



**QUEENSTOWN**

CONFERENCE  
11-13 September 2023

**AOTEAROA KI TE WHAI AO!**

*Aotearoa and Beyond!*

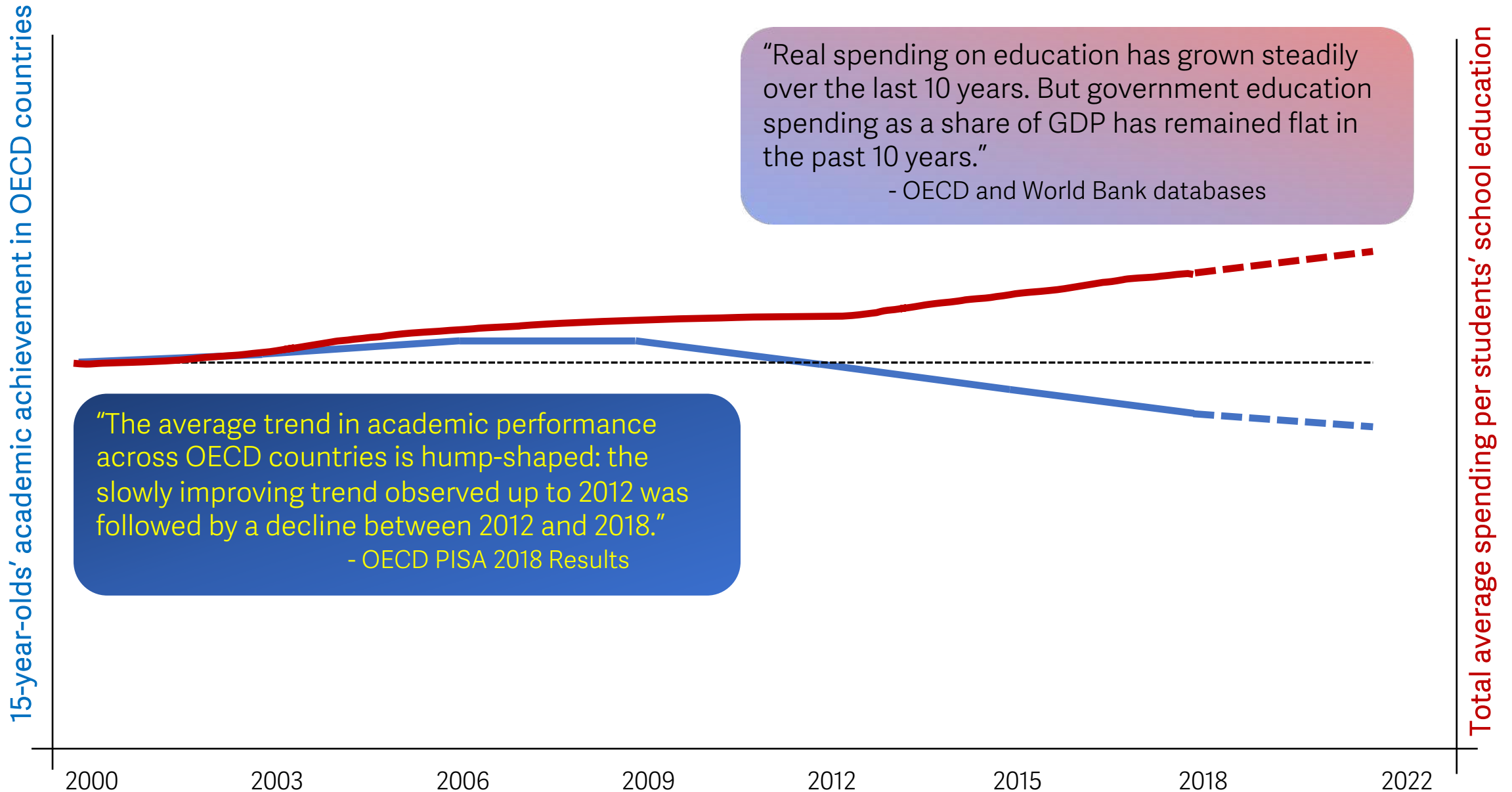
# **The Big Picture of School Education:** *What every principal needs to know*

**Pasi Sahlberg**

11/09/2023

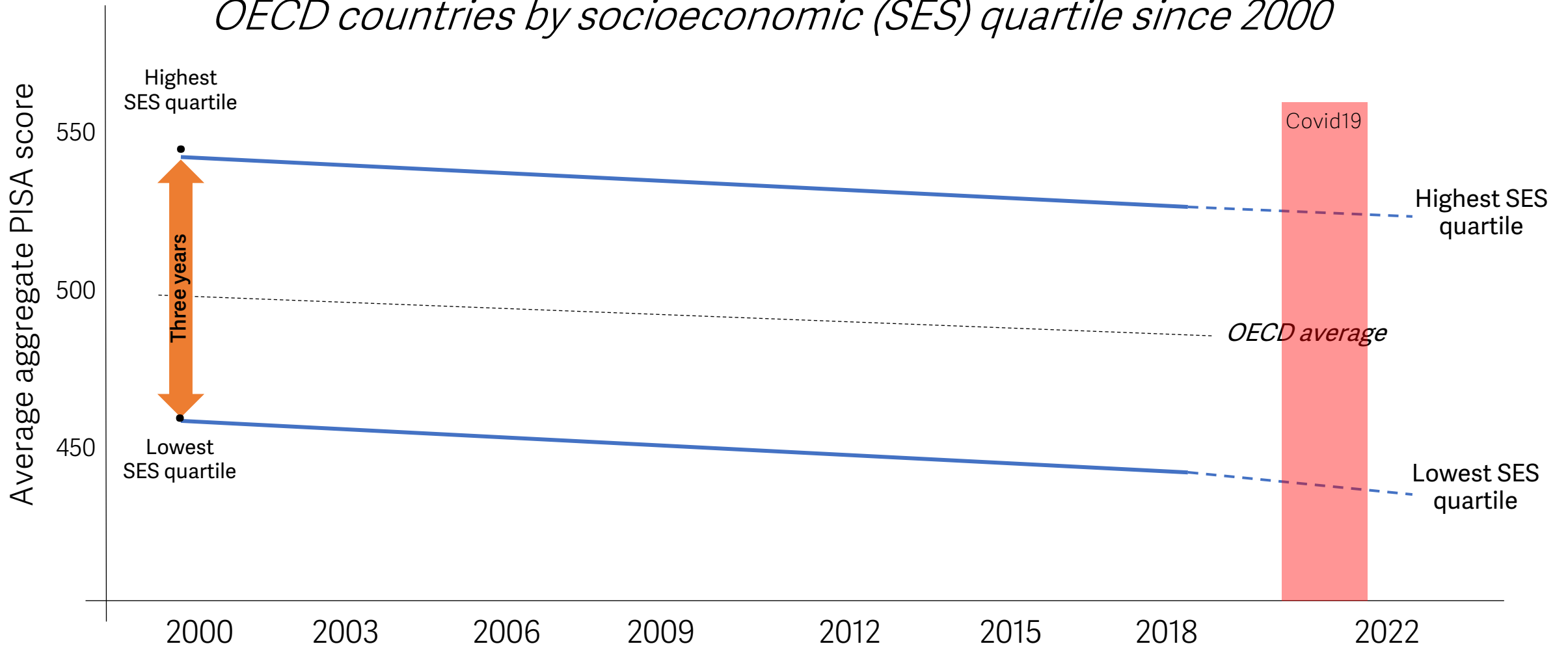
- 1. The state of school education**
- 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?**
- 3. What influences student school outcomes?**

# 1. The state of school education



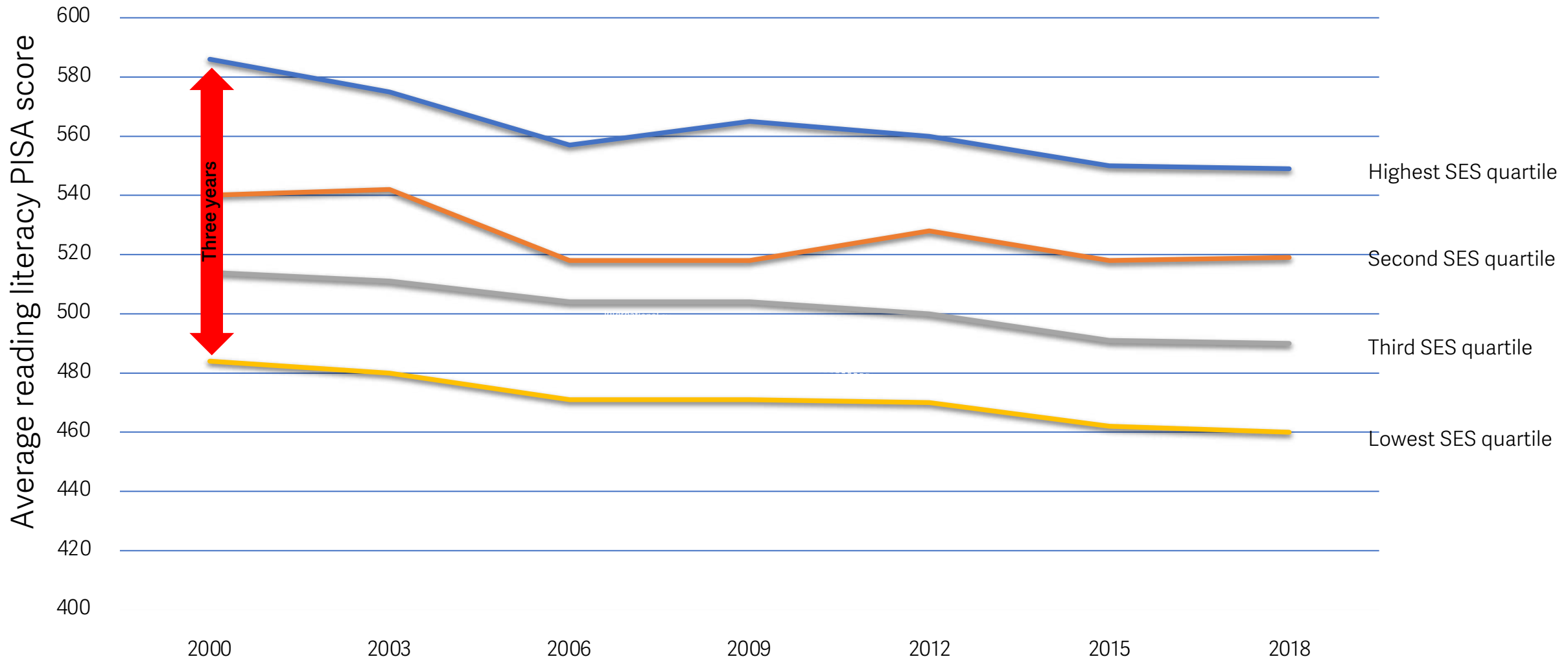
# 1. The state of school education

*15-year-old students' average academic achievement in OECD countries by socioeconomic (SES) quartile since 2000*



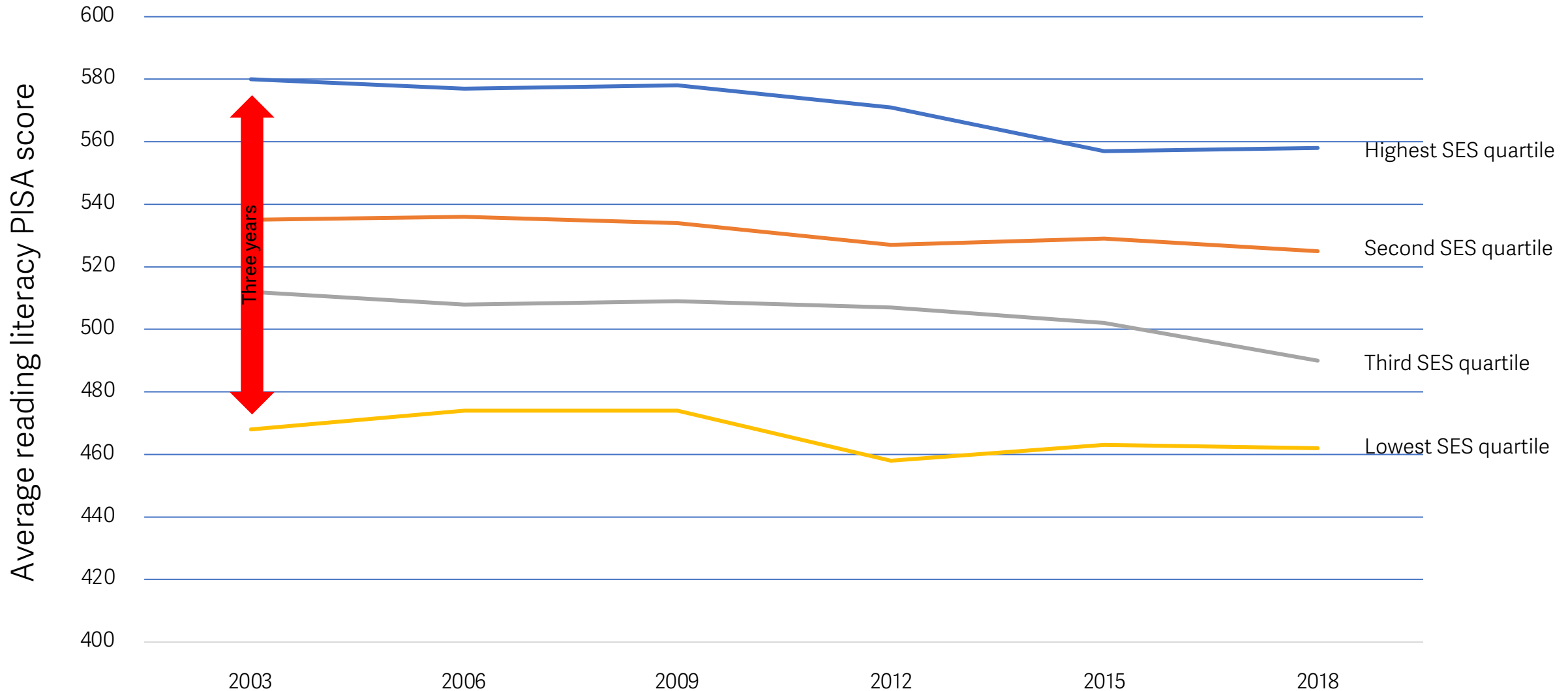
# 1. The state of school education

*Average reading literacy PISA scores in Australia by SES quartile*



# 1. The state of school education

*Average reading literacy PISA scores in New Zealand by SES quartile*



Source: NZ MoE (2019)

# 1. The state of school education

*Proportion of low and high performers in Australia and New Zealand on the OECD PISA reading literacy proficiency scale since 2000*

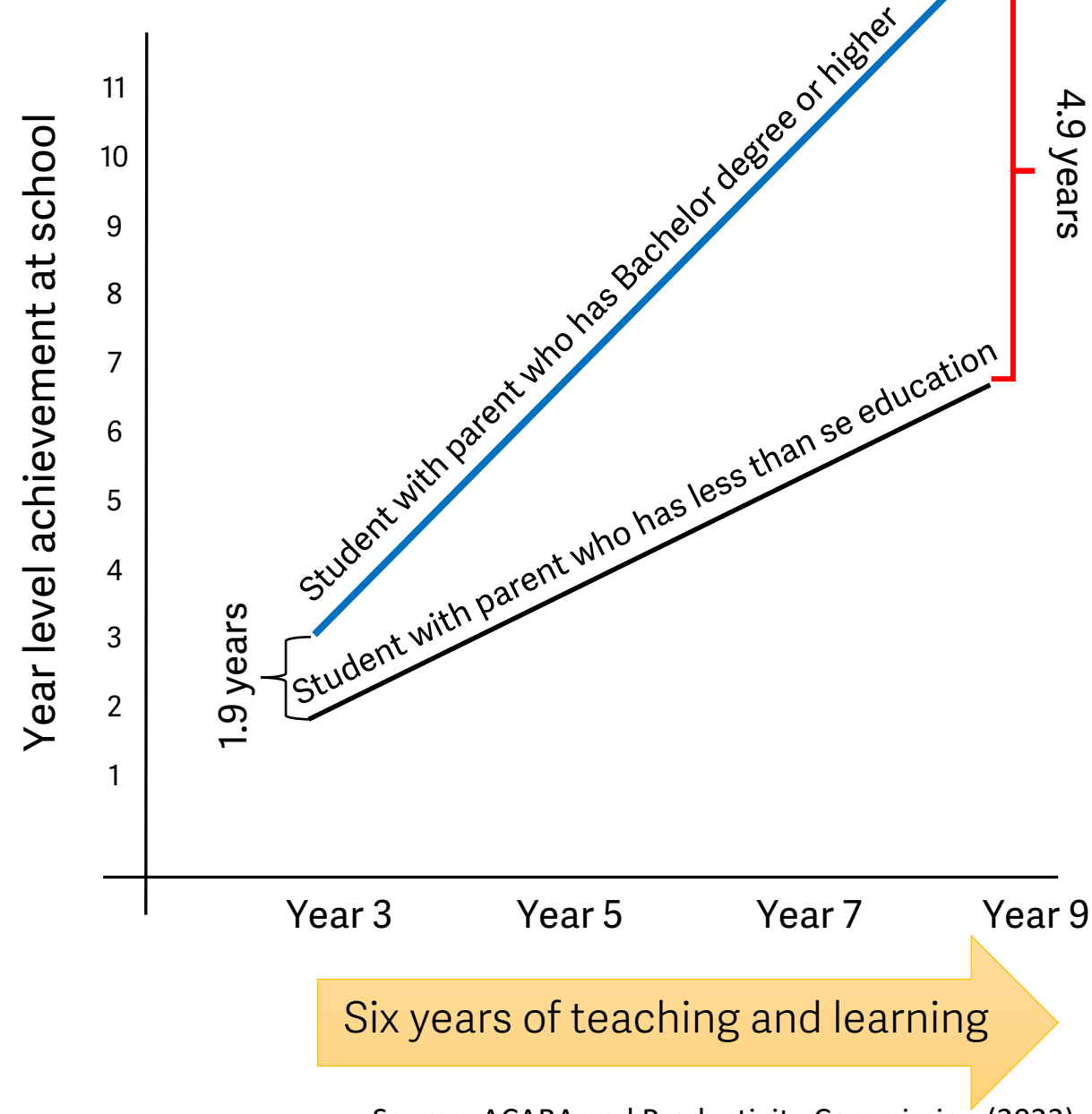
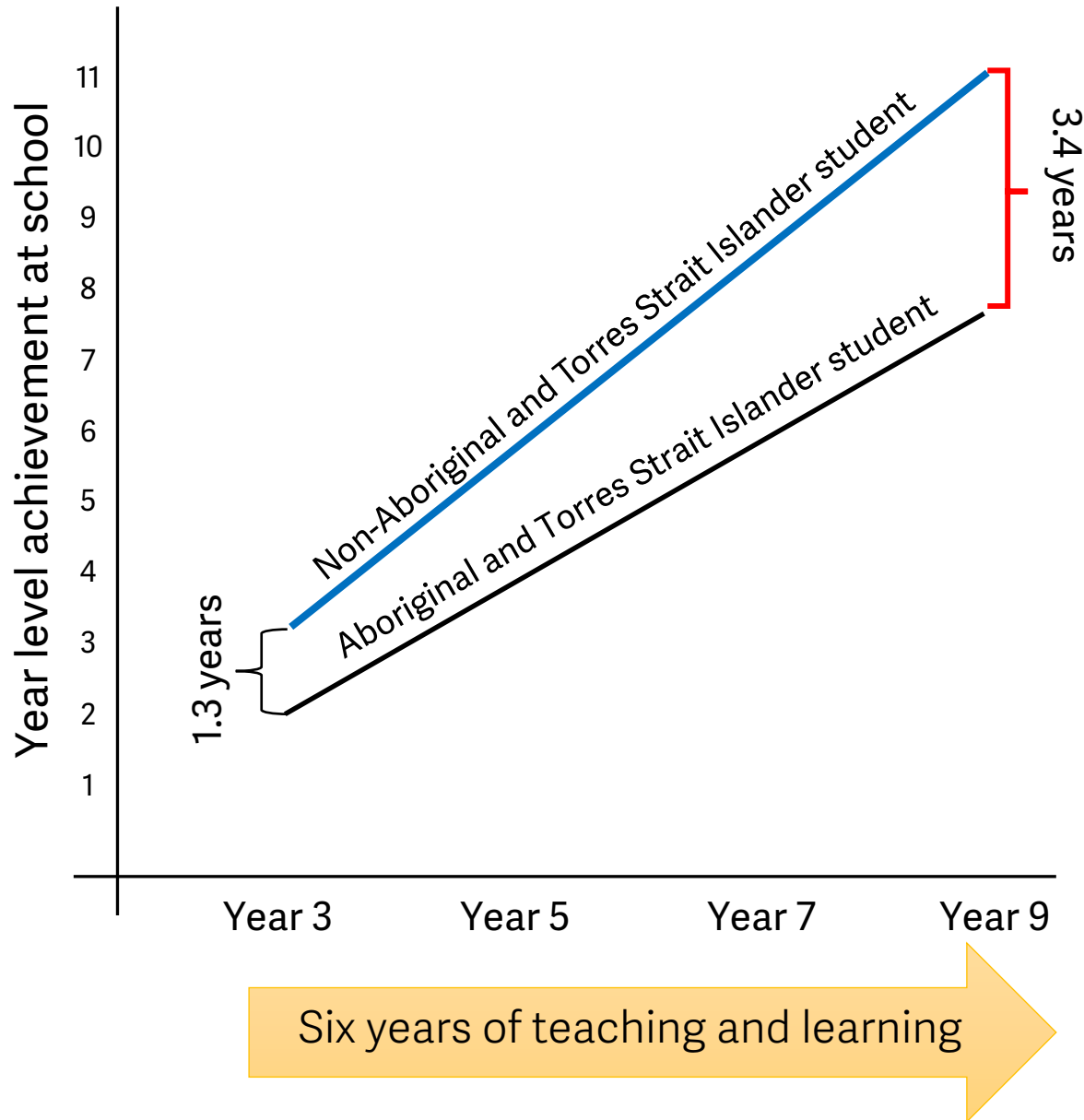
Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander students (AUS)



Māori students (NZ)



# 1. The state of school education (AUS)





**How could we explain this  
inconvenient state of  
school education?**

## 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?

In 1983:

### A Nation at Risk

The Imperative for Educational Reform



A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education

*“The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.”*

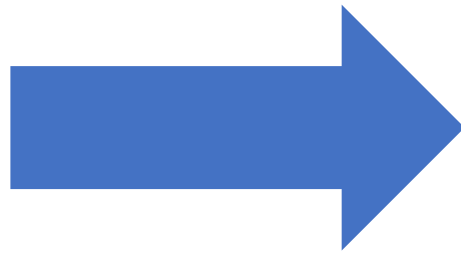
## 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?

### A Nation at Risk

The Imperative for Educational Reform



A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education



### **G.E.R.M.**

Back to basics curricula

Test-based accountability

De-professionalisation

Privatising public education

School choice

## 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?

### A Nation at Risk

The Imperative for Educational Reform



A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education

The education reforms that followed did not properly address the root causes of the poor state of education. Consequently, they failed to accept that schools alone won't solve the nation's educational problems.

## 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?

*“There is a global learning crisis that amplifies educational inequalities that severely hobbles the disadvantaged youth who most need the boost that a good education can offer.”*

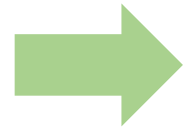
– World Bank Human Development Report 2018

**Hope or not?**

## 2. Times like these: crisis or hope?

*“In Australia we offer world-class education – but not to everyone”*

# HOPE



Create a shared vision that broadens the definition of student success towards **whole child** development.

Redesign educational settings and practices to build healthy **relationships** for support and safety of all children.

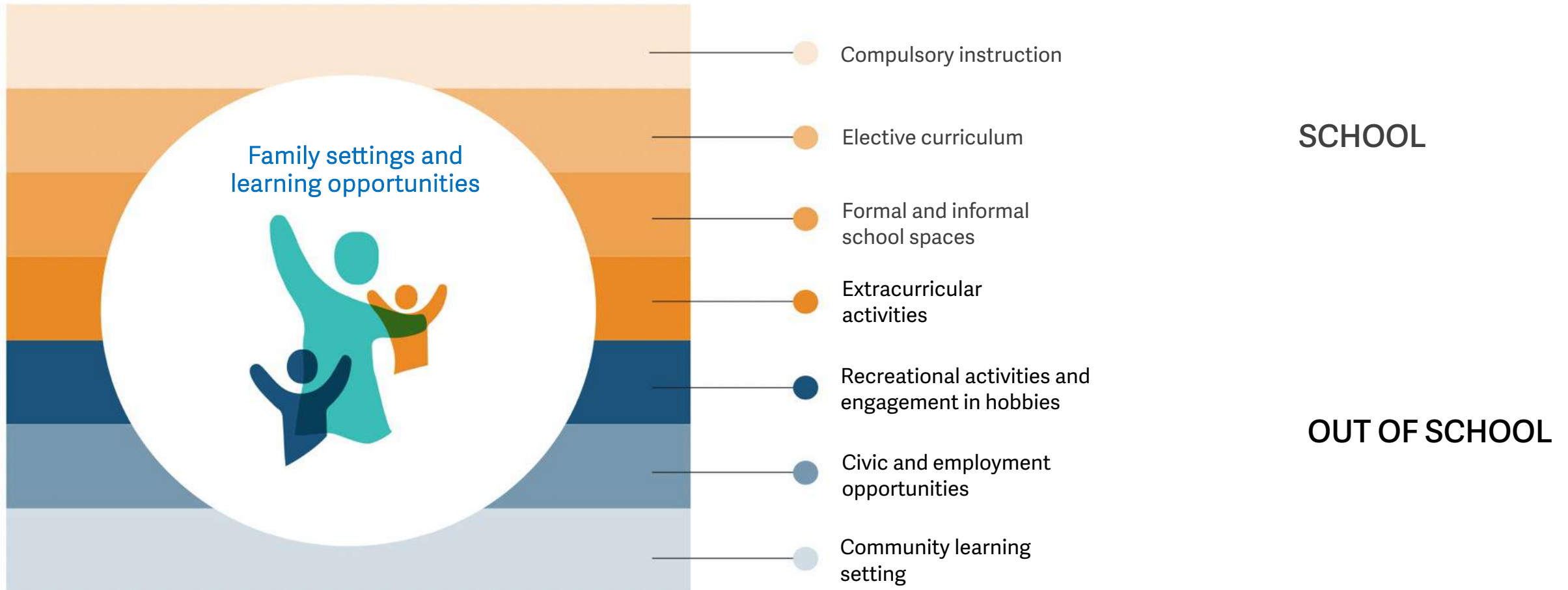
Teach students social, emotional, and cognitive skills for stronger **engagement and agency** in whole school practice.



# 3. What influences student achievement?



## Where do kids learn?

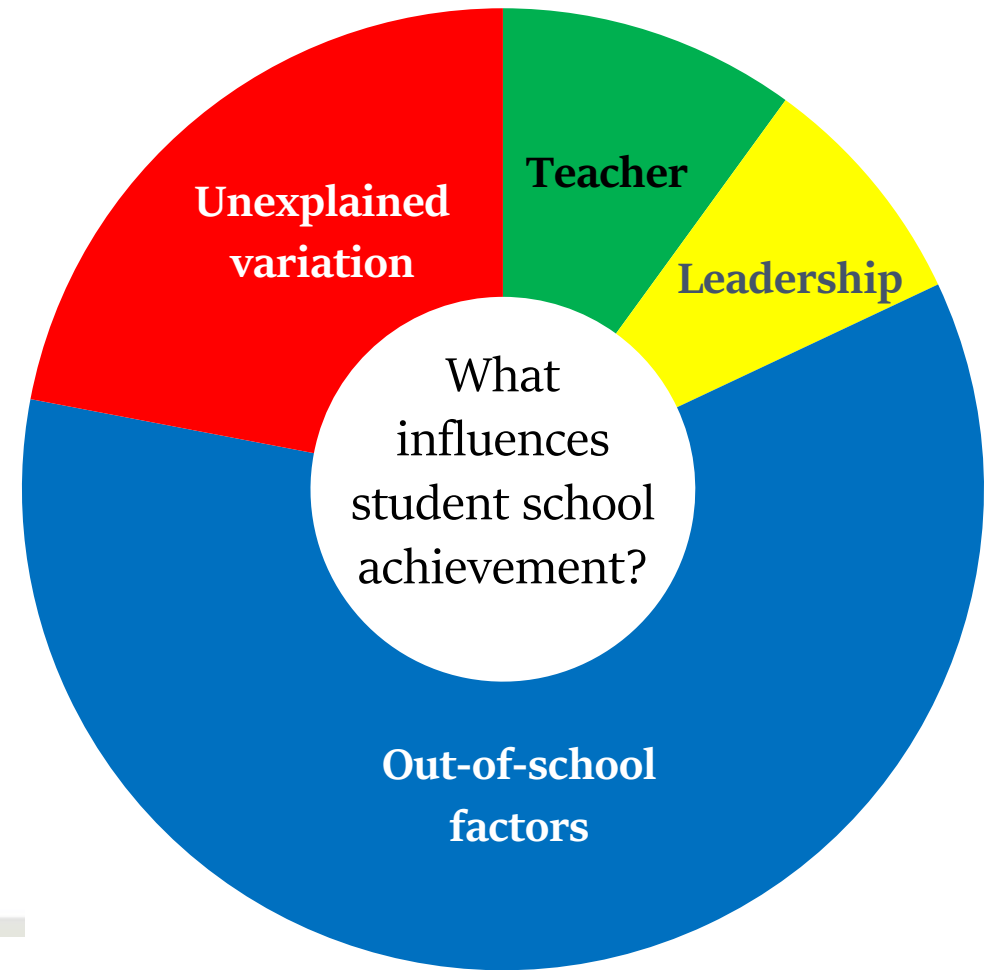


# 3. What influences student achievement?

Proportion of NAPLAN score explained by student background for all schools with ICSEA and NAPLAN data (2011-2017)



Source: ACARA's NAPLAN data



Source: Haertel (2013)

### 3. What influences student achievement?

The conclusion that family background is far more important than people think has remained a solid empirical research finding for the past half a century.

# What do we need to know?

- We haven't done different things differently enough;
- We should avoid toxic narratives of education crisis;
- Schools alone won't solve the educational problems.

Ngā  
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