Scoring Rationales

Round 1 — Prince Elementary (Reading)

Attendance initiative (Cost: 10, Gain: 2) — Better attendance supports learning, but effect on reading scores is modest.

Class size reduction (Cost: 35, Gain: 1) — Expensive structural change; research shows minimal impact on literacy outcomes.

Classroom libraries (Cost: 10, Gain: 0) — Access to books helps, but by itself does not raise standardized test scores.

Curriculum – phonics (Cost: 35, Gain: 8) — High-quality, phonics-based curriculum produces large literacy gains when implemented well.

Early childhood partners (Cost: 20, Gain: 0) — Valuable long-term, but no short-run impact on MCA reading scores.

Family liaison (Cost: 15, Gain: 2) — Improves engagement, but only small effects on reading proficiency.

Family literacy nights (Cost: 10, Gain: 2) — Builds community, limited evidence for direct impact on scores.

Literacy coach (Cost: 25, Gain: 2) — Stand-alone coaching often fails to shift results without curriculum/PD changes.

PD – Tier 1 SoR (Cost: 30, Gain: 9) — Strong PD in Science of Reading practices yields significant student gains.

PD – culturally responsive (Cost: 10, Gain: 1) — Helps climate, but limited direct effect on literacy scores.

PLCs – data (Cost: 15, Gain: 4) — When focused on student work, PLCs yield measurable improvement.

Reading screening (Cost: 15, Gain: 2) — Screening tools help identify needs, but do not directly raise outcomes without intervention.

Retention incentives (Cost: 20, Gain: 1) — Costly incentives have limited impact on student learning.

Summer reading (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Evidence for summer programs is mixed but can help mitigate summer slide.

WIN block (Cost: 20, Gain: 5) — Protected intervention time produces moderate gains for struggling readers.

Round 2 — Dylan Middle School (Math)

Adaptive software (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Moderate effect if used consistently, but results are uneven.

Attendance incentives (Cost: 10, Gain: 1) — Small impact; attendance alone rarely shifts math achievement.

Class size reduction (Cost: 35, Gain: 2) — Very costly; minimal effect on math proficiency per research.

Clubs – enrichment (Cost: 15, Gain: 0) — Positive for engagement, but no evidence of direct math gains.

Culturally responsive math coaching (Cost: 15, Gain: 2) — Can improve relationships, but weak evidence for math outcomes.

Data teams (Cost: 10, Gain: 3) — Improves monitoring and adjustments, moderate effect size.

Double-dose math (Cost: 25, Gain: 7) — Well-researched; extra instructional time yields strong gains.

Family math nights (Cost: 10, Gain: 0) — Builds goodwill, no evidence of raising MCA math scores.

Formative assessment (Cost: 15, Gain: 4) — High effect size in Hattie's research; feedback improves learning.

Math PLCs (Cost: 15, Gain: 4) — Focused collaboration boosts instruction, moderate effect size.

Math interventionist (Cost: 25, Gain: 8) — Targeted personnel drive strong gains when used effectively.

PD – math content (Cost: 20, Gain: 5) — Strong evidence that content-specific PD helps teachers and students.

Summer bridge (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Moderate gains, especially for students transitioning to higher math.

Technology Training (Mandatory) (Cost: 10, Gain: 0) — District compliance mandate; no impact on math learning.

Tutoring – afterschool (Cost: 30, Gain: 9) — High-dosage tutoring is one of the most effective strategies.

Round 3 — Lizzo High School (Graduation)

9th Grade On-Track (Cost: 30, Gain: 7) — Strong evidence: keeping students on-track in 9th grade boosts graduation.

AP / dual enrollment (Cost: 25, Gain: 5) — Expands rigor and engagement; correlated with higher grad rates.

Attendance interventions (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Better attendance supports graduation, moderate effect.

Career academies (Cost: 30, Gain: 5) — Well-studied; CTE pathways improve persistence and completion.

College/career advising (Cost: 20, Gain: 3) — Good counseling support boosts graduation and postsecondary entry.

Credit recovery (Cost: 20, Gain: 2) — Helps some students graduate, but does not address root causes.

Culturally responsive PD (Cost: 10, Gain: 1) — Improves climate, weak direct evidence for raising grad rates.

Early warning system (Cost: 20, Gain: 4) — Data systems identify at-risk students earlier, moderate effect.

Engagement PD (Cost: 10, Gain: 1) — Generic engagement PD rarely moves the needle on outcomes.

Family engagement (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Family partnerships support persistence, moderate effect.

Freshman academy (Cost: 25, Gain: 6) — Structured 9th grade transition strongly improves on-time credits.

Graduation coaches (Cost: 25, Gain: 2) — Costly; evidence for raising grad rates is weak.

Mentorship programs (Cost: 15, Gain: 3) — Mentors improve belonging and persistence, moderate effect.