



Second-Year Evidence from an Evaluation of the Partnership Model

**Presented to:
Michigan Association of Intermediate
School Administrators**

January 28, 2021

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

EPIC's Year 2 evaluation of the Partnership Model asks five main questions:

1. How has the Partnership model changed over time?
2. How has Partnership changed education in Partnership schools and districts?
3. How are educators and leaders in Partnership schools and districts implementing the reform as it matures?
4. What human capital challenges face Partnership schools and districts and how are educators in these districts addressing them?
5. What conditions, other than human capital, mediate Partnership turnaround efforts?



DATA AND METHODS

EPIC's multi-method evaluation relies on several sources of data to address research questions:

Data Type	Data Source	Analysis Method
Administrative	Student administrative records (n=9,014,665 student-years)	Regression-based analyses (event studies)
	Educator administrative records (n=573,875 educator-years)	Regression-based analyses (event studies)
Surveys of Educators in Partnership Districts	Teachers in Partnership districts (fall 2018 n=2,718; RR 38%) (fall 2019 n=3,324; RR 49%)	Descriptive analyses
	Principals in Partnership districts (fall 2018 n=81; RR 29%) (fall 2019 n=88; RR 38%)	Descriptive analyses
Educator COVID Surveys	K-8 teachers across the state (statewide n=8,565; 16% RR) (Partnership district n=909; 19% RR)	Descriptive analyses
	K-8 principals across the state (statewide n=316; 12% RR) (Partnership district n=29; 12% RR)	Descriptive analyses

DATA AND METHODS

EPIC's multi-method evaluation relies on several sources of data to address research questions:

Data Type	Data Source	Analysis Method
Qualitative Interviews	LEA/ PSA Leader Interviews (2018-19 n=22) (2019-20 n=22)	Descriptive & thematic coding
	Case study interviews (2018-19 n=60 across 3 sites) (2019-20 n=28 across 3 sites)	Descriptive & thematic coding, comp. case study
Qualitative Observations and Document Analysis	Review of Goal Attainment (RGA) meetings (n=3)	Observation
	Continuity of Learning (COL) plans (n=813)	Descriptive coding, EPIC-developed rubric



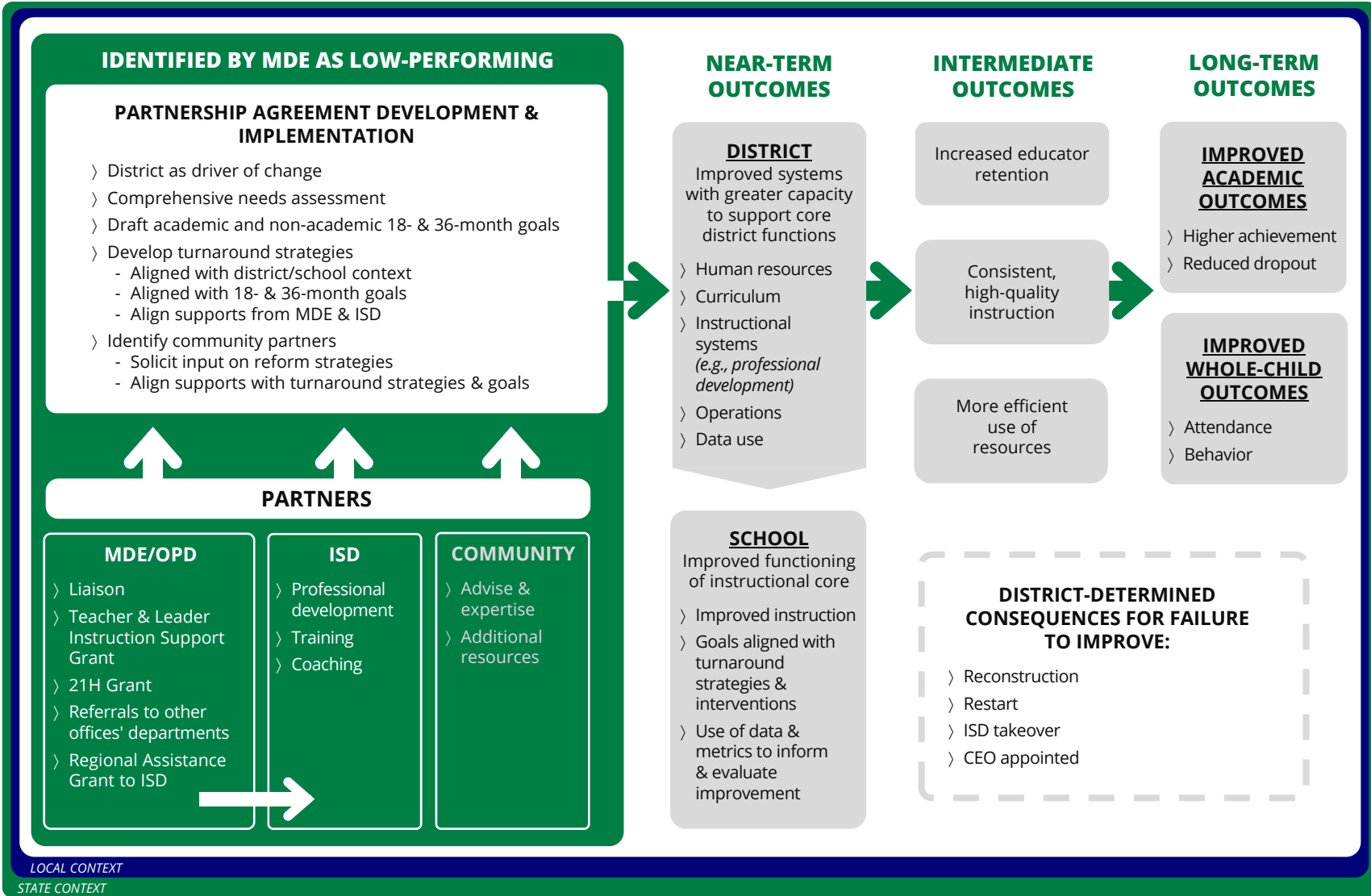
Research Question #1:

**How has the Partnership model
changed over time?**





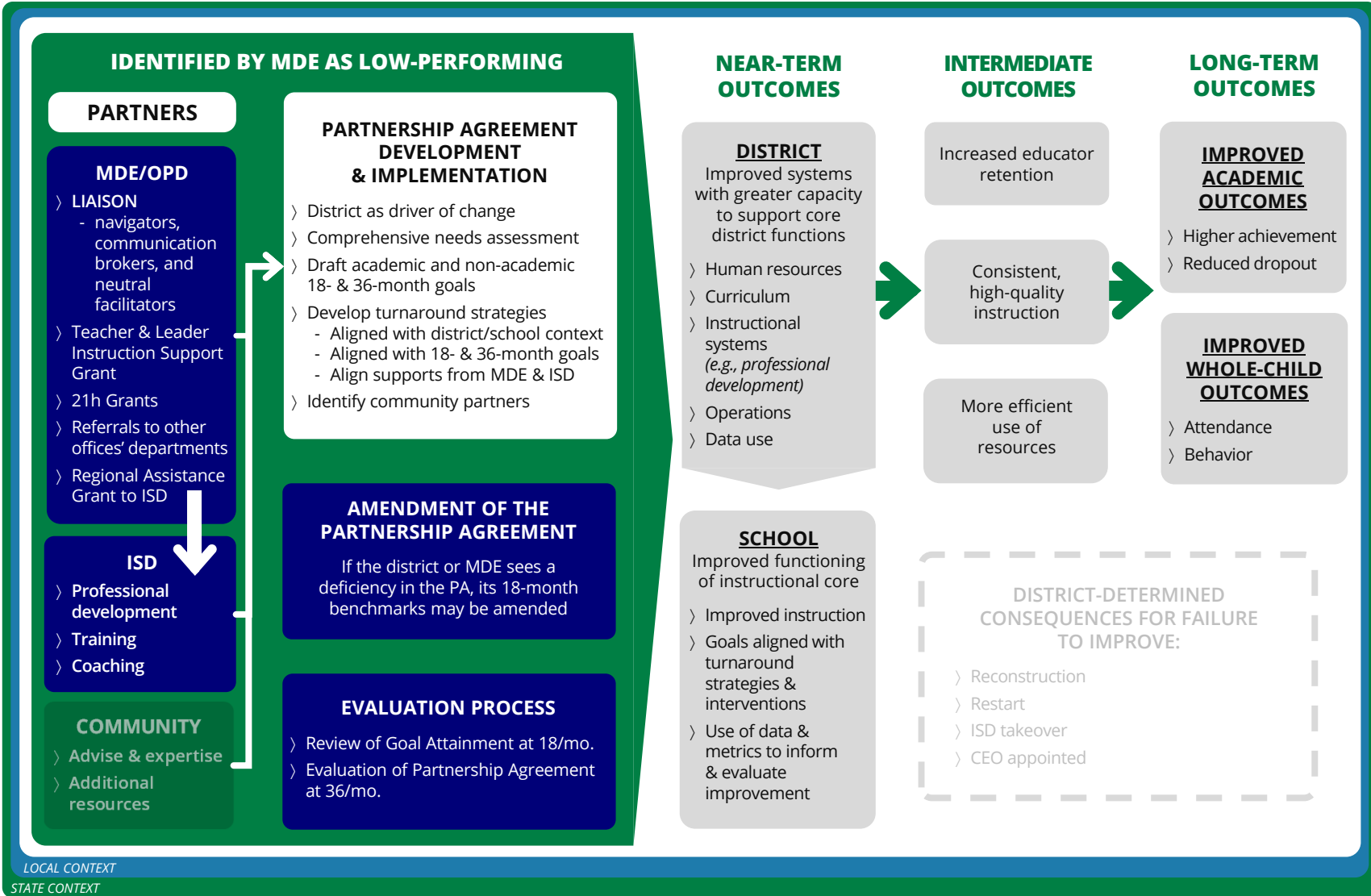
MICHIGAN'S PARTNERSHIP MODEL ORIGINAL THEORY OF CHANGE





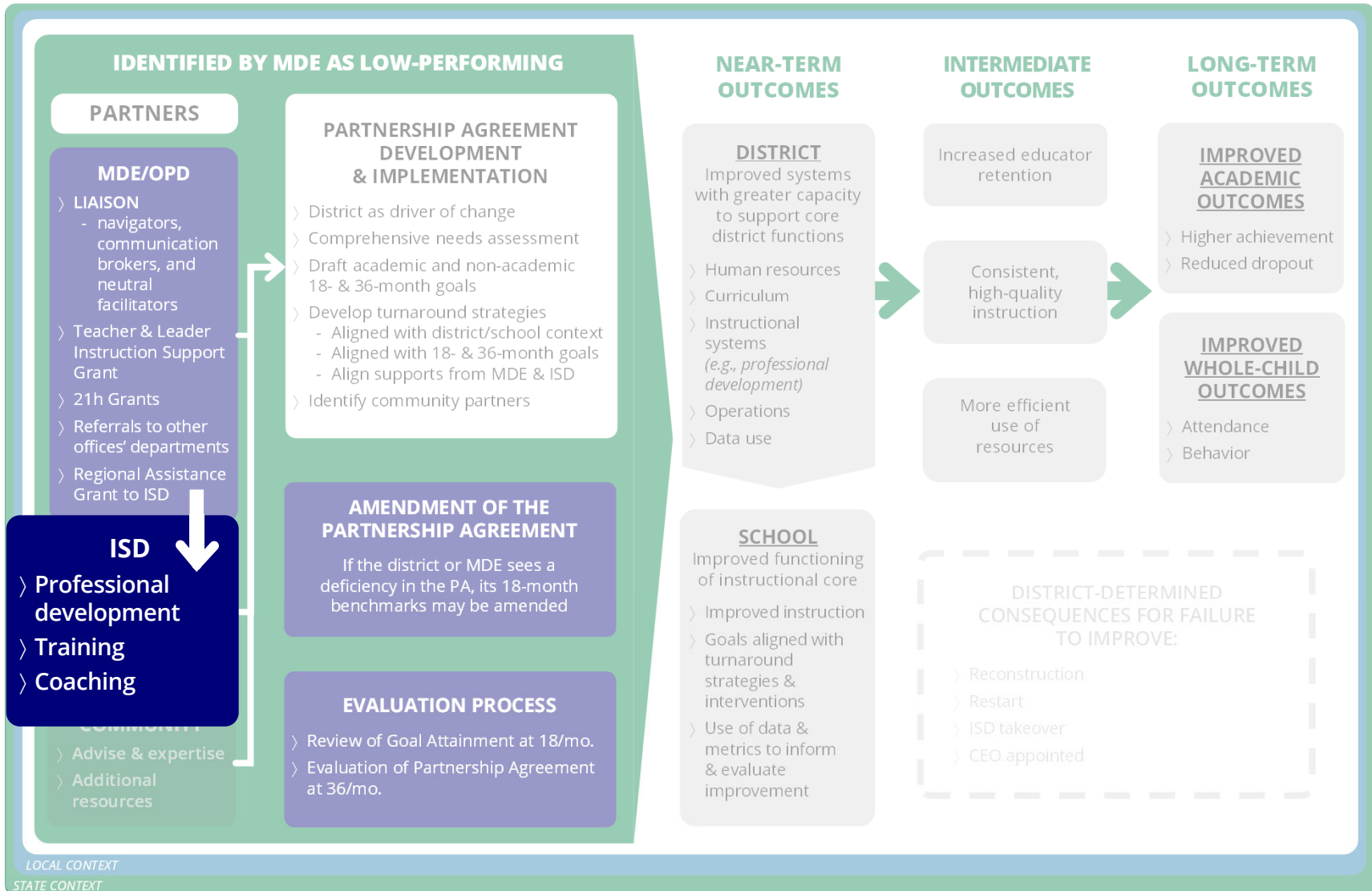
MICHIGAN'S PARTNERSHIP MODEL

UPDATED THEORY OF CHANGE





MICHIGAN'S PARTNERSHIP MODEL UPDATED THEORY OF CHANGE



EXPANDED ROLE OF ISD

The role of the ISD expanded over time as Partnership shifted from a high-stakes accountability-focused reform to a support-centered intervention

1. ISDs have provided coaching and other professional development

“*[The ISD] has really stepped up tremendously. They’re providing coaching support, and they’re providing so many PDs [professional development opportunities] and all of these things. It would have been helpful to have this initially, when we saw the scores dropping as opposed to once we reached that level. Now, we’re getting the support we need, and we’re going back up.*”

-Flames Charter Leader

2. ISDs supported Partnership leaders in navigating improvement processes

“*[The] [ISD] has been phenomenal in this process. We didn’t have a lot of interaction with them prior to coming into the Partnership Agreement, but they — we have had monthly meetings with **our Partnership liaison**, and the [ISD] representative comes to each and every one of those. [He/She] **has been very supportive** with us in terms of preparing us for our 18-month review, which we had yesterday, giving us feedback on that, walking us through, you know — letting us practice on him/her as a demonstration leading up to it.*”

- Oilers’ Charter Leader

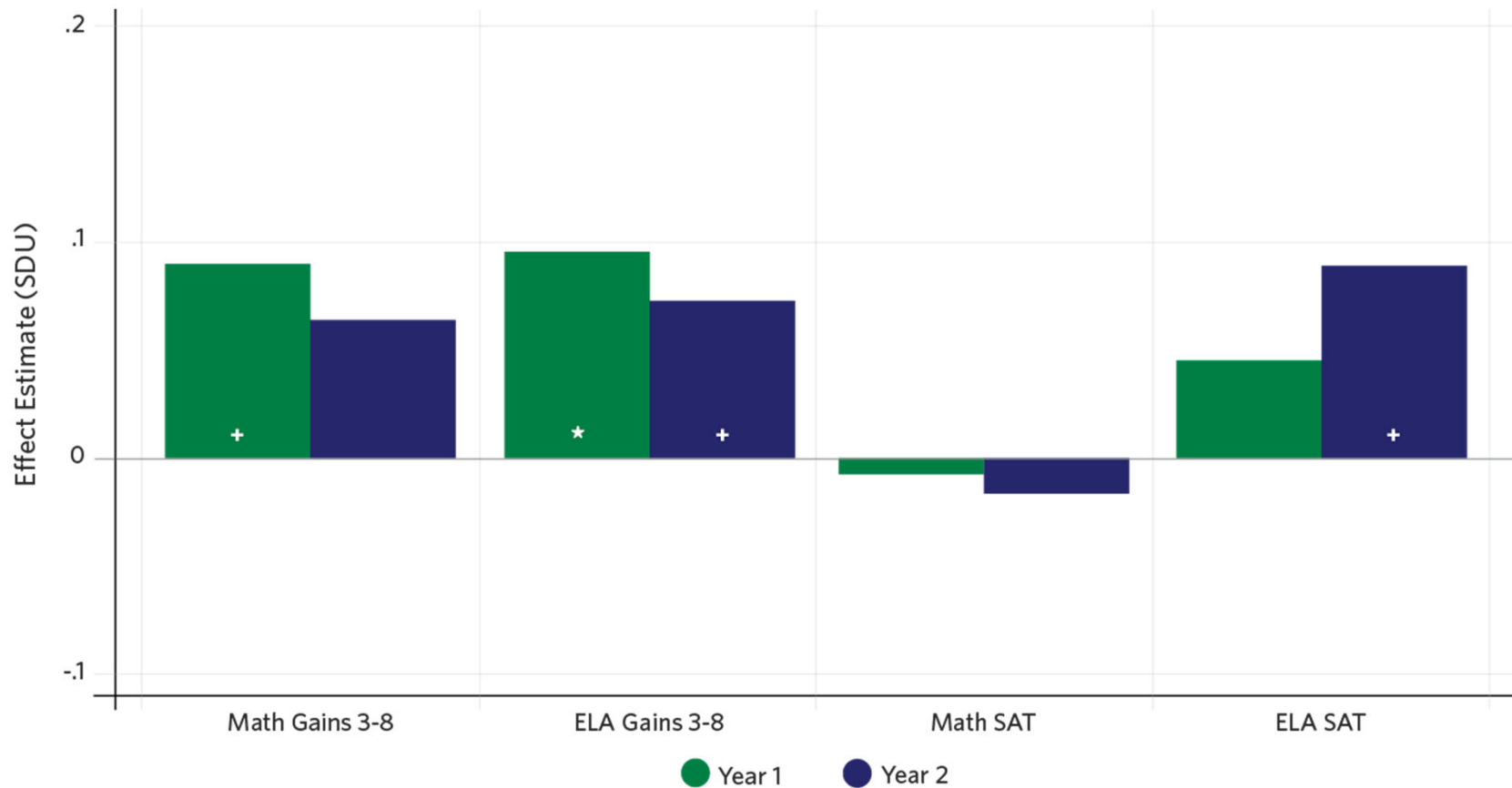
Research Question #2:

How has Partnership changed education in Partnership schools and districts?



PARTNERSHIP'S IMPACT: COHORT 1 PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

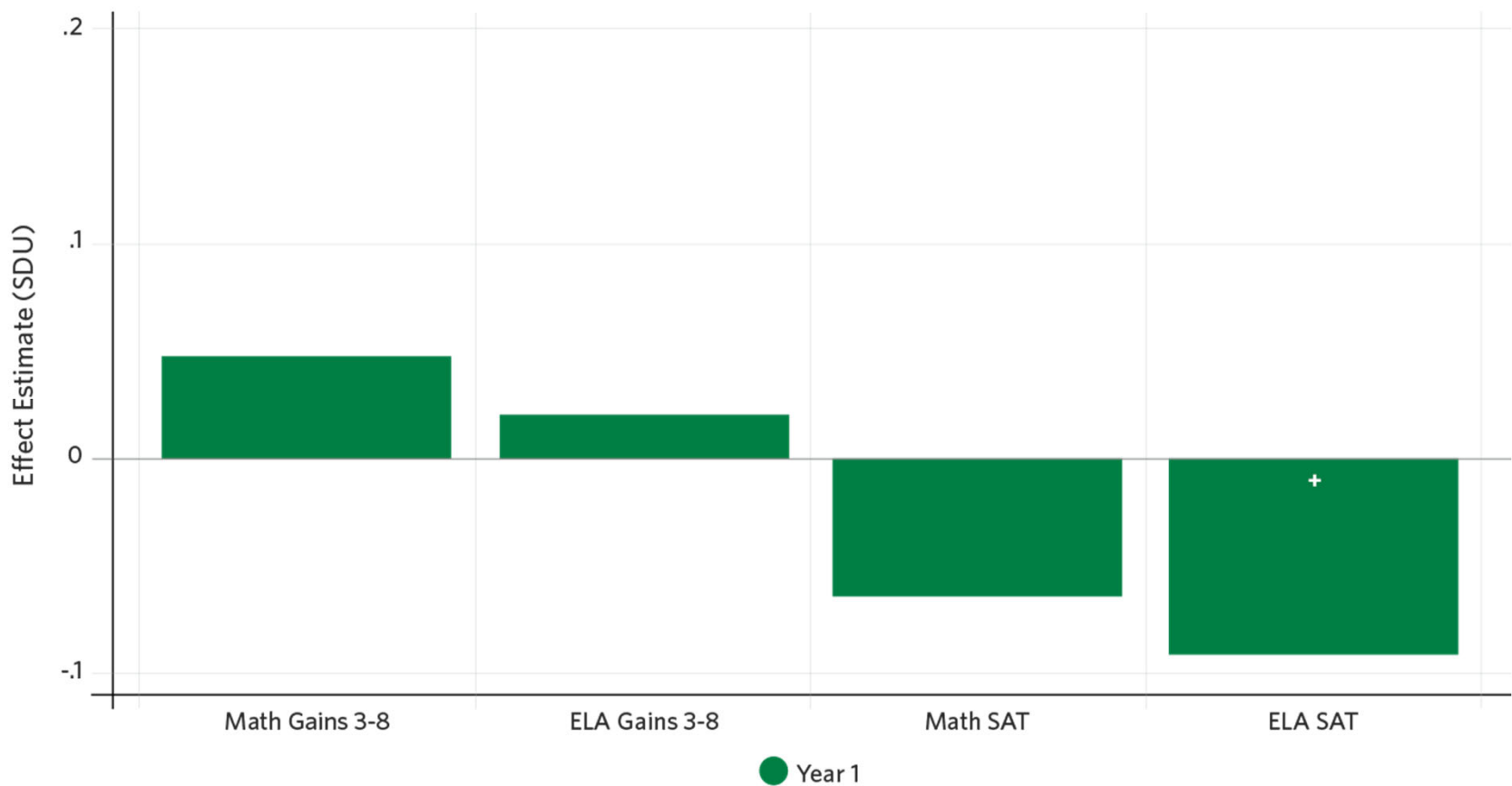
Partnership had a positive effect across performance measures in Cohort 1 Partnership schools



Note: $p < .10$ +, $p < .05$ *, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$ ***. Coefficients show effect relative to comparison schools in the identification year.

PARTNERSHIP'S IMPACT: COHORT 2 PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

Cohort 2 Partnership schools fared similarly to comparison schools on most test score outcomes, though ELA SAT scores dipped in the first year of Partnership



Note: $p < .10$ +, $p < .05$ *, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$ ***. Coefficients show effect relative to comparison schools in the identification year.

Research Question #3:

How are educators and leaders in Partnership schools and districts implementing the reform as it matures?



PARTNERSHIP FACILITATES IMPROVEMENT

Partnership offers a strategic planning framework that facilitates improvement:

1. Identify the most critical goals
2. Use data-driven instruction and a continuous improvement cycle
3. Improve communication both within the internal leadership team and with external partners

DISTRICTS' IMPROVED USE OF DATA

The goal-setting and evaluation process gave educators a system to facilitate data use to inform decision-making, instruction, and practice

1. Partnership goal-setting and evaluation process led to increased data use



"It really was a benefit, because it did make us really—we had all the data, we didn't have to aggregate data, we had it. Putting it together in one place I think was a really good part—a really good thing."

– Rangers' Charter Leader

"I think the sensitivity to the data in [that Partnership] school has increased tenfold. I think the understanding of the data component of [Partnership school] and their staff, they'll walk away with a really strong understanding of not only just—not panic urgency—but healthy urgency to address things and know that this affects their kids."

– Stars' District Leader



2. Partnership schools and districts used data conversations to improve communication and align instruction with Partnership goals



"Well, I think the other piece has been really forcing us to look at the reading and math scores and then the classroom teachers working with [a coach] to bridge the gap of where kids might not be understanding algebra or geometry and then giving those additional supports. That has been very helpful."

– Red Wings' District Leader



NEW PARTNERSHIPS FORGED BETWEEN SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND ISDS

The Partnership Model led to new partnerships with ISDs that school systems could leverage toward school improvement, particularly in charter systems

“One major thing would be being a Partnership school has really **opened and created a positive relationship between my school and my ISD.** ... There were so many more professional development opportunities that they were always there, but it’s almost like with the strengths in relationship, **I’m finding out about so much more than I even knew was out there that I can send my teachers to based on their individual needs,** based on what it is that’s surfacing in my coaching cycles with my teachers. I can send ‘em and say, “Hey, **the ISD has this great opportunity.**”

– Predators’ Charter Leader

“**Our relationship with our local ISD has improved significantly.** ... They’ve made some changes at the ISD, and the liaison we have now is just amazing. Because we’re a Partnership School, I think she got to see how great our school is **because she probably had to be there more often.** Now I think it helped to build that solid foundation. **Before, I wouldn’t even think of the ISD to even contact for support.**”

– Rangers’ Charter Leader



16 out of 22

Partnership leaders considered partnering with their local ISD to be a positive aspect of Partnership.

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75%

Charter districts found partnering with their ISD a positive part of reform.

70%

TPS districts found partnering with their ISD a positive part of reform.

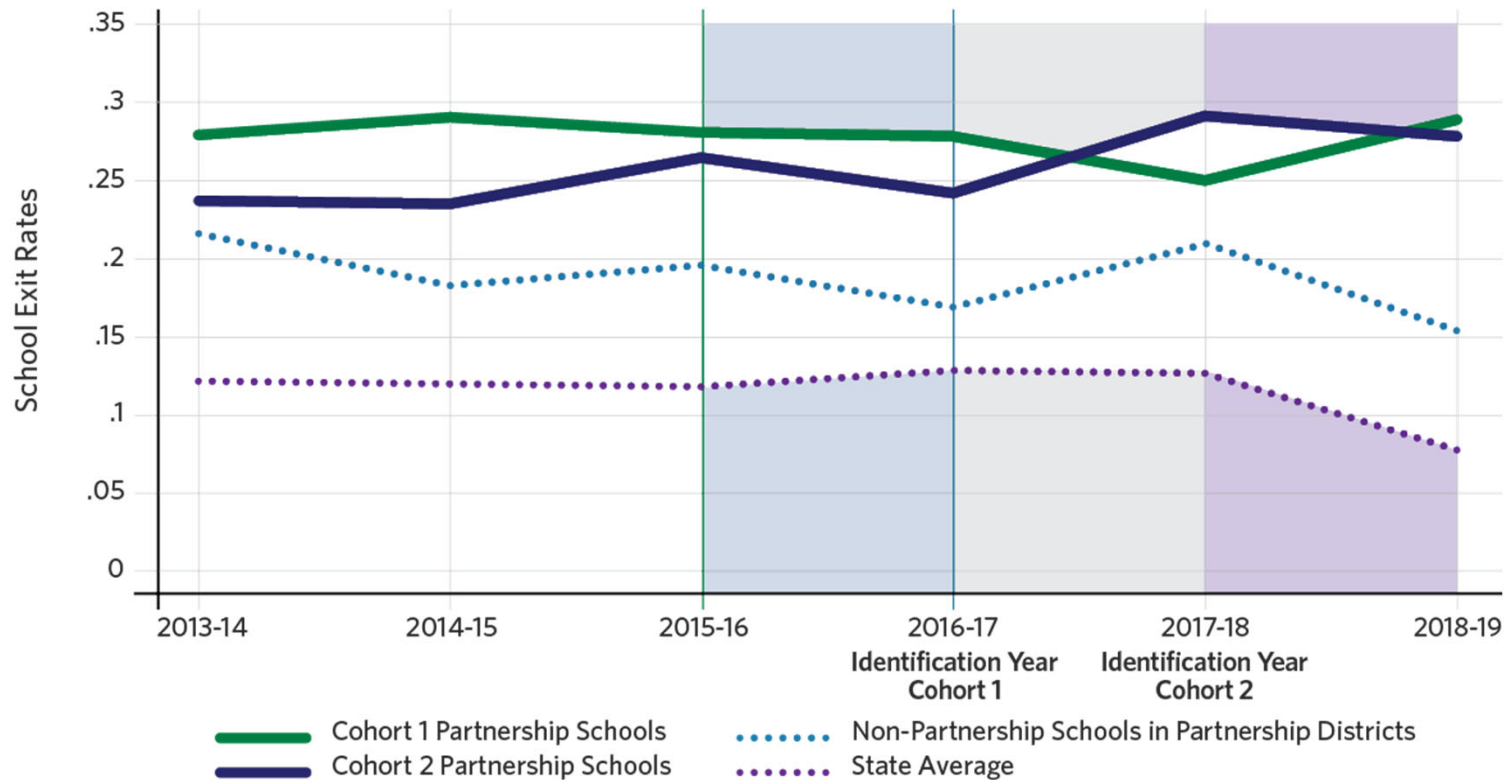
Research Question #4:

What human capital challenges face Partnership schools and districts and how are educators in these districts addressing them?



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Teacher recruitment and retention remains a challenge in Partnership schools and districts



For every opening, you used to get 40 applicants, 10 of whom were very hireable, 5 of whom were probably great. I'm talking up till about 5 years ago. Now, you are lucky to get one, extremely lucky to get two or three, and incredibly lucky if one of them is really a hireable candidate.

- Devils' District Leader



TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Districts implemented new strategies to recruit teachers

1. Teacher Compensation:

Half of Partnership leaders reported using compensation – e.g., salary increases, signing bonuses, or financial incentives – to help recruit teachers.

2. Grow Your Own Programs:

Districts implemented programs to help substitute teachers become credentialed, attract new teaching interns, or mentor and develop teachers already in the district. Often in partnership with universities.

3. Attracting “Right Fit” Teachers:

Districts changed hiring practices to reach teachers who would mesh well with district culture and be less likely to leave.



TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to retaining teachers in the building, developing them was seen as critical to school improvement and ISD partners played an essential role in these efforts



*“From [ISD], the partners who have been allocated for our building have done a phenomenal job at **aligning the curriculum**, [so that the curriculum] also helps us to **meet the social and emotional needs of our children**. They’ve just done a really good job in helping us with resource—I won’t even say resource allocation—with **finding the resources to support the professional development** around [the curricula].”*

– Black Hawks’ District Leader

*“We now have what I would consider **two trusted consultants that are really a part of our team** now. [...] The **ISD really is making that happen**, making them available and finding the quality people really to help us to do what we need to do there.”*

– Lightning Charter Leader



TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

ISDs were seen as partners in helping Partnership districts and schools improve their instructional core



*“Between my Blueprint facilitator, my MDE facilitator, myself, my curriculum coach from the [ISD], we sit at the table and we **make these decisions collectively as a team.**”*

– Predators’ Charter Leader

*“I would say the biggest success would be just **a deeper relationship with [the ISD] and the resources and training and people that they’ve provided.** I definitely think that has been very, very helpful, one of our most helpful areas for us.”*

– Flames’ Charter Leader



Research Question #5:

**What conditions, other than
human capital, mediate
Partnership turnaround efforts?**



RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATE IMPROVEMENT

Several factors can mediate Partnership to help improve school and district performance

- **High quality school leaders**
- **Streamlined systems and processes (e.g., RGA)**
 - RGA process facilitated reflection and continuous improvement
 - Many still viewed RGA as time-intensive and compliance-focused
- **Increased funding**
 - 21H funding is seen as valuable, especially for smaller districts
 - But financial constraints still impeded progress towards turnaround



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

EPIC'S YEAR 2 EVALUATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL

- Early Partnership effects on student outcomes are mixed but remain positive for Cohort 1
- Partnership educators leveraged the Partnership Model to benefit their schools and districts
- Teacher recruitment and retention remain a challenge in Partnership schools and districts
- There are several mediating factors that are critical to successful turnaround in Partnership schools and districts



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

ISD'S SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP DISTRICTS

- The role of the ISD as a turnaround partner has expanded over time.
- Districts are leveraging ISD resources and expertise toward instructional supports and navigating the improvement process
- Partnership shined a light on existing ISD resources and helped Partnership leaders—especially in PSAs—identify resources they felt would support improvement
- ISD partners played a particularly strong role in helping Partnership Schools and Districts improve their instructional core through coaching, professional development, and instructional planning
- On the whole, more than 7 in 10 Partnership leaders felt that their relationship with their ISD was a positive component of the reform



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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

236 Erickson Hall, 620 Farm Lane, East Lansing, MI 48824 | (517) 884-0377 | EPICedpolicy@msu.edu