

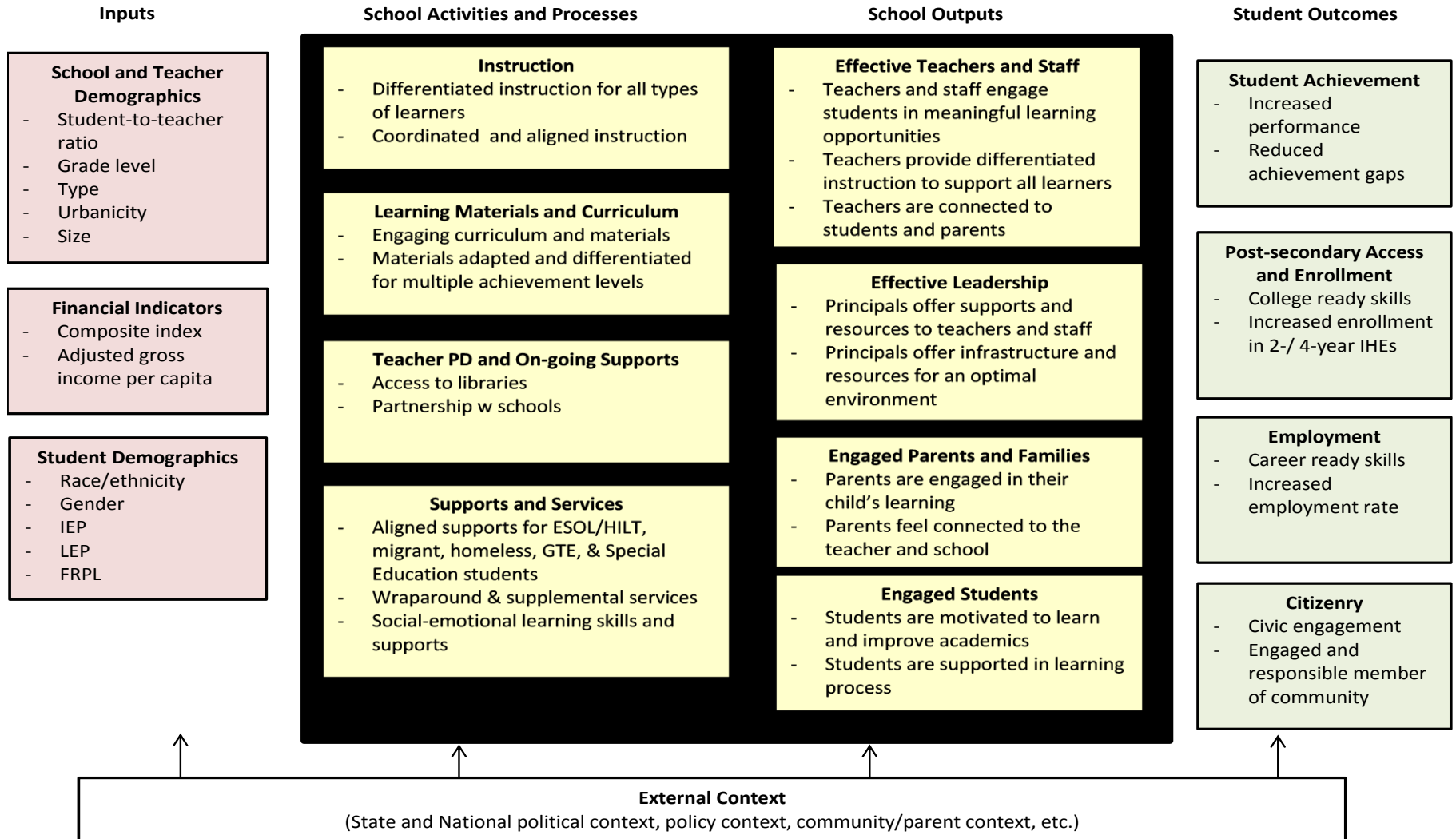
# **Statistical Peer Groups: Creating Demographically Similar Peer Groups of Schools to Aid School Improvement Efforts**

Research conducted for the Virginia Department of Education by Plus  
Alpha Research and Consulting

# Need for Study

- Schools are often sorted by geographic region or status based on student achievement (e.g., priority school, focus school, schools accredited with warning) for the delivery of technical assistance
- Schools served by the Office of School Improvement suggested that improvement efforts might be better focused by establishing groups of schools that educated students with similar backgrounds.

# School Improvement Efforts: A Complex System and Process



# School Improvement Efforts: Focusing on Inputs

## Inputs

### School and Teacher Demographics

- Student-to-teacher ratio
- Grade level
- Type
- Urbanicity
- Size

### Financial Indicators

- Composite index
- Adjusted gross income per capita

### Student Demographics

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- IEP
- LEP
- FRPL

## Student Outcomes

### Student Achievement

- Increased performance
- Reduced achievement gaps

### Post-secondary Access and Enrollment

- College ready skills
- Increased enrollment in 2-/ 4-year IHEs

### Employment

- Career ready skills
- Increased employment rate

### Citizenry

- Civic engagement
- Engaged and responsible member of community

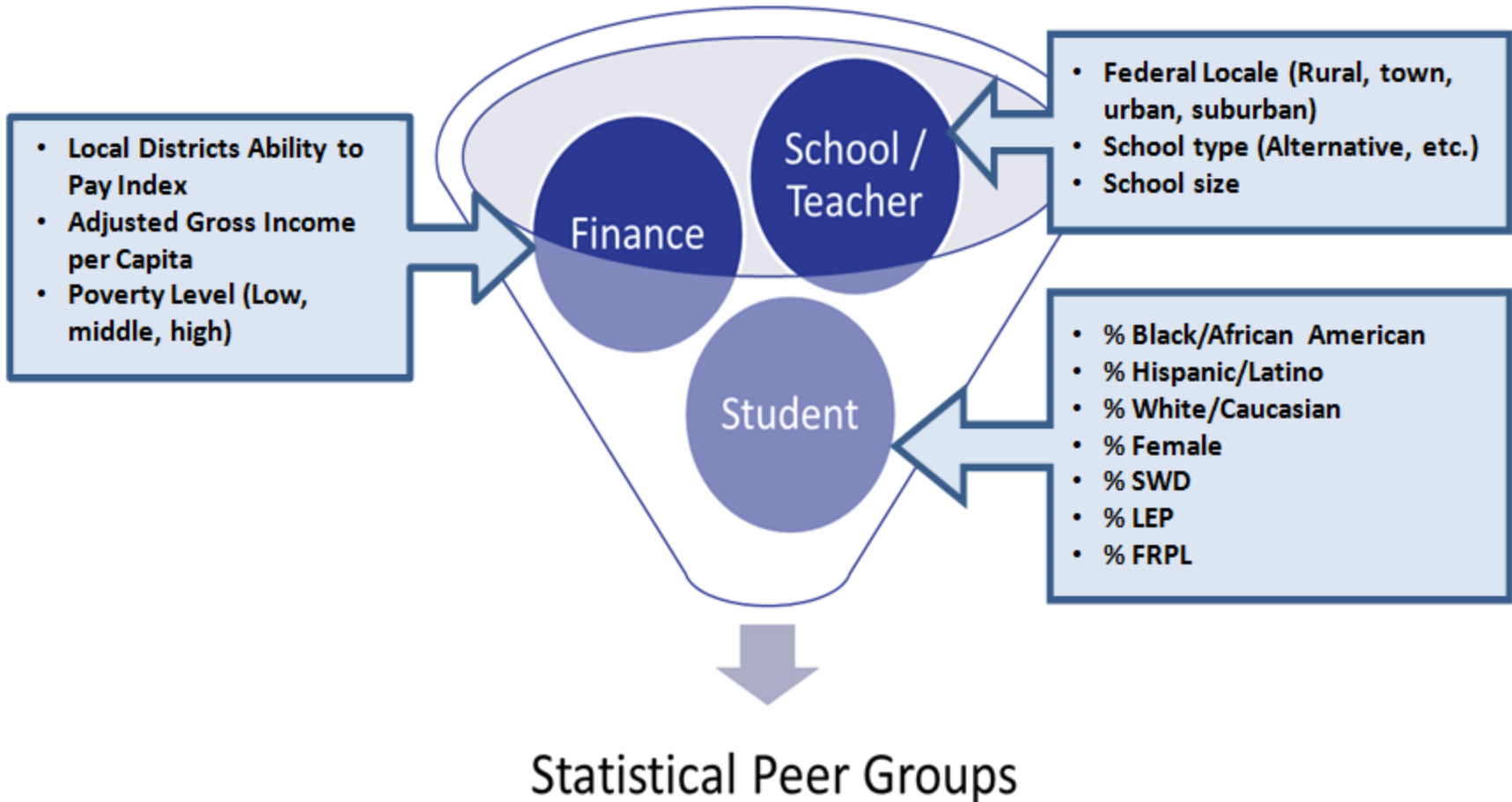
## The Statistical Peer Groups Project:

- Connects Inputs and Outcomes by sorting similar schools into groups or clusters.
- Enables targeted professional development and technical assistance to clusters of schools.
- Matches kids to kids, across schools.

### External Context

(State and National political context, policy context, community/parent context, etc.)





# “Inputs” Used to Establish Virginia Peer Groups

- School Characteristics
  - School Type (Elementary, Middle, or High School)
  - School Size
- Student Demographics
  - % of Asian Students
  - % of Black Students
  - % of Hispanic Students
  - % of White Students
  - % of Students with Disabilities
  - % of Limited English Proficient Students
  - % of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch
- Financial Information
  - Division Ability to Pay
  - Per Capita Income

# Potential Uses for Results

- Development of community of learners among educators who serve similar student populations
  - Development of Professional Learning Communities
  - Target professional development and technical assistance efforts to similar groups of schools
- Identify schools in which “promising practices” are making a difference for students

# Discussion of Next Steps

- Thoughts on dissemination of information?
- Other ways in which information might be used?
- Any concerns or cautions?



# Questions?

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