

Introduction

Educating All Our Children

A Resource and Planning Guide

Are you interested in doing something different in order to get better results for your students?

Are you . . .

- . . . interested in saving staff time and resources by integrating the initiatives and programs operating in your school?
- . . . worried about your students' test scores, especially when they are disaggregated by sex, race, and other factors?
- . . . concerned about students from a different culture moving into your district, a culture you've never worked with before?
- . . . interested in preventing recurring problems, such as harassment and truancy?
- . . . wondering what will happen to graduating students who are not prepared to enter a diverse workforce and civic life?

We may be able to help you, but it will take some time--yet also save time in the long run--and propel you in directions your school may never have travelled before.

Our Focus

This process has been designed to assist educators and community members as they grapple with huge systemic and individual changes in education. It can be used in any change or assessment effort to develop new skills and to assist in deepening commitment to diversity and equity for all students, in all programs and activities.



REMINDER:
Equity:
Fairness and
justice or
impartiality
(getting what
you need).

In preparing this guide, our own commitment to teachers and other educational personnel in making the practice of diversity and equity a valued standard in their districts and classrooms is based on these beliefs and assumptions:

- that the process and products of the guide are designed to work anywhere with any group of any size, and must mesh with initiatives already in place;
- that student learning can be positively influenced by changes in school policies and practices that are part of systemic school reform measures, although there is no simple cause-effect relationship between school reform and learning;
- that passing new laws and creating policy is one way to move us toward equity, but attention to compliance alone can limit our full embrace of diversity;
- that principles of science suggesting a natural tendency to order and diversity, which assure survival, are also operative in organizational systems and communities and need to be acknowledged and supported;
- that each of us knows the pain and injury of discrimination because each of us is “different” in some way and that this knowledge can be a motivation for creating alternative responses to difference;
- that attention to diversity and equity for all students will increase individual and collective student achievement;
- that, while we have already spent great time, energy, and resources on attempting to achieve diversity and equity, and have made some progress, the creative, integrative process presented here is intended to enhance, deepen, and expand that effort.

“In today’s global business environment, being able to interact effectively with people different from ourselves is a necessity for leaders, managers, and individual employees in every organization.”
--Harris & Myers

• possibilities through greater diversity. Species that are extinct
• have, for the most part, died out because they could not or
• would not diversify (Gould, 1993).

• Though 80% of the total species that have existed on the planet
• may now be extinct, those remaining bring gifts and surprises
• that represent unimaginable and tenacious forms. Life forms
• opt to survive, to evolve, to diversify. From a drop of water to
• the universe as a whole, there is abundance of form and
• resources, richness and variety, that allows chaos to develop
• into patterns, to emerge into an order that is stunningly
• beautiful and elegantly efficient. The order and growth that are
• inherent in the processes of nature are a metaphor for this
• program. We believe that when people and systems are *open* to
• the richness and utility in human difference, change will occur
• in organizational systems and structures.

• Diversity and equity are everybody’s issues, because we are
• each a part of the variety. It doesn’t belong to the “others.”
• People and their systems must relate to, support, and value
• difference. **Survival depends on it.**

• **Changes in How We “Do” Equity**

• Many attempts have been made to change individuals and
• programs so that they are more inclusive of individual
• differences. In the early years of this effort to accept diversity
• and equity, we worked to change attitudes. Some organizations
• still hold what they call “sensitivity” sessions. It was soon
• recognized, however, that it was harder to change attitudes than
• to change behavior, and harder still to change behavior when
• participants could not see any benefit to change, nor understand
• its dynamic.

• We were also encouraged to ignore or deny race- or gender-
• based differences in the early days, to “treat everyone the
• same.” Equality meant everyone getting the same, being treated
• as if primary differences of heritage, identity, or personality
• were not significant. Treating everyone the same has some

major hazards: 1) Many students become lost in the large group and we cannot see what they need as individuals; 2) students need different things to help them succeed, based on individual experiences and capabilities; and, 3) when we treat people who are unequal the same, we get the same, unequal results.

Our new efforts will concentrate on transforming ourselves and our systems and structures, with an emphasis on the results we want to achieve in schools. There have been bills, laws, codes, policies, edicts, directives, and prayers passed down to us, demanding that we accept this responsibility on behalf of all children. While some educators have only made cosmetic changes, many individuals have made great efforts to incorporate well-intended change ideas and strategies into their practice. However, these efforts often proved temporary and/or superficial. We have learned that achieving equity must be systemic and long term. (See Figure 1).

<u>IS NOT</u>	<u>IS</u>
Program of the day or month	An ongoing process
A quick solution	A way of thinking
Win-Lose	Win-Win
Reapportioning the slices	Making a bigger pie
A case of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."	A case of "There is a better way. Find it." (Thomas A. Edison)
Restricted to one aspect of the educational process only (e.g., tech ed or p.e.)	Applicable to all purposeful activities or systems
Authoritarian	Empowering
"Been there-Done that." (Over in a year or two without regard for success)	A profession-long commitment

Figure 1. A schematic that summarizes what equity and diversity are and are not.

“Systems are not amenable to imposed solutions. . .”
-Wheatley

Key Point: For systemic change to occur, it must be created within the system.

“If we take time to reflect together on who we are and who we could choose to become, we will be led into the territory where change originates.”
--Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers

• Systems, like huge water balloons, tend to revert to their original shape as soon as the pressure from the outside is removed. In the instance of diversity and equity in education, this reversion to former practice does not happen because people are bigoted and prejudiced, although these behaviors do indeed exist and contribute to the difficulty. Rather, as Meg Wheatley indicates in her book, *A Simpler Way* (1992), systems are not amenable to imposed solutions. They resist being treated like nonliving things. For systemic change to occur, it must be created within the system. While some have been working on respect for individual differences diligently for years, we are far from truly embodying the value of diversity in our classrooms, districts, groups, communities, and organizations. Yet, sometimes our efforts inadvertently contribute to *greater* difficulties: creation of internal competition for limited resources, labeling, isolating, lowered expectations, intimidation, resentments, stigmatization, negativity toward and blaming of the very people to whom we are trying to relate in a different way.

• While we have come a long way toward raising consciousness about the need for equity across all populations, we are not there yet. These inequities are not due to a lack of concern or caring. Effecting change in human systems, in attitudes, and in behavior takes time. Three decades of effort represent the groundwork. We feel it is now time to capitalize on this groundwork, to integrate diversity and equity fully into education.

• Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) are stating a belief that underlies the approach we are taking. There is so much new information on systems--how they work, how they don't work and how they change--that we feel a new look at how change might occur is warranted.

• Systems evolve with their environments to provide support and stability even as they stimulate change. This stability provides freedom for individual organisms to experiment and change (Wheatley, 1992). We hope, through our process, to

• the school on vocational issues, or open hostility to teachers?
• Contrast this fictional school with the dynamic learning
• organizations you have seen. There is a constant flow of new
• information into and out of school, parents visit and
• volunteer in classrooms, and the community feels that the
• school is receptive to its needs for future citizens and workers.

• Which school is likely to get the long-term support it needs
• through taxes, community involvement, and pride?

• We do not suggest that change for the sake of change is the
• goal. Rather, we believe that when a system is truly open to
• useful, new ideas, it will accept those ideas that support its
• fundamental values. The principle of "self reference"
• (Prahalad & Hamet, 1990) suggests that, in response to a signal
• for change, the system alters in a way that is consistent with
• itself. In other words, a system will change but only in ways
• that preserve its integrity and allow for self renewal. "A clear
• sense of identity is the real source of independence from the
• environment"(Wheatley, 1992).

• In order for systems, school or otherwise, to change and
• embody a new orientation to diversity, the core identity of the
• system needs to be explored and opened. Solutions cannot be
• imposed upon systems. Solutions must *come from* the system.
• They must be created from its heart or core. To be effective,
• they must reflect a change in the fundamental values that the
• system embodies and implements.

• Those involved in an organized system must believe that
• something more beneficial exists for them when they endorse
• possible changes in the system. People want to find ways to
• express and embody their own beliefs and purpose; they look
• to the core of a system to determine whether it will support and
• enhance this possibility. Indeed, when a system projects its
• vision and beliefs, such as a commitment to diversity and
• equity, equity unfolds relatively effortlessly and with elegant

*Phase 1 will
help you
establish
your vision
and values.*

"If you're in a situation in which you need to solve a cultural problem, *you* are the only tool you have."

John Kibler

Our credibility depends on our learning something about each of our students' cultures. When we have many students from many cultures in our classrooms, we must learn enough about each child's culture to be credible. Obviously, we cannot learn *everything* about each student's culture, but we can learn enough to create a learning context.

Keep in mind that the Five F's--Food, Fashion, Festivals, Famous People, and Folklore--are only the tip of the cultural iceberg. What is much more important is what lies beneath the surface of the water. More important than the external manifestations of culture are the internal values, mores, and habits taught to a culture's children. It is more important to learn about how a culture describes a supreme being, birth, death, childrearing, and relationships between the sexes. The Five F's are a good place to start, but they are not enough, and often support the limiting stereotypes about a culture.

Here are some things to keep in mind about cultures:

- Everyone has one, even if we cannot immediately see it.
- We cannot generalize interests, values, or habits to all people in a cultural group or to individuals, but there are some commonalities to all people in a given culture.
- Everyone interacts in many cultures, depending on the situation. For example, one may interact in a particular way when in an all-male culture as compared to an all-female situation.
- We change our responses depending on the culture we are in at the moment.
- Each of us has operated in a majority culture and minority cultures, although some people design their lives to spend most of their time in a majority culture.
- "Home" has a learned culture--which we cannot see-- that may be very different from school culture.

In this guide, we have created and borrowed many activities designed to help educators learn about their students' cultures. First, we have provided opportunities to learn about our own cultures, since we rarely are aware of them. When we are unaware

that we have a culture, others' cultures are not meaningful to us. Second, we have provided models for finding out about the cultural backgrounds of the students in your schools and relevant strategies for honoring them.

Our goal is to enhance the values of diversity and equity in the vital system on which you choose to focus, so that they are enduring and fully integrated throughout. The challenge to achieve equity in schools is outlined in the following two pages by the National Coalition of Educational Equity Advocates.

Both diversity and equity will enhance achievement and future success for all your students. We intend that this process become an ongoing part of all that you do in your organization, and a source of energy and excitement to everyone involved in the learning process.

We hope that those who use this resource and planning guide will collaborate in ways that truly enhance success for all students.



The Challenge

We, as a nation, must assert that the . . . inequitable state of public education is not inevitable and will no longer be tolerated. Equity depends on much more than access to schools and their offerings. For example, we know a good deal about what drives poor and minority youth out of school—our schools can stop doing those things. There are effective pedagogies that involve students in active, creative learning—we can make their use routine rather than exceptional. We know that critical thinking is more important, more useful, and more exciting than rote memory recital—we can engage *all* students in the fullest use of their minds. Abandoning the piecemeal approach to meeting the needs of historically marginalized students, we can restructure our schools to make them places of excellent learning opportunity for *all*. Incorporating the following ten principles permits schools to achieve equity in excellence as an integral element of their structure:

1. **School governance and administration are committed to the integration of equity and excellence.** All decision-making considers the potential impact on the learning opportunities of all student groups. Publicizing disaggregated school data regularly permits comparative monitoring and evaluation of learning opportunities and outcomes by race, national origin, language background, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status.
2. **Every school program is accessible to any student who can benefit from participation and is not based on race, national origin, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status.** All students have equal opportunities to make informed choices about program entry and to prepare adequately for program participation. Schools and feeder schools meet their shared responsibility to plan for and to prepare students to participate in challenging classes.
3. **All students attend school in a climate of respect, free from discrimination, bias, and harassment.** Curriculum content, instructional materials, and teaching methods acknowledge and value all students' cultures and languages.
4. **The school has resources adequate to provide opportunities to meet the highest learning standards established by the school, its district, and its state.** The resources provide for a satisfactory physical plant and match

the needs of the students. All students have equal access to learning equipment and technology.

5. **The curriculum provides a progressive sequence of interdisciplinary, multicultural content aligned with the highest district, state, and national content standards.** It is active, cumulative, and inclusive of all cultures and both genders; it reaches beyond understanding content to the development of skills for evaluating and using information; it includes exposure, instruction, and experience in the fine and practical arts of diverse cultures.
6. **The school involves all students in a variety of active, student-centered instructional methods.** Instruction fosters independent and cooperative learning, mastery of learning skills, higher order thinking, and second languages; it recognizes and responds to variety in learning styles, including those which may reflect culture and gender.
7. **The school assesses student learning on a frequent and continuing basis for the primary purpose of improving teaching and learning.** Assessments are aligned with learning opportunities, are conducted in a variety of formats, involve the student in self-appraisal, reflect understanding of multiple domains of intelligence and academic learning, and have equal consequences for all students assessed.
8. **The school provides a variety of curricular and enrichment activities to meet the academic, vocational, and personal interests and needs of all students.** It actively encourages the participation of all students and all groups of students and is active in identifying and removing barriers to students' involvement.
9. **The school makes effective partners of the parents of all student groups.** It informs parents of education rights, student progress and options; consults them on policy matters; recruits them as cultural and local-history resources; welcomes them as program volunteers; and consistently *involves them* in short- and long-range school-wide planning and implementation.
10. **The school is an important link in a school-community network that supports a safe, caring environment of continuing and stimulating experiences for children.** It provides early educational services; provides or collaborates with daycare programs; provides parenting programs for community adults; and it collaborates with community agencies and groups through referrals for health, social, recreational, and cultural programs and services.

Educate America: A Call for Equity in School Reform
The National Coalition of Educational Equity Advocates

• Using This Resource and Planning Guide

• *Why should it be used?*

• **Connections to Organizational Improvement.** All improvement efforts must be looked at through the lens of equity and diversity in order to ensure the best education for all students. This guide provides a process for doing that.

• **Collaborative school improvement efforts to save time and energy.** Integrating all your school's initiatives, special programs, mandates, and values will ensure that all are continued and become a part of the daily fabric of your school.

• **Infusion of equity into all aspects of your educational program to help all students and make everything about your school better.** Students doing well now will do better and be better prepared for a diverse adult life.

• **Provision of a systematic, systemic process.** There is a road map here that can help you achieve any school initiative. It is tested and piloted and shown to be a productive method. It may be used with any project, large or small. It provides a way of looking at an issue and a means for addressing the issue.

• *How have others used this process?*

• Those who piloted the guide used it in a variety of settings for diverse purposes:

- An elementary school committee used it to plan and implement activities to introduce staff and community to newly-arrived Hmong students in the primary grades. The intent was to prevent harassment or discrimination by European American students and introduce teachers and staff to relevant cultural norms and learning expectations.

- An alternative high school used the activities with students who were interested in discovering whether the police detained students from their alternative school more than students from the high school, and whether Native American students were detained more frequently than European American students.
- A high school committee used the five-phase process to design a federally-required equity plan.
- A high school concerned about truancy used the guide to examine exactly who was truant, why, and how to address the problem.
- A high school used the process to integrate programs for respecting diversity among students, including issues of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and religion.

What does the Resource and Planning Guide include?

You have already read the introduction, which sets forth the principles and intentions of the guide. This section offers a guide on how to use the book. Following this preliminary material, you will find five phases, all of which include the following;

- A large star telling you where you are in the process
- Introduction to and overview of the phase
- The concepts that define the intent of the phase
- A list of outcomes you should expect when you finish the phase
- An outline of the goals, objectives, and activities in the phase
- A chart depicting the contents of the phase
- The complete instructions for activities chosen or designed to help you achieve the goals and objectives
- A final page of transitional questions to ask yourselves in order to ensure that you are ready to move to the next phase

The appendix includes a handy glossary, supplemental materials, references, and resources.

• You will often
 • see reference
 • to a “target
 • system,”
 • which refers
 • to the issue,
 • project,
 • problem, or
 • part of your
 • educational
 • system on
 • which you
 • have decided
 • to focus when
 • using this
 • Guide.

Phase 1:

Where do you want to go?

Phase 2:

Where are you now?

Phase 3:

Planning to go where you want to go from where you are.

Phase 4:

Implementing the plan.

Phase 5:

Maintaining momentum.

How should you start?

- **Read the Introduction.** This gives you an overview of the principles behind the development of the phases.
- **Review the Appendix.** There are several resources that will be helpful to you as you work through the phases, and it will serve you well to know what is there. The information will be helpful as you complete the activities, and will also help as you implement your plans.
- **Begin at Phase 1 and work through sequentially.** This model is a common one, used often because it works. We encourage you to follow the sequence at first, especially the first three phases.
- **Allow yourself to cycle back to other phases or to the beginning, as needed.** If you find that you want to return to an activity you have skipped, feel free to do so. When you finish all five phases, return to the beginning to see if your vision needs modification.

What do the graphic icons mean?

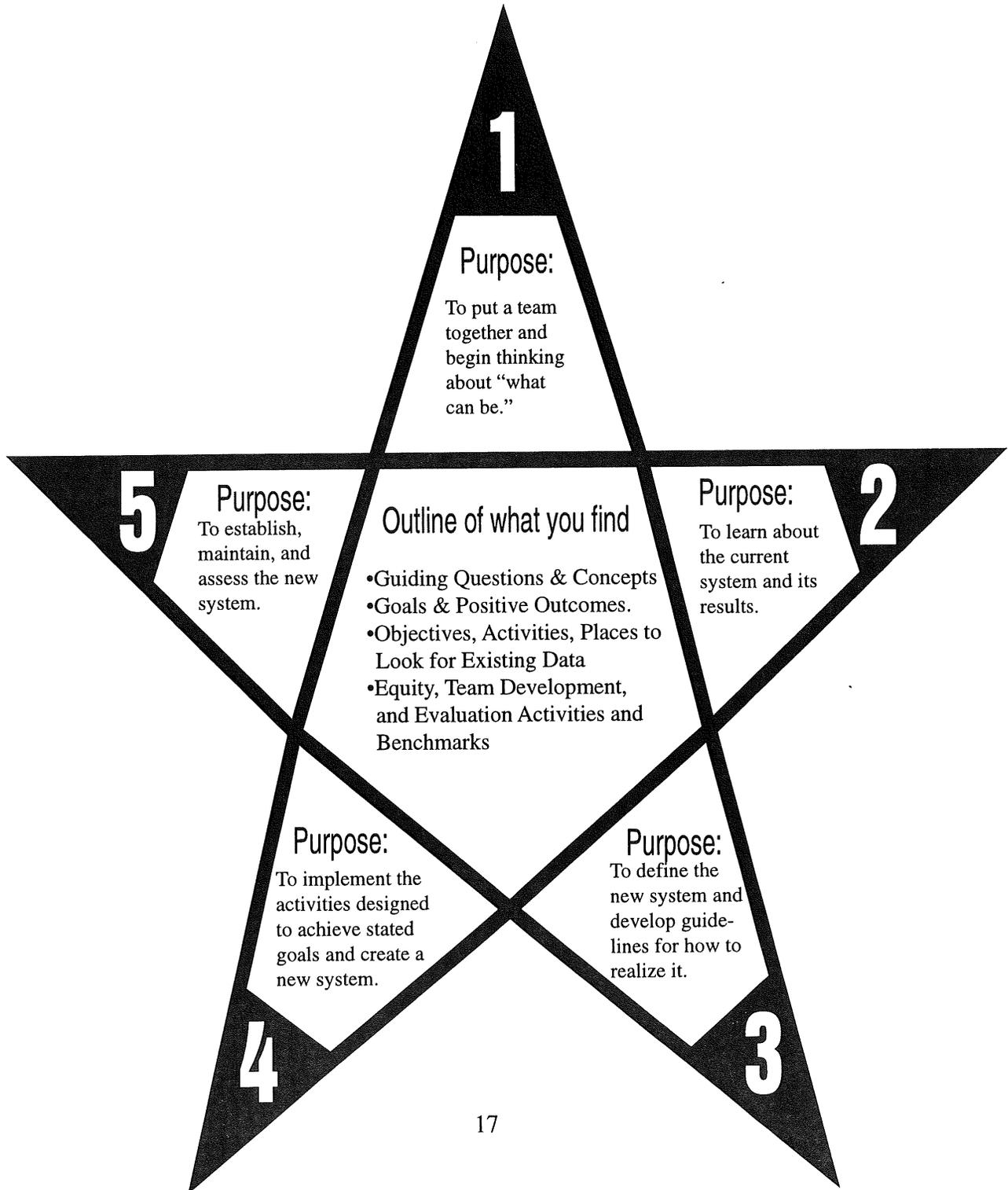
There are two types of icons:

The large star. The large star describes where you are in the total process. See Figure 2 for an overview of the phases.

IN THE MARGINS:

- TIPS
- REMINDERS
- DEFINITIONS

Figure 2. Organization of what you will find in each phase.



The small star found in the margin of the narrative within each phase identifies the number of that phase (Figure 3, below).



Figure 3. Phase identifier.

The circle. Within the activities of each phase, the circle (see Figure 4) identifies the phase number at the top, the concept the activity addresses, and the goal and objective number the activity addresses, at the bottom.

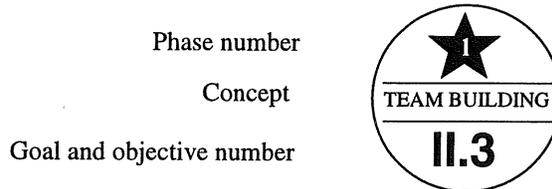


Figure 4. Situating the activity.

What can you expect from the activities?

Except for two suggested assessment instruments, the activities are complete. Everything you need to complete each activity should be included in the material that accompanies each one. The activities address the content of the phase as explained in the narrative and the concepts, and also include ways to build a team and address equity. As you work through the phases, you will notice that the team and equity activities become more sophisticated.

Possible solutions to common problems

"We don't have time for this."

- Create a realistic timeline for completion. Don't expect people to spend all their time on this project between meetings; for most, this is one more thing added to an already full schedule.
- Examine your meetings carefully. Sometimes people get frustrated with meetings that seem pointless or fraught with problems.
 - Is this meeting necessary? Can occasional business be taken care of via e-mail? Is the purpose for the meeting clearly stated? Is there an agenda, no matter how skeletal, for every meeting?
 - Have you established ground rules for the meetings? Having ground rules to point to makes it easy for members of a team to address small irritating problems that can grow when not dealt with. For example, pointing to the rule "Everyone has a chance to speak" can remind someone who is monopolizing the discussion to let others speak.
- Look at your calendar.

On a sheet of paper, write out the elements of the vision for yourself, your group, and the vision you created in Phase 1. Then write the word "None" on a line by itself. Now open the primary calendar or diary in which you keep your appointments. Look at the appointments you have made for the next two months. For each appointment, make a hash mark next to the element of your vision to which it is most applicable. If it doesn't apply to any, mark the word "none." What percentage of the marks have fallen next to the word "none"? If it is more than 30 to 40 percent, then you are spending this time on nonessential work. What can you do to eliminate some of that work entirely?
- The Attention Appraisal

At the top of one side of an 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of paper, write

• From "Five
• Ways to
• Create
• Time," by
• Rick Ross, in
• *The Dance
• of Change*

“What, in your opinion, do I pay too much attention to?” On the flip side, write: “What, in your opinion, do I pay not enough attention to?” Give the sheet to each of your team members and ask them to be candid. Collect them, read them over, and adjust your attention accordingly.

- See below for ways to integrate many initiatives.

“No one else is supporting this.”

“No one else is supporting this.”

According to Peter Senge, et al. (1999), as investments in change initiatives go up, more help is required. That help may include coaching, training, consultation, mentoring, approval from authorities, or other forms of guidance for developing a change initiative. If help available is limited (perhaps because there isn't enough institutional support for it), the resulting “help gap” leaves people frustrated because they are investing time with little payoff; the change intuitive is ineffective and learning capabilities do not develop.

Another problem is that people may drop out of the team in their frustration. Here are some strategies for meeting this challenge:

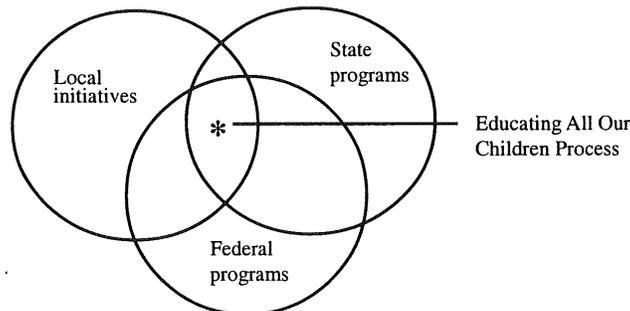
- Make sure that everyone is invested in the common vision your team develops. This means that, in Phase 1, you use the activities provided to really design a solid vision that everyone agrees with, if not entirely, then with most of it.
- Start with a smaller team, then expand as you get to Phase 3. One of the pilot sites for this guide started with a large (45 + member) group that consisted of three committees combined. After a few months, many people had dropped out of the group. The coordinator's opinion was that the group never developed a common vision out of what appeared to have been three separate visions.
- Invest early in help. It may take several months, with several missteps, before your team finds the right person or persons to help you move your plan forward. Those in

administrative positions are often responsible for a larger part of the system and can see how parts interact. They may also know how to approach boards or community groups.

- Seek help when you need it. Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help, but you may need to talk to someone who has worked on a change initiative before and can help you prepare for the pitfalls. Beware, however, of the cynics who say "You'll never get that to work here."
- Keep everyone apprised of your team's vision and progress. If your district has e-mail, a brief occasional note to the staff and administration is all that is needed to let people know you are still working and committed to the process.

"This isn't relevant to more pressing problems we're dealing with."

This is where integration of ongoing initiatives and projects is crucial. Use the activities in this guide to help you find out what is going on in your school. Integrate as much as possible; this guide can help you do that.



- Maybe you've focused on the wrong target system to change. This should appear as you complete Phase 2's analysis of the current system. Feel free to change your focus.
- Send out emissaries to other committees and working teams. Ask for ten minutes to let them know what your team is working on, and find out if you can help integrate some of their purpose into yours, or vice versa. Let them know that a major part of your work is on equity and

"No matter how far you have gone down the wrong road, turn back."

--Ancient proverb.

diversity, and you'd be glad to share what you've been learning about those concepts and how they are being dealt with in your school.

- Let everyone in the system know the results you're getting in Phase 2. Maybe your project is the most relevant to student learning in the school, but others just do not know about the disparate results for some groups of students and how your project can help them improve results for all children.
- Ask specific questions in your team about relevance. Sometimes a group can get enthusiastic about a side issue and forget where they are going.

Let's get going.