

## Research Brief

### Change

#### **Question: How can change become institutionalized?**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

“Why change?” “What’s in it for me?” “Been there done that.” “I am not doing this because another new idea is just around the bend.” “I do that, just by another name.” “Here we go again.” Have you heard these laments from staff? Perhaps you have even had these thoughts. Change has almost become synonymous with being “done to.” With the advent of a new superintendent, principal, curriculum director and/or legislature, each of whom wants to make their mark with hopes of “improving” public education by introducing new programs, the message teachers receive from those who are not in the trenches is that they are incompetent and do not know what is best for students. Given this, it is no wonder that change is often viewed as a threat, which in turn creates fear and anxiety. As a result, what gets lost is that “Change is forever. Problems don’t stay solved, so you have to learn to do the right thing over and over again” (*Leading and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*).

Fullan stated that it takes about six years for change to become institutionalized at the high school level. A critical aspect to take into account is that there is no one way to do it and what worked for one school may not work for another because the needs of the students as well as the culture and climate of the school are unique. In order to create a vibrant learning organization “...’change’ should be beyond reproach, embraced as an opportunity and valued as a key to a better work place and (help provide) a better future for kids” (*Create opportunities, not fear, through change...*)

#### **Necessary ingredients for successful change to occur:**

- All stakeholders (this should include teachers, students, parents, administration, district office personnel, and business representatives) must be involved in the change process
- All who will be affected by the change must be consulted and heard

- All key stakeholders should be educated on their roles and responsibilities, why the change is necessary and how it will be beneficial
- All staff must be prepared and trained for the change
- The changes must be client centered and results oriented
- There must be realistic reasons for the change
- There will be short term gains and this will need to be supported through additional materials, successful practices and on-going professional development
- Administration needs to share the leadership with critical stakeholders and not micromanage.
- Administration will need to manage ambiguity and uncertainty with self-confidence
- Communication needs to be open and honest
- Learn from successes and failures and utilize the information to inform change
- Be aware of the 1/3rd, 1/3rd, 1/3rd precept. 1/3rd of the stakeholders will be totally supportive and move forward with the change, 1/3rd may be open to the change but will take a “wait and see” stance, and 1/3rd will not support the change. Work with the supportive group and wait until a critical mass develops as the change has been shown to be successful.
- In order to maintain changes, new rewards must be aligned with the desired culture

### **Generic template**

- Develop a vision that is aligned with the district’s expectations
- List the strengths and areas for growth and how they meet or do not meet the vision
- Brainstorm ideas of strategies to fortify the strengths and develop areas for growth
- Prioritize the strategies, remembering that substantive change takes time
- Establish a realistic timeline for implementation, that includes who will do what and how each area will be assessed
- Build in ample support for staff to participate in on-going staff development, implement the ideas and meet together to share and plan

- Provide the firm yet gentle supportive leadership and guidance when staff reach points of cognitive dissonance and want to go back to the ways in which things have always been done
- Train staff in the analysis and collection of data
- Utilize the data to make informed decisions and implement those decisions
- Continuously educate the stakeholders, especially as there are changes in personnel
- Revisit and evaluate the vision and plan frequently. Readjust as necessary.

**Online Resources:**

- Basic context for organizational change  
A brief list of definitions for organizational change with live links is given.  
<http://www.managementhelp.org/mgmt/orgchnge.htm>
- Best practices of high performing schools: reform begins with understanding why schools need to change, using good data to determine what needs to change, and then knowing how to carry out the change  
A descriptive list of the process several high schools used to make long term substantive changes is laid out in this article.  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0HUL/is\\_4\\_34/ai\\_n14705049](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_4_34/ai_n14705049)

- Change inventories  
Provides descriptions of personal and organizational change styles inventories.  
<http://www.nsba.org/sbot/toolkit/chinv.html>
- Change management  
This is a brief description of necessary components in the change process.  
<http://www.leanmanufacturing.com/chgmt.htm>
- Changing educational change  
A description of change in terms of a design field is given in this article.  
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2000/02/16/23sergiovanni.h19.html?querystring=change%20process&levelId=1000>
- Create opportunities, not fear, through change: We must resist being drained by a concern over managing change, and invest more in powerful learning to support a positive future  
This author mentions different phrases that have become cliché, including “change process.” He provides some alternative ways to look at change through a new lense.  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0HUL/is\\_3\\_31/ai\\_82092510](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_3_31/ai_82092510)
- Examining the teaching life  
The importance of developing a community of professional learners and its components are described in this article.  
[http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.459dee008f99653fb85516f762108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c\\_ws\\_MX&javax.portlet.prp\\_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c\\_journaltypeheaderimage=%2FASCD%2Fimages%2Fmultifiles%2Fpublications%2Felmast.gif&javax.portlet.prp\\_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c\\_viewID=article\\_view&javax.portlet.prp\\_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c\\_journalmoid=df75f993dac99010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp\\_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c\\_articlemoid=2ad5f993dac99010VgnVCM1000](http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.459dee008f99653fb85516f762108a0c/?javax.portlet.tpst=d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_ws_MX&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journaltypeheaderimage=%2FASCD%2Fimages%2Fmultifiles%2Fpublications%2Felmast.gif&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_viewID=article_view&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_journalmoid=df75f993dac99010VgnVCM1000003d01a8c0RCRD&javax.portlet.prp_d5b9c0fa1a493266805516f762108a0c_articlemoid=2ad5f993dac99010VgnVCM1000)



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- The three stories of educational reform  
This piece by M. Fullan, explores three different settings in which change took place.  
<http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kful0004.htm>
- Using collective wisdom  
One principal shared his thoughts about working with staff to develop a trusting and nurturing environment.  
[http://www.principals.org/s\\_nassp/bin.asp?CID=908&DID=53164&DOC=FILE.PDF](http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/bin.asp?CID=908&DID=53164&DOC=FILE.PDF)

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