

Mayday... Mayday...

Who Will Answer the Distress Signals Appearing in Some Districts' Data?

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Note: Presentation is on-the-record but Q&A after is off-the-record unless otherwise noted

**Slides available at
edunomicslab.org**



ESSA requires some SEA and district responses to schools that fall below state-set thresholds on multiple measures* ...



But who responds when data suggest that it is a district that is in distress?

Note that some SEAs are launching efforts to address statewide low outcomes (e.g., with broadly available tutoring, new curriculum, etc.). But that's different than intervening in a district in distress.

*Per federal law, SEAs must Identify schools for improvement, allocate extra Title I \$, review resource allocation, provide TA, and approve improvement plans. LEAs must develop improvement plans, support schools, and take action toward improvement.



Q Which group (if any) monitors whether students attend a properly functioning district and raises a flag when concerns emerge in the data?

❖ US Dept of Ed?

❖ State Ed Agency?

❖ State Fiscal Watchdog?*

❖ County/City?

❖ Auditors?

❖ Media?

❖ Parents/Community/Public?

Doesn't monitor student outcomes. Re ESSER, so far, OIG inspected 2 states (KY & WA). Found insufficient SEA oversight in both. oig.ed.gov/reports/list



"The state cannot just write big checks and then say, 'We're not paying attention to what happens here.' The buck stops with the state."**

*A few states employ some sort of state takeover in cases of very low student outcomes.

** <https://edsources.org/2023/the-case-of-cayla-j-judge-to-decide-if-california-failed-low-income-students-during-covid/696235>

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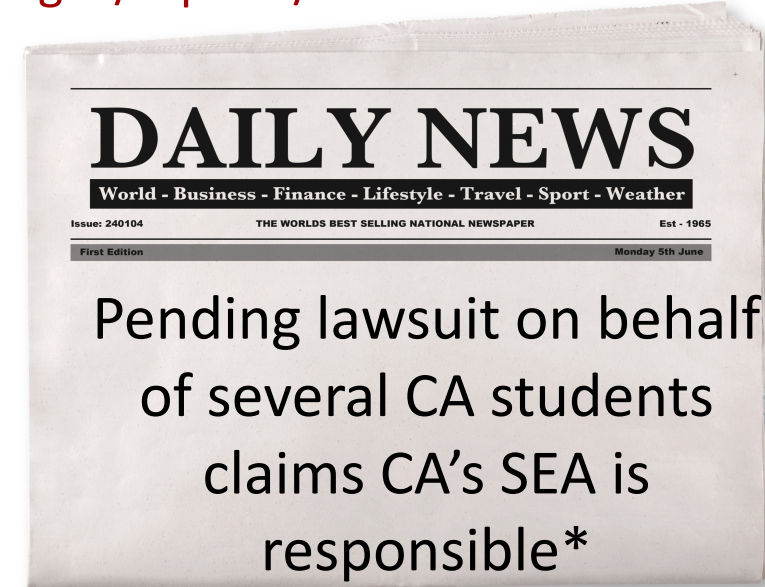
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A few states do have strong fiscal oversight.

Spotty at best

Increasingly stepping in where data are public

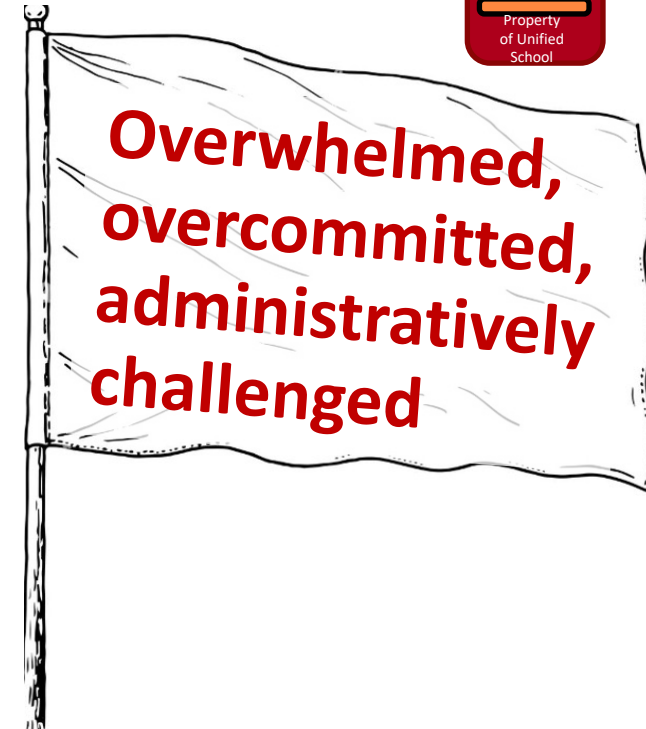
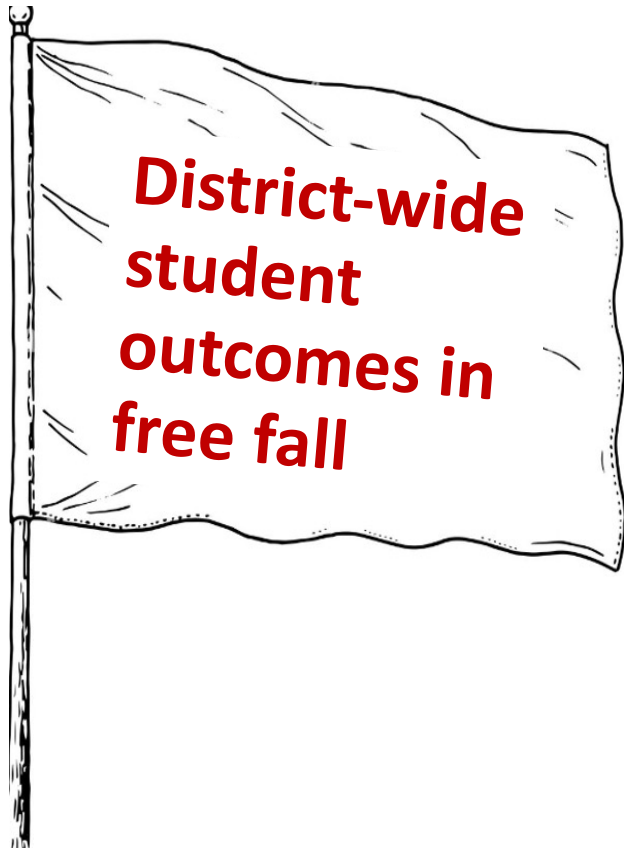


A It's not clear that any one group owns the responsibility of scanning district data for obvious problems, and raising them when found.

*A few states do employ some sort of state takeover in cases of very low student outcomes.

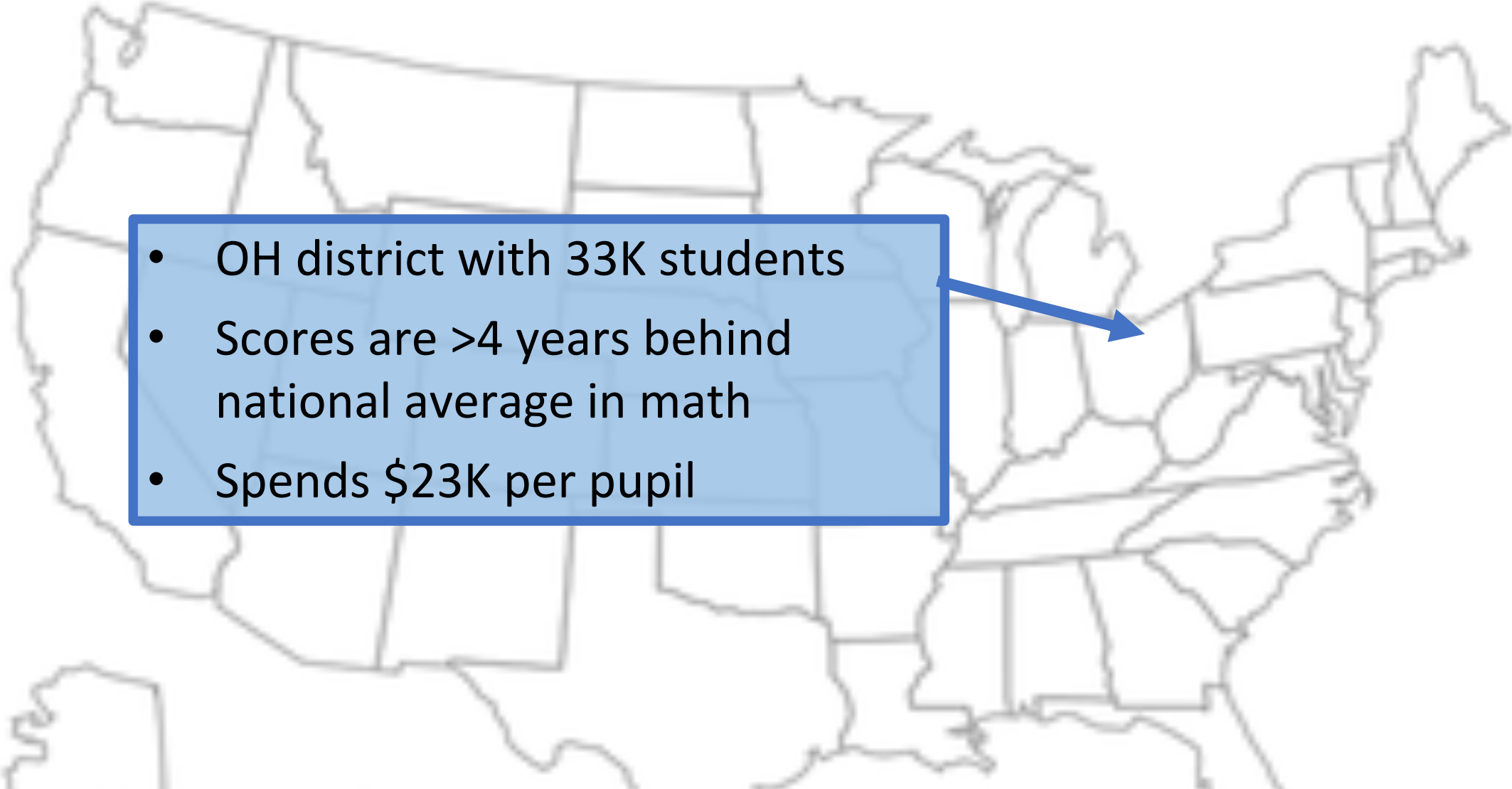


The 4 types of distress signals we're seeing in some districts' data:

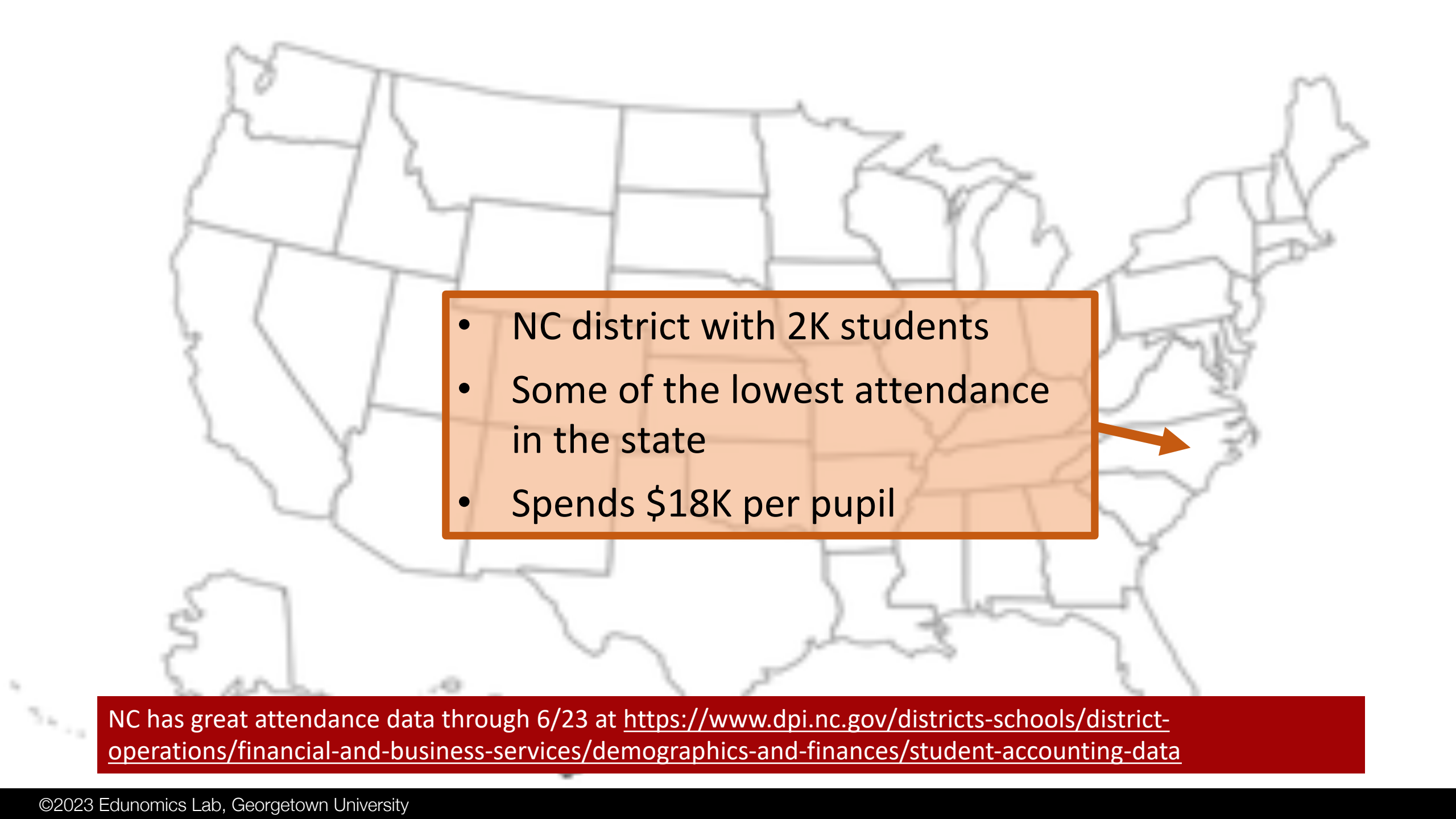


The 4 types of distress signals we're seeing in some districts' data:



- 
- OH district with 33K students
 - Scores are >4 years behind national average in math
 - Spends \$23K per pupil

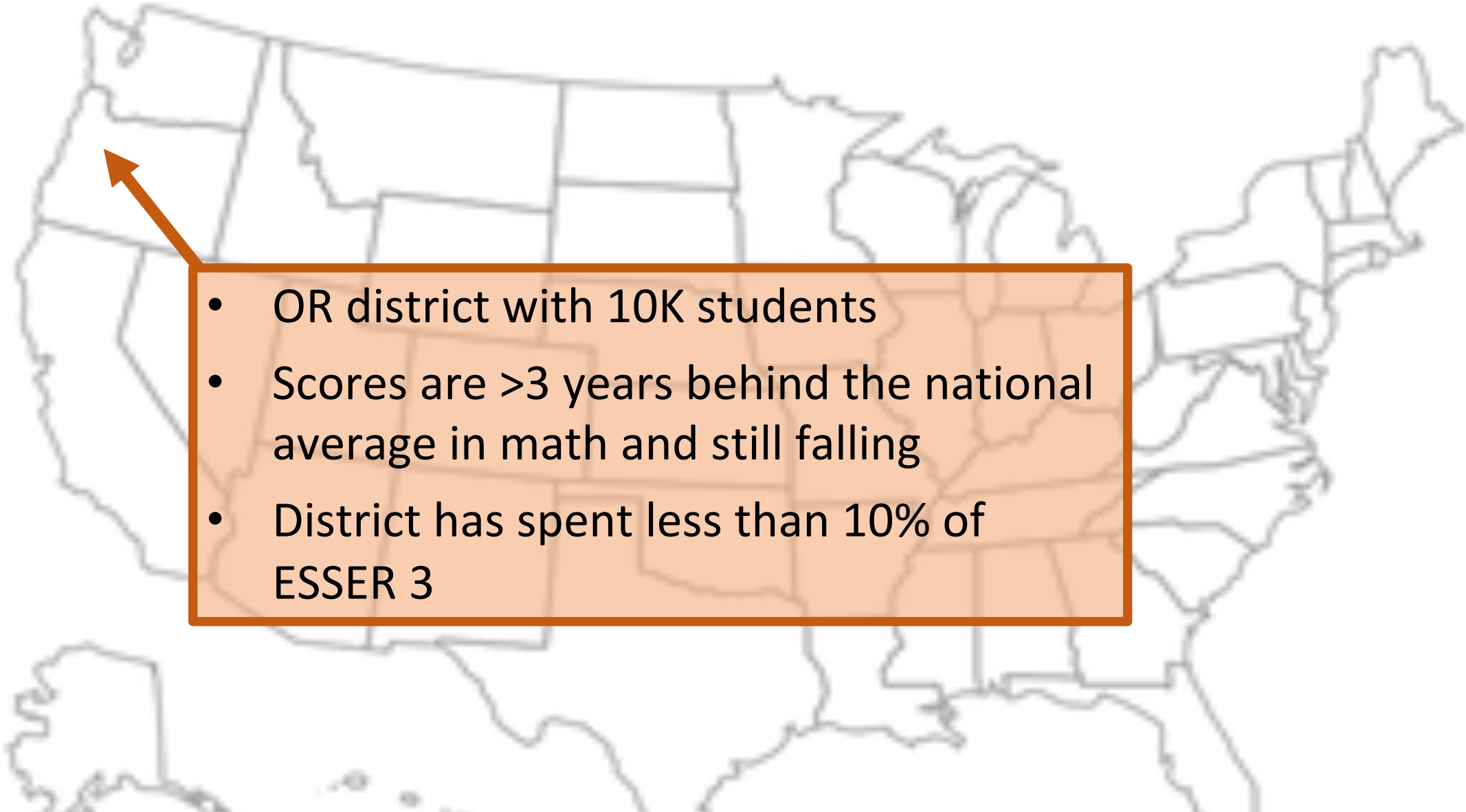
Relevant data sources for national comparisons (thru 2022) edopportunity.org/recovery
Then use recent state-released district data to look for progress.

- 
- NC district with 2K students
 - Some of the lowest attendance in the state
 - Spends \$18K per pupil

NC has great attendance data through 6/23 at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-operations/financial-and-business-services/demographics-and-finances/student-accounting-data>

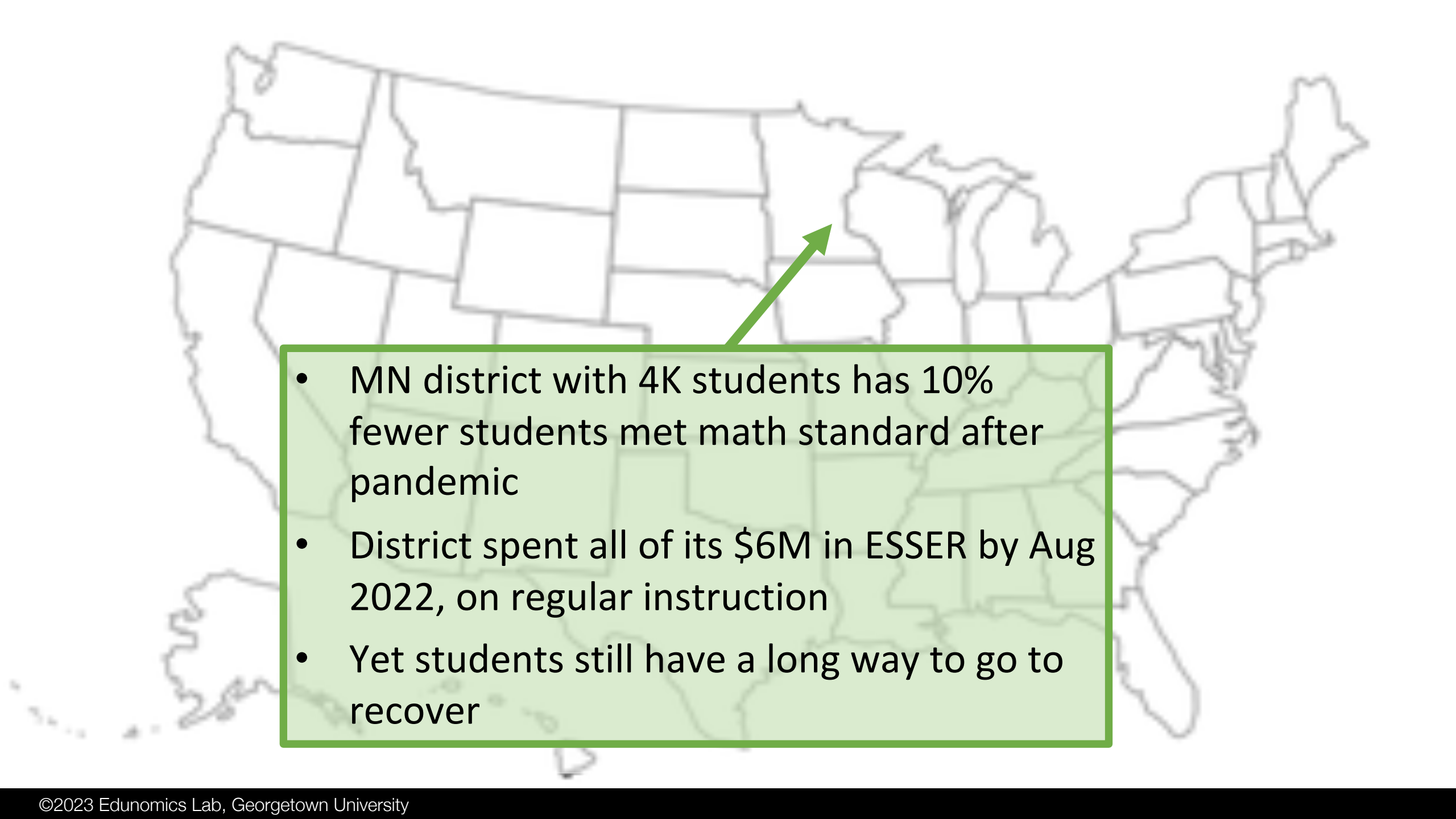
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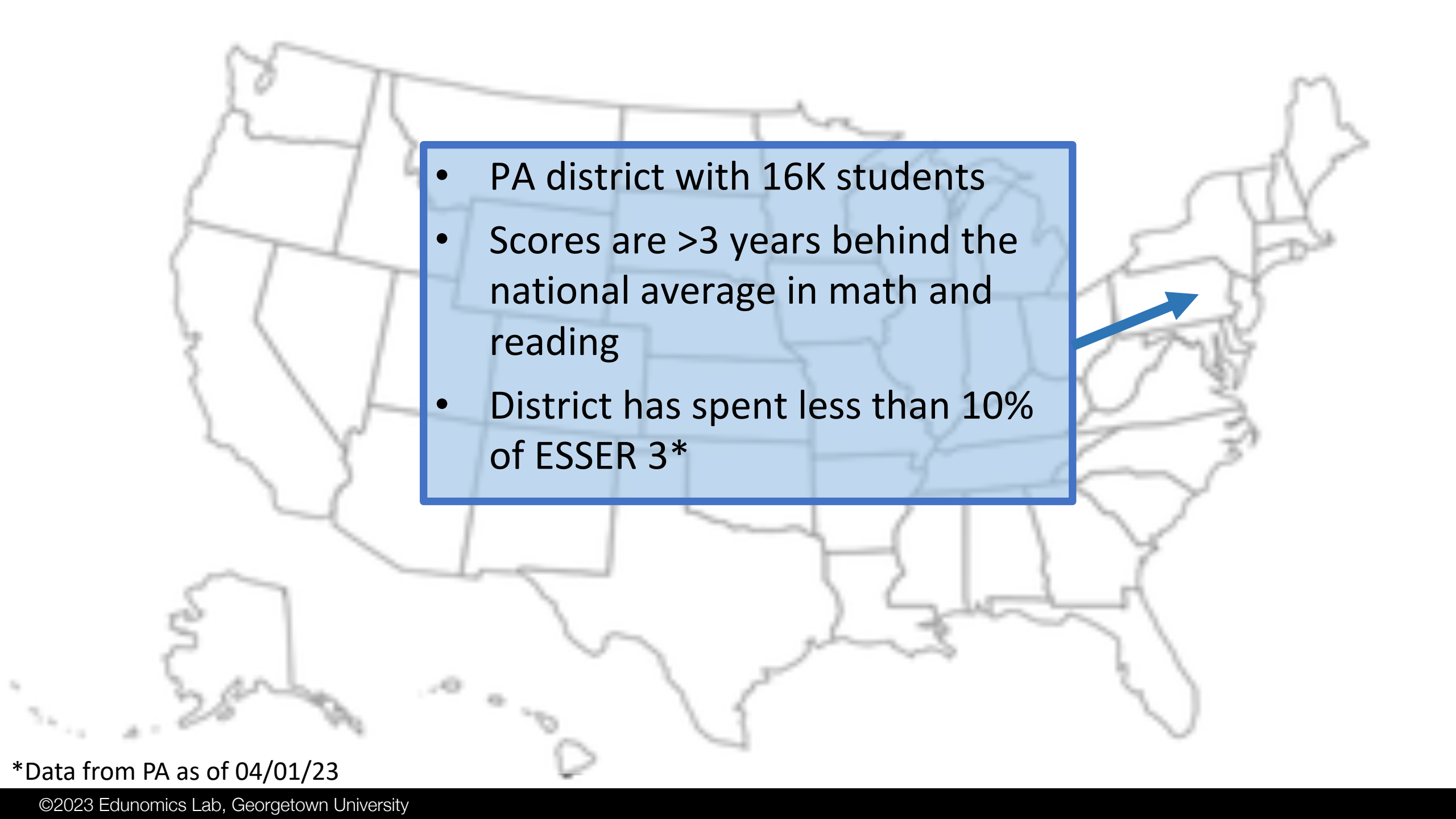




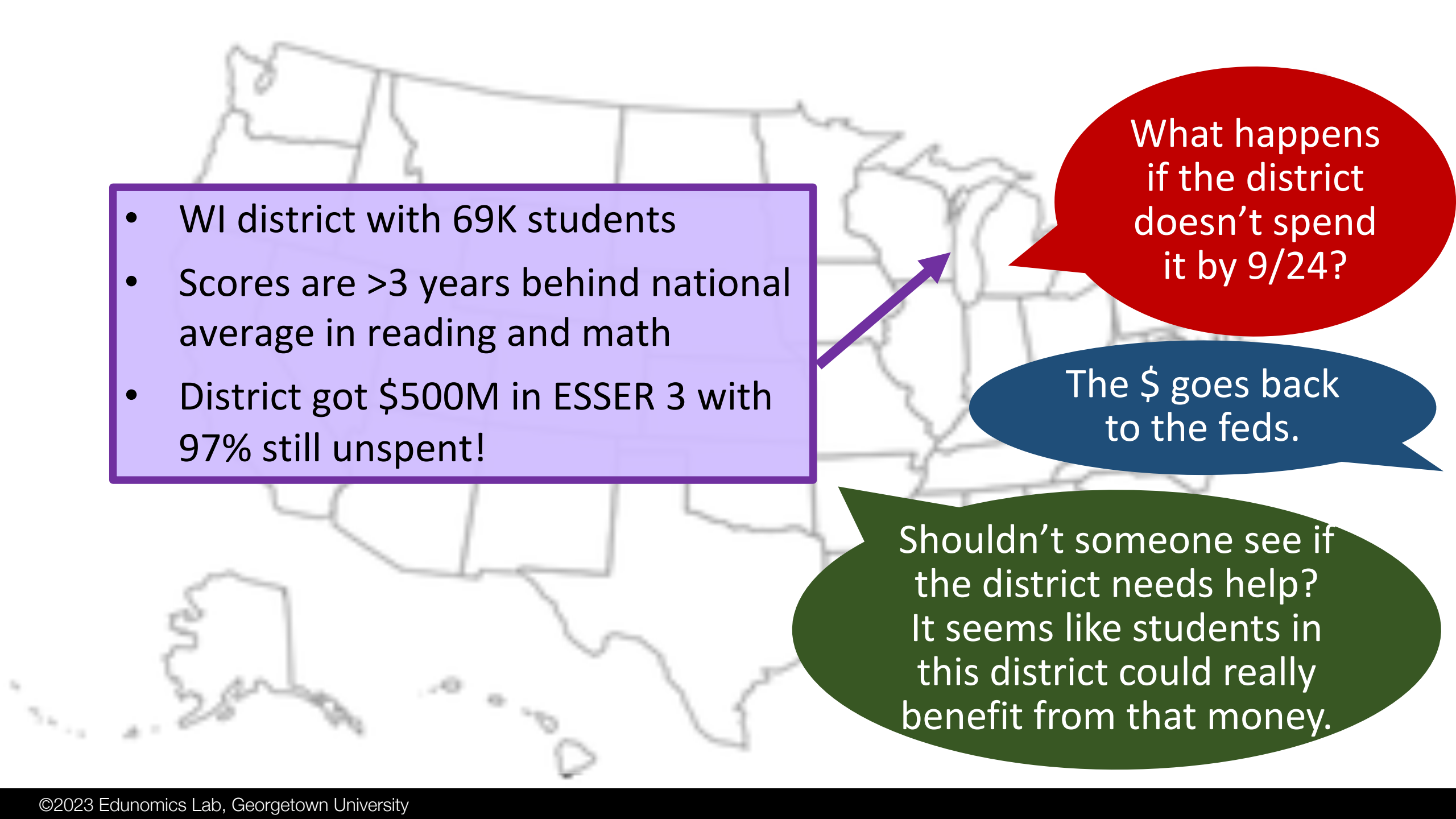
- OR district with 10K students
- Scores are >3 years behind the national average in math and still falling
- District has spent less than 10% of ESSER 3

View Edunomicslab.org/esser-spending for available data on district-by-district ESSER spending.

- 
- MN district with 4K students has 10% fewer students met math standard after pandemic
 - District spent all of its \$6M in ESSER by Aug 2022, on regular instruction
 - Yet students still have a long way to go to recover

- 
- PA district with 16K students
 - Scores are >3 years behind the national average in math and reading
 - District has spent less than 10% of ESSER 3*

*Data from PA as of 04/01/23

- 
- WI district with 69K students
 - Scores are >3 years behind national average in reading and math
 - District got \$500M in ESSER 3 with 97% still unspent!

What happens if the district doesn't spend it by 9/24?

The \$ goes back to the feds.

Shouldn't someone see if the district needs help? It seems like students in this district could really benefit from that money.

Now's a great time to check in with districts at risk of returning some ESSER. In Illinois, 69 districts have spent <20% of ESSER 3 and have >\$300K remaining. Edunomicslab.org/esser-spending

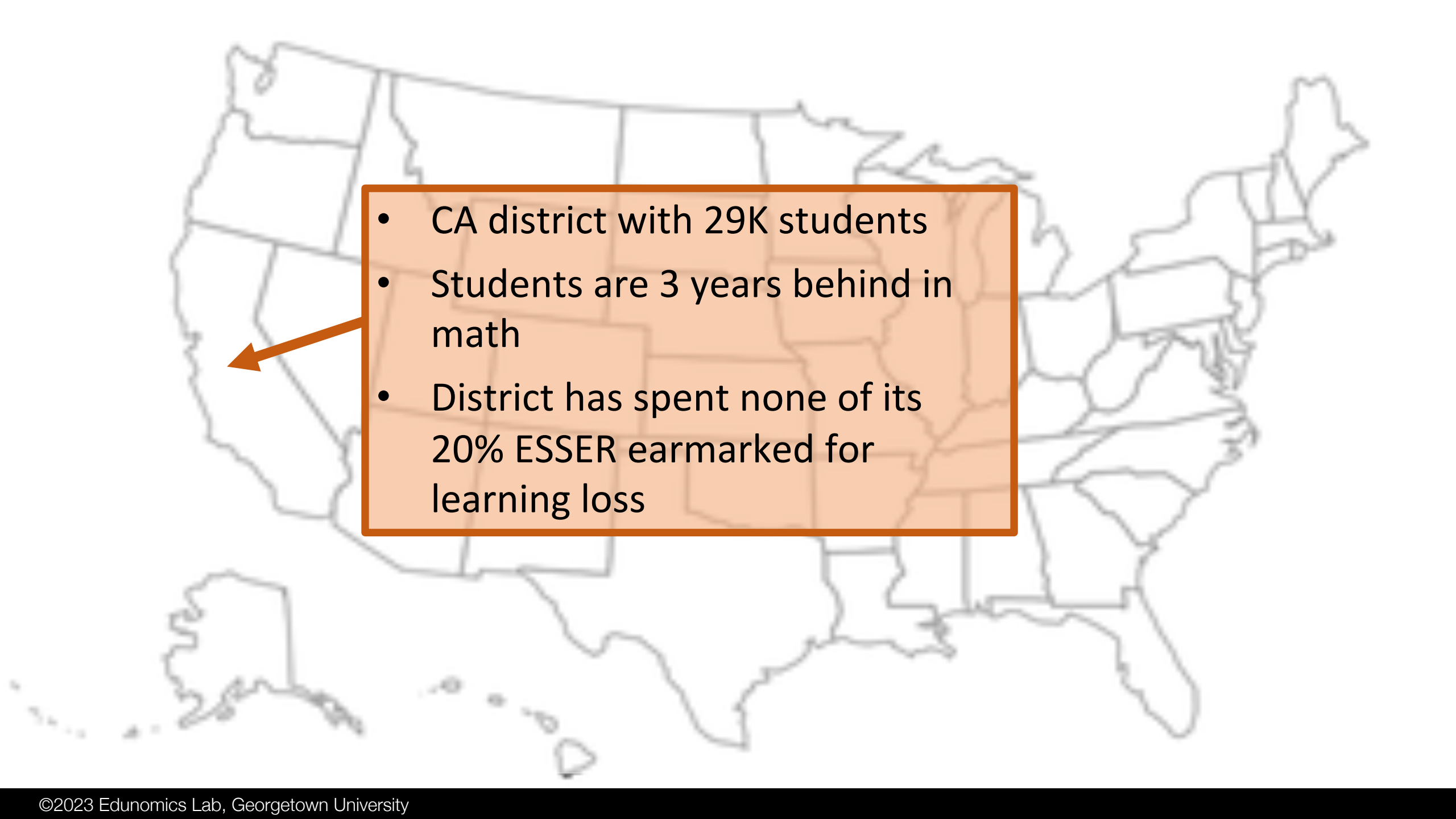
	Total ESSER III Allocation	% ESSER III Spent	\$ Remain		Total ESSER III Allocation	% ESSER III Spent	\$ Remain		Total ESSER III Allocation	% ESSER III Spent	\$ Remain
Mazon-Verona-Kinsmen	\$302,993	0%	\$302,993	Niles Twp HSD 219	\$5,169,537	0%	\$5,169,537	Spoon River Valley CUSD 10	\$489,519	14%	\$418,910
Chester-East Lincoln CUSD 1	\$323,721	0%	\$323,721	Hazel Crest SD 152-5	\$5,513,589	0%	\$5,513,589	Spring Garden Community School District	\$872,171	15%	\$744,974
Cissna Park CUSD 6	\$332,558	0%	\$332,558	Township HSD 211	\$9,291,700	0%	\$9,291,700	Tuscola CUSD 301	\$1,345,305	15%	\$1,144,078
Greenview CUSD 200	\$337,010	0%	\$337,010	Dolton SD 148	\$13,876,186	0%	\$13,848,716	North Boone CUSD 200	\$2,382,651	15%	\$2,020,665
Riley CCSD 18	\$345,335	0%	\$345,335	J S Morton HSD 201	\$23,965,621	0%	\$23,965,621	Pinckneyville CHSD 10	\$636,284	16%	\$532,773
Odell CCSD 435	\$379,401	0%	\$379,401	Rosemont ESD 78	\$403,445	3%	\$391,801	Rockridge CUSD 300	\$1,477,999	16%	\$1,236,781
Lake ROE	\$483,724	0%	\$483,724	Brookwood SD 167	\$4,471,401	3%	\$4,331,995	East Alton SD 13	\$3,044,697	16%	\$2,551,385
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Marengo CHSD 154	\$606,378	0%	\$606,378	Rochelle CCSD 231	\$2,458,430	4%	\$2,366,190	Rich Twp HSD 227	\$7,009,381	16%	\$5,870,922
Urban Prep West Chicago	\$650,376	0%	\$650,376	West Chicago ESD 33	\$7,679,205	4%	\$7,374,309	North Chicago SD 187	\$11,645,963	16%	\$9,775,227
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Chicago Lighthouse	\$1,417,101	0%	\$1,417,101	Jasper County CUD 1	\$2,550,788	10%	\$2,287,624	Maine Township HSD 1	\$5,815,662	18%	\$4,765,382
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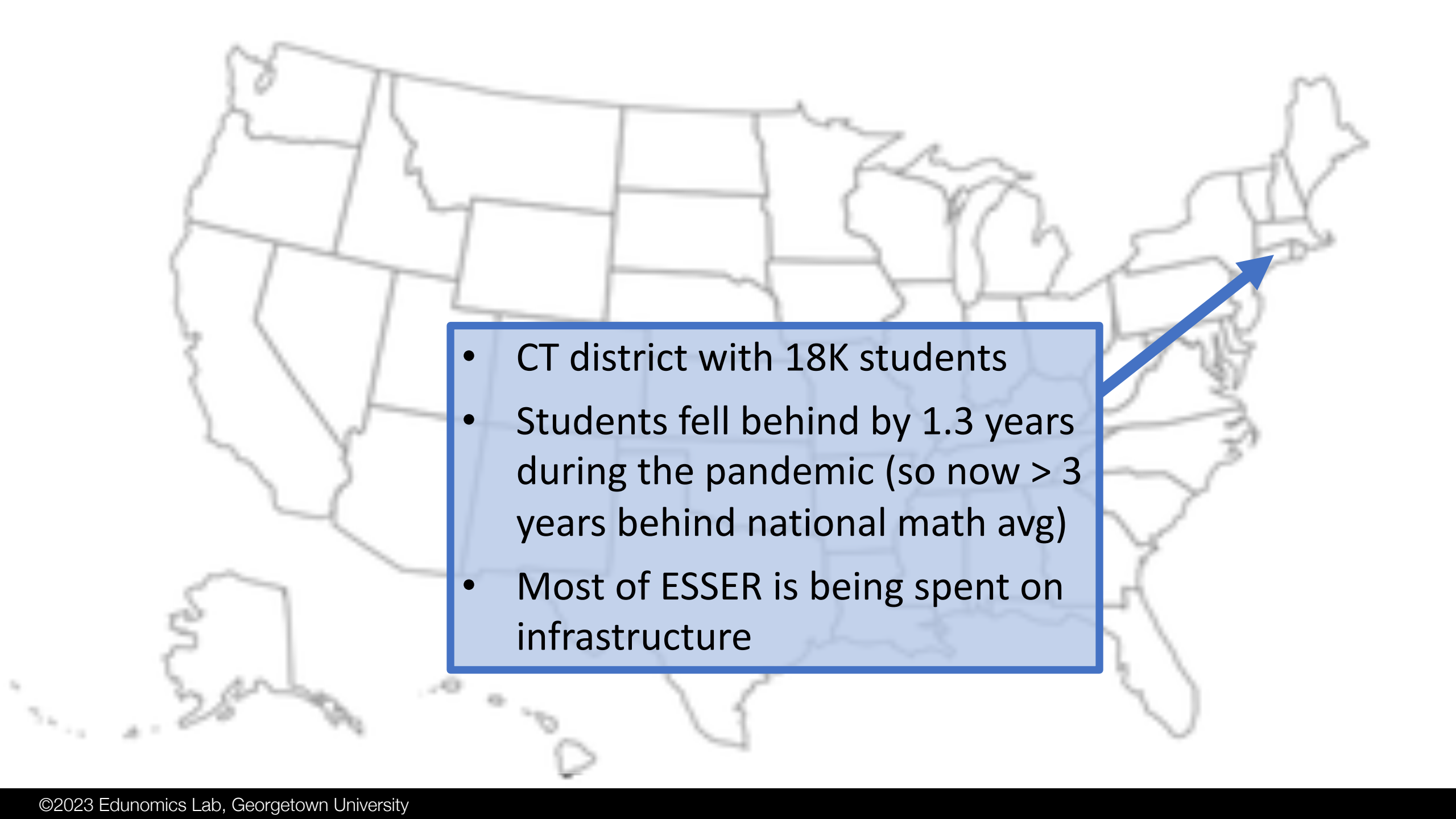
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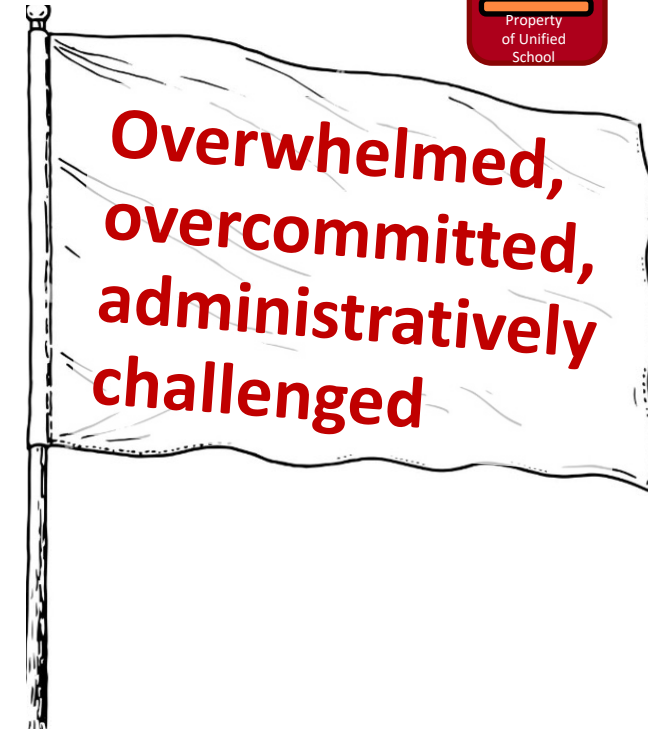
Types of distress signals we're seeing in some districts' data:

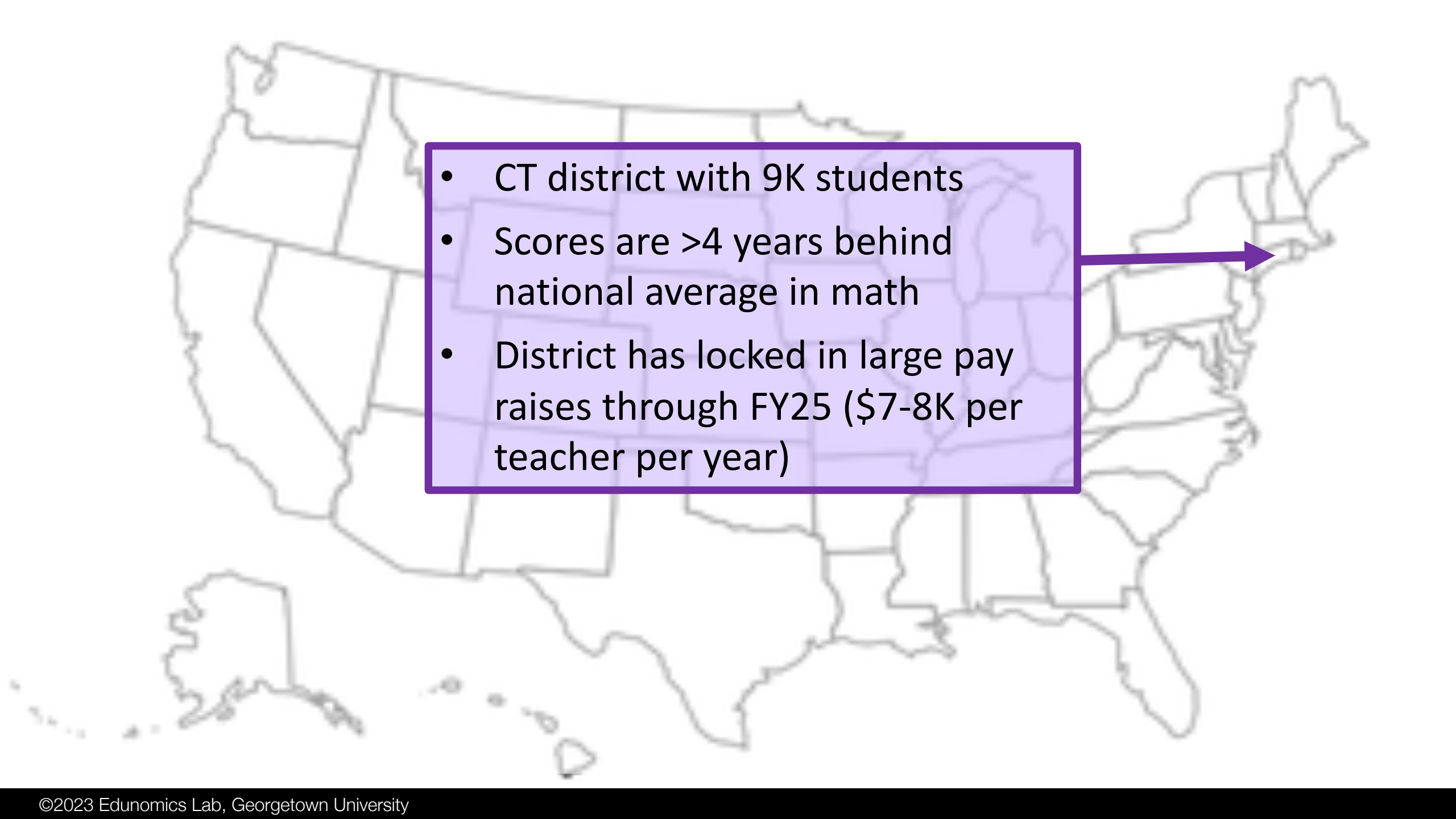


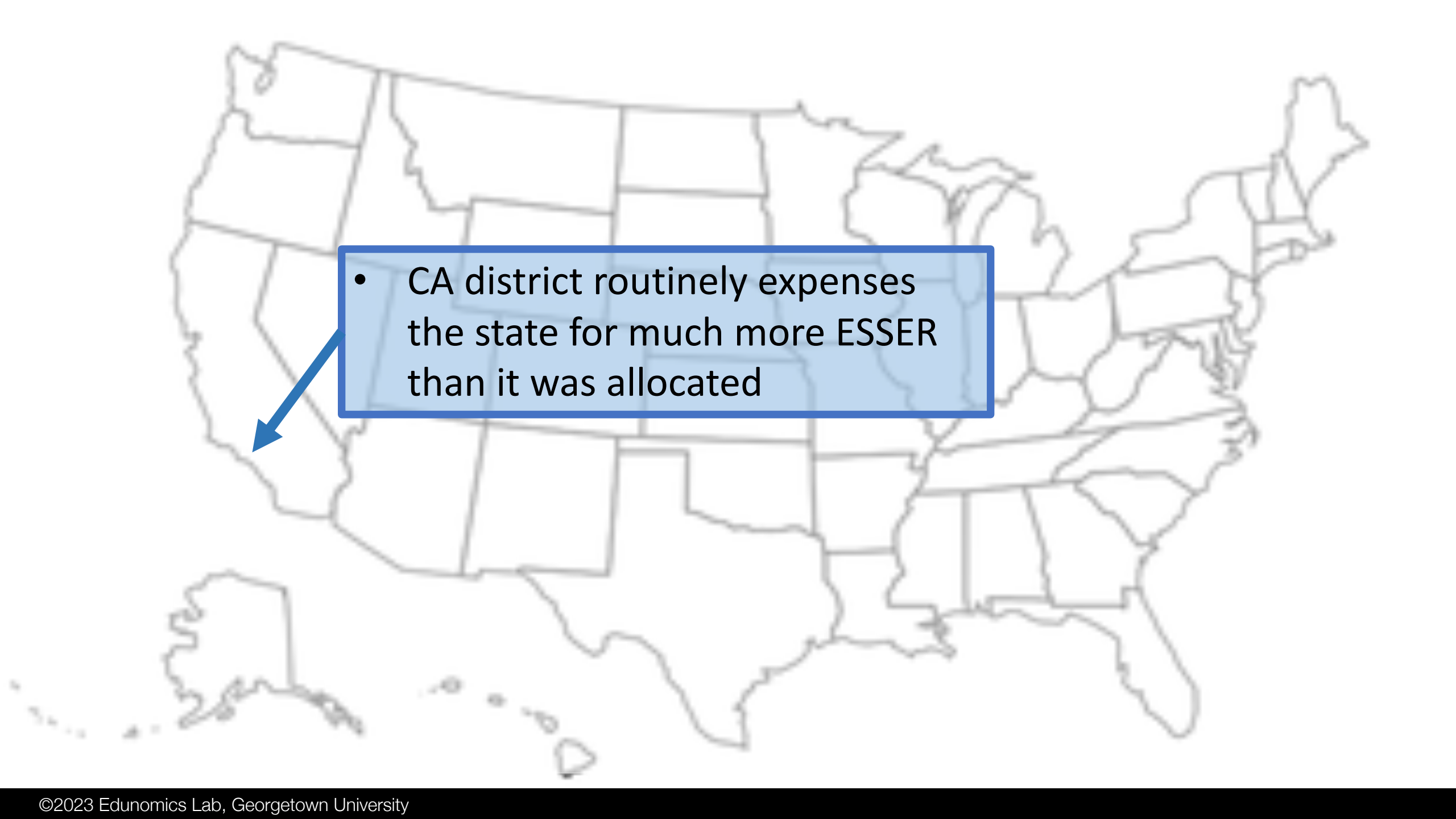
- 
- A map of the United States with a callout box pointing to California. The callout box contains three bullet points.
- CA district with 29K students
 - Students are 3 years behind in math
 - District has spent none of its 20% ESSER earmarked for learning loss

- 
- CT district with 18K students
 - Students fell behind by 1.3 years during the pandemic (so now > 3 years behind national math avg)
 - Most of ESSER is being spent on infrastructure

Types of distress signals we're seeing in some districts' data:



- 
- A map of the United States with a purple box highlighting a region in the Northeast. An arrow points from the box to the state of Connecticut. The box contains a bulleted list of information about a CT district.
- CT district with 9K students
 - Scores are >4 years behind national average in math
 - District has locked in large pay raises through FY25 (\$7-8K per teacher per year)

- 
- A map of the United States with a blue callout box containing text. An arrow points from the box to the state of California. The text inside the box reads: "• CA district routinely expenses the state for much more ESSER than it was allocated".
- CA district routinely expenses the state for much more ESSER than it was allocated

Connect the data... and you can hear the distress signals

**District-wide
student
outcomes in
free fall**



**Poorly
paced ESSER
spending**



**Spending
not aligned
with needs**



**Overwhelmed,
overcommitted,
administratively
challenged**



Selected district profile from RI

District Profile: ESSER and the coming fiscal cliff | Providence Public Schools, RI

This is the last full school year to spend ESSER funds. The district has only this school year to ensure these remaining funds deliver value for students while also planning for operating without this money (aka preparing for the "cliff").



ESSER funding for this district

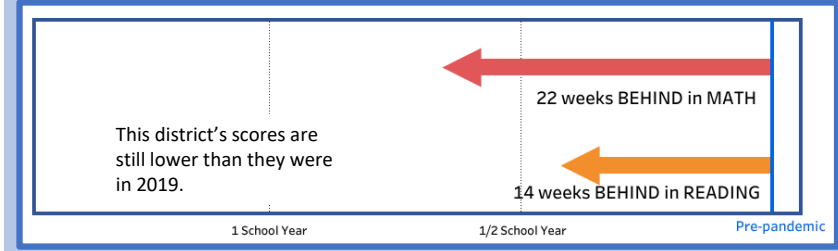
This district received: \$200,306,679 (\$9,665 per student)

Currently the district has

\$120,439,475 remaining
(\$5,811 per pupil)

Even where districts have already obligated these remaining funds, leaders must ensure that the dollars bring value for students during the coming year.

There is still work to do to get this district's students back to pre-pandemic levels



Download profiles for select New England districts:
bit.ly/districtprofilesESSER

How big is the ESSER cliff for this district?

As ESSER spending ends, the impact as a portion of annual expenditures

equates to a

17% fiscal cliff

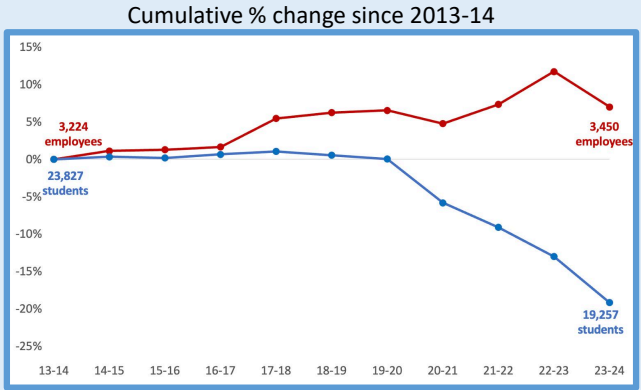
This means leaders will need to reduce spending by 17% for the 2024-25 school year.

Addressing this cliff means an estimated

320-500 FTE positions are at risk

Staffing and enrollment trends in this district

staffing +7%
enrollment -19%



Looking ahead

- ✓ Intense academic acceleration is needed. Providence students are 3 years behind the national average in math, among the lowest in the country.
- ✓ It appears this district has spent its ESSER more slowly than peers (unless the district has fallen behind in filing reimbursements). With so much unspent, the district has more work to do during this school year to invest remaining dollars effectively to boost academic outcomes while planning for those investments to end.
- ✓ Given dramatic enrollment drops (19%), this district may need to further right-size its operations as part of addressing its budget gaps.

These data are from publicly available sources. Users can and should bring updated data to conversations when available. Questions regarding data or methodology, email edunomics@georgetown.edu. Typo revised 10/19/23.



What federal mechanisms are in place to ensure data is used?

Federal accountability pressures were relaxed with bipartisan support under ESSA.*



*ESSA was signed December, 2015.

And ESSER required little oversight.

It seems unlikely that the feds will do more.

The following states haven't released district's ESSER\$ since last spring: AZ FL KS KY MD MN NY PA WY

Some SEAs are using the data and responding...

- A. Read the signs, raise the alarm bells inside the SEA
- B. Convene distressed districts around common challenges
- C. Use resource allocation reviews to focus on the district
- D. Encourage distressed districts to apply for more supports
- E. Require district boards to review student data
- F. Use transparent language with media
- G. Show up at school board meetings (to sound alarm bells) (CA fiscal advisor)
- H. State takeover (and/or state-appointed advisor)

Responses vary substantially by state

Should SEAs be doing more?

Note that efforts to help all districts are different than efforts to help the “Mayday” districts.



Sometimes we hear...

It's not the SEAs role to tell districts what to do.

We have local control in our state. There's not much we can do.

Our SEA work is siloed (ESSER vs. non-ESSER).

That's over my paygrade.

We don't want to shame districts.

There's too much political sensitivity right now.



In the end, children can suffer when we ignore distress signals.

- VA district, 4K students
- Scores are > 4 years behind national average in math

C'mon, Virginia!
We showed you a sign.
We sent up a signal...
Now throw us a line!



Is it fair to
leave
students to
languish in
distressed
districts?

Q&A

Marguerite Roza @MargueriteRoza
MR1170@georgetown.edu

Note: Q&A is off the record unless otherwise stated

Visit EdunomicsLab.org for webinar slides, recording, and other resources.
Sign up for our newsletter at <http://bit.ly/EdFiNews>

WILD RIDE AHEAD

A Workshop On District
Finances Post ESSER

December 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th

12-2PM ET

edunomicslab.org/wildride

Certificate in Education Finance

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2023
PITTSBURGH

JANUARY 18-20, 2024
LAS VEGAS

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