

Data Management Plan

Study information

Title: Effects of a state-defined restart strategy for low-performing schools in Texas

Abstract: Beginning with the 2017/18 school year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) established grant programs to provide applicant districts with financial support to design and implement strategic school improvement actions for Title I schools. School restart is one type of strategic action districts may implement with these grants. TEA requires a whole-school improvement model for district grantees that select to implement a district-managed restart strategic action for schools. In this model, the schools develop a new academic program and replace school leadership and instructional staff.

REL Southwest is using longitudinal administrative data, program records, and data from qualitative interviews with district and school leaders to evaluate the effects of the school restart model on student and educator outcomes. The study is using descriptive analyses and a comparative interrupted time series design to examine changes in school-level student test scores, attendance, demographic characteristics, and mobility, as well as teacher and principal turnover, relative to comparison schools. The study's primary research questions will provide new evidence on the effects of the school restart model on student outcomes and educator turnover, and the study's supplemental research questions will descriptively explore the contexts in which the school restart efforts occurred. The findings from this study will support TEA's ability to evaluate and improve school and district policies and practices.

This study addresses the following primary research questions:

1. What was the effect of a school restart model on school-level student achievement, attendance, demographic characteristics, and mobility after one and two years of implementation?
2. What was the effect of a school restart model on teacher and principal turnover after one and two years of implementation?

In addition, we are examining the following supplemental research questions:

3. How were schools selected by the districts and what key activities were implemented in the first and second year?
4. What percentage of schools implementing the school restart model met accountability standards within the first, second, and third years of implementation?
5. What were the professional experience and demographic characteristics of teachers and principals who stayed in restart schools compared to the experience and demographic characteristics of teachers and principals who left the schools?
6. What percentage of teachers who taught in schools the year prior to restart remained teaching in the school or taught in a different school or district during the first two years of implementation?

- a. Among teachers who left restart schools and were subsequently employed in teaching positions in other Texas schools, how were the teachers distributed by school performance rating?

The results of this study will inform TEA’s ability to evaluate and improve school and district practices in struggling schools. This study meets a critical need of the REL Southwest School Improvement partnership to understand whether this state-supported strategy is effective at improving student outcomes.

Authors: Angelica Herrera (American Institutes for Research), Marshall Garland (Gibson Consulting)

Principal investigator contact information: aherrera@air.org

Data sources

The study includes several data sources, relying primarily on extant administrative data and records (table 1). Supplemental data comes from semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of up to nine district and school staff from across the 29 schools and four districts implementing the restart model. The sample targets two respondents per district, at least one district leader and one other informed respondent who is a district or school administrator.

Table 1. Data elements, variables, and sources by research question

Primary research question	Data sources	Primary variables
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA program records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools implementing the restart model • Year of restart implementation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR); Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-level State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) state standardized assessment results; school-level student attendance rates; school-level student mobility rates; school-level percentage of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program; school-level percentages of students by race/ethnicity
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staffing records from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff role • Staff school of assignment

Supplemental research question	Data sources	Primary variables
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEA program records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools implementing the restart model Year of restart implementation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and school staff interviews and publicly available artifacts (board meeting minutes, grant applications) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes and decisions to select schools for restart implementation Timing and sequence of key activities in the first two years of implementation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texas Accountability Rating System (TARS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School accountability ratings
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staffing records from PEIMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff role Staff school of assignment Staff demographic characteristics Staff professional experience
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staffing records from PEIMS TARS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School accountability ratings Staff role Staff school of assignment

Data confidentiality procedures

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest researchers are following standard protocols as part of the American Institutes for Research data governance and management planning process. The study team ensures study data remain confidential and protects personally identifiable information. TEA has provided implementation records on the schools that have implemented the restart model, including the year of implementation. For research questions relying on principal and teacher-level records, we are accessing de-identified administrative data through the Texas Education Research Center at the University of Texas. These data include teacher and administrator school assignment as well as their professional and demographic characteristics. For research questions pertaining to school-level outcomes, we are using school-level data publicly available from TEA, including Texas school accountability results, performance on state standardized tests, student attendance and mobility, and student demographic characteristics. These data are available for up to 10 years prior to the first year of implementation for the first cohort of schools implementing the restart model.

All data files are being housed on a secure drive, and access to the data is restricted to the staff assigned to the project. Any data obtained for this study are being used only for statistical and descriptive analyses. The study’s principal investigators lead the data management and quantitative analysis task. Staff maintain written records of data activity to keep detailed records related to the merging, cleaning, processing, and analysis of the data files.

The study report will not identify the name of any specific students or schools. Data will be reported in the aggregate. When there are fewer than 10 individuals in a particular subgroup or area, results will be suppressed.

If both Dr. Herrera and Mr. Garland leave the study, the applied research task lead for REL Southwest, Dr. Dean Gerdeman, will appoint, in consultation with REL Southwest leadership, a new principal investigator. Dr. Gerdeman will work with the new principal investigator and all other study staff to ensure the transition is smooth and that study data remain confidential.

REL Southwest researchers will destroy all data by November 29, 2022, or when the approval from the Texas Education Research Center to access microdata files expires, whichever occurs first.

Format for final data file

The study will produce an alternate data file, as described in the Data Management Plans and Data Files Guidance document, with the relevant documentation needed to replicate the analysis. In a .txt format, the alternate file will describe the data and the steps the study team took to merge and clean the data, create variables, and run analyses.

Why a public-use file will not be made available

The Texas Education Research Center has approved access to the data files needed for this study. This does not give permission for REL Southwest to share this data with any outside entities, including the Institute of Education Sciences. The data from the interviews, including audio files and transcripts, will have confidential information and, therefore, cannot be shared outside of the study team.