Supporting Student Wellbeing and Equity: Effective School Discipline Practices from New York State School Districts

February 2023
Board of Regents
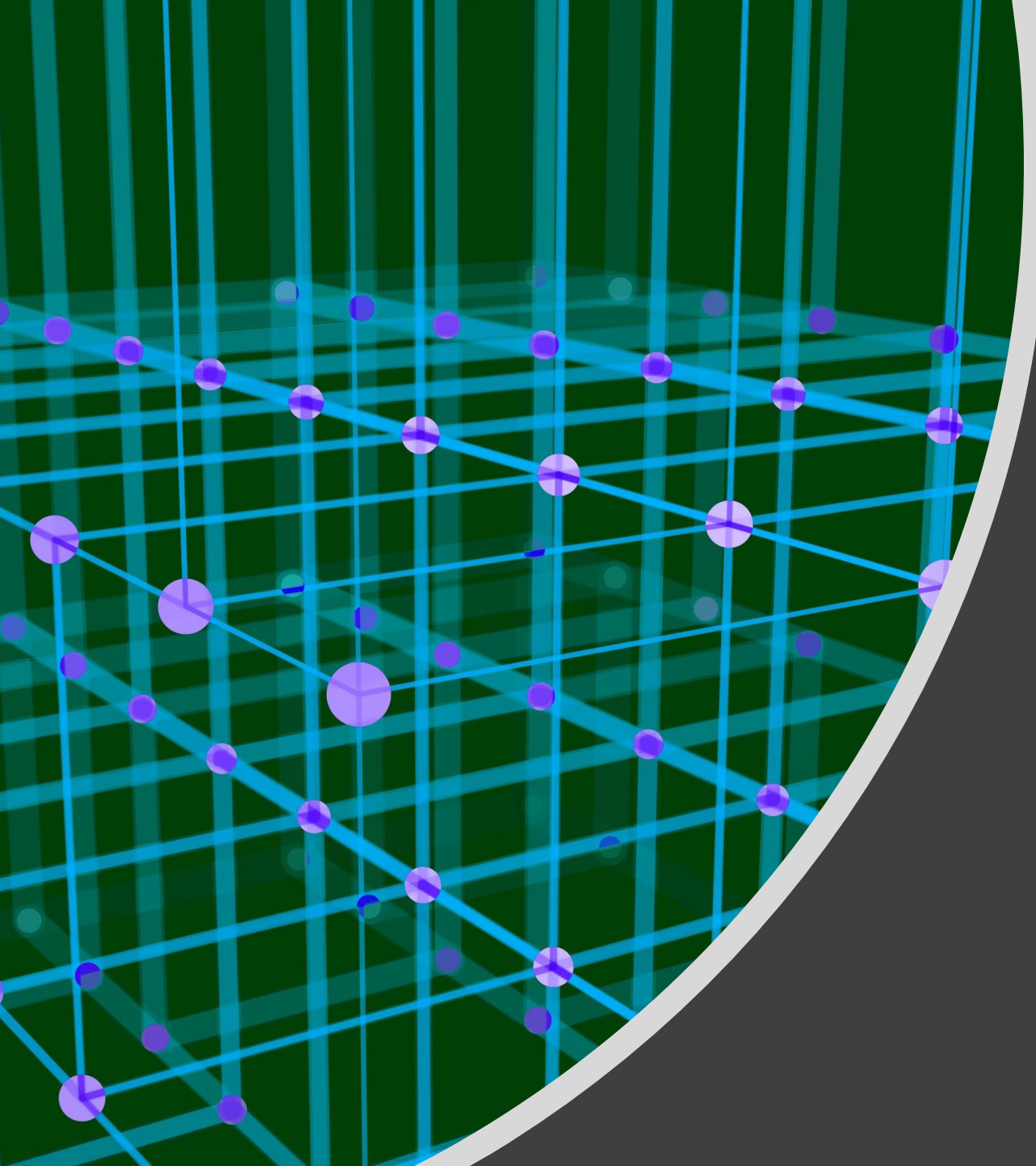
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New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
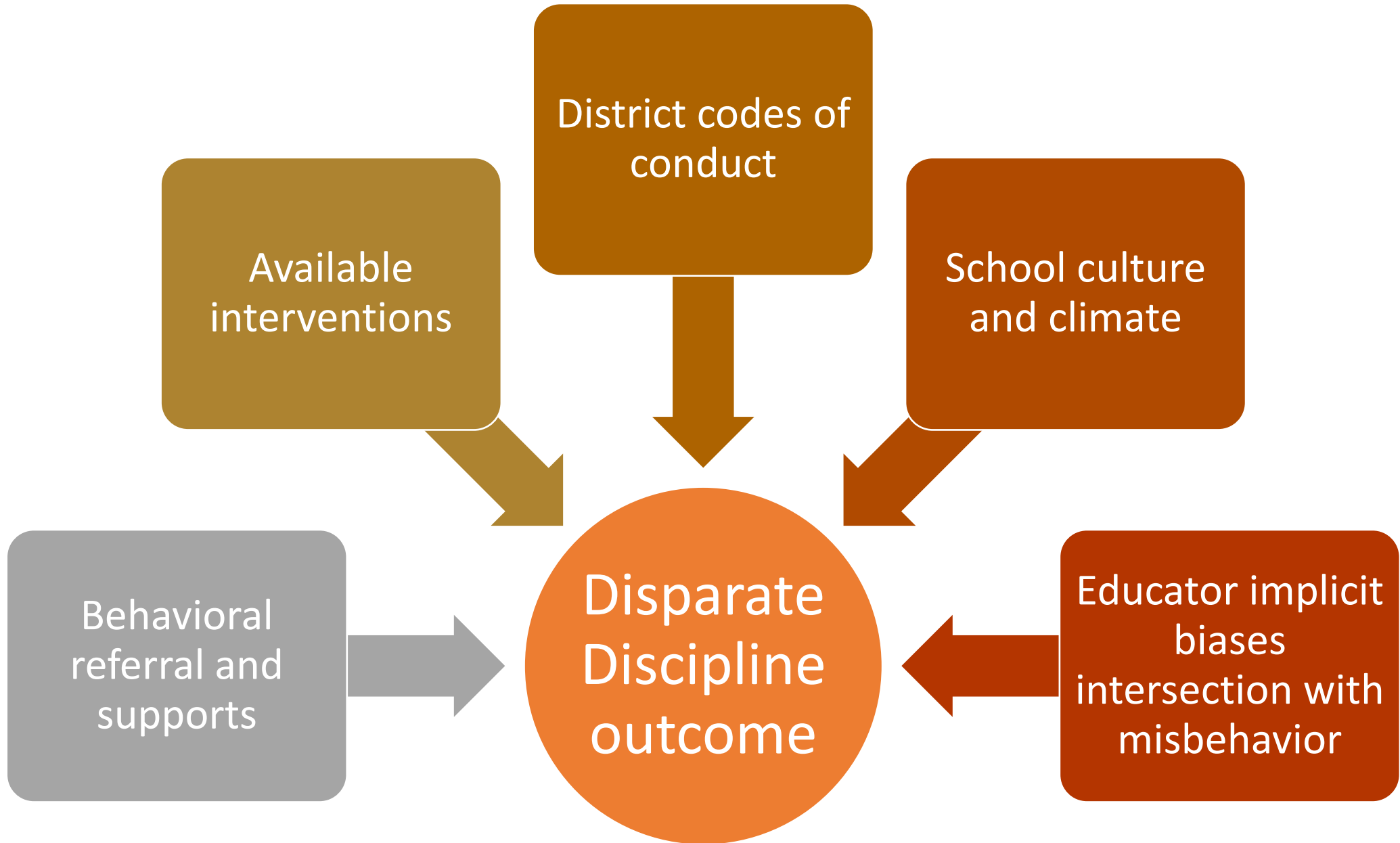Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity

The Factors of Racial Discipline Disparity: The Equation of Disparity

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Discipline disparity is complex

Discipline taskforce provides a catalog of these outcomes.

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District codes of
conduct

Available
interventions

School culture
and climate

Behavioral
referral and
supports

Disparate
Discipline
outcome

Educator implicit
biases
intersection with
misbehavior

The wellness of the school culture and climate contributes to youth engagement

The factors that mattered most…

Academic Engagement (10.2%)

School Climate (1.9%)

Instructional Challenge (1.9%)

Cumulative Grade Point Average (30.7%)

Other control variables (school and grade level) (18.2%)
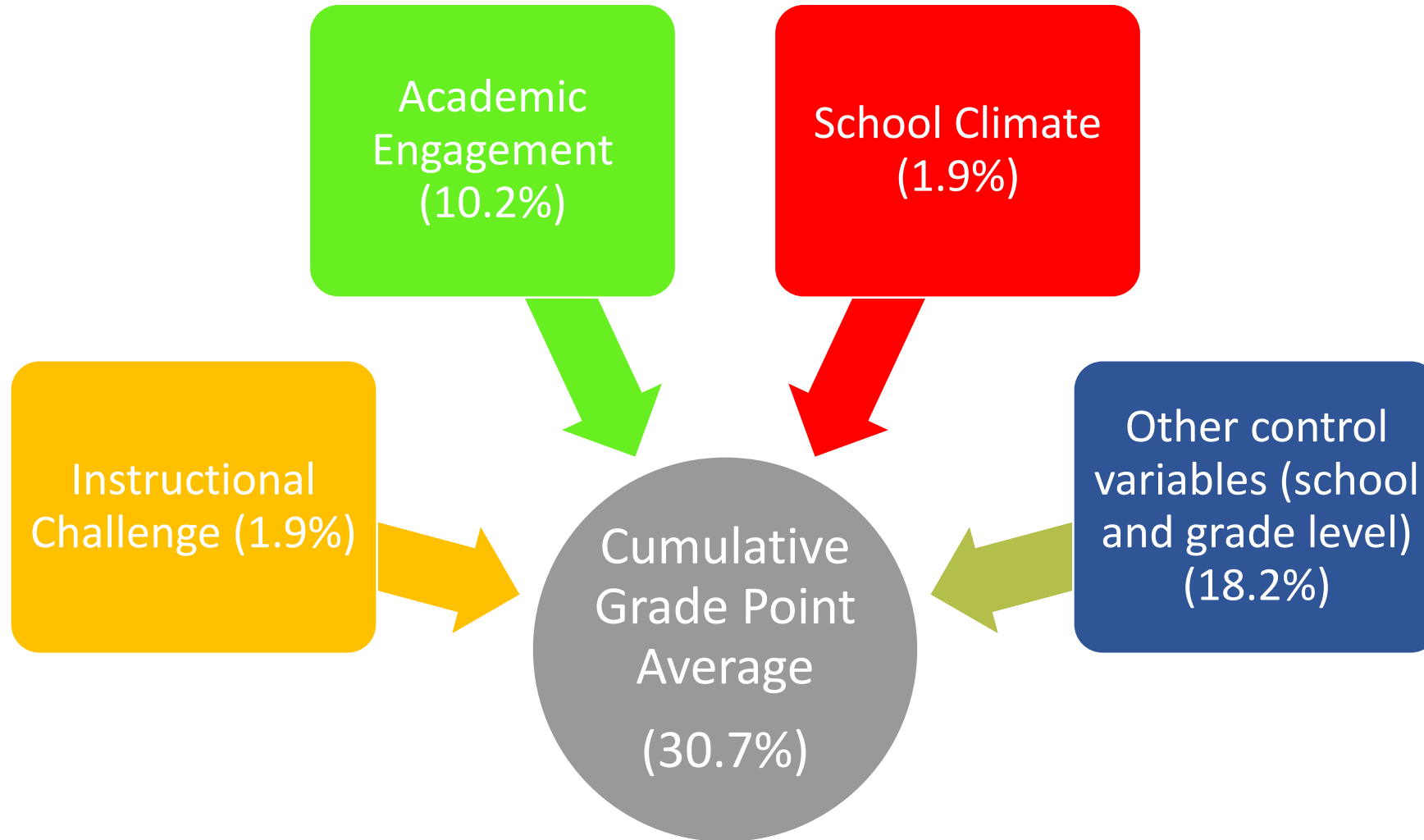
What contributes to behavioral engagement…

School Climate (3.7%)

Relational and Cognitive Engagement (21.9%)

Behavioral Engagement
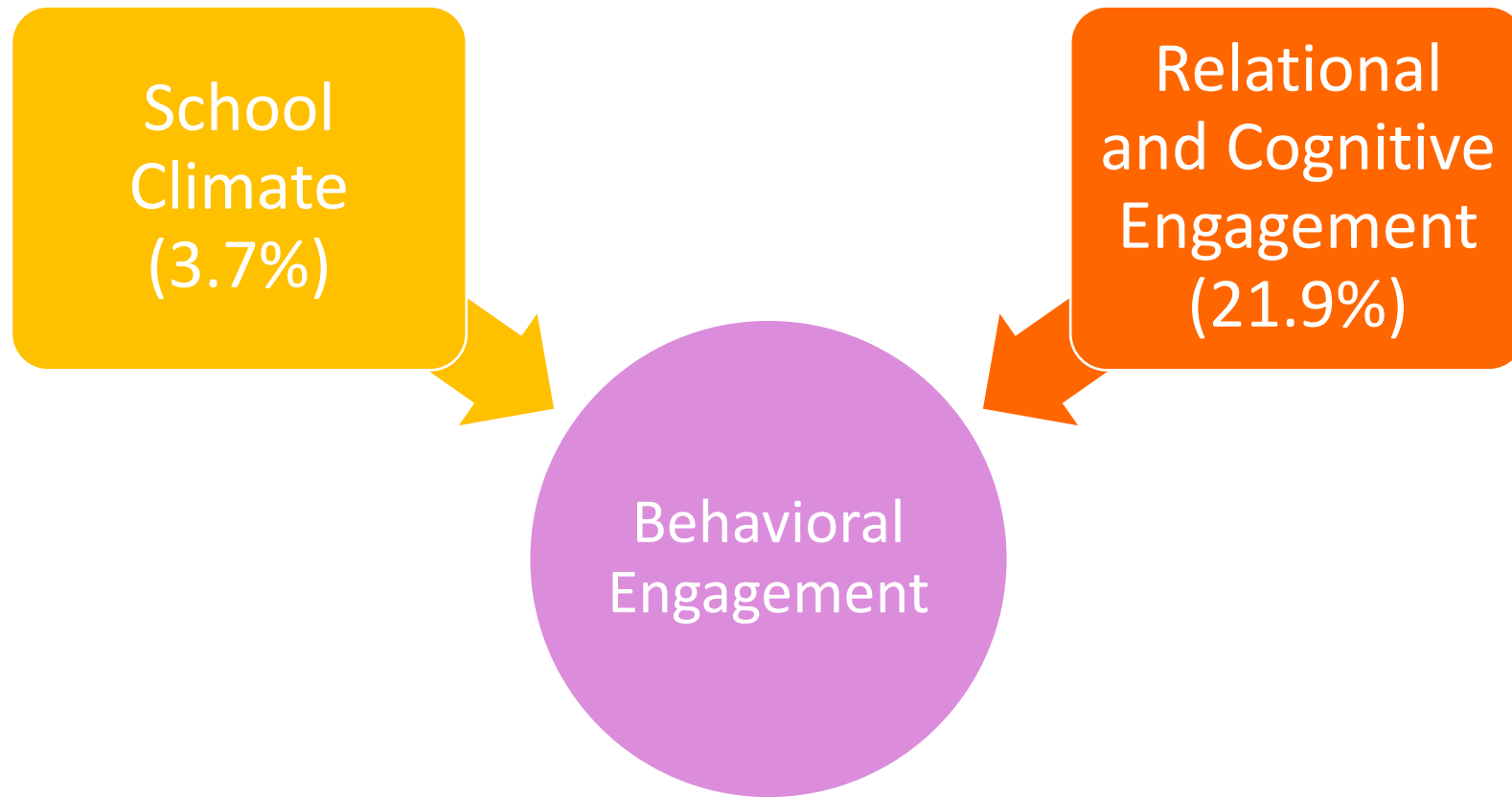
What contributes to cognitive engagement...

Relational Engagement (18%)

Perceived Instructional quality (.2%)

School Climate (16.1%)

Cognitive Engagement
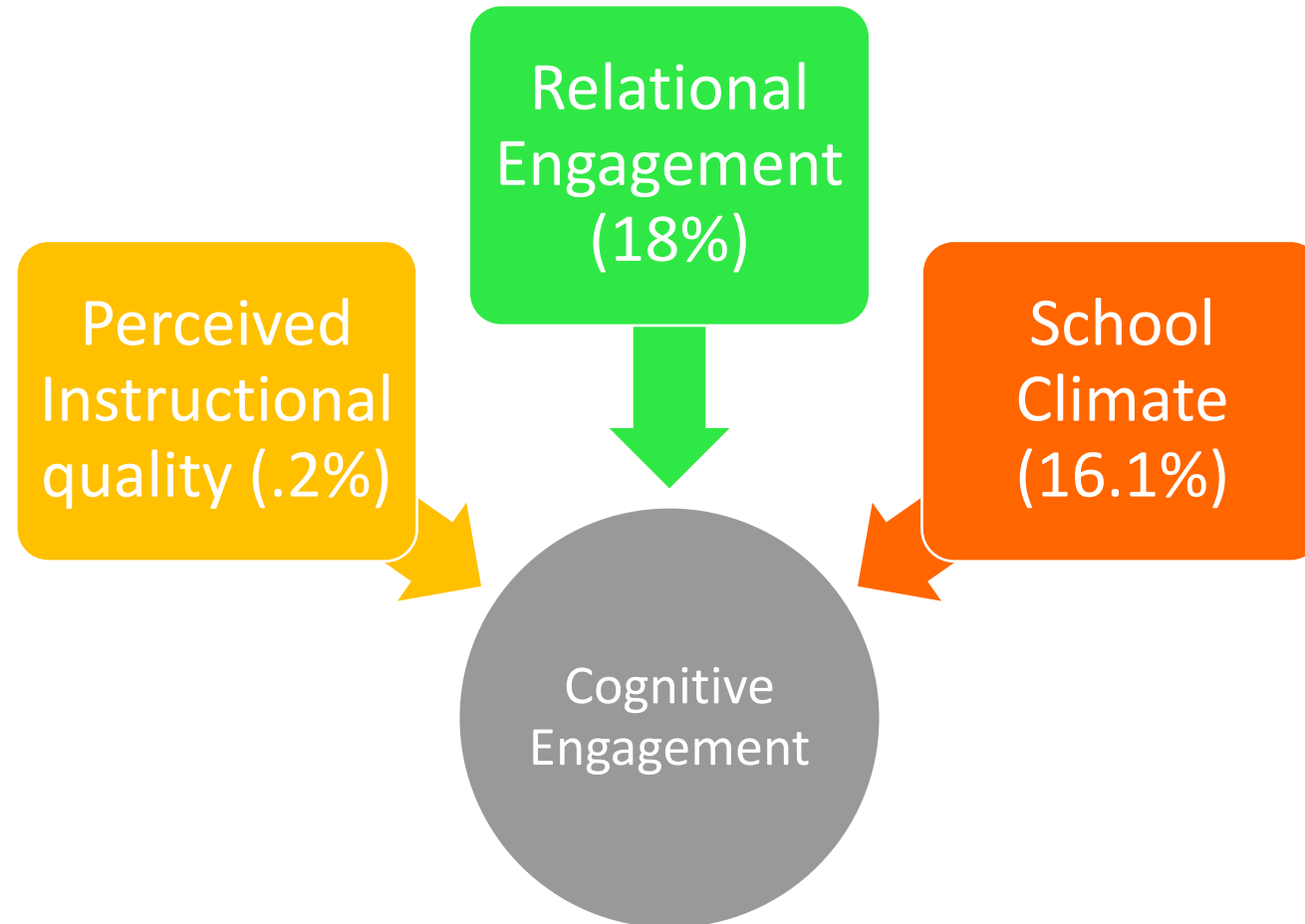
What contributes to relational engagement…
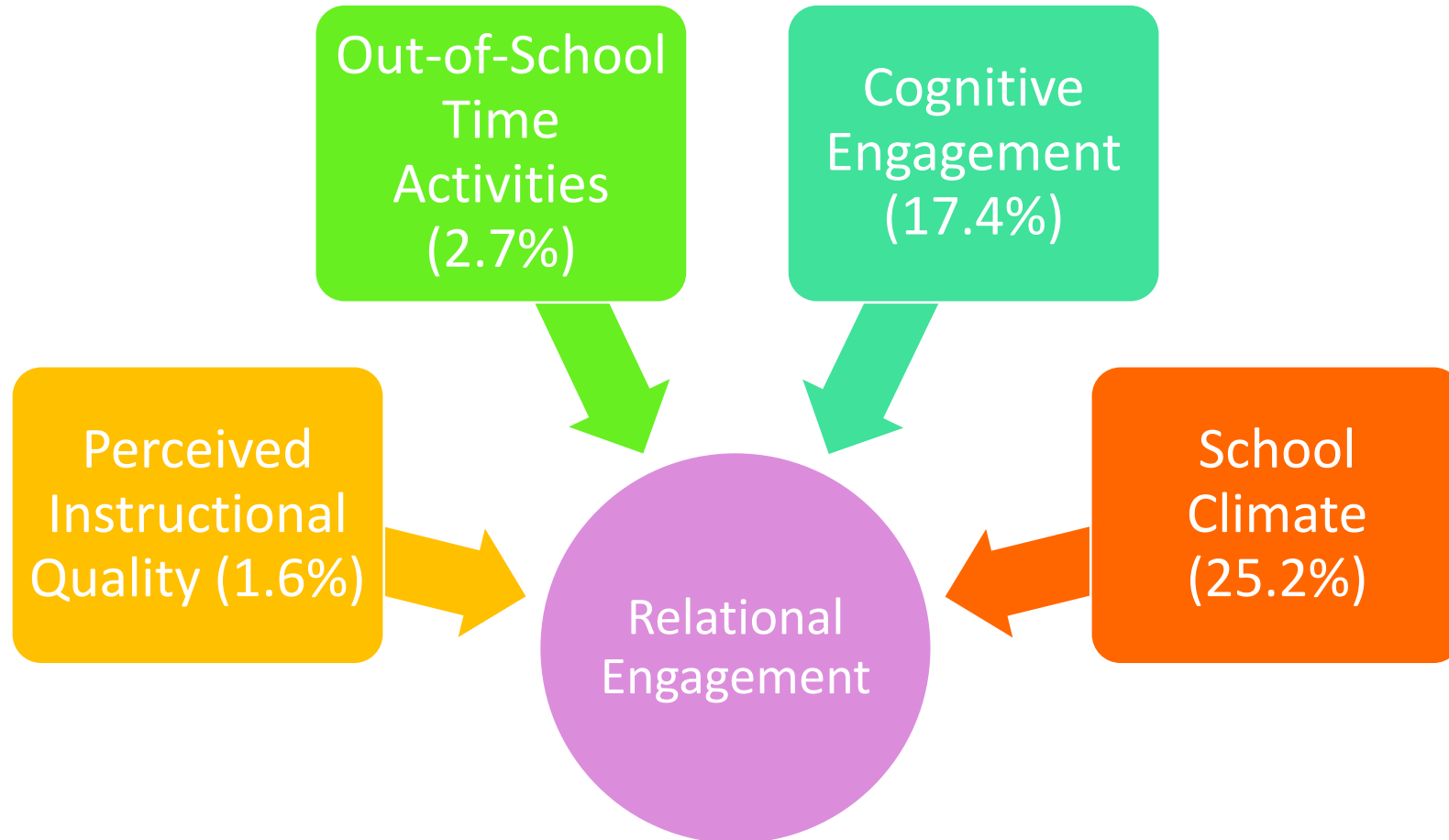
Out-of-School Time Activities (2.7%)

Cognitive Engagement (17.4%)

Perceived Instructional Quality (1.6%)

School Climate (25.2%)

Relational Engagement
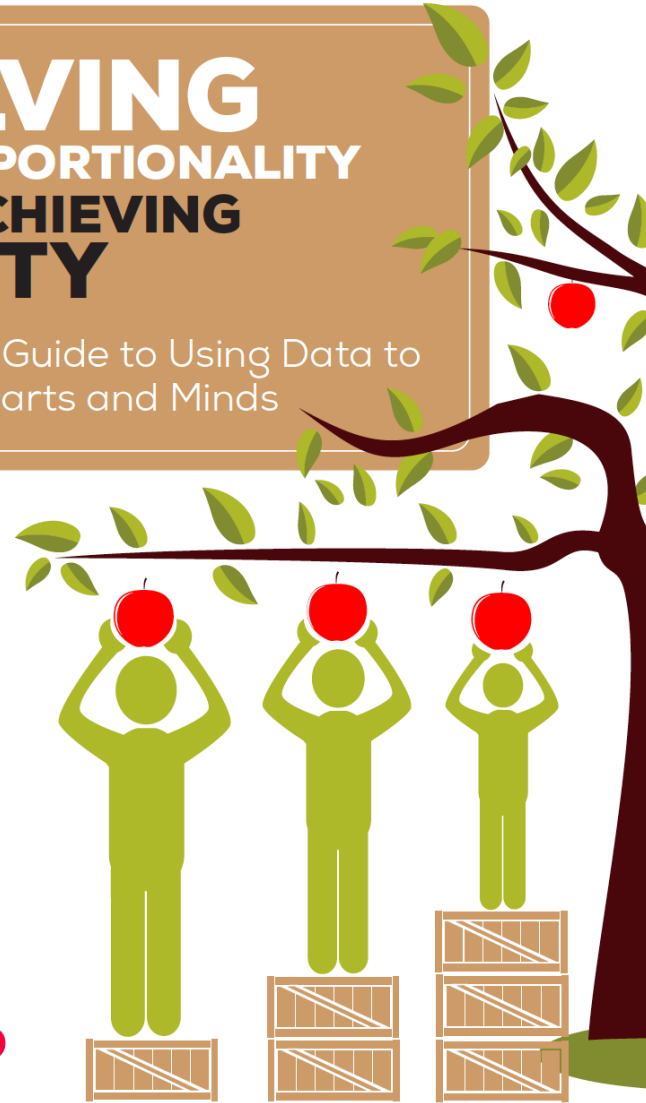
Fergus, E. (2016). "Teacher Beliefs about Race in School Districts with Overrepresentation of Black and Latino Students in Special Education and Behavioral Referrals." Three forms of Bias-based Beliefs

1. **Colorblindness:** 1) removes race identifiers; and 2) uses personal lens for viewing interaction. This belief can be showcased through interaction with individuals as identity-neutral "individuals", or looking for the commonalities between individuals.

2. **Deficit-thinking:** Premised on cultural and/or genetic deficiencies and used within education to explain academic performance as a result of deficiencies within an individual and/or group.

3. **Poverty-disciplining:** Premised on the notion that poverty happens because of individual behaviors and psychological dispositions. This belief is used to develop practices that are intended to change "poverty" behaviors.
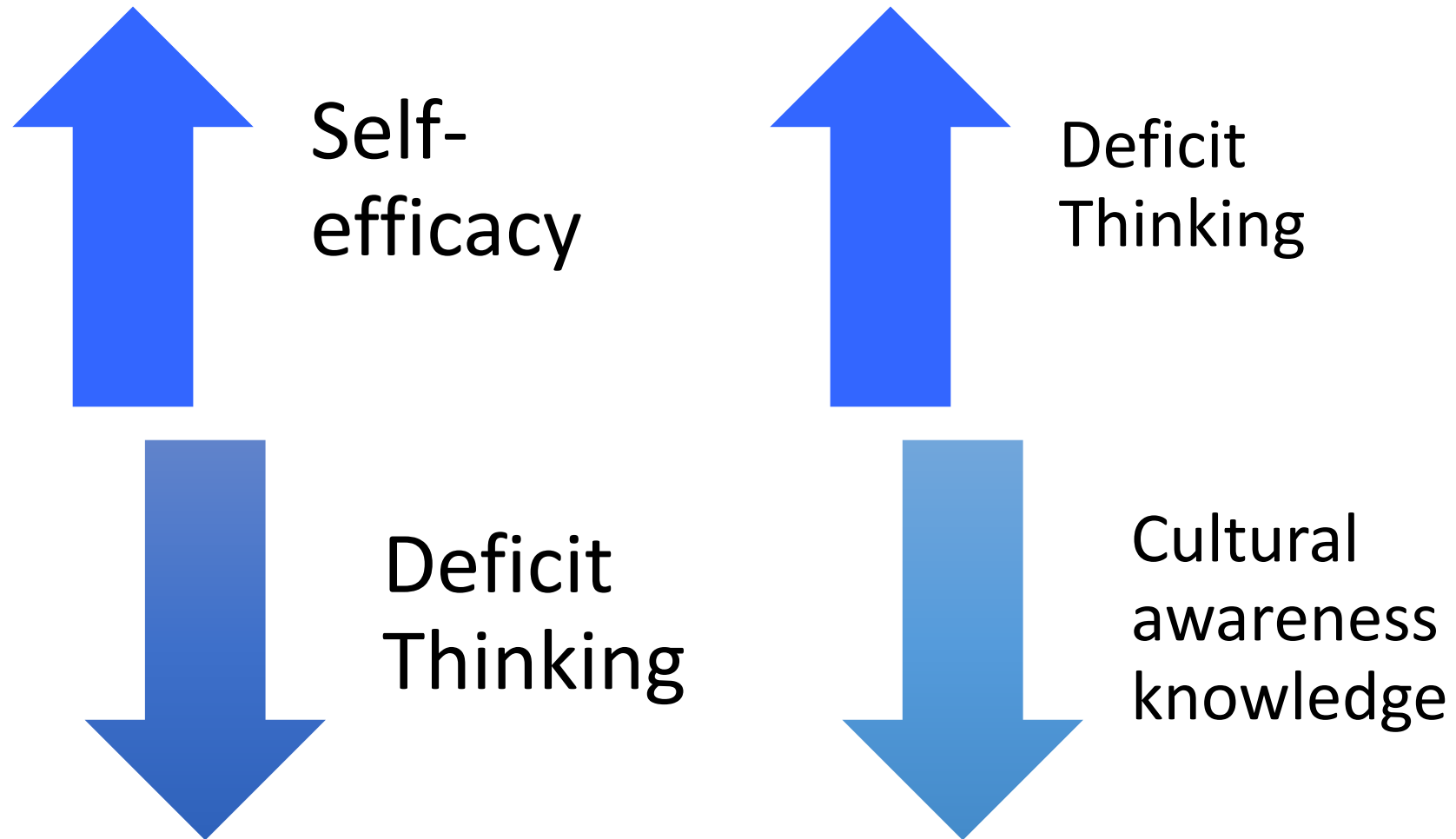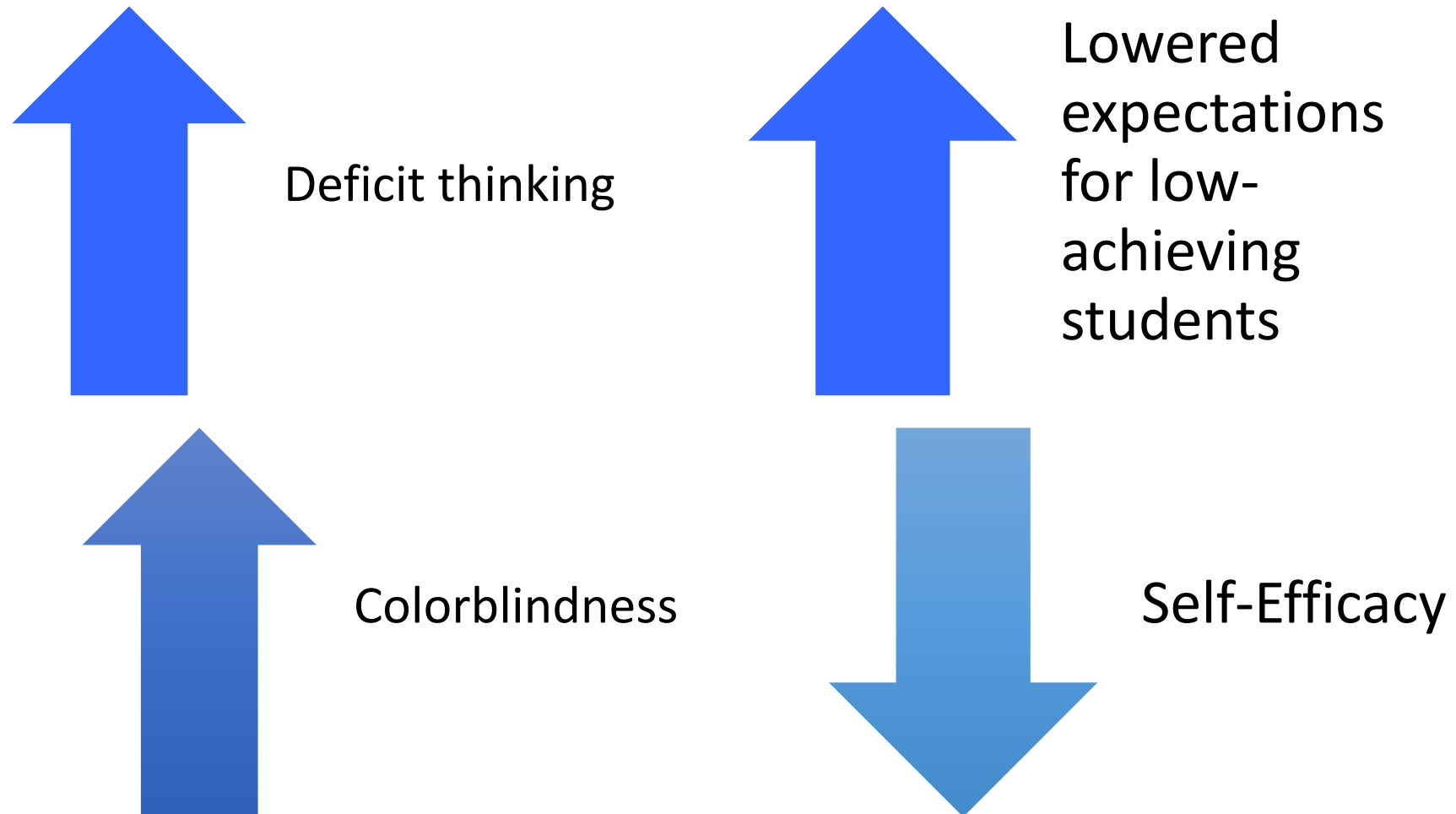
Fergus, E. (2016). "Teacher Beliefs about Race in School Districts with Overrepresentation of Black and Latino Students in Special Education and Behavioral Referrals."

Self-efficacy

Deficit Thinking

Deficit Thinking

Cultural awareness knowledge

Fergus, E. (2016). "Teacher Beliefs about Race in School Districts with Overrepresentation of Black and Latino Students in Special Education and Behavioral Referrals."

Deficit thinking

Lowered expectations for low-achieving students

Colorblindness

Self-Efficacy

Behavioral trackers as surveillance vs. intervention tools

- Bradley (kindergarten), Black, non-SWD.
    - Incidents that include Bradley are categorized as "Physical/Fighting/Hitting (51 times), and "constant disruptions" (41 times). Bradley was also cited for leaving class 9 times. Other incidents were categorized as "threatening/bullying/teasing" (6 times), and as "other" (3 times). He was cited as using offensive language (2 times) and disturbingly one incident was classified as "racial/sexual harassment".
- John (8th graders), Latinx, non-SWD.
    - John's behaviors are tagged "defiance/insubordination" (32 times), "severe classroom disruption" (31 times), "aggressive" (22 times), and then "verbally aggressive and threatening toward students and staff" (21 times). Because each incident can be tagged multiple times, these labels are used multiple times to describe one incident.

Research on Remedies

Tiered behavioral supports with culturally responsive frame (McIntosh, et.al., 2021; Neese, et.al., 2021)

Quality instruction as prevention and intervention of educator implicit bias (Scott, 2021)
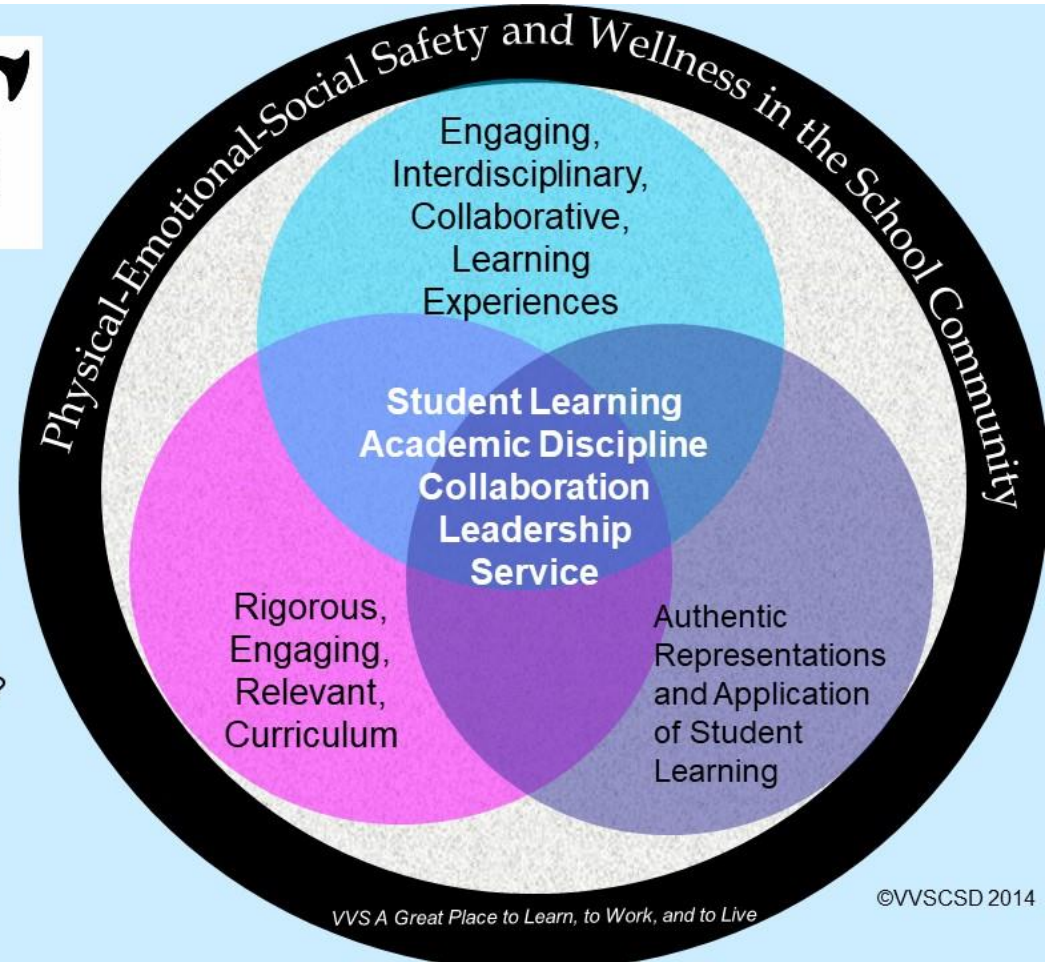
Restorative practices and the school organizational factors for improved implementation (Gregory, et.al., 2021)

Vernon Verona Sherrill School District

Martha Group Superintendent

1. What do we say we value?

2. What do we show we value?

3. Where and how do we invest our resources?

Physical-Emotional-Social Safety and Wellness in the School Community

Engaging, Interdisciplinary, Collaborative, Learning Experiences

Student Learning
Academic Discipline
Collaboration
Leadership
Service

Rigorous, Engaging, Relevant, Curriculum

Authentic Representations and Application of Student Learning

VVS A Great Place to Learn, to Work, and to Live

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Where We Are

- VVS System of continuous growth and improvement

  - District vision, mission, beliefs and goals

  - Student behavioral health data

  - District, school, classroom, student specific goals

  - District, school, classroom, student specific actions

  - Ongoing progress monitoring at the district, school, classroom, and student levels

  - Annual reporting and refinement

  - Continuing the cycle of growth and improvement

- Stories from VVS

"A viable system of continuous growth adapts to the ever present forces of change."

-Martha K. Group
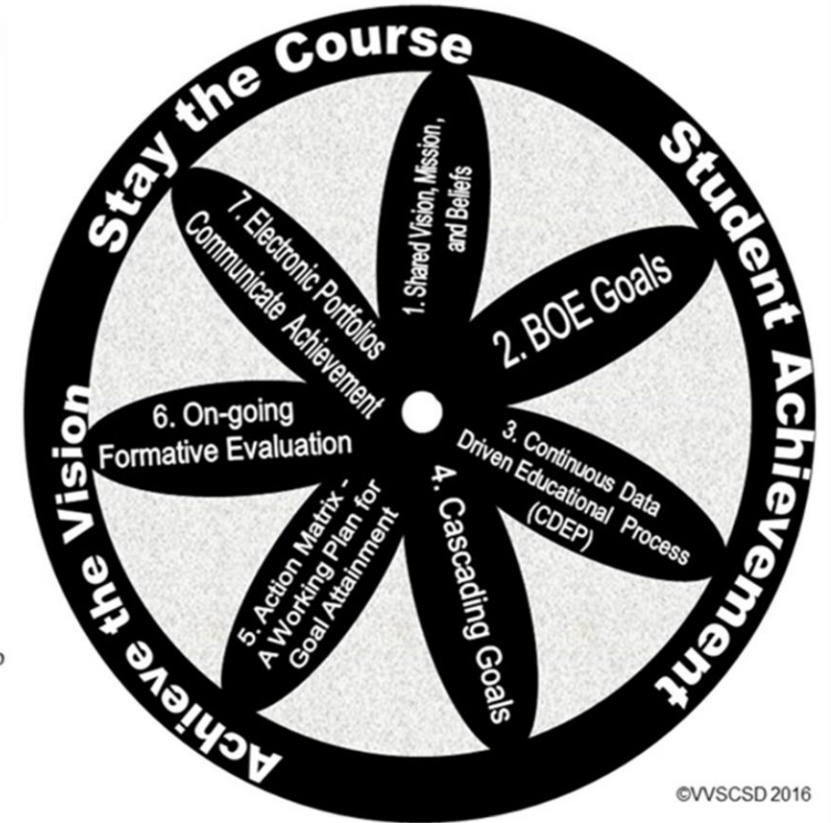
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Moving Forward

Remaining issues
- Resources
  - State
  - County
  - Community
  - Family
  - School
  - Faculty/Staff
  - Student

Collaboration
- Interagency
  - State
  - County
  - Region
  - Locality
- Community
  - School
  - Family
  - Other

Oceanside Union Free School District

Phyllis Harrington Superintendent

Proactive vs. Reactive

★ District - wide initiative on creating a Culture of Belonging

(Dr. John Krownapple & Dr. Floyd Cobb)

★ All stakeholders connected and involved through the

#OSD BeWellCouncil

★ Partnership with the Northwell Behavioral Health Center

★ RBTs and BCBAs at all levels

★ Health & Wellness Counselors at the Elementary Level

★ OMS TASC Room (The Alternative Setting Classroom)

★ OHS Wellness Center

★ Resources such as 'Sources of Strength' and the use of Therapy Dogs

★ Castleton Academy

Suspension is **NOT** the answer and there is no arguing the point that disproportionality must be addressed. Yet our current reality requires school leaders maintain the flexibility to respond to the unique circumstances we are presented with on a daily basis.

Perry Central School District

Daryl McLaughlin Superintendent

A Superintendent's Perspective

- Current Practices Employed
  - Staff, faculty and administration have been trained in and implement:
    - Trauma-Responsive Systems
    - Restorative Practices
    - Youth Mental Health First Aid
    - Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
  - Code of Conduct was updated to include restorative language and eliminate punitive references
  - Analysis of data reports at the building and district levels

- Factors Influencing Intervention Decisions
  - Social dynamics associated with some of our families
  - Lack of community and regional mental health resources for students
  - Health, safety and welfare of other students, staff, faculty and administration

A Superintendent's Perspective (cont.)

- Reengagement Mechanism
  - Long-term suspensions are often shortened with contracts for conduct.
  - Since districts cannot mandate mental health interventions, they use contracts for conduct to connect families with needed resources.
  - Schools secure releases so they may coordinate educational efforts with mental health professionals.
  - In instances where districts have employed the aforementioned method, recidivism rates have dropped dramatically, relationships improve, families get needed supports, and students get back on track.

New York City Department of Education

Kenyatte Reid Executive Director Office of Safety and Youth Development

Unprecedented, social and psychological impact of the pandemic
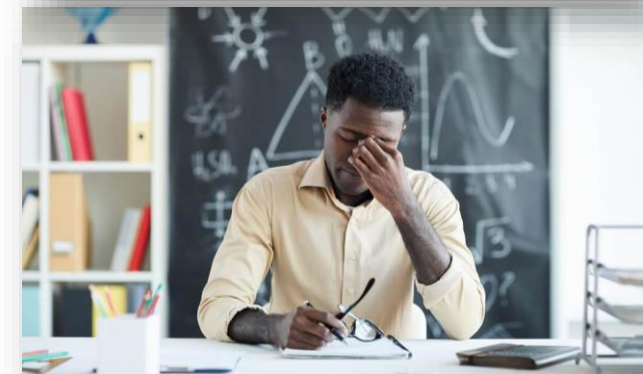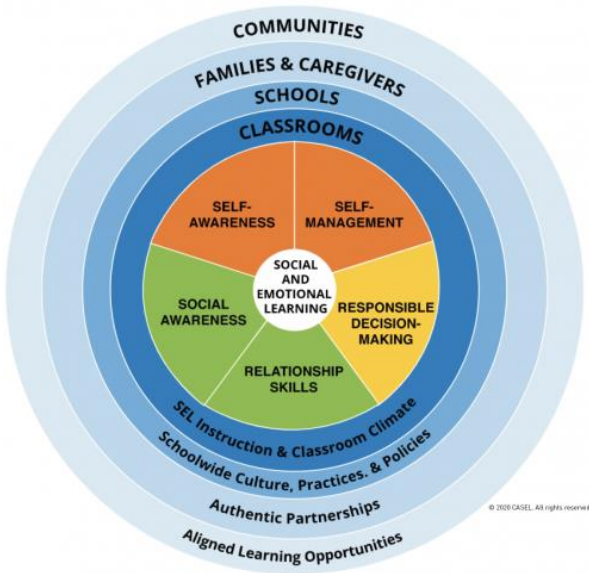
[Interactive Toolkit for Social-Emotional Learning(SEL) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):
Tools and Strategies for Applying Tiered Supports](#)

Ossining Union Free School District

Raymond Sanchez Superintendent

Culture of Care

A deep culture of care with an equity lens that envelops all.

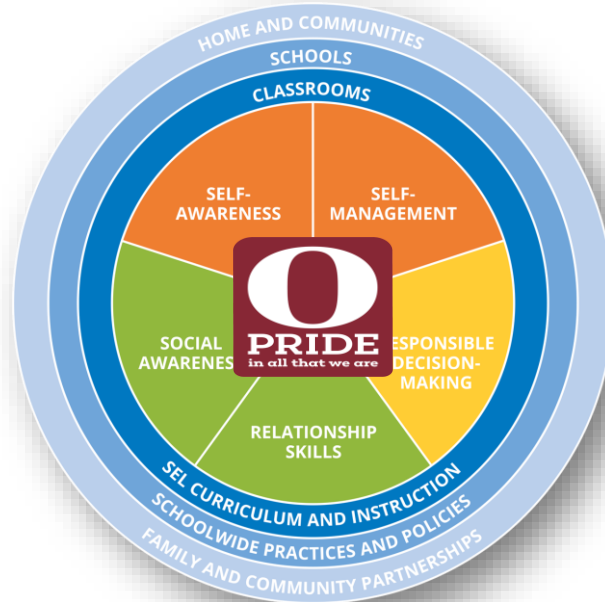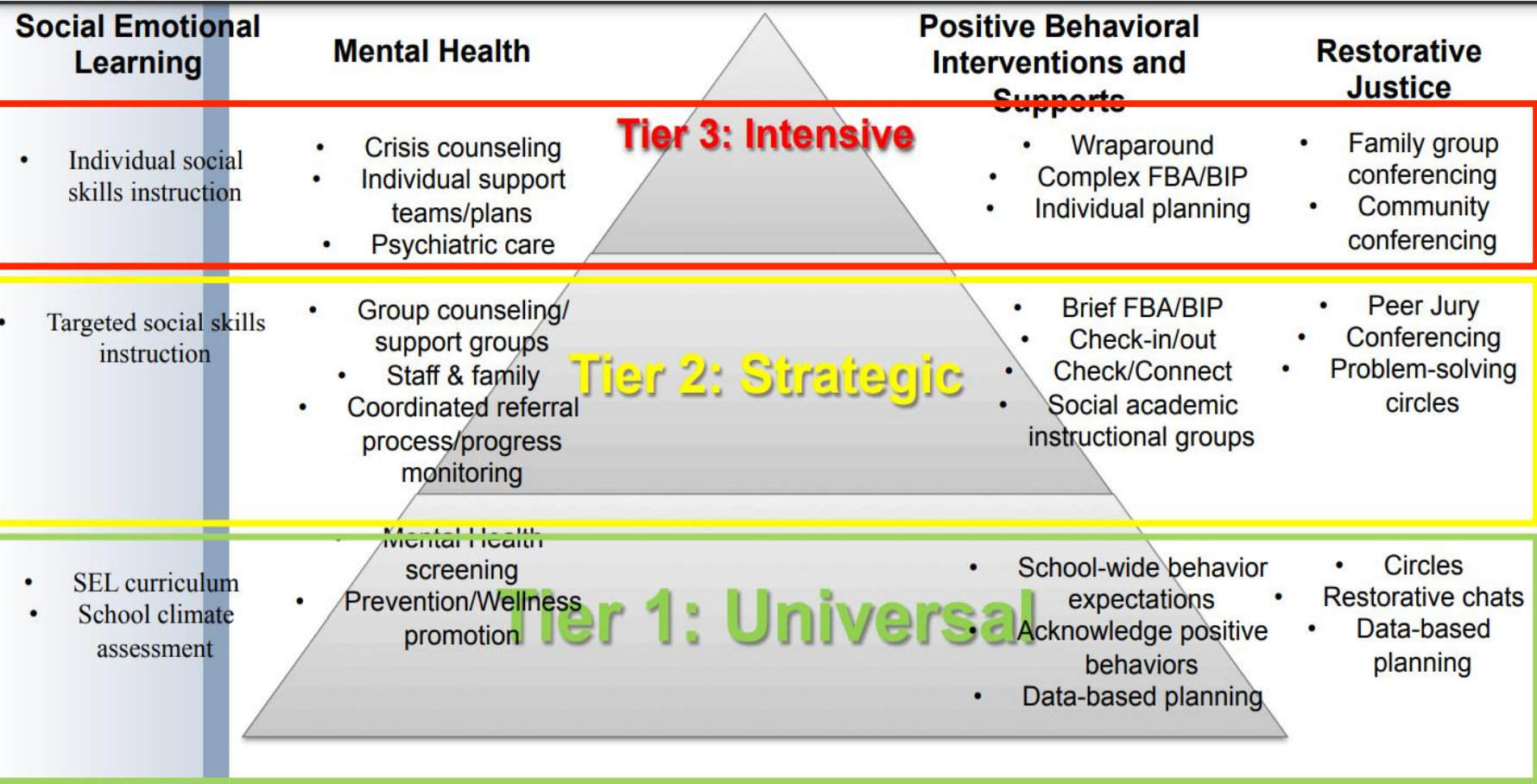| Social Emotional Learning	Mental Health	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	Restorative Justice
• Individual social skills instruction	**Tier 3: Intensive** • Crisis counseling • Individual support teams/plans • Psychiatric care	• Wraparound • Complex FBA/BIP • Individual planning	• Family group conferencing • Community conferencing
• Targeted social skills instruction	**Tier 2: Strategic** • Group counseling/ support groups • Staff & family • Coordinated referral process/progress monitoring	• Brief FBA/BIP • Check-in/out • Check/Connect • Social academic instructional groups	• Peer Jury Conferencing • Problem-solving circles
• SEL curriculum • School climate assessment	• Mental Health screening • Prevention/Wellness promotion **Tier 1: Universal**	• School-wide behavior expectations • Acknowledge positive behaviors • Data-based planning	• Circles • Restorative chats • Data-based planning

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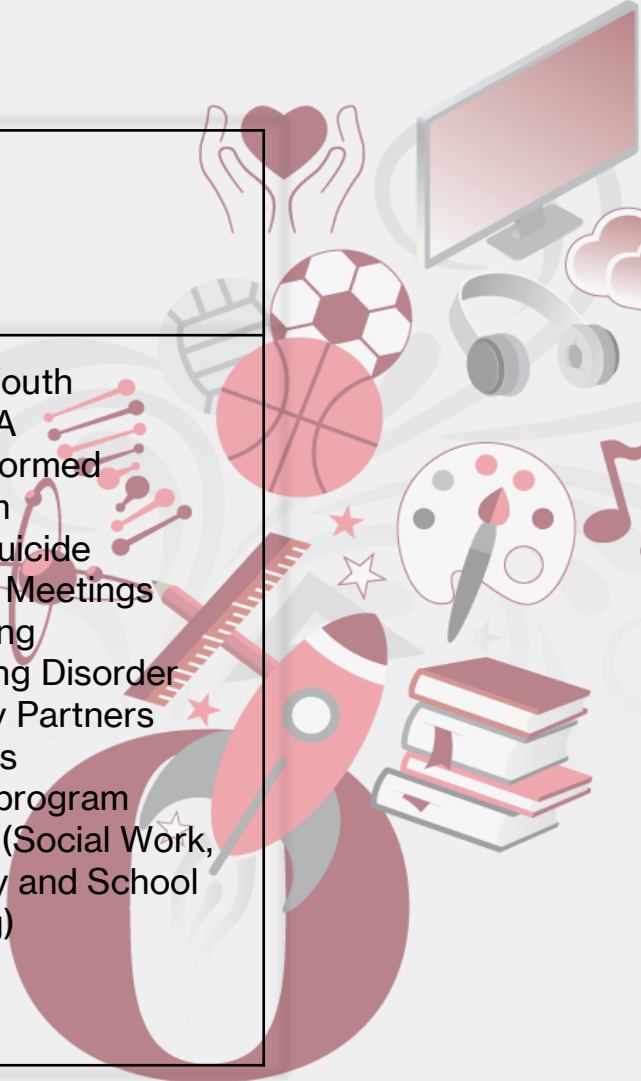| SEL State Mandate & Strategic Planning 2020-2021	Strategic plan Implementation w/ Mental Health Focus 2021-2022	SEL Curriculum & Screener, SEL-alignment (Equity, Discipline, RJ/MTSS) 2022-2023	SEL Curriculum Expansion MS/HS, MH Grant, Tiered PBIS & RJ 2023-2024

OSSINING R·I·S·E·S

RENEW… IMAGINE… SUCCEED… ELEVATE… SOAR
RENOVAR… IMAGINAR… SUPERAR… ELEVAR… SUBIR

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Prevention	Intervention	Capacity Building
• Culture of Care structure (teaming, culture & climate, unified themes-character education; panorama survey) • House System (Middle/High School) • Mental Health Newsletter • Mental Health Tip-Text Line • Calendar Mental Health Programming Monthly/Yearly • Parent Programming (BASIC, TTT, SEPTO) • Streamlining supports (single-point of access; MTSS) • Mental Health Tip-Text Line • P.A.S.S. Cards • Grown Up-Show Up Campaign (w/ CTC)	• P.A.S.S cards • Open Door • Andrus • Suicide Assessment Protocol (Expansion & Revision) • 1 Social Worker and 1 Psychologist (prek-5th) • AMD: 2 SW, 2 Psych, 3 SC • OHS: 2 SW, 2 Psych and 8 SC • 1 Social Worker/Prevention Specialist (AMD/OHS) • Individual school programming (individual/groups) • Referral Process for Substance Abuse	• Youth-to-Youth • Teen MHFA • Trauma Informed Consortium • Regional Suicide Prevention Meetings • DBT Training • Co-Occuring Disorder • Community Partners • Consultants • Internship program Expansion (Social Work, Psychology and School Counseling)

OSSINING R·I·S·E·S

RENEW... IMAGINE... SUCCEED... ELEVATE... SOAR
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Geneva City School District

Lawrence "Bo" Wright Superintendent

Prioritizing Safe, Positive Learning Environments, Academic Achievement, and Equity

- Professional development centered on use of restorative practices and de-escalation techniques; increased resources in support of mental health and implementation of restorative measures

- Positive school culture and strong relationships with students and families

- Menu of Alternatives to Suspension; framework for behavior management

- Opportunities for student voice (Superintendent's Student Advisory)

- Strategic use of data

Escalation of Behaviors in Schools

- Communities are very concerned about school safety

- Need to recalibrate behavioral expectations and norms – not all behaviors are the result of trauma and/or mental health issues

- Suspension as a tool; 100% of GCSD suspensions have been attached to restorative measures and/or a mental health supports

- Complex issues require thoughtful, collaborative solutions