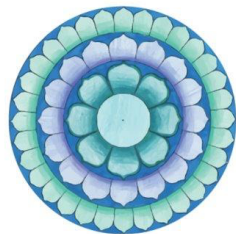# Change Management Through a Ministerial Lens

A path for approaching change management in faith-based schools

Michael J. Boyle, Ph.D.
Colleen McCoy-Cejka, M.A.
Crystal Brooks, M.A., CCC-SLP

Inclusion Solutions, LLC
and ED-21 Solutions
Widening the Circle

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following colleagues for their insightful feedback on the document:

Change Management Through a Ministerial Lens

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.
He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes
so that it bears more fruit."*

John 15:1-2

Systemic change is never easy, and it is often hard to come to the realization that there may need to be demonstrable changes made to achieve the organizational mission. Of course, this observation is threatening and causes major affective responses. The parable addresses the need to make the changes spiritually that will help the individual to continue to walk with Jesus. But it may also provide guidance for how an organization should regard change.

As hinted at in the parable, an organization needs to engage in on-going processes to determine which systems/practices are effective and "bearing fruit" and which ones are not. In faith-based schools, the framing question is how aligned the system/practices under question are in helping the organization to meet the mission. Ultimately, this will beg the question as to which system/practices need to continue and which ones should be sunsetted.

Herein the crux of the matter lies. Faith-based educational institutions are steeped in a historical legacy which may restrict an organization in continuing systems/practices because "that is that way we always have done them." However, it is this "legacy" that may trap an organization in, what are now, ineffective processes, that may ultimately steer the group from actualizing its mission.

There is a requisite courage that is necessary for leaders to move an organization from "what is" to "what is needed" to enhance efficiency in meeting the mission.

With respect to practices protected by tradition and preference, no doubt they once served their purpose and bore fruit. Clarity of mission and strength of leadership can help individuals to look beyond preferences and traditions and put energy into aspects of ministry that serve a true and higher purpose.

Systemic change is never easy. There is a sense of ambiguity that is embedded in the change process, and there is ambiguity that can fuel a sense of anxiety that can be the basis of several non-productive behaviors in the organization members as well as the various stakeholder constituencies. Unfortunately, to avoid these issues, an organization can mistakenly fast-track the change process and make deep changes without providing a framework for the stakeholders to engage in sense-making that will facilitate eventual ownership of the change. This "slash and burn" method may be more present in the take-overs approach that can be seen in the corporate world, but it certainly doesn't reflect a ministerial approach that should be embedded within a faith-based organization. The "slash and burn" process certainly meets the criteria of expediency which may be critical in a corporate world; however, the corporate world doesn't have the requirements to minister to the flock. In the corporate paradigm, disaffected customers will accept the changes, or they will take their business to another vendor. This same mind-set will

have disastrous implications for faith-based organizations. Who is the other "vendor"? The disaffected "customers" can go to another denomination. Or, tragically, do these disaffected "customers" simply disassociate from all faith-based organizations?

Yes- it can be argued that a protracted continuous improvement process can be exhausting and cause dis-affiliation. However, it could also be argued that lengthy change processes that are not *well-managed* could be the cause for disaffiliation. That is to say that the discontentedness that accompanies change might actually be caused by the process, how it is handled and communicated by the leadership or organization, and NOT by the change itself, which is likely necessary and quite positive for the organization.

To this point, it is suggested that faith-based organizations are best advised not to employ the corporate "slash and burn" approach but rather should employ a ministerial approach. This is not to suggest that faith-based organizations should avoid difficult decisions. Nor, is it suggesting that these organizations should take a pollyannaish perspective where "feelings" are the most important factor which should be accounted for, and conflict avoided. A ministerial lens can best be described as dual focus; the identified change to be made and the pastoral needs of those experiencing the change. The ministerial lens accepts that difficult decisions for change may need to be made. However, "cura personalis" (care for the person) needs to be evident throughout the process.

Three Spheres of Change

A model for change through a ministerial lens is offered in **FIGURE ONE.** This figure consists of several moving circles to reflect the complex nature of change. The center of the model signifies that Christ is the reason for the school and that we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us. The next concentric circle reflects the mission of the school. The mission is the incarnation of the reason for the school's existence. The next level represents the accompaniment process that is required in each one of the logical steps, signified on the outer ring of the model. The final level is the Logistics sphere. This sphere represents the practical steps to implementing a change process.

The representation of circles serves as a reminder that the change process is never final and should be conceptualized as a process that needs to be monitored and revised as needed. Change is not a one-way street, with a destination. Change is an on-going process required of a faith-based school/organization to ensure that it is best organized to meet the mission.
Although it may be convenient to conceptualize that each of these spheres are operating independently of each other, the reality is that the three spheres impact each other. As such, for effective change to occur within a faith-based school, explicit attention needs to be paid to each one of the spheres.
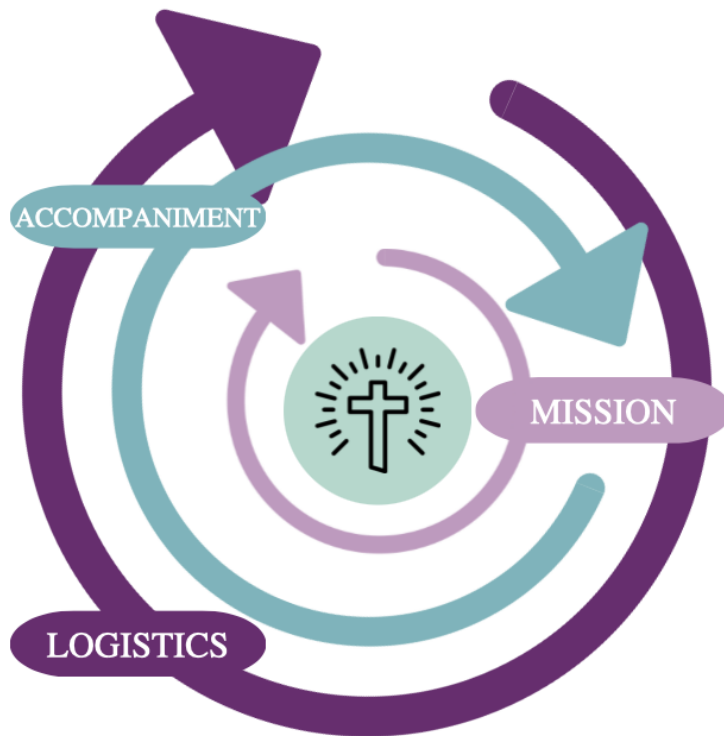
www.inclusionsolutions4kids.com

FIGURE ONE: Three Sphere of Change in a Ministerial View of Change

Mission Sphere

The innermost circle is the *Mission Sphere*. The mission is the incarnation of the reason for the school's existence. This is the core that should drive all decisions about the programming and services in a school. Unfortunately, members of school communities often dilute mission to the catch phrase that is present on a mission statement (which, many times, is merely a marketing logo). Mission is deeper. It is the reason why a school exists. Bottom line- a faith-based school lives to empower students to know, love and serve God. All systems of a school should align to this central core tenant. Mission serves as the "north star" and all programmatic decisions should use the mission as the target for navigation of operation.

Accompaniment Sphere

The next circle in the model is the *Accompaniment Sphere*. This sphere speaks to the critical role that the leadership team should employ as an organization engages in the change process. In this vein of thought, Pope Franics's idea of accompaniment is an important framework to consider for leadership team in the change process. Pope Francis has advocated for a process of accompaniment, the need to "walk" with those who experience life challenges. In Evangelii Gaudium (24), Pope Francis states:

An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance.

The process of accompaniment is not just a random act of kindness. Rather, it is a set of intentional decisions about systems and programming that provide the approach. It is this, along with the critical human element of trying to reflect God's love and mercy. There is a power in the process of accompaniment. It helps to preserve and nurture and ultimately sustain relationships, even in the most difficult of times.

To this end, the process of accompaniment can help refocus the change process from a secular, corporate process to one that is ministerial in nature. The challenge to the organization becomes to guide the change process from a process that implements change from what seems to be an expedient fashion to a process that shepherds and cares for those that are being impacted by the change. It should be recognized that the needs of those who are impacted by the change will differ along the steps of the change. In addition to logistical steps of a change process, the faith-based organization should also explicitly build in a plan for ministerial care to the various members of the constituency. The words of Pope Francis provide guidance that can be applied in this scenario:

> Today more than ever we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience, and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur.
>
> –Evangelii Gaudium (171)

Logistics Sphere

The outermost circle is the *Logistics Sphere*. Using a purely secular approach to implementing change may not capture some of the important intricacies of implementing change in a faith-based organization. Yet, implementing change that only focuses on the inner two circles may not provide the necessary structure that will enable the change to be effective. With this in mind, this approach to change incorporates the following steps into the Logistics circle (illustrated in FIGURE TWO):

- Mission Review
- Data Gathering and Analysis
- Plan Development
- Identify Conditions of Success
- Implement the Change
- Review and Edit

As indicated earlier, this sphere does not operate independently of the other two spheres. In fact, both the *Mission Sphere* and the *Accompaniment Sphere* are core to the change process and should inform the processes named in the *Logistics Sphere*.

FIGURE TWO: Stages of Change Management in the Logistical Sphere

1. Mission Review

Every efficient organization is engaged in the process of continuous improvement. As part of this process, the group should be actively monitoring their mission to stay on track as they move toward goal attainment. The process entails reviewing the data portfolio and using these measures to determine whether the outcomes are being met. For faith-based schools, there is an added dimension that needs to be part of this mission review. The leadership team must engage in prayerful reflection and review the mission of the school and ask the ultimate question: "Are we doing what God is calling us to do?" As a faith-based school, the purpose of the school is not only to foster academic excellence but also to be a ministry of the Church. As such, the leadership team should be engaged in on-going prayer and reflection about the mission of the education organization.

www.inclusionsolutions4kids.com

2. Data Gathering and Analysis

The process of on-going prayer and reflection should cause the leadership team to engage in an honest and frank review of the current circumstances. Several essential questions will arise here:

- Does our mission need to change to address the current students that are entering our doors?
- Do we have evidence to suggest that our activities support the attainment of our mission?
- Are we collecting the right kinds of data (collection of both quantitative and qualitative data) that gives us the evidence to help understand the current situation? As such, should we be collecting additional data to help document the cause?
- What do we already do / What resources are already in place that will help us implement the plan and achieve the goals?
- What resources are missing? How/Where can these resources be gathered?

3. Plan Development

The leadership should come together to prayerfully reflect on the data to answer the essential questions. If the review of data suggests that there are needs of groups of students that are not being met, the leadership team is then being called to edit/revise/refine the program to meet the needs of students. See **FIGURE THREE.**

State the goal of the intended change in observable terms

Create the concrete steps that are reasonably constructed to achieve the goal

Name the potential obstacles for the implementation and identify steps to address them

Commit to an explicit implementation timeline, and "publish" it and share with stakeholders

Establish on-going data collection methods and identify the benchmarks for success
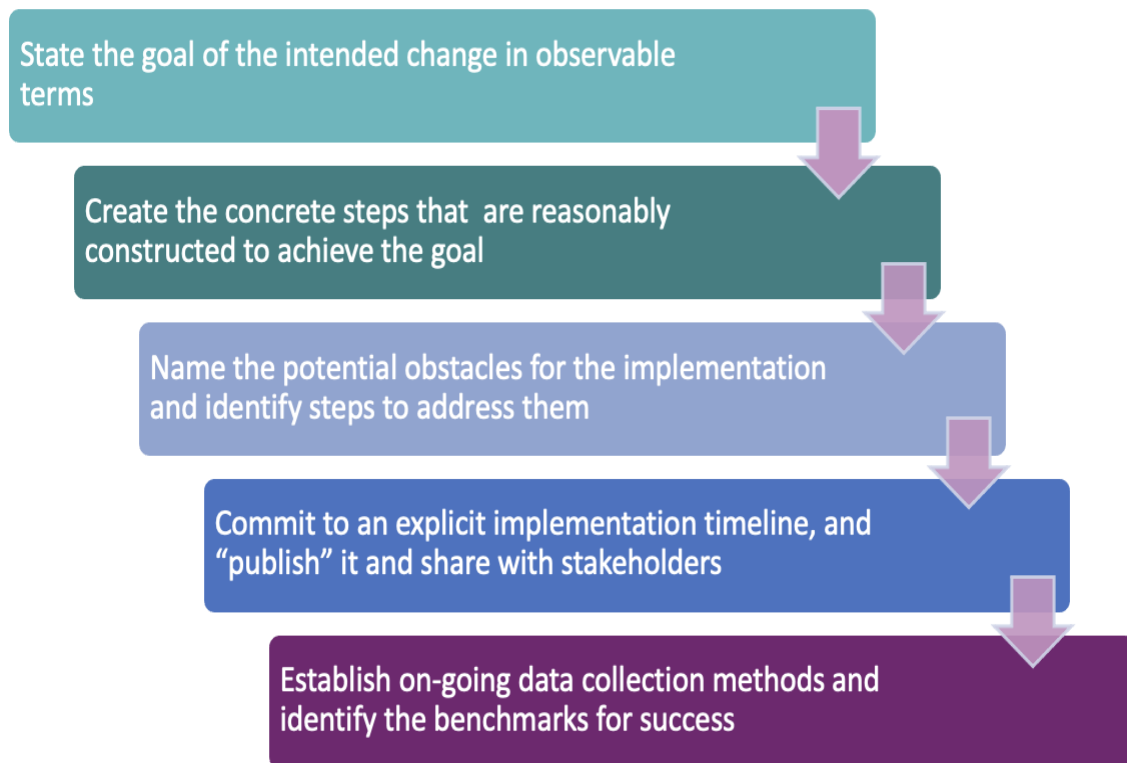
FIGURE THREE: Plan Development

The process of change cannot be undertaken without a sound reason to change. As mentioned before, the process of change (especially in faith-based setting) will elicit strong emotional reactions. Without establishing an evidenced-based case for the change that clearly sets the reason for change will only escalate feelings of anxiety which will exacerbate negative behavioral expressions of those negative feelings. In addition to evidence through data, the plan development must be aligned with the mission. This clear alignment is further support that the plan reflects the faith identity of the constituency. It should be noted that, even with the clearly expressed reasons for change, negative reactions will not be eliminated. However, they will be somewhat mitigated. Providing clear rationales rooted in evidence that has been collected with community stakeholders helps to intellectualize the issues and offset emotions around the issues.

A plan is just that— a plan. An effective plan should also contain explicit strategies to engage the constituency. This is not just a one-time event. The plan should also contain a systemic approach to inform and encourage the constituency in the entire change process. All members of the leadership team are in lockstep when it comes to outward facing communications and messaging around change to the larger community. *(Note that this does not state all members of the leadership team are in full agreement on every point. However, any disagreements among leadership must remain within the team, and messaging from the team remains consistent. Any cracks in the leadership will be exploited by anxious members who are opposed to impending change.)* All leadership team members also recognize that the constituency comprises many different parts: both external and internal. In addition to the parent and school members, a faith-based school also must address the change needs with a larger audience. The parish community, which often supports the school financially with the weekend offertory, should be apprised of the kinds of changes being implemented. The leadership team should also be actively engaged in identifying other unique stakeholders that may be members of the larger school community.

The leadership team should also be mindful of the internal stakeholders. Unfortunately, there is so much attention given to the external stakeholders that the internal audience can be overlooked. This is a significant oversight in that the members of the internal stakeholders are often the ones that will be on the front line of the change. The alignment to mission is once again stressed; internal stakeholders who believe in the mission of the school can describe the benefits of the plan not only on student outcomes, but in living the faith identity of the mission. If engaged correctly, this group can become the greatest cheerleaders for the change strategy. Conversely, if not cared for, this group can become a vocal group of dissent that ultimately will work against the intended change or even bring it to a halt.

4. Identify Conditions for Success

Change should be a disciplined process, one where the conditions for success are explicit and defined for all stakeholders. Without a defined endpoint, change processes can proceed for too long and the focus for the change is lost.

An important part of setting the condition for success is creating the *process of accompaniment* for the stakeholders engaged in the process of intended change. In Evangelii Gaudium (24), Pope Francis states:

An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance.

Pope Francis continues:

Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustrations or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel. (Evangelii Gaudium, 172).

In the change process, a structured and planned approach is systematic in its approach, with identifiable supports to ensure the success of the change. The following factors that are important in providing accompaniment to a community undergoing change.

- Communication
- Professional Learning
- Faith Development
- Data Collection

Communication: First, the leadership team should identify the communication process. In short, the organization needs to communicate early and to communicate often. In the absence of communication, a vacuum occurs, and alternate narratives arise to take the space. The leadership team needs to ensure that the constituency is informed in an ongoing fashion. Order of those that are notified matters. Internal community members should find out about changes or announcements first before external audiences.

Over communication is not possible! Consider the smallest of steps that have been taken and share it with all. It must be recognized that this strategy will not decrease alternate narratives that will be circulating, nor will it make resistance to the change disappear. However, it will help to manage these emotional responses.

Professional Learning: Provide the professional learning for growth in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for staff and community. The type of professional learning will vary depending on the needs of the learning organization and must be assessed to find the right match. A comprehensive professional learning plan might contain some of the following strategies:

Professional development workshops

Professional development intended to promote the deeper understanding of specific concepts that are relevant to the plan. This type of professional development session is part of a systemic approach of continuous improvement.

Coaching and Mentoring

10

In addition to the traditional approaches of professional learning, direct coaching and mentoring can help support the development of the skills and dispositions that can support the intended change. Two specific types of coaching that have demonstrable positive impact on change are instructional coaching and executive coaching.

Instructional Coaching: Professional development is only the beginning when building the capacity of educators. Instructional coaches partner with teachers to build a repertoire of skills to better meet the needs of learners within the classroom. Coaches provide on-going support to classroom teachers in a non-evaluative relationship that helps build the professional capacity of the teaching staff.

Executive Coaching: Being a leader in a faith-based school can be isolating. Often the professional supports that are present in the public education sector are not present in the private school system. On-going executive coaching services can help provide support, encouragement, and problem-solving strategies to assist in the vitality of faith-based schools.

Technical Assistance

In the process of continuous improvement, there are moments when obstacles are encountered. At these times, executive coaching provides support to accompany the leadership team to provide technical assistance to specific implementation issues, as well as to provide affective support. It is extremely beneficial to engage in a systematic process to elicit input and perspective from a coach that is not engaged in the day-to-day operations of the organization that is involved in the continuous improvement process.

Faith Development: With any sort of change, there will be a process of mourning that will occur. Given that many faith-based schools have a long sense of legacy, it is understandable that individuals will mourn *what was* and be fearful of *what will be*. Using a faith perspective (very similar to how one encounters grief and mourning) to acknowledge the "loss" and develop strategies to cope with the ambiguity can be sustaining for a community. The leadership team should intentionally design faith development strategies (prayer, reflection) for the community for them to receive spiritual support in the process.

Data Collection: As discussed previously, the ambiguous nature of change can fuel negative feelings that may work to derail the process. One of the ways to agree on a process is to provide on-going data to mark the path of the change. To achieve this, the leadership team should engage in on-going data collection of the indicators of success and provide feedback on the progress toward benchmarks. In addition to the quantitative data that can be collected, it is highly recommended that a process for collecting perceptual data be designed and the results also reported in a routine fashion. Qualitative data reflecting perception of communication, alignment
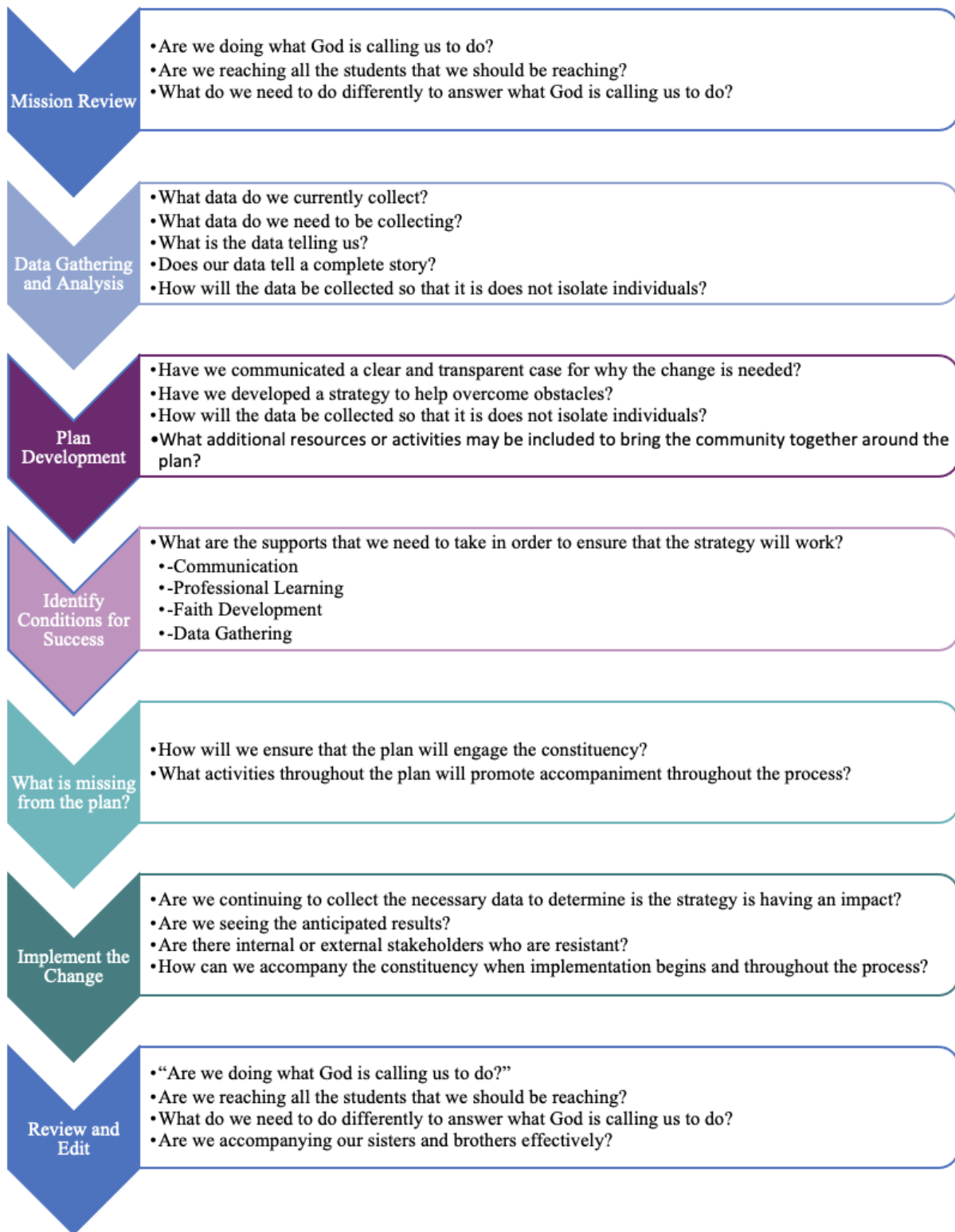
Mission Review
- Are we doing what God is calling us to do?
- Are we reaching all the students that we should be reaching?
- What do we need to do differently to answer what God is calling us to do?

Data Gathering and Analysis
- What data do we currently collect?
- What data do we need to be collecting?
- What is the data telling us?
- Does our data tell a complete story?
- How will the data be collected so that it is does not isolate individuals?

Plan Development
- Have we communicated a clear and transparent case for why the change is needed?
- Have we developed a strategy to help overcome obstacles?
- How will the data be collected so that it is does not isolate individuals?
- What additional resources or activities may be included to bring the community together around the plan?

Identify Conditions for Success
- What are the supports that we need to take in order to ensure that the strategy will work?
  - -Communication
  - -Professional Learning
  - -Faith Development
  - -Data Gathering

What is missing from the plan?
- How will we ensure that the plan will engage the constituency?
- What activities throughout the plan will promote accompaniment throughout the process?

Implement the Change
- Are we continuing to collect the necessary data to determine is the strategy is having an impact?
- Are we seeing the anticipated results?
- Are there internal or external stakeholders who are resistant?
- How can we accompany the constituency when implementation begins and throughout the process?

Review and Edit
- "Are we doing what God is calling us to do?"
- Are we reaching all the students that we should be reaching?
- What do we need to do differently to answer what God is calling us to do?
- Are we accompanying our sisters and brothers effectively?

TABLE THREE: Framing Questions for Change Process Steps

www.inclusionsolutions4kids.com

to mission, and readiness for change can be gathered through anonymous surveys or focus groups.

5. Implement the Change

The best plan in the world will not work unless steps are taken to implement the plan. This step can cause some fear and anxiety. To this point, the leadership team has spent a great deal of time reviewing data, creating a plan, and working on developing support for the team. However, despite these steps, not everyone is going to be in support. Even with that eventuality, the plan must go forward. As we are reminded in the Old Testament, "Tell the people to move forward" (Exodus 14:15).

The change plan is implemented in accordance with the implementation timeline. A critical part of this implementation is the collection of the benchmark data as identified in the previous step. Again, this data is utilized to ensure that the intended changes are occurring. If the path of change is not occurring as anticipated, intervention steps can be taken to adjust the course of change.

6. Review and Edit

The progress of the change strategy is reviewed. Points of growth are identified and celebrated. Points that are not going as planned are reviewed and revised. To do this, the leadership team should review the benchmark data to identify these areas and answer the initial question raised in the mission review: "Are we doing what God is calling us to do?"

Practices that Inhibit Change

Some of the barriers to change are procedural in nature and can be avoided by attending to the process outlined in the previous paragraphs. However, there are a set of obstacles that are more insidious and often unaddressed that can ultimately sabotage any change strategy. These barriers are internal and more related to the dispositions of the leadership team, as opposed to the existence of an external barrier. They are more challenging to address and require an intense ability for self-reflection. Often, leadership teams have difficulty in engaging in the process of introspection, which ultimately can doom a change process.

Struggling to Disentangle the Personal from the Professional Agenda

Change is an intense process and sometimes leadership can personalize the process and lose track of the end goal. The path can be muddied by personal beliefs and goals. This agenda may not be completely consistent with the intended change. Therein the conflict arises, especially if the constituency perceives that the change is being motivated for personal benefit as opposed to the benefit of the organization.

Effective leaders are impartial and mindful of explicit and implicit biases that mitigate their decisions. Leaders also develop the ability to let go of unhealthy attachments and prejudices so that decisions are made freely. The Jesuits describe this as developing indifference, which allows one to let go of these prejudices. Marina McCoy offers:

> Indifference means being detached enough from things, people, or experiences to be able either to take them up or to leave them aside, depending on whether they help us to "to praise, reverence, and serve God" (*Spiritual Exercises* 23). In other words, it's the capacity to let go of what doesn't help me to love God or love others—**while staying engaged with what does**.

Recommendation: To embrace disembedding personal agenda in the change process, the leadership team is encouraged to foster a sense of healthy indifference to allow the ability to let go of unhealthy attachments and prejudices. This will foster the ability to find grace in the process and to dis-embed personal agendas. Ongoing reflection and honest processing among the leadership is necessary for navigating the challenges of the process.

Those leading the change can reflect on this quote from St. Ignatius of Loyola:

> We must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed… Consequently…we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things. Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we were created"
>
> <div align="right">- Saint Ignatius of Loyola #23- The Spiritual Exercises</div>

Surrendering to Despair

Change efforts take time and, because of that, can prove to be exhausting. As such, some teams can become overwhelmed by the amount of energy that must be expended. Additionally, since change can be accompanied by negative emotions, the leadership team can feel beaten down by the efforts to reject the change. It can be at these times that teams can be overwhelmed and be tempted to surrender. A great sense of despair can pervade the process. But it is at this moment that teams must remember that we are hope-filled people because, with God, nothing is impossible.

Recommendation: Working in a mission-driven vocation presents tribulation. It is at these times when the leadership team needs to spend time engaging in prayer and seeking guidance to find ways to remember that with God, nothing is impossible. Such reflection can start with the words of St. Francis de Sales:

> Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;
> rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise,
> God, whose very own you are,
> will lead you safely through all things;

and when you cannot stand it,
God will carry you in His arms.
Do not fear what may happen tomorrow;
the same understanding Father who cares for
you today will take care of you then and every day.
He will either shield you from suffering
or will give you unfailing strength to bear it.
Be at peace,
and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.

<div align="right">– St. Francis de Sales</div>

Forgetting that change is a process and takes time

Effective change is not an immediate process. Because change is a complex process, there is a varied and unique response from the constituency. Prior to engaging in change, the leadership team has been involved in an intense process of studying the proposed change and considering several strategies to obtain the desired result. These efforts may not have been communicated effectively to the constituency. Upon completion of that process, the leadership team is ready *to change*. The leadership team usually comes out ready to "jump in" and start the process. Because the team has been involved for a length of time, the team can overlook that they have had the luxury of time to make the "change" their own, but we may not be able to say the same about crucial stakeholders. The team may forget that the process may not have been a smooth one and there may have been internal conflict that has been resolved. With all of that in the rearview mirror, it is easy to forget that rejection is part of the process. Proposed change is rarely ever fully accepted at the initial presentation of the idea. The leadership team sometimes forgets to allow people the time to "act out" and reject change before the constituency can *own* the change. Communication of the "origin story" for the change and the steps taken to develop the plan is necessary for acceptance.

The change process takes time, not so much for the implementation of the strategy but to help build acceptance among the stakeholders. This will mean that the leadership team needs to consider the process of prayerful accompaniment, not only for the constituency but for themselves.

Sometimes in the effort to speed the change, the team may opt to side-step the process and skip steps. Ultimately, this short-circuits the process and may cause damage that must be repaired. This, obviously, adds more time to the process and defeats the intended goal of shorter implementation.

At other times, leadership teams may choose to skip over the data gathering and analysis phase and focus on a predetermined outcome. It can be that the predetermined outcome has no evidence to suggest that this is the correct outcome to work towards. Unfortunately, this can lead the leadership team down a worn path and then cause more time to engage in a course correction.

Recommendation*:*

There are so many time demands, especially working in a faith-based school when resources may be limited. Sometimes, change occurs as a matter of convenience or simply because this when the school has the time, the resources, etc. However, just because the leadership team believes that the change is necessary now, executing a change may not be part of a larger plan. A point to contemplate comes from this passage of Ecclesisates:

> There is an appointed time for everything,
> and a time for every affair under the heavens.
> A time to give birth, and a time to die;
> a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
> A time to kill, and a time to heal;
> a time to tear down, and a time to build.
> A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
> a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
> A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them;
> a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.
> A time to seek, and a time to lose;
> a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
> A time to rend, and a time to sew;
> a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
> A time to love, and a time to hate;
> a time of war, and a time of peace.

<div align="right">Ecclesiastes 3:1-8</div>

Neglecting to be honest and transparent about the process

Change can be a circuitous path and sometimes change doesn't follow the path that the team has envisioned. It is at these times that leadership teams may want to avoid data that take the change process off course. At these moments, teams may be tempted to ignore or to whitewash the data to suggest an outcome more favorable to the predicted or preferred outcome. This *lack of honesty* has the potential for tremendous backlash in the change process. When the team is not engaged in reflecting on all the data, the necessary adjustments cannot be made in the plan, causing the change strategy to be less effective. It is important to remember that data is data.

In some cases of change, the implementers are more focused on getting the change "done" and fail to pay close attention to the process. It is almost an embodiment of the observation that Machiavelli once offered "the end justifies the means." This can lead to some of the missteps that can be observed in change processes. In these situations, it can be perceived that, if the change occurs, that all steps are justified. Unfortunately, this is what breeds mistrust in organizations and leaves a great sense of anger that could lead to the change not being fully implemented, taken off course due to emotional conflicts, or abandoned altogether. Additionally,

it can breed disaffiliation and disengagement among the leadership team members, which hampers further the implementation of any continuous improvement processes.

Recommendation:

Objectivity is crucial for the members of the leadership team. Holding one another accountable to objectivity can be mission critical. Leadership teams must avoid the temptation to pay attention only to data points that support the operational theory and avoid negating evidence that may be present that runs counter to the prevailing theory of change. All data is evidence, even if it doesn't support the operating theory of change. Change is not an easy process and to try to make it fit a convenient process only has diminishing returns. More often than not, it only increases the time for the process and may inadvertently disenfranchise the constituency.

As the leadership team encounters obstacles, the team is encouraged to pray for courage and to look for that Pope Francis offers:

> I renew my invitation to walk in the hope that "is bold, can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and can open us up to grand ideals which make life more beautiful and worthwhile" (Fratelli tutti, 55)

Concluding Remarks

Change…a single word that can elicit fear and hope at the same time. Effective leaders in faith-based schools must lead change with a focus on caring for those most impacted by the decisions made. The model of a ministerial lens presented in this paper places a focus on the change to implement as well as on the constituents in the community, building trust, acknowledging emotions, communicating frequently, and prayerful reflection.

Secular models of change place a necessary emphasis on the process. However, in faith-based organizations, focus on the change process alone cannot be enough. The stakes are high. There is a high cost to alienating the constituency. Members that feel ostracized by a change process that does not authentically engage them are not only potentially alienated from the school, but from the faith. In this time of disaffiliation from organized religion, this can have a disastrous and long-term impact.

However, even with this disastrous outcome hanging over the heads of an organization, it does not argue against engaging in change when it is needed. Without needed change, faith-based schools can become mired in status quo programs and approaches that may be robbing the school from the ability to work to achieve the mission. This also has diminishing returns in that the constituency then regards the school as being out of touch with the demands of the contemporary world. Ultimately, this lessens the evangelizing zeal that helps propel the organization to meet the challenges of the mission.

www.inclusionsolutions4kids.com

To those leading the process: If you have answered the call to leadership, then you must prepare for the challenges you will inevitably face when leading a community through changes. Balancing the best interests of those who will benefit from change with the call to mission and the psychological and emotional difficulties being experienced by those who oppose change is no easy task. Prepare for conflict, call on the Holy Spirit for guidance, and pray to Jesus for strength through opposition, for victory for your organization may depend on your tenacity.

Words of courage and support are offered by Pope Francis (Jubilee of Mercy, June 2016):

> The Apostolic courage which the Holy Spirit ignites in us as a fire helps us overcome walls and barriers, makes us creative, (*and spurs us along*) unexplored or uncomfortable paths, offering hope to those we meet.

www.inclusionsolutions4kids.com