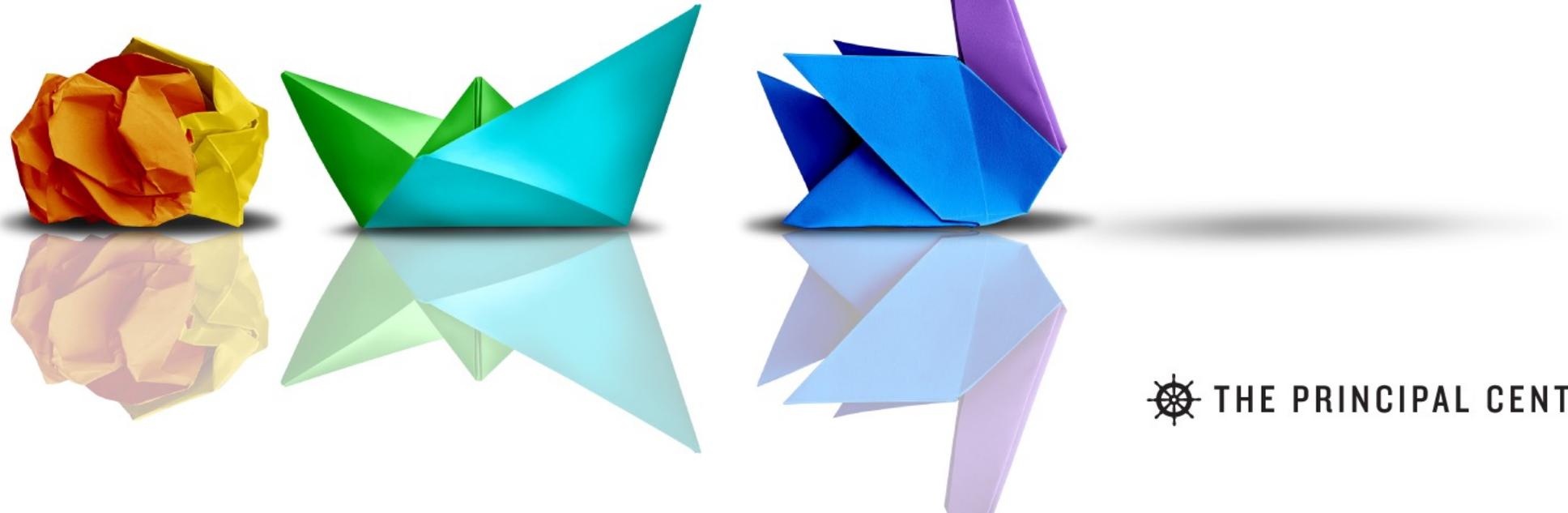


Lean Change

How To Build Momentum, Overcome
Resistance, & Change Practice for Good

with Justin Baeder, PhD



Essential Question



How can we use the research on change to overcome resistance and build momentum with a change?

What We'll Explore



- How to assess organizational capacity for change, and move forward even when not everyone is ready
- The key role of teacher leaders, and the specific way to activate and empower them for instructional improvement
- Why some people are so resistant to change that they'll never get on board—and what to do about them so they don't derail everyone else
- The counterintuitive idea from 1960s consumer electronics that explains and unlocks school change today
- How to deal with mandates so they don't spark resistance or interfere with your goals

Bulk vs. Lean Change



Everyone At Once vs. *Most Ready First*





Bulk Change

- Make everyone change at once
- Maximize resistance
- Delay learning
- Suffer from inertia



Lean Change

- Change in order
- Maximize learning
- Minimize resistance
- Build momentum



Handouts



Lean Change
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THE PRINCIPAL CENTER

Lean Change Webinar Handouts
 May 20, 2025

Everett Rogers' Adopter Categories
 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Adopter Category	Percentage
Innovators	2.5%
Early Adopters	13.5%
Early Majority	34%
Late Majority	34%
Laggards	16%

Table 11.1: Summary of Rogers's Adopter Categories

Group	Risk Orientation	Openness	Supports Needed	Role
Innovator	Seeking	Excessive	Autonomy	Experimenter
Early adopter	Tolerant	High	Safety	Importer
Early majority	Averse	Moderate	Support	Implementer
Late majority	Fearful	Low	Accountability	Resister
Laggard	Terrified	Zero	Personal	Saboteur

From *Mapping Professional Practice: How to Develop Instructional Frameworks to Support Teacher Growth*, by Heather Bell-Williams & Justin Baeder © 2023 Solution Tree

Staff Roster By Adopter Category

Innovators (2.5%)
Early Adopters (13.5%)
Early Majority (34%)
Late Majority (34%)
Laggards (16%)

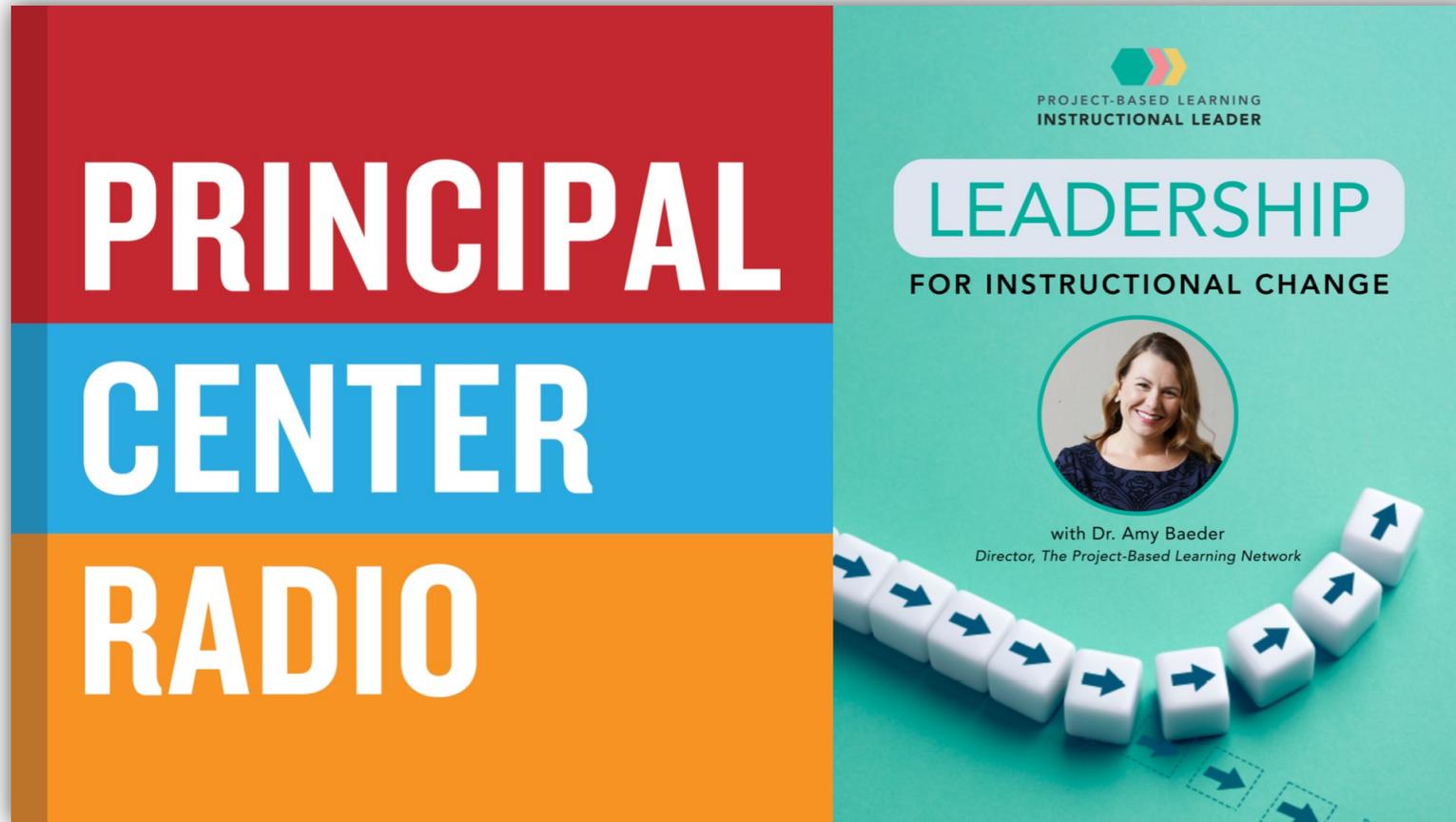
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Example: PBL



Dr. Amy Baeder Interview



Leader Knowledge Is Crucial



Leaders must develop deep knowledge of:

1. The details of the change itself
2. The practice of the people involved



Two Leadership Actions



1. Become a local expert on the change
2. Get into classrooms and talk with teachers

Our Role As Non-Implementers



- Leaders are generalists
- Modeling is overrated
- As much as we might try, we will not be doing the primary firsthand work of implementation
- But we must understand and support it well

Who Should Model New Practices?



- Teachers who are respected by peers
- Personally implementing in their classroom
- Advanced knowledge relative to peers

Non-Implementer Example



- PBL Curriculum Developer Certification for Teachers
- Leaders wanted to participate fully, however...
- The authentic product & authentic audience are missing for leaders, who will not teach a real unit to actual students
- A simulated effort is not worth the trouble
- Leaders need to make other contributions



A Metaphor from Physics



Static Friction (μ_s) > Kinetic Friction (μ_k)

A Metaphor from Physics



Static Friction (μ_s) > Kinetic Friction (μ_k)

Change is hardest before it begins.

What If There's No Training?



- Some improvements are developed in-house
- There may be no outside experts
- Develop clarity internally

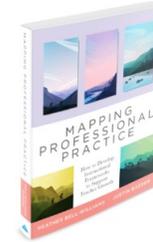
Using Framework Thinking To Help Teachers Level Up

Based on
*Mapping Professional Practice:
How to Develop Instructional Frameworks
to Support Teacher Growth*

© 2025 Heather Bell-Williams

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Step 1: Observe the Whole Iceberg of Practice

Observe & make notes re presenting problem (pick the biggest issue). Think of an iceberg – what are you observing? What is beneath the surface in terms of professional judgements and decisions that are missing?



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Another Physics Metaphor: Newton's First Law



- A body at rest tends to remain at rest
- A body in motion tends to remain in motion
...unless acted upon by an outside force

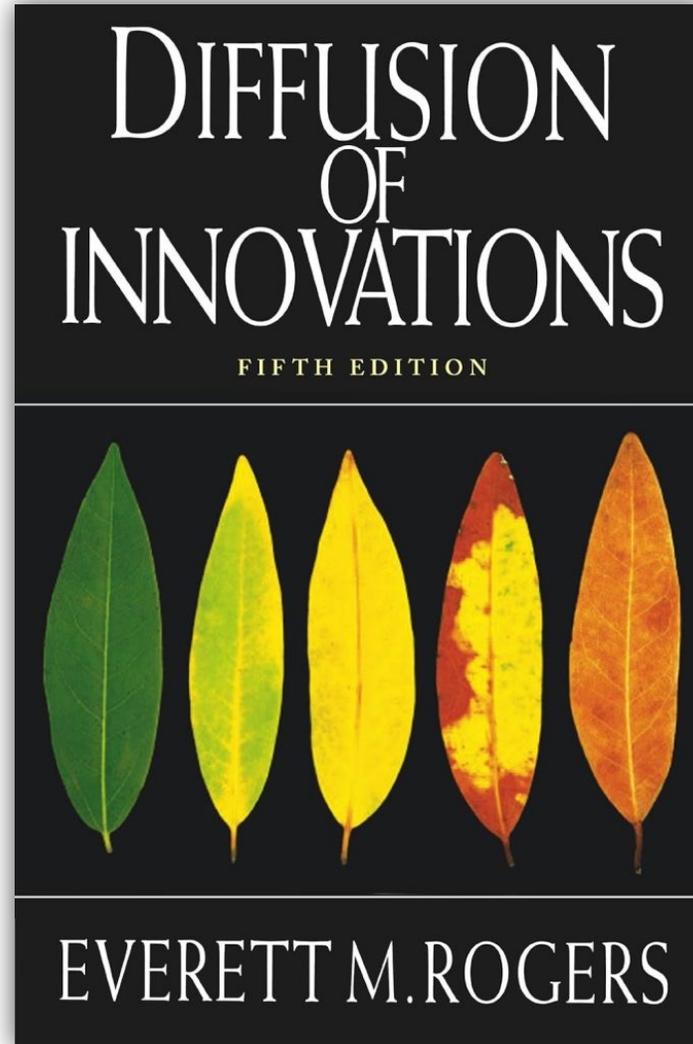
Newton's First Law



- Inertia: Mass—resistance to change in motion
- Momentum: Mass x Velocity

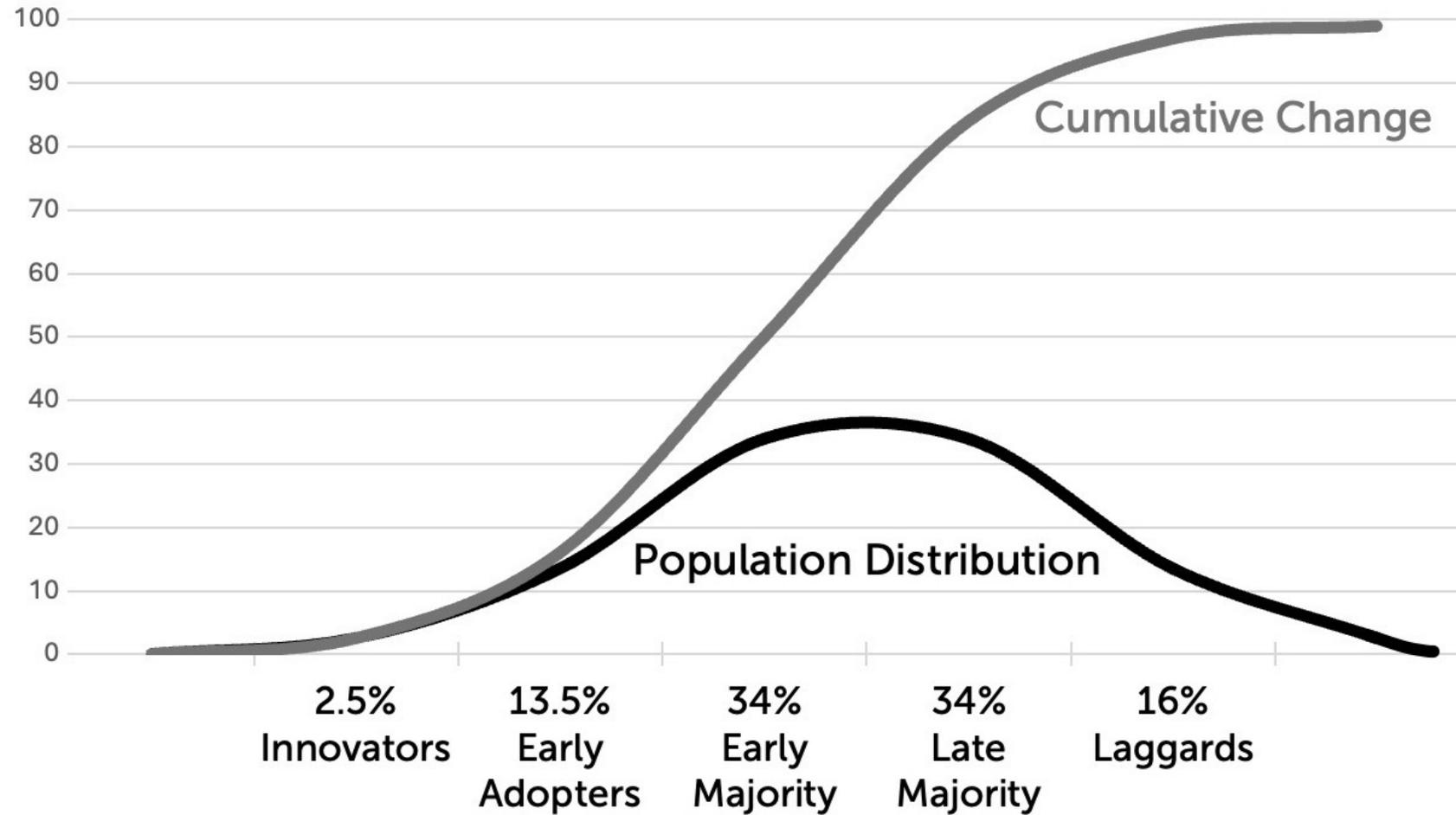
How can we get teacher practice moving?

"Early Adopter"



Everett Rogers' Adopter Categories

Diffusion of Innovations Theory



Change Is Social

People's readiness for change is:

- Social
- Relative



Group Characteristics



Table 11.1: Summary of Rogers's Adopter Categories

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Teacher/Leader Lag Time



- Leaders' work on initiatives is front-loaded—deciding, budgeting, purchasing, training
- Their work may seem 90% done after initial training
- Teachers need much longer to follow through on implementation—often 2+ school years

Leader Attention Deficit



- Too often, leaders mentally move on to the next initiative when their role in the current initiative is wrapping up
- However, teachers will continue to:
 - Need support from the leader
 - Not be ready for anything else that's new

The School Year Cycle

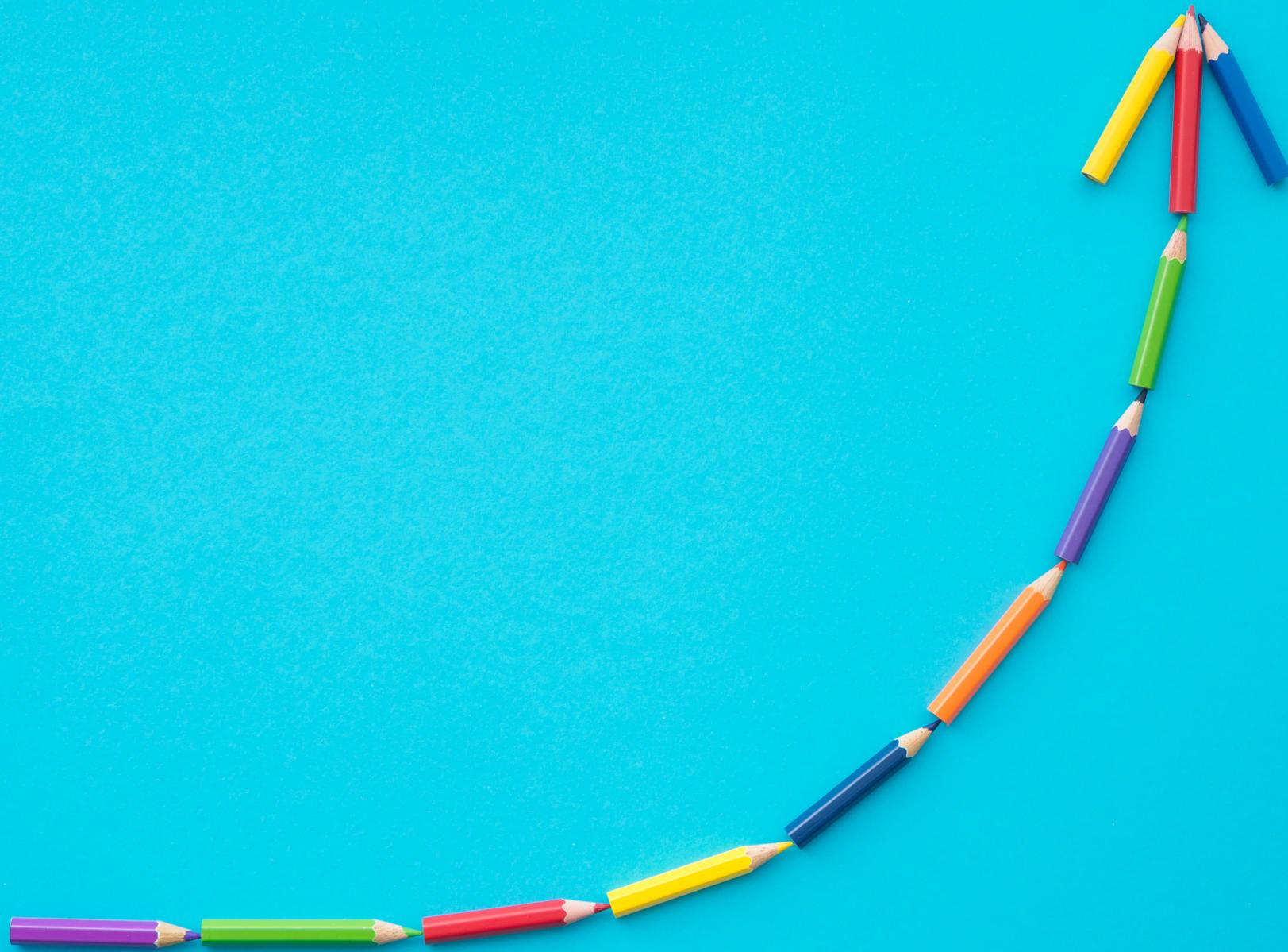


- Summer/welcome-back PD days
- Messaging and focus for the year
- Implementation with students
- Coaching support for teachers
- Faculty/leadership team meeting focus

Waves of Change

- Pilot—Innovators & Early Adopters
- Wave 1—Early Majority
- Wave 2—Late Majority





What About Mandates?



- Who can start early?
- Who can climb the learning curve ahead of others?
- Who should go last?

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