Pathways to Progress:
Inspiring Success Stories in Student Learning Recovery

December 10, 2024

The Campaign for
GRADE-LEVEL
READING

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Keys to Unlocking Success

*Promising Practices of i-Ready Schools That Exceeded Expectations during the 2020–2021 Academic Year*

Purpose: To learn from economically disadvantaged schools and schools serving a majority of students of color that exceeded expectations during the challenging 2020–2021 academic year with respect to the growth of students two grade levels below in reading/math.

PHASE 1: Identify schools that exceeded expectations during 2020-2021 academic year using *i-Ready Diagnostic*.

PHASE 2: Interview districts leaders and school administrators from identified schools.

PHASE 3: Identify promising district and school-level practices supporting below grade level students.

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Schools exceeding expectations (EE): students two or more grade levels below grew substantially more than predicted during the '20-'21 academic year accounting for school-level characteristics (e.g., school locale, school median income, school racial composition).

301
Schools EE Total

157
Schools EE in Reading

176
Schools EE in Math

32
Schools EE in Both
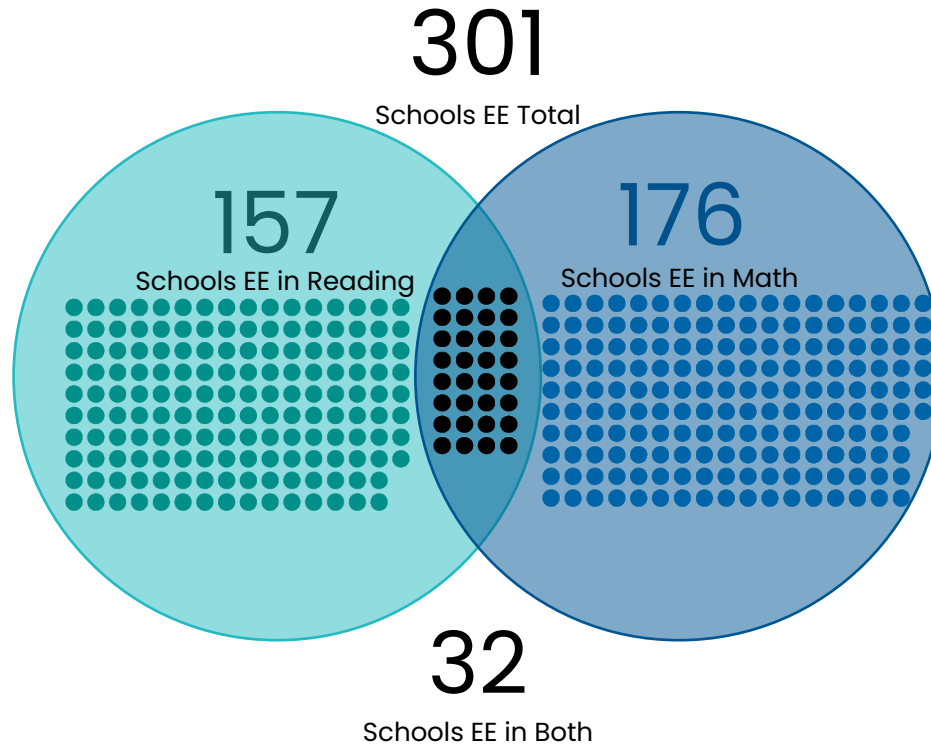
We talked to district and/or school leaders from **16 schools** across the country.
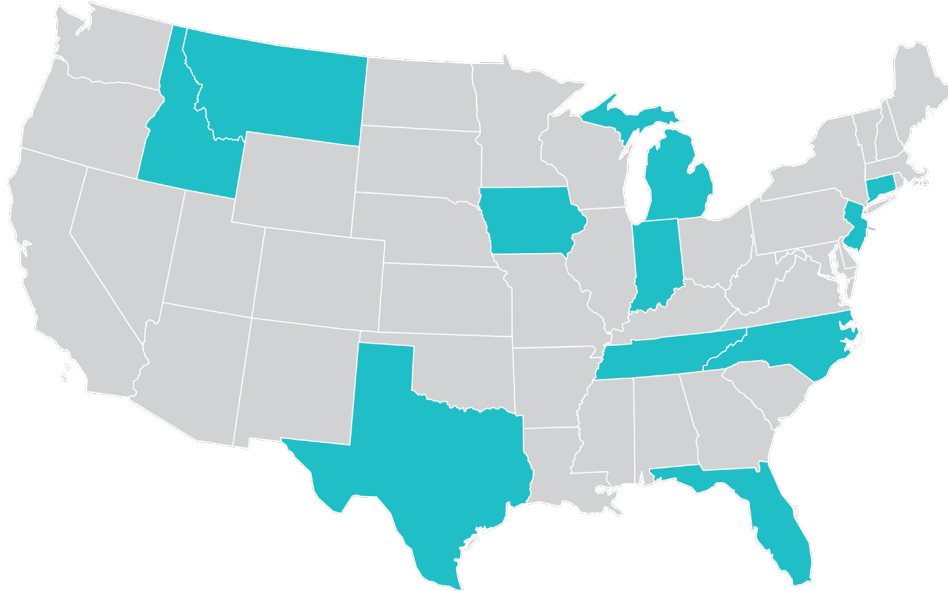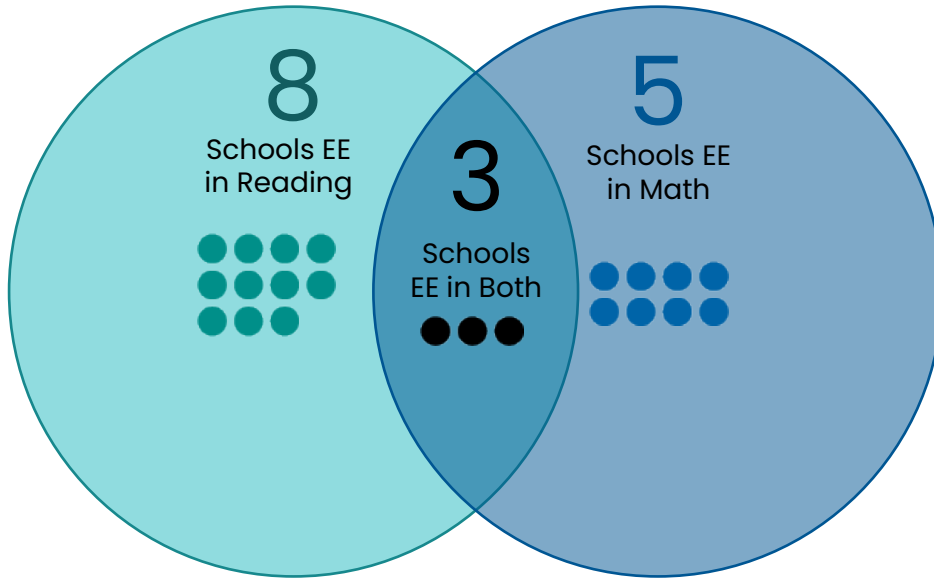

States

CT
FL
IA
ID
IN
MI
MO
NC
NJ
TN
TX

Region

East & Central . . . . 6 schools
South & Atlantic . . . . 2 schools
West . . . . 4 schools
Atlantic Central & NYC . . 4 schools

Locale

City . . . . 4 schools
Suburban . . . . 4 schools
Town . . . . 5 schools
Rural . . . . 3 schools

Most schools were both economically disadvantaged and served a majority of students of color.

School Characteristics

Elementary . . . . 8 schools
Middle . . . . 4 schools
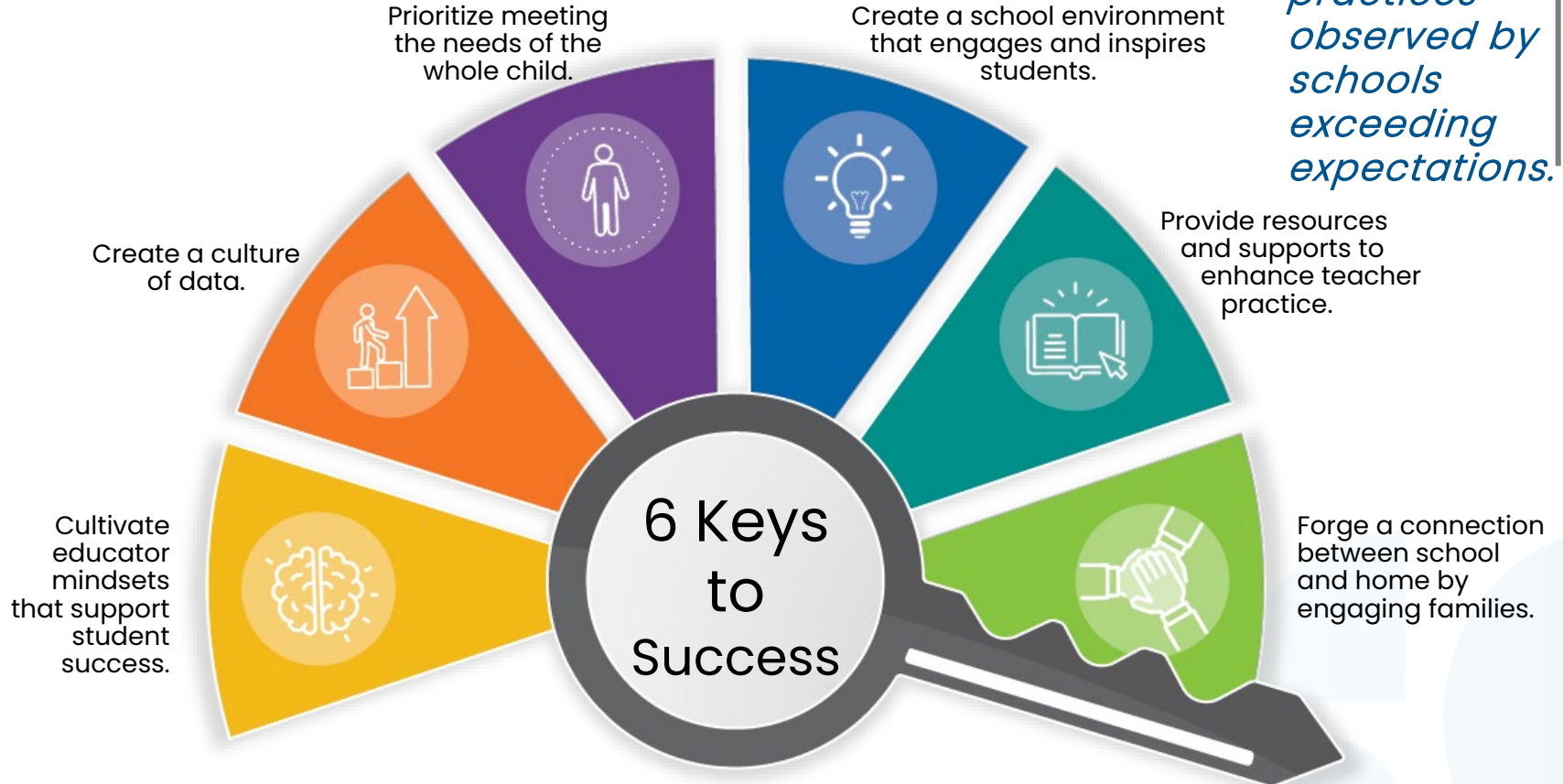K–8 . . . . 4 schools

Median Total Enrollment . . 399 students

Average % of
Students of Color 53%

Average % of Students
Receiving Free or
Reduced-Priced Lunch 67%

8
Schools EE
in Reading

3
Schools
EE in Both

5
Schools EE
in Math

Prioritize meeting the needs of the whole child.

Create a school environment that engages and inspires students.

Create a culture of data.

Provide resources and supports to enhance teacher practice.

Cultivate educator mindsets that support student success.

6 Keys to Success

Forge a connection between school and home by engaging families.

Promising leadership practices observed by schools exceeding expectations.
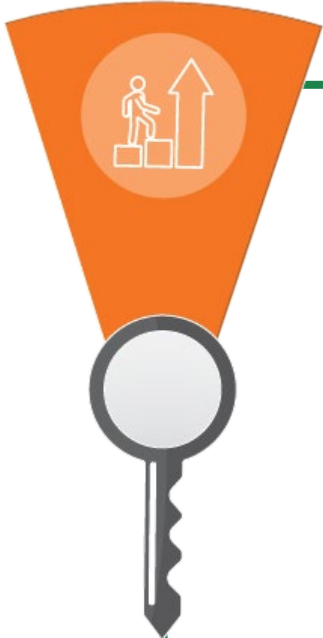
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Cultivate educator mindsets that support student success.

District/school leaders created a culture in which educators take ownership of student learning, set high expectations for students, and believe all students can achieve with the appropriate scaffolding and support.
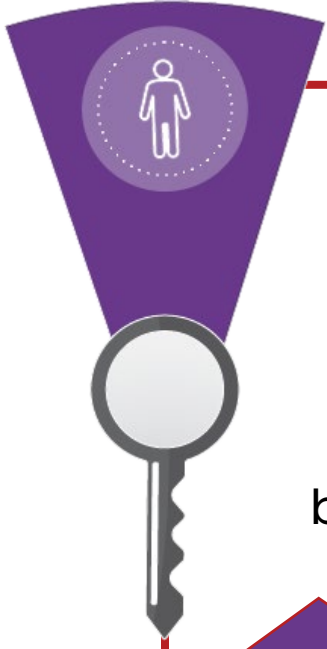
"...unpack deficit thinking."

Create a culture of data.

District/school leaders cultivated a strong data culture in which teachers and students regularly discuss data and educators make timely instructional modifications based on student data.

"Plan–Study–Do–Act"
PDs for Data
PLCs for Data

Prioritize meeting the needs of the whole child.

District/school leaders addressed the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of all students via instructional interventions, structural changes, and the provision of basic resources.

Incorporate SEL Assessments
Kindness Challenges
Tennis Shoe Drive
Plan Schedule Around
Intervention Block

Incentives
Relationship Building
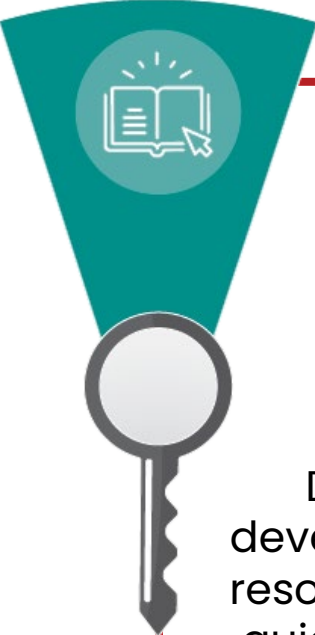Student Ownership of Learning
Peer Learning Practices

Create a school environment that engages and inspires students.

District/school leaders strived to make school a place that students enjoy. By making learning fun and engaging, offering incentives for academic and non-academic performance, and showing students they truly care, educators increased student motivation, effort, and learning.

Regular PD
PD for Mindset
Instructional Coaches
Content PLCs (for new teachers)
Structure for Lesson Planning

Provide resources and supports to enhance teacher practice.

District/school leaders equipped educators with professional development and differentiated learning opportunities, instructional resources, ample time to meet and collaborate with their peers, and guidance and support from instructional coaches to enhance their content knowledge, shift their mindset, and improve their pedagogical practices and classroom management skills.

At-Home Reading Challenge
Family/Literacy Nights
Tools for Regular Communication
IT Support for Parents

Forge a connection between school and home by engaging families.

District/school leaders encouraged educators to build relationships with families by maintaining open communication, providing resources to support student learning at home, and creating opportunities for families to be involved in their child's learning (e.g., Math/Literacy Nights, reading challenges, etc.).

Assessment data suggests most **school system reforms fail**

Number of countries that have improved vs declined on international assessments over the past decade

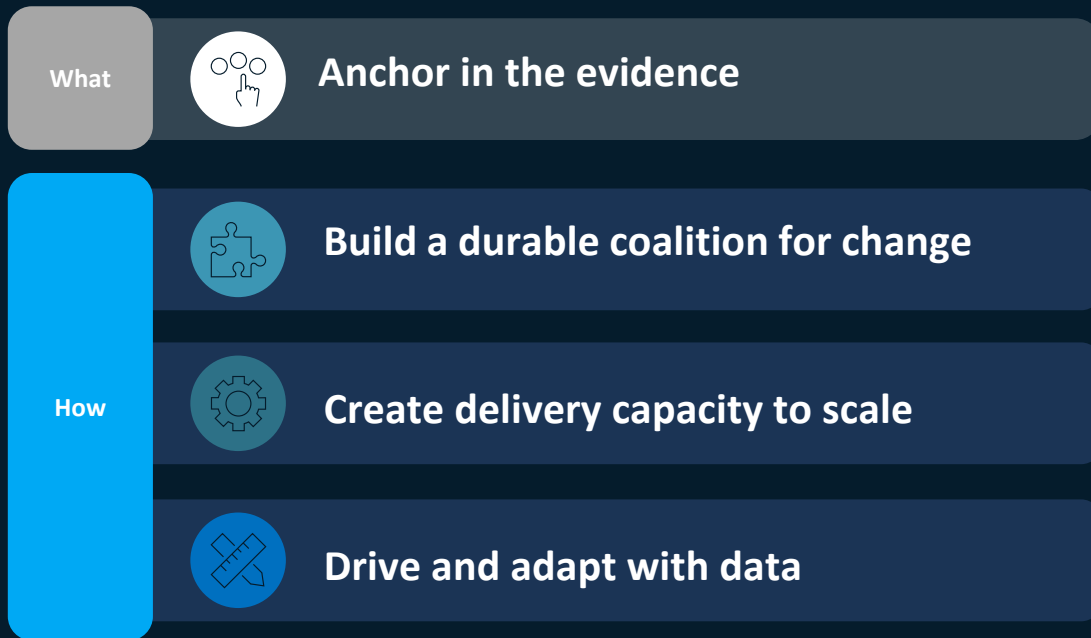|	**23** improved	**17** declined	**31** stagnated
Good and Great	8	15	16
Fair	10	1	8
Below Poor and Poor	5	1	7

A set of strategies seem to be common among systems showing outsized gains in student learning over the long term

Reinforcing improvement strategies for success

What — Anchor in the evidence

How

- Build a durable coalition for change
- Create delivery capacity to scale
- Drive and adapt with data

There seems to be consensus on the "what' of building resilient school systems"

Student outcomes

(A) Human capital
- Recruit, develop and retain the highest-possible quality teachers and school leaders

(B) Academics
- Deliver rigorous high-quality instructional curriculum to every student

Classroom

(C) Whole child supports
- Enhance student wellbeing to improve attendance and learning

School

(D) Performance management
- Track & manage the performance of all schools

(E) Enabling factors
- Ensure fair and effective resource allocation, governance, and operations (including effective use of technology where appropriate)

System supports

School readiness
- Ensure readiness through early childhood development and pre- and post-natal supports

But our research shows many systems are struggling with the "how"

Conflicting directions	**Leadership discontinuity**	**Stakeholders sidelined**	**Strategy stuck on a shelf**	**Limited capacity**	**Flying blind**	**Standing still**
We don't know where we are going	*We change directions with every new leader*	*We were never consulted*	*We aren't moving*	*We don't have the right people*	*We don't know if it's working*	*We are stuck in the past*

Systems that have overcome implementation challenges at scale seem to do a few things effectively – seven 'how' levers

Build a durable coalition for change   *Create delivery capacity to scale*   *Drive and adapt with data*

| Conflicting directions | Leadership discontinuity | Stakeholders sidelined | Strategy stuck on a shelf | Limited capacity | Flying blind | Standing still |

| Clear consistent evidence-based priorities | Engaged, empowered, and embedded leadership | Changing hearts, minds, and behaviors | A plan and a performance infrastructure | Capacity and expertise to implement | Data-driven decisions at every level | Continuous innovation |

Lessons from these systems can be applied at scale – from individual classrooms and schools to entire countries

Build a durable coalition for change

Washington, D.C. focused relentlessly on talent, empowered leaders to drive priorities, and brought communities into the priority-setting process

Create delivery capacity to scale

Mississippi moved literacy outcomes with high-quality materials, assessments, and ongoing teacher training and support, emphasizing consistency and quality in delivery

Drive and adapt with data

New York City used data in its rapid scale-up of universal preschool to meet the dual goals of access and quality

Our research draws on insights from hundreds of experts, and profiles 14 countries in detail that were beating the odds
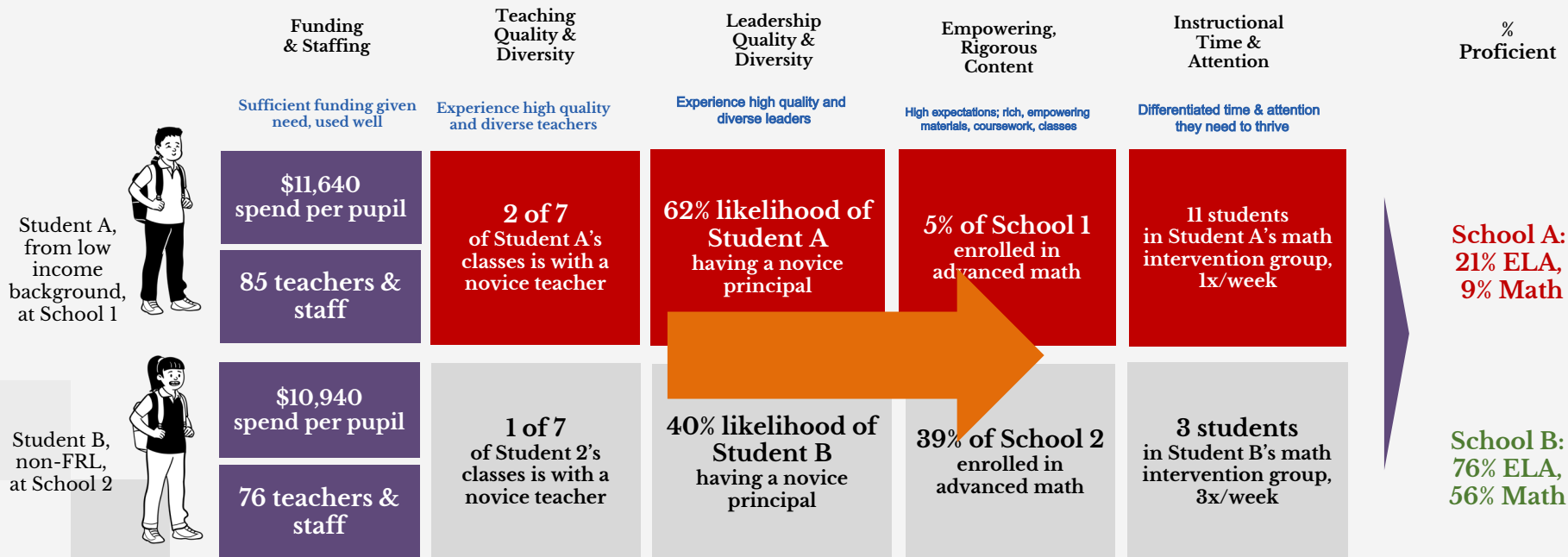
What is resource equity?

When schools, systems, and communities work together to mobilize the right combination of resources that create high-quality learning experiences for all students, that is what we call *education resource equity.*

How much districts spend *AND* how well they use resources to support student experiences?

ARE Data Stories

	Funding & Staffing	Teaching Quality & Diversity	Leadership Quality & Diversity	Empowering, Rigorous Content	Instructional Time & Attention	% Proficient
	Sufficient funding given need, used well	Experience high quality and diverse teachers	Experience high quality and diverse leaders	High expectations; rich, empowering materials, coursework, classes	Differentiated time & attention they need to thrive	
Student A, from low income background, at School 1	$11,640 spend per pupil / 85 teachers & staff	2 of 7 of Student A's classes is with a novice teacher	62% likelihood of Student A having a novice principal	5% of School 1 enrolled in advanced math	11 students in Student A's math intervention group, 1x/week	School A: 21% ELA, 9% Math
Student B, non-FRL, at School 2	$10,940 spend per pupil / 76 teachers & staff	1 of 7 of Student 2's classes is with a novice teacher	40% likelihood of Student B having a novice principal	39% of School 2 enrolled in advanced math	3 students in Student B's math intervention group, 3x/week	School B: 76% ELA, 56% Math

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#CantBeErased

Note: Illustrative data for demonstration purposes only.

What are the Dimensions of Resource Equity?

SCHOOL FUNDING

TEACHING QUALITY & DIVERSITY

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP QUALITY & DIVERSITY

EMPOWERING, RIGOROUS CONTENT

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME & ATTENTION

POSITIVE & INVITING SCHOOL CLIMATE

STUDENT SUPPORTS & INTERVENTION

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

LEARNING-READY FACILITIES

DIVERSE CLASSROOMS & SCHOOLS

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Education Combination: Example of HQIM

If school systems focus on providing high-quality, specialized courses to students, they **may choose to invest** in curriculum and materials (Empowering, Rigorous Content)

And professional learning for teachers (Teaching Quality and Diversity)

The desired outcomes will not be achieved **if** students do not feel safe and supported in class (Positive, Inviting School Climate).

The Toolkit: A Roadmap to the ARE Tools

Learn about the 10 dimensions

The Education Combination paper introduces our framework and outlines each dimension.

Identify decision-makers

Determine WHO should be the target of advocacy efforts.

Assess strengths & weaknesses

Understand the current state of education resource equity, both strengths and weaknesses

Dig deeper

Consider underlying causes of challenges.

Make the case

Create clear and compelling messaging to move your audience to action.

ESSER Bright Spots

Tuscaloosa City Schools, AL School District

What
- Invested $2.7M in Summer Learning & After School Programming
- Hired additional mental health counselors, social workers, and behavior coaches for schools
- Trauma-informed professional development training for staff
- Bilingual staff to improve sense of belonging and family engagement for Spanish-speaking families

Who
- Serving nearly 3000 students, and employing 500 staff
- 40 percent of their K-4 student population
- 66% of attendees from low-income backgrounds

Outcomes
- Students who attended summer learning 15 days or more had a 73% chance of showing no learning loss, whereas students who attended 10 days or less had a 13% chance of showing no learning loss.

Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

PARTNER WEBINAR
Child Care Has Shifted: Are We Ready for the Future?
Tuesday, December 17, 3−4:30 p.m. ET/12−1:30 p.m. PT

HOLIDAY REBROADCAST | GLR WEEK 2024
Supporting School Attendance in a Time of Changing Norms
Tuesday, December 24, 3−4:30 p.m. ET/12−1:30 p.m. PT

HOLIDAY REBROADCAST | BIG BETS WORKING
Not Just Nice But Necessary: Family Engagement = A Big Bet That's Paying Off For Kids
Tuesday, December 24, 3−4:30 p.m. ET/12−1:30 p.m. PT

LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE
Beyond the Ballot: Sustaining Progress in Academic Recovery and Early School Success
Tuesday, January 7, 3−4:30 p.m. ET/12−1:30 p.m. PT

Join us!

GLR Learning Tuesdays

The Campaign for GRADE-LEVEL READING

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