Welcome!

In the chat, please share your:

Your name, org and something you're excited to learn about today

The GRAD Partnership
Community of Practice
June 27, 2022

The GRAD Partnership

Grad Partnership Organizing Members

Patricia Balana
Managing Director
Grad Partnership

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Research Professor Johns Hopkins
University, Director of
Everyone Graduates Center

Sarah Duncan
Co-Executive Director Network
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Founder and Executive Director
BARR Center

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Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Jenny Scala
Principal Researcher and Program Director AIR

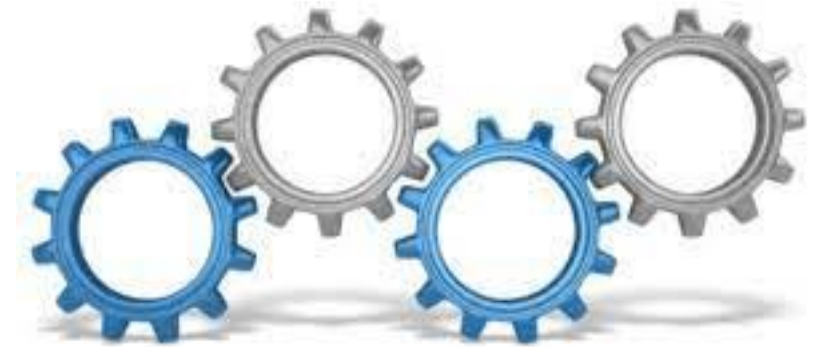**The GRAD Partnership**

GRAD Partnership for Student Success

Partnering with communities to use **high-quality student success systems** so that schools are empowered to graduate all students ready for the future.

High-Quality Student Success Systems

- Relationships
- Information
- Response systems
- Shared mindsets

Why Join The GRAD Partnership

- Access to high quality tools and resources
- **Join our Community of Practice**
- Access to Technical Assistance
- We have a deep shared commitment to equity and anti-racism and belief in student, educator, family, and community agency
- **We can do more together, with greater impact, than if we work alone**

AIR
Advancing Evidence.
Improving Lives.

BARR
Same Students. Same Teachers.
Better Results.

Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching

EVERYONE
GRADUATES
CENTER

National Center for
Learning
Disabilities

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

RURAL SCHOOLS
COLLABORATIVE

SCHOTT
FOUNDATION
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Talent
Development
SECONDARY

Our Community of Practice

- Connects people who want to implement, improve, and innovate Student Success Systems
- Enables shared learning
- Generates motivation and inspiration
- Defined by our mutual engagement

Community Agreements

- We, not me: Share stories and air time
- Accept non-closure
- Chatham house rule: Use the ideas, keep details in the community
- Share to learn
- Make room for joy

VALUES   CULTURE   NORMS
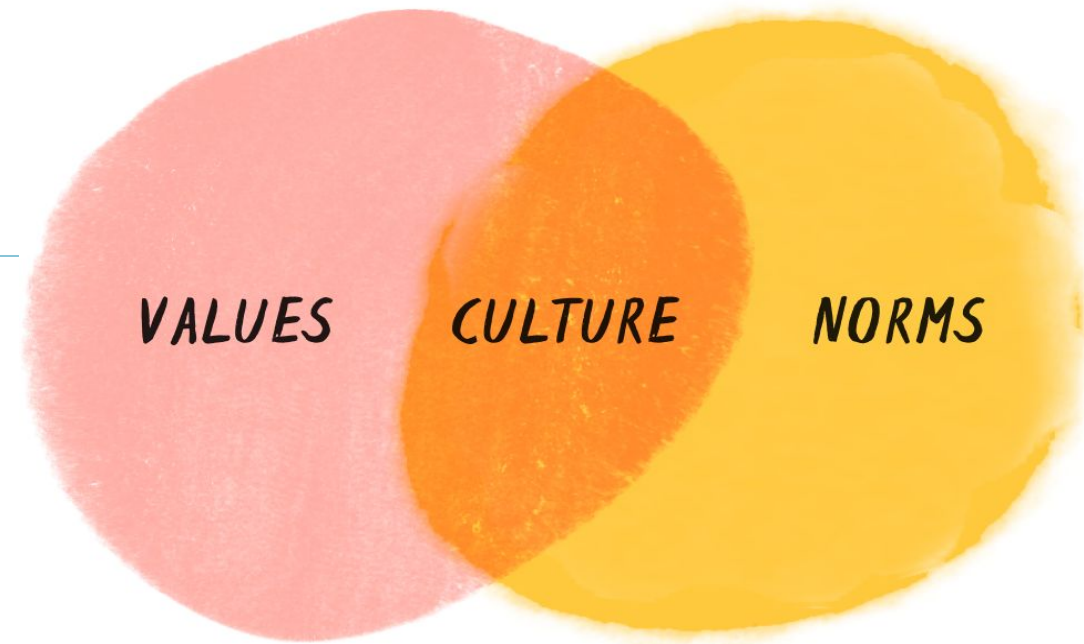
Values are the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that drive a group.

Norms are the ground rules that dictate how people interact.

Culture is the interaction between the two; the beliefs and the behaviors of the group.

Today

- Welcome & overview
- Context
- Speaker session: Whole school strategies, school connectedness
- Breakout discussions
- What's Next?
- Reflections & Closing

DEFINITIONS

School Connectedness sko͞ol /con·nect·ed | \ kə-ˈnek-təd *noun*
1. Belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning, as well as, them as individuals.

Belonging be·long·ing | \ bi-ˈlȯŋ-iŋ *noun*
1. The extent to which students feel that they are valued members of community.
2. Feelings may include understanding, respect, connectedness, mattering, and dignity.

School Connectedness
&
Student Success

Robert Balfanz

Director, Everyone Graduates Center
at Johns Hopkins School of Education

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Effective Student Success Systems are Proactive, Protective, and Preventative

- Tier 1 Strategies in Early Warning System/On-Track/MTSS systems often have this characteristic

- But sometimes in the rush to provide students customized supports they are overlooked or undervalued

An Ounce of Prevention …

The CDC finds…

- Efforts to improve child and adolescent health have typically addressed specific health risk behaviors, such as tobacco use or violence. However, results from a growing number of studies suggest that greater health impact might be achieved by also enhancing protective factors that help children and adolescents avoid multiple behaviors that place them at risk for adverse health and educational outcomes

Pandemic Increased Need to Build School Connectedness

- Last year was a tough year, with most schools reporting increases in fighting, chronic absenteeism, course failure, and student social-emotional and mental health needs.

- It was also likely a year when positive relationships and a sense of connection between students and teachers and students and students were at an all-time low

- For example, in many middle schools, two-thirds of the students were new to teachers, and each other, at the very time that staffing shortages provided fewer adults to form relationships

School Connectedness as a Universal Student Success Strategy

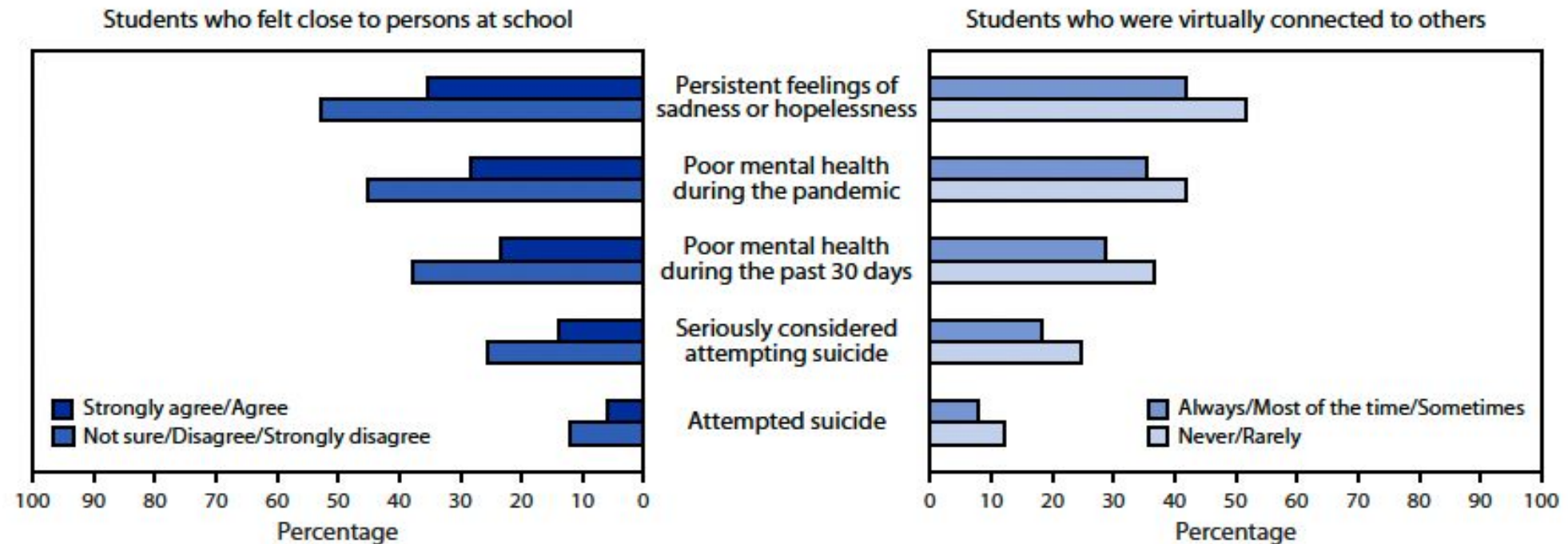The GRAD Partnership for Student Success

FEELING CONNECTED TO SCHOOL IS VITAL TO ADOLESCENT HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND, EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- It improves mental health

- It reduces drug and alcohol use, as well as teenage pregnancy

- It increases middle and high school grades, high school graduation, and college enrollment rates

Feeling Connected to School Mattered for Teens During the Pandemic

FIGURE. Persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, perceptions of mental health, and suicidal thoughts and attempts among high school students during the COVID-19 pandemic, by feeling close to persons at school* and being virtually connected† — Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021

Students who felt close to persons at school

Students who were virtually connected to others

- Persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Poor mental health during the pandemic
- Poor mental health during the past 30 days
- Seriously considered attempting suicide
- Attempted suicide

Strongly agree/Agree
Not sure/Disagree/Strongly disagree

Always/Most of the time/Sometimes
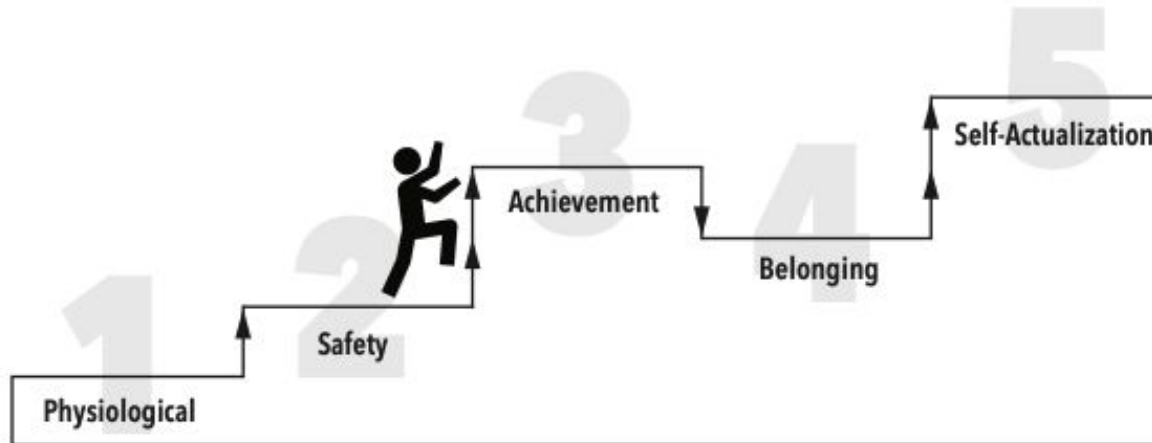Never/Rarely

Percentage

Percentage

Source: Jones, S.E., Etheir, K., et al (2022). Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness Among High School Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic. MMWR. Vol. 71, no. 3. CDC

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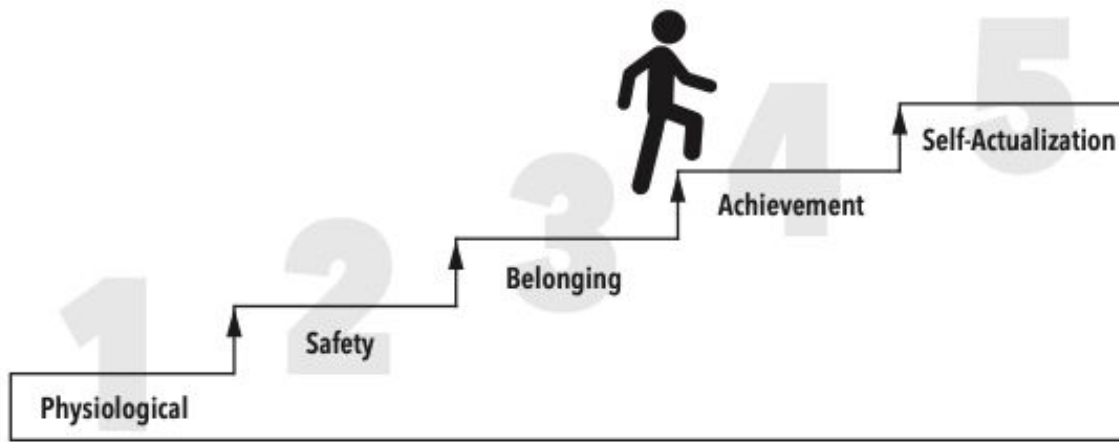
Belonging Proceeds Achievement

Source: Belonging through a Culture of Dignity (2019) by Floyd Cobb & John Krownapple, p. 44, 51, 54 Adapted from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Science Shows Supportive Relationships are a Superpower, but School Surveys Show They are Rare

- A survey of 25,400 sixth to 12th graders in a large diverse district in 2016, found that less than a 1/3 of middle schoolers had a strong relationship with their teachers, and that number dropped to 16% by the time students reached 12th grade.

- Students from low-income backgrounds report even fewer strong relationships with their teachers.

SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS IS…

- Believing you are welcomed, wanted, cared about, and needed in your school

- As a result, school is a place you want to be

WHAT MAKES A STUDENT FEEL CONNECTED TO SCHOOL?

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STUDENTS WHO FEEL CONNECTED TO SCHOOL...

- Have an adult in school, who they believe knows about them and cares about them as person

- Have a group of peers they interact with and feel affinity with as a group
  - i.e., sports teams, theater crews, clubs, identity groups, circle of friends

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STUDENTS WHO FEEL CONNECTED TO SCHOOL...

- Engage in activities helping others, either directly (e.g., tutoring, food banks etc.) or indirectly (e.g., environmental or social justice efforts).

- Believe school is welcoming place to be
  - i.e., positive and supportive school climate
  - Accepts them for who they are
  - Creates sense of belonging

WHAT CAN SCHOOL STAFF, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITIES DO TO BUILD SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

STUDENTS FEEL THAT SOMEONE FROM THE SCHOOL KNOWS AND CARES ABOUT THEM AS A PERSON

- Ask teachers to reach out to students with whom they have existing connections, provide time in a teacher's workday for them to do this e.g., advisories, x-periods, morning greetings, etc.

- Strong relationships can be maintained through two short, and one longer interaction each week

STUDENT FEEL THAT SOMEONE FROM THE SCHOOL KNOWS AND CARES ABOUT THEM AS A PERSON
(cont'd)

- Conduct a relationship audit
  - Use google docs, and/or other digital tools, to have teachers in each grade, identify students who may not have a strong connection to an adult in the school, and then identify an adult to reach out to the student

- Create new possibilities for connections, have both students and teachers, fill out an interest survey, and then connect students and teachers with similar hobbies or interests.

- 1 to 1 Relationships

STUDENTS INTERACT WITH OTHER STUDENTS WITH SHARED INTERESTS OR AFFILIATIONS

- Rebuild existing student activity structures to be inclusive – don't make students have to earn participation

- Create new affinity groups or student activities linked to a broad range of student interests

- Involve students in identifying and leading new student groups

STUDENTS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES THAT HELP OTHERS

- Set up peer coursework and homework "hotlines"

- Homeroom Captains – older students support attendance and belonging of younger students

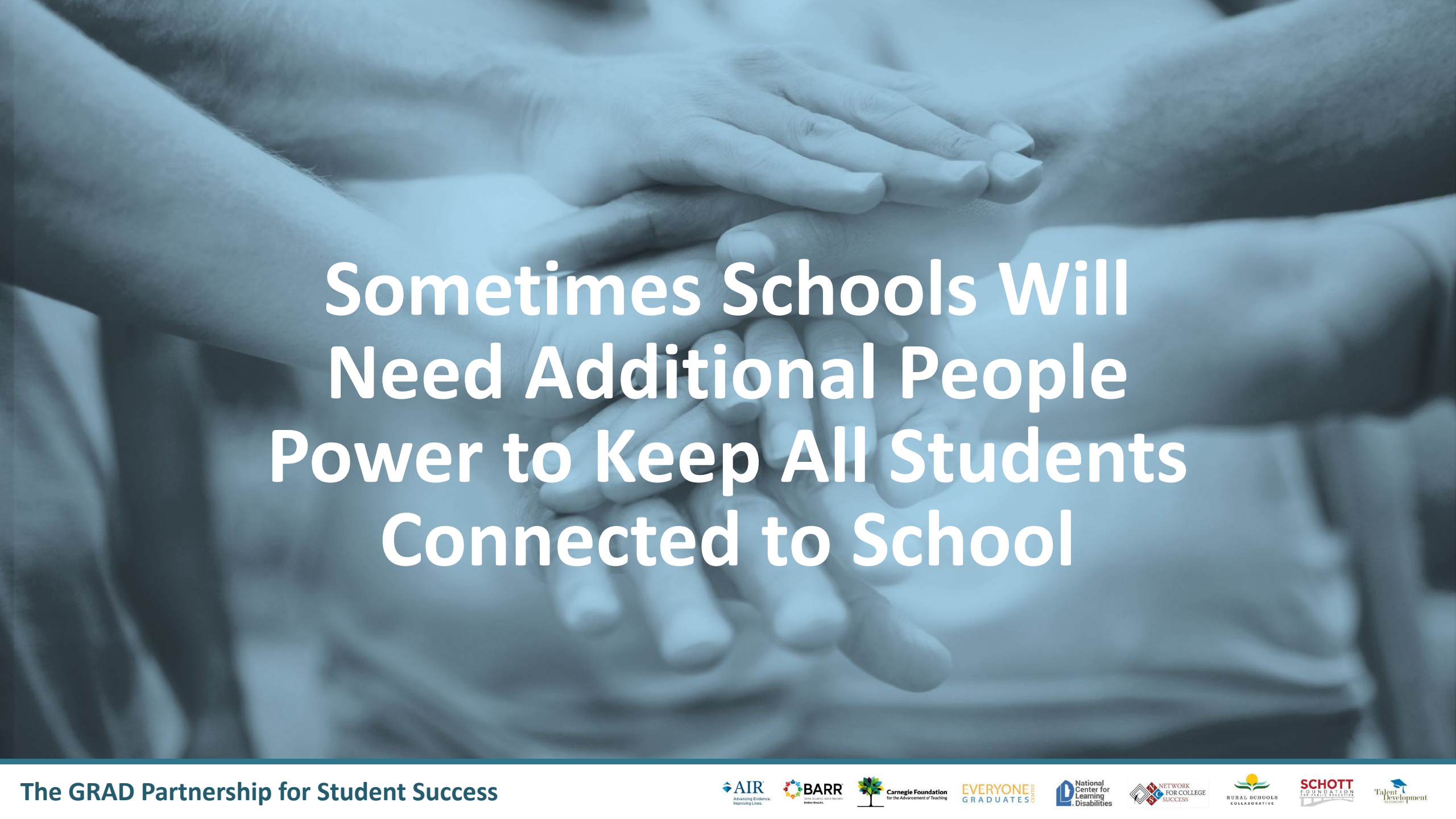- Think of activities that help others, that can be accomplished with many individual efforts

SCHOOL IS A WELCOMING PLACE

- Talk with students and families to understand and address concerns around safety, transportation, learning environment, and school climate

- Create mechanisms for students to provide voice and insight on how best to make school welcoming

- Focus on Belonging and Engagement

Sometimes Schools Will Need Additional People Power to Keep All Students Connected to School

The GRAD Partnership for Student Success

Overview of the National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS)

NPSS seeks to provide the leadership, organizational structures, and connective tissue needed to bring additional evidence-based person-powered student supports to schools and districts based on their locally determined needs.

Local determination of student needs and collaboration

| Districts | ➕ | Schools | ➕ | Community-Based Organizing Partner(s) | ➕ | Evidence-Based, Relationship-Driven People Powered Supports |

Menu of evidence-based supports to meet student needs

Academic Tutors

Address instructional loss, particularly for content areas and grades in which tutoring has proven most effective (i.e., early elementary reading and upper grade math)

Student Success Coaches

Diverse teams of near-peers in under-resourced schools partnering with teachers to provide relationship-driven integrated social, emotional, academic and youth development supports to enhance student outcomes and positive learning environments

Post-Secondary Transition Coaches

Support post-secondary exposure, application creation, and navigation of post-secondary transition

Wraparound Support Site Coordinators

Enable schools to build strong connections and systems with community health, mental health, and social service providers

High-Quality Mentors

Support web of developmental relationships, youth development experiences, and buffer against adversity in-school, out of school and over the summer

Getting the right support to the right students at the right scale and intensity

A Tool You Can Use

- [Secondary School Student Survey](#) from Des Moines Public School that uses school connectedness among other factors, to understand student attendance
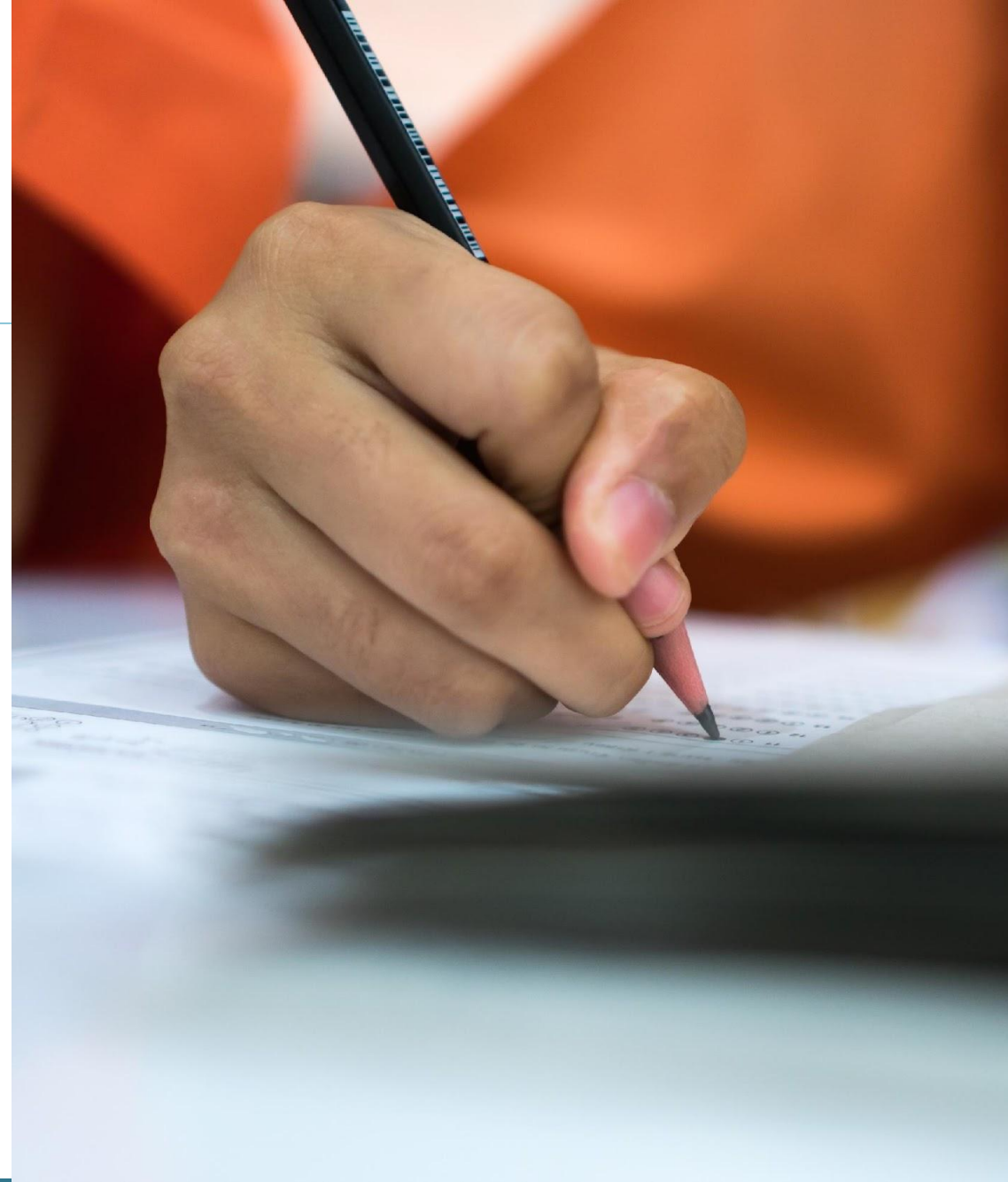
Something to Think About

- Everyone is under stress, coming from periods of isolation, and uncertain about their future

- Under conditions of stress and scarcity, humans focus on immediate needs – getting through the school day, and can set aside acting on things that remain important to longer term success – school connectedness

- Making sure all students, especially the most vulnerable, are connected to school, even when circumstances are challenging, needs to become routine

- We need to make school connectedness the foundational strategy of student success systems

Questions

Clarifying

- Simple questions of fact. They clarify the dilemma.

Some examples…

- *How much time does it take?*
- *How were students grouped?*
- *What resources did you use?*

Probing (Open)

- Prompts deep thought. Avoid recommendation or advice.

A good probing question…

- *Allows for multiple answers*
- *Encourages perspective taking*
- *Evokes more questions*

Breakouts

- Introduce yourself to your new friends.
  Name, organization, role, what brought you to the meeting?
- Discuss…
  a. What did you hear that resonated?
  b. What are you wondering?
  c. What might you try?
- As a **group**, decide what idea or question to bring back to the main room
- As an **individual**, decide what you will try based on the discussion.

Waterfall

Type your idea or question <u>and</u> wait to hit return

Looking forward…

Our next
Community of Practice
Meeting will be
Wed., Aug. 31, 2022
2:00-3:15p ET

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Shaping our Community

We'd like your feedback and input.

Grad Partnership Community of Practice

Thank you for being part of our community - and for offering honest feedback and input to help us shape our future meetings.

Next steps

What is one step you can take by next Monday that advances student connectedness?

Want to Learn More or Join Us?

BE PART OF IT

Contact:

info@gradpartnership.org

Visit the website:

www.gradpartnership.org

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