



Leading Change



How to Use This Guide

This discussion guide is intended to assist California educators who wish to use the QSF **Leading Change** video in meetings or discussions.

The questions and activities can be modified to fit the chosen purpose and audience.

Overview

School site and district administrators can be effective leaders for change by successfully navigating a period of critical change. Leaders can reduce the anxiety brought about by rapid change by managing the change process, making it:

- Understandable—by building awareness of upcoming changes well before the transition begins
- Inclusive—by involving stakeholders in developing a shared vision and plan of action
- Optimistic—by maintaining a positive attitude and by framing challenges as opportunities
- Human-centered—by viewing the change from the perspective of others
- Organized and sustainable—by aligning programs and resources to maintain a focus on the goals of the new initiatives, and by phasing in the transition so that changes can be refined and adjusted using knowledge gained during the initial stages of implementation

Key Topics

- District and school leaders foster a climate in which the school community works collaboratively toward a shared vision, and in which challenges are turned into opportunities
- Leaders manage the change process by communicating frequently with stakeholders and providing multiple opportunities for feedback and discussion of important issues
- Leaders balance needed change and organizational stability by making the process clear

Reflection Questions

- What comes to mind when you think about the word **leader** aligned with change?
- What have been your experiences as a leader of a department, school, or project? Did you assume leadership roles? If not, did you want to assume leadership roles? In either case, what was your experience?
- What leadership education for leading change might benefit this group?

Activity 1—Building Consensus

To build consensus and make an informed decision around a change initiative, with your leadership team, answer the following questions to prepare for a successful beginning to the new practice.

- **What is our current situation?**
What activities are we currently doing, who are we currently serving and what is the data telling us about how effective this practice is for our students?
- **Why do we need to change our current practices?**
What problem are we trying to solve, what is going to motivate people to change their practices, what are the incentives, what will happen if the change does not happen, and what support for the change exists among our stakeholders?
- **What does research tell us about best practices?**
What is the research on evidence-based and promising practices and what success has other districts and schools experienced?

Activity 2—Sustaining a Change Initiative

In districts and schools over the years, many new initiatives, programs and practices have been introduced and used for various lengths of time. There are many reasons why these were once considered best practices but are no longer in place. To be able to carefully introduce, support and sustain any new initiative, it is important to reflect on past practices to determine how to improve the introduction of any new changes. For the following exercise and discussion, think of an initiative or program that did not generate the outcomes you had expected or think of a successful initiative or program that is no longer in practice.

Write down (individually):

- a brief description of the initiative or program
- the desired outcomes
- why it is no longer in place or effective
- what could have made it successful

Share out individual responses and then as a group discuss:

- How do we lead our new initiatives so that, based on positive data, they can be sustained?

- What can we do differently in the change process to address challenges, disappointments, confusion, or frustration?
- How should we communicate how this change will have long term support and focus in contrast to earlier change initiatives?