



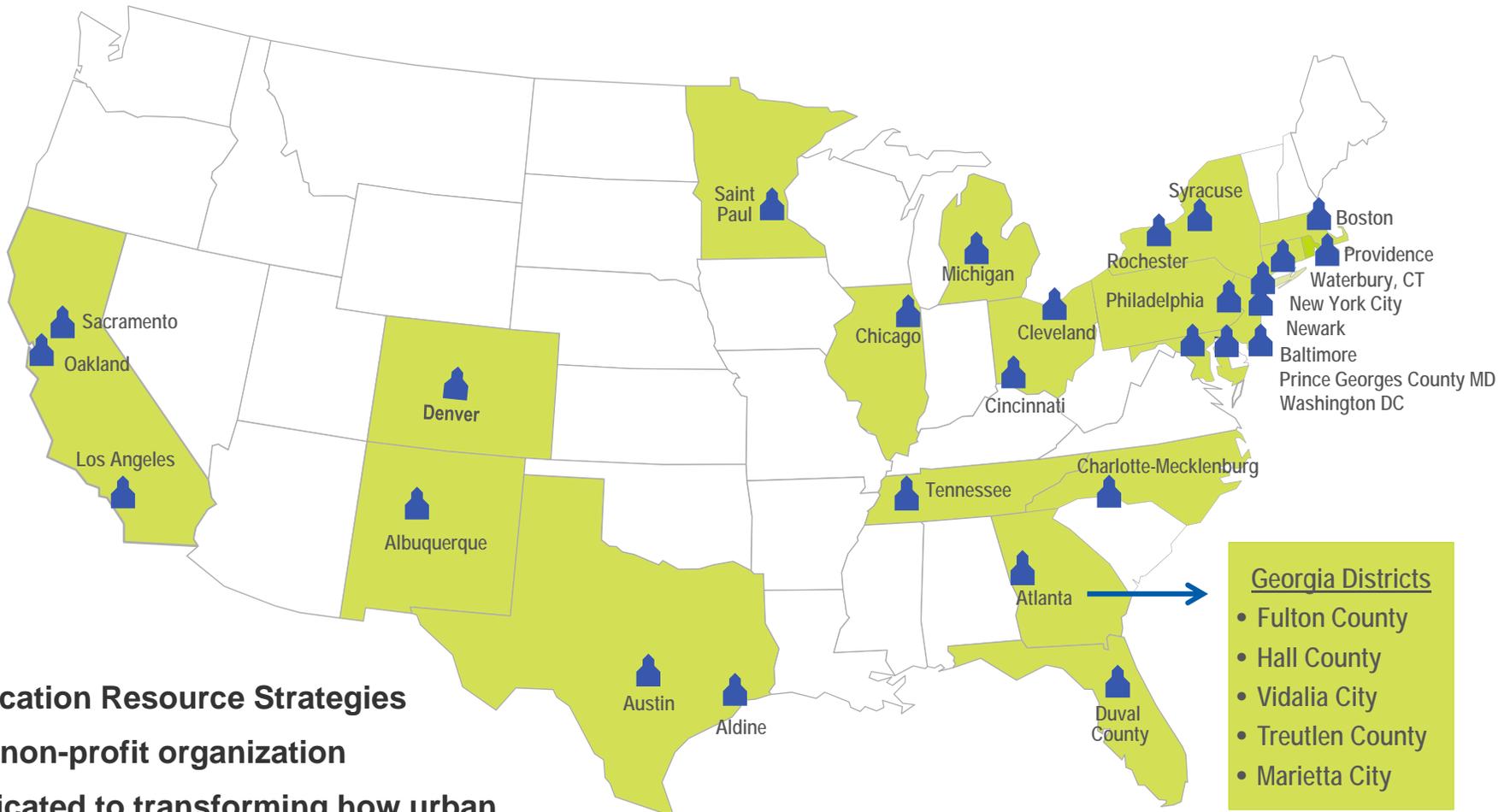
# School Budget Hold'em

CT Alliance District Convening  
January 16, 2014

**Let's imagine.**



# Who are our partners?

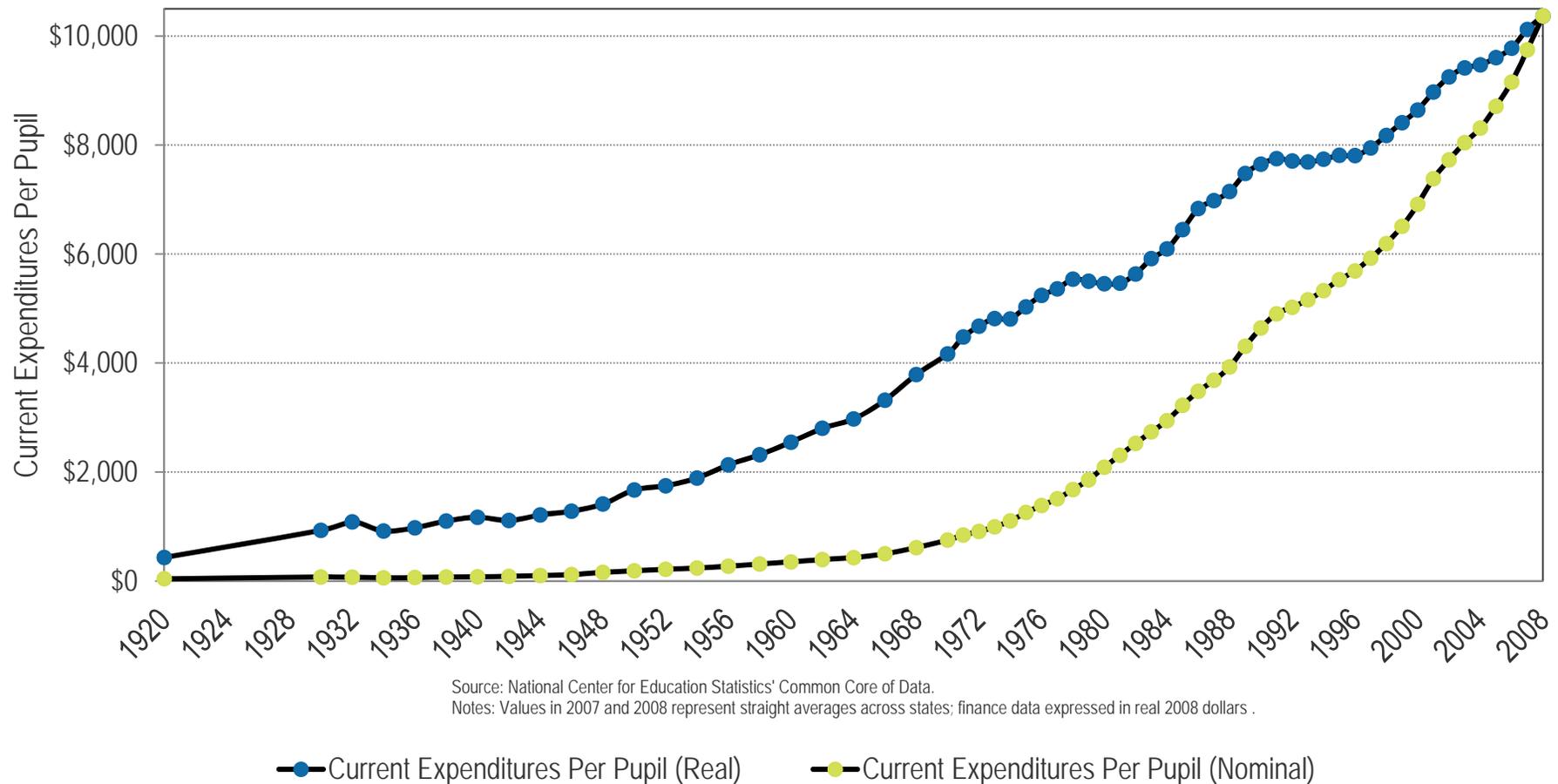


**Education Resource Strategies**  
 is a non-profit organization  
 dedicated to transforming how urban  
 school systems organize resources—people, time, technology,  
 and money—so that every school succeeds for every student.

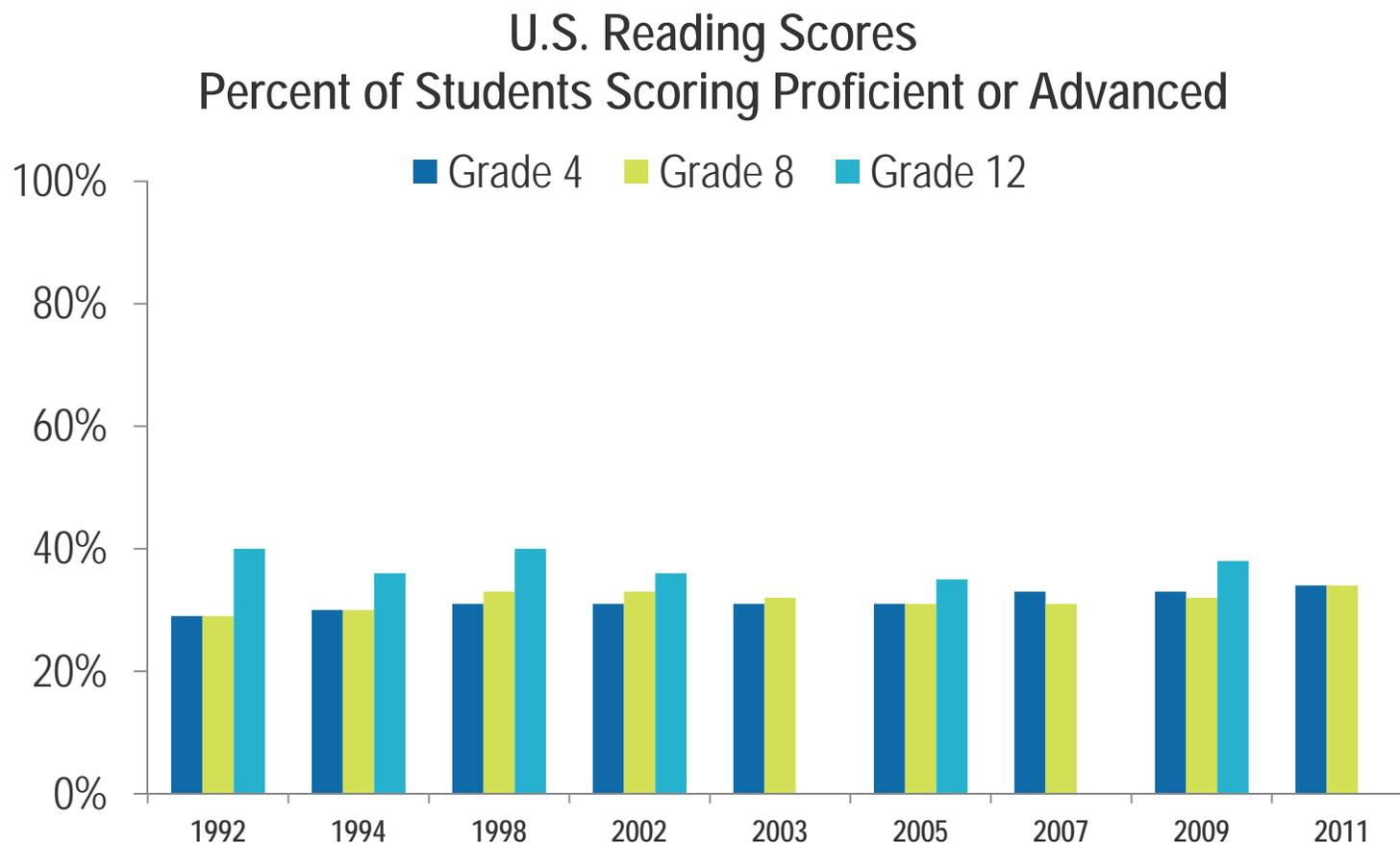
# Why now?

# Once upon a time, real spending on US education increased every year for 100 years

National Public K-12 Current Expenditures Per Pupil (1920-2008)



# And yet, student performance did not increase at the same rate



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Elementary and Secondary Education Assessments

# Why not? Because, as a nation, we spend \$0.30 – 0.40 of every education dollar on practices that have little impact on student achievement

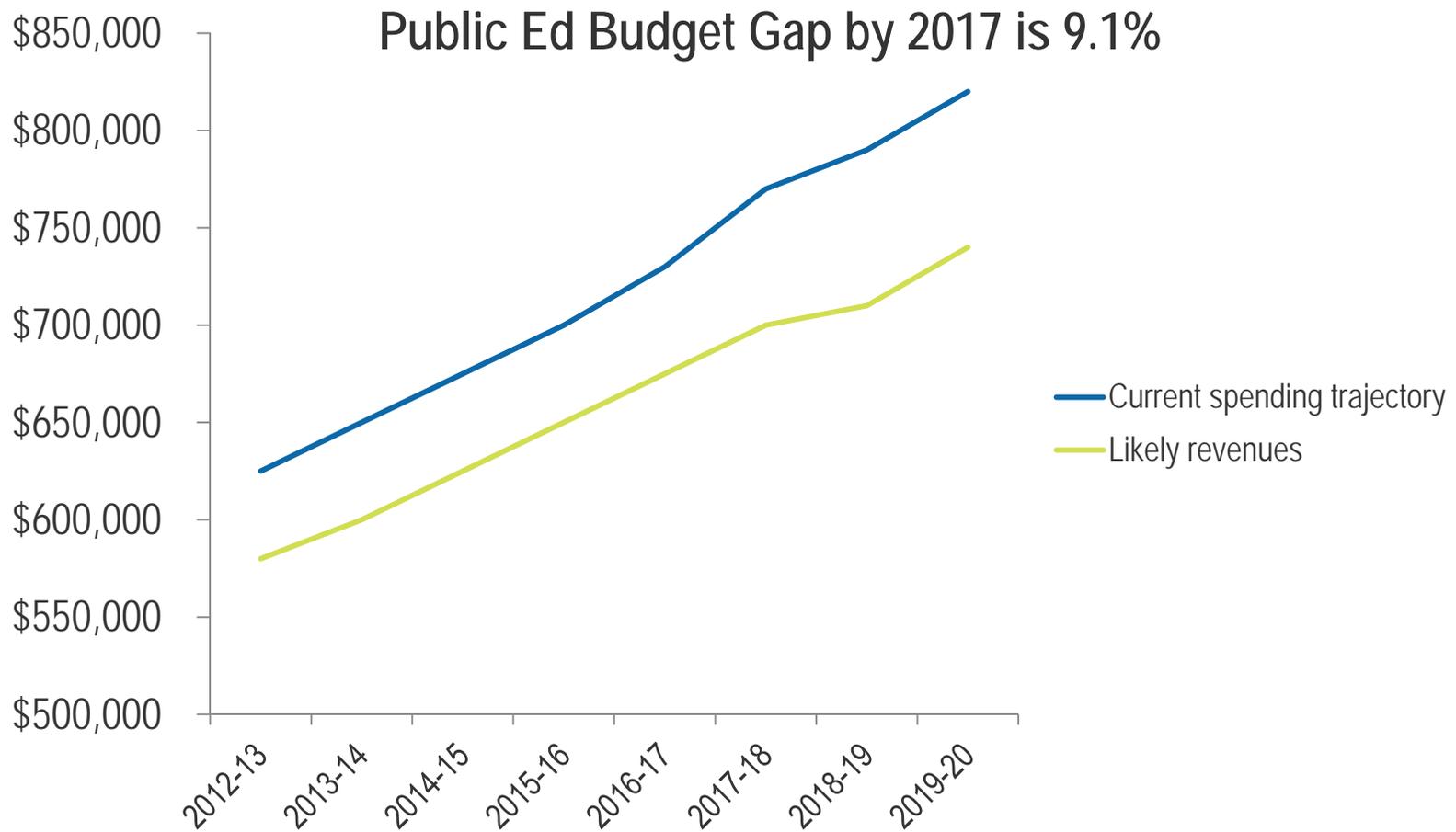
Up to \$0.40 of every \$1 spent on misalignments



## Some top resource use misalignments (Nation-wide):

- Investing in small reductions in whole-day class sizes in all subjects
- Compensating teachers for traits not closely associated with student learning, such as experience or advanced degrees
- Not varying time to meet student needs or to allow progress upon mastery
- Serving students in overly restrictive programs or settings

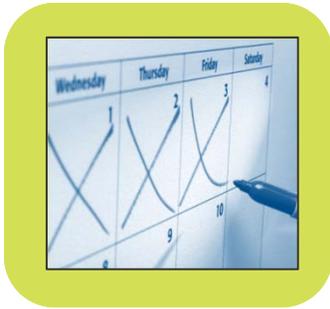
# The status quo will no longer suffice: In recent years there has been a budget gap which is forecast to continue



Source: Marguerite Roza, Research Associate Professor at the University of Washington's College of Education and Senior Scholar at the Center on Reinventing Public Education. November 2011; Current spending trajectory assumes no incremental reforms and spending growth of 4%

# Typical responses preserve current structures and attempt to do less with less

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Furlough days



Across the board cuts

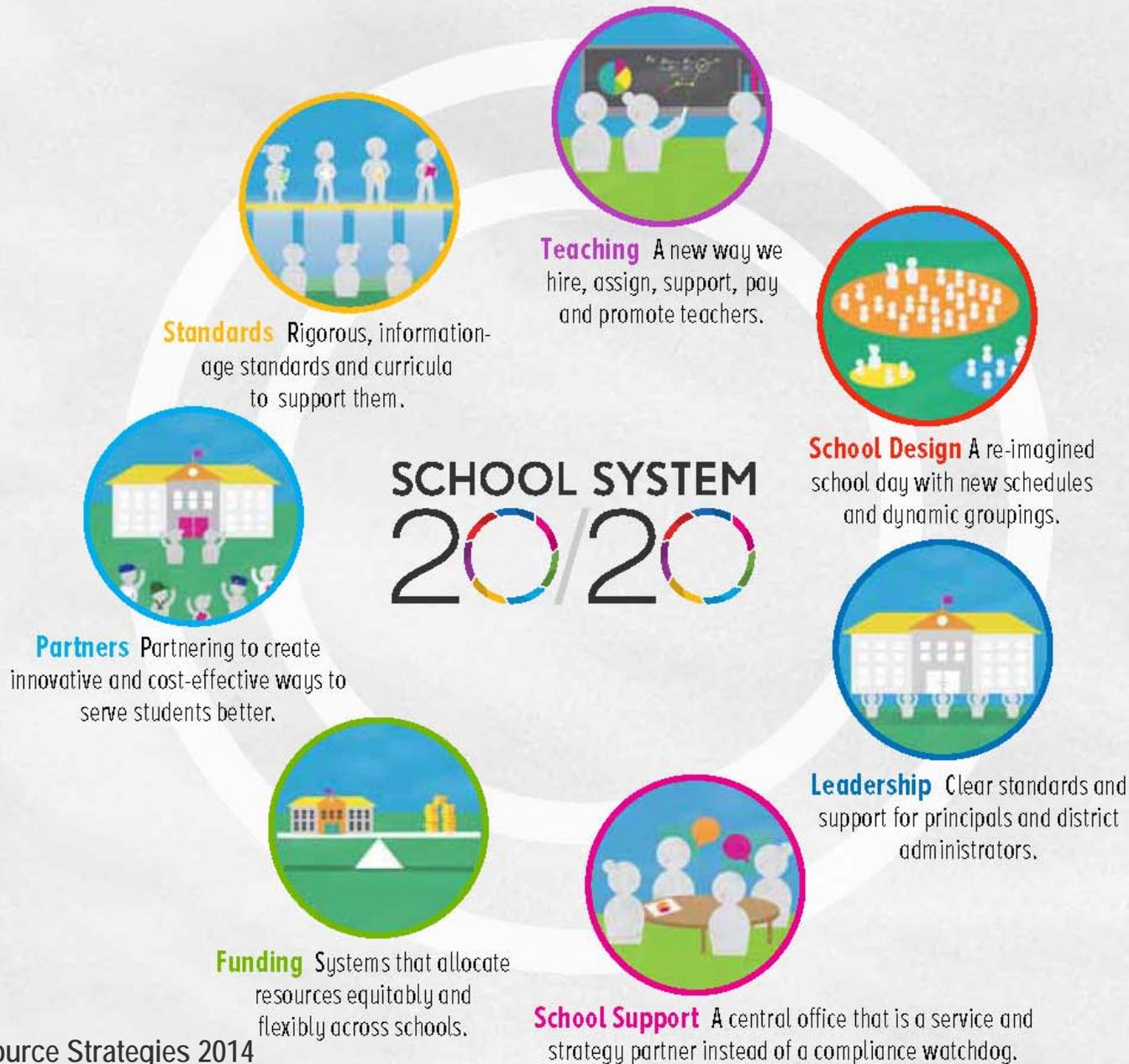


Frozen salaries



Incremental staffing ratio adjustments

# To meet new challenges, we must TRANSFORM our systems



# A new vision will require leaders to make trade-offs

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*For the same cost a typical 25,000 student urban district can:*

Reduce K-6 class size  
by 2

OR

Add 90 minutes of  
collaborative planning  
time for all teachers

Increase % SPED in HS  
by 2 percentage points

OR

Invest in 1 RTI  
Specialist for every 160  
K-2 students

Give all teachers a 5%  
raise

OR

Double the salary of  
the top 5% of teachers



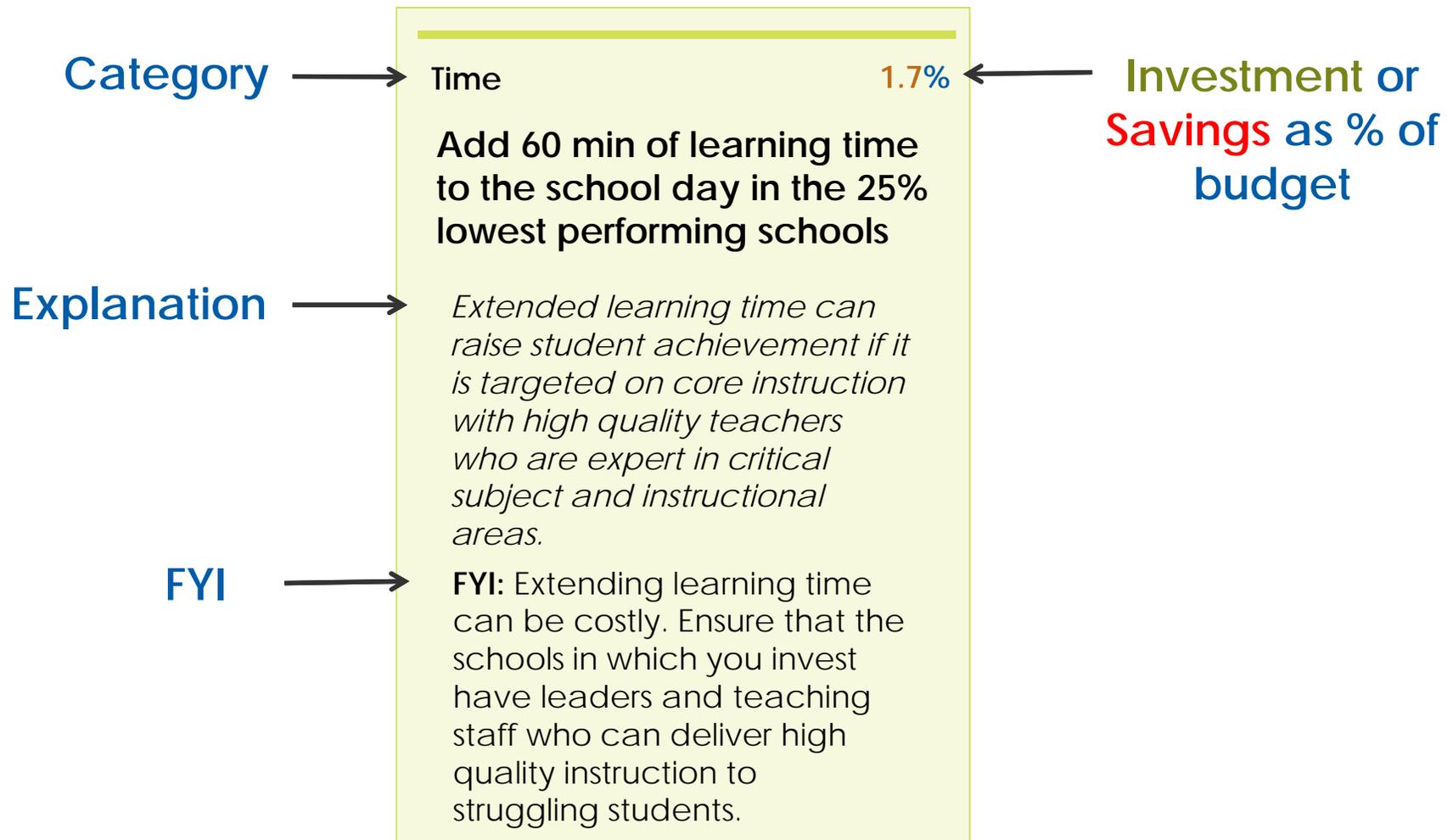
# School Budget Hold'em -- More Than a Game

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- An interactive exploration of the thoughtful trade-offs school district leaders must make
- Turns ordinary budgeting into a visioning exercise
- Allows non-district leaders to “put on the hat” of district leaders to understand the tough choices they must make
- For everyone – not just the “Finance” team



# What's a Hold'em Card?



# How To Play

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Step 1 Organize into Groups (3-4 people)

Step 2 Assign Roles

Step 3 Agree on Priorities

Step 4 Read through Cards

Step 5 Select your Investments

Step 6 Finalize your Hand

Step 7 Discuss

# Establish Priorities Before You Play

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Imagine you are the superintendent of “District A”

## Background

Enrollment/Size: Mid-size district w/ enrollment declines

Budget: Current gap is 1%; in fourth year of budget cuts—already cut central office and other operations

Demographics: 45% F&R, 15% Special Ed, 6% ELL

Student Performance: Low in reading and math—low performers concentrated at 25% of schools

Teacher Comp: 90% of increases over base due to education/experience

Teacher PD: 4 staff days/year; 75 min. daily prep; 45 min. collaborative planning

Teacher Evaluation: Not historically rigorous

## Priorities

Support continuous improvement of effective teachers—recognize, support, and reward great teaching.

Organize time and staffing to provide individual support to match student needs in high priority areas, focusing on early intervention for at-risk students.

Ensure school leadership has information, knowledge, and resources to build strategic school designs that maximize student growth potential.

Download our Facilitator’s Guide at [erstrategies.org](http://erstrategies.org)

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# Things To Consider

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- Select cards thoughtfully
- Consider inter-relationships
- Accept approximation
- Be bold
- Don't avoid staffing cuts
- Use Wild Cards

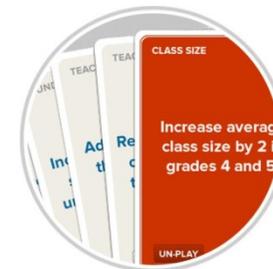
# Schedule

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11:05-11:20 Introduction



11:20-12:10 Let's Play Hold'em



12:10-12:30 Discussion



# Let's Play!



# Discussion Questions

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1. What were the biggest insights and/or surprises in your choices?
2. What particular investments or savings would be most feasible?
3. What particular investments or savings would be most challenging?
4. How could you use Hold'em with your team?



# Hold'em Online

## SCHOOL BUDGET **Hold'em**

### Draw Your Hand

Advance your long-term goals. Set your budget goal, then draw cards to achieve it. It's not about luck ... it's about making smart trade-offs.

### Get started now

Select your budget target:

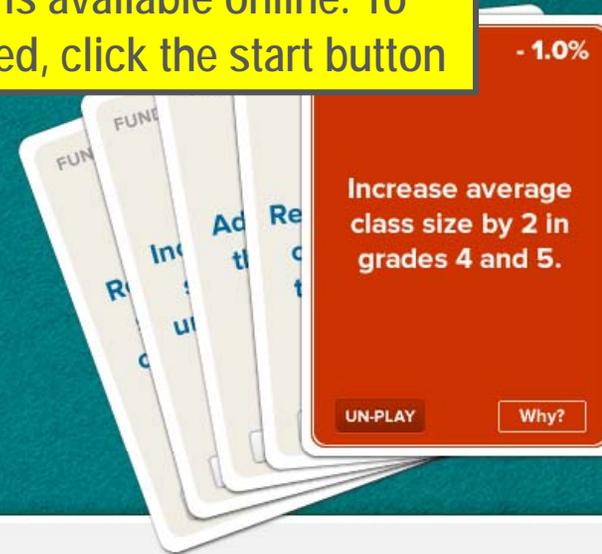
-2%



START

[How to Play](#)

Hold'em is available online. To get started, click the start button



### Smart trade-offs are the name of the game.

We can't afford to just cut. Achieving educational and budgetary goals requires administrators to think differently about how they balance reductions and investments. The good news is that today's budget realities offer an opportunity to discover how strategic reallocation of resources can change the game – yielding improvements in education while saving money. [Learn more »](#)



### Are we gambling with our children's education?

Education funding decisions should never be left to chance. *School Budget Hold 'em* is more than a game...it's an interactive exploration of the thoughtful trade-offs school administrators have to make in these challenging budget times.

Play your cards right and you can win the day – transforming your district to make the most of every budget dollar, while improving student success.

**Play Hold 'em individually or with your colleagues. Then let us know what you think!**

The screenshot displays the 'SCHOOL BUDGET Hold'em' interface. At the top, there are four summary boxes: 'TOTAL INVESTMENTS' at 0.0%, 'TOTAL SAVINGS' at 0.0%, 'TOTAL BUDGET CHANGE' at 0.0%, and 'BUDGET TARGET' at +10%. Below these, the current hand is 'Untitled Hand - 03/21/2013 3:23PM'. The interface is split into 'Investments' (left) and 'Savings' (right) sections. Each section contains several cards with descriptions and 'PLAY' and 'Why?' buttons. A yellow callout box at the top center states: 'As you select cards, your total investment and savings percentages are tallied at the top of the screen'. An arrow points from this box to the summary statistics at the top. Another yellow callout box at the bottom left states: 'To choose a card for your hand, simply click "play"', with an arrow pointing to a 'PLAY' button on a card. A third yellow callout box at the bottom right states: 'For each card, you can click on "Why" to get more information about a particular option', with an arrow pointing to a 'Why?' button on a card.

ERS ▼ My ERS ☰

<b>SCHOOL BUDGET</b> <b>Hold'em</b>	<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b> <b>0.0%</b>	<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b> <b>0.0%</b>	<b>TOTAL BUDGET CHANGE</b> <b>0.0%</b>	<b>BUDGET TARGET</b> <b>+10%</b> <span>▼</span>
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<b>Show My Hand</b>	<b>Share My Hand</b>	<b>How to Play</b>	<b>More Options</b> Put Your Hand Into Action Rank Your Hand FAQ About ERS Seven Transformational Strategies
<b>Manage My Hands</b>	<b>Manage Wildcards</b>	<b>See Winning Hands</b>	

Menu ⬆

Give \$10K stipend to your top 15% contributing teachers for increased...

le...  
respo...  
ser...

**PLAY** Why?

Increase teacher salary by \$10K for teachers in...

... salary step...  
... for one year...  
... employee...  
... ntracts

**PLAY** Why?

TEACHING **0.2 %**

TEACHING **0.8 %**

TEACHING **-0.4 %**

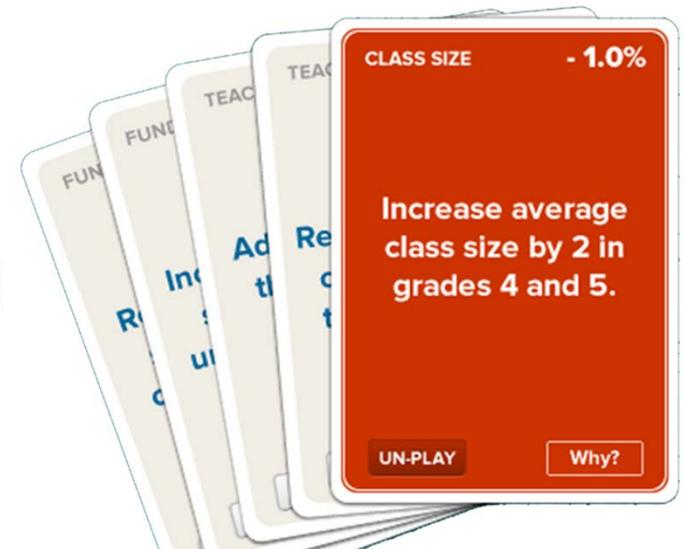
You also have the option to track your hands. Click on "Menu" to expose the options

- "Show my hand" allows you to see what cards you played
- "Share my hand" allows you to email your hand to another person
- "Manage my hands" allows you to see all of the hands you've played
- You can get more information on "how to play" or "see winning hands"

# Ready To Play?



- 1 Play online or order cards at [erstrategies.org](http://erstrategies.org)
- 2 Join our email list and open a Tools Account at [erstrategies.org](http://erstrategies.org)
- 3 We want your feedback—please let us know how it goes!  
[tools@erstrategies.org](mailto:tools@erstrategies.org)



# Grab a Postcard!

See What's Possible [ERStrategies.org/tools](http://ERStrategies.org/tools)

EXPLORE



**The Vision**

A blueprint for district transformation.

ASSESS



**Resource Check**

Understand how well your district is using its resources.

PLAY



**School Budget Hold'em**

Learn how you can invest in kids and still meet the bottom line.

QUANTIFY



**DREAM**

Create budget scenarios and envision change.

Get our email updates at [www.ERStrategies.org/signup](http://www.ERStrategies.org/signup)



Education Resource Strategies is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping urban school systems organize talent, time and money to create great schools at scale.