



President

Gillian Williams assumed the Presidency of The Rensselaerville Institute in the spring of 2010. Her appointment by the Board of Trustees was grounded in the achieved success of School Turnaround which she founded and developed at The Rensselaerville Institute. Gillian is focusing and streamlining the programs, consulting, and tools offered by all three groups of The Institute as she leads the entire organization to higher levels of impact through these core offerings.

As the Founder and Chief Academic Officer of School Turnaround, Gillian grew the organization from a summer conference into a multi-faceted, nationally established initiative. She works with principals and superintendents across the country to lead change by example using leadership characteristics and strategies that are proven effective in turning around low-performing schools. The initial research and thinking for the current turnaround movement is grounded in the work that Gillian created and undertook.

Under her leadership, School Turnaround demonstrates consistently high gains for student achievement. School Turnaround is designed specifically for schools and districts where someone in power perceives a current failure that requires urgent intervention. While most educational initiatives geared toward demonstrating student achievement take place over a long time period, School Turnaround is designed to bring about urgency and time-compressed change. It stands apart from others in the field by offering a money-back warranty that guarantees achievement on high stakes tests will increase in one year's time.

Gillian became an educator as a member of the Teach For America Charter Corps in 1990. She began her teaching career as a bilingual teacher at Public School 98 in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. In 1997, Gillian became the youngest elementary school principal in New York City at Public School 63 in the South Bronx. In her first year at Public School 63, Gillian led a turnaround that lifted the school from its dismal standing on the state's list of persistently failing schools—a distinction it had held for all eleven years of that list's existence.

Gillian is a national leader in education and was featured twice on the CBS Television program Sunday Morning as well as NPR radio segments. She has appeared in numerous publications, including, The New Yorker, The New York Times, US News and World Report and Education Week.