Early Education Essentials:

Strengthening Organizational Conditions across the Educational Continuum

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Ounce of Prevention Fund

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The Ounce's Organizational Mission

The Ounce of Prevention Fund gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five.

Session Objectives

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- **Understand of the importance of strong organizational conditions** in B-3rd grade educational settings, and how the Early Education Essentials measurement system strengthens continuous quality improvement.

- **Practice using the Early Education Essentials** framework and data tools.

- **Discuss the common lens, language, and metric** provided by the *Early Education Essentials* and the (K-12) *5Essentials* measurement tools, and how these tools can be used to promote coherence across the continuum.

# How can we realize stronger continuous quality improvement?

Proposition: Let's broaden our focus to the organizational conditions that either support or hinder the daily decision-making and practices within classrooms.

Early Education Essentials: A System to Measure & Strengthen Organizational Conditions in Early Education
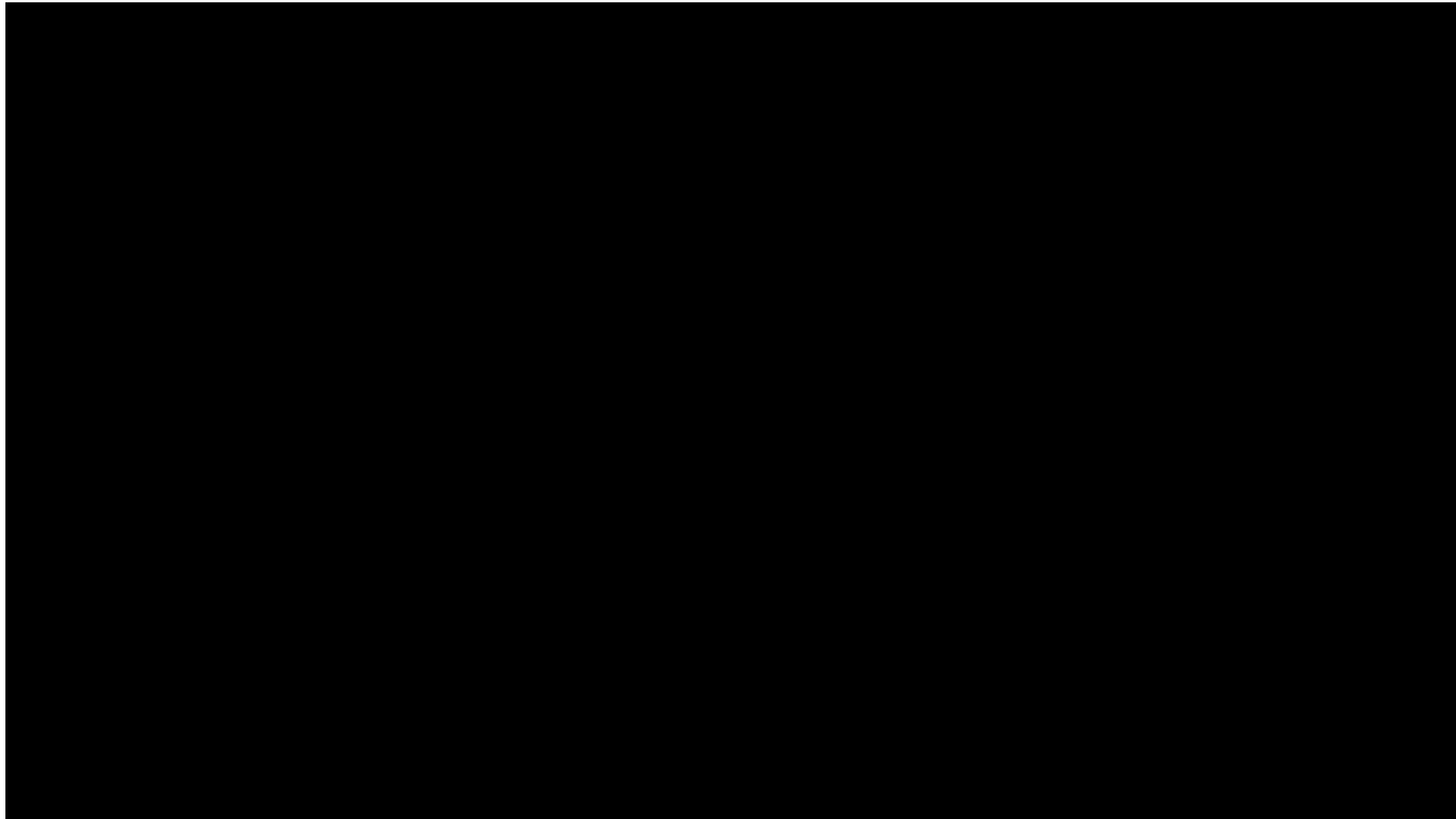
What predicts improving school performance?

Percent of Students Scoring At or Above National Norms in Math, 1990 to 1996

Schools with highest positive trends

Schools with lowest or negative trends
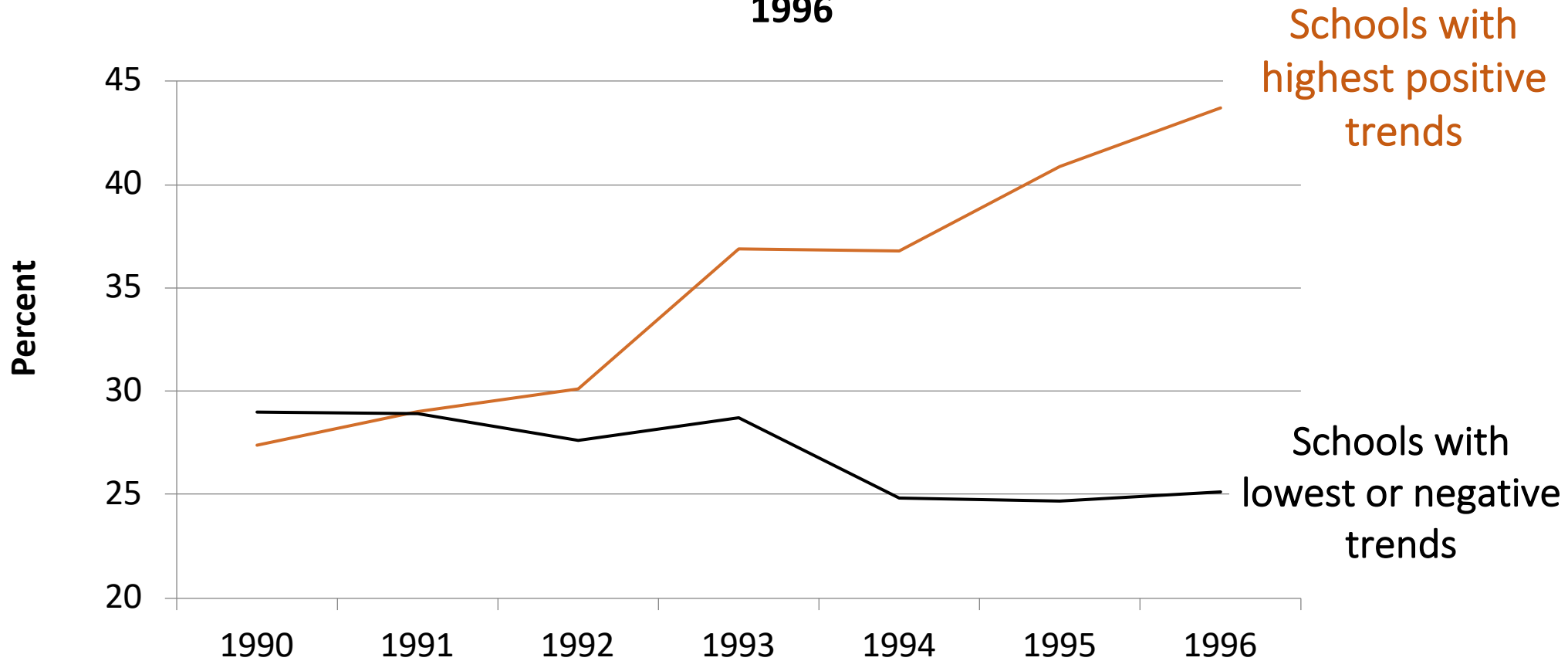
Activity 1: Pair Share

What do you think differentiated the schools that improved overtime from those that stagnated?
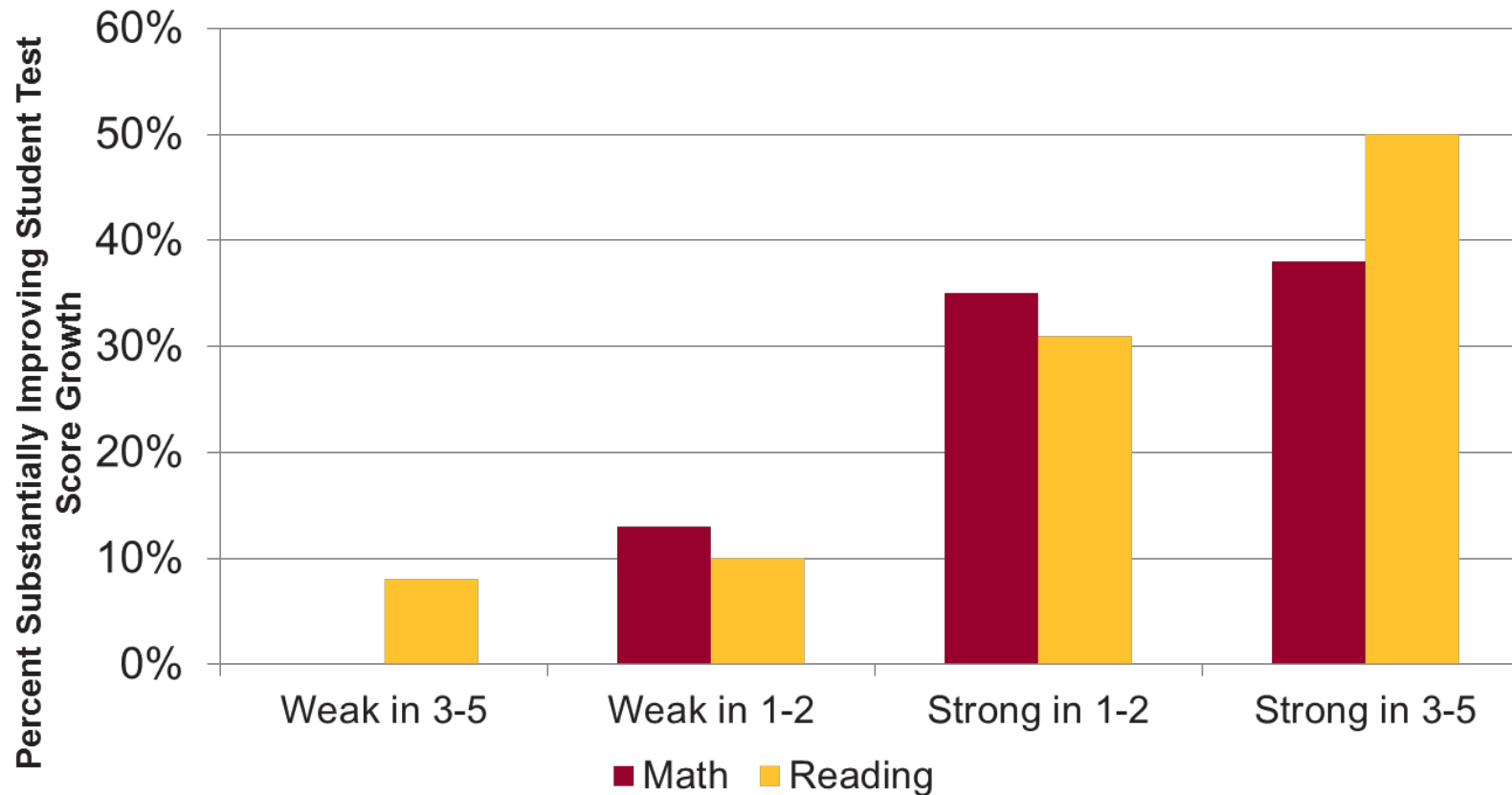
Did you come up with any of the following:

- Leadership vision and focus…
- Staff knowledge, skills, and mindsets…
- Relationships and interactions…
- Learning climate and environment…
- Structures and processes…

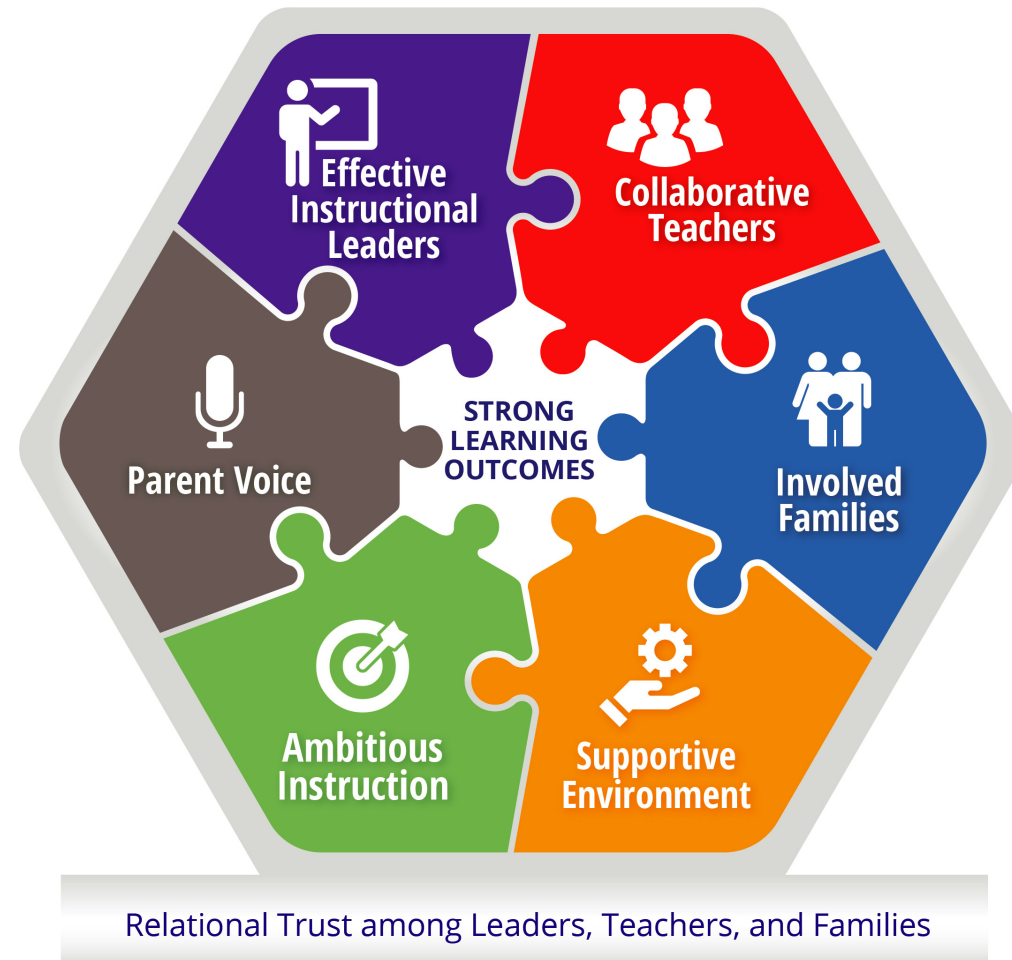# The 5Essentials Organizational Supports Framework
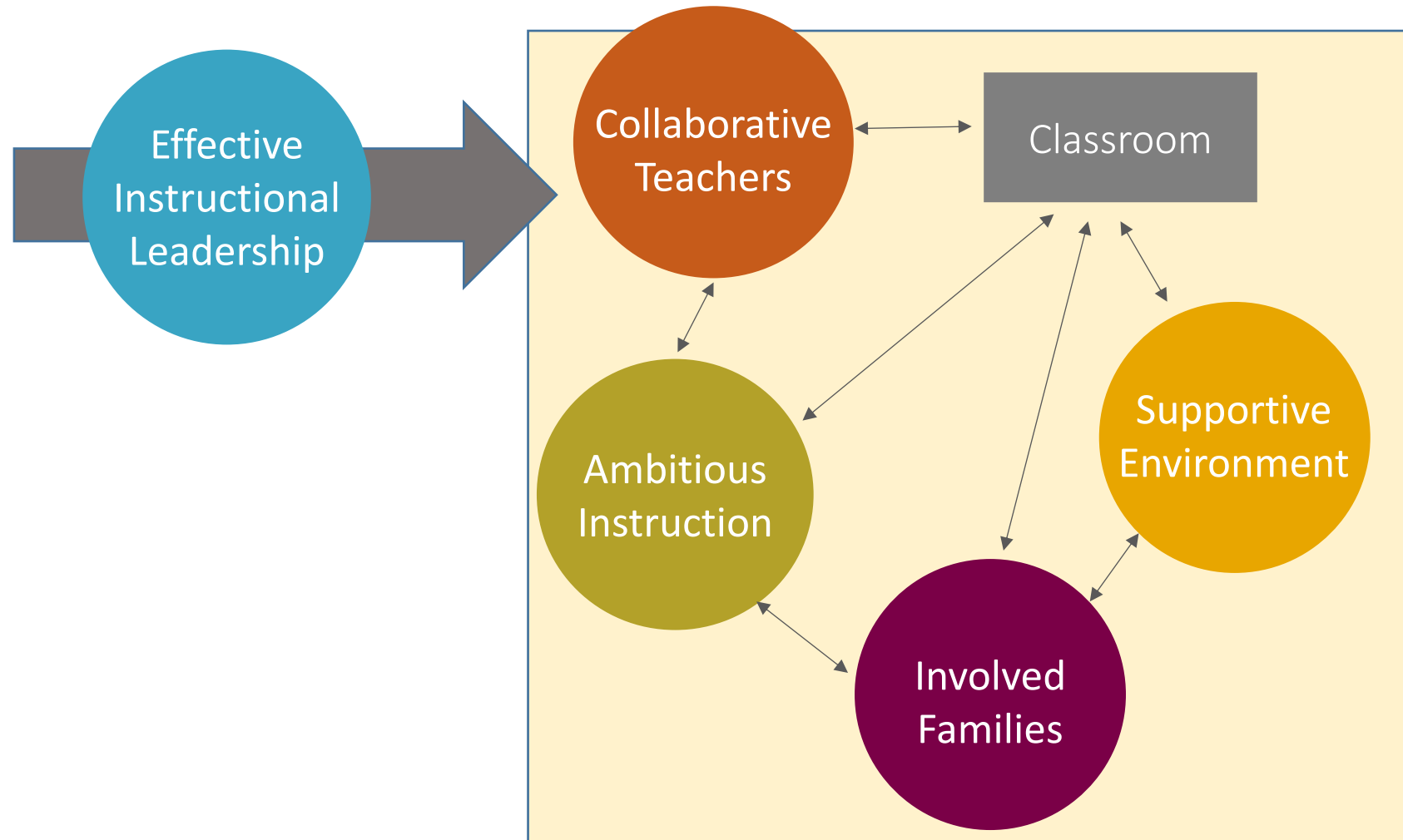
Chicago schools with strong organizational supports were <u>10 times</u> more likely to improve over time

Schools Strong in the 5 Essentials Are 10 Times More Likely to Improve Substantially

Percent Substantially Improving Student Test Score Growth, by category:
- Weak in 3-5: Reading 8%
- Weak in 1-2: Math 13%, Reading 10%
- Strong in 1-2: Math 35%, Reading 31%
- Strong in 3-5: Math 38%, Reading 50%

Legend: Math, Reading

Early Education Essentials Organizational Supports Framework

Measures in the Early Education Essentials

Survey Measures

Effective Instructional Leaders

Instructional Leadership^A
Program Coherence
Teacher Influence
Teacher-Leader Trust

Collaborative Teachers

Collective Responsibility^A
Teacher Collaboration
School Commitment
Teacher-Teacher Trust
Socialization of New Teachers

Involved Families

Teacher-Parent Trust^A
Parent Involvement
Teacher Outreach and Collaboration
with Parents*
Parent Influence

Supportive Environment

Teacher Safety^A
Child-Child Interactions
Positive Learning Climate

Ambitious Instruction

Early Learning Instruction*
Quality of Student Interactions*

Parent Voice

Including Parents as Partners*^{P}
Teacher Communication with Parents *^{P}
Program Orientation towards Early Education *^{P}
Parent Influence on the Program*^{P}

*Early Education measure (not onK-12)
^{A}slightly Adapted from K-12 measure
^{P}parent survey measure

Effective Instructional Leadership and Collaborative Teachers essential scores were significantly related to sites' CLASS scores
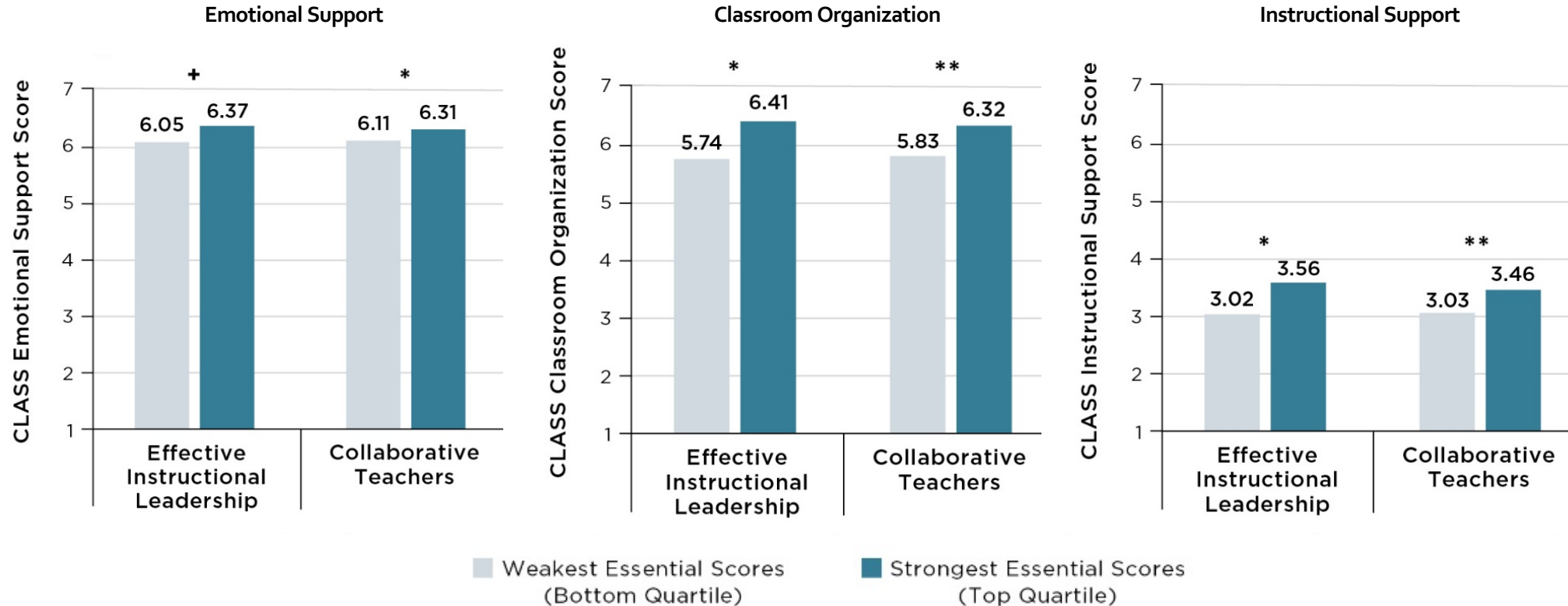
Note: Each pair of bars compares average CLASS scores with essential scores in the bottom vs. top quartiles. Each site's CLASS score was obtained by fitting unconditional 2-level HLM with classroom scores nested within sites; these model-fitted scores were then used to produce the top/bottom quartile average score. * indicates that the relationship between the essential score and the outcome is statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level; ** indicates significance at the $p<0.01$ level; *** indicates significance at the $p<0.001$ level.

Most essentials were also related to student attendance
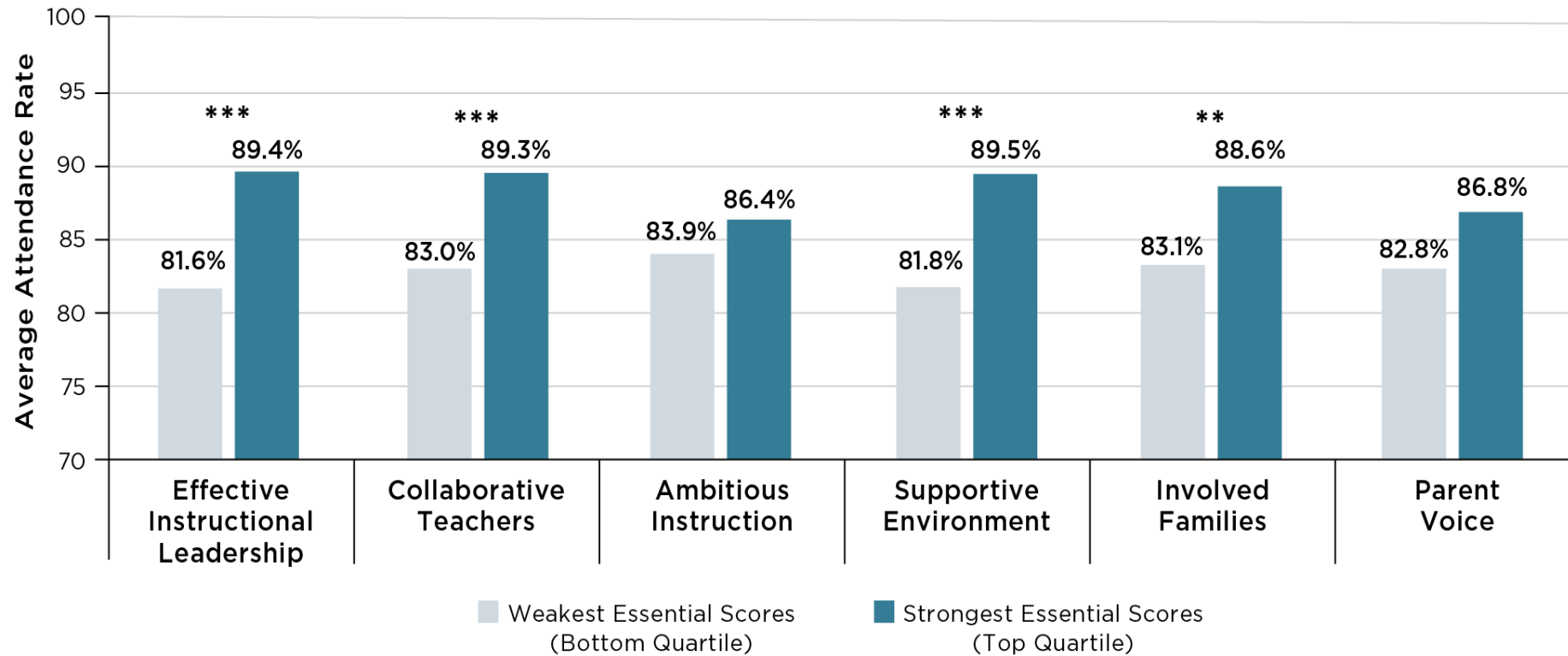
Note: Each pair of bars compares average attendance rates between sites with essential scores in the bottom vs. top quartiles. Each site's average attendance rate was obtained by fitting unconditional 2-level HLM with students nested within sites; these model-fitted scores were then used to produce the top/bottom quartile average score. * indicates that the relationship between the essential score and the outcome is statistically significant at the p<0.05 level; ** indicates significance at the p<0.01 level; *** indicates significance at the p<0.001 level.

Getting to Know the Early Education Essentials

Activity 2: Structures, Practice, & Mindsets

1. Individually review and reflect on the definition for your table's assigned essential. Underline what resonates with you as essential elements of quality.

2. In the report, flip to the page for your essential and review the table of associated structures and practices when the essential is strong and weak.
    - ➢ Effective Instructional Leaders: p. 3
    - ➢ Collaborative Teachers: p. 4
    - ➢ Involved Families: p. 5

3. Discuss at your table: In what ways does this essential, when strong, enable and encourage the daily work of leaders, staff, and families? When weak, how do you envision it disabling and discouraging that work?

4. Each group (time permitting) will share out 1-2 key takeaways.

RESEARCH REPORT DECEMBER 2018

Early Education Essentials
Illustrations of Strong Organizational Practices in Programs Poised for Improvement

Debra M. Pacchiano, Maureen R. Wagner, and Holly Lewandowski
with Stacy B. Ehrlich and Amanda G. Stein

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UCHICAGO Consortium on School Research

Turn to page 3

TABLE 1
Comparison of Organizational Structures and Practices of
EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

WHEN ESSENTIAL IS STRONG	WHEN ESSENTIAL IS WEAK
1. Leaders **communicate a vision that is purpose driven** and rooted in developmental science and developmentally appropriate practice.	1. Leaders **communicate a vision that is compliance driven** to the myriad program standards and funder requirements.
2. Leaders establish a small number of **actionable goals tied to program standards** and their vision for the program. They problem-solve implementation issues with staff.	2. Leaders pass along written program guidance they receive with the **expectation that staff will figure out how to change their practice** to implement new requirements properly.
3. Leaders **create a warm and professional work environment**, expecting staff to focus on practice and cultivating children's love of learning.	3. Leaders **create a rigid work environment**, expecting staff to comply in highly procedural ways with program standards.
4. Leaders help staff **connect to a moral purpose** and the reasons they became early educators through their purpose-driven vision and actions.	4. Leaders **make it difficult for staff** to prioritize time to focus on practice by overloading them with a compliance-driven vision and actions.
5. Leaders **maintain regular communication with staff**, sending weekly updates to help staff prioritize time and to promote open dialogue about successes and challenges.	5. Leaders **communicate only sporadically with staff**, as needed to ensure staff compliance with standards and requirements.
6. Leaders **use a facilitative and relational leadership style** to build trust, shared understanding, and collective responsibility.	6. Leaders **use micromanagement and a transactional leadership style** to hold individuals accountable for meeting standards.
7. Leaders prioritize their time to **provide teachers with guidance** on teaching and encouragement to critically examine and improve practice and children's learning.	7. Leaders prioritize their time to **monitor compliance with funder requirements** and respond to teacher requests for assistance by referencing program standards.
8. Leaders **create a culture and supportive policies** to welcome family partnerships, supporting staff to ensure that families are involved, included, and influential in the program.	8. Leaders **interact minimally with families** and do not expect staff to reach out to families beyond formal family involvement activities that meet minimum program standards.
9. Leaders observe classroom practice routinely and **provide performance feedback that is strengths based.** Staff all receive regular feedback.	9. Leaders observe classroom practice sporadically and **provide feedback that is compliance focused and often deficit based.** Nonteaching staff may not receive any structured feedback.

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TABLE 2
Comparison of Organizational Structures and Practices of
COLLABORATIVE TEACHERS

WHEN ESSENTIAL IS STRONG	WHEN ESSENTIAL IS WEAK
1. Leaders **view collaboration as the key to building professional capacity** and achieving their vision.	1. Leaders **do not view collaboration as key** to improving children's outcomes.
2. Leaders **cultivate a culture of collaboration**, model reflective practice, and discuss teaching and learning regularly with staff.	2. Leaders **cultivate a culture of individual accountability**, and remind staff verbally and in writing of what constitutes compliant practice.
3. Teachers bring up problems of practice, and are **committed to raising the performance of the school/center overall**, in their own work and in that of their peers.	3. Teachers, in response to the culture set by leaders, assume responsibility for their own practice improvement. They **seek and receive little to no ongoing performance feedback** from leaders.
4. Teachers have scheduled and **protected time weekly and monthly for peer collaboration and learning**, including time weekly for teaching teams to lesson plan together.	4. Teachers **do not engage in routine collaboration** and rarely have structured time for practice discussions or peer learning.
5. **Collaborative time has a clear purpose** and is structured by goals, data, and protocols that allow teachers to demonstrate expertise and to learn from each other.	5. Teachers **receive minimal active instructional guidance from leaders**; rather, leaders forward memos with program guidance or practice requirements teachers are expected to follow.
6. Teachers **use collaborative time to address variations in children's learning** and outcomes by focusing on pedagogical issues, using data to examine practice, and designing innovations.	6. **Teachers rarely use children's data to critically examine instruction**. When they do, it is usually done independently and focused only on their own practice.
7. Teachers **observe each other's instruction** several times a year to learn about creative approaches.	7. Teachers **do not observe each other's classrooms**; rather they are directed to go to leaders when they are having a problem in their classroom.
8. **Interactions and conversations among staff and between staff and leaders are frequent**, warm, and focused on offering one another encouragement around professional and personal endeavors.	8. Teachers **keep to individual classrooms, interacting minimally** in the common areas with colleagues, leaders, or families through brief, perfunctory exchanges.

TABLE 3
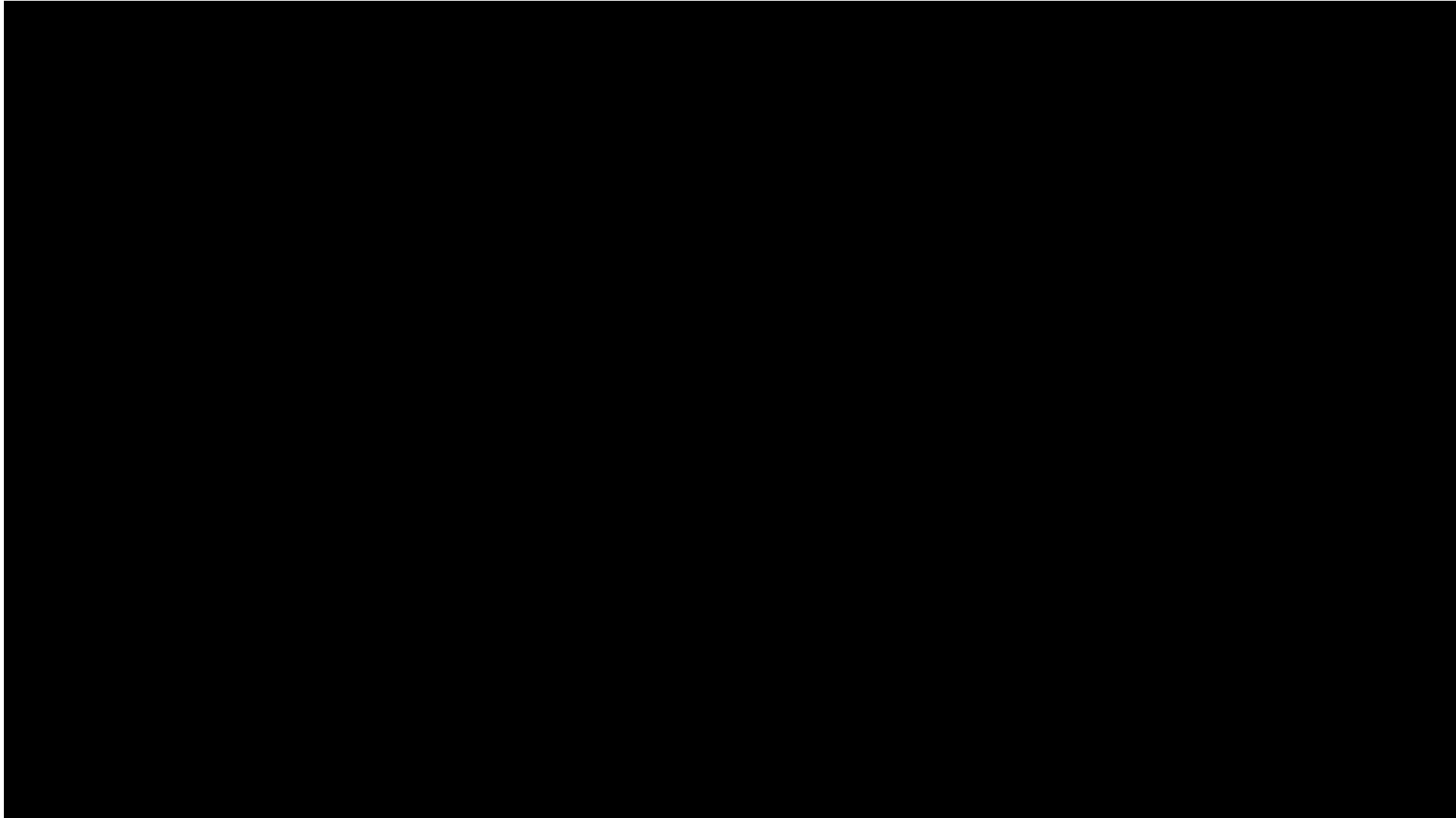Comparison of Organizational Structures and Practices of
INVOLVED FAMILIES

WHEN ESSENTIAL IS STRONG	WHEN ESSENTIAL IS WEAK
1. Leaders champion the importance of involving and engaging families and link it to their vision for program success.	1. Leaders do not describe substantial engagement of families as part of their guiding vision for program success.
2. Teachers and staff actively involve families, recognizing that families are integral to the work they do to support children's adjustment and early learning in the school/center.	2. Teachers and staff do not prioritize family involvement; rather, teachers are told to let leaders handle "issues" that families bring up about their child or the program.
3. Leaders and staff amplify teachers' efforts to build partnerships with families, including helping to design activities to engage parents within the classroom and school/center-wide.	3. Teachers receive little, if any, support from leaders and staff to amplify their efforts to involve families.
4. Leaders provide families a variety of formats and times of the day to be involved.	4. Leaders recruit families to attend monthly meetings as required by funders and express frustration at low participation rates.
5. Leaders and teachers use multiple strategies for communicating with families about their children's learning and development.	5. Teachers and leaders communicate with families almost exclusively through written memos and newsletters, which parents often find to be impersonal and minimally useful.
6. Families learn ECE terminology and child development through regular conversations with teachers and at school/center family nights.	6. Teachers and leaders do not intentionally use ECE terminology or talk with families in ways that build their knowledge of child development.
7. Families learn about the curriculum and the concepts being explored with their child in the classroom and are asked to provide their input and feedback on their child's experiences.	7. Families may learn about the curriculum or the concepts being explored with their child in the classroom but are not asked specifically to provide input or feedback.
8. Leaders and teachers ensure families are welcome and invited everywhere in the building.	8. Leaders and teachers do not welcome families into classrooms or encourage them to be a part of daily activities in the building.

Activity 3: Experience the Early Education Essentials Survey Measures and Items
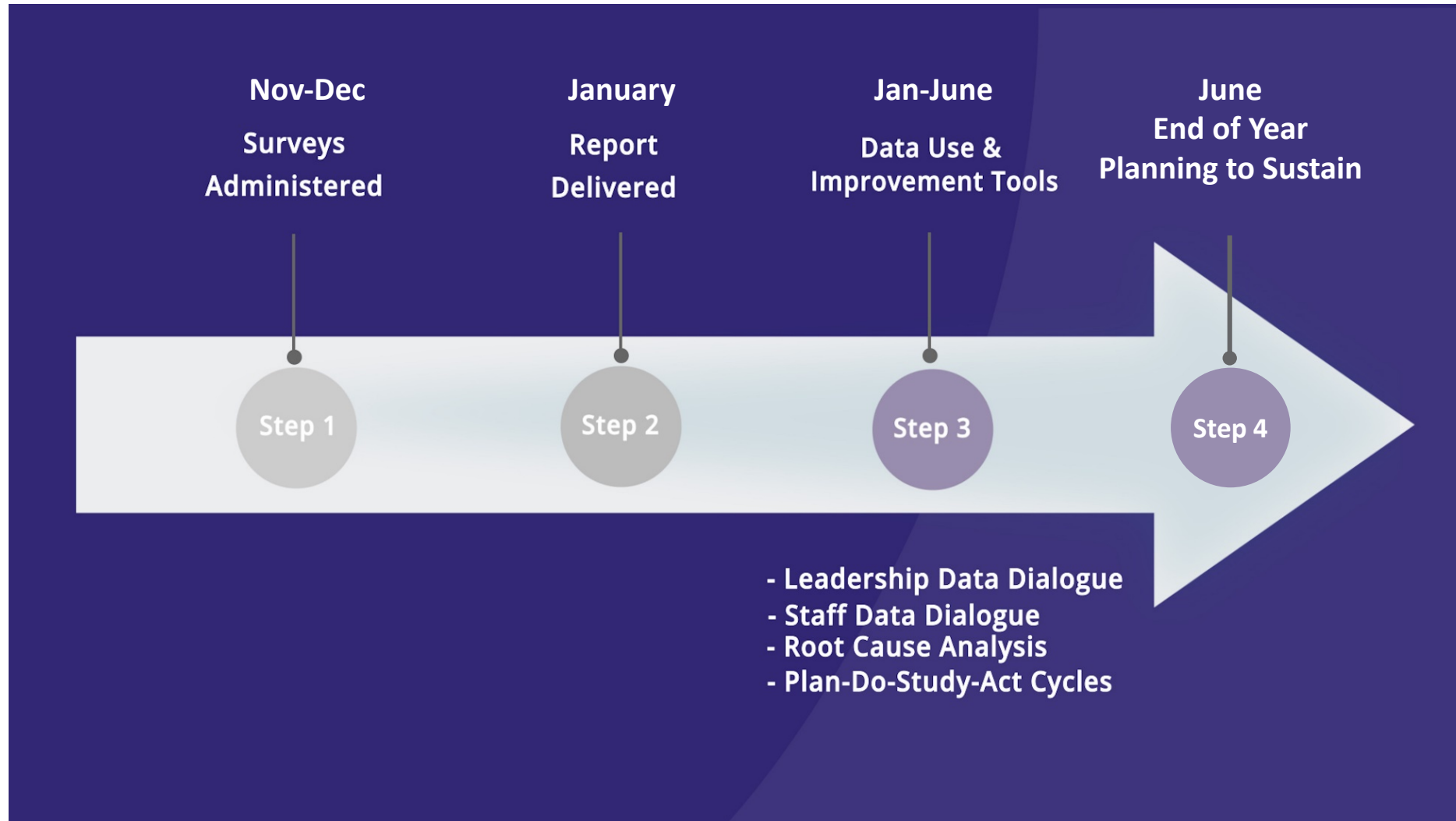
1. Review and rate the sample items thinking from the perspective of staff in your school.

2. Reflect on what informed your predicted rating.

3. How was your experience with this sample of survey items?

Early Education Essentials Data Use and Improvement Tools

Early Education Essentials: A System to Measure & Strengthen Organizational Conditions in Early Education

Typical Implementation Process and Timeline

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Nov-Dec	January	Jan-June	June
Surveys Administered	Report Delivered	Data Use & Improvement Tools	End of Year Planning to Sustain
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4

- Leadership Data Dialogue
- Staff Data Dialogue
- Root Cause Analysis
- Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles

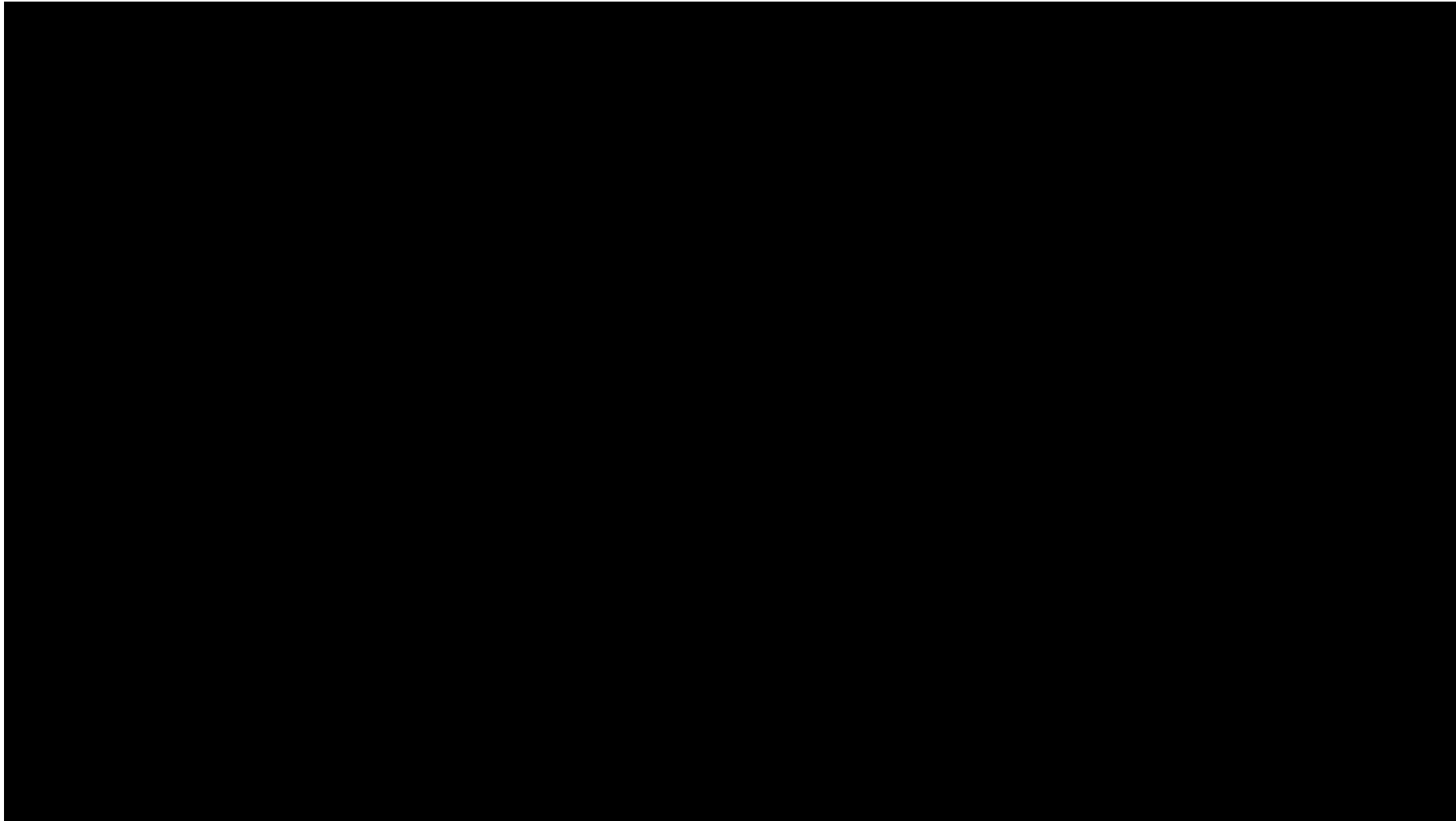# Data Use and Rapid-Cycle Improvement Protocols

Teacher Testimony 1: Benefit of Root Cause Analysis
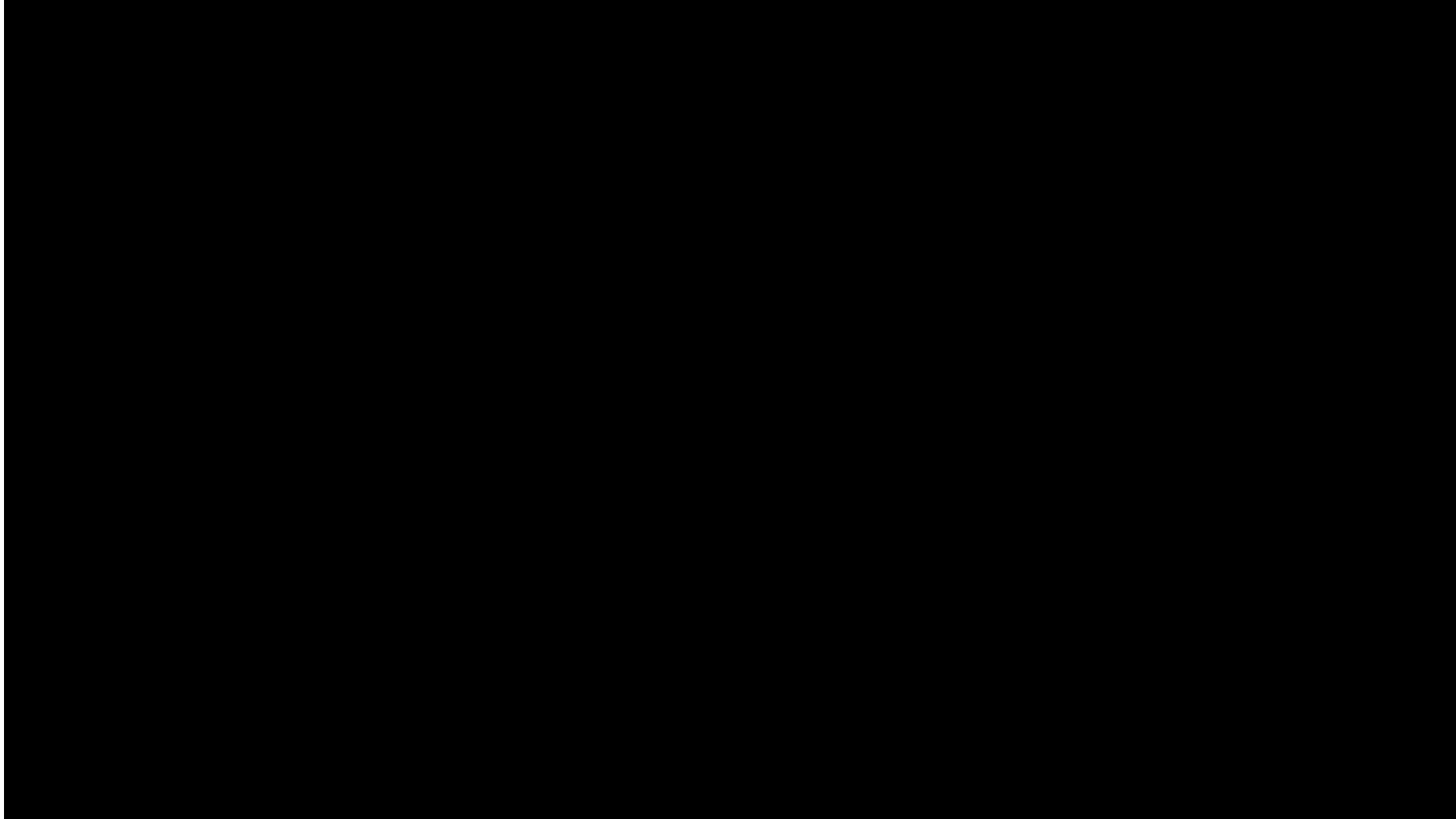
Root Cause Analysis

Teacher Testimony 2: The Power of Small Change

What's Next?

- **Provide the data use and improvement tools** to all programs taking the Early Education Essentials surveys.

- **Offer mentoring services** to build session facilitators' motivation, readiness, and confidence through tailored support.
  - ➢ Initial services include communities of practice and TA.
  - ➢ Train-the-trainer model in development.

- **Use research-program partnerships to continue refinements** to surveys, data visuals, and tools.

- **Conduct applied research** to study organizational constructs and continue pursuing practitioners' outstanding questions.

- **Continue survey research and improvement efforts** to explore adaptations to new context, including work to create a version for infant-toddler programs.

Audience Reflections

Let's share reflections on how *Early Education Essentials* can support improvement in the field, and work together with the (K-12) *5Essentials* to promote alignment across the education continuum.

1. What benefits do you anticipate from using the common lens, language, and metric provided by the *Early Education Essentials* and *5Essentials* tools to promote B-3 alignment?

2. How can we most effectively leverage the data use and improvement tools for CQI and alignment purposes?

3. What challenges and barriers do you anticipate in our efforts to support and improve organizational conditions across the B-3 continuum?

Suite of Professional Learning Experiences

Quality, Solutions, and Impact

Early Education Essentials

Program quality measurement & improvement system focused on organizational conditions

Lead Learn Excel

12-month fellowship for instructional leadership to support their growth and development as leaders

Achieve OnDemand

Online learning experiences for home visitors, supervisors, and family support staff

Educare Best Practices Training

Module-based training program for center-based settings, birth to five

Coming Soon

Launching Learners (PBS Kids)

High-tech/high touch program to help parents foster children's social/emotional development

Coming Soon

Parent Self-Reflection Tool

Digital tool to help parents identify their strengths and areas of growth as a parent

Thank you!

For more information visit: http://theounce.org/eee
Email the team: eee@theounce.org

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