

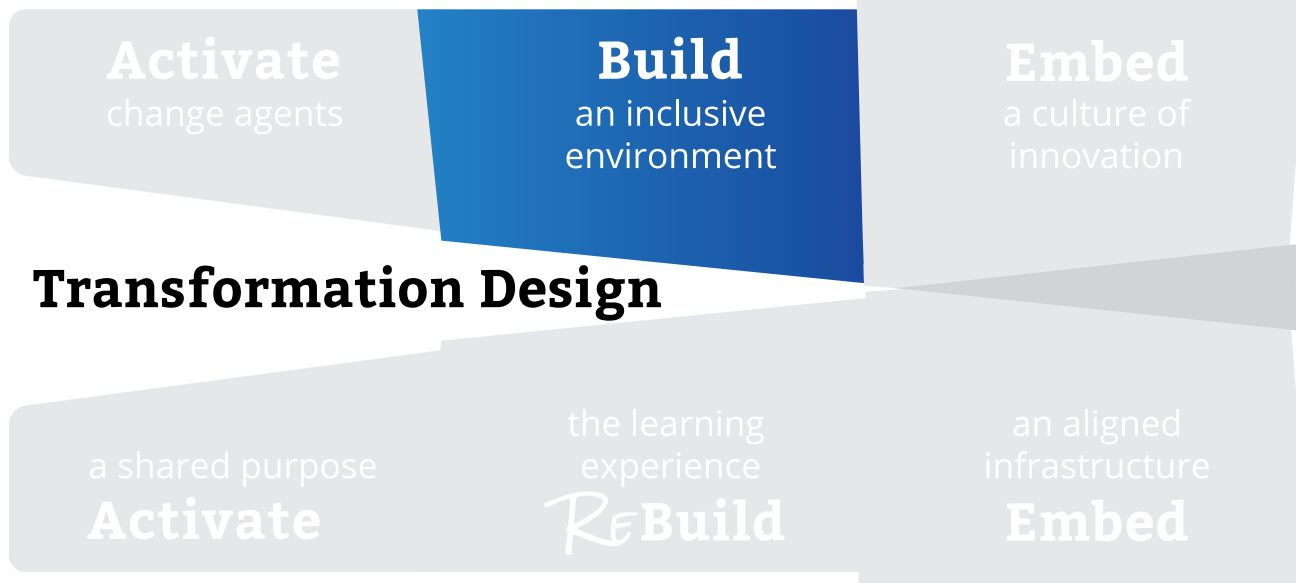


# Transformation Design Deep Dive Guide

## Distribute Leadership

The extent to which teams of diverse staff, students, and stakeholders lead various aspects of the transformation, empowered to make decisions and take action.

Transformation Design  
Core Practice



This Deep Dive Guide is an extension of the Transformation Design District Self-Assessment to help district communities move from reflection to action. For guidance on using this tool, visit [www.transformation-design.org](http://www.transformation-design.org) and download the [District Self-Assessment Guide](#).

**Why Distribute Leadership?**  
Distribute Leadership is one action district communities can take to Build an Inclusive Environment: Strengthening relationships among teachers, administrators, students, families, school board members, community and business leaders so our district has the foundation of trust that creates an environment supportive of change.

## Reflections from the Transformation Design District Self-Assessment (Discuss as a team.)

Reflect on the self-assessment findings about this action.

*What did your team discover about this action? What are your district's strengths, assets, and resources that support this action?*

## Questions to Consider (Reflect as a team.)

Use these questions to identify how this action shows up in your district community.

- How are (in)formal decision-making power, authority, and influence distributed across your district community? In what ways might systemic inequities contribute to an uneven distribution of leadership?
- How does your district culture support staff, students, and stakeholders to lead the learning transformation? Consider the role of supervision, performance evaluations, flexibility and risk-taking, community relations and family engagement, student voice, and other aspects of culture.
- Have your distributed leadership strategies yielded staff, students, and stakeholders with true agency in the learning transformation? How do you know?

*Notes from the team discussion about these questions:*

## The Big Idea (Complete independently.)

Review the following resources to better understand this action and why it is important.

- [Leading for Equity Framework](#), National Equity Project. Grounded in equity, complexity, and design, the framework in this brief overview document enables leaders to navigate the complex territory of equity challenges and develop the capacity to engage in purposeful leadership action.
- [Collaborative Leadership Practices](#) in the *Community Schools Playbook*, Partnership for the Future of Learning. Shared leadership for governance, coordination of services, and supporting constructive school/community relationships can extend beyond educators to include students, families, members of the community, local organizations, government, and universities. The playbook offers policy principles and examples, characteristics of high-quality implementation, and implementation resources.
- [Transforming Schools: How Distributed Leadership Can Create More High-Performing Schools](#), Bain & Company (2016). This report presents the challenge when leadership—defined as end-to-end responsibility for improving teaching and learning—falls on just one or two people, and the opportunity that distributed leadership offers. The authors also describe five best practices in successful schools.
- [How Districts Can Empower Teachers to Lead Change](#), John Watkins, in the *Education Week Learning Deeply* Blog (2018). This article presents a process for iterative innovation when groups of interested educators connect in communities of practice to develop instructional approaches while district administrators notice, name, and support their efforts.
- [Interactive Planning Guide for Distributed Leadership](#), Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This guide is for districts interested in using distributed leadership approaches to help improve the quality of feedback and instruction in schools. It includes four steps: Cultural Readiness, Approaches (see the non-evaluative approaches on p. 6-8), Implementation Readiness, and Implementation Planning.

*What new ideas from the Big Idea resources seem most exciting for your community? What strengths do they reveal about your district? What opportunities would you like to explore more deeply?*

## District Artifacts (Complete independently.)

Review the following artifacts from leading districts to benchmark the Transformation Design action in your own district and to spark new ideas.

### Kettle Moraine School District

- [\*Distributive Leadership in Practice\*](#). This 3½-minute video conveys how teacher-leaders are empowered to lead innovative efforts in the district. In this model, leaders emerge rather than being selected.

### Vista Unified School District

- ["Org Chart" for Vista Innovation and Design Academy \(VIDA\)](#). The organizational chart for this middle school adopts the work of Gordon MacKenzie to replace the typical top-down pyramid structure with a peach tree. The tree represents the organic nature of leadership and the role of every individual in the school's growth.

### Thrive Public Schools and Alliance College-Ready Public Schools

- [10 Principles to Move Your School toward Distributive Leadership](#), Nicole Assisi on the NGLC Blog (2015). A challenge of moving to a distributive leadership model is giving up control. Thrive's founder offers concrete principles to make this sometimes difficult shift in mindset.
- [K-12 Roundup of Tools and Resources: Distributed Leadership](#), NGLC (2015). This practitioner's guide provides tools and information from Thrive Public Schools and Alliance College-Ready Public Schools on how to establish or strengthen systems of distributed leadership.

*Which artifacts inspired you? Why?*

*What do these artifacts reveal about how the districts distribute leadership—that is, empower teams to make decisions and take action to transform learning?*

*What do these examples illuminate about your own district's work?*

## A Common Understanding

(Discuss as a team.)

Gather as a team to develop a common understanding about this action and why it is important. Share insights and inspirations gained from your independent study of Big Idea resources and District Artifacts. Challenge yourselves to think big and be bold as you take on this action in your district.

*What are the key takeaways to keep in mind as you plan?*



## Action Planning

(Complete as a team.)

Developing this Transformation Design action into common practice across your district community can advance your learning transformation and help you better serve your students, family, and local community. Use the structure below to create a plan to strengthen use of this action by your district community.

*What has your district already done? (Refer to your responses to [Questions to Consider](#) earlier.)*

*What needs further development? Which of these are key levers that, if they were strengthened, would significantly advance your district's learning transformation?*

*What is your goal for moving forward? What do you want to accomplish?*

Assign people to take action with clear deadlines and deliverables (e.g., by the end of the month, the communications director and a parent representative on the core team will create a prototype of a community newsletter). These Action Steps are an opportunity to “walk the talk” of the change you are trying to create in your district: consider how team members will own these steps and how to invite stakeholders to participate!!

Action Steps	Timeline	People Responsible	Communication Plan (Listen & Share)	Success Criteria
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## Progress Tracking

Set a date to reconvene to review progress on the Action Steps. Use a project management tool or another way to collectively track progress between meetings.

*Date to review progress:*

*Other Notes:*



*Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) is a nonprofit initiative that empowers educators and communities to reimagine and transform the student learning experience, cultivating academics, life skills, wellness, and citizenship so that students can thrive in a world of rapid change.*

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