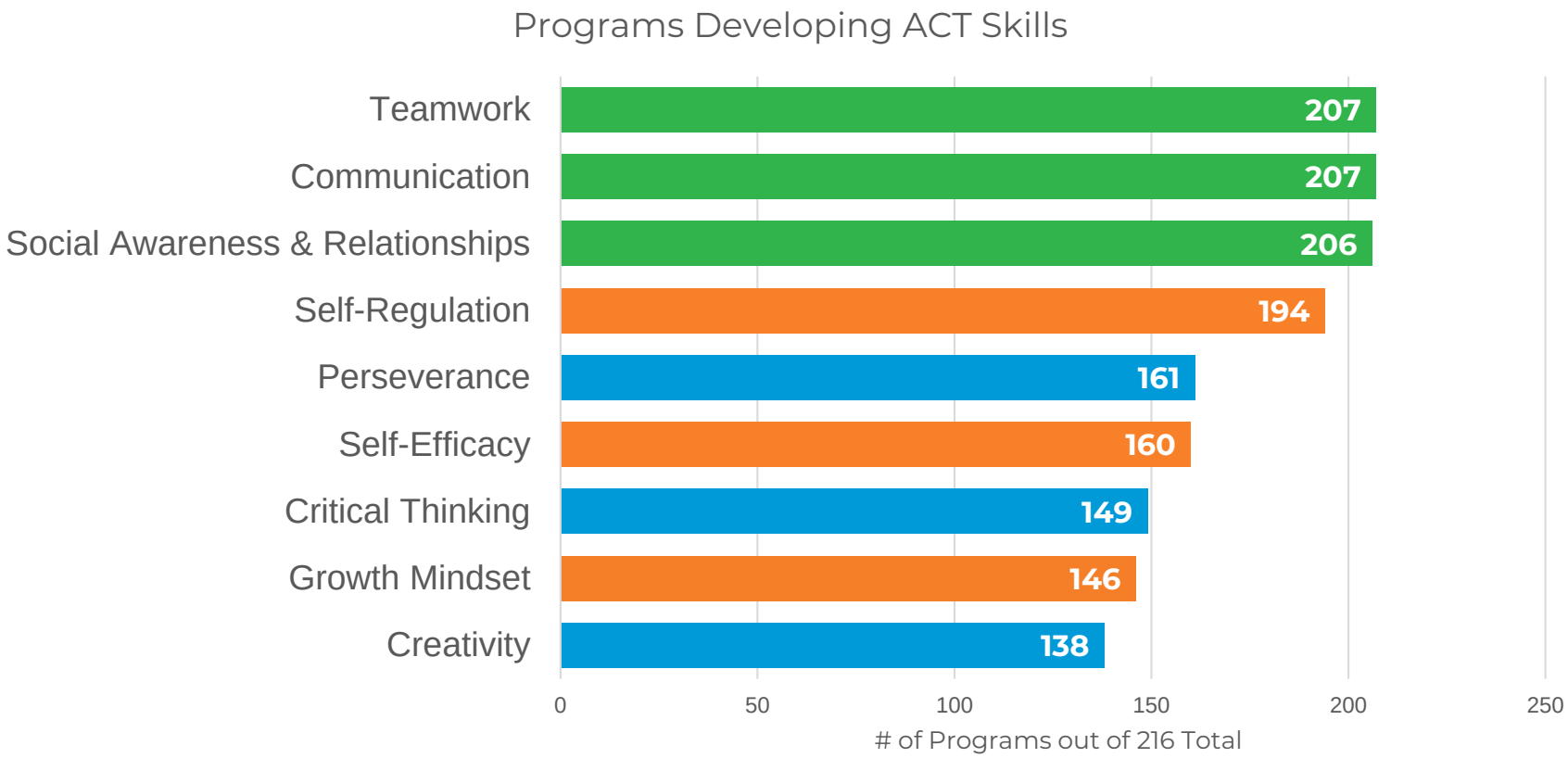
Boston After School & Beyond

The ACT Skills: Growth Mindset

The Achieve-Connect-Thrive Skills

Connect Skills are the most widely taught



Representative of 2023-2024 School Year

What is Growth Mindset?

Having a growth mindset is believing that talent and intelligence can be developed and improved through continued learning, practice, and effort.

Research shows that a growth mindset is associated with academic success. Young people with a growth mindset will understand that mastery comes through effort, embrace feedback and constructive criticism, and seek to learn from their experiences.

Why Growth Mindset?

- Resilience, self-efficacy: “central factor… is a student’s mindset about intelligence”
  Dweck & Leggett, 1988

- Growth mindset led to greater academic achievement (7th grade math, college premed freshmen)
  Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014

- Attitudes about learning, including growth mindset, are important for academic and future success
  Farrington et. al., 2012

What does Growth Mindset look like?

- Intelligence can be developed through effort
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn → perseverance
- Energized by challenges
- Excited to learn and grow

Dweck, 2015.

Harlem Lacrosse, Mark Curreri Photography

What does a lack of Growth Mindset look like?

- Intelligence is fixed
- “Mistakes crack their self-confidence”
- Avoid challenges
- Avoid effort or working hard, because working harder or trying means you’re not smart enough

Dweck, 2015.

Sociedad Latina Escalera, Casey Atkins Photography

How to Encourage Growth Mindset

1. Praise Work not Talent
2. “Not Yet”
3. Hold High Expectations

1) Praise Work not Talent

- "You must have worked really hard"
  (not "you must be smart")

- Specific feedback on problem-solving strategies:
  "I liked that you tried a lot of different strategies until you finally got it"

- Reinforce that "even geniuses work hard"

Dweck, 2015.

CitySprouts, Mark Curreri Photography

2) “Not Yet”

- When a student says “I can’t do it,” or “I’m not good at it,” you add: “...yet”

- “This simple habit conveys the idea that ability and motivation are fluid.”

Dweck, 2010.

5th Quarter Launch, Casey Atkins Photography

3) Hold High Expectations

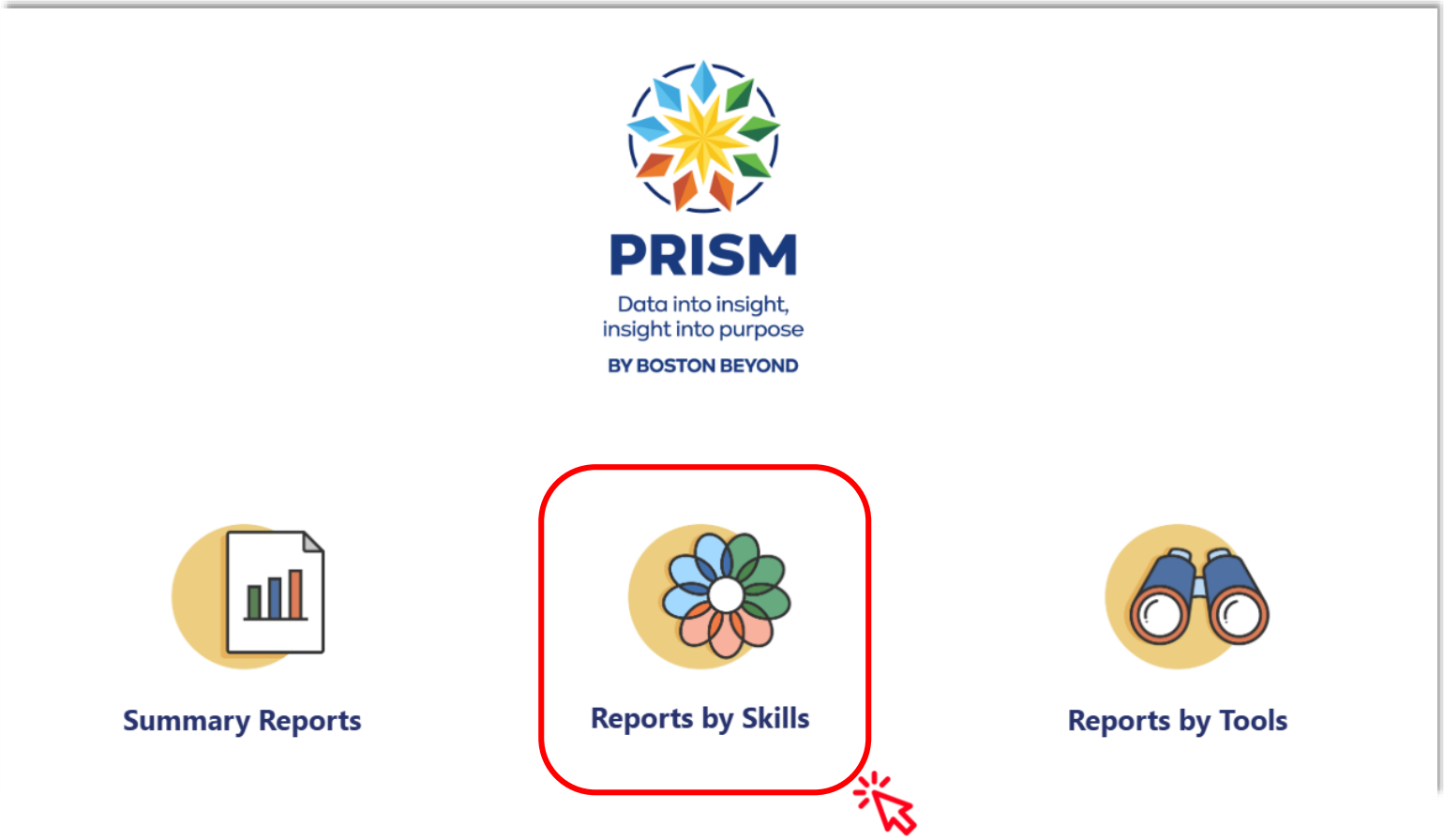
- “the most consistent predictor of all motivational outcomes… was students’ perception that their teachers had high expectations of them.” (Dweck et al 24)
- Attention, positive feelings, reinforce message of growth
- Keep expectations challenging but attainable

Dweck, Walton, & Cohen 2014, 24-26.

Camp Harbor View

Building Growth Mindset beyond school

Don’t forget the Reports by Skills in the PRISM



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