BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

Teaching. Learning. Leading.

Title: "Be The Change You Want To See"

Workshop Description:
This is a hybrid between a workshop and a meeting that is intended to be facilitated by UniServ Directors, local presidents, association representatives and/or activists. It is designed to be responsive to members who have called on the association to help them respond to an issue, crisis, or something that has caused discontent at their worksite. Once assembled participants will identify the issues causing the concern, determine an initial action step, determine individual and group readiness for action, and lay the groundwork for action implementation. This content is a tool to equip local activists with the skills they need to resolve building level conflicts.

Target Audience: School faculty/staff (members and potential members) with a worksite issue(s).

Optimum Number of Participants: n/a

Time: 1 hour (or more if the group desires to continue meeting and agrees in the moment to stay longer)

Materials:
- Enclosed handout
- The 3 Signs (included at the end of the workshop) for the continuum activity.
- Chart paper
- Markers

BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

Preparation: (5 minutes)
Write all of the Steps on the board or on chart paper. Keep Step 1 visible (and the others covered) so that as participants enter the room they see the question and can begin thinking about their answers.

Place a long piece of tape positioned horizontally on the wall to use for the "Readiness Continuum." Have the 3 signs (included at the end of this workshop) ready to be taped to 3 different positions on the continuum.

Write the Impact/Effort Grid listed under Step 4, on a piece of chart paper for later use.

Note: Facilitator's Instructions are in regular type. ***Participant Instructions are in Italics (and blue if this document is printed in color).***

Note to Trainer: The process you are facilitating is designed to help people discover if they can agree upon the change that is needed and if they can agree upon the best course of action to begin the change process.

DEFINING THE ISSUE (10 to 20 minutes, depending upon the size of the group)

Step 1: The group will define the issue(s) that have brought them together.

Prior to beginning a discussion, the facilitator should ask the group to:

- Collectively honor the confidentiality of what is said during the meeting, in order to move forward towards resolution of the issue(s) discussed, and
- Remember that the group is here to WORK ON AN ISSUE, as opposed to WORK OVER AN INDIVIDUAL.

We plan to go hard on the problem and easy on the person/people. We are here to acknowledge that, if handled right, we have the power to bring about the desired change.

The facilitator can use one of two methods to open the discussion on why folks are at the meeting today (Announce that each person's response will be limited to 1 minute):

1) Ask the direct question: *What is the commitment you hold that brought you to this meeting today?* and allow each participant to answer while the facilitator charts the answers; or
2) Break the group into small groups, ask each small group to choose a recorder and have each group report out their answers to the question: *What is the commitment you hold that brought you to this meeting today?* Instruct groups that for reporting out purposes, there is no need to restate an idea that has already been expressed, but rather the group should only report out NEW information that has not yet been expressed during the meeting. (This is often referred to as "New or Nothing.")

Note common themes and see if the group can agree on the main issue or, if necessary, on multiple issues. (At this point the group may not have consensus on the issue of concern.)

Ask: *Does anyone feel that there are other issues that have been left off of the list that should be added?*

If the group feels the list is complete, move on to the next Step.

ARTICULATING A VISION (10 minutes)

Reveal **Step 2: The group articulates a shared vision of the issue resolved.**

If applicable, acknowledge that although people may not have identified the same issue(s), they may still be able to identify common steps that can be taken to improve the working conditions and ultimately the teaching and learning environment.

Ask participants to close their eyes. *With your eyes closed and in total silence, envision what a healthy working environment would look like.*

(Provide sufficient wait time.)

Contemplate if the issue(s) we just discussed were resolved, what a day at school would be like.

(Wait time.)

Open your eyes. Solicit a few comments from participants who are willing to share what they envisioned.

Explain that this is a key component in beginning to narrow the steps that might be taken to resolve the issue. To bring about positive change people must first have an idea of their end goal. Make the comparison of this vision being similar to a lesson plan's "objective." Educators start preparing their lessons with an objective/end goal in mind.

Ask: *What is the objective here?*

Encourage participants to think broadly in this initial step. Provide examples of inaccurate objectives: Example: "The objective is to get rid of the principal (or X person in an authoritative position)."

Some may contend that indeed getting rid of a particular person is an objective/end goal. Acknowledge that although getting rid of, or addressing the behavior of, a person in authority may ultimately be a step that needs to be taken it differs from the OBJECTIVE, which is to have a healthy working environment that provides optimum conditions for teaching and learning. If we are clear about what that learning environment looks like it will provide focus for specific steps that can be taken to achieve this environment. We must begin with the end in mind.

With this information, *ask participants again to close their eyes and envision what it would be like if the issue(s) were solved.* Ask if taking into account the end goal made the vision any different.

ARTICULATING A VISION (10 minutes) (continued)

See if the group can articulate characteristics of healthy learning environments. You may choose to chart while they brainstorm.

To help get the list started, suggest a few of the following:

Note to Trainer: **The VEA can assist in providing online surveys to administer to the entire faculty to measure working conditions.**

Healthy learning environments:

- *Have processes for input that are inclusive and give all stake holders an opportunity to have their voices heard*
- *Create systems of accountability where colleagues hold themselves and others accountable (this differs from blame)*
- *Foster teambuilding through intentional efforts to build trust*
- *Are organized to maximize interactions among all school and community members*
- *Have a shared purpose of learning*
- *Facilitate reflective practice*
- *Have shared authority and resources*

When the group has generated a list of characteristics, ask participants to stand up if they agree with the following statement:

I believe it is desirable to obtain the kind of working environment we have just described.

Ask participants to sit.

Ask participants to stand if they agree with the following statement:

I believe it is possible to achieve this kind of working environment.

Ask participants to take their seats.

More discussion may or may not be necessary at this point. If necessary acknowledge that this is where trying to bring about change becomes uncomfortable.

BARRIERS TO REALIZING THE VISION (10 minutes)

Reveal **Step 3: The group identifies barriers to achieving their shared vision of the resolved issue.** Chart participants' responses. When they are done brainstorming, write the 3 words: Purpose, Relationships, and Structure on chart paper. Explain the following:

There are 3 powerful levers that exist in every workplace and can turn anxiety into energy or vice versa.

Purpose

Relationships

Structure

Purpose – People exist in school environments for different purposes. For example, one person believes he/she is there to teach the students the love of learning, while another is there to raise students' achievement (that he/she may believe is accomplished by using standardized tests). ***Do our school employees (including the administration) have a shared purpose?***

Relationships – Connections with co-workers that let us feel whole, requires cooperation across lines of hierarchy and function. Consider the following question: ***Would you consider this meeting worthwhile if the only immediate outcome was to simply strengthen our relationships?***

Structure – A clear and transparent system for handling day to day operations **AND** issues helps create a healthy work environment. ***Do we need more or a better structure for handling issues within the school environment? Would a few focused meetings and one, or a few collective actions by this group make our professional lives less stressful and more productive?***

Ask the group to refer back to their list of barriers and attempt to categorize their list under: Purpose, Relationships, or Structure in order to identify the type of actions needed to resolve the issue.

SELECTING A COURSE OF ACTION BASED ON REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS (15 minutes)

Reveal **Step 4: The group will consider various courses of action and evaluate them on an impact/effort grid.** They will then identify potential risks and/or consequences, as well as opportunities that may result from this course of action.

Explain that as the group considers which course of action to embark upon that there may be some possible choices that involve more or less risk, some that will have potential consequences, and others that offer opportunities. Ask participants to begin brainstorming some potential courses of immediate action that can be taken.

To get them started, you may want to share some of the following examples:

Purpose

- Conduct an online survey of employees to gather more data on shared purpose.

Relationships

- Organize another meeting to work on team building skills. Someone once asked: "Why do we spend so much time focusing on the leader, when it is the team that is the vehicle for getting things done?"
- Ask the principal to meet with the group, or several representatives from the group to discuss the groups' concerns.

Structure

- If communication from the administration is a problem, have the group agree that each of them will begin to use "confirming memos" as a follow up to any verbal requests made by the administrator(s) to the staff.
- If no structure or system exists within the building for resolving conflict, the group creates a formal process for communication/conflict resolution (soliciting input from all stakeholders).
- If, for example, the administration does not respect the staff's time and has a habit of keeping them in long faculty meetings (after announcing a set ending time) when that time occurs, the staff may all agree to take out their car keys and jingle them simultaneously.
- In order to begin documenting inappropriate behavior, the staff will purchase enough copies of a small red notebook, so that each staff member participating in this effort will have a notebook. Whenever the administrator exhibits the inappropriate behavior (bullying, etc...), the staff member will open their red notebook and begin documenting, in the presence of the administrator.

SELECTING A COURSE OF ACTION BASED ON REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS (15 minutes) (continued)

After participants generate a list of possible courses of action, walk through them, one by one, categorizing them under the chart below.

Take this time to clarify:

- The UniServ Director's role in this organizing effort,
- The participant's role in "owning" the issue and the desire for change,
- Realistic and unrealistic expectations, and
- What types of issues can be grieved or dealt with through legal action vs. ORGANIZING action.

Impact/Effort and Risk/Opportunities Grid

Possible Course of Action	Implementation: *Difficult/Easy*	Risk and/or Consequences *High/Low*	Opportunities for improvement: *Major/Minor*
Small notebook	Easy	High Risk	Major
Jingling keys	Easy	Medium	Minor

When the group has categorized all of their possible courses of actions on the grid, *ask them to choose the option that will work best for them* (most likely the one that is easiest to implement, with the lowest risk and the greatest opportunity for improvement).

- **Note to Trainer: If, for example, the group believes their course of action should be to "get rid" of an administrator, note that there is no guarantee that the replacement will be a better fit. A more productive initial step may be to work collectively to suggest purpose, relational or structural changes.**

ASSESSING READINESS AND WILLINGNESS TO ACT (5 MINUTES)

Reveal **Step 5: The group will assess their readiness and willingness to act on the first step in the course of action to bring about change.**

In this final activity, the group will physically place themselves on a Readiness Continuum.

Place the following 3 signs in 3 equal distances apart, upon the taped (or drawn) line across the floor or board.

"Willing to accept the present conditions as they are." (Placed on a far end)

"Willing to learn more." (Place in the middle of the line)

"Ready to act!" (Place on the opposite end)

Example:

Willingness to Accept Ready to Learn More Ready to Act!

Ask participants to review the 3 options and when they are ready, to stand and take a place on the continuum noting their readiness and/or willingness to participate in the group's selected course of action.

Instruct participants to conduct this activity in silence. Remind participants that not everyone feels ready to act at the same time and that acknowledging and recognizing varying levels of readiness is a first step towards implementing change.

Based on the results of the readiness continuum, the following scenarios may occur:

1. Ready to Act – Participants standing on this side of the continuum may form a steering committee. Ask them to agree on a date for a follow up meeting where they begin to plan further. **(Note to Trainer: If the group agrees to meet again, you may want to contact your UniServ Director or the VEA Office of Teaching and Learning for a.) The "Be The Change You Want To See – Part 2," materials, which focuses on building trust, accountability and commitment among team members and b.) Healthy School Environment Assessment tools.)**
2. Learn More – Ask which of the areas that have been identified as barriers to the end goal (Purpose, Relationships, Structure) they would like to work on first? Set up a second meeting to delve deeper into the identified area.

3	Not Ready to Act – If the majority of participants are standing here, let them know they can contact you when they are ready to work together for change.

Thank the participants and leave them with the following 2 quotes:

"Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

"You must be the change you want to see in the world." – Mahatma Gandhi

Handout # BTC-1

"The Principle"

We wanted to have us a school fair
The kind that they have almost anywhere
I was elected to talk to the principal
To see what she would say
"That's a fine idea, but please understand
"It takes experience and people and a good plan
"I just don't see how we can manage now
"Thanks for visiting have a nice day"

I went back to the class and I let 'em know
That the principal had quite politely told us no
So Jesse and I gave it one more try
And decided we'd go see her as a pair
When we got to the office she said, "Fine
"I'll meet with each of you, one at a time"
I looked at Jesse with a grin, he looked at me I
looked at him
And then together we decided what was fair

Chorus:
We said, "Thank you, no
"We don't think so
"We came here together as a team"
And what one can't do
We'll try as two
Then we're not quite as lonely as we seem

Well, she still said no and when we got back
The whole class decided on a different track
We talked to all the rooms and grades, all the
teachers and the aides
All the cooks and janitors were on our side
So when the whole school gathered on the front
lawn
And the principal saw what was going on
She said, "I will agree to meet a group of three
"To discuss this matter, now, please, come inside

We said, "Thank you, no
"We don't think so
"We came here together as a team"
And what one can't do
We'll try as two
And when two can't score
We'll try again with more
Then we're not quite as lonely as we seem

Then she said, "Oh, oh
"I just didn't know
"We'll have the best school fair you've ever seen!"

And what one can't do
We'll try as two
And when two can't score
We'll try again with more
And if we all act as one
You'd be surprised what can be done
Then we're not quite as lonely as we seem

Willing to accept the present conditions as they are.

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Willing to learn more!

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VEA VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

READY TO ACT!

VEA VIRGINIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Eight Paradoxes of Good Advocacy

1. ***Leaders don't create movements, they wait for one to come along and then jump in front.***

2. ***Describing the problem is sometimes more important than trying to solve it.***

3. ***Never let one person do what 10 are willing to do just as well.***

4. ***If you don't tell the members it happened, it didn't happen.***

5. ***Even if nothing is happening, something is happening.***

6. ***If you don't claim the credit, you won't get the credit.***

7. ***No matter what, declare victory.***

8. ***Don't do nothing. When you're in a position of power, you can give the members results. When you're not in a position of power, you can give the members a voice. At least one option is always available.***

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Step 4: The group will consider various courses of action and evaluate them on an impact/effort grid.

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Step 5: The group will assess their readiness and willingness to act on the first step in the course of action to bring about change.