Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) State Initiative – Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Planning Tool

Purpose

This tool is designed to help state teams plan and execute key communications and engagement activities that support the outcome of advancing inclusive principal leadership in policy and practice. It is also intended to complement the other tools provided (e.g., state readiness tool/self-assessment, state plan) toward the end of helping states build from the "Communication and Engagement" efforts section of their state plan.

Overview

States are encouraged to create communications and engagement plans that cover the second year of the pilot project (June 2019 to July 2020). Consider splitting this planning process into three phases, with phase one already underway:

Phase 1 – June to October 2019	**Building a Foundation** (e.g., identify the people who need to be consulted/engaged in the state plan under "Communication and Engagement"; develop the "story" of the effort and high-level messages, establish the guiding coalition/stakeholder group and broaden awareness of your aspirations and the plan; cultivate champions both inside and outside the education policy arena)
Phase 2 – November 2019 to February 2020	**Capacity-Building: Engaging Stakeholders and Issues**

	(e.g., identify highest leverage stakeholders—those most critical to ensuring the work gets done and those who are effected by implementation; increase awareness and support among the education community and policymakers around key decisions that need to be made; ensure clear objectives for each stakeholder; engage key groups in co-constructing some of the work identified in the plan; deploy your champions in the rollout of your objectives)
Phase 3 – Ongoing through July 2020	**Mobilizing for Implementation** (e.g., share progress toward achievement of implementation milestones; celebrate and recognize efforts; pay attention to relationships with key stakeholders; monitor and track progress against the plan; reinforce support for this work in the face of opposition)

Building a Communications and Engagement Plan: Key Elements

Goals
As with implementation planning overall, goals are necessary for engagement and communication plans. The strongest goals are concrete (though not too narrow), concise, measurable, and few (2-3 in each phase are fine!). Try to develop goals for each phase like the examples below.

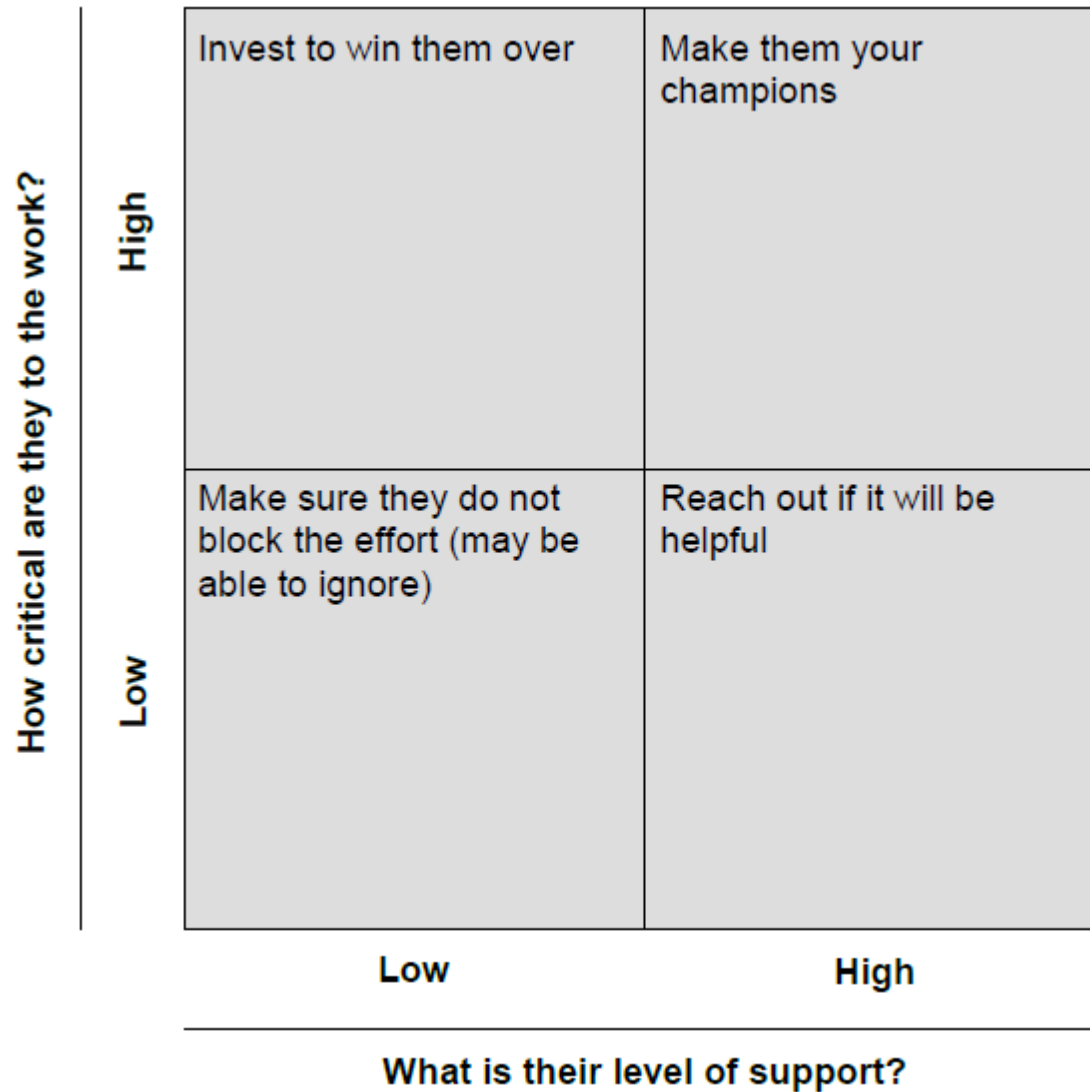| **Example Phase 1 Goals**	**Example Phase 2 Goals**	**Example Phase 3 Goals**
• Establish our guiding coalition or stakeholder group and raise basic awareness of advancing inclusive principal leadership project among members • Create our basic story for our work on inclusive leadership with targeted messages to priority stakeholders	• Work with each identified stakeholder group to use targeted messages and vehicles • Deploy "inside the education policy arena" (e.g., SEA leaders) champions to tell story using vehicles identified	• Execute plan for state lead to engage in 1:1 communication with champions and critics of the work • Deploy "outside the education policy arena" (e.g., EPPs, principals) to tell story using identified vehicles

• Identify our communication approach for phases 2 and 3		• Build awareness among all stakeholder groups about the advancing inclusive principal leadership effort

Our Stakeholders and Target Audience (Who)

Consider a wide range of stakeholders who will influence and be affected by advancing inclusive principal leadership in preparation and practice in your state.

Inside the education policy arena (i.e., those making/implementing decisions regarding how to advance inclusive principal leadership in preparation, ongoing practice, and continuous school improvement particularly in the areas of licensure/certification, program approval, data use and sharing, professional learning, evaluation and feedback, and targeted supports)	• Education community, including K-12 and postsecondary leadership, key faculty and staff at state education agency, educator preparation, district, and school levels • Policymakers, including governors, legislators and their staff, state board of education, professional standards board, Chief State School Officer • National principal networks, including New Leaders, NASSP, NAESP, etc.
Outside the education policy arena (i.e., those affected by decisions regarding the advancement of inclusive principal leadership, particularly in the areas of licensure/certification, program approval, data use and sharing, professional learning, evaluation and feedback, and targeted supports)	• Business and community leaders, local philanthropy • Public including parents, students, prospective school leader candidates • Local principal networks

To prioritize your efforts to engage stakeholders, it may be helpful to consider mapping where each falls on a two-by-two matrix of criticality to the work and support:

		What is their level of support?	
		Low	**High**
How critical are they to the work?	**High**	Invest to win them over	Make them your champions
	Low	Make sure they do not block the effort (may be able to ignore)	Reach out if it will be helpful

Communication Toolkit/Vehicles (How/When/Where)

A wide range of communication tools and vehicles can be used as part of your effort.
- Speeches/presentations (e.g., create Power Point for team members to use)
- Conferences (e.g., work with national partners to get on state and national organization conference agendas)
- Meetings with key people (e.g., set up meetings with stakeholders identified as critical, particularly those who may be resistant; meet with governor's or Chief State School Officer to get mention of effort in speaking engagements)
- Notes/letters/emails/calls (e.g., keep key stakeholders in the loop on progress)
- Social media (e.g., develop quick videos to get champions such as school principals to explain key parts of your plan; create a Twitter campaign about plan; provide principals opportunity to blog on new supports received)
- Earned media (e.g., work with CCSSO's communications team to get Op-eds placed in *Education Week* etc.)
- Traditional (e.g., update website to include this work; share information via newsletters, webinars, etc.)

Phase 1 Planning Tool (Building from State Plan)

Stakeholders	Priority Targets (Identify target stakeholders from analysis of critical groups and resistance to initiative)	Messages (Once you have your core story, create messages most compelling to target groups)	Tools/Vehicles (Select the most effective way to deliver the message and engage the group)
Inside the education policy arena			
Outside the education policy arena			