



# Arlington

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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Regular or Special Board Meeting, Include Date*



# **Sixth Grade Placement Exploration in AISD**

**Meeting #5: May 13, 2026**

# Today's Agenda



- Review of previous work & where we are heading
- Discipline
- Research & Accountability
- Consensus Building
- Next Steps

# Sixth Grade Exploration

## Project Goal:

Garner stakeholder feedback, study current research, and evaluate the **Student Experience** in a way that allows for the committee to come to **consensus** and make a **recommendation** to the Board by June of 2026 whether sixth grade should move to junior high or remain in elementary school for the 2027-28 school year.

## ARLINGTON ISD 2025-2026 PRIORITIES

**ACADEMIC GROWTH**  
*Ensure positive, engaging experiences for every student that promote academic growth and ignite a passion for learning.*

**CULTURE**  
*Establish an inclusive culture of respect, support and continuous improvement for all students, staff and families.*

**SAFETY & DISCIPLINE**  
*Create safe and productive learning environments in which every student and staff member can thrive.*

**MARKETING & ENGAGEMENT**  
*Involve families and community stakeholders as valued partners in student learning.*

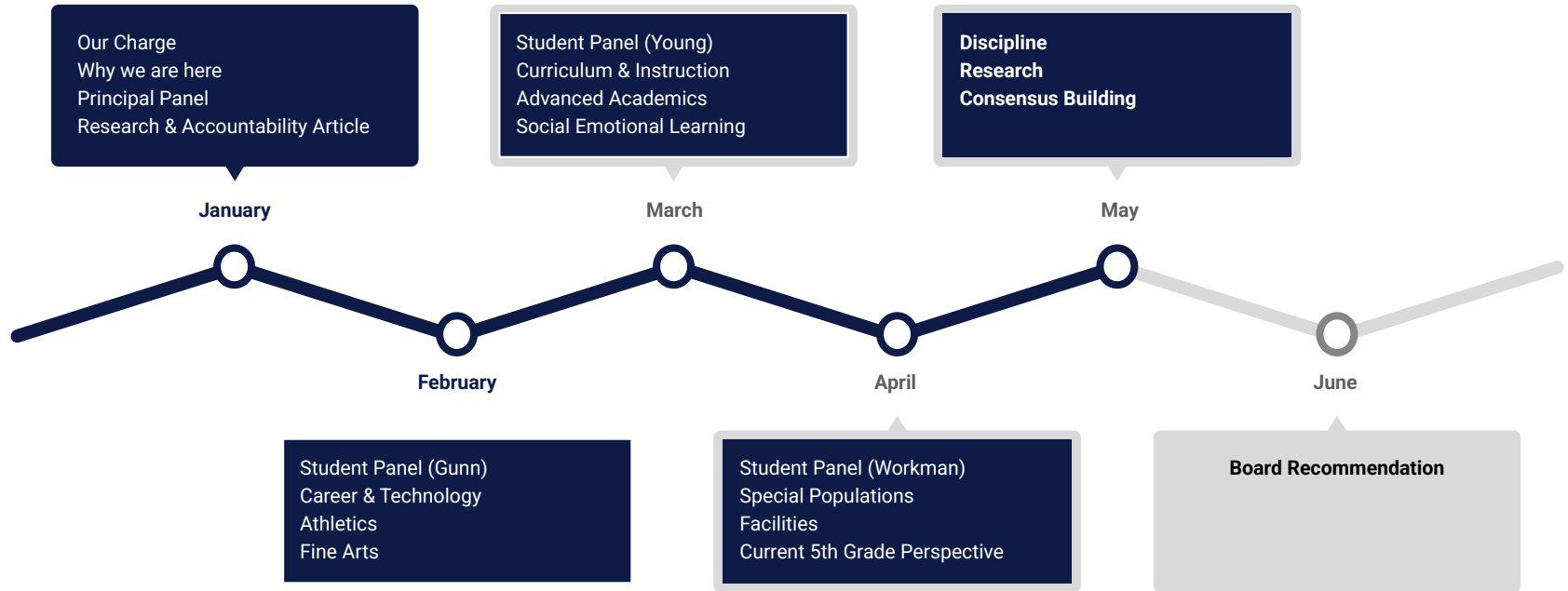
**TALENT & RESOURCES**  
*Maximize our resources and people to promote a thriving district while maintaining sound fiscal management.*

**Arlington**  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**VALUES and BELIEFS**

- EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES**  
We believe we should strive, on a daily basis, to **create exceptional learning experiences for our students.**
- INCLUSIVE CULTURE**  
We value our diversity and believe that our students and staff deserve an inclusive culture **where they feel valued, supported, and challenged to grow.**
- THRIVING STAFF**  
We believe that a thriving staff **continuously learns and strives for excellence** in order to positively impact our students.
- STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**  
We believe that strong partnerships with families and the community **provide a foundation for student success.**
- MAXIMIZED RESOURCES**  
We believe that district talent and financial resources must be maximized to **promote student learning** while also maintaining effective fiscal management.
- LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**  
We believe that our learning environments must be **safe, productive spaces** that are well designed and maintained.

# Where we've been and where we are going

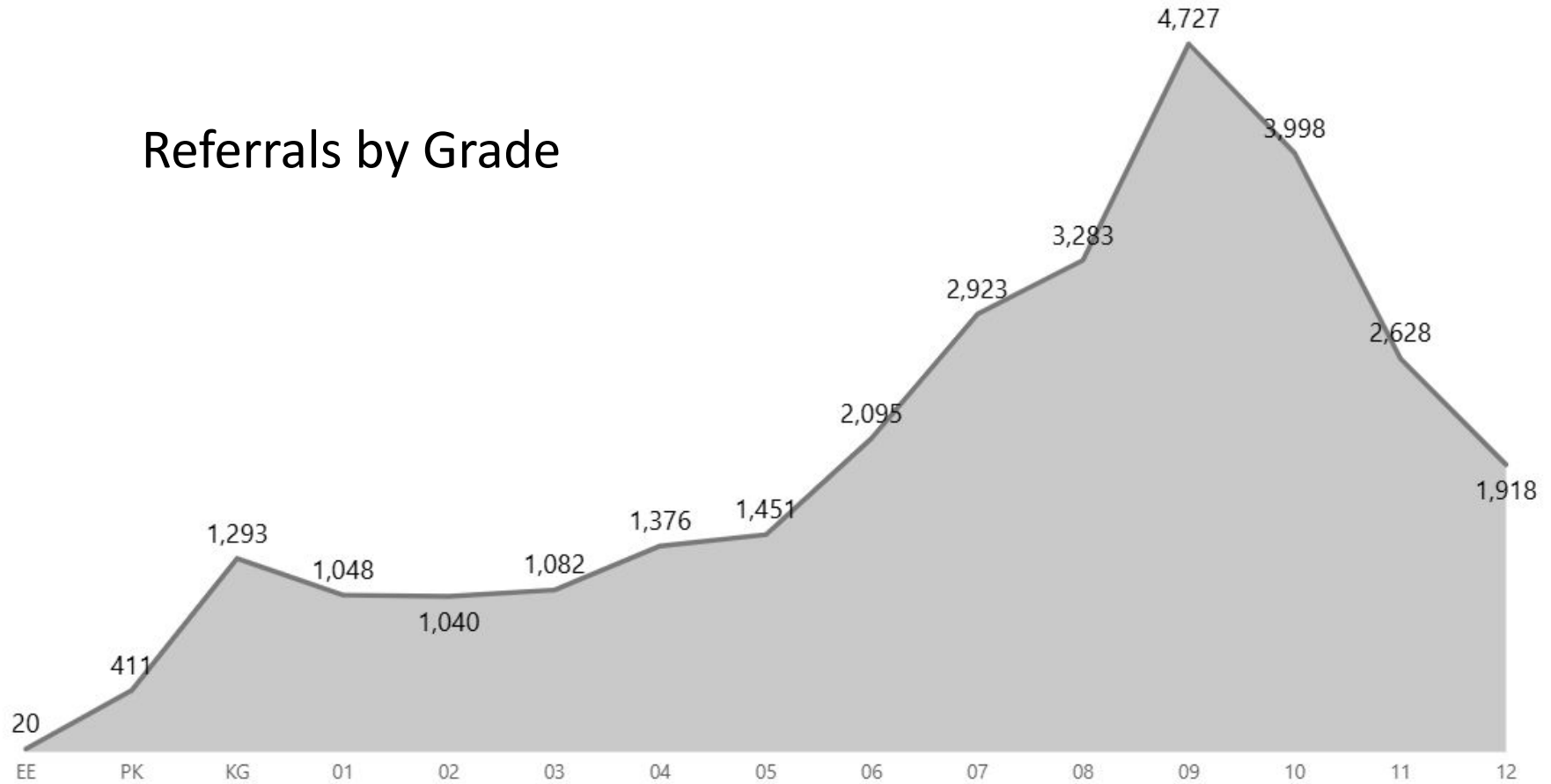




## **Discipline Data**

# Referral Data by Grade

## Referrals by Grade



# Referral Data by Type and by Grade

	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3
EE	Physical Contact	Refusing to follow directive	Physical Aggression
PK	Physical Contact	Physical Aggression	Physical contact w/classmate
KG	Physical Contact	Physical Aggression	Physical contact w/classmate
01	Physical Aggression	Physical Contact	Physical contact w/classmate
02	Physical Aggression	Physical Contact	Physical contact w/classmate
03	Physical Aggression	Physical Contact	Defiance
04	Physical Aggression	Defiance	Physical Contact
05	Physical Aggression	Physical Contact	Defiance
06	Physical Aggression	Defiance	Disruption of classroom
07	Defiance	Physical Aggression	Fight/Combat
08	Defiance	Physical Aggression	Truancy/Skipping
09	Technology Violation	Defiance	Technology Violation
10	Technology Violation	Technology Violation	Defiance
11	Technology Violation	Technology Violation	Defiance
12	Technology Violation	Technology Violation	Defiance



**Let's Discuss**



## **Research Considerations**

Dr. Genéa Stewart,  
Director of Research - Evaluation  
& Analysis

# Research & Accountability



Clarify what quantitative research can (and cannot) tell us



Discuss why outcomes vary across students and schools



Reference state-wide comparison data as context

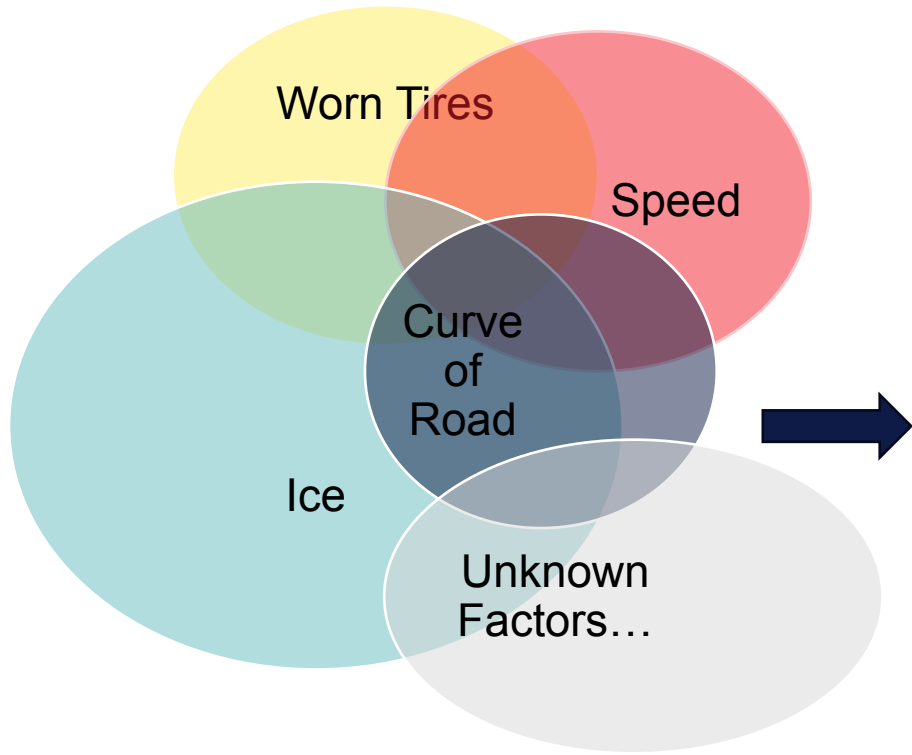


Resources: How to be a critical consumer of educational research

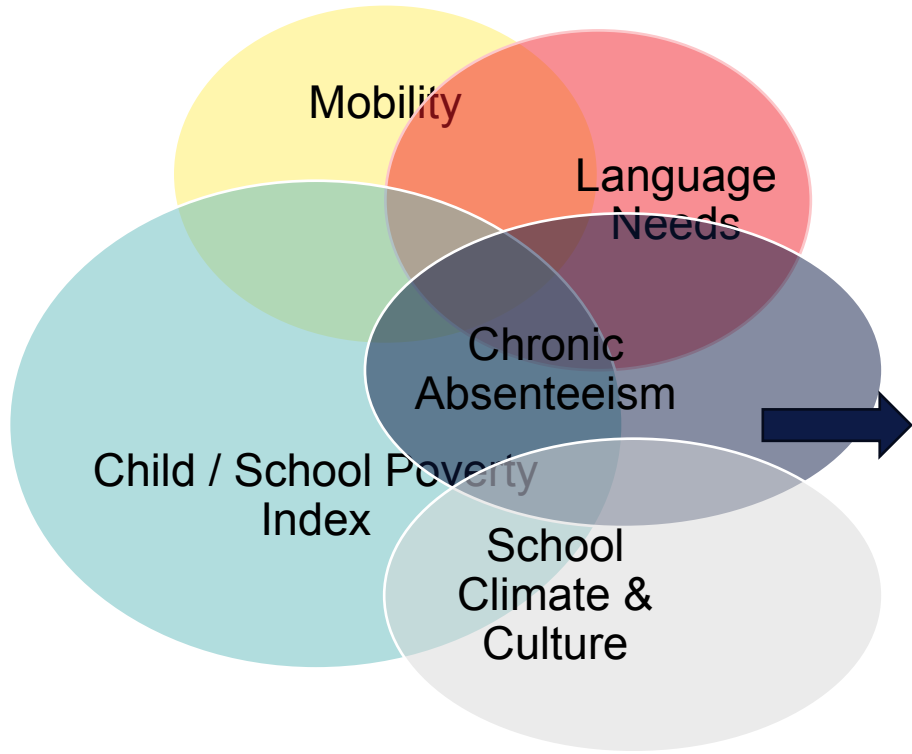


# What Caused this Crash?





## Overlapping Factors at Play: Real-World Scenario

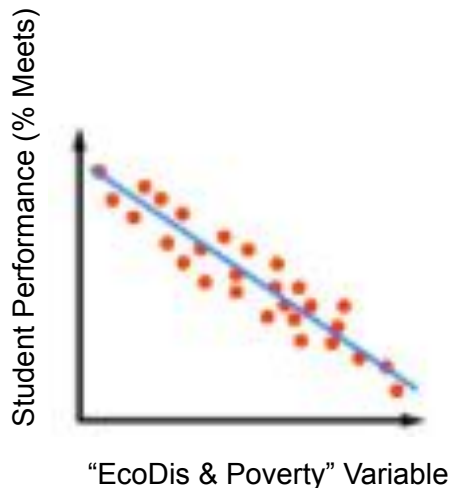
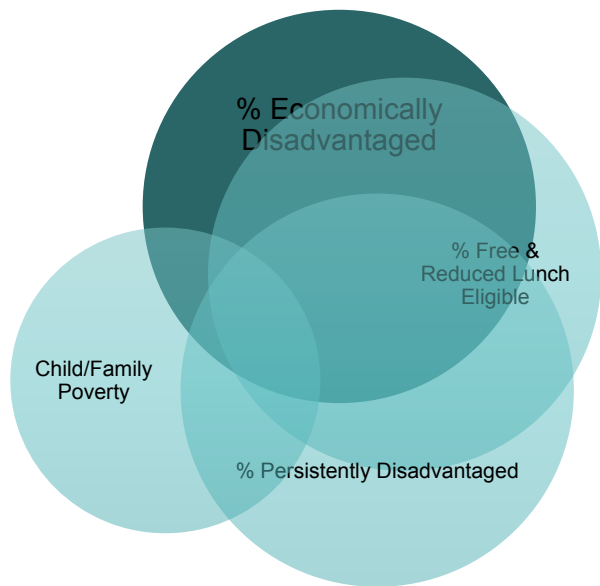


*“Education research may be the hardest science of all.”*  
– David C. Berliner



## Overlapping Factors at Play: Student Performance

# Illustrative Example: The Undeniable Impact of Socio-Economic Indicators



On its own, % Economically Disadvantaged status could explain **46.6%** of student achievement in a STAAR dataset.

After adding the additional campus characteristics (culture, language needs, mobility, chronic absenteeism) the model accounted for **73.7%** of student performance.

*"...a school's poverty index is the strongest correlate and best predictor of achievement test scores." - Bracey, 1997*

# Recap: Why Grade Configuration Doesn't Tell the Whole Story



Two schools with the **same grade structure** can produce **very different results** because:

## Student Differences

- Varying needs, supports, and experiences shape outcomes more than structure alone

## Community & Feeder Patterns

- Enrollment patterns, mobility, and feeder systems influence middle school outcomes in ways structure alone cannot explain.

## Implementation Matters

- How a model is carried out (staffing, schedules, supports) often matters more than the model itself.

## No Random Assignment

- Students are not randomly assigned to schools, making direct comparisons difficult.

## Simultaneous Change

- Policy changes often occur alongside many shifts in demographics or funding.

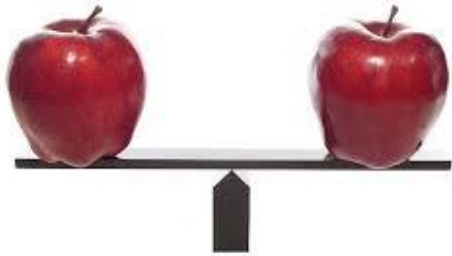
## Time to Adjust

- Changes in grade configuration take time to stabilize; early results can be misleading.

## Complex School Systems

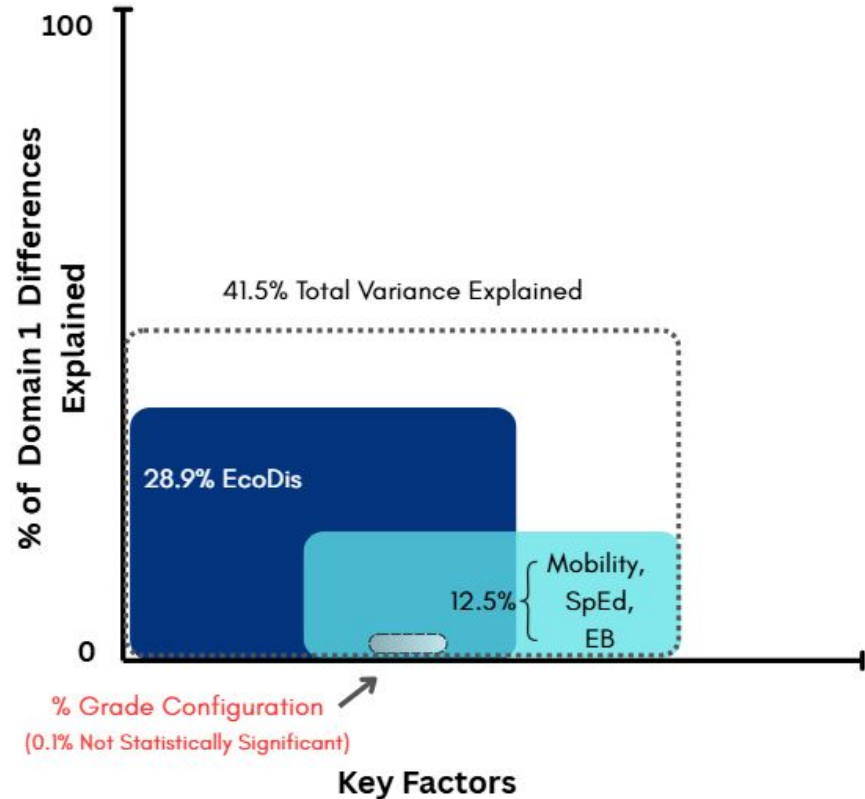
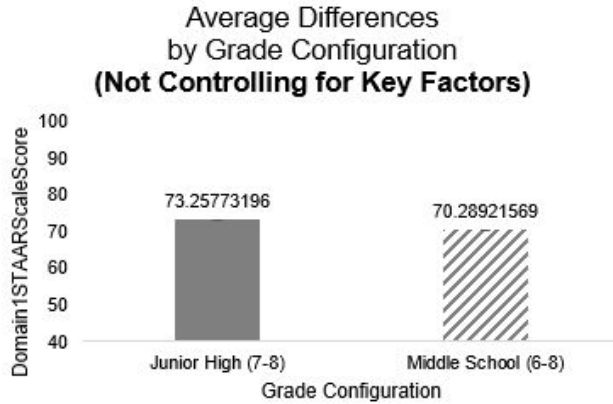
- Schools are not isolated environments; many factors interact at once.

# TEA Comparison Campus Analysis



- TEA-defined comparison schools are based on key characteristics (e.g., size, student demographics, mobility).
  - This allows us to analyze a sample of peers with similar student populations and contexts.
  - Each AISD JHS campus was matched to ~40 statistically similar schools across Texas (duplicates were removed as campuses could be multiply matched).
- 301 Total Campuses
- 204 Middle Schools (grades 6-8)
- 97 Junior Highs (grades 7-8; one grade 8)

# Domain 1: At-a-Glance Differences vs What Explains Them

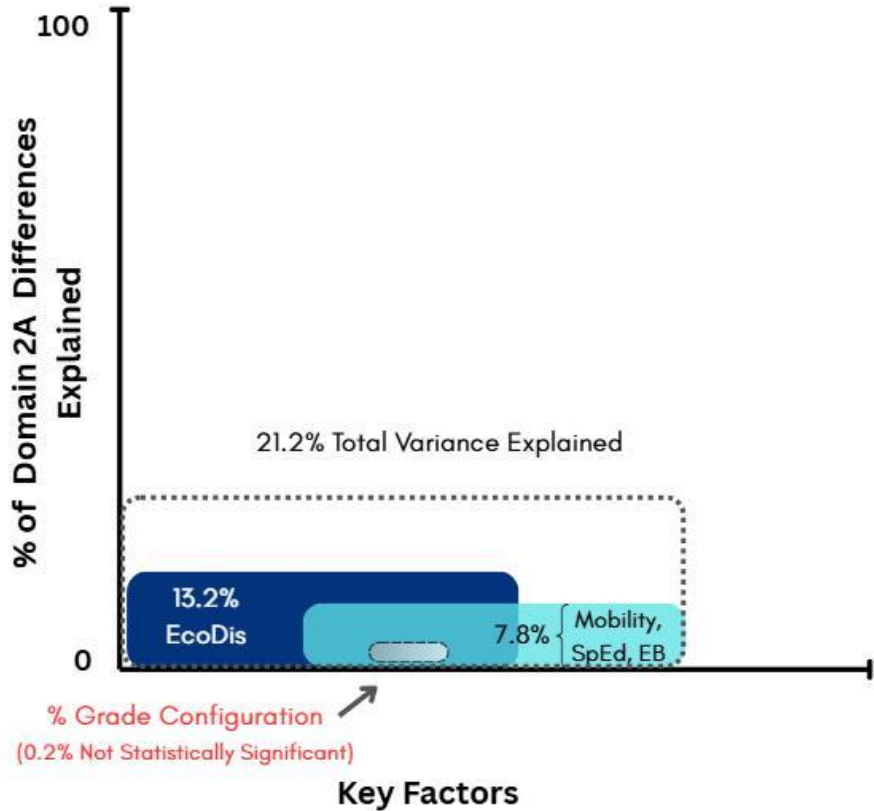
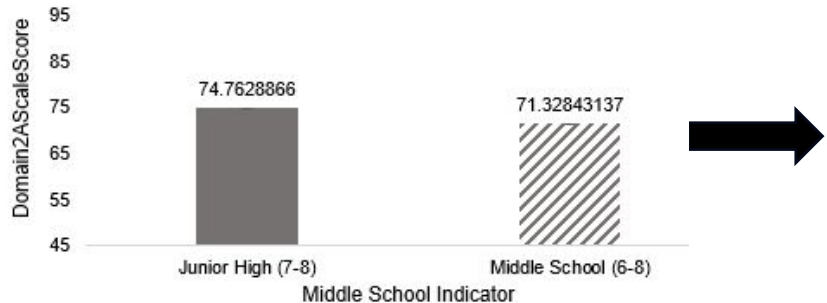


*At first glance, there are differences between grade configuration models (6-8 vs. 7-8). But when we account for student and school factors, **grade configuration itself isn't what explains those differences.***

# Domain 2A: At-a-Glance Differences vs What Explains Them



Average Differences  
by Grade Configuration  
(Not Controlling for Key Factors)



At first glance, there are differences between grade configuration models (6-8 vs. 7-8). But when we account for student and school factors, **grade configuration itself isn't what explains those differences.**

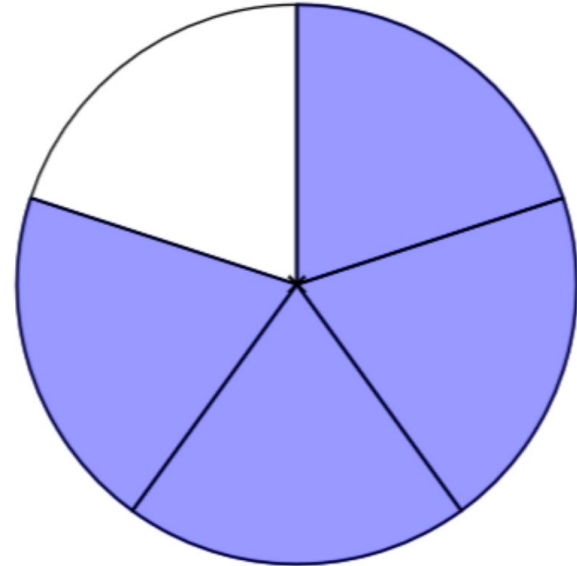


**Consensus Time!!!!**

## Define Consensus:

Consensus is a general agreement, collective opinion, or concord among a group of people. It signifies a shared position or decision reached through discussion, **where all participants' viewpoints are considered** and a, broadly accepted, acceptable outcome is reached, even if it is not completely unanimous.

Today we are defining consensus at 4 out of 5 or 80%



## Let's Build Consensus: From Table to Whole Group

- In groups of 5 build consensus
- Then let's share out and build one rubric



# 6 Dots

**Look at the factors we've discussed as a team.**

- **Are there factors we're missing?**
- **What are the most important factors as we consider a recommendation?**
- **Use your six dots to indicate importance.**

# Rubric

## 6th Grade Placement Rubric

<b>Our Charge:</b>	Garner stakeholder feedback, study current research, and evaluate the <b>Student Experience</b> in a way that allows for the committee to come to <b>consensus</b> and make a <b>recommendation</b> to the Board by June of 2026 whether sixth grade should move to junior high or remain in elementary school for the 2027-28 school year.
<b>Our Collective Thoughts on the 6th Grade Experience</b>	Sixth grade should serve as an intentional bridge between childhood and adolescence, blending academic rigor with strong developmental support. Students should strengthen literacy and numeracy skills while experiencing increased challenge, structured independence, and access to acceleration or intervention based on readiness. The year should gradually introduce junior high systems such as multiple teachers, passing periods, and greater accountability while explicitly teaching organization and self management. At the same time, every student should feel safe, known, and connected to a trusted adult, with access to leadership opportunities, exploration in fine arts and athletics, and meaningful extracurricular experiences. Ultimately, sixth grade should preserve care and belonging while expanding opportunity and responsibility so students are fully prepared for junior high and beyond.

Retain Sixth Grade at the Elementary Level - Balanced Perspective - Transition Sixth Grade to Junior High - No consensus reached -

	Impact on student experience	Recommendation	Based on	Notes/Considerations or If no consensus reached, why?
Career & Technology	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		
Athletics	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾	Why did your group make this recommendation?	What has to happen for this to be successful? or If we didn't come to consensus, why not?
Fine Arts	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		
Curriculum & Instruction	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		
Advanced Academics	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		
SEL	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		
Special Populations	Impact ▾	Recommendation ▾		



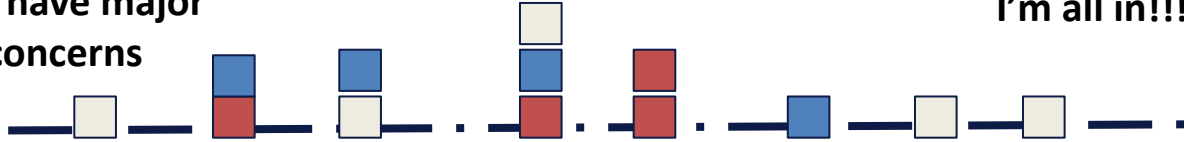
How accurate does this final recommendation reflect the recommendation to the Board in June?

# Let's build a Consensogram!



I have major concerns

I'm all in!!!



How aligned are you to this recommendation?

What keeps you from 100%?

# For Next Time???

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