Leading Change by John Kotter

Think you might want to read this book?
In *Leading Change*, John Kotter uses his decades of expertise on leadership and change to warn us of the pitfalls as well as guide us towards efficient change. The bulk of the book explains an eight stage process for change that is generic enough to be applied to any industry, including schools. This book is a must read for any school in the midst of change as there are anecdotes and guidelines that are sure to be useful. An example of the kind of advice doled out is Kotter's rule of thumb for vision explanation: "If you can't describe the vision for a change initiative in five minutes or less and get a reaction of understanding and interest, you aren't going to be successful."

What would Socrates ask?
- Are there times when you should manage and times that you should lead change?
- How many people, or what percentage of people, need to be all in for a change to be effective?
- How can we embed short-term wins as a part of the larger change process?
- Is the vision for change in your school clear enough that key people can articulate it and everyone understands it?
- How will a vision for change affect: students? teachers? parents? administrators? mission? messaging?
- Does our current school climate honor and encourage honest discussions about change?
- Should a certain amount of change be required of teachers and administrators each year?
- If change is slow or delayed, what are the variables causing that?
- Does your organization have a group that suffers from inner myopia and if so, how will that change your initiative?

Concepts
- Rule of thumb: If you can't describe the vision for a change initiative in five minutes or less and get a reaction of understanding and interest you aren't going to be successful.
- Three common communication mistakes: 1- hold a few meetings/send out a few memos, 2- one person communicates a lot while most others are silent, 3- some highly visible people behave antithetical to the vision and cynicism increases as a result.
- Embed short-term victories into the process within six to eighteen months.
- Assume three to ten years for a significant change to fully embed itself into a company- short of that the change is still fragile.
- When communicating- succinct and clear is always better than complicated and wordy (it's also harder to do).
- Messaging in many different modalities is key.

- In times of change, performance evaluation, compensation, promotion and recruiting and hiring systems all have to align with the change.
- Organizations of the future will have flat hierarchies, little bureaucracy, risk-taking and senior level leadership and workforces that manage themselves.

Quotes from the author
- "In an organization with 100 employees, at least two dozen must go far beyond the normal call of duty to produce a significant change."
- (beware the trap where) "People became so caught up in big dreams that they didn't effectively manage the current reality."
- "If everyone in senior management is a cautious manager committed to the status quo, a brave revolutionary down below will always fail."
- "A majority of employees, perhaps 75 percent of management overall, and virtually all of the top executives need to believe that considerable change is absolutely essential."
- "Reengineering, restructuring, and other change programs never work well over the long run unless they are guided by visions that appeal to most of the people who have a stake in the enterprise: employees, customers, stockholders, suppliers, communities."
- Don't underestimate "the power of a metaphor, analogy, example or just plain colorful language to communicate complicated ideas quickly and effectively."
- "Whenever you let up before the job is done, critical momentum can be lost and regression may follow… Three years of work can come undone with remarkable speed."

Quotes from others
- "With the greatest leader above them, people barely know one exists. Next comes one whom they love and praise. Next comes one whom they fear. Next comes one whom they despise and defy. When a leader trusts no one, no one trusts him. The great leader speaks little. He never speaks carelessly. He works without self-interest and leaves no trace. When all is finished, the people say, 'We did it ourselves.'" - Lao-tzu- Tao-Te Ching

Gateways to further learning
- Busting the Bureaucratic Iron Cage: How to Win Support for Change
- Small is Beautiful: Using Gentle Nudges to Change Organizations

The applicability of this book to education is ….

Abstract ←——————————✗——————→ Obvious