

# Excellence and equity Policy lessons from PISA

*Grandes rencontres sur la persévérance scolaire*  
4 November 2013

Andreas Schleicher

Special advisor to the Secretary-General on Education Policy  
Deputy Director for Education

## Average school systems

Some students learn  
at high levels

Uniformity

Curriculum-centred

Learning a place

Low status of the  
teaching profession

Prescription

Delivered wisdom



## High performers in PISA

All students learn  
at high levels

Embracing diversity

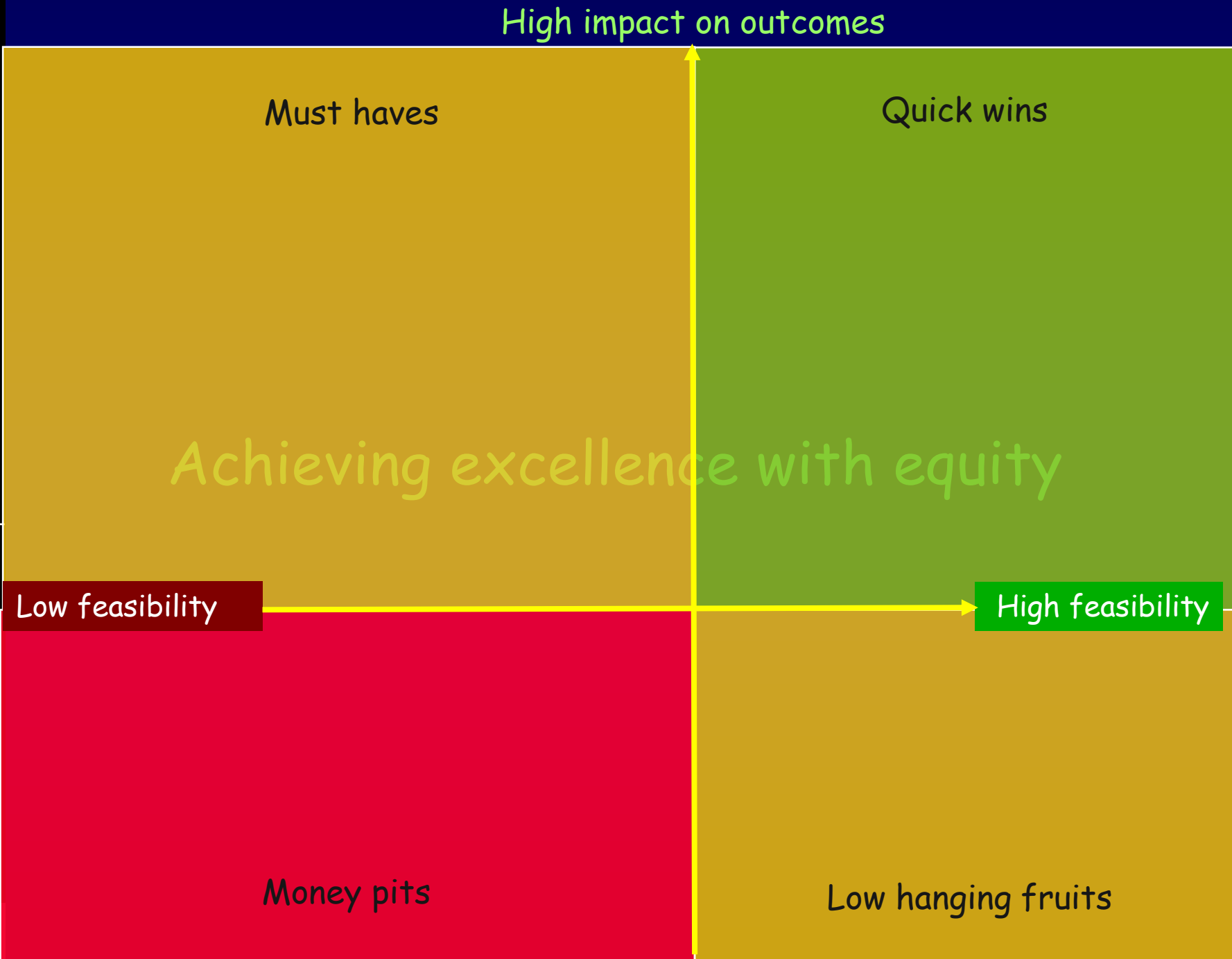
Learner-centred

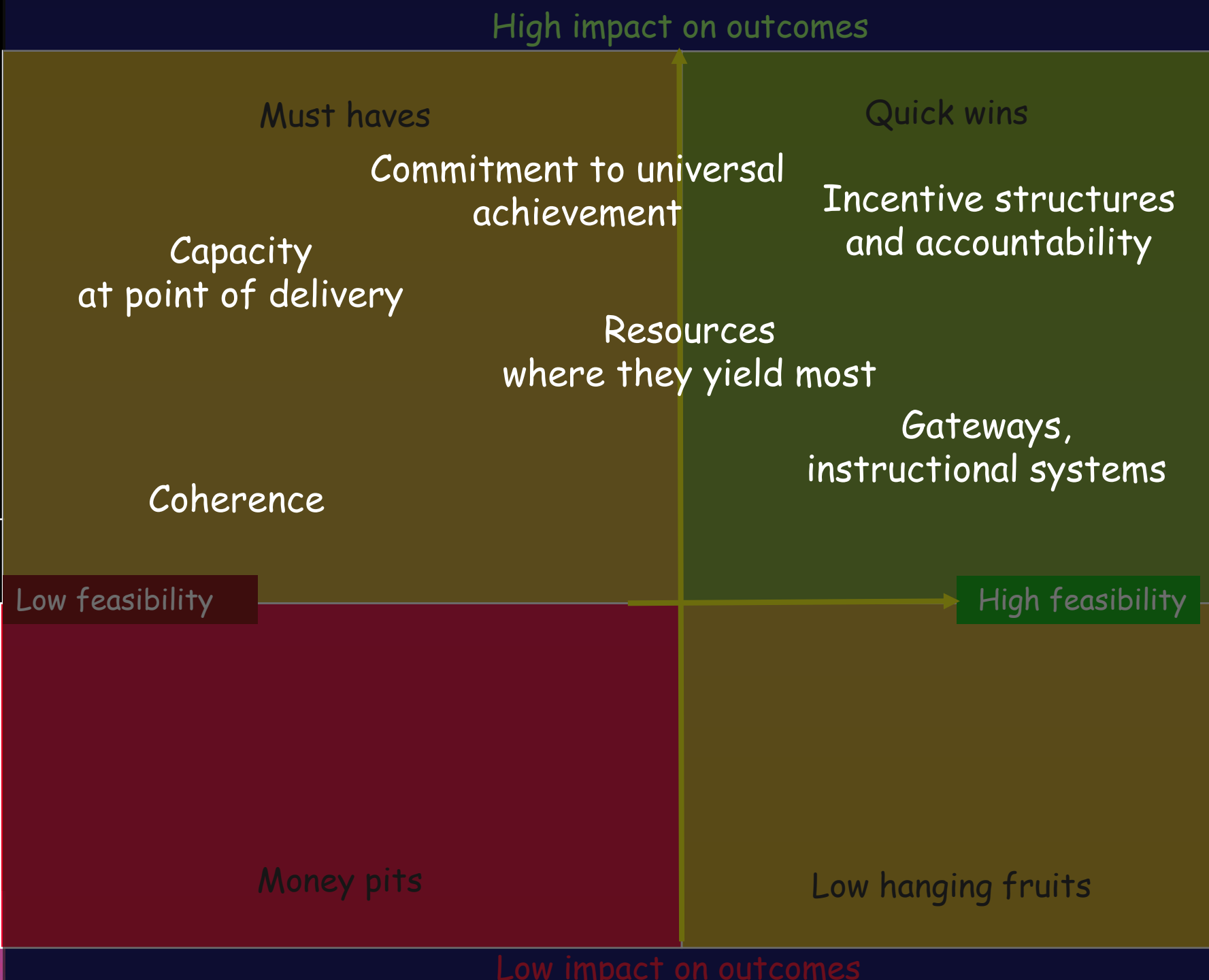
Learning an activity

Countries attract and develop  
high quality teachers

Informed profession

User-generated wisdom





- A commitment to education and the belief that competencies can be learned and therefore all children can achieve
  - Universal educational standards and personalisation as the approach to heterogeneity in the student body
  - Clear articulation who is responsible for ensuring student success and to whom

Conference

Low feasibility

High feasibility

Money pits

Low hanging fruits

High impact on outcomes

Must haves

Quick wins

Commitment to universal  
achievement

Incentive structures

Capacities  
at point

Cohesive

Low feasibility

- Clear ambitious goals that are shared across the system and aligned with high stakes gateways and instructional systems
  - Well established delivery chain through which curricular goals translate into instructional systems, instructional practices and student learning (intended, implemented and achieved)
  - High level of metacognitive content of instruction
  - Innovative learning environments

Money pits

Low hanging fruits

Low impact on outcomes

## □ Capacity at the point of delivery

- Attracting, developing and retaining high quality teachers and school leaders and a work organisation in which they can use their potential
- Instructional leadership and human resource management in schools
- Keeping teaching an attractive profession
- System-wide career development

Quick wins

Incentive structures  
accountability

Gateways,  
functional systems

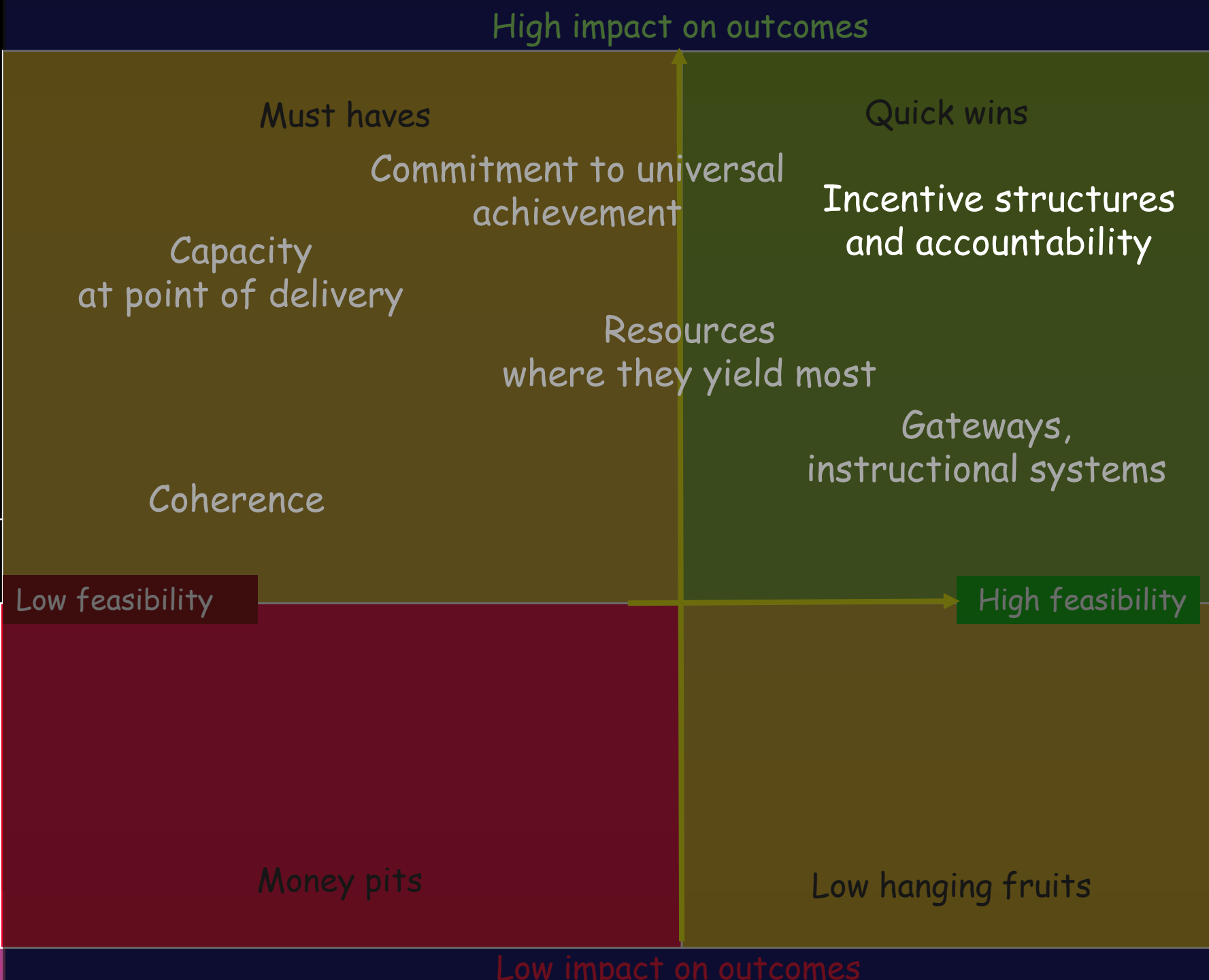
Low feasibility

High feasibility

Money pits

Low hanging fruits

Low impact on outcomes





□ Incentives, accountability, knowledge management

- Aligned incentive structures

For students

- How gateways affect the strength, direction, clarity and nature of the incentives operating on students at each stage of their education
- Degree to which students have incentives to take tough courses and study hard
- Opportunity costs for staying in school and performing well

For teachers

- Make innovations in pedagogy and/or organisation
- Improve their own performance and the performance of their colleagues
- Pursue professional development opportunities that lead to stronger pedagogical practices
- A balance between vertical and lateral accountability
- Effective instruments to manage and share knowledge and spread innovation - communication within the system and with stakeholders around it
- A capable centre with authority and legitimacy to act

# School autonomy, accountability and student performance

## Impact of school autonomy on performance in systems with and without accountability arrangements

PISA score in reading

500

490

480

493

498

495

489

School autonomy in resource allocation

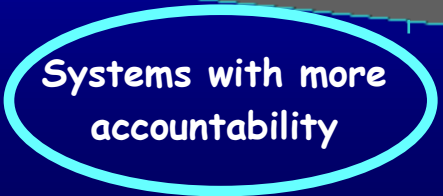
Schools with more autonomy

Schools with less autonomy

Systems with more accountability

Systems with less accountability

System's accountability arrangements



High impact on outcomes

- ❑ Investing resources where they can make most of a difference
  - Alignment of resources with key challenges (e.g. attracting the most talented teachers to the most challenging classrooms)
  - Effective spending choices that prioritise high quality teachers over smaller classes

structures  
ability

s,  
systems

Low feasibility

High feasibility

Money pits

Low hanging fruits

Low impact on outcomes

High impact on outcomes

Must haves

Quick wins

Commitment to universal  
achievementIncentive structures  
and accountabilityCapacity  
at point of deliveryResources  
where they yield mostGateways,  
instructional systems

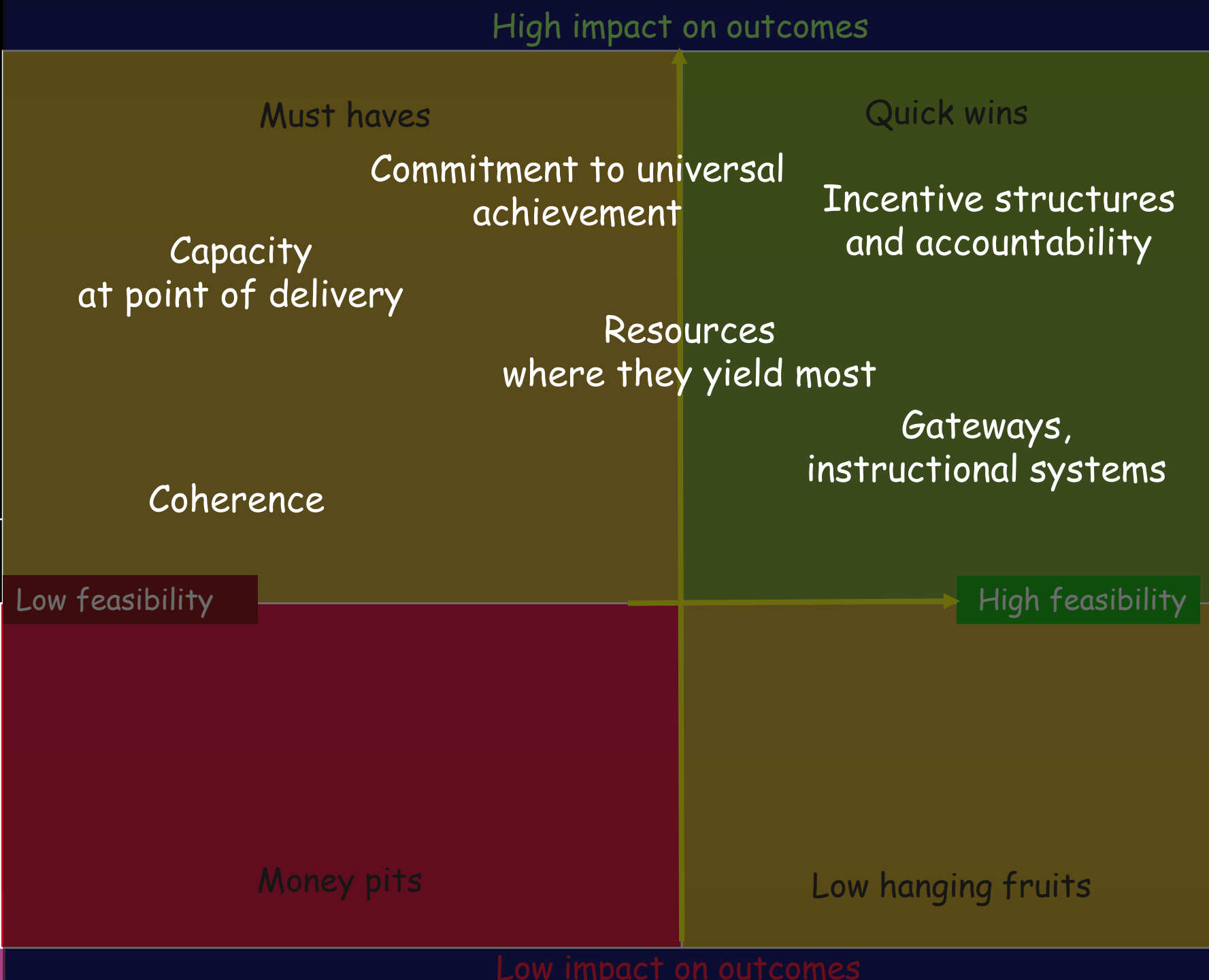
Coherence

## □ Coherence of policies and practices

- Alignment of policies across all aspects of the system
- Coherence of policies over sustained periods of time
- Consistency of implementation
- Fidelity of implementation (without excessive control)

High feasibility

Low hanging fruits



High impact on outcomes

Must haves

Quick wins

Commitment to universal achievement

Incentive structures and accountability

Capacity at point of delivery

Resources where they yield most

Gateways, instructional systems

Coherence

Low feasibility

High feasibility

Money pits

Low hanging fruits

Low impact on outcomes

# Education reform trajectories

14

Excellence and Equity  
Policy lessons from PISA

**The old bureaucratic system**

Student inclusion

**The modern enabling system**

**Some** students learn at high levels

**All** students need to learn at high levels

Curriculum, instruction and assessment

Routine cognitive skills, rote learning

Learning to learn, complex ways of thinking, ways of working

Teacher quality

Few years more than secondary

High-level professional knowledge workers

Work organisation

'Tayloristic', hierarchical

Flat, collegial

Accountability

Primarily to authorities

Primarily to peers and stakeholders

Montreal, 4 November 2013  
Andreas Schleicher

Find out more about PISA at...

- OECD [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)
  - All national and international publications
  - The complete micro-level database
- Email: [Andreas.Schleicher@OECD.org](mailto:Andreas.Schleicher@OECD.org)

Thank you!

... and remember:

Without data, you are just another person with an opinion