

Round 1 — Prince Elementary (Reading)

School Scenario

Prince Elementary sits along the river in one of the city's most vibrant but economically stressed neighborhoods. The school's families speak more than a dozen languages, and parents bring rich traditions into the community. Yet 78% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and challenges outside of school spill into the classroom.

Only 29% of third graders reached reading proficiency last year. Teacher turnover is high, and many new hires arrive with limited training in evidence-based literacy practices. Last year the district adopted a new K–3 reading curriculum, but teachers received only a brief introduction, with little follow-up training. Chronic absenteeism affects about one in five students, and many classrooms lack a full set of high-interest books. While some families attend evening events, others face time, work, and language barriers that limit participation.

Prince Elementary must decide how to invest scarce resources to strengthen early literacy, stabilize instruction, and give its students the foundation they need for future success.

Menu of Interventions

Teams may spend no more than 100 points. Choose from the interventions below:

- **Attendance Initiative** (Cost: 10)
Programs and incentives to improve daily student attendance, such as recognition for consistent attendance.
- **Class Size Reduction** (Cost: 35)
Hire additional teachers to reduce student-to-teacher ratios in primary classrooms.
- **Classroom Libraries** (Cost: 10)
Provide every classroom with a set of high-interest, grade-level books for independent and guided reading.
- **Curriculum – Phonics** (Cost: 35)
Fully adopt and implement a systematic phonics-based reading curriculum across K–3.

- **Early Childhood Partners** (Cost: 20)
Collaborate with local preschools to strengthen early literacy readiness before kindergarten.
- **Family Liaison** (Cost: 15)
Hire staff to improve communication with families and connect them with school resources.
- **Family Literacy Nights** (Cost: 10)
Host events to teach families strategies to support reading at home.
- **Literacy Coach** (Cost: 25)
Provide an instructional coach to model lessons and support teachers with literacy instruction.
- **PD – Tier 1 Science of Reading** (Cost: 30)
Deliver intensive training for teachers on evidence-based reading instruction aligned to the science of reading.
- **PD – Culturally Responsive** (Cost: 10)
Train teachers to use culturally relevant practices that reflect students' backgrounds and experiences.
- **PLCs – Data** (Cost: 15)
Establish professional learning communities where teachers analyze student data to guide instruction.
- **Reading Screening** (Cost: 15)
Implement regular early literacy screening tools to identify struggling readers quickly.
- **Retention Incentives** (Cost: 20)
Offer bonuses or stipends to encourage teachers to remain at the school.
- **Summer Reading** (Cost: 15)
Provide summer programs to maintain and extend reading growth outside the school year.
- **WIN Block** (Cost: 20)
Schedule a daily 'What I Need' block for targeted small-group intervention or enrichment.

Round 2 — Dylan Middle School (Math)

School Scenario

Dylan Middle School serves a mix of families, many with ties to the nearby medical centers, but also students from lower-income neighborhoods. Nearly half (48%) of eighth graders are proficient in math, leaving wide achievement gaps between student groups. While resources are stronger here than at some schools, chronic absenteeism still affects 12% of students.

Teachers have asked for deeper professional development in math instruction. Collaborative planning time exists but often drifts toward logistics rather than student learning. The school does not have a dedicated math intervention program, and students who fall behind frequently struggle to catch up. Leaders have experimented with math software licenses but found usage inconsistent. Parents are eager to see their children challenged with enrichment opportunities, but struggling students often miss out on the basics.

The challenge for Dylan Middle is to raise overall math performance while closing persistent gaps — all within a constrained budget and limited teacher capacity.

Menu of Interventions

Teams may spend no more than 100 points. Choose from the interventions below:

- **Adaptive Software** (Cost: 15)
Purchase online math programs that adjust practice problems to each student's level.
- **Attendance Incentives** (Cost: 10)
Offer recognition or rewards for students with strong or improved attendance.
- **Class Size Reduction** (Cost: 35)
Reduce the number of students per math class by hiring additional teachers.
- **Clubs – Enrichment** (Cost: 15)
Create afterschool clubs or activities to extend learning for advanced students.
- **Culturally Responsive Math Coaching** (Cost: 15)
Train teachers to integrate students' cultural backgrounds into math examples and instruction.

- **Data Teams** (Cost: 10)
Establish regular teacher teams to analyze math assessment data and adjust instruction.
- **Double-Dose Math** (Cost: 25)
Provide struggling students with two math periods per day instead of one.
- **Family Math Nights** (Cost: 10)
Host evening events to engage families in understanding math content and strategies.
- **Formative Assessment** (Cost: 15)
Implement frequent low-stakes assessments to check student understanding during lessons.
- **Math Interventionist** (Cost: 25)
Hire a specialist focused on providing targeted support for students below grade level.
- **Math PLCs** (Cost: 15)
Organize professional learning communities where math teachers collaborate on instruction.
- **PD – Math Content** (Cost: 20)
Provide professional development to strengthen teachers' math knowledge and pedagogy.
- **Summer Bridge** (Cost: 15)
Offer summer programs to help students catch up or get ahead in math.
- **Tutoring – Afterschool** (Cost: 30)
Provide structured tutoring after school for students who need additional math help.

Round 3 — Lizzo High School (Graduation)

School Scenario

Lizzo High School is known for its strong academic reputation, award-winning arts programs, and packed bleachers at Friday night games. Overall, 91% of students graduate in four years — one of the highest rates in the district. Beneath that success, however, are sharp disparities: only 78% of students of color and 75% of low-income students graduate on time.

Many students who struggle begin falling behind in ninth grade, failing to earn enough credits to stay on track. While the school offers a wide range of AP and dual enrollment courses, access has not been equitable across student groups. Teachers and counselors have limited tools to flag students at risk early, and interventions often come too late. Attendance issues persist for some students, and families of first-generation graduates sometimes struggle to navigate the system. A credit recovery program exists, but it is overwhelmed, and teachers report that “getting a diploma doesn’t always mean students are prepared.”

Lizzo High faces the challenge of sustaining overall excellence while closing gaps so that all students can walk across the stage ready for what comes next.

Menu of Interventions

Teams may spend no more than 100 points. Choose from the interventions below:

- **9th Grade On-Track** (Cost: 30)
Launch early warning systems and supports to ensure 9th graders pass core courses and stay on track for graduation.
- **AP / Dual Enrollment** (Cost: 25)
Expand access and support for advanced placement and college credit courses.
- **Attendance Interventions** (Cost: 15)
Use targeted strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism among high school students.
- **Career Academies** (Cost: 30)
Organize high school programs around career-themed pathways with coursework and internships.

- **College/Career Advising** (Cost: 20)
Strengthen counseling to help students plan for postsecondary education or careers.
- **Credit Recovery** (Cost: 20)
Provide alternative options for students to make up failed or missed credits.
- **Culturally Responsive PD** (Cost: 10)
Train teachers in culturally relevant practices to better engage diverse learners.
- **Early Warning System** (Cost: 20)
Implement data tools to flag students at risk of dropping out before problems escalate.
- **Engagement PD** (Cost: 10)
Professional development to help teachers build stronger relationships and engagement in class.
- **Family Engagement** (Cost: 15)
Programs to involve families more directly in supporting student progress toward graduation.
- **Freshman Academy** (Cost: 25)
Create a structured program to support 9th graders transitioning into high school.
- **Graduation Coaches** (Cost: 25)
Assign staff to monitor and support at-risk students individually through to graduation.
- **Mentorship Programs** (Cost: 15)
Pair students with mentors who can provide academic and social-emotional support.

