

Changing the Conversation About School Discipline

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No significant and sustainable change has ever taken place without first changing the conversation

Student Discipline is Multi-faceted

- Complexities of **human behavior**
- **Environmental and social factors** – health, family, social media, peer pressure, poverty, drugs, gangs, etc.
- **Inconsistencies** of discipline consequences
- Conflicting opinions about consequences – **tougher or too tough**
- Consequences of **suspensions** – instructional time lost
- Legal requirements and **due process protections**
- School **safety** considerations



The Challenge...

- Many teachers cite student discipline problems as the number one issue they face on a regular basis
- Many administrators cite student discipline as the most time-consuming problem they address each day
- Many students indicate that student discipline is a problem in the classroom that keeps them from learning

However...

However...

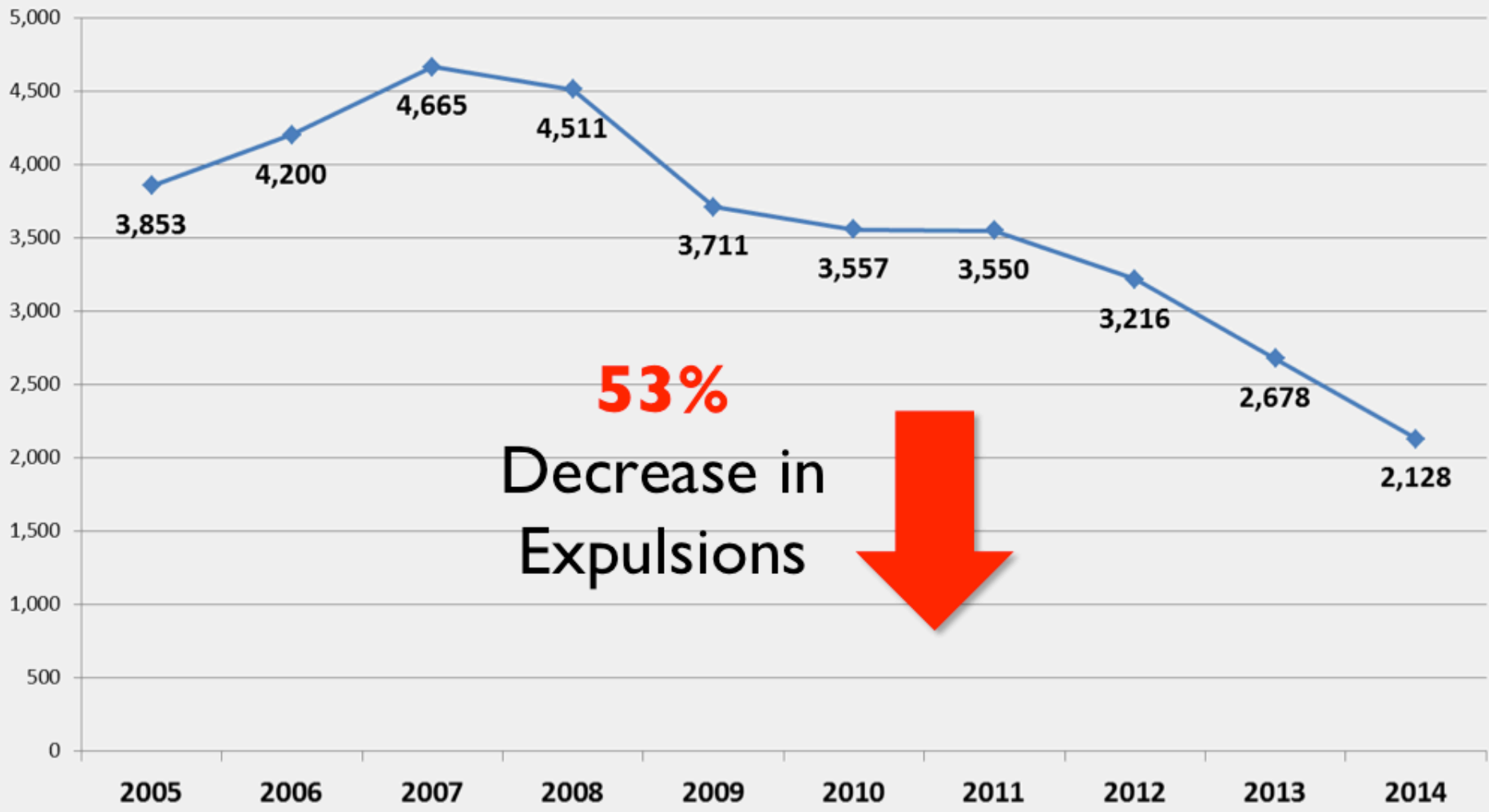
- Georgia **ranks 10th in the nation** in the rate of out-of-school suspensions
- Over **128,000 students were suspended** from school during the 2013-2014 school year and over 174,000 students were assigned in-school suspension
- Of the 20 high schools in the United States with the **highest percentage of students suspended, 6** are in Georgia

However...

**However...let's look at
Georgia's data...**

Georgia Department of Education

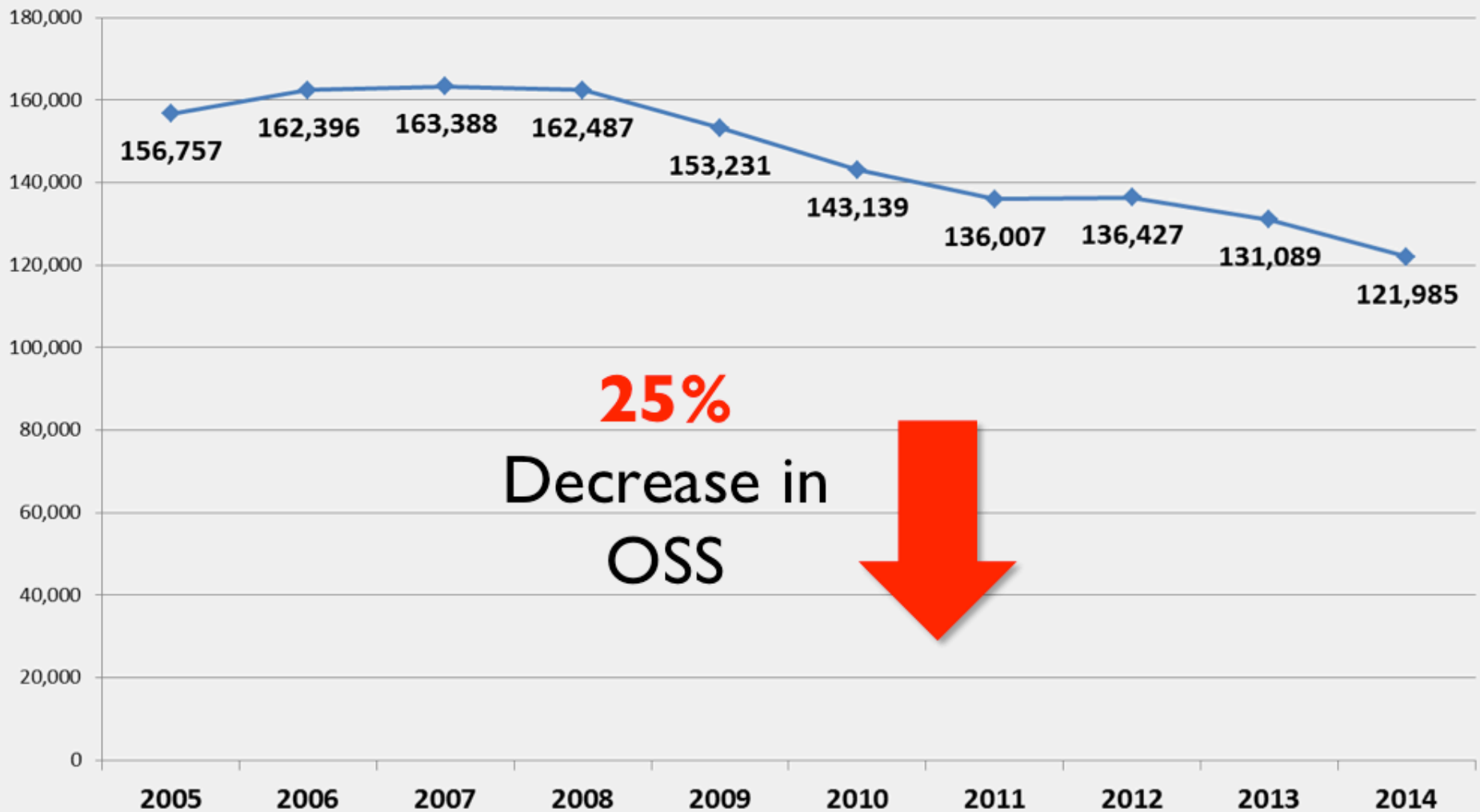
State of Georgia Discipline Action - Expulsion Total Number of Students



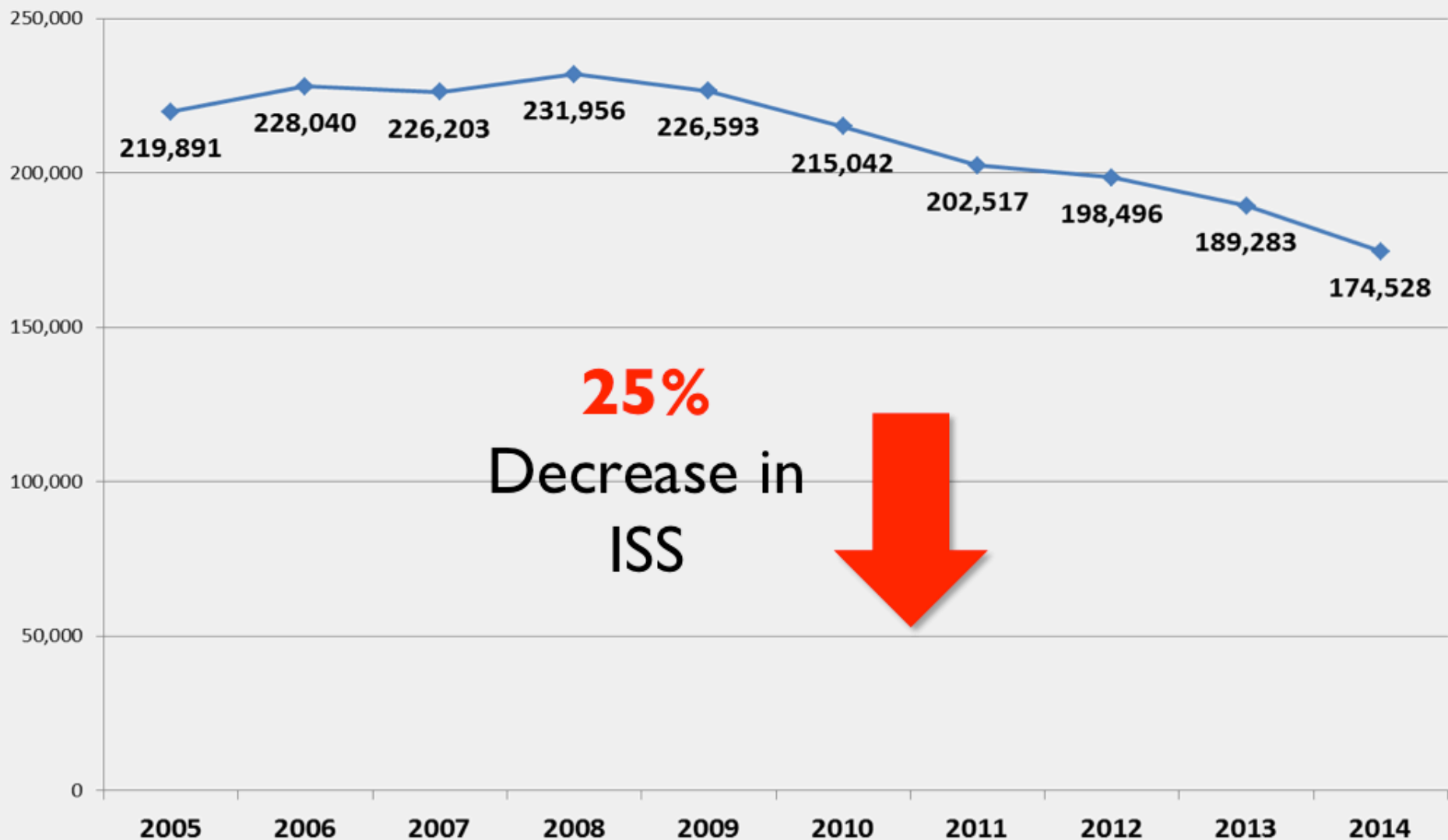
53%
Decrease in
Expulsions



State of Georgia Discipline Action - Out-of-School Suspension Total Number of Students



State of Georgia Discipline Action - In-School Suspension Total Number of Students



**“Experts often possess more data
than judgment.”**

-Colin Powell



Change the
conversation
about how we
look at data

Epidemiology

- 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

Look at the Data from Epidemiological Basics

Diseases

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

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

Look at the Data from Epidemiological Basics

Diseases

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

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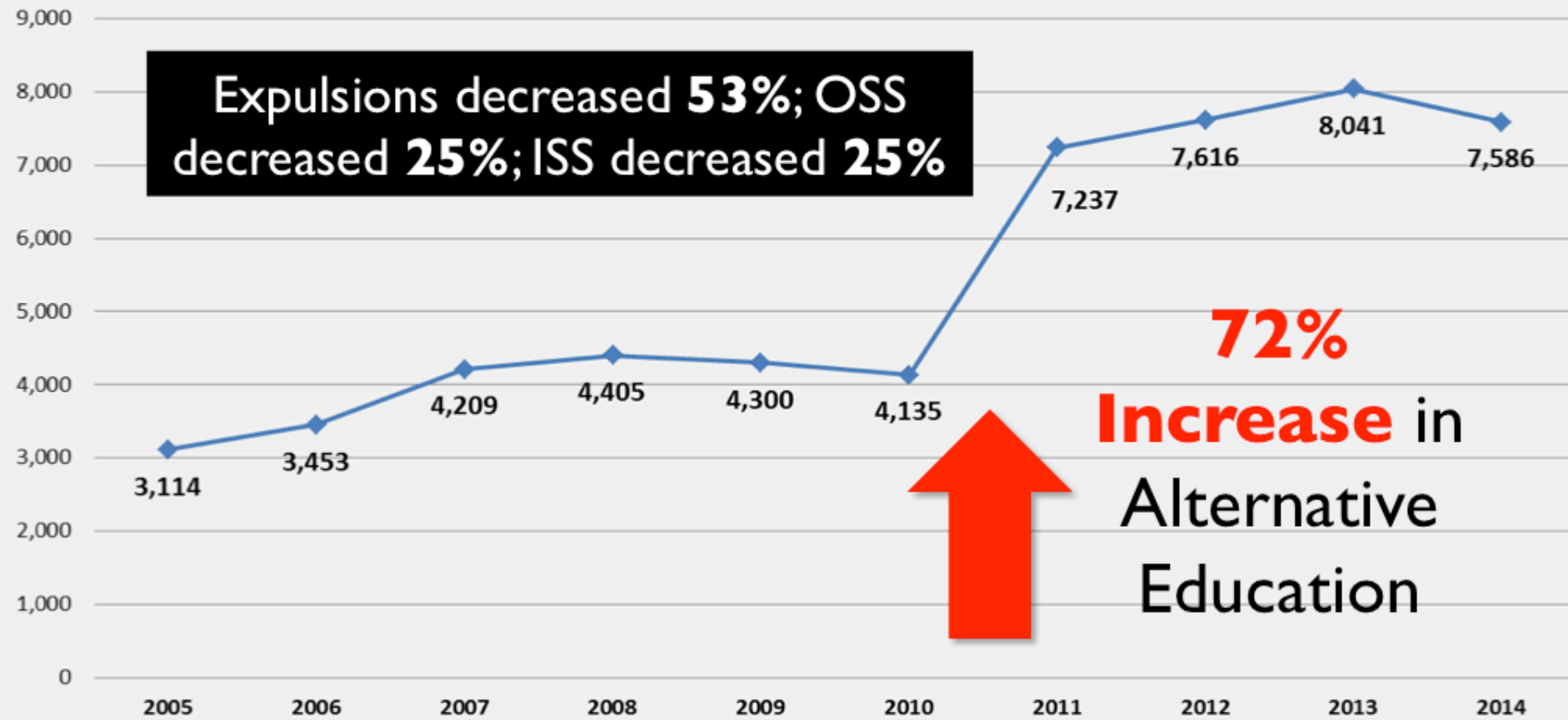
Disruptive behaviors

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

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

LOOK FOR PATTERNS and CLUES

State of Georgia
Discipline Action -
Alternative School - Disruptive



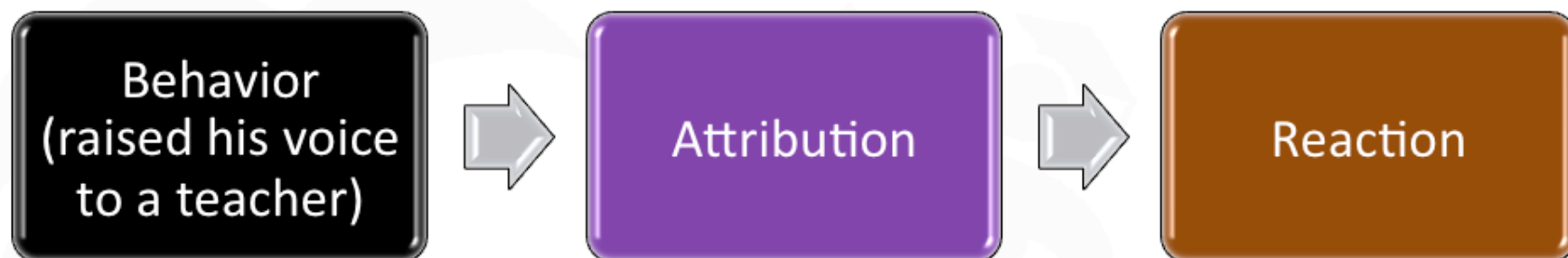
- Changing the way we look at data is a good start, **but it's not enough**
- We must also change the way we look at **decision-making**
- How we **characterize behavior** in large part determines how we respond to the behavior





Attribution Theory:

- The attempt to understand the behavior of others by attributing causation to feelings, beliefs, intentions, personality and/or situations
- Reactions are determined by the assignment of cause to the behavior



Two students do the same thing...

Attribution: He did that because he has no respect for authority - **Consequence:** Sent out of class and suspended

Attribution: He did that because he's so immature and peer pressure - **Consequence:** Stays in the classroom



Fundamental Attribution Error

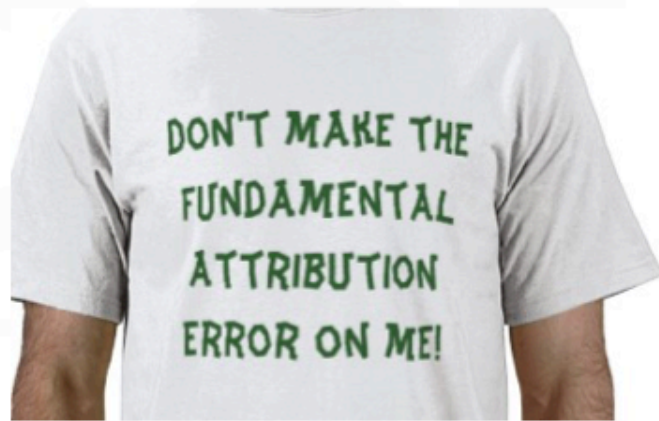
Error is assigning the **incorrect** cause to the behavior.

Attribution: "The student is just mean and doesn't like authority figures."

Fact: "The student is picked on and is socially isolated."

With **Fundamental Attribution Error** there is a tendency to place an **undue emphasis on internal** characteristics, motives, perceived attitudes, or personality of the person to explain behavior **rather than considering situational factors**

The causes of events always interest us more than the events themselves. -Cicero





Fundamental Attribution Error Applied

We attribute other people's behavior to internal motives, but we attribute our own behavior to circumstances.



When **FAE**
becomes the
norm



Attribution Theory Applied to Training

- **Leadership training:** applying principles of attribution to leadership style and influence, including interactions with staff, students, and parents
- **Teacher training:** applying principles of attribution to classroom management, student behavior, and classroom design
- **Student motivation:** applying principles of attribution to cause and effect (i.e., student attributing outcomes to preconceived beliefs)



CHANGE

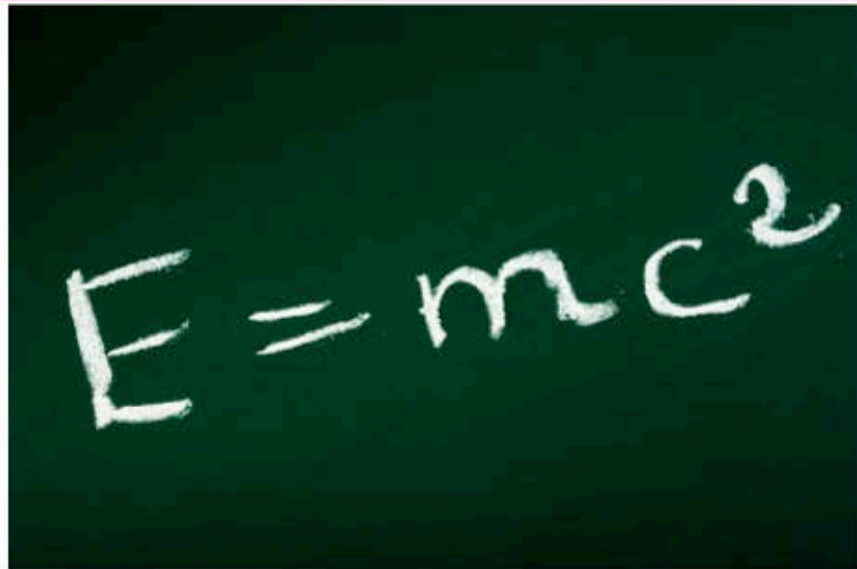
the Conversation

**"Culture eats strategy
for breakfast."**
-Peter Drucker

Changing the conversation about
data

Changing the conversation about
decision-making

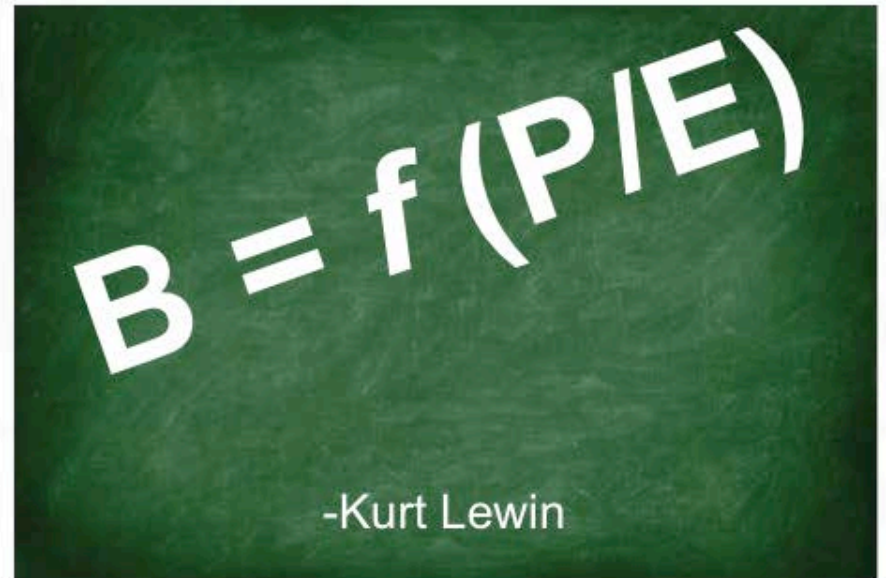
Now, let's try to change the
conversation about **school
climate**



$E = mc^2$

People and their environment are not separate things. **B**ehavior is a **f**unction of the **p**erson and the **e**nvironment

Matter and energy are not separate things...



$B = f(P/E)$
-Kurt Lewin

- We can all remember when we felt **safe** (or **unsafe**) at school
- We can all remember when we felt **connected** to a caring adult (or **frighteningly alone**) in school
- We can all remember when we felt **engaged** in meaningful friendships (or **not**)
- We can all remember when we felt **engaged** in meaningful learning (or **not**)



The Memory Palace

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

Research:

A positive school climate has been shown to affect middle school students' self-esteem (Hoge), mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism (Kuperminic), improve a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes (Way, Reddy, & Rhodes), increase student self-concept (Cairns), lower levels of drug use (LaRusso), reduce psychiatric problems among high school students (LaRusso), and increase psychological well-being (Ruus)

If students do not feel safe at school, do not feel welcomed at school, or not treated with respect and are not given opportunities to learn, engage, interact, mature and grow, they will not meet their academic potential, develop emotionally or learn positive social lessons

Research:

- Studies show that there is a significantly positive difference in student achievement between schools with a good school climate and those with a negative school climate
- A positive school climate is correlated with decreased student absenteeism in middle school and high school (DeJung & Duckworth). Research indicates that positive school climate is critical to effective risk prevention (RAND Corporation; M. C. Wang, Haertel, & Walberg)

- It is important to **define** school climate
- It is important to **understand** school climate
- It is important to **measure** school climate



Changing the conversation about the importance of school climate requires measuring it in such a way that it helps schools understand school climate and what they need to do to improve school climate

**Official Code of Georgia Annotated
20-14-33**

Georgia School Climate Star Rating



What is the School Climate Star Rating?

- Georgia is one of the first states in the nation to include school climate as an indicator in its academic accountability system, the *College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)*
- The School Climate Star Rating is a diagnostic tool to determine if a school is on the right path to school improvement

Georgia School Climate Star Rating



School Climate Star Rating Data Metrics (**Determinants**)

	25%	25%	25%	25%
1 million+	Student Survey	Student Discipline Data	Schoolwide Attendance Data	Survey + Discipline Data
100,000+	Parent Survey	(discipline data and enrollment =weighted OSS rate)	(student, staff, teachers)	(Ratio of drugs, alcohol, bullying, & dangerous incidents)
100,000+	School Staff Survey			

School Climate Star Rating (Scale 1-5: Negative to Positive)

*Schools have access to each School Climate Star Rating metric, because the Rating is intended to be prescriptive **not** punitive. Improvement of school climate depends on effective change of each determinant – identifying patterns and clues.

2013-2014 School Climate Ratings

Percentage of Schools Earning 1-5 Star Ratings

Schools earning 1 star	= 66	(2.9%)
Schools earning 2 stars	= 268	(11.8%)
Schools earning 3 stars	= 731	(32.3%)
Schools earning 4 stars	= 838	(37.1%)
Schools earning 5 stars	= 343	(15.2%)
Schools earning NA	= 17	(1.0%)*

Total number of
schools = 2,263

*Short-term residential treatment facilities

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 (PBIS).**”

*Best Practices
for Improving
the School
Climate*



Georgia Department of Education

School Climate and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

The most effective, research-based strategy for improving school climate is **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**.

PBIS evolved from three main sources:

- ✓ applied behavior analysis
- ✓ normalization/inclusion practices
- ✓ person-centered focus on prevention and intervention with a population-based framework

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.
[Symptomatic vs. Defiant] = Fundamental Attribution Error
- **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]

PBIS is endorsed by several national associations and organizations, including the:

- National Association of School Psychologists
- American Association of School Administrators
- American School Counselors Association
- United States Department of Education

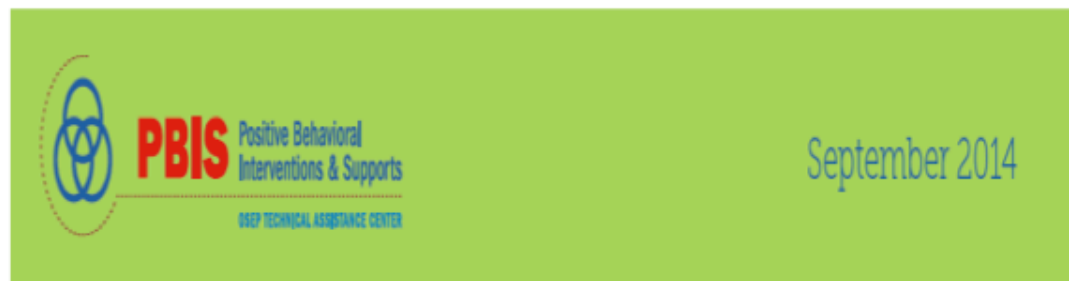
The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Agency** reviewed research on **PBIS** and has endorsed the use of **PBIS** “as a model to improve school climate and reduce student discipline problems”.

How PBIS Differs from Traditional Discipline

- ✓ Behavioral expectations are clearly and positively defined
- ✓ Behavioral expectations are taught to all students and staff
- ✓ Appropriate behaviors are acknowledged
- ✓ Behavioral errors are proactively corrected
- ✓ A database for keeping records and developing a strategic school plan is established
- ✓ Data-based monitoring and adjustments to the plan are regularly conducted



PBIS and Disproportionality



Research indicated that **PBIS** schools that documented a reduction in their overall major discipline referral rates also showed reductions in numbers of major discipline referral rates for each racial-ethnic category. The pattern of reductions from year to year holds across races and ethnicities. **PBIS improves the school climate for all students.**

Claudia G. Vincent, Gwendolyn Cartledge, Seth May, and Tary J. Tobin, 2014

After PBIS Implementation...

- Spalding High School **OSS reduced 32%**
- Dacula Middle School discipline incidents **reduced 66% and OSS reduced 24%**
- GIVE Center (alternative school) discipline incidents **reduced 51%**
- Murray County High School **OSS decreased by 37%**
- Murray County High School decreased ISS from **1,010 to 212** within three years

PBIS Schools and School Climate Rating

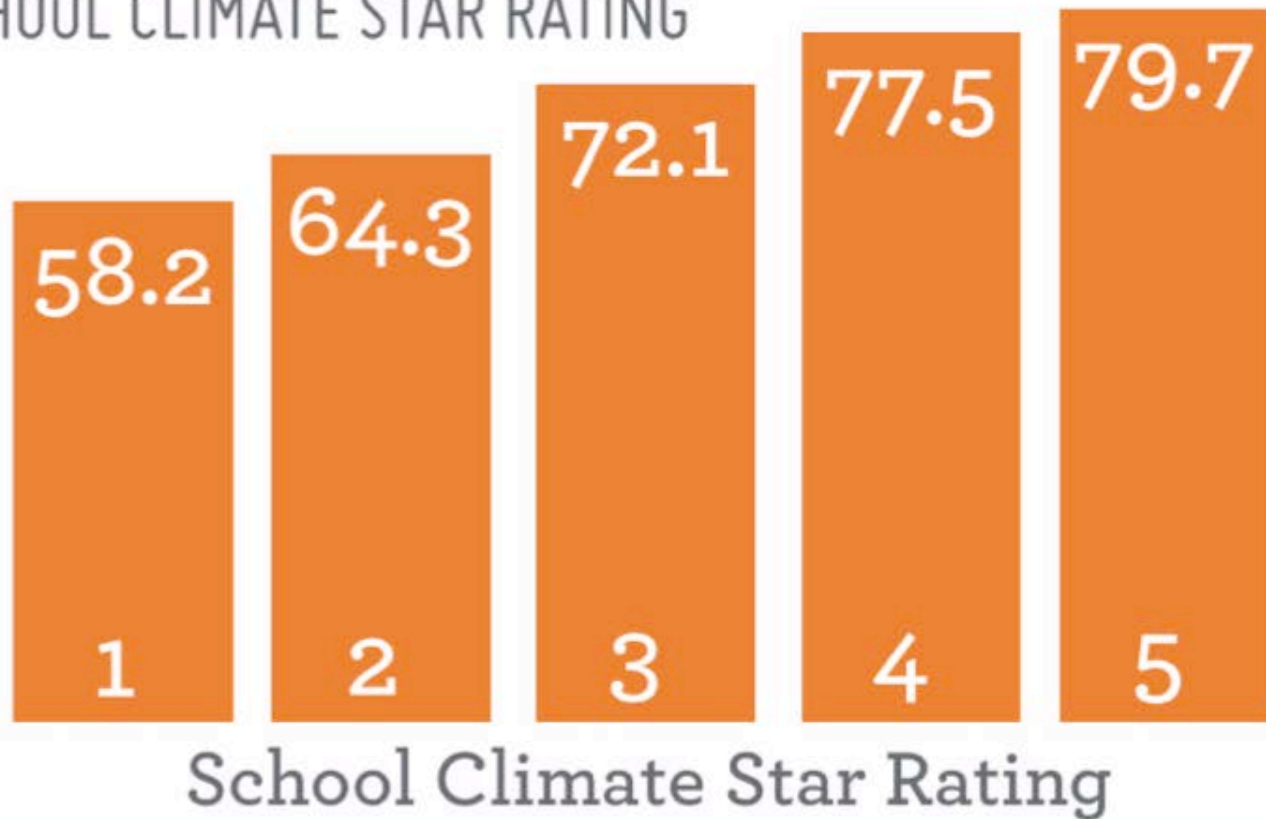
PBIS schools earning 1 star	= 0 schools
PBIS schools earning 2 stars	= 3 schools (1%)
PBIS schools earning 3 stars	= 21 schools (10%)
PBIS schools earning 4 stars	= 99 schools (48%)
PBIS schools earning 5 stars	= 85 schools (41%)

89% of **PBIS** schools received a **4 or 5 Star** School Climate Rating compared to **52%** of other schools

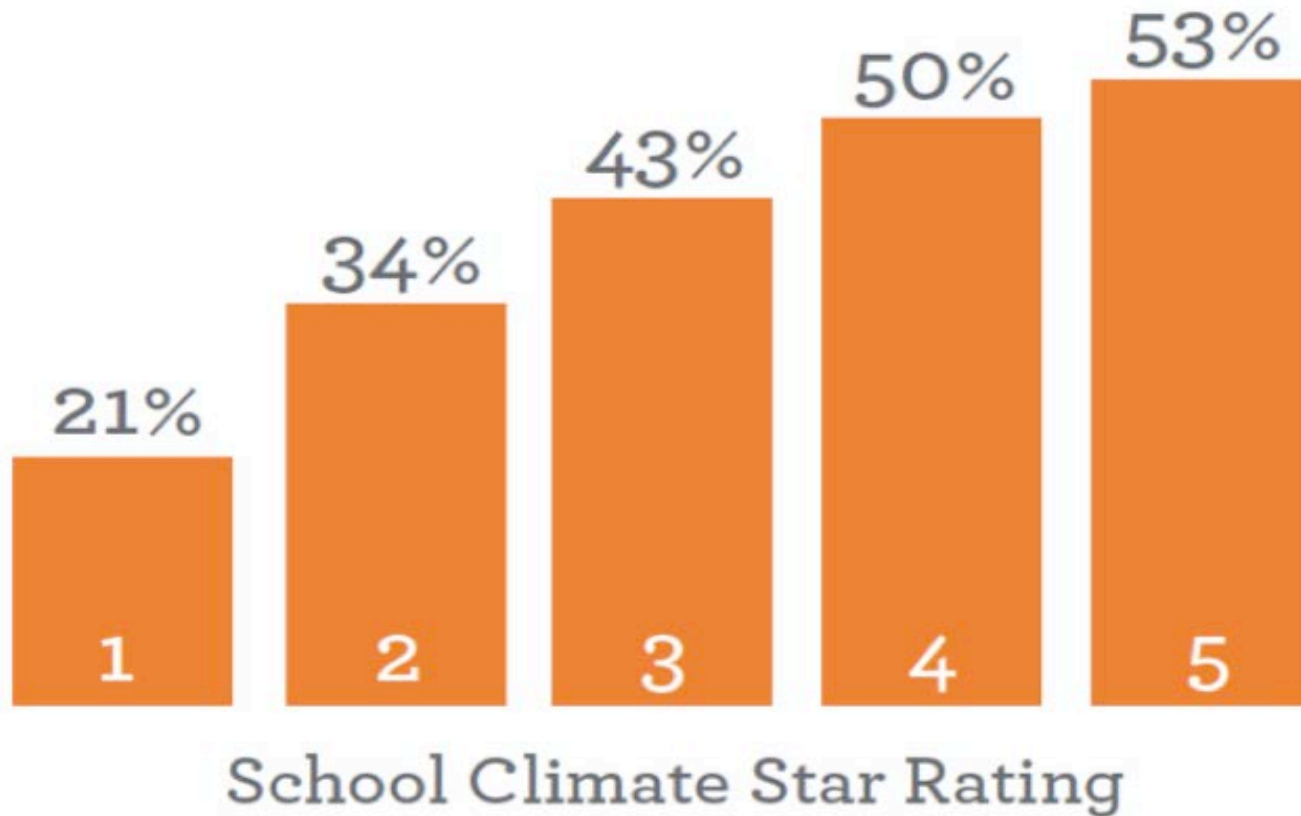
Research showed that school climate has a significant impact on student behavior and academic outcomes

- ✓ A **1% improvement in school climate** was found to decrease discipline actions per student by 1.35 percent (e.g. improve school climate by **10% = 13.5%** reduction in disciplinary referrals)
- ✓ School Climate Star Ratings **correlated** with College and Career Ready Performance Index scores (school measure of success)

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY PERFORMANCE INDEX BY SCHOOL CLIMATE STAR RATING



3RD GRADE READING EXCEEDS BY SCHOOL CLIMATE STAR RATING



Changing the Conversation and **Lessons Learned**

Language Experts



Epidemiologists

Teachers

Parents



Systems Engineers

Nurses

Advocates

Medical Researchers



Children



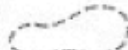
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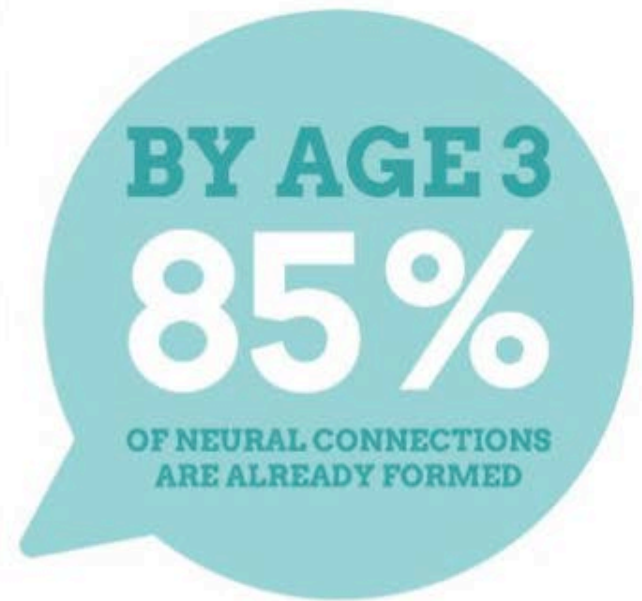
JOURNEY

NEXT

STEPS



Lesson: Efforts to change long-term outcomes and consequences must begin early – long before children enter kindergarten



Education

Lesson: There is a correlation between language development and vocabulary



CHILD 1

CHILD 2

CHILD 3

NUMBER OF
WORDS HEARD

13 MILLION

26 MILLION

45 MILLION

NUMBER OF
QUESTIONS/HOUR

5

20

40

AFFIRMATIONS VS.
PROHIBITIONS

5/11

12/7

32/5

LISTENING
VOCABULARY BY
KINDERGARTEN

3,000

12,000

20,000

PRESCHOOL EXPULSIONS

OCCUR AT A RATE MORE THAN 3 TIMES
THAT OF GRADES K THROUGH 12

3,000 words
20,000 words

3X



Lesson: There is a correlation between language and reading and between reading and behavior

“When children don’t have language their behavior becomes their language.”

**JUDGE PEGGY H. WALKER
DOUGLAS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT**

When children can’t read their behavior becomes their shield

Lesson: There is a correlation between early language, vocabulary, reading, behavior, and graduation rate.

Students who don't read proficiently by the end of third grade are

**4 TO 6 TIMES
MORE LIKELY
TO DROP OUT**

of high school compared to proficient readers.



Lesson: Early access to a positive learning climate can minimize the prevalence of discipline problems and increase academic outcomes



Lesson: Positive learning climates support the development of social emotional engagement, which is crucial to effective interactions with others



Falling in love with the social world



Seeking out social connections with words



Succeeding in a range of social settings


Lesson: Changing learning environments in preschool through K-3 can support social emotional development, increase reading skills and prevent long-term behavioral issues in middle & H.S.



Preschool PBIS to integrate social emotional learning strategies supporting social, emotional, and behavior development



Blended with school-wide PBIS training to improve school climate and increase reading proficiency by 3rd grade



3rd grade reading proficiency in a positive school climate increases likelihood of high school graduation

BLENDED PBIS SITES

Fulton

- 1) Brookview Elementary School
- 2) Seaborn Lee Elementary School
- 3) Sheltering Arms—Welcome All Childcare

Atlanta

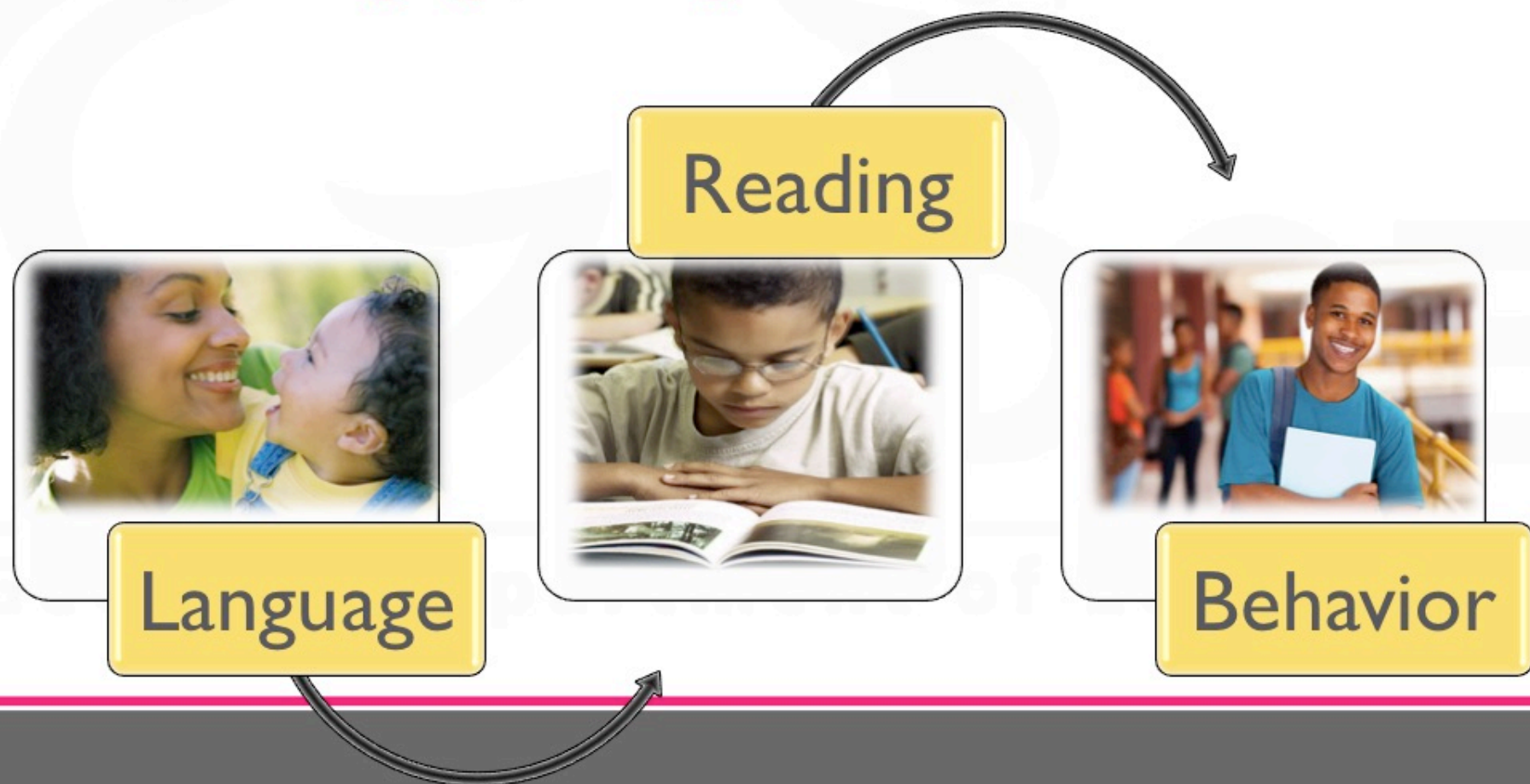
- 4) Deerwood Academy Elementary School
- 5) Whitefoord Elementary School
- 6) Whitefoord, Inc Childcare

DeKalb

- 7) Toney Elementary School
- 8) McNair Discovery Learning Academy
- 9) Childcare Network—Candler Rd.



Lesson: The efforts to improve school climate must be linked to a larger framework that includes work in areas that impact **language**, **reading**, and student **behavior**.





FOUR PILLARS



Language Nutrition

All children receive abundant language-rich adult-child interactions, which are as essential for brain development as food is for physical growth

Example: **Talk With Me Baby – Nursing Workforce; WIC Nutritionists in 199 Ga Offices; Smartphone App; Public Awareness**





Access

All children and their families have access to, and supportive services for, healthy development and success in high-quality education from early childhood through high school graduation

Examples: **GaReady4K; School Nurses, Telemedicine in Schools; SLDS; Lunch at the Library; myON Summer Reading**



ACCESS THE SIX KEYS TO ACCESS



AWARENESS

Population is informed that the service exists and what it provides



AFFORDABLE

Prices of services meets population ability to pay



ACCESSIBLE

Location of supply aligns with population location/demand



AVAILABLE

Size or volume of the supply meets population needs



ACCOMMODATING

Delivery of service meet population needs



ACCEPTABLE

Characteristics of service providers & population are receptive to each other



Positive Learning Climate

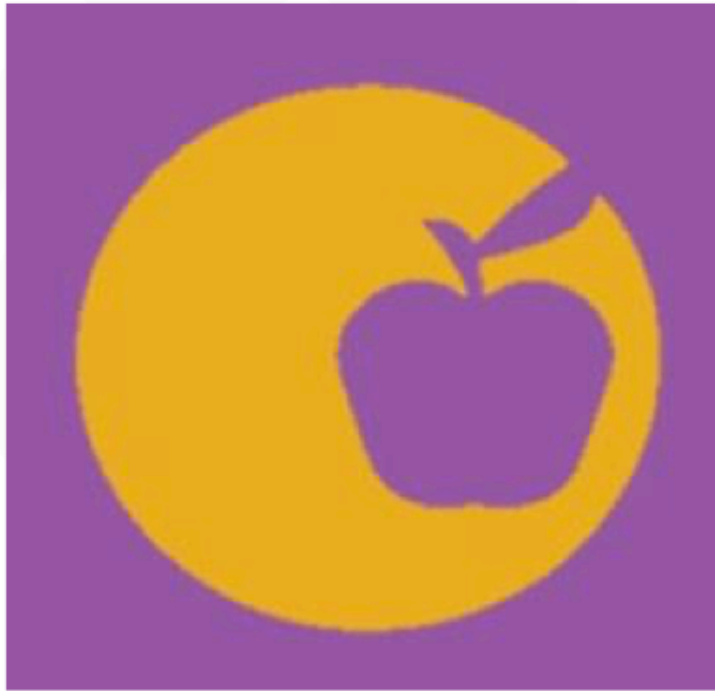
All educators, families, and policy makers understand and address the impact of learning climate on social emotional development, attendance, engagement and ultimately student success, beginning in preschool

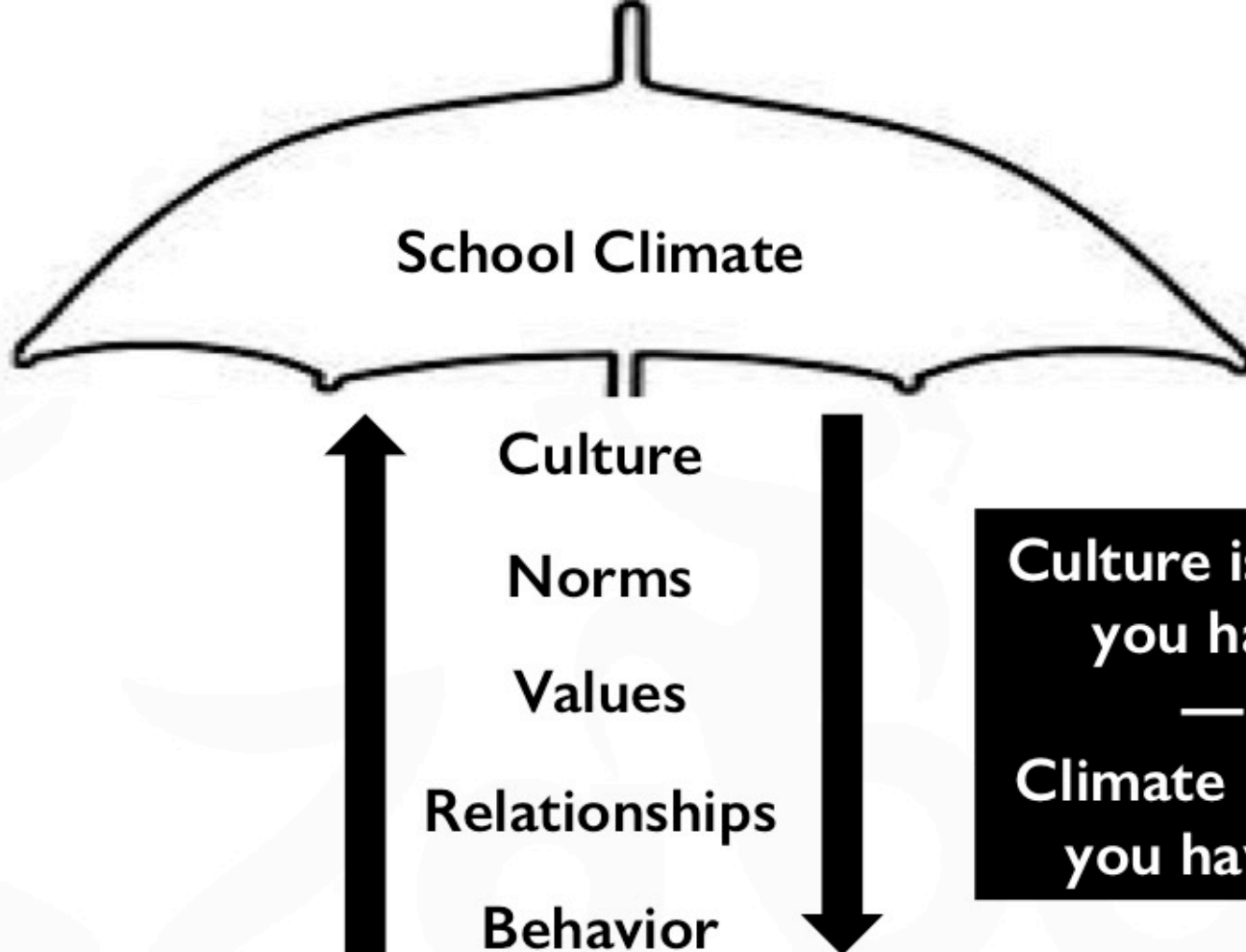
Example: **PBIS/Blended Model**

Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness

All teachers are equipped with evidence-informed skills, knowledge and resources that effectively meet the literacy needs of each child in a developmentally appropriate manner

Examples: **Social Emotional Learning training; SLDS; Governor's K-3 Literacy Initiative**





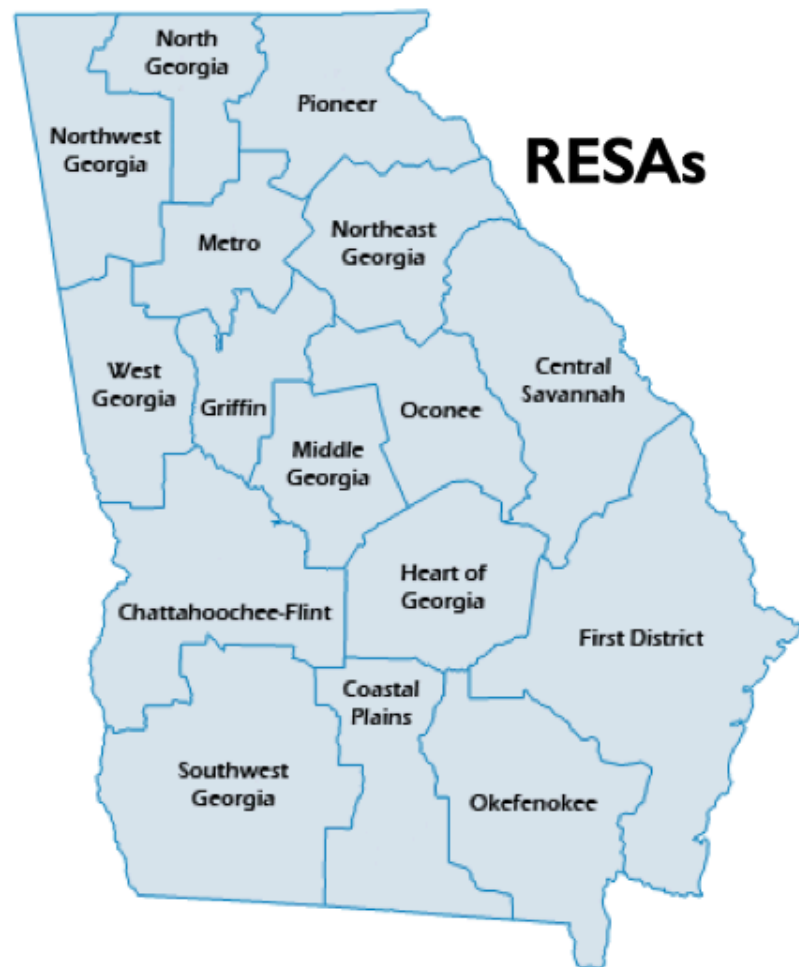
Lesson: To change behavior, relationships have to change; to change relationships, values have to change; to change values, norms have to change; to change norms, culture has to change; to change culture, **school climate has to change.**



Lesson: Outcomes in Georgia and research in diverse school settings support the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as the most effective framework for improving school climate

PBIS focuses on **population-based** prevention and intervention and also supports individual interventions

PBIS can stabilize and then improve school climate.



Lesson: The efforts to improve school climate through the PBIS frameworks must include a statewide delivery and sustainability strategy that engages the strength and influence of the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) and other partners to put resources at the region, school district, and school level



GaPBIS Mission

To improve climates in Georgia schools and community settings through the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework.



Key Features of PBIS

Evidence-based framework developed to assist school teams in providing preventative, positive behavioral support for **ALL** students. This system of support includes:

- ✓ Clearly defined behavioral expectations
- ✓ Social & behavioral skills instruction
- ✓ Positive and proactive discipline
- ✓ Active supervision and monitoring
- ✓ Positive acknowledgement
- ✓ Data-based decision making
- ✓ Parent training and collaboration

Advocacy Organizations

- Georgia Appleseed
- Georgia Advocacy Office
- Anti-Defamation League, Southeast Region

Foundations and Private Entities

- Southern Education Foundation
- United Way of Greater Atlanta
- The Carter Center
- The Marcus Center
- Leadership Georgia

Statewide Agencies and Organizations

- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Get Georgia Reading Campaign
- Juvenile Court Judges
- Georgia DFCS
- Regional Education Service Agencies
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- Georgia Supreme Court's Committee on Justice for Children
- Georgia Council on Substance Abuse
- Georgia PTA
- Georgia Family Connection Partnership
- Governor's Office of Children and Families
- Georgia State Board of Education
- REACH Georgia

First Lady's Children's Cabinet

LEA Representatives

- Superintendents, teachers, principals

Legislators:

- Randy Nix, Georgia House of Representatives
- Katie Dempsey, Georgia House of Representatives

Institutes of Higher Education:

- Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Georgia State University
- Georgia College and State University
- Georgia Southern University
- University of Georgia

National Association of State Boards of Education

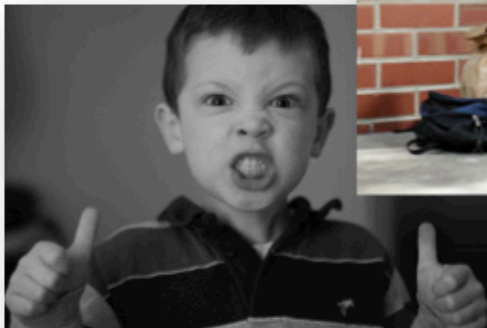
- Center for Safe and Healthy Schools

Professional Educator Associations

- Georgia Association of Educational Leaders
- Georgia Association of School Psychologists
- Georgia School Counselors Association
- Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators
- Georgia School Boards Association
- Georgia Association of School Social Workers



Lesson: An unstable/unhealthy, non-supportive, non-responsive school climate can exacerbate the conditions of students with personal issues, health issues, family issues, adjustment issues, and/or mental health issues




Lesson: School climate has an impact on student attendance

A 1% improvement in school climate was found to increase student average attendance by 1.6% (e.g. improve school climate by 10% = 16% increase in student attendance)

A 1% increase in student attendance leads to a 1% reduction in referrals to juvenile court (e.g. increasing student attendance by 10% = 10% decrease in juvenile court referrals)

Lesson: School climate impacts student attendance which impacts academic outcomes

Days Absent	Graduation Rate
0 Days	
1 to 5 Days	
6 to 10 Days	
11 to 14 Days	
15 or More Days	

8th grade student attendance

Lesson: School climate impacts student attendance which impacts academic outcomes

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%

20%



8th grade student attendance

When DOE analyzed student level data on attendance and achievement, it was found that **achievement is impacted beginning at the sixth day of absence – whether excused, unexcused, or suspension** – and had a significant impact on both subject-specific test scores and high school graduation rate

Research:

A positive school climate is correlated with decreased student absenteeism (DeJung and Duckworth)



attendance
MATTERS
 Education

SUCCESS

EVITUBE

Lesson: The possible positive impacts of projects, programs, initiatives, and interventions are compromised, threatened, or weakened if implemented in a **school climate that is unstable.**

NOW What?!

Georgia Department of Education

NOW What?!

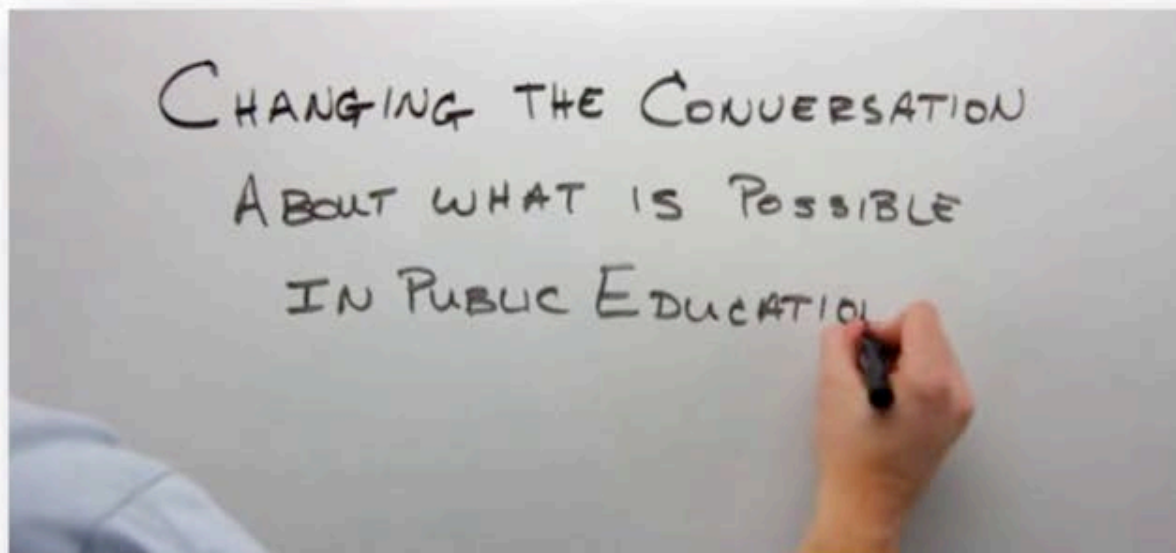
- **Encourage** schools to recognize the importance of school climate
- **Encourage** schools to implement PBIS to improve school climate and reduce student discipline issues and suspensions
- **Encourage** schools to view improving school climate as a framework for improving academic achievement
- **Encourage** policy makers to advocate for improving school climate
- **Encourage** early learning programs to recognize the importance of learning climate
- **Collaborate** but remember that collaboration is a process

NOW What?!

- **Share** the information with your school, court, community, leaders, advocates, parents, students, and other stakeholders
- **Share** the four pillars as a framework for collaborating, planning, implementing and evaluating

**Learn, encourage, collaborate, support, join,
think, communicate, and share**

- **Learn** more about school climate and Ga PBIS: gadoe.org (school climate) gadoe.org (PBIS)
- **Learn** more about PBIS: pbis.org
- **Learn** more about Georgia Appleseed's School Discipline Toolkit: gaappleseed.org/initiatives/toolkit/school-climate
- **Join** the Get Georgia Reading Campaign: getgeorgiareading.org
- **Learn** more about social emotional learning: casel.org



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