

Aspen Institute **National Commission on** **Social, Emotional & Academic Development**

CAMPAIGN LOGIC: INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

August 7, 2017



TODAY'S GOAL

Identify critical insights and implications pointing to a campaign strategy that will help amplify and mobilize action around the Commission's *The Report From The Nation*.

RESEARCH INPUTS

- Intake interviews with education experts, practitioners and Commissioners
- SEAD background materials
- Frameworks analysis
- Hatcher Group media scan
- Learning Heroes parent focus groups and survey results
- Opposition articles
- Social change campaign analogs

AS WE PROCEED, FEEL FREE TO COMMENT

- What resonates?
- What feels uncomfortable?
- Where can we strengthen these ideas?
- What is missing?

Opening Observations

THE STARTING POINT: WHAT WE KNOW

- The conversation about American education has become narrow and negative—with an emphasis on test scores, failure rates and competitive reform agendas.
- The pump has been primed—the narrative around the relationship among social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive development has started to get meaningful traction.
- While the stage is set for SEAD, the current adoption approach has been “retail” vs. “wholesale,” and largely opportunistic.
- The rate of acceptance and adoption has not yet translated into a normative shift on a national scale.

“Proponents of SEAD integration should take care not to assume that the current upward trajectory in SEAD awareness will continue uninterrupted, or that salient will necessarily translate into changes.”

—Frameworks report

THE COMMISSION'S STATED MISSION

"Engaging and energizing communities to fully integrate social, emotional and academic development in K-12 Education so that all students are prepared to thrive in school, career and life."

—From SEAD Mission Statement

THE COMMISSION'S GOAL

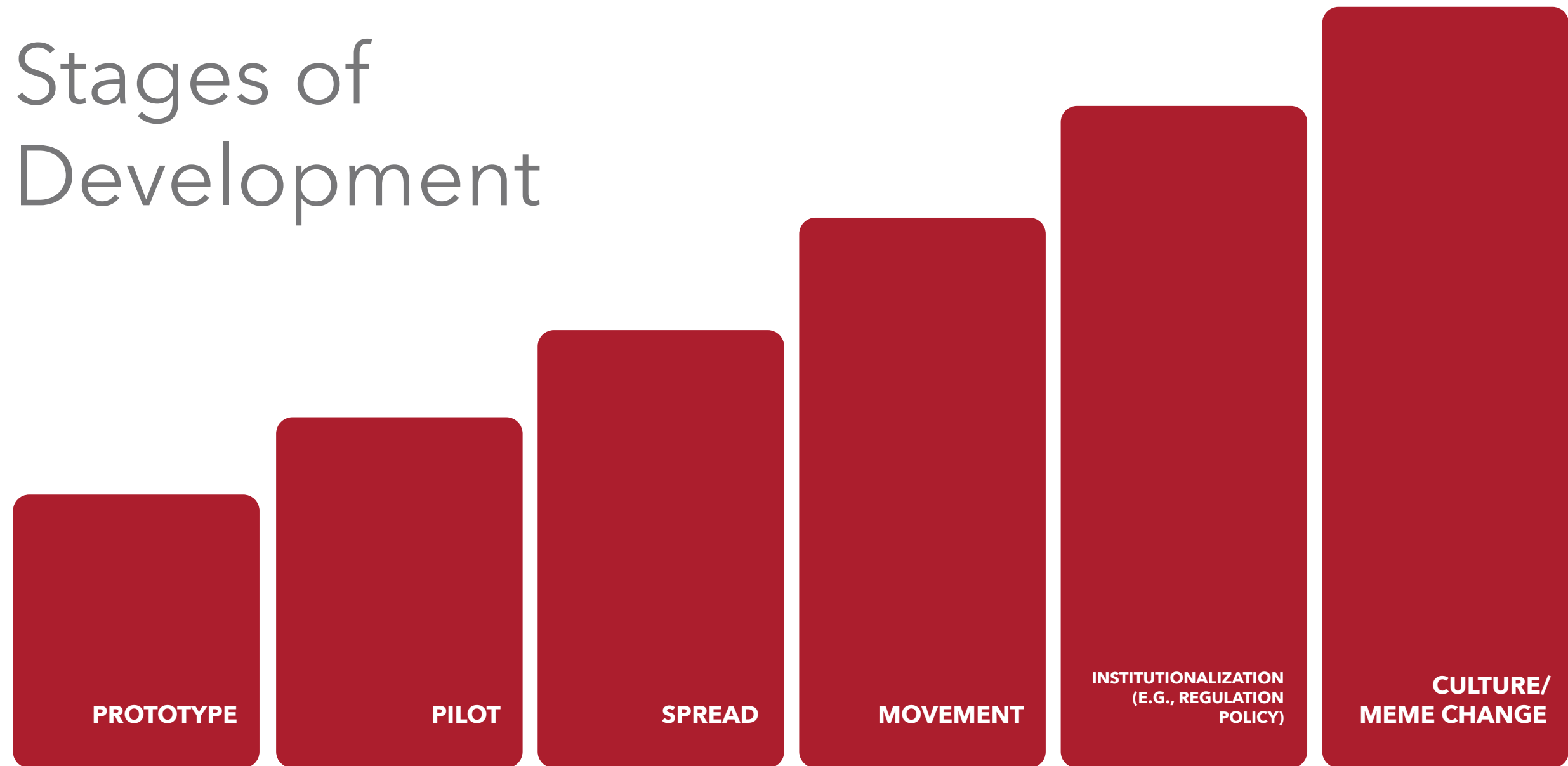
"We're ultimately after a permanent shift in Americans' understanding of education to include both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of a child's development; to create a view of education as child and youth development versus what it is today—test success, job prep, etc."

—SEAD Commissioner

OPENING OBSERVATIONS

WHERE ARE WE STANDING?

Stages of Development



WE ARE HERE.

OPENING OBSERVATIONS

THE STRATEGY TO DATE:

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OPENING OBSERVATIONS

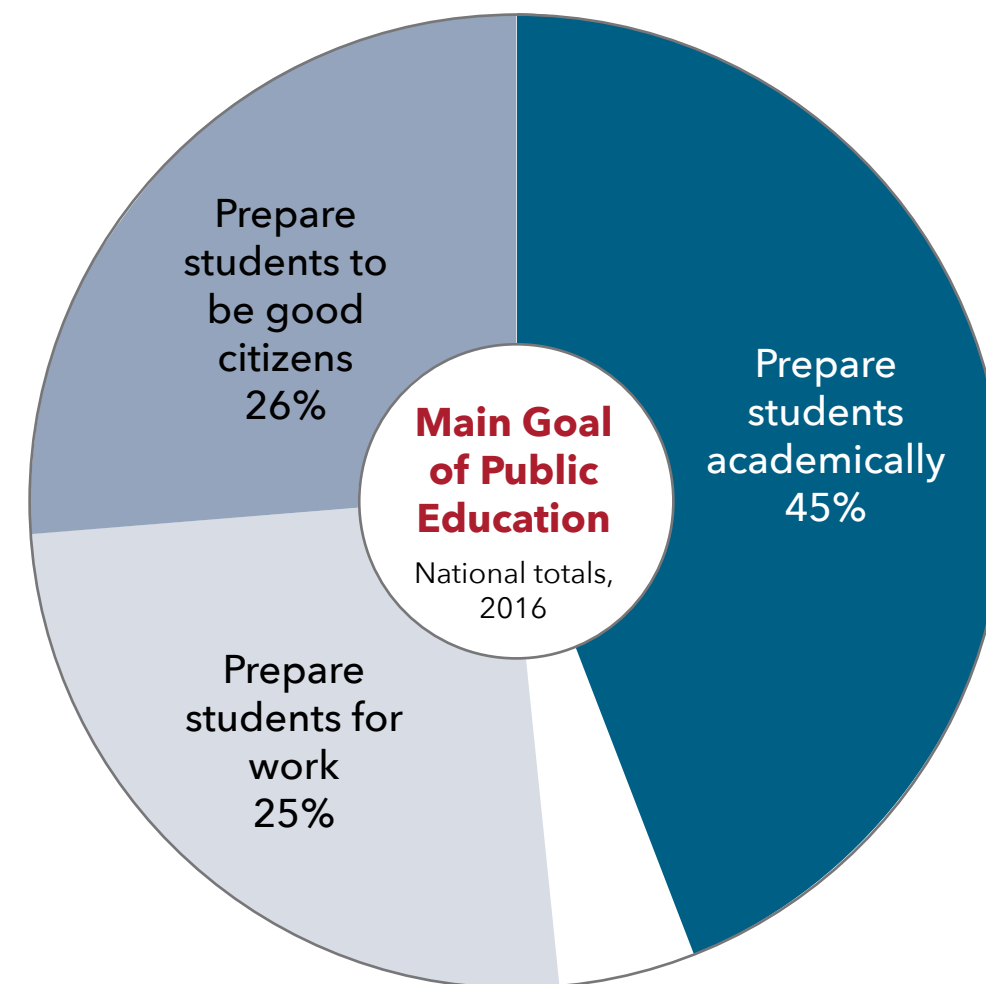
WHICH REINFORCES THE VERY DIVIDE THAT WE DENY EXISTS...

“Although there has been much debate about the relative importance of academic versus social and emotional skills (Zigler et al., 2006), this is actually a false dichotomy; decades of research show that social, emotional, and academic skills are interconnected. Social and emotional skills are associated with academic outcomes through multiple pathways that vary according to types of skills.”

—Society for Research in Child Development

...AND DRAWS A FOUNDATIONAL FISSURE INTO RELIEF.

Q. What do you think should be the main goal of a public school education: to prepare students academically, to prepare them for work, or to prepare them to be good citizens?



Source: PDK Poll, 2016

Our Perspective

EMERGING PERSPECTIVE

WE NEED TO STOP TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION...

EMERGING PERSPECTIVE

...BECAUSE WHAT WE'RE REALLY TALKING ABOUT IS LEARNING.

EMERGING PERSPECTIVE

WE NEED TO STOP TALKING ABOUT INSTITUTIONS
AND SYSTEMS...

EMERGING PERSPECTIVE

...BECAUSE WHAT WE'RE REALLY TALKING ABOUT IS PEOPLE.

In order to scale a framework for learning that is consistent with SEAD principles, and curb future opposition, we need to shift our emphasis from proving its value and **align around a universal idea** that compels people to start getting to work making it happen.

SEAD supporters enter the education conversation from multiple vantage points: funding, academia, policy and programming.

We need a unifying conversation, at an altitude above the specific change they're looking to make, that leads inexorably to SEAD-aligned programs and strategies.

EMERGING PERSPECTIVE

THE BIG QUESTION:

What is that conversation?

Campaign as Conversation

WHAT WE MEAN BY CAMPAIGN

An intentional and sustained communication effort that identifies a common purpose and mobilizes targeted actors to take specific actions to achieve it.

WHAT THIS CAMPAIGN WILL DO

- Align SEAD proponents with a shared POV
- Create a conversation hub using a common lexicon and set of messages
- Create a brand identity for the SEAD vision (vs. SEAD itself)
- Create demand pull for a range of SEAD practices
- Show how SEAD is implemented and scaled (case studies as micro-content/shareable stories?)
- Motivate actors to initiate and/or expand these practices

WHAT THIS CAMPAIGN WILL NOT DO

- Try to unify Americans around the purpose of K-12 education
- Rehash the evidence that indicates why SEAD is essential (that's in the clay, now we need to sculpt)
- Create a new name or acronym for SEAD/SEL (though we may introduce new variants on existing terms)
- Advocate for specific legislation
- Advocate for particular SEAD programs

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

What or whom do we need to change?



A campaign goal

What conversation do we need to have?



A hub around which the SEAD campaign can organize itself, and from which it can expand in various directions

Whom does that conversation start with?



A core audience and sphere of influence

How do we engage them?



Pose a question

What action do we want them to take?



A call to action

THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED OURSELVES

- What essential concern will unify educators, academics, and policymakers that offers a straight line to the conclusion that SEAD is necessary...without frontally naming SEAD?
- Where are points of internal opposition?
- What is at stake for the opposition?
- What is the fundamental doubt parents have about SEAD?
- What is the fundamental aspiration that would unite all parents and point to SEAD?
- What narratives have been tried and why haven't they worked?
- What conversations drive us into cul de sacs or reveal deep fractures among our stakeholders?

Campaign Building Blocks

Align the SEAD “sales force”:

FOCUS ON HOW LEARNING HAPPENS

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To steer clear of the places where the SEAD conversation fractures, we need to assume a common "why," postpone the question of "what", and aim directly at the "how"—which is at the heart of what we're talking about. This needs to be something that resonates as common sense: the conditions under which all learning—for adults and children alike—happens.

The common ground educators and parents share is that they know there are many ways that kids excel and therefore many paths to help them succeed. Effective learning is essential regardless of what path you follow.

Messages here would emphasize that learning happens in relationship, that it involves the union of emotion and cognition.

Seek to motivate around a vision, not a solution:

POINT TO POSSIBILITY

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Motivation comes from a sense of momentum and possibility. We know that things could be much better than they are. We need to paint a picture of what that means to inspire the work ahead. Jumping too fast to "here's how" and using the terminology of fixing something that's broken is dispiriting, and leads people to fall back on objections like "just teach my child the basics and let me worry about the rest."

Enlist the closest witnesses to learning (parents and teachers):

FOCUS ON WHAT LEARNING LOOKS LIKE

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Teachers and parents share a powerful intuition about their students/children: when kids are engaged, they learn. They may not be able to describe the scientific mechanisms, or agree on how to achieve them...but they all know what it looks like when someone is gripped by learning. They know what self-motivation, engagement, excitement and inspiration look like in a single student...and what they feel like in a classroom. And they all want this.

We must ally teachers and parents around the core of this aspirational vision. At the root is a simple, visceral recognition of how learning feels and looks, allowing us to build from there—validating with science and then offering tools.

Place learner, classroom, school and community into a single value set:

BRAND AN IMPERATIVE

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In our view, the longstanding struggle to brand SEL is rooted in two issues:

1. We have not evoked a picture of what SEAD looks like.
We cannot love what we cannot envision. A framework or approach and scientific data do not help here. We need to be able to imagine what the result looks/feels like;
2. We have not given people an action or stance they should take that signals their support and desire for more SEAD content. Taking a page from the *Lean In* campaign, we need to convert a group of descriptive nouns into an imperative verb that students, educators, classrooms and communities can all embrace and embody.

Generate buy-in from the inside out:

POSE A QUESTION THEY WANT TO ANSWER

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SEAD is already happening in some form all day, every day in schools—but not with the scope or intention that we know it requires. To tip into true movement status we need to invoke personal ownership of the vision, to rally those who are ready to act.

Instead of talking about SEAD as something new, we would do better allowing people to identify their deepest wish: for their child to be driven to learn. The answer to the question, "what does that look like?" will vary, and we should give them the opportunity to tell us. Our bet is that all answers will point in an obvious way to the pillars of SEAD.

Provide a runway to the “how”:

LINK DEMAND TO SUPPLY

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The most common reason a campaign doesn't succeed is the failure to seize the momentum created by its success in raising awareness, inciting appetite or curiosity, and directing that demand toward action. Action requires supply—of content and advice—on everything from classroom strategies to policy to school climate to community coalitions.

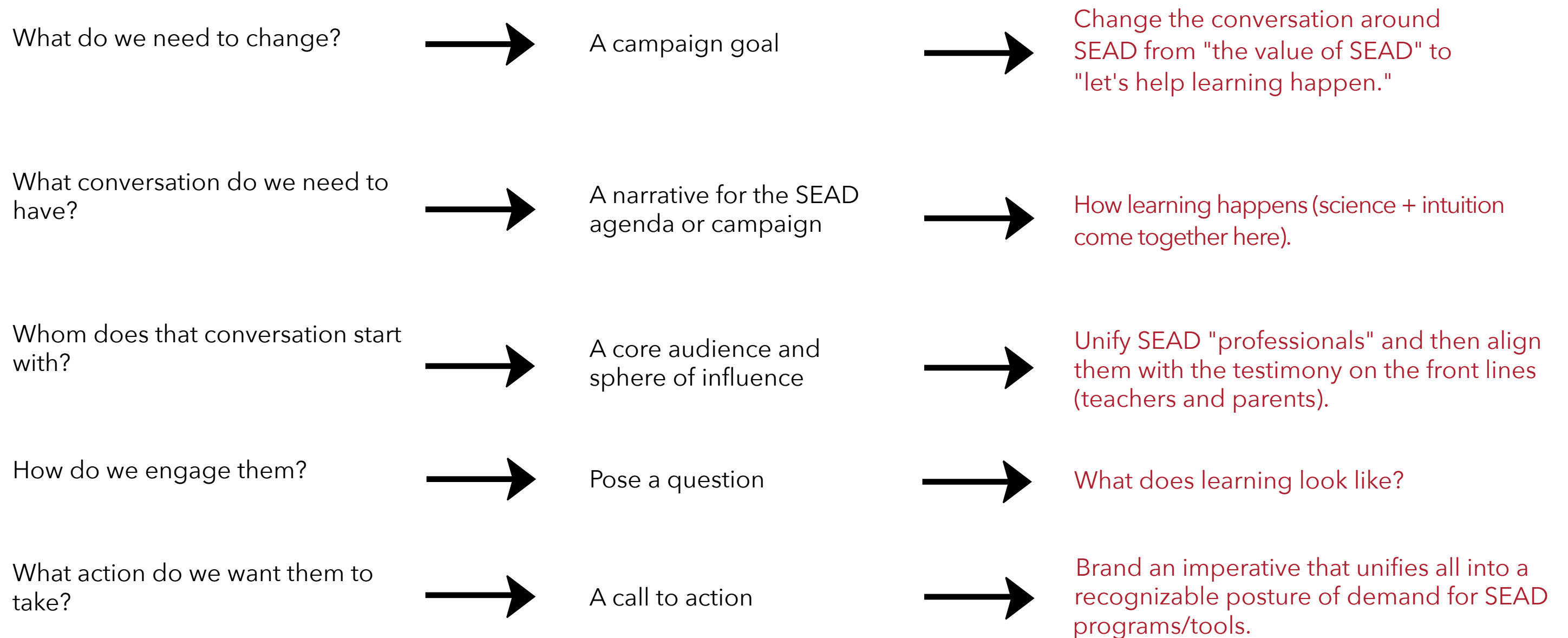
Our campaign must offer tools that offer ways of helping actors act—either by providing communication vehicles or by pointing them directly to resources (human, institutional, and digital) that are available. By ensuring that there is no missing link in the chain from demand to supply, the campaign can maintain quality control while being catholic in its calls to action, thereby encouraging on-the-ground buy-in without generating skepticism or rejection of top-down directives.

SUMMARY OF CAMPAIGN BUILDING BLOCKS

- 01** Align the SEAD “sales force”:
Focus on how learning happens
- 02** Seek to motivate around a vision, not a solution:
Point to possibility
- 03** Enlist the closest witnesses to learning (parents and teachers):
Focus on what learning looks like
- 04** Generate buy-in from the inside-out:
Pose a question they want to answer
- 05** Place learner, classroom, school and community into a single value set:
Brand an imperative
- 06** Provide a runway to the how:
Link demand to supply

Campaign Strategy

DEVELOPING A CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



NEXT STEPS

- Seek feedback
- Move to campaign concepting
- Present campaign concepts, messages and design options (by September 6)
- Present tools catalogue (by September 20)