



Don't forget to click
"use template"



Youth Voice Toolkit

Companion Guide



Using this guide

Share your link with your team, or make sure each member of the team has their own copy to fill out.

Be prepared to navigate between this guide and the website.

Welcome to the Youth Voice Toolkit Companion Guide! 😊

XQ Institute is the nation's leading organization dedicated to rethinking the high school experience so every student graduates ready to succeed in college, career, and real life. 🏆

To learn more, [visit us](#).

- ➔ This Companion Guide is meant to accompany you in every step of your journey through the Toolkit as a whole, and contains a mix of both individual and team exercises that help progress and propel your very own change effort!
- ➔ While this journey is not always an easy one, remember you're not alone on this changemaking journey—XQ is here for inspiration and support! [Email us](#) or reach out on [Instagram](#).

XQ

Inspiration Library



After COVID, Raina and her peers at Purdue Polytechnic High saw a need to ignite a new kind of learning in their school, called industry projects, that focused on hands-on learning opportunities

They explored how, when, and why they might make a powerful case for re-introducing these hands-on learning opportunities.

They prepared their case for change as they modeled a new way to participate and co-own their learning as teachers and practitioners, not just students.

Emery and his peers at New Harmony High planned out an effort that culminated in piloting a recycling program to model sustainability practices in their high school community.

Elizabethton students created the Student Committee of Volunteers—a committee driven by students who volunteer their time and effort to see school-wide improvements come to life.

Lydia and her peers at Iowa Big, devised a plan to revitalize Hawkeye Downs Speedway, which has struggled to attract visitors. They decided to host a race where teens are the drivers. Through their efforts they raised \$30,000 for the event. They purchased cars, commissioned local businesses as sponsors, and launched a marketing campaign to attract drivers and spectators.

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**Solo exercise****01: Understand yourself**

Guidance: To start your changemaking journey, complete the self-exploration exercise. Feel free to reflect on anything that makes you, you.

1. Who are you as a person?

The foundation for any great change effort is understanding who you are. Think about what you are best at, and where you can grow.

Type here...

2. Whom do I believe in?

Change means finding and amplifying your voice and passion. Think about what matters to you, what you value, how you want things to change, and what you are most passionate about as a student.

Type here...

**Solo exercise****01: Understand yourself**

Guidance: To start your changemaking journey, complete the self-exploration exercise. Feel free to reflect on anything that makes you, you.

3. Why are you interested in creating change?

Every student has their own reasons for starting on the path of creating change. Think about yours, and how your motivations might impact your path forward.

Type here...

Type here...









Next step

Now that you've started with self, the next step of changemaking means knowing those around you—people in your high school community—and the power they hold.

[Click here for step 2 on the website](#) →

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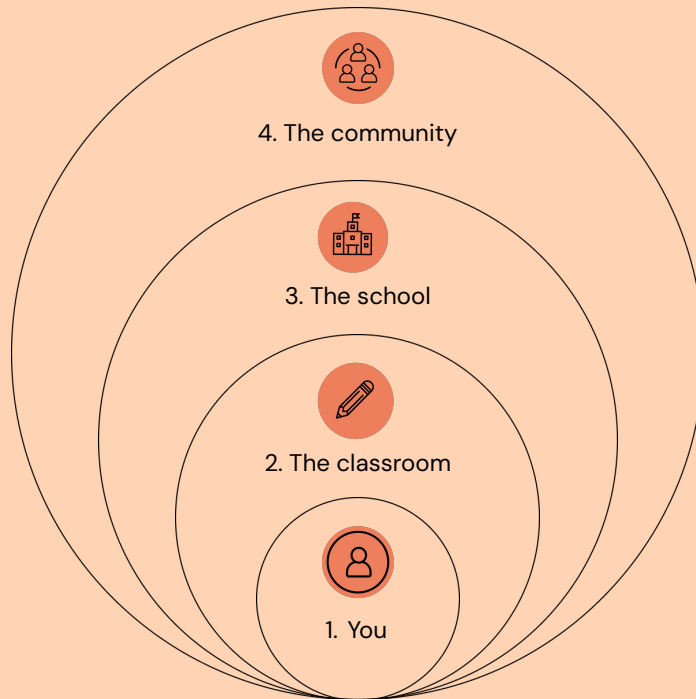
Context

02: Explore people and power

Your high school community

Remember, **high school communities** are large systems that are composed of invested participants at varying levels of engagement and role.

Check out this visual depiction of a high school community (system) and consider how each layer and role within the community plays a job in tying the system together.





Solo exercise

02: Explore people and power



Tip: Think about the diversities in your high school community. What voices aren't usually heard? Whom do you not yet know but might want to engage with?

1. What power and resources do you have?



You
Role: <i>Type here...</i> Power I have: <i>Type here...</i>
Resources I have: <i>Type here...</i>

2. What people, power, and resources are around your classroom, your school, your community?



Person: <i>Type here...</i>	Role: <i>Type here...</i>
Power they have: <i>Type here...</i>	Resources they have: <i>Type here...</i>

Person: <i>Type here...</i>	Role: <i>Type here...</i>
Power they have: <i>Type here...</i>	Resources they have: <i>Type here...</i>

Person: <i>Type here...</i>	Role: <i>Type here...</i>
Power they have: <i>Type here...</i>	Resources they have: <i>Type here...</i>

Person: <i>Type here...</i>	Role: <i>Type here...</i>
Power they have: <i>Type here...</i>	Resources they have: <i>Type here...</i>





Example

02: Explore people and power

1. What power and resources do you have?



You
Role: <i>Student</i> Power I have: <i>My voice and my relationships with my teachers</i>
Resources I have: <i>Social media followers, access to Student Government Association</i>

2. What people, power, and resources are around your classroom?



Person: <i>Mrs. Jones</i>	Role: <i>Science teacher</i>
Power they have: <i>Head of a school committee</i> <i>Long-time teacher</i>	Resources they have: <i>Strong connections to other staff and the school board</i>

3. What people, power, and resources are around your school?



Person: <i>Mr. Khan</i>	Role: <i>Librarian</i>
Power they have: <i>Deep knowledge in research methods</i>	Resources they have: <i>Access to different web libraries, books, and lesson plans on how to best conduct research</i>

4. What people, power, and resources are around your community?



Person: <i>Ms. Gonzales</i>	Role: <i>Head of local YMCA</i>
Power they have: <i>Their voice, their organization, and their connections</i>	Resources they have: <i>Weekly newsletters, connections to local media, and funding</i>



Solo exercise

02: Explore people and power



Tip: Think about the diversities in your high school community. What voices aren't usually heard? Whom do you not yet know but might want to engage with?

3. What people, power, and resources are around your school?



Consider people and groups across this domain that might include:

- Teachers
- Coaches
- Principals and school leaders
- School resource officers
- Guidance counselors
- Social workers

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...





Solo exercise

02: Explore people and power



Tip: Think about the diversities in your high school community. What voices aren't usually heard? Whom do you not yet know but might want to engage with?

4. What people, power, and resources are around your community?



Consider people and groups such as:

- After school program leads
- Family and friends
- Community leaders
- Religious and faith-based leaders
- Local elected officials
- School boards

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...

Person: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Power they have:

Type here...

Resources they have:

Type here...





Solo exercise

02: Explore people and power

5. Now revisit questions 1–4 where you mapped power and resources in your high school community

Identify the people you would like to draw from to build your team and support system.

Person: *Type here...***Role:** *Type here...***Power they have:***Type here...***Resources they have:***Type here...***Person:** *Type here...***Role:** *Type here...***Power they have:***Type here...***Resources they have:***Type here...***Person:** *Type here...***Role:** *Type here...***Power they have:***Type here...***Resources they have:***Type here...***Person:** *Type here...***Role:** *Type here...***Power they have:***Type here...***Resources they have:***Type here...*









Next step

Now that you've mapped people and power in your high school community, it is time to form a team—and bring them together for your first moment!

[Click here for step 3
on the website](#)



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**Context****03: Build the change team****Guiding principles**

Tip: When building a team, consider who has the skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute. Include a broad range of voices, and consider those who don't normally have a seat at the table.

Change doesn't happen alone! Before you identify a change area, build a team to co-lead and co-create this work.

Make the shift from “me” to “we” that is at the heart of every change effort. A change team should be drawn from your high school community. As you're building a team, consider how you will:

**Design inclusively**

Draw in voices and participants that don't normally have a seat at the table. Consider whether a teacher, advisor, or someone drawn from the community would need to join your effort.

**Build relationships**

Start by gathering a few people who want to do this and then reach out to others—especially those you don't know as well. Build a team identity—between members and as a group.

**Promote safety**

Work with people who make others feel safe. Each person on the team should feel they can be themselves, if they choose to do so. A safe environment means people feel okay sharing all their ideas, free from judgment—and that leads to better outcomes.

**Empower others**

Identify what tools and resources you and your team can use to support each other.





Team exercise

03: Build the change team

- 1. Consider who will join you in this effort and reach out to to secure their commitment**
Refer to [exercise O2](#) for support.

- 2. What role will each team member play?**

Consider these roles:

- Researcher
- Organizer
- Writer
- Social media lead
- Presenter/facilitator

Your name: *Type here...*

Your role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*

Name: *Type here...*

Role: *Type here...*



Tip: Return to [exercise O1](#) and have each team member complete the self-reflection to begin this journey.

What did the team learn from this process of getting to know each other better?





Example

03: Build the change team

When students at EHS learned a funding discussion was coming quickly, they established team roles for follow-ups with important figures that would help them advance their efforts to bring repairs to their school

1. Consider who will join you in this effort and reach out to to secure their commitment

Name: *Ava*

Role: *Social media lead*

2. What role will each team member play?

Name: *Mona*

Role: *Student organizer*

Name: *Diego*

Role: *Facilitator*

Name: *Shantal*

Role: *Faculty liaison*

Name: *Zain*

Role: *Research lead*

3. Set team commitments

- *We'll have regular moments of acknowledgement and celebration of progress.*
- *We'll communicate every week on our progress.*
- *We'll share open feedback to each other as we advance this work.*
- *We'll keep up to date with what's happening around our issue.*
- *We'll take time for the health and well-being of ourselves and others.*

4. Plan the first team meeting

What is on the agenda?

I. Introductions

II. Icebreaker

III. Team roles and skills

IV. Set our commitments

V. Define the change we want (see: defining the change – [exercise 04](#))

VI. Plan research and discovery (see: researching the change – [exercise 05](#))



Team exercise

03: Build the change team**3. Set team commitments***Type here...*

Team commitments help us ensure we'll take care of ourselves, and each other, as we progress our changemaking.

- How will we act with each other, and hold each other responsible?
- How often will we meet?
- What practices and rules will we follow?
- How will we take care of ourselves?

4. Plan the first team meeting*Type here...*

The first team meeting should ensure that all team members feel comfortable, are aware of roles and expectations, and have an understanding in the work to be done.

- When will it happen?
- Where will it take place?
- What is on the agenda?











Next step

Now that the team has been built, focus on the change you'll pursue together in your high school community.

[Click here for step 4
on the website](#)



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Context

04: Define the change

Your high school community

Now that the team has been built, focus on the change the team will pursue within your high school community.

A change relevant to your school can be anything from developing a school recycling program to encouraging new tech in the classroom or forming a student government. Consider what inspires you!



Tip: The [XQ Design Principles](#) and can be a helpful guide for exploring change opportunities in your high school community:

- Strong high school mission and culture
- Meaningful, engaged learning
- Caring and trusting relationships
- Student voice and choice
- Community partnerships
- Smart use of time, space, and tech





Team exercise

04: Define the change

Guidance: Focus on a change the team hopes to make—think about what might be most critical in your classroom, the school, and the greater high school community.

1. What are changes the team feels drawn to act on in your high school community?

**The classroom***Type here...***The school***Type here...***The community***Type here...*

2. As a team, take the changes from the previous page and vote on the change area that is most important and urgent—and connected to your interests.



Tip: If you've already identified a change area, skip to question 3.



Team exercise

04: Define the change**3. What change most inspired the team?**

This will be the change the team researches and leads.

Type here...

4. What will it feel like to achieve this change?

Individually, and then as a team, sketch, draw, or write what will most motivate the team to pursue the change you want to see.

Type here...

**Team exercise**

04: Define the change

5. Reflect

Individually, then as a team, reflect on connections to this change area. What are commonalities and shared interests?

Type here...








Next step

Now that your team has decided on the change you will pursue, it's time to learn as much about it as possible.

[Click here for step 5
on the website](#)



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Context

05: Research the change

Learning goals

**Tip**

Check out additional guidance on [Learning how to gap detect](#) for additional support

Once the team has settled on a core change idea to pursue, consider what the **learning goals** are for the research around the subject in order to better define the change area.

Learning goals require clarity around what is known, and what is not known, about a change area.

Where will the team need to get smarter? What gaps in knowledge exist? Who has information that can be leveraged?



Context

05: Research the change

Research methods

**Tip**

Start at the source (fellow classmates and peers) to understand today's challenges and opportunities for change.

Individual & group interviews

- Whom do we want to talk to?
- What questions do we want to ask?
- What will be the mode of the interview (e.g., in-person, video call, etc.?)
- How will we select and recruit participants?
- How will we capture learnings?

For inspiration, see additional guidance on [How to conduct an interview](#).

**Tip**

Focus groups are a research method that bring together small groups of people to answer questions in a moderated setting, and are a great way to speak to multiple people at once.

Surveys

- What is the purpose of the survey?
- Who is the target audience and what questions should we ask?
- What type of capture methodologies are best (open-paper or digital questionnaire)?
- What platform(s) work best for the audience (e.g., Google Forms, paper)?

For inspiration, see additional guidance on [How to conduct a survey](#).

Desk research

- What is the purpose of the research?
- What case studies and examples can we find?
- What statistics and data will be most helpful?
- How will we capture learnings?
- What sources do we want to use?

Observation & field research

- Where will we observe?
- What will we look for?
- How will we capture the learnings?
- How will we receive permission and consent?





Team exercise

05: Research the change

1. What do we need to learn and what is our learning goal in order to better define the change?

Type here...

2. What types of research methods will best meet our goals and help us get more clear on the change area?

How will we capture our learnings?

Type here...





Example

05: Research the change

Students at Elizabethton High have set out on an effort to advocate for more natural lights in their school, as their building has been windowless since construction in the 1970s.

1. What do we need to learn and what is our learning goal in order to better define the change?

We want to understand the root causes of why our school has been built this way, and why changes haven't been made.

2. What types of research methods will best meet our goals and help us get more clear on the change area?

How will we capture our learnings?

A. Individual and group interviews

- Interviews with high school community partners (school resource officer, mental health counselor, athletic director, director of schools)
- Interviews with industry experts (school architectural firm, clinical psychologist)

B. Desk research

- Comparison of local school's architecture and window design
- Benefits of natural light for students
- Why schools were designed the way they were in 1970s

C. Observation & field research

- Observed classroom conditions, spoke with students and staff to understand impact of windowless classrooms and rooms



Team exercise

05: Research the change**3. Summarize your research findings—list the most important things the team learned.**

What are the most significant insights and takeaways from the research?

Type here...

4. How does this research further define and shape the change?

Revisit your change area. Draw forward your change area from [exercise 04](#). Does your research support your team's change, or does it need to shift?

The original change area:

Type here...

The change we are moving forward with:

Type here...



05: Research the change

Additional Resources

O5: Research the change

Learning how to gap detect

Gap detection is a research practice that helps assess the knowledge that is already understood, and the knowledge that needs to be gained.

Awareness

Known 	Known–Unknowns Questions and gaps Information you are already aware of but do not have answers to. “We know that we don’t know...” Example “We know that we don’t know the science behind why recycling is beneficial, or why we should act now.”	Known–Knowns Assumptions and facts Information you are aware of and have evidence for. “We know...” Example “We know...that recycling is good for the environment.”
Unknown 	Unknown–Unknowns Discoveries, blind spots, and exploration Information or perspectives you are neither aware of nor understand (also known as areas of true exploration). “We truly don’t know, and need to explore.” Example “We explored trends in our area and discovered something unexpected.”	Unknown–Knowns Untapped, latent knowledge Knowledge we possess but are not aware of. “We weren’t aware we knew...” Example “We weren’t aware our classmate had knowledge of recycling and composting programs.”
	Knowns 	Unknowns

Knowledge

*Adapted from: Robert Bruce Shaw, Leadership Blindspots

O5: Research the change

Research guide: How to conduct an interview

1. Reach out to potential interviewees (i.e., email, phone call, in-person) and schedule an interview. Make sure to respect the interviewee's time and defer to their experience and role if they hold power in your school or high school community.
2. Prepare for the interview: Research the interviewee and the topic.
3. Draft an interview guide and use it as a resource during the conversation. Let the conversation go where it takes you—don't stick to the guide strictly if the conversation is going down an interesting and unexpected path.
4. Capture insights. Use a notetaker and additional team members to surface powerful insights in support of the change effort.

Sample interview guide

Note: Interview guides should be customized to the interviewee, constituent, or participant.

Introduction:

Brief introduction about yourself and the purpose of the interview.

Identify a team member to support and take notes, capturing key points and quotes.

Background and Expertise:

Ask the interviewee about their experience, role, and responsibilities related to the change area.

Ask about any relevant content, thoughts, or insights from their work.

Trends and Concepts:

Ask about any recent developments or emerging trends in the change area.

Ask the interviewee to explain concepts or processes related to the change area.

Examples:

Ask the interviewee to provide examples of how they have applied their knowledge and expertise in their work.

Change and transformation:

Ask the interviewee about their views on change and what's needed in the area of focus.

Ask them about moments of change within their field of study and what's worked in the past.

Conclusion:

Summarize the key points from the interview.

Ask about others who might have perspectives to share.

Ask if the interviewee has any final questions or comments.

Thank them for their time and expertise.

O5: Research the change

Research guide: How to conduct a survey

1. Plan your approach

Consider the populations or audiences you're hoping to learn from—this might be your classroom, your school, or your community.

- What does the team most care to learn?
- Do we want qualitative (i.e., numerical or measurable) data or quantitative (i.e., descriptive and conceptual) data?
- Are the questions easy enough for your peers and other partners to understand?

Surveys can be kept confidential to ensure students and peers can share their ideas freely.

2. Design your survey

Survey design is a critical step—ensuring there are enough questions to solicit meaningful feedback, but not an overwhelming amount.

- **Structured questions** are a simple and approachable way to gather data and sentiment.
- **Open-ended questions** help surface broader ideas and thoughts.
- **Feedback forms** request ideas from respondents and open the floor for participation in future work.

3. Distribute

Use free tools such as Google Forms, Typeform, or Microsoft Forms to design and distribute your survey.

4. Analyze your data

Review what you've gathered to surface trends in your data. How do different groups of partners differ in their sentiment? What are trends in the language or words your respondents use?

	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree
My school helps us learn at our best.			
My school invites us to participate.			
My education experience is meaningful.			

Open-ended

What have been your most meaningful moments at school?

Feedback

What questions do you have about this subject?








Next step

Now that your team has gotten smarter on your change area and the research surrounding it, solidify your change and take a moment to reflect.

[Click here for step 6 on the website](#) →

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Team exercise

06: Reflect

Guidance: To practice self-reflection on what has been learned up until this point, think about the following:

**1. Reflect on what you
and your team learned**

Type here...

**2. Think about what you are most
excited about, and what makes
you nervous**

Type here...

**3. Consider what you might need
more or less of and what might
help you moving forward**

Type here...







Next: O2 Plan

Ready as a team and aware of the change you want to make in your high school community, it's time to clearly plan out how to make it happen.

[Click here to go
to O2: Plan](#)



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Context

07: Craft the vision

Mad lib template

Vision statements are a glimpse into the future a team or organization is looking to make a reality. While they can be tricky to create, have fun creating one! Try using the mad lib provided, or think of it as a suggestion as the team creates their own.

Our vision is to _____
description of your change

for our _____
whom the change is for

because _____
the reasons behind your efforts

in order to _____
what the future will look like

by _____
timeline for your effort



**Team exercise****07: Craft the vision**

Guidance: Use the following prompts to help with brainstorming a vision statement based on your team's change.

Our change: *Type here...*

1. What is your change effort and whom is it for?

Write a powerful description of your change and clearly state whom it is for.

Type here...

2. Why are you embarking on this change?

List the reasons behind your efforts

Type here...



Team exercise

07: Craft the vision

Share your vision statement with @XQAmerica using the hashtag #youthvoicekit

3. What will the future look like if achieved and when is your goal for it happening?

State what the future will look like and the timeline for your effort

Type here...

4. Put together your answers from steps 1–3 into the team's very own vision statement!

Our vision is to Type here...
description of your change

for our Type here...
whom the change is for

because Type here...
the reasons behind your efforts

in order to Type here...
what the future will look like

by Type here...
timeline for your effort



Tip: A good vision statement:

- Dreams big, and focuses on success
- Uses the present tense
- Uses clear, concise language
- Combines passion with inspiration



Go to pg 46 to see an example



Example

07: Craft the vision

From Elizabethton High:

Our vision is to ensure student input is heard before financial decisions are made
description of your change

for our high school community
whom the change is for

because all students deserve to have their voices heard
the reasons behind your efforts

in order to create a high school that truly belongs to the students
what the future will look like

by 2024
timeline for your effort

Another Example:

Our vision is to have our school outfitted with recycling bins
description of your change

for our students and staff
whom the change is for

because everyone should have the ability to practice recycling
the reasons behind your efforts

in order to create a cleaner school with instructions on when, how, and why to recycle
what the future will look like

by 2025
timeline for your effort







Next step

With your powerful vision in mind, now you and your team can begin to organize and plan your efforts.

[Click here for step 8
on the website](#)



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Context

08: Build the plan

Action library

Every strong plan has a set of **actions** that should be sequenced in the order that's most meaningful to your issue—each with a clear who, how, what, and why.

Use the action library, located here to get a head start in choosing the actions that best fit the team's vision and needs. Don't stop there! Create your own actions as well. Personalized actions based on what inspires the team and the high school community are often the most effective!

**Actions that educate others**

1. Build a case with value and talking points
2. Educate and provide skills training
3. Build awareness by hosting seminars or workshops
4. Survey the community
5. Research and publish findings on social media
6. Interview experts and publish their insights
7. Talk to your classmates about important issues
8. Prepare a speech
9. Deploy a poster campaign around school
10. Showcase examples of other success/change stories
11. Organize a speaker series at school
12. Communicate with your teachers and administrators about key issues

**Actions that bring people together**

1. Organize events, experiences, and outings
2. Build a coalition with like-minded supporters
3. Speak to the school board
4. Host a fundraiser
5. Organize a field trip
6. Host a [town hall](#)
7. Create a club or group
8. Partner with a community organization that shares similar values
9. Host a [roundtable](#) discussion

**Actions that amplify the effort**

1. Start a vlog, webinar, or podcast
2. Host a kickoff event
3. Launch a social media campaign
4. Contact local TV and radio stations
5. Build a website
6. Create campaign gear, such as buttons, signs, and T-shirts
7. Find a sponsor for your team





Team exercise

08: Build the plan**Vision statement:****1. Use your change effort to inspire a list of actions**

- When it will happen
- Whom our action will affect
- How it will occur
- Why this action is important to achieve
- Where this action will take place

1/ Action:*Type here...***2/ Action:***Type here...***3/ Action:***Type here...***4/ Action:***Type here...***5/ Action:***Type here...***6/ Action:***Type here...***2. Choose one of the different styles of the timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.**



Example

08: Build the plan

Change plan template:
Option 1

- Choose one of the different styles of timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.

Our Change Plan

Vision

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
1/ Action: Meet with district officials and school leaders to schedule a student presentation for funding input as board agenda item													
				2/ Action: Identify the outreach campaign to gain student input and educate them on funding				3/ Action: Start meeting with students to gain input through social media, classroom drop-ins, morning announcements, and other student-led clubs					
4/ Action: Create a presentation to present to the School Board with actionable steps, estimates, and expected outcomes													



Team exercise

08: Build the plan

Change plan template:
Option 1

- Choose one of the different styles of timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.

Our Change Plan

Vision

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

1/ Action:



2/ Action:



3/ Action:



4/ Action:



Go to pg 55 to see an example



Team exercise

08: Build the plan

Change plan template:
Option 2

- Choose one of the different styles of timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.

Headline

Our Change Plan

Week 01 Week 02 Week 03 Week 04 Week 05 Week 06 Week 07 Week 08 Week 09 Week 10 Week 11 Week 12 Week 13 Week 14 Week 15 Week 16 Week 17 Week 18 Week 18

1/ Action:

Description

2/ Action:

Description

3/ Action:

Description

4/ Action:

Description

5/ Action:

Description



Team exercise

08: Build the planChange plan template:
Option 3

- Choose one of the different styles of timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.

Headline

Our Change Plan

1
Action**2**
Action**3**
Action**4**
Action**5**
Action**6**
Action



Team exercise

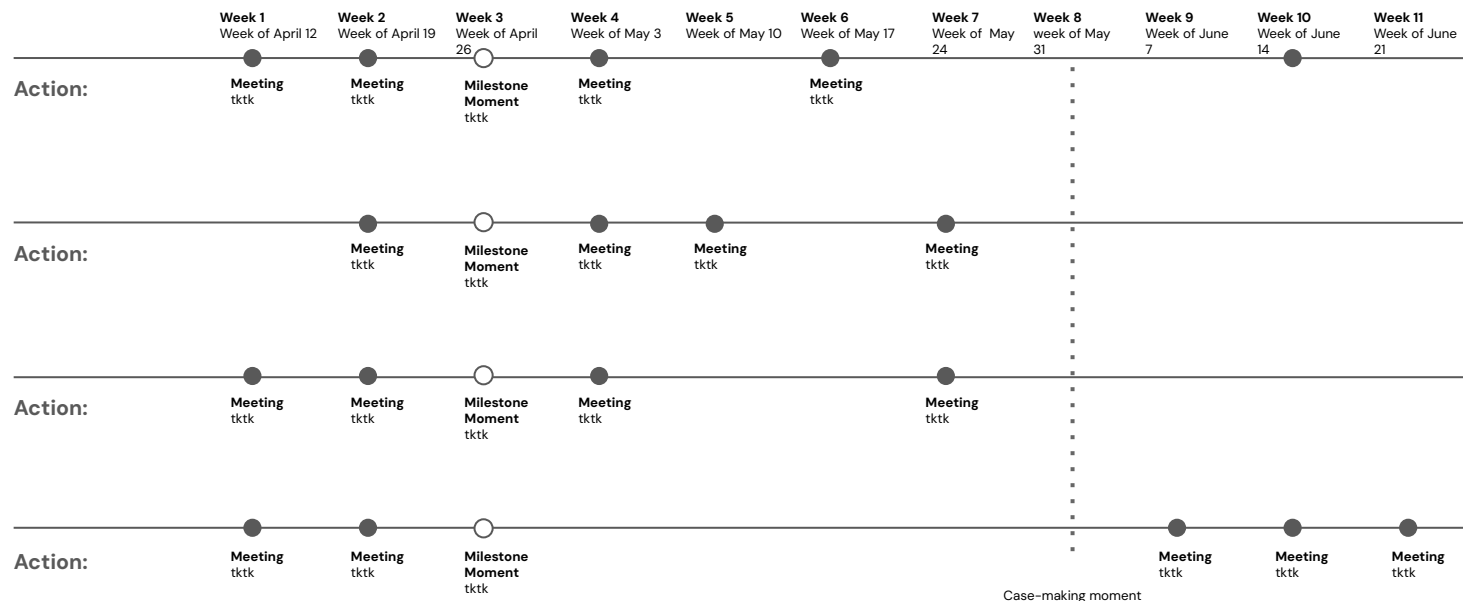
08: Build the plan

Change plan template:
Option 4

- Choose one of the different styles of timeline templates found on the following pages to plot your actions.

Headline

Our Change Plan





08: Build the plan

Additional Resources

O8: Build the plan

Design an action: Host a town hall

Hosting a town hall meeting is an important way to engage with the community and promote open dialogue around your change efforts. It provides a platform to voice opinions, ideas, and concerns. Town hall meetings can help to build trust and strengthen relationships between your team, community members, and partners—and it can lead to better decision-making and support during your journey.

- 1. Determine the purpose and topic:**
Identify the issue or topic and define your objectives
- 2. Identify experts and your audience:**
Identify speakers and participants. This may include community and school members, decision makers, subject matter experts, and others
- 3. Choose a date, time, and location:**
Consider factors such as accessibility, audience size, and availability of the venue
- 4. Develop an agenda:** Outline the topics to be discussed and meeting format
- 5. Invite speakers and the community:**
Spread the word and invite people through different channels, such as email, social media, and flyers
- 6. Prepare and execute the meeting:**
Be ready! Ensure that all equipment, support, and materials are available—including a mic for questions and crowd participation. Take notes and record where appropriate
- 7. Reflect and acknowledge:** Follow up with key partners and ensure all insights from the meeting are captured and communicated

Sample town hall agenda

Purpose

Review top-level goals, coordinate projects, and discuss pressing topics

Agenda

The list of items to be discussed in the meeting

Introductions

Greeting the people in the room

Celebrate wins

Acknowledging participation and efforts

Identify the problem

Clear distinction of the 'why' people are here today

What we are going to do about it

Creating an action plan with next steps and the data needed to back it up

Action items

Discussing any outstanding questions or comments

08: Build the plan

Design an action: Host a Roundtable

Roundtables are usually attended by a set group of experts or voices drawn from the community who have a particular perspective on the issue—and other interested members of your community might attend as an audience. Roundtables help bring experts into the fold, drawing in interested parties and advancing thinking around your cause.

1. **Find a moderator:** Choose a moderator who is engaging, respected, and knowledgeable on the topic
2. **Choose your speakers:** Identify and reach out to experts who will help move this work forward
3. **Draft your agenda:** The sample agenda to the right can help focus your work
4. **Brief facilitators:**
 - Define the purpose and goals of the session
 - Establish ground rules
 - Provide any necessary background information
5. **Promote and invite your audience:**
Leverage your network and social media
6. **Prepare and execute the meeting:**
Be ready! Ensure that all equipment, support, and materials are available—including a mic for questions and crowd participation. Take notes and record where appropriate
7. **Reflect and acknowledge:** Thank participants for their engagement. Ensure all insights from the meeting are captured and communicated

Sample roundtable agenda

Topic

The primary topic for your roundtable discussion

Purpose

The purpose of the discussion to help attendees work toward a common goal

Specific questions or secondary issues

To avoid misunderstandings or vague answers

Timeline

The start time, finish time, and any breaks. This assists with time management and avoids disrupting the flow of conversation

Key information

So attendees don't need to ask housekeeping questions, such as the location of the bathrooms or standard refreshments

Ground rules

A code of conduct to limit undesirable behavior (e.g., a single person dominating the conversation or speaking over others)







Next step

With the foundation of a plan in place, shift the team's focus toward the elements that will determine how the team intends to work together to make the plan a reality.

[Click here for step 9
on the website](#)



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Team exercise

09: Prepare the plan for reality

Guidance: Now that you've mapped out your actions, use critical thinking skills to prepare the team for the real world! Be sure to bring the team vision statement forward to this exercise.

Vision statement: *Type here...*

1. What will be the signals that the plan and actions are working?

Consider measures such as:

- Student sign-ups for the change effort
- Meeting engagement
- Views of social media posts
- Active participation in the actions (e.g., attendance at a school rally)

Type here...

2. What might interfere with the plan?

What could go wrong? Imagine any obstacles to the plan, and try to anticipate situations or changes that could undermine it.

Type here...

**Team exercise****09: Prepare the plan for reality**

Guidance: A healthy practice in self-care is normalizing the things that make people feel nervous. By talking together openly, teams can support each other while putting a plan in action to handle stressors that come up!

3. How will the team react, respond, and move forward to barriers or complications?

How might the team respond to challenges? How will the team be flexible enough to pivot if need be?

Type here...

4. Discuss what each team member is most excited for and nervous about.

How will we support each other in moments of triumph and excitement? How can the team best come together so no one person feels isolated in challenging times?

Type here...







Next step

Congratulations! Prepared and ready to go, before launch, make sure the team takes a moment to reflect on the progress that has been made to this point.

[Click here for step 10](#) →
[on the website](#)

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Team exercise

10: Reflect

Guidance: To practice self-reflection on what has been learned up until this point, think about the following:

1. Reflect on the highs and lows of planning an intense change effort

Type here...

2. Determine the support you and the team will need as your plan starts to become a reality

Type here...

3. Think about how far you and the team have come to this point and how the team can unlock all its potential

Type here...








Next: 03 Act

Grounded in a clear plan, powerful actions, and a motivating vision, it's time to make your plan real.

[Click here for 03: Act on the website](#) →

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Team exercise

11: Plan a kickoff

Guidance: Great efforts have a kickoff moment when the larger community is invited and gets involved. This is a chance to build excitement and support toward the change you're seeking together.

1. Where will the kickoff take place, and how will the room be set up?

Type here...

2. What will the agenda be?

Type here...

3. What are the speaking roles?

Type here...





Example

11: Plan a kickoff

Guidance: Great efforts have a kickoff moment when the larger community is invited and gets involved. This is a chance to build excitement and support toward the change you're seeking together.

1. Where will the kickoff take place, and how will the room be set up?

2. What will the agenda be?

- **Introductions:** Have each member of the team introduce themselves and share why they are involved
- **Our why, why now:** Create a shared sense of truth of why this change and why now
- **What success looks like:** Identify goals and how we'll know we're successful
- **Action plan:** Develop actionable next steps
- **Surface how we will work together:** Determine how we will meet to advance our goals
- **Our journey:** Share the history of this change effort. Share research that led to the change effort, and why the change effort is necessary
- **Our vision:** Bring the vision to life in a way all can understand and contribute to
- **Change plan scope & timeline:** Share the change plan for input. Include project milestones, tasks, and any due dates
- **Identify who's doing what:** Assign roles and responsibilities
- **Questions and next steps:** Make space and time for open questions. Share concrete next steps

3. What are the speaking roles?



Tip: In step 14, take these agenda items, or create your own, to build a compelling case for change to present to your community, key partners, and interested parties.

**Team exercise****11: Plan a kickoff**

Guidance: Great efforts have a kickoff moment when the larger community is invited and gets involved. This is a chance to build excitement and support toward the change you're seeking together.

4. What will success (think both short-term and long-term) look like?

Type here...

5. How will the event be promoted?

What are the methods you will use to reach your audience?

Type here...








Next step

Now that you've started your change effort—and you're actively building momentum through your kickoff and plan—start to shape the team's story and voice.

[Click here for step 12](#) →
[on the website](#)

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**Team exercise****12: Tell the story**

Guidance: Jump-start the team's very own powerful story of self, us, and now for an external audience. Workshop it as a team and practice together before sharing it with a larger audience!

1. Story of self

Build personal connection—begin the story by sharing the personal experiences that led to the change the team wants to make.

Type here...

2. Story of us

Share the team's passion and enthusiasm for the change you want to make and express how it would make a difference in people's lives.

Type here...

3. Story of now

State the change you are seeking in this moment. This will help your audience understand the purpose of your story, the urgency, and how they can support your cause.

Type here...








Next step

Grounding and connecting with others in a shared and personal story is key—now use that story to build support from others.

[Click here for step 13
on the website](#) →

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Team exercise

13: Build partnership and support

Guidance: Who will be invited and how will the event be promoted? List the leaders, key community members, and supporters. Bring forward the groups or individuals from the people and power exercise ([exercise 02](#)).

Vision statement: *Type here...*

1. Consider what individuals or groups will help amplify your effort, bring credibility, or sharpen the research or value case (refer to exercise 2)

Individual or group:
Type here...

Individual or group:
Type here...

Individual or group:
Type here...

2. What resources can they offer the team's specific efforts, and what might their interest be in the change?

Their motivations and resources:
Type here...

Their motivations and resources:
Type here...

Their motivations and resources:
Type here...

3. Prioritize the groups most important to the change effort by putting a star next to their name. How will the team engage with and recruit them?

How we will engage them:
Type here...

How we will engage them:
Type here...

How we will engage them:
Type here...





Example

13: Build partnership and support

Students at Elizabethton High School build support and partnership for school improvement efforts by meeting with stakeholders to outline pathways for improvement projects based on priority and impact.

Vision statement:

Our vision is to ensure student input is gathered before financial decisions are made for our high school community because all students deserve to have their voices heard in order to create a high school that truly belongs to the students.

1. Consider what individuals or groups will help amplify your effort, bring credibility, or sharpen the research or value case (refer to exercise 2)

Individual or group:

*Elizabethton School Board; ESB
Student Board Liaison; EHS principle;
EHS faculty and staff*

Individual or group:

Local elected officials

Individual or group:

School board

2. What resources can they offer the team's specific efforts, and what might their interest be in the change?

Their motivations and resources:

- *School board wants to ensure funds are used wisely to promote learning*
- *SB Liaison wants to ensure student voice remains prominent at meetings*
- *Educators want to elevate student voice to bring change*
- *Students want to find deeper value and create a meaningful connection*

Their motivations and resources:

- *Local elected officials are sworn to represent their entire constituency, including us*
- *They can help us gain knowledge of the system and provide resources*

Their motivations and resources:

- *Our school board exists to protect the best interest of our school and students*
- *They can help us with the necessary approvals and connections*

3. Prioritize the groups most important to the change effort by putting a star next to their name. How will the team engage with and recruit them?

How we will engage them:

- *We will ensure we schedule time to meet individually and discuss expectations before a vote is made*

How we will engage them:

- *Reach out directly, engage them around our work, look for ways to get involved, and demand action*

How we will engage them:

- *Reach out for necessary approvals, schedule a meeting, share our work*








Next step

Next, bring together your collective creativity and experiences to prepare, build, and execute a motivating case for change to an intended audience in your high school community can understand and get behind.

[Click here for step 14
on the website](#) →

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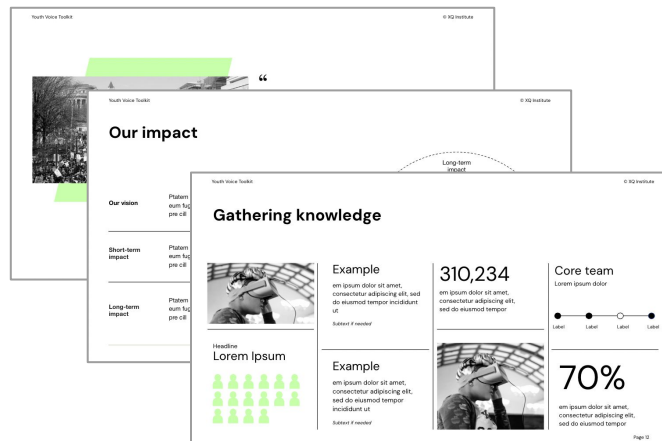
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**Case-making template****14: Present the case for change**

Guidance: Presenting the case for change can take many forms. Here is a sample presentation template to help you motivate decision makers in your high school community to support your effort.

Case-making template

A collection of editable and personalizable slides for you to use as you wish for your kickoff.



Tip: Writing talking points can be an effective way to communicate and stay focused on what matters in a presentation. Use the speaker notes feature to write talking points in your case-making presentation.



[Go to Case-making template](#) →








Next step

Changemaking takes many cycles of work, action, and effort. It's important to reflect on what you've achieved both individually and as a team, and consider what's next.

[Click here for step 15](#) →
[on the website](#)

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Team exercise

15: Reflect

Guidance: To practice self-reflection on what has been learned up until this point, think about the following:

1. Reflect on what it felt like to act together and work closely as a team

Type here...

2. Reflect on how it felt to present and facilitate a case-making moment in front of the high school communities

Type here...

3. Reflect on what happened over the course of this journey and how it felt—brainstorm any next steps the team would like to take

Type here...



Congratulations!



All that your team has accomplished is essential to advancing the work of those who have come before you and inspiring the efforts of those who come after you.



Celebrate your experience—the successes, challenges, and small wins along the way—because each of those moments is a building block of progress on your changemaking journey.





Next

Save your work, bookmark this website, and keep it handy for the future! Share your team's work with your friends, family, and community. The world deserves to know your work—and if interested, [connect with XQ](#) for additional ways to get involved and stay supported.

Follow and share your
changemaking journey with
XQ using #youthvoicekit