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Schools and the Stimulus \$\$\$

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Six States Sign On to School Turnaround Project

By [Lesli A. Maxwell](#)

Dozens of schools are slated for aggressive interventions over the next three years under a new, multistate effort that aims to clear hurdles that have hindered previous attempts to improve underperforming schools.

Education officials in Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and New York have agreed to partner with [Mass Insight Education and Research Institute](#), a Boston-based nonprofit group that has developed a set of strategies it says will reverse years of low achievement in schools.

The effort will be fueled in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is channeling billions of extra dollars in federal aid into school improvement, a top priority of the Obama administration.

The [Partnership Zone Initiative](#), spearheaded by Mass Insight, is a \$75 million effort that will tap into the \$3.5 billion in new Title I school improvement aid that states will receive later this year, as well as private philanthropy.

And if any of the six participating states wins some of the \$4 billion in Race to the Top grants also being financed by the economic-stimulus law, a slice of that money could go to districts that elect to be part of the school turnaround project.

Much of the public money would be used to pay for increased salaries for teachers who are hired to work in the "turnaround" schools and to cover the costs of longer school days, project officials say, and the states have committed to spend roughly \$750,000 per year, per school.

"We saw this as a chance to be a real partner with our districts on one of the most challenging problems we face," said Dwight D. Jones, the education commissioner in Colorado.

"Historically, we've been in the business of monitoring our districts. We say, 'Here's what you need to do, and we'll be back to check on you.' "

Previously, Colorado didn't have the staff capacity or other resources to do school turnarounds on any scale or with any staying power, Mr. Jones said. Two districts—one in

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The advertisement features a green header with the text "Socially relevant, fully interactive video games for teens". Below this is a black banner with the text "VIDEO GAMES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE". The main body of the ad shows four small, square portraits of diverse teenagers. At the bottom, the text "WILL CAMPUS" is displayed in a bold, white font, and to the right, "CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE" is written in a smaller, white font.