



## Breaking Away: Leading Cultural Change



# Principal Leadership Specialist and Support Team



**Staci Allmaras**  
RCE Director Liaison

**Kari Ross**  
Northwest Region



**Maria Erlandson**  
Northwest/  
Central Region



**Kip Lynk**  
Southern Region



**Renae Busse**  
Metro/Northeast Region



**Ann Mitchell**  
Metro Area/MDE Liaison



**Liz Vaught**  
Metro Area/MDE Liaison



RCE=Regional Centers of Excellence  
MDE=Minnesota Department of Education



Ten  
Minnesota  
Commitment  
s to Equity

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.

# Community Commitments



Take this opportunity to authentically reflect.

Engage fully with a thought partner.

Be mindful of honoring others' stories.

# Seven Leadership Practices

- Developing a shared mission, vision and goals with staff
- Developing a school leadership team and fostering teacher leadership
- Recognizing, respecting and employing each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning (cultural responsiveness and attentiveness to equity)
- Providing meaningful and effective instructional feedback to teachers
- **Leading through change effectively for continuous improvement**
- Developing an aligned system of curriculum, assessment and instruction.
- **Building a trusting and positive learning culture/climate**

# Leadership Practice (LP) #7: Building a trusting and positive culture and climate

## EXPLORING

## BECOMING

## GROWING

## THRIVING

### Leader is...

- **Learning** about creating cultural change... and
- **Reflecting** on ...

### Leader...

- **Analyzes ...**
- **practices ...**
- **Actively engages** students and families, with particular attention to those underrepresented and /or underserved
- Identifies and develops **planning steps** needed to...

### Leader is working with Leadership Team to...

- **Use data**
- **Identify ...**
- Develop an **action plan** and **strategies** to ...
- **Develop relationships** with community agencies/external partners

### Leadership Team...

- **Implements the action plan**
- **Collects evidence ...**
- **Adjusts actions**
- **Continuously works** toward increased implementation fidelity
- **Builds coalitions**
- **Advocates for equity and justice**

# LP# 5: Leading through change effectively for continuous improvement

## EXPLORING

## BECOMING

## GROWING

## THRIVING

### Leader is...

- **Learning** about change leadership...
- **Implementing** district initiated changes and/or school technical changes,
- **Reflecting on change management** practices

### Leader...

- **Engages stakeholders**
- **Assesses readiness** for change
- **Creates coherence**
- **Understands** how change affects students, staff and community
- **Focuses on comprehensive communication**

### Leader is working with Leadership Team to...

- **Identify Adaptive challenges**
- **Create a vision**
- **Anticipate challenges**
- **Develop an implementation plan**

### Leadership Team...

- **Develops a culture of change**
- **Models and supports**
- **Sustains focus**
- **Promotes collective collaboration**
- **Systematically gathers data** enabling continuous improvements

# Change is challenging

Change in organizations is challenging,  
but perhaps the most daunting  
is changing culture.





# Our Guiding Questions



Why is changing a culture so difficult?

What are three levels of culture?

What is a cultural problem that requires change?

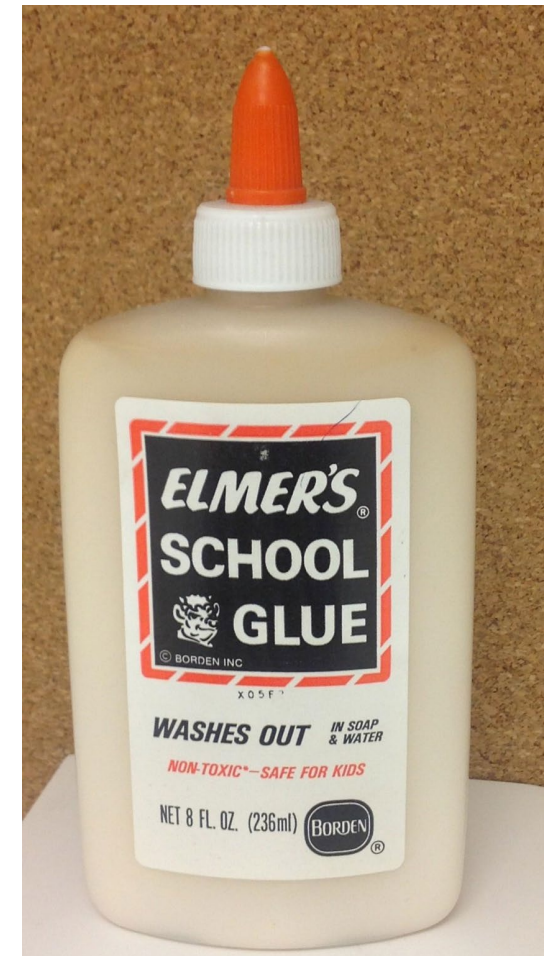
What steps can be taken to facilitate a change in a system's culture?

# *Personality* is to an individual as *culture* is to a system.



If the analogy holds true,  
how might staff respond  
when a change in school culture is  
suggested?

What might the analogy suggest  
as to why culture change  
is so challenging?



# Culture or Climate?



**Climate** often reflects the relationships among and with students, teachers, families, and administrators.

Climate can be described as the morale of the school at a given point in time.

**Culture** is a far more amorphous concept and reflects deeply held values, traditions and patterns of behavior. Often those beliefs are so ingrained into the fabric of the school that people don't even think about them.



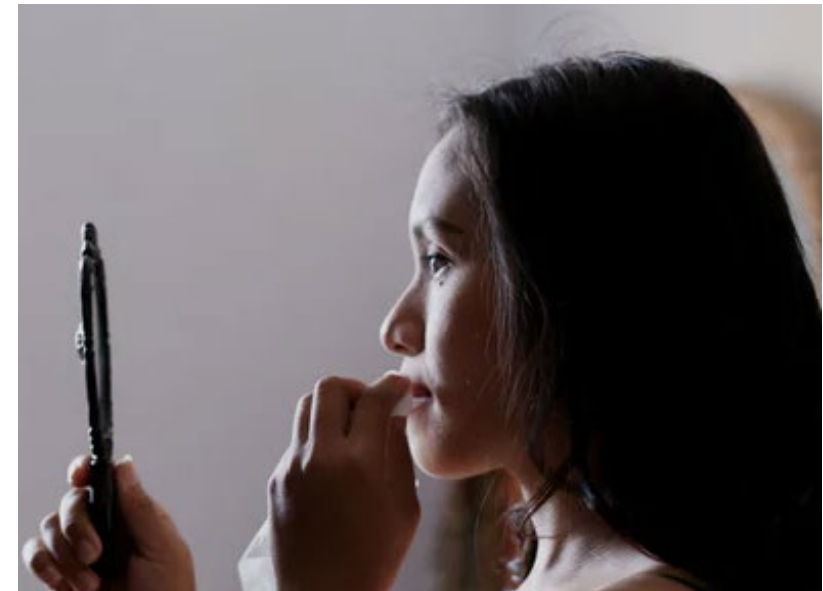
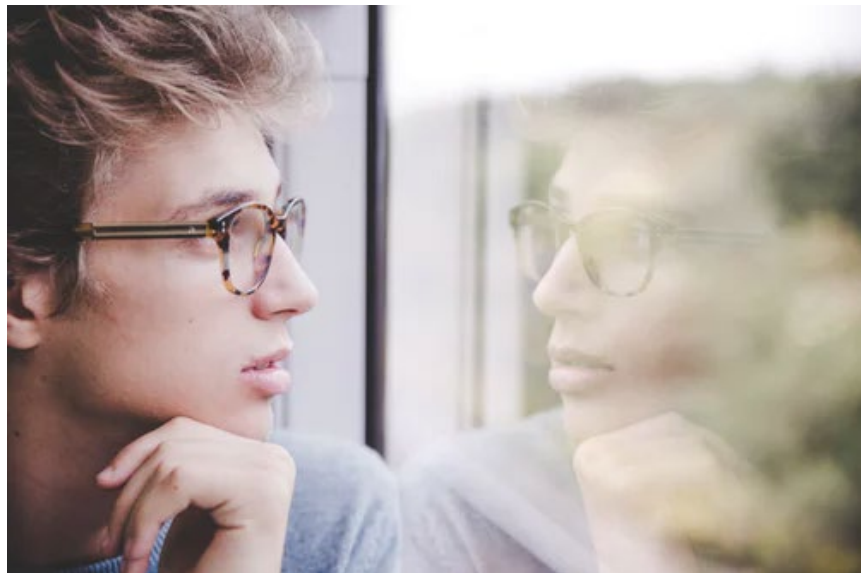
# Culture change begins with a problem



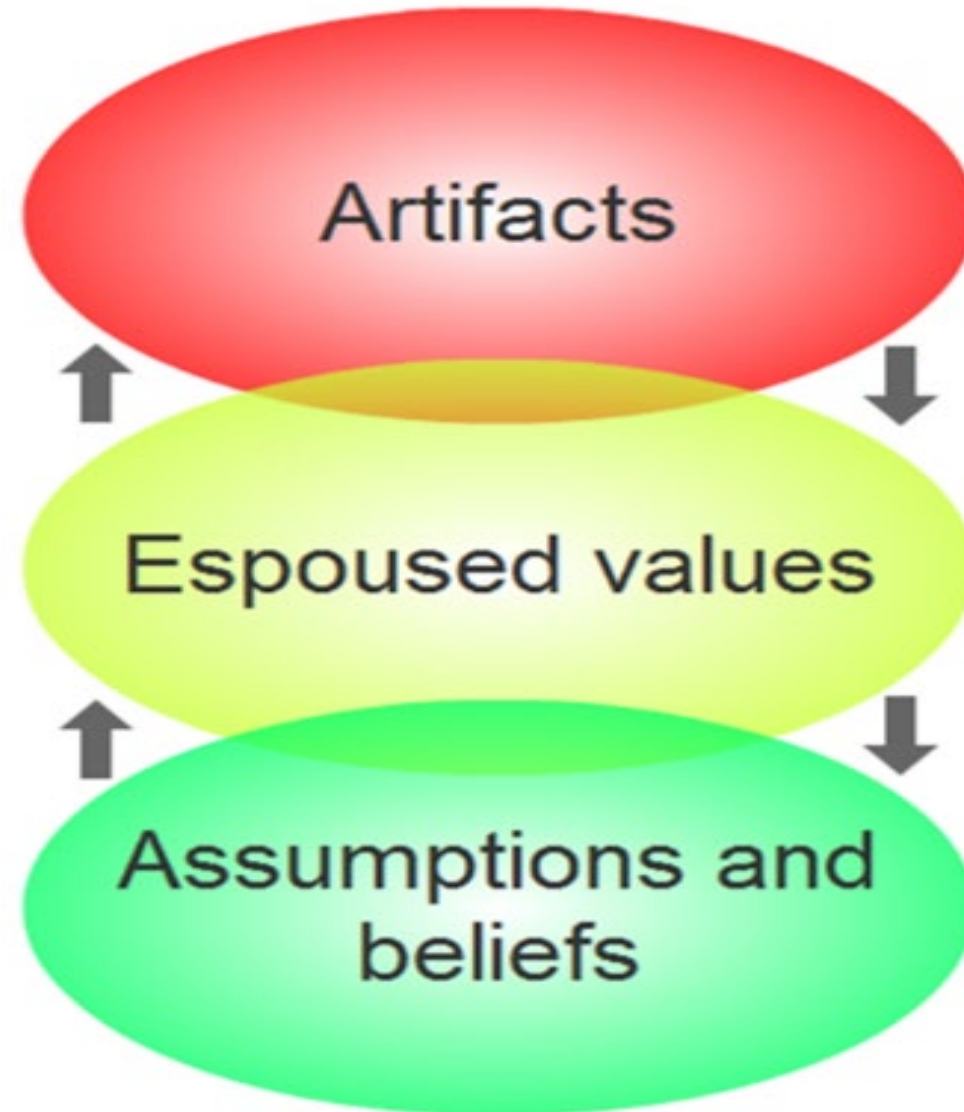
A perceived problem that needs to be addressed, to more effectively **meet student needs**, is a critical entry point for cultural change.

# Self-Reflect

Consider an element of the culture within your school that helps define the school, is broadly and deeply shared to the point it is carried out quite often unconsciously. It is so pervasive that it has become the correct way to think, feel or behave.



# Schein's Three Levels of Culture



# Level 1 – What Are Artifacts?

**What you see, hear and feel** when you...

review data, walk the hallways/visit classrooms, observe a professional learning community (PLC), chat with a custodian, take calls from parents, review disciplinary reports, notice staff or student clothing, listen to conversations among staff, students, and community members, plan for year-end celebrations, induct new staff, display artwork and trophies?

...It's the **visible, noticeable facts.**

What's  
going on  
here?





## Level 2 - What Are Our Espoused Values?

*Sense of what ought to be*

Ideas, goals, values, aspirations

Mission and Vision language

Belief Statements

What do we **say** we value and believe is important?

*May or may not be congruent with artifacts*

# Pause and Reflect on your mission and vision

What do we  
say we value  
and believe?



# Level 3 - What Are Our Unconscious Assumptions?

Unconscious, taken-for-granted  
beliefs and values that

**determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling**

At this level, cultures tell their members  
who they are,  
how to behave toward each other,  
what to pay attention to,  
and how to feel good about themselves.  
Sometimes it conveys “the only way” ...



# Leaders embed and reinforce (intentionally or unintentionally) beliefs, values and assumptions:

1. What do we **pay attention to, measure and control** regularly?
2. How do we **react to critical incidents**, e.g. emotional outbursts, what is not paid attention to, inconsistency and conflict?
3. How do we **allocate resources**?
4. What do we deliberately **role model**, teach and coach?
5. How do we **allocate rewards and status**?
6. How do we **recruit, select, promote and excommunicate**?

## Pause and Reflect (2)

To what degree are artifacts consistent with espoused values?



What unintended messages may we be sending?

Reexamination of assumptions destabilizes.

Recognizing this destabilization  
makes us aware why  
**“changing” culture is so anxiety provoking.**



# Change the Culture, Change the Game – Results Pyramid



“It’s really simple –

**experiences** shape beliefs,  
**beliefs** determine actions,  
and **actions** produce results,

all of which form  
the organizational culture

– and it’s happening in your organization  
every minute of every day.”

[www.partnersinleadership.com](http://www.partnersinleadership.com)

[www.doortraining.co.in](http://www.doortraining.co.in)

# Schein's 10 Step Process for Discovering Culture

- 1) Obtain leadership **commitment** to address the issue / problem
- 2) Identify and engage stakeholders in **self-assessment**
- 3) Create a **collaborative setting** where every voice is honored
- 4) Explain **purpose**
- 5) Understand how to think about culture – **present 3 levels**
- 6) Elicit description of **Artifacts** – Ask, “What is going on here?”
- 7) Identify **Espoused Values and Beliefs** – Ask, “What do we say we value and believe?”
- 8) Identify shared **Unconscious Assumptions** – Ask, “To what degree are artifacts consistent with our espoused values and beliefs? What unintended messages may we be sending?”
- 9) Identify **cultural aids and hindrances**. Given the problem, ask, “What **assets and barriers** exist?”
- 10) Make collaborative decisions on **next steps**.





# John Kotter's Eight-Step Process for Leading Change



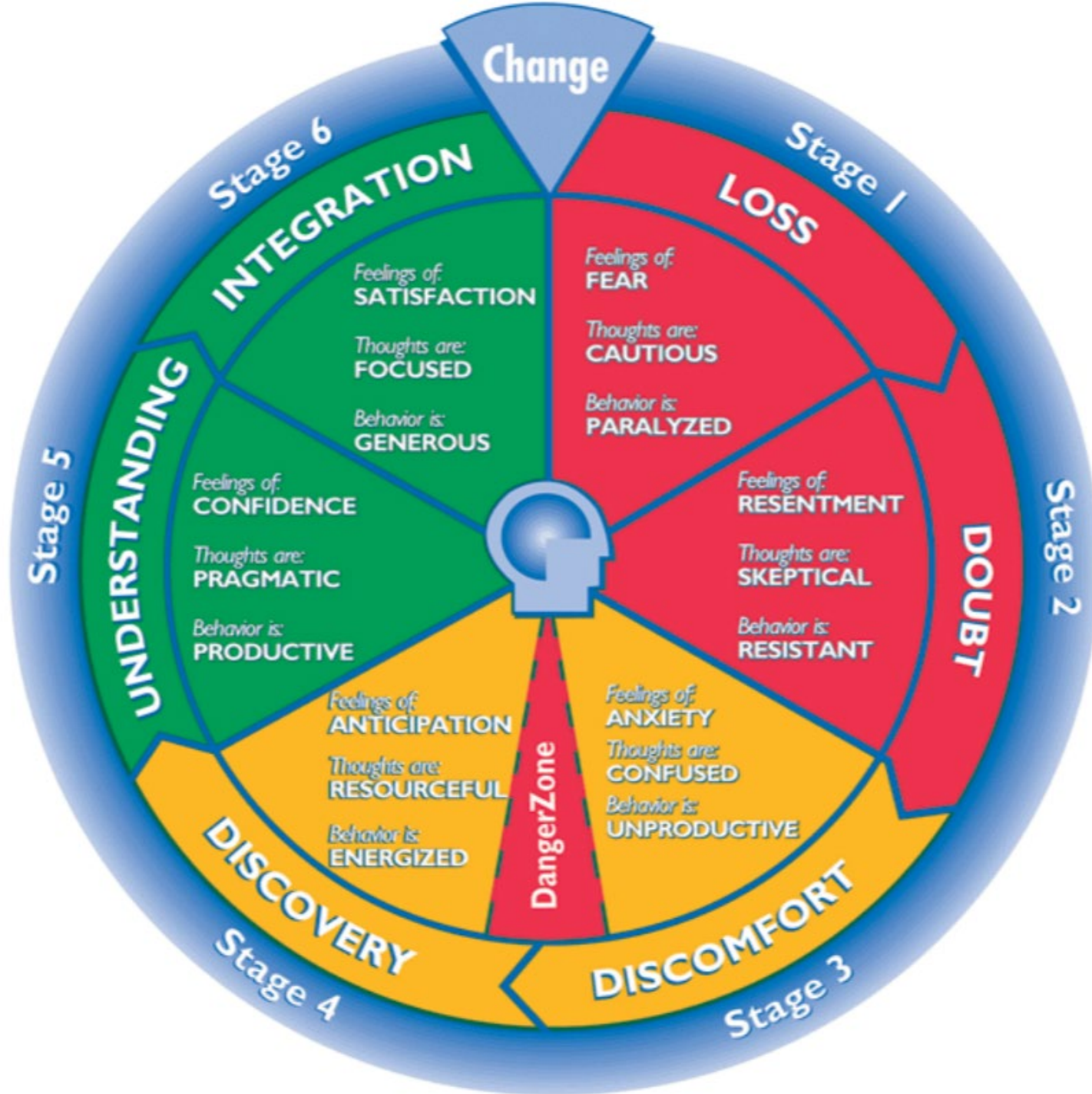
<https://www.kotterinc.com>

# Center for Creative Leadership – Nine Change Competencies

<b>1</b>	<b>Communicate</b> – to build / sustain commitment
<b>2</b>	<b>Collaborate</b> – bring people together to plan and execute the change
<b>3</b>	<b>Commit</b> – shift own beliefs, approaches, behaviors
<b>4</b>	<b>Initiate</b> – make the case for the change with a clear vision
<b>5</b>	<b>Strategize</b> – develop the change plan
<b>6</b>	<b>Execute</b> – implement and monitor the plan
<b>7</b>	<b>Support</b> – remove personal and professional barriers
<b>8</b>	<b>Sway</b> – gain support and involvement of key stakeholders and groups
<b>9</b>	<b>Learn</b> – gather and use feedback to make adjustments



# The Change Cycle



“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting for the old but on building the new.”

- Socrates

# Reflecting on Change Models

How are the models **similar**?

How are the models **different**?

What are **common components**?

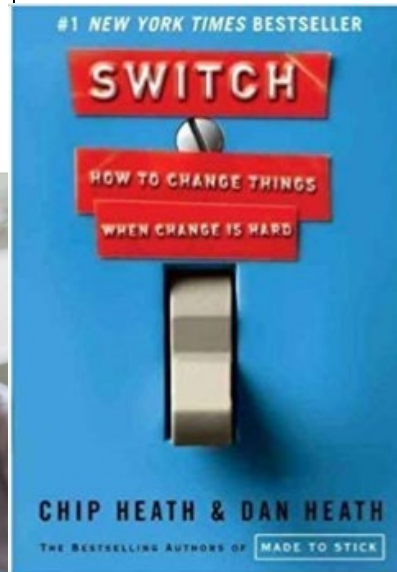
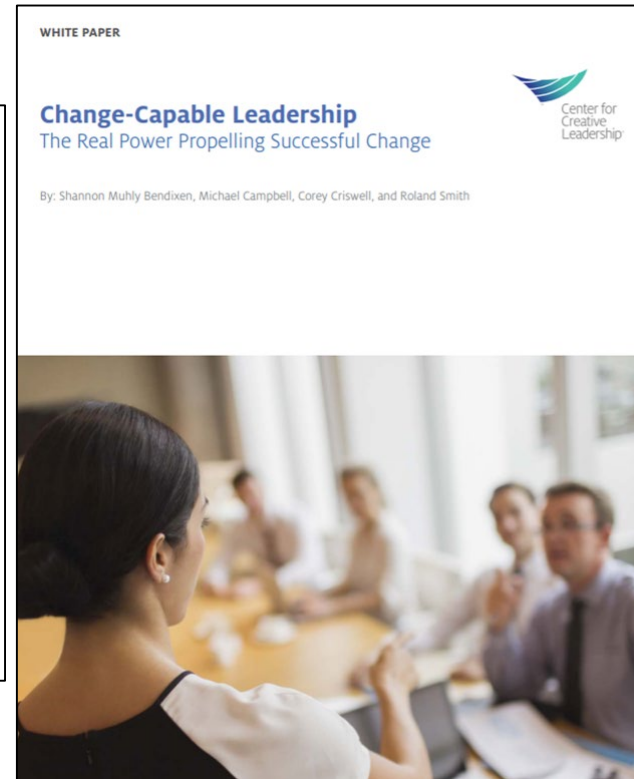
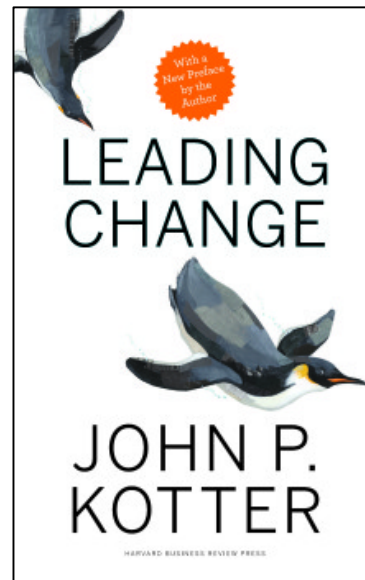
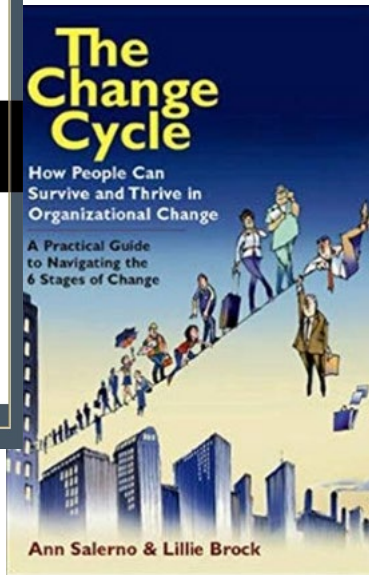
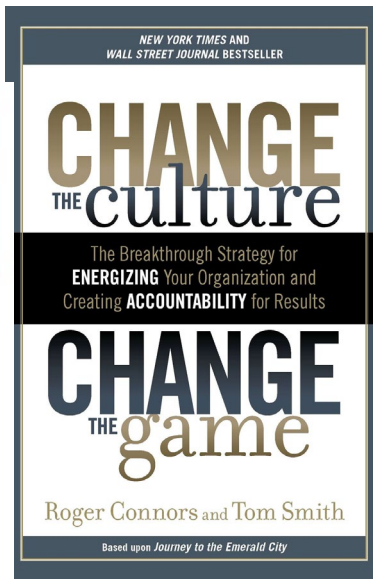
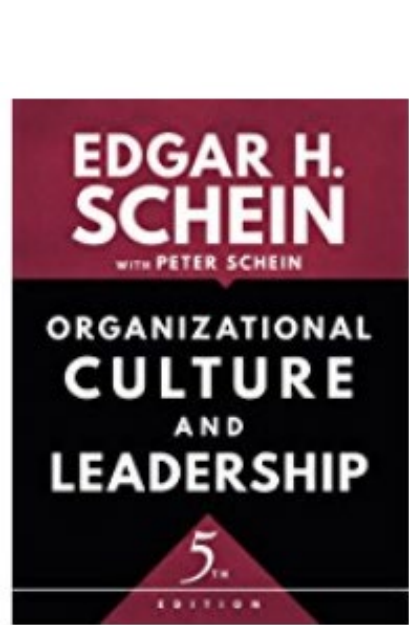
How does this **compare with your experience** of change?  
(personal and professional)

# Pause And Reflect: Use A Change Process

What can we learn from these change processes and models?



# Resources



[Change Leadership – A Guide for School Leaders](#) (MDE website)

# Additional Opportunities to learn more – Principal Leadership Specialist (PLS) support options

## Large-Scale Learning

Building foundational knowledge

Focus based upon theme of conference or request

Grounded in evidence-based resources

## Networks / Cohorts

Deep dive into one or more practices based on agreed upon needs of participants

Learn, Plan, Apply, Reflect cycles during regularly scheduled, ongoing sessions

Regional location

## Coaching / Mentoring

Contextualized, deep dive into one or more practices based on self-assessment of prioritized needs

Specific, personalized coaching and action plan

Regularly scheduled, ongoing sessions

- 1) A take-away from today's session
- 2) A lingering question





# Thank you!

Ann Mitchell, [ann.mitchell@state.mn.us](mailto:ann.mitchell@state.mn.us), 651-582-8290

Liz Vaught, [elizabeth.vaught@state.mn.us](mailto:elizabeth.vaught@state.mn.us)