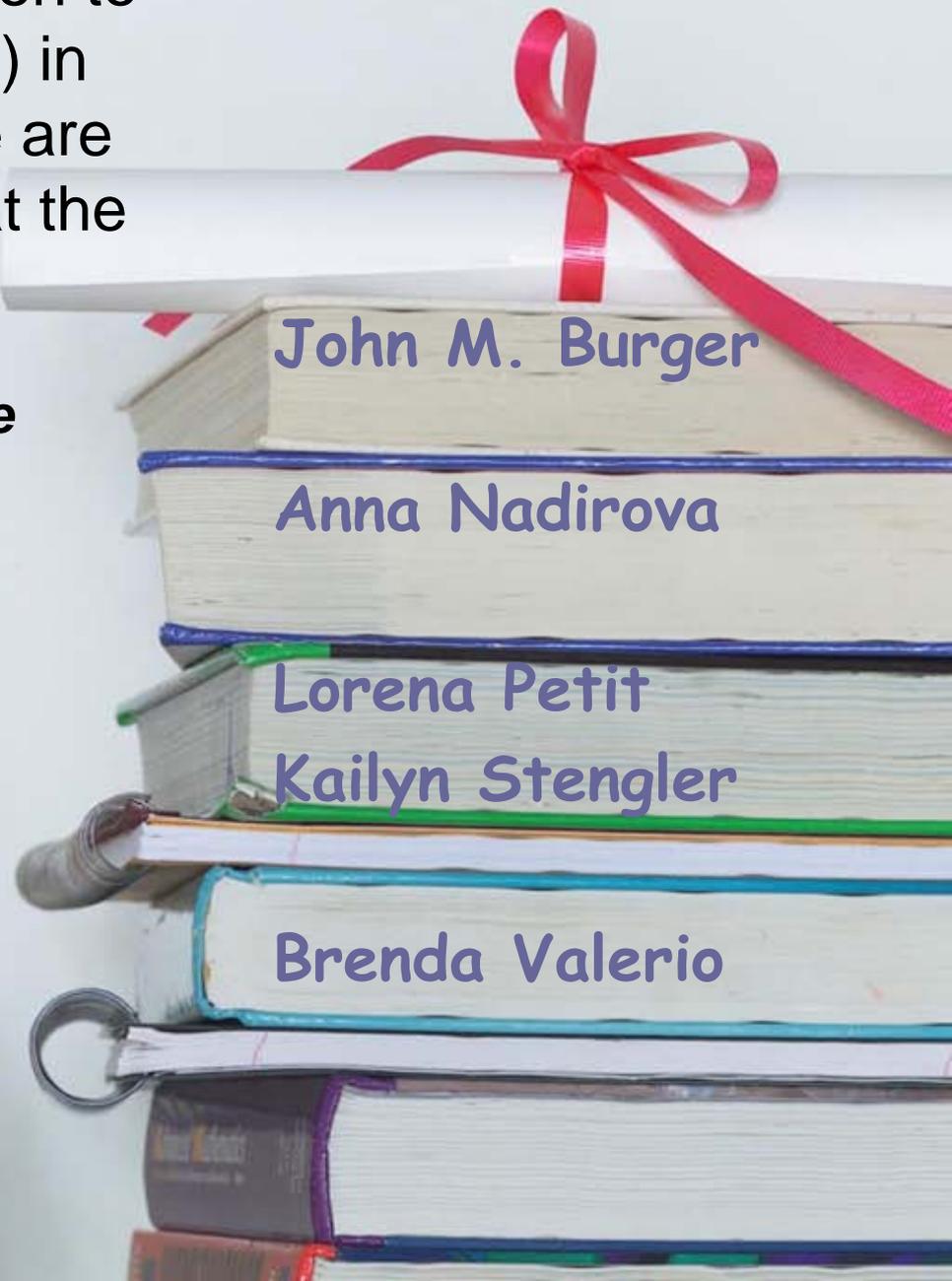


Scaling up the Student Orientation to  
School Questionnaire (SOS-Q) in  
Rocky View Schools - What we are  
Learning about Student Affect at the  
School and System Levels

***Shaping the Future Conference***  
***January 31, 2015***  
***Kananaskis, Alberta***



John M. Burger

Anna Nadirova

Lorena Petit

Kailyn Stengler

Brenda Valerio



# Growing emphasis on incorporating student socio-emotional component in education policy and practice to increase engagement and achievement

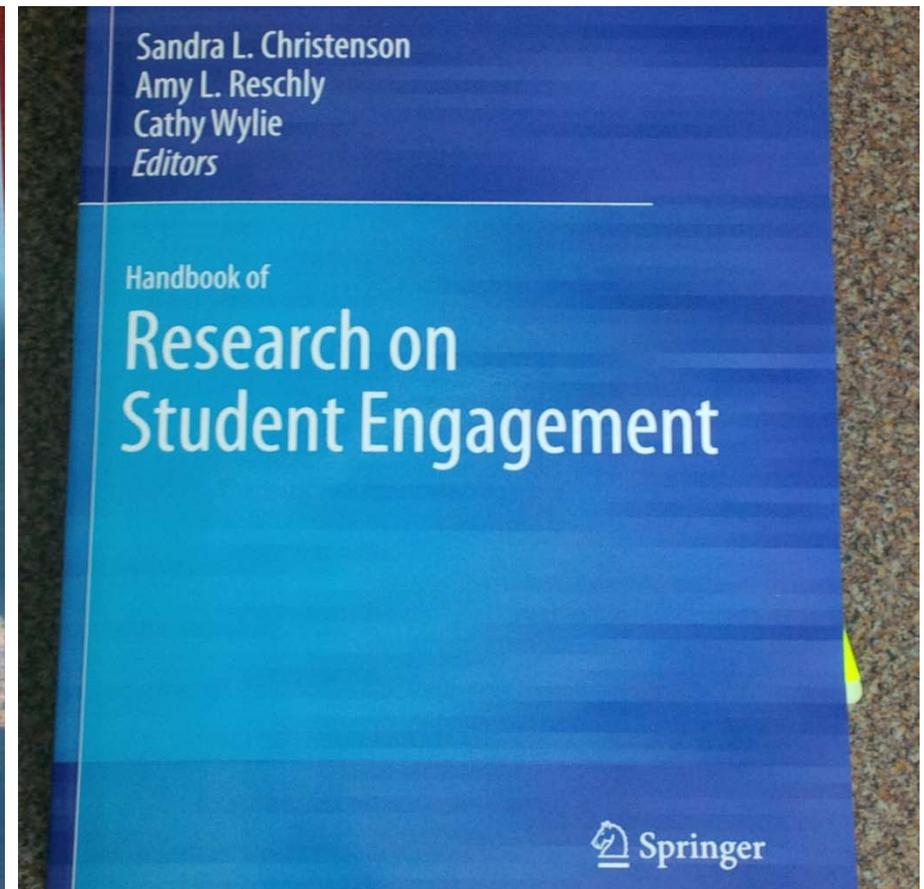
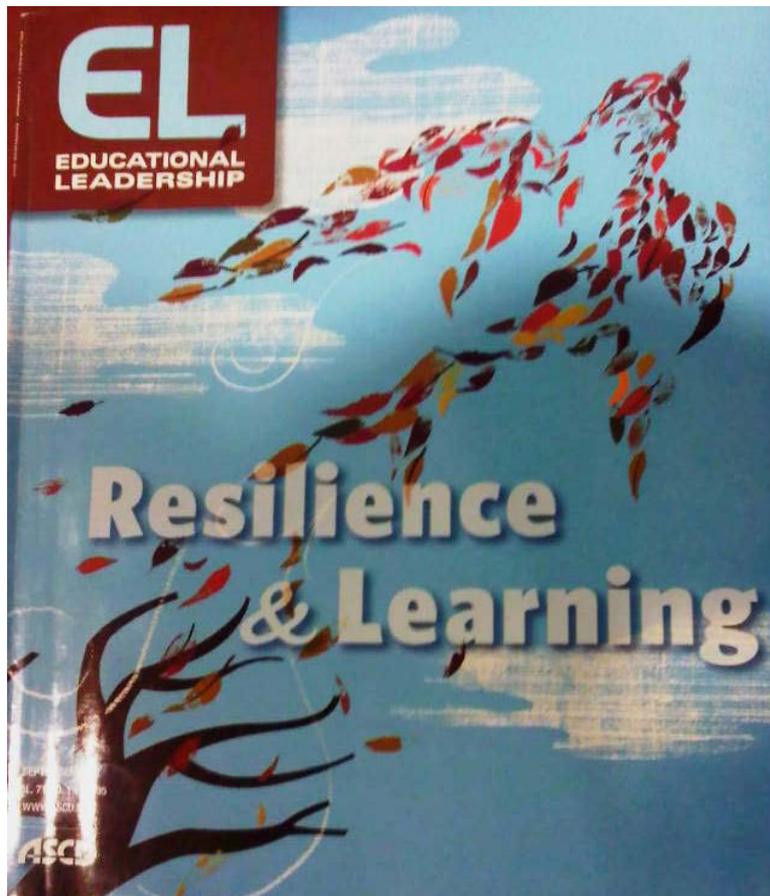
- “PISA results indicate that drive, motivation and confidence in oneself are essential if students are to fulfil their potential.” P.21
- “Teachers and school principals need to be able to identify students who show signs of lack of engagement with school and work with them individually before disengagement takes firm root.” P.22

# Growing Research Base on Student Affect and Learning

- September 2013 Ed. Leadership
- Influence of caring teachers  
Connecting with troubled students  
Unlearning helplessness [building self-confidence]

2012 Springer publication

“...[student] engagement not only drives learning but also predicts school success.”  
(Christenson, p.4)



# WHY SOS-Q?



User-Friendly: SOS-Q is comprehensive, concise and easy to use (takes about 15 – 20 minutes to complete)

Student Centered: Developed with extensive input from students as well as educators

Flexible/Dynamic: Allows identification of individual upper elementary or jr./sr. high students for diagnostics and self-assessment and/or follow-up with cohorts (classrooms, grades, schools, etc.)

Connects to Real Achievement Data:

Allows linking individual SOS affective data with cognitive data – does not rely on student self-reported achievement

Puts Data at Educators' Fingertips:

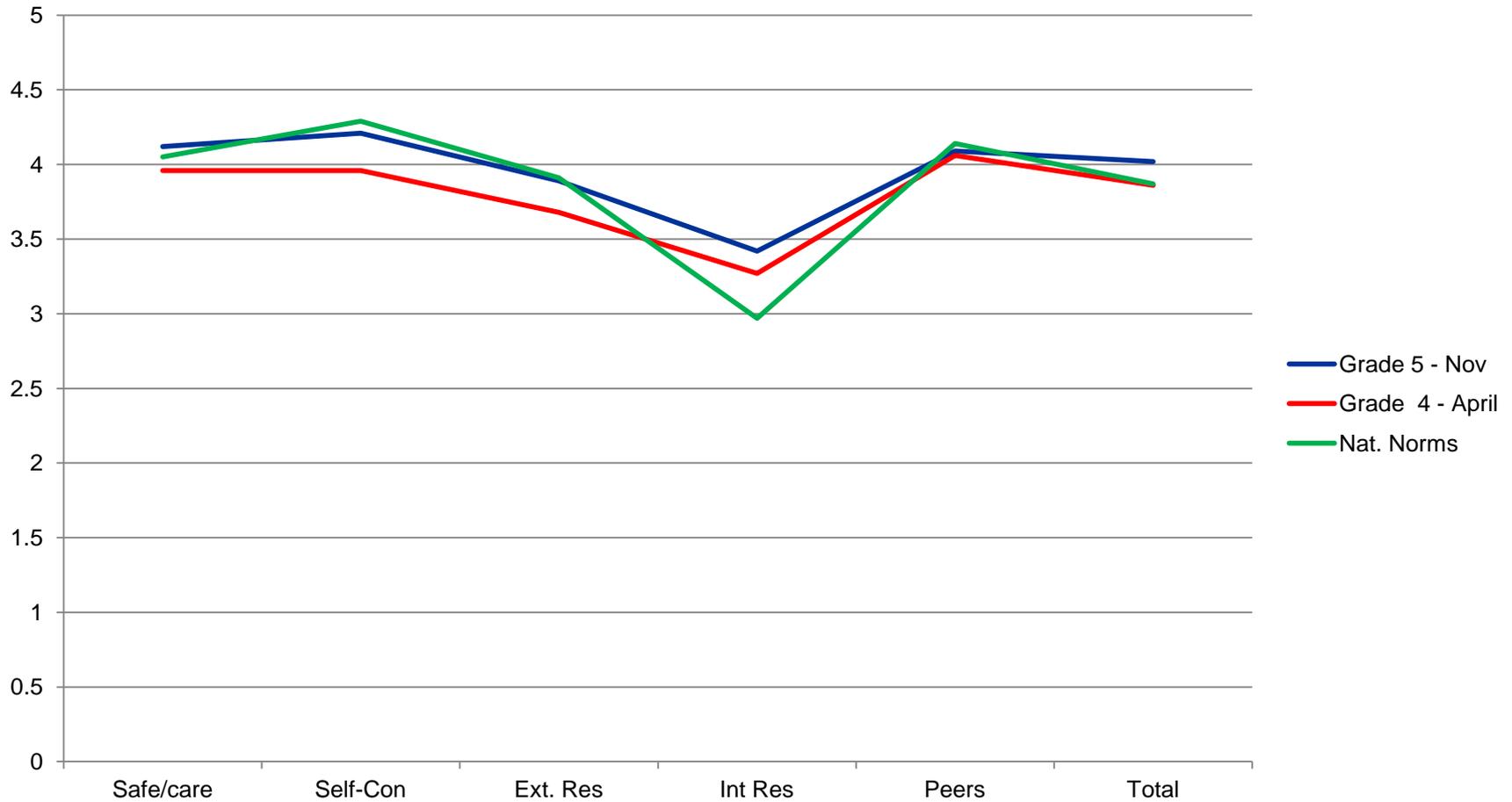
Allows principals and staff to follow-up results based on their student's specific needs

SOS Q: SUB-SCALES	UPPER-ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH
SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL	Students' perception of school environment – the academic and social setting of a school that support the welfare of students
PEERS	Perceived supports from friends and ability to get along with peers
SELF-CONFIDENCE	Students' conviction that they are capable and well-positioned to be successful at school and beyond
EXTERNAL RESILIENCE	Perceived ability to cope and adapt successfully in the face of challenges
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SOS Q: SUB-SCALES	UNIQUE TO JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH
UTILITY OF SCHOOL	Students' sense of usefulness of school
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	Student participation in and perceived value of extra-curricular activities

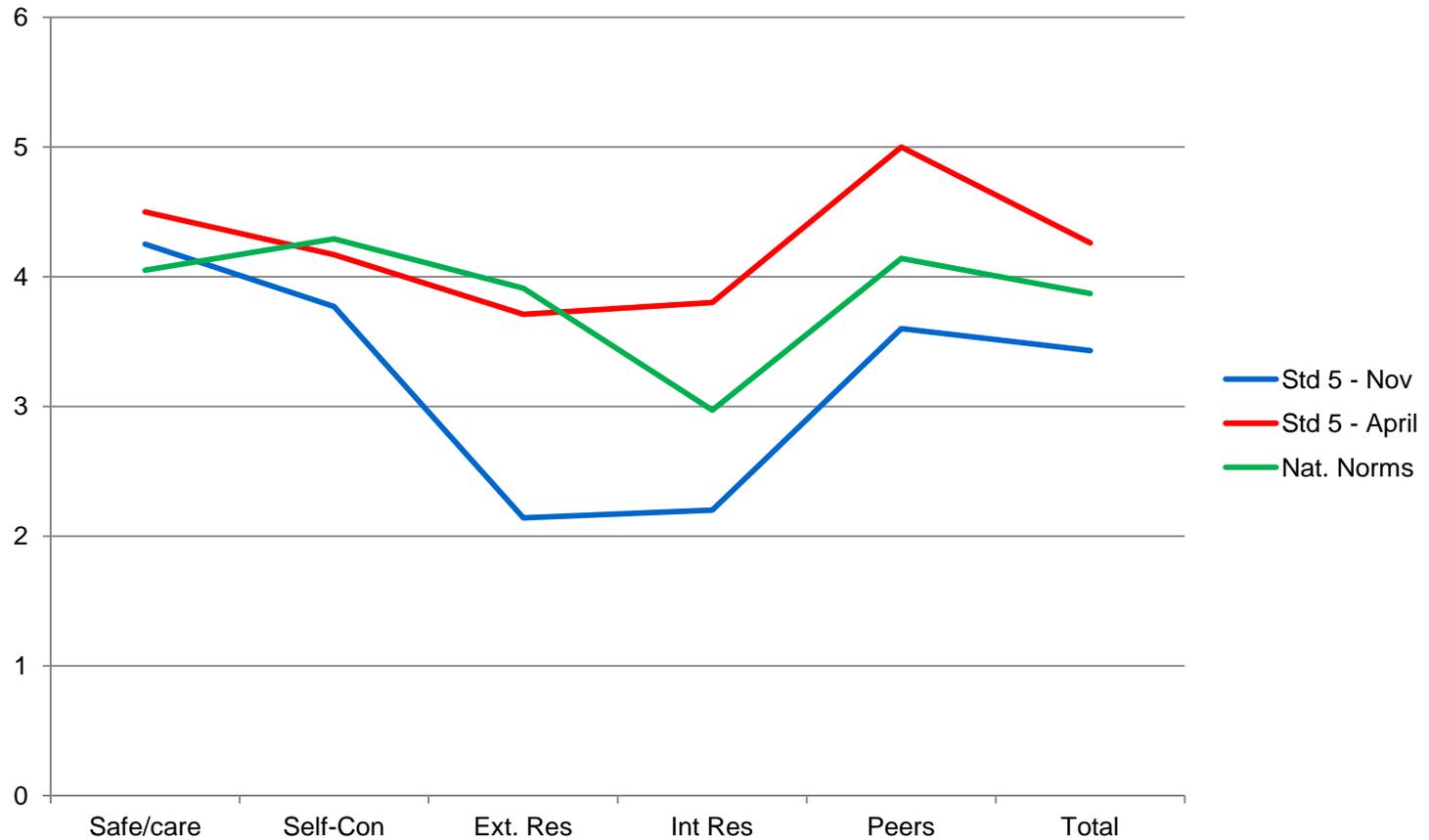
# Qualitative Action Research

- Rocky View Schools (RVS), with a \$45,000 grant from the Alberta Health School Communities Wellness Fund, is engaging in action research on innovative ways to use SOS-Q data to better support students at risk of disengaging from school.
- Currently, 23 RVS schools have administered the SOS-Q in 2013-15 - several schools applied it several years.
- The SOS-Q Manual has been re-written as an RVS document capturing RVS staff input on student engagement strategies and is available @ <http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/jurisdiction/research/sos-q>.
- Some stories regarding work with individual students follow...

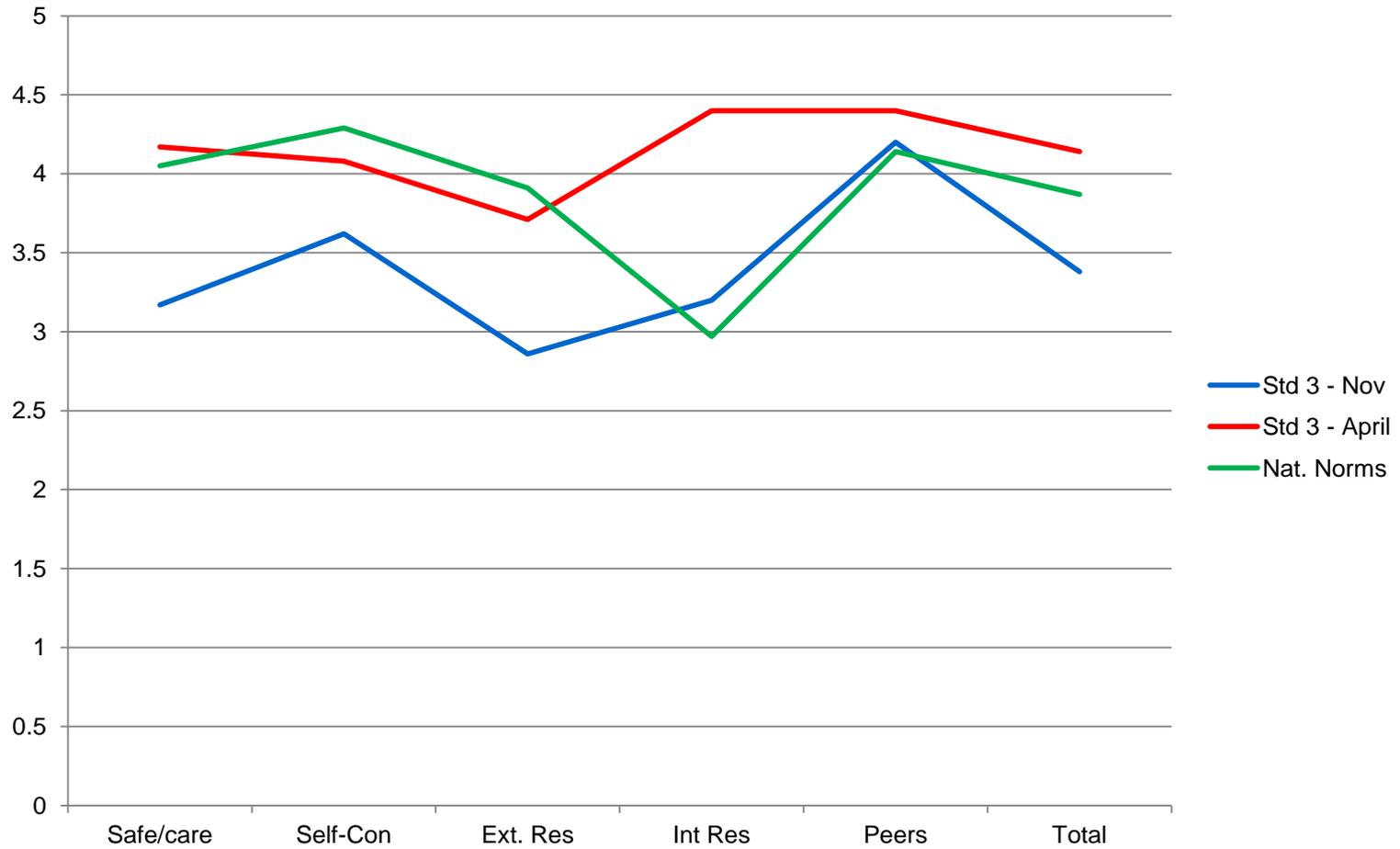
# Crossfield Elementary Class Profile Change – Positive Reversal of Traditional Grade 4 to 5 Pattern



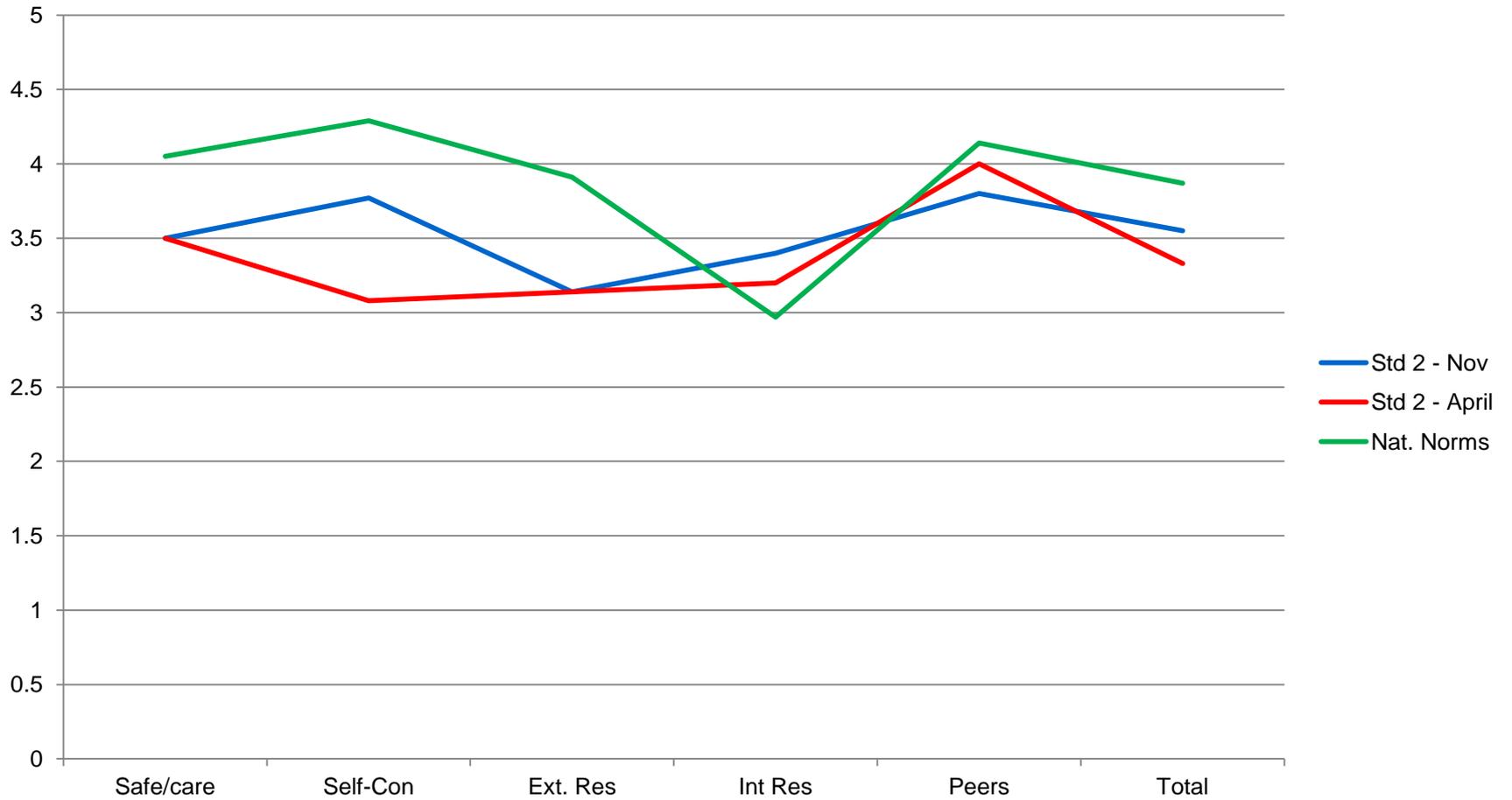
# Individual Cases, Crossfield Elementary – Declining Profile Student 5



# Declining Profile - Student 3 - background

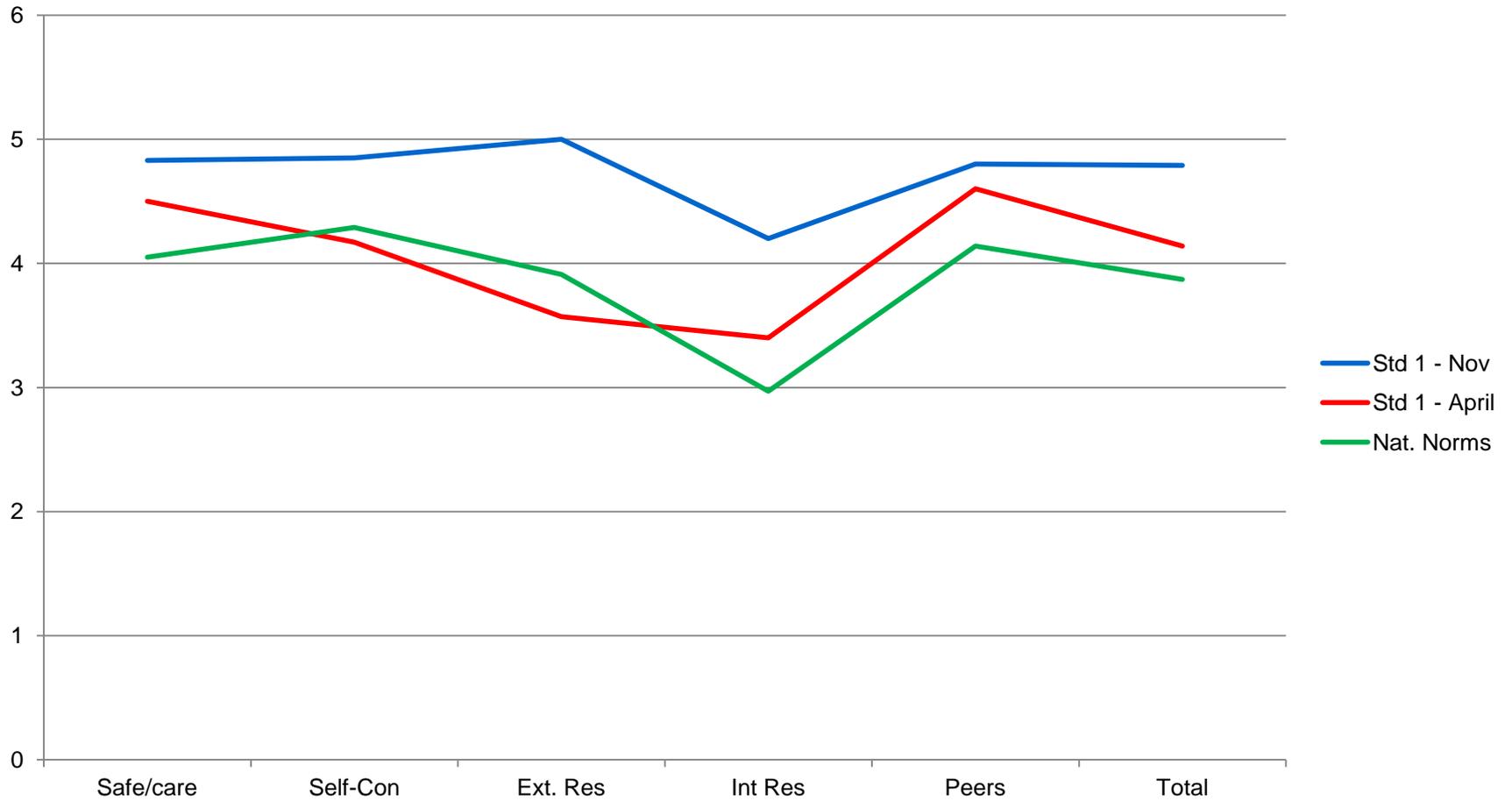


# Improving profiles - Student 2 - background



# Student 1

## Very positive profile – high resilience



# Data to Drive Support for the Affective Domain of Students



## Student Orientation to School Questionnaire: Data to Drive Support for the Affective Domain of Students

- Supporting the affective domain of students is an important part of a school culture. It is also often overlooked. Research and experience tell us that if students are not feeling connected to their school and do not feel safe, they will not be as successful in school. In this section of the presentation we will share how we use the SOS-Q in our school and some of the initiatives that have proven successful in supporting the affective domain of our students.



If you don't try...  
You Won't Know!

# Kids

*Here's to the kids who are different  
The kids who don't always get A's*

*The kids who have ears*

*Twice the size of their peers*

*Or noses that go on for days*

*Here's to the kids who are different*

*The kids who are just out of step*

*The kids they all tease*

*Who have cuts on their knees*

*And whose sneakers are constantly wet*

*Here's to the kids who are different*

*The kids with a mischievous streak*

*For when they have grown, as history has shown*

*It's their difference that makes them unique.*

Students who struggle can learn more when teachers, counsellors and administrators continued to:

---

- make accommodations/adaptations based on individual needs,
- use tools that identify learning preferences and styles,
- ensure a safe, caring and inclusive classroom and school environment, and
- explicitly teach self-regulation strategies and procedures (e.g. goal setting, self-instructions, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation).

# CHANGE OF COMMAND



TESSA CLAYTON/AIRDRIE/ECHO

Shelby Janes, a Grade 5 Meadowbrook Middle School student, was named as this year's Junior Fire Chief on Oct. 9. Her essay about keeping her family fire safe and what to do in case of a fire was chosen from other submissions as a part of Fire Prevention Week. Janes and her family had lunch with the department and led an assisted school fire drill.

## What we know...

- Students who feel they belong are happier and more engaged
- Students who feel they contribute to the school community (or larger community) are more confident and engaged
- Students who feel they have a purpose to come to school achieve better
- Students who are connected to adults in the school are more engaged and better able to cope with day to day challenges



Breakfast Club Student Volunteers are making the program a HUGE success!

# How do we know this?

- Collect data – SOS-Q, student profiles, provincial and divisional satisfaction surveys, focus groups, parent and student feedback and overall involvement in school activities
- Overall shift in the positive cultural change in the school over the past 4 years
- Connections and observations with individual students and groups of students ie.:
  - Attendance
  - Peer relationships
  - Achievement
  - Appearance/ Hygiene school
  - Involvement in school
  - Advocacy for self and others
  - Positive changes in behaviour
  - Increased commitment to

A photograph of three young boys standing behind a large white sign. The boy on the left is wearing a blue hoodie and has a surprised expression with his mouth open and hand to his face. The boy in the middle is wearing a grey and blue polo shirt and is smiling. The boy on the right is wearing a green t-shirt with a cartoon frog face and has a neutral expression. The sign they are holding contains the text: "If not you, who? If not now, when? Get involved! ☺".

If not you, who?  
If not now, when?  
Get involved! ☺

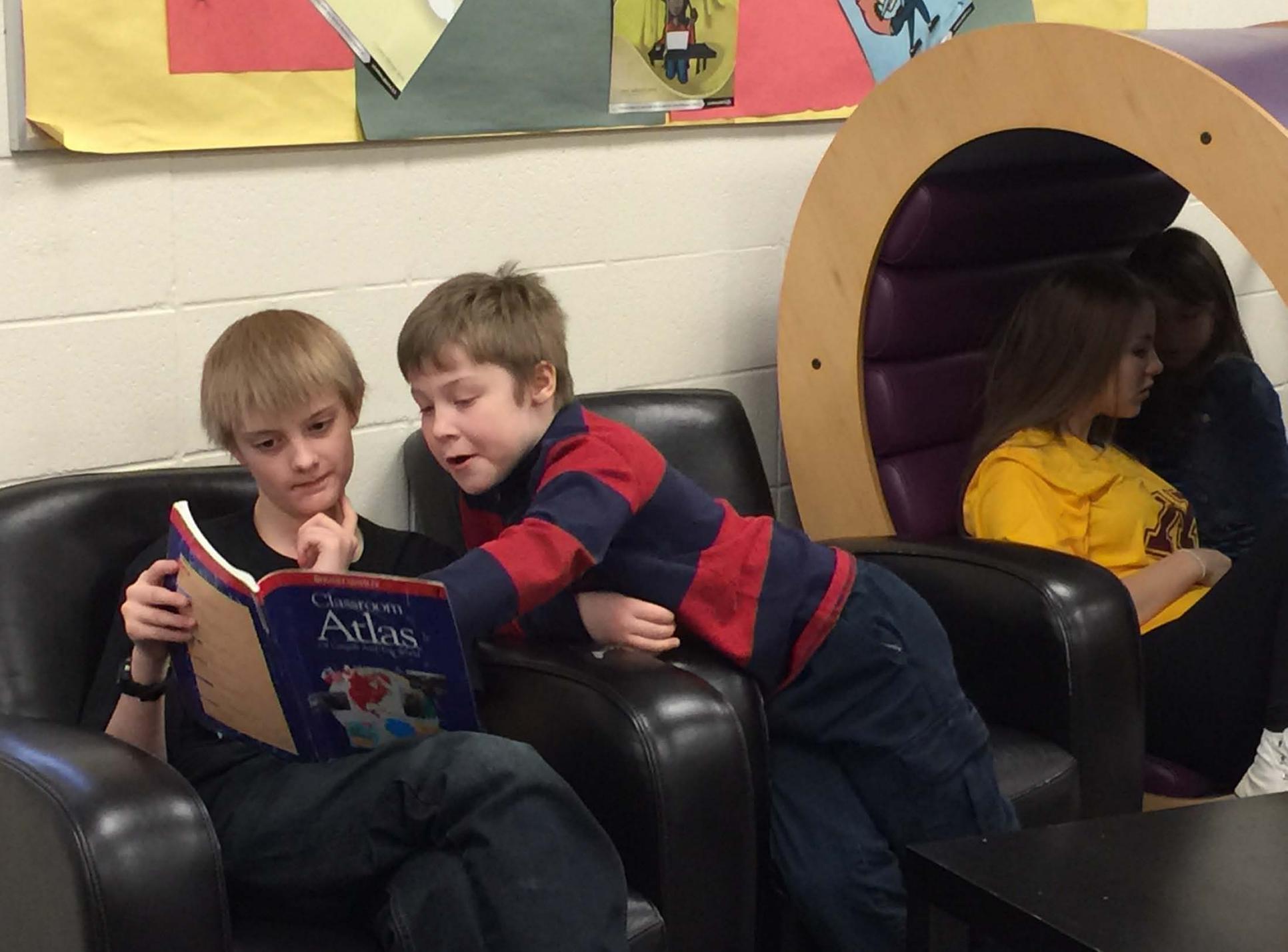
# SOS Purpose at Meadowbrook

- Add an affective dimension to student assessment to increase jurisdictions' and schools' awareness of students' emotional needs
- Capture social and emotional variables related to students' comfort and bond with school, including:
  - Socialization with teachers and peers
  - Perceived self-confidence in own abilities and progress
  - Ability to be resilient and adapt to challenges
- Identify potentially “at risk” students positioned low on the SOS scale and develop customized interventions



# SOS Application:

- Use in conjunction with “conventional” school/district measures (achievement, attendance) and intuitive/informal knowledge of students
- Usable for both individual and generalized (school/district level) student diagnostics

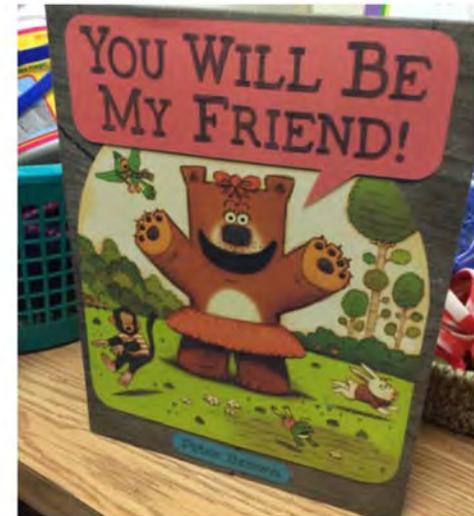
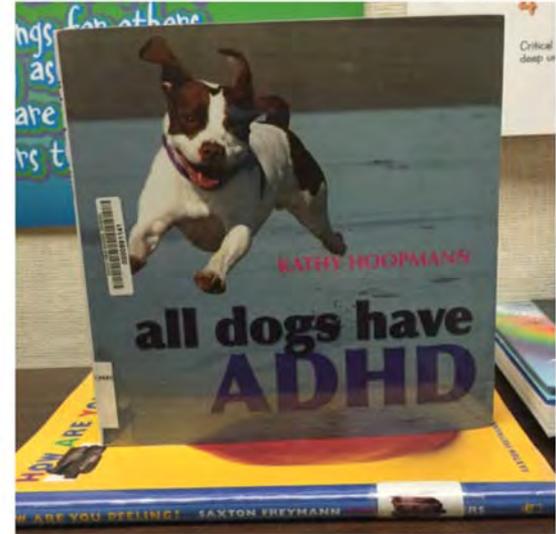


# SOS-Q Procedure

- Administer questionnaire to all students in October (some schools do fall and spring)
- Compile data as a whole school and plan initiatives and strategies to support the areas of need (overall school needs)
- Disseminate data into groups such as Grade 6 Males and use that data to plan and implement strategies to support the needs
- Disseminate data into individual students and create a spreadsheet of each student's profile for easy reference
- Use individual results to help better understand and support the individual student's strengths and areas of need.



Sand Table



Resources

SOS Q: SUB-SCALES	UPPER-ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH
SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL	Students' perception of school environment – the academic and social setting of a school that support the welfare of students
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EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	Student participation in and perceived value of extra-curricular activities



## Question Examples: Safe and Caring

- My teacher cares for me.
- Students are treated fairly at my school.
- My teacher listens to me.
- I get the help I need at school.
- Student opinions count in my school.

## Question Examples: Self Confidence

- I bounce back quickly from set backs.
- I stay positive when the going gets tough
- When something unfair happens I am usually able to control my temper
- I come up with solutions to my problems
- I can adjust to changes in my life

## Question Examples: External Resilience

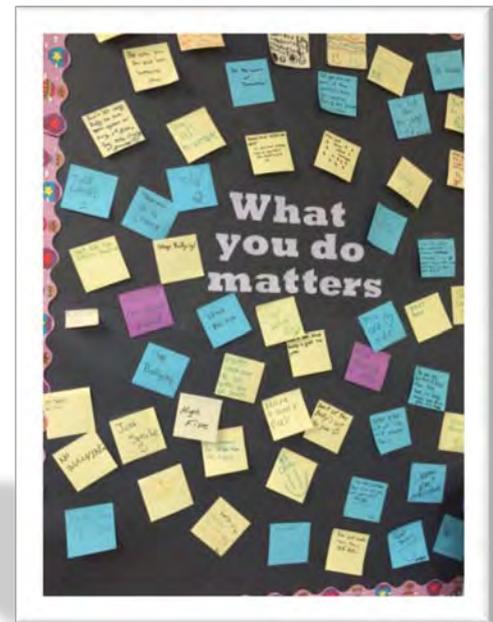
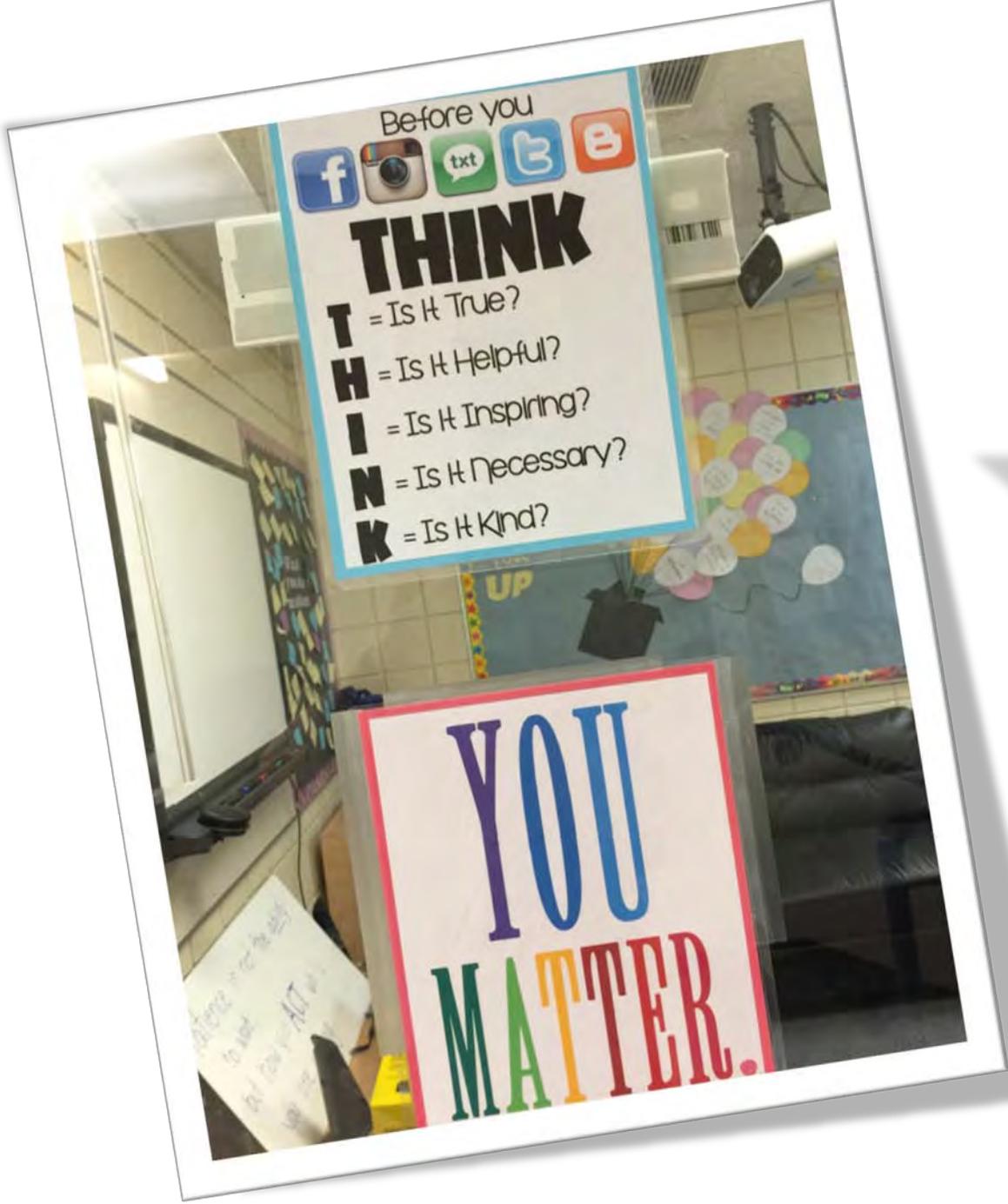
- I can think for myself.
- I expect to succeed in school.
- I understand how I learn best.
- I know what goals I can achieve.
- I know how to do well in school

## Question Examples: Internal Resilience

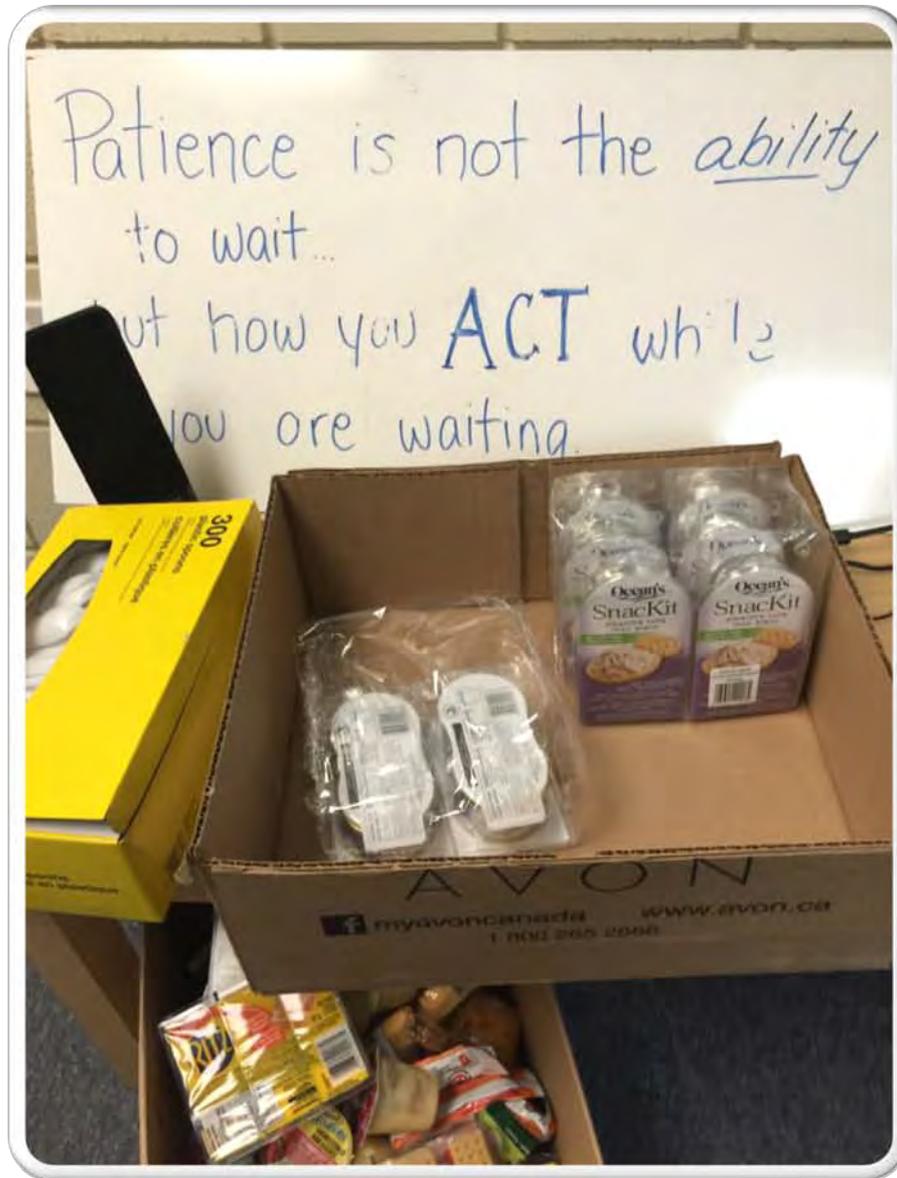
- I sometimes feel overwhelmed by school
- Often I can not sleep because I worry about stuff
- I worry about things too much
- When I make mistakes it bugs me for a long time
- I don't know who I am as well as I'd like

## Question Examples: Peers

- My friends treat me fairly
- I am confident with my classmates
- I have good friends at my school
- I can get along with most of the students at my school
- I like school because of my friends



safe and caring	External Resilience	Internal Resilience	Extra Curricular	Self-Conf	Utility of School	Peers	Total
-1.30	0.85	0.63	-2.24	-0.52	-3.73	-3.71	1.43
0.49	1.96	1.21	0.22	1.39	-2.36	1.13	0.58
0.79	0.02	0.05	0.46	0.03	-0.71	1.13	0.25
-0.40	-0.40	-2.28	3.16	0.57	0.11	0.73	0.21
1.19	0.99	-2.57	-1.75	1.39	1.21	1.53	0.28
-1.00	0.16	-0.83	-0.27	-0.52	-0.16	-0.08	0.39
-0.30	-1.37	-2.57	-2.97	-0.25	-0.44	-2.90	1.54
0.00	-0.54	-0.24	0.95	0.30	0.38	-0.08	0.11
1.29	0.16	-1.70	1.20	0.03	0.66	1.13	0.39
0.29	0.16	0.63	-0.03	-0.52	0.38	0.32	0.18
-0.40	-1.09	-1.41	-1.01	-1.34	-1.53	-0.08	0.98
-0.10	-1.37	-0.83	0.95	-1.61	-1.53	-2.10	0.94
0.09	0.71	0.63	0.46	0.03	0.11	-0.08	0.28
0.29	0.43	-0.83	-0.76	-0.79	0.11	-0.48	0.29
-0.20	0.57	-0.83	1.44	-0.25	-0.71	-2.90	0.41
0.29	0.02	0.05	-0.03	-0.79	-1.53	-0.08	0.30
0.59	0.57	-0.83	0.71	-0.52	0.11	0.32	0.14
-1.50	0.57	-0.53	2.18	0.30	-0.71	1.53	0.26
1.59	1.54	-0.83	1.20	1.39	0.38	1.13	0.92
0.69	0.71	0.63	1.93	1.39	0.93	-0.48	0.83
-1.60	-0.82	-2.57	1.44	-0.79	-0.16	0.73	0.54
-0.20	-1.79	-2.57	1.44	0.57	-0.44	1.53	0.21
0.00	0.16	0.05	1.44	-0.25	-0.99	0.73	0.16
0.69	-0.54	-0.53	0.46	0.57	0.66	0.32	0.23
1.09	0.29	-0.24	2.42	0.30	0.66	1.13	0.81
0.00	0.99	0.34	0.46	0.57	-0.99	1.13	0.36
0.29	-1.51	0.05	1.44	0.30	0.11	-1.29	0.09
1.09	0.57	0.63	2.18	0.30	0.66	0.32	0.82
-0.70	-1.37	0.92	-2.24	-1.43	-0.71	-1.29	1.12



Backpack Program, Snack Attack and More positive messages

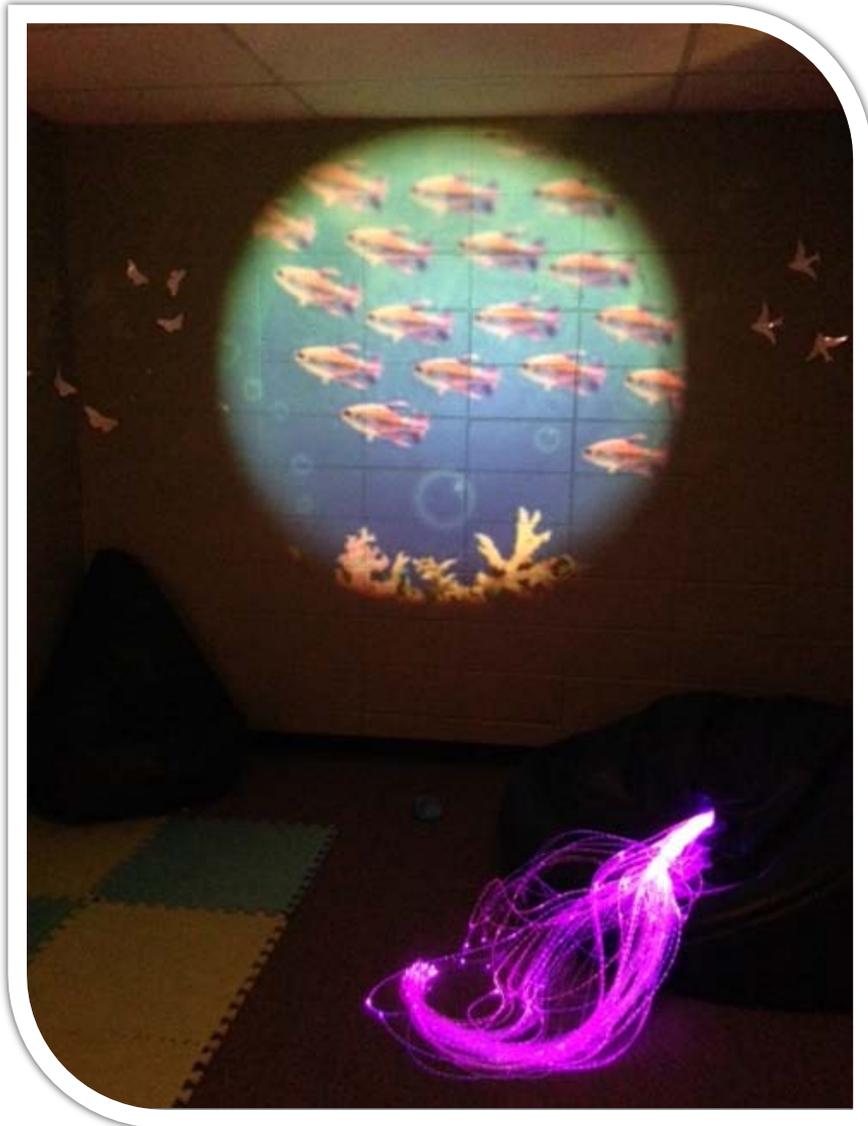
# What we do... School Wide

- Sports Teams
- Learning Commons – Flexible Learning Spaces
- Fine arts – Band and Drama Productions/clubs
- Green Team
- Tech Team
- Monday Madness and Newspaper Group
- Comprehensive School Health
- Zumba Fridays
- Breakfast Program and Snack Attack Program
- School Mascot Team
- Global and local ‘We- Day’ initiatives (Social Justice)
- Steps to Success
- Positive Behaviour Support Plan
- Awards Recognition
- Games Lunch – every Thursday
- Maker Spaces – during lunch recess in the Learning Commons

# Zumba Fridays



# Flexible Spaces and Furniture



Sensory Calming Space

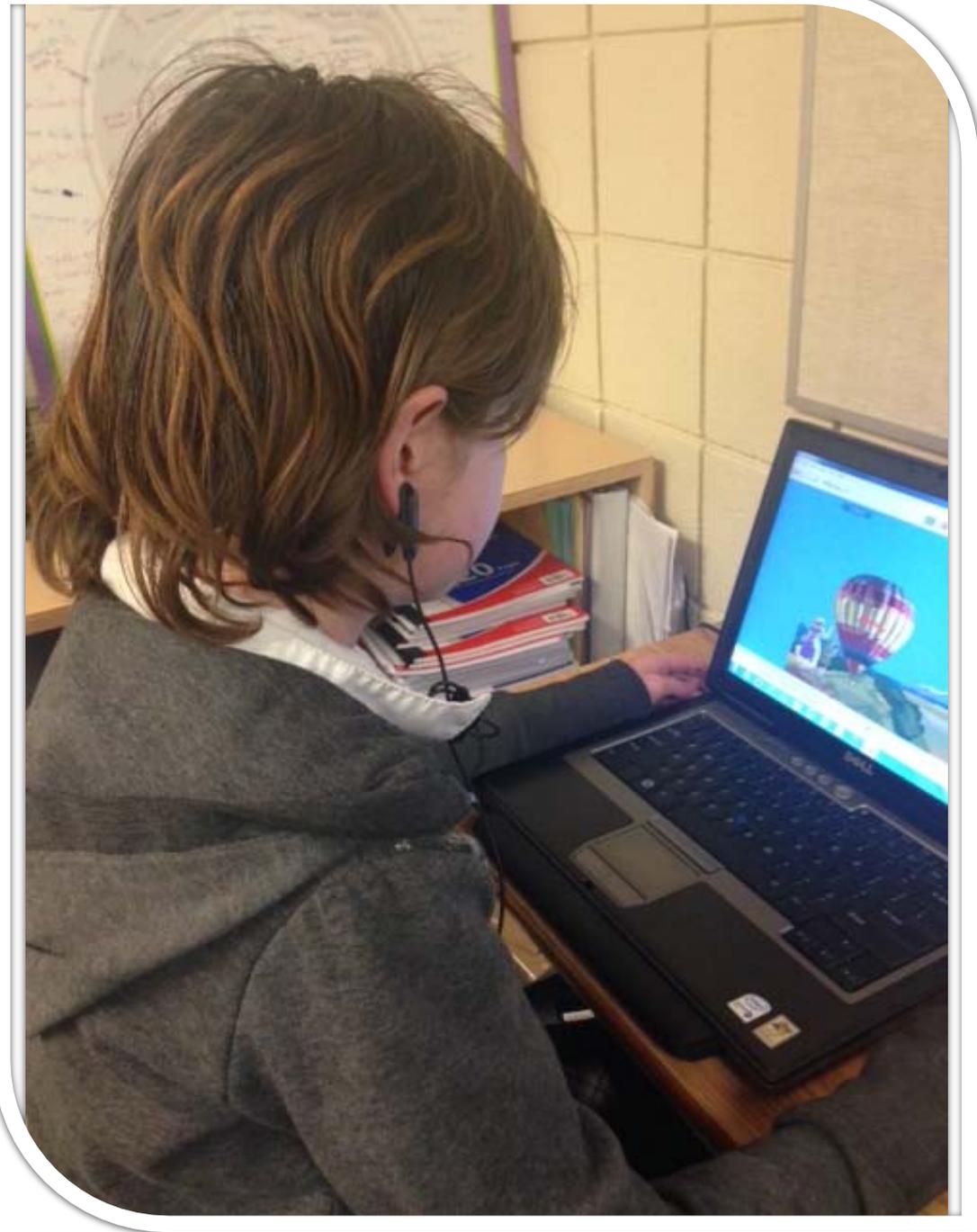


Boomerang Desks (sit and stand hts.) and Hokki Stool

Reading 'Egg' Seat (double)

# What we do... Individually

- CDA programs – ie. Girls Groups, Boys Groups, Self Regulation Group, Anxiety Group, one on one and peer mediation and conflict management support
- Heart Math – Bio-feedback/self regulation tool
- Sensory Calming Room
- Connecting to school and community programs and supports
- Family School Liaison
- Refer for further assessment ie. Psycho-educational
- Targeted programs ie. enrichment group (direct investment), life skills, before school organization group, lunch group (social skills support)
- Sand Table Therapy
- Blended programming to meet student needs
- Work with staff to better understand student needs how that may present in negative behaviours
- Work with staff on how to best support and approach students with respect to the information we have gathered (sos-q)
- MANDT training – positive intervention training



Student using Heart Math, a bio-feedback program to help students lower their anxiety and stress levels.



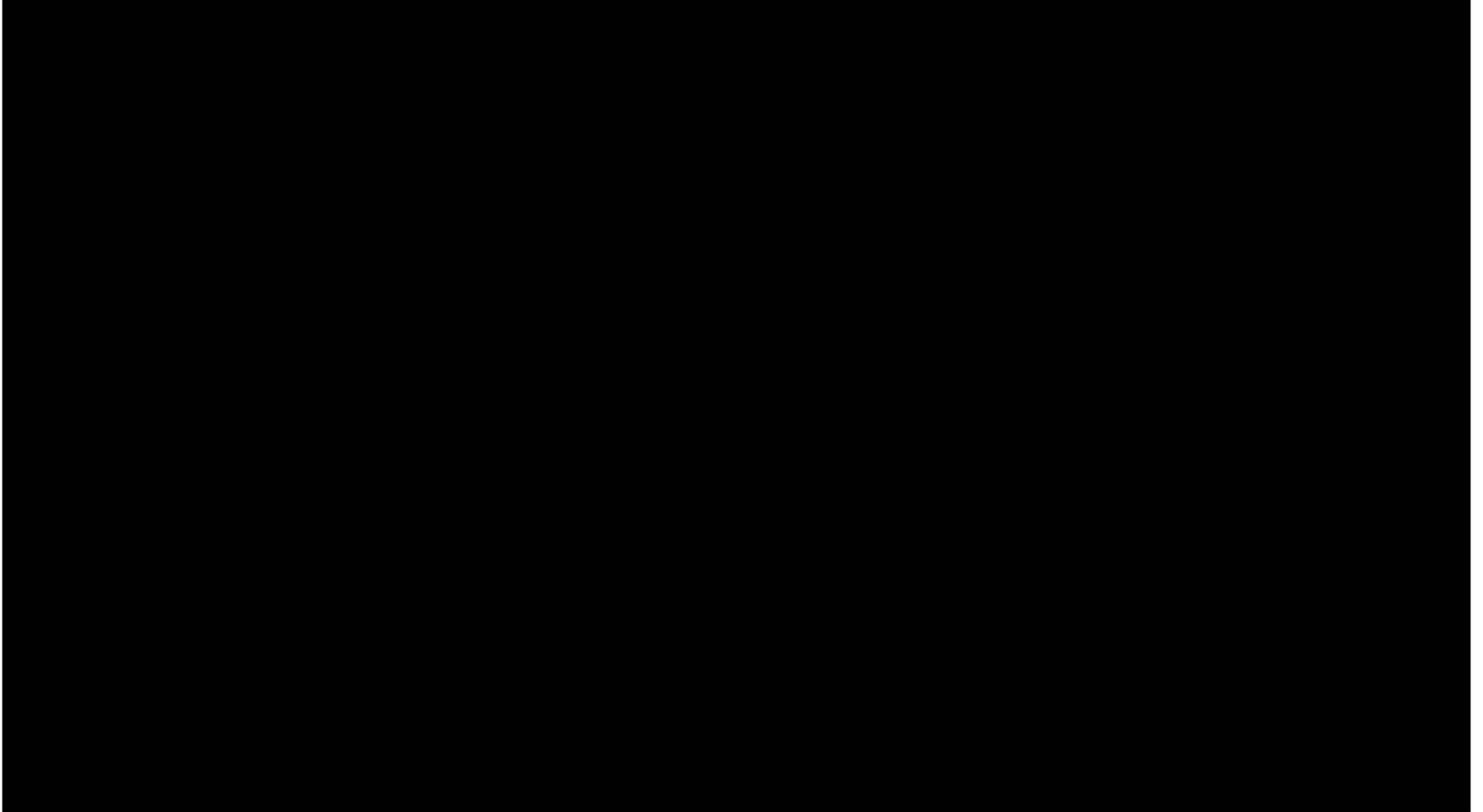
Green Team – Enviro Stewards

## Student Responses to 4 questions asked about the opportunities they have had to be involved and their own involvement in the school community

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- “Allows us to be active in our community”
- “ It’s about feeling good about coming to school”
- “It gives us self- confidence”
- “It shows that if you work hard you can achieve BIG things”
- “It encourages us”      “I feel like we are all connected, like one big family”
- “I got to meet other students”
- “It makes us feel good and important”
- “Celebrating our successes helps promote our school in the community ”
- “We feel good about ourselves and congratulate ourselves for work well done.”
- “Shows our school is a good place to be”
- “I feel my ideas are important”
- “Made us feel great because we created events to celebrate who we are”
- “Our groups show we care about each other”
- “Allows students to represent Bulldog Pride and showcase talented students”

# Inspiration Campaign



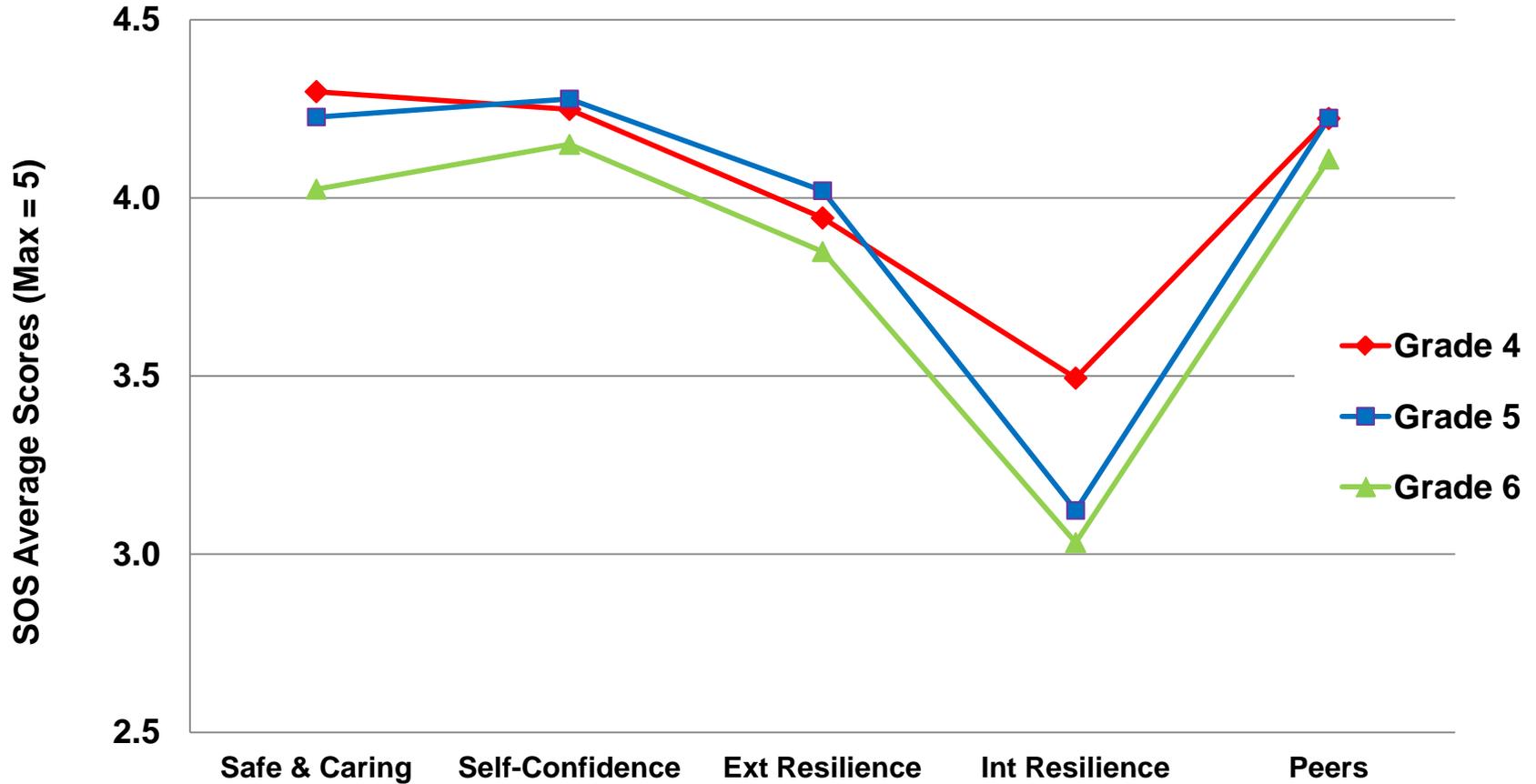
# SOS in Various RVS Student Groups: GENDER (Upper-Elementary)

Student Orientation to School by Gender (Grade 4, 5, and 6; N - 1099)



# SOS in Various RVS Student Groups: GRADE (Upper-Elementary)

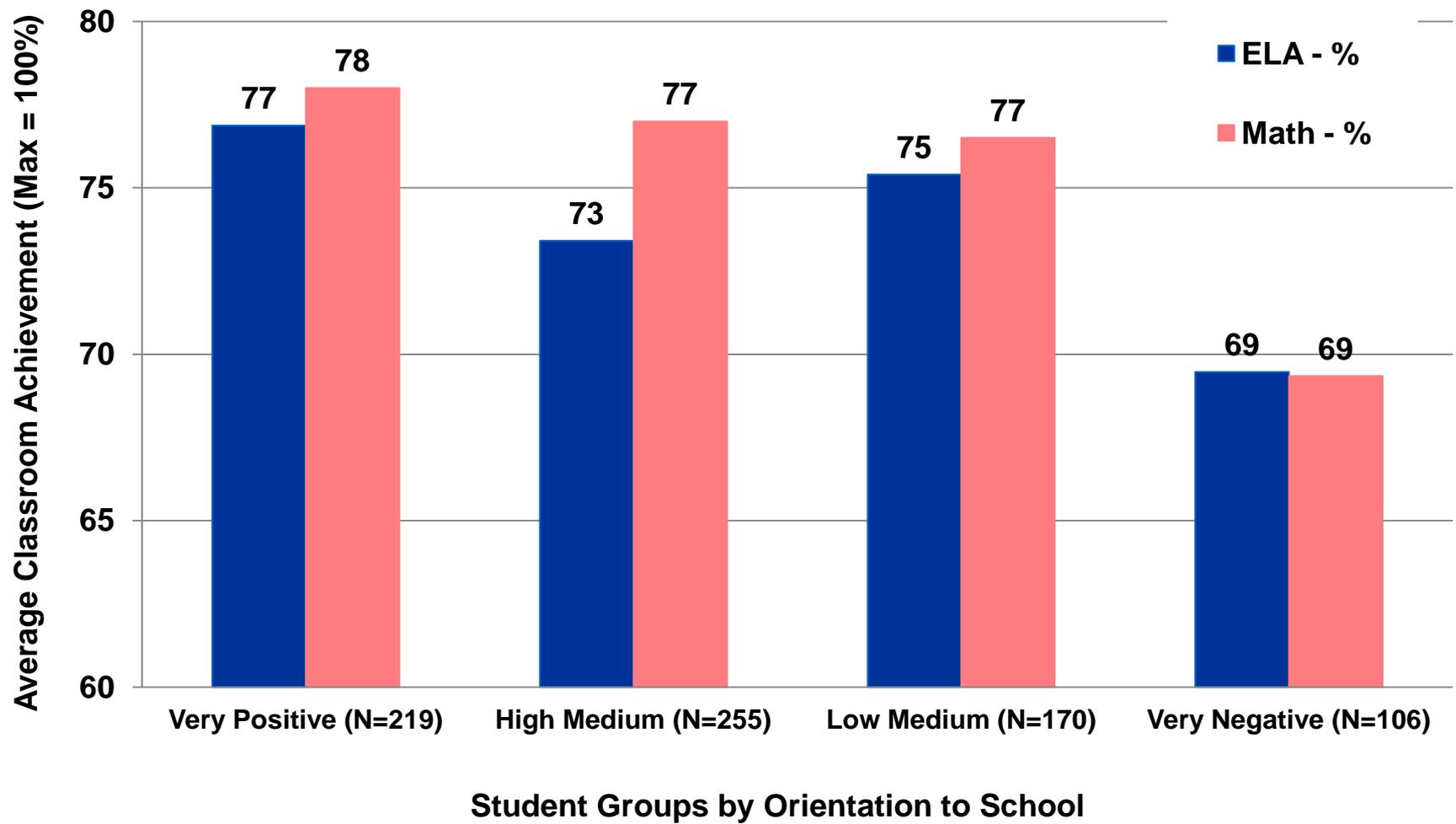
Student Orientation to School by Grade (Grades 4, 5 and 6; N = 1104)





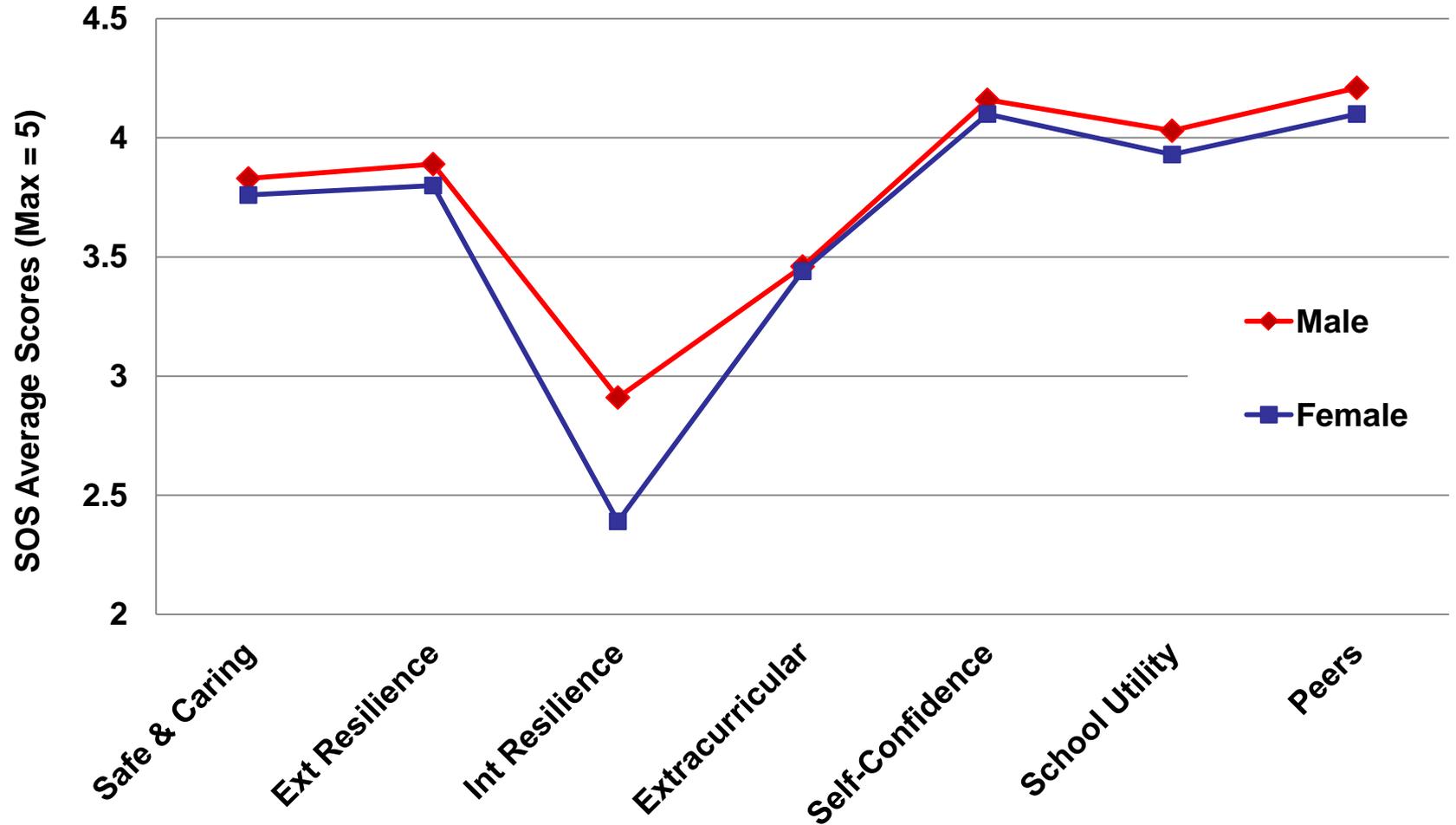
# SOS and Classroom Achievement (Upper-Elementary)

Classroom Achievement and Student Orientation to school (Grade 5 and 6;  
N = 750)



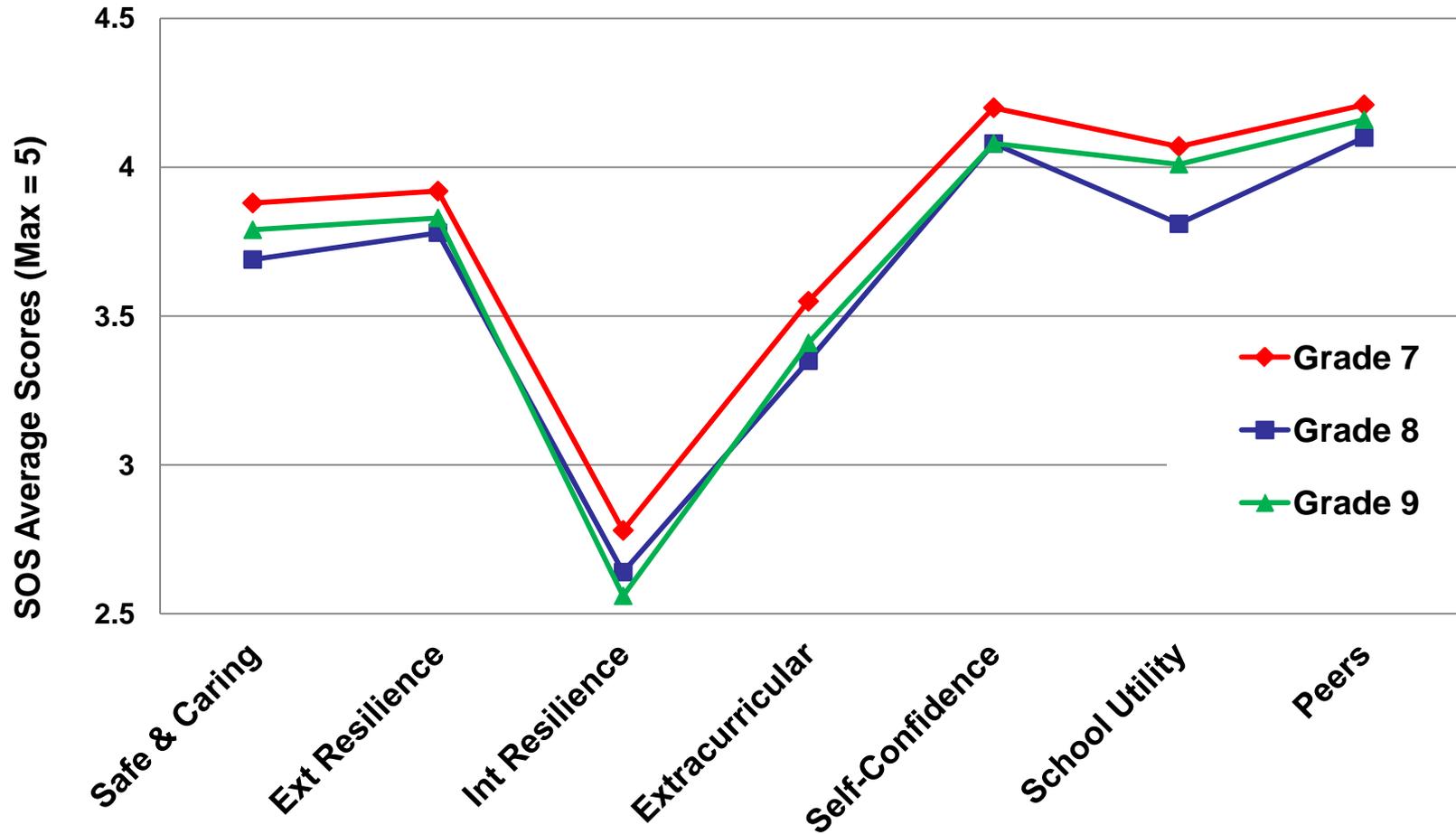
# SOS in Various RVS Student Groups: GENDER (Junior-High)

Student Orientation to School by Gender (Grades 7, 8 and 9; N = 1084)



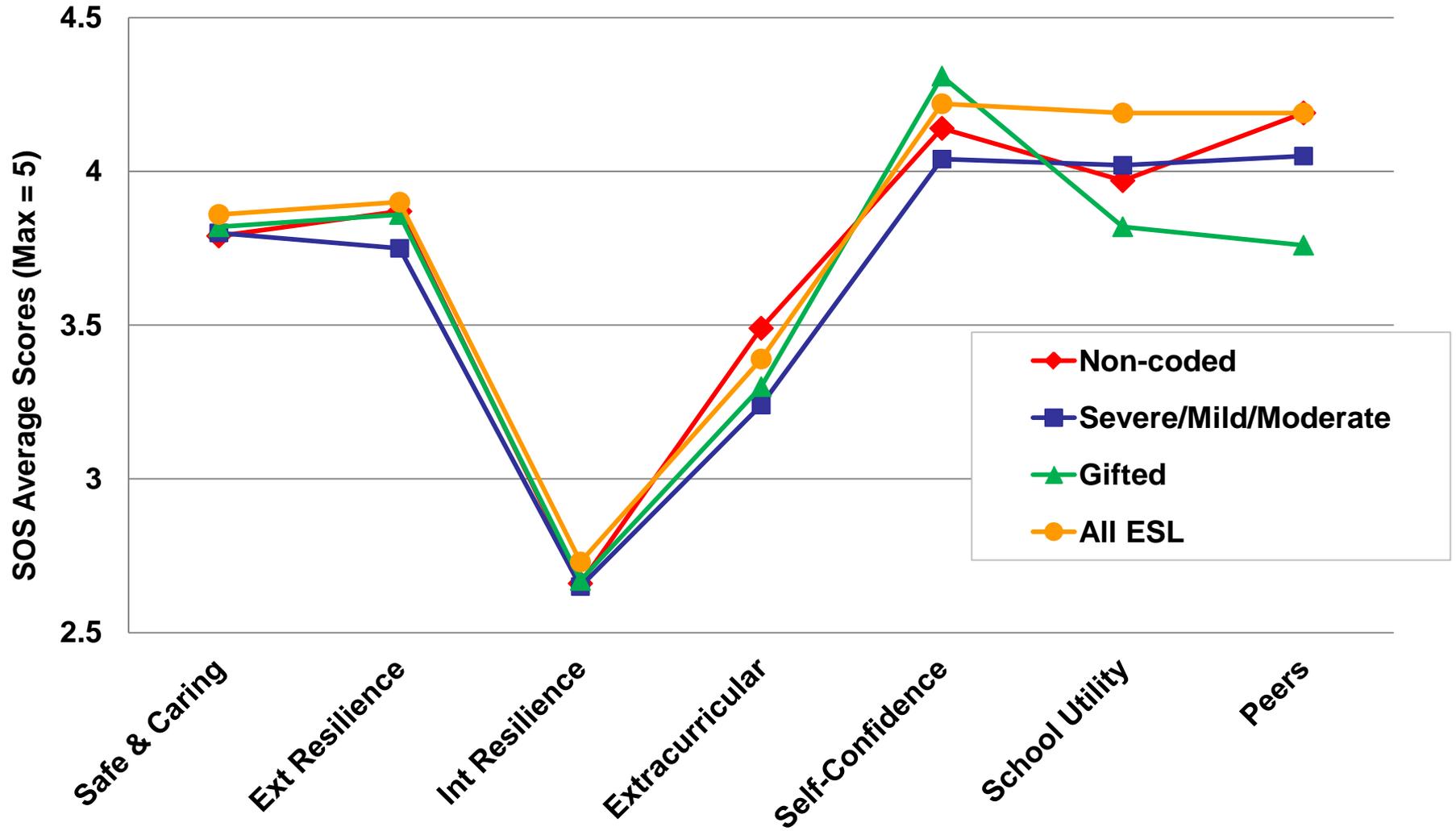
# SOS in Various RVS Student Groups: GRADE (Junior-High)

Student Orientation to School by Grade (N = 1084)



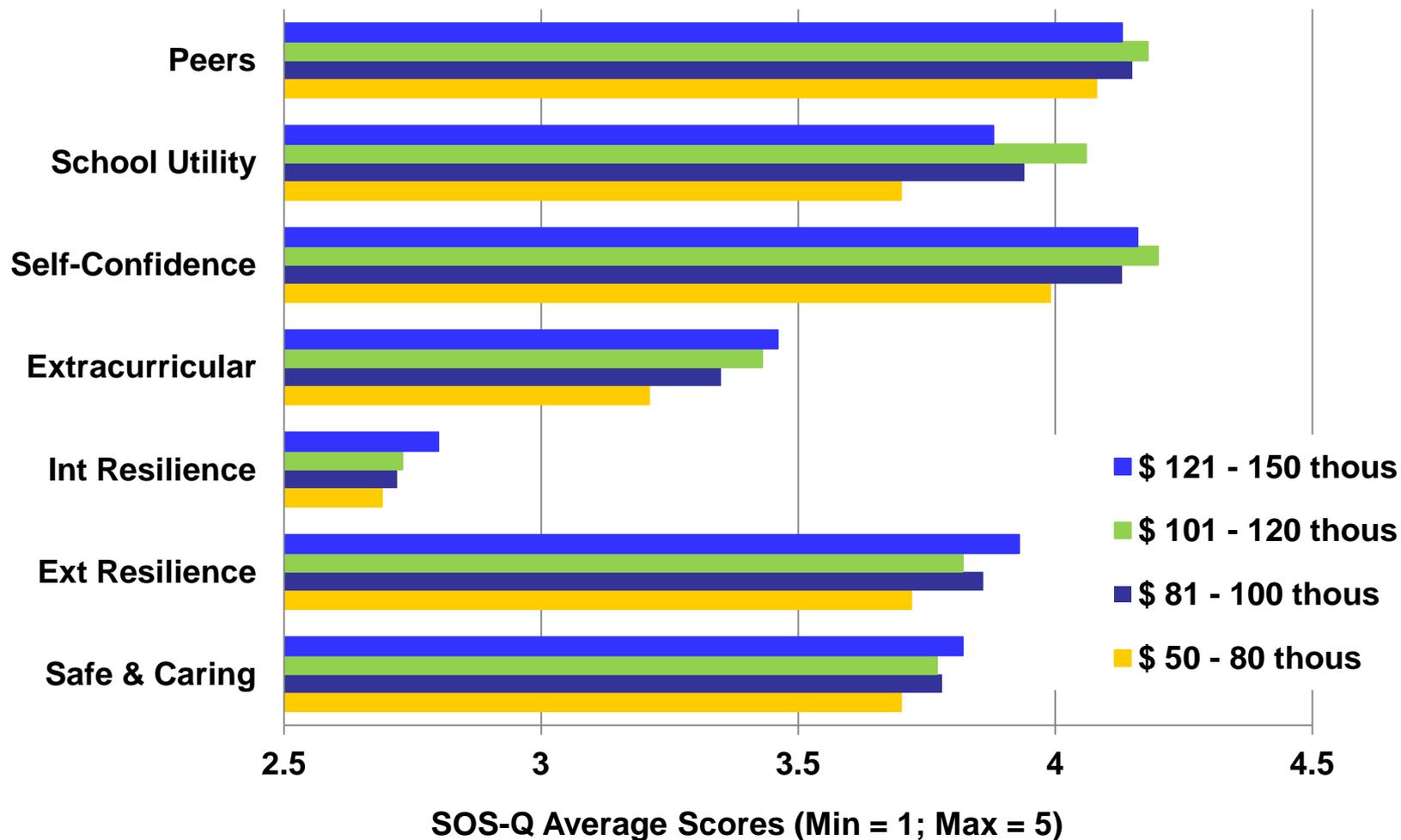
# SOS in Various RVS Student Groups: CODED AND NON-CODED (Junior-High)

Student Orientation to School in Various Student Groups (Grades 7, 8 and 9; N = 1072)



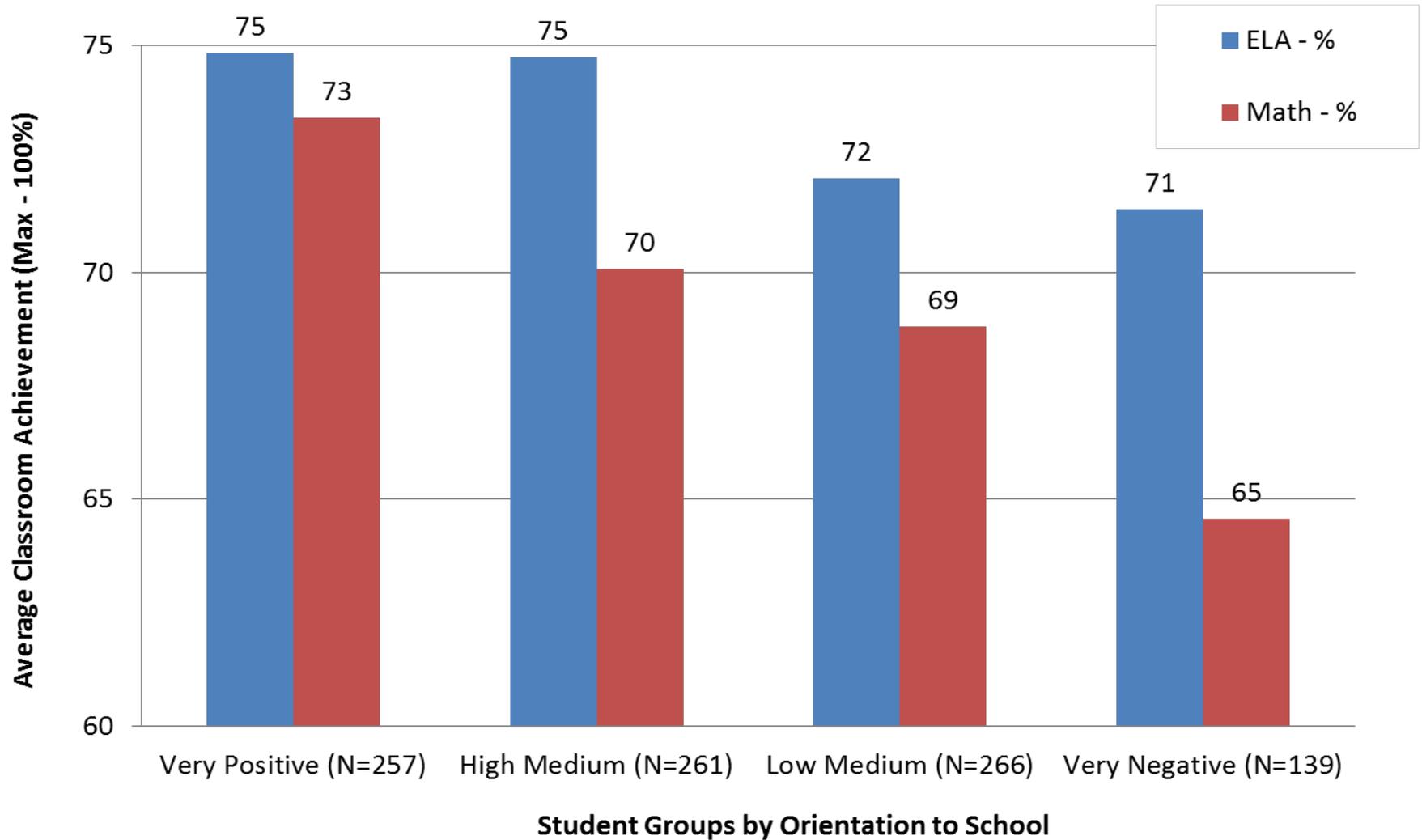
# SOS by Socio-Economic Status: AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME (2 RVS Schools - JH)

Student Orientation to School by Average Family Income (Grade 7, 8 and 9)



# SOS and Classroom Achievement (Junior-High)

Classroom Achievement and Student Orientation to School (Grade 7, 8 and 9; N = 923)





# CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ 1. Rocky View Schools has assumed copyright and ownership of the SOS-Q instruments and is keen to share our research and effect partnerships with other jurisdictions.
- ✓ 2. Distinct student profiles illustrate the diagnostic potential of the SOS-Q for identifying students at risk of disengaging from school.
- ✓ 3. RVS has just received a \$30,000 grant to develop secure, encrypted on-line versions of the SOS-Q.
- ✓ 4. Next steps include capturing SOS-Q data as key inputs to the RVS Student Information System to enhance data relationships, diagnostic potential and research value of SOS-Q data.

# Additional Reading

Measuring students' orientation to school to improve high school completion." Cass Connection Magazine. P. 30 @

[http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10063916/f/New%202012%20Files/Spring\\_2008.pdf](http://o.b5z.net/i/u/10063916/f/New%202012%20Files/Spring_2008.pdf)

•“Supporting students emotional connection to school.” Canadian Assoc. of School Administrators Magazine, p. 27 @

[http://www.edline.net/files/\\_mFB4F\\_/be84f7cfef4b30e83745a49013852ec4/LL\\_Mag\\_2011-2012\\_Winter.pdf](http://www.edline.net/files/_mFB4F_/be84f7cfef4b30e83745a49013852ec4/LL_Mag_2011-2012_Winter.pdf)

•“Moving beyond achievement data: Development of the student orientation to school questionnaire as a noncognitive assessment tool.” Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment. p367 @ <http://jpa.sagepub.com/content/30/4.toc>

•“Assessing student orientation to school to address low achievement and dropping out.” Alberta Journal of Educational Research. In press.

•Ross Green. Lost at School. <http://www.lostatschool.org/>

# Discussion

- What are some positives and negatives or benefits and risks of capturing data on individual student's orientation to school?