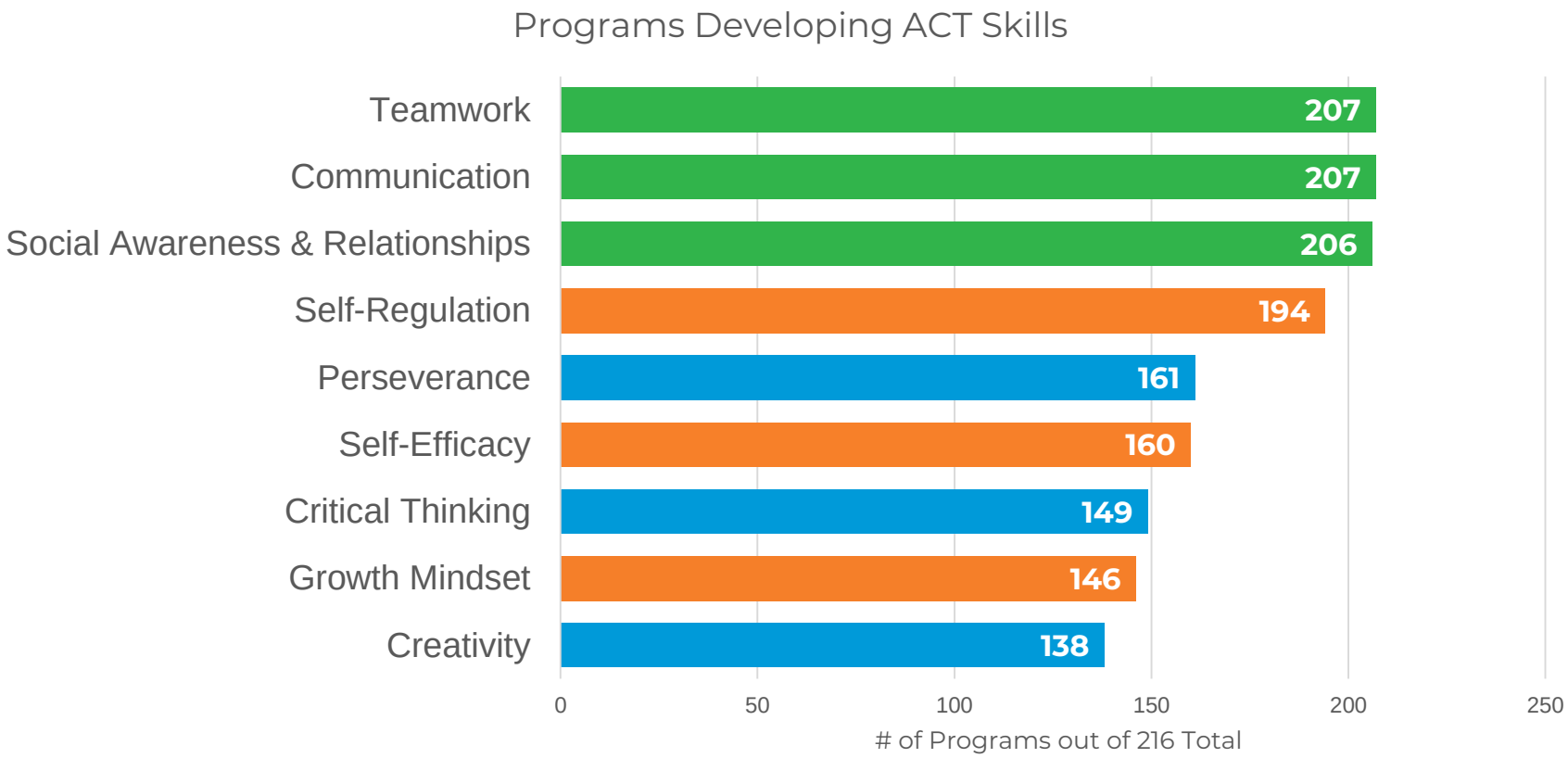
Boston
After School
& Beyond

The ACT Skills: Perseverance

The Achieve-Connect-Thrive Skills

Connect Skills are the most widely taught



Representative of 2023-2024 School Year

What is Perseverance?

Perseverance is focusing on a long-term goal despite challenges, consistently performing required or important tasks and demonstrating initiative in spite of obstacles or distractions.

Research shows that perseverance is important for academic success, including educational attainment and school grades. Young people with strong perseverance skills will set goals, persist in completing a task even when challenges arise, connect a current task to future goals, and try again when they fail at doing something.

Why Perseverance?

- Linked to work habits, task persistence, math achievement
  Vandell et al., 2007

- Linked to higher education attainment, higher undergrad GPAs, fewer career changes
  Duckworth et al., 2010

- Associated with resilience (normal or above normal functioning despite stressors from risk or adversity)
  (definition from Windle, 2011)

What does Perseverance look like?

- Tries again after failing to solve a problem
- Works hard to achieve goals even if things get in the way
- Continues to work on tasks that take longer than expected
- Intrinsically motivated to improve
- Receives feedback with a positive attitude

PEAR, Perseverance Rubric
PEAR, Perseverance 2 Rubric

Camp Harbor View, Mark Curreri Photography

What does a lack of Perseverance look like?

- Struggles to start or continue challenging tasks
- Lacks focus on long-term goals
- Avoids work instead of asking for help
- Blames themselves (“I failed” “I’m stupid”)
- Needs an outside reward or punishment to finish a task

PEAR, Perseverance Rubric
PEAR, Perseverance 2 Rubric

Sociedad Latina, Casey Atkins Photography

How to Encourage Perseverance

1. Learn from Mistakes

2. Hold Long-Term Projects

3. Show What's Possible

1) Learn from Mistakes

- Model learning from mistakes
  - Staff mistakes → self-assessment, reflection
- Reflect together on struggles & successes
  - Morning meetings, closing circles, journal prompts

PEAR, Perseverance Rubric
PEAR, Perseverance 2 Rubric

BINcA / World Ocean School

2) Hold Long-Term Projects

- Set long-term goals (individual or group)
  - Post around the room
  - Track progress and celebrate milestones
- Use perseverance language
  - “Stick with it,” “drafts,” “editing”
- Give encouraging feedback throughout the project
  - Staff frame feedback positively
  - Mid-project peer feedback

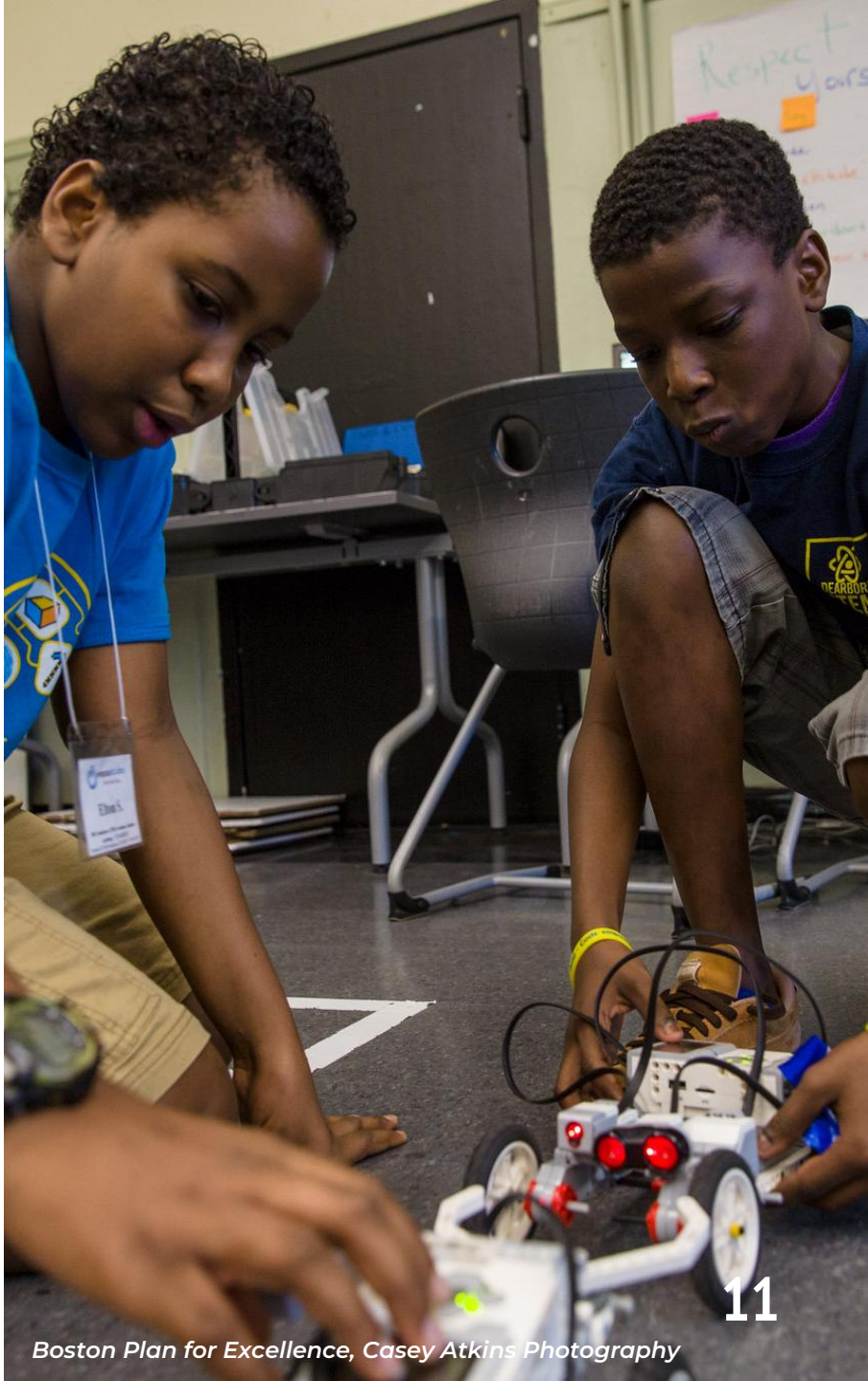
PEAR, Perseverance Rubric
PEAR, Perseverance 2 Rubric

MassArt, Casey Atkins Photography

3) Show What's Possible

- Share stories of famous role models who succeeded "against all odds"
- Pair students with peers that can challenge them (but not so advanced that it feels unrealistic)

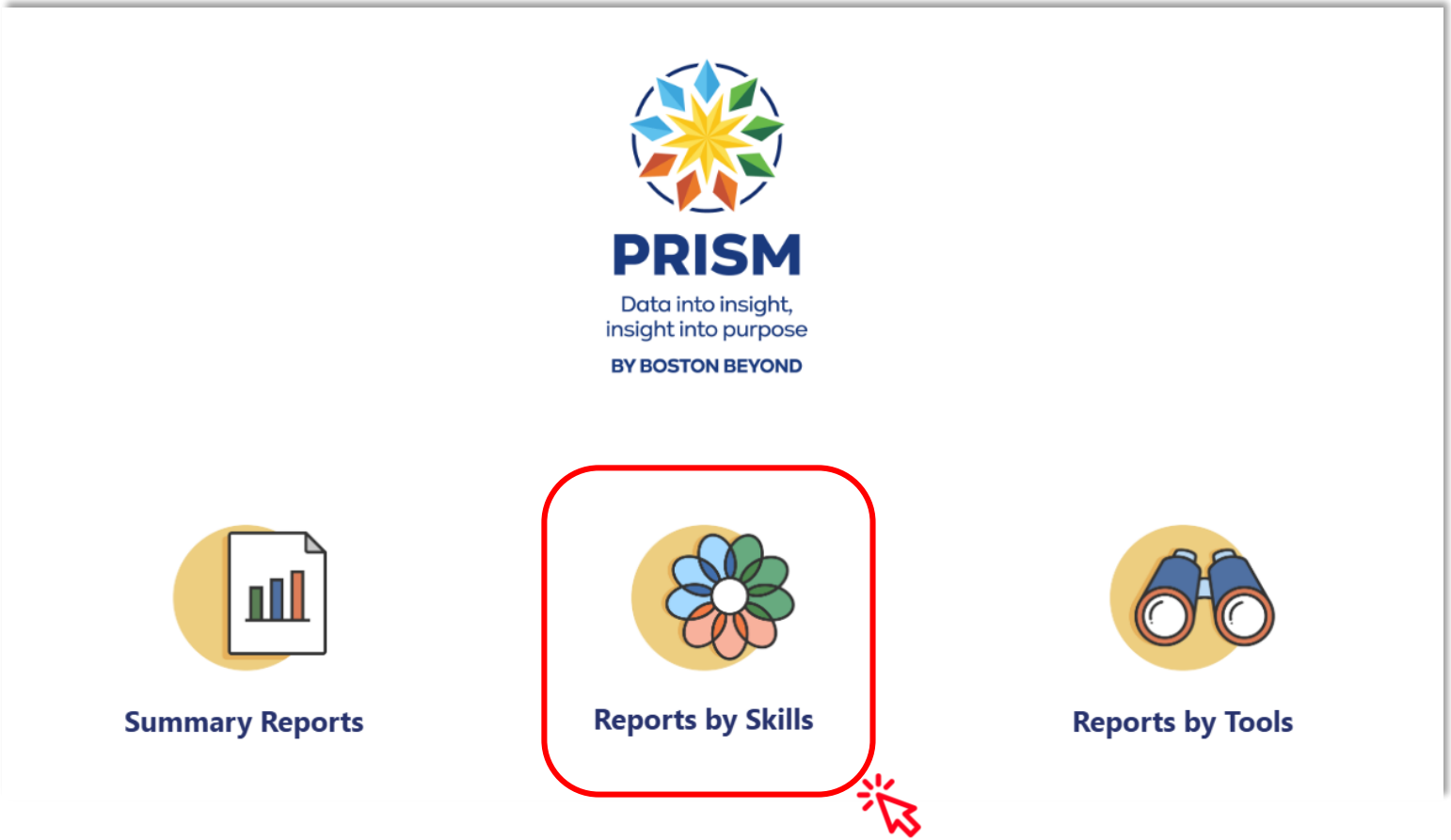
PEAR, Perseverance Rubric
PEAR, Perseverance 2 Rubric



Boston Plan for Excellence, Casey Atkins Photography

Building Perseverance beyond school

Don’t forget the Reports by Skills in the PRISM



Works Cited

Vandell, D.L., Reisner, E.R., & Pierce, K.M. (2007). Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising afterschool programs. Report to the Charles Steward Mott Foundation.

Duckworth, A.L, Peterson, C., Matthews, M.D., Kelly, D.R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 92(6), 1087-1101.

Windle, G. (2011). What is resilience? A review and concept analysis. **Reviews in Clinical Gerontology**, 21, 152-169.

PEAR. "Perseverance." https://drive.google.com/file/d/1abI1GlY3MnUvtRQLKO7AZBNMGIVt42Bl/view?usp=sharing.

PEAR. "Perseverance 2." https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DGx9czixkk4ECn6EggoKIFiprJahcM7V/view?usp=sharing.