Lessons Learned From Supporting Charter Schools Through The COVID-19 Pandemic: One Authorizer's Experience

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Lessons Learned From Supporting Charter Schools Through The COVID-19 Pandemic

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Session Goals

➔ Attendees will gain insight into the response and lessons learned from one authorizer's actions to support schools throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

➔ Attendees will leave this session with elements to begin creating a framework to assess their own portfolio/school's response to COVID-19.

COVID + Authorizing = ?

Crisis Management Framework

ENGAGE	EXPLORE	EXPLAIN	EXECUTE	EVALUATE
ENGAGE all in framing the crisis and get your framing right.	**EXPLORE the crisis and how to fight it**	**EXPLAIN what you have decided, why and how it will work, then commit to action**	**EXECUTE with focus and constant monitoring**	**EVALUATE, learn and adapt efforts, as well as your leadership, as new information and feedback comes in**

Handout for today's session: **bit.ly/vaccinesforeveryone**
***you will be prompted to make a copy- click the blue button**

Source: A Crisis Management Blueprint for COVID-19 (Ludo Van der Heyden & Peter Nathanial, INSEAD - April 3, 2020)

Phase 1: Engage
all in framing the crisis and get your framing right

Ideal	CSI's Approach	Lessons Learned
- Focus on what you know, not what you don't know. - Leverage past experience (internally and externally) - Identify who will be impacted and whose cooperation is needed; engage stakeholders early - Prioritize the most vulnerable	- Engaged state and local orgs to ensure flow of information about COVID-19 to schools - Regular contact with school leaders to understand their needs - Created simplified guidance on health/safety plans, required all schools to submit	- Mechanisms for internal cross-departmental communication needed improvement - Employing multiple modes of communication with schools; single internal tracking mechanism - Relationships are key

Adapted from "A Crisis Management Blueprint for COVID-19", INSEAD, April 3, 2020

Phase 2: Explore the crisis and how to fight it

Ideal	CSI's Approach	Lessons Learned
- Communicate clearly and consistently. - Share information quickly and generously. - Identify and focus on the most pressing and realistic goals - One-size-fits-all approach rarely works. Be flexible.	- Communicate tangible mitigation strategies frequently - Evolved into assigning support contacts to schools to partner w/ school leaders - Provided options schools could implement in various scenarios - Realized CSI couldn't solve all problems inside schools for school leaders	- Recognize different stakeholders have different needs - Maintain flexibility in our approach; focus of our approach adapted to pandemic and school needs - Need to consider the human element of the school in identifying an approach - The problem you're solving evolves

Phase 3: Explain

what you have decided, why and how it will work, then commit to action

Ideal	CSI's Approach	Lessons Learned
● Don't wait to take action; the longer you wait the fewer options you have ● Plan multiple scenarios and share the action plans you develop ● Communicate clearly; communicate with purpose	● Made clear guidance vs. requirements. ● Encouraged schools to meet the challenge with their usual nimbleness ● Set clear channels of communication	● Set a communication plan that meets the needs of schools ● Communicate a lot, and in a regular pattern ● Create a consistent touch point for schools ● Expect ambiguity ● Know your channels of communications (who are your go-to experts)

Phase 4: Execute with focus and constant monitoring

| Ideal	CSI's Approach	Lessons Learned
- You won't know whether your strategy is working unless you rely on the right metric(s) - Monitor impact *and* implementation - Build credibility during execution though clear, transparent communication - Put in work on the front end so you have solid options and resources at your disposal	- Don't wait… implement - Track school's learning delivery modalities and cases/quarantines - Internal and external implementation monitoring - We're still in this phase - Be transparent with data and share up to Board	- Currently learning the lessons of this Phase; but we have a framework to execute and monitor - Context matters when sharing numbers and choosing metrics - Strong connection to schools has been valuable - Relationships matter; leverage opportunity to strengthen relationships - Exposes the realities of relationships w/ schools

Phase 5: Evaluate

learn and adapt efforts, as well as your leadership, as new information and feedback comes in

Ideal	CSI's Approach	Lessons Learned
● Remain open to feedback and criticism, reassess continuously, manage errors and admit mistakes, and, above all, keep learning. ● Evaluate your own response to crisis ● Make the time to evaluate your response to strengthen systems and plan for the next crisis	● Track modalities used to deliver learning and cases/quarantines ● Adapted to the needs of our schools/staff as pandemic progressed/progresses ● Openly shared what we were measuring/tracking/ learning	● Track the data you do have/receive ● Currently learning the lessons of this Phase ● How can we share/elicit open feedback from a wide variety of sources? ● Strong connection to schools has been valuable ● This will change how we do business; will change how schools operate

Lessons Learned: Common Threads
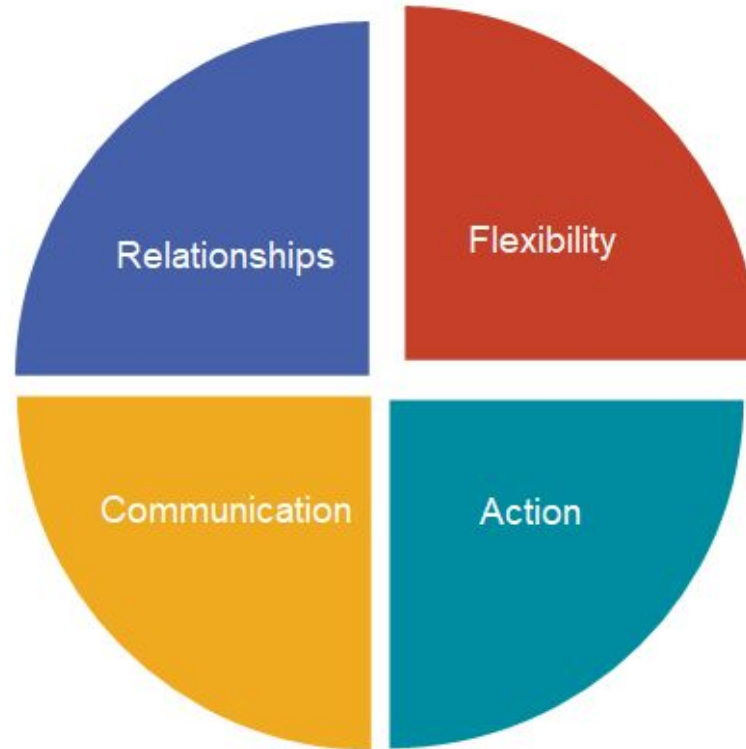
Attendee Discussion

1. What were the most immediate needs in your school? Community? Role as authorizer?
2. How did your approach to providing supports to schools take shape? What drove that approach?
3. What was an effective element in your response to COVID-19?
4. What was an element in your response to COVID-19 that was not effective?
5. What have you learned about your organization as a result of addressing this crisis?
6. Authorizers - what will you take from this challenge?
7. Schools - what would you like authorizers to know about your reality?

Is your crisis response plan ready?

[Your Crisis Response Plan: The Ten Effective Elements](#) (Michael Watkins, Harvard Business Review - Sept 30, 2002)

- Have you considered the broad range of scenarios possible?
- Do you have "off-the-shelf" responses to enact? And a plan to enact those responses?
- Who is responsible for what? What is your chain of command?
- Do people know what sets your plan in motion?
- Do you have clear communication channels?
- Do you have back-up resources? (human, physical, financial)?
- Have you practiced your crisis response?
- Are you prepared to evaluate your response?

Thanks for joining!

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