



Cahn

**DISTINGUISHED
PRINCIPALS FELLOWSHIP**

Shift Happens: Greater student outcomes through increased adult ownership

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2022 Cahn Fellowship Cohort

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ABSTRACT

The COVID pandemic had both obvious and much more subtle impacts on our students, staff, and families at Price Middle School. Our school serves a community that is extremely resource deficient, and we were forced to provide direct support and resources to many of our stakeholders during the height of the pandemic. However, once we transitioned from the immediate crises of the pandemic, we learned that there were residual effects that continued to impact our effectiveness. We were laser focused on plugging student learning gaps and capturing all the growth we could once we returned to in person learning. However, we found our progress was limited by a fixed mindset in our teachers, which informed their actions and as a result, the mindset of our students. This led to a compliance based mentality, which slowed our growth and momentum. As a result, we found ourselves doing what we felt was the right work, but falling short of the passion required to truly become transformational.

The Cahn Fellowship experience helped our leadership team utilize systems thinking to reframe our challenge by questioning and exploring the role we played as administrators in the creation of a culture where agency and ownership were lacking. We knew that we had to build agency within our adults in order for them to subsequently empower our students. We also realized that we were fully responsible for the mindset of our teacher and staff. This caused us to rethink and revise how we communicated our expectations, observations, and results to our staff. As a result, we were able to foster a higher level of passion and grit for the work, even when it was difficult. Consequently, we have seen positive changes in our adult behaviors and student performance metrics, with much larger gains planned for this year since we are leveraging our learning from last year from the outset.

INTRODUCTION

Our Cahn project is focused on creating a culture of ownership and agency within our staff so that they could effectively empower our students with a growth mindset. We selected this project when we realized that the perceived perpetual lethargy, complaining, and pessimism of some of our teachers were actually symptoms of a larger problem. Of course, this problem was ours to define and address, so we began to use systems thinking to transform our school culture. We had to become very tactical in our approach to this challenge, and we decided to create a second semester “reset” to execute these changes. As a result of our

efforts, we were able to meet some of the ambitious academic growth goals that we set for ourselves at the beginning of the year and make substantial progress towards others, confirming that we were on the right path and needed to sustain the work.

Luther Judson Price Middle School is a small middle school that serves some of the most resource stricken communities still in downtown Atlanta. The student body is qualified for 100% free and reduced lunch within the school. We usually have about four hundred students that we serve in grades 6-8. However, in the last two years, one of our largest and most crime and poverty ridden communities that feed directly into our school was closed down due to innumerable code violations. As a result, about 30 percent of our students had to relocate to various communities around Atlanta and the metro Area. This was an incredibly difficult transition for staff, students, and families. We currently serve around 300 students.

Price Middle School exists to improve the community in which it is housed by empowering and equipping our students to live liberated, choice filled lives. We specifically focus on affirming the identity of our students, which we feel is often overlooked to the detriment of our students. We also try to develop the skills and leadership they need to be successful in school and beyond. Lastly, we use project based learning to try to help our students develop the critical thinking skills and problem solving skills that they need to be successful. We focus on developing agency and ownership in our students so they will see the relevance between their success in school and their success in their lives. The abbreviated phrase that captures the mission of our school is coined "Love and Liberation," as we know that for us to consider our work a success, it requires that all students that come to our school feel loved constantly and we help build the skills and agency they need to achieve liberation. This means that they will be able to live a choice filled life and follow whatever pursuits they have with success. We want our students to exercise their choice in what they pursue, but we also want them to be conscious of what it takes to make it in that arena and what the tradeoffs are.

Price Middle School, which is located in the 30315 zip code in downtown Atlanta, is a part of the George Washington Carver High School cluster and feeder pattern. Our students live in several neighborhoods surrounding the school, including Carver Homes, Joyland, Polar Rock, Thomasville Heights, and Amal Heights amongst others. The school primarily receives students from Thomas Slater Elementary School. Before last year, the school also received students from Thomasville Heights Elementary School, but the school closed when the aforementioned apartment complex was closed and the students rezoned. The community in which the school is housed has many challenges, as it is under-resourced and has many challenges associated with intense poverty. The students have dealt with a lot of trauma as a result, which must be addressed and supported when the students come to the school. The zip code has a low

percentage of adults with education beyond a high school diploma. The socioeconomic status of the vast majority of the students at Price is low, and as a result, it requires that we are prepared to do more than some other schools to support the needs of students and families.

The student demographics at Price Middle School are about 98% African American, a little under 2% Latino, and under 1% are students of mixed race. As mentioned before, 100% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Due to many of these factors, the staff realized years ago that the focus can not solely be on curriculum and instruction. There also has to be a focus on social and emotional learning, trauma informed practices in the classroom, and numerous multi-tiered student support systems for academics. The willingness of our staff to invest in these other focus areas in addition to the regular planning for instruction that must take place is truly admirable.

The staff school culture at Price Middle School is what makes the school special. Many of our students come to us several years behind in reading and short on academic confidence. Many of our students lack very foundational skills in numeracy and literacy, which requires serious differentiation and remediation. However, our students are incredibly talented, intelligent and resilient, and they continue to rise to the occasion whenever we challenge them and provide adequate support. For years, the school has been working to educate the teachers about the impacts of poverty on student learning. There has also been a consistent “discourse two” conversation with the staff about the impact of societal inequities on our students and their identity as scholars. This conversation took on new complexities during and since the pandemic, as our communities and families were impacted a great deal. This conversation is a very challenging one, as our teachers care about our students, but they must understand that the expectations that they have for our students and the way in which teachers prepare to address our students' needs will make a big difference on whether our students grow or not. The prevalence of a fixed mindset when it comes to what the students are capable of is the biggest threat to success in our school.

Price Middle School is unique in that it was formerly one of the few high schools in Atlanta that would educate African American Students in the 1950s and 1960s. There is a very proud Price High School alumni association, as the school was a high school from 1954 to 1988. From there, the school became one of two middle schools in our cluster that both feed into Carver High School, which was a former rival of Price High School. The alumni association is active and supportive of the school. However, the school does not have a reputation in the community for academic success. The school has performed well beneath many of the state averages on state testing for many years, and as a result many families that have the choice and the means choose to send their students to a or charter school elsewhere in the city.

One of the biggest goals of the school is to become a school of choice for all the families in our attendance zone. We hope to do that by continuing to develop a rigorous and relevant instructional program for our students, using project based learning to help our students understand that real world problems require interdisciplinary skills and understanding. It is also the means through which we equip our students with the 21st century skills that they need to compete in today's workforce. We offer some unique classes like chess, dance, and farming, which we hope to grow into a Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathway that is state recognized. In addition, we have worked hard to offer alternatives to exclusionary methods for discipline and behavior management. We have a program called Wildcat University that offers intensive social and emotional learning support (SEL) for both students and families when they make poor decisions that violate our code of conduct. These students are offered African drumming and go to a Bike shop program that we partner with in order to build confidence, skills, agency, and a growth mindset. We also utilize positive behavior interventions and support and offer many behavior supports to our students.

Our school has a focus on SEL that requires us to utilize it every day to build confidence and social skills within our students. Our school day begins with our SEL block in our homeroom classes, where students are given access to connection circles, mindfulness, and the mood meter to help with emotional identification and regulation. Our teachers also utilize an SEL curriculum called "We Do it for the Culture," which is a culturally responsive SEL option. For students that need support that goes beyond basic Tier 1 interventions, we have a school counselor and social worker and we are in partnership with Chris 180, which is a therapeutic counseling service provider in Atlanta. We also partner with the Big Brother, Big Sister program, which houses full time employees in our school in order to provide mentoring for students in need. These supports and partnerships have supported a tremendous shift in school culture over the last several years, with suspension infractions and suspension days steadily decreasing over the last five years (of course, the pandemic virtual year was an anomaly as there were no suspension days).

Benchmark data

We rely on several data sources to track our progress, but the most pertinent data sources for the scope of this project are the quarterly NWEA scores that we collect when our students take the MAP test three times a year and the statewide Georgia Milestones assessment. The Georgia Milestones (GMAS) were not given during the years of 2020 and 2021 following the pandemic. It was given again in Spring of 2022, but the scores were not used by the state to rate the performance of the schools. However, in Spring of 2023, the GMAS scores

were going to be utilized on the school's "report cards" in order to determine the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) scores.

The data that was used to gauge success throughout the year was the NWEA or MAP data. We had some historical data showing how the students performed on the MAP assessment compared to the sittings from 2022-2023. There was particular attention given to the percentage of students that met their individualized goals and the students predicted to score at various levels when they took the Milestones at the end of the year. Other important metrics included the projected growth of the students from one MAP sitting to the next, compared to the actual growth during that time. The statewide assessments, or Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) was also used to benchmark our progress and success in the endeavor to create more ownership amongst our staff. We looked at historical data for GMAS, even though we mentioned that there were years during the pandemic that it was not taken.

Figure 1 in Appendix A shows the reading scores from the NWEA MAP test for the year 2021-2022. The top left portion shows student average growth from one sitting of the assessment to the next. The top right portion shows the historical NWEA scores for the spring sitting from before the pandemic to 2021-2022. The school was seeing growth across the board before the pandemic, and then experienced a huge learning loss as shown by the drop between 2019 and 2021. However, the work done in 2021-2022 nearly filled the gap from the learning loss by bringing student averages close to the pre-pandemic levels. Despite this growth, our students still showed the majority of them operating in the bottom two quartiles of nationally normed performance, though there was positive movement every sitting.

The math scores from 2021-2022 in Figure 2 of Appendix A showed a similar reality. The students grew in their RIT score, but their growth slowed between winter and spring as shown in the top left bar graph. Over the years, there was again a drop attributed to learning loss from the pandemic. However, the work from 2021-2022 did plug the gap to get students close to the pre-pandemic levels again. However, the students maintained huge gaps in understanding in mathematics, which showed more learning loss than reading. Projected proficiency for math for the state tests were primarily in the bottom quartile for mathematics, showing just how much work there was to be done.

Figure 3 in Appendix A shows the performance on the statewide GMAS for the last several years. The school was seeing mostly consistent growth across all subjects until the pandemic interrupted the growth. There are significant signs of learning loss across most subjects with the exception of science. The 2022 sitting of the GMAS served as a benchmark for

the state and for our school so it was apparent that growth on these metrics was required across all subjects. These benchmark scores for the GMAS scores and the NWEA scores helped us set very aggressive goals as a school.

The goals for the school were set at the beginning of the year based on the GMAS scores from the prior year. The goal for GMAS for each subject was very ambitious, seeking to recover the learning loss from the pandemic and to surpass performance from 2019. This led each goal to be at least 10% of growth. The graphs that showed the 2019 performance, the post-pandemic performance in 2022 and the goal as compared to the projection from Fall 2022 NWEA scores is shown in figures 4 and 5 of Appendix A.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While the COVID-19 pandemic was a crisis itself, it also served as a catalyst for change, pushing educators to adapt rapidly to new modes of teaching and learning, which resulted in many educators feeling overwhelmed. This educational crisis revolves around the emotional toll and, in some cases, depression that teachers are experiencing as they grapple with the significant deficits in student education caused by the pandemic (<https://www2.ed.gov/>). The same was true at Price Middle School. Our teachers are not only educators but also mentors and caregivers, deeply invested in their student's success and well-being, and watching students experience setbacks and emotional turmoil took a toll on their own mental health. This resulted in increased teacher absenteeism and teachers voicing their frustrations with their home and work lives.

As an administrative team, we had to understand how we could cultivate a positive culture facilitating productive goal-setting, professional development, performance feedback, and collective teacher efficacy if we were going to continue to see behavioral and academic growth. We asked ourselves, how can we create an environment of agency and ownership such that adults push the students to do the work needed to meet their personal individual goals to be more likely to meet the school's long-term goals? As leaders, how do we create an environment of ownership and agency? How do we define what is required to optimize our time in intervention and spur student academic growth? How do we encourage staff with the tired and disengaged characteristics of post-pandemic educators to sprint to the finish line?

This resulted in the decision to make sure all staff understands our short-term action steps and how those steps aligned with our school goal, teachers are observed consistently and receive immediate feedback, differentiated professional development opportunities are provided based on observations, observation data is shared with the entire staff bi-weekly and

staff can collaborate, reflect, and plan next steps towards reaching our goal. We also celebrated both small and significant achievements by teachers and publicly acknowledged their efforts and successes towards reaching our school goals.

METHODS

Our goal was to uphold our organizational mission by instilling and cultivating agency and ownership for our students. We accomplish this by supporting the successful achievement of our organizational growth goals by meeting our yearly academic goals on our state tests. To meet our goals created an outcome of academic momentum, confidence, and belief in our ability to continue growing in a manner that led our students to close achievement gaps between them and their peers in other schools around the state. We closed academic gaps by identifying changes that fueled our change management initiatives throughout the year.

The leadership team created a culture of ownership and agency by defining what that looks like in our school and making that connection with our overall goals and mission. We defined turnaround work competencies that support teaching in a turnaround school and reminded all staff of the school and organizational goals. Members of the instructional leadership team (ILT) created cultural and academic “look fors”. These “look fors” provided teachers and students with expectations for different times during the academic school day. ILT members observed and collected data supporting all expectations and providing immediate feedback to the observee. Teachers analyzed weekly observation metrics to reflect and identify trends that led to or hindered growth. We celebrated staff for reaching their goals each week during our faculty meeting. We celebrated student’s academic success by recognizing students during our morning announcements, adding their names and pictures to board displays, and providing incentives.

Empowering our staff and students to own and engage with data increased buy-in and promoted a data-driven culture. Our teachers understood its relevance and took ownership of the improvement process. This led to teachers getting excited about setting goals and having data conversations with our students, which led to increased excitement and engagement among students. The next steps include fostering a culture where our teachers proactively analyze data and develop student action plans independently and as a grade level.

The table below denotes the actions taken over the last year in order to execute on our project plans.

Date:	Actions:	By Whom:
December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project brainstorm on the train after the December Cahn courses ● Application of systems thinking to develop our problem and theory of action ● Determination of which metrics of focus would guide our actions ● Creation of a new plan of action for semester 2 	Luqman Abdur-Rahman, Dr. Natasha Hogan-Mahan
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation and execution of pre-planning for Semester 2 ● Roll out of new focus areas for intervention ● Training on new Intervention look fors ● Training for the leadership team on new staff meeting expectations ● Beginning focus walks using new rubrics and look fors 	Entire leadership team
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Started new weekly meeting, sharing new metrics with staff and emphasizing distributed leadership ● Continued feedback to teachers on identified metrics and look fors ● Celebrating teachers who continued to show excellence in new focus areas 	Instructional leadership team
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussed agency, ownership with teachers ● Continued feedback to teachers on identified metrics ● Celebrated teachers who continued to show excellence in new focus areas ● Final sitting for NWEA for Spring 	Administration
April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed a plan for the final sprint in the school year using data from Spring MAP ● Problem solving workshops with teachers ● Developing plans for differentiation for students 	Luqman Abdur-Rahman, Dr. Natasha Hogan-Mahan
May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final preparations for state testing 	Administration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subsequent data analysis ● Yearly reviews 	
June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyzing data with core leadership team ● Reflect on wins and areas of growth 	Administration
July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership team meetings to plan for FY 2024 ● Determine new goals and new methods to continue the work 	Administration

RESULTS

While ensuring data is shared and analyzed by teachers and staff is impactful when understanding how everyone is progressing towards meeting their goals, staff may also feel overwhelmed by the volume of data available, leading to "data fatigue" and making it challenging to focus on the most important information, which is what we encountered at Price. Too much data can lead to confusion rather than clarity, hindering effective decision-making. Data metrics were shared with staff each Wednesday during our one hour faculty meeting. After a long day of work, staff sat and listened to a presentation that highlighted our school goals and action steps as well as our progress or regression each week. While staff seemed to be alert and engaged during the presentation, many of them were focused on other things, which resulted in a lack of engagement and commitment towards reaching weekly goals.

To combat this challenge, after sharing weekly metrics, the staff was assigned a data analysis activity that would be used to create action items based on the data presented. The staff created action items as a grade level and vertical teams. Interacting with the data and planning next steps led to an increase in ownership and resulted in increased proficiency in meeting all goals, but did not totally alleviate "data fatigue". While creating action steps are important, our administrative team had to allow the staff time to implement strategies if we were going to see the most growth. Meeting weekly to review metrics and create a new plan of action was not the most effective because our staff was not given a sufficient amount of time for implementation before we presented new metrics.

The outcomes from the actions we took as leaders was a more aligned focus amongst the staff on the actions that led to greater student outcomes. The leadership focus on these actions was evident in how we observed teachers, the feedback they received in real time, and the data that we presented to staff every week showing our progress on these metrics. This alignment then led to greater student outcomes because the proliferation of these best

practices was more pronounced and as a result had a greater impact. Of course, none of this matters if we do not see results in student growth, and we feel that the student achievement metrics showed that our actions led to more ownership and agency amongst the staff, which then led to teachers raising their expectations for students so they could show more ownership and agency as well.

The leadership actions had an impact on all levels of the school. It started with the leadership team and the increase in distributed leadership that occurred as a result of our initiative. More members of the leadership team understood the role that they played in the school initiative and the subsequent student success. This encouraged them to do more to monitor and intervene when they saw practices that were not in line with our vision and our goals. The teachers first adjusted their actions as a result of the increased specificity about what to do, when to do it, and why it was necessary. Our initial conversations after winter break really dove deeply into the why for the changes. We talked about what turnaround work entailed and how large the impact of all teachers are in a turnaround school. We also talked at length about the turnaround competencies that teachers must exhibit to create positive growth at a school like ours. This focus on these competencies and our decision to monitor and reward these competencies really engaged teachers in positive ways. As a result, they would encourage students to show the competencies they needed to be more successful, and this increased their agency. We also helped students and parents gain a better understanding of how to measure their growth over time, which allowed them to show more agency. When put together, these behavioral changes led to the growth in achievement that we saw at the end of the year.

We did expect to see growth as a result of our work in the school. We work incredibly hard as a staff, but in turnaround work, there are many things that impact achievement. We cannot rely on hard work alone. It has to be the right work, and it has to be consistent. We have to control for as many variables as we can, including the confidence and buy-in of the students. We have to focus heavily on a growth mindset and keeping students engaged over long periods of time, even though they get fatigued as the year goes on. In the past, we generally saw a small dip in MAP scores between winter and spring as the students started to complain of testing fatigue. We worked hard to give the students perspective about why each of the data points was so important, and we discussed their data more deeply so they continued to focus on their individual goals and the rewards they could earn for them. More importantly, we sought to focus on the identity of the students as scholars who could grow. This changed the conversations about goals that we were having and helped them focus more on the outcome. We were hopeful as a leadership team that we would meet our very ambitious goals, but we knew that math continued to show lagging growth compared to ELA so it would

be a tall task. At the end of the day, we did our absolute best and hoped that it would show in the results.

The evidence to show the impact of our work can be seen in our results. We did see evidence of many teacher actions and leader actions changing in our observations, and we had much more substantive feedback conversations as a result. Our teachers started to pay attention to both their behaviors and student behaviors that were more predictive of academic growth. This shifted the focus and increased the agency and ownership of both the students and the staff. While it is difficult to quantify how much the agency amongst staff increased, we do have the student achievement outcomes to rely on to gauge whether or not the initiative was a success. These results were captured in the figures listed in Appendix B.

Figure 6 in Appendix B captures many data points and gives a broad view of the growth that took place in the school over several years with emphasis on 2022-2023 in the midst of our project. You can see the achievement level on the state tests before the pandemic and the performance in 2021-2022, which captures the learning loss that occurred for students. Then, there is a predicted state assessment score that is calculated from the NWEA MAP scores for each of the three times that it was taken in 2022-2023. These are compared to the goal for ELA for that year, which was a 13% increase from the prior year. The important thing to note in the MAP data was that in years past, we would often see a drop in the Winter to Spring MAP testing windows because of testing fatigue and a drop in engagement from both staff and students. This is a significant challenge, but this year there was a slight increase in this performance in the Spring data. In fact, the Spring data predicted that we would achieve our goal on the GMAS state tests at the end of the semester.

Figure 7 in Appendix B shows the same data points for math. In this case, the learning loss, which is captured by the decrease in performance from pre-pandemic years to the benchmark year of 2021-2022 is even larger, as was the case for most schools in our district and our state. In this case, there was a slight dip in the MAP performance from the first sitting in Fall to winter and then to spring. These dips showed that while students were growing in math, they were not keeping pace with the amount of growth that they should have between these varied benchmark assessments. This further solidified the fact that math practices would have to be analyzed even deeper to accelerate growth in this subject. There were many strategies put in place this year to elevate attention on math and to support student growth in it, but the MAP sittings showed that we were predicted to grow from the prior year's performance, but we were not expected to achieve our goal for the year.

Figure 8 in Appendix B shows many of the same metrics from Figure 6, except it includes the scores from the actual GMAS state assessment and compares it to the goal. The goal was a 10% increase in performance from 36% to 46%. While the school saw a respectable 8% increase, we fell short of the 46% goal for the year.

Figure 9 in Appendix B shows the same data for mathematics. Similar to the situation with English, the school saw a respectable 6% increase in achievement scores from 2022 to 2023. However, we fell well short of the goal of a 15% increase in math. Increasing the acceleration of math proficiency will continue to be a huge focus in the next year, especially with math standards in the state changing again.

Figure 10 in Appendix B shows the school's performance on the GMAS state assessments over several years both before the pandemic and afterwards. The 2023 data points show that in ELA, the learning loss from the pandemic was recovered and there was an eight percent increase. In math, there is still a way to go in order to see growth over the pre-pandemic levels. In science and social studies, there was significant growth in performance, which also helped recuperate some of the learning loss from the Covid years.

Figure 11 in Appendix B shows the challenge index graph, which is a regression line used to measure performance of a school according to the concentration of poverty in the school. Unfortunately, there is a direct correlation between the two, and our school has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in our district. The district uses the regression line in the challenge index to gauge whether a school is performing above predicted levels according to the "challenge" posed by the concentration of poverty. Part of our partnership with the district depends on our ability to perform above the challenge index regression line, which was achieved in 2022-2023.

Lastly, Figures 12-17 in Appendix C show how our growth in the NWEA MAP performance from Spring of 2021 to Spring of 2022 compares to other middle schools in our district. It contextualizes the task at hand for all of our schools considering the challenges that the pandemic created and sustained. It also shows that the efforts of our staff allowed us to surpass our peer middle schools in terms of growth in nearly every instance. We know that we must move the needle a great deal in terms of pure achievement and academic performance for our students to be competitive around the state. However, we celebrate the hard work that the students and teacher continue to put in to accelerate growth, and we continue to refine our practices with rigor, engagement, and differentiation to continue pushing our students to higher levels of mastery.

REFLECTIONS and FUTURE PLANS

Cahn Fellow reflection

Participation in the Cahn Fellowship has had a tremendous professional impact on me. There is huge value in creating a safe space for practitioners to work together to solve very challenging and important problems. However, the opportunity to do so with so many talented and passionate educators was a privilege. I learned just as much in my ad hoc conversations with my fellow cohort members as I did in the classes with my professors. I am grateful that there was an opportunity to build camaraderie with these individuals and to learn from them. I listened intently to how other fellows and allies applied the learning to their particular school circumstances and I was able to push myself to do more for our school. Even though all of our schools are very different and unique, there was a ton that we could gather from one another about what best practices would have the most impact.

The courses we took in Cahn were very relevant and insightful. Learning from professors, former superintendents, and others who have done the work on such a broad scale was amazing in that I could hear about how they approach problems differently. The systems thinking courses were particularly helpful for me because I can get into the “weeds” of particular problems and miss some of the bigger picture realizations that can help me find solutions. I really enjoyed how our courses helped us better define our problem of practice. As leaders in a school with numerous needs, we are accustomed to “fire fighting,” and seeking to solve immediate problems. Of course, there is an opportunity cost to this type of thinking, as we do not do as much work for the long term success of our school. The systems thinking course and the way we pulled back to thirty thousand feet to define and strategize solutions for our problems really changed how I viewed our challenges. When we started to think more “upstream” about what we needed to do, the steps we should take seemed much more clear.

The leadership competencies that I have developed through this experience were based in networking, challenging my conventional thinking and seeing problems from a different lens, and distributed leadership. I always seek to empower my colleagues, but there are times when I struggle to fully release a challenge and trust them fully with the outcome. My ally, Dr. Mahan was instrumental in defining our problem and challenging my thinking on what the real issue was and what we can do about it. I will forever be grateful for her professionalism and candor in stating what we needed to do, even though it was likely that what she shared may be difficult for me to hear. These conversations with her at Cahn Fellowship convenings allowed us to really

delve into what works at our school without the day to day distractions that are inevitable. This deepened the trust we had amongst each other, and I think that it also made Dr. Mahan more confident in her ability to truly own school challenges, create a vision of her own, and execute accordingly (especially when her strategy is totally different from mine). I think this was one of the final levels of leadership development that she needed, so I will be grateful to Cahn for helping empower her in that manner as well.

Our school performance was positively impacted by our participation in the Cahn fellowship because we were more efficient and effective in how we led. We completely changed how we used our time with teachers so we were actually being influential in how we pushed them to take ownership of student results. The results section of the narrative (and in the appendix) summarizes our growth as a school. Though we were disappointed that we did not hit all of our school's ambitious targets, we are proud of the gains we had, and we are encouraged because we will apply what we learned to how we do things the entire school year for 2023-2024, instead of just the second semester. Now that teachers are accustomed to the new way of doing things and students are more comfortable with our intervention practices, we foresee much bigger gains this year. We know that this is an ongoing project and not just limited to the time that we are in the fellowship, so we are confident in our ability to keep making an impact.

The ways my leadership has changed as a result of being in the Cahn fellowship can be summarized by being more at peace with the juxtapositions and contradictions that occur in leadership. Even though our challenge is very complex, it can usually be simplified to something that is easy to understand when utilizing systems thinking. In our case, we struggled with adult ownership and agency, but we simply had to empower and inform them about what were the most important levers of change and how we were measuring their performance on those levers. Also, there is always a contradiction between how more can often be done when a leader actually does less and trusts and releases more. This has been a challenge for me for years, as I pride myself in my ability to get into the details of the work. However, much of what I needed to do to allow my colleagues to grow and work at capacity involved me stepping back. Understanding these nuanced truths about leadership has really helped me grow as a leader, and I am grateful for the role the Cahn Fellowship has had in these realizations.

Cahn Ally reflection

My experience as a Cahn Fellowship Ally has been impactful in my leadership journey. Being able to work alongside my principal to identify a problem of practice that has resulted in so much growth amongst our staff and students has been powerful. Alongside our instructional leadership team, we have stated to foster a culture of data literacy which will result in teachers

proactively engaging with data. Cahn Fellowship professional development sessions have allowed me to intentionally pause and identify what was leading to many undesired staff behaviors. This behavior resulted in a decrease in staff and student engagement, which seem to be more of a barrier after we paused in person contact with each other and our students after the COVID-19 pandemic. The professional development sessions referencing COVID's impact on teaching and learning and being able to interact with other leaders who are experiencing similar challenges as our school motivated me to focus on strategies that would address these distractions and barriers.

My leadership team focused on shifting the mindset of staff, which can be challenging when it requires individuals to self-reflect and understand why a shift is needed. My principal, Mr. Abdur-Rahman, trusted me to develop action steps addressing this concern and be the voice for change, which in turn forced me to hone in on building my school leadership skills. Specifically in the areas of instructional leadership and school climate. Taking a leadership role in creating a shared vision for the school, establishing learning goals from the vision, and communicating this information with the entire staff has helped me develop a voice as a school leader. The results of our project implementation has led to increased accountability among our leadership team, our teachers, and our students. Staff and students understand where they are regarding reaching our school goals and regularly develop action steps to result in reaching those goals.

Cahn sessions that taught me more about myself as a leader helped me understand the best way to lead alongside others with different personalities and leadership styles. Specifically, the neuroscience of leadership sessions has helped how I communicate with my staff, leadership team, and other stakeholders. The systems thinking and equity sessions have helped me use multiple lenses and understand how different components of a system could aid in creating challenges. Lastly, the organizational leadership in the education session allowed me to think through how leadership styles shift to fit the needs of the organization. It reminded me that effective organizational leaders do not have a one size fits all approach, and must learn to adapt based on the needs of the organization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several individuals who are unsung heroes of this work and seldom receive recognition for all they do for children. We want to acknowledge all of the educators at Price Middle School who go above and beyond for our students and operate in a manner that is congruent with our schools mission and vision. There are so many people that model "Love and Liberation each day, namely our front office team, including Ms. Bloodsoe, Ms. Walker, Ms.

Sims, and Ms. Ferguson, our student support team, including Ms. Hardy, Mr. E. Johnson, Mr. Jackson, Ms. Bradley, Ms. Freeman, and Ms. Ham, as well as so many teachers, paraprofessionals, and interventionists that truly see the value in our students and know that the hard work that they put in every day is worth it. There are too many amazing educators at our school to name, but they do an amazing job each day, and we are honored to work alongside them.

We would also like to acknowledge the Cahn Atlanta crew, including the current and former fellows and the Cahn mentors. They were incredibly helpful throughout the year, even when unforeseen challenges came about. Lastly, the Cahn cohort was an amazing group to learn alongside, and we will cherish the network of friends that we gained moving forward. Of course, we are also grateful for all the Cahn Fellowship staff and professors that did so much to challenge our thinking and push us to be the best leaders possible for our schools and communities.

APPENDIX A

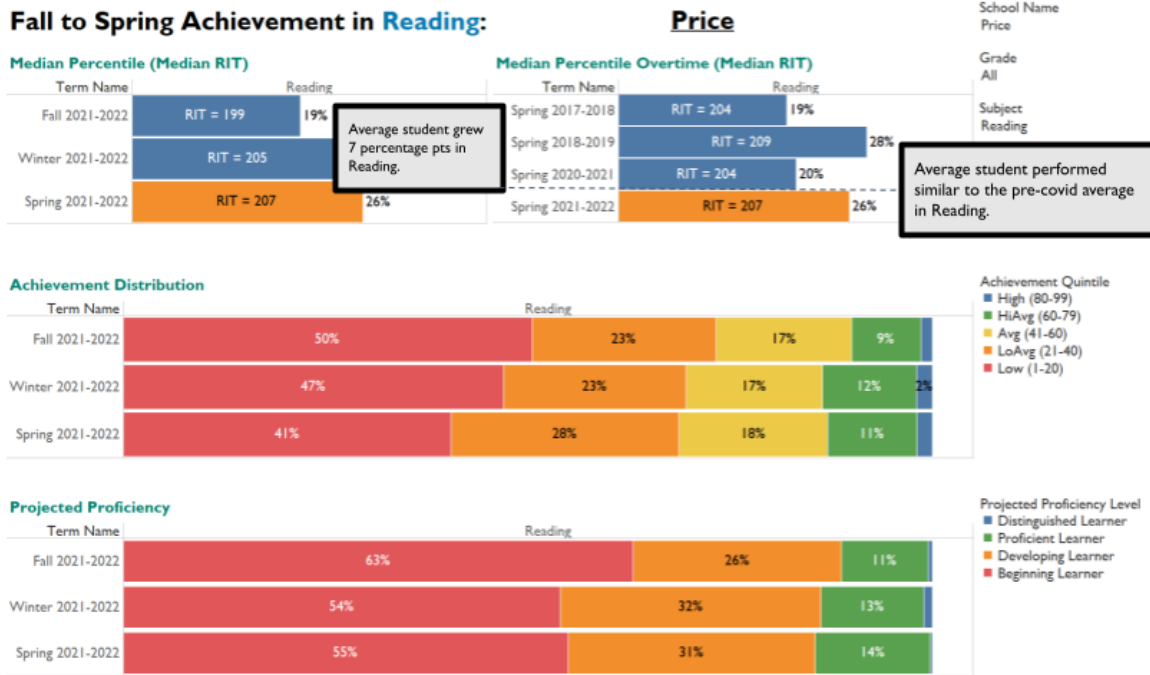


Figure 1: NWEA reading data for 2021-2022

Fall to Spring Achievement in Math:

Median Percentile (Median RIT)

Term Name	Mathematics
Fall 2021-2022	RIT = 199 12%
Winter 2021-2022	RIT = 205 16%
Spring 2021-2022	RIT = 207 14%

Average student grew 2 percentile pts in Math..

Price

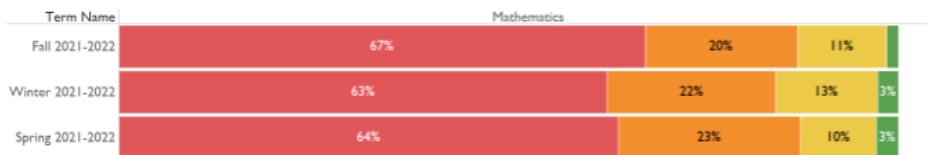
Median Percentile Overtime (Median RIT)

Term Name	Mathematics
Spring 2017-2018	RIT = 208 13%
Spring 2018-2019	RIT = 209 14%
Spring 2020-2021	RIT = 205 13%
Spring 2021-2022	RIT = 207 14%

Average student performed similar to the pre-covid average in Reading.

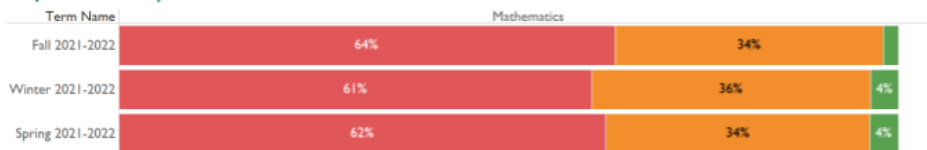
School Name
Price
Grade
All
Subject
Mathematics

Achievement Distribution



Achievement Quintile
 HiAvg (60-79)
 Avg (41-60)
 LoAvg (21-40)
 Low (1-20)

Projected Proficiency



Projected Proficiency Level
 Proficient Learner
 Developing Learner
 Beginning Learner

Figure 2: NWEA math data for 2021-2022

GMAS Performance Overtime

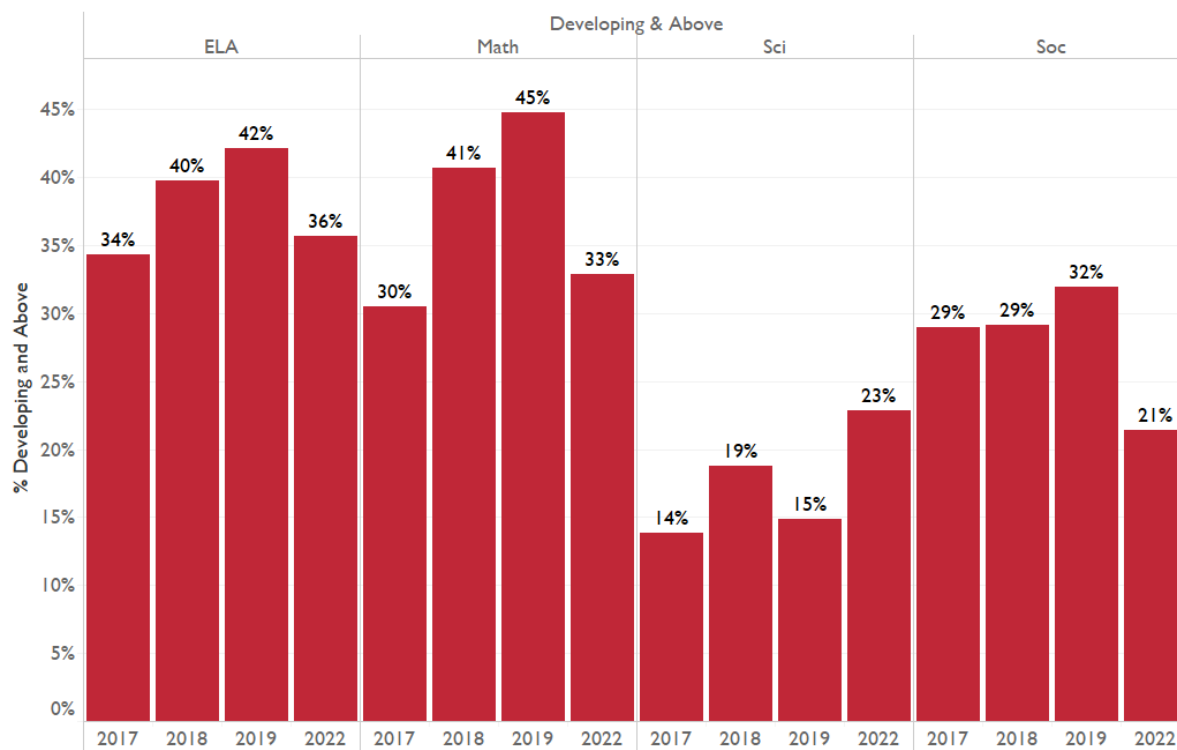


Figure 3: GMAS math data for 2017-2022

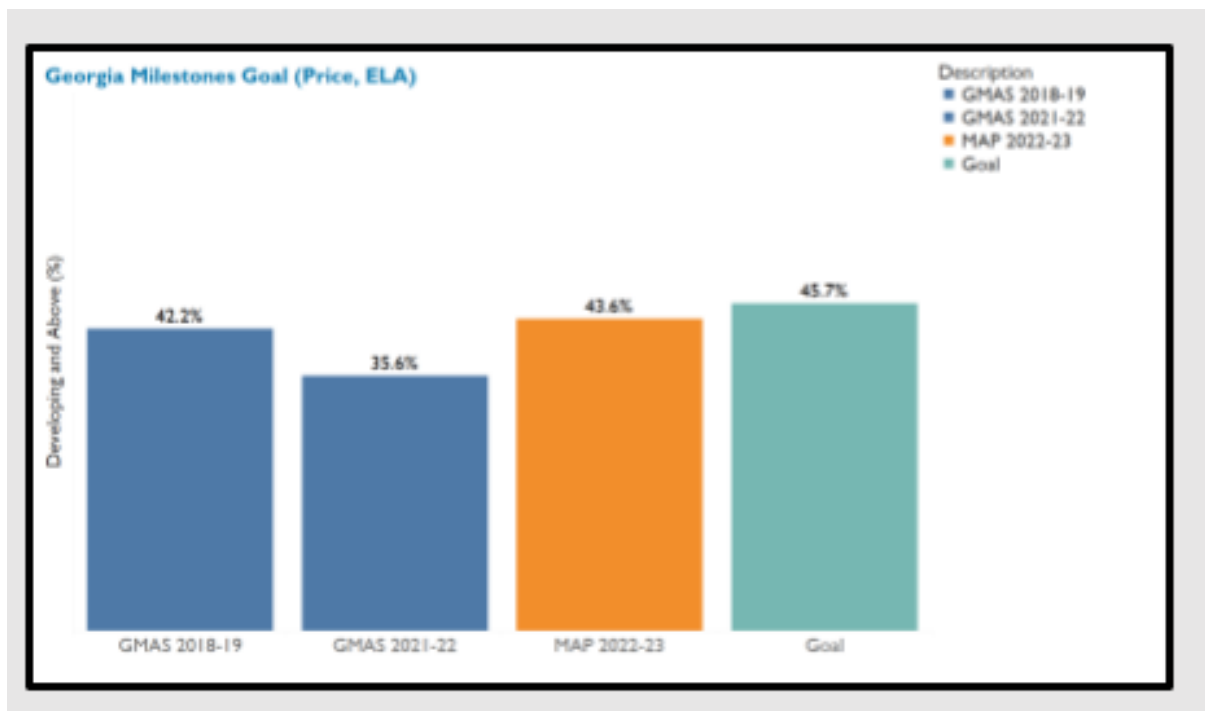


Figure 4: Historical GMAS ELA data and goal for 2023 GMAS

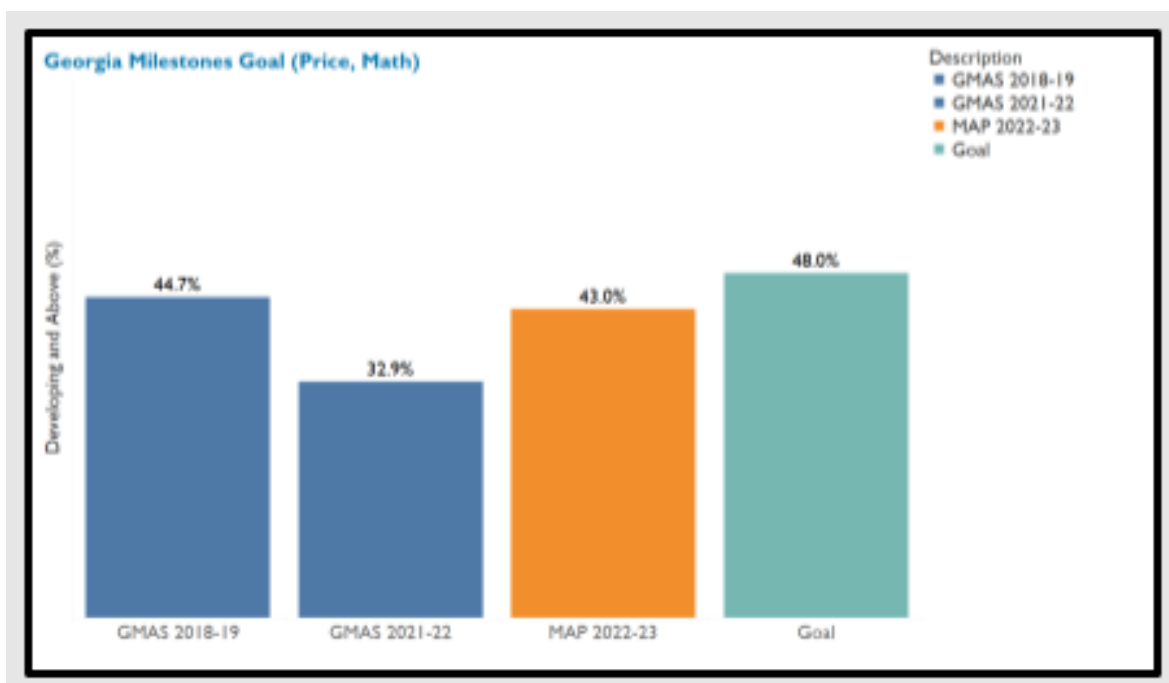


Figure 5: Historical GMAS math data and goal for 2023 GMAS

APPENDIX B

MAP Achievement Data (Price, Grades 6-8, ELA)

96% Complete
Actively Enrolled at
time of test

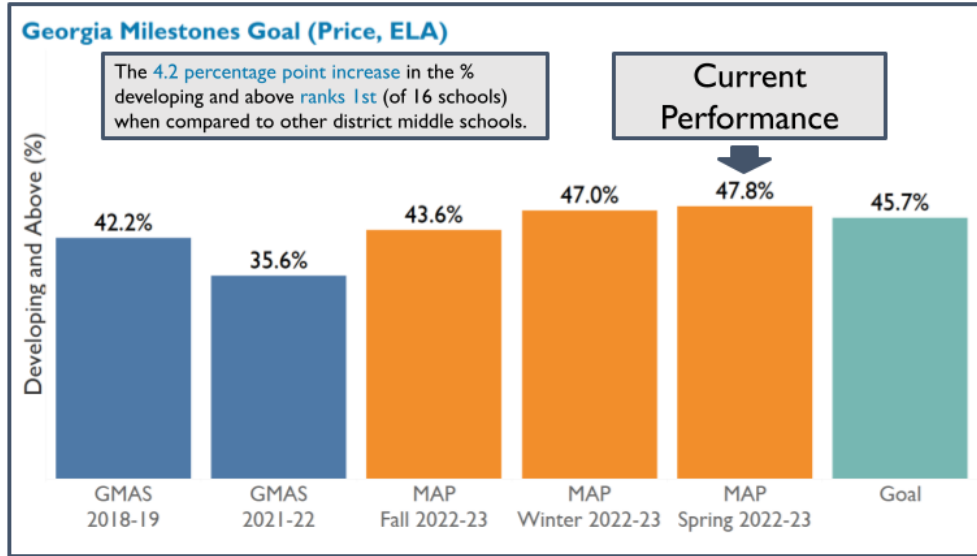


Figure 6: Combination of historical GMAS scores and MAP scores for ELA

MAP Achievement Data (Price, Grades 6-8, Math)

96% Complete
Actively Enrolled at
time of test

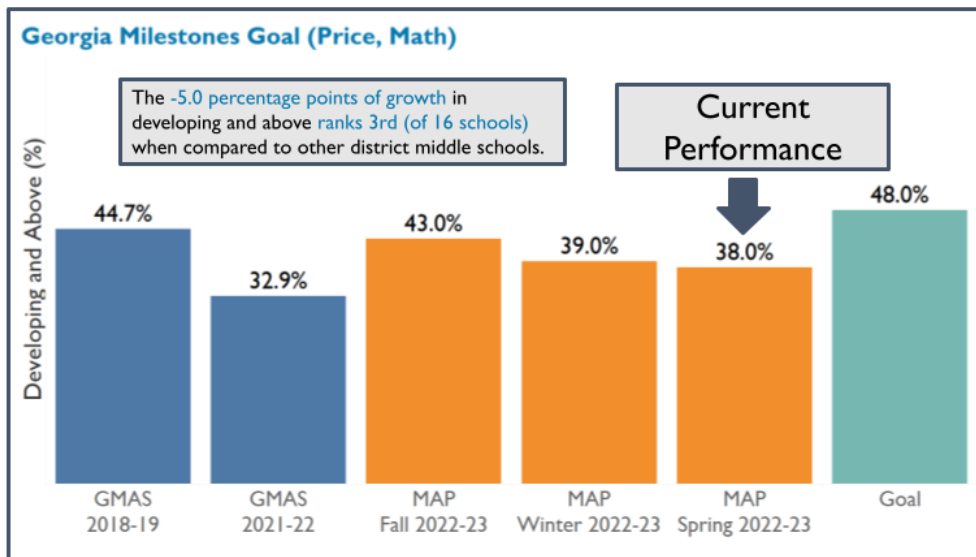


Figure 7: Combination of historical GMAS scores and MAP scores for Math



Georgia Milestones (Price, Grades 6-8, ELA)

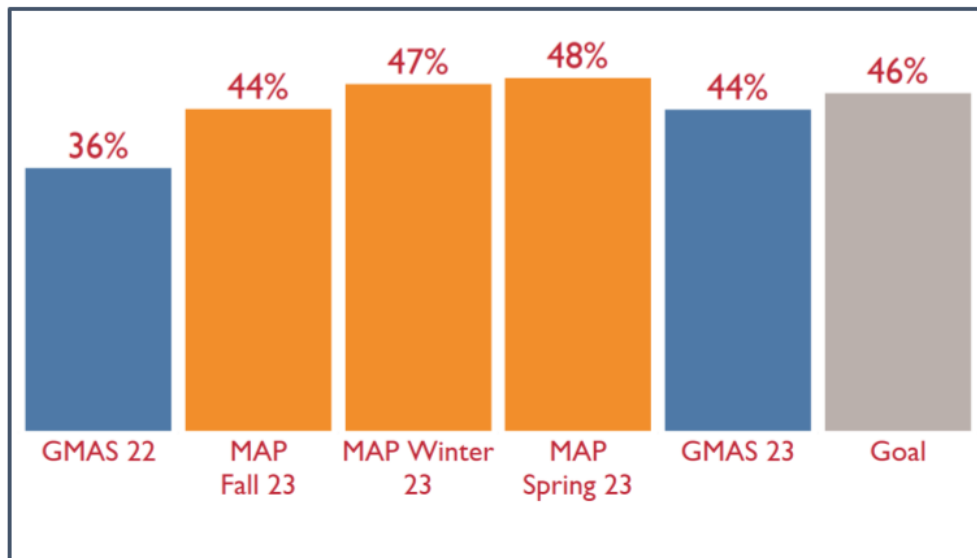


Figure 8: Combination of 2023 GMAS scores and 2022-2023 MAP scores for ELA



Georgia Milestones (Price, Grades 6-8, Math)

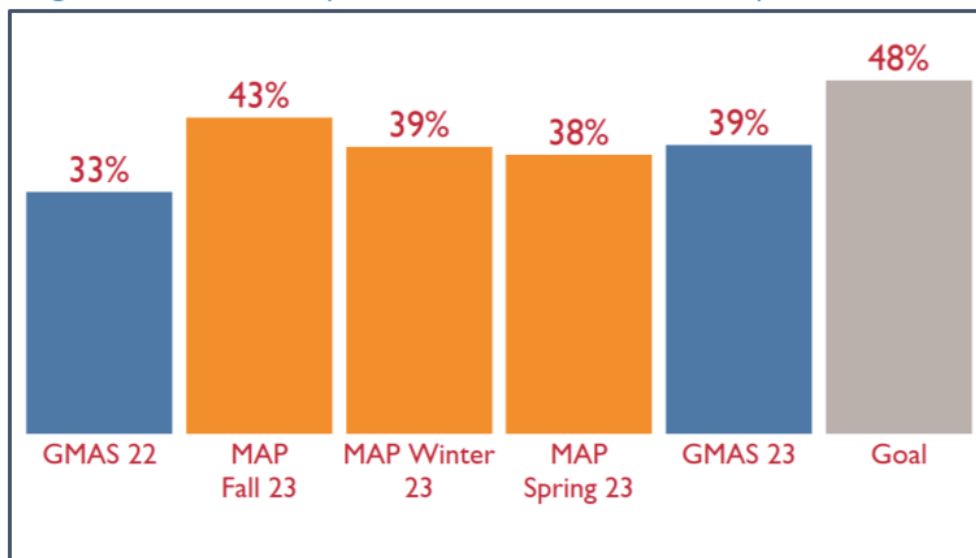


Figure 9: Combination of 2023 GMAS scores and 2022-2023 MAP scores for Math

GMAS Performance Overtime (With SY2023 Results)

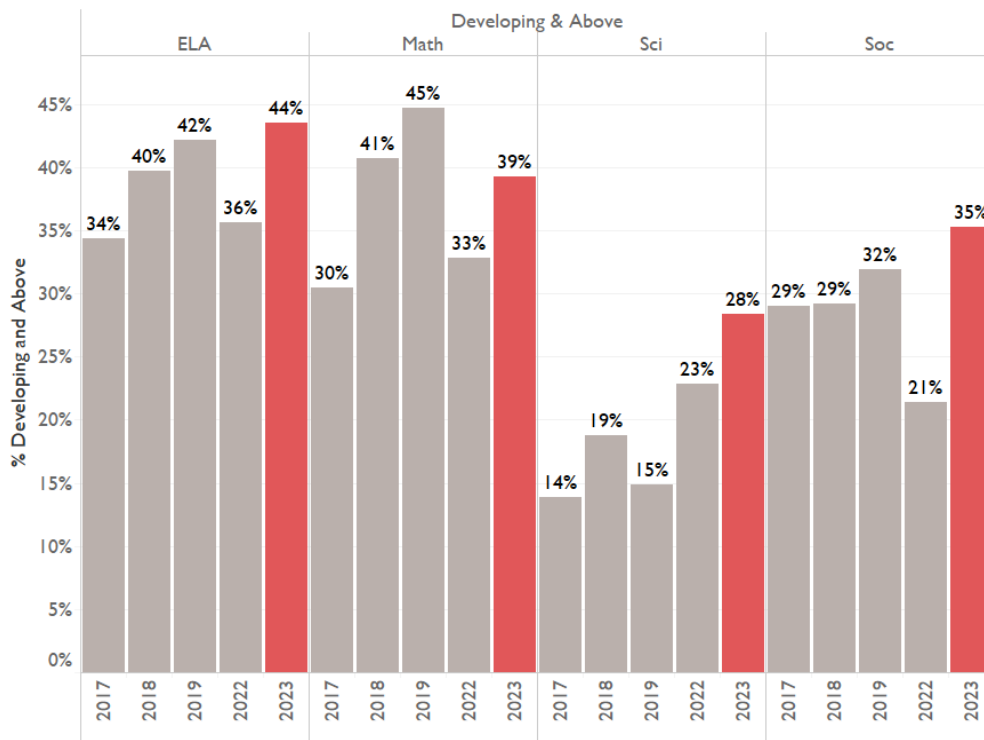


Figure 10: Historical GMAS scores and 2022-2023 GMAS scores for all subjects

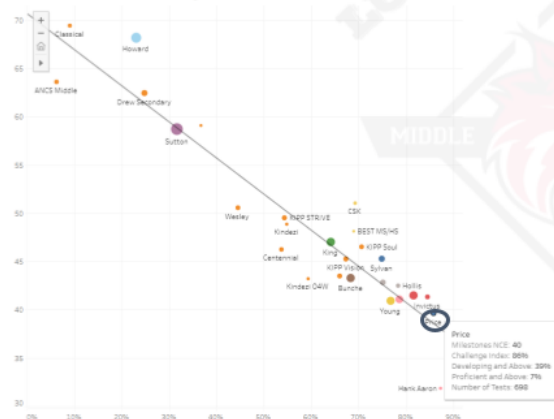
Price (Challenge Index)



A. Did we meet our contract metric in SY23?

B. How does our change in challenge index compare to all other APS schools?

Milestones NCE Scores vs Challenge Index



Price
Points below or above the challenge index line



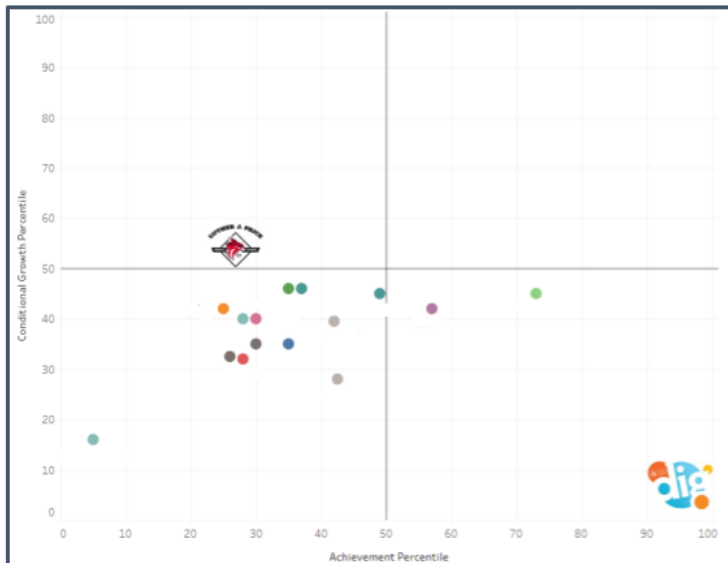
Since we opened:
Ranks 2/20 APS middle schools

Since last year:
Ranks 4/22 APS middle schools

Figure 11: Challenge index line for 2022-2023

APPENDIX C

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, ELA) Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 (Same School Year)



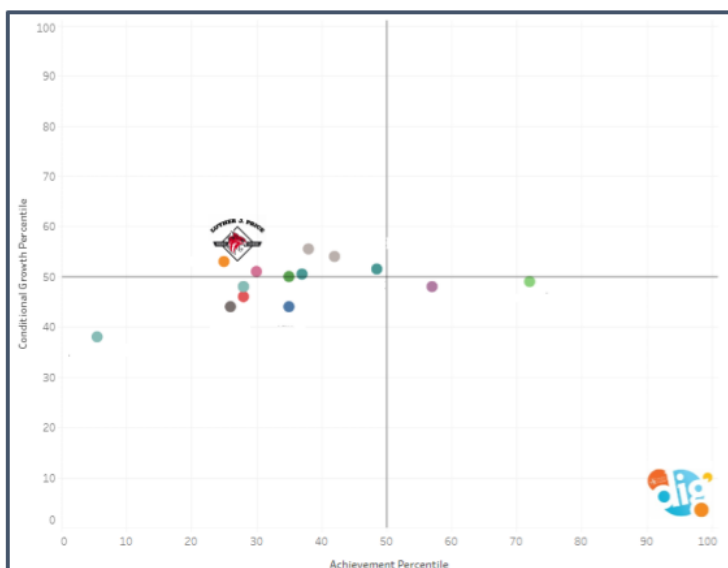
As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [27th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [54th Percentile for Growth](#) in ELA from the Fall to Spring of this school year.



Grade	MEDIAN of Fall to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	51	17
7	55	34
8	55	33
Grand Total	54	27

Figure 12: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for ELA MAP scores from Fall to Spring

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, ELA) Winter 2022 to Spring 2023 (Same School Year)



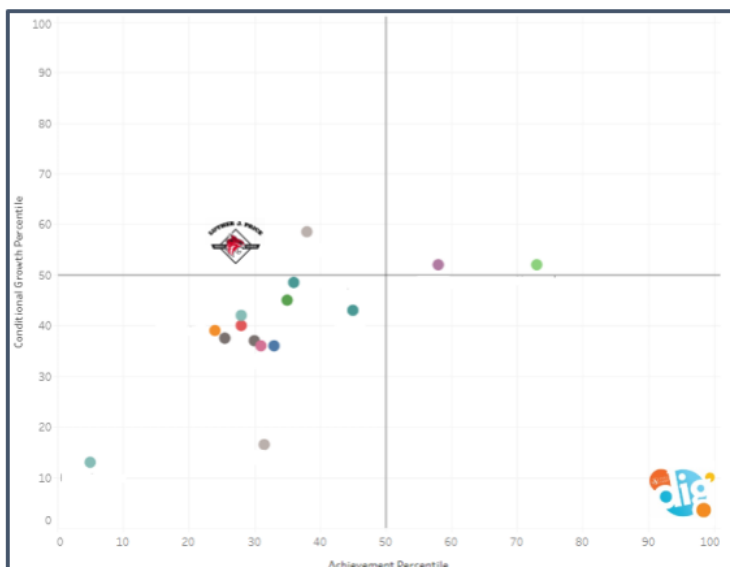
As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [27th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [56th Percentile for Growth](#) in ELA from the Winter to Spring of this school year.



Grade	MEDIAN of Winter to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	59	17
7	51	34
8	62	33
Grand Total	56	27

Figure 13: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for ELA MAP scores from Winter to Spring

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, ELA) Spring 2022 to Spring 2023 (Across School Year)

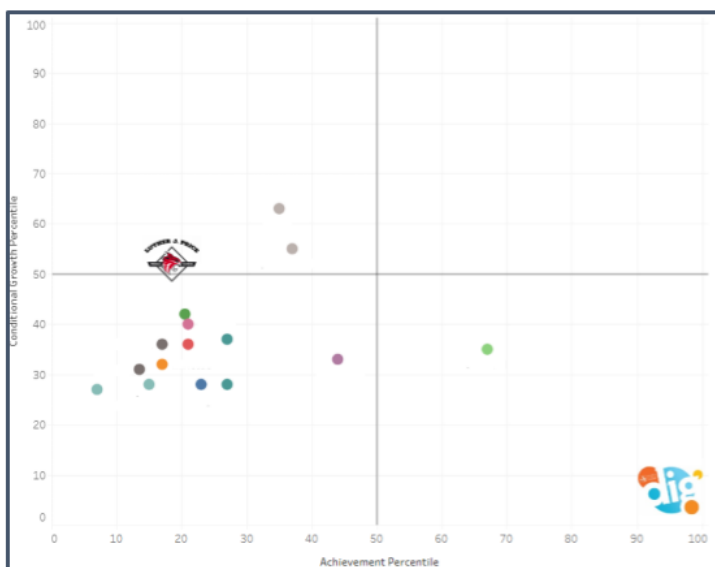


As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [27th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [56th Percentile for Growth](#) in ELA from the Spring of last year to Spring of this school year.

Grade	MEDIAN of Spring to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	69	17
7	54	34
8	59	33
Grand Total	58	27

Figure 14: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for ELA MAP scores from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, Math) Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 (Same School Year)



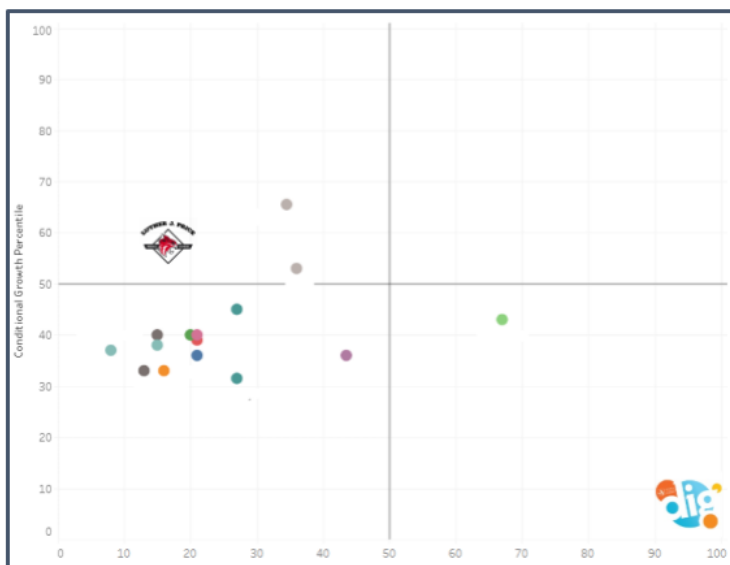
As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [18th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [51st Percentile for Growth](#) in Math from the Fall to Spring of this school year.

Grade	MEDIAN of Fall to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	51	12
7	48	20
8	51	20
Grand Total	51	18

Figure 15: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for math MAP scores from Fall to Spring

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, Math)

Winter 2022 to Spring 2023 (Same School Year)



As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [18th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [58th Percentile for Growth](#) in Math from the Winter to Spring of this school year.

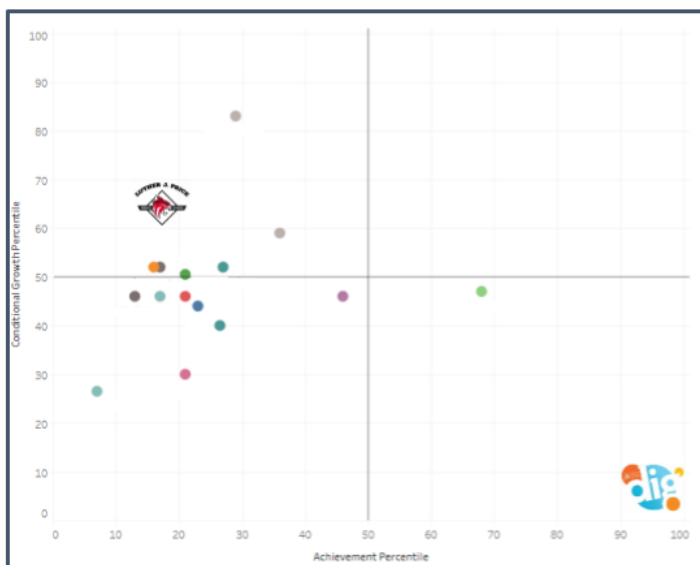


Grade	MEDIAN of Winter to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	51	12
7	70	20
8	57.5	20
Grand Total	58	18

Figure 16: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for math MAP scores from Winter to Spring

MAP Growth & Achievement Data (Price, All, Math)

Spring 2022 to Spring 2023 (Across School Year)



As Price Wildcats, our students performed in the [18th Percentile for Achievement](#), and the [65th Percentile for Growth](#) in Math from the Spring to Spring of this school year.



Grade	MEDIAN of Spring to Spring CGP	MEDIAN of Spring Score (Percentile)
6	73	12
7	57	20
8	63	20
Grand Total	65	18

Figure 17: Relative growth and achievement percentiles for math MAP scores from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023