

ISER's work in education funding & teacher retention

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Alaska Municipal League

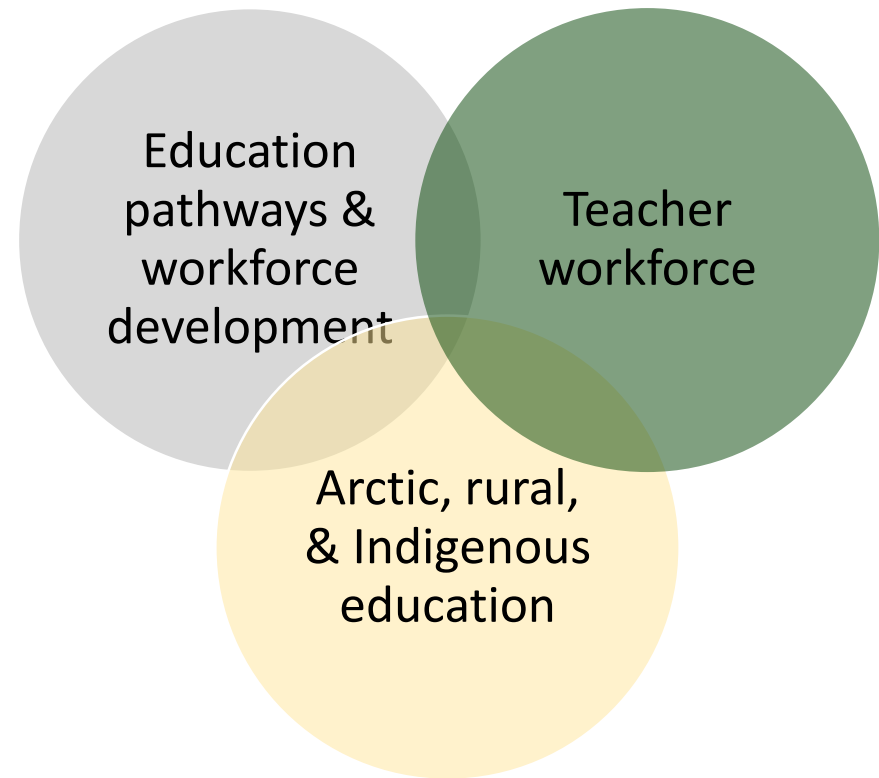


ISER has been studying Alaska's teacher workforce and education system for over 50 years.

Institute of Social & Economic Research

- Alaska-focused
- Nonpartisan
- Policy-focused
- Intended to help people understand social and economic systems

Center for Alaska Education Policy Research



Grounding today's presentation

Part 1:

Education spending

Part 2:

Teacher workforce

When you get a lot of data,
and you find the time
to really look at them,
you start to see
that the world is complicated.

- Matt Berman

For every complex problem,
there is an answer that is
clear, simple, and wrong.

- H. L. Mencken

Part 1: Education spending



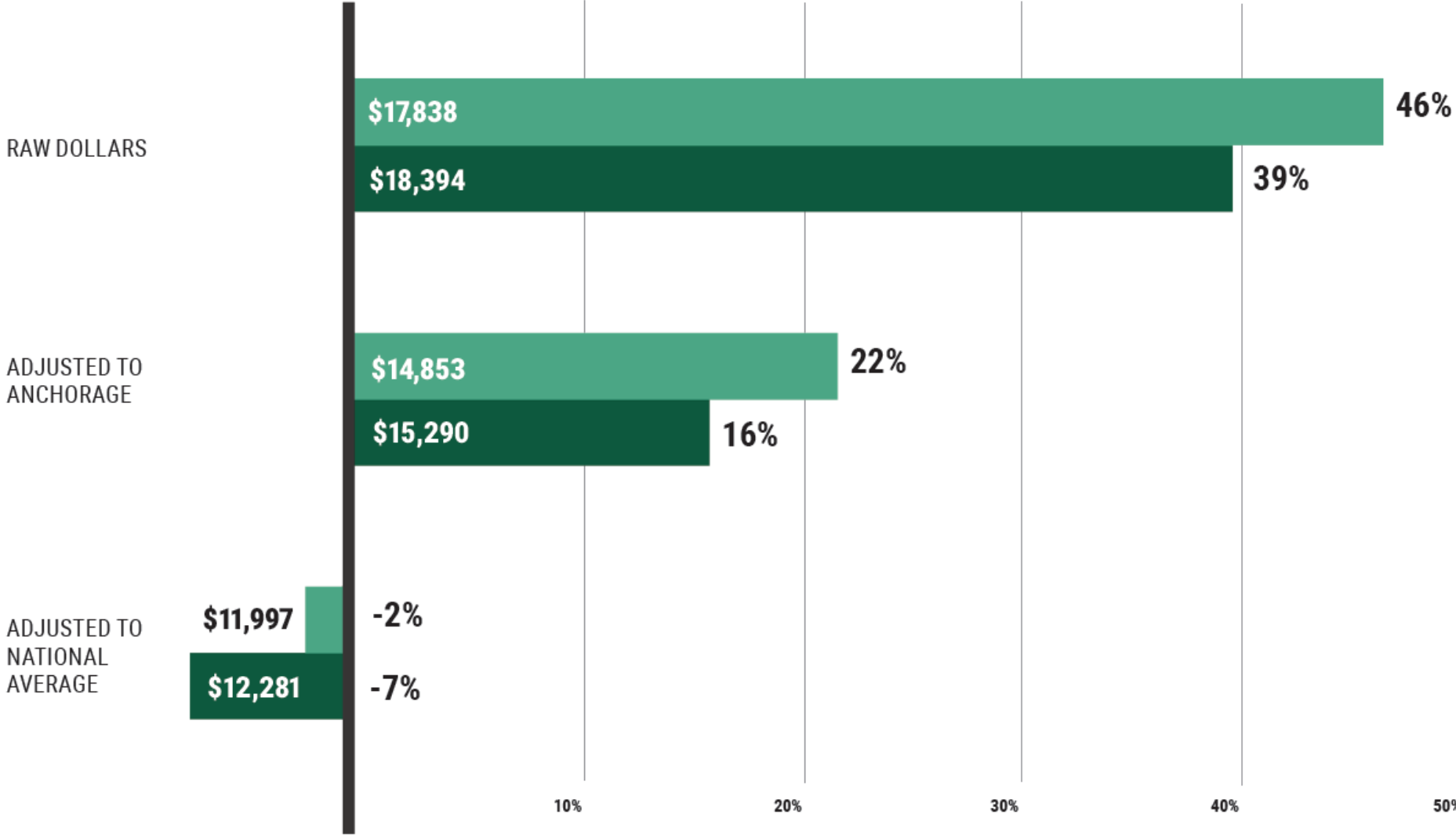
1. Alaska's per-pupil spending is not keeping up with other states.

Berman, M., & DeFeo, D. J. (2022). *How much does Alaska spend on K-12 education? (2022 update)*. (Report No. 1857). Anchorage, AK: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

DeFeo, D. J., Berman, M., Hill, A., & Hirshberg, D. (2019). *How much does Alaska spend on K-12 education?* (Report No. 1766). Anchorage, AK: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

ALASKA'S AVERAGE PER-PUPIL SPENDING

2017
2019



NATIONAL AVERAGE \$13,187

% = DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE

2. Many of Alaska's education costs are beyond education policy.

DeFeo, D. J., Berman, M., Hill, A., & Hirshberg, D. (2019). *How much does Alaska spend on K-12 education?* (Report No. 1766). Anchorage, AK: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

Healthcare, geography, and energy influence Alaska's education spending.

Ed costs are not inflated from...

- High per-pupil teacher salaries
 - On average, Alaska teacher salaries about 15% below where they should be*
 - “Right” salary varies by community & working conditions there
- Extra contributions to retirement systems

Evidence that costs are higher due to...

- Small schools
- Healthcare
- Energy
- Geographic costs
 - Housing and building costs
 - “Basket of goods” reality












Part 2: The teacher workforce



3. Teacher shortages are a national concern.

DeFeo, D. J., & Tran, T. C. (2019). *Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching* (Report No. 1765). Anchorage, AK: Institute of Social and Economic Research.



Alaska hires teachers in a national market.

	Demand	Supply	Turnover	Competitiveness
US	 Strong economy creates increased demand for teachers in other states ^{i,ii}	 Decreased interest in teaching profession ^{iii,iv}	 High turnover in profession in general	 Strong economy allows other states to offer better compensation packages
		 Declining enrollments and graduates in teacher preparation programs ^{v,vi,vii}	 In good economy, highly qualified teachers find jobs in private sector or other fields ^{viii}	
AK	AK's demand for teachers has been steady for past decade ^{ix}	AK-prepared teacher supply has been flat since at least 2008	 About 22% of AK's teachers turn over annually ^x	 In AK's fiscal crisis, teacher salaries and benefits have not increased commensurate to other states
	 Most of AK's new teacher hires come from the lower 48	 UAA, AK's largest teacher preparation program, suspended admissions in 2019	 Turnover is higher in rural and low-income schools ^{xi}	

4. Teacher turnover is expensive.

DeFeo, D. J., Tran, T. C., Hirshberg, D., Cope, D., & Cravez, P. (2017). *The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska* (Report No. 1634). Anchorage, AK: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

It costs districts over \$20k to replace a teacher.

Category	Activities	Per teacher cost
Separation	Administrative tasks, technology, physical plant	\$2,449
Recruitment	Job fairs (including travel), advertising	\$1,910*
Hiring	Applications, interviews, background checks, HR	\$4,902
Orientation & training	New teacher orientation, mentoring, PD	\$11,170
Preparation	Coursework, field placement, certification 	
Teacher productivity	Student learning 	

5. There are lots of reasons why teachers leave.

DeFeo, D.J., Hirshberg, D., & Hill, L. (2018). It's more than just dollars: Problematizing salary as the sole mechanism for recruiting and retaining teachers in rural Alaska. *Alaska Native Studies Journal* 4(1).

Some conditions can be improved with policy.

School- community relationships

- Communication
- Support
- Parent engagement

Community characteristics

- Transportation
- Amenities
- Climate

Working conditions

- Physical plant
- Class size
- Workload

Salary & compensation

- Pay
- Benefits


School & district administration

- Support
- Feedback
- Recognition

6. Recruitment and retention challenges both contribute to workforce shortages, but require different solutions.

Berman, M., & DeFeo, D. J. (2023). Equitable compensation to attract and retain qualified teachers in high-need Alaska public schools. *Educational Policy*

Improved compensation will *help* recruitment & retention.

- But we can't fix the problem with salary and benefits alone.
 - Some benefits are more effective for attracting new teachers, others for retaining current teachers.
 - Housing
 - Personal leave days
 - Districts attempt to substitute benefits for wages when they can't raise salaries.
 - Benefits cost money too, but sometimes their value to teachers is higher than their cost.
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Wrapping up



Solutions will need to be multi-faceted and inclusive.

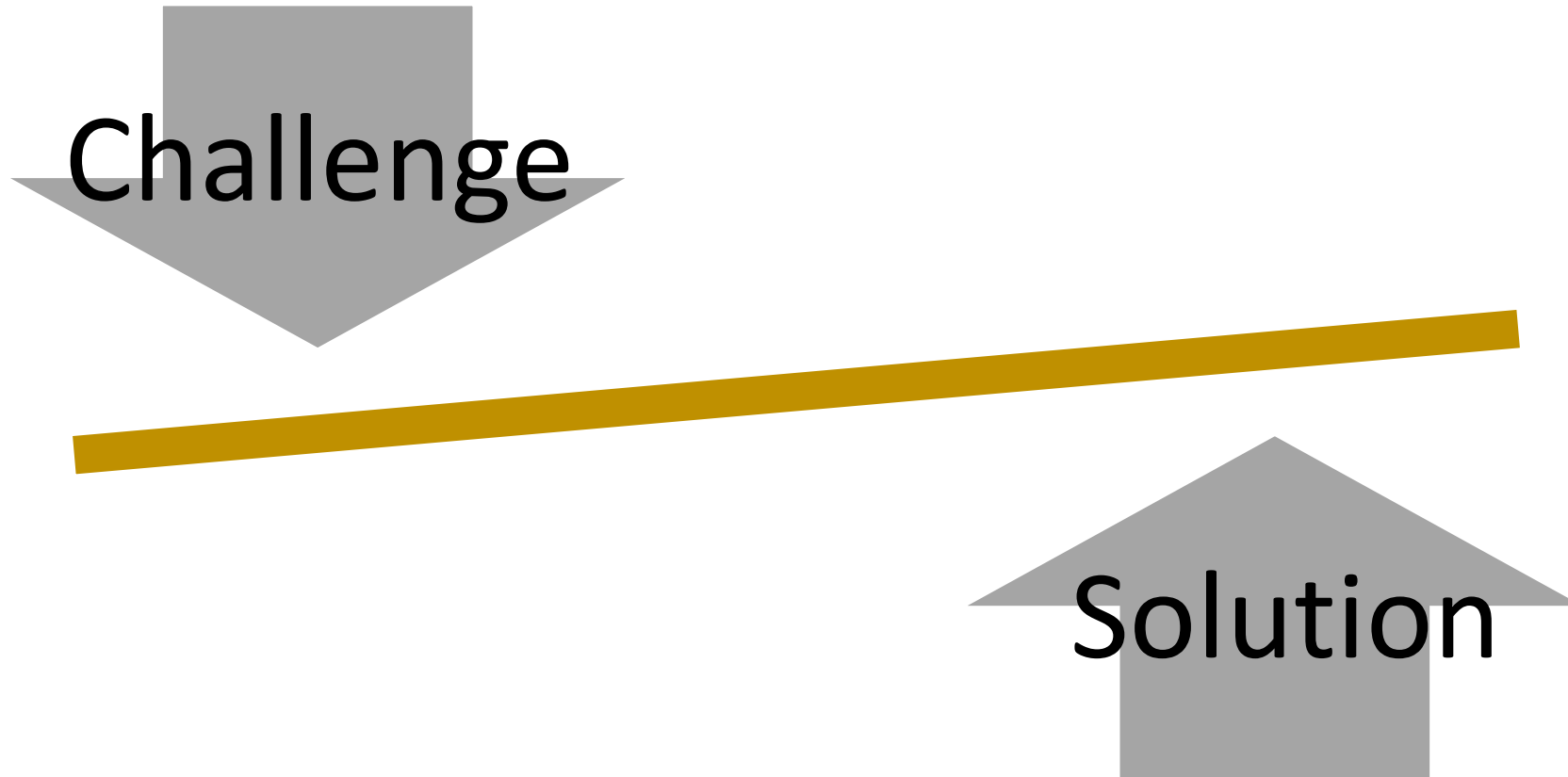
The problem itself is:

- Complex
- Systemic
- Highly variable
- Characterized by distributed responsibility

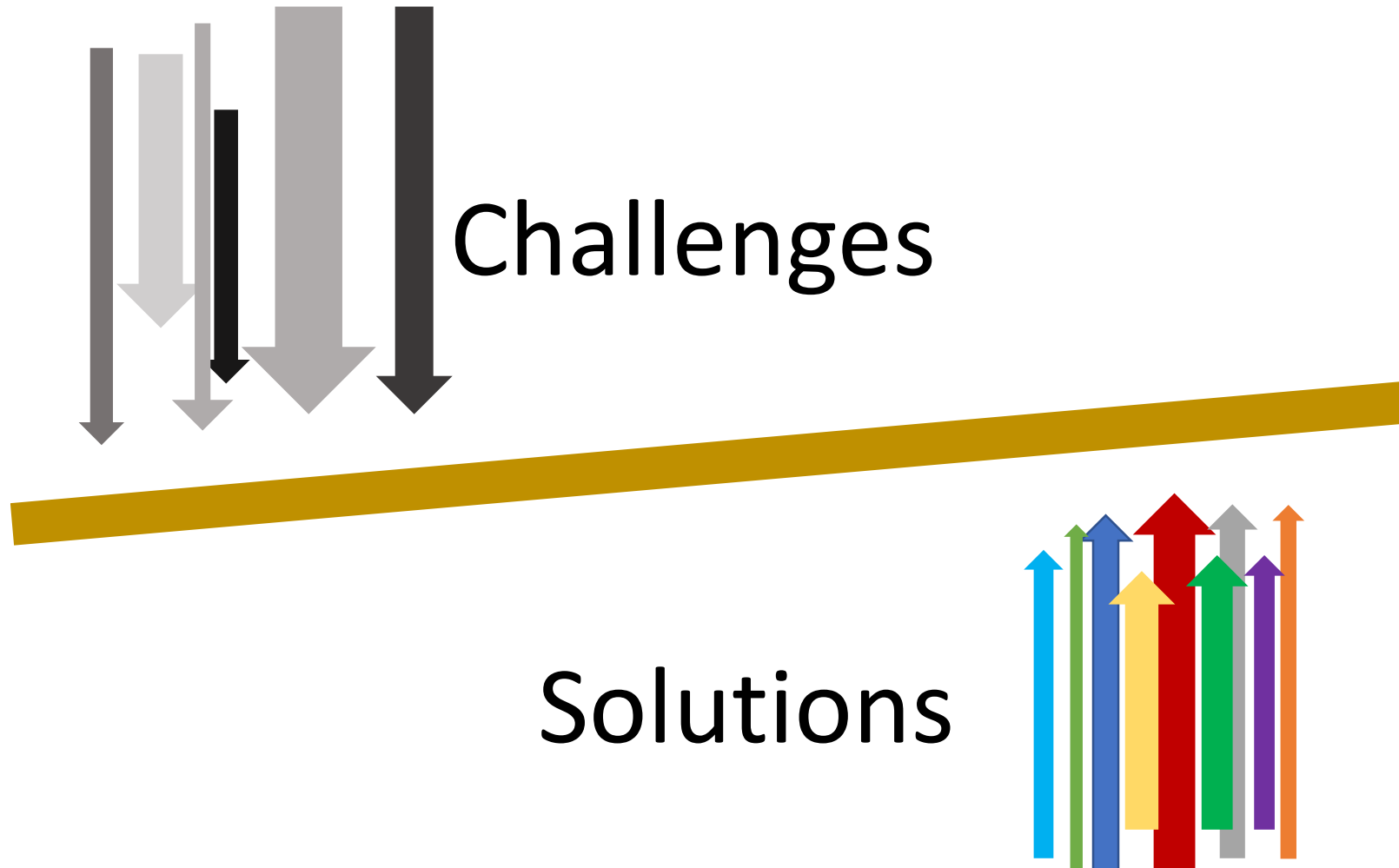
Thinking about solutions:

- There's no single solution.
 - Some solutions are objectively “good” or “bad” for the outcome.
 - Some solutions create new tensions.
- Efforts will need to be coordinated.
 - Communities
 - Schools
 - Districts
 - State
- The effects of our efforts will not be immediate.
- We can't afford not to.

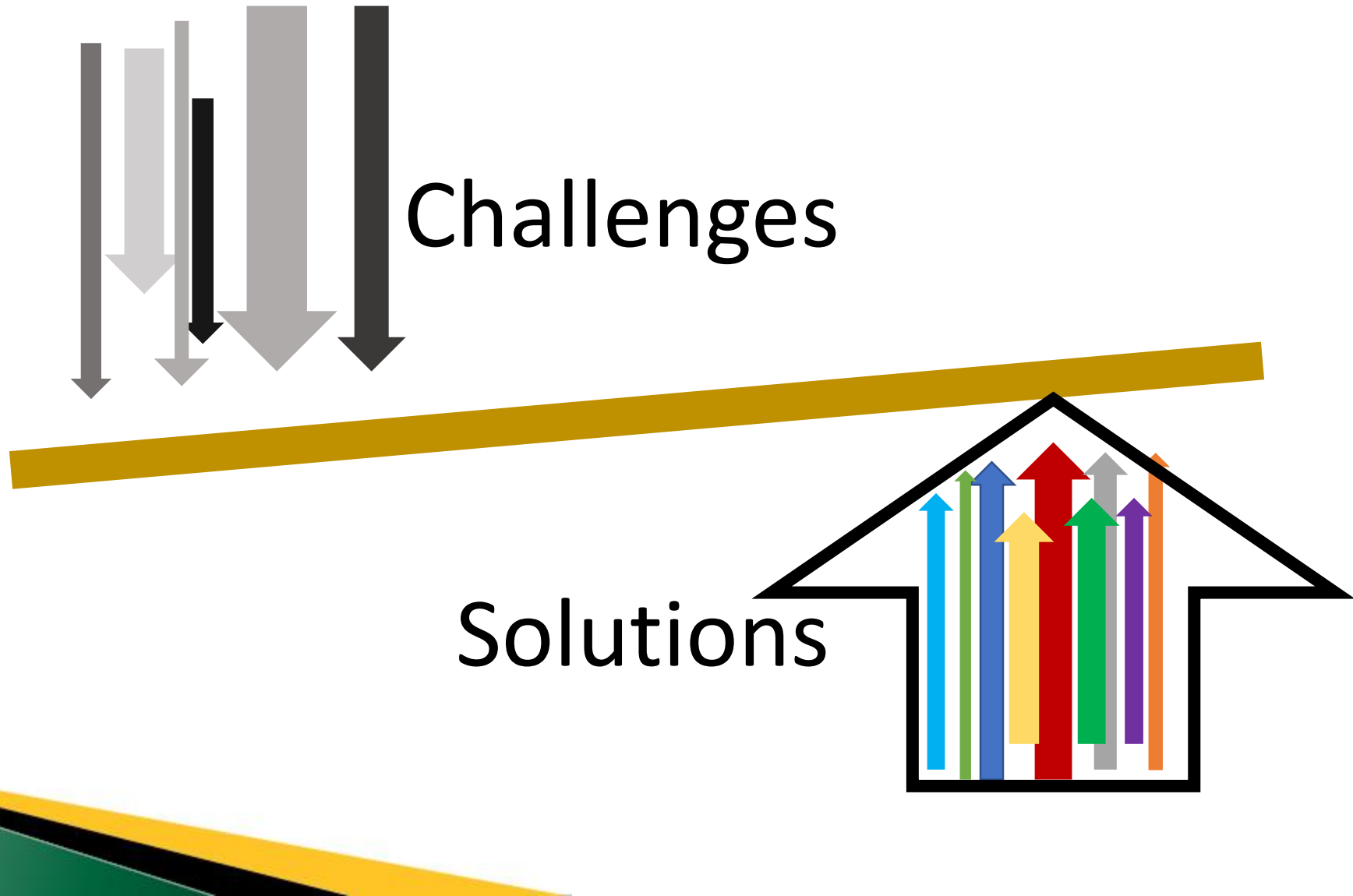
It's not this simple.



Wicked problems require multifaceted solutions.



Dialogue and collaboration maximize our impact.



Thank you, questions, follow-up

Dayna

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