**The Four Phases of the Change Conversation**  
**Sponsors and Implementers Responsibilities**

With guiding questions for the sponsors and suggestions to help the implementers understand their role which is important to alignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal of Phases 1 and 2: Clarity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1 – Stating Expectations</strong></td>
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**Sponsor:**  
The executive sponsor of the change clearly states the expectations he/she has of those who will help sponsor or who will implement the message. This message includes:
- What he/she expects
- Why He/she expects this
- How he/she thinks it will be done (or wants it to be done)
- The process for accountability for meeting this expectation
- When implementation will start

**How does the sponsor do this?**
- Orally
- In writing
- With graphics
- With metaphors
- With theme songs or poems

The message must be presented in a way that appeals to a variety of learning styles and/or to all of the multiple intelligences.

The message must be repeated several times. The sponsor cannot assume because he or she has said one time what he/she expects once that the implementers understand the expectation.

**Guiding Questions:**
- Has the sponsor developed a clear statement of his/her expectations?
- Has the sponsor decided how to share the message, ensuring that the presentation of the message is visual and oral?
- Has the sponsor created a PowerPoint for delivering the message or some type of visual representation?

**Implementer:**  
Tell them that as the implementers you want to encourage the:

- Use of active listening to ensure they are accurately hearing what the sponsor expects them to do.

Some strategies we will use to do this are:
- Bracketing distractions
- Suspending judgment
- Listening only to understand the message
- Take notes in response to the prompt, “I am hearing…”

Please note: If the executive sponsor is the superintendent, the implementers in the initial part of this process will be principals and central office administrators. When they share it with those whom they lead, they become sustaining sponsors. Agents are also implementers in the initial communication of the change process.
Phase 2 – Checking for Understanding

Sponsor:
- The executive sponsor of the work asks those with whom he/she shared the expectations to paraphrase their understanding of the expectations. This needs to be done in a way that all people can state their understanding. The sponsor should remind the implementers that a good teacher always checks for understanding and that is what he/she is doing at this time.

Strategies for sponsor to do this include:
- Ask people to write down what they heard and then do a write, pair share with a person next to them. They blend what they heard. Then ask a few pairs to share what they heard. Ask if there is anything else that people heard.
- Ask someone to volunteer to paraphrase what they heard (It is important to remind people that this type of paraphrasing is not repeating something verbatim. It is rephrasing what the paraphrasing person heard in a way that clarifies what he/she heard.) Ask others to add anything they think they heard in addition to what the first person said.
- Ask the implementers how they would like to let the sponsor know what they heard.

Guiding Questions:
- Is there a specific plan to check for understanding of the expectations he/she is stating? (See the Clarity Scale at the end of this document.)

Implementer:
Tell them that you would like to give them time to express his/her understanding of the expectation of the sponsor. He she can do this:
- Orally
- In writing
- Playfully in a song or poem. The advantage of this playful strategy is that it makes a more human connection between the sponsor and implementers. It reduces the anxiety because it usually produces some laughter. The disadvantage of this strategy is that it takes more time and it can make some people uncomfortable.
Goal of Phases 3 and 4: Shared Commitment

Phases 3 – Soliciting Reactions

Sponsor:
The sponsor inquires about the immediate impact of the expectation on the implementers. This includes:
- Soliciting reactions
- Listening and paraphrasing back
- Indicating where he or she is open to influence relative to the expectation. It may be possible that there is no openness on influence on this particular expectation.
- Making it clear that the system will still move forward and even though they have concerns, they are expected to implement the change and meet the expectations stated in Phase 1.

Strategies for sponsor to do this include:
- Ask people to verbally share their concerns. Someone records the concern. If the sponsor can address the concern in the time it is stated, he/she does so and his/her comments are recorded as well. The sponsor commits to problem solving the remaining concerns, those that were named that he/she has not addressed.
- Ask implementers to work in team to list their specific concerns. They need to list them so anyone looking at the list would understand every item.
- Each person records concerns on separate post notes and they are clustered in groups of similar concerns.
- Ask people to complete a comfort scale. (See Comfort Scale at the end of this document.)

Next Steps:
- The sponsor requests implementers suggest ways to address the identified concerns.
- The sponsor assigns concerns to appropriate individuals to address. They do so and report back. The results are shared orally and in writing with all leaders.
- He/she determines the concerns we cannot address at this time.
- He/she names the concerns that will continue to be worked on and makes the commitment to keep people informed about these.

Implementer: Encourage implementers to:
State questions and concerns in an open, honest and respectful way. Implementers can do this:
- Orally and/or in
- Writing.
- Chart paper, survey etc.
- They will participate in the process being led by the sponsor to gather these concerns. It is important to make it clear that this is not an opportunity to blame or complain. Instead, it is a chance to state what they think the difficulties in meeting these expectations will be.

The implementers also can make suggestions for problem solving these concerns.
Guiding Questions:
- Has the sponsor planned how to gather concerns from the implementers? (IE chart, survey, show of fingers etc.
- Has the sponsor planned how to problem solve the concerns?
- Has the sponsor planned how to communicate the solutions to the concerns?
- Has the sponsor scheduled this phase. Depending on the number and complexity of the concerns of the implementers, this phase can take more time than the other three phases.
Phases 4 – Determining Readiness

Sponsor:
The sponsor repeats the expectation and states the starting date of the change.
- Inquire about implementers’ confidence to implement the change
- Find out what implementers need in order to be successful in meeting the expectations.

Steps for sponsor to use in doing this:
- Ask implementers to use the Scale of Confidence. This will give data about each implementer’s point on the Scale of Confidence and what they need to be a three or four. (See the Confidence Scale at the end of this document.)
- Summarize the input from this scale and report it back to the implementers.
- Make next steps of the change clear.
- Clarifies how the team will continue to communicate about the change during the implementation process.

Guiding Questions:
- Has the sponsor planned how, when and where to conduct the Scale of Confidence?
- Has the sponsor determined his/her plan for processing what implementers said they needed?
- Has the sponsor considered how to work that plan and share results in the implementers?
- Has the sponsor develop a plan for next steps?

If the sponsor of the change is the superintendent the principals are implementers initially. The superintendent is known as the executive sponsor. If this change is to move to the building level for further implementation (which most changes do), the principal becomes the sustaining sponsor of the change in his/her building. Consequently, he/she needs to lead his/her staff (the new implementers) through the Four Phases.

Implementer: Encourage the implementer to share his/her point on a Confidence Scale. This scale is a measure of how ready they are to begin the implementation process. They also say what they need to be ready to confidently implement the change.

He/she ensures his/her clarity about next steps in the implementation of the change and identifies his/her responsibility in each step.
Change Process Tools
Scales Applied to the Four Phases of Change Conversation

Clarity Scale:
1. Create a scale of 1 to 4 with clear descriptors on a flip chart page.

| Expectation: The expectations held by the sponsor are recorded here. |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Totally Unclear | Somewhat Clear | Clear | Totally Clear |

2. List the expectation on the top of a flip chart page or large sheet of butcher paper, depending on the size of the group. Divide the paper into 4 to 6 columns.
3. Explain the descriptors of the points on the scale.
4. Distribute one 3 x 3 inch post it per person. Ask them to record the number that best represents the level of their clarity at this point in time.
5. Then ask them to give a specific reason for that number. Why do these see themselves at this level of clarity? What additional information do they need to be at a three or four? They write this on their post it.
6. Ask them to place their post it under the corresponding number on the flip chart or butcher paper in neat columns. You can ask individuals to do their own posting or ask one person at each table to collect the post its from that table and place them on the flip chart page under the correct numbers. It is a good idea to use long strips of scotch tape to adhere the numbers so the graph can be displayed over time.
7. When all post its are placed on the paper, ask the group to look at the visual display. What conclusions can they draw from the existing graph?
8. Invite people to do a gallery walk to view the reasons for the numbers.
9. The reasons are synthesized and put into a document.
10. The sponsor assigns tasks to the appropriate people to provide the information that people indicated they needed in Step 5. This information is added to the document created in Step 9. Information that is not available immediately is distributed when it is available.
11. The document is distributed to the implementers who participated in the change conversation.
12. This document is reviewed periodically and updated as needed during the implementation of the change.
Confidence Scale:
1. Create a scale of 1 to 4 with clear descriptors on a flip chart page.

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2. List the expectation on the top of a flip chart page or large sheet of butcher paper, depending on the size of the group. Divide the paper into 4 to 6 columns.

3. Explain the descriptors of the points on the scale.

4. Distribute one 3 x 3 inch post it per person. Ask them to record the number that best represents the level of their confidence at this point in time.

5. Then ask them to give a specific reason for that number. Why do these see themselves at this level of confidence? Then ask them to write what they need and/or will do to move to a three or a four. Make it clear that this chart does not imply that meeting the expectation is optional. Instead it is an attempt at providing the support needed to build the confidence that will help implementers make a true commitment to the change they are expected to implement.

6. Ask them to place their post it under the corresponding number on the flip chart or butcher paper in neat columns. You can ask individuals to do their own posting or ask one person at each table to collect the post its from that table and place them on the flip chart page under the correct numbers. It is a good idea to use long strips of scotch tape to adhere the numbers so the graph can be displayed over time.

7. When all post its are placed on the paper, ask the group to look at the visual display. What conclusions can they draw from the existing graph?

8. Invite people to do a gallery walk to view the reasons for the numbers.

9. The reasons are synthesized and put into a document.

10. The sponsor assigns tasks to the appropriate people to take steps to address what people said they needed to go to get to a three or four that indicated in Step 5.
11. These people work on addressing these needs. The implementers are asked to participate in this process as well. As these needs are met they are added to the document created in Step 9 and this more complete document is distributed. It is important to communicate that addressing the things people said they needed to be a three or four is a collaborative process between the sponsor, agents and implementers. The implementers should also be doing what they said they would do to move to a three or four. The implementation of the change does not wait until all these needs are met and things accomplished. The change implementation starts at the date shared by the sponsor. So implementation and support on happening at the same time.

12. The document is distributed to the implementers who participated in the change conversation.

13. This document is reviewed periodically and updated as needed during the implementation of the change.

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