Data Governance Change Management Case Study

Pain Point: Define commonly used data-related term

Paly West Unified School District (PWUSD) has just begun implementing the Ed-Fi toolset. The district has some policies and procedures around how data are collected, stored, shared, and the like, but they are not uniformly executed and there are frequently data issues. Chief among those issues is the quality of the data they collect which makes it hard to use the data for any sort of meaningful analysis. The district superintendent, Dr. Braverman, had championed implementing Ed-Fi so that they could make better data-driven decisions in real time, particularly the teachers. But she is worried that this considerable investment of time and money will be for nothing if she can't rely on the quality of those data. She has charged the newly appointed Director of Policy, Jake Sanders, to spearhead a data governance committee.

Being new to PWUSD, Jake was eager to lead this new work. His first step was to invite all senior leaders to the kickoff meeting. The meeting agenda included:

- Explaining what data governance is,
- Sharing how it can help the entire district,
- Discussing the role of each member of the committee, and
- Identifying data-related pain points each person faced.

He also sent out some pre-reading so everyone had a basic knowledge of data governance. With the endorsement of the data governance work by Dr. Braverman, all invitees attended the kick-off meeting. During the first meeting, subcommittees were assigned and began tackling their respective projects. One of those subcommittees was the Common Terms Subcommittee, which was charged with defining commonly used data-related terms under Jake's leadership.

The Common Terms Subcommittee encountered a number of challenges. Members were attending meetings without any advanced preparation and failed to complete their assigned action items in a timely manner. Over time some members didn't show up to meetings or meetings were rescheduled because team members had conflicts on their schedules.

As Common Terms Subcommittee efforts progressed, meeting attendance, preparedness, and engagement continued to stagnate. And as a result the committee struggled to deliver a set of definitions for commonly used data-related terms to the full committee to review by the deadline on the data governance committee's project plan. This delay caused other subcommittees with dependent workstreams to fall behind on their deadlines as well. Dr. Braverman asked Jake to investigate what

was causing the conflicts and slow progress. Jake reached out to each committee member individually to ask them how they thought the subcommittees work was going and what issues they might be facing.

Here is what Jake heard from the subcommittee members:

- Four of the six members had been told by their supervisors that various other projects took priority over data governance.
- All members seemed generally overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and could not articulate the objectives of the work. Furthermore, they agreed that they were not in agreement on many of the key common terms.
- Two members confessed that they did not think they were the right representatives for the subcommittee, but they were unable to think of an appropriate person to replace them on the subcommittee.
- Two members questioned if the common terms created would actually be read and used. They felt that maybe this was busy work that would quickly get shelved.
- One member of the team was very enthusiastic about the work but felt stressed that each meeting just repeated the agenda of the last because they did not progress since the last meeting.

Discussion Questions

Which of these nine change management principles do you think could apply to this situation and why? You can select more than one.

- o Finding the Bright Spots
- o Script the Critical Moves
- o Point to the Destination
- o Find the Feeling
- o Shrink the Change
- o Grow Your People
- o Tweak the Environment
- o Build Habits
- o Rally the Herd

After spending a day talking about data governance, how would you articulate the reason why the Common Terms Subcommittee is important? What is the "why" for this work?

What are two or three actions you would suggest Dr. Braverman and Jake take to help put the subcommittee back on track?