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### Unveiling a Path to Head Start Turnaround: Investigating How Head Start Directors Transform Low-performing Programs into High-performing Programs

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# Unveiling a Path to Head Start Turnaround: Investigating How Head Start Directors Transform Low-performing Programs into High-performing Programs

## Abstract

The 2009 Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring indicated that Head Start grantee non-compliance findings have increased since 2008, implying that grantee non-compliance is an issue for the Head Start field. The poor performance of grantees during Federal Monitoring Reviews demonstrates the critical need to investigate turnaround practices of Head Start directors who have successfully improved their low-performing programs to high-performing in compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards (HSPS) and successfully achieved a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. The investigation of Head Start turnaround practices is not reflected in the current literature. However, business and K-12 settings have contributed to scholarly literature regarding organizational turnaround. The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamics of the turnaround process in Head Start programs as described by directors of underperforming programs that experienced turnaround and the leadership behaviors implemented to facilitate performance improvements. The study employed a qualitative cross-case analysis, guided by Kotter's (1996) Eight-Stage Change Model as the conceptual framework to investigate Head Start turnaround practices. The qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to analyze the relationship between the strategies the leaders engaged in and the changes within their programs. The findings revealed four themes as described by the Head Start turnaround directors: a) Organizational Noncompliance, (b) Managing Self, (c) Managing Others and (d) Systems Turnaround. Additionally, the findings unveil the introduction of the Four- v Stage Turnaround Model. Moreover, the researcher proposed six recommendations, three recommendations for the Office of Head Start (OHS) and three recommendations for Head Start directors. The Head Start field will benefit from informed research in an effort to build a capacity for successful turnaround strategies. This effort will minimize the potential of performance issues plaguing Head Start programs threatening the continuity of quality of educational services for children.

## Document Type

Dissertation

## Degree Name

Doctor of Education (EdD)

## Department

Executive Leadership

## First Supervisor

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## Subject Categories

Education

Unveiling a Path to Head Start Turnaround: Investigating How Head Start Directors  
Transform Low-performing Programs into High-performing Programs

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree  
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Dr. Michael Wischnowski

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

August 2013

## **Dedication**

I begin by thanking my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for it is because of His grace and mercy that I am able to complete this dissertation process successfully. Thank you for enlarging my territory and guiding me in finding my passion. I am fortunate to have the best parents in the world, Johnel and Mary Tracy. Dad, thank you for encouraging me to seek my passion and not make excuses along the way. My mother provided support during our daily talks and frequent reminders to depend on the Lord. Throughout this process I have been thankful to the cheering squad that supported me. In particular, Wanda Acevedo for the early morning text messages and Tough Mudder adventures along the way. Tonya Taylor your energy and encouragement have never exhausted. Thanks for reminding me of the importance of enjoying the process with fun getaways and great music. To my cousins: Maurice Hymes and Yasmin White, you inspire me. Our family love runs deep and your support seems to serve without measure. Yvette Mosley and Kellie Peoples, my lifelong friends, I.D.S.N.P.J.-you already know! My sisters: Robin, Donna, and April have been loving and supportive.

I am thankful to all of my Cohort members, a wonderful group of colleagues, we exchanged thought provoking discourse and great memories. Joshua Fegley, my friend, thank you for the fun during the many long nights that we spent at Fisher as we put our spin on the definition of a mixed study (dissertating to Bey). My fellow transformers, Karen Bobok aka doctor squared and Deborah Pearce have provided fun and laughter during our dissertation parties.

I am indebted to my committee members Dr. Wischnowski and Dr. Hildenbrand. Their patience in helping me explore depth and richness in my research were essential to my development during the process. Additionally, all of the professors and staff in the DEXL program have been supportive and instrumental to my learning. I am grateful for the generosity of time and knowledge sharing provided to me by Dr. A. Dirk Hightower his suggestions and recommendations created a solid foundation for the study.

I am grateful to the incredibly giving Head Start participants that shared their experiences with me and provided a wealth of knowledge for the current study. Without their willing commitment of time, I could never have gained the understandings that resulted in this study. I hope the lessons shared will be a tribute to their successful execution of Head Start turnaround practices.

To my children Dajanee', Darae and Amiah you are my motivation and the reason why I am. You have cheered me on every day. Your patience, love and support were critical to my success. Amiah thank you for never complaining despite the long hours we spent together at Fisher in the library. There are many people to thank for the encouragement, insight, and generosity and I am appreciative of all of the support from family, friends, and colleagues.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Seanelle Tracy is currently an early childhood consultant in the Greater Rochester Area. Ms. Tracy attended several colleges across the upstate New York area. More recently, in 2009, she graduated from Roberts Wesleyan College with a Masters in Strategic Leadership. She came to St. John Fisher College in May of 2011 and began her doctoral studies in the Ed.D Program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Tracy pursued her research in Head Start turnaround strategies under the direction of Dr. Michael Wischnowski and received her degree in 2013.

## **Abstract**

The 2009 Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring indicated that Head Start grantee non-compliance findings have increased since 2008, implying that grantee non-compliance is an issue for the Head Start field. The poor performance of grantees during Federal Monitoring Reviews demonstrates the critical need to investigate turnaround practices of Head Start directors who have successfully improved their low-performing programs to high-performing in compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards (HSPS) and successfully achieved a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. The investigation of Head Start turnaround practices is not reflected in the current literature. However, business and K-12 settings have contributed to scholarly literature regarding organizational turnaround. The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamics of the turnaround process in Head Start programs as described by directors of underperforming programs that experienced turnaround and the leadership behaviors implemented to facilitate performance improvements.

The study employed a qualitative cross-case analysis, guided by Kotter's (1996) Eight-Stage Change Model as the conceptual framework to investigate Head Start turnaround practices. The qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to analyze the relationship between the strategies the leaders engaged in and the changes within their programs. The findings revealed four themes as described by the Head Start turnaround directors: a) Organizational Noncompliance, (b) Managing Self, (c) Managing Others and (d) Systems Turnaround. Additionally, the findings unveil the introduction of the Four-

Stage Turnaround Model. Moreover, the researcher proposed six recommendations, three recommendations for the Office of Head Start (OHS) and three recommendations for Head Start directors. The Head Start field will benefit from informed research in an effort to build a capacity for successful turnaround strategies. This effort will minimize the potential of performance issues plaguing Head Start programs threatening the continuity of quality of educational services for children.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 promised a “war on poverty” by introducing community programs to advance the poor. The Head Start project was born out of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). President Lyndon B. Johnson envisioned a social competence program to provide low-income children educational and supportive services to help them overcome the challenges of poverty. Head Start promised to provide high-quality preschool programming to prepare children for school. Today more than 25 million children and their families have benefited from the comprehensive services of Head Start (Zigler & Styfco, 2010).

Head Start is a federal program administered through the Office of Head Start (OHS), a division within the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). OHS provides competitive Head Start grants to over 1,600 grantees across the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. Grantees include nonprofits, for-profits, community action agencies, tribal nation programs, and agencies serving migrant and seasonal workers (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). Grantees are awarded five-year renewable grants to provide comprehensive services to disadvantaged children and their families. Additionally, grantees will designate other local nonprofits or public agencies part of its duty for operating the Head Start program, these agencies are referred to as delegates. Grantees and its delegates are awarded funds

to actualize Head Start's mission to provide children with high-quality education, health, nutrition, physical, and disability services.

Children served by Head Start are between the ages of three and four years old. Early Head Start programs serve children from six weeks to 36 months. Head Start and Early Head Start services are free to families who qualify. Family income must be at or below the Federal Poverty line. Parents are viewed as partners in their child's education and are decision-makers in the management systems of the programs. Additionally, Head Start provides supports to the parents of the children served by helping them meet their goals towards economic self-sufficiency (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>).

**Performance standards.** The OHS provides oversight of its grantees to ensure that the programs follow the Head Start Performance Standards (HSPTS). In 1975, ten years after the inception of Head Start, ACF developed a set of performance standards that were issued in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (Federal Register, 1975). Head Start programs are mandated to adhere to the HSPTS standards to maintain their Head Start funding.

In 1995, ACF designed Early Head Start (EHS) under the auspice of Head Start in response to the need to support pregnant women, infants and toddlers. Subsequently, the Head Start Performance Standards (HSPTS) were updated to include provisions for EHS. In 1996, Federal Monitoring began as a process to ensure programs were operating in compliance with HSPTS.

In 2007, under the Bush administration, congress reauthorized the Head Act with a renewed focus. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, better known as the Head Start Act of 2007 was developed to strengthen the quality of the program.

Moreover, operating under a new guiding framework, the act encompasses state early learning standards, increased stringency in teaching qualifications, enhancement to the HSPS, a system of designation and renewal for grantees, and greater program monitoring (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>, 2013).

Additional reform enacted in the 2007 Head Start Act includes a mandate that low-performing grantees must compete to renew its grant. “Recompetition,” a concept developed under new regulations set by President Barack Obama mandating that any grantee which fails to provide high-quality services set by new federal quality regulations must compete for its grant against other potential community providers. In the past, Head Start grantees would automatically continue its funding despite its failure to comply with Head Start Performance Standards. Under recompetition guidelines the low-performing grantee may also reapply for the grant. This system of designation renewal system also distinguishes grantees delivering high-quality Head Start services. Moreover, offering continued grants to high quality Head Start programs for a period of five years noncompetitively.

**Recompetition.** In 2011, OHS announced that 132 of the 1,654 Head Start grantees will need to compete for its federal grant due to its failure to meet the mandated HSPS. In 2012, 122 grantees were announced, as a second round of grantees, mandated to recompute for continued funding. Under the rules of recompetition, 25% of Head Start grantees will be evaluated annually for compliance with the HSPS. Programs that fail to meet set standards will need to vie for grant funds against other community providers. The goal of recompetition is to raise the quality of services and defund low-performing grantees. Until now, a process of competition has never been part of the refunding of

programs. In some instances, grantees have been the long standing sole grantee of the Head Start Grant (Headstartredesignation.com).

**Monitoring reviews.** The Office of Head Start (OHS) conducts triennial reviews to ensure that Head Start programs are complying with the HSPS. OHS conducts the reviews to ensure that Head Start programs do not have “systemic or substantial material failures” (Head Start Act, 2007). All Head Start programs are required to receive a Federal Monitoring Review at least once every three years. Annually, OHS conducts four types of Federal Monitoring Reviews: (a) First Year, (b) Triennial, (c) Other, and (d) Follow-up (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2009). First Year reviews are conducted on grantees within their first year of operation, Triennial reviews are conducted every three years, Other reviews are usually desk reviews typically initiated due to grantee performance concerns when grantees are found deficient and noncompliant, and a Follow-up review is conducted when grantees fail to meet the mandated standards (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2009).

During the Federal Monitoring Review, the program is evaluated on its ability to provide evidence of meeting the HSPS. Federal reviewers act as fact finders who detect matters of program performance. During Federal Monitoring Review, grantee compliance outcomes are determined by the Federal Review Team. At the completion of the on-site review, grantees will achieve one of three determinations: (a) compliant, (b) noncompliant, and (c) deficient. A grantee with no findings identified during the review will be determined as compliant. A grantee with one or more areas of non-compliance and no deficiencies is determined as noncompliant. Furthermore, grantees with one or

more deficiencies are deemed deficient (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2008).

Deficiencies are more serious than non-compliances. Head Start defines deficiency as a performance failure in one of the following eight areas: (a) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children; (b) denying parents their rights to exercise their full roles and responsibilities related to the operation of the program; (c) failing to comply with the program standards; (d) misuse of funds; (e) loss of legal status, childcare license, debarment from receiving federal grants or contracts; (f) failure to meet or correct any agency requirement; (g) failure of the governing body to exercise its legal and fiscal responsibilities; and (h) failure to resolve an area of non-compliance (Head Start Act, 2007).

Grantees are expected to correct non-compliances and deficiencies. Prior to recompetition, when a deficiency was identified, the federal reviewer would conduct a Follow-up review within six months to ensure the deficiency is corrected. Today, the stakes are higher and a deficiency finding will almost guarantee a grantee an immediate pathway to recompetition. Head Start grantees are expected to operate high-quality programs and provide services in compliance with the HSPS. Grantees and its delegates are expected to establish a process for monitoring to ensure compliance. Moreover, programs are expected to self-identify areas needing corrective actions to ensure compliance with HSPS. Annually, Head Start programs are required to conduct a process of self-assessment to determine areas needing quality improvements in addition to developing programmatic goals. Grantees are expected to provide documentation of their

self-monitoring procedures and tools used to ensure the implementation of quality programming (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>).

Additionally, OHS monitoring reviews efforts include: (a) increased unannounced visits for programs with identified concerns, (b) implementation of Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to gauge teacher effectiveness, (c) software updates, (d) Federal Monitoring Review reports, and (e) Monitoring Protocol guides.

***The Protocol.*** In 2007, OHS introduced the Monitoring Protocol, a comprehensive tool which encompasses the Head Start program content areas and includes a list of questions designed to measure grantee compliance with the HSPS. Annually, OHS develops a new monitoring tool to guide both Head Start programs and federal reviewers in gathering evidence regarding grantee compliance with the HSPS. The 2012 Monitoring Protocol is divided into eleven individual guides based on the Head Start service areas. The guides are divided as follows: (a) Program Design and Management; (b) Fiscal Management; (c) Safe Environments; (d) Education and Early Childhood Development Services; (e) Health Services; (f) Transportation Services; (g) Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA); (h) Nutritional Services; (i) Disabilities Services; (j) Family and Community Services; and (k) Mental Health Services (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2009).

The Monitoring Protocol guides give federal reviewers direction during the Federal Monitoring Review process regarding interview questions, observations, and documentation review (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2009). All Federal Monitoring Reviews are conducted within the context of the Monitoring Protocol. Federal Review Teams gather data regarding grantee compliance from observations,

interviews, and verification and analysis of grantee documents. From the data gathered the federal review team makes initial findings regarding program compliance and forward a full report regarding evidence gathered to the Office of Head Start (Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring, 2009).

### **Problem Statement**

**Evidence of low-performance.** The most recent Reports to Congress on Head Start Monitoring (2008 & 2009) provides evidence of the need for Congress to provide supports to thoroughly investigate the reasons for the poor-performance of grantees during monitoring reviews. In 2008, OHS conducted 974 monitoring reviews. Of the 974 reviews conducted, 565 Head Start grantees experienced a First-Year or Triennial Federal Monitoring Performance Review. Interestingly, three-fourths of the programs reviewed were identified as non-compliant. More specifically, 412 programs were found non-compliant and 27 were determined as deficient. According to the Monitoring Report to Congress for FY 2008, of the 439 noncompliant programs, a total of 2,139 compliance issues were cited; 95% were non-compliance findings and 4.1% were deficiency determinations. The majority of noncompliant and deficient determinations were associated with Program Design and Management (62%) and Fiscal Management (47.6%) service areas. Program Design and Management services include the following content areas: (a) program planning, (b) governing body, (c) Policy Council, d) on-going monitoring, (e) human resources, (e) communication, and (f) recording keeping and reporting. Fiscal management includes cost reporting, procurement, grant reporting and compensation (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>, 2012).

In 2009, OHS conducted 986 monitoring reviews. Of the 986 monitoring reviews conducted, 475 Head Start grantees experienced a First -Year or Triennial Federal Monitoring Performance Review. Subsequently, most of the programs were identified as noncompliant. 357 of the 475 programs reviewed were found noncompliant and 22 were determined as deficient (Monitoring Report to Congress for FY, 2009). According to the Report to Congress on Head Start Monitoring (2009), the number of noncompliant programs has increased since 2006. Furthermore, in 2006, 58% of Head Start programs had findings of one or more non-compliances. In 2009, the number increased to 75.2%. Albeit, the number of programs found deficient has decreased since 2006 from 32.8% to 4.6% in 2009. The reduction in deficiencies is attributed to the Head Start Act of 2007 which narrows the definition of a deficiency (Monitoring Report to Congress for FY, 2009).

Interestingly, of the 357 noncompliant and 22 deficient programs reviewed in 2009, a total of 1,878 non-compliance issues were cited and 38 deficiency violations. On average four non-compliances were found of each grantee reviewed. Grantees reviewed in 2007 and 2008 experienced a similar average of non-compliances. Grantees reviewed in 2006 that were found noncompliant averaged six non-compliances. The majority of noncompliant and deficiency determinations in 2009 were associated with Program Design and Management, Fiscal Management, Safety Environments, and Education and Early Childhood Development Services (Monitoring Report to Congress for FY, 2009). Of the 357 noncompliant grants, 331 required follow up reviews. Notably, 22 of the programs corrected their non-compliances immediately while the federal reviewers were on site.

Of the 331 grantees slated for Follow-up reviews, 80 received a Follow-up Review and 90 received Desk reviews. Subsequently, 89% of the grantees that received Follow-up reviews that year became compliant, 1.3% remained noncompliant, and 7% failed to correct non-compliances and its violations were elevated to deficiencies. Of the grantees which received a desk review, 97.8% became compliant and 2.2% failed to correct non-compliances and its status was elevated to a deficiency (Monitoring Report to Congress for FY, 2009). The poor performance of grantees during Federal Monitoring Reviews demonstrates the critical need to investigate turnaround practices of Head Start directors who have successfully improved their low-performing programs to high-performing in compliance with the HSPS and successfully achieved a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings.

The examination of the current turnaround literature presents a gap in the ECE field, more specifically Head Start programs. This gap validates the need for future research to investigate Head Start programs experiencing performance decline and in need of recovery. Turnaround literature has not been examined relative to early care and education programs or Head Start. The lack of literature has created a gap and warrants an emergence of scholarship to investigate causality of Head Start program decline and leadership's capacity for turnaround efforts. The emergence of an intervention plan for programs enriched from lessons learned from Head Start directors that have provided evidence of successful turnaround will assist early care and education leaders in gaining greater cognizance of symptoms of performance decline and strategies to remedy performance issues. Head Start administrators will benefit from informed research to build a capacity for a successful turnaround. This effort will minimize the potential of

performance issues plaguing Head Start programs threatening the continuity of quality of educational services for children. There is an urgent and critical need to conduct research that informs Head Start grantees with strategies and documented successful models of programs moving from a state of low-performance to higher performance. It is important to create discourse in the literature about Head Start agencies experiencing performance decline and their recovery process documenting the steps of corrective action to achievement of program compliance.

The field warrants a comprehensive examination of common themes in non-compliance issues, whereas the cycle of recompetition is bound to continue and Head Start children are threatened with a loss of continuity in quality Head Start services.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

**Turnaround theory.** To date there is not a documented model of turnaround strategies in the early care and education (ECE) field or Head Start programs. Studies of successful and unsuccessful attempts of turnaround are analyzed in the for-profit sector, not-for-profit, public sector, and schools. These studies offer detail on the stages of turnaround and the steps necessary to move an organization from a state of failure to recovery. Within the literature, turnaround is theorized in three ways: As a “condition” (Armenakis, Fredenberger, Cheronos & Field, 1995, p. 231), as a “process” (Short, Palmer, & Stimpert, 1998, p. 155) and as a “consequence or end state, of successful strategic actions” (Short, Palmer, & Stimpert, 1998, p. 155). Turnaround efforts will result in two divergent end states: failure or recovery. (Hager et al, 1999; Slatter, 1984; Stewart, 1984).

*School turnaround.* There is an abundance of literature on turnaround theory in the corporate sector (Arogyaswamy et al., 1995; Barker & Mone, 1998; Bibebault, 1992; Castrogiovanni et al., 1992; Francis & Desai, 2005; Grinyer & McKiernan, 1990; Lohrke & Bedeian 1998; Oviatt & Bruton, 1994; Schendel & Patton, 1976) and more recently an expanded body of literature that includes turnaround of for-profits, churches, hospitals, public organizations, and schools. There is an absence of research that investigates the turnaround practices implemented by Head Start directors. Subsequently, the researcher substituted K-12 turnaround literature as there are similarities in accountability structures and federal mandates. Accountability systems created by the government imposed onto organizations is not exclusive to Head Start. School improvement has been a federal focus since the 1994 Improving America's School Act. The Improving America's School Act was a weak attempt to hold schools accountable for poor performance. Under the Bush administration, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 imposed penalties to schools deemed as low-performing by the Department of Education due to low test scores and poor student achievement. Under the 2001 NCLB Act, schools are subject to sanctions for low-performance. Like Head Start, factors that outline the causality of low-performance in schools are not definitively defined, but are often attributed to poverty stricken neighborhoods. NCLB is the impetus for many initiatives at the federal and state levels to improve schools and implement turnaround strategies (Duke, 2012).

Increasing high-performing schools are the focus of the reauthorized NCLB Act under President Obama's administration. With a new era of accountability, low-performing schools are forced to develop a strategy to improve or face reductions in state funding or closure. Moreover, NCLB includes a provision that specifies that schools that

lack evidence of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years will need to develop an improvement plan, provide professional development for staff using Title I funds, and offer families the option of transferring to another school. If the school demonstrates three-years of deficiency by not meeting AYP, tutoring and afterschool programs must be offered to students. Furthermore, if the school demonstrates four-years of failing to make AYP, the school district is required to implement an immediate corrective action strategy. The strategy must be selected from a federally approved list. Strategy steps must include hiring an expert to advise the school, reduce the school's management authority, replace staff, restructure, and update the current curriculum. The most severe corrective action step is imposed if a school demonstrates five years of failing to make AYP. Consequently, the school is either closed or reopened after replacing all staff, managed under a charter, and the management of the school is contracted out (Herman et al., 2008).

The federal government has invested in school turnaround attempts by providing funding and developing policy which mandates school turnaround. There are several competitive initiatives designed to fund school turnaround. President Obama's *Race to the Top* fund offers 4.35 billion dollars to support education initiatives including school turnaround. *Investing in Innovation grants* provides 650 million dollars to support school improvement including innovation related to turnaround. Additionally, school improvement grants provide funding to schools willing to subscribe to one of four prescribed turnaround models (Herman et al., 2008).

**Race to the Top.** Race to the Top outlines four models of school turnaround: (a) Turnaround Model, (b) Restart Model, (c) Transformation Model, and (d) School

Closure. The Turnaround Model includes replacing the principal, replacing most of the staff, implementing a strong strategy including restructuring governance, and implementing a research based curriculum to improve student outcomes. The Restart Model includes opening the school under new management. The new management team is selected from a competitive and arduous process. Like the Turnaround Model, the Transformation Model includes principal replacement, but focuses on teacher professional development and extending teacher planning times, longer school days for students, and additional supports including community engagement. The Closure Model, requires that the school is closed and the students are redirected to a higher-performing school (Kutash et al., 2010). There is a paucity of research to document the sustainability of success of in any of the school turnaround models (Murphy, 2008).

Turnaround models are derived from practices and models from the business sector, albeit the success of school turnaround is not as well documented as business sector turnaround. There is a paucity of literature that is demonstrative of successful school turnaround. A large majority of the literature details the strategies implemented by principals or districts to turn low-performing schools into higher performing successful schools. There is very little empirical research that documents the successful turnaround interventions and much less literature that lends itself as a guide to the sustainability of the successful turnaround.

Turnaround support is not limited to the federal government. There are many groups that are invested in the success of school turnaround strategies. Unfortunately, there are a large number of failing schools. Many states and school districts have invested in improving student outcomes. States are developing accountability models to

formatively access school efficacy and school district performance. Moreover, Universities have invested in turnaround by creating programs to develop principals as turnaround specialists. Bargaining unions have supported turnaround by updating union contracts to include provisions to terminate teachers in schools deemed in a turnaround. This effort offers school districts the flexibility to make the necessary staff changes to implement turnaround interventions. Charter schools provide turnaround support by becoming the solution to empty school buildings. More often, charter schools are or selected to manage schools when districts engage in the Restart Model. Additionally, through philanthropy efforts, turnaround initiatives are supported at the national and local levels (Kutash et al., 2010).

Despite the growing support for turnaround efforts there are barriers to achieving widespread school turnarounds. States and districts are limited to turnaround expertise. Consequently, districts are limited because there is a scarcity of highly qualified experts that can document mastery in turnaround interventions. School districts are still developing the capacity to monitor and assess turnaround efforts. The uniqueness of turnaround requires districts to set up new infrastructures to ensure appropriate implementation systems in addition to successful turnaround interventions. Therefore, there are limited turnaround leaders and teachers experienced in turnaround. Moreover, there are limited universities that offer turnaround training, thereby, limiting the pool highly qualified staff to lead turnaround efforts. Other barriers to turnaround include the limited availability of management organizations that specializes in turnaround. This barrier will limit states selections to three of the four approved turnaround models (Kutash et al., 2010).

Interestingly, some critics blame the education policies that create accountability systems for low-performance of schools. Notably, Levine and Levine (2012) criticize No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTT) for the cycle of chronic low-performance in K-12 settings. Under NCLB, low achievement scores are reasons to close or restructure schools; similarly, in Head Start programs, grantees that perform poorly during the Federal Review risk losing their Head Start Grant, consequently, another organization may apply for its grant to provide Head Start services in the existing grantee's community. Levine and Levine (2012) argue that low student achievement extends beyond low test scores and teacher accountability. They describe social factors that are attributed to low student achievement, for example, inequitable school resources in poor and more affluent communities. Furthermore, the critics posit that crowded schools and rapid growth are all attributes to low student achievement.

Additionally, Levine and Levine (2012) proffer systems of accountability modeled after business practices are creating unintended consequences like student test scores correlating with teacher performance, therefore creating an incentive for schools to cheat. The researchers assert that more businesses are investing in education due to the millions of dollars in funds available to corporations for developing software and tutoring services. Many private corporations are benefiting from business turnaround models intended to benefit the education of students. Levine and Levine (2012) argue that the turnaround model is "destructive to public education" (p. 113). Moreover, they posit replacing the turnaround model with individualized instruction and eliminate the business model trajectory. Whereas the researchers critique the turnaround model as an intervention for failing schools, they claim districts have limited influence over the

implementation of turnaround as a model for improvement strategy. Moreover, the turnaround model is driven by federal mandate under President Obama's Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative.

At the Head Start level, there are no documented models of turnaround to choose from. However, there are organizations that take over grants of chronically low-performing Head Start programs and ensure that children have access to Head Start services. These programs have a specialized capability to put in place a team of staff to ensure children have a Head Start program to attend without interruption. Community Development Institute Head Start (CDIHS) based in Denver, Colorado is funded by OHS. CDIHS provides interim services when a Head Start program grant is relinquished, suspended, or terminated. CDIHS is awarded a new grant at the same funding amount as the former grantee. According to CDIHS, they provide a staff of highly qualified consultants to support and continue Head Start program operations. Existing staff of the former grantee will need to reapply for their jobs and begin the hiring process as new employees. CDIHS will typically serve as the grantee for one year until a replacement grantee is selected (<http://www.cdiheadstart.org>).

**Organizational change.** Organizational change is described by many scholars as a dynamic multifaceted process. Scholars posit that organizational change is categorized as either emergent or planned (Burnes, 2004b; Cummings & Worley, 2001; Pettigrew, 2000). Emergent change is a process that derives from ongoing variations within the organization that occur and create change without intention (Pettigrew, 2000). Often in the nonprofit sector the impetus that drives change is unplanned. Factors that drive change are typically demands by regulatory bodies, shifts in the field, or change in

funding warranting the development of a planned strategy. In Head Start, OHS is the impetus for change in low-performing programs.

The notion of planned change has been adopted in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sector (Medley & Akan, 2008). The theory of planned change is first introduced by Kurt Lewin (1947) and described as intentional planning for change developed throughout multiple stages. Lewin (1947) developed a three-step planned change model. Lewin's planned change theory was utilized in the not-for-profit and social sectors (Cummings & Worley, 1997) to help understand and conceptualize planned change. Lewin's theory was later applied in organizational development theories (Burnes, 2004b; MacIntosh and McLean, 2001). Lewin's (1947) three-step model is described in as follows: (a) unfreezing, (b) changing; and (c) refreezing. During the unfreezing stage, a process is developed to eliminate old unwanted behaviors and learn new behaviors. In the changing stage, people are motivated to change and learn new behaviors. In the final stage, refreezing, participants adapt to the new behaviors and commit to sustain the organizational change.

***Kotter's eight-stage change model.*** Kotter's (1996) book *Leading Change* provides a framework for leading planned change. Furthermore, the model illustrates the importance of the change leader and their action steps implemented during the change process. Kotter's (1996) change model builds on Lewin's (1947) three-step planned change model. Although the book is intended to guide the business for-profit sector, this model is applicable to any organizational change. Kotter (1996) posits that there is an eight-stage process necessary to lead successful sustained change within any organization. The change model employs the following steps:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Kotter (1996) suggests that following this sequential multi-stage process is important to leading successful change. The author delineates that it is critical that the stages are followed in the requisite sequence to ensure the overall success of the transformation. According to Kotter (1996), change cannot be accelerated by skipping steps in the change sequence. The author asserts that critical mistakes within stages can stifle organizational transformation. Kotter describes vulnerability and crisis as triggering mechanisms for change. The eight-stage change model is the guiding framework that will be employed in this study to analyze the change process of Head Start directors leading low-performing programs to high quality performing programs.

The first four steps of Kotter's (1996) change process moves the organization out of a state of complacency with the status quo. This phase is modeled after Lewin's (1947) unfreezing stage. Likewise, steps five, six, and seven models Lewin's (1947) changing phase, by creating shifts in culture and change unwanted embedded organizational behaviors. The final stage borrows from Lewin's refreezing stage and ensures that the

change is sustained by illustrating positive shifts in organizational culture. Kotter describes successful change as demonstrating sustained behavior change (Kotter, 1996).

In the first step, *Establishing a sense of urgency*, Kotter (1996) delineates that leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with the vision, and inspires them to actualize the vision despite obstacles (Kotter, 1996). The leader must communicate the urgent nature of the need for change. Staff will not only require an awareness of the problem, but the data that demonstrates the need for the turnaround. The team must understand that complacency and the current state of the organization will lead to organizational failure.

In the second step, *Form a powerful guiding coalition*, Kotter (1996) asserts that the leader needs to develop a team to guide the activities to achieve the intended solution for change. This team must develop a set of shared values and continually grow the support of staff. The author avers that hierarchy should not matter and that champions of change are not hierarchal. Moreover, that it is more important that the guiding coalition is strong enough to lead the change (Kotter, 2007). Change efforts begin with a leader and grow throughout the team. The guiding coalition will inspire others to action by clearly communicating the vision.

Step three, *Create a vision* Kotter (1996) states that at this phase the leader communicates the transformation strategy and defines the vision for the desired state of the organization. Furthermore, vision is what drives the change and keeps the activities and changes aligned with the desired state. In step four, *Communicate the vision*, the leader uses all opportunities to ensure that staff are aware and understand the direction of

the vision. Additionally, all staff should be clear on the vision and direction of the organization.

In Kotter's (1996) fifth step, *Empowering others to act*, the leader must ensure that the team has the resources and support necessary to carry out the vision. During stage six, *Generating short term*, Kotter (1996) asserts that short term wins offer the change agent feedback that their strategy is on the right track. Subsequently, it provides the team the motivational inspiration to push towards the goal. Kotter argues that short term wins encourage others to join in on the mission and believe that its goals are achievable. Moreover, short term wins minimize the power of doubters and naysayers (Kotter, 2007).

In step seven, *Consolidate improvements and produce more change*, the change agent must motivate the group to continue its momentum and drive change. Kotter (1996) warns, claiming a premature victory can be detrimental and demotivate staff. Furthermore, the team should know that they are on the trajectory of achieving the vision, thereby, understanding that the vision is not actualized until the end ultimate goal is met and the new behaviors are sustained.

The final stage requires the leader to *Institutionalize new approaches*. The author delineates that successful change is demonstrated when organizational behaviors have taken root and become established as norms and the team illustrates shared values. Moreover, staff clearly understand the benefits of the change and illustrate an acceptance of new norms and that reverting back to old behaviors are detrimental to the livelihood of the organization.

## **Statement of Purpose**

President Obama's reform of Head Start appears to regulate like the NCLB of Head Start. Obama's mission is to ensure children have the best opportunities for school readiness. The Obama administration plans to increase the accountability in Head Start grantees that are chronically low-performing by enforcing recompetition as a solution for low-performance. Forcing grantees to reapply for their Head Start grant and allow higher performing programs to vie for their grant. Turnaround involves a concerted effort to understand the reasons why the program is failing before executing a series of solutions (Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Congress needs to recognize the current condition of programs. Moreover, identifying common non-compliance issues will caution grantees and developing the appropriate improvement plan informed by research will prevent grants from suffering from the same conditions of non-compliance. Absent from the turnaround literature are the voices of Head Start directors that have experienced the condition of non-compliance and documented steps to move from a non-compliant state to the high-quality program performance.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the turnaround practices as identified by Head Start turnaround directors that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards to achieve a successful Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. Subsequently, the research will provide a road map to guide grantees plagued by noncompliance, whereas increasing opportunities to operate within the guidelines of program compliance, in turn, guaranteeing more children access to high quality Head Start services. Additionally, the threat of recompetition and the recent increase of low-performing Head Start programs

present an urgent need to focus on identifying the turnaround strategies employed by Head Start directors who facilitated successful organization change.

### **Research Questions**

The following research question guides this study:

What do Head Start Directors identify as the successful turnaround practices that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards, consequently achieving a successful federal review with no findings?

The study explored the unique action steps of six Head Start turnaround directors and their actions steps towards program improvements. This study details their process of organizational change as described by the Head Start turnaround leaders. The interview protocol was designed to reveal the turnaround practices and gather if the practices implemented by the participants modeled any of the steps in Kotter's (1996) Leading Change eight-step model.

### **Summary**

Head Start was developed to serve preschool children in poverty to increase opportunities for academic success. Head Start grantees are governed by OHS and subjected to the HSPPS, a set of standards designed to ensure Head Start programs are continuously operating high-quality programs. Recently, many grantees have demonstrated a failure to maintain full compliance with the HSPPS as documented in the 2008 and 2009 Federal Reports to Congress on Head Start Monitoring. The reports indicate that grantees have demonstrated an increase in non-compliances during recent

federal reviews. Grantees that operate outside of the HSPS are deemed noncompliant and thereby low-performing. It is vital that Head Start provide high-quality programs.

Turnaround literature is prominent in business literature, more recently there has been an emergence of literature related to turnaround in K-12 settings. Regrettably, there is not a documented model of Head Start turnaround practices in early care in education field, more specifically Head Start. Therefore, the current research study addresses the gap within the field. The threat of low-performing Head Start programs, presents a critical need to investigate the practices implemented by Head Start directors who have successfully facilitated their programs transformation from low-performing to high-performing subsequently, achieving a federal review with no findings. This study is particularly relevant as it introduces the field to Head Start turnaround practices.

Many Head Start programs are threatened with performance decline and poor monitoring reviews. It is important that Head Start administrators are armed with the tools to analyze organizational factors that lead to performance decline and implement a successful strategy to correct concerns. The lack of documented research to guide improvement efforts in Head Start programs, presents a risk of a chronic system of failures among agencies and continuity of services for children. Unlike schools, there is an absence of turnaround models to choose from to support Head Start grantees. The understanding of turnaround strategies in low-performing Head Start programs will help programs achieve program improvements and HSPS compliance.

In the literature review that follows, the researcher will examine school turnaround literature and provide evidence of the absence of scholarship to document turnaround in early care and education programs. This discourse will set the stage to

demonstrate the need to develop the methodology described in Chapter 3, to conduct a research study to understand the experiences of Head Start directors who have successfully transformed low-performing Head Start programs. In Chapter 4, the results are presented. The Chapter delineates the study findings into four major themes as derived from the data of six interviews with Head Start turnaround directors. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and interpretation of the results, and includes implications of findings, in addition to study limitation, recommendations for future research and concludes with a summary of the entire dissertation.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction and Purpose**

Chapter 2 offers an overview of the empirical and theoretical findings related to turnaround in K-12 settings. The literature offers discussion and strategies for K-12 settings, but research does not suggest turnaround practices, leadership competencies, and approaches for early care and education, more specifically Head Start directors. In sum, none of the existing turnaround research previewed examines the practices of early care and education leaders to turn low-performing Head Start programs to high-performing programs.

For purposes of this study, the researcher will use the definition of turnaround by the Mass Insight and Research Institute (2007): “ a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization” ( p.8). Turnaround differs from typical improvement efforts that focus on actions to recover over time. Turnaround suggests dramatic and quick change efforts by administration to prevent closure or other high stake interventions (Public Impact, 2007). This study will interview six Head Start directors who have successfully turned around their low-performing programs using the HSPS as criteria for high-performance and subsequently achieved a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. The study is guided by the following research question:

What do Head Start Directors identify as the successful turnaround practices that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards, consequently, achieving a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings?

Kotter's eight-stage change model is the guiding framework that will be employed in this study to analyze the change process of Head Start directors leading low-performing programs to high-quality performing programs.

The literature search strategy commenced with a Google Scholar search of key terms, Head Start turnaround and Head Start improvements, and the researcher yielded no research relative to the improvement or turnaround practices of Head Start programs. The results were expanded to school turnaround in which the researcher found literature relative to public school turnaround in the K-12 setting. Education Research Complete and Academic Search were the primary databases utilized to gather literature published between 2000 and 2012. Literature sources included peer reviewed and other journal articles, as well as independent reports developed by research centers, and published books.

The research studies presented in this chapter detail lessons learned in successful turnarounds in K-12 settings across the United States. This literature review is organized logically to synthesize the literature according to three distinct sections: (a) the role of the district, (b) principals as agents of change and (c) leadership competencies needed to facilitate the successful school turnaround. These sections will be followed by a discussion of the fidelity of these turnaround strategies to Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Interestingly, none of the studies offer a specific prescription that

guarantees the successful turnaround and most importantly, all of the literature reviewed fails to examine turnaround strategies of directors in Head Start programs.

### **Review of the Literature**

To date, Head Start turnaround has not been the subject of scholarly literature. The researcher will rely on school turnaround literature as there are similarities in the settings. This viewpoint is crucial to the study because it is primarily focused on low-performing schools and the efforts taken to turn around the entities. The school turnaround literature offers valuable lessons of successful school improvement and an analysis of factors that influence school turnaround. Turnaround leaders analyze, diagnose, and then develop a turnaround plan. The leader establishes a sense of urgency, implements quick actions, and executes short term goals (Murphy, 2008).

The research on school turnaround is limited because it is generally qualitative and consists of case studies of schools that have successfully improved their performance (Public Impact, 2007). School turnaround research emerged in the late 1990s, and there are several scholars that have contributed to the leadership on school turnaround literature (Duke, 2006; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Much literature is derived from cross-sector research on turnaround practices and analyzed to create a framework for districts and schools to develop turnaround plans based on research and best practices to transform chronically low-performing schools (Fredrick & Gift, 2009; Herman et al., 2008; Murphy, 2008;). Much of the turnaround research provides evidence that turnaround efforts are not sustained and often student achievement regresses, school re-culturing energies diminish, and improvement efforts are limited ( Duke & Landahl , 2011).

**School turnaround models.** Turnaround models used in schools are derived from practices and models from the business sector, albeit the success of school turnaround is not as well documented as business sector turnaround (Meyers, 2008). According to Meyers (2008), there is a paucity of literature that is demonstrative of successful school turnaround. For example, in a study conducted by Aladejem, Birman, Orland, Harr-Robins, Heredia, Parrish, and Ruffini (2010) approximately 1,000 low-performing elementary schools were examined to recognize schools that demonstrated drastic and continued improvement, only 47 schools met the criteria. Moreover, the researchers assert that few schools within the U.S. demonstrate dramatic and sustainable achievements. Much literature details the strategy implemented by principals or districts to turn low-performing schools into higher performing successful schools. However, little empirical research documents the success of turnaround interventions and much less literature lends itself as a guide to successful turnaround (Meyers, 2008; Public Impact, 2007).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the impetus for many initiatives at the federal and state levels to improve schools and implement turnaround strategies (Duke, 2012). In addition, President Obama's reform of Head Start also has regulations that can identify low-performance and threaten a program with closure. Obama's stated mission is to ensure children have the best opportunities for school readiness. The Obama administration plans to increase the accountability in Head Start grantees that are chronically low-performing by imposing the concept of recompetition and forcing grantees to reapply for their Head Start grant and allow higher performing programs to vie for their grant (<http://www.whitehouse.gov>, 2011).

At the Head Start level, there are no documented models or studies of turnaround. With the threat of recompetition and the increase of low-performing Head Start programs, the field has an urgent need to focus on identifying the organizational change process and turnaround strategies employed by Head Start directors. These leaders are faced with the task of guiding their programs from a state of low-performing to high-performing Head Start programs, but not much is known about what they actually do to make the turnaround happen.

**The role of the district.** External forces are the impetus for school turnarounds. Similar to Head Start, K-12 settings are guided by a hierarchal system of regulations. Turnaround mandates begin at the federal level, and are cascaded down from the state and local level to the district. School district leadership has the critical role in developing the turnaround direction, and district led initiatives could lead to the success or failure of the turnaround strategy. Murphy (2008) provides an overview of turnaround literature employed from his study of turnaround in corporate, nonprofits, and government organizations in an effort to provide insights for schools in need of a successful turnaround. The researcher posits that turnaround leaders should analyze the reasons for decline and then develop a turnaround plan. Districts actions should include quick actions, which include evaluative actions to gauge the problems and tighten cost. Moreover, Murphy (2008) provides insights for school turnaround. He posits that turnaround leadership should focus on efficiencies, organize and understand the need of the customer, understand the causes of decline, and change the school principals and provide support for the new leadership.

The district determines who will lead the turnaround effort at a specific school and the financial and professional development support that will be provided for the turnaround leaders (Public Impact, 2007). Murphy (2008) asserts that changing management can include changing strategy or employing consultants to support the current leader. The school district determines if the current principal will continue or if a new principal will lead the turnaround initiative. Several turnaround studies suggest that principal replacement is necessary to lead the successful turnaround (Murphy, 2008; Rhim, Kowal, Hassel, & Hassel, 2007). Several private sector scholars posit that changing leaders is critical to the success of the turnaround effort (Abebe, 2009; Barker, Patterson, & Mueller, 2001; Pearce, 1992). In a later section, a study by Duke (2006) is previewed. The researcher interviewed fifteen schools leaders and delineates that ten of the school districts replaced the principal as the first step in the turnaround process. In contrast, school turnaround research has not documented that principal replacement is necessary to the success of the turnaround effort (ED, 2004). However, Duke (2006) delineated that all schools experienced a change in leadership practices regardless of principal replacement. According to Murphy (2008), most for profit organizations recover by replacing the CEO and the top management team. The researcher delineates that in most cases of organizational turnaround successful leadership is viewed as the critical facture. He posits that leadership provides the sense of direction. The scholar distills that right leadership does not always warrant leadership change, albeit, this is the most common practice.

Interestingly, three authors provide critical insights as to the role of school district leadership in guiding the turnaround process beyond principal replacement. Kowal and

Abliedinger (2011), Public Impact (2009), and Robinson and Buntrock (2011) espouse the importance of communicating with stakeholders and informing them of quick, dramatic improvements that happen early on that indicate the strategy is working. Whereas demonstrating small wins quickly build stakeholder support for the turnaround strategy. All of the authors recommend providing turnaround principals the autonomy to make decisions is critical. Additionally, removing the complexity of red-tape and providing them the flexibility to terminate or deploy staff that fails to support the vision. The researchers are in agreement and do not have any contrasting arguments. The issue of principal replacement is addressed, but current literature is absent of significant data to support either the concept that replacing or retaining a principal to guide the turnaround is critical to the successful strategy to sustain turnaround. All of the researchers' findings are consistent with one another (Duke, 2006; Kowal & Abliedinger, 2011; Public Impact, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011).

Kowal and Ableidinger (2011) provide guidance for states, school districts, and principals on the leading indicators of school turnaround based on research from business and health sectors. Kowal and Ableidinger define leading indicators as early demonstrations of success. The researchers build on the scholarship of Hassel and Hassel (2009) which demonstrates the successful leadership actions of turnaround leaders. Similarly, the scholars posit that early signals offer leaders feedback as to strategic direction indicating what is going well and areas that need a change in strategy.

According to Kowal and Abliedinger (2011) successful turnaround leaders focus on small wins early and use it to gain momentum. The researchers contend that turnaround leaders need the autonomy and flexibility to develop their team. Hassel and

Hassel (2009) describe this as the “big yes” whereas the leader is given the support to make decisions that will lead to quick improvements. Kowal and Abliedinger’s (2011) posit that turnaround leaders develop a vision and strategies with activities that are aligned with the goal and employ communication activities to regularly communicate the vision and goals with the staff and leaders. Furthermore, turnaround leaders empower others to act by removing organizational barriers to achieve the vision. However, as turnaround leaders recognize failed actions, consequently they eliminate activities that are not producing the expected outcomes and invest in activities that are doing well.

In another study, Public Impact (2009) provides seven steps for district leaders to achieve the successful turnaround based on cross-sector research. The researchers posit that district leaders should commit to the successful turnaround by providing ongoing support to school staff and community stakeholders. Public Impact (2009) delineates that districts should prepare for multiple attempts at the turnaround process, consequently, new efforts may require a new principal. The researchers aver that the district’s decision of determining which schools will be considered turnaround schools and the intervention strategy are critical to the successful turnaround. Additionally, the researchers assert that districts must develop a pool of turnaround principals that possess the leadership capacity and turnaround strategy to eliminate the cycle of poor performance. Similarly, Kowal and Abliedinger (2011) and Public Impact (2009) argue the importance of providing turnaround principals the support and autonomy to make staffing decisions, in addition to holding them accountable for results. Both studies determine that, districts must recognize the importance of selecting the right teachers for turnaround schools and ensure they possess the skills needed to support the turnaround.

Robinson and Buntrock (2011) examined the turnaround strategy of Cincinnati Public Schools. The researchers determined that turnaround begins with the district and the turnaround “leaders must be supported and held accountable by a strong infrastructure” (p. 8). The authors contend that there must be clearly established objectives and a plan to monitor performance. Similarly, Kowal and Abliedinger (2011) and Public Impact (2009) posit that turnaround principals must have the autonomy to remove obstacles to goal achievement. Likewise, the authors contend that principals are critical to turnaround success, and furthermore they motivate culture changes, develop strategy-focus and lead the change process.

Robinson and Buntrock (2011) delineate that districts need highly qualified turnaround principals to guide the improvement strategy. Robinson and Buntrock (2011) argue of the limited number of turnaround principals and recommends that school districts seek turnaround leaders from sectors outside of education. Additionally, the researchers note the importance of the district communicating with stakeholders. Interestingly, Robinson and Buntrock (2011) and Public Impact (2009) detail the importance of including stakeholders in the improvement process. The researchers contend that community support can positively benefit turnaround efforts and minimize naysayers who may try to challenge turnaround efforts. All of the authors previously cited contend that the school districts role is important to beginning the successful turnaround strategy. School districts make critical decisions about the selection of the principal; they provide autonomy, engage stakeholders, and hold turnaround leaders accountable.

Interestingly, Head Start directors do not report to the school district. OHS and congress mandate that all Head Start programs operate within the HSPS. Subsequently, the Federal Government awards funds directly to grantees to provide high-quality programming. When Head Start programs are low-performing, OHS mandates that grantees take immediate action to improve the program and often provide technical supports. However, the grantee is required to ensure the program is operating within full compliance with the HSPS (Zigler & Styfco, 2010). The grantee holds the Head Start director accountable to ensure that changes are made, whereas, the school district would hold the principals accountable for the successful turnaround. In this next section, the researcher will provide scholarship that emphasizes the critical role of the effective turnaround principal as change agents.

**Principals as change agents.** Turnaround research emphasizes the importance of effective leadership to guide the successful turnaround (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Murphy, 2008; Steiner & Hassel, 2011; Thielman, 2012). The principal selected by the school district to head the turnaround school must guide and set the strategy. Albeit, the district will set the stage for the turnaround and prepare and remove barriers to strategies. Evidence of successful principal actions during the turnaround process informs research about effective principal leadership behaviors. The significance in the role of the principal as a change agent is demonstrated in the work of Duke (2006); Theilman (2012); Duke and Salmonowicz, (2011); Tucker, Salmonowicz, and Levy (2008); Murphy and Meyers (2009); and Duke and Jacobson (2011). The researchers detail the behaviors and actions of successful turnaround leaders. Tucker et al., (2008) emphasizes the importance of turnaround training programs and provides evidence that principals

trained as turnaround leaders demonstrate greater successes than of principals that were not formally trained as turnaround leaders. Conversely, Duke and Salmonowicz (2011) fail to provide evidence that the turnaround principals demonstrated incomparable performance. The implications of turnaround principals that emerge from the literature provide evidence that there are similarities in the actions of successful turnaround leaders.

Duke (2006) contends that there are similarities in leadership behaviors within turnaround schools. The researcher studied fifteen schools that sustained turnaround improvements. All the participating schools were elementary schools. Nine of the schools were studied during 1997-1998. Of the remaining six schools, five were studied in 2004 and the remaining school was studied over the period of 2004-2005 (Duke, 2006). Inclusion criteria for the study required that the schools must have completed a turnaround. Duke (2006) documented the improvements demonstrated by the fifteen turnaround schools and developed a set of changes he identified as critical to their turnaround success.

Duke (2006) delineates that all principals developed a mission that was motivated by a core belief. Additionally, Duke identified similarities in the strategies implemented by the principals in the turnaround schools examined. They are: (a) a vision that children can be educated; (b) teamwork; (c) shared focus and accountability for the success of each student; (d) data decision making; (e) distributed leadership; (f) expanded learning time and experts support for students needing additional help; (g) collegial teams to plan, assess, determine student progress, curriculum and intervention strategies; (h) data sharing; (i) staff professional development; and (j) family and community engagement

(Duke, 2006). Additionally, the principals examined reported that other leadership changes included: (a) mission and focus, (b) style of leadership, (c) re-culturing, and (d) distributed leadership.

Duke (2006) described changes made by 12 of the turnaround principals to reinforce changes in school culture. Nine of the principals removed staff that lacked the capacity to help students improve their academic performance. Individuals were deployed to other schools, counseled out of the field or motivated to retire (Duke, 2006). The researcher delineates that turnaround principals cannot lead turnaround efforts alone, and that the leadership functions must be distributed. The turnaround principals included teachers as part of the leadership functions. All 15 turnaround schools demonstrated evidence of improved teamwork among staff which included regular sharing of instruction strategies and the development of vertical and horizontal teams. Duke (2006) states that future research should include extending studies that substantiate characteristics of successful K-12 turnaround and develop a curriculum for turnaround leaders. Interestingly, the author does not provide a context that includes turnaround in early care and education settings, more specifically Head Start programs.

Similarly, Thielman (2012) provides an account of the efforts of a principal's leadership actions while facilitating the successful turnaround in a catholic high school. Unlike the turnaround case examined in Duke (2006), this turnaround effort was not motivated by Department of Education or other external forces. This turnaround effort was initiated by the principal and teachers committed to improving curriculum and teaching practices (Theilman, 2012). Theilman (2012) posits that regardless of the external impetus for improvement, the successful turnaround is driven by the internal

efforts. Theilman's (2012) case study documents the efforts of the principal and core team to drive the improvements within the high school.

Most of the literature on school turnaround focuses on elementary and middle schools (Ferguson et al., 2010). Several scholars posit that high schools are more difficult to reform than elementary schools (Duke & Jacobson, 2011; Ferguson et al. 2010; Thielman, 2012). High schools are typically larger than elementary schools, and the internal division often serves as impediments to the success of high school turnaround. Furthermore, past academic failures of students, ages of high school students, lack of parent involvement, behaviors, and absenteeism all serve as factors that hinder the success of high school turnaround (Duke & Jacobson, 2011). However, Theilman (2012) provides evidence of a successful high school turnaround. Similar to Duke (2006) the study principal established a core belief among staff that they students they served had the capacity to learn and make academic improvements (Theilman, 2012).

It is important to examine the leadership behaviors to document the successful practices implemented by principals engaged in turnaround strategy. In another study examining principal behaviors, Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) examined the first year turnaround efforts of a principal in a low-performing school. Duke (2006) provides an overview of actions of 15 principals. This study examined the decisions made by one turnaround principal. This exploratory qualitative case study is of a first year elementary school principal leading a turnaround. The principal was interviewed via email or in person. The scholars employed a decision making conceptual framework to analyze the data. The Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) research was guided by the question: "How does a new principal begin the process of turnaround in a low-performing elementary

school?” (p. 38). Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) posit that principals make key decisions related to “performance, policies, program, process and personnel” (p. 39). More specifically, when there is resistant staff not in support of the mission. Principals often make difficult decisions when they lack the support or flexibility to hire or terminate staff as needed. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) delineate that the participant relied on beliefs to make critical decisions. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) posit that there are critical lessons from their research. The authors contend that decisions made by principals were from judgments that lacked a process system for forming the best response. Principals lacked time for exploration of alternative options to resolve critical dilemmas that arise.

Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) delineate that principals need to understand the reasons for failure and pose critical questions about low-performance issues, where to focus efforts on intervention programs and the appropriate design and when to eliminate unsuccessful invention efforts in order to possess the capacity to conduct turnaround. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) proffer that turnaround principals would benefit from training to support leaders in “good decision making” (p. 56). Interestingly, the participant principal was trained as a turnaround specialist. The researchers posit that turnaround leaders need to understand the environment in which they make decisions and reflect about the costs of the decisions made. Limitations to this study include the small sample pool and the inability to generalize findings. Additionally, this study is limited to elementary schools and fails to mention efforts to turnaround low-performing Head Start programs. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) demonstrate the critical decisions made by turnaround principals and the need for specific training to support turnaround leaders.

The studies examined thus far guide the reader in understanding that there are specific skills warranted of individuals leading K-12 turnaround. The following studies will preview the specific skills of turnaround leaders and the importance of targeted training programs to prepare principals with the competency skills necessary to lead as a turnaround principal. Over the years training programs have been developed to meet the increased demand for turnaround principals in low-performing schools (ED, 2004). Tucker et al., (2008) found that turnaround training programs have a “positive influence on leadership activities and outcomes” (p. 31). The authors found that principals who participated in turnaround training programs achieved better turnaround results than principals that did not. Similar to the work of Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) the authors examined principal leadership behaviors on a larger scale, specifically in 20 underperforming schools. Of the twenty schools interviewed 10 principals completed a turnaround specialist program and the comparison group had not. On the contrary, the principal examined in Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) had not completed a turnaround specialist program. The purpose of the study were to define the leadership actions demonstrated by principals to improve student achievement, identify measures of student achievement, and examine any differences in the change process as described by leaders in low-performing school who completed specialized turnaround and principals in comparison schools.

During the 2004-2005 school year, the 20 participating principals were interviewed twice. The researchers’ interview protocol included two semi-structured interviews. Student data from year end state assessments were collected from all students. Ten participants were offered formal turnaround training and support to aid in the success

of the turnaround efforts and the other ten principals had not been offered turnaround support. Notably, Tucker, et al., (2008) found similarities in the practices and beliefs of the turnaround principals and the non-turnaround principals. The researchers found that both groups of principals demonstrated a high value on teamwork and partnership, commitment to increasing test scores, and data-driven decisions. Similarly, the leadership practices mentioned by principals were: (a) benchmark testing, (b) actively analyzing data, (c) after-school remediation, and (d) on-going communication with staff. Interestingly, the research found that 19 of the 20 participants stated that teamwork was highly valued component of the change process. In contrast, the student's assessment scores demonstrated significant differences in the two schools. The math and English scores of the elementary students lead by turnaround specialist surpassed those of the comparison schools. Interestingly, eighth grade scores did not demonstrate substantial results and there was only one eighth grade school in the study. The researchers proffer that there are commonalities in turnaround practices.

According to Tucker et al. (2008), the students who attended schools led by the turnaround specialist demonstrated better test results in 2005 than students in the comparison schools. The researchers attribute the improvements to specialized turnaround training, communication of the mission to stakeholders and community, and ongoing and regular support. The researchers posit that turnaround specialist trainings are beneficial and have a positive influence on principal leadership actions and goals. Also, future research must take into account the importance of improving school cultures and its relationship to turnaround practices. Although this study offers a comparative narrative of the successes of turnaround principals, the study fails to include turnaround

practices of leaders of in early care and education programs, consequently, the field lacks research relative to the leadership actions of Head Start directors turning around low-performing programs.

Notably, re-culturing is important task in the turnaround initiative in poor performing schools. Tucker et al. (2008) recommended future research to examine culture and its relationship to turnaround practices. Murphy and Meyer (2009) present data on the importance of reculturing in turnaround. The researchers provide a narrative about critical elements necessary for the successful turnaround drawn from their preview of the corporate, government, and nonprofit fields. The researchers establish that people are critical to the success of a turnaround. Likewise, leaders of turnarounds must understand the attitudes of their employees as they, in turn, impact the culture. Negative and toxic cultures cannot sustain a turnaround. It is important for turnaround leaders to change the culture by restoring confidence by empowering the team, through collaboration, engendering respect, and recognizing the contributions of the staff. Other researchers for example, Fullan (2007), examines the importance of re-culturing in the improvement process. Similar to Fullan (2007), the researchers support the notion that principals must employ influencing and motivational skills to change the school culture, and furthermore, must establish an organizational shift in how employees view their work (Fullan, 2007; Murphy & Meyers, 2009).

Murphy and Meyers (2009) engaged in a study of cross-sectional literature to develop a comprehensive model for successful organizational turnaround. The authors suggest that the leader begin by recognizing early warning signs of crisis, and then mobilize the team to focus on the mission and remove barriers to achieving the mission.

The researchers proffer that employees are motivated by a vision of organizational success, increased opportunities to participate, challenges, shared successes, and recognition of success. Additionally, the researchers assert that leader should engender transparency by communicating good and bad information about the organization, thereby building trust and momentum (Murphy & Meyers, 2009).

According to Murphy and Meyers (2009), leaders can empower people by building teams and training staff. Similarly to Tucker et al. (2008), the authors posit that organizational culture has a critical impact on the likelihood of sustaining the turnaround. Furthermore, turnaround leaders help develop new organizational norms and create shifts in employee behaviors. They do this by challenging the current situation, demanding a positive change, and warranting a commitment from all staff. The researchers contend that turnaround leaders develop, a vision that the organization can change its path and improve, they commit to high standards, and a continuous process of ongoing improvement that that leads to increased successes (Murphy & Meyers, 2009). The dissertation research questions will probe for further exploration of how Head Start directors motivate and empower staff during the turnaround process in Head Start programs.

In another study, evidence of successful turnaround implemented by principals includes the work of Duke and Jacobson (2011). Duke and Jacobson (2011) examined the success of two Texas High School turnaround situations. Duke and Jacobson (2011) contend that there are several leadership characteristics shared by the principals. Both principals shared a focused strategy on improvements with small wins insight; the courage to terminate staff not committed to the goal developed the support from the team.

Similarly, both principals built relationships with the middle schools and a focus on data to drive decisions regarding next steps for academic supports for students. Furthermore, both principals balanced improvements and monitored to eliminate barriers to continuous improvement. A significant difference in the turnaround efforts is that Weiskopf was a new principal and selected new staff to help lead the efforts unlike Garza. Limitations to the study include efforts to sustain the turnaround implemented by principals are not examined.

Current literature details the importance of examining the behaviors and actions of successful turnaround leaders. The absence of research to document the behaviors and actions of Head Start leaders guiding turnaround demonstrates the critical need to facilitate a study that will provide evidence of such practices. The early care and education field needs literature to document the actions of Head Start leaders that transcend programs from a point of low-performing to quickly improving. The literature review examines the action steps taken by competent turnaround leaders. It is critical to examine the unique competencies of turnaround principals. The next section of research suggests that turnaround leaders possess a unique set of competencies to lead the successful turnaround.

**Turnaround leader competencies.** Turnaround leaders possess a unique set of skills that differ from principals that are successful in general school settings. Notably, the research presented by Duke and Jacobson (2011) alludes to the fact that there are unique competencies of turnaround leaders. According to Public Impact (2007) turnaround leaders must possess the competency and knowledge base to guide the dramatic improvement. Turnaround literature argues not to assume that principals of

high-performing schools possess the capacity to successfully lead a turnaround school (Kowal & Hassel, 2011). Turnaround principals possess a critical set of competencies to successfully lead a turnaround strategy (Kowal & Hassel, 2011).

Turnaround principal competencies are unique, in comparison to typical principals leading high performing schools. Public Impact (2008) guides this concept by delineating that there are four unique core competencies of successful turnaround principals. Kowal and Hassel (2011), Aladjejem et al. (2010), and Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, Redding, and Darwin (2008) build on the research of Public Impact (2008) and their research expounds on the concept of core competencies needed to guide the successful turnaround. According to Public Impact (2008) turnaround leader competencies represent “patterns of actions” hence, overlap in turnaround leader competencies and actions (p. 4). Public Impact (2008) developed a guide to identify competencies for principals in leading the successful turnaround. Much of the literature contends that turnaround principals drive results (Public Impact, 2008; Rhim, 2011; Steiner & Barrett, 2012). Public Impact (2008) scanned cross-sector turnaround literature and derived from their research that there are a set of core competencies to successfully lead turnaround (Public Impact, 2008). The researchers contend that there are four “clusters” of leader competencies. They are: (a) driving for results, (b) influencing for results, (c) problem solving, and (d) showing confidence to lead.

In the first cluster, driving for results, the turnaround leader will set high performance goals and develop a system to prioritize and monitor goals and activities. Turnaround leaders take risks, set clear expectations, and plan for hiccups and crisis with a clear plan to deal with issues before they occur. In the second cluster, influencing for

results, the turnaround leader focuses on creating a coalition to support and influence others. Moreover, the turnaround leader builds morale and empowers the team with a clear vision and ongoing professional development. Next, in the problem solving cluster, the turnaround principal demonstrates competencies in resolving conflicts. Finally, in the showing confidence to lead cluster, turnaround leaders visibly demonstrate the confidence and a commitment to the mission and vision of the turnaround (Public Impact, 2008).

Turnaround leader competencies are enacted in combination with critical action steps. Public Impact (2008) posits that there are three critical actions of competent turnaround leaders: (a) identify and focus on early wins to gain momentum; (b) dismantle organizational norms by creating discomfort with status quo and eliminate patterns that impede success; and (c) respond rapidly to measured outcomes, eliminate failed strategies, and sustain focus on progression. Additionally, Public Impact (2008) proffers that there are 14 additional actions in combination with leader competencies that leads to the successful turnaround: (a) collect and analyze data; (b) make action plan based on data; (c) concentrate on big, fast payoffs in year one; (d) implement practices even if it requires deviation; (e) require all staff to change; (f) make necessary staff replacements; (g) focus on successful tactics; halt others; (h) do not tout progress as ultimate success; (i) communicate positive vision; (j) help staff personally feel problems; (k) gain support of key influencers; (l) silence critics with speedy success; (m) measure and report progress frequently; and (n) require decision makers to share data and problem solve (p. 6). Identifying the competencies and actions demonstrated by turnaround principals is critical to guiding the success of future turnaround schools. Whereas, the researchers

provide evidence of the capacities necessary for successful turnaround leaders, they fail to provide evidence of the steps necessary for Head Start directors to guide low-performing Head Start programs to high-performing programs.

Similarly, Kowal and Hassel (2011) provide evidence of turnaround competencies as found in the work published by Public Impact (2008). In contrast, the researchers posit that there are shortages of leaders to guide turnaround in chronically low-performing schools. Kowal and Hassel (2011) posit that there is not a large supply of available leaders that possess the competencies necessary to guide the successful turnaround outside of the education field. The authors posit that there is a paucity of talent, and argue that turnaround leaders should be imported from cross-sector into the education field.

According to Kowal and Hassel (2011) successful turnaround leaders focus early on small wins and use it to gain momentum. They develop a vision and strategy aligned with activities that ensure goal achievement. Turnaround leaders improve communication by sharing the vision and goals with the staff and leaders. Furthermore, turnaround leaders empower others to act by removing organizational barriers to achieve the vision. However, as turnaround leaders recognize failed actions, they eliminate activities that are not producing the expected outcomes and invest in activities that are doing well. Moreover the researcher asserts that, turnaround leaders are driven by the data. They drive momentum, while building credibility. Turnaround leaders develop goals after critical analysis. They are motivating and communicate to all stakeholders about the success of the turnaround. The researchers contend that open communication among stakeholders is effective for reducing the effects of cynicism.

Kowal and Hassel (2011) proffer districts struggling to find competent leaders to should look to secure talent from other fields. The researchers suggest further study on the benefits of importing leaders from other sectors as turnaround principals.

Interestingly, Kowal and Hassel (2011) identify the benefits of selecting leaders from other fields to guide the successful turnaround strategy, however, the researchers fail to address the gaps in knowledge about early care and education directors and the techniques used to guide low-performing Head Start programs to a state of improvement.

Turnaround literature supports the argument that specific competencies are required of leaders in order to achieve turnaround success (Kowal & Hassel, 2011; Public Impact, 2008). Notably, Aladejem et al. (2010) found that principals that did not demonstrate competencies still achieved improvements. Aladejem et al. (2010) conducted a retrospective qualitative study to document 11 schools that demonstrated improvement during the school years of 2000 through 2005. The schools either demonstrated slow improvement, within three and five years, or rapid and dramatic improvement within one to two years. Eight of the schools were determined as rapid-improvement schools and the remaining three were designated as slow-improvement schools. Aladejem et al. (2010) aver that principals that achieved less turnaround success were more management type leaders and focused less on the change process. Principals that focused on the change process implemented quick strategies and reinforced the improvement through re-culturing efforts. According to Aladejem et al. (2010) most of the study's principals employed distributed leadership strategies. The researchers delineate that the implementation of distributed leadership practices were critical to their success.

Aladejem et al. (2010) proffer that the turnaround principals distributed leadership styles included engaging staff in developing instructional policies and supporting data driven decisions. Study principals demonstrated competencies in motivating employees and setting high expectations for staff and pupils. Furthermore, Aladejem et al. (2010) posit that study principals focused on student outcomes, developed consistent school procedures, and improved the culture by enforcing a belief that change was of urgent. Limitations to this study include the small sample size of eleven schools and none of the school examined were Head Start programs.

Similarly, Herman et al. (2008) demonstrate the commonalities of successful turnaround leaders. Herman et al. (2008) analyzed turnaround literature derived from ten turnaround case studies. The studies included a combination of 35 schools, six high school, eight middle schools, and 21 elementary schools. The case studies examined represent turnaround research during the school years of 1999- 2005. The purpose of the study is to analyze ten case studies to provide similarities and findings to provide strong evidence of successful turnaround competencies. Herman et al. (2008) preface the study delineating that all of the case studies examined provided low evidence to support the significance of the data. Despite the low significance levels, the researchers deduced from the study commonalities in successful turnaround leadership. Similar to work of Aladejem et al. (2010), the researchers found commonalities in the practices of turnaround principals specifically, in developing a clear vision and expectations. The principals developed a culture of change renouncing status quo and setting high goals of all staff and mandating their commitment to the change process.

Turnaround principals enforced the message that everyone must change. According to Herman et al. (2008) new principals analyzed data about student achievement before creating changes. The researchers contend that the turnaround plan must be ground in data and analyzed to ensure the appropriateness for the change initiative. Herman et al. (2008) posit that the turnaround principals studied and eliminated barriers to change. Additionally, the principals monitored staff and pupil performance and were more accessible to manage student behaviors in addition to observing classroom instruction.

Interestingly, Herman et al. (2008) delineates similar findings to the work of Aladejem et al. (2010). Both studies found that the principals employed distributed leadership practices engaging staff and other stakeholders. According to Herman et al. (2008) all participants established goals related to teaching instruction and establish procedures to regularly monitor progress. The researchers posit that turnaround leaders develop successful strategies by establishing one or two short term goals that are highly achievable. Once the goals are achieved, turnarounds leaders declare quick wins by publicly announce the accomplishments of the strategy. The researchers assert that highlighting quick wins will gain parent confidence in the success of the strategy and minimize the effects of naysayers (Herman et al., 2008).

Herman et al. (2008) provide evidence of commonalties in turnaround leader competencies and actions in alignment with other turnaround studies (Aladejem et al., 2010; Public Impact, 2008). The researchers contend that this study offers low-level evidence, however argues that the study provides strong recommendations to lead to the likelihood of the successful turnaround strategy. Albeit, the researchers provide evidence

of turnaround commonalities, they fail to examine the cohesion of successful practices of Head Start directors' turnaround around low-performing Head Start programs to improved high-performing programs.

The research studies presented in this chapter describe the role of the district, principals as change agents, and the specific leadership competencies needed to facilitate the successful K-12 turnaround in schools. The school district sets the turnaround strategy by analyzing the causes for low performance before prescribing the turnaround strategy. The district selects the right leaders, ensures autonomy for the principals to make critical decisions, and provides the appropriate professional development and funds to support the turnaround at the school.

The literature provides evidence that principal action steps are complex and crucial to the successful turnaround. Most importantly, the principal begins with developing a vision and gaining buy-in from all stakeholders. Furthermore, the literature provides evidence that turnaround principals demonstrate similar actions. Their actions and competencies are unique to principals of their kind. Consequently, it cannot be assumed that principals currently leading high performing schools will successfully turnaround low-performing schools. Turnaround principal demonstrate a unique set of competencies. There are four core competencies of turnaround principals: (a) driving for results, (b) influencing for results, (c) problem solving, and (d) showing confidence to lead (Public Impact, 2007). Interestingly, the core competencies are aligned with Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. This model is tightly aligned with the leadership actions and competencies of turnaround leaders reviewed in this chapter. Despite, the

alignment with Kotter's (1996) change model the literature fails to document evidence relative to Head Start directors.

**Examining the literature according to Kotter's model.** The literature reviewed demonstrates the breadth of coverage relative to turnaround leadership. Albeit, the studies examined fail to demonstrate turnaround practices in Head Start whereas it guides the researcher in developing a framework to examine the phenomenon of Head Start turnaround. This section summarizes the relationship between Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model and the variables that provide evidence of successful strategies for turnaround and major variations, if any, in the strategies reviewed.

Step 1 of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model requires *Establishing a sense of urgency*. Making staff changes, requiring all staff to change, and the mandate for quick and dramatic change are evidence of actions that validates turnaround leaders' establishment of the sense of urgency in the nature of turnaround. Actually, the fact that a school is engaged in turnaround represents the sense of urgency. All of the studies examined in this literature review document the sense of urgency. Some studies signal the sense of urgency by making changes to leadership. The concept of changing principals is discussed in several studies as a signal to stakeholders that a change was necessary.

Frederick and Gift (2009) proffer that guiding the turnaround with a new leadership strategy is beneficial. In contrast, Murphy (2008) warns that many weak turnaround strategies include retaining the existing school leaders. In the research by Theilman (2012), the researcher examined two principals who achieved success in their turnaround strategy. One principal was a new leader and the other principal was the existing principal and retained to facilitate the turnaround. Interestingly, Murphy (2008)

delineates that there is point where school recovery is unattainable regardless of leadership replacement.

Turnaround literatures asserts that the leader must establish a sense of urgency, and implement quick actions that include evaluation to understand the problems and reduce, a process to develop and execute short term goals ( Murphy, 2008). Turnaround principals must develop a strategy that resolves where to focus intervention efforts and when to eliminate unsuccessful intervention efforts. These competencies are necessary to conduct a successful school turnaround (Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010).

Much of the literature examined supports Kotter's (1996) Step 2, *Form a Guiding Coalition* (Public Impact, 2008; Murphy & Meyers, 2009; Tucker et al., 2008; Duke & Jacobson, 2011). The researchers support the idea of building a team to guide the vision, moreover, they posit that all staff must commit to the change. Similarly, the literature supports Kotter's (1996) Step 3, *Create a vision*, as most of the literature examined provides evidence of the importance of developing a vision. Duke (2006) establishes that turnaround leaders establish a mission and focus. Similarly, Hassel and Hassel (2009) and Kowal and Ableidinger (2011) document the importance of developing a mission and focus to the successful strategy.

A number of the studies examined provide evidence of support for Kotter's (1996) Step 4, *Communicating the change vision* (Herman, 2012; Public Impact, 2008; Public Impact, 2009; Rhim, 2012). Turnaround leaders communicate the message to all stakeholders that there is a need to change. Interestingly, Theilman (2012), Duke and Salmonowicz (2010), Hassel and Hassel (2009) and Kowal and Ableidinger (2011) all provide examples to support Kotter's Step 5, *Empowering others to act*. For example,

Duke and Salmonwicz (2010), Public Impact (2007), and Public Impact (2008), discuss the importance of removing staff that do not support the vision in addition to removing obstacles to achieving the change. Similarly, Duke (2006) asserts that principals must have the autonomy to remove staff that fails to support the vision. Negative and toxic cultures cannot sustain a turnaround. It is important for turnaround leaders to change the culture and restore confidence by empowering the team, collaboration, engendering respect, recognizing the contributions of the staff (Murphy & Meyers, 2009).

Recognizing successes and contributions of staff are in alignment with Kotter's (1996) Step 6, *Generating short term wins*. Many studies mention the importance of establishing small wins during the early stages of the turnaround process ( Hess & Gift, 2009, Kowal & Ableidinger, 2011; Murphy & Meyers, 2008). Additionally, Duke and Jacobson, (2011) and Kowal and Hassel (2011) reported the advantages of highlighting small wins. The authors posit that generating small wins increases momentum, documents the successes of the strategy, diminishes the power of naysayers, and encourages buy-in with stakeholders to support the turnaround strategy. In contrast, Duke (2006) did not report findings that emphasized the importance of generating short term wins. None of the studies provided explicit evidence of the need to develop small wins.

Kowal and Hassel (2011) provide evidence to support Kotter's (1996), Step 7, *Consolidate improvement and produce more change*. Turnaround leaders eliminate failed efforts and focus on successful strategy efforts. Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) research found that Turnaround principals' strategy included a focus on successful intervention efforts and they knew when to eliminate unsuccessful intervention efforts. Turnaround

leaders focus on data and monitor progress regularly to gather when to eliminate failed efforts (Kowal & Hassel, 2011).

Finally, several studies provide evidence to support Kotter's (1996) Step 8, *Institutionalize new approaches* (Herman et al., 2008; Hassel & Hassel, 2009; Kowal & Hassel, 2011; Murphy & Meyers, 2009; Public Impact, 2007, Public Impact, 2008). Tucker et al. (2008) in particular, emphasized the importance of re-culturing to create a culture that supported student learning. Re-culturing was documented to create new organizational norms and change behaviors. None of the literature examined represent a stark contrast in turnaround practices. Each article examined supports at least two of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Among the studies examined, the following studies support seven or more of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model: (a) Kowal and Abliedinger, 2011; (b) Public Impact, 2008; (c) Hassel and Hassel, 2009; (d) Kowal and Hassel, 2011; (e) Theilman, 2012; and (f) Herman et al., 2008. These studies reflect support of Kotter's (1996) change model and the actions of leaders improving chronically low-performing programs. It will be interesting to examine Kotter's framework and its relationship to Head Start directors' turnaround practices.

## **Conclusion**

With the threat of recompetition and the increase of low performing Head Start programs, the field has an urgent need to focus on exploring the organizational change process within low-performing Head Start program and turnaround strategies employed by Head Start directors who guide their programs from a state of low-performance to high-performing Head Start programs.

Chapter 2 provides evidence that turnaround in early care and education settings, more specifically Head Start have not been explored in the literature and scholarly research. This gap validates the need for future research to investigate and answer the following question:

What do Head Start Directors identify as the successful turnaround practices that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards?

The researcher will interpret the data to analyze the change process employed by Head Start directors to investigate if there is any alignment with Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model.

The lack of literature has created a gap and warrants an emergence of scholarship to investigate the successful turnaround of Head Start programs. Whereas the literature has substantiated cross-sector turnaround literature, it fails to include Head Start. This literature review substantiates the need for further exploration.

In Chapter 3 the researcher will describe the methodology for conducting research to answer the questions regarding how Head Start directors turnaround low-performing programs. In addition the chapter previews the design and execution of the qualitative study. Furthermore, it details the design of the study, rationale, study participants, instrumentation, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and process for data analysis to report findings to the field.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction: The General Perspective**

To date, there is not a documented model of turnaround application in the literature detailing instances of troubled Head Start programs being improved. Consequently, the existing research identifies turnaround in the context of schools, nonprofits, churches, and organizational turnaround. The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamics of the turnaround process in Head Start programs as described by directors of underperforming programs that experienced turnaround and the leadership behaviors implemented to facilitate performance improvements in full compliance of the Head Start Performance Standards (HSPS) for Federal Review accountability.

The employment of a qualitative design guided this study in documenting Head Start turnaround practices and created a road map for other Head Start programs to facilitate program turnaround from low-performing and operating out of compliance to high-performing programs operating in full compliance with the HSPS. Furthermore, the qualitative design offered in-depth reflective insight into leadership practices, monitoring procedures, organizational culture, and turnaround practices implemented by Head Start directors. Currently, this phenomenon is not explored, so there is a critical need to introduce discourse about the practices of Head Start directors as they facilitate the improvement processes. The introduction of their respective reflections on how they facilitated change will provide programs that are currently low-performing a road-map to lead to improvements that ultimately benefit the children served. The researcher ascribed

meaning from the data provided by Head Start turnaround directors as they detailed the improvement trajectory in achieving full compliance status. First, the researcher will provide an understanding of the turnaround procedures employed by Head Start directors. Then, the researcher will analyze the data and to understand if the participants' actions reflect instances of Kotter's (1996) model (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The research employed the use of an open-ended interview and demographic questionnaire to gain understanding and gather credible evidence to help answer the question:

What do Head Start directors identify as the successful turnaround practices that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards?

The chapter begins with a discussion of the basic tenets of qualitative methodology. Next, the context of the study is reviewed describing how the participants were selected and study criteria. Then, the researcher's positionality as an insider is explained. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief analysis of how the study addressed reliability and trustworthiness.

A cross-case analysis offered the researcher robust data that extended beyond one specific case but offered the researcher an opportunity to examine the practices of multiple directors (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Analyzing the strategies, behaviors, and specific conditions experienced by various directors increased the opportunities for generalization and added significance within multiple cases. Additionally, a cross-case analysis explicated the phenomenon by analyzing comparisons and relations across numerous cases. Cross-case analysis permitted the researcher to dig-deeply to understand

the methods employed by Head Start directors in the United States who have improved their Head Start programs from a state of low-performance to high-performance operating within full compliance with all HSPS for Federal Review accountability.

The study included an in-depth, one-on-one telephone interview with directors identified from the list of the eligible Head Start programs provided by OHS. The directors were interviewed to gain understanding about the dramatic improvements made during the time between their most recent federal review, for the purposes of this study it will be referred to as federal review 2 (FR2), and the review previous to FR2, in which the program was cited for six or more non-compliances or one or more deficiency findings, this review will be defined as federal review 1 (FR1). Additionally, participants were asked to respond to an electronic semi-structured questionnaire to gather personal demographic and organizational structural data. The results of the study inform the early childhood and education field about effective turnaround strategies that can be used to lead change efforts.

### **The Research Context**

Participants were selected from a list generated by OHS identifying grantees that met the study criteria. Forty-one grantees were identified as meeting the criteria. The selection criteria for participants included: (a) each participant must be a grantee or delegate operating a Head Start program; (b) at the grantee's FR2, the program must have achieved a full compliance finding; and (c) the grantee must have previously received a finding of six or more non-compliances or one or more deficient findings from their FR1 during 2007- 2009.

The researcher invited all eligible grantees and its delegates to participate in the study. The participants represented Head Start grantees across 25 states: located in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The programs are operated by a mix of private nonprofit (n= 19), public schools (n=9), universities (n=2), and Native-American Tribal (n=11) programs.

### **The Research Participants**

The participants included Head Start directors who have led their programs from non-compliant or deficient status to achieve full compliance over the past two reviews. This accomplishment demonstrates substantial improvement in program performance. The list of grantees that met the selection criteria provided by OHS included 41 grantees and its delegates.

All of the eligible Head Start directors were invited to participate via email. The selections of participants were determined by the number of respondents that agreed to participate. A total of six programs agreed to participate. However, rich data about Head Start directors' competencies and action steps were gathered.

Creswell (2007) suggests deliberately sampling individuals that have first-hand knowledge who can best inform the phenomenon being studied. For this study purposeful sampling were employed. Interview criteria required that prior to the interview the participant needed to confirm that they were the responsible person for the strategy and improvement process regarding the turnaround. Subsequently, all of the interviewees confirmed their leadership in the turnaround effort. The interviews and

associated demographic questionnaire began in April 2013 after Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The interview process commenced over four months. Interviews were conducted from April through July 2013. The audiotaped interviews were sent to a local professional transcriptionist for transcription. Once the interviews are transcribed the research data coding and analysis immediately followed.

The researcher intended to collect demographic information collection from the participants which included age, gender, race, organization reporting structure, educational background, length of time served as a Head Start director, tenure with the current Head Start program, current title, and specific training related to turnaround or change management. The demographic questionnaire, found in Appendix B, was distributed electronically prior to the initial telephone interview. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher requested the participant's report of findings from FR1 and FR2 in addition to the most recent program information report (PIR).

Only three of the six respondents completed the demographic survey. Interestingly, several respondents did not disclose their FR1 and FR2 data and PIR. It is presumed that the respondents did not want to share confidential documents. As an additional challenge, it appeared that the respondents and potential participants were fearful of identifying information being deduced from the study data to indicate participants to OHS and staff. It is the researcher's intent to protect respondent's privacy and maintain confidentiality to mitigate the risk of negative consequences. Therefore, participants in the study are not identified. The researcher has taken care to only identify the programs with a letter as a program identifier. The researcher does not pinpoint specific geographic location, programmatic information, unique program traits, and

gender of participants in order to protect the identity of the participants. Therefore, the contents in the demographic survey were not analyzed for the purposes in this study.

### **Researcher as Insider**

The researcher is a former Head Start director and has worked in the capacity of a Head Start director hired to conduct a turnaround. This relationship served as a benefit when interviewing the participants. Whereas allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and offer opportunities for self-reflection when analyzing the data. At the start of each interview, before the questions began, the researcher disclosed to the participants the status as a former Head Start director. The status as an “insider” may have offered the respondents the freedom to speak comfortably without fear or judgment. Additionally, the participants were comfortable describing their experiences as they knew they were engaging with someone that were aware of the nomenclatures of Head Start and possessed an understanding of the challenges as a Head Start director. As an insider, the researcher is fully aware of the issues that arise with program improvements within Head Start programs. Interestingly, the researcher easily developed a rapport with the interviewees. Likewise, the interviewees seemed to reduce inhibitions to share information. According to Thurman (2001), the rapport between the researcher and participant is critical to obtaining rich data.

### **Instrumentation**

Head Start directors selected were asked to participate in one telephone interview and complete one questionnaire to gather demographic data about the director and Head Start program. The questionnaire was administered online, and data were collect using Qualtrics, a web-based survey collection software. Each interview ranged between 40 and

75 minutes long. Directors described common challenges and contextual variations which influenced their turnaround practices. The interview questions, found in Appendix C, are researcher-developed and based on Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Standardized open-ended interviews were employed to understand the directors' perspectives in their own words about their lived experiences regarding program improvement. Standardized open-ended interview protocols were utilized using the same questions for each participant. This approach was employed to increase the comparability of responses, reduce interviewer bias, and facilitate the organization of data analysis (Patton, 2002).

The questions on the interview protocol (see Appendix C) were designed to ensure that it did not permit yes or no responses. The interview questions engaged the participants to detail their experiences in their own words without limitations or restrictions (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). Consequently, this style of interview is more difficult to code due to the amount of detail in the participants' responses (Creswell, 2007). Interview questions focused on how the Head Start turnaround directors facilitated the change process, described challenges during the process, and the culture and climate of the program during the change process. More specifically, the questions focused on strategies used to facilitate the improvement process, monitoring practices, communication, and professional development.

Only two programs released their FR1, FR2 and PIR documents for review. Subsequently, this presented a challenge in reviewing the participants FR1 and FR2 documents. As an alternative, the eligibility listing from OHS was reviewed. The listing contained data from FR1 and FR2 for all participants. Therefore, this information served

as a suitable substitution for missing data and provided evidence of programs non-compliances and deficiency findings. Notably, all of the participants were confirmed by OHS as meeting the study criteria.

### **Procedures**

The researcher employed pilot testing of the interview questions with two Head Start directors in Western, NY. Both directors facilitated significant improvements in their respective programs and their input allowed the researcher to test the protocol for timing and clarity of the question format (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). Subsequently, no significant changes were made to the interview protocol after the pilot interviews. Whereas during the interview process an additional question emerged regarding fiscal matters and was added to the Protocol, see Appendix C. Creswell (2007) suggests employing the use of a protocol to record information and collect interview data in an organized fashion. The protocol contains twenty-one interview questions, found in appendix C, focused on the state of the Head Start program before the improvement process began, the period between FR1 and FR2, and after the improvement. The questions guided the conversation to gain an understanding of the changes implemented by the participants that led to program improvements.

Participants were contacted via email and requested to participate. Participants were informed of their rights and offered detailed information regarding the purpose of the study and confidentiality. Respondents were made aware that their participation was voluntary, confidential, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. As discussed previously, the names and program identities are protected

and therefore each program is assigned a letter as an identifier. Letters A-F will be used to identify each program.

Prior to the initial telephone interview, each participant electronically received the demographic questionnaire and interview questions at least one week prior to the scheduled interview. Additionally, the participants were asked to upload their FR1, FR2 and PIR. As previously mentioned, participant follow-through in this area were minimal. The participants received an email link with access to the questionnaire for the duration of the study. In an effort to reduce low response rates, participants received emails informing them of the pivotal role they played in informing research to improve program quality for Head Start children and families. Head Start directors that did not respond to the survey received an email prompt to complete the questionnaire in addition to a second email encouraging them to complete the demographic questionnaire. Three of the six respondents completed the electronic survey. This presented a challenge when attempting to analyze demographic survey data across programs. Additionally, participant recruitment was a challenge. The researcher sent multiple emails to potential participants in an effort to gain interest in the study. Moreover, all of the eligible participants that met the study were contacted either via telephone or email to increase participation. Interestingly, some potential candidates refused to participate, others did not respond, and some respectfully declined. There were several potential interviewees that agreed to participate, scheduled for an interview and failed to follow through with the interview. Non-respondents were approached a second and even a third time, until a response was achieved. However, the researcher did not always get a response.

Graciously, six of the 41 eligible Head Start grantees participated in the study. Six Head Start turnaround leaders were interviewed on the telephone and recorded using an iPhone to digitally record the interview. Additionally, an iPad were utilized as a back-up to ensure the successful recording and mitigate the risk of a failed recording. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), audio recording interviews increase the accuracy in coding. All interviews were transcribed employing a professional transcriptionist. In seeking to ensure rigor in this qualitative study, the researcher engaged in full transcription assuring that the interviews gathered everything that the participants said including grammatical errors and pauses in speech. Hard copies of the transcriptions, as well as the digital voice recording, will be maintained for a period of five years. The hard copies of the transcription will be stored in a locked file cabinet. The data will be destroyed after a period of five years.

Individual interviews were read twice and then categorized and coded to discover common themes. In an effort to gain transactional validity the researcher invited the participants to review the transcripts and agree that their perspectives were accurately interpreted (Cho & Trent, 2006). The participants were offered one week to make any corrections to the transcripts, and if no changes were initiated by the participants, the transcripts were transcribed as recorded. Additionally, the researcher simultaneously listened to each recording and matched it to the transcribed data to assure its accuracy. Transcribed data were entered into the qualitative software program, Atlas.ti for coding and analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

All of the interviews were coded by the researcher to ensure consistency of coding across participant interviews. Data analysis included coding and categorizing for themes. Transcripts were coded using Atlas.ti, a qualitative software tool. The researcher collected and analyzed the turnaround actions steps described by the study participants to answer the research question guiding the current study. Then the researcher analyzed the findings to determine if the Head Start turnaround directors' actions steps demonstrated any relationship to Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model.

Analysis of the data were conducted using thematic qualitative coding. The coding was conducted in a line by line format. Open codes were developed by reading the text and not based on the established A priori codes. The researcher found that the A priori codes developed limited the analysis of the data to Kotter's change model. Open coding helped ensure that coding was developed based on participant discourse and not based on the researcher's inherent biases. After open coding, axial codes were used to categorize the open codes around dominant codes and relationships. Uniquely, the Atlas.ti software provides the user the capability to examine the most dominant codes based on groundedness, the number of text passages associated with a code in addition to density, the number of codes connected to a single code. These techniques enabled the researcher to develop multiple levels of analysis to examine the significance of codes. After all the transcripts were coded, relationships between codes and the contextual framework of the study were finalized and four themes emerged from the data (Friese, 2012).

The researcher employed an internal audit to ensure consistency of themes and categories identified in the data. The researcher conducted an internal audit and ensured for inter-rater reliability by employing check-coding with a second coder for interviews one, two, and three to affirm a reliable data analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To confirm agreement between the researcher and second coder, each transcript were coded and then inter-rater reliability checked. The first and second coder discussed the process and codes were selected. In instances where the researcher and second coder did not agree as to how to code a particular passage, the researcher made the final determination. The estimated agreement established from the three rounds of coding ranged between 85 to 90 percent.

Triangulation helps to ensure the validity of data collected (Creswell, 2007). It was the researcher's intention to conduct additional data analysis by demonstrating a thorough review of the grantee's federal review documents from FR1, FR2 and the PIR. Unexpectedly, this data was not made available by all respondents. Alternatively, the researcher employed other convergence methods to affirm reliable and valid data regarding the programs studied. Participant data were compared to the federal review data received to the data acquired from OHS in addition to interview data across participants. Whereas it was analyzed for consistency and commonalities across the data previewed the six participant interviews. Data that appeared contradictory were given additional scrutiny, which included member checking. Through member checking the researcher selected participants to verify information and add input. Additionally, the use of a second coder increased the opportunities to reduce for inconsistencies across findings by employing a method of cross-checking data (Huberman and Miles (2002).

In an effort to ensure rich and robust qualitative data the researcher assured rigour in the study maintaining an audit trail, keeping a detailed record of data collection and analysis for confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Audit trails are useful if the methodology changes the researcher can document the details of the change and the rationale (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 provides a description of the research method, the study design, participants, instruments, procedures, data collection and analysis and finally, trustworthiness is discussed. Findings from this study, as well as the connection to the research literature previewed in Chapter 2 will be presented in Chapter 4. Research study conclusions and recommendations for future studies are described in Chapter 5. Additionally, in Chapter 5 the researcher compares the findings with Kotter's eight-stage change model and makes connections to the turnaround leader actions steps. The field needs to understand the organizational complexity, leadership behaviors, and strategies necessary to operate high-performing Head Start programs. Therefore, it is critical to examine the turnaround practices of leaders in Head Start programs, in an effort to not only explicate the phenomenon of Head Start turnaround, but to increase the opportunity to improve Head Start services for the children and families served.

## **Chapter 4: Study Findings**

This chapter presents an analysis of the qualitative data gathered through the interviews with the Head Start directors who led during successful program turnarounds. The purpose of the study was guided by the research question: What do Head Start directors identify as the successful turnaround practices that transformed their low-performing programs into high-performing programs that meet Head Start Performance Standards?

The chapter is divided into four sections: (a) Organizational Noncompliance, (b) Managing Self, (c) Managing Others, and (d) Systems Turnaround. Notably, the four areas serve as the overarching themes for the study. In the first section, Organizational Noncompliance, the researcher provides the context regarding the reasons the Head Start director's attributed to their programs non-compliant and deficiency status. The following section, Managing Self, explores the turnaround competencies the leaders were dependent upon to facilitate them in leading the turnaround. Next, Managing Others, details the unique steps that each director implemented to help staff redirect their work to ensure full compliance. The final section, Systems Turnaround, provides a summary of the actions steps that provides evidence of the turnaround.

The results presented in this study were derived from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with six Head Start directors across the United States. Each interview ranged between 40 and 75 minutes long. Directors described common challenges and contextual variations which influenced their turnaround practices. Despite their challenges all of the

directors dramatically improved their programs. Collectively, the six programs were cited by OHS with 63 non-compliances and seven deficiencies. All of the directors demonstrated common approaches in facilitating their respective turnarounds. Each director discussed their experiences educating stakeholders about the changes within Head Start and described how they utilized technical assistance (formal or informal) to educate themselves about expectations and implications for compliance with the new HSPS within their organizations.

Each program participant was assigned a letter ranging from A to F as a program identifier, as shown in table 4.1. Programs were located across the United States. Two programs were located in the northeastern region, three from the Midwestern region, and one from the southeastern region. Program sizes ranged from small to large.

Table 4.1

*Participant Data*

Program Identifier	Program A	Program B	Program C	Program D	Program E	Program F
Geographic Identifier	Northeastern	Midwestern	Northeastern	Midwestern	Midwestern	Southeastern
Size of Program	Small program	Small program	Large program	Small	Large	Small
Range of enrollment	0-300	0-300	600-1000	0-300	600-1000	0-300

**Organizational Noncompliance**

OHS cited 63 non-compliances and seven deficiencies across the six study programs. The Head Start turnaround leaders attributed multiple factors for their programs noncompliant or deficient status. These reasons are categorized in four areas:

(a) Finance, (b) Shared Governance, (c) Human Resources, and (d) Monitoring Systems. Interestingly, all six directors cited lack of understanding of changes made to the HSPS after the adoption of the 2007 Head Start Act as a factor in the noncompliant or deficiency findings.

**Finance.** Five of six directors agreed that the fiscal procedures and financial matters were not their areas of expertise and subsequently were disconnected from HSPS for fiscal operations and attributed this factor for the fiscal related non-compliances. Four of the six the directors worked their way up the ranks with early roots as a teacher and lacked experience working with the financial aspects of the program. The director from Program F stated:

I kept getting phone calls from our program specialist saying you need to fix this, why did you do this wrong, and I would go, and one time I said, I don't do that, the finance person does that and they said well you better figure it out because the finance person is not responsible, the Head Start director is.

The directors discussed their previous disconnect with the fiscal matters prior to their turnaround efforts. Fiscal managers maintained the responsibility and monitoring for this area and shared reports and financial data with Head Start directors when requested. Program B, summarized, "Fiscal procedures are not on my radar. I'm busy doing school readiness calls and making sure that transportation is in line and documents are completed. We spend very little time studying the fiscal procedure manual." Five of the six interviews demonstrated that the Head Start directors were reliant on the fiscal manager for financial data and lacked the skills to monitor the fiscal content area.

**Shared governance.** The turnaround leaders detailed the need for turnaround in the area of governance. Head Start directors found that their governance procedures did not parallel structures and functions as outlined in the HSPS. Four of the six directors recalled the importance of ensuring that the governance component paralleled HSPS. Head Start directors needed to understand their role in providing supports to the board in knowing their responsibilities. Program E, emphasized the need to improve governance processes in their program.

I remember the first time that I brought to their attention [board] that we needed a board member that will be representing the accounting background, and then another one who is a lawyer. We need to look for someone that is going to help us take another look at those pieces that heads that program.

Program E's recount provides evidence of the need to ensure the board structure is aligned with the HSPS. The board was not clear on their role to monitor and provide subject matter expertise in specific areas. Additionally, director's found that the Policy Council was weak and parent engagement was minimal.

**Human resources.** All participants reported that they did not have a thorough understanding of the changes made to the HSPS after the 2007 Head Start Act. Consequently, directors lacked clarity on subsequent changes to staff qualifications and updates that affected other program areas. Programs were cited for expired Child Development Associate Credentials (CDA). Staff lacked the required credentials to teach in specific rooms. Changes to the HSPS forced changes in staff roles. The director at program B stated, "There were all these changes that really changed the focus of service delivery for family advocates." Job descriptions failed to clarify expectations and failed

to outline the appropriate educational requirements. Several directors cited their staff's lack of qualifications and their failure to follow established procedures despite previous training as challenges for meeting HSPS.

**Ongoing monitoring systems.** Five of the six directors' attributed a lack of ongoing monitoring procedures as other reasons for their program's noncompliance status. Other reasons cited included, failure to thoroughly analyze data and failure to follow-up on pertinent program information. One of the Head Start programs failed to correct a non-compliance. Consequently, the non-compliance was elevated to a deficiency by OHS. Programs were plagued with late reporting and failed record keeping. Notably, one of the programs was threatened with a shut-down from OHS, but successfully won the appeal and permitted to continue operations.

The Head Start programs either did not have monitoring procedures in place or failed to understand the intricacy involved with program monitoring to ensure HSPS compliance. One program reported that programmatic information were either not documented, inaccurate, or not completed on time. Programs reported concerns with integrity of the available data and their lack of documenting programmatic accomplishments.

Program A's director detailed her recollection reviewing the PIR report prior to implementing the improvement plan.

If you look at the PIR from that year, there were things like 134%, and you can't have more than 100%. So it was just a mess and in sort of asking questions about where the data came from, I think a lot of the data came out of people's heads.

Program A's description provides evidence that the integrity of data was questioned when metrics were inaccurate. Consequently, staff lacked an understanding of how metrics were derived and had little information to evaluate the effectiveness of program services. Additionally, programs reported that systems to foster continuous improvement were not in place. The programs lacked goal follow-up and reported concerns with timeliness and accuracy of reports. Three of the six directors indicated concerns with service related data. The directors stated that data were gathered on an annual basis in lieu of analyzing data at varying points of the program year to inform decision making regarding program improvements and follow-up on trends.

### **Managing Self**

This section examines the theme *managing self*. The directors' stories provide evidence that turnaround directors possess competencies that reflect abilities in building inner strength and creating personal change. Drawing upon the data from the Head Start director interviews revealed significant information related to their leadership development in preparing for the implementation of the turnaround process. This section describes the trajectory of the Head Start turnaround leaders as they focused on managing themselves by engaging in preparing self and technical assistance. Interestingly, the directors' stories provide evidence that they engaged in formal technical assistance (TA) and informal technical assistance while employing a strategy for program improvement.

**Self-development.** All of the directors discussed the importance of staying current with new research and upcoming Head Start developments. The director at program B detailed the importance of self-reflection and staying current on research.

Spend some time in self-reflection and spend some time just reading... none of us take the time, or have the time to sit down and pick up a journal and read it. Head Start had great articles about parent engagement, to be more proactively engaged as to what's on that horizon, it is very difficult to balance head down time with heads up time...turn off that computer, turn off all work, and spend some time just reading documents trying to keep up with things.

Program E illustrated the challenges experienced by Head Start directors in making time for self-reflections and reading journals. The director affirmed engaging in self-development is necessary to stay current with new advances. Similarly, Program E described her work with a life coach to support with self-reflection. "I went through doing all these things and all of the changes, I needed a life coach... [I was] determined and committed, but I needed to get to know myself better." Program E's reflection illustrates the importance of self-development during the turnaround process. The data revealed that Head Start turnaround leaders continuously engaged in current research and shared the information with staff.

**Technical assistance.** The turnaround leaders recognized the urgency in facilitating progression towards full compliance with HSPS and assure a successful review. Each director began their trajectory towards full compliance in similar directions. All of the directors focused on self-development and engaged in formal or informal TA. Formal TA is provided through OHS or a paid consultant. Informal TA materializes in either one or a combination of the following approaches. Informal TA included (a) previous experiences, (b) support from other Head Start directors, (c) Head Start trainings, (d) attending Head Start Association meetings, and (e) OHS tools.

*Formal TA.* Four of the six turnaround leaders received technical support provided by OHS. Notably, the directors share contrary opinions about the helpfulness of the support from OHS. Program B, did not find the support provided by OHS helpful. “I can’t tell you that I think I got much in the way of consultative support,” stated Program B’s director. In contrast, Programs E and F found the support useful, but sought guidance from a consultant to assist with their journey towards improvement. “I just felt like she was the answer to my prayers,” stated the director from program F as she described her delight in working with a consultant.

So I don’t want to say that our region has not been helpful. I guess what I’m saying is, is that some of the information is confusing and hard to understand and I needed the consultant...a consultant who actually does more than just answer your questions. It was a consultant that comes in and if you’re willing to open up, looks at everything and says this is not right you’ve got to fix this, you’ve got to fix this.

Program F described the need to have a consultant that provided individualized support with guidance regarding non-compliance issues within the program. The director at Program F continued her conversation and described her fear of being vulnerable with OHS officials.

We were very leery of sharing information with people because you want to be able to talk to your consultant and say, this is what we’re doing, is this okay and if it’s not okay help me fix it, not tattle on me...so you need to have a consultant that you can trust, so that’s why they said that if I was going to get a consultant I

had to get an outside consultant who knew what they were doing and they had to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The respondent's board and Executive Director required her to work with a consultant not connected to OHS. These concerns described by the director illustrate the programs fear of sharing vulnerable performance information with OHS officials in concern of penalties. Consequently, she hired a consultant and kept questions with her OHS officials general. In contrast, the director at Program D detailed her experiences working with the program specialist provided by OHS.

We've had the same one for the last two or three years but, you know, for the two or three years before that we were constantly having a new grant specialist. I finally had somebody that I was familiar with and was familiar with me which that really wasn't a big problem, it was just that I'm one that likes to be familiar with who I'm talking to and once that was stabilized with the federal people then I got to be a little bit more comfortable in asking questions.

The director at Program D was satisfied with the TA OHS provided her program. The information provided by the Head Start directors illustrate that in addition to getting technical support directors ask questions of people they trust to ensure they are implementing the appropriate steps towards program compliance.

***Informal TA.*** All of the directors engaged in some form of informal TA. Interestingly, some directors engaged in formal and informal TA. This section details the directors' preparation engaging in informal TA by drawing upon one or more of the following: (a) previous experiences, (b) support from other Head Start directors, (c) Head Start trainings, (d) attending Head Start Association meetings, and (e) OHS tools.

*Previous experiences.* Three of the six directors leaned on their previous experiences to prescribe a strategy for turnaround. The director at Program A leaned on her prior knowledge leading a troubled program to guide the turnaround effort. She also stated that she received specialized training from OHS some years prior to her start with her current program. The director believed this training coupled with her previous experiences helped prepare her for the turnaround effort. Program A illustrated, “I had taken a program, a much larger program than this, from not being horrible but improved them over those years. So I fell back on a lot of what I’d already done.” The director employed her previous experiences and training to facilitate the successful turnaround strategy. Distinctively, the respondents from Programs A, B and C drew upon their previous experiences to support their turnaround effort. The directors from Programs A and C had previous Head Start experience.

*Support from other Head Start directors.* The Head Start directors interviewed described an informal system of support with other Head Start directors. Two directors that hinged on previous experiences described how they combined prior knowledge along with support from other Head Start directors to support their improvement strategy. Head Start directors connected at conferences and local Head Start Association meetings. Notably, four of the six directors interviewed described the importance of connecting with other directors to learn about how other programs were responding to Head Start changes, more specifically how other programs managed challenges in maintaining program compliance with the HSPS. Interestingly, at conferences and local Head Start Association meetings, directors commonly warned each other of reasons why their programs were cited for non-compliances or deficiencies. Additionally, Head Start

directors shared information about best practices and updates on Federal Review experiences. Notably, the director at Program F kept a running log of citations other programs received and used the information to develop a list of common non-compliances to guide decisions about improvements in her own program.

Everywhere I went I asked every person I knew how their monitoring review went and what they got counted down on, and I had an ongoing list...I have five pages of notes about things to make sure were going right that I needed to fix, or make sure were fixed, or make sure I was doing because somebody else got caught on it. I said what were you written up for, so what did you get written up for, and I made sure it was done.

The director described her process for gaining information about common Federal Review findings and utilized the information to assure her program was not cited for the same issues. Albeit, the director stated she experienced challenge from her superiors on making the recommended changes.

People were like I don't think we have to do this, I mean in my agency. We've been reviewed so many times before and nobody said anything. I said yes, but this agency over here got written up for it, maybe we didn't get caught. It's like saying it's okay for me to drive drunk or speed because I've never been caught. Yeah, but this person over here got caught so we shouldn't drive drunk or speed.

The director demonstrated her trust in the guidance she received from other Head Start directors. The director's superiors looked for specific communication from OHS. The respondent described her concerns with OHS communication.

Part of the things that come from the Office of Head Start are ambiguous sounding and they're not really good about clarifying and they're not sending out policy clarifications for all the questions that people are asking, and so you have to make educated guesses and it's hard, so I always aired on the side of caution. If I wasn't sure I presented it to the executive director and the board and said look, these people were written up for this, this is a problem, do we want to change it or not.

The director provides evidence that turnaround leaders want to make decisions that position their program to maintain program compliance and gather information from directors that have experienced error. The circle of trust appears to be unique to program directors. Four of the six directors asked questions from other Head Start Programs they trusted to ensure the appropriate trajectory towards meeting full compliance with the performance standards. Program B illustrated:

I remember when I went to the [local association] meetings, I remember contacting at that time, someone based solely on the fact that her program is small like ours, her program is rural like ours. I'm going to call and see if she would mind helping me, and I was very lucky that I got hold of someone who was very gracious, came to my program for an entire day... I said, I don't know that I know how to write a grant. I don't know what a grant should contain, and again, that was a different era when there was not such a fear of if I give you my trade secrets are you going to go after my grant. But I developed a nice relationship with that particular director and I still have contact with her. There was another Head Start

director that I knew and is indeed a very respected director in this community that I often would call and ask questions of.

The director at Program B illustrated the informal TA system that turnaround leaders engaged in by contacting directors they trusted that led programs in good standing. Interestingly, the director at Program B stated that exchanges of trade information were more frequent prior to recompetition. Consequently, the threat of recompetition has created a fear that other Head Start programs will compete for their grant if they were to be recompeted. Turnaround leaders connect with individuals they trust whether OHS officials, consultants, and other directors. Program F illustrated:

Hire somebody that's going to help you or call another Head Start director or somebody else, get somebody that you trust that knows what they're doing that will come in and open up to them enough that they can see what you're doing wrong, because if you're hiding it they're not going to be able to fix it. You have to be willing to open up and let people see that you're not okay in order for them to be able to fix it.

Being comfortable with the technical assistance enables turnaround leaders to be transparent and vulnerable in an effort to begin to recognize and fix the non-compliances.

*Head Start trainings.* The turnaround directors discussed the impact of engaging in professional development either through training or learning from other programs in good standing. Program C details the importance of attending Head Start specific trainings.

I get so much information by attending. Head Start has a leadership institute that they do in the fall and then again in the winter and at that leadership institute they

tell you everything like Yvette Sanchez Fuentes was there, through the National Head Start Association, they tell you everything that's coming down, what you should be doing, the reason behind everything and I attended those leadership institutes and I just grew and in talking with other colleagues and listening to other people's stories, also the local Head Start Association [meetings], I became involved in that.

The data revealed that Head Start turnaround leaders continuously engaged in Head Start trainings and OHS Leadership Institutes.

*Head Start Association meetings.* Turnaround leaders connected with other directors at local Head Start Association meetings. Four of the six directors reported their active engagement with their local association. The director at Program F described her active engagement at her local association meetings.

I started going to the [local] Head Start Association meetings when I would meet in the director's class, and I would ask questions. In fact one person said, you ask all the questions and said you're monopolizing the time and I thought yeah I probably am because other people don't have questions, but I asked questions and we passed monitoring without findings.

The respondent described the importance of asking questions at Association meetings and utilizing the information as a tool to support with programmatic improvements.

*OHS tools.* The Head Start directors all cited the importance of using the tools made available by OHS. All of the directors detailed the importance of staying connected to communication on OHS's website Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center

(ECLKC). The directors illustrated the importance of actively perusing the ECLKC website and utilizing it as a tool to get new and helpful information to remain current on Head Start changes. Program E explained:

Finding those resources on ECKLC, you know, I realize as I go out to national and state conferences or meetings that people don't access the resources that are there. I think we hear about it over and over again but people don't actually take the time to go and look. I think there's something new on ECKLC almost every week.

Turnaround directors recognize the importance of Head Start communication and resources on the ECKLC website. Interestingly, the Protocol is a resource available on the ECKLC website. Four of the six directors stated that they used the Protocol to help support their program with preparing for the federal review and to monitor for improvements. Program E explained their use of the Protocol with all program constituents.

Print out the protocol as soon as you can and even if it's not printed yet, get the year prior, they're all online and make sure that everyone has a copy or at least part of their section, but it's best to have the whole thing because you want to know a little bit from others as well...you have to have the parents, board and all of the staff, and I'm talking from housekeeping all the way to the board, everyone needs to know what's going on, that the review is coming and what is in that protocol. For me I think that's the Holy Grail as they say. That's what they [federal reviewers] are following and that's what helps us along.

Program E affirmed the benefits of using the Protocol as a tool to support improvements and compliance. The program ensured that information was shared across program content areas, among parents and board members. Despite their divergent commencement steps toward full compliance each director demonstrated commonalities in facilitating their action steps towards full compliance. Each director engaged self-development and gained technical support. The next section will detail their steps as they utilized the skills gained to manage others.

### **Managing Others**

The findings confirm that turnaround directors used information gained from technical assistance to manage self and influence their decisions towards change and target improvement efforts. After the directors gained the appropriate technical assistance, turnaround directors demonstrated confidence to pursue and achieve turnaround goals. The respondents developed a clear vision and communicated expectations with staff as they led their low-performing program into full compliance with HSPS. The directors employed their turnaround competences to facilitate their subordinates and constituents into transforming their own self-interest into concern for shared goals. The turnaround directors provided important lessons on how to manage others during the turnaround. All of the directors affirmed that they encouraged participation from their subordinates, parents and board. The directors shared power and information, enhanced staff skills through professional development, and helped staff to develop shared goals. Program Director A provided her recollection regarding staff commitment.

One of the factors for success had to be that there was this sort of core committed staff that wanted, that believed in the program that wanted it to work...There was a real commitment to compliance, to quality, and so staff were willing to change, they were willing most all of them knew that there was something not right...I mean for the most part people were from the cooks through teachers, to everybody else, were committed and they wanted it to be successful and they wanted the program to be recognized. I mean there's probably, the usual like 10% that don't care much about anything.

The study participants contend that there are challenges in gaining staff commitment to support the new direction. Notably, the director from Program B, detailed her experiences with staff that lacked commitment to the goal.

I say all the time don't ever say one bad apple won't spoil the whole bunch, because one bad apple will destroy you. And one person was and I use the term she became toxic and I attempted so many times, I do believe in staff intervention and staff support, and staff growth, let's groom you to be a better employee rather than just toss you out, but we could not get there.

The turnaround leaders highlighted the challenges faced with staff during the change process. Turnaround directors confirm that not all staff commit to the vision and often staff decided to leave the program. The turnaround leaders illustrated the importance of reculturing to overcome the effects of turnover and to gain staff support.

**Reculturing.** The turnaround leaders focused their efforts on reculturing by building relationships with staff in effort to shift the culture from this is how we have

always done it to a culture of accountability and staff compliance. The director at Program F describes the challenges of engaging staff in a cultural shift.

Some of them [staff], especially the new people, bought in almost immediately, and they just started working at it. There's a couple of staff that were resistant the whole time. We've been, we've done it this way before, it's never gotten us in trouble, there's no sense in changing now. Then there were the others that didn't want to change it and resented it but did it anyway.

The directors demonstrate that staff must be coached through the change process. One example of the shifting the culture and the importance of relationship building is described by Program A's director.

We all knew we had past baggage whether it was scars from all the big changes we had to make that year, whether it was scars or fears over job changes, but if we were going to move this agency forward we needed to be a cohesive unit. So we invested a good day and a half to two days really focused on that, before we ever began to really unearth this stuff that needed to be taken care of.

The director engaged the staff in a retreat to uncover issues and work towards healing and cohesiveness. Similarly, Program E utilized the support of an organizational coach to engage the management staff in monthly retreats in addition to reorganizing to ensure the appropriate structure for compliance. Each director ascribed their efforts to changing culture and building relationships very differently. Three of the six directors described reculturing efforts and relationship building to include staff retreats.

At first we had some staff that have been here longer than me and I remember hearing this is not broke why are we going to try to fix it. This is the way we've

always done it. The staff really weren't happy with change... We really had to try to stay the course and work on helping them understand why the change was necessary and I think that was something that we just never really did was share the Performance Standards with the staff, here's the standard, here's what we have to do, here's the change that's coming.

Turnaround leaders implemented efforts to reculture that included steps to gain staff support. All of the turnaround leaders assured that staff were aware of the performance standards and received communication about changes. The Head Start turnaround leaders ensured that staff had access to policies. At one program the director placed all of the policies on-line but quickly learned that the bus driver and other staff that did not have access to internet lacked access to the policies and procedures. She corrected the change by creating operating guidelines that were accessible to all staff. "We were very proud that we had converted every policy to a PDF and had uploaded it to our website and we love that and the federal review team that came loved that, but our bus driver would not."

The respondent believed that creating an electronic version of the policies would provide easier access for staff. She and her team recognized the importance of making policy binders available for staff that did not have access to computers or were not comfortable navigating policies electronically. Turnaround leaders demonstrated that all staff must have access to policy documents to ensure alignment. Each director made reference to the importance of aligning staff to support the vision. The respondents gained staff support by providing professional development opportunities and ensuring staff understood the implications of the change process. The turnaround directors made

gains in shifting staff attitudes. Program A described the attitudinal shift at her program. “There was more of a sense of accountability that things are focused on the performance standard versus the way that we’ve always done them.” The turnaround directors nurtured a culture of accountability.

**Communication.** The turnaround directors engaged staff in regular communication which included staff meetings to ensure staff were aware of new developments. The director from Program B described why she decided to have regular monthly staff meetings. “In reviewing how did these simple errors that really were just simple human error happen? That became one of the possibilities that maybe we needed to go back to a staff meeting every single month.” The respondents demonstrated that regular staff meetings provide staff with continuous systems of communication to provide clear expectations and offer staff opportunities to ask questions.

All of the respondents described the importance of continuous communications. The director at Program A described her communication at meetings. “It’s a very purposeful, very sort of set communication on the things that we need to be on top of to be in compliance.” She continued.

So part of our meetings now is there’s an action item list that gets updated by me after every meeting, so things don’t drop off until they get addressed or we just decide that it no longer is an issue or it no longer makes sense, but things just stay on there, and I think that’s a big part of what made the changes stick in some ways and why we keep moving forward is there is follow-up and accountability.

The respondent believed the follow-up and accountability is critical for the sustainability of program improvements. Program A described the importance of

turnaround leaders following up on actions items and holding staff accountable for task completion.

***Professional development.*** The respondents transformed their organizations to consist of people that wanted to work collectively to achieve program compliance. The directors supported staff work through professional development and continuous communication. The director at program E provided a description of how professional development is offered to staff through mentoring. “So when a staff member comes in they also have a mentor or someone that is supporting them ongoing.” Program E illustrated the importance of providing ongoing support to staff to assure they are successful in their roles. Moreover, Program E provided detail on the importance of professional development for staff. “I think spending a lot of time and effort in promoting education for staff members, continuing education, professional development goals...so I think quality is also investing in the staff members that work for the agency.”

Turnaround directors invested in staff training to ensure staff were competent in meeting program outcomes. Through training and support the turnaround leaders redefined employees work and attitudes. The turnaround leaders demonstrated their understanding that compliance with HSPS is the sole responsibility of the Head Start director. The respondents’ strategies included a plan to monitor the effectiveness of staff through monitoring plans.

***Monitoring plans for continuous improvement.*** This section details the competencies necessary for turnaround leaders in monitoring and evaluating program operations to ensure compliance. The turnaround leaders shared their practices improving operations for organizational efficiency and full compliance with the HSPS. All of the

directors interviewed detailed the importance of monitoring and ongoing efforts to evaluate their programs, albeit each director achieved this in divergent ways. Program C noted:

The directors of the different component areas make visits once a month and they visit the programs, they do a report, they give it to the programs, any concerns they have, they tell the program it has to be completed. When there's an issue and they feel like there's something that could be a health and safety, they would inform me and I would tell the program immediately it would have to be corrected.

The respondent described the importance regular site visits and being aware of health and safety related issues. The director at Program D, described her approach to continuous improvement. Program D invited independent auditors to inspect her program to ensure continuous improvement. She explained what she would say when she invited community inspectors to audit her program. Program D's director stated she would say, "Come and do an inspection and let us know what we need to improve on." She continued:

I didn't sit back and wait for somebody to come and find it, I wanted to find it first, so we started getting, our fire department to come in and do our fire safety checks periodically, we work with our food program, we have the CACFP program and we used their reports to get better.

The respondent illustrated the importance of turnaround leaders in being proactive in getting information about program performance. The director did not wait for OHS to inform her of noncompliance. She invited independent auditors to monitor her program.

Moreover, the respondent demonstrated that as concerns are identified the turnaround leader must track and follow-up on goals to ensure the program is on the trajectory towards achieving the goal of full compliance.

Three of the six programs discussed their use of the Protocol as a monitoring tool to guide program improvements. The programs used the protocol to support self-evaluation and inquiry. Program E described their use of the protocol:

I think that we went through the protocol and we started preparing probably a year in advance... If there's something from the previous protocol that we thought was really helpful, we continue to use it and I think that all staff is involved in that, not just the management team, our parents, educators, family advocates, health staff, everybody is part of going through the protocol... But staff already knows what we're looking for, they already know that we're following the protocol and many start preparing themselves, they read it and then we host discussion groups about the protocol and we practice asking the questions and the interviews.

Program E demonstrated that monitoring is an ongoing process and effective monitoring tools are beneficial when all staff are familiar with the tool and are aware of expectations. Program E continued, "Questions are asked kind of like pop quizzes for the other staff... We all have the mindset the self-assessment is coming, the federal review is coming and be prepared."

Turnaround directors confirm that staff read performance standards by establishing checks or mini quizzes to ensure staff are aware of the policies and procedures. Additionally, turnaround directors developed timelines to monitor program goals and support staff in assuring that timelines were met. Program B explained:

We would have a management team meeting with very clear cut delegation of duties, very clear cut timelines and follow-up..[I would ask] did you get this done and if the answer is no please don't waste 15 minutes saying well but you know here's why, nope it's not done let's just change the timeline and if we can't change the timeline what can I do to pull you away from what you're doing because that has to happen.

Turnaround leaders assured timelines were met and provided staff the support necessary to meet target dates to mitigate the risk of failure. The turnaround leaders provided evidence of the importance of reviewing documents and supporting staff with follow through. Program D illustrated:

We have at least three meetings with our classroom staff, it's a staffing with them and they have the opportunity to bring each individual file with them and they go through the whole file with us and if there is a referral that the parents haven't followed up with then we will offer support on helping them help the parents.

Program E provided evidence of the importance for program directors to demonstrate leadership that promotes inquiry and evaluation. Program E summarized:

Creating leadership to create a culture of change, a way to always promote inquiry and evaluation...from self-assessment to just meeting to get ideas so I think any program that continues growing and expanding and being successful is a program that always looks at their policies, procedures and looks at what's new, what's happening and takes those decisions to make changes.

The directors affirmed that establishing regular checks to ensure staff follows policies as prescribed is critical. The director from Program B described her process for monitoring transportation safety.

One of our members of management team made a spot review form for the buses. It takes three minutes and all of us, which is again that cohesiveness again... [we] take one of those forms we brought to the bus, we step onto a bus whether it's here at the middle of the day or the end of the day and just a quick scan that says number of children on the bus, is everyone in a safety seat and buckled in properly, are all folders stored properly, any questions.

This description illustrated the importance of monitoring to ensure that staff are following operational guidelines and performance standards. Monitoring plans also provide targets and specific deadlines. Monitoring plans provide directors with a continuous process of gathering staff progress on goals and program outcomes. All of the directors discussed the importance of monitoring plans. Additionally, monitoring plans ensure that staff do not follow policies with creativity. Monitoring plans provide Head Start directors greater opportunities for staff accountability and compliance with HSPS. Each monitoring plan for the respondent's differs in detail but is common in its goal to ensure compliance with HSPS and accuracy of data.

### **Systems Turnaround**

The turnaround leaders provided evidence that they implemented an effective improvement strategy for failed systems. The directors' first steps included gaining skills in self-development and connecting with resources to gain technical assistance. The leaders applied the skills gained and through its application focused their turnaround

strategy in four specific areas that showed dramatic performance decline. The four areas are: (a) Finance, (b) Shared Governance, (c) Human Resources, and (d) Monitoring Systems. The turnaround directors employed their skills to manage themselves and manage others in order to make changes in the areas that were low-performing. This section will explore the actions steps that the directors engaged in as they improved performance. The findings revealed that there are specific competencies of a Head Start turnaround director and their individual strategies indicate that there are commonalities in actions steps taken by the directors to guarantee full compliance with HSPS.

**Finance.** The turnaround leaders made significant improvements in the fiscal area. The dramatic turn in performance is seemingly related to the directors building an internal capacity to learn more about fiscal processes and procedures. The leaders confidently articulated financial matters and an understanding of their role and responsibility to monitor the fiscal areas of the program. Five of the six turnaround leaders reported that they gained knowledge of fiscal matters. The director at Program F described her confidence in fiscal matters.

By the time we did the grant that year I knew how to do a grant. That grant was done and then that finance person quit a month before we were monitored and the week we were monitored our finance person had only been in twice... I knew what was going on, and I was able to answer all the questions.

The respondent's recollection demonstrated her confidence in fiscal matters and that her dependency on finance staff for information had ended. The director confidently answered fiscal related questions during the monitoring visit. Three of the six respondents reported they were more aware of the fiscal aspects for the program for grant

reporting and could confidently monitor the fiscal content area for program improvements. The director at Program F described the skills she gained in the turnaround process. Program E discussed the importance of connecting with the finance staff on a regular basis.

I'm more involved with fiscal, monetary, but I think again it is a constant area that the Head Start director, the program director has to keep up with like every week. I talk to the fiscal department almost every day.

The respondent illustrates that turnaround leaders are intentional with connecting to fiscal matters within the organization. The leaders understood that it was their responsibility to ensure that fiscal matters were in compliance with the HSPS. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the turnaround improvements implemented by the directors.

Table 4.2

*Finance Before and After*

Prior to Turnaround	Turnaround Evidence
Directors had minimal knowledge of HSPS related to finance.	Directors educated themselves on fiscal areas of HSPS
Directors were dependent on finance staff to manage and monitor fiscal matters	Directors developed competencies in fiscal matters
Lacked clarity regarding their role with finance related matters	Gained clarity regarding the director's role in monitoring and understanding finance matters
Minimal communication with finance staff	Regular communication with finance staff regularly

**Shared governance.** Directors made board members and parents feel valued which led to greater commitment and increased parent and board engagement. Improving

shared governance required a paradigm shift. The directors expanded professional development to include parents and board members to make certain they were aware of the HSPS. The directors aligned board activities with HSPS and assured that board and Policy Committee members approved agenda items as needed. Moreover, turnaround directors identified board and parent training needs to provide coaching and support. As a result, the board and parents expressed interest and subsequently became more engaged in governance activities. The director at Program A illustrated the transformation in shared governance at her program.

So no they really weren't involved, they're involved now, once we got past that initial hurdle and could really start working on like engaging parents and getting our parent committee strong and getting our parent council strong. Now they're part of any discussion we have about like the sequestration stuff, how do we make these changes, how do we make the cuts, what do we do, how do we solve this problem, like they're definitely a part of those conversations now.

Program A's recollection detailed evidence of shared governance as parents were encouraged to be part of the decision making process.

Board members were provided professional development, subsequently members gained understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting and monitoring the Head Start program. Program F detailed how the board and Policy Committee monitor the program.

Board members are part of the self-assessment teams and so we use the monitoring protocol from 2010 is what we've been using so they go through just like they were a monitor, and say all the things that need to be fixed and then we

do our self-assessment results and self-assessment improvement plan and then after the improvement plan they always want follow-up answers, what was done to fix it, how did you fix it, what still needs to be done and everything like that. So like I said they ask questions, a lot of questions.

The board members engaged in active inquiry and demonstrated their awareness of the implications of noncompliance, thus provided follow-up on the improvement plan. All of the Head Start directors reported that they were accountable to the board and dependent upon their subject area expertise to provide program support. Moreover, directors ensured that the board composition reflected the required subject area expertise as outlined in the HSPS. Board members and parents demonstrated efficiency when they illustrated awareness of the HSPS and its implications on the program. As program data improved, reports were made available to parents and board members to review and effectively monitor. Program A detailed the changes to reporting at her program:

There's a set report that goes out every month to staff, but also it goes out to the board and Policy Council and it has all the elements that you have to report to the board including numbers of meal served, why I don't know, but that's what it says in the 2007 Act so that's what we tell them. But it's a very purposeful, very sort of set communication on the things that we need to be on top of to be in compliance. I'm not sure there was anything like that there prior to me getting here.

The respondent demonstrated the shift to reporting procedures that encompassed structured communications to assure compliance with the governance requirements outline in the 2007 ACT. Turnaround leaders shared program goals and objectives with

their governing board and Policy Committees, they ensured its members were aware of the HSPS and supported the program in making improvement to gain compliance. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the improvements in the area of shared governance.

Table 4. 3

*Shared Governance Before and After*

Prior to Turnaround	Turnaround Evidence
Board activities were not aligned with HSPS	Governance activities paralleled HSPS
Board members needed to gain clarity on roles and their duty to monitor and provide expertise	Board members provided clarity regarding roles and responsibilities
Parents minimally engaged in Policy Committee activities	Board members demonstrate active engagement and knowledge of updates to HSPS
Board members required professional development that informed them of updates to HSPS	Board members provided professional development that included information on new HSPS and its implications
	Directors engaged in supportive activities to provide board members effective tools to monitor
	Board structure was aligned with HSPS Directors monitored board composition to ensure compliance with HSPS
	Aligned board activities to support effectiveness

**Human Resources.** The directors espoused their commitment to quality by ensuring that the Human Resource functions of the organization transformed to a state of compliance. The directors were aware of the factors for the noncompliant and deficiency

status. The directors made immediate improvements by ensuring that all staff met the educational requirements mandated in the HSPS. All six respondents stated they experienced turnover within their organization during the improvement process due to staff performance or failure to meet the educational requirements as stated in the HSPS. As a result, job descriptions were updated to align with mandated educational requirements. Program D described the importance of holding staff accountable for meeting the educational requirements.

Our job descriptions clearly state what's expected of our staff. If you're not qualified then are you willing to get qualified or certified, a degree if it required a degree and if they don't follow through with that then you have to hold them accountable. This is what you said, this is the timeline, where are you at with that.

The director demonstrated the importance of ensuring staff followed through with the education plans and holding staff accountable to assure program compliance. Turnaround leaders hold staff accountable and provide staff with clear expectations. As roles changed, staff were provided clarity as to the implications and new reporting structures. Program hiring practices were enhanced. Directors assured that candidates met the mandated educational requirements prior to hire. Staff roles were redefined to ensure operational efficiency and effective service delivery. Policies and procedures were changed to reflect the changes in the HSP. Program D illustrated:

We went into really looking at our program plans and our policies and procedures. We've always followed Head Start Standards, however, we didn't have in detail policies and procedures for each of the standards that we follow. So at the

moment, now, we have revised them and every so often our policies and procedures are things that we review as things have been changing.

The director recognized that policies and procedures needed to be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance. Table 4.4 summarizes the transformation from low-performing to program compliance in the Human Resources area.

Table 4.4

*Human Resources Before and After*

Prior to Turnaround	Turnaround Evidence
Staff lacked qualifications	Changed hiring practices to ensure all staff met requirements
Job descriptions failed to reflect HSPS	Job descriptions were updated to reflect HSPS
Staff unclear of roles	Directors provided clarity to staff about roles and expectations
Current organizational structure did not reflect HSPS	Programs reorganized or hired “right” staff
Policies and procedures did not reflect changes in HSPS	Updated policies and procedures to reflect changes in HSPS

**Ongoing monitoring systems.** Turnaround leaders demonstrated important lessons for ongoing monitoring. The respondents recognized that effective monitoring of performance is essential to the successful improvement of their program. Thorough analysis of data revealed there are multiple dimensions of monitoring. Directors actively monitored multiple areas of the program for compliance. Directors monitored for: (a) staff performance and compliance, (b) data for accuracy and follow-up, (c) timely reporting, (d) fiscal performance, (e) governance policies, (f) program effectiveness, (g) service delivery, and (h) Head Start changes. All of the turnaround leaders described the importance of implementing checks to ensure staff were performing and meeting

expectations, moreover directors monitored staff performance to ensure that procedures were followed without creativity. Program E illustrated:

We started doing more ongoing, doing weekly monitoring, bi-weekly monitoring, quarterly monitoring, annually monitoring, and we have reminders. So with that monitoring in place, the milestones in place, it really supported us and improved our program for this.

Respondents monitored data for accuracy and to ensure staff follow-up on goals. Checks and reminders were developed to ensure reports were completed on time. Moreover, directors monitored to ensure financial reports were accurate and made available to the Policy Committee and board members.

The directors monitored to ensure that Policy Council and board Members were trained and actively part of the decision making process. Additionally, directors evaluated program performances on a regular basis and ensured service delivery met the expectations outlined in the HSPS.

I think we've evolved a lot in the last year so I think that's one of the most important things to be successful. Implementing a checks and balance system, making sure that you're meeting your HR piece, ERSEA, your educational piece, your health and safety piece, your parent engagement piece, making sure that staff members that are coming in have the background screenings and physicals, and making sure of the minor details. The minor details can put out of compliance.

Program E identified the importance of monitoring and ensuring the plan included a system for monitoring minor details. The director warned that missing the minor details can lead to noncompliance. Turnaround leaders consistently monitored for updates and

changes that affected the program and delivery of services. The directors stayed connected to association meetings, checked the ECKLC website and stayed connected to other programs to monitor in order to remain aware of new developments that could affect their programs compliance status. The director at Program C explained:

Focus on going to the Head Start specific training. That's where they [directors] need to be, Head Start specific training, actually go to the training, actually to it, and listen to what's going on and what's being said. So Head Start training! That's where you get the information and of course you know you get the e-mails and alerts and you go on, if you have questions you can go on that ECKLC website, you got to like live it and breathe it.

The director described the importance of external monitoring to understand new developments within in Head Start. She described the importance of maintaining an awareness regarding changes within Head Start. The directors focused monitoring efforts in multiple areas. The monitoring improvements are summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Monitoring Systems Before and After*

Prior to Turnaround	Evidence of Turnaround
Several participants reported that they did not have a clear understanding of ongoing monitor	Turnaround leaders demonstrated and understanding of the complexity of ongoing monitoring
Failed to thoroughly analyze data and follow-up on pertinent program information	Developed checks to analyze data and monitored to ensure follow-up
Five of six directors attributed lack of ongoing monitoring as reasons for noncompliance	Developed strong ongoing monitoring plans
Participants programs plagued with late reporting	Developed target dates and a system of reminders for staff to ensure timely reporting
Failed record keeping	Monitoring included checkpoints to ensure reports are completed
Program information not documented, inaccurate, or not submitted on time	Directors ensured program information were accurate and timely
Integrity of data questioned	Directors monitored data
Staff lacked understanding of how metrics were derived	Directors provided staff training to ensure staff competency to develop metrics
Leaders failed to evaluate the effectiveness of program	Directors engaged in regular evaluation for program effectiveness
Programs lacked follow-up on goals	Monitoring plans included goal follow-up
Directors reported concerns with service related data	Monitored data for accuracy
Data analyzed annually	Improved data with quarterly analysis

The Head Start turnaround leader competencies in Managing Self and Managing Others provided support in developing the appropriate action steps in the areas of Finance, Shared Governance, Human Resources, and Monitoring Systems. The directors successfully improved operations and brought their programs to a state of 100% compliance with HSPS. The data revealed that there are commonalities in their approaches to transforming their low-performing programs. The directors' stories provide

evidence that the combination of their competencies in Managing Self and Managing Others and their specific action steps positioned them to achieve a successful Federal Review with no findings and in full compliance with the HSPS. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the turnaround leader competencies.

### **Four-Stage Turnaround Model.**

As participants addressed strategies for turnaround, a four-stage framework was suggested, referred to here as the Four-Stage Turnaround Model. The conceptual framework of the Four-Stage Turnaround Model is shown in Figure 4.1. Notably, the model begins with the individual and works outwardly. This inside-out approach illustrates the types of changes that the turnaround leader needs to consider, providing a guide for marshaling personal capabilities, accessing available technical assistance resources, leading others through turnaround strategies, and assessing needed change in targeted organizational systems.

The first stage, Preparing Self, builds the leader's personal capacity for change. The second stage, Accessing Resources, provides technical assistance resources to help guide the change effort. Next, Leading Others is the stage in which the leader utilizes competencies gained in the previous stages to direct the change efforts of staff and stakeholders. Finally, Turnaround Systems the last stage includes actions steps and accountability systems to ensure change in the specific targeted areas. The first three stages of the model underlie the effectiveness of the final stage, Turnaround Systems.

***Preparing Self.*** Preparing Self is the initial stage as illustrated in Figure 4.1. At this stage the participants developed self-efficacy skills and generative capabilities to guide the turnaround strategy. Moreover, the directors engaged in self-reflection and

developed the inner strength for change. Preparing Self activities varied among participants. However, all participants engaged in one or more of the following: (a) self-reflection to assess their personal readiness to guide the improvement strategy, (b) gaining personal confidence and support from superiors, (c) working with a personal coach, and (d) staying connected to developments within the field.

*Self-reflection to assess readiness to guide the improvement strategy.* During this stage turnaround leaders assess their personal readiness to facilitate the change effort. The former director at Program D engaged in a process of assessing personal readiness for change.

A lot of departments had to make budget cuts and for the director at that time it was very stressful and she decided that, she had been in Head Start for a long time as well, and she decided that for her family and for herself that leaving the program was what was in her best interest because of the high stress that was going on at that time. I think it was just too much for her.

The director at Program D recounted the Preparing Self process of the former director. Conversely, Preparing Self does not always assume that the leader moves forward with the change process. The turnaround leader makes critical decisions about facilitating the change process. As illustrated in the participant's narration, the turnaround leader may find that the organizational and personal goals are not congruent and may choose an alternative path and therefore decide not to lead the turnaround effort. However, once the participant decides to move forward with leading the turnaround strategy, the individual must gain personal confidence and will benefit from support from the organization's leadership staff.

*Gaining confidence and support from superiors.* Gaining support from superiors is illustrated by participants as vital to their turnaround success. The participants described the importance of gaining personal confidence in addition to support from their superiors in preparing for the change process. Program A described the personal factors attributed to the turnaround success during this stage and the importance of gaining support from the CEO and leadership team in preparing for the turnaround.

Personal factors would be the experience I had and the fact that I'm pretty fearless...I was confident that it could be done. I think institutionally there was strong support from the president and CEO who is my direct supervisor and the rest of the senior leadership team.

The director at Program A demonstrated self-efficacy skills in preparation to execute the course of action necessary to turnaround the specific content areas. The participant determined the requisite level of self-efficacy skills necessary to facilitate the action steps to improve the Head Start program and ensure turnaround systems are achieved. The participant described an attitude of fearlessness and the confidence to move forward with the change. Additionally, support from supervisors and peers are recognized by the participant as a strong support in developing the belief that the outcome could be achieved.

*Working with a personal coach.* "I went through doing all these things and all of the changes, I needed a life coach... [I was] determined and committed, but I needed to get to know myself better." Program E's reflection illustrated the importance of preparing self during the turnaround process and gaining a better understanding of self. The

recollection of the director at Program E demonstrates the individual's readiness to improve self in order to facilitate the process of leading others.

*Staying connected to developments within the field.* Engaging in research and staying attuned to new developments within the field are essential to the change process. The participant from Program B described the importance of engaging in research and staying connected to new developments.

As a management team, the leadership of this program are a lot smarter than we were then and have taken a much more proactive approach to constantly reading, trying to stay ahead of what requirements are and expectations... I honestly have to say Head Start has changed so fast in the last couple years... I truly can't hardly even get through all the e-mails we get on a daily basis with new webinars requested and new information requested. So there's been a rapid change. But I think trying to stay more engaged with local state and federal regs.

The participant illustrated the need to read and stay connected to the rapidly changing Head Start environment. The turnaround leader described the need to gain an understanding of what was new and developing in order to assess the resources necessary to help facilitate the turnaround process.

***Accessing Resources.*** Next is Accessing Resources, the second stage of the Four-stage Turnaround Model, illustrated at the center of Figure 4.1. At this stage, the directors provided an assessment for the types of resources necessary to guide the turnaround strategy. During this stage, the participants assessed the personal need for Formal and Informal Technical Assistance or a combination of the two. Formal Technical Assistance includes the support of an OHS consultant or engaging with an independent consultant.

Formal technical assistance provides well-defined relationships either through legal contracts or terms defined by OHS. Additionally, Formal Technical Assistance Resources define expectations, detail outcomes and determine specific functions and expectations for both the director and consultant. The consultants provided technical assistance to help the directors develop the skills and capacity to lead the change. Additionally, participants assessed the need to engage in one or more forms of Informal Assistance. Informal Assistance materializes in either one or a combination of the following approaches: (a) previous experiences, (b) support from other Head Start directors, (c) Head Start trainings, (d) attending Head Start Association meetings, and (e) OHS tools. Informal Technical Assistance differs from Formal Technical Assistance in that resources are not outlined with specific outcomes and defined relationships. Directors self-elect to engage with Informal Technical assistance resources on as needed basis. The turnaround leader illustrates engaging in two forms of Informal Technical Assistance: Previous experience and OHS tools.

The director before me always had the Prism out. She always had that, we never really used it though. I never understood what it was but I learned, well I took what I learned from the director before me and used it and then started to build on that...She had a lot of experience and she had a lot of years under her belt as far as working for Head Start. So I took what I learned from her and I started building on it, so I got the Prism and the Protocol, to me they're the same thing...I started breaking it down and getting managers together and giving them each the area where they were covering.

The director at Program E recollected accessing multiple Informal Technical Assistance Resources, the director drew upon previous experience and utilized OHS tools to support the turnaround. The director demonstrated the intersection of previous experiences and OHS tools in providing the skills to lead others in guiding the systems turnaround. The director also provided a checklist to the supervisors to measure the programs compliance with the standards. The participants engaged in a process of preparing self and assessed the need for technical assistance resources to provide specific turnaround strategy supports. The participants utilized the skills gained to lead others.

***Leading Others.*** The third stage, Leading Others, is illustrated in the outer circle of Figure 4.1. At this stage, the participants engaged staff in reculturing, improved communication, executed ongoing monitoring systems and provided professional development for staff, parents and board members. After the directors gained the appropriate resources to provide technical assistance, the turnaround directors demonstrated confidence to pursue and achieve turnaround goals. The respondents developed a clear vision and communicated expectations with staff as they led their low-performing program into full compliance with HSPS. During this stage, the directors employed their turnaround competences to facilitate their subordinates and constituents into transforming their own self-interest into concern for shared goals. The directors shared power, information, enhanced staff skills through professional development, and helped staff to develop shared goals. Turnaround directors invested in staff training to ensure staff were competent in meeting program outcomes. Through training and support the turnaround leaders redefine employees work and attitudes. The turnaround leaders focused their efforts on reculturing by building relationships with staff in effort to shift

the culture from this is how we have always done it to a culture of accountability and staff compliance. The turnaround directors engage staff in regular communication which include staff meetings to ensure staff were aware of new developments. The directors supported staff work through professional development and continuous communication. Additionally, monitoring is essential during this stage. The directors developed a process to ensure effective implementation of monitoring tools which are beneficial when all staff are familiar with the tools and are aware of expectations. Turnaround directors developed timelines to monitor program goals and support staff in assuring that timelines were met. The program director at Program D details the actions steps necessary to facilitate staff in gaining the knowledge and demonstrating high quality performance.

Our monitoring it goes hand and hand with our communication and the training of the staff... We started doing more ongoing, doing weekly monitoring, bi-weekly monitoring, quarterly monitoring, annually monitoring, ..and we have reminders. So with that monitoring in place the milestones in place it really supported us and improved our program. We had a lot of professional development around the reflective practices and reflective supervision so I think that having that one-on-one [meetings} with staff, individual staff, lots of the things come up there so when the quarterly or monthly or weekly monitoring happens I mean we already have an indication of where we need to go or what's going on.

The director affirmed that establishing regular monitoring, communication and providing professional development reinforce staff in following policies as prescribed. Moreover, monitoring plans ensure that staff do not follow policies with creativity. Executing strong monitoring plans provide Head Start directors greater opportunities for

staff accountability and compliance with HSPS. Each monitoring plan for the respondent's differs in detail but is common in its goal to ensure compliance with HSPS and accuracy of data.

***Turnaround Systems.*** The Head Start participants provided important lessons on how to lead others during the previous three stages of the Four-stage Turnaround Model. However, the final stage, Turnaround Systems, illustrated in Figure 4.1 demonstrates how the directors utilized the skills gained in the previous stages to inform the targeted turnaround areas. The leaders applied the competencies gained in the former stages, Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others and through its application focused the turnaround strategy in four specific areas that demonstrated dramatic performance decline. The four outer legs depicted in Figure 4.1 represent the systems targeted for improvement and its connection to the Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others stages. In the current study, the participants focused turnaround efforts in human resources, finance, shared governance, and ongoing monitoring. The model provides flexibility in that the outer legs can be increased or decreased depending on the systems targeted for improvement. The unlabeled boxes depicted in Figure 4.1 illustrate the flexibility in the Turnaround Systems stage of the model. For example, if a director has determined that non-compliance concerns are only in the shared governance area, one outer leg would be depicted in the model. Moreover, if the director determined change necessary in the fiscal and shared governance areas there would be two outer legs depicted and so on. However, the researcher contends that the Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others Stages are critical and do not provide the same flexibility as the outer legs. In sum, the Preparing Self and Accessing Resources stages supported

the participants in developing capabilities and strategy. In the Leading Others stage, the participants influenced staff change and performance to operate in alignments with the HSPS within the designated systems.

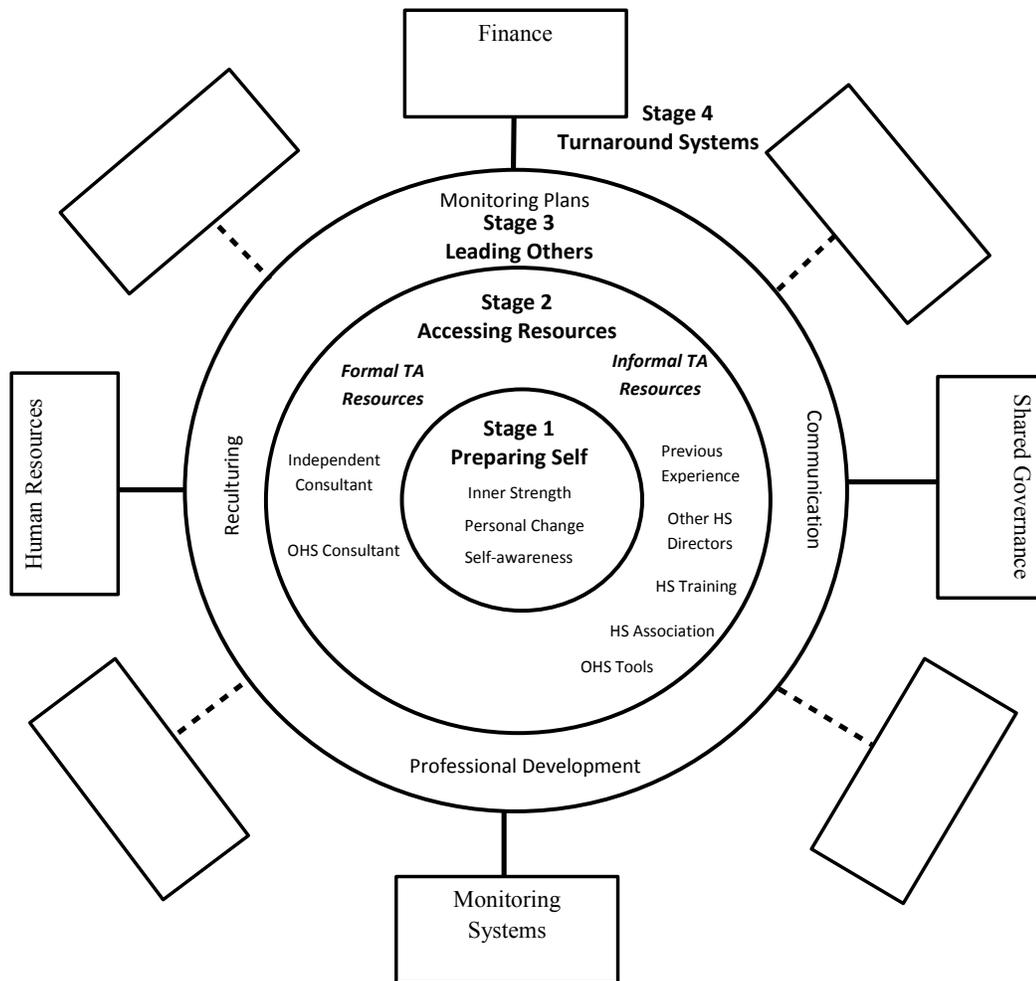


Figure 4.1. Four-Stage Turnaround model.

Chapter 5 presents the implications of the findings. The researcher analyzes the directors' actions steps and its applicability to Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Additionally, the chapter provides discourse relative to the implications of the study for

OHS and Head Start directors, provides a review of the methodological limitations to the study, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

Chapter 4 presented findings regarding the steps turnaround leaders identified as critical to the success of their improvement strategy. The directors identified their processes towards program improvement. Interestingly, the participants shared commonalities in their actions steps. Each of the six turnaround leaders interviewed achieved a successful review with no findings after implementing their improvement strategy.

The findings from this study contribute to the field as pioneering research regarding turnaround practices in Head Start. This study addressed the gap in research relative to Head Start turnaround practices. There is an absence of research that investigates the turnaround practices implemented by Head Start turnaround directors. Subsequently, the researcher substituted K-12 turnaround literature to gain a scholarly perspective on turnaround principals. The researcher found that school turnaround literature provides a better fit to explore turnaround within Head Start programs than other turnaround literature.

Chapter 5 presents the implications of the findings. First, the researcher analyzes the participants' actions steps and its applicability to Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model in addition to providing a comparison of the findings to the turnaround literature examined in Chapter 2. Next, the chapter examines implications of the study for OHS and Head Start directors. Then, a review of the methodological limitations to the study are examined and finally a review of the recommendations for future research.

## Implications of Findings

**Kotter's model.** Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model is developed as a guide to the business for-profit sector, but Kotter contends that the theory is applicable to any organizational change. Kotter (1996) avers that his eight-stage process is necessary to lead successful and sustained change within any organization. Moreover, Kotter argues that the change model is sequential and employs the following steps:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Kotter (1996) delineates that following this sequential multi-stage process is important to leading successful change. This section provides an analysis of the study participants' action steps during the respective turnarounds to investigate if they employed any of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Additionally, the researcher will explore if the steps were applied in the requisite order. According to Kotter (1996), change cannot be accelerated by skipping steps in the change sequence. Kotter (1996) asserts that critical mistakes within stages can stifle organizational transformation.

*Establish a sense of urgency.* Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model begins with establishing a *Sense of Urgency*. Kotter (1996) proffers that change leaders must

eliminate status quo and create a sense of urgency by informing all staff that the change is necessary. Kotter (1996) delineates that change leaders make staff modifications, require all staff to change and mandate for quick and dramatic improvement. The study findings imply that the Head Start directors' actions are in alignment with the first step in Kotter's (1996) model. The director at Program A illustrated how a sense of urgency was established:

The CEO basically stepped in and sort of hands on came down here and took sort of a hands on approach and changed a lot, got rid of some staff and so I think that's where I see the beginning of the change process happening and honestly if the CEO hadn't done that before I came in I don't think I would have been successful.

The CEO's hands on approach, in addition to, making staff changes demonstrated a sense of urgency. The participants made staff changes when necessary to indicate that change was critical. The directors also communicated the necessity of change among staff through meetings and by updating policies and procedures. Findings were in agreement that the participants established a sense of urgency by making immediate changes within themselves and sought technical assistance to develop the skills necessary to create change.

Turnaround literature describes creating a sense of urgency by changing leadership. Frederick and Gift (2009) delineate that guiding the turnaround effort with new leadership is beneficial. The study findings reveal that five of the six turnaround programs changed leaders. Five participants were hired to make improvements within the program. Interestingly, all of the participants successfully improved their respective

programs. These findings imply that a leadership change may illustrate a sense of urgency, but does not indicate the success or failure of the strategy. All of the directors engaged in the Managing Self process through self-preparation and technical assistance. Study findings imply that regardless of the change in leadership, the turnaround leader must engage in a process of preparing self to organize and develop the inner strength to facilitate the change process. Concomitantly, the leader must establish a process to gain technical assistance. Based on the findings of this study, changing leadership does not indicate a sense of urgency, or the success of the improvement process.

*Create a guiding coalition.* The second step in Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model encompasses assembling a group to lead the change to ensure that all staff commit to the effort. All of the directors led the turnaround change and attributed their supervisory staff as major contributors to the successful change effort. Findings were in agreement with Kotter's (1996) second step. All of the respondents led their change efforts and provided guidance to their respective coalitions. Additionally, the directors took an active role in guiding the turnaround effort by engaging in ongoing monitoring. Not all staff committed to the change efforts, but the directors engaged in a process of reculturing to ensure the change effort advanced. Murphy and Myers (2009) aver that it is critical to change the culture and restore confidence by empowering the team. Study findings are consistent with the researcher's assertions. The directors worked with their leadership teams to ensure they were committed to the change process. The respondents recognized the importance of ensuring their leadership teams were committed to the change effort.

Kotter (1996) contends that it is important for the change leader to guide and develop the leadership team. The study findings suggests when participants recognized a lack of staff commitment they either managed staff out of the organization or worked with the team by engaging them in leadership retreats to resolve issues and develop a sense of cohesion. Furthermore, the directors developed inner strength and gained the knowledge to lead the effort. Respondents ensured their leadership teams were committed to communicating the vision and empowering staff to change. In the following account, the director at Program E described the supportive efforts of the guiding coalition:

We always make group decisions and stick together, the same way that the managers do, the site supervisors also do at their level. So I think just the culture of working together towards one common goal is something that really changed and using reports as a way to come together as managers and be united and understanding what's going on in the different components.

The director's recollection illustrates the importance of cohesion and working towards a common vision. The program's leadership staff demonstrated support for the vision within multiple levels of management. These findings reveal that developing the coalition is critical to the turnaround leaders' success. The respondents developed a team committed to the vision.

*Create a vision.* Kotter (1996) establishes that change leaders must develop a vision for change. Similarly, Duke (2006) suggests that turnaround leaders must create a mission and vision. Kowal and Ableidinger's (2011) research is in agreement that developing a vision and focus are critical to the successful turnaround strategy. The study findings imply that the turnaround leaders' vision and focus were driven by the OHS

mandate to immediately comply with all HSPS and remedy the program from its non-compliant and deficient state. Despite the impetus for the vision, the directors supported the change vision and implemented processes to communicate the vision. The director from Program A depicted the importance of creating a vision and communicating the vision:

Being a leader your often times not popular and particularly through change because people want to hold on to the way that they did things and certainly no one wants to be told that they're doing things wrong. So being a little thick skinned and having a vision and remaining true to it and communicating and over communicating, you can never communicate enough. You think people know why and where we're going and sometimes people don't get that message so putting that message out multiple times.

The director validated the importance of developing a vision for change as she supported the vision throughout the process. Furthermore, the director recognized the benefit of communicating the change vision regularly throughout the change process. These actions also demonstrate alignment with Kotter's next step.

*Communicating the change vision.* Kotter (1996) maintains that change leaders must communicate the vision. Several turnaround studies provide evidence in support of Kotter's fourth step (Herman, 2012, Public Impact, 2008, and Public Impact, 2009). The Head Start leaders' action steps provide evidence in alignment with Kotter's (1996) assertion. The findings affirm that Head Start leaders communicated the change efforts through staff meetings and direct communication. All of directors stated that they understood the importance of communicating the message multiple times in various

media formats. The Head Start turnaround leaders ensured staff were clear about the change efforts. Additionally, staff were provided opportunities to hear the change message multiple times throughout the improvement process in order to empower them in understanding the vision and new direction.

*Empowering others to act.* Kotter (1996) argues that it is critical for change leaders to eliminate barriers to achieve the intended change. Kotter suggests that this can be accomplished through experiments within the strategy. Findings related to turnover indicate that the Head Start turnaround leaders eliminated barriers through staff turnover. Conversely, participants also provided support to staff to remove barriers in meeting the required education requirements. Program C described how the Head Start program provided staff tuition reimbursement to remove financial barriers to ensure staff meet the education requirements for teachers.

We supported the staff. Staff that needed to go to school or get a CDA, we have a tuition reimbursement program, so we made sure that they took advantage of that so they could fulfill what they needed to do.

The director's recollection demonstrates that removing barriers to change also empowered staff to support the vision. As documented in the findings, participants clarified roles by updating job descriptions and reorganized to ensure operational efficiencies. Additionally, participants provided cross-content training. The findings imply that Head Start turnaround leaders engaged in actions steps to eliminate barriers to change.

*Generating short term wins.* Kotter (1996) posits that *short term wins* offer change leaders evidence that their strategy is on track. Consequently, the leader is

empowered to push towards the goal. Kotter (1996) argues that short term wins encourage others to support the goal. The findings show that respondents realized personal short term wins when they monitored the program and found that policies were being adhered to by staff. Conversely, none of the directors indicated a process for generating short term wins with staff. Opportunities to reward and celebrate small wins are not described by the turnaround directors. Notably, one of the six directors detailed the importance of providing staff assurances of their progress during the change process, but the findings do not support Kotter's (1996) assertion. Inquiry should be made into directors implementation of short term wins in a future study. Kotter (1996) contends that short term wins are critical to the change process, but the study evidence maintains that generating short term wins are not critical during the turnaround of Head Start programs. It appears that the directors' development of inner strength during the Managing Self process motivated directors to achieve the goal. Moreover, the directors continually communicated the necessity for the change effort and engaged staff in a process of reculturing in an attempt to change behaviors and motivate staff to improve.

*Consolidate improvements and produce more change.* Kotter (1996) establishes that change leaders need to consistently motivate individuals to continue momentum and drive change. Program B described the process in ensuring that victories were not claimed prematurely:

I think that became a whole culture shift...never feeling like we arrived.

Constantly going, okay this is good, but now we need to raise the bar and that's the old [adage] when you meet the bar you raise the bar. And we had that hanging all over everybody's office-when you meet the bar you raise the bar.

The director extended staff thinking beyond the incremental evidence of improvement and extended it towards the greater vision. Kotter contends that the turnaround leader must be careful not to claim victory too soon and continue improvement efforts until the goal is actualized. The study findings are consistent with Kotter's (1996) assertions. All of the turnaround leaders detail the importance of continuous improvement. Findings reveal that participants continually monitored staff for compliance with policies and HSPS. Moreover, the directors attributed ongoing monitoring systems as critical to ensuring compliance and a process for continuous improvements to sustain the change.

*Institutionalize new approaches.* Kotter (1996) claims that in this final stage, successful change is evidenced by staff illustrating the embodiment of the shared norms and new behaviors. Study findings are consistent with Kotter's (1996) claim. One of the study programs contends that it has sustained the change as evidenced by a second concurrent Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. The director at Program E maintained that staff have successfully adopted the change.

I think they've adopted it now. It didn't happen overnight. I think it's an ongoing improvement as well, but I think it's working well. It did take a few years; I would say maybe two years to get into the swing of that. But now it's just happening, I mean yes there's always ways to improve, sometimes meetings are too long, or they ask for management support, but I think overall they've adapted.

The director confirmed that the adoption of change required a few years to institutionalize, but concedes that the behavior change have been embodied by staff. All the directors indicated that they were successful at achieving behavior changes among

staff, but agree that the process for change is continuous. The turnaround leaders agreed that strong monitoring efforts are critical to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to and staff commit to the new behaviors.

Kotter (1996) argues that his change model must be followed in sequence. The Head Start directors did not provide evidence that they followed the steps in order. Moreover, the findings indicate that the order and the number of steps the change leaders engaged in are insignificant. This finding is in contrast with his assertion that change cannot be accelerated if steps are skipped and that success is achieved by following the steps sequentially. Study findings support seven of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. Additional findings reveal that not all of the steps in his change model are critical for the successful turnaround. Furthermore, steps can be skipped without detriment to the strategy.

*Limitations of Kotter's change model.* The study provides an analysis of Kotter's eight-stage change model. The findings support much of Kotter's change model. However, the results imply that Kotter's model has limitations. Kotter's asserts that for the successful change to occur all of the steps must be engaged in and acted upon in the required order. Whereas the study participants did not engage in all of Kotter's eight stages and did not adopt the requisite order. Conversely, they all achieved successful change.

Additionally, the study does not provide evidence that that the participants engaged in Kotter's stage 6 *Generating Short term Wins*. The respondents did not communicate ways in which they rewarded staff for short term wins. However, the respondents did indicate that there were instances that provided evidence of high-

performance behaviors indicating the turnaround process was effective. The study suggests that the timeframe of the turnaround did not allow the directors to make time for celebrating successes with staff during the change process. The participants described the importance of meeting HSPS and implementing change quickly to ensure high-performance and a successful Federal Monitoring Review.

Interestingly, Kotter's model fails to provide change steps for the turnaround leaders in preparing for the improvement strategy. The model describes steps to guide the strategy; however, action steps necessary for preparing self in facilitating the turnaround strategy are not described. However, the Four-Stage Turnaround Model outlines the importance of the change leader developing inner strength, self-awareness and personal skills necessary to prepare to set the turnaround strategy. The study findings indicate the importance of building strength, reflective skills, and generative capacities within the turnaround leaders to prepare to guide staff and stakeholders through the change process. The study reveals that the Preparing Self stage is critical to the turnaround success. Conversely, Kotter's model fails to detail stages of the leader's self-preparation as the change leader.

Additionally, the study implies that Kotter's model does not warrant a requisite order. The findings reveal that the participants did not follow Kotter's steps in sequential order and despite this fact each participant demonstrated success. The research findings imply that Kotter's prescriptive approach is not necessary. The Head Start turnaround leaders achieved success and engaged in seven of Kotter's eight stages. However, some adaptations were made. More specifically, the participants replaced the rigidity of the model and modified it by engaging with stages that best fit the culture of their specific

Head Start program. Notably, the findings imply that the seven stages of Kotter's (1996) model correlate with the Four-Stage Turnaround Model, as shown in Figure 4.1. The two models seem to operate in congruence. However, the Four-Stage Turnaround Model includes provisions for the turnaround leader to develop the capacities to guide the turnaround strategy; Kotter's model fails to do so. Kotter's model provides prescriptive stages for organizational culture. However, the study findings imply that the Four-Stage Turnaround model (see Figure 4.1) is more applicable for the culture Head Start programs. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the steps that each respondent engaged in.

Table 5.1

*Participants' Activity Levels with Kotter's (1996) Eight-Stage Change Model.*

Head Start Leader	Step 1 Establish a sense of urgency	Step 2 Create a guiding coalition	Step 3 Create a vision	Step 4 Communicate the change vision	Step 5 Empower others to act	Step 6 Generating short term wins	Step 7 Consolidate improvements and produce more change	Step 8 Institutionalize new approaches
A	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
B	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
C	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
D	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
E	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
F	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

**Turnaround literature.** As noted previously, School turnaround literature is examined in Chapter 2 as it most closely resembles Head Start Programs. The researcher conducted an exhaustive review for Head Start turnaround literature and yielded no findings. The turnaround literature examined illustrates the strategies of principals in K-12 educational settings. This section will provide evidence of the applicability of the theories relative to the actions steps for successful change. The literature is organized into three sections: (a) Setting the stage, (b) Head Start Turnaround Leaders as Change Agents, and (c) Head Start Turnaround Leader Competencies.

*Setting the stage.* Several turnaround articles assert that changing the leader is critical to the turnaround success (Murphy, 2008, Rhim, Kowal, Hassel & Hassel, 2007). Duke (2006) provides a contrasting argument that changing the leader is not critical to the successful turnaround. The findings in this study are consistent with the research that supports the change in leadership. All of the Head Start directors achieved a successful review with no findings and were cited by OHS as operating in full compliance with HSPS. Five of the six programs experienced a change in leadership. Findings maintain that all of the Head Start turnaround leaders experienced a success regardless of decisions to change or maintain the current leadership.

Communication with stakeholders is critical to the successful turnaround. Robinson and Buntrock (2011) and Public Impact (2009) research supports this assertion. In agreement with the research assumptions, the findings reveal that the turnaround participants identified the importance of including stakeholders during the improvement process. The leaders engaged parents and board members throughout the process. Turnaround literature asserts that engaging stakeholders can positively support the effort

and minimize opportunities for pessimists to deter positive efforts. The Head Start turnaround leaders actions steps provide evidence that they engaged stakeholders through professional development and ensured they were provided clarity regarding roles.

*Head Start turnaround leaders as change agents.* Themes in this study corroborate with the findings of previous research studies which contend that turnaround leaders lead the change, reculture, develop a vision, understand reasons for decline, and possess unique competencies.

The turnaround leaders are critical to the change effort. Several researchers provide evidence regarding the significance of the turnaround leader's role (Duke, 2006; Duke & Jacobson, 2011; Duke & Salmonowicz, 2011; Murphy & Meyers, 2009; Tucker et al., 2008). Tucker et al. (2008) contend that principals trained as turnaround leaders demonstrate greater success than principals that were not formally trained. Based on the findings in this study, all of the Head Start turnaround leaders engaged in either formal or informal technical assistance to prepare for the improvement effort. Interestingly, one of the participants indicated she received specialized training prior to her current turnaround role. Despite this fact, findings reveal that the Head Start directors did not demonstrate variations in success which can be attributed to turnaround training. All of the directors engaged in formal or informal technical assistance or a combination of the two. All of the turnaround leaders achieved a successful Federal Monitoring Review. The study findings imply that engaging in technical assistance is critical to the successful review.

Reculturing is essential to the successful turnaround effort. Murphy and Meyer (2008) detail the importance of reculturing. Likewise, Fullan (2007) supports the claim that turnaround leaders must employ influencing and motivational skills with staff in

order to change culture and shift employee behaviors. All of the Head Start turnaround directors engaged their programs in some form of reculturing. Findings reveal that the respondents recultured by communicating the vision and gaining staff support. Additionally, participants developed a culture of accountability among all staff. Duke's (2006) study demonstrates that turnaround principals removed staff that failed to illustrate the capacity to improve performance by counseling them out or motivated staff to retire. Study findings support Duke's (2006) research. The Head Start turnaround directors established comparable practices with resistant staff.

Duke and Salmonowicz (2010) assert that principals need to understand the reasons for failure and pose critical questions about the reasons for low-performance and focus efforts on developing improvements and understanding when to eliminate unsuccessful strategy efforts. The researchers contend that turnaround leaders need support in decision making. Moreover, they proffer that turnaround leaders need specific training. The findings of this study demonstrate support with this research. All of the Head Start turnaround leaders provided that they had a clear understanding for the reasons for their programs performance decline prior to the start. The respondents used that knowledge in addition to technical assistance to develop an improvement strategy. All of the directors detailed the importance of technical assistance and support with individual questions as requisite to the success of their strategy.

Tucker et al. (2008) espouse that turnaround leaders develop a vision to improve the organization, commit to excellence, and develop methods for continuous and ongoing improvement. The findings from this study support the research of Tucker et al. (2008). All of the Head Start turnaround leaders developed a vision, committed to excellence,

and developed strategies for ongoing improvement. The participants monitored their programs for compliance and engaged in informal and formal technical assistance.

*Head Start turnaround leader competencies.* Turnaround literature asserts that there are unique competencies of turnaround leaders that are not typical to leaders leading high performing programs (Public Impact, 2008). Public Impact (2008) delineates that there are specific competencies exclusive to turnaround leaders. This present study does not contrast the competencies of Head Start Directors in high-performing programs to low-performing programs in need of turnaround. Present study findings show that Head Start turnaround leaders illustrate similar competencies. The research developed by Public Impact (2008) indicates that turnaround leader competencies represent “patterns of actions” (p. 4). The researchers assert that there are four unique competencies of turnaround leaders and clustered leader action steps in the following areas: (a) driving for results, (b) influencing for results, (c) problem-solving, and (d) showing confidence to lead.

*Driving for results.* Public Impact (2008) posits that turnaround leaders develop a clear plan for change. Study findings are consistent with this assumption. The Head Start directors planned for changing during the Managing Self stage. The directors developed inner strength and gained skills as they received technical assistance.

*Influencing for results.* The researchers assert that turnaround leaders develop a coalition to support and influence others. The findings affirm this assertion. The Head Start turnaround leaders’ increased morale with staff by engaging in retreats and worked with staff to resolve issues and develop team cohesion. Additionally, through the process of reculturing, the directors communicated a clear vision and provided staff with

professional development. The Head Start directors' actions support the researchers' assertion. The findings imply that participants demonstrated critical turnaround competencies operating during the Leading Others stage.

*Problem solving.* The researchers contend that turnaround competencies include skills in problem solving. Findings are in support of the researchers claim. The turnaround leaders interviewed demonstrated competencies in resolving conflict. The participants faced conflict when staff illustrated resistance to the vision and change process. The Head Start turnaround leaders made critical decisions related to staff and organizational operations. The participants demonstrated competencies in this area as they successfully resolved problems.

*Showing confidence to lead.* Public Impact (2008) posits that turnaround leaders demonstrate the confidence to lead. Findings were in agreement with the researchers' position. Head Start turnaround leaders demonstrated confidence in leading the change effort after they engaged in the Managing Self stage. Directors established the knowledge to lead the change and confidently communicated the vision for change to staff, parents, and board members.

In congruence with the current research, the study findings also reveal that Head Start turnaround leaders espoused the importance of accurate data to monitor their respective programs. Kowal and Hassel (2011) found that turnaround leaders are driven by data. Moreover, the researchers assert the following: (a) turnaround leaders develop goals after critical analysis, (b) motivate and communicates success to all stakeholders, (c) develop a vision and strategy aligned with activities to ensure the goal, (d) improve communication by sharing the vision and goals with staff and leaders, and (e) empower

others to act by removing barriers to achieve the change. Kowal and Hassel's (2011) research illustrate similarities to Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. The findings reveal that Head Start turnaround leaders demonstrate actions that support the work of Kowal and Hassel (2011). Head Start turnaround leaders developed goals for change after they understood the reasons for decline. Table 5.2 summarizes the findings that support and contrast turnaround literature.

The respondents engaged stakeholders in problem solving, training, and updated them on programmatic improvements. Additionally, the participants communicated the vision and strategy and ensured that goals were achieved through ongoing monitoring systems. The Head Start turnaround directors focused on improving communications and goal sharing through reculturing efforts. Furthermore, they removed barriers to achieve the vision by managing out staff that did not support the vision. Whereas, remaining staff were trained and provided clarity about changes to their work. The findings of the research appear to support much of the school turnaround literature.

Table 5.2

*Comparison of Turnaround Leader Findings*

School Turnaround leaders	Head Start Turnaround leaders
Changing the leader is critical to turnaround. (Murphy, 2008; Rhim, Kowal, Hassel & Hassel, 2007)	Findings are in support. Changing the leader is critical to turnaround success.
Communication with stakeholders is critical to the successful turnaround. (Buntrock, 2011; Public Impact, 2009)	Findings are in support. Turnaround leaders supported parents and board members throughout the improvement process.
Formally trained turnaround leaders experience greater turnaround success (Tucker et al., 2008).	Findings are in contrast. The findings indicate that Head Start turnaround leaders both formally and informally trained shared turnaround success.
Reculturing is essential to the successful turnaround. (Murphy & Meyer, 2008; Fullan, 2007; Duke, 2006).	Findings are in support. Head Start turnaround leaders engage their staff in some form of reculturing.
Turnaround leaders need to understand the reasons for failure (Duke & Salmonowicz, 2010)	Findings are in support. Turnaround leaders demonstrated a clear understanding of the reasons for their programs decline.
Turnaround leaders need specific training and support with decision making (Duke, 2006).	Findings are in support. Head Start turnaround leaders engaged specific training in the Managing Self phase.
Turnaround leaders develop a vision, commit to excellence and engage in ongoing improvement efforts (Tucker et al., 2008).	Findings are in support. Head Start turnaround leaders committed to the vision, guided the program towards excellence and implemented monitoring systems to ensure compliance and ongoing improvement.
Turnaround leaders have unique competencies (Public Impact, 2008)	Findings are in support. The turnaround leaders illustrate unique competencies.
Turnaround leaders are driven by data (Kowal & Hassel, 2008).	Findings are in support. Head Start turnaround leaders espoused the importance of ensuring the accuracy of data to monitor program efficiency.
School Turnaround leaders developed goals for change.	Findings are in support. Head Start leaders developed goals for change
School turnaround leaders motivate and communicate successes with stakeholders.	Findings are in support. Head Start leaders motivated and communicated success with stakeholders
School turnaround leaders develop a vision and align actions steps with strategy.	Findings are in support. Head Start leaders developed a vision and aligned action steps with strategy
School turnaround leaders improved communication by sharing vision and goals with staff and leaders	Findings are in support. Head Start turnaround leaders improved communication by sharing vision and goals with staff and leaders.
School turnaround leaders removed barriers to ensure change was achieved.	Findings are in support. Head Start leaders remove barriers to ensure change

## **Limitations**

This study has several limitations. The study data was derived primarily from the recollections of the six participants and relied on self-reported data. Additionally, there were 41 Head Start Grantees that met the study criteria and six participants agreed to participate. The small participant pool makes it difficult to generalize across the Head Start field. A study encompassing a larger group of participants may yield divergent or additional findings. Additionally, the lack of demographic data of the participants may be a limitation. The researcher purposely concealed the demographic data of the participants to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. However, the study did not seek to explore or contrast demographic data. It sought to investigate turnaround practices and understand the specific action steps implemented by Head Start turnaround leaders who successfully improved their low-performing programs to a high-performing program.

Findings from this study may not be relevant in non-Head Start settings. Uniquely, Head Start programs are subjected to the HSPS, therefore OHS Federal Monitoring Reviews and HSPS compliance are not applicable in non-Head Start settings. However, this could be remedied through an investigation of the systems and regulatory requirements for non-Head Start settings. The study participants expressed concerns about providing vulnerable program information in fear of the perceived possibility of repercussions with OHS. The participants were cautious of the data they revealed. Respondents expressed considerable concerns about the researcher providing geographical and identifying information that could be detected through deductive measures to reveal the program's identity. This fear may have prevented directors from sharing other critical data that may have added to the study findings.

## **Recommendations**

As a result of the lessons learned, study participants offer valuable insights as to the specific issues that affect low-performing programs during the turnaround of a Head Start program. The lessons the participants provide offer detail regarding the turnaround leadership competencies and the actions steps necessary to turnaround troubled Head Start programs. From the present study, six recommendations emerge. The researcher proposes three recommendations for OHS: (a) anonymously survey Head Start directors to understand their perspectives for causes for chronic noncompliance, (b) establish a sense of trust between OHS consultants and Head Start Grantees, and (c) develop measures to validate and formalize informal learning communities among Head Start directors. Additionally, the researcher proposes three recommendations for Head Start directors: (a) employ the use of the Four-Stage Turnaround model as a road map for turnaround success, (b) develop a system to formalize informal learning communities between directors, and (c) establish mentoring systems between Head Start directors.

**Implications for OHS.** Turnaround literature contends that external forces are the impetus for school turnaround (Murphy, 2008; Public Impact, 2007; Rhim, Kowal, Hassel & Hassel, 2007). Turnaround mandates begin at the federal level, and mandates are communicated down from the state and local level to the district. The same holds true for Head Start programs. Congress approves and develops the changes to the HSPS. The HSPS are approved and OHS monitors programs to ensure that Head Start programs are operating in compliance. Murphy (2008) asserts that districts should evaluate the reasons for performance decline and take quick actions to gauge the problem and develop a plan for operational efficiencies.

OHS' Reports to Congress (2008 and 2009) identify that there is a serious problem with chronic non-compliance among Head Start Grantees. There is a paucity of evidence that indicates that OHS has provided a comprehensive evaluation among Head Start Grantees to investigate the causes of decline. The researcher asserts that this is a critical opportunity for OHS to improve Head Start services. As the study findings reveal, all of the participants attributed their lack of understanding to the changes made to the HSPS as a contributing factor to their programs non-compliant and deficient status, additionally the respondents' detailed their concerns with the ambiguity of the HSPS. OHS must investigate opportunities to understand participant concerns and develop multiple opportunities to clarify to Grantees about the continuous changes in operating under the HSPS. The researcher proposes that OHS anonymously survey Head Start programs to understand the reasons for chronic non-compliance. Moreover, from the survey data develop trainings and communications that provide clarity regarding full compliance and best practices.

Interestingly, the participants gained a better understanding of HSPS expectations after they engaged in self-development and technical assistance. Study findings reveal that participants expressed concerns in sharing information with OHS consultants. The researcher concedes that OHS provides supports for directors but contends that OHS should explore opportunities to improve the consultative process and investigate relationships between OHS consultants and Grantees. Study findings reveal that trust is a major concern. As evidenced in the participants concerns with the researcher protecting the identities of the respondents. It is recommended that OHS work to establishing a sense of trust between Head Start directors and OHS consultants in an effort to improve

the effectiveness of technical assistance, by separating the role of the OHS consultant and technical assistance. OHS should define and separate roles for OHS consultants and OHS technical assistance staff. Whereby, OHS technical assistance staff provides grantees support without punitive measures for noncompliance and establishing trust.

Subsequently, this act would create positive communication and feedback between OHS staff and the grantees in an effort to increase performance and effectiveness within programs.

Additional findings reveal that participants sought programmatic supports through informal methods. Participants engaged other Head Start directors to gain better understanding of common non-compliances and program practices. These actions should signal to OHS that there is a unique community of collaboration among Head Start directors. OHS should recognize the utility of collaboration among programs and empower Grantees to support one another. Interestingly, the unintended effects of recompetition, may ultimately damage the collaborative nature between Head Start directors. Study findings reveal that some directors may become hesitant to share trade secrets since recompetition has developed a pathway for programs to compete for Head Start grants.

The researcher asserts that OHS should capitalize on the utility of collaboration and develop measures to validate this informal method of technical support. Furthermore, developing a formal system of technical support between directors in good standing and struggling non-compliant Head Start programs will increase opportunities for programs to come into full compliance with HSPS. Findings reveal that participants trusted other Head Start directors operating programs in good standing. It is recommended that OHS

explore developing mentoring programs between the programs and establish systems of support without consequences. As allies, Grantees can support one another and ultimately reduce the number of non-compliant programs in lieu of the current system of recompetition.

The researcher delineates that OHS may need to develop publications and webinars to reinforce competencies among Grantees in meeting HSPS, more specifically in ongoing monitoring and information sharing of common non-compliances. Study data provided evidence that participants were not clear on the complexity of ongoing monitoring. The researcher proffers that these recommendation are essential for OHS to explore in an effort to transform Head Start programs and create systems for Head Start directors to improve programs for Head Start children.

**Implications for Head Start directors.** In the absence of Head Start turnaround literature, this research study has critical implications for Head Start directors. Head Start directors are confronted with the critical need to ensure their programs are providing children a high-quality program. The implications are derived from the data from the Head Start participants. The participants' retrospective feedback offers pertinent insights in support of directors wanting to guide the successful turnaround. The researcher posits that the Head Start participants achieved turnaround success because the directors developed critical competencies in the three areas: Preparing Self, Accessing Resources and Leading Others.

The researcher has invoked meaning from the competencies developed by the participants and suggests the participants employed a four-stage competency model. With the absence of a competency model to describe Head Start turnaround, the researcher

offers the introduction of a new model, the Four-Stage Turnaround model, to operationalize the unique steps the participants engaged in (See figure 4.1). The findings reveal that the participants developed skills related to self-preparation leveraging specific knowledge to make improvements. Moreover, the directors employed the skills gained to facilitate a process for leading staff and constituents which resulted in improving the quality of the program and achieving a successful Federal Monitoring Review. Furthermore, the researcher asserts that the participants achieved turnaround success because all of the participants employed the Four-Stage Turnaround Model. It is the assertion of the researcher that this model provides Head Start directors a roadmap for success. The researcher proposes that Head Start directors employ the use of the model, therefore, it is critical to examine this model further as it illustrates a road map for Head Start directors to follow. The researcher posits that following the steps reviewed will provide a strong strategy for achieving turnaround success.

The Four-Stage Turnaround model, as shown in Figure 4.1, details the action steps taken by directors, the researcher contends that the actions steps can be altered depending on the operating systems the participants are trying to effect. The actions steps are specifically related to the systems that the participants intend to influence. The Four-Stage Turnaround model framework is broad enough to accommodate the expanding strategic perspectives of Head Start turnaround directors and new research.

**Informal learning circles.** Head Start directors have developed a unique community of support. Directors have adopted an informal learning community. The study revealed that directors supported each other by filling in the gaps where information is lacking. These finding imply that OHS is failing directors by not providing

the critical information needed. Participants revealed that they sought the support of other directors for information about non-compliance findings and best practices. It appears that accessibility of information is a concern for directors.

This informal system of interpersonal learning developed by Head Start directors provides critical learning. Participant data indicated that directors trust other Head Start directors who operate programs in good standing. The study reveals that in some instances directors provided support via phone calls, on-site visits and exchanged tips about maintaining program compliance. The informal learning appears to be desirable benefit for directors. The findings imply that Head Start program directors that do not engage in local Head Start Association meetings and attend Head Start sessions miss opportunities to engage and learn about new updates and best practices within Head Start shared by other directors.

Head Start directors create learning circles through engagement with one another. The learning circles developed by directors have contributed to the effectiveness of program operations. The study findings imply that Head Start directors feel comfortable engaging in nonthreatening social settings, where they can share experiences, skills and best practices.

The current study suggests that relevant learning takes place in informal learning circles and directors acquire skills and knowledge to support them in their roles. Mezirow (2000) describes this as transformative learning. Throughout transformative learning, individuals experience a shift of reference and explore new behaviors, shift their attitudes, and build the confidence to lead in the new manner. The researcher proffers that this mode of learning is critical to turnaround leaders. The study suggests that participants

gained knowledge that supported their missions. The findings indicate that respondents used the learning opportunities to develop actions steps to make improvements within their programs. In agreement with Mezirow (2000), study findings support his assertion that individuals shift behaviors. Directors that engaged in informal learning circles gained valuable learning experiences. The researcher recommends the development of a system to formalize learning between directors to create opportunities to expand learning among programs and minimize opportunities for programs to repeat mistakes and mitigate the risk of common non-compliances. Additionally, directors can establish regular mentoring systems to ensure more Head Start directors operate high-quality programs by learning from others. Head Start program directors could benefit from a formalized learning system in an effort to significantly increase the number of programs achieving Federal Monitoring Reviews with no findings operating in full compliance with the HSPS.

These recommendations, if heeded, are likely to positively impact the quality of Head Start programs within the field ultimately improving services for the children and families served. Furthermore, the next cohort of Head Start directors scheduled to receive a Federal Monitoring Review can benefit and possibly mitigate the risk of being cited by OHS with non-compliances and deficiencies.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The study findings inform the field about how Head Start leaders improve their programs and provide data on the specific action steps implemented by the respondents. The findings reveal that the Four-Stage Turnaround model (See Figure 4.1) employs three critical leadership competencies for Head Start directors conducting turnarounds: Preparing Self, Accessing Resources and Leading Others. Future research should

investigate if the three stages can operate independently and yield the successful turnaround or affirm the current study's findings that the four-stage process work concomitantly and all steps must be employed to achieve turnaround success. Additionally, the findings reveal that the actions steps that the turnaround leaders engaged in while employing the four-stage model align with seven of Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model. This study presents pioneering research regarding Head Start turnaround. It is critical to develop further research to add to the body of knowledge and build a representative body of work in the field to expand the discourse regarding Head Start turnaround.

The Report to Congress (2009) reveals that there is an increase in the number of Head Start programs with noncompliant findings. Further studies are needed to examine if the turnaround practices described by the respondents will yield the same results or additional results if a larger pool is examined. Moreover, the study could be expanded by investigating if the study participants sustained the improvements and achieved subsequent successful Federal Monitoring Reviews with no findings.

OHS and independent consultants have a critical role in the Managing Self step. Findings reveal that that the directors must have an established relationship of trust with the consultants in order to successfully gain knowledge and effectively achieve technical support. Future research might explore the relationship between consultants and Head Start turnaround leaders during the Managing Self stage to examine the practices that lead to trust and define relational behaviors that lead to increased turnaround success.

Further research is recommended to provide an investigation of Head Start directors leading high-performing programs to Head Start directors facilitating a

turnaround in low-performing programs contrast the competencies and actions steps among the two groups. Additional research is recommended to investigate the turnaround practices in non-Head Start settings. However, the current study contributes to a better understanding of competencies and actions steps of Head Start directors' transforming their low-performing Head Start program to high performing. In so doing, it suggests a new direction for turnaround research and theoretical development.

### **Conclusion**

Many Head Start programs are faced with the problem of chronic non-compliance and deficient statuses. Recent Reports to Congress (2009) indicate that chronic poor performance is an increasing epidemic for Head Start Grantees. However, there is an absence of literature that investigates the action steps of Head Start leaders during the turnaround process. This study addressed the urgent need to investigate the approaches used in non-compliant and deficient programs to successfully meet the HSPS and achieve a Federal Monitoring Review with no findings. Accordingly, as discussed in Chapter 2, the purpose of this study is to investigate the turnaround practices as identified by Head Start directors that improved their low-performing programs and transformed the programs to full compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards to achieve a successful Federal Monitoring Review.

The study relied on data collected from six Head Start directors. The qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to analyze the relationship between the strategies the leaders engaged in and the changes within their programs. The researcher analyzed the strategies of the Head Start directors interviewed to the practices found in the literature. Four themes emerged from the study data: (a) *Organizational Noncompliance*, (b)

*Managing Self*, (c) *Managing Others*, and (d) *Systems Turnaround*. The first theme Organizational Noncompliance included four areas: (a) Finance, (b) Shared Governance, (c) Human Resources, and (d) Ongoing Monitoring Systems. Five of the six directors agreed that fiscal procedures and financial matters were not their areas of expertise and consequently were disconnected from HSPS and fiscal operations.

Turnaround leaders stressed the importance of improving shared governance. Four of the six respondents detailed the importance of ensuring that governance procedures paralleled the HSPS. Program directors identified improvements needed in the area of parent participation and ensuring the board was provided clarity on their roles and responsibilities.

In the area of Human Resources, poor performance were attributed to the lack of staff qualifications and failure to update policies and procedures to reflect the HSPS. Five of the six Head Start leaders identified the lack of ongoing monitoring systems as another attributing factor to their programs non-compliant or deficient status. Collectively the six programs were cited for 63 non-compliances and seven deficiencies. All of the directors implemented a successful strategy to improve their program to achieve a successful Federal Monitoring Review with no findings.

Managing self, the second theme introduces the idea that directors began their turnaround trajectory in a process of building inner strength and created personal change through self-preparation and self-reflection. Additionally, the directors engaged in formal and informal technical assistance. Formal technical assistance is provided through OHS consultants or Independent consultants hired directly by the grantee. Informal technical assistance materializes in one or a combination of the following five areas (a) previous

experiences, (b) support from other Head Start directors, (c) Head Start trainings, (d) attending Head Start Association meetings, and (e) OHS tools.

Managing others, the third theme, provides findings that reveal that Head Start directors utilize the skills gained in managing self to guide subordinates and constituents through the successful turnaround. Directors facilitate their staff through the change process by reculturing, improving communication, providing professional development, and executing strong monitoring plans.

Systems turnaround, the last theme, findings imply that the participants applied the skills gained and through the application of a four-stage framework. The four-stage model, referred to as the Four-Stage Turnaround Model (See Figure 4.1). As described, the model includes four stages: Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, Leading Others and Turnaround Systems.

In the first stage, Preparing Self, the participants developed self-efficacy skills and generative capabilities to guide the turnaround strategy. The second stage Accessing Resources, the participants assessed the types of technical assistance resources necessary to guide the turnaround strategy, next Leading Others, the third stage, the participants led staff in a reculturing process, improved communication, executed ongoing monitoring systems and provided professional development for staff, parents and board members. All stages influence the final stage, Turnaround Systems. In this stage, the participants' focused on systems turnaround efforts in human resources, finance, shared governance, and ongoing monitoring. The directors' stories provide evidence that the combination of their competencies in Preparing Self, Accessing Resources and Leading Others in tandem

with their specific execution steps situated them to accomplish a successful Federal Monitoring Reviews with no finding and in full compliance with the HSPS.

Based on the findings in this study, the researcher can imply that institutionalizing the change requires more than ongoing monitoring systems. It requires consistent communication between the Head Start turnaround leader and the staff. Themes in the study indicate that the change leader must engage in a process of in preparing self and accessing technical assistance resources. It is essential for the Head Start directors to engage in training and research to understand new developments on the horizon. Head Start directors must ensure that they are connected to changes within the HSPS and its implications. The participants achieved training through informal and formal technical assistance. Additionally, the participants provide evidence of employing their turnaround competencies and the importance of the intersection of the Preparing Self, Accessing Resources, and Leading Others stages and its implications in the Turnaround Systems stage.

Six recommendations are presented in the study. The researcher proposes three recommendations for OHS: (a) anonymously survey Head Start directors to understand their perspectives for causes for chronic noncompliance, (b) establish a sense of trust between OHS consultants and Head Start Grantees, (c) develop measures to validate and formalize informal learning communities among Head Start directors. Additionally, the researcher posits three recommendations for Head Start directors: (a) employ the use of the Four-Stage Turnaround model as a road map for turnaround success, (b) development of a system to formalize informal learning communities between directors, (c) establish mentoring systems between directors.

The Head Start turnaround leaders demonstrate that turnaround leaders reflect competencies in understanding Organizational Noncompliance, Managing Self, and Managing Others. Managing Self and Managing Others must interact concomitantly in order to achieve the successful turnaround. Head Start directors achieved successful turnaround because they engaged in three critical phases during their turnaround effort. Directors understood the reasons for their programs non-compliances, managed themselves through a process of preparing self and established inner strength in addition to engaging in technical assistance and leading others. This process facilitated a path for Head Start directors to guide staff in changing behaviors to ensure compliance with the HSPS.

These findings present an important addition to turnaround research. It introduces a new model to analyze Head Start turnaround and provides the entry of Head Start discourse to the turnaround field. This entry establishes the importance to the work of Head Start turnaround directors as change leaders. Implications of these findings are encouraging for Head Start directors, Head Start directors have a competency model to follow and employ. The specific action steps that the participants engaged in provide a roadmap to improve program operations within Head Start programs for the benefit of the children and families served.

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## Appendix A

Dear Head Start Director,

My name is Sean Tracy and I am a doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY. I am writing you to seek your assistance with my dissertation research, in an effort to add to the body of knowledge on turnaround theory and its application in Head Start programs. I am interested in learning about how Head Start directors describe their experiences leading their program to achieving full compliance with the Federal Performance Standards for Federal Review accountability. Your program has been distinguished as achieving a full compliance finding at your most recent Federal Monitoring Review. This finding provides evidence that your program has implemented substantial improvements from your previous Federal Review. I would like to learn more about how you led your team through such substantial program improvements. Your leadership and recent Federal Review findings demonstrate that you have an important story to share. Your story and participation is voluntary. I will make every attempt to ensure that your stories and program identity remain anonymous. I will use pseudonyms to protect your program identity. At no time will your name, geographic location or identifying program data be identified through the study, completion of the project, or at time of publication.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB). I would be honored if you would support in my research project by participating in one telephone interview and complete a brief demographic survey. The interview will last approximately one hour; the survey will take less than ten minutes to complete. I will also request to review your most recent Federal Review documents and Program Information Report. With your consent, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcription will be forwarded to you for your review and approval.

I appreciate your consideration in participating in this research study. You will be helping to contribute to the field by introducing a theory that has not been applied to early childcare and education. Your survey responses will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance for contributing to such important research.

Sincerely,

Sean Tracy

## Appendix B

### Part 1: Demographic Questions

Q1 Thank you for agreeing to participate in this ground breaking research regarding successful turnaround practices in Head Start Programs. This survey will take about ten minutes to complete. Once you have completed the survey, I will contact you to schedule your telephone interview. My contact information is as follows: Sean Tracy585 305-0977

Q2 Please list your current title

Q3 Your program has been identified as making improvements between your most recent Federal Review and the Federal Review prior to your most recent review. Did you lead the improvement process?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q4 When did you begin the improvement process? Please list month and year.

Answer If Did you lead the improvement process? No Is Selected

Q5 Who led the improvement process? Are they still employed with your program?

Q6 How long have you served in your current position?

- less than 6 months (1)
- 6 months -1 year (2)
- 1 year (3)
- 2 years (4)
- 3-5 years (5)
- 6-8 years (6)
- 8-10 years (7)
- 10-15 years (8)
- 15-20 years (9)
- More than 20 years (10)

Q7 Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q8 In what age group are you?

- 19 and under (1)
- 20-29 (2)
- 30-39 (3)
- 40-49 (4)
- 50-59 (5)
- 60-69 (6)
- 70+ (7)

Q9 Please describe your ethnicity

- American Indian (1)
- Asian (2)
- Biracial (3)
- Black/African-American (4)
- Latino/Hispanic (5)
- White (6)
- Other (7)

Q10 Describe any professional development that you believe helped you with the improvement process. Please list any in-service, workshops, college courses, or books. You may answer none.

Q11 Did you receive any additional support with your improvement process. Please list supports.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Did you receive any additional support with your improvem... Yes Is Selected

Q12 Please list the supports your received.

- Office of Head Start (1)
- STGI Technical Support (2)

- Other Head Start Directors (3)
- Consultants (4)
- Other (5)

Answer If Did you receive any additional support with your improvement process... Yes  
Is Selected

Q13 What did the supports provide you with? Please describe.

Q14 Please list the capacities in which you have served throughout your Head Start  
Career. Please list the positions you have held at any Head Start Program.

- Maintenance (1)
- Receptionist (2)
- Consultant (3)
- Cook (4)
- Education Coordinator (5)
- Assistant Teacher (6)
- Teacher (7)
- Assistant Director (8)
- Director (9)
- Finance Manager (10)
- Executive Director (11)
- Volunteer (12)
- Other, Please specify (13)

Q15 What financial resources were available to implement the required changes?

Q16 Briefly describe your Head Start Program reporting structure

Q17 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- CDA (1)
- High School / GED (2)
- Some College (3)
- 2-year College Degree (4)
- 4-year College Degree (5)
- Masters Degree (6)
- Doctoral Degree (7)
- Professional Degree (JD, MD) (8)

Q18 Please select a response that best describes your program today.

- Head Start only (1)
- Head Start and Universal Prekindergarten (PreK) (2)
- Head Start and wrap-care ( care for children beyond Head Start Program hours) (3)
- Head Start and Daycare (4)
- Head Start, daycare, wrap-care, Pre-K, and school-age programs (5)

Q19 List the key staff that you believe were critical to the change process. Please list titles not names.

Q20 Please provide the best number to contact you for the interview. The questions will be provided prior to the interview.

Q21 Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important research.

## Appendix C

### Part 2: Standardized Open-ended Phone Interview Questions

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the survey today. Your input will be used to inform research regarding program improvements. I recognize that you have a busy schedule and I will be respectful of your time. Today's interview will take about 45 minutes. We'll talk about your program and its current status as a high quality program and what you did to make it the success it is today. I will refer to your Federal Review from 20\_\_ as Federal Review 1 and your last Federal Monitoring Review as Federal Review 2. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Now we will talk about your program: its structure; the strategy you implemented; your end results; communication with your stakeholders; management of your program; financial management; human resource issues; professional development; and wrap up the interview with any recommendations you may have for other programs. Are you ready to begin?

#### **Program Description**

1. Describe your program today compared to Review One?
  - a. Were you employed with the program at Review One? If no, go to section i.
    - i. If not, who was leading the program?
    - ii. What was your role?
    - iii. When did you begin leading the program?
    - iv. Did you make changes in the structure between Review One and Review Two?

## **Professional Development**

2. What professional development did you receive that you implement the improvements? Workshops, books, college courses etc.
  - a. Staff?
    - i. Who provided the training?
    - ii. List the topics.
    - iii. List the topics.
3. Describe any support you received from?
  - a. Office of Head Start?
  - b. STGI Technical Support?
  - c. From other Head Start programs?
  - d. Consultants?
    - i. What did the consultants provide?
    - ii. What did they offer?

## **Next we will talk about your improvement strategy and how it was developed.**

### **Strategy**

4. How did you plan for the improvement process after receiving results from review 1?
  - a. When did you begin the improvement process?
  - b. Was the plan formal or informal?
  - c. Did the actions you put in place address the non-compliances?
  - d. Tell me about the actions you took?
  - e. How did you figure out the sequence of actions to take?
  - f. What was the outcome?
    - i. Tell me more about what you learned at this stage?
5. I want to learn more about what factors you believe contributed to your overall success?
  - a. Did you collaborate with other programs?
  - b. Did other programs or individuals help you? If so, who?

### **Fiscal**

6. Were there any financial resources available to implement the required changes? If yes, how much and from whom?
7. Did you make any cutbacks to your program from Review One to Review Two? If so, what?

8. Did you receive a grant to make improvements?
9. Did you lose any funding from Review One to Review Two?
10. What were there any unexpected costs necessary to improve your program? If so, what?

### **End Results**

11. Think about Review One and Review Two, How did you know you were making progression towards the goals prior to Review two?
  - a. How did you know you were ready for Review Two?
  - b. What were your indicators of program improvement?

**Now we are going to talk about your stakeholders and their involvement in the improvement process**

### **Stakeholders**

12. Tell me about how staff were involved in the improvement process?
  - a. Parents?
  - b. Other stakeholders?
  - c. Consultants?

**Now we are going to talk about Communication**

### **Communication**

13. Tell me about any changes in communication pattern from Review 1 in comparison to now?
  - a. Parents?
  - b. Staff?
  - c. Board of Directors?
  - d. Policy Council/Committee?
  - e. With other stakeholders?

**Now we are going to talk about your management of the program**

### **Management**

14. Did your monitoring procedures change after Review 1. If so, how?
  - a. Describe monitoring procedures now?
15. Describe how you used the Program Information Report (PIR) to inform your improvement plan?
16. How did the culture change between Review 1 and Review 2?

17. How did you change your organizational structure from Review One to Review Two?

Now we are at the final section. We are going to discuss your staff.

### **Staff**

18. Tell me about staff turnover from Review One to now:
  - a. What is turnover like today?
  - b. Did you expand or reduce staff between reviews?
19. How are you and staff held accountable for performance?

We're almost done, now we are going to talk about professional development. I would like to learn about the trainings that you and your staff were involved in.

We are at the end of our interview. I'd like to get your final thoughts about any other items you believe should be discussed.

### **Final thoughts**

20. Are there any things that you would do differently?
21. Do you have any recommendations for others?

### **Closing Statements**

22. Is there anything that I have missed that you would like to share?
23. Do you have any questions for me?

If I have any follow up questions may I call you back? Would you like a copy of my dissertation when the research is completed? Thank you again for your patience and participation.