The Challenges of Educating Students in a Growing Climate of Poverty

DRS. J. ANDERSON, KEVIN HUFFMAN, ADAM MEADOR

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MO)

Poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau

Income Used to Compute Poverty Status (Money Income)

◦ Includes earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources.

◦ Noncash benefits (such as food stamps and housing subsidies) **do not** count.

◦ Before taxes

◦ Excludes capital gains or losses.

◦ If a person lives with a family, add up the income of all family members. (Non-relatives, such as housemates, do not count.)

Measure of Need (Poverty Thresholds)

Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status.

Each person or family is assigned one out of 48 possible poverty thresholds [XLS - 48k]

Thresholds vary according to:
◦ Size of the family
◦ Ages of the members

The same thresholds are used throughout the United States (do not vary geographically).

Updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

They are intended for use as a statistical yardstick, not as a complete description of what people and families need to live.

Many government aid programs use a different poverty measure, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines , or multiples thereof.

Poverty thresholds were originally derived in 1963-1964, using:

◦ U.S. Department of Agriculture food budgets designed for families under economic stress.

◦ Data about what portion of their income families spent on food.

2013 Data (Taken in 2014)

In 2013, the official poverty rate was 14.5 percent, down from 15.0 percent in 2012 This was the first decrease in the poverty rate since 2006.

In 2013, there were 45.3 million people in poverty. For the third consecutive year, the number of people in poverty at the national level was not statistically different from the previous year's estimate

The 2013 poverty rate was 2.0 percentage points higher than in 2007, the year before the most recent recession

The poverty rate for children under 18 fell from 21.8 percent in 2012 to 19.9 percent in 2013

The poverty rate for people aged 18 to 64 was 13.6 percent, while the rate for people aged 65 and older was 9.5 percent. Neither of these poverty rates was statistically different from its 2012 estimates

By Race

Hispanics were the only group among the major race and ethnic groups to experience a statistically significant change in their poverty rate and the number of people in poverty. For Hispanics, the poverty rate fell from 25.6 percent in 2012 to 23.5 percent in 2013, while the number of Hispanics in poverty fell from 13.6 million to 12.7 million.

The poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites was 9.6 percent in 2013 Non-Hispanic Whites accounted for 62.4 percent of the total population and 41.5 percent of people in poverty. For Blacks, the 2013 poverty rate was 27.2 percent, and there were 11.0 million people in poverty. For Asians, the 2013 poverty rate was 10.5 percent, which represented 1.8 million people in poverty.

The Children

The number of children in poverty fell from 16.1 million to 14.7 million. Children represented 23.5 percent of the total population and 32.3 percent of people in poverty.

Educationally we use the statistic of free and reduced lunch qualification.

Poverty Historically

Mark 14:7 – Jesus: "The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me." (New International Version)

"Differences in class systems have been around since the beginning of written history, which can be dated back to 3100 B.C. Each of the early civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley, Huang He Valley, Crete, and Central America all had class systems in place." (Meador, 2011)

So what?

Marzano (2003) noted, "For decades, educational researchers, educational practitioners, and the public at large have assumed that socioeconomic status is one of the best predictors of academic achievement" (p. 126).

Closing the achievement gap could reduce national spending each year by 5 to 7 million dollars.

How do we close the Achievement Gap?

The Boy and the Starfish

A man was walking along a deserted beach at sunset. As he walked he could see a young boy in the distance, as he drew nearer he noticed that the boy kept bending down, picking something up and throwing it into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things into the ocean.

As the man approached even closer, he was able to see that the boy was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at a time he was throwing them back into the water.

The man asked the boy what he was doing, the boy replied, "I am throwing these washed up starfish back into the ocean, or else they will die through lack of oxygen.

"But", said the man, "You can't possibly save them all, there are thousands on this beach, and this must be happening on hundreds of beaches along the coast. You can't possibly make a difference."
The boy looked down, frowning for a moment; then bent down to pick up another starfish, smiling as he threw it back into the sea. He replied,

"I made a huge difference to that one!"

~Author Unknown~

How do we help?

Alternative solutions: Dr. Huffman

Relationships: Dr. Anderson

Understanding how they learn

The Brain

Meet them where they are

Change from pity to empathy

Recognizing three factors that strongly impact performance
- ◦ Reliable relationships
- ◦ Strengthening Peer Socialization
- ◦ Quest for importance and social statys

Action Steps
- ◦ Embody respect
- ◦ Embed social skills
- ◦ Be inclusive

Growth Mindset

Embrace the mindset of changes that can happen

School Wide Success Factors

Support the whole child

Hard Data

Accountability

Relationship building

Enrichment mind set

Classroom Success Factors

Standards-Based Curriculum and Instruction

Hope building

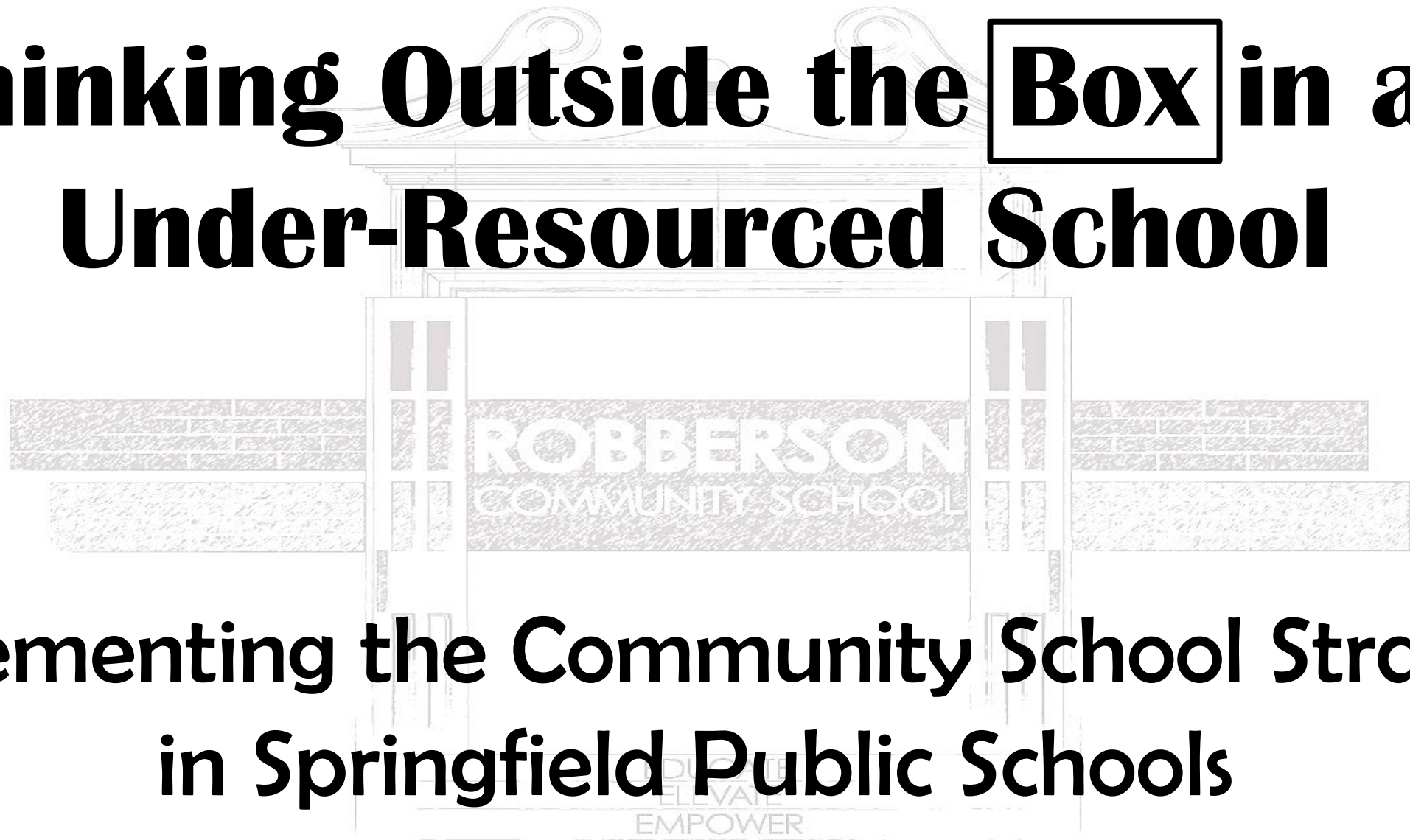**A**rts, Athletics, and advanced placement

Retooling of the operating system

Engaging instruction

Engagement

How it looks in different aspects of the day

Thinking Outside the Box in an Under-Resourced School

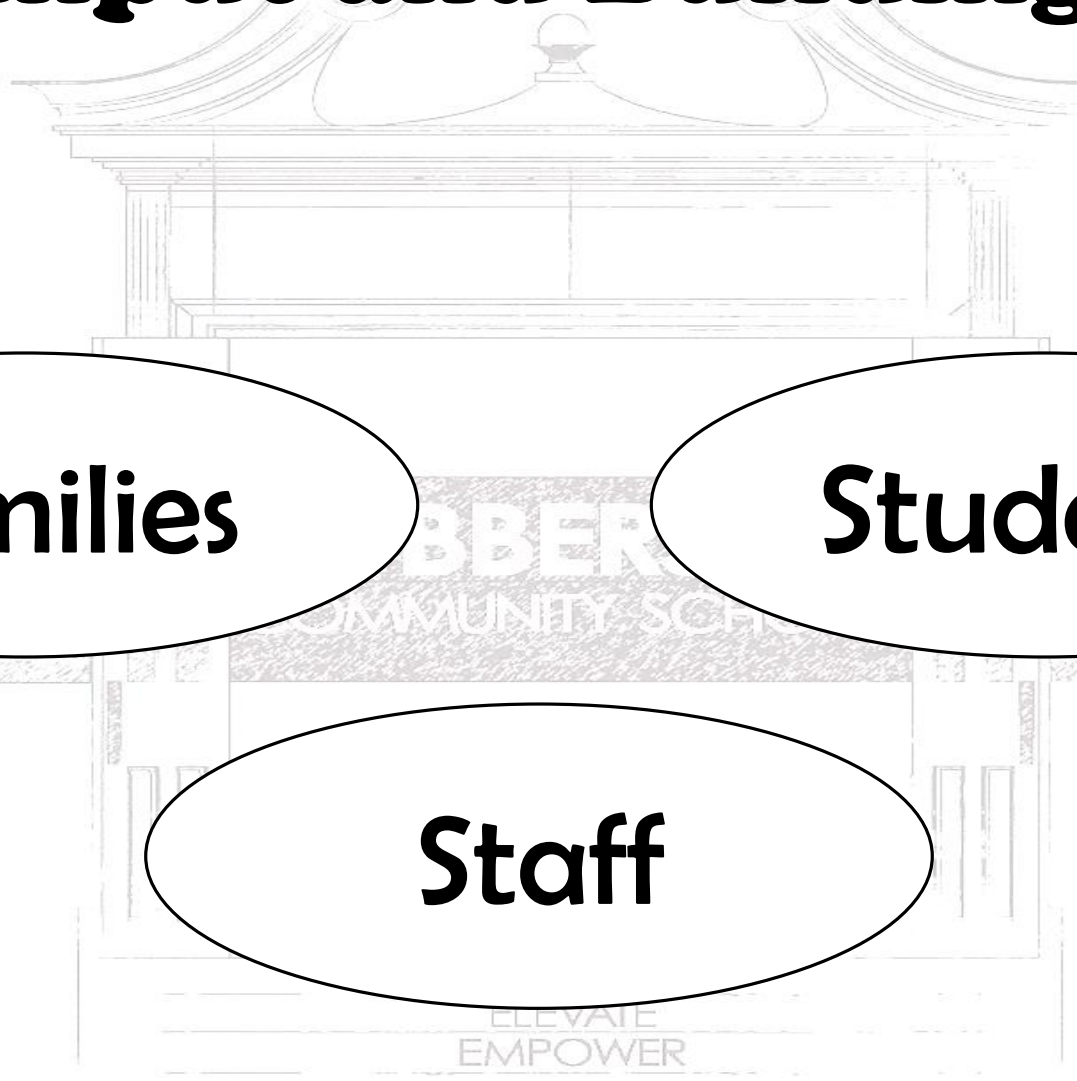## Implementing the Community School Strategy in Springfield Public Schools

Gathering Input and Building the Dream

Families

Students

Staff

Utilizing Local Resources
(and Understanding Social Capital)
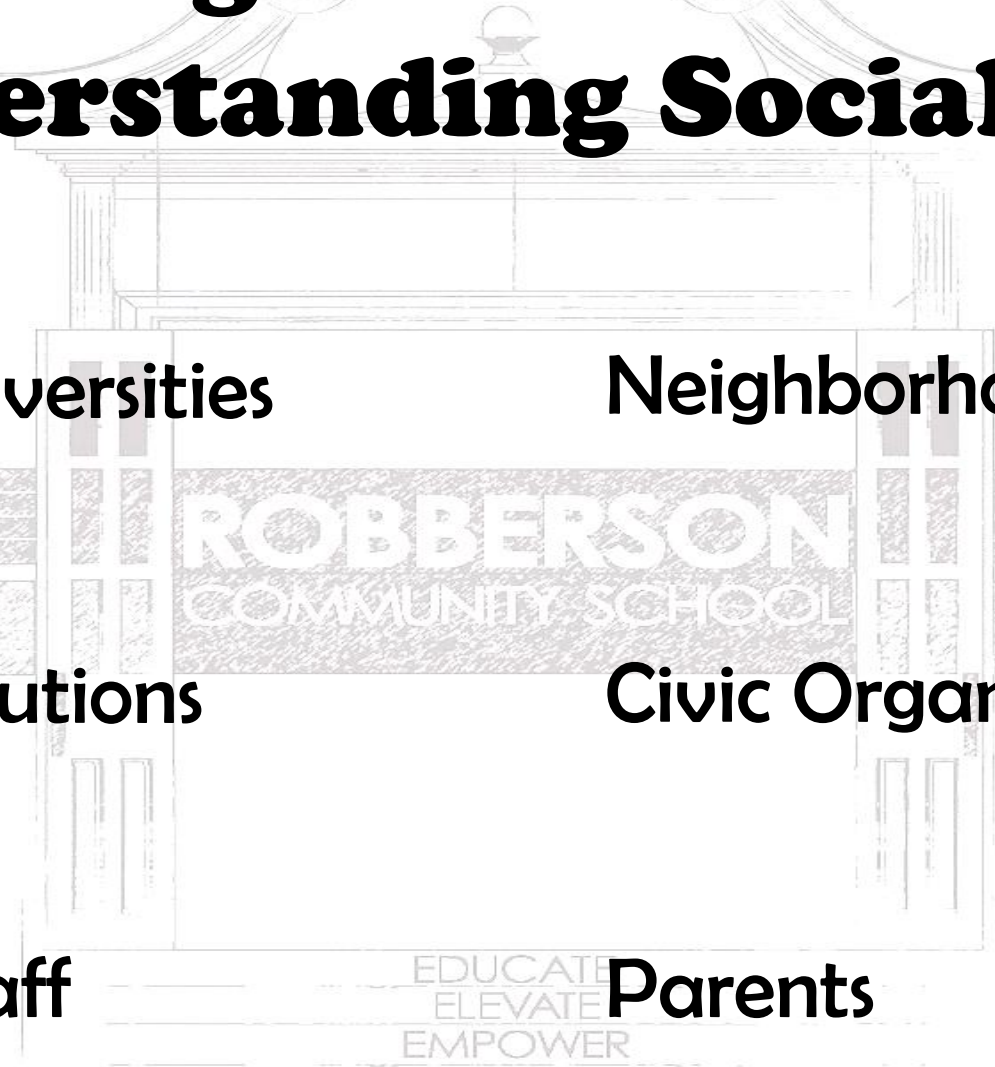
Colleges & Universities

Neighborhood Associations

Religious Institutions

Civic Organizations

Teachers & Staff

Parents

Effective Aggregation of Resources

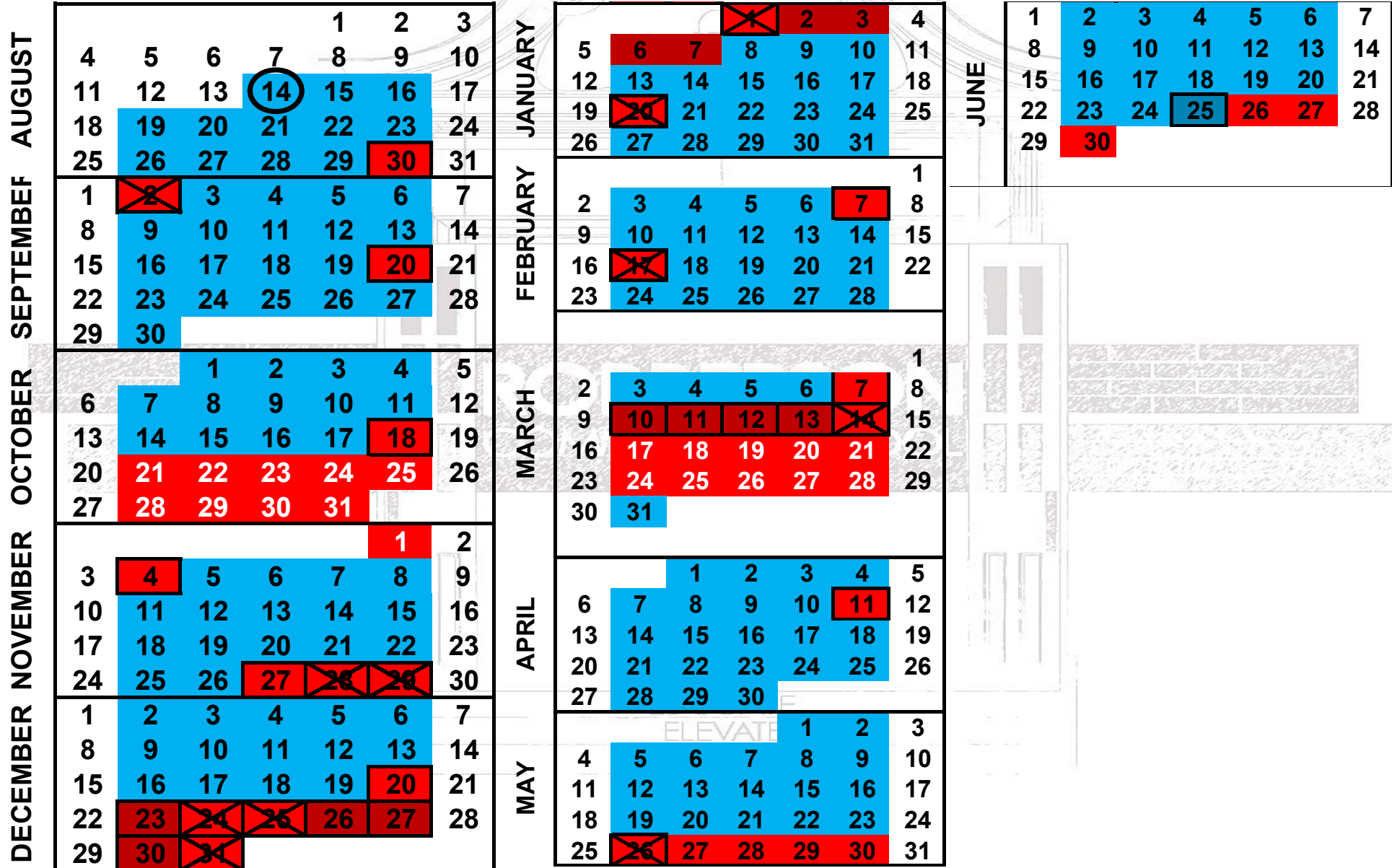Mobile Food Pantry

+

Budget Shopping Class

Gathering Feedback

Parent Forums

Staff Participation

Redefining the "School Year"
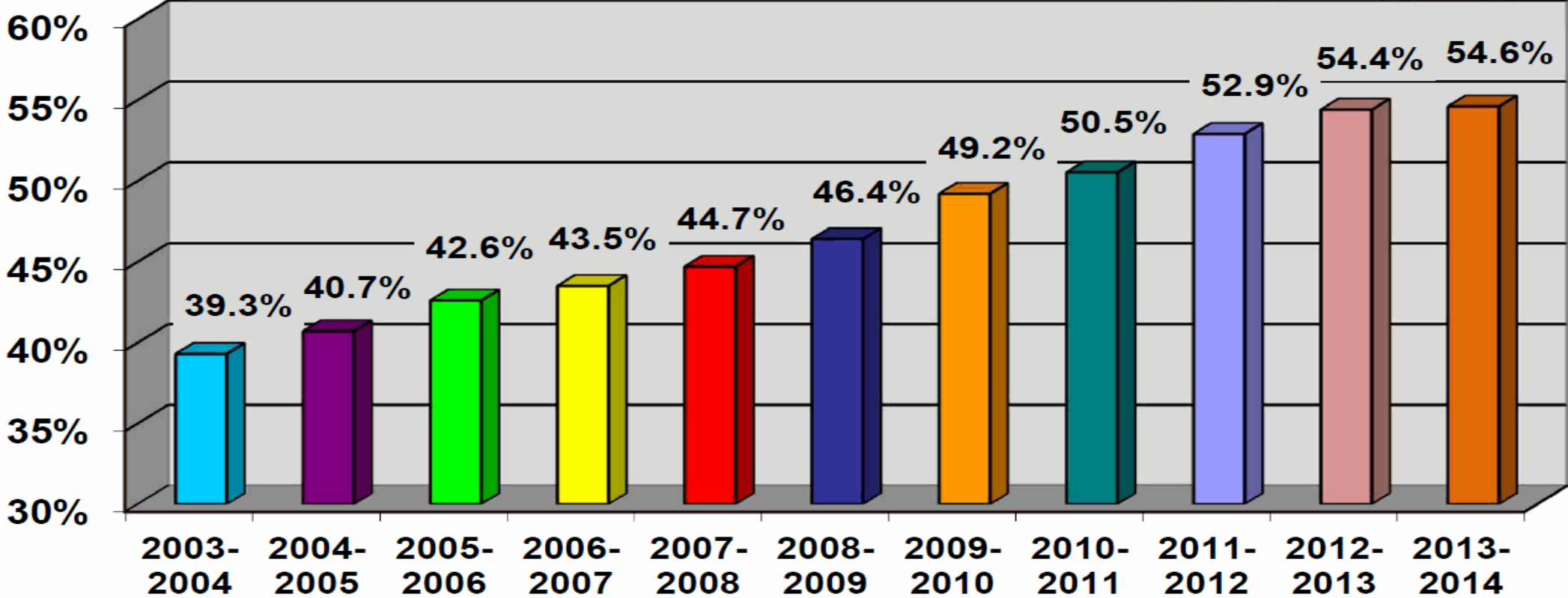
Our Growing Poverty…
and why Relationships Matter

JANDERSON@SPSMAIL.ORG
@DRJ_ANDERSON

Historic trend

Springfield Public Schools
Free and Reduced Lunch District Rate Trend

Division	Enrollment	Free	Reduced	F + R	Percent	Prev Year	Change
ES	11,884	6302	918	7,220	60.8%	61.2%	-0.4%
Int Sch	480	69	19	88	18.3%	23.5%	-5.1%
MS	5,100	2,468	454	2,922	57.3%	56.3%	1.0%
HS	6,831	2,519	516	3,035	44.4%	43.4%	1.0%
District	24,295	11,358	1,907	13,265	54.6%	54.4%	1.4%

mobility

Division	Sept Count	Trans In	Trans Out	Stable	Mobility	Stability
ES	12,025	3,802	3,911	10,513	64.1%	87.4%
MS	5,644	1,349	1,458	5,044	49.7%	89.4%
HS	7,236	1,424	1,385	6,590	38.8%	91.1%
District	24,905	6,575	6,754	22,147	53.5%	88.9%

Source: SPS Student Information System and DESE MOSIS Reporting.
Mobility: Sum of transfers in, plus transfers out, divided by Sept. enrollment.
Stability: Students enrolled all year, divided by Sept. enrollment.

Types of Poverty

Situational – caused by sudden crisis/loss

Generational – occurs when at least two generations have been born into poverty

Relative – the economic status of a family whose income is insufficient to meet its society's standard of living

Urban – occurs in metro areas with a populations of at least 50,000 people

Rural – occurs in populations with less than 50,000 people

Risk Factors and Resources

PRIMARY RISK FACTORS

Emotional & social challenges -

Acute & chronic stressors

Cognitive lags

Health & Safety Issue

WHAT ARE "RESOURCES"
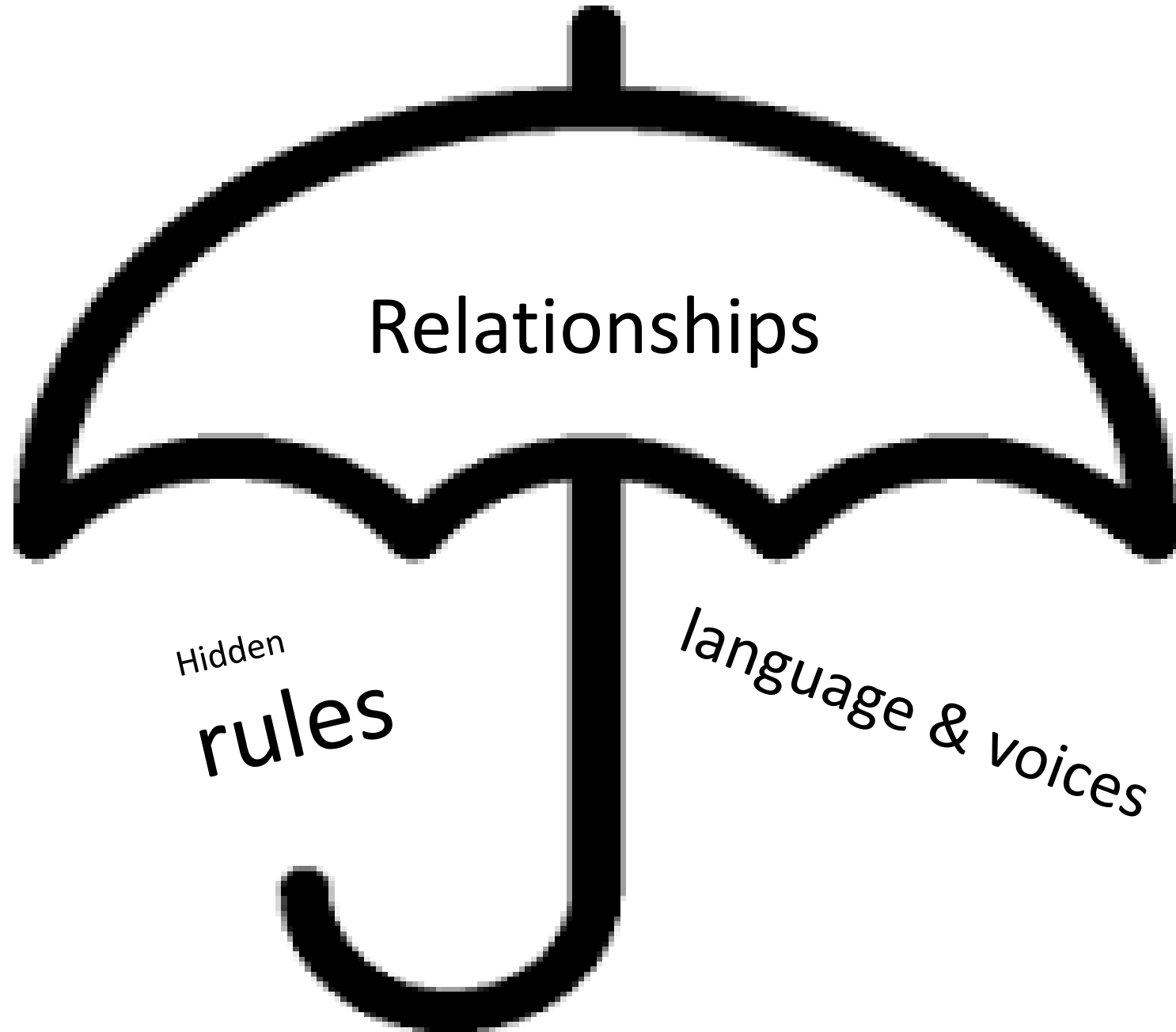
Financial

Language

Emotional

Mental

Spiritual

Physical

Support Systems

Relationship/Role Models
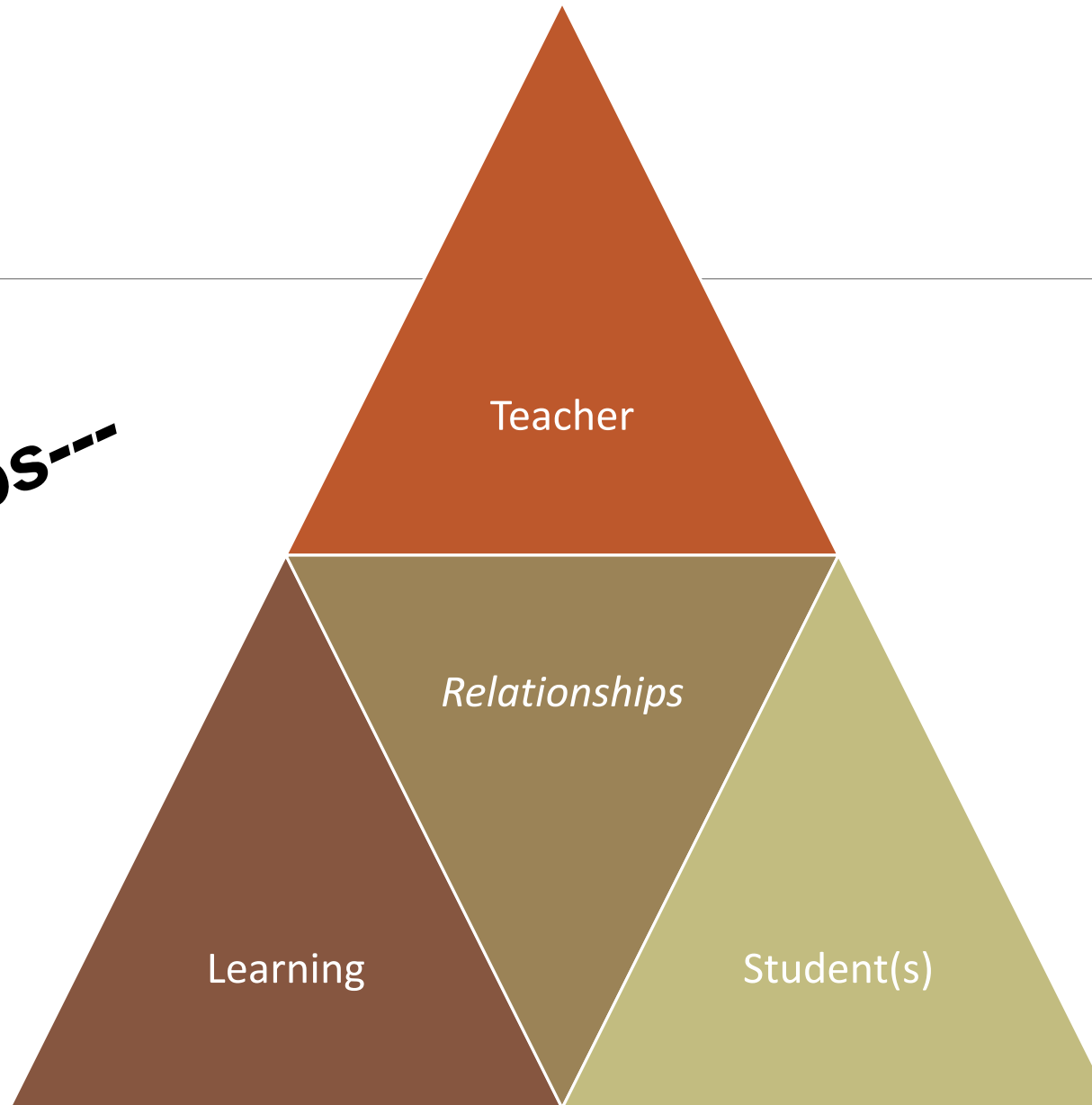
Knowledge of Hidden Rules

JANDERSON@SPSMAIL.ORG
@DRJ_ANDERSON

Relationships

Hidden rules

language & voices

JANDERSON@SPSMAIL.ORG
@DRJ_ANDERSON

It's all about relationships--

Teacher

Relationships

Learning

Student(s)

Students have 3 relational forces that drive their behavior:
1. Drive for reliable relationships
2. Strengthening of peer socialization
3. Quest for importance and social status

All learning is double-coded, both mentally and emotionally. How you feel about something is part of the learning and your openness to learning. Most learning is in essence emotional. Virtually all learning starts with a significant relationship.

-Stanley Greenspan and Beryl Benderly

Three things that help one move out of poverty are:

- **Education**
- **Relationships**
- **Employment**

Four reasons one leaves poverty are:
- Too painful to stay
- Vision or goal
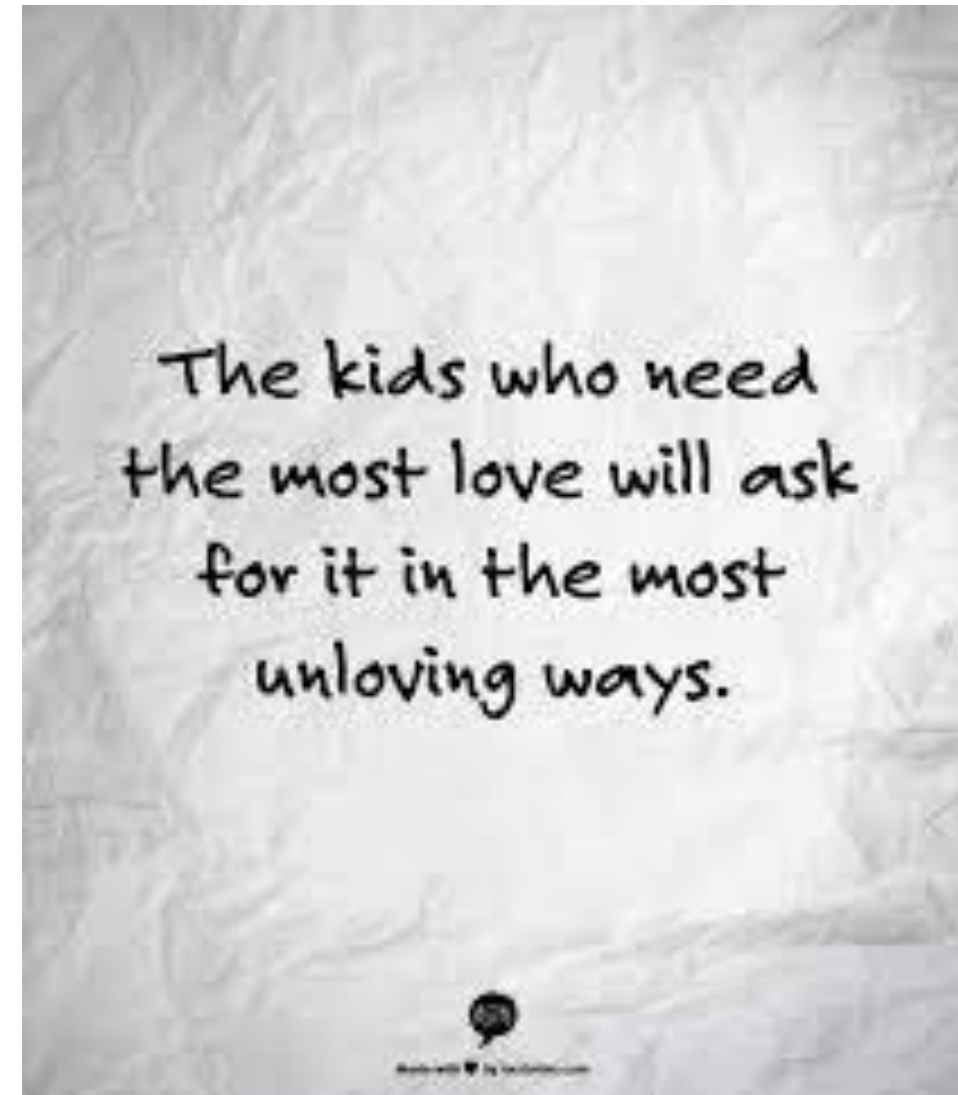- Key relationship
- Special talent/skill

Mutual Respect

If a student and teacher do not have a relationship of mutual respect, the learning will be significantly reduced.   For some students, it won't occur at all.

If a student and a teacher don't like each other—or even come to despise each other—forget about significant learning.

If mutual respect is present, it can compensate for the dislike.

Mutual respect is as much about non-verbals as it is about what you say.

The kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving ways.

Mutual Respect

Relationships of mutual respect must have three things present:

- **Support**: the direct teaching of processes and mental models.

- **High expectations**: the approach that says,
  "I know you can do it, and you will."

- **Insistence**: the motivation and persistence that come from the relationship.

Mutual Respect

For mutual respect to exist, there must be *structure, consequence, and choice.*

Structure is the external parameters and internal boundaries.

Consequence is what happens when structure is not honored.

Choice is an individual decision regarding those parameters and boundaries.

Creating Relationships

DEPOSITS	WITHDRAWALS
Seeking first to understand	Seeking first to be understood
Keeping promises	Breaking promises
Kindnesses, courtesies	Unkindnesses, discourtesies
Clarifying expectations	Violating expectations
Loyalty to the absent	Disloyalty, duplicity
Apologies	Pride, conceit, arrogance
Open to feedback	Rejecting feedback

Note. Adapted from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,* by Stephen Covey, 1989.

What can a teacher/adult do to build relationships?

1. Calls on everyone in room equitably.
2. Provides individual help.
3. Gives "wait" time (allows student enough time to answer).
4. Asks questions to give student clues about answer.
5. Asks questions that require more thought.
6. Tells students whether their answers are right or wrong.
7. Gives specific praise.
8. Gives reasons for praise.

9. Listens.
10. Accepts feelings of student.
11. Gets within arm's reach of each student each day.
12. Is courteous to students.
13. Shows personal interest and gives compliments.
14. Touches students (appropriately).
15. Desists (does not call attention to every negative student behavior).

Note. Adapted from "TESA (Teacher Expectations & Student Achievement)." Los Angeles Department of Education.

Creating an Environment of Mutual Respect

1. Know something about each student.

2. Engage in behaviors that indicate affection for each student.

3. Bring student interests into content and personalize learning activities.

4. Engage in physical behaviors that communicate interest in students.

5. Use humor when appropriate.

6. Consistently enforce positive and negative consequences.

   - Robert J. Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching,* 2007

Every child deserves a **champion** -- an adult who will **never give up** on them, who understands the power of **connection** and insists that they **become** the best that they can possibly **be.**
-- Rita F. Pierson

Use the right voice to reframe & change behaviors.

WHY?
To maintain relationships and get the appropriate behaviors.

JANDERSON@SPSMAIL.ORG
@DRJ_ANDERSON

Voices

| **Parent** (telling)	**Child** (whining)	**Adult** (asking)
▪ You shouldn't do that. ▪ It's wrong to … ▪ That's stupid, immature. ▪ You are good, bad, worthless, beautiful.	▪ Quit picking on me! ▪ You don't love me! ▪ I hate you! ▪ You're ugly. ▪ It's your fault. ▪ You made me do it.	▪ Have you thought about … ▪ What's your plan? ▪ What are your choices? ▪ If you did know, what would you say?

Note. Adapted from work of Eric Berne

- Hidden rules are the *"unspoken cues and habits of a group."*

- These rules become part of your belief system and guide how you behave.

- Relationships can be broken when you don't know the hidden rules.

- A lack of knowledge of hidden rules can limit your interaction with people who are different from you.

Relationship lessons from flying a kite
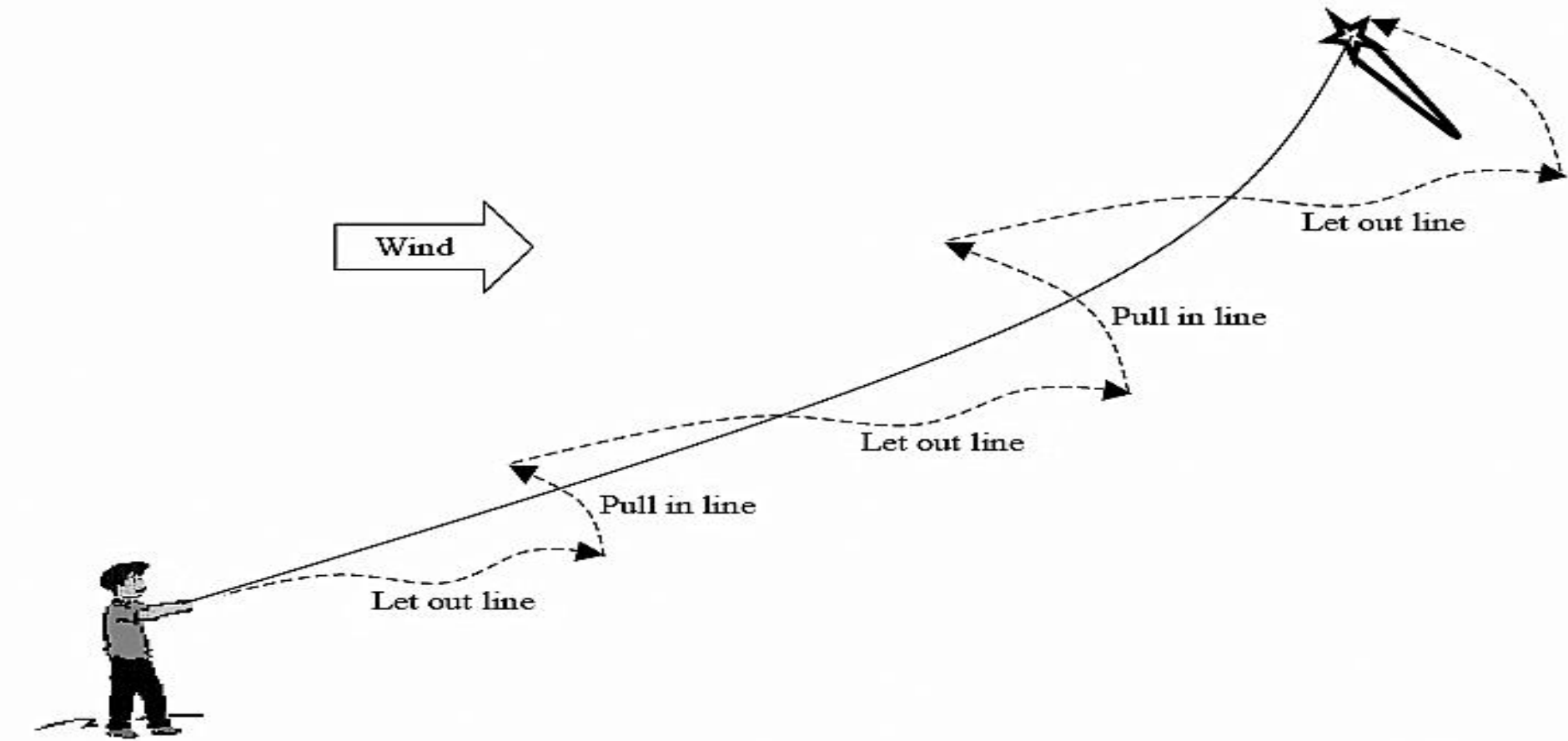
What are your take-aways from today?
How can you make your take- aways actionable?