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Turning Around K-12 Schools Strategic Learning Initiatives Presents Three Year Results in Chicago

Chicago – December 14, 2009 – Strategic Learning Initiatives (SLI), a leading provider of K-12 school turnaround support, today presents three year results for Chicago Public Schools using its Focused Instruction Process (FIP). The FIP process accelerates school transformation, works with incumbent supervisors and teachers and guarantees results. Some other school turnaround models are predicated on firing existing school staff, a financially burdensome endeavor, and may not be necessary in all schools among the lowest performing schools, given the untapped potential of the existing staff.

SLI applies research, conducted over the past 20 years in Chicago, to identify and develop what qualities schools must possess in order to succeed. In 2006 SLI began work in ten very low-performing elementary schools that were on the Chicago Public Schools list to close or 'reconstitute.' SLI has now completed the analysis of the first three years' results (in this four year demonstration project) in the eight elementary schools which completed the third year. The data demonstrate that the rigorous application of SLI's FIP model can quickly transform the results of failing schools at a low cost per school. This includes neighborhoods that are primarily Latino and African American.

Results Summary: over three years, SLI schools improved four times faster than they did before joining the SLI network.

- 8 schools "turned around." 3 turned around in the first year. 3 more in the second, and 2 in the third year. (turnaround definition: *more than 3x increase in the ISAT reading score and major improvement in school culture*)
- 2 of the 8 were the most improved school in the ISAT Composite in Chicago in '07 and '08, namely, the Willa Cather and Cardenas schools.
- Under the FIP model, teacher and principal satisfaction was high at the end of the first year and continued to improve during years two and three.
- Cost per school: is under \$200,000/year. This is less than 20 percent of the cost of some turnaround models and does not disrupt the community as greatly as other models

The success of SLI's Chicago FIP model is the result of the synergy among the :

- effectiveness of the research-based model
- ownership of the continuous improvement process by the school's leadership team, and
- quality of the SLI team working on the school site

The data indicate that this strategy could be applied in most school districts in the nation for a

significant percentage of their lowest performing schools. .

The results are summarized in Strategic Learning's report, "Making a Difference--Turning Around Under Performing Schools." The data demonstrate that Strategic Learning's FIP model is highly effective and less costly than other turnaround programs which require replacing principals and teachers.

The full report can be found under "Turnaround Schools" at : www.strategiclearning.org.

About SLI

SLI is a Chicago-based IRS 501c3 non-profit organization. SLI's mission is to both accelerate the improvement in classroom practice and district results and create high performance organizations. The SLI approach and methods are grounded in the best national research and the decades of experience that SLI leaders have had in education and business.

The SLI strategy for school transformation draws from both education and business research to identify best practices that work for schools. Combining fifteen years of experience in the Chicago Public Schools and twenty years of business consulting background, SLI is prepared to help schools adopt the following hallmarks of high-performing organizations: (1) stakeholder participation, (2) continuous quality improvement, (3) teamwork, and (4) outstanding results.

SLI supports principal, and teacher professional development plus training for parents to help their children with their homework by using our expertise, experience, partnerships, and other resources. SLI helps school leaders, school staff and parents to build skills by learning from their peers and each other.

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