

# Strengthening School Culture in Simulated Workplaces: New Resources to Support Leaders' Program Improvement Efforts

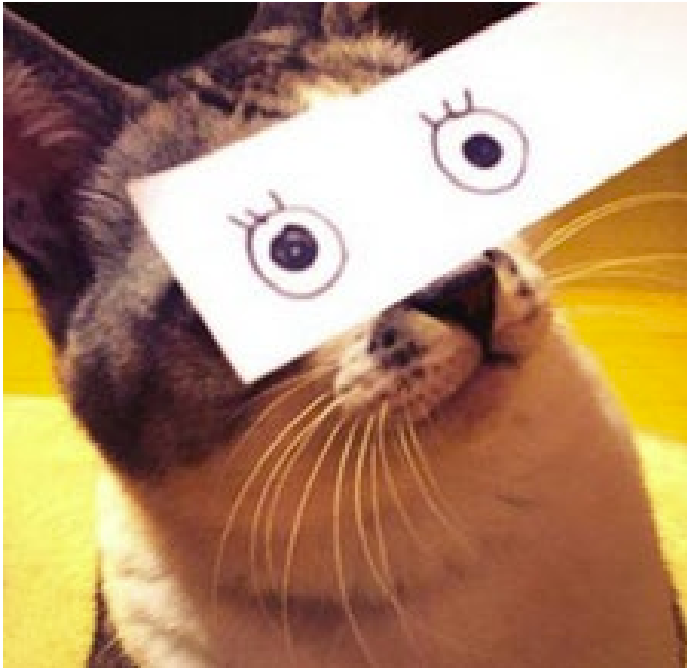
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REL Appalachia  
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Kea Anderson  
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Welcome!



It's great to see  
you today!

# Meet the facilitators

Hey!



Lydotta Taylor  
**REL Appalachia**  
*L-ovation, LLC*

'Sup.



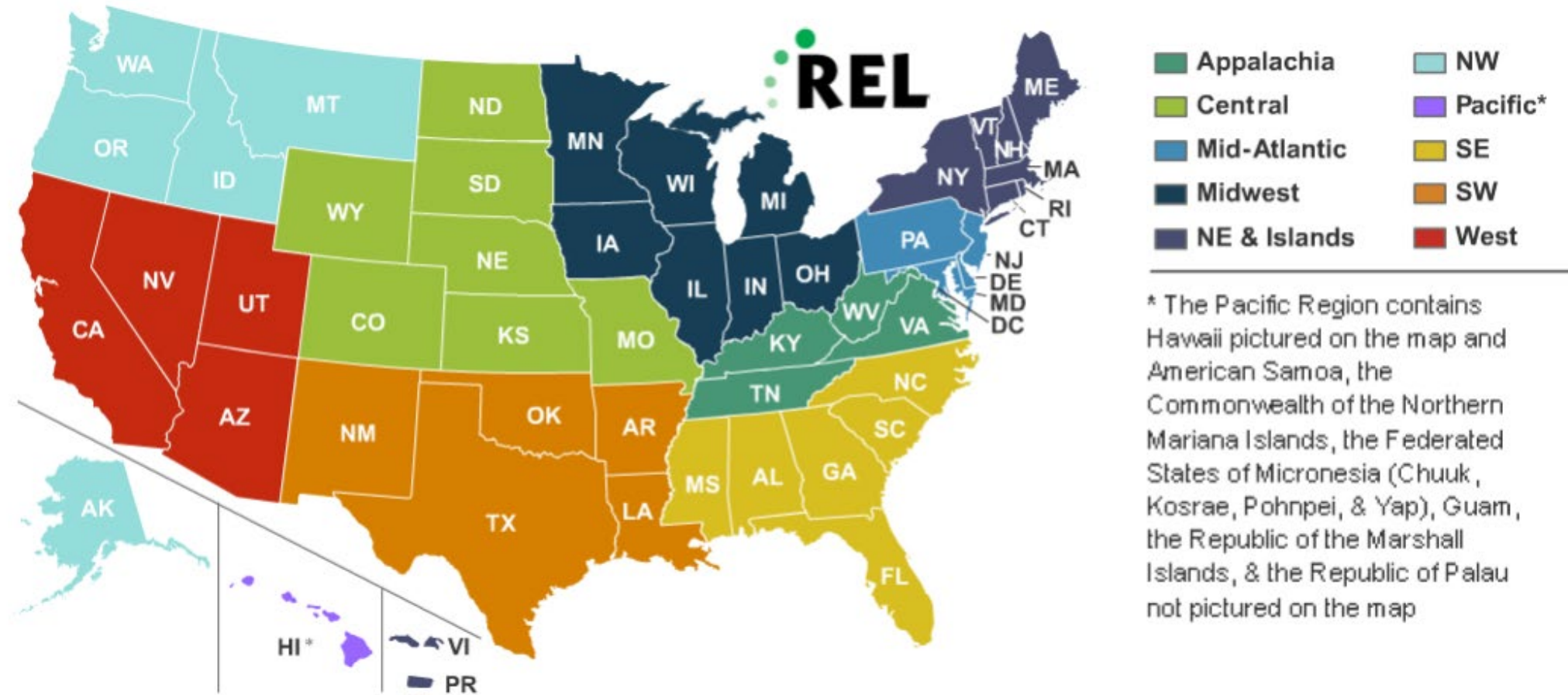
Kea Anderson  
**REL Appalachia**  
*SRI International*

Yo.



Kaily Yee  
**REL Appalachia**  
*SRI International*

# The Regional Educational Laboratories

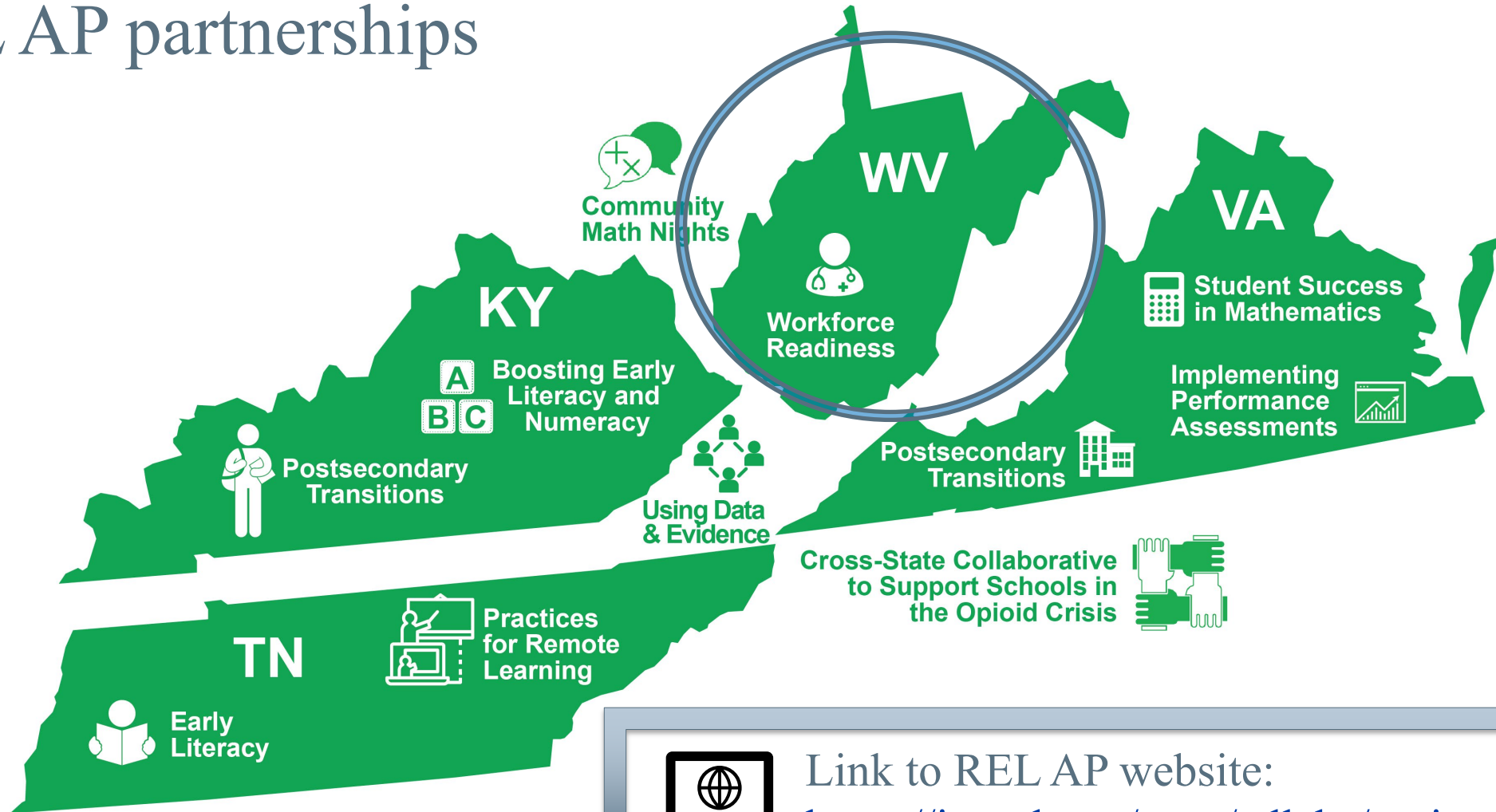


The **10 RELs** work in partnership with stakeholders to **support a more evidence-based education system.**

Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

Find us on the web! <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/>

# REL AP partnerships



Link to REL AP website:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/>

# West Virginia partnership activities



Refined the annual Simulated Workplace **school culture survey** and added **student empowerment/engagement measures**.



Developed a **resource for educators** on relevant evidence-based practices and strategies.



**Codesigned activities** to help Simulated Workplace teams interpret their school culture survey results, use the guide, and plan school-culture improvements.



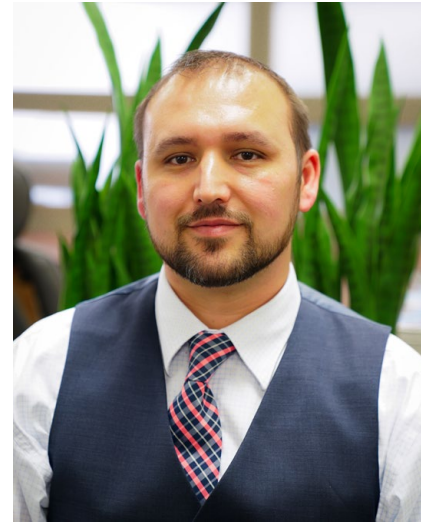
Developed resources for a **workshop series** that supports leaders to use data to plan evidence-based school culture improvements.

*(Cox & Yee, 2019)*

# Collaborating with WVDE



Clinton Burch  
**Office of  
Technical and  
Adult Education,  
WVDE**  
*Senior Officer*



Tim Elliot  
**Office of Technical  
and Adult Education,  
WVDE**  
*Coordinator*



James Coble  
**Office of Technical  
and Adult Education,  
WVDE**  
*Coordinator*

# Training webinar goals

- Build understanding of the importance of school culture.
- Learn about the new workshop materials.
- Experience select school culture workshop activities first-hand.
- Build knowledge and skills related to using school culture survey data to inform improvement.



You're gonna  
love it.



# Agenda

Introducing the workshop series

What is school culture?

Simulated Workplace school culture survey

Working with school culture survey data

Identifying evidence-based practices

Planning for improvement

Questions and wrap-up

Introducing the  
*Strengthening Simulated Workplace School Culture*  
Workshop Series



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# Overview of the *Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces: Workshop Series*

## **What is it?**

A three-part workshop series that provides educators with a step-by-step process for strengthening school culture.

## **Who leads the process?**

State coordinators, administrators, or others can use the facilitator materials to lead the workshops.

## **Who participates?**

A team of 12–16 teacher and student leaders, and possibly people in other roles, can participate in the workshops.

## **Where are the materials?**

<https://wvde.us/instructional-support-professional-learning-forum/>

# Materials for leading the workshop series

- Scripted slide deck
- Participant workbook
- Facilitators' handbook



## Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces: Workshop Series

*Facilitators' Handbook*

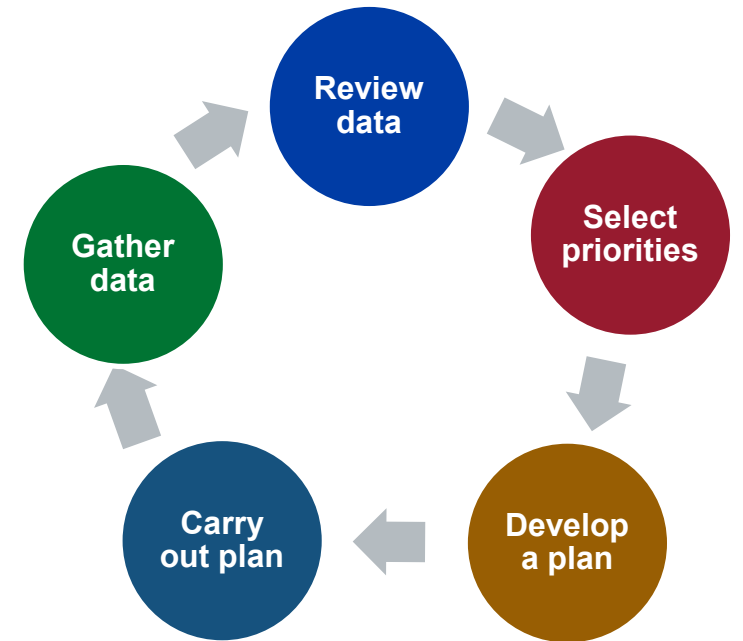
Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia at SRI International

February 2021

# Workshop 1: Introduction to School Culture Improvement

Workshop 1 gets participants interested in positive school culture and introduces them to the improvement cycle.

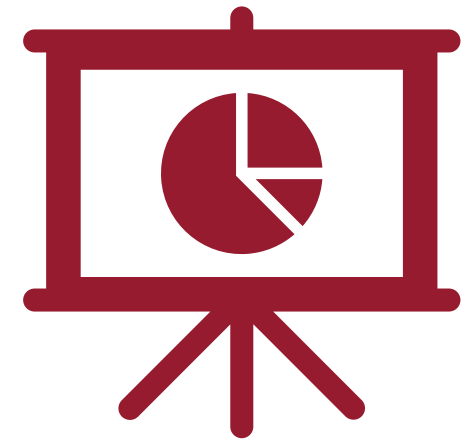
- Learn about positive school culture and the school culture survey.
- Develop a sense of shared interest and purpose in improving school culture.
- Become familiar with the steps in the improvement cycle.
- Plan who will lead and participate in school culture improvement.



# Workshop 2: Review and Interpret School Culture Survey Data

In workshop 2, participants dig into survey results and interpret data to identify strengths and areas for growth.

- Review and discuss state- and school-level school culture survey results.
- Practice making accurate statements about the survey results.
- Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.



# Workshop 3: Identify Priorities

Workshop 3 guides participants to identify a priority area and learn about evidence-based practices that can support the improvement effort.

- Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement.
- Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts.
- Review evidence-based practices in *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*.



# What Is School Culture?



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# What is school culture?



## Definition

School culture is the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that arise over time from how people treat and feel about each other, as well as how the school community faces challenges and celebrates successes.

Everyone in a school community contributes to school culture—including students, families, teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators.

*(Peterson & Deal, 2009)*

# Why is a positive school culture so important?



For **students**, positive school culture is associated with increased:

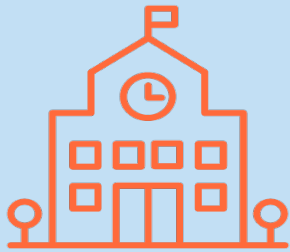
- Achievement,
- Attendance,
- Engagement and empowerment, and
- Social-emotional learning.

For **teachers**, positive school culture is associated with increased:

- Job satisfaction,
- Commitment, and
- Collaboration.

*(Anderman, 1991; Collie et al., 2012; Ellis et al., 2018; Geier et al., 2008; Hixson et al., 2012; Kemple et al., 1999)*

# How can we cultivate a positive school culture?



Sources

Positive school culture arises from:

- High expectations for students.
- Intentional, meaningful staff relationships.
- Trust and respect for student and family voices.
- Openness to constructive criticism.

*(Certo et al., 2003)*

Activity!

Let's Think About Your School's Culture



If my school were an animal

**If my school were an animal, it  
would be a (an) \_\_\_\_\_**

**because \_\_\_\_\_.**



Link to Google JamBoard: <https://tinyurl.com/schoolanimal>

# How do I use a Google Jamboard?

The screenshot shows a Google Jamboard interface with a toolbar on the left and a central workspace. The workspace contains several instructional sticky notes and arrows:

- Green sticky note (top left):** 1. Use the tools on the left side of the screen to add to this page.
- Pink sticky note (top center):** Do not click on "Clear frame" to delete your post-it. You'll delete everyone's post-it!
- Orange sticky note (top right):** 3. To move to the next page, click on the arrow up top.
- Pink sticky note (center):** 2. Hover cursor over the icons to see what each tool can do. Click to select the tool.
- Light blue sticky note (bottom left):** \* You can add a sticky note, image, or text box.
- Light blue sticky note (bottom center):** \* You can use a pen, highlighter, paintbrush, etc.
- Light blue sticky note (bottom right):** \* You can move things around the page.

In the center of the workspace, there is a large grey scribble with a yellow circle around it and the text: "Each page has an activity! Add your thoughts as we progress through the webinar."

At the bottom right, there is a meme image of a beagle puppy with the text "YOU GOT THIS" overlaid.

# Simulated Workplace School Culture Survey

Awesome, I was hoping I would learn about the survey!



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# Simulated workplace school culture survey

- WVDE administers the survey twice a year.
- Administrators, instructors, counselors, and students in Simulated Workplace programs statewide take it.
- The survey measures four constructs of positive school culture.



*(Taylor & Fratto, 2012)*



# Survey constructs with examples

## Engagement/empowerment

- Students have a say in how their Simulated Workplace programs are run.
- Students take ownership of their learning process and work.



## Goal-setting/action planning

- Students' courses help them set and achieve goals.
- Students' Simulated Workplace experience helps them make career-related decisions.



## Engaging openness/positive attitude

- Students feel comfortable learning unfamiliar things.
- Students find their work to be meaningful.



## Collaboration

- Students work together to plan and do work.
- Students learn from peers and help peers learn.



# Working with School Culture Survey Data



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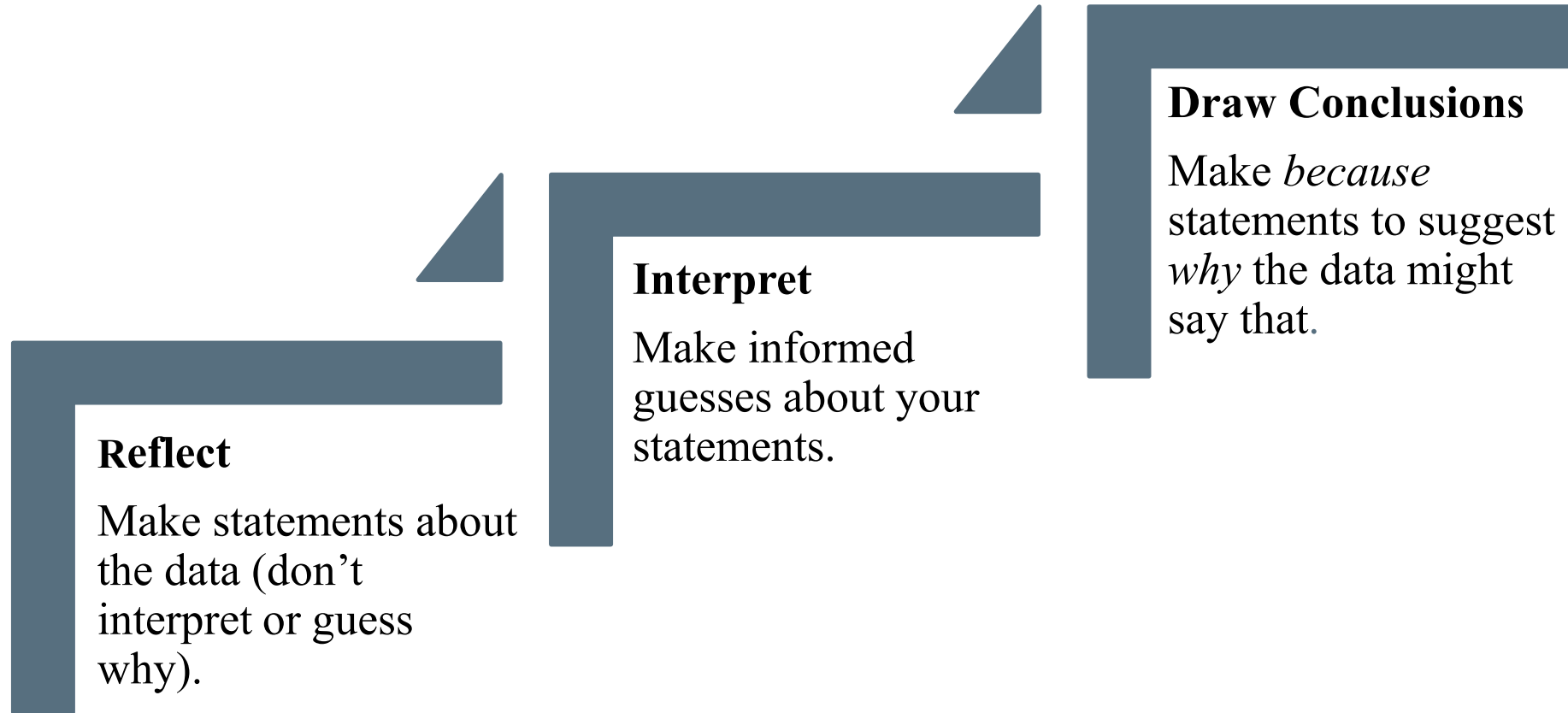
# Students will love reviewing their own data!

- Contributing alongside teachers and leaders.
- Comparing statewide and school results.
- Drawing on their experiences to interpret results.
- Building skills in using data for improvement.

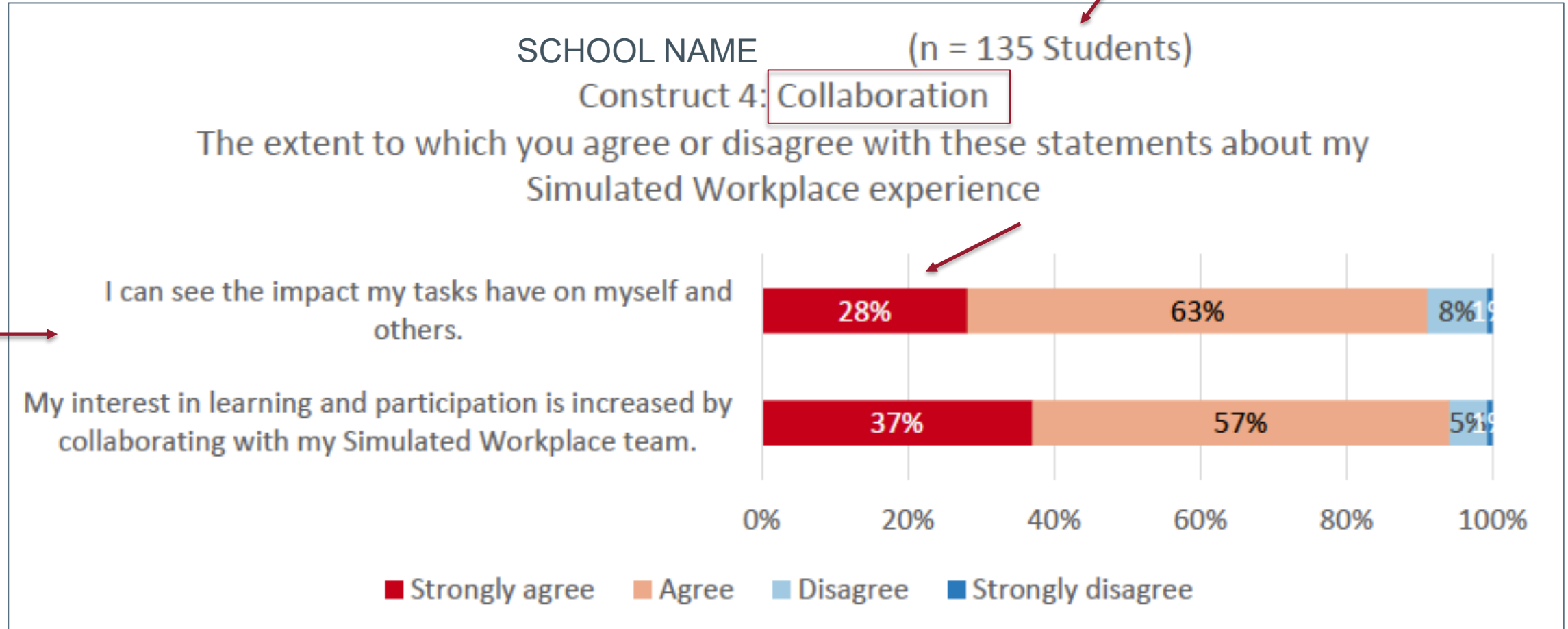


**We're not  
kidding!**

# Steps for reviewing and interpreting data

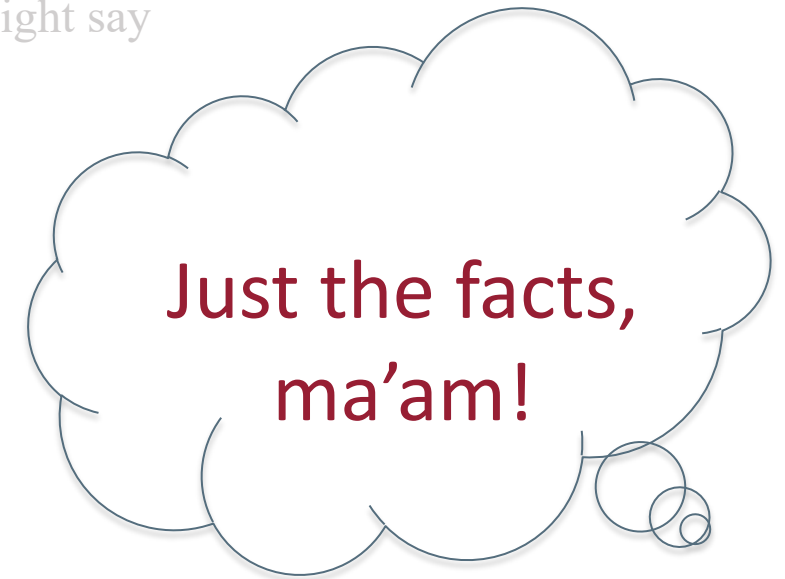
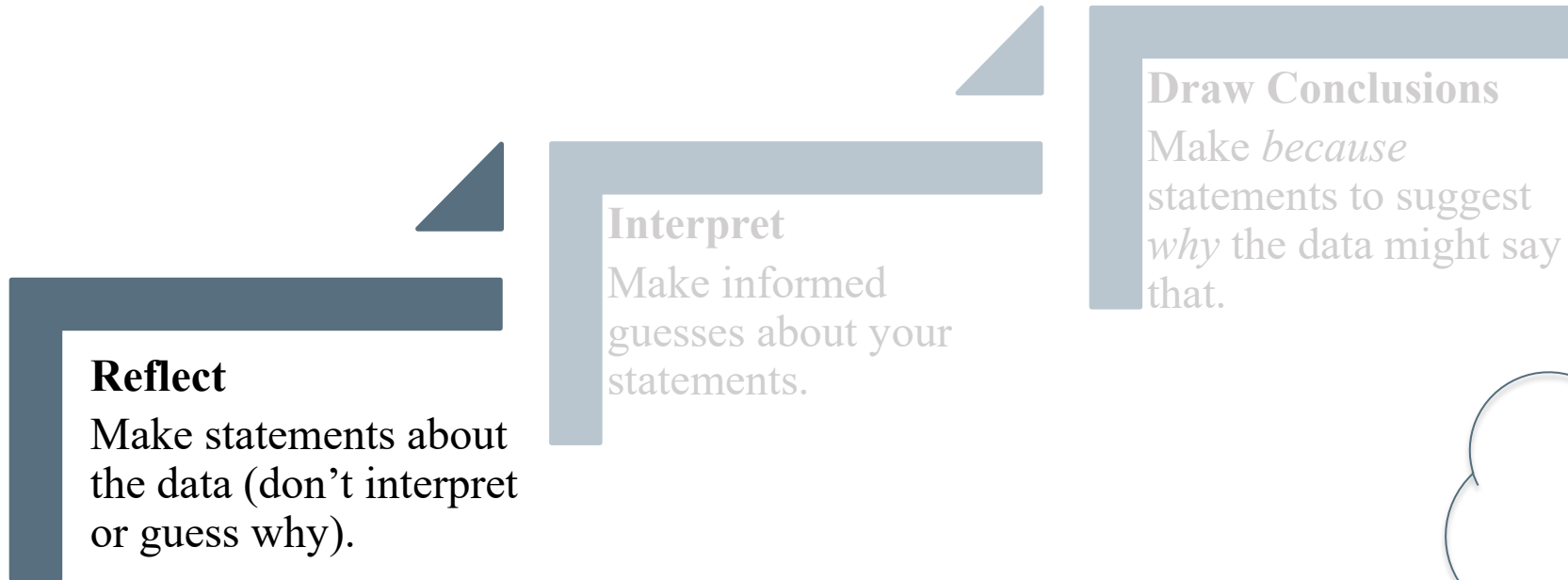


# What are we looking at?



(Simulated Workplace School Culture Survey, 2018)

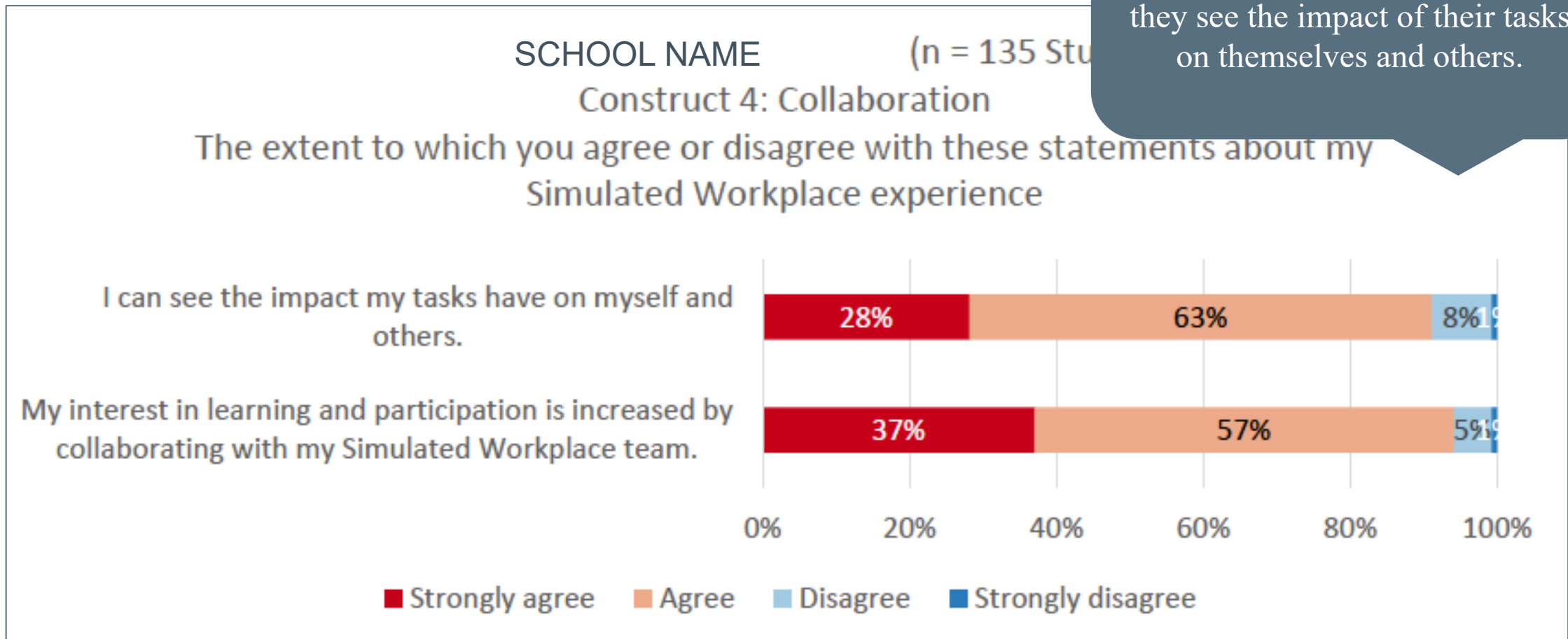
# Step 1: Reflect



# Step 1: Reflect (example)

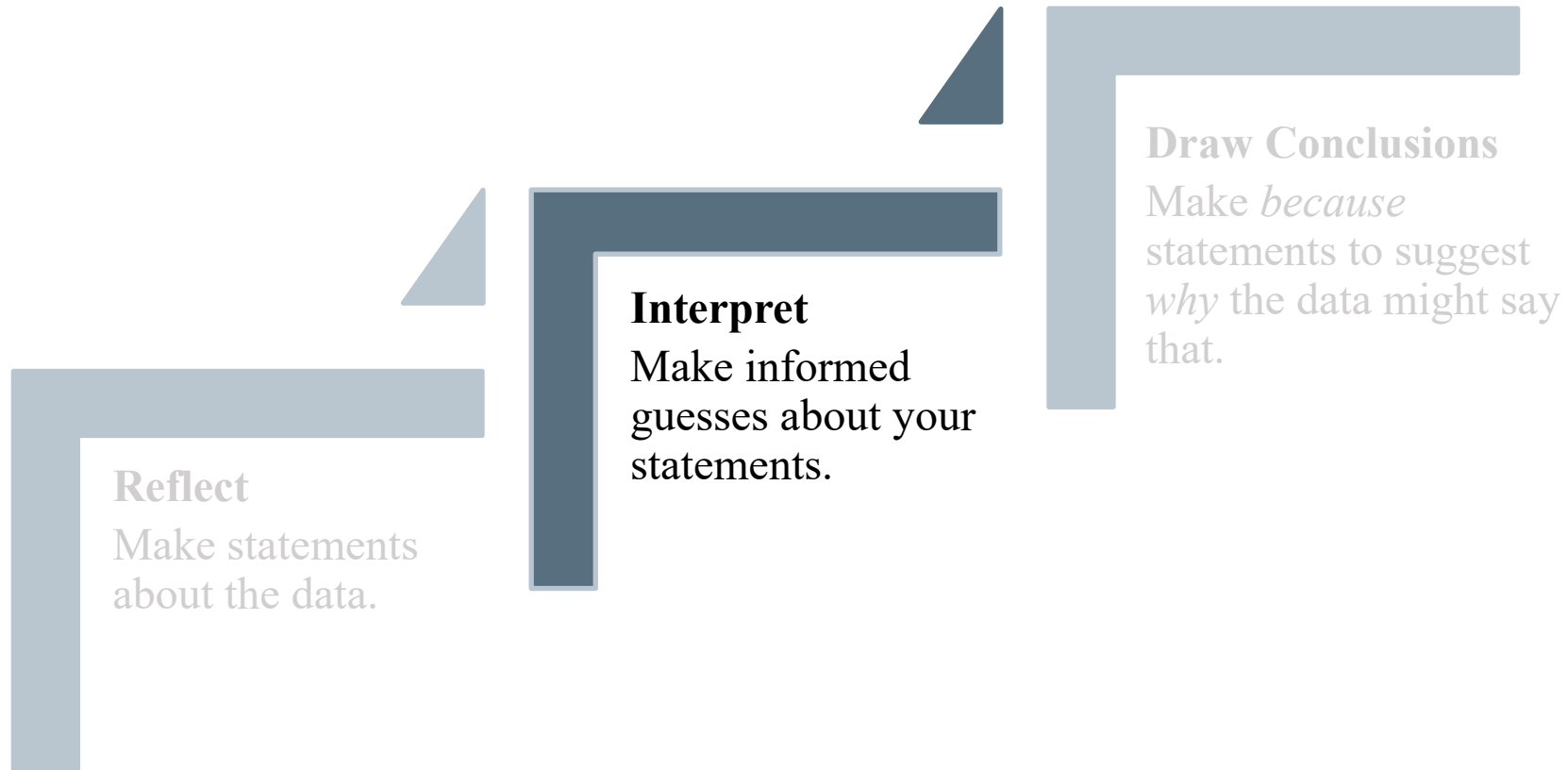
Make factual statements about the sample data below.

About 9 in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.



(Simulated Workplace School Culture Survey, 2018)

# Step 2: Interpret





## Step 2: Interpret (example)

Make informed guesses about the statements you made.

### REFLECT

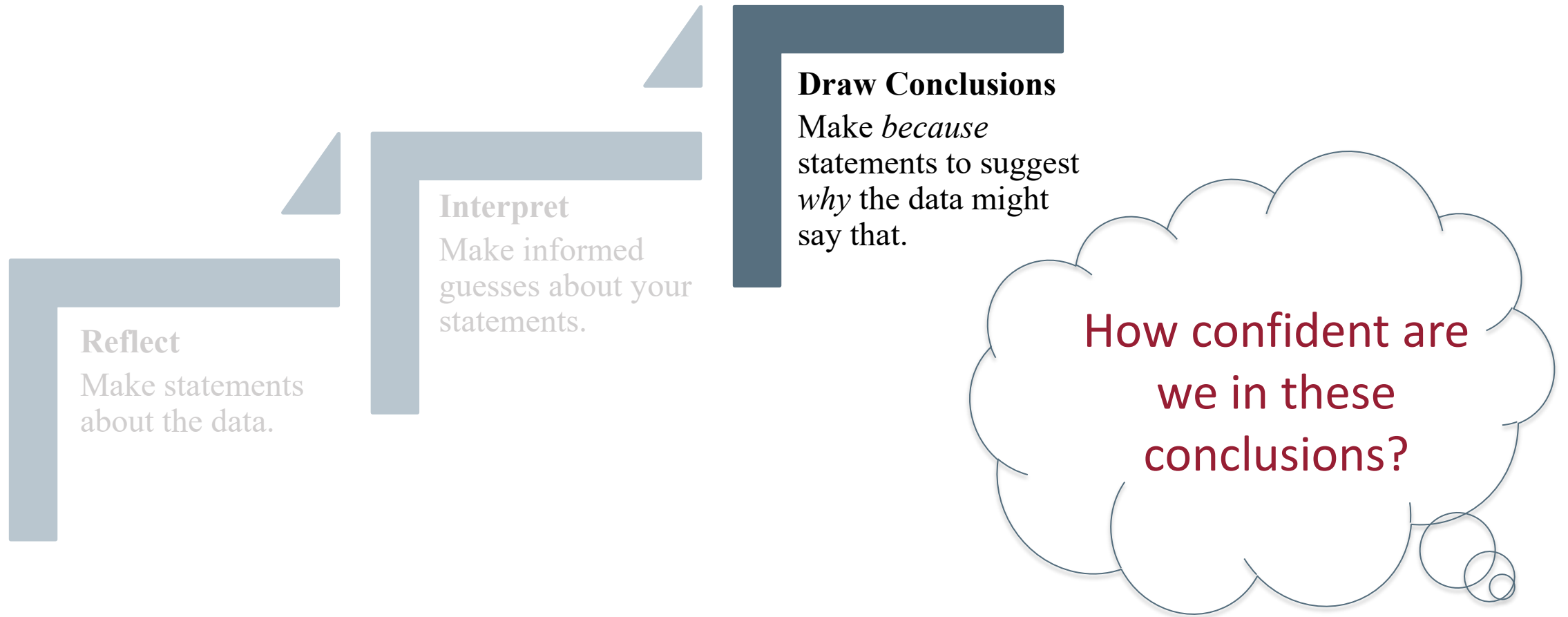
About 9 in 10 students reported they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.

### INTERPRET

It seems that a large majority of students at our school feel positive about their work.

A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.

# Step 3: Draw conclusions



## Step 3: Draw conclusions (example)

Make *because* statements to explain your interpretations.

### REFLECT

About 9 in 10 students reported they strongly agree or agree they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.

### INTERPRET

It seems that a large majority of students at our school feel positive about their work.

A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.

### DRAW CONCLUSIONS

A large majority of students feel positive about the work because the tasks in most of our programs are relevant and engaging for our students.

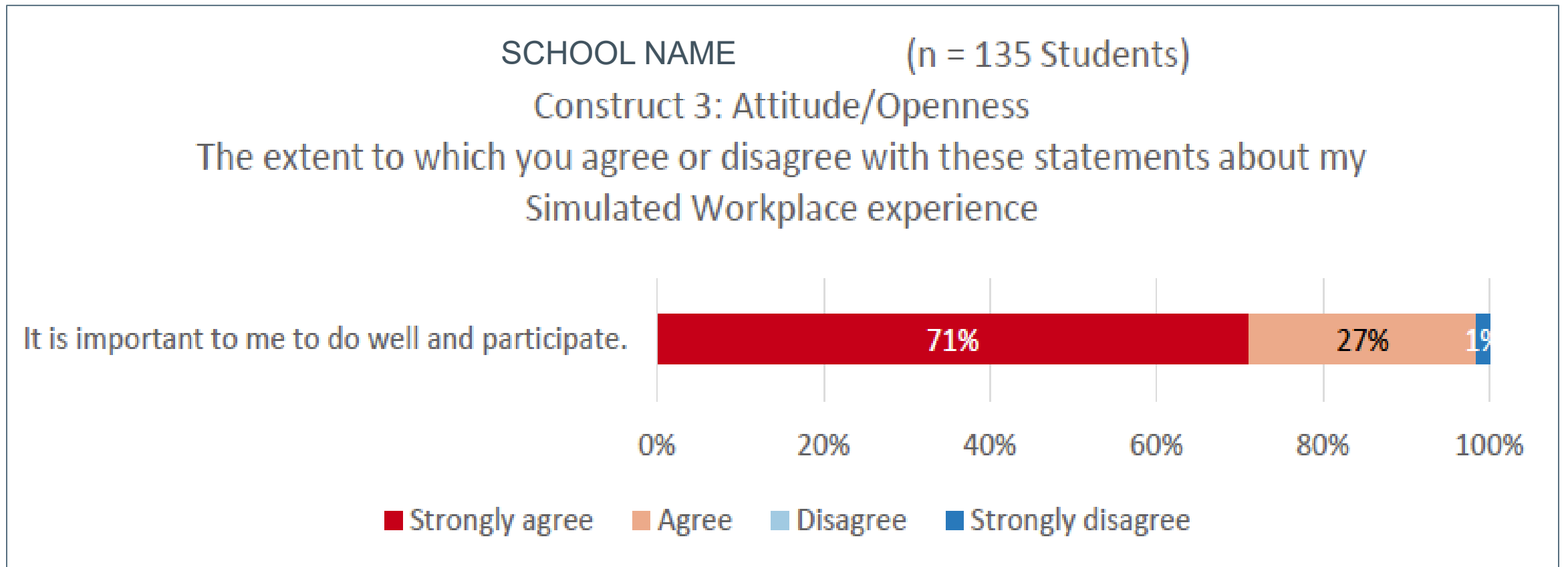
A minority of students may not see the impact of their tasks because some tasks do not feel relevant or authentic.

Activity!

Let's Work with School Culture Survey Data



# Let's try the three-step process with this result.



Link to Google JamBoard: <https://tinyurl.com/practicewithdata>

(Simulated Workplace School Culture Survey, 2018)

# See what a blast that is?!?

- Your participants will work with full survey reports.
- Students and instructors engage in open dialogue.
- Participants gain new insights into others' perspectives.



Great  
work!

# Identifying Evidence-Based Practices with the *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture* Educator Guide



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*SRI International*

# What's next?

Identify  
improvement  
priority.

Brainstorm  
types of  
change to  
help meet  
that  
priority.

Identify  
evidence-  
based  
practices to  
help achieve  
goals for  
change.



# Why does selecting evidence-based practices matter?

- You want to know how well a program or practice works to improve outcomes, for whom and under what conditions:
  - **Before** you adopt it.
  - **While** you are doing it.
  - And **after** you finish it.
- Evidence-based practices have been tested and studied.
- Practices with strong evidence or moderate evidence of success are more likely to improve outcomes than unproven practices.

# Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

- Created in partnership by the West Virginia Department of Education and REL Appalachia.
- Highlights five evidence-based practices:
  - Project-based learning
  - Frameworks for authentic questioning
  - Career-focused mentoring for students
  - Building strong student-teacher relationships
  - Individualized career planning

## Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture A Guide for Educators

### Simulated Workplace Culture

Simulated Workplace programs are intended to engage and empower students and increase workforce readiness by transforming classrooms into immersive, authentic workplace environments that combine individualized student supports with rigorous training and skill-building.<sup>1</sup>

Central to the vision of the Simulated Workplace program are educators who act as facilitators and a student-led classroom culture in which students' interests, capabilities, and learning styles drive learning.<sup>2</sup>

### Purpose of the Guide

On behalf of the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), the EdVenture Group administers the annual Simulated Workplace Culture Survey. WVDE, with support from Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia @SRI International, has prepared this guide to provide educators with evidence-based practices to strengthen culture both inside the classroom and schoolwide. After reviewing survey results and identifying areas of need, educators can select the appropriate evidence-based practices in this resource guide to enhance their school and classroom culture and plan for next steps to implement these practices.

The five evidence-based practices highlighted in the guide are aligned to one or more of the culture survey's constructs and, at a minimum, demonstrate a rationale for improving student outcomes. The practices fall into two categories: creating a student-centered learning environment and providing individualized student supports in the classroom. We identified the intended audience for each practice as either Simulated Workplace teachers or administrators depending on whether the practice is intended to be implemented at the classroom level or schoolwide to strengthen culture. Educators, however, should not feel limited by these designations when selecting and adapting the practices for use in their own classrooms and schools.

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* outlines four levels of evidence to support educators and administrators in choosing and implementing effective approaches, practices, and strategies that improve student outcomes. The level of evidence tells you whether a practice has been shown to be effective in similar settings. For an excerpt on levels of evidence from the U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments see [Appendix A on page 20](#).

### Roadmap to the Guide

For each practice, we provide a description, identify the target audience, and discuss foundations for strong implementation as well as core components of the practice. To help educators take the practices into the classroom and/or school, we provide concrete next steps to explore whether each practice is a good fit for their school or classroom, implement the practice, and continuously assess and improve implementation. We also provide additional resources to help you learn more, including examples of programs implementing these practices.

#### Creating a student-centered learning environment

- ▶ [Practice 1: Project-Based Learning \(PBL\) on page 2](#)
- ▶ [Practice 2: Frameworks for Authentic Questioning on page 5](#)

#### Individualized student supports

- ▶ [Practice 3: Career-Focused Mentoring for Students on page 8](#)
- ▶ [Practice 4: Building Strong Student-Teacher Relationships on page 11](#)
- ▶ [Practice 5: Individualized Career Planning on page 14](#)

#### Additional resources

- ▶ [Resources on page 16](#)
- ▶ [Glossary on page 19](#)

#### Appendix

- ▶ [Excerpt from U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments on page 20](#)

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# Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

## Creating a student-centered learning environment

Project-based learning  
(PBL)

Collaborating on relevant, real-world challenges can support students' critical thinking, motivation, and academic achievement.

Authentic questioning

Open-ended questions can increase student talk to support critical thinking, engagement, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations.

# Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*

## Individualized student supports

Career-focused mentoring

Strong relationships with mentors can increase student engagement, self-efficacy, and career readiness.

Building strong teacher-student relationships

High expectations for students, classroom norms, shared culture, and caring can support student success.

Individualized career planning

Career exploration and planning can promote student empowerment, engagement, motivation and goal-setting.

# Next Steps: Planning for Improvement



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# Action Planning Template

<b>Action step</b>	<b>Responsible parties</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Communications needed</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Measures of success</b>	<b>Data</b>
<b>What do you need to do to implement the practice?</b>	<b>Who will lead the task and provide support?</b>	<b>What do you need to complete this step?</b>	<b>Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?</b>	<b>When should this step be completed?</b>	<b>How will you know you have made progress on this step?</b>	<b>What data will you use to measure progress?</b>

# Action Planning Template

Action step	Responsible parties	Resources	Communications needed	Due	Measures of success	Data
What do you need to do to implement the practice?	Who will lead the task and provide support?	What do you need to complete this step?	Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?	When should this step be completed?	How will you know you have made progress on this step?	What data will you use to measure progress?
-Learn about career-focused mentoring programs in other Simulated Workplaces. How have others done it?	-Assistant principal and teacher	-Staff time -Contacts at other schools who have implemented career-focused mentoring programs  -Written materials on effective programs	-Other schools to learn about what they are doing  -Internal team communication to share status update	-Three weeks to gather information  -Send update email within four weeks	-Identify at least three example mentorship programs  -Share clear, timely update email	-Successful completion of items in <i>Measures of Success</i> column (list of three identified programs and update email)

# Questions and Wrap-Up



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# Where can I find the materials for this webinar and workshop series?

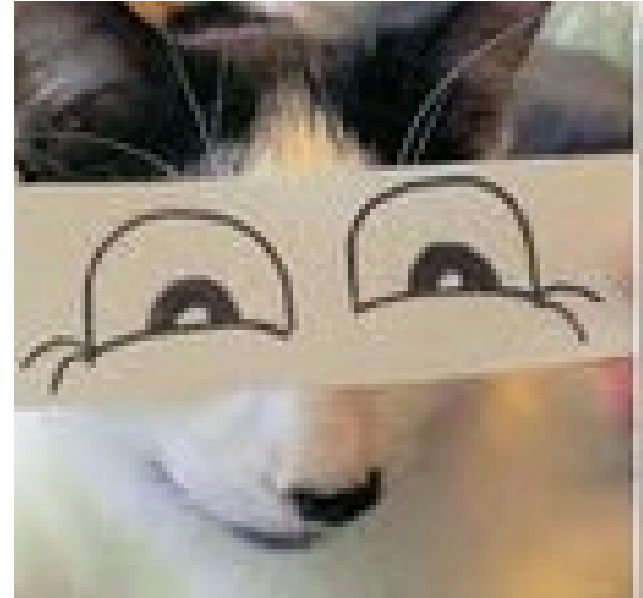
<https://wvde.us/instructional-support-professional-learning-forum/>





Questions?

Comments?



I'm so pumped about positive school culture, but wait, I still have some questions!

# Thank you!



<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia>



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