



Turning Points

TRANSFORMING MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Benchmarks to Becoming
a Turning Points School





Benchmarks to Becoming
a Turning Points School

Turning Points Guides

At the Turning Point: The Young Adolescent Learner

Benchmarks to Becoming a Turning Points School

Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership

Guide to Curriculum Development

Guide to Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making

Looking Collaboratively at Student and Teacher Work

School Quality Review

School Structures that Support Learning and Collaboration

Teaching Literacy in the Turning Points School

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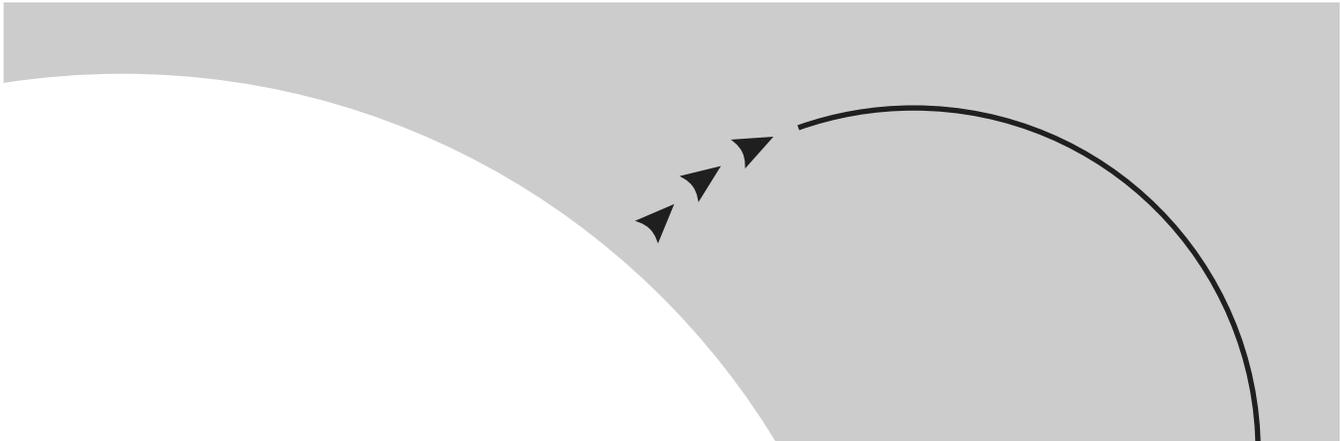


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Acknowledgements

The Center for Collaborative Education wishes to thank all the Turning Points middle schools that have contributed to the design of these benchmarks.

In addition, we would like to thank our team of external reviewers:

Gayle Davis, Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative

Tim Flynn, Vermont Department of Education

Mary Anne Herron, Brookings Middle School,
Springfield, Massachusetts

Tony Jackson, Galef Institute

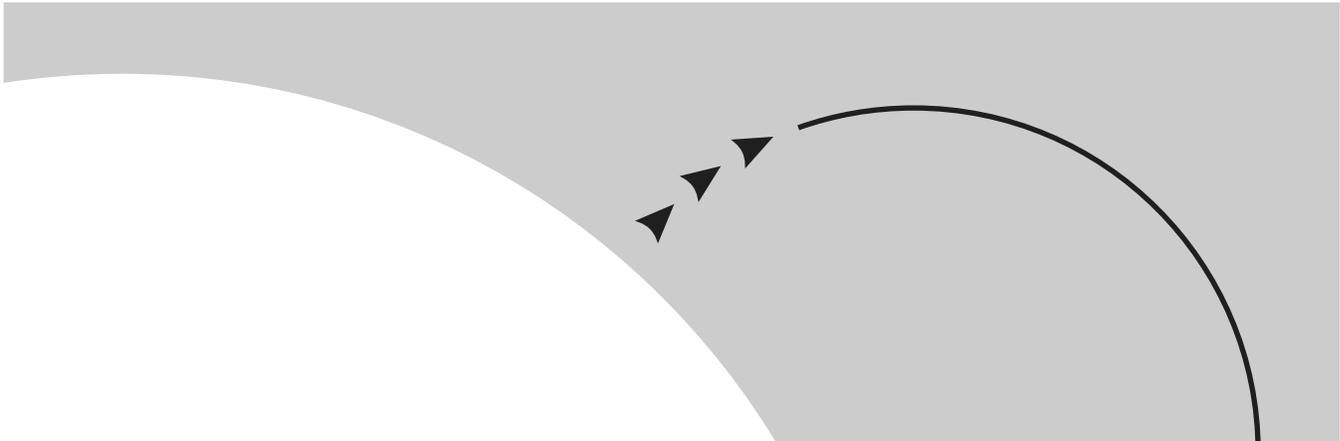
Deborah Trotter-Kasak, Association of Illinois Middle Schools

Doug Kilmister, Expeditionary Learning

Dean Millot, New American Schools

Pam Spagnoli, Massachusetts Department of Education

This guide was made possible in part by the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation.

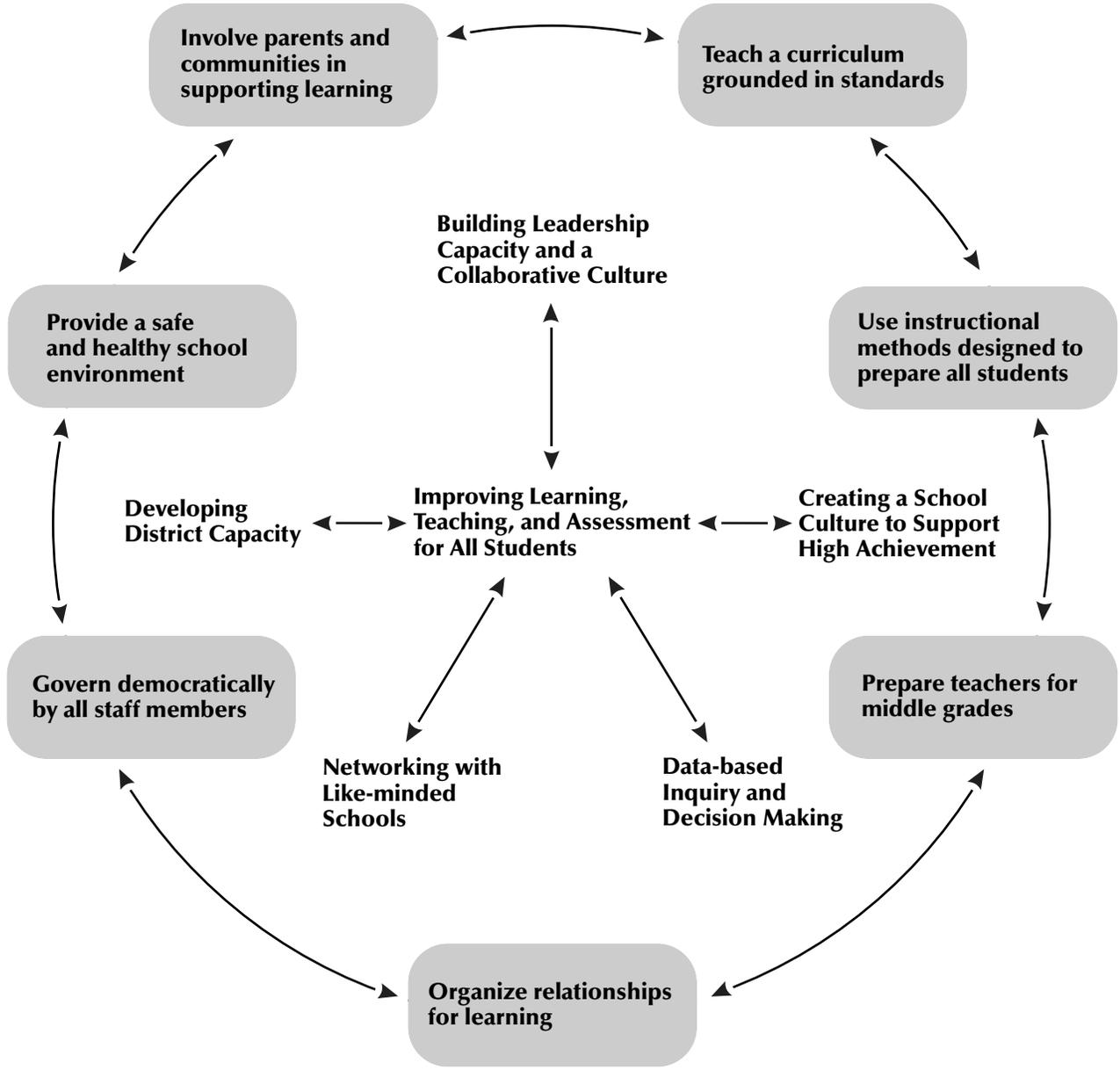


Preface

Turning Points is a national design for middle school change, coordinated by the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston, Massachusetts, which serves as the National Turning Points Center. The design focuses on restructuring middle schools to improve learning, teaching, and assessment for all students. It is based on the seminal *Turning Points* report issued by the Carnegie Corporation in 1989, which concentrated on the considerable risks that young adolescents face as they reach the “turning point” between childhood and adulthood.

A crucial part of this reform initiative calls for schools to reflect continuously upon their progress in implementing the Turning Points model. This guide presents the Turning Points benchmarks and tells how a school will use them to assess its implementation of the Turning Points model. The benchmarks are based upon the Turning Points principles and are organized around the practices. (See pages vii–ix.)

Turning Points Design Principles and Practices



Turning Points Principles*

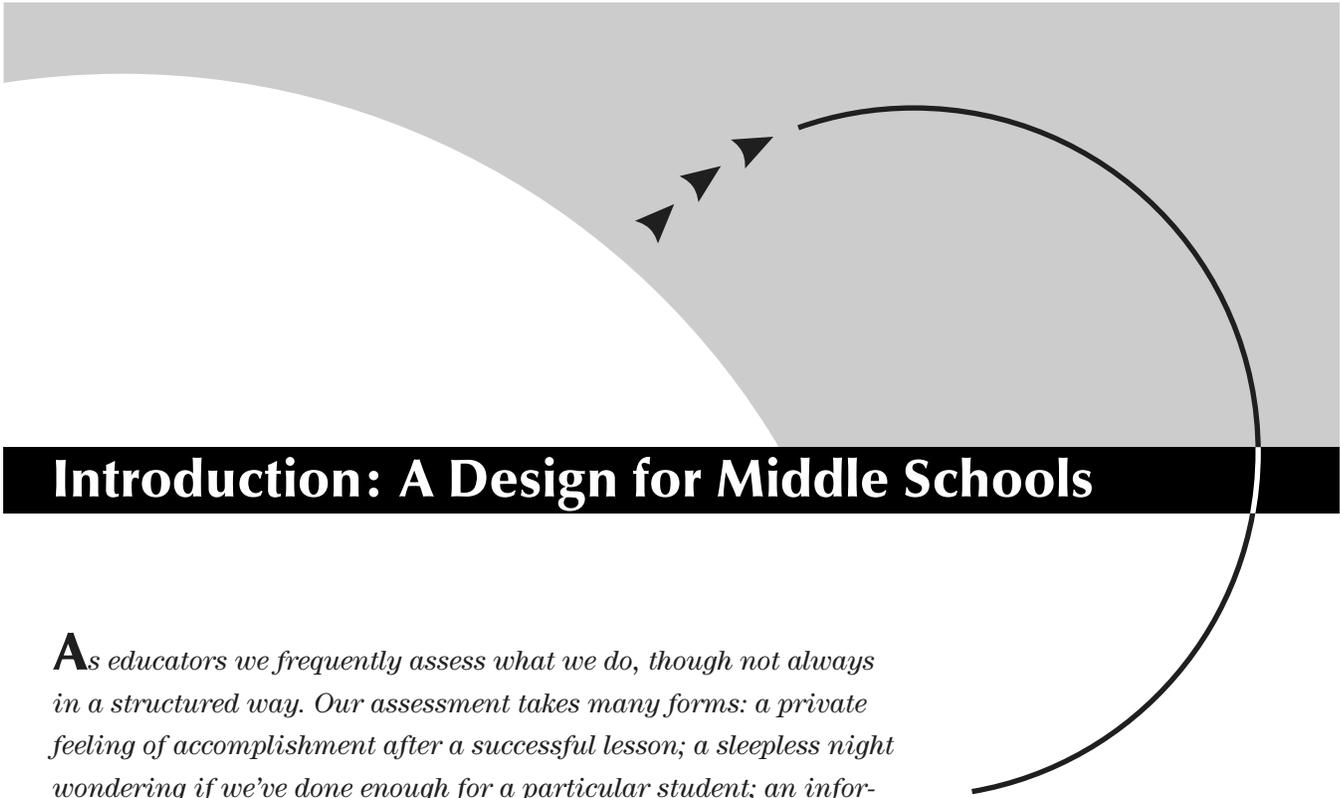
- Teach a curriculum grounded in rigorous, public academic standards, relevant to the concerns of adolescents and based on how students learn best
- Use instructional methods designed to prepare all students to achieve high standards and become lifelong learners
- Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents, and engage teachers in ongoing professional development
- Organize relationships for learning to create a climate of intellectual development and a caring community of shared educational purpose
- Govern democratically through direct or representative participation by all school staff members, the adults who know students best
- Provide a safe and healthy school environment as part of improving academic performance and developing caring and ethical citizens
- Involve parents and communities in supporting student learning and healthy development

Six practices translate these principles into action in each school and throughout a network of Turning Points schools in a district. Within each area of practice, teacher teams, a school leadership team, and faculty committees, engage in collaborative work.

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The Six Turning Points Practices

- **Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students:** working collaboratively to set high standards, close the achievement gap among students, develop curriculum that promotes habits of mind and intellectual inquiry, utilize a wide range of instructional strategies and approaches, emphasize the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- **Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture:** creating a democratic school community, fostering skills and practices of strong leadership, establishing regular common planning time, embedding professional development in the daily life of the school
- **Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making:** setting a vision based on the Turning Points principles, collecting and analyzing multiple sources of data to help improve areas that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment, setting annual measurable goals
- **Creating a School Culture to Support High Achievement and Personal Development:** creating structures that promote a culture of high-quality learning and teaching, establishing small learning communities, eliminating tracking, lowering student-teacher ratios, building parent and community partnerships
- **Networking with Like-minded Schools:** participating in network meetings, summer institutes, and forums; visiting other Turning Points schools
- **Developing District Capacity to Support School Change:** building district capacity through collaboration



Introduction: A Design for Middle Schools

As educators we frequently assess what we do, though not always in a structured way. Our assessment takes many forms: a private feeling of accomplishment after a successful lesson; a sleepless night wondering if we've done enough for a particular student; an informal discussion in the faculty room about materials we're using; a formal discussion during a meeting about curriculum. It is unlikely that a day goes by in our schools without some form of reflection about what we are doing. Are we effective? Are we attaining our goals?

We constantly use informal criteria to assess our work in schools. Yet we may have trouble describing exactly what measures we use to assess students or evaluate our own work. Benchmarks help us formalize our assessments of personal and professional actions and behavior.

What Are Benchmarks?

One crucial part of the Turning Points reform initiative calls for schools to reflect upon their progress in implementing the design on an ongoing basis. Although much of this reflection occurs informally during leadership team and small faculty committee meetings, schools also need to assess their progress periodically in a more formal and systematic way. These more formal assessments are based upon a clear set of criteria called **benchmarks**. Benchmarks are standards of success that tell us about a school's performance in relation to desired outcomes.

Benchmarks are standards of success that tell us about a school's performance in relation to desired outcomes.

As a tool for self-assessment, benchmarks provide schools with targets to move toward as they engage in school reform. Benchmarks help answer the question: *How far has the school progressed in implementing the principles and practices of the Turning Points design?*

Benchmarks allow teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to develop concise, critical, and shared definitions of achievement and performance. Using benchmarks supports the development of a school as a community of learners and embeds self-assessment in the daily life of the school.

TURNING POINTS BENCHMARKS

1

Are based on the Turning Points principles

2

Are organized around the Turning Points practices

3

Represent best practice as defined by the school's vision and the principles of the Turning Points design

4

Help the Turning Points school sustain change by focusing on a common vision

5

Focus on the evidence of where the school is in relation to the benchmarks rather than on making judgments

6

Enable teachers, administrators, and other members of the school community to understand their school more deeply

7

Point to where a school is headed as well as to where it may be falling short

8

Map out what needs to occur, indicating the different phases in becoming a Turning Points school

9

Are part of an ongoing assessment strategy that guides continuous improvement

How Are the Turning Points Benchmarks Organized?

The Turning Points benchmarks are organized around the six Turning Points practices. Each practice has several focus areas, and within each focus area are specific benchmarks. The benchmarks are arranged in four phases reflecting the school's progress on its way to becoming a Turning Points school. There are two sets of benchmarks: a set of **Full Benchmarks** (see pages 9–43) to be used for more comprehensive assessment and evaluation including the School Quality Review Process and other formal on-going reflection on progress; and a set of **Streamlined Benchmarks** (see pages 45–61) to be used in the Annual Assessment Process and other more informal ongoing reflection.

On the next page are partial examples of the **Full** and **Streamlined Benchmarks** for the first practice.

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

A Turning Points school will go through stages or phases of development as it grows and deepens its work. In broad strokes, these phases are described below.

Beginning Implementation (Phase I): This first-year phase typically indicates that a school has started on the path to becoming a Turning Points school. There is some understanding and commitment to the Turning Points model. The school has made a few changes that are consistent with the Turning Points principles and practices, but the level of change is neither in-depth nor school-wide. Initial structures are in place to support practices.

Partial Implementation (Phase II): This phase usually occurs in or after year two. During this time the school implements a number of additional practices, and the depth of change is greater. There is a well-defined plan for solving challenges and areas of growth. Although substantial progress has been made in Phase II, much more progress is still possible to ensure that the changes are long-lasting.

PARTIAL EXAMPLE OF THE FULL AND STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS FOR THE FIRST PRACTICE.

FULL BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS			
FOCUS AREA Equity and Access	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation
<i>High Standards for all students</i>	Disproportionate numbers of students are enrolled in low-level or special programs.	Some students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.	The majority of students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.
			PHASE IV Systemic Implementation All students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.

STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS			Overall Phase: _____
Focus Area: Equity and Access	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>High Standards for all students</i>	All students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.	<p>Student course matriculation disaggregated by ethnicity and gender (Incidence of grouping by race, gender, socioeconomic class to eliminate tracking).</p> <p>Student achievement on multiple authentic assessments and standardized tests.</p> <p>Teacher perceptions of student abilities and potential – Teachers believe that all students can learn and gain success</p>	

Demonstrating Implementation (Phase III): A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice. A majority of the school-wide structures are in place. When a school has reached Phase III, it can show good or excellent achievement of goals in most major areas and a sustained change clearly linked to adoption of the Turning Points principles and practices. However, the school does not yet have the capacity for the practices to be self-sustaining.

Systemic Implementation (Phase IV): In this phase an ideal picture emerges of significant or total change in all aspects outlined in the Turning Points practices. The Turning Points school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

NOTE ON PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION

It is important to note that there are two levels at which schools will use the benchmarks to reflect on and assess their progress. Schools will give themselves an overall rating for each of the four school-based Practices. In addition, schools will rate themselves on each of the individual strategies used within that Practice. In this way, schools can develop both a broad and detailed view of their practice.

A school may be in different phases across the different practice areas, or even in different phases within one practice. For example, a school may be in Phase I in *Data-based Inquiry*, having just begun to collect and analyze data. The same school may be in Phase II in *Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment*, having well-established teacher teams that regularly look at student work. Likewise, within the Practice area of *Improving Teaching, Learning, and Assessment For All Students*, a school may be at Phase III in the strategy *Closing the Achievement Gap*, but in Phase II in *Strategies to Address Student Diversity*.

How Are the Turning Points Benchmarks Used?

The benchmarks are a critical tool used throughout assessment processes such as the Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making practice and the School Quality Review. When you use the Turning Points benchmarks, you continuously assess your school's implementation of best teaching and learning practices, optimal use of resources to ensure a culture of high achievement and personal development,

family and community involvement in each child's education, and your school's relationship with other schools and the district administration. In Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making, benchmarks are used in focusing the vision, collecting and analyzing data and identifying challenges, action planning, and assessing progress annually. The following stages comprise this practice:



Focusing the Vision—Assess where the school is in relation to the Turning Points principles and how the school's vision can be shaped by the principles.



Collecting and Analyzing Data and Identifying Challenges—Analyze data collected from multiple sources, including the self-study survey. Identify differences between the vision and reality as well as key challenge or problem areas.



Action Planning—Inquire into problem areas that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment. Identify causes of problems and develop solutions and a plan of action. This process includes creation of ongoing study groups.



Annual Assessment—Use benchmarks to conduct a self-assessment. The leadership team conducts the initial assessment, and in subsequent years the whole faculty engages in the assessment. The process should take no more than 2–3 hours to a day. It does not involve actually collecting evidence, but rather citing evidence collected during the course of the year. This process should include setting specific, measurable annual goals for improving learning, teaching, and assessment. The *streamlined* benchmarks will be used in this process.

School Quality Review

The School Quality Review includes a school visit conducted by an external team to assess progress and inform school improvement planning. The School Quality Review visit complements the Turning Points school community's *internal* annual assessment with an *external* perspective on the school's progress toward its vision and Turning Points goals. The Review Team uses the full Turning Points Benchmarks in conducting its review and reporting its findings.

THE ROLE OF EVIDENCE

The focus for all the benchmarks is always on answering the question, “How are we doing?” To find this answer, Turning Points schools gather evidence. Often the same evidence can be used to support different benchmarks.

Here are a few examples of evidence. This list is by no means complete, and schools should provide other types of evidence when applicable.



Notices of study group meetings, leadership team minutes, and topics for faculty-wide discussions could all be evidence of professional collaboration, learning, and shared leadership.



Team meeting minutes, observations, and presentations may be evidence to assess changes relating to the following four practices: 1) Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for all Students; 2) Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture; 3) Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making; 4) Building a Culture of High Achievement and Personal Development.



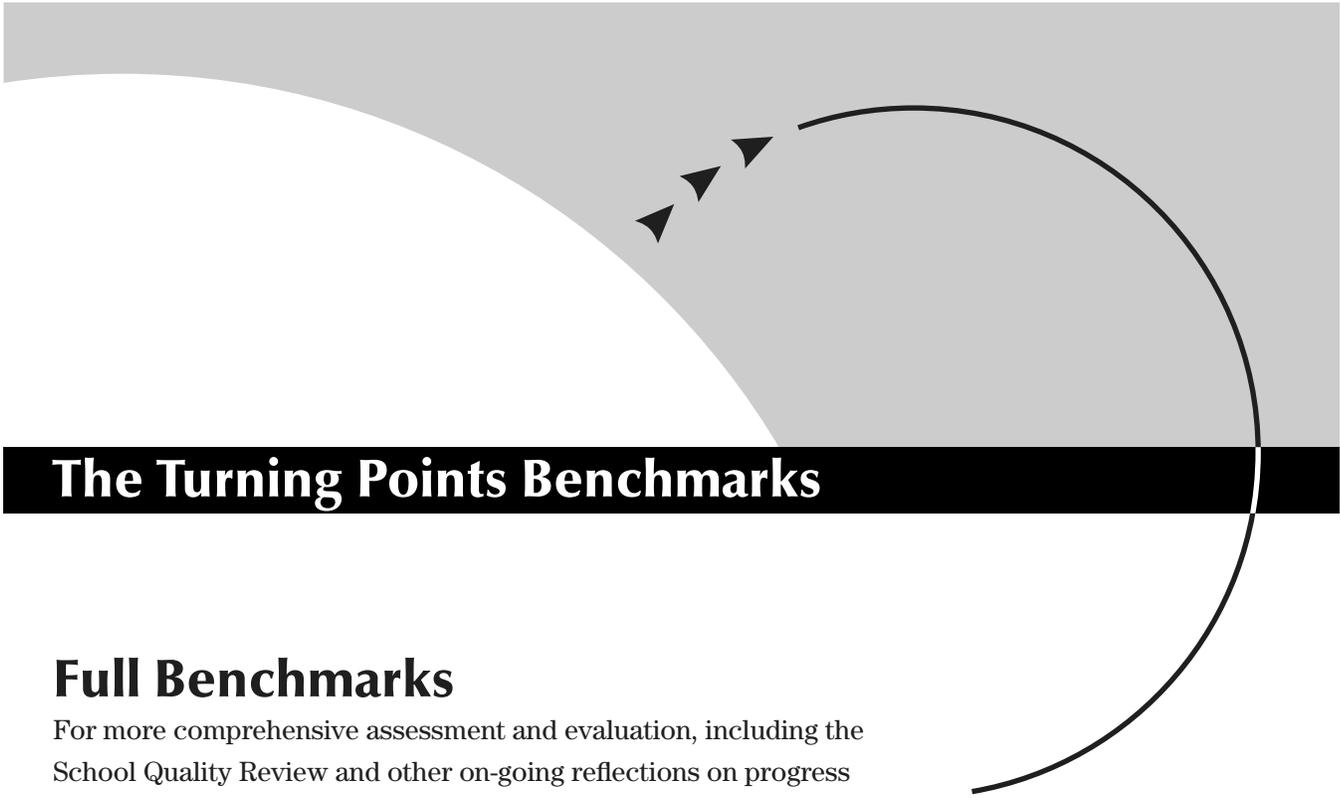
Improved results in state tests can also be evidence of changes in any of the practices named above.



Reviews of school documents, interviews, observations, student work, course and curriculum descriptions, teacher-and class-generated rubrics, culminating projects and tasks and achievement test results are sources of evidence for a range of practices.



Disaggregated data by race, achievement levels, gender, etc., showing class grouping patterns, attendance, discipline referrals, and drop-out rates may reflect progress in equity and diversity.



The Turning Points Benchmarks

Full Benchmarks

For more comprehensive assessment and evaluation, including the School Quality Review and other on-going reflections on progress

Practice 1: Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students

During the past year, groups of teachers at a number of Turning Points middle schools have been meeting with a Turning Points coach. At one such meeting at Brooks Middle School, teachers have come together for a ninety-minute session to look at student work and discuss means to improve students' persuasive writing skills. While some teachers are enthusiastic about the opportunity to use an inquiry process they had practiced during a recent Turning Points summer institute, others are skeptical that it will have any direct benefit for them as non-language arts teachers.

As the session proceeds, all the teachers are surprised that a close reading of student writing can reveal so much complexity. It becomes clear that, in addition to varied experiences with persuasive writing, students need direct instruction about types of evidence, kinds of appeals, structures of argument, etc. The conversation is rich and makes apparent connections across content areas. Among other discoveries, the teachers realize that they failed to point out to students that the effective use of evidence is common to geometrical proofs, the scientific method, and persuasive writing.

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Student learning will not improve unless schools continually focus on understanding the unique needs and capabilities of middle school students. Teachers need to set high expectations for every student and create curriculum and instruction that enable students to meet those expectations.

Set high expectations for every student.

Create curriculum and instruction that is rigorous, purposeful, and related to the real world.

Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students is the practice around which the other five practices are built. It involves teachers and teams in continuous collaborative work and planning to ensure that learning for all students is rigorous, purposeful, and related to the real world. In this practice, the school places a strong emphasis on integrating effective approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. On at least a weekly basis, teacher teams engage in activities such as setting standards and creating assessments for student achievement, incorporating standards into curriculum development, and looking collaboratively at student work to assess progress and improve instruction.

This practice includes:

- **Setting standards** that clearly and publicly identify what students should know and be able to do at each grade level
- **Closing the achievement gap** between white students and students of color and between low-income and more affluent students, and setting in place the necessary instruction and academic support to achieve this goal
- **Developing curriculum, framed around essential questions**, that assists students in meeting high standards
- **Promoting habits of mind and intellectual inquiry** that span all disciplines, (e.g., using evidence, making connections, and determining viewpoint)
- **Utilizing a wide range of instructional strategies and approaches** to meet the needs of all students
- **Adopting effective, intensive approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy to all students**

■ **Developing authentic and reliable assessments**, with clear performance criteria (rubrics), (e.g., exhibitions, portfolios, projects), to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they need to work on

■ **Looking collaboratively at student work** to assess student progress and improve instruction

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

Samples of student work from every content area and grade level from the fall and the spring demonstrate consistency of standards, evidence of curriculum and instruction designed to meet them, and student progress in meeting standards.

2

Notes and videotapes of classroom observations document a wide range of effective instructional approaches.

3

Course and curriculum descriptions demonstrate both depth and coverage in meeting standards.

4

Culminating projects and tasks are integrated into all courses.

5

Teacher- and class-generated rubrics are used for important skill areas such as writing. Student work demonstrates revision using rubrics and other forms of explicit criteria.

6

A “walk-through” of the school reveals students actively engaged in individual and group projects.

7

A wide range of reading material is visible in classrooms and is in use by students.

8

Improvement in standardized test scores is evident.

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS				
FOCUS AREA <i>Curriculum and Instruction</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Standards-based Curriculum Development</i>	Little or no standards-based curriculum planning and development, framed around essential questions, take place. Some teachers and teams are involved in curriculum mapping across grade levels. A few teachers are beginning to articulate clear standards and set rigorous goals for student achievement.	Some teachers (a) are involved in standards-based curriculum planning and development that is linked to school, district, and state standards and that is framed around essential questions; (b) are involved in curriculum mapping across grade levels, with attention to connections across disciplines, common goals, and habits of mind; and (c) articulate high standards and set clear, rigorous goals for student achievement.	A majority of teachers (a) are consistently involved in standards-based curriculum planning and development that is linked to school, district, and state standards and that is framed around essential questions; (b) are involved in curriculum mapping across grade levels, with attention to connections across disciplines, common goals, and habits of mind; and (c) articulate high standards and set clear, rigorous goals for student achievement.	Almost all teachers are involved in standards-based curriculum planning and development that is linked to school, district, and state standards and that is framed around essential questions. Curriculum mapping is prevalent school-wide across grade levels with a goal of curriculum coherence. Almost all teachers articulate high standards and set clear, rigorous goals for student achievement.
<i>Habits of Mind and Intellectual Inquiry</i>	A few teachers are beginning to embed habits of mind in their curriculum (e.g., using evidence, making connections, and determining viewpoint). Little or no project-based learning and extended in-depth learning units is implemented.	Some teachers are beginning to embed habits of mind that span some disciplines. A few teachers implement project-based learning and extended in-depth learning units.	A majority of teachers embed habits of mind that span most disciplines in project-based learning and extended in-depth learning units.	Almost all teachers embed habits of mind and intellectual inquiry that span all disciplines. Almost all teachers use project-based learning and/or extended in-depth learning units.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place. Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Varied Instructional and Learning Strategies</i>	A few teachers model a few effective and varied instructional strategies.	Some teachers and administrators model varied, effective instructional practices. There is some evidence of a clearly articulated school-wide theory of teaching and learning.	The majority of teachers and administrators model varied, effective instructional practices. There is substantial evidence of a clearly articulated school-wide theory of teaching and learning.	Almost all teachers and administrators model varied effective instructional practices based on a clearly articulated school-wide theory of teaching and learning.
<i>Intensive Approaches to Literacy and Numeracy</i>	The school is beginning to develop a focus on the Turning Points approaches to literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.	Some teachers are using the Turning Points approaches to integrate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.	The majority of teachers are using the Turning Points approaches to integrate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.	Almost all teachers are using the Turning Points approaches to integrate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices
Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater
Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.
Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>High Achievement for All Students</i>	Commitment to providing equal learning opportunities to all students is reflected in the school's mission and vision. Few school-wide structures aimed at reducing achievement gaps among students are in place.	Commitment to providing equal learning opportunities to all students is reflected in the school's mission and vision. Some school-wide initiatives and structures are designed to reduce achievement gaps and provide equal learning opportunities to students.	A majority of school-wide initiatives and structures are designed to reduce achievement gaps and provide equal learning opportunities to students.	Almost all school-wide initiatives and structures are designed to reduce achievement gaps and provide equal learning opportunities to students. Almost all school stakeholders share a common goal of reducing achievement gaps among all students.
<i>High Standards for All Students</i>	Disproportionate numbers of students are enrolled in low-level or special programs.	Some students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.	A majority of students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.	All students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all.
<i>Strategies to Address Student Diversity</i>	The school provides few experiences that address diverse needs, interests, and student backgrounds. Some teachers use appropriate strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of students.	The school provides some inclusive experiences that address diverse needs, interests, and student backgrounds. Some teachers are sensitive to the unique needs of their students and apply a variety of approaches to help each student learn.	The school provides a number of inclusive experiences that address diverse needs, interests, and student backgrounds. A majority of teachers are sensitive to the unique needs of their students and apply a variety of approaches to help each student learn.	The school provides a variety of inclusive settings and experiences that address diverse needs, interests, and backgrounds. Almost all teachers are sensitive to the unique needs of their students and apply a variety of approaches to help each student learn.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place. Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS				
FOCUS AREA Assessment	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Authentic and Reliable Assessment (Demonstration of Learning)</i>	Student learning is regularly assessed but a limited number of assessment strategies are used.	Student learning is regularly assessed. Some authentic assessment strategies (including portfolios, exhibitions, and demonstrations) are being used in some grades and disciplines. Some teachers require students to display mastery of academic and social skills in school and real life situations.	A number of authentic assessment strategies (including portfolios, exhibitions, and demonstrations) are being used in most grades and disciplines. A majority of teachers require students to display mastery of academic and social skills in school and real life situations.	Continuous assessments, linked to clearly identified standards, are conducted using multiple assessment authentic strategies (such as portfolios, exhibitions, and demonstrations) in all disciplines and grades. Almost all teachers require students to display mastery of academic and social skills in school and real life situations.
<i>Looking at Student and Teacher Work (LASW, LATW)</i>	A few teachers are beginning to look at student work collaboratively and to discuss varied approaches to teaching and assessment by focusing on teacher work.	Some teachers have frequent, scheduled opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in looking at student and teacher work using some protocols and assessment strategies.	A majority of teachers have frequent, scheduled opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in looking at student and teacher work using some protocols and assessment strategies.	Almost all teachers have frequent, scheduled opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in looking at student and teacher work to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment, using a wide variety of protocols and assessment strategies.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices
Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater
Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.
Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS				
FOCUS AREA <i>Assessment (continued)</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Criteria and Reporting</i>	The school has criteria for assessing student work, but is working to make them written, consistent, and public.	Criteria for assessing students' work are written, and known by some parents and students. Student progress is reported occasionally in writing to parents and students.	Criteria for assessing students' work are written, consistent, and known by most parents and students. Student progress is reported more regularly in writing to parents and students.	Criteria for assessing students' work are written, consistent, and known by all parents and students and community members. Student progress is reported consistently in writing to parents and students.

Benchmarks

Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices

Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater

Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.

Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

Practice 2: Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture

In the Ryan School, teachers feel they are working collaboratively toward the common goal of ensuring high student achievement. Their collaboration includes the following:



Observing each other's teaching and using a structured protocol to help one another improve



Participating in various study groups to look at instructional and administrative issues affecting the school and all learners



Conducting regular curriculum roundtables to share effective practices for improving teaching, learning, and assessment



Sharing decision making through an effective leadership team

When the faculty is asked why they function together so well, they emphasize the support and professional development opportunities which sustain the changes in structures, processes, and values that have been essential to the success of the school's reform efforts.

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Achieving improvement in learning, teaching, and assessment for all students requires strong, shared leadership and a school culture in which adults collaborate effectively. Schools in which faculty interaction is collegial and teacher talk and collaboration are focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment experience significant improvement in student achievement.

This practice includes:



Creating a democratic school community, including shared decision making, through a representative leadership team and involving all faculty in making high-impact decisions affecting student learning.



Fostering the skills and practices of strong leadership among administrators and teachers to manage and facilitate change and to stay focused on improving teaching and learning. This includes collec-

Create structures that support shared leadership and collaboration.

tively creating and sustaining a shared vision, developing a collaborative school culture, and working together to solve problems.



Establishing regular common planning time dedicated to talking about learning and teaching.



Establishing teams that have specific purposes, performance goals, and norms for operating.



Embedding professional development in the daily life of the school through practices such as teacher study groups that explore important classroom questions, peer observation that promotes collegial feedback, and collaboratively looking at student work.



Building the faculty's capacity to look constructively and critically at teacher work including engaging in collective curriculum and instructional planning, developing and using strategies for collaboratively looking at teacher assignments, using peer observation, and modeling best practices.

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

Notes and observations of teacher common planning time meetings demonstrate a focus on teaching and learning and effective use of time.

2

Interviews and/or surveys of teachers reveal that they feel planning time and professional development activities support their professional growth.

3

Notices of study group meetings, leadership team minutes, and topics for faculty-wide discussions are all indicators of professional collaboration, adult learning, and participation in governance.

4

Leadership team meeting minutes indicate regular opportunities for all faculty to provide input on school-wide issues and decisions.

5

All established teams have a defined purpose, measurable performance goals, and norms by which all members operate.

6

A structure and protocol are in place for regular peer observation among faculty.

7

Coaches' logs reflect a wide variety of professional development activities.

8

A schedule of in-school and out of school professional development activities is posted.

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE				
FOCUS AREA Leadership	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Commitment to Shared Vision</i>	Leadership has developed a school vision, which is consistent with the Turning Points principles and practices; however, it is not reflected in all documents (handbooks, curriculum guides, orientation material, etc.).	Leadership promotes a commitment to and ensures that the school vision, which is consistent with the Turning Points principles and practices, is reflected in most documents (handbooks, curriculum guides, orientation material, etc.). This vision is generally evident in decision making, policy development, instructional practices, strategic planning, and other interactions throughout the school.	Leadership promotes a commitment to and ensures that the school vision, which is consistent with the Turning Points principles and practices, is embedded in all documents (handbooks, curriculum guides, orientation material, etc.). This vision is more substantially evident in decision making, policy development, instructional practices, strategic planning, and other interactions throughout the school.	Leadership continually reinforces a commitment to the school vision, which is consistent with the Turning Points principles and practices, and ensures that it is embedded in all documents (handbooks, curriculum guides, orientation material etc.). This vision is consistently present in decision making, policy development, instructional practices, strategic planning, and other interactions throughout the school.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices
Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater
Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.
Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Democratic School Community</i>	The principal is the primary decision-maker, but a leadership team has been established. Some attempts are being made to develop leadership capacity among faculty.	Some of the faculty feel included in decision making through the faculty-wide, representative leadership team and other structures. The Leadership Team meets more regularly. Some opportunities are provided to build faculty leadership capacity. Some opportunities exist for wider school-community to provide input in school-wide decision-making process.	The majority of the faculty are included in decision making through the faculty-wide, representative leadership team and other structures. More opportunities are provided to build faculty leadership capacity. More opportunities exist for wider school-community to provide input in school-wide decision-making process.	Democratic and shared decision-making exists at all levels. The leadership team has the autonomy and responsibility to facilitate significant decisions regarding school structures, instructional practices, personnel, budget, professional development, and resources. Significant opportunities are provided to build faculty leadership capacity and to allow for faculty input on decisions. Wider school community provides input for school-wide decisions.
<i>Allocate Resources to Support Learning</i>	The school's leadership has begun to examine its allocation of resources in light of its learning goals.	The school has begun to make decisions about allocating resources, including funding for professional development, teaching staff, and release time, based on a school-wide comprehensive plan for improving student learning.	The school makes most decisions about allocating resources based on a school-wide comprehensive plan for improving student learning.	The school makes almost all decisions about allocating resources based on a school-wide comprehensive plan for improving student learning.

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PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Effective Communication</i>	The school's leadership is beginning to communicate effectively with the whole school community but does not yet have strong relationships with students, faculty, families, and other community members.	To some extent, the school's leadership communicates effectively with the whole school community. They are in the process of establishing good relationships with students, faculty, families, and other community members.	For the most part, leadership and faculty communicates effectively with the whole school community. They have established good relationships with students, faculty, families, and other community members.	The school's leadership and faculty communicates effectively with the whole school community and establishes and maintains strong, effective relationships with students, faculty, families, and other community members.
<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	Administrators provide little support to teachers around teaching, learning, and assessment.	Some administrators, team leaders, and lead teachers engage some faculty in structured ways to provide support for teaching, learning, and assessment and for modeling good practice.	A majority of administrators, team leaders, and lead teachers engage most faculty in a structured way to provide ongoing support for teaching, learning, and assessment and for modeling good practice.	Almost all administrators, team leaders, and lead teachers consistently model learning and designate time each day to work with teachers and participate in classroom activities to build teacher capacity and improve teaching and learning.

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PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Multiple Opportunities for Collaboration and Planning</i>	Some teachers have scheduled common planning time and are beginning to use it to talk about learning, teaching, and assessment (Activities include peer observation, LASW, LATW, and action research).	Most teachers and administrators are involved in planning at least 45 minutes once a week. The teams are learning to use common planning time effectively to support learning, teaching, and assessment (Activities include peer observation, LASW, LATW, and action research).	The majority of teachers and administrators are involved in common planning at least 45 minutes three times a week. For the most part this time is used effectively to support learning, teaching, and assessment (Activities include peer observation, LASW, LATW, and action research).	Almost all teachers and administrators are involved in regular common planning at least 45 minutes three to five times a week. This time is used effectively to support learning, teaching, and assessment (Activities include peer observation, LASW, LATW, and action research).
<i>Embedding Professional Development in the Daily Life of the School</i>	Some professional development is initiated as teachers begin to focus on planning a standards-based curriculum, developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, looking at student work, and implementing an integrated literacy and numeracy model across the curriculum.	Professional development is becoming more embedded in day-to-day activities through practices such as study groups. Planning a standards-based curriculum, developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, LASW, conducting peer observation, and implementing an integrated literacy and numeracy model across the curriculum all take place regularly and are nearly school-wide, but more time needs to be allocated.	Professional development is embedded in daily activities through practices such as study groups, team meetings and dedicated workshops. Standards-based curriculum is ongoing and involves most faculty. Developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, looking at student work, conducting peer observation, and implementing an integrated literacy and numeracy model across the curriculum all take place consistently and are school-wide.	Regular and consistent school-wide professional development is embedded in day-to-day activities through practices such as study groups. Planning a standards-based curriculum, developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, looking at student work, conducting peer observation, and implementing an integrated literacy and numeracy model across the curriculum take place throughout the school year. Ample time is set aside for these practices.

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PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Teaming</i>	Teams have been established but few have a defined purpose, clear goals, or norms by which to operate.	Some teams have a well-defined purpose, clear goals, and norms by which team members operate.	Most teams have a well-defined purpose, clear goals, and norms by which team members operate.	<p>Almost all team activities are consistent with Turning Points principles and practices and are focused on learning and teaching.</p> <p>All teams have a well-defined purpose, clear goals, and norms by which team members operate.</p>

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Practice 3: Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making

At an afternoon spring meeting, the Duncan Middle School faculty sat in small groups, poring over multiple sources of data, including data from the student and faculty Self-Study Survey about all areas of the school. One group was comparing what faculty had reported were effective instructional practices with what faculty and students stated were the most common forms of instruction actually practiced in the classroom. Another group was busy analyzing the reasons that the school most often contacts parents. A third was comparing teachers' expectations of students to students' expectations of themselves. A fourth group was comparing an analysis of standardized test results with actual student work samples. As a result of this meeting, faculty members identified key challenge areas in the school and formed faculty study groups to investigate, recommend, and implement school-wide solutions.

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making provides a comprehensive picture of a school's strengths and challenges. This practice encourages school-wide participation in thoughtful decisions for improvement. To set its vision and discover its strengths and challenges, a school engages in data-based inquiry and decision making by collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources. It creates and implements action plans to address priorities within the challenge areas, while continually assessing progress. In a highly implemented Turning Points school, this process is not static, but ongoing and cyclical.

A key data-gathering tool used by all Turning Points schools is the Self-Study Survey developed and administered by the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois. Teachers, students, and administrators complete a comprehensive survey that addresses a wide range of domains including learning, teaching, and assessment, teaming, leadership and decision making, school climate, and student behavior and adjustment. Schools then use the findings, along with student achievement and other data, to set goals and objectives for annual school improvement plans.

Collect and analyze data from a variety of sources to discover a school's strengths and challenge areas.

Broadly, this practice includes:



Setting a vision for the school that is based on the Turning Points principles and on what students should know and be able to do upon exiting the school



Collecting and analyzing multiple sources of data, including the Self-Study Survey. In this survey, data is disaggregated by race, gender, and income status. Schools also analyze differences between vision and reality.



Inquiring into areas for improvement that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment. This inquiry leads to identifying causes of problems and to developing solutions and a plan of action.



Setting annual measurable goals for improving learning, teaching, and assessment

PRACTICE 3: DATA-BASED INQUIRY AND DECISION MAKING

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

A comprehensive school plan incorporates references to data from multiple sources: achievement data, self-study charts, focus groups, attendance, drop-out, and discipline records, etc.

2

Opportunities are scheduled for all faculty groups to look at and analyze data.

3

A school portfolio that demonstrates student achievement and progress through a wide range of measures and evidence of learning.

4

Comprehensive, accurate data are easily and readily accessible to all school and community stakeholders.

5

Faculty committee meeting minutes indicate frequent reference to the school's data.

6

Proposals for change are brought before the Leadership Team and the whole faculty by study groups organized around challenge areas.

7

Clear and measurable performance goals are well publicized and known by teachers, students, parents, and the broader community.

8

Faculty engage individually, in teams, and school-wide in action research which informs planning, curriculum development, learning and teaching.

PRACTICE 3: DATA-BASED INQUIRY AND DECISION MAKING

FOCUS AREA <i>Data collection, analysis, and use</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<p><i>Using the Data-Based Inquiry and Decision-Making process</i></p>	<p>The school is beginning to collect and analyze some data, with some faculty involvement. The school leadership has begun to use data in identifying challenges to improve student learning. There is no annual assessment of progress. The Data-Based Inquiry and Decision-Making process is not central to the school's improvement planning.</p>	<p>Some faculty are involved in this process through study groups, in which they collect and analyze a greater range and depth of data to identify challenges and develop solutions. Some data collection and analysis informs decision making and the school's improvement plan, especially around student learning. Data is collected from more than one source, including the Turning Points Self-Study Survey. Solutions are not yet implemented school-wide. The Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making process informs some school improvement planning.</p>	<p>A majority of the faculty are involved in study groups which conduct regular data collection and analysis that informs on-going decision-making and the school's improvement plan. More intensive data collection and analysis occurs and is used to solve problems, guide change efforts, and enhance school and student performance. Data is collected from many sources, including the Turning Points Self-Study Survey. The Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making process informs most school improvement planning.</p>	<p>All faculty and administration are involved in ongoing study groups that collect and analyze data from multiple sources (including the Turning Points Self-Study Survey) to provide a comprehensive picture of a school's strengths and challenges. Collection and analysis inform the inquiry process and decision making, and they enhance school and student performance. The Data-Based Inquiry and Decision-Making process is ongoing and is central to the school's improvement planning.</p>
<p><i>Using Disaggregated Data</i></p>	<p>The school is beginning to disaggregate data by race, gender, income status, special needs, English language learners, and other key groups, and to use the information to create greater equity in learning for all students.</p>	<p>The school uses disaggregated data for some of its Data-Based Inquiry, with the goal of creating greater equity in learning for all students.</p>	<p>Disaggregated data is used extensively by a majority of faculty as they make decisions that create greater equity in learning for all students.</p>	<p>The ongoing collection and analysis of disaggregated data is embedded in the Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making process with the clear focus on creating greater equity in learning for all students.</p>

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Practice 4: Creating a School Culture to Support High Achievement and Personal Development

At the beginning of 1998, Willard Middle School was reorganized so that teams of teachers would share the same students. Each team of two teachers, specializing in different subject areas, began working with a group of 45 students. Members of the same team were assigned neighboring classrooms. A regular schedule of one-hour meetings, three times a week, was set. For at least one meeting per week, a Turning Points coach joined the team. Together they coordinated curriculum planning, designed lessons around common themes and concepts, began looking collaboratively at student work, diagnosed learning problems and challenges facing specific students, and made team decisions on how best to solve problems. They also scheduled regular parent conferences and meetings with students. These activities were supplemented with informal conversations between team members and with peer observation whenever the schedule allowed it.

On these teams, teachers felt united in their concern for students and in their attempts to ensure high achievement and personal development among all students. As one teacher expressed, “I just feel there is no time here at school when we’re not talking about something that will benefit all the kids on our team. We are like a family.” Another teacher said, “If I become aware of a problem, it is vital for me to communicate with other members of our team about the student and the problem. On our team we are constantly focused on helping students and each other. Because we all teach the same students, we can provide and get lots of help.”

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Turning Points schools focus resources of time, money, and personnel on improving teaching and learning. Teams of teachers form small communities of learning in which they share responsibility for the same group of students. This teamwork helps create a school culture that supports learning and achievement at the same time that it nurtures relationships between adults and students. In addition to a rigorous academic program, there is a strong focus on the development of students’ character, creativity, and health.

Turning Points schools focus resources of time, money, and personnel on improving teaching and learning.

Schedules that allow for common planning time and longer blocks of learning time; elimination of tracking; lower student-teacher ratios; and parent and community partnerships are all examples of improvements that help promote high-quality teaching and learning.

This practice includes:

Learning Communities

- Fostering school norms of decency, trust, and respect
- Establishing small learning communities with common planning time for faculty teams and longer blocks of learning time for students
- Ensuring that students develop strong, caring relationships with adults in the school

Grouping

- Eliminating tracking and rigid-ability grouping to ensure greater equity in learning opportunities and results
- Lowering teachers' student loads, with a goal of one teacher having no more than 80 students

Supporting Student Development

- Building parent-community partnerships so that parents and the community become more involved in decision making and student learning
- Providing opportunities for students to develop character, creativity, and health
- Providing academic support to students who need it
- Ensuring access to health services
- Building positive relationships between different groups of students

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

Every student and teacher is fully dedicated to a small learning community.

2

Higher attendance, fewer discipline referrals, and lower drop-out rates are reported.

3

Schedules include longer blocks of learning and regular teacher common planning time.

4

Heterogeneous groups are the norm and no tracking exists.

5

Interviews and/or surveys of students reveal that they feel known and cared for by a significant number of adults in the school, and that they have a significant role in the school.

6

Structures for academic support and health and social services, such as conference logs and schedules, are in place and are utilized by many students.

7

Records of student involvement and active participation in classroom and school activities and governance.

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Small Learning Communities</i>	Some teachers work in teams to create small, personalized learning communities. Some attempt is made at reducing teacher-student loads. Most teachers still have loads of over 100 students.	Most students are in small learning communities to meet individual academic, social, physical, and emotional needs. Some reduction in teacher loads has been made, but teachers still have over 80 students.	All students are in small learning communities to meet individual academic, social, physical, and emotional needs. Substantial reduction in teacher loads has been made, but some teachers still have over 80 students.	The school is reconfigured into small learning communities that provide a safe, supportive environment in which every student interacts with a core group of adults who teach, advise, and interact with them meaningfully. No teacher has more than 80 students.
<i>Flexible Schedules</i>	Plans are being made to support flexible scheduling.	Longer learning blocks are in place, but they are rarely used to support flexible scheduling.	Longer learning blocks are in place. Most teams use flexible scheduling and longer blocks of time to support varied instructional approaches.	Longer learning blocks are used to provide diverse learning opportunities. All teacher teams use time more flexibly to maximize varied instructional approaches.
<i>School Culture of Collaboration, Decency, Trust, and Respect</i>	The school is beginning to focus on developing collegiality and norms of caring, mutual respect, and trust. Teachers have begun to learn about students' home cultures.	Some sense of community and the development of collegiality, caring, mutual respect, trust, and support are incorporated into the curriculum. Some teachers include students' home cultures in their curriculum.	The majority of school staff and students feel that the concepts of community, caring, mutual respect, and support are incorporated in the curriculum. Most students and teachers are engaged in an ongoing exploration of each other's cultures.	Community, caring, mutual respect, and support are embedded in the curriculum and throughout the school in daily activities among students and faculty. Almost all students and teachers are engaged in an ongoing exploration of each other's cultures.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place. Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

FOCUS AREA <i>Learning Communities, Grouping, and Supporting Student Development (continued)</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Student Voice, Responsibility, and Leadership</i>	The school is beginning to focus on strengthening the role of students in their learning, and in improving the culture of the school. They have begun to identify ways to involve students in developing curriculum and instruction that is influenced by students' interests and concerns. They have also begun to consider students' roles in decision-making and governance, and in service to the school community.	Some teachers have begun to involve students in making decisions about their learning and in developing classroom norms and structures. Some students believe they have a voice and role in the school through a variety of means. Some students take responsibility for service to the school community.	The majority of teachers involve students in making decisions about their learning and in developing class norms and structures. The majority of students believe they have a voice and role in the school through a variety of means. The majority of students take responsibility for service to the school community.	Meaningful involvement of students in shaping their learning and the culture of the school is embedded throughout the school. All teachers and students believe that developing students' voice, leadership, and responsibility is a critical part of education. Almost all students are involved at multiple levels of classroom and school community leadership and service.

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PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
<i>Eliminating Tracking</i>	Tracked levels exist but there is an intent to eliminate tracking.	There is some evidence of flexible grouping, heterogeneous groups, and a reduction in tracking that ensures more access to learning and teaching for students.	Flexible grouping, heterogeneous groups, and a substantial reduction in tracking are mostly in place, and ensures greater access to learning and teaching for most students.	Flexible grouping, heterogeneous groups, and elimination of rigid-ability grouping and tracking ensure optimal access to learning and teaching for all students.
<i>Curriculum and Instruction Addresses Students' Personal Development</i>	The school's mission recognizes the uniqueness, importance, and formative nature of the student's stage of development. There is little focus on arts, social responsibility, health, fitness etc. in the core curriculum.	The school is developing more curricular and instructional approaches that are sensitive to the developmental needs of the middle school student. Programs such as advisory groups and/or mentoring allow students to develop strong relationships with adults in the building. There is greater focus on arts, social responsibility, health, fitness etc. in the core curriculum.	Most curricular and instructional approaches are sensitive to the developmental needs of the middle school student. Programs such as advisory groups and/or mentoring allow students to develop strong relationships with adults in the building. The core curriculum focuses on arts, social responsibility, health, fitness aligned to academic needs of students.	The school has balanced its rigorous academic program for all students with electives and after-school programs that meet students' academic and development needs. Programs such as advisory groups and/or mentoring allow students to develop strong relationships with adults in the building. Significant focus on arts, social responsibility, health, fitness etc. is embedded in the core curriculum.
<i>Academic Support</i>	Some academic support, such as after school and summer programs, is provided.	Academic support is provided to greater numbers of students who need it.	Appropriate academic support is provided to most numbers of students who need it. A variety of structures are provided.	Comprehensive, individually focused academic support is provided for all students who need it. A wide variety of structures are provided.

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PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

FOCUS AREA <i>Partnerships</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<p><i>Family Partnerships</i></p> <p>The importance of the home-school connection is beginning to be articulated, although few actual home-school activities are taking place.</p> <p>Standards and expectations held for all students are communicated to families and the wider community.</p>	<p>The home-school connection is emphasized beyond solving problems related to student behavior. There is some family involvement in areas such as homework and learning at home, school exhibitions, and school programs on parental education to support young adolescents. A number of opportunities exist for students, teachers, and guardians to interact.</p>	<p>The home-school connection addresses issues related to student behavior, academic achievement, personal development, and whole school change. There is considerable parental involvement in areas such as homework and learning at home, school exhibitions, and school programs on family education to support young adolescents. A greater number of opportunities exist for students, teachers, and parents to interact.</p>	<p>The home-school connection is very strong and most parents are active participants in their children's education. Most families are continually involved in school governance, curriculum issues, and their children's social and personal development.</p> <p>There are numerous opportunities for students, teachers, and parents and guardians to interact through student-led parent conferences, learning at home, and school exhibitions.</p>	

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PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT				
FOCUS AREA	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Community Partnerships</i>	The school has established few or no community partnerships that support the vision and mission of the school.	The school has established some partnerships and operational relationships with social service agencies, business partners, and community organizations. These links support the vision and mission of the school, but they could be strengthened.	The school has established more significant partnerships and operational relationships with social service agencies, business partners, and community organizations. These links support the vision and mission of the school.	The school has established substantial partnerships and operational relationships with many social service agencies, business partners, colleges and universities, and community organizations to enhance high achievement. All partnerships, which integrated with the daily life of the school, support and sustain the vision and mission of the school.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices

Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater

Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.

Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

Practice 5: Networking with Like-minded Schools

In February middle school administrators and teachers are gathered as representative leadership teams for the second Boston Turning Points Network meeting to develop skills and strategies for aligning standards with integrated units. Teachers and administrators from different member schools form teams. The structure of the day models what the leadership teams will do when they return to their schools.

The approach that the facilitator presents establishes a connection between a common concept or theme and the skills, standards, and content required in each discipline.

Each team begins by identifying essential skills students need in their lives and in the future job market. This identification directs teachers' thinking about activities needed to support the mastery of vital skills and the development of certain qualities. The responses of all teams point to the benefits of integrated curriculum development anchored by school, city-wide, or state standards.

For an hour and a half, as teachers continue to work in teams, principals meet separately to discuss how administrators can best support integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum development and planning. The principals first identify barriers they encounter when implementing interdisciplinary curriculum development and planning. The group then brainstorms strategies to tackle these barriers, including ideas on structures and processes to support teachers' efforts. These school leaders feel that promoting advocacy, creating time for common planning, sharing guides and outlines, and modeling good practice are important components of a committed, school-wide effort to support teachers who are undertaking integrated interdisciplinary curriculum development and planning.

Turning Points schools participate in a network of schools that share a common philosophy and vision.

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Participation in a regional network of schools strengthens a school's efforts to improve student learning. In the Turning Points network, schools share a common philosophy and vision, work collaboratively on common issues, and develop mutually beneficial relationships. The network offers the opportunity to develop strong collegial relationships with other schools and to share ideas and strategies. Turning Points schools participate in a range of regional network activities.

This practice includes participation in:

- **School-year network meetings** for leadership teams
- **Summer institutes** on leadership, and on learning, teaching, and assessment
- **Critical friends' visits with other schools** to provide feedback on key issues of learning, teaching, and assessment
- **Principal network meetings**
- **National conference** on sharing successful Turning Points practices
- **Forums** to promote and share strategies for school change and to influence the public's support for democratic and equitable schools

PRACTICE 5: NETWORKING WITH LIKE-MINDED SCHOOLS

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

Teaching and learning strategies are adopted by one school after observing and documenting them in another school.

2

Written feedback from critical friends' visits is reflected in the goals and plans of the host school.

3

Faculty from different schools meet on a more frequent and informal basis.

4

There is regular attendance at network-organized professional development activities.

5

Individuals and teams attending institutes and other professional development activities of the network present reports and other forms of feedback to the faculty.

PRACTICE 5: NETWORKING WITH LIKE-MINDED SCHOOLS				
FOCUS AREA <i>Professional and Community Links</i>	PHASE I <i>Beginning Implementation</i>	PHASE II <i>Partial Implementation</i>	PHASE III <i>Demonstrating Implementation</i>	PHASE IV <i>Systemic Implementation</i>
<i>Participate in Local and National Network</i>	The school is a member of the Turning Points network and other professional networks, although few faculty participate in these networks.	A number of teachers and administrators participate in the activities of the networks for mutual benefit of their school and the other members of the networks.	A number of teachers and administrators participate in the activities of the networks for mutual benefit of their school and the other members of the networks. Some faculty begin to contribute as presenters, facilitators, and “critical friends.”	Many teachers and administrators participate in the activities of local, regional, national Turning Points, and other networks for mutual benefit of their school and the other members of the network. A significant number of faculty contribute as presenters, facilitators, and “critical friends.”
<i>Links with Other Schools</i>	Faculty undertake a few visits to other school sites, although lessons from these visits are rarely shared with other faculty.	Increasing incidence of visits to other school sites include some teachers and administrators. Lessons are sometimes shared with faculty and integrated into school plans and activities.	Many teachers and administrators are involved in reciprocal visits to other school sites. Lessons are shared with most of the faculty and integrated into school plans and activities.	Reciprocal visits to schools as part of the Critical Friends Visits, walkthroughs, and collaborative professional development occur regularly. Feedback, shared experiences, and lessons are continually shared with other faculty and integrated into practice.

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place. Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

Practice 6: Developing District Capacity to Support School Change

The Turning Points regional center sent a letter to all the middle schools in the district inviting them to join a new Turning Points network. The goal was to get all or most of the middle schools in the district involved in the network so that as they gathered and shared data, they would also be able to speak as one voice to the central office and the school committee. Sixteen of the twenty-three schools decided to join the network. Mr. Michaels, president of the Middle School Principals' Association, invited the regional center staff to work with the association to help them build a strong advocacy relationship with the district.

The middle schools used to be represented in the central office, but in recent years there was no advocate downtown. When the Turning Points initiative was introduced in the district, middle school principals saw it as an opportunity to gain support and to have a formal organization that would advocate for middle school students. The question that emerged in the early discussions was how best to develop this advocacy with the district central office.

Working with the Turning Points regional center, the principals decided that the first step was to develop a clear, shared vision based on the Turning Points principles that all middle schools could support. The Association would then present the vision to the Superintendent and ask him to take it to the school committee for approval. While the adoption of the vision statement will not produce dramatic changes in structures or funding, it will help the middle school principals and teachers advocate for the very specific needs of early adolescents.

ABOUT THIS PRACTICE

Schools have a greater chance of improving student learning if the district supports middle grade reform efforts to promote effective instruction and a learning community. Effective district administrations model and support the kind of risk-taking and change that is expected of schools. All stakeholders in a Turning Points district share the responsibility for change and improvement of student learning.

When districts adopt the Turning Points design for a group of middle schools, they also commit to reshaping their own central practices,

Turning Points schools commit to middle grade reform efforts at the district level.

policies, and responsibilities to better serve schools embarking on change. Turning Points schools are dedicated to creating a new vision of public schools and districts in which schools are provided maximum flexibility to create dynamic and challenging learning environments. In this vision the role of the school district is recast to provide these schools with increased support to ensure their success.

Districts in which middle schools are engaged in Turning Points reform commit to pursuing the following focus areas:

- **Building the district capacity** to better support whole-school change (e.g., developing vision, refocusing district staff roles to support school change, and redirecting resources)
- **Collaborating with the schools** to pursue means of flexibility and autonomy that allow the school to be more innovative (e.g., lump-sum budgeting, policy flexibility, staffing flexibility)

PRACTICE 6: DEVELOPING DISTRICT CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SCHOOL CHANGE

Examples of Evidence

What are some of the concrete things you would see if this practice is being fully implemented?

1

A middle school vision that guides policy and program development for the middle grades is adopted by the district.

2

District staff roles provide direct coaching support to Turning Points schools.

3

School budgets reflect that all resources are being redirected to support Turning Points practices.

4

District policies allow lump-sum budgeting and hiring flexibility.

5

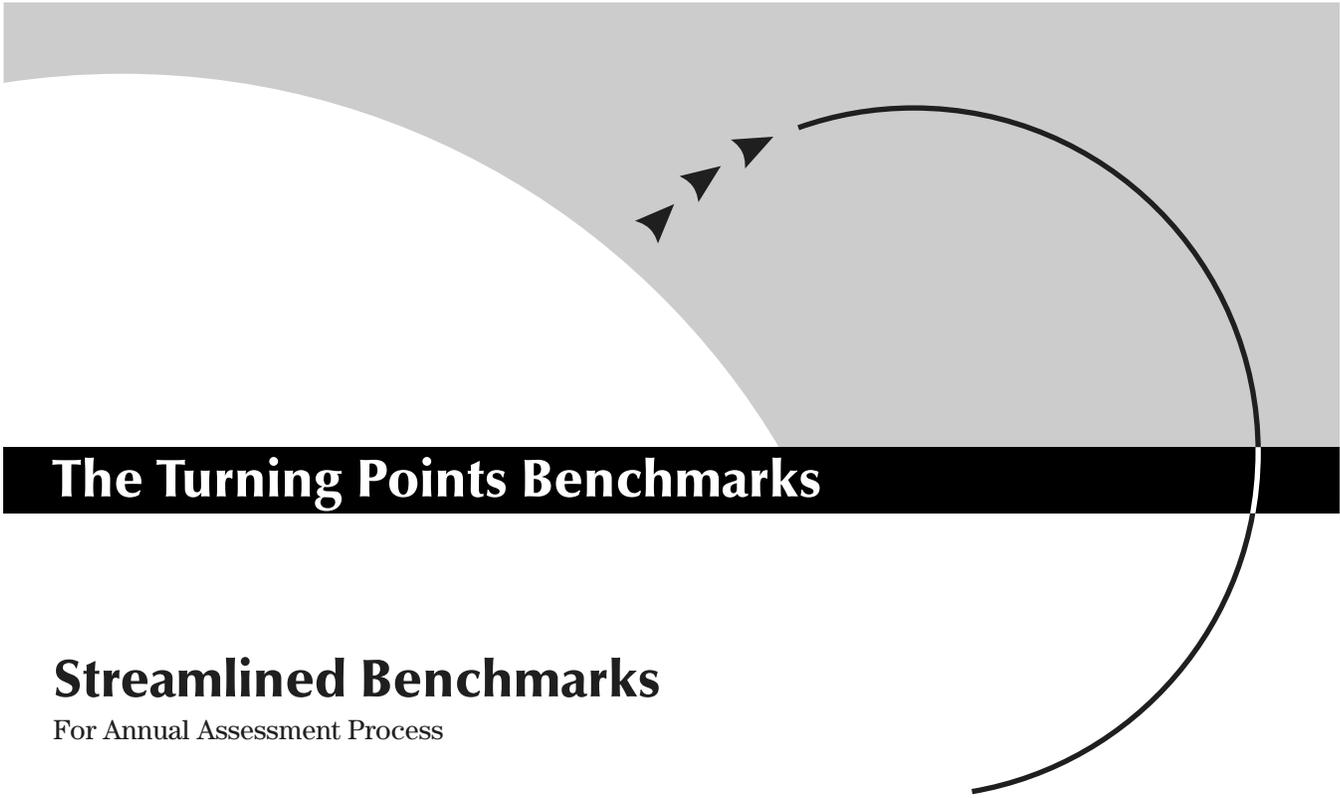
Lump-sum budgeting is in use in all Turning Points schools in the district.

6

The district budget reflects Turning Points priorities.

PRACTICE 6: DEVELOPING DISTRICT CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SCHOOL CHANGE		PHASE I Beginning Implementation	PHASE II Partial Implementation	PHASE III Demonstrating Implementation	PHASE IV Systemic Implementation
FOCUS AREA District Support of Schools and Flexibility and Autonomy of Schools					
<i>Developing a District Vision for Middle Schools</i>	Limited conversation exists among schools and district staff about creating a district-wide vision for middle school reform.	A deliberate process is underway to involve schools and district staff in creating a district-wide vision for middle school reform.	Most schools and district staff share a vision for middle school reform.	A comprehensive shared district vision guides and shapes middle school reform throughout the district.	
<i>Redefining District Roles and Redirecting Resources</i>	The district is beginning to examine the role and purpose of central office personnel in supporting middle school reform. The district analyzes the use of resources in supporting Turning Points reform.	The roles of some district staff are redefined to provide direct support to schools on the Turning Points model. The district has begun to implement plan to redirect district resources to better support	There are adequate district personnel dedicated to provide direct support to schools on the Turning Points model. A number of district resources are available to support Turning Points Reform.	District staff provide effective ongoing support and coaching in the Turning Points model. District resources are effectively used to support and sustain Turning Points reform across the whole school district.	
<i>Lump-sum Budgeting</i>	The district investigates the transition to lump-sum budgeting for Turning Points schools.	The district provides lump-sum budgets to some Turning Points schools for school costs (e.g., salaries, instructional materials, and supplies). TP schools have begun to direct some school budget and resources to support Turning Points reform.	The district provides lump-sum budgets to most Turning Points schools for school costs (e.g., salaries, instructional materials, and supplies). The school has begun to direct all school budget and resources to support Turning Points reform.	The district provides lump-sum budgets to Turning Points schools for school costs and selected central office costs (e.g., printing, library services, special education services, custodial and security services). The school's entire budget and resources support Turning Points reform.	

Benchmarks Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place. Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.



The Turning Points Benchmarks

Streamlined Benchmarks

For Annual Assessment Process

STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

Focus Area: Curriculum and Instruction			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Standards-based Curriculum Development</i>	<p>All teachers are involved in standards-based curriculum planning and development linked to school, district, and state standards framed around essential questions.</p> <p>Curriculum mapping is prevalent school-wide across grade levels with a goal of curriculum coherence.</p> <p>All teachers articulate high standards and set clear, rigorous goals for student achievement.</p>	<p>Minutes and products from curriculum planning and curriculum mapping meetings, and seminars, and workshops.</p> <p>Course syllabi, lesson/unit plans, and/or student work that address school, district, and state standards and include essential questions.</p>	
<i>Habits of mind and Intellectual Inquiry</i>	<p>All teachers embed Habits of Mind and intellectual inquiry that span all disciplines.</p> <p>All teachers use project-based learning and extended in-depth learning units.</p>	<p>Teaching and learning strategies, and instructional materials</p> <p>Project-based lessons and assignments and in-depth learning units</p>	

Benchmarks

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Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.

Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS			
Focus Area: Curriculum and Instruction (continued)			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Varied Instructional and Learning Strategies</i>	All teachers and administrators model a variety of effective instructional practices based on a clearly articulated theory of teaching and learning that incorporates Turning Points Principles and Practices	Observations of teachers using a variety of instructional techniques.	
<i>Intensive Approaches to Literacy and Numeracy</i>	All teachers use Turning Points approaches to integrate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.	Coherent school-wide approach to teaching literacy and numeracy through explicit instruction, modeling and practice. Examples of authentic student work in literacy/numeracy.	

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

Focus Area: Equity and Access

Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>High Achievement for all students</i>	All school-wide initiatives and structures are designed to reduce differences in achievement by race, gender, or socioeconomic class and provide equal learning opportunities to all students.	<p>Disaggregated standardized test scores, school grades and other ongoing achievement data, as well as discipline and attendance data.</p> <p>The school identifies and targets additional resources to address underachievement resulting from issues of inequity</p> <p>All members of the school share a common goal of reducing achievement differences among all students.</p>		
<i>High Standards for all students</i>	All students have access to a rigorous core curriculum with high standards for all students.	<p>Student course matriculation disaggregated by ethnicity and gender (Incidence of grouping by race, gender, socioeconomic class to eliminate tracking).</p> <p>Student achievement on multiple authentic assessments and standardized tests.</p> <p>Teacher perceptions of student abilities and potential – Teachers believe that all students can learn and gain success</p>		

Benchmarks

Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made that are consistent with TP practices

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

Focus Area: Equity and Access (continued)

Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>Strategies to Address Student Diversity (continued)</i>	The needs and interests of specific groups of students including English Language Learners (ELL) and special needs (SPED) students are addressed	<p>Statistics on pupil placement, discipline, and attendance by categories (race, gender, SES)</p> <p>School's classification practices for special education</p> <p>Proportion of poor and minority students enrolled or classified in special education</p> <p>School's practices and support systems assist these children in achieving at their grade level</p> <p>Dedicated resources including instructors, curriculum and facilities</p>		

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 1: IMPROVING LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS			
Focus Area: Assessment			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Authentic and Reliable Assessment: Demonstration of Learning</i>	Continuous assessments, linked to clearly identified standards, are used in all disciplines and grades. All teachers develop assignments connected to real life to assess students' mastery of academic and social skills.	Lesson/unit plans show a variety of assessment strategies used, such as projects, demonstrations, exhibitions, portfolios, oral assessments, and traditional exams and tests. Content and frequency of community and service learning projects. Graduation/promotion policies.	
<i>Looking at Student and Teacher Work</i>	All teachers have frequent, scheduled opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in looking at student and teacher work to improve curriculum, instruction and assessment.	Teacher common planning time Records of looking at student and teacher work and follow up activities Teacher and Student Portfolios Team Rubrics	
<i>Criteria and Reporting</i>	All teachers use a wide variety of appropriate protocols and assessment strategies. Criteria for assessing students' work are written, consistent, and known by all parents and students, and community members. Student progress is reported consistently in writing to parents and students.	School-wide rubrics are public and open to parents and students. Comprehensive and clear reports are regularly sent to parents.	

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Focus Area: Leadership

Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>Commitment to Shared Vision</i>	<p>Leadership is committed to the Turning Points vision and embeds it in all documents.</p> <p>The vision is present in decision making, policy development, instructional practices, strategic planning, and other interactions throughout the school.</p>	<p>Vision and mission are posted wherever appropriate.</p> <p>Meeting minutes show the Turning Points model is discussed.</p> <p>Teachers feel the school has a shared vision and are able to articulate that vision.</p>		
<i>Democratic School Community</i>	<p>Democratic and shared decision-making exists at all levels.</p> <p>The leadership team has autonomy and facilitates significant decisions regarding school structures, instructional practices, personnel, budget, professional development, and resources.</p> <p>Significant opportunities exist to build faculty leadership capacity.</p> <p>Wider school community provides input for school-wide decisions.</p>	<p>Structures enable input for decision-making from all members of the school community.</p> <p>Leadership team minutes show the team is deciding issues of teaching and learning and that faculty provide input on school-wide issues and decisions.</p> <p>Teachers feel involved in decision-making and leadership activities.</p> <p>Community input in decision making recorded in meeting minutes.</p>		

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE			
Focus Area: Leadership (continued)			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Effective Communication</i>	<p>The school's leadership and faculty communicate effectively with each other, and with the whole school community.</p> <p>Strong, effective relationships are established and maintained with students, faculty, families, and other community members.</p>	<p>Type/incidence of communication</p> <p>Teachers feel communication in the school is effective</p> <p>Families feel the communication in the school is effective</p>	
<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	<p>All administrators and teachers consistently model learning.</p> <p>All administrators, team leaders, and lead teachers work daily with teachers in classroom activities to build teacher capacity and improve teaching and learning.</p>	<p>The amount of time administrators and lead teachers work with teachers around instructional practices</p>	

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Focus Area: Professional Collaboration

Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>Multiple Opportunities for Collaboration and Planning</i>	<p>All teachers and administrators are involved in regular common planning at least 45 minutes three to five times a week.</p> <p>Time is used effectively to support learning, teaching, and assessment.</p> <p>Collaborative activities include peer observation, LASW, LATW, and action research.</p>	<p>Amount of common planning time/week used to support learning, teaching, and assessment</p> <p>Team meeting minutes indicating collaborative activities are taking place</p>		
<i>Embedding Professional Development in the Daily Life of the School</i>	<p>Regular and consistent school-wide professional development is embedded in the day-to-day schedules of teachers.</p> <p>Planning a standards-based curriculum, developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies, looking at student work, conducting peer observation, and implementing an integrated literacy and numeracy model across the curriculum take place throughout the school year.</p>	<p>Incidence and type of professional development activities</p> <p>Rate of participation in professional development activities</p> <p>Evaluations of professional development activities</p> <p>Teacher credits for school-based and external professional development</p>		

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 2: BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE CULTURE			
Focus Area: Professional Collaboration (continued)			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Teaming</i>	<p>All team activities are consistent with Turning Points principles and practices and are focused on learning and teaching.</p> <p>All teams have a well-defined purpose, clear goals, and norms by which team members operate.</p>	<p>Teachers feel that their team has a well-defined purpose, clear and measurable performance goals, and norms by which to operate.</p> <p>Team records include minutes, agendas, reports to leadership team and whole faculty.</p>	

Benchmarks

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Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 3: DATA-BASE INQUIRY AND DECISION MAKING

Focus Area: Data-Collection, Analysis, and Use

Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>Using the Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making Process</i>	<p>All faculty and administration are involved in ongoing study groups that collect and analyze data from multiple sources (including the Turning Points Self Study).</p> <p>Data collection and analysis inform inquiry process and decision making.</p> <p>Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making enhance school organization and improves student learning.</p> <p>The Data-Based Inquiry and Decision Making process is on-going, provides a comprehensive picture of a school's strengths and challenges, and is central to the school's improvement plans.</p>	<p>Type and use of data.</p> <p>Incidence of faculty teams looking at and analyzing data.</p> <p>Comprehensive and accurate data are easily accessible to all school and community stakeholders.</p> <p>Teacher and student work show evidence of data-based inquiry.</p> <p>Minutes of faculty and leadership meetings indicate use of data-based decision making.</p> <p>The process is used to ensure that all students have equitable access to resources, including matriculation in higher-level courses, after school activities, and/or specific programs.</p>		
<i>Using Disaggregated Data</i>	<p>The ongoing collection and analysis of disaggregated data (by race, gender, income status, etc.) is embedded in the Data Based Inquiry Process with the clear focus on creating greater equity in learning for all students.</p>	<p>School improvement plan reflects data analysis.</p>		

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Focus Area: Learning Communities, Grouping, and Supporting Student Development			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Small Learning Communities</i>	<p>The school is reconfigured into small learning communities that provide a safe, supportive environment in which every student interacts with a core group of adults who teach, advise, and interact with them meaningfully.</p> <p>No teacher has more than 80 students.</p>	<p>Every student in a small learning community</p> <p>Structures supporting one-on-one and small group contact</p>	
<i>Flexible Schedules</i>	<p>Longer learning blocks are used to provide diverse learning opportunities.</p> <p>All teacher teams use time more flexibly to maximize varied instructional approaches.</p>	<p>Length of classes</p> <p>Amount of teacher common planning time</p>	
<i>School Culture of Collaboration, Decency, Trust, and Respect</i>	<p>Community, caring, mutual respect, and support are embedded in the curriculum and throughout the school in daily activities among students and faculty.</p> <p>Almost all students and teachers are engaged in an ongoing exploration of each other's cultures.</p>	<p>Student, teacher, and administrative perceptions of school atmosphere</p> <p>School rules governing behavior</p> <p>Discipline referrals, incidence of bullying and harassment</p>	

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Focus Area: Learning Communities, Grouping, and Supporting Student Development (continued) Overall Phase: _____

STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS	PHASE
<i>Student Voice, Responsibility, and Leadership</i>	Meaningful involvement of students in shaping their learning and the culture of the school is embedded throughout the school. All teachers and students believe that developing students' voice, leadership, and responsibility is a critical part of education. Almost all students are involved at multiple levels of classroom and school community leadership and service.	Records of student involvement in classroom and school activities Student perceptions of their role in the school		
<i>Eliminating Tracking</i>	Flexible heterogeneous groups, and elimination of rigid-ability grouping and tracking ensure optimal access to learning and teaching for all students.	Student course matriculation disaggregated by ethnicity and gender (Incidence of grouping by race or ethnicity)		
<i>Curriculum and Instruction Addresses Students' Personal Development</i>	The school has balanced its rigorous academic program for all students with electives and after-school programs that meet students' academic and developmental needs. A significant focus on the arts, social responsibility, and health is embedded in the core curriculum.	Curriculum plans and instructional practices Structures supporting personal and social needs Links with community organizations to support students' needs		
<i>Academic Support</i>	Comprehensive individually focused academic support for all students who need it.	Number and quality of before and after-school and summer programs		

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 4: CREATING A SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Focus Area: Partnerships			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Family Partnerships</i>	<p>The home-school connection is very strong and most parents are active participants in their children's education.</p> <p>Parents and guardians are continually involved in school governance, curriculum issues, and their children's social and personal development.</p> <p>There are numerous opportunities for students, teachers, and parents to interact through student-led parent conferences, learning at home, and school exhibitions.</p>	<p>School activities and structures specifically designed to involve parents and guardians in support of learning and teaching</p> <p>Incidence and type of parent-teacher contact to support learning and teaching</p> <p>Parent attendance rates at school events</p> <p>Parent's perceptions of involvement with the school</p> <p>School's use of community languages</p> <p>Parental involvement in school decision-making and setting policies</p>	
<i>Community Partnerships</i>	<p>The school has established substantial partnerships and operational relationships with social service agencies, business partners, colleges and universities, and community organizations to enhance high achievement.</p> <p>All partnerships, which are integrated with the daily life of the school, support and sustain the vision and mission of the school.</p>	<p>Structures to support partnerships</p> <p>Assessments of student learning outside the school</p> <p>Evaluation of partnerships</p>	

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 5: NETWORKING WITH LIKE-MINDED SCHOOLS

PRACTICE 5: NETWORKING WITH LIKE-MINDED SCHOOLS			Overall Phase: _____
Focus Area: Professional and Community Links			
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Participate in Local and National Networks</i>	<p>All teachers and administrators participate in the activities of local, regional, national Turning Points, and other networks for the mutual benefit of their school and the other members of the networks.</p> <p>A significant number of faculty contribute as presenters, facilitators, and “critical friends.”</p>	<p>Percentage of faculty and administration who attend and participate in network meetings, and institutes.</p> <p>Contributions of faculty to network publications/conferences.</p>	
<i>Links with other Schools</i>	<p>Reciprocal visits to schools as part of the Critical Friends Visits, walk-throughs, and collaborative professional development occur regularly.</p> <p>Feedback, shared experiences, and lessons are continually shared with other faculty and integrated into practice.</p>	<p>Number of reciprocal critical friends visits/year.</p> <p>Visits to other schools.</p> <p>Follow-up activities including individual and group report back to whole school community.</p> <p>Revisions to school plans and activities based on cross-site experiences.</p>	

Benchmarks

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STREAMLINED BENCHMARKS

PRACTICE 6: DEVELOPING DISTRICT CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SCHOOL CHANGE			
Focus Area: District Capacity to Support School Change			Overall Phase: _____
STRATEGIES	INDICATORS	SAMPLE EVIDENCE	EXPLANATION/COMMENTS
<i>Developing a District Vision for Middle Schools</i>	A comprehensive shared district vision guides and shapes middle school reform throughout the district.	Common goals and indicators	
<i>Redefining District Roles and Redirecting Resources</i>	District staff provide effective, ongoing support and coaching in the Turning Points model. District resources are effectively used to support and sustain Turning Points reform across the whole school district.	Number and types of workshops by district to support Turning Points activities District-wide resources available to Turning Points Schools	
<i>Lump Sum Budgeting</i>	The district provides lump sum budgets to Turning Points schools for school costs and selected central office costs (e.g., printing, library services, special education services, custodial and security services). The school's entire budget and resources support Turning Points reform.	Sample budgets	

Benchmarks that are consistent with TP practices that are consistent with TP practices that are consistent with TP practices

Phase I: *Beginning*: a few changes made and the depth of change is greater

Phase II: *Partial*: more changes made, and the depth of change is greater

Phase III: *Demonstrating*: A majority of the faculty are engaged in the practice, a majority of structures are in place.

Phase IV: *Systemic*: The school has developed the capacity to be self-sustaining and continuously improving.

Center for Collaborative Education

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Turning Points is affiliated with New American Schools, a dynamic coalition of teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers, community and business leaders, and experts from around the country committed to improving academic achievement for all students. All NAS designs have been validated through extensive testing and research.

Cover and interior design: Carroll Conquest, Conquest Design

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