

The background features a light gray silhouette of two stylized human figures holding hands, positioned behind the text. The figures are simple, rounded shapes with outstretched arms and legs, suggesting a sense of unity or support.

Family Impact Seminar, 2010

**The Middle Grades:
Gateway to Dropout Prevention**

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The Challenge

The Atlanta metro area has 149 high schools.

42 of these are considered dropout factories--schools where fewer than 60% of freshmen progress to their senior year on time.


37% of high school students in the region do not graduate on time with a regular diploma.

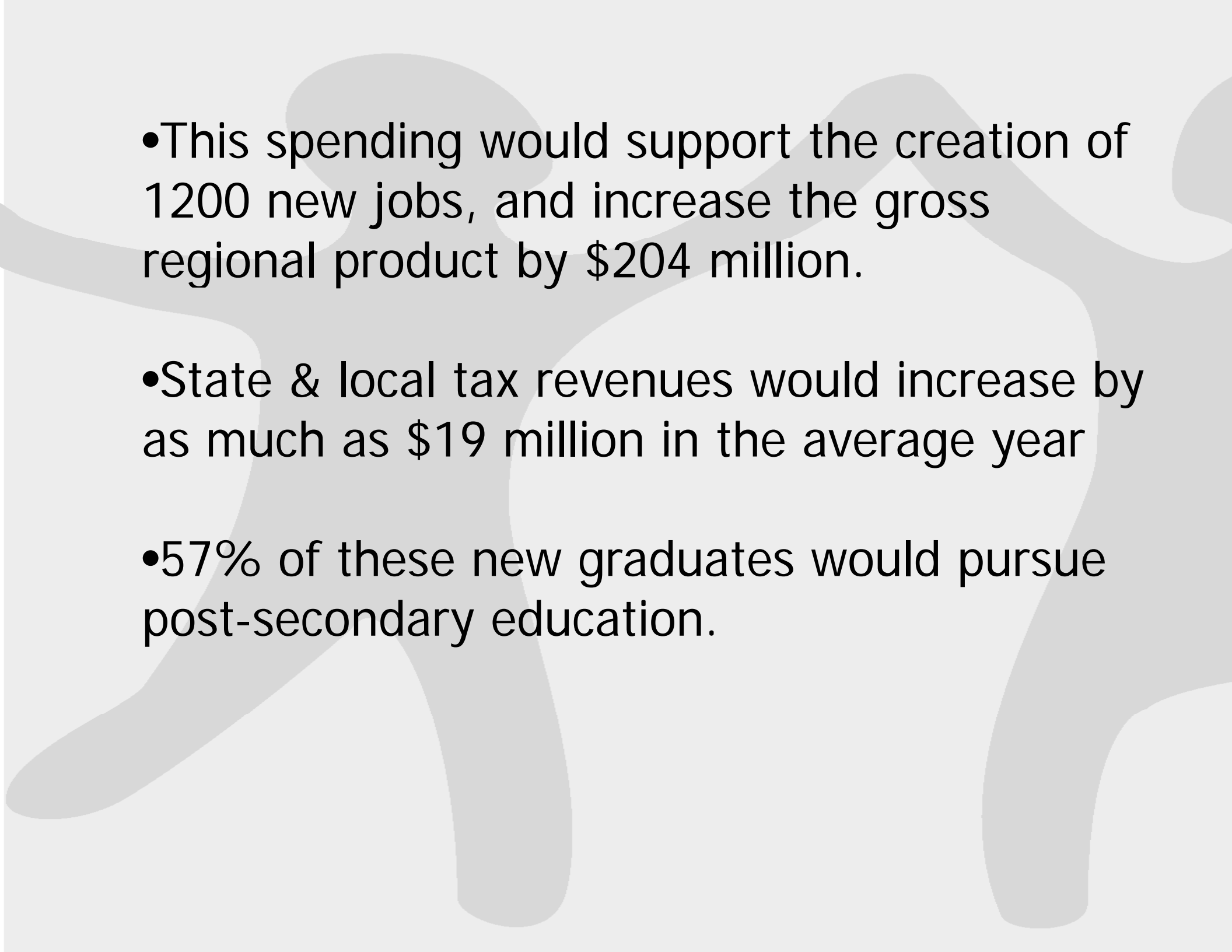
Atlanta

In the Atlanta metropolitan area, an estimated 27,900 students dropped out from the Class of 2008 at great cost not only to themselves but also to their communities.

Reducing the number of dropouts by 50% for this single high school class would result in tremendous economic benefits to the Atlanta region.

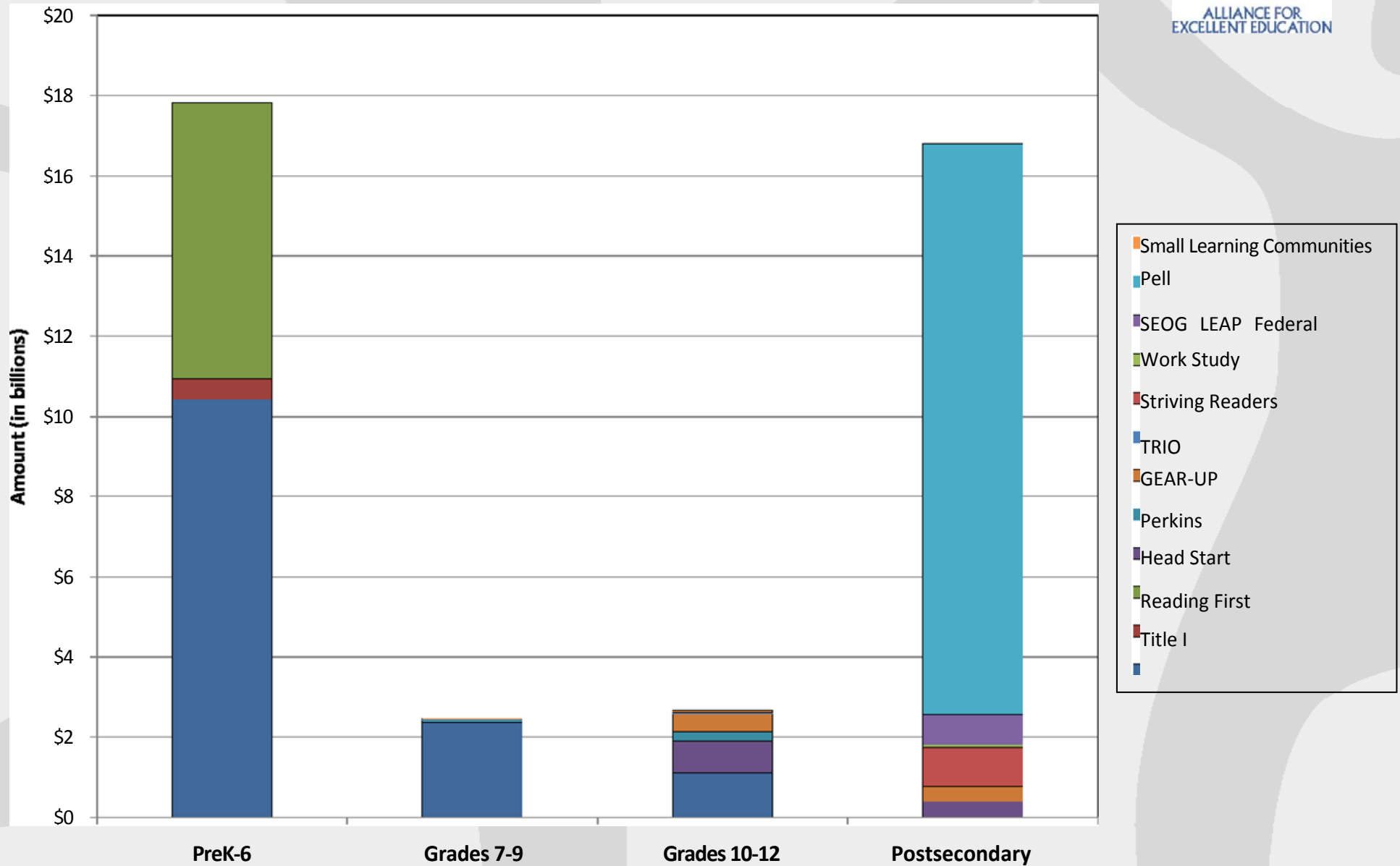
Including...

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- \$160 million in combined earnings, including
 - \$110 million in spending
 - \$40 million in investments and
 - \$14 million in vehicle purchases each year
 - By mid-career, an additional **\$349 million more** in housing

- 
- This spending would support the creation of 1200 new jobs, and increase the gross regional product by \$204 million.
 - State & local tax revenues would increase by as much as \$19 million in the average year
 - 57% of these new graduates would pursue post-secondary education.

The Missing Middle

FY 2008 Federal Education Appropriations



Source: US Department of Education Budget FY2008; US Department of HHS Budget FY2008

Like Babies, Adolescents Can't Wait

- Many students pass 8th grade exit tests but arrive at high school so far behind that they cannot catch up in their preparation for college or career
- Youth make the decision to drop out long before they begin high school

Four critical predictive indicators
that can identify 6th graders likely to drop
out:

- Failing math
- Failing language arts
- Attending school less than 80% of the
time
- Receiving a poor final behavior grade in
one class

Georgia's Promising Programs & Practices

Graduation coaches

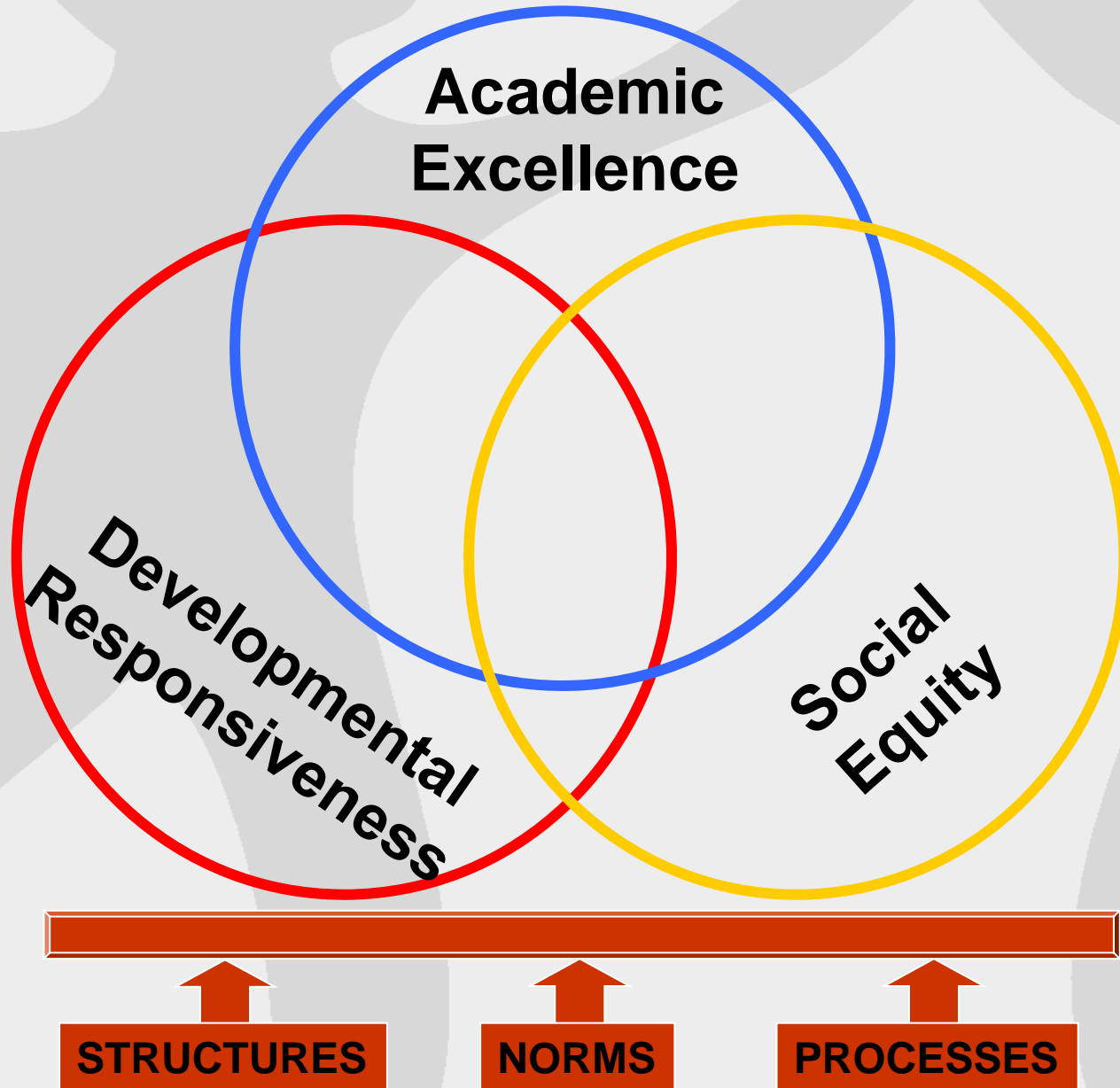
Georgia Performance Standards

Service-learning

Middle grades teacher preparation

Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch

The Vision



**Academic
Excellence**

**Developmental
Responsiveness**

**Social
Equity**

STRUCTURES

NORMS

PROCESSES

Vision to Reality: Schools to Watch

- Identify where Excellence is Happening
- Duplicate What Works
- Learn from What Doesn't
- School Improvement at Virtually No Cost

North Carolina Experience

Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout
Prevention and High School Graduation

Committee on Dropout Prevention

Commission on Raising Achievement &
Closing Gaps

DOE Division of School Transformation

North Carolina Experience

Under 60% Graduation Rate for 2 of 3 years or under 50% Performance Composite 2 of 3 years

- 132 Schools
- 64 Elementary
- 22 Middle
- 46 High Schools

Recommendations

Direct Attention to Middle Grades

Use Schools to Watch as Partner/Mentor
Schools

Continue to Support:

Middle School Graduation Coaches

Middle Grades Teacher Preparation

Service-Learning

The Bottom Line...



Teach
Learn