

**Serving *Every* Child Well:
Washington State's Commitment to Help
Challenged Schools Succeed**

Draft Recommendations
for the State Board of Education

September 2008



Today's discussion

- **The Innovation Zone from the Ground Level**
 - From the perspective of communities, districts, schools
 - Local options within a context of shared accountability
 - Painting a picture of Zone-inspired reform
- **What's the Idea? (embedded throughout)**
 - Key points of challenge, and the ideas behind the proposed strategies
- **Making It Happen**
 - Enlisting important stakeholders
 - The process from here on out
 - What's at stake: the most important messages

Guiding principles that emerged from the development process

1. The initiative is driven by *one* mission: student success
2. The solution we develop is collective
3. There is *reciprocal accountability* among all stakeholders
4. To have meaning, reciprocal accountability is backed by reciprocal consequences
5. The solution directly addresses common barriers to reform
6. The solution requires a sustained commitment
7. The solution requires absolute clarity on roles

Walking through the Zone from the perspective of three communities

District A

- 20-50 schools
- Diverse pop.
- 5-15 schools in improvement
- 1-2 Priority Schools

- Active participant in OSPI support services
- Generally high degree of local collaboration
- “Summit” district

District B

- 20-50 schools
- Diverse pop.
- 5-15 schools in improvement
- 1-2 Priority Schools

- Active participant in OSPI support services
- Generally high degree of local collaboration

District C

- 20-50 schools
- Diverse pop.
- 5-15 schools in improvement
- 1-2 Priority Schools

- Less likely to opt into OSPI support services
- Less history of strong partnering across all stakeholders

What questions are they asking?

- 1. Why are two of our schools being identified as “Priority Schools” by the state?**
- 2. What does this mean to our community and school district in terms of:**
 - Pursuing our core educational mission of proficiency for every student?**
 - Resources and supports to help us fulfill the mission?**
 - Public positioning of those schools and our district?**
 - Our continuing authority over the schools in question?**
- 3. What’s the process? What do we have to do?**

“Why are two of our schools being identified as ‘Priority Schools’ by the state?”

- 1. Lowest tier of academic performance: roughly the lowest 2% to 5% of schools in the state**
- 2. Identified as a persistently low-performing school over several years**
- 3. Vetted for contextual explanations for low achievement (e.g., school is designed to serve students who have dropped out of high school)**
- 4. Overall: consensus that the status quo in these schools will not lead to success**

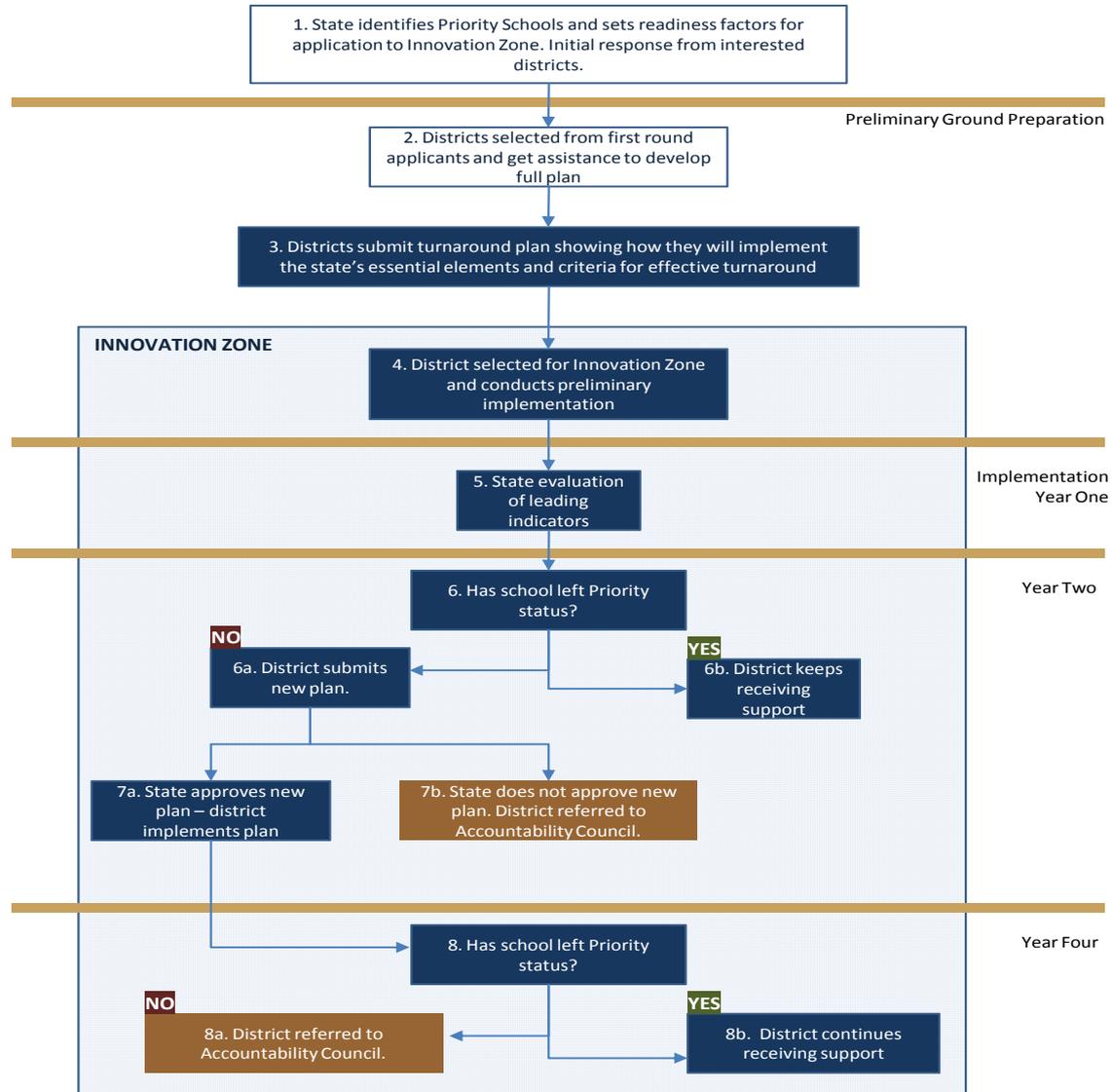
“What does this mean to our community and school district in terms of:

- 1. Pursuing our core educational mission of proficiency for every student?”**
 - An opportunity to develop and implement a new set of strategies in your most challenged schools – integrated where possible with current reform initiatives**
- 2. Resources and supports to help us fulfill the mission?”**
 - Significant new funding, partner support, and latitude to reallocate current dollars strategically**

“What does this mean to our community and school district in terms of:

3. **Public positioning of those schools and our district?”**
 - **Pioneers in the vanguard of school reform – *not* “failing,” “corrective action,” or “academic distress”**
4. **Our continuing authority over the schools in question?”**
 - **Unchanged, unless – even with all of the Zone’s resources and supports over multiple years – the schools still are unable to improve**

Washington State's Innovation Zone: Initial Cohort



1

1

Step 1: State identifies Priority Schools and sets readiness factors for application to Innovation Zone

- **“How ready is our district to undertake fundamental, transformative reform? Can we demonstrate:**
 - A record of strong effort to turn around these schools already?
 - Openness to new kinds of strategies and partnerships?
 - Readiness to focus on *people* as well as on *programs*?
 - Alignment of curriculum with the state standards?
 - Consensus among key stakeholders (board, superintendent, principals, teachers, community leaders) of the need to try something different?”

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

Why make districts *earn* their way into the Zone at the outset? Why not serve every challenged school?

- **The state's interest is to prioritize success**
 - We need to develop *exemplars* of effective turnaround and high performance in schools serving high-challenge student enrollments
- **Local capacity and consensus for change is hugely important**
 - There is little track record of success in schools *mandated* to implement transformative change
- **Right now, the state would not fund all Priority Schools at levels that can enable real change**
 - Nor should it, until pathways to success become clearer

The three sample communities' response:

District A

- School board and superintendent create District A Innovation Zone Task Force
- Participation in planning by principals, teachers and teachers union, community leaders
- Jointly prepare “readiness statement”

**INITIAL
APPROVAL**

District B

- Superintendent persuades school board to respond
- Board submits “readiness statement” prepared by superintendent and selected staff

District C

- Superintendent, board decide not to respond, citing:
 - Other initiatives already underway, OR
 - Lack of consensus for major change OR
 - Little optimism regarding ability to marshal all stakeholders

Steps 2 & 3: Districts selected in first round get assistance to develop a plan to enter the Zone

- **Assistance = \$, time for planning, and partner support from state list of preferred providers**
 - State supports development of partner resource base
- **Assumption is that all districts entering this phase will be funded**
 - However: implementation funds would not be awarded to districts that cannot meet state criteria with their plan
- **Plausible size of first state cohort: 16-32 schools**
- **Proposals on behalf of clusters encouraged:**
 - 2-5 schools: same level or within a feeder pattern
 - Can include non-Priority schools (preference given to Tier 4 schools)

The three sample communities' response:

District A

- Board and superintendent link with turnaround partner organization
- With district task force, develop plan for District A's Innovation Zone: cluster of HS, two middle schools
- Plan is aligned with district's Summit participation

District B

- Superintendent, Priority School team pursue improvement plan, outside of Innovation Zone, with all other available OSPI supports

District C

- Superintendent, Priority School team pursue improvement plan outside of Innovation Zone

**PLAN
APPROVAL**

Step 4. Districts are selected for participation in the Innovation Zone's first cohort

- **Timeline:**

- Fall 2008-Spring 2009: final SBE proposal development, legislative action, school identification
- Summer 2009: first step of Zone admission process
- Fall 2009-Winter 2010: second step of Zone admission process. Districts and partners prepare, submit plans; SBE approves or asks for revisions
- Spring/Summer 2010: planning and initial training, recruiting
- Fall 2010: Innovation Zone clusters open for first full implementation year

What is the SBE looking for in districts' Innovation Zone plans?

The 3 'C's of comprehensive, coherent, *transformative* reform

1

Conditions

Change the rules and incentives governing people, time, money, & program

2

Capacity

Attract and build high capacity in Zone schools and apply it from lead partners

3

Clustering

Organize in clusters by feeder pattern, need, or type -- where new conditions apply and districts create special capacity

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

Change the operating conditions
to support *transformation*, not just marginal change

First Critical Element: PEOPLE

Traditional School Improvement:

Help current staff perform at a higher level

- Staff development, coaching
- Leadership development

Innovation Zone

Establish professional norms for HR management

- Turnaround leaders have authority, resources to staff the school as needed to fulfill the turnaround plan
 - Incentives to recruit highly capable teachers
 - Flexibility on staff hiring, allocation, work rules
 - Flexibility, time to make staff development coherent

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

Change the operating conditions
to support *transformation*, not just marginal change

Second Critical Element: TIME

Traditional School Improvement:

*Some initiatives: adjust
schedule, within same-length
school day and year*

- Block scheduling
- Extra common planning time for educators

Innovation Zone:

*Expand school day and year
and reinvent schedule, to
fulfill turnaround plan*

- Significantly more time for teacher collaborating, instruction
- Strategic assessment, re-engineering of schedule to support the plan

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

**Change the operating conditions
to support *transformation*, not just marginal change**

Third Critical Element: MONEY

Traditional School Improvement:

*No real impact on budgetary
authority in most cases*

- Additional resources (usually staff development)

Innovation Zone

*Authority to re-allocate budget
to support coherent plan*

- Ability to re-allocate budget strategically
- Sufficient additional resources to support the plan
 - Pay for extra time
 - Pay for incentives
 - Pay for partner support

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

Change the operating conditions
to support *transformation*, not just marginal change

Fourth Critical Element: PROGRAM

Traditional School Improvement:

Improve quality of current strategies

- Consulting support
- Curriculum, instruction, assessment tools and strategies

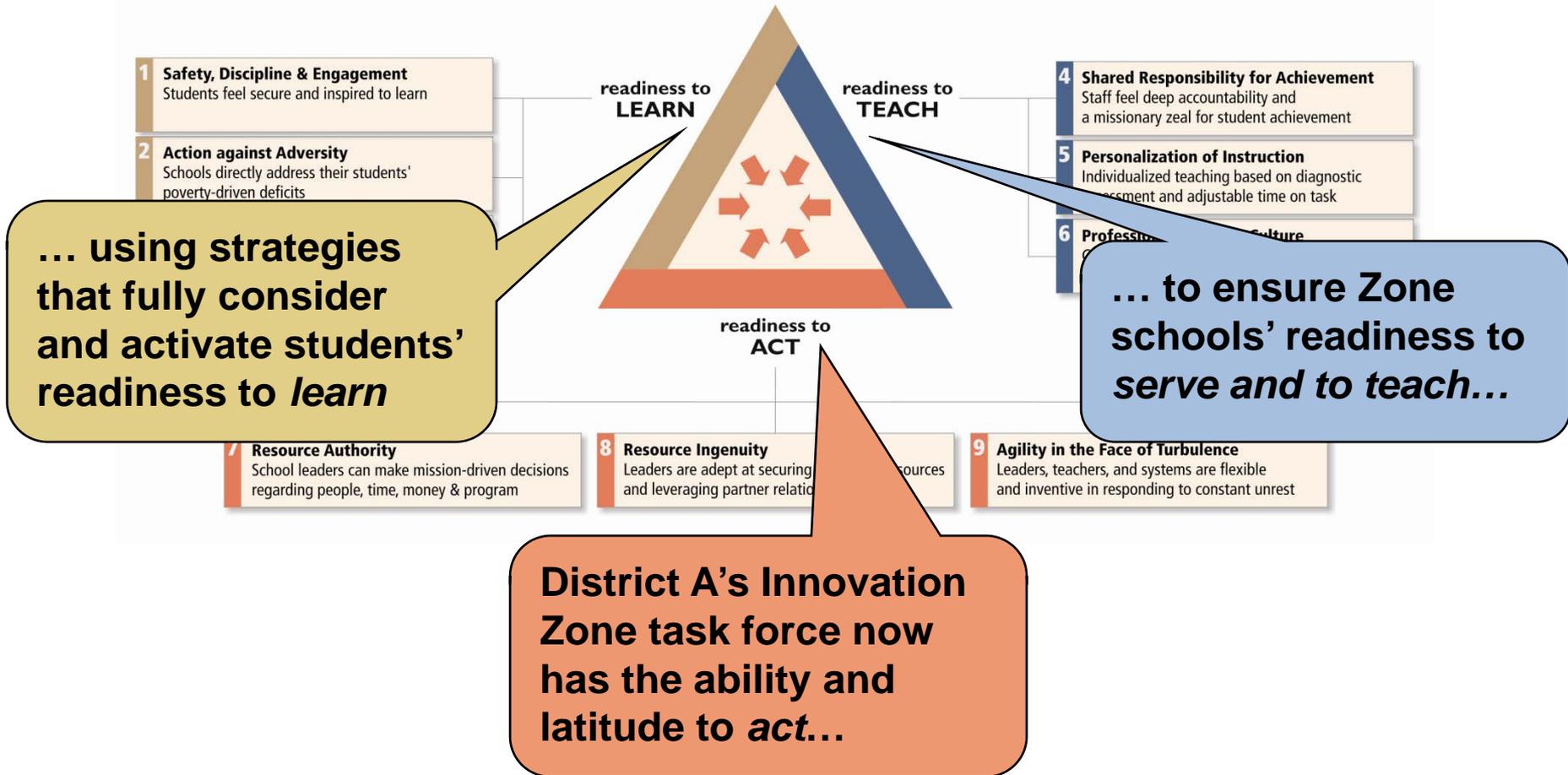
Innovation Zone:

Tailor program and overall school approach to suit needs of high-challenge enrollments

- Coherent, whole-school plan
- Integrate strategies to address impacts of poverty on students
- Relief from compliance burden in order to focus on instruction

What does the work inside a Zone cluster look like?

Elements of High-Performing, High-Poverty Schools Nationally: Mass Insight's "Readiness" model



How might District A's Zone plan get underway?

Four Workstreams	
Workstream # 1	Secure turnaround leadership at district level and across the three schools and create professional leadership teams at each school
Workstream # 2	Develop systems to deliver engaging and personalized instruction
Workstream # 3	Develop systems to mitigate the impacts of adversity and poverty
Workstream # 4	Shape schedules and structures to support streams 2-3, particularly across transition from middle school into high school

District A's Innovation Zone "Year 0" Workplan

Workstreams	Priority Goals for Year 0
<p># 1 Secure turnaround leadership & create professional teaching team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Choose and contract with turnaround partner organization <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit principals and top school leaders with turnaround expertise/training as necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Turnaround teams (with district leaders and partner organization) evaluates the needs and strengths of the schools and community, develops comprehensive plan for cluster <input type="checkbox"/> District adopts election-to-work agreement for Zone cluster; principals, leadership teams, teachers shape school staffing in accordance with needs of the turnaround plan <input type="checkbox"/> Teams spend part of summer preceding first implementation year in intensive planning, staff development, team-building
<p># 2 Develop systems to deliver engaging and personalized instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define educational approaches that engage all students through relevance and student-centered instruction, linked to a robust, rounded curriculum aligned to standards <input type="checkbox"/> Create a system for short feedback loop assessment of learning, monitoring and adjustment of instruction, with embedded opportunities in the schedule for re-teaching or enrichment
<p># 3 Develop systems to mitigate the impact of adversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create student advisory programs that are central to school structures and schedules, and include an adult champion assigned to each student from day 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Create a case system for monitoring and addressing student social needs, in partnership with social service and community organizations and outreach programs to families
<p># 4 Shape schedules and structure to support streams 2-3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create schedules, incorporating additional time and reallocating existing time, that directly serve the purposes of the turnaround plan (i.e., engagement of students, personalization of instruction, active learning, professional learning communities) <input type="checkbox"/> Set up structures and incentives to ensure order, safety and a positive school climate, and make these visible to community

Possible outcomes for the three sample communities after two implementation years

District A

- Original two Priority Schools leave Priority status
- District maintains status, plan, resources for the Zone
- District applies to expand Zone cluster to six schools, including all three feeder elementaries

District B

- Of original two Priority Schools, one remains in Priority status
- District leadership visits current Zone districts, creates new “readiness statement” to enter Zone
- State approves readiness statement and, later, district’s turnaround plan; district enters Zone

District C

- Both original Priority Schools remain in Priority Status
- District fails to enter Zone because:
 - Elects not to propose a plan
 - Submits a plan that fails to meet state criteria, after revisions
- District referred to Accountability Council

WHAT'S THE IDEA:

Create an intervention continuum that drives, shapes and supports local initiative – *and* provides a “backup plan” for the state

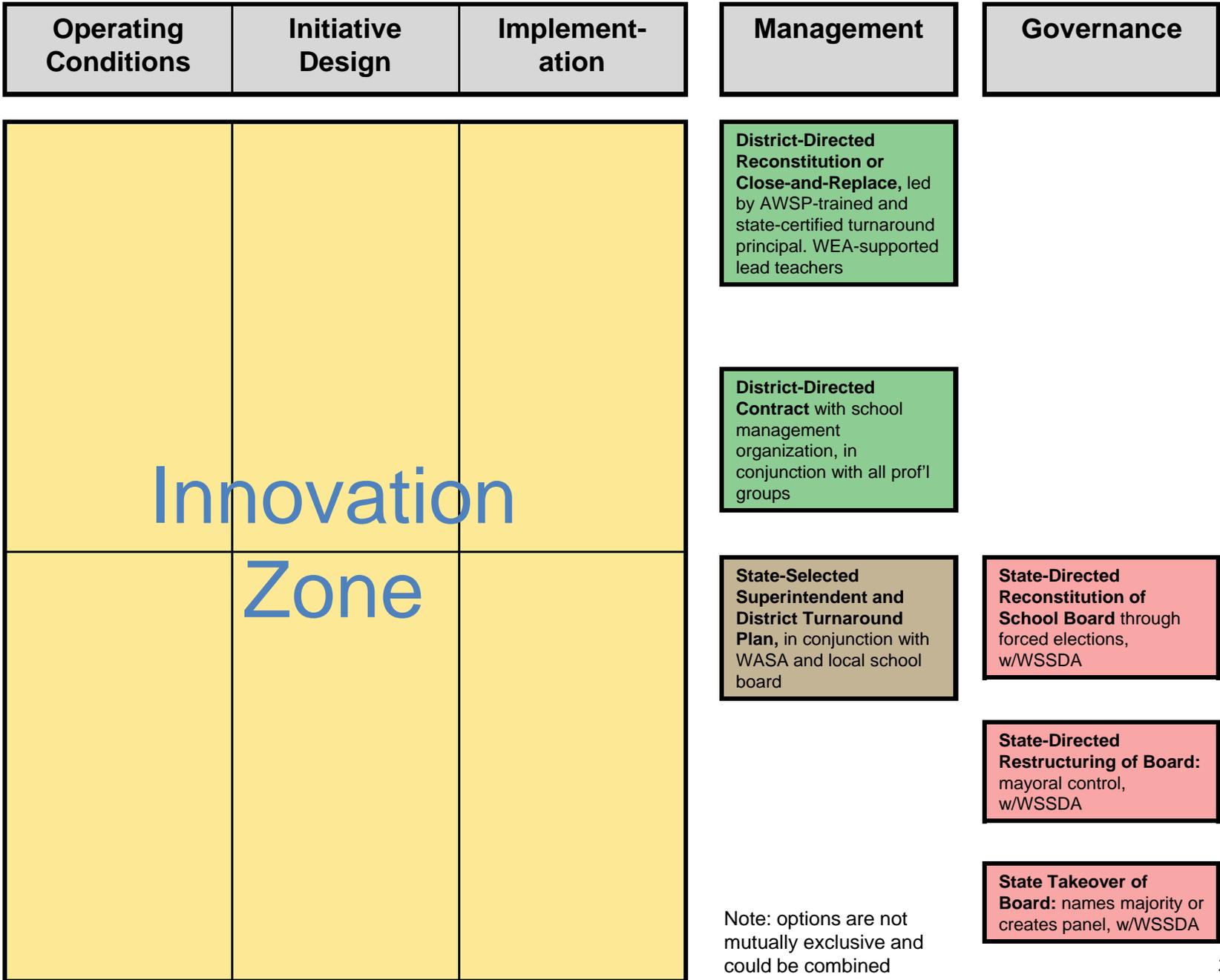
- **The state capitalizes on early adopters**
 - District A shows the way
- **The state builds capacity and commitment to scale up early success as more districts opt in**
 - Through partner development, leadership development, results analysis, cross-district visiting
- **The state recognizes its responsibility to act – to have a backup plan – when the needs of children are not being adequately served**
 - But only when it is abundantly clear that no progress will result from the status quo

What happens when the state must recognize its responsibility to act?

	Operating Conditions	Initiative Design	Implementation	Management	Governance
SCHOOL LEVEL	Innovation Zone			Plus Academic Receivership	
DISTRICT LEVEL					

	Operating Conditions	Initiative Design	Implementation	Management	Governance
SCHOOL LEVEL	<h1>Innovation Zone</h1>			District-Directed Reconstitution led by state-trained and certified turnaround principal	State Takeover: direct control or contract with school management organization
				District-Directed Charter Conversion	State-Directed Charter Conversion
				District-Directed Contract with school mgmt organization	Placement in New State Recovery District
DISTRICT LEVEL				State-Selected Superintendent in conjunction with local school board	State-Directed Reconstitution of School Board through forced elections
				District-Directed Contract with district management organization	State-Directed Restructuring of School Board: mayoral control
					State Takeover of Board: names majority or creates new reform panel

Not recommended under this initiative



Note: options are not mutually exclusive and could be combined

How are decisions made regarding Academic Receivership?

- **Districts are referred to a new Washington State Accountability Council**
 - **Members appointed by the SBE; representatives from the professional organizations to be invited**
- **Accountability Council makes recommendations based on OSPI analysis**
- **SBE makes all decisions with regard to Academic Receivership**
 - **All Academic Receivership initiatives have access to Zone supports and resources and are subject to the same conditions-change requirements**

Where the state will be by Summer 2012?

- **Clarity on progress made against goals by Priority Schools and their clusters after two years of implementation**
- **Comparison with progress made by districts with Priority Schools that did not participate in the Zone**
- **Decisions at that point:**
 - Expand funding and access to the Innovation Zone
 - Continue with first cohort but hold on expanding until more results are obtained
 - Adjust program if insufficient progress is shown thus far in Zone schools

Making it happen: Enlisting key stakeholders in developing the state's strategy

- **Participation in the Design Team for the initiative**
- **Interviews with 30+ stakeholders**
- **Presentations by SBE to professional organizations and legislators**
- **Follow-up on final design into October**
- **Development of tools and templates for use by districts preparing to enter the Zone**

Making it happen: The process from here on out

- **SBE discussion today and continuing counsel on initiative design**
- **October 21 workgroup meeting**
- **November 5 full SBE meeting**
- **Preparation of legislative package**
- **Advocacy**

WHAT'S AT STAKE:

The status quo wastes lives and talent and will undermine Washington's future.

- **“We are committed to creating success, and building from there.”**
 - This is a request for investment in new models, new approaches, new partnerships, new accountability
- **“This is *Washington State's* initiative, developed by a partnership between local experts and national resources.”**
 - Its design marries local context with national research.
- **“The Innovation Zone is Washington State's bet on its own future.”**
 - A clarion call for change in the midst of hard times