Barre Unified Union School District

Spaulding High School
Central Vermont Career Center
Barre City Elementary and Middle School
Barre Town Middle and Elementary School

Chris Hennessey, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools

A rock solid education for a lifetime of discovery

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MEMORANDUM

TO: **Barre Unified Union School District Curriculum Committee**
Sarah Pregent (Chair), Paul Malone (V. Chair), Chris Parker, Nancy Leclerc, Melissa Battah, Rachel Aldrich

DATE: September 29, 2022

RE: BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting
October 6, 2022 @ 6:00 pm
In-Person: Spaulding High School Library, 155 Ayers St, Barre
Remote Options: Google Meeting ID: meeting link
Phone Number: 1-413-327-0525 PIN: 177 328 274#

If you attend the meeting remotely you must state your name for the record to satisfy the Open Meeting Law.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Additions/Changes to Agenda

3. Public Comment

4. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes
   - 4.1. Meeting minutes from September 1, 2022

5. New Business
   - 5.1. SEL/MTSS Update (SP 4.A-B & 5.D-F)
   - 5.2. Setting Goals for Growth within the 5-Year Education Action Plan
     - 5.2.1. System Driver Map
     - 5.2.2. 5-year Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Plan (DRAFT)
   - 5.3. Discussion of Blended Classes/AP Students and Enrichment for Elementary/Middle School Students (SP 1.B & 3/5.G)
     - 5.3.1. Hattie Ranking: 252 Influences And Effect Sizes Related To Student Achievement
     - 5.3.2. Three Reasons Tracking Kids is Wrong (And How to Start Making a Change)
       - What Assumptions does the author of the text hold?
       - What do you Agree with in the text?
       - What do you want to Argue with in the text?
       - What parts of the text do you want to Aspire to (or Act upon)?

6. Old Business

7. Other Business

8. Items for Future Agenda

9. Next Meeting Date: November 3, 2022 at 6:00 pm, SHS Library or via Google Meet.

10. Adjournment (appreciations and gratitude)

Parking Lot of items:

A. Fall Climate Survey - National Survey Through PBIS (for students, parents & faculty) (Nov)
B. Review Results from January 2022 Staff Survey (Nov)
C. Percentages: Student Drop-out Rates and School Completion Rates (Nov)
D. Use of Diagnostic Assessment Date to Assist Teachers with Identifying Student Needs
E. Professional Development
F. Organizational Flow Chart (outline)(personnel fit/responsibilities)

BOARD/COMMITTEE MEETING NORMS

- Keep the best interest of the school and children in mind, while balancing the needs of the taxpayers
- Make decisions based on clear information
- Honor the board's decisions
- Keep meetings short and on time
- Stick to the agenda
- Keep remarks short and to the point
- Everyone gets a chance to talk before people take a second turn
- Respect others and their ideas

DRAFT

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING
Spaulding High School Library and Via Video Conference – Google Meet
September 1, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Sarah Pregent (BC) – Vice Chair
Melissa Battah (BT Community Member)
Nancy Leclerc (At-Large)
Paul Malone (BT)
Chris Parker (BT)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:
Rachel Aldrich-Whalen (BC Community Member)

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:
Chris Hennessey, Superintendent
Karen Fredericks, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Terry Reil

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Delcore, Times Argus	Jean Haeger	Darby Hiebert	Josh Howard	Tara Martin
Ben Matthews	Rachel Van Vliet	William Toborg		

1. **Call to Order**
The Superintendent, Mr. Hennessey, called the Thursday, September 1, 2022, BUUSD Curriculum Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., which was held at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

2. **Organize**
Mr. Hennessey called for nominations for the positon of Committee Chair. It was clarified that community Committee Members have equal voting privileges, but cannot be elected to the position of Committee Chair.

Mrs. Leclerc nominated Mr. Malone for the position of Committee Chair. Mr. Malone seconded the motion. On a vote of 2 to 3, the motion failed. Mrs. Leclerc and Mr. Malone voted for the motion. Mrs. Battah, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent voted against the motion.

On a motion by Mrs. Battah, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee voted 3 to 1 to elect Mrs. Pregent as Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Mrs. Battah, Ms. Parker, and Mrs. Pregent voted for the motion. Mrs. Leclerc voted against the motion. Mr. Malone abstained.

Mrs. Pregent facilitated the remainder of the meeting.

On a motion by Mrs. Battah, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Committee unanimously voted to elect Mr. Malone as Vice-chair of the Curriculum Committee.

3. **Additions and/or Deletions to the Agenda**
Add 6.4 Commencement Speech From District Kick-off. This item will be taken out of order (after 5.1).

On a motion by Mrs. Leclerc, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the Agenda as amended.

4. **Public Comment**
In response to a query, it was noted that discussion of SBAC scores occurred at a prior meeting.
In response to a query regarding a previous discussion related to 'blind surveys', it was noted that a staff-wide survey falls under the purview of the Board.
Mr. Howard queried regarding an update on Student Performance data.

Mr. Toborg requested that members of the public have on-line access to information regarding curriculum, including the syllabi and information regarding what books and instructional materials are being used (for all grades). Mr. Hennessey advised that he believes this request would be best addressed at the building level.

5. **Approval of Minutes -**

5.1 August 4, 2022 Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Leclerc, seconded by Ms. Parker, the Committee unanimously voted to approve as amended, the minutes of the August 4, 2022 BUUSD Curriculum Committee Meeting.

6. New Business

6.1 Great Schools Partnership, Extensive Summary of Support FY23 (Consultant Jean Haeger)

A document titled 'BUUSD Great Schools Partnership Support 2022 – 23' was distributed.
Ms. Haeger provided an overview of the document, advising of the three areas of development slated for the 2022-2023 academic year, including Goals, Curriculum Development (and cohesion), Administrative and Instructional Leadership, and Supporting Structures for Professional Learning Facilitation. Ms. Haeger proceeded to provide more detailed information on the three defined areas of work and advised of some of the feedback provided by participants in previous work groups/professional development sessions. Ms. Haeger read some of the end-of- year survey responses and advised of participation data from various surveys.
Ms. Haeger and Ms. Fredericks answered questions from the Committee, including queries relating to ongoing supports for staff, the number of facilitators, expansion of the program to the high school, and alignment with the Strategic Plan.

6.2 Feedback from Facilitator Training

A document titled 'BUUSD Facilitator Training August 16, 2022 – Feedback Survey Responses' was distributed.
Ms. Fredericks provided an overview of the data received from the most recent training, noting that there was a 100% response rate (13 responses), and that participants reported that training was a good experience and felt it was time well spent. Ms. Fredericks provided information relating to the definition of 'equity' to meet the needs of all students and assure that all students meet proficiency. It was noted that Curriculum Leaders meet twice a month, PLG Facilitators once a month and all meetings close with some form of feedback gathering.

6.3 New Math Program

Ms. Fredericks advised regarding a link to 'Illustrative Mathematics', and advised that this Program will replace the Engaged New York Math and Connected Math Programs (for K – 8). Middle and Elementary staff are 'on-board' with implementation of the new program. This program does have a high school component which can be explored at a later time. The program is more teacher-friendly and is more interactive for students. Ms. Fredericks advised that there are 'entry points' for all students (low floor / high ceiling – engagement for students of all abilities). The program offers consistent formative assessments (exit questions) as well as unit assessments. The Program also includes 'parent and family extensions' to help parents assist their students. ESSER funds were used to purchase this program. Ms. Fredericks answered questions from Committee Members, advising that 'parent nights' will be reintroduced this year, the program is highly rated, teachers have had training on this program, and that additional training opportunities will be available throughout the year. Ms. Fredericks advised regarding how the Program was selected. In response to a query, Ms. Fredericks advised that she will be in contact with the high school Math Department Head for confirmation that this program will be adequate to prepare students for their move to the high school.

6.4 Commencement Speech From District Kick-off

Ms. Fredericks read the Commencement Speech from the District Kick-off meeting, which was held in the SHS Auditorium to approximately 600 employees. A copy of the speech will be submitted to Mrs. Gilbert for posting as an addendum.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Items for Future Agendas

<u>October Meeting:</u>

- SEL/MTSS Update
- Setting Goals for Growth within the 5-Year Education Action Plan
- Discussion of Blended Classes/AP Students and Enrichments for Elementary/Middle School Students

<u>November Meeting</u>:

- Review Results from January 2022 Staff Survey
- Fall Climate Survey – National Survey Through PBIS (for students, parents & faculty)

- Drop-out and School Completion Data

Add to Parking Lot:
- Setting Goals for Growth Within 5-Year Education Action Plan

Remove from Parking Lot:
- Plan to Assist Teachers in Understanding Data
- Report on How Planning To-Date Has Impacted Student Learning

The Committee agreed to make changes to Parking Lot formatting:
- Label items alphabetically
- Add 'Requested Date' to each item

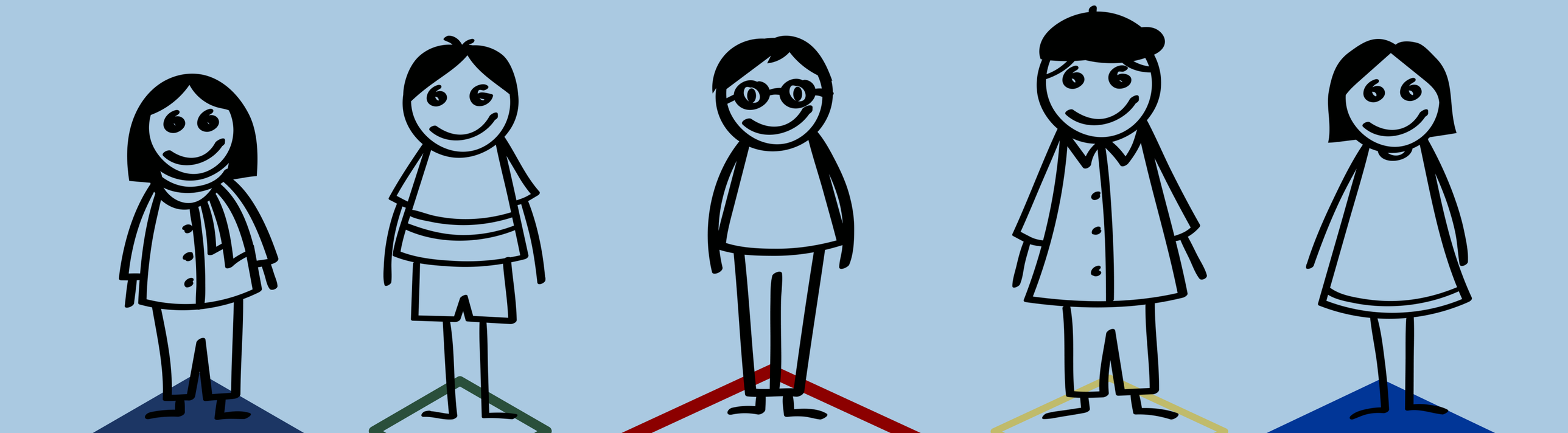
10. Next Meeting Date
The next meeting is Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Spaulding High School Library and via video conference.

10. Adjournment
On a motion by Mr. Malone, seconded by Mrs. Leclerc, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Poulin

Academic & Social Emotional Learning MTSS

BUUSD



System of Layered Supports

Universal Instruction: Planning for and Teaching Diverse Learners

Universal Instruction: provides whole class, individual, and small group instruction and intervention focused on priority standards and proficiencies.

Layered Support

Why, What? How Long?

Who and Where?

Layered Support

Why, What? How Long?

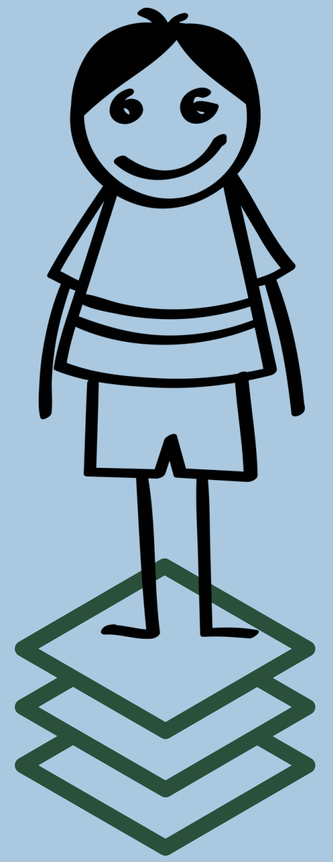
Who and Where?

Layered Support

Why, What? How Long?

Who and Where?

VTmtss Field Guide 2019



Elements of Effective Instruction

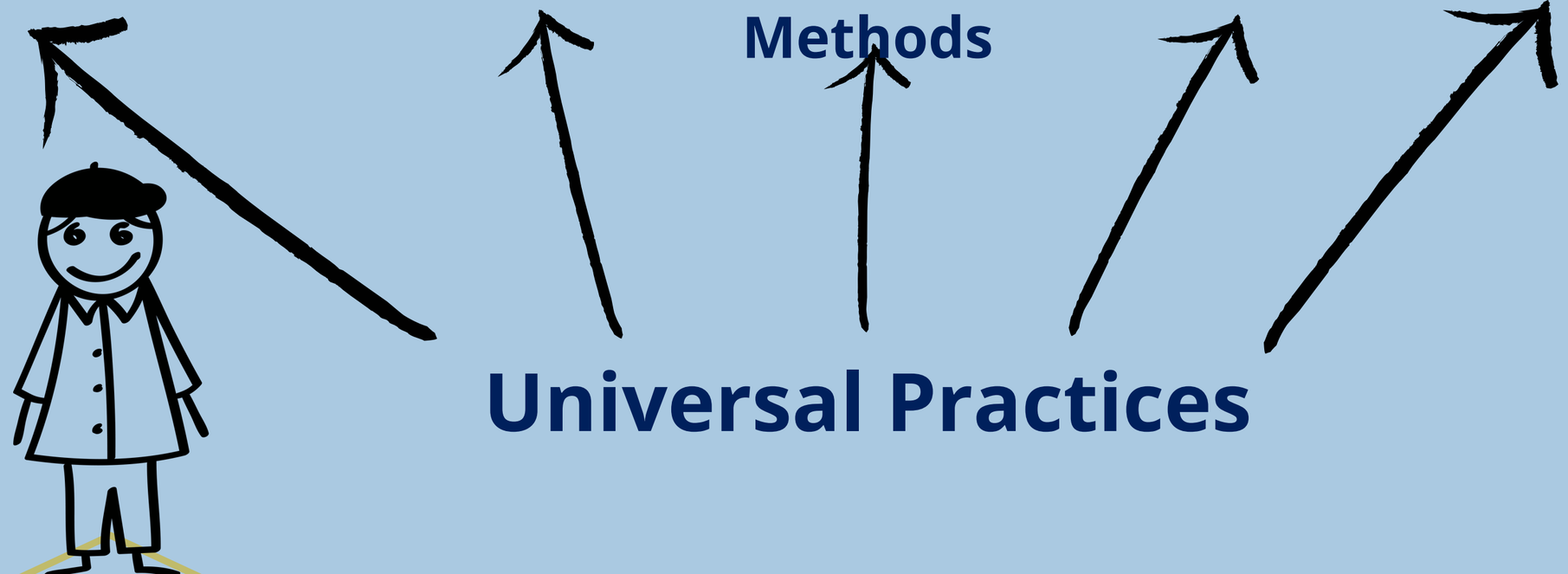
Learning Environment

Clear, Shared Outcomes

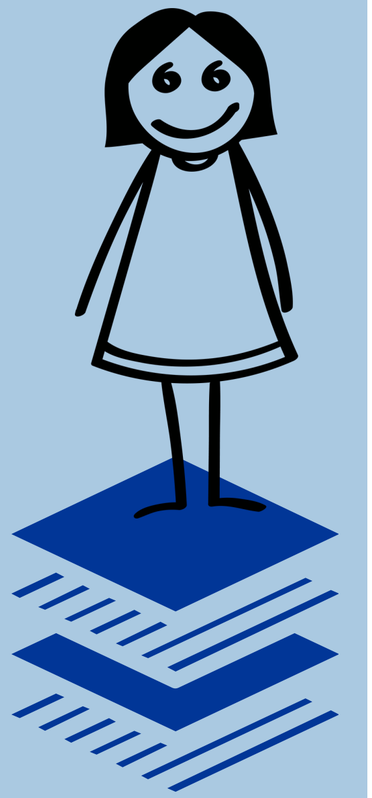
Varied Content, Materials, Methods

Practice and Feedback

Complex Thinking and Transfer



Universal Practices



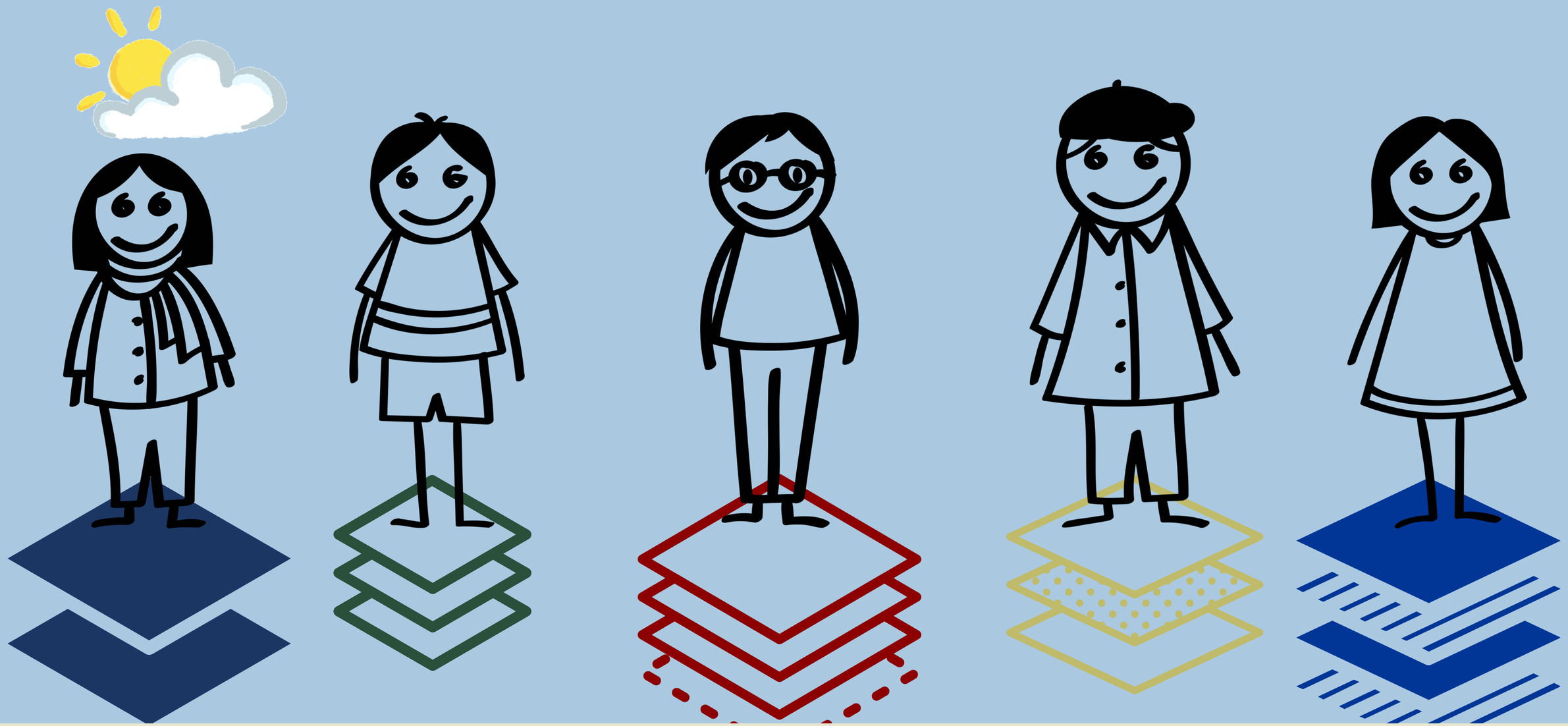
Introduction	Practices Elements of Effective Instruction
Learning Environment	Create an inclusive community of learners that fosters belonging and relationship building.
	Facilitate meaningful content-specific discourse by posing purposeful questions and encouraging students to lead conversations.
	Create a content rich learning environment.
	Collaborate to develop inclusive systems of support.
Clear, Shared Outcomes	Establish goals to focus teaching and learning.
	Communicate learning objectives to students throughout every lesson, providing students with opportunities for self-reflection.
Varied Content, Materials, Methods	Differentiate instruction using a variety of instructionally relevant strategies that build on prior knowledge, connect concepts and expand vocabulary.
	Build skills through understanding concepts.
Practice and Feedback	Provide students with grade level instruction along with needs-based practice.
	Elicit and use evidence of student thinking to differentiate instruction.
	Provide actionable feedback to students (in a timely manner).
Complex Thinking and Transfer	Teach content for authentic meaning-making purposes.
	Support productive struggle in learning.

All PreK-8 Content Areas

Effective Practices

Social Emotional Learning

Academic Learning

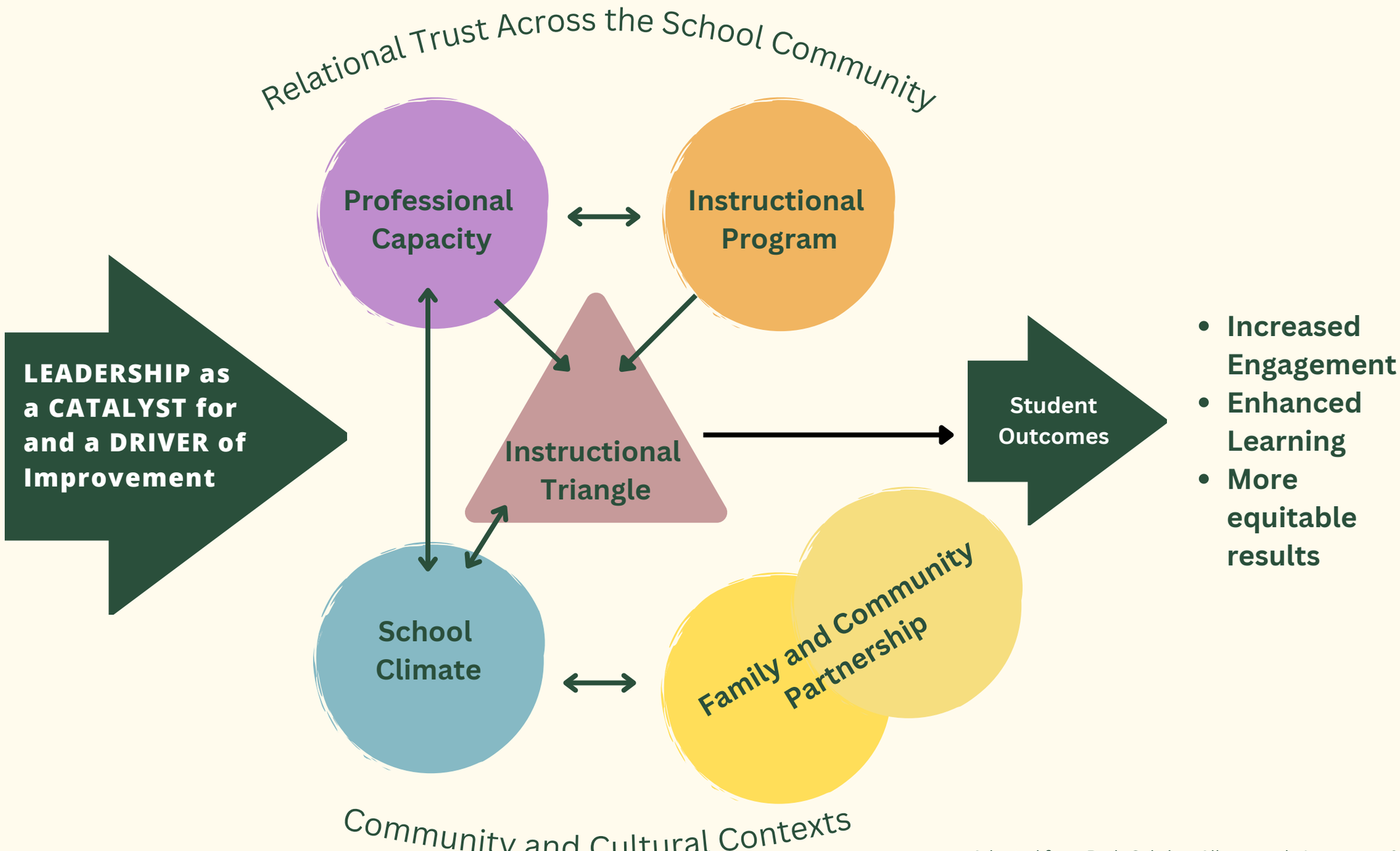


"Through a systemic and comprehensive approach, diverse stakeholders collaborate purposefully and effectively to ensure equity and to improve academic, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes for all students." VTMTSS 2019

Additional Resources:

- 2019 VTMTSS Field Guide
- SEL Example Supports for All Students
- Small Group Intervention Examples
- Intensive Intervention
- Referral Pathways

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES?



- Increased Engagement
- Enhanced Learning
- More equitable results

Adapted from Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton (2010)

5-year Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Plan (DRAFT)

(Outlined by 5 Key Goals of the Strategic Plan)

1. Ensure Students Have Equitable Access to Learning Resources			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4-5
Analyze student achievement data for poverty, race, and gender differences and focus resources to reduce gaps (annually) Complete Elementary curriculum alignment to ensure continuity between all classrooms & schools	Middle School curriculum alignment to ensure continuity between all classrooms & schools	High School curriculum alignment to ensure continuity between all classrooms & schools	Monitoring

22-23 Challenge:
Student assessment results reveal that inequities are leading to gaps in achievement among different marginalized groups.

Strategy: What approach will we take to address this challenge?
-Analyze student achievement data for poverty, race, and gender differences and focus resources to reduce gaps (annually)
-Complete Elementary curriculum alignment to ensure continuity between all classrooms & schools

Outcomes: If this strategy is successful, what will be the impact on students' learning or behavior?	**Evidence:** How will I know this is "working"?
There will be increased engagement, enhanced learning, and more equitable results	*Academic and nonacademic data will reflect similar outcomes regardless of different indicator status.*

Action Step for 22-23: What steps will we need to take to implement this strategy?	**Timeframe:** When will we implement this step?	**Partners:** Who will be involved?	**Comments / Resources needed:**
Create data teams in each building	*Oct.-Nov.*	*Various school staff*	
With support of the Curriculum Director, PreK-4 Curriculum Leaders vertically align content materials, resources, and guiding documents	*Jan-June*	*Director of Curriculum, Curriculum Leaders, GSP Coach*	*Existing frameworks need to be revised*

Instructional coaches provide job-embedded support for teachers to improve student outcomes	*Aug-June*	*Instructional Coaches*	
3rd-9th and 11th grade Students have an opportunity to experience an SBAC Interim Assessment in each content area that is assessed.	*Jan-Feb*	*Faculty members who work with these students*	

2. Create Communication Systems That Foster Collaborative Internal and External Community Relationships			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4-5
Host family nights to inform families about student learning expectations (ongoing) Build partnerships that welcome the community into our schools & engage students with community partners Curriculum website revision Create student advisory to meet with administrators to solicit feedback on Proficiency Based Learning	Help students understand Proficiency Based Learning & Standards Based Grading Help families better understand Proficiency Based Learning (PBL) standards and related achievement -Curriculum website maintenance	Incorporate family access to Google Classrooms and other communication systems to expand family partnerships network	Monitoring

22-23 Challenge:
Family and community partnerships are a driver for improvement; without them, we cannot maximize student outcomes.

Strategy: What approach will we take to address this challenge?
-Host family nights to inform families about student learning expectations
-Build partnerships that welcome the community into our schools & engage students with community partners
-Curriculum website revision

Outcomes: If this strategy is successful, what will be the impact on students' learning or behavior? *There will be more effective communication with stakeholders, positive support for students, and a more safe and inviting institutional environment.*	**Evidence:** How will we know this is "working"? *Our climate survey data (students, families, and staff) will reflect overall satisfaction on questions that are related to community support and involvement.*

Action Step for 22-23: What steps will we need to take to implement this strategy?	**Timeframe:** When will we implement this?	**Partners:** Who will be involved?	**Comments / Resources needed:**
Organize opportunities to bring in family and other community members	*Aug-June*	*Building Administrators, Curriculum Leaders, Director of Curriculum*	*grant funding building/space access request*
Outreach to local agencies and businesses to identify common interests and opportunities for collaboration	*Oct-Nov*	*Director of Curriculum Administrative Assistant, Director of Curriculum, Superintendent*	
Revise the curriculum website to reflect standards and performance indicators for each grade level.	*Jan-June*	*Director of Curriculum, Director of Communications*	

3. Develop Creative and Flexible Curriculum and Career Pathways That Enable Students to Become Successful Citizens and Skillful Workers			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4-5
Articulate curriculum with proficiency standards and learning progressions, PK-12 Articulate all student assessment systems in each content area and grade level and use analysis to adapt learning practices Support administrators to increase their capacity as instruction leaders	Implement Multiple Modes of instruction to reach all levels of students Identify Proficiency based graduation requirements	Work with the Career Center to create middle and high school career exploratory experiences for middle and high school students	Implement personalized learning opportunities for each grade 7-12 student, including goals, assessments, and career exploration resources

22-23 Challenge: ***Students are leaving the system without the necessary skills to be successful citizens and/or skillful workers***
Strategy: What approach will we take to address this challenge? *-Articulate curriculum with proficiency standards and learning progressions, PK-12*

-Articulate all student assessment systems in each content area and grade level and use analysis to adapt learning practices *-Support administrators to increase their capacity as instruction leaders*

Outcomes: If this strategy is successful, what will be the impact on students' learning or behavior? *More students will graduate in the typical timeframe; students will graduate with the necessary skills to be successful.*	**Evidence:** How will we know this is "working"? *Graduation data is improving; alumni surveys reflect that Barre students report being prepared for their next occupational or educational step.*

Action Step for 22-23: What steps will we need to take to implement this strategy?	**Timeframe:** When will we implement this step?	**Partners:** Who will be involved?	**Comments / Resources needed:**
With support of the Curriculum DIrector, PreK-12 Curriculum Leaders and Departments heads define proficiency standards and learning progressions	*Jan-June*	*Director of Curriculum, Curriculum Leaders, Department Heads, GSP Coach*	*Existing frameworks need to be revised*
Curriculum leaders to share assessment frameworks for each grade level	*Jan-June*	*Director of Curriculum, Curriculum Leaders, Department Heads,*	
Instructional coaches provide job-embedded support to improve student outcomes	*Aug-June*	*Instructional Coaches Director of Curriculum*	
Provided monthly-weekly support for administrators by building coach-administrator relationships	*Aug-June*	*Director of Curriculum, Coaches, Administrators*	

4. Provide the Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Environmental Resources that Students Need for Successful Learning and Personal Wellbeing			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4-5
Continue to build student Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	Ensure all teachers, staff, and administrators receive ongoing	Sustaining	Sustaining

capacity Align research-based practices which support student wellness PK-12 Expand health and dental centers in all schools	trauma informed training (ongoing)		

22-23 Challenge:
Students' social emotional needs are inhibiting successful learning and personal well being.

Strategy: What approach will we take to address this challenge?
-Build student Social Emotional Learning (SEL) capacity
-Align research-based practices which support student wellness PK-12
-Expand health and dental centers in all schools

Outcomes: If this strategy is successful, what will be the impact on students' learning or behavior?	**Evidence:** How will we know this is "working"?
There will be increased engagement and enhanced learning.	*There will be fewer behavior and nurse referrals. Academic assessment data will improve (5% improvement each year). Our climate survey data (students, families, and staff) will reflect overall satisfaction on questions that are related to students' social emotional needs.*

Action Step for 22-23: What steps will we need to take to implement this strategy?	**Timeframe:** When will we implement this step?	**Partners:** Who will be involved?	**Comments / Resources needed:**
Promote use of the Essential Elements of Instruction document to focus on practices that are research-based.	*Aug-June and beyond*	*All staff and administrators*	
Instructional coaches provide job-embedded support for teachers to improve student outcomes	*Aug-June*	*Instructional Coaches*	
Enroll BTMES in the Dental Van program.	*Oct*	*Director of Curriculum, BT nurses, Dental Van support persons*	

5. Promote Student Engagement and Ownership in Their Learning			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4-5
Develop Multi- Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiative Expand student critical thinking skills Increase student ownership in accomplishing learning goals Conduct school culture and climate survey that focuses on student aspirations and student voice in the school setting (ongoing)	Consistently implement MTSS (ongoing) Ensure all students have access to a diverse array of co-curricular and club activities	Teachers work in Professional Learning Groups to develop interdisciplinary learning units (ongoing)	Monitoring

22-23 Challenge:
Student engagement overall has decreased; less ownership has led to less interest in learning.

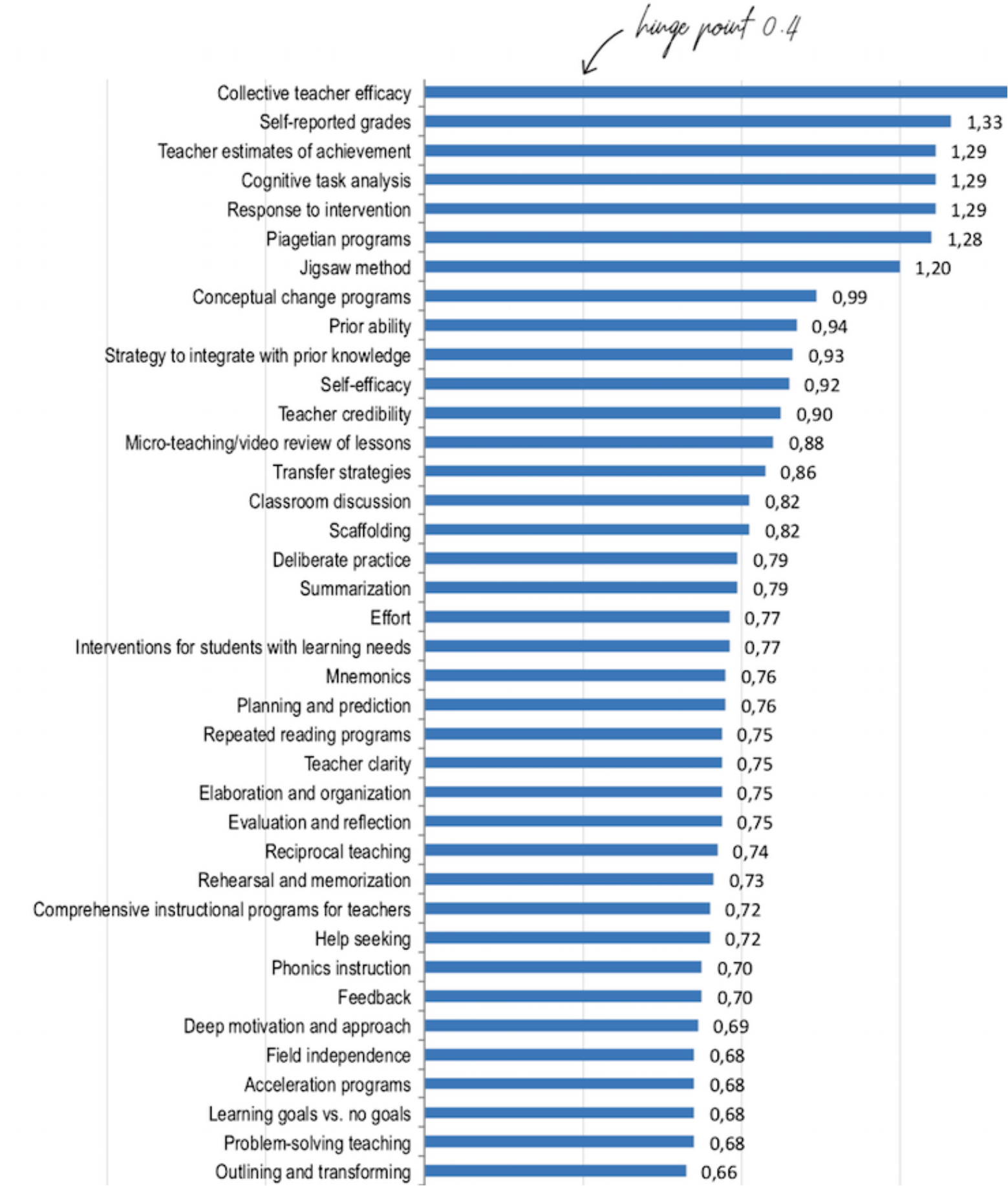
Strategy: What approach will we take to address this challenge?
-Develop Multi- Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiative
-Expand student critical thinking skills
-Increase student ownership in accomplishing learning goals
-Conduct school culture and climate survey that focuses on student aspirations and student voice in the school setting

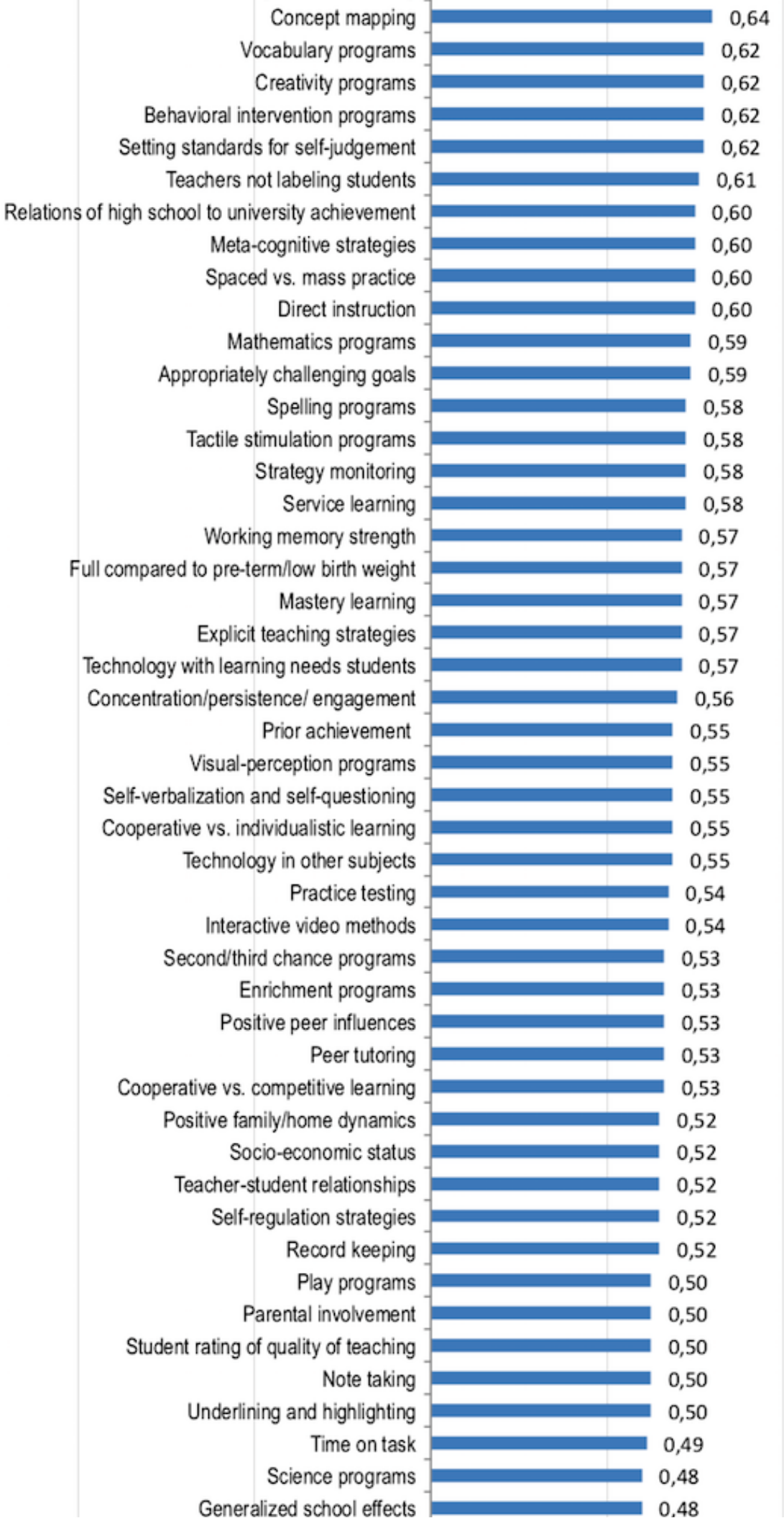
Outcomes: If this strategy is successful, what will be the impact on students' learning or behavior?	**Evidence:** How will we know this is "working"?
There will be increased engagement and enhanced learning.	*There will be fewer behavior and nurse referrals. Academic assessment data will improve (5% improvement each year). There will be a 5% improvement on attendance data each year. Our climate survey data (students, families, and staff) will reflect overall satisfaction on questions that are related to students' social emotional needs.*

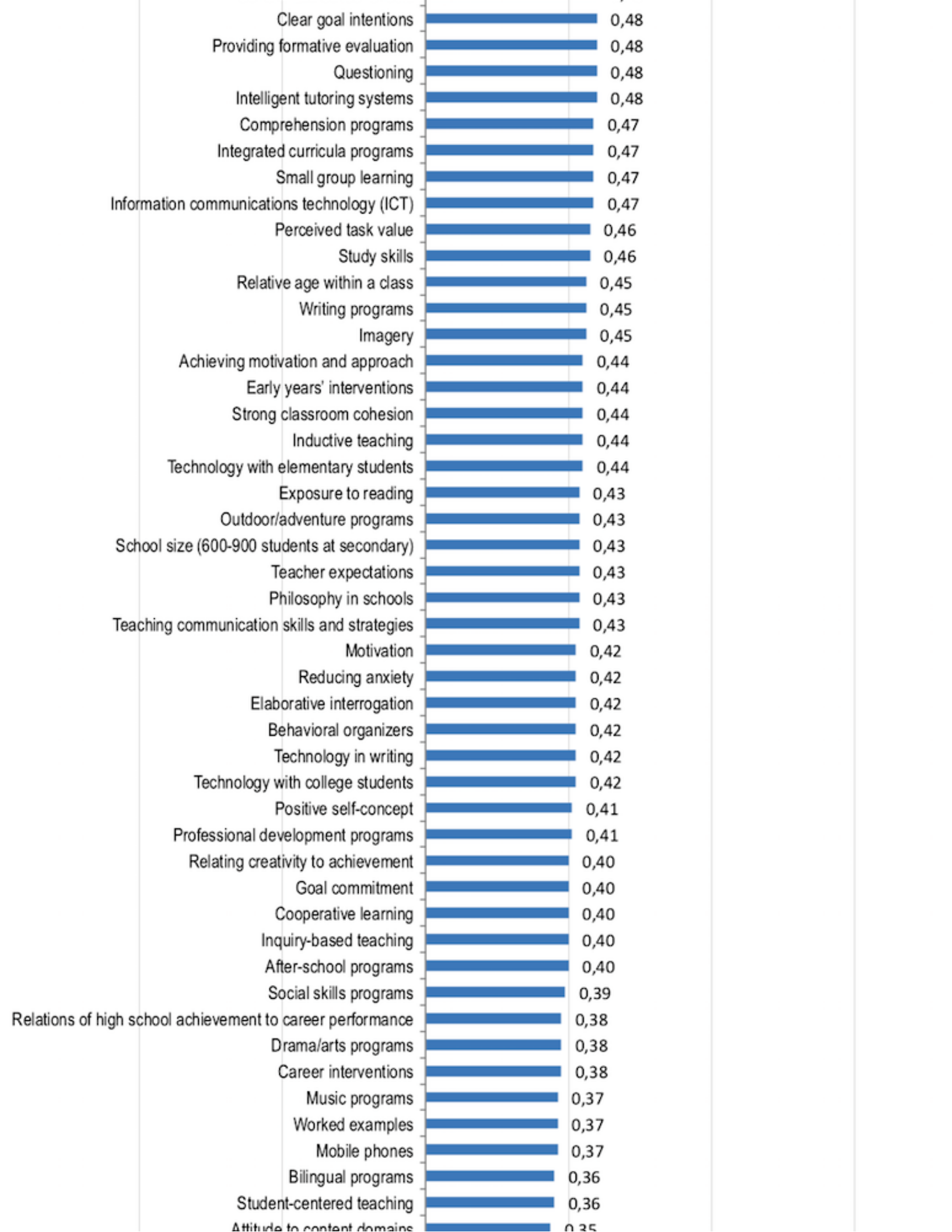
Action Step for 22-23: What steps will we need to take to implement this strategy?	**Timeframe:** When will we implement this step?	**Partners:** Who will be involved?	**Comments / Resources needed:**
Pilot a progress monitoring system for use with additional layers of support.	*Sept-Nov*	*Special Services Directors, Director of Curriculum, Barre City Interventionists*	
Promote use of the Essential Elements of Instruction document to focus on practices that are research-based.	*Aug-June and beyond*	*All staff and administrators*	
Administer PBIS climate surveys; data teams make recommendations based on the results.	*2-3 times per year*	*Barre Students, staff, and families*	

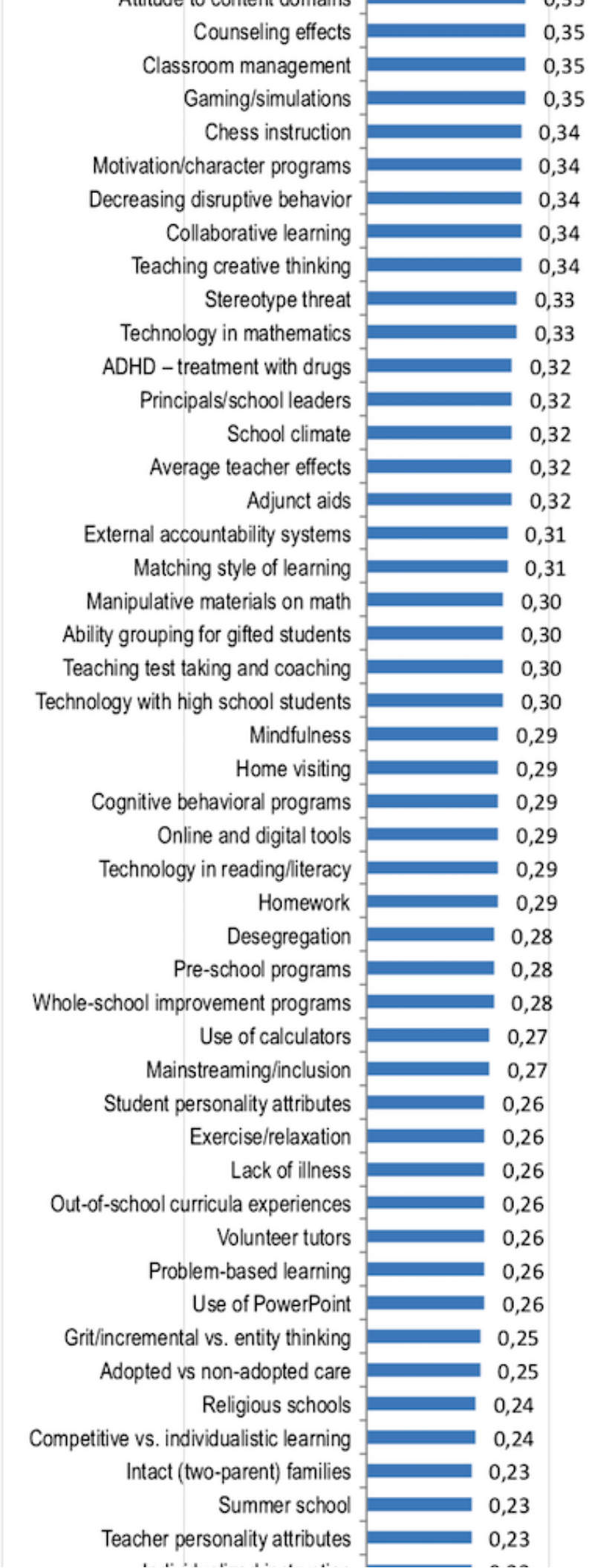
Hattie's 2018 updated list of factors related to student achievement: 252 influences and effect sizes (Cohen's d)

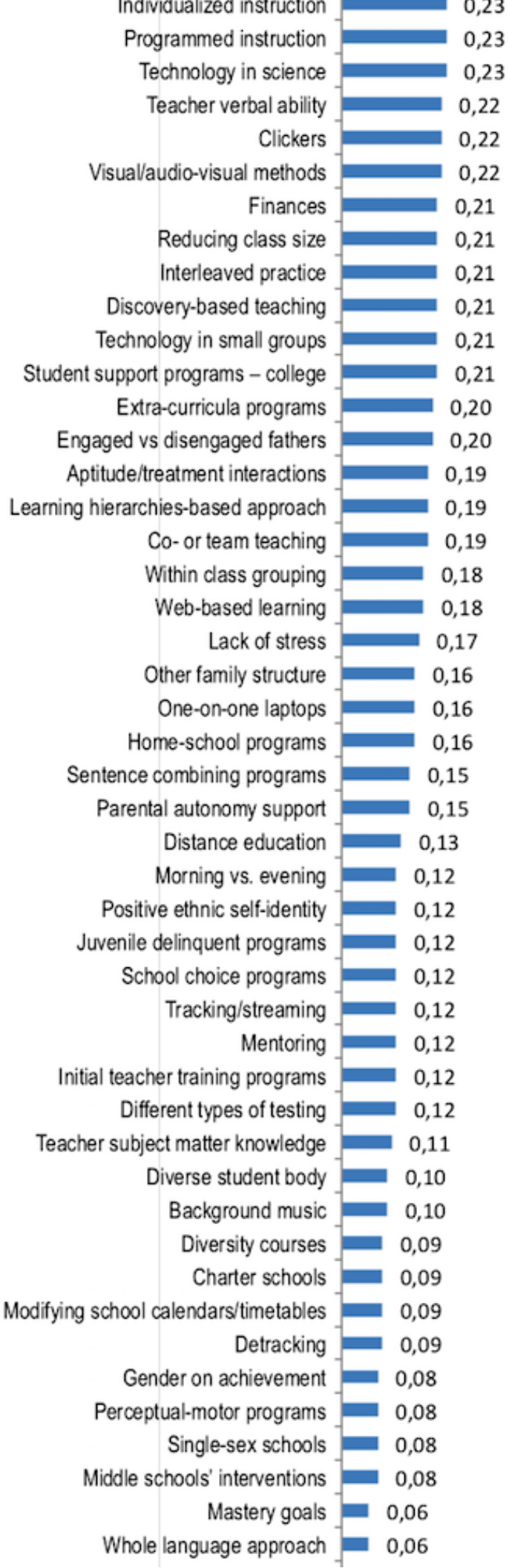
Source: J. Hattie (December 2017) visiblelearningplus.com
Diagram: S. Waack (2018) visible-learning.org

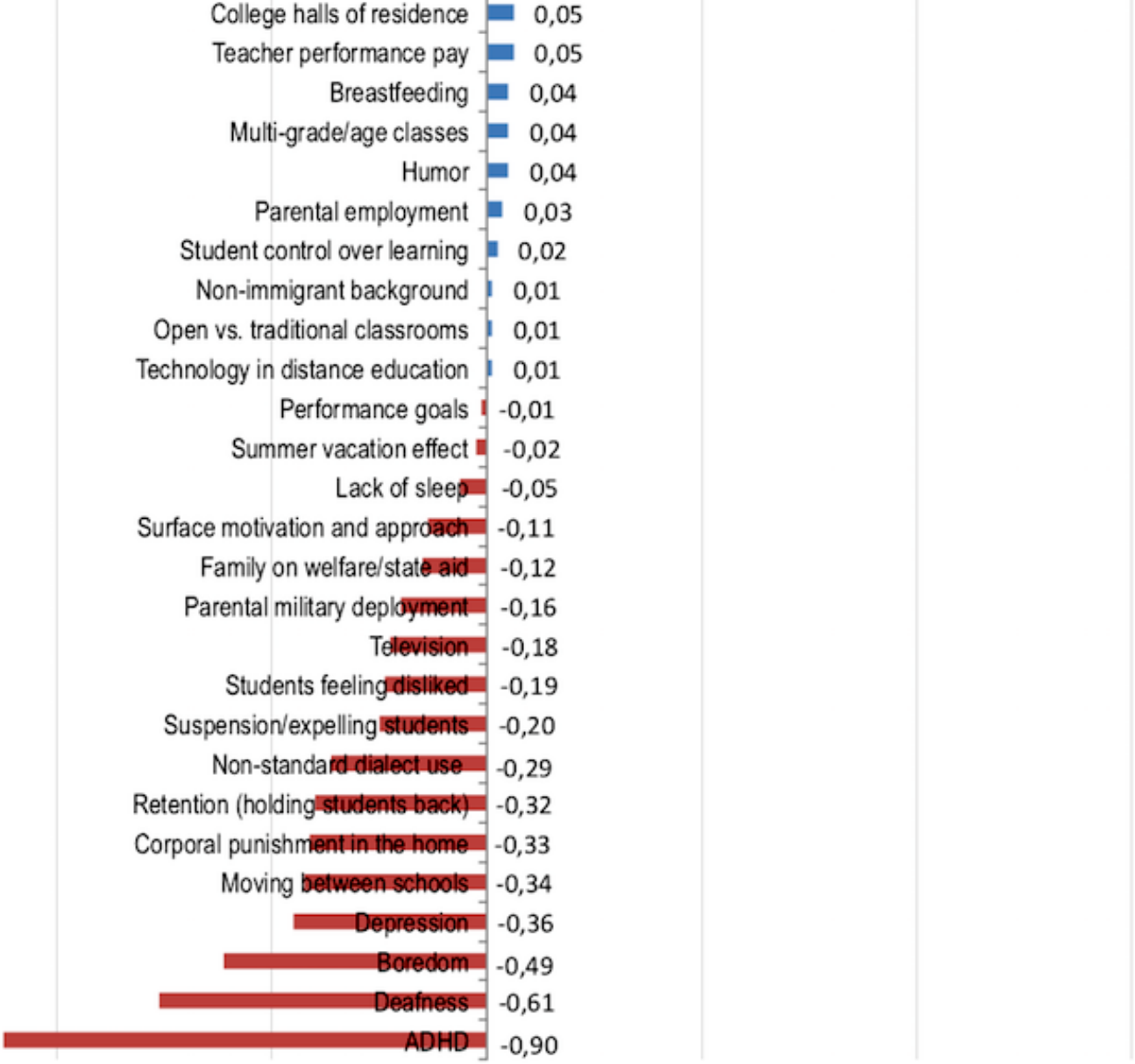



Concept mapping 0,64
Vocabulary programs 0,62
Creativity programs 0,62
Behavioral intervention programs 0,62
Setting standards for self-judgement 0,62
Teachers not labeling students 0,61
Relations of high school to university achievement 0,60
Meta-cognitive strategies 0,60
Spaced vs. mass practice 0,60
Direct instruction 0,60
Mathematics programs 0,59
Appropriately challenging goals 0,59
Spelling programs 0,58
Tactile stimulation programs 0,58
Strategy monitoring 0,58
Service learning 0,58
Working memory strength 0,57
Full compared to pre-term/low birth weight 0,57
Mastery learning 0,57
Explicit teaching strategies 0,57
Technology with learning needs students 0,57
Concentration/persistence/ engagement 0,56
Prior achievement 0,55
Visual-perception programs 0,55
Self-verbalization and self-questioning 0,55
Cooperative vs. individualistic learning 0,55
Technology in other subjects 0,55
Practice testing 0,54
Interactive video methods 0,54
Second/third chance programs 0,53
Enrichment programs 0,53
Positive peer influences 0,53
Peer tutoring 0,53
Cooperative vs. competitive learning 0,53
Positive family/home dynamics 0,52
Socio-economic status 0,52
Teacher-student relationships 0,52
Self-regulation strategies 0,52
Record keeping 0,52
Play programs 0,50
Parental involvement 0,50
Student rating of quality of teaching 0,50
Note taking 0,50
Underlining and highlighting 0,50
Time on task 0,49
Science programs 0,48
Generalized school effects 0,48


Clear goal intentions 0,48
Providing formative evaluation 0,48
Questioning 0,48
Intelligent tutoring systems 0,48
Comprehension programs 0,47
Integrated curricula programs 0,47
Small group learning 0,47
Information communications technology (ICT) 0,47
Perceived task value 0,46
Study skills 0,46
Relative age within a class 0,45
Writing programs 0,45
Imagery 0,45
Achieving motivation and approach 0,44
Early years' interventions 0,44
Strong classroom cohesion 0,44
Inductive teaching 0,44
Technology with elementary students 0,44
Exposure to reading 0,43
Outdoor/adventure programs 0,43
School size (600-900 students at secondary) 0,43
Teacher expectations 0,43
Philosophy in schools 0,43
Teaching communication skills and strategies 0,43
Motivation 0,42
Reducing anxiety 0,42
Elaborative interrogation 0,42
Behavioral organizers 0,42
Technology in writing 0,42
Technology with college students 0,42
Positive self-concept 0,41
Professional development programs 0,41
Relating creativity to achievement 0,40
Goal commitment 0,40
Cooperative learning 0,40
Inquiry-based teaching 0,40
After-school programs 0,40
Social skills programs 0,39
Relations of high school achievement to career performance 0,38
Drama/arts programs 0,38
Career interventions 0,38
Music programs 0,37
Worked examples 0,37
Mobile phones 0,37
Bilingual programs 0,36
Student-centered teaching 0,36
Attitude to content domains 0,35


Attitude to content domains 0,35
Counseling effects 0,35
Classroom management 0,35
Gaming/simulations 0,35
Chess instruction 0,34
Motivation/character programs 0,34
Decreasing disruptive behavior 0,34
Collaborative learning 0,34
Teaching creative thinking 0,34
Stereotype threat 0,33
Technology in mathematics 0,33
ADHD – treatment with drugs 0,32
Principals/school leaders 0,32
School climate 0,32
Average teacher effects 0,32
Adjunct aids 0,32
External accountability systems 0,31
Matching style of learning 0,31
Manipulative materials on math 0,30
Ability grouping for gifted students 0,30
Teaching test taking and coaching 0,30
Technology with high school students 0,30
Mindfulness 0,29
Home visiting 0,29
Cognitive behavioral programs 0,29
Online and digital tools 0,29
Technology in reading/literacy 0,29
Homework 0,29
Desegregation 0,28
Pre-school programs 0,28
Whole-school improvement programs 0,28
Use of calculators 0,27
Mainstreaming/inclusion 0,27
Student personality attributes 0,26
Exercise/relaxation 0,26
Lack of illness 0,26
Out-of-school curricula experiences 0,26
Volunteer tutors 0,26
Problem-based learning 0,26
Use of PowerPoint 0,26
Grit/incremental vs. entity thinking 0,25
Adopted vs non-adopted care 0,25
Religious schools 0,24
Competitive vs. individualistic learning 0,24
Intact (two-parent) families 0,23
Summer school 0,23
Teacher personality attributes 0,23


Individualized instruction 0,23
Programmed instruction 0,23
Technology in science 0,23
Teacher verbal ability 0,22
Clickers 0,22
Visual/audio-visual methods 0,22
Finances 0,21
Reducing class size 0,21
Interleaved practice 0,21
Discovery-based teaching 0,21
Technology in small groups 0,21
Student support programs – college 0,21
Extra-curricula programs 0,20
Engaged vs disengaged fathers 0,20
Aptitude/treatment interactions 0,19
Learning hierarchies-based approach 0,19
Co- or team teaching 0,19
Within class grouping 0,18
Web-based learning 0,18
Lack of stress 0,17
Other family structure 0,16
One-on-one laptops 0,16
Home-school programs 0,16
Sentence combining programs 0,15
Parental autonomy support 0,15
Distance education 0,13
Morning vs. evening 0,12
Positive ethnic self-identity 0,12
Juvenile delinquent programs 0,12
School choice programs 0,12
Tracking/streaming 0,12
Mentoring 0,12
Initial teacher training programs 0,12
Different types of testing 0,12
Teacher subject matter knowledge 0,11
Diverse student body 0,10
Background music 0,10
Diversity courses 0,09
Charter schools 0,09
Modifying school calendars/timetables 0,09
Detracking 0,09
Gender on achievement 0,08
Perceptual-motor programs 0,08
Single-sex schools 0,08
Middle schools' interventions 0,08
Mastery goals 0,06
Whole language approach 0,06


College halls of residence 0,05
Teacher performance pay 0,05
Breastfeeding 0,04
Multi-grade/age classes 0,04
Humor 0,04
Parental employment 0,03
Student control over learning 0,02
Non-immigrant background 0,01
Open vs. traditional classrooms 0,01
Technology in distance education 0,01
Performance goals -0,01
Summer vacation effect -0,02
Lack of sleep -0,05
Surface motivation and approach -0,11
Family on welfare/state aid -0,12
Parental military deployment -0,16
Television -0,18
Students feeling disliked -0,19
Suspension/expelling students -0,20
Non-standard dialect use -0,29
Retention (holding students back) -0,32
Corporal punishment in the home -0,33
Moving between schools -0,34
Depression -0,36
Boredom -0,49
Deafness -0,61
ADHD -0,90

Three Reasons Tracking Kids is Wrong (And How to Start Making a Change)

As I sent my kids off to school the other day, I noticed that my daughter was hanging back. "What's wrong?" I asked.

> *"Today we have a big test," she said, "and if I don't do a good job, I'll be in the low class next year."*

It took a moment for me to respond to her anxiety, and I tried to be reassuring. However, deep down, I knew I was placating my daughter and that anything I said would be less powerful than what she learned from friends and teachers. Over the past several years, I've struggled as a parent when my own children have experiences in school that I question as an educator. In this case, I do not know where my children get the terminology of "low, middle, high" when they refer to the courses in which they are placed each year. Whether these words come from fellow students or from teachers, they reinforce all kinds of ideas that are both inaccurate and potentially damaging to a child's academic identity. Furthermore, when we track students into different groups based upon perceived ability, we are reinforcing a set of beliefs that is destructive to children. Below are three important reasons that we should, once and for all, walk away from tracking, as well as some questions to ask ourselves as we walk away from this outdated practice.

Tracking Holds Kids Back

Do we think that hanging out with people who are theoretically just like us is a desirable social model? And if the answer is no, is it a desirable academic model? Quite often, students are placed into classes with students who are considered to be of like ability, usually based on assessment data. That practice is flawed for so many reasons, not the least of which is an overreliance on testing results which are not always accurate. Beyond that, if we combine groups that are perceived as the same, not only do we unfairly stereotype scores of students both academically and socially; we also miss a huge opportunity to elevate students by maximizing their collective differences. I do not learn nearly as much from those who have the same skills or perspective that I have; instead, I tend to have more meaningful growth when I interact with people who challenge my own way of thinking. Students need that same benefit.

Think about how much progress they will be able to achieve when we reinforce the important reality that we make one another stronger because of our differences, and not in spite of them.

Tracking Supports Fixed Mindset

As we know, moving from a set point can be a difficult accomplishment. While schools sometimes argue that tracked placements are not permanent, students often lack the adult advocates to help them change their situation. Coupling that with a gradual decline in self-belief, students tend to remain in the same tracked groups from the early grades all the way through high school. We spent a lot of time telling students that they can change, that intelligence is not a fixed point, that we believe in their ability to constantly grow. Why, then, does it make sense to place them into a leveled learning environment that sends the opposite message, either implicitly or otherwise? If we really believe in a growth mindset, we cannot support tracking both ideologically and practically. It does not make sense to place students into a situation that labels their academic identity and expect that they will remain there without any consequence to their sense of self. Instead of just talking about having a growth mindset, our actions should support what we say we value.

Tracking Promotes Inequity

A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of teaching a brilliant writer. He came into my class as a happy accident; one day, I was grading student test papers with a group of colleagues and I came across his. At the time, he was enrolled in so-called “regular” English, but his writing was absolutely masterful. When I asked him why he was not in a more advanced English class, he said, “I’ve just been put in regular English since the third grade. I wanted to switch out, but they told me I’m in the right place.” I didn’t know who exactly “they” were, but I did have a feeling that “their” decision was influenced by my student’s racial background since there was no other way to explain why this excellent student was being held back. In schools all over the country, demographic data shows that students of color are overwhelmingly enrolled in remedial or lower-level courses while their white peers are placed into honors or AP classes. This pattern is not accidental, nor is it a passing trend. Students are placed into classes at a young age and the rationale behind these placements is often the result of either implicit bias or explicit racism. Unless we stop making decisions about what students can do based upon personal perception when they are still at their most formative stage, nobody will check the inexcusable results that happen time and time again. The only way to stop this de facto segregation is to engage in a vital antiracist practice and stop tracking.

What considerations go into making the change away from tracking? To begin the process of positive change, here are some questions to pose:

- What need does tracking serve? How can we meet that need in heterogeneous groupings?
- Are classes tracked because of perceived ability or perceived motivation? If the former, what data measures do we use to make these decisions? If the latter, why is academic ability aligned with behavior?

- If we begin to experiment with heterogeneous groupings, what might be a good grade level or department to begin with?
- How can we explore our beliefs about tracking as a school, confront ideas that do not serve students, and have productive conversations about moving forward?
- What kind of professional development or support might teachers need who make this transition?
- What are our biggest concerns about making this transition? How can we address these concerns productively without moving backward?

While the questions above are just a start, they provide some reflective opportunities as well as a call to action for change. Over the past year, we've been given a huge opportunity to reexamine so many of our educational structures, to challenge their effectiveness, and to put a stop to the status quo. As we think about scheduling students for next year and helping them recover from so much learning disruption over the course of this pandemic, the last thing on our minds should be finding ways to further limit opportunity and access. Tracking has not, nor should it ever be, a legitimate way to provide students with a strong sense of academic confidence. Instead, it has created a system of have and have-nots, and that is simply unacceptable. Looking forward, making a case to remove tracking with our school teams is a solid investment in our students and in what they can really do when we believe in them wholeheartedly.

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