Executive Summary:

An Evaluation of the i3 Validation Grant:

Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model

Introduction

In 2010, New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) and the Louisiana Recovery School District (RSD) received a U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) Validation grant to test and transport the New Orleans Charter Restart Model (CRM). Over the course of the next seven years, NSNO and RSD led an initiative to validate the CRM in New Orleans and to scale the model to Memphis and Nashville via Tennessee's Achievement School District (ASD).

The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University completed the federally mandated third-party evaluation of *Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model* using a mixed methods design to test the CRM's Theory of Action and its impact on students in 21 schools across Louisiana and Tennessee from 2010-2016.

We conducted three discrete but related investigations. The first was a systems-level examination of Organizational Capacity to study the policy and administrative prerequisites, activities, and outcomes necessary to support, scale, and sustain the CRM. Second, an Implementation Study of the schools implementing the CRM investigated the experience of school-level stakeholders in the day-to-day work of turning around a failing school. Third, a Student Impact study was conducted to determine how the CRM affected the academic progress of students touched by the CRM. Ultimately, we aimed to test whether the CRM was well designed, was implemented with fidelity to that design, and had positive impact on student growth and achievement.

We present here an Executive Summary of those findings. The full compendium of results and implications are presented in an interactive form on the *Evaluation of Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model* website. In addition to the interactive presentation of findings, we also make available on the website analytic summaries and earlier reports.

This Executive Summary document is organized as follows: Section 1 presents background information on the New Orleans Charter Restart Model itself. Section 2 details the findings of the Organizational Capacity study. Section 3 presents findings from the Implementation Study. Section 4 focuses upon the results of the Student

Impact study. Section 5 presents an integrative analysis and implications of the evaluation findings writ large. Last, we present our final conclusions.

1. The New Orleans Charter Restart Model

The CRM was predicated upon a particular Theory of Action: investments made in charter management organizations (CMOs) with proven track records of success in improving performance for academically disadvantaged students would increase systemwide capacity to turnaround low-performing schools. This, in turn, would increase the number of high quality seats available to students within the CRM ecosystem.

To implement this Theory of Action, the CRM comprised three overarching goals. First, NSNO and RSD would build local capacity to incubate and expand charter restart operators. Second, NSNO and RSD would create sustainable infrastructure to sustain the charter restart model in perpetuity. Finally, NSNO and RSD would demonstrate the scalability of the CRM by codifying the model and replicating it in Tennessee via partnership with ASD.

Toward these ends, NSNO and RSD in New Orleans and ASD in Tennessee granted i3 funds to CMOs in yearly cohorts to turn around lowest-performing schools, with the explicit aim of moving schools from the bottom 5% of performance to the top 33% in New Orleans or the top 25% in Tennessee. The CRM ultimately proposed to serve 15,281 students in high performing schools. This evaluation follows 21 of the 25 schools eventually opened under the auspices of the CRM initiative. These schools are listed in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1: Chart Restart Model Schools and their Operators

CRM Participant Schools and CMOs				
CRM Opening Year	CRM School	CMO	Flagship School	Closing School
Cohort 1 NOLA				
NOLA 2011	Clark Prep	Firstline Schools	Arthur Ashe Middle School	Clark High School
NOLA 2011	KIPP Believe Primary	Knowledge Is Power Program - NOLA	KIPP Believe Academy	Gregory
NOLA 2011	Harriet Tubman Elementary	Crescent City	No Flagship	Tubman
Cohort 2 NOLA				
NOLA 2011	Cohen College Prep *	New Orleans College Prep	NOCP Elementary NOCP Middle - Sylvanie Williams	Walter Cohen
NOLA 2012	Crescent Leadership Academy	Rite of Passage	Canyon State Academy	Schwartz
NOLA 2012	McDonogh 42 Elementary Charter	Choice Foundation	Lafayette Academy	McDonogh 42
NOLA 2012	Joseph A. Craig Charter	Friends of King	Martin Luther King, Jr.	Craig
NOLA 2012	Carver Prep	Collegiate Academies	Sci Academy	Sojourner Truth
NOLA 2012	Carver Collegiate	Collegiate Academies	Sci Academy	G.W. Carver High School
NOLA 2012	John McDonogh: FIN High School	Future is Now	No Flagship	John McDonogh

CRM Participant Schools and CMOs *continued*				
CRM Opening Year	CRM School	CMO	Flagship School	Closing School
Cohort 3 NOLA				
NOLA 2013	Einstein Extension	Einstein	Einstein Charter School	Intercultural Charter
Cohort 4 NOLA				
NOLA 2014	KIPP Community East	Knowledge Is Power Program - NOLA	KIPP Believe Academy	AP Tureaud
Cohort 5 NOLA				
NOLA 2015	Wilson Inspire	Inspire NOLA	No Flagship	Wilson Charter

CRM Participant Schools and CMOs *continued*				
Cohort 1 TN				
MEMPHIS 2012	Humes Preparatory Academy - Upper School	Gestalt	Power Center Academy Middle School	Humes Middle School
MEMPHIS 2012	KIPP Memphis Academy Middle	Knowledge Is Power Program - Memphis	KIPP Memphis Collegiate Middle School	Cypress Middle School
NASHVILLE 2012	Brick Church College Prep	Lead	Cameron College Prep	Brick Church Middle School
Cohort 2 TN				
MEMPHIS 2012	Cornerstone Prep-Lester Campus **	Cornerstone	Cornerstone Preparatory Academy	Lester
MEMPHIS 2013	Aspire Hanley #1	Aspire	Aspire Maynard Academy	Hanley
MEMPHIS 2013	KIPP Memphis Preparatory Middle	Knowledge Is Power Program - Memphis	KIPP Memphis Collegiate Middle School	Corry
MEMPHIS 2013	Klondike Preparatory Academy	Gestalt	Power Center Academy Middle School	Klondike
CRM Opening Year	**CRM School**	**CMO**	**Flagship School**	**Closing School**
Cohort 3 TN				
MEMPHIS 2014	Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Elementary School	Freedom Prep	Freedom Prep	Westwood Elementary

Notes:
* Although Cohen College Prep opened in 2011, it is part of the Cohort 2 schools for the purposes of the analysis.
** Cornerstone Prep-Lester Campus delayed start for one year

The following three sections detail the findings and implications of each of the three studies comprising the overall evaluation of *Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model*. We then shift to an integrative analysis in order to understand the CRM initiative within a larger context of policy and practice.

2. Organizational Capacity Findings

The Organizational Capacity study examined the policy and systems-level infrastructure and operations established toward the end of *Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model*, and tested these against the CRM Theory of Action and goals. While there was some reason for optimism at the close of the Organizational Capacity study in 2015, we find that across the full study window NSNO and RSD achieved mixed results on the goals of the CRM.

Goal 1: Build the Capacity to Incubate and Expand Charter Restart Operators

By the close of the evaluation period, 25 schools serving 9184 student received i3 funding, falling short of Goal 1 expectations to restart 27 schools. Of the 21 schools opened in the first five years of the initiative and included in this evaluation, only nine achieved positive impact on student learning. Further, six of those 21 schools closed or reconstituted by the end of the study period.

We observed wide variation in school performance. School performance was found to associate significantly with a number of systems-level factors. In particular, despite a rigorous and fine-tuned design for selection processes to identify charter operators for turnaround schools, the selection process as implemented in New Orleans suffered a loss of integrity for a period of time. The resulting turnaround operators from that period did not have the necessary skills, experience, and capacities to perform their roles successfully. To their credit, NSNO and RSD revised their approach before the end of the grant period and selected stronger partners to conduct the difficult work of school turnaround in later cohorts.

Another factor associated with performance was the specific turnaround intervention chosen by a CMO operator: some CMOs elected to conduct a "full restart" with as many of the rising students who wished to remain in the school and other new students, while others elected to open with only an entry grade or two and grow incrementally from there, a condition labeled "fresh start."

In one regard, we found superior performance over the study period: NSNO supported the incubation of four brand new or new-to-their-location CMOs, exceeding Goal 1 expectations.

Goal 2: Provide Infrastructure to Sustain Charter Restart Schools

Goal 2 aimed to establish both infrastructure and practice that would enable the CRM to operate beyond the conclusion of the funding period. This infrastructure chiefly consisted of support of CMO growth and success, assurance of equity in access and school quality for all students, and creation of a strong community commitment to the work of school improvement. Permanent infrastructure to sustain the CRM existed to some degree at the start of the initiative in New Orleans insofar as RSD held and still retains the takeover function. However, numerous shifts in the accountability landscape including transition to new state standards and the step-back from an aggressive ratchet mechanism to continuously improve the stock of schools over time have weakened this function.

NSNO has matured in its role as harbormaster and has generated viable responses to some of the CRM's most visible threats, such as the recruitment of Relay GSE to strengthen the human capital pipeline and the support of citywide SPED initiatives to ensure equitable access and support for students with disabilities. The community is still deep at work to build local resources to enhance the capacities of schools, CMOs, teachers and policy makers to collectively raise the quality of schools and the education that students reap.

In Tennessee, the ASD implemented many of the CRM's components in early years, including the takeover function and some support functions. But in the absence of a harbormaster organization in Tennessee, many of the systems-level interventions that were observed in New Orleans were not attempted in Tennessee. ASD evolved over time to a compliance agent and withdrew attention from their turnaround charters to mobilize more effectively in their direct-run schools. For much of the evaluation period, ASD charters reported little benefit to their operations from ASD. By the close of the evaluation, ASD's infrastructure was in the process of being shrunk and restructured by the Tennessee Department of Education.

The most publically visible shortcoming within Goal 2 concerned community engagement. None of the program partners, (NSNO, RSD, or ASD) ever successfully managed stakeholder engagement as a core commitment, as per the original CRM Theory of Action. Community engagement was most frequently managed as a school-level function with varying degrees of success, although we do view some exceptional successes at Carver Collegiate and Wilson which can inform future engagement strategies. Despite the truncated efforts to build support for school improvement, public opinion polls show ascending positive regard for charter schools and a growing recognition of the critical importance of strong education for students, families and the community.

Goal 3: Scale the CRM Strategy by Codifying and Replicating the Model

A critical portion of the i3 grant was to establish the feasibility of scaling the CRM to other communities that had similar legislative and regulatory foundations. (View the

[Theory of Action](#) video to see a full explanation.) Similar to Goals 1 and 2, we observed mixed results for Goal 3 as well. NSNO achieved great success in broadcasting the CRM via publications, consultations and public appearances. Considerable investment in consultations with other communities occurred. With the support of Education Cities, the very notion of a harbormaster evolved from NSNO's strategic responses to system-wide needs.

However, scaling the CRM to Tennessee did not entirely succeed. The formulation of the ASD in Tennessee differed from the outset from the CRM formulation in New Orleans, which rested upon a joint arrangement of RSD and NSNO. Despite some lack of clarity regarding roles in the early years of the CRM initiative, the New Orleans arrangement of regulatory monitor (RSD) and harbormaster (NSNO) eventually developed into a clearly defined division of labor regarding compliance versus school / CMO support to address problems. NSNO and RSD each had important and distinct functions, and school and CMO leaders could easily navigate the respective relationships. In Tennessee, however, the ASD combined the functions of a charter school authorizer for turnaround schools with (initially) those of a limited support provider to schools. Both schools and CMOs in Tennessee expressed concern about the apparent blurring of roles, which hindered authentic interactions and seeded uncertainty. At the conclusion of the evaluation, newer harbormaster agencies were beginning operations in Memphis and Nashville. At the same time, the ASD has incurred numerous policy and funding setbacks which further limit its reach.

Implications of the Organizational Capacity Study

The decentralization upon which the CRM is predicated replaces a single point source management (district) with a multi-point source management structure. The CRM further creates a set of levers (citywide school choice, CMO- and school-level autonomy, decentralized student supports) which in turn drive school quality in the absence of a single central oversight authority. This decentralization, coupled with the faulty assumption that the CRM would move schools from closure to successful schools in one try, created externalities which the CRM system-level partners did not anticipate and/or were not equipped to resolve. Systems-level partners missed key opportunities to intervene early in the study period and as such left CMOs and schools vulnerable to exogenous and endogenous shocks.

However, the system does show evidence of learning in the later years of the evaluation. The introduction of OneApp vastly resolved issues of equitable access to schools. When later coupled with the citywide SPED initiative and the Differentiated Funding Formula, these efforts alleviated the disincentive to CMOs to enroll highest needs students. NSNO supported development of local human capital talent pools by recruiting Relay GSE, supporting the Achievement First fellowship, and procuring/administering a federal Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant and philanthropic funds specifically targeted to this issue. The administrative, financial, and accountability functions necessary to manage system-wide change were nearly all in place by the

fourth year of the evaluation in New Orleans. However, we see little evidence of similar evolution in Tennessee. Instead, ASD transitioned to a compliance rather than a change-management mindset to the detriment of their CRM schools.

3. Implementation Study Findings

The Implementation Study followed the CRM installation process from the last days of the Closing schools' operations, through the selection of charter operators based in part on the performance of their existing Flagship schools. The Implementation study then followed each CRM school through their first one to five years of operation (depending on when in the study each school came online). In order to understand the daily realities of school turnaround, the Implementation study used qualitative research methods to capture the experiences of school principals, teachers, and other on-the-ground respondents.

The Implementation Study analysis drew on observed schools' experiences and responses in numerous domains. We conducted interviews and site visits with principals, teachers, SPED coordinators, family engagement personnel, and school or CMO finance and operations staff at Closing and Flagship schools one time to establish a baseline; and conducted observations and interviews at CRM schools twice yearly in every year they participated in the CRM initiative. Implementation observation and interview protocols were designed to extract data about school mission and culture, human capital, performance management, continuous improvement, and interaction with systems-level functions such as governance and accountability. We also rated schools' overall operational well-being using CREDO's Performance Management Organization (PMO) rubric, which consists of 14 domains the mastery of which indicate a high performing organization.

In all cases, the immensity of the task of school improvement in challenging settings was apparent. Every school experienced periods of significant struggle. Teachers and school leaders began the work with high spirits and strong belief in their abilities to successfully engage students in learning. Within a year, teachers were significantly less optimistic. The vast depth of student need – often unanticipated by principals and teachers – disrupted morale among even the most committed teachers.

The commitment of nearly all CRM schools to whole child supports grew both in degree and in sophistication over the course of the study. Further, schools' dawning understanding of the depth of their students' needs introduced an inflection point for schools regarding the treatment of their students. In some schools, we see this commitment mobilized to enrich students' experiences in concert with their academic development; while in other schools, we see slippage from a vision for "college for all" to less academically rigorous goals and philosophies. This incremental step back from a commitment to highest school quality in all domains relevant to youth development –

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academics and social-emotional support – represents a threat to the viability of the CRM (indeed, to the viability of any education reform initiative).

The limitations of human capital pipelines in both New Orleans and Tennessee impacted every CRM school. Principals struggled to find teachers who both fit their schools' culture and who also could produce student results. Teachers reported consistent frustration in accessing professional development resources. Because teacher turnover was so high, and the teaching corps in both Memphis and New Orleans so inexperienced, professional development focused on basics year after year in support of new teachers, instead of progressing to more sophisticated pedagogical topics to support the development of more experienced – but still hardly expert – teachers. (Note that we see fewer human capital challenges in Nashville, but this is likely an artifact of having only one Nashville school in the CRM evaluation.) By the middle years of the study, principals reported that they relied as frequently on teachers quitting as they did on professional development to bolster the quality of their teaching corps. Indeed, teacher quality was unilaterally considered by schools to be a fundamental challenge to the success of the CRM.

Principal turnover also plagued CRM schools. Twelve of the CRM schools had at least one school leader turnover during the study period, and one school had as many as five leadership transitions. Leadership turnover created inevitable disruptions to the continued maturation of school operations, as new leaders learned systems, rebuilt relationships with staff, and often introduced operational and/or pedagogical approaches that differed from their predecessor. Overall, both teacher and leader turnover – even when moving to superior talent – impacted cohesion and smooth operations. Again, these types of human capital challenges are not unique to the CRM, but CRM systems-level partners will need to strategically and proactively plan for low teacher and principal retention in coming years.

Our analysis revealed ways in which the schools could and did push themselves forward. A commitment to a philosophy of continuous improvement and a set of practices built toward the end of critical reflection and improvement bolstered schools' operations. Schools with cultures that supported peer learning among teachers, actionable feedback loops at all levels, and dedicated infrastructure (time, resources, clearly defined processes) reported more stability earlier in their lifespans, although nearly all CRM schools articulate challenges in moving from designing their schools' operational systems on paper to implementing those systems effectively. These findings represent a crucial element in school turnaround: schools struggle mightily, and rarely succeed, in overcoming inadequate starting endowments of resource and capacity. Schools that open without strong leadership and operational systems in place rarely recover, as their energies are spent striving just to get to a place stable enough that they can then think critically and strategically about improvement. Schools that started strong installed that stability immediately, but schools that started with inadequate talent and operational endowments experienced a reactive cycle of crisis management rather

than being equipped to identify problems, hone in on solutions, and implement positive change.

Finally, the Implementation Study also examined schools' positions vis-à-vis systems-level functions and partners. Schools report great benefit from their affiliation with their CMOs, despite observed challenges in the first two years of operation in clearly defining roles and responsibilities for network versus building-level functions. Members of schools Boards of Directors generally express interest in education and commitment to the cause of education reform, but on average lack core areas of expertise. Schools in New Orleans see specific benefit in NSNO's support provisions, but Tennessee schools suffer for the lack of a harbormaster and report very little if any benefit to engagement with ASD. Given the vast array of challenges turnaround work presents at the building level, these systems-level functions emerge as crucial supports or protective factors within the CRM ecosystem. All schools, in any locale, will suffer both endogenous and exogenous shocks. The degree to which schools can absorb such shocks without disruption to student learning depends not only on school-level capacity, but also on the capacity of their systems-level partners to anticipate, accommodate, or mitigate such shocks before the shocks become existential threats to schools.

In addition to these qualitative findings from the Implementation study, we were additionally interested to understand how the qualitative investigation helped to explain the quantitative results we observed in the Student Impact analysis. Were there leading or lagging attributes of the schools or the CMOs that might shape the results that they created for their students? Any significant association between qualitative observations and quantitative impact could provide valuable policy guidance.

This evaluation did find associations between a CRM school's implementation approach and student learning in some domains. There were hundreds of potential explanatory factors that were assessed for sufficient variation across schools and for the completeness of the data series (due to time constraints with some of the last schools to join the evaluation). Accordingly, we tested relationships between student impact and 19 operational factors identified Implementation analyses as having had impact on schools' operational functions. These operational factors comprised aspects of facilities and location move, community engagement, locality of CMO, principal turnover, and board governance. Of the 19 operational factors tested, we find three have significant impact on student learning: CRM schools with local rather than non-local CMOs, schools with lower principal turnover, and schools with less frequent board meetings, demonstrated greater learning gains for their students. For a full consideration of all 19 factors, see the Student Impact Study report.

We also observed differences in student impact relative to the type of turnaround intervention an operator chose to implement (fresh start versus full school turnaround). We observe an advantage to the fresh start model in some Implementation domains: operations, culture, and to a lesser extent teacher recruitment benefit from having fewer students in a school's early years. Full school turnarounds struggled more and longer to

establish operating principles and practices as they inherited wholesale the legacy of their Closing schools. This is not to imply that fresh start status guaranteed success or that full school turnarounds were destined to fail, as we saw counter-examples in both directions. But, on average, fresh start schools showed some advantage in successful implementation throughout the course of the evaluation. Similarly, PMO scores indicated that fresh start schools outperformed full school turnarounds in terms of quality of implementation. While the highest PMO scores did not differ substantially between fresh start and full school turnarounds, average scores were far higher for fresh starts than full turnaround schools. Serving a smaller number of students allowed the fresh start operators more bandwidth to establish smooth consistent operations and practices seems to have held an advantage.

Implications of the Implementation Study

Despite the observed differences between fresh start schools and full school turnarounds, the Implementation evaluation indicates that overall, CRM schools face tremendous hurdles in their first years of operation regardless of their chosen approach to restarting their school. These challenges are both typical of start-up organizations (such as establishing culture) and particular to the CRM ecosystem (such as identifying, recruiting, and retaining the right teachers for each school). While some schools show stabilization and maturation over the years of the evaluation in some domains, we find on average that CRM schools struggle with core functions through their third, fourth, and fifth years of operation across multiple domains.

In the domains under consideration, we observed uneven maturation trajectories and inconsistent statistical association with student impact. However, key operational functions – regardless of their statistical association with student learning – had clearly observed impact on schools' ability to provide stable, nurturing, rigorous learning environments for students. In particular, degraded facilities and location moves created notable disruption to the stability of schools' operations. Family and community engagement was cited universally and consistently over time by CRM schools as an area of challenge. Principal turnover undermined schools' abilities to stabilize all other school functions and to establish permanent and productive school culture.

The Implementation study found that in the majority of domains under consideration, maturation of schools' functioning over time mattered less than opening schools with a strong starting endowments from the outset. Schools rarely overcame truly dysfunctional start-up periods. Without a strong foundation in place at opening, schools were more vulnerable to internal and external shocks and found themselves ill-equipped to serve their students when they occurred.

In total, the findings of the Implementation study suggest that the required runway for school turnaround is years longer than anticipated and requires multi-dimensional supports and capacities. Given research evidence that the stability of a school in its early years strongly indicates the school's eventual success or failure, the absence in

this evaluation of a consistent or efficient maturation process for CRM schools presents concern about the long-term viability of the model.

These domains as observed in the Implementation study operate at the building level, but in aggregate represent system-wide issues that require systems-level attention. To the extent that the CRM situates schools within a larger ecosystem of charter turnaround, the CRM must provide baseline support for all schools regarding systems-level challenges such as human capital pipelines, cross-sector student supports, and facilities management.

4. The Student Impact Study

The Charter Restart Model envisioned the creation of schools that would transform from lowest 5 percent in their local school performance distributions to the top 33 and top 25 percent of schools in New Orleans and Tennessee, respectively. To reach this ambitious goal, students in CRM schools would have needed to outperform their peers every year by very large margins in order to move up in the distribution. The necessary trajectory of gains provides the motivation for the Student impact analysis: if the CRM was successful, students in the restart schools would grow academically faster than their peers in non-CRM schools.

To ascertain if the CRM performed as expected, we studied the academic progress of students in CRM schools as measured by gains from year to year on state standardized assessments and compared them to students with identical attributes, including baseline academic performance from other schools in their community. We used a precise matching algorithm to select comparisons known as Virtual Twins. (See the Student Impact Report for a full description of the matching method.) Our outcome of interest is the one-year academic gain of CRM students.

The full set of findings appears in the Student Impact Report; here, we present only the most salient results. Over all schools and all years of study, the student academic progress in CRM schools did not differ from that observed in the non-CRM schools in their local ecosystems. These results are displayed in Figure 1, and show that in the aggregate, CRM students posted academic gains that were not statistically different from their peers in either reading or math. This finding holds when the schools are disaggregated by geography: in New Orleans and in Tennessee, the state-level findings show no significant gains in reading or math compared to their non-CRM peers. Based on these topline results, it is clear that the CRM's ambitious performance targets were not met.

Deeper analysis of the impact of the CRM on student progress was more revealing. When we look at school-level academic growth, three of the 13 schools in New Orleans

did achieve this target in reading; and two of 13 New Orleans schools achieved this target in math. No CRM schools in Tennessee achieved the performance target in either subject.

Despite the CRM schools' inability to achieve the proposed performance targets, the analysis showed incremental improvement occurred in both New Orleans and Tennessee. The CRM schools in both New Orleans and Tennessee showed significantly higher academic growth compared to the Closing schools they replaced. As expected, students in the Closing schools had significantly lower growth in their final year than similar students attending traditional public schools (TPS) in their areas. We find that even students who were ineligible to attend a CRM school because of gradespan mismatch (i.e. those students in a Closing school grade that was not served by a fresh start CRM school) had academic growth comparable to that of similar students in TPS schools, suggesting positive consequences from the closure of the Closing schools. Put another way: even students from Closing schools who did not attend a CRM school, but rather a different, non-CRM school, performed similarly to their matched peers, which represents an improvement relative to their Closing school's performance. We confirmed that these findings were not the result of demographic differences between students in Closing and CRM schools.

Figure 1. Relative Learning Gains of CRM Students Benchmarked Against Learning Gains of Virtual Twin Controls
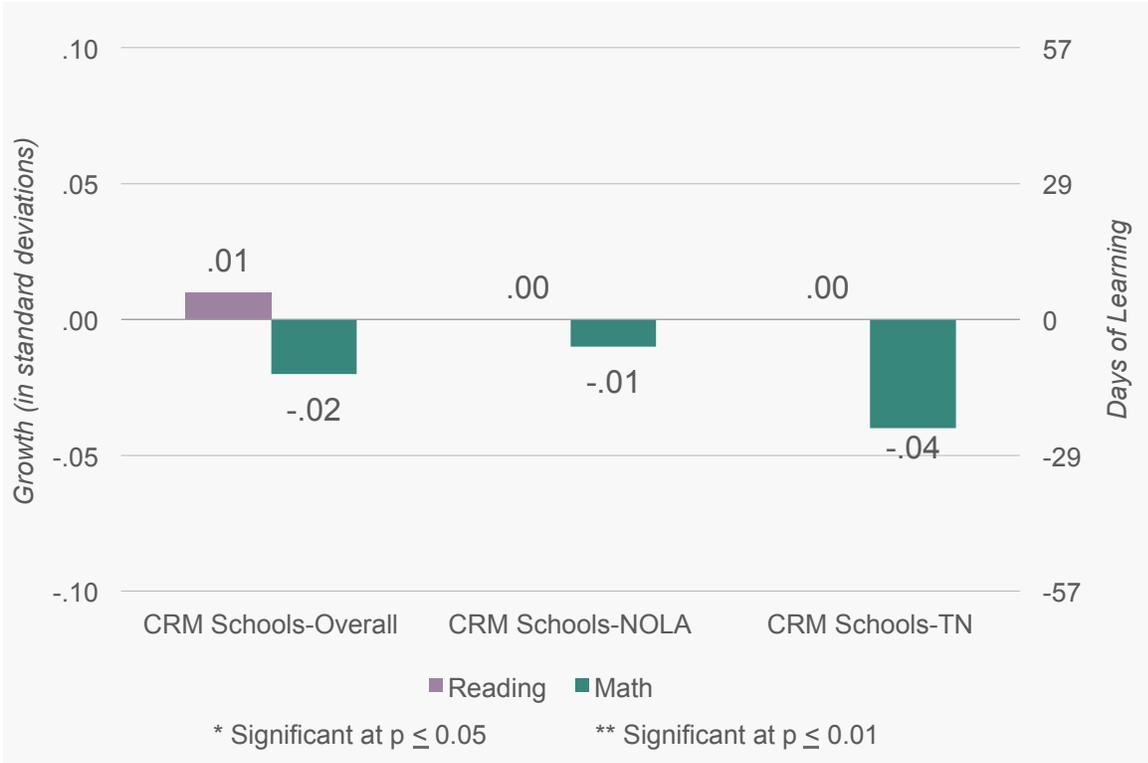
While these aggregate findings of the Impact evaluation suggest little progress by the CRM overall, the aggregate findings obscure additional important insights, particularly regarding the model of intervention implemented by any given operator. The CRM intervention allowed for two approaches to school turnaround. The first approach (Fresh) allowed for schools to grow one grade per year, while in the second approach (Full) schools took on the full range of targeted grades. Students in fresh restart CRM schools demonstrate significantly stronger academic growth in math and reading when compared to the students in full turnaround CRM schools.

Below, we show estimated annual average growth for students in the two types of turnaround, taking into account potential influences due to race, gender, free/reduced-price lunch eligibility, and special education status. We find that the fresh start charter schools are associated with higher annual growth effects in both mathematics and reading compared to the full turnaround charter schools. The difference in the estimated effects between the two types of restart in both subjects is statistically significant at a confidence level of 10 percent.

*Figure 2: Learning Gains of CRM Students Benchmarked Against Learning Gains of TPS Students-Overall*
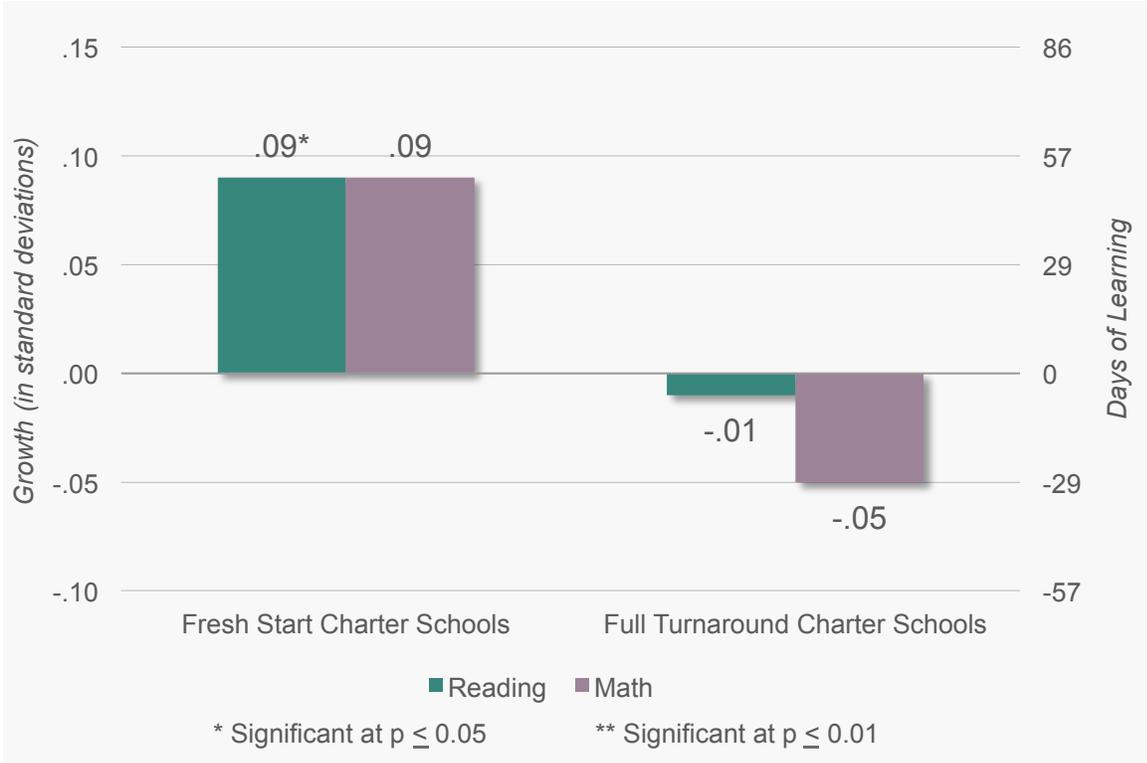
Figure 2 presents our analysis of the overall CRM sample (New Orleans and Tennessee) using TPS students as the baseline for comparison. Students enrolled in Fresh Start CRM schools have stronger academic growth than students in TPS in both reading and math. CRM students in fresh start schools experience 51 additional days of learning in reading and math when compared to TPS students, although only in reading

are these differences statistically significant. Students in a full turnaround CRM school make less progress than TPS students, but those differences in learning gains are not statistically significant.

Although our findings in this study are based on student data from only 19 schools, we believe they bear important implications. First of all, the scale of turnaround seems to be associated with the likelihood of turnaround success. Our findings regarding fresh versus full restart schools suggest that smaller units of turnaround (one grade per year, rather than an entire school at once) may increase the likelihood of success. This raises a question of whether more focused or limited-in-scale interventions would be even more effective. Fresh start CRM schools started with fewer grades than full turnaround CRM schools and fresh starts exhibited higher academic growth on average. Having said that, the fresh start approach should not be viewed as a silver bullet guaranteeing success, as close to half of the CRM schools that had academic growth at or below zero were fresh start schools.

Further, organizational and business practices that improve operational rigor enable each intervention strategy to reach a higher likelihood of success. In particular, leadership stability is found to be significantly and positively associated with higher academic growth at the school level. To a great extent, those factors facilitating school operation are either part of the initial turnaround plan and/or are endowed to the schools by the operators. This suggests that we can expect ripple effects of the initial school selection further downstream in students' academic growth. In fact, our Implementation study findings (discussed above), including our measure of implementation quality (the Performance Management Organization (PMO) rubric), shows exactly that. A slower ramp up in terms of operational capacity is associated with weaker student growth, suggesting that it is hard to compensate for poor starting positions.

These findings raise important policy questions: additional information and thinking is required to judge if the born costs of school closure justify the reaped benefit to both CRM and non-CRM students.

5. Integrative Analysis and Implications

Taken in aggregate, the findings of the evaluation of *Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model* indicate that the CRM was not entirely successful. However, we find great value in the learnings and implications that arise from the work of the CRM partners, CMOs, and schools. This initiative – and the evaluation thereof – tested for preconditions, capacities, and processes that may take years to get right, but without which large scale education reform cannot succeed.

At the conclusion of this evaluation of *Scaling the New Orleans Charter Restart Model*, we find NSNO occupying an authoritative role as harbormaster, while RSD shrinks its New Orleans footprint in anticipation of schools currently under its aegis returning to the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), the local education agency in New Orleans. We find a vastly reduced ASD, which is focused on its direct run schools but no longer showing appetite for charter turnaround. NSNO and RSD invested in thirteen New Orleans schools and twelve Tennessee schools (eight of which are included in this study). This falls short on both number of schools and number of seats the CRM had proposed, although the CRM did incubate four new CMOs. Of these, six had such poor early experience that they were closed, reconstituted, or dropped from the CRM program. Overall, the CRM schools have improved relative to their Closing schools, but very few New Orleans schools (and no Tennessee schools) achieved the benchmark for success envisioned by the CRM: top 33% of performers in New Orleans, top 25% of performers in Memphis/Nashville.

Ultimately the CRM suffered for discrete failures within its design as well as numerous failures of implementation. What does this evaluation tell us about how to move forward in light of the CRM experience? Where does the CRM go from here? How promising is it for other parts of the country?

Selection
The CRM found itself at a disadvantage from its earliest days due to weaknesses in the selection process. The CRM as designed requires a deep bench of potential operators who not only meet the quality thresholds for CRM consideration but who also commit specifically to turnaround work. Even high performing CMOs may need to be shepherded into a CRM if they have little experience with or desire for the extremely difficult work of turnaround. In both New Orleans and Tennessee, we see challenges of recruiting a critical mass of high quality operators to turn around as many chronically failing schools as existed in those locales. This indicates that districts or regions considering adoption of the CRM must first test their landscape of charter operators: are there enough high performing operators to do turnaround, and do it well, to suggest that the CRM can succeed?

The CRM also requires a set of objective, measurable selection criteria. These criteria must include a consideration of leadership at both the CMO and school levels: leadership in a CRM ecosystem is multi-tiered, and strong leadership at one level cannot compensate for weak leadership at another. Additionally, operators need deep knowledge of the grades they will serve: CMOs pursuing a K12 pipeline by expanding up the gradespan from elementary or down the gradespan from high school did not, in this evaluation, produce much in the way of successful results.

Pre-existing or robust CMO infrastructure was less important to CRM school success than a team of implementers fully prepared to tackle the challenges of turnaround. Local CMOs were on average better equipped than non-local CMOs, but the presence of robust CMO infrastructure did not guarantee success, nor did its absence presage failure. In fact, the two full school turnarounds that posted positive impact for students – Tubman and Einstein – lacked CMO infrastructure prior to joining the CRM. They did, however, have a full commitment to the work of turnaround, and to doing that work specifically in their school's neighborhoods and communities.

The CRM selection criteria specified that Type 2, 3, or 4 operators (those that were already running at least one school) must demonstrate a .1 effect size in student growth for consideration. But little distinction was made during the selection process between networks with a .1 effect size across multiple schools versus networks with a single school that hit the .1 threshold. In reality, this created a more fluid requirement than originally intended, since CMOs could (and did) receive i3 funds based on a single school within their network which met the effect size criterion even if their other schools did not.

Further, even those that met the effect size threshold found themselves sorely taxed by the work of turning around a chronically failing school. For Type 2 applicants, building CMO infrastructure while simultaneously managing a CRM turnaround school and an existing school undergoing a leadership transition (as the Flagship principal transitioned to the CEO position) too often proved detrimental to both the CRM school and its network. For Type 3 and Type 4 applicants, the introduction of a chronically failing turnaround school stretched their networks, not necessarily fatally, but always enough to impact both the resource-intensive CRM school as well as other schools reliant on network wide resources disproportionately mobilized to stabilize the CRM school.

Downgrading or diluting the existing selection criteria represents a failure of implementation of the CRM. We also find a failure of design in the selection criteria: too little attention was paid to a proven commitment to continuous improvement. The CRM requires that all actors (system-level partners, CMOs, schools) approach the work as an n-period solution with the understanding that some schools may require more than one turnaround intervention to achieve success. The selection process does not anticipate this per se.

Additionally, continuous improvement *within* schools also received too little attention in the evaluation of applicants. For turnaround to succeed, operators need a continuous

improvement orientation baked into their DNA. CMOs must not flag in their commitment to critical reflection and strategic action in order to enact successive approximations of highest quality implementation. No operator can turn around a chronically failing school by expecting to transport unchanged a set of practices that worked elsewhere. Our findings indicate that even CMOs with high performing Flagship models needed to articulate and activate an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement throughout the years of the evaluation to have any hope of success. This commitment to continuous improvement, and an enumeration of the processes whereby that commitment would roll out in schools, was never tested by the selection process.

In addition to lacking selection criteria such as continuous improvement orientation, we also observed a willingness by RSD and NSNO to abandon existing criteria when faced with a choice between operators who cannot meet selection criteria and no operator at all. The CRM partners, especially in the early years of implementation, lacked the political will and/or the political cover to reject weak applicants outright. RSD and NSNO were loath to let selection cycles pass in which no operators were selected. The pressure to make grants in every round, even when presented with no viable operators, allowed for a systemwide downgrading of the CRM's primary goal: to create an ecosystem of *high performing* schools, not merely an ecosystem of schools incrementally better than the ones they replaced. This more than anything represents an existential threat to the CRM in New Orleans or anywhere else: the CRM requires absolutely that partners maintain a long term focus on the task at hand, to transform chronically failing schools into high performers.

The challenges of selection – both in design and implementation – raise critical questions for districts considering the installation of a CRM. Failures at selection impact both fresh start and full school turnarounds equally. Strong starting endowments of the CRM at every level – from the universe of available operators to the quality of leadership to the ethos and commitment of all partners to continuously strive for the BHAG of top performing schools – are necessary prerequisites for a CRM to succeed.

The CRM Theory of Action: CMOs as the locus of intervention in turnaround
At its core, the CRM posits that CMOs are the primary lever for educational quality to improve. This evaluation indicates that placing CMOs as the locus of intervention has both benefits and detriments.

CMOs are closer to the classroom than a district office would be. CMOs are endowed with flexibility and autonomy to act in the interest of students first. CMOs are also endowed with resources that districts may lack from private philanthropic funding, human talent, and/or public funds specific to charter startup and operation.

CMOs also possess the potential to hold crucial knowledge about local contexts. Local CMOs, or nonlocal CMOs with a longstanding commitment to particular locales, hold both formal and informal knowledge about the regulatory, geographic, and cultural contexts within which they operate. Their leaders cultivate networks of individuals and organizational partners whose talent and expertise can be brought to bear. Further, their

knowledge and networks render CMOs the best situated actors in a turnaround environment to build authentic support across stakeholders for school and student success.

But we see real risk to positioning CMOs as the primary locus of intervention. In this evaluation, we observe wide variation in board oversight and governance of CMOs, creating a potentially fatal weakness for any individual organization and, by extension, for the credibility of the entire system. Additionally, the work of simultaneously growing a CMO and turning around a school risks diluting the success of both efforts. We also observed role confusion among many CRM schools and their CMOs regarding core operating functions and responsibilities. Some of this is attributable to utterly expected organizational growing pains (especially for Type 1 and Type 2 schools). But, there are aspects of turnaround – particularly full school turnaround – that require very different approaches to leadership, culture, and instruction than assuming operation of schools that are not chronic failures. For CMOs to support the turnaround of chronically failing schools, CMOs must be built intentionally to understand and manage turnaround work.

In addition to these challenges at the level of CMO operation, we also identify systems-level detriments to placing CMOs as the sole levers for change. CMOs are decentralized actors. This is, of course, by design. But this also creates a set of externalities which threaten the sustainability of a CRM. Most fundamentally, no individual CMO faces any incentive to consider the entire system within which they operate. A fully decentralized system incentivizes CMOs to pursue their own goals. This lack of affinity – which we heard consistently articulated in the course of this evaluation – can and did encourage CMOs to maximize benefit to their own organizations at the expense of the collective good.

Without external intervention or oversight, a fully decentralized system will not prevent predatory behavior. Equity must be imposed – it is not baked into the CRM design, despite the commitment to educational equity that a school improvement initiative might imply. To the credit of the system-level partners, this realization eventually led to the installation of One App; centralized expulsion policies; and systemwide professional development, SPED and mental health supports. But even with these leveling functions in place, we see little in the way of consequences for bad actors. We believe that front-end equity functions must exist above the CMOs, but that back-end remediation must also exist for a CRM to sustain. CMOs may be the most effective lever for change, but the CRM includes no inherent controls to prevent that change from coming at the expense of other organizations.

More broadly, CMOs will not "become the system" without thoughtful, carefully calibrated structural incentives to do so. In New Orleans, which will soon have a 100% charter district, this point is especially salient. During the early years of this evaluation, the system-level partners behaved as if leaving the CMOs maximally unfettered would result in the emergence of an equitable, functional, sustainable system. That was not – and will not – be the case. CMOs may be the locus of *school* improvement, but they are not the locus of *systems* improvement.

The CRM Theory of Action: Systems in support of CMOs

If the CMOs are not the locus of systems improvement, from where does systems development emerge? As mentioned above, at the outset we see an overreliance on CMO autonomy to execute multiple aspects of the Theory of Action. CMOs were expected to hold responsibility for not just school turnaround in a single building but also self-governance, resource generation and procurement, and the mobilization of community support to activate and perpetuate the CRM.

Early on, NSNO and RSD suffer for the lack of clear distinctions in roles and responsibilities. They initially failed to intervene proactively on issues that are far larger than the auspices of any single CMO or school, such as facilities limitations and the woefully inadequate human capital pipeline. Moreover, the early interventions of the systems-level partners were comprised of investments in short term capacity building efforts, such as Executive Development training for the first and second cohorts of turnaround leaders, that left no lasting effect beyond the individuals who directly participated. These initial capacity building efforts had no multiplier effect, leaving NSNO and RSD confronting the same challenges across a growing universe of CRM schools year over year.

Eventually, though, the system-level actors – those entities who oversee, coordinate across, and support the CMOs – came to recognize themselves as exactly that: keepers of the system. The systems-level actors evolved from an initial expectation that CMOs will become the system to a much more strategic orientation of [systems surrounding CMOs surrounding schools]. This meant looking strategically across CMOs to identify universal need and high leverage solutions, rather than responding to each individual request with a scramble of activity to identify a one-off intervention. This meant anticipating change, both internally motivated or exogenously imposed. And this resulted in smoother operations at all levels, in addition to growing community support and demand for high quality schools.

Fidelity to Flagship

For evaluation purposes, CREDO brought more emphasis to the notion of Flagship fidelity than actors in the CRM did in their treatment of schools and CMOs. The focus on Flagship schools provided a preliminary picture of what a CMO held a successful school to be, and the variation across the Flagships that we studied bore out the wisdom of pursuing that viewpoint. Nevertheless, we have found in the evaluation that Flagship status does not serve as effectively as an anchor for baseline comparison or a predictor of CRM school success than we originally hypothesized. We have, however, come to understand the factors that are responsible for the differences, and so the comparisons were useful where they were possible.

At the point of selection, Flagship schools were considered demonstrations of proven success for their CMOs. While this may have conceptually informed selection considerations, CRM schools rarely considered themselves pure replications of their Flagships' models. Further, we find little relationship between a CRM school's fidelity to

its Flagship and the CRM school's success. As such, we conclude that the presence of a Flagship when selecting CRM operators or as a point of reference for CRM schools is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for success.

This finding is unsurprising. Most Flagship schools were greenfield schools – the first of their CMOs' schools, and as such barely past the point of beta testing their models themselves. There was no expectation that CRM schools improve upon their Flagship models, even in those cases where Flagships were weaker than selection criteria recommended.

CMOs also reported fairly consistently that microcontexts – especially geographic neighborhoods, school catchment areas, and/or a school's enrolled student body – were extremely important to schools. Schools in both states entered the turnaround process with long histories, often embodied by active alumni associations or neighborhood-school affinity groups who felt a sense of ownership for the Closing schools and had very particular expectations for the CRM schools. Additionally, schools in different neighborhoods served student who may have appeared similar on paper, but who may have had very different experiences. Students' level of trauma – already high across the board in New Orleans and Memphis/Nashville – could differ widely from one neighborhood to the next depending on levels of community and domestic violence, variations in quality of housing stock, and, in New Orleans, extent of hurricane destruction.

As such, transporting a Flagship model to a CRM school – even if that school sat just a few blocks away – was framed as CMOs as a risky proposition. In New Orleans, some CRM schools looked to recruit from the neighborhoods in which they would be permanently located in order to minimize disruptions to their student bodies and maximize their access to students who fit the profile they ultimately hoped to educate. New Orleans schools that focused less on their permanent neighborhood suffered loss of enrollment when schools moved from temporary to permanent locations.

Similarly, schools serving neighborhoods that (as described by the CMOs themselves) had not had a high performing school in living memory faced the critical task of not only installing a functional school, but also educating neighbors and parents about what to expect from such a school. Tension between community members and alumni who mourned the loss of school bands and football teams – longstanding points of pride in places where academic success had seemed inconceivable for decades – and CRM operators looking to extend instructional time often resulted in compromise solutions that allowed schools to protect beloved cultural institutions, but in doing so forced a diversion from their most obvious path to increasing academic rigor. Losing instructional time to band practice does not necessarily require a step back from academic rigor – some CRM schools found creative solutions to meet both needs. But in some cases, we find CRM schools are unable to achieve the balance of academics and enrichment observed in their Flagships due in part to how their unique microcontexts behaved.

Finally, the Flagship schools were for the most part mature organizations by the time the CRM initiative began. This creates an intertemporal problem in positioning Flagships as a basis for comparison. Flagships, as fully enrolled and operational entities, may better serve as aspirational targets for CRM schools than as a fair test of how a school should behave during the startup years of turnaround.

Schools as Performance Management Organizations
Our ratings of schools on the Performance Management Organization (PMO) rubric reinforce the notion that schools are incredibly complex organizations. As such, schools require unwavering attention to a number of different functions simultaneously in order to be effective. Further, these functions are not solely related to the daily business of classroom instruction, but rather implicate a more holistic set of responsibilities that undergird the cultivation of purpose, drive, and joy for students and adults alike.

Our findings from the PMO analyses suggest that successful schools must put students at the center of every decision they make and every activity in which they engage. In order to do this well, schools must be thoughtful in what they do and in what they choose not to do: student learning must be front and center, ancillary activity can be outsourced. Schools must connect their attention to student results, constantly driving toward student learning.

Securing buy-in from every adult in the building also supports school success: CRM schools report orienting even their janitors and cafeteria staff to school values and practices. Teacher commitment also matters. While we see high turnover across the years of the evaluation, school leaders report a growing realization over time of the need to hire teachers who commit fully to their profession, to the development of their craft, and to their geography.

Most fundamentally, successful schools need to infuse continuous improvement into their very ethos. Learning and adapting infuse all levels of successful schools. Adults and students alike must have unending opportunity to engage with robust feedback. Principals, teachers, staff, and boards must all stay laser focused on students and steeped in a school's sense of purpose, drive, and joy. It is through a commitment to upholding these principles that we see increasing resilience among schools when they encounter inevitable shocks.

The Maturation of CRM Schools
The resilience of schools is a core consideration for the CRM because shocks – exogenous ones such as budget cuts or endogenous ones such as staff turnover – are inevitable. This evaluation finds that schools' starting endowments matter greatly in setting a school up to weather both expected and unexpected difficulties. We find great variation in the strength of school leaders, the availability of supports to CMOs and to schools, the quality of human capital, and the initial installation of school culture. We also see vast differences in the commitment to and mechanisms of continuous improvement. Some CRM schools struggle for failing to commit to the difficult work of

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critical reflection and action planning. Others struggle for misdiagnosing problems when they arise, or for generating ineffective solutions.

We observe CRM schools struggling to stabilize these types of operational and instructional functions well into their third, fourth, and fifth years. The runway for turnaround as originally conceived by the CRM may well be too short. But a protracted runway is not the solution either. Budgetary limitations would prevent incubation periods of any longer than a year, and slower turnaround trajectories would leave too many students in under-performing schools for too long.

This suggests a need in any future instantiations of the CRM to leverage as much learning as possible prior to opening. Further, this learning must be turnaround specific. Visiting only high performing schools put CRM leaders at a disadvantage in understanding how to overcome the challenges of startup. CRM principals had excellent exposure to what they wanted their schools to become, but not necessarily to the ways in which they could get there.

The communities of practice which NSNO attempted to establish in the middle years of the evaluation period represent a potential avenue for leveraged learning. While the communities of practice as implemented were both short-term in duration and shallow in their levels of engagement, they could have had greater effectiveness if they had been better conceived and resourced. Indeed, CMOs reported that they would have derived more value from the communities of practice if the meetings had gone deeper into topics of interest and been better structured to maintain CEO attendance (rather than allowing CEOs to attend once and then delegate future meetings to staff).

Another tactic we propose to support leveraged learning implicates Goal 3 of the original CRM. While NSNO successfully communicated the CRM model to national audiences, they did so from the perspective of the harbormaster, i.e. their own perspective. However, we see little communication of how the CRM lives and breathes at the school level. An elegant invention here would be the creation of a problem inventory: a simple census of the challenges encountered by CRM schools, coupled with information about how the schools met those challenges, and the results of their efforts. Over successive iterations, such an inventory of problems and solutions would evolve into an operating manual of sorts for CRM schools.

An asset inventory would provide additional value to the CRM schools and CMOs. Such tools have a precedent in New Orleans:, the work of entities such as the YouthShift intermediary and The Data Center serve to identify and clearinghouse community and regional assets for youth-serving organizations. An inventory of assets generated by CRM schools enumerating how and when they were able to rely on specific assets to address specific needs would complement a problem inventory in providing guidance to future CRM operators. Further, engagement with entities already involved in asset mapping would push CRM schools to rethink community engagement. This evaluation finds that community and family engagement provided the greatest boost to those schools that approached engagement as an opportunity to build an ecosystem of

support around students, rather than as an instrumental one-way relationship to bring resources from communities into schools. Casting community organizations and members, as well as families, as assets to be perpetually cultivated rather than as resources to be raided would produce mutual benefit to communities, families, and schools.

Finally, NSNO might leverage their school reviews to build out SWAT teams equipped to intervene in the areas of concern which the school reviews identify. This evaluation finds that the high performing CRM schools made yearly use of NSNO's school reviews, and that reviews of high performing schools increased in sophistication (and hence usefulness) over time. If NSNO were to build capacity – internally or elsewhere in the system – to provide short-term intervention as well as review, schools could receive support earlier and more effectively in areas that are best addressed before reaching a crisis point.

It is important to note here that as the CRM schools stabilized, matured, and built resilience, the system was simultaneously maturing around them. In the CRM's first two years, NSNO and RSD stood back while CMOs were expected to solve, ignore, or supersede systems-level barriers that they were, in fact, ill equipped to impact. But as the system evolved, NSNO and RSD recalibrated their activity to build the connective tissue – the system – that operates above and between CMOs and schools. Community support for the system also evolved in this time, as evidenced by the yearly Cowen Institute public opinion polls, the reduction in community protests, and the nascent engagement of families with their children's schools and CMOs. As the system evolved, we see thinking shift about what responsibilities CMOs can and cannot be reasonably expected to hold as levers for change systemwide. This evolution continues, and districts considering the viability of the CRM would do well to continuously examine which functions are best held by which actors, and in which instances are interventions or activities more effective when they are not mediated by CMOs.
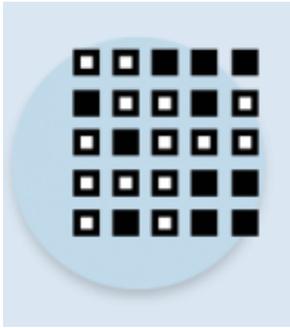
Final Conclusions

In final consideration, the CRM fell far short of its target for 15,281 seats in top performing schools. Only half the CRM schools posted positive impact for students, but most CRM schools perform better than the schools they replaced. Given that the CRM instituted some level of improvement, what is the prescription for the CRM to extract additional improvements?

We know from research literature, and we find in this evaluation, that the culture and function of an organization crystallizes early, and that an organizational ethos is incredibly difficult to change once established. We know that chronically failing schools can carry the baggage of bad management, dysfunctional culture, and low performance forward through a turnaround. We know that chronically failing schools require tremendous effort to stabilize and raise, more so than closing a school outright and starting fresh. But, we also know that closing a school outright places a heavy burden on students forced out of that closing school. Unless students find seats in higher performing schools, they will experience a net negative impact on their learning, even if their new school is no worse than the one they left.

Full school turnaround is resource intensive (perhaps at times prohibitively so), and fresh start schools carry great risk to closing school students. Where does that leave those who remain committed to creating high quality schools for all students? This evaluation demonstrates the very real pitfalls of both full school turnaround and fresh start interventions. We also find that, despite deep investigation into drivers of success (or failure), we still have incomplete information about precisely which features, endowments, or behaviors a school needs at the outset to guarantee positive results. Some points, however, emerge with clarity.

First, policy actors need to have a more diversified toolkit to intervene. The full-versus-fresh turnaround debate is a false dichotomy. As such, we can conceive of full school turnaround and fresh start schools as two of a larger set of school reconstitution strategies that state agencies (RSD, ASD), districts (OPSB, Shelby County), and harbormasters (NSNO) may want to build into their arsenals. Other strategies might include systems-level intervention into the barriers to school success. We see the beginnings of this in, for example, NSNO's engagement of Relay Graduate School of Education. CRM systems may require the flexibility to seed and reward second, third, and fourth attempts to improve schools: the CRM at the school level is not a one-period solution, but rather an n-period solution, and systems-level partners should engineer for that. This does not suggest that schools be allowed to flounder through multiple failed iterations. Rather, in addition to more clearly defined pathways through successive approximations of success, CRM systems also require well-understood limits beyond which schools have no option but to close. In a truly student-centered system, the distinction between schools on a protracted runway to success and schools who will never achieve altitude becomes clear. As such, we recommend an absolute

commitment to putting students first in all considerations and decision-making, no matter what the disruption to adults.

Finally, we see an opportunity to consider learning models that either directly address or delicately bypass systems-level barriers. High quality, thoughtfully applied instructional strategies such as targeted mentorship, place-based learning, blended learning and others can provide better instructional options for students without necessarily implicating the typical burdens of human capital constraints, facilities challenges, integrated holistic services, et cetera. In this way, we suggest that future instantiations of the CRM consider the value not just of reforming schools, but of reforming learning itself.