

Figure 3.7: The Culture Stretch Process

Phase 1: Recognize the Need for Change	
1. Identify performance gaps and need for transformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by analyzing results and outcomes to pinpoint performance issues or unacceptable results that signal the need for a cultural shift. • Conduct a cultural gap analysis to compare current practices against the school's aspirational values, using tools such as surveys, focus groups, and leadership interviews.
2. Set targeted cultural objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once gaps are identified, establish clear, behavior-based objectives that align daily actions with school values, ensuring all staff have a concrete understanding of how their behaviors contribute to the organization's vision.
Phase 2: Plan Through Engagement and Collaboration	
1. Develop continuous listening channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consistent feedback loops with town hall meetings, engagement surveys, and organizational network analyses to capture input across all levels of the organization.
2. Engage formal leaders in strategic planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively involve formal leaders, such as principals, department heads, teacher leaders, and senior administrators, in strategic planning sessions to ensure they can contribute insights from their areas of influence, helping to shape goals, action plans, and metrics for success. • These leaders play a critical role in setting the tone, shaping expectations, and modeling behaviors that align with the school's values. Their involvement reinforces accountability and ensures leaders are equipped to guide their teams through cultural change, fostering a unified approach across all levels of the organization.
3. Leverage sentinels and identify scouts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage long-standing staff (sentinels) to preserve essential aspects of the culture while recognizing areas for growth. • Simultaneously, identify and prepare respected early adopters (scouts) who align with the vision and can model desired behaviors for others.

Phase 3: Implement and Build Momentum

1. Create safe opportunities for scouts to begin implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build confidence and establish initial successes, provide scouts with low-stakes, supportive environments where they can begin implementing the new cultural practices without fear of failure. These controlled opportunities allow scouts to practice and refine their approach, receive feedback, and build visible momentum. By fostering an environment where scouts feel safe to take risks and innovate, leaders help them develop into confident role models who can inspire others to adopt the new practices across the school.
2. Unify scouts and recruit influential sprouts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build momentum by recruiting and training influential sprouts, bringing them into alignment with scouts. By engaging sprouts with training and visible support, unify this critical group with the scouts. Encourage ongoing collaboration among scouts and sprouts to build a supportive network and accelerate the shift and spread new behaviors.
3. Define, coach, and reinforce desired behaviors for staff engaged in the change preprocess.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reiterate, model, and provide timely and targeted feedback on the specific behaviors expected of staff, linking them directly to school values.
4. Provide the <i>why</i> for sentinels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly communicate the purpose behind the changes to the sentinels, helping them understand how these align with the school's vision. Ensuring sentinels see the reasons for change is critical in this phase to prevent resistance and foster their support. Continually offer sentinels opportunities to join implementation of the change process.

Phase 4: Sustain Momentum and Ensure Accountability

1. Monitor progress, adjust, and celebrate wins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the impact of changes using measurable metrics, make necessary adjustments during implementation, and celebrate small wins to reinforce progress and create a positive feedback loop. Use these successes to inspire remaining sprouts to align with the evolving culture.
2. Engage remaining resisters thoughtfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once momentum has taken hold, address any ongoing resistance, providing sentinels and shadows with additional support and mentoring as needed. For those who consistently hinder progress, consider reassignment or removal to maintain cultural integrity and long-term success.