



CAIS Strategic Change Accelerator FAQ

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Cais.ca

What is the CAIS Strategic Change Accelerator?

The CSCA is a one-year cohort-based experience that is designed to accelerate a school strategic implementation process. It begins with a face-to-face experience set alongside the CAIS Summer LI, and extends throughout the academic year with virtual meetings and monthly newsletters and resource reminders. It provides guidance and support for school teams planning important innovative change.

Where did it come from?

In 2015, CAIS launched Project 2051 that brought together 44 educators and business leaders from the CAIS community of schools. They researched 22 schools from around the world and mined data from their research to chart a course for innovation in Independent Schools that would allow them to meet the dual-challenge of maintaining a strong value in the marketplace without relying solely on raising tuition to do so.

Download the White Paper [here](#).

What kind of school changes are appropriate for the CSCA?

The CSCA experience will be most valuable for schools exploring any of the 10 business and/or academic innovations from the [Project 2051 report](#). Likewise, change projects that require innovation across traditional silos of responsibility, and/or change projects that would benefit from building capacity across the community of students, faculty, staff, administration, board, parents and alumni. For example, changes in the use of time, major thematic areas of learning, scheduling, student wellness initiatives, thematic or project-based learning adoption, and virtual learning programs have been brought to the CSCA. Each school is different and wants to move in different directions. We celebrate those differences. Teams that join the CSCA get closer to where THEY have determined they want to go.

What do we get from the CSCA experience that we don't already have?

Schools are different from other companies and organizations in the way they change. It is said that they change more like villages than like companies because they are so much about human relationships, not the bottom line. Organizational change is both an art and science, just like teaching. Most educators have not been trained in the skills, strategies or mindsets of innovation; they are common in business schools but not in schools of education. How schools change is nuanced. In most schools, change

initiatives are burdened by fear of the unknown and a lack of change management skills. With these skills, school stakeholders can embrace changes instead of fear them.

Do we need to bring a team?

Yes. We and many other change designers know that teams bring energy and richness to thinking that none of us have alone, and, more importantly, provide a built-in capacity to actually implement the stages of effective change once you go back to school.

We recommend the team being made up of at least one administrator and faculty to ensure that there is capacity within the team to maintain and sustain the change project.

Why do we need the head of school/principal to approve participation?

We know that the one thing that can immediately kill a change initiative is lack of support by the site leader; and the most powerful fuel for change can also come from the site leader. Therefore, one of the very few requirements to participate in the CSCA is pre-approval of the principal, head of school or CFO.

What will we get out of the CSCA experience?

When your team leaves after the three-day on-site session, you will have a set of tools that have proven effective at organizational change across time and various sectors. Your team will have an artifact of planning (the CSCA unique Change Road Map) that will be a literal and figurative roadmap to keep the change project on track. And these tools will be translated for you into the language and experience of schools.

Who should be on our team?

Bring people who are both interested in the change you propose and/or will have a role to play in implementing the change. We find that an optimal team size is about five, though more are welcome. The only requirement is that each team have at least three attendees.

What happens after the three-day on-site?

Each team will be assigned a lead facilitator who will support them throughout the coming school year. Your team will be able to connect with your facilitator for virtual

video chat meetings as needed. We hope that there will be at least 3-4 of these virtual meetings during the year to help keep you on track, answer questions, and ensure that you are meeting your roadmap goals. You will also receive monthly email progress reminders from the facilitation team to help make sure your team is on track.

How are teams chosen to participate?

Teams fill out a very simple application that includes the project that the team wants to work on, and the anticipated members of the team. The CAIS team will select from those applications. In the first two years we have been able to enroll all of the teams that filled out accepted applications. Criteria for selection can be found on the main site

Can non-Canadian schools participate?

Yes! We had a school from the United States in Cohort One and would love to see schools from other countries as well.

Who do I contact if I have questions about participating in the CSCA?

Feel free to contact CAIS Executive Director Patti McDonald at pmacdonald@cais.ca, or any of the three principal facilitators: Garth Nichols, Justin Medved and Grant Lichtman at csc@cais.ca.