

A Multiple Case Study of Persistent and Emergent Positive Outlier Schools: How They Build Innovation Capacity Through Past-Informed Future Making

AERA Annual Meeting

11:45-1:15pm; April 10, 2026

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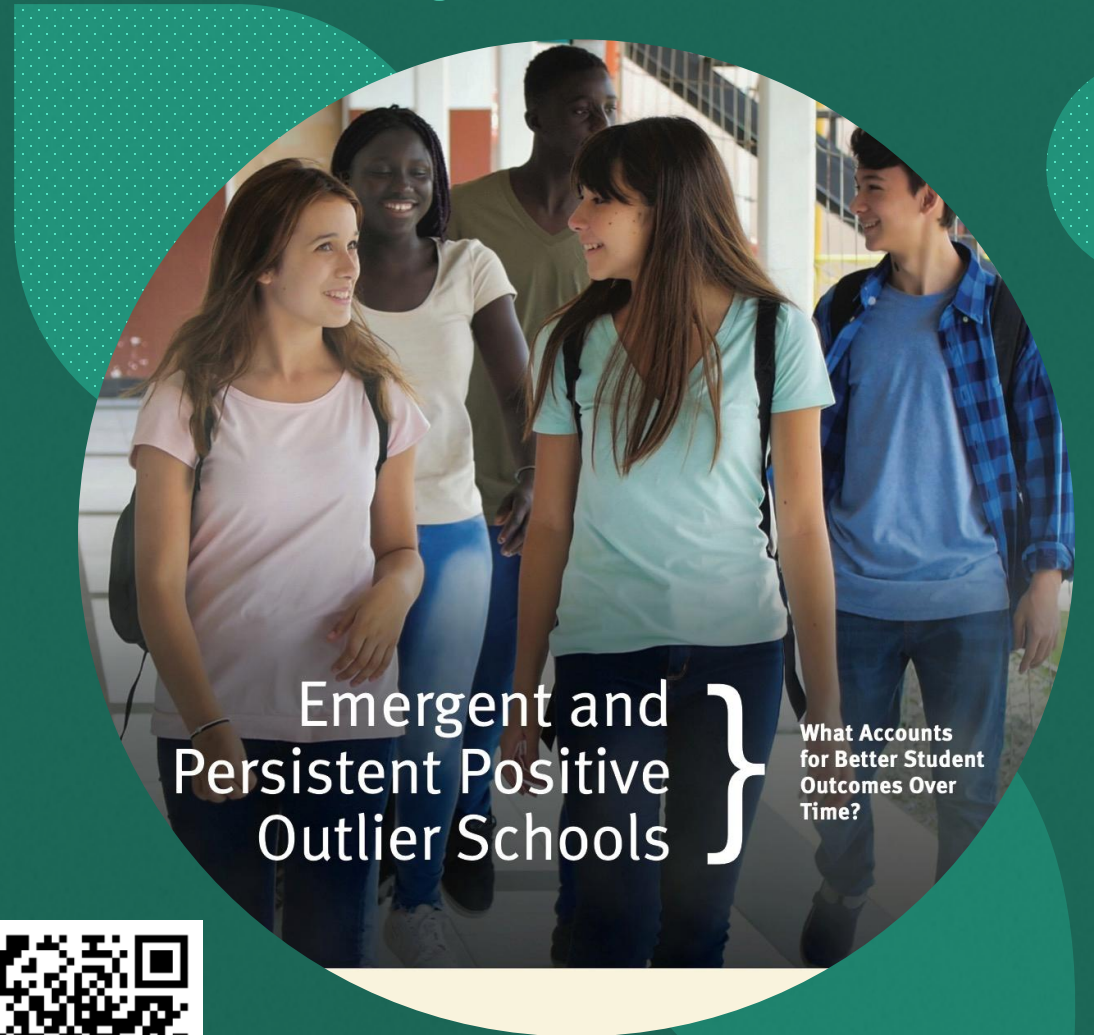
NYKids: A School Improvement Hub with Positive Outlier Research at the Center



Study Objectives and Purpose

We examined how persistent and emergent positive outlier schools (PPO and EPO) build innovation capacity through past-informed future making.

Overarching research question:
What enables some schools to consistently produce better student outcomes over time?



Emergent and
Persistent Positive
Outlier Schools }

What Accounts
for Better Student
Outcomes Over
Time?

Theoretical Frameworks

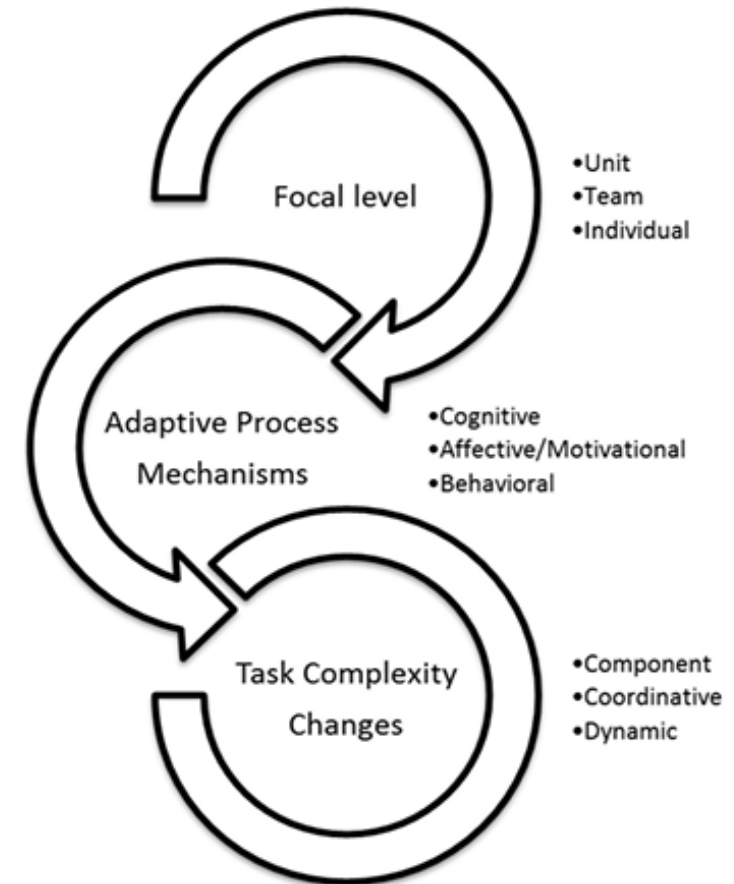
Bronfenbrenner's (1997) social ecological theory helps us examine the relationships of different levels of systems impacting youth experiences and performance

Baard's (2014) Performance Adaptation theory helps us understand how educators help weave the fabric of their schools through these processes:

- 1) thinking/learning about adaptation and change or what might contribute to them,
- 2) feeling/relating to adaptation and change, both as individuals and as a collective of individuals, and
- 3) doing/acting through the use of processes, tools, and resources that facilitate adaptation and change.

Senge's (1990) learning organization theory

This, then, is the basic meaning of a "learning organization" – an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive. - Senge, p.14, 1990



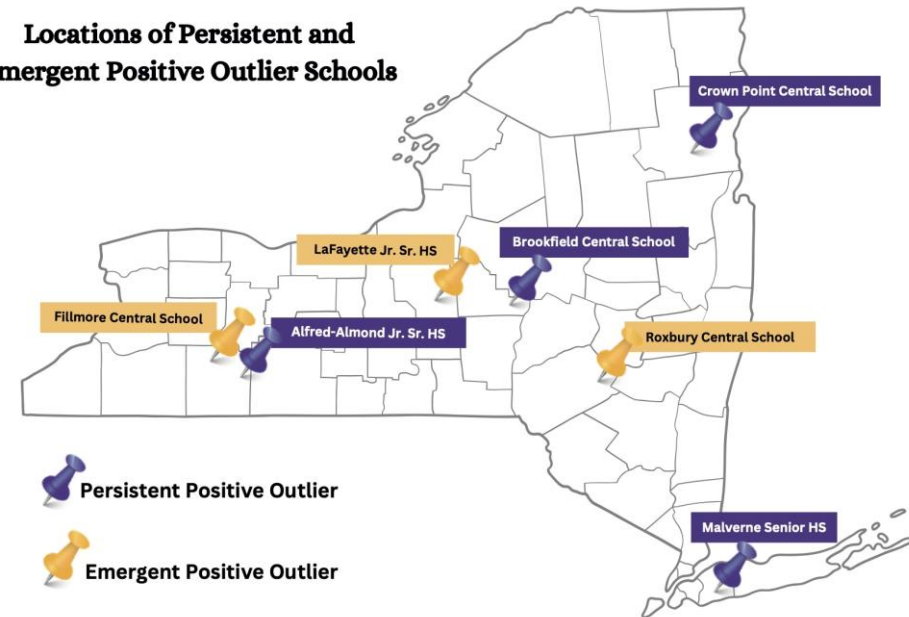
Research Design and Sample

- Comparative case study design (Yin, 2014)
- Of over 60 previously studied schools since the 2004-05 school year, 11 met our criteria as a persistent positive outlier or emergent positive outlier and 7 of those participated in this study.

Defining terms:

- **Persistent positive outlier schools** were identified in prior NYKids studies for having achieved statistically significant better student outcomes and continue to do so using the same, but most current, student outcome and demographic variables.
- **Emergent positive outlier schools** were identified in prior NYKids studies for having achieved “typical” student outcomes, but have emerged as positive outliers using the same, but most current, student outcome and demographic variables.

Locations of Persistent and Emergent Positive Outlier Schools



Data Collection and Analysis

Total Data Collected

	Crown Point	Malverne	Fillmore	Lafayette	Roxbury	Brookfield	Alfred Almond	Total
Interviews	17	3	6	18	17	2	7	70
Focus Groups	2	10	8	2	2	8	11	43
Documents/photos	48	33	47	89	37	10	97	361
School Tour	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	4
Interpretive Memos	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Participants	21	32	29	21	20	18	41	182

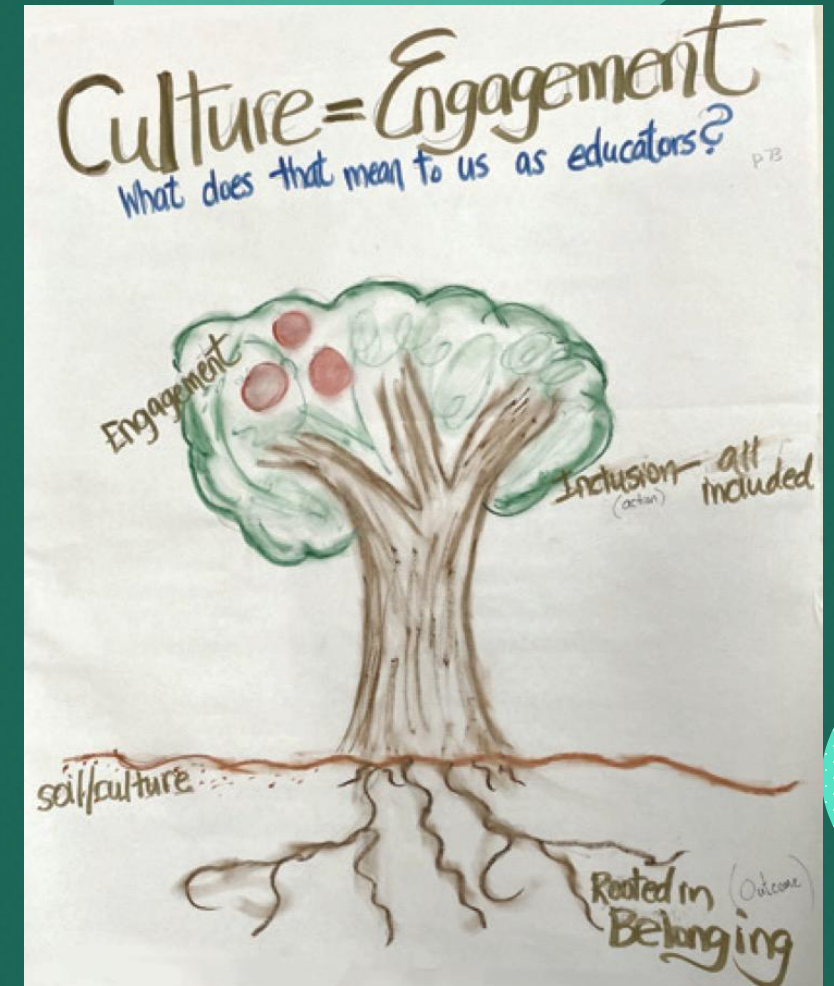
- Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with district and school-level leaders, teachers, support staff, and family members
- Document collection
- A priori and inductive coding (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014)
- Pattern-matching cross-case analysis to identify patterns

1. Consistency in Family Engagement

- Leveraging of past practice and process knowledge
- Purposeful mentoring to bridge communication gaps with families

Making sure that the way that [newer teachers] are writing them [quarterly progress notes] makes sense for families, and showing the data— reminding them [newer teachers] that if a parent comes back and says like, "Well, how'd you figure that out?" Do we have the resource just to show them?

- PPO Teacher



2. Professional Learning to Stick, Stay, and Spread

And administration is good about having us [staff] go [to professional learning opportunities]. Even if . . . we can't have five people out of the building, they kind of have one person go, and then ask "... can you bring it back and turn-key, and be prepared to be able to do that?" Whatever I hear at my monthly meetings with BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), I bring it back and say, "Hey, there's a training on this. This is what we need—find a sub[stitute]." And the sub is always a trick. We don't have a ton of subs. But we make it work. Because. . . if we want our kids to be lifelong learners, we need to set that example.

- PPO Teacher

- Spreading new learning across organizations as a priority
- Future-oriented practices and processes for youth
- School commitment to modeling lifelong learning
- Principle driven professional learning is connective glue to sustaining continuous learning

3. Remediating the Past through Balanced and Collective Effort

- Balance of patience and urgency in healing past challenges
- Providing space and time for educators and community members to share concerns about impacts of COVID-19

So we sat down as a committee [on grading policy], and anyone was welcome to join the committee. I want to say we maybe had 10 people who were actually part of the committee. We debated and we planned and we negotiated. We came up with a trial plan. And then for a year, we piloted the grading policy as a trial. I don't think people had to do it necessarily. But we had some people pilot this program. And then we went back as a school. And we looked at the data. . . . We looked at the issues people were having and revised the policy, and then we put the revised plan into place.

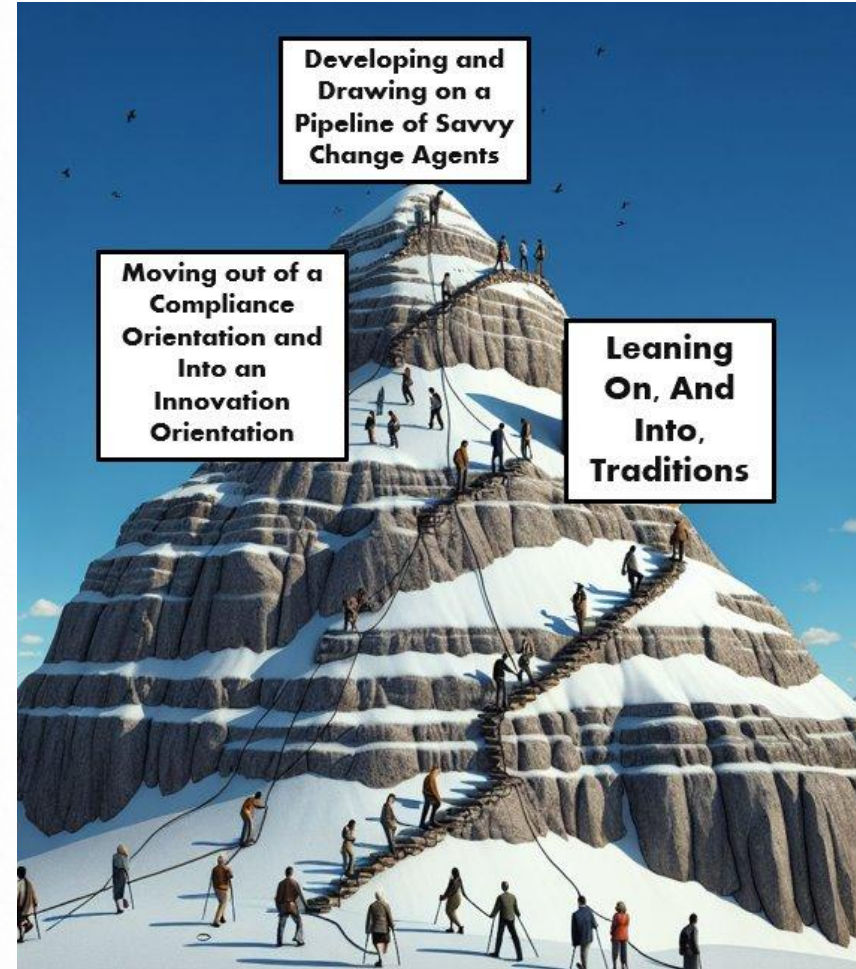
- PPO Support Staff

Spotlight: Malverne Senior High School

1. Enhancing Systems of Support
2. Mastering the Master Schedule: “Kids Want to Do Everything”
3. Continuous Review of Academic and Nonacademic Data



Climbing toward Outlier Status: Three Anchors



1. Developing Pipelines of Savvy Change Agents

- *“...we need to be moving away from sit and get because the kids are not getting what they need...So that’s what the goal is for next year. What’s a math classroom going to look like at the high school level? That’s going to be out of their [some teachers’] comfort zone.”*

- EPO School Leader

2. Leaning Into Traditions

- *“...the whole legacy dinner...was really phenomenal...the families were there and everything. What was really nice to see was the elementary school teachers who probably haven’t seen them [their former student who picked them for the honor] in a very long time. [Teachers] felt so honored that they were picked like, ‘wow, I made a difference with Johnny Sith in third grade.’”*

- PPO District Leader

3. Moving from A Compliance to An Innovation Orientation

“We are all responsible for looking at our data and pushing the envelope and looking to see how we can better ourselves. So if there’s a weakness, we have to work on that.”

- PPO School Leader

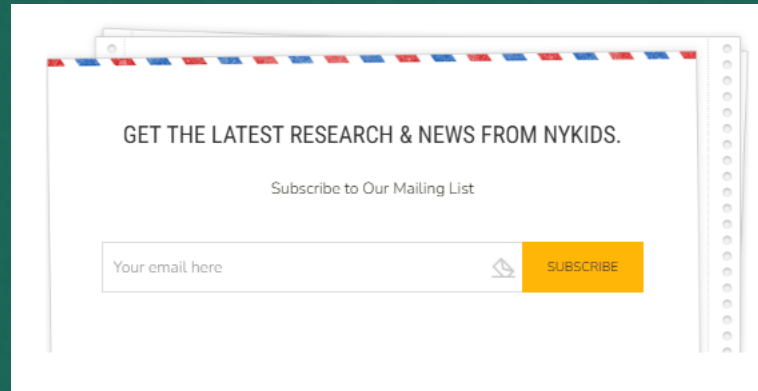
Discussion and Future Research

Innovation that results in consistently measurably better outcomes requires much of educators in all roles, including

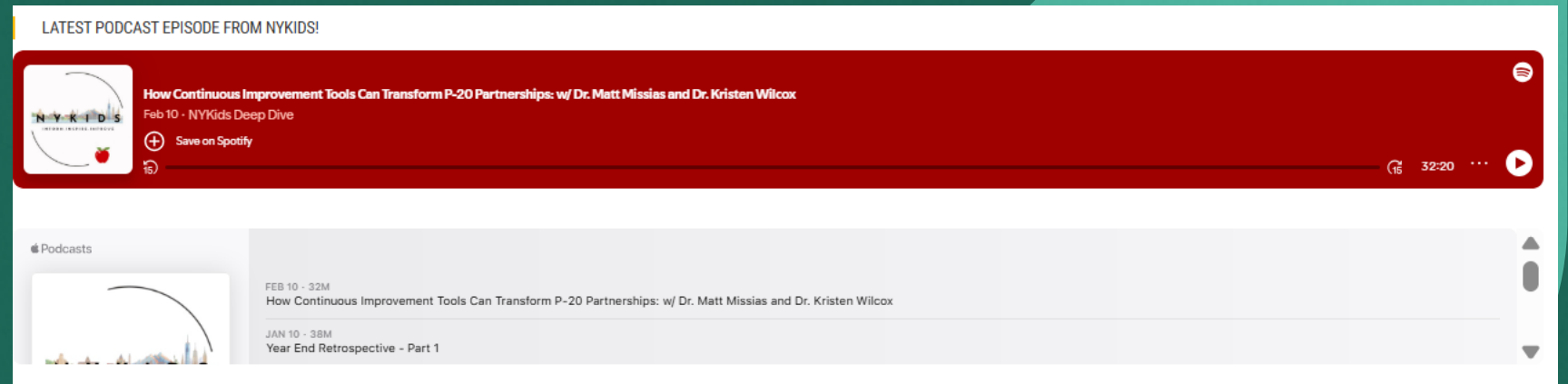
- A resistance to maintaining the status quo
- A leadership team that offers emotional sensitivity
- An affinity for use of data and ability to use data to inform change
- An environment where working outside comfort zones is the norm

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Key References

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