

Changemaker School Districts:

Helpful Ideas to Get Started

We interviewed our change team leaders from our school districts to identify best practices and creative ideas to integrate and implement the Changemaker Education framework in their districts. The Changemaker Journey involves meeting with the selected stakeholders (teachers, administrators, community leaders, etc.) 5 times over a 10-month period. Below are some ideas for supporting your team!



Kristina Gillmeister

STEM Coordinator,
Anne Arundel County Public
Schools (MD)

On covering classes:

“We invited experts from the community to become changemaker mentors.”



Paula Talty

Superintendent (Retired),
Cromwell Public Schools
(CT)

On raising resources:

“I gave up my own travel budget for conferences so that my teachers could go and share their journey.”



Thomas Brodnitzki

Impact Year Coordinator,
Capitol Region Education
Council (CREC) Magnet
Schools (CT)

On supporting teachers:

“Teachers are changemakers, but they don’t see themselves as changemakers. The thing that helps is to highlight and celebrate them as such.”

Ideas for Covering Classes:

- Rotating substitutes: Form small group substitutes where 20 group teachers are pulled out for 90 min each.
- Combined classes: Create activity for all the students (50 to 100 students) and pull teachers out during that time.
- Ted Talks: Have 3 TED talks around a topic and have one teacher in charge of it and get a parent volunteer to facilitate the discussion circles. This works for half-days.
- 2-hour Early Dismissal: Have once per month for all the teachers.
- Full-day and Half-day PD Days: Schedule into school calendar a year ahead.
- Teachers covering for each other: Have a buddy system to cover class time.

Ideas for Supporting Educators:

- Be transparent. Not all teachers will be able to participate in every PD or conference opportunity, so best choice is to create a culture of lifting each other up in the profession – not competition – and being transparent to manage expectations.
- Celebrate teachers for their changemaking leadership. Encourage them to present to board of education, other district leadership, and community partners.
- Do a community mapping to understand the human resources available in your district
- Give teachers an additional hour of planning per week.
- Create integrated community stakeholder teams: teams of people from healthcare, media, business, higher ed., small businesses, as well as students, parents and teachers to meet with schools to review curriculum, brainstorm new modules, and internship opportunities.
- Design a roadmap of “What’s Next” to show teachers the concrete outcomes they can expect from the Changemaker Journey process for them and the district.
- Share stories of global changemakers from Ashoka’s network.

Ideas for Raising Resources:

- Look for funds from federal, state, and local government and grant entities. For example, Title 1 & Title 2 gives funding for “teacher enhancement” that can be used for PD and hiring substitute teachers.
- Primary costs to account for are:
 - paying for substitute teachers.
 - supporting teachers & change leaders to share experiences at educational conferences, in publications, and in other creative ways.
 - venue & food.
 - facilitation & support.