

# Focusing Sessions

**A valuable stakeholder engagement  
and evaluation design tool**

Veronica S. Smith, Principal  
AEA Conference 2016  
October 28, 2016





Veronica S. Smith, MSEE

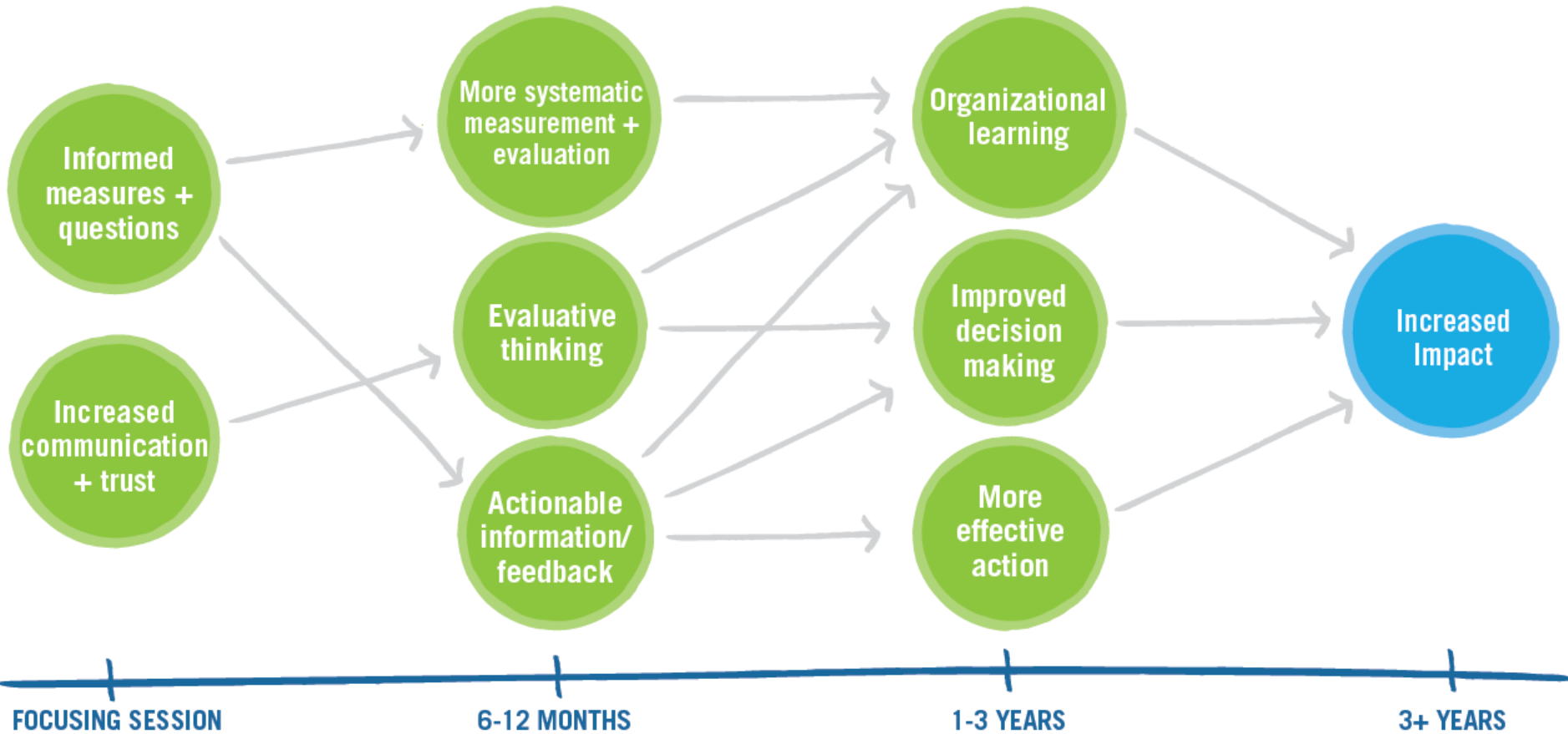
**(Architect + Engineer + Evaluator +  
Informatics) x (Communicator +  
Process Facilitator) = Data Scientist**



# Theory of Action



# Theory of Change



# Donaldson's theory-driven evaluation science

- Hypothesis driven
- Develops theories independently
- Reduces evaluation anxiety
- More efficient
- Happier clients

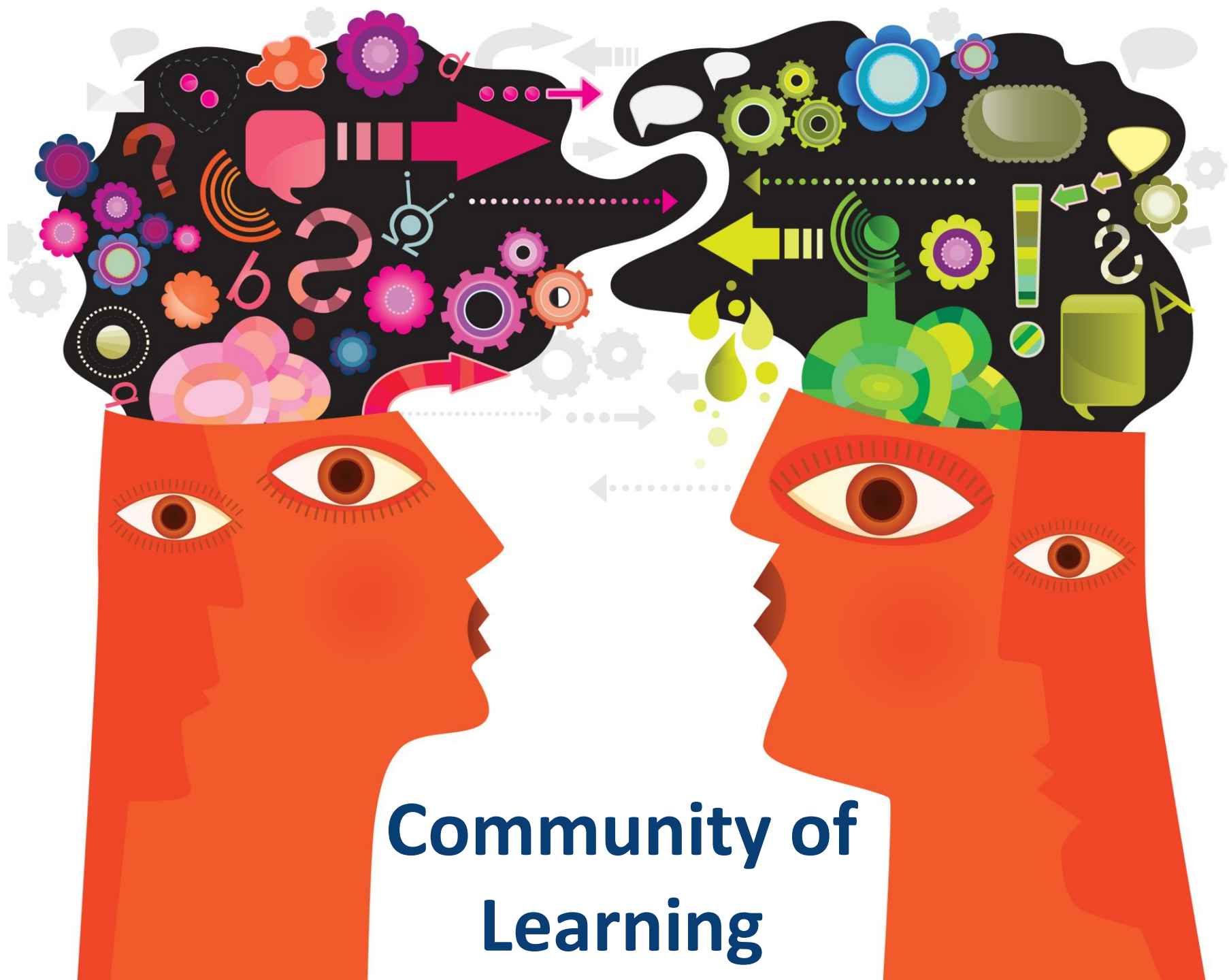
# Value proposition

- Create common understanding
- Make theory explicit and testable
- Frame evaluation questions
- Provide framework for data collection and analysis

# Learning!!



**data2insight**  
Find wisdom in information



**Community of Learning**





# What are the 3 attributes you would like to contribute to this evaluation study?

Veronica S. Smith

1. Quantitative data analysis expertise
2. Facilitation skills
3. Formal and informal education research knowledge



**How do we want to conduct the evaluation as co-creators of knowledge?**

**What kind of learning community do we want to create?**

Are they  
ready?



It is worthwhile to integrate evaluation activities into Zeno's program delivery and reporting practices.

97%



Mistakes made by employees are viewed as opportunities for learning.

100%

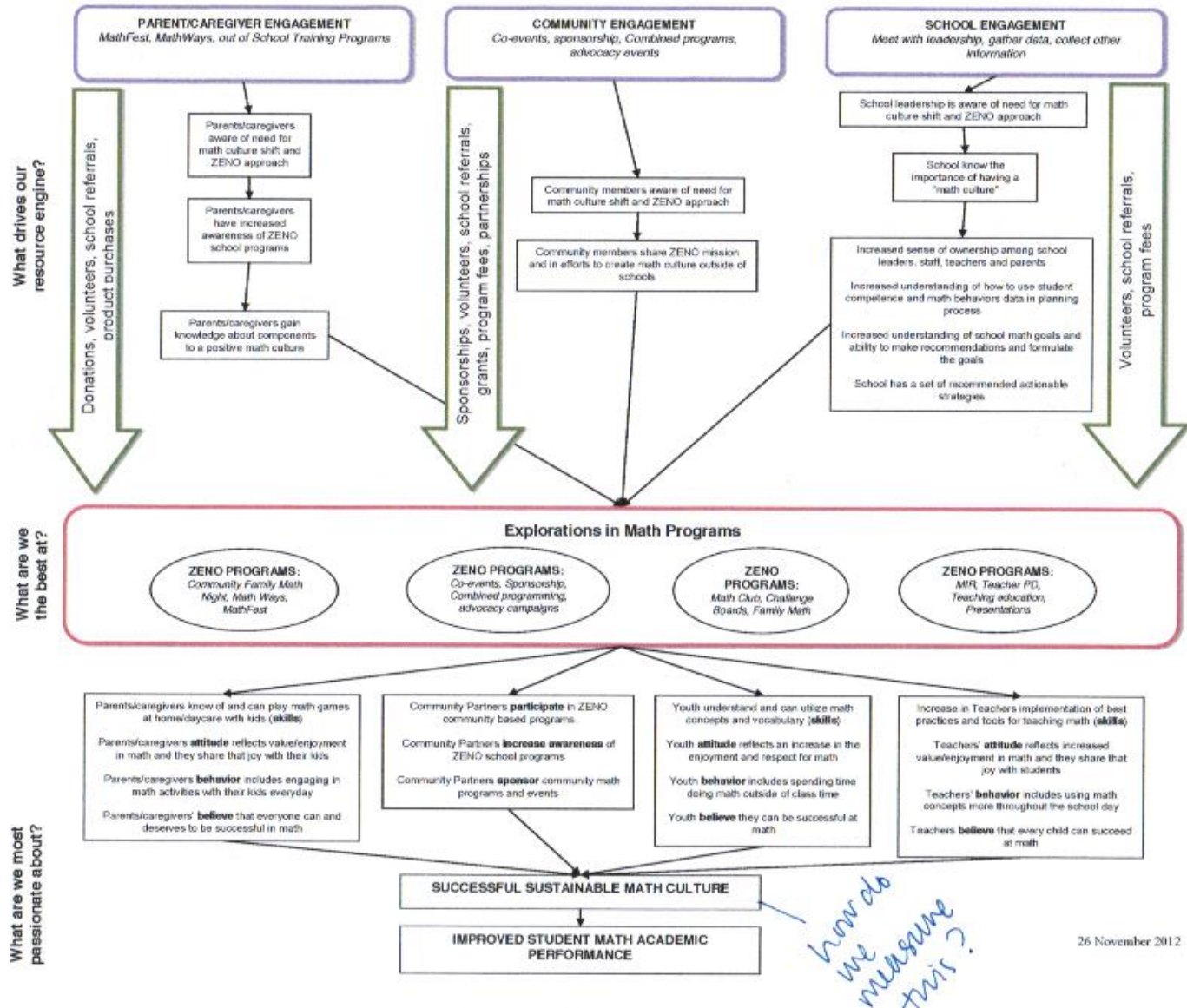


Currently available information tells us what we need to know about the effectiveness of our programs and processes.

19%



# Zeno: Theory of Change

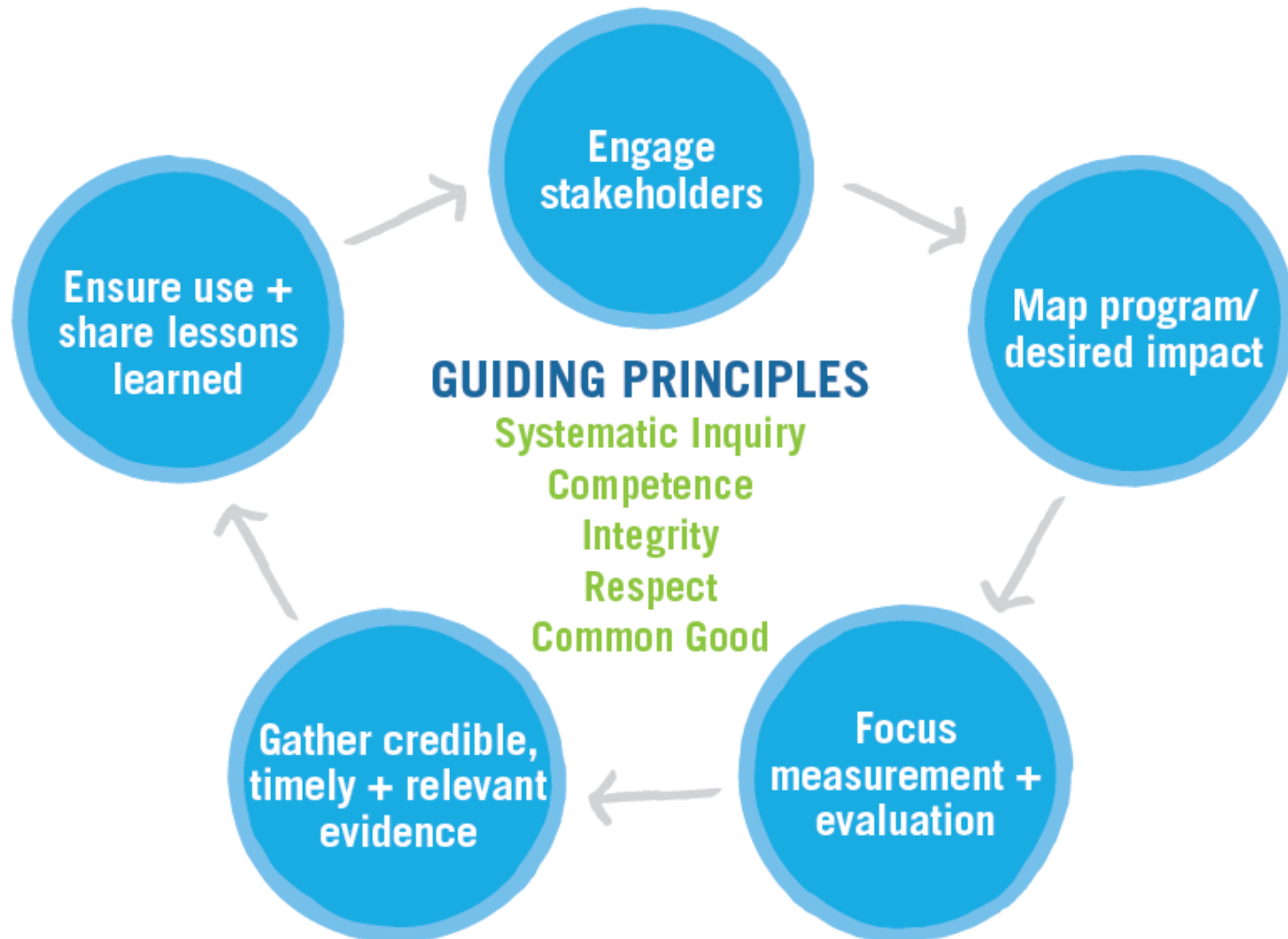


26 November 2012

# Evaluation Focusing Part 1



# Theory of Action



# Today's goals

- Create common understanding
- Make theory explicit and testable
- Frame evaluation questions
- Provide framework for data collection and analysis

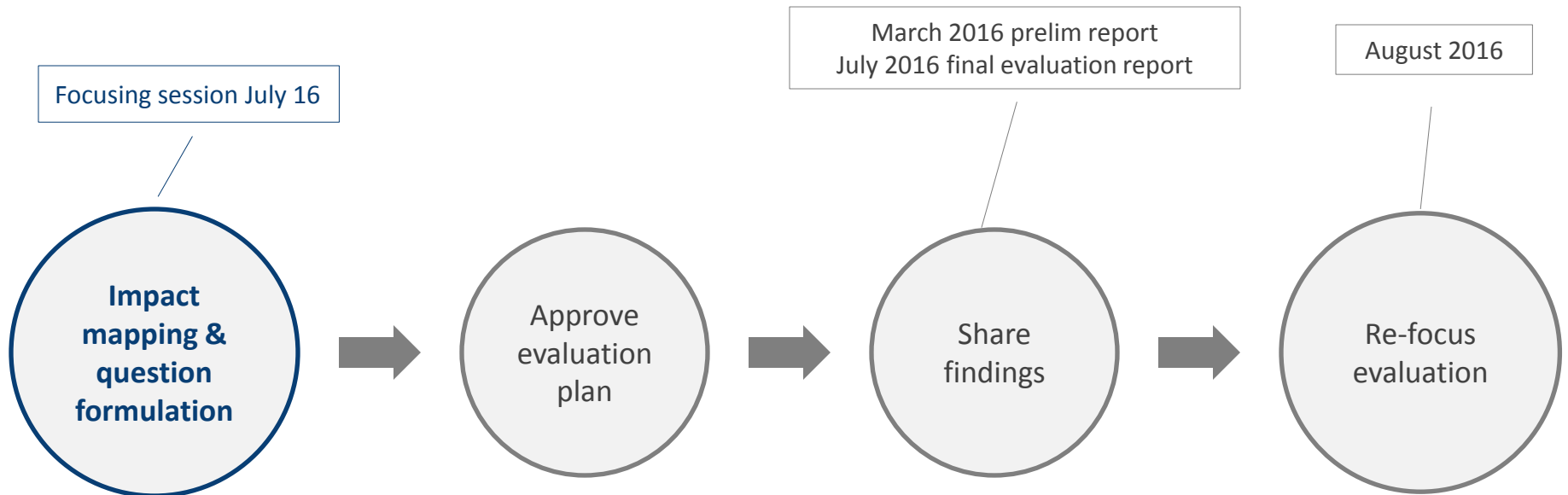
# Today's agenda

**Step 1: Introductions & overview**

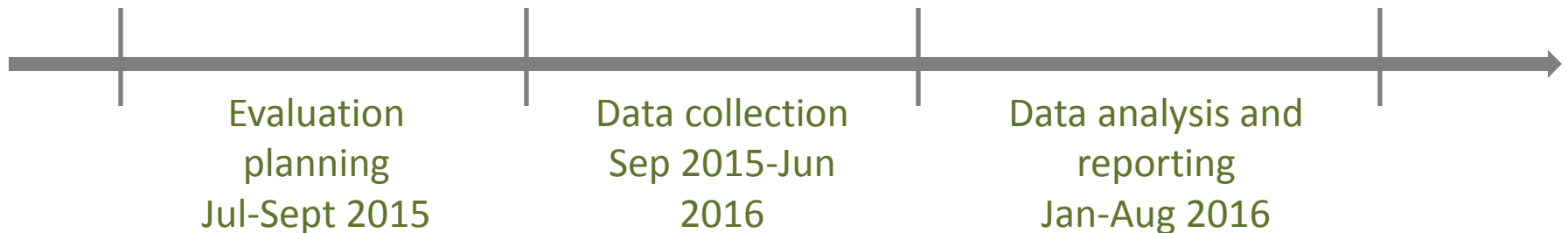
**Step 2: Clarify why and/or how Big Brothers Big Sisters presumably realizes desired outcomes/impact**

**Step 3: Frame and prioritize potential evaluation questions**

# Evaluation timeline



## *Estimated time line*

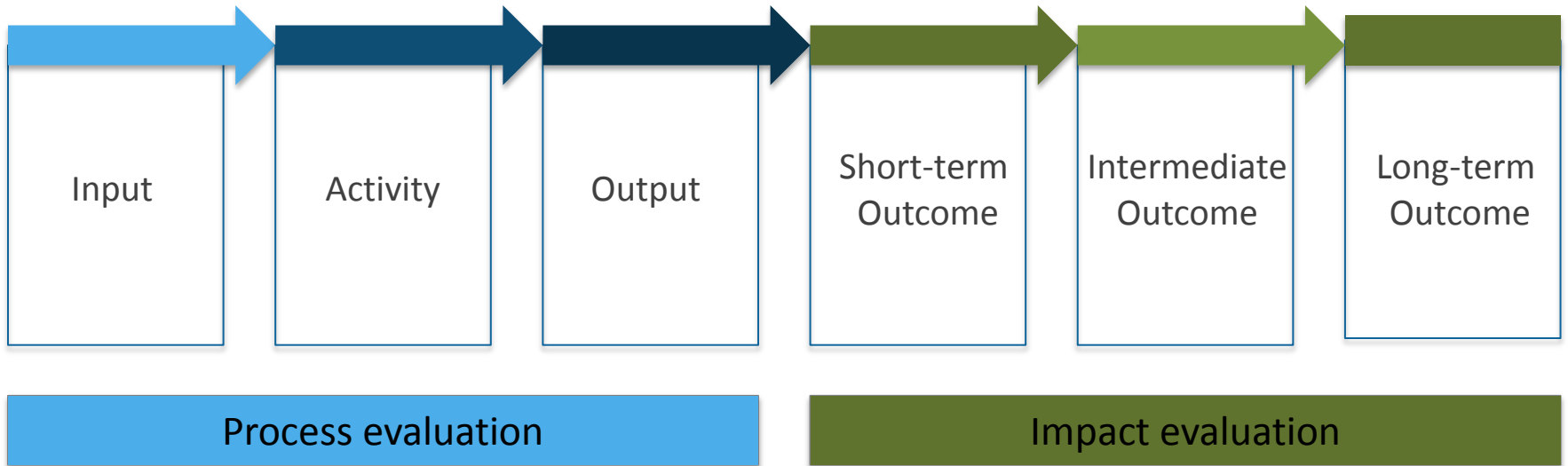


# Program Logic

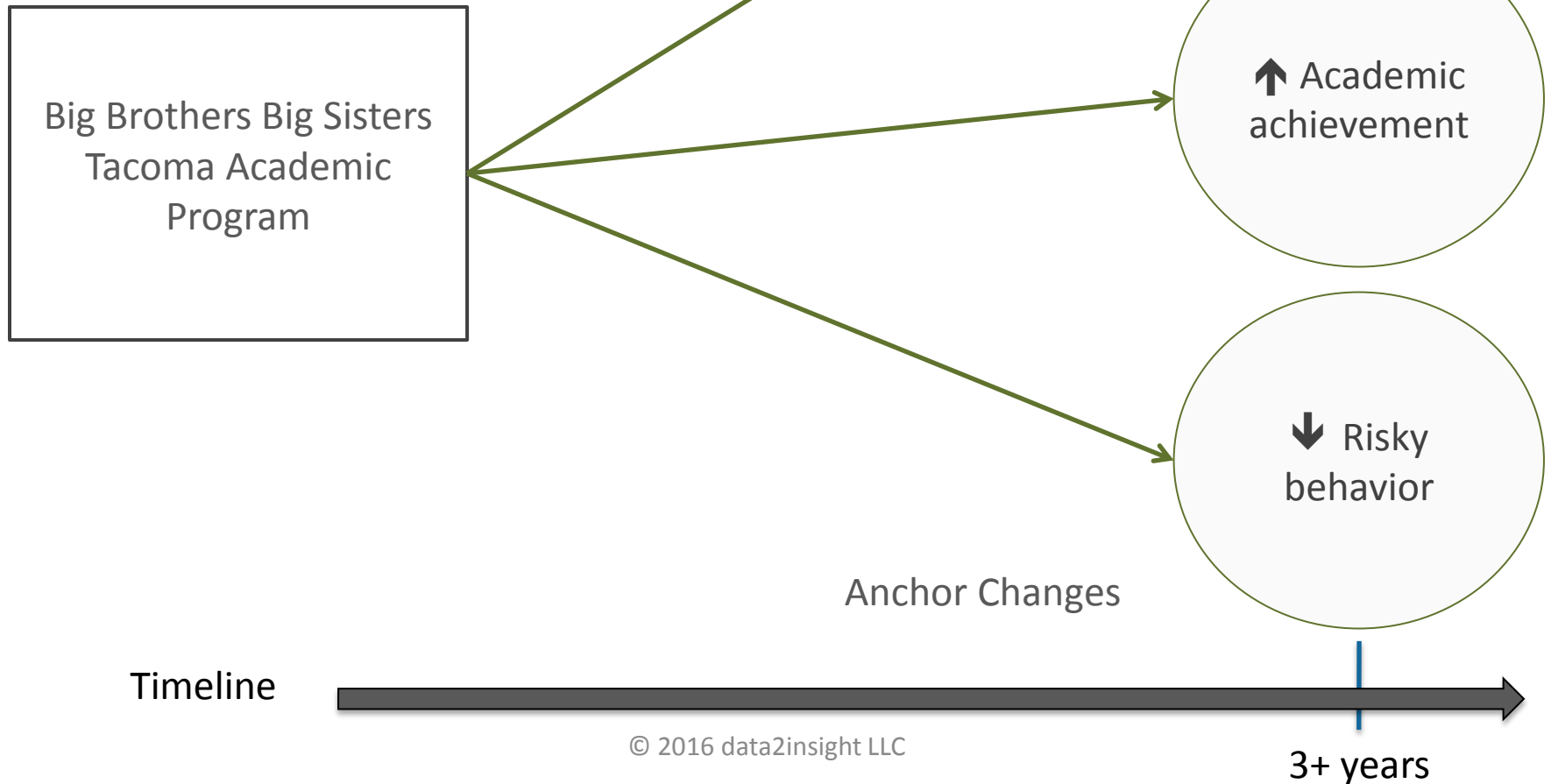
ACTION

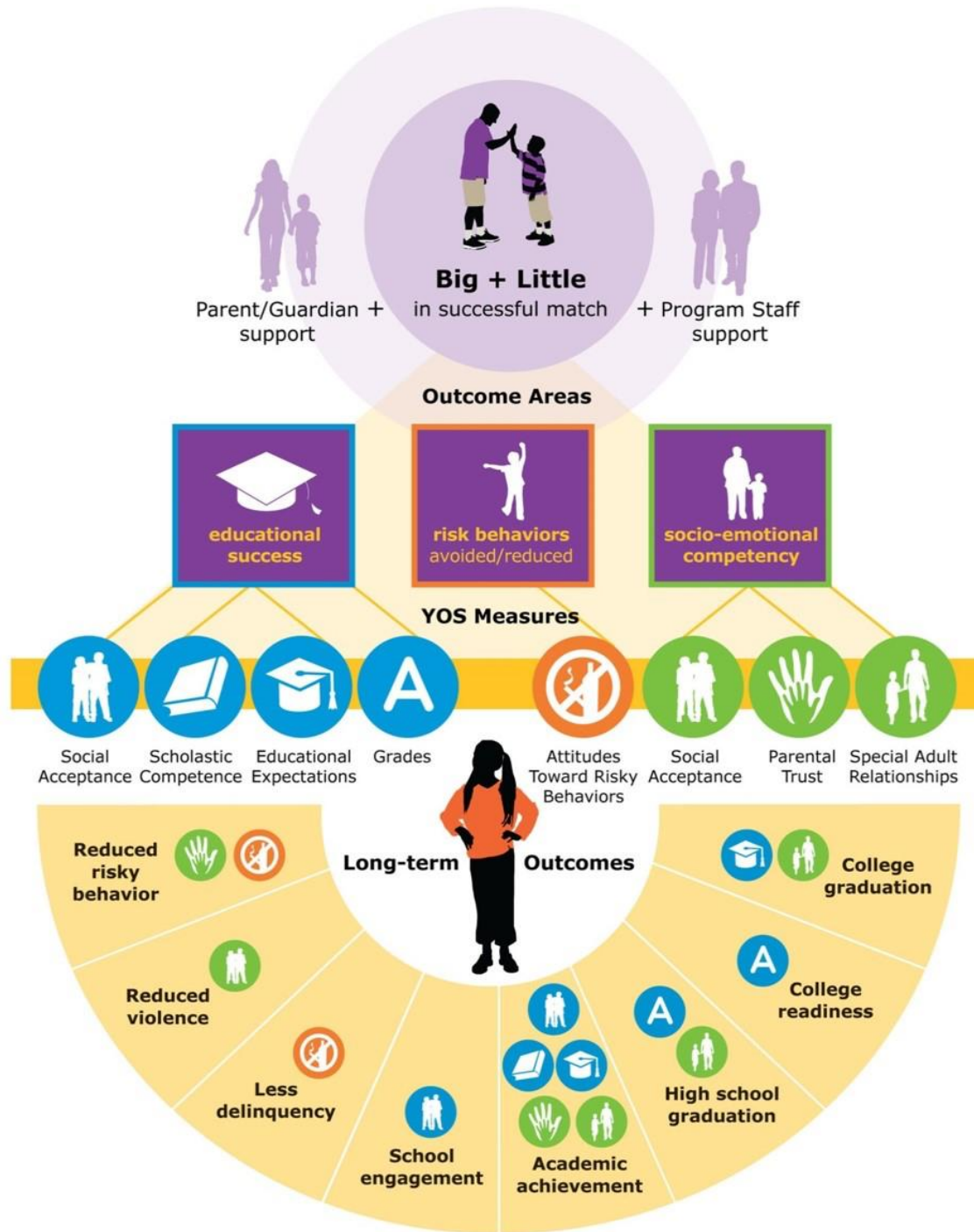


CHANGE



# Need program map to move beyond waving of hands





# Tacoma Academic Program

## Theory of Action Overview

## IMPACT

2018+

Anchor Changes

### INPUTS

Murdock  
Foundation grant

Tacoma Public  
Schools  
partnership

Training  
curriculum

### ACTIVITIES

Match bigs and littles

Mentor training

Teacher engagement

Case manager and  
teacher meetings

Set goals through Youth  
Development Plans

Big and Little weekly  
meeting

Parent check-ins 3 x  
year

### OUTPUTS

# of Bigs recruited

# of students  
participating

# of teachers  
participating



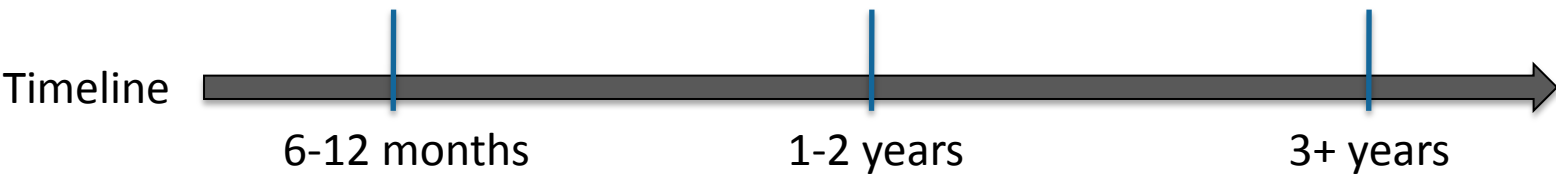
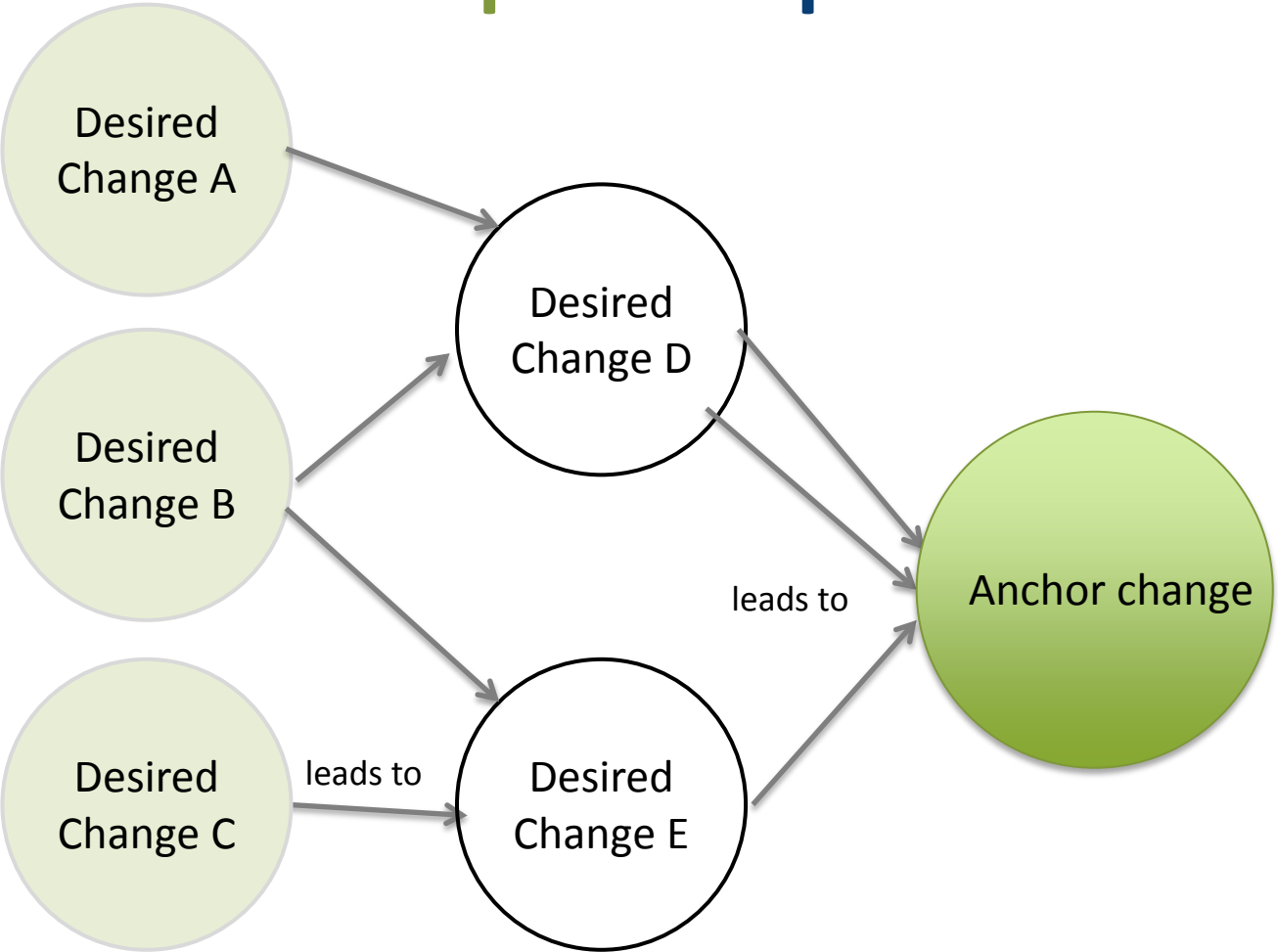
Increased social and  
emotional well-being  
of child

Student's increased  
academic  
achievement

Child/Youth  
increasingly avoids  
risky behavior



# Impact Map





years 5+ outcomes

years 3-5 outcomes

years 1-2 outcomes

years 5+ outcomes

years 3-5 outcomes

years 1-2 outcomes

years 5+ outcomes

years 3-5 outcomes

years 1-2 outcomes

EDUCATION  
↑ engagement in and understanding of the connection betw social, environmental and economic systems

INCREASED Capacity in PD  
Inform Ed Teacher Principal

Personal Transition of  
interest and engagement in school vs. life  
Transition in 1st quarter (January)

ECONOMY  
↑ Sustainability, responsibility, engagement and societal participation

Essential elements of a sustainable life

↑ Involvement in a range of activities, including community and social activities

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↑ Involvement in a range of activities, including community and social activities

INSTITUTIONAL SHIFT  
To take sustainability as the lens for learning  
(long-term goal)

INCREASED Capacity in Using Tools to Capture and Assess THE IMPACTS

↑ Involvement in a range of activities, including community and social activities

Building of needs for educators with the core outcomes ESE

↑ Involvement in a range of activities, including community and social activities

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Improved Access & Equity to opportunity for ESE Education

Increased understanding of the gaps in sustainability education

↑ Involvement in a range of activities, including community and social activities

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**What is the difference between an  
ACTION and a CHANGE?**

# ACTION or a CHANGE?

- Offer more outreach activities
- Develop a new program offering
- Increase awareness of what constitutes risky behavior
- Increase number of students reading at grade level
- Diversify participation in Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Recruit 10 new big brothers/sisters

# Focus on CHANGE

**Increase**

**Decrease**

**Deepen**

**Broaden**

**Mediate**

**Moderate**

**Diversify**

**Compress**

**Temper**

**Accelerate**

**Decelerate**

# Avoid ACTION

Offer

Create

Develop

Serve

Build

Leverage

Collaborate

Design

Adapt

Amend

Modify

Revise

Refine

Replace

Teach

Train

Recruit

Model

Implement

Operate

Scale

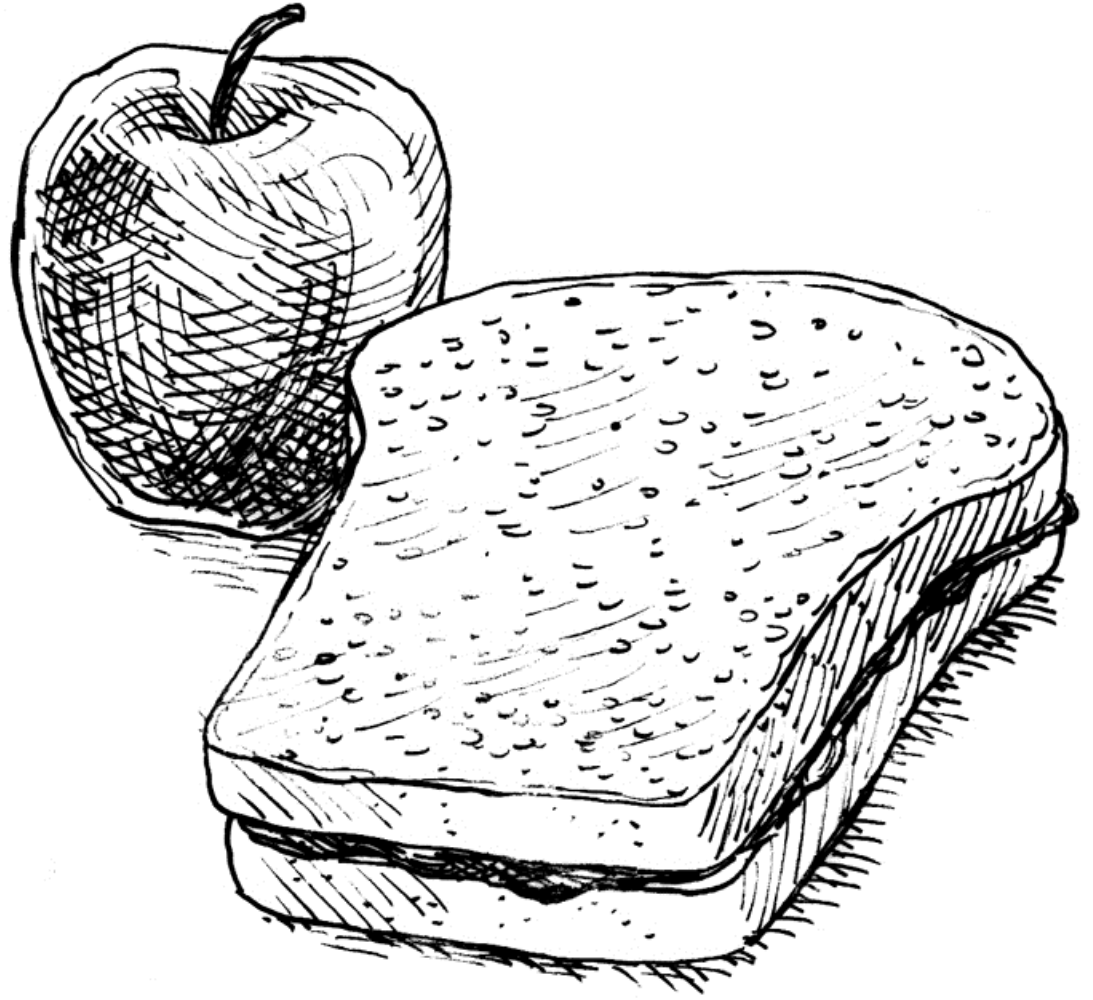
Partner

Research

*Counts*

Let's map!





LUNCH





**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of Puget Sound

Evaluation  
Focusing  
Part 2





**What if you could get a sound answer to a question about your program that would help improve outcomes?**



**What are the questions you want and need answers to?**

# Example Questions

- To what extent do students' school performance correlate with the program measures of social acceptance, scholastic competence, attitudes toward risky behavior, and parental trust?

# Example Questions

- How can our organization best coordinate with Tacoma Schools to ensure that information collected by both groups is used formatively to improve student outcomes?

# Today's goals

- Create common understanding
- Make theory explicit and testable
- Provide framework for data collection and analysis
- Frame evaluation questions

# Next steps



# Evaluation design

## Zeno Evaluation Plan Outline 2014-15

Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Data Sources	Timeline	Evaluation Tools	Data Analysis & Interpretation
Teacher Effectiveness	What are the MIR program's essential features for increasing teacher effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum documentation</li> <li>MIR classroom observation</li> </ul>	January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customized observation rubric</li> <li>Document review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative analysis to identify essential features</li> </ul>
Teacher ability to use math instruction best practices and tools	What are math teacher practices before, during, and following a quarter of MIR instruction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher observation</li> <li>Teacher interviews</li> </ul>	November 2014 January 2015 May 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customized observation rubric</li> <li>Customized interview protocol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify changes</li> </ul>
Teacher math content knowledge and confidence in their ability to teach math	How have math teachers' mathematical content knowledge and confidence in their teaching ability changed after a quarter of MIR instruction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pretest-posttest (N=20?)</li> <li>Teacher interviews</li> </ul>	November 2014 April 2015 May 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customized pretest-posttest and scoring guide</li> <li>Customized interview protocol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistical analysis of changes in content knowledge and confidence levels</li> </ul>





Thank you!

