

Designing Creative Learning
Experiences Through
Outdoor Innovation

hollis architects®
r miller



Today's Discussion

Impactful
learning
experiences

A philanthropic
approach

Educator
perspectives

Integrated
learning
opportunities





Impactful Learning





**Sensory
Input**



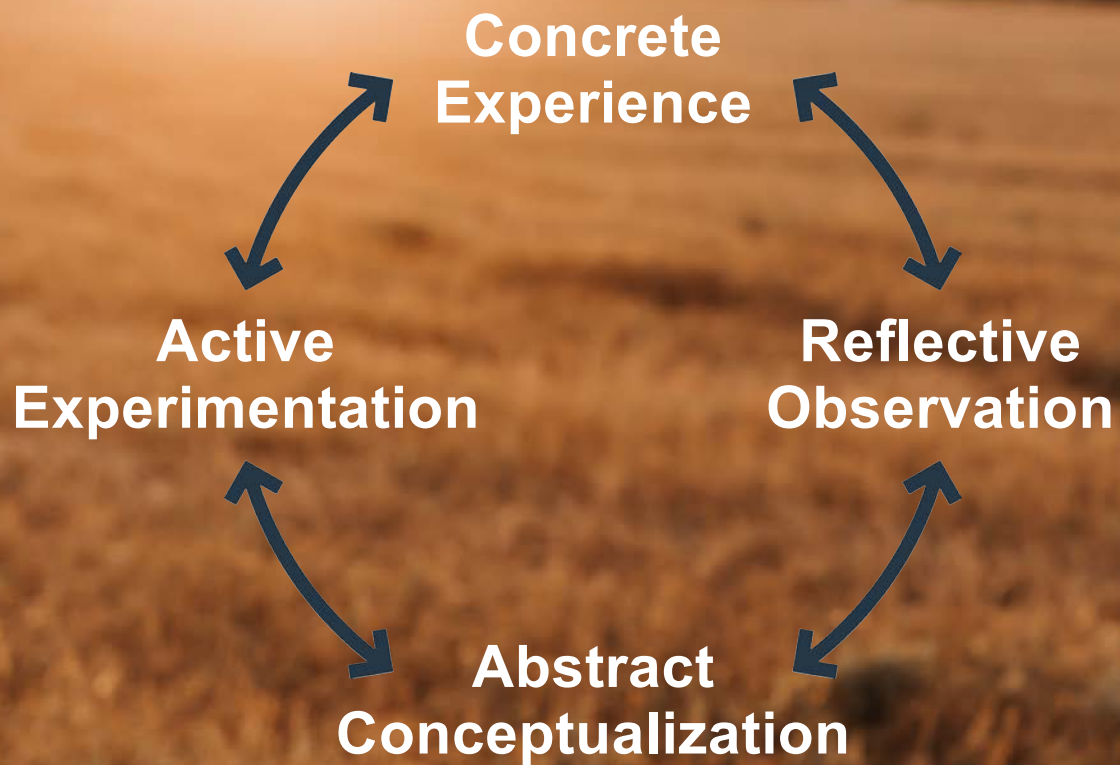
**Emotional
Connection**



Movement







Experiential Learning





Everyone enters every learning situation with more or less articulate ideas about the topic at hand. **We are all psychologists, historians, and atomic physicists.** It is just that some of our theories are more crude and incorrect than others. -David Kolb



Learner Engagement

91%

more engaged
in learning

69%

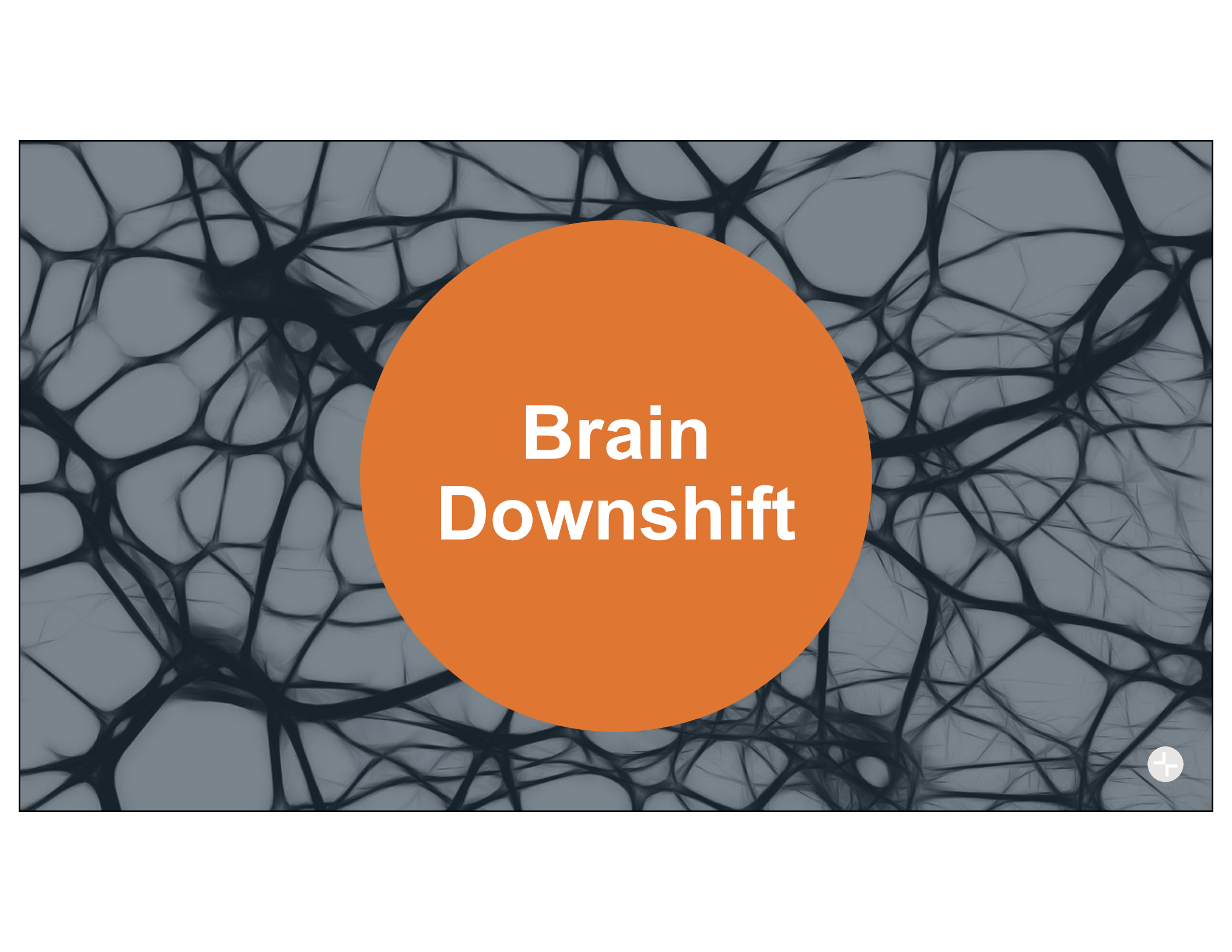
better able to
concentrate

68%

better behaved

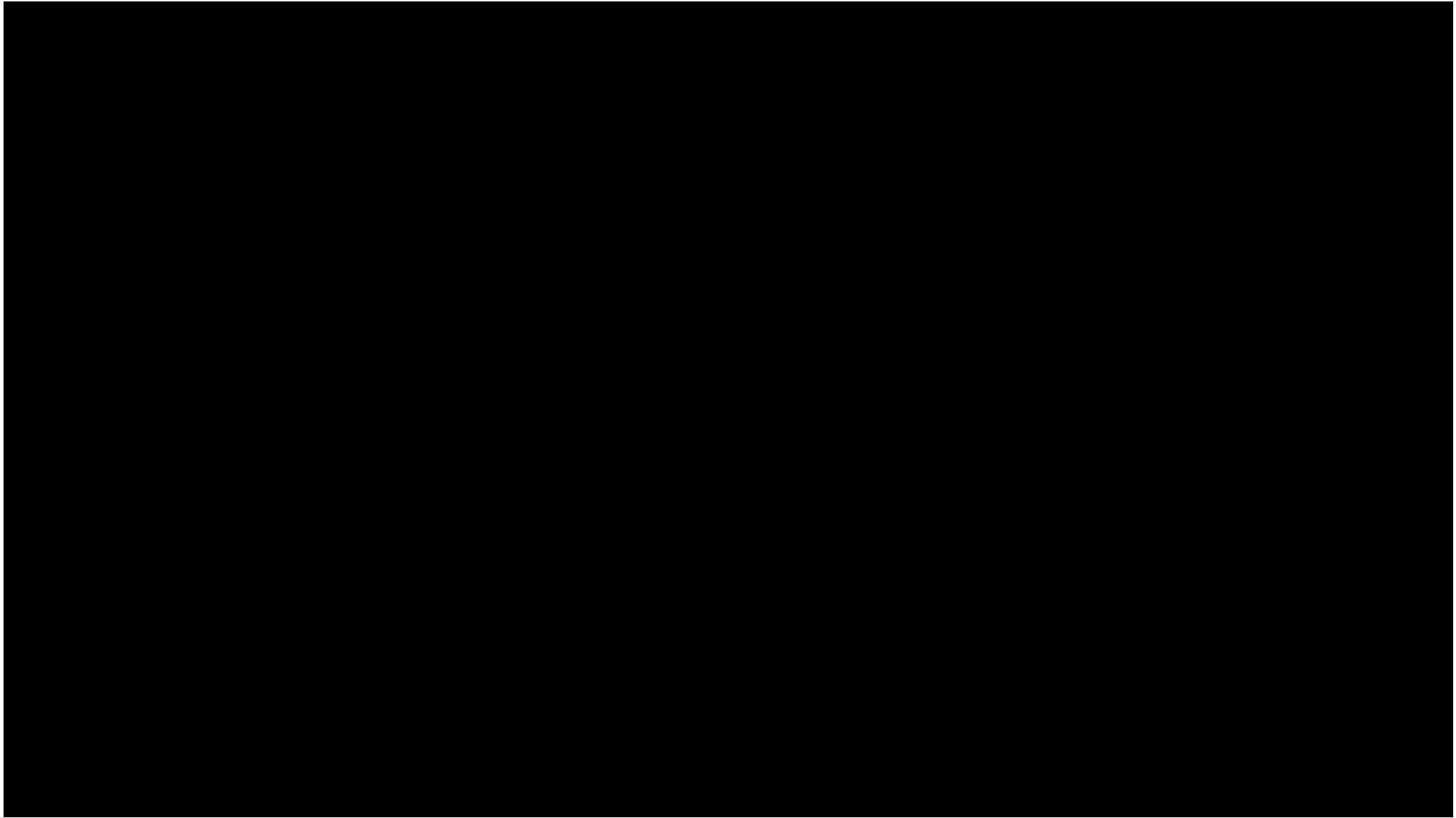
PROJECTDIRT



The background of the slide is a grayscale micrograph showing a dense network of dark, branching structures, likely representing neural tissue or a complex network. Overlaid on this is a large, solid orange circle. Inside the circle, the text "Brain Downshift" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered both horizontally and vertically.

Brain Downshift







Philanthropic Approach



Our Challenge





Scaled Learning Opportunities



Leveraging Partnerships



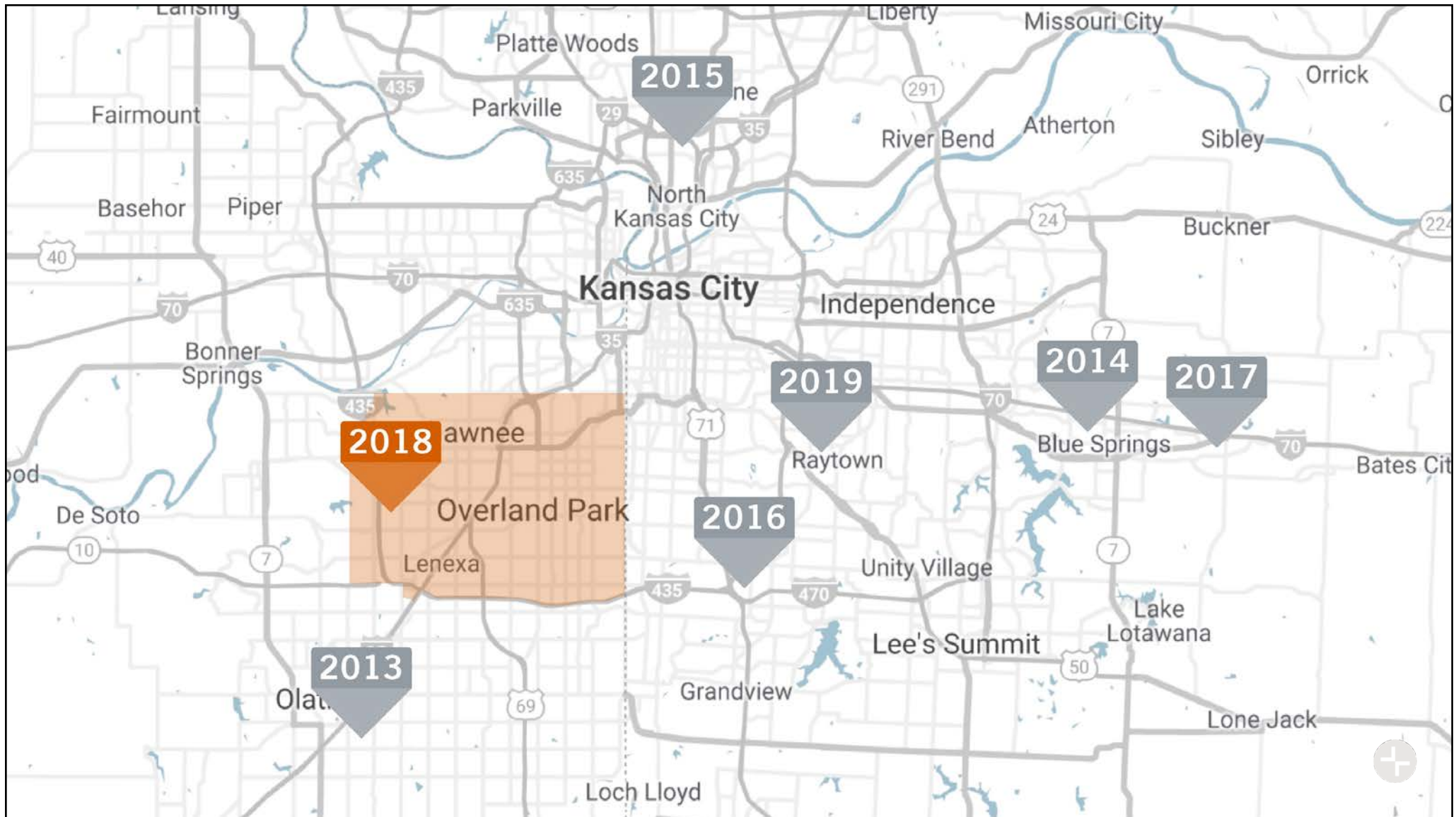


learnscape



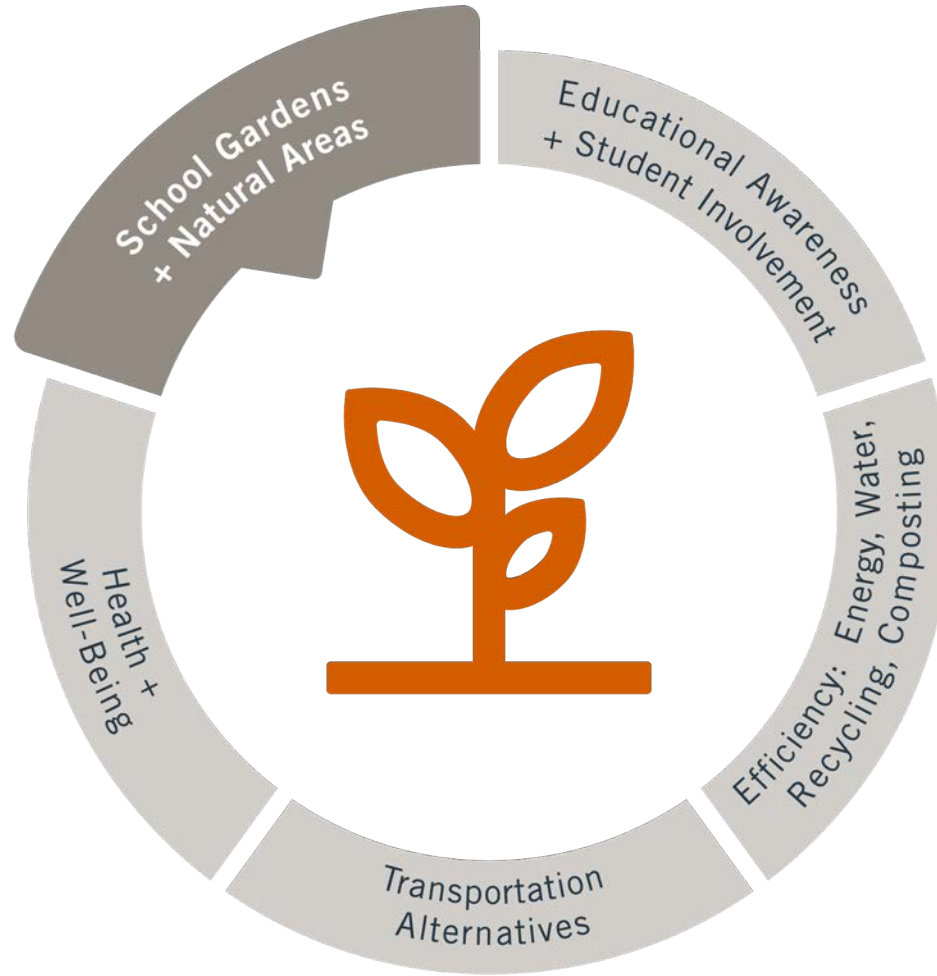


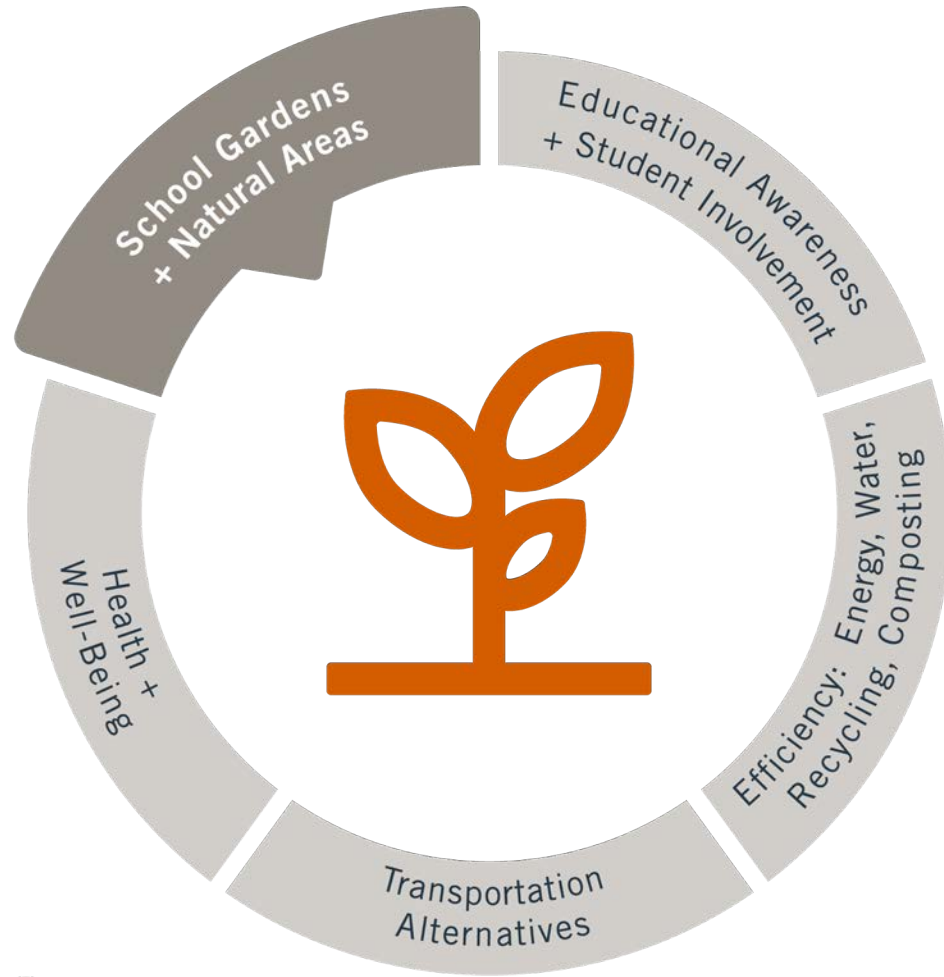








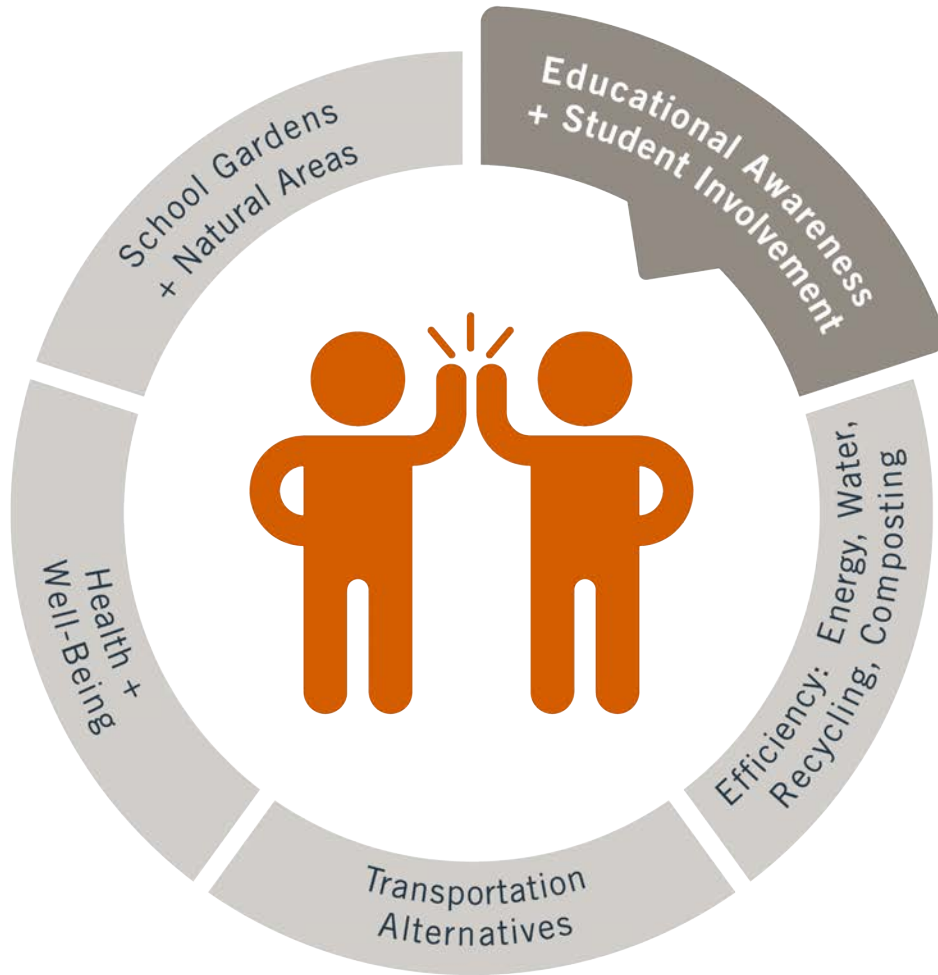




80% of schools host
gardens or natural areas

Sustainable landscaping

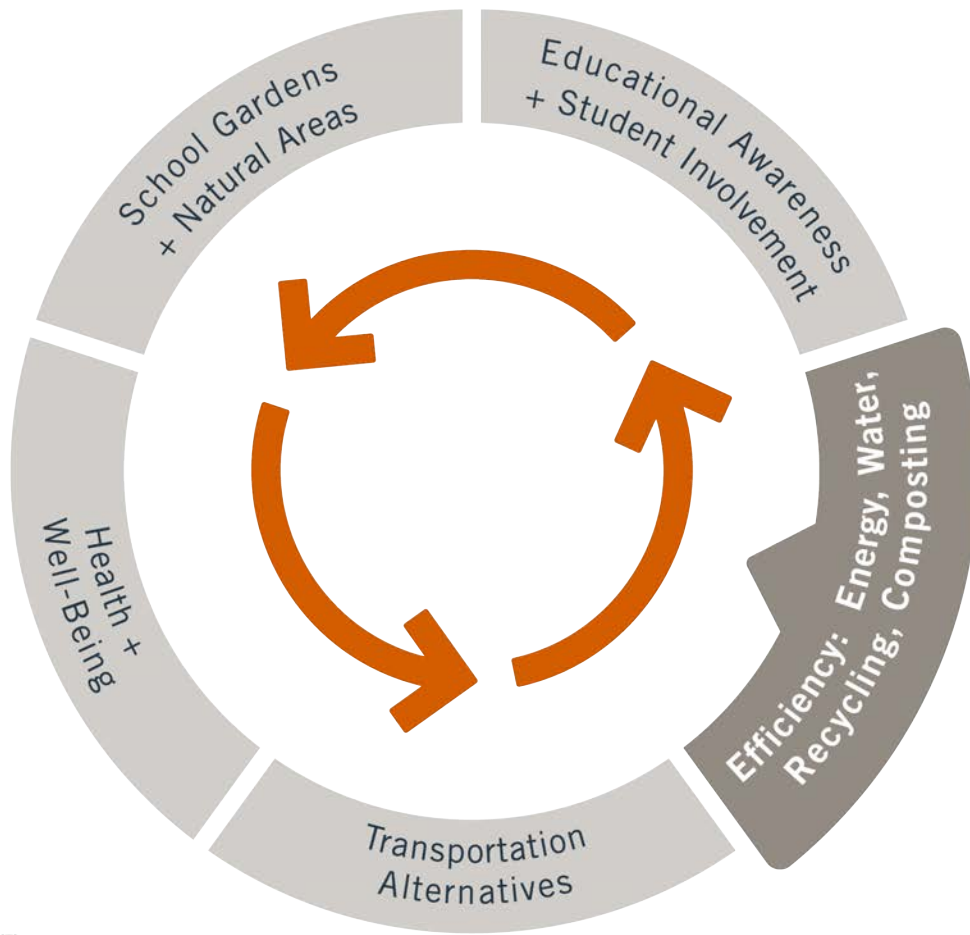




Elementary Grade Level Alignment

- PK-2:** School Gardens & Native Plants
- 3:** Butterfly Gardens (life cycles/ habitats), Severe Weather
- 4:** Energy Efficiency (incl. audits), Air Quality
- 5:** Water Quality Monitoring
- 6:** Energy Alternatives (renewable energy)

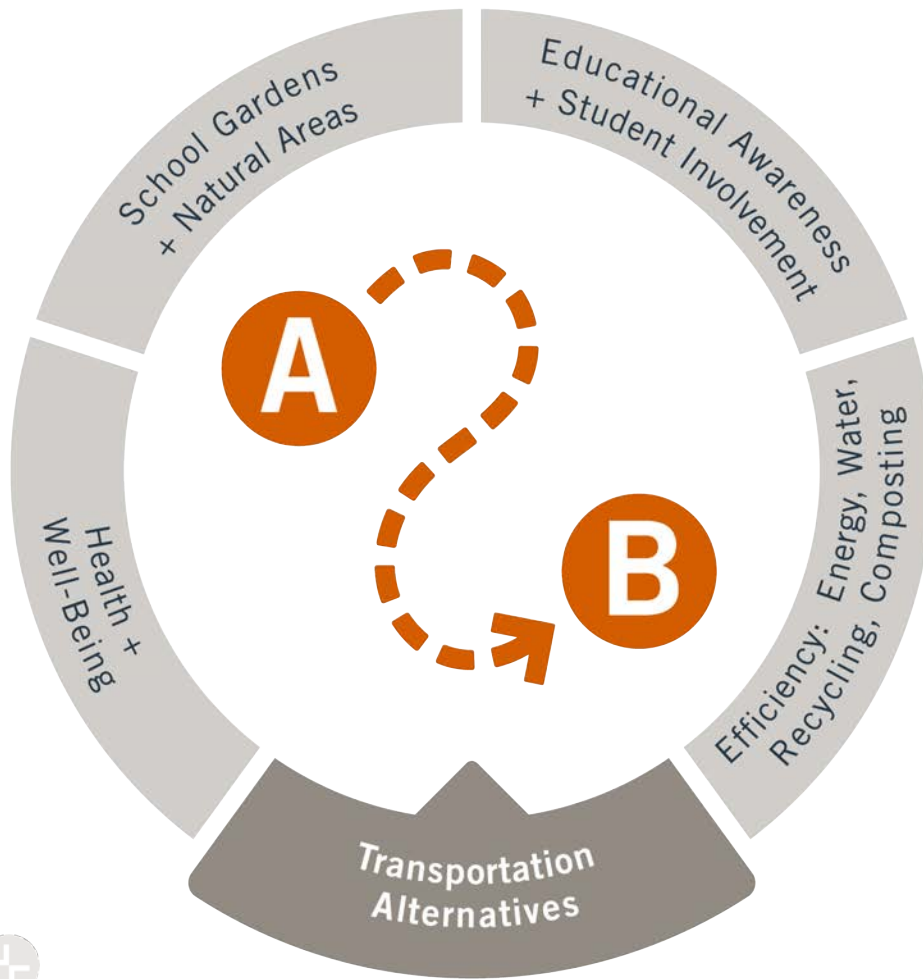
Middle School Water Quality Alignment



**All district facilities
recycle and compost**

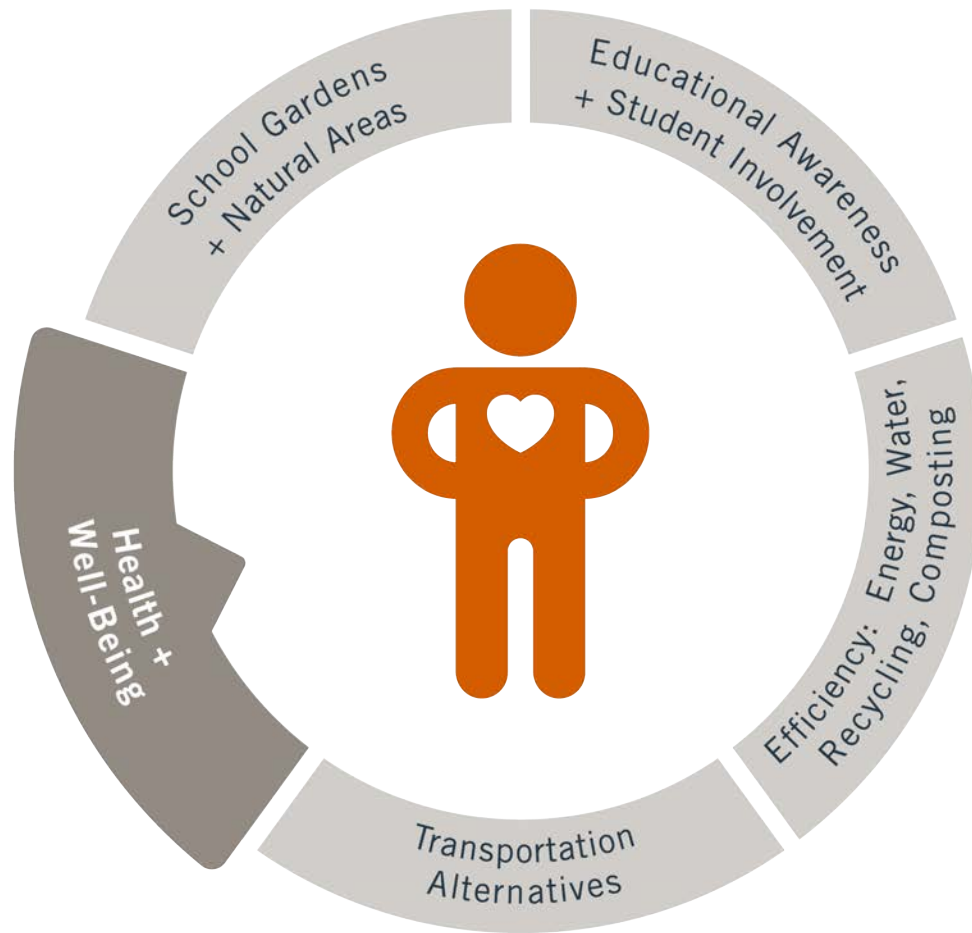
**11 schools achieved
energy star status – top
25% nationwide**

**LEED design at new
facilities**



Walking and biking to school: safe routes checklist & workshop

**SAFE
K:DS**
JOHNSON
COUNTY



Mental health

Physical health

Nutritional health

Indoor air quality &
natural light

Student innovation and
involvement



Joan Leavens

Coordinator of Sustainability & Community Engagement


Curriculum,
Instruction &
Assessment

Operations &
Maintenance



Sunflower Elementary



An aerial photograph of Sunflower Elementary School, a large, modern brick building with a complex, multi-winged roof. The school is surrounded by green lawns, trees, and a parking lot. In the background, there are residential houses and more trees. A label "Sunflower Elementary School" is placed on the building. Street names like "Weath Ct", "W 90th St", and "Bourpave Ave" are visible on the map.

White – 65%
Black – 14%
Hispanic – 11%
Two Or More Races – 7%
Asian – 3%

K-6 | 360 students | 47 total staff | 28% free and reduced





Building a Positive Culture





A hand is placing a wooden block with the letter 'G' on top of a block with the letter 'C'. The blocks are arranged to spell out the word 'CHANGE' on a wooden surface. The letters 'C', 'H', 'A', 'N', and 'E' are on individual blocks in a row. The 'C' and 'E' blocks are on the surface, while the 'G' block is being placed on top of the 'C' block. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

C H A N G E





NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

For States, By States

Design Elements

garden beds

solar panel

dry rock bed

native grasses

project tables

learning wall

garden beds

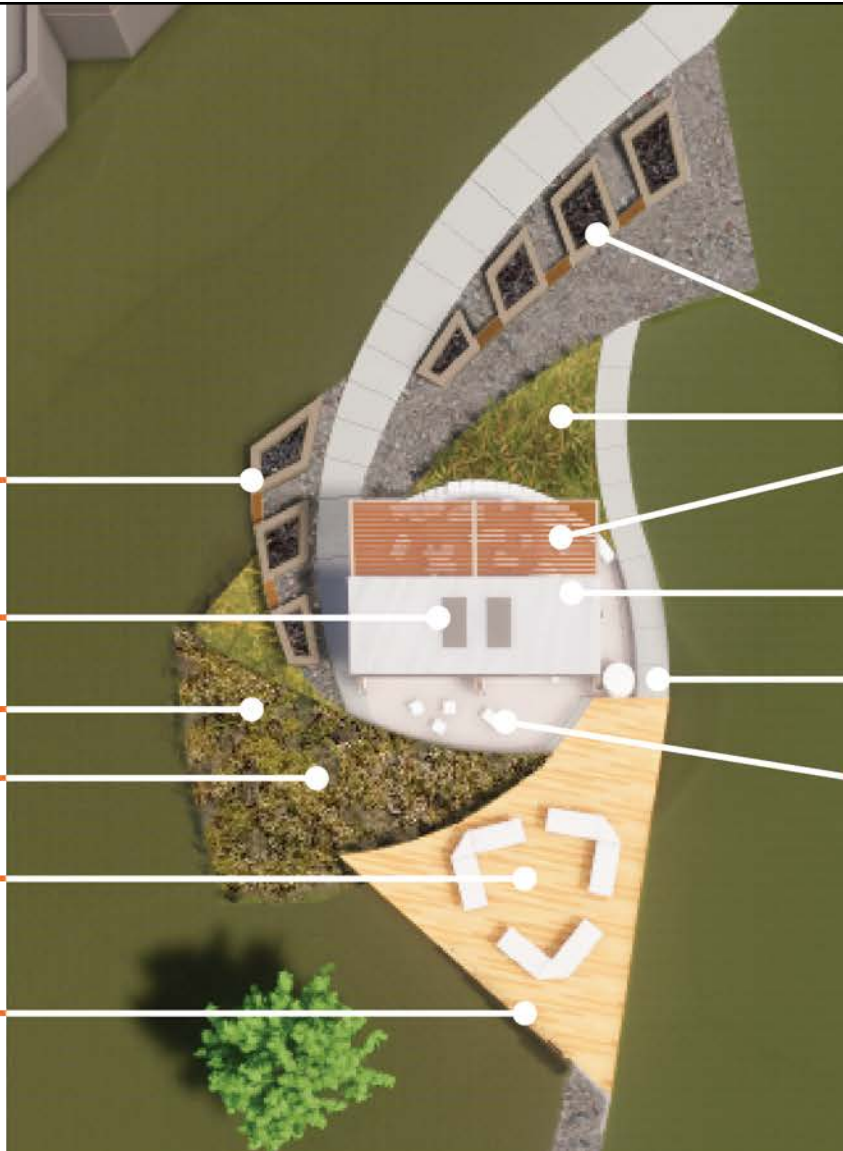
native grasses

shade structure

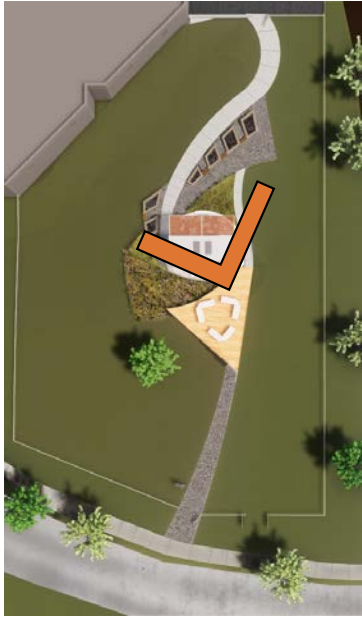
large group area w/
flex learning wall

cistern

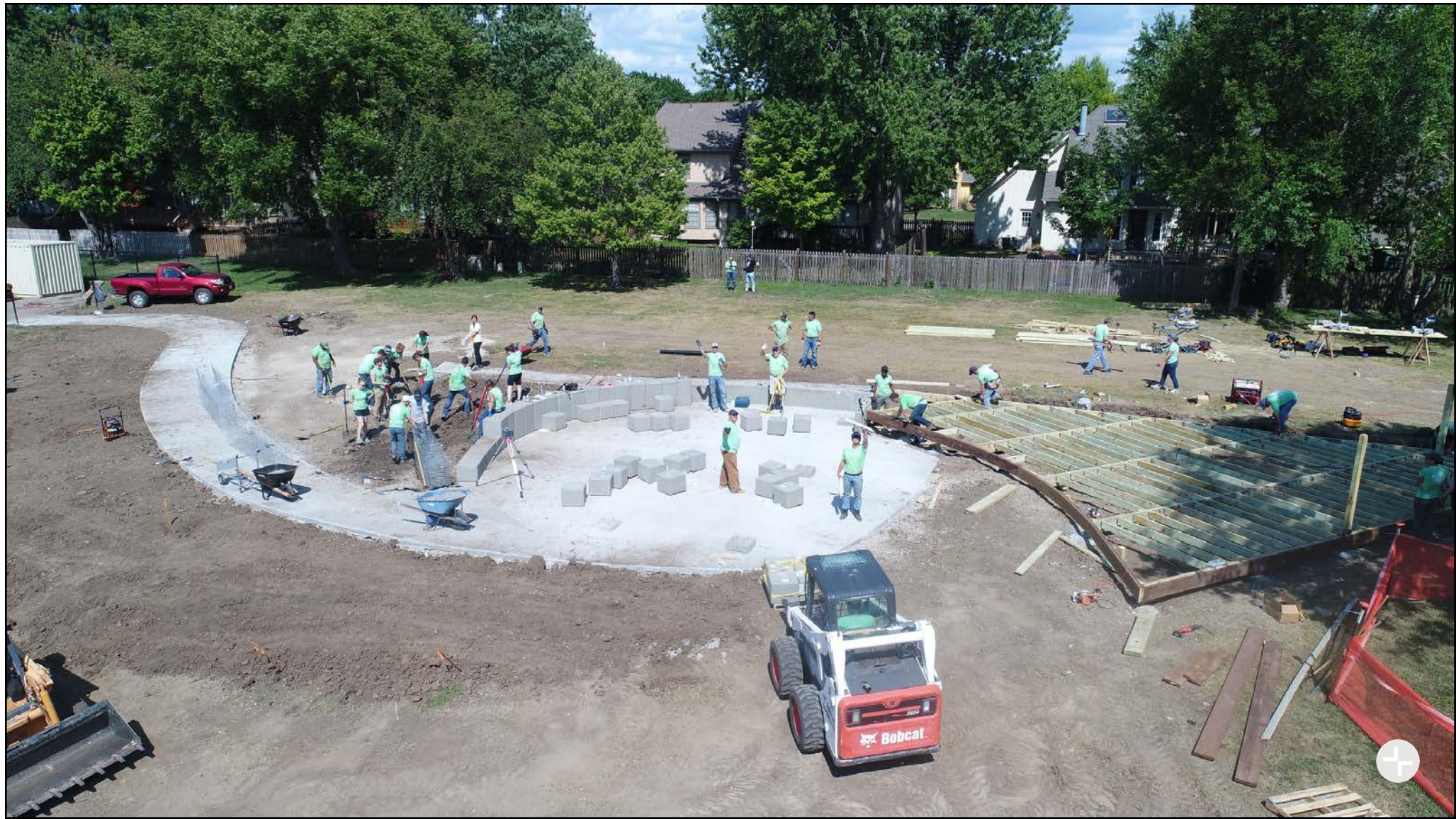
small group areas







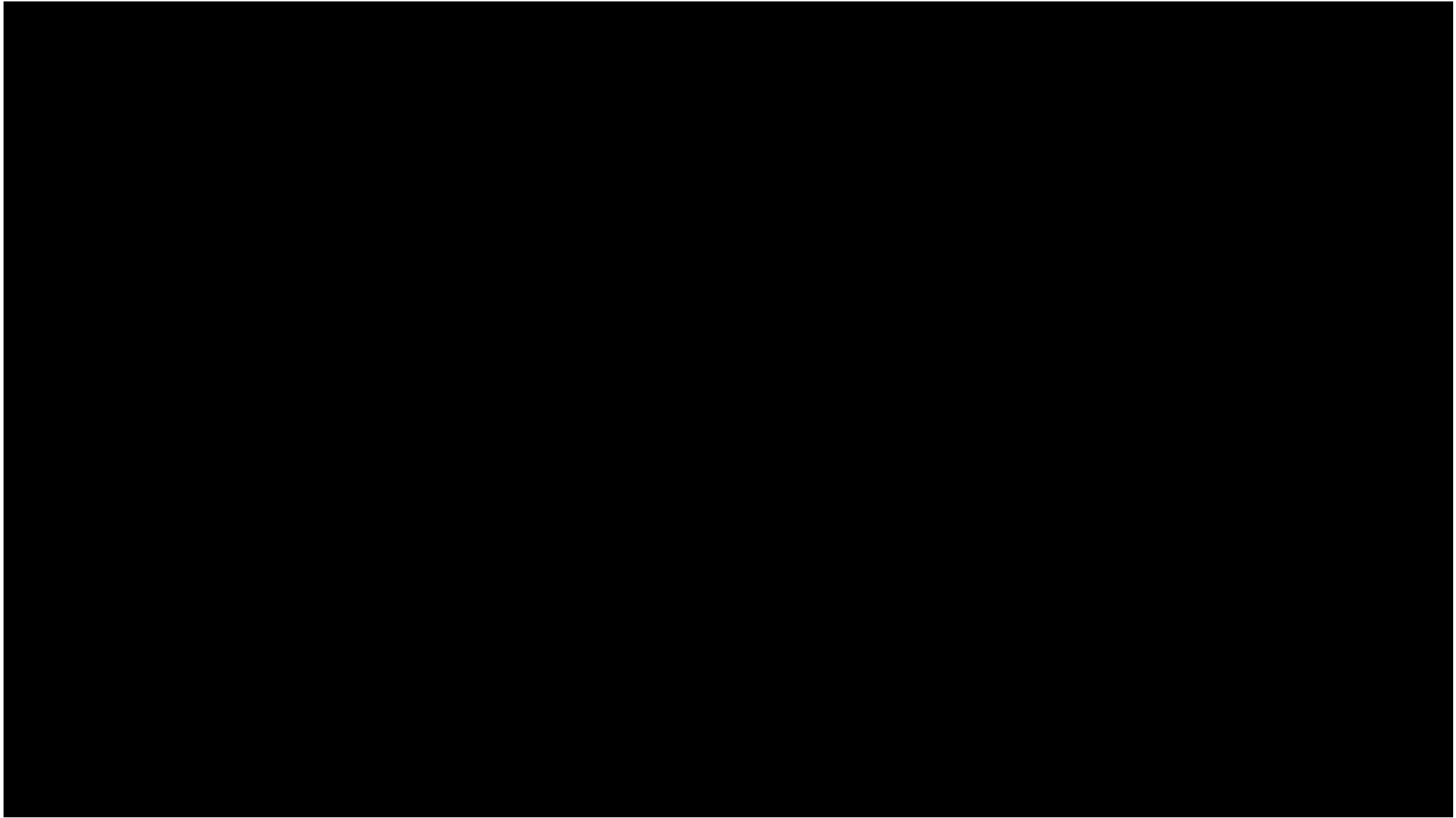






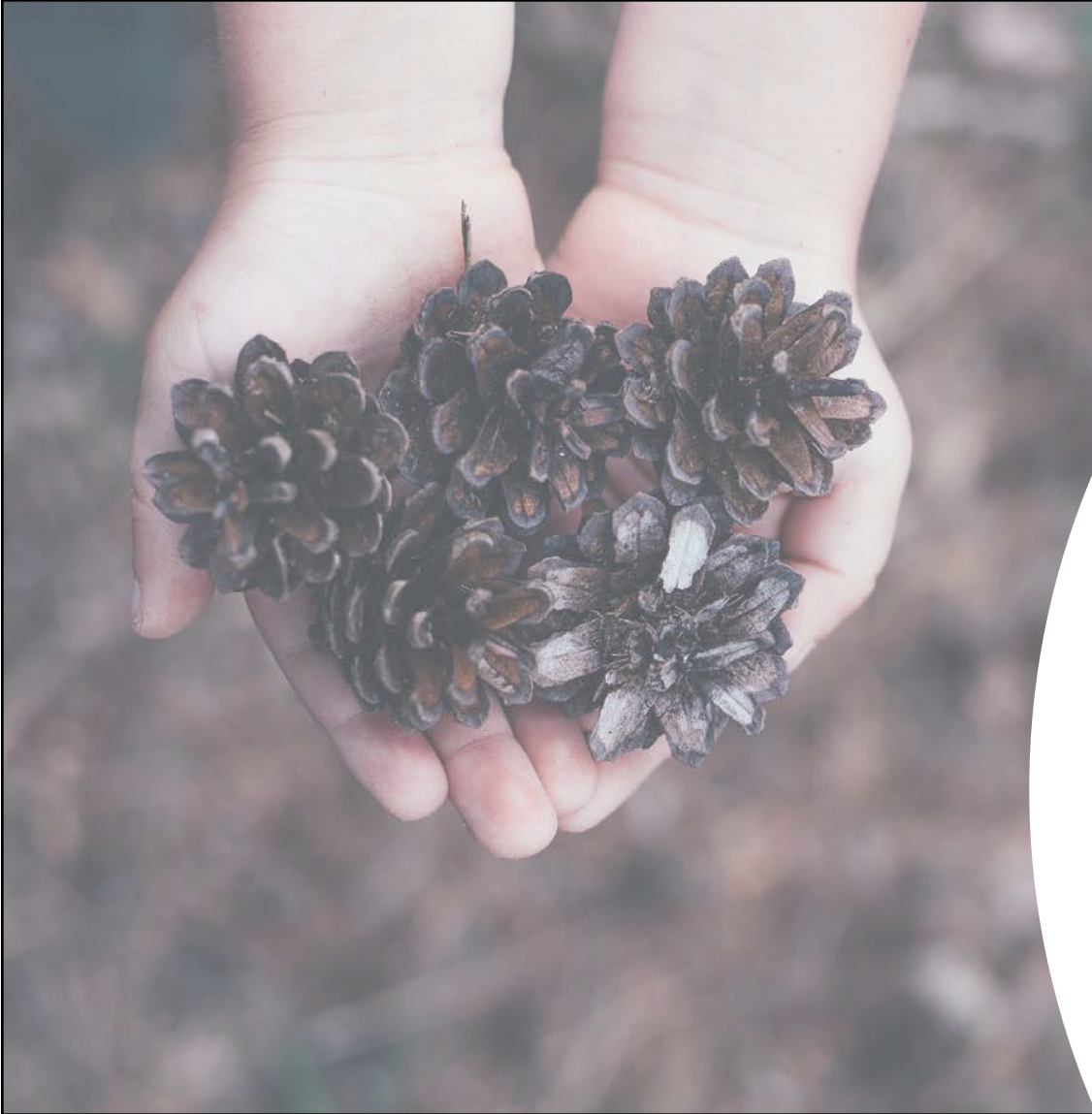






Open Ended Exploration





Early Educator Perspectives



creative

environment

experiential

Socrates

fun

adventure

boundless

curiosity

calming

flexible

age appropriate

science

fresh

active

hands-on

STEM

nature

happiness

real-world

exploration

engaging





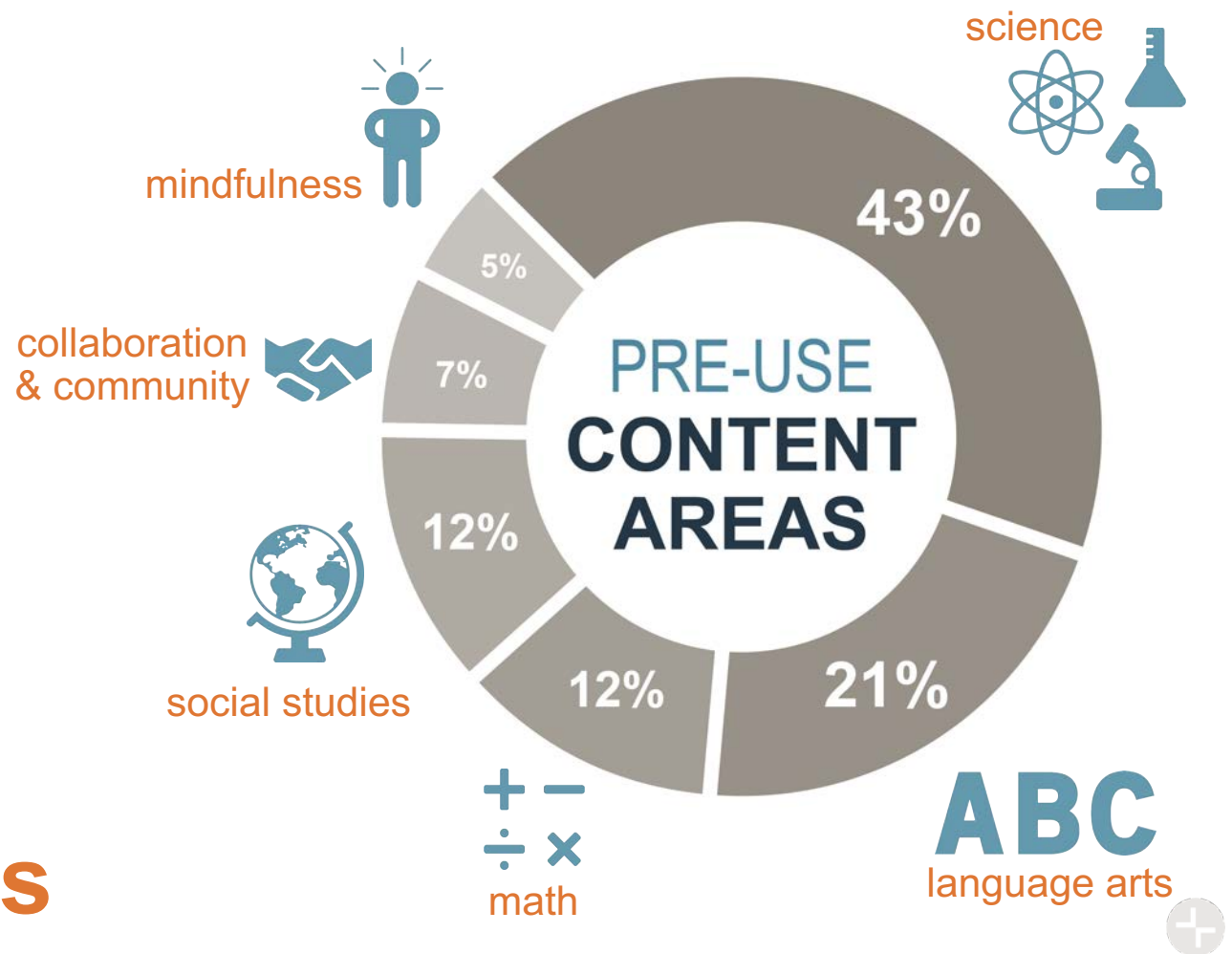
**69%
YES**

**31%
NO**

**“Do you need
additional
support or
helpful
resources?”**

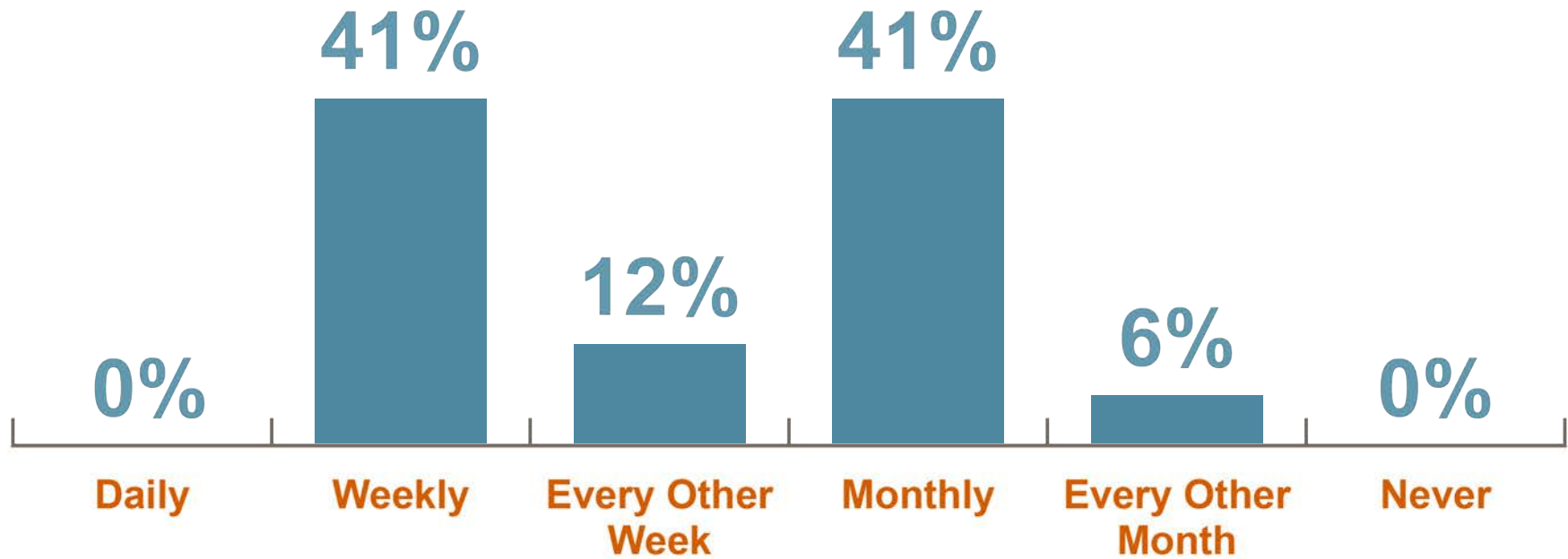


Anticipated Content Areas





Anticipated Usage



Focused Efforts





Brittney Fuchs & Gina Avery
2nd Grade

Tracy Overton
Innovation Specialist





Concern for Student Ability Level

Excited to Harness Increased Engagement

Thoughtful Curriculum Integration

Just Don't Know Where to start

Pre-use perspectives





**“Gardening is
Empowerment”**



A close-up photograph of several small green seedlings with two leaves each, growing out of a dark brown, textured seedling tray. The background is blurred, showing more of the tray and a hint of a green surface above.

KCCG Support

Garden planning support

Reduced cost plants

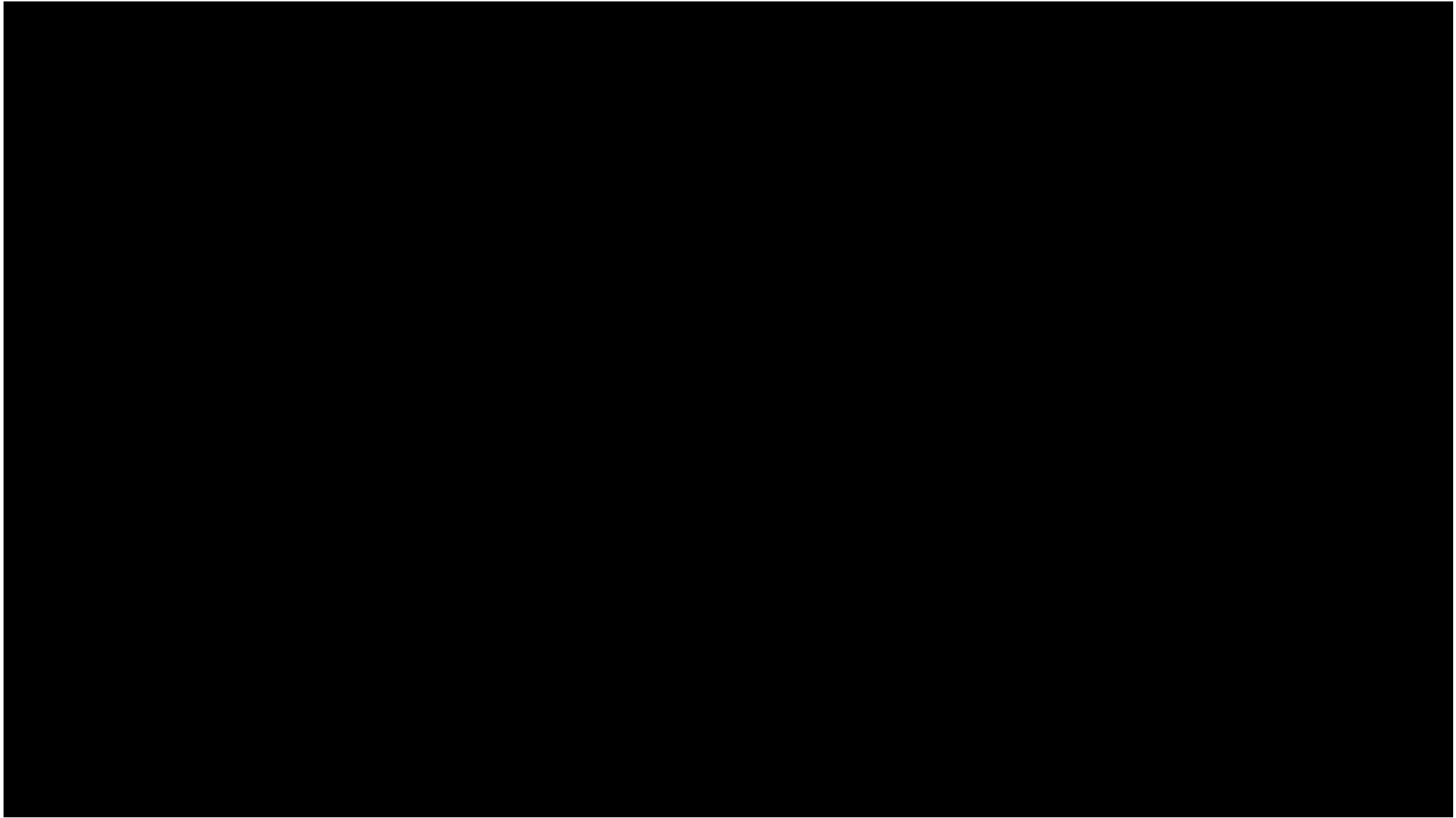
Workshop training for teachers

On-site training for kids

Curriculum options

Follow-up support







“Can I be on the carrot team? I love carrots!”

“Wait! Are we farming?”

“Yeah we are!”

“Can I get my hands dirty?”

“This is so awesome!” 



I want to help our students feel connected to our school. If they're planting something and taking care of it by watering it and weeding it, they'll have the chance to feel a connection.

-Brittney Fuchs



Creating Connections









Empowering Learners



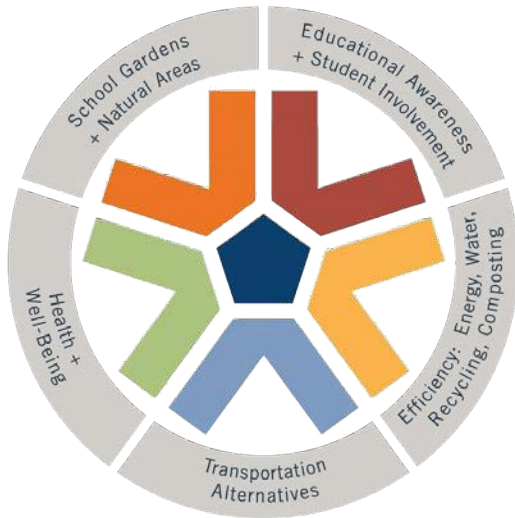




Empowering Teachers

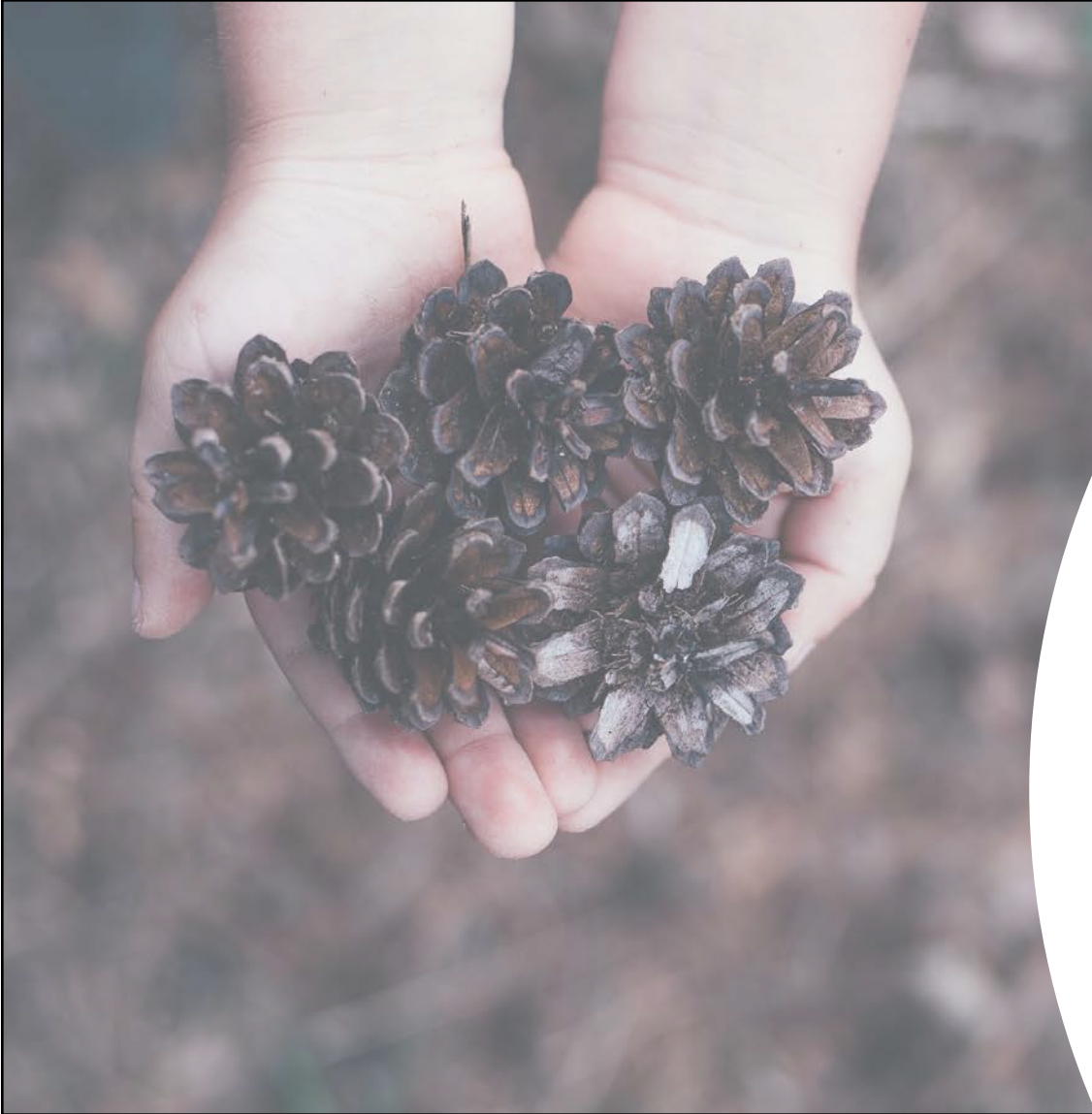


Professional Learning



KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture





Updated Educator Perspectives



Pre-Use Thoughts

creative

environment

experiential

fun

Socrates

adventure

boundless

curiosity

calming

flexible

age appropriate

science

fresh

active

pass-on

STEM

nature

happiness

engaging

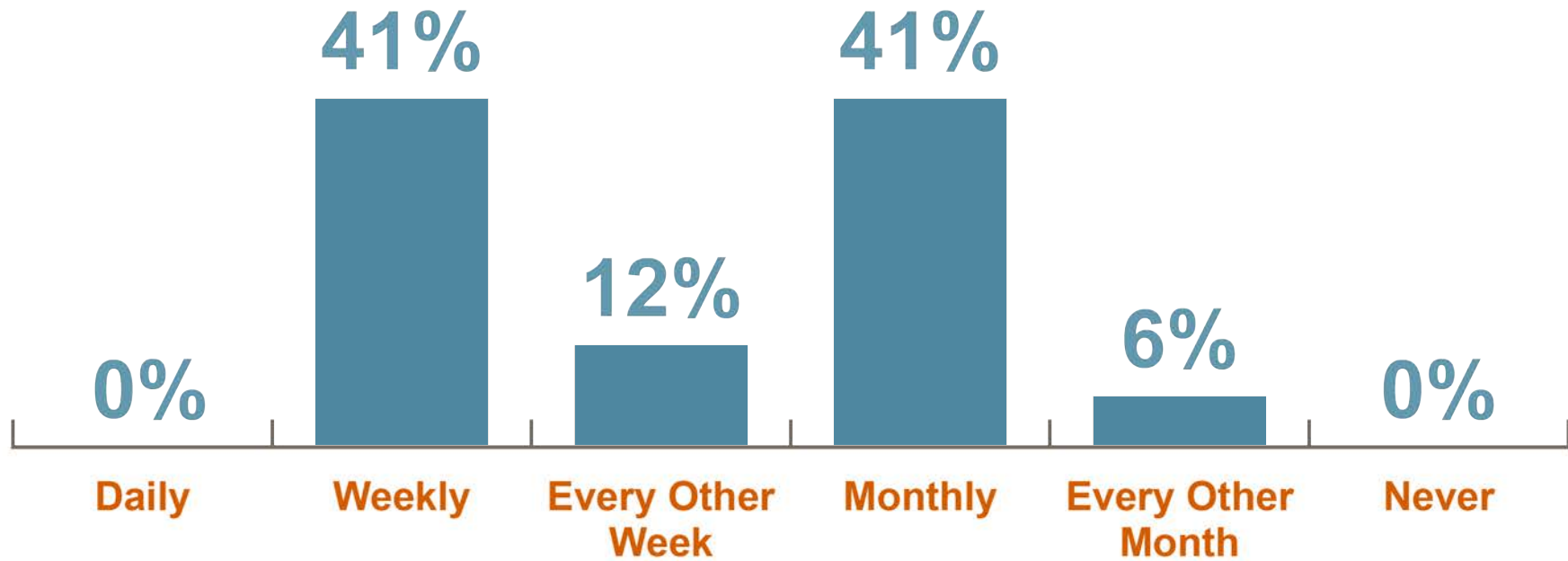
real-world

exploration



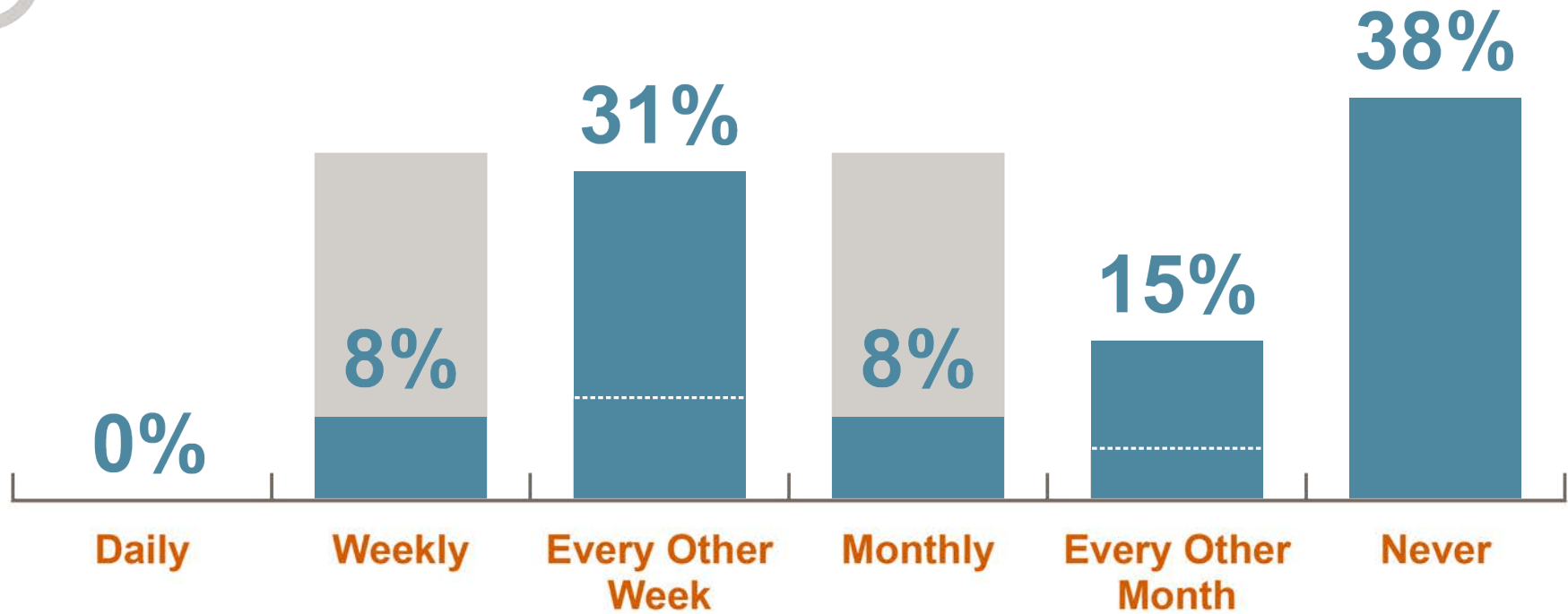


Pre-Use Expectations





Post-Use Reality



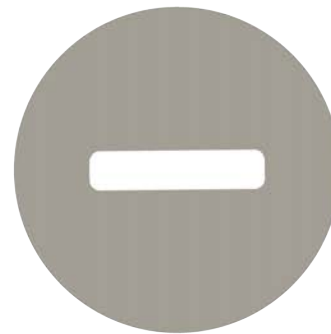
“Did you use the space as much as you hoped you would?”



25%



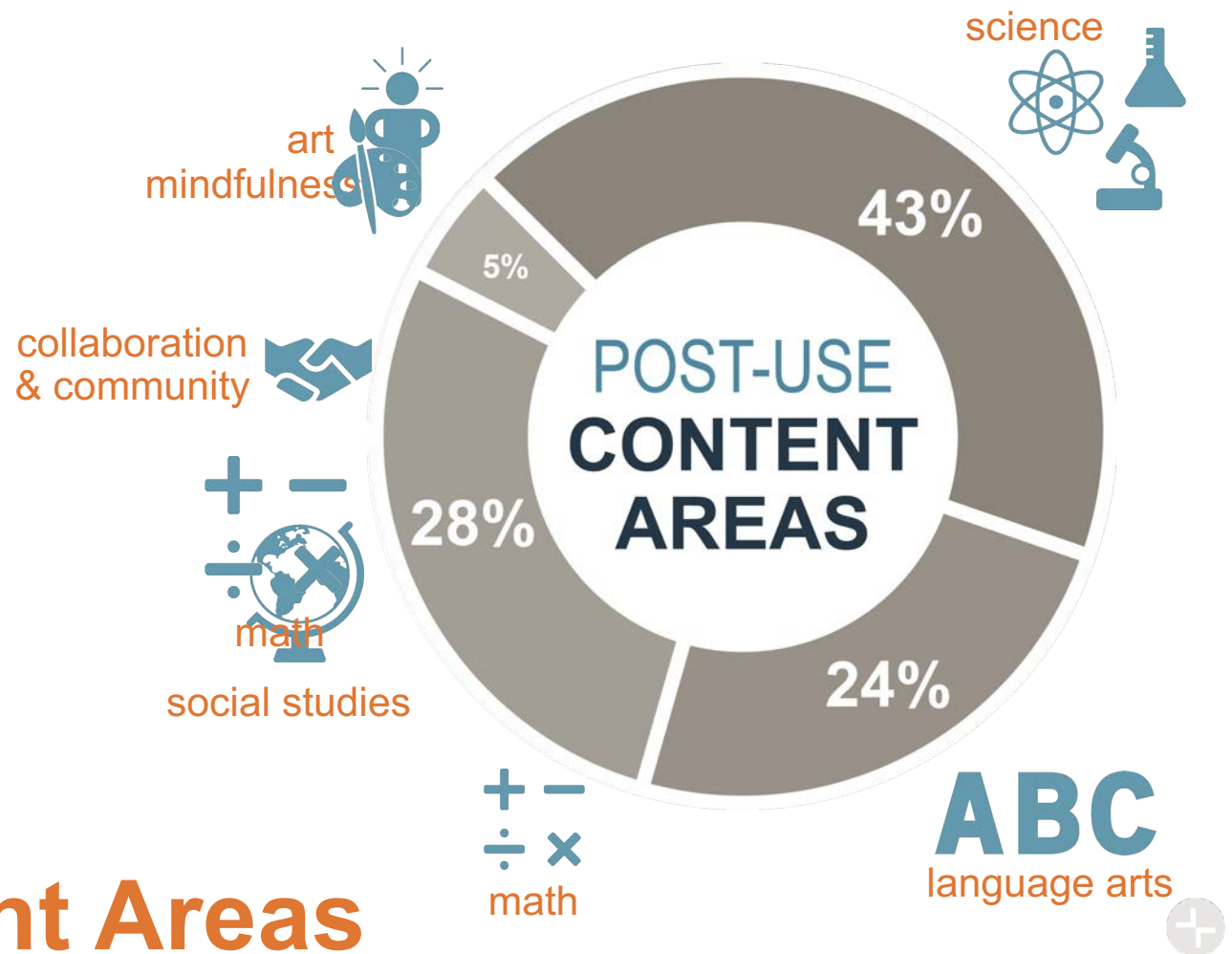
42%

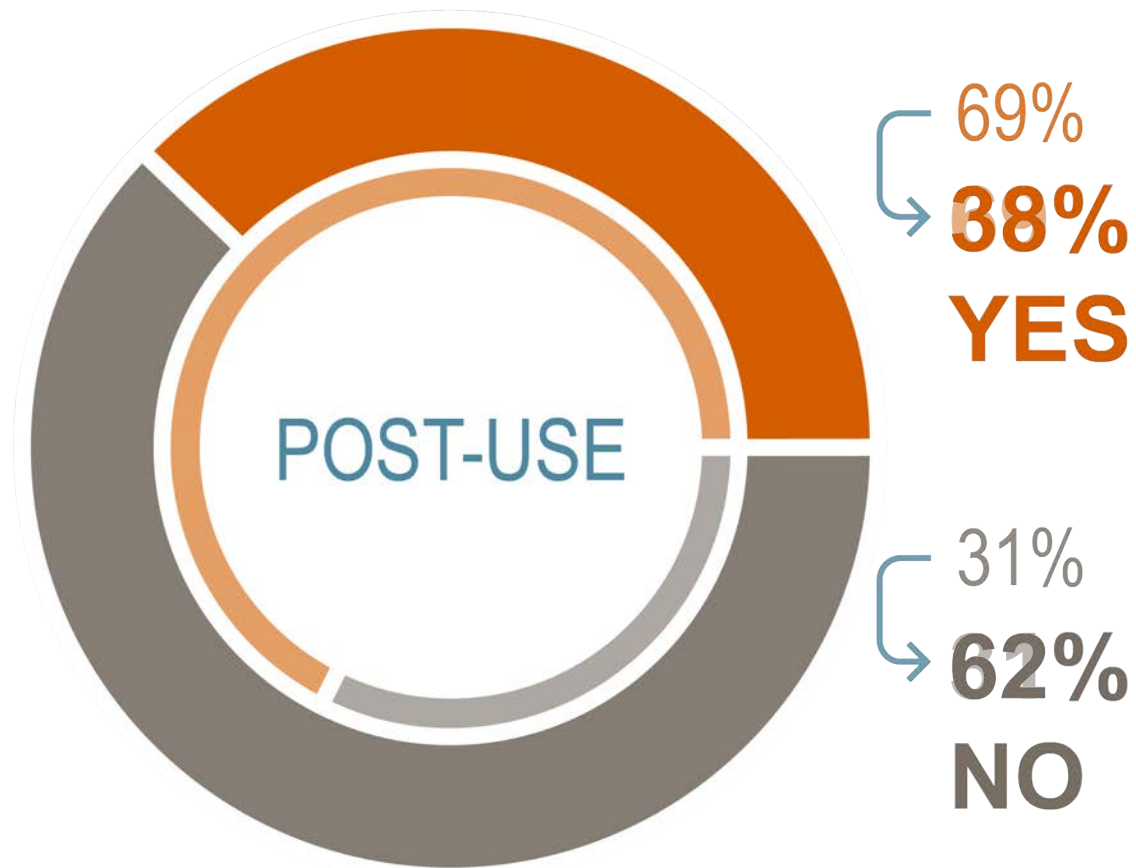


33%



Actual Content Areas





“Do you need additional support or helpful resources?”



Data Takeaways

**support for
ideas beyond
science**

**a balance
of digital &
analog**

**include those
outside the
typical
classroom**

**collaboration
impact**

**engagement
increase**

Ongoing professional learning is key





Teacher Reflections

- Life-cycle understanding...
“This year it really clicked”
- Support was essential
- Student excitement was sustained and awareness was built
- Variation in experiences is awesome



Infusing learning connections





OutTeach
Go Outside Expectations



**OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM
DAY**



LEARNING LAB



Outdoor Learning Resources



Keys to Success

close proximity:
indoor/outdoor
bridging is ideal

“getting started”
info from the
design team

identify and
use key
partnerships

intentionally
guided
professional
learning

professional
learning
community
support

tell the story! multiple formats & audiences 

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Thank You!

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