing on leadership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahl, 2004; Walsh, Sattes, Corallo, & McDonald, 2003), improving teaching practices (Brady, 2003; Rudo, 2001), creating professional learning communities (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan, 1995), and increasing school capacity (McLaughlin, 1987; Malen & Rice, 2004), but reform efforts rarely look at the role of the students in the school. Examining school reform efforts through the eyes of students can be incredibly informative, offering students, teachers, administrators and policymakers a perspective of how school reforms might have a more positive impact on students and schools. Students are rarely seen as active members in the school community and their possible contribution to the success or failure of school reforms is greatly underestimated. By attempting to understand the turnaround changes in schools through the eyes of the students, a better understanding of how to manage and lead overall school change can be gained (Burke, 2010). “Overlooking and underestimating the human and organizational component of change has routinely sabotaged programs to improve our schools . . . no innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of

people and place” (Evans, 2001, pp. 91-92). If any change in a school is going to be effective, there must be buy in by all of the members in the school. In the end, it is the students who produce the school outcomes, so their participation in school reform efforts is fundamental to school improvement. Yet, very rarely are students considered in the discussion of school change or as participants in the process of school change (Fullan, 2007).

Some researchers (Cook-Sather, 2007; Wilson & Corbett, 2001) have recently advocated for engaging students in the process of educational reform given that “unless they have some meaningful role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail” (Fullan, 2007, p. 170). Given the chance, student voice can challenge adults to see education through the eyes of the students and can allow educators to see what reform efforts are successful and which ones are not (Kushman, 1997). Levin (2000) goes so far as to argue that education reform cannot be successful without much more direct involvement of students in all its aspects. When given the chance students often speak articulately and compassionately about what prevents them from succeeding at school (Mitra, 2001). Nevertheless, seldom are students asked what they think about their own school or their own education.

John Dewey identified the need for a democratic education where students were given the chance to develop civic roles and habits of being concerned and involved citizens (Dewey, 1938). Decades later, educator Paolo Friere (1998) dared educators to “speak by listening”. While the idea is not new, it gained momentum in the early nineties, when educators continued to argue for the inclusion of student voice in the educational reform discussion. Kozol (1991) called for the voices of children to be heard in the

discussion of education and educational reform, and Weis and Fine (1993) summoned “the voices of children and adolescents who have been expelled from the centers of their schools and the centers of our culture [to] speak” (p. 2). Fullan (1991) has asked the difficult question, “What would happen if we treated students as someone whose opinion mattered?” (p. 170). Levin (1994) has maintained that the most meaningful education reform involves capitalizing on students’ knowledge and interests. During the 1980s and 1990s, researchers, scholars and educators encouraged adults and students to work together in classroom pedagogy and school reform, leaving the traditional roles of students behind them (Delpit 1988; Giroux 1989; Kurth-Schai 1988; Levin, 1994; McLaren, 1989; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; SooHoo, 1993).

Despite various initiatives calling for increased collaboration and participation of parents, teachers and students in the school reform process, there is little indication of student voice and involvement in the majority of school reform efforts (Rubin & Silva, 2003). For this reason, this study suggests that student voice can be a powerful evaluation tool of school turnaround and other school reform efforts. While standardized test scores have become the ultimate indicator of school success or failure, student voice offers researchers, practitioners, and policymakers powerful insights into what works in schools and classrooms and ultimately can contribute to positive school change. After all, it is students who are the target of school improvement efforts. Their perspective and participation in school turnaround efforts is essential.

Benefits of Student Voice for Students

Students have a unique perspective on school and learning and when adults take the time to listen to them, students communicate openly about their schooling

experiences. Moreover, when adults take the time to listen, students become more engaged, study harder, feel more respected, and have a growing sense of self confidence. Mitra (2006) points out “when participating in student voice activities, students often speak with great appreciation that their voices are finally being heard and honored. Students expressed a growing sense of self-worth because they felt that people were listening to their perspectives” (p. 8). Students who are invited to share their experiences, knowledge and perspectives show increased self confidence (Cook-Sather, 2007; Mitra, 2001) gain a better understanding of teachers’ roles, become more engaged and in many cases, become more successful students.

According to Mitra (2001) schools have found that increasing student voice makes sense for a number of reasons. First, student voices gave a clearer picture of the reasons that students struggle in school. When given the chance, these students at risk of dropping out of school spoke articulately and compassionately about what prevents them from succeeding at school. Students are surprisingly expressive, open and insightful when adults take the time to actually listen to them (Mitra, 2001; Osborne & Collins, 1999).

Yet another positive aspect of student voice is that students often report feeling “respected and engaged in the classroom” (Cook-Sather, 2006) resulting in more meaningful participation in classrooms and better student-teacher communication. Mitra (2001) also reports that student involvement in school reform efforts can lead to increased communication and better understanding between students and teachers, ultimately changing the way that students and teachers work together. Furthermore, students have reported studying harder and feeling more a part of the school community

when given the opportunity to participate in meaningful change in their school (Mitra, 2001). Creating situations where students feel empowered and motivated to participate constructively in their education fosters youth engagement and motivation (Shultz & Cook-Sather, 2001).

Benefits of Student Voice for Schools

Recent research points to many benefits of utilizing student voice to improve schools (Cook-Sather, 2007; Kushman & Shanessey, 1997; Levin, 1999; Levin, 2000; Mitra, 2001; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Smyth, 2007). When students are given opportunities to share their views and perspectives, their schools become more conducive to student learning (Smyth, 2007). Additionally, students' views can help mobilize staff and parent opinion in favor of meaningful reform creating more productive schools (Cook-Sather, 2007; Levin, 2000). Better quality of learning, lower dropout rates, improved implementation, and saving time for administrators are just a few of the benefits researchers have found to utilizing student voice to inform school policy (Cook-Sather, 2007; Levin, 1999; Levin, 2000; Kushman & Shanessey, 1997; Mitra, 2001; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Smyth, 2007). Putting students at the center of school reform is an essential step to seeing school improvement (Ericson & Ellett, 2002; Levin, 1999; Kushman & Shanessey, 1997; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Tolman, Ford, & Irby, 2003). Consulting students about their experiences in school and their educational needs and listening closely to what they have to say about their learning and their experiences of school can provide teachers and administrators with valuable information to help design curriculum and drive school policy (Kushman, 1997).

Student involvement in school reform efforts makes students and adults change the ways in which they interact. Both students and adults have expressed that working together in school reform efforts led to increased communication and a better understanding of one another (Mitra, 2001). Through better understanding of their students, teachers report a “heightened awareness and appreciation of the kids” (Mitra, 2001, p. 93), making them better teachers. Listening to students’ perspectives can help teachers recognize the everyday needs and experiences of each individual student (Dutro, 2009; Kushman, 1997; Mitra, 2001).

Cook- Sather (2007) offers a promising example of how student voice can afford high school administrators the opportunity to create meaningful student involvement by building collaborative relationships within the school. These collaborative relationships increased both student engagement and teacher engagement. Students were given the chance to gain perspective about what goes into teaching and learning and voice their experiences and perspectives about their school and their hopes for their school. At the same time, teachers connect with students during conversations with students about what really matters to them, strengthening their relationships with students (Cook-Sather, 2007).

Further research has shown that listening to students can achieve important goals such as: saving time for administrators as students help take on roles as change agents, adults examining their assumption about student learning, students being treated as valuable agents of change and an improved learning environment in the school (Kushman & Shanessey, 1997; Levin, 1999; Rubin & Silva, 2003; Tolman, Ford, & Irby, 2003). Levin (1999) also argues that students can help to rally their parents, teachers and fellow

students around meaningful school reform. When students are the producers of change, meaningful student involvement can help students navigate learning environments that have historically been discouraging (Ericson & Ellett, 2002; Levin, 1999; Rubin & Silva, 2003, Tolman, Ford & Irby, 2003).

Students have the potential to provide a valuable lens for teachers and administrators to see how reform efforts are being received. Students have unique perspectives and knowledge that can help to make reform efforts more successful and even improve implementation (Kushman & Shanessey, 1997; Levin, 1999; Rubin & Silva, 2003). Consulting students about their experiences in school and their educational needs and listening closely to what they have to say about their learning and their experiences of school can provide teachers and administrators with valuable information to help drive school policy.

Benefits of Student Voice for Policymakers

By recognizing that students are “casually central” to education reform, Ericson and Ellett (2002) provide vital rationale for student inclusion in school success. Students should not be considered beneficiaries of school reform, but rather central participants in the process. Students are the most affected by and also the most critical to the success of any school reform. If educators took the time to listen to students they would gain invaluable partners in the educational reform process (Ericson & Ellett, 2002; Wilson & Corbett, 2001). Levin (2000) argues that school reform is generally something that is done to students, not necessarily for them:

The history of education reform is a history of doing things to other people, supposedly for their own good. Each level in the hierarchy of education believes it

knows best what those at lower levels need to do, and has little shyness about telling them or, just as often, forcing them. So governments issue directives to school districts, schools, principals and teachers; districts instruct schools, and principals try to direct teachers. Right at the bottom of the education status list, of course, are students. They are subject to direction from everyone above. Even though all the participants in education will say that schools exist *for* students, students are still treated almost entirely as the objects of reform. (p. 155)

By allowing students to participate in the school reform discussion, students are given the opportunity to participate in their own education and in their own learning (Kushman, 1997; Levin, 2000). Students have unique perspectives on learning and should be afforded the opportunity to actively shape their education. Their perspectives have the potential to make reform efforts more successful and even improve their implementation (Levin, 2000; Cook-Sather, 2006). By giving students the opportunity to voice their experiences and perspectives, adults are given vivid accounts of how students see the school circumstances. Mitra (2007) points out that:

Gathering perspectives from students not only provides rich data for school reform efforts; it also provides a distinctly different kind of information for consideration. When not involving students, and particularly those who are failing subjects or rarely attending school, it is easy to shift the blame of failure to these students rather than look at problems with the school's structure and culture. Adults tend to blame problem behaviors on a lack of motivation or neglectful parenting; the youth instead talk of wanting respect from adults and supportive opportunities to learn and to gain responsibility. (p. 730)

Student perspectives have the potential to become a significant role in education reform, as they offer policymakers and implementers a unique perspective that may enhance the ability to make informed decisions about how to improve low performing schools. By understanding what students think and how they experience school change, reforms and their implementation can be more successful.

Table 5. Benefits of Student Voice

Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student engagement, participation & success • Students study harder • Students feel more respected • Students have a growing sense of self confidence and self-worth • Students gain a better understanding of teachers' roles • Better student-teacher communication and understanding • Students feel more a part of the school community
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools become more productive and conducive to student learning • Student voice can help mobilize staff and parent opinion in favor of meaningful reform • Lower dropout rates • Saved time for administrators • Teachers become more aware of student needs and experiences, making them better teachers.
Policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students unique perspectives have the potential to make reform efforts more successful and even improve their implementation • Adults are given vivid accounts of how students see the school circumstances • Students provide rich data that can inform school reform efforts • Policymakers and implementers can make informed decisions about how to improve low performing schools. • Reform implementation can be more successful

Reform with Students

Historically, students have been the least powerful members of the educational community being excluded from conversations about teaching and learning (Fullan, 1991; Weis & Fine, 1993) making them passive recipients of what educators and policymakers decide knowledge and education should be (Cook-Sather, 2006). Creating opportunities for students' voices to be heard allows students to play an important role in their own education. As Levin (2000) points out:

Virtually all school reform is planned and implemented by adults. By talking with and listening to students, we can learn more about how classroom and school processes can be made more powerful, and how improvement can be fostered, whether or not students are committed to a particular reform. (p. 158)

Students have a unique perspective that should not be ignored, but should instead be utilized to help drive curriculum, pedagogy, and school reform (Delpit, 1988; Fielding, 2001; Giroux, 1989; Hooks, 1994; Kurth-Schai, 1988; Levin, 1994; McLaren, 1989; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000; SooHoo, 1993). Students are the reason that schools exist. Including their voices, opinions and perspectives offers an insiders' view of educational reform. Educational reform should not be something that is done to students, or for students, but with students. Cook-Sather (2002) argues that the educational reform effort is entirely adult driven and only relies on the ideas and perspectives of adults. Utilizing student voice can be beneficial to everyone involved: students, teachers, administrators, communities and parents. In spite of research that supports student voice, schools rarely engage youth in a way that empowers them to be constructive participants in their own education (Lee 1996; Nieto, 1994; Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002). Recognizing students as potential contributors to the school reform process and inviting them to be participants in the discussion about their own education opens up the possibility for better relationships between the school community members (Levin, 2000; Mitra, 2001; Nieto, 1994; Yonezawa, Wells, & Serna, 2002) as well as be a powerful evaluation tool of school turnaround and other school reform efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The focus of this chapter is to describe the research design of this study as well as the methods that were employed to collect, analyze and report data. In an effort to better understand “the world from the perspectives of those living in it” (Hatch, 2002, p. 7), this mixed-methods study focused on two turnaround high schools and the voices of the students who attend them. Utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data provided a better understanding of how students experienced the policy than either method alone could have done (Creswell, 2008). Mixed methods research designs have become more prevalent in social science research as researchers have begun to collect, analyze, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data within a single research study (Creswell, 2012; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The underlying principle of combining both qualitative and quantitative data is that neither method alone is adequate to fully answer the research question (Creswell, 2012). However, when quantitative and qualitative methods are used in combination, research can benefit from the strengths of both methods and have a deeper analysis (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Research Questions

Recall from earlier, that this study included two distinct, albeit related, research questions, each focusing on student voices and the turnaround policy. The research questions that guided this study were:

- How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change within their school?
- How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school?

Research Design

In an effort to answer these questions, an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003) was employed to examine how students experienced the turnaround policy in real life context. The mixed-methods sequential design entailed collecting and analyzing data in two sequential phases. In this design, quantitative data were collected and analyzed first and was then followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2012; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). These phases were distinct and the qualitative data built on the analysis of the quantitative data that were collected in the first phase. “The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture” (Creswell, 2012, p. 542). Used together, qualitative and quantitative methods provided a more complete picture of the students’ experiences (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), as the analysis of the qualitative data explained the statistical results by examining participants’ experiences in more depth.

In this study, the quantitative data (student surveys) were collected and analyzed first. The qualitative data (the interviews and focus groups) were then collected in an effort to better explain and elaborate on the quantitative data. See Figure 3 for a visual model (Creswell, 2012) of the exploratory sequential design. The survey data provided insight of the research problem, and the interviews helped explain those statistical results by exploring how students experienced turnaround within their schools. The qualitative

data from interviews elaborated and enhanced the quantitative data from the surveys (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Figure 3. Visual model for mixed methods sequential exploratory design procedures



In a mixed-methods research study, priority refers to which method, qualitative or quantitative, will be given more weight in the data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the qualitative data were given the priority (Creswell, 2008) in order to explain the students' experience in greater depth. Given that "qualitative research is about understanding the meanings individuals construct in order to participate in their social lives" (Hatch, 2002, p. 9), interviewees were intentionally chosen to better understand the meaning that students constructed of turnaround within their school. It is the students' experiences and interpretations of their natural setting (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 1998) that emerged in thick descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) in this study.

Mixed methods studies are more than simply collecting both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study. The deliberate integration of qualitative and quantitative data is essential in mixed methods studies (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) as is the combination of the strengths of each data set to answer the research questions. This study intentionally combines the quantitative and qualitative data in two distinct ways. First, the data were 'connected' (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith,

2011) as the quantitative data informed the subsequent qualitative data collection. Secondly, both data sets were ‘merged’ (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) in data analysis when the qualitative themes were transformed into quantitative numbers as theme occurrence was calculated. Further ‘merging’ of the data occurred in the data analysis through the use of tables that displayed both quantitative and qualitative data, showing convergent findings (Lee & Greene, 2007). Lastly, as Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest, divergent findings between quantitative and qualitative findings were reconciled. The intentional mixing of the data sets in this study builds on the strengths of each data set to better answer the research questions.

Site Selection

In an effort to optimize what could be learned about student experience in turnaround schools, the two high schools for this study were chosen based on when the schools became turnaround schools. In order to examine how students experienced change in their schools, the students at each school must have attended the school before and after the turnaround policy was implemented. For this reason the turnaround policy had to be implemented within the last three years within each school. The two high schools in this study had gone through the turnaround policy within the past three years, resulting in senior students who experienced being students at a high school before and after the policy was implemented. These high schools were purposefully chosen (Creswell, 2012) to better understand students’ experiences in turnaround schools. Additional consideration was given to selecting two turnaround schools with similar demographics and student populations. Both of these two turnaround high schools are located in an urban environment, are both within the same school district and have

similar student achievement levels. While these schools have both gone undergone the turnaround policy and have similar demographics and student enrollment characteristics, contextual factors such as leadership, faculty and school environment had an impact on the different trajectory of each school. The similarities and differences between the two schools will be discussed in chapters five and six.

Despite the striking similarities between these two schools, it was important for me to realize as I approached the research that the students in each of these high schools may have experienced the policy differently. While the turnaround policy was implemented at both schools, each school had its own culture and context and a different principal and staff to consider. All of these factors were likely to impact how these students might have experienced the policy. Additionally, these students experienced different turnaround timelines, with either one or two years in the school before the turnaround policy was implemented. These contextual differences were kept in mind throughout the study, giving consideration to what may have accounted for differences in how students experienced the policy.

While the majority of the teachers were replaced at these schools, the students remained and experienced the policy first hand. In fact, while the turnaround policy requires at least 50% of the teachers be replaced, at the schools in this study, more than 90% of the teachers were replaced, leaving few people besides the students in the building to speak to the changes. These students have a unique perspective on the planned organizational change within their schools, considering they were the only group who experienced both the before and the after of school turnaround.

Because the specificity of this study narrowed the number of schools that were possible research sites, I initiated contact with each school principal several months before data collection began. Both principals were contacted via email in which I explained the aims of the study, outlined students and staff's participation and requested support for my research. One principal agreed to support my research immediately, while the other requested we discuss the details of the research further in a phone conversation. Both principals gave me their full support for conducting research within their schools and wrote letters of support for the school district's research review office. Subsequently, the district's research review office approved my research at the two schools. The University Institutional Review Board approval followed. The schools and students were assured anonymity and measures were taken throughout the study to ensure anonymity.

Morgan High School

Morgan High School (a pseudonym) is located in a predominantly African American urban community. The student population is about 1000 students, but the school has seen a declining enrollment in recent years. The majority of the students come from low-income families and on an average day, a little less than half the students are in attendance. In 2010, less than 5% of the students met or exceeded state standards. The school is known for a strong athletic program and has an active alumni association.

In January 2010 it was announced that Morgan would become a turnaround high school. The students in this study were sophomores at the time. The staff continued teaching in the school until the end of the school year and was able to reapply for their positions. While the turnaround policy requires that at least 50% of the staff be replaced, at Morgan less than 10% of teachers were rehired. Over the summer, a new staff was

hired and the students returned as juniors to a new principal and teachers. The students in the study from this high school had 2 years as students in the school prior to turnaround, and another 2 years as students after the policy was implemented.

Harrison High School

Harrison High School (also a pseudonym) is also located in a predominantly African American urban neighborhood and serves over 1000 students. The majority of the students come from low-income families and the average daily attendance hovers around 70%. The school offers students the opportunity to enroll in a wide range of career academies and has a wide range of athletics available for both boys and girls. Despite these various programs that are offered, less than 10% of the students met or exceeded state standards in 2010.

In January 2009, it was announced that the staff at Harrison would be replaced. The students in this study were freshmen at the time. The teachers remained in the school for the remainder of the school year and were given the opportunity to reapply for their jobs. Like at Morgan, a large majority of the staff at Harrison was displaced, with less than 10% of the staff returning after turnaround. While the students were on summer break, a new staff was hired and trained. When the students returned as sophomores in September of 2009, they returned to new teachers and a new principal. The students at the center of this study had one year as students in the school prior to the turnaround, and three years in the high school after the turnaround.

High School Context

It is important to note that high schools were purposefully chosen for this study. As Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin (2003) suggest, “our understanding of whether educational reforms as a whole are succeeding or failing is to be found most clearly in America’s high schools” (p. 1). Elementary schools have seen limited success under certain turnaround models, but high schools have had very little success, if any, under any turnaround model (Herman, 2012; Stuit, 2010). In fact, in terms of academic achievement outcomes, little progress has been made at turnaround high schools (de la Torre et al., 2012). As Kutash et al. (2010) point out, in high schools:

Academic remediation is more difficult, because students have accumulated knowledge and skills gaps over many years and have only a few remaining years to address them. The high school curriculum and schedule are also more complex. Changing school culture is more difficult, because the students in the building are nearly adults themselves and may resist the changes. (p. 47)

High schools are the make or break point for many students. This is another reason this study focused on high schools and students’ experience with the turnaround policy.

My interest in examining turnaround at the high school level is an extension of my own experience as a high school teacher, but it is also driven by a desire to better understand how to improve high schools that have been so difficult to reach with school reform efforts. High drop out rates, lack of academic progress, and disengagement are all prevalent at high minority and poverty high schools (Noguera, 2002). Compared to elementary schools, high schools have remained ‘stagnant’ and resistant to reforms (Payne, 2010; Quint, 2006). Contributing to the difficulty of reforming low performing schools is their large size, departmental structure, and the fact that low income and minority students often enter high school years behind in academic skills (Noguera, 2002;

Payne, 2010; Quint, 2006; Steinberg, 1996). Under these circumstances, students are more likely to feel lost and isolated and fall between the cracks. Quint (2006) suggests that for freshmen students transitioning into high school, the problem is intensified, as they move from smaller elementary or middle schools into large impersonal high schools. The complicated nature of high schools makes them unique organizations and the experiences of the students inside these schools is worth our attention as the struggle to turnaround the lowest performing high schools continues.

Phase I: Surveys

Survey Goal and Design

The goal of the quantitative phase of this study was to gain insight into how students generally experienced the turnaround policy in two high schools. Utilizing a survey (See Appendix A) allowed me to reach a greater number of senior students than individual interviews, which are more time consuming. The survey data provided initial answers to the research questions and informed the identification of interviewees for the next phase of the study. Additionally, student surveys were used to inform the development of the individual student interview guide.

The survey, designed specifically for this study, was written with the research questions and theoretical framework in mind and questions were written clearly to ensure the clarity of their purpose and to encourage meaningful answers. Additional consideration was given to making sure that the questions were written at a level of high school student understanding. Since the survey was designed specifically for the purposes of this study, it was important to field test it before distributing it to students at the schools in the study (Creswell, 2003). I asked several local high school students to read

the survey and give me their opinions of the survey. This gave me the opportunity to receive feedback and identify any issues or concerns. Further, I asked several high school teachers to assess the survey to ensure that it was written at the high school level. For the most part, both students and teachers positively received the survey. Thoughtful suggestions made by students or teachers were incorporated into the final survey before implementation.

Recall from earlier that the students at the center of this study are those who experienced the turnaround changes in their schools. Still, I recognized that all senior students, regardless of how long they had attended these schools, would likely have insight into the everyday realities of their schools without considering the before and after of turnaround. With this in mind, I designed the survey (See Appendix A) to reach both groups of seniors-- those who had attended the schools for four consecutive years, and those who had not. This two part survey design facilitated survey distribution in senior classes and allowed additional data to be collected that measured students' perception of their current schools, without considering the before and after of turnaround. All senior students were asked to complete the first part of the survey, which was designed to probe the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of all senior students. The first part of the survey consisted of 10 closed-ended response questions in 5-point likert format. In this part of the survey, students were asked to rate their current teachers, principals, and school climate without considering the before and after of turnaround. For example, one survey question was: "Teachers are approachable and friendly." Utilizing closed-ended responses allowed for statistical analysis (Creswell, 2012).

Only those students who attended these schools for the last four years completed the second part of the survey. It is those students who attended these schools both before and after that have a truly unique perspective because they lived through the turnaround change. The second part of the survey consisted of 10 closed-ended questions on a 3-point scale, designed to measure students' perceptions of their school before and after the turnaround. For example, students were asked to respond to: "Our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best." The three point scale included three possible responses: 'more before turnaround,' 'the same,' and 'more after turnaround.' I visited senior level advisory classes during non-academic time to distribute surveys to classes. This allowed me to introduce myself, explain the purposes of the study and answer any questions that students may have had about the study, the survey, or myself.

Survey Implementation

An initial meeting with a counselor at each school generated a list of all senior students, their homeroom classes, and a breakdown of how many seniors had attended the school for four consecutive years. At the time of data collection, Harrison High School had over 200 senior students and Morgan High School had about 150, for a total of 373 senior students at the two schools. In total, surveys from 217 students were collected. A total of 105 surveys were collected at Morgan, and 112 were collected at Harrison for an overall response rate of 58.2% for the two schools. See Table 6 for a complete breakdown of response rate.

Table 6. Survey Response Rate

	Harrison HS	Morgan HS	Total
Number of Senior Students	217	156	373
Number of Surveys Collected	112	105	217
Response Rate	51.6%	67.3%	58.2%

Survey Considerations

There were several factors that impacted my data collection timeline in regards to distributing surveys at both schools. While these factors did not necessarily hinder my data collection, they did impact the scheduled timeline. For this reason, these factors are worth discussion in an effort to get a clear understanding of the data collection process at these two schools.

Consideration #1: School Schedule and Calendar

As a researcher, I needed to work around the school schedules, be respectful of the school staffs' time, and be sure not to interfere with academic time. With this in mind, I met with students during non-academic homeroom time, which was only 12 minutes a day at each school, just enough time to introduce myself and distribute consent/assent forms. During the quantitative phase of this study, I often traveled to either Morgan or Harrison and spent only 12 minutes in classrooms, and then turned around and left. As a result, if a school had 10 homerooms, as Harrison did, a minimum of 10 initial visits to the school would be necessary to distribute consent/assent forms, with another 10 visits following to distribute surveys.

Along these same lines, an additional factor to consider is the school calendar. Data collection began in January, a month with many school holidays and teacher professional development days. In addition to those days off, standardized testing added to the days that I couldn't visit the schools. Ultimately, working around these days off prolonged my data collection timeline.

Consideration #2: Attendance rates

As noted above, the attendance rates at Morgan and Harrison indicate that on any given day less than 70% of the students are likely to be in attendance. When I visited classrooms with less than 50% attendance, I scheduled a time within the next week for an additional visit in an attempt to reach more students. This happened at each stage of my study. If I visited a class to distribute consent/assent forms with low attendance, I scheduled another visit. By the same token, during survey distribution, I made repeated visits to classrooms with low attendance. Scheduling these additional days impacted my data collection timeline with an additional 12 visits that were necessary due to low attendance.

Consideration #3: Age of Students

It is important to note that some of the senior students were eighteen years old or older at the time of the study and were able to sign an assent form themselves. Senior students who were still seventeen at the time of data collection were given parental consent forms to be signed. Any 17 year old students who were interested in participating needed to take the parental consent form home to have it signed, and bring it back to me on my next scheduled visit. To be sure, this process limited the number of 17 year olds who participated in this study. Being that it was easier for students who were 18 at the

time to provide assent to participate in the study, a disproportionate number of 18 year olds participated in the study. In fact, only 31 parental consent forms were returned from all of the seniors at both schools. Of the 217 survey participants, 31 students were 17 years old (14.2%), 166 students were 18 years old (76.5%), and 20 were 19 years old (9.3%).

Additionally, any students 18 years old or older who had been absent on the day I originally visited their homeroom had the opportunity to complete the assent form and the survey on the day I distributed surveys. Any 17 year old who had been absent on the day of my initial visit and interested in participating would not have this same opportunity. One 17 year old student did ask about emailing me at a later date so she could complete the survey, but she never contacted me.

Distributing Surveys at Morgan

My first visit to Morgan High School was in January 2012, two years after the turnaround was announced. Morgan High School is located in close proximity to the downtown area, yet seems miles away from the glitz and glamour of downtown. Vacant houses are prevalent in the neighborhood and the stores and businesses surrounding the school have bars on the windows. Located on a busy street in the middle of the neighborhood is the massive high school. The school building is over 100 years old, but is clean and well kept up. The parking lot is newly paved and a brand new AstroTurf football field sits behind the school. Young trees, newly planted, line the side of the school near the main entrance.

The school building was originally built as an elementary school. In its nearly 120 year history, it has seen several expansions and renovations. The many expansions have

made for an interesting layout in the school, making it challenging to navigate. The building includes a swimming pool, a library, and an auditorium. Fresh paint adorns the walls, the floors are clean and free of clutter, and shiny new lockers line the hallways, which are lined with college and university banners and reminders of school rules and policies.

When I visited, the main entrance to school was always unlocked. I was required to go through a metal detector upon entering and check in with security staff before proceeding into the building. Every time I visited Morgan High School, the same friendly security guard greeted me. A young African American woman with a wide smile, she always welcomed me and offered her assistance in directing me where I needed to go. By the end of my data collection, she greeted me by name and often had my visitor pass waiting with my name on it when I arrived.

Nearly everyone that I encountered at Morgan was hospitable, welcoming, and generous with their time. Months before my study began, when I first contacted the principal (Ms. B), she was immediately open to my study being conducted in the school. Weeks before my data collection began Ms. B left Morgan to take another job in the district and the assistant principal (Ms. G) was promoted to principal. When I started my data collection, Ms. G put me in contact with the senior counselor (Ms. K), who was always open and welcoming, and was very accommodating with scheduling. Ms. K readily offered her expertise of the school schedule, helping with scheduling the best times to meet with senior students, and offered to help in anyway she could.

When I visited classrooms, most teachers were welcoming and helpful. They helped to get the students' attention, introduced me to their classes, and some even helped

hand out surveys and pens. There was only one teacher who seemed unreceptive and skeptical of my research. Nevertheless, even in her classroom, I was able to introduce my research and distribute surveys to students without interference.

During the 2011-2012 school year, Morgan had a total of seven senior homerooms, including two homerooms made up of all 'demote' students, students who have attended school for four (or more) years, but hadn't accumulated enough credits to be considered true seniors. While Ms. K suggested I skip these two classes because of poor attendance, I insisted on visiting them in an effort to reach all of the students who had been at Morgan before the turnaround. As Ms. K suggested, the attendance in these classes was considerably lower than the other classes. For example, only three students were in attendance in one 'demote' homeroom that I visited. Regardless, I thought it was worth the effort to attempt to reach out to all senior students. I visited all seven homeroom classes to introduce myself and explain the aims of my research and to distribute consent/assent forms. As mentioned earlier, in homerooms where the attendance was less than 50% on the day of my initial visit, I scheduled additional visits in the following days in attempt to reach more students. At Morgan, I scheduled additional visits in two homeroom classes. Each time I visited the school, I wrote down field notes that were both descriptive and reflective in nature (Creswell, 2012).

Once assent and consent forms were collected, I contacted Ms. K to schedule days to distribute surveys. She suggested that I use an upcoming extended advisory day to meet with the seniors and offered to include me in the next extended advisory day's agenda. Scheduled once a month, extended advisory days gave students additional time to meet with their homeroom teachers and counselors. Utilizing this extended advisory day

allowed me to meet with each homeroom class and distribute surveys to all senior students in one day. When I met with the students, I reminded them about my research and answered any questions they had before distributing surveys. Students were reminded to only complete the second page if they had been a student at Morgan for the past four years.

Once I organized the student surveys, I made a list of those students who had turned in a consent or assent form when I visited their homeroom, but were absent on the extended advisory day that I distributed surveys. Some homeroom classes had one or two students who fell into this category, but there was one homeroom class that had eight students in this category. I scheduled a time to return to this specific homeroom in an effort to reach these additional eight students. When I visited that homeroom, I was able to collect an additional six surveys. In total, I visited Morgan twelve times to collect consent and assent forms and distribute surveys. Recognizably, the opportunity to distribute surveys to all senior homerooms in one day lessened the number of visits to Morgan.

Distributing Surveys at Harrison

My first visit to Harrison was in early January 2012, three years after the turnaround had been announced at the school. Harrison High School is located miles away from the downtown, closer to bordering suburbs than to the city center. The school is tucked away on a residential street, and the residential houses that surround the high school are surrounded by manicured lawns and wrought iron fences, a juxtaposition from Harrison High School, a stereotypical urban high school. The school was originally built

to house both elementary and high school students. Today, the high school serves over 1000 students from the surrounding neighborhood.

This community has a high crime rate, but the neighborhood streets are deceptively quiet during school hours. Standing on nearly every corner for a two-block radius are security guards wearing bright yellow jackets with SECURITY emblazoned on the back. They are friendly, waving at me as I drive by and seem alert and vigilant. The parking lot for the school is in the back of the school, and as I walk around the sizeable building, the security guards and police officers out front greet me with friendly smiles and nods.

When I visited, the main entrance to the school was always locked. Every day that I visited Harrison there are a handful of students waiting outside. Later I found out that late students were only let in at certain times, and just a few at a time for processing through security. 'Ladies first', the security guard reminded the waiting students on one of my visits. I was always let in immediately when I knocked, while the students were waiting in the cold in January at the beginning of my study, and in the heat in June at the end of my study.

Harrison High School is an old school building, but like Morgan is clean and well kept. The main office and library entrances are framed by beautiful dark carved wood as is the stage in the large auditorium. Upon entering, I was greeted by a middle age African American woman, who was friendly, but serious. By my second week at the school, she warmed up to me and we chatted about our children, the weather, and school. She no longer asked my name, and would write out my visitor pass quickly without asking what

classroom I was going to, then would quietly radio the assistant principal to let her know that I had arrived.

The school staff and students were friendly and welcoming during my time at Harrison. In the beginning of my study I visited the school almost every day for several weeks, and by the end of my first week, the students in the hallway greeted me with hellos and asked me when I was coming back to their class. One day, a student stopped me in the hallway and asked if she could please be interviewed for my study. Another student walked me to class one day, talking to me about the upcoming prom as we walked. I felt a part of the staff here almost instantly. The security guards were helpful, and often helped me navigate the labyrinth of a high school.

Like Morgan, Harrison High School also had some staff transitions during the data collection school year. My original contact Ms. P, a dean at the school, was promoted to assistant principal early in my study. She remained my main contact, but was less available, and my emails and phone calls faced a slower response from her after her promotion. She admitted that she was swamped and apologized on several occasions for not getting back to me sooner. Despite these delays, data collection went smoothly.

At the time of data collection, Harrison had a total of ten senior homeroom classes, including three 'demote' classes. My visits to Harrison extended well into the month of February. This was partly due to more homeroom classes at Harrison than at Morgan. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, issues of low attendance and the school calendar impacted my data collection timeline. I visited each homeroom to introduce myself and distribute consent and assent forms. Like at Morgan, when I visited a class with less than 50% attendance, I scheduled a time for an additional visit to reach more

students. In total, four homeroom classes at Harrison required additional visits. On my first visit to one class, the teacher suggested that I visit the in-school suspension classroom to find most of his students. Instead, I made three visits to his classroom in an effort to reach more students. Like at Morgan, when I visited Harrison, I recorded descriptive and reflective field notes immediately after each visit (Creswell, 2012).

Once assent and consent forms were collected, I contacted Ms. P to schedule days to distribute surveys. While I was able to utilize an extended advisory day at Morgan to facilitate survey distribution, the school calendar did not allow for the same at Harrison. Instead, I scheduled ten days to visit each homeroom to distribute surveys. Once these ten visits were complete, I organized the student surveys as I had at Morgan. After checking for the number of students in each class that had handed in a consent/assent form, but were absent on the day of survey distribution, I decided to revisit three of the homeroom classes. In each of these classes up to ten students were absent on the day of survey distribution, so I thought it worth my time to make additional visits. In total, I visited Harrison twenty-eight times to collect consent and assent forms and distribute surveys, more than double the visits to Morgan. The total number of visits to the schools for each phase of the study is detailed in Table 7.

Table 7. Data Collection at Morgan and Harrison

Quantitative Data Collection		
Research Activity	Morgan	Harrison
	Number of Visits	Number of Visits
Initial visits to each class to introduce research and distribute consent and assent forms	7	10
Additional visits to classrooms to distribute more consent/assent forms	2	5
Initial Visit to school for survey distribution	1	10
Additional Visits to classrooms for survey distribution	2	3
Total Number of Visits for Quantitative Data Collection	12	28
Qualitative Data Collection		
Visits to invite students to interview	1	1
Visits to conduct individual interviews	10	9
Visits to invite students to focus group	1	1
Visits to school to conduct student focus group	1	1
Total Number of Visits for Qualitative Data Collection	13	12
Total Number of Visits	25	40

Phase II: Interviews

Interview Goals and Design

While quantitative methods provided the opportunity to gain insight into a larger group of students' experiences generally, qualitative methods offered the opportunity to generate rich descriptions of students' experiences in turnaround high schools. The goal of the qualitative phase was to enhance the findings from the surveys with a deeper qualitative analysis of students' experiences in turnaround schools. Creswell (2003) suggests that in an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the researcher often looks for the data to be explained in greater depth in the qualitative phase of the study. In this study, the interviews were used to provide greater insight about the students' experience.

The interview guide was semi-structured (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) with a few main questions written in advance and was developed based on the initial analysis of the survey data. Interview questions were rooted in the literature on school turnaround and organizational change theory and were designed to prompt perspectives and reflections on the organizational change in turnaround high schools. The semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix B) ensured flexibility with the hope that themes and topics would emerge during the course of the interviews. As Rubin & Rubin (2005) point out, "because the questions cannot be fully worked out in advance, responsive interviewers need a high tolerance for uncertainty" (p. 35). The flexibility of the interview design focused on getting as much depth of understanding of students' experiences as possible. Merriam (1998) points out, that a semi-structured interview "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on

the topic” (p. 74). Consequently questions were general enough to allow participants the freedom to answer in whatever direction they chose, and probes were used to seek more detail, clarification, or examples. This interview approach facilitated gathering information that was related to both the students’ meaning of change and the four interrelated subsystems that are present in an organizational work setting: organizing arrangements, social factors, technology, and physical setting (Porras, 1987; Porras & Robertson, 1992), as defined in the theoretical framework. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Interviewee Selection

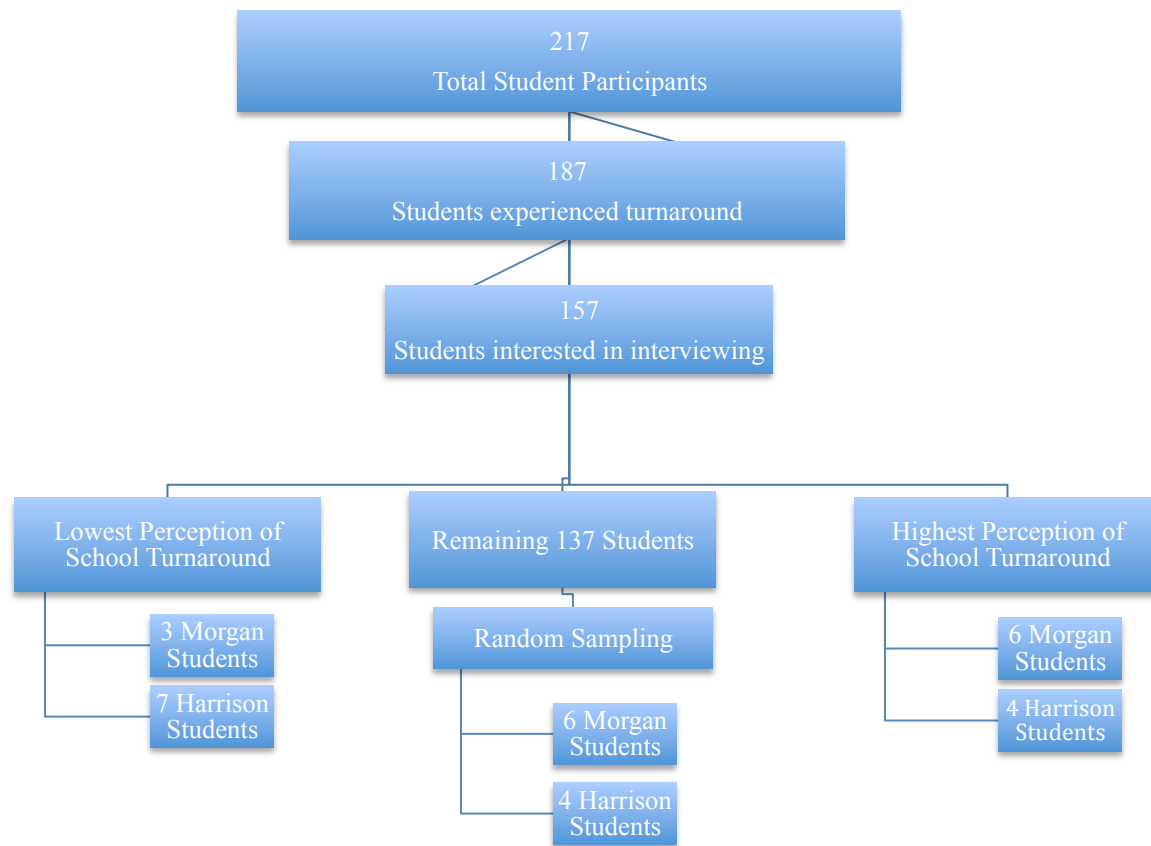
The quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection in this study were integrated in this transitional stage when the survey data analysis from the first phase of the study informed the interview data collection in the second phase (Hanson et al., 2005). Students were purposefully chosen (Creswell, 2012) for interviews in an effort to reach students with varied perspectives of the turnaround policy. Based on the initial analysis of the survey data, students were chosen for interviews with the intent to gain insight from students with differing opinions of turnaround. While all senior students were asked to complete the survey, the interviews focused specifically on those students who had attended these two schools for the last four years because they experienced the changes in their schools after turnaround was implemented. Out of the total 217 students ($N = 217$), 187 students ($n = 187$) fit into this category. As a part of the survey, students were asked if they were interested in participating in an interview. This was included in an effort to be respectful of students’ time and level of interest in participating in the study. Of the 187 students who experienced the turnaround, 157 students indicated that

they would be willing to participate in an interview. This excluded 30 students as possible interviewees. While it would have been optimal to have these students included as possible interviewees, it was more important to be respectful of students' level of interest in participating in the research study. In accordance with IRB and the district's research board, students were ensured anonymity throughout the interview process.

In selecting students to interview, I wanted to make sure that the interviewees represented students with varying perspectives at each school. Utilizing the quantitative data as a guide, I was able to select interviewees who had varying perspectives of school turnaround. Focusing on the second part of the survey, that had students measure important constructs in regards to 'more before turnaround', 'the same', or 'more after turnaround', I created a summed score to measure students' perception of turnaround. This summed score was calculated to measure students' overall perception of school turnaround by summing survey items 11 - 20. Higher scores on these ten items indicated a more positive perception of school turnaround, thus none of the items required reverse scaling (King & Minium, 2008). While the individual scores in part two of the survey capture students' perceptions of specific aspects of school turnaround, this summed score better described students' overall perspectives of school turnaround. Examining the summed scores of the 157 possible interviewees, I first identified the students with the highest and lowest summed scores, representing those students who had the highest and lowest perceptions of turnaround. Creswell (2003) suggests that in mixed methods studies, when the analysis of the quantitative data reveals outliers, the qualitative phase of the study should be used to explore these outliers in an effort to gain understanding about why they deviated from the larger sample. For this reason, my interviews began by

focusing my attention on the students with the highest and lowest perception of turnaround, as measured by their turnaround perception summed scores. Of the ten students with the highest summed score for turnaround perception, six students were from Morgan and four were from Harrison. Of the ten students at the lowest summed score, seven were from Harrison, and three were from Morgan. Targeting these students for interviews resulted in nine interviewees at Morgan, and eleven at Harrison. I interviewed these students first before turning my attention to the group of students in the middle, whose summed scores indicated that they thought their school was largely the same despite turnaround efforts. I randomly chose six additional Morgan students and four additional Harrison students from the remaining 137 students to bring the total number of interviews at each school to 15. Using simple random sampling (Creswell, 2012), a random numbers table was used to select students who were representative of the group of students whose summed scores indicated that they perceived their schools largely as 'the same' after turnaround. This process of interviewee selection is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Interviewee Selection Process



The Participants

Thirty total students were chosen for interviews, fifteen from each school. As mentioned earlier, there were a disproportionate number of 18 or 19 year old students who completed the survey. Likewise, there were no 17 year olds who participated in interviews. Of the 30 interviewees, all but one was 18 years old at the time of data collection. The one student who was 19 years old was in his fifth year in attendance at Morgan. At Morgan High School, there were eight girls and seven boys that participated

in interviews. At Harrison, there were more girls—ten, compared to five males.

Participant information is outlined in Table 8 for each phase of the research.

Table 8: Research Participants

		Survey-Part One	Survey-Part 2	Interviews	Focus Groups
Number	Morgan	<i>n</i> = 105	<i>n</i> = 85	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 6
	Harrison	<i>n</i> = 112	<i>n</i> = 102	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 8
	Total	<i>N</i> = 217	<i>N</i> = 187	<i>N</i> = 30	<i>N</i> = 14
Male	Morgan	<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 40	<i>n</i> = 7	<i>n</i> = 2
	Harrison	<i>n</i> = 54	<i>n</i> = 48	<i>n</i> = 8	<i>n</i> = 2
	Total	<i>N</i> = 102	<i>N</i> = 88	<i>N</i> = 12	<i>N</i> = 4
Female	Morgan	<i>n</i> = 57	<i>n</i> = 45	<i>n</i> = 8	<i>n</i> = 4
	Harrison	<i>n</i> = 58	<i>n</i> = 54	<i>n</i> = 10	<i>n</i> = 6
	Total	<i>N</i> = 115	<i>N</i> = 99	<i>N</i> = 18	<i>N</i> = 10
GPA	Morgan	M = 2.22	M = 2.21	M = 2.23	M = 2.57
		Range 0.65-3.62	Range 0.65-3.62	Range 0.65-3.56	Range 1.76-3.42
	Harrison	M = 2.29	M = 2.33	M = 2.84	M = 2.32
		Range 0.09-4.00	Range 0.09-4.00	Range 1.46-3.48	Range 1.46-3.35
	Total	M = 2.26	M = 2.27	M = 2.54	M = 2.43
		Range 0.09-4.00	Range 0.09-4.00	Range 0.65-3.56	Range 1.46-3.42
Age Range	Morgan	17-19	17-19	18-19	18
	Harrison	17-19	17-19	18-19	18
	Total	17-19	17-19	18-9	18

Conducting Interviews at Morgan and Harrison

Once initial interviewees were selected, I contacted Ms. K at Morgan and Ms. P at Harrison to schedule a time to visit each school to invite students to interview. When I visited, I handed out the individual student invitations to senior homeroom teachers who then distributed the invitations to students. The invitations included the day and time of their scheduled interview, as well as my contact information in case students had any questions or needed to reschedule. The students were very responsive to the invitations. Of the initial 20 students, 8 contacted me via email, phone, or text to confirm our interview.

At Morgan, the interviewees all took place in the assistant principal's office, providing a private and a quiet space conducive to audio recording. At Harrison, I was

given a small conference room that was equally private. At both schools, the interviews took place during extended advisory, after school, or during lunch. Most of the students arrived on time for our interviews. At Morgan, it was necessary to track down one student to see if he was still interested in participating. At Harrison there were four students who did not show up on time. After waiting 10 minutes, I went to find each student. I was able to find three of the students; all of them apologized for forgetting and followed through with the interview. One student was suspended on the day of our scheduled interview, so the interview needed to be rescheduled. In the end, all students that were selected participated in interviews.

As mentioned earlier, once the initial interviews were conducted, I turned my attention to the large group of students in the middle ($n = 137$) to choose additional students to interview at each school. While the outliers were initially chosen for interviews, I thought that the group of students whose survey responses indicated that their schools were largely the same would also have interesting perspectives on school turnaround. I visited each school to deliver invitations to senior homeroom teachers once again. Like the first group of interviewees, these students were responsive to the invitation to interview. One student contacted me to reschedule her interview, but the others were conducted as scheduled. Sometimes I was able to schedule two interviews in one day, with one during the day and another after school. Other times I traveled to either school to conduct one interview. In total, I visited Morgan 11 times and Harrison 10 times to invite students to interview and then conduct the 15 interviews at each school. The total number of visits to each school for interviews is outlined in Table 7, and the length of the interviews at each school is outlined in Table 9.

Table 9. Interviews at Morgan and Harrison

	Morgan	Harrison	Total
Number of Interviews	$n = 15$	$n = 15$	$N = 30$
Total Time of all Interviews in Hours/Minutes	5:38	5:14	10:52
Range of Length of Interviews in Minutes/Seconds	13:41-32:34	15:33-50:23	13:41-50:23
Average Length of Interviews in Minutes/Seconds	21:51	20:58	21:04

Phase 3: Focus Groups

Focus Group Goals and Design

The goal of the focus group was to create a time and space for the students at each school to process the initial findings of the interviews, giving them the opportunity to refute or support the initial findings and add any further insights. Focus groups were included in this study as an additional way to gain insight into students' perspectives. Focus groups are considered to be naturalistic settings (Krueger & Casey, 2000) where participants are encouraged to share their views and build on the ideas of other participants. The focus groups provided additional insights into students' perceptions of school turnaround (Fern, 2001) as students listened to each others' perspectives and responded to one another's thoughts and comments.

The social nature of focus group research influences the data (Morgan & Krueger, 1998). The conversation among the students painted a picture of their combined perspective, as they told stories, disagreed, interrupted each other, and built on each

other's ideas. In an effort to balance both the natural conversation flow and a focus on the topics, I used a semi-structured focus group guide to steer the discussion (Morgan & Krueger, 1998). The focus group guide (See Appendix C) was created to encourage students to think about the initial interview findings, consider alternatives, and open up about their perspectives.

The focus group protocol guide focused on the initial interview findings. Like the interview protocol, it was semi-structured with a few main questions written in advance. Focus group questions were designed to encourage reflections and perspectives on the initial interview findings. It is important to realize that due to time constraints of the school calendar, the interviews had not gone through full analysis before the focus groups were conducted. Instead, general concepts that were prevalent in the interviews were highlighted in the focus group discussion. I utilized my research journal, including notes that I took after each interview to help guide the creation of the focus group protocol. It would have been helpful to conduct another focus group months later, after time was taken to analyze the data further, but the school calendar limited that possibility.

Conducting focus groups at Morgan and Harrison

After interviews were completed, and an initial analysis was done, all 15 interviewees at each school were invited to participate in the focus group. I visited each school to distribute invitations to senior homeroom teachers, who in turn delivered the invitations to the students. The focus groups were held after school in a school conference room that was private, and as Krueger & Casey (2000) suggest, snacks were provided. At Morgan, only six students chose to participate. Of those six students, two were boys and four were girls. The Morgan focus group lasted about an hour (56

minutes). At Harrison, eight students chose to participate in the focus group, two boys and six girls. The Harrison focus group lasted just over an hour (1 hour, 6 minutes).

The focus group was scheduled at each school for the first week in June, less than two weeks before graduation. The senior students were gracious with their time, but chatter before and after the focus group centered on senior activities. The timing of the focus group may have hindered student participation as students were preparing for prom and graduation. As the students engaged in discussion about their teachers, principals and schools, I listened not only for content, but also for contradictions and sentiments that the students expressed (Fern, 2001), searching for the meaning behind the conversation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was shaped by the research question and conceptual framework, which provided me with an outline of what information I needed to collect and what to ask. Analysis focused on students' experiences and perceptions of school turnaround with specific attention given to how students have made meaning of the planned organizational change in their school. Data collection and data analysis were concurrent and ongoing throughout the research process, with repeated reflection about the data (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Throughout each phase of data collection, I kept a data collection journal, noting my own reflections and thoughts about the schools, the students and the data collection process. For example, during survey distribution, I noted the attendance in each class, the number of surveys completed, and my perceptions of the classroom environment.

The analysis developed from the information provided by the students in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups to create a detailed description of how the students

in the two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change, and what factors they perceived as promoting or inhibiting positive change in their schools. The data that emerged were both descriptive and exploratory in an effort to describe and understand the students' experience. Since data were collected in phases, data analysis was also done in phases.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the student surveys was analyzed first. Quantitative data analysis included describing trends, comparing groups and relating the important constructs from the student survey (Creswell, 2012). All quantitative data were first organized for analysis and input into SPSS. The data was scored and a codebook was created, including a code for each construct. All participants were given a code in addition to their names that was not related to their student ID number, or any other identifier. Once interviewees were selected, the data were de-identified and student names were removed from the data.

Single item scores were assigned to each survey question to give a detailed analysis of students' responses to each survey question. Summed scores were also created to better capture students' perspectives about important constructs such as overall satisfaction with school turnaround. Initial analysis included descriptive statistics such as mean, variance and standard deviation to illustrate general tendencies within the data. This helped to summarize overall trends within the data and provided an understanding of central tendency and variance in the students' scores (Creswell, 2012). The analysis first considered the students as one group, and then each school separately, which was

essential for the selection of interviewees at each school. The analysis then continued to consider the differences between the students' experience at each school.

Looking at the differences between the students at each school revealed useful data in regards to how students experienced school turnaround in different contexts. Independent *t*-tests were used to determine if there were significant differences between the students at each school with respect to the important theoretical constructs. For example, how the students at each turnaround high school compared in their overall perception of school turnaround. Using a combination of tables, figures, and discussion, the quantitative data helped paint a clear picture of students' perceptions.

The selection of interviewees was based on the quantitative results from the first phase of data collection (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, students' summed scores that measured their perception of school turnaround were important in the selection of interviewees at each school. As described earlier in this chapter, utilizing these summed scores, students were chosen for interviews in an effort to reach students with varied views of school turnaround. An additional connecting point of the two phases of data collection is the development of the interview protocol, which was built upon the results from the survey analysis. The connecting of the data in this way integrates the two data sets as data from the first phase of data collection informs the subsequent data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Building on the first quantitative phase of this study, qualitative data elaborated and further explained the initial analysis of the quantitative data (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is considered to be an ongoing process that occurs throughout the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). With this in mind, my data collection also indicated the beginning of my data analysis. In an effort to lessen my personal influence and bias, I was mindful to adhere to the interview and focus group protocols during data collection and consistently reviewed the data to confirm my interpretations during data analysis. Relying on the data and the protocols limited my own personal bias during the data analysis phase of the study.

The interview and focus group data were combined into one qualitative data set for analysis. In order to make sense of the large amount of data, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating what the data revealed, the data was analyzed according to the guidelines set forth by Rossman & Rallis (1998) and Creswell (2003) with a focus on the students' meanings of change and the model of planned change used as a framework for this study, specifically the four interrelated subsystems defined by Porras & Robertson (1992), as outlined in chapter three. This theoretical orientation, along with school turnaround literature guided the analysis and the definition of codes. The qualitative data analysis process was organized into six steps, as suggested by Rossman & Rallis (1998) and Creswell (2003).

Step 1: Organize and Prepare Data for Analysis

The first step in the qualitative analysis was to prepare the data for analysis (Creswell, 2003). I created a table with all the interviewees' information, including the scheduled day and time of each interview and the length of each interview, but masked

any identifying information to protect the identity of the students. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed, and organized in individual files for each school.

It is important to note that I personally transcribed all qualitative data in an effort to immerse myself into the data as much as possible. In approaching the task of transcription, I considered how I could best represent the students in my study. The centrality of transcription in qualitative research has become more recognized recently (Poland, 2002) as researchers grapple with how to best represent research participants. A point often overlooked is that transcription can affect the way participants are represented and the information they share (Cameron, 2001). For this reason, before I began transcription, I took the time to reflect on how to best approach transcribing my qualitative data in relation to my research questions and theoretical framework.

My approach to transcription was a combination of what some researchers call naturalized (Hutchby & Wooffit, 1998) and denaturalized (Cameron, 2001) transcription. With the hope that the meanings and perceptions created and shared during my conversations with students would emerge in the data, I did not overly filter the interviews and focus groups. Instead, I privileged students' voices in the way they were spoken, so that the students could speak for themselves (Schegloff, 1997). I transcribed each interview and focus group verbatim, and included slang terms, stutters, overlapping talk when possible, and words such as um, uh, yeah, and ok, all adding rich detail to the data. Grammatical errors, both students and mine, were also transcribed as they were spoken.

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the transcription process, as I took notes about each interview and focus group in an attempt to shape a general sense of the data in this initial examination and reflection of the data. Once the transcriptions were complete, copies were sent to the students via email, giving them the opportunity to review their individual transcript and make any corrections they felt necessary. This member checking offered the opportunity to provide accuracy and credibility to the qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). Several students responded to say thank you for sending the transcript, but no students asked for changes or additions to their transcripts.

Step 2: Read Through all the Data

After transcribing all interviews and focus groups, I read through each transcript several times to get a general sense of the data before coding began. Throughout this process, I took notes about what I was seeing in the data, getting a general sense of what the students were saying in both interviews and focus groups. During this process, I also made sure to keep in mind the research questions and theoretical framework.

Step 3: Code the Data

The next step in the qualitative analysis was coding the data. “Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks before bringing meaning to those chunks” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). Highlighting each code in a different color, the qualitative data went through two cycles of coding. The first round of coding focused on the first research question: How did students at two turnaround high schools experience the planned organizational change in their schools? Coding in this first round focused on the students’ experiences and how they made sense of the changes in their schools. The second round of coding focused on the next research question: How do students feel

about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school? Coding in this round focused on the model of planned organizational change, and students' perceptions of what factors promoted or inhibited positive change within their schools. Each time I read through the qualitative data, I explored the data to locate and assign codes to text segments in an effort to "form descriptions and broad themes in the data" (Creswell, 2012, p. 243). The codes helped organize and uncover patterns within the data.

Step 4: Use Codes to Generate Themes for Analysis

My next step in data analysis was to make a list of the emerging codes and cluster similar topics together (Tesch, 1990). As I sorted through the codes, I looked for similar phrases, commonalities and differences between the students' perspectives, and relationships between codes. These clusters were then used to create categories that were rooted in school turnaround and planned organizational change literature. See Table 10 for a list of themes and codes. These categories became the major themes that "display multiple perspectives from individuals and...are supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence" (Creswell, 2003, p. 194). Relevant text documents were created for each theme and saved as new files. The relevant text documents were then reviewed and analyzed to reflect the students' experience within each school.

In an effort to keep the data organized, files were organized by site and participants. "Organization of the data is critical in qualitative research because of the large amount of information gathered during a study" (Creswell, 2012, p. 238). While I began coding data using paper copies of each transcript, at this point during data analysis,

in an effort to streamline and enhance the data analysis process, data were imported into Dedoose, a mixed methods data analysis software that facilitated the analysis of data.

Table 10. Generating Themes from Codes

Theme	Codes	
Students' Perception of Turnaround	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnaround transition • Chaos/confusion • Adjustment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale Replacement of teachers • School improvement
Security & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security guards • Police • Violence/fights • Rules and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline policies • Hall sweeps • In-school suspension
Student Push-outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Bad' kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of students
School Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring staff • Student Expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule enforcement • School Climate
Student supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselors • Academic remediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional/Social support • Post Secondary Preparation
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former teachers • Strict teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher expectation • Caring Teachers
Classroom environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigor • Classwork
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal's personality • Principal Strictness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal expectations • Leadership Stability
The school building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football field • Appearance of school building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical school improvements
Students' attitudes, beliefs, & behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in attitudes • Change in attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engagement • Student participation
Student Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student voice

Step 5: Consider how to Present the Data

In considering how to best represent the developing themes, I turned to the theoretical framework to categorize the major themes in the qualitative data. As discussed in chapter three, the planned organizational change model describes four categories that are essential to changing work settings: 1. Organizing arrangements, 2. Social factors, 3. Physical setting, and 4. Technology. Using Porras and Robertson's (1992) definitions of each category and their factors as a guideline, I arranged the main themes into these categories.

It is important to note that while Porras & Robertson suggest 'technology' is a key work setting category, it was not prominent in the data in this study. Instead, data analysis focused on the other three categories: Organizing Arrangements, Social Factors, and Physical Setting. Moreover, the qualitative data focused on social factors more than the other categories. See Table 11 for the theme categories. The theme 'student attitudes, beliefs, and behavior' is separated out from these categories, as it is actually the target of change, and is the next phase in the model of planned organizational change, as discussed in chapter three.

Table 11. Theme Categories

Organizing arrangements	Social factors	Physical setting
1. Security 2. Student Push-outs	1. School Climate 2. Student Supports 3. Teachers 4. Classroom Environment 5. Leadership	1. The School Building

Step 6: Interpret the Data

Finally, with the intention of explaining, elaborating and contextualizing the data, I looked at the data to realize the 'lessons learned' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is

important to identify what data truly provide the evidence to answer the research questions. Lincoln (2002) has argued that there is a difference between qualitative data and qualitative evidence. Qualitative data are simply information, while qualitative evidence is comprised of data that have been analyzed through the theoretical lenses and experiences in respect to the guiding research questions. This process helped to draw conclusions about how students experienced school turnaround and the nature of the differences between the two schools.

The Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Finally, data analysis concluded with the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data. As Creswell & Plano-Clark (2011) suggest, mixed methods research involves not only the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, but also the intentional mixing of both data sets in order to benefit from the strengths of each data set. This stage of analysis was facilitated by the use of Dedoose, which allowed me to organize data, quantify themes, and view data from multiple perspectives through the use of conceptual maps and visual insights.

In this phase of data analysis, the qualitative and quantitative data sets were merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) in several ways. First, qualitative themes were transformed into quantitative numbers as theme occurrence was calculated. As Creswell (2003) suggests, in mixed methods research, “mixing at the stage of data analysis and interpretation might involve transforming qualitative themes or codes into quantitative numbers and comparing that information with quantitative results in an interpretation section of a study” (p. 212). This quantification of the qualitative themes allowed me to compare the quantitative and qualitative data. Additional merging of the data occurred in

the data analysis through the use of tables that displayed both quantitative and qualitative data, showing convergent findings (Lee & Greene, 2007). While the integration of both forms of data was challenging, interpreting the quantitative and qualitative data together contributed to a deeper understanding of the research questions.

Table 12 outlines the data collection and analysis timeline, describing the steps that were implemented in this dissertation study. Overall, data collection and analysis, including obtaining IRB and RRB approval took about one year.

Table 12. Data Collection & Analysis Timeline

What?	How?	When?
Initial Contact with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails, phone calls & school visits to meet with principals 	Fall 2011
Obtain IRB & RRB Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present research protocols to IRB & RRB 	Fall 2011
Consent/ Assent Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed to senior level classes, including second and third round of distribution 	January 2012
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed to senior level classes 	February-March 2012
Survey Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation and analysis of survey data Interviewees selected 	February-March 2012
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews gained an in-depth understanding of students' experiences 	March-May 2012
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured focus groups gave students the opportunity to verify or refute initial interview findings 	June 2012
Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing analysis, interpretation and reflection of data with a focus on the theoretical framework Relevant text documents created 	Ongoing February 2012-November 2012
Write Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing writing, revising and editing 	Ongoing October 2011-November 2012

Strategies to Address Issues of Trustworthiness and Credibility

Triangulation, the use of multiple data collection strategies, is an important feature of qualitative research. Triangulation can provide a more accurate explanation and interpretation of social behavior through analysis from several different perspectives (Cohen & Manion, 1989). Furthermore, triangulation can add validity by enhancing both the quality of the data and the accuracy of the findings (Fetterman, 1993). For this study, multiple sources of data will be used, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups in an effort to present the most accurate account of the case studies.

In all research, it is important to address issues of researcher bias. As a former teacher, I have unquestionably developed opinions about educational reforms and policies that could influence my analysis. In this specific study, the importance is compounded by my experience as a former teacher. There are both positive and negative aspects to my position of being an insider. As a former teacher at a turnaround high school, I have an insider perspective to the schools in the study. I have firsthand familiarity with the school turnaround policy, which might make it easier to analyze contextual issues. However, as a researcher, I must be sure to be careful not to impose my prior assumptions. My research approach stems from my own experiences, and in attempt to limit my own bias I made a deliberate effort throughout data collection and analysis to strictly follow the research protocol and highlight student voices.

It is important to acknowledge that while it is the student voices that are featured in this dissertation, I collected, transcribed, analyzed, interpreted, and presented the information. As Rubin & Silva (2003) point out, “while we may try to represent students and their experiences as genuinely as possible, we can portray the experiences, opinions

and thoughts of students only from our perspective as adult researchers” (p. 210). When considering the students’ meanings and experiences, I was mindful to consider that as a researcher my own biases and personal history inevitably impact this research.

Limitations

It is widely argued that qualitative studies lack the power to generalize to the larger population (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Consequently, there is little basis for generalization in regards to the qualitative data in this study. However, given the limited number of cases of turnaround high schools, this study offers a unique look into two schools where there are lessons to be learned. While generalization is not the goal of this research study, the exploratory nature of this study sheds light on students’ experiences and perspectives about turnaround. Students’ perspectives undoubtedly shed light on how the turnaround policy is being experienced by those who have lived through the turnaround process. Thick descriptions of the students’ experience were provided in an effort to allow readers to make their own decisions about how the emergent themes can be transferred to the implementation of policy in different contexts. The exploratory nature of the work brings student voice

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study include:

- The study was confined to the senior students at two turnaround high schools in one urban district. It purposefully excludes turnaround elementary schools and younger students within the turnaround high schools.

- Students' survey, interview, and focus group responses were reflections of their personal experiences within their specific high schools, confining the responses to the urban contexts within which the schools are located.
- This study only provides the students' perspective on the turnaround policy, excluding other school members, such as teachers, administrators and parents.
- The quantitative and qualitative data was collected within one academic school year (2011-2012). Due to this time frame, the researcher may not have been able to locate all the students who experienced the school turnaround, including those students who have dropped out or transferred schools since the turnaround policy was implemented. The data collected was limited to those students who have progressed through school to their senior year.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

This chapter features the findings of this dissertation. It is divided into three distinct sections: quantitative findings, qualitative findings, and the intersection of the two data sets. Quantitative data is examined in the first section, including an examination of each school individually in addition to the students as a whole group. The qualitative findings section builds on the quantitative analysis and constructs a more in depth look into students' experiences at their schools with the examination of interview and focus group data. The final section in this chapter integrates the two data sets, examining the convergent and divergent findings between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Findings

The goal of the quantitative phase of this study was to gain insight into how students experienced the turnaround policy in two high schools, focusing on the first research question: How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change within their school? Additionally, quantitative analysis offered preliminary insights into what was influential in shaping students' perceptions of factors that promoted or inhibited positive change in their schools.

Quantitative data analysis included describing trends, examining frequencies, and comparing the students at the two high schools (Creswell, 2012). Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the characteristics of the students and their perspectives of their schools and the school turnaround policy. The quantitative analysis also included a comparison of the two schools through the results of independent *t*-tests.

The Survey: Part One

This section begins by examining each part of the survey individually. While each school had undergone turnaround, the students at each school experienced turnaround within the specific context of their schools. Examining the schools individually allows students' experiences within each context to be highlighted. The first part of the survey aimed to measure students' perceptions of their school, without considering the before and after of turnaround. A total of 217 students completed this section of the survey, including 105 students from Morgan High School and 112 students from Harrison High School. Overall, survey results indicated that students at both schools have a relatively positive view of their schools, although Morgan students reported a higher overall school satisfaction.

Largely, perceptions in the first part of the survey indicated that students had an overall high perception of their schools. The majority of students consistently agreed or strongly agreed to every item in the first part of the survey, except for Harrison students in response to survey item 9: "Our school environment is welcoming." With respect to that item, 35.7% of Harrison students indicated that they were neutral or unsure about their school environment. That was the only survey item that the majority of students didn't indicate that they agreed or strongly agreed. All other survey items consistently had a majority of students agree or strongly agree, when examining the students together or as individual schools. Table 13 details how students responded to each survey item, first as all students ($N = 217$), and then as individual schools.

Table 13. Student Responses to Survey Part One

Survey Question	Participants	1 Completely Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral I'm not sure	4 Agree	5 Completely Agree	M	SD
		Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent		
I feel safe in and around my school.	All Students	9.2	6.9	20.3	37.8	25.8	3.64	1.20
	Morgan Students	9.5	4.8	20.0	36.2	29.5	3.71	1.22
	Harrison Students	8.9	8.9	20.5	39.3	22.3	3.57	1.91
Our school is organized to help students be successful in school.	All Students	3.7	7.4	17.1	39.2	32.7	3.90	1.06
	Morgan Students	3.8	6.7	16.2	34.3	39.0	3.98	1.08
	Harrison Students	3.6	8.0	17.9	43.8	26.8	3.82	1.03
Teachers are approachable and friendly.	All Students	4.6	6.0	13.8	44.7	30.9	3.91	1.05
	Morgan Students	1.9	7.6	9.5	51.4	29.5	3.99	0.94
	Harrison Students	7.1	4.5	17.9	38.4	32.1	3.84	1.43
Classroom instruction is clear and well structured.	All Students	4.1	8.8	20.3	41.9	24.9	3.75	1.06
	Morgan Students	3.8	8.6	19.0	41.0	27.6	3.80	1.06
	Harrison Students	4.5	8.9	21.4	42.9	22.3	3.70	1.06
The classes at our school are interesting and engaging.	All Students	8.8	10.1	16.6	47.0	17.5	3.54	1.15
	Morgan Students	7.6	8.6	15.2	45.7	22.9	3.68	1.15
	Harrison Students	9.8	11.6	17.9	48.2	12.5	3.42	1.15
The principal has high expectations for students.	All Students	6.0	2.3	15.7	22.6	53.5	4.15	1.14
	Morgan Students	2.9	1.9	17.1	20.0	58.1	4.29	1.01
	Harrison Students	8.9	2.7	14.3	25.5	49.1	4.03	1.25
The teachers and staff at our school are supportive and helpful.	All Students	2.3	8.3	13.8	43.8	31.8	3.94	.998
	Morgan Students	1.0	4.8	7.6	53.3	33.3	4.13	0.82
	Harrison Students	3.6	11.6	19.6	34.8	30.4	3.77	1.12
The school rules create a positive school environment.	All Students	6.5	8.8	24.9	40.1	19.8	3.58	1.10
	Morgan Students	6.7	4.8	23.8	41.9	22.9	3.70	1.08
	Harrison Students	6.3	12.5	25.9	38.4	17.0	3.47	1.11

Our school environment is welcoming.	All Students	6.9	9.7	29.0	34.6	19.8	3.51	1.12
	Morgan Students	2.9	10.5	21.9	41.0	23.8	3.72	1.03
	Harrison Students	10.7	8.9	35.7	28.6	16.1	3.30	1.17
Our school is a good place to go to school.	All Students	6.9	12.4	26.3	34.6	19.8	3.48	1.15
	Morgan Students	4.8	10.5	23.8	38.1	22.9	3.64	1.09
	Harrison Students	8.9	14.3	28.6	31.3	17.0	3.33	1.81

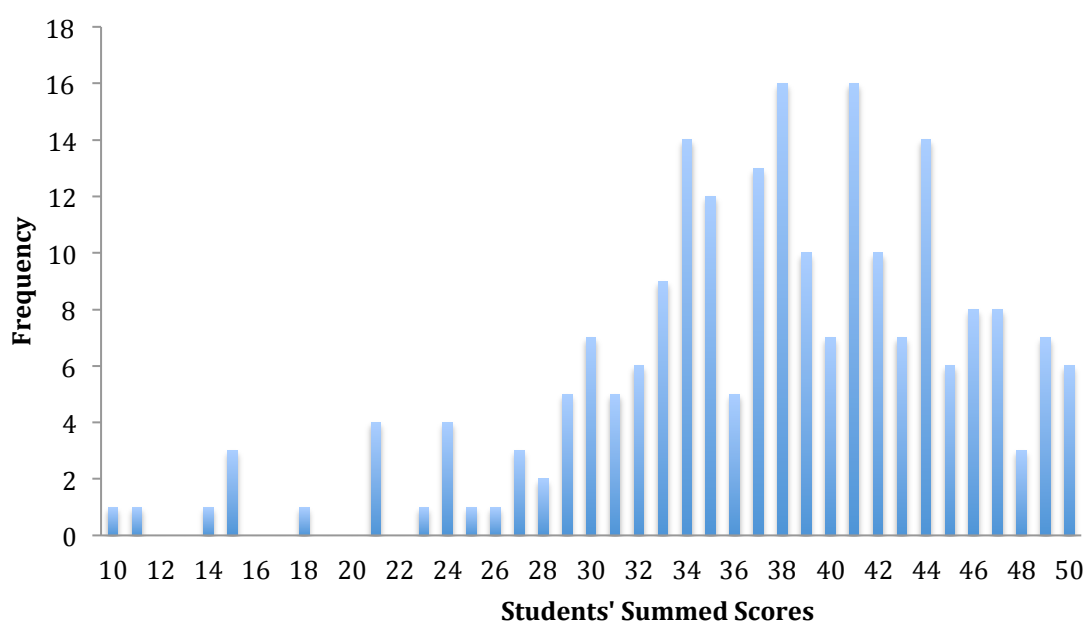
After descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated on individual survey items, summed scores were calculated. Higher scores on all ten items in the first part of the survey indicated a more positive perception of the school, thus none of the items required reverse scaling (King & Minium, 2008). Summed scores were calculated for three constructs in the first part of the survey: overall school satisfaction, school environment, and teachers. In an effort to keep all constructs on the same scale, all summed scores are averaged to remain on a 1-5 scale, corresponding to the survey scale.

Overall school satisfaction was measured by summing the first 10 survey questions. This was calculated to measure students' opinions of their current school. While the individual scores capture students' perceptions of specific constructs, this summed score better describes students' overall school satisfaction. Figure 5 shows the frequencies for the overall school satisfaction summed score for all students ($N = 217$), with a mean score of 3.74. Table 14 displays the means and standard deviations for all students ($N = 217$) and for each individual school.

Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations for Overall School Satisfaction

	Morgan <i>N</i> = 105	Harrison <i>n</i> = 112	All Students <i>n</i> = 217
Mean	3.86	3.63	3.74
Standard Deviation	.74	.82	.79

Figure 5. Students' Overall School Satisfaction Scores



Note. A higher summed score indicates higher overall school satisfaction.

School environment was calculated by summing survey items 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10. These five items included school safety, school organization to support student success, school rules, welcoming environment, and whether the students perceived their school as a good place to go to school. These five items were calculated in an effort to examine students' perceptions of their school environment. Figure 6 shows the frequencies for the

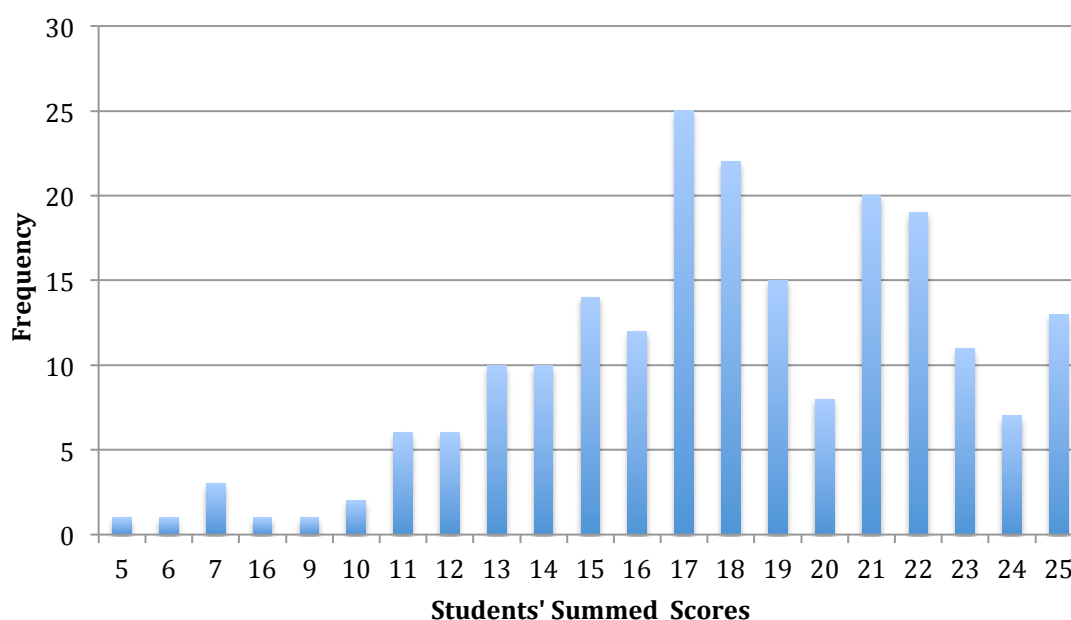
school environment summed score for all students ($N = 217$), with a mean score of 3.70.

Table 15 displays the mean and standard deviation for all students ($N = 217$) and for each school individually.

Table 15. Means and Standard Deviations for School Environment

	Morgan $n = 105$	Harrison $n = 112$	All Students $N = 217$
Mean	3.75	3.50	3.70
Standard Deviation	0.83	0.84	0.84

Figure 6. Students' School Environment Scores



Note. A higher summed score indicates a more positive perception of school environment.

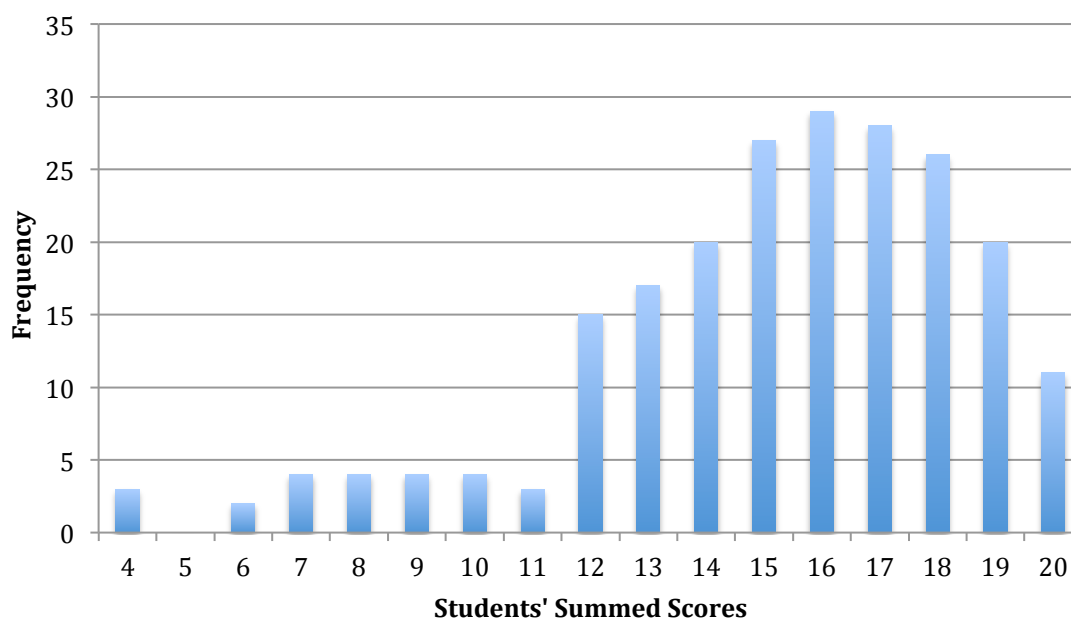
Students' overall perception of teachers was calculated by summing survey items 3,4,5, and 7. These five items included questions about teachers' characteristics and classroom instruction. These items were calculated into one summed score to capture students' overall perception of their teachers. Figure 7 shows the frequencies for the

teachers summed score for all students ($N = 217$), with a mean score of 3.79. Table 16 displays the mean and standard deviation for all students ($N = 217$) and for each school individually.

Table 16. Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Scores

	Morgan $n = 105$	Harrison $n = 112$	All Students $N = 217$
Mean	3.90	3.68	3.79
Standard Deviation	0.77	0.90	0.84

Figure 7: Frequencies of Students' Teacher Scores



Note. A higher summed score indicates a more positive perception of teachers.

The Survey: Part Two

The second part of the survey asked students to consider how their school compared before and after turnaround. As previously discussed in chapter four, only those students who attended the high school for the past four years were asked to

complete this part of the survey ($n = 187$). Of the 187 students who completed this part of the survey, 85 students were from Morgan, and 102 were from Harrison.

Despite having a new staff, new principal, and additional resources, the majority of the students indicated that their school was the same as it was before the turnaround, in response to the majority of survey questions. When examining all 187 students from both schools, students reported that their school was the same after turnaround in 9 out of 10 survey items. Only in response to the survey item ‘Our school offers students what they need to be successful’ did more students report ‘more after turnaround’. A total of 45.5% reported ‘more after turnaround’ compared to 44.9% of students who reported their school was the same.

However, when the quantitative data were split into two cases in order to compare the schools, differences between the schools were revealed. While the majority of Harrison students rated all ten survey items ‘the same’, Morgan students’ responses indicated a more a positive perception of their school after turnaround. In fact, a majority of Morgan students responded that their school was better after turnaround in regards to five out of ten survey items:

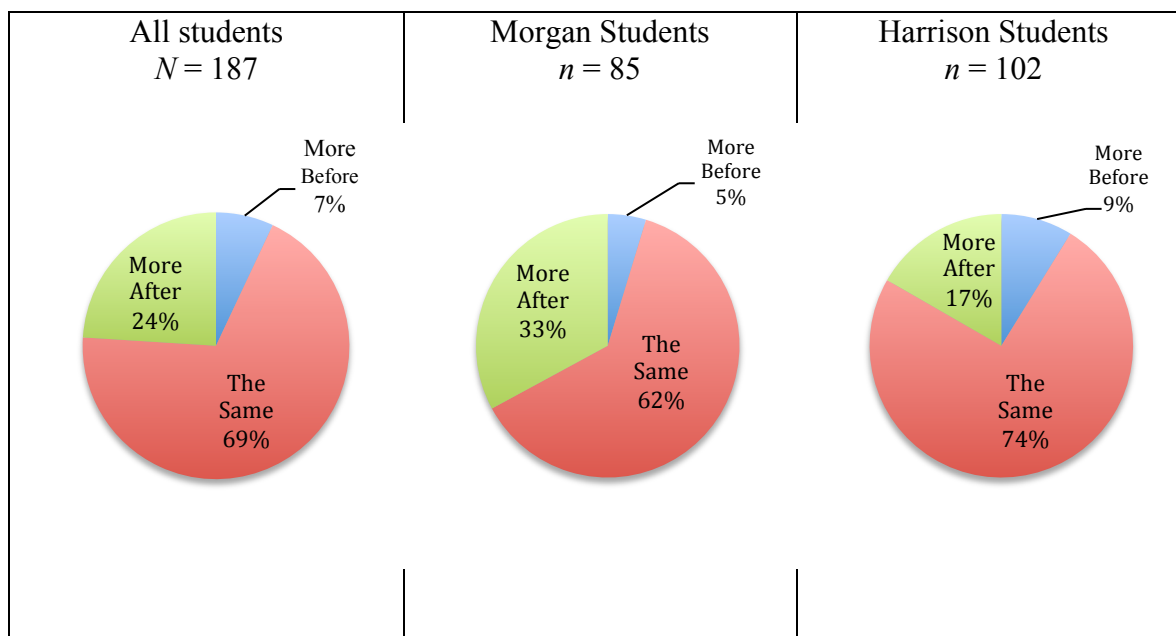
- Our school offers what students need to be successful
- Teachers are supportive and expect the best from students
- Our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best
- The school building looks nice and is safe and welcoming
- Our school is a good place to go to school

Each individual survey item is discussed below in greater detail, including charts and figures to better represent the information.

Survey Item #11: There is a positive relationship between the school and my family

According to students' responses to the survey, school and family relationships were the most unchanged since turnaround of the ten items on the survey, with the fewest students (24.1%) reporting any changes in school and family relationships and a large majority (69.0%) reporting that the relationship between their school and family had stayed the same. As can be seen in Figure 8, at Harrison High School, only 16.7% of the students indicated that the relationship between their school and family had improved after turnaround. The other survey items weren't as skewed, but still had a majority of the students indicating that their school hadn't changed since turnaround.

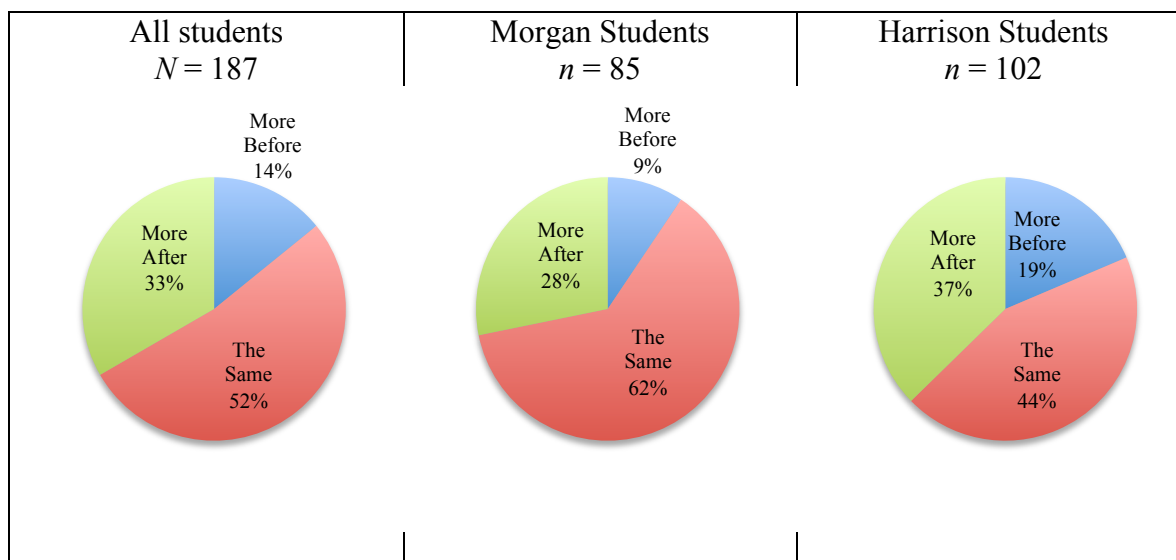
Figure 8. Student Responses to Survey Item 11
There is a positive relationship between the school and my family.



Survey Item 12: I am motivated to come to school

When examining all students, a little more than half (52.4%) of students reported that their motivation to come to school was ‘the same’ after turnaround, as indicated in Figure 9. When the schools are split into separate cases, the number of students that indicated that their motivation to come to school was ‘the same’ jumps to 62.4% of Morgan students. Further, this is one of only two survey items where Harrison students’ perceptions were rated higher than Morgan students. A total of 37.4% of Harrison students rated their school better after turnaround in terms of student motivation, compared to 28.2% of Morgan students. Also worth noting in regards to this survey item is that 18.6% of Harrison students reported being more motivated to come to school before turnaround, the highest percentage of students reporting ‘more before’ on any survey item.

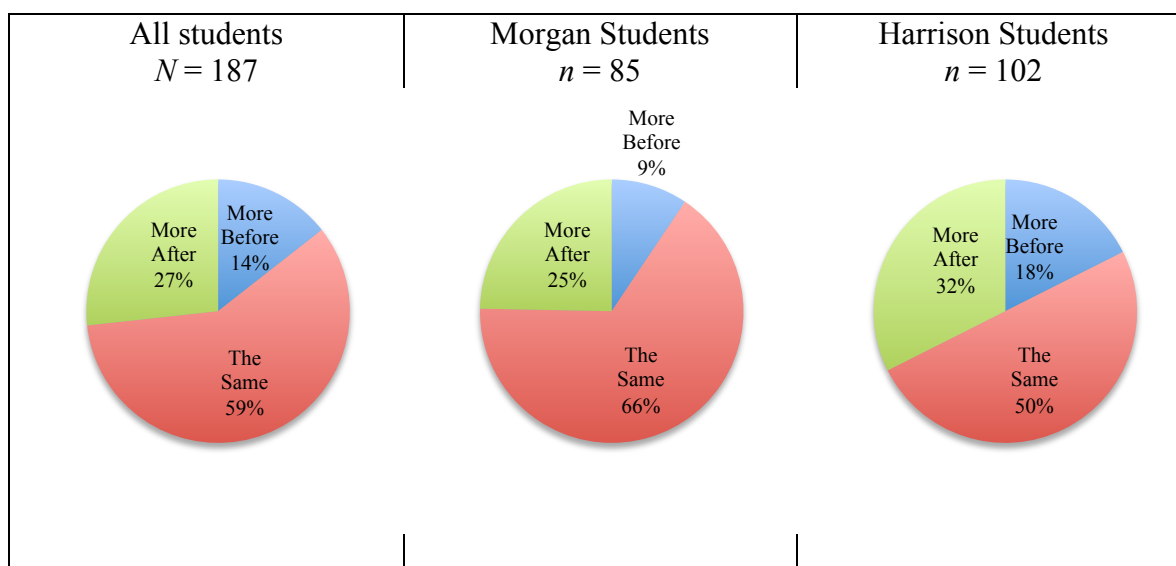
Figure 9. Student Responses to Survey Item 12
I am motivated to come to school.



Survey Item 13: I like to participate in my classes

A majority of students (58.8%) reported that their school was the same in regards to their participation in classes after turnaround, as indicated in Figure 10. The percentage jumps to 65.9% when looking solely at Morgan students. This is one of only two survey items that Harrison students' perceptions were higher than Morgan students', as 28.4% of Harrison students reported that they liked to participate in classes more after turnaround compared to 24.7% of Morgan students. Further, 14.4% of all students reported they participated in their classes more before turnaround. When examining the schools separately, only 9.4% of Morgan students reported that they participated more before turnaround, compared to 18.6% of Harrison students who reported higher participation before turnaround.

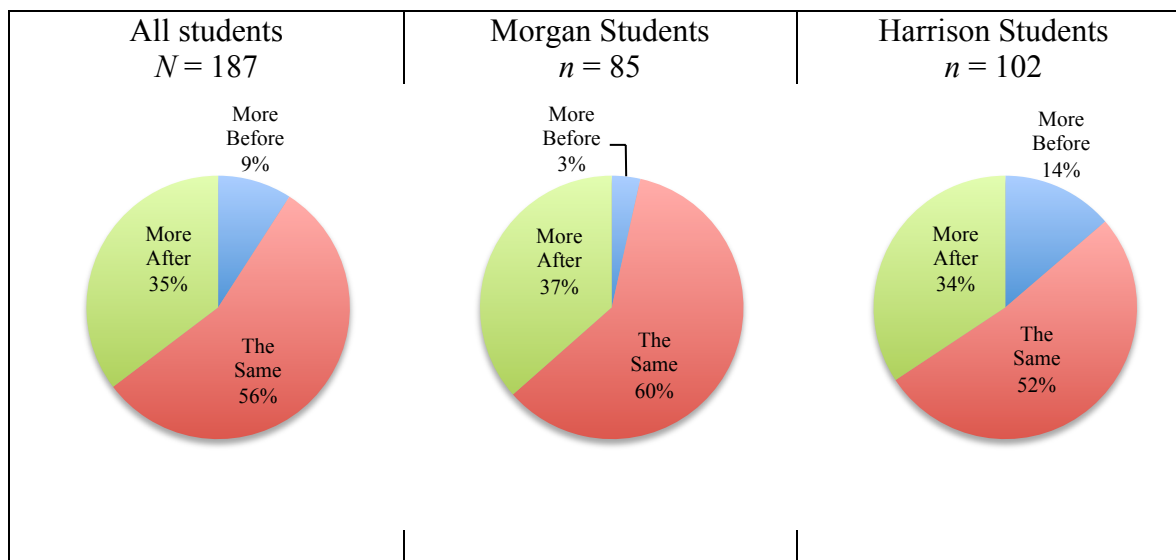
Figure 10. Student Responses to Survey Item 13
I like to participate in my classes.



Survey Item 14: I am determined to do the best that I can in school

As can be seen in Figure 11, a little more than half (55.6%) of all students indicated that their determination to do their best in school was the same after turnaround. When examining the schools individually, that number increases to 60.0% for Morgan students, and decreases slightly to 52.0% for Harrison students. Additionally, when examining the schools separately, 13.7% of Harrison students reported that they were more determined to do better before turnaround compared to 3.5% of Morgan students.

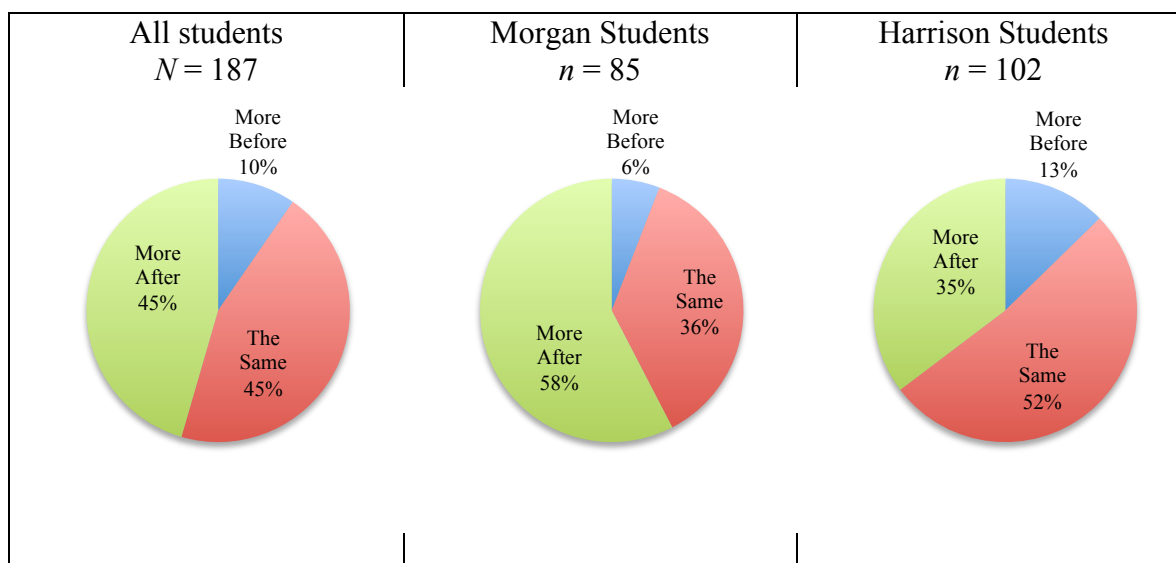
Figure 11. Student Responses to Survey Item 14
I am determined to do the best that I can in school.



Survey Item 15: Our school offers students what they need to be successful

As Figure 12 indicates, with respect to the survey item “Our school offers students what they need to be successful” 45.5% of all students indicated that their schools offered more student supports after turnaround. This was the only survey item where the majority of students indicated ‘more after’ in response to the survey question. When examining the schools individually, the numbers look quite different. A majority (57.6%) of Morgan students indicated that their school offered them what they needed to be successful more after turnaround, compared to only 35.3% of Harrison students who reported the same. At Harrison, the majority of students (52.0%) indicated that their school remained the same in regards to offering them what they needed to be successful more after turnaround, compared to only 36.5% of Morgan students.

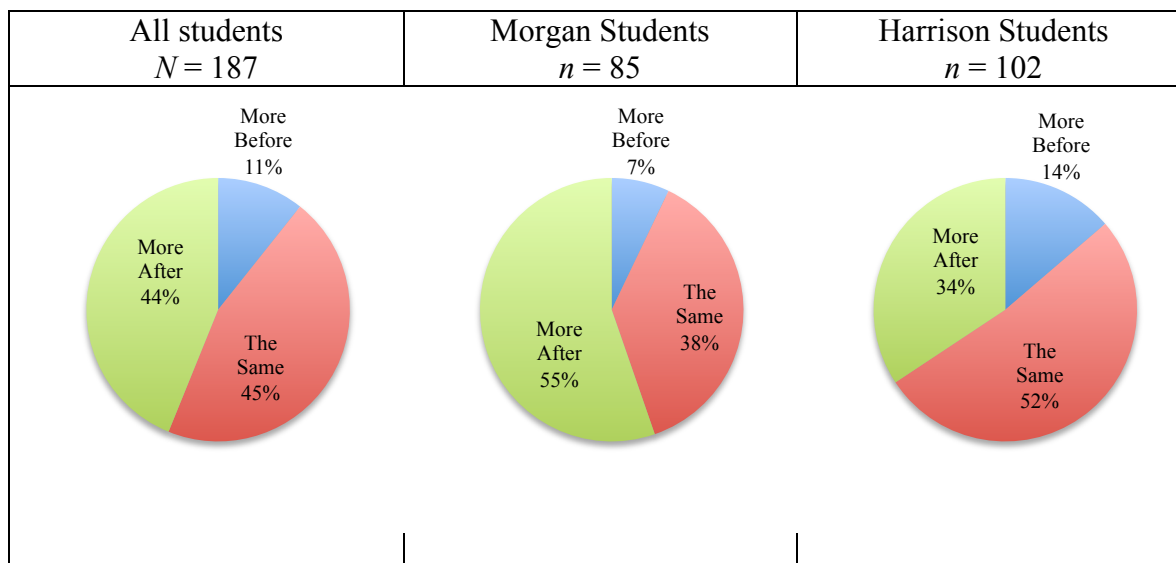
Figure 12. Student Responses to Survey Item 15
Our school offers students what they need to be successful.



Survey Item 16: Teachers are supportive and expect the best from students

When examining how all students responded to the survey item “Teachers are supportive and expect the best from students” the students were nearly split between answering ‘the same’ (45.5%) and answering ‘more after’ (43.9%). However, when the schools are examined independently, the numbers are very different. A total of 55.3% of Morgan students indicated that the teachers were supportive and expected the best from students more after the turnaround, compared to only 34.3% of Harrison students who reported the same. Conversely, 52.0% of Harrison students reported that the teachers were the same after turnaround in regards to being supportive and expectations for students, compared to 37.6% of Morgan students who reported no change in their teachers.

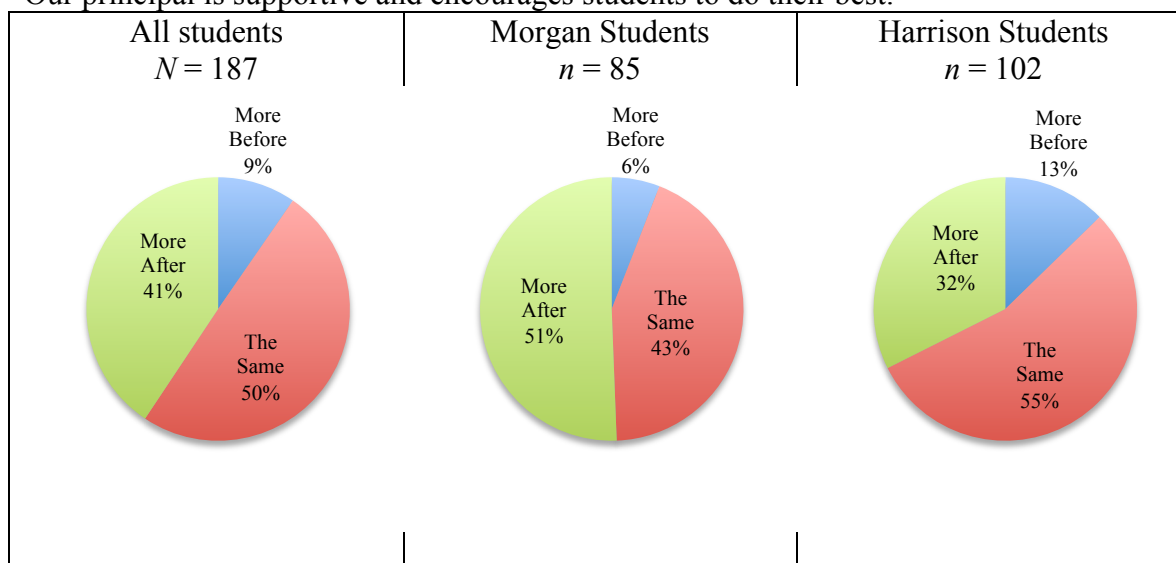
Figure 13. Student Responses to Survey Item 16
Teachers are supportive and expect the best from students.



Survey Item 17: Our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best

As can be seen in Figure 14, students' responses to survey item 'our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best' varied across the schools. At Harrison, 32.4% of students indicated that the principal was more supportive after turnaround, compared to about half (50.6%) of Morgan students. In contrast, 54.9% of Harrison students reported no change in terms of leadership at their school, compared to 43.5% of Morgan students who reported no change in terms of leadership at Morgan.

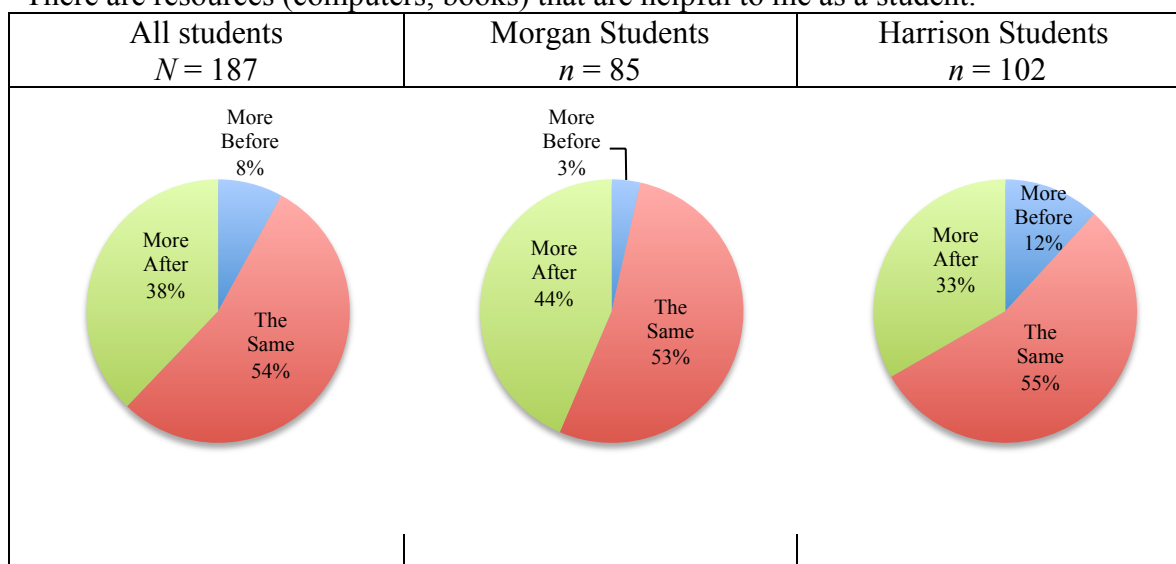
Figure 14. Student Responses to Survey Item 17
Our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best.



Survey Item 18: There are resources (computers, books) that are helpful to me as a student

As shown below in Figure 15, a little more than half of all students (54.4%) reported their school was the same with respect to resources available to students after turnaround. The percentages are about the same when the schools are split into individual cases, with 52.9% of Morgan students and 54.9% of Harrison students reporting that the amount of resources available to students was the same after turnaround. A difference between the schools on this survey item can be seen in terms of how many students reported that there were more resources available to students before turnaround. At Morgan, only 3.5% of students indicated that there were more resources available to students before turnaround, compared to 11.8% of Harrison students.

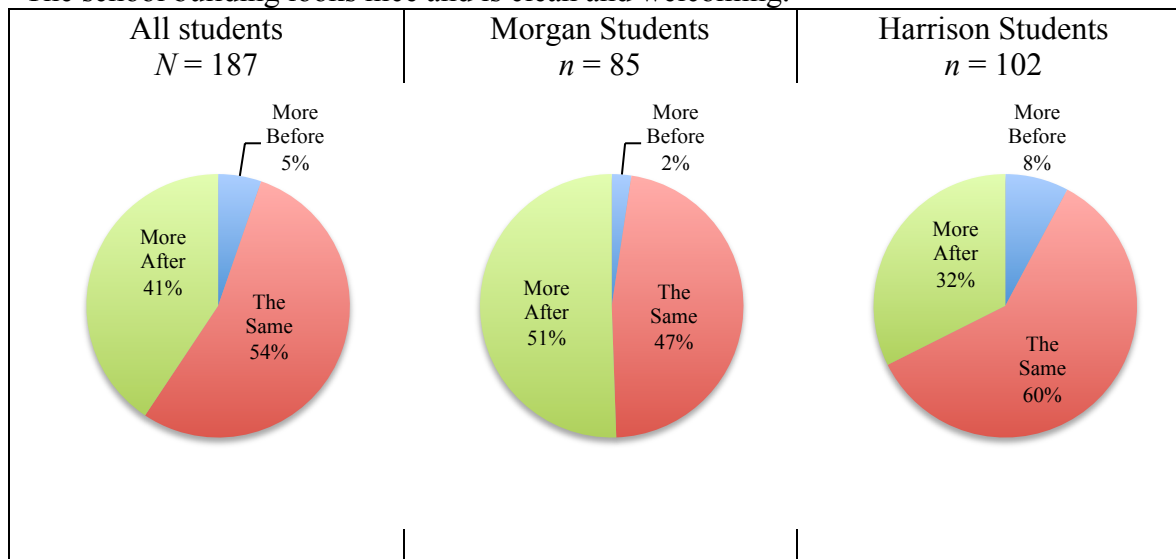
Figure 15. Student Responses to Survey Item 18
There are resources (computers, books) that are helpful to me as a student.



Survey Item 19: The school building looks nice and is clean and welcoming

Student responses to the survey item pertaining to the physical school building indicated that 54% of all students reported that their school was the same after turnaround, and 40.6% reported that the school building was better after turnaround. When the schools are examined separately, 47.1% of students at Morgan reported that their school was the same, compared to 50.6% that reported their school building was better after turnaround. At Harrison, more than half of the students (59.8%) reported that their school building was the same and 32.4% of students reported that their school building was better after turnaround.

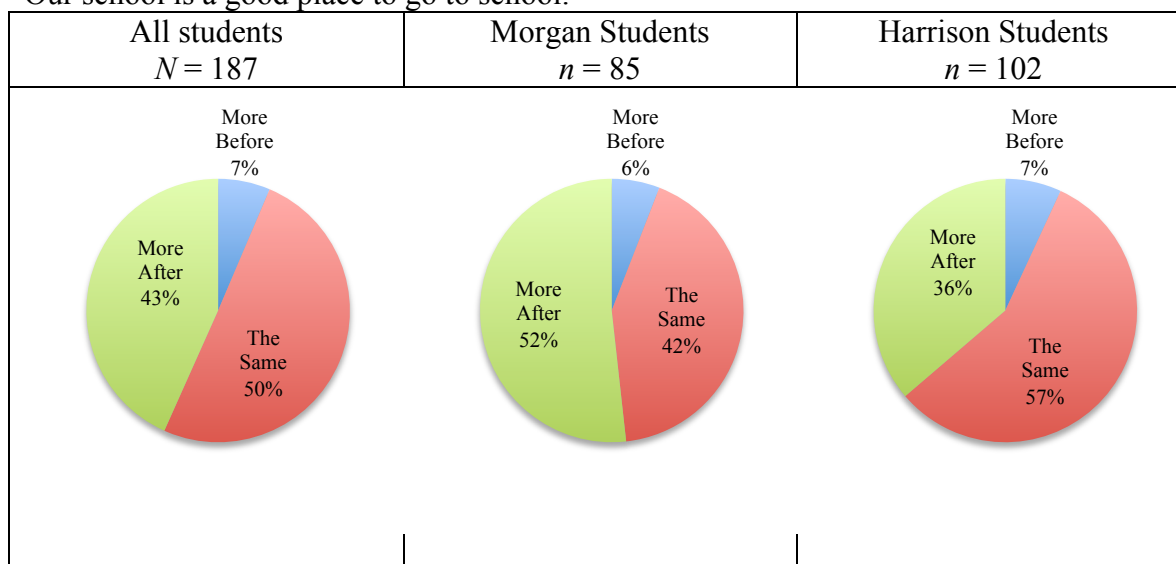
Figure 16. Student Responses to Survey Item 19
The school building looks nice and is clean and welcoming.



Survey Item 20: Our school is a good place to go to school

Responses to the survey item designed to reflect students' overall perceptions of whether their school was a good place to go to school indicated that 6.4% of all students thought their school was a good place to go to school more before turnaround, 50.3% thought their school was the same, and 43.3% thought their school was was a good place to go more after turnaround. When the schools are examined individually, Morgan students demonstrated a more positive view of their schools, with 5.9% of students reporting 'more before' turnaround, 42.4% reporting 'the same', and more than half (51.8%) reporting 'more after' in regards to their school being a good place to go to school. On the other hand, 6.9% of Harrison students reported 'more before', 56.9% reported 'same', and 36.3% of students reported 'more after' in regards to their school being a good place go to school.

Figure 17. Student Responses to Survey Item 20
Our school is a good place to go to school.



Survey Part Two: Summed scores

After descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated on individual survey items in part two, a summed score was calculated for students' overall perception of school turnaround. Higher scores on all ten items in the second part of the survey indicated a more positive perception of school turnaround, thus none of the items required reverse scaling (King & Minium, 2008). A summed score was calculated for students' overall perception of school turnaround by summing survey items 11 - 20. While the individual scores in part two of the survey capture students' perceptions of certain constructs, this summed score better describes students' overall perspectives of school turnaround. Table 17 displays the means and standard deviations for all students ($N = 187$) and for each individual school.

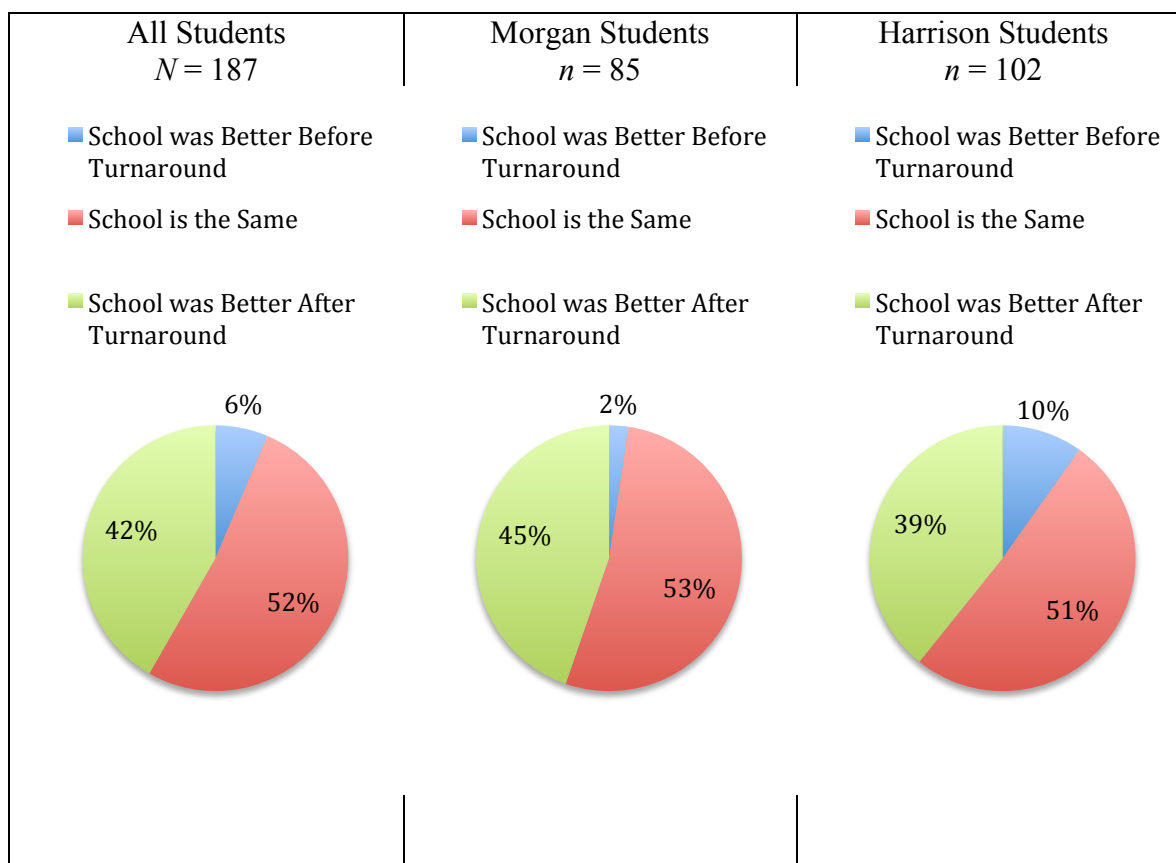
Table 17. Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Perception of School Turnaround

	Morgan $n = 85$	Harrison $n = 102$	All Students $N = 187$
Mean	23.74	21.95	22.76
Standard Deviation	3.72	4.13	4.04

Students' perception of school turnaround scores were important in the selection of interviewees for the next phase of the study. The quantitative and qualitative phases of data collection in this study were integrated in this transitional stage when the survey data analysis from the quantitative phase of the study informed the interviewee selection for the second phase (Hanson et al., 2005). The range (10 - 30) of all scores was divided equally into three categories, each with a range of seven. Scores within the lowest category (range 10 - 26) indicated the lowest perception of school turnaround. The

students who fell into the middle category (range 17 - 23) had scores that indicated they felt that many aspects of their school were the same since turnaround. Scores in the highest category (range 24 - 30) indicated the highest perception of turnaround. Figure 18 below shows the frequencies of students' perception of turnaround scores as they fit into these three categories.

Figure 18. Percentage of Student Scores on Perception of School Turnaround



Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior

A summed score was created to measure students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior by calculating the sum of survey items 12, 13, and 14, which centered on students' motivation, participation in classes and their determination to do their best in school. Higher scores on these three survey items indicated students were more motivated, participated more, or had more determination after turnaround, thus none of the items required reverse scaling (King & Minium, 2008). This summed score was calculated to examine how students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior may have changed since turnaround. Table 18 displays the means and standard deviations for all students ($N = 187$) and for each individual school.

Table 18. Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behavior

	Morgan n=85	Harrison n=102	All Students N=187
Mean	6.67	6.49	6.57
Standard Deviation	1.34	1.60	1.48

Independent t-tests to Compare the Schools

Initial survey analysis indicated clear trends in the differences between the two schools. The small number of students who reported that the school was better before turnaround largely came from Harrison High School. Further, Morgan students' survey responses indicated that they had higher perceptions of school turnaround than Harrison students on the majority of survey items. This initial analysis led to a deeper look into whether or not the difference between the students at the two high schools was

significant. Independent *t*-tests were used to evaluate the differences on several important constructs. Table 19 summarizes the *t*-tests that were used in the analysis.

Students' overall school satisfaction was measured by summing the first 10 survey questions, which included constructs such as school safety, leadership, school environment, and classroom expectations. Together, these individual constructs paint a clearer picture of students' perceptions of their schools. This was developed to measure students' opinion of their current school, and all 217 students completed this part of the survey. An independent *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether or not the students at Morgan High School had a significantly higher overall school satisfaction than those students at Harrison High School. The test was significant, $t(215) = 2.25, p = .025$. The students at Morgan High School have significantly higher overall school satisfaction than the students at Harrison High School.

An independent *t*-test was conducted to further evaluate whether or not the students who experienced the school turnaround at Morgan had a significantly higher perception of the school turnaround at their school than the students at Harrison High School. This includes only those students who attended these schools prior to the school turnaround ($n = 187$). Student perception of school turnaround was measured by summing survey questions 11 - 20, which included many of the same constructs as overall school satisfaction, but asked the students to respond how the school compared before and after turnaround. An independent *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether or not the students at Morgan High School had a significantly higher perception of school turnaround than those students at Harrison High School. The test was significant, $t(185) =$

3.088, $p = .002$. The students at Morgan High School have significantly higher perception of school turnaround than the students at Harrison High School.

Students' perceptions of school environment were measured by summing 5 individual survey items: school safety, school organization to support student success, school rules, welcoming environment, and whether the students perceived their school as a good place to go to school. An independent t test was conducted to evaluate whether or not the students at Morgan High School had a significantly higher perception of their school environment than those students at Harrison High School. The test was significant, $t(215) = 2.207$, $p = .028$. The students at Morgan High School have significantly higher perception of their school environment than the students at Harrison High School.

Student attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors was measured by summing survey items 12, 13, and 14, which focused on students' motivation, participation in classes and their determination to do their best in school. An independent t test was conducted to evaluate whether or not Morgan students' attitudes, beliefs and behavior were significantly higher after turnaround compared to Harrison students. The test was not significant, $t(185) = 0.83$, $p = .409$. These results indicate Morgan students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior were not significantly higher than Harrison students after turnaround.

Additional independent t-tests were done to evaluate students' perceptions of teachers and leadership. There was no significant difference in the students at Morgan and Harrison High Schools in regards to these constructs. An independent t test was conducted to evaluate whether or not the students at Morgan High School had a significantly higher perception of their teachers than those students at Harrison High School. The test was not significant, $t(215) = 1.926$, $p = .055$. The students at Morgan

High School do not have significantly higher perception of their teachers than the students at Harrison High School. Similarly, the t-test to evaluate students' perception of leadership was not significant, $t(215) = 1.675$, $p = .095$. The students at Morgan High School do not have a significantly higher perception of leadership than the students at Harrison High School.

Table 19. Independent t-tests Summary

Construct	Morgan High School	Harrison High School	Significant Difference?
Overall school satisfaction	$M = 38.64$ $SD = 7.38$	$M = 36.25$ $SD = 8.20$	Yes $t(215) = 2.25$, $p = .025$
Perception of school turnaround	$M = 23.74$ $SD = 3.72$	$M = 21.95$ $SD = 4.12$	Yes $t(185) = 3.09$, $p = .002$
School Environment	$M = 18.75$ $SD = 4.13$	$M = 17.50$ $SD = 4.21$	Yes $t(215) = 2.21$, $p = .028$
Leadership	$M = 4.29$ $SD = 1.01$	$M = 4.03$ $SD = 1.25$	No $t(215) = 1.68$, $p = .095$
Teachers	$M = 15.60$ $SD = 3.06$	$M = 14.72$ $SD = 3.60$	No $t(215) = 1.93$, $p = .055$
Student Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behavior	$M = 6.67$ $SD = 1.34$	$M = 6.49$ $SD = 1.60$	No $T(185) = 0.83$, $p = .409$

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative phase of this study focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the findings in the quantitative phase. In these findings, attention is paid to how students at the two schools experienced school turnaround. Further attention is paid to examining students' perceptions of factors that promoted or inhibited positive change in their high schools. In an effort to let students' voices be heard throughout the findings of this study, excerpts from student quotations are intentionally included whenever possible, giving priority to students' voices, thoughts and opinions. Furthermore, as mentioned in the

research design, student quotations shared in this section are exactly as students spoke them. Grammar or sentence structure have not been corrected or changed. Instead, students' voices are shared in the manner that they were spoken.

Interview and focus group data were used in combination to gain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences at the two turnaround high schools. Student responses were consistent across interviews and focus groups data, and the data were combined into one qualitative data set. Qualitative data were used to construct answers to the research questions guiding this study:

- How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change within their school?
- How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school?

This section begins with addressing the first research question, with a look at how the students experienced turnaround at each school. Next, the focus turns to factors that promoted and inhibited positive change at these schools, with an examination of the similarities and differences between the schools. The organizational components within the planned organizational change theory used as a framework for this study created the outline for this section, as detailed in Table 19. As discussed in chapter four, the themes that emerged in the qualitative data were categorized into these organizing components.

Student experiences at each school are discussed below, organized by organizational components and themes, along with supporting evidence. The examination of each school begins with an overview of students' perceptions of the turnaround policy, and then moves into the central themes that emerged in the qualitative data. The theme students' attitudes, beliefs and behavior, the target of the organizational changes, is separated into an individual category. It is important to realize that the themes discussed

in this section are interrelated, and ultimately, it is the combination of these factors that contributed to the students' experiences at these two schools.

Figure 19. Organization of Qualitative Findings for Each School



Morgan High School

Morgan High School became a turnaround school at the beginning of the 2010 - 2011 school year. That fall a new staff greeted Morgan students on the first day of school, just as had been promised the January prior when the turnaround was first announced. Accordingly, the students in this study had two years at Morgan before turnaround was implemented, and two years after. At the time of data collection, the students were in the middle of their senior year.

Students' perception of school turnaround

It was crazy, really chaotic. Nobody really understood what was happening, or what was going to happen to our school. I think some teachers were in shock, and students didn't really know what was going on or what was going to happen to us. Some people said the school was going to close, and that we were all going to go to another school. I was really hoping that wasn't true. I had been here for two years and wanted to graduate from here with my friends.

When the turnaround was announced at Morgan in January of 2010, the students in this study were sophomores. They described the time surrounding the turnaround announcement as chaotic and confusing. The students were concerned that their school was going to be closed, and some students were upset about losing their teachers. One senior student explained:

Well, the way they announced the whole thing was pretty bogus. I mean, we still had a lot of time in school that year and we all had to deal with the mess and just be confused the whole time. The teachers were sad, mad, pissed off, I don't know, but the students were mainly just confused I think. Nobody really took the time to explain to us what was going on, what was going to happen to our school or to us. So, we were just left in the dark. We were scared I think, that our school might close. It was bad enough to lose all of our teachers, but to have to transfer to another school would have been worse.

The majority of the Morgan students said they were confused about what turnaround meant for their school and for them. They described the process as challenging, calling it “difficult” and “crazy.” One student explained, “It was full it was crazy . . . and I was thinking like where would I go? I was lost. And then I was just worried about the part of it closing and opening back up.” Another student talked about being anxious, “I was kind of nervous because I didn't know exactly what turnaround was and exactly how it would be carried out and stuff like that.” While some students were nervous or confused, other students admitted that they took the opportunity to enjoy the chaos:

I mean, once we realized that our old principal was getting fired, it was like we didn't have to listen to anybody. Everybody was out of class, pulling the fire alarms. I went home like two weeks straight early because they pulled the fire alarms. So the rest of that school year was pretty much just chaos.

When I asked the students how they survived the confusion of that semester, some of them told me that they turned to their teachers and coaches to get a better

understanding of what was going on in their school. “My coach helped me sort through all the confusion. I played basketball so my coach was actually telling to us what would be happening for the next season the following year.” Another student explained, “There were a couple of helpful teachers who helped explain what turnaround meant and made us feel better about the situation, but still, we were sad to hear that we were losing all of our teachers, I mean some of our teachers.” The students were painfully aware that their teachers, good and bad, were going through a hard time when the turnaround was announced. One student noted, “Some teachers was kind of hurt you know. Like you could see it like everyday everyday you could see it on their faces coming to work and I thought man this is crazy.” Some of the students suggested that they should announce the turnaround differently to avoid a semester of chaos in the school, “if I had a suggestion I would suggest that they tell the students closer toward the end of the year . . . but they informed everybody early so everybody knew and everybody was just like all right, what’s coming next.”

The students at Morgan did not like the way the turnaround was announced, and there was definitely a sense of confusion and chaos when the turnaround was announced. Some students talked about feeling excluded in the turnaround decision. For example, “Nobody really asked us about turnaround. Well, they might have asked other students, but they didn’t ask me. It was like, this is happening to your school and there is nothing you can do about it.” Another student shared a similar response, “They didn’t really consider how the turnaround might affect us, the students. They did it to make the school better, but didn’t even really think to ask the students. Someone should have talked to us about it.”

Despite the chaos, confusion, and a lack of voice in decision making, in the end, the majority of the students said they were looking forward to the turnaround, and were excited about the changes that would come.

Sophomore year . . . they was telling us about how we was going to have a new system. The administration was going to be different, different activities, different teachers. They want to remodel the school and things like that, and my impression, I thought it was really nice. I thought . . . I want to check out the new, and I thought it was going to be really good. I have new teachers because sophomore year, no one cared about our education. I think they just cared about the money. So I feel that it's a good thing that we have the turnaround school because now there is a lot more.

After the initial shock wore off, the students at Morgan really appreciated the changes in their school. One student described turnaround as “the best thing ever.” When asked about the former staff, he said “The other staff, they weren’t helping me with nothing. Weren’t helping me . . . I was just running the halls doing all type of other stuff.” Describing how things have changed since turnaround, he said, “And I thought man like these people really trying to help me. Let me get right so I can graduate.” Other students agreed that turnaround has improved the school. One student talked about how much she appreciated the changes in her school, “Just overall, I really like it and I’m glad it happened to our school . . . even though it’s different . . . we could see it was all for the better and things needed to change. So I like it.” While the Morgan students didn’t like the way turnaround was announced at their school, and had a difficult transition time, looking back, they thought that turnaround had improved their school in many ways and were grateful that it had happened.

Organizing Component #1: Organizing Arrangements

Within the planned organizational change model used in this study, the first organizing component is organizing arrangements. This component includes factors such

as an organization's goals, strategies, and administrative policies and procedures (Porras & Robertson, 1992). This component intersects with the following themes found in the student interview and focus group data: safety & security and student push-outs. The following section discusses these themes in detail, providing student quotations to paint a clear picture of students' experiences.

Security and safety.

They keep you safe now. They used to be like . . . security guards didn't care about a fight. They just let kids fight everywhere.

Nearly every student at Morgan talked about there being increased security and safety after turnaround. According to the students, not only are there more security guards, but the new security guards are stricter, enforce school rules more, and are doing a better job. One student noted, "Before security guards were hardly nowhere to be found . . . Now it's more security guards and they enforce the rules more . . . The rules are stricter, the security guards are stricter. All of it makes the school better, more in control I guess." The students thought the new security guards were more proactive and did a better job of keeping things under control. One student noted the glaring difference in security since the turnaround:

Like one day it was a fight so big like SWAT, literally SWAT, was here. They had their guns out, and I was like what-people was getting tazed. It was real crazy. And now it's, it's like, if anything do happen security guards right then and there, there's always somebody to see it . . . Now they pay way more attention, which makes the school safer. We have less fights. We have less problems. We can focus on our school work more now.

The Morgan students often mentioned a calmer school environment, attributing the calmer environment to more security guards, increased consequences, and stricter rules.

For instance, one student noted:

The school is more safe, more secure. There are more security guards, who are really strict, which is a good and bad thing at the same time. We can't play like we used to. The hallways used to be like a party, now if you are in the hallway, you just get hallswept like that quick. You can't play anymore. So, it's good because we are getting to our classes and have more time to learn, but it's not as fun.

The students recognized that better security was related to a calmer school, less fights and less problems. The increase in security guards and stricter rules made the students feel safer within the schools, but not necessarily outside the school in the community. One student suggested that security had improved within the school, but there is a long way to go for the students to feel safe both in the school and in the community:

I would say that I feel safer now, but really I don't never feel safe nowhere. Because, it's the community. I mean, I don't trust anybody and I feel safe sometimes because some of the security guards, but they get hurt too, so, I don't really know how to feel sometimes.

Despite the increased security in the school, there was still a lack of security in the community and many of the students didn't feel safe outside of the school in the community. When talking about security inside the school, one student said, "Of course I feel safe." Then, when I asked him about outside the school, he replied, "Outside of school, I mean it's a different story, you know in this area, but inside of the school I feel as safe as can be." Morgan is located in one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city, and it is important to realize that safety is a real concern for these students.

Student push-outs.

I think it has made a big improvement here. I think it has. Because it's not really how it used to be because Morgan was bad . . . So I feel like now that half of the bad kids are going to an alternative school, it done improved my life. There's less fighting, you know.

By definition, the turnaround policy does not include changing the population of the students at the school. While the majority of the staff is replaced, the students are to remain the same in the school. The students at Morgan insist that this was not the case at their school. One student simply stated, “They got rid of a lot of the students, the bad ones. They got rid of a lot of them.” The students referenced the ‘bad’ students being pushed out when the turnaround happened. The term “pushout” has become widespread recently to describe students who are encouraged by school administrators to leave school, often because of low test scores, discipline problems, or low attendance rates (Rosborough, 2009).

Interestingly, most of the students in this study think pushing out the bad students is the right thing to do. One student said, “Well, to be honest, I don’t see anything wrong with the decision because if these students don’t care enough about their education, why should you care?” The students feel that removing these students had a positive impact on their school. The students recognized that these students are missing from school and the difference it has made in the school. For example:

Well, the students have changed. I mean, first they made all the bad kids go to different schools. There are so many bad kids that don’t go here any more. I don’t know where they go, but they ain’t here. So that is a big difference. I don’t know how they can just push kids out of their school, but they did. I guess it is a good thing for the more serious students who don’t want to deal with the interruptions in class, but it doesn’t seem fair to those bad kids.

Some students struggled about whether or not pushing students out was fair to those students, but most of the students agreed that the needs of the students who want to learn should outweigh those students who have been disruptive over the years. Some students named their friends, cousins, and neighbors as students who were pushed out because of the turnaround. Even with their friends and family being pushed out, students

often agreed with pushing out students to improve the climate of their school and classrooms. Students talked about less fights and classroom disruptions and attributed those things not only to increased discipline in the school, but also to these students being pushed out. One student suggested:

Some students were pushed out and it made some difference. They pushed all the bad ones out, so there are less distractions now. Less problems, less fights. When the bad kids were gone, the school was automatically better really. Well, there are still some bad kids here, that's just the way it is, but a lot of the bad kids are gone, which made a difference. It's better for the good students to not have as many distractions.

The students recognized that these students being pushed out made a difference in their school and in their classrooms, and to them, that was more important than the 'bad' students' right to come back to school.

Organizing Component #2: Social Factors

Within the planned organizational change model used in this study, the next organizing component is social factors. Factors such as culture, interaction processes, management style, social patterns, and individual attributes are included within this component (Porrás & Robertson, 1992). This component intersects with the themes found in the student interview and focus group data: school climate, student supports, teachers, classroom environment, and leadership. These themes are discussed below.

School climate.

The school has an overall positive energy, like it makes you want to be a part of it. So, yeah, I wanted to be a part of it now that it feels safe and organized.

The overall consensus from the students at Morgan was that the school climate changed at Morgan for the better. The students commented on the good and bad of the changing culture of their school, but the majority of the students at Morgan agreed that

the school had in fact changed for the better. One student explained, “The school is calmer now. I guess because of security, the principal, some of the teachers. The new rules have made things a bit better too I guess.” Other students agreed, pointing to new staff members and new stricter rules that have changed the culture of the school:

The climate of the school is different, so it pushes you in the right direction now. I don’t know if we are all going to graduate, but the school tries to push you in the right direction. The principal, the new teachers, the new security guards...they all push you, push all of us to go to class and learn.

The students talked about the new rules in the school, describing how stricter rules changed the school. While the students weren’t thrilled to have to follow all the new rules, many of them realized that these rules were necessary in the school. One girl explained, “You need rules. Rules keep everything in order, and that’s pretty much what Morgan is doing right now. They are trying to make sure they don’t lose control of the school again. And I see that, you know.” Another student agreed, seeing both the good and bad sides of the stricter rules:

I’ll say the rules are kind of hard to comply by, but as far as the school, as a whole, it’s pretty good actually. So it’s strict and it’s kind of hard to deal with sometimes, but it’s good for the school, it’s excellent for the school. Oh, yeah, it’s excellent for the school.

While students saw an overall improved school climate, some students had issues with some of the rules being too strict, and not liking the new rules. One student explained that the strict rules, like making late students get passes and hall sweeps, were making students miss out on class time. Every morning, students who arrive late to school are ushered to a central location to receive late passes before they can go to their first period class. The tardy passes are recorded and there are consequences if a student accumulates too many. Similarly, when students are late for any class throughout the day,

they get caught in the ‘hall sweep’. Tardy students are ushered to a central location and given a late pass to class. These policies are put in place to encourage students to get to school and class on time, or face the consequences. One student explained why she didn’t think these policies are necessary:

I don’t think it’s fair. . . the tardy passes, like making people late just because it’s a minute late after the 8:00 swipe-in. That’s a big problem, I don’t know why they have to be so strict about that. Hall sweep, I feel like that’s unnecessary too because the security guards are in the hallway so that’s why you don’t need nobody to get no pass to go back and forth to the library, not even missing time out the classroom from learning just to get a pass.

Late passes and hall sweeps aren’t the only rules that the students had concerns about. Other students commented on the uniform and cell phone policies being overly strict and unnecessary as well. One student explained, “You have to wear uniform, you have to wear your ID all the time, you can’t hang out in the hallway . . . Now we get hall swept if we are in the hallway for like a minute.” Another student further explained that, “you can get an infraction for nothing. I mean, like if you disagree with a teacher, you can get an infraction, or just get suspended over nothing. Before we used to get away with a lot of stuff. So, school isn’t as much fun, but we are more focused on learning.”

Despite criticizing some of the rules, or the strictness of them, most of the students at Morgan realized that these rules had helped make positive changes in their school. One student explained how things have changed:

Um, it was real different because it was real organized. Everything was in order. They told us we couldn’t do this and they told us we couldn’t do that. We couldn’t believe it and we realized that they were serious. It just changed everything. We were mad at first, but we had to get over it and I’m glad they did that.

The changes in the climate of the school have made a difference in the students’ safety in the school. Further, while some students felt that the new stricter rules were

counterproductive, even those students realized that the rules were necessary to improve the overall climate of the school.

School supports.

They have the PASS [Pathways to Accelerated Student Success] program now, they have extra class, they have night school, they have online classes, they got a lot of opportunities for students to catch back up and get their credits that they need to graduate that wasn't given before the turnaround.

There are additional supports available to students at Morgan High School, which the students agreed had a positive impact on the school and the students. "There are just more resources for us, like college applications, and time in the computer lab." The students noted that turnaround brought in additional supports, but questioned whether or not these supports are enough for Morgan students.

It's a lot more resources. Like with the turnaround, we are a lot closer with our counselors, and our counselors check up on us a lot. Like it makes, it makes things harsh a little bit. But like they call it lists, like certain lists. Like if you're not on track about this or like that, it's like they put it in your face, but you get serious about it. So I think our counselors, they helped a lot. Like they there. We use them when we need them.

Still, some students questioned whether or not there were enough supports in the school to address the needs of the students. One student discussed the need for additional supports at Morgan:

Well, a lot of extra supports. There are some added, sure, but not enough for what people expect from us. They are expecting a miracle, and it just ain't going to happen. We need more supports for getting ready for college. We need more supports for getting through bad things in the neighborhood. I bet you never saw your friend, your neighbor get shot in the alley. We see that shit all the time here. Then we are expected to go to school and learn. Teachers need to realize that we can't just leave experiences like this behind us and go in and learn math, read

boring books or do good on tests. They need to talk to us about these things and realize that we have a life outside of school.

While the additional support of counselors and college preparation seem to have had a positive impact on the students at Morgan, additional social and emotional supports might still be lacking.

Teachers.

There were bad teachers before and there are bad teachers now. There were good teachers before and there are good teachers now. I don't think that changed. I like my new teachers, but really...there are some bad ones too.

Replacing the majority of the staff is a central component of the turnaround policy, and the Morgan students were divided about how they felt about their teachers being replaced. Many of the students at Morgan had little sympathy for their former teachers, arguing that they needed to be replaced and that they weren't really doing their job. "I think they were mad because they lost their jobs. I think they needed to though because they really didn't care about us." Some students did mention a favorite teacher from before the turnaround, but for the most part, these students were happy to see their old teachers go and start fresh with new teachers. One student simply stated, "I wasn't upset because they didn't teach me nothing." Another student echoed the same sentiment, "I wasn't sad because some of the teachers . . . was slacking, some of the teachers wasn't teaching, some of the teachers wasn't coming in to school. Some of the teachers wasn't giving students a fair chance." Several students talked about the former teachers not caring about the students. When they felt like the teachers had given up on them, some of them gave up too:

Ok, my freshman year teachers they didn't care. Like, they didn't care about work. They didn't care about, one teacher told me, "I don't care what you do, I

get paid regardless!" All I could think was "This is crazy." Then I just got up and left out of the room then never come back to her class for the whole year. Some students struggled with whether or not the teachers should have been

replaced. One student suggested that under the leadership of their new principal, maybe the former teachers would have done a better job. A few students were upset to see some of their favorite teachers leave, suggesting that only the teachers who weren't doing their jobs should have been replaced. Several students also suggested that students should have a voice in teacher replacement strategies. One student suggested, "If they had asked me, I could have told them. Told them which teachers really needed to be replaced. But, no one asked me." One student struggled with whether or not replacing all the teachers is the best way to improve the school:

I also think that the new teachers are good. But, still, I wish that not all the teachers had been fired. We had some teachers that needed to go. They were just here for a paycheck really, but we had some great teachers too, and they didn't come back, they didn't want to be at a turnaround school maybe. I don't know... I think that the turnaround should ask the students, the parents, the principal who the good teachers are and who the bad teachers are. Then, move out the bad ones, get rid of them, and don't just let them teach at another school. That's messed up. Then, hire new teachers to take their place. They hired all new teachers, but really, I bet we have the same amount of good and bad teachers as we did before the turnaround. But, they are just new, younger, not necessarily better. I do miss some of the old teachers. The cool ones, who really tried to reach out to us, but I have some new cool teachers too, so I guess it's alright, but it just doesn't seem fair that good teachers get fired just because of test scores.

The idea that some of the former teachers should have stayed after the turnaround was popular with many of the Morgan students. Indeed, even those students who were happier with the new staff questioned the idea of wholesale staff replacement. While the turnaround policy requires that at least 50% of the teachers be replaced, at Morgan more than 90% of the teachers were actually replaced. Some of the students wished that more of their teachers had returned. "I felt like some of the teachers should have stayed

because some of them was, some of the teachers were stricter and more stricter than some of the teachers that we have now.” Another student agreed:

Yea, so maybe they don’t need to replace all the teachers. Maybe bring in a great new principal, keep the good teachers and get rid of the bad ones. Bring in some new teachers instead of a whole new group of teachers. I guess I would say that is a bad thing about turnaround. Because we did miss some of our teachers . . . but we also have some good ones now, so it’s hard to say.

Other students were certain that the new teachers have made a positive impact on the school and that they are a big improvement over their former teachers, which is evident in the many student quotes about the new teachers:

I just think it was a good experience that they turned it around because a lot of us wouldn’t even be going to college if it weren’t for the new teachers.

The teachers are more active with us and that makes it fun.

The amount of confidence our teachers have in us. I didn’t see that sophomore year.

The teachers have a way to make everyone involved in their class, want to learn, so that’s cool.

They making me feel like they want to listen to what I got to say and actually care about my education.

They’ve been pushing. So that’s why I pretty much see them as great teachers. They’re pushing and they’re pushing us still. One of my personal favorite teachers, Ms. C., yeah, she can get on your nerves, but she’ll push you to the end.

A lot of students spoke very highly of the new staff members, saying that they care more about them, that they are more engaging, and that they are far better than the teachers before the turnaround. One student explained the fresh start that the new teachers gave him:

But when we got the fresh start with the new teachers, it was like they were eager to teach us and I could see that in them. And they really, really wanted to help us. They really wanted to build student-teacher relationships with us, to know us personally. They wanted to go deep in depth with us. And I seen that in a lot of

teachers. And I say that was the difference. These teachers are pushing us. I mean, those teachers, before the turnaround, wasn't pushing us. But these teachers now, they are going to give you that push whether you want it or not.

The students felt that their new teachers really cared about them and focused on the students' needs. "They stricter but they care about their children, they show that they care and they just want their kids to have a better opportunity in life than we come from in life." The students felt that the new teachers supported them in a way that their former teachers didn't and discussed how that motivated them, "They treat me like they care about me . . . They really care. So that's why I love coming to school cause this school, they treat you like family . . . That's why I like the teachers this year. I'm glad the turnaround happened." Other students agreed and said the new teachers made a difference in motivating students:

Now actually they stay and talk to you about it. And if you do tell they offer help and it's just very caring. It's great to have teachers who really care about you, to know that there are people in school that really care about you. It makes a difference and it motivates you to be a better student.

The Morgan students painted their new teachers in a positive light, and recognized that their kind and caring demeanors made a difference in their school. "The teachers have a way to make everyone involved in their class, want to learn, so that's cool." For some students it was that extra push that made the difference:

The principal and the teachers, they are willing to help you. They'll be willing to help you go up to another level. The next level actually and then they'll be there for you if you need it. The school is much better than it was. People are there for you in school. You can't come to Morgan and say nobody tried to help me. There's a lot of help along the way. And your freshman through senior year, you'll have help there.

When discussing their teachers, students talked about how their new teachers encouraged them to participate in their classes more. "Yeah I actually participate in class

a lot more . . . Some classes are actually a lot more fun and at the same time we're still learning." In addition to classes being more engaging, most of the students further thought that their classes were also more rigorous after turnaround, "There's a lot more work. It requires a lot more attention. It requires a lot more determination, at home and in school, in order to even pass. So it's going to give you a run for your money if you didn't think it was." The students talked about the difference in classwork and expectations since turnaround, commenting on the increased rigor in their classes, as well as the teachers being stricter and pushing students to succeed. One student said, "But with these new teachers I felt like they give you that push whether you want it or not, they're going to give it you. And it's up to you whether you want to take it or not. They're going to dish it to you while you're in their class." Another student agreed:

They more about their job. They care more about the kids to learn. The other ones, they did, but they say, "I got my diploma" you know like that, and I feel like that was not fair. It irks me to hear them say that. They was for us learning but they really didn't care who got it and who didn't. But now the new teachers that we have, they are. Cause they still forcing us even if we not listening.

Some of the students suggested that it is student-teacher relationships they have built in the past two years that have made the biggest difference. One student suggested that it would be helpful for all students to build relationships with their teachers, "You spend more time here than at home, really. You should get to know the teachers here. Then they help you get into certain things and it just works out when you have a good relationship with staff members." Another student added:

I think the best thing was the difference, like the teachers, so many teachers, like a lot of students don't want to get to know the teachers like outside of the classroom. Once you get to know them they build relationships with you so you could actually see it in their class, like teachers don't deliberately want you to fail. Like if you come to them you can talk to them and they build their communication with you.

When asked about how their school could continue to improve, one student suggested, “I mean, just keep students close together and keep building those student-teacher relationships and this school going to be amazing couple years from now.”

Classroom environment.

We have more time in the classroom to learn, to think, to process things and it's like, there's not just, "Sit down. Take your paper out. Write this down." It's talking to the class. "We going to do this, then we're going to do this." It's like different things, different activities to do. Different things to keep the class communicating and participating with each other. I am learning more now because I am participating more. The teachers are more interesting, more engaging and I think most of us are learning more . . . things are better, classes are better and students are learning more.

There was a wide divide in how the students at Morgan perceived their classes since turnaround. Some students think that classroom environment has improved greatly, while other students think there is still a long way to go. Other students had concerns about the curriculum not connecting to their lives, a lack of rigor, and the overwhelming focus on standardized tests.

Some students perceived their classes at Morgan as more interesting and more interactive since the turnaround. They described feeling more motivated to participate in classes because they enjoyed the classes more. One student explained, “So it's, it's more to class than just, “write down your notes.” So students are more interested in learning because the teachers are more interested in teaching. When school is more interesting and there aren't as many distractions, then students are going to be better, more active in their classes and classwork.” These students thought that the teachers were more engaging and are more interested in teaching, hence making the students more engaged and interested in learning.

In addition to being more interesting, several students noted that classes are more rigorous, and that they need to work harder to get good grades and pass their classes.

Well my freshman, sophomore year I had As and Bs ok that's because I had to come to school and just show up and I'll pass. But our junior year, senior year, they was like really on it and they had to let us know, you need to do your work or you're going to fail, so I had to keep my grades up.

Other students disagreed, suggesting that their classwork wasn't rigorous enough, "it's not really that challenging, even before the turnaround and after the turnaround. Like I thought the turnaround would like help us more, give us books, give us stuff like that, challenge us, motivate us. They're not even motivating us." One student who thought classwork should be more rigorous, questioned whether Morgan students would be able to reach that level of instruction, "They could bring it up another level but it's just the fact that if the students would be able to reach that level because some might think it's too hard and they'll tend to drop out . . . because I don't think students here are capable of rising higher. The students were clearly split in how they experienced the changes in their classroom. Yet another concern that students brought up was the concern that the curriculum fell short of connecting with the students. One student noted:

The curriculum, it's new, and in some ways, it is good, it's better, but it still doesn't really mean anything to us, you know . . . what we are going through in our lives, our neighborhoods, why can't we talk about those things in classes and make learning more fun. Make classes more fun. I know we need to learn math and English and all that stuff, but I still think it could be more fun.

Other students suggested that there should be less focus on test scores and preparing for standardized tests. One student lamented that there was too much time spent on tests, "There is so much focus on our test scores, that is just makes you want to forget it and give up. I mean will I ever do good enough on that stupid test to make them happy? Doubt it." Another student agreed that all the focus on testing can be overwhelming,

“Why can’t we focus on learning instead of tests? I feel like we learn stuff plenty, but it doesn’t really show on those tests. I think those tests are stupid, but it seems to me that’s all everyone cares about!” One student who saw both the good and bad of his classrooms since turnaround suggested:

Some things have changed, yeah, but there’s still distractions in the classroom when the teacher’s trying to teach, and the kids, not paying attention, some talking over her, some playing, throwing things... If all that died down then, yeah things would be better.

Leadership.

Our new principal is the bomb! She is really tough, but in a good way. She is always in the hallway yelling at us to get to class, talking to students, coaching them about life, school, stuff. She is great.

Ms. B came to Morgan after being the turnaround principal at another turnaround high school in the district. During the summer of 2010, she took over leadership at Morgan and was principal at Morgan for one and a half years before leaving Morgan in January 2012 to take another position in the district. Despite her rather short tenure at the school, she had a big impact on the students. It is evident from their enthusiasm, their comments, “She’s the bomb,” and their tears when she left the school, that Morgan students loved Ms. B. One student suggested that, “The best thing about turnaround is the new principal, at least at our school. She’s on top of it! So maybe all schools that need a turnaround should get a good principal like her.” When asked about school leadership, Morgan students gave decisive thumbs up to Ms. B, as evidenced by the students’ observations:

She was better. A huge step up.

OK, Ms. B she did a good job with the turnaround.

The best principal I ever had in my whole life. I don't really know, but we was blessed to get that principal at that time. She really knows how to do her job.

She cares about me in a way that no principal in the world ever cared about me.

I like Ms. B. She was real, she wasn't like one of those principals that just focused on all the bad students or she wasn't like a principal that focused on all the good students. She focused on everybody.

Unequivocally students commented on Ms. B being a huge improvement from their former principal, who was nice, but wasn't visible in the school, and didn't seem to have high expectations for the students. A student commented about the former principal, "he didn't do anything. When the gangs were running the school he didn't do anything, he stayed in his office, never came out. Let his security guards get beat up . . . I think it was a good thing that he got replaced." Another student described the difference in the two principals:

Before the turnaround, our principal was nice, but he didn't have what it takes to really be a good principal, to really help the students or change our school. But Ms. B is different. She really had high expectations for all of us, and showed it. Sometimes you would be like, damn...I don't want to hear her today, but in the end, you knew that she really cared and that she was doing it for our own good. Before I never really thought much about the principal, or how important a principal could be to a school. Now, I know that the principal is really important because I have seen the difference that a good principal can make in a school.

The students saw the new principal as a big improvement over their former principal, "I think she did better than our last principal, because she walk around and come in and visit our class and see what we are doing and whatever's wrong, she'd fix it. And she actually did her job. I think that's just better." Some students suggested that they would have been happy with the new principal, but the same teachers, suggesting that under strong leadership, teachers could improve.

Every student that I interviewed at Morgan HS talked about how much Ms. B cared about them, and how she showed that she cared on a daily basis by being there for her students, being fair, and having high expectations for the students. She was more than just a principal to these students; many of the students likened her to the ‘mother of the school’:

I love Ms. B. She understood too. Like, she just won’t take the teacher’s side, like she’ll hear from both sides first before she try to do something with the student or whatever. But she was a good principal. She was strict, but she was good. And like everybody could relate to her and she was acting like actually a mama, the mother of the school.

Ms. B. connected with students, learned their names, walked with them in the hallways, and took care of the students’ everyday needs, “She took care of us. She wanted to see us doing good. Liked to help out when she could.” The students talked about the personal relationships that they had formed with her and how she was there for them when they needed her. The following responses illustrate how the students felt about Ms. B’s leadership:

Because she just had that overall about her. We connected, when I need to be in line she kept me in line when I was wrong or I really was right but I was wrong for taking out she stepped up she talked to me then she helped me get through my junior year, back I’m getting back on track my junior year.

She want to know if you hungry, you sick, you need some medicine, do you need to go home? She care a lot about me and everybody else.

Great principal. She practically saved me from dropping out of school. I was about to drop out when I found out I wasn’t graduating that fourth year. I sat down and talked to her. She was like, “Ok. I want to see you graduate.”

I think she had a personal relationship with everyone. She knew who I was and I know that she would be there for me if I needed her. I know a lot of people, my friends, who have gone to her to talk about things, even more than teachers, even more than like a counselor. You can really talk with her about stuff, stuff going on in your life. So. That’s cool. Plus, I think she really wants all of us to be good

students, to do better in school, in class and even in life. So, yea, she is good. She is really supportive.

The students talked about Ms. B. having a big impact on their everyday interactions within the school and the majority of the students said that Ms. B was very active in the school, spending time in classrooms and especially hallways. She knew students' names and called students out by their name in the hallway if they were late to class or weren't following directions. One student chuckled, while she recalled, "She was coming for you, always saw her in all the hallways. She never sit in her office." Another student added, "She's always out, talking to each student. Yeah, she was everywhere. Every time I'd walk down the hallway without an ID it would be Ms. B behind me, telling me, 'Put that ID on'." Nearly every student agreed that Ms. B was very dynamic and involved in the everyday interactions at Morgan.

She was very active, yes. Everyone knew who she was and I think she knew like every student's name too. She'd call you out in the hallway like, "Marqueisha, get to class", "Leshawn, why aren't you wearing your id?" or "April, where are you going? Let's talk while I walk you to class". I don't know how she did it. It seemed like she was everywhere.

While the students said that Ms. B obviously cared about them, she was also very strict. The students saw her strictness as a positive thing, referring to it as 'tough love'. They saw her strict demeanor as another way that she showed that she cared about them.

She was not to be played with. One thing about Ms. B, she cared and loved everybody in this school, but when it came down to work, that always was going to come first. She always wanted to hear your side, but she's going to let you know why you are wrong or right, or you thought you were wrong or right.

Ms. B seemed to strike a good balance of discipline and compassion, and the students respected her for it. Ms. B left Morgan High School just weeks before the start of data collection of this study to take another job within the district. I don't think it is an

overstatement to say that the students were devastated about her leaving. “It was sad to see her go, but I really, really loved her for what she did for this school” Another student remembered, “I cried. The day that she had told her staff that she wasn’t going to be here, I was so mad I just walked out. Her last day here I cried.” The students were upset that she wasn’t going to see them through to the end of their senior year:

Yeah, it was a emotional time at Morgan because we like really didn’t understand why she had to leave. We were like, “You kind of just got here.” We had got used to her. And she still comes to visit now and then. It’s not bad. And she told us she was coming to our graduation.

The students realized that losing Ms. B was a big loss for them and for their school, and talked about her leaving as a very emotional time for the staff and students.

It was kind of, it was like a bittersweet moment, knowing that she was promoted. I was happy for her but still sad that she was leaving us. But she promised us that she’ll come back and do graduation. Because we was all, like we want Ms. B to pass out our diplomas. Because she was our turnaround principal. She was our principal and it’s like, just like to leave, we felt betrayed as a senior class, that she was leaving us.

Despite the feelings of loss, the transition to the new principal, Ms. G, was a smooth one according to the students. Ms. G had been the assistant principal under Ms. B, and the students were appreciative to have a principal with a similar management style to Ms. B. One student thought that the two principals were quite similar, “Ms.B and Ms. G are like another mom as a principal . . . want you to get your education, want you to succeed be someone.” Still, the students felt that having stable leadership within the school would be better for the school:

She left, and we got another new principal. The new principal is good, but I still wish Ms. B was still here . . . the principal should stay at the school, at least until the kids that came in with her graduate. That would be better.

Fortunately for the students at Morgan, Ms. B's leadership was strong enough to leave the students with a meaningful lesson, "I mean, with Ms. B, she left us with the knowledge of we could do anything with her or without her."

Organizational Component #3: Physical Setting

Within the planned organizational change model used in this study, the next organizing component is physical setting, which includes the interior and architectural design of an organization, as well as factors such as space configuration and ambiance (Porras & Robertson, 1992). This component intersects with the theme found in the student interview and focus group data: the school building. Students' thoughts about their school building are discussed below.

The physical school building.

"Our school looks nicer, inside and out"

The schools that have undergone the turnaround policy in the district have all undergone some major renovations in the summer prior to the first turnaround year. At Morgan, this included new landscaping and newly planted trees, a new paved parking lot, and perhaps most notably, an Astroturf football field that sits behind the school. These changes did not go unnoticed by the students.

I like how they changed the surrounding of the school. They made it more greener more cleaner and better, more something to look at because at first it used to be empty viaducts around they changed all that around, so it's better.

The importance of the new football field was mentioned by some students, especially the male students. "Have you seen our new football field? They gave us a whole new football field!" One student even made me get up in the middle of our interview to peer out the window to see it, while commenting, " You can tell they really

meant they weren't playing around if they are going to spend that much money on our school, on our football field." The students see the new football field, as well as the other changes, as a sign that the district cares about their school, and about them.

Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior

As with any planned organizational change, school turnaround policy creates changes in the school organization. Ultimately, these changes aim to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of the people in the school—the students. The categories that were discussed above described the changes in the school environment. Those changes were made with the intention that they would impact students' behavior. An individual's environment is an important source of information about what behavior is appropriate (Porras & Robertson, 1992). The intention is that when the school organization is changed, students will change their behavior to meet the new expectations. As Porras and Robertson (1992) suggest, "Many factors contribute to the performance of an organization, but perhaps the most important one is the behavior of individual organizational members" (p. 737). With this in mind, the discussion now turns to Morgan students' perspectives of how school turnaround impacted their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

Students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

I think a lot of us changed because of the turnaround. I mean, you can't really play here anymore. You need to be a more serious student, and if not, you might get put out too. The teachers are really strict. The security are really strict. The principal is strict. There are more rules that make sure you can't play. So, really we were forced to change, but maybe it is for the best. I mean, you can't just keep playing as you go through high school or you aren't going to graduate.

At Morgan High School, turnaround seemed to be relatively successful in changing students' attitudes and beliefs about learning and in impacting students'

behavior. Some students at Morgan said that they were basically forced to change their behavior because of the new rules that were enforced after the turnaround. Some of the students admitted to failing classes before the turnaround, but feeling like they didn't have a choice but to shape up, study more, and go to classes after the turnaround.

Before the turnaround I admit I was failing. I was failing a whole lot because like there wasn't no control. We was, I was, all the kids was in the hallways, ditching classes, in the bathrooms. You know, like, doing basically what they wanted. So there wasn't no control so, once the turnaround came I started thinking of my grades. I didn't have a choice. My grades started improving. So I think the turnaround was a good idea.

The students suggested that even if they wanted to slack off, misbehave, or not do their work, they couldn't because of the new discipline policies, increased security, and more engaging classes. Some of the students acknowledged that turnaround was the impetus to change their behavior and become a more serious student.

Personally, I have really changed. Coming into high school, graduation wasn't my mindset. But coming to the turnaround and building relationships with some of the teachers, and them installing the importance of graduation and college, I really feel like, now I can be something. I can do something more than just hang out on the streets with my friends. I can be something. I can do better. The turnaround really had a great deal to do with it, but it's really something personal that you have to deal with yourself. You have to make that decision yourself whether you want to do this or you don't.

Morgan students offered their opinions about how their mindset had changed. "I think I'm more serious about my education, about life and I learned a lot like you can't take life as a joke. And I learned that through the turnaround." Some students said their friends and fellow students changed their behavior along with them.

Yes yes yes. Because the way the way that things are going, they students, they not going to come out and say it, but they know that they're doing better with the turnaround in place. I know that. Any dummy know that because the turnaround is giving us more opportunities to learn which students really, it's the whole purpose of school, to learn. So that's what the turnaround has given us so I don't

think nobody would be like the turnaround is just awful...only if they're not big into school. That's the only reason I could give about people not buying in to it.

While the students see turnaround as giving them motivation to improve "It's opened my eyes and made me want to do better in school," many of the students recognized that in the end, it is the students' own decision to change their behavior. "It's basically up to them. Better learning. Basically better environment for themselves to prepare themselves for the future, and it has bettered me. It changed me." Although many students described the turnaround as giving Morgan students momentum to be better students, "The turnaround has helped a lot, a lot of individuals get their schooling back on track," some students were more skeptical about the quick changes in their school.

You can't really expect teenagers to just change overnight. Where was turnaround when we were younger? We are set in our ways, already. We have been in bad schools, then all of a sudden, you come in and change our schools, our teachers and just expect us to change overnight. No way. I don't know what the answer is but, I guess starting with cleaning up the school and making things more in control is a good idea. You need control in the school, in the classrooms if students are going to learn. But we need more support. Turnaround fixes the big stuff- new teachers, new principal, cleaner school, painted hallways, but misses all the little things.

Another student voiced a similar opinion about changing students' attitudes and behavior, arguing that it will take more than new teachers to change students' attitudes:

Students' attitudes aren't going to change overnight just because of a turnaround. I guess you can bring in more security, a rougher principal, and new younger teachers and change the hallways, have less fights . . . that's easy. Even easier when you kick out the bad kids. Right there you have less fights and better attendance. But getting kids to learn more, be smarter, that's harder. That's on the students, really. If we have just been playing all these years, not doing much in classes, having teachers sleeping at their desks, so like you haven't learned as much before, and now you are expected to be on top of your game all of a sudden, how can you expect that? How can we just change our learning habits right away? It's harder than that. It will take more than just new teachers.

It is clear that at Morgan High School there were factors that had an impact on changing students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. To be sure, the improved school climate and strong leadership influenced a group of students who said that two years after turnaround they were more motivated and serious about school. Still, other students thought turnaround was not enough to change their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior at school.

Harrison High School

The students in this study were freshmen in January 2009, when turnaround was announced at Harrison High School. When the students returned as sophomores the next fall, they returned to new teachers and a new principal. Consequently, they had three years as students after the turnaround policy was implemented. During the time of this study, Harrison was engaged in its third year of turnaround and the students in the study were in their senior year.

Students' Perception of Turnaround

Before the turnaround, it seems like the students, they just ran the school. The students really did ran the school. And it was like students had problems with other students, like fights every day, every day, every day. Since the turnaround, like teachers and staff they got more control over the school. But it seems like since it's just conflicts with the students and the staff now.

When the turnaround was announced at Harrison in January of 2009, the students in this study were freshmen. Much like at Morgan High School, the students at Harrison portrayed the semester following the turnaround announcement as 'crazy' and remember that time as chaotic and confusing. One student said she just wanted to get through "all the chaos of everybody trying to figure out what's going on." Another student explained:

It was basically just hard. It was hard to hear that we were going to lose our teachers. It was hard to figure out what was going on and what was going to happen. We couldn't believe that we were going to lose all our teachers. I don't know if I was more mad or sad, sad probably though.

For some students, the confusion within the school was exemplified by their feeling of being ignored. Some students recounted being asked about their thoughts of turnaround, but felt that their opinions were ultimately ignored. One student explained:

They did ask us students what we thought when the turnaround was first announced. We had a vote. Would you want this to be like this? I picked no. But somehow it still happened. So I'm like what happened to my voice? I'm sure everybody was like no, no, no, I don't want it to happen, everybody was like no. But it still happened. Like it didn't even matter. They didn't take us into consideration. So why even ask us?

The turnaround transition evoked myriad emotions in the students, from frustration to confusion.

Even though the students were only freshmen at the time, they had become attached to their teachers in their first semester of high school and were upset to lose them. One student explained:

All the teachers were like, "Man, we got to go. We got to pack up, and we got to go. We got new teachers." And we just were like sad because like we got attached to the freshmen teacher. And like we were like, "We don't want no new teachers here. They got to go." I'm like, dang, I just met them, and now they got to go find a new job. So I'm just like I wish they could stay.

The Harrison students talked about adjusting to the new teachers at the beginning of their sophomore year, "and you come back to the school, and like I'm not really feeling it and everything. And just like it's so different. Like just too much like everybody in your face now." As the semester continued, some of the students admitted that maybe the turnaround wasn't as bad as they initially thought, "But as everybody looked at it coming to school, it's like they really helping us, and they just said like, "Well, we got to get used to it. We can't do nothing about it." It's like, you know – but

everything is going good.” Other students agreed that they soon realized that they needed to adjust to their new school environment:

It was very hard because we had to get used to new teachers. And then we actually had to do work. Because freshmen, it was like we was doing work but we wasn’t getting an education we were supposed to. So when the new teachers came, we had to learn. Like actually sit down and learn and behave and all that. So we had to get used to it.

We didn’t have no choice, and like we was mad at the world. Like, “Ohhh, I can’t stand these teachers.” But then you got to think about it, they care about you. They want you to graduate. So it ain’t like they not going to go nowhere. So and they get paid to teach you all, so even if you all don’t want to listen they still going to get paid. So I mean, we was mad. But at the end of the day, we had to get over it because it’s still your education.

There was an overall sense of confusion that surrounded the turnaround transition for the students at Harrison. The confusion seemed to be exemplified by many layers of reforms in recent years, including changes in the school schedule. The turnaround transition came with a change to block scheduling and the following year the school switched to a year-round school schedule. At times during student interviews, the students had difficulty remembering what year the turnaround happened, as they reflected on the continuous reforms that their school experienced in recent years.

Early during the first year of turnaround, a Harrison student was caught between rival gang members on his way home from school. In the brawl that followed, he was killed. While gang violence was not new for the Harrison school community, the high profile tragedy made local and national headlines. More than three years later, every student I interviewed broached the subject of the tragedy. One student discussed the negative perception that people have of the school, due partly to the tragedy:

It still haunts us. Thinking about [him] here at school, and the way people think of our school because all of it. They think bad of us because we’re Harrison students. They say, ‘oh, you go there’ and say it like we bad because we go here, because

of what happened and because we are a turnaround school. There's so much negative and all we trying to do is come to school.

Another student commented that the first year of turnaround was already a difficult transition time, and then the school community also had to deal with the loss of one of their students, making the year that much more trying. "That year was a mess. Students getting used to the new teachers, new attitudes, new everything. Then, the whole (student's name) thing happened. It was crazy. We couldn't focus on schoolwork for nothing."

The first year of turnaround was a difficult transition for Harrison students and they were split about how much positive change turnaround had brought to their school. The students' perceptions of turnaround were all over the map, with some believing the school was better now "Now like it is way much better than it was before," some thinking the changes weren't positive, "Things are different, but not really in a good way," and some students thinking the school hadn't changed much at all, "I don't really know, it seems like the school and students are just the same as before."

Several students at Harrison saw positive changes at their school since the turnaround. "Some things are better, yeah. Teachers are nice, there are less fights, so turnaround helped that." Another student added, "When it first started, our school was real different . . . we had more fights before the turnaround, but now its like it calmed down. It's like a lot of different stuff coming around . . . It's like better so far." During a focus group discussion, one student argued that turnaround is a good option for that she called 'bad' schools:

If your school is like bad and going through a change, like really need to change, you all need the turnaround and need like teachers that is really going to help you all. You all need a principal that's really going to like really be there for you all,

you know. Because you don't want to, you know, there's kids that really don't care. Like, "I really don't care about these teachers. I really don't care about my education." But you want to graduate. You want to be successful in life. So if you want teachers that's going to help you pass, going to help you get through life and stuff, you need a turnaround school because they just want to help you. They want to make sure that you successful and that you helping yourself. So that's why they should have turnaround schools.

At the same time, some students saw room for improvement. One student noted progress that has been made at Harrison in the past three years, while suggesting that there is still work to be done:

We have more activities to do, like during school, after school. The teachers and the principal is a little better. Students are not out of control like they used to be freshmen year. So I think it's changed. I mean, it is better. Now we're working on trying to get our attendance better, grades better and all that. So less fights. So I think it changed, but there is still a long way to go.

The Harrison students considered both the good and bad of the turnaround at their school, and discussed the ups and downs of turnaround. One student suggested that there were more downs than ups, "It's hard when there's pros and cons dealing with it, and there's more cons than pros. Like, it's hard to say what's good about it when it's so much bad stuff about it. I don't know." Another student confirmed these same thoughts, "There are good and bad things really, but the rules are so strict, everyone so mean, that it's hard to come in with a positive attitude." The Harrison students spoke a lot about their concerns with the new rules since the turnaround, and complained about the new stricter discipline policies and the inconsistency in enforcing them.

The worst thing about turnaround is all the new rules and the uniforms, how they enforcing that. And another . . . is academically because like they not really preparing us – like even though it's the turnaround, I understand that, you all trying to make yourself look nice. But you all not really preparing for us for college.

It would be better is they were consistent with the rules. One day you get in trouble for something, and the next day not. Like with cell phones or uniforms.

It's a lot of new rules that are too strict as it is, but then when they don't always enforce them the same, that just makes it worse.

Despite all the changes that came with turnaround, there were Harrison students who thought their school hadn't changed much since turnaround. "So I mean, I don't really think there's a difference since that turnaround."

Organizational Component #1: Organizing Arrangements

This section discusses the themes that intersect with the organizational component: organizing arrangements. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this component includes factors such as an organization's goals, strategies, and administrative policies and procedures (Porrás & Robertson, 1992) and intersects with the following themes found in the student interview and focus group data: safety & security and student push-outs. The following section uses student quotations to portray student experiences in relation to each of these themes.

Safety and security.

We got the patrol people almost on every corner, and a lot more security guards, we got police around everywhere. The school is safer since the turnaround.

The students at Harrison saw the new security guards as a big improvement, both in terms of quantity and quality. The increase in security guards did not go unnoticed by the students, "We got the patrol people almost on every corner, and a lot more security guards, we got police around everywhere." Students said there was an improved sense of security not only because of more security guards, but also because of increased attention to security within and outside the school. "they got a lot more security guards now." Changes in security have made the students feel safer in school, "And then like when I was a freshman they used to check you from like 8:00 – 9:00. You come in after 10:00, you don't get checked. You could bring any type of weapon in the school. You don't get

checked. You just come in, sign your name on the paper, go on up to your class. Now, you get checked no matter what.” The security guards were more diligent, making sure that rules are followed and that students are safe. One student talked about how she couldn’t skip class anymore after turnaround because of the security guards.

I know one thing about the turnaround, like freshmen year, it was so easy to like ditch not only class but to get out the school. Like it was real easy just to leave out the school, but now there ain’t none of that.

Not only were there fewer fights, “There used to be fights nearly every day.” within the school after turnaround, but when there was a fight, students said that the security guards were quicker to respond, taking action to ensure students’ safety and control the situation. “The security guards more active, and are there in a second if something do happen. Fights end before they even get started really.” Overall, the students had a positive view of the security guards since turnaround. One student even referred to them as another ‘support system’:

I like the security guards. Even the security guards is a support system. You know, they make sure I’ll be in class on time. I be to class on time. They make sure I’m not in ISPD, which in-school suspension. And they make sure – they try to make sure I get to school on time. They on me about that. I have problems with that, but they on me about that. And they real cool, you know. If you having a bad day, you can go to the security guard. They’ll take you outside for a minute then they tell you, “You know, you got to get it together. You still in school. You only got a couple more months left. It’s going to be done and over with. So just get it over with,” you know. And that’s really, that’s some good advice. It’s really good advice. So, yeah, the security guards, I like the security guards.

It was clear that the new Harrison security guards were keeping the students safer and more secure. Accordingly, the students at Harrison recognized the importance of increased security in their school. Further, some security guards at Harrison seem to have

taken on the role of a social support system for some students, providing additional supports for Harrison students, acting as counselors for some students.

Student pushouts.

Oh, with the turnaround, when it came, like kicked out basically the bad kids. They didn't get all of them, but it's fair to take the students that are considered bad and push them out of the school. If they'd learn how to stop trying to fight so much and get their work done maybe they can be passing and graduating with the rest of us.

Echoing the students at Morgan, the students at Harrison insist that some 'bad' kids were pushed out of Harrison with the turnaround. "Yeah, the bad kids are gone. The ones that was causing most of the problems, they gone." Another student explained, "Kids going to get in trouble. It's a part of teenage life...It's just that the kids that was doing the most trouble, you know, they transitioned them out of here." Another student suggested that while some students had left, "I mean we still have some problem students here."

Also similar to the students at Morgan, most of the Harrison students felt that pushing out 'bad' students was the right decision so teachers could teach and students can learn with fewer distractions.

Like if they not paying attention in class, like they feel ok when they're cutting class...So they kind of affecting the teacher teaching us stuff so they can stop the kids from, you know, interrupting the class and stuff. So they got to put them out, talk to them with the security or the deans and stuff. So it do kind of affect our education.

At the same time, other Harrison students wavered about whether or not these students should be pushed out of school. "But I still don't want you to kicked out of school. I mean, where are these kids going to go? But if it come down to it then you probably have to get kicked out." Another student clearly struggled with the issue:

I feel like they should, you know, get kicked out of school . . . But it's like, it's so much that students or teachers can take. So I feel like, you know, do something, like not just kicked them out or something, like go into an alternative school or a different school or suspend them. I don't really know what to say about that. But, don't try to mess up their education, but make them do in-schools or something. Something.

Some of the students at Harrison were more sympathetic than Morgan students about students being pushed out, but still acknowledged that it wasn't fair to the students who wanted to learn or the teachers who are trying to teach.

Organizational Component #2: Social Factors

This section discusses the themes that intersect with the organizational component: social factors. Social factors include the culture, interaction processes, management style, social patterns, and individual attributes of an organization (Porras & Robertson, 1992). The themes that intersect with this component include: school climate, student supports, teachers, classroom environment, and leadership. These themes are discussed below.

School climate.

Well it's like the same, but it's like less violence.

Harrison students recognized that the culture of their school had improved in terms of fewer fights and things being more in control, but at the same thought the new discipline policies were overly punitive, making the climate of the school less hospitable for students. They further argued that the new rules were inconsistently enforced. Many students argued that the inconsistent enforcement of the new discipline policies resulted in a negative environment and too many students being suspended and missing out on class time.

Many of the students talked about the school being calmer since the turnaround, and noticed the decrease in fights in the school. One student noted, “freshmen year and sophomore year it was kind of a lot of things going on, a lot of fighting. But now, it got better. Once they did turnaround, it got better . . . There weren’t really a lot of fights.” Other students noticed the same, “there was basically fights every day my freshmen year. Now there’s a fight every week probably. There’s probably one every day but you probably never really find out about it.” Fewer fights resulted in the students feeling safer in the school since turnaround, “The environment of the school, it seems safer now.” One girl noticed a considerable difference since turnaround:

I believe it is better because like when I was freshman and they did a lot of fighting . . . And I'm like, "This is crazy. Are you serious?" And there'd be a riot. We had a fire drill at least three times a week. There'd be a food fight every day. And it was just hectic before.

Regrettably, some students suggested that while there was a decrease in conflicts between students, at the same time there was an increase in conflict between students and teachers.

Before the turnaround, it seems like the students, they just ran the school. The students really did ran the school. And it was like students had problems with other students, like fights every day, every day, every day. Since the turnaround, like teachers and staff they got more control over the school. But it seems like since it’s just conflicts with the students and the staff now.

According to the students, one contributing factor to the increase in student teacher conflicts was the inconsistency in the way the new rules were administered. “If you’re going to have a rule, it should be for everybody, every day, not just on days when you feel like it. It sucks. Like some days, they just enforcing it more on different students.” The students at Harrison talked about the school being disorganized and inconsistent, making it difficult for students to know what to expect at school, “There's a

lot of problems with the rules and the suspensions and the way that they're kind of running the security and things like that." Other students agreed:

They'll tell you they doing one thing then the next minute they'll cancel it. Then they say it's rescheduled. Then when they reschedule for that day, they cancel it for that day and reschedule it again . . . They need to be more organized. I don't think the school is organized enough.

Like the way they enforce some of the rules. Like, they have a rule, this happened to me a couple of times, like they have a rule and like they don't enforce it. One day, like they'll let you slide by with it. Then one day, they'll just like enforce it completely. So you're like, "What happened? You didn't do this yesterday." So they're inconsistent.

Many of the students that I interviewed mentioned punitive policies and increased school suspensions as a barrier to student learning. They cited an increase in school suspensions since turnaround, keeping students out of school, "They're definitely suspending kids quite often, and ten days out, that's a lot of time to be out of class." The students gave examples of why students were put into in school suspension, all of which they felt were unfair, inconsistent, or too punitive, leading to students missing class time.

I don't like when they just suspend people for not having their shirt or going in in-school because they taking away our learning. That's how some people fail their classes because certain people don't have their shirt or ID, they get set to in-school. They get mad at us because our grades are going down. It's really not our fault. It's you all fault because you all sent us in in-school or either getting suspended because we don't have a shirt, the correct shirt on? They suspended and in-school more when they did the turnaround.

It be the worst because they enforcing it so bad to what – they enforcing the school IDs. And if you don't got your school ID on, you got to go to ISPD (in school suspension) and I don't like that. Like I be thinking like we in here missing out on our education over a school ID, a shirt. Like, okay, I understand that uniforms are professional. But at the same time though education is more important no matter how you dress. Right. As long as you in here getting your grades, coming to school, that's all that should really matter.

Not all of the students felt this way about the new stricter rules. Some of the students see the new rules as necessary, and attribute the stricter rules to improving the school, “So the strict rules are good . . . they have very high expectations for students. They want you here on time. They want you to follow every rule.”

The evidence on Harrison’s school climate is mixed. While students generally saw their school as calmer and safer, they also described the school climate as inhospitable for students. Students attributed punitive discipline policies that were inconsistently enforced as a main issue at their school, despite a calmer more secure environment.

Student supports.

I say that they do . . . They really give, for me, they really give me a lot of moral support.

Students at Harrison talked about the improved support systems at the school, particularly in relation to getting ready for college. “You know, they ask me every day what college am I going to, what am I doing to do make sure I’m in college.” Considering all the students in this study were seniors at the time of the study, it wasn’t surprising that they were focused on college and the supports that they needed to succeed after high school graduation. Other students also mentioned increased support from staff members:

Yeah, the teachers on us more. We got Ms. J and Ms. P helping us with like FAFSA, scholarships and all that. And then we got teachers that’s helping us fill out college applications and stuff. So I think they pushing us to go to college, helping us and stuff. Making sure we get accepted to a college that we want to go to. And taking us on college trips and stuff too. So I think that’s kind of fun.

Other students suggested that these student supports weren’t limited to helping students with college applications. “They support us. There’s a support system. Like they

really try to give people pointers and try to give them advice to better themselves as students. So, you know, that's good." Quite a few of the students commented on how much the counselors have supported them more since the turnaround:

Well, my counselor, Ms. W. I love her. She really helps me with like if I'm failing something she'll let me know and try to give me some extracurriculars to help me pass, or she'll tell me that I'm missing something for graduation. Or, you know, she'll just talk to me and see what's going on, just like she a real good support system.

It's boring. But it has a great support system. If you are struggling with, you know, being yourself or actually trying to get good grades, but it's just not working, this is a great support system. I think I have a good support system...it's nice to be around teachers and people that actually care, especially if you have people in your house or people that you hang around that really don't care about you. It's nice to have people that's actually trying to be there for you. And it feels good. It really do. Just to actually have a support system. So, you know, they really do. I mean, Harrison is nice. Harrison is a nice school, I guess. It's all right. It's all right.

Harrison students listed everyone from the principal to the security guards as being sources of support:

We get a lot of support from like the teachers and the principal and security guards and other staff.

They can sit there with you, like if you really need your help, they going to help you learn. Or if you still thinking you should play around, they going to ask you if you want tutoring after school.

While most of the students said that they have additional school supports, from the security guards to the principal, two students felt that there wasn't anyone in the building that they could turn to.

I don't have a personal relationship with nobody. Not a student like supposed to have someone to talk to, or they just go to for advice or something. I don't have none of that, not even with my counselor.

Like counselors supposed to at least, if they see that you're falling off your square, pull you to the side and let you know, "Look, whatever you doing, turn it around." You know what I'm saying? The counselors don't do that.

It is evident from students' quotations that the added social supports at Harrison had a positive impact on students. At the same time, a few Harrison students felt unsupported. In general, it seems that the entire staff, from the security guards to the principal supported the majority of students, especially when it came to college preparation.

Teachers.

Well, the teachers I know now, they good teachers. I wouldn't say the teachers that I had freshmen year was bad, but I could say the ones we have now are just a little bit better.

Replacing the staff in a school with more capable and committed teachers is a fundamental component of the turnaround policy. The students at Harrison High School were not convinced that the wholesale replacement of their teachers was the right answer. From the Harrison students' perspective, bringing in a brand new staff is not necessarily the remedy. The students at Harrison felt a sense of loss over their former teachers, questioning whether or not they needed to be replaced, and wished that some of them could have returned. When asked about the staff being replaced, one student described how she felt:

I didn't like it because I missed like all my old teachers. I just got started getting used to my teachers that I had, and we got new people coming in. So I know that was hard. And it was hard for me too cause I liked some of them teachers.

Some students wanted to keep some of their former teachers, realizing that some of the teachers might have needed to be replaced, but not all of them. When questioned about their thoughts on the staff being replaced, one senior was happy that the former

teachers were replaced. He student simply stated, “for the better, yeah. For the better of the school. They needed to be replaced.”

The rest of the Harrison seniors were consistent in their belief that some, but not all, of the teachers should have been replaced:

But I think some of the old teachers should’ve stayed, the ones that was, you know, doing they job.
I wished I’d had some of my old teachers though . . . They didn’t really need to be replaced by these new teachers.
I feel like the ones that wasn’t really doing their jobs should’ve been replaced.

Some teachers that we developed a relationship with, we could talk to them . . . I mean, we could’ve kept some of the old teachers and replaced some of the old teachers with new teachers.

By the same token, several insightful students questioned the logic of replacing the former staff when their counterparts were comparable in terms of quality. These students explained why the staff replacement didn’t make sense to them.

I was disappointed to lose the teachers that I liked, the good teachers. But, it was great to get rid of the bad teachers, the ones that didn’t teach. Now, we have a mix of good and bad, just like before.

I was kind of disappointed because I liked my teachers, especially Ms. B and Ms. L. There was a lot of teachers that I liked. But at the same time, it doesn’t matter because I still like all my teachers. So I really liked some of my old teachers and now I really like some of my new ones too. So what’s the point of replacing all of them if you are going to end up with the same mix of good and bad? Really, what’s the point? I don’t get it.

Adding to the discussion of whether or not to replace the staff at Harrison, several students suggested that students should be asked their perception of their teachers to inform rehiring or replacing strategies. One student suggested, “Ya know, I could tell them who needed to be replaced, who was good, who was really teaching. They should ask students, really cause we know better than they do.”

When questioned further about the new staff, the senior students admitted that they thought their new teachers did a good job, even if the students were unsure in the beginning. “At first, [chuckles] they seemed like they was scared out their mind. They were like real scared of us, but they got used to us.” Once the students got over the shock of losing their teachers, they appreciated the new teachers and admitted that they were supportive and helpful. “So I wasn’t really happy to have my teachers replaced. Not really. But now, now I’m used to the new teachers, and they are pretty good, they help up a lot and I do like them.” Other students agreed, they explained why they thought the new teachers were doing a good job, “They good because they make sure that we have work every day, make sure we have homework, making sure we get our work done, so they good teachers.” According to the students, while they didn’t want their former teachers to be replaced, the new teachers were encouraging and helpful, as described by several students:

The teachers on us more. We got Ms. J and Ms. P helping us with like FAFSA, scholarships and all that. And then we got teachers that’s helping us fill out college applications and stuff. So I think they pushing us to go to college, helping us and stuff. Making sure we get accepted to a college that we want to go to. And taking us on college trips and stuff too. So I think that’s kind of fun.

I’d say like, for me, it’s kind of good because the majority of teachers that I have now actually take that time, not that the other teachers didn’t take time to sit down with us, but the majority of them like took time to explain step-by-step on how things go in class, and like stuff that we didn’t understand. And like, “All right. I’m staying as long as I need to with you just to get you to understand this.” I mean, so like it’s really a good thing that we do have new teachers, who are actually going to sit down and take the time to go with you step-by-step just to make sure that we understand what’s going on.

And like certain teachers in here you can go talk to . . . And that’s what I love about majority of the new teachers, that they are there for your moral support with our school problems, family problems and like just outside problems period. They

give you like the best advice that they can and actually good advice and the best moral support they know how.

The students at Harrison were critical of the replacement of the teachers at their school. They articulated their concerns about replacing teachers with teachers who were new, but not necessarily better. They acknowledged that the new teachers were doing a good job, and were happy to get support and encouragement from them. At the same time, many of them believed that their former teachers could have done the same. “I like the new teachers, sure, but that doesn’t mean I think they are better than the other ones we had before. I liked those teachers too. I don’t really see a difference in the two.”

Classroom environment.

For me, it’s like an equal. Our classes haven’t really changed at all . . . I’m just saying like since it’s a turnaround it’s more under control, that’s all.

The students at Harrison were divided in their thinking about whether or not classes had changed much since turnaround. Some students depicted their classes as places where things had improved and learning was taking place. One student compared classes before the turnaround to how they were after, “I really wasn’t learning nothing before because, especially how they teaching. The materials they teaching, I’m like, I didn’t understand it. Now, the teachers explain things better and the materials are better too.” Other students had comparable descriptions:

Now we actually have to do work. Because freshmen, it was like we was doing work but we wasn’t getting an education we were supposed to. So when the new teachers came, we had to learn. Like actually sit down and learn and behave and all that. So we had to get used to it.

But now it’s like people actually come to school on time, trying to get stuff done. They can sit there with you, like if you really need your help, they going to help you learn. Or if you still thinking you should get help, they going to ask you if you want tutoring after school.

Some students felt like the new teachers supported them and offered extra help if students needed it, making the classroom a better place to learn. Still, even though many of the students said they felt supported by their teachers, the students felt that their classes hadn't really changed much since the turnaround. "Our teachers now take the time to sit down and explain step-by-step. They go around and help everybody else. And you have a better understanding of whatever it is you're working on, but the work is the same." Other students agreed:

Yeah, I would say the teachers are more better because they really is honest now. They really strict now and they worry about grades and stuff like that. But still, I would say like you not going to learn a lot here at this school.

Other students offered their straightforward appraisals of classes at Harrison, expressing that classes weren't challenging despite all of the other changes that came with turnaround.

It was like, that's why, yeah, it's not really that challenging, even before the turnaround and after the turnaround. Like I thought the turnaround would like help us more, give us books, give us stuff like that, challenge us, motivate us. They're not even motivating us. This is our senior year, we supposed to be motivated and ready to succeed and go to college.

Quite a few students complained about the materials that were used in their classrooms, noting a lack of textbooks and challenging materials. One student pointed out, "I don't come home with no books . . . I mean, they give us worksheets. We don't have books. The only book we had was driver's ed." Another student had the same opinion:

And like they not even teaching us that. They just give us worksheets. And we don't even have books. We don't even have books here. All it is is worksheets, worksheets, worksheets, worksheets, projector, projector, worksheets. Like where is the hardcover books? Where is the books that we supposed to see the example before we do the problem? It's not working at all.

Students argued that without a rigorous curriculum and the necessary materials their classes failed to motivate them.

Leadership.

She's definitely a step up from our other principal. He wasn't doing nothing. But, it's not like she's the best principal either. She is good, but not great, maybe that's the best way to say it.

The majority of the students at Harrison students see their new principal, Ms. Z, as an improvement over their former principal. From the perspective of these students, the replacement of the former principal was warranted. When I asked one student what he remembered about the former principal, he replied, "To be honest, when I was in freshmen year, I don't think I even met my first principal. Like I don't think I never seen my principal. So that's kind of bad." The students could hardly remember their former principal, often stating that they didn't know his name or really remember ever seeing him. As one student saw it, "he could have been more strict about the students not being in class and just roaming the hallways, and just basically doing what they want to do." Comparing the two principals, one student recalled, "I probably seen him once in the hallway the whole year and then that's it. But Ms. Z, we see her everyday walking up through the hallway and she also teaches a class." Supporting this view, another student explained why she thinks Ms. Z is an improvement over the former principal:

I think so because I don't think he was doing his job to be honest. Like I never seen him out of his office or whoever the principal was. We would just come to

school just to kick it and just have fun. So I think we should've had a new principal. That's why I think the turnaround was a good thing. It really changed our school. If we didn't have Ms. Z, I think this school would've probably been closed down or it would've been a wreck.

While the students see Ms. Z as an improvement, she received mixed reviews from the students. On the one hand, students recognized that Ms. Z was doing a good job. "We got a better principal. She knows what she's doing." Yet, on the other hand, students criticized her for what they saw as not being organized. "But as far as like the principal and, you know, she's not organized with activities and assemblies and stuff like that. She's not really organized." Other students criticized her negative attitude. "But Ms. Z, I mean, like she be on us. But it's like sometimes I don't like her attitude. I'm sorry to say. I just do not like her attitude." Another girl agreed:

Like sometimes she do be nice. Sometimes she just have this attitude. Other than that, she be on her job, as far as like making sure fights don't start up and giving consequences and stuff like that. But she just got an attitude problem to me. That's just my opinion though.

Despite some criticism, the students at Harrison praised Ms. Z for some of her efforts as principal. For starters, Ms. Z. stepped in to teach a math class last year, which the students found impressive:

Yeah, I heard she was even teaching. I think last year, toward the end of the school year, I think one of the teachers -- I don't know what happened, but she filled in for one of the teachers. So she was the teacher and the principal.

She teaches a math class. So I think that's interesting. You don't hear that about most principals teaching a class. At all.

Students recognized that Ms. Z. had high expectations for them and was strict about enforcing those expectations. The majority of Harrison students appreciated both the high

expectations and her strictness. The following responses were echoed across the students at Harrison:

She is extremely strict about everything: about ID, about uniform, about our attendance, of getting to class on time. Like with the hall sweep thing, she is very strict about us getting to class.

Some people don't like her but I don't have nothing against Ms. Z. I think the ones that don't it's the ones she's disciplining or that she suspends. But to me she suspend for a reason so . . . I like Ms. Z a lot.

She's very active. She's trying to get all of the seniors to graduate. So she started our attendance over so I think everybody has 100%. And she's done that twice. She hasn't done that for no senior class since she been here. So she really giving us more opportunities than she gave any other senior class.

Really high expectations. I think she want all of the seniors to graduate I know that.

My interviews at Harrison took place in the months and even days leading up to senior prom, and every student that I interviewed discussed the attendance challenge that gave many students a second chance to go to prom. At the beginning of the school year, the administration had set an 80% attendance expectation for senior students who wanted to attend senior activities, including prom. Any students whose attendance fell below 80% would not be able to participate in prom and senior luncheon. Unfortunately, in April, it became apparent that too many students would be missing out on senior activities, including prom. Ms. Z. stepped in and created a new attendance challenge, challenging students to come to school every day in May. Students who met this challenge were allowed to go to prom, regardless of their attendance record from the rest of the school year. The students at Harrison said she 'bent over backwards' to help the senior students meet attendance goals so they could all attend prom and all agreed that it was remarkable that she did it. One student explained:

She really do have high expectations. And I say that because before – well, now we're doing this thing called the 30-day challenge for the seniors. You have to come to school for the whole month of May, leading up to each senior activity. And I say that she really did bend over backwards for that with us because a lot of seniors wouldn't have made it to prom, a lot of seniors wouldn't be going to prom. And then for her to bend over backwards is a good thing.

The students at Harrison vacillated in their opinions about Ms. Z., and some of them reluctantly agreed that she was doing a good job, despite some criticisms of her. In the end, it seems that the Ms. Z was doing a good job, but missing out on some things that the senior students deemed important. One student described her this way:

I mean, as a person, she's good. I like Ms. Z. She's nice...I like her. But as a principal. [Groans and then laughs]As a principal, you know, she keeps the school as far as safety, as far as school stuff, you know, as far as grades and stuff, she try to stay on top of it. But when it comes down to activities and stuff, she really is not organized.

The Harrison students gave Ms. Z mixed reviews but ultimately many of them acknowledged that she was an improvement over the former principal. Further, despite some of the students critiquing her personality or disorganization, many of them recognized that she had high expectations for students and was active in the school.

Organizational Component #3: Physical Setting

This section describes the last organizational component: The physical setting, which includes the interior and architectural design of an organization, as well as factors such as space configuration and ambiance (Porrás & Robertson, 1992). This component intersects with the theme found in the student interview and focus group data: the school building. Students' thoughts about their school building are discussed below.

The Physical Building.

The school looks better now and I think it makes a difference about how you feel about the school. It just looks like a better school.

According to the students at Harrison, the physical improvements in their school building have made a difference in how the school looked and how they felt about their school. As one student put it, “They did a lot. I think they removed everybody’s desks. Like all the desks are the same, painted some of the rooms. They fixed this room up, fixed the lunchroom up some more.” In another observation, a student noted, “They changed the school for better. It makes me feel better about going here.” Recall from earlier, that many of the Harrison students felt that people had a negative view of their school. One student articulately explained how he thinks the changes in the building could counter some of that negativity:

So, you might think our school is bad, based on what you heard, like we are a turnaround school, and the [student’s name] case. Everyone sees our school as bad, just really negative based on these things. But, if you didn’t know about that, about those things, and just saw our school, you might not think it is a bad school. I mean our school looks pretty good really. New desks, a nice football field, it’s clean and looks good I think. I think our lockers are new too. If you didn’t know, you might think that the school isn’t so bad because they fixed it up a bit with the turnaround. I think that makes a difference, if you forget about the negative.

Not only did the physical improvements make the school look better, but they made the students have a more positive view of their school as well. One student pointed out, “They never put any money into our school before, now we look better. Our school looks better. I like it. It took the turnaround for it to happen, but it happened.” From the perspective of these students, the physical improvements are a sign that their school isn’t as bad as some people think.

Student Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behavior

The themes discussed above described how students perceived the changes in the school environment after the turnaround policy was implemented. Ultimately, these changes aim to influence students’ attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. The changes in

students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are perhaps the most important factor in determining the success of turnaround. For this reason, the discussion now turns to the students' perspectives on how school turnaround impacted their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

Student attitudes, beliefs, & behavior.

I would say some students' attitudes have changed, yeah, some haven't. Some wish we could go back to freshmen year but some wish they could just stay like it is now... But I think it's better now; more discipline, more structure.

Much like their thoughts about school turnaround, the students at Harrison were split about whether or not their own behavior, attitudes, or beliefs about school had changed since turnaround. Some students insisted that they hadn't changed much since turnaround happened at Harrison, "No, I think I'm still the same. I mean, I still focus on school and manage to make my grades, try to stay on honor roll. So, yeah, I don't think I've changed." Other students agreed, "But like since the turnaround, I'll say like it's probably been the same." Some students noted that while they had changed, they didn't see the same changes in her peers:

I think I've gotten a lot better since the turnaround because freshmen year, when I realized that we really didn't have any rules, it was like, "Okay. I'm a freshman." I'm going to be off the chain with everybody. And like now, with the turnaround school, and the rules are more strict, it's like, now you got to bring it down some, just bring it down. But I don't know that everyone has gotten better.

I do think that some students have changed for the better, but not everyone. They trying though, the way they enforce the rules, sometimes it seems like you don't have a choice but to go to class and learn, even if you don't want to, so yeah, I do that now. Cause what else am I going to do? But the turnaround hasn't worked for everyone like that. Some students just aren't going to change the way they act. Because everybody going to be themselves. Everybody going to do what they want to do. I mean, kids going to get in trouble. It's a part of a teenage life. So

like everybody going to get in trouble. It's just that the kids that was doing the most trouble, you know, they transitioned them out of here.

Many students voiced that turnaround had brought about changes in students' behavior, including their own. "Yeah, because like everybody changed. So like I see they changed. Some changed for the better. Some changed for the worse. Like I changed too."

Other students agreed:

Well, my behavior like, okay, freshmen year, like I had a couple of words with some teachers and students. Now, your attitude and behavior is going to change anyway with all the changes in the school really, how could it not change?

I think I've gotten a lot better since the turnaround because freshmen year, when I realized that we really didn't have any rules, it was like, "Okay. I'm a freshman." I'm going to be off the chain with everybody. And like now, with the turnaround school, and the rules are more strict, it's like, now you got to bring it down some, just bring it down.

And like I'm getting better at a lot of stuff I should do. I used to have a disgusting attitude. And like now since turnaround... a lot of teachers take the time to talk to me, and I get to explain to them a lot of stuff that's going on with me, so that helps. It's made me change.

I think I was more hardworking sophomore year, like from sophomore year to senior year because I had the things, I had more supports, yeah, I am more hardworking now than before the turnaround.

Well, I think a lot of kids improved due to the turnaround because like Harrison wasn't really enforcing the learning laws on the students. So everybody was just doing whatever they want, not learning in class, none of that. That's why like it's a lot of kids that's failing now and was failing last year that have to do night school due to before the turnaround freshmen year and sophomore year because it was a lot of joking around. There wasn't a lot of learning things being enforced to students like it is now. And, yeah, so the turnaround did help kind of educational-wise because before than I don't know what it was.

While these students think that some students changed, they also questioned whether turnaround could force students to change their attitude or beliefs about school, acknowledging that it is difficult to change people's behavior. One student pointed out, "They can bring in new teachers and have stricter rules, but unless we want to change the

way we act, things aren't going to change at a school like Harrison. Students need to change, but that's not easy." Another student shared similar thoughts:

No, it's the students. The teachers are doing they're job. It's the students. I don't know. I guess it's just because that's how they grew up. I mean, you can't change that. That's in their personality, that's just in them. But I don't know. That's hard. I think it's really difficult to change people's behavior.

The Harrison students were split about whether or not turnaround had a positive impact on their behavior, beliefs, or attitudes about school. Even those students who agreed that their own behavior had changed were skeptical about the possibility of turnaround being able to change all students' behavior.

Factors Promoting and Inhibiting Positive Change

Building on the qualitative findings above that described how students in each school experienced school turnaround, this section now turns to the discussion of students' perceptions of factors that promoted and inhibited positive change within each school. This section focuses on answering the research questions: How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school? The students in this study noted some positive changes within their schools since turnaround. At the same time, they were quick to point out the factors in their school that had impeded positive change. These students experienced turnaround firsthand and have a unique perspective on the changes in these schools. They can see how far their schools have come, and how far they need to go. Students were articulate in expressing the positive changes in their schools and describing how these changes have made a difference in their lives as students. By the same token, they shared how they thought their schools could improve.

Turnaround Transition

Categorically, the way that turnaround was announced was problematic for the students at both Morgan and Harrison High Schools. The announcement of the turnaround, in the middle of the school year created confusion and chaos at both Morgan and Harrison High Schools. While staff and students spent the rest of the year dealing with the consequences of the turnaround announcement, classrooms were lacking in terms of both teaching and learning. The turnaround was announced with nearly five months left of school, leaving the school community to make sense of what was happening at their school while struggling to continue with everyday interactions. Some teachers quit teaching, some students quit coming to school, and months of instructional time were lost.

Likewise, when school started the following fall, students struggled with adjusting to the changes in their schools. Students were faced with meeting new teachers, a new principal, and adjusting to new rules, procedures, and expectations. Without the familiar social support of their former teachers, many students struggled with the turnaround transition. At Harrison, the transition was worsened by the tragic loss of a Harrison student. At both schools, it took some time for the students to adjust to the new school environment.

Wholesale Replacement of Staff

The students at both Morgan and Harrison thought the indiscriminate replacement of their former teachers was unwarranted. The students at both schools did not agree with the wholesale replacement of the staff, arguing that many good teachers were lost in the turnaround transition. Students expressed nearly identical experiences at the two schools,

where students were upset about losing their social supports and good teachers. The students recognized that some of their teachers should have been replaced, but argued that it was unfair that nearly every teacher was replaced. The students were consistent in their responses about it not being fair or effective to replace the majority of the staff. This is particularly true at Harrison, where the students argued that the new staff wasn't necessarily any better than their predecessors, so the students had a hard time justifying replacing all the teachers. They suggested a more balanced approach to re-staffing, such as determining whom the 'good' teachers were and allowing those teachers to return to the school. The blow of staff replacement was lessened at Morgan, where after the initial shock of losing their teachers, Morgan students acknowledged that the new staff was an improvement over their former teachers. While students at Morgan and Harrison have varying perspectives of their new teachers, students at both schools felt that indiscriminate staff replacement was not the answer to improving their schools.

Security and Safety: Discipline Policies and Procedures

The students at Morgan and Harrison agreed that increased safety was an important factor in improving their schools since turnaround. The increase in both the quantity and quality of security guards at both schools improved students' sense of security and safety within these schools. Security guards were depicted as caring and concerned, yet held the students to high expectations. Further, police presence in and around the schools was also seen as a factor that contributed to students' overall safety.

From the students' perspective, new discipline policies and procedures at both schools played an important role in shaping school climate. High expectations for students, new discipline policies, and stricter rule enforcement contributed to more stable

and organized school environments. However, students experienced the enforcement of new discipline policies at Morgan and Harrison differently. While students at both schools attributed the new stricter policies to a calmer school environment, the students' experiences varied across the schools.

At Morgan, the students primarily saw the new security and discipline policies as positive. However, some students noted some policies were counterproductive, keeping students unnecessarily out of the classroom. These students were concerned about consequences for minor infractions, such as being out of uniform, which resulted in time out of class, being detrimental to students' learning and grades. The students understood the necessity of the rules, but questioned the logic of making students miss class time for wearing the wrong shirt.

At Harrison, students argued the new policies were too punitive and inconsistently enforced. From the perspective of Harrison students, rules and policies were often inconsistently enforced, which the students saw as unjust. Students also perceived some of the new rules as unreasonable, creating an antagonistic environment for students. Like at Morgan, the students at Harrison complained that in-school suspension was often a consequence for minor infractions, keeping students out of class. While the students at Harrison recognized the need for stricter rule enforcement and high expectations, from their perspective, the rules were inconsistently enforced and overly punitive.

Student Pushouts

Despite the fact that the turnaround policy does not theoretically involve removing students from schools, the students at both Morgan and Harrison argued that when turnaround was implemented, some students were pushed out of their schools. The

students consistently agreed that having the ‘bad’ students removed from their schools had a positive influence in improving school culture. To be sure, from the perspective of the students in this study, pushing out the ‘bad’ students promoted positive change in their schools. Only a handful of students took the time to reflect on the fairness of pushing out students. Nevertheless, even those students who expressed concern about the fairness of the practice recognized the benefits of having some of the least desirable students pushed out. While the issue of student pushouts is generally framed as a civil rights issue, focusing on the unjust nature of forcing students to leave school, students in this study saw the positive side of the practice. For them, fewer disruptive students meant an improved school climate and fewer disturbances in their classes.

School Climate

The qualitative data revealed that there was a sense of improved climate at each school since turnaround, but to varying degrees. In each case, the students mentioned increased security and safety as an important motivating factor in improving the climate in both schools. The students at both schools seemed to understand the value in added security, and felt safer within their schools. The climate at both schools was calmer, safer, and more controlled after turnaround.

The students at Morgan discussed an overall more positive environment since the turnaround. The students recognized that the climate of their school had improved and attributed this to several factors, including increased security, ‘bad’ students being pushed out, and stricter rules that are more strictly enforced. More security guards paired with high expectations played key roles in the improved climate at Morgan, as did the removal of what the students called ‘the bad kids’.

There is a clear sense that the school climate of Harrison has also improved, but to a lesser degree than at Morgan. Like at Morgan, the students suggested that added security, increased safety and pushing out ‘the bad students’ contributed to this improvement. The school seems to have moved from a place ‘students run the school’ to one where friendly security guards in the school and neighborhood take students’ safety and well being seriously. Still, there seems to be room for improvement in creating a positive environment for the students at Harrison, where some students feel overwhelmed by punitive discipline policies.

Student Supports

The students at Morgan and Harrison both agreed that additional school supports improved their school experience. Together, these students recounted the times spent with school counselors, teachers, principals, and even security guards that have given them encouragement in the years since turnaround. These added supports, especially in terms of counselors, have made a difference in how students were able to apply for college, complete their financial aid packets for college, and deal with everyday stresses. It is important to remember that all of the students in this study are seniors. Furthermore, data collection took place during the spring semester, just months before graduation. The students at both schools appreciated the increased supports at their schools, pointing to an increase in interactions with counselors, who supported students in a variety of ways, most notably, preparation for life after graduation. Some students also mentioned how encouraging it is for them to know that the people in the building care about them. Students at both schools depicted their teachers and counselors as caring and concerned.

Additionally, principals, coaches, and security guards were also mentioned as social supports for students at both schools.

Teachers & Classroom Environment

New staff members who were encouraging and caring seem to be fostering positive change in these schools, especially at Morgan. Unfortunately, the curriculum that they delivered fell short for many students. Students at both schools commented on the lack of rigor, lack of materials, and a disappointing curriculum, all of which was preventing a positive classroom environment.

The new teachers at Morgan, whom the students depicted as caring and engaging made the students feel valued and supported in school and in their classrooms. Students emphasized that their new teachers had established nurturing learning environments where they felt supported and valued. The students at Morgan described their new teachers as compassionate and supportive, giving students the support they needed to be successful in their classes. At the same time, students questioned the quality of instruction and rigor in their classrooms. They thought that the curriculum lacked rigor and was disconnected from their own lives. Other students bemoaned how much time was dedicated to preparing for standardized tests. Morgan teachers were supportive, caring, and engaging, but from the students' perspective, the curriculum they delivered often failed to meet the needs of their students.

While the Harrison students characterized their new teachers as caring and supportive, they also considered their new staff to be comparable to their predecessors. Students at Harrison questioned whether classroom instruction had changed at all, often referring to teachers as 'the same' as before turnaround. While some students noted an

improved classroom environment, others suggested the curriculum wasn't rigorous and failed to challenge or motivate students. Some students had further concerns about a lack of classroom materials and textbooks. All things considered, Harrison students saw their teachers, classroom environment and instruction as largely unchanged.

Leadership

In terms of leadership, the students at Morgan and Harrison agreed that their former principal needed to be replaced. To be sure, bringing in new leadership encouraged positive change at these two schools. At the same time, there was a difference in the influence that each principal had on these schools and students. Morgan students praised Ms. B for the work she did as principal. They were overflowing with compliments and recognized Ms. B's strong leadership skills. In contrast, the students at Harrison reluctantly gave Ms. Z. accolades and were quick to criticize her for being disorganized. They Harrison students did think she was an improvement over the previous principal, but still saw limitations in her leadership style. Still, the replacement of the former principal with Ms. Z seemed to be a factor that was moving Harrison in a positive direction.

Perhaps the most prominent factor that has promoted positive change at Morgan was strong leadership. Ms. B demonstrated a caring, yet authoritative, persona at Morgan. She was active in school activities and was engaged with students and their daily lives. She invested time in her students and interacted with them in the hallways and classrooms. Furthermore, she had high expectations for all her students and was strict in enforcing those expectations, while at the same time being fair and consistent.

While Ms. B's strong leadership contributed to positive change at Morgan, her departure only 1½ years after turnaround triggered a great deal of turmoil at the school. The instability in leadership at Morgan was problematic for the students. Morgan students had just experienced the school turnaround transition, when Ms. B left the school in the middle of the school year. The impact this had on the students cannot be overemphasized. The students were disappointed and hurt when she left. Considering how much her strong leadership had influenced the school and the students, it is not surprising that her leaving would cause considerable angst among the students. Even though the transition to Ms. G seemed to be a smooth one, the loss of Ms. B was difficult for the students.

School Building Improvements

When asked about the improvements in the school building, students consistently remarked that the improvements gave them a sense of pride in how their school buildings looked after turnaround. The physical changes in the building made the students feel like their school and the students were valued. The landscaping, new football field at Morgan, painted walls, and new desks made the students at both schools feel like they were cared about. They reasoned that if the district would spend the money to improve their school building and its surroundings, they must be serious about improving the school. This was particularly important to the students at Harrison, who felt their school had a reputation for being a 'bad' school.

Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behavior

The students at Morgan and Harrison had varying responses in terms of much their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior had changed since turnaround. The answers given by

Morgan students were overall more positive than those given by the Harrison students. The improved school climate, caring staff, and added supports seem to have made a difference for Morgan students, as many of them discussed changing their beliefs and attitudes about school, and perhaps most importantly, their behavior in response to the turnaround policy. Turnaround at Morgan was successful in changing some students' beliefs and attitudes about school, and in some cases their behavior. Some students suggested that the positive school environment encouraged them rethink the value of school and rise to meet the new expectations. Other students reflected on the last two years at Morgan and supposed that with increased discipline policies, students didn't have a choice but to change their behavior.

At Harrison, there was more of a division among students in terms of students changing their behavior, attitude and beliefs. While some of the students agreed that the climate of the school and classrooms encouraged them to change their behavior, more students discussed the difficulty in changing students' behavior and beliefs. Moreover, Harrison students questioned the possibility that the turnaround policy could force students to change their attitudes and beliefs. While some students thought they had changed since turnaround, other students suggested teenagers are too set in their ways to change in such a short period of time.

Similarities & Differences Between the Schools

When comparing the schools in terms of how students experienced school turnaround, some interesting similarities are revealed, as seen in Table 20. There were striking similarities across schools in what the students perceived as promoting positive change. Among the commonalities were: additional school supports, student pushouts,

increased safety and security, stricter discipline policies, an improved school building, and a new principal. It is important to note that these factors promoted positive change at these two schools in varying degrees. For example, at both schools a new principal was an important factor, but Ms. B was more influential in promoting positive change at Morgan than Ms. Z at Harrison. Likewise, students recognized the necessity of stricter discipline policies, but the enforcement of them varied in the two schools.

There were also similarities with respect to students' perspectives on what inhibited positive change. These factors included the announcement of turnaround and the turnaround transition, the wholesale replacement of the staff, lack of rigorous classroom instruction, and policies that the students perceived as punitive or counterproductive. Like the factors above, the students had varying opinions on some of these factors, but ultimately students acknowledged that these factors inhibited positive change in their schools. The most consistent among these factors across schools was the difficult turnaround transition and wholesale staff replacement. The students at both schools characterized the transition as a time of chaos and questioned the necessity and efficacy of wholesale staff replacement.

In addition to the similarities noted here, the qualitative data reveal interesting differences between the two schools, as seen in Table 20. It became apparent during data collection that the students at Harrison and Morgan High Schools had experienced turnaround differently, especially in relation to several key themes including: consistency in discipline policies, change in student behavior and attitudes, leadership and teachers. To be sure, Ms. B's leadership style had a more positive impact at Morgan than Ms. Z had at Harrison. Conversely, the uncertainty that came with her departure had a negative

impact at Morgan. The implementation and enforcement of discipline policies was another important difference in how students characterized the climate of their schools. All things considered, Morgan students seemed to change their attitudes, beliefs, and even their behavior in response to turnaround more than the students at Harrison. Whereas Harrison students questioned the possibility of changing students' attitudes, students at Morgan credited higher expectations and stricter rule enforcement as reasons they changed following turnaround at their schools. While students experienced the implementation of the same policy in two very similar schools, it is obvious that contextual factors within the school affected students' experiences. change

Table 20. Students' Perspectives of Turnaround Changes at Morgan and Harrison

	Morgan High School	Harrison High School
Promoting Positive Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership • Improved school climate • Increased security & safety • Student pushouts • Stricter rules that are consistently enforced • Increased student supports • Caring and engaging teachers • Change in student behavior and beliefs • Improvements to school building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school climate • Increased security & safety • Student pushouts • Increased student supports • Improvements to school building
Inhibiting Positive Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnaround announcement & transition • Wholesale replacement of staff • Policies that result in students missing instruction • Leadership instability • Curriculum not rigorous or relevant to students' lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnaround announcement & transition • Wholesale replacement of staff • Inconsistent policies that students deem punitive • Lack of student buy in • Lack of curricular materials

The Intersection of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

This section integrates the quantitative and qualitative data for a more complete picture of students' experiences in turnaround schools and their perspective of the factors that promoted or inhibited positive change in their schools. In the first phase of this study, quantitative data were analyzed to give insight into students' experiences at turnaround schools. In the next phase of this study, the qualitative data offered an in-depth look into students' experiences and perceptions of school turnaround. The mixing of these two data sets allowed for the findings from the qualitative phase to further explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) have argued that collecting data by using both qualitative and quantitative methods enhances the quality of the data interpretation. The combination of the two data sets builds a better understanding of students' experiences and factors that promoted or inhibited positive change in these schools, speaking specifically to both research questions:

- How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced the planned organizational change within their school?
- How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school?

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) define merging data as “a mixing strategy in which quantitative results and qualitative results are brought together through a combined analysis” (p. 413). Using analytic techniques, the quantitative and qualitative results in this study were merged in several ways. First, qualitative data were transformed into quantitative data. Next, tables were utilized to facilitate the comparison and interpretation

of both data sets. Finally, further analysis attempted to reconcile divergent findings in the two data sets.

While both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed differences in the students' perceptions of their school and turnaround, the occurrence of themes in the qualitative data were consistent across both schools. Although it may be true that the students at these two schools experienced turnaround differently, the same themes emerged in the qualitative data at both schools. For this reason, this section integrates the two data sets with a focus on the students from both schools as one group. When asked about their experiences, students at Morgan and Harrison often had the same concerns and suggestions and talked about the same issues. Responses about the difficult turnaround transition, the importance of quality teachers and improved school climate were echoed across schools.

Transformation of Qualitative Data into Quantitative Data

In mixed methods research, one approach to the merging of data can be transforming qualitative themes into quantitative numbers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Sandelowski, Voils, & Knafl, 2009). In an effort to integrate the qualitative and quantitative data sets in this study, theme occurrence in the qualitative data was calculated and the qualitative themes were transformed into quantitative data. Through this calculation, the most prevalent themes across the schools were: School Climate, Teachers, Student Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors, Leadership, and Turnaround Transition. These themes were prevalent in the qualitative data, as seen in Table 21, which indicates the occurrence of themes and the number of students who mentioned

those same themes. This quantification of the qualitative themes allowed further interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 21. Occurrences of Themes in Student Quotes

Theme	Occurrence in Student Quotes	Number of students who mentioned theme (N = 30)
Teachers	147	30
School Climate	152	30
Student Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behaviors	102	30
Leadership	97	28
Turnaround Transition	94	21
Security & Safety	36	18
Classroom Environment	34	17
Student Push-outs	25	17
Student Supports	13	10
School Building Improvements	8	4

Note. The most prevalent themes are highlighted in table

The transformation of the qualitative data indicated that teachers, school climate, students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, leadership, and turnaround transition were the most prevalent themes in the qualitative data. It was evident in the qualitative data that these themes were important factors in students' experiences at the two turnaround high schools, as the students highlighted social factors in interviews and focus groups. However, the transformation of the qualitative data into quantitative data gives a clearer

picture of the importance of those themes. Indeed, all 30 interviewees expressed their opinions about teachers, school climate, and students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

The Intersection of Survey Responses & Student Quotations

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest that an additional way to integrate quantitative and qualitative data sets in a mixed methods study is for researchers to “further analyze the quantitative and qualitative results by relating them to each other in a matrix that facilitates comparisons and interpretations” (p. 67). Data analysis included two separate matrixes in an effort to best integrate and interpret the quantitative and qualitative data sets. The first matrix (Table 22) examines the intersection of student responses in the first section of the survey and student quotations about the same themes. Next, a matrix (Table 23) was created to facilitate the comparison and interpretation of how students responded to the specific survey question, with corresponding student quotes to better explain the quantitative data.

The first matrix (Table 22) was created in an effort to examine the predominant themes that were measured in the quantitative data and also emerged in the qualitative data. As previously mentioned, through the calculation of theme occurrence, the following themes emerged as the most prevalent in the qualitative data: teachers, school climate, students' attitudes, beliefs, & behaviors, leadership, and the turnaround transition. Turnaround transition is not included in the matrix because it was not measured in the quantitative phase of the study. Table 22 illustrates the intersection of the other four prevalent themes.

Table 22. Intersection of Most Prevalent Themes in Quantitative and Qualitative Data

	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Teachers	<p>75.6% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The teachers and staff at our school are supportive and helpful.”</p> <p>66.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Classroom instruction is clear and well structured.”</p>	<p>The teachers have a way to make everyone involved in their class, want to learn, so that’s cool.</p> <p>Don’t fire all the teachers. The good teachers should stay . . . just fire the bad ones.</p>
School Climate	<p>16.6% of students either disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement “Our school environment is welcoming”</p> <p>59.9% of students either agreed or completely agreed with the statement “The school rules create a positive school environment.”</p>	<p>The school has an overall positive energy, like it makes you want to be a part of it. So, yeah, I wanted to be a part of it now that it feels safe and organized.</p>
Student Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behavior	<p>33.2% of students reported being more motivated to come to school after turnaround.</p> <p>26.7% reported being more motivated to participate in their classes after turnaround.</p> <p>35.3% reported being more determined to do their best in school after turnaround.</p>	<p>Students’ attitudes aren’t going to change overnight just because of a turnaround.</p> <p>I think a lot of us changed because of the turnaround. I mean, you can’t really play here anymore. You need to be a more serious student, and if not, you might get put out too.</p>
Leadership	<p>76.1% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The principal has high expectations for students.”</p> <p>50.6 % of Morgan students and 32.4% of Harrison students indicated that their principal was more supportive and encouraging after turnaround.</p>	<p>She was more, she cared. The principal we had he was ok but you didn’t see him as much. You saw her at every activity and she was there. Because she cared.</p>

As exhibited in Table 22, there is congruence between the two data sets. For example, when considering teachers, a majority of the students (75.6%) reported that their teachers were supportive and helpful. At the same time, a lesser amount of students (66.8%) reported that classroom instruction was clear and well structured. This parallels the qualitative evidence, where students generally portrayed their teachers as caring and encouraging, but some students suggested that classroom instruction lacked rigor and didn't connect with the students' lives. The student quotation in the matrix offers a better understanding of how students' perceived teachers, "The teachers have a way to make everyone involved in their class, want to learn, so that's cool."

The theme school climate offers an additional example of how quantitative and qualitative data converge in the matrix. The quantitative evidence on how students perceived their school environment indicated that they had an overall positive view of their schools. For example, as shown in Table 22, 16.6% of students either disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement "Our school environment is welcoming". In contrast, 59.9% of students either agreed or completely agreed with the statement "The school rules create a positive school environment." The qualitative evidence supports these views, as students described their schools as calmer, safer, and more positive. The quotation in Table 22 offers an example of how students portrayed their schools after turnaround, "The school has an overall positive energy, like it makes you want to be a part of it. So, yeah, I wanted to be a part of it now that it feels safe and organized."

Another point of congruence among the data sets is in regards to students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. A look at the quantitative evidence shows that about a third of the students reported being more motivated to come to school (33.2%), and do

their best in school (35.3%) after turnaround. Examining these numbers in conjunction with the qualitative data further explains why students may have changed their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior after turnaround in relation to how they experienced turnaround in their schools. Like the quantitative data, the qualitative data indicates that the students in this study were divided in terms of turnaround being able to change students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. Some students suggested that they had changed in order to meet the new expectations in the school, as demonstrated in the student quotation, "I think a lot of us changed because of the turnaround. I mean, you can't really play here anymore. You need to be a more serious student, and if not, you might get put out too." Conversely, other students suggested that it would take more than turnaround to change students' attitudes, "Students' attitudes aren't going to change overnight just because of a turnaround." In regards to students' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, the interpretation of both data sets together reveals a better understanding of how students experienced school turnaround.

Merging the quantitative and qualitative data in regards to leadership offers a clear picture of how students perceived the importance of leadership in their schools. The quantitative evidence indicates that the students feel that their principals expect the best from them, as 76.1% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The principal has high expectations for students." These results are consistent with the qualitative data regarding leadership, as shown in Table 22. The qualitative evidence further implies the importance of leadership in these two turnaround high schools, as evident by the student quotation about Ms. B from Morgan High School, "She was more, she cared. The principal we had he was ok but you didn't see him as much. You saw her

at every activity and she was there. Because she cared.” It is clear from the merging of the quantitative and qualitative data that leadership was an important factor in promoting positive change at these two schools.

The second matrix (Table 23) provides another interesting connection of the two data sets, as it emphasizes the intersection of students’ responses to survey questions and the same students’ corresponding student quotations. Utilizing a matrix, students’ survey responses (the quantitative data) and students’ interview and focus group excerpts (the qualitative data) can be examined side by side. Examining students’ responses to survey, interview, and focus group questions side by side facilitates a better understanding of students’ experiences. Table 23 depicts this intersection in regards to how students ($N = 187$) responded to the survey item: “Our school is a good place to go to school” and students’ perceptions of the prevalent themes in the qualitative data.

Table 23 uses qualitative data to better understand and explain why students answered the survey question in the way they did. For example, only a small amount of students responded that their school was a better place to go to school before the turnaround (6.5%). These same students’ responses during interviews and focus groups better explain why, as they explain that they were skeptical about the changes and that the new rules were hard to follow. When describing the central themes, these students’ descriptions include terms like ‘skeptical’ and ‘difficult.’ In contrast, 50.2% of students responded that their school was the same in regards to being a good place to go to school, which is perhaps best summarized by one student who suggested that “some changed for the better, some changed for the worse.” The remaining 43.3% of students responded that their school was a good place to go to school more after the turnaround.

Their quotations suggest that the improved school culture, supportive staff, and strong leadership may have contributed to their perception that the school is better after turnaround. These same factors emerged in the qualitative data as having promoted positive change.

Table 23. Intersection of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

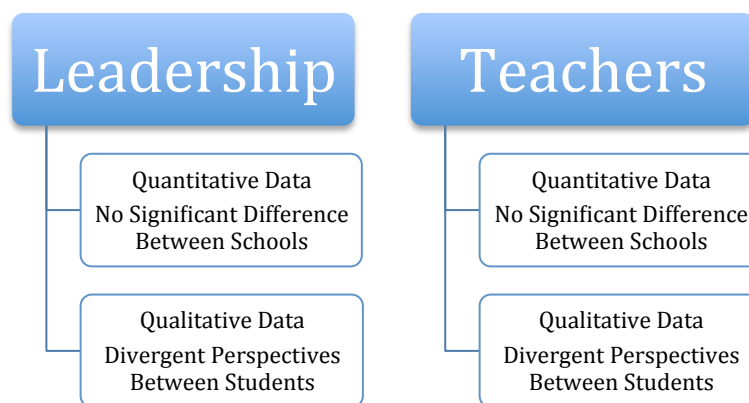
Student Survey Responses	Most Prevalent Themes in Qualitative Data				
“Our School is a good place to go to school”	Teachers	School Climate	Student Attitudes, Beliefs, & Behavior	Leadership	Turnaround Transition
6.5% of students More before turnaround	<i>But I think some of the old teachers should've stayed, the ones that was, you know, doing their job.</i>	<i>It's like kinda the same rules but it's like they are enforcing them more so, yeah. They really hard...you gotta follow the rules.</i>	<i>I think it's really difficult to change people's behavior.</i>	<i>I mean, like she be on us. But it's like sometimes I don't like her attitude.</i>	<i>We was all kind of like skeptical about the whole idea, like what was going to happen.</i>
50.2% of students The same after turnaround	<i>The old teachers and the new teachers, they teach to help us more. It think it's the same as the old teachers.</i>	<i>The rules are basically the same, but it's just that hey enforce them now.</i>	<i>I see how they changed. Some changed for the better, some changed for the worse.</i>	<i>She let that be known everyday, that she's in charge here.</i>	<i>It was chaos at first, but the classes, the students have changed.</i>
43.3% of students More after turnaround	<i>Yeah, I would say the teachers are more better because they really is honest now. They really strict now and they worry about grades...</i>	<i>The climate of the school is different, so it pushed you in the right direction now.</i>	<i>Now it's like, I attend class, pay attention, focus more, discipline more too. Way more. And like, I like going to class.</i>	<i>She knows what she's doing. We got a better principal.</i>	<i>When I first saw everything like changed, I'm like, yeah, it's going to be better right off the top.</i>

Reconciling Divergent Findings

When qualitative and quantitative data sets are integrated and results from the data sets are divergent, Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) suggest that the data be further analyzed to “reconcile the divergent findings” (p. 413). As illustrated above, there is

congruence between the two data sets in regards to many of the prevalent themes in this study. At the same time, when interpreting the qualitative and quantitative data together, there are some divergent findings that require attention and resolution. This section examines the divergent findings in the two data sets and attempts to reconcile those findings. Two important points of divergence between the quantitative and qualitative data are in regards to leadership and teachers, important themes in both data sets.

Figure 20. Divergent Findings in Quantitative and Qualitative Data



Quantitative evidence found no significant difference between Morgan and Harrison in regards to students' perception of leadership. On the other hand, the qualitative data paint a different picture. In fact, leadership was perhaps one of the biggest variations in terms of how students experienced school turnaround at the two schools. At Morgan, Ms. B promoted positive change and connected with students with her strong 'tough love' leadership style. Conversely, the students at Harrison were quick to criticize Ms. Z's leadership style and personality, often telling stories of her lack of organization. In an effort to reconcile these divergent findings, further consideration could be given to the importance the replacement of the former principal. While it may be true that Ms. B's leadership style had a more positive impact than Ms. Z's, the students at

both schools were consistent in their belief that the former principal needed to be replaced. While the Harrison students did not see Ms. Z as a strong leader, it was apparent that they did see her as an improvement over their former principal. With this in mind, students at Harrison and Morgan both viewed replacing the principal as an important factor that promoted positive change at their schools, but perhaps to different degrees.

Examining the divergent findings with respect to teachers reveals that while quantitative data found no significant difference between students' perceptions of teachers at the two schools, the qualitative data suggest otherwise. Like leadership, the Morgan students painted a more positive picture of their teachers, as they described them as active and eager to help. Conversely, Harrison students had more concerns about whether their new teachers were better than the former staff. While the students at Morgan and Harrison had varying views of their teachers, students were consistent in questioning whether the wholesale replacement of teachers was practical or worthwhile. Along these lines, while students had varying opinions of their new teachers, the students shared the same opinion that replacing all the teachers was likely unnecessary. When considering the divergent findings in regards to teachers, while there are differences between the schools, there are also similarities.

This section used data analysis strategies to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data sets, building on the strengths and weaknesses of each type of data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The mixing of the quantitative and qualitative data through the quantification of the qualitative themes, the creation of matrixes, and the

reconciliation of divergent findings enhanced data interpretation and allowed for further insight into students' perceptions of school turnaround.

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This dissertation explored how students at two turnaround high schools experienced planned organizational change in their schools. It focused on student experiences and highlighted what factors students perceived [to be](#) promoting or inhibiting positive change in their schools. The study employed surveys, individual interviews, and focus groups to specifically answer the research questions:

- How have students in two turnaround high schools experienced planned organizational change within their school?
- How do students feel about the turnaround policy? From their perspective, how did the policy promote or inhibit positive change within the school?

Through a synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative data, a clear description of students' experiences at [the](#) two turnaround schools was painted. Themes were identified that spoke to the students' experience in these schools. Building on the students' experiences, a picture was painted of what factors promoted or inhibited positive change within the two high schools. Perhaps most important, this study illustrated how the experiences of these students, within the framework of organizational change, are critical to understanding school turnaround and organizational changes in [such](#) schools.

This chapter discusses the findings of this dissertation study in relation to the theoretical framework of planned organizational change and the growing body of literature on school turnaround. Like the last chapter, this chapter is organized by the themes that fit into the planned organizational change framework. Some of the factors students discussed are paralleled in school turnaround and organizational change literature. However, students' experiences highlighted in this study offer a new

perspective on school turnaround, [providing](#) an understanding of how turnaround plays out in schools, through the eyes of the students in the schools.

Before we turn to the discussion of individual themes, it is important to revisit the planned organizational change model as a whole in relation to the evidence in this study. As outlined in chapter three, the planned organizational change theory suggests that work-setting changes (organizing arrangements, social factors, technology, and physical setting) will prompt people to change their behavior (Porras & Robertson, 1992). To be sure, altering work settings has the possibility to be a strong lever for inducing change in people's behavior. Underlying planned organizational change theory is the idea that people will respond to work setting changes by adopting new behaviors to meet the new expectations of the organization (Robertson, Roberts, & Porras, 1993). For those students in this study who said their behavior had changed, many of them explained that their change in behavior was in fact driven by the changes in their school setting after turnaround was implemented. In some cases, students pointed to new staff members and new discipline policies as the impetus for changing their behavior. At the same time, some students struggled with the change, and others questioned whether students could be forced to change their behavior.

From the perspective of the students in this study, changes in social factors were the most influential in changing students' behavior. As discussed in chapter three, these social factors include school climate, teachers and classroom environment, and leadership. In response to the changes in these social factors, some students adopted new attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in an effort to meet the new expectations at their schools. The evidence in this dissertation suggests that turnaround had a positive impact on

students' individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. On the other hand, the policy has not realized the goal of positive changes in organizational outcomes.

Considering current school turnaround discourse and the focus on standards, testing, and accountability, it is fair to presume that when it comes to school turnaround, 'organizational outcomes' refers to student achievement, as measured by standardized tests. While the changes in these schools may have prompted students to alter their attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, a change in organizational outcomes has yet to be realized at these schools, where less than 10% of students meet state standards today, two to three years after turnaround was implemented.

Organizing Component #1: Organizing Arrangements

This section focuses on the themes that fit into the organizing arrangements component of the planned organizational change model. These themes include safety [and](#) security and student push-outs. These themes will be discussed below in relation to implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and suggestions for future research on school turnaround.

Security and Safety: The Importance of Student Safety

Discussion

Morgan and Harrison invested in improving the security and safety of their schools and the students took notice. As one student simply stated, "the school is safer since the turnaround". The quantitative data supported this, as 63.3% of all students either agreed or completely agreed with the survey item "I feel safe in and around my school." As evident in the findings, the increased security and attention to discipline policies made a difference in the way these students felt about being at school. Understandably, acts of

violence in schools make students feel unsafe and ultimately impact all the students in the school and interrupt learning (Henry, 2000; Scheckner et al., 2002). It is logical to assume that if students feel unsafe at school, their ability to learn will be negatively affected. Gorski & Pilotto (1993) have suggested that when children's personal safety is at risk, they are unable to concentrate in class. Accordingly, the increased security and safety at these turnaround schools were clear factors that promoted positive change in these schools. Unfortunately, this same sense of safety did not extend to the neighborhood.

While there was increased security and safety within the schools in this study, a number of students conveyed that their sense of safety ended when they left school. In many urban neighborhoods, like the ones where Morgan and Harrison are located, students face crime and violence on a daily basis, having a detrimental effect not only on their learning, but also on emotional and social well being (Aisenberg & Mennen, 2000; Shields & Pierce, 2002). Even those students who are able to escape physical harm are unlikely to escape the social and emotional harm from the tumultuous nature of their community, which pervades a school's climate. Exposure to violence has been found to be related to lowered personal expectations for the future, antisocial activity, and diminished academic achievement (Schwab-Stone et al., 1995). Several students in this study discussed their lack of safety within the neighborhood. Indeed, some students suggested that they never feel safe. Regrettably, despite the efforts at Morgan and Harrison, the students are still faced with violence and lack a sense of safety in their everyday lives. Students' concerns about their own well-being will certainly impact their readiness and ability to learn. Turnaround schools need to go beyond academics to

address the emotional, psychological, and social needs of students in an effort to combat these deleterious effects. One student I interviewed was particularly insightful about this:

We need more supports for getting through bad things in the neighborhood. I bet you never saw your friend, your neighbor get shot in the alley. We see that shit all the time here. Then we are expected to go to school and learn. Teachers need to realize that we can't just leave experiences like this behind us and go in and learn math, read boring books or do good on tests. They need to talk to us about these things and realize that we have a life outside of school.

It is commendable and encouraging that these turnaround schools have put resources into improving the safety of their schools and students. The students in this study praised these efforts, but their safety only lasted as long as they were in school. One issue that emerges from these findings involves the relationship between schools and the communities in which they exist. How can meaningful positive change be promoted in schools that are surrounded by crime and violence? Without considering the safety in the surrounding neighborhoods, turnaround schools will continue to face the obstacle of the violence that pervades the schools and its detrimental impact on students.

The success of turnaround schools and the communities in which they are situated are interconnected. Schools in disadvantaged communities are the most difficult to change or improve, making the relationship between such schools and communities that much more important (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010). Bryk et al. (2010) stress the importance of parent and community ties with schools, and suggest that schools need to find ways to build relationships with parents and community. They offer three specific dimensions in which these relationships can develop:

(1) Teachers need to be knowledgeable about student culture and the local community and draw on these in their lessons, (2) School staff must reach out to parents and community to engage them in the processes of strengthening student learning, and (3) Schools should draw on a network of community organizations to expand services for students and their families. (p. 11)

These three dimensions give clear direction for schools to improve the school and community partnerships that are important to school success.

Other researchers (Dryfoos, 2000; O'Donnell, Kirkner, & Meyer-Adams, 2008) have suggested a model of a 'community school.' Community schools are open 24 hours, 7 days a week to students and the community, offering everything from parent classes to warm meals. Community schools can promote youth development and enhanced school and community relations in addition to student achievement. The community school movement is growing, but financial and organizational concerns are barriers to implementation in many districts.

Despite extensive research that confirms the importance of community and school partnerships (Bryk, et al., 2010; Dryfoos, 2000; Jansorn et al., 2008) most schools and districts struggle with developing strong relationships with communities. Another consideration is that school community relationships tend to decline as students get older (Jansorn et al., 2008), resulting in high schools with the least amount of parental and community involvement, adding an additional obstacle to turnaround high schools. The common interests of schools, families, and communities create the opportunity to develop relationships that can offer students the sustained support they need to succeed, not only in turnaround schools, but in all schools.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

This finding has important implications for developing further studies. The relationship between school and community safety is an important issue for future research. Additional research needs to be done to explore how schools can better support students who live in dangerous neighborhoods. How can schools do a better job of

building relationships with the community? How can schools and communities work together to better support students? If we know that academic achievement is related to students' overall safety and well being, how can we expect student achievement gains without addressing these issues? When considering how to best turnaround our lowest performing schools, careful thought needs to be put into how to best address the broader societal context of the school.

Push Outs: School Turnaround at Whose Expense?

Discussion

Theoretically, schools serve the same students after the turnaround policy has been implemented. The evidence in this dissertation tells a different story. Students at both schools consistently reported that students at their schools were pushed out. In general, students who are pushed out are encouraged by school staff to leave the school in an effort to exclude 'problem students' from schools. The term 'push-out' suggests that students are victims of educational policies that focus on standardized tests and accountability (Light, 2003). Contributing to the push out phenomenon is pressure on principals to raise student test scores, improve attendance, increase safety, improve school climate and turn around low performing schools (McCargar, 2011). Certainly, at a turnaround school, principals and teachers are under such pressure.

Consistent with the turnaround policy's guidelines, a recently published report by The Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) and American Institutes for Research (AIR), asserts that schools that underwent turnaround in Chicago "generally served the same students as before intervention" (p. 6). Using re-enrollment rates at five turnaround schools in Chicago as evidence, the report argues, "these data contradict

claims made by critics who argue that turnaround schools systemically push out low-performing and more disadvantaged students” (p. 6). While it may be true that a similar percentage of students re-enrolled at those schools, the CCSR/AIR report fails to consider the high mobility rate at these schools. The schools in the report have high mobility rates, with more than 40% of students transferring in or out of these schools throughout the school year. Ultimately, these high mobility rates result in a school enrollment that is continually changing. So, while re-enrollment rates at those schools suggest that students are not being pushed out, perhaps insight from the students in this study tells the real story of how turnaround plays out. Like the schools in the CCSR/AIR study, Morgan and Harrison High Schools have mobility rates over 40%.

The students at Morgan and Harrison assert that students at their schools were pushed out when the school underwent turnaround. One student explained, “Well, the students have changed. I mean, first they made all the bad kids go to different schools. There are so many bad kids that don’t go here any more. I don’t know where they go, but they ain’t here.” It is important to note that largely the students in this study were not critical of this policy. As a matter of fact, they appreciated the calmer environment that came along with the absence of these students. Many students attributed improved school safety, a calmer environment, and improved classroom environment to bad students being pushed out. Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to ask whether or not it is justified to push-out students if the larger school community benefits. The students in this study certainly seemed to think that pushing out the ‘bad’ students was justified.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

The findings surrounding push-outs have important implications for turnaround schools and reveals many questions that need to be explored in future research. What are the implications of pushing out the least desirable students? Is it reasonable for schools to turnaround at the expense of these pushed out students? To begin with, it is important to explore how the push-out process transpires and examine the educational experiences and outcomes of those students who are pushed out. It is unlikely that school staff would be open to sharing how this controversial process plays out in schools. On the other hand, students might be more likely to share their experiences, and a study exploring how students experience the process of being pushed out would be another opportunity to bring student voices to the forefront of the school turnaround discussion. Another consideration is where these students go after they are pushed out of these schools. Some of the students in this study suggested that these students went to other schools, while others suggested they were “on the streets”. Is an unintended consequence of school turnaround a higher drop out/push out rate? Future research should examine drop out rates of low performing schools before and after turnaround, to better understand how turnaround might impact schools’ drop out rate. In addition to the drop out/push out rate, the mobility rates at turnaround schools also need to be explored. To be sure, such practices influence not only students who are being pushed out, but also the students who remain in these highly unstable school environments. High mobility rates create additional obstacles within the school and the pervasive consequences span student learning, classroom instruction, and school organization (Kerbow, 1996). The removal of the ‘least desirable’ students is likely to have both positive and negative consequences for

the schools, the students who are pushed out, and those who remain. Further research on the complex nature of this problem should address the impact on schools as a whole, students who have been pushed out, and those students who remain.

A related matter concerns how schools and districts can better support students in turnaround schools. If these ‘least desirable’ students aren’t welcome at the lowest performing schools, then where do they belong? If it is in fact necessary to remove these students to turn around our lowest performing schools, then there needs to be alternatives for these students. What options can schools and districts offer to these students? Furthermore, what are the costs if schools and districts fail to offer reasonable alternatives to these students? At the same time, a closer look at those students who remain in the school could also shed light onto the impact of push out practices. Further consideration should be given to how schools can support those students who remain, as their school environment becomes even more unstable in the face of possible higher mobility rates.

Organizing Component #2: Social Factors

This section focuses on the themes that fit into the social factors component. These themes include climate, teachers and classroom environment, leadership, and students’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. These themes will be discussed below in relation to implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and suggestions for future research on school turnaround.

School Climate

Discussion

It has been established that school climate is important to student and school success (Herman et al., 2008). Moreover, research suggests that measures of school climate are leading indicators of school turnaround progress (Center on Education Policy, 2012a; Kutash et al., 2010; Perlman & Redding, 2011). It is evident that the schools in this study have made positive strides in terms of improving their school climate. Students credit a safer school, more engaged staff members, and strong leadership among factors that have improved school climate. It is important to realize that these schools are in the early stages of turnaround. At the time of this study, Harrison was engaged in year three of turnaround, and Morgan was only in year two. Undoubtedly, the improved school climate at both Morgan and Harrison is a step in the right direction. At the same time, these schools have a long way to go before they could be considered turned around.

While both schools are in the early stages of turnaround, both Morgan and Harrison appear to be employing practices that show promise of positive change. A positive school climate, including high expectations, increased security, and staff members who care about students' well-being and educational success, are all key factors that have promoted positive change at these schools. Nevertheless, when looking at student achievement figures, these schools have a long way to go. A look at the schools' state report cards reveals that despite turnaround efforts, less than 10% of students meet or exceed state standards today, two and three years after they engaged in turnaround. At the present time, Morgan and Harrison are still amongst the persistently lowest performing schools in the state. To be sure, improving the school climate is a necessary

step toward school turnaround, but is not sufficient. Targeting improved student achievement at these schools will likely take a long time and extensive resources. Calkins et al. (2007) argue that “Turning around chronically under-performing schools is a different and far more difficult undertaking than school improvement” (p. 4). While school turnaround comes with high ambitions, it is important to realize that expectations must also be reasonable.

In its current configuration, it is expected that the turnaround policy will result in rapid results and improvements in a relatively short period of time. Similarly, authorities on turnaround suggest the turnaround process takes two to six years (Calkins et al., 2007; Fullan, 2006). Reformers, policy makers and educators need to be more realistic about how much time and resources it takes to successfully implement organizational change, especially within a school, which is such a complex organization. Burke (2010) points out that plans of action are rarely implemented exactly as planned, and suggests that there will be steps backwards for every step forwards. With this in mind, turnaround is likely to take longer than expected. Two years after being engaged in turnaround, Morgan appears to have made some improvements in terms on school climate. Similarly, Harrison has seen some initial improvements after three years. Still, to be sure, improvements still need to be made at both schools before either school is considered to have made substantial improvements. Both of these schools have a long history of low performance and many layers of reform efforts. Turnaround expectations need to be realistic when the starting point is less than 10% of students meeting or exceeding state standards.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

This discussion has important implications for school turnaround policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. While the turnaround model does not explicitly involve addressing school climate, it is evident that a safe and orderly environment is a necessary component in school turnaround. Clearly, there is a need for more research on what indicators should be utilized to track progress towards turnaround. A greater understanding of turnaround indicators and progress could inform future turnaround efforts.

As policy makers and education leaders consider how to best turnaround our lowest performing schools, it becomes increasingly clear that school turnaround might take longer than previously estimated. In depth studies of school turnaround need to be carefully crafted to better understand how the policy plays out in schools and how long it might realistically take to turnaround a school. It is the expectation of rapid improvement that differentiates turnaround from other school improvement strategies. In theory, rapid improvement in our lowest performing schools should be the only option, especially in high schools, where students only have four years. Unfortunately, while rapid improvement is ideal, it might not be realistic to expect or feasible to achieve, especially at the high school level.

The definite discrepancy in effectiveness of the policy at the elementary and high school level is disconcerting. Elementary schools have seen limited success under certain turnaround models, but when we take a look at high schools, results have been dismal (de la Torre et al., 2012; Stuit, 2010). Compared to elementary schools that had undergone turnaround, high schools “did not perform differently than similar schools” (de la Torre et

al., 2012, p.2) Certainly, high schools have been more difficult to turnaround than elementary schools. There are few high schools that have seen success under any turnaround model, so evidence on how long it takes to turnaround a school is lacking. There is a need for more studies focusing on turnaround high schools to better understand why high schools continue to be impervious to school turnaround efforts.

Another area of future research concerns the availability of resources required to turn around a low performing school and the sustainability of improvements made. In its current manifestation, turnaround is in early stages and continued study is needed to know how the policy will continue to play out in schools in the long-term. If turnaround schools are making initial improvements in school climate, how will these improvements be sustained and eventually transformed into student achievement performance? Further, how will states, districts, and the federal government continue to fund turnaround efforts?

Teachers and Classroom Environment

Discussion

The federal turnaround policy requires that at least 50% of the staff at a turnaround school be replaced. At the schools in this study, more than 90% of the teachers were replaced. While change in leadership is generally thought to be a necessary component of turnarounds (Day et al., 2010; Duke, 2010; Murphy & Meyers, 2008), research suggests that wholesale staff replacement is not necessary (Perlman, 2007). Consistent with recent research, the students in this study questioned the necessity of wholesale staff replacement in their schools. Not only did the students want some of their teachers to return, but also wanted a voice in deciding which teachers should return.

It is debatable if the large-scale replacement of school staffs is necessary (Herman et al., 2008; Perlman, 2007). Instead, it is important to realize that committed teachers are the key (Herman et al., 2008). As Perlman (2007) points out, “The essential thing is to have staff who support change. The capacity of existing staff to adapt to new responsibilities and goals is more important than any inherent benefits a clean slate might provide.” Expanding this argument, Leithwood et al. (2010) suggest that schools, “take special care to recruit and assign to turnaround classrooms and schools teachers and administrators who have the capacities and dispositions required to solve a school’s unique challenges” (p. 156). Research suggests that successful turnarounds focus on ‘targeted’ decisions about hiring and firing teachers instead of a replacing the entire staff (Calkins et al., 2007; Herman et al., 2008). Despite this research, federal policy continues to require staff replacement as a component of school turnaround. At Morgan and Harrison, the district went well beyond the federal requirement, replacing large majorities of the teaching staff at each school.

The students’ perspective in this study provides support for the conceptual premise that wholesale replacement of teachers may not have been the right approach for staffing these two turnaround schools. Consistent with recent research on school turnaround, the evidence in this dissertation suggests that restaffing an entire school may be unwarranted and comes with many challenges. “Replacing staff members is necessary when they lack specific expertise or a commitment to the school’s progress, but studies suggest that the wholesale restaffing envisioned by SIG’s turnaround model may be unnecessary, hard to implement, and counterproductive” (Brownstein, 2011, p. 4). As the discussion on how to effectively turnaround our lowest performing schools continues, it

is necessary to consider more effective alternatives to enhancing the effectiveness of educators in low performing schools.

Further, in examining how to best staff our schools, it is important to question the availability of quality teachers. The Harrison students in this study suggested that their new teachers weren't more capable or committed than the former staff. The quantitative data in this study suggest the same, as 45% of all students indicated that their teachers were the same after turnaround. As school turnaround efforts expand to reach all of the lowest performing schools, it is sensible to question whether or not there are enough qualified teachers to replace the majority of teachers in future turnaround schools. When the SIG program was first announced, it was targeted to turnaround the lowest 5% of the nation's lowest performing schools. As of 2011, state SIG applications revealed that 16% of all schools were eligible for SIG funds, a total of 15,277 schools (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch, 2012). Some districts that have received SIGs have already reported that finding (and keeping) quality teachers has been a major obstacle in implementation (Center on Education Policy, 2012d). As the SIG program continues to expand, undoubtedly the challenge of restaffing turnaround schools will be problematic. Likewise, the ability to retain high quality teachers at turnaround schools is likely to be a concern. Some SIG awarded districts have suggested that retaining new hires has been a challenge (Center on Education Policy, 2010). The capacity to recruit and retain quality educators will likely continue to be a pivotal factor in the success of school turnarounds.

We can further the discussion on the availability of quality educators, by examining staff replacement at the local level. More than half of SIG eligible schools (52.5%) are located in large or middle-sized cities (Hurlburt, Therriault, & LeFloch,

2012). Considering that many of the lowest performing schools are clustered in large urban areas, it is reasonable to question the capacity of a district to restaff turnaround schools in the future. To date, in the district that Morgan and Harrison are located, a total of five high schools have undergone turnaround. How many turnaround schools can one district support? Earlier studies on reconstitution efforts reported that schools were not able to fully staff schools, and that teachers who were dismissed from one turnaround school ended up teaching at other schools in the district (Hess, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2003). As the SIG program expands to turnaround more low performing schools, it is likely that teacher replacement will be a barrier to continued turnaround efforts.

It is likely that turnaround policy will impact teacher recruitment at all low performing schools, not just those engaged in turnaround. As Rice and Malen (2010) have suggested, the threat of staff replacement is likely to impact the recruitment of quality teacher candidates to low performing schools. Research shows that low performing schools often struggle to attract quality teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). To be sure, the threat of turnaround could possibly make it even more difficult for all low performing schools to attract quality teachers. The stigma associated with working in low performing schools and the threat of staff replacement both act as deterrents for effective educators to work in low performing schools (Lipman, 2006; Rice & Malen, 2010). Assuming the turnaround policy continues in its current form, why would prospective teachers consider working in low performing schools if the threat of turnaround looms? This is especially relevant in the district examined in this study where over 90% of the teaching staffs were

replaced. It is possible that the threat of turnaround could exacerbate staff recruitment in all low performing schools, where high quality teachers are already in short supply.

A related matter extends the discussion of teachers to the importance of classroom environment and quality of instruction. While the students suggested that the learning climate had improved in the schools in this study, some students questioned the quality of instruction. While most students talked about being more engaged and participating more, some students mentioned a lack of rigor and a curriculum did not connect to their lives. This is consistent with earlier research on reconstitution efforts, where Hess (2003) found that classroom rigor was unchanged in seven Chicago high schools that underwent reconstitution. From this perspective, more attention needs to be paid to the quality of classroom instruction in turnaround schools.

Certainly, in turnaround schools focusing on the quality of instruction is essential (Herman et al., 2008). Bringing in new enthusiastic caring teachers is likely to improve the climate of schools but will not, in and of itself, increase student achievement. In their review of reconstitution, Rice and Malen (2010) assert that while new staffs are committed and work long hours, they are not necessarily more motivated or effective than their predecessors. Further research suggests that the pressure that comes with rapidly improving student test scores can result in narrowed curriculum, a focus on only subject matter that is tested, and a focus on those students who have the ability to bring up the overall test scores of the school (McNeil, 2000; Rice & Malen, 2010; Schwartz, 2005). While research suggests that a focus on instruction is one of the most important aspects of school turnaround, from the students' perspectives, there was not a focus on instruction at Morgan and Harrison.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

Committed educators and the quality of instruction are essential to the success of school turnaround (Herman et al., 2008). The ability of districts and schools to recruit and retain effective educators will likely continue to be a pivotal factor in the success of school turnarounds. To date, wholesale staff replacement has not proven to be successful in enhancing the quality of teaching staffs. Future research on the impact of wholesale staff replacement needs to be done in an effort to better understand the most effective way to enhance the effectiveness of educators in low performing schools. Clearly, there needs to be a greater understanding of how to effectively staff low performing schools.

Another important area that deserves scholarly attention is the difficulty of improving classroom instruction in turnaround schools. Bringing in new teachers will not, in and of itself, improve classroom instruction. The premise of turnaround focuses on rapid improvements in student achievement, compelling teachers to narrow their curriculum and focus on test preparation instead of quality instruction that meets the needs of all students. Continued study is necessary to gain a better understanding of classroom instruction in turnaround schools. Exploring teachers' experiences in turnaround schools would offer a greater understanding of the challenges teachers face in turnaround schools and would offer insight into enhancing classroom instruction.

Leadership

Discussion

It is widely known that leadership is important in turning around low performing schools (Burke, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy, 2009; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Leithwood et al. (2010) assert that, "Poorly performing schools stand virtually no chance

of turning around without good leadership” (p. 22). Consistent with the growing body of research that supports the importance of leadership in a turnaround school, the students in this study certainly understood the importance of leadership in their schools. The students saw the replacement of their principals as a key factor that promoted positive change at both Morgan and Harrison. Even at Harrison, where Ms. Z got mixed reviews, the students saw her as a clear improvement over the former principal.

Leadership is critically important in school turnaround and in almost all cases current leaders need to be replaced (Burke, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy, 2009; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Indeed, the students in this study recognized that their new principals were essential to the changes in their schools. One student talked about realizing the importance of the principal in the school. “Before I never really thought much about the principal, or how important a principal could be . . . Now, I know that the principal is really important because I have seen the difference that a good principal can make in a school.” The students’ perspective on leadership is consistent with broader research on the importance of leadership in turnaround schools (Burke, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). The students further realized that their former principals needed to be replaced and that the new principals were an improvement.

Some research suggests that it is not necessarily a leader’s management skills, but personality that is critically important in turnaround (Duke, 2004; Steiner & Hassel, 2011). The literature on what it takes for a principal to turnaround a school is growing, as is the list of character traits that principals need to exhibit in order to be effective. Murphy & Meyers (2008) highlight myriad character traits in their discussion of “getting the right leadership,” including: achievement oriented, action oriented, intense, hands-on,

trustworthiness, credibility, honesty, courageous, persistent, flexible, optimistic, committed, and positive, among others. Burke (2010) adds to this list, suggesting that transformational leaders need to be visionary, inspirational, strategic, motivational, political, respected, innovative, charismatic, competitive, aggressive, active, and analytical. In this dissertation, the principals' personalities were highlighted in students' descriptions, as the students portrayed of their leaders as 'caring,' 'supportive,' 'tough,' 'strict,' and 'active.' Obviously, being a turnaround principal isn't an easy task. Still, Ms. B gets high marks for her 'tough love' approach to leadership, and Ms. Z is praised for her efforts at Harrison, as students emphasized how their principals' personalities played an important role at their school. The students understood the importance of leadership in their schools, and saw their new principals as a key factor promoting positive change in their schools.

A strong principal can make all the difference in a turnaround school (Calkins et al., 2007; Kowal & Hassel, 2005; Leithwood & Strauss, 2010, Murphy & Meyers, 2008), as evident from the perspectives of the students in this study. At the same time, it has to be considered that not all principals will be successful in managing the turnaround process (Murphy & Meyers, 2008) and selecting the right leaders for turnaround schools is essential (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). When examining students' perspectives of the two principals in this study, it was evident that not only was principal replacement important, but the quality of the new leadership was also important. If a new principal is essential to school turnaround, then choosing the right principal is of the utmost importance. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) assert that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (p. 27). There are obvious benefits

to ensuring that strong leaders are put in place to turnaround the lowest performing schools, but whether or not there are enough effective principals to lead the lowest performing schools remains to be seen. The challenge of attracting and retaining effective principals for turnaround schools is likely to be an obstacle in future turnaround efforts.

Like teacher replacement, there might also be concern about an adequate supply of quality principals. As the discussion above suggests, being a successful turnaround leader is not an easy task. Moreover, the turnaround model is not the only federal SIG model that involves principal replacement. Transformation, the most often chosen model, also requires principal replacement. With this in mind, it is judicious to consider whether or not there are enough quality principals with the necessary expertise to lead future turnaround and transformation schools.

Further, in considering all low performing schools, not just the ones engaged in turnaround, like teachers, the threat of turnaround could possibly make it even more difficult for low performing schools to attract strong leaders. Consider a quality candidate who is looking for a principal job. As with possible teachers, the threat of turnaround could likely dissuade strong principal candidates from working at low performing schools. If schools and districts are able to meet the challenge of attracting strong principal candidates to work in turnaround schools, the next challenge would be to retain those principals, offering schools the benefit of strong stable leadership.

Considering that turnaround is not a one time event, but instead a sustained effort, leadership stability should be considered an important element of school turnaround. The importance of leadership stability was highlighted in this study at Morgan, where Ms. B left only one and a half years after the school engaged in turnaround. The students

understood the implications of this and this lesson is an important one. Fullan (2006) suggests that once a strong leader is in place, that person “stay the course through continuity of good direction by leveraging leadership” (p. 44). Fullan emphasizes that a principal remain in a school for at least three years to make this happen. Regrettably, principal turnover and mobility tend to be higher at low performing schools (Gates et al., 2006). Ultimately, high levels of principal turnover can frustrate progress and deny schools the stable leadership they need to succeed. Districts need to consider how to support leadership stability in turnaround schools so that strong turnaround leaders can build on initial quick wins and turn their attention to sustaining improvements.

Implications for Future Research and Policy

There is a wealth of literature that argues that turnaround leadership is vital to turnaround success (Duke, 2004; Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Steiner & Hassel, 2011). This study highlighted the necessity of a strong leader in a turnaround school from the perspectives of students. Surely, Ms. B’s strong leadership had a positive impact on the students at Morgan High School. Strong leadership is necessary for planned organizational change to be accomplished (Burke, 2010), and this is highlighted in the students’ experiences in this study. Continued study is needed to know more about leadership in turnaround schools. This study focused on the experiences and perspectives of students. Unquestionably, the principal experience is also worth exploring. What factors would Ms. B or Ms. Z suggest were promoting or inhibiting positive change at Morgan and Harrison? An in depth look into the work of turnaround principals could offer insight into the everyday realities of turnaround principals.

Another area of future research involves the ability of districts and schools to attract and retain quality principals to turnaround schools. While there is literature on the importance of attracting and training effective turnaround leaders (Duke, 2004; Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010; Steiner & Hassel, 2011), and additional studies have examined the importance of leadership stability (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Hargraeves & Fink, 2003; Hargraeves & Goodman, 2004). In terms of leadership stability, it is worth asking if principals of turnaround schools should be asked to make a commitment to a turnaround school, giving the principal and the school the opportunity to work uninterrupted towards school turnaround.

The importance of replacing the leadership in a turnaround school is recognizably important in the evidence in this dissertation. At the same time, the students in this study did not believe that wholesale staff replacement was warranted. Considering the students' experiences in this study, it is reasonable to consider if leadership replacement is sufficient. This study examined one SIG turnaround model, which requires the principal and the majority of the staff be replaced. Recall from chapter 2 that the SIG transformation model requires the replacement of the principal, but the existing staff remains in the school. Perhaps the transformation model might be enough. To be sure, it is less disruptive to the students and school community. Further examination into the SIG transformation model could offer insight into the impact of different turnaround models. Comparative studies of the four SIG models could offer insight into which model might best fit the needs of schools and students.

Students' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors: The Meaning of Change

Discussion

Evans (2001) suggests that school improvement efforts will depend highly on successfully helping teachers cope with the change and loss. It is reasonable to extend this same argument to students at turnaround schools, because they are at the center of the change process. It is the individual realities of the students in these schools that are crucial to successfully changing schools. After all, it is student test scores and attendance that need to improve. If you attempt change without addressing students' individual realities, turnaround efforts will likely fail. As Evans (2001) points out, "Overlooking and underestimating the human and organizational component of change has routinely sabotaged programs to improve our schools . . . no innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of people and place" (Evans, 2001, pp. 91-92). With a new principal and teaching staff, it is the students who are left to live through the change at turnaround schools.

Leading organizational change scholars (Burke, 2010; Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007) characterize change as a combination of loss, friction, confusion, frustration, unpredictability, conflict, negotiation, and compromise. Consistent with the literature on the difficulty of change (Burke, 2010; Evans, 2001; Fullan 2007), the students' portrayed the turnaround transition at Morgan and Harrison as a time of chaos, confusion, and difficulty. Furthermore, the students in this study did not feel supported during the transition time at their schools. Students described the transition time as challenging and confusing as they were left with many questions unanswered. This is especially true for

the semester when turnaround was announced, when students reported that nearly a semester of learning time was lost amid the confusion.

It is important to realize that the change process is difficult, as evident by the student experiences in this study. Accordingly, we can expect that students at turnaround schools will experience loss and confusion during the initiation of turnaround. This does not mean that schools shouldn't do a better job of supporting students during this time. In fact, Fullan (2007) suggests that the more factors that support the school as a whole in the implementation of change, the more successful it will be. Implementation will likely be an obstacle in the change process and the same factors that either support or work against a successful implementation are at play with the continuation of the change. The evidence presented in this dissertation describes the chaos and confusion associated with the turnaround transition. It is essential that students be given ample supports during this difficult time. Such supports are likely to ease the transition for students and ultimately support the success of turnaround efforts.

Another consideration to keep in mind is, as Tyack & Cuban (1995) have suggested, schools change reforms. Policymakers and education leaders need to be prepared for how individuals and groups might react to organizational change in the school. Organizations are influenced by the context in which they exist, but also influence their context. As this study revealed, the same policy can be implemented in two very similar schools, but play out differently at each school. Considering school context is important when implementing school turnaround, as some students in this study suggested when they talked about their lives outside of school. With this in mind, Tyack & Cuban (1995) suggest, "treating policies as hypotheses and encouraging

practitioners to create hybrids suited to their context. Instead of being ready-made plans, reform policies could be stated as principles, general aims, to be modified in the light of experience, and embodied in practices that vary by school or even classroom” (p. 83). Still, even when context is taken into consideration, implementation is important. As Rebecca Herman (2012) points out, “even if strategies are a good fit with the school’s history, context, and needs, having the right strategies is not enough; they must be implemented well” (p. 31).

Taken together, the evidence in this dissertation suggests that students were more likely to buy in to the turnaround policy when they felt supported, cared about, and fairly treated. Students talked about the importance of fair and consistent discipline policies as having a positive impact on both the school climate and on their own behavior. Caring staff members, including the principal, security guards, counselors, and teachers who had high expectations for students were pivotal in how the students perceived school turnaround and ultimately how much they changed their own attitudes, beliefs and behavior.

It should be considered if these students changed their behavior because of the turnaround policy or did they simply mature as they advanced through high school. After all, these students reflected on a time span of four years in high school, a period of tremendous development in terms of cognitive growth and intellectual development for adolescents (Rice, 1990; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). It is fair to consider if the students in this study naturally matured and gained an increased sense of responsibility. When asked about this, one student suggested that it was a combination of factors, “I matured but then, like the teachers, I see that they wasn’t playing no more. You know like they was

under something really trying to get us to learn.” It is reasonable to believe that the students in this study matured throughout their high school career. At the same time, their explanations of why their attitudes and behavior changed point to the turnaround policy impacting their everyday interactions at school.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

The issues emerging from these findings relate specifically to supporting students throughout the turnaround process. Further research should investigate how to better support students who attend turnaround schools. Students offered some practical suggestions, including a better way to announce the turnaround and including student voice in the turnaround process. For instance, the students in this study learned about the turnaround from their teachers. There are likely better messengers than the teachers who just learned that they would be displaced. An in-depth look into the critical transition semester at turnaround schools would be informative. When is the best time to study these schools? This study examined two schools that had been engaged in turnaround for two or three years already. Earlier entry into turnaround schools would be valuable in informing how to support students through the change process.

Final Discussion

From the perspectives of students whose voices are highlighted in this dissertation, school turnaround brought about some meaningful positive changes to their schools. At the same time, the students in this study voiced that factors had inhibited positive change. The students in this study offered authentic and insightful explanations of how turnaround played out in these two high schools and offered their perceptions and judgments of what factors promoted and inhibited positive change. The insights revealed

from first-hand knowledge in this study offer a unique viewpoint. While student voice is not the ultimate answer to school turnaround, or to school reform more generally, this research does bring attention to the voices of students and builds a better understanding of how school turnaround moves from theory to practice.

Acknowledging the important realities of students and addressing the need for student buy in is essential to the success of school turnaround efforts. In the end, it is students who produce school outcomes, so their buy in and participation in school reform efforts is fundamental to school improvement. Without addressing the needs of students and considering how to encourage students to buy in to school turnaround efforts, turnaround efforts are likely to fail. Yet, rarely are students considered in the discussion of school change or as participants in the process of school change (Fullan, 2007). This study suggests that student voice has the potential to contribute to the evaluation of school turnaround efforts. While standardized test scores have become the ultimate indicator of school success or failure, student voice offers researchers, practitioners, and policy makers powerful insights into what works in schools and classrooms and ultimately can contribute to positive school change. Building on the findings and discussion from this study, future research should consider students' perspectives in future school turnaround efforts.

Burke (2010) argues that by attempting to understand organizational change through the lens of the individual, group, and larger system we can better understand how to manage and lead overall change. From this perspective, this study is a small step in better understanding school turnaround. Additional studies need to examine turnaround through the lens of the principal, the teachers, the community and the larger system.

Unquestionably, when brought together with student perspectives, these other lenses would offer a more complete picture of the change process in turnaround schools.

Students' perspectives in this study confirmed some of what is already acknowledged in school turnaround literature. At the same time, this study revealed student perspectives that challenge some aspects of turnaround policy. To begin with, students confirmed that leadership is an essential component to school turnaround. Students also recognized the importance of quality instruction and an improved school culture. At the same time, the students in this study challenged some aspects of the turnaround policy. Chiefly, students questioned the wholesale replacement of teachers as a means to improve student achievement. Students also had concerns about the way turnaround was announced at their schools and the challenging transition the following school year. Students in this study also exposed new concerns about turnaround, revealing that their fellow students had been pushed out of their schools and suggesting that these push outs were a positive factor in their schools.

Students recognized the positive and negative aspects of turnaround. All things considered, the policy resulted in school environments that students characterized as calmer and safer, but these schools are still amongst the lowest performing schools in the state. The possibility of raising student achievement in a negative environment characterized by a pervasive lack of order is unlikely, so these initial gains in improved climate are important. But will these small incremental changes be enough to turnaround schools like Morgan and Harrison? Low performing schools are unlikely to meet the challenges of improving student performance without considering how to build on initial quick wins. Perhaps turning around our lowest performing schools should be less focused

on rapid improvements as outlined in the current turnaround policy, and more focused on ongoing development and continuous improvement in schools.

Student achievement challenges do not appear in high school, but instead, accumulate throughout a students' academic career. It might be reasonable to consider if high school turnaround efforts are too little, too late. Perhaps targeting these students earlier in their educational career would be a better approach. As one student in this study suggested:

You can't really expect teenagers to just change overnight. Where was turnaround when we were younger? We are set in our ways, already. We have been in bad schools, then all of a sudden, you come in and change our schools, our teachers and just expect us to change overnight.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, leading turnaround scholars suggest the turnaround process takes up to six years (Calkins et al., 2007; Fullan, 2007). High school only spans four years of students' educational experience, so it is reasonable to ask if implementing turnaround at the high school level is sensible. Instead, sustained efforts targeted at urban students starting earlier in their K-12 career are likely to be more successful in improving student outcomes. A long term commitment of sustained support should be considered in the discussion of ongoing development and continuous improvement in schools.

Like the term 'turnaround', the concept of 'continuous improvement' has numerous definitions. Smylie (2010) suggests that continuous improvement "embodies the notion of continuously getting better, performing better, and achieving objectives more effectively" (p. 25). Instead of focusing on rapid drastic changes as the turnaround policy does, the "constant strengthening of already good work and constant

enhancements of already impressive results” (Murphy & Meyers, 2008, p. 222) is essential in continuous improvement. “The basic idea behind continuous improvement is that making continuous, strategic, incremental changes can help organizations adapt to internal changes and changes in their environments” (Smylie, 2010, p. 28).

Continuous improvement and turnaround are not mutually exclusive (Smylie, 2010; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Conversely, it is reasonable to consider that if a school is going to successfully turnaround, it needs to turnaround to continuous improvement (Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Smylie, 2010). While there have been some initial improvements at Morgan and Harrison, it is unlikely that these initial improvements will be enough to address the deficits within these schools. Instead, perhaps turnaround could be the starting point for these schools, as they move towards the path of continuous improvement (Murphy & Meyers, 2008; Smylie, 2010). The idea that continuous improvement could build on changes spurred on by previous planned change is not new (Burke, 2011; Smylie, 2010; Weick & Quinn, 1999), but the move from one to the other is likely to be an obstacle for many schools. Indeed, Smylie (2010) suggests that the challenge may lie in transitioning between the initial change and continuous improvement. Considering the difficult transition that the students in this study experienced with turnaround, it is likely that a transition to sustained improvement will also be difficult in these schools.

The premise of school turnaround focuses on rapid improvement, failing to acknowledge how long it will realistically take to turnaround the lowest performing schools and the need for sustained improvement. Rice and Malen (2010) have suggested that the fundamental assumptions of reconstitution are ‘fatally flawed’ and that the policy

is ‘a risky strategy’. By the same token, it might be prudent to ask if the expectation of rapid improvement, as defined in the turnaround policy, is also flawed. It may be reasonable to expect quick wins in a turnaround school, but improved student outcomes are unlikely to come as quick as policy makers expect. Considering the student experiences in this dissertation in conjunction with school turnaround literature, it is reasonable to consider whether or not school turnaround, its current form, is a viable option for school improvement. Is turnaround, in and of itself, enough to incite positive change in our lowest performing high schools? Considering the current policy environment, and the amount of money being invested in turnaround models, this question is particularly relevant.

As schools work to build on the successes, mistakes, and lessons of the first two rounds of SIG grants, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers should also consider the lessons from the students in this study. It is important to realize that “while SIG may be a huge opportunity for dramatic improvement, it is also a huge opportunity to once again fail our students, families, and communities” (Shea & Liu, 2010, p. 1). From the perspective of the students in this study, turnaround would likely benefit from the following:

1. Include students in the process and evaluation of school turnaround. Recognizing, respecting, and including students’ unique perspectives can help shape and advance turnaround efforts.
2. Reconsider indiscriminate staff replacements. Instead, focus on building the capacities of the teachers within these schools who have the ‘will and skill’ to implement a rigorous curriculum and are committed to student success.

3. Secure strong leaders who are willing to make a long-term commitment to the school. Requiring a commitment from principals gives turnaround schools the continuity and stability they need to promote positive change.
4. Understand that turnaround is unlikely to be as rapid as the turnaround policy expects. Instead, continuous improvement that focuses on incremental changes and sustained efforts over time has the potential to reach the goal of turning around our lowest performing schools.

The data collected and examined in this study raise questions for future research on high school turnaround efforts. The current federal turnaround policy environment provides ample opportunities for analysis of how the different SIG turnaround models operate within schools. Future studies, both longitudinal and comparative in nature, need to be conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses not only of the turnaround model examined in this study, but of all four SIG models. Further studies are required to determine whether these models are viable options to school turnaround or if the premise of turnaround is viable at all.

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APPENDIX A STUDENT SURVEY

Section 1: Demographic Information

Name: _____ Division _____ Age _____

Gender _____ Birthday _____ How many years have you attended your school? _____

Section 2: Your School Today

Answer each of the following questions by choosing the one answer that best fits how you feel about each statement.

1. I feel safe in and around my school.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

2. Our school is organized to help students be successful in school.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

3. Teachers are approachable and friendly.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

4. Classroom instruction is clear and well structured.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

5. The classes at our school are interesting and engaging.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

6. The principal has high expectations for students.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

7. The teachers and staff at our school are supportive and helpful.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

8. The school rules create a positive school environment.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

9. Our school environment is welcoming.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

10. Our school is a good place to go to school.

- ☐ Completely disagree
 ☐ Somewhat disagree
 ☐ Neutral/ I don't know
 ☐ Somewhat agree
 ☐ Completely agree

Section 3: Your School Before and After the Turnaround

Now, consider each question in regards to your thoughts about your school since the turnaround. If you were not a student here before the turnaround, please do not complete this section.

11. There is a positive relationship between the school and my family.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

12. I am motivated to come to school.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

13. I like to participate in my classes.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

14. I am determined to do the best that I can in school.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

15. Our school offers students what they need to be successful.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

16. Teachers are supportive and expect the best from students.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

17. Our principal is supportive and encourages students to do their best.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

18. There are resources (computers, books) that are helpful to me as a student.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

19. The school building looks nice and is clean and welcoming.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

20. Our school is a good place to go to school.

- ☐ More before turnaround
 ☐ The Same
 ☐ More after turnaround

Are you interested in telling me more about your school turnaround experience in an interview?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about school turnaround?

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Introduction and Orientation (To be read to research subjects)

I am conducting interviews of students at turnaround high schools to gain insight into students' experiences being at a school during the turnaround process. I know that you were a student prior to your school being turned around and continued to attend afterwards. I am interested in how you experienced the change process. This research is being conducted by me, Jennifer Olson, as a part of my PhD studies at University of Illinois at Chicago. The topics of the interview will revolve around how you experienced the planned organizational change within their school and how you feel the turnaround policy has either promoted or inhibited positive change within their school. You were selected to participate because you have personally experienced being a student at a high school during the turnaround process.

I want to let you know that you are in control of this interview. Before we begin I want to make sure that you understand your rights as a participant in this research, and that you feel comfortable to go ahead with the interview. An interview is really a working relationship to learn more about an important topic. In my role as interviewer, my job is to pose the main questions and guide the discussion. In your role as interviewee, you have both the right and the freedom to control what we learn and talk about. In particular, you can:

- Stop the interview at any time if you decide you don't want to continue.
- Decide that you don't want to answer a particular question.
- Alert me that a discussion is starting to make you uncomfortable.
- Decide that you want to finish your answer to a question even if I want to continue exploring another question.
- Decide that you do want to answer a question, but "off the record," including:
 - Turning off the tape recording (I'll ask if its OK to turn the recording on again after we cover the "off record" information).
 - Instructing me not to quote you on a particular matter that we discuss.
 - Instructing me how you want a sensitive matter treated in a written transcript.
 - We will stay "off the record" for as long as you want. I'll ask you if it's OK to go back on the record, but you make the final call.
- Sometimes after an interview people decide that something they said needs to be treated as "off the record" and confidential. Just call me or email me to indicate what that is. We'll work with you to make sure we have identified the right information and treat it as you request.
- If you wish, you can also examine the written transcript to "bracket" passages that you want us to treat as confidential and sensitive.
- If you have any issues with our interview that you don't feel comfortable discussing with me, please contact my advisor, Dr. Christopher Miller, 312-413-2415.

I also want you to know that I will take every step necessary to protect the information in this interview. I will take the following steps:

- I take the protection of your interview information very seriously.
- I upload the taped interview to a password protected computer drive at the university.
- This will be transcribed verbatim into a word processing document that I will use to explore the research topic, along with other similar interviews.
- Your name and any other names mentioned on the recording will be removed from the transcript. Your name will be replaced with an identification number. No record of your name or contact information will be linked to your identification number in any project file.
- I also will be careful to change or mask place names and any other identifying information that might give away your identity to a reader.
- This interview is for dissertation research. It is however possible that the research may lead to being published in a journal.

Are there any questions or concerns you wish to raise before we continue?
Are you ready to begin the interview?

Interview Questions

1. What do you remember about when the turnaround was first announced?
2. As you think about your overall experiences, tell me about how your school has changed since the turnaround.
 Probe: What seemed most beneficial?
 Probe: What additional changes could have helped, and how?
3. Since the turnaround, are you satisfied with what your school has to offer you as a student?
4. Describe the positive characteristics of your school since turnaround.
 Probe: Are there any new rules or policies that have been particularly helpful at the school?
5. Since the turnaround, what factors in your school prevent you from being as successful as you can be?
 Probe: If you were in charge of your school, how would you address these problems?
6. What aspects of the turnaround were most difficult for you as a student?
 Probe: What has helped you/or could help you overcome these challenges?
7. One of the main parts of the turnaround was to replace the former teachers. How do your new teachers compare to the ones you had before turnaround?
 Probe: How are your new teachers supportive of your needs as a student?

Probe: How have you been able to develop relationships with your new teachers?

8. Your former principal was also replaced. How does your new principal compare to the one you had before turnaround?

Probe: Do you think she is active in your school?

Probe: Does she set high expectations for all students?

9. Would you say your behavior as a student has changed because of the turnaround policy? If so, how/why?

Probe: How do your current grades compare to before the turnaround policy?

Probe: What about your attendance?

Probe: How would you say your engagement in school or classroom activities has changed?

10. What about your attitudes toward school, your teachers and your school work? Has your attitude changed at all since the turnaround?

11. If you were to tell someone about turnaround, who didn't know anything about it, what would you tell them?

12. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX C FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Focus Group Introduction and Orientation (To be read to students)

Thank you for coming today. I am conducting focus groups of students at turnaround high schools to gain further insight into students' experiences being at a school during the turnaround process. This research is being conducted by me, Jennifer Olson, as a part of my PhD studies at University of Illinois at Chicago. I've brought you together so that we can learn from each other about what is really going on at turnaround high schools. This is a "no holds barred" discussion. I really want to hear both the good and bad, so that I can learn more about your experiences. The topics of the focus group will revolve around how you experienced the planned organizational change within their school and how you feel the turnaround policy has either promoted or inhibited positive change within their school. You were selected to participate because I would like to learn more about your experiences.

I will be taping this session so that I can study what you have said, but it goes no farther than this group. Anything you say here will be held in strict confidence; we won't be telling people outside this room who said what. Before we begin I want to make sure that you understand your rights as a participant in this research, and that everyone feels comfortable to go ahead with the focus group. In my role as facilitator, my job is to pose the main questions and guide the discussion. In your role as participants, you have both the right and the freedom to control what we learn and talk about. In particular, you can:

- Stop the focus group at any time if you decide you don't want to continue.
- Decide that you don't want to answer a particular question.
- Alert me that a discussion is starting to make you uncomfortable.
- Decide that you want to finish your answer to a question even if I want to continue exploring another question.
- Decide that you do want to answer a question, but "off the record," including:
 - Turning off the tape recording (I'll ask if its OK to turn the recording on again after we cover the "off record" information).
 - Instructing me not to quote you on a particular matter that we discuss.
 - Instructing me how you want a sensitive matter treated in a written transcript.
 - We will stay "off the record" for as long as you want. I'll ask you if it's OK to go back on the record, but you make the final call.
- If you wish, you can also examine the written transcript to "bracket" passages that you want us to treat as confidential and sensitive.
- If you have any issues with our interview that you don't feel comfortable discussing with me, please contact my advisor, Dr. Christopher Miller, 312-413-2415.

I also want you to know that I will take every step necessary to protect the information in this focus group. I will take the following steps:

- I take the protection of your interview information very seriously.
- I upload the taped focus group to a password protected computer drive at the university.
- This will be transcribed verbatim into a word processing document that I will use to explore the research topic, along with student interviews.
- Your name and any other names mentioned on the recording will be removed from the transcript. Your name will be replaced with an identification number. No record of your name or contact information will be linked to your identification number in any project file.
- I also will be careful to change or mask place names and any other identifying information that might give away your identity to a reader.
- This focus group is for dissertation research. It is however possible that the research may lead to being published in a journal.

Are there any questions or concerns you wish to raise before we continue?

Is everyone ready to begin the focus group?

Questions

1. When I discussed the turnaround announcement with students, many described that time as confusing. Other students said they were excited about the possible changes. How would you describe that time?
2. Many students said that the first semester of turnaround was a difficult transition. How would you describe the transition?

Probe: What could have made the transition easier for students?
3. As you think of your overall experiences, what have been the most positive things about turnaround at your school?

Probe: Some students suggested the new principal has been important. What do you think about your new principal?

Probe: Some students suggested that security in the school has been important. What do you think about the security at your school after turnaround?
4. As you think of your overall experiences, what have been the most negative things about turnaround at your school?

a. Probe: Some students suggested that replacing the majority of the teachers wasn't necessary. What would you say about replacing the teachers?
5. One of the main parts of the turnaround was to replace the former teachers. How do your new teachers compare to the ones you had before turnaround?

Probe: Would you say classroom instruction has changed since turnaround? If so, how/why?

6. Some students talked about new rules and policies since turnaround, like increased hallsweeps, and suspensions. How have these new rules and policies made a difference at your school?
7. Some students suggested that they have changed since turnaround. Would you say your behavior as a student has changed because of the turnaround policy? If so, how/why?

Probe: What about your attitudes toward school, your teachers and your school work? Has your attitude changed at all since the turnaround? If so, how/why?

Thank you all for participating in this focus group! I appreciate you taking the time to share your opinions with me.

Jennifer D. Olson

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Education

University of Illinois at Chicago	Chicago, Illinois
PhD Policy Studies in Urban Education	May 2013
Dissertation: Student Voices: Implications for School Turnaround in Urban High Schools	
Loyola University Chicago	Chicago, Illinois
MEd Curriculum & Instruction	May 1999
Illinois State University	Normal, Illinois
BA Sociology	June 1995

Research Interests

Urban school reform, school turnaround, student voice, organizational change

Teaching Experience

Spring 2010- 2011	Teaching Assistant University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create <i>Introduction to Urban Education</i> curriculum • Implement curriculum aimed at preparing pre-service teachers to be successful in urban schools • Coordinate field experiences for pre-service teachers
Fall 2002-2008	Lead Teacher, FACETS Small School <i>Harper High School, Chicago, Illinois</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct operations and elements of a small school with 125-150 students • Manage recruitment of incoming students into FACETS

- Recruit and hire staff for FACETS
- Calculate statistics on graduation rates, test scores and attendance
- Organize & implement integrated curriculum for all FACETS classes
- Coordinate and organize team building mentoring days
- Facilitate weekly small school meeting

Fall 1999-2008

Social Studies Teacher

Harper High School, Chicago, Illinois

- Create and implement curriculum for United States history, community civics & culinary arts to 10th, 11th and 12th grade students
- Integrate technology into curriculum, using a custom built website that allows students to post their original work, conference with other students and share documents
- Facilitate Leadership Academy (Uniting urban and suburban students for leadership activities)
- Organize and design an advisory plan for the entire Harper High School student body

Research Experience

June 2010-Present

Collaborative Teacher Network

University of Illinois at Chicago

- Review professional literature and write literature reviews
- Analyze and code qualitative data and develop reports
- Work collaboratively with other researchers to interpret educational data
- Complete IRB and continuing IRB review paperwork

Summer 2009

Strategic Learning Initiatives

Chicago, Illinois

- Conduct and develop literature reviews related to educational research
- Collect & analyze data on urban education reform issues

Related Professional Experience

2011-2012

Graduate Assistant

University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Education

- Work cooperatively with MEd coordinator to support MEd students

- Plan and implement recruitment strategies for MEd program
 - Coordinate social and professional activities for MEd students
 - Mentor and supervise graduate teaching assistants
- 2010-2011 Student Representative: UIC Graduate Student Council Educational Policy Studies
- 2010 Reviewer: Midwestern Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Columbus, OH. Individual Paper Submissions:
 Division G: Social Context of Education
 Division H: Research, Evaluation & Assessment in Schools
 Division L: Educational Policy and Politics.
- 2010 Discussant: Parents, Community Involvement, and Social Influence in Education Division G - Social Context of Education Paper Session. Midwestern Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Columbus, OH.
- 2004-2008 Close Up Washington DC Coordinator/Facilitator
Harper High School, Chicago, Illinois
- Organize & manage students participating in a week long government studies trip to Washington D.C.
 - Manage fundraising of \$10,000 annually
- 2004-2008 United States History Course Planning Team Leader
Harper High School, Chicago, Illinois
- Facilitate United States history course planning team meetings
 - Collaborate with teachers to organize & design the United States history course plan, including curriculum maps, special education accommodations, state standards and lesson plans
 - Communicate United States history course planning information between teachers, department chair, special education teachers and administration

Conference Presentations

- 2012 Students' Experiences in Turnaround High Schools. Paper presentation. Midwestern Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Evanston, IL.
- 2012 Factors Promoting or Inhibiting School Turnaround. Paper presentation. American Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Vancouver, BC.

- 2012 Teacher Development to Enhance Content Area Reading Instruction for Students with Disabilities. Paper presentation with Michelle Parker-Katz, Marie Tejero Hughes and Tiffany Ko. American Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Vancouver, BC.
- 2011 Student Engagement in a Turnaround School. Paper presentation. American Education Research Association Annual Meeting: New Orleans, LA.
- 2011 Collaborative Teacher Network: Findings Related to Increasing Teachers' Knowledge of Content Area Reading Strategies. Paper presentation with Michelle Parker-Katz, Marie Tejero Hughes and Tiffany Ko. American Education Research Association Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA.
- 2010 Like Being at a New School: Students' Experience in a Turnaround School. Paper presentation. Midwestern Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Columbus, OH.
- 2010 Scholars at Work: Establishing a Community of Practice in Graduate School. Workshop with Hall, M; Lewis, D.; Warren, C.; Rawls, S.; Dawson, C., & Cummings, M. Midwestern Education Research Association Annual Meeting: Columbus, OH.
- 2010 Scholars at Work: Establishing a Community of Practice in Graduate School. Workshop with Hall, M; Lewis, D.; Warren, C.; Rawls, S.; Dawson, C., & Cummings, M. American Educational Studies Association Annual Meeting: Denver, CO.
- 2010 Graduate Student Experience. Invited Lecture. University of Illinois at Chicago: Chicago, IL.
- 2010 Like Being at a New School: Students' Experience in a Turnaround School. University of Illinois at Chicago Student Research Forum.
- 2004 Integrating Service Learning Projects into Your Curriculum. Workshop: Chicago Public Schools Office of Small Schools Conference: Chicago, IL.
- 2005 Lead Teacher Roles and Responsibilities. Workshop: Chicago Public Schools Office of Small Schools Conference: Chicago, IL.

Honors and Awards

1st Place Award UIC Student Research Forum 2010

Principals Choice Teacher of the Year Harper High School 2005

Memberships in Professional Associations

American Education Research Association

Midwestern Education Research Association

American Education Studies Association

Professional Training & Workshops

2006 Connecting American History Project
The Newberry Library & Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois

2002 Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: Civil Rights Seminar
Cambridge University, Cambridge England

