



Indiana Department of Education School Improvement Summit

School Improvement Technical Assistance Partner Profile

March 10, 2020

Background

American Institutes for Research

1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835

Dawn Dolby

630.689.8020
ddolby@air.org

The mission of the American Institutes for Research (AIR) is to apply the best research evidence to inform education policy and practice. We explore the root causes of enduring and emerging educational challenges and measure the impact of strategies to meet those challenges. To drive positive change in education, we ask difficult questions to increase understanding of what works, why it works, and how to sustain it.

Approach

AIR provides customizable and differentiated school improvement services aligned with identified needs and priorities to build the capacity of administrators and teachers to meet students' needs, along with monitoring tools and support to establish a foundation for continuous improvement. AIR can provide supports in the following areas:

- Effective Leaders
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction
- Involved Families
- Collaborative Teachers

AIR's responsive school improvement services are both evidence-based and adaptable to acknowledge the unique needs of Indiana corporations and schools. Within the framework of our services, we address critical elements of school improvement (Exhibit 1)—Leadership that Drives Change, Safe and Supportive Environment, Student Access and Opportunity, Family and Community Engagement, Educator Effectiveness—that build a sustainable system, increase the capacity of leaders and teachers, and ensure equity for all students. Our team is made up of experienced school turnaround leaders and coaches who have used this framework as a foundation to support district and school improvement efforts that have consistently produced positive results.

Exhibit 1. The AIR Systemic School Improvement Framework



AIR is experienced at bridging research and practice to build effective school improvement partnerships. Finding a good fit between school and provider is optimal for success. AIR considers an ideal partner relationship to be one that is committed to continuous improvement and coherence, possesses a compatible expectation for intensity of services, and is willing to reciprocate in a relationship that moves at the speed of trust.

Impact

AIR has a track record of facilitating lasting change in districts and schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings through our responsive, customized solutions. Our school improvement partner services have supported elementary, middle, and high schools in 12 districts across five states with improving schoolwide and subgroup proficiency scores in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, graduation rates, and other local measures of success. Examples of results achieved with our partner schools and districts include the following:

Stephen Foster School 67

Indianapolis Public Schools,
Indianapolis, Indiana
(7/25/2019–8/31/2019)

AIR partnered with Stephen Foster School 67 to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to guide the school leadership team through a root cause analysis process for determining the root causes of the prioritized key findings and focus areas identified in the data analysis session. AIR then collaborated with district and school leadership for the school improvement planning process to develop goals and drivers for improvement based on key findings from the needs assessment and root cause analysis. AIR provided intense, on-site coaching support for increasing capacity in continuous school improvement that resulted in a school improvement plan (SIP), aligned to research and best strategy practices for transforming systems, that meets the IDOE requirements and builds the capacity of school leaders to improve performance during the 2019–20 school year.

Morton East High School

JS Morton HSD 201, Cicero, Illinois
(7/1/2014–6/30/2017)

AIR served as the lead partner for Morton East High School and its partner, Freshman Academy, to support implementation of their School Improvement Grant. The AIR partnership team trained and coached school leaders with a gradual-release model for scaffolded support of key levers of change. Through initial needs assessment and planning, focused professional development sessions, and customized coaching support, AIR assisted this school of more than 3,500 students in realizing a 4% increase in graduation rates in the first 2 years of the grant. 96% of Morton East students are Hispanic and 93% are from low-income households. The school is working to become a 90/90/90 school after seeing a graduation rate of 72% in 2016 and 76% in 2017.

Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School

Utica City Schools, Utica, New York
(9/1/2013–6/30/2018)

AIR served as the lead partner for Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School (MLK) to support implementation of its School Improvement Grant. The support included initial needs assessment and planning; focused professional development sessions on data analysis and sustainability planning; and customized coaching support for the principal, school leadership team, and mathematics and ELA teachers. Professional development and resources also were provided to support parent and community engagement. MLK was upgraded from Priority to Focus status on the New York State Education Department school and district accountability report in February 2016, then moved to Good Standing in 2018. The school made significant gains in ELA and mathematics on the state assessments and saw average attendance at monthly parent and community events increase by more than 40%. AIR's partnership with the district has expanded to multiple schools.