



# Establishing a Theory of Action and Logic Model for Your Project

## Session 1

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## **Session Goals**

- Explain how theories of action & logic models can help structure a quality evaluation
- Present some theories of action for performance incentives
- Help you formulate or review a theory of action & logic model for your TIF

## Strand Goals

- Suggest ways to do a useful evaluation without an experimental or quasi-experimental design
  - Formative/diagnostic contribution to making your TIF work better
  - Contributing to growth of knowledge about if & how incentives work
- Both make use of a theory of action or logic model to guide research on the causal process linking TIF to desired outcomes

## **What is a theory of action?**

- An explicit statement of how program operations are supposed to lead to desired program effects
- Theories of action express the expected causal links between performance pay and outcomes such as improved student achievement
- Sometimes called “program theory”

## What is a logic model?

- Typically a graphic representation of the theory of action (theory of change) that shows how program *inputs* (design features, resources) enable *actions* (activities) that lead to *outputs* contributing to *outcomes* on program goals
- Links the big picture with the gritty details
- Focuses attention on system: interconnections & context

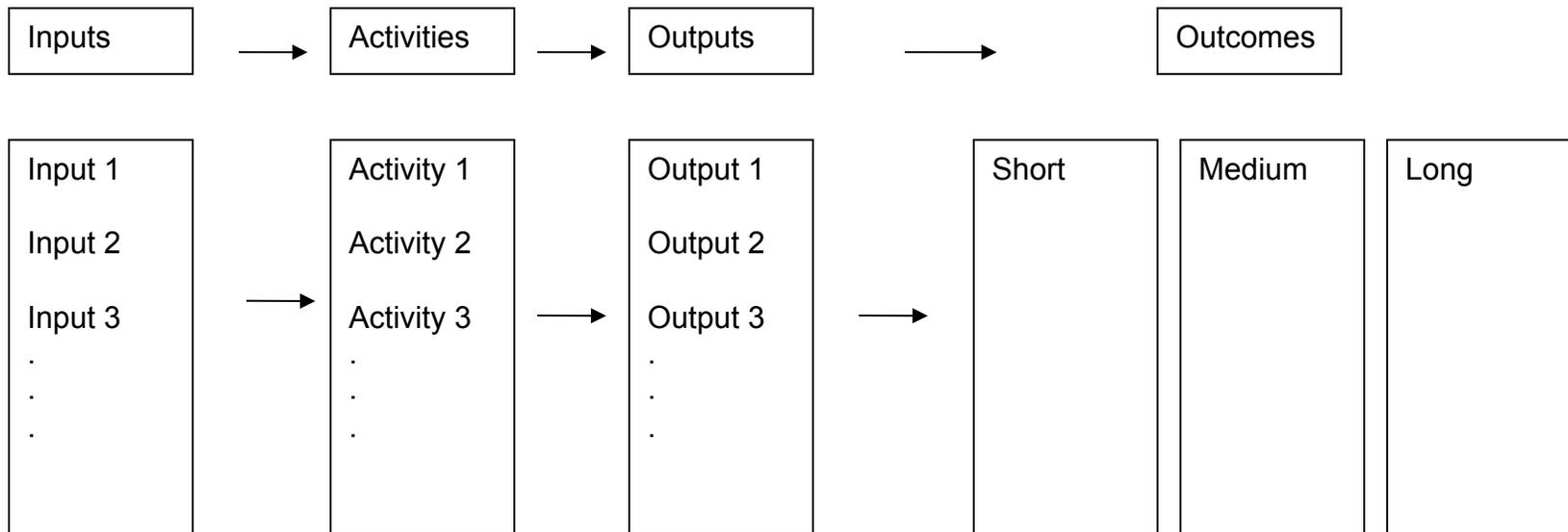
## Why start with a theory of action or logic model?

- Surfaces key assumptions about how program is supposed to work
- Explicitly connects activities to desired outcomes
- Framework for identifying evaluation questions
  - Implementation fidelity
  - Causal mechanisms
  - Outcomes

## Why start with a theory of action or logic model?

- Identifies key outputs & *intermediate outcomes* that can be measured to show if program mechanisms are operating
- Provides some evidence supporting causal inference
  - If program was implemented as intended, if outputs & intermediate outcomes occurred and then ultimate impacts were observed, there is some reason to believe the program might be causing the desired change

# Logic Model Shell



Assumptions

e.g., teacher and principal  
associations buy-in...

External Factors/Contingencies

e.g., stable resources, leadership...

# Logic Models and the CIPP Framework

## CIPP elements

Context: What are needs and assets of program and beneficiaries, problem(s) requiring solution, intended goals?

Input: What solutions or programs are applicable, financially feasible, research based?

Process: What activities are taking place to meet goals?

Product: What are impact and effects of the activities? Is program sustainable and transportable?

## Logic Models and CIPP Framework

### Logic Model

Inputs

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

### Informed by

### CIPP Evaluation

Context & Input

Process

Process & Impact

Product

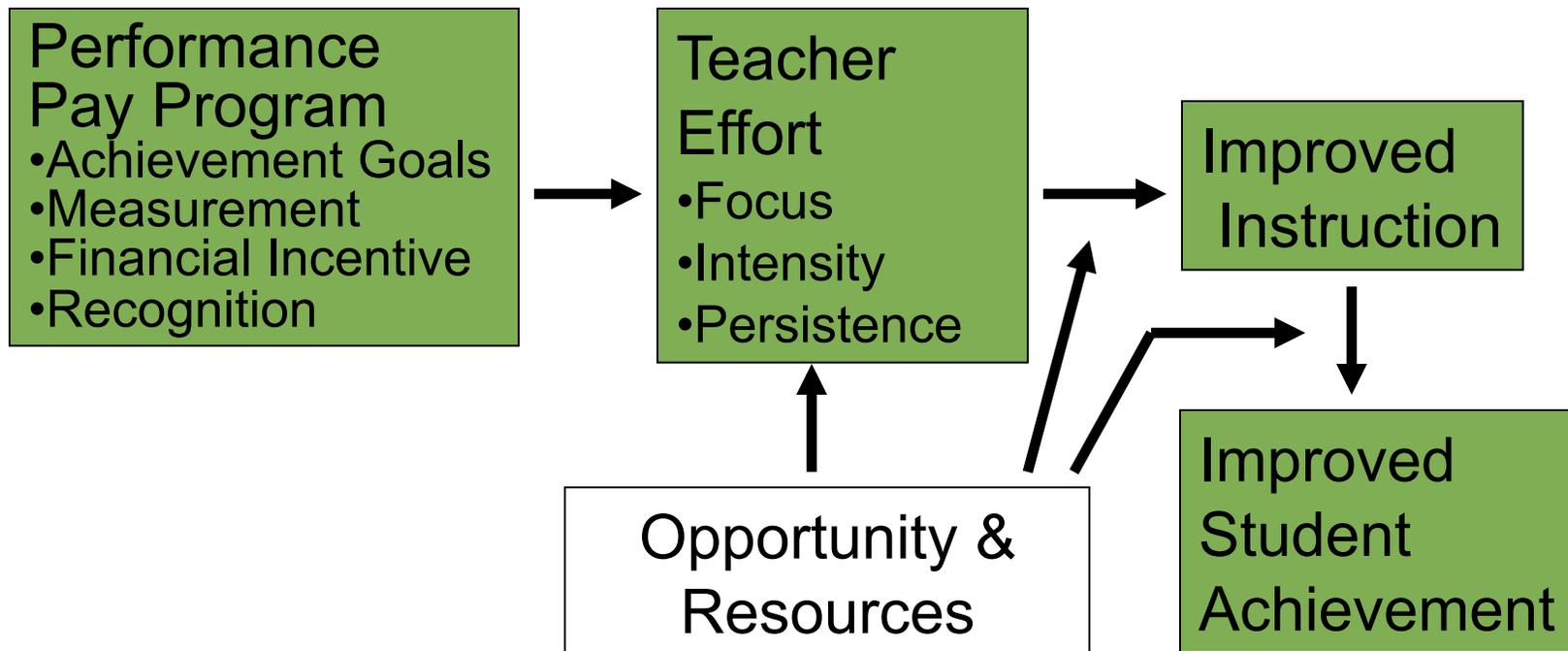
## **Our Claim:**

An explicit theory of action for performance incentives is needed to set the stage for a quality evaluation of a TIF program.

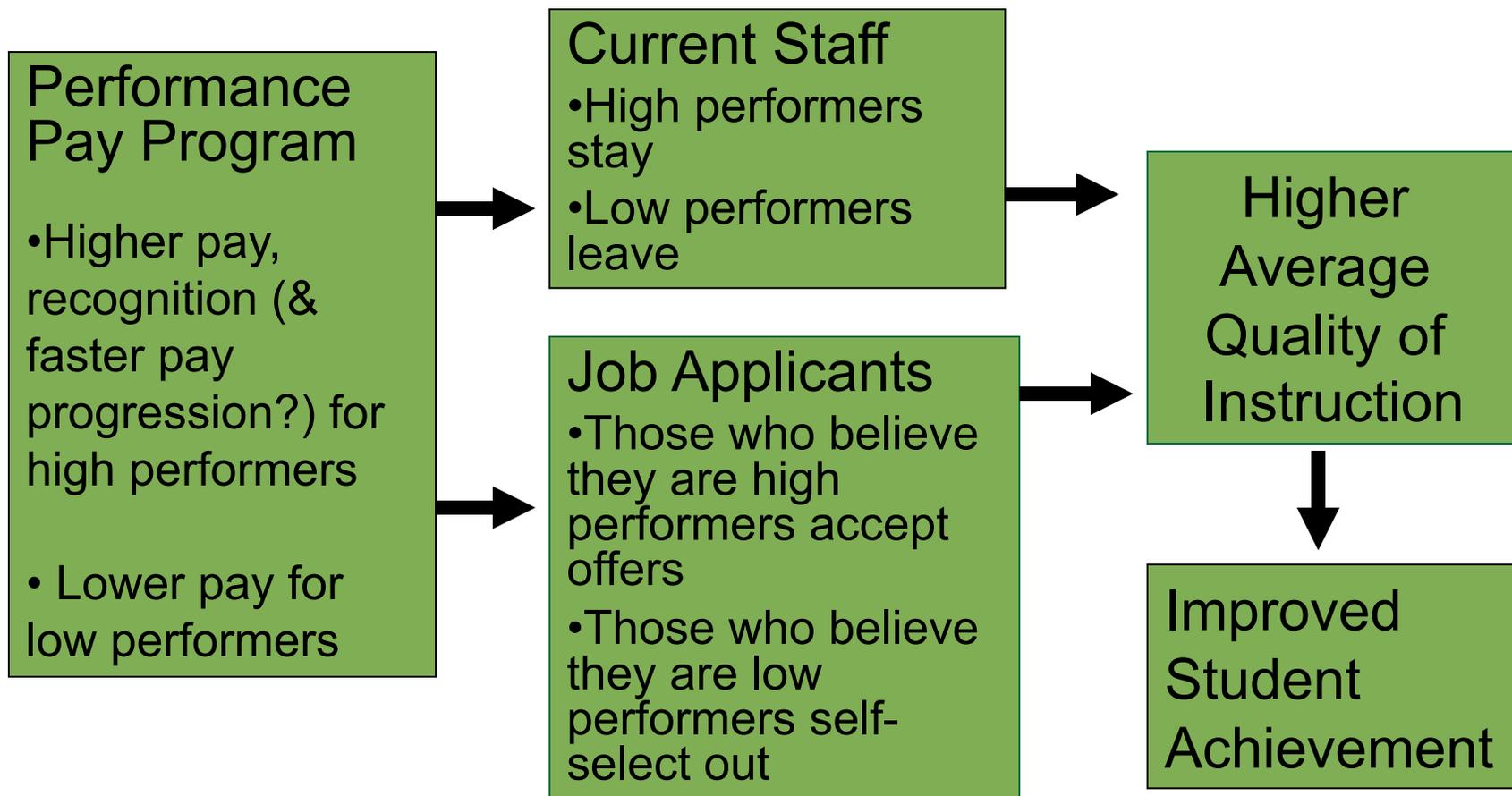
# **Three Basic Paradigm “Theories of Action” for Educator Compensation Reform**

- Motivation of Effort
- Differential Attraction & Retention
- Communication & Culture

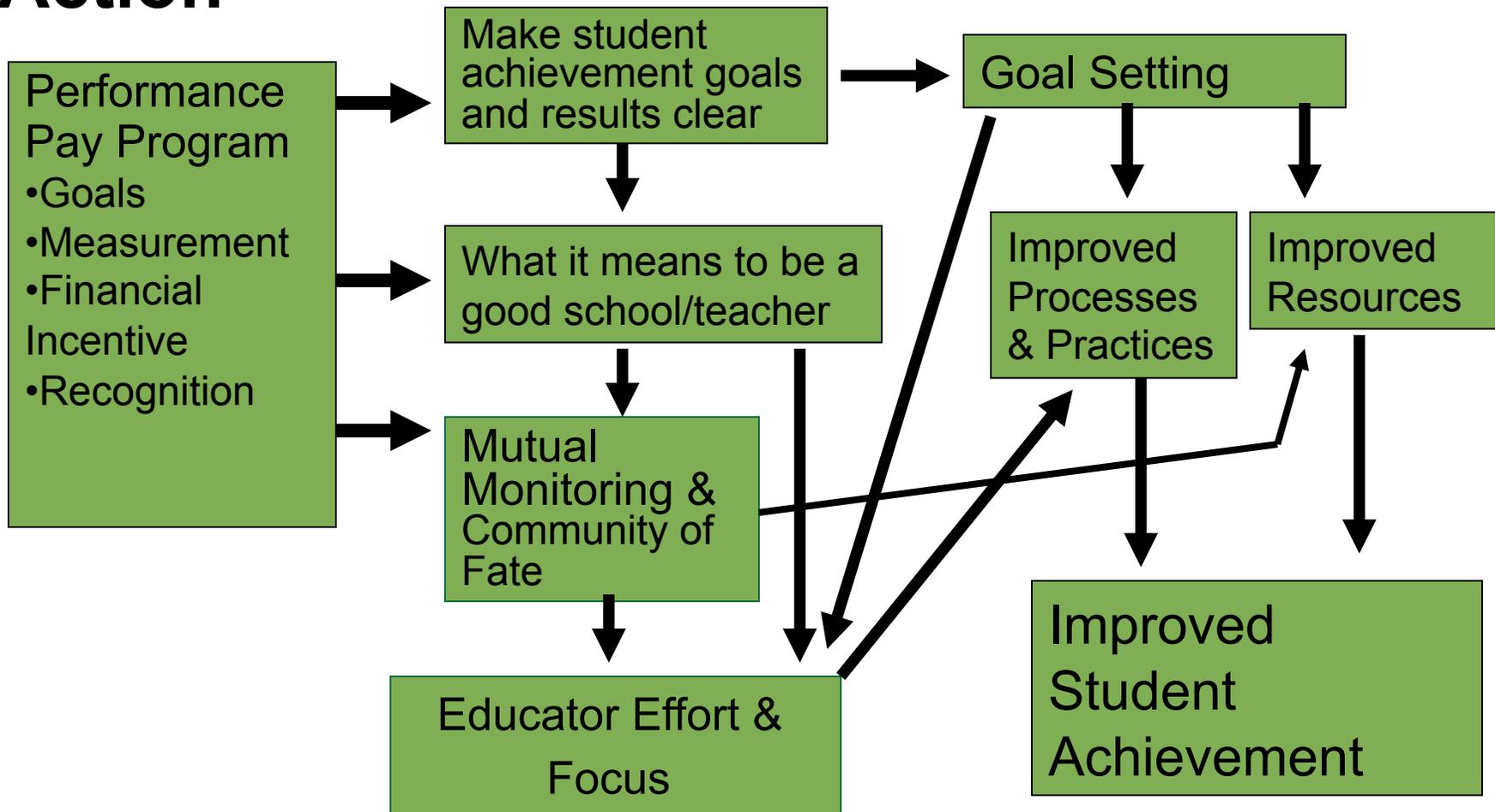
# Motivation Theory of Action



# Differential Attraction & Retention Theory of Action



# Culture & Communication Theory of Action



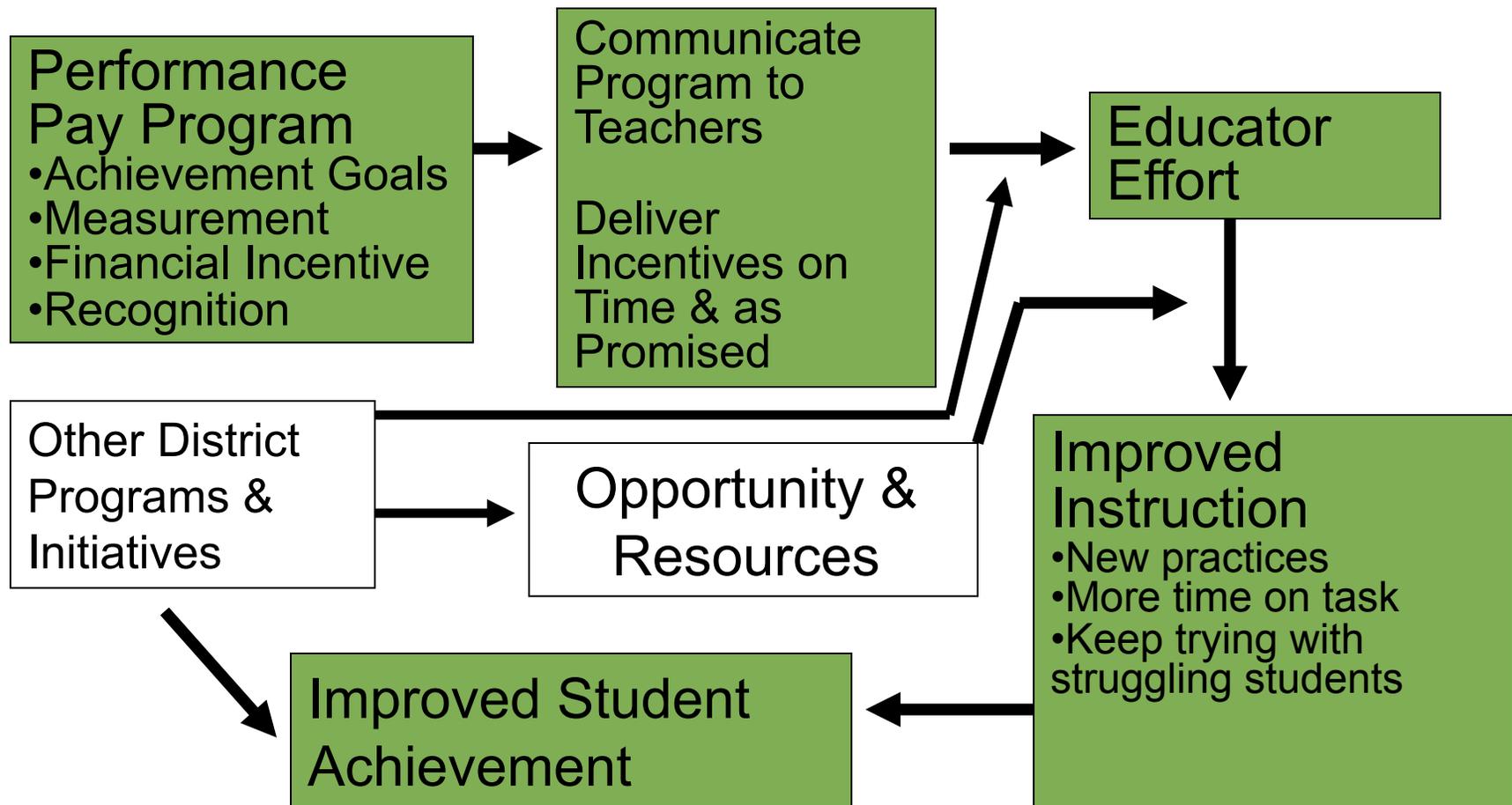
## Developing a Logic Model for Your TIF Program – Tracing Out the Connections

- Generic Parts of Causal Chains
  - Inputs
  - Activities (processes) & outputs
  - Intermediate (proximal) outcomes
  - Ultimate (distal) outcomes
- Be specific about the “active ingredients” in the design
- Causal connections: social science theory & program designer intuitions
- Temporal order

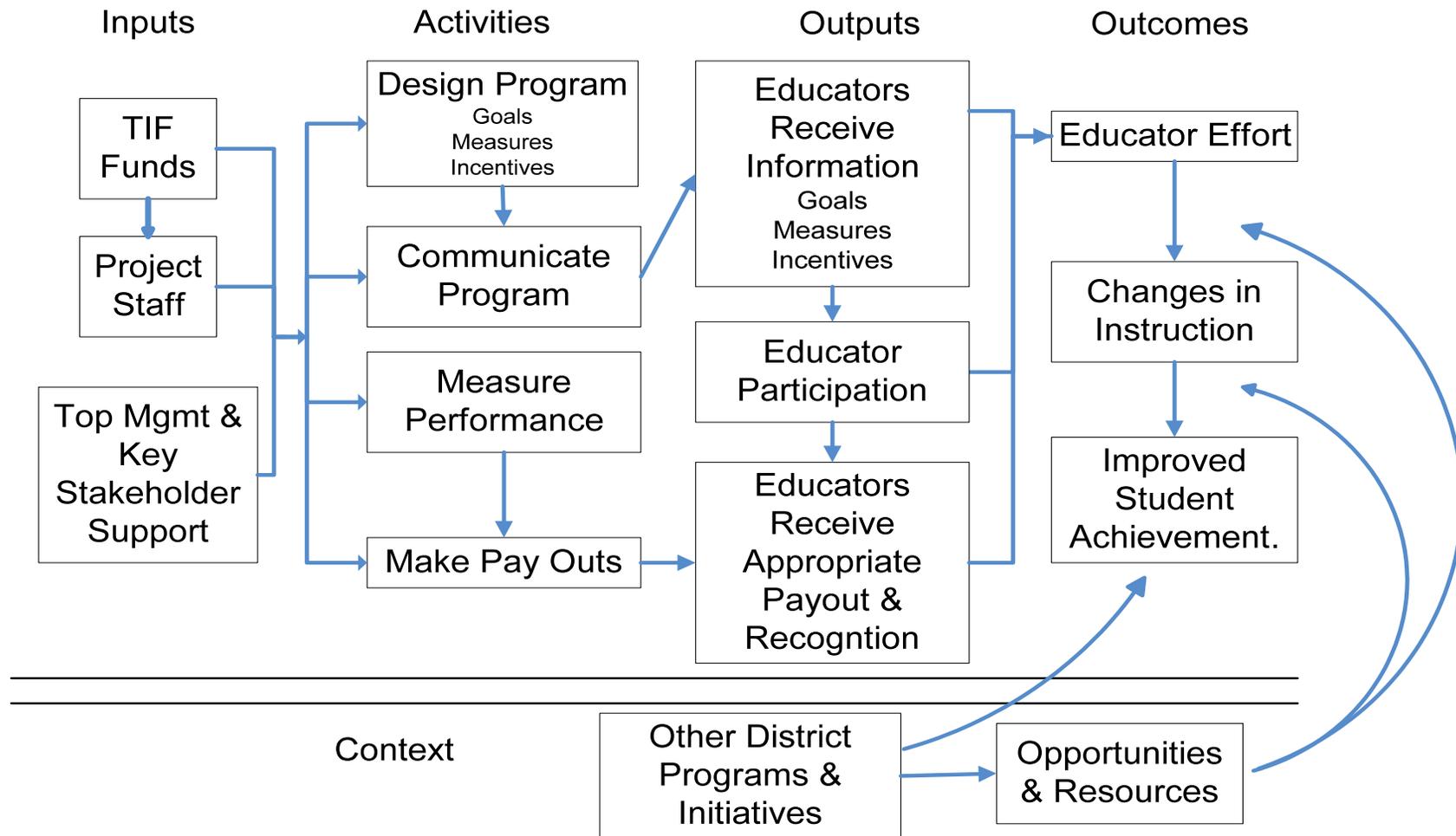
## Developing a Logic Model for Your TIF Program- Tracing Out the Connections

- Multiple & reciprocal causation
- How much detail?
  - Measurability
- Many connections are made via educator perceptions & beliefs
- Context and limiting conditions
- Styles of logic models

# Logic Model Style 1



# Logic Model Style 2



## Developing a Logic Model for Your TIF Program

- Logic models are not static, they may need to change with program evolution
- Use evaluation to challenge logic model assumptions
- As logic model changes, re-assess evaluation design
- Directly involve evaluator and key project leaders in logic model development and re-design

## **Time to Work on Your Own Logic Models**

- Develop a draft
- Modify an existing model
- Share some insights

## Resources on Logic Models

- Frechtling, J.A. (2007). *Logic Modeling Methods in Program Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2000). *Logic Model Development Guide*. Battle Creek, MI: Author.