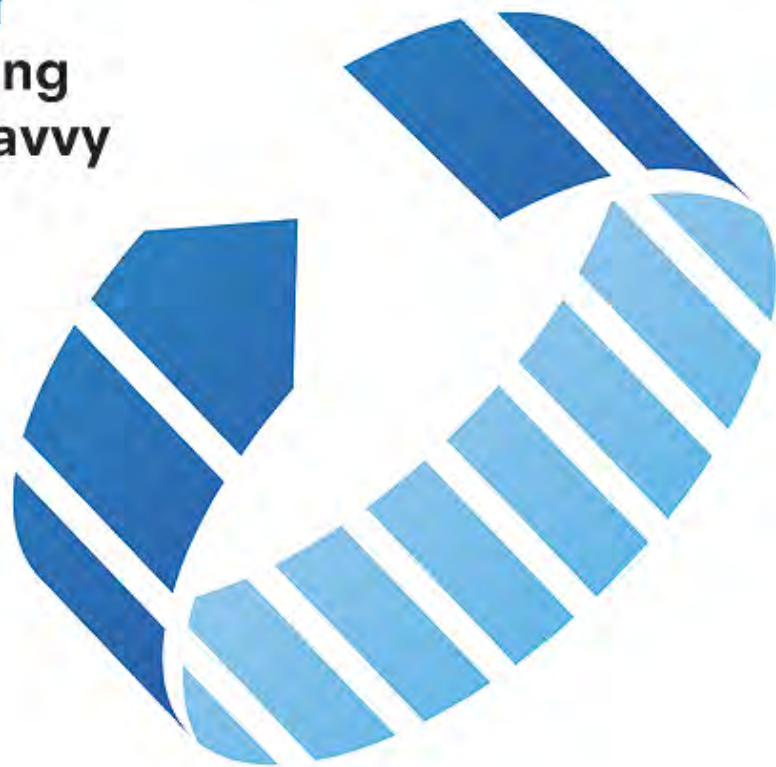


MICHAEL FULLAN

# MOTION LEADERSHIP

THE SKINNY  
on Becoming  
Change Savvy



A JOINT PUBLICATION



Welcome to the workshop.  
We hope you have an enjoyable time.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Understand the concept of 'the skinny'
- Learn about the high yield factors that make a difference to the change process
- Gain key insights that support fast, quality change
- Be inspired to apply the ideas in your own workplace

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Please feel free to reproduce and use the material in this booklet with your staff and others. The important thing is that you actually try out the ideas in a purposeful manner and build your knowledge through cumulative, reflective practice.

2011

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## OVERVIEW

This workshop focuses on the new implementation work beyond the *Six Secrets of Change*. It introduces some of the key concepts from the book *Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy* (Corwin, November, 2009). The idea of ‘the skinny’ is to boil down the essence of change into the smallest number of key, high yield factors that have high impact on stakeholder learning. The goal is to a) increase the speed of quality change, and b) to achieve large-scale or whole system reform.

In terms of the skinny we sometimes call this high yield set of factors ‘simplicity’ which is to identify the smallest number of powerful factors that make a difference—less than complex, but not overly simple.

The workshop does not cover the skinny in its entirety but rather is an introduction. The book itself shows more examples of the skinny in action. We have also developed ‘Motion Leadership the Movie’ which shows actual film-based situations of motion leadership in action. The ‘movie’ is available online < [http://www.corwin-sinet.com/Michael\\_Fullan\\_Info.cfm](http://www.corwin-sinet.com/Michael_Fullan_Info.cfm)>.

### Key New Watchwords

- Motion leadership
- From practice to theory
- Take the mystery out of complexity
- The speed of quality change
- Instruction drives data
- Whole system reform
- The skinny

### The Modules

- Ready-Fire-Aim: Change Savvy
  - The Instructional Core (Secrets Two-Five)
  - Love, Trust, and Resistance
  - All Systems Go
  - Case Studies
-

This module zeros in on 'change itself' and identifies nine insights embedded in the metaphor ready-fire-aim. It shows how to start change with maximum effect.

### 3-Step Interview

Letter off A, B, C

Interview each other as per the questions below:

1. What is your current position and when did you start?
2. What was the situation like when you first arrived? What did you see as the change challenge?
3. How did you go about addressing the challenge in your first year? What reactions, obstacles, etc. did you face and how did you handle them?
4. What happened in the second and third years?
5. When did you first get positive breakthrough? What are the indicators of success?
6. What stage are you at now? What are the issues for the immediate future?

As a group, debrief and identify two or three 'change challenges'.



**Peters & Waterman**

In 1982, Peters and Waterman offered the metaphor “ready-fire-aim” to capture the action bias of high performing companies that they studied. The concept was intuitively appealing but it was hard to find the savvy in there. It turns out that they were right, and we now have good evidence of the particular operational meaning of that famous phrase—and rich in insights it truly is.

There is a tight cluster of change-savvy ideas embedded in the “ready-fire-aim” wisdom.

**Ready-Fire-Aim  
9 Insights**

1. Relationships first (too fast/too slow)
2. Honor the implementation dip
3. Beware of fat plans
4. Behaviors before beliefs
5. Communication during implementation is paramount
6. Learn about implementation during implementation
7. Excitement prior to implementation is fragile
8. Take risks and learn
9. It is okay to be assertive

**Relationships First  
(too fast/too slow)**

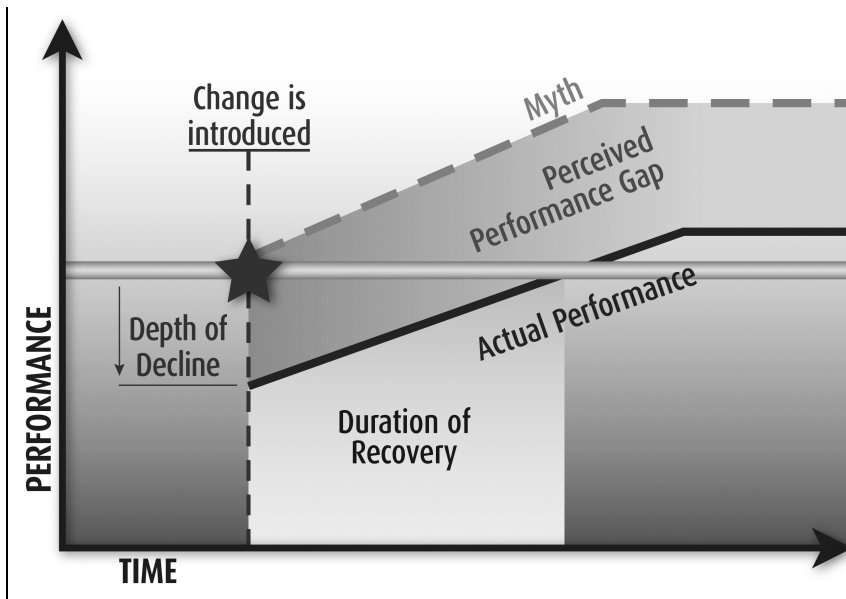
If the leader comes on too strong, the culture will rebel. If the leader is overly respectful of the existing culture, he or she will become absorbed into the status quo.

**Change Savvy Leadership**

- Careful entry into the new setting
- Listening to and learning from those who have been there longer
- Engaging in fact finding and joint problem solving
- Carefully (rather than rashly) diagnosing the situation
- Forthrightly addressing people’s concerns
- Being enthusiastic, genuine, and sincere about the change circumstances
- Obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing; and
- Developing a credible plan for making that fix

—Herold & Fedor, 2008

**Honor the Implementation Dip**



—Herold & Fedor, 2008

**Myth of Change**

Those who introduce the change (usually far removed from the implementation scene) assume that there will be some immediate gains. It can't be thus—by definition.

**Depth of Decline**

If you are an implementer, the costs to you are immediate and concrete, while the benefits are distant and theoretical. Thus the cost-benefit ratio is out of whack in favor of the negative.

**Don't Expect Compliments**

Remember your job is to help people get through the dip. Change-savvy leadership works to increase the upward slope of the bottom line of the triangle (decreasing the duration of recovery) so that the breakthrough line to the plus side occurs sooner—within six months in our best efforts.

**Resolute Leadership**

Change leaders are parsimonious in using a small number of powerful forces that get breakthrough results—such as having immense moral commitment to a cause along with a clump of empathy with those they are dealing with. This combination of resolute leadership and empathy enables leaders to find alternative ways when they get stuck. They demonstrate persistence with flexibility but never stray from the core purpose.

**Beware of Fat Plans**

The size and the prettiness of the plan is inversely related to the quality of action and the impact on student learning.

—Reeves, 2009

**(Ready)-Fire-Aim**

- Focus on the right priorities
- Attend to relationships, but get action sooner and treat it as a learning period
- Go light on judgment

**Early Implementation**

Early planning/implementation is more like 'strategizing' than it is like 'strategy'.

—Mintzberg, 2004

**One-Page Plans**

There is evidence that schools are well served by one-page plans that are clearly focused and sufficiently simple so that all participants in the process understand their role in executing the plans.

—Reeves, 2009

**Behaviors Before Beliefs**

Research on attitudinal change has long found that most of us change our behaviors somewhat before we get insights into new beliefs. The implication for approaching new change is clear. Do not load up on vision, evidence, and sense of urgency. Rather, give people new experiences in relatively non-threatening circumstances, and build on it, especially through interaction with trusted peers.

**Communication During Implementation is Paramount**

Communication during implementation is far more important than communication prior to implementation because communication in the abstract, in the absence of action, means almost nothing.

**Ready-(Fire)-Aim**

The change savvy leader accomplishes several critical things at this stage:

- Problems get identified through constant two-way communication
- Information is based on the specific happenings
- Leaders have multiple opportunities to communicate and refine the vision in relation to concrete implementation
- Problems get solved, a we-we identity around a common vision gets strengthened, and people come to know the implementation strategy



**Learn About  
Implementation During  
Implementation**

One of the most powerful strategies we have employed is to find different ways for implementers to learn from other implementers, especially those in similar circumstances who are further down the line.

**Draw on the Wisdom of the Crowd**

Effective leaders realize that many of the answers are out there. This is not a 'why can't you be more like your brother' strategy but rather a recognition that this is very hard work, some are figuring it out, and we can learn from them.

**Excitement Prior to  
Implementation is  
Fragile**

- Excitement in advance of doing something is understandable, but it does not have much of a foundation. Indeed, the fall in the implementation dip will be even greater if high aspirations precede it.
- Excitement during implementation when it occurs is solidly based on substance.

**Change Knowledgeable Leaders**

These leaders strive for small early success, acknowledge real problems, admit mistakes, protect their people, and celebrate success along the way. They avoid phony pep rallies. They love genuine results that generate great pride in the organization. They have their finger on the energy pulse of people, knowing that it will ebb and flow but will be spurred by positive results.

**Take Risks and Learn**

The skinny on risk taking is for leaders to create a climate that encourages action and learning from mistakes.

**It's Okay to be Assertive**

Many of the potentially best leaders in these democratic times are often reticent to assert themselves. To know about change is to know about inertia, which is to say that sometimes the status quo needs a wakeup call. You can't wait for success, you have to kick start it.

**Three Conditions of Assertive Leadership**

1. When leaders have built trusted relationships
2. When it turns out leaders have a good idea, and
3. When they empower people from day one to help assess and shape the idea

**Change Savvy Leaders**

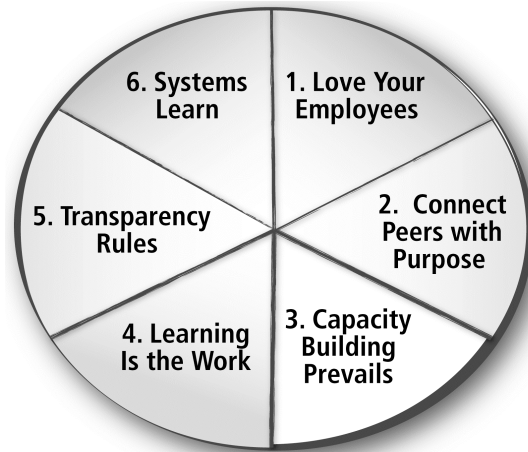
- Know a great deal because they are learners
- Respect complexity and live by the definition of wisdom (using your knowledge while doubting what you know (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2008))
- Combine assertiveness and humility

**The Skinny of Change**

- To get anywhere you have to *do* something
- In doing something you need to focus on developing *skills*
- Acquisition of skills increases *clarity*
- Clarity results in *ownership*
- Doing this together with others generates *shared ownership*
- Persist no matter what—resilience is your best friend.

**Key Message**

All effective leaders combine *resolute moral purpose* with *impressive empathy*.

Six Secrets of  
Change

— Fullan, 2008a

## Secret Two: Connect Peers with Purpose

Purposeful peer interaction within the school is crucial. Student learning and achievement increase substantially when teachers work in learning communities supported by school leaders who focus on improvement.

## Secret Three: Capacity Building Prevails

The most effective strategies involve helping teachers and principals develop the instruction and management of change skills necessary for school improvement. The role of assessment for learning is essential in order to link data on learning to instructional practices that achieve student results.

## Secret Four: Learning Is the Work

Professional development (PD) in workshops and courses is only an input to continuous learning and precision in teaching. Successful growth itself is accomplished when the culture of the school supports day-to-day learning of teachers engaged in improving what they do in the classroom and school.

## Secret Five: Transparency Rules

Ongoing data and access to seeing effective practices is necessary for success. It takes up the dilemmas of 'de-privatizing practice' in which it becomes normal and desirable for teachers to observe and be observed in teaching facilitated by coaches and mentors.

## Secret Two: Connect Peers with Purpose

### Connecting Peers in a School

Purposeful peer interaction works effectively under three conditions:

1. When the larger values of the organization and those of individuals and groups mesh.
2. When information and knowledge about effective practices are widely and openly shared.
3. When monitoring mechanisms are in place to detect and address ineffective actions, while also reinforcing and consolidating effective practices.

### Knowledge Sharing

Literacy Learning Fair

### Learning Fair Outcomes

- Forces schools to explain themselves
- Time for celebrating the work of the year
- Learn new ideas from other schools
- Friendly competition to outdo each other
- Fosters district identity

### Results of Connecting

- Knowledge flows as people pursue and continuously learn what works best
- Identity with an entity larger than oneself expands the self into powerful consequences.

### We-We Commitment

What are your two best strategies for connecting peers?

### Secret Three: Capacity Building Prevails

**Capacity Building** | Capacity building concerns competencies, resources, and motivation. Individuals and groups are high on capacity if they possess and continue to develop these three components in concert.

**Judgmentalism** | Judgmentalism is not just perceiving something as ineffective, but doing so in a pejorative and negative way.

**Non-Judgmentalism** | Focused on improvement in the face of ineffective performance rather than labeling or categorizing weaknesses.

**Judgmentalism** | Is it possible to perceive something as ineffective and not be judgmental about it?  
Letter off A, B

- Pick one of the four quadrants that represents a situation you have experienced.
- Make a few notations within the quadrant.
- Do a two-step interview with your partner A, B.

| FEELING       | FEEDBACK |        |
|---------------|----------|--------|
|               | Indirect | Direct |
| Belittled     |          |        |
| Not Belittled |          |        |

**Fear Prevents Acting on Knowledge** | When people fear for their jobs or their reputation it is unlikely that they will take risks. Fear causes a focus on the short term and neglects the mid or longer term. Fear creates a focus on the individuals rather than the group, and teamwork suffers.

**Capacity Building** | People who thrive here have a certain humility. They know they can get better; they want to learn from the best. We look for people who light up when they are around other talented people.

— Taylor & LaBarre, 2006

**Secret Four: Learning Is the Work**

**Culture of Learning**

The single greatest difference between effective and ineffective organizations is the *collective depth of understanding* among employees about their work.

**Breakthrough**



—Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006

**Dimensions of Relational Coordination**

| <b>Relationships</b> | <b>American</b>   | <b>Southwest</b>  |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Shared goals         | "Ninety percent of the ramp employees don't care what happens, even if the walls fall down, as long as they get their check."   | "I've never seen so many people work so hard to do one thing. You see people checking their watches to get the on-time departure ... then it's over and you're back on time."   |
| Shared knowledge     | Participants revealed little awareness of the overall process. They typically explained their own set of tasks without reference to the overall process of flight departures.   | Participants exhibited relatively clear mental models of the overall process—an understanding of the links between their own jobs and the jobs of other functions. Rather than just knowing what to do, they knew why, based on shared knowledge of how the overall process worked. |
| Mutual respect       | "There are employees working here who think they're better than other employees. Gate and ticket agents think they're better than the ramp. The ramp think they're better than cabin cleaners—think it's a sissy, woman's job. Then the cabin cleaners look down on the building cleaners. The mechanics think the ramp are a bunch of luggage handlers." | "No one takes the job of another person for granted. The skycap is just as critical as the pilot. You can always count on the next guy standing there. No one department is any more important than another."   |

**Communications**

|                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Frequent and timely communication | "Here you don't communicate. And sometimes you end up not knowing things ... Everyone says we need effective communication. But it's a low priority in action ... The hardest thing at the gates when flights are delayed is to get information." | "There is constant communication between customer service and the ramp. When planes have to be switched and bags must be moved, customer service will advise the ramp directly or through operations." If there's an aircraft swap "operations keeps everyone informed. ... It happens smoothly." |
| Problem-solving communication     | "If you ask anyone here, what's the last thing you think of when there's a problem, I bet your bottom dollar it's the customer. And these are guys who work hard every day. But they're thinking, how do I keep my ass out of the sling?"         | "We figure out the cause of the delay. We do not necessarily chastise, though sometimes that comes into play. It is a matter of working together. Figuring out what we can learn. Not finger pointing."   |

— Gittel, 2003

## Secret Five: Transparency Rules

### Getting Started with Transparency

- Data walls — elementary teachers / Data walls — high school teachers

### Medicine

To fix medicine we need to do two things: measure ourselves, and be open about what we are doing.

—Gawande, 2007

### Classroom Improvement

Transparency + non-judgmentalism + good help = classroom improvement

## Statistical Neighbours

As part of the overall strategy, Ontario created a new database, which is called “Statistical Neighbours.” All four thousand schools are in the system. They are organized into four bands—students and schools from the most disadvantaged communities, two bands in the middle, and a fourth comprising students in the least disadvantaged communities. Schools can be examined using other categories as well—size of school, percentage of students who come from homes where English is not their main language, geographical setting (rural or urban), and so on.

We are now in a position to use the data, and here is where the nuance of Secret Five comes into play. Simply publishing the results can possibly do some good, but more likely than not would have negative side effects. Instead we operate under a set of ground rules:

1. We do not condone league tables—displaying the results of every school from lowest to highest scores without regard to context. Instead we do the following:
  - a. Help schools compare themselves with themselves—that is, look at what progress they are making compared to previous years;
  - b. Help schools compare themselves with their statistical neighbours, comparing apples with apples;
  - c. Help schools examine their results relative to an external or absolute standard, such as how other schools in the province are faring and how close they are to achieving 100 percent success in literacy and numeracy.
2. We work with the seventy-two school districts and their four thousand schools to set annual “aspirational targets” based on their current starting point.
3. We focus on capacity building, helping districts identify and use effective instructional practices.
4. Although we take each year’s results seriously, we are cautious about drawing conclusions about any particular school based on just one year’s results. We prefer to examine three-year trends to determine if schools or districts are “stuck” or “moving” (improving or declining).
5. For schools and districts that are continuing to under-perform, we intervene with a program called Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), which provides targeted help designed to improve performance. There are currently about 850 of the 4,000 schools in this program. We are careful not to stigmatise schools in OFIP (in keeping with Secret Three), because doing so gets people sidetracked into issues of blame.

Overall, we think that this approach to data-informed development is effective. There is quite a lot of pressure built into the process, but that pressure is based on constructive transparency. When data are precise, presented in a non-judgmental way, considered by peers, and used for improvement as well as for external accountability, they serve to balance pressure and support. This approach seems to work. After five years of flatlined results before beginning the program (1999–2003), the province’s literacy and numeracy scores have climbed by some ten percentage points, with OFIP schools improving more than the average.

In England, schools and LAs can also track their performance through a data system called ‘RAISE online’ in which they can trace their performance over time.



Module Three, 'love, trust, and resistance' examines how this cluster of factors is intertwined. The module reveals why resistance can be necessary and helpful, and how change can be increased as long as it is built on a climate of trust.

#### How do you get trust if you don't have it?

Love, trust, and resistance are closely interrelated. The skinny is to unravel them and then recombine them with powerful consequences—simplicity.

#### Theory X Assumptions

- The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he or she can.
- Because of their dislike for work, most people must be controlled and threatened before they will work hard enough.
- The average human prefers to be directed, dislikes responsibility, is unambiguous, and desires security above everything else.

—McGregor, 1960

#### Theory Y Assumptions

- If a job is satisfying, then the result will be commitment to the organization.
- The average person learns under proper conditions not only to accept but to seek responsibility.
- Imagination, creativity, and ingenuity can be used to solve work problems by a large number of employees.

—McGregor, 1960

#### Dimensions of Trust

- Model integrity (sincerity, reliability, honesty)
- Model competence (skill, effectiveness)

To get over the implementation dip of establishing trust is to be rewarded with what Stephen Covey calls "the speed of trust." If there is anything worth investing in upfront it is to demonstrate your trustworthiness especially in the face of suspicion or mistrust. Low trust, as Covey says, means low speed (motion slows to a half) and high cost (financially and emotionally). High trust does the opposite. You can get so much more done, more quickly.

**Resistance**

Purposeful per interaction (which incorporates resisters or makes them increasingly uncomfortable), non-judgmental capacity building, learning is the work, and transparency of data and practice are stances and strategies that combine to synergise support and pressure as an almost irresistible force.

**Four Ways to Recombine**

- Start with love (Theory Y)
- Behave your way into trust
- Earn trust through demonstrated integrity and competence
- You can't make people change but if you are change savvy things will conspire and reduce if not eliminate resistance

**Turning Around People**

- Think of a situation where you saw a disengaged person change to become excited/involved.
- What caused the transformation?
- Interview each other.

**Motivational Work**

- Meaningful, accomplishable work
- Enables development
- Sense of camaraderie
- Being well led

**Perspective**

- Government level: Be assertive about the direction, and engage in two-way partnership with the sector
- Field: Exploit government policy, seek engagement vertically and horizontally; be proactive
- General advice for all: Do the work!

Changing whole education systems for the better, as measured by student achievement, requires coordinated leadership at the school, local authority, and government levels. Systemwide reform becomes possible when educational leaders build collective capacity within schools and across the system.

**Big Ideas for Whole-System Reform**

1. All children can learn
2. A small number of key priorities
3. Resolute leadership/stay on message
4. Collective capacity
5. Strategies with precision
6. Intelligent accountability
7. All means all

—Fullan, 2010b

**Elements of Successful Reform**

1. A small number of ambitious goals
2. A guiding coalition at the top
3. High standards and expectations
4. Collective capacity building with a focus on instruction
5. Individual capacity building linked to instruction
6. Mobilizing the data as a strategy for improvement
7. Intervention in a non-punitive manner
8. Being vigilant about “distractors”
9. Being transparent, relentless, and increasingly challenging

—Fullan, 2010b

Making All Systems Go



—Fullan, 2010b

Intelligent  
Accountability

1. It relies on incentives more than on punishment
2. It invests in capacity building so that people are able to meet the goals
3. It invests in collective (peer) responsibility—what is called “internal accountability”
4. It intervenes initially in a nonjudgmental manner
5. It embraces transparent data about practice and results
6. It intervenes more decisively along the way when required

—Fullan, 2010b

**Incentives That Work  
for Teachers**

- Good salaries
- Decent surroundings
- Positive climate
- Strong induction
- Extensive professional learning
- Opportunity to work with and learn from others (job embedded and otherwise)
- Supportive, and even assertive, leadership about the agenda
- Getting helpful feedback
- Reasonable class size
- Long-term collective agreements (4 years)
- Realizable moral purpose

—Fullan, 2010b

**Key Factors for School  
Improvement**

1. School leadership as driver
2. Parent and community ties
3. Professional capacity
4. Student-centered learning climate
5. Instruction focus/system

—Bryk et al, 2010

**Key Message**

What energizes educators is *realized moral purpose*.



### Armada Public School Case Study

Sharratt, L. & Fullan, M. 2009. *Realization*. pp. 84-89.

#### 14 Parameters

1. Shared beliefs and understandings
2. Embedded literacy coaches
3. Time-tabled literacy block
4. Principal leadership
5. Early and ongoing intervention
6. Case management approach
7. Literacy professional development at school staff meetings
8. In-school grade/subject meetings
9. Book rooms with leveled books and resources
10. Allocation of district and school budgets for literacy learning and resources
11. Action research focused on literacy
12. Parent involvement
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections
14. Shared responsibility and accountability

Jill Maar is the principal of Armada Public School, the district's largest elementary school, serving a highly diverse and multilingual community. Using the parameter self-assessment tool developed by Sharratt and her district curriculum staff, Jill and her school leadership team developed and implemented a plan of action based on the following nine components:

1. Improve the learning conditions: clean, organized, bright, well-lit plant. Regular maintenance and urgent repairs were needed in some areas because structure guides school behavior (Parameter 4).
2. Give access to current and inclusive resources: clearing out classrooms of all school-based resources (some were well stocked with resources dating back to the 1970s, while others had very few resources) through centralization across the school; creating a literacy room, math room, science room, including text resources, technology software, and math manipulatives (Parameters 9 and 10).
3. Centralize and streamline budget decisions: developing a clear and transparent process to address essential needs and division/teacher accountability (Parameter 10).
4. Examine data and identify trends; reshape teacher thinking about the importance of data when making instructional decisions (e.g., at-risk identification, case management approach) (Parameters 6 and 1).
5. Engage district curriculum consultant experts: facilitate professional learning based on teacher need and ensure consistency of practice within and across grades, for example, they assist in implementing the First 20 Days (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001), daily literacy walks in every classroom throughout the school, targeted long range and unit planning, and class meetings (Parameters 1 and 11).

6. Strategically build a leadership team: support implementation and share in the building of a school plan with SMART goal language (specific, measureable, attainable, results-based, time-bound; “What Are Smart Goals?” 2007; Parameters 2, 7, and 11).
7. Renew focus on parent and family engagement: extended library hours, parent/family town hall sessions, street festivals, and heritage and English language classes (Parameter 12).
8. Attend to early and ongoing interventions: kindergarten/Grade 1 programs focus on oral language and use of the Reading Recovery Observation Survey as a valuable assessment tool to guide instruction (Parameter 5).
9. Hold our nerve: protecting instructional time, honoring the literacy block, and designating specific time to meet in school to discuss program needs and students’ increased literacy achievement (Parameters 3, 8, and 13).

Jill is a dedicated instructional leader who as lead-learner—with will and perseverance—is a living example of how the 13 parameters can bring support and focus to every administrator and teacher in every school. Jill demonstrates modeled, shared, and guided practice when necessary, not lock-step but in concert, matching the parameters at the right time with the varied needs of her staff. Jill is an interdependent leader who understands how to bring all the parameters to life in a school with 890 students and 67 staff members. The answer lies in the 14<sup>th</sup> parameter—shared responsibility and accountability—and Jill’s narrative below demonstrates how to reflect and integrate the parameters in order to increase literacy achievement for each student.

### **Accountability and Responsibility at Armadale Public School: An Example of the 14<sup>th</sup> Parameter**

Our sense of urgency to improve student achievement for all students while closing the achievement gap for at-risk students crystallized after analyzing a variety of data sources. As a team, we needed to firmly establish our shared beliefs and understandings to ensure that *all* teachers can support *all* students in reaching *high* expectations in *all* subject areas (Hill & Crévola, 1999). Initial student gains have been achieved, as evidenced in the latest data collected both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Jill reports that her team has collaboratively set high expectations for the literacy learning of both teachers and students. In taking responsibility for implementing the parameters, they have achieved the following:

- Job-embedded professional learning, based on student needs, has increased the consistency of practice within and among classrooms. Teachers are beginning to model lessons in one another’s classrooms on a monthly basis, thereby building capacity and understanding.
- Professional learning is active in each division. The identified focus is assessment-based instruction with teacher moderation of student work.
- Teachers are using a variety of assessment tools and instructional strategies to meet the learning styles, interests, and needs of every student.



- Teachers are building class and student profiles and attending case management sessions to identify high-yield strategies.
- Teachers and students can clearly articulate what the learning targets are and what success criteria are needed in order to achieve the targets, as evidenced through daily literacy walks.
- Two teams (of five teachers each) are engaged in action research and meet bimonthly to review their data, actions, and research.
- Ninety-eight percent of the staff have volunteered to participate in a biweekly professional book club and bring supporting student evidence to their discussions.
- An increase in the usage and frequency of centralized resources has been acknowledged through not only centralized tracking systems but also the observations and comments of teachers and students who are accessing them.
- Student needs are at the forefront when making budget decisions with grade/divisional teams.

Attendance at family/community school events has increased by 200 percent (School Council sessions have grown from 8 members to 67; Early Years parent sessions on average have 48-50 parents attending now on a regular basis).

The quantitative data also confirm that by continuing to improve learning conditions, celebrating collaborative practices, and sustaining a climate of trust and transparency, students are beginning to show performance gains (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 shows significant reduction in the number of students at risk in kindergarten through Grade 5—especially those at Level 1—in one year of intense, focused activity. While the at-risk numbers still need to be improved further, Jill considers the skill sets used in kindergarten—Grade 5 interventions to be necessary in Grades 6 to 8, and she will train or move staff to provide for that increased instructional capacity. What is impressive is that Jill knows every student and has her finger on the performance pulse at Armadale. She is able to provide up-to-the-minute assessment results for each student. She and her teachers can name the at-risk students individually and clearly articulate what they are doing for each one. We believe that this is the essence of the 14<sup>th</sup> parameter. In implementing all of the parameters, including the 14<sup>th</sup>, Jill has daily conversations with teachers and works alongside them to co-plan and co-teach. She is truly an evidence-based, knowledgeable, and passionate leader.

**Figure 6.1: Summary of Armadale Students Identified as At Risk in Reading\***

| Grade        | October 2008 Planning Process |                            |         |                  | February 2009 Planning Process |                            |         |                  |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|
|              | Enrollment<br>October<br>2008 | Number of Students At Risk |         |                  | Enrollment<br>February<br>2009 | Number of Students At Risk |         |                  |
|              |                               | Level 1<br>or Below        | Level 2 | Total<br>At Risk |                                | Level 1<br>or Below        | Level 2 | Total<br>At Risk |
| Kindergarten | 75                            | 68                         | 0       | 68               | 77                             | 11                         | 35      | 46               |
| 1            | 92                            | 42                         | 13      | 55               | 83                             | 29                         | 17      | 46               |
| 2            | 94                            | 23                         | 28      | 51               | 87                             | 11                         | 23      | 34               |
| 3            | 82                            | 26                         | 14      | 40               | 78                             | 8                          | 21      | 29               |
| 4            | 70                            | 7                          | 15      | 22               | 70                             | 6                          | 12      | 18               |
| 5            | 83                            | 14                         | 26      | 40               | 83                             | 7                          | 26      | 33               |
| 6            | 106                           | 11                         | 24      | 35               | 107                            | 5                          | 29      | 34               |
| 7            | 87                            | 14                         | 19      | 33               | 86                             | 14                         | 17      | 31               |
| 8            | 109                           | 18                         | 16      | 34               | 108                            | 17                         | 20      | 37               |
| Total        | 798                           | 223                        | 155     | 378<br>(47%)     | 779                            | 108                        | 202     | 233<br>(30%)     |

\*'At risk' defined as Level 2 or below on a 4-point scale.

In terms of student achievement, Armadale shows amazing improvement in one year from 2008-2009:

| Percent Proficient | Grade 3 (08/09) | Grade 6 (08/09) |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Reading            | 63-84%          | 58-77%          |
| Writing            | 75-91%          | 66-78%          |
| Mathematics        | 76-89%          | 60-72%          |

### Crosby Heights Public School Case Study

Sharratt, L. & Fullan, M. 2009. *Realization*. pp. 68-75.

#### 14 Parameters

1. Shared beliefs and understandings
2. Embedded literacy coaches
3. Time-tabled literacy block
4. Principal leadership
5. Early and ongoing intervention
6. Case management approach
7. Literacy professional development at school staff meetings
8. In-school grade/subject meetings
9. Book rooms with leveled books and resources
10. Allocation of district and school budgets for literacy learning and resources
11. Action research focused on literacy
12. Parent involvement
13. Cross-curricular literacy connections
14. Shared responsibility and accountability

Crosby Heights is a K-8 school of 662 students in a low-income neighborhood in a growing York Region community. It was designated by the district as a Performance Plus School over the years, that is, a school in challenging circumstances requiring attention. After five years of focused work, the principal, Ryan Friedman, and his team have overcome the following obstacles to begin producing the impressive results shown in Figure 5.1:

- No focal point (lack of clear vision)\*
- Toxic culture (negative culture)
- A facility that was in poor shape, with nonfunctional lighting, paint peeling, nonexistent or torn blinds, a shabby play yard, and drafty windows (structural barriers)
- Demoralized unionized staff (negative culture)
- Unsafe school environment, including violence and oppositional students (negative culture)
- Critical parents wanting to get their children out (negative culture)
- Huge discrepancy between report card results and provincial standardized assessments, indicating that assessments did not match curriculum expectations (assessment and instruction issues)
- Lack of common language regarding instruction (assessment and instruction issues)
- Low achievement on the provincial assessment (assessment and instruction issues)

\*The categorization in parentheses is our way of organizing Ryan's actions using the five factors or conditions that principals must consider when developing schools as a learning organization (Leithwood, Leonard, & Sharratt, 2000).

**Figure 5.1: Increase in Crosby Heights Students Achieving Level 3 or 4, 2004-2007\***

|             | Baseline Year: 2004-2005<br>As Grade 3 Students | Year 3: 2007-2008<br>As Grade 6 Students | Baseline to Year 3:<br>% Increase by Same Students |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Reading     | 44%   | 90%                                      | 46%  |
| Writing     | 40%   | 87%                                      | 47%  |
| Mathematics | 50%   | 83%                                      | 33%  |

\*EQAQ (see also Figure 4.1)

In the years before there was a forward plan (2000-2001 to 2004-2005), student performance as measured by the provincial assessment agency was low and jumping around in a nonlinear manner. Ryan entered as principal in 2004. In the following three years, the school dramatically increased the percentage of its students in Grades 3 and 6 achieving the province’s demanding proficiency level (3 or 4 on a 4-point scale).

Figure 5.1 shows the results in Grade 6 reading, writing, and math compared with the scores of the *same* students when they were in Grade 3. Note the significant and impressive 33 percent to 47 percent increase in Grade 3 students achieving Level 3 and 4 from 2004-2005 to 2007-2008.

How did this happen? Crosby Heights is one example of how a principal and his team, with district support, implemented the 13 parameters. As a new principal in 2004, Ryan quickly established a vision for his school that mirrored the district’s vision and priority of literacy. He shared this vision and priority every chance he got and made time to meet all his teachers, working with them at whatever level they were at in their professional lives. His personal version of the district vision for the school amounted to five nuggets:

1. Learning for all, whatever it takes
2. All equals *all*
3. Students and staff can articulate their potential
4. A focus on literacy, that is, balanced literacy
5. Excellence in all that we do

He clearly articulated the vision to staff and found ways to share it everywhere, including newsletters to staff and parents, presentations at parents’ nights and school council meetings, and focused learning for staff on professional activity days. Over time, after the teachers had begun to experience success in the classroom, Ryan felt safe sharing the following beliefs and understandings more explicitly, looking for buy-in:

- All students can achieve at high levels given adequate time, the right support, and effective instruction and resources
- High achievement is not an accident
- We are all responsible for all of the students
- Equity does not mean equality
- Be responsible for your own actions
- Share decision making
- Practice an ethic of care and mutual respect
- Provide an emotionally and physically safe and supportive learning environment

Ryan then set about to model, share, and guide practice so his staff would become interdependent, that is, achieve realization. He became even more precise about the literacy focus and guided his staff, through pressure and support, toward four key goals:

1. Creating proficient, interdependent readers and writers
2. Understanding that reading and writing are the important parts of the curriculum
3. Understanding that reading and writing work across all subject areas
4. Having students see themselves as readers, authors, critics, researchers, and artists

Ryan knew that his own attitude and performance were his most powerful tools, so he modeled those beliefs consistently for staff. Because of that positive influence, and the resulting willingness to work with him, teachers came to share the beliefs slowly but steadily, and eventually Ryan broke the previously toxic school environment.

To their professional credit, the school staff members who stayed the course have become inspirational to each other and to other school teams. Subtly and not so subtly, Ryan believes that he changed beliefs and understandings in a number of ways:

- Establishing job-embedded learning, that is, right in the school, with staff as a professional learning community between the bells; he stayed true to his course, saying, “professional learning is not an option here at Crosby Heights” (culture)\*
- Building relationships with teachers and support staff and the school community (culture)
- Transferring a few teachers who struggled to buy into the vision (vision and structure)
- Modeling hope, optimism, life-long learning, and caring for others (culture)
- Having high expectations of teachers to rise to the teaching challenge (assessment and instruction)
- Providing needed resources for teachers (resources)
- Celebrating small incremental successes (vision and assessment and instruction)
- Seizing opportunities daily, weekly, and monthly through constant newsletters to teachers and parents to remind staff, parents, community to stay the course (structure)
- Staying current with research on the most successful practices to increase school and student improvement—and then applying the research he found (assessment and instruction)
- Doing whatever it takes to get additional resources, whether it was speaking to the superintendent of schools, the plant department, or the Reading Recovery teacher-leader (resources)
- Putting in place multiple teams to distribute the leadership and to accept the responsibility for teachers’ practice and student improvement (structure)
- Changing the attitudes of teachers, students, staff, parents, and district leaders to understand that improvement could happen at Crosby Heights (culture)

\*Similar to our earlier note, the categorization in parentheses represents five key conditions to consider when evaluating schools as effective learning organizations (Leithwood, et al., 2000, pp. 99-124).

One can see that Ryan and his leadership team found ways to embrace our pressure-and-support mantra—to guide the learning—in turning around this large school. He is an unabashed, informed risk taker who routinely asks for staff feedback on his leadership. One young staff member commented:

[The principal] does an excellent job of promoting and reinforcing a shared sense of purpose. He uses data to inform us of the progress toward our goal, sends articles to read to enhance our PD [professional development], and lets us know about district workshops that we may want to attend. He is very approachable and easy to talk to about issues, concerns, or questions that I have as a first-year teacher. His caring about the needs of his staff is greatly appreciated and admired. He trusts us as educators in our field and in our ability to make good decisions. When he feels strongly about an issue, he is very diplomatic in his delivery of his point of view, which contributes to his respect of others and his approachable nature.

Another teacher on staff who has been at the school for a long time commented positively as well:

[He] is consistently approachable and visible within the school. He works hard to resolve conflicts and build good relationships with staff and students. He is respectful of other as demonstrated in his mannerisms, language, and actions. He encourages teachers to take on new leadership roles, involves community and family participation in the school, and most definitely demonstrates a deep knowledge of teaching and the learning process. I admire the fact that he is constantly willing to learn new things and share what he has learned with others. His use of data to drive instruction has helped us all see that this is an important tool. He has built consensus around the school plan and delivers on his commitments. He has made a significant change in our school and made it such a positive place to be.

Ryan himself says that all the improvements and positive comments are due to the contribution of his staff members. He notes that school improvement starts in the classroom surrounded by the 13 parameters working in concert. However, our research says that two arenas must come together in improvement at every level: first a focus on classroom practice, followed by leadership with pressure and support. Ryan has had no end of questioning about how he accomplished the improvements to date and continues to maintain energy for his school and students. One of his staff members, who is working on her master's degree, wrote a paper about his leadership style, in which she answered the questions:

I chose to interview Mr. Friedman, because in my opinion, he is such an awe-inspiring, dynamic, and results-oriented principal. Since he joined our school three years ago, he has brought about many changes that not only have worked (affectively) [*sic*], but have also improved student learning scores (empirically). He was able to bring about those changes by motivating the staff, getting them on board with the ideas, and then charting the path for them. All along the way, he would continue to support the staff, listen to them, and empower them. (Dato, 2006, p. 1)

Through the gradual-release-of-responsibility learning model (modeled, shared, guided, and interdependent practice), Ryan led the staff to experience school and student improvement. There wasn't just one single silver bullet or one single action that he took to overcome all the obstacles he initially faced. It was a concerted leadership effort to delve deeply into each of the 13 parameters that has resulted in interdependent practice at Crosby Heights.

Ryan may be one of the better school leaders in York Region, but this is a matter of degree, not kind. Our capacity-building-to-realization model has systematically engaged all leaders, teachers, and students. Aligned leadership at the district and school levels is a key to staying and deepening the course, and this too is consistent. Not coincidentally, such alignment and deep implementation results in a very powerful wave of a thousand and more change agents who have tasted success and "want more, please." They will not be satisfied with less.



## GLOSSARY

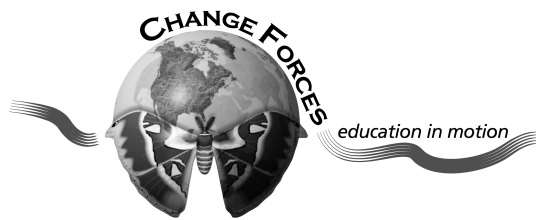
|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| All systems go               | How to achieve whole system reform in which all parts of the system are coordinated.   |
| Change capacity              | The collective ability to make change happen based on new knowledge, new resources and new commitments or motivation.  |
| Change knowledge             | Knowledge about how change occurs and the key drivers that cause change.   |
| Change processes             | Understanding the dynamics of change as it unfolds in a situation, including insights into how to manage change.   |
| Coherence-making             | Change processes that help connect elements of reform so that groups gain shared clarity and shared commitment.  |
| Culture                      | The way we do things around here; behaviors and attitudes.   |
| Cultures of evaluation       | Behaviors and attitudes that value assessing what is done and acting on such assessments.  |
| Cultures of learning         | Behaviors and attitudes that value seeking new ideas, learning from existing practices and engaging in continuous improvement and doing so collectively or collaboratively.  |
| Implementation dip           | The inevitable bumpiness and difficulties encountered as people learn new behaviors and beliefs.   |
| Intelligent accountability   | Accountability that combines self/collective responsibility with transparent results, and selective intervention. Relies more on incentives than on punishment.  |
| Innovation vs innovativeness | Innovation refers to the content of a particular new idea, program, policy or thing; innovativeness is the process of engaging in making change happen in practice.  |
| Lateral capacity building    | Strategies and cultures which are based on schools and other agencies learning from each other in clusters or other networks, and districts learning from each other in ongoing exchanges.   |
| Leadership                   | Leaders focus on individuals. Leadership involves developing leadership throughout the system. It involves the capacity to lead change, and to develop others so that there is a critical mass of people working together to establish new ways. |



|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Learning in context              | Learning which is built into the day-to-day culture of the organisation as distinct from learning out of context in workshops or courses. The latter is input but the real power is whether the daily culture supports learning and application.                               |
| Moral purpose                    | The human desirability of a goal; in education moral purpose often involves raising the bar and closing the gap of student learning in the society as a whole.   |
| Motion leadership                | Leadership that causes positive movement of individuals, schools or systems in accomplishing better results.   |
| Organizational capacity building | Improvements in the infrastructure that represent new capabilities in government and non-government agencies to provide support, monitoring and other capacity building resources for the system.  |
| Professional learning community  | Usually refers to school cultures which foster learning among teachers within the school; cultures in which teaching is less private and more transparent for feedback and improvement.  |
| Pressure and support             | The combination of high challenge (pressure) and high support (capacity building) required for whole systems to reform.  |
| Simplexity                       | Making things less complex but not oversimplified. Taking the mystery out of something.  |
| The skinny                       | The essence of something. The smallest number of key things leaders have to address in order to get substantial improvement.   |
| Strategizing vs strategy         | Strategy is innovation or content; strategizing is innovativeness or process. Strategizing involves developing a strategy and then continually refining it through feedback between thought and action.  |
| Technical vs adaptive challenge  | Technical problems are ones in which current knowledge is sufficient to address the problem (still difficult); adaptive challenges are problems that are more complex and go beyond what we know. Adaptive work is more difficult, more anxiety-producing and takes more time. |
| Tri-level development            | Movement forward involving all three levels of the system and their interrelationships: school and community; district/region; and state.  |

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