

The Need for a New Kind of Leader

Our public education system is struggling to serve all students well. A long history of institutionalized racism and unequal resources among schools, combined with rising standards have made it difficult for our schools to make good on the promise of a quality education for all students. The teachers and leaders that serve in our public schools are inspiring, deeply committed and knowledgeable about their craft, however, teaching and leading in our country's most under-resourced schools is hard work. By investing in and building the capacity of the adults within our system, it is possible to create a thriving system of public schools, wherein historically underserved groups--African American, Latino, and English learner students--develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the 21st century. To do this, our schools and districts need leaders who can act as skillful facilitators, coaches, collaborators, agitators, consultants, and data fanatics. They must be chameleons, ready to take on each of these roles at the right moment to develop the conditions and capacity to greatly improve outcomes for students.

What is a Change Agent?

During the past 25 years, Partners has systematically supported our own staff members as well as our school and district partners to disrupt patterns of inequity that have negatively impacted students of color and English learners. Our change agents are powerful leaders, able to challenge the way things are currently done while respecting the history and experience within the system. They rally their communities in ways that lead to powerful and sustainable improvements. We have found that teachers and leaders can successfully transition from being highly effective in their own practice to leading and building the capacity of others when they receive professional development and coaching in the following areas:

- **Mindsets:** Rooting oneself in an understanding of systemic oppression in our education system, courageously maintaining a focus on equity and social justice, focusing on results and continuous improvement, and addressing challenges with courage and tenacity.
- **Leadership:** Inspiring others to work in aligned and deliberate ways to disrupt patterns of inequity; collaborating respectfully with the local community to realize a rigorous and inspiring vision.
- **Adult Learning:** Using coaching and facilitation skills to bring out the best of individuals and groups, guiding others to examine their practice, using data to highlight what is and isn't working, and investing others in making changes that will lead to greater success
- **Transformation Approach:** Learning about what successful classrooms, schools, and districts look like, holding deep pedagogical knowledge of the strategies proven to work best for students of color and English learners, understanding how learning systems can be designed to best support teachers and leaders to improve their practice.
- **Change Management:** Understanding how the feelings, motivations, points of resistance, and social dynamics of the adults within a system must inform the pace and tactics of change; recognizing that altering the status quo can create discomfort and adjusting to help individuals and institutions embrace more effective practices and structures.

Stages of Development

Progress toward becoming a change agent can be measured according to the stages of development described below. Consider multiple sources of evidence in selecting a stage and choose the one that fits best. The descriptors for each stage are based on four criteria: 1) Application or usage of the practice in one’s work; 2) Knowledge of the practice and an understanding of how it contributes to school or district transformation; 3) Consistency of implementation; 4) Quality of implementation.

Not Yet Started	Awareness	Exploring	Applying	Transforming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not implementing this practice • May not be a focus this year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still learning about this practice • May not yet use this practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in inquiry around this practice • Beginning to use the practice and understands why the practice is important • Implementation may be sporadic and quality of implementation is mixed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses the practice intentionally • Can clearly articulate why the practice is important and what it looks like in their context • Working to improve quality and consistency of their implementation; may need encouragement or reminders to use the practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice has become a habit or way of being and is implemented consistently and with high quality • Able to innovate and adapt their use of this practice based on data, context and feedback

Change Agent Rubric

1	Mindsets	
1.1	<i>Belief in Students</i>	Models an assets based view of students and emphasizes the importance of engaging learning opportunities that allow each and every student to thrive.
1.2	<i>Optimism</i>	Takes on difficult challenges with a sense of hope and possibility. Models the idea that the work of educators can and will make a difference in the lives of children.
1.3	<i>Antiracism</i>	Intentionally adopts, plans and implements anti-racist strategies and language while soberly identifying and accounting for personal and organizational risks and benefits associated with championing educational equity and antiracism.
1.4	<i>Self-Reflection on Personal Identity</i>	Explores intersecting aspects of personal identity (e.g. race, culture, gender, language, sexual orientation) within a broader social and political context. Is committed to reflection and personal growth related to how these identities impact his/her work as a change agent.
1.5	<i>Historical Perspective</i>	Is grounded in an understanding of the history of systemic oppression in society and public education and makes connections to inequitable policies and practices in place today.
1.6	<i>Theory to Practice</i>	Shifts conversations about equity from theory to practice. Takes action and models how to analyze, disrupt and repurpose the manifestations of racist ideology - policies, systems, structures, practices, rhetoric and ways of working – in urban public schools and districts. (e.g. engaging in courageous conversations, highlighting disaggregated data, planning and sharing culturally responsive units of study, actively identifying cultural assets, championing initiatives that support the most vulnerable students)
1.7	<i>Respect for Community</i>	Recognizes community cultural wealth. Seeks to learn about values, concerns, culture, and aspirations of families and students. Builds relationships, listens, and incorporates community voice when making decisions.
1.8	<i>Solidarity</i>	Builds cultural bridges with individuals from different racial and cultural backgrounds and acts in solidarity with historically oppressed people.
1.9	<i>Systems Thinking</i>	Attends to the systemic factors that influence school and district transformation, understands how challenges came to be, and is able to visualize how goals, changes, and priorities must be aligned across a system in order to create a lasting impact.

1.10	<i>Results-Orientation</i>	Keeps a clear vision for student success at the center of their work. Uses outcomes to guide decisions, priorities, and resource allocation. Helps others to form the habit of collecting data that informs adjustments needed to reach the end-goal.
1.11	<i>Courage and Resiliency</i>	Demonstrates the courage to do what is right by kids; is unafraid to challenge the status quo when something is not working and develops support systems that encourage him/her to keep moving forward when faced with challenges and setbacks.
2	Leadership	
2.1	<i>Communicates with Urgency and Optimism</i>	Communicates that the current reality for low-income students of color can and must be improved.
2.2	<i>Commits to Excellence</i>	Maintains high expectations for teaching, learning, and leadership. (e.g. communicates a clear connection between excellence and equity, creates a climate where professional growth is standard, and sharing a clear vision and expectations for curriculum, instruction, and assessment)
2.3	<i>Shares Leadership</i>	Ensures that leadership is collective, distributed, and collaborative, which includes trusting and listening to others, leveraging expertise, sharing decision-making, empowering others to lead and strategically stepping back while providing the necessary supports to ensure each leader is successful.
2.4	<i>Energizes and Inspires</i>	Creates a vibrant school culture in which progress is celebrated and each individual is inspired to leverage their strengths in order to realize their collective vision.
2.5	<i>Learning Orientation</i>	Acknowledges that he/she doesn't have all the answers by actively listening to the community, seeking out new ideas and learning opportunities, encouraging diverse perspectives, and actively soliciting feedback.
2.6	<i>Self Awareness</i>	Demonstrates social-emotional intelligence, is able to understand his/her impact on others, and protects time to remain grounded (e.g. engaging in personal reflection, prioritizing self-care, seeking support, etc) in order to maintain composure and resilience in the face of challenges.
2.7	<i>Reflective Leadership</i>	Uses data and feedback to adapt leadership practice. The connection between what has been heard and learned and leadership decisions is transparent.
3	Adult Learning	
3.1	Coaching	

3.1.1	<i>Coaching Orientation</i>	Regardless of role, takes responsibility for supporting the learning and growth of others. Views colleagues with an assets-based lens and leverages coaching techniques (e.g. active listening, coaching stances) to catalyze growth.
3.1.2	<i>Partners and Enrolls</i>	Strategically and opportunistically identifies key partnerships. Enrolls others in working to improve their practice.
3.1.3	<i>Coaching Conversations</i>	Leads coaching conversations with both content and relational objectives, using coaching stances flexibly and intentionally to help colleagues work systematically toward their goals. Outlines clear agreements and next steps.
3.1.4	<i>Critical Feedback</i>	Skillfully identifies areas of growth for colleagues or clients; engages in difficult conversations; is comfortable giving and receiving critical feedback, and proactively addresses resistance and misunderstandings.
3.1.5	<i>Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Coaching</i>	Adeptly supports a wide-range of clients, rooting coaching in a deep and respectful understanding of their clients' identity, values, experiences, strengths and goals.
3.2	<i>Team Facilitation</i>	
3.2.1	<i>Team Charters</i>	Guides teams to define their purpose and goals (linked to larger school/ district goals), establish working agreements (e.g. how they will communicate, make decisions, and hold one another accountable) and hold students at the center.
3.2.2	<i>Adaptive Facilitation</i>	Facilitates adaptively, seeking to understand the group's goals, soliciting feedback on facilitation, and making adjustments to ensure the group achieves its desired outcomes.
3.2.3	<i>Creates High-Performing Teams</i>	Cultivates group dynamics that promote high performance, helping the group address dynamics of race, culture, class and power, supporting the group to move through the stages of team development, and empowering the group to address dynamics on their own.
3.2.4	<i>Leverages Team Assets</i>	Empowers teams to work in ways that draw on the unique strengths and knowledge of each team member.
3.3	<i>Professional Learning Design and Facilitation</i>	

3.3.1	<i>Adult Learning Design</i>	Draws on knowledge of adult learning theory to design a scope and sequence and individual sessions that enable diverse groups of participants to achieve the learning outcomes.
3.3.2	<i>Facilitates Professional Learning</i>	Confidently prepares and delivers presentations that use a variety of techniques to engage participants in learning. This includes, communicating with participants and preparing materials in advance of sessions; presenting new concepts with passion, clarity, and poise; giving clear directions for activities; and responding adeptly to participant comments and questions.
3.3.3	<i>Leverages Feedback</i>	Adjusts facilitation based on feedback received during and at the end of a learning session. Able to read the room based on body language, engagement, and patterns of participation. Immediately adapts tone, pacing, or activities in order to meet the needs of participants. Reviews formal feedback at the end of every session and uses it to adapt the overall scope and sequence, design principles, and follow up support.
4	School & District Transformation Approach	
4.1	Results-Oriented Cycles of Inquiry (ROCI)	
4.1.1	<i>Disaggregated Data</i>	Facilitates analysis of school-wide/ district-wide disaggregated student achievement and other relevant data (based on race/ethnicity/language) to identify and create plans for students most in need of support.
4.1.2	<i>Sets Goals</i>	Leads processes to set school/district-wide SMART and equitable goals for improving student outcomes and develop or refine a theory of action for improving instruction for underserved students.
4.1.3	<i>Creates Plans</i>	Leads the creation of actionable plans (e.g. school professional learning plans, departmental action plans, district-wide PD plans), aligned to the school's vision and goals, that include clear expectations, structures and resources to support instructional improvement outlined in the theory of action.
4.1.4	<i>Monitors Progress</i>	Stays focused on outcomes and establishes regular routines to collect the data (student achievement, adult practice, and other relevant student data) needed to closely monitor impact of change strategies and progress towards goals.
4.1.5	<i>Reflects and Adjusts</i>	Reflects on and refines strategies for accelerating student learning, and adjusts action plans to more effectively support teacher learning.

4.1.6	<i>Empowers Others to Engage in Continuous Improvement</i>	Empowers both individuals and teams to internalize Results Oriented Cycles of Inquiry (ROCI) and use it to drive continuous improvement. (e.g. creating a consistent routine - time and process- for engaging in ROCI, supporting team leads to adapt the process based on their context, holding teams accountable, celebrating evidence of improvement, modeling and being metacognitive about use of continuous improvement methods)
4.2	Instructional Leadership	
4.2.1	<i>Anchors to Vision</i>	Enrolls their community in a compelling vision for teaching and learning and uses that vision to anchor and align all efforts within their context. Consistently communicates how change efforts are aligned to a larger vision.
4.2.2	<i>Instructional Core</i>	Implements, supports, and aligns curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment systems that are proven to work best for students of color and English learners.
4.2.3	<i>Builds Systems and Structures</i>	Envisions and creates aligned systems, structures, and roles (instructional leadership teams, district departments, professional learning structures, etc.) that work in concert to help the school/district move closer to its vision.
4.2.4	<i>Instructional Leadership Role</i>	Fulfills obligations of assigned role in a way that explicitly identifies an understanding of how it plays an instrumental part in impacting the instructional core.
4.2.5	<i>Coherence and Alignment</i>	Consistently works to ensure that systems, structures, roles, and actions are aligned to the instructional vision and desired shifts to the instructional core
5	Change Management	
5.1	<i>Strategy Development</i>	Grounds implementation of the “transformation approach” in a larger change strategy that is based on key principles behind multiple change theories (e.g. level of change; political, structural, symbolic, people lenses; stages of change; communication and decision processes; human reactions to change, etc). Ensures that the change strategy employs a user-centered approach that engages others in designing and testing changes.
5.2	<i>Identifies Collaborators and Early Adopters</i>	Gathers key people in the system together to collaboratively define the vision and strategic plan for change. Ensures that potential “early adopters” are invested in the strategy and outcome and resourced appropriately to pilot something new (a program, an approach, a mindset, a way of working, etc). “Quick wins” experienced by early adopters are used to build momentum.

5.3	<i>Project Management</i>	Identifies priorities, creates and manages multiple project timelines and checkpoints. Ensures that action steps and roles and responsibilities are clear. Holds others accountable and make adjustments when deadlines are missed. Understands the cadence of activities over the course of a year and anticipate upcoming projects that will need support.
5.4	<i>Two-way Communication</i>	Creates effective systems for gathering input and communicating priorities, expectations, decisions, etc. related to change efforts. Uses multiple methods for communicating (e.g. email, newsletters, staff meetings, collaborative planning sessions, etc) and reiterates key messages - knowing that stakeholders will process new information over time with repetition. Seeks out opportunities to check for understanding by observing people in action and listening to stakeholder experience.
5.5	<i>Attends to Culture</i>	Works to understand the individual needs and perspectives of those impacted by change. Taps into people’s intrinsic motivation in order to engage and enroll them in creating meaningful and lasting change. Understands that deep cultural transformation comes from designing and implementing strategies that attend to multiple aspects of the organization (e.g. political, structural, symbolic, and human). Adeptly draws on multiple frames to ensure effective change efforts.
5.6	<i>Responds to Resistance</i>	Identifies individuals or teams resisting a change and designs multiple strategies to bring them onboard (e.g. seeking to understand what is behind resistance, removing potential barriers, partnering “resistors” with early adopters they trust, setting people up to experience success, being patient, etc).
5.7	<i>Strategic Opportunism</i>	Stays focused on a longer term vision while remaining flexible enough to strategically leverage short term opportunities for change that arise.

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