

**THE
RENSSELAERVILLE
INSTITUTE**



***New Direction Report
2016-2018***

*Increasing life chances for children through
education and community*

Together we increase life chances for young people

The Rensselaerville Institute takes pride in our 50-year history of helping local people lead change in their communities.

In 2016 we sharpened TRI's mission to focus on increasing life chances for children. We took two of our proven interventions—School Turnaround and Community Sparkplugs—and joined them to create a bigger impact in the communities we serve. Atlanta Public Schools became our first test-site and since then we've spread this model to new locations.

We also deepened our longtime partnership with New York City's Clark Foundation, helping its grantees use our results frameworks as they take important steps to reduce poverty.

As we grow and forge this new direction, the lessons we've learned in both urban and rural communities inform our work. I thank our partners, our donors, and the entire TRI team for believing in the mission. Together we're proving that communities, schools, and partners have the energy and the spark to increase life chances for young people.

Gillian Williams

PRESIDENT



SCHOOL TURNAROUND

For over 18 years School Turnaround has worked in some of the country's most beleaguered schools, where their leaders share one thing in common—an urgent need to raise student achievement.

Our team helps schools intervene to boost student achievement within two years. All of our School Turnaround specialists previously served as principals who turned around at least one school.

We prepare school principals to lead through focused turnaround strategies and behaviors. They apply these in ways that enable teachers to teach and children to learn.

From 2016-2018:

- 100% of our partner schools in Atlanta have met their targets in reading.
- 87% have seen math achievement climb; 37.5% are meeting their targets.
- We served 55 schools in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Ohio, Mississippi, New York and North Carolina.



Cumulatively, TRI has turned around 307 schools since 2001 with an average gain of 10.2% in reading and math.

ATLANTA RESULTS

Georgia's Department of Education ranks the state's public schools based on the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI). Here is the performance of School Turnaround's first cohort, which began the 2016-2017 school year.

State Percentile Rank on CCRPI*

School Name	2016 CCRPI Rank	2018 CCRPI Rank after 2 years in ST
Continental Colony Elementary School	12%	23%
Finch Elementary	2%	21%
Kimberly Elementary School	3%	21%
Miles Intermediate School	28%	41%
Perkerson Elementary School	15%	48%
Peyton Forest Elementary School	6%	42%
Sylvan Hills Middle School	15%	26%

** Actual individual school scores not comparable due to change in CCRPI methodology during past three years.*

Sylvan Hills Middle School is school in Southwest Atlanta where 99% of the student population is economically disadvantaged.



Less than 10% of its students were proficient in reading and math.



Its principal, Mr. Portee, became involved with The Rensselaerville Institute in 2016.

First we brought in more teachers who have the children's best interests at heart.



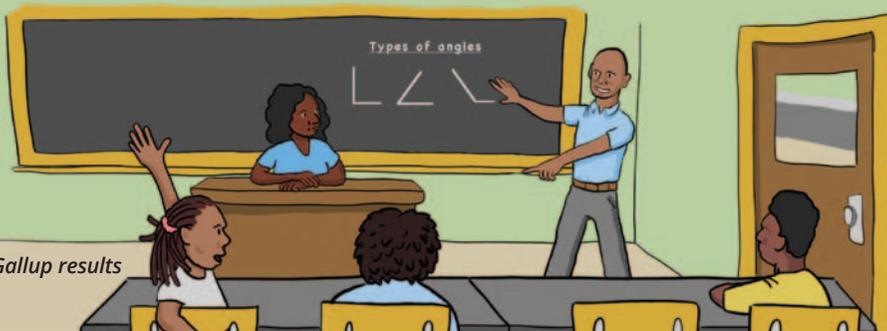
Mr. Portee told his staff there are two types of people at school:

TEACHERS THOSE WHO HELP TEACHERS

remove barriers for teachers and students so that they can really LEARN

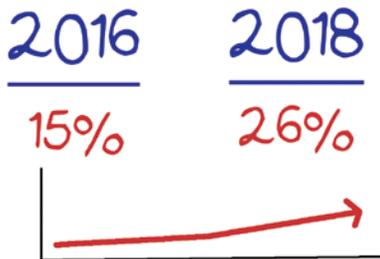


The leaders committed to giving teachers helpful feedback – daily. Data use shifted from school accountability to informing daily classroom change. Now staff* and student engagement is at an all-time high.

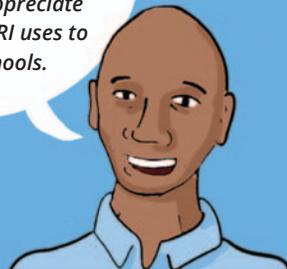


*2017 Gallup results

Over two years, Sylvan Hills' state ranking has improved.



We've changed the trajectory of the school. Parents and families believe we have a genuine desire for their children to succeed. I appreciate the approach TRI uses to support schools.



Community Sparkplugs

Learning doesn't just happen in schools. It happens when kids explore extracurricular activities, when they spend quality time with family, and when they interact with caring adults.

TRI's Community Sparkplug methodology provides support to local citizens who want to improve their neighborhoods and bring children more opportunities. These volunteers—brimming with ideas and energy—are people we call Sparkplugs.

Since we started in Atlanta in 2016, Sparkplugs have led three cohorts for a total of 22 projects. TRI helped volunteers organize their projects to move fast and gain measurable results in just six months:

- 831 kids developed a new skill in Atlanta. These skills included reading, theater training, youth-development skills at the YMCA, tennis, aqua-farming, and entrepreneurship
- 516 people volunteered and the projects received \$99,663 in cash and in-kind donations

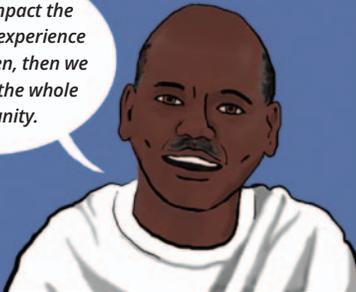
We know that 50 percent of volunteers “re-spark” and go on to lead other projects, building civic leaders who are there to stay.

Five Sparkplug projects are also now underway in Clarksdale, Miss.



In Atlanta, Community Sparkplug Kenneth Hill has created a program called "We Read Together."

If we can impact the educational experience of our children, then we can impact the whole community.



Once a week, Hill and other volunteer tutors work one-on-one with students at Adamsville Primary School.



Students also receive incentives to read at home, as Jaeden does with his mom.



Raquel is a volunteer tutor with We Read Together.

Any time you can get a kid excited about getting lost in a book, I think that's a good thing.



The group received over \$1,500 worth of donated books.



In just six months, all of the students increased their reading levels.



This is what being a Community Sparkplug is all about.



I believe in the value of the volunteer looking into the eyes of our students. They know that 'someone in my community cares for me and keeps showing up.' They know 'that person believes reading is important for my future.'

The Clark Foundation

TRI has been The Clark Foundation's "outcome partner" for 15 years. The foundation provides long-term operating support to nonprofits in New York City which help residents build a path out of poverty.

We work with nonprofit leaders—providing tools, energy, confidence and discipline—to achieve results focused on the people they serve.

New York Cares is one of these groups. It connects caring New Yorkers with volunteer opportunities in 1,300 nonprofits and schools.

Executive Director Gary Bagley first consulted with TRI in 2006 to improve volunteer engagement. He discovered that just 20 percent of volunteers performed 80 percent of the work, prompting the organization to invest in retaining key volunteers instead of spending time on one-timers.

They made other decisions based on data—shifting its services from Manhattan to neighborhoods in the boroughs with higher needs. They also discovered it was easier to send volunteers from Manhattan to fill slots in those neighborhoods than find volunteers who already lived there.

Today New York Cares tracks its performance, sharing data regularly so staff can see the impact. "Staff report they work at a well-run organization where they know what is expected of them," says Bagley.



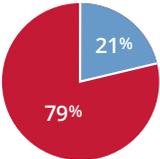
Assistance we offer to non-profits and funders:

- Defining success
- Tracking targets and milestones
- Assessing progress
- Improving and learning from data
- Telling organizational results stories

Financial Statement *Audited through Dec. 31, 2017*

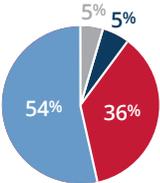
2017 REVENUES

● Contributions & Grants	\$ 700,891
● Fee for Service	\$ 2,608,669
Total	\$ 3,309,560



2017 EXPENSES

● Program Salaries	\$ 1,649,831
● Program Expenses	\$ 1,123,081
● General & Administrative Salaries	\$ 164,120
● General & Administrative Expenses	\$ 143,593
Total	\$ 3,080,625



School districts typically pay for School Turnaround through their school-improvement budgets, occasionally supplemented with philanthropic dollars. Community Sparkplugs and other community work are funded by grants and donors.



Thank You Supporters

Over these past two years, 100 percent of board members and staff have made a financial contribution to TRI.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Rensselaerville Institute is deeply saddened by the loss of **John Klingenstein** and **Lawrence Bober**. As longstanding members of our Board of Trustees, John and Larry both contributed thinking and insistence on results to TRI's work for human gain.

**2016-2018
SCHOOL PARTNERS**

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Birmingham City Schools

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NORTH CAROLINA

Guilford County Schools

The New York Times Magazine profiled our work with Atlanta Public Schools in the September 2018 article: *Can good teaching be taught?* Find it in our newsroom at rinstitute.org.

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