



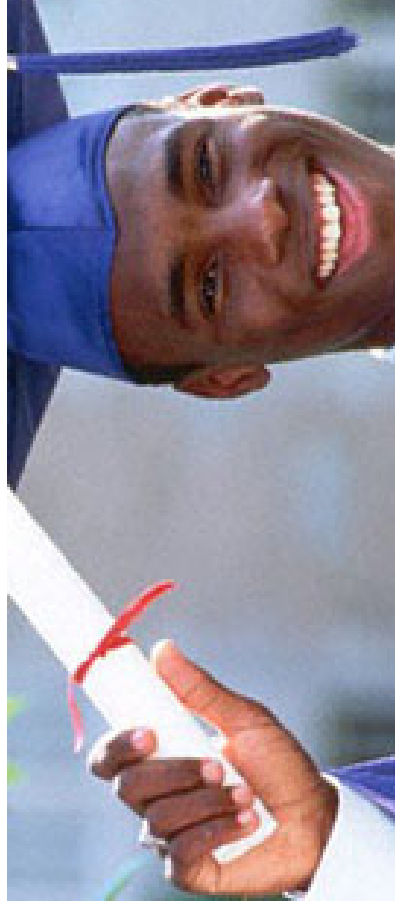
Rethinking Resources for Student Success

Perils, Promises and Practicalities: How districts' policies do or do not promote high-performance small school designs

"Putting Knowledge to Work"
MDRC Conference on High School Reform

June 25-26, 2007

Who is Education Resource Strategies?



Our Mission:

To be a catalyst for the creation of systems of high performing urban schools by promoting the strategic management of education resources

Catalyst (kat-i-list), n.: A substance that enables a reaction to proceed at a faster rate or under different conditions than otherwise possible (Merriam-Webster)



Recent district partners include....



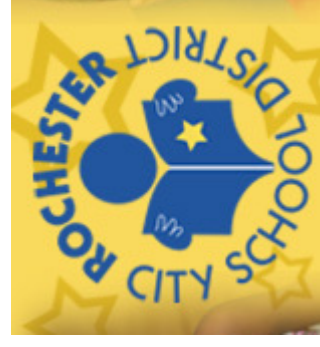
Cincinnati Public Schools



Boston Public Schools



NYC Department of Education

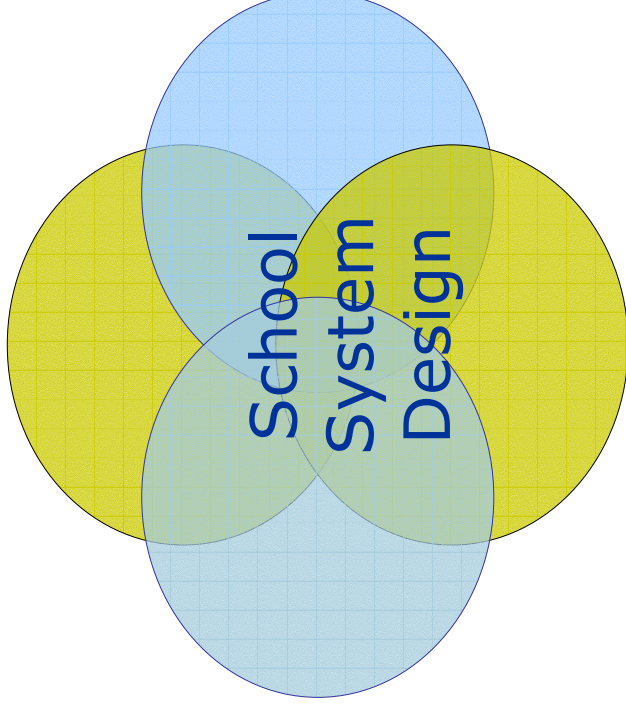




Five Strategic Practice Areas

Strategies for
Professional Development
& School Support

School Performance
Management



Rethinking
School Funding
Systems

Redesigning
School Resources



Today's Objectives

- To review the common resource practices of nine Leading Edge Small High Schools from the “Rethinking the Cost and Organization of Small High Schools” Project
- To understand how district policies and practices can support or discourage the creation of high performance small school models
- To share best district resource practices in areas that facilitate the success of small high performing high schools and portfolios of excellent high schools systemwide



The Challenge: Closing the achievement gap and reducing the dropout rate

- **The Response:** Urban districts are creating small high schools as one answer to this challenge
- **The Need:** Many urban districts are creating small high schools without a clear understanding of:
 - Spending levels required
 - Organizational designs most likely to balance the challenge and opportunities small size creates
 - System changes (policy, capacity, structures) required to facilitate both:
 - ▶ The success of small high schools; and
 - ▶ A portfolio of successful schools (rather than isolated pockets of excellence)



“Rethinking the Cost and Organization of Small High Schools” Project Objectives

- Detail the **organizational design models** for nine highly effective small high schools
- Understand the **amount spent** on each organizational design model
- Identify **common practices** across highly effective schools and the reasons for practices that vary
- Highlight changes in **policy and practices** that would promote more effective high school designs across systems of schools
- Inform the creation of **tools to support school and district leaders** in designing more effective high schools



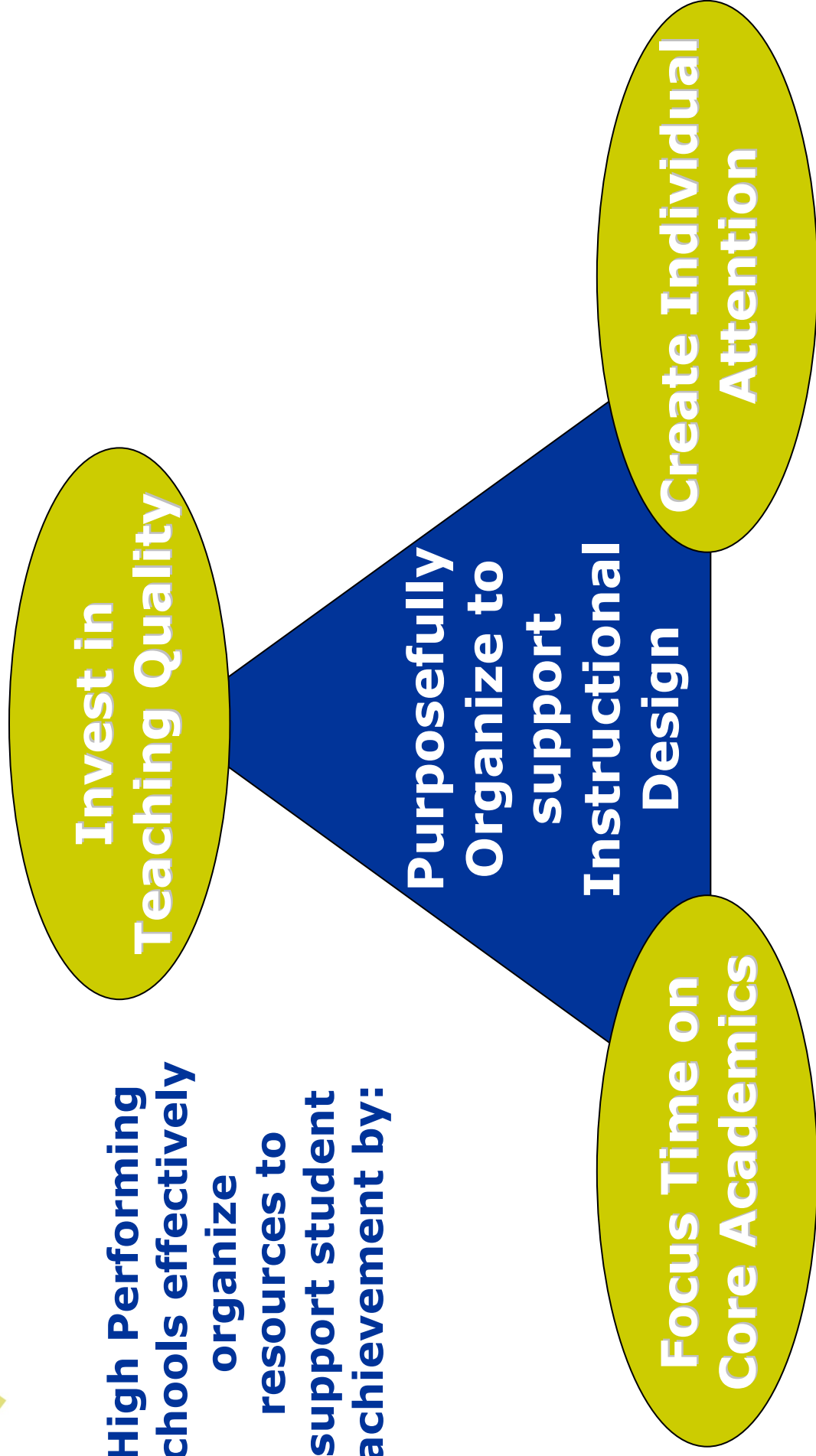
Leading Edge Small High Schools Studied

- Boston Arts Academy – Boston, MA
- TechBoston – Boston, MA
- University Park Campus School, Worcester, MA
- Academy of the Pacific Rim, Boston, MA
- Noble Street Charter School, Chicago, Ill
- Perspectives Charter School, Chicago, Ill
- MetWest, Oakland, CA
- Life Academy, Oakland, CA
- High Tech High, San Diego, CA



Framework for Analysis: ERS "Big Four" Guiding Resource Principles

High Performing schools effectively organize resources to support student achievement by:





Some Common Practices across the Leading Edge Small High Schools (1 of 2)

- **Invest in Teaching Quality:**

- Ensure an expert teaching staff that aligns with instructional design through a strategic hiring and rigorous evaluation process
- Devote significant time to teacher PD and collaboration through extended teacher workday and year

- **Focus Time on Core Academics:**

- Increase the overall amount time students spend in school by up to 40%
- Devote significantly more of this extended time in core academics, though increased graduation expectations and academic support



Some Common Practices across the Leading Edge Small High Schools (2 of 2)

- **Create Individual Attention**
 - Systematically assess and review student learning needs
 - Provide individual attention for all students regardless of program pr performance level around a common instructional program provided by core academic teachers.
- **Purposefully Organize**
 - Strategically maximize and balance resources around an instructional vision in the context of overall resource levels, student needs and teacher capacity and flexibility over use of resources.



How do district policies promote or discourage high performance small school designs?

It is not just about **SIZE!**

- Small schools working under big school district policies will be more expensive, less diverse, and less effective.
- Key district policies that impact design include those that govern:
 - **Level of funding**
 - **Distribution of students and programs**
 - **Flexibility over the use of resources**



These policies can be found in: teacher, administrator, clerical contracts; administrative policies and practices and School Board policies



A Tale of Two Schools: A review of how district policies can impact small school design

- This is the story of two small high schools both located in the same urban school district but playing by very different rules.....
 -resulting in two very different organizational structures with only one consistently incorporating some of the Common Practices of Leading Edge Small High Schools

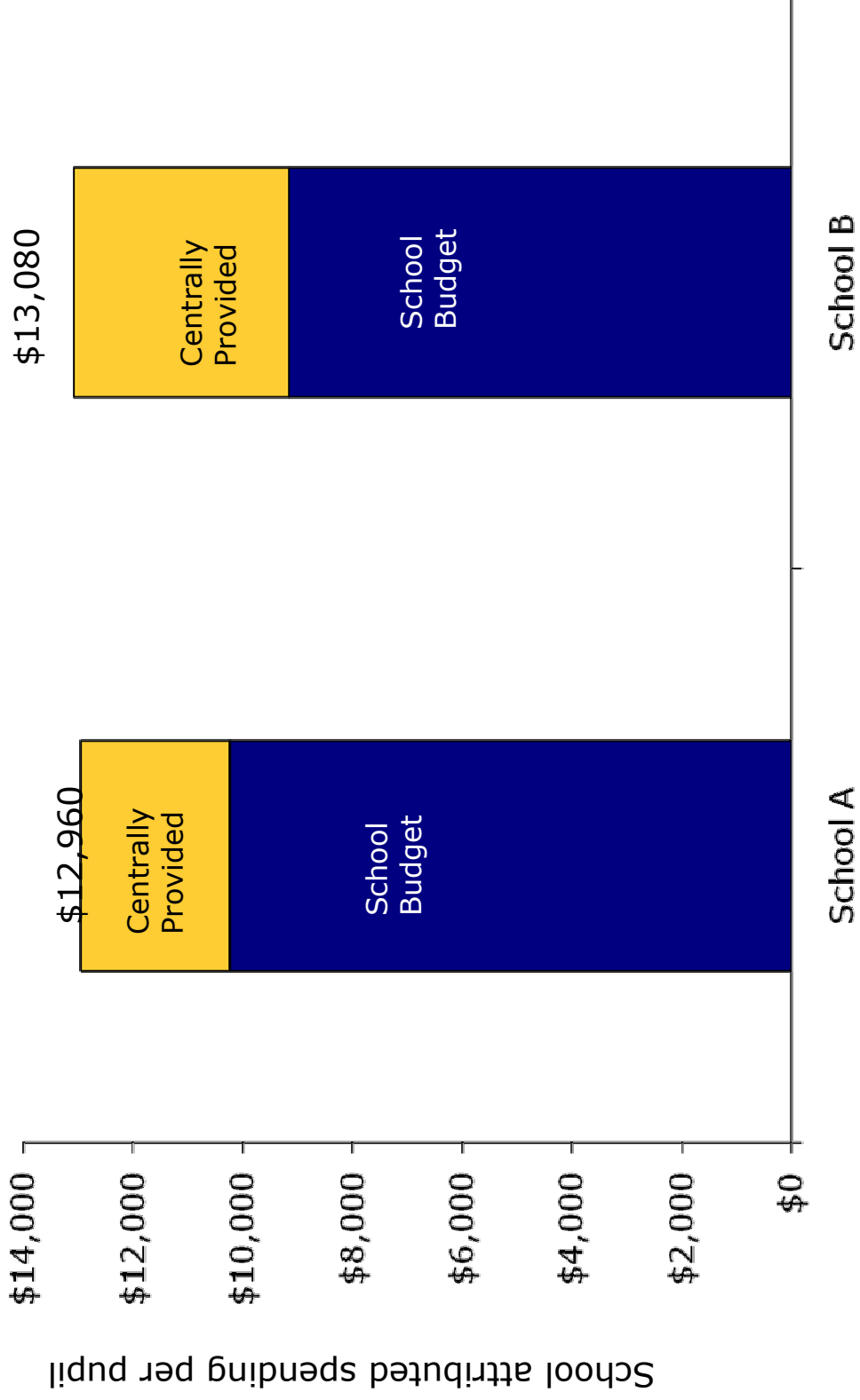
How do the rules for these two schools differ?





These two small high schools receive similar dollar resources from the district

FUNDING LEVELS



Enrollment:

404

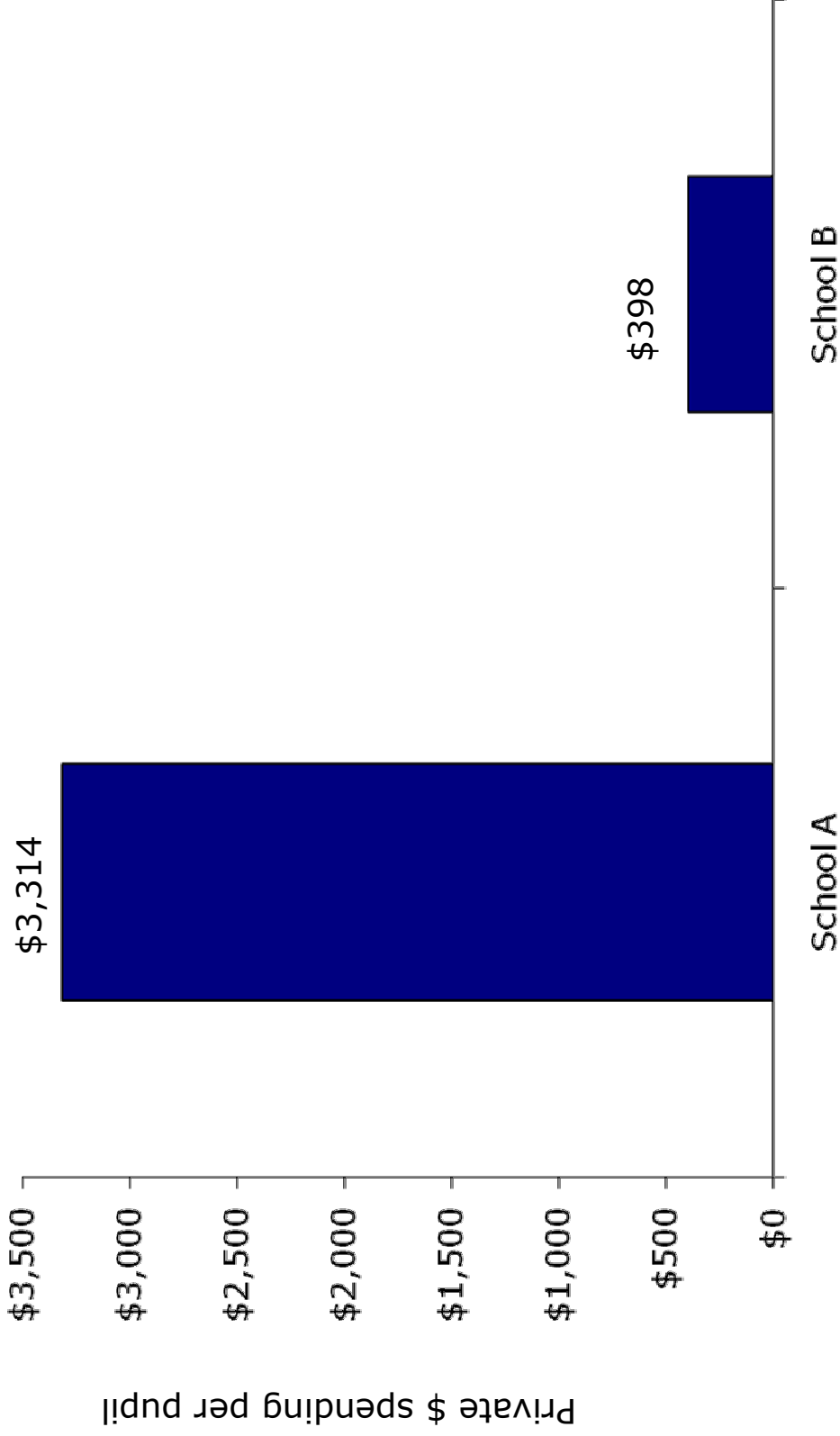
363

Note: These dollars include a calculation of the dollar value of centrally provided staff and services such as itinerant staff, utilities and custodians.



Both schools are supported by privately raised funds, with School A aggressively fundraising to support its instructional design

Privately Supported \$ Per Pupil



Enrollment:

404

334

FUNDING LEVELS



Student assignment and program placement policies result in the schools serving two very different student populations

S T U D E N T S & P R O G R A M S

	School A	School B
% Special Education Resource Self-Contained	13% 10% 3%	24% 11% 13%
% Ninth grade ELA Proficient/Advanced	68%	35% No Advanced
% 9 th graders Bottom Quartile ELA	7%	22%
% Students who chose school	100%	35%



School A has freedom from many union and district constraints resulting in dramatically different levels of flexibility in the use of resources

F L E X I B I L I T Y

Flexibility Dimension	School A	School B
Hiring and Firing	Yes	Limited
Teacher Time	Yes	Limited
Class Size	Yes	No
Student Time	Yes	Limited
Staffing Composition	Yes	Limited
Use of Outside Contractors	Yes	Limited
Salary	No	No
Option to Opt out of district services	Yes	No
Discretion over Non-Salary Budget	Yes	Limited
Percent of school budget reported at school level	79%	70%



Do School A and B implement the Common Practices?

	School A	School B
Ensure an Expert Teaching Staff	?	?
Significant time to PD	?	?
Increase Student time	?	?
More time to Core Academics	?	?
Review Student Learning needs	?	?
Provide Individual Attention	?	?
Strategically organize around an instructional vision	?	?



Ensure an expert teaching staff that aligns with instructional design through a strategic hiring and rigorous evaluation process (1 of 2)

	School A	School B
Years Experience as Principal or Administrator	20+	1
Teaching Staff	<p>Hand-picked to fit mission</p> <p>Veteran staff & Expert Adjunct instructors Recruited from Community</p>	<p>Reconstituted School Staff Remain Largely the Same</p> <p>6% teaching positions filled with district placed subs</p>
Support Staff	<p>No positions defined by District</p> <p>Hand-picked to Fit Mission</p>	<p>Required Positions Defined by District</p> <p>Some Building Staff Shared with 2 Schools</p>

District Policies: Union Contract – Hiring; Administrative – Staffing



Ensure an expert teaching staff that aligns with instructional design through a strategic hiring and rigorous evaluation process (2 of 2)

Percentage of teachers with Content Certification

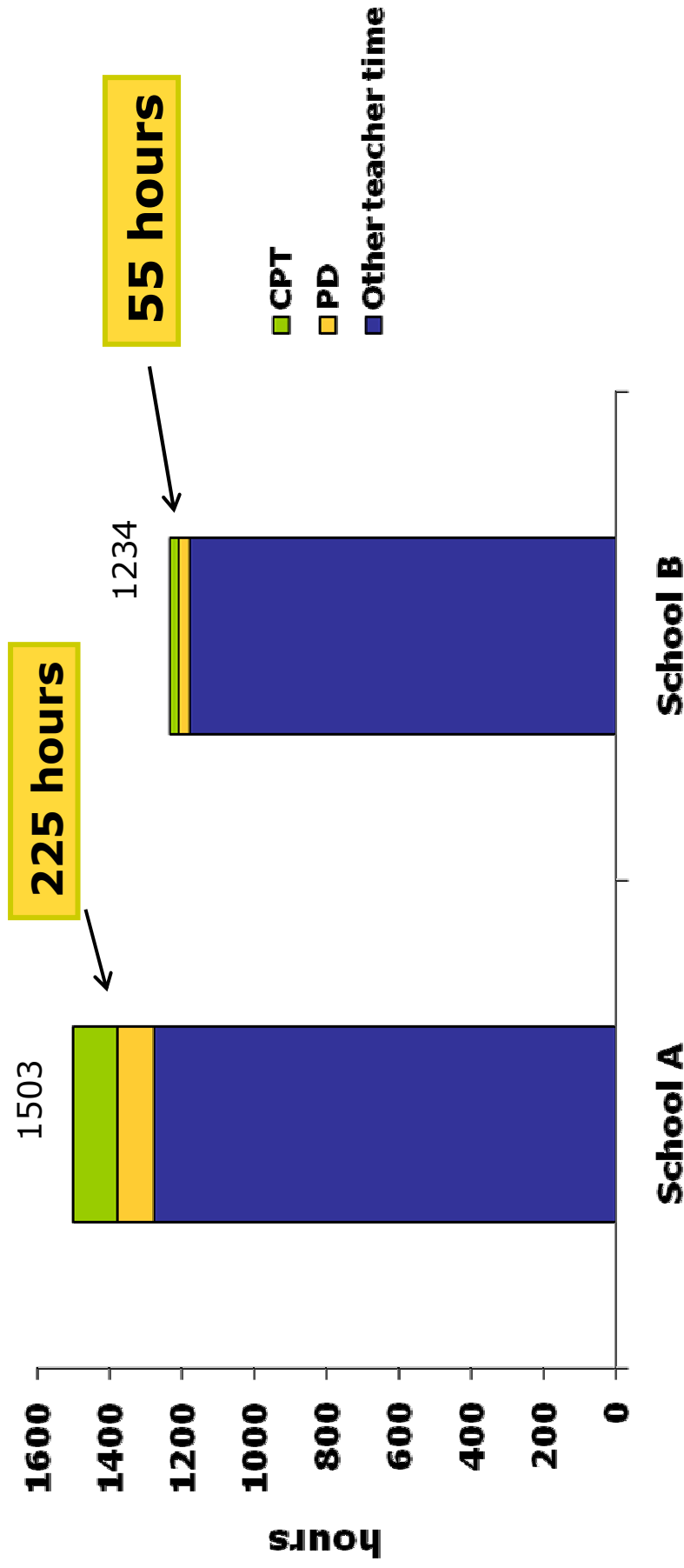
	School A	School B
Humanities	<p>100%: English certification: 2/5=40% History or SS certification: 3/5=60%</p> <p>Note: School A has an inclusion model for SWD</p>	<p>General Ed: 55%: English certification: 2/9=22% History or SS certification: 3/9=33%</p> <p>SWD Teachers certification: 3/9=33%</p>
Math	<p>Math certification: 5/6=83%</p>	<p>General Ed: Math certification: 3/9=33% SWD certification: 1/9=11%</p>

District Policies: Union Contract – Hiring; Administrative - Staffing



Devote significant time to teacher professional development and collaboration through extended teacher workday and year

Teacher Hours devoted to Professional Development

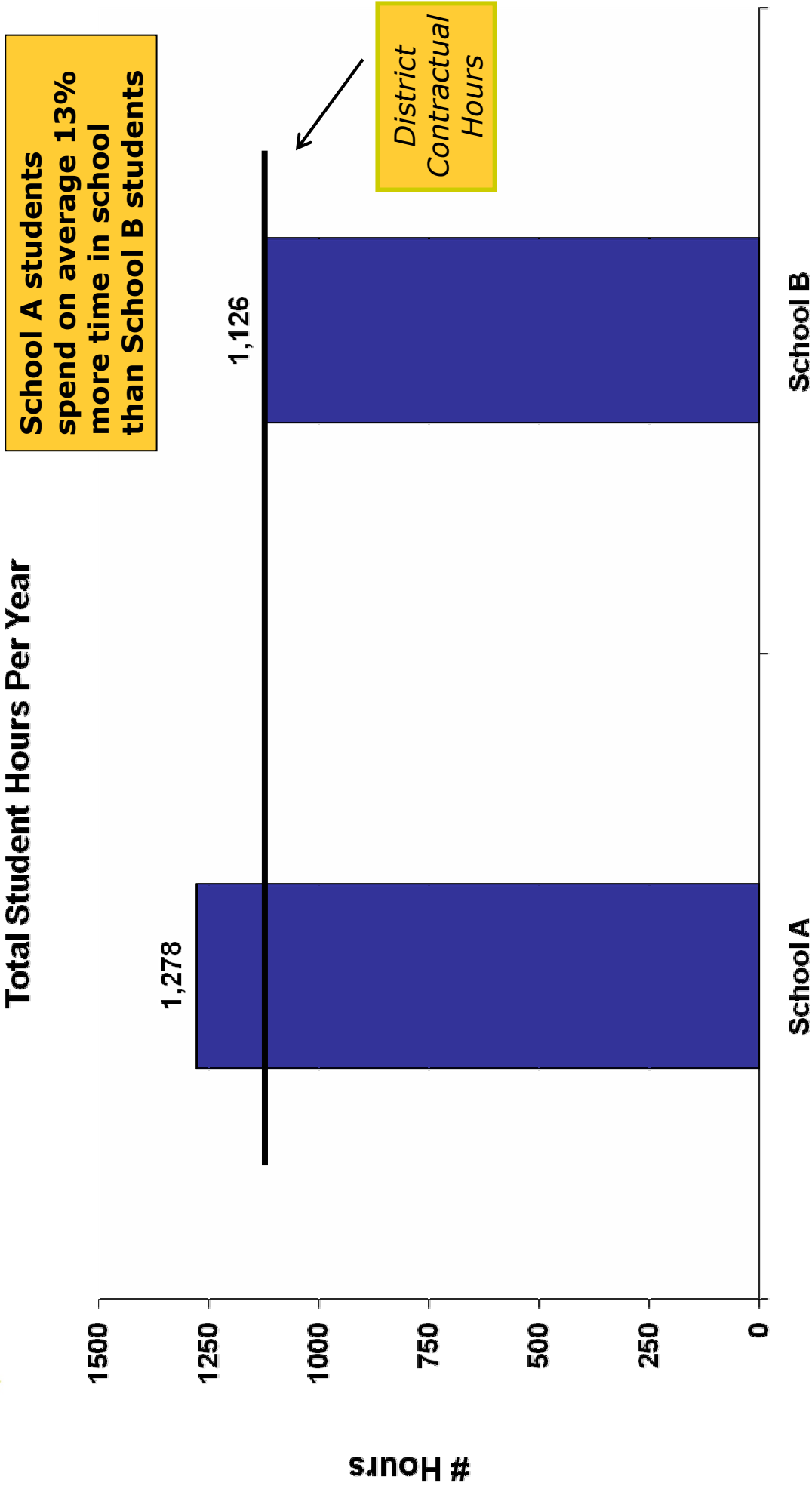


District Policies: Union Contract – Teacher time



Increase the overall amount of time students spend in school by up to 40%

Total Student Hours Per Year

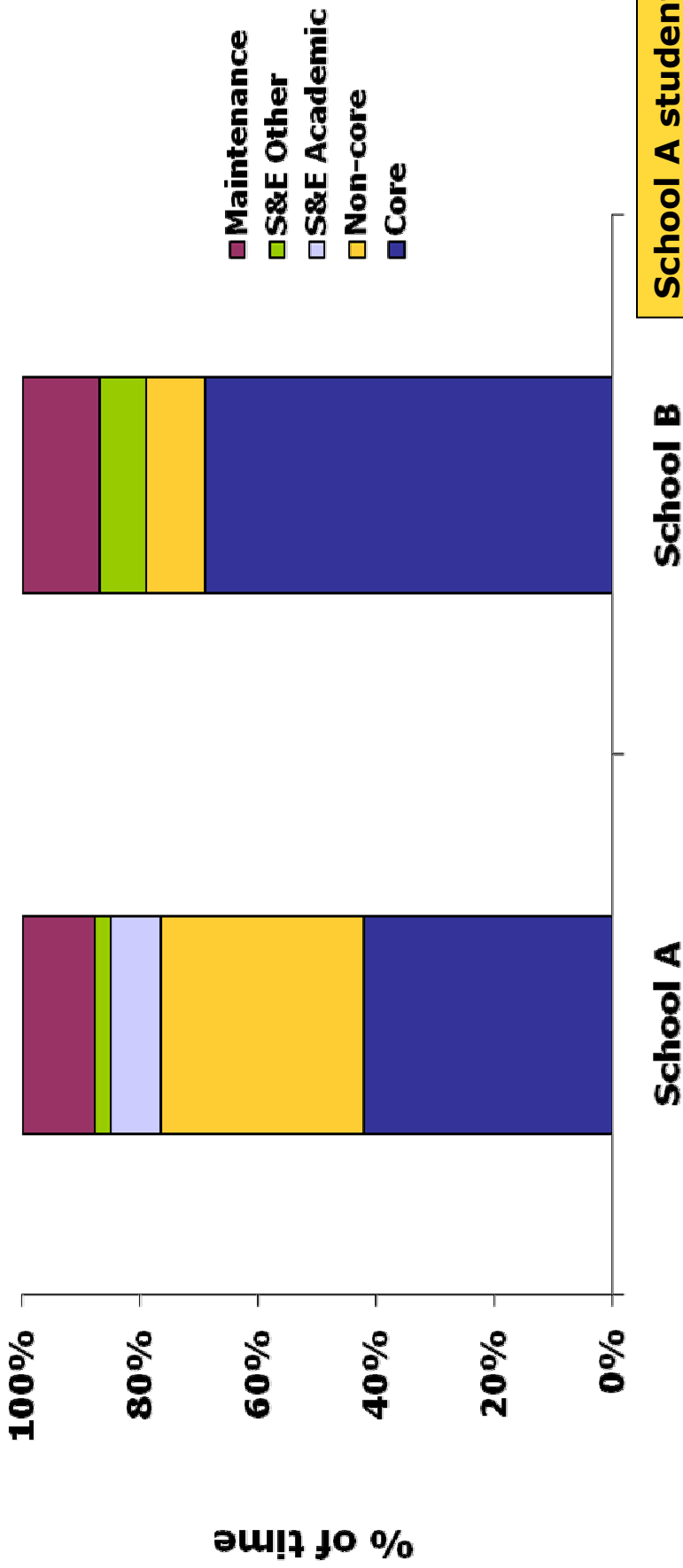


District Policies: Union Contract – Teacher time



Devote significantly more of this extended time in core academics, though increased graduation expectations and academic support

Percent of Time by Category



School A students spend 17% less time in Core and S&E Academic than School B Students

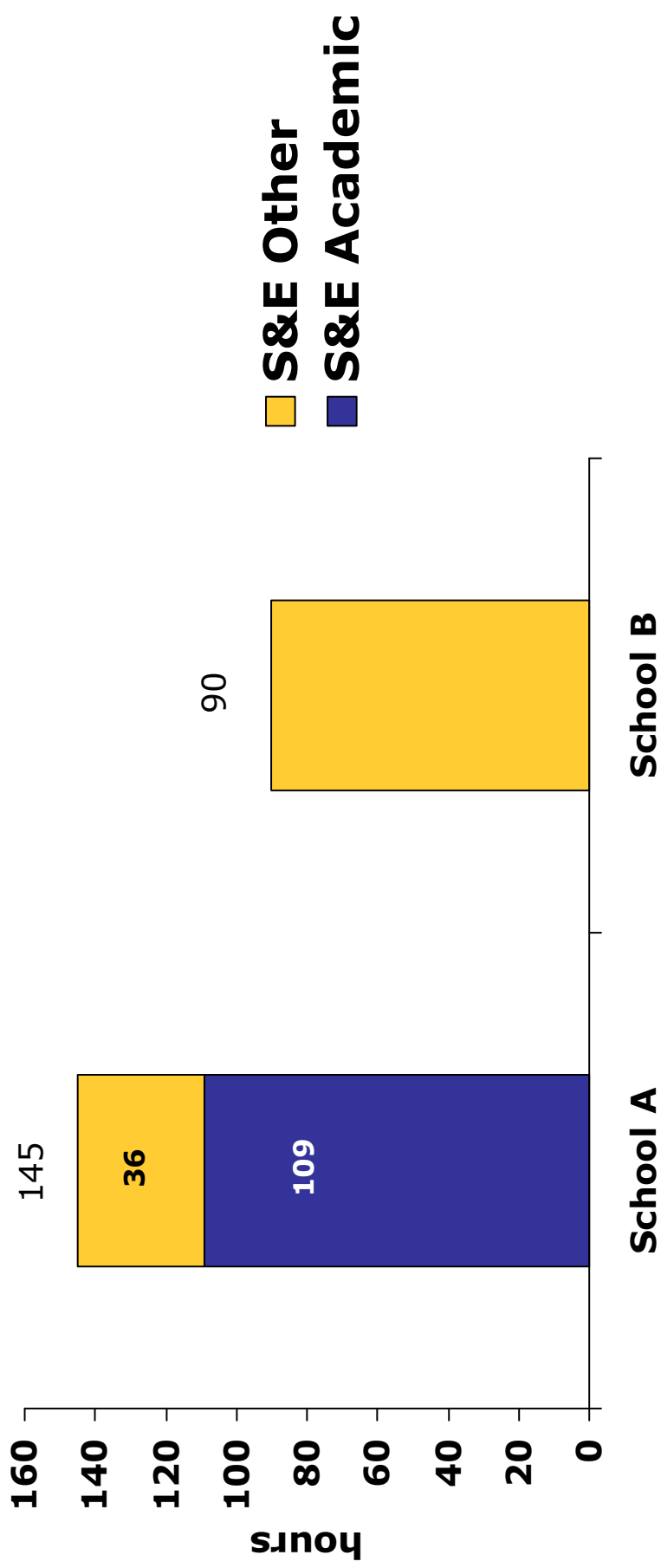
District Policies: Union Contract – Teacher time;



Provide individual attention for all students regardless of program or performance level around a common instructional program provided by core academic teachers

School A begins each day with a period devoted to academic support tailored to student needs

Hours Per Year in Support & Enrichment



District Policies: Union contract – length of day



Systematically assess and review student learning needs

•**School A:**

- Individual student plans for struggling students
- Public exhibitions
- Informally tracked through Advisory 4x/week, loop for 4 years
- Grade level teams mtgs - 2 hours/wk to discuss student needs

•**School B:**

- There is no system in place for assessing or monitoring individual student learning needs
- Informally tracked through Advisory 1x/week, no looping

District Policies: Union contract – length of day; Administrative – Supports and Principal Capacity



Strategically maximize and balance resources around an instructional vision

Both Schools recognize they have students struggling with literacy skills and have attempted to address this issue:

•School A:

- Writing class 4x/week for 50 minutes, co-taught with class sizes of 20 (10:1 student ratio)
- Writing and literacy skills addressed through curriculum
- Academic support time integrated into the school day
- Significant professional development

•School B:

- Extends time for Humanities in 9th grade, but teachers lack certification and experience
- Curriculum and materials do not address literacy skills for struggling readers
- No professional development around literacy
- No opportunities for academic support
- No assessments to understand literacy needs



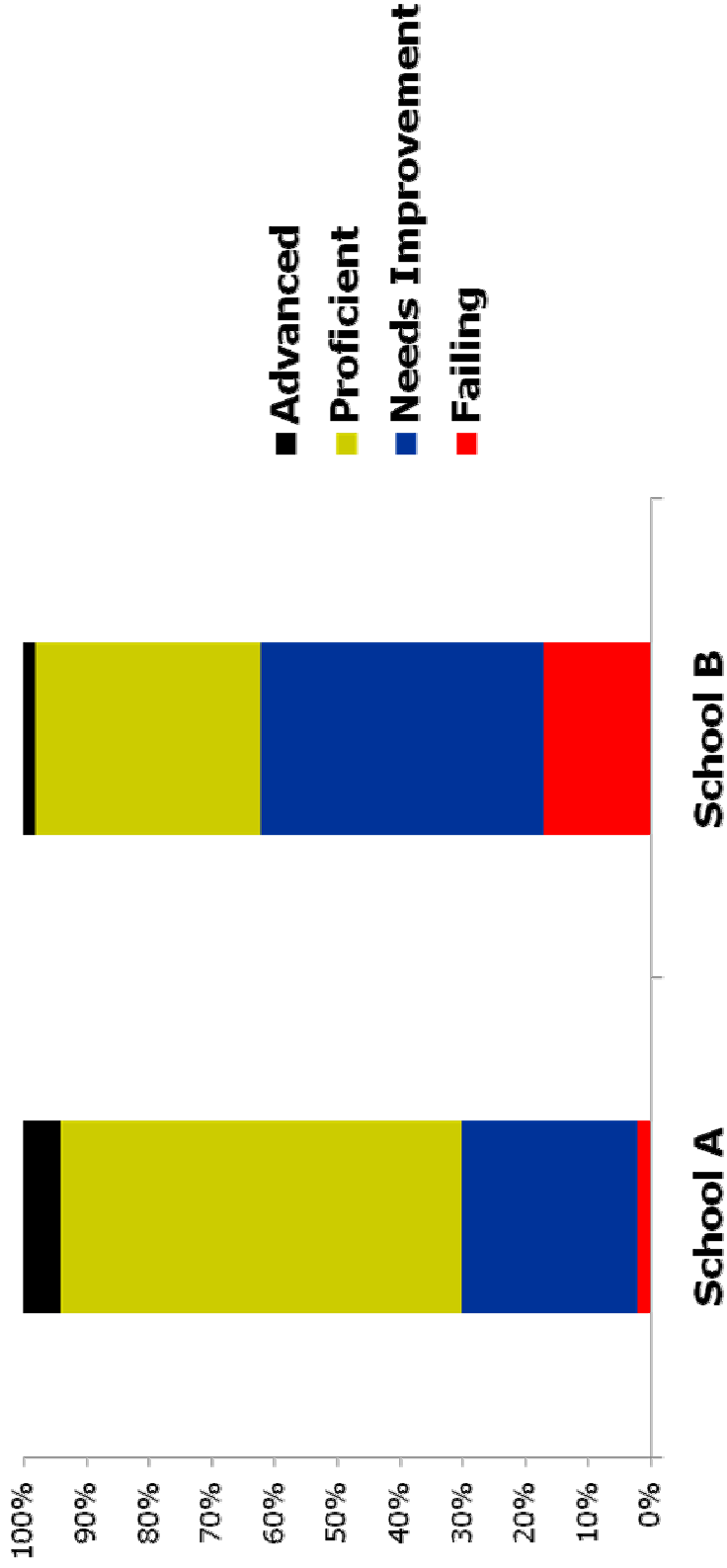
Do School A and School B implement the Common Practices?

	School A	School B
Ensure an Expert Teaching Staff	Yes	No
Significant time to PD	Yes	No
Increase Student time	Yes	No
More time to Core Academics	Yes	Yes
Review Student Learning needs	Yes	No
Provide Individual Attention	Yes	No
Strategically organize around an instructional vision	Yes	No



Why does all of this matter?

Spring 2006 State Grade 10 English Language Arts Exam



2005-2006	School A	School B
Attendance	94.3%	79.7%
Suspensions	5	74



What support does School B need to implement the Common Practices of Leading Edge Small High Schools?

- School level resources that reflect student need
- Highly expert teachers and staff that match student needs and school design
- Flexibility to align resources to needs and design
- Student assignment practices that allow them to predict program and staffing needs especially for SWD and ELL
- School planning, supervision and support to encourage the use and organization of resources in high performing ways
- High performing design models that fit the district's budget, HR capacity and regulatory/contractual context
- Cost-effective provision of operational services to allow focus on improving performance and maximizing instructional dollars



Do your District practices produce School A models or School B models of organizational design?

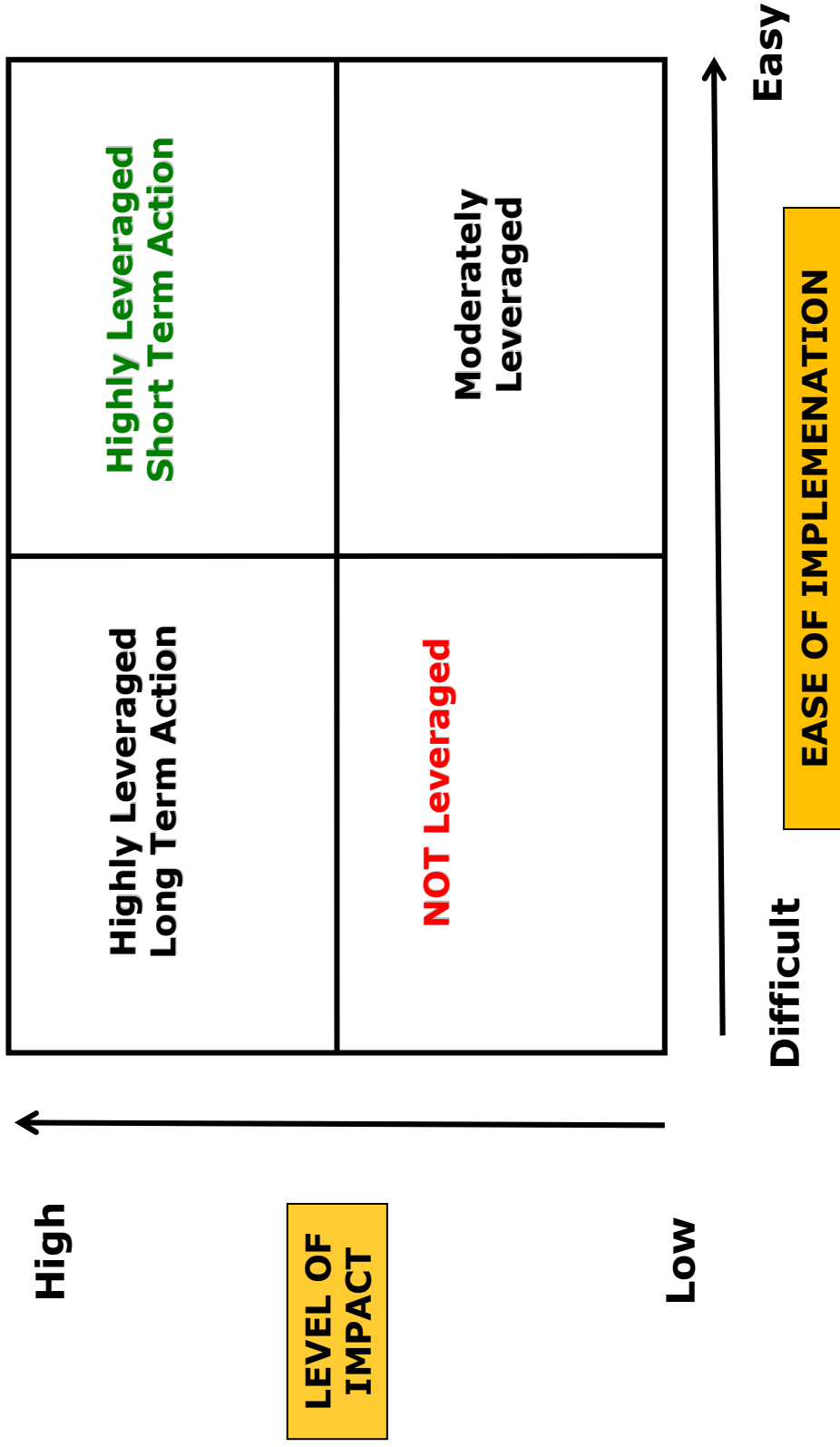
- Looking at the previous slide, does School B need any other support from the district to be able to organize in high performing ways?
- Which support will have the highest impact in your district?
- Which support is the most challenging to achieve? Why?
- What are some promising practices around these supports that you can share?

In creating a portfolio of excellent schools, districts should be aware of how each policy:

- **Interacts with other policies**
- **Impacts schools of different sizes and types**

Where should my school district begin?

A Decision Matrix





How ERS is Supporting the creation of high performing models of secondary schools and portfolios of excellent schools systemwide

- **Secondary School Design Tool:** Web-based tool that will help users create strategic school designs that invest in teaching quality, maximize academic time and create individual attention
- **Going to Scale Tool:** Excel-based tool that provides districts with the ability to quantify the resource impact of potential small school designs using district allocation policies
- **Empowering Great Schools Assessment Tool:** Allows districts to examine practices and policies that are critical for supporting high performing small high school models: union contracts, teacher hiring and evaluation, school planning and support, resource allocation systems.



Other Related ERS Resources

- **Publications:**
 - The Cost of Small High Schools: A Literature Review
 - Rethinking School Resources: Design Principles for High Performing Schools (Publication - Fall 2007)
 - Final Report "Rethinking the Cost of Small High Schools" (Publication - Summer 2007)
- **www.educationresourcestrategies.org**

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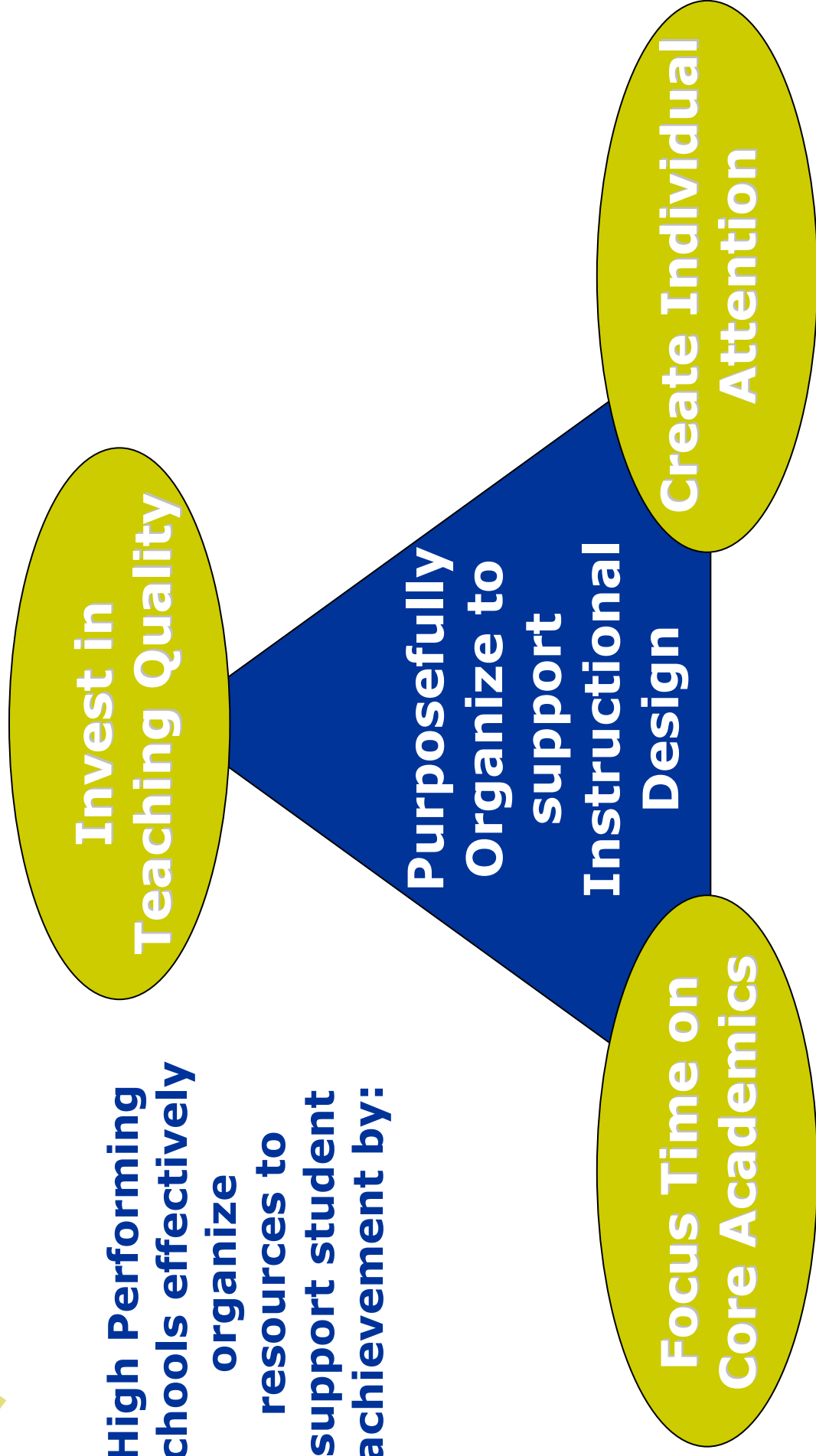


Supporting Information



Framework for Analysis: ERS “Big Four” Guiding Resource Principles

**High Performing
schools effectively
organize to
resources to
support student
achievement by:**





High performing schools use student time strategically, linking use to student needs, by:

Design Principles
Purposefully aligning the school's schedule with its instructional design and student needs
Maximizing time on academic subjects, including longer blocks of uninterrupted time
Varying individual student time when necessary to ensure all students meet rigorous standards



High performing schools invest in teaching quality through hiring, PD, job structure and common planning time

Design Principles
Hiring and organizing staff to fit school needs in terms of expertise, philosophy and schedule.
Integrating significant resources for well-designed PD that provides expert support to implement the school's core instructional design
Designing teacher work schedules to include blocks of collaborative planning time effectively used to improve classroom practice
Enacting systems that promote individual teacher growth through induction, leadership opportunities, PD planning, evaluation and compensation



High performing schools create individual attention and personal learning environments by:

Design Principles
Systematically assessing student learning to adjust instruction and support
Creating small group sizes and reduced teacher loads in high need academic areas.
Organizing structures that foster personal relationships between students and faculty



High performing schools purposefully organize to maximize resources for instructional design by:

Design Principles
Using flexible structure and personnel that are responsive to changing teacher and student needs
Leveraging internal and external expertise and resources