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**“PARENT TRIGGER” LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES:  
A KEY TO PARENT EMPOWERMENT IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

by

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A dissertation submittal in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

Dissertation Committee

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## ABSTRACT

Parent involvement in public education has changed over time in the United States. Recently it has taken on a more radical dimension aimed at shifting the role of parents. These efforts are identified by some as *parent empowerment* and arguably may be part of a larger policy movement to secure parent voice in equity-focused education reform. The policy innovation allows parents with students in persistently underperforming schools to force a change in school governance. Since the passage of the first parent trigger law in California in 2010, three parent petition campaigns have forced a turnaround in school governance.

The purpose of this study was to provide a baseline of understanding for the ways in which parent trigger legislation intersected educational policy and to investigate the extent to which the law supported the needs, values, and interests of local parent stakeholders. This qualitative study consisted of three ways in which to examine the legislative influence on parent empowerment: 1) a state-level document analysis of proposed and enacted parent trigger legislation; 2) interviews with the legislator and the education reform advocate responsible for authoring the first parent trigger law; and, 3) eleven interviews with key stakeholders involved in the first two successful efforts to use the parent trigger at Desert Trails Elementary in Adelanto, California and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary in Los Angeles, California.

A cross case comparison of the two school sites revealed that the needs and core beliefs of parent leaders aligned with the intent of the parent trigger law. However, an intermediary organization was required to help the parent stakeholders attain the resources, socio-political learning, and community building strategies necessary to

effectively exercise their parental legal right. Moreover, factors within the local context affected the parent leaders' implementation of the law. Levels of relational trust either mitigated or exacerbated the process. Finally, the use of the law was experienced by parent leaders as both personally and collectively empowering in shifting their role to decision maker. This study has implications for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners considering parent trigger legislation and parent empowerment as a solution for failing schools.

## DEDICATION

To Ted

To Avery and Axel

To my friends and family

To my SOLES and CEPAL mentors

To Polly, Shelli, and Teresa

And, to John Dewey,

*“What the best and wisest parent wants for his child,  
that must we want for all the children of the community.*

*Anything less is unlovely, and left unchecked,  
destroys our democracy.”*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>24PU</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Parents Union</b>
<b>AESD</b>	<b>Adelanto Elementary School District</b>
<b>AFT</b>	<b>American Federation of Teachers</b>
<b>ALEC</b>	<b>American Legislative Exchange Council</b>
<b>API</b>	<b>Academic Performance Index</b>
<b>AYP</b>	<b>Adequate Yearly Progress</b>
<b>CUSD</b>	<b>Compton Unified School District</b>
<b>DTPU</b>	<b>Desert Trails Parent Union</b>
<b>ESEA</b>	<b>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</b>
<b>LAUSD</b>	<b>Los Angeles Unified School District</b>
<b>LEA</b>	<b>Local Educational Agency</b>
<b>NCLB</b>	<b>No Child Left Behind Act of 2009</b>
<b>NEA</b>	<b>National Education Association</b>
<b>RTTT</b>	<b>Race to the Top</b>
<b>SBE</b>	<b>State Board of Education</b>
<b>SSPI</b>	<b>State Superintendent of Public Instruction</b>

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Parent involvement in the public education system in the United States has changed over time since the inception of what was known as “common schools” in the mid-nineteenth century (Cutler, 2000). In the past two decades, parent involvement has evolved into a potentially more meaningful form of participation in a child’s public education. Parent *involvement* became parent *engagement*, a school-led effort aimed at decreasing the marginalized position of the parent within the school landscape and increasing the possibilities for shared authority (Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Pushor, 2007). Researchers contend, however, that not all forms of parent engagement are the same. In particular, school-led efforts do not serve well the most disadvantaged, bi-cultural families (Olivos, Jimenez-Castellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Payne, 2010; Pushor & Murphy, 2004). Instead, school-led parent engagement reflects a growing power imbalance between marginalized parents and the bureaucratic system of education (Dyrness, 2011; Hong, 2011; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Institutional constraints and deeply embedded cultural norms continue to push parents towards the periphery of the school landscape (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies, 2007; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Renee, Welner, & Oakes, 2010; Stelmach, 2004).

As a response to this imbalance, a new form of parent involvement has emerged that suggests that the power dynamics within the system of public education reflects that which exists in the wider society. Parent engagement, once the purview of school-led initiatives aimed at “unlocking the schoolhouse door from within” (Stelmach, 2004, p. 8), has become *parent empowerment*, a term that references collective, parent-led action

focused primarily on school equity and adequacy issues, as well as increased social and political capital for families from disadvantaged populations (Fabricant, 2010; Johnson, Carter, & Finn, 2011; Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Parent empowerment involves a different kind of dialogue, centered in social justice issues, that seeks “mutual recognitions, not as a condition in which weak groups wait for distributions of power or resources from those more powerful” (Anderson, Cissna, & Clune, 2003, p. 12). Furthermore, parent empowerment efforts draw upon radical community organizing strategies as a foundation for social justice change (Mediratta, Shah, & McAlister, 2009; Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006; Warren, 2011; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009) to secure a seat for parents at the education reform table. This emerging public dialogue, its alliances, and collective actions may have elements akin to a social movement (Hargreaves, 2001; Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Wells, Anyon, & Oakes, 2011) and may be further shifting the role of parent within the public school landscape to that of social change agent and policy maker. As a social movement, these efforts may be poised to address deeply seated norms and beliefs that “sustain the status quo” (Oakes, Rogers, Blasi, & Lipton, 2006, p. 3) and undermine the right of all students to a quality education. Dagostino (2011) suggests that empowerment reform efforts that “remove power over the students’ education from the political process” (p. 209) and transfer decision-making power to parents will lead to better policy decisions because of the parents’ sole accountability for their student children’s welfare. To further Stelmach’s (2010) metaphor of unlocking the schoolhouse door from within, parent empowerment is more akin to *shooting the lock off* the schoolhouse door from the *outside*— a battle motif

that reflects an entrenched encampment of those unwilling to align with a potentially new paradigm of empowered parent involvement.

An example at the center of the national discussion on parent empowerment is found in the efforts of the Los Angeles Parent Union (LAPU), a group now part of the parent advocacy organization, Parent Revolution. Tired of what is seen by many as the slow, tinkering progress of education reform (Payne, 2010; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wolcott, 2003), these parents voiced their grievance through collective action and, ultimately, policy making. As they stated on the LAPU website, “For too long, everyone else has been in charge of our children’s schools. Politicians. Bureaucrats. Special interests. They had the power. We were told to do bake sales...We are sick and tired of being sick and tired” (“About Us: Parent Revolution,” 2010).

Together, the LAPU and Parent Revolution leveraged the California Parent Empowerment Act (SBX5 4) legislation introduced in 2009 by State Senator Gloria Romero and enacted in 2010. Called the “parent trigger,” this legislation empowers parents at a limited number of persistently failing schools (75) to force a change in management, if they obtain the signatures of 51% of the parents of children enrolled at that school. Four options for school transformation are available: 1) transformation – replacement of the principal with new leadership and increased autonomy and implementation of a broad school improvement plan; 2) turnaround – replacement of the principal and at least half of the staff, with more local control over both staffing and budget; 3) charter conversion – the district no longer runs the school; and 4) closure – the school is closed and students are sent to nearby higher performing schools. A fifth option, not codified in the law, but touted by parent advocacy groups as one of the most

important aspects of the legislation, is the ability to use the parent trigger to negotiate change, “This bargaining power holds the most transformative potential impact of the parent trigger: by giving parents – no matter what their socioeconomic status – a real seat at the decision making table of public education (Buffalo ReformEd, 2012, p.2).

Parent Revolution’s parent trigger efforts, whether to enact legislation or to pull the trigger at local school sites, have produced widespread backlash from both local school districts and the teachers unions (Sawchuck, 2011), yet, the idea of parents having a legislation-backed say in the governance structure of their schools is spreading (Dagostino, 2011; Foundation for Education Reform & Accountability (FERA), 2012; Orr & Rogers, 2011). In addition to California, twenty-eight other states have proposed parent trigger legislation. While this is not the first legislation to codify systemic change in public education (Payne, 2010; Sunderman, 2010; Welner, 2010), it is the first to propose a re-orientation of the role of parents in school governance.

This collective activism on the part of the Parent Revolution is variously called *community organizing for school reform*, *education organizing*, or *parent organizing*. Whatever the nomenclature, organizing around schoolhouse issues emerged as its own “distinct field of work” (Mediratta et al., 2009, p. 16) in the late 1980s, beginning as a grassroots response in low income areas to the national policy debates between researchers, politicians, and educational administrators. School reform work has now become part of the community organizing agenda and it is estimated that in urban areas over 500 organizing groups are engaged in work involving public education (Warren & Mapp, 2011).

## **Problem Statement**

Parent trigger legislation is emerging as a nationwide school governance reform movement. A window of opportunity is being accessed by policy entrepreneurs to address a perceived problem (Boushey 2012; Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997). Yet, it remains unclear who will ultimately benefit should this reform effort take hold and what actions will result from these efforts (FERA, 2012). This represents a problem if the potential shift in governance power supports an inequitable policy agenda that further stratifies American society rather than aligning with the tenets of the American democratic education system and, as Orr & Rogers (2011) contend, it aims to:

...address the shared interests of society to shape the knowledge, skills, and values of community members and future participants in the democratic process. Further, the principle of equal educational opportunity holds that public schools should mitigate the effects of inherited wealth by unleashing the capacities of diverse communities in economic, political and social affairs. (pp. 10-11)

At the heart of public education is the belief that its purpose is to support contributing citizens who have the capacity to knowledgeably participate in a democratic society (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1987). However, over the past 100 years, history has shown that American public education, including its decision-making and delivery structures, is not adequately serving all students and, in particular, is under serving its marginalized student populations through unequal access to resources (Oakes et al., 2006; Payne, 2010; Stewart & Wolf, 2011). The outcomes are based on systemic problems, the root cause of which has not been agreed upon or addressed (Payne, 2010; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wolcott, 2003). Teacher quality, professional development, curriculum quality and engagement, school funding, principal leadership, standardized testing, and school privatization (e.g., charter schools, vouchers, tax credits, home schooling) are all reform ideas that have failed to significantly decrease the nation's dropout rate or

increase the student population's preparedness for college and careers (David & Cuban, 2010; Payne, 2010). Further, a dysfunctional K-12 educational system puts students at risk for failure in college and careers and may, in part, contribute to the nation's incarceration rate and inadequate pool of qualified workers (Alexander, 2012; Tucker, 2011).

Orr and Rogers (2011) contend that the root problem of unequal schooling can be found in the unequal voice within the school governance structures. Increasing public engagement in governance through parent trigger legislation will make the decision-making and delivery system more responsive and responsible to the underserved communities. An empowered parent voice may cause a shift away from decades of status quo tinkering by education policy makers and practitioners, but will it lead to real change in providing equity and access to quality learning for all students?

Unfortunately, at present, there is little known about the local impact of the parent trigger legislation or its relationship to what is being self-identified by parent-led organizing groups as *parent empowerment*. Even the very latest research on parent involvement in public education remains focused on school-led parent or family engagement (Hands, 2010; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Hong, 2011) or community-organized engagement (Mediratta et al., 2009; Warren et al., 2009), as the *du jour* form of parent involvement. There is a need, therefore, to look closely at the emerging phenomenon of parent-led empowerment, recently supported by state policy and law, to examine the way in which this policy is shifting the role of the parent as one of individual child advocate to one as a collective agent for social change, and influencing the public education reform landscape. Without research on the phenomenon, questions regarding

the ability of parent trigger legislation to support parent empowerment and school reform go answered. To date, no examples of published academic research on parent trigger policies in the local context were found.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue of parent empowerment in public education by examining not only parent trigger legislation, but also its influence within the local education context. This study will help us understand the genesis of the enacted parent trigger laws in each state and the similarities or differences that exist across them.

First, I examine each parent trigger law and any related administrative guidelines or judicial challenges in the seven states in the U.S. that have passed the legislation to compare legislative content. I conduct a document analysis in order to investigate the policy mechanisms and advocacy coalitions linked to the legislation and determine any variation across states. A thematic coding of the content may suggest a priority of values that reflect public policy preferences as well as a possible taxonomy of policy actors who advocate for or against the legislation.

Second, through a case comparison of two local parent empowerment efforts, this study explores the extent to which parent trigger legislation supports the needs, values, and interests of parent stakeholders who use trigger legislation to empower their position as decision makers within the local education context. By integrating the findings from the analysis of the legislative documents with the lived experience from the two case studies, this study will foster a better understanding as to whether parent trigger

legislation is shifting the role of the parent in public education towards that of a social change agent or whether it may be supporting a different school reform agenda.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research question guiding this study is: *What influence does parent trigger legislation have on parent empowerment within the United States system of public education?* Sub-questions considered include:

- What is the current status of enacted parent trigger legislation across the country?
- What core policy issues are driving parent trigger legislation?
- How does the legislation propose to effect the participation and representation of parents in school governance structures?
- To what extent does parent trigger legislation support the needs, values, and interests of the parent stakeholder in the local context?

Through a document analysis of current parent trigger legislation and two case studies of local parent trigger efforts, this study explores the possibility that collective parent actions may be able to influence school districts. This stimulus may motivate an effective shift away from decades of status quo tinkering by education policy makers and practitioners (Evans & Shirley, 2008; Harper, 2007; Payne, 2010; Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and towards real change in providing equity and access to quality learning for all students.

This chapter has provided the background and purpose of the study at hand. The remaining sections of the study are organized in six chapters. Chapter Two is a review and analysis of various bodies of literature that inform the study. Current research regarding parent involvement in public education is reviewed to anchor the discussion historically and to provide a context to critique the parent trigger legislation as a social

justice issue, and to consider the implications of parent empowerment if it were to shift the role of the parent to a dominant actor in educational policy making.

Chapter Three outlines the study's methodology orientation, including: sample and participation selection, data collection methods, and data analysis methods.

Chapter Four presents the findings from the data analysis of proposed and enacted parent trigger legislation in the United States.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the data analysis of the interviews with the legislative author and policy entrepreneur involved in the development and enactment of the first parent trigger law.

Chapter Six presents the findings from the data analysis of the interviews with participants involved in the first two successful attempts to utilize the parent trigger law.

Chapter Seven provides a discussion of the findings, conclusions and implications. Twelve appendices are attached that include interview protocols, mind map journal sample, the text of the first parent trigger legislation, administrative guidelines for the first parent trigger legislation, model legislation, and legislative matrices for the states, with both proposed and enacted parent trigger laws.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of parent trigger legislation and the extent to which it supports the needs, values, and interests of parent stakeholders who use trigger legislation to empower their position as decision makers within the local education context. In this section, three bodies of literature are reviewed referring to: the concept and history of parent involvement in public education, the related theories of social capital and empowerment, and the related theories of community organizing and social movements. These particular bodies of literature were chosen to anchor the discussion historically, provide a context to critique the phenomenon as a social justice issue, and to consider the implications of parent empowerment if it were to emerge as a social movement for equity-based school reform.

#### **Parent Involvement in Public Education over Time**

##### **Historical Trajectory of Parent Involvement**

As family practice, parents have always been involved in their children's learning. This type of parental involvement takes the form of close familial mentoring, as parents shepherd their children into the adult world in which they are embedded. Parent involvement in public education, however, is an altogether different construct; it expands the learning relationships between the parent-child dyad to include the complex social relationships between parent-child-school-community-society.

In general, educational historians agree on the historical trajectory of parent involvement in American public education (Cutler, 2000; Hands, 2010; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In colonial times, for all but the elite families, children

were educated by their parents in their homes or through church for basic skills and induction of values. Influenced by the European workforce tradition, children's advanced education followed an apprenticeship model. Later, community-based "common schools" were developed and children from all layers of society began to attend school, in part as a way of leveling the playing field between different socio-economic groups in America (Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). While that was the stated purpose, certain groups such as children from African-American or Native American families still struggled to even gain access (Spring, 2010). The role of the parent as educator expanded to include that of school governor; parental control of school governance structures was the norm in the village school system up until the early 1800s. In the 1800s, however, the active role of the parent was diminished as the school system became more standardized and bureaucratized at the hands of teacher professionals and political leaders. Parents were seen as having less to offer to the parent-school relationship as schooling was restructured to adapt to the growing industrialization of the country and the need to educate students for a less-personalized workforce (Benham & Heck, 1998; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

This loss of control as the child's first educator and loss of a dominant role in the school's governance structure created tension between parents and school personnel that has carried forward to the present day (Cutler, 2000). Pushor (2007) uses the metaphor of colonization and asserts that parents have, in the past, been put into a scripted role that plays out as the *protected* rather than the *protectorate*, which results in the marginalization of the parent population. Hands (2010) delves more deeply into this phenomenon, explaining, "Policies limiting or eliminating school-level involvement,

combined with separate roles and responsibilities of parents, community citizens, and school personnel set the school apart from the community and the home. As a result, school-family-community relations were severed” (p. 2).

Cutler (2000) also notes other factors in the 1800s that can account for the adversarial relationship between parent and school, including social class, ethnicity, and cultural differences across the increasingly diverse student populations in the public schools. With the advent of educational philosopher John Dewey’s progressive education movement in the early 1900s, however, the importance of parents in their children’s education was revitalized (Fabricant, 2010). Dewey (1988) was also skeptical of experts providing the lone perspective on the needs within the school system. Instead, Dewey advocated for parents and citizens to be part of the dialogue; as he noted, “the man who wears the shoe, knows best where it pinches” (p. 207).

Despite Dewey’s progressive philosophy, the role of the parent in relation to school continued to submerge under “the bureaucratic concept of a professional managed relationship” (Cutler, 2000, p. 44) that did little to support the notion of parent as educator or decision-maker. School administrators fostered the widespread development of parent-teachers associations to provide a defined and controlled role for parent participation within the school system (Cutler, 2000). The *bake sale version* of parent involvement, wherein parents were asked to provide additional classroom funding and social bonding support, was considered paramount.

In the 1960s, school site PTA's support by parents gave rise to a form of activism as marginalized parents joined with other social reformers to grapple with school desegregation. This marked a resurgence in the adversarial relationship between parents

and the school system. Fueled by the landmark court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the court systems forced school bureaucracies and communities to address issues of equity and access in the public schools and to increase the rights of parents in relation to their child's schooling (Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Sunderman, 2010; Welner, 2010). Attention was paid to the inequities between different socio-economic groups within the American system of public education.

Another outcome of these court challenges was an increased focus on the parent-school relationship. Educational researchers began to connect parent involvement to student success in both behavior (e.g., school attendance) and cognitive (e.g., academic productivity) aspects (Epstein, 1995; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Pushor, 2007). As a result, beginning in the mid-60s, federal legislation started to incorporate elements of parent involvement and parent education into its funded programs in hopes of capitalizing on the correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. These strategies expanded the notion of parent involvement from a school support and social function to a new form of parent participation that attempted to re-introduce parents into the school landscape as more vital partners (Epstein, 1995). For example, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 outlined mandatory provisions for parent involvement strategies, particularly in federally-funded Title I schools. The NCLB parent involvement directives included two-way and meaningful communication between families and school; parents having an integral role in assisting their child's learning; parents as full partners; parents, as appropriate, in decision-making; meaningful consultation between parents and school; and, capacity building of the parent stakeholders' interaction with the

school system (NCLB, 2001). State laws also codify the importance of parent involvement and parental rights (Bonnett, 2011). In California, the law states:

(a) It is essential to our democratic form of government that parents and guardians of school age children attending public schools and other citizens participate in improving public education institutions. Specifically, involving parents and guardians of pupils in the education process is fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

(b) Research has shown conclusively that early and sustained family involvement at home and at school in the education of children results both in improved pupil achievement and in schools that are successful at educating all children, while enabling them to achieve high levels of performance. (Cal. Educ. Code § 51100)

The statute further delineates parental rights to be “informed by the school, and to participate in the education of their children.” In addition to requesting a particular school for their child, fifteen other rights are codified in the law, including the right to observe the classroom, meet with the child’s teacher or principal, volunteer at the school and participate in advisory committees, timely notification of the child’s absence, receive academic performance results and be informed of the child’s progress, receive information about academic standards and school rules, examine curriculum materials, access the child’s school records and question the accuracy of the records, receive information about or deny the use of psychological testing, and be notified if the student is at risk of retention.

Parent involvement has also changed over time in relation to the increase in schooling options available to public school students. Parental school choice policies such as open enrollment, alternative schools, and magnet schools, as well as public charter schools and school voucher programs, have shifted the role of the parent to a potentially more empowered consumer (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002). In 1925, the U.S. Supreme Court landmark case, *Pierce v. Society of Sister*, established parental and

guardian rights in relation to schooling. The parent has the liberty right to direct their child's education. As Justice McReynolds wrote in the court's majority opinion: "The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only" (268 U.S. 510, 45 S. Ct. 571).

Referred to as *the demand side of education* (Stewart & Wolf, 2011), parental school choice is "a term commonly used to describe the opportunity for all families to pursue educational options that are in the best interest of the children" (p. 91).

Proponents of school choice policies contend that when parents are given more school choices, there is the potential for greater parental involvement because parents adopt a more engaged attitude towards an intentionally chosen school environment (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002). A longitudinal study of sixty families involved in a voucher program in the District of Columbia (Stewart & Wolf, 2011) found evidence of parent empowerment through school choice options. In a review of school choice literature, Vassallo (2000) noted a commonality of findings:

Studies of school choice programs on city, state, and national levels indicate that choice schools support parents' involvement in their children's studies, encourage parents' participation in meaningful school activities, and engender greater satisfaction – and that choice schools do so to a significantly greater degree than do traditional schools. (pp 13-14)

In contrast, opponents of school choice options question whether parents have the salient knowledge to be good consumers or whether the market version of schooling really produces better schools from which to choose (Cutler, 2000; Payne, 2010). They also raise questions as to which parents really have a choice option, suggesting that often low-income minority parents do not have the resources to activate the choice available to them (Stevens, de la Torre, & Johnson, 2011). Regardless of the pros and cons of school

choice options, an element of parent involvement in public education now includes parent choice, in part because of federal legislation such as NCLB and the Race to the Top federal funding program, which embeds parental involvement and choice options (Berends, Cannata, & Goldring, 2011). For example, under NCLB, parents with students in schools considered underperforming have choice options to attend higher performing schools.

Today, parent involvement is seen by some researchers as critical to the success of the public school system, to the point of being identified as one of the four essential supports for any school reform effort (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). In their comprehensive study of the Chicago Public Schools, Bryk and his colleagues developed a framework based on empirical findings that placed parent, school, and community ties alongside professional capacity of the teachers, school climate, and instructional guidance, as pillars of school improvement. Their framework furthers the view of parent involvement as a reciprocal phenomenon: Parent involvement includes both parent participation in the school community and school participation in the parent community (p. 51). Interestingly, as this new partnership form of valued parent involvement emerged, researchers begin to diverge in their language and definition of parent involvement.

### **Parent Involvement as Parent, Family, or Community Engagement**

By far, the most cited work regarding the current definition of *parent involvement* is the work of Joyce Epstein (1995). Eight of the works on parent involvement in this review cited Epstein, either her contribution through the National Network of Partnership Schools or, more frequently, her typology (Cutler, 2000; Hands, 2010; Henderson et al.,

2007; Hiatt-Michael, 2006; Hong, 2011; Mediratta et al., 2009; Olivos et al., 2011; Pushor, 2007). Epstein delineates six types of parent involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein's model also places parent involvement into a context of three external and overlapping spheres of influence: school, family, and community.

Epstein's work laid the foundation for broadening the discussion around parent involvement. For example, Pushor (2007) makes a case for re-defining parent involvement as *parent engagement* to better understand the current interactions emerging between school and parent. Pushor describes parent engagement as the construction of a shared world where participation is intentionally linked to student learning and a wide range of outcomes: grades, test scores, graduation rates, post-secondary movement, social skills, social capital, personal competence, and learning efficacy. Pushor acknowledges, however, that not everyone agrees with her definition and that the general lack of differentiation between the terms involvement and engagement tends to muddy the waters within the literature.

In addition to negotiating the terminology and experience of involvement vs. engagement, researchers are starting to interchange the concepts of parent involvement with *family involvement* or *family engagement*. For example, although the title of the work is around parent engagement, Hands (2010) switches back and forth between parent engagement and the concept of family engagement and the role of community support in parent engagement. Likewise, Hiatt-Michael (2006) follows this lead and dumps the discussion all into one pot: *family-school-community involvement*. Pushor (2007) sums up the difficulty:

The result of these delineations – involvement/engagement and parent/family is a body of literature with a multitude of sometimes undifferentiated terms: parent involvement, parent engagement, family involvement, family engagement. (p. 4)

Regardless of the delineations, the current research points to the fact that “The pendulum appears to be swinging back again, slowly at first, but gathering momentum, towards schools which increasingly involves parents” (Hiatt-Michael, 2001, p. 256).

### **Varying Levels of Parent Involvement**

The role of parents and their locus of control in the learning system have changed over time (Cutler, 2000; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Pushor, 2007). Parent involvement as a school-led education practice is now re-centering parents and community within the school landscape as partners and, at times, co-decision-makers (Hands, 2010; Henderson et al., 2007; Pushor & Murphy, 2004). For example, Henderson et al. (2007) outlines the pathway for school leadership to follow that might transform what the authors term a “fortress school” into a “partnership school.” This pathway attends to five essential characteristics: building relationships, linking to learning, addressing differences, supporting advocacy, and sharing power.

But despite research-based guides aimed at shifting the role and power of the parent in relation to the school system, research shows that levels of parent involvement still vary and, in particular, mirror the socio-economic status of families; those of a lower socio-economic status are found to be less involved (Cochran, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Olivos, 2006; Henderson et al., 2007; Pushor & Murphy, 2004). Moreover, these less-involved parents are connected to students who reside in the lowest quartile of student achievement and, according to Olivos (2006), these families are often viewed by society in a way that suggests:

Primary blame for academic underachievement and social maladjustment should be placed on the social group in question. In other words, the source of inequality is not seen as being located within the dominant social structure, from which the dominant white middle- and upper-class population benefits most, but rather within the bicultural and/or low-income individual and his/her group. (p. 45)

Framing the discussion in a way that centers the cause for underperformance within the disadvantaged community is referred to as *deficit theory* or *deficit thinking* (Olivos, 2006; Valencia, 1997). Olivos (2006) outlines three basic forms of deficit thinking: biological, structural or environmental, and cultural. Biological deficit thinking is akin to racism with the belief that it is the genetic make-up of the group that accounts for the underperformance. Structural or environmental deficit thinking places the root cause on historical events that undermine and weaken the group's social structure. Cultural deficit thinking devalues the cultural characteristics of a group by attributing the group's attitudes, beliefs, and values to the underperformance within the school system. Lewis (1961) coined the term as a "culture of poverty" and posited that income inequality and underperformance is the result of beliefs and values embedded within the culture of the poor. As might be expected, the implication of this type of thinking is the construction of educators' attitudes and practices toward parent involvement. School-led processes that strive to increase parent involvement, but face deficit perspectives regarding the ability of parents to contribute in meaningful ways, are actually counter-productive (Cochran, 1992; Doucet, 2011; Olivos, 2006; Valencia, 1997). An example of this is found in an ethnographic research study conducted by Hubbard (Hubbard & Hands, 2011) at a conversion charter middle school. Her findings indicate that the deficit perceptions by the school administration caused the school-community relationship to deteriorate and led to feelings of marginalization on the part of the parents. The result was a withdrawal of parental support.

As a way of counter-acting the deficit model of thinking, researchers recommend professional development on the part of teachers and school leadership to better understand the social context in which their parent involvement practices are embedded (Comer, 2001; Hands, 2010; Henderson, et al., 2007; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Pushor, 2007). Valuing the *funds of knowledge* that parents and community bring to the school setting is considered essential to the parent involvement practice and to the students' learning environment (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). By understanding the cultural knowledge that is centered in the family household and community, educators are able to place learning within a context that attends to the whole person in a child, not just the student-part of the child that teachers encounter in the school setting. Furthermore, Olivos (2006) contends that the devaluation of the parental funds of knowledge leads to various forms of resistance, especially in marginalized communities. This resistance, mostly of an unproductive nature (e.g., lack of participation, apathy, nitpicking, challenging power, enragement), cannot be overcome without addressing issues of class, race, and gender – subjects not usually a part of the parent involvement discussion.

### **Parent Involvement and Social Capital**

The ability of parent groups to socially network and negotiate within the system, either successfully using valued funds of knowledge or struggling with undervalued contributions, is called social capital. In spite of possible concerns regarding the practical applicability and dominant bias of social capital theory, researchers continue to study the connection between social capital, parent involvement, and the challenges within the public education system.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986), a seminal thinker in the theory of social capital, defined the phenomenon of social capital as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership of a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (pp. 248-249)

Bourdieu argued that just as physical capital has value in an economic sense, so does social networking between individuals and group. In addition, its value can be leveraged to affect the productivity of the social system. Coleman (1988) delineates three forms of social capital: the reciprocal nature of social structures that rely on obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness; information channels that provide the information-flow as well as facilitate action, and the social norm that reinforces the interest of the group over self-interest through rewards and effective sanctions. Portes (1998), however, points to flaws in the focus on, and phenomenon of, social capital. First, he contends that the concept is not new, but rather a re-labeling of a previously studied process, re-packaged for more popular consumption, and, second, he questions the logic of extending the individual level of the precepts as put forth by Bourdieu and Coleman to the larger society. Portes is not sold on the assumption that increasing social capital will “provide a ready remedy for major social problems, as promised by its bolder proponents” (p. 21). Furthermore, Yosso (2005) calls into question, from a Critical Race Theory perspective, the dominant interpretations of social capital. The author posits the need for broadening the understanding of social capital as community cultural wealth which includes the aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistance capital possessed by marginalized groups.

Coleman's research findings concluded that "Both social capital in the family and social capital outside it, in the adult community surrounding the school, showed evidence of considerable value in reducing the probability of dropping out of high school" (Coleman, 1998, p. S119). Similarly, other researchers confirm that meaningful parent involvement is not possible without first addressing the issue of the lack of social capital (Laureau, 2001; Mediratta et al., 2009; Olivos, 2006; Olivos et al., 2011; Putnam, 1995). For example, Delgado-Gaitan (1990), in her ethnographic study of the public education experience of twenty Spanish-speaking families in Portillo, California, noted the ways in which the socio-cultural differences (e.g., economic status, cultural, language) between the families and the school and district administration created a socially isolating experience for the parent population that affected their ability to engage in the public school environment. Similarly, in an ethnographic study, Horvat, Weininger and Lareau (2003) examined parental networks in relation to social capital and found that middle-class parents were able to react collectively and activate the information, authority, and expertise much more so than their working-class or poor parents.

If the parent population lacks those social connections and the trust and reciprocity that allow them to gain their fair share of control within the social landscape, then parent involvement will be ineffectual (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Marsh, 2007). Bryk and Schneider (2002) found in their three year study of twelve elementary schools that the relational trust built among the adult stakeholders was instrumental in the effective implementation of school reform efforts and that "social similarities by race, ethnicity, and class offer an initial basis for trusting" (p.28). This contention is further born out in the seven-year research study done within the Chicago public school system. The

findings from that study are clear: “Community social capital is a critical resource for advancing school improvement” (Bryk et al., 2010). Furthermore, Shipps (2003) postulates that different types of urban education reform require different levels of civic capacity. Empowerment regime changes require essential resources such as “cohesive group representation, social stability, political legitimacy, and redistribution of benefits” (p. 852). An African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” What research says is, “To teach a child, you need to raise a village.”

### **Parent Involvement and Empowerment**

A variety of education practices have emerged to support the increase in social capital and empower the parent community. The concept of empowerment is rooted in the social transformation movements of the 1960s and 1970s where models of community action were implemented to improve the status of marginalized groups within the larger society. Rappaport (1987) suggests that empowerment is “a process, a mechanism by which people, organizations, communities gain mastery over their affairs” (p. 122). By the 1980s, researchers across such fields as community psychology, organizational psychology, education, business, social work, and others began to consider a “theory of empowerment” that encompassed concepts related not only to process, but also to the outcome, partnership, and perception (Cochran, 1992; Dunst, Trivette, & Lapointe, 1992; Hur, 2006; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

During the late 1980s, a group of social scientists and practitioners at Cornell University applied the concepts of empowerment to the “context of community support for family life” (Cochran, 1992, p. 3) and introduced the idea of *parent empowerment* to increase parent involvement in disadvantaged communities and to positively impact

student academic performance. Centered in the field of community psychology, this group, called the Cornell Empowerment Group (CEG), developed an often-cited definition:

Empowerment is an intentional, dynamic, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources. (CEG, 1989, p. 2)

While CEG introduced the idea of *parent empowerment*, it is important to note that the term was not presented in literature as a concept to replace the term *parent involvement*, but, rather, as an essential practice within public education for increasing parent involvement (Cochran, 1992).

From its research, CEG also developed a conceptual framework of “eight interacting systems ranging from the natural environment through belief systems, institutional relationships, mediating groups and orientations, informal networks, family dynamics, and dyadic relations within the family to the self-system” (Cochran, 1992, p. 13) and, thus, embedding parent involvement in public education within the larger community context. This ecological framework drew heavily from the nested systems and adult development approach of their Cornell University colleague, Urie Bronfenbrenner. Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed an ecological systems theory in which he outlined four types of embedded systems: the immediate environment of the microsystem; the mesosystem of connections between microsystems; the external environment of the exosystem; and the larger cultural context of the macrosystem.

Paulo Freire’s (1970) notion of power imbalance between the dominant and the subordinate stakeholders also played an important role in the development of the framework. Freire believed that education should be a practice of freedom, rather than

dominance, a chance to redefine the relationship between society's oppressed and their oppressor. Freire's theory of knowledge fundamentally linked the process of knowledge acquisition to social relationships and, further, viewed all educational pedagogy as embedded in the political nature of the social system (Giroux, 1984).

As a result of their work, CEG found three important elements to help define the practice of parent empowerment: 1) It is a social networking process; 2) It involves mutual respect and the sharing of power; and 3) It includes critical reflection of attitudes towards the larger system. Finally, by putting empowerment theory into practice at the school site level, the CEG researchers were able to see gains in resource availability to marginalized groups, an increase in social networking, and improvement in student performance (Cochran, 1992).

### **Transformative Parent Involvement as Parent Empowerment**

While cited researchers acknowledge the importance of the social capital and parent empowerment practices for increasing levels of parent involvement, what is less clear are the methods available to determine which types of parent involvement practices are best for raising (or, worst, for *razing*) the social capital within the village. Epstein's (1995) model does not evaluate her six types of parent involvement in relation to ability or inability to raise the social capital of parents or to move the parents towards a role of change agent. While Johnson, Carter and Finn (2011) contend that most research on parent involvement has focused on the individual parent as advocate rather than the collective role as a parent activist, research on the ground such as Evans and Shirley's (2008) work in Boston with the Jamaica Plain Parent Organizing Project follow the trajectory of learning from individual interest to communal accountability. Kelly (2012)

conducted interviews with leaders of parent organizing groups across the country and found that organizers have a term for this challenging transition “moving people along the ‘curve of engagement’ or taking steps up the ‘engagement ladder” (p. 41).

To bridge the gap between parent involvement models and parent activism, Olivos (2006), along with education researcher Alberto Ochoa, constructed a Parent Involvement Analysis Paradigm for “analyzing progressive levels of parent involvement in a democratic social and educational context” (p. 112). Their framework examines four levels of parent involvement practice across a continuum of socio-economic and developmental consciousness. Perceptions of parents as contributors within the system are seen at different levels: Level I, superficially connected; Level II, collaborators; Level III, co-decision-makers; and Level IV, action researchers and agents of transformative change. Olivos identifies Level IV as an empowered form of parent involvement, one that “seeks to transform parent involvement into a meaningful act of empowerment and political involvement with the goal of making education a democratic and reflective action” (p. 112). He calls this empowered model *transformative parent involvement*.

Olivos (2006) suggests that for parent involvement to be an empowering education practice it must be placed within a context of cultural and economic democracy and, to be successful, must support the active participation of the subordinate group in making change to the dominant system. Without the perception of parents as change agents, parent involvement practice might address the issue of economic democracy or “equal benefits” (e.g., access to resources, inclusion, and responsiveness) within the dominant structure (Level III), but will not have the necessary ingredients to address the

issues of cultural democracy (Level IV). Outside of the Olivos' own body of work, however, the term *transformative parent involvement* is not widely used.

Marsh (2007) found similar issues of power imbalance. The author spent three years of field research studying the outcomes of two system-wide district improvement efforts that deliberately engaged a community of educators, parents, and citizens to effect change. She found that unattended to issues of hierarchical position, language skills and style, and a biased towards commonality of representation versus interest group representation, attributed in varying degrees across each case to undermining the “needs and interests of traditionally marginalized individuals” (p. 76). Hubbard and Martinez (in press) in their study of a high school reform effort revealed that both unequal positional and relationship power caused by individual, structural, and cultural factors impeded the reform effort and that district leadership responded more noticeably to the voices of the “privileged” parents (p. 14).

### **Parent Empowerment through Community Organizing**

Today, *parent empowerment* is the label most used to describe parent involvement activities aimed at increasing the social and political capital of parents with the goal of systemic school reform. Current literature cites examples of numerous local parent empowerment efforts (Bryk et al., 2010; Dyrness, 2011; Fabricant, 2010; Hands, 2010, Hong, 2011; Mediteratta et al., 2009; Oakes et al., 2006; Olivos, 2006; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Moreover, common to these parent empowerment efforts is the use of community organizing as the central empowerment strategy.

Various terms are used to describe community organizing as it relates to public education including: community organizing for school reform, community organizing in

education, community organizing for educational justice, community partnerships for school reform, or, simply, parent organizing. Current research appears to be favoring the term *community organizing for school reform*, as the overarching label for this emerging field (Mediratta et al., 2009).

During the past two decades, parent involvement activities within marginalized communities have used community organizing as a fundamental strategy for shifting the role of parents in public education to that of successful change agents (Fabricant, 2010; Warren, 2011). The goal of community organizing in education is twofold: 1) to increase the social capital and political power of the parent community, and 2) to create systemic change that goes beyond success at single school sites to address broader issues such as accountability, equity, standards and performance, and quality of instruction (Lopez, 2003). Renee et al. (2010) suggest that community organizing should result in what the authors term *third-order change*—change that upends the normative belief structure of the system, beliefs such as deficit thinking or the need for governing power to be held by those in a position of societal dominance.

Current community organizing in education strategies are based, in large part, on the labor and civil rights movement work of Saul Alinsky (1971), his successor, Edward Chambers (2004), and lessons from large scale organizing efforts such as the civil rights campaign led by Cesar Chavez (Ganz, 2009) or Myles Horton and the Highlander Center (Horton & Freire, 1990). Central to these strategies, developed over the past seventy years, is the notion that power must be built from within the disadvantaged population with the purpose of the disadvantaged to take collective action on their own behalf (Harper, 2007). Fabricant (2010) and Oakes et al. (2006), however, both note some

differences between the Alinsky and Horton's models of organizing: The Horton model stresses the importance of decentralized leadership and rejects “the dominant assumption that poor people would be led by their social betters” (Fabricant, 2010, p. 26).

Through a study of six education organizing projects across the country, Warren and Mapp (2011) found common similarities to understand how contemporary community organizing works in the school reform context. The authors contend that a strong foundation of organizing traditions, sharing histories and identities, building relationships, and building power leads to three transformational processes within the individual, community, and institution. Similarly, Gold, Simon, and Brown (2002) summarize the distinct characteristics of organizing groups based on their own case study research from five examples across the nation: 1) changing public schools to be more equitable and effective for all students; 2) building large membership to take collective action to further their agenda; 3) building relationships and collective responsibility by identifying shared concerns and creating alliances; 4) developing leadership among community residents; and 5) using organizing strategies such as civic participation, public action, and negotiation to build power for low- and moderate-income residents.

According to the latest research, although there are some differences, not only are there common characteristics across organizing efforts, there also appears to be common trends emerging in terms of the impact of organizing. However, because the research is mainly qualitative and case study in nature, the outcomes are less tied to specific student outcomes and more focused on the “improving equity, improving school culture, and winning policy and practice reforms” (Renee & McAlister, 2011). For example, although Warren and Mapp (2011) did not attempt to “precisely measure the impact of community

organizing on student achievement” (p. 260) for a variety of reasons, they explained instances when organizing groups showed a “win” from stronger parent participation, to improved school-community collaborations, to increased equity.

Mediratta et al. (2009), in a six-year nationwide study, also found positive results from within eight education organizing efforts including: new capacity in districts, positive school climates, stronger professional cultures in schools, stronger instructional core in schools, deeper parent involvement in children’s learning, increased motivation and higher aspirations for educational success, and improved student educational outcomes. Perhaps the most detailed account of community organizing in education outcomes is from the work of Gold et al. (2002). The authors developed an Educator Organizing Indicators Framework that outlined not only the common strategies previously noted across five case study examples, but also the results of each of these strategies. Results were reported in the areas of leadership development, community power, social capital, public accountability, equity, school/community connections, positive school climate, and high quality instruction and curriculum.

Dyrness (2011) and Hong (2011) provided a more personal look at community organizing and parent involvement in two local contexts. Their accounts, framed as educational ethnographies, pull out of the research a complex and conflicted account of parents organizing and struggling together to redefine their collective role within the school landscape. Hong’s findings were process-oriented, developing a new ecological paradigm for parent engagement that centers on parents, promotes engagement, and views parents as assets. The organizing model included cooperation through internal relationships with the school as well as external organizing that was more confrontational

in nature. Dyrness' account was a cautionary tale of the rigidity of the status quo as Latina mothers worked to overcome pushback practices from teachers and administrators in the system who clung to the "controlling images" (p. 109) of the parents that served to devalue their contribution to any reform efforts. Similarly, the case study research of Johnson et al. (2011), across four interrelated parent empowerment projects in an urban district, also highlighted the resistance of administrators and district officials when faced with a new and collective voice of the parent stakeholder. While parent stakeholders were interested in moving from parent involvement to parent empowerment through collective organizing, the other adult stakeholders were less willing to give up the traditional stance of parent involvement – the individual parent support for individual student achievement. One nuanced finding from Johnson and colleagues involved the small schools initiative project and a partner university. This project lacked the involvement of allied community organizers and when the university was finished with the project, it was found that the parent organizing effort was not as strong as other projects with on-going organizing support. The authors offered this as evidence of the importance of ally-building to community organizing efforts in education.

### **Parent Empowerment and Organizing as a Social Movement**

While researchers have identified and studied a number of community organizing activities in the local context, it is still unclear whether or not these parent empowerment efforts are part of a larger social movement. Some research mapping of the current community organizing in education landscape does show that local efforts are also connected with regional and state coalitions (Frabrant, 2010; Mediratta et al. 2009; Warren & Mapp, 2011), but the research is not exhaustive to include all efforts

nationwide. Given the intransigence of the challenges facing public education and the preliminary positive results of organizing efforts, there appears to be a hopefulness on the part of educational researchers (Hargreaves, 2001; Oakes & Lipton, 2002; Oakes et al., 2006; Wells et al., 2011) that community organizing in education will emerge as a social movement to offer a “strategic lever” (Fabricant, 2010, p. 21) for righting the social justice inequities within public education. Oakes et al. (2006) contend that a social movement is necessary to ensure educational equity as a fundamental right through a shift in our cultural and political logics. Where conventional reform has failed with its technical solutions of high stakes testing and free market competition, it is hoped that the grassroots organizing reform, with a strong power base of those most affected by the inequities of public education, will address the underlying adaptive challenges in the system (Heifitz & Linsky, 2002) – embedded beliefs in scarcity, meritocracy, and deficits.

Social movement theorists agree with the education researchers regarding the importance of coalescing local organizing efforts into system level change. The phenomenon of social movement is often viewed as a primary agent for making sustained change within the larger society (Crossley, 2002). Social movement theory seeks to explain the emergence and consequence of a sustained collective challenge by a subordinate group to a dominant authority. There is no exact definition of social movement, but several prominent authors in multiple fields offer their own versions (Crossley, 2002; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2004; Tilly & Wood, 2009). Based on a review of the various definitions, Snow et al. (2004) contribute this conceptualization:

...social movements can be thought of as collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society culture or world order of which they are a part. (p. 11)

Beyond definition, it is also helpful to consider the core elements of a social movement.

McAdam et al. (1996) lay out the three basic factors needed for movement emergence:

political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes. In their view, a social movement arises from the broader political environment in which it is embedded, aided by the formal and informal networks available for mobilization, and fueled by shared understanding of a particular grievance vis-à-vis a dominant authority. Tilly and Wood (2009) also suggest three elements that determine whether or not a collective activity is, indeed, a movement. These elements are defined as:

1. a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (let us call it a *campaign*);
2. employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering (call the variable ensemble of performances the *social movement repertoire*); and
3. participants' concerted public representations of WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies (call them *WUNC display*). (p. 4)

Tilly and Wood admit that WUNC is an odd term, but one that manifests in the real world as easily recognizable demonstrations of self-representation, such as strong slogans, banners, matching clothing, and signature petitions.

Based on the above definition, factors of emergence, and elements of social movement, there appears to be evidence for consideration of community organizing in education as a social movement. Moreover, the organizing strategies of these activities

closely parallel those used in other social justice movements such as the labor, immigrant, women's rights, and civil rights movements (Cutler, 2000; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Mediratta et al., 2009). As further anecdotal evidence, parent organizers in the field are self-identifying their efforts as a social movement (B. Austin, personal communication, April 14, 2010) as are large networking education reform advocacy organizations (ERAOs). Policy Innovators in Education Network (PIE Network), a collaboration of 45 education reform organizations across the nation, note:

By the latter part of the 2000s, it was clear that education reform had achieved movement status. In 2007, several national organizations committed to advancing education reform were founded, all headed by high profile movement leaders (PIE Network, 2012, p.5).

McGuinn (2012) conducted interviews with leadership from a number of the largest ERAOs across the country including 50 CAN, Democrats for Education Reform, Foundation for Excellence in Education, PIE Network, Stand for Children, and StudentsFirst. McGuinn concurs that ERAOs are working at a larger systemic level, but cautions labeling the effort a social movement until more work is done on the ground:

This new approach will need to build a permanent, coordinated, nationwide network of organizations operating at the school, district, state, and national levels that is committed to the kind of grass-roots parent organizing that can create a genuine social movement behind school reform and convert parent power into political power. (p. 21)

Tilly and Wood (2009) concur and warn that the work of identifying the emergence of a social movement is not about aggregating past efforts that appear to align with the common grievance; it is about understanding the contemporary elements in play. Amassing the history of parent involvement in public education and calling the trajectory a "social movement" does not make it one. A social movement must be defined by its current incarnation or, in the case of parent involvement, the latest efforts that place

parents in the field position of social change agents. On the other hand, outside the academic discourse, Tilley and Wood (2009) suggest there may be value in conflating past collective actions and labeling it a social movement to “aid recruitment, mobilization, and morale” (p. 7). Or in the case of Oakes et al. (2006), the authors hope that a social movement and its complementary narrative will codify the right to a high-quality education into law:

In the end, law and rhetoric of rights will no doubt play a significant role in the process. But rights without power to compel their realization are an illusion. Law and the recognition of education as a fundamental right, together with the social mobilization and political power sufficient to make those real, however, could materially transform public education. And possibly much more. (p. 23)

### **Connecting Academic Literature to the Parent Trigger Narrative**

#### **The Cloud Narrative**

To date, there has been no published field research on parent trigger legislation and its impact in the local context. However, social and political science academics, think tanks, and advocacy groups, have weighed in on the legislation and its potential to help or hinder education reform. Both previous research and ideological sentiments regarding parent involvement, school choice, school governance, democracy, and equity, are used to bolster the argument both for and against the use of the parent trigger legislation. This “cloud narrative” is discussed through white papers, policy briefs, ranking indices, websites, webinars, blogs, newspaper articles, and other social media venues such as Twitter. The common discourse, however, is not grounded in the research that involves the lived realities of those implementing parent trigger laws.

The parent trigger law is also featured in the full length fictional movie *Won't Back Down* (Barnz, 2012) and in a documentary about the petition campaign at Desert Trails Elementary in Adelanto, California, called *We the Parents* (Takata, 2013).

Scheduled for release in 2014, a new documentary, *The Ticket: The Many Faces of School Choice* (Bowden, to be released), features school choice as an umbrella movement for seven different reform options: parent trigger, homeschooling, interdistrict choice, charter schools, school vouchers, online learning, and private school.

Furthermore, each side has its high profile vocal champions. In the proponent camp are former California State Senator Gloria Romero, Michelle Rhee and StudentsFirst, former governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, as well as large education reform advocacy organizations (ERAOs) such as 50-state Campaign for Achievement Now (50-CAN), Stand for Children (Stand), Democrats for Education Reform (DFER), and the Foundation for Excellence in Education (FEE). In the dissenting camp are education historian and policy analyst, Diane Ravitch, Randi Weingarten and the American Federation of Teachers, as well as the National Education Association. A review of five policy briefs on parent trigger legislation condenses the pro and con rhetoric around parent trigger legislation.

### **Policy Briefings in Opposition**

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform released a policy brief, *Parent Trigger: No Silver Bullet* (Center for Education Organizing, 2012), and the National Education Policy Center released a policy memo, *Missing the Target? The Parent Trigger as a Strategy for Parental Engagement and School Reform* (Lubinsky, Scott, Rogers, & Welner, 2012). The two papers share several commonalities in their critique of parent trigger legislation:

1. Insufficient evidence that the charter school intervention option provides stronger academic outcomes than the existing public school options
2. Insufficient evidence that changing the school governance structure will necessarily result in stronger academic outcomes

3. Concern that parent stakeholders may not have the capacity nor relational longevity to be put “in charge”
4. Concern that the approach weakens the democratic nature of public education by allowing parent stakeholders to make decisions regarding a community asset
5. Skepticism regarding the agenda of the large education advocacy reform organizations funding parent trigger efforts as an agenda for school privatization rather than parent empowerment
6. Implementation efforts are flawed and divisive and do not offer a more effective community partnership approach to systemic and sustainable change

### **Policy Briefings in Support**

Policy briefings have also been developed in support of parent trigger legislation. The Heartland Institute published two policy briefs: *The Parent Trigger: A Model for Transforming Education* (Bast, Behrend, Boychuk & Oestreich, 2010) and *The Parent Trigger: Justification and Design Guidelines* (Bast & Pullman, 2012). Michelle Rhee’s StudentsFirst organization released a policy publication, *Empowering Parents with Choice: The Parent Trigger* (StudentsFirst, 2012). The Heartland Institute provides its rationale in support of parent legislation stating, “The parent trigger has the potential to turbo-charge the transformation of education in every state by bringing grassroots ‘regime change’ to public education” (Bast, et al., 2010, p. 1). The briefing cites research evidence in support of parental involvement to provide strong academic outcomes and competition from parental school choice to drive better school governance. The briefings also provide advice on how to avoid some of the “common pitfalls” that emerged in the proposed legislation as well as the model legislation. Most notably, the model legislation includes voucher options as an additional to the original model from California. The document published by StudentsFirst (2012) also offered suggestions for strengthening

the legislation and outlined three reasons for supporting trigger legislation as a transformational policy:

1. It provides parents with more power and more options when it comes to the education of children.
2. Low-performing schools can be held accountable to the needs of the families they serve.
3. The parent trigger gives families leverage where they don't otherwise have it by increasing pressure upon districts and others in charge of failing schools. (p.3)

### **Performance Indices including Parent Trigger Policies**

Two index measurements of parent empowerment in a state-wide context use parent trigger legislation as one of the empowerment indicators. In 2013, the Center for Education Reform (CEFR, 2013) published a state-by-state *Parent Power Index* that “measures the ability in each state of a parent to exercise choice, engage with their local school and board, and have a voice in the systems that surround their child” (p. 1). Five weighted elements of power (charter schools, school choice, teacher quality, transparency, online learning) contributed to the index along with extra points for whether a state had a parent trigger law in place. Similarly, StudentsFirst (2013) created a *State Policy Report Card* to “evaluate each state’s education laws and policies and determine what states are doing to create a better education system” (p. 5). The graded rubric was designed to determine how each state’s policies aligned with three policy pillars: 1) elevate the teaching profession; 2) empower parents with data and choice; and, 3) spend wisely and govern well. Parent trigger policy is one of the objectives within the second policy pillar.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

In review, the literature shows that parent involvement has changed over time with the role of parents shifting in relation to the locus of control within the school system. The trajectory starts with a parent-led education effort within the home to a school-led effort centered in standardization and bureaucratization and, more recently, to a more partnered relationship between parents, schools, and community. And, while research indicates the importance of parent involvement in supporting a successful learning environment for students, levels of parent involvement are not equal across communities. Despite school-led educational practices aimed at empowering parents, lack of a governance voice continues to devalue parents' role within the education system. Very recently, however, collective parent-led grassroots activities supported by community organizing strategies have begun to emerge that may potentially increase the voice of parents and effect systemic change. A transformative version of parent involvement, parent empowerment through community organizing, seeks to redefine the role of parent to include that of social change agent. See Figure 1 on the following page for a graphic overview of the trajectory of change in the relationship between school governance and parent involvement overtime in the United States.

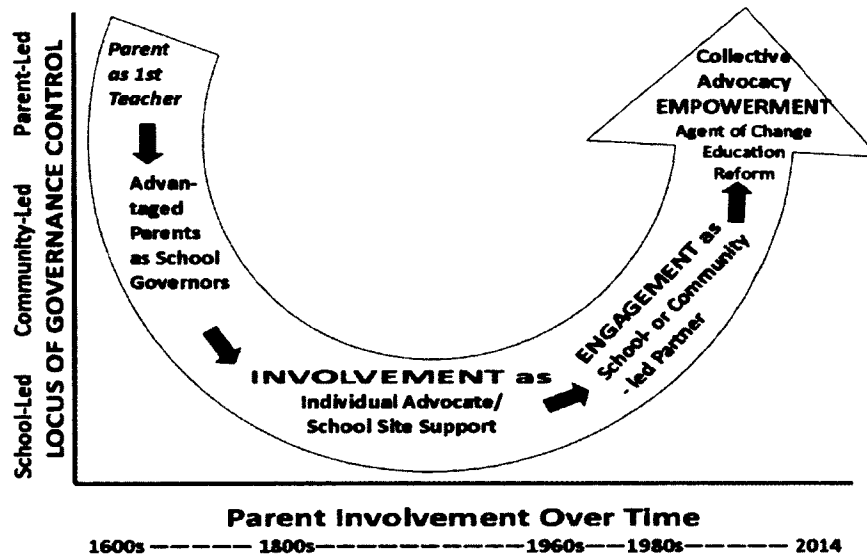


Figure 1. Parent involvement trajectory overtime in the United States.

Evidence is emerging to suggest that parents are tired of waiting for others in power to make the difference in education reform. Instead, parents are taking matters into their own hands as parents from the Los Angeles Parents Union stated on their website, “Now it’s our turn to take back the power over child’s education. We are the only ones who will always stand up for our children, no matter what” (“About us: parent revolution,” 2010). Parent empowerment as an education practice is transforming parent involvement into a version that could lead to a new definition within the literature of the parent stakeholder as social change agent or policy maker.

From the synthesis of the literature presented in this chapter, a gap in knowledge regarding parent empowerment emerges. While studies note a number of examples of organizing efforts that lead to a variety of “wins” for the parent stakeholders at a school, district, or, less frequently, state level, the research is silent on the existence or impact, if any, of parent empowerment efforts at the local level to shift the structure of school

governance both in terms of decision making authority and delivery. Academic research in this area is warranted, particularly because current research focuses on school level outcomes of community organizing in education, but overlooks the impact on the role of parents in relation to the larger political system. If the goal of *parent empowerment* is to affect change at the larger system level of public education and increase the social and political capital of the marginalized stakeholder, then research should also consider the larger policy context regarding the social and political power of the parent stakeholder population. Analysis of the state-level policy legislation will serve to frame this larger context inquiry and, ultimately, provide a bridge to the impact – or lack of impact – within the local context.

### **Theoretical Policy Analysis Framework**

One way in which to “mind the gap” existing in literature and to potentially aid in the construction of findings is through a theoretical overlay of the education policy analysis.

The genesis of educational policy analysis has its beginnings in the field of political science in the mid-1960s as an approach for understanding the complexities involved in the educational policy decision making process (Heck, 2004). A number of conceptual frameworks have been developed by social scientists to study the problems of educational policy and to provide new insights. Initial frameworks included stage heuristics that involved sequential policy phases of agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, evaluation, and reformulation (Fowler, 2004)). A major critique of the stage framework is that it does not take into account the process linkages between stages

and looks at the policy cycle from a “top down” and linear perspective, neglecting such aspects as goals and beliefs (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994).

More contemporary frameworks go beyond the policy cycle as a unit of analysis to diversify the perspective on the policy problem. Cultural approaches seek to understand how “historical, social, and cultural conditions and processes contribute to policy patterns that develop over time” (Heck, 2004, p. 325) and how power structures privilege certain cultural values through policy decision making (Marshall, Mitchell & Wirt, 1986). For example, one cultural approach is the advocacy coalition framework (ACF). The ACF framework was first introduced in 1988 and has since been used in over 40 cases to study policy change processes across a variety of areas, including education. The authors contend large context policy analysis may be too complex and that “the most useful way to think about policy change over such a time span is through a focus on policy subsystems, i.e. the interaction of actors from different institutions who follow and seek to influence governmental decision in a policy area” (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994, p. 178). Datnow and Park (2008) further suggest that various policy frameworks can be viewed from the perspective of either technical-rational, mutual adaption, or sensemaking and co-construction perspectives. Inherent within each framework is a perspective regarding the direction set for the change process: uni-directional, bi-directional, or multi-directional. Similarly, Marshall et al. (1986) contend that any model or theory used to analyze state policy making must include the “history, values, and role obligations of key actors, the political culture, the formal structure of power and responsibility, the partisan politics, and informal process of the policy world” (pp. 376-377).

But whether the researcher chooses to inform the work through cultural and political theory, economic models, rational choice, institutional theory, or critical and feminist theories, each lens has a particular research design, unit of analysis, goal, set of strengths, and set of weaknesses and the ultimate goal is for the policy analysis lens to be a useful tool in the “better understanding of important policy problems” (Heck, 2004, p. 320).

Because this study is grounded in a policy document analysis, applying a policy framework that includes Kingdon’s (2003) revised “garbage can” model, Boushey’s (2012) concept of innovative policy diffusion, and Mintrom’s (1997) notion of policy entrepreneurs may aid in better understanding the policy formation of and agenda setting around the parent trigger legislation. Kingdon (2003) postulates that key policy entrepreneurs take advantage of policy windows of opportunity to couple problem streams together with solutions to create a policy agenda, but “these policy windows, the opportunities for action on given initiatives, present themselves and stay open for short times” (p. 166). If successful, the policy initiative may propagate in a process called policy diffusion. Boushey (2012) contends that there are three mechanisms for innovative policy diffusion that lead to either:

1. gradual diffusion initiated by incremental policy emulation;
2. near immediate diffusion as a result of a common external shock to the policy system; or
3. “rapid state-to-state diffusion driven by policy imitation and mimicking” (p. 127) fueled by public demand to pass a “fad” policy from neighboring states.

Policy entrepreneurs also play a role in this diffusion. Mintrom (1997) researched the phenomenon of policy diffusion through an event history analysis on school choice education reform. He found that policy entrepreneurs – “people who seek to initiate

policy change” (p. 739) – were found to significantly contribute to innovative policy diffusion across states. Depending upon which mechanism is in play, the policy diffusion takes place at different speeds and scope levels.

Research also suggests that policy diffusion in education reform within the local context is also dependent upon the capacity for change of stakeholders throughout the system and “recognizes that agents at all levels contribute to the policy-making process (Datnow & Park, 2008, p. 351). Power differentials between the district policy makers and educators implementing the reform efforts can impede successful policy implementation (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehan, 2002). In their study of a major education reform within the San Diego Unified School District, Hubbard, Stein and Mehan (2006) found that a top down strategy that placed district staff as the sole driver of the reform effort resulted in a divisive process that stakeholders struggled to understand.

In summary, this chapter provided background into the phenomenon of parent empowerment in public education and situated the concept within three bodies of academic literature. A gap in that literature regarding a new form of parent empowerment, parent trigger legislation, pointed to the need for further study to better understand its impact as a school reform strategy. Furthermore, policy analysis literature was considered to help frame the inquiry. The next chapter outlines research questions and a methodology for data collection and analysis to explore the use of parent trigger legislation in the local context.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed to study the enacted parent trigger legislation in the United States and the extent to which it impacts parent stakeholders in the local context.

The primary research question guiding this study is: *What influence does parent trigger legislation have on parent empowerment within the United States system of public education?* Sub-questions considered include:

- What is the current status of enacted parent trigger legislation across the country?
- What core policy issues are driving the parent trigger legislation?
- How does the legislation propose to effect the participation and representation of parents in school governance structures?
- To what extent does parent trigger legislation support the needs, values, and interests of the parent stakeholder in the local context?

#### **Methodological Orientation**

##### **Instrumental Case Studies**

This study is a comparative analysis of two instrumental cases involving parent-led empowerment efforts using a qualitative research methodology. An instrumental case study design was chosen because it offered the research approach that best captured the unique details of a parent empowerment effort within the local community context. Stake (as cited in Glesne, 2006) defines an instrumental case study as one that serves to “provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (p. 13). Yin (2009) suggests the use of a case study approach is advantageous when “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events” (p. 13).

Specifically, this study employs three ways to examine the legislative influence on parent empowerment within the United States: 1) an analysis of state-level documents related to proposed and enacted parent trigger legislation; 2) interviews with the legislator and the education reform advocate responsible for authoring the first parent trigger legislation; and, 3) eleven interviews with key stakeholders involved in the first two successful efforts to use the parent trigger at the local school level in California.

### **Document Analysis**

A legislation document analysis was chosen because it is a research technique that, as Krippendorff (2004) notes, “allows researchers to analyze relatively unstructured data in view of the meanings, symbolic qualities, and expressive contents they have and of the communicative roles they play in the lives of the data’s sources” (p.44). Moreover, Patton (2002) contends that the documentation analysis “proves valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as a stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing” (p. 294). Information from the document analysis provided a general understanding of the problem and the interviews provided more in depth understanding.

### **Interviews**

To collect data for the case studies, semi-structured life world interviews were conducted. Interviews were conducted in-person except for one interview that was conducted via phone. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) define a semi-structured life world interview as one that seeks to “obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomenon” (p. 27). Specifically, this study consisted of thirteen in-depth interviews that were audio-taped

and later transcribed verbatim. The interviewing process followed a responsive interviewing model (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) which “emphasizes flexibility of design and expects the interviewer to change questions in response to what he or she is learning” (p. 7). This model allowed for both cross-cultural reflection and a gentle conversational style which I felt was warranted given that the parent participants differed in a number of ways from me – socio-economically, racially, education level, and, in two cases, citizenship status – and were being asked to share previous experiences that might be considered disempowering. Moreover, the model aligned well with a constructivist research philosophy that makes assumptions about the nature of individual and group reality, the role of the researcher, and the potential impact of the research findings. Rubin and Rubin contend that “constructivists are concerned with the lenses through which people view events, the expectations and meanings they bring to a situation” (p.9).

Data from the interviews were then analyzed for evidence of increased empowerment of the parent stakeholders and to provide confirmation or refutation of alignment with policy themes that emerged in the document analysis.

### **Sample and Participant Selection**

#### **State-level Legislation**

For the document analysis, legislative documents such as bill history, text, and analysis, or subcommittee reports and testimony were retrieved for the seven states that have enacted parent trigger laws: California, Connecticut, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas. Basic legislative information was also retrieved concerning the twenty-three states with proposed legislation, to provide context for the more in-depth analysis of the enacted legislation. The states with proposed legislation are

as follows: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

### **Parent Empowerment Efforts in the Local Context**

The interview phase of the study in the local context involved the selection of the first two successful attempts at a local school site level to empower parents through the use of parent trigger laws. Because laws identified as some form of “parent trigger” legislation has only been in effect in the past four years, examples of its use within the local context were limited. At the time of data collection in the spring and summer of 2013, there were two examples of successful parent trigger campaigns at Desert Trails Elementary School in the Adelanto Elementary School District (AESD) in Adelanto, California and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in Los Angeles, California. In fact, despite enacted law across seven states, only in California have parents attempted to use the parent trigger law to effect change at their local school site. Since the data collection for this study, one other school in California has been the target of a successful trigger petition campaign at Weigand Elementary School in LAUSD. For this research study, my purposeful sampling of two cases of a local parent empowerment effort include: 1) the Desert Trails Parent Union (DTPU) in Adelanto, California; and, 2) the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Parents Union (24PU) in Los Angeles, California. These two sites offered a unique perspective on what it means to utilize parent trigger legislation to empower parent stakeholders.

In the case of DTPU, the group was the first example of a successful formal trigger signature campaign and the effort involved a legal battle between the parent union organized to utilize the parent trigger law, and the school district. In the case of the 24PU, the school district was more amenable to the parents' call for a change in school governance and the effort demonstrated a successful community organizing strategy that the school district superintendent called a "poster child" for parent trigger campaigns. No legal challenges arose as the result of the 24PU campaign.

At the larger system level, two key informants were chosen to be interviewed to provide a better understanding of why and how the legislation was constructed and the kind of strategies developed for implementation at the local level: 1) former California State Senator Gloria Romero, sponsor of the California parent trigger law; and 2) Ben Austin, director of Parent Revolution and the key education reform advocate involved in the construction of the law. Romero and Austin were chosen based on their authorship of the California Parent Empowerment Act.

Within each local case, three key parent leaders were chosen because of their involvement with the school site parent empowerment effort. The parent leader informants were chosen based on recommendations during conversations with the staff at Parent Revolution. Pseudonyms for the key parent leader informants are as follows:

- DTPU parent leaders: Belisma, Celeste, and Dianne
- 24PU parent leaders: Adabella, Licia, and Linda,

As the research progressed, the critical role of community organizing as the parent leaders' main tool for utilizing the parent trigger law began to emerge (Oakes et al., 2006), and, thus, an interview with one community organizer at each site and Parent Revolution's organizing director, Patrick DeTemple, were added to aid in the

understanding of that mechanism for change. The pseudonyms of the community organizing informants are as follows:

- DTPU community organizer: Gerardo
- 24PU community organizer: Mora

In addition, in Los Angeles, the importance of the relationship between the 24PU parent organizers and LAUSD emerged so consistently as to prompt an interview with both Dr. Deasy, the LAUSD superintendent, and Dr. Tommy Chang, the instructional area superintendent, to further explore the relation trust that had been built between the stakeholders (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Patton (2002) confirms that this *snowball or chain sampling* is a valid approach to “locating information-rich key informants or critical cases” (p. 237).

Snowball sampling also played a part in the selection of the 24PU as the second case to study. Originally, during the construction of the dissertation proposal, there were only two examples of attempts to use the parent trigger law to change the school governance structure. One attempt had failed (McKinley Elementary in the Compton Unified School District) and the other (Desert Trails Elementary in AESD) was being reviewed in court to determine if the campaign was legal. For that reason, the original site selection was not based on examples of schools actually reorganized by parent trigger campaigns, but rather based on two examples of the way in which parents were using the parent trigger as both a formal and an informal strategy for empowering their position as decision makers within the local education context.

The two sites originally selected during the proposal phase were the DTPU and the District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC) in Buffalo, New York. These two cases appeared to offer unique perspectives on what it means to utilize parent trigger legislation

to empower parent stakeholders. In the case of DTPU, the group was one of the two examples nationwide of a formal trigger signature campaign. In the case of DPCC, the group backed a parent trigger legislation attempt that stalled in 2011 and initial research pointed to the possibility of the group backing another attempt at legislation in 2012 as part of their larger parent empowerment agenda.

After the dissertation proposal's defense, the DTPU did become the first group of parents to successfully use parent trigger legislation to force a change in the school governance. Furthermore, as my interviews with state-level and DTPU key informants commenced, data began to emerge suggesting the importance of community organizers and, across the interviews, references and recommendations were being made to the newly successful trigger campaign at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School. As Patton (2002) states in relation to the snowball sampling, "Those people or events, recommended as valuable by a number of different informants, take on special importance" (p. 237). Interviewees continue to highlight the role of the community organizer and to mention their importance in the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School campaign.

With two successful trigger campaigns now available to study and the importance of community organizers in the efforts emerging from the local context, I began some preliminary research on the local context in Buffalo, New York to confirm or refute my original second case selection. Informational interviews with three key personnel at the New York Department of Education, NYCAN (the state chapter of the nationwide education advocacy group, 50CAN), and Buffalo ReformEd (a local education advocacy group in Buffalo), confirmed that the strong parent involvement effort in 2011 involved legislative lobbying and education advocacy rather than the community organizing model

developing to support the local parent trigger efforts in California. According to the informational interviews, there are no current local examples of parent groups organizing to advocate for a parent trigger law. Yet, the conversation around parent trigger laws continues in New York with new legislation introduced in 2013 and continued interest on the part of education reform groups. For example, a sponsored showing of the new documentary on the California parent trigger effort called “*We the Parents*” was co-hosted by the Buffalo ReformED and the DPCC. While my study will no longer use the DPCC as its second case, as these efforts progress, a cross-state analysis between parent empowerment in California and New York may be warranted for future study.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **State Legislative Documents**

To locate proposed and enacted parent trigger legislation, a web-based search was conducted utilizing four legislation search engines, WestlawNext<sup>1</sup>, LegiScan<sup>2</sup>, OpenStates<sup>3</sup>, and Project Vote Smart<sup>4</sup> as well as accessing each individual state’s legislative search webpage. Legislation was retrieved using lexical searches with the following key words: parent or parental empowerment, parent or parental engagement, parent or parental trigger, parent or parental petition, charter conversion, and school choice. The searches were also filtered by legislative session from 2009 to the present. Found legislation was then cross-referenced with three widely-referenced parent trigger legislation matrices: 1) *The Parent Trigger in Your State* webpage from the Heartland

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<sup>1</sup>WestLawNext website address: <https://lawschool.westlaw.com>

<sup>2</sup>LegiScan website address: <http://legiscan.com/>

<sup>3</sup>OpenStates website address: <http://openstates.org/>

<sup>4</sup>Project Vote Smart website address: <http://votesmart.org/>

Institute<sup>5</sup>; *Parent Trigger Laws in the States* webpage from the National Conference of State Legislatures<sup>6</sup>; and, *Objective Parent Trigger* webpage from StudentsFirst<sup>7</sup>. In addition, Google Alerts<sup>8</sup>, a web-based content change detection and notification engine was used to provide notification for news, web, blogs, video or discussion groups on the internet that matched the search term “parent trigger.”

The information collected on each piece of proposed legislation is as follows:

- Date of legislation introduced by House or Senate
- Legislative sponsor and political affiliation
- Process status (e.g., in committee, enacted, stalled, failed)
- Brief language regarding the parent trigger provisions in the legislation
- Website address for accessing the latest version of the legislation.

For the enacted legislation, additional policy mechanism components were collected:

- Name of the legislation;
- Governor and political affiliation;
- Problem perception;
- Political backing (e.g., legislative sponsors and affiliation, supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions);
- School eligibility (e.g., qualifications, limitation of scope);
- Parental involvement in the process (e.g., instrument for change, eligible adults and feeder pattern);

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<sup>5</sup>*The Parent Trigger in Your State* webpage address: Parent <http://theparenttrigger.com/in-your-state/>

<sup>6</sup>*Parent Trigger Laws in the State* webpage address: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/state-parent-trigger-laws.aspx>

<sup>7</sup>*Objective Parent Trigger* webpage address: <http://reportcard.studentsfirst.org/policy-discussion?objective=Parent%20Trigger>

<sup>8</sup>Google Alerts webpage address: <http://www.google.com/alerts>

- Petition process mechanics (e.g., signatures required, time to collect signatures, organizing);
- Intervention models;
- Control mechanisms (e.g., local public hearings, administrative guidelines, local educational agency, state educational agency);
- State administrative guidelines; and,
- Local educational agency guidelines.

The documents retrieved on the enacted legislation included: bill history, bill text, bill amendments, sponsorship information, and in some instance, transcripts or video recordings from public hearings. Subsequent administrative guidelines or judicial challenges to the legislation were also collected.

In general, the documents were located across all seven states for the majority of information that needed to be assembled into the legislative matrix. However, the amount of information on state legislative websites regarding advocacy coalitions in support or in dissent of parent trigger legislation varied considerably by state. For example, the Connecticut website includes committee hearing transcripts and, in Louisiana, the website provides a video archive. Information on coalitions was also available on the California and Texas websites through more detailed bill analysis documentation. Unfortunately, the Indiana, Mississippi, and Ohio websites provided little or no information on advocacy coalitions attached to parent trigger legislation. In the case of Indiana, however, the Indiana Coalition for Public Education (ICPE) did track and record summaries of testimony. The ICPE<sup>9</sup>, a nonprofit organization, has its own particular mission to oppose legislation in the Indiana General Assembly that would

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<sup>9</sup>Indiana Coalition for Public Education webpage address: <http://www.icpe2011.com/>

contribute to the privatization of K-12 public education (i.e. vouchers, tax credits, for-profit or private agency management of schools). For this reason, while their records were used to identify advocacy and other organizations providing testimony for or against the legislation, other commentary was viewed with caution towards a potential bias.

## **Interviews**

Based on preliminary results from the document analysis, an interview protocol was developed to explore those findings from the perspective of the key informants. See Appendices A, B, C, D, and E for interview protocols developed for the legislative sponsor, community stakeholder, and parent stakeholder. The interview protocols were designed to probe for confirmation or disconfirmation of alignment between the values and preferences found in the legislation and those held by the interviewees. The interviews were also designed to probe for ways in which the interviewees have attempted to use the policy mechanisms outlined in the legislation to enhance the empowerment of parent stakeholders. The questions were both exploratory (seeking new information through the use of open-ended questions) and hypothesis testing (structured to verify the findings from the legislative matrix) in nature (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Interview protocols were similar across the three participant groups (legislator, community organizer, parent) allowing for some comparison of responses across the groups. However, the design also allowed for responses particular to each group to “ensure that the research question is answered from the perspective of the conversational partner,” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 116). To increase the trustworthiness of the protocols (Glesne, 2006), the parent interview protocol was reviewed by a parent leader of a local parent organizing group and feedback was incorporated into the final draft. Similarly, a

community organizing leader of a local parent organizing group provided feedback for the community stakeholder protocol. Interview consent forms were provided to the participants and in the case of the parent participants the form was translated in Spanish.

Twelve of the thirteen interviews were conducted in person. The exception was a phone interview with the area instructional superintendent for LAUSD. For the parent interviews, trips were made to both 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School in Los Angeles and to Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto. Two of the parents interviewed were unilingual, with Spanish as a first language (or mother tongue). For those interviews, a community organizer from Parent Revolution provided simultaneous translation. For the community organizers, the interviews were conducted at either the Parent Revolution office in downtown Los Angeles or at the 24PU organizing office a few blocks from the school campus. The interview with the superintendent of LAUSD was conducted at the LAUSD headquarters. The interview with the director of Parent Revolution was conducted at his office in Los Angeles. All interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed.

In the case of the two interviews in which the interviewees spoke Spanish, those interviews were first transcribed in Spanish and then translated into English. One interviewee, while bilingual in English and Spanish, spoke English during the interview with a strong Spanish accent. In this instance, the audiotape was transcribed by someone fluent in both languages.

It is important to note that not all the participants spoke English or spoke English fluently and that I am a unilingual English speaker with some limited ability to understand and communicate in conversational Spanish. While the language barrier

between the parent leaders and I might be seen as a challenge, the challenge appeared to be more on my side of the interviews, as I strived to attend to both the content and context of the words presented. The three parent leaders seemed quite comfortable with the process. In one instance, when asked if there were any questions about the interview process, Adabella flatly responded, “No.” The interpreter then added, “She is a pro at this. She has done it a lot of times.” Part of this level of comfortable with the interview process is likely due to the fact that the parent leaders at both 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary and Desert Trails Elementary had ample opportunities to engage in the media story surrounding the petition campaigns. Quotes from the participants can be found in media accounts and some are featured in the documentary, *We The Parents*.

It should also be noted that the parent leader voices were all women. In fact, the vast majority of the participants in the efforts were women. At my three site observations at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, however, there were a small number of men engaged and participating in the discussion.

### **Site Observations**

Because of the timing of the interviews with the 24PU, I was also able to witness three milestone events after the parent petition was submitted to the school district and the request for an alternate governance structure at their school was approved. The first event was the day in which parents at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School voted on which organization would take over the school in the coming fall. The second event was the first meeting of the 24PU to be held on the school site campus. Previously, the group had met at a nearby park. The third event was a celebration hosted by the 24PU to thank the community organizers who helped with their campaign efforts. Site observations at these

events, as well as at the other interview sites (Parent Revolution offices, 24PU organizing office, LAUSD headquarters, the park near Desert Trails Elementary schools) and a visit to AESD headquarters were recorded as handwritten field notes. The notes were later transcribed and provided further context to the interview data collected.

## **Data Analysis Methods**

### **Legislative Document Analysis**

For the document analysis, documents collected from the web-based research were entered into qualitative research data analysis software called MaxQDA<sup>10</sup>. This specific software can aid in both thematic coding as well as lexical searches. Lexical searches were used to determine the similarity or dissimilarity of bill components across the legislation. One of the goals of this phase was to uncover embedded internal concepts (e.g., cultural values and preferences) within the legislation (Allen & Mintrom, 2010; Benham & Heck, 1998; Marshall, Mitchell & Wirt, 1989). As Marshall et al. (1989) note, “culture is reflected in the written and unwritten codes of behavior” (p. 5). For example, a lexical search using variations of the words “intimate, threaten, or harass” identified similar components across the state legislation prohibiting the harassment of individuals involved in parent trigger campaigns.

Furthermore, as Heck (2004) outlines, a document analysis can serve to “identify and describe advocacy coalitions working within a policy subsystem and their shared belief systems (values, goals, causal assumptions, and problem perception)” (p.322). In addition to collecting information on legislative sponsorship, a lexical search and analysis was also conducted to determine legislation that may have been influenced by certain

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<sup>10</sup>MAXQDA, software for qualitative data analysis, 1989-2013, VERBI Software - Consult - Sozialforschung GmbH, Berlin, Germany.

trigger policy advocates, such as Parent Revolution or the American Legislative Exchange Council, two organizations who have promoted model parent trigger legislation.

The data analysis was an ongoing process throughout the study. An analysis of data collected during the document analysis informed the next interview phase. To increase the trustworthiness of this study, the document matrix was also shared with a key informant and feedback requested. According to Mathison (1998), triangulation of several data sources affords additional validity to the study, but can also be used as a strategy to “provide a rich and complex picture” (p. 15) of the effort being studied.

### **Interview and Site Observation Analysis**

Data analysis of the transcribed interviews and site observation field notes occurred continuously throughout the data collection phase and allowed for the identification of themes as they arose (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Given that I had previous contact with a local parent empowerment group that advocates for the use of the California parent trigger law, care was taken to maintain an objective view of the data analysis. Reflective mind-mapping (Buzan, 1991) was used, similar to a researcher’s journal, as a resource to evaluate and manage any emerging bias (Peshkin, 1988). Mind-mapping uses both language and imagery to classify, associate, and structure words, ideas, and concepts. A radial tree is drawn with major categories extending out from a central node and connecting to lesser categories or sub-branches (See Appendix F).

Initial categories were generated from the literature review and the legislative analysis and modified as patterns emerged from the interviews and site observations. First, passages from the interview transcriptions and site observation field notes were

structurally coded into meaningful units. The interviews were intentionally coded in the following order: parents, community organizers, district officials, legislation authors. This order privileged the voice of participants closest to the local context, allowing the parent voice to emerge as the primary builder of meaning (Harper, 2007).

Second, the data was frequency-coded and mind-mapped into categories to generate an essence statement of similarity or to note areas of dissimilarity across the two cases. According to Saldana (2009), this *essence-capturing* provides the foundation for the “development of categories and thus the analysis of their connections” (p. 8).

Third, the coded data was synthesized to find patterns and relationships among the categories to suggest possibilities for a convergence of understanding and to make sense of the parent empowerment phenomenon.

Fourth, to double check the coding and thematic process, a parent leader involved in a local parent empowerment group, and familiar with the work of Parent Revolution and the two campaigns in Los Angeles and Adelanto, reviewed the interview transcriptions and provided feedback on the developed units. According to Patton (2002), having more than one analyst to record and categorize the data provides a comparative process for a consistency of measurement. This “measuring whatever it is that is supposed to be measured” is one definition of validity (Wolcott, 1990, p. 122), although Wolcott argues that the preoccupation with validity in qualitative research is actually a distraction from the central issue of understanding.

Fifth, data from the two interviews with the legislation authors were analyzed in relation to the core policy findings from the legislative document analysis to help to confirm or disconfirm those findings. In addition, policy analysis literature helped to

further frame the analysis by placing the conversations with the context of policy windows, policy diffusion, and policy entrepreneurs.

Finally, interviews from participants in the local context were analyzed in relation to both the document analysis and the author interviews. See Figure 2 for a graphic representation of the research methodology plan for this study.

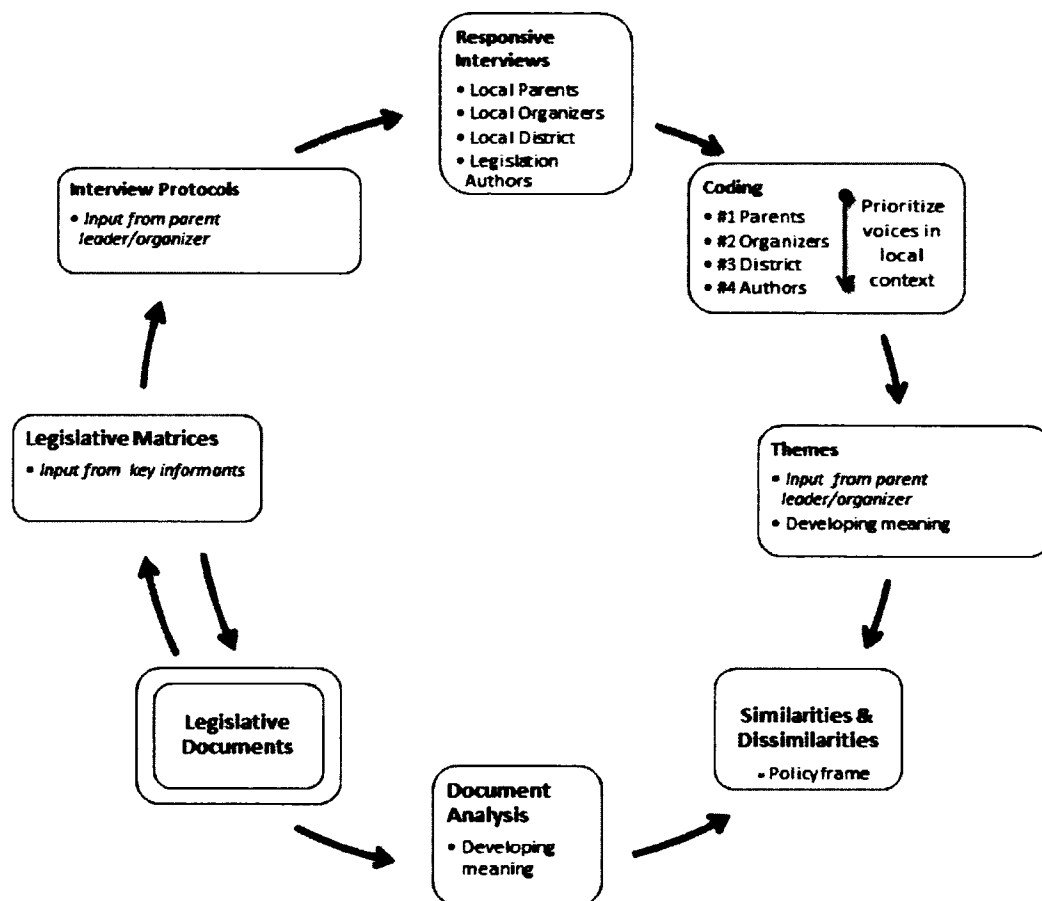


Figure 2. Research methodology plan used in this study.

The coding of the interviews yielded 31 concepts that coalesced around seven themes: 1) quality education as a desire and a right; 2) school system is broken; 3) school system as non-responsive or negatively responsive to change; 4) devaluation of parent

stakeholder; 5) the parent trigger law as a mechanism for change; 6) empowerment of the parent stakeholder; and, 7) evidence of change in the school system. These themes were found across both cases and stakeholder groups (e.g., parent leader, community organizer, district leader). Using the responsive interviewing model, it is important for the reader to be able to transparently follow the logic of the analysis, thus creating more creditability to the subsequent findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For this reason, the concepts and themes found from the analysis of the interviews are listed on the following page in Table 1.

Table 1

*Themes and Categories from Interviews with Stakeholders.*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
Quality education as a desire and a right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents want a quality education for their child</li> <li>• Parents hold high expectations for achievement</li> <li>• Collective right</li> <li>• Equal right regardless of economic, geographic, ethnic, or immigrant status</li> </ul>
The school system is broken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic failure to deliver a quality education</li> <li>• Belief that some children can't learn</li> <li>• Unsafe and damaging environment</li> <li>• Fear of reprisal and distrust</li> </ul>
School system as non-responsive or negatively responsive to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status quo in control</li> <li>• Failed attempts at change by status quo</li> <li>• Non or negative response to parental attempts to change the system</li> </ul>
Devaluation of parent stakeholder as change agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No parental voice</li> <li>• Devaluing of knowledge</li> <li>• Devaluing of parent as decision maker</li> </ul>
The parent trigger law as a mechanism for change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent trigger as activator</li> <li>• Collective action</li> <li>• Community organizers as mediator</li> <li>• Knowledge building</li> <li>• Complex socio-political learning</li> </ul>
Empowerment of the parent stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the locus of control</li> <li>• New voice for the parent stakeholder</li> <li>• Additional legal rights</li> <li>• Parents have knowledge</li> <li>• Parents at the governance table</li> <li>• New alliances and increase in social capital</li> <li>• Community building</li> </ul>
Evidence of change in the school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New school governance structure</li> <li>• New educational opportunities</li> <li>• Shift in social norms</li> <li>• Response from the district</li> <li>• Response from the school site</li> <li>• Response from the larger system</li> </ul>

### **Delimited in the Local Context**

It is important to note that this study is intentionally delimited in the local context by its central focus on the parent stakeholder as the primary participant. The objective of the research was to capture the parent voice which is often ignored in the school reform discussion, especially if the parents are not in a position of privilege (Hubbard & Martinez, in press; Olivos, 2006). While attending to other perspectives from district staff, school administration, teachers, and teacher union personnel could provide a more generalized understanding of the impact of the parent trigger law it was outside the scope of this study. The main goal of this study was to forefront the particular impact of a parent empowerment law on the empowerment of the parent stakeholder and central to the process of empowerment is hearing the voice of the participant (Gaventa, 2006). Furthermore, focusing on the primary voice of the parent stakeholder provides access to the perspective for policy makers in evaluating the policy innovation or for consideration in future endeavors. Education philosopher Israel Scheffler (1984) stressed the importance of policy makers acknowledging and respecting the perspectives of those impacted by policy as a learning practice for creating better policy. Access to those perspectives, however, is required for this understanding, “It requires that we hear what they say when they speak their own voice” (p. 154). For these reasons, this study concentrated on the connection between the law and the implementer of the law in the local context.

This chapter provided areas of inquiry and a research methodology for collecting data regarding parent trigger legislation in the United States. The methodology was designed with an aim to understanding two ends of the policy spectrum: the policy

content of enacted law and the experience of stakeholders using the law in the local context. The next three chapters present findings and analysis from this data collection.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### PARENT TRIGGER LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES

##### Introduction to the Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to better understand the ways in which parent trigger legislation has been used in the local context by parent leaders attempting to change the governance structure of a failing public school. While legislation has been drafted that purports to empower parent stakeholders as decision makers and change agents, and while academics, education practitioners, and reform advocates have debated the political agenda and efficacy of the legislation, no research has been done to determine the impact of the law from the perspective of the parent stakeholder. This study addresses this knowledge gap by analyzing data gathered from both ends of the spectrum of experience. The document analysis of current parent trigger laws and interviews with the authors of the first “parent trigger” law in California provide insight into the intent behind the legislation and in depth interviews with stakeholders who have used the law to force a change in school governance provide evidence of the ways in which the law has impacted the local school context.

To review, the primary research question guiding this study is: *What influence does parent trigger legislation have on parent empowerment within the United States system of public education?* Related sub-questions include:

- What is the current status of enacted parent trigger legislation across the country?
- What core policy issues are driving parent trigger legislation?
- How does the legislation propose to effect the participation and representation of parents in school governance structures?

- To what extent does parent trigger legislation support the needs, values, and interests of the parent stakeholder in the local context?

The findings and data analysis presented help answer these questions and are organized into three chapters: Chapter Four: Parent Trigger Legislation in the United States; Chapter Five: Interviews with Parent Trigger Authors; and, Chapter Six: Field Study Cases: The Parent Trigger in Local Contexts.

For this chapter, findings and analysis focus on key components across proposed legislation, key components across enacted law, attempts to use the parent law and legal challenges, background on the first parent trigger law, and models for subsequent legislation. To provide for readability in this study, citations for individual pieces of legislation are not included within the text, but can be located in Appendix G. Proposed legislation is organized alphabetically by the state in which it was introduced and by the year of introduction.

### **Proposed Parent Trigger Legislation**

The focus of the findings and analysis is on the enacted law; however, a preliminary analysis of the language in proposed parent trigger legislation provides additional context for understanding the core policy issues embedded in parent trigger law. Over the past four years, state legislators have introduced 87 pieces of legislation that contain some mechanism aimed at providing the parent stakeholder with the right to force a governance change at a chronically failing school. Legislation with this type of policy component is often called a “parent trigger” law. The first piece of legislation identified as a “parent trigger” law was introduced on December 9, 2009 by California State Senator Gloria Romero (D) as Senate Bill 4 X5 (See Appendix H). The document collection phase found nearly 60% of the states (30) have proposed some form of a parent

trigger provision through state legislation. Not all bills were developed exclusively to enact parent trigger legislation, but rather had parent trigger provisions embedded within other school reform legislation. In one case, the parent trigger provisions were contained in a governor's biennial budget bill.

In terms of legislative attempts, California and Indiana have introduced the most legislation, each with one piece of enacted law and five pieces of proposed legislation. See Appendix G for a state legislative matrix showing the 87 legislative attempts by year and bill number, legislative status and history, primary sponsorship with party affiliation, pertinent excerpts, and links to the state legislative websites to directly access the bill documentation. Table 2 on the following shows legislative attempts to date.

Table 2

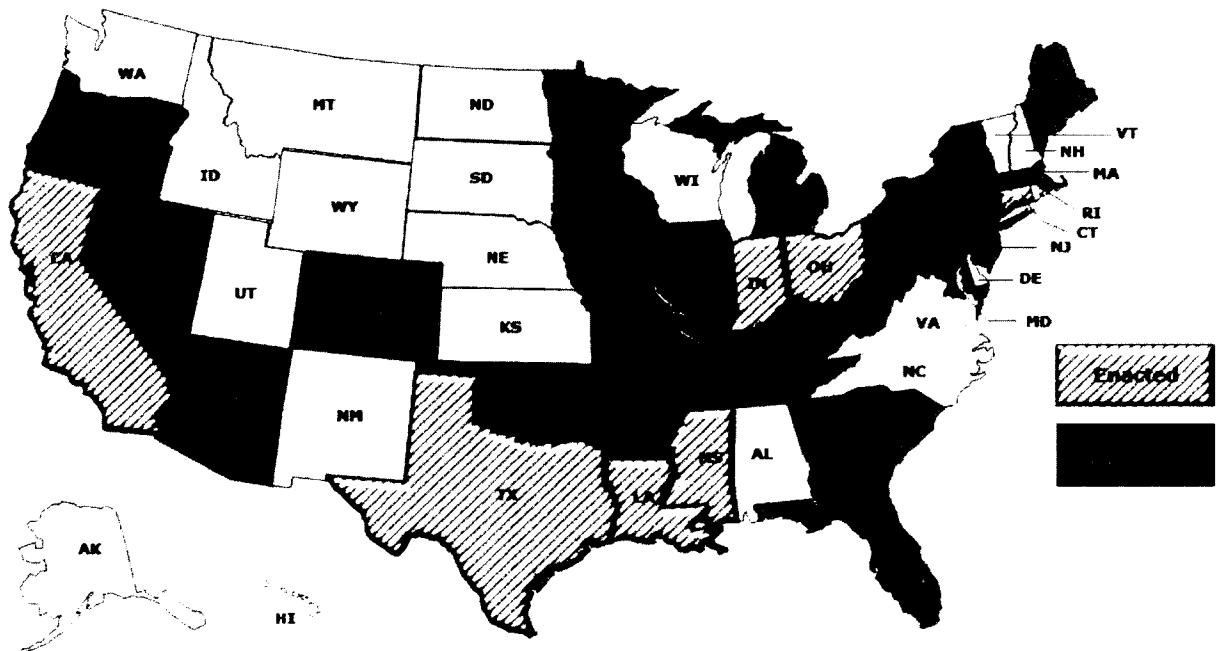
*Parent trigger legislation by state and year introduced.*

State	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Arizona				1	1	2
Arkansas			1			1
California	1	2	1		2	6
Colorado			1	1	1	3
Connecticut		2				2
Florida				2	2	4
Georgia			2		2	4
Illinois					1	1
Indiana			3	1	2	6
Iowa					1	1
Louisiana				1	1	2
Kentucky					1	1
Maine			1			1
Maryland			2	1	1	4
Massachusetts					1	1
Michigan			1		1	2
Minnesota			1	2		3
Mississippi		1	1	3		5
Missouri			1	1	2	4
Nevada			2		2	4
New Jersey		2		2		4
New York			3		1	4
Ohio			1	1	1	3
Oklahoma			2		2	4
Oregon					1	1
Pennsylvania		2	2		1	5
South Carolina					1	4
Tennessee					2	2
Texas			1		3	4
West Virginia			1	1		2
<b>By Year Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>87</b>

Parent trigger legislation was introduced throughout the above mentioned states in a number of ways: Forty-two bills were introduced with parent trigger as the *sole focus* of the legislation; 23 bills were introduced with the parent trigger as the *major focus*, but also included other school reform mechanisms such as accountability measures or school vouchers; 19 bills introduced parent trigger provisions *embedded* within a larger school reform bill such as charter school or school choice legislation; and, in Ohio, parent trigger

provisions were embedded within state budget bills. The vast majority of these bills aimed at introducing the parent trigger as a statewide mechanism for change. In four cases, in Ohio and New York, the trigger options were limited to pilot programs in designated districts.

Seven states have not only proposed, but also enacted, nine pieces of legislation containing some form of parent trigger provision: California (2010); Connecticut (2010); Mississippi (2010); Indiana (2011); Ohio (2011 and 2012); Texas (2011); and, Louisiana (2012 and 2013). Figure 3 on the following page shows the 23 states that have proposed legislation and the seven states that have enacted legislation.



*Figure 3.* Introduced parent trigger legislation in the United States.

Among the 20 states where no evidence of introduced trigger legislation was found, it should be noted that seven of them also do not permit the operation of public charter schools. This is significant to note because a major component of most parent

trigger legislation is the ability for parents to choose charter school governance as a triggered intervention option. Accordingly, if parent trigger legislation were introduced it might also be coupled with a larger discussion regarding charter school legislation. The eight states without charter school legislation are as follows: Alabama, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia.

For example, despite the lack of charter school law, West Virginia legislators introduced a trigger bill in 2011 and 2012 that included an intervention option for charter school governance. House Delegate Jonathon Miller (R) introduced House Bill 3051 as the Parent Empowerment and Choice Act on January 8, 2011 and January 11, 2012. Both bills were subsequently referred to the House Education Committee where last actions were taken on February 8, 2011 and February 11, 2012, respectively. While legislation has yet to be introduced in Virginia or Wyoming, there is media evidence of an interest in potentially drafting legislation.<sup>11</sup>

After examining the 87 pieces of state trigger legislation, I was able to identify bills sponsored by both Democratic and Republican membership in 14 of the 30 states with proposed or enacted legislation. Sixty-two pieces of legislation (71%) named Republican members as primary or co-sponsors. In addition, in the states with enacted legislation, all seven laws were signed by Republican governors: Arnold Schwarzenegger (California), Jodi Rell (Connecticut), Mitch Daniels (Indiana), John Kasich (Ohio),

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<sup>11</sup>*Education Issues Top Legislative Agendas*. Retrieved on February 18, 2014 at [http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/education-issues-top-wyoming-legislative-agendas/article\\_e0313ba9-e32e-5fca-9fde-6aed9841fab6.html](http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/education-issues-top-wyoming-legislative-agendas/article_e0313ba9-e32e-5fca-9fde-6aed9841fab6.html)  
*Virginia Gubernatorial Candidate Proposes Raft of School Choice*. Retrieved on February 18, 2014 at <https://eagnews.org/virginia-gubernatorial-candidate-proposes-raft-of-school-choice/>

Bobby Jindal (Louisiana), Haley Barbour (Mississippi) and Rick Perry (Texas). Figure 4 identifies the primary party sponsorship of the legislation by state.

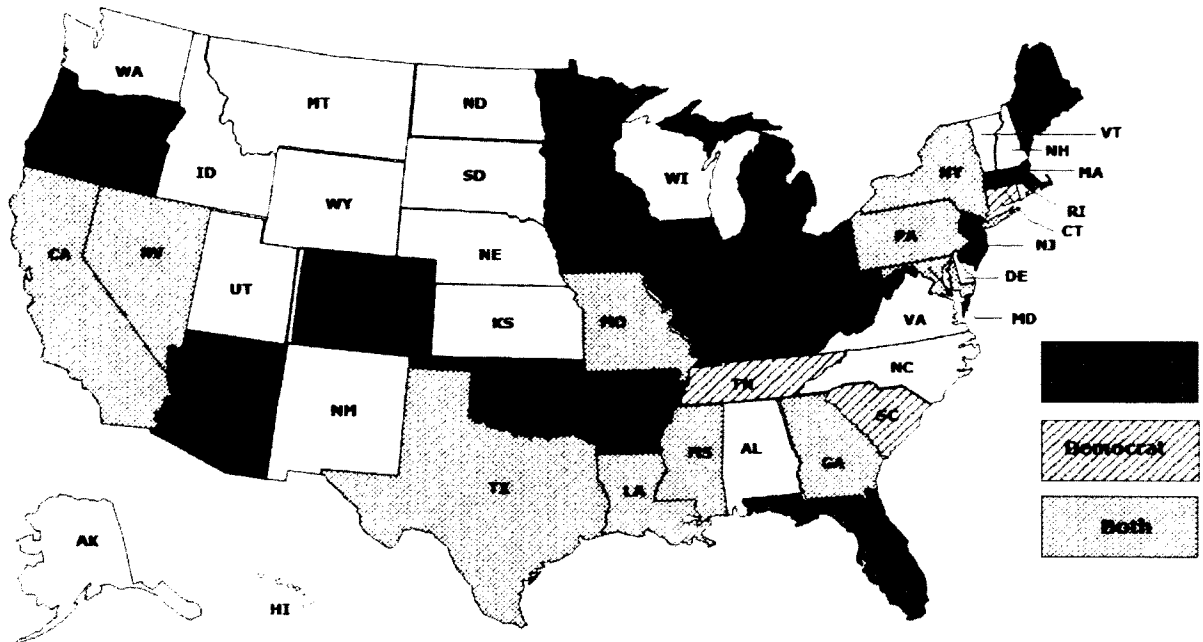


Figure 4. Introduced parent trigger legislation by primary party sponsorship.

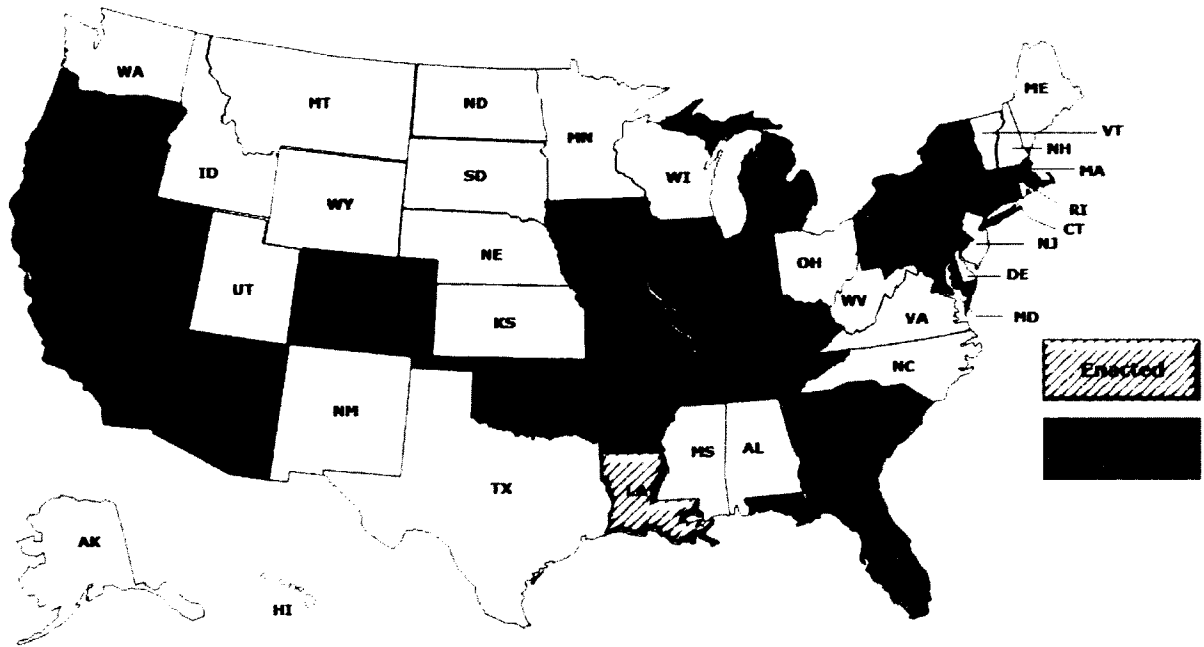
Two national surveys conducted in 2012 confirm the bipartisan support for parent trigger legislation. The 44<sup>th</sup> annual *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes towards Public Schools* was a random sampling of 1,002 adults responding to telephone interviews conducted in May and June 2012 and weighted to be demographically representative of the U.S. adult population and of parents with children between ages 5 and 18. According to the poll,

Seventy percent of Americans favor giving parents whose children attend a failing school the option of mounting a petition drive requesting that the teachers and principal be removed. This has greater support among Republican (76%) and independent (75%) voters than among Democrats (61%). (Bushaw & Lopez, 2012, p. 22)

StudentsFirst also fielded a telephone poll among 1,000 likely November 2012 voters. Their poll, conducted by SKDKnickerbocker and Beck Research found similar support for parent trigger legislation,

Voters strongly back measures that put more tools and more power into the hands of parents. Fully 70% support “parent trigger” legislation with just one-quarter (26%) opposing the reform. Despite the newness of this reform, only 4% are undecided and the opponents lack intensity (17% somewhat oppose the measure and 9% strongly oppose it). Support for this proposal is broad across the political spectrum, including among Republicans (78% - 19%), Democrats (65% - 30%) and Independents (68% - 29%). (StudentsFirst, 2012a, p. 3)

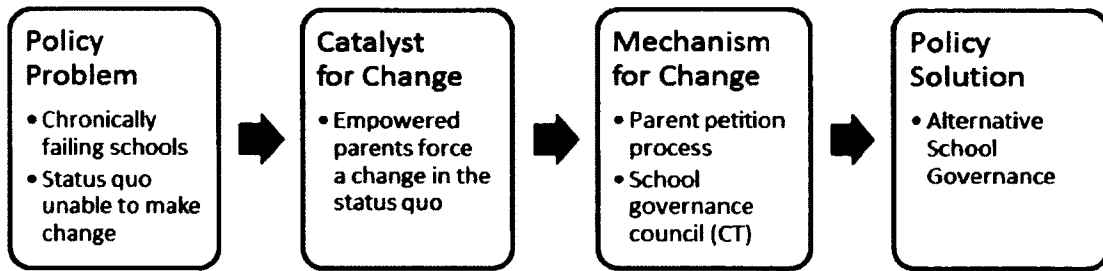
The interest in the introduction of parent trigger legislation continues to grow with 33 pieces of legislation introduced in 2013 across 23 states. There was also one example of enacted law in 2013, Louisiana House Bill 115. An additional piece of enacted legislation in Ohio, House Bill 59, the biennial budget bill, contained a parent trigger provision in its introductory version aimed at expanding Ohio’s parent trigger pilot in Columbus City Schools. The pilot was established in 2012 under Senate Bill 316. By the time HB 59 was enacted, however, the trigger provision had been removed. Of the remaining legislation proposed in 2013, all but one, Senate Bill 1067 in Pennsylvania, appears to have died or stalled in committee. SB 1067 is the most recently proposed legislation in 2013 and was introduced on September 19, 2013 by members of both the Democratic and Republican parties. The legislation has subsequently been referred to the Senate Education Committee. Pennsylvania made previous attempts to introduce trigger legislation in 2010 (Senate Bill 1192 and Senate Bill 1440) and in 2011 (Senate Bill 250 and Senate Bill 1148). All four bills did not make it out of committee. Figure 5 on the following page shows the 23 states that introduced some form of parent trigger legislation in 2013.



*Figure 5. States introducing or enacting parent trigger legislation in 2013.*

### **Core Policy Components and the Language of the Legislation**

Taken at its most elemental level, four core policy components emerged from the parent trigger legislation: 1) the policy problem of inadequate public schooling as evidenced by an achievement gap; 2) parent locus of control as a catalyst for change; 3) parent petition organizing process as the mechanism for change; and, 4) alternative school governance options as the implementation solution. The four core policy components were found across all examples of proposed legislation with one exception, the Connecticut House Bill 5491. In the case of the enacted trigger legislation in Connecticut, rather than a petition process, a school governance council can be formed by stakeholders involved with a failing school. Figure 6 on the following page provides a graphic representation of these findings.



*Figure 6.* Parent trigger core policy issues.

While some variation occurred across the 87 pieces of proposed trigger legislation, there was consistency of language frequently used to convey the intent of the legislation across the four fundamental components. Presenting the language of the legislation, “in vivo” coding (using a word or short phrase from the actual document) allowed for later comparison of the actual language used by stakeholders in the local context. Saldana (2009) suggests that in vivo coding allows a researcher to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice.” Table 3 on the following page shows similar word usage found in the bill excerpts of the proposed legislation by key components.

Table 3

*Similar Word Usage across 87 Examples of Proposed or Enacted Parent Trigger Legislation.*

<b>Key Component</b>	<b>Similar word usage from bill excerpts containing petition language and intervention options.</b>
<b>Account-ability for inadequate public schooling</b>	At-risk; behind; below; bottom; chronically; corrective action; designated; eligible; fails, failed, failing; identified, identification, identifying, identify; least; low-achieving, lowest-achieving; lower performing, lowest performing; low-performing; persistently; struggling; unacceptable; under achieving, under achievement; under-performing. Academic; education, educational. Public; school, schools; campus Children; pupil, pupils; student, students.
<b>Parental locus of control</b>	Parent, parents, parental; council; family, families; guardian, legal guardian. 50%, 50 percent, fifty percent; 51%; 51 percent, fifty-one percent; fifty-five percent; 60 percent, sixty percent; combined, combination; eligible; majority, one-half; at least; more than; or more; plus one; two-thirds. Action, actions; allow, allows, allowing; authorizing, authorizes, authority; choice, choose; empowering, empowerment; initiated; initiative; involvement; requires; represent, representing, represented; trigger, triggered; voice.
<b>Petition process</b>	Attend; attending; matriculate; petition, petitioner, petitions, petitioning; process; subject. Sign, signature, signed, signing. Initiating; request, requesting; submission, submit, submits, submitted.
<b>Reform options</b>	Academies, academy; accountability; alternative governance; change, changes, changing; charter; choice; close; closing; closure; conversion, convert, converted; create, creating, created; establish, establishing, establishes, establishment; federal, federally; governance arrangement; governing arrangements; implement, implemented, implementing, implements; improve, improvement, improvements; initiative, initiatives; innovative, innovation; intervention, interventions, intervene; management organization; measures, measured, measuring; models; option, options; pilot; priority; reassign; reconfigure; reconstitute; reorganization, reorganize, reorganizing; replace; repurposing; restart; restructure; transfer, transferred, transferring, transform, transforms, transformation, transformational; tuition; turnaround; voucher, vouchers.

A number of the proposed and enacted pieces of legislation also contained references to either the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB is the reauthorization of ESEA), or Race to the Top (RTTT), the multi-billion dollar initiative by the U.S. Department of Education to spur innovation in

K-12 schools. Thirty-nine of the 87 pieces of legislation, or 45%, contained information referencing ESEA, NCLB, RTTT, or another federal funding mandate.

This similarity of language and the reference to an exogenous federal policy driver suggests the possibility of innovative policy diffusion across the states (Boushey, 2012). Depending upon which mechanism is in play, the policy diffusion takes place with a different speed and scope. In the case of parent trigger legislation, the desire to apply for and receive federal RTTT funding dollars could be viewed as an external driver to the state policy system. Johnston (2011) contends that NLCB has created “demands for consequences in schools (p.2) and references parent trigger legislation as one example. Evidence from the quick response in the Connecticut legislature following the enactment of the California Parent Empowerment Act may also indicate a kind of policy mimicking.

### **Legislation – Other Considerations**

While the California legislation is considered the first of its kind and the starting point for subsequent parent trigger provisions across the country, the document analysis of the state's legislation did reveal four earlier pieces of legislation in two states that included a type of parent trigger provision, although they were not originally identified as such.

On January 19, 2009, Mississippi State Representative Omeria Scott (D) introduced House Bill 1393 to create a pilot program in the Laurel Municipal Separate School District. This pilot would have allowed for the establishment of charter schools through a process of conversion that could be initiated either by parent petition or by the citizenry of the school district; the parent petition to convert the school required approval

by a majority of the parents of students enrolled in the school who attend a specific meeting to vote in favor of the conversion or a petition could be signed by no less than 1,500 citizens of the school district. It was left to the district school board to determine the conversion policy. The legislation later died in committee on February 3, 2009.

Representative Scott would reintroduce another bill of this nature the following year as House Bill 458 on February 11, 2010. Like its predecessor, it later died in committee. In February 2010, however, Mississippi passed the Conversion Charter School Act of 2010, Senate Bill 2293, which included a state-wide parent trigger provision. The parent petition mechanisms and the bill language of HB 1393 and HB 458 is sufficiently dissimilar in scope and intent to both the California legislation and SB 2293 to suggest the bills were not a precursor to the drafting of the California bill.

The other examples of a possible precursor to the California legislation involved a parent trigger provision embedded in a bi-partisan charter school bill in Tennessee introduced in 2001. House Bill 1131 and its companion, Senate Bill 887, would later become enacted as the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002. The legislation included a provision in which an eligible public school might convert to a charter school if the parents of 60% of the children enrolled in the school demonstrated support by signing a petition seeking the conversion. The legislation did not stipulate the approval process for the petition; however, if the local educational agency had the authority to approve or deny the charter school application and there is no appeal process to the state board. By some media accounts, this legislation is considered a “faux” parent trigger because of the high signature threshold, the needed approval by the LEA, and the lack of

recourse to appeal at the state level.<sup>12</sup> The *Tennessee Department of Education's Application for a Public Charter School from New Operators for a School Opening in the 2014-15 School Year* both references and distances itself from parent trigger legislation, stating:

Unlike so-called “trigger” laws in other states, Tennessee’s law does not require the LEA to approve the conversion initiated by parents or faculty. Sufficient support for the conversion requires the LEA to review the application, however. (Tennessee Department of Education, p.6)

To date, parent petitions have yet to be used for charter conversion, although one charter operator was poised to convert a middle school in Knox County in December 2012. The petition was denied by the school board noting the lack of community support, including the required number of parent signatures. While media reports indicated the charter operator, Genesis Rock, might attempt to gather parent signatures, a second charter submission was for a new charter, not for converting an existing school.

While both the earlier Mississippi and Tennessee legislation contain provisions that might be identified, in retrospect, as parent triggers, no evidence was found in the media search directly linking these pieces of legislation with the genesis of the parent trigger law trajectory that began with the California Parent Empowerment Law of 2010. Neither did the lexical analysis reveal a similarity of language that might indicate a connection. For that reason, Mississippi HB 1393 and HB 458 and Tennessee HB 1131 and SB 887 were excluded from the subsequent legislative analysis. For more details on these four pieces of legislation see Appendix I.

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<sup>12</sup>*Tennessee Democrat Proposes Parent Trigger Bill*. Retrieved on October 5, 2013 at <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/02/12/tennessee-democrat-proposes-parent-trigger-bill>.

## Enacted Parent Trigger Laws

### Key Components of Parent Trigger Laws

As previously noted, California was the first state to enact legislation identified as a parent trigger in January 2010. Six other states have since followed suit enacting some form of a trigger law aimed at providing parents with the ability to initiate the reform of failing schools. Of all seven states, two have enacted two bills each. Table 4 lists the nine pieces of enacted law to date.

Table 4

#### *Enacted Parent Trigger Law Provisions.*

<b>Date Enacted</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>January 7, 2010</b>	California	SB 4 X5	Public schools: Race to the Top. Parent Empowerment Act.
<b>April 27, 2010</b>	Mississippi	SB 2293	New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act of 2010.
<b>May 26, 2010</b>	Connecticut	SB 438	An act concerning education reform in Connecticut.
<b>May 5, 2011</b>	Indiana	HB 1002	An Act to Amend the Indiana Code Concerning Education.
<b>June 17, 2011</b>	Texas	SB 738	An act relating to parental role in determining sanctions applied to a public school campus under certain circumstances.
<b>June 30, 2011</b>	Ohio	HB 153	Operating appropriations FY 2012 & 2013.
<b>April 18, 2012</b>	Louisiana	HB 976	Schools/Choice.
<b>September 24, 2012</b>	Ohio	SB 316	Mid-term budget review – education
<b>June 14, 2013</b>	Louisiana	HB 115	SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS: Provides for parent petitions relative to the transfer of certain schools from the Recovery School District back to the local school system.

Enacted law was reviewed across a number of key components including political sponsorship, problem perception, school eligibility, parental involvement, petition process, intervention models, control mechanisms, and guidelines. See Appendix J for a matrix of data collected by each of the states with enacted law.

### **Sponsorship of the Enacted Law and Advocacy Coalitions**

Mirroring the data from the review of all proposed legislation, the enacted laws were sponsored by both Democratic and Republican political party membership, although the majority of primary sponsors listed by name were Republican. Ohio was the only state where sponsorship was limited to only Republican members. As previously stated, all bills were signed by governors affiliated with the Republican political party.

From the data collected, different types of organizations were listed in support for or against legislation that contained parent triggers provisions. It is important to note that in cases where the parent trigger was embedded in a larger piece of legislation, those listed in support or dissent were being attributed to the overall bill. With that caveat, the main proponents of legislation containing parent trigger legislation included groups favorable to promoting education reform, school choice, charter schools, vouchers, educational equity, business and industry, and workforce preparedness. In such states as Connecticut and Louisiana, several organizations supporting minority populations were also in support of the legislation. The main opponents included parent-teacher organizations, teacher unions, labor organizations, local educational agencies, school administrator associations, school board associations, school superintendents, and those groups opposing the privatization of public education.

This bifurcation of support does not carry across every example of enacted legislation. To illustrate, in Texas, the 2011 bill was supported by the Texas Association of School Administrators and the Texas Association of School Boards, and in Connecticut a local superintendent spoke in favor of the parent trigger provision in the 2010 bill. Furthermore, in Louisiana, HB 115 garnered support from most major educational

stakeholders, according to media accounts.<sup>13</sup> The bill was seen as providing more choice options to parents and a way in which to hold the Louisiana Recovery School District more accountable. The Louisiana Federation of Teachers, the Louisiana Association of Educators, the State Superintendent, as well as the Louisiana Black Alliance for Educational Options were all in favor of the bill's passage.

Transcripts from the joint Connecticut Education Committee hearing on March 15, 2010 provide an insight into the arguments for and against the parent trigger provision embedded within proposed House Bill 5491. A member of the education committee, Douglas McCrory, spoke in favor of the trigger:

I'm just saying I think the parents should have an opportunity to say, 'Hey, this school is failing and I know I don't want my child in this failing school, anymore, and I want to pull the trigger and make a change.'

I don't understand why the parents can't have the power to say, 'No more.' Because if the educational leaders in the state, in this particular state, haven't done it, who's going – who's going to kick their butt to make them do it? (Connecticut Education Committee Hearing, 2010, p. 72)

The state director for the Connecticut Black Alliance for Educational Options also spoke on behalf of including the provision in the bill:

It includes something that's very interesting and transformative, which is a parent trigger. It's different than the way that it has been enacted in California, but it very much has the spirit of a law that says the parents should be at the core, as stakeholders, in determining what is the best educational opportunity and option for their child to pursue, and then being empowered to place their child in a setting that they know will be – will be most edifying in an educational setting. (p. 120)

But concerns were raised by a school administrator from a local school district:

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<sup>13</sup>*Rare Show of Unity among Education Leaders on RSD 'Parent Trigger' Bill.* Retrieved on January 4, 2014 at [http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/rsd\\_parent\\_trigger\\_ted\\_james\\_b.html](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/04/rsd_parent_trigger_ted_james_b.html).

The other concern that we have, which is what I just spoke to you about, outside interest groups using the parent trigger as an opportunity to organize parents, to push their own agenda – we're – we're concerned that this may disrupt the educational process pitting parents against parents, parents against teacher (p. 53).

The president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Connecticut, an AFL-CIO union echoed the concerns about disruption to the system:

The parent petition, known as the parent trigger, calls for a negative action by signing a petition to close a school. We believe it has the potential to split school communities, scatter children to other schools and not significantly involve children and their parents in their children's school. The decision regarding a school would still remain with local and state boards of education. (p. 65)

Representative Patricia Miller, however, spoke to the need for the system as a whole to begin addressing the problem at hand:

It's difficult to get all the parties to the table, and that's what the parent trigger is trying to do. I don't think that the par – parent trigger is trying to give – it's also trying to empower parents, but it's also to get everyone, all the stakeholders, the administrators, the teachers, the unions, at the table to say, Look, we need to do something so that this trigger is not activated. So I hope that we – we ought – or we will be able to come to the table so that we could, all of us and then be one accord to get these children educated and close this gap. (pp. 94-95)

And a public school parent and founder of the State of Black Connecticut Alliance also voiced the role that parents play in the system:

You bring your skill set to the table. The parents bring their skill set to the table. And all of us together can educate our children to a place that they need to be. But you can't exclude us, and then think you're going to have different results. So I ask you to revisit the language on the parent trigger because all I'm saying is you cannot be the final decision making on my Son, Elijah... (pp. 141-142)

Subsequent to the education committee hearing, HB 5491 would move on to the Senate as substitute legislation and enacted as SB 438. A concerted effort by the AFT Connecticut, however, influenced the political process and the substitute legislation did not include a parent petition option. This intervention on the part of the AFT was highly contentious, especially after internal documentation of the strategy to diffuse the parent

trigger was posted on the internet.<sup>14</sup> The document, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, listed the legislative advocate for AFT Connecticut as the information contact. The document referenced proponent policy makers including California State Senator Gloria Romero as well as the trigger petition effort in California and outlined a “kill mode” strategy that “reached out to co-chairs and members of the Education Committee, lobbying them to kill the bill” and “met with Legislative leadership to create a backstop” (slide 7). In describing the School Governance Council process that replaced the parent petition component, it was noted that the “name is a misnomer – they are advisory and do not have true governing authority” (slide 19).

### **Policy Problem and Solution across Enacted Laws**

The Joint Connecticut Education Committee hearings highlight the major similarity among the nine enacted laws: the problem perception and the overall legislative solution. First, there is a clear mission across the laws to address the problem of students being adversely affected by attending chronically under-performing schools and an acknowledgment that the current system of governance was not being held accountable for a timely intervention. Second, the solution put forth by the laws is to no longer rely on the existing governance structure, but, instead, to force a change in governance through the collective actions of parents with children attending the failing school. Beyond the problem perception and the overall solution, however, the more specific policy components for identifying failing schools, involving parents in forcing a change in school governance, and the intervention options available, varied across states.

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<sup>14</sup>*How Connecticut Diffused the Parent Trigger, American Federation of Teachers.* Retrieved on September 2, 2013 at [http://rishawnbiddle.org/outsidereports/aft\\_parentpower\\_guide.pdf](http://rishawnbiddle.org/outsidereports/aft_parentpower_guide.pdf)

### **School Eligibility Components across Enacted Laws**

Chronically failing schools were at the center of all pieces of enacted law. However, the way in which subject schools were identified as such, and for how long they needed to be failing before being eligible for a parent-initiated reform, varied by state. In most cases, the schools needed to be failing for at least two to three consecutive years.

In California, subject schools must not be previously identified as part of the “persistently lowest-achieving” school program; they must fail to meet the federal Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks for three consecutive years, and have a state Academic Progress Index of less than 800. Connecticut also conforms to the federal designations of schools in need of improvement or failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level for two or more consecutive years. In Indiana, the school must be in either of the state’s two lowest performing categories (D or F) for two consecutive years. In Louisiana, schools are eligible if they have received a letter grade of “D” or “F” from the state’s accountability system, but they must have received that grading for three or more consecutive years. Schools designated by the Mississippi State Department of Education as either Low-Performing, At-Risk of Failing, or Failing for three consecutive years are considered eligible. Ohio uses its statewide ranking system and schools in the lowest 5% on performance index scores for three consecutive are considered eligible and must be located within the Columbus City Schools District. Texas requires the longest time period before a school is eligible for the parent trigger. First, the campus must have failed to meet academic performance targets for two years and been designated for a

reform plan called reconstitution. If after reconstitution, the school has continued to have unacceptable performance ratings for three consecutive years, it then becomes eligible for a parent trigger.

Several limitations were found in enacted laws that addressed the scope of the legislation to schools within the state. In California, the reform is limited statewide to a total of 75 failing schools. Connecticut limits the number of school governance councils that can be formed in a given year to 25. Ohio limits the reform to a pilot program within the Columbus City School District. Indiana law does not apply to an existing school that has been scheduled for closure. The 2013 Louisiana law (HB 115) is limited to those schools currently under the jurisdiction of the Recovery School District. Mississippi limits the reform to twelve schools in a period of six years with no more than three in each of the four congressional districts. The 2012 Louisiana law and Texas law do not mention a limitation of scope.

### **Parent Petition Mechanism Components across Enacted Laws**

**Parent petition campaigns.** Eight of the nine parent trigger laws across the seven states involve a parent petition campaign as the means for parents to initiate a change in the school governance. The exception is in the state of Connecticut. In lieu of a parent petition process, recommendations for a change of governance are made through a school governance council mandated for chronically underperforming schools. Voting membership within the council includes seven members elected by parents at the school, five members elected by teachers of the school, and two community leaders within the school district elected by the parent or guardian members and teacher members of the

councils. Three years after being established, the council has the authority to recommend a number of governance intervention options.

As previously noted, when the Connecticut bill was originally introduced on March 10, 2010, it did include a provision for a parent petition process and was based on the recently enacted California legislation. In the joint Education Committee hearing on March 15, 2010, the chairman of the committee referred to the California law in questioning the testimony of one of bill proponents:

So you're one of several people who've signed up to talk about this parent trigger, which I believe was enacted in California about six weeks ago. And I'm just wondering, this Committee typically tries to take steps that we have confidence will move the meter where we have some evidence or data that shows us that we will get progress by taking a given step. Given the fact there's just one state that has made this move and that it's so recent, what's the reason that you and your Commission have decided to come out so strongly in support of it? (Connecticut Education Hearing, 2010, p. 21)

The respondent, the executive director of the African American Affairs Commission, replied: “Because the alternative is not an alternative. We've been in situations where schools are continu[ing] to fail, new action must be taken. Parents can make decisions.”

In 2012, new Connecticut legislation was passed (Senate Bill 458) that provided for additional schools to set up school governance councils. These schools are part of the Commissioner's Network of Schools. Under this new law, the number of voting parent or guardian members has been reduced, further weakening the collective parent ability to force a change in governance.

**Eligible adults and school feeder pattern.** The enacted laws also include components that address issues regarding parental or legal guardian eligibility and subject school enrollment. Across all seven states the adult identified as been eligible to participate in a petition campaign is either the parent or the legal guardian of a student

attending a subject school. In the case of the Indiana law, only parents were named as eligible and, in Texas, a parent was defined as the person who was indicated on the student registration form at the subject school campus. For the majority of the legislation, parents or guardians are only eligible to participate in either a petition drive or, in the case of Connecticut the establishment of a school governance council, if a student is enrolled at a subject school. California and Ohio laws also include eligibility if parents and guardians have students who are enrolled in a school that would matriculate into the subject school. In the case of Louisiana House Bill 115, parents or guardians must have students who have been enrolled in the subject school for at least two years.

**Signatures requirements.** With the exception of Connecticut, the laws were very similar on the percentage of parents or guardians that needed to sign the petition to activate the law. The language in the other six states with enacted laws included the words “majority,” “at least one-half,” fifty-one percent,” “at least a majority,” “more than fifty percent,” or “at least fifty percent.” In addition, several of the laws stipulated the number of signatures or votes that can be obtained per student household. In Louisiana, each student equals one signature. In California, while the original law did not contain language regarding the number of parent or guardian signatures per pupil, subsequent guidelines stated one signature per pupil attending a subject school or one signature per pupil attending a matriculating school. In Texas, the law states that the signature of only one parent is required and the administrative guidelines indicated only one parent signature per enrolled student. In Connecticut, when electing parents to the school governance council, only one per vote is allowed per household.

**Time to collect signatures.** In the six states with petition mechanisms, two of states spelled out a time to collect petition signatures. The Indiana law included the provision that the petition must be completed no later than ninety days after the first signature is collected, and in Ohio, the second law (SB 316) states that a petition must be filed by December 31 of the school year in which a school qualifies for restructuring. Subsequent administrative guidelines in Louisiana allow petitioners ninety days from the release of the list of eligible schools each year by the state. Mississippi guidelines state that the State Board of Education will accept petitions after it has approved the annual classifications for public schools in the state. Texas guidelines provide a date of October 15 for submitted petitions. Neither the law nor the guidelines in California indicate an initial timeline for the first submittal. The California guidelines do provide direction on a subsequent submittal if the first lacks sufficient valid signatures.

**Organizing process.** None of the laws provide specific information on the process or strategies by which parent leaders might organize to collect signatures, although both laws in Louisiana address issues of intimidation stating:

Parents or legal guardians shall be free from harassment, threats, and intimidation related to circulation of or signing a petition. School and district resources shall not be used to support or oppose any effort by petitioning parents or legal guardians to gather signatures and submit a petition (LA HB 976, 2012; LA HB 115, 2013).

Guidelines developed in California also prohibit the harassment of individuals involved in a petition campaign. Subsequent court cases surrounding the first two attempts to utilize the parent trigger law in California did serve to clarify a number of issues regarding the organizing aspects of a parent trigger campaign including identification of the organization heading the campaign, petition document formatting, and the rights of the parent petitions vis-à-vis free speech and freedom from harassment.

### **Intervention Options Components across Enacted Laws**

Two out of the nine parent trigger laws in the seven states reference intervention models based on federal legislation and seven of the nine laws include an option that involves the possibility of charter conversion. These intervention models, if triggered, represent significant changes to the current governance system at a failing school with considerable impact on the current school leadership and staffing.

California law allows for the Restart, Closure, Transformation, or Turnaround models, and other federally-mandated alternative governance options. Connecticut allows for Restart, Transformation, or Turnaround models, other federally-mandated alternative governance options, and two state-specific options: a CommPACT school or an innovation school. Two of the states, Indiana and Mississippi, allow only the intervention option of charter conversion. The remaining states offer more individualized intervention mechanisms. In Louisiana, a trigger petition can remove the subject school from the current local educational agency jurisdiction and transfer it to the state-operated Recovery School District (2012 law) or can transfer a subject school from the Recovery School District back to the local school system (2013 law). While the 2012 Louisiana law intervention option only allows for the school to be transferred to the Recovery School District, it should be noted that a majority of schools in the Recovery School District are charter school operated. In Ohio, the intervention options are as follows: 1) reopen the failing school as a community school; 2) replace at least 70% of the school's personnel who are related to the school's poor academic performance, or retain no more than 30% of staff members; 3) contract with another school district or a nonprofit or for-profit entity with a record of effectiveness to operate the school; 4) turn operation of the

school over to the Ohio Department of Education; or 5) any other major restructuring that makes fundamental reforms in the school's staffing or governance. Finally, in Texas, the options include: 1) repurposing of the campus (charter school conversion); 2) alternative administrative management of the campus; or, 3) closure of the campus.

### **Local Educational Agency Response Components across Enacted Laws**

Embedded in the enacted laws is language that provides for control mechanisms to codify the way in which local and state educational agencies will administrate a parent trigger process. Some of these mechanisms are procedural in nature (e.g., notification dates) while others are more power-oriented (e.g., lack of appeal process provisions) and may be seen as diminishing the authority of the trigger petitioners.

**Public hearings and direction to create guidelines.** Procedurally, two of the seven states required a public hearing as part of the petition submittal process. In Connecticut, once a recommendation is sent to the school board, the LEA has up to ten days in which to hold a public hearing for discussion. In Mississippi, it is the sponsor of the petition campaign that must conduct a public hearing in the local school district of the subject school. Of the seven states, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Ohio include language in the laws directing state agencies to develop administrative guidelines to implement the law in the local context. In Louisiana, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is directed to develop and adopt rules and regulations for implementation. In Mississippi, the State Board of Education is directed to establish rules and regulations for the submission of petitions as well as criteria and procedures for the operation of the converted school. And, in Ohio, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Columbus School District, is to establish implementation guidelines.

**Administrative guidelines development.** Whether directed within the trigger law or not, five of the seven states have enacted guidelines to provide parents and local education agencies with more detailed information to aid in the implementation of the legislation. Directions to develop guidelines were not found in the Indiana trigger law nor were developed guidelines located during the document collection phase. In Ohio, although the Department of Education is directed to establish implementation guidelines in collaboration with the Columbus City Schools District, the guidelines have yet to be developed (S. Falluco, personal email communication, October 29, 2013).

In California, administrative guidelines were developed to provide more information to aid in the use of the law in the local context:

- Intent
- Definitions
- Requirement to serve all pupils
- Parental notice
- Petition signatures
- Content of the petition
- Submissions of the petition
- Verification of petition signatures and obligations of the LEA
- Restart requirements for parent empowerment petition
- Description of intervention – turnaround model
- Description of intervention – restart model
- Description of intervention – school closure
- Description of intervention – transformation model
- Description of intervention – alternative governance arrangement
- Prospective effect of regulations

The guidelines also directed the California Department of Education (CDE) to establish a website for parents to use to better understand how to circulate a parent empowerment petition, but allowed the local educational agencies to develop websites at their discretion.

One local educational agency in California, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), also issued its own guidelines as a result of a number of parent trigger campaign attempts within its school district. On September 20, 2013 the LAUSD Board of Education adopted the *Parent Empowerment Guidelines for Schools and Communities* with the intent to couple the release of the guidelines with “a series of two-day professional development opportunities for employees in schools subject to the Parent Empowerment Act” (LAUSD, 2013, p.2).

The LAUSD guidelines provided information on:

- Parent Empowerment Act Statute
- School eligibility
- Intervention options
- Petition requirements, process and checklist
- Signature eligibility and verification
- Lead petitioner
- Final disposition
- LAUSD procedure for processing petitions
- Parent and legal guardians’ rights
- Principals and school staff’s rights
- Use of facilities and district resources
- Complaints procedures
- Parent resource flyer
- Building Relational Trust for School Transformations toolkit

In Connecticut, the State Department of Education provides a website that includes information on school governance responsibilities, election guidance (e.g., candidate information forms, election ballot sample, nomination form, recruitment flyer), and sample by-laws. It is up to each school governance council to draft its own by-laws to submit to the local educational agency for approval.

Louisiana guidelines developed for the Recovery School District also include information on parent petition including:

- Eligibility and notification
- Completing parent petitions
- Prohibited practices
- Submission of petitions
- Review of petitions
- Outcome of petitions
- Transfer to the Recovery School District

The Texas Administrative Code provides the following additional information:

- Petition deadlines
- Certification of valid petition
- Must clearly state the intervention option
- Parent must be the parent indicated on the student registration
- Only one parent signature per enrolled student
- Alternate options submitted by the local school board must be approved by a majority
- Further defining the intervention options:
  - 1) repurposing – replaces a significant amount of faculty and allows students to enroll and be provided transportation to another approved campus
  - 2) alternate management – the local school district no longer governs the school and another operator is selected (e.g. charter school operator)
  - 3) closure – the school is closed.

**Local and state educational agency approval.** As an espoused empowerment reform strategy, parent trigger law provides parents with the legal clout to force a change in the governance of a failing school or other interventions. In reality, enacted trigger laws provide varying degrees to which parents, alone, can force this change by submitting a trigger petition. Elements within all the enacted legislation require some kind of approval from a local or state educational agency before the petitioners' interventional model can be adopted. In California, the LEA is not required to implement the option requested in the trigger petition if the request is for reasons other than improving academic achievement or pupil safety. The LEA may also recommend the implementation of an alternative governance arrangement than the one offered in the petition trigger. In Connecticut, the LEA can select a model other than the school

governance council recommendation, but it is up to the state LEA to decide whether or not to implement the model recommended by the council. In Indiana, the LEA must approve the conversion to a charter school. In Louisiana, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education must approve the transfer either into or out of the Recovery District and, in the case of the “reverse parent trigger” (HB 115), the LEA must also approve the transfer. In Mississippi, the Board of Education must approve the petition and the submitted charter conversion plan. In Ohio, the LEA is not required to implement the plan if it determines the request is for reasons other than improving student academic achievement, student safety, or if the State Superintendent of Education determines the trigger intervention plan does not comply with the state’s Model of Differentiated Accountability. In addition, if the trigger petitioners opt to turn the operation of the school over to the state Department of Education and it refuses, the LEA does not have to implement that recommendation. And, in Texas, while the State Commissioner of Education is required to implement the reform option, the LEA can submit a request for an alternative option. The Commissioner may decide which option to implement.

### **Attempts to Use the Parent Trigger Law**

The current parent trigger laws include language that provides a number of ways in which LEAs and state education agencies can either opt for alternative models other than those recommended in the trigger petition or decline to approve all together. To date, only four parent petition campaigns have put the parent trigger law to the test and the four cases were in one state, California. In the first two cases at McKinley Elementary and Desert Trails Elementary the use of the law was unsuccessful in obtaining approval from

the school districts for the parent petitioners' request for change. The petitioners had to seek legal remedy to further a possible change in the school governance. In the third and fourth cases, at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary and Weigand Elementary, the law and the subsequently developed guidelines were sufficient to force the implementation of the trigger petitions' recommendations for change. Table 5 outlines four attempts to utilize the California parent trigger law in the local context through formally submitting a petition to the local school district. The following section provides information on the court cases brought about by the McKinley and Desert Trails Elementary petition campaigns.

Table 5

*Attempts to Use Parent Trigger Legislation in the Local Context.*

<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Petition Submitted</b>	<b>Petition Outcome</b>
<b>McKinley Elementary</b>	Compton Unified	2010	Petition was submitted to the district; Superior court ruled the petition was invalid for the lack of date boxes on the petition.
<b>Desert Trails Elementary</b>	Adelanto Elementary	2012	Petition submitted to the district. Board rejected the petition.. Superior court ruled in favor of the petitioners. Converted K-6 charter school opened in 2013.
<b>24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary</b>	Los Angeles Unified	2013	Petition submitted to the district. Board approved the petition. Hybrid district/charter K-8 school opened in 2013.
<b>Weigand Avenue Elementary</b>	Los Angeles Unified	2013	Petition submitted to the district. Board approved the petition. Reform brought in new school leadership.

### **Legal Challenges to the Parent Trigger Law**

Since the California parent trigger law was enacted, four legal court actions were mounted regarding the use of the trigger law in the local school context. The first instance involved the first use of a parent trigger campaign to convert McKinley Elementary School in Compton, California. On December 7, 2010, a petition signed by a majority of

the parents at McKinley was submitted to the Compton Unified School District (CUSD) requesting the district convert the school to a charter school run by Celerity, a charter management organization. Rather than verify the signatures of the parents to determine eligibility under the parent trigger law, the CUSD representatives and employees allegedly launched a campaign to convince parents to rescind their signatures. In addition, CUSD required parents to attend in-person meetings to personally verify their signatures along with photo identification, a protocol not called for under the current law. This was of particular concern for parents who were living in the United States without legal documentation. Two parents filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requested an investigation into the intimidation of the parents at the school. Subsequently, a complaint for injunctive and declaratory relief was filed with the Los Angeles Superior Court on behalf of students of parents who had signed the McKinley petition. The complaint also included class action allegations.

In the complaint, CUSD and the CUSD superintendent were named as the defendants. It was alleged they had failed to uphold their constitutional duty to provide an adequate education for the students at McKinley and denied parents the chance to convert the failing school that their children attended. The causes of action in the complaint listed the violation of: 1) free speech rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; 2) free speech rights under the California Constitution; 3) equal protection clauses of the California Constitution; 4) Article 1, Section 7(b) of the California Constitution (commitment of care and services to elementary school students); 5) California Government Code Section 11135 (right to received educational opportunity

without regard to economic status, nationality, or ethnicity); and, 6) Parent Trigger Law. Ultimately, the District was issued a temporary restraining order and an injunction by the Los Angeles Superior Court stating that the District's requirement for parents to appear in person for signature verification along with a government-issued photo identification was a violation of their free speech under both the federal and California constitution.

Following the temporary restraining order and injunction, the District found cause to deny the parents petition by claiming that the petition document failed to technically comply with the emergency administrative guidelines set forth by the state. At question was whether or not the petition documents, despite facial technicalities, were substantially compliant. As a second court action, in June 2011, the Los Angeles Superior court ruled that the lack of a date box did not allow the school district to determine whether or not the parent signing the petition held the educational rights for the students when the petition was signed (i.e. the parent had a student enrolled in the school or feeder school at the time the petition was submitted to the LEA). Thus, the ruling denied the parents' petition. Although McKinley was not converted to a charter school via the parent trigger petition, Celerity, the charter management organization, later opened a charter school near the McKinley campus authorized by the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

The third court case involved the second attempt to utilize the California parent trigger law at Desert Trails Elementary School in Adelanto, California. On January 12, 2012, the Desert Trails Parent Union (DTPU) submitted a petition with signatures from 70% of the Desert Trails parents to the Adelanto Elementary School District (AESD). In verifying the signatures, AESD rejected parent signatures if they could not find a

signature in its files. In addition, an anti-trigger campaign was launched by an oppositional parent group with allies to teachers from within and outside the district to gather signature rescissions. AESD accepted the rescission of 97 signatures, the effect of which lowered the number of eligible signatures below the majority threshold. Sworn declarations were also presented in court attesting to forgeries on the signature rescission campaign. Two of the co-sponsors of the parent trigger law, Senator Bob Huff and former Senator Gloria Romero, as well as two senators from the area, requested an investigation into the anti-trigger campaign tactics. On February 21, 2012, the AESD Board of Trustees rejected the parents' petition based on its finding of a lack of a valid number of signatures. A petition was resubmitted on March 28, 2012 and was also denied by the AESD Board.

The complaint was filed by the parent petitioners to the San Bernardino Superior Court and the respondents were the AESD and the AESD Board. The complaint listed similar causes of action as in the Los Angeles case including violations of: 1) free speech rights under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; 2) Article 1, Section 2 of the California Constitution (free speech rights); 3) equal protection clauses of the California Constitution; 4) Article 1, Section 7(b) of the California Constitution (commitment of care and services to elementary school students); 5) California Government Code Section 11135 (right to received educational opportunity without regard to economic status, nationality, or ethnicity); 6) California Government Code Section 11135 (with respect to the Parent Trigger Law); and 7) Parent Trigger Law.

The San Bernardino Superior Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs requiring AESD to accept the parents' petition citing language from the parent trigger law:

Since § 53300 states a local school agency "shall" implement the requested corrective action, a local school district has a mandatory duty to implement the corrective action sought when at least half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils at a school sign a petition under the Parent Trigger Law. The District is not allowed to disregard this mandatory duty because in their judgment, converting the school into a charter school is unwise, inappropriate, or unpopular with District employees or classroom teachers. (San Bernardino County Superior Court, 2012), p. 6)

The court decision went on to state that the district had exceeded its scope of authority to not count the 97 signatures on the original petition that were allegedly rescinded and to do so amounting to an "abuse of discretion." (p. 7). The court decision also reiterating the express wording in the administrative guidelines which states, "...parents and legal guardians of eligible pupils shall be free from...being encouraged to revoke their signature on a petition." There was also a question regarding the petition header, which listed Parent Revolution instead of the DTPU. The court ruled that there was sufficient clarity in the signature campaign for parents to discern the main organizing group as the DTPU.

Following the court order, the AESD Board approved the parent petition but then later rejected the alternative governance choice of the parents to convert the school to a charter stating there was not enough time to transition to a charter operator. In a fourth court action, a subsequent ruling by the San Bernardino Superior Court forced a writ of mandate for the AESD Board to comply with the stated governance choice model in the parent petition.

The four court cases provide some clarity for implementation of the parent trigger law in the local context. First, the cases delineated the need for better identifying the stakeholders involved in a parent trigger campaign by requiring a clear heading at the top of the petition to state the organizing group in charge and by requiring a date box on the

petition to help the district ascertain that parents signing the petition have students enrolled at the subject school on the petition submittal date. Second, the cases supported the parents' right to participate in a signature campaign as an expression of free speech and to do so without intimidation or harassment. Third, the cases support the right of the parents to use the parent trigger to gain a more equitable educational opportunity for their children. And, fourth, the cases support the parents' right to choose the specific intervention model they feel will best transform the subject school.

While those who brought the cases argued the position that the parent trigger law is a legal remedy for an entire class of students who are being underserved and denied the constitutional right to an equal and quality education, these arguments were not used by the judges in their final rulings.

### **The First Parent Trigger Law in California**

Looking more closely at the first parent trigger law in California provided a better understanding for the ways in which this founding law and its administrative guidelines were incorporated into subsequent models for legislation and were used to aid in the diffusion of this policy innovation across the United States.

The 2010 California parent trigger law was part of a larger bill, SB 4 X5, which contained two acts aimed at increasing parental choice within the public education system: the Open Enrollment Act (Article 10) and the Parent Empowerment Act (Article 3). The Open Enrollment portion of the bill provided parents with students attending under-performing schools the opportunity to act individually to enroll their children in higher performing schools outside the school district in which they reside. The California Parent Empowerment Act (Cal. Educ. Code § 533000 - § 53303) offered families the

opportunity to act collectively to force a change in school governance at a targeted under-performing school.

Emergency guidelines were proposed by the California State Board of Education (California SBE) in July 2010 to aid in the implementation of the legislation. The emergency guidelines articulated the rationale of the legislation:

Despite years of the best efforts of California's legislators, education leaders, teachers, and administrators, California's achievement gap has been only marginally reduced. Further, many of the students who are not adequately achieving are concentrated in failing schools. Although academic achievement in these schools is slowly improving, achievement has not improved enough to reduce the achievement gap and provide students with the education and life opportunities necessary to a secure future for them, and for California's society. As a result, in 2010 the California State Legislature decided that the students in these schools can no longer wait for their educational opportunities to catch up. (California SBE, 2010, p.2)

The document also identified the potential solution to the problem: the legal right of parents to force a change in governance at a failing school:

With the Parent Empowerment provisions (SBX5 4, Chapter 3, 5<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session, 2010), the California State Legislature has given the parents of pupils in low-achieving schools the right to petition the local educational agency (LEA) to reform the school in which their child is or will be enrolled. (California SBE, 2010, p.2)

That parental right is now commonly referred to as “pulling” a parent trigger.

### **Content of the First Law**

Eight key components of the Parent Empowerment Act define the school eligibility, parent petition mechanism, intervention options, and Local Educational Agency (LEA) implementation response.

**Four school eligibility components.** Four components in the law outline whether or not a school is subject to the parent trigger law and the overall number of schools that can be identified as such. First, the subject school is *not* identified as a

“persistently lowest-achieving” school by the California SBE. Persistently lowest-achieving schools are the 5% lowest performing schools in the state receiving Title 1 funding for having a high percentage of children from low-income families. Having been identified as persistently lowest-achieving, these schools are already involved in a turnaround effort through a State Improvement Grant process and, therefore, are excluded from the parent trigger process.

Second, the subject school has been in corrective action for at least one full academic year under the federal ESEA. Under ESEA, schools that fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for a third year are identified for corrective action and must institute interventions to improve school performance. AYP is a measure defined under ESEA to determine how public schools and school districts are performing academically in English language arts and mathematics according to standardized tests, and, at the high school level, graduation rates are also taken into consideration.

Third, the subject school continues to fail to make AYP progress, and has an Academic Performance Index (API) score of less than 800. API is part of California’s Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 and measures the academic performance and growth of California schools across a set of academic measures. Ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000, the API is an improvement model that compares one year of assessment to a prior year. The state assessment results used in the API include the California Standards Tests<sup>15</sup>, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternative Assessment, and the California High School Exit Examination.

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<sup>15</sup> California is currently in the process of moving towards a new testing system called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) which is aligned with the new Common Core state standards. With parent trigger law eligibility contingent upon API scores, it is unclear how this will affect the use of the parent trigger laws in the future. The California Department of Education has yet to address this issue.

And, fourth, there is a limitation to the overall number of subject schools. No more than 75 schools can be subject to a petition. A petition is counted toward this limit once the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) and California SBE receive notice from the LEA of its final disposition of the submitted petition.

**Parent petition mechanism component.** The legislation also specifies at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition.

**Intervention option component.** During the petition process, parents are able to request that the LEA implements one of the four methods of intervention:

Transformation, Turnaround, Restart, or School Closure. These options are outlined as part of ESEA:

*Transformation model:* Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.

*Turnaround model:* Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.

*Restart model:* Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.

*School closure model:* Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher-performing schools in the district. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 12)

**Two Local Educational Agency response components.** Two components in the law provide guidance for the way in which LEAs should respond to the use of the parent trigger law by local stakeholders. First, the LEA must implement the option requested by

the parents unless, in a regularly scheduled public hearing, the LEA makes a finding in writing explaining the reason it cannot implement the recommended option and instead designates another of the options it will implement in the subsequent school year. The LEA must notify the SSPI and the California SBE that the alternative governance option holds substantial promise to make adequate yearly progress. Second, there is a limitation to the petition request. The LEA is not required to implement the option requested by the parent petition if the request is for reasons other than improving academic achievement or pupil safety.

As noted in the previous chapter, subsequent to the passing of the Parent Empowerment Act, guidelines were formally adopted in September of 2011 (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, § 4800 - § 4808, see Appendix K) to provide more detailed information on how to utilize the parent trigger law in the local context.

### **Models for Subsequent Legislation**

By comparing key components of the California parent trigger law with subsequent trigger legislation, evidence suggests that legislators in other states have drawn heavily from both the original legislation passed in California and the California administrative guidelines, as well as model legislation developed by Parent Revolution, the primary advocacy organization for California's Parent Empowerment Act. The Parent Revolution model of legislation (see Appendix L), entitled *Empowering Parents to Address and Challenge Low-Performing Schools*, incorporates language from the original legislation as well as information from the California state administrative guidelines. One sentence indicates that the goal of the Parent Revolution model legislation is to provide "a parental petition to reform public schools with inadequate student

achievement” (paragraph 1). The model legislation proposes more detailed strategies for the intervention options, petition submittal and appeal timelines and procedures, and harassment prohibitions. In addition to the model legislation proposed by Parent Revolution, three other organizations in favor of parent trigger laws have weighed in by proposing their own models for legislation or advice on crafting a stronger law.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) posted model legislation entitled “Parent Trigger Act.” According to ALEC’s website, the non-profit think tank, “...provides a constructive forum for state legislators and private sector leaders to discuss and exchange practical, state-level public policy issues” (ALEC, 2013, para. 1).

ALEC’s model legislation (ALEC, 2013a) has some similarities with the Parent Revolution model legislation, but it also offers a significantly different option as a policy solution: the use of educational vouchers for students who would matriculate into a triggered school. This model legislation proposes a monetary voucher be used to cover the cost of attending another private or public school. The most high profile opponent of parent trigger legislation, the National Education Association (NEA), has voiced concern on its Education Votes website that ALEC’s interest is to “advance corporate interests” (Perez, 2013, para. 11) and further privatize public education through an increase in charter schools (Litinov, 2013).

The Heartland Institute, a free-market think tank, also crafted model parent trigger legislation which “incorporates the best ideas and language appearing in the design guidelines, bills, and actual legislation regarding Parent Trigger programs, charter schools, and universal choice programs” (Bast & Pullman, 2012, p. 34). The Institute’s design guidelines offer advice on improving previously employed mechanisms for

stipulating who can sign the parent petition, identifying eligible schools, establishing process timelines, defining parent majority control, creating a more transparent petition process, and assuring that the scope of the law does not go beyond the parents' right to pull a trigger for an alternative school governance option. The authors urge caution when drafting a trigger law to avoid caps and limitations on the number of schools eligible for the trigger and propose that the law be made available to parents with students attending all public schools, except charter and magnet schools. This would decouple the law from any state or federal identification processes for failing schools. In addition, language should be in place to ensure that other stakeholders, such as district leadership or teachers, cannot veto the remodel choice put forth by the parents.

Bast & Pullman also critique the reform models available under the original trigger law. The authors strongly support the closure model as well as the restart model, including allowing for-profit charters to participate. They generally oppose the inclusion of the transformation and turnaround models, however, because “they repeat the top-down and one-size-fits-all reform prescriptions that large bureaucracies use in lieu of having to compete with other providers for customers” (p. 27). Like the ALEC model, Bast & Pullman support the inclusion of some form of universal choice (e.g., tuition vouchers, opportunity scholarships).

Model legislation was also put forth in 2012 by the Foundation for Education Reform & Accountability (FERA), a non-profit research organization. Their report, *“Parent Trigger” for New York: Empowering Parents to Reform Their Children's School*, reviewed and critiqued existing parent trigger legislation and then went on to propose a model parent trigger bill for the state of New York. The report outlined five

key components of a model policy that “directly effects how empowered parents truly are to initiate lasting and effective change” (FERA, 2012, p. 27). The components included what the authors claim are better policy mechanisms for: 1) school eligibility; 2) the parent petition process; 3) potential reform models; 4) the process to validate petitions; and, 5) process and plan for the reform implementation.

While this proposed legislation had key similarities to the California legislation, it differed in a number of ways. Differences reflected mechanisms that had emerged in state legislation since the California bill was introduced as well as new ideas introduced by FERA specifically for the state of New York. FERA offered the following best policy mechanisms for new parent trigger laws:

- Does not rely on a federally-mandated performance threshold to establish school eligibility;
- Uses a simple majority of parents or legal guardians to sign the petition;
- Only parents or legal guardians of children attending the targeted school may sign the petition with one vote per child;
- Includes provisions prohibiting opponents of the reform from harassment of those involved in the petition-gathering process;
- Offers school reform models beyond those federally-prescribed in NCLB (e.g., Closure, Restart, Mayoral Academies, Opportunity Scholarships);
- Petitions are submitted to the state education department for verification, not the local educational agency;
- Includes a requirement for a reform model implementation plan;
- Sets forth annualized timeline for petition submittal beginning the first Monday in January of each year for implementation in the next academic school year; and,
- Establishes the provision that a triggered school may not be the target of another trigger campaign for five years.

Another major organization in support of the parent trigger law, StudentsFirst, also weighed in on how to craft more effective legislation. The policy brief made several recommendations, but stopped short of offering a model for legislation. Unlike the Heartland Institute proposal, StudentsFirst believes the law should only be available to parents or guardians of students attending chronically failing schools in the bottom 20% of schools. In addition, parents or guardians with students attending feeder schools should also be able to sign the trigger petition. StudentsFirst also contends the law should continue to be coupled with the remodel options found in RTTT. Similar to the other model legislations, the law envisioned by StudentsFirst should include more clearly defined timelines, and there should be an appeal process should the school district decide to implement an option other than the parents' choice. StudentsFirst (2012) echoed sentiments found in the three models for stronger trigger legislation:

As more states consider parent trigger legislation, it is essential to ensure that parents truly have the power to force a change in a school. Recent press reports mention cases where parent trigger legislation has been watered down, preventing parents from actually having the power to petition for a change on their own. In order for the parent trigger to create the intended impact, parents must have the power to act and force a change without having to wait around for bureaucracies and special interests to come around to the idea. (p. 7)

### **Impact of Model Legislation**

It is beyond the scope of this study to determine how the recommendations of Parent Revolution, ALEC, the Heartland Institute, FERA, and StudentsFirst directly influenced legislation since the first law was enacted in 2010. However, it is clear that there is some relationship between the recommendations and legislation that has been proposed since these recommendations were made. Since the enactment of the California parent trigger law, 86 pieces of legislation containing some form of parent trigger provision have been introduced in the United States. As the trajectory of introduced

legislation progressed, mechanisms became more clearly defined and included policy components found within various models of draft legislation. In addition, the analysis that was part of this study clearly indicated that provisions of both the ALEC and Heartland Institute models could be seen in legislation proposed in eight states. Provisions included some form of voucher (e.g., monetary voucher, tuition, scholarship, educational tax credit) as an option within the proposed parent trigger legislation: Arizona (2012); Indiana (2011 and 2013); Maryland (2011 and 2012); Massachusetts (2013); Missouri (2011 and 2012); Nevada (2011 and 2013); New Jersey (2010 and 2012); and West Virginia (2012). While the parent trigger provision in Mississippi's Conversion Charter School Act of 2010 does not mention a voucher provision, because the trigger would transfer a district school to the state-run Recovery School District, low-income families might be eligible for a private school voucher as part of the Recovery School District's scholarship program.

While all but one piece of legislation introduced the ability of parents to petition for a change in school governance, the legislation was silent on how the petition process might be implemented through parent or community organizing strategies. Sixteen pieces of proposed or enacted legislation did contain language prohibiting harassing, intimidating, or threatening parents or legal guardians during the petition process related to either circulation of the petition or signing of the petitions. This language barring harassment of stakeholders involved in petition campaigns begins to appear in state legislation proposed after the introduction of the California administrative guidelines approved in September 2011. Prior emergency guidelines adopted in September 2010 failed to adequately address the treatment of stakeholders involved in a petition

campaign. The contentious nature of the first parent trigger campaign at McKinley Elementary in late 2010 confirmed the need for the drafting of more detailed guidelines.

### **Summary of the Legislative Document Analysis**

The analysis of legislative documents provided information to begin to address the research sub-questions regarding the current status of parent trigger legislation in the United States as well as key components and core policy issues embedded within the legislation. While some variation was found in key components across the nine enacted laws, four core policy issues emerged: 1) the laws were crafted to address inadequate public school student achievement; 2) the parent stakeholder was put forth as a new agent of change; 3) with the exception of the Connecticut law, a parent petition process was identified as the mechanism activating the law; and, 4) alternative school governance options outlined as the implementation solution. The reform strategy has spread across 30 states with three models of legislation drafted for use by policy makers. Yet, despite 87 attempts to introduce legislation, parent trigger laws have only taken hold in seven states and uses in the local context in one state.

In the next chapter, findings and analysis from the interviews with the two authors of the first parent trigger legislation provide a bridge to the larger policy drivers at the federal level and the first glimpse of parent trigger law's impact in the local context. Data from the two interviews were analyzed in relation to the core policy findings from the legislative document analysis to help to confirm or refute those findings. In addition, policy analysis literature continues to provide a framework for the analysis by placing the interview findings within the context of policy entrepreneurs, policy streams, policy windows, and policy diffusion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### INTERVIEWS WITH PARENT TRIGGER AUTHORS

*I'm just getting sick and tired of what I see and I begin to write legislation... to bring in greater options for choice in public education and begin to look at what we can do to turn around the wall that I keep seeing kids hit.*

*Former California State Senator Gloria Romero*

*I mean the idea behind the term [parent trigger] was to make it clear that the parents were the initiators of change; that parents were the ones with the power; that they were the ones who were going to trigger the conversion.*

*Ben Austin, CEO, Parent Revolution*

By all accounts, State Senator Gloria Romero, and Parent Revolution CEO, Ben Austin are considered the two most visible political actors behind the formation of the first parent trigger legislation in California. Romero and Austin can be described as policy entrepreneurs, “people who seek to initiate dynamic policy change” (Mintrom, 1997, p. 739) and, as policy entrepreneurs, they seek to couple their policy agenda to an emergent policy problem (Kingdon, 2003). Analyzing Romero and Austin’s stated policy agenda, their understanding of the policy problem at hand, and the accessed window of opportunity to couple their agenda with a policy problem, provides for a triangulation of the findings found with the legislative document analysis.

#### **Background of the Policy Entrepreneurs and their Policy Agendas**

Former State Senator Gloria Romero was elected in 1998 to the California Assembly and then to the California Senate in 2001 representing East Los Angeles and the greater San Gabriel Valley. After reaching the term limit in 2010, she became the California State Director for the education reform advocacy group, Democrats for

Education Reform. Most recently, she launched a new reform organization, Foundation for Parent Empowerment.<sup>16</sup> During her tenure in the State Senate, she was elected by her peers to the position of Senate Majority leader and was the first woman to hold that leadership position. Romero later relinquished that role to serve as the Chair of the Senate Education Committee because, as she stated, “As a chair you have so much more power and I already knew that I wanted to begin to mobilize in the final years; that I had to really direct the policy.”

Ben Austin is the founder and Executive Director of Parent Revolution. The stated mission of Parent Revolution is, “To transform under-performing public schools by empowering parents to advocate for what is good for children, not adults, through grassroots community organizing.”<sup>17</sup> A former White House staff member in President Clinton’s administration, Austin worked on a number of democratic presidential campaigns. He was the former deputy mayor of Los Angeles under Mayor Richard Riordan, the senior advisor to the early childhood education initiative, First 5 California, and briefly served as a member of the California State Board of Education. He also worked with the Green Dot Public Schools charter management organization directing a teacher petition campaign to convert failing Locke High School to a charter school.

In terms of policy agenda, Romero focused on the issue of individual parental school choice. Working in the State Senate, Romero began to explore the possibility of an open enrollment policy in California to allow parents the opportunity to transfer their child from an identified low-performing school to a higher performing school in another

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<sup>16</sup>Foundation for Parent Empowerment website address: [www.1000schools.org](http://www.1000schools.org).

<sup>17</sup>Parent Revolution, Who Are We, webpage. Retrieved on February 18, 2014 at <http://parentrevolution.org/who-we-are/>.

school district. Romero felt that students' academic success in this country was too dependent on geography and on the "side of the tracks" a family came from:

I've already begun to look at open enrollment laws, beginning to understand how zip code, just basically five digits that separate kids from the American dream – that five digits is what we operate under. It's a very feudalistic notion that basically says, 'You are bound to your geography, your piece of land.' And it was crazy to me because I think, here we are in America. Imagine if we told people as they entered a park, 'What zip code are you in? Nope, you can't come to this park. You've got to go to your own park.'

From Romero's perspective, the open enrollment portion of the Parent Empowerment Act has received less attention than the parent trigger, even though she thinks "it's potentially more powerful." Other school choice reform efforts were also on Romero's radar, especially the work being done through the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Public School Choice initiative to turnaround failing schools and the Locke High School campaign to use a teacher petition campaign<sup>18</sup> to convert one of the lowest performing high schools in the state, Locke High School in Los Angeles, into a public charter school. Both efforts, however, did not include or involve a collective group of parents initiating governance reform efforts. Romero saw the lack of parental power as problematic to reform efforts:

I would see every lobbyist, every special interest, rarely parents, advocating for status quo and blocking every sensible reform and the only parents that I saw, quite frankly, were the Parent Teachers Association, that were more teacher than parent.

Austin is an advocate for the collective empowerment of the parent stakeholder. Part of the development of his policy agenda began years before the enactment of the parent trigger law while working on the California First Five universal preschool initiative. This experience was an "eye opener" and a realization that "there are real

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<sup>18</sup>In California, under Cal. Educ. Code § 47605, a school can be converted to a charter school if a petition is signed by more than 50% of the permanent teachers at the school:

powerful forces in the California that are not always advocating for the interest of kids.”

Austin’s goal is to enact a “kid’s first agenda,” that involves:

...shifting the playing field to giving parents power [which] changes the conversation because parents don’t care how big your PAC is or how many lobbyists you have. They just care about what’s good for your kids.

This idea that parents need to be involved in education reform was further solidified during his work on the Locke High School teacher petition campaign. Austin faced another experience in which adult needs were being voiced ahead of student needs. In a meeting with a Locke teacher to gain one of the final teacher votes to convert the school, the conversation kept returning to the teacher’s personal needs, not the successful academic experience for the students. Austin reflected on this adult-centric exchange:

I just remember thinking as I’m sitting in that classroom how different this particular conversation would be if I was talking to a parent because I would be talking about what’s good for their kids. The subject of kids just didn’t come up in the course of that hour-long conversation.

After the successful campaign to convert Locke High to a Green Dot charter school, Austin continued to work with a group of Los Angeles parents and formed the Los Angeles Parent Union (LAPU). LAPU later became Parent Revolution and used community organizing as central strategy to support the board resolution in the LAUSD for its Public School Choice (PSC) initiative. The PSC Initiative was a district-wide reform effort funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Investing in Innovation Fund grant. Grant partners included a number of organizations including the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Greater Los Angeles, and Unite-LA which had affiliations with the local teachers union (Marsh, Strunk & Bush, 2012). PSC created a turnaround process for LAUSD’s lowest performing schools and allowed non-district operators such as charter schools or community groups to run the schools. After Austin’s

experience at Locke, his unprecedented idea was to create a type of parent trigger as part of the PSC by allowing parents to begin the Request for Proposal (RFP) process if their school was chronically failing. While the PSC was eventually approved by LAUSD, according to Austin, the parent trigger element was not included:

So, for all failing schools in LAUSD, it created an RFP process... the LAUSD had never done anything like this and most school districts in America had never done anything like this. Parent Revolution played a role in getting it passed and I tried very hard to get a parent trigger embedded into that board resolution.

The parents would initiate the RFP process. The school board would still have the final decision, but the parents would basically trigger their way into the RFP process and Ray Cortines<sup>19</sup> vetoed it... So, when he vetoed it, that's when I started talking to state legislators, talking to Gloria, talking to other friends I knew in Sacramento.

Romero also related the connection between the work at Locke High School, Ben Austin, and the drafting of the parent trigger legislation:

We stood with Steve Barr<sup>20</sup> and the effort at Locke to turn around and defend basically that hurried, hurried, petition gathering. The fact was it could be done, but it was limited to teachers. So, the question was always – teachers can do it; superintendents can do it, I mean there's NCLB; board members can do it, can transform school...

So here becomes the issue of the role of parents. Enter Ben Austin in Parent Revolution... They talked to me and said, "Look, here's an idea for looking at allowing parents – giving parents this right." Then I said, "Absolutely, parents should have [this]." So I'm one that said, "I will craft it. Let me go ahead... Let's start drafting legislation to begin to put this into law and to figure out a strategy to make it happen.

### **The Policy Problem and a Window of Opportunity**

The analysis of the parent trigger law reveals that the primary policy problem being addressed was that of chronically failing schools embedded in a status quo system ill-equipped for change. The interviews with the Romero and Austin concurred. Romero

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<sup>19</sup> In 2009, Ramon Cortines was the LAUSD superintendent.

<sup>20</sup> Steve Barr was the founder of Green Dot Public Schools, a charter management organization. In 2007, LAUSD awarded operation of Locke High School to Green Dot based on the teacher petition campaign for charter school conversion.

spoke to the policy problem and the inherent inequities within the problem of poor performing schools:

I always say, “If you don’t educate, we will incarcerate.” And that’s what I am seeing. We’re incarcerating because we have failed ... There is a failed public education system which traps kids. There is no way out. Even the laws exist, but the courage, the backbone to use the laws, is not there. And, in the meantime, the bulk of the people who are trapped and the kids who are trapped are poor and mostly black and brown.

Austin agreed that the policy problem involved a status quo system that was ill-equipped to put forth a solution:

It became pretty clear to me, if the goal is actually a kid’s first agenda, getting there by trying to convince school boards and district bureaucracies and legislators that are all very influenced by the other sides’ money and power, that was going to be an uphill battle. And, it was going to be unlikely we were going to get there in the academic lifetime of my kids or any other kids that are entering school now.

Austin also addressed the disparity between the middle class neighborhood schools, such as the one his daughter attends, and those in disadvantaged neighborhoods:

Most of the parents who are at our school are middle class, upper middle class or even wealthy and you know, many of them are White and you know, parents at Warner Elementary school walk around with a tremendous amount of power that they don’t even think about. I mean it would literally never occur to them that their kid could get stuck with a horrible teacher or an ineffective principal or if there were problems at Warner that those problems will be left to fester for years or even generations.

Both Romero’s and Austin’s policy agendas of individual and collective parent empowerment for education reform were ready to address this policy problem of chronically failing schools. And, in 2009, the U.S. Department of Education’s RTTT funding initiative provided the state-level window of reform opportunity to do so. The result of this confluence of policy agendas and the RTTT window of opportunity was the first parent trigger legislation. Romero elaborated on her role in drafting the law in 2009 and aligning her ideas with an external federal policy driver:

I'm the author of the parent trigger law in California. Officially, it's known as the Parent Empowerment Act and this was part of broader legislation [Open Enrollment] that I wrote as part of the Race to the Top call from the President of the United States and this was my answer in California.

So when the call comes for Race to the Top, I'm looking at the things that the President is calling for like teacher evaluation, dropping the firewall, being able to link student achievement data, testing. I'm a supporter of NCLB in the sense that to me – there's many criticisms and it needs to be changed – but to me, the beauty, the power of NCLB was always it forced us to open up the books and show me the numbers, show me the data because you can no longer hide."

Austin also referenced the moment in time created by the RTTT mandate:

Had I come up with that idea [the parent trigger law] any other time in history it would have still been a crazy idea, but it just so happened that I came up with it just when Race to the Top was happening.

### **Policy Catalyst: Empowering Parents with a "Seat at the Table"**

The analysis of the legislative documents pointed to a policy catalyst to shift the status quo: Empower the parent stakeholder to hold the system accountable for creating successful learning environments. Austin and Romero agreed that empowering parents would bring change to a stalled system of education reform and legally underscore the parents' right to demand a quality education for their children. Romero called the parent trigger law a "manifesto of parents' rights." Romero also made a point to differentiate between parent empowerment and parent involvement where "We [just] go to parents to ask them to pass bond measures [or do] bake sales."

Austin further articulated the goal of the parent trigger law to support the empowerment of parents as decision makers, not as school leadership or management:

The theory of change here is parent trigger is not about parents taking over schools or running the schools themselves. It's about parents having a seat at the table. It's about understanding that right now, when big decisions are made, the main players at that table are the teachers union, the district bureaucracy. We think they should have a seat at the table because they have expertise the parents don't have... So fundamentally, teachers unions and district bureaucracies should have power because they know how to run schools. But, we're just saying there should be a third seat at the table of parents who have real power that force the conversation to revolve around a kid's first agenda.

### **Policy Mechanism for Change: The Petition Process**

With the exception of the parent trigger law in Connecticut, the analysis of the other enacted parent trigger laws put forth a petition process as the mechanism for engaging change. Romero spoke to the use of a petition campaign and its strong connection to the democratic process:

This is the foundation of a democracy. It's putting your name on a petition. It's saying my John Hancock, we the people, we the parents, petition our government and if our government will not represent us and protect us then basically, get the hell out of the way, because we the people will... I mean that's the foundation of this nation, we, the people.

The importance of this method of engaging parents at the local level was such that, at one point, Austin considered calling the law the *parent petition*. The *parent petition* was not only descriptive of the change mechanism, but, by Austin's account, also "less threatening sounding." Austin noted that his organization has always used word *trigger* as noun, not as a verb, "It's not a parent pulling the trigger. It's parents triggering change. That's quite important you know." By November of 2009, however, the name, *parent trigger*, had "taken on a life of its own, that we couldn't change it even if we wanted to."

Austin also spoke of the petition campaign process as not only a change mechanism for alternative school governance options, but also as a collective process in which the parents who participate experience empowerment:

The parents of Desert Trails, and the parents of 24<sup>th</sup> Street are different than they were when they began this process and I think they have maybe, not just higher expectations for what their kids should get, but higher expectations for themselves.

But Austin made a point to explain that collective empowerment may not necessarily equate to school choice:

Parent trigger is so new. There really isn't a vocabulary for it in the ed[ucation] reform movement. I think it's thrown into the choice bucket and I don't think it really is the same.

I don't think it's definitionally empowering for parents to take [their] kid out of a bad school and put them into a good school. But, the work the parents for a parent trigger campaign have to do – to stand up, to organize themselves, to build consensus, to take on incredibly powerful interests and to advocate for and, ultimately, win you know, radical change for their kids, that in and of itself is transformative.

One policy mechanism that did not surface in the legislative documents was the role of community organizing. In the local context, however, the Parent Revolution community organizers were key partners with parent leaders during both the Desert Trails Elementary and the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary petition campaigns. Austin spoke to his organization's role in community organizing:

If you look at the history of any social movement, almost invariably you're going to see community organizers and that's quite a good thing in my opinion... I mean there are incredibly powerful forces aligned against it [the parent trigger] and parents, without the backing of an organization like ours, just would not have been able to get over the bar.

Romero concurred that intermediary organizations such as Parent Revolution are needed to provide support and to “fight power with power” against the efforts of well-organized lobbyists:

The more poor, the more isolated you are, the less likely you are going to have an understanding and access to the law so there will be need for intermediaries and I think that's not [just] Parent Trigger. That's just the law in this nation.

But Austin also made it clear that the goal of the community organizing was not only to provide a balance of power to well-resourced organizations against the parent trigger, but also to empower the parent stakeholders in the community in a more lasting way. The current model of organizing involves the development of parent union chapters, and provides resources, trainings, and organizing personnel. Austin explained that while Parent Revolution supports petition efforts, it is the parents in the local context that run the petition drive and build their chapter:

What we're doing is trying to teach low income moms, moms of color and even undocumented moms to have that same sense of power and entitlement that all the parents at Warner [a school in a higher income area] have. But, you know, that's not so easy because a lot of these parents have never felt powerful in any context ever in their whole lives.

One of the underrated aspects of this movement and under researched aspects of this movement are... what are the ripple effects? What are the implications of whole communities that have been left for dead all of a sudden, feeling powerful? How can we harness that power to drive change at higher levels?

This current model of organizing at DTPU and 24PU, however, had not always been in place. A different model was used in 2010 during the petition campaign at McKinley Elementary in Compton, California and was largely conducted by the Parent Revolution organizers. Mora, the Parent Revolution community organizer for the 24PU efforts at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary who also worked on the McKinley Elementary campaign, commented on how the lack of specificity in the legislation was problematic for both parents and organizers in their first attempt to launch a petition campaign:

When you envision using the law it was, well, "[You] can just go tell parents they can use the law." But it was never, "[Here is the way to] organize parents to know how to use the law. That first Compton case was our test to see how do you get this done. And so, once we saw what it took, in order to make transformative – more transformative changes that impacted more kids, we knew that we couldn't hold the power for organizing. We needed to have other parents working on it.

The failure of the Compton campaign led Parent Revolution to rethink their strategy as Austin put it, “not avoiding mistakes, but learning from mistakes.” The result was the development of the parent union chapter model that is “significantly more empowering, but also more scalable because we are able to help parents with a lighter and lighter footprint.” Austin describes the “quantum leap forward” from the work started at McKinley to Desert Trails and then to 24<sup>th</sup> Street and the more significant role of the parent organizers as the model progressed:

I think the new normal is that the parents were able to organize in a way [that was] not only empowering, not only that led to an ultimate victory, but made it very difficult for the other side to counter-organize. I think that the 24<sup>th</sup> Street organizing [by] the parents, not only did a better job of organizing, but they were able to do it in a way that helped us share in this new normal.

The gap between turning the petitions into victory for Desert Trails was about 18 months and at 24<sup>th</sup> Street it was about one month and that had something to do with John Deasy [LAUSD superintendent]; it had something to do with the path that led us to getting there; but, it also had to do with the way in which the parents approached the work.

Romero also had concerns regarding the way in which the law was being implemented and acknowledged,

It’s an imperfect piece of legislation that’s still being sloppily carried out and maybe you just got to get through it until people figure out how to use the law and really comply with it in a state that fought it horrifically, brutally. And, so, I look at it and I think it gives parents, I think this – the respect and the recognition and the power and the empowerment beyond involvement. You have the right to turn around this school. You banding together you know, can do it.

### **Policy Solution of Alternative School Governance**

The review of enacted laws revealed a number of alternative school governance options offered as a solution to the previously failing schools. In California, four options were put forth in the law. The interviews revealed a difference in opinion regarding the governance options available to parents. From Romero’s perspective, “it’s four options

and it's about transforming now. It's about, pick one, and transform it. It's not about playing games." According to Romero, what it is not about is negotiating for political leverage with the school district:

I mean the law was not intended to take a district hostage politically. It's not about negotiating. It's about this is the law. We are sick and tired. We want it transformed. We're not here to play footsies. We're not here to play games. We're not here to say, 'Golly gee, if you don't make these changes then we might turn it into a charter school.'

But for Parent Revolution, they maintain one of the main ways in which to use the parent trigger law is to negotiate with the school district. For example, on the Parent Revolution website, they cite the efforts by parents at Haddon Avenue Elementary using the parent trigger law as leverage to implement a new college-focused school model.<sup>21</sup> Austin explained:

We do spend a lot of time talking about organizing to bargain because in some ways all we're doing is helping parents to have the same kind of power that teachers and other organized interest groups have had for generations.

However, Austin and Parent Revolution do not recommend California law's fourth option to close a school. In fact, on their website<sup>22</sup>, the fourth transformation option is bargaining for leverage, not school closure. Austin sees this as an option that is unwanted in the local context:

It's a parent's right but if you get on our website you'll see that we advise parents against it. And, I don't think that parents need us to advise them against it because what parents in their right mind would organize around closing their local neighborhood school? ... I don't think any parents really care to use their power in that way.

Subsequently proposed parent trigger legislation included governance mechanisms not found in the original California bill or in the model legislation drafted by

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<sup>21</sup>Parent Revolution, What We've Accomplished, webpage retrieved on February 18, 2014 at <http://parentrevolution.org/what-weve-accomplished/>

<sup>22</sup>Parent Revolution, What We Do, webpage retrieved on February 18, 2014 at <http://parentrevolution.org/what-we-do>

Parent Revolution. According to Austin, Parent Revolution did not support the legislation introduced in Arizona in 2012, Senate Bill 1204, because of the empowerment scholarship accounts, a type of monetary voucher:

There are interest groups that see this as a way to move their agenda. Our agenda is parent empowerment in the context of public education. Fundamentally, the idea behind parent trigger is to make public schools more public, to make them responsive to the parents and kids that ostensibly they exist to serve. In Arizona there was a parent trigger bill that the Goldwater Institute added a voucher provision for and we came out against our own bill and killed it.

Similarly, Austin explained that the organization did not support legislation introduced in Michigan in 2011 (SB 620) because of stringent 60% parent signature threshold and the for-profit nature of most charter operators in the state:

Over 80 percent of the charter operators in Michigan are for-profit and we basically drew a line in the sand that they needed a certain ban on for-profit operators before we could get behind the bill. Fundamentally, the theory of change here is, parent trigger is not about parents taking over schools or running the schools themselves. It's about parents having a seat at the table.

In addition to Michigan, three other states required parents to go beyond the 50% plus signature threshold. Proposed legislation in Colorado (House Bill 12-1149 in 2012; House Bill 13-1172 in 2013) and in Tennessee (House Bill 77 and Senate Bill 483 in 2013) included the provision that 60% or more of parent must sign a petition to trigger a school governance intervention. In Kentucky's proposed Senate Bill 176 in 2013, the petition threshold required a two-thirds vote of the parents.

### **Policy Diffusion**

Analysis of the legislation showed evidence of policy diffusion that led to 87 examples of parent trigger-type legislation in thirty states. By their own account, Romero and Austin played a role in this diffusion. Romero commented on her initial work with the education reform group, Buffalo ReformEd in New York and in Texas:

I met with them [Buffalo ReformEd] about a year and a half ago. I'm going to be in New York again. At the time they were sort of exploring it. I talked to them about what I did, the experience, etc. and each state is different.

I mean it's in different levels. Sometimes I'll get calls from legislators. Sometimes I'll get calls from parents. I don't have money to travel all over so it's not like I go wherever – I don't go everywhere. I was in Texas. I met with people there.

Romero also explained her understanding of the national narrative regarding trigger legislation:

I'd like to be more actively involved and certainly, I think that it's one thing to introduce a bill. It's another thing to help – to understand – to have savvy on how you move it through and I think some of the efforts that I've seen in other states have been poor like what happened in Florida. I wasn't involved in the Florida – it's no wonder it dropped. I think they're missing the boat as far as the power of it being articulated as a civil rights fight.

There's the power of understanding what those other legislators are going through and the pressures that they're facing. How do you bring – say, 'Been there. Done that. Let me tell you what I went through' I think legislators need to have that, especially when you take a look at the national level how teachers unions have risen up against us.

I think the efforts nationally have not been as strong as they could be. It needs to be reshaped, rethought but whatever I see going forward I think, 'good,' and if there's something I can help with, ask. Sometimes I reach out to them. Sometimes they call me.

Austin contended, however, that his organization is first, and foremost, about parent empowerment, not simply replication of parent trigger across the United States in any form:

Parent trigger is an idea that is certainly bigger than we are. It's taken on a life of its own and in terms of this movement spreading legislatively to other states, it's pretty obvious that legislators in Texas are not voting for the parent trigger because Parent Revolution endorses it. We are a relatively small nonprofit based in L.A. with no political action committee or lobbyists and so this is a movement that's sort of taken on a life of its own and sometimes that's good; sometimes, from our perspective, isn't so good. The role that we've tended to play is not arm twisting and getting legislators to sign on the bill, because why would they listen to us in the first place? The role we play is protecting the progressive brand of what this is all about.

Information on the Parent Revolution website<sup>23</sup> further describes the organizations wider role in the diffusion of parent trigger legislation:

In states without Parent Empowerment legislation, we work with local, like-minded partners to build a base of parents committed to fighting for a Parent Empowerment laws. To accomplish this, we support local groups and coalitions in their efforts to advise policy makers on legislation that empowers parents. We also conduct trainings and workshops, share resources and expertise, and provide other sources of support for allies and partners.

### **Summary of Interviews with Parent Trigger Authors**

The simple overlay of policy analytic concepts provide a framework in which to situate this policy innovation in a broader context, make connections between other policy agendas in play during the genesis of the drafting of the legislation, and understand how the parent trigger legislation was connected to the individual policy agendas of the two main policy entrepreneurs. The interviews with Romero and Austin revealed their intention for law regarding the policy problem, catalyst for change, mechanisms, solutions, as well as evidence of policy diffusion. Furthermore, what was found in the interviews mirrored the findings from the document analysis of enacted law. While the two entrepreneurs held generally similar views on the policy innovation, one area of dissimilarity emerged regarding the alternative governance options. In particular, Austin viewed the legislation as a leveraging option for parent stakeholders to negotiate with the school district.

Figure 7 on the following page shows a graphic interpretation of how the different reform agendas being promoted by Romero and Austin intersected with the external federal policy driver of Race to the Top. The two policy entrepreneurs took advantage of this window of opportunity to both craft and pass the law. Kingdon (2003) contends that

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<sup>23</sup>Parent Revolution, What We Do, webpage retrieved on February 18, 2014 at <http://parentrevolution.org/what-we-do>.

entrepreneurs “lie in wait” (p. 181) for a window to open with “ideas, expertise, and proposals” (ibid) at the ready. The interviews with the parent trigger authors related a similar trajectory with both Austin and Romero developing the policy streams of school choice and collective parent empowerment that subsequently coupled in 2009 as parent trigger legislation. In addition, this framework also points towards the next step in the analytic process, understanding the impact of the parent trigger legislation in the local context of two school sites from the voice of parents, organizers, and district leadership.

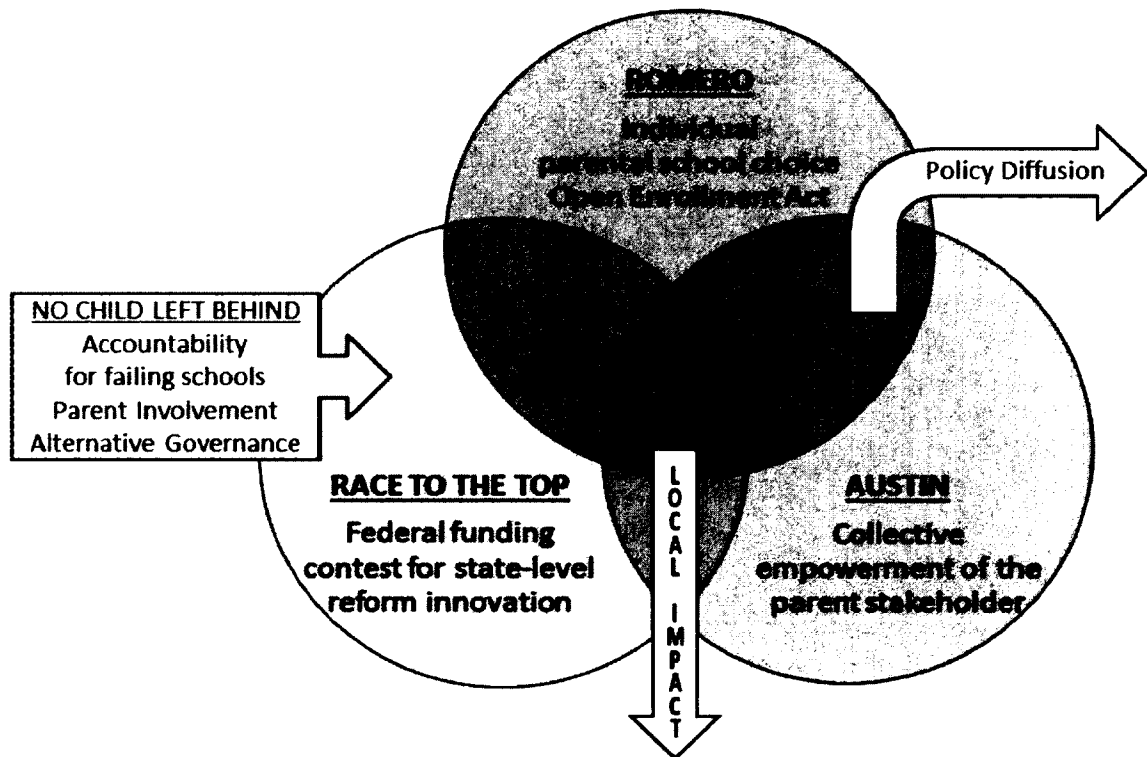


Figure 7. Reform agendas and the intersection of the parent trigger.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### FIELD STUDY CASES: THE PARENT TRIGGER IN LOCAL CONTEXTS

*¡De la ley! Ahí nos dio a nosotros la seguridad de que nosotros estaba en nuestras manos el poder llevar los cambios a esa escuela.*

*The law! That gave us the confidence that it was in our hands the power to make changes at that school.*

*Licia, parent leader  
24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Parents Union*

The impact of parent trigger legislation on parent empowerment at the local level has been precedent setting. To date, parent leaders at three school sites in California have utilized the law to force a turnaround in school governance. The ability of the parent stakeholders to collectively use a state law in this way represents a major power shift among education reform actors. The law placed the key to educational reform in the hands of the parents. However, this study at two of the school sites revealed that factors within the local context led to both a different lived experience in activating the law as well as different governance outcomes across sites. Local context – the dynamics at play between district leadership, school site staff, teachers unions, parents, organizers, and the community as a whole – either promoted or hindered the parent stakeholders' efforts.

The analysis of the successful use of parent trigger legislation involved two elementary schools in two different school districts in California: Desert Trails Elementary School in the Adelanto Elementary School District (AESD) and 24th Street Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). This section provides background on the two school districts listed in the study, as well as the two schools and the two parent leader organizations involved in a parent trigger campaign. It

also presents findings from the interviews with local parent leaders, community organizers, and, in one case, district leadership to develop a better understanding of the impact of the parent trigger legislation at the two school sites.

As previously noted, the study is delimited in the local context by its primary focus on the parent stakeholder perspective along with key supporting allies – the community organizers and, in the case of the 24PU, the two central figures at district office. Thus, the study both explores and privileges the voice of the implementer of the law – the parent stakeholder – over other stakeholders who were not participants in the study.

Background data presented below are from the school year 2011-12, the latest complete data set available on the Ed-Data Partnership website.<sup>24</sup>

### **Desert Trails Elementary School Background**

Desert Trails Elementary is part of the Adelanto Elementary School District. AESD is located in a mid-sized suburban area of San Bernardino County and, in the 2011-12 school year enrolled approximately 9,000 students, K-8. In terms of race/ethnicity in the district<sup>25</sup>, the majority of students were Hispanic or Latino (59%). African American students represented 23% of population and White students 11% of the population. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Filipino accounted for 3% of the population and those identified as Two or More Races or None Reported accounted for 4%. Nineteen percent of the students were identified as English Learners and nearly 82% qualified for the federal Free or Reduced Price Meal Program. In 2011-12, the district was comprised of 11 elementary schools, 2

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<sup>24</sup>Ed Data Partnership website address: <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/Pages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>25</sup>Race/ethnicity designations are those identified in the California Department of Education's Dataquest databank.

middle schools, and 1 K-12 school. The district was the authorizer of two public charter schools with an enrollment of 647 students or 7% of the total district enrollment.

Desert Trails Elementary became the subject of a parent trigger campaign in 2011. In 2011-12, Desert Trails Elementary was a K-6 school with almost 700 students. The school demographics differed somewhat from the district as a whole, with a similar percentage of Hispanic or Latino students, but a higher percentage of African American students (28%) and a correspondingly lower percentage of White students (5%). The school served a larger population of English Learners (24%) and approximately the same percentage of students from low income families. Desert Trails Elementary had a 2011 Base API score of 712 (on a scale of 200 to 1,000); a similar state-wide API ranking of 1 (on a scale of 1 to 10); and a similar schools API ranking of 4 (on a scale of 1 to 10). In 2011-12 it was listed in Year 5 of Program Improvement.

Beginning in the summer of 2011, parents frustrated with the failure of the school district to turnaround the school's academic performance contacted Parent Revolution and in September 2011 the parents formed the Desert Trails Parent Union (DTPU). DTPU (2012) described their school in a letter seeking interest from prospective partners to transform their school:

Desert Trails Elementary School is a K-6<sup>th</sup> grade school located in Adelanto, California. Desert Trails is one of the worst schools in California, ranking in the bottom 10% of all elementary schools statewide. Out of its graduating sixth grade class, 72% of its students are not proficient in English-language arts, while 70% are not proficient in Math. Desert Trails also ranks last out of the 10 elementary schools in the Adelanto School District. For the last six years, it has been classified by the state as a failing school, and students' test results have continued to decline over the last three years. (p.1)

Parents at Desert Trails Elementary had been working through the usual channels of parent involvement for many years, but without significant success. An excerpt from the letter of interest to prospective partners allows the story to unfold in the parents' own words:

Members of the School Site Council, Parent-Teacher Association and other important school committees, have tried for years to address the academic and cultural problems at the school. For example, our past volunteer efforts have included forming a Coyote Club to create incentives that reward students doing well in school, having the PTA buy books for students as Christmas gifts, and sponsoring Spirit Days.

Over the years, we have brought forth our concerns and ideas and have been eager to work alongside school leaders to turn around the unacceptable conditions at Desert Trails Elementary. Unfortunately our efforts to collaborate with school and district officials have mostly been met with staunch resistance, yielding very little change at Desert Trails (DTPU, 2012, p. 1)

### **24th Street Elementary School Background**

24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

LAUSD is the largest urban school district in California and in the school year 2011-12 enrolled over 660,000 students, K-12. In terms of race/ethnicity in the district, the majority of students were Hispanic or Latino (72%) and African American and White students each represented 10% of the population. Asian and Filipino students represented 6% of the populations. American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander accounted for 1% of the population and those identified as Two or More Races or None Reported account for 1%. Twenty-seven percent of the students were identified as English Learners and 74% qualified for the federal Free or Reduced Price Meal Program. In 2011-12, the district was comprised of 547 elementary schools, 126 middle schools, 13 K-12 schools, and 88 other school configurations.<sup>26</sup> The district was

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<sup>26</sup> Other school configurations include: Alternative, special education, continuation, community day, and

the authorizer for 223 charter schools with an enrollment of just over 113,000 students or 17% of the total district enrollment.

24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary became the subject of a parent trigger petition campaign in 2012. In 2011-12, 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary was a K-5 school with 622 students. The school demographics were less diverse than the district as a whole, with a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino students (80%) and African American students (18%) and a correspondingly lower percentage of White students (1.3%) and Asian and Filipino (.5%). The school served a much larger population of English Learners (47%) as well as more students from low income families (87%). 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary had a 2011 Base API score of 661; a similar state-wide API ranking of 1; and a similar schools API ranking of 1. In 2011-12 it was listed in Year 5 of Program Improvement.

In the spring of 2012, Parent Revolution organizers approached parents at the school regarding the possibility of establishing a parent union chapter. In August 2012, the parents formed the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Parents Union (24PU). The 24PU also described their school in a letter seeking interest from prospective partners:

24th Street Elementary is located in the West Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles and serves grades K-5. It has been in Program Improvement and subject to corrective action by the state since 2006. The school is one of the worst performing in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and is in the bottom 2% of LAUSD elementary schools. In 2012, 68% of students were not proficient in English Language Arts, and 65% were not proficient in math. Additionally, the school has the 2nd highest suspension rate out of all LAUSD elementary schools, further highlighting the failure of leadership and broken culture at our school (24PU, 2013, p.1).

While parent leaders at Desert Trails Elementary worked within the traditional roles of parent involvement through activities such as School Site Council or English Learners Advisory Council, parent leaders at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary had a history of opportunity.

working outside of school-led parent involvement activities. One parent, in particular, Adabella, used parent organizing strategies to affect change at the school prior to the parent trigger campaign. In the 24PU letter, the organization outlined the challenges the parents faced:

The parents at 24th Street Elementary have a long history of organizing, and we have become exceedingly frustrated with the unacceptable academic situation and the broken culture at our school. We have tried for years to make meaningful change at the school, and have even circulated petitions to change the principal in the past, but our attempts were unsuccessful. Our voices are not being heard, and the needs of our children are not being met (24PU, 2013, p.1.)

### **Similarity and Dissimilarity in the Two Case Studies**

The two cases appear different in a number of ways: urban vs. suburban environment; ethnic/racial diversity; English learner populations; socioeconomic status; and district charter school environment. They are similar, however, in the fact that both schools were identified as so chronically underperforming that they were eligible under California's parent trigger law and there was a history of unsuccessful attempts by parents to influence change at the school sites. It is also important to note that at both sites an intermediary, community organizing group, Parent Revolution, was involved, helping the parents form a parents union, and supporting the petition campaign. In the case of the DTPU, an ally of the parents at the school approached Parent Revolution. In case of the 24PU, Parent Revolution had identified the school as parent trigger eligible and approached the parents.

Another dissimilarity is found in the mobility and neighborhood cohesiveness of the student populations across the two schools. 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary was seen as a primarily neighborhood school with the student population living within walking distance. At Desert Trails Elementary, a large number of the students were from families

that lived in other parts of town. It was reported that other, more academically successful schools in the district were at capacity and, when a new student enrolled in the district, they were often placed at Desert Trails Elementary. Once a space opened up at the student's neighborhood school, the family would transfer. Table 6 on the following page outlines the chronological trajectory of the two successful petition efforts.

Table 6

*Chronology of Petition Campaign Efforts by the DTPU and the 24PU.*

	<b>Desert Trails Parent Union (DTPU)</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Parents Union (24PU)</b>
<b>2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In summer 2011, parents at Desert Trails Elementary contacted Parent Revolution to help transform their school</b></li> <li>• Began holding house meetings</li> <li>• Conducted surveys with parents</li> <li>• Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Parent Revolution and formed the Desert Trails Parent Union</li> <li>• Began circulating two petitions: 1) work with the school district, and 2) charter option</li> </ul>	
<b>2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In January 2012, DTPU submitted petition with signatures representing 70% of school's enrollment</b></li> <li>• Negotiations between DTPU and AESD are unsuccessful</li> <li>• AESD denied the petition for a charter school operator</li> <li>• DTPU went to the Superior Court for a ruling</li> <li>• Superior Court ordered AESD to accept petition</li> <li>• Letter of interest to prospective partners sent out</li> <li>• Submittals of letters of interest and RFP process</li> <li>• DTPU selected LaVerne Elementary Preparatory Academy as charter school operator</li> <li>• AESD refused to accept petitioners option</li> <li>• DTPU went to the Superior Court for a ruling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In spring of 2012, Parent Revolution approached parents at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School to help transform their school</b></li> <li>• Began holding house meetings</li> <li>• Conducted surveys with parents</li> <li>• Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Parent Revolution and formed the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Parents Union</li> <li>• Worked with the school on a plan to improve it through the LAUSD Public School Choice (PSC) program</li> <li>• 24PU passes a "no confidences vote" for the PSC</li> </ul>
<b>2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superior Court ordered AESD to accept petitioners choice</li> <li>• <b>In July 2013, the school reopened as a charter school, Desert Trails Preparatory Academy</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In January 2013, 24PU submitted petition with parent signatures representing 68% of the school's enrollment.</b></li> <li>• Letter of interest to prospective partners sent out including to LAUSD as a potential partner</li> <li>• Submittals of letters of interest and RFP process</li> <li>• 24PU voted on one of four options and select a hybrid district charter partnership</li> <li>• <b>In September 2013: 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School reopens as a K-4 school operated by LAUSD and feeding into the 5-8 grade charter school, Crown Preparatory Academy on the same site. A pre-K program is also reinstituted.</b></li> </ul>

### **Findings from the Case Studies: Parent Trigger as a Key for Change**

The findings from the field are based on the evidence from interviews with six parent leaders, three community organizers, and two district leaders involved with the parent trigger petition campaigns at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary schools. The interviews were further informed by event observations and documents (e.g., posters, flyers) gathered during school site visits. This section will reveal the participants' perceptions and impact of the parent trigger law on the two school sites.

During the interviews, parent leaders and community organizers told a nearly chronological story of their experience with a parent trigger petition campaign. This was due, in part, to the way in which the interview protocols were constructed and because people often relate information chronologically, but it may also have been due to the story-telling nature of the community organizing experience surrounding the parent petition campaign. Developing an authentic personal narrative that relates the *story of self* to the *story of us* and the *story of now* is one of the fundamentals of community organizing training (Ganz, 2009a, para. 14-16). Patrick DeTemple, the Parent Revolution community organizing director, spoke of the traditional organizing techniques utilized when working with the DTPU and 24PU parent leaders, such as conducting one-on-one and house meetings, developing a leadership steering committee, attracting an active and identified membership, and determining an “action orientation” plan tied to a “kid’s first” agenda. Furthermore, each of the parent leaders talked about the importance of hearing each other’s stories and testimonials as they worked towards forming the parent union chapters.

The story at both school sites began with the parent leaders' desire for their children to have a quality education without regard to their family's ethnicity, socioeconomic ranking, geographic location, or immigration status. However, the school system broke down many times over and their child – or a friend's child – was treated poorly and unfairly. While the parents at the school cared enough to be involved in their child's education and tried to work with the current system to make it better, the system did not respect the parents' efforts as equal partners and would not change. Eventually, the parents found out about the parent trigger legislation and learned of the legal right it would give them to force a change in the failing system. Because the parents were unfamiliar with how to use the parent trigger legislation or to negotiate the socio-political landscape of the system, community organizers from Parent Revolution helped them develop a parents union, launch a petition campaign, and strategically plan to take advantage of the law. Using the parent trigger was not an easy task and parts of the status quo actively resisted the change, but this difficult job brought the parents together as a collective force and, ultimately, they were empowered to force a change in the school system and to better serve their children. And, further, the outcome confirmed for the parent leaders what they knew at the beginning of the story – that a quality education was not only their desire, it was their right.

While this narrative of *self*, *us*, and *now* certainly weaves a compelling story to tell, the work of this study is to go beyond the telling of the parent stakeholder story and, instead, to draw connections between the themes, contrast and compare across the two cases, and to synthesize the findings from the document analysis and the legislation author interviews. It is this final phase of analysis that allows for a deeper understanding

of the impact of parent trigger legislation, how the local context affects its use, and offers the possible construction of theoretical and policy implications (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To aid in this analysis, the focus will return to Stelmach's (2004) parent engagement metaphor of *unlocking the schoolhouse door from within* discussed in Chapter Two. The use of this metaphor will help to frame a synthesis of seven major findings that reveal how the parent trigger law was used as a key empowerment tool for parents to shift the power dynamics of a status quo educational system to *unlock the schoolhouse door from the outside*.

As a review, the interviewees and their roles as stakeholders involved in a parent trigger campaign at the local level are as follows:

- Desert Trails Parent Union parent leaders: Dianne, Celeste, and Belisma
- Desert Trails Parent Union community organizer: Gerardo
- 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Parent Union parent leaders: Adabella, Licia, and Linda
- 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary Parent Union community organizer: Mora
- Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent, John Deasy
- Los Angeles Unified School District, Instructional Superintendent, Tommy Chang
- Parent Revolution, Organizing Director, Patrick DeTemple
- Parent Revolution, Executive Director, Ben Austin

### **Playing Hide the Empowerment Key – Devaluing the Parent Stakeholders**

The intent of the parent trigger law in California was to provide a way in which the parent stakeholder might force a change in the governance of a persistently failing school. Both the language of the law and interviews from the law's two authors indicated that this law was to be a powerful key in which parents might take ownership of their school site and decide how they would like to remodel an academically crumbling institution into one that provided their children with a quality education. Findings from the case study interviews, however, reveal that the predisposition of the status quo educational system towards the parent stakeholders – both within the district and at the

school sites – made it difficult for the parent stakeholders to initially gain access to this newly codified parental right. Not only were parent stakeholders uninformed of the parent trigger law, but also an overarching devaluation of parent stakeholders suggested they were not capable of using this right. The DTPU and 24PU parent leaders were subject to deficit expectations from staff and district leaders that hindered the parent leaders' capacity to make needed reforms at their local schools. Furthermore, the familiarity and capacity of the district towards school choice reform, in general, and charter schools, in particular, engendered a different response towards the parent leaders' efforts.

**Uninformed of their parental right.** Despite intense media coverage of the McKinley Elementary School parent trigger campaign in 2010, parent leaders at both school sites were unaware of the trigger law and said they “didn’t know about it,” “never heard of it,” or “had no idea what it was.” From their perspective, no attempt was made by the district to inform them of their parental right to pick up this key legal mechanism for change. And, the law itself contained no component for informing parents at the school site level. The state guidelines instructed the California Department of Education to create a webpage with information on the Parent Empowerment Act, but only stated that district “may” create a webpage to inform parents. Neither the DTPU nor the 24PU parent leaders knew of any information available on the district website before the petition campaigns.

**Devaluing the parent stakeholder.** After the passage of the law in 2010, and before their own petition campaigns commenced, parents at both sites continued to be involved in traditional forms of parent involvement such as work on the PTA, school site

council, or English Learner Advisor Councils. But efforts by parents to improve the school through traditional means were reported as neither empowering nor successful.

Belisma, a DTPU leader, explained how the parental involvement at Desert Trails

Elementary had not been effective in improving the school:

You know parents work probably three or four years trying to help... You come and help. You know there [are] protocols to go [through] and meetings to attend, so we did all that... We struggled through all that and we saw no change. Nothing happened. Nothing was getting better at the school.

Parent involvement in both cases was experienced as “not being heard,” “no one listened,” or “no one came to ask what we were doing.” Throughout the interviews the parent leaders spoke of the lack of voice as evidence of a lack of power. Adabella, a 24PU parent leader, felt this experience was the reason many parents left 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary and commented, “Because the parents saw that no one listened to us at all, the parents took their kids to another school.”

Parent leaders were without power prior to the enactment of the parent trigger legislation and, even immediately after the law was enacted, continued to lack power within the system. When parent leaders and community organizers were asked about the power dynamics between parents and other stakeholders, parents were never mentioned as holding power within the system. Who had the power? Licia, a 24PU parent leader, responded, “The district. They had the power. We weren’t listened to at all.” Moreover, the parent leaders felt like their role was a “rubber stamp.” Dianne, a DTPU parent leader, related her experience when participating on the School Site Council:

Before we didn't have any power we were just told this side or the other thing, even on School Site Council. I didn't learn what School Site Council truly was supposed to be until I became involved with Parent Revolution and this movement and found out that I was supposed to be involved in the Single Plan for Student Achievement which was nothing we ever did [before]. All we ever did was approve purchase orders...They're just taking us as token parents and, 'Oh, here, approve this and approve that.' And that's not what's meant to be and they, at any turn, don't really want parent involvement. They say they do, but parent involvement is not just [to] approve a purchase order.

Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, concurred regarding the status quo power dynamics of the public school system:

No question that when we go into a school community it's very apparent to us that the only ones at that point that have the power is the district or the school. To be more specific, it's the teachers and the principal of the school. Parents are allowed to be part of PTA. Parents are allowed to be part of School Site Council...but there's really no power there. I mean it's unfortunate that these organizations were designed to give parents power but there's really not. There's really no leverage, no power there for the parents. There's not even a sense of ownership.

At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, attempts were made to change the school that went beyond traditional parent involvement with parents protesting the lack of attention by school leadership to change the failing school. Sit-ins in front of the school were staged by parents and a signature campaign was launched to remove the principal. As Licia, a 24PU parent leader, related, these attempts were equally unsuccessful, in part because they did not have an allied organization to support them:

They had many strikes, collected signatures, and sent them to the district. They spoke with the principal, and they wrote letters. And they were not heard...We were alone and we were no one.

Furthermore, according to Adabella, a 24PU parent leader, early attempts at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary by parent organizers to demand change at the school were met with reprisal from school leadership and "she [the principal] threw out all the volunteers." While the School Site Council and the English Learner Advisory Council continued,

there was no active participation by parents. Again, the power differential was in play. When asked who held the power within the system, Adabella responded with her impression that “The principal had the power because she had three friends of hers on the district’s board of directors.”

Parents also related an unwelcoming environment at the school. Gates were closed to parents when dropping of kindergarteners, parents were not acknowledged for a half an hour when waiting in the school lobby, and classroom observations were discouraged or limited to fifteen-minute observations. Belisma further described the school environment as unwelcoming to the parents:

When I came in there’s no parent involvement. There’s no welcoming. You brought your students to school and you just left them there and you weren’t invited to come in. So, I had a talk with one of the teachers and she encouraged me to volunteer. [But] the teachers and the principal kind of stopped that parent involvement. They don’t want that in here.

In the case of Desert Trails Elementary, immigration status also played a role in further marginalizing the parent voice. Because of her immigration status, Celeste, a DTPU parent leader, was wary of volunteering at the school and mentioned that she felt like “a bug or something. I don’t know. It was very, very bad.” Belisma related how those without legal status were urged to “quiet down:

We have that voice, whether we’re illegal or legal. We still have that parent right for our children, to speak for them and asking for a better education. Just because we have that status it doesn’t mean we’re going to quiet down.

Both school sites could be likened to Henderson et al.’s (2007) fortress school where parents are viewed as bringing little value to the learning environment. At one AESD board meeting, Dianne was “shocked and amazed” to hear the Board president say, “‘It’s [the] parents’ responsibility’ or ‘parents are the main educators.’ And, then a

few minutes later, he says, ‘But what do parents know? They’re not educated.’ Give me a break. Which one is it?”

Eventually, parent leaders at both schools did learn of the parent trigger. In the case of Desert Trails Elementary, a former AESD board member, who was considering having her child attend the school, contacted Parent Revolution and asked the organization to talk with the parent leaders. In the case of 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, Parent Revolution approached parent leaders. Licia related when she first attended a park meeting nearby the school and heard about the parent trigger from Parent Revolution organizers:

I said, “Oh, this is the way I can support making those changes.” And that’s how I stayed there, informing myself more and more and starting to get involved and I said, “This is the change.”

As efforts began at the school sites to organize a parent petition campaign, parent stakeholders continued to experience the prejudice of low expectations. Initially, in both cases, as the parent leaders were forming their union and collecting petition signatures, there was little response from either the district office or the district Board of Trustees. In the case of the 24PU, this lack of response was viewed more benignly than in the DTPU context. Adabella’s perspective was that the district knew very little about the law prior to their campaign:

I think that here in Los Angeles they hadn’t even read the law. The law already existed, but since no one knew it, not even the people from the district had studied it. Until we came, [then] they started reading it.

However, at DTPU, the parent leaders reported this lack of attention more critically. Not only did the parent leaders feel that the district had low expectations about their children, but that they also held low expectations about the parents involved in the trigger campaign. The parents felt the district held the belief that the parents could not

“pull it off.” But this response changed rapidly once the parents submitted the petition and then, according to Dianne, the district’s attitude was, “Oh, my God, these parents did do this and we never thought they would.” The ability of the parents to organize using the trigger law “caught them [the district] off guard.”

**Familiarity and capacity of the district for education reform.** From the parent leader and organizer perspective, another factor predisposed the district to look unfavorably at the DTPU education reform effort, especially in relation to the restart governance option of a charter school. It was reported that Adelanto had a “bad experience with a charter operator” that was “stealing money and not running the school properly.” Charter schools were not a major part of the AESD school choice portfolio and the county of San Bernardino, as a whole, was referred to as “anti-charter.” This was one of the reasons the DTPU described their restart reform option as a *community school*, instead of a *charter school*, because this previous experience was seen as a “stain” on the reputation of charter schools.

This was in contrast to the 24PU reform effort where LAUSD had significant experience with charter schools, charter school management organizations, as well as their own school choice turnaround reform initiative, Public School Choice. Furthermore, Tommy Chang, the LAUSD instructional superintendent, had previously worked in a traditional public school and had also worked for the Green Dot charter organization. This “context of both worlds,” as he referred to the experience, allowed for the more favorable consideration of alternative governance models because, “we’re all public schools trying to serve community kids.”

In summary, the experience of parent leaders as a devalued stakeholder existed before and continued after the passage of the parent trigger law. District leadership did not present parents with information regarding this legal right to hold the school district accountable for the failure of the school and potentially force a change in the schools governance. The parent leaders became aware of the law through other channels and in different circumstances. However, their relationship with the school continued to be structured based on power differentials that discounted the parents' ability to take on a new role as a reform decision maker and change agent. An additional factor, the districts own familiarity with alternative governance models, had set the stage for how the parent leaders' reform efforts were received.

### **Finding the Key - The Legal Right to be a Change Agent**

The law provided a window of opportunity not only for the authors of the legislation to advance their policy agenda of school choice and collective parent empowerment, but also for parent leaders at local school sites to pursue a different, and, hopefully, more effective strategy for attaining education reform goals. Once the DTPU and 24PU parent leaders learned of the parent trigger law, they recognized the value to support their own efforts to improve their school. For the parent leaders, the key was a new way to approach education reform at their failing school and the key fit. First, the law was perceived as a legal solution to rectify the power differential that had previously precluded them from successfully making change. The law codified their right to be a change agent. Second, the intent of the law aligned with the parent leaders' belief that a quality education for their child and for their neighborhood was an immediate right, regardless of their immigration status, socioeconomic status, education level, or language

proficiency. And, third, especially in the case of the DTPU when the petition campaign became contentious, they felt the law was there to protect them.

**The law provided a legal ally for change.** The law provided the DTPU and 24PU parent leaders with a legal ally to shift the power differential among the stakeholders. The balance of power was seen by the parent leaders as so skewed that the parent petition campaigns were often referred to as a “battle” or a “fight.” Belisma recounted her impression of the law, “So that’s when we found out that there was a parent trigger... something with the law behind it that was going to help us fight for the school that we needed for our children.” The parent trigger law also brought hope to the parent leaders who previously felt isolated in their efforts to make change. Dianne expressed her response to learning about the law from the Parent Revolution organizers, “Thank God. There’s hope. There’s something we can do to make a difference in the education of our children and we are going to do it. Yeah, definitely.” Adabella echoed those sentiments and recalled when she first learned about the law through a Parent Revolution organizer, “When she explained to me what the parent empowerment law was, I thought for a while and I said, ‘Oh, this is chance I’ve been waiting for.’”

Another alignment between the law and the needs of the parent leaders was in the desire for immediate change. Both DTPU and 24PU parent leaders were aware of the necessity for dramatic transformation in the school environment and referenced the immediacy of change available through the use of the parent trigger. Similar to the language expressed in the law’s emergency guidelines that “these schools can no longer wait for their educational opportunities to catch up,” so, too, the parent leaders wanted to see immediate improvement and “needed changes now, not for the next year.” Dianne

articulated this message of urgency, especially given the fact that the schools had been failing for many years:

We felt that our school desperately needed a drastic change. It couldn't just be a plan that was put in place that will take effect five years from now. We've already been in program improvement for six years. That's a whole educational career for a child and we weren't going to risk any more children...One bad teacher one year, it puts a kid behind two years so you can't continue to do that to children.

**The law aligned with the parent leaders' core beliefs.** Beyond helping parent leaders fulfill their need for a legal ally to make urgent change at their school sites, the parent trigger also aligned with their core beliefs. The parent leaders felt that the use of the law would enable them to "have the school that our children deserve" and, with a longer term goal in mind, "because it is my dream. I envision seeing my sons getting out of college carrying a diploma." Across both cases there was a clearly expressed belief that students have an inherent right to a quality education. In particular, parents wanted a quality education for their children and the community as a whole; parents had high expectations for achievement; and, saw a good education as a civil right regardless of economic, ethnic, or immigrant status. Similar to other parent leaders at both the school sites, Linda, a 24PU parent leader, had high ambitions for her children:

My daughter is a girl that likes to learn... She wants to be a doctor. And I believe she will be a doctor! She's smart, she's special. I have another two [children] and I expect more for them. I want them to have better everything: better teachers, better school, better future. Do you understand?

The parents were steadfast in this belief that their child should have a good education, but, as Dianne explained, there was also an acknowledgement that the system did not see certain groups as having the same right:

I want all parents to know they have that right. It's the kid's right and it's not about where you come from or whether or not you can speak English or whether or not you're literate yourself. But, that the school has a responsibility to teach your kid at the level that they're at.

And so, there's just a common – I think at that school it's just that because of our socioeconomic area – I don't know what their idea is – but their core belief was that our children couldn't learn and so, why [would they] bother?

Dianne also echoed the sentiment expressed by Senator Romero regarding the unfairness of geographic location and access to a good education:

Parents should have choices and I don't believe that we should have to drive across town to take our kids to a quality school when there is one around the corner. It's like – it's not fair and it's not right to doom people because of their zip code.

Parent leaders at both sites activated the parent trigger law for reasons beyond the individual benefit of their own child, to make a collective impact for the good of the larger community. There was an understanding that the right to a good education was an equal right that goes beyond the individual right of their child. Adabella conveyed that her 24PU work was on behalf of all children:

I mean, I am happy because the only thing that I've been trying to do is make all the children have an equal education...I just want people to say, 'Oh, that child studies at the best school. Or, that child has the best grades.' This is what my biggest interest is.

Dianne also spoke of the rights of all children to a good education and how her work for with the DTPU was not just for her own child's individual benefit, but for the community:

I know right from wrong and I want my kids to have the best they can possibly have and that school wasn't giving that to my kids. I have to stand up for it, and not just for my kids, but for every kid that goes to the school in the community.

Licia related her decision to send one of her son's to the charter school co-located on the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary campus and balancing the choice for the individual versus the collective good:

It was easy for me to take my son and put him in another school. But it was a self-centered act; because, I was forgetting the other parents and children. And I said, 'These kids need me, and so do their parents.' If I join them we are going to be strong and we're going to achieve what we need to achieve.

**The law provided protection.** There was initial hesitancy, however, on the part of some parents to engage in a parent trigger campaign and take up this new role of transformer. Of particular concern in the DTPU case was the immigrant status of the parents involved in the effort and the fear of reprisal. And, while parents with an undocumented status were reticent in the beginning to be involved with the campaign, Celeste's felt her leadership example helped others become willing to participate in the petition campaign, "I told them, □If I'm still standing, then you're standing, because I'm the one that's inside the whole organization [DTPU], so if they come after somebody it's going to be me.'" Although Celeste's immigration status was an issue, she remarked on the fact that this was not the case for her family:

I mean my kids were born here. My husband's a U.S. citizen. I mean it's their right. I mean they're entitled to have a good public school as a place where they could get educated. So why should I shy away from that?

DTPU leaders commented more often than the 24PU leaders on the need for the parent trigger law as protection, often referencing the petition campaign as a fight. "I mean," Celeste related, "how many times did we face so many things we were in tears." But she also referenced how the law provided them with the strength to continue their work, "You feel it [the parent trigger law]. You feel it every day. Even when we wanted to give up, you feel it and the law is on your side." Belisma agreed, "You know you have something [the law] that's going to walk with you. You're not by yourself."

Alfonso, the DTPU organizer, also viewed the parent trigger as a way in which to protect parents with undocumented status:

You're preparing them for the petition drive and you're saying, 'Under this law you're protected. Your immigration status has nothing to do with it. Not only the law protects you – the parent trigger law – but also under the State of California you have the right to petition.'

What did not emerge from the parent leader interviews was evidence that parents initially sought out the parent trigger law to shift their role in the system of school governance or to enhance their own empowerment. In other words, if the system had been working, and their children had been receiving a quality education, the leaders would not have sought out the parent trigger law simply to get a better seat at the governance table. Rather, parents were activated to use the parent trigger law, to pick up this key to empowerment, in response to a local experience of failure to properly educate or care for their child or their neighbor's child.

In summary, the interviews with parent leaders revealed that there was a fit between their beliefs and needs and the purpose of the parent trigger law. Personal experiences of a failing school environment prompted parent leaders to consider utilizing the law as a means to an end: a quality school for their neighborhood. Because of the existing power differentials within the system, parent leaders recognized the possibility of reprisal in using the law. While this created some hesitancy, ultimately, they looked to the law to protect them.

### **Turning the Key – Increasing the Capacity of the Parent Stakeholder**

The parent leaders made the connection between the parent trigger law and the advancement of their cause and recognized it as a powerful legal ally. However, an intermediary was critical in helping them use the law by providing basic resources, opportunities for knowledge acquisition including strategies to navigate the socio-political landscape, and supporting the parent leaders in their community outreach efforts

to connect with other parents. Establishing a relationship between the community organizers and the parent leaders was an important factor in building the organizational capacity and cohesion of the parent stakeholders so their efforts could not only withstand resistance from those in opposition, but also solidify their position as a change agent.

While the language of the parent trigger was silent on use of intermediaries to use the law effectively, the parent leaders were not. Dianne felt that success in implementing the parent trigger law required another ally:

We wouldn't have been able to do this by ourselves. We didn't have a clue where to start. We could want it all we wanted, and we heard about the parent trigger law, but we had no idea how it worked and what the steps were and what to do and what our rights were. And that's hard, that's overwhelming for a parent to try and figure out by themselves.

Linda spoke of the important role – the key role – of the community organizers, “Many parents want to fight and work, but we don't have the power, we don't know how to do it. And then they give [us] the key to open the door.”

For the DTPU and the 24PU, the intermediary was Parent Revolution and the primary purpose of its community organizing strategy was to empower the parents with the knowledge and capacity to demand transformation from the school. Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, explained what he called a “very simply, very raw” process that shifts the role of the parent stakeholder:

We just want them to have a voice and by educating the parents to understand how the system works, not only do you empower them but through that empowerment they gain their voice and for the first time you start seeing parents really understanding that. And, not only that, but you start seeing the other side.

For the first time you have parents that are able to communicate at the level of a teacher or a principal and sometimes even higher than that. They understand how the system works you know, so when a parent is talking to teachers about LIFO [Last In First Out hiring] or policies within the districts...a lot of teachers get taken aback by that. But that's when they'll respect the person. That's when you know, the legitimacy of the group, in this case the parent union, occurs and that's where power comes in. That's where parents are empowered to start moving the campaign forward.

Parent Revolution's community organizing strategy addressed the complexity of undertaking a collective effort of this kind. Patrick DeTemple, the Parent Revolution organizing director, explained the importance of capacity building for both the parent leaders and their union:

People have to develop the capacity, organizational capacity which means leadership has to be identified. Leadership has to be developed. Organizational practice has to happen and organizational identity has to emerge that has experience, can learn from experience and then ultimately, still has to take shape as an actual agent of change within their own community.

**Basic resources and knowledge acquisition.** Parent Revolution provided a variety of basic resources including community organizing staff to help start the parent union and strategize the petition campaign, legal aid, translation and interpretation, rental headquarters and office equipment for the organizing efforts, and educational trainings. The trainings were designed to enhance the parent leaders' knowledge regarding the use of the parent trigger as well as such fundamental skills as reading a school's report card. But the trainings also provided the parents with a more in depth understanding of the inner workings of the school and the district. For example, Dianne explained how parents were taught how to access information regarding teacher credentials:

We started to learn how to go into the state website and check how the schools are, check what the teachers' credentials were. These are things that most parents don't think about. We don't. We don't think about this because we send our kids to the professionals, because we think they're going to do right by our kids.

One of the challenges faced by the parent leaders was making other parents aware of the realities of the school's poor performance and the community organizers helped with this challenge. Licia called this type of knowledge-building, "taking the blindfolds off." And, in her view, the community organizers also helped the parents to "See beyond that, visualizing our kids graduating from college." Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, concurred that both the school and the district were remiss in informing parents of the status of their child's school:

Desert Trails was failing by all measures and most of the parents, when we were talking to them and having those one on ones, they had no idea that the school was that bad. They had no idea Desert Trails was the lowest performing school in the entire district of Adelanto. They had no idea. The schools or the districts, they don't volunteer that information. They don't go up to a parent and say, 'Oh, do you know your child is attending one of the worst schools?' I won't say they keep it a secret. They just don't volunteer that information and, so, basic things such as APIs. Parents don't understand that. They get that report card every year. I don't know if you ever had a chance to see this. It's not easy for the average parent to read.

John Deasy, the LAUSD superintendent, acknowledged the importance of knowledge in shifting the power dynamics among the stakeholders and offered, as he described it, his own motto, "I think that one of the great problems is that knowledge is the underground currency of the privileged, and when that knowledge becomes known by everybody, you definitely level [those] unearned fields of power."

Furthermore, Mora, the 24PU organizer, provided the example of how the organizers helped the parent leaders navigate the language of schooling – the "educational jargon" – that was embedded in proposals sent to the parent union by prospective school operators:

A parent reading it [the proposals] will never understand what it [common core standards] means. So, what we did was we created a glossary where our policy director pulled out all the words. We explained what that means so that when they read it they understand.

And going beyond providing a dictionary of educational terms and acronyms, the organizers would often work in the language of metaphor to cross the cultural divide between the world of the parent and the world of the school system. For example, in explaining individualized teaching or individualized instruction, Mora used the metaphor of a monkey, a zebra, and a giraffe being asked to climb a tree to pick an apple. If you ask all three to do the same task, one will succeed, but the other two will fail. The metaphor referred to the personalization of learning necessary to meet each individual child's need.

The community organizers also worked with the parent leaders to develop a stronger and more unified role in relation to both the district and the teachers union. With the DTPU, a community organizer accompanied the parent leaders in their initial meetings with district and the teachers union to consider a district-run option for turning around Desert Trails Elementary. When the talks broke down, the organizers worked with the DTPU to strategize a "Plan B." Parent Revolution also worked with the DTPU as the group faced the legal challenges in the San Bernardino Superior Court and continued their support over the months it took to conclude the proceedings.

The parent leaders brought with them prior leadership skills within their stakeholder group through traditional parent involvement activities; however, additional support was needed to interact with non-parent stakeholders. In the case of the 24PU leader, Adabella, she had experience in more radical organizing leadership having led a previous signature campaign and sit-ins to remove the school principal, but, as Mora, the 24PU organizer related, translation and interpretation was needed to interface outside the parent community:

Adabella is very fearless. She just needed the right support around her and other parents who really trust and believe in what she was doing. And we just helped provide that translator when she needed one and ensured that she understood what was happening. So, whenever we would go to these Public School Choice meetings or, maybe small meetings with some of the teachers and maybe some district leadership, both Evan and I would always ensure that these parents had translation. And, even if we had the plan in front of us in English, we would read it as much as we could to them in Spanish so that they really understood and knew what was happening. And, I know that had it not been for that she wouldn't have been able to understand and know everything that was happening and really lead the way [for] this group of parents and what they were doing.

**Community building.** The relationship between the parent leaders and the community organizers was much deeper than resource provision and knowledge acquisition. As Dianne stated, "They taught us how to be strong, that we can do this." The community organizers served as role models and guided the parents to engage the school system in a new way and as a collective force. The community organizers worked alongside the DTPU and the 24PU to engage the parent population at the school as a whole and the parent leaders recognized the importance of community building. Licia commented on how the community organizers helped the parent stakeholders come together as family:

They taught us how to be family. There were so many mothers that had known each other for eight, nine, ten years and had never said 'hi' to each other. They taught us through uniting ourselves we could make significant changes. Not a change like fixing the water fountain, but big changes. They taught us how to dream. They made us stronger. They taught us how to speak. They showed us what we had in side.

The depth of the relationship between the community organizers and the parent leaders was particularly evident at the site visits to 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary. For example, a surprise celebration was organized by the 24PU to honor and thank the community organizers from Parent Revolution. After their 24PU meeting, they lead the organizers into the school's auditorium where a potluck was laid out along with a photo gallery

depicting their collective efforts to transform the school. The emotional testimonials at the gathering spoke of the difficult times during the parent trigger campaign, and how, like a family, they sometimes did not get along. But, the stories were predominately about the trust between the 24PU parent leaders and the community organizers and how, together, they had worked to make a better school for the children.

The community organizers also helped with the development of the parent union organizations at both sites. Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, explained the strategy of the parent union model to help level the power playing field:

Teachers have their union. Administrators have their union. Custodians have their union. You know cafeteria workers have their union. We just want our parents to have a union. That's why we formed parent union chapters.

Everybody in the school district has their own union and the only ones that don't at this point are parents. I mean they're the only ones not being brought to the table and we want them to be. I think that's our main goal when we go into these campaigns. We want to make sure that parents are being listened to and the only way that we can do that is to create an autonomous organization.

The parent unions were formed as the central organizing unit for the parent petition campaign and for bringing together the extended parent stakeholder group at the school site. While DTPU and 24PU were autonomous parent-led organizations, each had a Memorandum of Understanding with Parent Revolution which outlined the role of the community organizer. Each parent union had a Steering Committee of core parent leaders to run the organization. Other committees were also formed to carry out specific tasks of the organization. For example, a Parent Review Committee was formed to evaluate the proposal submitted by potential new school operators. Mora, the 24PU organizer, mentioned a Parent Report Committee was formed to better communicate with the 300 parent members of the organization, "We need these parents to start to talk

to each other, connect with each other you know, just keep those relationships evolving and continue to be built.”

**Two factors affect community building efforts.** There was some dissimilarity, however, between the 24PU and DTPU experience of community cohesion among the parent stakeholders. The findings suggest that the DTPU experience was more divisive and the difference was linked to issues of neighborhood cohesion and racial dynamics.

At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, building connections and relational trust between 24PU parent leaders and parents at school was an extensive effort on the part of the parent leaders and organizers. Thousands of hours were logged during the petition campaign, finding and contacting individual parents, informing them of the campaign, and gathering them together to work on the effort. The result was a large, loosely organized coalition that represented a majority of the parents at the school. The ability to coalesce the group was reported as partly due to the parent population at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary living so close to the school. At the 24PU organizing headquarters, a map of the signature campaign highlighted where parent leaders had visited homes surrounding the school with color-coding marking the signature status at each location. One respondent also commented on the racial similarity of those involved in the parent petition campaign as a possible point of cohesion given that the local neighborhood had a more homogeneous Latino population.

With the 24PU effort, parent leaders were able to build community support among parent stakeholders throughout the signature campaign without experiencing a challenge to their efforts from either an opposing group of parent leaders or from a well-organized intervention of people aligned with the interests of the teachers union. The parent leaders

and organizer at 24PU reported a small percentage of parents not signing the petition, mostly for fear of reprisal or repercussion regarding their citizenship status, but no major opposition was launched within the parent stakeholder community.

At Desert Trails Elementary, however, lack of neighborhood cohesion was an issue in both the petition campaign and in development and growth of the parent union. It was reported that 30% of the families did not live near the school and, because the parent leaders did not have access to addresses, they found it difficult to connect with these out-of-neighborhood parents. Moreover, student mobility at the school was high, given that out-of-neighborhood parents would transfer their student to the closer neighborhood school when an opening was made available. The result was that while the DTPU parent leaders and organizers spent a similarly great amount of time and effort as the 24PU parent leaders, it was more difficult to bring the parent community together.

With the DTPU effort there was also the issue of a group of five oppositional parents who aligned with the teaching staff and teachers union. This small group helped to launch a signature rescission campaign that was seen as highly divisive by the parent leaders. The DTPU parent leaders reported that this group of anti-petition parent leaders, along with others from outside the school community and tied to other teacher unions, approached Desert Trails Elementary parents with misinformation in an effort to get them to rescind their signatures. Because of how quickly the anti-petition signatures were gathered, one respondent suggested that this group of anti-petition parent leaders and their allies must have been given access to addresses of families attending the school. The confusion and ill-feelings surrounding the rescission campaign was problematic for the cohesion of the parent community and cannot be overstated. The animosity was so

pervasive that it continued even after the court ruled in favor of DTPU to transform the school. Two of the core anti-petition leaders were charged with felony vandalism for allegedly damaging a classroom at Desert Trails Elementary prior to the school reopening under the new charter operator.<sup>27</sup> Parent leaders pointed out the racial differences between the small group of anti-petition parent leaders, four of whom were White, and the majority of the parent population who were parents of color. Although the opposition to the parent petition campaign indicated significant undertones of racial distrust, there was a reticence to “go there,” and talk about the potential racial prejudice generated by the use of the parent trigger. Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, explained:

I’m going to share that component that we really never really talk about just because we don’t want to go there. And, we train our parents not to go there, even though they’re seeing that on the ground. They’re feeling it. Maybe they’re being told things, racial slurs. We always try to stay away from engaging in that kind of a conversation.

In addition to racial slurs, Gerardo reported that social media was used as a bullying tactic to target the African American and Latino parents. This included the use of highly charged words such as lynching and suggestions that parents without U.S. citizenship should leave the country.

The racial dynamics also extended beyond the parent community. One respondent’s personal feeling was that the attitude in the “High Desert” [the community surrounding Adelanto] was “how dare the Browns and Blacks stand up and do anything.” The “High Desert” attitude was also referenced in a meeting between the parent leaders, the district, and the Adelanto teachers union. In that instance a comment was made from a teacher union representative that the parent leaders did not understand that “right here

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<sup>27</sup> *Parent Trigger Vandalism Case May Cost Woman City Post*. Retrieved on February 18, 2014 at [http://hechingerreport.org/content/parent-trigger-vandalism-case-may-cost-woman-city-post\\_14716/](http://hechingerreport.org/content/parent-trigger-vandalism-case-may-cost-woman-city-post_14716/)

in the High Desert we do things differently.” Comments were also made regarding the staffing at Desert Trails, specifically that the predominantly White teaching staff was not reflective of the racial diversity of the student population.

In summary, the community organizing process led by the Parent Revolution organizers was key to building the capacity of the parent stakeholders and to developing a parent union organizational structure to interface and challenge other organizations within the school system (e.g., district leadership, school site management, teachers union). The process of community building among the parent stakeholders in Adelanto was diminished however by the mobility of the families attending the school and challenged by the racial distrust and tension that characterized the interactions among parent leaders and those in opposition to their efforts.

### **Guarding the Door – Relational Trust in the Reform Effort**

The intermediary work of the community organizers helped DTPU and 24PU leadership access the rights embedded within the parent trigger law. The result was a shift in the power dynamics providing the parent stakeholder group with a more empowered position. And, as the petition campaigns progressed, the shift elicited a response from the district, school staff, and teacher unions impacted by petition campaign. The findings show a marked difference in the response across the two cases tied to the level of relational trust among the other adult stakeholders. Relational trust, which included issues of respect, personal regard for others, integrity, intention, and competence, emerged quite differently in Adelanto compared to the Los Angeles case and impacted the parent leaders’ ability to utilize the law.

**District level response to parent petition campaign.** In Adelanto, parent leaders felt their right to use the law was dismissed, both in the initial district response to their overtures from the DTPU as well as in the later legal challenge. From the parent leaders' perspective, the initial district response was to "just talk" and they were not willing to engage the parents' concerns as a directive for change. This kind of response diminished the relational trust between the parent leaders and the district and, eventually, precluded the ability of the parent leaders to work with the district on an in-district reform option. Celeste described her feeling of being disrespected at her first DTPU meeting with the Adelanto school district:

That first meeting, I came out of there more angry than anything. I got home and I remember I told my husband. I was like, 'You can't believe what just happened.' And his response was, 'What do you expect? If nobody has ever stepped up to them, faced them, they're obviously going to try to attack you guys.' And I was like, 'Yes, but just the way they make you feel like you're not important, like your kids are just bankrolls. You bring them to school so they get paid and that's it.'

And that's exactly the feeling that we all got when we were there. They just want our kids so they could continue to get paid. They're really not caring whether they're learning or not, as long as they move them, pass them along or retain them. They're coming to school. They're getting paid. That's it."

Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, concurred with the parent leaders' impressions regarding the AESD's early lack of response. He related how the district started to take notice of the DTPU effort as they got closer to submitting the petition with the required number of signatures:

The day prior to the drop, that Thursday – that Wednesday, for the first time we actually get emails from the board of directors in Adelanto basically saying they want to talk to them [the DTPU]. They had refused to talk to us all this time, completely ignored the fact that we even existed and now they're sending emails to us, to our parent leaders saying, 'Hey, let's sit down and talk. You know it's great what you guys are doing.'

Dianne will tell you that they really never believed that the parents would pull this off and so they [the district, thought] – ‘Why talk to them? They’re going to fail.’ And when we basically told them we’re dropping petitions then they, at that point, wanted to talk. And, I remember they even asked us, ‘Let’s talk before it’s dropped.’ They were hoping we would stop this talk and not drop the petition.

As was previously analyzed in the discussion of legislative documents, the AESD later response was to challenge the parent petition based on a number of technical issues regarding the implementation of the law. This response led to a lawsuit by a few of the parent leaders on the DTPU steering committee and, ultimately, resulted in a one-year delay in the parent leaders reform efforts to re-open the school in partnership with a charter school operator. Despite the legal challenges, Dianne related how the DTPU would not be deterred by the district’s opposition to their efforts:

The purpose [of the lawsuit] was to force the district to verify our petitions and give us the change that we wanted or were demanding. Obviously, they didn’t verify the first time, the second time, or even the third time. Or, they verified and tried to implement their own kind of reform and we weren’t going to allow that. We went through all those months of work to actually do this and to let them just decide that they wanted to do something else was not acceptable to us, and it wasn’t what we understood the parent trigger law to be so we fought for that...

In the view of the DTPU leaders and organizers, however, the response at AESD went beyond challenging the technical legitimacy of parent petition and appeared related to both the language barrier of Spanish speaking parents and their immigration status. Two of the DTPU leaders initially had their own signatures on the petition invalidated by the district because the petition they signed was in English and school records indicated Spanish was spoken in the home. Celeste commented on this disrespectful tactic, especially given the fact that the district was aware of the parent leaders’ bilingual ability:

By that time they knew who we were. They clearly knew. We spoke to them up in the podium. They knew we were bilingual and they did the same thing to me [as Belisma]. So, I was like, 'Are you really kidding me? You are understanding the words that are coming out of my mouth and now you're telling me because of the language barrier, because [the record says] I only speak Spanish, I'm supposed to sign a Spanish petition?'

Celeste also related that one board member from AESD "made a couple of comments and things about my status" and Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, concurred, "it got ugly with that [immigration status] because they used those tactics, unfortunately." This perception, on the part of the parent leaders, that the staff and district leadership were intentionally thwarting and threatening their right to participate in the petition campaign, further fomented the parent leaders' distrust and served to diminish the possibility of working with the district on a transformation plan for the school.

It is significant to mention both the DTPU parent leaders' and the organizer's view of the AESD Board of Trustees unanimous approval of the new charter after the Superior Court ruled they must comply with the parent leaders' alternative governance choice. The incident appeared at odds with prior impressions as Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, reported a very different final and personal response on the part of the AESD Board:

They passed it. They saw our emotion. We were about to walk out and leave because we were all very emotional and they said, 'Let's take a recess and, it's a moment of celebration.' And they basically came off their chairs...and they just started hugging the parents and just saying, 'Congratulations and, you know, we want to work with you.' And, in my case, they said sorry to me, two of them. Never – I have never seen that and I mean this was a very – at times very dysfunctional board of directors. I mean they would argue with each other. It was really hard to watch, not necessarily had to do with us, but it was just it seemed like it was a new era for – well, at least, it seems like it's a new era for the Adelanto School District.

Both the organizer and one of the parent leaders in attendance at this board meeting felt that this final response from district leadership was an acknowledgment that the district opposition to the parent leaders' work had been unfair.

In LAUSD, the response from the district took an alternative tact from that at AESD and it engendered an overall increase in relational trust. Instead of challenging the parental right, John Deasy saw the use of the law as a legitimate vehicle for parents, "I take the position that parent trigger is the law; it's the right for parents to do that." Furthermore, Deasy acknowledged the way in which the system has engaged parents in the past, "For decades and decades and decades [we] have found ways to kind of disempower parents and to give them a token involvement and this moves [the discussion] very much towards a different place..."

At 24PU, the parent leaders personally met and began to develop a relation with John Deasy, as they had more confidence that the district would work towards the best interest of their children. Adabella reported that the 24PU had "like five meetings" with the superintendent and "I trust that he is giving us all that we are requesting." All three of the 24PU leaders commented on the fact that Deasy welcomed them at the district office the day they turned in the petition. Deasy spoke about the petition submittal day and how he intentionally received the parents from 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary:

They came into my home and so you open your home up. You don't keep them on the sidewalk... I invited every single person in to the boardroom and said, 'OK, tell me what's going on.' And they delivered the petition, and we accepted the petition and I said, 'We'll do a legal process on this. I'm interested in it, so we want to be partner with you.'

Unlike the impression made by the district on the parent leaders in Adelanto, Deasy affirmed the 24PU parents' concerns at their school, "The parents warned us of serious concerns which were very—how do I say this?—incredibly thoughtful and well-

presented.” He also acknowledged that trust needed to be built between him and the

24PU leaders:

And I could see that narrative [of distrust] in their head. And I think by the end of that meeting it was a very different narrative. I wanted to not have a narrative like the other examples I saw in the state.”

This view was shared by the 24PU leaders who, until the day of the petition submittal, were skeptical that the process would go forward in their favor. Linda recounted going to the district office:

It was very exciting because, oh, it’s something we worked [for] —because we don’t know, we are not sure. Is, is this all right? Is it working? We’re not sure until this day. And he [Ben Austin] said, ‘No, everything is legal.’ And then this day, oh, it’s true. And then we went over there, they received us with open[ness] and they listened. And it was wonderful.

After the petition was approved in LAUSD, there was a willingness to collaborate with the 24PU on the part of the district. The parent leaders reported that John Deasy communicated it to them in person. Moving forward, Tommy Chang, the instructional superintendent, worked with the parents to consider an in-district reform that included a hybrid district/charter school at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School. Communication channels between the district and the 24PU were direct and personal. Parent leaders related the importance of having district leadership visit them at a meeting at a nearby park and Chang also mentioned the occasion:

They had a park that was maybe two or three blocks west of the school and it was like raining. It was pouring rain. It rarely rains in Southern California and they’re all standing outside and I showed up to meet with them and then Dr. Deasy came in to meet with them and we just had a chance to just talk to them about our desire to continue working with parents to transform the school and just open up lines of communication.

Rather than viewing the parent reform effort as disempowering, Chang viewed it as “actually quite empowering to myself and my team” and as an opportunity for directly advocating to parents:

That sort of direct access and avenue to parents isn’t always something that we as a large school district can typically do. I mean for myself and the superintendent to have a direct audience with parents who are kind of chomping at the bit to hear from us about how we will transform schools is a rarity. We usually meet with parents when there is some fire to put out or there is – or they – we are there to not send a message, more to react to something that the parents are going to be coming at us with so I guess it was a major power shift.

**School staff response to the parent petition campaign.** Parent leaders and organizers in both cases related a history of past dysfunctional relationships between school site principals and staff that set the stage for how the parent petition campaign was received. Lack of relational trust among staff was evident to the parent leaders, as Celeste related, “The more I got involved, the more I started seeing how there was a lot of friction among the employees.” In the case of Desert Trails Elementary, DTPU leaders spoke of a former principal who had “tried to make those teachers accountable.” The staff’s response had been to file a grievance report against the principal. And, when that principal left for health reasons “everything left with him.” The new principal “fought us all the way and he wouldn’t do nothing.” The DTPU leaders also recalled how the former principal had suggested to them that a charter school was a viable option for turning the academics of the school around, but “he got reprimanded by the district and had to stop talking to us [about the charter].”

In the case of 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, relational trust was also a problem because the parent leaders were suspicious of the principal’s intentions, feeling that she did not care about the children, but was only interested in “her paycheck, her money.” They attributed other family’s decisions to transfer their children out of the school to the

principal's behavior and unwillingness to make needed changes. Past efforts by the parents to collect signatures for her removal, to some degree, had, been supported by the teaching staff. Adabella recalled that several teachers joined in on one of the sit-ins demanding the principal's removal. As a result, some of those teachers had been transferred. Mora, the 24PU organizer, related her experience of the school climate:

I realized during my work here that there were teachers that were intimidated because a lot of them left after they themselves raised concerns. Because, at one point, they were outside of the school protesting with the parents and a lot of those teachers never came back, partly because one, they saw no changes so they probably opted to go elsewhere and others were intimidated out of the school. There were also teachers that ended up in teacher jail [reassignment centers].

The fear of principal reprisal extended beyond adult stakeholders and it was reported that even 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary students felt negatively towards the principal. Linda related a comment from her daughter, who said, "You know, Mommy, the principal went to my room and one girl asked, □ Why don't you like to work for our school?" And she [the principal] was very mad and she suspended her."

Lack of formalized communication channels between teaching staff and the parent leaders also diminished relational trust between the stakeholder groups. Fear was experienced on both sides. As the petition campaigns progressed, both DTPU and 24PU parent leaders reported hearing concerns from the schools' teaching staff regarding the potential effect of the campaign on the school. The responses mainly concerned whether or not they were going to be fired or that the school was going to be closed. At Desert Trails Elementary, however, the response was more acute, and the DTPU leaders mentioned teachers crying in the classroom when the petitions were submitted and communicating to children, "your parents are trying to fire us." Dianne related the DTPU attempts to allay the teachers' fears:

Well, at first we tried to keep an open line of communication with our teachers. We told them it's not about them; that we're not trying to fire them. We're just trying to get better education for our kids. But as soon as we dropped our petitions, it got very ugly, and got very ugly for the kids as well.

This fear was not altogether unfounded. One of the “biggest things” the parent leaders were asking for was teacher accountability, as Dianne explained,

I think that keeping a teacher there because they've been there forever doesn't do kids justice because some of those teachers are done. They're just going through the motions and they don't really care or they're just done with the profession and you're letting all these really young ones that are reaching kids and making a difference and they're no longer employed.

In the real world if you're not doing your job you're fired, right? So why is it any different for the teacher?

According to parent leaders, the most common reason that parents were reticent to sign the parent petition was fear of reprisal for their student – that they would have “problems at school” or their child might be suspended and then “where would they go?” Both DTPU and 24PU leaders reported worrying about reprisals towards their children and that one of the most difficult parts of the petition campaign in relation to educating other parents was “taking that fear away that your children may be attacked by the teachers or the principal.” At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, Licia spoke of the parents' fear of retaliation from the principal because “she had done many similar things with teachers that were fired for supporting the parents.” For Dianne, the experience at Desert Trails Elementary became very personal:

My daughter got to a point where she didn't want to go to school anymore, but I told her that I had started something for her and I had to stay there and finish it. I couldn't just you know, walk away from it and even through all of the battles.

There were also incidents reported of bureaucratic bullying towards the DTPU parent leaders and organizers which undermined their efforts. For example, an outreach attempt was made towards staff at the school along with a request to use the multipurpose

room, but the DTPU was refused the use of the facilities. Restrictions were put on how the parent leaders could pass out flyers in front of the school. Celeste recalled how, during the signature verification process, parents reported that office staff was withholding important information:

People from the office, the workers themselves, pulled out the emergency cards and made them disappear so that the parents' signatures would not be able to [be] verified. We – I had a couple of parents that I know personally that actually asked me to walk in with them because they didn't know how to speak. They needed translation to ask the person who they handed the yellow emergency card [to] what had happened [to the card]. And, in front of their face, the secretary denied it. 'You never gave it to me.'

She's like, 'I gave it to you in your hands and I saw you put it in that file.' And she's like, 'Well, I don't have it. It's not there.' So she's like, 'So where is it?' 'Well, I don't know. I can't tell you where it's at.' And she's like, 'How can you not tell me where it's at when I gave it to you specifically in your hands and I saw you put it there?' So that's the excuses that they started using.

Similar to the response of the district prior to petition submittal, there was also a sense that the teaching staff did not believe the parents were capable. This perceived lack of capability regarding the parent petition effort by the teacher stakeholders exacerbated the issues of relational trust with the parent stakeholders. Gerardo, the DTPU organizer, related an example of this dynamic between the staff and the DTPU parents:

Like prior to the petition drop they [the teachers] were very dismissive. They – I remember having situations where we could see the teachers looking at us meeting at the park and they would be laughing at the parents. They just didn't think these parents were going to take it anywhere and I think they started getting worried when they started seeing 80, 100 parents out there in the park.

**Teachers union response.** Another factor that contributed to lack of relational trust in Adelanto was the intervention of outside organizations that were opposed to the parent petition campaign. While Parent Revolution served as an intermediary in support of the effort, the teachers union – both local and state agencies – were reported as serving

as an intermediary for the teaching staff in active opposition. Comments regarding “the teachers union” were often non-specific as to which organization was being referred to: the Adelanto District Teachers Union, the California Teachers Association, or the nearby Hesperia Teachers Association. The tactics of the teachers union as they attempted to thwart the parent signature campaign were seen not only as harassing, and immoral, but, in some cases, as illegal. Incidents of rudeness and verbal abuses were reported by the parents leaders at the school site, at board meetings, and at meetings with the district. Dianne related her negative experience and the connection between the anti-parent trigger group and the teachers union:

I was aware of the teachers union. I wasn’t aware of how nasty they can be until after we dropped the petition. For the most part they were not – they were nonexistent to me. I mean I know I had the local ADTA, but they were not really a player in our thing. We were able to get through our whole petition process without any opposition. It wasn’t until we dropped the petitions that things started to happen and they managed to get a couple of parents that would be a part of that and they got really nasty.

I mean they scared our parents. I mean what they did – upset me the most – was that people’s immigration status were being threatened and a lot of fear tactics. The lengths that they went to try and get rescissions were immoral and I understand that sometimes we live in an immoral world but when it comes to children’s education how can you... have that kind of behavior?

This generalized referencing of the “teachers union,” however, was grounded in very specific examples and the lived experience of these negative tactics called into question, for the parent leaders, the deeper intentions of the teachers union. Dianne connected the actions of the group involved in the signature rescission campaign to an agenda that was not in the best interests of students:

They pretended to be us and got people to sign rescissions. They blocked the driveway of the school and forged papers and didn't let them leave unless they signed the bottom. They did the forgeries. They went through all of that and all to stop the kids from getting a quality education. Is that – from what I understand is their goal is to stop us from getting a quality education from our kids – for our kids. I just don't understand it and to me, I think that if they're so threatened by parent trigger and parent empowerment then they should get up and do their job. They should just get up and do their job.

The parent leaders also recounted that some of the threat responses in the DTPU campaign was less aimed at their efforts, and more towards Parent Revolution. There was a wariness and resentment on the part of the other stakeholders for bringing in Parent Revolution as well as the media attention that the effort generated. In addition, according to Celeste, the leader of the parent group in opposition to the parent petition campaign focused on Parent Revolution as a way in which to frame their argument against the effort:

She began publicizing how Parent Revolution had started the Compton campaign, how bad they were and we kept on saying the whole time, "But we are not Parent Revolution. They're supporting us but we're not doing things the way they want. We're doing it the way we want.

The anti-petition group was reported as being allied with both school site teachers and the teachers union and outside people helped with the signature rescission campaign. The group was seen by the parent leaders as "stirring the pot and causing so much confusion" and subsequent media reporting labeled the DTPU effort as divisive to the community. A video was made promoting this view of the campaign, entitled, *Parent Trigger - False Promises, Divided Communities and Disrupted Young Lives*.<sup>28</sup> The video included interviews with a school teacher, a school teacher union representative, and one of the oppositional parent leaders at Desert Trails Elementary. The concerns expressed in the

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<sup>28</sup> Parent Trigger – False Promises, Divided Communities and Disrupted Young Lives retrieved on January 29, 2014 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqH8Ap2rbtg>.

video pointed to a distrust in the intent of Parent Revolution alleging the organization had misled parents regarding the charter school conversion, the fear that a new charter school would not provide a better quality option, and personal experience of the parent trigger petition campaign as harmful to the cohesiveness of the community. From the parent leaders' perspective, however, the divisiveness was not so much about a community divided, but rather the disruptive intervention of the teachers union.

In Adelanto, the petition effort was seen as a fight with the teachers union; in Los Angeles, however, it was called "the new normal." Ben Austin reflected on the shift:

I think what we've seen in the last few months at 24<sup>th</sup> Street is the teachers union beginning to recognize that we've entered a new normal, where parents have power just like any other powerful, special interest group and they are exercising their power on behalf of kids in sort of normal, bureaucratic ways. And, the fact that the 24<sup>th</sup> Street parent trigger passed not only unanimously but also on the consent calendar is a real proof point that the teachers union is choosing their battles very differently now.

Prior to the petition submittal, John Deasy reported no contact with the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) regarding the petition campaign, although several union representatives were in attendance when the petition was submitted and the UTLA president spoke at the proceeding. Deasy reported some momentary tension, but that generally the tone and comments from the teachers union was akin to a new normal, at least within the context of a parent trigger campaign:

[The teachers union response was,] 'Hey, we want to be a partner. We're going to be here before and after parent trigger and no one wants a school that's not working for kids. No one wants to work with such a school either.' So, it [the union's comment] was, it was an absolute hand reach. It was cordial. It was respectful... And then there was a bit of a step away, and that is, let's allow the law to do what the law is supposed to do.

The 24PU parent leaders reported one interaction with UTLA at the park nearby the school once they had collected enough signatures to submit a petition that included

the restart option for charter conversion. This exchange between the 24PU and the UTLA exemplified a shift in power as a result of the parent trigger campaign. Not only were the other stakeholders, both district and teacher union leadership, physically coming to the parents park headquarters to discuss the petition effort, but the parent leaders were telling the other stakeholders how the impact of the effort would play out. Adabella recounted the interaction and how the response from the teacher union representatives was to attack Parent Revolution, “They told us that they were manipulating parents. And that it was something bad because the teachers were going to lose their jobs.” And Adabella recounted the 24PU response to the teacher union representatives:

This was the time that we have always waited for. And, when we did this before, where were they? So we told them that the teachers were going to be transferred, that they would not lose their jobs.

In conclusion, 24PU parent leaders and organizers revealed that their ability to develop some level of relational trust with district leadership contributed to a less divisive response overall and a more rapid conclusion of the reform efforts than at Desert Trails Elementary. The level of relational trust with 24PU was such that two busloads of parents were personally welcomed by John Deasy to the district board room when petitions were submitted and it was “wonderful.” With DTPU, they held a press conference at the school, and parent leaders reported teachers crying on the phone in the classroom the day the petition was submitted and one teacher telling students, “if you don’t want to be on the camera, stay next to me and I’ll take care of you.” Moreover, the role of competing and outside intermediaries had a more divisive impact on the DTPU campaign efforts.

### **Inside the Schoolhouse – Parent Leader as Architect**

Part of the work of the parent petition campaign was to create enough socio-political knowledge and collective cohesion to understand and activate the parent trigger law, as well as withstand any pushback from the status quo. Another part of the work of the parent unions, assuming they were to be successful in their petition effort, was to envision the possibilities for a new quality school environment.

The interviews with the parent leaders and community organizers, as well as the site visits at 24<sup>th</sup> Elementary School, and the 24PU headquarters, revealed a lengthy process in which the parent leaders began to build the capacity for designing the quality school that wanted to create in their neighborhood. The first part of this process was previously described as “taking the blindfolds off” – understanding just how poorly the school was performing – and the second part was to decide how they would like to see their school, metaphorically, rebuilt. And, as the process progressed, parent leaders took on a new role – that of school architect.

At both sites, as community organizing efforts got underway, parents met at the parks nearby the elementary schools where they shared the “testimonies of the ugly experiences.” Five major areas of concern emerged from the parent leader stories: 1) unclean and unsafe environment with low expectations; 2) poor educational program; 3) ineffective teaching; 4) lack of valued parental involvement; and 5) ineffective principal leadership and school governance. The two most often identified concerns for the parents were academics and safety. While the issues at the school site were complex, the desire on the part of the parent leaders was for their children to simply experience “a nice, quality education” and to have that experience immediately.

**An unclean and unsafe environment with low expectations.** The culture of the both schools was seen by the parents as a detriment to the learning. In terms of health and safety, a disturbing commonality reported by parents at both sites was the number of children contracting urinary tract infections, which they attributed to draconian rules regarding bathroom usage. Bathrooms were unclean and one parent reported that the children would ask to use the nearby park bathroom because “these are cleaner than the ones in the school.” Concerns were also reported at both sites regarding access to food during the day and Belisma related the experience at Desert Trails Elementary:

It was as basic as their lunch. My kids were getting frozen lunches and they were afraid to take it back because they didn’t know if there were going to get screamed at. So they just had to sit there and not eat it.

Mora, the 24PU organizer, also mentioned parents and children had reported the hostile environment created by some of the cafeteria employees at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary:

Cafeteria employees were super mean, really mean to the kids, where to the point that little kindergarteners, 1<sup>st</sup> graders, did not want to go to the cafeteria and would prefer not to eat just to not encounter the rudeness of these employees, kids crying and being afraid to go back to school the next day.

At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, the parent leaders also reported the extended breakfast for the children was taken away by the principal and children went hungry while at the school.

Adabella’s children said to her, “Mommy, a lot of kids where really hungry today.”

“Why?” “Because the school principal took the food away and she’s not giving them anything to eat.” The issue of food for children at the school site became the focus of a successful parent organizing effort by Adabella and the extended breakfast was restored.

Linda also mentioned the lack of working water fountains at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary and how the principal at the school was not paying attention to the parents’

concerns. The issue of broken water fountains would later become one of nineteen Williams Complaints<sup>29</sup> filed by the 24PU parents.

Parent leaders reported teachers screaming in the classrooms at the children and telling the children to “shut up,” and, in one case, an aide telling a child to “kick the ass” of another student that had bullied her. Desert Trails Elementary was described as “too hostile” and “it doesn’t feel like a school environment.” At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, Linda described how she would find students outside in the hallway crying, reluctant to return to their classroom. On one occasion she took a young boy to the office after finding him wandering in the hallways crying and unattended. She reflected, “What happens one day [when] my daughter goes outside and nobody is around?” Parents were adamant that the school experience should be a safe experience. Dianne felt this was especially important to very disadvantaged students:

You know their home life is their home life. You can’t change that but when a kid walks into a school, isn’t it our responsibility to make sure that these kids know that they’re safe in a nurturing environment and that through education they can be anything they want to be, that they’re not doomed to that life that they’re living right now, that there’s a brighter future for them and why can’t we just teach them that?

**A poor educational program.** Beyond the fundamentals of health and safety, the parents other top concern was failure on the part of the school to provide children with a good education. Personal accounts were relayed of how the parents first thought the school was providing for their child, only to realize after years at the school, that their child had fallen far behind. These experiences were deeply troubling to the parent leaders and, as Dianne relayed, it “just broke my heart.” For Adabella, this personal experience

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<sup>29</sup> A Williams Complaint is a uniform complaint procedure regarding instructional materials, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of pupils, and teacher vacancy or mis-assignment and may be filed anonymously with the local educational agency. The process was institute as part of the Williams vs. State of California lawsuit.

of the school's inattention was one of the reasons she got involved to change 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary:

First of all, I saw the unfairness that was happening inside the school and no one was doing anything about it. But, I got more engaged when my daughter, who is now 13-years old, finished 5<sup>th</sup> grade and, to my surprise, she couldn't even read at first grade level.

Failure to thrive in mathematics, English language arts, and in specialized programs such as special education or classes for English learners were called out as examples of not attending to the needs of the individual student. Moreover, these experiences were not seen as isolated, but rather as chronic and systemic. Celeste spoke to the ongoing nature of the issue:

The kids were not learning anything. There were 6<sup>th</sup> graders that were reading at a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level and were not being challenged. So that's when I started noticing, 'Oh, my God, so what I've been seeing is not just my kid, my class. It's been going on the school for a longer time.'

**Ineffective teaching and low expectations.** Ineffective teaching was also mentioned by parents as a reason the schools were failing. However, the sentiments were less about individual teachers and more about accountability and the professional practice of teaching within the school. The parents wanted the principal to have power to hire effective teachers or fire ineffective ones and for adequate levels of professional development to "allow them to become the teachers that they need to be."

At both sites, parents felt the school engendered a culture of low expectation. Students were not being taught "at the levels they needed to be at." Furthermore, there was a distrust that this was an intentional slight and that the core belief of the system was "that our children can't learn, so why bother." Dianne related this culture of low expectations was often tied to their families' socio-economic status:

I had teachers tell me to my face okay, that they'll teach to the ones that get it and too bad for the ones that don't and this is a teacher telling me this to my face. How do you say that if you're in the teaching profession and you're just going to teach to the kids that get it in your class and too bad for the ones that don't? Or I've had other ones say, 'Well, because of the socioeconomic area that we live in these kids just can't learn.' I'm like, 'Really?' And then you go on to, 'Well, the transient rate is so high.' Okay, so now that's three different reasons why, all put on the kids, why they can't learn. Interesting. Isn't it your job to do that? Isn't it your job to do everything you can to reach these kids?

**Inattentive principal leadership.** In terms of similarities across the two cases, both schools were seen by the parent leaders as very broken examples of public education and poor leadership was seen as contributing to the schools' failure to offer a quality education to their children. There was dissimilarity, however, regarding the actual experience of principal leadership. Both groups of parents spoke to the importance of the position of principal, but it was at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary that the specific principal was singled out as one of the prime reasons the school was not succeeding and her inattention was a major impetus for using the parent trigger.

Based on these concerns over ineffective leadership and teaching, an unsafe unwelcoming school climate, and low academic performance and expectations, the community organizers worked with the parent leaders to reframe the discussion and to explore new possibilities for their school. Mora, the 24PU, organizer described how this process aligned the experience of the parents with what Parent Revolution felt was a framework for a quality school:

What [does] your ideal school look like? And it fits perfectly under our policy framework. All of these concerns that you can think of fit into one of the four pieces of our policy framework puzzle and so once we had a list of everything that the parents had been telling us through one to ones, through the park meetings, through having these different exercises where we would have them just write down what they wanted, we were able to come up with this list of: This is what our future school should look like. These are the four primary things we want.

Through the process led by the community organizers, the DTPU and 24PU parent leaders were able to transform their concerns into a new vision for the school and begin to take up the new role of school architect. A poster at the 24PU headquarters described in detail the “objectives for transforming our school” and stated:

Our Future School: We believe our kids deserve a great school that will prepare them not only for middle school, but successfully put them on the path to college. A school where they are safe, respected, and inspired to learn and grow. To get from the current school we have to the future school we need, we believe there are four important changes we need.

At one of the three observed 24PU parent meetings, the four objectives were listed in Spanish on the whiteboard with the header, “¡Niño’s Primeros! [Students First!]:

- Buen Liderazgo [Good Leadership]
- Padres Involucrados [Involved Parents]
- Maestros Efectivos [Effective Teachers]
- Escuela Segura y Cultura de Altas Expectativas [Safe School and a Culture of High Expectations]

These four objectives were incorporated into the parent leaders’ mission statement for the school:

The mission of the newly transformed 24th Street Elementary will be not only to prepare students for middle school, but also to successfully put them on the path to college. Ultimately, the school should be one in which students feel safe, respected, and inspired to learn and grow. The school should have a strong leader with a vision for the school, and all teachers will work to create a culture of high expectations.

The mission for the DTPU parents incorporated similar objectives, but in more detailed language:

The mission of the newly Transformed Desert Trails Elementary School (“TDT”) will be to empower and support effective educators as they present an engaging, data-driven, college and career preparatory curriculum to establish high expectations for the success of all children. TDT shall strive to ensure that as students master content they also learn *how* to learn, developing self-confidence, critical thinking skills and a true passion for lifelong learning. The school’s nurturing and collaborative school community shall develop an important sense of belonging, where students, parents, teachers and staff embrace relationship-building, open communication, cultural diversity, and respect as crucial elements for the success of all students

The parent leaders had great ownership over these four pillars of excellence. To a leader, they would name them. But, beyond this naming was a more detailed understanding that was due in part to the trainings provided by Parent Revolution as well as site visits to best practice schools.

This work of establishing the four objectives not only informed the petition drive to make a case to other parents but were internalized to the extent that they informed other aspects of the parent union work such as choosing the new school operator at each site. Mora, the 24PU organizer, explained that, in the case of 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, the objectives were used to evaluate the Public School Choice (PSC) process and the turnaround option that was being proposed by the district and school leadership:

So the great thing about the policy framework is that it allows us to inform parents that – it’s not just the principal that makes a great school. Like it really is these four components and so when they understand what these four things are then the conversation turns into, ‘Do you think this plan will get you these four things?’ And their response was, ‘No, this school is not going to get – this plan will not get us a great school next year.’ So then their response was, ‘Well, what will? What options are there for us?’

The 24PU letter of intent created for prospective school operators also referenced the parent leaders’ objectives and how they were part of their evaluation of the district PSC option:

We put together a list of objectives that we hoped to see in the plan and worked with teachers to try to make those objectives a reality. Unfortunately, the plan proposed by the teachers did not lay out a real path to transformational change, and our chapter membership passed a formal resolution of no confidence in the current PSC process.

A poster on display at the 24PU gathering to honor the community organizers also connected the four objectives to the larger strategy for transforming the school. Figure 8 shows a graphic image of the 24PU reform strategy.



Figure 8. 24PU strategy to transform the school.

In summary, through a process led by community organizers, parent leaders saw the realities of their crumbling schoolhouse and increased their knowledge regarding the necessary pillars of educational excellence to redesign the school. Findings reveal that

both capacity and confidence were increased to the point where the parent stakeholders had the ability to submit their own detailed plans for transformation and, in the case of 24PU, were willing to challenge the district's vision for a school transformation plan. The role of the parent stakeholder had shifted to that of school architect.

### **Rebuilding the Schoolhouse – Parent Leader as Owner, not Operator**

The process of utilizing the parent trigger reoriented the role of the parent stakeholder. The parent leaders took up the work of developing a new school design as architect, and through the eventual acceptance of the parent petitions, were able to take on yet another role – owner. As owner, it was up to the parent stakeholders to be the final decision makers, not only how the school would be transformed through one of the four models codified in the law, but also which partner organization would rebuild the school. The findings revealed how the parent stakeholders' decisions continued to be grounded in their goal to create a quality, neighborhood school. Rather than being predisposed to a particular governance option, the parent stakeholders were open to both in-district and restart solutions, as long as the result was a good school for their children. As Mora, the 24PU organizer said, "They just wanted a better school for their kids. They didn't care who gave it to them."

In review, the four alternative governance options available to the parent leaders under the parent trigger law were as follows:

*Transformation model:* Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.

*Turnaround model:* Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research-based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance structure.

*Restart model:* Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.

*School closure model:* Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other, higher-performing schools in the district.

In terms of the alternative governance models, in both cases, the parent leaders dismissed the option for closing the school. Their work was to better their neighborhood, not to close the school and go elsewhere. The parent leaders were aware that an individual choice option was available to take their children out of the failing school, and they had seen other parents make that choice. At Desert Trails Elementary, in particular, the parent leaders related how there were always openings at the school because parents would pull their children out as soon as a better option was available. John Deasy also spoke of the difference between “transportation” and transformation” to illustrate how the parent trigger law provided a more empowered role for the parent stakeholder to activate neighborhood school reform instead of the individual school choice option:

I think there’s a positive and a negative. The positive is that it’s a highly legitimate, constitutionally established through legislation, decision making vehicle for parents other than walking away. So, we give parents lots of constitutional rights to walk away, to go somewhere else. We actually don’t give anything like this in their role to transform. So transportation and transforming, I don’t know, like you can drive away or you’re going to do something about this. So that I think is a very positive role.

I think the negative is...they have this role in the most, kind of imperiled of circumstances. So, the school has to be at rock bottom. So, that’s unfortunate. So it kind of gets to the point where it’s exasperation with how bad things are, then you could pull the trigger.

So, there’s a good lesson learned. There’s real power in not having to reach that stage, but it really equalizes the power structure, in many ways.

Both cases were also similar in that the parent leaders used Parent Revolution’s fifth model of negotiation to explore working with this district, either through direct talks

in the case of the DTPU or through the Public School Choice planning with 24PU. This initial impetus to discuss a district-led option was partly due to a reticence on the part of the parent leaders towards the charter school option. As Adabella understood it, “The law is not exactly about charters. The law was created for the parents, so that they can choose what they want for their children.”

For DTPU, the hesitancy to convert to a charter school was because of the previous unsuccessful charter operator in the area. For 24PU, the parent leaders were unsure if the students’ needs regarding special education and English learning acquisition would be met. In addition, the 24PU’s main concerns at the school site were primarily with the principal leadership, an issue, which could be addressed through either the transformation or turnaround model options and would still allow the district to retain governance control over the school. Belisma related how they were initially looking for an option that included district governance:

We wanted to stay with the district. We wanted to be part of that district family but still be part of the district. We wanted – we always wanted for the district to hear and resolve our problems, what was going on.

In the case of the DTPU, what they wanted was more autonomy at the school site over curriculum, budget and staffing. But, as the initial negotiating with the district progressed, the parent leaders realized that “the district had no intent on doing that” and what they called negotiations was “just talks” and “they never took us seriously.” Two petitions were circulated in Adelanto. One involved an in-district collaboration and the other a charter restart. When the talks with district fell through, the DTPU submitted the signature petition for the charter restart model. When asked who halted the talks, Celeste responded that it was the parent union’s decision, “We told Parent Revolution, ‘That’s it. No more meetings. It’s a waste of time. It’s disrespectful.’”

After the court intervened, the charter restart model was accepted by the Board of Trustees and the DTPU began the RFP process to find a charter operator. The circulation of two petitions at Desert Trails Elementary proved problematic and was seen by the district, the staff at the school, and the anti-petition parent group as misleading. Learning from that experience, the organizers did not repeat the strategy at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary. Instead, the 24PU put forth the restart model in their petition, but allowed for the possibility that the district might participate in the RFP process as a potential school operator. Mora, the 24PU organizer, related that the idea of working with the district was kept on the table throughout the petition process:

When we were circulating the petition the message to parents was, ‘Yes, you’re signing a petition under parent trigger for a restart model, but Plan A is to negotiate with the district, and Plan B is the charter school option.’ So when the RFP got released we ensured that the district received it as well and we’re hoping that they decided to participate in the process, which they did. They just submitted a Letter of Intent. They underwent the whole process.

Despite the district’s inability to provide the parent leaders with a quality school, both the DTPU and the 24PU Letter of Intent (LOI) to solicit potential partners included language that allowed for the possibility of a district-led partnership. The DTPU LOI stated the following:

Therefore, we intend to exercise our power under CCR, Title 5, and Section 4802.2 to solicit additional proposals for partners that can transform Desert Trails. We are hopeful that the Adelanto Elementary School District will participate but given their history of obstruction and rejection, DTPU has an obligation to our parent members and our children to seek out alternative proposals. Under the regulations, this process will be open to anyone – including districts and labor organizations interested in submitting Partnership School proposals, as well as existing non-profit charter operators submitting traditional independent charter proposals.

Moreover, both parent unions remained firmly in control of the RFP process, inviting all respondents in the LOI to participate in workshops that “facilitate the process

of creating a proposal informed by, and reflective of, the input of the parents.” Celeste described it as “100% hands on.” Ben Austin concurred on the locus of control in recounting the work of the 24PU leaders in directing the RFP process:

It was a wild ride and this was parent empowerment –the rubber hitting the road empowered – parent empowerment in ways that we’ve never seen before in America and for us, as the sort of inventors of the law and the implementers of the law and, obviously, the strongest advocates for the law, even for us there were quite scary moments. But we [Parent Revolution] were not in control of this process and, you know, and it ultimately led to what I think is just an absolutely terrific result. I mean a far better result than anything else that was originally on the table.

At 24PU, the importance of the RFP process for the parent leaders was reflected in their choice of metaphor for the process – a marriage suitor and the engagement ring. As Mora, the 24PU organizer, explained, “It was a great way for everyone to really understand what this meant, how important.”

In Adelanto, the AESD did not participate in the RFP process and the DTPU parent petitioners voted to select LaVerne Elementary Preparatory Academy, a successful charter school operator from a nearby town. Subsequently, Desert Trails Elementary School closed down and reopened as the Desert Trails Preparatory Academy charter school in July 2013.

In the case of 24PU, an innovative district/charter hybrid model was put forth by LAUSD and Crown Preparatory Academy, a charter middle school operating on the same campus. Under this model, LAUSD would retain operational control over 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary and students would later feed into Crown Preparatory Academy for their middle school years. Despite the growing trust between the 24PU, John Deasy, and Tommy Chang, the parent leaders wanted more assurance that, if this was the model voted on by the parents, the district was going to make substantive change at the school.

Flexing their ownership role, the parent leaders invited John Deasy and Tommy Chang to meet with the 24PU to discuss what they considered the most chronic condition at the school – ineffective principal leadership. As Adabella, related, “We asked them that, if they wanted us to trust them again, they would have to remove the principal because it has been a long time now.” When the parents returned from the school spring break, a new principal was in place at the school. The change in leadership was immediate, as was the effect on the school climate. Licia exclaimed, “Now we don’t have any problems with fighting and we have support. Everything is clear. Everything is working together for something better.” The 24PU parent petitioners voted for the hybrid/charter option and, in September 2013, the school opened with 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School reconfigured to serve grades K-4 and students feeding into the Crown Preparatory Academy for grades 5-8.

In summary, given the opportunity to be the final decision makers at their school site, both parent unions took advantage of the law to change the governance of school. Supported by the community organizers, they implemented an RFP process to select the new school operator and, in the case of the 24PU, further negotiated with the school district leadership to implement an immediate change in school leadership. The use of the parent trigger law resulted in a change in school governance, but as Tommy Chang’s remark suggests, the process also contributed to an increase in empowerment on the part of the parent stakeholder:

The parents of 24<sup>th</sup> street are a pretty sophisticated group of parents. Through this process they have developed a skill set that is very sophisticated. I mean literally, they are parents that could probably support school transformation efforts in other parts of the city. That’s how sophisticated they got.

### **Holding onto the Key – Experience of Empowerment**

The use of the parent trigger law in the local context increased the social and human capital of the parent leaders involved in the petition campaign. Previous findings noted the knowledge acquisition, socio-political learning, and community building on the part of the parent leaders and in relation to the school's parent population. From the perspective of those interviewed in the local context, the outcome of the parent petition process was experienced as empowering: personally, collectively, and in a way that they believe will be sustained over time. However, there was some dissimilarity across the two sites in terms of attrition of the parent stakeholder participation during the petition campaign.

**The experience of personal empowerment.** Across both cases, the parent leaders unanimously spoke of the experience as personally empowering. The parent leaders referred to how they had grown, risen to the challenge, and persevered. Celeste related her experience of being involved in the parent petition campaign, "It's made me grow, opened my eyes. Sometimes I go online. Sometimes I peek and I see and it's something that you're going to take with you for life and you're going to keep on growing." And, Dianne explained in more detail her personal trajectory of empowerment:

I never thought of myself as an activist or strong parent leader, never thought that I would be fighting this fight, this kind of a fight that got so bad and nasty or just public speaking. I never thought that I would be someone – I mean I went up to the board and spoke on numerous occasions and just doing that, just I never saw myself as that or an activist at any time. I was just a homemaker that had worked many different kinds of jobs, but never imagined myself making a difference in not only in my child's life but in the lives of the kids in our community, never imagined that that could happen.

But, through the parent empowerment I realize that I have that ability and that I can make that change and I don't have to be – I don't have to accept just because they say that's the way it's supposed to be, I don't have to accept that. I can question it and I can fight for what I think is right for my kids and the kids in my community.

The parent leaders understood the personal hurdles they faced with regard to language, socio-economic status, education level, and citizenship status barriers, but did not allow those barriers to deter them from their goal. Licia described that although the work was “a challenge for me to be able to show that I could do it,” her growth and gaining the ability “to be heard” supported her dream to see her children graduate from college:

I have this focus and no one will take me from it... For every ‘no’ they told me, it was a ‘yes’ for me. And I involved myself with them to do whatever is needed until I could see changes in that school. It didn't matter that I don't have a degree; that, I don't speak English. There are a lot of people that know English who can translate for me. But I want to be heard.

The parent leaders also linked this personal empowerment very closely to their lived experience of using the parent trigger law. The hope they initially placed in the law had borne out for them and, through the successful parent petition process, they felt empowered. Dianne related her story of being empowered through the use of the parent trigger law:

Nobody can tell me that I don't know what's best for my kid because I do. And, through the education process that parent trigger gives me, the power it gives me, that power is telling me that you have the power to make a positive change in the education system for your child and you have that right to use it. And I think every child – every parent in America who finds themselves stuck in a similar situation as I was in – has the right to take that power by the reins and just run with it and do what's going to be in the best interest of their children. Because at the end of the day, it's their kids that are going to suffer, nobody else's, the teachers, the unions, the administrators, everybody who opposes this.

The experience of the petition campaign was a personal one, not only for the parent leaders, but also for their families. The parent leaders reported that initially their

families were fearful, but that this fear turned to pride as they witnessed what their mothers and wives had accomplished. Licia recounted an exchange with her young son:

Yes, he is very happy and feels very proud when he watches me in the news, when he sees that I'm studying—sometimes I get packages and packages to read. And he says, 'What are you doing?' [And, I say,] 'I'm reading something that was lent to me.' [He says,] 'Do you enjoy what you do, mom?' [And, I say,] 'Yes, because it's for your school.' And every day he asks, 'Mom, are you going to be at school today?' [I say,] 'Of course.' [And, he says,] 'OK, I'll see you there!'

For example, last night while I was doing my hair, he says, 'Why are you getting so pretty?' And I told him, 'I feel good.' And he says, 'Ah, because you guys won, right?' And I answered, 'Yes, because we won. I feel very happy because your school will be much better than it is now.'

The district leadership and Parent Revolution staff also saw this trajectory of growth in personal empowerment. Mora, the 24PU organizer, spoke of one singular moment that exemplified the parent leaders' trajectory from disempowered to empowered:

They felt powerless and Adabella will say that specifically, too. Because they've tried and they did other things and just no one would listen. So to me, the culminating point for the empowerment that I saw was the group of parents that were at the Tuesday meeting at the district and when they spoke and just how powerful they were. Some of these parents would never speak up. They would never say anything. They wouldn't even know who to go talk to about some of their issues or concerns. And, here they were talking about their struggles, what they've been through, and they're asking for one final vote from the school board. Because they knew that this plan was going to get to an amazing school for them next year. I mean that was just amazing to see.

They all spoke in Spanish and for them to feel comfortable to still go up there and do it. Like, it's okay for you to speak Spanish if someone will translate for you. It's fine.

**The experience of collective empowerment.** Parent leaders reported the experience of the parent petition campaign not only as individually empowering, but also collectively empowering for the parent stakeholder group. Collective empowerment for the parent stakeholder was described as “having a voice,” “being heard,” or “being

listened to.” Five of the six parent leaders specifically used the word, *voice*, to relate instances in which, as a group, they felt they were making progress towards their goal of transforming the school. Celeste related the experience of the parent trigger law in relation to the acquisition of *voice*:

You have a voice. This is for you to use so that your voice is heard and you really – you feel it until you start seeing it little by little. You see it and you’re like, “Okay, so then, this really, really works.”

Licia also spoke of how the initial efforts of the 24PU to submit Williams Complaints at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary helped generate confidence among the parents. Along with these victories, she related, came an understanding from the parent stakeholders that change was possible:

When we showed with facts that our voices could be heard through the organization, it was like parents started uniting and losing that fear.

With the evidence that we had, we were being heard through the Williams Complaints, that they have been approved, and they saw the changes. And many parents started getting together and we started to raise the voice, to inform ourselves. That’s when change came. Now the parents said, ‘Yes, we can do it. If we unite ourselves we can make it.’

Through this process, parents “woke up” and “became united” and “worked together for change” and, as their numbers grew, the organization became stronger. Linda described the 24PU effort as, “We are the strength. We are the power.” At 24PU, the park nearby was the central locus of this collective empowerment experience. The parents had weathered the petition campaign both figuratively and literally at this location. After the successful petition submittal, the 24PU was allowed to meet on the campus of the school, which signaled a shift in dynamics. While this was seen as a positive consequence, Licia said “we missed our park,” and relayed the feelings that accompanied the transition:

We felt like, ‘Now, this is our place. Here is where we should’ve been in the first place, but the doors were closed.’ Because, it was the reason for our struggle, our school. We had to be there. But the park was our meeting point. And in that park we laughed, we cried, we got disappointed, we [were] uplifted, we fell, and we got up. We withstood cold, rain, heat. It was raining in the park and we were there and we always met.

In both cases, as the park gatherings grew in numbers overtime, they became a visual and physical representation of the parent stakeholders’ collective empowerment.

Other stakeholders also provided their perspective on the growth in the collective empowerment of the parent leaders. Ben Austin recalled the culminating moment when 24PU was given approval by the school district Board of Trustees to move forward with the school transformation:

All of a sudden, all the power devolved to them and they were going to run RFP process and they alone were going to make the choice about who was going to run their school. It’s a profound shift of power in one second and to be surrounded by a bunch of moms in real time, who don’t even speak English...

And Tommy Chang spoke of the empowerment of the RFP process in not only re-envisioning the school, but also being a part of the selection of the new school operator and restaffing:

You have a group of parents that actually launched an RFP process, interviewed applicant groups and judged applicant groups based on plans that were submitted. So they were a group of parents that walked classrooms, and we helped train them in classroom walkthroughs, walked the classrooms during the needs assessment process, and basically, helped teachers, administrators, outside individuals assess the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. And, maybe a third example of it, is that now they’re completely involved in the restaffing of the school, interviewing candidates for principal, candidates for teachers. I mean this is a group of parents that have done all this over the last four months.

There were some differences in the experience of collective empowerment between the 24PU and the DTPU. At Desert Trails Elementary School, the length of the campaign led to an attrition in the number of parents involved. This was reported as due to a number of factors including the parents becoming “tired,” graduation of the sixth

grade students and families, and the transient nature of the student population at Desert Trails Elementary. Attrition was also due to the divisive nature of the anti-petition signature campaign. On the day of the DTPU vote to select a charter operator, the turnout of original petition signers eligible to vote was less than thirty percent. At the 24PU, the turnout of eligible voters was fifty percent.

**Sustained empowerment.** The interviews for this study were conducted prior to the opening of either of the new school governance models put in place by the DTPU and 24PU. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether or not the impact of the parent petition campaign in terms of parent stakeholder empowerment has extended beyond those efforts. Definitive plans to continue the parent union or to transition the leadership roles to another organization within the schools had not been established. However, the intention on the part of the parent leaders was to continue their efforts and to be personally as well as collectively involved and to “move inside.”

At the DTPU, Celeste stated that the parents union was going to continue on as an organization supporting the school and will “push the parents to be involved inside the school” and to join the Parent Teacher Organization. Promoting parent involvement and trainings inside the school is also part of the 24PU transition strategy and, according to Adabella, “the parents will be there helping and looking to see how the process develops.” The flyer developed by the 24PU to promote the district/charter school model of governance indicated a future role for parent stakeholders in two categories: parent engagement and new staff:

#### Parent Engagement

- Parents will be on the hiring committee for the new principal and teaching staff at the new school. Additionally, parents have several voting seats on the Organizational Services Council, which will meet monthly to oversee the needs of the school site.

#### New Staff

- An LAUSD Hiring Committee that includes parents and Crown Prep leadership will select a new Principal, and teacher and staff from a highly qualified pool of educators.

Beyond extending the parent stakeholder involvement to the new schools, the parent petition effort was also seen a contribution to the larger reform effort. The parent leaders saw the work of the DTPU and the 24PU as a proof point that parent stakeholders can come together and use the parent trigger to make a difference in their own neighborhood school. Adabella encouraged other parents to take the lead in school transformation efforts:

I would recommend all the other parents to take advantage of this law because now that it exists, we as parents have the power to choose the education we want for our children.

And Celeste felt that it was still up to the parent stakeholder to make the difference:

I am suggesting all the parents, that if they really want to do the change, if they want to see the change, they're going to have to make the change for themselves. Because nobody else out there is going to do it and we are proof of that.

Both the DTPU and 24PU parent leaders expressed a willingness to share their experience with others and, in many instances, had already done so through the media coverage and documentaries about their work. But the sharing would include both the successes and the struggles because, as Dianne pointed out, it was “not easy.” She related what she would say to anyone considering using the parent trigger law:

‘Let’s sit down and talk and talk about what the options are.’ And I’d tell them you know, answer any questions they may have. I’d tell them about the story – my story and let them know that it’s not an easy task at all. It’s not. It takes a toll. The dedication has to be there. You know if this is truly what you want to do then you have to be dedicated to it, but that you can do this. I did it and I didn’t think I could do it and you can do this. Anybody can. They just have to want it.

In summary, the use of the parent trigger law in the local context was an empowering experience for the parent leaders, both individually and collectively. However, in the case of the Adelanto campaign, the length of the campaign and the divisive nature of the anti-petition campaign led to attrition in the participation by parent stakeholders. In terms of sustainability of empowerment, the parent leaders expect their more empowered role to continue within the new school governance model.

### **Summary of the Findings and Analysis**

The analysis of legislative documents and parent trigger author interviews provided information to begin to address the first three sub-questions in this study: 1) What is the current status of enacted parent trigger legislation across the country? 2) What core policy issues are driving parent trigger legislation? 3) How does the legislation propose to effect the participation and representation of parents in school governance structures?

While 87 attempts have been made to introduce legislation with parent trigger legislation across 30 states, the reform strategy has only taken hold in seven states. Moreover, the implementation of the parent trigger law has proved slow to take hold, as evidenced by the fact that only in California have local stakeholders tried to utilize the law through the petition process to force a change in school governance. Of the four petition attempts, three were successful. Two of the attempts required the petitioners to request Superior Court intervention to further the campaign outcome. Despite the

isolated success of the law in California, the interest in proposed legislation continues to grow with 33 pieces of legislation introduced in 2013.

Four core policy issues emerged from the California parent trigger legislation in 2010 that were common to the subsequent eight examples of enacted legislation. First, parent trigger legislation was crafted to address a chronic failure within the current system of education: inadequate public school student achievement. Second, because the problem was seen as an entrenchment of the current governance stakeholders, a new stakeholder as decision maker – the parent – was put forth as a catalyst for change and to hold the status quo accountable for chronic failure. Third, with the exception of the Connecticut law, the mechanism for change involved a parent petition organizing process. And, fourth, the parent trigger laws all called for alternative school governance options as the implementation solution. These core policy issues supported the policy entrepreneurs' policy agendas of school choice and collective parent empowerment and took advantage of an external policy window of opportunity, the Race to the Top education reform initiative.

While the parent trigger laws were clear regarding the policy intent for addressing the perceived problem of chronically under-performing schools, the laws were less definitive on the participation and representation of parents in school governance structures. In Connecticut, parents are directly involved through mandated seats on the school governance council. In Indiana, the parents and guardians of the students enrolled in the conversion charter school select members to serve on the school's local management board. And, in Mississippi, sponsoring parents and guardians from the petition campaign elect members to serve on the converted school's management. In the

other four states, involvement in school governance was not codified beyond participation in the petition process and as a recommendation for an alternative school governance model.

Seven findings from the interviews with local parent leaders and community organizers helped to provide information to answer the study's fourth sub-question: To what extent does parent trigger legislation support the needs, values, and interests of the parent stakeholder in the local context? The findings are as follows: 1) Initially, there was no impact in the local context from the passage of the first parent trigger law. Traditional parent involvement and a failing school scenario continued to prevail; 2) Disempowered parent leaders recognized the parent trigger law as a key empowerment tool for furthering their collective efforts to ensure a quality education for their neighborhood, but required an intermediary to access its use; 3) The community organizing process was a central component in utilizing the parent trigger law and involved knowledge acquisition, sociopolitical learning, and community building on the part of the parent leader stakeholder; 4) The use of the parent trigger law shifted the power dynamics among the stakeholders and elicited a response from the status quo that varied across the two cases. Relational trust among the stakeholders either mitigated or exacerbated the process; 5) Through the petition campaign process, the role of the parent stakeholder shifted to include that of school designer, envisioning a school with four pillars of excellence; 6) The use of the parent trigger law shifted the role of the parent stakeholder to that of owner. And, as owner, both groups elected to bring on board new school operator and changed the school governance structure at both sites; and, 7) The

use of the parent trigger law increased the social capital and empowerment of the parent leaders who utilized the law.

The findings point towards an initial conclusion, the parent trigger law was designed by its authors as a tool – a key – to empower parents to force a change in the public school system. However, the local context was a factor in how the use of the parent trigger was experienced by parent leaders using the law. At Desert Trails Elementary, the parent trigger law was more difficult to implement than at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary. Lack of relational trust between the adult stakeholder groups, undercurrents of racial tensions and issues of immigration status, competing agendas between outside intermediaries, less familiarity on the part of the district regarding school choice education reform efforts, and a more transient family population at the school, all contributed to a longer and more divisive campaign.

Despite these challenging contextual factors which were experienced to a greater degree by the Desert Trails Parent Union than the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Parent Union, parent stakeholders were empowered to the point where they were able to turn the key on behalf of their children and, as Celeste concluded in her statement below, get their “doors open for their future:”

We had meetings where it’s just meetings that you bring a box of Kleenex because it’s a constant battle. It’s something that as regular individuals you’re not prepared for, but it’s something that is going to be worth the while, worth the wait. Kids will benefit. Who cares if you get attention in the media? No, that’s not important. The important thing is your children are going to be secure in school. It’s going to be learning. It’s going to be getting their doors open for their future.

Based on these findings and in the context of previous literature, the next chapter will provide a summary of the study, discussion of findings in response to the main

research question, as well as address implications and significance for research and practice, future directions, and limitations.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of parent trigger legislation in the United States. More specifically, the study explored the extent to which parent trigger legislation supports the needs, values, and interests of parent stakeholders who use trigger legislation to enhance their position as decision makers within the local education context.

Chapter One provided a background into the emergence of parent trigger legislation as part of a larger parent empowerment reform movement. Parent trigger laws are an option available in seven states for parent stakeholders to directly impact school governance at a chronically underperforming school. But, as a recent phenomenon, it was still unclear how the impact of a more empowered parent stakeholder is experienced in the local context and whether or not it could help or hinder the goal of a quality education for all students.

Chapter Two anchored the discussion of the education reform phenomenon in three bodies of academic literature: parent involvement in public education, the related theories of social capital and empowerment, and the related theories of community organizing and social movements. The chapter also laid out the use of a policy analysis framework to aid in the data analysis. Current literature regarding the use of parent trigger laws in the local context was unavailable to inform the study and this gap in knowledge served as a rationale for this study.

Chapter Three began by reminding the reader of the primary research question guiding the study and outlined the study's methodological strategies, including the use of a comparative analysis of two cases involving parent-led empowerment efforts. The chapter noted that three types of data were collected: 1) documents related to both proposed and enacted parent trigger legislation in the United States; 2) qualitative interview data from the authors of the first parent trigger law; and, 3) qualitative interview data from parent leaders, organizers, and district stakeholders involved in the first two successful parent trigger campaigns in California. The chapter also articulated the delimited scope of the data collected in the local context as focused on the primary voice of the parent leader stakeholder.

Chapter Four presented the findings of the data analysis from the legislative document review. Four core policy issues were found within the nine examples of parent trigger law in seven states. First, the laws address a chronic failure within the current system of education to provide quality schooling for all students. Second, because the problem of school failure was yet to be solved by the current governance stakeholders – the status quo – the parent stakeholders were given the legal right to affect change. Third, with the exception of the Connecticut law, the mechanism for change involved a parent petition organizing process. And, fourth, alternative governance options were codified in the laws as the solutions that could be implemented. The laws were less definitive about the participation and representation of parents in the alternative school governance structures.

Chapter Five presented the findings of the data analysis from the interviews with the authors of the first parent trigger legislation in California. The policy entrepreneurs

took advantage of an external policy window of opportunity, specifically the Race to the Top federal education reform initiative, to couple the policy streams of school choice and collective parent empowerment. The result of this coupling was the policy agenda of parent trigger legislation. The two policy entrepreneurs at the forefront of the first parent trigger law and their organizations contributed, in some degree, to the policy diffusion to other states.

Chapter Six presented the findings of the data analysis from the interviews in the local context. The findings revealed that the parent trigger law functioned as a key empowerment tool for the parent stakeholder. However, an intermediary community organizer was essential for providing the parent stakeholders with the resources, knowledge acquisition, socio-political learning, and community building strategies necessary to negotiate the system dynamics of the status quo stakeholders (district leadership, school leadership and staff) and oppositional parent stakeholders (in one of the two sites) to successfully activate the parent trigger law. The findings also showed an increase in both individual and collective empowerment on the part of the parent stakeholders as evidenced by reports of personal growth and the change in the locus of decision making control to the parent unions.

This concluding section, Chapter Seven, provides an overall discussion on the findings in relation to the study's research question, implications and significance for research and practice, future directions for further study, and limitations of the study.

### **Answering the Research Question**

The overarching research question for this study was: *What influence does parent trigger legislation have on parent empowerment within the United States system of public education?*

The study concluded that parent trigger laws enacted in seven states were designed to empower parent stakeholders to force a change in a failing public school. The intent of the laws was to codify a mechanism to hold the status quo stakeholders (district leaders, school leadership, teachers, unions, communities) accountable for their inability to rectify the problem at the local school level. For the first time, the key to this accountability was placed in the collective hands of the local parent stakeholder. When the law was used in the local context, the parents' needs and desire for change aligned with the intent of the parent trigger law.

This study revealed that in two cases within the local context parent trigger laws influenced parent empowerment in public education in seven ways: 1) the law codified a mechanism to hold the status quo stakeholders accountable to the parent stakeholders in the local context; 2) the law provided a mechanism for parent stakeholders to select the collective good option of transforming their neighborhood school; 3) the use of the law highlighted the difficulty of a non-dominate stakeholder accessing their parent empowerment right in opposition to the dominant stakeholder; 4) the use of the law confirmed that relational trust was an important factor in school reform efficacy; 5) the use of the law shifted the role of the parent stakeholder to a more empowered stakeholder; 6) the use of the law was experienced by the parent stakeholders as both personally and collectively empowering; however, the pervasiveness of the experience of

collective empowerment was influenced by contextual factors which are reviewed below; and, 7) the law provided the parent stakeholders with the ability to reorient the system resources towards what they felt would most likely result in a quality neighborhood school.

However, the study also identified the ways in which the parent trigger law fell short in its implementation within the local context. Although the law aligned with a true local need of the parent stakeholder, it was difficult to utilize given the power differential between the community organizers and parent leaders and the district, school, and teacher union leadership. While this study did not explore why other states do not have examples of the law being activated by parent stakeholders, it does present why it was difficult to utilize the law in two cases in California. Parent leaders at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary could not effectively access the use of the trigger law without an intermediary – the community organizers. By definition, the status quo – the dominant stakeholders – were unwilling to help parents in their change efforts. As the non-dominant stakeholders, the parent stakeholders experienced a “Catch 22” scenario. In other words, it takes an empowered stakeholder to access the rights embedded in the law to empower themselves. Devalued and disempowered parent stakeholders lacked the necessary human and social capital within a deficit model system (Olivos & Ochoa, 2011) to access the parent empowerment mechanism. However, through an alliance with an intermediary, Parent Revolution, both human and social capital was increased within the parent stakeholder group through resource provisioning, knowledge acquisition, socio-political learning and community building (Kelly, 2012; Oakes et al., 2006). This alliance and its attending capacity building activities provided a growth in the parent

stakeholder power to withstand varying levels of opposition from other adult stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the law did not address this Catch 22 by codifying ways in which the parent stakeholder might gain the capacity necessary to run an effective parent trigger campaign. There is an implication that the law, in and of itself, will place the parent stakeholder in a sufficiently empowered position to successfully “pull” the trigger. This study found this was not the case. The law was not sufficient to address the power differential amongst the stakeholders and that imbalance impeded the education reform effort (Datnow et al., 2002; Hubbard & Martinez, in press).

The study also confirmed the importance of relational trust in school reform efforts (Bryk et al., 2010; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Marsh, 2007) and the importance of local context (Datnow & Park, 2008; Marsh, 2007). In both cases, as the Desert Trails Parent Union (DTPU) and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School Parents Union (24PU) used the parent trigger as a reform strategy, past and current relational dynamics among the adult stakeholders affected the experience. Questions of intent and integrity, different levels of respect, and assumptions around knowledge and capacity either mitigated or exacerbated the school reform effort. In the Adelanto Elementary School District, racial tensions and concerns regarding the immigration status of parents, the intervention of teacher union organizations, less district experience in school choice education reform efforts, and a school with a more transient family population contributed to a longer and more discordant implementation experience. In the case of the DTPU, the petition campaign was seen as a divisive fight; in the case of 24PU, it was seen as more cohesive and collaborative. Moreover, in the case of DTPU, outside intermediaries and their

competing agendas contributed to a more contentious implementation experience. The law, however, does not provide guidance on the role of outside intermediaries such as teachers unions or community organizers in relation to the implementation within the local context. This study provided information on how a community organizing group worked with the parent stakeholder to facilitate the effective use of the parent trigger law and highlighted examples of how the teachers union could work to undermine the parent stakeholder efforts.

The study advanced the understanding of how the use of the parent trigger law shifted the role of the parent stakeholder to a more empowered decision maker within the school landscape. Parent leaders at both the DTPU and 24PU went beyond traditional “bake sale” involvement or even partnered engagement (Henderson et al., 2007) to that of change promoting activist (Oakes et al., 2006; Olivos, 2006; Olivos & Ochoa, 2011). As the new school architect, parent stakeholders envisioned a new school with four pillars of success: 1) Good leadership; 2) Effective teachers; 3) A safe school with a culture of high expectations; and 4) Involved parents. As owners, they took the responsibility of picking a new school operator to implement their school design. What did not emerge from the study among the DTPU and 24PU leaders was any evidence that the parent stakeholders were looking to take on the role of school operator. Neither did they have a particular allegiance to who would operator the school, as long as the new operator contracted to implement the parents’ collective vision.

The study provided clarity on both the motivation of the parent stakeholder in utilizing the parent trigger law and how the parent stakeholders were affected by its use. The use of the law was seen as a means to an end by parent stakeholders – a way in

which to obtain a quality neighborhood school matching their vision. The means – the petition campaign and parent organizing process – was also experienced by the parent stakeholder as both individually and collectively empowering (Johnson et al., 2011). There were, however, differences across the two cases which suggested that the pervasiveness of the collective empowerment can be affected by the length of the campaign, community cohesion, and groups in opposition to the effort. The 24PU parent leaders were able to launch and complete a successful parent trigger campaign in less than half the time of the DTPU because of greater ease of access to the school families, the time to coalesce the parent stakeholders without interruption from a concerted anti-petition effort by the teachers union, and a trajectory of involvement that was not extended by a number of court proceedings.

Given that the use of the trigger law has only very recently forced a change in school governance at the two school sites, the study did not provide information on how the law did or did not impact the outcomes for students. Not enough time has passed to evaluate student academic performance. However, the study showed the law did provide the parent stakeholders with the ability to shift system resources towards supporting what they felt were most important in the development of a quality neighborhood school: strong leadership, effective teaching, a safe and clean school with high expectations, and parent involvement. It remains to be seen if an increase in academic outcomes of Desert Trails Preparatory charter school and hybrid/district model at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary will flow from this redesign strategy and outperform their predecessors.

Educational research is inconclusive on the ways in which a change in school governance via the four NCLB turnaround options impacts academic outcomes (Trujillo

& Renee, 2012); however, research is more conclusive on the impact of the four pillars put forth by the parent stakeholders (Bryk et al., 2010; Ouchi, 2009). As a result of the parent trigger law, both school sites will have new school leadership chosen by the parent union membership to align with the expectations for a safe, quality school. Both school sites will have a new teaching force. And, plans are underway by both parent unions to continue to support the involvement of parents at each school. At 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, evidence of this continued parent involvement can be seen in the recent and successful parent signature campaign to re-open the preschool on site.<sup>30</sup> A recent media report also suggests that the use of the parent trigger law has not only resulted in positive changes in school culture at Desert Trails Preparatory Academy, but also in district policy, through a newly implemented policy allowing parents district-wide school choice.<sup>31</sup> In addition, a recent parent survey at Desert Trails Preparatory conducted for Parent Revolution by Goodwin Simon Strategic Research indicated that, of the parents polled, 95% are satisfied with the quality of the new school (Parent Revolution, 2014).

### **Implications and Significance for Research and Practice**

The study has implications and significance for both research and practice. For researchers and policy analysts, this study provided more clarity into how parent trigger legislation interfaces with the existing bodies of literature on parent involvement, social capital and empowerment, and community organizing and social movements and highlights the need for understanding policy across the spectrum of theoretical and lived experience. Allowing the narrative to solely be developed by academic researchers,

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<sup>30</sup>*First Preschool Launched Under Calif. "Trigger" Law to Open.* Retrieved on February 23, 2014 at [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/early\\_years/2013/11/first\\_preschool\\_set\\_up\\_under\\_ca\\_trigger\\_law\\_set\\_to\\_open.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/early_years/2013/11/first_preschool_set_up_under_ca_trigger_law_set_to_open.html)

<sup>31</sup>*Parents Laud Changes.* Retrieved on February 23, 2014 at <http://www.vvdailynews.com/articles/parents-45090-changes-editor.html>.

policy analysts, and think tanks does not provide a complete story of how a policy is actually being used by or benefiting stakeholders in the local context. For example, a recent article by Smith and Rowland (2014) uses an exit-voice framework to evaluate the parent trigger model and weigh in on whether parents using the trigger law have a tangential or infused voice. The evidence used to conclude that the parent voice was tangential in the case of the petition campaigns at McKinley Elementary and Desert Trails Elementary were drawn from the language in the legislation and media accounts of the two petition efforts, but did not include direct accounts from the parents themselves.

The importance of the information found from the participants in the local context is in agreement with Datnow and Park (2008), who argue that sensemaking and co-construction perspectives are particularly helpful in examining the implementation of education policy making in the United States and “place implementers (e.g., educators) at the forefront of reform efforts, highlighting the process by which they interpret, adapt, or transform policy” (p. 350). This study contributed to the discussion by exploring how parent leaders as the education reformer implement policy in the local context.

The study challenged the “cloud narrative” of academic researchers, policy analysts, and think tanks presented in Chapter Three. The assumptions and perspectives found in the common discourse that undergird both the arguments for and against the parent trigger law as a school reform mechanism are not grounded in lived realities. Consequently, findings from the local experience of the parent stakeholders and community organizers supplied an important perspective that needs to be woven into the story before conclusions can be made about the law’s efficacy. Listed below are the six

main arguments against the parent trigger from the “cloud narrative” and the text in italics shows findings from the study that offer additional information to consider.

1. Insufficient evidence that the charter school intervention option will provide stronger academic outcomes than the existing public school options.

*In using the parent trigger law, the DTPU and 24PU considered more than just the charter school option for transformation. In both cases, the parent leaders' first option was to work towards an in-district transformation. And, at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, an option of a district-run/charter school hybrid was ultimately chosen as the best governance option.*

2. Insufficient evidence that changing the governance structure of a local school will necessarily result in stronger academic outcomes.

*The DTPU and 24PU concurred that more than just a change in school governance was needed to provide a good school. They outlined four areas that, from their understanding, would provide stronger academic outcomes: 1) a safe and clean school with high expectations; 2) effective principal leadership; 3) effective teaching; and 4) parent involvement. From the parents' perspective, there is sufficient research evidence that these four areas do impact student academic outcomes.*

3. Concern that parent stakeholders may not have the capacity or relational longevity to be put “in charge.”

*Parent stakeholders, in alliance with a community organizing intermediary, were able to gain a substantial amount of capacity to make the decisions necessary to both choose an alternative governance model and a new school operator.*

4. Concern that the approach weakens the democratic nature of public education by allowing parent stakeholders to make decisions regarding a community asset.

*The DTPU and 24PU responded to the collective good of improving their neighborhood school. They were not looking to close the school down or to opt for the individual good of leaving the neighborhood school for a better option outside the community.*

5. Skepticism regarding the agenda of the large education advocacy reform organizations funding parent trigger efforts as an agenda for school privatization rather than parent empowerment.

*Parent stakeholders at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary were not connected to a larger educational reform agenda prior to using the parent trigger legislation. The impetus for utilizing the law was the result of individual and collectively poor experiences at their local school.*

6. Implementation efforts are flawed and divisive and do not offer a more effective community partnership approach to systemic and sustainable change.

*Parents in the Desert Trails context did experience the implementation as divisive. A group of parents resisted the efforts of the DTPU and the intervention of outside teacher union organizations impeded the reform efforts. Conversely, parents at the 24<sup>th</sup> Street context experienced the implementation as cohesive. In both cases, the parent unions plan to continue to support parent involvement at the transformed school sites.*

Similarly, the five main arguments from the “cloud narrative” in support of the parent trigger legislation also lack important information from the local context, and included here in italics, would add to a more complete story.

1. Parental involvement supports strong academic outcomes.

*Parents at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary had been involved in the school in traditional ways, but it was viewed as insufficient to surmount the larger issues contributing to low academic outcomes. Parent involvement was seen as important, but it was only one part of a four-part strategy. The parent trigger was utilized to activate three other areas that were seen as essential to improving strong academic outcomes: effective principal leadership, effective teaching, and a safe and clean school with the high expectations.*

2. Competition from individual parental school choice (e.g., vouchers) drives better school governance.

*DTPU and 24PU parent leaders were not looking for individual school choice options. They wanted their own neighborhood school to be the best option for their child and others’ children. Moreover, at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary, parents had used their individual choice option to leave the schools, but it did not result in an experience of better school governance for those who stayed at the schools.*

3. It provides parents with more power and more options when it comes to the education of children.

*At both school sites, the role of the parent stakeholder became more individually and collectively empowered through the use of the parent trigger and, ultimately, parents were provided with additional options for their children's education. However, without an intermediary to help parents develop strategies for taking advantage of the legislation through community organizing, increase socio-political knowledge, and provide needed resources, the parents would have had a difficult time in successfully using the law.*

4. Low-performing schools can be held accountable to the needs of the families they serve.

*Parent stakeholders were able to hold the school accountable for its inability to turn around the experience of a poor learning environment.*

5. The parent trigger gives families leverage where they don't otherwise have it by increasing pressure upon districts and others in charge of failing schools.

*Prior to utilizing the parent trigger legislation, parents at Desert Trails Elementary and 24<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary had little leverage to force a change in the system. Use of the parent trigger did increase pressure on the status quo to effect change. However, as outlined in #3 above, an intermediary was also needed to effect change.*

The study may also benefit parent involvement researchers by adding to the limited academic body of knowledge regarding the shifting role of parents within the public school landscape in relation to parent trigger legislation. It will continue to move the parent involvement discussion from *engagement* towards *empowerment*. Examples of parent empowerment at the national, state, and local levels are becoming too frequent, high profile, and culturally rich to ignore and this study can serve to frame further discussions. Moreover, it contributes to the discussion that the trajectory of parent involvement in public education may be moving beyond empowerment through community organizing or community partnership building towards empowerment through school governance decision making.

For policy entrepreneurs, the study provided a cautionary tale in carefully choosing the window of opportunity in which to further a policy agenda. In the case of

the parent trigger, its alignment with the Race to the Top school choice agenda may have allowed for the relatively swift passage of the first law in California, but it attracted the backlash of policy opponents who are wary of school privatization efforts and policies that might negatively affect the democratic aspects of public education. Because the school choice movement is such a high profile component of the larger education reform policy conversation, by positioning the parent trigger as part of that effort, other aspects of the law's intent have been overshadowed. Up to this point, there was little evidence found that parent trigger efforts were seen as part of the community partnership education reform movement. However, a recent review of the Parent Revolution website points towards a possible shift in strategy to align more heavily towards community organizing and community partnership and with less emphasis on the alternative governance options.

In other words, there appears to be a shift towards Parent Revolution's informal fifth option, using the parent trigger law as background leverage for negotiating with the district to transform schools. Parent Revolution's involvement at Lennox Middle School, Haddon Avenue Elementary, and Emerson Middle used the language of "negotiation table," "pushed the school," and "Parent Trigger as leverage" to describe their efforts in obtaining such changes as additional elective classes, new security staff, a new college-focused model, additional buses for after school activities. And, as the website states, "In each case, organized and active parents made actual differences in their own community school to improve the education for all local kids."<sup>32</sup>

For policy entrepreneurs, lessons might also be learned from the way in which the first parent trigger law was positioned to access the agendas of school choice and

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<sup>32</sup> Parent Revolution, What We Have Accomplished webpage. Retrieved on February 12, 2014 at <http://parentrevolution.org/what-weve-accomplished/>.

collective parent empowerment. Former California State Senator Gloria Romero spoke of an alignment between the law and the agenda of civil rights and there was evidence in the local context that parents also made this connection. In some states that have proposed legislation, instead of calling it a parent trigger, it is called a parental right law, perhaps to diffuse the unfortunate gun imagery associated with the use of the noun form of the word “trigger,” but perhaps to also encourage the connection to the higher moral policy stream of civil rights. Arne Duncan, the current U.S. Secretary of Education, called quality of public education, “the civil rights issue of our generation” (Duncan, 2008). Given that the parent trigger law is the only law that gives a group of united parents the legal right to force a change in the governance of their failing neighborhood school, policy entrepreneurs with a civil rights agenda might consider this law as a potential policy fit.

For stakeholders in the local context, this study provided a template for a potentially more effective way in which to approach parent trigger petition efforts. Being aware of past dysfunctional relationships and the importance of attending to the dynamic of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) provides for more of the “new normal” outcome experience by the 24PU leaders, and less of the “battle” experienced by those in the DTPU. To better understand these dynamics, parent leaders may consider conducting a power analysis based on the work of Gaventa (2006) to increase their own strategic capacity.<sup>33</sup> Both Freire (1970) and Gaventa (2006) conclude that sustained change cannot be made without addressing the power dynamics involved in the system.

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<sup>33</sup> Power Cube: Understanding power for social change. Retrieved on January 21, 2014 at <http://www.powercube.net/>.

According to Gaventa, *Power Over* is a form of power between win-lose or dominant-subordinate stakeholders in an environment where one stakeholder group is predominantly in control of the access to knowledge and the decision-making structure of the system. By definition, Power Over environments negatively affect the subordinate group within the system. The experience of Power Over was evident in the interviews with the parent leaders. Both discussed ways in which the system privileged the participation for the dominant insiders (teachers, staff, and district administration) over that of outsiders (parent stakeholders).

An environment in which stakeholders have the ability to make change in the world is referred to as *Power To*. What both parent leader efforts appeared to be working towards is an empowered form of parent involvement – a form that increases the decision-making authority on the part of the parent stakeholder to advocate what they term as a “nice, quality education.” To make a change to the system, however, stakeholders need *Power With*. Power With describes an environment in which individual skills and capacities are strengthened (power within yourself) as well as common ground across different interests to provide collective strength (power with others). The way in which the role of outside intermediaries, whether teachers unions or community organizers, impacted the 24PU and DTPU efforts speaks to the need to closely attend to Power With, despite the fact that the role of intermediaries is not codified in the law. Power With approaches result in more authentic communication and discourage the privileging of some voices over others (Hubbard & Martinez, in press).

The study may also benefit parent reform advocates by affording others the opportunity to see the larger context to their work, nationally, and the working world of

two local empowerment efforts. Parent leaders can benefit from an examination of contexts similar and different from their own to facilitate their own efforts. Moreover, the study may provide a new perspective for those interested in educational change more generally. This study may suggest a cognitive *paradigm shift* in education reform, a shift that recognizes the possibility of the parent stakeholder as a primary decision maker in the local school context. A paradigm shift represents a change in the basic assumptions of a model that produces significant change (Kuhn, 1996). When viewed in the context of the 150-year struggle for control in public education between parents and schools (Cutler, 2000), the successful use of the parent trigger law may represent the kind of anomalous event that portends a paradigm shift. If not of the magnitude of a paradigm shift in the making, the findings support the possibility that the use of the parent trigger represents a *third-order change*—change that upends the normative belief structure of the system (Renee et al., 2010).

Finally, the appendices constructed during this study provided a baseline of information regarding parent trigger legislation. Policy analysts and education researchers have here one source in which to access detailed information regarding the 87 pieces of legislation introduced between January 2009 and September 2013. The compilation of this information was time consuming, as there is no one place in which to access the full body of knowledge concerning specific parent trigger legislation. While the appendices add significant bulk to this dissertation, I felt it was important to have this information available for others to access and to reduce duplication of effort.

### **Future Directions**

This study highlighted the successful use of parent trigger legislation in the local context to force a turnaround in the governance of a chronically failing school. The intent found within the legislative language mirrored, with some exception regarding the intermediary activities of community organizers and teachers unions, the ways in which parent leaders used the legislation. However, further exploration is warranted in, at least, three areas.

First, and foremost, while some claims can be made regarding the parent trigger as an effective tool for parents to become empowered and shift the governance of the school, it is still unclear what the impact is on the actual academic outcomes of the new learning environment that has been created. As was previously noted, parent leaders did not simply want a change in school governance for the sake of change. Rather, they felt that four ingredients were essential to achievement their ultimate goal of a quality education for their child. Future research at the two school sites could explore the ways in which the four ingredients of effective principal leadership, effective teaching strategies, a clean and safe school with high expectations, and continued parent involvement supports or hinders a change in student academic outcomes.

Second, this study only served to highlight the perspectives of the parent leaders, community organizers, and, in one case, district leadership. Interviews with administrators, teachers, and union representatives as well as non-leader parents, oppositional parents, and community members would have provided a more systemic perspective. Smith and Rowland (2014) contend that the parent trigger gives parents voice at the expense of silencing others in the community. A future study might explore a

parent trigger petition campaign from the framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) embedded micro, meso, exo, and macro systems. An ecological systems review might be a useful way to better understand how the larger community surrounding the school was impacted by a relatively small group of parent leaders working on behalf of the collective group, especially given the concerns that the use of this legislation might be somehow in opposition to the tenets of democratic public education.

Finally, given the importance of the community organizer as intermediary in the two cases in California, it would be of value to understand why parent leaders in the other six states with parent trigger laws have not utilized the law. Are parent leaders in other states experiencing the "Catch 22" found by the DTPU and 24PU – that it takes an empowered stakeholder to utilize a parent empowerment law?

### **Limitations**

In real estate, the saying is "location, location, location." In qualitative research the parallel saying might be, "context, context, context." One limitation to this study is the vastly different local contexts presented by the two chosen cases. At the time of the study, there were only two examples of the parent trigger law being used by a local group of parent leaders to launch a petition campaign; therefore, selection of more similar environments was not possible.

The magnitude of the differences was fairly extreme. The DTPU efforts were located in an isolated suburban elementary school district serving approximately 9,000 students in grades K-8. The district was the authorizer of two public charter schools serving 647 charter school students which represented 7% of the total district enrollment. The 24PU efforts were located in the largest unified school district in California serving

over 660,000 students in grades K-12. The district is the second largest urban school district in the United States. The district was the authorizer for 223 charter schools, with over 113,000 charter school students, or 17% of the total district enrollment.

Furthermore, the 24PU efforts took place within the context of another larger school turnaround reform effort, the Public School Choice initiative.

These differences in context certainly generate the need to consider implications. If the goal of the research is to somehow extrapolate the findings, then the differences in context is of more concern than if the goal is to hear from each case the lived experience of what happens when a group of parent leaders utilize parent trigger legislation. My goal in this study was to bring forth the voice of the parent stakeholder in both contexts to better understand the impact of the legislation. According to Gaventa (2006), empowered participation is a rights-based approach that includes the right to be heard (voice) as necessary to the attainment of those rights. In other words, the voice of the participant is of primary importance. Whether these voices come from the high desert of San Bernardino County – or the West Adams community of inner city Los Angeles – both carry weight.

Similarly, a broader limitation to the research study involves the generalizability of the research to other parent empowerment policy efforts or future efforts. I would offer, however, that because the phenomenon of parent trigger legislation is relatively new, generalizability was not the goal. Rather, this study and other initial studies of parent empowerment better serve to provide a baseline of basic information about what the phenomenon looks like through a variety of singular instances. Moreover, newness of phenomenon aside, there is an argument that generalizability in the social sciences should

not be considered an end goal. In particular, the role of the study may be to allow others to “look at the world through the researcher’s eyes” (p. 194) and allow generalizability to take a back seat to meaning and perspective (Donmoyer, 1990).

It was also a detriment to the study that I was unable to secure an interview with the former district superintendent involved in the DTPU efforts. While DTPU parents did not report the AESD superintendent as an ally in their empowerment effort, additional information from the AESD superintendent’s perspective would have been helpful to understand the AESD response in comparison to the LAUSD response. Several attempts via email and collegial connections were utilized to gain access, but neither proved successful.

Finally, personally, I feel that being a unilingual English speaker was a limitation. Listening to the two unilingual Spanish-speaking parent leaders through an interpreter, and then, later, reading the translated transcripts, I could not help but consider how vital information might have been left out. It was difficult to advance the conversation to the next level of follow-up questioning through an interpreter. And, I felt similarly about the interview with the parent leader with moderate English speaking abilities. Rubin & Rubin (2012) refer to the difficulty of “cross-language interviewing” (p. 185) and if I had more experience in this area prior to the study, or had worked in advanced with the interpreters, likely more nuanced understandings would have taken place.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the outlined limitations and the delimited scope, this study provided a baseline of understanding for the ways in which parent trigger legislation intersects with the larger policy discussion of education reform in the United States. More importantly,

it grounded the phenomenon in the local context to allow the voice of the parent stakeholder to begin to weigh in on its efficacy and to contribute to that discussion. The study pointed to the value of asking parent implementers of the law how it helped or hindered their experience of empowerment within an education reform effort. As Licia affirmed when asked about whether parent trigger legislation was authentically empowering for the parent stakeholders, “I have evidence, not words.” However, the study also underscored how the use of the law by the parent stakeholder was problematic. In the two cases studied, the support of the community organizer intermediary was critical to the successful petition campaigns and to the empowerment of the parent stakeholder.

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**APPENDIX A****Parent Trigger Legislator Interview Guide**

The following is the interview protocol to be conducted with a key legislator or former legislator in a state that has enacted “parent trigger” legislation or is proposing to enact “parent trigger” legislation.

Beginning the interview:

1. Introduce myself. Thank the participant for their involvement.
2. Explain the purpose of the study and the timeframe for the interview.
3. Explain how confidentiality will be maintained.
4. Distribute the consent form and ask for it to be signed and returned.
5. Ask if there are any questions the participant would like answered prior to the beginning of the interview.
6. Initiate discussion with the following questions in mind, but allow for the discussion to broaden beyond the topics listed.

Questions:

1. You have been involved at the state level in the enactment of parent trigger legislation. Can you explain your role and describe your path in taking up this role. How did you get involved?
2. What do you see as the primary purpose for enacting this legislation?
3. What do you view as its most essential components?
4. How do you view the parent empowerment component of the legislation and the role of parents within the public education system?
5. Who else has been instrumental in the effort – the primary policy players – both pro and con?
6. What do you perceive is the primary argument being used against the trigger legislation and what are your reactions to that argument? How do you refute that argument?
7. What challenges or barriers are did you face, or are you facing, in its enactment?
8. What role did politics play? What kind of political dealings were/are at play?

9. How, or has, your effort been linked to other parent trigger policy efforts across the United States?
10. Have you seen any unintended or unexpected consequences of the parent trigger legislation or the efforts to enact it?
11. Have you been involved in other education reform legislation and, if so, did it involve a parent empowerment component? How was this effort similar or different than other education legislation you have been involved with?
12. Has the role of parents changed because of the parent trigger legislation? What evidence have you seen at the local level?
13. I am curious about political power within the system of public education. If you will take a look at Drawing A on this paper, how would you rank the power of the three groups (policymakers, teachers unions, and parents), prior to the parent trigger legislation efforts? And after? What kind of power do you think each one of the groups holds?
14. I am also working on an idea about the impact of parent trigger legislation on education reform. If you will take a look at Drawing B on this paper, I will explain a bit about my idea. Of three end results pictured – which do you feel most connected to and how does the drawing fit with your experience?
15. I really appreciate your time spent with me. It has been very helpful. Is there anything I have failed to ask that would help me to better understand your experience of working to enact parent trigger legislation?
16. Are there any other questions you have about this interview you would like to ask?

**APPENDIX B****Local Parent Empowerment Effort Parent Interview Guide**

The following is the interview protocol to be conducted with key parent leaders in a community that is currently undertaking a parent empowerment effort involving parent trigger legislation.

Beginning the interview:

1. Introduce myself. Thank the participant for their involvement.
2. Explain the purpose of the study and the timeframe for the interview.
3. Explain how confidentiality will be maintained.
4. Distribute the consent form and ask for it to be signed and returned.
5. Ask if there are any questions the participant would like answered prior to the beginning of the interview.
6. Initiate discussion with the following questions in mind, but allow for the discussion to broaden beyond the topics listed.

Questions:

7. You have been involved in a local effort to implement (or enact) parent trigger legislation. Please describe your role in this effort and how you got involved. What was your path to involvement?
8. What do you feel is the primary purpose of the effort?
9. How are other people attracted to the effort?
10. What strategies are you using to help with the effort?
11. What is the role of parents within the public school system and how has this effort changed the role of parents?
12. I am curious about political power within the system of public education. If you will take a look at Drawing A on this paper, how would you rank the power of the three groups (policymakers, teachers unions, and parents), prior to the parent trigger legislation efforts? And after? What kind of power do you think each one of the groups holds?
13. What has it been like for you to lead this effort and how has it changed your relationship to your student's school?
14. What challenges or barriers are you facing?
15. Have you teamed with other organizations within the community or outside the community?

16. Were there actions that you have taken, thus far, that you think have compromised or undermined your efforts?
17. Are there individuals and/or community constituencies that are resistant to the idea?
18. What kind of political support have you received from your district school board?
19. How do you see this effort connecting to other parent-led involvement efforts in California/New York or other places in the United States?
20. I am also working on an idea about the impact of parent trigger legislation on education reform. If you will take a look at Drawing B on this paper, I will explain a bit about my idea. Of three end results pictured – which do you feel most connected to and how does the drawing fit with your experience?
21. What is your response to someone who describes the parent trigger as “fake empowerment” – that parents are being used by policymakers for their own political agenda?
22. I really appreciate your time spent with me. It has been very helpful. Is there anything I have failed to ask that would help me to better understand your experience of working to enact parent trigger legislation?
23. Are there any other questions you have about this interview you would like to ask?

**APPENDIX C****Local Parent Empowerment Effort Stakeholder Interview Guide**

The following is the interview protocol to be conducted with key stakeholders in a community (e.g. school board member, district staff member, community organizer, teacher union member) that is currently undertaking a parent empowerment effort involving parent trigger legislation.

Beginning the interview:

1. Introduce myself. Thank the participant for their involvement.
2. Explain the purpose of the study and the timeframe for the interview.
3. Explain how confidentiality will be maintained.
4. Distribute the consent form and ask for it to be signed and returned.
5. Ask if there are any questions the participant would like answered prior to the beginning of the interview.
6. Initiate discussion with the following questions in mind, but allow for the discussion to broaden beyond the topics listed.

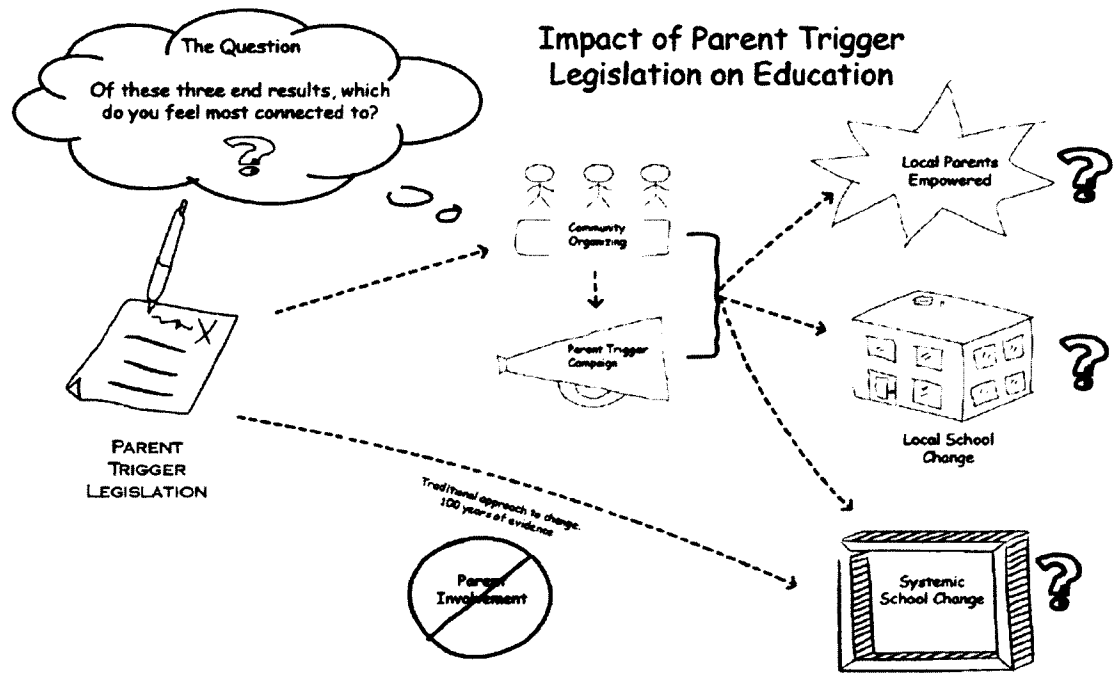
Questions:

7. You have been involved or impacted by a local effort to implement (or enact) parent trigger legislation. Please describe your role in this effort and how you got involved. What was your path to involvement?
8. What do you feel is the primary purpose of the effort?
9. What is your perception of the strategies being used to help with the effort?
10. What is the role of parents within the public school system and how has this effort changed the role of parents?
11. I am curious about political power within the system of public education. If you will take a look at Drawing A on this paper, how would you rank the power of the three groups (policymakers, teachers unions, and parents), prior to the parent trigger legislation efforts? And after? What kind of power do you think each one of the groups holds?
12. What has it been like for you to experience this effort and how has it changed your relationship to the local schools?
13. What challenges or barriers do you perceive the effort is facing?
14. What is your experience of other organizations within the community or outside the community involved with the effort?

15. Were there actions that have been taken, thus far, that you think have compromised or undermined the efforts?
16. Are there individuals and/or community constituencies that are resistant to the idea?
17. What is your opinion of the political support from the district school board?
18. How do you see this effort connecting to other parent-led involvement efforts in California/New York or other places in the United States?
19. I am also working on an idea about the impact of parent trigger legislation on education reform. If you will take a look at Drawing B on this paper, I will explain a bit about my idea. Of three end results pictured – which do you feel most connected to and how does the drawing fit with your experience?
20. What is your response to someone who describes the parent trigger as “fake empowerment” – that parents are being used by policymakers for their own political agenda?
21. I really appreciate your time spent with me. Is there anything I have failed to ask that would help me to better understand your experience of working to enact parent trigger legislation?
22. Are there any other questions you have about this interview you would like to ask?

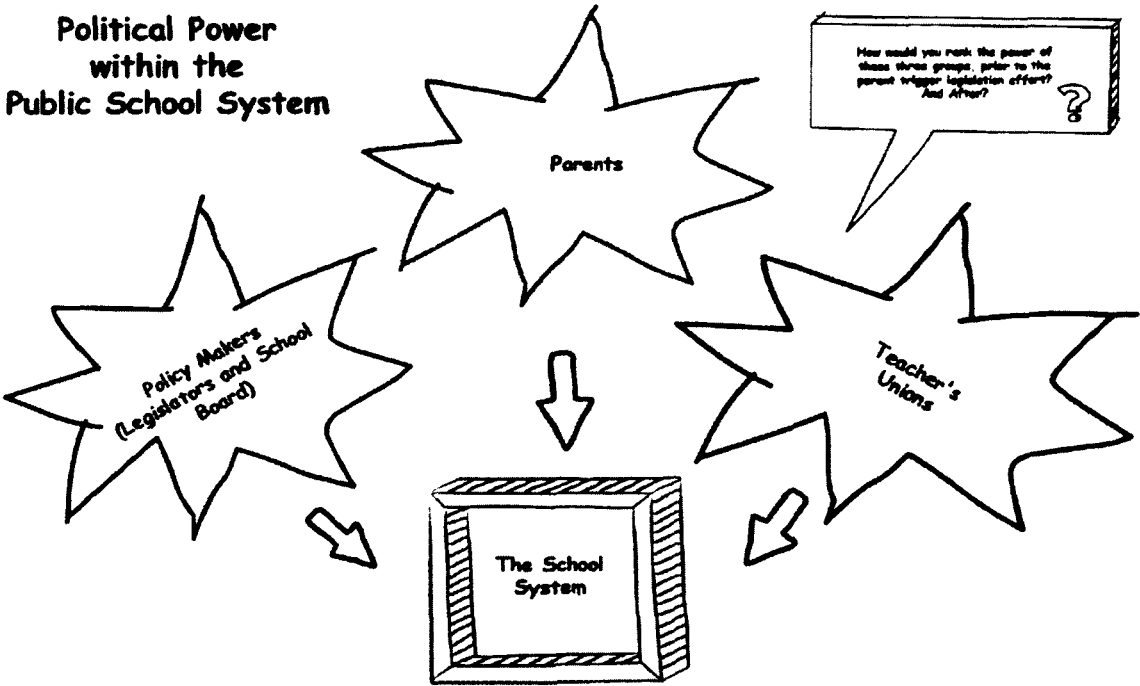
**APPENDIX D****Interview Protocol Drawing A**

Drawing A



**APPENDIX E****Interview Protocol Drawing B**

Drawing B



## **APPENDIX F**

### **Example of Mindmap Research Journal Entry**



## **APPENDIX G**

### **Eighty-Seven Pieces of Proposed Parent Trigger Legislation**

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Alabama					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13. No charter school law in the state.
Alaska					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent legislation as of 9/22/13.
Arizona	2012	SB 1204	Sen. Klein - R	Introduced 1/23/2012.  Passed Senate. Last action House second read 3/5/2012.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (empowerment scholarship account).  <i>"Schools; parental intervention options; notification. For any school that has been assigned a letter grade of D or F... the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending that school and parents or guardians of pupils attending a school that feeds into that school may submit a petition to the school district governing board to request that the governing board take one of the following actions: 1. Close the school. 2. Convert the school to a charter school. 3. Replace the existing principal..."</i>  <a href="http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/sb1204s.pdf">http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/sb1204s.pdf</a>
Arizona	2013	SB 1409	Sen. Murphy - R Sen. Burges - R Sen. Montenegro - R Rep. Smith - R Sen. Melvin - R Sen. Ward - R Rep. Cardenas - D Sen. Gray - R Rep. Kwasman - R Rep. Seel - R Rep. Thorpe - R	Introduced 2/5/2013.  Last action Senate second read 2/6/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"Schools; parental intervention; relating to parent involvement in schools. For any school that has been assigned a letter grade of D or F... for at least two out of three consecutive years and that has been assigned a letter grade of D or F at the time the petition is submitted, the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending that school and parents or guardians of pupils attending a school that feeds into that school may submit a petition to the school district governing board to request that the governing board take on of the following actions recommended by those parents... implement the turnaround model... implement the restart model... implement the transformation model..."</i>  <a href="http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/51leg/1r/bills/sb1409p.pdf">http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/51leg/1r/bills/sb1409p.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Arkansas	2011	HB 1894	Rep. Hobbs - R	Introduced 3/4/2011.  Died in House committee at sine die adjournment 4/27/2011.	Parent trigger legislation.  "An act to reform low-performing schools; to establish a parent trigger process for parents to improve public schools; and for other purposes... Provide a process by which low-performing schools may be reformed; enable parents of low-performing schools to initiate reform efforts through a petitioning process; and, allow parents to have a voice in the method of school reform among approved options... reorganize the designated school by: (1) Closing the school as a public school operated by the school district and reopening the school as an open-enrollment public charter school under the guidance of a charter management organization or educational management organization specified in the petition; (2)(A) Changing the leadership of the public school, including without limitation replacing the school principal and other licensed personnel; or (3) Closing the school and transferring the students to a higher performing school."  <a href="ftp://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/2011/Public/HB1894.pdf">ftp://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Bills/2011/Public/HB1894.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
California	2009	SB 4 X5 Article 3	Sen. Romero – D Sen. Alquist – D Sen. Huff – R Sen. Wyland - R	Introduced 12/9/2009.  ENACTED 1/7/2010.	<p>School choice legislation with parent trigger provision.</p> <p><i>“Public schools: Race to the Top...Article 3. Parent Empowerment... For any school not identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school under Section 53201 which, after one full school year, is subject to corrective action pursuant to...the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act... and continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, and has an Academic Performance Index score of less than 800, and where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the four interventions... no more than 75 schools shall be subject to a petition...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920105SB4">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920105SB4</a></p> <p><u>Administrative guidelines developed</u></p> <p><a href="http://weblinks.westlaw.com/result/default.aspx?action=Search&amp;cfid=1&amp;cnt=DOC&amp;db=CA-ADC&amp;eq=search&amp;fmqv=c&amp;fn=top&amp;method=TNC&amp;n=1&amp;origin=Search&amp;query=CI%28%225+CA+ADC+S+4800%22%29&amp;rlt=CLID_QRYRLT68854104613313&amp;rltdb=CLID_DB93557104613313&amp;rlti=1&amp;rp=%2Fsearch%2Fdefault%2Ewl&amp;rs=GVT1%2E0&amp;service=Search&amp;sp=CCR-1000&amp;srch=TRUE&amp;ss=CNT&amp;sskey=CLID_SSSA79557104613313&amp;tempinfo=FIND&amp;vr=2%2E0">http://weblinks.westlaw.com/result/default.aspx?action=Search&amp;cfid=1&amp;cnt=DOC&amp;db=CA-ADC&amp;eq=search&amp;fmqv=c&amp;fn=top&amp;method=TNC&amp;n=1&amp;origin=Search&amp;query=CI%28%225+CA+ADC+S+4800%22%29&amp;rlt=CLID_QRYRLT68854104613313&amp;rltdb=CLID_DB93557104613313&amp;rlti=1&amp;rp=%2Fsearch%2Fdefault%2Ewl&amp;rs=GVT1%2E0&amp;service=Search&amp;sp=CCR-1000&amp;srch=TRUE&amp;ss=CNT&amp;sskey=CLID_SSSA79557104613313&amp;tempinfo=FIND&amp;vr=2%2E0</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
California	2010	SB 1315	Sen. Romero – D	Introduced 2/19/2010.  Last action in Rules committee. 11/30/10.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>“An act relating to parent empowerment... Existing law requires a local educational agency to implement one of several specified reforms for any other school which, after one full school year, is subject to corrective action pursuant to a specified provision of federal law and continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, and have an Academic Performance Index score of less than 800, and where at least 1/2 of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least 1/2 of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one of the alternative governance arrangements, unless the local educational agency makes a finding in writing why it cannot implement the recommended arrangement and instead designates in writing which of the other alternative governance arrangements it will implement in the subsequent school year. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation relating to parent empowerment.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100SB1315">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100SB1315</a></p>
California	2010	SB 1270	Sen. Romero – D	Introduced 2/19/2010.  Last action in Rules committee. 11/30/10.	<p>Provides technical, no substantive changes to existing parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>“...Public schools: parent empowerment... Existing law requires a local educational agency to implement one of several specified reforms for a school not identified as a persistently lowest achieving school that, after one full school year, fails to meet specified criteria and has a specified amount of parents and guardians of pupils sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement at least one of the alternative governance arrangements. This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to these provisions.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100SB1270">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100SB1270</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
California	2011	AB 203	Rep. Brownley – D Sen. Alquist - D	Introduced 1/17/2011.  Passed Assembly and Senate. Vetoed by governor 10/8/2011.	Expands school eligibility for existing parent trigger legislation.  <i>“... provide parents with adequate information to make an informed decision on whether to sign a petition or initiate a petition... that local governing boards with schools that are eligible for the parent empowerment program, at a regularly scheduled meeting, provide information on the parent empowerment program, such as a description of the intervention models, the petition process, and responsibilities of the school, parents, and organizations that are initiating and signing the petition, and allow parents to provide testimony on the program and intervention models.”</i>  <a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB203">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB203</a>
California	2013	AB 815	Rep. Conway – R Rep. Allen – R Rep. Gaines – R Rep. Gorell – R Rep. Harkey – R Rep. Jones – R Rep. Morrell – R Rep. Nestande – R Rep. Wilk - R	Introduced 2/21/2013.  Referred to Standing Committee on Education. Failed passage. Reconsideration granted. 04/17/2013.	Expands school eligibility for existing parent trigger legislation.  <i>“...or any school ranked in any of deciles 1 to 3, inclusive, of the API and where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the four interventions...”</i>  <a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB815">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB815</a>
California	2013	SB 452	Sen. Hugg – R Sen. Anderson – R Sen. Berryhill – R Sen. Emmerson – R Sen. Fuller – R Sen. Gaines – R Sen. Knight – R Sen. Nielsen – R Sen. Walters – R Sen. Wyland - R	Introduced 4/17/2013.  Failed passage in Standing Committee on Education. Reconsideration granted.	Expands school eligibility for existing parent trigger legislation.  <i>“...or any school ranked in any of deciles 1 to 3, inclusive, of the API and where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the four interventions...”</i>  <a href="http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB452">http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB452</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Colorado	2011	HB 11-1270	Rep. Beezley - R Rep. Acree - R Rep. Barker - R Rep. Becker - R Rep. Conti - R Rep. Holbert - R Rep. Joshi - R Rep. Murray - R Rep. Nikkel - R Rep. Summers - R Rep. Szabo - R Sen. Nancy Spence - R	Introduced 2/28/2011.  Last action in House Education committee. Postponed indefinitely 3/14/2011.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"A bill for an act concerning parental authority to effect transformations of low-performing schools... Under the bill, the parents of students enrolled in a low-performing public school may submit a petition to the school district board of education (local school board) to close the school or convert the school to a charter school or an innovation school. The petition must be signed by more than 50% of the parents of the students enrolled in the low-performing school... The parents of students enrolled in an eligible public school may... present to the local board of education for the eligible public school a petition to: Close the eligible public school... convert the eligible public school to a charter school..."</i>  <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2011A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/C8A40116CBD9E2918725780800800707?Open&amp;file=1270_01.pdf">http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2011A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/C8A40116CBD9E2918725780800800707?Open&amp;file=1270_01.pdf</a>
Colorado	2012	HB 12-1149	Rep. Beezley - R Rep. Holbert - R Rep. Acree - R Rep. Balmer - R Rep. Becker - R Rep. Murray - R Rep. Ramirez - R Rep. Summers - R Sen. Johnston - D	Introduced 1/20/2012.  Passed the House. Last action in Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs committee. Postponed indefinitely 3/28/2012.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"A bill for an act concerning parents' authority to request interventions for low-performing schools... The bill authorizes the parents of students enrolled in a public school that has operated under a priority improvement or turnaround plan for 2 consecutive years to submit a petition to the state board requesting the state board to direct the local school board or the institute to take action to reconfigure the public school immediately. The petition must be signed by more than 50% of the families of the students enrolled in the public school..."</i>  <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2012A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/281E56E0CBDC24CD87257981007CC032?Open&amp;file=1149_ren.pdf">http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2012A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/281E56E0CBDC24CD87257981007CC032?Open&amp;file=1149_ren.pdf</a>



State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Connecticut	2010	SB 438	Rep. Schofield - D Rep. Miller - R Sen. Gaffey - D Sen. Looney - D Rep. Fawcett - D Sen. Stillman - D Rep. Reynolds - D Rep. Villano - D Rep. Taborsak - D Rep. Lyddy - D Rep. Baram - D Rep. Clemons - D Rep. Reeves - D Rep. Mioli - D Rep. Gonzalez - D Rep. Mushinsky - D Rep. Wright - D Rep. Bartlett - D Rep. Rojas - D Rep. Johnson - D Rep. Drew - D	Introduced by Education committee 3/10/2010 in House. Sent as substitute bill to Senate.  <b>ENACTED 5/26/2010.</b>  Rep. Miller - D Rep. Grogins - D Sen. Debicellam-R Sen. Crisco - D Sen. Meyer - D Sen. Harris - D Sen. Prague - D Sen. Duff - D Sen. Colapietro -D Sen. Harp - D Sen. Fonfara - D	School reform legislation with school governance council option. Parent petition language removed from original House bill.  <i>“Act concerning education reform... The school governance council may, by an affirmative vote of the council, recommend the reconstitution of the school into one of the following models: (i) The turnaround model... (ii) the restart mode... (iii) the transformation model... (iv) any other model that may be developed by federal law; (v) a CommPACT school... or (vi) an innovation school...”.</i>  <a href="http://search.cga.state.ct.us/2010/ACT/PA/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.htm">http://search.cga.state.ct.us/2010/ACT/PA/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.htm</a>
Delaware					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.
Florida	2012	H 1191	Rep. Bileca - R	Introduced 1/3/2012.  Died in House Education Pre-K – 12 committee. 3/9/2012.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions.  <i>“An act relating to parent empowerment in education... authorizing parents of students who are assigned to certain underperforming public schools to submit a petition to the school district requesting implementation of a school turnaround option... The school district shall verify at least a majority of the signatures on the petition using existing student enrollment documentation or other records containing parent signatures... implementing one of the following <u>school turnaround</u> options... covert the school to a district-managed turnaround school... reassign students to another school... close the school and reopen the school as one or more charter schools... contract with an outside entity that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school.”</i>  <a href="http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1191/BillText/c3/PDF">http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1191/BillText/c3/PDF</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Florida	2012	S 1718	Sen. Benacquisto - R	Introduced 1/6/2012.  Failed to pass in the Senate. Vote 20-20. 3/9/2012.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions.  “An act relating to parent empowerment in education... authorizing parents of students who are assigned to certain underperforming public schools to submit a petition to the school district requesting implementation of a school turnaround option... The school district shall verify at least a majority of the signatures on the petition using existing student enrollment documentation or other records containing parent signatures... implementing one of the following <u>school turnaround</u> options... covert the school to a district-managed turnaround school... reassign students to another school... close the school and reopen the school as one or more charter schools... contract with an outside entity that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school.”  <a href="http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1718/BillText/e1/PDF">http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1718/BillText/e1/PDF</a>
Florida	2013	H 867	Rep. Trujillo - R	Introduced 2/18/2013.  Passed the House. Failed in the Senate. Vote 20-20. 4/30/2013.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions.  “An act relating to parent empowerment in education... providing that parents who have a student in a public school that is implementing a turnaround option may petition to have a particular turnaround option... creating the “Parent Empowerment Act...specifying that a petition is valid if it is signed and dated by a majority of the parents of eligible students... the turnaround options available to a school district to address a school... covert the school to a district-managed turnaround school... reassign students to another school... close the school and reopen the school as one or more charter schools... contract with an outside entity that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school... implement a hybrid of turnaround options...”  <a href="http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0867/BillText/e1/PDF">http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0867/BillText/e1/PDF</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Florida	2013	S 862	Sen. Stargel – R	Introduced 2/13/2013.  Substituted HB 867. Laid on Table 04/29/13.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions.  <i>“An act relating to parent empowerment in education... providing that parents who have a student in a public school that is implementing a turnaround option may petition to have a particular turnaround option... creating the “Parent Empowerment Act... specifying that a petition is valid if it is signed and dated by a majority of the parents of eligible students... the turnaround options available to a school district to address a school... covert the school to a district-managed turnaround school... reassign students to another school... close the school and reopen the school as one or more charter schools... contract with an outside entity that has a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school... implement a hybrid of turnaround options...”</i>  <a href="http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0862/BillText/c1/PDF">http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0862/BillText/c1/PDF</a>
Georgia	2011	SB 68	Sen. John Albers - R Sen. Chip Rogers - R	Introduced 2/9/2011.  Senate read and referred. Last action 2/9/2011.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act... relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the ‘Parent Trigger Act’... to provide for petitions from parents for interventions for low-achieving schools... for any low-achieving school which is not currently subject to one or more interventions by the state board ... continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, and where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local board to implement one or more of the four interventions for turning around persistently lowest-achieving schools described... Race to the Top program... or the federally mandated alternative governance arrangement... of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act... no more than 75 schools shall be subject to a petition...”</i>  <a href="http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/109809.pdf">http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/109809.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Georgia	2011	HB 731	Rep. Lindsey – R Rep. Ashe – D Rep. Setzler – R Rep. Hamilton – R Rep. Coleman – R Rep. Dudgeon – R	Introduced 1/12/2011.  House second readers. Last action 1/23/2011.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act... relating to charter schools, so as to enact the ‘Parent Trigger Act’... to provide for charter petitions by a majority of parents or guardians for certain schools... A charter petitioner seeking to create a conversion charter school shall submit a petition to the local board of the local school system in which the proposed charter school will be located.”</i>  <a href="http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/118473.pdf">http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/118473.pdf</a>
Georgia	2013	HB 123	Rep. Lindsey - R Rep. Coleman - R Rep. Jones - R Rep. Glanton - D Rep. Casas -R Rep. Morgan - D	Introduced 1/28/2013.  Passed the House. Last action read and referred in the Senate. 03/07/13.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions, specifically the allowance for a teacher petition option.  <i>“An act... relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the ‘Parent and Teacher Empowerment Act’; to provide for petitions to convert existing schools to charter schools or to impose turnaround models... A petition may be submitted by: (1) A majority of the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school or, for a high school cluster, a majority of the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in one of the schools within the high school cluster... turnaround model... remove school personnel.. institute the complete reconstitution of the school... permit parents to have the option to relocated their students to other public schools... prepare and implement an intensive student achievement improvement plan... require a complete restructuring of the school’s governance arrangement...”</i>  <a href="http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20132014/133574.pdf">http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20132014/133574.pdf</a>
Georgia	2013	SB 162	Sen. Jones – D Sen. Jackson – D Sen. Henson – D Sen. Tate – D Sen. Sims – D Sen. Seay – D Sen. Davenport - D	Introduced 02/13/2013.  Senate read and referred. Last action 2/13/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act... relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the ‘Parent Charter School Trigger Act’; to provide petitions to convert charter schools to traditional public schools... A petition may be submitted by a majority of the parents or legal guardians of students who are eligible to enroll in the school the following year, or for a high school cluster, a majority of the parents or guardians of students who are eligible to enroll in one of the schools within the high school cluster...”</i>  <a href="http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20132014/130822.pdf">http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20132014/130822.pdf</a>
Hawaii					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.

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Idaho					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.
Illinois	2013	HB 3295	Rep. Senger - R	Introduced 2/26/2013.  Re-referred to House Rules committee. Last action 03/22/13.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An act concerning education... provides that parents of at least 51% of students in a low-performing school may initiate reform measures at the school through the submission of a parent petition to the school board... provides that the petition shall request that the school board fully intervene in the school and implement one of the following reform measures: (1) reopen the school as a charter school; (2) change the school leadership; (3) close the school and reassign students currently attending the school to another school at the appropriate grade level within the same school district; or (4) adopt a new school governance structure."</i>  <a href="http://ilga.gov/legislation/98/HB/PDF/09800HB32951v.pdf">http://ilga.gov/legislation/98/HB/PDF/09800HB32951v.pdf</a>
Indiana	2011	HB 1250	Rep. Noe – R	Introduced 1/12/2011. Referred to Committee on Education. Last action 1/12/2011.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition).  <i>"...Parental initiative for school reorganization... Requires the state board of education to create a school performance category of pending reorganization. Provides that parents of a school that is in the third or subsequent year of placement in the lowest performance category may petition to reorganize the school by: (1) closing the school and transferring the students to a higher performing school in the same school corporation; (2) reorganizing the school as a charter school; or (3) providing tuition payments for students who wish to transfer from the school to another school corporation or a nonpublic school. Requires the governing body of the school corporation to carry out the reorganization if the parents of at least 51% of the students in the school sign the petition."</i>  <a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/IN/IN1250.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/IN/IN1250.1.html</a>

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Indiana	2011	HB 1002	Rep. Bosma – R Rep. Bhening – R Rep. Noe – R Rep. Sullivan – D	Introduced 1/13/2011.  ENACTED 5/5/2011	<p>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision.</p> <p><i>“An Act...concerning education... An existing public elementary or secondary school may be converted into a charter school if all of the following conditions apply: (1) At least fifty-one percent (51%) of the parents of students who attend the school have signed a petition requesting the conversion, which must be completed not later than ninety (90) days after the date of the first signature. (2) The school has been placed in either of the two (2) lowest categories or designations under IC 20-31-8-3 for two (2) consecutive years...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/HE/HE1002.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/HE/HE1002.1.html</a></p>
Indiana	2011	SB 496	Sen. Hershman – R Sen. Kruse – R Sen. Yoder – R Sen. Banks - R	Introduced 1/13/2011.  Passed Senate. Returned to Senate with amendments. Senate dissented from House amendments. Advisors and conferees appointed. 4/25/2011.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition).</p> <p><i>“Parental initiatives for school reorganization... Provides that parents of a school that is in the third or subsequent year of placement in the lowest performance category may petition to reorganize the school by: (1) closing the school and transferring the students to a higher performing school in the same school corporation; (2) providing tuition payments for students to transfer to a higher performing school in another school corporation; or (3) reorganizing the school as a charter school. Requires the governing body of the school corporation to carry out the reorganization if the parents of at least 51% of the students in the school sign the petition.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/ES/ES0496.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/ES/ES0496.1.html</a></p>
Indiana	2012	HB 1219	Rep. Rhoads – R Rep. Bhening – R	Introduced 1/9/2012.  Last action Committee on Education; do pass, adopted. 1/11/2012.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>“...Parental initiatives for school reorganization. Establishes the following parental initiatives for school reorganization: (1) The conversion of an existing public school into a charter school. (2) A petition to have the state board of education consider intervention in the school. Repeals current provisions concerning the conversion of existing public schools into charter schools... An existing public elementary or secondary school may be converted into a charter school if: (1) the parents of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the students who attend the school have signed a petition requesting the conversion...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2012/HB/HB1219.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2012/HB/HB1219.1.html</a></p>

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Indiana	2013	HB 1358	Rep. Huston – R Rep. Behnig - R	Introduced 1/22/2013.  Recommitted to Rules and Legislative Procedures committee. 2/21/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  "Parental initiative for school reorganization. Establishes the following parental initiatives for school reorganization of low performing schools: (1) The conversion of an existing public school into a charter school. (2) A petition to have the state board of education consider intervention and establish a lead partner to support the operation of the school. (3). The transfer of the operation of a charter school to the school corporation in which the charter school is located. Repeals current provisions concerning the conversion of existing public schools into charter schools... An existing public elementary or secondary school that is a designated school may be converted into a charter school if: (1) the parents of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the number of students who attend the designated school have signed a petition requesting the conversion..."  <a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2013/HB/HB1358.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2013/HB/HB1358.1.html</a>
Indiana	2013	SB 341	Sen. Kruse - R	Introduced 1/8/2013.  First reading and referred to Education and Career Development Committee. Last action 1/8/2013.	School reform legislation includes parent trigger provision and voucher language (tuition).  "School reorganization. Requires the state board of education to create a school performance category of "pending reorganization". Establishes a process for the reorganization of a school that is in the third or subsequent year of placement in the lowest performance category... Provides that, as a condition to reorganizing the school, the school reorganization initiative (initiative) must include: (1) a vote by the majority of the governing body's members in favor of reorganization; (2) a petition in favor of the reorganization signed by at least 75% of the teachers at the designated school; (3) a petition in favor of the reorganization signed by at least 51% of the parents of students who attend the designated school; or (4) any combination of (1) through (3)... a reorganization of a designated school under this chapter using one (1) or more of the following methods: (1) Closing the designated school and transferring the designated school's students to a higher performing school within the same school corporation. (2) Providing tuition payments for students from the designated school who wish to transfer from the designated school to a higher performing public school in another school corporation. (3) Restructuring the designated school as a charter school..."  <a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2013/IN/IN0341.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2013/IN/IN0341.1.html</a>

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Iowa	2013	SF 2	Sen. Johnson - R	Introduced 1/14/2013.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 01/14/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An act relating to parent empowerment petitions for implementation of school intervention models of school districts... at least fifty percent of the parents or guardians of students attending the attendance center, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or guardians of students attending the attendance center and the elementary or middle school who normally matriculate into the middle or high school, as applicable, signs and submits to the board of directors of the school district in which the attendance center is located a petition... implement one or more of the four school intervention models identified by the United States department of education for school improvement grants... The four school intervention models include the turnaround model, in which the principal is replaced, no more than half the teachers may be rehired, and new strategies are implemented; the restart model, in which the attendance center is converted to a charter school; school closure, in which the attendance center is closed and its students sent to higher-achieving schools in the district; and the transformation model, in which the principal is replaced and comprehensive curriculum reform and other strategies are implemented..."</i>  <a href="http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/linc/85/external/SF2_Introduced.pdf">http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/linc/85/external/SF2_Introduced.pdf</a>
Kansas					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.
Kentucky	2013	SB 176	Sen. Wilson – R Sen. Seum - R	Introduced 2/15/2013.  Passed Senate referred to House Education. Last action 3/6/2013.	Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision.  <i>"An act relating to persistently low-achieving schools... permit a persistently low-achieving school to petition for conversion to a charter school... If parents, guardians, or legal custodians representing at least twenty percent (20%) of the students enrolled in the school sign a petition for conversion to a charter school and file it with the principal, the principal shall present the question to the parents, guardians, or legal custodians of all students for a vote. If two-thirds (2/3) of those voting, vote to convert to a charter school, the local board shall convert the school to a charter school..."</i>  <a href="http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/13RS/SB176/bill.doc">http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/13RS/SB176/bill.doc</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Louisiana	2012	HB 976	Rep. Carter – R Rep. Kleckley – R Rep. Broadwater – R Rep. Champagne – R Rep. Connick – R Rep. Henry – R Rep. Hensgens – R Rep. Ligi – R Rep. Lorusso – R Rep. Ponti – R Rep. Robideaux – R Rep. Schroder – R Rep. Seabuagh – R Rep. Talbot – R Rep. Thompson	Introduced 3/2/2012.  ENACTED 4/18/2012.	<p>School choice legislation with parent trigger and other school reform provisions.</p> <p><i>“An act relative to school choice... to provide for the submission of petitions by parents requesting that a school be transferred to the Recovery School District under certain conditions; to require rules and regulations to be adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for the petition process... Parents or legal guardians representing at least a majority of the students who have been enrolled in the school for at least two years sign a petition...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=793655&amp;n=HB976%20Act%202">http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=793655&amp;n=HB976%20Act%202</a></p> <p><u>Administrative guidelines developed:</u></p> <p><a href="http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v145/28v145.doc">http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v145/28v145.doc</a></p>
Louisiana	2013	HB 115	Rep. James – D Rep. Broome - D	Introduced 3/13/13.  ENACTED 6/14/2013.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>“...relative to schools transferred to the Recovery School District; to provide for the submission of petitions by parents requesting that a school be removed from the Recovery School District and returned to the local school system under certain conditions; to require rules and regulations to be adopted by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for the petition process; and to provide for related matters... School and district accountability; failing schools; transfer to Recovery School District; parent petitions.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=857436&amp;n=HB115%20Act">http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=857436&amp;n=HB115%20Act</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Maine	2011	LD 1424 (HP 1047)	Rep Volk - R Sen. Mason – R Rep. Newendyke - R Rep. O'Connor - R Rep. Sanderson - R Rep. Sirocki - R	Introduced 4/6/2011.  Sent to Senate Education and Cultural Affairs committee for concurrence. Placed in legislative files (DEAD) 05/12/11.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An Act to Enhance Parental Roles in Education Choice... Parent empowerment in school restructuring... a parent of a student in an elementary or secondary school that is not making adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001... may petition the superintendent of the school administrative unit in which the school is located to restore the provision of services provided by the school through one of the strategies described... Parents or legal guardians representing at least a majority of the students who have been enrolled in the school for at least two years sign a petition requesting that the school be removed from the jurisdiction of the Recovery School District and returned to the administration and management of the school system from which it was transferred.”</i>  <a href="http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1047&amp;item=1&amp;snum=125">http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1047&amp;item=1&amp;snum=125</a>
Maryland	2011	HB 1081	Del. Bates - R Del. Aumann -R Del. Elliot – R Del. Hough – R Del. Kipke – R Del. McDonough –R Del. Miller – R	Introduced 2/11/11.  First reading in House Ways and Means committee. Last action 2/16/13.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform options including voucher language (monetary scholarships).  <i>“An act concerning Education – Public Schools – Petitions for Intervention... For the purpose of authorizing certain parents and legal guardians of students attending public schools that are subject to corrective action and are not making adequate yearly progress to petition county boards of education to implement certain interventions... if more than 50% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending a public school, or a combination of more than 50% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the middle or high school, sign a petition requesting the county board to implement an intervention, the county board shall implement the intervention requested by the parents or legal guardians... ‘Intervention’ means: (1) An educational choice model; (2) A restart model; or (3) A school closure model...”</i>  <a href="http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2011rs/bills/hb/hb1081f.pdf">http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2011rs/bills/hb/hb1081f.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Maryland	2011	SB 776	Sen. William G. Ferguson IV - D	Introduced 2/4/2011.  Unfavorable report by Senate Education Health and Environmental Affairs committee. Withdrawn 03/17/11.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An act concerning Parent Empowerment Act of 2011... For the purpose of authorizing certain parents and legal guardians of students attending public schools that are subject to corrective action and are not making adequate yearly progress to petition county boards of education to implement certain interventions based on accomplishing certain improvements... If at least 51% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending a public school sign a petition requesting the county board to implement an intervention, the county board shall implement the intervention requested by the parents or legal guardians... 'Intervention' means an alternative governance structure... "</i>  <a href="http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2011rs/bills/sb/sb0776f.pdf">http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2011rs/bills/sb/sb0776f.pdf</a>
Maryland	2012	HB 831	Del. Bates – R Del. Glass – R Del. Hough – R Del. Kipke - R Del. McDonough - R Del. Schuh – R Del. Smigiel Sr. – R Del. Stocksdale – R Del. Szeliga - R	Introduced 2/9/2012.  Unfavorable report by House Ways and Means committee. Withdrawn 03/06/12.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform options including voucher language (monetary scholarships).  <i>"An act concerning Education – Public Schools – Parent Trigger... for the purpose of authorizing certain parents and legal guardians of students attending public schools that are subject to corrective action and are not making adequate yearly progress to petition county boards of education to implement certain interventions... if more than 50% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the middle or high school, sign a petition requesting the county board to implement an intervention, the county board shall implement the intervention requested by the parents or legal guardians... 'Intervention' means: (1) An educational choice model; (2) A restart model; or (3) A school closure model..."</i>  <a href="http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2012rs/bills/hb/hb0831f.pdf">http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2012rs/bills/hb/hb0831f.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Maryland	2013	HB 875	Del. Bates – R Del. Afzali – R Del. Aumann – R Del. Boteler – R Del. Dwyer Jr. –R Del. Eckardt – R Del. Elliot – R Del. George – R Del. Hough – R Del. Kipke – R Del. Kregs – R Del. McComas – R Del. McDonough – R Del. Oaks – R Del. Otto – R	Introduced 2/7/2013.  First reading in House Ways and Means Committee and hearing. Last action on 2/13/13.	Parent trigger legislation.  “An act concerning “Education – Public Schools – Parent Empowerment... For the purpose of authorizing certain parents and legal guardians of students attending public schools that are not meeting State accountability goals to petition county boards of education to implement certain interventions... if more than 50% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending a public school, or a combination of more than 50% of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the middle or high school, sign a petition requesting the county board to implement an intervention, the county board shall implement the intervention requested by the parents or legal guardians... ‘Intervention’ means: (1) A restart model; or (2) A school closure model...”  <a href="http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/bills/hb/hb0875f.pdf">http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/bills/hb/hb0875f.pdf</a>
Massachusetts	2013	H 429	Rep. Jones – R Rep. Peterson - R Rep. Hill - R Rep. Poirier - R Rep. deMacedo - R Rep. Humason - R Rep. Frost - R Rep. Harrington - R Rep. Boldyga -R Rep. Ferguson - R Rep. Winslow - R Rep. Smola - R Rep. Kuros - R Rep. Beaton - R	Introduced 1/22/2013.  Referred to Joint Committee on Education. Last action 06/27/13.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (monetary voucher).  “An act relative to a “parent trigger petition” at schools in the Commonwealth... any underperforming or chronically underperforming public school that requires further improvement or has failed to improve, following the commissioner’s review... may be subject to further turnaround plans, as initiated by a petition signed by the parents of a majority of the students enrolled at said underperforming or chronically underperforming schools... the commissioner shall have the authority to order the following actions: (1) repurposing of the underperforming or chronically underperforming school; (2) closure of the underperforming or chronically underperforming school; or (3) educational choice, whereby students of the underperforming or chronically underperforming school are offered a monetary voucher to cover the cost of attendance at any private or other public school...”  <a href="https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H429">https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H429</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Michigan	2011	SB 620	Sen. Robertson - R	Introduced 9/7/2011.  Passed Senate. Referred to second reading in the House. Last action 12/5/2012.	School reform legislations with parent trigger provision.  <i>“Education; public school academies; conversion schools... A public school operated by a school district may be converted to and operated as a conversion school as provided under this part pursuant to a parental petition... contains the valid signatures of at least 60% of the eligible or legal guardians... The redesign plan shall require the implementation of 1 of the 4 school intervention models that are provided for the lowest achieving schools under the federal incentive grant program known as ‘race to the top’... the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model...”</i>  <a href="http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billengrossed/Senate/htm/2011-SEBS-0620.htm">http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billengrossed/Senate/htm/2011-SEBS-0620.htm</a>
Michigan	2013	SB 83	Sen. Roberston – R Sen. Pavlov - R	Introduced 1/29/2013.  Referred to Committee on Education. Last action 1/29/2013.	School reform legislations with parent trigger provision.  <i>“Education; public school academies; conversion schools... A public school operated by a school district may be converted to and operated as a conversion school as provided under this part pursuant to a parental petition... contains valid signatures ... of at least 51% of the eligible parents or legal guardians... The redesign plan shall require the implementation of 1 of the 4 school intervention models that are provided for the lowest achieving schools under the federal incentive grant program known as ‘race to the top’... the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model...”</i>  <a href="http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/Senate/pdf/2013-SIB-0083.pdf">http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/Senate/pdf/2013-SIB-0083.pdf</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Minnesota	2011	HF 1053	Rep. Downey – R Rep. Scott – R	Introduced 3/14/2011.  Referred to Education Reform. Last action 1/24/2012.	<p>Parent trigger legislation. No more than 20 schools shall be subject to this petition.</p> <p><i>"A bill for an act relating to education; empowering parents to request that a school district intervene in a persistently low performing school; proposing coding for new law ... Empowering parents to request school interventions... where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending one of the state's persistently lowest performing schools... or a combination of a least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending that school and those attending the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate in to that school, sign a petition requesting that the school board of the school district in which the school is located implement one or more of the four interventions or other alternative governance arrangements identified under federal law..."</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF1053&amp;version=0&amp;session_year=2011&amp;session_number=0&amp;format=pdf">https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF1053&amp;version=0&amp;session_year=2011&amp;session_number=0&amp;format=pdf</a></p>
Minnesota	2012	HF 2580	Rep. Loon - R	Introduced 2/29/2012.  Billed passed from house. Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 04/18/2012.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>"A bill for an act relating to education; empowering parents to request a school district intervene in a "Priority" school... Empowering parents to request school interventions... ..if parents representing at least 51 percent of students attending one of the state's "Priority" schools... or parents who combined represent at least 51 percent of students attending that school and students attending the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into that school, sign a petition requesting that the school board of the school district in which the school is located or the charter school board of directors implements one of four intervention models or other alternative governance arrangement in this paragraph, then the school board must implement the parent-requested intervention model... The four intervention models include: (1) a turnaround model... (2) a restart model... (3) a school closure model... (4) a transformational model..."</i></p> <p><a href="http://wdoc.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/L.S87/HF2580.3.pdf">http://wdoc.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/L.S87/HF2580.3.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Minnesota	2012	SF 2546	Sen. Hann - R	Introduced 3/22/2012.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 3/22/2012.	<p>Parent trigger legislation. No more than 20 schools shall be subject to this petition.</p> <p><i>A bill for an act relating to education; empowering parents to request a school district intervene in a persistently low-performing school... Empowering parents to request school interventions... if at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending one of the state's persistently low-performing school... or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of students attending that school and the parents or legal guardians of students attending the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into that school, sign a petition requesting the school board of the school district in which the school is located to implement one of the four intervention models or other alternative governance arrangement, then the school board must implement an intervention model or other governance arrangement. The four intervention models include: (1) a turnaround model... (2) a restart model... (3) a school closure model... (4) a transformational model...</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF2546&amp;version=0&amp;session=ls87&amp;session_year=2012&amp;session_number=0&amp;format=pdf">https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF2546&amp;version=0&amp;session=ls87&amp;session_year=2012&amp;session_number=0&amp;format=pdf</a></p>
Mississippi	2010	SB 2293	Sen. Watson – R Sen. McDaniel – R Sen. Hewes – R Sen. Yancey – R Sen. Lee – R Sen. Clarke – R Sen. Burton – R Sen. Hudson – R Sen. Dickerson – D Sen. Flowers – R Sen. Chassaniol – R Sen. Michel – R Sen. Ward – R Sen. Kirby – R Sen. Moffatt - R	Introduced 1/7/2010.  <b>ENACTED 4/27/2010.</b>	<p><b>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision.</b></p> <p><i>"An act to create a new start school program...to create the 'Conversion Charter School Act of 2010'; to establish a process by which chronically under-performing public schools may be converted to conversion charter school status upon a petition approved by more than 50% of the parents or guardians of students in those schools..."</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/SB/2200-2299/SB2293SG.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/SB/2200-2299/SB2293SG.pdf</a></p> <p>Policy guidelines: <a href="http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mississippi-board-of-education/board-of-education-policy-manual/policy-2650-conversion-charter-schools">http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mississippi-board-of-education/board-of-education-policy-manual/policy-2650-conversion-charter-schools</a></p> <p>Petition and conversion plan format:  <a href="http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/mississippi-board-of-education-library/ms-conversion-charter-school-petition-conversion-plan-2650.pdf?sfvrsn=2">http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/mississippi-board-of-education-library/ms-conversion-charter-school-petition-conversion-plan-2650.pdf?sfvrsn=2</a> </p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Mississippi	2011	HB 920	Rep. Scott - D	Introduced 1/17/2011. Died in Education committee 2/1/2011.	<p>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision. Expands the definition for charter school conversion eligibility.</p> <p><i>“An act to... delete the definition of the term ‘chronically under-performing public school’ from the conversion charter school act... to authorize any public school to convert to charter school status... The petition and conversion plan must be approved by more than fifty percent (50%) of the families of the students enrolled in the public school...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2011/pdf/HB/0900-0999/HB0920IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2011/pdf/HB/0900-0999/HB0920IN.pdf</a></p>
Mississippi	2012	HB 327	Rep. Scott – D	Introduced 3/6/2012. Died in Education Committee 2/13/2012.	<p>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision. Expands the definition for charter school conversion eligibility.</p> <p><i>“An act to... delete the definition of the term ‘chronically under-performing public school’ from the conversion charter school act... to authorize any public school to convert to charter school status... The petition and conversion plan must be approved by more than fifty percent (50%) of the families of the students enrolled in the public school.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/HB/0300-0399/HB0327IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/HB/0300-0399/HB0327IN.pdf</a></p>
Mississippi	2012	HB 1152	Rep. Moore – R Rep. Dixon – D	Introduced 2/20/2012. Passed the House. Died in conference 4/30/2012.	<p>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision. Provides for a transitional year for converted schools.</p> <p><i>“An act... to require the first school year following the approval of a chronically under-performing public school's petition for conversion to charter school status to be a transitional year during which the conversion occurs... The petition and conversion plan must be approved by more than fifty percent (50%) of the families of the students enrolled in a chronically under-performing public school...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/HB/1100-1199/HB1152IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/HB/1100-1199/HB1152IN.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Mississippi	2012	SB 2591	Sen. Tollison – R	Introduced 2/20/12. Died in Education committee 3/6/2012.	<p>Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision. Provides for a transitional year for converted schools.</p> <p><i>“An act...to provide that following three consecutive school years as a low-performing, at-risk or failing school there will be a transitional year to transfer the administration into a conversion charter school... The petition and conversion plan must be approved by more than fifty percent (50%) of the families of the students enrolled in a chronically under-performing public school...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/SB/2500-2599/SB2591IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2012/pdf/SB/2500-2599/SB2591IN.pdf</a></p>
Missouri	2011	HB 393	Rep. Jones - R Rep. Dieckhaus - R Rep. McNary - R Rep. Barnes - R Rep. Richardson - R Rep. Koenig - R Rep. Schoeller - R Rep. Cross - R	Introduced 2/2/11.  Referred to House Elementary and Secondary Education committee. Last action 2/16/11.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (monetary vouchers).</p> <p><i>“An act... relating to the parent empowerment and choice act... known as the ‘Parent Empowerment and Choice Act’ or the ‘Parent Trigger Act’... For all public schools where more than fifty percent of the parents of pupils attending school, or a combination of more than fifty percent of the parents of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the three interventions... There are three school intervention models: restart model, school closure, and educational choice.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills111/billpdf/intro/HB0393I.PDF">http://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills111/billpdf/intro/HB0393I.PDF</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Missouri	2012	HB 1539	Rep. Jones - R Rep. Fuhr - R Rep. Lant - R Rep. Cox - R Rep. Higdon - R Rep. Funderburk - R	Introduced 1/26/2012.  Referred to House Elementary and Secondary Education committee. Last action 2/2/2012.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (educational choice tax credit scholarship).  <i>“An act... relating to the parent empowerment and choice act... known as the ‘Parent Empowerment and Choice Act’ or the ‘Parent Trigger Act’... For all public schools where more than fifty percent of the parents of pupils attending school, or a combination of more than fifty percent of the parents of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the three interventions... There are three school intervention models: restart model, school closure, and educational choice.”</i>  <a href="http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills121/billpdf/intro/HB1539I.PDF">http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills121/billpdf/intro/HB1539I.PDF</a>
Missouri	2013	HB 603	Rep. Jones – R Rep. Cookson – R Rep. Barnes – R Rep. Cierpiot – R Rep. Koenig – R Rep. Burlison – R Rep. Scharnhorst – R Rep. Funderburk – R Rep. Hubbard – R Rep. Parkinson – R Rep. Swan – R Rep. Hicks – R Rep. Spencer – R Rep. Diehl – R Rep. Bahr – R	Introduced 2/14/2013.  Referred to Elementary and Secondary Education committee. Public hearing scheduled, bill not heard. Last action 5/1/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act.... Relating to intervention options for struggling schools... For any public school in the bottom twenty percent of schools as identified for the previous school year under the school improvement program scoring guide, parents may petition to convert the school into a charter school or transform it under one of the following transformation models:(1) Restart model;(2) School closure;(3) Transformation model; (4) Turnaround model.”</i>  <a href="http://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills131/billpdf/intro/HB0603I.PDF">http://house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills131/billpdf/intro/HB0603I.PDF</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Missouri	2013	SB 311	Sen. Nasheed - D	Introduced 2/13/2013.  Second read and referred to Senate education committee. Last action 2/28/13.	Charter school legislation with parent trigger provision.  <i>“An Act... relating to school turnaround models to transform public schools designated in the lowest performing twenty percent of schools in the state... For any school in the bottom twenty percent of schools identified through the Missouri school improvement program, the parent of any student who is enrolled in the school or the parent of any student whose age does not exceed twenty-two who resides in the attendance area of the school may petition to convert the school to a charter school or convert the school using a school turnaround option... a restart model, a school closure model, a transformation model, and a turnaround model... Petitioning parents shall not submit signed petitions for any school to the district board of education until they have obtained a number of signatures equal to fifty-one percent of the pupils attending the school.”</i>  <a href="http://www.senate.mo.gov/13info/pdf-bill/intro/SB311.pdf">http://www.senate.mo.gov/13info/pdf-bill/intro/SB311.pdf</a>
Montana					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13. No charter school law in the state.
Nebraska					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13. No charter school law in the state.

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Nevada	2011	AB 367	Assm. Hansen – R	Introduced 3/21/2011.  Referred to Education committee. Pursuant to Joint Standing Rule 14.3.1, no further action allowed 4/16/2011.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language.</p> <p><i>“Enacts provisions relating to school choice... An act relating to education; authorizing certain parents and legal guardians to submit a petition to the board of trustees of a school district to implement intervention actions at a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement... this bill authorizes the parents and legal guardians of pupils enrolled in a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement, or a combination of the parents and legal guardians of pupils who will matriculate into the school, to submit a petition signed by not less than 51 percent of those parents and legal guardians to the board of trustees of the school district to take one or more of the following intervention actions for the school: (1) implementing a restart model for the school by closing the school and reopening as a charter school; (2) closing the school and transferring the pupils to another school located in the school district; or (3) implementing a program of school choice, including providing vouchers...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB367.pdf">http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/AB/AB367.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Nevada	2011	SB 366	Sen. Cegavske - R Sen. Gustavson - R Sen. Roberson - R Sen. Halseth - R Sen. Settelmeyer - R Sen. Hardy - R Sen. Kieckhefer - R Sen. McGinness - R	Introduced 3/21/2011.  Referred to Education committee. Pursuant to Joint Standing Rule 14.3.1, no further action allowed 4/16/2011.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language.</p> <p><i>“Enacts provisions relating to school choice... An act relating to education; authorizing certain parents and legal guardians to submit a petition to the board of trustees of a school district to implement intervention actions at a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement... this bill authorizes the parents and legal guardians of pupils enrolled in a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement, or a combination of the parents and legal guardians of pupils who will matriculate into the school, to submit a petition signed by not less than 51 percent of those parents and legal guardians to the board of trustees of the school district to take one or more of the following intervention actions for the school: (1) implementing a restart model for the school by closing the school and reopening as a charter school; (2) closing the school and transferring the pupils to another school located in the school district; or (3) implementing a program of school choice, including providing vouchers...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/SB/SB366.pdf">http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/76th2011/Bills/SB/SB366.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Nevada	2013	AB 254	Assm. Hansen – R Assm. Hickey – R Assm. Hambrick – R Sen. Gustavson – R	Introduced 03/13/2013.  Referred to Education committee. Pursuant to Joint Standing Rule 14.3.1, no further action allowed. 04/13/2012.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language.  <i>“Enacts provisions relating to school choice... An act relating to education; authorizing certain parents and legal guardians to submit to the board of trustees of a school district a petition to implement intervention actions at a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement... this bill authorizes the parents and legal guardians of pupils enrolled in a public school that is designated as demonstrating need for improvement, or a combination of the parents and legal guardians of pupils who will matriculate into the school, to submit a petition signed by not less than 51 percent of those parents and legal guardians to the board of trustees of the school district to take one or more of the following intervention actions for the school: (1) implementing a restart model for the school by closing the school and reopening as a charter school; (2) closing the school and transferring the pupils to another school located in the school district; or (3) implementing a program of school choice, including providing vouchers...”</i>  <a href="http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Bills/AB/AB254.pdf">http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Bills/AB/AB254.pdf</a>
Nevada	2013	SB 311	Sen. Ford - D	Introduced 3/18/2013.  Passed Senate. Failed in House in third reading. Vote 17-24-1. 5/24/13.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform options.  <i>“Revises provisions governing empowerment schools... An act relating to education; authorizing the parents and legal guardians of pupils enrolled in an underperforming school, under certain circumstances, to submit a petition for the conversion of the school to an empowerment school or the conversion of an empowerment school to a charter school...this bill provides that 55 percent or more of the parents and legal guardians of the pupils enrolled in an underperforming school for which a school advisory board was created may submit a petition to the board of trustees of the school district for the conversion of the school to an empowerment school.”</i>  <a href="http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Bills/SB/SB311_R2.pdf">http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Bills/SB/SB311_R2.pdf</a>
New Hampshire					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
New Jersey	2010	A 3697	Assm. Carroll - R	Introduced 1/10/2011.  Referred to Assembly Education committee. Last action 1/10/11.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition voucher).</p> <p><i>“Parent Empowerment and Choice Act; enables parents to initiate reform in low performing schools through a petition process... The parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in a low performing school may initiate reform at the school through the submission of a parent petition to the board of education or, in a school district under full State intervention, the State district superintendent. The parent petition shall: (1) include signatures representing more than 50% of the households in which the school's students reside; and (2) specify which of the three reform measures identified... reopening the school as a charter school... change in school leadership... establishment of a tuition voucher system...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/A4000/3697_11.PDF">http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/A4000/3697_11.PDF</a></p>
New Jersey	2010	S 2569	Sen. Kyrillos – R	Introduced 12/20/2010.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 12/10/10.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition voucher).</p> <p><i>“Parent Empowerment and Choice Act; enables parents to initiate reform in low performing schools through a petition process... The parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in a low performing school may initiate reform at the school through the submission of a parent petition to the board of education or, in a school district under full State intervention, the State district superintendent. The parent petition shall: (1) include signatures representing more than 50% of the households in which the school's students reside; and (2) specify which of the three reform measures identified... reopening the school as a charter school... change in school leadership... establishment of a tuition voucher system...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/S3000/2569_11.PDF">http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/S3000/2569_11.PDF</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
New Jersey	2012	A 1507	Assm. Carroll - R	Introduced 1/10/2012.  Referred to Assembly Education committee. Last action 1/10/12.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition voucher).  <i>"Parent Empowerment and Choice Act; enables parents to initiate reform in low performing schools through a petition process... The parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in a low performing school may initiate reform at the school through the submission of a parent petition to the board of education or, in a school district under full State intervention, the State district superintendent. The parent petition shall: (1) include signatures representing more than 50% of the households in which the school's students reside; and (2) specify which of the three reform measures identified... reopening the school as a charter school... change in school leadership... establishment of a tuition voucher system..."</i>  <a href="http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/A2000/1507_11.PDF">http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/A2000/1507_11.PDF</a>
New Jersey	2012	S 803	Sen. Kyrillos -- R	Introduced 1/10/2012.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 1/10/12.	Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (tuition voucher).  <i>"Parent Empowerment and Choice Act; enables parents to initiate reform in low performing schools through a petition process... The parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in a low performing school may initiate reform at the school through the submission of a parent petition to the board of education or, in a school district under full State intervention, the State district superintendent. The parent petition shall: (1) include signatures representing more than 50% of the households in which the school's students reside; and (2) specify which of the three reform measures identified... reopening the school as a charter school... change in school leadership... establishment of a tuition voucher system..."</i>  <a href="http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/S1000/803_11.PDF">http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/S1000/803_11.PDF</a>
New Mexico					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
New York	2011	A 7569	Assm. Crystal Peoples-Stokes - D	Introduced 5/10/2011.  Recommitted to Education committee. Last action 4/18/2012.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act... in relation to permitting the parents of students attending a persistently lowest-achieving school to choose an education intervention model... the program shall allow parents of a subject school to circulate petitions in support of an intervention model, which a school district shall act upon pursuant to this section if fifty-one percent or more of the parents of the school enrolled in the subject school sign a petition in support of the intervention model... which include the turnaround model, restart model, transformation model or closure model.”</i>  <a href="http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A7569c-2011">http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A7569c-2011</a>
New York	2011	S 5777	Sen. Grisanti - R	Introduced 6/15/2011.  Recommitted to Education committee. Enacting clause stricken. 3/29/2012.	Parent trigger legislation. Provisions are not statewide.  <i>“An act... in relation to permitting the parents of students attending a persistently lowest-achieving [PLA] school to choose an education intervention model... permit the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending such PLA school to choose which intervention model shall be implemented: the turnaround model, restart model or transformation model. Implementation of the desired model would be based upon at least fifty-five percent of the parents and legal guardians voting and signing a petition identifying the supported model. These provisions apply to cities with a population of more than two hundred twenty-five thousand and less than three hundred thousand...”</i>  <a href="http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S5777-2011">http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S5777-2011</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
New York	2011	S 6878	Introduced by Senate committee on rules.	Introduced 4/4/2012.  Referred to Rules committee. Last action 4/29/2012.	Parent trigger legislation. Provisions are not statewide.  <i>“An act... in relation to permitting the parents of students attending a persistently lowest-achieving [PLA] school to choose an education intervention model... permits the parents of pupils attending a persistently lowest achieving school in any of the big five school districts to choose an educational intervention model... shall permit the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending such PLA school to choose which intervention model shall be implemented: the turnaround model, restart model or transformation model. Implementation of the desired model would be based upon at least fifty-five percent of the parents and legal guardians voting and signing a petition identifying the supported model. These provisions apply to cities with a population of more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand...”</i>  <a href="http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S6878-2011">http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S6878-2011</a>
New York	2013	A 3826	Assm. Crystal Peoples-Stokes - D	Introduced 1/29/2013.  Referred to Education committee. Last action 01/28/2013.	Parent trigger legislation. Provisions are not statewide.  <i>“An Act... in relation to permitting the parents of students attending a persistently lowest-achieving school to choose an education intervention model... Any school identified by the Commissioner as persistently lowest-achieving shall be eligible for participation in the Parent Empowerment Plot. The program shall allow parents of a subject school to circulate petitions in support of an intervention model which a school district shall act upon... if fifty-one percent or more of the parents of the students enrolled in the subject school sign a petition in support of the intervention model...which includes the turnaround model, restart model, transformation model or closure model.”</i>  <a href="http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A3826-2013">http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/A3826-2013</a>
North Carolina					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13.
North Dakota					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/13. No charter school law in the state

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Ohio	2011	HB 153	Rep. Amstutz – R  Governor's biennial budget bill.	Introduced 3/15/2011.  ENACTED 6/30/2011.	<p>Bi-ennial budget legislation with parent trigger provision. Provision is not state wide.</p> <p><i>"Sec. 3302.042...a pilot project that applies to any school that has been ranked according to performance index score... in the lowest five per cent of all public school buildings statewide for three or more consecutive school years and is operated by the Columbus city school district. The pilot project... if the parents or guardians of at least fifty per cent of the students enrolled in a school to which this section applies, or if the parents or guardians of at least fifty per cent of the total number of students enrolled in that school and the schools of lower grade levels whose students typically matriculate into that school, sign and file with the school district treasurer a petition requesting the district board of education to implement one of the following reforms in the school... reopen the school as a community school... replace at least seventy percent of the school's personnel who are related to the school's poor academic performance... contract with another school district or a nonprofit or for-profit entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school... turn operation of the school over to the department... any other major restructuring of the school that makes fundamental reforms in the schools' staffing or governance."</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_HB_153_EN_allparts.pdf">http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_HB_153_EN_allparts.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Ohio	2012	SB 316	Sen. Lehner- R  Mid-term budget review – education provisions.	Introduced 3/22/2012.  ENACTED 9/24/2012.	<p>Bi-ennial budget legislation with parent trigger provision. Provision is not state wide.</p> <p><i>“Sec. 3302.042. (A) ... a pilot project that applies to any school that has been ranked according to performance index score... in the lowest five percent of all public school buildings statewide for three or more consecutive school years and is operated by the Columbus city school district... if the parents or guardians of at least fifty per cent of the students enrolled in a school to which this section applies, or if the parents or guardians of at least fifty per cent of the total number of students enrolled in that school and the schools of lower grade levels whose students typically matriculate into that school... sign and file with the school district treasurer a petition requesting the district board of education to implement one of the following reforms in the school... reopen the school as a community school... replace at least seventy percent of the school's personnel who are related to the school's poor academic performance... contract with another school district or a nonprofit or for-profit entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school... turn operation of the school over to the department... any other major restructuring of the school that makes fundamental reforms in the schools' staffing or governance.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.pdf">http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Ohio	2013	HB 59	Rep. Amstutz – R  Governor's biennial budget bill.	Introduced 2/12/2013.  Bill was enacted 6/30/2013. However, expanded parent trigger provision removed in House Finance and Appropriations.	<p>Biennial budget legislation with parent trigger provision. Provision is not state wide.</p> <p>Originally introduced bill with legislation to extend parent trigger beyond the Columbus School District Pilot. Following language was removed from enacted legislation:</p> <p><i>"Modifies the parent triggered reform mechanism, established under the Columbus City School District Pilot Project, to become a permanent provision applicable to any school of a city, exempted village, or local school district in the state (the provision allows the parents of students enrolled in a school to petition for school reforms if that school has been ranked in the lowest 5% of all public schools by performance index score for three or more consecutive years)... if the parents or guardians of at least fifty per cent of the total number of students enrolled in that school and the schools of lower grade levels whose students typically matriculate into that school... sign and file with the school district treasurer a petition requesting the district board of education to implement one of the following reforms in the school...(1) Reopen the school as a community... (2) Replace at least seventy per cent of the school's personnel who are related to the school's poor academic performance or, at the request of the petitioners, retain not more than thirty per cent of the personnel... (3) Contract with another school district or a nonprofit or for-profit entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school... (4) Turn operation of the school over to the department... (5) Any other major restructuring of the school that makes fundamental reforms in the school's staffing or governance..."</i></p> <p>As introduced:  <a href="http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText130/130_HB_59_1_Y.pdf">http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText130/130_HB_59_1_Y.pdf</a></p> <p>Compared:  <a href="http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/fiscal/comparedoc130/housefinance/edu.pdf">http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/fiscal/comparedoc130/housefinance/edu.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Oklahoma	2011	HB 1745	Rep. Nelson - R	Introduced 2/7/2011.  Second reading referred to Common Education committee. Last action 2/8/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An act relating to schools... which relates to identifying low-achieving schools and alternative governing arrangements; providing for the operation of certain schools to be turned over to the State Board of Education upon petition of the parents... the management and operation of the school shall be turned over to the State Board of Education if more than fifty percent (50%) of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school, including the parents and legal guardians of students in elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the change in the operation of the school... shall implement one of the following four intervention models... turnaround model... restart model... school closure... transformation model..."</i>  <a href="http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2011-12%20INT/hB/HB1745%20INT.PDF">http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2011-12%20INT/hB/HB1745%20INT.PDF</a>
Oklahoma	2011	HB 1731	Rep. Hall – R Rep. Kern – R	Introduced 2/7/2011.  Second reading referred Common Education committee. Last action 2/8/2013	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An act relating to schools... which relates to the identification of low-achieving schools; providing for implementation of certain school intervention upon petition by parents... if at least one-half (1/2) of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school sign a petition requesting the district board of education to implement one or more of the interventions... turnaround model... restart model... school closure... transformation model..."</i>  <a href="http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2011-12%20INT/hB/HB1731%20INT.PDF">http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2011-12%20INT/hB/HB1731%20INT.PDF</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Oklahoma	2013	HB 2243	Rep. Nelson – R	Introduced 2/4/2013.  Seconding reading referred to Rules committee. Last action 2/6/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act relating to schools... which relates to identifying low-achieving schools and alternative governing arrangements; providing for the operation of certain schools to be turned over to the State Board of Education upon petition of the parents... the management and operation of the school shall be turned over to the State Board of Education if more than fifty percent (50%) of the parents or legal guardians of students attending the school, including the parents and legal guardians of students in elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the change in the operation of the school... shall implement one of the following four intervention models... turnaround model... restart model... school closure... transformation model...”</i>  <a href="http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2013-14%20INT/hB/HB2243%20INT.PDF">http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2013-14%20INT/hB/HB2243%20INT.PDF</a>
Oklahoma	2013	SB 1001	Sen. Holt – R Rep. Nelson- R Sen. Shumate - D Sen. Loveless - R Sen. Shortey - R	Introduced 2/4/2013.  Passed the Senate. Second reading referred to Appropriations and Budget committee. Last action 3/14/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“An act relating to schools... authorizing certain school districts to sponsor charter schools; creating the Parent Empowerment Act... creating guidelines for circulation of petition to transition to a charter school... If the total number of students enrolled at the school site on the date that the petition is submitted is an even number, the number of students required to be represented on the petition shall be the total number of students divided by two (2), plus one (1)...”</i>  <a href="http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2013-14%20ENGR/SB/SB1001%20ENGR.PDF">http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2013-14%20ENGR/SB/SB1001%20ENGR.PDF</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Oregon	2013	HB 2881	Rep. Parrish - R Sen. Olsen - R	Introduced 2/11/2013.  Referred to House Education committee. In committee upon adjournment. 7/8/2013	Parent trigger legislation.  “Allows parents to submit petition to school district board to transform school that is in bottom 20 percent of schools of state. Provides process and requirement for transformation... A bill for an act relating to underperforming schools... The parents representing at least 51 percent of the students attending the school sign the petition...may submit an application to convert the school into a charter school... transform the school... using the turnaround model... using the restart model... using the transformation model... close the school.”  <a href="http://www.leg.state.or.us/l3reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2881.intro.pdf">http://www.leg.state.or.us/l3reg/measpdf/hb2800.dir/hb2881.intro.pdf</a>
Pennsylvania	2010	SB 1192	Sen. Piccola - R Sen. Dinniman – D Sen. Browne - R Sen. Earl - R Sen. Rafferty – R Sen. Williams – D Sen. Boscola - D Sen. Alloway – R	Introduced 2/2/2010.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Laid on the table 6/9/2010.	School reform legislation with parent trigger provision.  “An act relating to the public school system... providing for empowering the Department of Education, school districts, schools and parents of school children to undertake measures necessary to improve the academic performance of the students... Education Empowerment Act... The parents of 51% of students in a school district or school designated for accountability level 3... may petition the governing body to take one of the following actions: (1) Contract with an education management organization to manage the school district or a school. (2) Convert a school to a charter school. (3) Close a school. (4) Enter into agreements with persons or for-profit or nonprofit organizations providing education or other services to or for the school district or school...”  <a href="http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&amp;sessYr=2009&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1192&amp;pn=1871">http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&amp;sessYr=2009&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1192&amp;pn=1871</a>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Pennsylvania	2010	SB 1440	Sen. Piccola – R Sen. Dinniman – D Sen. White – R Sen. Williams – D Sen. Waugh – R Sen. Rafferty – R Sen. Earll – R	Introduced 7/7/2010. Referred to Education.	<p>School reform legislation with parent trigger provision.</p> <p><i>“An act relating to the public school system... providing for parent petition.... The parents of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of students in a school identified... as scoring in the lowest measured five percent (5%) in either math or reading may petition the department to take one of the following actions: (1) Close a school and reassign students currently attending the school to another school of the appropriate grade level within the same school district. ... (2) Close the school and reopen the school as a charter school... (3) Enter into an agreement with a person or a for-profit or non-profit organization providing educational or other services or with another school district for alternative management of a school...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2009&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1440&amp;pn=2149">http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2009&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1440&amp;pn=2149</a></p>
Pennsylvania	2011	SB 250	Sen. Piccola – R Sen. Dinniman – D Sen. Earll – R Sen. Eichelberger – R Sen. Waugh – R Sen. Rafferty – R Sen. White – R	Introduced 1/24/2011. Referred the Education committee. Last action 1/24/2011.	<p>School reform legislation with parent trigger provision.</p> <p><i>“An act relating to the public school system... providing for parent petition... The parents of at least fifty-one percent (51%) of students in a school identified... as persistently lowest-achieving may petition the governing body of the school to take one of the following actions... (1) Close the school and reassign students currently attending the school to another school of the appropriate grade level within the same school district that is not a persistently lowest-achieving school. (2) Close the school and reopen the school as a charter school pursuant to subsection (b)(2). (3) Enter into an agreement with a person or a for-profit or nonprofit organization providing educational or other services or with another school district for alternative management of a school.”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2011&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=0250&amp;pn=0212">http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2011&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=0250&amp;pn=0212</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Pennsylvania	2011	SB 1148	Sen. Williams - D Sen. Rafferty - R Sen. Folmer – R Sen. Ferlo – D Sen. Dinniman - D	Introduced 6/14/2011.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 6/14/2011.	<p>Parent trigger legislation. No more than 75 schools in this Commonwealth shall be subject to this petition.</p> <p><i>“An act relating to the public school system... providing for a parent trigger... A petition requesting the board of school directors to implement one or more of the four interventions identified... or the... alternative governance arrangements under... the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 must be signed by one of the following: (1) At least 51% of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school. (2) A combination of at least 51% of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school... transformational model... turnaround model... restart model... school closure...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2011&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1148&amp;pn=1347">http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2011&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1148&amp;pn=1347</a></p>
Pennsylvania	2013	SB 1067	Sen. Williams – D Sen. Rafferty – R Sen. Folmer - R	Introduced 9/19/2013. Referred to Education.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>“An act... providing for parent trigger, for transformational model, for school transformation by parental petition, for implementation of parental petition... If parents representing over 50% of the students attending a low-achieving school sign a petition requesting to restart the school or to implement one of the turnaround options provided in subsection (a), the school district shall implement the option requested by the parents... transformational model... turnaround model...restart model... school closure...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2013&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1067&amp;pn=1373">http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&amp;sessYr=2013&amp;sessInd=0&amp;billBody=S&amp;billTyp=B&amp;billNbr=1067&amp;pn=1373</a></p>
Rhode Island					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/2013.

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
South Carolina	2013	S 556	Sen. Ford - D	Introduced 3/20/2013.  Referred to Senate Education committee. Last action 3/20/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"...To enact 'The Parent Empowerment Act'... so as to provide that the parents of children attending a school rated below average or located in a school district rated at-risk under the education accountability act may convert the school into a charter school or transform the school under a turnaround model, restart model, or transformation model... If parents representing at least fifty-one percent of the pupils attending the school, or a combination of parents representing at least fifty-one percent of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting one of the interventions..."</i>  <a href="http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/556.htm">http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/556.htm</a>
South Dakota					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/2013. No charter school law in the state.
Tennessee	2013	HB 77	Rep. DeBerry – D Rep. Hardaway - D	Introduced 1/23/2013.  Action deferred in House Education committee to summer study. Last action 4/3/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An eligible public school in the bottom twenty percent (20%) of the state in student academic performance may convert to a public charter school pursuant to this chapter if the parents of fifty-one percent (51%) of the children enrollment at the eligible school demonstrate support by signing a petition seeking conversion or a turnaround model and the LEA agrees to the conversion... These models are the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model."</i>  <a href="http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/HB0077.pdf">http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/HB0077.pdf</a>
Tennessee	2013	SB 483	Sen. Tate – D	Introduced 1/23/2013.  Assigned to general subcommittee of Senate Education committee. Last action 4/3/2013.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>"An eligible public school in the bottom twenty percent (20%) of the state in student academic performance may convert to a public charter school pursuant to this chapter if the parents of fifty-one percent (51%) of the children enrollment at the eligible school demonstrate support by signing a petition seeking conversion or a turnaround model and the LEA agrees to the conversion... These models are the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model."</i>  <a href="http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/SB0483.pdf">http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/SB0483.pdf</a>

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Texas	2011	SB 738	Sen. Shapiro - R Rep. Villareal - D	Introduced 2/16/2011.  ENACTED 6/17/2011  Administrative guidelines developed.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>"An act relating to a parental role in determining sanctions applied to a public school campus under certain circumstances... If a campus is considered to have an unacceptable performance rating for three consecutive school years after the campus is reconstituted under Subsection (a), the commissioner... shall order:(1)repurposing of the campus under this section; (2)alternative management of the campus under this section; or (3)closure of the campus... a written petition signed by the parents of a majority of the students enrolled at a campus... the parents request the commissioner to order, the commissioner shall... order the specific action requested..."</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/82R/billtext/pdf/SB00738F.pdf#navpanes=0">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/82R/billtext/pdf/SB00738F.pdf#navpanes=0</a></p> <p><a href="http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&amp;app=9&amp;p_dir=&amp;p_rloc=&amp;p_tloc=&amp;p_ploc=&amp;pg=1&amp;p_tac=&amp;ti=19&amp;pt=2&amp;ch=97&amp;rl=1065">http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&amp;app=9&amp;p_dir=&amp;p_rloc=&amp;p_tloc=&amp;p_ploc=&amp;pg=1&amp;p_tac=&amp;ti=19&amp;pt=2&amp;ch=97&amp;rl=1065</a></p>
Texas	2013	SB 1263	Sen. Taylor - R Sen. Patrick - R Sen. Campbell - R Sen. West - D	Introduced 3/6/2013. Passed Senate. Left pending in House Public Education committee. Last action 5/14/2013.	<p>Parent trigger legislation.</p> <p><i>"A bill... relating to allowing parents to petition for repurposing, alternative management, or closure of certain public school campuses... if the commissioner is presented, in the time and manner specified by commissioner rule, a written petition signed by the parents of a majority of the students enrolled at a campus that is assigned an unacceptable performance rating under Section 39.054 for three consecutive school years... that the parents request the commissioner to order, the commissioner shall... order the specific action requested.."</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/SB01263E.pdf#navpanes=0">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/SB01263E.pdf#navpanes=0</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) -- Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
Texas	2013	HB 300	Rep. Isaac – R Rep. Parker – R Rep. Davis – R Rep. Harper-Brown – R Rep. Simmons – R Rep. Capriglione – R Rep. Flynn – R Rep. Frank – R Rep. Hughes – R Rep. Krause – R Rep. Laubenberg- R Rep. Sanford – R Rep. Lavender – R Rep. Leach – R Rep. Miller – R	Introduced 3/6/2013. Left pending in Public Education committee. Last action 4/30/2013.	School reform legislation with parent trigger provision.  <i>“A bill... relating to an alternative system of public education governance that enhances school accountability, local control, and family empowerment in the educational system... The family trigger for a Families First school may be pulled for any reason, including a desire to consider changing the operator of the school to a different school management organization...A family trigger is pulled by a petition sent to the division signed by the families of at least 50 percent of the students at the school that specifies the change or changes that the families are contemplating...”</i>  <a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HB00300I.pdf#navpanes=0">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HB00300I.pdf#navpanes=0</a>
Texas	2013	HB 2976	Rep. Gonzalez – D Rep. Morrison – R Rep. Lozano – R Rep. Parker – R Rep. White - R	Introduced 3/7/2013. Left pending in Public Education committee. Last action 4/30/13.	Parent trigger legislation.  <i>“A bill... relating to parental involvement in certain procedures regarding a school campus receiving an unacceptable performance rating under certain circumstances... If a campus is considered to have an unacceptable performance rating for two consecutive school years after the campus is reconstituted under Subsection (a), the commissioner... shall order: (1) repurposing of the campus under this section;(2) alternative management of the campus under this section; or(3) closure of the campus... if the commissioner is presented, in the time and manner specified by commissioner rule, a written petition signed by the parents of a majority of the students enrolled at a campus...”</i>  <a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HB02976I.pdf#navpanes=0">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HB02976I.pdf#navpanes=0</a>
Utah					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent legislation as of 9/22/2013.
Vermont					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/2013. No charter school law in the state.
Virginia					Media evidence of preliminary discussion of draft legislation. 2013 gubernatorial candidate Ken Cuccinelli’s education platform includes a constitutional amendment to allow a parent trigger law.  <a href="http://www.cuccinelli.com/virginia-gubernatorial-candidate-proposes-raft-of-school-choice/">http://www.cuccinelli.com/virginia-gubernatorial-candidate-proposes-raft-of-school-choice/</a>

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Washington					<p>No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/2013.</p> <p>However, the 2012 state charter school initiative measure, I-1240, included language whereby a majority of parents could petition to convert a school to a charter.</p> <p><a href="http://sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/initiatives/FinalText_274.pdf">http://sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/initiatives/FinalText_274.pdf</a></p>
West Virginia	2011	HB 3051	Del. Miller – R	Introduced 1/8/2011. Last action referred to House Education. 2/8/2011.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (universal educational vouchers). No charter school law in the state, although HB 3051 references charter schools as one of the intervention options.</p> <p><i>“A bill... relating to creating an opportunity for parents to petition a school district in order to convert a school into one of three possible models of school level reform... The Parent Empowerment and Choice Act... For all public schools where more than one half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of more than one half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the county board of education to implement one or more of the three interventions identified pursuant to section four of this article, the county board of education shall implement the option requested by the parents... Parents may petition the county board of education to implement one or more of the following intervention models... restart model... school closure model... educational choice...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb3051%20intr.htm&amp;yr=2011&amp;sesstype=RS&amp;i=3051">http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb3051%20intr.htm&amp;yr=2011&amp;sesstype=RS&amp;i=3051</a></p>

State	Year	Proposed Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) – Party Affiliation	Status	Bill excerpts relating to parent petitions and alternative school governance options.
West Virginia	2012	HB 3051	Del. Miller - R	Introduced 1/11/2012.  Referred to House Education committee. Last action 1/11/12.	<p>Parent trigger legislation with other school reform provisions including voucher language (universal educational vouchers). No charter school law in the state, although HB 3051 references charter schools as one of the intervention options.</p> <p><i>“A bill... relating to creating an opportunity for parents to petition a school district in order to convert a school into one of three possible models of school level reform... The Parent Empowerment and Choice Act... For all public schools where more than one half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of more than one half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the county board of education to implement one or more of the three interventions identified pursuant to section four of this article, the county board of education shall implement the option requested by the parents... Parents may petition the county board of education to implement one or more of the following intervention models... restart model... school closure model... educational choice...”</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=HB3051%20intr.htm&amp;yr=2012&amp;sesstype=RS&amp;i=3051">http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=HB3051%20intr.htm&amp;yr=2012&amp;sesstype=RS&amp;i=3051</a></p>
Wisconsin					No media evidence of efforts to draft parent trigger legislation as of 9/22/2013.
Wyoming					Media evidence of preliminary discussion to draft parent trigger legislation. Floated idea, but no bill introduced. Rep. Edmonds – R.

**APPENDIX H****California Parent Empowerment Law SB 4 X 5**

## **Senate Bill No. 4**

### **CHAPTER 3**

An act to add Article 10 (commencing with Section 48350) to Chapter 2 of Part 27 of Division 4 of Title 2 of, and to add Article 3 (commencing with Section 53300) to Chapter 18 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of, the Education Code, relating to public schools.

[Approved by Governor January 07, 2010. Filed with Secretary of State January 07, 2010. ]

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 4, Romero. Public schools: Race to the Top.

(1) Existing law requires each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years not otherwise exempted to attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes in the school district in which his or her parent or guardian is a resident. Existing law authorizes 2 school districts to enter into an agreement that allows pupils to transfer between the 2 districts.

This bill would establish the Open Enrollment Act to enable pupils residing in the state to attend public schools in school districts other than their school district of residence, as defined. The bill would authorize the parent or guardian of a pupil enrolled in a low-achieving school, as defined, to submit an application for the pupil to attend a school in a school district of enrollment, as defined. The bill would authorize a school district of enrollment, as defined, to adopt specific, written standards for acceptance and rejection of applications for enrollment, subject to specified conditions and a specified priority scheme for applicants. Within 60 days of receiving an application for enrollment, the bill would require a school district of enrollment to notify the applicant parent or guardian and the school district of residence, as defined, in writing whether the application has been accepted or rejected and, if an application is rejected, state in the notification the reasons for the rejection. The bill would require the State Board of Education to adopt emergency regulations to implement these provisions. The bill would require the Superintendent to contract for an independent evaluation of the program using federal funds appropriated for that purpose and to provide a final evaluation report to the Legislature, the Governor, and the state board on or before October 1, 2014.

By requiring school districts to perform additional duties regarding the enrollment of nonresident pupils, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provides \$4.3 billion for the State Incentive Grant Fund (Race to the Top Fund), which is a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states that are implementing specified educational objectives.

The ARRA requires a governor to apply on behalf of a state seeking a Race to the Top grant, and requires the application to include specified information. The United States Secretary of Education has issued regulations and guidelines regarding state eligibility under the Race to the Top program.

This bill would require a local educational agency to implement one of several specified reforms for any other school which, after one full school year, is subject to corrective action pursuant to a specified provision of federal law and continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, and have an Academic Performance Index score of less than 800, and where at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one of the alternative governance arrangements, unless the local educational agency makes a finding in writing why it cannot implement the recommended arrangement and instead designates in writing which of the other alternative governance arrangements it will implement in the subsequent school year. The bill would require the local educational agency to notify the Superintendent and the state board if it decides to implement a different alternative governance option.

The bill would limit this procedure to no more than 75 schools.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

(4) The bill would provide that it would become operative only if SB 1 of the 5th Extraordinary Session is also enacted and becomes operative.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Article 10 (commencing with Section 48350) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 27 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, to read:

**Article 10. Open Enrollment Act**

**48350.** This article shall be known, and may be cited, as the Open Enrollment Act.

**48351.** The purpose of this article is to improve pupil achievement, in accordance with the regulations and guidelines for the federal Race to the Top Fund, authorized under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5), and to enhance parental choice in education by providing additional options to pupils to enroll in public schools throughout the state without regard to the residence of their parents.

**48352.** For purposes of this article, the following definitions apply:

(a) “Low-achieving school” means any school identified by the Superintendent pursuant to the following:

(1) Excluding the schools, and taking into account the impact of the criteria in paragraph

(2), the Superintendent annually shall create a list of 1,000 schools ranked by increasing API with the same ratio of elementary, middle, and high schools as existed in decile 1 in the 2008–09 school year.

(2) In constructing the list of 1,000 schools each year, the Superintendent shall ensure each of the following:

(A) A local educational agency shall not have more than 10 percent of its schools on the list. However, if the number of schools in a local educational agency is not evenly divisible by 10, the Superintendent shall round up to the next whole number of schools.

(B) Court, community, or community day schools shall not be included on the list.

(C) Charter schools shall not be included on the list.

(b) “Parent” means the natural or adoptive parent or guardian of a dependent child.

(c) “School district of enrollment” means a school district other than the school district in which the parent of a pupil resides, but in which the parent of the pupil nevertheless intends to enroll the pupil pursuant to this article.

(d) “School district of residence” means a school district in which the parent of a pupil resides and in which the pupil would otherwise be required to enroll pursuant to Section 48200.

**48353.** The state board shall adopt emergency regulations to implement this article.

**48354.** (a) The parent of a pupil enrolled in a low-achieving school may submit an application for the pupil to attend a school in a school district of enrollment pursuant to this article.

(b) (1) Consistent with the requirements of Section 1116(b)(1)(E) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.), on or before the first day of the school year, or, if later, on the date the notice of program improvement, corrective action, or restructuring status is required to be provided under federal law the district of residence shall provide the parents and guardians of all pupils enrolled in a school determined in subdivision (a) of Section 48352 with notice of the option to transfer to another public school served by the school district of residence or another school district.

(2) An application requesting a transfer pursuant to this article shall be submitted by the parent of a pupil to the school district of enrollment prior to January 1 of the school year preceding the school year for which the pupil is requesting to transfer. The school district of enrollment may waive the deadline specified in this paragraph.

(3) The application deadline specified in paragraph (2) does not apply to an application requesting a transfer if the parent, with whom the pupil resides, is enlisted in the military and was relocated by the military within 90 days prior to submitting the application.

(4) The application may request enrollment of the pupil in a specific school or program within the school district of enrollment.

(5) A pupil may enroll in a school in the school district of enrollment in the school year immediately following the approval of his or her application.

(6) In order to provide priority enrollment opportunities for pupils residing in the school district, a school district of enrollment shall establish a period of time for resident pupil enrollment prior to accepting transfer applications pursuant to this article.

**48355.** (a) The school district of residence of a pupil or a school district of enrollment to which a pupil has applied to attend may prohibit the transfer of the pupil pursuant to this article or limit the number of pupils who transfer pursuant to this article if the governing board of the district determines that the transfer would negatively impact either of the following:

(1) A court-ordered or voluntary desegregation plan of the district.

(2) The racial and ethnic balance of the district, provided that any policy adopted pursuant to this paragraph is consistent with federal and state law.

(b) A school district of residence shall not adopt any other policies that in any way prevent or discourage pupils from applying for a transfer to a school district of enrollment.

(c) Communications to parents or guardians by districts regarding the open enrollment options provided by this article shall be factually accurate and not target individual parents or guardians or residential neighborhoods on the basis of a child's actual or perceived academic or athletic performance or any other personal characteristic.

**48356.** (a) A school district of enrollment may adopt specific, written standards for acceptance and rejection of applications pursuant to this article. The standards may include consideration of the capacity of a program, class, grade level, school building, or adverse financial impact. Subject to subdivision (b), and except as necessary in accordance with Section 48355, the standards shall not include consideration of a pupil's previous academic achievement, physical condition, proficiency in the English language, family income, or any of the individual characteristics set forth in Section 200.

(b) In considering an application pursuant to this article, a nonresident school district may apply its usual requirements for admission to a magnet school or a program designed to serve gifted and talented pupils.

(c) Subject to the rules and standards that apply to pupils who reside in the school district of enrollment, a resident pupil who is enrolled in one of the district's schools pursuant to this article shall not be required to submit an application in order to remain enrolled.

(d) A school district of enrollment shall ensure that pupils enrolled pursuant to standards adopted pursuant to this section are enrolled in a school with a higher Academic Performance Index than the school in which the pupil was previously enrolled and are selected through a random, unbiased process that prohibits an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be enrolled based on his or her individual academic or athletic performance, or any of the other characteristics set

forth in subdivision (a), except that pupils applying for a transfer pursuant to this article shall be assigned priority for approval as follows:

- (1) First priority for the siblings of children who already attend the desired school.
- (2) Second priority for pupils transferring from a program improvement school ranked in decile 1 on the Academic Performance Index determined pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 48352.
- (3) If the number of pupils who request a particular school exceeds the number of spaces available at that school, a lottery shall be conducted in the group priority order identified in paragraphs (1) and (2) to select pupils at random until all of the available spaces are filled.
- (e) The initial application of a pupil for transfer to a school within a school district of enrollment shall not be approved if the transfer would require the displacement from the desired school of any other pupil who resides within the attendance area of that school or is currently enrolled in that school.
- (f) A pupil approved for a transfer to a school district of enrollment pursuant to this article shall be deemed to have fulfilled the requirements of Section 48204.

**48357.** Within 60 days of receiving an application pursuant to Section 48354, a school district of enrollment shall notify the applicant parent and the school district of residence in writing whether the application has been accepted or rejected. If an application is rejected, the school district of enrollment shall state in the notification the reasons for the rejection.

**48358.** A school district of enrollment that enrolls a pupil pursuant to this article shall accept credits toward graduation that were awarded to the pupil by another school district and shall graduate the pupil if the pupil meets the graduation requirements of the school district of enrollment.

**48359.** (a) Each school district is encouraged to keep an accounting of all requests made for alternative attendance pursuant to this article and records of all disposition of those requests that may include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

- (1) The number of requests granted, denied, or withdrawn. In the case of denied requests, the records may indicate the reasons for the denials.
- (2) The number of pupils who transfer out of the district.
- (3) The number of pupils who transfer into the district.
- (4) The race, ethnicity, gender, self-reported socioeconomic status, and the school district of residence of each of the pupils described in paragraphs (2) and (3).
- (5) The number of pupils described in paragraphs (2) and (3) who are classified as English learners or identified as individuals with exceptional needs, as defined in Section 56026.
- (b) The information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) may be reported to the governing board of the school district at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board.

**48359.5.** For a school district of enrollment that is a basic aid district, the apportionment of state funds for any average daily attendance credited pursuant to this article shall be 70 percent of the district revenue limit that would have been apportioned to the school district of residence. Apportionment of these funds shall begin in the second consecutive year of enrollment, and continue annually until the pupil graduates from, or is no longer enrolled in, the school district of enrollment. For purposes of this section, “basic aid school district” means a school district that does not receive an apportionment of state funds pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 42238 for any fiscal year in which this subdivision may apply.

**48360.** (a) From federal funds appropriated for this purpose, the Superintendent shall contract for an independent evaluation of the open enrollment program operated pursuant to this article. The evaluation shall, at a minimum, consider all of the following:

(1) The levels of, and changes in, academic achievement of pupils in school districts of residence and school districts of enrollment for pupils who do and do not elect to enroll in a school district of enrollment.

(2) Fiscal and programmatic effects on school districts of residence and school districts of enrollment.

(3) Numbers and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of pupils who do and do not elect to enroll in a school district of enrollment.

(b) The Superintendent shall provide a final evaluation report to the Legislature, Governor, and state board on or before October 1, 2014.

**48361.** No exercise of discretion by a district of enrollment in its administration of this article shall be overturned absent a finding as designated by a court of competent jurisdiction that the district governing board acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner.

**SEC. 2.** Article 3 (commencing with Section 53300) is added to Chapter 18 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, to read:

### **Article 3. Parent Empowerment**

**53300.** For any school not identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school under Section 53201 which, after one full school year, is subject to corrective action pursuant to paragraph (7) of Section 1116(b) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) and continues to fail to make adequate yearly progress, and has an Academic Performance Index score of less than 800, and where at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting the local educational agency to implement one or more of the four interventions identified pursuant to paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive of subdivision (a) of Section 53202 or the federally mandated alternative governance arrangement pursuant to Section 1116(b)(8)(B)(v) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.), the local educational agency shall implement the option requested by the parents unless, in a regularly scheduled public hearing, the local educational agency makes a finding in writing stating the reason it cannot implement the specific recommended option and instead designates in writing which of the other options described in this section it will implement in the subsequent school year

consistent with requirements specified in federal regulations and guidelines for schools subject to restructuring under Section 1116(b)(8) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.) and regulations and guidelines for the four interventions.

**53301.** (a) The local educational agency shall notify the Superintendent and the state board upon receipt of a petition under Section 53300 and upon its final disposition of that petition.

(b) If the local educational agency indicates in writing that it will implement in the upcoming school year a different alternative governance arrangement than requested by the parents, the local educational agency shall notify the Superintendent and the state board that the alternative governance option selected has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress as defined in the federally mandated state plan under Section 1111(b)(2) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.).

**53302.** No more than 75 schools shall be subject to a petition authorized by this article.

(b) A petition shall be counted toward this limit upon the Superintendent and state board receiving notice from the local educational agency of its final disposition of the petition.

**53303.** A local educational agency shall not be required to implement the option requested by the parent petition if the request is for reasons other than improving academic achievement or pupil safety.

**SEC. 3.** If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

**SEC. 4.** This act shall become operative only if Senate Bill 1 of the Fifth Extraordinary Session of 2009–10 is also enacted and becomes operative.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Precursors to Parent Trigger Legislation**

State	Year	Precursor Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) - Party Affiliation	Status	Bill language excerpt
Mississippi	2009	HB 1393	Rep. Scott - D	Introduced 1/19/2009. Referred to Education, Appropriations. Died in committee 2/3/2009.	<p><i>"An act to create a pilot program in the Laurel Municipal Separate School District to establish charter schools... a charter school may be formed as a pilot program... in one (1) of the following manners:... the process of conversion may be initiated by parents at an existing school who petition the school district in accordance with the district's conversion policy... A petition may not be approved unless a majority of the parents of students enrolled in the school who are present at the meeting called for the specific purpose of deciding whether or not to convert vote in favor of the conversion. The process of conversion also may be initiated by the filing of a petition signed by no less than one thousand five hundred (1,500) citizens of the school district with the school board."</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2009/pdf/HB/1300-1399/HB1393IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2009/pdf/HB/1300-1399/HB1393IN.pdf</a></p>
Mississippi	2010	HB 458	Rep. Scott - D Rep. Buck - D Re. Coleman - D	Introduced 1/11/2010. Referred to Education, Appropriations. Died in committee 2/2/2010.	<p><i>"An act to create a pilot program in the Laurel Municipal Separate School District to establish charter schools... a charter school may be formed as a pilot program... in one (1) of the following manners:... the process of conversion may be initiated by parents at an existing school who petition the school district in accordance with the district's conversion policy... A petition may not be approved unless a majority of the parents of students enrolled in the school who are present at the meeting called for the specific purpose of deciding whether or not to convert vote in favor of the conversion. The process of conversion also may be initiated by the filing of a petition signed by no less than one thousand five hundred (1,500) citizens of the school district with the school board."</i></p> <p><a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/HB/0400-0499/HB0458IN.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/HB/0400-0499/HB0458IN.pdf</a></p>

State	Year	Precursor Legislation	Primary Sponsor(s) - Party Affiliation	Status	Bill language excerpt
Tennessee	2001	HB 1131	Rep. Winningham - D Rep. Montgomery - R Rep. McDaniel - R Rep. McCord - R Rep. Buttry - R Rep. Baird - R Rep. Black - R Rep. Beavers - R Rep. Boyer - R Rep. Sargent - R Rep. Scroggs - R Rep. Clem - R Rep. Vincent - R Rep. Dunn - R	Introduced 2/1/2001.  ENACTED 7/9/2002.      Rep. Wood - R Rep. Pleasant - R Rep. Bittle - R Rep. Sharp - D	<p><i>"Tennessee Charters Schools Act of 2002...Provide options for parents to meet educational needs of students in low performing schools...An eligible public school may convert to a public charter school pursuant to the provisions of this act if the parents of sixty percent (60%) of the children enrolled at the school or sixty percent (60%) of the teachers assigned to the school agree and demonstrate support by signing a petition seeking conversion and the LEA agrees to the conversion."</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/102/Bill/HB1131.pdf">http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/102/Bill/HB1131.pdf</a></p> <p>Guidelines: <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/Charter_Schools_FAQs.shtml#converted">http://www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/Charter_Schools_FAQs.shtml#converted</a></p> <p>Knox County guidelines: <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/doc/KCS_CS_RFP_11_26_12.pdf">http://www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/doc/KCS_CS_RFP_11_26_12.pdf</a></p>
Tennessee	2001	SB 887	Sen. Atchley - R Sen. Ford J - D Sen. Graves - D Sen. Trail - D Sen. McNally - R Sen. Person - D Sen. Haynes - D Sen. Crutchfield - D Sen. Carter - R Sen. Dixon - D Sen. Miller J - R Sen. Blackburn - R	Introduced 2/7/2001.  Companion bill to HB 1131. Substituted 6/19/2002.	<p><i>"Tennessee Charter School Act of 2001... provide an alternative means within the public school system for ensuring accomplishment of the necessary outcomes of education by allowing the establishment and maintenance of charter schools that operate within a school district structure but are allowed maximum flexibility to achieve their goals... Any existing public school may convert to a charter school pursuant to the provision of this act if seventy-five percent (75%) of the full-time teachers or sixty percent (60%) of the parents whose children are enrolled at the school agree and demonstrate support by signing a petition seeking conversion."</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/102/Bill/SB0887.pdf">http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/102/Bill/SB0887.pdf</a></p>

## **APPENDIX J**

### **Matrix of Seven States with Enacted Legislation**

## CALIFORNIA ENACTED LAW

<b>Legislation Details</b>	<p>SB 4 x5  Name: Public Schools: <b>Race to the Top; Article 3. Parent Empowerment Act</b>  Introduced 12/9/2009. Enacted 1/7/2010.  Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger – Republican  <a href="http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920105SB4">http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920105SB4</a></p>	
<b>Problem perception</b>		Students who are not adequately achieving are concentrated in failing schools and these students can no longer wait for the current system of governance to slowly address the issue. The Parent Empowerment Act is part of a larger piece of legislation called the Open Enrollment Act.
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliation</b>	Sen. Romero – D; Sen. Alquist – D; Sen. Huff – R; Sen. Wyland – R
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	<p>Supporting: California Chamber of Commerce; County of Los Angeles, Sacramento Legislative Office.  Dissenting: California Labor Federation; California School Boards Assn; Small School Districts' Assn.</p> <p>Also mentioned, but not on file, in bill analysis the following organization in opposition: California Teachers Assn; Associated of California School Administrators; individual school districts.</p>
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	The school cannot be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school (under Section 53210); fails to meet Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal Elementary and Secondary Act for three consecutive years; has a state Academic Performance Index of less than 800.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Maximum of 75 schools.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change.</b>	Petition process.
	<b>Eligible adults and feeder pattern.</b>	Parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school or the elementary or middle schools that normally feed into a middle or high school.
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	The petition must be signed by at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school, or a combination of at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally feed into a middle or high school.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Organizing</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Intervention Models</b>		Four intervention models identified in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act: 1) Restart Model; 2) Closure Model; 3) Transformation Model; and, 4) Turnaround Model.

## CALIFORNIA ENACTED LAW, cont.

<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	No direction regarding implementation of guidelines in the legislation. Emergency guidelines were approved by the California State Board of Education in September 2010 and final guidelines were adopted in September 2011.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	<p>California Code of Regulations, Title 5, § 4800 - § 4808</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intent</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Requirement to serve all pupils</li> <li>• Parental notice</li> <li>• Petition signatures</li> <li>• Content of the petition</li> <li>• Submissions of the petition</li> <li>• Verification of petition signatures and obligations of the LEA</li> <li>• Restart requirements for parent empowerment petition</li> <li>• Description of intervention – turnaround model</li> <li>• Description of intervention – restart model</li> <li>• Description of intervention – school closure</li> <li>• Description of intervention – transformation model</li> <li>• Description of intervention – alternative governance arrangement</li> <li>• Prospective effect of regulations</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://weblinks.westlaw.com/result/default.aspx?action=Search&amp;cfid=1&amp;db=CA%2DADC&amp;eq=search&amp;fmqv=s&amp;fn=%5Ftop&amp;method=TNC&amp;origin=Search&amp;query=CI%28%225+CA+ADC+S+4800%22%29&amp;rlt=CLID%5FORYRLT392853118911&amp;rldt=CLID%5FD9270953118911&amp;rp=%2FSearch%2Fdefault%2Ewl&amp;rs=GVT1%2E0&amp;service=Search&amp;sp=CCR%2D1000&amp;src=TRUE&amp;sskey=CLID%5FSSSA2370953118911&amp;tempinfo=FIN&amp;vr=2%2E0">http://weblinks.westlaw.com/result/default.aspx?action=Search&amp;cfid=1&amp;db=CA%2DADC&amp;eq=search&amp;fmqv=s&amp;fn=%5Ftop&amp;method=TNC&amp;origin=Search&amp;query=CI%28%225+CA+ADC+S+4800%22%29&amp;rlt=CLID%5FORYRLT392853118911&amp;rldt=CLID%5FD9270953118911&amp;rp=%2FSearch%2Fdefault%2Ewl&amp;rs=GVT1%2E0&amp;service=Search&amp;sp=CCR%2D1000&amp;src=TRUE&amp;sskey=CLID%5FSSSA2370953118911&amp;tempinfo=FIN&amp;vr=2%2E0</a></p>

## CALIFORNIA ENACTED LAW, cont.

<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>LEA administrative guidelines developed</b>  <b>Los Angeles Unified School District</b>	<p>Board of Education Report No. 021-13/14 submitted 09/03/13, Revision #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Empowerment Act Statute</li> <li>• School Eligibility</li> <li>• Intervention Options</li> <li>• Petition Requirements, Process and Checklist</li> <li>• Signature Eligibility and Verification</li> <li>• Lead Petitioner</li> <li>• Final Disposition</li> <li>• LAUSD Procedure for Processing Petitions</li> <li>• Parent and Legal Guardians' Rights</li> <li>• Principals and School Staff's Rights</li> <li>• Use of Facilities and District Resources</li> <li>• Complaints Procedures</li> <li>• Parent Resource Flyer</li> <li>• Building Relational Trust for School Transformations Toolkit</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://laschoolboard.org/sites/default/files/09-10-13RegBdPublic-Press.pdf">http://laschoolboard.org/sites/default/files/09-10-13RegBdPublic-Press.pdf</a></p>
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	The LEA is not required to implement the option requested in the parent petition if the request is for reasons other than improving academic achievement or pupil safety. The local agency must make this finding at a regularly scheduled public hearing and state, in writing, the reason it cannot implement the specific recommended option. If the local agency indicates it will implement a different alternate governance arrangement than requested by the parents, the alternate arrangement must have substantial promise to make adequate yearly progress.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	The local agency must notify the State Superintendent and state board upon receipt of the petition and its final disposition. The local agency must notify the State Superintendent and the state board if it intends to implement an alternative option.

## CONNECTICUT ENACTED LAW

<b>Legislation Details</b>	<p>SB 438  <b>Name: An act concerning education reform in Connecticut.</b>  Introduced 3/10/2010. Enacted 5/26/2010.  Governor Jodi Rell – Republican  <a href="http://search.cga.state.ct.us/2010/ACT/PA/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.htm">http://search.cga.state.ct.us/2010/ACT/PA/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.htm</a></p>	
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliation</b>	<p>Introduced by Education committee; Rep. Schofield - D  Rep. Miller – R; Sen. Gaffey – D; Sen. Looney – D; Rep. Fawcett – D; Sen. Stillman – D; Rep. Reynolds – D; Rep. Villano – D;  Rep. Taborsak – D; Rep. Lyddy – D; Rep. Baram – D; Rep. Clemons – D; Rep. Reeves – D; Rep. Mioli – D; Rep. Gonzalez – D;  Rep. Mushinsky – D; Rep. Wright – D; Rep. Bartlett – D; Rep. Rojas – D; Rep. Johnson – D; Rep. Drew – D; Rep. Miller – D;  Rep. Grogins – D; Sen. Debicella – D; Sen. Crisco – D; Sen. Meyer – D; Sen. Harris – D; Sen. Prague – D; Sen. Duff – D; Sen.  Colapietro – D; Sen. Harp – D; Sen. Fonfara – D</p>
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	<p>Supporting: Partners in Campaign LEARN include the General Assembly's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus; Connecticut Black Alliance for Educational Options; African American Affairs Commission; the State of Black Connecticut Alliance; the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN); Connecticut Commission on Children; Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches; Education Equality Project; Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission; Multicultural Chamber of Commerce – Stamford.</p>
		<p>Dissenting: Co-president of regional Parent Teacher Council; American Federation of Teachers in CT</p>
<b>Problem perception</b>		Education reform of schools failing to make adequate yearly progress.
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	In conformation with NCLB, schools designated by the local or regional board of education as in need of improvement or as low achieving and failing to make adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level for two or more consecutive years.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Twenty-five school governance councils may be established each year.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument of change</b>	This legislation allows for the establishment of school governance councils with between 15-17 members. Membership includes seven parents or guardians of students attending the school; two members of the community within the school district; five teachers from the school; the principal (non-voting) or his or her designee; and, at the high school level, two students (non-voting). Community members are elected by the parent and teacher members of the council.
	<b>Eligible adults and leader pattern</b>	Parents or guardians of students attending the subject school.

<b>CONNECTICUT ENACTED LAW, cont.</b>		
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	No petition process. Parents or guardian members are elected by parents or guardians of schools attending the school. For the purpose of election, each household with a student attending the school has one vote.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	n/a
	<b>Organizing</b>	n/a
<b>Intervention Models</b>		The school governance council can vote to recommend a reconstitution of the school: 1) the turnaround model; 2) the restart model; 3) the transformation model; 4) any other model that may be developed by federal law; or two models district-created models, CommPACT school or an innovation school.
<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Once a recommendation to reconstitute is sent to the school board, the local LEA has up to ten days to hold a public hearing to discuss the recommendation.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	School governance responsibilities: <a href="http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/sgc/SGC_Responsibilities.pdf">http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/sgc/SGC_Responsibilities.pdf</a> Election guidance: <a href="http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/sgc/SGC_ElectionGuidance.pdf">http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/sgc/SGC_ElectionGuidance.pdf</a> Sample by-laws: <a href="http://www.cabe.org/uploaded/Education/Sample_Bylaws.pdf">http://www.cabe.org/uploaded/Education/Sample_Bylaws.pdf</a>  CT School Governance Councils webpage: <a href="http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&amp;Q=322630">http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&amp;Q=322630</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate information form</li> <li>• Election ballot</li> <li>• Nomination form</li> <li>• Recruitment flyer</li> </ul>
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	Bylaw example from Stadley Rough School within the Danbury Public Board of Education: <a href="http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us/elemweb/strweb/SGC_files/STR-SGC-Bylaws2011-2012.pdf">http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us/elemweb/strweb/SGC_files/STR-SGC-Bylaws2011-2012.pdf</a>
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	If the local LEA selects an alternative governance model other than the council recommendation, it is up to the state agency to decide whether or not to implement the model recommended by the school governance council.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	The state can either approve the intervention plan or allow the school to remain unchanged.

<b>INDIANA ENACTED LAW</b>		
<b>Legislation Details</b>	<p><b>HB 1002</b>  <b>Name: An act to amend the Indiana Code concerning education.</b>  Introduced 1/13/2011. Enacted 5/5/2011.  Governor Mitch Daniels - Republican  <a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/HE/HE1002.1.html">http://www.in.gov/legislative/bills/2011/HE/HE1002.1.html</a></p>	
<b>Problem perception</b>		The need for innovation and options in public education. The parent trigger provision to convert a public school to a charter school is part of a larger bill adding a new chapter to the Indiana code regarding charter schools in the state.
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliation</b>	Rep. Bosma – R; Rep. Bhening – R; Rep. Noe – R; Rep. Sullivan - D
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	<p>Legislative documents on the state website did not include coalition information or testimony transcripts. The Indiana Coalition for Public Education (ICPE) did, however, track and record summaries of testimony. Overall support or dissent for the bill at the House Education Committee hearing on 1/19/2011 is as follows (ICPE, email correspondence, 10/19/2013):</p> <p>Support: Indiana State Superintendent; Indiana Public Charter School Assn; Indianapolis Mayor's Charter Schools; Charles Tinley Accelerated School; Goodwill Charter Schools; Indiana Chamber of Commerce; Irvington Charter Schools; National Alliance of Charter Schools; National Assn of Charter School Authorizers; Indiana Connect Virtual School; Hoosier Academy; Indiana Virtual School Families Assn.</p> <p>Dissenting: Indianapolis Public Schools Superintendent; Indiana Assn of School Principals; Indiana State Teachers Assn; Indiana School Boards Assn; Indiana Assn of Public School Superintendents; Indiana Assn of School Business Officials; Indiana Federation of Teachers; Indiana Urban Schools Assn; Indiana Coalition of Public Education; Watchdog Indiana Taxpayer;</p>
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	School has been placed in either of the two lowest performing categories (D or F) for two consecutive years.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Law does not apply to an existing elementary or secondary school that the governing body of the school corporation in which the school is located has scheduled for closure.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change.</b>	Petition process. After the State Board of Education approves a petition for conversion charter school status, the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the conversion charter school shall select members to serve on the conversion charter school's local management board. The local management board shall be composed of parents or guardians of students enrolled in and in attendance at the conversion charter school, selected by other parents or guardians of students enrolled in and in attendance at that school.
	<b>Eligible adults and feeder pattern.</b>	Parents of students who attend the subject school.

<b>INDIANA ENACTED LAW, cont.</b>		
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	Fifty-one percent.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	Ninety days after the date of the first signature.
	<b>Organizing</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Intervention Models</b>		Charter school conversion.
<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	None found. <a href="http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/2010/title20/ar24/ch11.pdf">http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/2010/title20/ar24/ch11.pdf</a>
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	None found.
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	The local governing body must approve conversion. Local governing body may not serve as the charter school's sponsor if school had been placed in either of two lowest performing categories for four consecutive years.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	The conversion charter must comply with all legal requirements concerning student diversity and treatment of children with special needs and accept all students who attended the school before its conversion and who wish to attend the conversion charter school. If any space remains, any student in Indiana may attend the converted school.

## LOUISIANA ENACTED LAW

<b>Legislation Details</b>	<p>HB 976  Name: Schools/Choice  Introduced 3/2/2012. Enacted 4/18/2012.  Governor Bobby Jindal – Republican  <a href="http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=793655&amp;n=HB976%20Act%202">http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=793655&amp;n=HB976%20Act%202</a></p>	
<b>Problem perception</b>		Schools and districts must be held accountable for failing schools. This legislation provides parents with the ability to petition to have the failing school transferred to a Recovery School District.
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliations</b>	Rep. Carter – R; Rep. Kleckley – R; Rep. Broadwater – R; Rep. Champagne – R; Rep. Connick – R; Rep. Henry – R; Rep. Hensgens – R; Rep. Ligi – R; Rep. Lorusso – R; Rep. Ponti – R; Rep. Robideaux – R; Rep. Schroder – R; Rep. Seabuagh – R; Rep. Talbot – R; Rep. Thompson
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	<p>House education committee hearing 3/14/2012, video archive.</p> <p>Supporting: Governor; State superintendent; State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; Secretary of Economic Development; Louisiana Assn of Business and Industry; Council for a Better Louisiana; Louisiana Federation of Children; Black Alliance for Educational Options; Baton Rouge Area Chamber; Louisiana Assn of Public Charter Schools; Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops; Louisiana Family Forum; Louisiana Grassroots Network; Charter Schools USA; Superintendent of Catholic Schools.</p> <p>Dissenting: Louisiana Federation of Teachers; East Baton Rouge Federation of Teachers; Monroe Federation of Teachers and Employees; Calcasieu Federation of Teachers and Employees; Jefferson Federation of Teachers;</p>
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	School has received a letter grade of “D” or “F” by the Louisiana School and District Accountability System for three or more consecutive years.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change.</b>	Petition process.
	<b>Eligible adults and feeder pattern.</b>	Parents or legal guardians who have a student attending the subject school.
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	Parents or legal guardians representing at least a majority of the students attending the subject school. Each student equals one signature.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Organizing</b>	Parents or legal guardians shall be free from harassment, threats, and intimidation related to the petition campaign.

# **LOUISIANA ENACTED LAW, cont.**

<b>Intervention Models</b>		Petition will remove the target school from the current jurisdiction and transfer to the state-run Recovery School District jurisdiction. Low-income families whose students attend a low performing Recovery School District School are eligible for the Louisiana Scholarship Program, a state-funded private school voucher program.
<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will develop and adopt rules and regulations for implementation.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	<p>Title 28: CXLV, Bulletin 129: The Recovery School District.</p> <p>Parent petitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility and notification</li> <li>• Completing parent petitions</li> <li>• Prohibited practices</li> <li>• Submission of petitions</li> <li>• Review of petitions</li> <li>• Outcome of petitions</li> <li>• Transfer to the Recovery School District</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v145/28v145.doc">http://doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v145/28v145.doc</a></p>
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	None found.
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	School and district resources shall not be used to support or oppose a petition campaign.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	The transfer must be approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**LOUISIANA ENACTED LAW, cont.**

<b>Subsequent Legislation</b>	<b>HB 115 Introduced 3/13/2013.  Enacted 6/14/2013.</b>	<p>SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS: Provides for parent petitions relative to the transfer of certain schools from the Recovery School District back to the local school system.</p> <p><a href="http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=857436">http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=857436</a></p> <p>Sponsorship: Rep. James – D; Rep. Broome – D.</p> <p>This legislation allows a parent petition process to return a Recovery District school back to the administration and management of the school system from which it was transferred if it has been failing for five consecutive years as a Recover District school. The transfer must be approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the local school board. The law does not apply to schools that are identified for conversion to a charter school. The bill has been termed the “reverse parent trigger.”</p> <p>In the case of this law, to sign the petition parents or legal guardians must have students who have been enrolled in the school for at least two years.</p>
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<b>MISSISSIPPI ENACTED LAW</b>		
<b>Legislation Details</b>	SB 2293 Name: New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act of 2010 Introduced 1/7/2010. Enacted 4/27/2010. Governor Haley Barbour - Republican <a href="http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/SB/2200-2299/SB2293SG.pdf">http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2010/pdf/SB/2200-2299/SB2293SG.pdf</a>	
<b>Problem perception</b>		The parent trigger provision is part of a larger piece of legislation addressing the turnaround of underperforming schools through the development of a New Start School Program. Some evidence that the legislation was in response to RTTP education funding goals.
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliations</b>	Sen. Watson – R; Sen. McDaniel – R; Sen. Hewes – R; Sen. Yancey – R; Sen. Lee – R; Sen. Clarke – R; Sen. Burton – R; Sen. Hudson – R; Sen. Dickerson – D; Sen. Flowers – R; Sen. Chassaniol – R; Sen. Michel – R; Sen. Ward – R; Sen. Kirby – R; Sen. Moffatt - R
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	Information not available on state legislative website. Mississippi Realtors legislative priorities webpage list organization in support.
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	Schools designated by the State Department of Education as Low-Performing, At-Risk of Failing, or Failing for three consecutive years. The 2009-2010 school year is the first year a school's classification can be considered.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Twelve schools in a period of six years with no more than three in each of the four congressional districts.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change</b>	Parent petition process; the petition must include a detailed conversion plan; the parents and guardians are considered the sponsor of conversion campaign; sponsoring parents and guardians elect members to serve on the converted school's management board.
	<b>Eligible adults and feeder pattern</b>	Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the subject school. Students enrolled in the target school attendance boundary are considered enrolled in the converted school. If openings are available, other students within the district may attend through an application process.
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	The conversion plan must accompany the petition during the signature process; more than fifty percent of the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the target school; one vote per family
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	The State Board will establish a timeline for accepting petitions.
	<b>Organizing</b>	School districts may not take unlawful reprisal against and employee who is directly or indirectly involved in a petition campaign.
<b>Intervention Models</b>		Charter school conversion; 3-year minimum term. After three years, the school may be converted back to a traditional school if a majority of the parents petition for the change.

# **MISSISSIPPI ENACTED LAW, cont.**

<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	The sponsor must conduct a public hearing in the local school district of the target school.
	<b>Direction for administrative</b>	The State Board of Education is to establish rules and regulations for the submission of petitions as well as criteria and procedures for the operation of the converted school.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	<p><b>Policy Code 2560. Conversion Charter Schools.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure for submission of petition</li> <li>• Forms and format for petition and conversion plan</li> <li>• Criteria to approve or deny a petition</li> <li>• Timeline for accepting petitions</li> <li>• Criteria and procedure for the operation of a conversion charter school</li> <li>• Selection of conversion charter school local management board members</li> <li>• Cessation of the conversion charter school</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mississippi-board-of-education/board-of-education-policy-manual/policy-2650-conversion-charter-schools">http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/mississippi-board-of-education/board-of-education-policy-manual/policy-2650-conversion-charter-schools</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/mississippi-board-of-education-library/ms-conversion-charter-school-petition-conversion-plan-2650.pdf?sfvrsn=2">http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/mississippi-board-of-education-library/ms-conversion-charter-school-petition-conversion-plan-2650.pdf?sfvrsn=2</a></p>
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	None found.
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	Must abide by the state board approval.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	Receives, reviews, and approves the petition and submitted conversion plan. The State board must provide a written response to petitioners within forty-five days after the closing date for receiving petitions. Petitioners have thirty days to resubmit a petition if there are problems with the original petition.

<b>OHIO ENACTED LAW</b>		
<b>Legislation Details</b>	<b>HB 153</b> <b>Name: Biennial Budget; Operating appropriations FY 2012 &amp; 2013.</b> Introduced 3/15/2011. Enacted 6/30/2011. Governor John Kasich - Republican <a href="http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_HB_153_EN_allparts.pdf">http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_HB_153_EN_allparts.pdf</a>	
<b>Problem perception</b>		As part of Ohio's biennial budget, parent trigger legislation was included as a pilot program in the Columbus City School District. The introduced version of the legislation stipulated the parent trigger as a statewide component.
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliations</b>	Parent trigger provision included by the Republican governor, John Kasich, in his biennial budget.  Rep. Amstutz - R
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	No coalitions listed on legislative website.
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	Pilot project in the Columbus City School District; schools ranked in the lowest 5% statewide based on performance index scores for three consecutive years.
	<b>Number of schools</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change.</b>	Petition process.
	<b>Eligible adults and feeder patterns.</b>	Parent or guardians of students enrolled in a subject school or schools of lower grade levels whose students typically matriculate into that school.
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	Parents of at least 50% of the school's students must sign the petition or a petition submitted by parents of at least 50% of the total number of students enrolled in the underperforming school and the feeder schools whose students typically matriculate to the target school.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	Not mentioned. Once the petition is submitted to the school district, the district treasurer has 30 days to valid the signatures. If the treasurer finds there are not enough valid signatures, within ten days anyone who signed the petition may appeal to the county auditor. The county auditor has 30 days to conduct an independent verification of signatures.
	<b>Organizing</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Intervention Models</b>		1) Reopen the failing school as a community school; 2) replace at least 70% of the school's personnel who are related to the school's poor academic performance, or retain no more than 30% of staff members; 3) contract with another school district or a nonprofit or for-profit entity with a record of effectiveness to operate the school; 4) turn operation of the school over to the Department of Education; or 5) any other major restructuring that makes fundamental reforms in the school's staffing or governance.

## OHIO ENACTED LAW, cont.

<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	Department of Education, in consultation with the Columbus School District, to establish implementation guidelines.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	Not yet developed.
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	Not yet developed.
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	LEA must implement petitioner's request except if the LEA determines the request is for reasons other than improving student achievement or safety. The local school board may hold a public hearing and submits evidence for an alternative reform from the petitioner's request. The alternative reform must be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	LEA shall not implement the reform if the state superintendent determines the implementation does comply with the state's Model of Differentiated Accountability or if the intervention option includes a state department of education takeover and the state department refuses to take over the school. Pilot program must be reviewed annually by the state department of education with recommendations to the legislation on continuation or expansion of the program.
<b>Additional Legislation</b>	<b>SB 316</b>  <b>Introduced 3/22/2012.</b>  <b>Enacted 9/24/2012.</b>	<p>Mid-term budget review – education provisions.</p> <p><a href="http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.html">http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.html</a></p> <p>Sponsorship: Sen. Lehner - R</p> <p>This legislation included the parent trigger pilot in Columbus but added additional information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A petition must be filed by December 31 of the school year in which a school qualifies for restructuring.</li> <li>• Specifies that parent trigger provisions prevail over the statutory restructuring provisions for low-performing schools, if a Columbus school district school becomes subject to both.</li> <li>• Specifies federal law prevails if the parent trigger provision or the state restructuring plan conflicts with federal law.</li> <li>• Specifies if a school is restructured either by the parent trigger, state restructuring, district commission, or federal law, the school does not have to restructure again for three years.</li> </ul>

TEXAS ENACTED LAW		
<b>Legislation Details</b>	SB 738 Name: An act relating to parental role in determining sanctions applied to a public school campus under certain circumstances. Introduced 2/6/2011. Enacted 6/17/2011. Governor Rick Perry - R <a href="http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/82R/billtext/pdf/SB00738F.pdf#navpanes=0">http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/82R/billtext/pdf/SB00738F.pdf#navpanes=0</a>	
<b>Political backing</b>	<b>Legislative sponsors and affiliations</b>	Sen. Shapiro – R Rep. Villareal - D
	<b>Supporting or dissenting advocacy coalitions</b>	Supporting – Texas Institute for Education Reform; Texas Parent Teacher Assn; Texas Assn of School Administrators; Texas School Alliance; Texas Rural Education Assn; Texas Assn of School Boards.  Dissenting – Texas Classroom Teachers Assn; Assn of Texas Professional Educators; Texas State Teachers Assn; Texas American Federation of Teachers; San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel.
<b>Problem perception</b>		<i>"Families who send their children to low-performing schools have no say in actually turning around a school. All they can do is switch schools, which often means more time and resources for the family... S.B. 738 empowers parents to force a change at low performing schools by petition for alternative management, reconstitution, or closure."</i> Bill analysis, author's/sponsor's statement of intent, 3/21/2011.
<b>School Eligibility</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	Unacceptable performance rating for three consecutive years after the campus is reconstituted. (Texas requires schools that fail to meet academic performance targets be required to implement a reform plan). Schools, therefore, are eligible for a parent petition drive after five years of unacceptable performance.
	<b>Limitation of Scope</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	<b>Instrument for change.</b>	Parent petition.
	<b>Eligible adults and freeder pattern.</b>	Parents of students enrolled at the subject school. "Parent" means the parent who is indicated on the student registration form at that school campus (Texas education code Section 12.051).
<b>Petition process mechanics</b>	<b>Signatures required</b>	Parents of a majority of the students enrolled at a school. The signature of only one parent is required.
	<b>Time to collect signatures</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Organizing</b>	Not mentioned.
<b>Intervention Models</b>		1) Repurposing of the campus (charter school conversion); 2) alternative administrative management of the campus; or, 3) closure of the campus.

# TEXAS ENACTED LAW, cont.

<b>Control mechanisms</b>	<b>Local public hearings</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>Direction for administrative guidelines</b>	Not mentioned.
	<b>State administrative guidelines developed</b>	<p>Texas Administrative Code Title 19 Part 2 Chapter 97 Subchapter EE Rule §97.1065</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petition deadlines</li> <li>• Certification of valid petition</li> <li>• Must clearly state the intervention option</li> <li>• Parent must be the parent indicated on the student registration</li> <li>• Only one parent signature per enrolled student</li> <li>• Alternate options submitted by the local school board must be approved by a majority</li> <li>• Further defines the intervention options: 1) repurposing – replaces a significant amount of faculty and allows students to enroll and in a be provided transportation another approved campus; 2) alternate management – the local school district no longer governs the school and another operator is selected (e.g. charter school operator); and, 3) closure – the school is closed</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&amp;app=9&amp;p_dir=&amp;p_rloc=&amp;p_tloc=&amp;p_ploc=&amp;pg=1&amp;p_tac=&amp;ti=19&amp;pt=2&amp;ch=97&amp;rl=1065">http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&amp;app=9&amp;p_dir=&amp;p_rloc=&amp;p_tloc=&amp;p_ploc=&amp;pg=1&amp;p_tac=&amp;ti=19&amp;pt=2&amp;ch=97&amp;rl=1065</a></p>
	<b>LEA guidelines developed</b>	None found.
	<b>Local educational agency (LEA)</b>	Local school board may offer an alternative option than that specific by the parent petitioners in a written request to the state education commissioner.
	<b>State educational agency</b>	Petitions are submitted to the state commissioner and the commissioner is required to implement the requested reform option. If, however, the local school board submits a written request for an alternative option, the commissioner may decide which option to implement.

**APPENDIX K****California Parent Empowerment Law Guidelines**

California Code of Regulations

Title 5. Education  
Division 1. California Department of Education  
Chapter 5.2.5. Parent Empowerment  
Subchapter 1. Parent Empowerment  
Article 1. General Provisions

5 CCR § 4800

§ 4800. Intent.

The Parent Empowerment regulations shall remain valid in the event of changes to federal law referenced within the legislative language of Chapters 2 and 3 of the 5th Extraordinary Session Statutes of 2010, to the extent allowable under the law.

5 CCR § 4800.1

§ 4800.1. Definitions.

- (a) "Elementary school" means a school, regardless of the number of grade levels, whose graduates matriculate into either a subject elementary, middle or high school.
- (b) "Eligible signature" means a signature of a parent or legal guardian of a pupil that can be counted toward meeting the requirement that at least one-half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils have signed the petition as set forth in Education Code section 53300.
- (c) "Final disposition" means the action taken by the local educational agency (LEA) to implement the requested intervention option presented by a petition or implement one of the other intervention options as set forth in Education Code section 53300.
- (d) "High school" means four-year high schools, senior high schools, continuation high schools, and evening schools.
- (e) "Intervention" or "requested intervention" means:
  - (1) one of the four interventions (turnaround model, restart model, school closure, and transformation model) identified pursuant to paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Education Code section 53202 and as further described in Appendix C of the Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, Definitions, Section Criteria for the Race to the Top program published in Volume 74 of Number 221 of the Federal Register on November 18, 2009; or
  - (2) the alternative governance arrangement pursuant to Title 20 U.S.C. Section 6316(b)(8)(B)(v).
- (f) "Middle school" means a school, regardless of the number of grade levels, whose graduates matriculate into a subject high school. Middle school also means a junior high school whose graduates matriculate into a subject senior high school.
- (g) "Normally matriculate" means the typical pattern of attendance progression from an

elementary school to a subject elementary school, from an elementary school to a subject middle or high school or from a middle school to a subject high school, as determined by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) pursuant to established attendance boundaries, published policies, or practices in place on the date the petition is submitted.

(h) “Parents or legal guardians of pupils” means the natural or adoptive parents, legal guardians, or other persons holding the right to make educational decisions for the pupil pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 361 or 727 or Education Code sections 56028 or 56055, including foster parents who hold rights to make educational decisions, on the date the petition is submitted.

(i) “Petition” means a petition requesting an LEA to implement one of the interventions defined in subdivision (e).

(j) “Pupils attending the subject school or elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a subject middle or high school” means a pupil enrolled in the school on the date the petition is submitted to the LEA.

(k) “Subject school” means a school identified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, following the release of the annual adequate yearly progress report, as a school that:

- (1) Is not one of the persistently lowest-achieving schools identified by State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE);
- (2) Has been in corrective action pursuant to paragraph (7) of Section 1116(b) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act for at least one full academic year;
- (3) Has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP); and
- (4) Has an Academic Performance Index (API) score of less than 800.
- (5) Has not exited Program Improvement.

(l) “Cannot implement the specific recommended option” means that an LEA is unable to implement the intervention requested in the petition and has provided in writing, during a regularly scheduled public meeting, the considerations and reasons for reaching such a finding.

(m) “Matriculating School” means all elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a subject elementary, middle, or high school.

#### 5 CCR § 4800.3

##### § 4800.3. Requirement to Serve All Pupils.

Every pupil that attended a subject school prior to the implementation of an intervention shall continue to be enrolled in the school during and after an intervention is implemented pursuant to Education Code section 53300, unless the parent or legal guardian of the pupil chooses to enroll the pupil in another school or the school is closed. In addition, any pupil who resides in the attendance area of the subject school during or after the implementation of an intervention has a right to attend the school, subject to any laws or rules pertaining to enrollment.

#### 5 CCR § 4800.5

§ 4800.5. Parental Notice.

(a) The CDE shall create a website for parents and guardians to obtain further information on circulating a parent empowerment petition.

(b) An LEA may create a website that lists the schools in the LEA subject to the provisions of the Parent Empowerment regulations, including enrollment data and attendance boundaries for each school. The web site may also inform parents and legal guardians of pupils how they may:

(1) Sign a petition requesting the school district to implement one or more interventions to improve the school, and

(2) Contact community-based organizations or work with individual school administrators and parent and community leaders to understand the school intervention options and provide input about the best options for the school.

(c) Consistent with the requirements of Section 1116(b)(1)(E) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. Section 6301 et seq.), on the date the notice of restructuring planning or restructuring status, Program Improvement Year 4 or later, is given pursuant to federal law, the LEA shall provide the parents and guardians of all pupils enrolled in a school in restructuring planning or restructuring status with notice that the school may be eligible for a parent empowerment petition to request a specific intervention pursuant to Education Code section 53300 and shall list the CDE website address created pursuant to section 4800.5(a). This notice, and any other written communication from the school or the LEA to parents or legal guardians of pupils, must meet the language requirements of Education Code section 48985.

5 CCR § 4801

§ 4801. Petition Signatures.

(a) A petition shall contain signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school, or may contain a combination of signatures of parents and legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school and signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the matriculating schools. A petition may not consist solely of signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the matriculating schools.

(b) Only one parent or legal guardian per pupil may sign a petition.

(c) The petition must have boxes that are consecutively numbered commencing with number 1, with sufficient space for the signature of each petition signer as well as his or her printed name, date, pupil's name, the pupil's date of birth, the name of the school the pupil is currently attending, and the pupil's current grade.

(d) The boxes described in subdivision (c) may also have space for the signer's address, city or unincorporated community name, and zip code, or request other information, and, if so, the petition shall make clear that providing such information is voluntary and cannot be made a condition of signing the petition.

(e) A petition may be signed by a parent or a legal guardian once for each of his or her pupils attending the subject school or, if the petition contains a combination of signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a subject middle or high school, once for each of his or her pupils

attending the subject school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the subject middle or high school. Separate petition boxes must be completed by the parent or legal guardian for each of his or her pupils.

(f) A petition may be circulated and presented in sections, so long as each section complies with the requirements set forth in this section and section 4802 regarding the content of the petition.

(g) Signature gatherers may not offer gifts, rewards, or tangible incentives to parents or legal guardians to sign a petition. Nor shall signature gatherers make any threats of coercive action, false statements or false promises of benefits to parents or legal guardians in order to persuade them to sign a petition, except that signature gatherers, school site staff or other members of the public may discuss education related improvements hoped to be realized by implementing any intervention described in these regulations. Signature gatherers, students, school site staff, LEA staff, members of the community, and parents and legal guardians of eligible pupils shall be free from harassment, threats, and intimidation related to circulation of or signing a petition, and from being discouraged to sign or being encouraged to revoke their signature on a petition. Signature gatherers shall disclose if they are being paid and shall not be paid per signature.

(h) All parties involved in the signature gathering process shall adhere to all school site hours of operation, school and LEA safety policies, and visitor sign in procedures.

(i) School or district resources shall not be used to impede the signature gathering process pursuant to this section.

#### 5 CCR § 4802

#### § 4802. Content of the Petition.

(a) The petition and each section of the petition shall contain the following elements:

(1) A heading which states that it is a Petition of Parents, Legal Guardians, and Persons Holding the Right to Make Educational Decisions for Pupils, including Foster Parents who hold rights to make educational decisions, to request an Intervention be implemented at the specified subject school and to be submitted to a specified LEA;

(2) A statement that the petition seeks the signatures of the parents or legal guardians of the pupils attending the subject school or, in the alternative, the signatures of the parents or legal guardians of the pupils attending the subject school and the signatures of the parents or legal guardians of the pupils attending elementary or middle schools who would normally matriculate into the subject school;

(3) The name and public contact information of the person to be contacted by either persons interested in the petition or by the LEA;

(4) Identification of the requested intervention;

(5) A description of the requested intervention using the language set forth in either sections 4803, 4804, 4805, 4806, or 4807, without omission to ensure full disclosure of the impact of the intervention;

(6) The name of the subject school;

(7) Boxes as designated in section 4801(c) and (d);

(8) An affirmation that the signing parent or legal guardian is requesting the LEA to implement the identified intervention at the subject school; and

(9) If requesting that an LEA implement the restart model intervention identified pursuant to Education Code section 53202(a)(2), and that the subject school be reopened under a specific charter school operator, charter management organization, or education management organization, a clear statement containing that information on the front of the petition, including contact information of the charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization.

(10) The names of any agencies or organizations that are supporting the petition, either through direct financial assistance or in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer support, must be prominently displayed on the front page of the petition.

(b) The CDE shall develop a sample petition that can be used by interested petitioners. The sample petition shall be available on the CDE website for interested petitioners to use. The CDE shall make the sample petition available in other languages pursuant to Education Code section 48985. Petitioners shall not be required to use the sample petition; however, alternate petitions must contain all required components pursuant to statutory and regulatory requirements.

#### 5 CCR § 4802.05

##### § 4802.05. Submission of Petition.

(a) Petitioners may not submit a petition until they reach or exceed the 50 percent threshold based on accurate and current enrollment data provided by the LEA. The date of submission of the petition shall be the start date for implementation of all statutory and regulatory requirements.

(b) An exception shall be made for a one-time resubmission opportunity to correct a petition based on errors identified by the LEA, verify signatures after a good faith effort is made by the LEA to do so first, or submit additional signatures. The start date for a resubmitted petition shall be the date it is resubmitted. No rolling petitions shall be accepted by the LEA.

(c) At the time of submission the petitioners shall submit a separate document that identifies at least one but no more than five lead petitioners with their contact information.

(d) The role of lead petitioners is to assist and facilitate communication between the parents who have signed the petition and the LEA. The lead petitioner contacts shall not be authorized to make decisions for the petitioners or negotiate on behalf of the parents.

#### 5 CCR § 4802.1

##### § 4802.1. Verification of Petition Signatures and Obligations of the LEA.

(a) An LEA must provide, in writing, to any persons who request it, information as to how the LEA intends to implement section 4800.1(g) as to any subject school and any normally matriculating elementary or middle schools, including providing enrollment data and the number of signatures that would be required pursuant to section 4802.1(e).

(b) Upon receipt of the petition, the LEA may make reasonable efforts to verify that the

signatures on the petition can be counted consistent with these regulations. The LEA and matriculating LEAs shall use common verification documents that contain parent or guardian signatures to verify petition signatures such as emergency verification cards signed by all parents or guardians. In order to verify the enrollment of a pupil in a school that normally matriculates into the subject school, but is not within the jurisdiction of the LEA, an LEA may contact the school or the LEA of the school. The matriculating LEA or school shall provide information necessary to the subject school and LEA in order to assist in verifying signatures. An LEA shall not invalidate the signature of a parent or legal guardian of an eligible pupil on a minor technicality assuming the parent or legal guardian is entitled to sign it. The LEA and the matriculating LEA or school shall make a good faith effort to contact parents or guardians when a signature is not clearly identifiable including phone calls to the parent or guardian.

(c) If, on the date the petition is submitted, a school is identified pursuant to section 4800.1(k), it shall remain a subject school until final disposition of the petition by the LEA even if it thereafter ceases to meet the definition of a subject school, unless that school has exited federal Program Improvement and is at or over 800 on the Academic Performance Index.

(d) If a petition has sought only signatures of parents of pupils attending the subject school, then for purposes of calculating whether parents or legal guardians of at least one-half of pupils attending the subject school on the date the petition has been submitted have signed the petition, only those signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school on the date the petition is submitted to the LEA shall be counted.

(e) If a petition has sought signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the subject school, then for purposes of calculating whether the parents or legal guardians of at least one-half of pupils attending the subject school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the subject school on the date the petition has been submitted have signed the petition, only those signatures of parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the subject school and the parents or legal guardians of pupils attending the elementary or middle schools who would normally matriculate into the subject school at the time the petition is submitted to the LEA shall be counted. Where pupils attend elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into more than one subject school, only those pupils attending the subject school and those pupils that normally matriculate, as defined in section 4800.1(g), into the subject school, shall be counted in calculating whether the parents or legal guardians of at least one-half of pupils attending the subject school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into the subject school on the date the petition has been submitted have signed the petition. There is no specified ratio required of signatures gathered at each school, rather the total ratio of signatures gathered must meet the one-half requirement.

(f) In connection with the petition, the LEA may only contact parents or legal guardians to verify eligible signatures on the petition. The identified lead petitioners for the petition shall be consulted to assist in contacting parents or legal guardians when the LEA fails to reach a parent or legal guardian.

(g) Upon receipt, the LEA may, within 40 calendar days, return the petition to the person designated as the contact person or persons as specified in section 4802(c), if the LEA determines any of the following:

- (1) One half of the parents or legal guardians of pupils meeting the requirements of section 4801(a) have not signed the petition;

- (2) The school named in the petition is not a subject school; or
- (3) The petition does not substantially meet the requirements specified in section 4802. In such a case, the LEA shall immediately provide the contact person written notice of its reasons for returning the petition and its supporting findings.
- (h) If the LEA finds that sufficient signatures cannot be verified by the LEA it shall immediately notify the lead petitioner contacts and provide the lead petitioner the names of those parents and legal guardians it cannot verify. The lead petitioner contacts shall be provided 60 calendar days to assist the LEA to verify the signatures. A number of methods may be used, including, but not limited to, an official notarization process or having the parent or guardian appear at the school or district office.
- (i) If the LEA finds a discrepancy or problem with a submitted petition it shall notify the lead petition contacts in writing and request assistance and clarification prior to the final disposition of the petition. The LEA shall identify which signatures need verification, any errors found in the petition, or any need for further clarification regarding the petition.
- (j) If the petition is returned pursuant to section 4802.1(g)(1), the same petition may be resubmitted to the LEA with verified signatures as long as no substantive changes are made to the petition. The petitioners shall be provided one resubmission opportunity which must be completed within a window of 60 calendar days after the return of the petition pursuant to section 4802.1. This is the same window for verification of signatures and any corrections or additional signatures submitted pursuant to section 4802.1(h). The LEA shall have 25 calendar days to verify the resubmitted signatures, additional signatures or corrections to the petition. The resubmitted petition may not contain substantive changes or amendments. If substantive changes are made to the petition, it must be recirculated for signatures before it may be submitted to the LEA and it shall be deemed a new petition.
- (k) If the LEA does not return the petition the LEA shall have 45 calendar days from the date the petition is received to reach a final disposition. The date may be extended by an additional 25 calendar days if the LEA and the person listed in section 4802(c) agree to the extension in writing.
- (l) The LEA shall notify the SSPI and the SBE in writing within fifteen calendar days of its receipt of a petition and within five calendar days of the final disposition of the petition. The notice of final disposition shall state that the LEA will implement the recommended option or include the written finding stating the reason it cannot implement the specific recommended option and designating which of the other options it will implement and stating that the alternative option selected has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress.
- (m) If the number of schools identified in a petition and subject to an intervention by a final disposition will exceed the maximum of 75 schools pursuant to Education Code section 53302, and the SSPI and the SBE receive two or more notifications of final dispositions that agree to implement an intervention on the same day, the petition will be chosen by random selection.

#### 5 CCR § 4802.2

#### § 4802.2. Restart Requirements for Parent Empowerment Petitions.

(a) Except where specifically designated in this section, a charter school proposal submitted through a parent empowerment petition shall be subject to all the provisions of law that apply to other charter schools.

(b) Parents or legal guardians of pupils will only need to sign the parent empowerment petition to indicate their support for and willingness to enroll their children in the requested charter school. A separate petition for the establishment of a charter school will not need to be signed. The signatures to establish a charter school pursuant to Education Code sections 47605(a)(1) through (3) and 47605(b)(3) will not be required if the petition that requests that the subject school be reopened under a charter operator, charter management organization or education management organization otherwise meets all the requirements of Education Code section 53300.

(c) A petition that requests that the subject school be reopened under a specific charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization may be circulated for signature with the proposed charter for the school. Upon receipt of the petition that requests a restart model as the intervention and includes a proposed charter, the LEA must follow the provisions of section 4802.1 and implement the option requested by the parents, unless, in a regularly scheduled public hearing, the LEA makes a finding in writing stating the reason it cannot implement the specific recommended option and instead designates in writing which of the other options described in Education Code section 53300 it will implement. If a petition requests that the subject school be operated under a specific charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization, and the LEA does not reject the petition pursuant to Section 4802.1(g), then the rigorous review process required by Education Code section 53300 and section 4804 shall be the review process and timelines set forth in Education Code section 47605(b), excepting 47605(b)(3).

(d) If a parent empowerment petition does not include the proposed charter but requests that the subject school be operated under a charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization, and the LEA does not reject the petition pursuant to section 4802.1(g), then the LEA shall promptly notify the petitioners that it has adopted the restart model and give the petitioners the option to solicit charter proposals from charter school operators, charter management organizations and education management organizations and select a specific charter school operator or decline to do so.

(1) If the petitioners opt to solicit charter proposals and select a specific charter school operator, they must submit the proposed charter school operator to the LEA within 90 calendar days. Upon submittal of the charter proposal, the LEA shall conduct the rigorous review process required by Education Code section 53300 and section 4804, which shall be the review process and timelines set forth in Education Code section 47605(b) excepting 47605(b)(3).

(2) If the petitioners inform the LEA that they have declined the option to solicit charter proposals and select a charter school operator, the LEA shall, within 20 calendar days, solicit charter proposals from charter school operators, charter management organizations and education management organizations. Thereafter, the LEA shall select a charter school operator, charter management organization or education management organization, through the rigorous review process required by Education Code section 53300 and section 4804. The rigorous review process shall be the review process and timelines set forth in Education Code section 47605(b), excepting 47605(b)(3), and shall begin at the end of a solicitation period not to exceed 90 calendar days.

(e) If the parents petition for a restart option to operate the school under an educational

management organization that is not a charter school, the LEA shall work in good faith to implement a contract with a provider selected by the parents. In the absence of parent selection of a specific provider, the LEA shall immediately solicit proposals from educational management organizations, and shall select an education management organization, through the rigorous review process required by Education Code section 53300 and section 4804 unless the LEA is unable to implement the option requested by the parents and shall implement one of the other options specified in Education Code section 53300.

Note: Authority cited: Section 33031, Education Code. Reference: Sections 47605 and 53300, Education Code.

## 5 CCR § 4803

### § 4803. Description of Intervention - Turnaround Model.

(a) A turnaround model is one in which an LEA must:

- (1) Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates;
- (2) Using locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students:
  - (A) Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and
  - (B) Select new staff;
- (3) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school;
- (4) Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies;
- (5) Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA, hire a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or State Educational Agency (SEA) to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;
- (6) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards;
- (7) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students;

(8) Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in the United States Department of Education notice published in the Federal Register at 74 Federal Register 59805 (Nov.18, 2009); and

(9) Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

(b) A turnaround model may also implement other strategies such as:

(1) Any of the required and permissible activities under the transformation model; or

(2) A new school model (e.g., themed, dual language academy).

#### 5 CCR § 4804

#### § 4804. Description of Intervention - Restart Model.

A restart model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process. (A CMO is a non-profit organization that operates or manages charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. An EMO is a for-profit or non-profit organization that provides “whole-school operation” services to an LEA.) A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.

#### 5 CCR § 4805

#### § 4805. Description of Intervention - School Closure.

School closure occurs when an LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving. These other schools should be within reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

#### 5 CCR § 4806

#### § 4806. Description of Intervention - Transformation Model.

A transformation model is one in which an LEA implements each of the following strategies:

(a) Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.

(1) Required activities. The LEA must:

(A) Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;

(B) Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that:

1. Take into account data on student growth (as defined in the United States

Department of Education notice published in the Federal Register at 74 Federal Register 59806 (Nov. 18, 2009)) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high-school graduations rates; and

2. Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

(C) Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;

(D) Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies; and

(E) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

(2) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness, such as:

(A) Providing additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school;

(B) Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development; or

(C) Ensuring that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.

(b) Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.

(1) Required activities. The LEA must:

(A) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards; and

(B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.

(2) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as:

(A) Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if

ineffective;

(B) Implementing a school wide “response-to-intervention” model;

(C) Providing additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited-English-proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content;

(D) Using and integrating technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program; and

(E) In secondary schools:

1. Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate; or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project-, inquiry-, or design-based contextual learning opportunities), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework;

2. Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies;

3. Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessments, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills; or

4. Establishing early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.

(c) Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.

(1) Required activities. The LEA must:

(A) Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in 74 Federal Register 59805 (Nov. 18, 2009)); and

(B) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

(2) Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as:

(A) Partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students’ social, emotional, and health needs;

(B) Extending or restructuring the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff;

- (C) Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment; or
  - (D) Expanding the school program to offer full-day kindergarten or pre-kindergarten.
- (d) Providing operational flexibility and sustained support.
- (1) Required activities. The LEA must:
    - (A) Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and
    - (B) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the State Educational Agency (SEA), or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).
  - (2) Permissible activities. The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support, such as:
    - (A) Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA; or
    - (B) Implementing a per-pupil school-based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.

#### 5 CCR § 4807

##### § 4807. Description of Intervention - Alternative Governance Arrangement.

Alternative governance is one in which an LEA institutes any other major restructuring of the school's governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms, such as significant changes in the school's staffing and governance, to improve student academic achievement in the school and that has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress as defined in the State plan under Section 6311(b)(2) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

#### 5 CCR § 4808

##### § 4808. Prospective Effect of Regulations.

The regulations in Article 1 are to apply prospectively. Any actions taken in reasonable reliance upon emergency regulations operative September 13, 2010 through June 13, 2011, are to be deemed in compliance with these regulations operative November 26, 2011.

**APPENDIX L****Parent Revolution Model Legislation**

### **Empowering Parents to Address and Challenge Low-Performing Schools.**

(a) Parental petition to enable parents to reform public schools with inadequate student achievement.

- (1) For any school in the bottom 20% of schools as identified under state law, parents may petition to convert the school into a charter school or to transform it under one of the four following transformation models:

**A. Turnaround model.**

i. A turnaround model is one in which an LEA must—

1. Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates;
2. Using locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students,
  - a. Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and
  - b. Select new staff;
3. Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school;
4. Provide staff with ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies;
5. Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hire a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;
6. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards;
7. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students;
8. Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and
9. Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

ii. A turnaround model may also implement other strategies such as—

1. Any of the required and permissible activities under the transformation model; or
  2. A new school model (e.g., themed, dual language academy).
- B. Restart model.** A restart model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process. (A CMO is a non-profit organization that operates or manages charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. An EMO is a for-profit or non-profit organization that provides “whole-school operation” services to an LEA). A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.
- C. Transformation model.** A transformation model is one in which an LEA implements each of the following strategies:
- i. Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.
    1. Required activities. The LEA must—
      - a. Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;
      - b. Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that—
        - i. Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high-school graduations rates; and
        - ii. Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;
      - c. Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high-school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;
      - d. Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies; and
      - e. Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

2. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness, such as—
  - a. Providing additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school;
  - b. Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development; or
  - c. Ensuring that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.
- ii. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.
  1. Required activities. The LEA must—
    - a. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards; and
    - b. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.
  2. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as—
    - a. Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective;
    - b. Implementing a schoolwide "response-to-intervention" model;
    - c. Providing additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content;
    - d. Using and integrating technology based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program; and
    - e. In secondary schools—
      - i. Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate; or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project-, inquiry-, or design-based contextual learning opportunities), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework;
      - ii. Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies;

- iii. Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessments, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills; or
    - iv. Establishing early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.
  - iii. Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.
    - 1. Required activities. The LEA must—
      - a. Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and
      - b. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
    - 2. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as—
      - a. Partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other state or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional, and health needs;
      - b. Extending or restructuring the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff;
      - c. Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment; or
      - d. Expanding the school program to offer full-day kindergarten or prekindergarten.
  - iv. Providing operational flexibility and sustained support.
    - 1. Required activities. The LEA must—
      - a. Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates; and
      - b. Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).
    - 2. Permissible activities. The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support, such as—
      - a. Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA; or
      - b. Implementing a per-pupil school based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.

- (2) This section does not apply to an existing public elementary or secondary school that the local educational agency has scheduled for closure.
- (3) If parents representing at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the pupils attending the school, or a combination of parents representing at least fifty-one percent (51%) of pupils attending the school and the elementary or middle schools that normally matriculate into a middle or high school, as applicable, sign a petition requesting one of the interventions mentioned in paragraph (1), the local educational agency shall implement the option requested by the parents, except as provided in paragraph (9). Each parent shall sign the petition once for each child they have in the eligible school(s).
- (4) Petitioning parents shall not submit signatures for any school until they have already surpassed the 51% threshold of support. Once the local educational agency receives the petitions, they shall have no more than 45 calendar days to review and verify the signatures as legitimate. Local educational agencies must initially attempt to verify all signatures by simply comparing the petitions to their existing files for parents, and may only contact parents about their signature in the case of a perceived discrepancy. If enough discrepancies exist to put the total support level below 51%, parents shall have an additional 30-calendar day window to clear up such discrepancies and/or add the signatures of additional supportive parents. Petitions shall not be discarded over technicalities if the clear intent of the parent was to support the petition.
- (5) If the petitioning parents select conversion to a charter school under the "Restart Model," they may select a specific, existing charter school operator by writing the operator's name onto the petition and circulating the petition with the completed charter application for the school. Parents may also decline to select a specific operator, choosing instead to select the operator after the petition is submitted to the district. In cases where the parents decline, they shall have 90 calendar days after their majority is certified by the district to solicit charter proposals from potential operators and select one.
- (6) In order to implement charter conversion option under the "Restart Model," the charter application must be approved by the appropriate authorizing body. The charter application will still have access to the same appellate process as normal charter applications.
- (7) Only non-profit charter school operators are eligible to participate in school transformations under this act. A petition may not select a for-profit charter school operator to transform an existing school.
- (8) Once the signatures have been verified, the local educational agency shall have no more than 30 calendar days to reach a decision on the final disposition of the petition.
- (9) Unless the parent petitioners explicitly request otherwise, the local educational agency shall plan the conversion or transformation and shall implement the plan no later than 180 days after the petition is received or, in the case where a petition is received after March 1, no later than the first day of school of the school year beginning in the next calendar year.
- (10) If the local educational agency approves a parent petition to convert the school into a charter school, any parents who do not want their child to attend the charter school shall have the right to enroll their student in a different publicly funded school within the jurisdiction.
- (11) A charter school established pursuant to this act is subject to the same accountability and other standards in place for charters in that jurisdiction. Any charter school that takes over the operation of a school under this act must continue to serve the entire attendance boundary of the school, subject to space considerations. Parents petitioning to establish a charter pursuant to this act do not need signatures from any other party.

- (12) Any school that implements any one of the turnaround options, including but not limited to charter conversion, must continue to serve the entire attendance boundary and must continue to serve all students who attended the school in the year prior to the transformation.
- (13) The local educational agency must implement the specific option that parents request in their petition unless they make a finding in writing, presented at a public meeting, stating the reason it is logistically impossible to do so. In such a case, they must also state which of the other conversion or transformation options described in this section it will implement within the timeframe in paragraph (6).
- (14) If a local educational agency determines that it is logistically impossible to implement the specific option requested by petitioning parents and instead designates a different option, the petitioning parents shall have the right to an expedited appeal to the state superintendent to determine whether or not the parents' request is or is not logistically impossible. The local educational agency shall defend the option selected. The state superintendent will provide guidelines for the appointment of counsel to represent the petitioning parents during the appeals process.
- (15) After a designated school has been reorganized, another petition for the reorganization of the designated school under this section may not be submitted to the governing body for at least two years after the school year in which the reorganization takes place.
- (16) Parents and legal guardians shall be free from harassment, threats, and intimidation related to circulation or signature of a petition, or to the discouraging of signing a petition or to the revocation of signatures from the petition.
- (17) School and/or district resources shall not be used to support or oppose any efforts by petitioning parents.

(b) Local educational agency responsibilities.

- (1) The local educational agency shall notify the state superintendent and state department of education upon receipt of a parental petition under this section and upon its final disposition of that petition.
- (2) A local educational agency shall not be required to implement the option requested by the parental petition if the request is for reasons other than improving academic achievement or pupil safety. Any denial of a petition on such ground is also subject to an expedited appeal to the state superintendent by the petitioning parents.
- (3) If a local educational agency indicates in writing that it will implement an alternative governance arrangement other than that requested by the petitioning parents and the petitioning parents do not file an appeal, the local educational agency shall include plans to demonstrate that the alternative governance option selected has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate student achievement growth consistent with state standards.
- (4) The local educational agency shall be responsible for verifying the petition signatures and making a decision on its disposition pursuant to paragraphs 4 and 5 of section (a) of this act.

(c) State department of education responsibilities.

- (1) Within 120 days from the passage of this act, the state superintendent shall adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this law, including but not limited to:
  - a. The petition format and submission process;

- b. The appeals procedure should petitioning parents appeal the decision of the local educational agency to implement an alternative governance arrangement other than that requested by the petitioning parents; and
  - c. The selection of the charter operator in circumstances where a charter school is established pursuant to this act.
- (2) The state department of education shall maintain records regarding the contents of and outcomes from parental petitions in order to ensure appropriate implementation of this section and address concerns identified through regulatory action.
  - (3) The state superintendent shall preside over appeals filed by petitioning parents under this section and issue his or her determination in writing

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