

# Leadership Coaching

Building strong leaders for district and school improvement

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September 2013

**DISTRICT & SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT** Center

at American Institutes for Research ■



# Today's Webinar

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- AIR and Leadership Coaching Work
- Leadership Academies
  - Hear from a leadership academy coach
- Leadership Coaching
  - Hear from both a leadership coach and turnaround principal
- Q&A

# American Institutes for Research (AIR)

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- Not-for-profit behavioral and social science organization
- Deep history connecting research, policy, and practice to support and improve education
- Committed to empowering districts and schools with innovative solutions
- District and School Improvement Center supports districts and schools in turnaround, improvement, curriculum, instruction, and leadership

# School Turnaround and Transformation

Leadership That  
Drives Change

Comprehensive  
Diagnostics

Educator Effectiveness

Comprehensive Instructional  
Guidance System

Student-Centered Climate

Family and Community  
Engagement

# Leadership That Drives Change

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- Effective turnaround and transformation processes require developing district and school leadership and creating an effective school leadership team
  - Strong leaders set and maintain direction
  - Strong teams working with an effective leader create the kind of change required in consistently underperforming schools.

# Leadership Services at AIR

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- **Leadership academies**

- Relevant “just-in-time” professional development throughout the year, building both school and district capacity

- **Leadership coaching**

- For individuals and school teams
- Providing customization and ongoing support

# Our Panel

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Loretta Blanks  
Turnaround Specialist  
AIR Leadership Academy Coach



Aaron Butler, PhD  
Senior Turnaround Specialist  
American Institutes for Research



Gary Jansen, EdD  
Turnaround Principal  
Hazelwood East Middle School

# Leadership Academies at AIR

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- Create opportunities for teams to learn from research and emerging best practices from across the country
- Build capacity and provide teams with time to embed best practices into their authentic work in schools
- Use timely tools to plan, monitor, and make course corrections based on evidence and data collected



# Leadership Academy Basics

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- An academy is structured either as a cohort of schools within a district or as an individual school team.
- Quarterly academies meet, ideally, before the opening of school, in the fall semester, in January, and at end of the year.
- The participants should include school teams, the district office, and coaches to ensure cohesive support of turnaround practices.

# Leadership Academy Topics

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- Comprehensive Needs Analysis and Assessment
- Selection and Building of the School Leadership Teams
- District Office's Role in Supporting Turnaround Efforts
- Unpacking School Improvement Grants
- Writing Measurable Outcomes and Goals
- Using Planning and Monitoring Tools
- Instructional Coaching and Teacher Effectiveness
- The Data Cycle—How To Use Data To Impact Instruction

# Leadership Academy “Just in Time”

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- Effective kickoff
- Early “Quick Wins”
- 30-60-90-day planning guides
- Midyear reality check and adjustment
- End-of-year check and course correction planning
- Sustainability

# Our Panel

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**Aaron Butler, PhD**  
Senior Turnaround Specialist  
American Institutes for Research



**Gary Jansen, EdD**  
Turnaround Principal  
Hazelwood East Middle School

# Leadership Coaching From AIR

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- Individual coaching of principals, assistant principals, and other key leaders to build capacity within the school
  - Customized coaching targeting their leadership strengths and needs
  - Monthly onsite visits as well as weekly contact and support
- School leadership team coaching to help accelerate and support the turnaround
  - Assistance in implementation and application of key elements
  - Monthly onsite visits

# Customized Leadership Coaching

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- Sets personal goals based on turnaround leadership competencies
- Plans and celebrates Quick Wins
- Adds value to school leadership and others
- Builds the capacity of the school leadership team
- Provides progress monitoring—annual goals, leading indicators, and measurable responsibilities

# Hazelwood East Middle School (HEMS)

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- Located in the 18,000-student Hazelwood School District in north St. Louis (MO) County
- 500 students
- 99% African American
- 77% eligible for free and reduced-price lunch



# Hazelwood East Middle School

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- **SIG Challenge—This was (and still is) hard work!**
  - Students are just passing through
  - Middle school students arrive at East Middle School reading at the second- or third-grade level
  - Inadequate systems to address closing the achievement gap for students in 3 years



# Leadership Coaching at HEMS

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- Shift in mindset
- Focused responsibilities
- Clear expectations
- Evolution of the coaching process

# Leadership Coaching at HEMS

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- Transparent Data
- Summer Institute
- Protocols
- Communication Guide Book
- Monitoring Tools
- Resources

# Distribution of Coaching at HEMS

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- Work with instructional leadership team
- Work with coaches
- Work with assistant principals

# Successes and Challenges

- Students began leaving East Middle School more prepared for high school than ever before (see lagging HS scores).
- Student attendance improved.
- A data-informed culture was established (attendance wall always updated, data walls in each grade-level hallway, data room for instructional leadership team meetings).
- East Middle School is on the right trajectory.



# Leadership Coaching...

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- **Necessary for leaders to stay at the top of their game**
  - Leaders often start out full of energy and ideas
  - Leaders can easily become overwhelmed or out of sync
  - Leadership coaches help assess the situation, suggest or collaborate on solutions, and push leaders in the right direction
  - Professional athletes, CEOs, and even singers become more effective through coaching

# Q&A

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# The Implementation Elements

● Successful Implementation
 ● Mediocre Implementation

This following graphic provides a basic overview of the six key elements for implementing the Achievement Path. Its purpose is to help you distinguish between **successful implementation** (where real learning and organizational impact can occur) and **mediocre implementation** (where desired results are left to chance). No one implementation is exactly like another; instead, implementation is tailored to a school or district's specific situation.

## School TURNAROUND & Transformation

### COMPREHENSIVE DIAGNOSTICS

- An in-depth needs assessment is conducted, cross-referencing new and existing data sets.
- An early warning system is implemented.
- Periodic course corrections and challenging decisions are made based on timely data.
- Multiple stakeholders are engaged in input, analysis, and decision making.
- Educators have access to timely data sets and analysis support.

- If a needs assessment is conducted, results do not drive planning.
- Limited student achievement data form the core of the data set for decision making.
- There is limited or no stakeholder engagement in analysis.
- Critical student and school decisions are made annually using year-end data.
- Educators engage with data in isolation and make few connections that drive instructional changes.

### LEADERSHIP THAT DRIVES CHANGE

- Specific and targeted district support is provided to implement the turnaround plan.
- A principal is selected specifically with turnaround criteria in mind.
- The school leadership team is effective and has a shared vision, goals, and commitment.
- School turnaround is launched as a team effort and coordinated with input from multiple stakeholder groups.

- District support reflects what is provided to all schools across the district.
- A new principal is selected.
- Turnaround is led by the principal, with little support from the school leadership team.

### EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

- Assignment, promotion, and tenure are determined by data and best fit.
- A high frequency of feedback, including student growth data and 360-degree review, is utilized to promote professional growth and achievement.
- The performance management system is connected to recruitment, development, and retention strategies.
- Teaching and leadership practices are focused on rigor, relevance, and relationships.

- Assignment, promotion, and tenure are determined by longevity and seniority.
- Limited feedback and support hamper educator professional growth and achievement.
- Performance management is isolated from other talent management strategies.
- Teaching and leadership practices are directive, isolated, disconnected, and inconsistent.

### COHERENT INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM

- A coherent curriculum—aligned vertically and horizontally and to state standards—is in place.
- Curriculum materials and technology resources are embedded to meet the needs of all students, including those performing above and below proficiency.
- Teachers implement the curriculum with fidelity and integrity.
- Checks for student understanding occur daily and are aligned to the curriculum and state standards.

- The curriculum is not clearly aligned across grade levels and/or to state standards; gaps may exist.
- Sufficient and appropriate materials and resources (including for subgroups) are limited in availability; teachers often must supply or create their own materials.
- Teachers interpret the curriculum individually instead of collectively.
- There are limited checks for student understanding leading to benchmark or summative assessments.

### STUDENT CENTERED CLIMATE

- Teachers focus on teaching for student engagement and relevance, and they incorporate student learning styles.
- The school climate endorses ambitious academic work and celebrates student diversity coupled with support for each student.
- Students are inspired to believe in themselves as learners and understand their path to success beyond school.
- Student performance and achievements are publicly recognized.
- The school is a safe and welcoming place where student voices are recognized.

- Teachers focus on rote teaching the curriculum.
- Student diversity and individual learning needs are not addressed.
- Teachers monitor student learning without engaging students in those activities.
- The school climate is chaotic and/or compliance driven.
- The school is exclusively staff centered.

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A broad range of stakeholders—including parents as well as representatives from community-based organizations, the business community, and health and social services—are cultivated and engaged.
- The voices and opinions of families and community members are sought, and needs are intentionally addressed.
- Effective partnerships leverage limited resources and strengthen opportunities for students and their families.
- Diverse opportunities for family and community engagement are developed in multiple formats to support student success.

- Parents are the only stakeholders considered.
- Engagement opportunities and communication are one way directed, passive, and focused on single events.
- Family involvement is not utilized to support student learning.
- The presented opportunities show little support and enthusiasm from leadership, staff, parents, and the community.

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

To learn more about our work, please visit

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