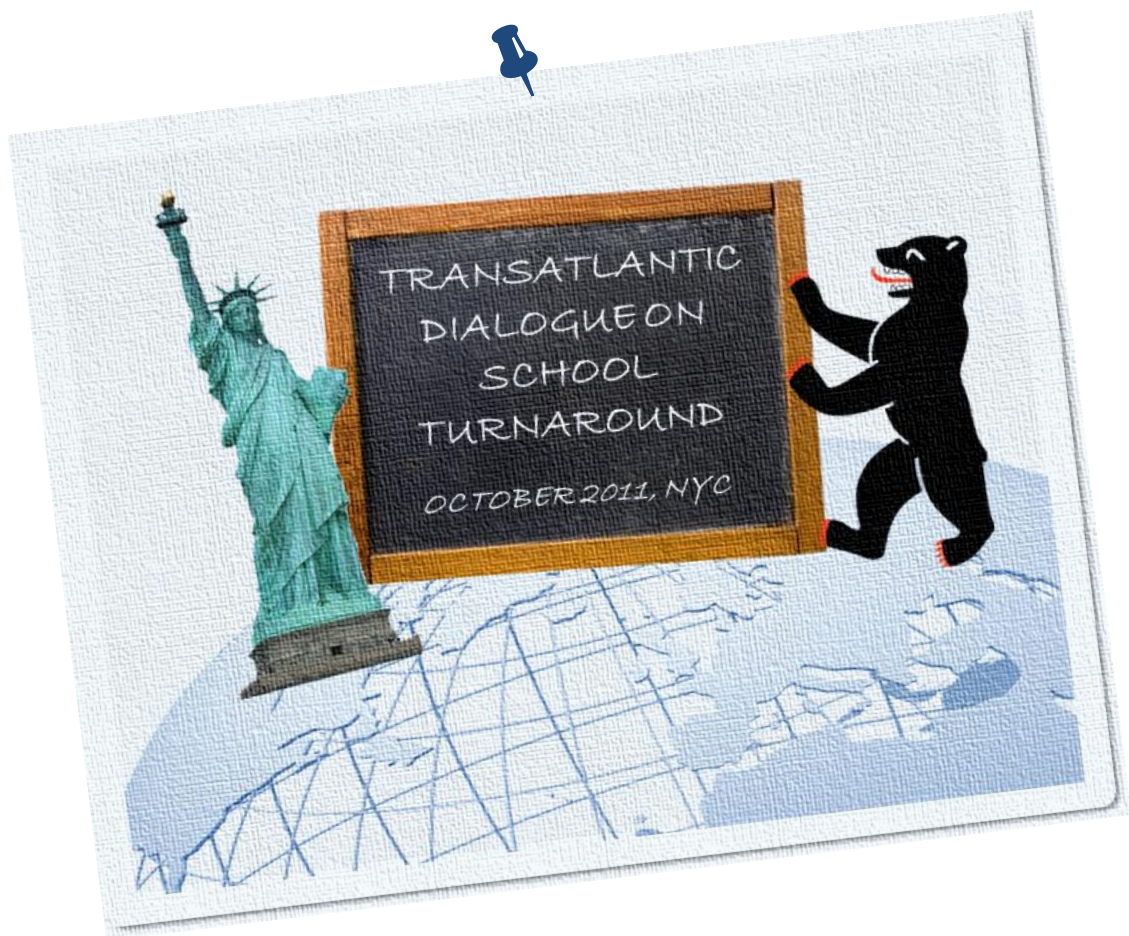


A Tale of Two Cities: Education Reform in New York City and Berlin



Authored by FSG on behalf of the

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**



Acknowledgements

We want to thank all of the people that contributed to this working paper in both the United States and Germany for their candid input and willingness to explore a transatlantic dialogue on school turnaround. This working paper is only the beginning of a larger conversation to ensure that children on both sides of the ocean receive the best possible education.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
I. Introduction	7
II. More in Common Than You Think	9
Comparison of Berlin and New York City School Systems	9
Building on Commonalities and Learning from Differences	14
III. Lessons Learned from School Reform in New York City	16
Context	16
Selected Building Blocks of Reform	17
Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for Berlin	26
IV. Spotlight: “School Turnaround” in New York City	28
Introduction	28
Three Turnaround Approaches in New York City	29
Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for Berlin	31
V. Lessons Learned from School Reform in Berlin	32
Context	32
Selected Building Blocks of Reform	33
Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for New York City	41
VI. Next Steps	43
Appendix	44
Bibliography	44
List of Interviewees	50
Glossary – NYC Education Terms in German	52
Case Study Index	
New York City	
<i>Box 1: Support networks – from supervising schools to supporting schools</i>	18
<i>Box 2: Tracking schools’ performance in NYC</i>	20
<i>Box 3: New York City Leadership Academy</i>	21
<i>Box 4: ACCION Academy</i>	23
<i>Box 5: Individualized and innovative learning in the iZone</i>	25
Berlin	
<i>Box 6: Service Learning “for everyone” at the Heinz-Brandt-Schule</i>	34
<i>Box 7: Early childhood language promotion</i>	36
<i>Box 8: Flexible school starting phase</i>	37
<i>Box 9: Turning around more than a school through Campus Rütli</i>	39
<i>Box 10: Dual Learning</i>	40

Executive Summary

Introduction

In Germany, an alarming number of inner-city schools, especially in metropolitan areas such as Berlin, are operating in challenging social environments and mired by low student achievement. At the same time, the reform wind is blowing strong in Germany and in particular in Berlin, where bold reforms have taken place over the past few years aimed at improving both the underlying structure and the enabling environment for schools. Because sweeping school reform, especially in complex urban school districts with a persistent achievement gap, has also been the focus of many cities in the United States, the Robert Bosch Stiftung sees an exciting opportunity to transfer lessons across the ocean, with an initial focus on Berlin and New York City. To serve as a springboard for a fruitful dialogue, this working paper has been written to provide education reform stakeholders in these two cities with an initial high-level overview of each city's education system and reform efforts.

More in Common Than You Think

While it may seem that the differing Berlin and New York City ("NYC") approaches to primary and secondary education render comparisons and an exchange of transferable ideas not feasible, this working paper shows that the systems actually have many commonalities to build upon, and that it is exactly the differences that are fertile ground for introducing new ideas. For example, both cities are managing their country's largest urban school system, respectively, and under much local and national scrutiny. In both cities, there persists a worrisome achievement gap in math and language arts among different segments of the student population, and in both cities drop-out rates are nearly twice as high for some student groups as for others. Moreover, there is wide variation among the different geographical sub-districts in the cities, with both cities' best performing areas often exhibiting student achievement on standardized tests that is twice as high as in the worst performing districts, respectively. These performance differences mean that differentiated approaches are necessary for different schools.

On the other hand, there are stark differences in the underlying school systems and reform emphases. While increasing both autonomy and accountability has been the focus of reforms in both cities, the NYC Department of Education ("DOE") has pushed these further than Berlin, including a strong emphasis on school leadership and human capital development and a more active hand in intervening on failing schools. Berlin, due to its large and growing population of German language learners ("nichtdeutscher Herkunft") has focused much attention on early childhood education, especially language acquisition. Further, the Berlin school system offers multiple pathways, tied closely to vocational training and career readiness, as early as the 7th grade.

Key Learnings

As can be imagined, comparing NYC's and Berlin's reform efforts and distilling lessons relevant for each city could result in volumes of text. The summary table on the following pages is thus organized around nine core topics that are important to both cities. Further, while each city is focused on each of these nine topics in some way, the table highlights the main transferable lessons rather than providing a comprehensive summary of what each city's approach looks like for each of the nine topics.

Autonomy



In both NYC and Berlin, schools have been given increasing autonomy in three areas: curriculum, human resources and budgets.

In Berlin, this has meant that schools can develop their own approaches to instruction to meet new standards that are designed around competencies, not content. Further, Berlin's principals have more say over new teacher hires and their professional development and finally, a small portion of the school's budget (up to 3% of total teacher salary costs) can now be used more flexibly.

In NYC, particularly around human resources and budgets, autonomy has gone further. Specifically principals in NYC:

- Can make direct, independent teacher and other staff hiring decisions more easily than their Berlin counterparts
- Have discretion of the *majority* of their school's budget, allowing them to design schools, schedules, instruction and their team composition to fit the needs of their specific students

Accountability



Tracking the performance of schools and individual students – both in terms of academic performance, but also in terms of more qualitative indicators – has been a hot topic in both cities. In fact, both cities have developed similar instruments, including school visits, surveys and standardized tests.

However, NYC has taken these instruments further than Berlin in three ways:

- *Compiled annual assessments*: schools in NYC receive a so-called Progress Report each year which summarizes the results of accountability indicators and leads to clear-cut and tailored mandates for schools to improve their areas of weaknesses
- *Clear consequences*: consistent poor performance on the Progress Report results in clear consequences, which can include changes in school leadership and school closings
- *Transparency*: finally, NYC has made publically available the results of all accountability instruments, as well as many other data points including school budgets, attendance records, student demographics, teacher qualifications and much more

Overall, it is important to say that NYC's sweeping, rapid, and public use of these accountability instruments for decision-making have been the subject of much debate – thus this working paper does not advocate for Berlin to adopt these 1:1; but rather, to learn from NYC's experiences as Berlin considers its next steps on assessments, consequences and transparency.

Leadership



With the increasing autonomy of schools, school leadership has been a focus in both Berlin and NYC – particularly the question of training school leaders for the challenges of diverse, urban schools. The role of the principal has changed dramatically in both cities over the past 5-7 years; necessitating a new model for attracting, training and retaining what is seen as the most crucial person inside each school.

The dedicated New York City Leadership Academy could provide an interesting model for Berlin to emulate. In this model, aspiring principals enter a 14 month practical program that prepares them to lead a struggling, high-needs school.

Human Capital



Bringing in talented new human capital – primarily teachers but also district managers – was a key focus in NYC, supported by several tactics that could be interesting for Berlin, which faces an aging teacher population and thus an opportunity to bring in fresh talent:

- Creating non-traditional recruiting and certification tracks for teachers to bring new talent into the city's schools
- Increasing teacher salaries to make the job more attractive
- Bringing new management talent into the district administration, often with private sector backgrounds

School Support



New York City's approach to school support is very different than traditional approaches, which could provide new ideas for Berlin:

- Schools in NYC join networks of schools with similar characteristics (rather than geographic networks)
- These networks (~20 schools) together share a dedicated School Support Team (~15 to 20 people), which provides tailored academic and operational support
- In this way, principals can decide which network they would like to join, outsource many of their administrative duties to free up more time for instructional leadership, and be part of a peer group of similar schools

Portfolio Approach



New York City has taken a more active portfolio approach to its schools along several lines that can help build on similar ideas in Berlin:

- *Schools as contingent on performance*: there are implications for schools that do not meet performance expectations, ranging from dedicated coaching, support and resources, to leadership and staff changes, to school phase outs and closings
- *Differentiated system of schools*: NYC recognizes that a diverse student body with diverse needs necessitates a diverse set of schools, which in turn need different levels of support
- *Diverse groups provide schools*: non-state (typically nonprofit) operators can open and run public schools in NYC ("charter schools"), and receive per pupil funding from the DOE; they operate independently but are subject to high(er) accountability standards.

Turnaround



In New York City, several organizations dedicated to active school turnaround are working with struggling schools. Their varied approaches (a cluster of several schools; dedicated turnaround teams in schools; a dedicated operator of turnaround schools) can provide ideas and inspiration for approaching the turnaround of failing schools in Berlin.

Early Childhood



Several facets of Berlin's intensive focus on and innovations around early childhood can inform NYC's existing efforts:

- Infusing language acquisition, including in-depth support and rigorous monitoring, into universal, free pre-K and K education programs
- Systematically forging connections between pre-K / K feeder programs and elementary schools to smooth the transition for students and enable teachers to learn about new students' strengths and needs early on
- Merging 1st and 2nd or 1st – 3rd grades to enable flexible, team-based teaching models in which students build on strengths, coach their peers and receive more dedicated support if needed

Career Readiness / Multiple Pathways



Berlin's approach to career readiness and multiple pathways can provide ideas for NYC's expanding efforts on this front on multiple levels:

- Developing so-called "Dual Learning" opportunities that provide practical hands-on experience in different professions for students as early as the 7th grade
- Expanding opportunities and pathways for disengaged students with high drop-out risk that entail vocational training and certification, but do not preclude higher education
- Creating a centralized hub that coordinates with schools, industry and trade associations to ensure that classroom content and practical experiences provide students with the skills and know-how that employers are seeking

Next Steps

This working paper has been written to provide a basis for discussion for an October 2011 convening of education reform stakeholders from Berlin, who will travel to NYC to meet with their counterparts and discuss the ideas and themes surfaced in this working paper in more detail. While the exchange is structured as a dialogue, the meeting in NYC will likely focus more on the lessons learned in NYC that are transferable to Berlin. Following the convening, next steps could occur on three different levels. First, the *transatlantic dialogue* could be continued, for example by hosting a delegation of education stakeholders from NYC and the US more broadly in Berlin to continue the conversation and learn more about relevant focus areas of the Berlin Department of Education ("Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung"). Second, the insights gleaned from the convening in NYC could be shared with a broader audience of education stakeholders in Berlin and used to inform *on-the-ground efforts* aimed at dramatically improving student outcomes of chronically underperforming schools. Finally, lessons learned on-the-ground in Berlin could be codified and provided to *other German cities and states*.

I. Introduction

The Challenge & Opportunity

In Germany, a growing number of inner-city schools in metropolitan areas such as Berlin are embedded in challenging social environments and characterized by low student achievement. For example in Berlin, 36% of children live in poverty, while 20% of households with children are plagued by unemployment (40% in single-parent households) and finally 21% of children live in households in which neither parent obtained a degree permitting higher education or completed a vocational training program.¹ Berlin has identified these three risk types (financial risk, social risk and educational risk) as key factors that impede educational success, and estimates that 39% of Berlin's school-aged children are exposed to at least one of these risks.

Compounding these already challenging circumstances is a large and growing German-language learner population. 43% of all children in Berlin under the age of six have a non-German background, and in some parts of the city this percentage is as high as 94%.² A third of Berlin's 3rd graders are not proficient in reading, and a significant achievement gap exists for students with non-German backgrounds. This gap persists beyond the early years as evidenced by the fact that the drop-out rate of 15% for students with a non-German background is nearly twice as high as the rate for Germans.³ In short, many schools are struggling to meet the needs of the urban, highly diverse student populations they serve.

At the same time, the reform wind is blowing strong in Germany and particularly in Berlin. As in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the disappointing results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study have catapulted education into the spotlight among parents, educators and policy makers alike. Over the past eight years, a series of innovative reforms have taken place in Berlin that are detailed further in this working paper. The 2010 "*Bildungsmonitor*" – a nationally recognized education performance ranking of Germany's 16 states – puts the state Berlin in last place overall, and in the bottom in key categories related to primary and secondary education. But on the other hand, Berlin's 2010 score is on par with the top scorer from 2004.⁴ In other words, Berlin and the German system overall are steadily improving, while at the same time open to new and innovative ideas.

In the United States, the U.S. Department of Education and individual states and districts alike have also been working towards the goal of transforming chronically underperforming schools, including a deliberate focus on "school turnaround". Because New York City's Department of Education ("DOE") has a history of bold and innovative reform efforts, ranging from school autonomy to the infusion of talented human capital across the system to a portfolio approach to school management, the Robert Bosch Stiftung believes that New York City offers valuable lessons for the Berlin Department of Education ("Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung").

While at first glance it may seem that the New York City ("NYC") and Berlin school systems are far too different to allow for comparisons and an exchange of transferable ideas, the next chapter of this working paper will show that, in fact, the systems have many commonalities to build upon, and that the differences are fertile ground for introducing new ideas.

The Way Forward

To address the challenges prevalent in Berlin and to capitalize on the current appetite for reform, the Robert Bosch Stiftung is preparing to launch a new program focused on school turnaround. The program could address the challenge of school turnaround through a series of actions:

Establishing a transatlantic dialogue on failing schools between NYC and Berlin

A delegation of Berlin education reform stakeholders will travel to New York City in October 2011 to meet with their NYC counterparts and begin a dialogue on ideas and lessons learned that can be transferred across the Atlantic. This working paper has been written with the specific purpose of providing background information to the attendees of this convening. In 2012, a next step could be to host a delegation of NYC education reform stakeholders in Berlin to continue the conversation and provide an opportunity for more in-depth exploration of the innovations taking place in Berlin, for example around early childhood education and career readiness.

Implementing a program for school turnaround in Berlin

A potential “Berlin Strategy Conference on School Turnaround” would build on the insights generated at the convening in NYC and bring together relevant actors in Berlin (e.g., schools, youth and social services, district administrators) to illustrate pathways for school turnaround and critical actions for policy-setting. Building on this, and in close partnership with the Berlin Department of Education, solutions could be developed to turn around a selection of struggling schools. The program would focus on improving overall school performance through a holistic approach encompassing leadership, instructional quality and parental and community engagement.

Capacity building on school turnaround in Germany

Finally, insights gained from the efforts in Berlin would be evaluated and distributed to relevant actors. A national symposium could inform ministry representatives and other experts of success factors for school turnaround. Individual schools or school districts would benefit from the results of the initiative through detailed materials, publications and other forms of immediate support.

The convening will be instrumental for the further development of these potential next steps.

Working Paper Approach & Methodology

As mentioned, this working paper has been designed to provide a basis for discussion at the October 2011 convening in New York City. Comparing and contrasting the NYC and Berlin school systems, and exploring their respective reform paths, could no doubt result in volumes of books. However, this working paper has purposely been written at a high-level, providing enough context for fruitful dialogue but in no way providing a comprehensive landscape of efforts in either city. The contents of this working paper have been informed by nearly 40 interviews on both sides of the Atlantic (see the Appendix for a listing of names) as well as dozens of existing articles and literature on the topic (see the Appendix for a full bibliography). Our aim is for this working paper to provide a basis for understanding the school systems and reform efforts in both NYC and Berlin and thus serve as a launch pad for sharing ideas and transferring learnings.

II. More in Common Than You Think

Comparison of Berlin and New York City School Systems







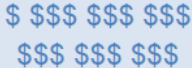



Before highlighting the various reform efforts taking place in NYC and Berlin, it is important to first compare the two school systems in terms of some basic dimensions so that the reforms can be better understood in the context of each city’s situation. This section will highlight basic data points and descriptions for five dimensions of each city’s school system:

- Basic characteristics
- Student demographics
- Human capital considerations
- Pathways to college and career
- Selected performance indicators

There are certainly both more categories and a myriad of other data points within these categories that could be mentioned; however, these should give a basic overview of each system in order to put the reform efforts described in the coming chapters into context.

Basic characteristics

While the NYC school system is approximately 2.5 times the size of the Berlin school system, both represent their country’s largest urban school district. NYC educates around 1,100,000 school-aged children in a total of approximately 1,700 schools while Berlin educates about 415,000 children in approximately 1,000 schools. In terms of students per class, NYC and Berlin operate very similarly.

K-12/13 System	New York City	Berlin
Number of Schools⁵	~1,700 	~1,000 
Number of Students⁶	~1,100,000 	~415,000 
Students per Class⁷	Elementary: 23.7 Secondary: 26.3 	Elementary: 22.7 Secondary: 26.6 
Per Pupil Spend⁸	~\$19,000 	~\$9,000 
% of City Budget Spent on K-12/13 Education⁹	~34% 	~16% (of which 4% pre-K) 

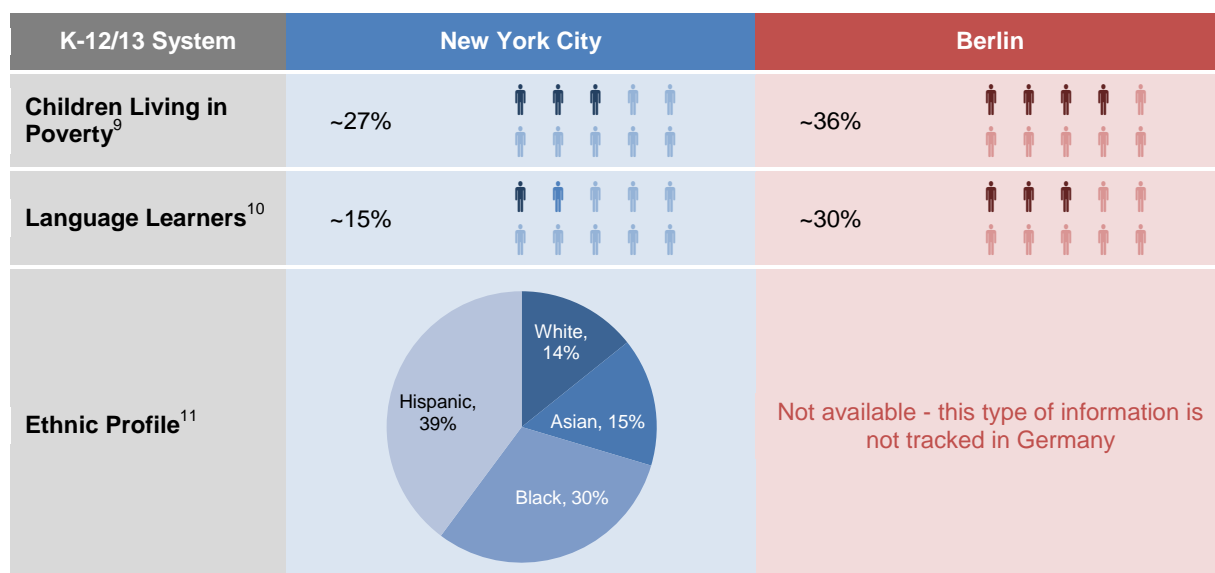
On the financial side, *New York City spends considerably more on education than Berlin*, measured both by per pupil spend, which is twice as high in NYC, as well as the percentage of the city budget allocated to education (34%). However, it is important to note that per pupil spend in NYC varies widely between general education students (~\$15K) and special education students (~\$50K).⁵ Furthermore, NYC per pupil spend is nearly twice the US average.⁶ Overall, education spending in NYC has increased by 108% since 2002, substantially higher than inflation growth of 33% over that same time period. In addition to the operating budget, NYC has set aside 37% (\$20 billion) of its ten year capital expenditure budget just for schools.⁷

In Berlin, 12% of the city’s budget is spent on primary and secondary education, with an additional 4% spent on pre-K and kindergarten for a total of 16% on general education. Berlin’s investments into early childhood education will be discussed further in the Berlin reform chapter.

Student demographics

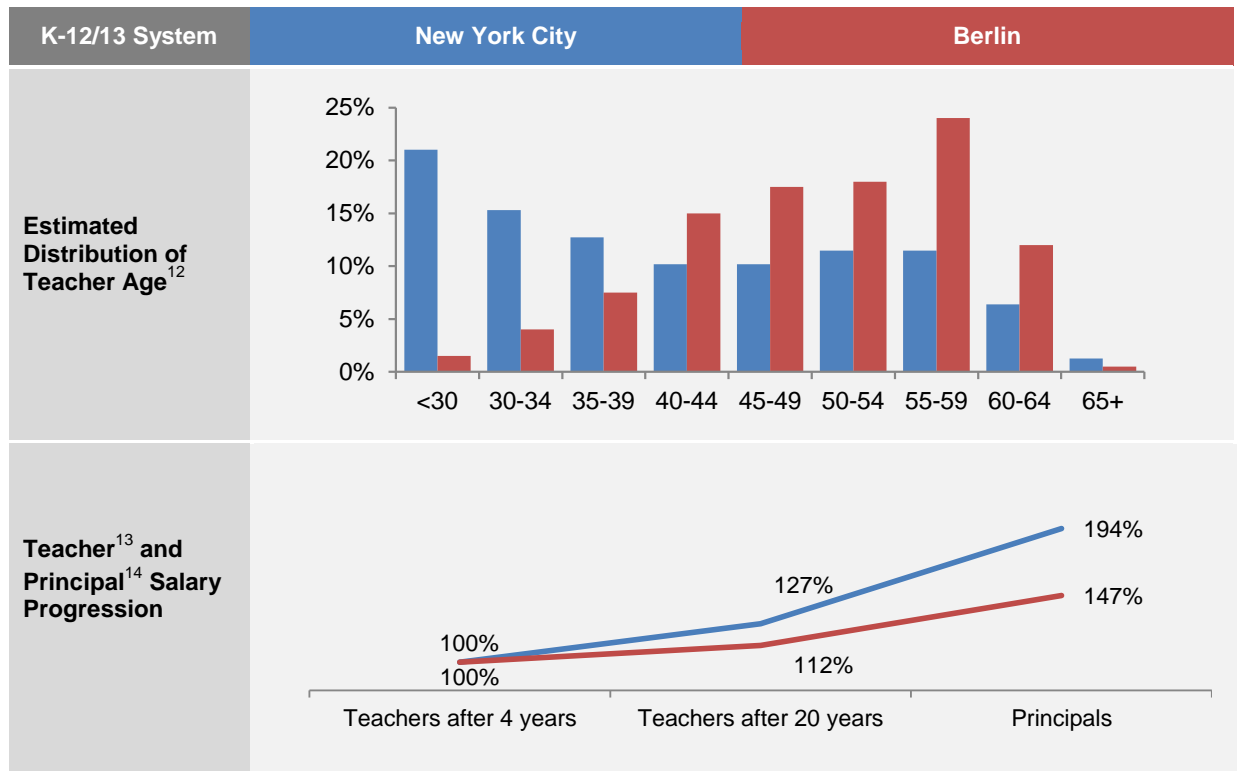
Both Berlin and NYC are *educating students from challenging environments*. In NYC, 27% of students are classified as living in poverty. Approximately 15% of NYC’s students are classified as English Language Learners (ELL). Further, the NYC student body is highly diverse as shown in the pie chart below.

In Berlin, 36% of children are affected by poverty. 30% of school-age children are from a non-German background (“nichtdeutscher Herkunft”), categorized as “Language Learners” in this chapter for comparison purposes. However, this figure varies widely among the different districts that comprise the Berlin school system, ranging from ~15% in the district with the lowest proportion of non-German background students to ~75% in the district with the highest proportion.⁸



Human capital considerations

On the human capital front, there are *big differences between NYC and Berlin*, ranging from the credentialing process to compensation. As the chart on the next page shows, teachers in NYC are younger than teachers in Berlin. Specifically, the median age of teachers in NYC is around 40, while in Berlin it is ten years higher at around 50. Strikingly, while over 20% of teachers in NYC are below the age of 30, in Berlin less than 6% of teachers fall into this age category. Part of this age differential relates to the different credentialing requirements. In Germany, becoming a teacher requires a dedicated bachelor and master, followed by a 12-24 month professional certification period (“Referendariat”). Considering that secondary education until recently lasted to 13th grade, it is logical that teachers typically start their careers in Germany toward the end of their 20s at the earliest. In the United States, teachers can start younger, after completing a bachelor (which does not have to be education-specific) and obtaining their teaching license. NYC in particular has pursued creative strategies to get more (and younger) teachers into the city, which will be described further in the next chapter.



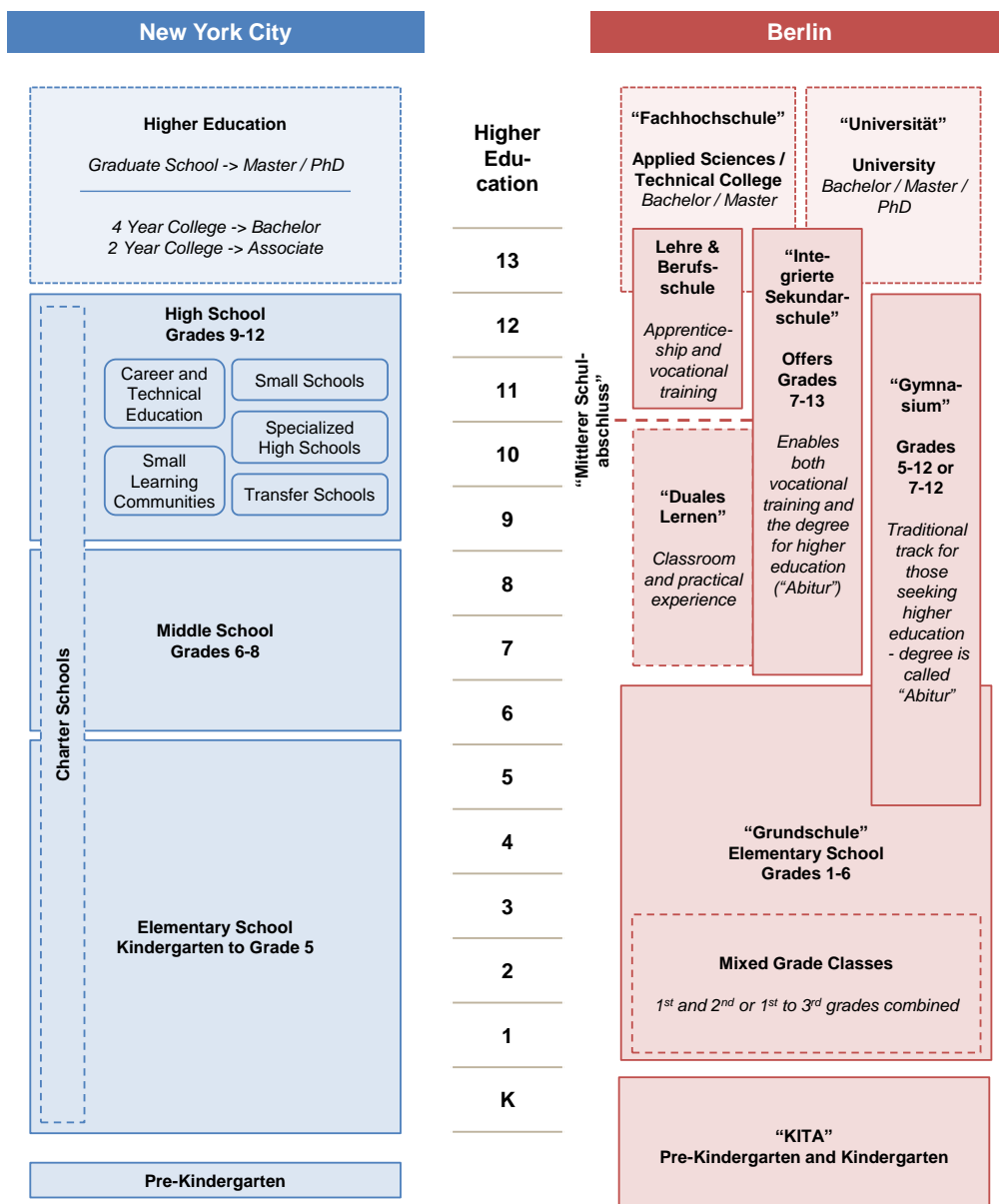
In NYC, teacher salaries are significantly higher than in Berlin. After 4 years, the average annual salary of a NYC teacher is \$70K while in Berlin, after the same time, a teacher only earns on average \$51K per year. It is critical though to *caution against comparing these figures 1:1*. Teachers in Berlin have historically been civil servants, meaning that they enjoy several benefits beyond their base compensation related to lower taxes, social security and retirement benefits, as well as high levels of job security. Moreover, the cost of living in Berlin is much lower than in NYC.¹⁵ In this context it is also important to note that raising teacher salaries was a deliberate part of the human capital strategy in NYC and aimed at attracting high-potential young professionals to start a career within the NYC education system. Since 2002, starting salaries for NYC public school teachers have increased by 43%.¹⁶ Nevertheless, as the chart above depicts, the progression of teachers' salaries is much stronger in NYC than in Berlin. Especially with regard to leadership positions the difference is significant. To take over a position as a principal in NYC means earning a salary that is on average 94% higher than the average teacher salary after four years. In Berlin, the average salary of a principal is only 47% higher than the average teacher salary after four years. Yet, the most important difference lies within the fact that the lowest principal salary in NYC is at least 29% higher than the maximum salary that a teacher can earn after 20 years, whereas in Berlin, the difference amounts to only 6%.¹⁷ This clearly indicates that the incentive to become a principal and take on additional responsibilities is much larger in NYC than in Berlin.

Pathways to college and career

Perhaps the *most substantial difference in the two cities' school systems is structural* and has its roots in the two countries' differing approaches to education. While the US has historically had a somewhat uniform path to a secondary degree, which is obtained in grade 12 (high school diploma) and enables post-secondary studies, Germany is known for its system of multiple pathways. Berlin's recent reform efforts on this topic will be detailed in the Berlin reform chapter.

The diagram below highlights some of the key characteristics of the new multiple pathways model in Berlin. Following elementary school, students can enter so-called Integrated Secondary Schools which offer several paths. On the one hand, students can remain in school until grade 13 and complete the “Abitur”, which qualifies them for higher education at either a classic university or an applied sciences university. Alternatively, students have the option of obtaining a diploma after the 10th grade (“Mittlerer Schulabschluss”) after which they can enter a structured apprenticeship program, accompanied by vocational studies. From this path, they can still choose to eventually obtain a post-secondary degree from an applied sciences university. Further, “learning to work” is integrated into the classroom as early as 7th grade. Berlin’s system of “Dual Learning” enables internships and practical work experience alongside traditional school studies. This will also be explored further in the Berlin chapter.

NYC has also created more options along the path to graduation, including several types of high schools. Further, dozens of charter schools have emerged that exist alongside traditional public schools. NYC’s reforms on this front will be explored further in the next chapter.



Selected performance indicators

The table below shows some performance indicators that each city tracks. It is important to note that these indicators *cannot and should not be compared 1:1 across the two cities*, especially related to the proficiency data due to the fact that testing in each city is based on completely different standards.

K-12/13 System	New York City	Berlin
Grade 3 Language Proficiency ¹⁸	NYC Overall: 47% White: 66% Black/Hispanic: 39% Highest borough: 53% Lowest borough: 36%	Berlin overall: 62% German native: 72% German learners: 39% Highest district: 79% Lowest district: 42%
Grade 3 Math Proficiency ¹⁹	NYC Overall: 54% White: 73% Black/Hispanic: 45% Highest borough: 62% Lowest borough: 43%	Berlin overall: 57% German native: 63% German learners: 39% Highest district: 75% Lowest district: 42%
Grade 8 Language Proficiency ²⁰	NYC Overall: 38% White: 59% Black/Hispanic: 29% Highest borough: 47% Lowest borough: 26%	Berlin overall: 43% German native: 55% German learners: 28% Highest district: Lowest district:
Grade 8 Math Proficiency ²¹	NYC Overall: 46% White: 68% Black/Hispanic: 35% Highest borough: 57% Lowest borough: 31%	Berlin overall: 55% German native: 64% German learners: 34% Highest district: 69% Lowest district: 35%
Graduation and Drop-Out Rates ²²	<p><i>Four Year Graduation</i></p> <p>Rates</p> <p>Legend: Graduated (blue), Still Enrolled (light blue), Dropped-Out (dark blue)</p>	<p><i>Secondary Education Attainment</i></p> <p>Legend: Abitur (red), Middle Degree (light red), Dropped-Out (dark red)</p>

Note that these performance indicators cannot be compared 1:1

The charts do indicate, however, that each city is focused on closing a substantial *achievement gap*. In the case of NYC, this achievement gap relates to the performance of Black and Hispanic students in comparison to White students. There is also an achievement gap between English native and English learning (“ELL”) students in NYC; however, as this population comprises a relatively smaller percentage of the NYC school system, the achievement differential that is depicted in these charts focuses on ethnicity. In Berlin, the ethnicity of students is never analyzed. Instead, the achievement gap relates to the performance of non-native Germans (“nichtdeutscher Herkunft”) in comparison to native Germans. While it is important to caution that the absolute data shown above in terms of language and math performance *cannot be compared*, the relative data shows similarities. For example, in 3rd and 8th grade language and math tests, the achievement gap between the respective student demographic groups of concern in both cities is substantial (between 20% and 35%). Interestingly, in both cities scores for language are lower across the board in the 8th grade as compared to the 3rd grade.

Further, in each city, there is a wide *achievement gap among the different sub-geographies*. In Berlin, which is divided into 12 districts, 3rd grade proficiency scores in both language and math are nearly twice as high in the best performing district as in the worst performing district. Data by district for language proficiency in the 8th grade is not available, but the math results show that the best performing district exhibits 69% proficiency while the worst performing district exhibits approximately half of this with 35% proficiency. The NYC data points relating to geographic differences appear less profound (typically a differential of around 20% versus Berlin’s 30%); however, the analysis was completed by looking at the city’s five boroughs. NYC is also divided into (but not formally managed around) 32 geographic districts. The differential among these districts is very high, for example 3rd grade language proficiency in NYC’s best performing district is 74%, compared to 28% in the worst performing district.²³ Not surprisingly, both cities have included school choice in their respective reform efforts, allowing more mobility for students to attend schools outside their home geography.

Both cities are also focused on *improving graduation rates*. As described in the previous section on “Pathways to college and career” the Berlin school system offers the option of a diploma after the 10th grade, which NYC does not, thus it is not possible to draw a comparison between NYC and Berlin in terms of absolute graduation and drop-out rates. However, as depicted on the prior page, there is again a similarity among the relative rates between student demographic groups of concern in both cities. For example, in NYC the drop-out rate for White students is 8%, while the drop-out rate for Black students is significantly higher (12%) and for Hispanic students nearly twice as high (15%).²⁴ Similarly in Berlin, the overall drop-out rate is 10%, but there is a stark difference between German native students (8%) and non-German native students (15%).

Building on Commonalities and Learning from Differences

The highlights on the past few pages have shown that both cities are actively trying to manage their country’s largest urban school system amidst similar challenges. In each city, there are achievement gaps to be filled and thus tailored strategies to be developed. Further, in each city the performance of schools in different sub-geographies varies widely, necessitating increased focus on certain “hot spots” of low-performing schools in different parts of the city.

As the next three chapters will show, in the face of these challenges school system reforms in both cities have been aimed at:

- increasing the autonomy of schools and school leaders
- introducing new forms of performance monitoring to increase accountability
- making structural changes to the basic architecture of the school system
- increasing school choice across the city's schools

At the same time, the high-level snapshots of the NYC and Berlin school systems also shed light on some of the differences that can provide instructive learnings and potentially new approaches to consider.

For example NYC, as the next chapter will show, has gone further than Berlin on both autonomy and accountability. Moreover, in order to create the enabling environment for expansive autonomy and strict accountability, the DOE has also put a substantial emphasis on the development of human capital, especially school leaders, and implemented structural changes to the way schools are supported by the district. Finally, NYC engages in active portfolio management of its schools, including distinct strategies for intervening if schools consistently underperform and are in need of deliberate turnaround.

Because Berlin is educating a large and growing population of German-language learners, the city is investing in innovative and in-depth early childhood approaches to promoting German language acquisition at a very early age, which will be discussed further in the Berlin reform chapter. Berlin is also maintaining the traditional German system of multiple pathways, while at the same time ensuring that it does not create an overly tracked system that results in so called “dead-end schools.”

The next few chapters will explore all of these reform efforts in greater detail.

III. Lessons Learned from School Reform in New York City

Context

“Current and future generations of NYC students will face unprecedented challenges— competing with well-educated students from across the globe and living in an increasingly diverse, multicultural, and, in many ways, divided world. More than ever, success depends on a high-quality education. The human stakes could not be higher. We recognized from the start that only by honestly facing the enormity of the challenge could we respond effectively to the moral urgency of our mission.”

New York City Department of Education, *Children First*, 2007²⁵

When Michael Bloomberg became mayor of New York City on January 1, 2002, he embarked on an ambitious campaign of school reform, focused on using evidence-based teaching practice to raise student outcomes across the city and reduce disparities between the city’s diverse populations.²⁶ He inherited a school system in which only 47% of 4th graders and 30% of 8th graders met grade level reading proficiency, an achievement gap of more than 30% persisted between White and minority students, and the four-year graduation rate was around 50%.²⁷ Bloomberg attained mayoral control of the city’s school system and appointed private-sector attorney Joel Klein as Chancellor. Over the following decade, New York City schools experienced dramatic reorganization under the *Children First* reforms, with the intent of increasing student achievement and closing performance gaps.

New York City’s bold moves quickly became an object of intense interest around the nation and the world as a case study in ambitious, comprehensive educational reform. As Jennifer O’Day and her co-authors observe in *Education Reform in New York City: Ambitious Change in the Nation’s Most Complex School System* (2011), “New York City seems to have drawn together many of the threads of what is emerging as a national education agenda, and is doing so on a massive scale.”²⁸

As illustrated in the prior chapter, one of the most profound changes in NYC was education funding. Funding for the NYC Department of Education essentially doubled between 2002 and 2010, supported by funds from a mixture of state and municipal taxes, federal support, and private grants. Per-pupil spending grew at twice the rate in NYC as in the rest of New York State.²⁹ The city also instituted a proprietary “Fair Student Funding” (FSF) formula to ensure that schools are funded appropriately for their need and size.³⁰ FSF funds are used by schools to cover basic instructional needs and are allocated to each school based on the number and need-level of students enrolled at that school. All money (about 50% of school-based budgets) allocated through FSF can be used at the principals’ discretion.

However, funding is of course only part of the story. The following pages focus on the some of the main building blocks of the *Children First* reforms:

- Autonomy
- Accountability
- Leadership & human capital
- Portfolio approach

As this working paper has been purposely written at a high-level, it does not cover all of the details of these building blocks, nor does it address all of the reform efforts that have taken place. It provides a panorama of reform efforts that are most relevant to the Berlin context.

Selected Building Blocks of Reform

Autonomy

The Bloomberg-Klein model of school reform in New York has been built on two phases to date. After taking control of the school system, Klein and Bloomberg set out to unify a system which they saw as diffuse, unaccountable, and low-performing, through an attempt to consolidate decision-making and accountability among a smaller number of superintendents. Quickly, however, the focus shifted towards a system that combines leadership at a local level capable of focusing on individual classroom environments with central direction capable of developing and enforcing a coherent plan for improvement.

“NYC’s reform strategy fits the description of business decentralization almost perfectly. The theory of change: strengthen the top and bottom (i.e., schools) against the middle (i.e. central and regional administration); let local productive units (schools) make the consequential decisions that affect their productivity; encourage innovation; centralize accountability via common outcome measures; make all arrangements contingent on performance; and continually search for better people and providers. [...] The schools seek to continuously improve the options available to customers (families).”

Paul Hill, “Leadership and Governance in New York City School Reforms”³¹

In 2005 the ground was laid for a fully autonomous system of schools. The Autonomous Zone (later named the Empowerment Zone) was instituted as a pilot, giving twenty-nine school principals control over staff and spending decisions in return for increased accountability for school performance results. The program quickly expanded to provide finance and human resource management responsibilities to most principals within the next two years.³² More schools joined and by 2007 Klein announced all schools would automatically be given autonomy over of day-to-day budgeting, staffing, and instruction, in return for accountability, as measured by their performance on standardized annual assessments conducted by the DOE. Principals would be expected to exercise their new responsibilities for continuous academic and operational improvement, but the DOE was careful to include mechanisms for targeted assistance.

In their autonomy, schools are supported by dedicated teams, which are described in more detail in Box 1. While the name of this support network has changed over the years through the different phases of autonomous schools, the core aim remains the same: “expand the philosophy of devolving as much decision-making power as possible to the people who know schools best: principals, teachers and school staff. The ultimate goal is to streamline operations and build capacity within schools so school-based staff can focus their time on instruction and accelerate student achievement.”³³

As teachers in NYC are unionized, giving principals more autonomy over teacher selection was the result of negotiations with the teacher’s union (United Federation of Teachers). In 2005, the city reached a new collective bargaining agreement with the union that created a system of “mutual consent” in which both teachers and principals have to agree on all teacher placements but where principals are given ultimate authority over teacher hiring in their schools. The deal required teachers to work longer days, allowed principals to disregard teacher seniority in hiring decisions and instead to focus purely on merit, which ended the

“bumping” of younger teachers out of their positions by more senior teachers who wanted the position (and could previously move into the job without approval from school staff). It also established a new “lead” teacher position in which veteran educators serve as mentors and experts to colleagues in return for a higher pay. By changing the fundamentals of the staffing process for teachers and schools, a so-called “open market” hiring system was established. In return, teachers received a raise of 15% over 52 months and kept a number of seniority rights such as preferences in grade as well as class and subject assignments.³⁴ While this new system was initially opposed by teachers, the DOE was able to make the convincing argument that increased control of teachers’ working environment by the teachers and administration would be in teachers’ – and students’ – best interests. In addition, the rapidly expanding teacher salaries were certainly helpful to successfully come to an agreement.³⁵

Box 1: Support networks – from *supervising* schools to *supporting* schools

As already mentioned in the main part of this chapter, the NYC DOE moved from an initial pilot of autonomous schools to an entire district of autonomous and empowered schools, eventually rendering the so-called Empowerment Zone label redundant. A logical consequence of empowering 100% of the schools in the system was also changing the way the DOE and its various operational and academic supervisory departments interact with individual schools. Keeping a more “customer service” orientation in mind, the district reorganized the traditional, geography based school “middle management” supervisory infrastructure into a service model in which schools can choose from whom they acquire services. Over time, the model has evolved, and will surely continue to evolve, but its basic tenets have remained consistent:

- Schools join networks of peer schools through self-selection (i.e. schools decide on their own which network they want to join)
- Each network consists of approximately 20 schools
- Networks have access to a Network Team (~15-20 people) that provides tailored instructional and operational support based on what the school needs / wants
- Example services include:
 - *Instructional support*: early intervention services to meet the needs of struggling students, implementation of classroom-level support, helping principals and teachers incorporate new standards into school curricula
 - *Operational support*: human resources administration, payroll, budget and procurement, food services, transportation, facilities, technology, health, youth development, legal, etc.

The goal is to center decision making with the people who know their school best: principals, teachers and school staff. Each network employs a small cross-functional team directly accountable to principals that delivers personalized services to schools. Further, the hope is that schools interact with their network peers to exchange best practices and lessons learned.

By giving schools a choice in who they acquire services from, the traditional structure of the school system was turned upside down, encouraging the “middle management” layer to take on a support mentality rather than a supervisory role. In fact, some of the Support Networks that schools can choose from are not formally part of the DOE, but rather private operators. In April 2010, 95% of NYC’s principals stated to be satisfied (63% very satisfied) with the instructional support provided by their networks and 96% were satisfied (70% very satisfied) with the operational support that they had received.³⁶ In Berlin, this would be the equivalent of letting schools choose who supports them in areas typically covered by the “Schulaufsicht” and “Schulamt”.

Accountability

As previously mentioned, expanded autonomy in NYC went hand in hand with increased accountability. The accountability system is heavily based on the use of data in instruction and management, as well as organizational transparency through increased parent reporting and public release of key monitoring metrics. The DOE under Klein's leadership instituted new data systems at two levels: *individual student data* to improve pedagogy and results in real-time, and a *school-based accountability system* based on on-site inspections as well as aggregated student standardized testing. The combination of these two approaches, it is hoped, will serve as a forcing function for continuous improvement at all levels, from the classroom to the citywide system.

Within schools, individual student data has been made available to teachers through the DOE's online reporting platform, *ARIS (Achievement Reporting and Innovation System)*. Teachers can currently examine students' current and historical standardized testing data to discover strengths and needs for individual instruction, and the DOE hopes to expand the platform to include information sharing on instructional best practices.³⁷

Since 2007, teacher collaboration is also promoted within schools through *inquiry teams*, a group of educators who meet regularly to examine the needs of individual struggling students and identify instructional strategies to meet each struggling student's progress targets. It is hoped that developing a culture of instructor collaboration through inquiry teams will take hold more broadly, and the DOE expanded the initiative to that effect in 2009-10, expecting nearly all teachers to engage around individual student outcomes, school goals, or curriculum.³⁸

In addition to these efforts to develop individual and collaborative evidence-based practice, the DOE has developed two mechanisms to monitor schools' progress in creating schools focused on, and consistently delivering, added value to students' educational progress.

- First, school inspections ("Quality Reviews") allowed the DOE to gather data on the level to which schools' instruction followed the evidence-based, collaborative practice encouraged by policies such as ARIS and inquiry teams. Five elements are evaluated as part of a Quality Review ("QR"): instructional coherence to state standards, collection and use of data on student outcomes, school wide planning and goal setting to accelerate student growth, structured professional collaboration to meet goals, and structures to support continuous improvement.³⁹ In essence, QRs evaluate a school's adoption of autonomy to set ambitious goals and lay the groundwork for higher student achievement.
- Second, *Progress Reports*, in contrast to QRs, were developed to be annual assessments of schools' student achievement results, indicating the success of its instructional and management programs. Whereas QRs are primarily intended to be used in internal improvement efforts (but are publicly available), progress reports are explicitly designed to be the public report on the state of a given school. Progress reports are described further in Box 2.

As discussed at the end of this chapter, New York City's data-driven accountability efforts have not always been received as positive.

Box 2: Tracking schools' performance in NYC

Tracking (and making publicly available) data about school performance has been a cornerstone of NYC's focus on accountability.

How is a school's performance assessed? The School Progress Report

Each school's Progress Report measures student year-to-year progress, compares the school to peer schools and rewards success for improving the performance of all children, especially children with the greatest needs.

The Progress Report measures four areas:

- **School Environment** (15% of score) uses parent, teacher and secondary student surveys and other data to measure necessary conditions for learning: attendance, academic expectations, communication, engagement, safety and respect
- **Student Performance** (25% of score) measures student skill levels in English Language Arts ("ELA") and Math
- **Student Progress** (60% of score) measures median student improvement from the prior year in English Language Arts and Math
- **Closing the Achievement Gap** gives schools additional credit for exemplary performance gains in ELA and / or Math among high-need students

As noted above, 60% of the grade relates to progress (did the school improve performance) rather than absolute student performance. Thus, schools are rewarded for achieving gains vis-à-vis the initial proficiencies of the students they serve. An example School Progress Report can be found in Box 4.

What are the consequences of the School Progress Report?

Schools are assigned A (highest) through F (lowest) letter grades based on their overall Progress Report score. Monetary bonuses may be given to principals and teachers at high-scoring schools. Schools that get Ds and Fs, or three Cs in a row may face consequences, including change in school leadership or school closure. The discussion of the Office of Portfolio Development in the main part of this chapter provides more details on how the DOE intervenes if a school consistently exhibits poor performance.

What other data can a parent access about NYC schools?

In addition to the School Progress Report, the DOE makes a range of data available to the public, including:

- Results of the learning survey (students, teachers, parents) mentioned above
- Results of the quality review (site visit) mentioned in the main text
- Information on enrollment, average class size, demographic factors, attendance, and teacher qualifications summarized in an "Accountability and Overview Report"
- Annual results on standardized tests summarized in a "Comprehensive Information Report"
- School budget (revenues and per pupil spending in certain categories, personnel salaries)
- School educational plan

Finally, parents can also access ARIS, which provides key information on their child in one place, for example attendance, test results, report cards, etc. to help parents identify what types of learning activities they can do at home with their child to improve his or her achievement. ARIS, just like the rest of the DOE website, is available in ten languages.

Leadership & human capital

The DOE recognized early on that a system of autonomous, accountable schools that were driven by data and an inquiry-based approach to teaching required a first rate set of educators. As already illustrated in the prior chapter, the DOE raised teacher salaries significantly over the past few years to make the job even more attractive.

Principals in particular are seen as one of the most critical elements in the NYC model, and the DOE has pursued a deliberate strategy to attract, train and retain principals. For example, The New York City Leadership Academy (see Box 3), was founded in 2003 to prepare principals undertaking the then new Empowerment Zone program, and has since expanded to serve the DOE by recruiting, training, and placing autonomous principals in high-needs schools and providing management support and training for existing principals.⁴⁰ Box 4 provides an example of a school very much living the autonomy and empowerment model, run by a graduate of the New York City Leadership Academy. The DOE realizes that the Leadership Academy will not be the only source of new principals in the NYC school system and is thus working in partnership with other principal training programs to ensure that principals are developed for the specific needs of the NYC school system.

Box 3: New York City Leadership Academy

The NYC Leadership Academy was launched in 2003 to recruit, develop and support effective school leaders, with a special focus on preparing principals to lead New York City's high-needs schools. While the academy currently plays several roles, including coaching for existing principals and national consulting to help other school districts create successful leadership development programs, the flagship program is the Aspiring Principals Program (APP). APP prepares new principals to lead instructional improvement efforts in the city's high-needs public schools – those marked by high poverty and low student achievement. The 14-month program has three distinct phases: (1) a six-week summer intensive that engages participants in a problem-based, action-oriented curriculum that simulates the actual challenges of being a New York City principal; (2) a ten-month, school-based residency under the mentorship of an experienced principal; and (3) a planning summer that enables participants to transition successfully into school leadership positions. The APP's faculty is comprised of former New York City principals and principal supervisors. APP participants' salaries and benefits are paid by the NYC DOE while in the program. In addition, participants who have not yet earned their New York State administrative certification complete the necessary credits. Today, APP principals represent 17% of New York City public school principals and currently serve more than 112,000 students. A recent independent study found that schools led by graduates of APP tend to improve student performance in English language and math at a higher rate than schools led by similarly-tenured principals in similar schools. Existing principals and other stakeholders in the NYC education system actively look for aspiring teacher leaders and encourage them to consider becoming principals through APP. Admission requirements, among others, include five years of work experience, of which at least three years have to be K-12 teaching experience.

Sources: NYC Leadership Academy; Interviews.

On the teacher side, NYC developed and / or partnered with several programs that allow teacher certification to occur on the job:

- *NYC Teaching Residency for School Turnaround*, which is an alternative teacher certification program designed to recruit and prepare talented, committed individuals to become effective teachers who will dedicate themselves to raising student achievement and driving change as part of a school turnaround strategy in New York City's lowest performing schools
- *New York City Teaching Fellows*, which recruits and prepares high-quality, dedicated individuals to become teachers who raise student achievement in the New York City classrooms that need them most
- *Teach For America*, which places recent college graduates and professionals of varying academic majors and career interests who commit two years to teaching in urban and rural public schools in the effort to expand educational opportunity

Further, teachers are encouraged early on to take on leadership positions within their schools. Ranging from departmental responsibilities to supporting the overall school leadership, which typically happens in a team-based setting, teachers are given opportunities to lead outside their classroom. Part of the quality review rubric for schools looks at whether schools have “structures to support distributed leadership with a focus on using teacher teams and other school decision making processes to support the development of teacher leaders.”⁴¹

Finally, the NYC DOE also recruited district management through innovative and non-traditional sources, such as the Broad Residency in Urban Education. The Broad Residency is a leadership development program that places participants into full-time high-level managerial positions in school districts, charter management organizations, and federal or state departments of education. Participants typically have a private sector background, for example experience in finance, operations, strategy, information technology, human resources, and general management and are often recruited from top business schools.

While working, Broad Residents receive two years of professional development and access to a nationwide network of education leaders. Residents are often tasked with leading major projects like opening new schools, leading budgeting processes, increasing operational efficiencies, improving human resources, or supporting the launch of major policy initiatives. The Broad Residency expects the organizations they work with to continue to employ Broad Residency alumni in their current positions or promote them into more senior leadership posts. Over ninety percent of Broad Residency alumni still work in education and continue to positively impact student achievement as leaders in the education industry.⁴²

For example in NYC, a Broad resident was able to lower the amount of time principals spent on administrative tasks in New York City from 43 percent to 30 percent by reducing unnecessary central office reporting requirements. As a result, principals had far more time to spend in the classroom, helping students and teachers succeed.⁴³

Box 4: ACCION Academy

At the young age of 28, NYC Leadership Academy graduate Adrian Manuel took over as the third principal of the then four year old ACCION Academy, a middle school in the Bronx, in 2007. Having felt disengaged by traditional schooling as child, Principal Manuel’s vision for the Academy is that of an “empowered school” – one in which teachers, counselors, students and parents have a voice in how the school operates. This manifests itself in several ways: Principal Manuel seeks for teachers to view themselves as “generators of new knowledge of their practice”. Thus, much time, energy and budget is spent on enabling teachers to improve their craft, experiment with new teaching methods, and work in departmental teams to improve instruction. For example, each department meets for an *entire day every week* using a guided approach of inquiry, which includes lesson design and discussion of taped lessons to improve instruction. Further, he wants teachers to view themselves as strategic thinkers and problem solvers. Budgets are part of the empowerment model, including for example budgets for each department or the “innovation and experimentation” team, which tests new technology to bring into the classroom. Each year in a spring retreat, teachers discuss progress and lessons from the current year, and together plan the curriculum for the following year. Teacher professional development is seen as critical, and each teacher develops a personal plan every September, which is carefully tracked over the course of the year.

In a nutshell, Principal Manuel and his school leadership team have taken the concept of process optimization and continuous learning (e.g., “Six Sigma” from the business world) and modified it for a school setting. He views his role as the designer of systems that enable the school, and especially its teachers, to innovate and thrive. Thus, data and technology play a key role in decision making and instructional design and delivery. The school’s efforts have paid off: in just four years the school’s overall rating improved from a “D” to an “A”; from the 5th percentile to the 81st percentile (see latest Progress Report below).

NYC Department of Education Progress Report 2009-10 MIDDLE

Progress Report Grade

A

What does this grade mean?

Schools are assigned letter grades based on their overall Progress Report score. Monetary bonuses may be given to principals and teachers at high-scoring schools. Schools that get Ds and Fs, or 3 Cs in a row, may face consequences, including change in school leadership or school closure.

How did this school perform?

- This school's overall score for 2009-10 is 64.4
- This school did better than 81% of all Middle schools citywide.

This Progress Report is for:

SCHOOL: **Accion Academy (12X341)**

PRINCIPAL: **Adrian Manuel**

ENROLLMENT: **183**

SCHOOL TYPE: **MIDDLE**

PEER INDEX: **2.32**

Category	Calculated Score	Category Grade
School Environment	7.7 out of 15	B
Student Performance	6.7 out of 25	C
Student Progress	42.5 out of 60	A
Additional Credit	7.5 (15 max)	
Overall Score	64.4 out of 100	A

How scores translate to grades:

- Schools receive letter grades based on their overall score.
- Schools with an overall score of 62.1 or higher receive a letter grade of A
- 25.1% of schools earned an A in 2009-10

Middle Table – Overall Grades

Grade	Score range	City summary
A	62.1 or higher	25.1% of schools
B	42.6 - 62.0	35.1% of schools
C	30.8 - 42.5	34.2% of schools
D	18.5 - 30.5	5% of schools
F	18.4 or lower	0.6% of schools

In light of changes in State tests and Progress Report methodology, schools cannot drop more than two letter grades from last year to this year. Further, schools with top quartile performance in ELA and Math cannot receive a grade lower than C.

Quality Review Score
This school's most recent Quality Review score is: **Proficient (2008-09)**

To see this school's Quality Review report, find the school's Web site at <http://schools.nyc.gov/>, click "Statistics" and scroll down to Quality Review Report.

State Accountability Status
Based on its performance, this school's State accountability status is: **In Good Standing (2009-10)**

This status is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It is separate from the school's Progress Report Grade.

In This Report:

Each school's Progress Report (1) measures student year-to-year progress, (2) compares the school to peer schools and (3) rewards success in moving all children forward, especially children with the greatest needs. The Progress Report measures four areas:

School Environment
uses parent, teacher and secondary student surveys and other data to measure necessary conditions for learning: attendance, academic expectations, communication, engagement and safety and respect.

Student Performance
measures student skill levels in English Language Arts and Math.

Student Progress
measures median student improvement from last year to this year in English Language Arts and Math.

Closing the Achievement Gap
gives schools additional credit for exemplary gains among high-need students.

The second page provides specific information about how

Portfolio approach

Finally, NYC has adopted a portfolio approach to its schools – striving for “a system of great schools rather than a great school system”. The portfolio approach can be summarized as follows:⁴⁴

Traditional School Districts	Portfolio School Districts
Schools as permanent investments	Schools as contingent on performance
“One best system” of schooling	Differentiated system of schools
Government as sole provider	Diverse groups provide schools

NYC has taken action on each of these three elements. First, as already mentioned above, school autonomy has been given in exchange for accountability. This accountability, as alluded to in Box 2 has consequences. For example, schools that receive grades D or F or three grades of C in a row in their Progress Report face the risk of change in leadership or even closure. To help manage the portfolio of schools from a performance perspective, the DOE set up the Office of Portfolio Development, which aims to help improve schools by considering school performance data and community needs. If a school is struggling, the Office of Portfolio Development provides support, such as professional development and teacher training and additional funding for specialized programs, to help schools make positive changes. In some cases, if schools are very low performing, more significant action is required, including staff replacement or leadership changes. Further, for very low performing schools the DOE may initiate phasing out some schools and replacing them with new schools, which is done in partnership with the Office of New Schools.

In terms of a differentiated set of schools, NYC has created more choice, especially among high schools, offering Career and Technical Education Schools (CTE), Small Learning Communities, Small Schools, Specialized High Schools and Transfer Schools as illustrated in the previous chapter on page 12. Most recently, the DOE launched the iZone, which is a community of innovative New York City schools committed to personalizing learning (see Box 5). According to the DOE, the *“idea is that by meeting the needs, motivations and strengths of each child, students will be better prepared for success in K-12, college and career. Across the iZone, schools achieve personalization in a variety of ways based on which ideas, technology and tools work best for their school community”*.⁴⁵ Further, parental and student choice in determining high school placement (rather than geographic proximity) was a key aim of the move to a more differentiated set of schools.

Finally, particularly as part of the New Schools reform efforts, the NYC DOE has partnered with operators to create schools that are public, but managed outside the traditional DOE system – so called charter schools. These schools are privately managed schools that receive public funding but are not subject to the bureaucratic and union restrictions which traditional public schools operate under. Charter schools’ contractual accountability to produce student achievement benchmarks fit well with Klein’s increasing push for principal accountability for all schools within the DOE system. At the chancellor’s direction, the DOE encouraged the growth of local charter organizations and invited nationally recognized

charter organizations to work in New York. The DOE provided charters with access to public school facilities, reducing capital costs as barriers to entry.⁴⁶

Box 5: Individualized and innovative learning in the iZone

What is the iZone?

To go beyond the incremental developments and reforms undertaken in previous years, the NYC DOE implemented an innovation zone (iZone), in 2010 in which new schools with revolutionary concepts can be created – 81 schools in 2010 and growing to 400 by 2014. The central goal is to improve learning by tailoring it to the individual student’s needs, to give children the opportunity to catch up on material difficult for them and to go faster in areas that they excel in. iZone “reimagines” the basis of teaching and learning as follows:

Traditional classroom-based model	Student-centered mastery model
Time, place, and pace of learning are constant	Learning occurs wherever needed, at whatever pace is needed; learning day extended if necessary
Standards are aligned to state testing systems, not empirically tied to college or career readiness	Standards are tied to global expectations and requirements for college success
Standard curriculum is used, with limited differentiation	Curriculum is personalized to meet diverse learning needs
Standardized tests are given for all at fixed intervals	Assessments are used that adapt and measure progress toward mastery of standards
Teacher role is generic	Teacher roles are flexible to support personalization and productivity

The so-called *School of One*, which is being piloted in some schools, for example is a math instruction method that uses computer algorithms to create *daily* individualized exercise plan based on each student’s previous performance. Teachers teach different modules to small groups depending on the students’ skill level and learning profile. Each day, students are assigned to new stations and modules and teachers are provided with information and activities for specific teaching assignments. A formal evaluation of the 2009 summer pilot program found that over the course of a 20 day summer program, students gained 28 percentage points from pre-test to posttest. In addition, 79 percent of students indicated they liked going to *School of One* each day.

Due to its focus on dramatic (rather than incremental) change, the iZone is both audacious and ambitious and will naturally experience growing pains as it wrestles with the status quo. However, as individualized learning, aided by computer technology (“blended learning”), becomes more and more critical in the 21st century, this bold experiment will hold valuable lessons for Berlin and beyond.

The iZone in action

The *Hudson High School* is an example of a public high school that seized the opportunity of the iZone to break free from the old system and start something revolutionary. Instead of text books, the 110 9th graders haven each been handed his or her own laptop (which turns out to be cheaper than textbooks over the course of their high school tenure). Classes leverage technology, but the technology is only a support; instruction comes first and teachers remain the central figure in the classroom, with the main difference being that technology allows them to use their time more wisely. Students can download their teachers’ explanations from an online repository, go back to these if they haven’t understood a concept, and retake tests later in the year if needed. Students are encouraged to use the internet and other technologies to creatively solve the problems presented to them, and they break out into small groups during the lessons to work on the exercises before they email the teacher their results. In this way, students are intended to become intellectually engaged partners. Principal Nancy Amling lists building team skills and learning to advocate for themselves among the most important learning successes. Two major challenges have surfaced in the school’s first year, which are both being addressed as the school moves into its second year. First is the fact that not all households can afford internet access for their children. Second, students have to develop from ‘digital natives’ to ‘digital learners’, in others word learn how to use technology for

learning and not entertainment.

Sources: CRPE Working Paper #2011-1; Interview with Nancy Amling; NYC DOE School of One Brochure.

Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for Berlin

The *Children First* reforms of the New York City educational system since 2002 have demonstrated organizational change at tremendous scale. Change in a system so massive and complex as New York City is a formidable challenge, made even more difficult by the polarizing nature of the debate around the reforms. However, with the acknowledgment that organizational change is a never-ending process and that the results will remain open to debate, it is possible to point to potential transferable ideas and lessons for Berlin related to both the *content* of reform as well as the *process* taken to get there.

Content lessons

In terms of content, Berlin can learn from NYC in terms of further expanding autonomy and accountability – including human capital and school support / intervention strategies.

Expanding autonomy, human capital and school support

On the autonomy side, providing principals with even more authority over budget and human resources, for example by making it easier to design teachers' allocation of time throughout the school day and week, and placing hiring decisions even more directly into the hands of schools, would allow schools and principals even more flexibility in creating an environment catered to the needs of the specific students served. In order to support this, Berlin could consider building on its efforts to train and certify principals by creating a dedicated leadership training program for serving high-needs schools in Berlin. The NYCLA could serve as one model for this, but there are surely others. Further, given the age of teachers in Berlin and the implied need for new teachers over the next decade, Berlin should consider developing deliberate strategies for attracting young teachers.

At the same time, increased autonomy over budget and human resources should not necessarily mean that precious time is spent on administrative tasks rather than instructional leadership. The idea of Network Support Teams that provide operational / administrative and instructional / academic support to clusters of similar schools could also work in Berlin, albeit likely within the confines of the twelve regional districts. In this model, principals could outsource administrative duties to dedicated teams, while at the same time receiving tailored support to meet the specific needs and challenges of their school.

Increasing accountability and performance management of the school portfolio

On the accountability side, Berlin has already created the building blocks of what could become a more deliberate annual assessment of school performance. Standardized tests have been implemented, 10th grade diploma and Abitur tests have been harmonized, school inspections and internal evaluation tools have been developed, and graduation and drop-out rates are tracked, as are other quality indicators such as the occurrence of truancy. All of these tools and indicators could be rolled-up (each year) and used to create a performance account of each school. A function could be created, either at the Senat-level (Berlin Department of Education equivalent) or within the regional school supervisory departments ("Schulaufsicht") to work with schools to create tailored improvement plans based on the results of these assessments. Whether Berlin chooses to follow the path of NYC in terms of consequences (closing schools or changing leadership if improvement does not occur within a set timeframe) or transparency (publicizing annual school assessments) is a larger debate

that will take time to unfold. However, even without consequences and full transparency, an internal (annual) assessment of school performance and related tailored school improvement plans would be a step toward more active management of struggling schools.

Process lessons

On the process side, there are surely countless lessons that can be drawn based on both successes and challenges. In the context of Berlin, three key areas rise to the top where Berlin can learn from NYC: the trade-off between speed and buy-in; pursuing a (publicly available) data-driven approach; and changing systems *and* changing mentality.

The trade-off between speed and buy-in

The Klein / Bloomberg administration's reforms were implemented with great speed, often at the expense of generating buy-in with communities, parents, teachers and the teachers' union. On the one hand, by acting swiftly and decisively, Klein and Bloomberg were able to transform an entire system in the course of just a few years. On the other hand, they often faced scrutiny and outright opposition over the years. With Klein's departure last year, and Bloomberg's pending departure in 2013, it will be interesting to see if the reforms are able to withstand changes in leadership. Klein himself acknowledged the need for greater community engagement after the end of his term:

"I probably could have spent more time, or should have spent more time really engaging people so they really understand the things that drive me. The number of people who have said to me, "Now I understand that; I didn't understand that," when I've had the time to talk it through with them has made an impression on me."⁴⁷

Pursuing a (publicly available) data-driven approach

Secondly, the emphasis on (publicly available) data has been the subject of criticism and controversy. Some teachers and educational experts contend that invalid or unreliable testing could be more damaging than a lack of actionable data in that it may mislead the DOE and individual teachers to suboptimal pedagogical or management approaches. Without adequate debate over the correct methods, they claim, the DOE harms its evidence-based process. Indeed, the DOE learned in 2010 that data is a double edged-sword. Standardized testing had indicated steady improvements in NYC over the years of the *Children First* reforms. At the time of Mayor Bloomberg's campaign for a third term in 2009, the mayor could boast of English proficiency over 60% and math proficiency over 80%, according to state standards. However, changes to the state standards for passing results on these tests – by changing the number of questions required to attain a passing grade – meant that achievement rates plummeted in New York City in 2010 by as much as one-third in some grades and subjects, despite stable student scores. While critics were quick to question the Klein administration's results in light of the new testing scores, it is clear that more time and testing will be needed to determine the true nature of the trends under new testing rules.

Changing systems *and* changing mentality

The *Children First* reforms effectively changed the job descriptions of every single role within the education system. Teachers were meant to become more data-driven and inquiry-based. Principals were meant to become autonomous and empowered instructional leaders within their schools. Middle management was meant to evolve from supervising schools to supporting schools. Yet, while these changes were made rapidly in terms of policies, systems and organizational charts, the actual human beings filling these roles were not exchanged overnight. Change of course takes time and when undertaking such a comprehensive set of reforms it is important to build in deliberate strategies for changing the mentalities and skills of those that are suddenly expected to perform a new and different role.

IV. Spotlight: “School Turnaround” in New York City

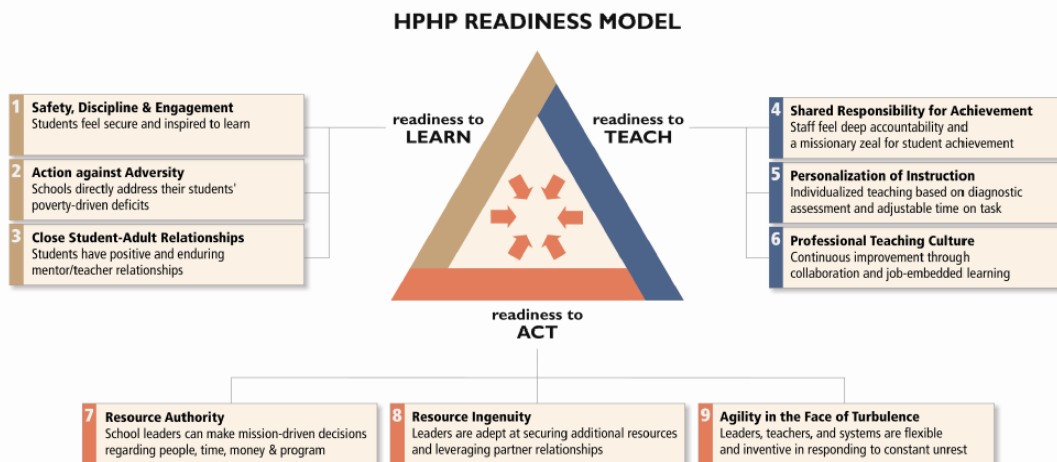
Introduction

The ambitious reforms undertaken by the NYC Department of Education described on the previous pages – increasing autonomy, managing for accountability, attracting and training new talent, and taking a deliberate portfolio approach – created the systemic conditions for schools to achieve new levels of performance. These reforms also laid the groundwork for more deliberate interventions referred to in the US as “school turnarounds”.

The term school turnaround in the US should be understood in two dimensions:

1. in the classic private sector sense: turning around a failing organization
2. as it has been defined by recent efforts led by the US Department of Education

On the first turnaround dimension – the more micro level – the renowned education thought leader Mass Insight uses the following definition of school turnaround: “*Turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization.*”⁴⁸ This definition describes well the nature, goals and timeline of school turnaround. Further, Mass Insight has developed a catalogue of criteria for “High-Performing, High-Poverty (HPHP)” schools:⁴⁹



Their turnaround theory, then, is that schools must attain readiness to learn, readiness to teach and readiness to act, which is related both to the school’s own capacity but also to the conditions it operates in. Indeed, many of the NYC DOE’s reforms described in the previous chapter of this working paper relate to the “readiness to act” and “readiness to teach” elements.

On the second turnaround dimension – the more macro level – the efforts of the US Department of Education on the subject of school turnaround have also created nomenclature on school turnaround, namely around turnaround models. Turnaround became a very important topic when the Obama administration decided in 2009 to invest a total of \$5 billion in new funding in the nation’s 5,000 poorest-performing schools (representing 5% of schools and serving 2.5 million students) over five years. The federal government is seeking dramatic rather than incremental reforms through four defined turnaround models:⁵⁰

- *Transformations*: Replacement of the principal, steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, comprehensive instructional reforms, more learning time, creation of community-oriented schools, provision of operational flexibility (especially in staffing, calendars, schedules, and budgeting), and support to the principal
- *Turnarounds*: Replacement of the principal, exchange of up to 50% of the staff, handover of sufficient operational flexibility, and support to the principal
- *Restarts*: Transfer of control to a new school operator that has been selected through a rigorous review process (either immediately or after the school has been reopened)
- *School Closures*: Closure of the school and enrollment of students in higher-achieving schools within the local education agency's reach

In order to receive dedicated turnaround funding (School Improvement Grants totaling \$3.55 billion), local school systems have to choose from among one of these models. While this bold stroke method provoked considerable parental resistance and teachers' union upheaval, it also created a sense of nationwide urgency – the basis of any successful change effort.

Three Turnaround Approaches in New York City

To some extent, the NYC DOE was utilizing elements of the four turnaround models described above even before the national efforts on school turnaround codified these formally. For example, as was highlighted in the previous chapter, consistent poor performance on Progress Reports can lead to principal replacements or even more dramatic interventions such as school closures and restarts.

As such, focused efforts on school turnaround are very prevalent in NYC – utilizing a host of different approaches. This working paper highlights three differing approaches to provide a landscape of the alternatives that can provide insights and impulses for school systems considering a dedicated school turnaround effort:

- Building *systemic change* for clusters of low-performing schools *from within*
- Supporting a school's turnaround through a dedicated *turnaround team*
- Transferring students to a *new operator* specialized on turnarounds

Building systemic change for clusters of low-performing schools from within

Mass Insight, referenced above, recently created The School Turnaround Group (STG) to turn some of its research and theories into action. Specifically, STG is creating Partnership Zones in five states (among them New York) with the aim of helping reform-minded districts to establish the conditions and capacity necessary to sustain academic results in turnaround environments. Partnership Zones are clusters of schools operating as mini-districts characterized by model organizational practices, including strong partnerships and more flexible operating conditions.⁵¹ The creation of a Partnership Zone is crucial to carry out the HPHP Readiness Model because the participating schools need operational flexibility, e.g. via the right to choose teachers and to offer them financial incentives. While it can be cumbersome to create consensus for a major change across an entire district at once, the Partnership Zone starts with only one cluster of schools (featuring either similar grade levels or similar feeder patterns) and adds more of them along the way.

To codify this thinking explicitly, Mass Insight's STG has identified the three C's for successful school turnaround in any given district:⁵²

- *Conditions*: Change rules and incentives governing people, time, money, & program
- *Capacity*: Build turnaround resources and human capacity in schools within the zone through Lead Partners and sufficient funding
- *Clustering*: To get to scale, organize clusters of schools within the zone intentionally and systematically

Specifically, STG will leverage their position as renowned thought leader to establish and work with Partnership Zones in the following manner:

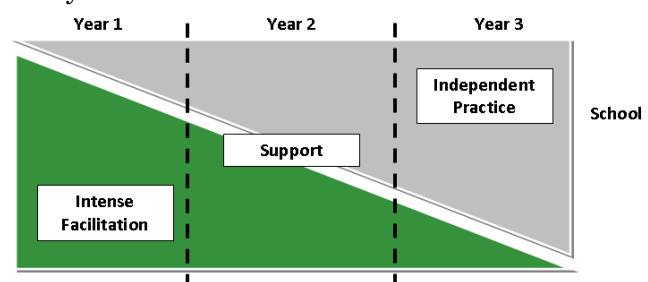
- Build the capacity of the District Turnaround Office
- Create district-wide Partnership Zone conditions, including those related to human capital and collective bargaining
- Analyze the local partner marketplace to identify gaps between district need and current capacity
- Identify a Lead Partner – either independent non-profit organizations or subunits of the district central office – to manage the cluster from within the district, e.g., to provide academic and student support for the school management and oversee the turnaround

With this strategy, Mass Insight is planning to close the achievement-gap of low-performing high-poverty schools in a timeframe of five years and is monitoring student performance, attendance, behavior, graduation rates, and staff retention.

Supporting a school's turnaround through a dedicated turnaround team

The approach described above focuses on creating conditions and capacity in a school district. Another approach is to intervene directly in schools through a specialized turnaround team. Turnaround for Children (TFC) is an example of such an approach. Over 60 of the lowest performing schools in NYC have been served by the TFC model, an approach that focuses on addressing poverty related adversity and mental disease while also implementing several other innovative methods like leadership training and extended learning time. In this sense, TFC is very focused on the piece of the HPHP readiness model called "Action against adversity." Specifically, the TFC theory is that a few high-need students, who might suffer from social or mental health issues, are engaging in acting-out behavior that destabilizes the classroom and hazards themselves, because schools do not offer the special services and resource structures that such students would need. Hence the aim is to prepare a common ground for learning for everyone and subsequently excel with state-of-the-art education so that every child is prepared to succeed in life and has the tools to overcome poverty.

The three-year TFC intervention (shown to the right), which starts with high facilitation and proceeds towards independent practice, is carried out by a whole team of experts: a Project Director, an Education Coach, a Classroom Coach, and a Social Work Consultant.



Together the team works on several levels: an individual level to provide access to services needed by high-risk students, on a classroom level to empower teachers with new skills, and on a school-wide level to build the required systems and structures, e.g., a student intervention team to review highest-risk students and to develop tailored intervention plans for them.

The TFC model is showing promising results: a three-year independent evaluation of five TFC schools in 2008 for example showed a 51% decrease in police reported incidents, a 32% decrease in suspensions, a 77% decrease in teacher turnover.⁵³

Transferring students to a new operator specialized on turnarounds

Finally, as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, part of the reorganization and closing of schools in NYC involved transferring the operation of schools to third party – typically non-profit – school operators.

Among several examples for this is Explore Network, an operator of two charter schools in high-need areas in Brooklyn, NYC, with a goal of adding one new school to its network every year, thereby following their mission to “*create and support a network of K-8 public schools in under-served communities that provides students with the academic skills and critical-thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college preparatory high school.*”⁵⁴ The schools that are opened replace public schools that were closed by the NYC DOE. Since they exactly mirror the demographics of the underperforming predecessor school and operate on the official per pupil allotment without raising additional funds, Explore Network schools want to prove that all pupils can thrive and learn if committed staff applies the right academic methods. Explore Network has already seen successes: a low drop-out rate of 6% up to 8th grade and admittance of 100% of their 8th graders into specialized high schools designed to prepare them for college.⁵⁵

In the spring of 2011, the NYC DOE announced its intention to partner with other dedicated operators to formally pursue the turnaround model as defined by the US DOE (replacement of the principal, exchange of up to 50 percent of the staff, handover of sufficient operational flexibility, and support to the principal) in two schools in the Bronx.⁵⁶

Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for Berlin

As Berlin considers more dedicated efforts with regard to turning around failing schools, the three approaches highlighted herein can provide valuable lessons:

- The first and most obvious lesson is that there are several ways to approach school turnaround. The capacity could be built inside or outside the DOE to manage the turnaround of a cluster of similar schools. It is also possible to pursue a more direct approach, namely by creating a dedicated team of turnaround specialists and deploying them in struggling schools for a period of time. Finally, if there are school operators with experience in school turnaround – which is, however, likely not currently the case in Germany – school operations could be handed over to them.
- Second, dedicated school turnaround efforts cannot happen in schools without changing certain conditions in the system – especially around autonomy. This may mean that special privileges need to be given to schools selected for turnaround.
- Third, it is critical to have a specific theory of change before attempting school turnaround at either the school or cluster level. Developing this theory of change will take time – especially as it will have to be tailored to the specific schools and their

specific situations – and further, ample time needs to be given to test the theory of change before attempting scale up.

V. Lessons Learned from School Reform in Berlin

Context

“The levels of reform undertaken in Berlin over the last ten years are unparalleled in other German states. Not only does Berlin have a modern school law, but it is actively implementing it in a deep reform process. Too little – too much; too slow – too fast? The critics contradict each other on this but one thing is clear: everyone sees the reforms as right and necessary. Because we are tackling nothing short of the chances of the next generation and with that the future of our whole society.”

Berlin Department of Education

In 2000, the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results revealed substantial deficiencies in the performance of Germany’s and especially Berlin’s schools. Since then, Berlin has enacted a number of fundamental reforms to its school system, with the urgent objective of increasing the quality of instruction within Berlin’s schools.

In 2004, Berlin was one of the first German states to undertake a comprehensive school reform by introducing a new school law. A variety of areas were addressed that brought significant changes to the education system. Chief among these were school autonomy and the role of principals, quality management and school development, reform of the curriculum as well as the introduction of centralized and comparable degree examinations.

Between 2004 and 2010, the reform was implemented step by step, with landmarks such as the introduction of a new school inspection model in 2005 and the harmonization of all degree examinations (“MSA” after the 10th grade and “Abitur” after the 12th or 13th grade) for the first time in 2006 and 2007.

In 2010, a structural reform introduced a completely new type of school that replaced and merged two of the three existing school types in Berlin. Just in May 2011, Berlin’s Senator for Education, Science and Research presented a new quality package for pre-K-13 education, introducing somewhat radical measures for a German state to ensure constant quality improvement of Berlin’s school system.

As the Berlin school system is undergoing many changes, this chapter only provides a snapshot of certain initiatives. Specifically, this chapter highlights a selection of reform initiatives of the last ten years with a focus on the following main areas:

- Quality and school development through autonomy and accountability
- Early childhood education
- Career readiness and multiple pathways

Reform always means change and continuous development. Hence, some of the examples depicted herein might continue to evolve in the coming months. Due to their newness, information on the impact of these reforms can only be provided in a very limited manner. However, rankings show that Berlin has already made significant progress towards eliminating the deficiencies, whose revelation shook the entire Berlin school system eleven years ago.

Selected Building Blocks of Reform

Autonomy

One of the main changes brought on by the 2004 Berlin new school law was the increased autonomy of schools. The law empowers each school to design and monitor the quality of its instructional approach and corresponding schedule in order to fulfill its education mandate as defined by the law, which is based on competency based standards rather than content based standards. The “Schulaufsicht” (school supervisory department) provides support and guidance to schools for this process.⁵⁷ The law also gave principals (“Schulleiter/in”) a stronger definition of their position that, up to 2004, was more defined as a “primus inter pares” (first among equals) amongst the school’s faculty. The law clearly states that the principal retains the discretionary authority towards the other teachers in the school, which enhances his or her role in comparison to its definition in the previous school laws.

Even though Berlin’s schools certainly still have less autonomy than their NYC peers (for example there is still limited control over most budget areas and aspects of human resources) the recent reforms led to significant progress in two broader areas:

- enhancement of school-internal management practices and
- encouragement to develop new pedagogical approaches and tailored school profiles

Regarding management practices, several enhancements had been documented by the “Modellvorhaben eigenverantwortliche Schule” field study. Similar to the beginnings of school empowerment in NYC, the Department of Education of Berlin initiated this pilot on autonomous schools in 2003 with a set of 31 different schools. The results showed that higher school autonomy led to the enhancement of the role of school leadership committees, empowerment of principals as well as familiarization with feedback / evaluation loops and management by objectives developed jointly with parents and students.

Concerning new pedagogical approaches and school profile development, the increased autonomy empowers the principals of Berlin’s schools to enhance school quality, develop specific school-profiles and create innovative approaches towards dealing with challenges such as a high percentage of students with a non-German background. Many schools have developed specialized profiles such as the award-winning “Grundschule im Grünen”, an elementary school which integrates environmental and ecological studies into its curriculum. For this reason, the school keeps ~150 farm animals that are looked after by the students. Other examples include schools that have anchored their profiles around theatre, arts or a foreign language. See Box 6 for an example of school with a focus on service learning.

While the new school law brought new autonomy, it also brought new responsibilities and skill requirements, for which principals weren’t necessarily trained. Many principals state that they have difficulties coping with all of the additional tasks and would wish for more administrative support to free up more time for instructional leadership and guiding the quality development of the school’s curriculum. The “Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien Berlin-Brandenburg (LISUM)” (State institute for schools and media of Berlin and Brandenburg) has been shoring up its course offerings to meet the needs of principals; however, there is room for improvement to offer additional support on school management and instructional leadership.

Box 6: Service Learning “for everyone” at the Heinz-Brandt-Schule

The Heinz-Brandt-Schule is located in one of Berlin’s more difficult neighborhoods where over 40% of its students qualify for financial aid for school supplies.

Principal Miriam Pech has successfully used the new school autonomy law with regard to curriculum and budget to develop a school profile adapted to the needs of the families and children of the neighborhood that not only respects diversity but turns it into a key strength. Benefitting from curriculum autonomy, the “school for everyone” can teach children of very different performance levels in the same class by combining team-based and individual learning: In the core subjects of German, English and Math for example the school offers subject specific rooms (“Lernbüros”) in which all children of one grade work on their personal study plan mapped out in their learning diary (“Logbuch”). Students choose the room and hence the subject they need to work on and build groups to help each other with their exercises while the teacher can concentrate on special topics or provide additional support to individual students. Other subjects like Chemistry, Biology and Physics are taught in joint topic-centered lessons (“Themenzentrierter Unterricht”). Furthermore, the school uses a portion of its personnel budget to fund additional support from a Teach First fellow (German equivalent of Teach for America), who for example organizes student activities during the major breaks of the school day.

A further aspect that makes the profile of this school special is the focus on Service Learning. In the broader sense, Service Learning can be understood as the fruitful combination of school and social service. In this regard, it is central to the Heinz-Brandt-Schule. First, children are encouraged to take on internships in soup kitchens and homes for the elderly in which they are confronted with different social realities and learn how to take responsibility. But beyond that, the schools fosters student-driven cooperation to solve problems within the school through specialized services coordinated among the school, its clubs and students, the local youth welfare service and the professional world of industry and institutions. Examples include:

- detection and counseling of students with social or academic problems who run a high risk of drop-out
- individual and team interventions to support students with academic or even familial challenges, to strengthen their own competencies and to re-integrate them into the school day rhythm
- building an extensive network of companies, public and private institutions to enable career orientation services, application support, and internship / vocational training matching

In this way, the students are taught to take care of each other, solve school conflicts on their own and assume responsibility for academic and career development.

In recognition of the school’s concept of being “a school for everyone” and their emphasis on “Service Learning”, the school recently won a special prize at the annual German School Award ceremony awarded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Sources: <http://www.heinz-brandt-schule.cidsnet.de/>.

Accountability

Following the disappointing results of the 2000 PISA study, efforts for more accountability have been made on various levels across Germany and its 16 states, including Berlin. First, Berlin harmonized the two degrees of the pathways leading to vocational training into one centralized degree after the 10th grade named “Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA)”. Second, Berlin standardized the examinations leading to the university entrance qualification after the 12th or the 13th grade called “Abitur”. Finally, Berlin also adopted a German-wide initiative of comparable performance assessments in the 3rd and 8th grades (“VERA”) which is

aimed at providing a fact base for schools' self-evaluation processes. All in all, Berlin now has access to performance data at four different grade levels.

Additionally, in 2005, Berlin introduced a new system of school inspection that is used by the school supervisory bodies but conducted by an independent party. The school inspection includes both data provided through school internal assessment processes as well as through an external inspection (two days within the school at least every five years). Assessment focuses on four areas: school organization, school management, school life and the quality of instruction. The school inspection is meant to help schools identify strengths and weaknesses based on data, provide additional input to the internal evaluation processes and enhance school development and discussion processes within schools. Additionally, the school inspection allows effective monitoring of the school system in Berlin regarding the implementation progress of reforms.⁵⁸

Currently, there is still room for improvement regarding familiarity with the use of data as a tool for internal evaluation and goal setting amongst teachers and principals but also amongst employees of the school supervisory departments. Hence the next logical step is to enter into a more deliberate learning cycle that would lead to a regular reassessment of goals and progress using the data collected by the school inspection.⁵⁹

As in NYC, increasing accountability in Berlin has also been accompanied with steadily increasing transparency. The results of the degrees "MSA" and "Abitur" are made publicly available, whereas school inspection results as well as the results of the comparison test VERA are only made available by schools on a voluntary basis. Not mandating public availability of the latter rested on the idea that the inspections and tests are meant to support schools in their self-designed quality development strategy. In May 2011 however, Berlin's Department of Education announced a quality package, which mandates that from the school year 2011/2012 onwards, schools will have to make public the results of the above mentioned performance assessment initiatives, at least in summary form.

Similar to the debates on transparency in NYC, these aspects of the quality package were controversially discussed throughout Berlin as opinions vary drastically on the effects that could arise out of forcing schools to make such data public. Besides the fear of the "teach to the test" effect, there is a perceived risk that not all audiences will be able to understand the results which would then lead to further inequality as educated parents will be able to choose the best schools while the children of uneducated parents, who might not have the skills to interpret these sets of data correctly, will all accumulate in the underperforming schools. Other opinions favor competition amongst schools in order to assure better parental choice and encourage successful schools.⁶⁰

While the collected data obviously also serves the school supervisory departments to identify failing schools, it is currently not aimed at providing any basis for sanctions or interventions. Schools that are identified as underperforming receive special support by the school authorities in form of goal setting and coaching, yet it has not been clearly defined what will happen to schools that do not demonstrate improvement.

Focus on early childhood education

Berlin has successfully undertaken a whole range of education reforms targeting early childhood: universally available pre-K / kindergarten and language support offerings, flexible school starting phases and mixed age classes for school starters, and improved collaboration systems between the institutions of KITA (pre-K and kindergartens) and elementary school.

Universal pre-K and special language support

As a large city characterized by heterogeneous social and cultural backgrounds as well as many different nationalities, Berlin puts an important emphasis on early childhood education. The objective is to eliminate any differences in skill levels of young children at the age of school enrollment that would potentially hinder them from successfully participating in the classroom and in the long run from acquiring the competencies needed to successfully participate in the labor market. In order to achieve this, Berlin offers the last two years of pre-K and kindergarten education free of charge. Additionally, one year before school enrollment, all children in Berlin have to pass a language test that assesses their German skills. For children that do not have a sufficient skill level in German, language support is provided in the KITA. The language test as well as the in-depth language support is mandatory for every child in Berlin (see Box 7).⁶¹ Parents are also offered language support.

Box 7: Early childhood language promotion

German language skills are a critical issue for Berlin's education department since 30% of school-aged children are from a non-German background, which in many cases makes them German language learners because parents do not always speak German with them at home. Starting at the age of three, children are thought to be in a phase in which it is especially easy for them to learn even multiple languages. The more positive support they get from close role models like parents and "KITA" (pre-K and K) teachers, and the more they are spoken to in general, the faster they learn – which has a direct influence on their school performance and which makes early childhood language promotion a critical success factor.

The most important two tools for language promotion, which the Berlin Department of Education has rendered compulsory for all children, are a language test one year before school enrollment and a language learning diary that documents the language progress in KITAs. Starting in 2011/2012 a second, earlier language test will be introduced even before children reach the age of four. Through the language tests it is possible to judge whether a child has early language learning deficits that need to be overcome to assure school readiness. In case of deficits, the child is enrolled in three hours of dedicated language promotion on five days a week for one year before school starts (from 2013/14 onwards even five hours per day). The test and the course are compulsory and a monetary fine for parental non-compliance will be introduced in the coming years. Besides the parents, the early childhood teachers play the most important role in a child's language learning progress. With the help of the language learning diary, the Berlin Department of Education is focusing educators' efforts on this critical topic. The booklet contains questions for parents on their language abilities and how they use language with their child as well as two extensive interview questionnaires to be conducted with the child, which include a wide range of tasks from drawing and explaining pictures of the child itself and its family to questions about whom the child is talking to in which language and what kind of letters and numbers it already knows. At the end of the interviews the teacher is asked to assess the child's language ability and to plan – in written form – further steps to increase it. Upon school enrollment, the language learning diary is handed to the child and its parents.

For the support and evaluation of the quality initiative for KITAs, the Berlin Department of Education has commissioned the international academy of the Freie Universität Berlin to assure the timely execution of internal and external evaluations (compulsory every five years), to analyze the evaluation results, to communicate them to the involved stakeholders and to make recommendations on how to solve potential shortcomings with the KITAs. While it might be too early for official quantitative success rates, interviews, for example with elementary school principals, showed that the perceived school readiness of children is already noticeably increasing.

Sources: <http://www.berlin.de/sen>; <http://beki.ina-fu.org/>; Interviews.

Flexible school starting phases and mixed age classes

Another change in Berlin's approach to early childhood education was brought on by the implementation of a so-called flexible school starting phase, allowing children to start school in the year they *turn* six years of age, rather than waiting to actually *be* six years of age. The concept aims at maximizing the flexibility of the learning environment, respecting each child's skills development level by allowing children to pass through the first two grades (in some schools even the first three grades) in one, two or three (or four) years. These mixed-age classes and learning groups also allow children to develop their social skills in a different way, taking on different roles within the group, depending on their skills and their age. Each child has specific strengths that can be encouraged and individual needs that can be supported. Even though the impact on performance of the children of these mixed-aged classes has not been proven, the observed impact based on higher social competencies of these children and the possibility for more individual support are positive. Box 8 provides more detail.

Box 8: Flexible school starting phase

Upon school enrollment age, children have often times reached very different development levels in terms of their knowledge and ability to learn. Thus parents are often in doubt whether it might be too early to bring their child to school even though studies have shown that postponed enrollment does not foster better learning results vs. "regular" enrollment.

The school system in Berlin actively removes this doubt from parents with a concept that underwent testing as of 1998 and was implemented in almost all elementary schools as of 2007/2008: The flexible school starting phase. The idea is to combine grades 1 and 2 (or even 3) and let children go through them at their own pace, in one, two or three (or four) years. Of course a majority of children reach 3rd grade after two years, but faster developing children can do so in only one and late bloomers in three years without being pulled out of their social environment since there are always classmates they already know. Class sizes of the flexible starting phase range from 21 to 26 children with the lower end of the range being targeted especially in poorer city areas with a high percentage of non-German students. Not only a teacher but also an additional educator take care of the children and oftentimes offer a rhythmic learning day until 4pm where phases of playing and studying alternate. In total, a class obtains 36.5 to 41.5 teacher / educator hours per week and an additional educator per school if the school day lasts until the afternoon. Since the groups are mixed in age and knowledge background, most of the work is carried out in teams which leaves the teachers with more time on their hands to support weaker students and which individualizes the children's learning. Student learning diaries help teachers to maintain a good overview of the development of each child and to plan individual tasks. The challenge is to provide enough interesting learning material adapted to this kind of classroom environment: while there is some centrally available material, schools and teachers need to adapt and develop their own new teaching content.

All in all, the efforts are paying off in Berlin: The feedback from principals, teachers and parents is positive because the concept not only allows students to develop their strengths, but it also fosters their social skills. Children teach concepts to one another, repeat and newly frame content, and even weaker students are encouraged because they can explain what they already know to younger students. Furthermore, non-German speakers are able to improve their language abilities faster in this class setting because a language is learned by speaking and communicating with others – not by listening to a teacher.

Sources: Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, Berlin, "Die flexible Schulanfangsphase - Förderung durch individuelles, gemeinsames und jahrgangsübergreifendes Lernen," July 2010; Interviews.

Collaboration of KITAs and elementary school

To ease the transition from KITA to school and to assure that each child's learning is continued smoothly; from 2005 to 2009 Berlin piloted district-based partnership tandems of KITAs and schools. Initially only a small group of specific elementary schools cooperated in tandems and organized visits with specific KITAs. The exchanges ranged from pedagogical methodology to the support of strengths and needs of specific children. With the teachers and KITA personnel becoming more and more familiar with such exchanges, the tandems were opened up to more elementary schools and KITAs to join and new tandems were built. This approach allowed the creation of mutually respected voluntary partnerships and has received positive feedback.

Multiple pathways and Berlin's structural reform

Germany has a long tradition of providing multiple pathways for students. This has led to the establishment of three school types after the fourth or sixth grade: Hauptschule (typically up to 9th grade), Realschule (typically up to 10th grade) and Gymnasium (up to 12th grade). However, especially the Hauptschulen were becoming "socially disadvantaged islands"; places where all struggling children – so-called lost causes – landed and were surrounded by nothing but hopelessness. The populations of these schools were often characterized by a high percentage of students with a non-German background or students highly exposed to one or more social risks. In 2007, a number of these schools received expansive media attention as their teachers declared that they would not continue teaching in such circumstances and that the school model of the "Hauptschule" was not only outdated but also inhuman, creating parallel societies of children having no prospects at all in today's labor market. Box 9 shows a prominent case study of a Hauptschule that achieved a remarkable turnaround.

Recognizing the burning need for change, sweeping structural reform was initiated in Berlin in 2010 to revamp the landscape of the traditional multiple pathways. The structural reform introduced a new type of school named "Integrierte Sekundarschule" that combines school-forms, allows special support for students to enter into vocational training (see Box 10 for more on Berlin's "Dual Learning" approach) and, within the same school, also allows acquiring the "Abitur" after the 13th grade. Most of these new schools were created by merging "Realschulen" and "Hauptschulen" of the same district. This process naturally led to the closing of many poor performing schools and "fresh starts" for many existing schools. All "Integrierte Sekundarschulen" provide a program for the whole day, which is a relatively new development in Germany where schools have typically only been in session for half of the day without offering any extra-curricular activities in the afternoon. Besides sports and cultural activities, the whole day school also permits the development of innovative approaches to structuring the school day. The approach of rhythmic learning for example creates a school day that interchanges between study times and relaxation times and has seen success in Berlin's schools.

Parental choice was also a key focus of the new school structure. A system that is based on a combination of merit, special needs and a lottery was rolled out this year to enable parents and their children to select and rank several secondary schools of choice, independent of geographic location. Because this system is less than a year old it is too soon to tell if it reaches the objective of creating more social equity in Berlin's education system.

Box 9: Turning around more than a school through Campus Rütli

In 2006, the Rütli School, a “Hauptschule” in the district of Neukölln hit the headlines of German newspapers as teachers were publicly alerting the Berlin Department of Education of the catastrophic situation within the school, which no longer allowed any form of instructional activity. The district is known for being a social hotspot with up to 90% of children coming from families with a non-German background. Studies had repeatedly pointed out the danger of creating parallel societies for the children of this district as many of them had limited prospects on the job market. By 2006 the situation had become so chaotic that the teachers pulled the trigger through a public letter, stating that some teachers had become too afraid to enter their classrooms as this meant confronting their highly aggressive and frustrated students. At the same time, one year before the situation came to a head, the “Quartiersmanagement” (local area management) of the northern part of this district, where the Rütli School is located, initiated a cooperation of local actors in the field of education with the focus on intercultural moderation and intervention. As part of this, the idea for a “Campus Rütli” was developed with the aim of providing an innovative and collaborative approach to the challenges that all the various actors in the field of social, youth and education services faced in that area, and to develop learning synergies amongst each other. The attention the “Rütli Schule” received in the media helped bring this project under way quite quickly.

Today the “Campus Rütli” – to some extent a smaller scale version of the well-known Harlem Children’s Zone – is a joint project of four different actors in the field of youth, education and city planning and was declared by the Berlin Department of Education to be a role model for such comprehensive approaches. The idea is to create a space of approximately one square kilometer that includes a comprehensive school, a KITA (pre-K and K) and a youth club, providing the area with a new social institution that accompanies children from the age of three all the way up until their entry into professional life and the labor market. It aims at providing a place where all children can learn the necessary skills to integrate into society and become successful. Hence, the square kilometer of education also provides the possibility for the students to finish school with the university entrance level, the Abitur, which wasn’t previously the case at many of the area’s schools.

The focus of the undertaking lies on the involvement of parents and all of the neighborhood’s various youth, social and social-pedagogic services. All people involved share a common vision of the “Campus Rütli”, which allows the avoidance of the usual conflicts that occur between social, education and youth services. All actors involved have a common responsibility, namely demonstrating innovative methods and collaboration to motivate students to learn and prove wrong the common opinion that the children of the district are resistant to learning and unable to integrate successfully into society. In this sense, prominent support and official acknowledgement of the innovativeness is a proof of the viability of this project.

Especially the management structure of the project and its governance are unique: Four equal project partners are responsible for steering the project and together report twice a year to a responsible committee including the Berlin Department of Education. The partners include

- the principal of the comprehensive school on the Campus Rütli,
- the Freudenberg Stiftung that finances a part of this project named “Ein Quadratkilometer Bildung (one square kilometer of education)”,
- the local cooperation on education that was initiated by the “Quartiersmanagement”,
- and two project managers of the Campus Rütli.

The inclusive project structure and the clear definition of roles and responsibilities were identified as important success factors as they gave all actors involved a certain security and encouraged them to cooperate.

Box 10: Dual Learning

The evolution of the Dual Learning concept in Berlin has a long history and can actually be traced back to the reform initiative “practical learning” of the Academy for Education Reform and the Robert Bosch Stiftung in the mid-1980s. While the main idea has always been the integration of professional life into schools, the new Dual Learning concept in Berlin includes not only studying related to practice and real life but also career orientation. This implies providing students with help in focusing their research on certain topics, finding an internship in a fitting industry, or taking part in an entirely student-led company.

The academic core of the Dual Learning program is the subject “Wirtschaft-Arbeit-Technik” (economy-labor-technology), which is taught two hours per week from 7th grade onwards at the “Integrierte Sekundarschule” (Dual Learning is optional for the “Gymnasium”). The students learn how to make concrete career and life plans, how to use information and communication technologies, how to analyze consumer behavior and how to use resources in an environmentally-friendly way. Moreover, they learn all of this not just by listening, but rather by doing it themselves, for example by creating products in the school workshop. At the Friedensburg-Oberschule for instance, students are encouraged to find out what products customers want, build them in the right way and try to sell them to the small businesses and restaurants around the school or to the school itself – not to their parents. In fact, with rather general curriculum requirements offering a choice from several modules by topic, schools are given much creative leeway regarding the Dual Learning implementation.

Furthermore, the Dual Learning concept is supported by a central service agency (“PSW”) that coordinates the interaction of schools, companies, and associations by organizing events, matching companies with schools and conceptualizing joint programs. Since the most important industry associations in Berlin have publicly announced their support of the initiative, companies are called on to prepare teachers for practical lessons, visit schools and offer internship spots.

For low-performing or school-tired students, who are thought to have a high risk of drop-out after 8th grade, there are even more specialized two-year practical learning programs available. Teenagers can transfer into a separate class where they are taught in small class sizes of 12-15 students, only 2-3 days a week. The rest of the week is dedicated to internships that ideally last about three months in order for the students to get to know three different companies or institutions throughout the school year.

For example, at the Integrierte Sekundarschule Schillerpark in Berlin, a group of students dedicates 17 hours per week to their internship and 13 hours to subjects like German, Math, English, Communication & Presentation, People & Culture, and Society & Economy. Practical elements like the internship preparation and documentation thus contribute 57% to the overall grade.⁶² Teachers visit their students at the internship and act more as coaches to help the teenagers reflect on the practical experiences than as traditional teachers. The success rates of students enrolled in such programs – 66-89%⁶³ reach a degree – lead to the conclusion that this special group of teenagers can be motivated through a “change of scenery” and the appreciation they can earn through their work outside school.

While there is a lot of excitement and support for Dual Learning from all sides, it is still too early to measure its success. Only by the time current 7th graders will have finished school, found and maintained a fitting job or training spot and started succeeding in their careers, will Berlin know whether the initiative has managed to better prepare children for 21st century workplace dynamics. In any case the effort is headed in the right direction and represents an important step in the continuous improvement process of the German vocational training tradition.

Potential Transferable Ideas and Lessons for New York City

The ensemble of reforms that have been undertaken in Berlin since 2003 exhibits a certain number of similarities to the *Children First* reforms in NYC. Moreover, in Berlin the most radical change has been targeted towards specific and urgent challenges. As shown earlier in this working paper, Berlin has a 30% non-German student population – in some of the city’s social hotspots as high as 90% – and has thus taken some important measures towards ensuring that all children at school enrollment age have the skill sets needed to successfully engage in class. Furthermore, Berlin has put a lot of effort into improving the career readiness of its students. Based on the conviction that each child needs to be supported individually to identify and develop its strengths, the traditional system of multiple pathways was reassessed and revamped to better meet the needs of all children. The content as well as the processes of these reforms are likely to provide some useful lessons to the NYC education system.

Content lessons

Universal pre-K / K and promoting language in early childhood

It is commonly acknowledged that students who lag behind in school from the early grades onwards are unlikely to successfully finish school and as a consequence find their place in the labor market. In this context, Berlin’s reform efforts are a great example of how to counter such phenomena. In early childhood, there are various elements that influence the development of academic as well as social skills. The largest influence certainly comes from parents. But since they do not necessarily all have the competencies needed to sufficiently prepare their child for school and for society, pre-K and kindergarten institutions are highly important. Universal pre-K starting from the age of three can help guarantee that children will have developed a certain set of skills upon school enrollment that will allow them to successfully follow in class. More importantly, accompanying children from a young age by a professional also allows the early identification of specific strengths and weaknesses for which the child might need special support. The Berlin model is an innovative example as it applies language support at an early age where it is supposed to be most effective. For NYC, which does not have a systematic approach to language promotion prior to school enrollment, Berlin provides insightful examples like early universal language assessment and the provision of specific materials for language development.

Mixing classes in age for improved support and social structures

The model of mixed age classes in Berlin’s elementary schools, also part of Berlin’s focus on early childhood education as a key success factor for student achievement, can be an interesting example for the NYC education system. Though the model of mixing classes in age can be applied to all age groups in a school, it is probably best suited for the first years of elementary schooling where differences in curriculum are not as drastic as in older age groups. For NYC this could be an inspiring example when it comes to social work and conflict prevention. Mixed-age classes specifically focus on students developing social competencies as they take on different roles within the class that vary along their skills and their age. Especially in the first years of elementary school, mixed-age classes, such as from the 1st to the 3rd grade, allow students to advance at their own pace without being pulled out of their social environment, and they provide room for individual support and coaching.

Improving career readiness through dual learning

When it comes to career readiness, NYC can certainly learn many things from Berlin's approach of multiple pathways. As a recent Harvard Graduate School of Education study on pathways states,⁶⁴ a major mindset change is needed: some children thrive much more by doing practical things than by focusing only on traditional academic routes to higher education. While in NYC students have to go all the way through to the 12th grade of high school in order to receive a diploma, in Berlin students can receive a degree after the 10th grade and can decide to specialize and learn a specific profession (which does not preclude them from higher education down the road). The consequence is that at the age of 18 and 19, students that do not plan on pursuing studies at university altogether or immediately following secondary school are qualified to fulfill a specific profession within companies and other organizations. To emulate this, NYC could take new steps in terms of orienting students towards the right profession that corresponds to their strengths, matching students with companies for internships and vocational training and ensuring that curricula correspond to the competencies needed for specific professions. This requires close cooperation and exchange with industry and trade associations. With its model of Dual Learning, Berlin has made a large step towards achieving greater career readiness of its students – it is a great example NYC could learn from.

Process lessons

On the process side there are two major areas from which to learn that focus on the challenges encountered by the interaction of various actors involved in the reform process.

Spurring pre-K, kindergarten and elementary school cooperation

One of the most important process improvements in Berlin is the cooperation between pre-K, kindergartens (together “KITA”) and elementary schools for improved early childhood education. A close collaboration is essential for a continuous learning support and a smooth transition between kindergarten and school. Berlin's approach to this can be taken as a role model: in district-based partnerships the interaction of KITAs and elementary schools is deliberately coordinated. While kindergartens in NYC are already tied to the elementary schools that house them, close cooperation with pre-K programs could be forged to ensure a seamless transition upon school enrollment for the city's five year olds.

Listening to industry and managing shared responsibility via a central hub

German schools that offer Dual Learning and similar programs have to deal with the challenge of finding enough companies that are willing and able to offer internships and comprehensive multi-year vocational training. Companies struggle with students who lack adequate preparation for the job, the shortcoming oftentimes being directly related to poor academic performance. If companies do not voluntarily provide enough spots, alternatives are expensive for the education system, which hence has to listen to the industry's needs. Only if every class is targeted to what children need to know for their future lives can schools be true career launch pads. Truly exemplary models are several German projects in which schools, companies and institutions work together: teachers, job coaches and company mentors can make sure that students choose jobs that fit their strengths, help them with their applications and coach them during their on-the-job training. Such interactions of multiple actors are best handled via a central service hub, like the PSW agency in Berlin, which hosts events, builds contacts, helps to frame joint projects and provides a research platform.

VI. Next Steps

This working paper has been written with the very specific purpose of providing a basis for discussion for a convening of education reform stakeholders from Berlin and NYC in October of 2011. The delegation of German education reform stakeholders will travel to NYC to meet with their counterparts and discuss the ideas and themes surfaced in this working paper in more detail.

While the exchange is structured as a dialogue, the meeting in NYC will likely focus more on the lessons learned in NYC that are transferable to Berlin. Likely topics of discussion include:

- *Autonomy*
What have the successes and challenges been around increasing the autonomy of schools in NYC and Berlin? How have schools been supported by their DOEs and beyond?
- *Accountability*
How are schools assessed in Berlin and NYC? What are the resulting supports and interventions for failing schools?
- *School Leadership*
What is the role of the school leader in an autonomous, accountable school? How are school leaders selected and prepared for this role? How are teachers empowered to become leaders?
- *Strategies for School Turnaround*
Which specific school turnaround strategies have been deployed? What role do external experts and service providers play? What are the challenges and success factors?

Ideally, the dialogue will continue in Berlin in 2012 with a focus on these topics as well as early childhood education and career readiness.

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Glossary – NYC Education Terms in German

Accountability	Schulleitungen übernehmen im Gegenzug zu mehr Eigenständigkeit die Verantwortung für die Leistung Ihrer Schüler. Diese wird jährlich durch Vergleichstests und Schulklima Indikatoren erhoben. In New York gibt es klare Konsequenzen für Schulleitungen, deren Schüler über einen längeren Zeitraum nicht Ihre Leistungen verbessern, die in nicht wenigen Fällen bis zu einem Austausch der Schulleitung reichen.
Achievement gap	Dieser Terminus beschreibt die starke Divergenz bei den Leistungen unterschiedlicher Schülergruppen. Z.B. in den USA schneiden bei Vergleichstests in der Regel weiße Schüler besser ab als schwarze Schüler und reiche Schüler schneiden besser ab als arme Schüler.
Autonomy	Autonomie oder Eigenständigkeit von Schulen; diese wurde in New York sehr stark ausgebaut.
Benchmark	Es handelt sich um einen Maßstab, der meist als Grundlage für Verbesserungsmaßnahmen genutzt wird. Als Benchmark wird auch derjenige bezeichnet, der im Vergleich am besten abgeschnitten hat.
Career readiness	Die Kompetenzen von Schulabsolventen entsprechen derer, die auf dem Arbeitsmarkt nachgefragt werden und Schulabsolventen sind in der Lage sich auf dem Arbeitsmarkt zu Recht zu finden.
Charter school	Es handelt sich um eine Schulform, die den Schulen in privater Trägerschaft ähnelt, jedoch zu 100% vom Staat finanziert wird. Eine „Charter School“ nimmt keine Schulgebühren und darf sich die Schüler auch nicht selber auswählen. Es handelt sich im Grunde um eine öffentliche Schule mit einem privaten Betreiber (oder einer privaten Betreibergesellschaft). Das Management kann eigenständig den Schulalltag gestalten und selbst Personal einstellen. Im Gegenzug sind die Auflagen für Qualitäts- und Transparenzstandards gleich, wenn nicht höher als für Schulen in öffentlicher Hand.
Cluster	Eine Gruppe von mehreren Schulen mit gewissen Ähnlichkeiten wie z.B. ein hoher Anteil von Schülern mit Migrationshintergrund oder ein hoher Anteil von Schülern aus sozial schwachem Milieu.
Continuous learning	Dieser Begriff ist als ständiges Lernen zu verstehen und bezieht sich hier ganz besonders auf das Qualitätsmanagement und die Fähigkeit einer Organisation z.B. einer Schule sich in einen durchgehenden Lernprozess zu begeben und sich dadurch ständig zu verbessern.
Drop-out-rate	Der Prozentsatz von Schülern, die ohne Abschluss die Schule verlassen
Dual learning	Duales Lernen
Early childhood	Frühkindliches Alter (bis zur Einschulung)
Failing school	Eine „Failing School“ ist eine Schule, die nicht die festgesetzten Leistungskriterien erfüllt.
Human capital	Humankapital – die Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen von Menschen werden als Wirtschaftsgut angesehen. Es wird auch häufig von Humanvermögen gesprochen. In diesem Kontext geht es darum, durch die Einstellung und Förderung von guten und überdurchschnittlichen Personen im Bildungssystem Humanvermögen auszubauen und so die Qualität des Unterrichts und des Schulsystems signifikant zu steigern.
Human resources	Personal in einer Organisation wie z.B. Lehrer, Schulleiter, Erzieher, Sozialpädagogen, etc. im Schulsystem

Inquiry teams	Es handelt sich hierbei um Teams, die an jeder Schule existieren und sich aus dortigen Lehrern und Erziehern zusammensetzen. Ihre Aufgabe ist es, basierend auf den vorhandenen Daten über Schülerleistungen, bestimmte Problemgebiete bzw. Problemgruppen anzugehen und schulinterne Lösungen für Leistungsdefizite zu entwickeln.
K-8 / K-12	K-8 beschreibt eine Schule bzw. ein Schulsystem vom Kindergarten bis zur 8. Klasse; K-12 beschreibt eine Schule bzw. ein Schulsystem vom Kindergarten bis zur 12. Klasse.
Key performance indicators	Leistungsindikatoren, die wichtige Informationen über die Entwicklung einer Schule liefern.
Leadership team	Schulleitungsteam
Middle management	Mittlere Führungsebene – Eine vergleichbare Ebene im Berliner Schulsystem sind z.B. die Schulaufsicht und die Schulämter.
Middle School	Eine Schule für Schüler der 6. bis 8. Klasse in New York
Mixed-age classes	Jahrgangsübergreifendes Lernen
Multiple pathways	Es handelt sich hierbei um die US-amerikanische Beschreibung eines mehrgleisigen Schulsystems, wie es in Berlin mit dem Gymnasium, der integrierten Sekundarschule und der Berufsschule existiert und Schülern ermöglicht zwischen praktischen und theoretischen Schwerpunkten und Abschlüssen, auch innerhalb der gleichen Schule, zu wählen.
New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE)	Zuständige Regierungsbehörde für Bildung in New York City; wird derzeit geleitet von <i>Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott</i> (Stand Juli 2011).
Parental (school) choice	Der Begriff beschreibt die Möglichkeit für Eltern die bestgeeignetste Schule für Ihre Kinder selbst wählen zu können und sich nicht durch Einzugsbereiche o.ä. auf eine Anzahl von Schulen beschränken zu müssen. Natürlich gibt es bei zu hoher Anfrage einer Schule Losverfahren und daher ist es nicht gewährleistet, dass alle Eltern Ihren Wunsch erfüllt bekommen.
Peer (school)	Es handelt sich hierbei um eine Schule, die aufgrund der gleichen Rahmenbedingungen und Anforderungen mit einer anderen Schule vergleichbar ist.
Personalized learning	Eine Unterrichtsmethodik bei welcher der Lernstoff auf das Lernverhalten und die -bedürfnisse der einzelnen Schüler angepasst (personalisiert) wird.
Portfolio approach	Die Portfolio Methode ist ein neuer Ansatz für die Gestaltung von Schulsystemen und wurde in den USA und unter anderem auch in New York stark gefördert. Die Portfolio Methode unterscheidet sich in drei Punkten vom traditionellen öffentlichen Schulsystem. (1) Schulen werden kontinuierlich auf Ihre Leistungen überprüft und geschlossen, sollte die Leistung über einen zu langen Zeitraum unter dem festgelegten Niveau liegen und sich nicht verbessern. (2) Die Landschaft der öffentlichen Schulen besteht aus verschiedenen Schulformen mit unterschiedlichen pädagogischen Ansätzen im Gegensatz zu einer Landschaft geprägt von einem einzigen Schulmodell. (3) Verschiedene Gruppen betreiben öffentliche Schulen im Gegensatz zum Modell, wo nur der Staat öffentliche Schulen betreibt.
Report card	Zeugnis

Secondary degree	Allgemeine Hochschulreife in Amerika nach der 12. Klasse
Principal	Schulleiter
Proficiency	Beschreibt die Kompetenzstufe einer Person in einer bestimmten Tätigkeit z.B. Fremdsprachen, Lesen, Mathematik, etc.
School district	Schulbezirk
School operator	Schulbetreiber, nicht unbedingt auch Schulträger
School profile	Schulprofil wie z.B. Umweltschule, Theaterbetonung, etc.
School Support Networks	Netzwerke die Dienstleistungen für Schulen und Schulleitungen sowie Unterstützung für das Management von Schulen anbieten.
Service learning	Schüler erlernen wichtige Kompetenzen durch Mitarbeit in sozialen Diensten im Rahmen des Konzepts Duales Lernen z.B. an der Heinz Brandt Schule in Berlin Weißensee.
Standardized tests	Vergleichsarbeiten, Vergleichstests
Suspension	Schulverweis
Teacher leaders	Führungspersönlichkeiten im Lehrerkollegium, die sich durch die Übernahme z.B. von fachlicher Führung, Leitung von Expertenteams, Schulleitungsfunktionen etc. auszeichnen.
Trade-off	Zielkonflikt – wenn die Wahl eines Aspekts nur unter Inkaufnahme der Verschlechterung (oder des Verlustes) des anderen Aspektes erreicht werden kann – z.B. Geschwindigkeit der Implementierung einer Reform oder größtmögliche Akzeptanz bei den Schulen.
Truancy	Schulverweigerung (Schwänzen)
Turnaround	Eine Schule wird sprichwörtlich umgedreht, d.h. aus einer Problemschule mit Leistungsdefiziten soll eine gut funktionierende Schule mit guten Leistungen werden.
Turnover	Bezeichnet in diesem Fall die Fluktuation von Lehrkräften
(Teachers) Union	Gewerkschaft. In NYC sind Lehrer durch die United Federation of Teachers vertreten.
Universal pre-K / K	Bezeichnet das Recht auf kostenlose KITA Plätze. Pre-K steht für Pre-Kindergarten, K steht für Kindergarten, und zusammen decken sie das Angebot einer Deutschen KITA ab.
Vocational training / studies	Beschreibt die berufliche und praktische Ausbildung im Gegensatz zur theoretischen Ausbildung in einem Berufsfeld.

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⁸ Berlin: Institut für Schulqualität der Länder Berlin und Brandenburg, "Bildung in Berlin und Brandenburg 2010: Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht zur Bildung im Lebenslauf," 2010 (children aged 6 to 15).

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¹² NYC: <http://gothamschools.org/2010/03/26/nyc-teacher-distribution-by-years-of-service/>;

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¹³ NYC: Teacher Salary Schedule, NYC DOE;

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Berlin: *ibid.*

¹⁵ It is important to note that cost of living is very different between NYC and Berlin. On the most recent Mercer Cost of Living Survey, NYC ranked #27 while Berlin ranked # 61. For example, rent in Berlin is approximately 60% lower than in NYC.

¹⁶ NYC DOE Salaries and Benefits page.

¹⁷ NYC teacher and principal salaries: high for teachers after 20 years is \$95K and low for principals is \$123K; Berlin teacher and principal salaries: high for teachers after 20 years is \$62K and low for principals is \$66K. Exchange rate of 1.38 (average of the last three years).

¹⁸ NYC: 2010 data from "ELA Results 2006-2010 Data Download" from the NYC DOE (weighted average of Black and Hispanic);

Berlin: Institut für Schulqualität der Länder Berlin und Brandenburg e.V., "VERA 3: Vergleichsarbeiten in der Jahrgangsstufe 3 im Schuljahr 2009/2010 Länderbericht Berlin" (Reading). Note that VERA 3 measures reading proficiency versus the expected standards at the end of the 4th grade. Proficiency is defined as reaching at least competency level II out of V.

¹⁹ NYC: 2010 data from "Math Results 2006-2010 Data Download" from the NYC DOE (weighted average of Black and Hispanic used);

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