Engage-Envision-Elevate: From Initiatives to Systems Toolkit

Overview

As we reflect on the past few years of the STLE grant, it is clear that we have collectively engaged in work that has challenged and enhanced our thinking and approaches. Most importantly, this work changed how we address the needs of our students and of our educators. The Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness strives to facilitate the creation of communities of practice, knowing that for many, the best way to address challenges is with the assistance of others engaged in similar work. To that end, this toolkit is a compilation of information, tools, and tips shared at the July 2014 Convening, “Engage-Envision-Elevate: From Initiatives to Systems”. This toolkit contains work from national experts, districts across the nation engaging in similar work, and most importantly tools and resources from our local districts.

The toolkit, created with assistance from our STLE districts, includes resources in six topical areas including:

- Developing Sustainable Career Pathways and Leadership Roles
- Systems Thinking and Evolution of Practice
- Peer Observation: Approaches and Design Considerations
- Enhancing Family and Community Engagement
- Transformational Collaboration: Systemic Commitment to Professional Learning Communities
- Force Field Analysis

Accessing the Toolkit

You can access the toolkit in a variety of ways:

1. Direct link to the toolkit: https://www.engageny.org/resource/engage-envision-elevate-initiatives-systems

2. Visit the Improving Practice page from the Teacher/Leader Effectiveness menu bar.

Use the dropdown menu to access the Improving Practice page.
Scroll to the “Engage-Envision-Elevate: From Initiatives to Systems” section. From here, you can access the entire toolkit or navigate to specific components of the toolkit outlined by the bullets.

**Click here for the complete toolkit:** Engage-Envision-Elevate: From Initiatives to Systems

- Developing Sustainable Career Pathways and Leadership Roles
- Systems: Thinking and Evolution of Practice
- Peer Observations: Approaches and Design Considerations
- Enhancing Family and Community Engagement
- Transformational Collaboration: Systemic Commitment to Professional Learning Communities
- Force Field Analysis

Access the entire toolkit here.

Or, access specific components of the toolkit here.

**Navigating Within the Specific Components**

As you access specific components of the toolkit you will be brought to a new landing page that provides the section title and a bulleted list of associated resources. You may notice that some of the bulleted items are direct hyperlinks while others are plain text. Those items that are hyperlinked will bring you to an external source. Items that are listed in plain text can be downloaded for use by scrolling down the page to the area called “Downloadable Resources.” Here you will find each resource linked for access in a variety of forms ranging from PDF, word documents, Power Points, and Excel workbooks.

The bulleted list of associated resources.

Scroll down the page to access downloadable versions of the associated resources.
**Spotlights on Content**

*Topic: Developing Sustainable Career Pathways and Leadership Roles*

The Developing Sustainable Career Pathways and Leadership Roles topic area includes resources for districts in various stages of designing and/or implementing career pathways for teachers and principals. Resources include, but are not limited to sample job descriptions for a variety of teacher/principal leadership roles, selection rubrics and program evaluation documents. In addition, this section includes a collection of video reflections from Greece Central School District on their experiences designing and implementing career pathways.

*Topic: Systems Thinking and Evolution of Practice*

This section contains information and basic tools of systems thinking to inform and enhance school improvement efforts including a summary of the habits of systems thinking, reflective tools and questions that uncover the power of mental models and can be used to push systems-thinking, graphics that can be used in discussion, aiding in the identification of high-leverage action steps, and information and tips for successful implementation.

*Topic: Peer Observation - Approaches and Design Considerations*

Peer observations have the potential to support the development of teachers, both formally and informally. Peer observations can be used to incorporate content expertise into the observation system, create opportunities for teacher leadership and increase system-wide support and improvement of the accuracy and reliability of observations. For districts exploring ways in which to incorporate peers into their observation structure, this section provides reflection questions to guide decision-making, examples of how other districts have approached peer observation, templates for data collection, samples of collective bargaining agreements and peer observation background and research. Additionally, a video demonstrating the “Focus Walks” taking place in Huntington Union Free School District is available.

*Topic: Enhancing Family and Community Engagement*

Highly effective schools and districts support and promote teacher efforts to create and maintain close relationships with families. Teacher leaders can play an important role in family and community engagement initiatives. Resources in this section include, but are not limited to an annotated bibliography, sample brochures used to communicate a Parent University, and sample newsletters. Additionally, a video is available that illustrates South Huntington Union Free School District’s approach to family engagement using teacher and principal leaders.

*Topic: Transformational Collaboration - Systemic Commitment to Professional Learning Communities*
There is compelling research that validates the work of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). While many districts have “groups” that call themselves a “Professional Learning Community” and yet they are not a highly functioning unit. High performing districts have common and coherent strategies that hold all adults accountable for a positive impact on students learning. The Webster Central School District has invested and fostered the implementation of PLCs that represent a community of professional learners whose members are mutually accountable and work interdependently to achieve common goals that support continuous growth improving the learning of each student. The resources in this section, including goal setting examples and templates, action planning tools, and sample calendars, were provided by Webster and can be used by districts throughout the state to enhance the role of PLC’s within their school context.

**Topic: Force Field Analysis**

Force Field Analysis is a strategic analytical tool developed by Kurt Lewin. This technique provides a framework for identifying and examining factors that can influence change. A Force Field Analysis diagrams a situation that exists as a set of forces: those that move toward change (driving forces) and those that inhibit change (restraining forces). For change to happen there has to be a shift in forces - the driving forces must exceed the restraining forces. The resources in this section, including templates and background information, can be used to help districts identify the current state or status quo. From there, the force field can be described and analyzed and a strategy may then be developed to shift the balance of forces.

**Summary**

Pleaes remember that the complete toolkit provides much more detail within each section, including tips, reflective questions, and contextual background. You can access the complete toolkit using the following link: [https://www.engageny.org/resource/engage-envision-elevate-initiatives-systems](https://www.engageny.org/resource/engage-envision-elevate-initiatives-systems).

We hope you find these resources useful as you continue to transform your initiatives to strategic systemic work. We encourage you to provide our office with feedback on these resources so it can continue to grow as a resource for you and your peers. In addition, we encourage you to submit additional resources for consideration which could supplement the toolkit and become a further resource for districts across the state via STLERFP@mail.nysed.gov.