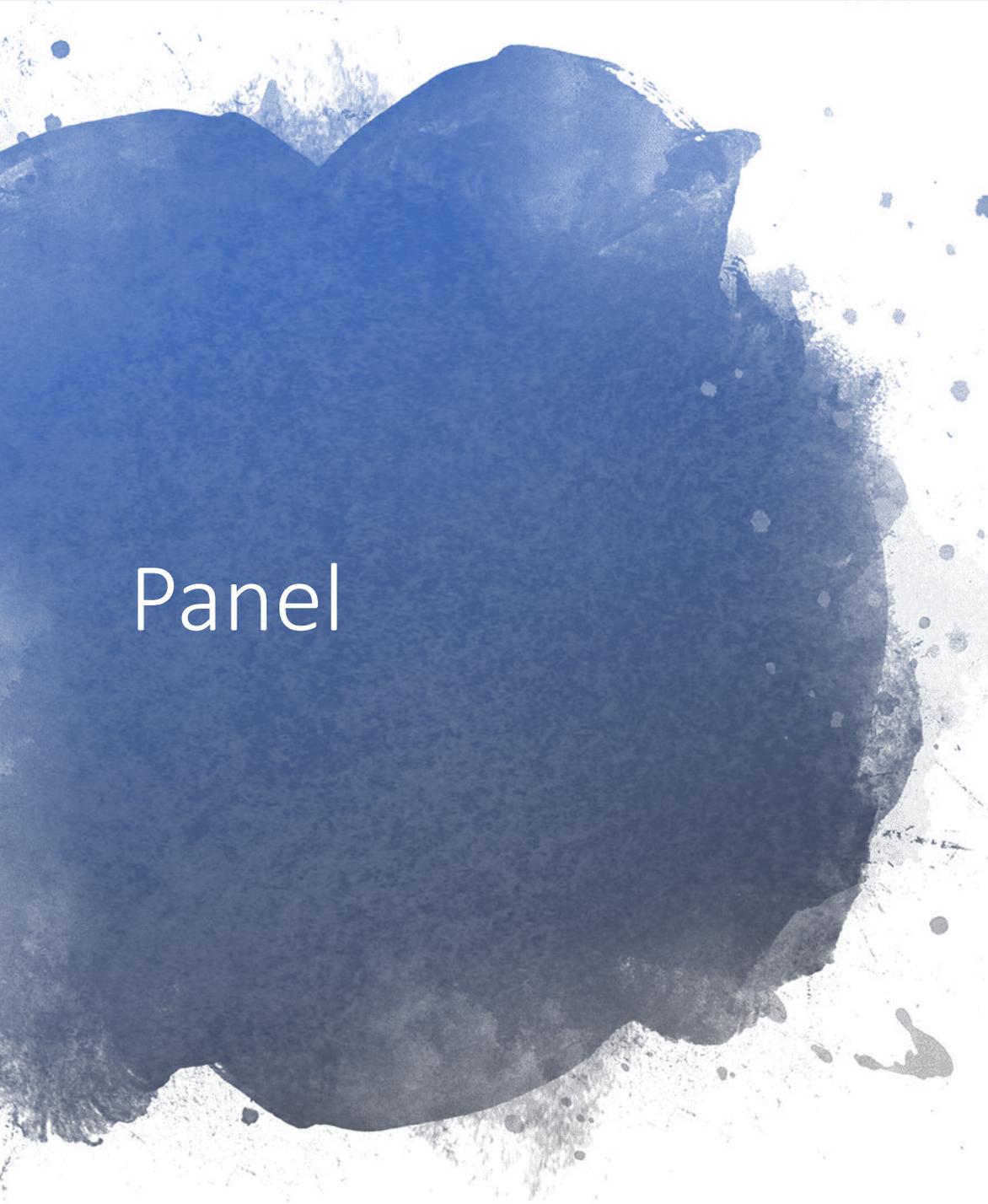




PROMOTING HEALTHY SCHOOL CLIMATES

Meeting of the Board OF Regents
November 13, 2017



Panel

1. **Renée Rider**, Associate Commissioner for School Operations and Management Services, **NYS Education Department**
2. **Stanley Hansen**, Assistant Commissioner for Access, Equity, and Community Engagement Services, **NYS Education Department**
3. **Dr. Genelle Morris**, Chief Accountability Officer/Chief Information Officer; and
Ebony Bullock, Assistant Superintendent of School Effectiveness, Annual Professional Performance Review, and Data Driven Instruction, **Buffalo Public Schools**
4. **Tom Andriola**, Chief of Policy and Implementation, Office Youth Justice, **NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services**
5. **Elizabeth Devaney**, Director, **Center for Social and Emotional Learning** at the Children's Institute, Rochester, NY
6. **Laurence Spring**, Superintendent of Schools, **Schenectady City School District**



What is School Climate?

School climate is -

“the way school culture affects a child’s sense of safety and acceptance, and consequently is a critical determinant of their ability to focus on the task of learning”

Dessel, A. (2010). Prejudice in schools: Promotion of an inclusive culture and climate. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(4), 407-429.

Why Measure School Climate?

Research suggests that:

- The **quality of the school climate** may be the **single most predictive factor** in any school's capacity to promote student achievement;
- If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the school climate.

Shindler, J., Jones, A., Williams, A.D., Taylor, C., Cardenia, H. (2016). The school climate-student achievement connection: If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the climate. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development* 1(1), 9-16.

New York State's Plan to Promote School Climate

To promote, measure, and improve school climate, schools and school districts take the following steps:

- a) Adopt a **school climate framework** (e.g., Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Restorative Practices, Trauma-Sensitive Practices);
- b) Establish a **Community Engagement Team**;
- c) Administer the USDE **School Climate Surveys** to students, parents, and school personnel;
- d) **Analyze Survey Results** and other pertinent data (e.g. chronic absenteeism data, school violence index, suspension data) with the Community Engagement Team; and
- e) **Create an Action Plan** with the Community Engagement Team to address areas of need.

Implementation of the USDE School Climate Surveys and School Climate Frameworks

**Dr. Genelle Morris, Chief Accountability
Officer/Chief Information Officer; and
Ms. Ebony Bullock, Assistant Superintendent of
School Effectiveness, Annual Professional
Performance Review, & Data Driven Instruction,
Buffalo Public Schools**

School Climate Survey Pilot in Buffalo Public Schools

- One of six districts in the State that piloted the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) School Climate Surveys in 2016-17 to provide feedback to NYSED
- Spring 2017 administration of surveys using USDE platform
- **7,849 Students** and **1,575 Staff from 50 schools** participated in the survey, results by domain were generated after survey closed
- Survey results are used to identify areas of need, and drive resulting change in practice in schools
- Survey results used for building awareness with staff, action planning and decision-making, assessment of change over time, and team validation.

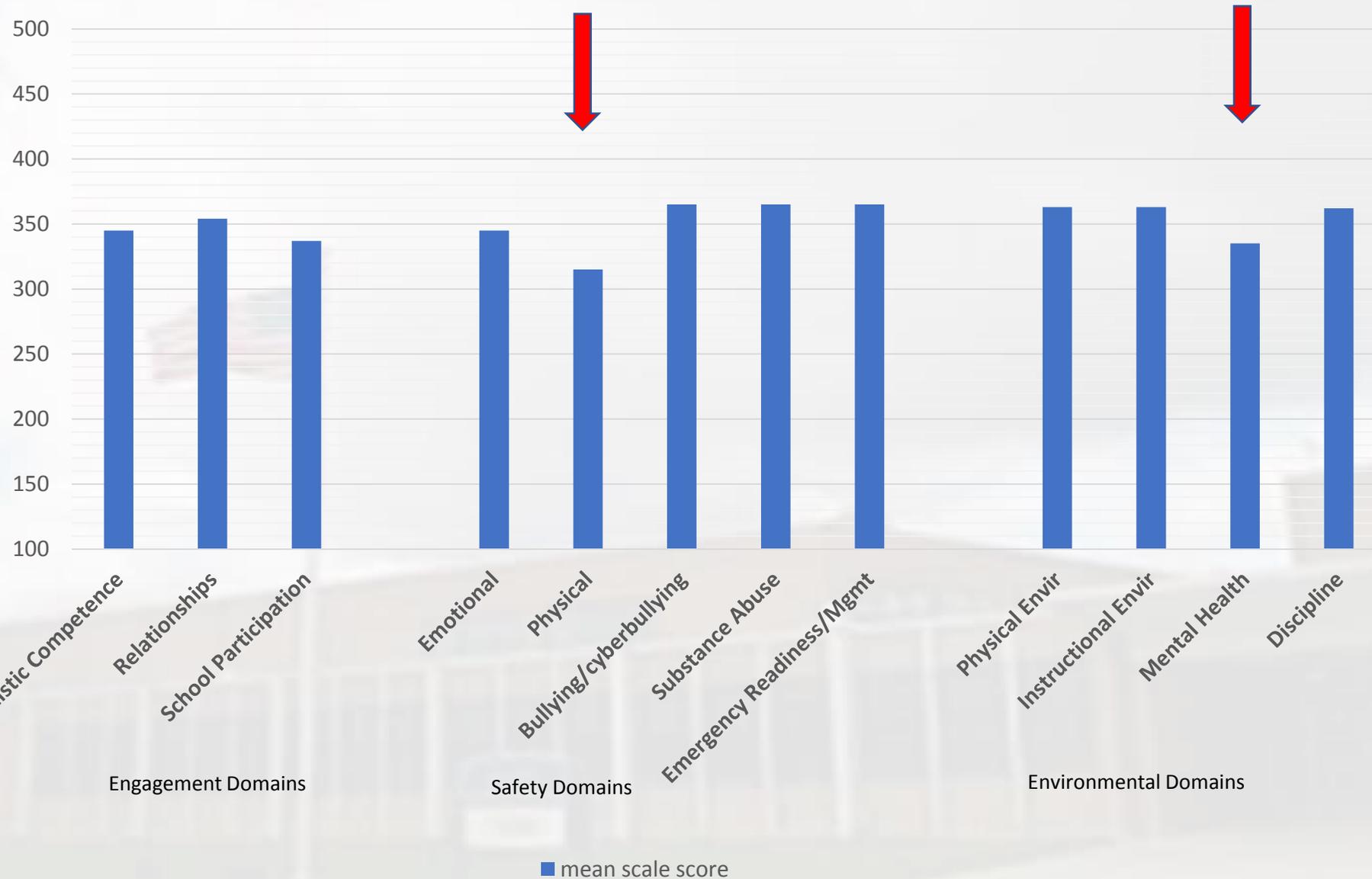
Student Survey Results from a Buffalo Middle School Environment/Mental Health Subdomain



The USDE surveys summarize student survey results by subdomain and student gender, race/ethnicity, and grade.

Student Survey Results from a Buffalo Middle School

All Subdomains



Schools may compare the results of the USDE surveys across all subdomains, for all students, or for student subgroups.

How Are the Survey Results Used in Buffalo Public Schools?

- Schools conduct a "town hall" meeting with students and parents to share survey results and engage the whole school community in action planning around problem areas.
- Student leadership advisors use the data to inform student leadership projects around culture and climate improvements.
- If staff are reporting a negative climate among staff on the survey, school teams develop ways to ensure that teachers feel acknowledged and appreciated for their work.
- If students are reporting that they are feeling unsafe or bullied in a particular area of the building, school teams create an improved supervision plan for that area to include interventions aimed at improving safety.
- Using USDE school climate survey data is a component of the District's MTSS:B (Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavior) work.
- It is also one of the data sources that the District Tier 1 team uses in the Data Driven Inquiry/ Improvement Cycle to develop district level supports and interventions for academic and behavior improvement across all schools.

Highlight:

PS# 94 West Hertel Academy (WHA #94)



- West Hertel Pledge
- We are the West Hertel **OWLS!**
- We are **O**utstanding!
- We are **W**orthy!
- We are **L**eaders!
- We are **S**mart!
- And....."We Aim High!"

Student Characteristics at WHA #94

- Low proficiency rates for all subgroups in both ELA and Math
- High Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) and suspension rates
- English as a New Language (ENL) students comprise 33% of student population
- Special classroom (8:1:1, 12:1:1 or 15:1) at most grade levels
- 90%+ Free and/or Reduced Priced Lunch
- Students impacted by poverty, trauma, homelessness, violence, or newly arrived to the United States
- Priority/Receivership accountability status

Initiatives to Promote Healthy School Climate at WHA #94

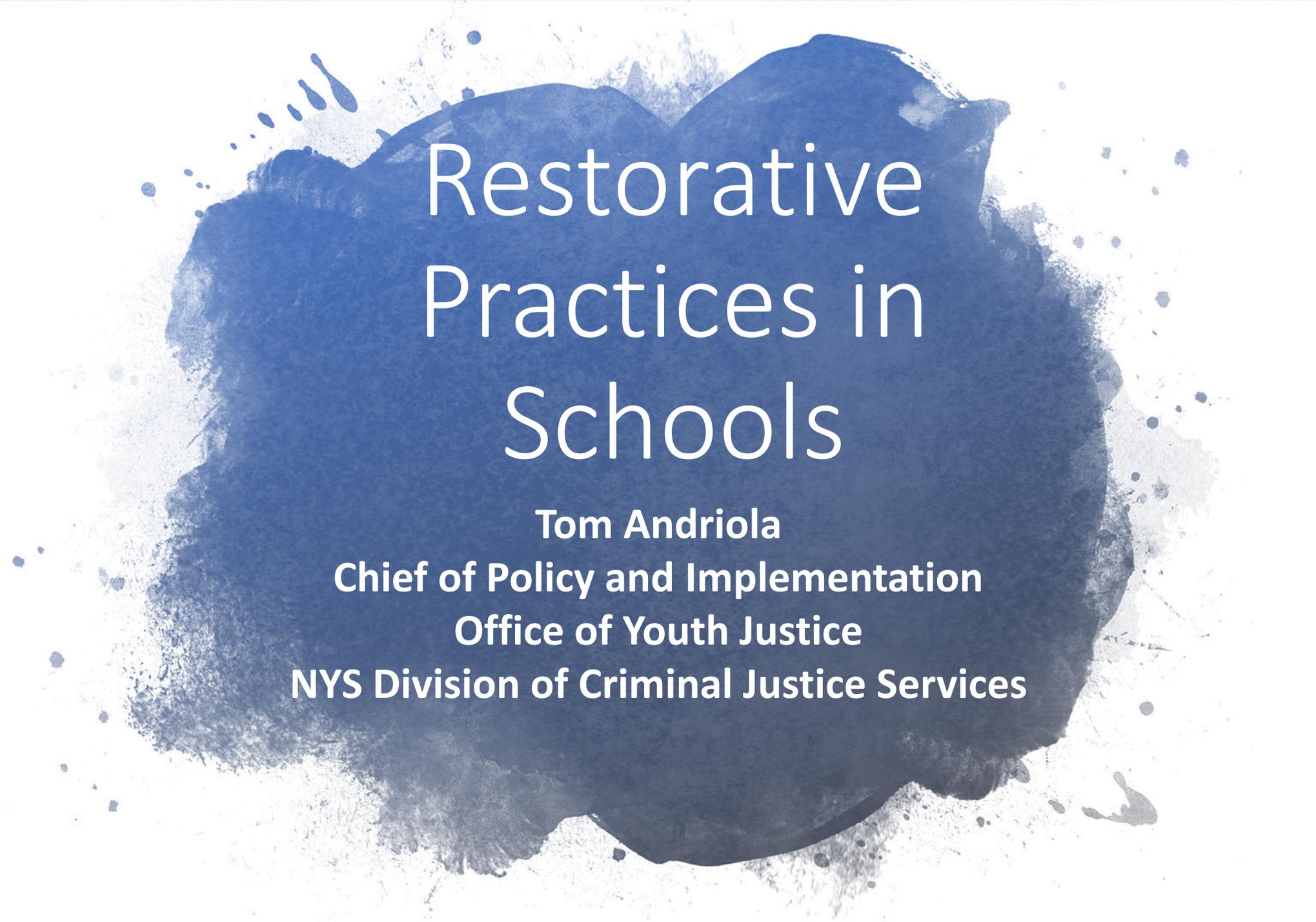
- Backpack Program
- Clothing donation and distribution services
- Community School initiative
- Mental and physical health clinics
- Saturday academies
- Mindfulness room to engage in activities (yoga, meditation) that help students manage emotions in times of stress
- Grade level/House initiatives

Progress Meeting Receivership Targets

After Implementing School Climate Initiatives in WHA # 94

80% met in 2015-16, and 75% met in 2016-17

DEMONSTRABLE IMPROVEMENT TARGET	2015-16	2016-17
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ALL 3-8 MATH STUDENTS AT LEVEL 2 & ABOVE	X	X
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ALL 4 & 8 SCIENCE STUDENTS AT LEVEL 2 & ABOVE	X	
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ALL 3-8 ELA STUDENTS AT LEVEL 2 & ABOVE	X	X
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF 3-8 ELA BLACK STUDENTS LEVEL 2 & ABOVE	X	X
INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ALL 3-8 ELA LEP STUDENTS LEVEL 2 & ABOVE	X	X
DECREASED OUT OF SCHOOL STUDENT SUSPENSION RATE	X	X
PROVIDED 200 HOURS OF QUALITY EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY TIME	X	X
IMPROVED ON TEACHER PRACTICES AND DECISION MAKING (DTSDE TENET 4)	X	X



Restorative Practices in Schools

Tom Andriola
Chief of Policy and Implementation
Office of Youth Justice
NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services

Why Change Practices In NYS?

- Youth with discretionary suspensions are 3 times more likely to drop out of school
- Youth with a first arrest are 2 times more likely to drop out of school
- Youth with a first arrest and a court appearance are 4 times more likely to drop out of school
- Youth with juvenile court involvement are 7 times more likely to have adult criminal records

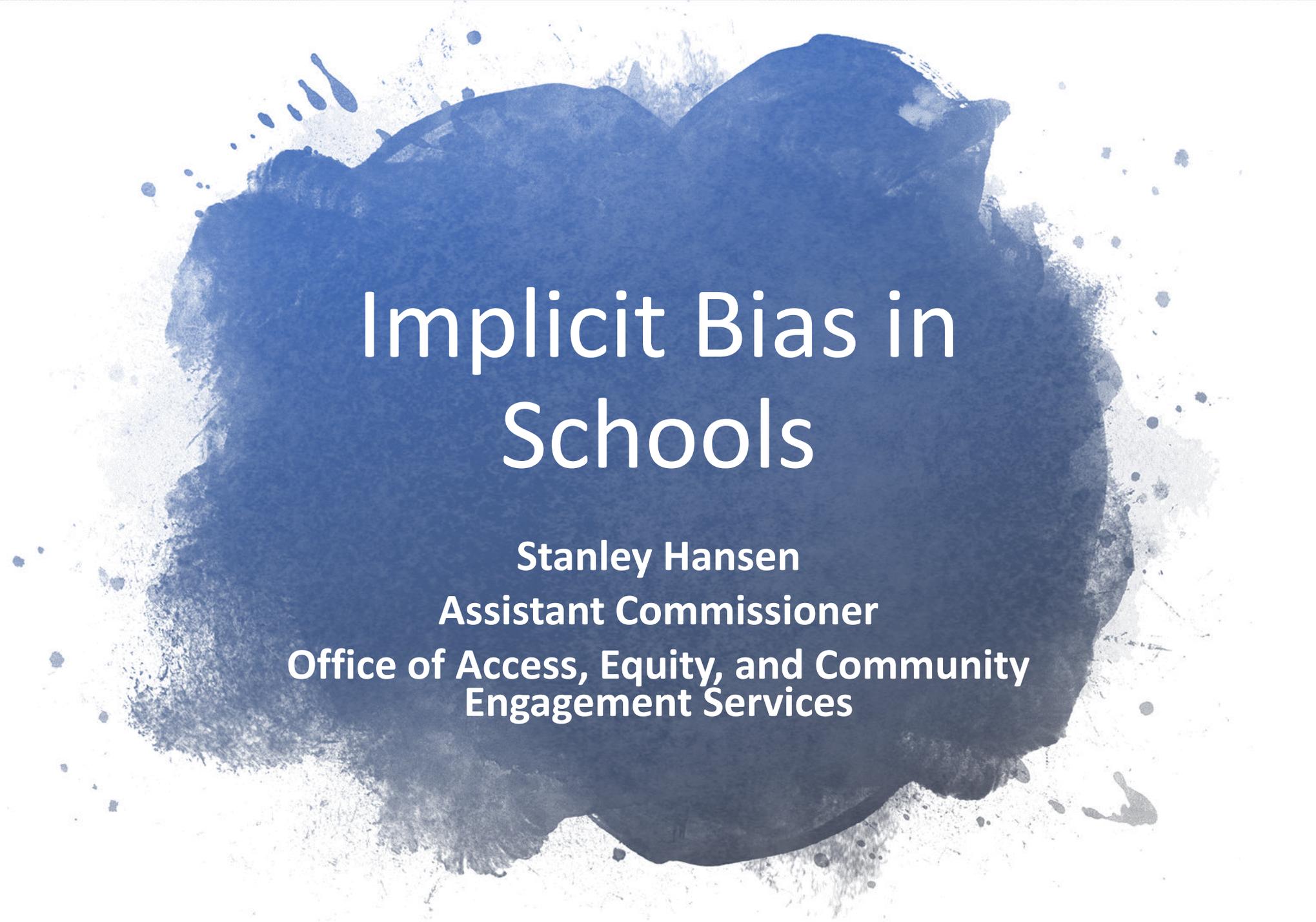
Source: Sweeten, Gary. 2006. "Who Will Graduate Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement." *Justice Quarterly*, 23(4): 462-480; Gatti, U., R. Trembley and F. Vitaro. 2009. "Latrogenic effect of juvenile justice." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 50(8): 990-998;

Traditional vs. Restorative Approaches

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules are broken	People and relationships are harmed
Justice focuses on establishing guilt	Justice identifies needs and responsibility
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
Justice directed at the perceived offender; the victim is ignored	Offender, victim, and school all have direct roles in the justice process
Rules and intent outweigh whether outcome is positive or negative	Offender is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm, and working towards positive outcomes
Limited opportunity for expressing remorse or making amends	Opportunity given to make amends and express remorse

Current Initiatives and Next Steps

- NYS Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) Seed Funding
- Restorative Practices Train the Trainer – Dr. Tom Cavanagh
 - BOCES and School Districts – 100 personnel trained
 - Partner Organizations – 17 personnel trained
 - Additional Trainings Planned for 2018
- Similar Trainings Being Sought for Trauma-Informed Care
- Pilot Project for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum
- Key to Implementation – Trained Coaches to Continuously Work with Schools



Implicit Bias in Schools

Stanley Hansen
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Access, Equity, and Community
Engagement Services

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

- May be favorable or unfavorable
- Involuntary and without an individual's awareness or intentional control
- Cause feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance
- These associations develop over the course of a lifetime

Source: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University

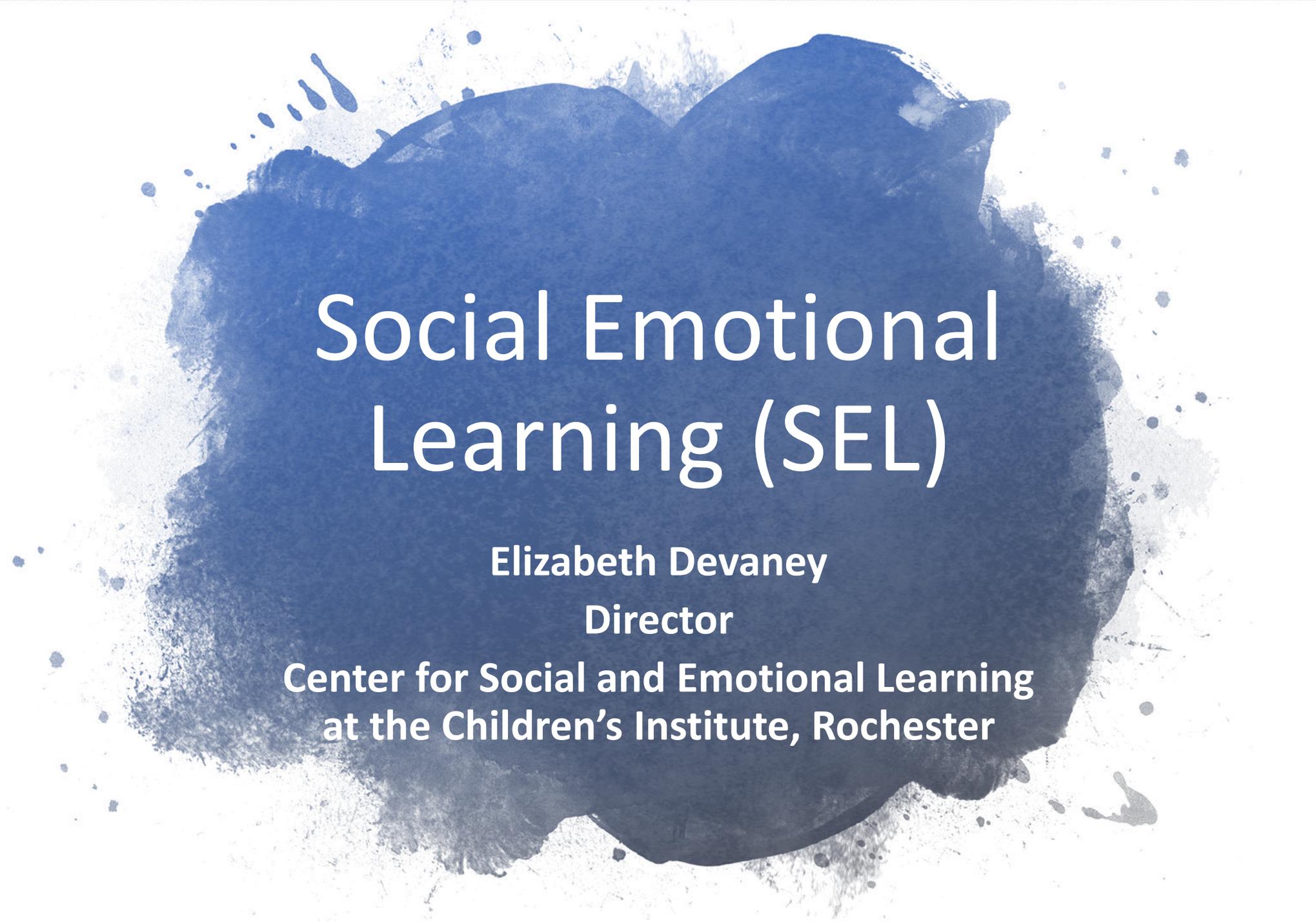
Implicit Bias Findings

- We all have biases, but the impact of our biases on others depends on the roles we play in society
- Implicit bias is more prevalent than explicit bias because our minds are cognitive machines that encode and store many associations between groups and traits that we have not consciously processed
 - numbers, shapes, colors
 - In the U.S.: race, gender, and age
- Implicit bias is a stronger predictor of day-to-day behavior than explicit bias because much of our behavior/thoughts are automatic
- The potential impact of implicit bias on behavior can be over-ridden by conscious effort

Implicit Bias Among Early Educators

Study by Yale Child Study Center

- National sample of Black and White pre-school educators
- Watched videos of pre-school Black and White boys and girls
- Findings revealed that when told to expect disruptive behavior, White **and** Black teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys, than White children.



Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Elizabeth Devaney

Director

**Center for Social and Emotional Learning
at the Children's Institute, Rochester**

What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

SEL is a **process** through which children and adults **gain** and **apply** knowledge, attitudes, and skills to:

- Understand and manage emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Feel and show empathy for others
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions



Core Social and Emotional Competencies



The research is clear...

SEL matters now

Students participating in SEL had

- **11 percentile-point** gain in academic achievement compared to non-participants
- Statistically significant **improvements** in attitudes, positive social behavior, emotional distress, and conduct problems



The research is clear... SEL matters later



For every one-point increase on a child's social competence score in kindergarten, he/she was:

- **Twice as likely** to attain a college degree in early adulthood
- **54%** more likely to earn a high school diploma
- **46%** more likely to have a full-time job at the age of 25

For every one-point decrease he/she had:

- **67%** higher chance of having been arrested by early adulthood
- **82%** higher rate of recent marijuana usage
- **82%** higher chance of being in or on a waiting list for public housing

Teachers and schools are demanding SEL

- 46% of teachers report high daily stress
- When teachers are highly stressed, students show lower levels of social adjustment and academic performance.
- Between 23% and 42% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years
- Teachers trained in and implementing evidence-based SEL have less stress and anxiety, greater classroom quality, greater job satisfaction
- 93% of teachers believe teaching SEL is important



Employers are demanding SEL

- 50% of employers say they can't fill vacancies because prospective employees lack communication, adaptability, decision-making, and problem-solving skills (*Chronicle of Higher Education study*)
- Lack of problem solving skills #1 skill deficiency among current employees (*Manufacturing Institute Skills Gap study*)
- Leadership and managerial skills ranked as the biggest skills gap between needs and potential employees (*American Society for Training and Development*)



School-wide Vision for Social and Emotional Learning

Multi-tiered Supports for Students

System Changes for Adults

- Organizational needs assessment
- School climate assessment
- School-wide professional development on SEL
- Changes to instructional practice
- Intentional relationship-building
- Policy and protocol changes
- Targeted and meaningful family engagement

Intervention/Indicated:

One-on-one counseling and skill-building; functional behavior assessment; cognitive behavior therapy; assessment; referrals

Prevention/Selected/Targeted:

Student support centers; social skills training; Student Support Team (SST); Take 5 breaks; Targeted SEL programs (e.g., Primary Project); peer mediation; support for healthy habits; peace circles; lunch bunch

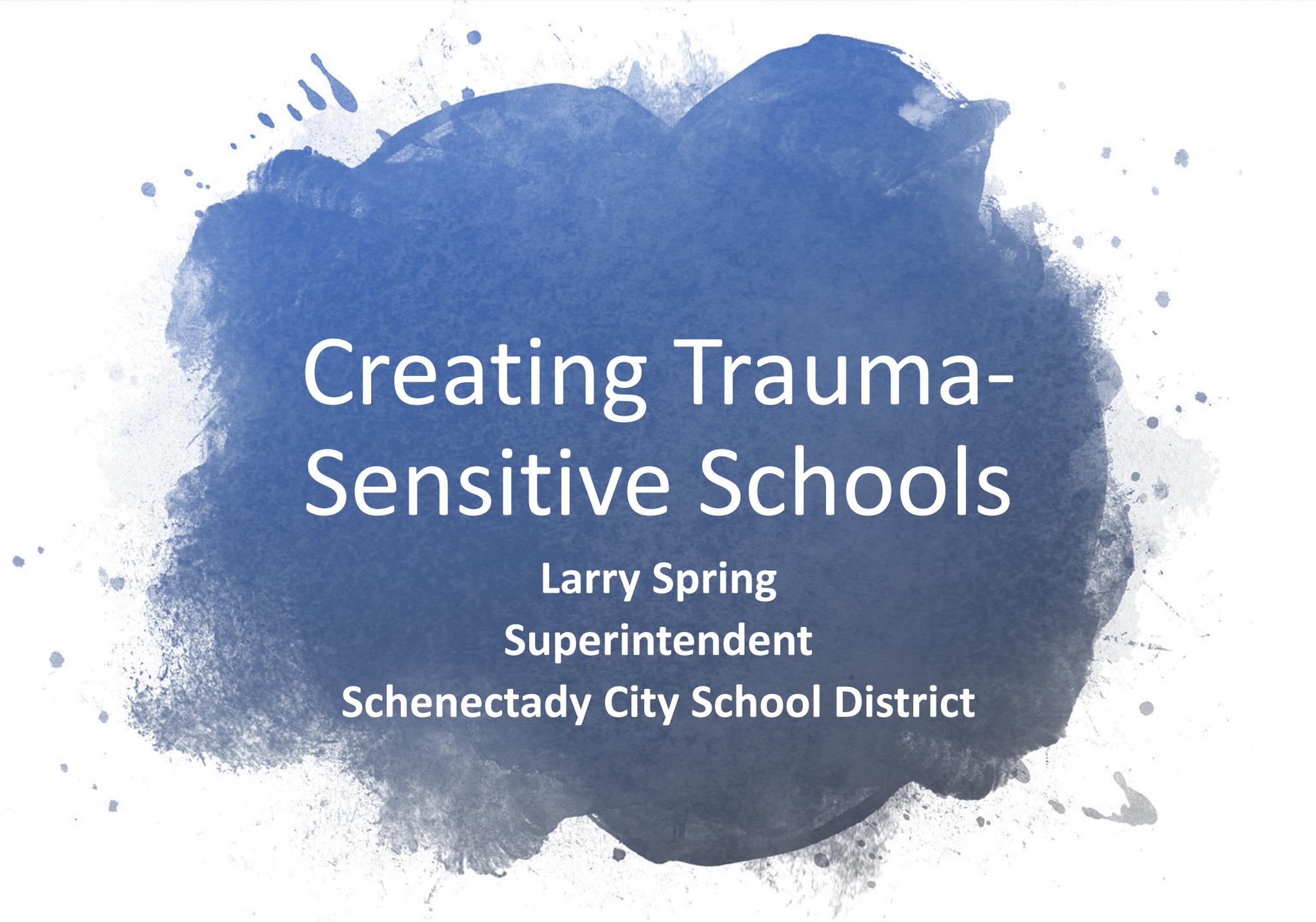
Promotion/Universal:

SEL skills instruction (through SEL program or teacher practice); Bullying prevention; student centered discipline; restorative practices; morning meetings; yoga; movement breaks; calm-down spots in classrooms; service learning; buddy programs; school-wide assemblies; SEL visuals (e.g., theme of the day/month, bulleting boards); mindfulness; changes to physical space; PBIS; healthy habits lessons

How does a school implement SEL?

- Conduct a needs assessment: interview staff, students, and parents
- Develop a vision statement, working collaboratively with school leaders for what SEL will include in this school
- Develop an implementation plan (often multi-year)
- Provide training for staff, support, and coaching





Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Larry Spring
Superintendent
Schenectady City School District

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Childhood Trauma

- ACEs or Childhood Trauma are traumatic events that children experience. These traumas can be the result of intentional violence—such as physical, sexual abuse, or domestic violence—or the result of natural disaster, accidents, or war.
- Families living in urban poverty often encounter multiple traumas over many years. These families are less likely than families living in more affluent communities to have access to the resources that may facilitate the successful negotiation of traumatic experiences.

http://www.nctsnet.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/understanding_the_impact_of_trauma.pdf

ACEs and Childhood Trauma have been Linked to:

- Risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential, and early death.
- People with an ACE score of 4:
 - 400% increase in risk of **diseases** like emphysema or chronic bronchitis
 - 1200% increase in risk of attempting **suicide**
- People with an ACE score of 6 or more:
 - Average life expectancy is **20 years less** than those who have experienced no trauma.

Children Who Live in Chronic Stress Are:

- In a state of fight, flight or freeze
- They respond to the world as a place of constant danger
- Stress hormone Cortisol is released when stressed

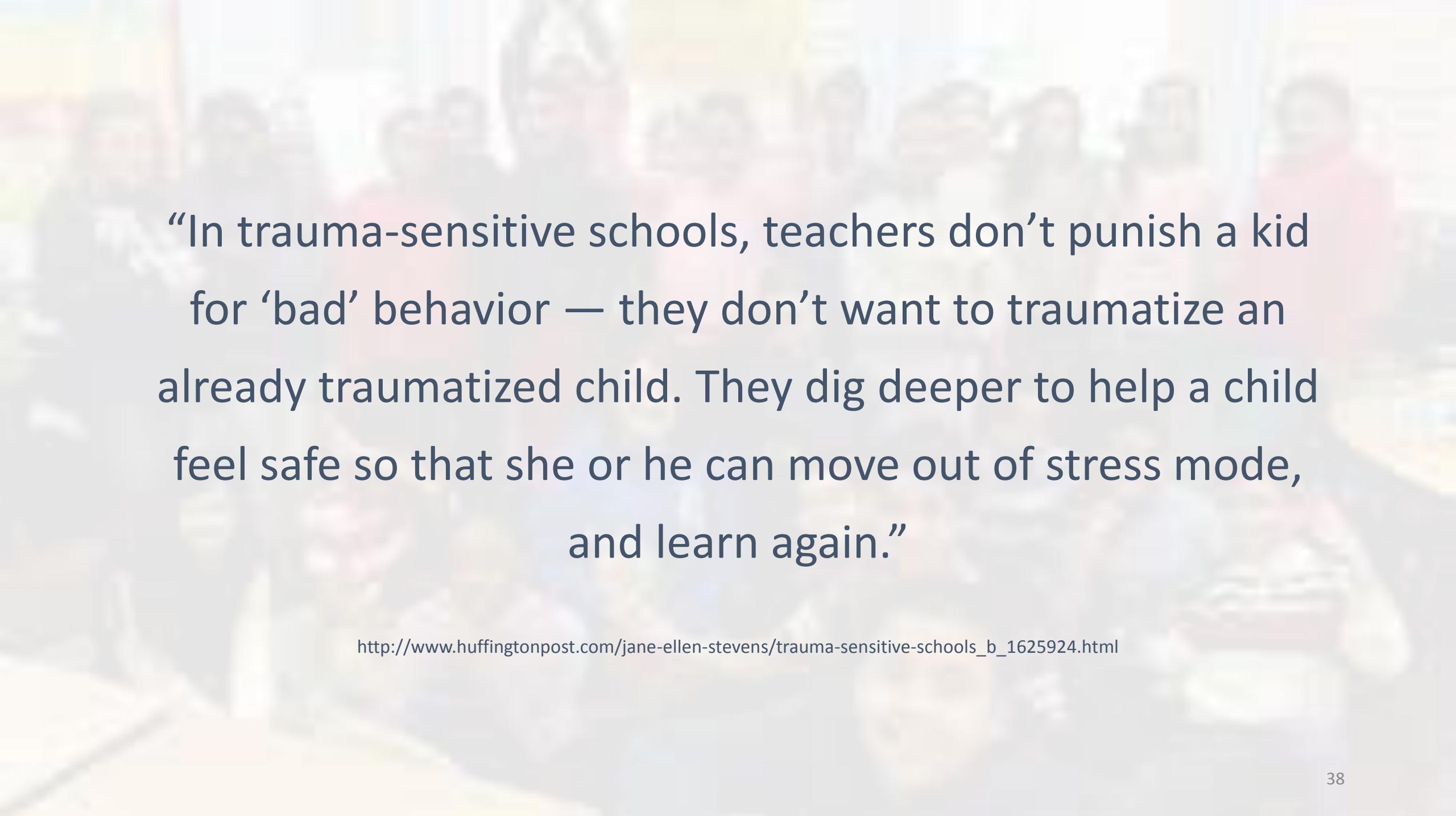
Requires us to reframe our thinking:

Instead of:

“What is wrong with you?”

ask yourself,

“What has happened to you?”



“In trauma-sensitive schools, teachers don’t punish a kid for ‘bad’ behavior — they don’t want to traumatize an already traumatized child. They dig deeper to help a child feel safe so that she or he can move out of stress mode, and learn again.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jane-ellen-stevens/trauma-sensitive-schools_b_1625924.html

Trauma Sensitive Schools (TSS) Implementation in Schenectady City Schools, Year 1:

- **Beyond Consequences**

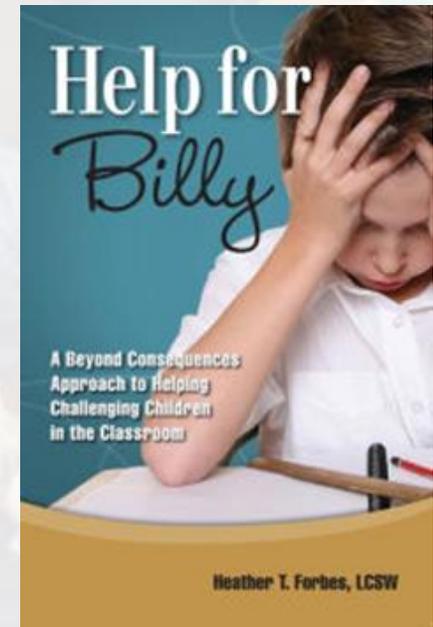
District Core Team attended conference in St. Louis

- **1st Annual TSS Summer Institute: July 18th -20th**

Building Level Teams attended and started building plans

- **Book Study**

Help for Billy by Heather Forbes



Schenectady City Schools TSS Implementation Teams

- Core Team consisting of 15 members
- Building Level Implementation Leaders consisting of 2-7 from each building
- Core Team and Building Implementation Leaders will meet once a month to talk about implementation plans and work on book study Help for Billy
- Building teams consisting of 10-15 members will meet together monthly to plan for building implementation

Highlights: Annual TSS Summer Institute Schenectady City Schools

Keynote Speakers:

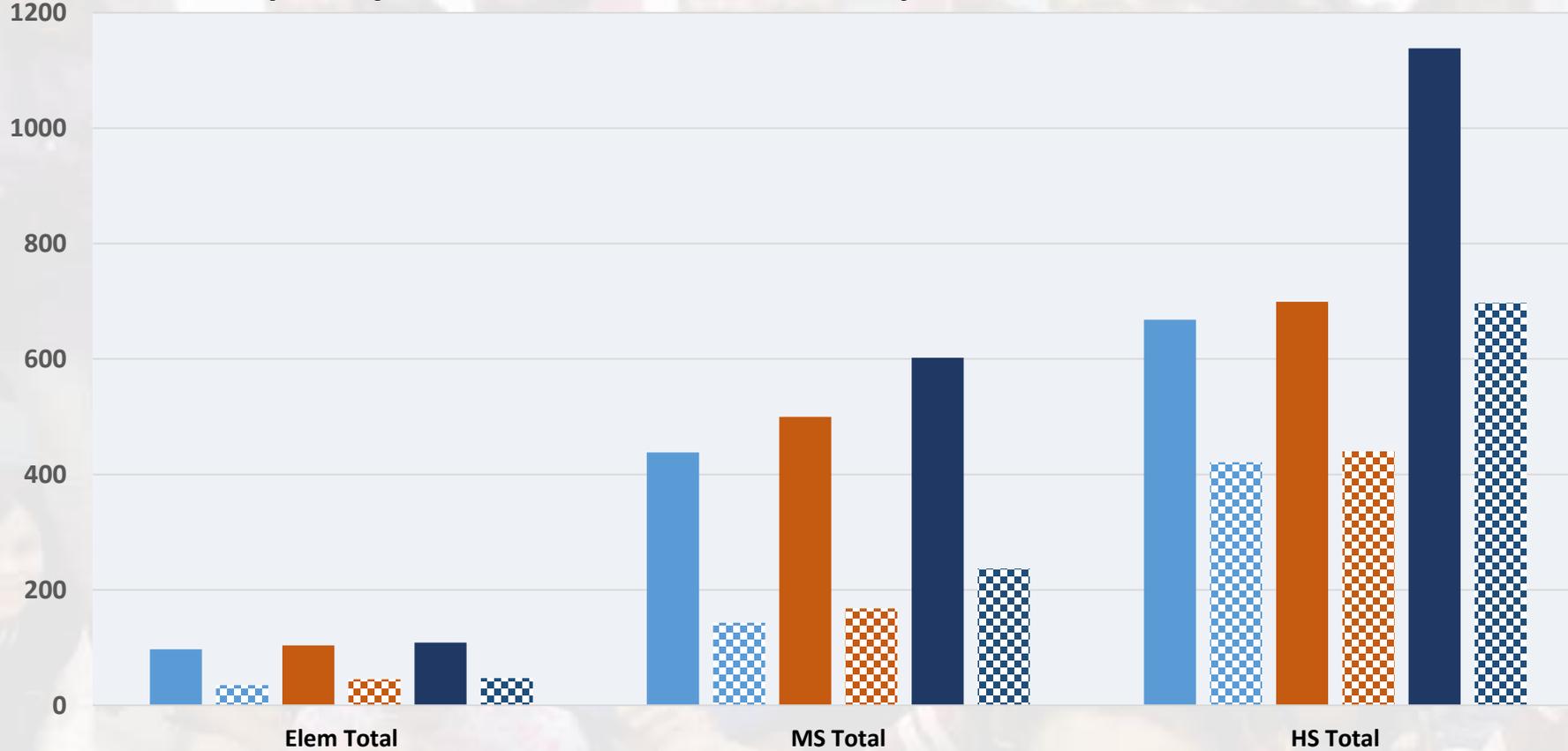
- Larry Spring
 - *Opening Remarks*
- Allison Sampson-Jackson
 - *Adverse Childhood Experiences*
 - *Trauma and the brain*
- Nathan Mandsager
 - *A parent perspective*
- Dr. Steven Birchak
 - *Resilience*

Breakout Sessions:

- Mindfulness
- Bridges Out of Poverty
- Creating Calm Spaces
- TSS: Logical Consequences
- TSS: Dys-Regulation and Co-Regulation
- Restorative Practices

Discipline Referrals in Schenectady City Schools **Decreased by 50%** After Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices

Disciplinary Incidents, Events, and Participants: SCSD 9/2016 vs 9/2017



- 2016-17 Incident Count
- 2016-17 Event Count
- 2016-17 Participant Count
- ▣ 2017-18 Incident Count
- ▣ 2017-18 Event Count
- ▣ 2017-18 Participant Count

