

Improving
School Climate

—
Change the
Conversation
and Build a
New System



Georgia Department of Education

Garry McGiboney



You never change things by fighting the existing reality.

To change something, build a new system that makes the existing system obsolete.

-Buckminster Fuller

Is it Possible to Provide a Positive School Climate, Reduce Student Discipline Problems, Improve Student Attendance, Increase Academic Achievement, and Improve Safety?



Is it Possible to Provide a Positive School Climate, Reduce Student Discipline Problems, Improve Student Attendance, Increase Academic Achievement, and Improve Safety?



Not if we take the same view and keep doing the same things.

Lateral Thinking

lat·er·al think·ing

noun

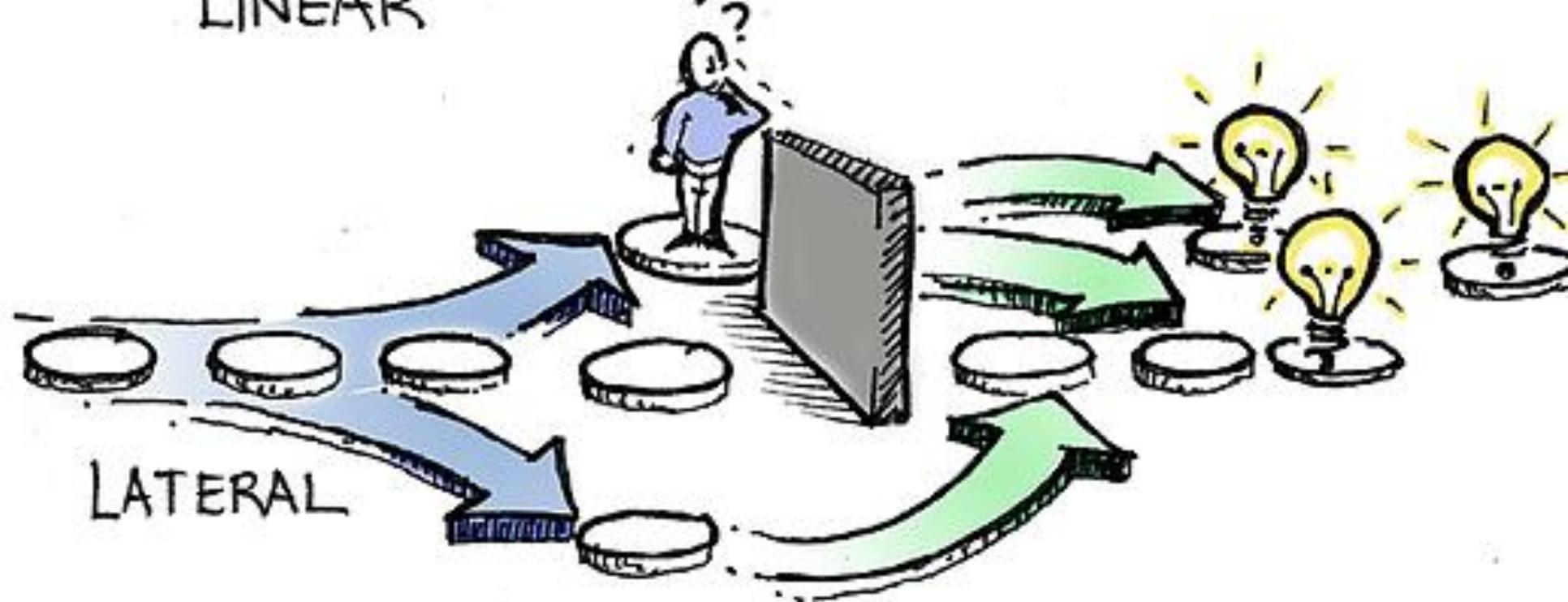
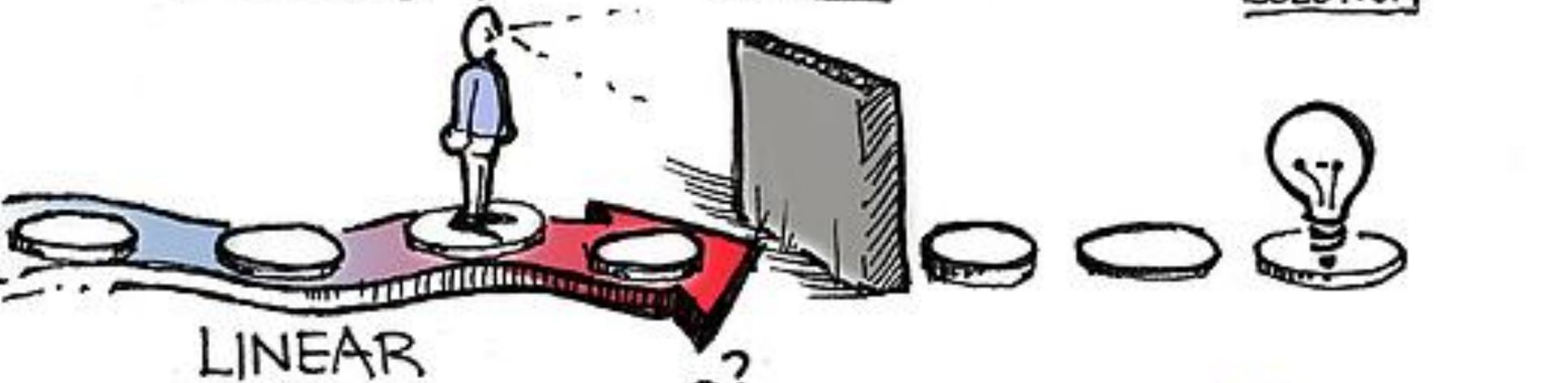
the solving of problems by an indirect and creative approach, typically through viewing the problem in a new and unusual light.

Edward DeBono – appointments at MIT, Harvard, and Oxford universities

THE PATH

PROBLEM

SOLUTION



2+2 = Fish

3+3 = Eight

7+7 = Triangle



2+2 = Fish

2 + S = 8

3+3 = Eight

3 + E = 8

7+7 = Triangle

7 + ∇ = ∇

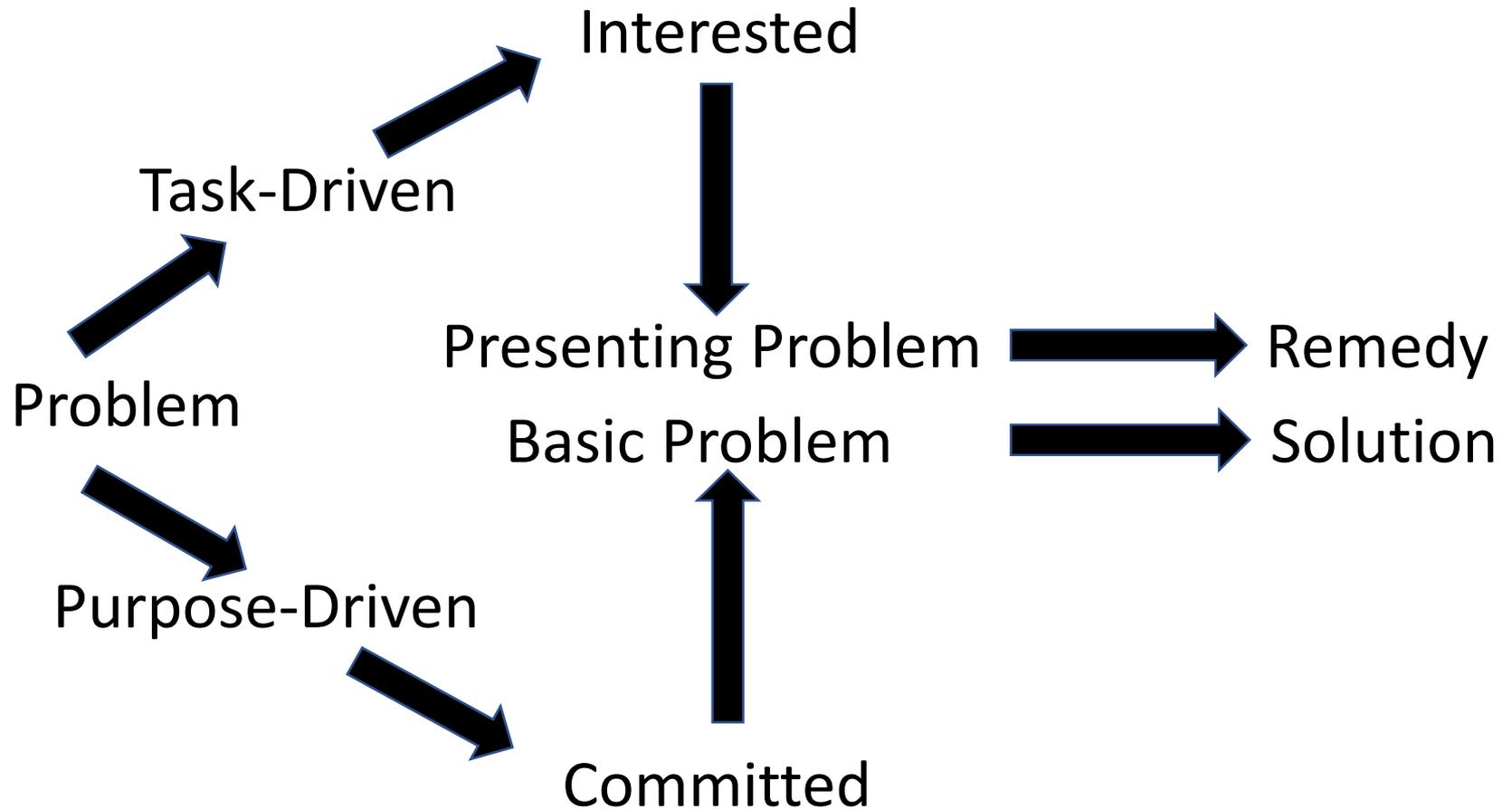


Lateral Thinking

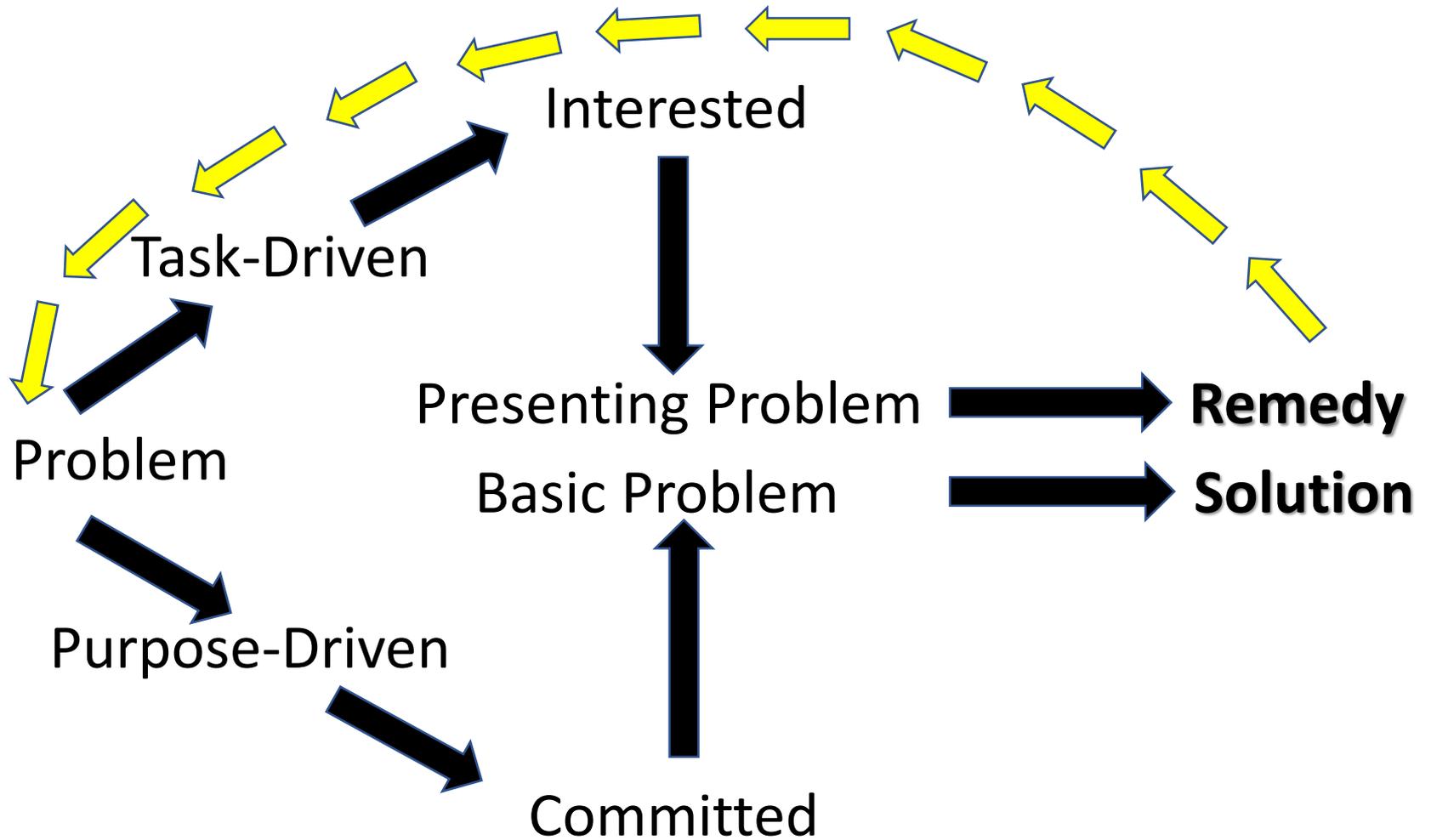


- Break existing patterns and change paradigms
- Generate more ideas and develop fresh thinking
- Solve challenging problems in new and different ways

Remedy or Solution?



Remedy or Solution?



Epidemiology (Solution-Based)

- Adopt the use of epidemiological concepts to provide a basis for developing surveillance measures and prevention strategies for groups and at-risk populations
- Adopt epidemiological methods to identify possible causation and strategies that impact both groups and populations, thereby also allowing individual treatments to be effective

This represents a shift from targeted reactions **to** population-based prevention and intervention

Diseases

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for the disease to occur.

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order **to identify solutions.**

Diseases

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there are always determinants for the disease to occur.

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order **to identify solutions.**

Behaviors

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for **disruptive behavior to occur.**

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order **to identify solutions.**

Diseases

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for the disease to occur.

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Behaviors

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for **attendance problems.**

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order **to identify solutions.**

Diseases

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for the disease to occur.

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Behaviors

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for **low academic performance.**

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order **to identify solutions.**

Diseases

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for the disease to occur.

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Behaviors

Do not occur by chance:
there are always determinants for academic performance.

Are **not distributed at random**: distribution is related to risk factors that need to be studied for the population in order to **identify solutions.**

LOOK FOR PATTERNS and CLUES

How do we identify solutions?

“Decisions are more often
driven by our reactions
than by data.”

Khal Simon

How we **characterize behavior** in large part determines how we react to the behavior.

How we **characterize behavior** in large part determines how we react to the behavior.

ATTRIBUTION

How we **characterize behavior** in large part determines how we react to the behavior.

ATTRIBUTION

at·tri·bu·tion

noun

the action of regarding something as being caused by a person or thing.

Attribution Theory:

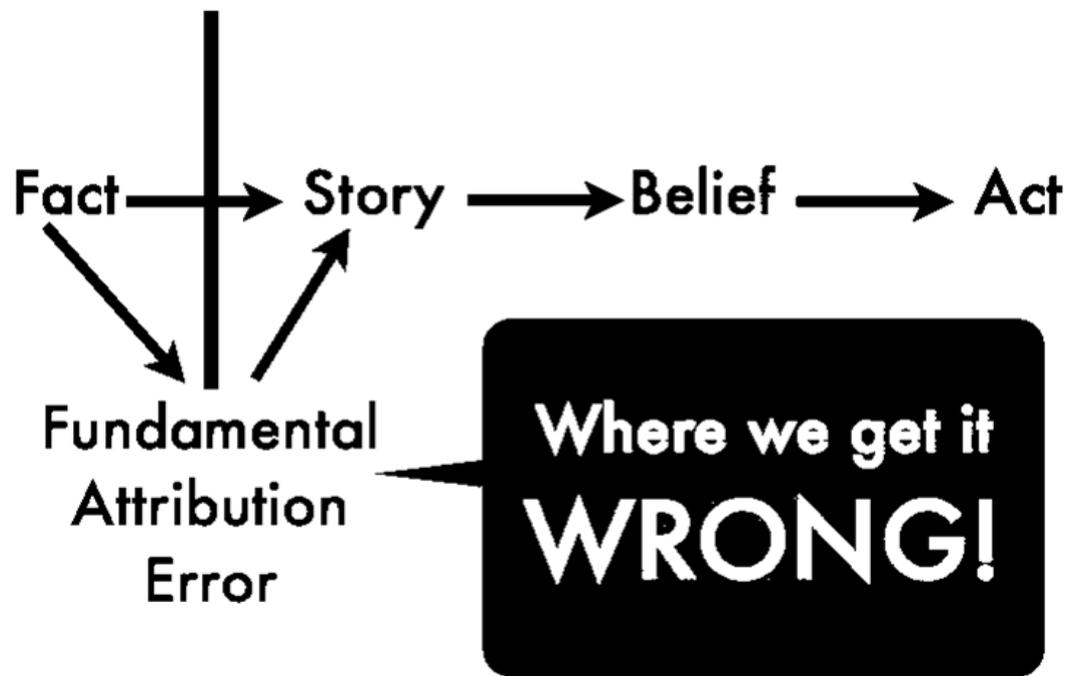
- The attempt to understand the behavior of others by attributing causation to feelings, beliefs, intentions, personality or situations.
- Reactions (consequences) are determined by the assignment of cause to the behavior more than by the behavior.

What happens when we attribute the
wrong cause to the behavior?

Fundamental Attribution Error

What happens when we attribute the wrong cause to the behavior?

Fundamental Attribution Error





IF THESE IDIOTS WOULD JUST TAKE THE BUS, I COULD BE HOME BY NOW

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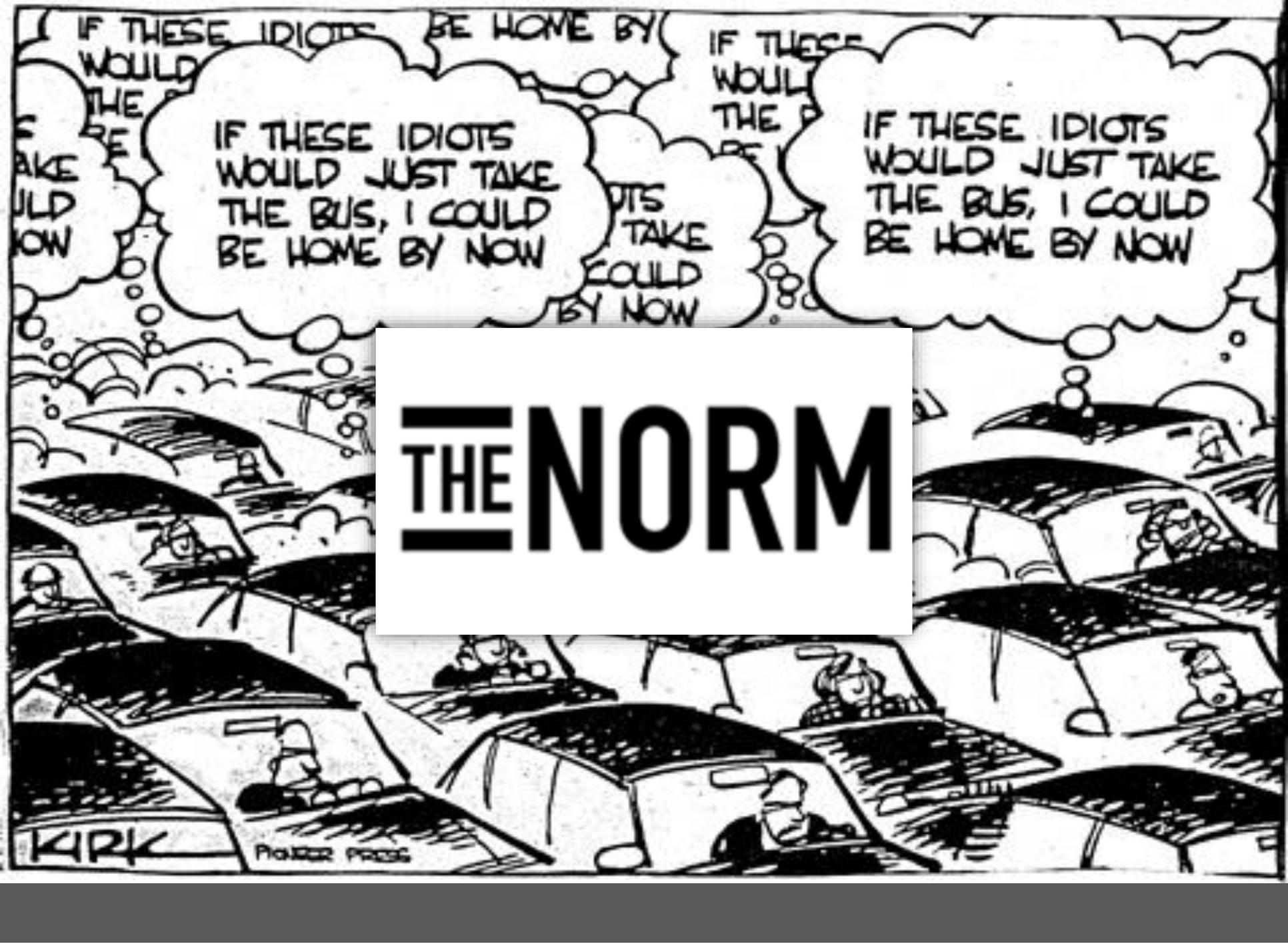
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KIRK

POWER PRESS



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THE NORM

KIRK

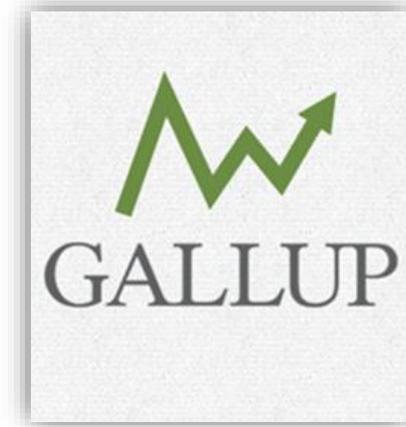
POLDER PRESS

Lateral Thinking
Epidemiological Perspective
Attribution
Solutions...
to Improve School Climate

School Climate/Workplace Climate

Gallup Poll

A Gallup Poll showed that, even when workplaces offered benefits such as flextime, telework, etc., employees preferred a **positive workplace climate** to all other benefits.



Harvard Business Review

“Well-being, productivity, problem-solving, and employee retention come from one place, and one place only – a **positive workplace climate.**”



**Harvard
Business
Review**

United States Military Climate Indicators

United States Army Positive and Safe Command Climate Survey



United States Navy Command Climate Assessment



Reference: FM 22-100



School Climate

School Climate is the experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, social interactions, access, engagement, connections, teaching and learning practices, building quality, safety, and organizational practices.



School climate sets the tone for all the learning and teaching done in the school environment and, as research proves, it is predictive of students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways and behave appropriately and productively.



The Center For Social and Emotional Education

Research shows that a **positive school climate** directly impacts important indicators of success such as:

- increased teacher retention,
- lower dropout rates,
- higher rates of student achievement,
- decreased incidences of violence,
- fewer out-of-school suspension, and
- reductions in referrals to juvenile court.

The Center For Social and Emotional Education

What Does a Positive School Climate Look Like?



Students....

- Are disciplined and not punished
- Are encouraged to contribute ideas for resolving problems
- Are taught replacement behaviors
- Are disciplined and taught how to self manage their behavior
- Are taught social skills

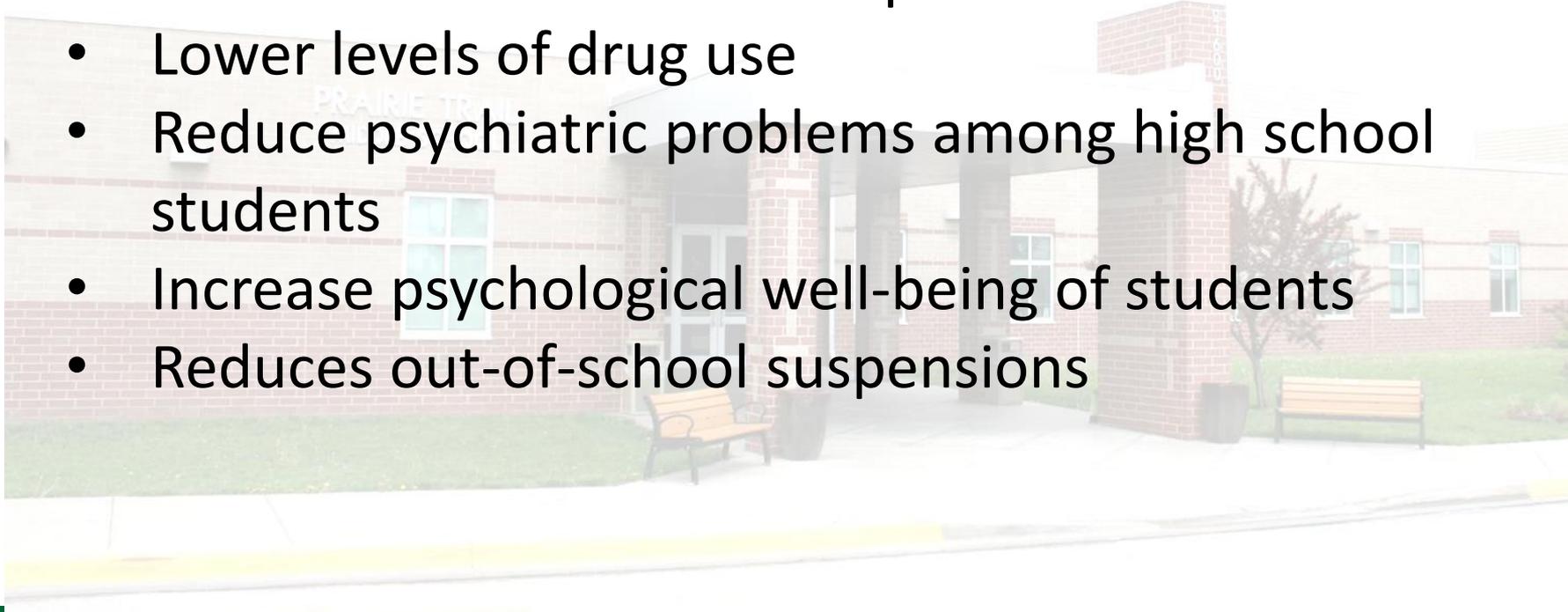


“Negative perceptions of peer interpersonal relations, unequal sharing of school resources, the physical appearance of one’s school building, and other school climate elements **uniquely predict greater behavioral health issues**, whereas positive teacher-student relations and a positive school climate were **associated with wellness....**”
(Suldo, McMahan, Chappel, and Loker)

School climate affects not only students’ motivation and school satisfaction, but their lifestyles, health, mental health, and quality of life, as well.
(Vieno, Santinello, Galbiati, and Mirandola)

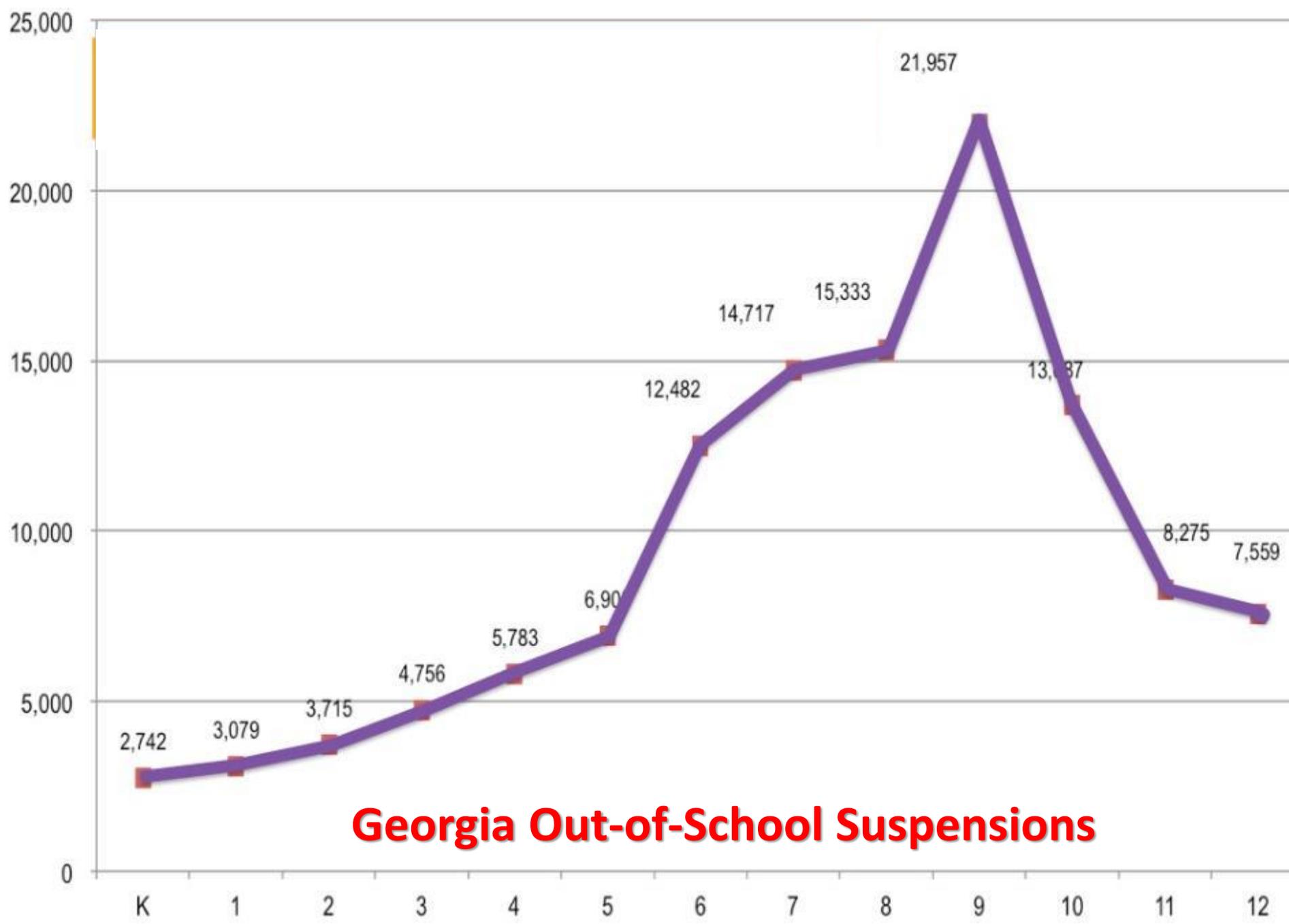
A **positive school climate** has been shown to:

- Positively impact middle school students' self-esteem
- Improve a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes
- Increase student self-concept
- Lower levels of drug use
- Reduce psychiatric problems among high school students
- Increase psychological well-being of students
- Reduces out-of-school suspensions

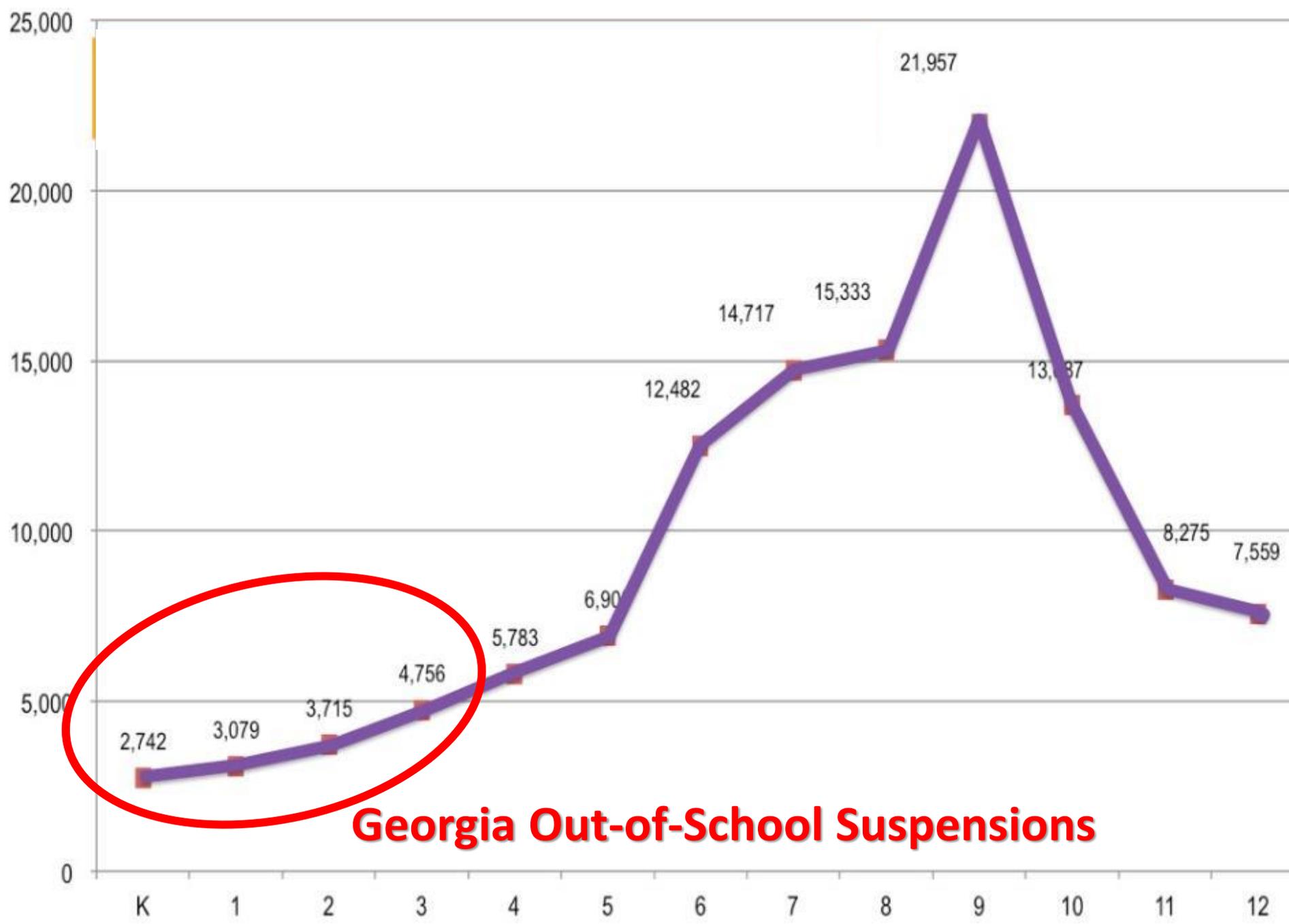


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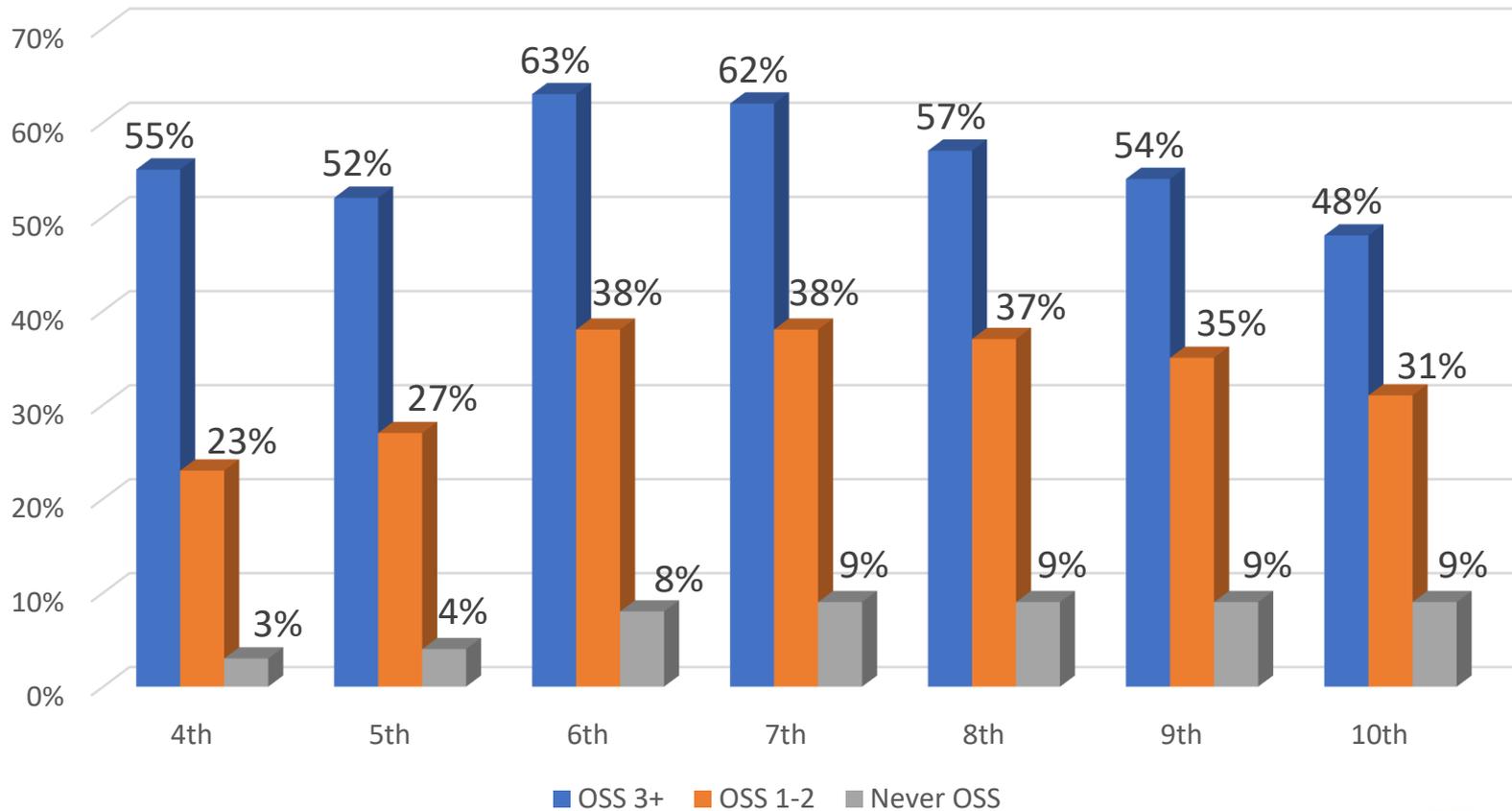


Georgia Out-of-School Suspensions

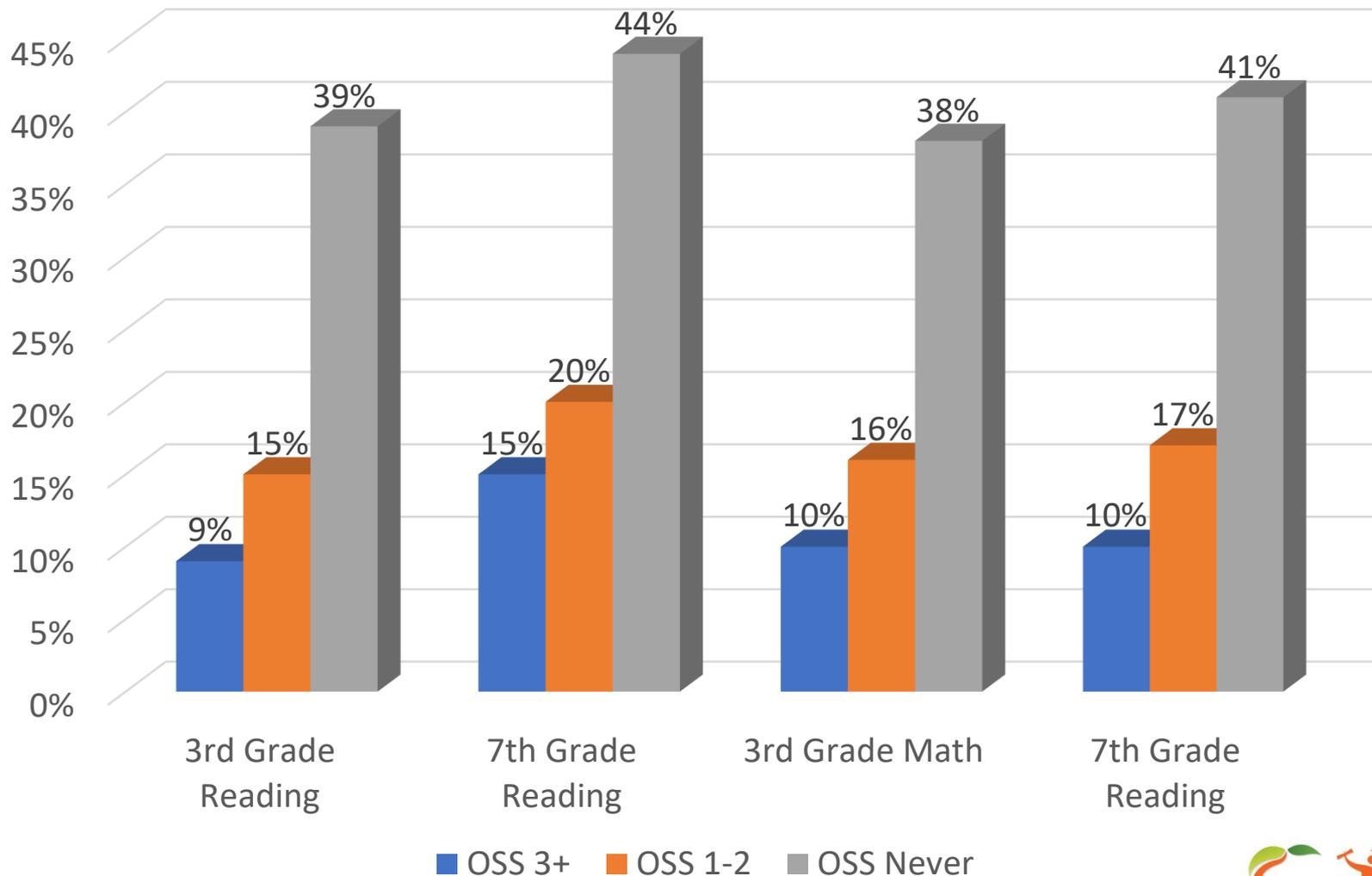


Georgia Out-of-School Suspensions

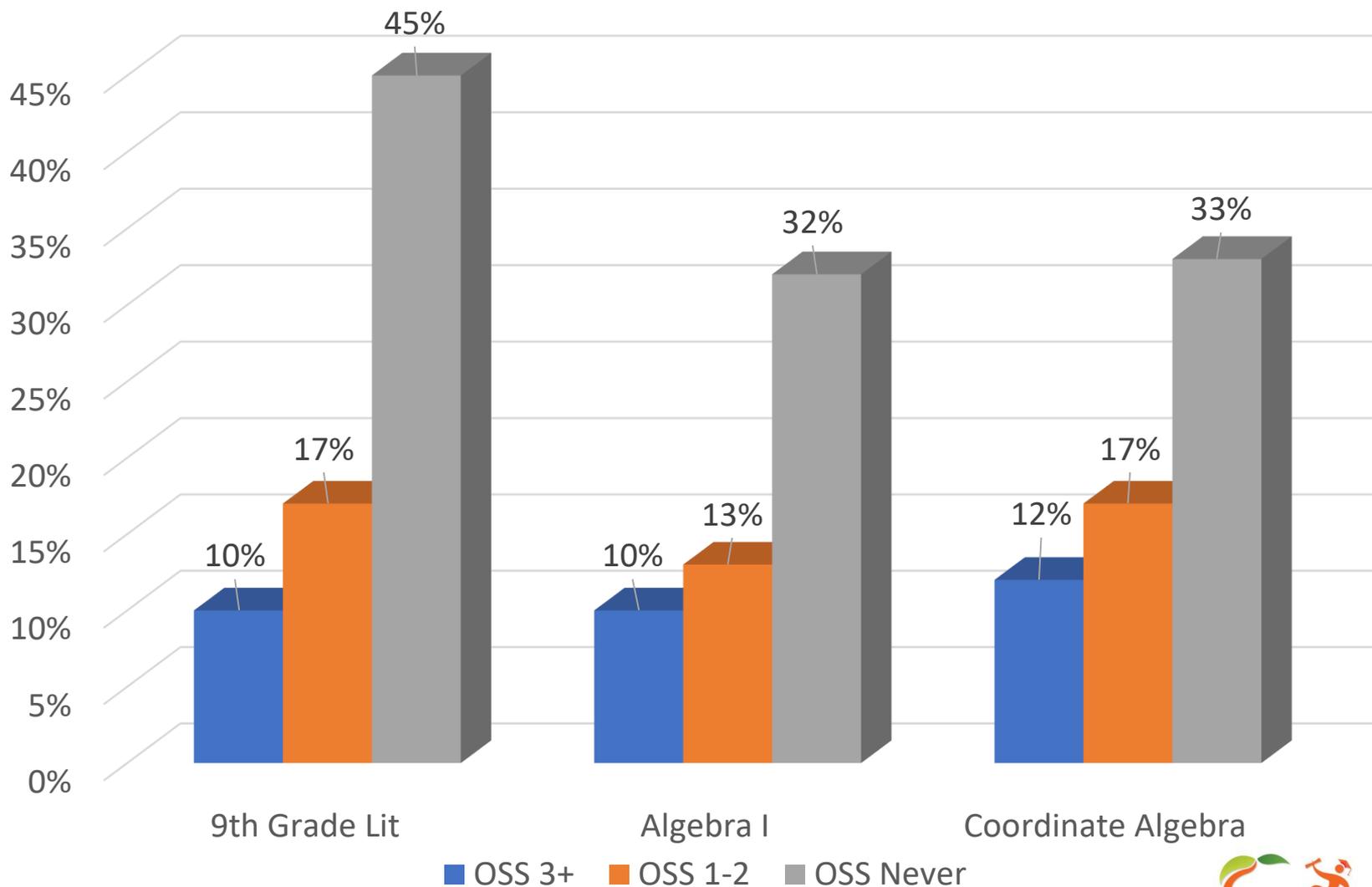
Students Assigned OSS in K-3 are Significantly More Likely to be Assigned OSS in 4th – 10th Grade



3rd and 7th Grade Reading and Math Exceeds by K-3 Out-of-School Suspension



9th Grade Literature and Algebra EOC Proficient and Distinguished by K-3 Out-of-School Suspension



Characteristic	# Students	% Dropout	% Graduated	% Enrolled in Post-Secondary	Avg Post-Secondary Terms Completed
0 Suspensions	133,044	16	75	58	4
1 Suspension	25,812	32	52	39	1.9
2 Suspension	11,693	42	38	31	1.2
3 Suspension	5,833	49	30	26	.9
4 Suspension	5,506	53	23	23	.7
Attendance > 95%	101,296	11	81	62	4.3
90-94	34,601	25	63	47	2.7
85-89	16,210	39	44	35	1.6
80-84	7,307	47	31	26	1.1
F grades: 0	93,626	8	85	67	4.9
1	18,500	23	66	44	2.3
2	14,909	29	56	40	2.0
3	7,482	38	45	31	1.2
4+	27,865	51	26	25	.9

Florida Study



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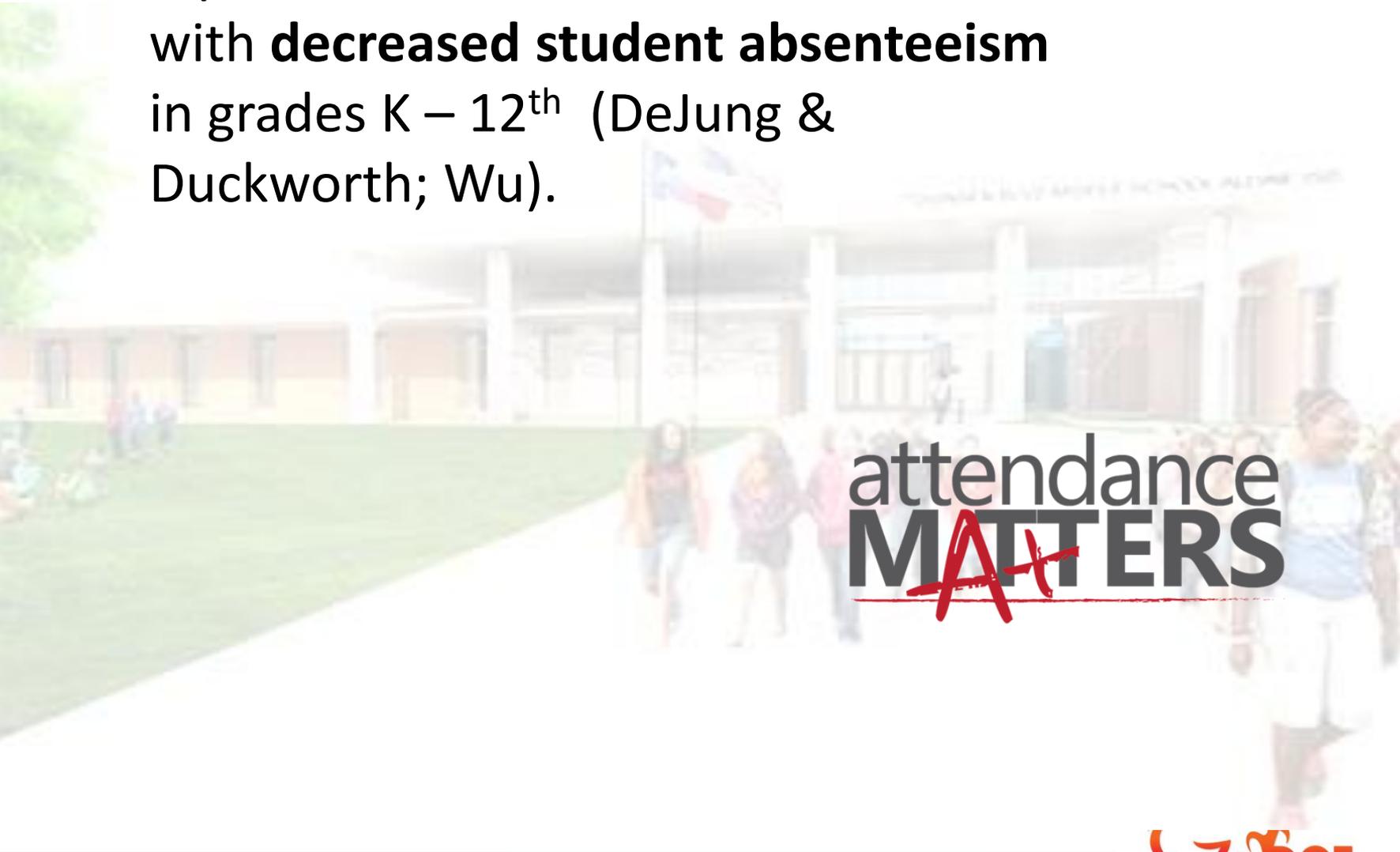


School Climate and Student Attendance

There is a correlation between student attendance and the School Climate Star Rating (Wu 2017).



A positive school climate is correlated with **decreased student absenteeism** in grades K – 12th (DeJung & Duckworth; Wu).



attendance
MATTERS

A study in Georgia found that a 1% improvement in school climate was found to increase student average attendance by 1.6 %

- **Improve school climate by 10% = 16% increase in student attendance**



Days Absent

0 Days

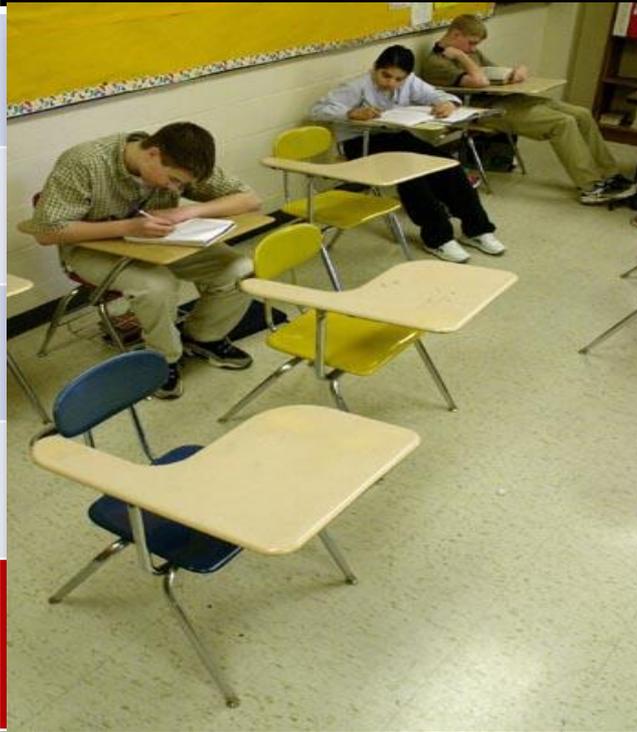
1 to 5 Days

6 to 10 Days

11 to 14 Days

15 or More Days

Graduation Rate



A positive school climate is correlated with **decreased student absenteeism**

8th grade student attendance

Days Absent	Graduation Rate
0 Days	81.89%
1 to 5 Days	80.17%
6 to 10 Days	71.91%
11 to 14 Days	61.08%
15 or More Days	38.09%

A positive school climate is correlated with **decreased student absenteeism**

8th grade student attendance

School Climate and School Safety



A positive school climate is critical to **overall school safety** (*M. C. Wang, Haertel, and Walberg*).



“A negative school climate is the only school characteristic that consistently correlates with school violence after taking into account other school features and factors.”

RAND Corporation Research





Our analysis of school-level factors led to a **clear conclusion:**

Preventing school violence requires an investment in building a positive school climate—one that supports student needs and promotes student engagement—as well as building individuals’ interpersonal and social and emotional skills to form positive, healthy relationships.

-Dr. Deborah Temkin, Senior Director of Research, Child Trends

Why Does Improving School Climate Impact Safety?

A study by Steinburg, Allensworth and Johnson found evidence that improving school climate is a means of creating safer schools because efforts to improve school climate focus on:

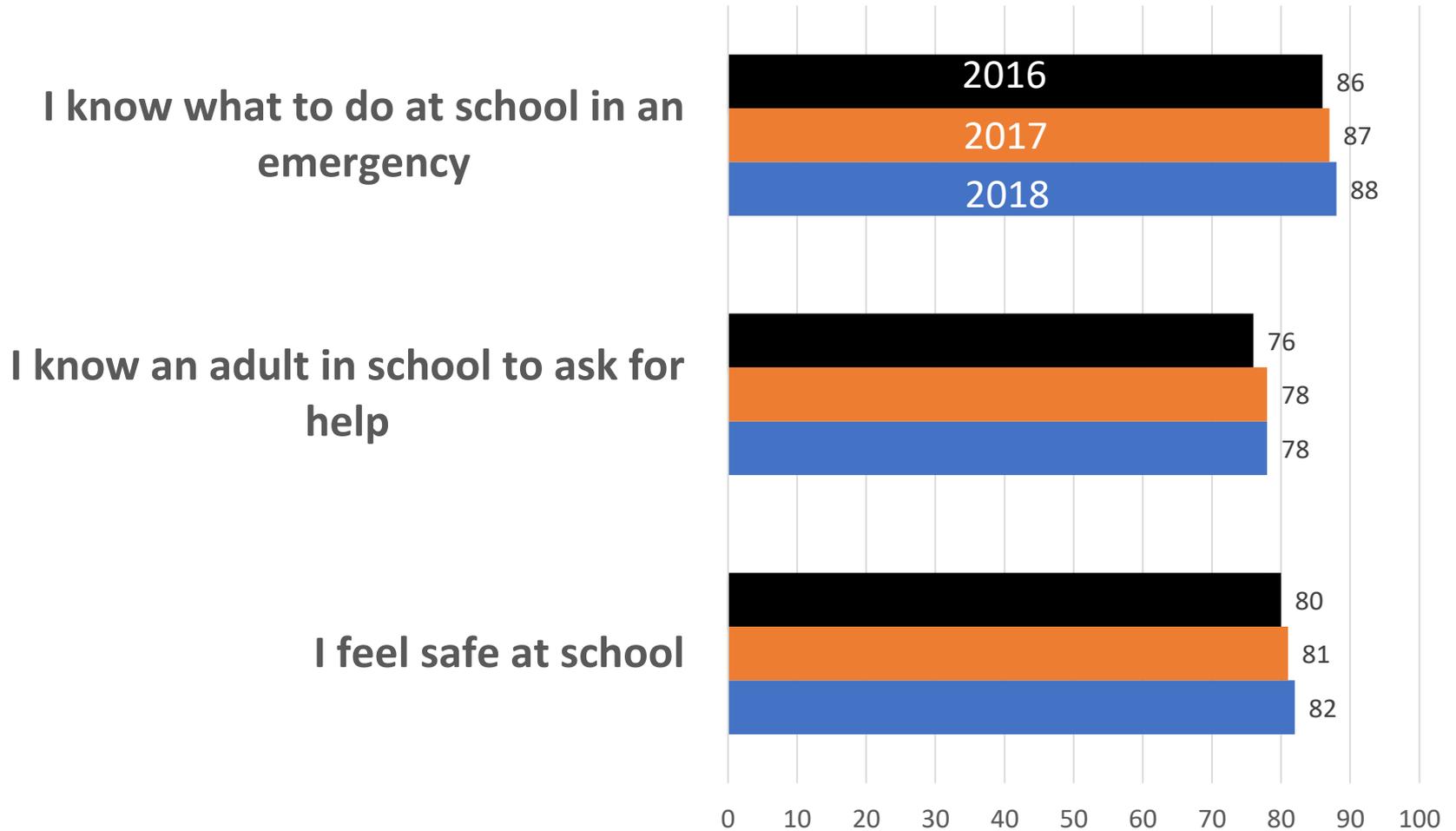
1. Improving communications
2. Reducing disruptions that escalate
3. Reducing threats that spread to multiple students
4. Reducing violence of retaliation/revenge
5. Reducing other forms of violence within and outside of the school
6. Increasing the prevalence of students informing staff members with concerns about safety, other students, etc.

Trusting relationships and a positive school climate are the most effective means of ensuring school safety, much more so than metal detectors.

-National Association of Secondary School Principals



Georgia Student Health Survey and Protective Factors

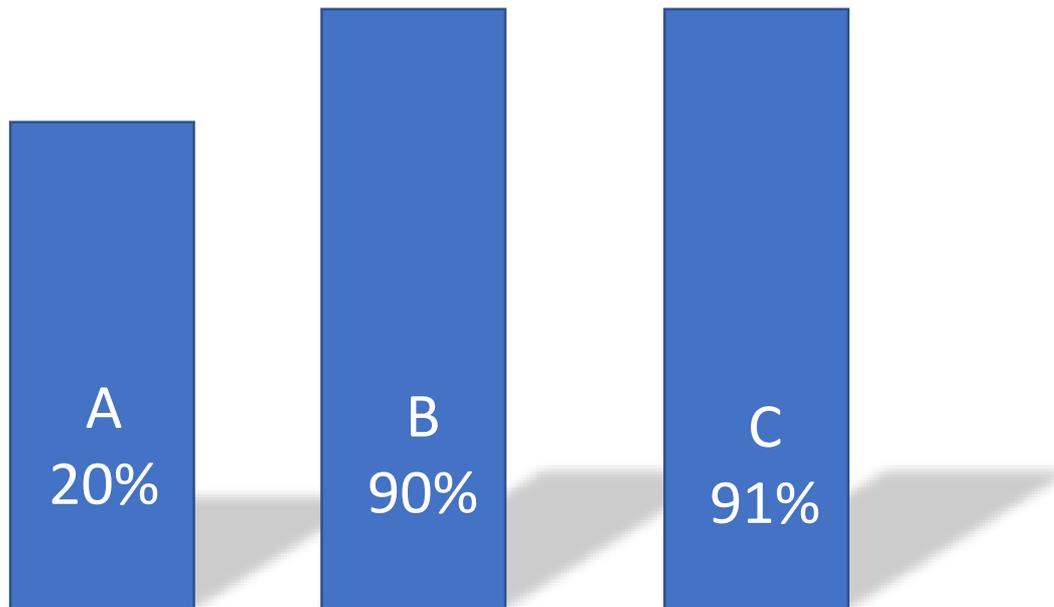


Georgia Student Health Survey – Study the Data

(A) Percentage of Students - Bullying

(B) Percentage of Students - Feel Safe at School

(C) Percentage of Students - Trusted Adult

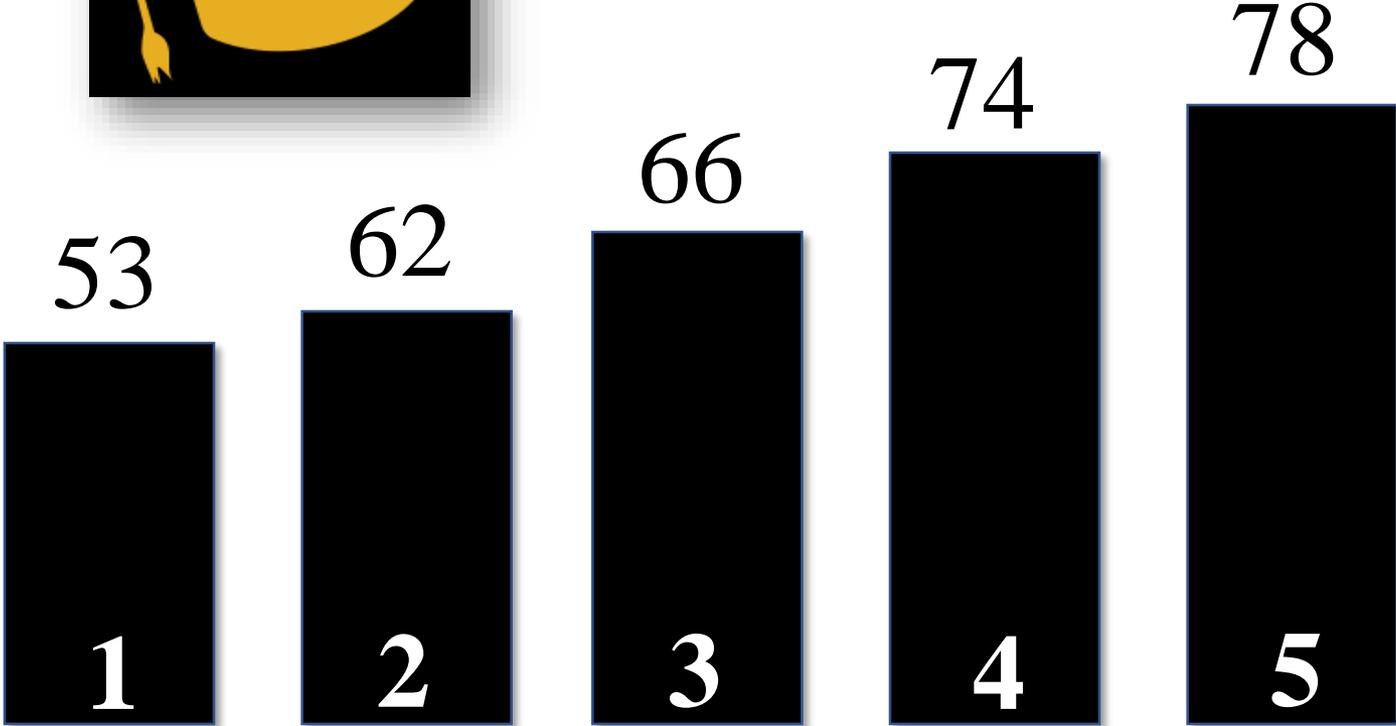


School Climate and Academic Outcomes

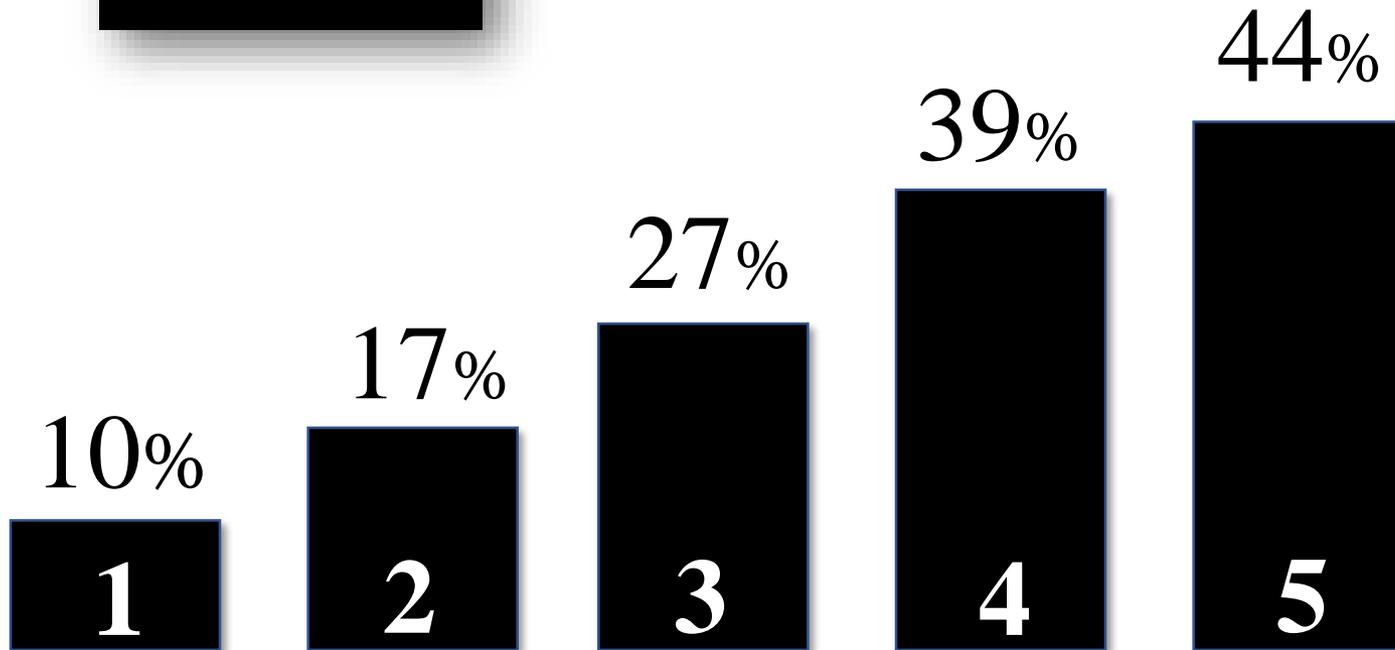


ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENTS

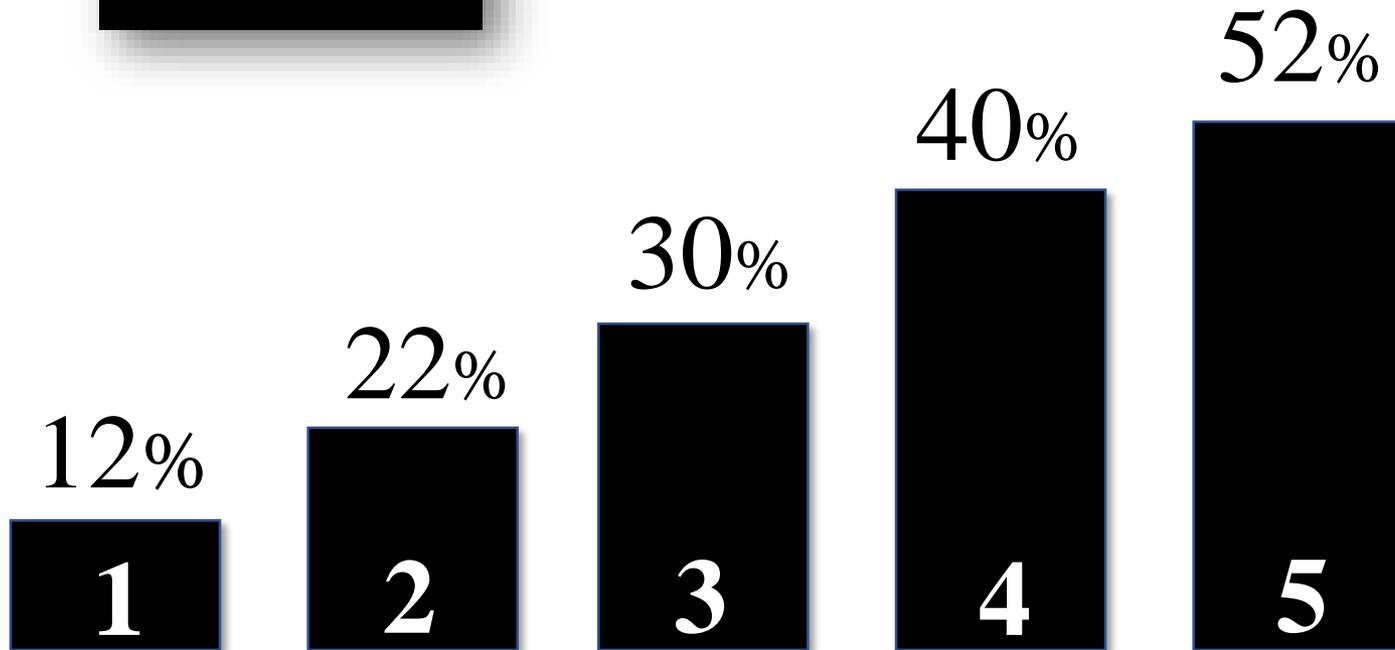
College and Career Ready Performance Index (0-100) by School Climate Rating 2018 (1-5)



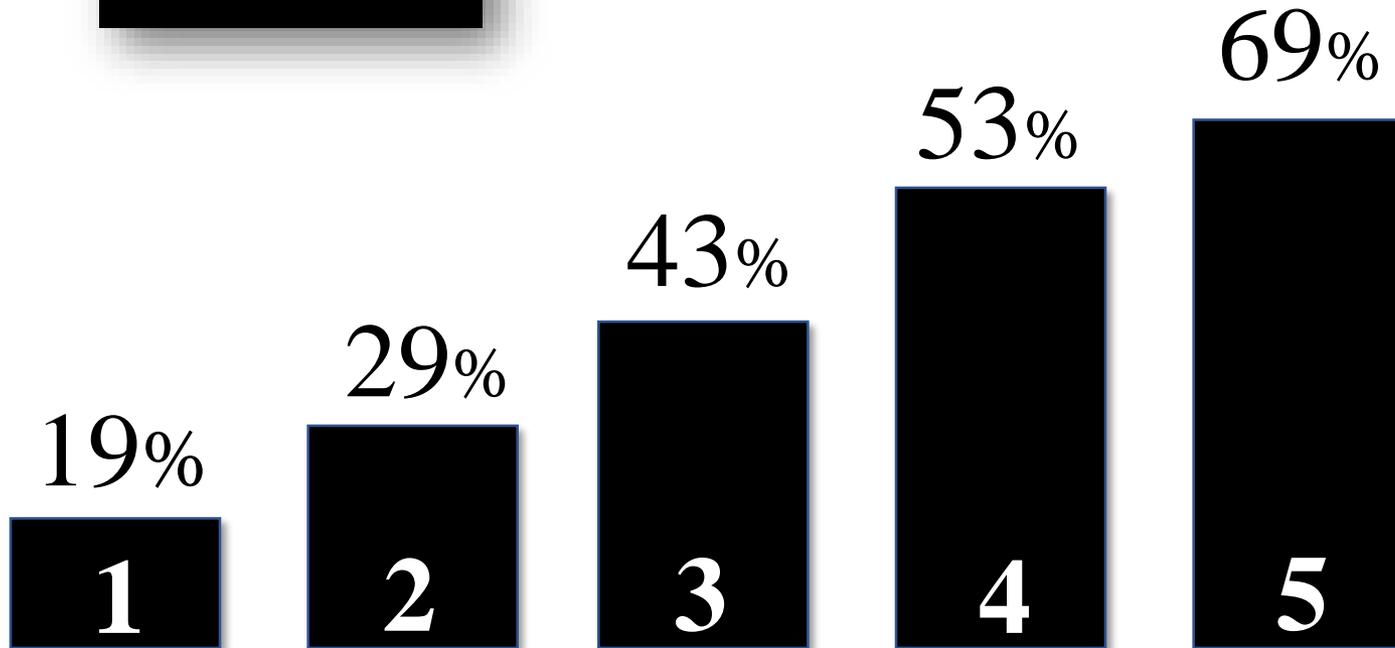
Percent of 3rd Grade ELA Proficient or Distinguished by School Climate Rating 2018



Percent of 8th Grade ELA Proficient or Distinguished by School Climate Rating 2018



Percent of 9th Grade ELA Proficient or Distinguished by School Climate Rating 2018



How do we improve school climate?



CODE OF CONDUCT

Safety, Discipline, and School Climate

“Schools have adopted a variety of approaches to **improve school climate** in an effort to reduce student discipline problems.

The majority of schools that recognize the need to improve school climate are using school-wide behavioral-management strategies, such as

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.”



The most effective, research-based strategy for improving school climate is **PBIS**.

PBIS evolved from four main sources:

- ✓ applied behavior analysis
- ✓ normalization/inclusion practices
- ✓ person-centered focus on prevention and intervention with a population-based framework
- ✓ creates change in how schools handle discipline, how schools make decisions, and how staff interact with students

PBIS Works Because...

- **PBIS** is a **research-based**, proactive, school-wide system using school-based data to develop processes to **promote positive behavior**, with a **focus on prevention** of inappropriate behaviors. **[Minimizes triggers for overreactions]**
- **PBIS** creates change in how schools handle discipline, how schools make decisions, and how staff interact with students. **Reduces Fundamental Attribution Error: [Symptomatic vs. Defiant]**
- **PBIS** defines a set of **universal behavior expectations** taught through classroom instruction, the use of a **common language**, and **positive staff-to-student interactions**. **[Positive interactions]**

School Climate



PBIS Works Because...

- **PBIS** focuses on **epidemiological population-based** prevention and intervention that encourages more appropriate individual interventions
- **PBIS** encourages **lateral thinking for problem-solving (creative problem-solving)**
- **PBIS** is **solutions-based** not remedy-based
- **PBIS** **stabilizes school climate** to allow interventions to work
- **PBIS** **reduces fundamental attribution error** (symptomatic vs. defiance)
- A **positive school climate** becomes an **expectation** not a goal
- A **positive school climate** is associated with increasing feelings of connectedness

70



School Climate and Connectedness

- A positive school climate is associated with increased feelings of connectedness.
- CDC study of 14,000 students followed for **20 years** found that
 - ✓ Connectedness is a protective factor for adolescents.
 - ✓ Students who felt connected to their school grew up safer and with better mental health than those who were disconnected as teenagers.



LIFT ALL BOATS

- The study found that a positive school climate is associated with higher achievement for all students, ***including students with disabilities and English language learners***, in both mathematics and reading.
- Educational leaders should consider school climate improvement as part of their mandate for school improvement.

Does a Rising School Climate Lift All Boats? Differential Associations of School Climate and Achievement for Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (Sanders, Durbin, and Anderson, November 2018))

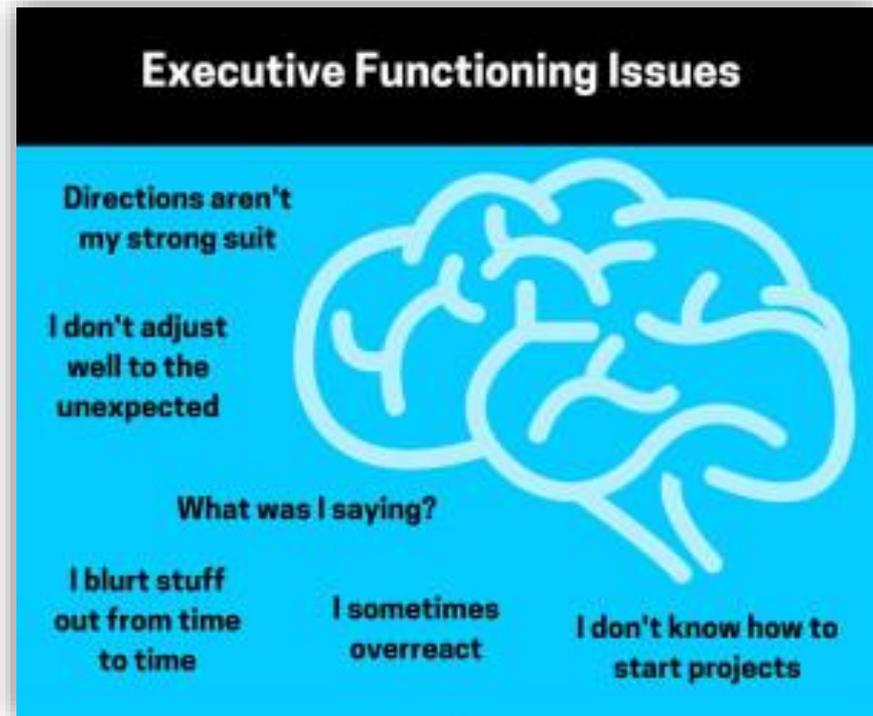


COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

“School climate is associated with cortical thickness and executive function in children and adolescents.”

“This work is the first to link school climate to brain structure.”

*Developmental Science Journal – August 2018
Luciane R Piccolo | Emily C Merz | Kimberly G Noble for the Pediatric Imaging, Neurocognition, and Genetics Study*



There are people that will say,

“We don’t have time for school climate because we have too much on our plate.”

-Peter DeWitt

There are people that will say,

“We don’t have time for school climate because we have too much on our plate.”

In reality, school climate is the plate.

-Peter DeWitt