



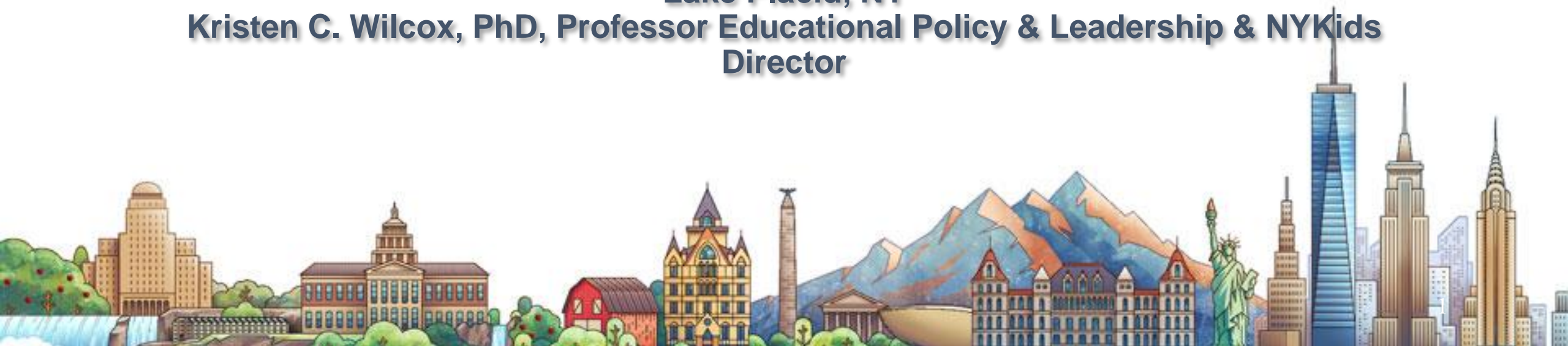
**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**

State University of New York

**Promising Practices from New York's Positive Outlier  
Rural Schools:  
A Report from NYKids**

**Monday, July 15 from 10:00 - 11:00 AM  
Lake Placid, NY**

**Kristen C. Wilcox, PhD, Professor Educational Policy & Leadership & NYKids  
Director**





*Great moments  
are born from  
great opportunity.*  
– Herb Brooks

Challenges of our time...

- rising and deepening levels of poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023) that often correlates to declines in student engagement and performance in school (Wilcox et al., 2022).
- increasing youth and parent/caregiver mental and physical health challenges (Fox et al., 2021; Leo et al., 2023).



# Pressing Questions

## How do Rural Positive Outlier School Educators...

- balance attention to students' mental health and social-emotional development while at the same time keep expectations high for academic performance?
- differentiate instruction and provide necessary academic supports for students with learning lags/gaps in the wake of the pandemic?
- build and maintain comprehensive systems of support for students and families?
- build resiliency in the face of unprecedented challenges?



# Study Background

## **Overarching Research Question:**

What policies, processes, and practices are supportive of adaptation and innovation in persistent and emergent positive outlier schools?

## Graduation Rates

# What are positive outliers and how do we identify them?

Procedure: multiple regression analysis using SPSS

Data used:

- student outcome measure
- + % low income/econ. disadvantaged
- + % student sub-groups (by ethnicity & language background) = z score

X-axis:

Performance by Percent Low Income

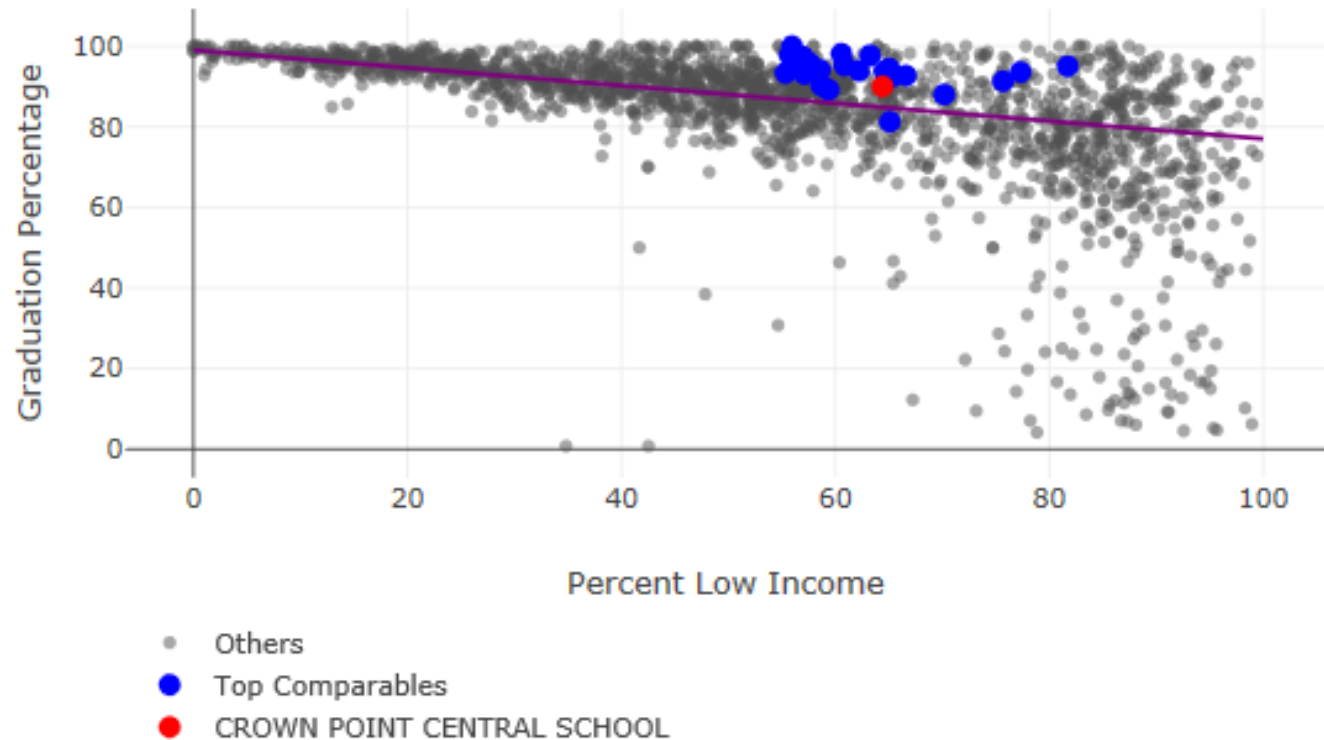
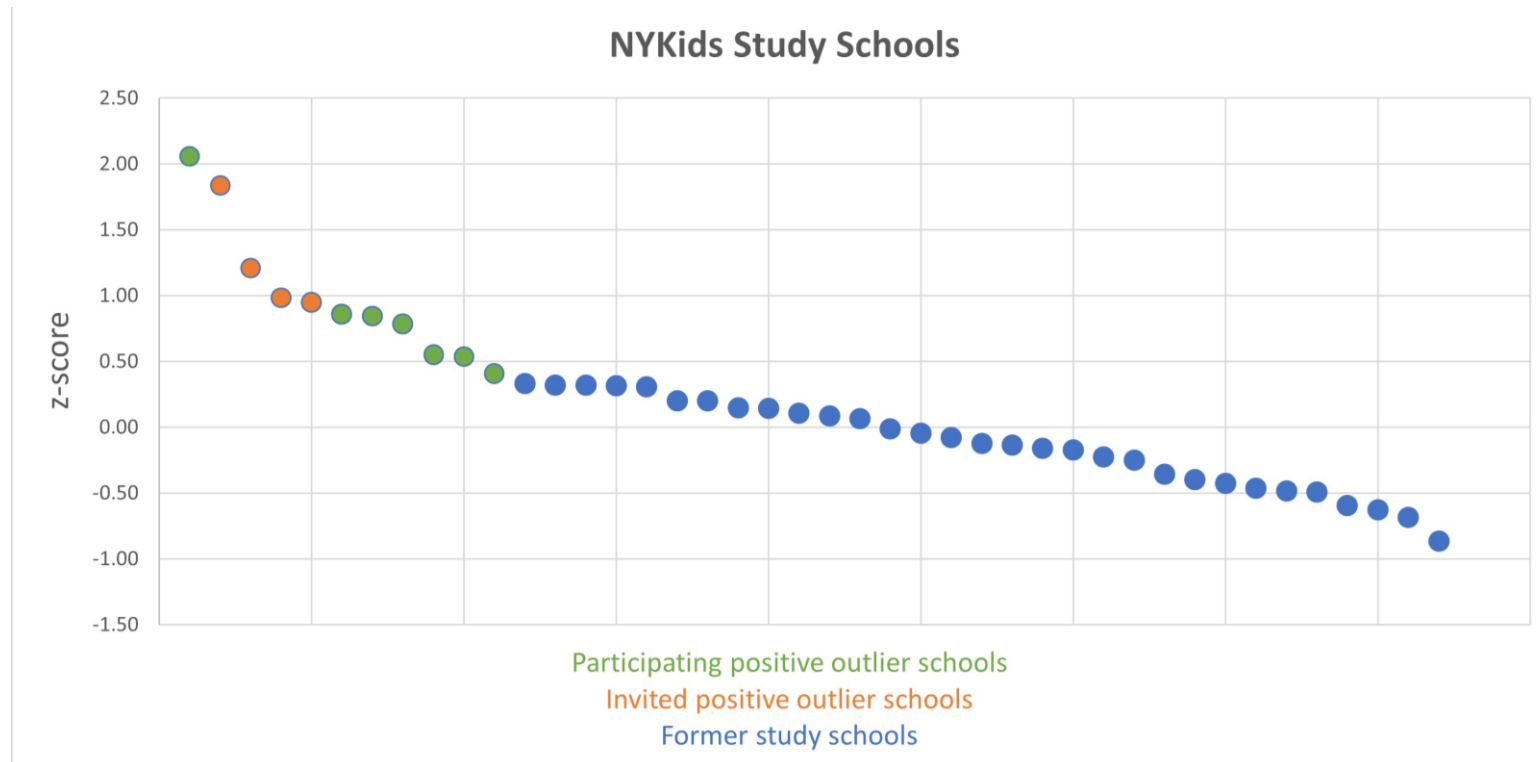
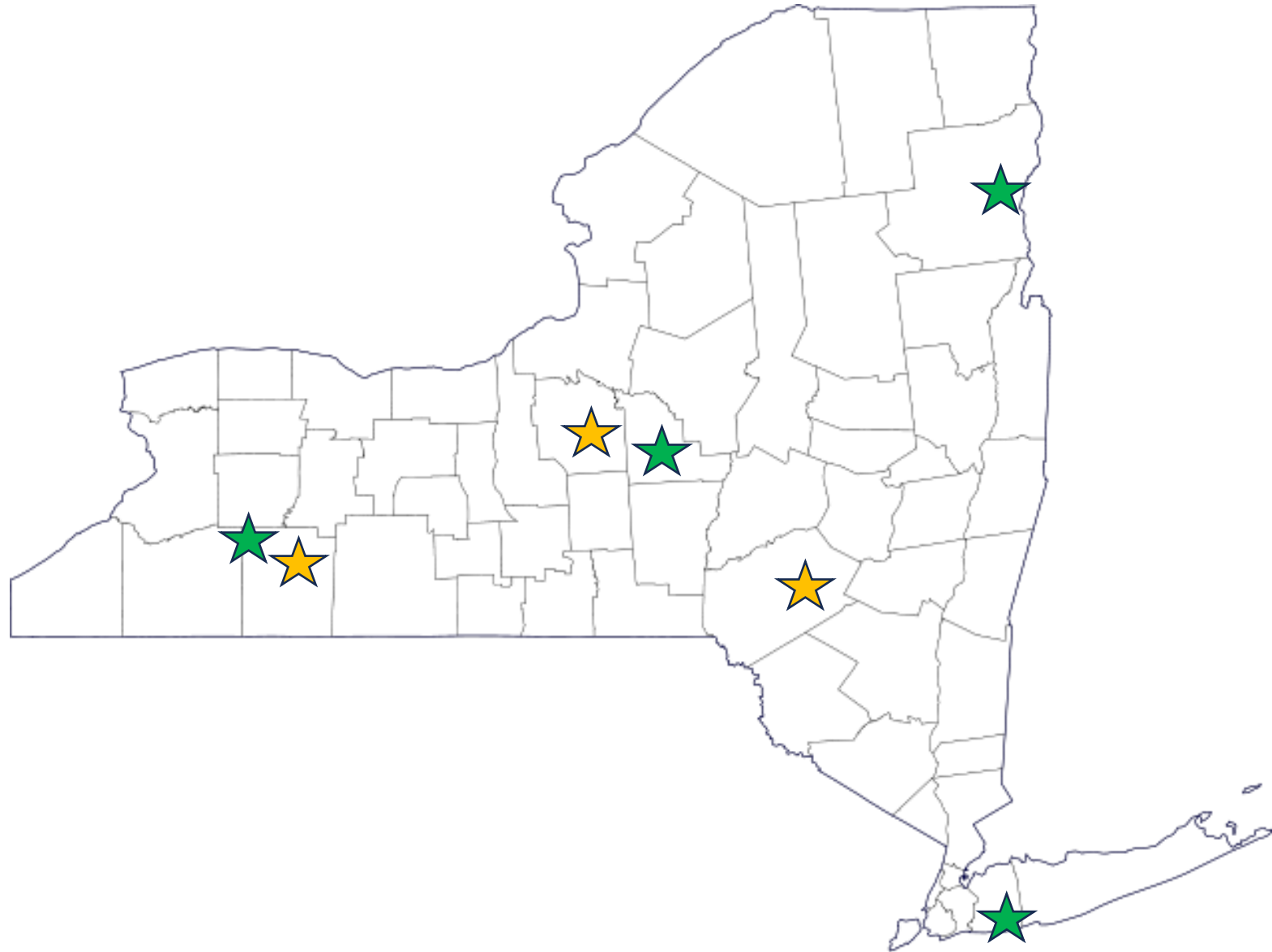


Image from NYKids' Performance Tracker –



# NYKids 23-24 Study Sample





**Locations of  
persistent  
and  
emergent  
positive  
outlier  
schools**

# Sample Demographics

School	z-score	Enrollment	Grade Span	Urbanicity	% Economically Disadvantaged	% Students with Disabilities	% ELL	% American Indian / Alaska Native	% Black/ African American	% Hispanic Latino	% Asian/ Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	% White	% Multiracial	PPE
Crown Point Central School	0.85	301	K-12	Rural distant	57	20	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	\$28,511
Malverne Sr High School	0.55	627	9-12	Suburb large	46	20	1	0	49	28	7	15	1	\$30,708
Fillmore Central School	0.54	589	K-12	Rural remote	61	15	0	0	1	1	1	96	0	\$16,620
LaFayette Jr-Sr High School	0.41	323	7-12	Rural fringe	43	12	9	28	1	2	1	66	2	\$24,672
Roxbury Central School	0.78	212	K-12	Rural remote	42	18	0	0	1	2	0	92	4	\$20,980
Brookfield Central School	2.06	195	K-12	Rural distant	78	24	0	0	1	0	0	99	1	\$24,226
Alfred-Almond Jr. Sr. High School	0.86	272	7-12	Rural fringe	45	15	0	0	0	5	4	88	3	\$21,361
NYS Average	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58	19	10	1	16	29	10	40	3	\$26,571



# Lines of Inquiry

- Culture, climate, & community
- Curriculum & instruction
- Leadership
- Social-emotional learning & mental health
- Family/parent engagement
- Staffing and capacity building
- Interventions/recognitions and special arrangements
- Data generation & utilization systems



# CCR and Student Engagement Research

Preparing students for college and career in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century

- Developing concrete plans for life after high school (Lindstrom et al., 2022)
- Exploring a range of options to match students' interests/skills with economic needs (Jimenez, 2020)

Fostering student engagement

- A “collective action problem” (Lawson & Lawson, 2020)
- Motivating students to succeed in and out of classrooms (Wang & Hofkens, 2020)



# SEL and Workforce Research

Prioritizing social-emotional learning and mental health

- Increasing needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bell et al., 2023)
- How to embed SEL programming in school curricula (Mahoney et al., 2021)

Educator workforce shortages present challenges for school districts across the country

- Creative and targeted interventions to recruit and retain staff (See et al., 2020)
- Improve teacher education and training pipeline (Holcomb-McCoy, 2023)



# Family-Community-School Research

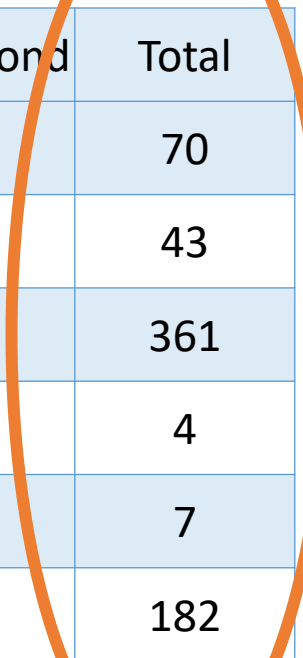
(Re)building family-community-school relationships after the pandemic

- Recognizing local needs and building capacity from existing resources (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020)
- Using a range of strategies, events, and activities to engage different families (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020)



# Study data

	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



# PERSISTENT POSITIVE OUTLIER CROWN POINT



## Crown Point findings:

- Increasing the number of staff who provide mental health services for students on the school campus
- Providing teaching assistants and aides in classrooms to support educators with growing class sizes
- Utilizing parent and family communication strategies such as ParentSquare
- Collaborating with colleagues across grade levels to ensure that students' unique needs are met as they transition from one grade to the next.

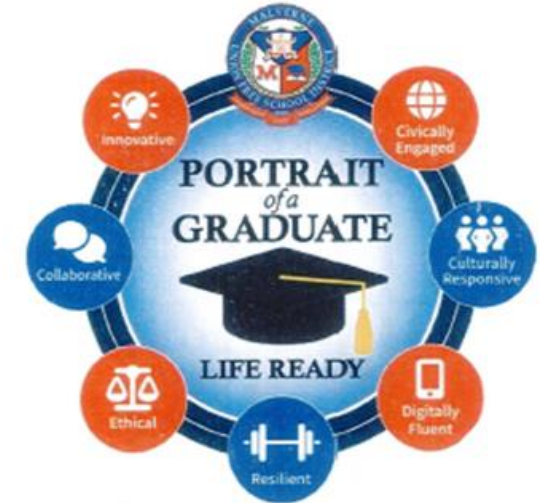
*I have worked in other districts where you don't get that warm and fuzzy feeling from everybody.*

***I could go to anybody in this building and say, "I need help with this."*** And they would do whatever they can to help me. So, whenever there's changes, it's just ***everyone supports each other.***

*We don't teach a certain class.*

***We teach individual students here.***

# PERSISTENT POSITIVE OUTLIER MALVERNE



## Malverne findings:

### Investment In and Ownership for Nurturing Relationships

- School and district experienced as a family<- “our kids” “my kids” – not “those kids” Individual connections/purposeful about building close relationships between staff – staff-student- staff-parent/caregiver
- Recognition of each individual’s value and contribution

### Future-oriented and Forward-leaning

- Educators see their roles in a longer timeframe – historical view of development of the school and district (legacy dinner; invites to alumni, pipeline for leaders) - proactive

### Leveraging Legacy and Leading the Field

- See themselves as leading in the field – and take pride in it and savvy about image – how they present themselves to the public

....**teamwork makes the dream work**. We always preach that *with the kids. We all have each other's backs- we'll all help each other for the kids.*

*Because they [students and parents] have a good rapport with us that it's, **they will do anything for us.***

# PERSISTENT POSITIVE OUTLIER ALFRED-ALMOND

AACs EAGLES S.O.A.R.								
I am an Eagle. Watch me SOAR! We are Eagles. We stand for...	BUS	HALLWAYS & STAIRWELLS	CLASSROOM & SPECIALS	BATHROOM	CAFETERIA	PLAYGROUND	SPECIAL EVENTS & RECEPTIONS	TECHNOLOGY
<b>SAFETY</b> We are aware of ourselves and our surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>Stay in assigned seat</li> <li>Face forward</li> <li>Follow bus safety rules</li> <li>Walk to and from bus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>walk</li> <li>stay to the right</li> <li>eyes forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>use furniture as intended</li> <li>use materials as intended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>keep water and soap in sink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>stay in seat</li> <li>ask permission to leave</li> <li>walk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>use equipment as intended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> <li>use furniture as intended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep high secure</li> <li>keep personal items</li> <li>know your "friend"</li> <li>see something, say something, tell an adult</li> </ul>
<b>OWNERSHIP</b> We take responsibility for our words and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>be timely</li> <li>take care of your materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>go directly to destination</li> <li>be where you are supposed to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>do your personal best</li> <li>take care of your materials</li> <li>complete work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>go, flush, wash, leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>eat your food</li> <li>keep area clean</li> <li>return tray and go directly to seat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>be gracious winners and losers</li> <li>play fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>KAMFOOTY</b></li> <li>give attention to presentation</li> <li>stay for whole performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take care of your devices</li> <li>be where you are supposed to be</li> <li>manage your digital footprint</li> </ul>
<b>ACCEPTANCE</b> We understand and celebrate differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give personal space</li> <li>include others</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>smile and greet others</li> <li>set a good example</li> <li>positive comments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give personal space</li> <li>include others</li> <li>be mindful of others' perspectives</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allow privacy of others</li> <li>give personal space</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be friendly to all</li> <li>kind words about others' food choices</li> <li>include others</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include others</li> <li>set a good example</li> <li>acknowledge personal ability levels</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set a good example</li> <li>be respectful of others' perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set a good example</li> <li>be respectful of others' perspectives</li> <li>be an upstander</li> </ul>
<b>RESPECT</b> We value ourselves, others, and the world around us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 1, 2</li> <li>garbage in the trash can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 0</li> <li>hold doors</li> <li>share the hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 1, 2, 3</li> <li>listen with an open mind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 2</li> <li>put toilet paper in toilet</li> <li>keep it clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 2</li> <li>say "please" and "thank you"</li> <li>use appropriate utensils</li> <li>use napkin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 4</li> <li>take turns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> <li>voice level 0</li> <li>find drink free zone</li> <li>clean when appropriate</li> <li>electronics silent and away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>THINK</b></li> </ul>

## Alfred-Almond findings:

- Maintaining an “academic culture” and a “we’re special” pride in school
- Focusing on relationships— adult-child; child-child; teacher-parent
- Delicately navigating between maintaining traditions and innovating (being strategic about lining up resources for school of their size to current and future needs of kids in the community).
- Fostering strong connections to place and managing finances

My Board of Education has been very very good about not cutting if we don't need to. **Very fiscally sound.** We've had a number of board members; we have two that are 25 plus years.

I think we've done well with keeping as many students engaged as possible in multiple aspects, whether it's in athletics, music, our clubs. **We've added classes that students were interested in taking and that teachers were interested in teaching.** The Board really pushed for a financial literacy class, which is why we that's our requirement, which also falls in line with the Blue Ribbon Commission.



# PERSISTENT POSITIVE OUTLIER Brookfield



## Brookfield findings:

- Looking forward to the future
  - Supporting many newly hired teachers
  - Re-engaging the community after staff turnover
- Making curricula more engaging
  - Emphasis on hands-on, performance-based, and relevant learning
  - Challenging students to take risks and make mistakes
- Leveraging all possible resources to meet students' needs
  - Working with BOCES and other county organizations to build programming and address poverty

.....

*We want to produce positive, **productive citizens**. So when they get out of here, whatever they do, they are adding to society in a positive way.*

**We don't want the teacher in the front lecturing and the students in their seats passively engaging with maybe note-taking or whatever it is they're passively doing. That's not engagement. That's not real learning.**

# EMERGENT POSITIVE OUTLIER FILLMORE



## Fillmore findings:

- Developing Well-Rounded Youth
- Growing Leaders from Within
- Creative Staffing
- Building Relationships with Every Student
- Enhancing SEL offerings and capacity
- Building Relationships with Each Student
- Building from Long-Standing Ties in the Community

*[I]t makes me feel good as a parent to know like, we have this amazing group of people in our school that are going to be there to **help lift up our kids and support them emotionally and physically.** – parent*

*I actually went to Fillmore as a kid. So starting kindergarten all the way up through, went off to college to be a teacher. And **this was one of the reasons I became a teacher was because of the school.***

*We are trying to prepare life skills for beyond these walls. We want them to be successful as adults too. **So, it's not just looking at a number on a test.***

# EMERGENT POSITIVE OUTLIER LAFAYETTE



Lafayette findings:

Centering on relationships and well-being

- Building expertise in trauma-informed care
- Infusing relationship-building into the fabric of school

Stabilizing leadership

- Paying purposeful attention to leadership that will stay and grow your own
- Resetting the culture to proactive vs. reactive

Experimenting and institutionalizing innovative models

- Big Picture
- WIN

And so, [we are] trying **to get teachers to understand that there has been a shift**... “Hey, we’re supportive with the fact that the kid had a violation in your classroom.” But at the same time, **we’re supporting the kid to try to get to the root cause of why was that problem there**. You know, was it that you didn’t eat breakfast and you’re grumpy? Or what happened the night before? **And trying to get those kids those services**. - Principal

# EMERGENT POSITIVE OUTLIER ROXBURY

Roxbury findings:

(Re)building trust through open communication

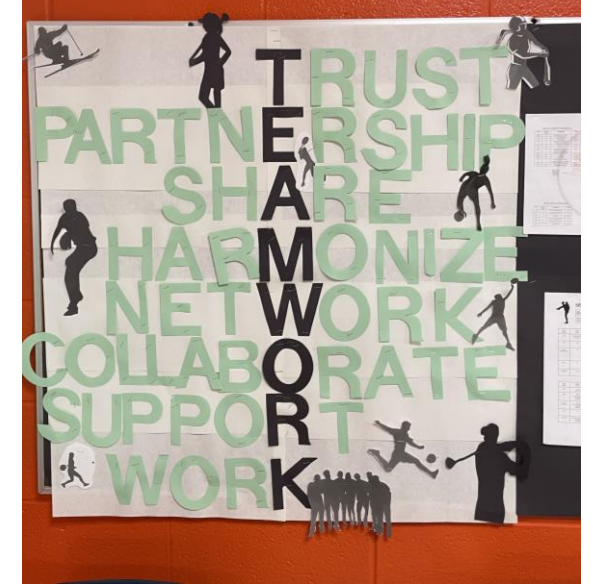
- Emphasis on establishing trust with community after budgetary tensions
- Optimism for new leadership after administrative turnover

Providing choice after graduation and emphasizing civic-mindedness

- Measuring success in developing active community members rather than by test scores

Going above and beyond for students

- Ensuring students had additional learning opportunities beyond the class day
- Taking on extra responsibilities when resources were limited



You have to be a team player, you have to be flexible. **And you have to be here for the kids.** You have to be here for the right reason. – teacher

*[E]verybody... wants what's best for kids going forward so that when they graduate, **they can do what, they can go into the military, they can go into college, they can go ahead and get a job.*** – principal

# Promising practices across schools

- ✓ Stabilize and grow leadership
- ✓ Build and rebuild trust with families and communities
- ✓ Harness resources and supports in the community and region
- ✓ Infuse choice in curriculum and programming



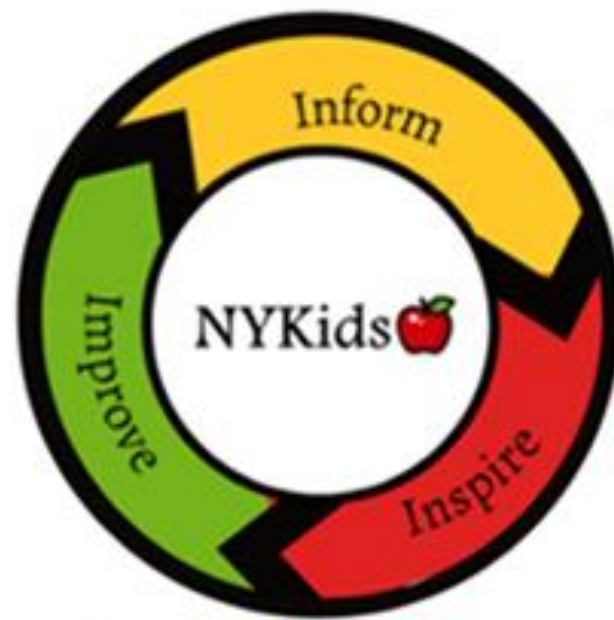
# Your Turn....

	We focus on this a lot (2)	We focus on this sometimes (1)	We focus on this hardly ever (0)	Challenges that arise for us in focusing on this are...
Stabilize and grow leadership				
Build and rebuild trust with families and communities				
Harness resources and supports in the community and region				
Infuse choice in curriculum and programming				

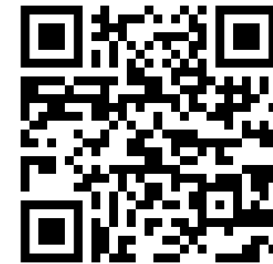


<https://ny-kids.org/>

Scan the QR code for NYKids website



Scan the QR code for our Performance Tracker



## Welcome to NYKids Performance Tracker

Welcome to New York State's only school performance tracker website.

This unique resource will help you:

- Learn about student performance in schools of your choosing
- Compare schools of your choosing with higher performing schools
- Visualize student performance over time and by student subgroups

The [Primer on Use](#) can help you get started.

This site will function on most browsers, but is tested for use in Chrome and Firefox.

Ready to Go?  
Find Your School

School

(or) District

(or) County

NYKIDS WEBSITE





Home » Blog

**01**  
JULY

**What Does "Excellence on Purpose" Look Like in Malverne Senior High School?: Announcing NYKids Latest Persistent Positive Outlier Case Study**

We are excited to announce the case study of Malverne Senior High School our latest persistent positive outlier school in this study, is now available. Below, we share some of the major themes we found and share take-aways on what ...


[READ MORE](#)

**21**  
JUNE

**Latest Case Study from Fillmore Central School Now Available from NYKids: Leveraging Belongingness to Improve Students' Experiences**

NYKids has been hard at work this year visiting schools throughout the state. As described in a previous blog, for our 20th anniversary study, NYKids is returning to schools we identified as positive outliers in prior NYKids studies (what we ...

[READ MORE](#)

NYKids 

Home » Research Results

**A primary activity of NYKids is to conduct research and identify promising practices in odds-beating schools.**

Results of each study are available in multiple formats and include reports that summarize the results of each study; best practice frameworks that offer comparisons of higher- and typically-performing schools and sample documents from the odds-beating performers; and case studies of the individual higher-performing, odds-beating schools studied.

Apply Any Combination of Filters to Refine Your Results

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1 of 8 1 2 3 - >


**Malverne Senior High School: Promising Practices from Persistent and Emergent Positive Outliers**


NYKids 20th Anniversary Study: Promising Practices from Persistent and Emergent Positive Outlier Schools



NYKIDS PERFORMANCE  
TRACKER


# Performance Tracker

 School Profile

 Main Chart

 Opportunity Gap Bar Chart

 Map

 Scatter Plot

 Multi-Year Summary Chart

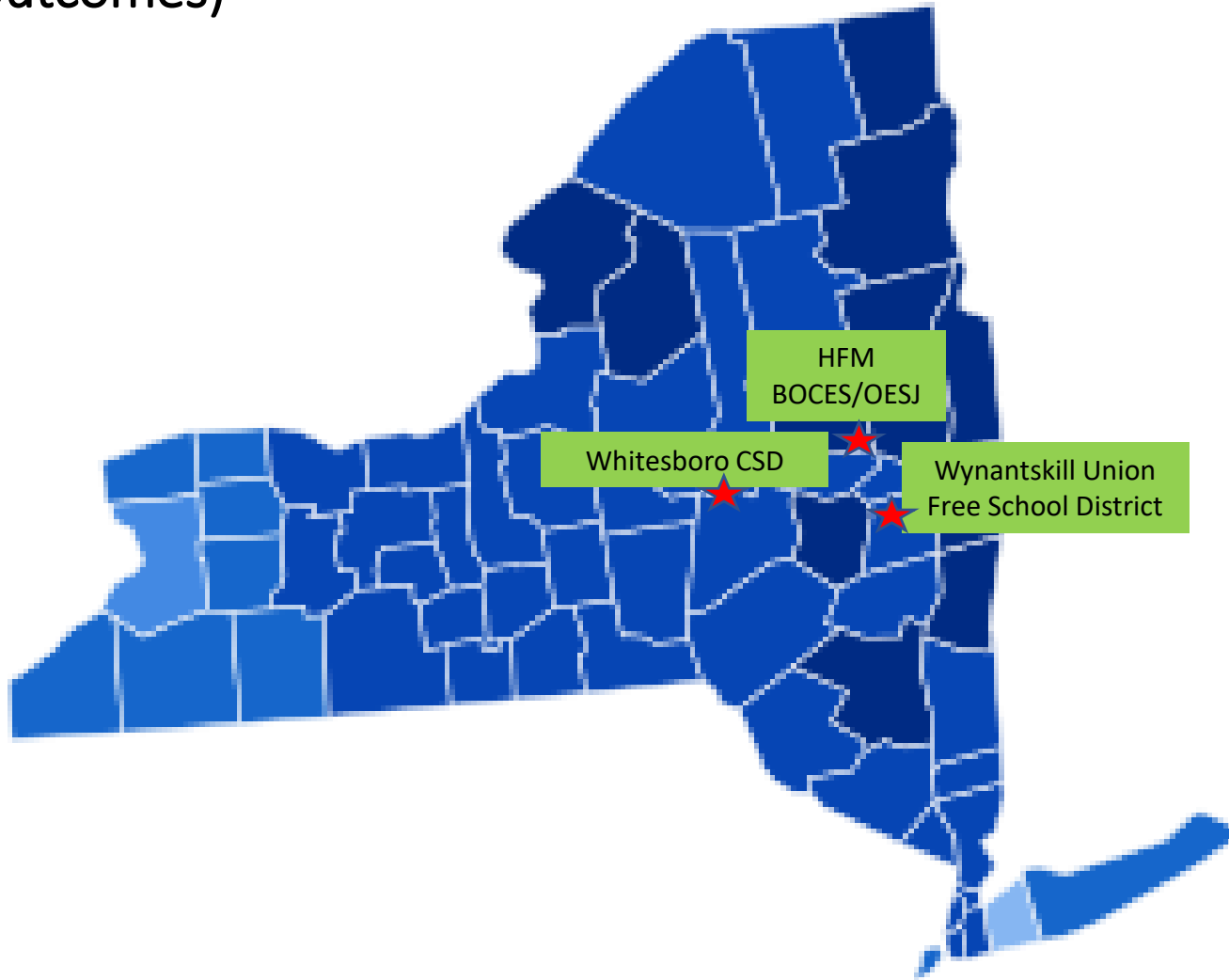
Select Year:

School Summary - CROWN POINT CENTRAL SCHOOL (All data for each year are as reported by the New York State Education Department.)

Grade Span:	PK-12	White:	100.00%
Number of Students:	301	Black or African American:	0.00%
Students with Disabilities:	61	Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander:	0.00%
Economically Disadvantaged:	57.14%	Hispanic or Latino:	0.00%
English Language Learners:	0.33%	American Indian or Alaska Native:	0.00%

NYKIDS SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT RESOURCES

# NYKids COMPASS-AIM Partners (Compare, Assess, Select levers to improve, Set goals, Action Plan, Implement plan, Monitor outcomes)



**Evidence-Based Direct Support for Continuous Improvement in Schools and Districts**

### What does NYKids offer?

Our NY-focused improvement hub conducts and uses research from NYS schools and couples it with improvement science to build improvement capacity in schools and districts

### What is our process and who leads it?

We convene your school improvement team(s) in 2-day intensive COMPASS institutes with check-ins throughout the school year. Your team will...

- COMParE your school with NYKids positive outlier schools
- Assess local school needs and priorities
- Select high leverage improvement ideas to test
- Set SMART goals and near term aims
- Implement and monitor evidence-based action plans

We are a team of researchers and practicing professionals with over 70 years combined experience leading school improvement initiatives in over 50 NYS schools



If identified as a LSI, CSI, TSI, or ATSI school, learn how to engage your school team(s) in designing and implementing your improvement plan

- Learn how to analyze and use survey data to inform priority areas in your plan
- Learn how to work as a team toward a shared goal/commitment in your plan
- Learn to be problem-focused and equity-oriented in your improvement team meetings
- Learn how to make sense of and share progress
- Learn how to use improvement processes and tools for system-wide and lasting improvements

**Our Mission:**  
Helping make educational systems get better at getting better by tapping the best of our practical and research knowledge, tools, and processes

### Testimonials

"Check-ins and the [COMPASS] template itself really lends itself to making sure you are articulating responsibilities, the who, what, when and where of all things."  
—Principal, rural school

"This institute allowed us to think through and discuss where we are now and where we can go. The time with colleagues and time to focus on specific pieces of a school or two was invaluable."  
- Teacher, suburban school



NYKids  
Inform. Inspire. Improve.

### Contact Us

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