



Phase-In Core Principles

This document should serve as a guide for districts interested in redesigning a school and launching the new option gradually over time. New schools opened in districts around the country using the phase-in approach have been significantly more impactful than attempts to revamp the entire school simultaneously. We have supported some successful whole school launches but only when there is a new and highly skilled leadership team in place to lead the redesign efforts. The text below helps to explain how and why the development of a new school one grade at a time enables the most dramatic school improvement possible.

THEORY OF ACTION

When we give a talented school leader a small school community, an evidence-based school model, mission-aligned teachers, and the time to focus on the intentional phase in of the new school, we're able to create a great school that will sustain long into the future.

By building a school community one grade at a time, new school leaders have the opportunity to set high expectations and create a school culture unencumbered by what had taken place in the school building previously. The school builds around incoming grades allowing new students and a reconstituted staff to create a new culture of high expectations. Staff should apply to work in the new school with a full awareness of the intentions and demands of the new school's approach. The new school leader will be solely responsible for the new grades, and should not have any (or extremely limited) responsibilities managing the phase out grades. Below are more detailed descriptions of concrete actions critical to supporting the successful launch of a new school:

1

Restaff in the phase in grades: teachers from the phase out, or existing school can apply to work in the new school, but a clear set of hiring criteria and expectations for working in the new school should be used to select the new school staff. Ideally, the staff of the new school are excited to be there and believe in the mission and vision of the school as advertised by the new school leader. If staff are told they will be working in the new school without being given information or choice there is potential that they will undermine the mission of the school from the outset.

2

Create a discrete teaching staff and student body in the new/redesigned school: Teachers in the new school should work exclusively with new school students to the greatest extent possible. Establishing common expectations and routines across the new school classrooms requires consistency that can be jeopardized by having teachers work with students who are not immersed in the new school culture all day, every day. The slow watering down of expectations is likely to gradually drag the new school expectations back to those they were designed to replace.

3

Maximize the leader's time and attention on the new school grade(s): The new school will be led by a Principal whose sole responsibility is to the new school and the phase in grades. The principal of the new school/phase in grades should spend the vast majority of their time working with their teachers and their students to ensure fidelity of the model and with a focus on shared understanding of the desired school culture in action. If there is a circumstance in which the Principal is needed as the supervisor of record for the phase out school as well, the phase out grades should be managed by experienced administrators who report to someone other than the new school principal. The new school principal and the administrators in charge of the other grades in the building should meet regularly as a building council to make sure that the building is running smoothly, but they should do so as peers. If the new school principal is additionally responsible for other grades in the school they will likely lose their orientation as the new school principal and gradually drift into being the principal for the whole building. To support a staffing model that allows for a Principal to solely focus on the new school, funding typically provides up to \$250,000 towards school instructional leader positions.

4

The shared facility/campus model: If a shared facility is required, meaning a new, or empty building is not available for the new school to grow into, then the new school should be given as coherent and discrete a space in the building as possible. There will be some shared spaces such as the cafeteria, gym, or library, but ideally the new school can be housed in a wing, or a set of contiguous classrooms so the new school students have the experience of being in a different school. If the new school is intermingled with classes from other grades it will be significantly more difficult to establish a distinct and high performing culture with new school students. To support facility upgrades, funding typically provides up to \$75,000 for improvements to the school space.

Phase-In Slow Grow Core Principles

DESCRIPTION OF SLOW GROW STRUCTURE BY SCHOOL LEVEL

High School

New high schools start with a 9th grade as the foundation of the new school, with rising 10-12 grades constituting the phase out. The new school adds a single grade a year as new 9th graders are recruited, and hires new staff to serve the rising 9th grade. In the second year the new school is grades 9 and 10, while the phase out is grades 11 and 12. The third year the new school is grades 9-11 while the phase out is grade 12. In the 4th year the new school is “at scale”, covering grades 9-12.

Middle School

New middle schools start with a 6th grade as the foundation of the new school, with rising 7th and 8th grades constituting the phase out. The next year the 6th and 7th grade are new school grades, and the 8th grade is the phase out. In the third year the new school is “at scale” meaning all students and staff are part of the new school culture.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
New School	6	6-7	6-8
Phase Out	7-8	8	

6-12 Model

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New School	6, 9	6-7, 9-10	6-11	6-12
Phase Out	7-8, 10-12	8, 11-12	12	

K-8 Model

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New School	K-1, 6	K-2, 6-7	K-3, 6-8	K-4, 6-8	K-8
Phase Out	2-5, 7-8	3-5, 8	4-5	5	

Elementary School

New elementary schools start with the lower grades and build up to fill the ES over time. In year one the new school starts with Pre-k and K, (with potential to add grade 1 if a larger starting student body is required). Grades 2-5 constitute the phase out and are replaced one grade a year as the new school grows over time.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
New School	Pre-K - K	Pre-K - 1	Pre-K - 2	Pre-K - 3	Pre-K - 4	Pre-K - 5
Phase Out	1-5	2-5	3-5	4-5	5	

OR

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New School	Pre-K - 1	Pre-K - 2	Pre-K - 3	Pre-K - 4	Pre-K - 5
Phase Out	2-5	3-5	4-5	5	