

HARVARD



GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF EDUCATION

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND **LITERACY DEVELOPMENT** RESEARCH GROUP  
increasing opportunities-to-learn for all // dedicated to the science of learning // informing research, practice, and policy

# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: LEADING ADVANCED LITERACY INSTRUCTION TO FOSTER ELLs' ACHIEVEMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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October 24, 2013



# Today's Agenda

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- 9.00 a.m. The Institute
- 9:30 a.m. The ELLs in your School
- 10:00 a.m. Introductions
- 10:30 a.m. Why Middle School Literacy?
- 11:15 a.m. Case Analysis: Meet our Profile Students
- 12.00 p.m. Lunch
- 12.45 p.m. The Blueprint Process: Our Case School Site
- 1.45 p.m. Starting your Blueprint: Stages 1 & 2
- 2:30 p.m. Going Forward

**THE INSTITUTE**

# Institute Objectives and Goals

1

- to revisit current knowledge about ELLs' literacy development and literacy needs during the middle school years

2

- to revisit the separable skills that comprise advanced literacy, with emphasis on the language of schooling and print and how these manifest across content areas

3

- to learn high-impact instructional strategies that promote and integrate formal and informal instruction to build oral and written language

4

- to analyze key literacy data at the classroom- and school-level to surface patterns and trends in order to strengthen the instructional core

5

- to focus on leading effective literacy instruction (objectives 1-4) at the school-level, supporting teachers to improve their instruction

For more information, see page 5 of the module

# Session Overview

## Resource Allocation Analysis

Student  
Populations

Advanced  
Literacy Skills

Gaps and  
Needs

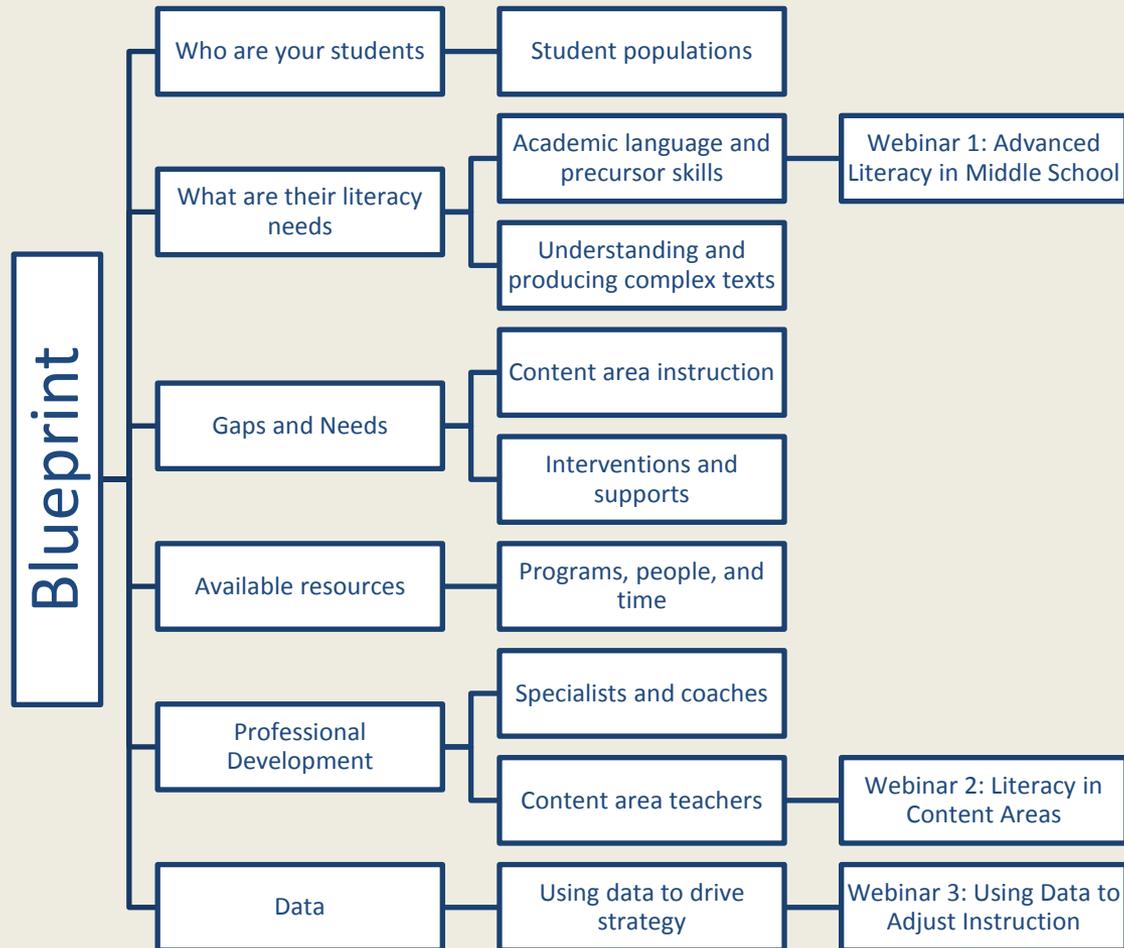
School Staff  
and Resources

Professional  
Development

Data

## Action Planning

# Developing a Blueprint



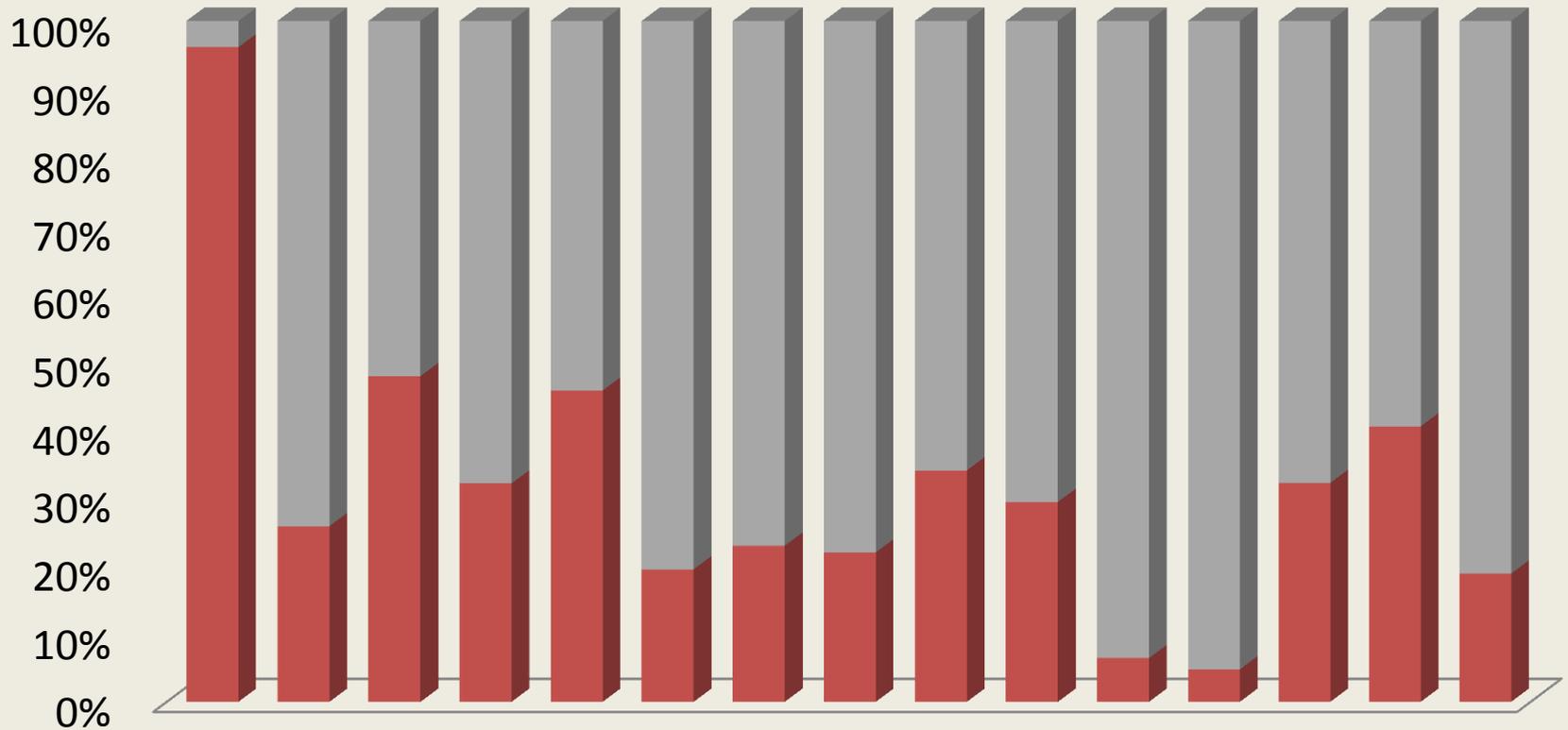
# **ELLs IN NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# ELL SUBGROUPS

Subgroup	Definition
<b>Newcomers</b>	Students who have been in our schools for three years or less and are English Language Learners. ELLs in our schools one year or less are exempt from the ELA.
<b>Middle-year ELLs</b>	Students who have completed between 4 and 6 years of ELL services in New York City schools and continue to require them.
<b>Long-term ELLs</b>	Students who have completed at least 6 years of ELL services in New York City schools and continue to require them.
<b>Special Education ELLs</b>	ELLs served by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP team determines a student's eligibility for special education services and the language in which special education services are delivered.
<b>Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)</b>	ELLs who have entered a US school after second grade; have had at least two years less schooling than their peers; function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; and may be pre-literate in their first language.
<b>Former ELLs</b>	Students who have reached proficiency on a test of English language skills and no longer require ELL services.

# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN YOUR SCHOOLS

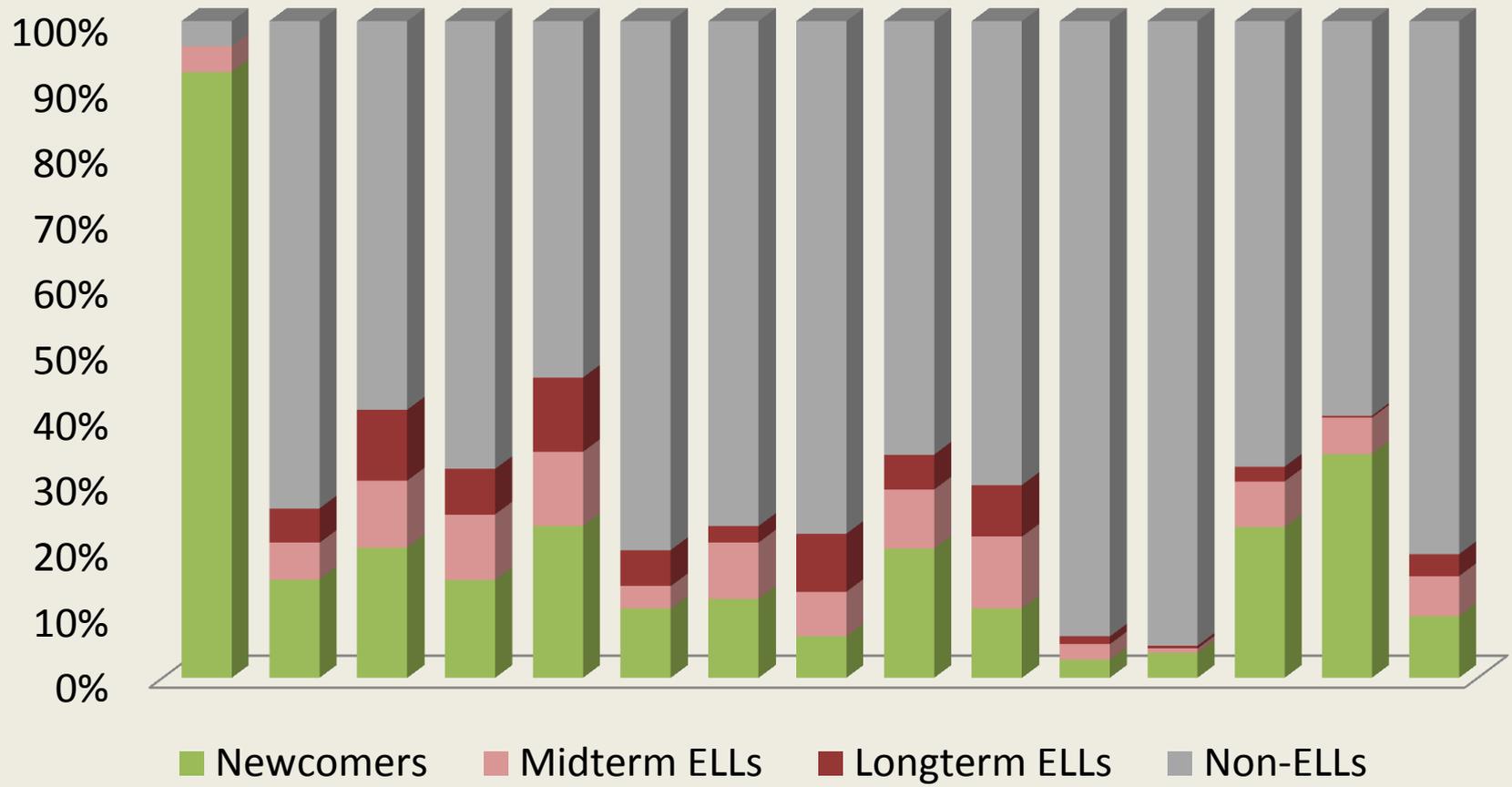
Data taken from most recent LAPs



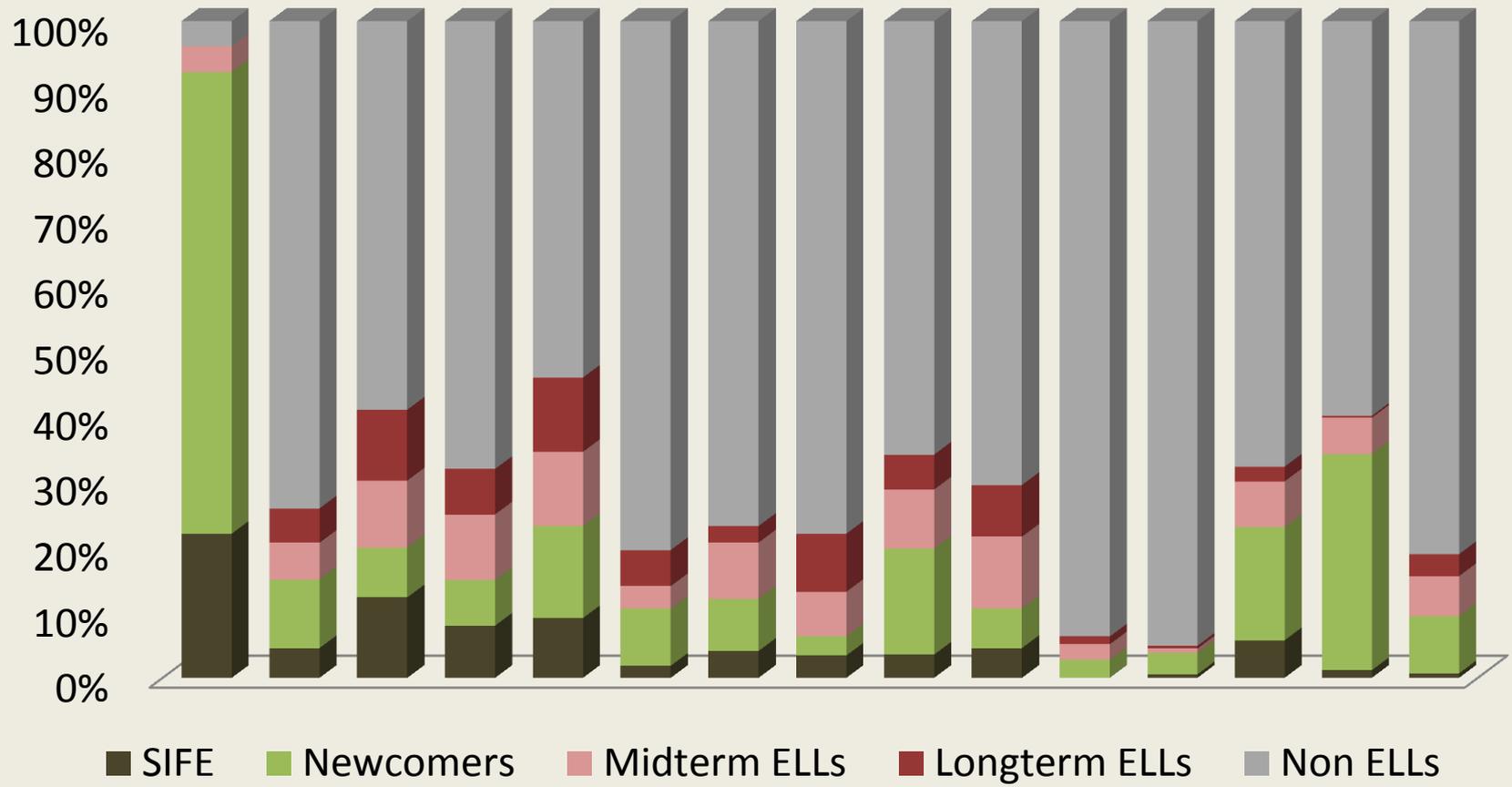
■ ELLs ■ Non ELLs

Includes EO and Former ELLs

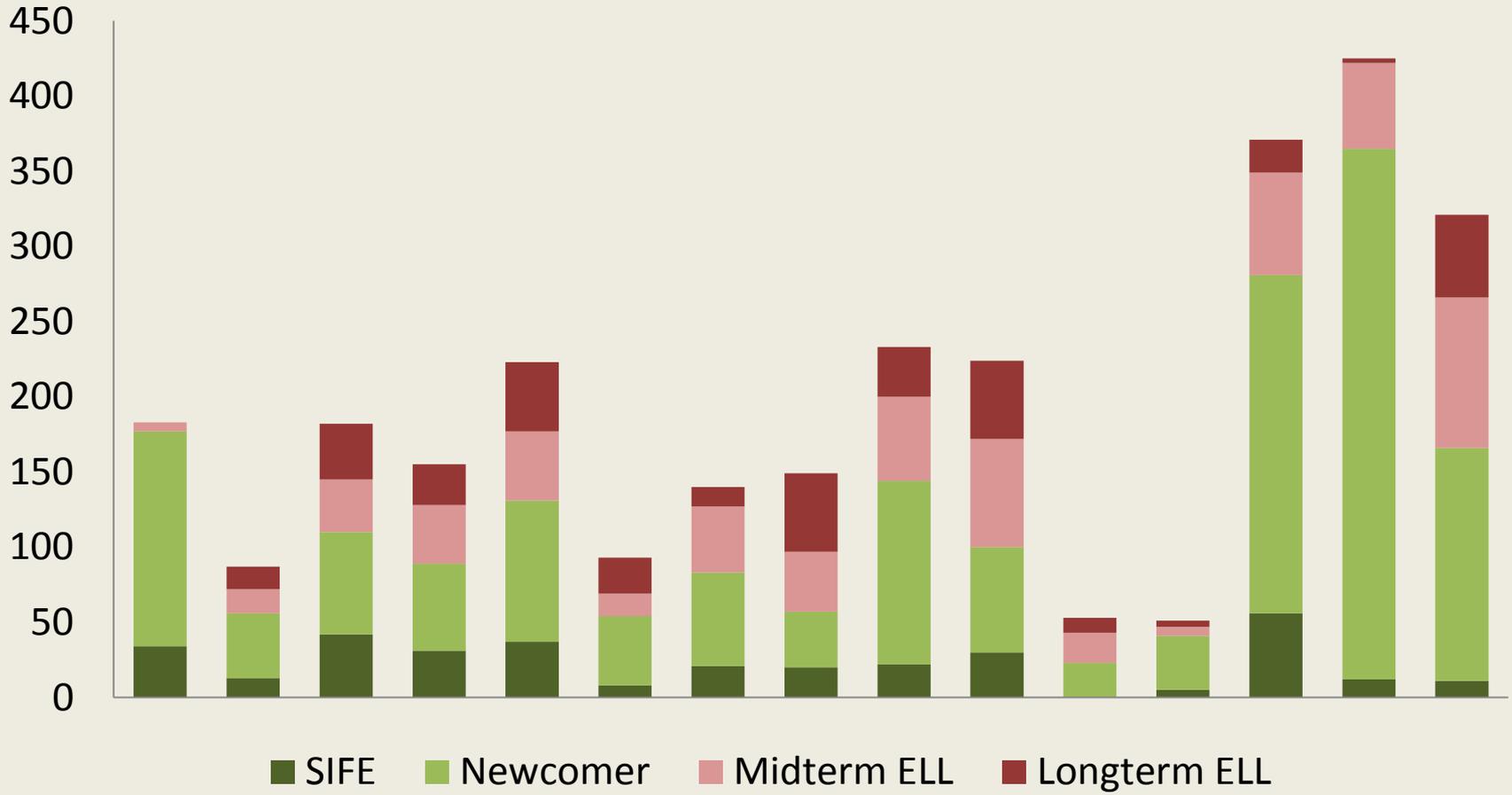
# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN YOUR SCHOOLS



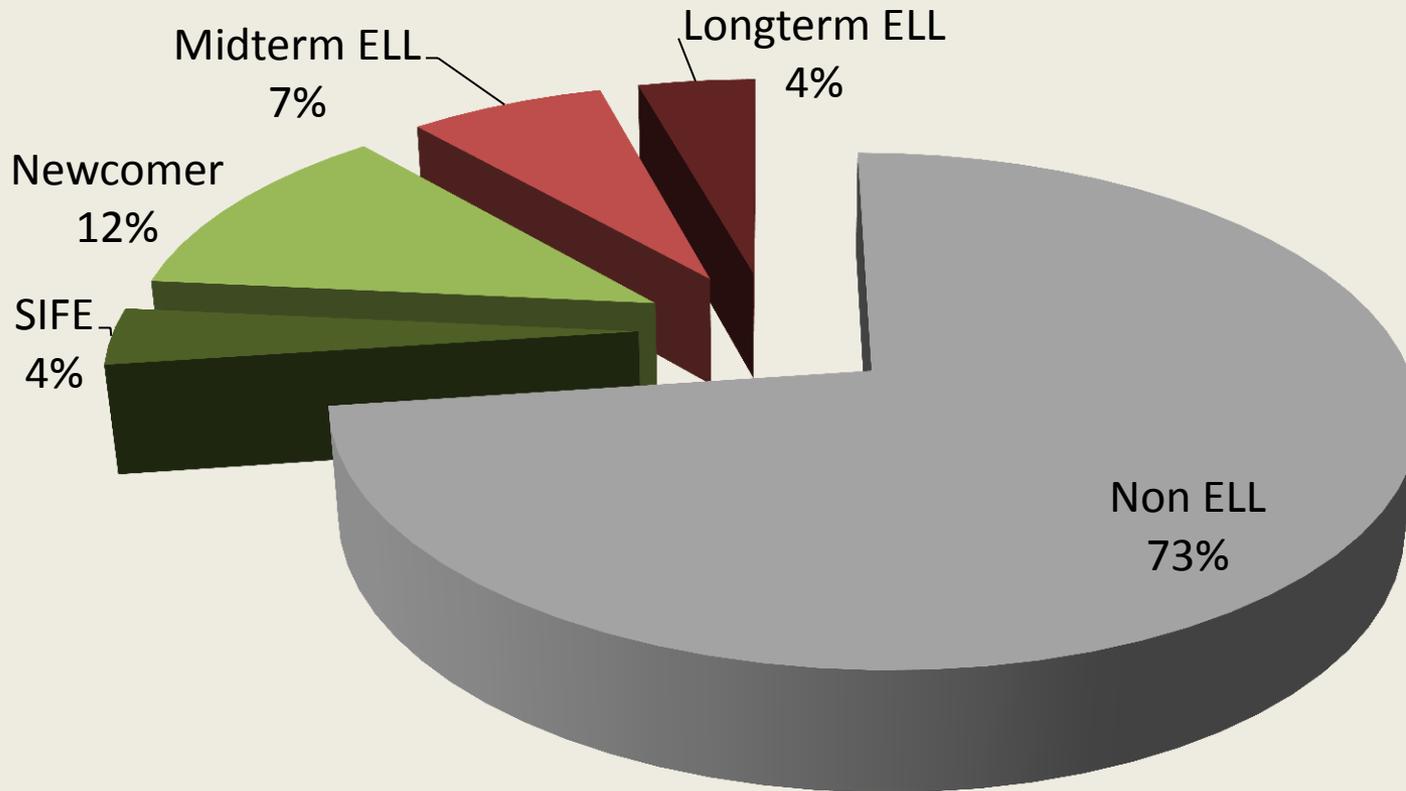
# LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN YOUR SCHOOLS



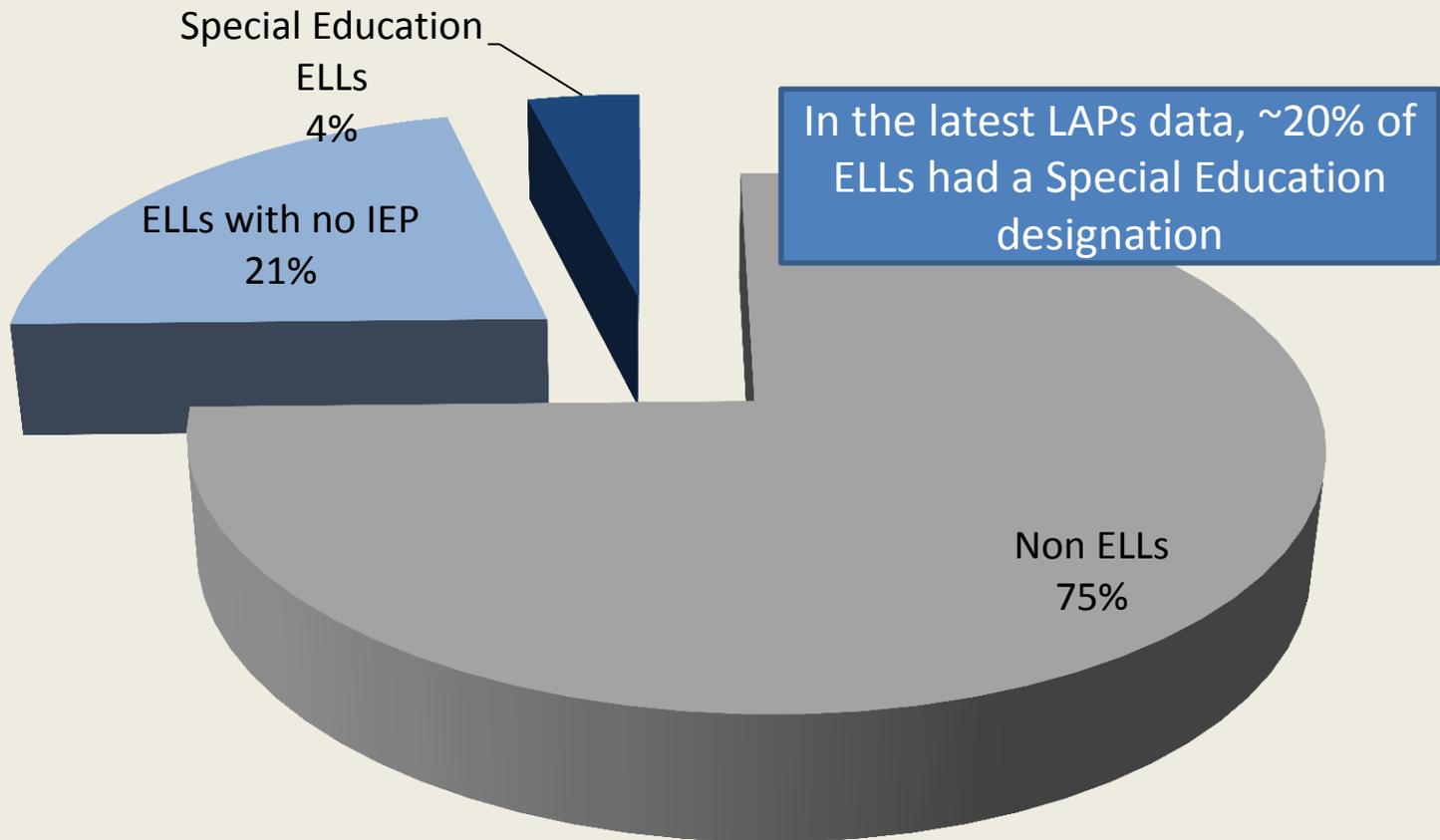
# NUMBERS OF ELLS IN YOUR SCHOOLS



# THE PROTOTYPICAL SCHOOL: ELL POPULATION



# THE PROTOTYPICAL SCHOOL: ELLS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



# Introductions

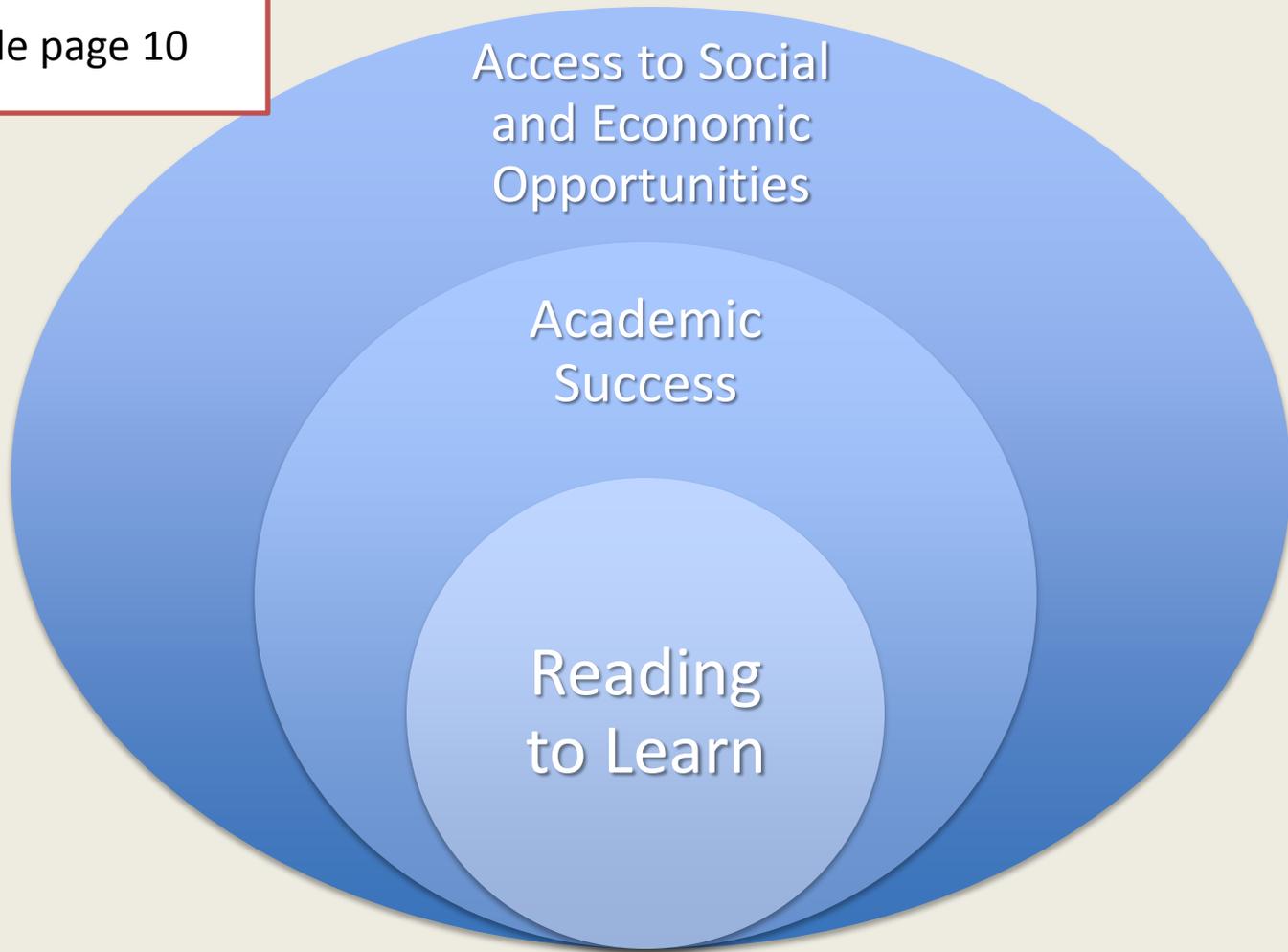
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- Please introduce yourselves to the group:
  - Name
  - School
  - Primary goal for this institute

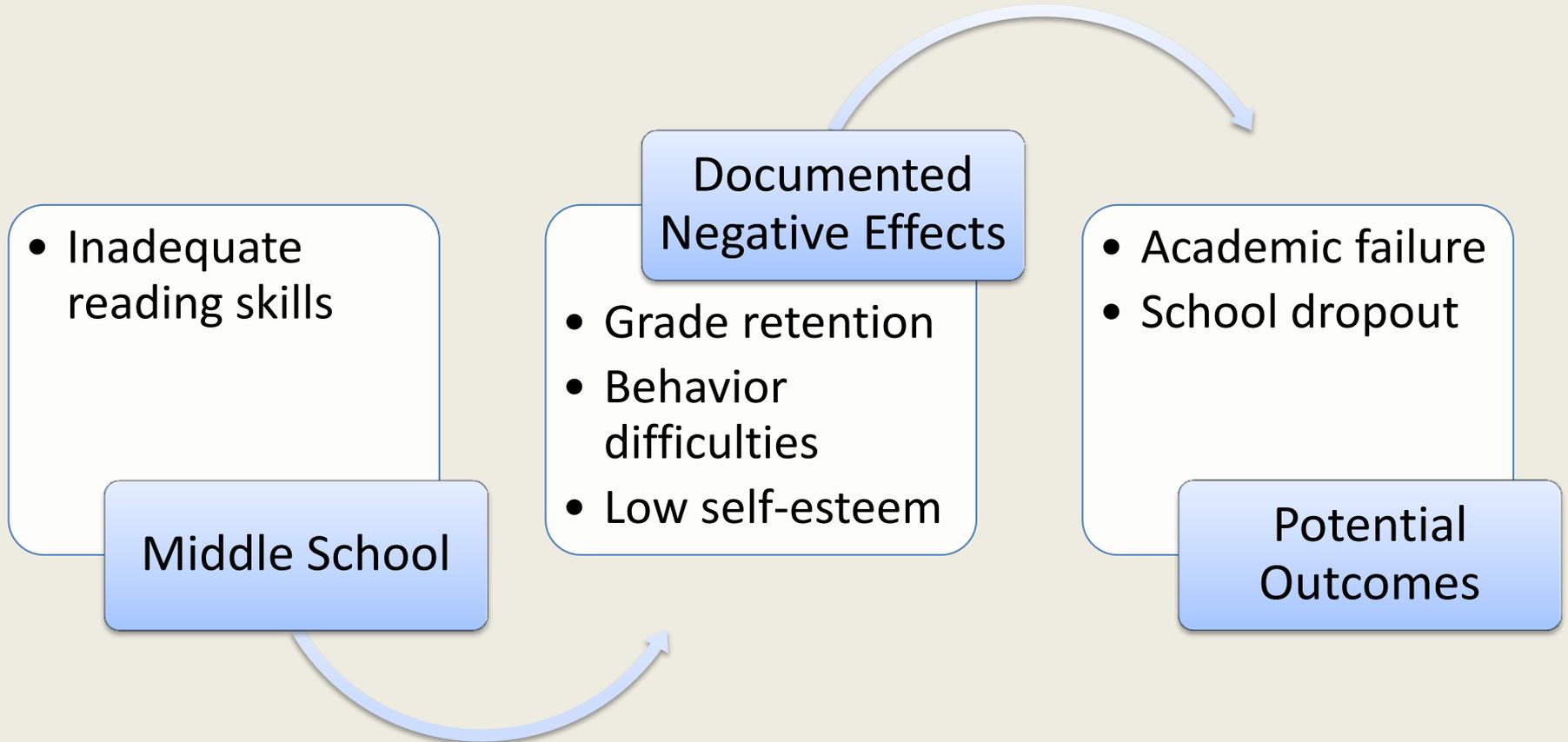
**WHY MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY?**

# Why Middle School Literacy?

See module page 10



# WHY MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY?

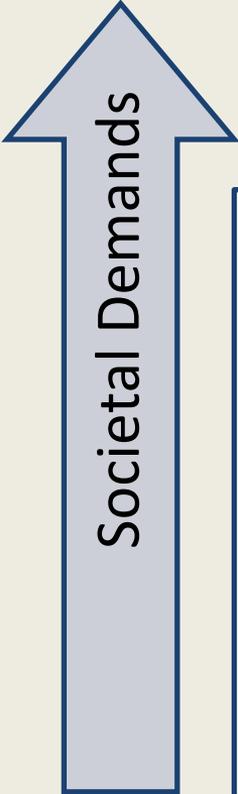


# Why Middle School Literacy?

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- Achievement rates in secondary school, generally
- Many high school graduates assigned to remedial reading courses as freshmen
  - Average college course requires 80 pages of independent reading/week
  - In community colleges, up to 60%
- Business leaders report a steady decline in workplace literacy skills
  - Private sector spending approx. 3.1 billion a year on bolstering entry-level workers' literacy skills

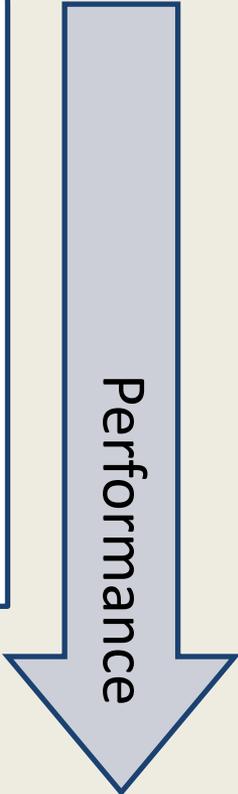
# Why Middle School Literacy



Societal Demands

- the literacy demands of the knowledge-based economy are on the rise
- reading and its relationship to the life of the individual and participation in society
- demographics and reading performance

- U.S. students in the context of international comparisons show we are not keeping up with developing literacy rates among our population
- there is a lingering question about whether even our top students are sufficiently prepared for this global economy

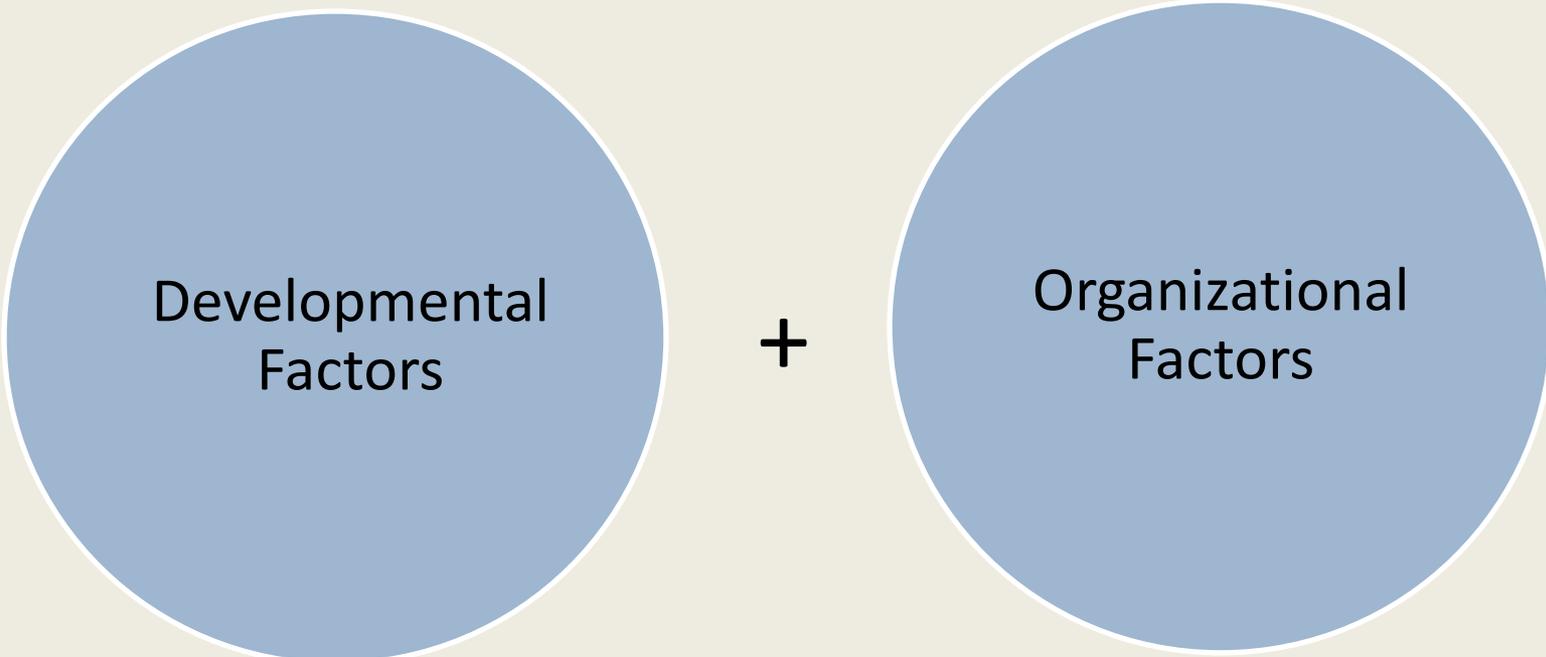


Performance

# Middle School Literacy Context

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With increasing grade levels, the sources of reading difficulties become increasingly diverse

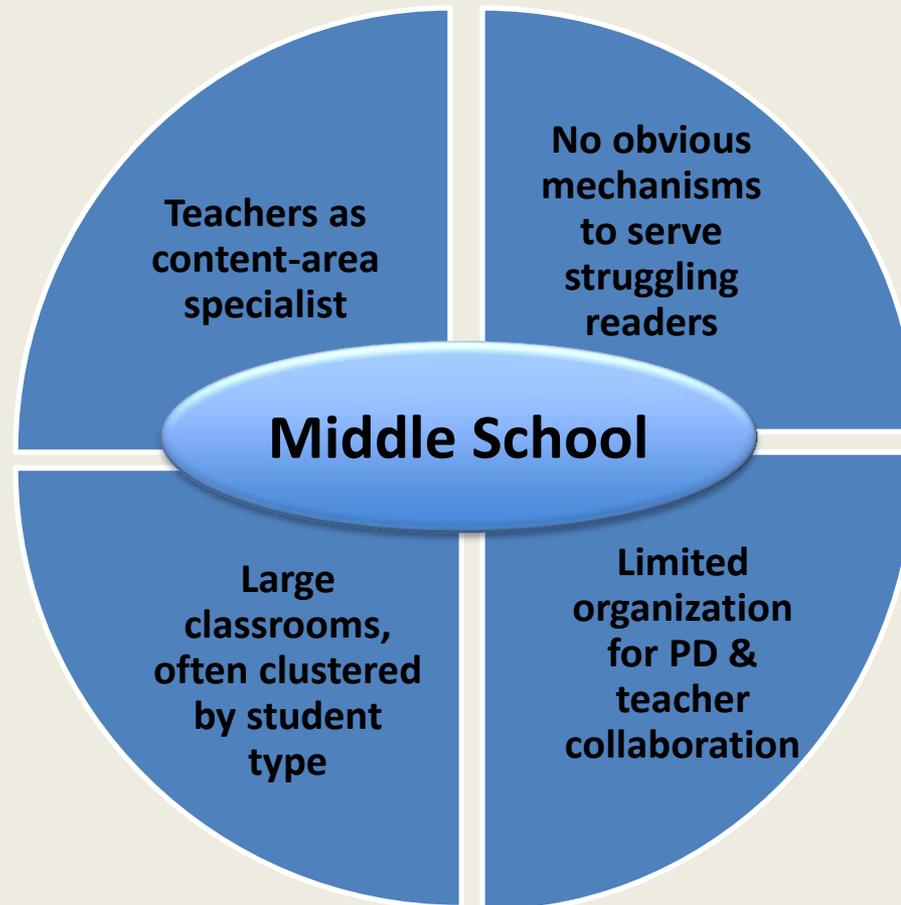


Developmental  
Factors

+

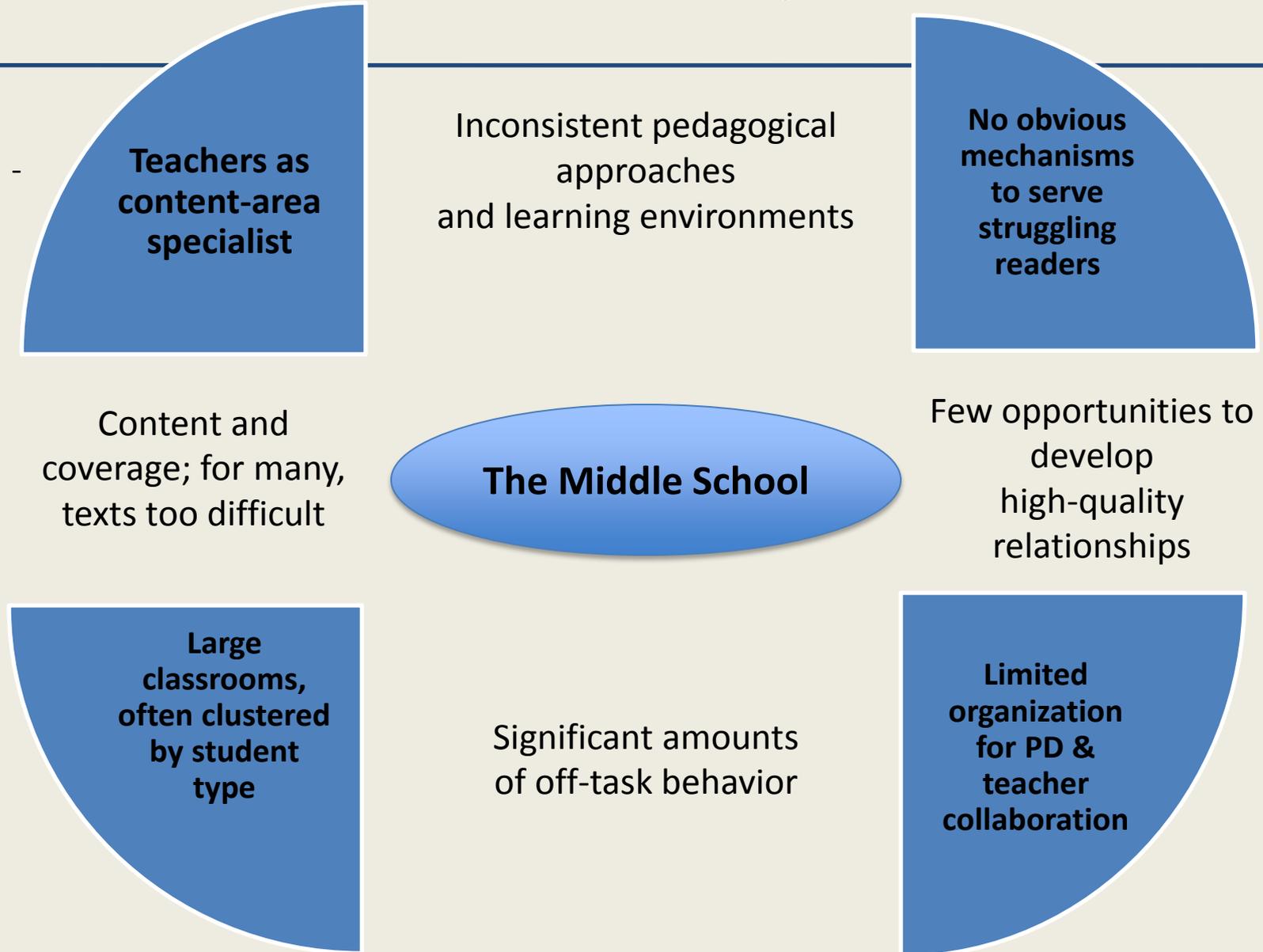
Organizational  
Factors

# Middle School Literacy Context



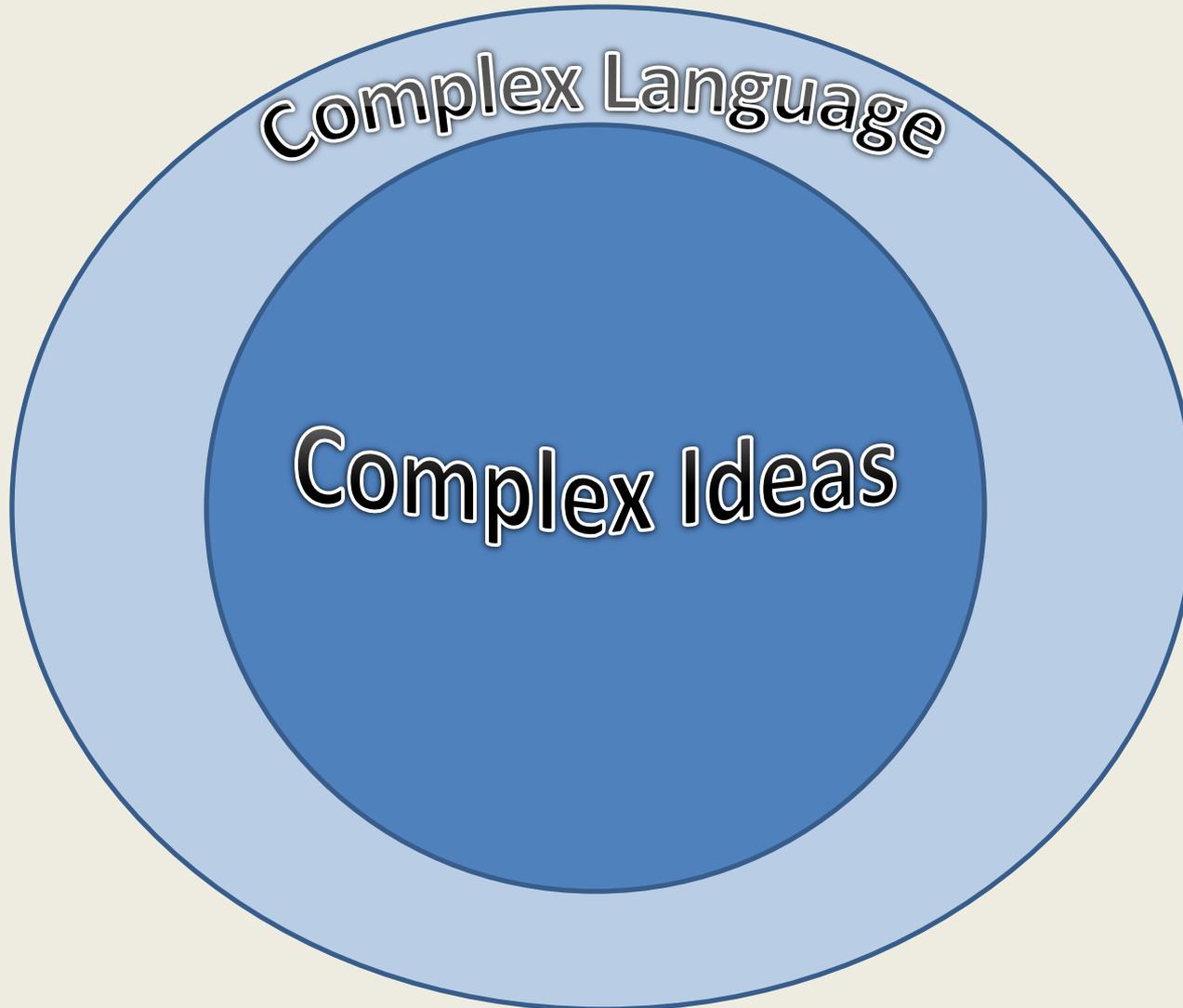
e.g., Eccles et al., 1993; Elmore, 2004; Frey, 2002; Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Wade & Moje, 2000

# Middle School Literacy Context



# What Makes Text So Challenging for Middle School Students?

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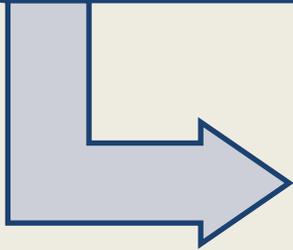


# Developmental Challenges for Reading Instruction

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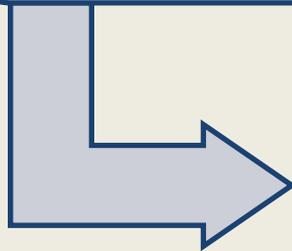
Reading is a dynamic competency

- Students must be supported to develop their reading skills over time, to match literacy demands



Moving past the inoculation fallacy

- Reading by grade 3 does not ensure later success – it cannot function as a “vaccine” against future problems

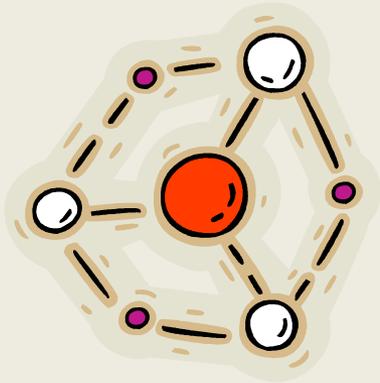


Continued instruction is necessary

- Reading is not a K-3 enterprise, yet we rarely train or support middle school teachers to incorporate literacy into instruction

# Reading across the Disciplines

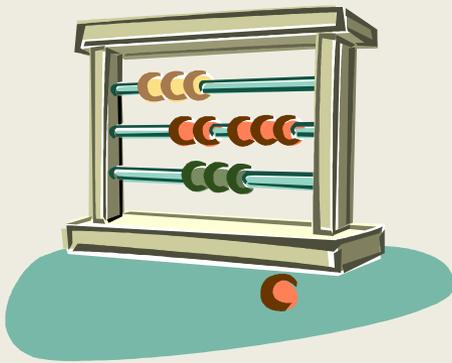
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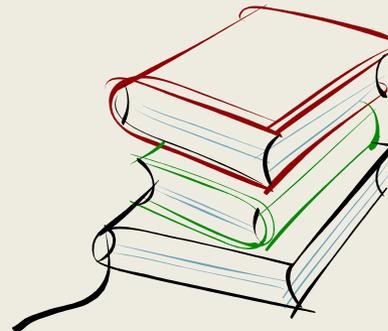
Science



Social  
Sciences



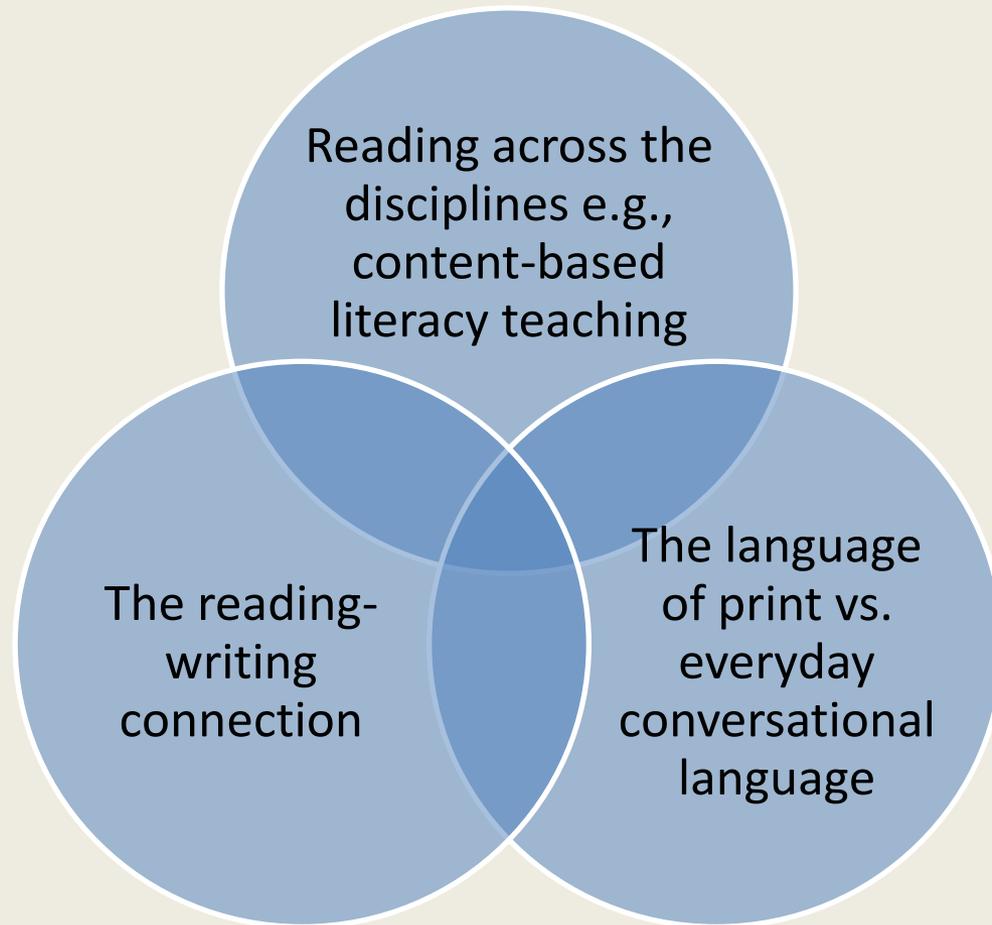
Math



Literature

# Supporting Deep Comprehension

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# COMPLEX TEXTS

## Elementary (Grade 5)

### High-Speed Trains

A type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. These trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, they are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour. There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular.

## High School

### Economic and Governmental Forces: Their Impact on American Railroads in the Twentieth Century

And so began one of the biggest populist campaigns ever seen in America – the crusade to harness the railroad robber barons. Before long, that drive had spread to Washington where in 1887, Congress legislated not out of reason but out of fear to create the Interstate Commerce Commission. Remember that in the days of a relatively powerless federal government, the railroad industry budget was many times the size of the federal budget.

# COMPLEX TEXTS

What does this mean?

## Elementary (Grade 5)

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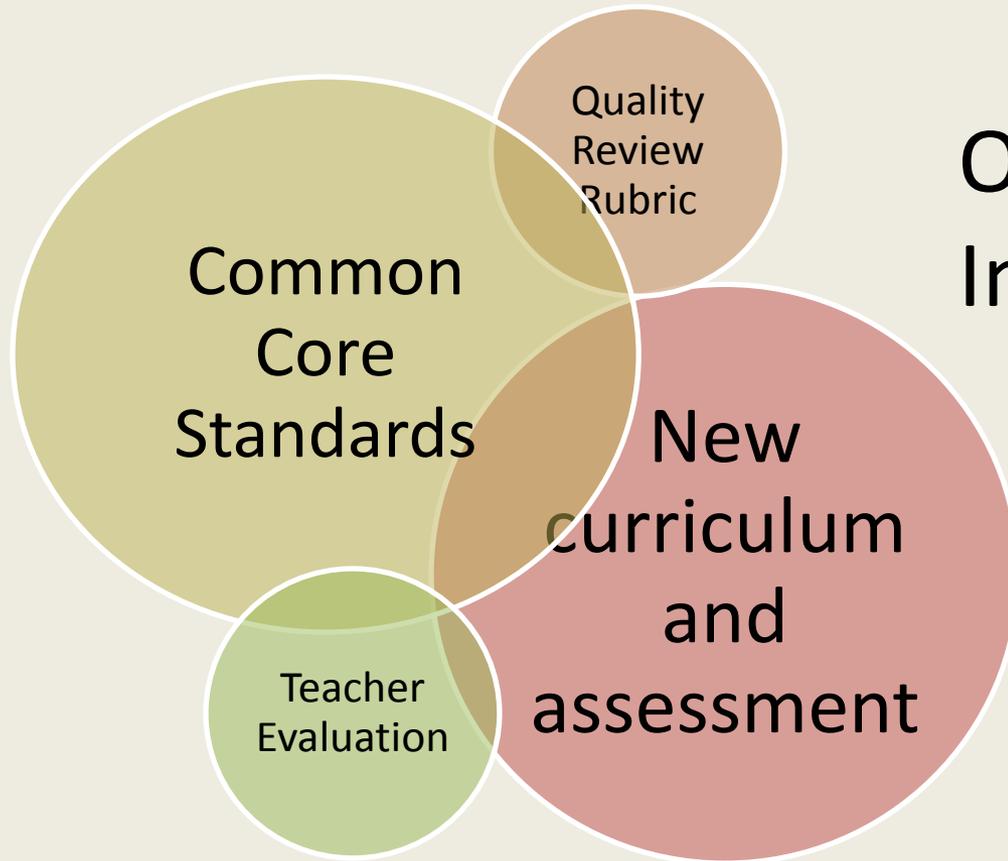
## High School

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# The NYC Landscape

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Overlapping  
Initiatives

# THE PROMISE

## PROMISING PRINCIPLES

- Increasing classroom- and system-wide quality
- Tightening the link between learner needs and instruction
- Enhancing quality of language environment(s)

## Shifting Policies

CCSS

Educator  
Evaluation

PARCC

Language  
Progression

School-wide  
Initiatives

New  
Curricula

## POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS

- Providing teachers with training & support that impacts practice
- Bringing at-risk students along while increasing rigor
- Organizing systems around language-learning

# AND THE CHALLENGE

# **TEACHING CASES**

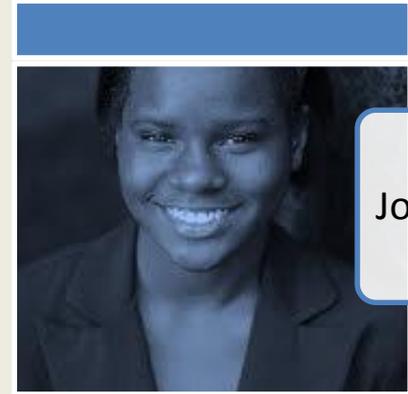
# Meet Our Profile Students



Marcia



David



Josie



Soojin



Anthony

# Case Analysis

*Potential Causes of Reading Breakdown*

*Potential Instructional Supports*

*Lingering Questions*

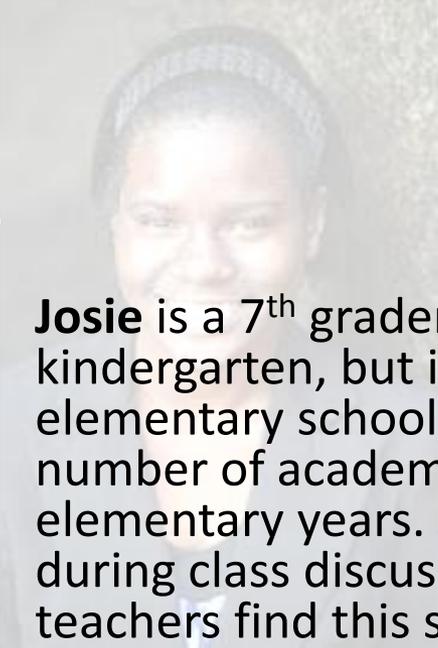


**LUNCH**

# Case Presentations

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- What may be causing this student's reading difficulty?
- What instructional supports might aid this student?
- What lingering questions do you have about this student?

A portrait of a young Black woman with her hair pulled back, wearing a dark headband. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

# Josie

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**Josie** is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader who has been attending New York City schools since kindergarten, but is still classified as ELL (intermediate level). During elementary school, she did well through the primary grades but received a number of academic supports to try to accelerate her reading in the upper elementary years. She is conversationally very proficient and participatory during class discussions—sometimes funny, and a little too outgoing. Some teachers find this same behavior disruptive, but others embrace her gregarious personality. She has had her phone confiscated several times, and is often at the center of conflicts within her circle of friends. Her parents, immigrants from Haiti, said that the teachers in the meeting they went to during 5<sup>th</sup> grade found she was “stuck” at her reading level, but they have been hoping that she would outgrow these difficulties. Josie’s teachers agree that she’s a good candidate for tutoring (CityYear) and after-school support. They also agree that she doesn’t have clear indicators of a learning problem. One teacher is concerned that she’s never actually received targeted instruction to support her language development for academic success.



# Marcia

**Marcia** is a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student who entered school at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She completed kindergarten and first grade in Puerto Rico, in Spanish, and then moved to Bronx the summer after grade 1. She has been receiving ELL supports since school entry (4 years); while her 5<sup>th</sup> grade NYS placed her at a Level 2, Marcia is doing a poor job with (1) homework assignments, (2) answering text-based questions, and (3) participating in content-based discussions in the classroom. She is on track to fail math and science, but her ELA teacher describes her as eager to learn, and knows that Marcia loves writing and generating stories. He doesn't think that Marcia's performance is related to lack of effort or motivation. Marcia lives with mother. The two of them travel to PR to visit relatives 2-3 times/year.



# Anthony

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**Anthony** is 14 years-old and enrolled in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the second time. He is a monolingual English speaker with native-English speaking parents. He does not have an identified disability. Anthony performs at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level on reading assessments and he struggles in science, social studies and ELA, especially with independent work. His math scores are in the average range. Anthony was retained a grade level in order to give him a chance to “catch up”—this year, 3 times/week he receives web-based reading support designed to boost his skills. When there is independent reading time, Anthony can often be found reading the sports page of the newspaper or a sports magazine.



# David

**David** is a 12-year old who has just arrived from a rural part of the Dominican Republic. His aunt, who walks him to school each day, along with his two sisters, has shared a great deal about the family with the school secretary. David's father has been living in the United States for many years and was joined by David's mother two years ago. By working double shifts, David's parents saved enough money to bring their children to New York, along with the children's maternal grandmother—who had been raising the children— and his aunt. In the DR, David got a few years of schooling, picking up some basic Spanish reading and writing skills. David and his siblings are starting to use a mix of Spanish and English at home. His mother and aunt speak mostly Spanish; his father has good conversational English. David knows a handful of English words and phrases his father has taught him in preparation for attending school: “hello,” “my name is David,” “goodbye.”



# Soojin

**Soojin** arrived to the U.S. from Korea in the middle of what would be her 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, based on age. Now in the spring of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, she has very limited proficiency in English. Her Korean schooling records indicated that she was a very strong student there—she had A’s across the board and was considered an “honors” student based on the exam system. Although Soojin took some English classes in Korea, the instruction was mostly focused on written English and Soojin is realizing that she knows much less than she thought she did, and she’s very anxious about school. She spends a lot of time online chatting with her friends in Korea. Soojin and her parents live in the Bronx; her father has just started a full-time research position at Fordham University and her mom is at home during the day. She brings Soojin to and from school, and is hoping that Soojin’s grandmother will come for an extended period of time to help them get settled in.

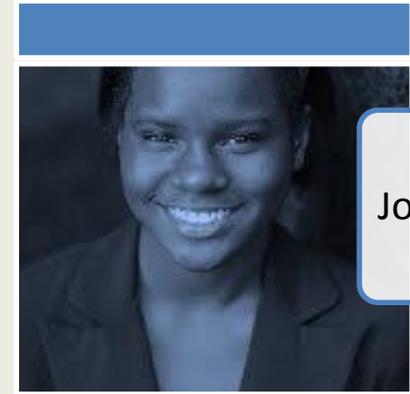
# Case Study Students: Commonalities and Differences



Marcia



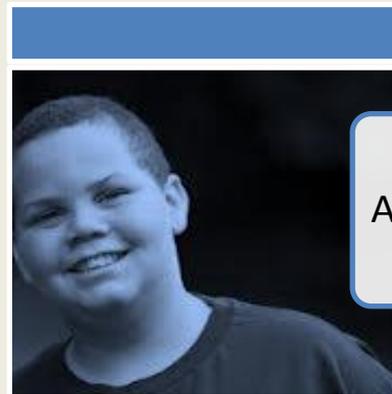
David



Josie



Soojin



Anthony

# Cross-Case Analysis

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- What are some common areas of instructional need?
- Which students share these needs? What needs are specific to certain subgroups?
- What does this mean for instructional groupings?
- What might this mean for organizing for instructional impact?

# Struggling Readers: A Continuum in the Urban District

English-Only Speakers

Language Minority

Slightly higher  
vocabulary  
levels

- Foundational skills for word reading generally well developed
- Low levels of vocabulary
- Diverse needs

Slightly  
more  
likely to  
struggle

**CASE SCHOOL SITE**

# M.S. 555 Student Demographics and ELL Population

- M.S. 555 in the Bronx enrolls 620 students, and approximately 85% of them qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch. 70% of students are Hispanic, 20% are Black, 6% are White, and 4% are Asian. Of the 170 ELL students, their characteristics are as follows:
  - 63 ELLs who have received 4-6 years of supports
  - 37 long-term ELLs (6+ years of supports)
  - 42 ELLs are also receiving special education services
  - 70 newcomers
    - 25 of these are SIFE students
- Within the school, about 10% of students are recent immigrants to the United States. These students are arriving from diverse global locations, including Senegal, Bangladesh, and Mexico, and speak a correspondingly diverse set of languages. However, the majority of students at the school (65%) were born in the U.S., in homes where Spanish is the primary language spoken along with English, to varying degrees.

# M.S. 555 Student Achievement

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Overall Population	51%	36%	10%	3%
ELLs	85%	12%	2%	1%
Former ELLs	30%	54%	14%	2%

# M.S. 555 Instruction and Professional Development

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- At M.S. 555 (Inspiration Academy), there is a push to improve literacy instruction and supports for all students, across content areas. In the last two years, **the school focused on two strategies for boosting achievement across content areas:**
  - 1) Accountable Talk;
  - 2) forming reading groups and then teaching Harvey's *Strategies that Work*, including 'close reading' strategies, to help students comprehend non-fiction texts.
- All **ICT/ELL classes include a specialist** who works with the classroom teacher to adapt the curriculum to support the ELLs.
  - For some struggling readers, *Wilson Reading Program* is used in small groups during the school day.
- An **extended day program** takes place 2X/week before school; during this time, students are on computers.
  - Some students use *Great Leaps* to develop their fluency and others work with *Achieve3000*.

# M.S. 555 Concerns and Challenges

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Some staff are concerned they aren't seeing any results from the extended day program. Others are concerned there isn't sufficient programming for the newcomers. In the area of professional development, the principal has been working on the master schedule to build in common planning time, with the goal of having all staff engaged in weekly planning session that will take a PLC format. The principal has been weighing the overall strategy for boosting literacy, thinking about the balance between the time and resources needed for offering supplemental services and the time and resources needed for developing stronger daily classroom practices, to be offered to all students.

# M.S. 555 Initial Case Analysis

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1. What do you notice about M.S. 555?
2. What questions do you have? What other information would you want?
3. What are your thoughts and questions about instruction?
4. Thinking back to our case students, what are your initial impressions and questions about M.S. 555's instruction and supports for struggling students (both ELLs and English-only students)?
5. Thinking about your own school, what are the similarities and differences? What issues do you resonate with?

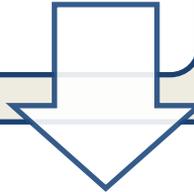
**BLUEPRINT**

# Step 1: Taking Stock

Step 1: Who are our struggling readers? Do they fit particular classification groupings?



Step 2: What supports do we have in place for students?



Step 3: What instructional initiatives do we have in place to support literacy? What is the associated professional development?

# Who are Your Struggling Readers?

Subgroups	What percentage are struggling readers?	Where do you get this information?	What are the likely sources of reading difficulty?
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Monolingual			
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Former ELLs			
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M			
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E			
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SIFE			
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Use these charts to further describe your student populations. You can use your school's ELL profile, if helpful.

# Supports for Reading Development

Programs

For whom

What is the process for deciding who receives this support?

Use these charts to describe the options available to individual students

# Instructional Initiatives and Professional Development

Initiative	Promise	Pitfall

Use these charts to describe school-wide instructional initiatives and professional development

**MOVING FORWARD**

# Upcoming Sessions

