

Guiding Coalition for Equity

Why A Guiding Coalition?

In Leading Change, John Kotter makes the case for convening a guiding coalition as a way to help lead and sustain change in an organization. The most influential and successful coalitions are those who wield power whether through title, knowledge, expertise, reputations or relationships.¹ Ideally, coalition members represent the diversity of key stakeholder groups within the school community, including students, parents, and community members and are those who can help move the work of the group forward. The Guiding Coalition for Equity is tasked with (1) assessing the organizational issues that impact the equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for students, and (2) making recommendations that will guide the strategic planning and implementation of change efforts to diminish and eliminate persistent equity gaps in the district.

A Working Team

The Guiding Coalition for Equity meets regularly to do the following:

1. Develop an equity lens throughout this work to better identify and address inequities and bias.
2. Collect and analyze district data (quantitative, qualitative, policies, procedures) to surface the equity gaps that exist.
3. Determine specific areas of focus (go slow to learn fast).
4. Conduct a root cause analysis to determine the ultimate cause(s) of the inequities.
5. Conduct research on best practices, initiatives, and efforts to diminish and eliminate the inequities.
6. Make recommendations to the Board that will guide the strategic planning and implementation of change efforts to diminish and eliminate persistent equity gaps within the district.
7. Monitor the effectiveness of the change efforts over time and determine next steps as needed.

A Vision for Equity

Defining equity for the district is a primary step in the process of creating and communicating a shared vision for equity. The process includes modeling the use of an equity lens and helping the district and community members develop an equity lens through the creation of Peer Networks. Peer networks are comprised of an easily accessible group of peers with whom you can regularly meet and communicate the work of the Guiding Coalition. Peer networks help move the work throughout the organization and community by replicating activities conducted during coalition meetings to develop an equity lens, and to open up conversations about perceptions and experiences with structural inequities within the school community and beyond.

Building Your Coalition

Selecting stakeholder membership for a Guiding Coalition is key to building a high-performing team, here are a few things to consider:

- Diversity matters: assembling a group of stakeholders with diverse perspectives, experiences, and roles lends credibility the group and creates opportunity for multiple perspectives to inform and shape the change efforts.
- Selection process: decide how members will be selected and be transparent about the process. Whether you are having people apply, asking for recommendations or making appointments, being clear about your process will establish credibility for the coalition and the change efforts they produce.

- Time management: be clear and upfront about meeting time, duration, and frequency. Consistent attendance affects the momentum, energy and productivity of the group.
- Communication plan: determine and capitalize on the opportunities coalition members have to talk about the work being done, solicit perceptions, and collect feedback. While a powerful coalition will help get the work off the ground, everyone in the school community needs to be invested and actively engaged.

¹ Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 1996.