Catalyzing Environmental and Climate Action in Schools Requires Communities Moving From Adversaries to Allies

Environmental Education - School-Community Engagement Webinar
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What have I learned in my journey as a changemaker?

Whole Systems Change

4Cs Whole Systems Framework for Environmental and Climate Action in Schools
Adapted from Sustainable Schools Project & Plymouth University: Andra Yeghoian - 2013

CAMPUS	CURRICULUM	COMMUNITY & CULTURE
Operations across the buildings and grounds model sustainable and resilient practices, minimize disruptions for learning, and serve as a lab for learning.	Curriculum integrates Environmental and Climate Literacy as well as principles and practices for Solutionary Teaching and Learning.	Evidence exists within the "walk" and the "talk" of the school community for prioritizing sustainability and resiliency, and developing strategic partnerships with community based organizations.

Constituents
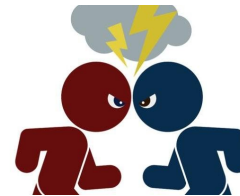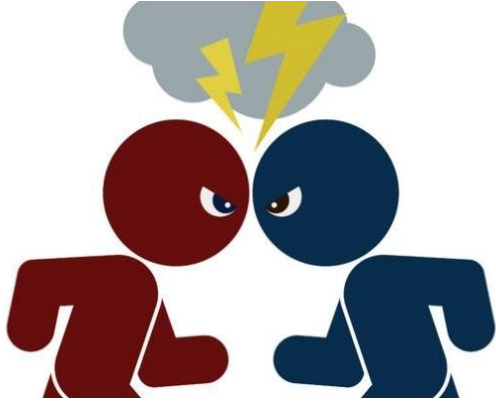
Students · Faculty and Staff · Administrators · Community Partners and Families

Whole systems change is transformative, and requires all hands on deck!

Key Terms

Adversary (n): One that contends with, opposes, or resists; an enemy or opponent in contest, conflict, or dispute; a clever or antagonist opposing interest
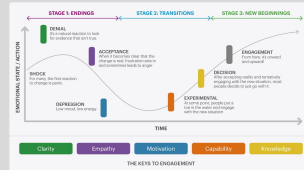

Ally (n/v): one that is associated with another as a helper; a person or group that provides assistance or support with an ongoing activity, effort, or struggle
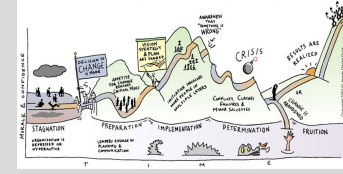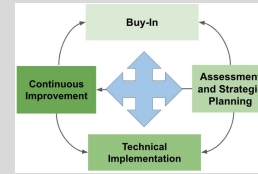
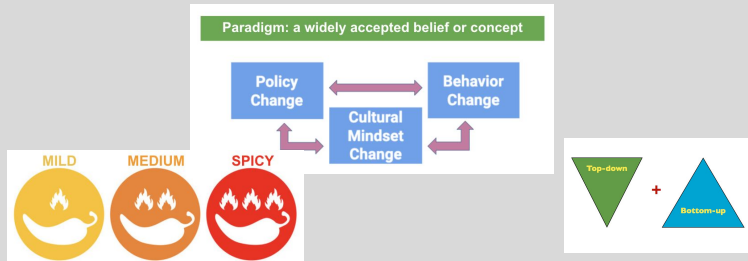# Taking People from Adversary to Allies Takes a Deep Understanding of Change

Readiness for Change

Change Management

Prepare, Plan, & Design Change

Disruptive Change
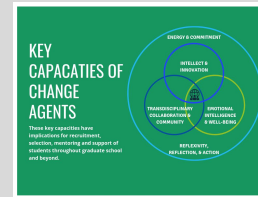
Transformative Change is Disruptive Change

ENERGY & COMMITMENT

INTELLECT & INNOVATION

TRANSDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & WELL-BEING

REFLEXIVITY, REFLECTION, & ACTION
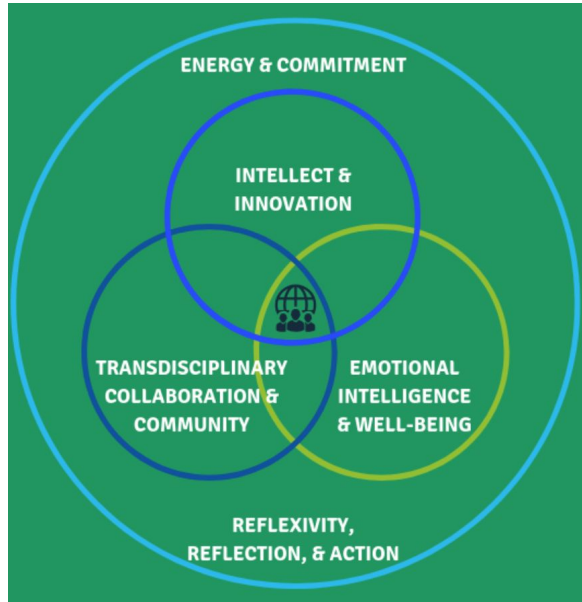
- Willing to take bold risks
- Don't follow conventions and beliefs of hierarchies and status quo legacies
- Believe that what matters is what is relevant
- Understand that change is inevitable so it is better to get uncomfortable now and tackle it
- Leverage cultural and multigenerational intelligence
- Understand global trends
- Provide vision and thought leadership
- Can manage in a crisis
- **Know how to shift constituents from adversaries to allies**

To what extent do you think of yourself as a changemaker? Which of the above characteristics are true for you?

Readiness for Change: Messaging Matters to Each Individual
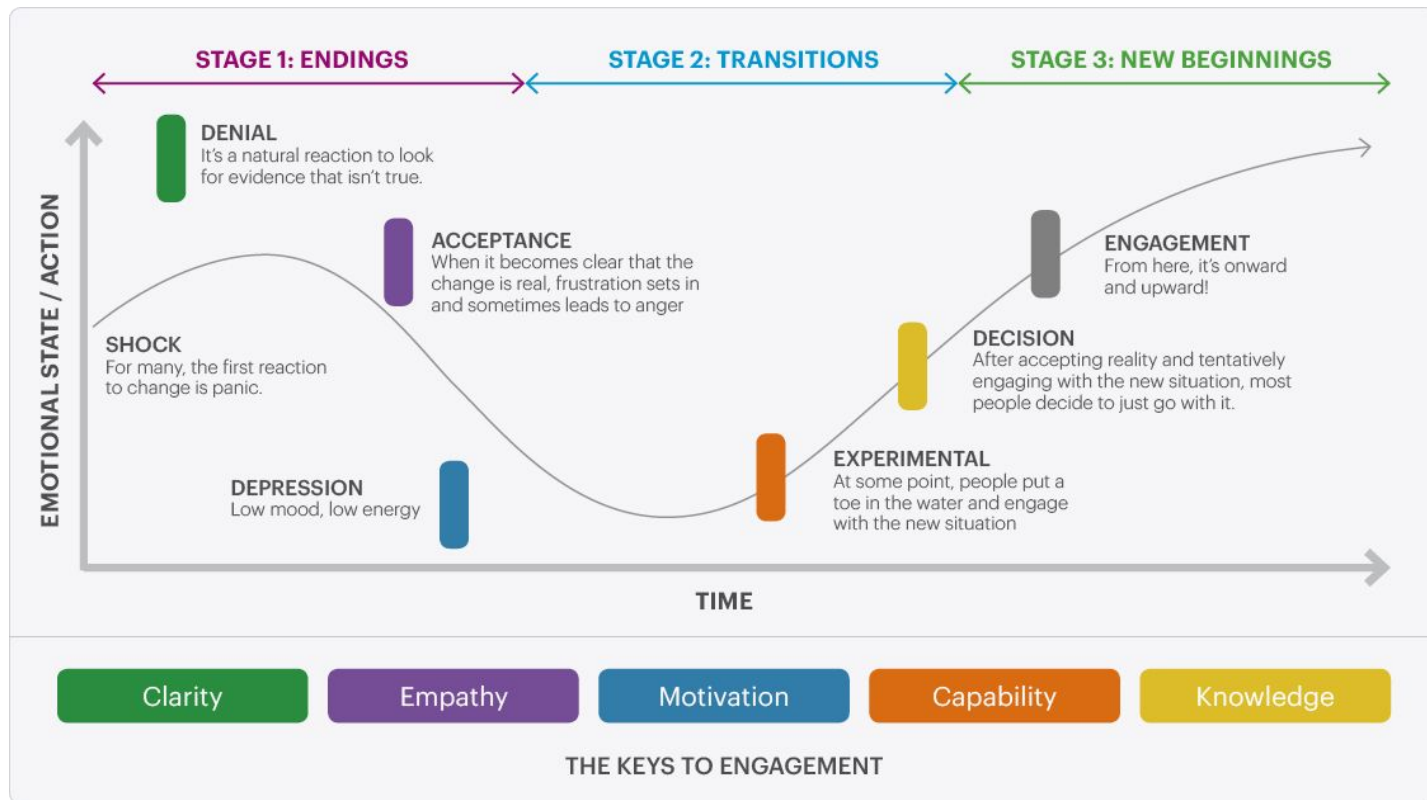
Preparing and Planning Change:

Top-down

+
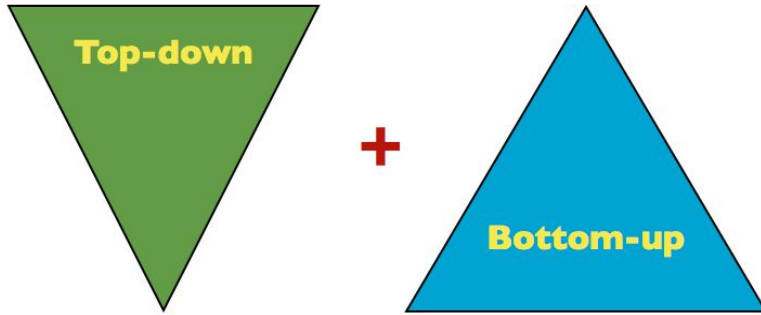
Bottom-up

You need both the top and the bottom!

Support a shared understanding of a timeline for change that works for each community

MILD MEDIUM SPICY

Change Management: Understand Phases of Change and the Monsters that Lurk in the
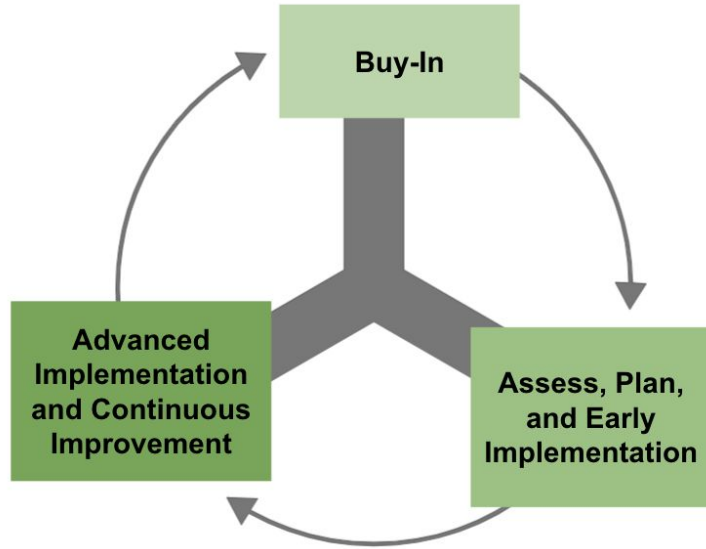
Note: The phases of change are not always linear, and different smaller projects may be in different phases of change…AND the change monster will try to bring things back to status quo!

What ally-informed tools can I share with others for their journey as a changemaker?

Develop a Compelling Shared Vision

Schools as hubs of sustainability and climate resiliency - equipping students with the tools, resources, and life experiences to create an environmentally sustainable, socially just, and economically thriving world.

Explore: Vision Activity Handouts

Have an Operationalizing Framework

4Cs Whole Systems Framework for Environmental and Climate Action in Schools

Adapted from Sustainable Schools Project & Plymouth University: Andra Yeghoian - 2013

🏫 CAMPUS	🌱 CURRICULUM	⚛ COMMUNITY & CULTURE
Operations across the buildings and grounds model sustainable and resilient practices, minimize disruptions for learning, and serve as a lab for learning.	*Curriculum integrates Environmental and Climate Literacy as well as principles and practices for Solutionary Teaching and Learning.*	*Evidence exists within the "walk" and the "talk" of the school community for prioritizing sustainability and resiliency, and developing strategic partnerships with community based organizations.*

Constituents

🌱 **Students**　🚿 **Faculty and Staff**　👤 **Administrators**　🌳 **Community Partners and Families**

Explore: 4Cs Whole Systems Framework for Environmental and Climate Action in Schools

Make the Crisis Easy to Understand

Non-indigenous human impact has caused an imbalance in the four spheres that has led to two separate but connected environmental crisis
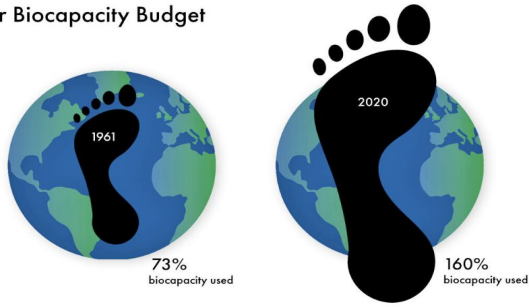
Ecological Overshoot: *Natural Resource Depletion, Built Landscape, Pollution, etc.*

Global Warming → Climate Change as a symptom of ecological overshoot and exacerbating overshoot issues

Explore Overview in the Educator's Shared Narrative of Contemporary Environmental Crisis

Reframe Responsibility as an Opportunity
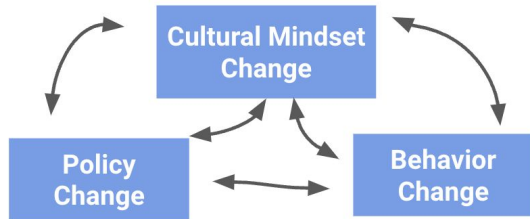
"The planetary emergency unfolding around us is, first and foremost a crisis of thought, values, perception, ideas and judgment. In other words, it is a crisis of mind, which makes it a crisis of those institutions which purport to improve minds."

– David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College

Paradigm Shifting Requires Engaging Three Key Levers of Change

Cultural Mindset Change

Policy Change

Behavior Change

Paradigm: a widely accepted belief or concept

NEW REVISED EDITION

THE WORLD BECOMES WHAT WE TEACH

Educating a Generation of Solutionaries

ZOE WEIL

Educate to Survive and Thrive
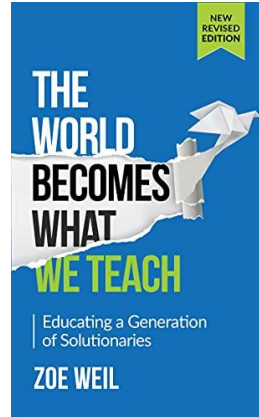
Explore: Guiding Philosophies

Create Structures to Drive the Behavior You Want!

District-Wide Sustainability Committees in K-12 Schools: Overview and Resources
Last Updated November 2022

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Environmental and climate literacy, and sustainable and climate resilient efforts in schools (i.e. carbon-neutral energy, zero waste, living schoolyards, etc.) are often referred to as "going green," or "green schools" efforts. These efforts are a win-win-win for schools as it is the right thing to do for student health and well being, it contributes to positive academic outcomes and overall school climate, and it is great for the budget and long-term maintenance of school facilities. Green schools efforts also offer a holistic approach to equity, as they serve to mitigate environmental injustice, and can be leveraged for learning that prepares students for college and career pathways that align with the growing emphasis that business, government, and higher education sectors have placed on sustainability. Despite all the amazing outcomes, many school districts struggle with identifying the right structure to keep environmental and climate action a top priority. This document outlines how district-wide sustainability committees can be a key leverage point for institutionalizing environmental and climate action.
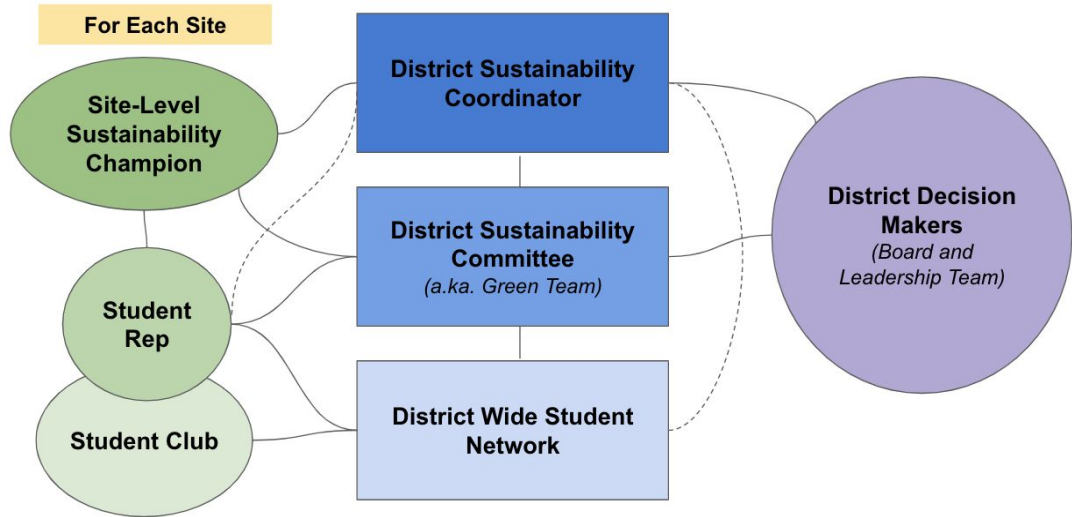
"Structure drives behavior"
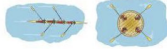
Like all organization-wide efforts, successful environmental and climate action initiatives require a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities; an organizational structure that fosters communication, empowerment, and accountability; knowledgeable and skilled leaders; and adequate resources to meet goals. Sustainability committees (a.k.a. "Green" or "Climate Action" Committees) can provide an important structure for prioritizing and building momentum towards sustainable outcomes. This document supports leaders in understanding the characteristics, considerations, and successful models for running effective district-wide sustainability committees. Use the quick links to navigate the document:

I.   **Characteristics of Successful Sustainability Committees**: This section provides a high level overview to the characteristics of successful district-wide sustainability committees.

II. **How Committees Can Leverage Change Theories to Effectively Catalyze Change**: This section analyzes change theories to support committees with effective change making efforts.

III. **Shared and Inclusive Leadership Models for Sustainability Committees**: This section provides a model for sustainability committee leadership pathways, and provides role descriptions and recommendations for compensation considerations.

IV. **Recommendations for First Actions by Committees**: This section outlines ideas for initial projects and efforts for a sustainability committee.

District and Site Level Model for Sustainability Leadership *(Sustainability Committee)*

For Each Site

- Site-Level Sustainability Champion
- Student Rep
- Student Club

- District Sustainability Coordinator
- District Sustainability Committee *(a.ka. Green Team)*
- District Wide Student Network

- District Decision Makers *(Board and Leadership Team)*

Explore: Successful District-Wide Sustainability Committees

THANK YOU!

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