



Partnership for  
Leaders in Education  
Darden School of Business  
Curry School of Education

A photograph of a classroom. In the center, a female teacher with short brown hair, wearing a green button-down shirt, is sitting on a dark wooden desk. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the foreground, the backs of several students are visible, with their hands raised in the air. The background shows a chalkboard with some faint markings. The overall atmosphere is one of an active classroom discussion.

RETHINK  
REIGNITE  
REDESIGN  
**TRANSFORM**

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA School Turnaround Program • *Empowering the change that can't wait.*

“We were mired in ‘what is’ and  
felt powerless to change. But now  
we have a vision of what can be  
and how to get there.”

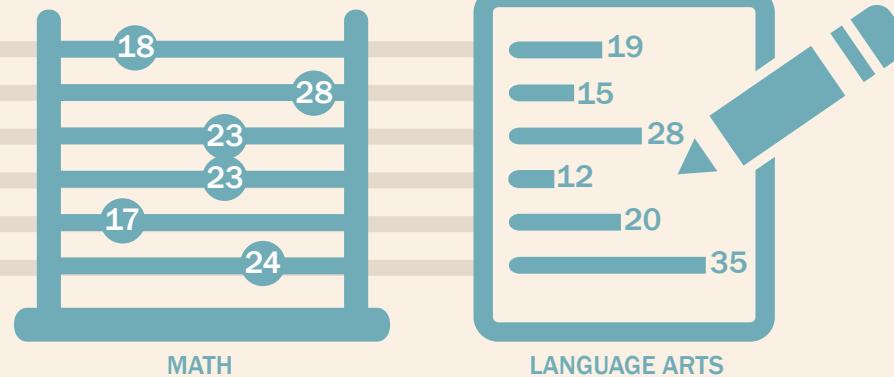
— BARBARA KUEHL, DISTRICT LEADER,  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT

The University of Virginia School Turnaround Program (UVA-STP) is founded on the core belief that a powerful educational system that inspires teachers and students to achieve their full potential is possible.

Our goal is to empower system-level and school-level leaders to jointly achieve dramatic improvement in a set of persistently underperforming schools. The lessons learned and successes achieved inform strategies for expanding and sustaining success across the school system. Our program is rigorous because we never lose sight of the real impact leadership can have on the lives of students. Our mission is critical and each day counts.

Our partnership enables school systems to *rethink, reignite, redesign* and ultimately *transform* their organizations.

SEVEN MILE ELEMENTARY (WHITERIVER, AZ)  
STELLA WORLEY MIDDLE (JEFFERSON PARISH, LA)  
DORIS HANCOCK ELEMENTARY (CLARK COUNTY, NV)  
LAGUNA-ACOMA HIGH (GRANTS, NM)  
SEIBERLING ELEMENTARY (AKRON, OH)  
DEE ELEMENTARY (OGDEN, UT)



THE TIME IS NOW  
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT A  
ONE-OF-A-KIND PROGRAM  
THAT HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE  
YOUR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT.  
BEGIN BY CONTACTING US AT  
[DardenCurry@Darden.Virginia.edu](mailto:DardenCurry@Darden.Virginia.edu)  
OR CALL US AT **+1-434-924-8719**.

**DOCUMENTED  
EFFECTIVENESS.**  
TO THE LEFT ARE  
EXAMPLES OF 2011-2013  
COHORT SCHOOLS'  
PROFICIENCY GAINS OVER  
A TWO-YEAR PERIOD.\*

\* Compared to state average for same type school to control for rigor.

A young girl with light brown hair tied back with a white headband is looking down at a book she is holding. She is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is blurred, showing other students in a classroom setting.

“I’ve never felt success before,  
and now I know what it feels like.”

—A THIRD GRADER, OGDEN, UT

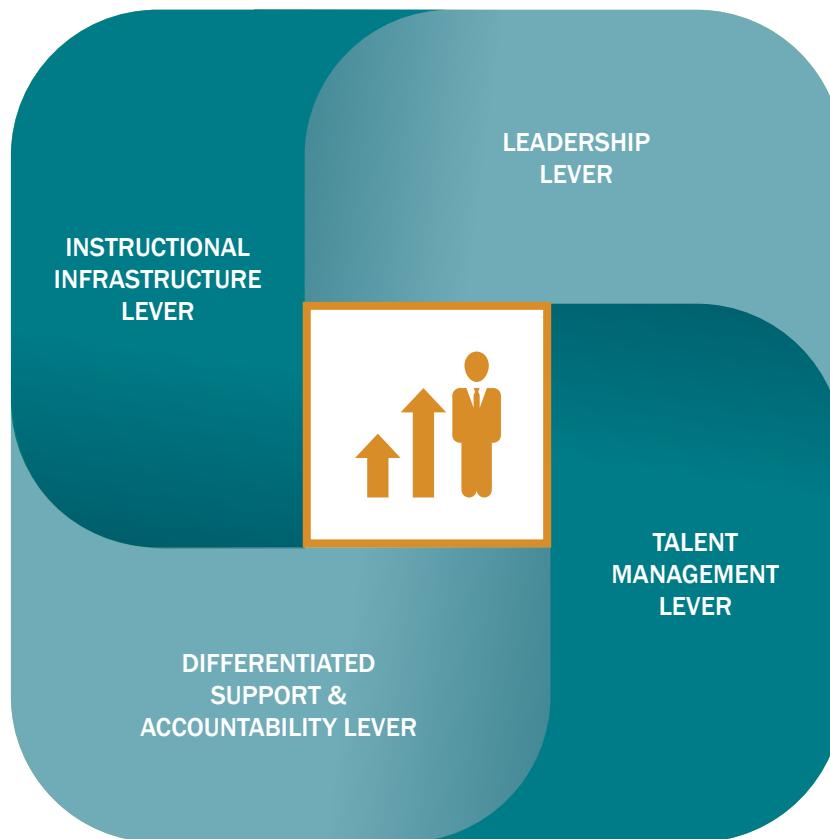
35%

AVERAGE PROFICIENCY GAINS IN READING AND MATH\*

\* The results that were achieved in our first 100 schools.

## What makes UVA-STP different?

The UVA-STP is the only program in the country dedicated to both establishing the school system conditions that set the stage for change and building transformative leadership capacity to achieve that change. We have eleven years of documented success we bring to bear to ensure leaders understand what it will take to achieve needed change. Over the course of three years, participants engage in deeply immersive experiences both at the University of Virginia and in their own school districts.



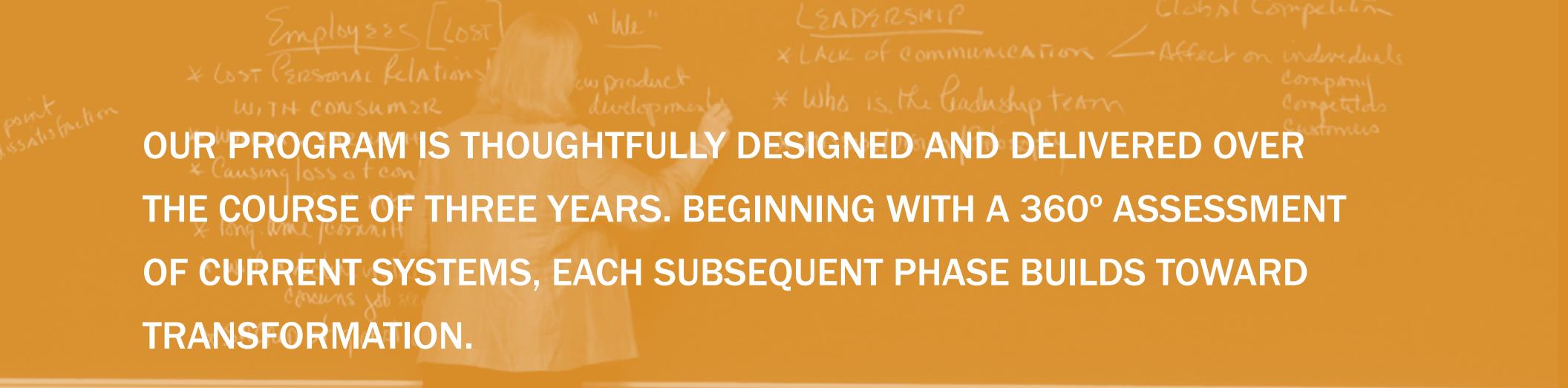
## How does the UVA-STP program work?

The UVA-STP focuses on building systemic capacity in four areas — *leadership, instructional infrastructure, differentiated support and accountability, and talent management*. Recognizing there is no one formula for turning around a school, we work with education leaders to identify key issues and develop strategies based on their own context.

Dedicated to growing the courageous leaders necessary to turnaround underperforming schools, we serve as catalysts for change. [The University of Virginia's Darden School of Business](#) and [Curry School of Education](#) are partners in this unique program.

This pairing of disciplines allows an integration of best practices from both business and education — the result being a professional development experience educators rarely receive. In particular, UVA-STP exposes leaders to how effective organizations and leaders across sectors achieve successful transformation.





# OUR PROGRAM IS THOUGHTFULLY DESIGNED AND DELIVERED OVER THE COURSE OF THREE YEARS. BEGINNING WITH A 360° ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SYSTEMS, EACH SUBSEQUENT PHASE BUILDS TOWARD TRANSFORMATION.

RETHINK

## PLANNING YEAR: RETHINKING THE SYSTEM TO SET THE STAGE

During the Planning Year, our team partners with district leadership to assess current capacity and practice and to rethink the system's structure. To help you develop context-based solutions, the UVA-STP team introduces you to innovative practice across the country and will be at your side throughout this critical part of the program. The planning year includes:

### READINESS ASSESSMENT, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & CONSULTATION

Our staff analyzes the district's current ability to engage in a sustainable turnaround initiative and then offers preliminary recommendations for addressing gaps in readiness and enhancing capacity. After the assessment, district leaders and UVA-STP representatives co-determine what commitments will be necessary for successful turnaround. If there is agreement to move forward, an implementation plan detailing commitments is developed.



ONCE THERE IS MUTUAL AGREEMENT TO PROCEED, A UVA-STP REPRESENTATIVE WILL CONSULT WITH DISTRICT LEADERS TO HELP THEM SET THE STAGE FOR THE INITIATIVE LAUNCH.

## BEHAVIORAL EVENT INTERVIEWS: IDENTIFYING HIGH-IMPACT LEADERS

Our team works with the district to recruit, interview and select the most promising people to lead the turnaround initiative. A rigorous selection process, known as a behavioral event interview, is used to identify those school leaders especially qualified to lead effective school turnaround. Assessments from this interview are used in conjunction with a candidate's performance history to determine both the assignment and development needs of current and prospective leaders. The rigorous behavioral event interview selection process can also be used to select who will oversee the cluster of turnaround schools.



UVA-STP REPRESENTATIVES ASSIST THE DISTRICT IN CONDUCTING THE BEHAVIORAL EVENT INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSING CANDIDATES.

## SPRING TURNAROUND LEADERSHIP BOOT CAMP

This executive education experience during the Planning Year brings together leaders from across the country who share a commitment to bold turnaround. Boot Camp is an effective tool for inspiring district leadership to embolden their turnaround plans, rethink the support that schools receive, and reassess their current accountability structures. The camp experience adds to the ability of leaders to face some of the most challenging, yet rewarding, work of their careers.



OUR TEAM ASSISTS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES TO REDEFINE DISTRICT LEADERSHIP'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS AND IDENTIFY SCHOOL-BY-SCHOOL NEEDS. THE GOAL IS TO ENSURE THAT EACH SCHOOL'S ROOT-CAUSE NEEDS INFORM THE TURNAROUND PLAN.

“The program has helped us make strategic decisions that will make a real difference for kids.”

— DARWIN STIFFLER,  
DISTRICT ONE SUPERINTENDENT,  
YUMA, AZ



# REIGNITE

## SUMMER PROGRAMS: REIGNITING LEADERS TO CO-CREATE SUCCESS

During two consecutive summers in Years 1 and 2, school leaders and district turnaround teams attend short-term residential executive development programs at the Darden School of Business on the UVA campus in Charlottesville, Virginia. These immersive experiences focus on igniting change both in organizational structure and leadership practice. During the six-day program in Year 1, leadership teams work together to:

- UNDERSTAND ROOT CAUSE NEEDS
- LAUNCH ORGANIZATION CHANGE EFFORTS
- LEARN HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS WITH IMPROVED DATA ANALYSIS
- ESTABLISH FOCUSED EXECUTION PLANS
- CREATE A LEARNING ORGANIZATION THAT CAN CONTINUOUSLY ADAPT TO CHANGING NEEDS

This summer program also encourages honest conversations and higher levels of trust between the district turnaround leadership team and principals as they cooperate to create and sustain change in targeted schools.

In Year 2, the summer program is three days long. The focus during this time is further leveraging strengths to build on success, addressing gaps in implementation of data-driven instruction, utilizing innovation to promote change and reinvigorating change efforts to overcome resistance.



## WINTER PROGRAMS

Two- to three-day executive education retreats are held in January or February of each program year.

These sessions include three critical teams charged with implementing the turnaround program:



DISTRICT TURNAROUND LEADERSHIP TEAM



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



A 3-MEMBER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM FROM EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL

The purpose of these retreats is to further strengthen teamwork, to increase empowerment among change agents and to drive strategic mid-course corrections. These sessions bring together principals, district and school leadership teams from around the country so all can exchange ideas and share effective or promising practices.

“My team went back ‘on fire’ with a rebirth of insight and enthusiasm for the work.”

— BRAD SMITH, SUPERINTENDENT,  
OGDEN, UT

## SPRING RETREATS

A local one-day strategic retreat is held each spring of the turnaround effort. Attended by school system leaders and turnaround principals and facilitated by UVA-STP staff or faculty, the Year 1 Spring Retreat typically focuses on resource reallocation and coordination — covering topics that help energize summer planning. The Year 2 Spring Retreat focuses on sustainability — helping leaders assess lessons learned and review practices that will drive continuous transformation for years to come.

## YEARS 1 & 2: REDESIGN AND TRANSFORM PRACTICE

With the right people in place and new structures determined in the Planning Year, it's time for action.

### A SHARED VISION OF SUCCESS

During Years 1 and 2 we help system and school leaders build the capacity and conditions necessary to establish meaningful goals and a clear plan for achieving transformative change. Our team provides tailored support throughout the program, bringing expertise from our internal resources as well as leading independent consultants to address specific needs. We continually expose leaders to data-driven and system-redesign approaches that yield insights and inspire new thinking. We seek to set a high bar that allows leaders to emerge.

### A CONTEXT-BASED 90-DAY PLAN

In each of four semesters (two per year), partner systems and schools each develop a plan designed to help teachers and students reach performance goals. These 90-Day Plans become a powerful tool for establishing focus, momentum and accountability.

### CREATING LEARNING LABS

As implementation proceeds, a cluster of turnaround schools becomes a learning lab for what is possible. Successful approaches can now be identified and used to transform system-wide practice and inform further system redesign.



## WORKING TOGETHER WORKS WONDERS.

The onsite visits are the best — the UVA people are so incredibly insightful. They are able to assess the situation and make strategic recommendations that move the work forward.

BARBARA KUEHL, DISTRICT LEADER, SALT LAKE CITY, UT

The UVA-STP team considers it a solemn obligation to participants to hold them accountable to the commitments they have made and to continue to help them brainstorm improved methods of execution. A team from the program visits each school after the summer sessions and the first winter session to help assess progress on their turnaround plans and determine next steps.

### DISTRICT AND SCHOOL SITE VISITS

To help school and district leaders stay on course while maintaining a sense of urgency, our team makes embedded visits and offers customized support throughout Years 1 and 2. By making these on-site visits, we seek to further enhance the ability of all involved to empower change that cannot wait.



OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO COLLABORATE WITH THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS TO ASSESS PROGRESS, DISCUSS OPPORTUNITIES TO REINVIGORATE OR ADAPT EFFORTS AND DETERMINE HOW OUR TEAM CAN BEST OFFER SUPPORT.

“The transformation of change includes hard work, accountability, and the ability to self-reflect on an ongoing basis. The payoff is nothing short of awesome and fulfilling.”

— MELINDA BAIZA, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT, TAYLOR, TX

**REAL RESULTS.**  
AVERAGE PROFICIENCY GAINS  
AMONG COHORT SCHOOLS  
IN TWO YEARS.

## CASE STUDY 1 // DISTRICT: OGDEN, UT

**BACKGROUND:** Ogden is the sixth largest school district in Utah and was the state's lowest performing district in the 2010-11 school year, including six of the state's ten lowest performing elementary schools.

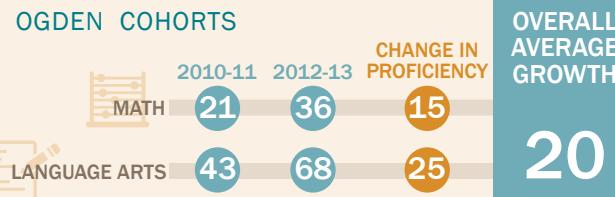
**RESULTS:** Ogden now has seven schools that have completed the program and no longer has any schools in the bottom 15% across the state. Three schools have demonstrated over 20-point gains in language arts, math and science and the percentage of students failing to graduate has decreased by more than 60%.

Dee Elementary experienced 35-point language arts gains in two years. The fifth grade showed the largest gains, increasing from 30% to 77% in one year and 65% of English Language Learners demonstrated proficiency in assessments compared to the state average of 37%.

## CASE STUDY 2 // DISTRICT: CINCINNATI, OH

**BACKGROUND:** Students in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) did not meet academic standards and trailed their peers in other districts across the state. In spring of 2008, for example, CPS met only six of thirty state performance indicators and failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

**RESULTS:** Through collaboration with the UVA-STP, Cincinnati Public Schools' Elementary Initiative leveraged data to inform decisions regarding school leadership, operational & institutional practices, targeted interventions, resource allocations, and professional development. After participation in the program, the 16 cohort schools had changed key operational and instructional practices and made impressive academic gains. For example, five schools increased their state accountability ranking from academic emergency to continuous improvement, and twelve schools improved according to the Ohio Performance Index.



1 / 2

A photograph showing the backs of two students. A tablet is held in the center, displaying a worksheet with mathematical content. The worksheet includes the Pythagorean Theorem, a diagram of a right triangle with legs labeled 'a' and 'b', and a hypotenuse labeled 'c', and a section on Fourier transforms with the equation  $\hat{f}(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-ixt} dx$ .

OVER HALF OF OUR RECENT  
PARTNERS HAVE ACHIEVED  
DOUBLE-DIGIT GAINS IN  
MATH AND LANGUAGE ARTS  
IN TWO YEARS OR LESS.



THE TIME IS NOW  
TO LEARN MORE BY  
CONTACTING US AT

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OR CALLING US AT [+1-434-924-8719](tel:+1-434-924-8719).

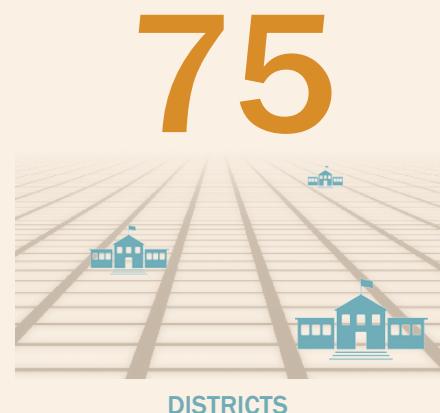
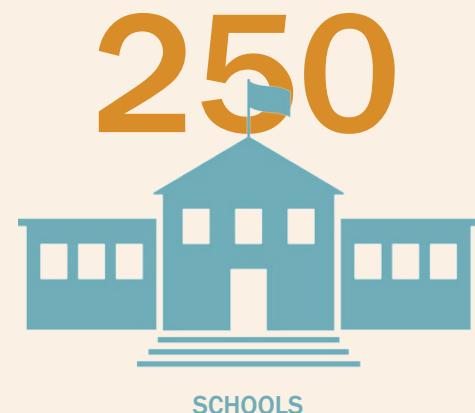
## THE POWER TO CHANGE IS INSIDE EACH AND EVERY ONE.

The University of Virginia School Turnaround Program (UVA-STP) is a proven program that lifts up competent leaders and empowers them to deliver on the promise that all children should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Our program changes minds in fundamental ways — in how schools and systems are organized, in the leveraging and interpretation of data, and in what is possible for the students we serve.

We create open, candid conversations that inspire trust and drive change. Through honest assessments, actionable recommendations, defined accountabilities, and on-site follow-up support, we transform the feeling of being stuck in underperforming schools into a strong sense of hope and positive momentum.

If you are committed to pursuing the changes students deserve, we are eager to discuss The University of Virginia School Turnaround Program with you in even greater detail.

**THE IMPACT.**  
OUR PROGRAM HAS  
REIGNITED LEADERSHIP  
AND TRANSFORMED  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS  
IN OVER:



“I know I’m a different leader today  
because of this program.”

—TONYA KALES, PRINCIPAL\*,  
CHARLOTTE, NC



Partnership for  
Leaders in Education  
*Darden School of Business*  
*Curry School of Education*

# RETHINK REIGNITE REDESIGN TRANSFORM

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