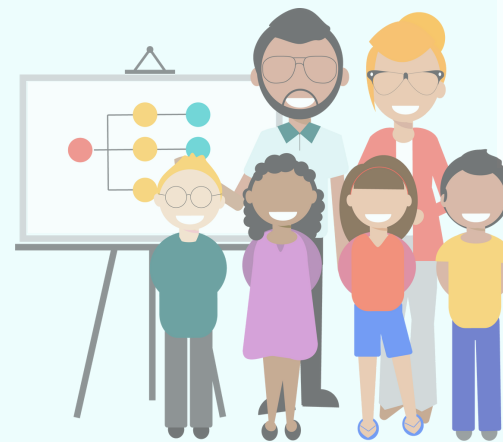
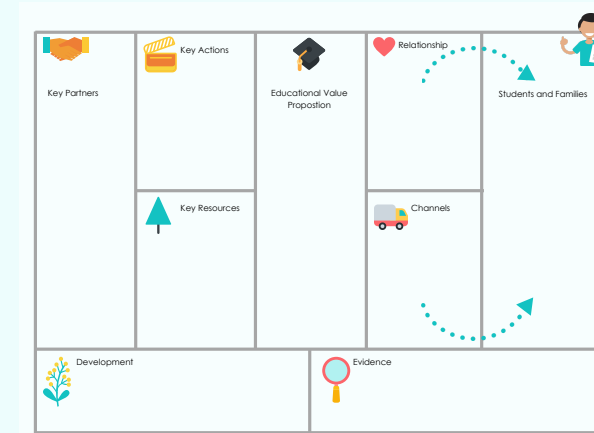


9 Keys to a Connected Strategy

A Map for Planning and Presentation

Written by
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dot it

When it comes to strategic planning, are you searching for ways to connect all the dots?

yes

no

Are you constantly thinking about how to create more value for your students and their families, or how to improve instruction in your school or district?


yes

no

Are you trying to find better, more innovative ways of teaching and learning to replace old and outdated ones?

yes

no

If you answered  to any of these questions, welcome!

You now have a handbook for educators who are striving to meet the new ESSA requirements through high expectations, empathy, equity, efficacy and evidence.

It's a book for the next shift in educational value.

Today, many kinds of innovations in education are emerging. Entirely new expectations, research, policies, and technologies are entering our schools, while others are fading away.

New service and product providers are challenging the old stand-bys, some of whom are working in warp-speed to recreate or update their products and services.

How do you imagine your school or district might look 5-10 years from now? Will you be among the exemplary schools who embraced the new direction? Will you face serious challenges because your strategy didn't take you where you needed to go?

This book will give you insight into strategies you should consider now. You've probably already noticed, this isn't your typical how-to book. It is designed to convey the essentials of what you need to think about now, quickly, simply, and visually. It is designed as a practical guide that is also a pleasure to use.

Strategic planning has been around for a long time. But since the Every Student Succeeds Act and the new standards were put into place, the focus and energy in our plans is changing. It is time for strategic planning that methodically addresses these new expectations.

Ultimately, education is about creating value for our communities, our economy, and our country. It is about preparing your students with the knowledge and skills they need to make their unique contributions to the world in the digital age.

But how do you systematically begin to talk about new ways, question old ones, and plan for the future?

We studied organizational design and development for over 10 years. Our experiences include learning at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in their Change Leadership Lab and in their program for New and Aspiring Leaders and in the Learning Forward Academy. We have led change initiatives in schools and districts across the United States, including effective implementation of RTI and MTSS.

We believe that demonstration is better than explanation, so we adapted the Strategy Map from Business Model Generation. We hope you find it helpful and that it brings you happiness.

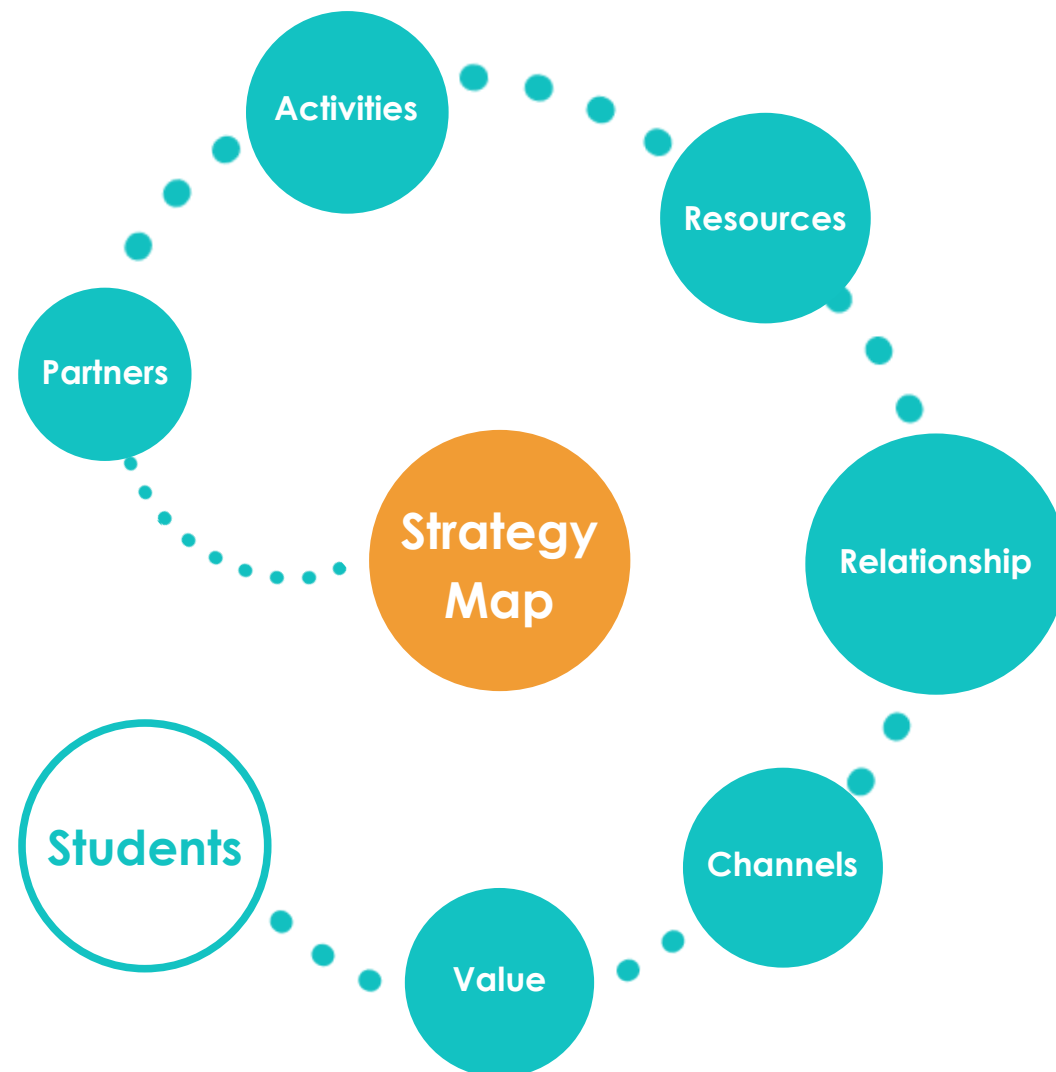


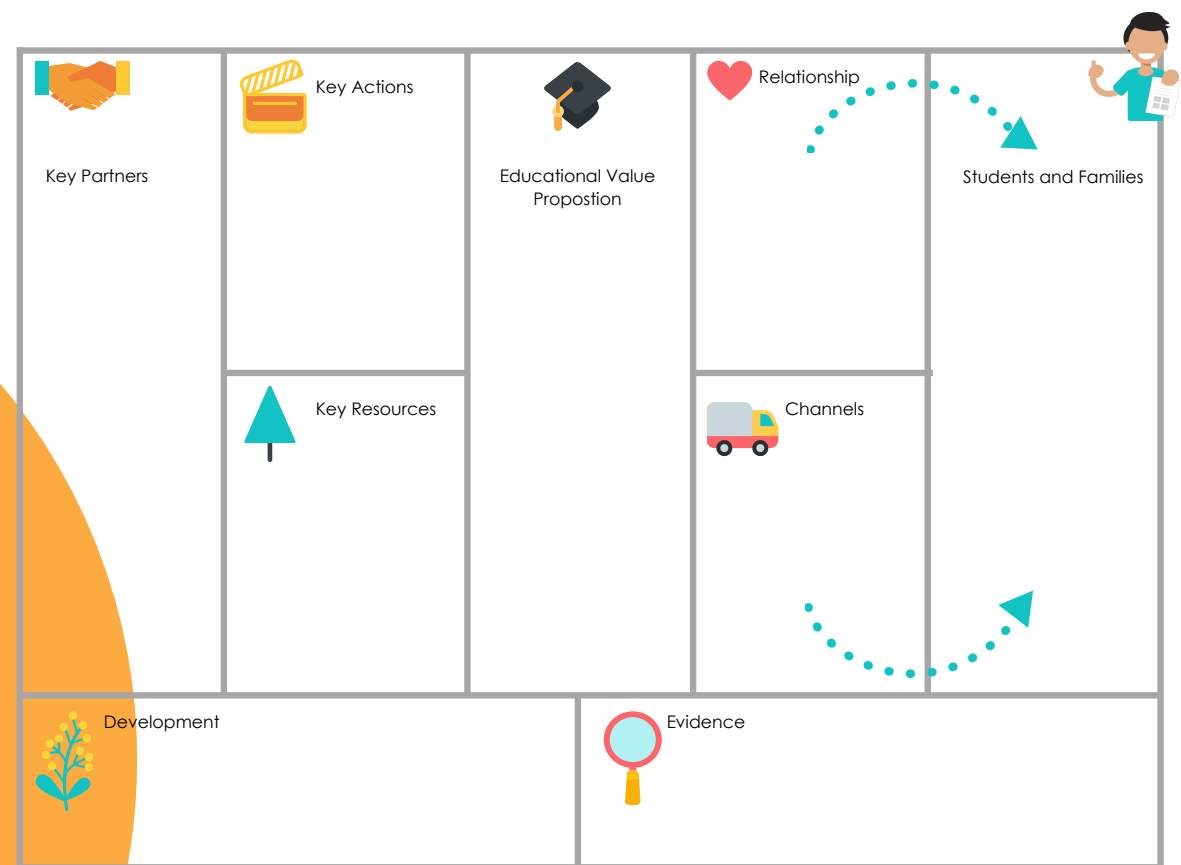
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Strategy

The Strategy Map

A common language for developing, defining, and describing an empathetic, equitable, and effective strategic plan



What is strategy?

a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim

Why Your Strategy Matters

Your plan is the foundation of your school's collective efficacy.

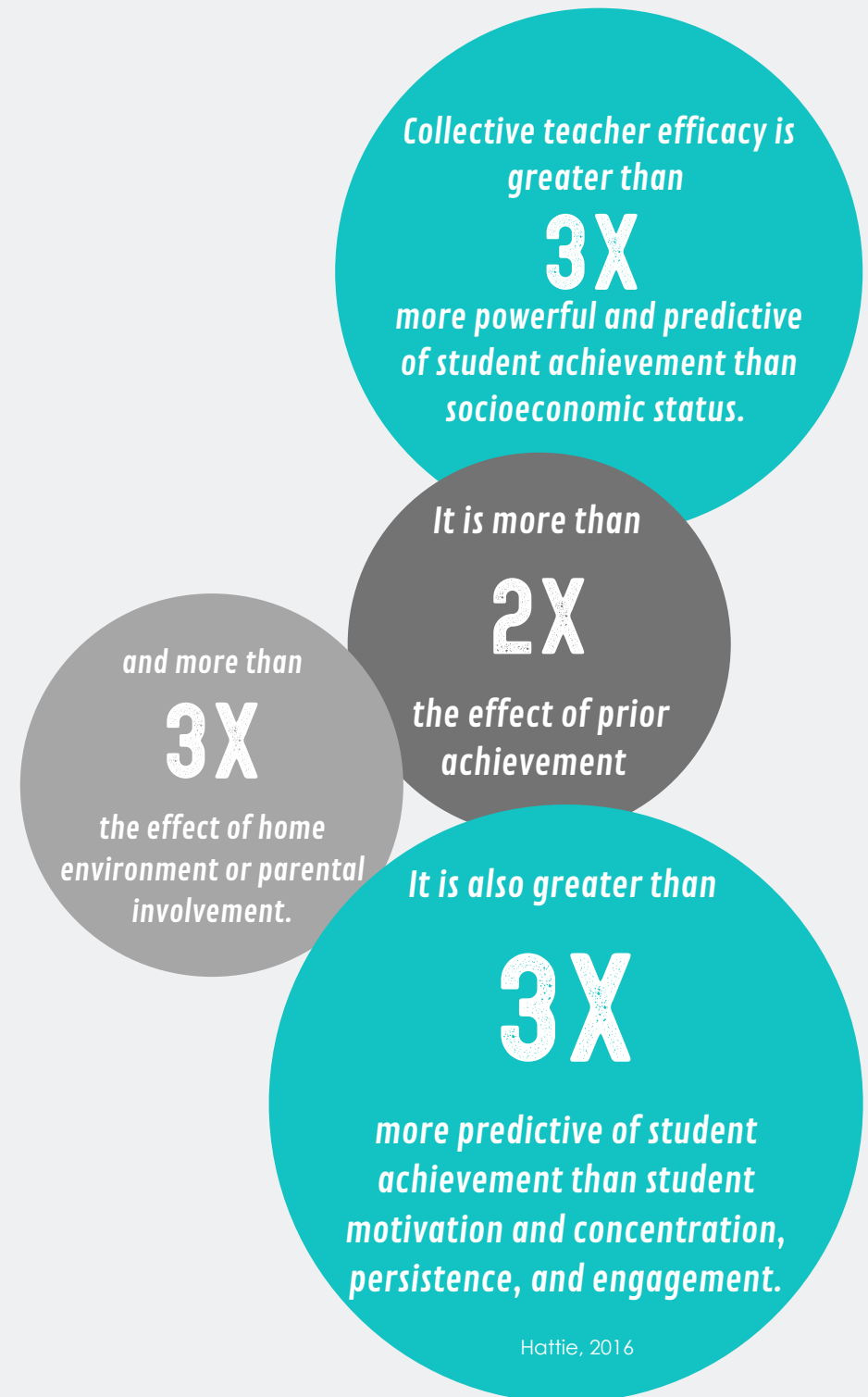
It is your channel for communicating your belief in the ability of your team.

It ensures that the educational service you have to offer is given in the best possible way to the people who need it.

It inspires your team so that they, in turn, can be sources of inspiration for your students and their families.

Your Strategic Plan

describes the rationale for how your district or school creates, delivers, and captures its educational value.



Collective Efficacy and Common Language

As you collaborate with your team on your strategic plan for next year, it's a good idea to arrive at a common understanding of what your strategic plan actually is. You need a strategic plan that everyone understands and that facilitates common ideas, common language, and common practices. You need to start from the same point and talk about the same things. The challenge is that your plan must be simple, relevant, and clear, while not oversimplifying the complexities of the problems your plan addresses. Think of your plan as the shared common language that allows you as the leader to describe and implement the initiatives that meet the new requirements under ESSA.

On the following pages, we will walk you through a process for describing and designing your plan. You can use the Strategy Map as a common language that makes it easier to create alternatives and challenge assumptions safely and successfully.

We believe your strategy works best when it connects 9 keys that show the logic of how you will deliver educational value to your students, their families, and the community.

"When educators share a sense of collective efficacy, school cultures tend to be characterized by beliefs that reflect

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

for student success."

A

SHARED LANGUAGE

that represents a focus on student learning as opposed to instructional compliance often emerges.

Hattie, 2018

The 9 Keys



STUDENTS

For whom are you creating value?



VALUE

What value do you deliver to your students and families?



CHANNELS

How are you planning to reach students and their families?



RELATIONSHIP

What type of relationship does your school want to have with its community?



RESOURCES

What resources do your value propositions require?



ACTIONS

What are the most important things you need to do to implement your plan and make it a success?



PARTNERS

Who are your key partners? How are they providing services and products to support your plan?



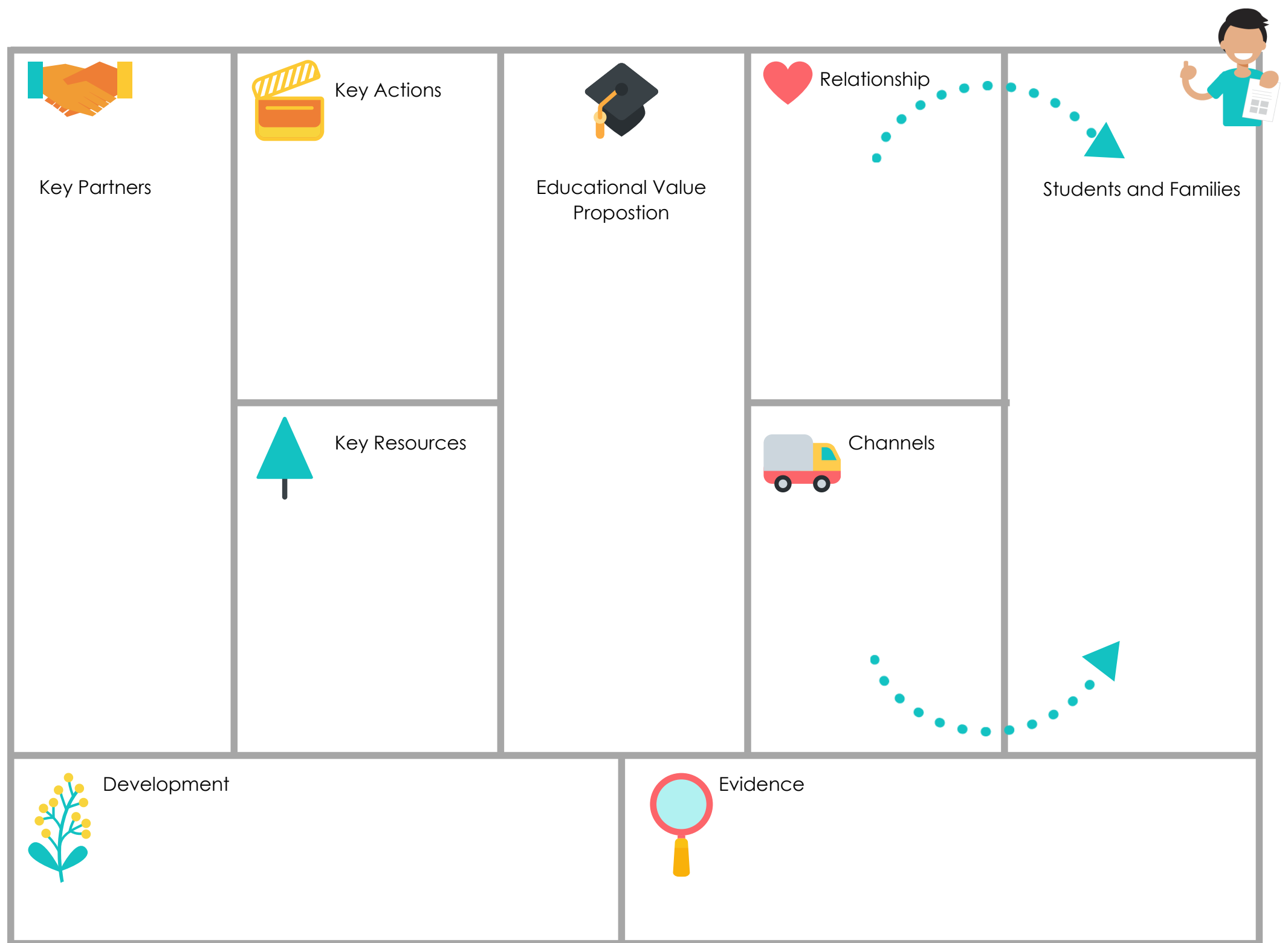
DEVELOPMENT

In order to make your plan a success, what changes might you need to make?



EVIDENCE

Evidence is the driver of efficacy. What will you collect to evaluate your plan?





Students & Families

For whom are you creating value? What are the demographic trends and how are they impacting your classrooms? Who may need special attention in your school or district?

The Compelling WHY

Students are at the heart of any strategic plan.

In order to better serve them, consider the common needs, and common behaviors of each subgroup.

Schools are not like businesses. We can't choose to serve some and not others. You have to provide access for all.

Your strategic plan should be designed around serving the unique students and families in your setting.

When you think about your subgroups, consider these ideas:

- Their needs require and justify a distinct approach. What can you do to make sure these needs are met?
- They are reached through different communication channels. What can you do to facilitate communication with all your subgroups?
- They require different kinds of relationships. What types of relationships will serve them best?
- They have different experiences or expectations. Which experiences and expectations are influencing their learning? How could you turn these experiences and expectations into opportunities?
- They have unique perspectives and talents to share. How can you engage them? How might they enhance learning in your classrooms?



Value Proposition

What value do you deliver to your students and families? What needs are you satisfying? What problems are you helping them solve? What initiatives, programs, and services are you offering?

The Compelling WHY

The Educational Value Proposition describes how you will solve a problem or meet the needs of your community.

Each proposition you make consists of the initiatives, programs, and services that connect to specific student strengths and needs.

In education, we tend to underwhelm overwhelming problems. Each value proposition should connect at least 4-6 of the 9 keys to be considered a successful strategy.

Performance

Improving performance is usually the main focus of how schools create educational value. Chances are, you already have strategies to offer this value. Look at your choices carefully and make sure that your strategy will result in the learning outcomes you promise.

Newness

How are you keeping up with the latest research and policies in education? This might be technology related, but it doesn't have to be.

Personalization

Tailoring curriculum and instruction for the needs of individual students is another way to create value. For example, the MTSS framework allows for personalized instruction while still engaging everyone in a common general curriculum.

Curriculum Design

Based on the needs of your students and their families, your district or school may take a distinct approach to curriculum or instructional design.

Accessibility

Making information and learning more accessible to families who previously lacked access is another way to create value. This can result from a new communication or meeting structure, an updated technology, or a more welcoming or safer environment.

Convenience

Making the educational experience more convenient for families and students can also add value. A 1:1 initiative, assignment videos and downloads, considerate conferencing times, are some ways to make learning more convenient for your students and their families.



Delivery Channels

How are you planning to reach students and their families? How are you reaching them now? Which ones are working best?

The Compelling WHY

Finding the right channels for how your students and families want to be reached is crucial in bringing your education value proposition to your community.

Delivery channels can be direct and indirect. Find the right balance and integrate your channels to raise awareness and give opportunities for feedback.

Actively promote participation in programs and initiatives and access to ongoing support.

Channels have five phases. Some channels will work for one phase and others could cover most or all of them.

channel types	channel phases				
	Awareness	Feedback	Participation	Delivery	Support
	How will you make students and families aware of your initiatives, programs, and services?	How are you planning to give them opportunities to evaluate how you are doing?	How will you provide access to opportunities to participate in programs and services you offer?	Beside face to face interaction, how could programs and services be delivered to them?	How will you provide students and families with ongoing support?
social media					
website					
owned platforms					
meetings					
events					



Relationships

What type of relationship does your school or district have with your community? What type of relationship do your families expect? Which ones have you established? How do they align with your strategic plan?

The Compelling WHY

Schools and districts should clarify the type of relationship they want to have with their community.

The way you describe your relationship aspirations can have a significant influence on how your students, your families, and the greater community perceive and experience the value you are providing.

Remember Maya Angelou's famous quote:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Personal Assistance

This relationship is based on human interaction with a real person who can provide help. Consider sharing information with families and students about who to contact about what, when, and how. Remember to include your front office staff in how you will implement your value proposition.

Automated Services

This type of relationship is a bit more sophisticated. Examples are web-based student portals that are personalized for individual needs and automated emails for school announcements.

Online Communities

Many schools maintain online communities that allow families and staff to exchange knowledge and solve problems. These communities can help schools better understand their students and their families.

Co Creation

More schools are moving beyond the traditional education provider relationship to co-create value with students and families. Schools are inviting students to grade level planning meetings, and giving PTAs the opportunity to weigh in on curricular issues rather than focusing only on fund-raising.



Resources

What resources do your educational value propositions require? What about your delivery channels? Your relationships? Which curriculum, instruction, programs, and assessments will best serve your purposes? What is the best way to engage the people you have? Do you need others?

The Compelling WHY

For any strategy to be successful, it must have resources.

Resources make your educational value proposition viable and sustainable.

Different strategies require different resources.

One of the biggest challenges we see in education is "video that does not match the audio".

In other words, the resources you are actually using are a good demonstration of your value proposition in action.



Human

Human resources are your most crucial asset. Your educational value proposition relies heavily on your people. Their expertise and experience is the foundation of your educational value proposition.



Physical Environment

Does your school itself align with your value propositions? Do you have the infrastructure and the technology to implement your plan?



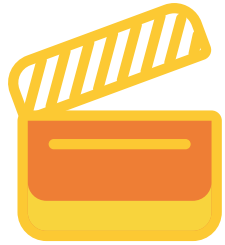
Knowledge

Do you have the curriculum, programming and instructional expertise you need? How are you developing and distributing your school's intellectual resources?



Financial

Where is the funding coming from? What sources of revenue, allocations, and grants will fund your plan?



Actions

What are the most important things you need to do to implement your plan and make it a success?
What actions and interactions need to be scheduled and communicated?

The Compelling WHY

Planning your strategy is great, but without execution your strategy is pretty useless.

Like resources, actions are required to implement your value proposition, your delivery channels, and your community relationships.

Actions are another way that your strategy becomes reality.

Presentation, Protocols, and Production

What do you need to design or make to implement your plan? Are there research based protocols, templates, and tools you can use to support you plan? What actions will need to be taken to present your value proposition, delivery channels, and relationships?

Problem Solving

How will you manage your plan? What problem solving activities will you put in place to monitor your progress and adapt along the way? What about training and learning communities? What actions could they take to help your plan succeed?

Platforms

Which technologies will you require or recommend for your people to use? How do these platforms relate to your plan and provide ROI? How do they work together? Are people clear about which platforms serve which purposes?



Partners

Who are your key partners? Who are your suppliers? Which resources are they providing? Which key services and activities do they help you perform?

The Compelling WHY

Schools and districts forge partnerships with external providers for many reasons.

These partnerships can be fruitful and long-lasting or a flash in the pan.

Schools and districts should foster alliances with providers who

- optimize their strategic plans
- reduce risks
- help them build capacity and resources
- support their key activities.

Do you have a partner who helps you

develop your plan?

yes

no

mitigate risks or uncertainty?

yes

no

build capacity?

yes

no

support your key activities?

yes

no

Provider

How They Help

We need partners who can help us...



Development

What is the current knowledge, aspiration, skills, attitudes and practices of your staff? In order to make your plan a success, what changes, beginning with your own, might you need to make?

The Compelling WHY

Most people are less interested in the how-to when they don't know the WHY. They don't want to know about your next big thing...they want to know how it will make things better for THEM.

This is not selfishness. It is not natural to expect people to act in conflict with their own self interest. The key is to align the interest of your school or district with the interests of the individual people in it.

Describing the shift clearly helps people see the big picture of where you are and where you are taking them next.

Our **knowledge** needs to grow

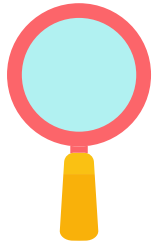
Our **aspiration** needs to grow

Our **skills** need to grow

Our **attitudes** need to grow

Our **practices** need to grow

from  to



Evidence

You likely have a list from your state or district about what types of evidence to gather for evaluating your plans. Here are 5 Phases to consider as you decide which pieces of evidence to capture at which phase of your plan.

5 Phases of Evidence

Phase 1: Reactions

Capture evidence of participant reactions to learning experiences and events. Ask people if they felt their time was well spent. Was the platform or setting comfortable for them? Was the information relevant and useful? Use open-ended questions in surveys or comment boxes.

Phase 2: Adult Learning

This type of evidence needs to be gathered over time. As people engage in learning, use pre and post assessments or surveys and capture evidence of completion of courses and attendance at events.

Phase 3: Organizational Capacity

Ask people if they feel the learning is aligned to your mission and values. Was there enough time and were there enough resources? Consider conducting some interviews with protocols to gather this evidence.

Phase 4: Levels of Use

To what degree are people using the new knowledge and skills? Are they getting started or are they experiencing organizational or technical barriers? Direct observation and interviews are a good way to gather this evidence, provided they are conducted in the spirit of learning.

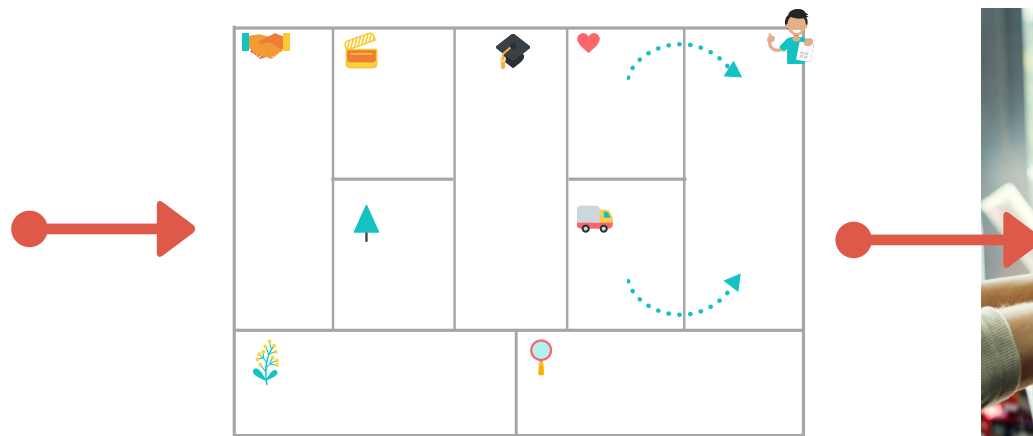
Phase 5: Student Learning Outcomes

How will you measure the impact of your plan on students and families? How will you use evidence from high stakes assessments? What about classroom work and portfolios? Will you use student surveys to measure student self efficacy and how students perceive their learning experience? Will attendance or disciplinary records be helpful evidence for your particular plan?

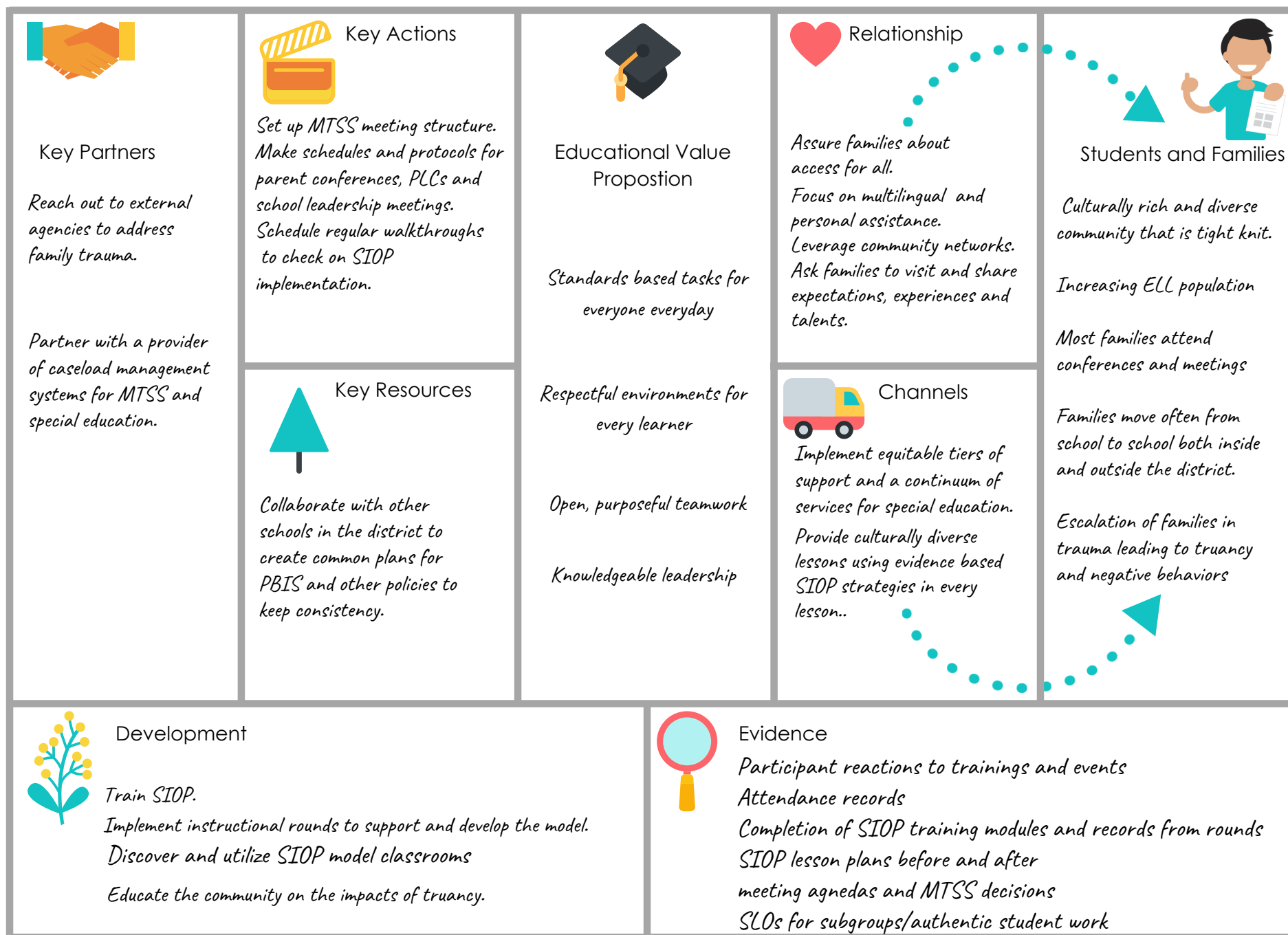
Remember to consider your families and their feedback about the home to school connections as well.

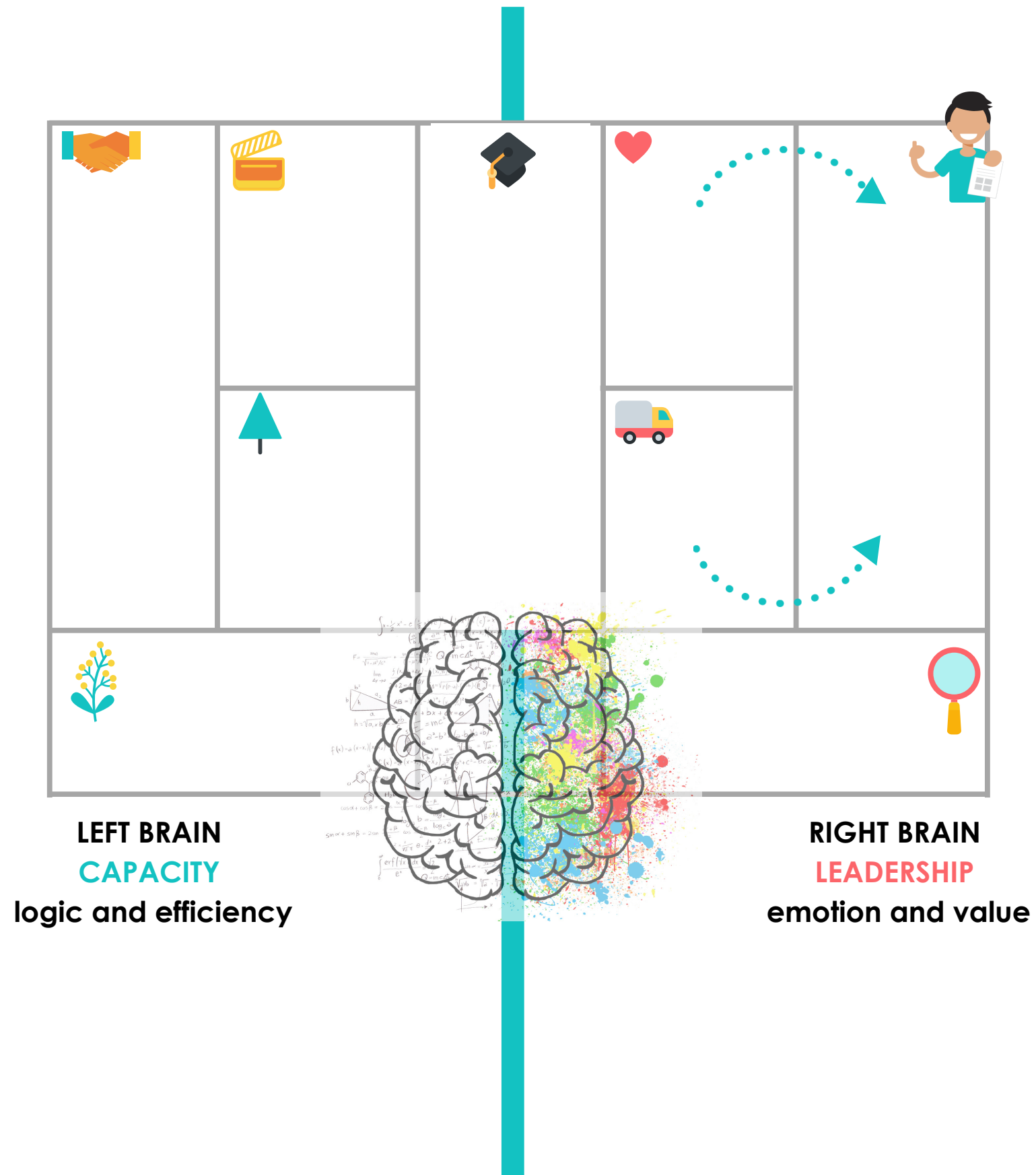


The 9 Dot Strategy forms the foundation for a hands-on planning tool that fosters creative and critical thinking and leads to a purposeful strategic plan you can clearly communicate to everyone.



Example





Suggestions for using the Map

Draft

Start by using the map to brainstorm ideas, sketch out solutions, and get familiar with the components.



Collaborate

Make a big poster version and get everyone working together with post-it notes. Color coding notes by roles or grade levels helps capture unique perspectives.



Present

The map makes a great visual for presenting and communicating your plan. Turn into a slide, post it in your school or district, or add it to your website and print materials.



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