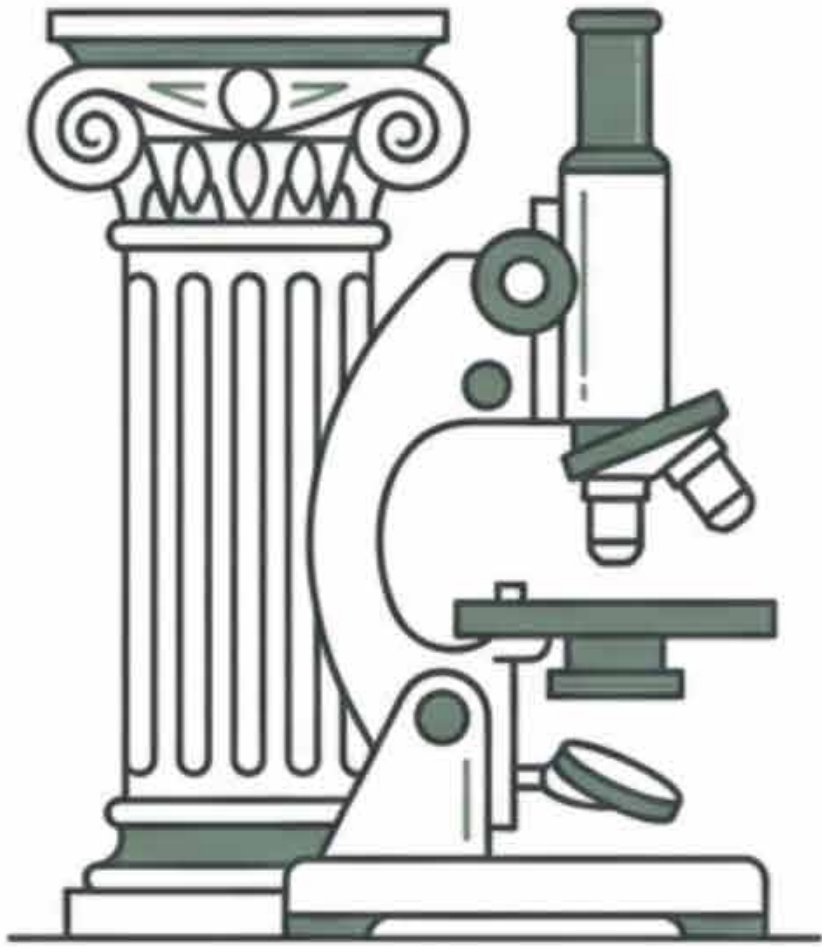


# Educational Equity Under Constraint

Resource Allocation, Innovation, and the  
Case for Funding Parity in Rochester's  
Charter Schools.



# A City Defined by Paradox



World-class Institutions

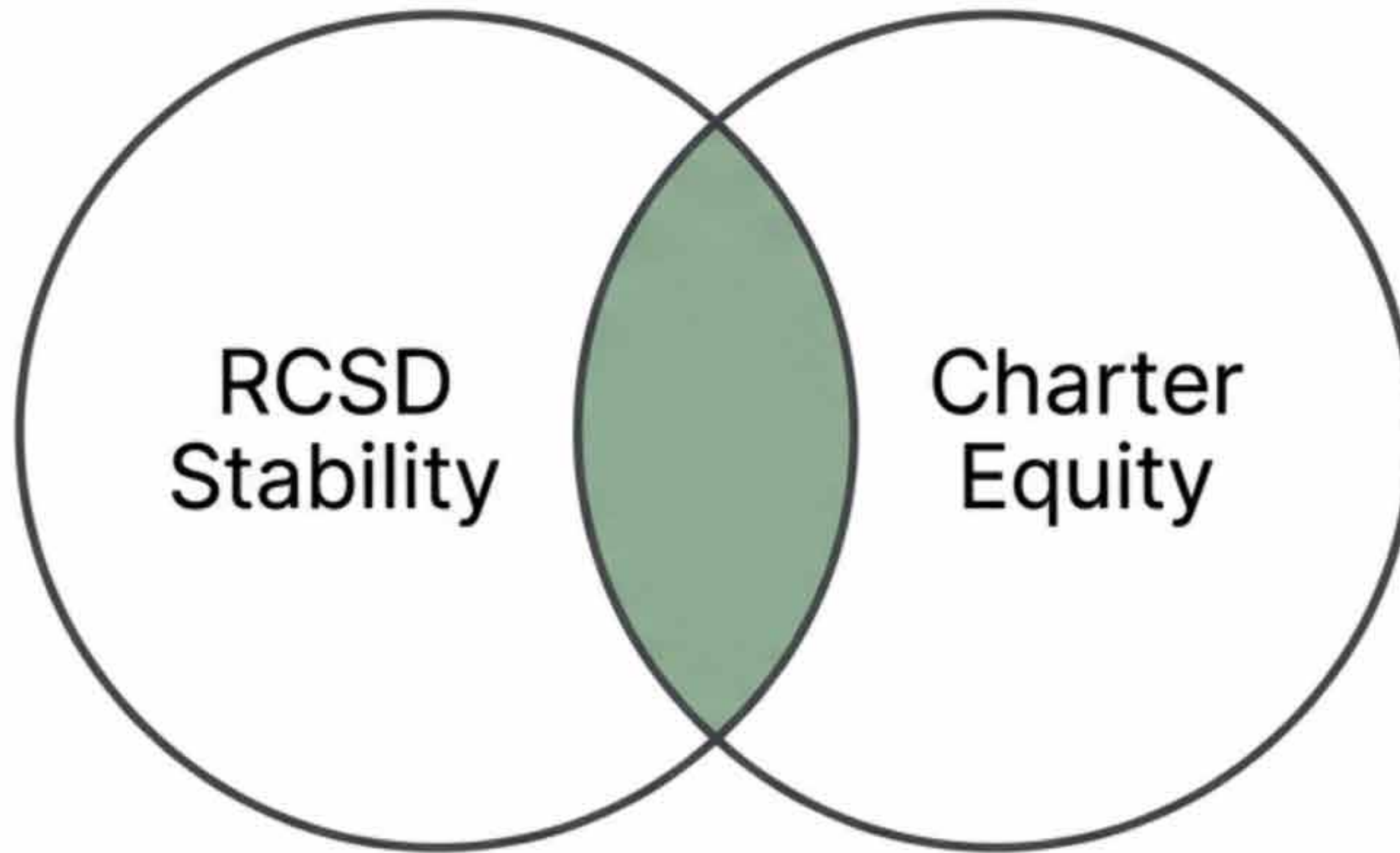
**42%**

Child Poverty Rate  
(5th highest nationally)

Rochester is a hub of innovation yet faces a defining contradiction. It is the only major city in NY where charter funding declined despite historic state spending highs.

Inter: 9,200 students (30% of public school population) attend charter schools.

# The 'Both/And' Framework



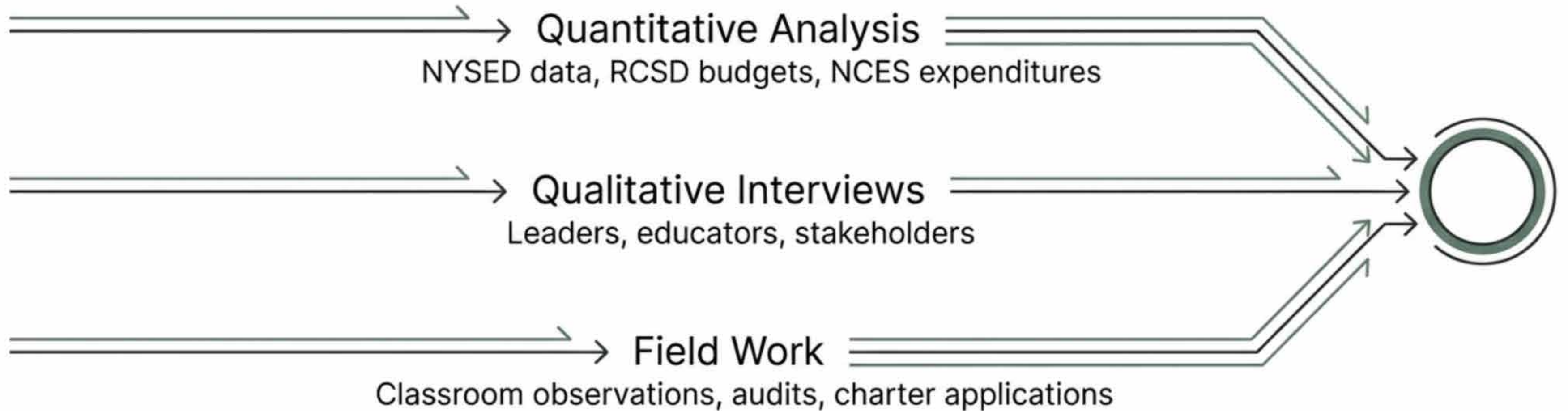
*“Supporting Rochester’s charter schools and supporting the Rochester City School District are not competing goals.”*

## Context:

RCSD faces a **\$53M budget gap** and **47% enrollment decline** since 1998.

This report argues for State remedy, not local competition.

# 12 Months of Concurrent Triangulation



Methodology designed to answer: How does resource constraint affect student opportunity? What are the mechanisms of the gap?

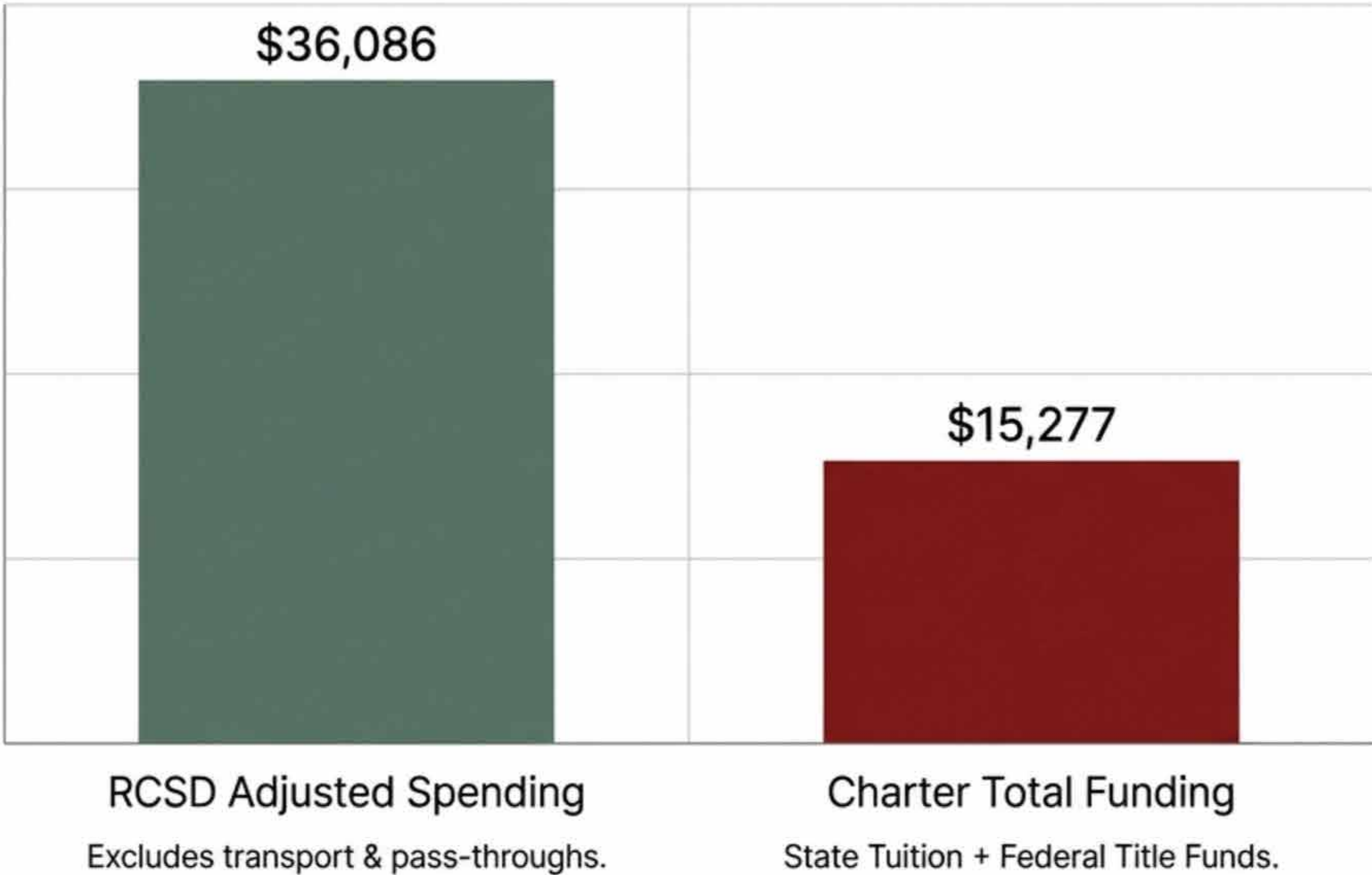
The Gap is

\$20,809

Per Pupil

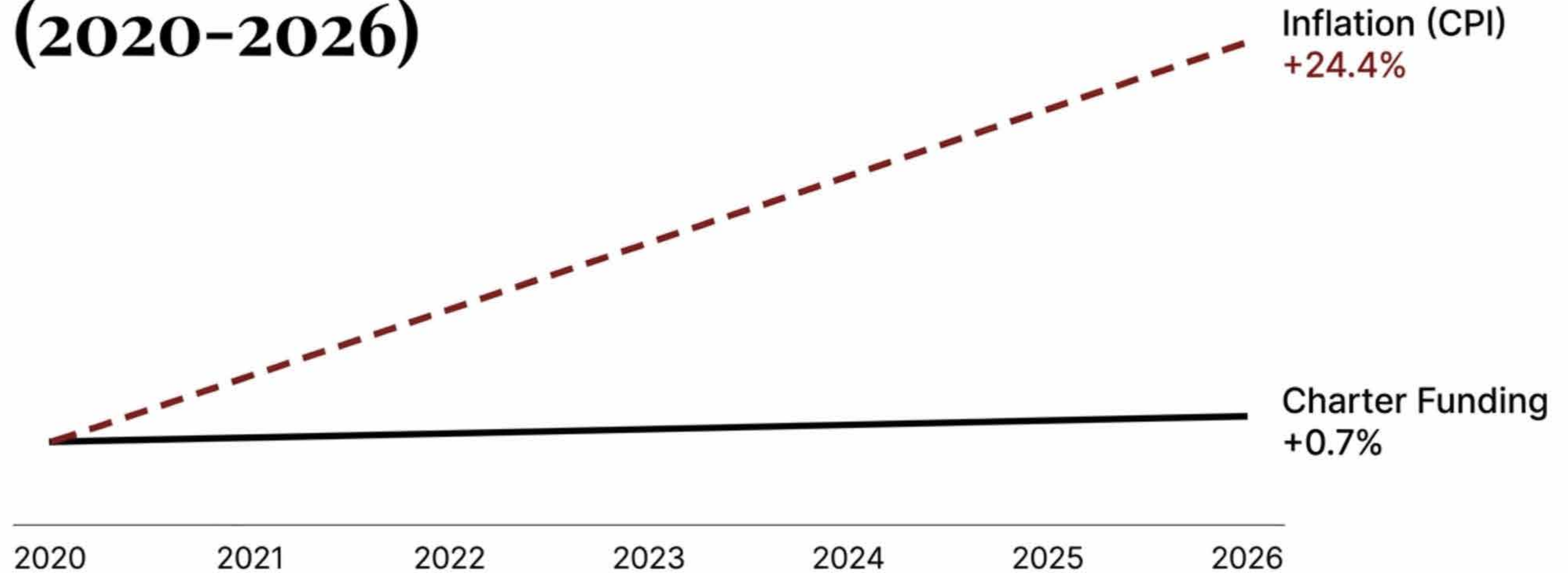
The difference in public investment between a student in a Rochester charter school and a student in a district-operated school (Adjusted Instructional Comparison). This is a structural design feature, not an error.

# Visualizing the Disparity



Charter schools receive approximately 42 cents for every dollar available to educate a student in a district school.

# The Erosion of Value (2020-2026)



Since 2020, purchasing power has plummeted. To match 2020 buying power, schools would need **\$17,640** today. Instead, they have **\$14,277**.

# The Mechanics of the Flaw

RCSD Enrollment Declines (-47%)



'Hold Harmless' protects District funding → Per-Pupil District Spending rises.



THE GLITCH: Charter Formula tracks Total Spending, not Per-Pupil.



Charter Growth Factor drops below 1.0 → **Funding Cut.**

In 2024-25, Rochester was the only Big Five city where charter rates dropped (-\$228/pupil).

# The Poverty Inversion

ROCHESTER



42% Child Poverty

**\$14,277 Funding**

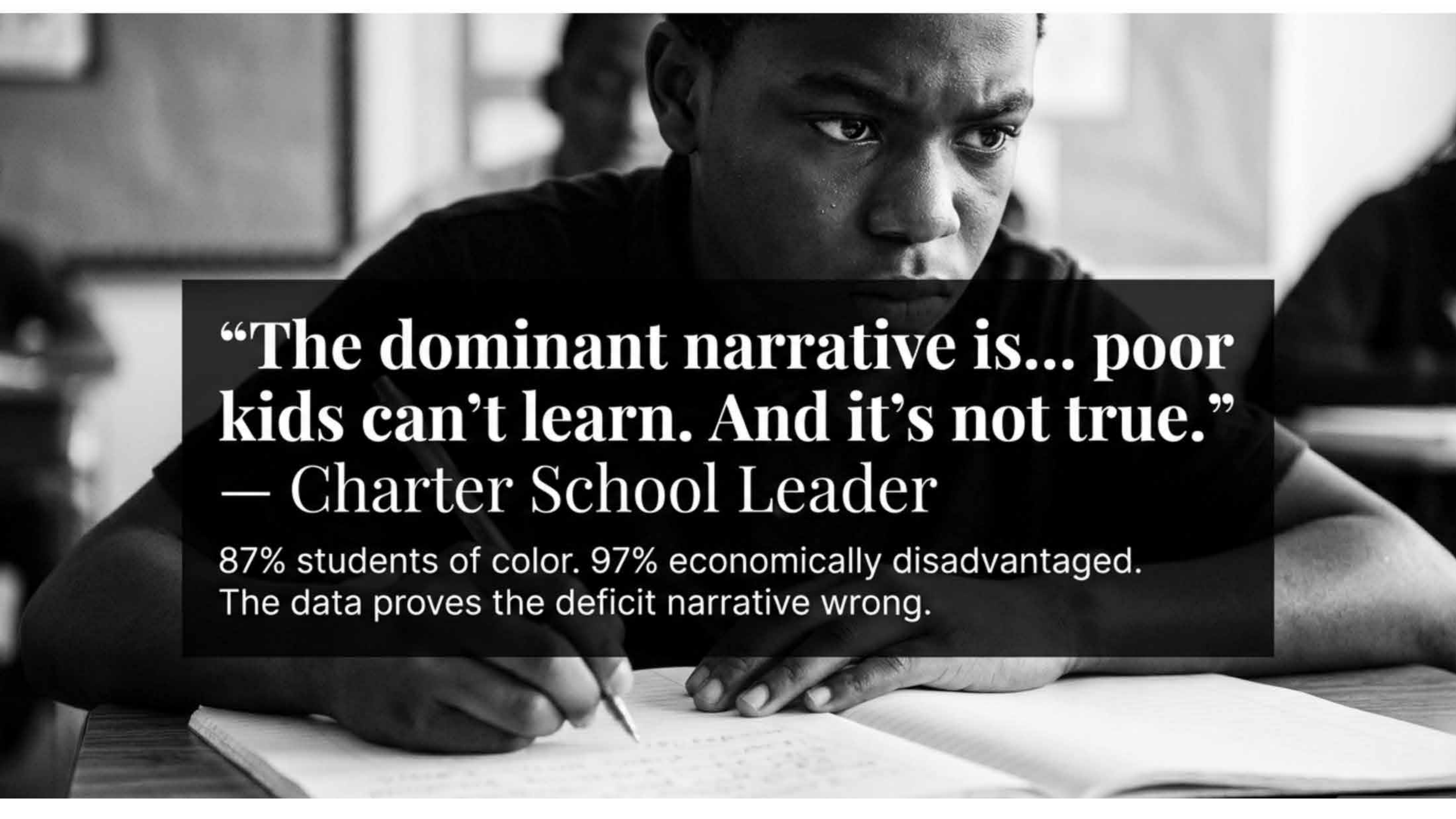
YONKERS



17% Child Poverty

**\$18,310 Funding**

The city with nearly 2.5x the poverty rate receives 22% less per charter student. The formula contains no poverty weight.



**“The dominant narrative is... poor kids can’t learn. And it’s not true.”  
— Charter School Leader**

87% students of color. 97% economically disadvantaged.  
The data proves the deficit narrative wrong.

# Evidence of Excellence



Outperformed district in Math

90%

Graduation Rate  
(vs 67% District)

100%

4-Year College Acceptance  
(Specific Networks)

Results achieved with a population that mirrors RCSD's high-need demographics.

# Diverse Models of Innovation



## **College Prep**

High expectations,  
extended days.



## **Expeditionary**

The City as Classroom.



## **STEAM**

Literacy-first approach  
to science/arts.



## **Dual-Language**

Culturally grounded,  
bilingual.

# The Speed of Intervention



“We’re **tracking...** looking at kids where we have 10 **minutes.** We can do a lot in 10 minutes.”

# From 'Policing' to 'Joyful Rigor'

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## Former Paradigm

Fear-based compliance

Silence

Rigid control



## Current Reality

Relational trust

Loving Accountability

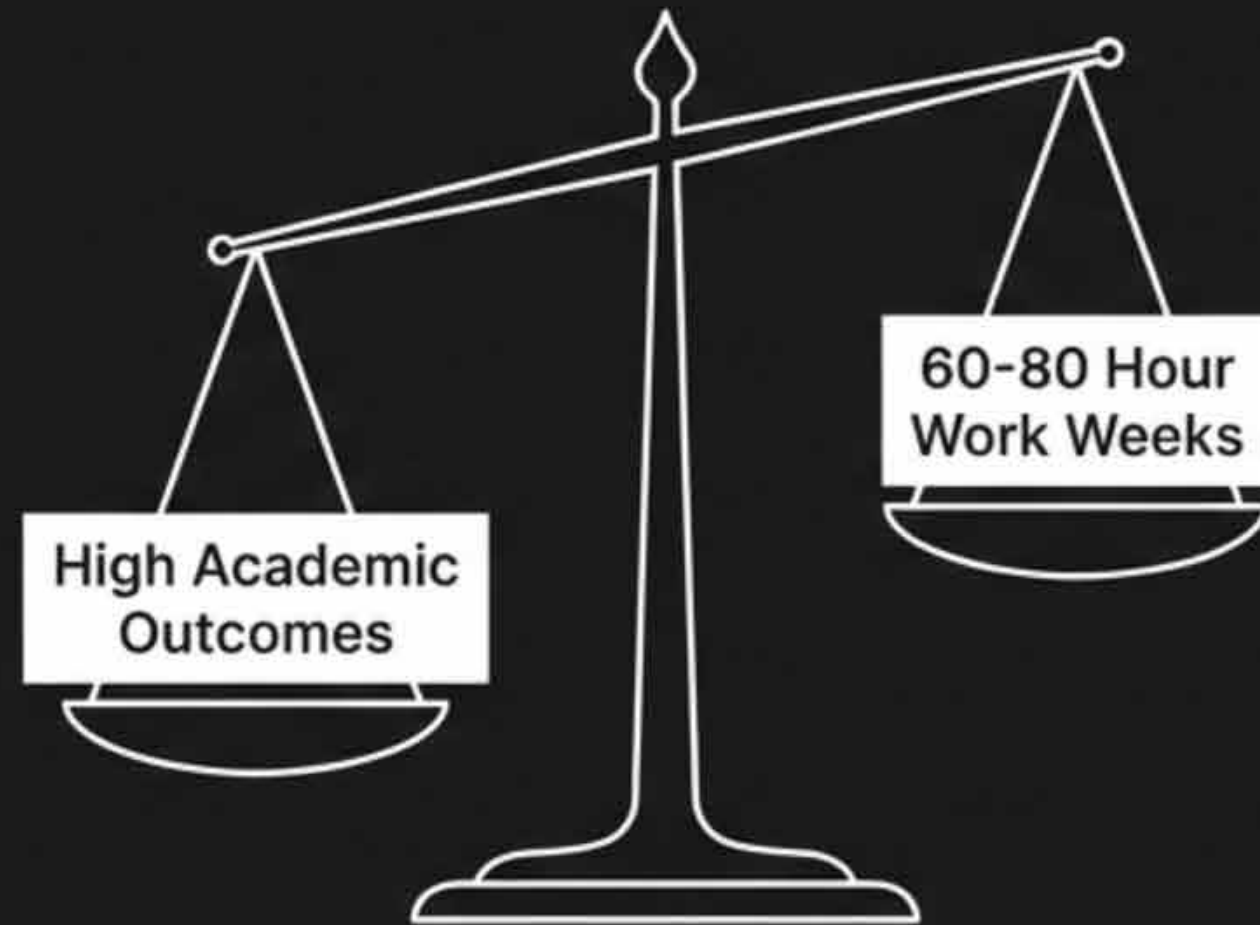
Identity-affirming cultures

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The sector has undergone a self-reckoning, moving away from assimilationist models toward culturally responsive environments.

# The Sustainability Crisis

Success is currently subsidized by human burnout.



“ “I can tell you how we do it efficiently. We underpay people and overwork them.” — Charter School Leader ”

# The Compensation Gap

\$61,785 (RCSD Average)

\$44,801 (Charter Average)

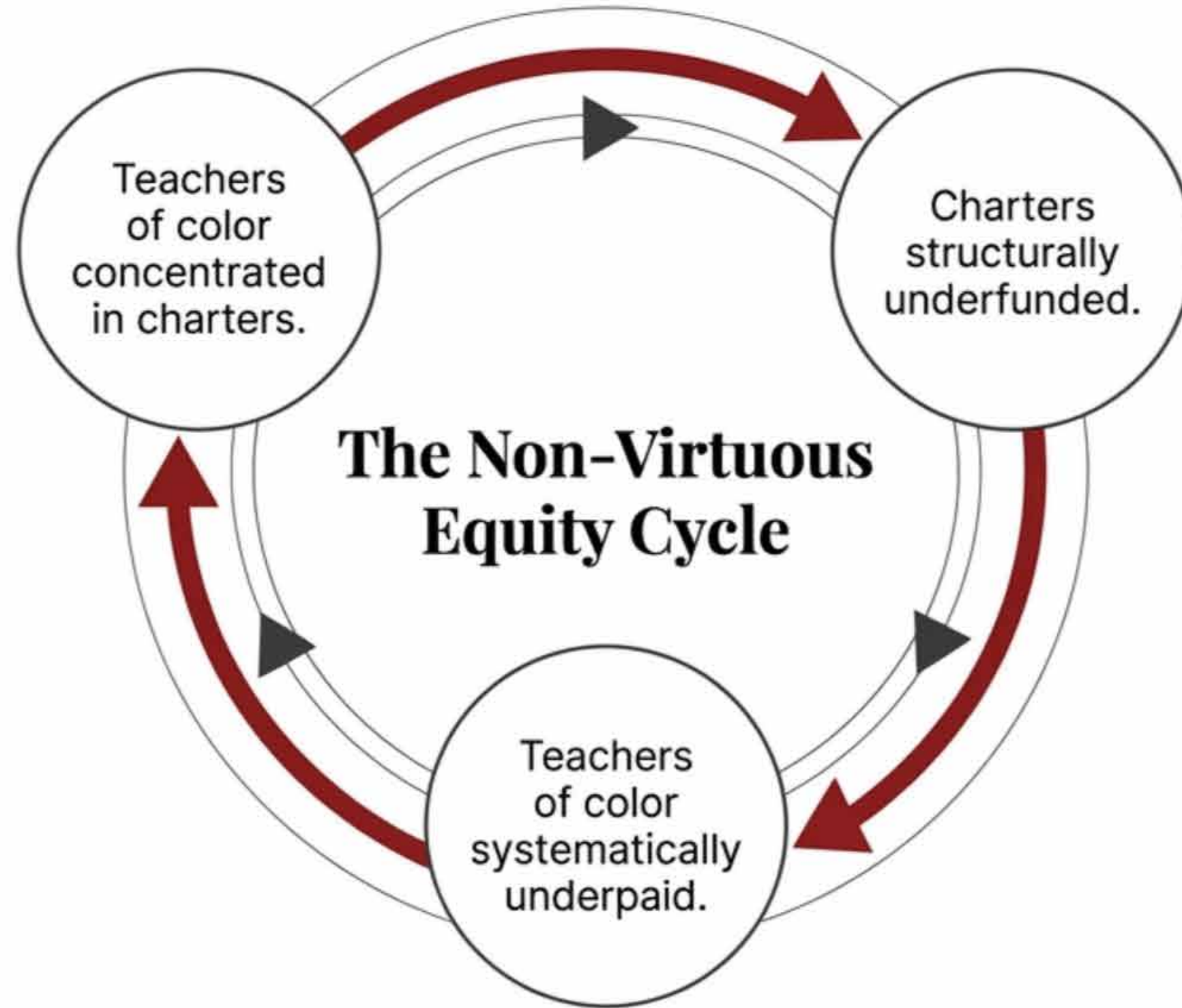
**25-27%**  
**Disparity**



No Pensions  
(403b vs. TRS)




The lack of parity drives turnover and prevents long-term retention of veteran educators.

# The Diversity Paradox



Funding is labor policy. The current formula creates a racial wage gap for educators serving the city's Black and Brown children.

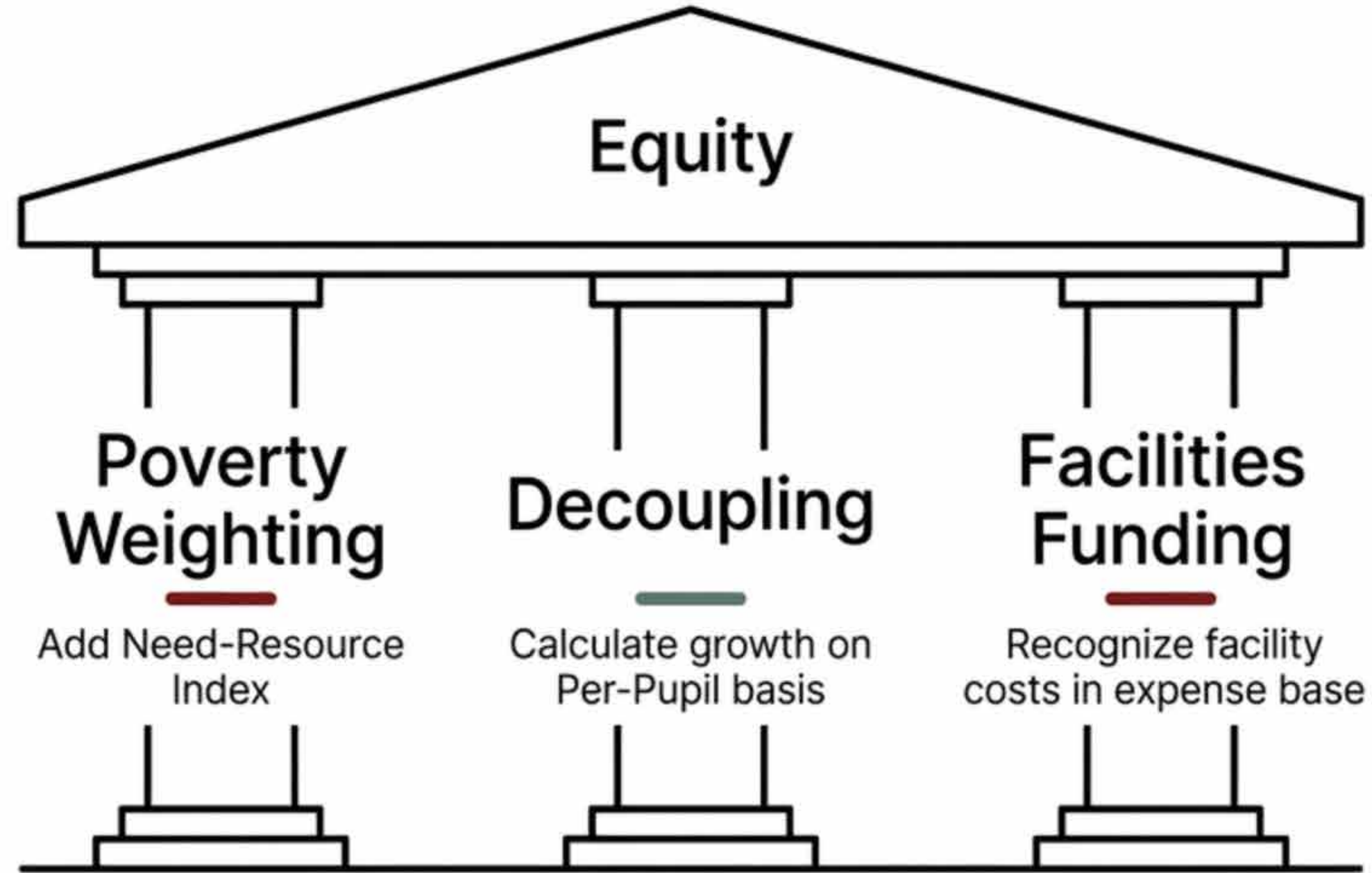
# Tier 1: Immediate Action (2026-27)

- 1  **Equity Supplement:** State-funded per-pupil supplement for high-poverty (>30%) districts.
- 2  **Inflation Floor:** Mandate that Charter Tuition cannot grow slower than CPI.
- 3  **Stabilization Aid:** One-time aid to restore \$2.1M loss from 2024-25.

## RCSD Safety Check

Neutral Impact.  
These are state appropriations, not deductions from the District.

# Tier 2: Structural Reform



Goal: Align the formula with the reality of student need.

# Tier 3: Long-Term Investment



## **Rochester Education Equity Commission**

Bipartisan planning body



## **Shared Services Pilot**

Collaboration on transport/SPED to reduce costs



## **Workforce Pipeline**

State-funded pipeline for educators of color

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Vision: Moving from competition to collaboration.

# The Constitutional Obligation

**THE CAMPAIGN FOR FISCAL EQUITY ESTABLISHED THE RIGHT TO A “SOUND BASIC EDUCATION.” APPROXIMATELY 9,200 OF ROCHESTER’S CHILDREN ATTEND CHARTER SCHOOLS. THEY ARE OVERWHELMINGLY LOW-INCOME AND BLACK AND BROWN STUDENTS. THE EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATES THAT THE CHILDREN THAT ATTEND THESE SCHOOLS, DESERVE MORE THAN 42 CENTS ON THE DOLLAR.**

# The Constitutional Obligation

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity established the right to a “sound basic education.” Approximately 9,200 of Rochester’s children attend charter schools. They are overwhelmingly low-income and students of color.

**The evidence demonstrates that these children, and the schools that serve them, deserve more than 42 cents on the dollar.**