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OF NEW JERSEY

Montclair Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting

New Jersey Public School Collaborative

Professor Saul Rubinstein

March 6, 2024

Overview

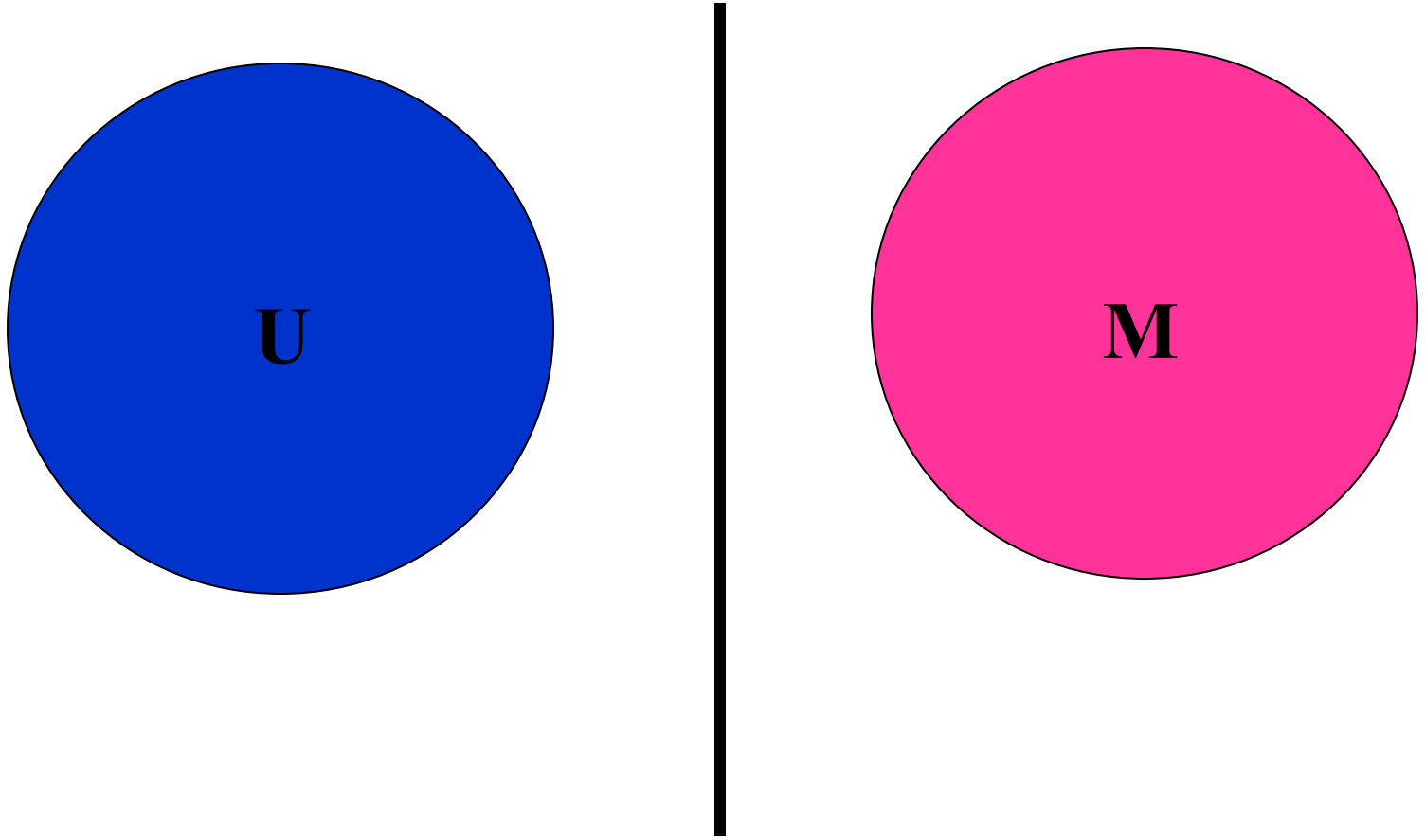
- Evidence of Benefits of Collaboration and Union-Management Partnerships to Educators and Students
- New Jersey Public School Collaborative
- Experiences of other Districts
- Capacity Building and Experience in Montclair

Union-Management Collaborative Partnerships and Educational Quality

Public School Improvement based on:

- District-level, School-level, Faculty/Staff Union-Management Partnerships
- Empowering Educator Collaboration in Schools
- Shared Decision-Making, Goal Alignment, Discretion, Educator Voice
- Innovation from Educators within Districts & Schools
- With Focus on Teaching and Learning

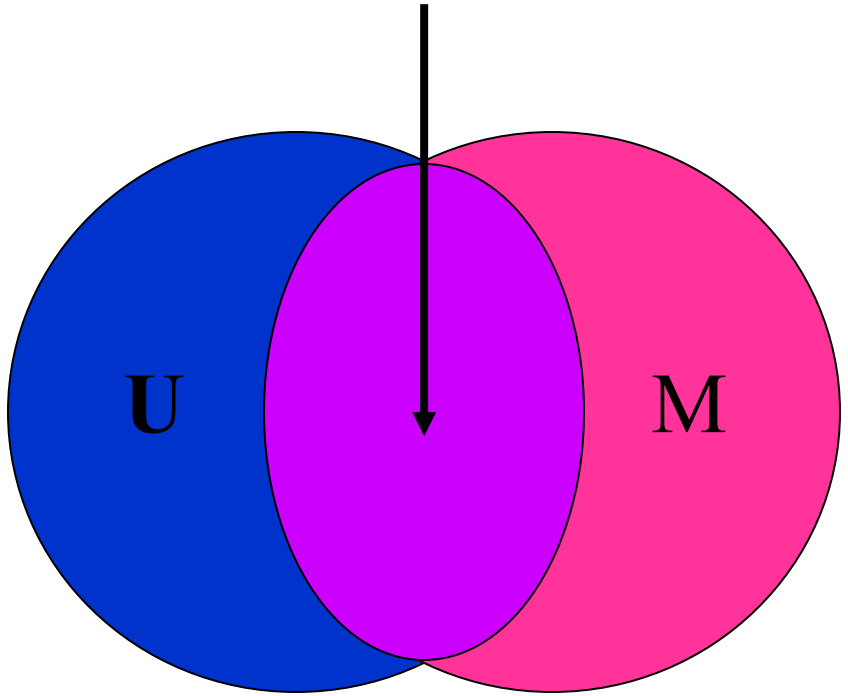
Institution for Conflicting Interests: Collective Bargaining



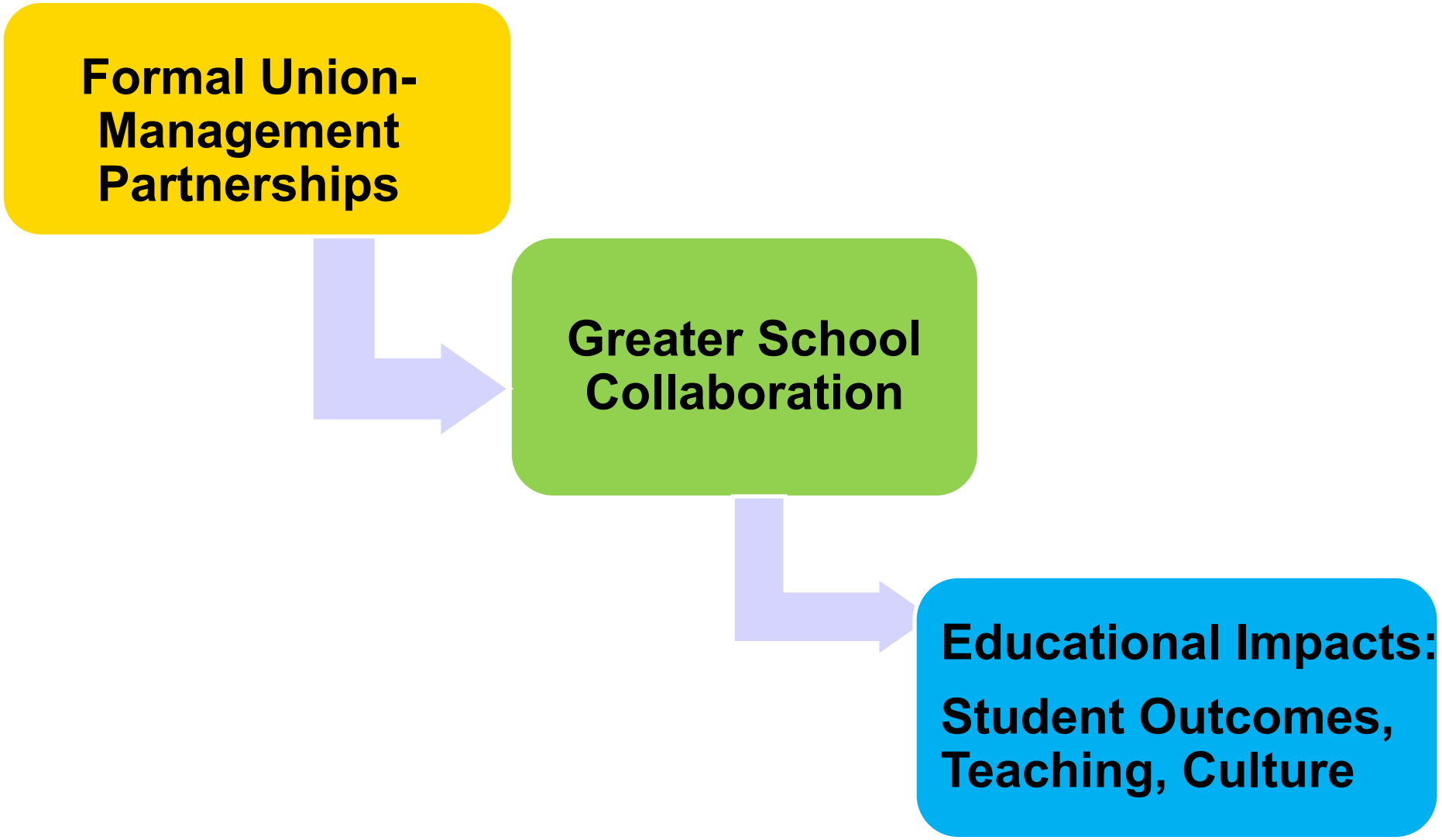
Institution for common interests?

Collaborative Partnerships

(Teaching Quality and Student Achievement)



Union-Management Partnerships as Antecedent to School Collaboration



National Performance Data

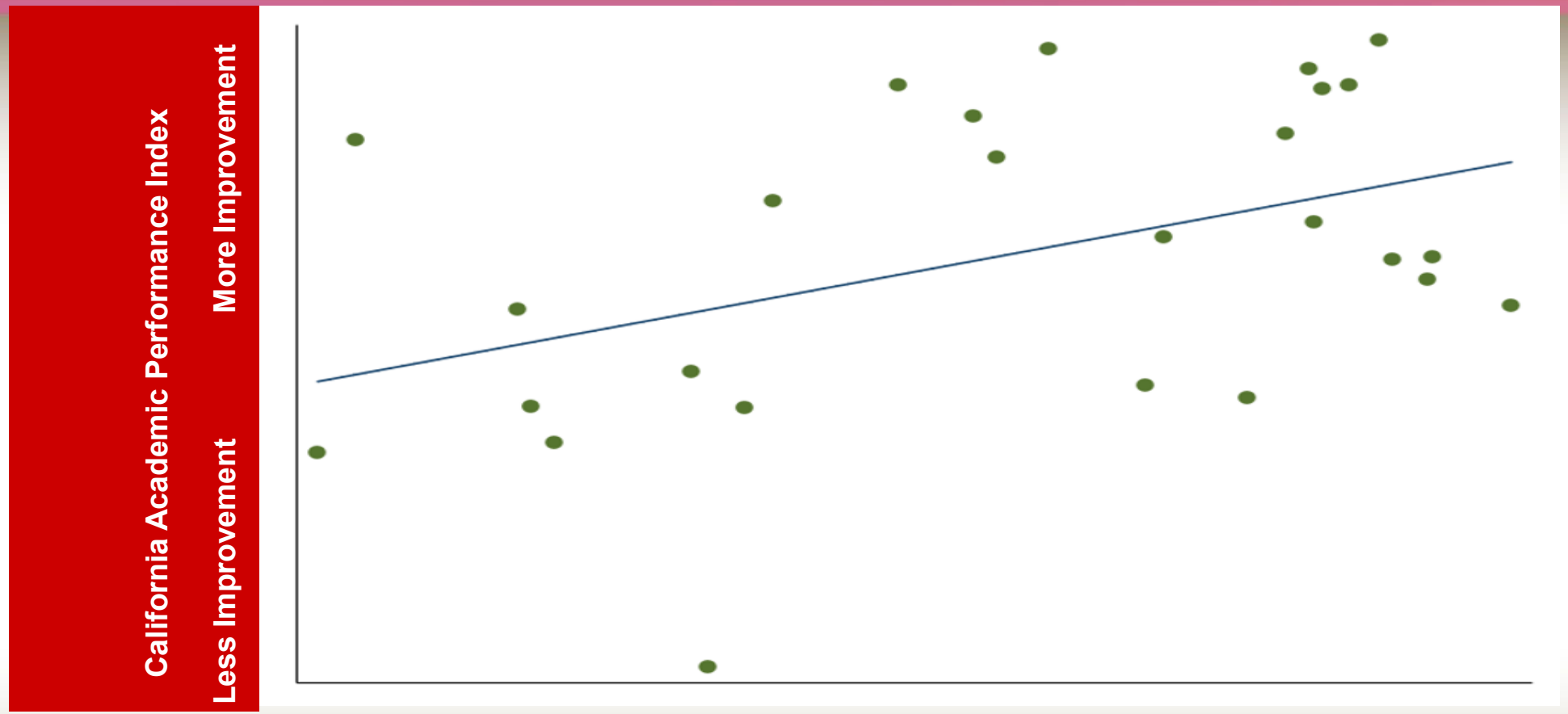
- % of Students Performing at or above Standards
- English Language Arts (ELA) and Math
- District Partnership
- School Collaboration
- Controls for Poverty & School Type
- 5000 Educators
- 25 Districts
- 450 Schools
- 6 States: California, Illinois, Maine, Mass, Minn, NJ

Variables:

- **Partnership (District):** Union leaders and district administration working together to improve teaching and learning. District initiatives are developed collaboratively.

- **Collaboration (School):** Teachers and administration working together on innovations to improve teaching and learning, engaging in significant problem-solving activity, and developing school initiatives collaboratively.

Collaboration and Performance Improvement



(Rubinstein & McCarthy, 2014)

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Collaboration and Student Performance

(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)

Union-Management Partnerships as an Catalyst for Educator Collaboration

- Creates Positive Climate
- Builds Trust
- Directs More Resources toward Improvement
  - Creates Problem Solving Infrastructure
- Better Communication and Information Sharing
- Support for Joint Decisions & Implementation
- Union is a Network – Social Capital

WHAT ARE EDUCATORS COLLABORATING AROUND?

Student Performance Data

Introduction	Develop Counterclaims	Textual Evidence / Inferences	Transitions/Links	Conclusion	Overall Organizatior
4.00	3.00	3.33	4.67	4.00	5.00
4.00	2.00	4.33	2.50	3.00	3.00
2.00	3.00	2.00 ↓	1.67 ↓	2.00	1.00
1.00 ↓	1.00 ↓	2.00 ↓	3.50	2.00	3.00
4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00
4.00	2.00	3.67	3.50	3.00	3.00
4.00	3.00	4.33	4.33	4.00	4.00
3.00	3.67	3.00	2.33	3.00	3.00

ntries

↓ indicates significantly behind peers

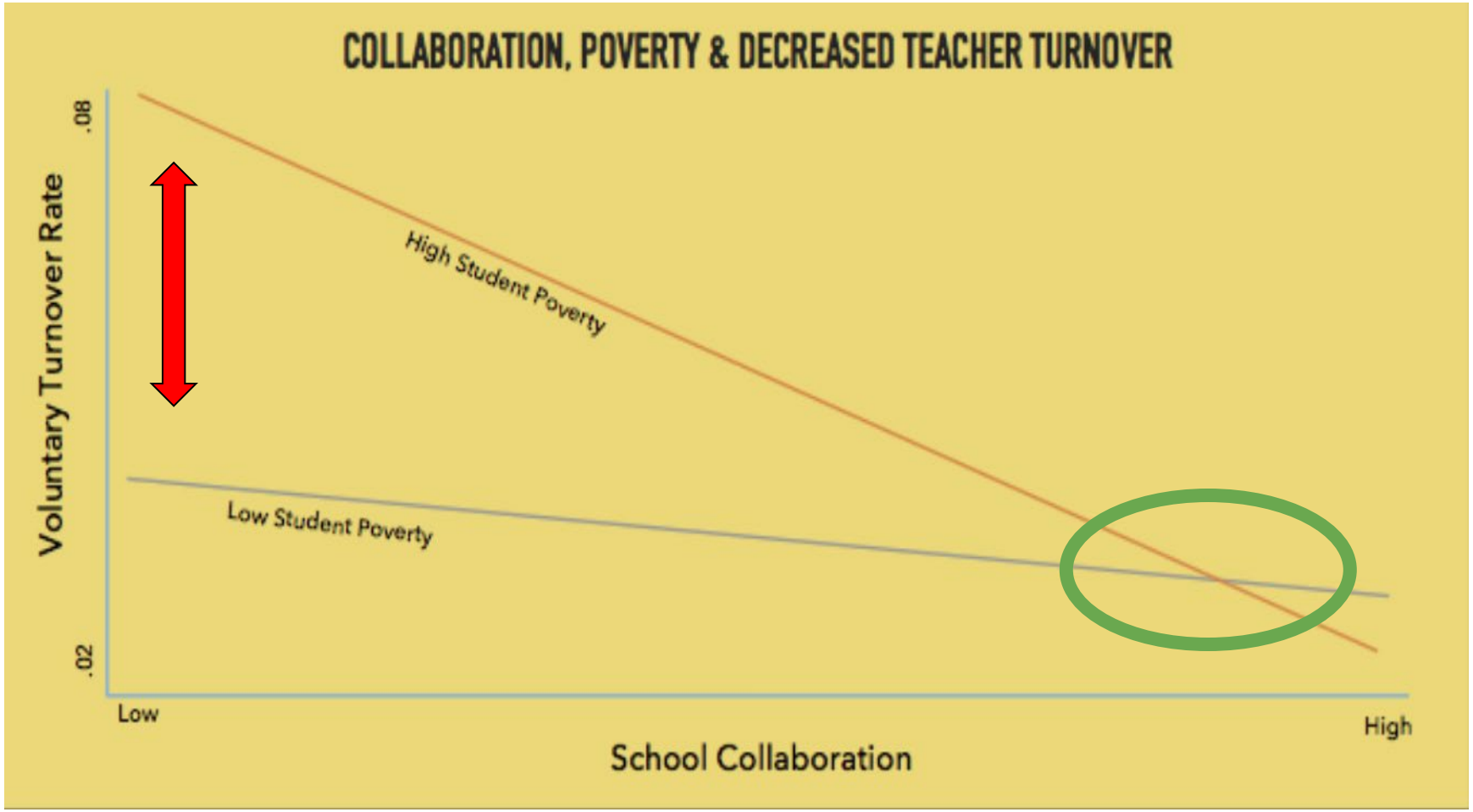
Below 11-12th (1.00) | Beginning 11-12th (2.00) | Emerging 11-12th (3.00) | Proficient 11-12th (4.00) | Above 11-12th (5.00)

Curriculum Development

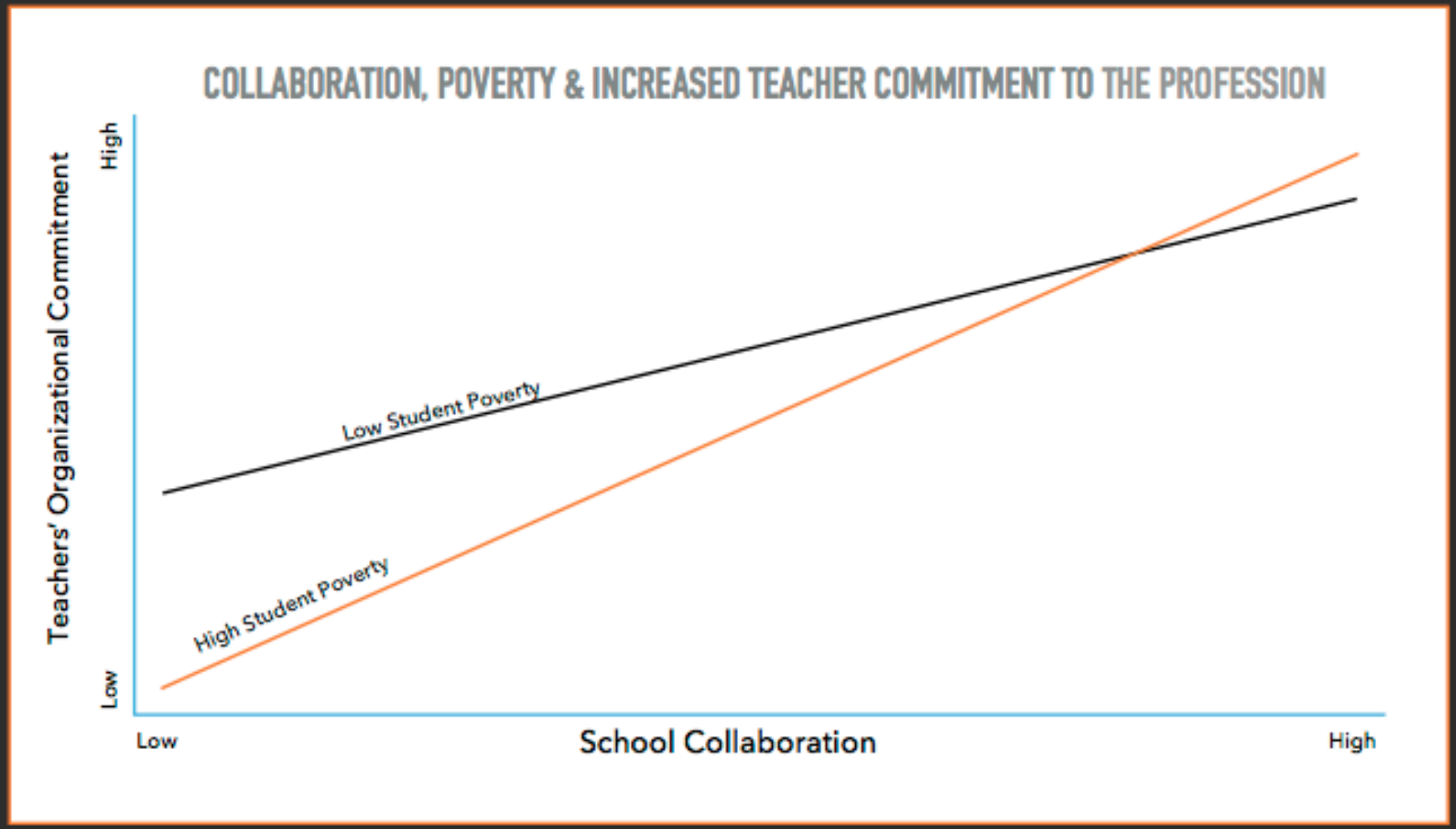
Instructional Practices

Mentoring

Collaboration Eliminates the Negative Impacts of Poverty on Teacher Retention



COLLABORATION MITIGATES THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF POVERTY ON TEACHER COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION



(McCarthy and Rubinstein, 2017)

Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Goal alignment:** The extent to which teachers and administration are working towards common goals. High goal alignment is demonstrated by a common purpose and shared priorities.

- **Shared decision-making:** The extent to which school administration and teachers work together on important decisions. In environments high in shared decision-making, school administrators regularly consult with teachers for input on significant issues.

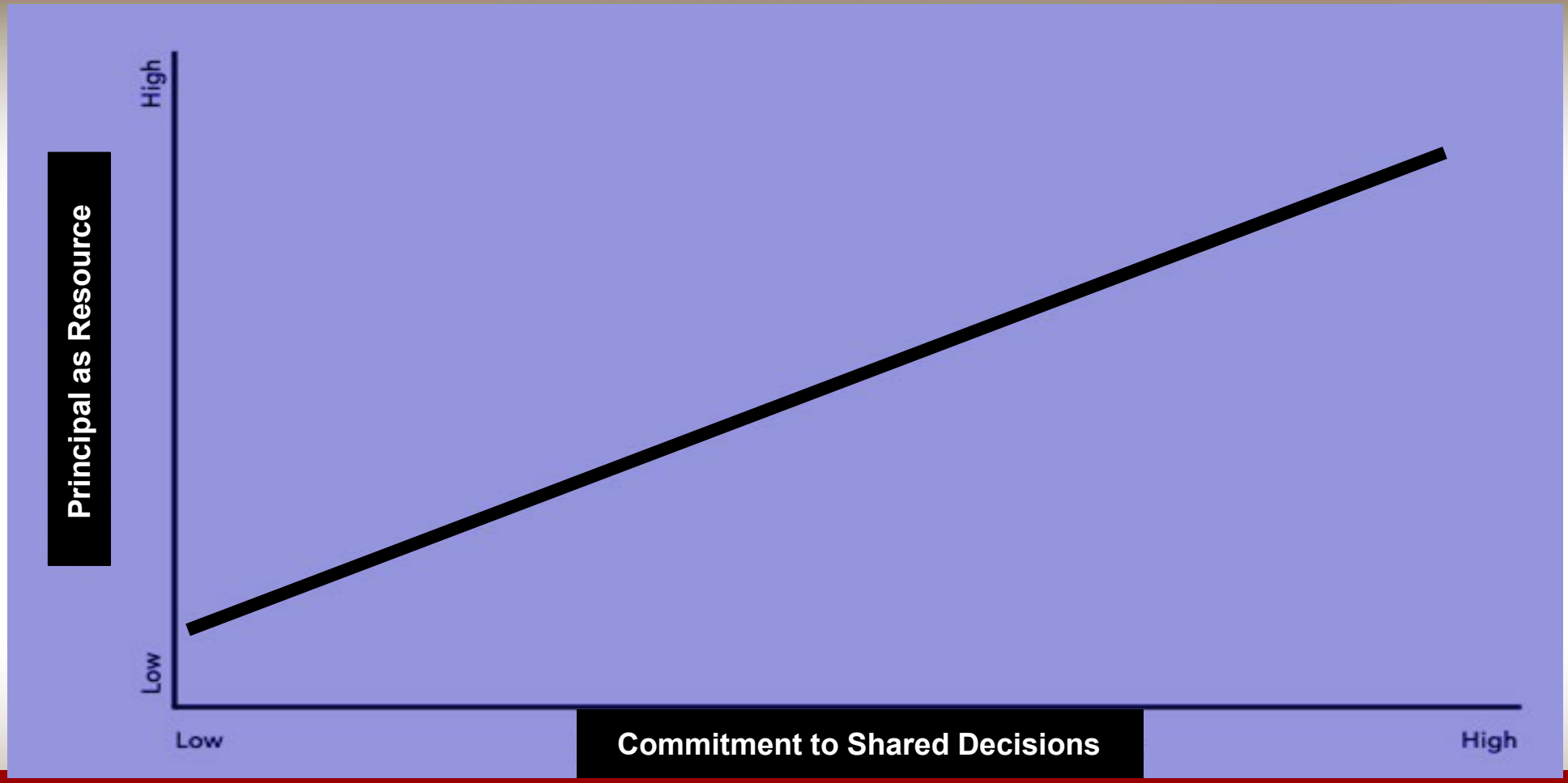
Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Teachers' Efficacy:** Teachers in this school have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.
- **Discretion:** The amount of autonomy afforded to faculty within a school. In high employee discretion settings, teachers have latitude to make classroom level decisions independently.
- **Principal as Resource**: My principal is a resource for me.
- **Union Rep as Resource**: My union rep is a resource for me.

Dimensions of Collaborative Culture:

- **Psychological Safety:** The extent to which employees are comfortable voicing their concerns and sharing their opinions. Employees that experience psychological safety believe that they will not be harshly judged for making mistakes or voicing concerns about school policies. Psychologically safe environments allow for respectful discourse that includes all viewpoints.

Shared Decision-Making and Viewing Principal as a Resource



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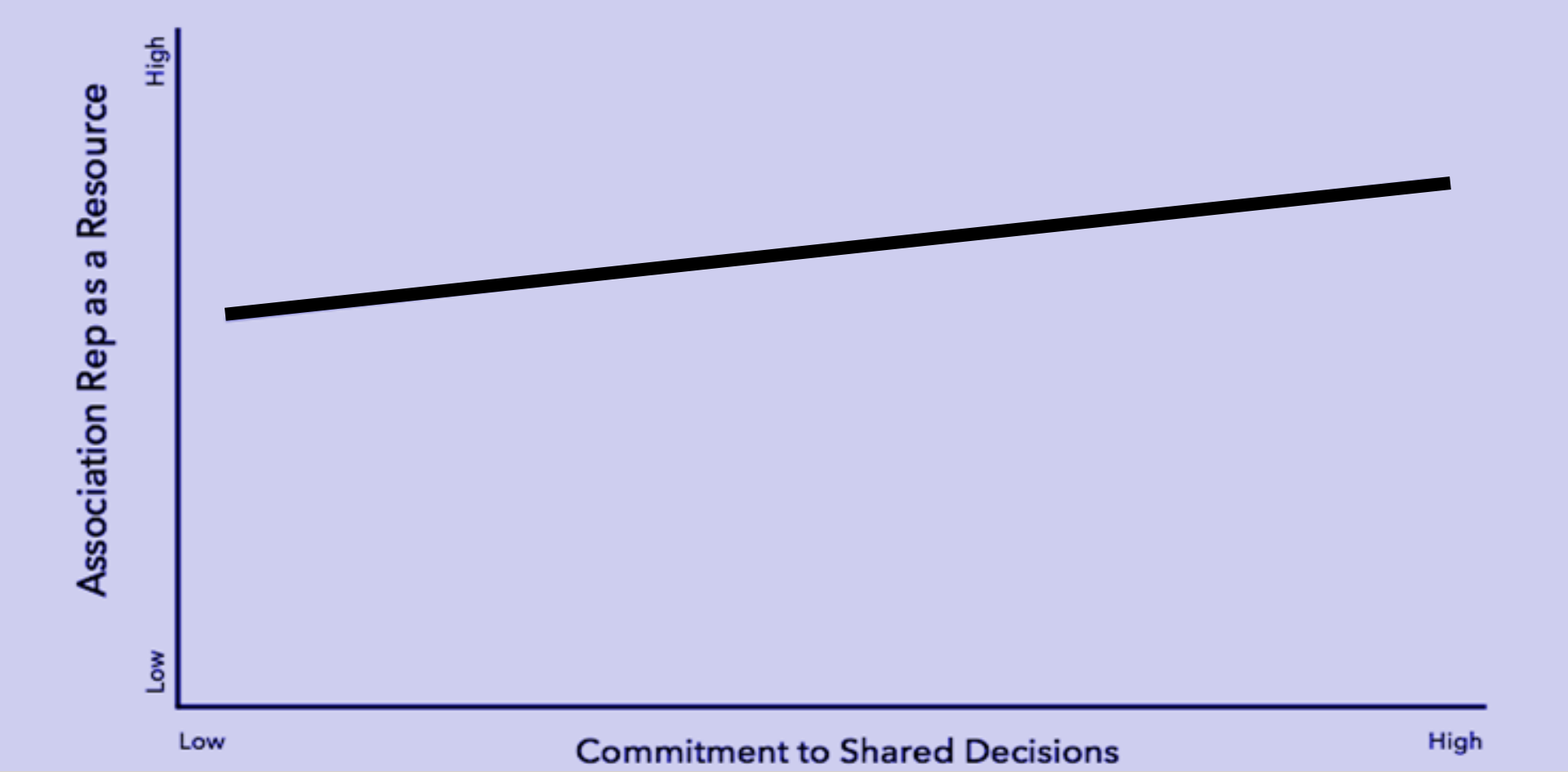
Shared Decision Making and Association Rep as Resource



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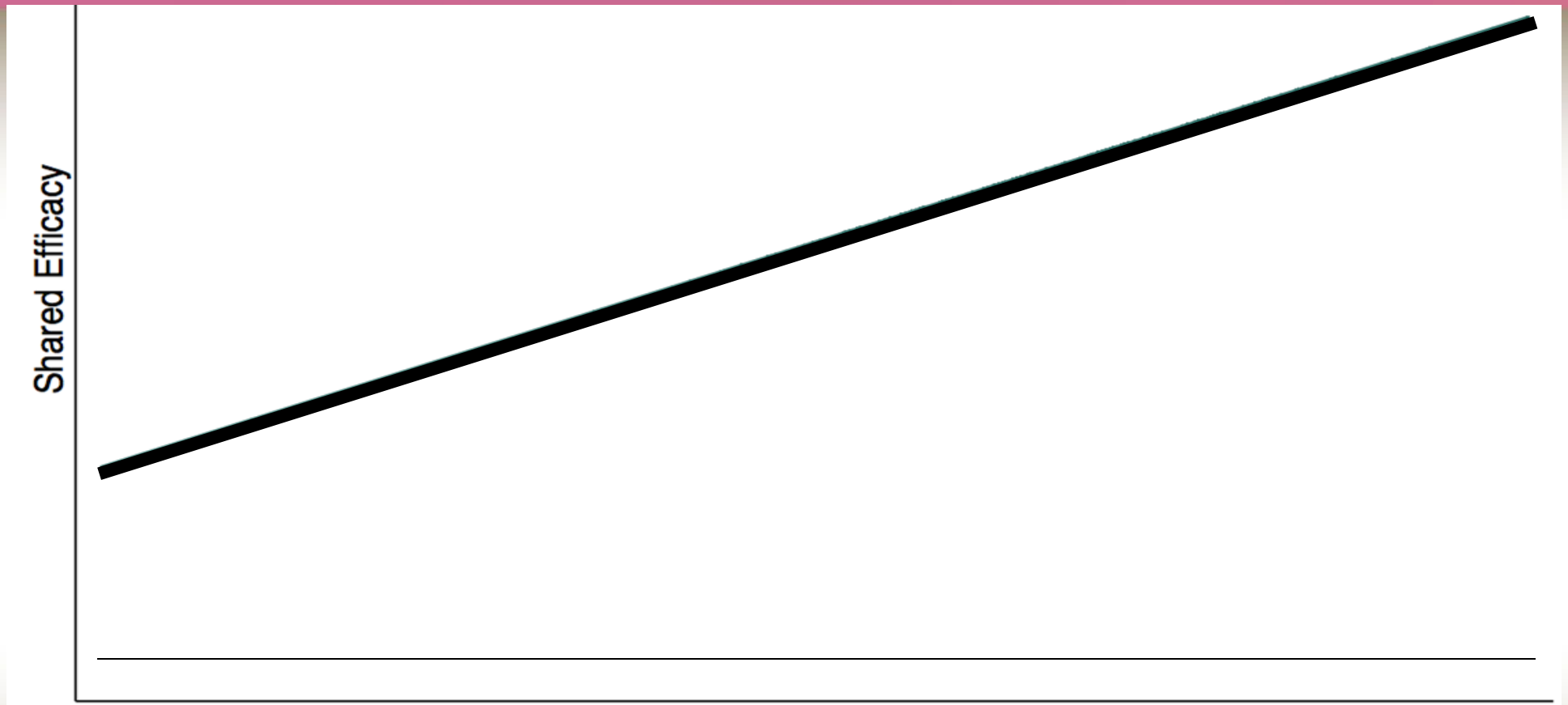
Shared Decision-Making and Teacher Efficacy



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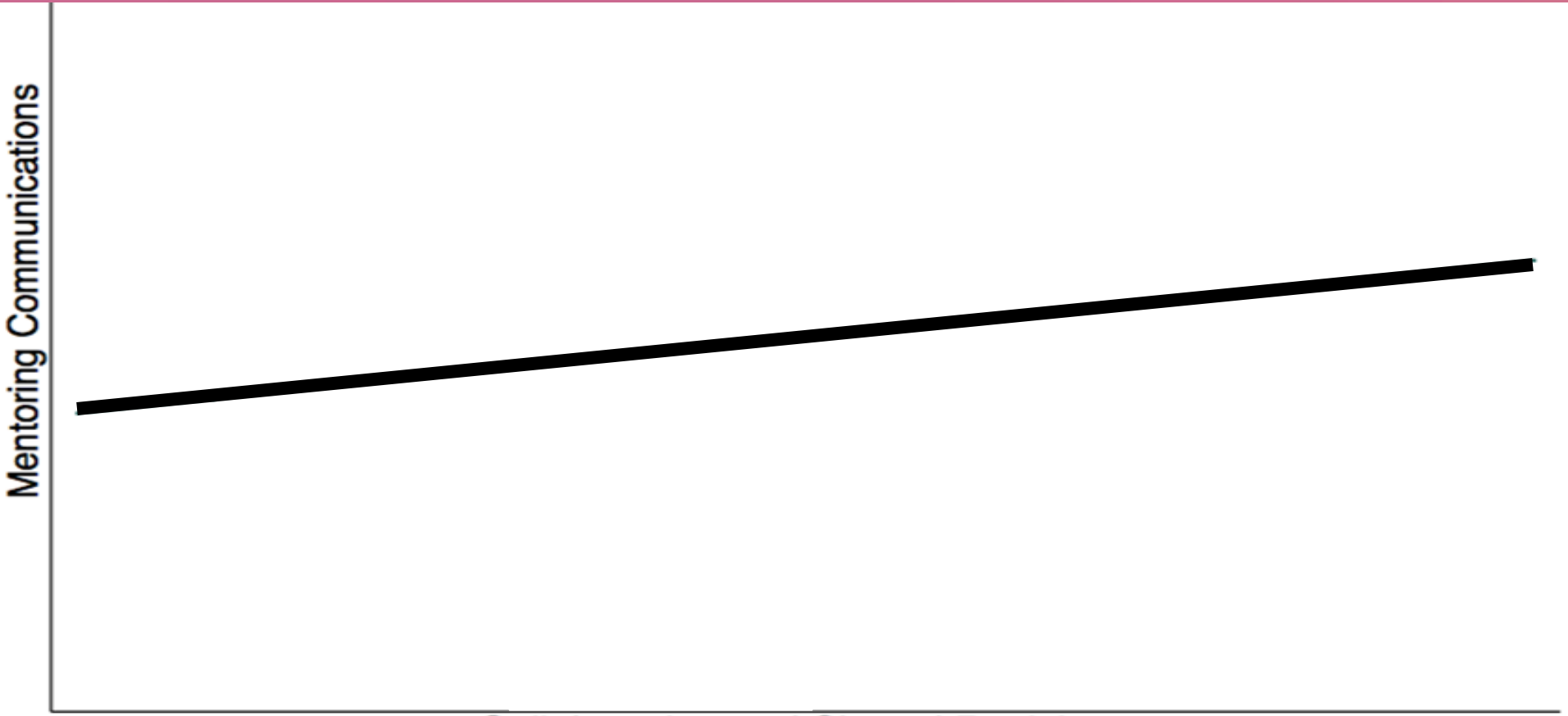
Shared Decision Making and Mentoring



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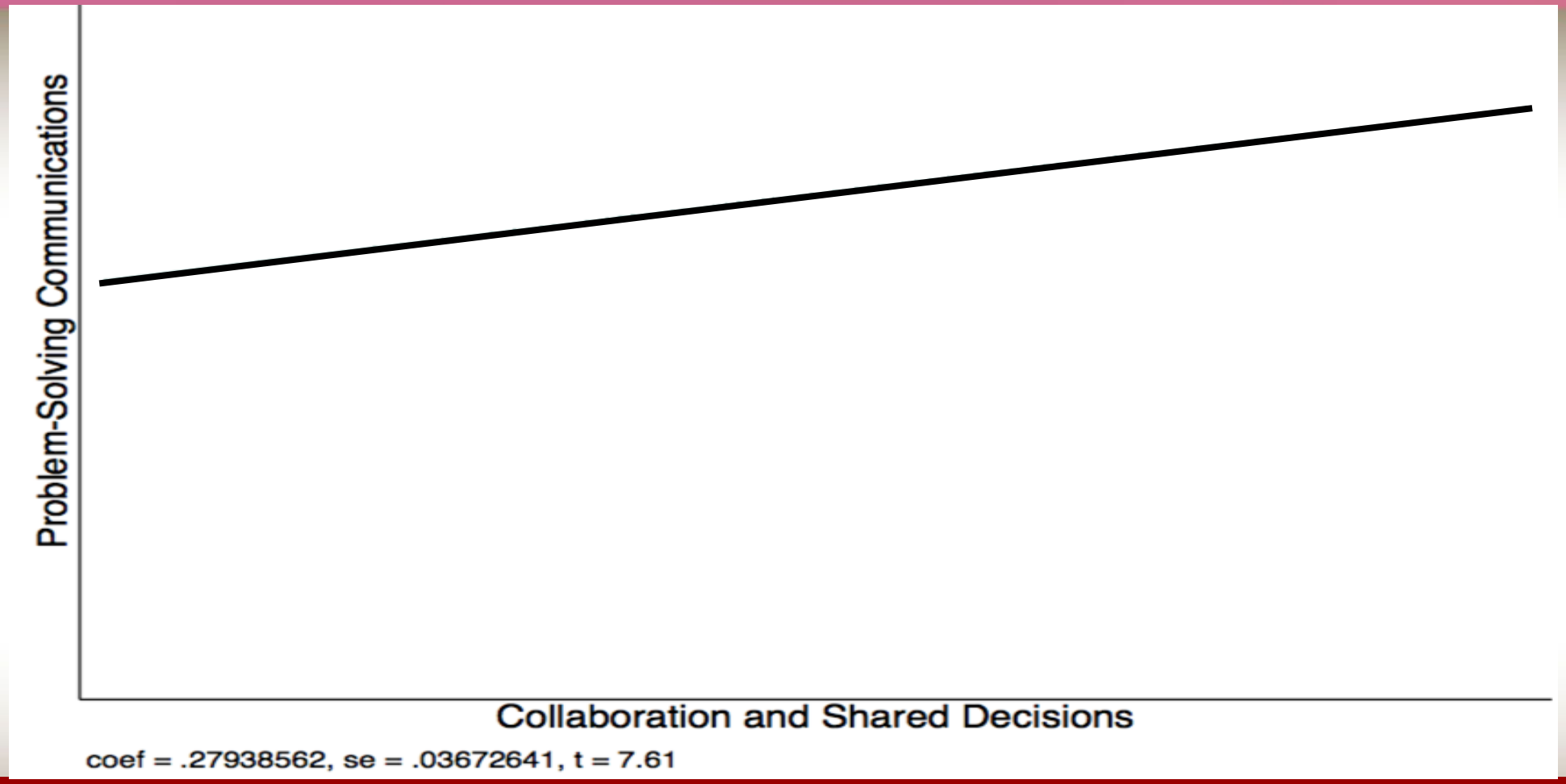
Shared Decision Making and Problem Solving



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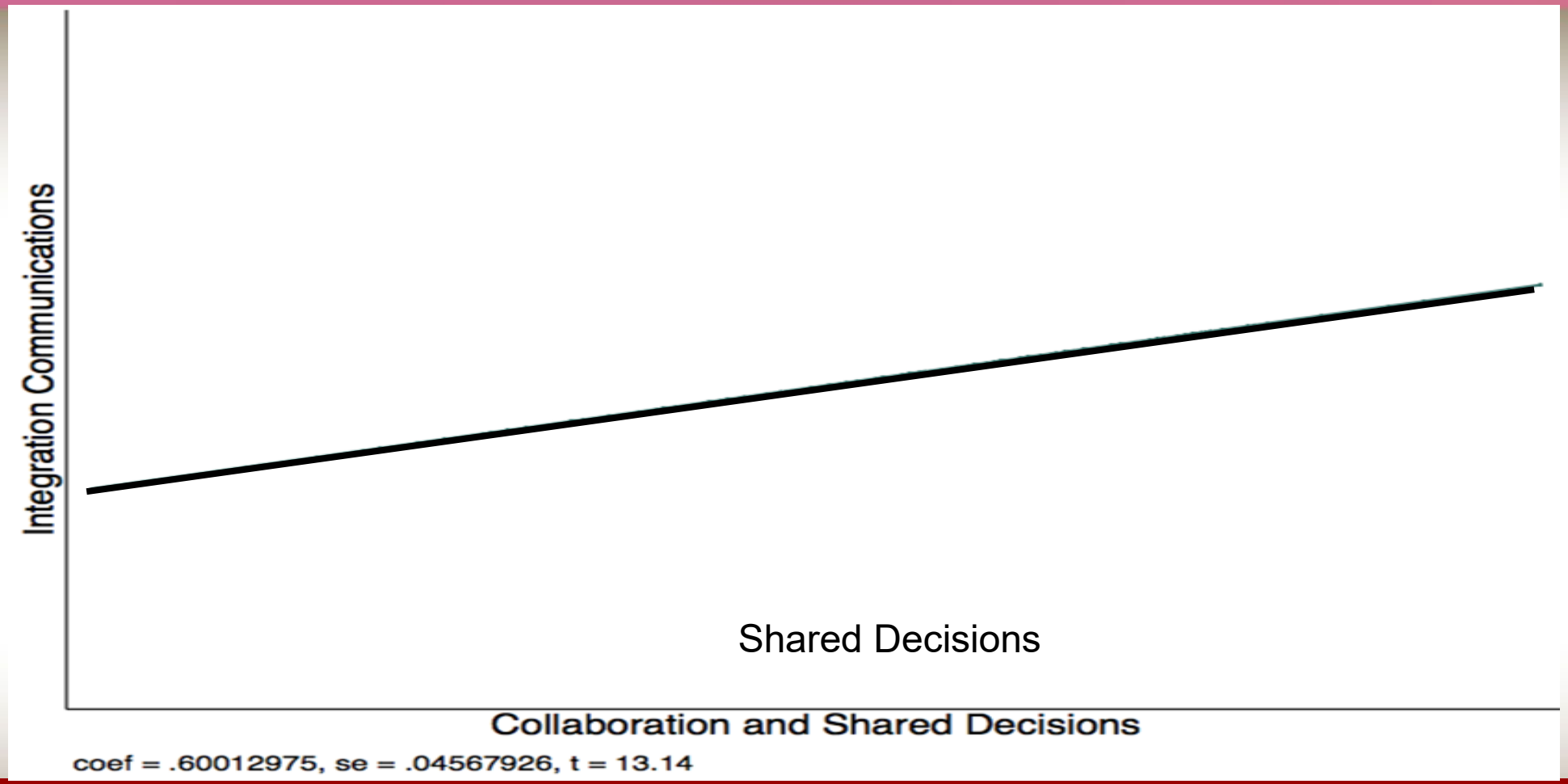
Shared Decision Making & Communication on Cross-Subject Integration



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ASSOCIATION REPS: CHANGING ROLE PERCEPTION

WEAK PARTNERSHIP = PRIMARILY PERCEIVE ROLE AS FOCUSED ON TRADITIONAL UNION ACTIVITIES

STRONG PARTNERSHIP =MORE BALANCED ROLE

Summary of Findings

- Union-Management Partnerships Lead to More Extensive Collaboration between Educators in Schools
- Collaboration Improves Student Performance (ELA and Math) even after controlling for Poverty
- Collaborative Climates Increase the Attractiveness of Schools to Teachers
- Strong Collaboration Reduces the Impact of Poverty on Teacher Turnover & Increases Engagement

Key Elements: District and School Capacity

- Establishing a Culture of Collaboration
- Sharing Leadership
- Identifying Priorities for Improvement
  - Related to Teaching and Learning
- Joint Problem Solving Initiatives (What?)
- Decision Making at Activity at All Levels (How?)
- Engaging Faculty & Staff in Improvement Activity
- Exposure to National Best Practice Models
- Assessing and Measuring Success
- Training for Capacity Building
- Community and School Board as Partners

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LABOR MANAGEMENT
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NJSBA
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NJ Public School Labor Management Collaborative

- **I. State**
  - 5 State Associations:

    NJEA, AFTNJ, NJSBA, NJASA, NJPSA
  - State-wide Summit
- **II. District/School**
  - District/School Capacity Building Workshop
- **III. Scaffolding Support**
  - Inter-District Learning Network (Twice a Year)
  - District Facilitators
  - Website, Online Community, Resources, Courses
- **IV. Research**

To Date:

- 25 Districts
- 158 Schools
- 475+ Administrators
- 9,241 Teachers
- 99,552 Students
- Adding 6-8 Districts 2023-24
- 10% of NJ Districts

Types of Improvement Initiatives

- New Curriculum
- Technology
- Sharing Instructional Practice
- Math & Language Performance
- Professional Development
- Energy Conservation
- K-12 Articulation
- Exam Coordination
- Mentoring
- Textbook Selection
- New Teacher Induction
- Peer Assistance
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Covid-19
- English as Second Language
- Student Advisory Periods
- New Courses
- Scheduling
- Homework Policy

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Structures

District Leadership Team

- Representatives of school and district administration, union and teacher leaders

School Leadership Teams

- Principal, union leader, representatives from grade level and content areas

School Leadership Team (SLT) Training:

- Overview
  - Research Overview on Collab Leadership and Student Achievement, Teacher Turnover, Recruitment, and Seeing Principal and Union Rep as resource
  - Understanding shared/common interests
  - Collaborative Norms for Working Together
  - Team Building
- Planning School Leadership Teams
  - Membership
  - Roles and Responsibilities
  - Collaborative Structures
  - Processes
  - Shared Leadership

SLT Continued:

- Problem Solving
  - Cycle of Problem Solving
  - Identification of Needs
  - Criteria for Problem Selection
  - Priority Matrix
  - Use of Data
  - Vital Few: Pareto Analysis
  - Priorities for Improvement
  - Cause-Effect Analysis
  - Improvement vs Control
  - Managing Project/Improvement Teams
  - Organizing Initiatives/Action Planning

SLT Continued:

- Decision Making
  - Methods of Joint Decision Making/Consensus
  - Value and Difficulties of Joint Decision Making
- Communication
  - Within and Across Schools
- Meeting Management
- Conflict Resolution
  - Alignment of Goals, Roles, Procedures
- Shaping Organizational Change
  - Inter-school Learning and Implementation across District
- Evaluating Progress and Making Adjustments

- 5 Days over 2-3 years with Peer Facilitators

Continuum of Shared Decision-Making

1	2	3	4	5
Administrator Centered	Collaborative/Consultative Consensus			Staff Centered
Admin decision (without staff input) and staff will be informed "Admin will tell staff"	Admin decision, where staff consults "Staff gives input, then admin makes the final decision"	Equal-weight decision. Vote on the decision. "We make the final decision together"	Staff decision, with input from admin "Admin gives staff input, but the staff makes the final decision"	Staff decision (within admin guidelines) and staff will inform admin "Staff will tell admin"

Why Collaborative Partnerships?

- Quality of Decisions
  - People Closest to the Problem
- Quantity of Solutions – More Resources Devoted to Improvement
- Quality of Implementation – More Support

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