



# PERMISSIONS

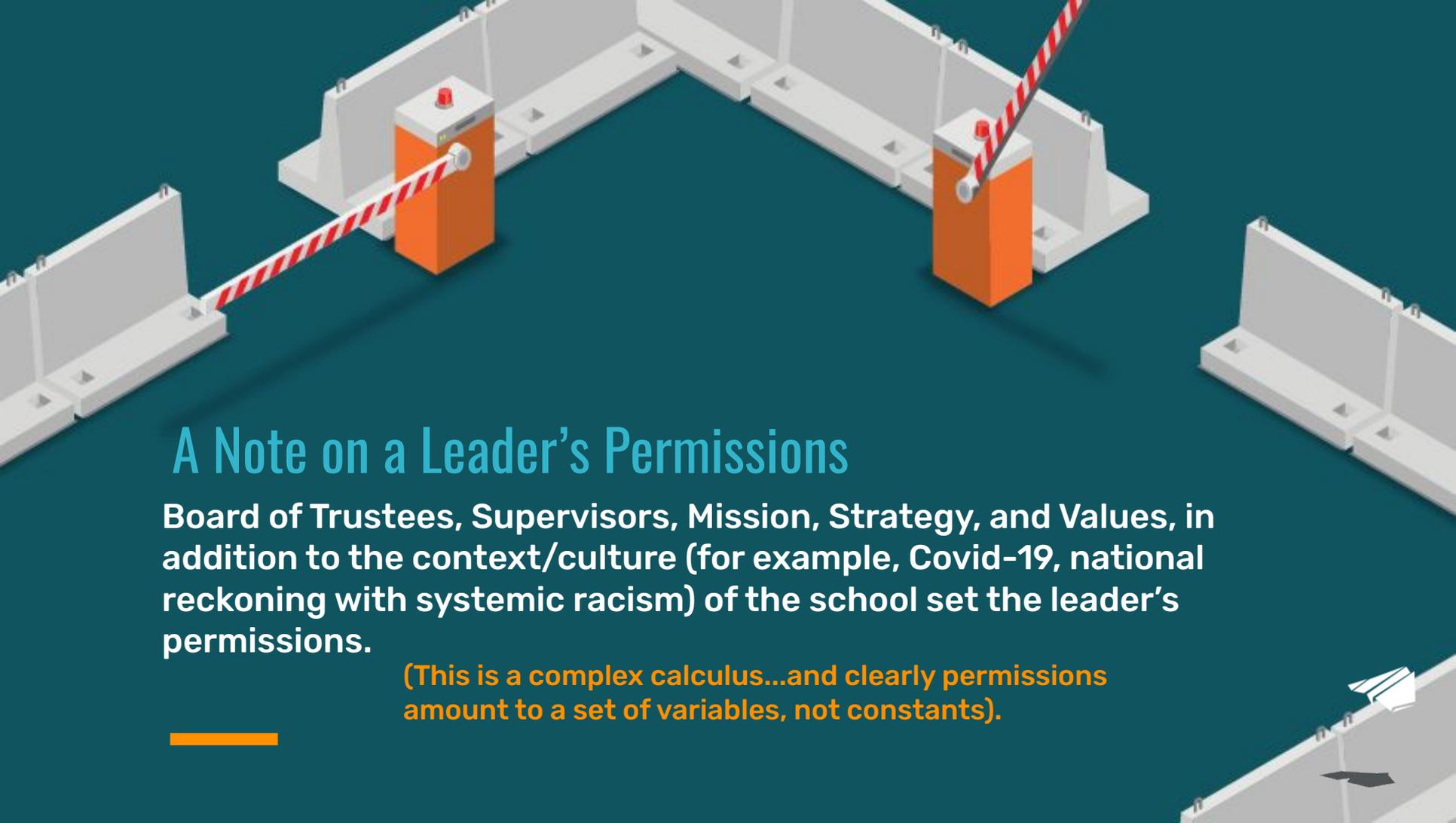
*What We Can Do Now*

# What do we mean by PERMISSIONS?

- What people are allowed to do within the systems of the school. (Think of computer system permissions.)
- How a person or group can participate in and guide decision-making and execution.
- How the context for constituent agency is set.

ALLOW





## A Note on a Leader's Permissions

Board of Trustees, Supervisors, Mission, Strategy, and Values, in addition to the context/culture (for example, Covid-19, national reckoning with systemic racism) of the school set the leader's permissions.

**(This is a complex calculus...and clearly permissions amount to a set of variables, not constants).**

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**Antifragile schools have high potential to leverage permissions toward bold strategic ends.**

**These schools have shared understanding of their relative permissions and the purposefulness of them.**



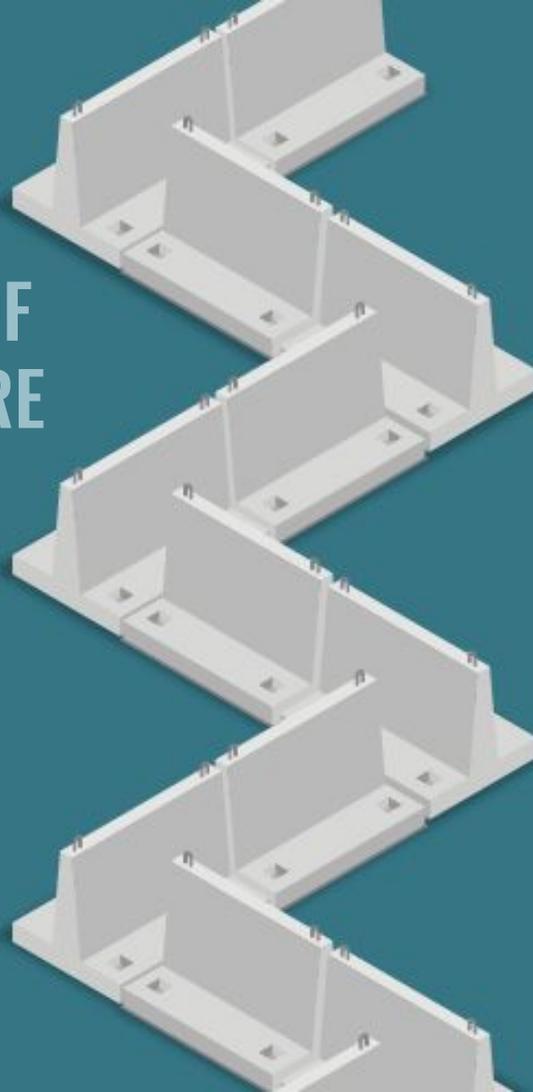
**Permissions change and shift with  
wide culture AND built culture...**  
over the last three years they have  
doubtlessly changed a great deal.



# TWO COMPONENTS OF A PROGRESS CULTURE

As we look ahead and think of how best a school can move into a post-pandemic reality, leaders must recognize what should not change.

What are important touchstones that need to stay in place in order for changed permissions to get the traction they need?





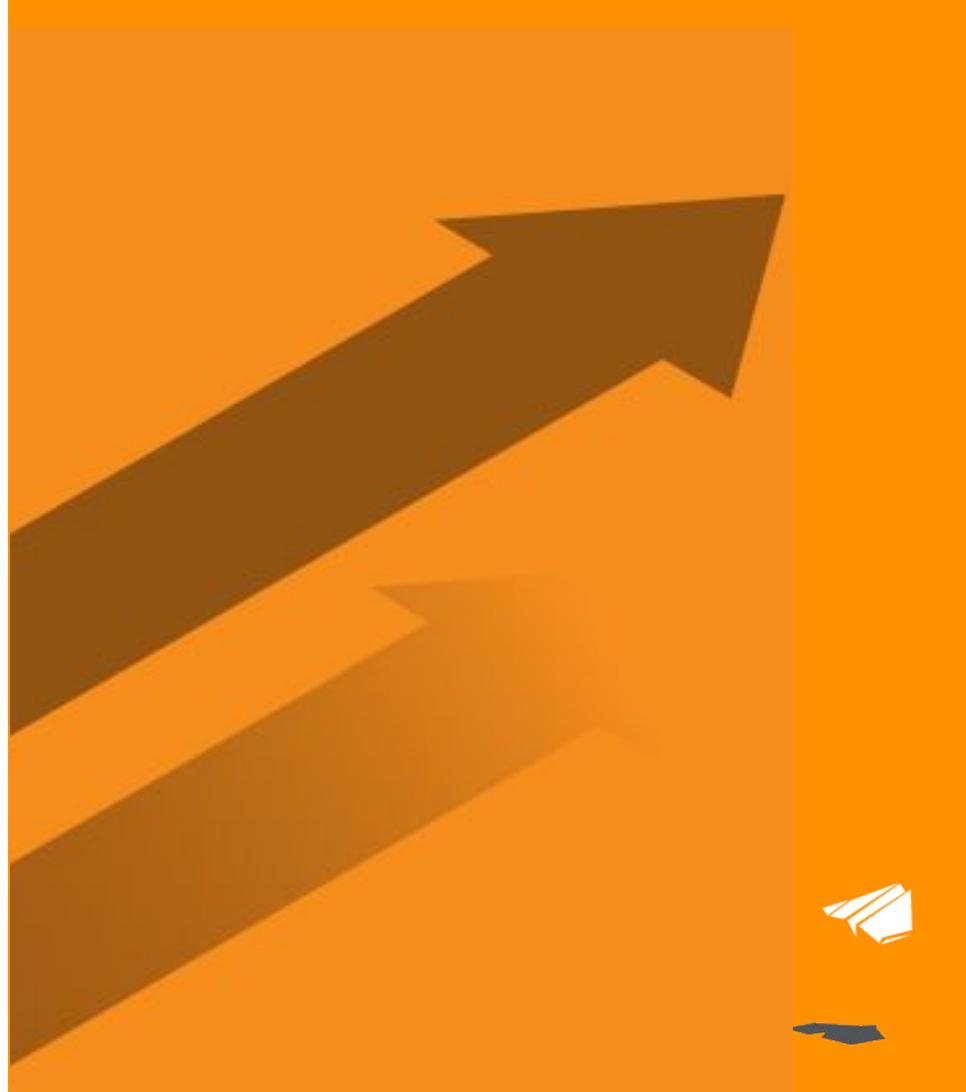
**BOARDS, HEADS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS  
MUST LEAN INTO (ACTIVATE) A SCHOOL'S CRITICAL  
LANGUAGE** in order to move a school forward post  
pandemic.



# Critical Language: **USE IT OR LOSE IT**

Setting Permissions based in large part on the critical language of the school **ACTIVATES** that language, gives it oxygen, and makes it easier to call on it again.

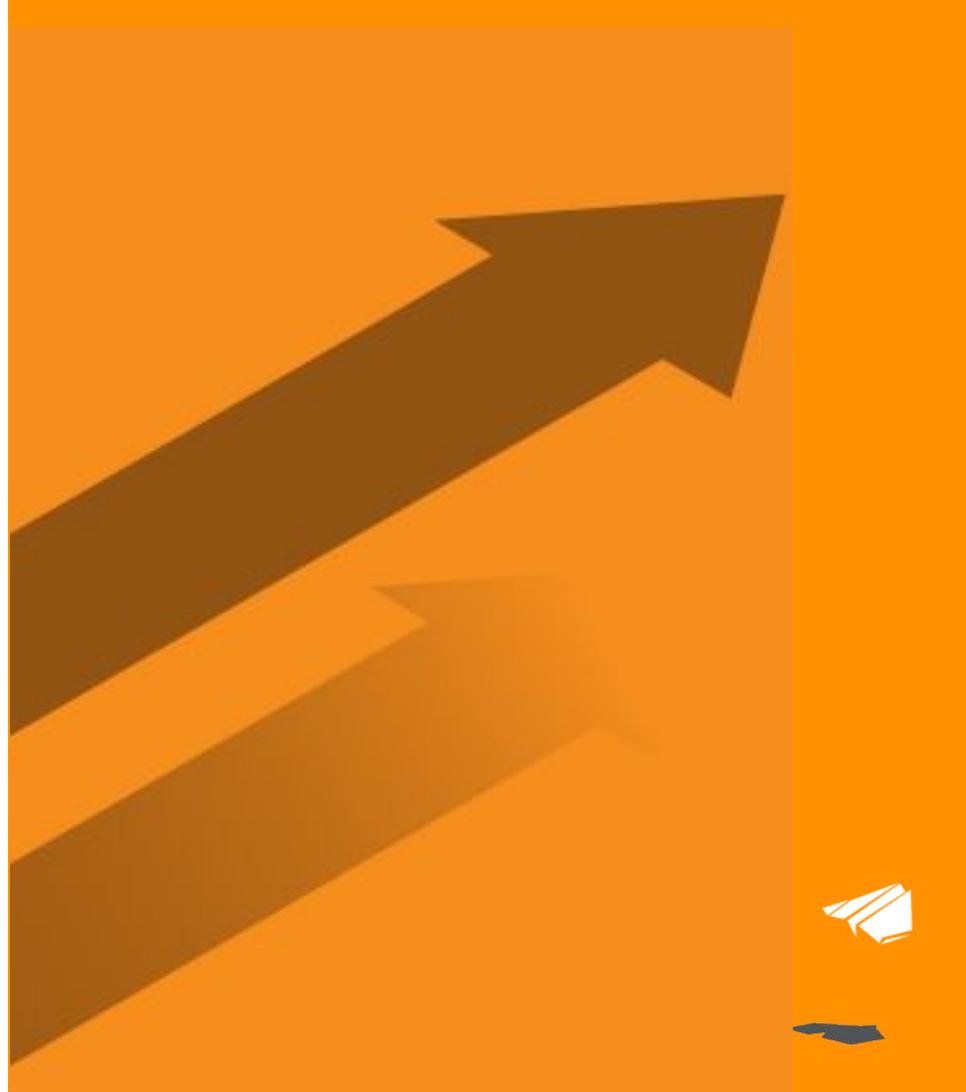
So...not only does critical language help in setting permissions, sourcing permissions from critical language revitalizes that language.



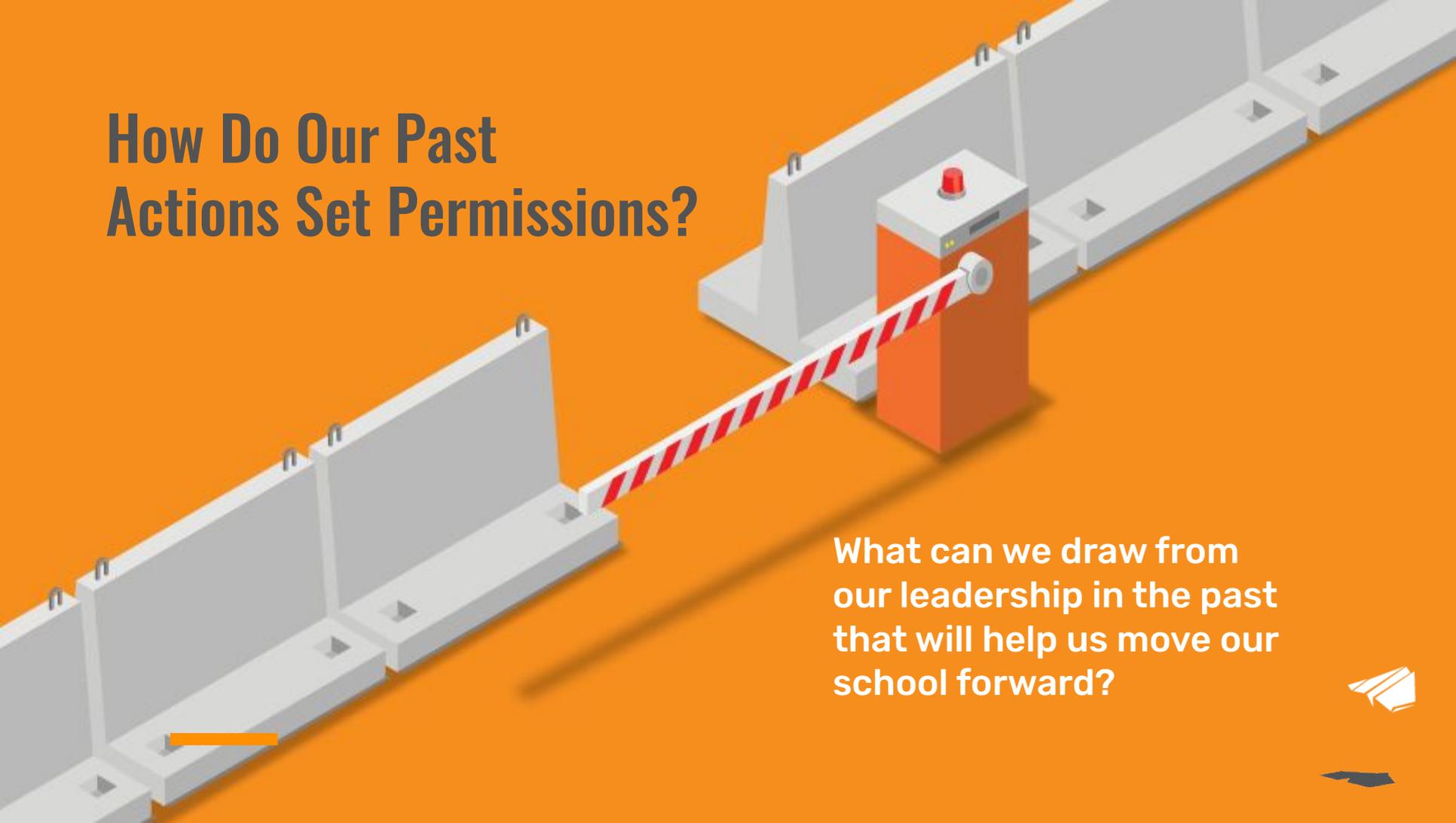
# Critical Language: **USE IT OR LOSE IT**

In short, schools lose the functionality of their most critical language unless the school leadership and the school community use it to co-create the way forward and drive toward its aspirations.

Permission setting is requisite to both maintain the relevance of critical language and to create the traction for strategic execution.



# How Do Our Past Actions Set Permissions?

A 3D illustration of a road barrier system. The barrier consists of several grey concrete blocks connected by a red and white striped boom arm. The boom arm is currently in a horizontal position, blocking the way. The background is a solid orange color. The text "How Do Our Past Actions Set Permissions?" is written in a bold, dark grey font in the upper left corner.

What can we draw from our leadership in the past that will help us move our school forward?

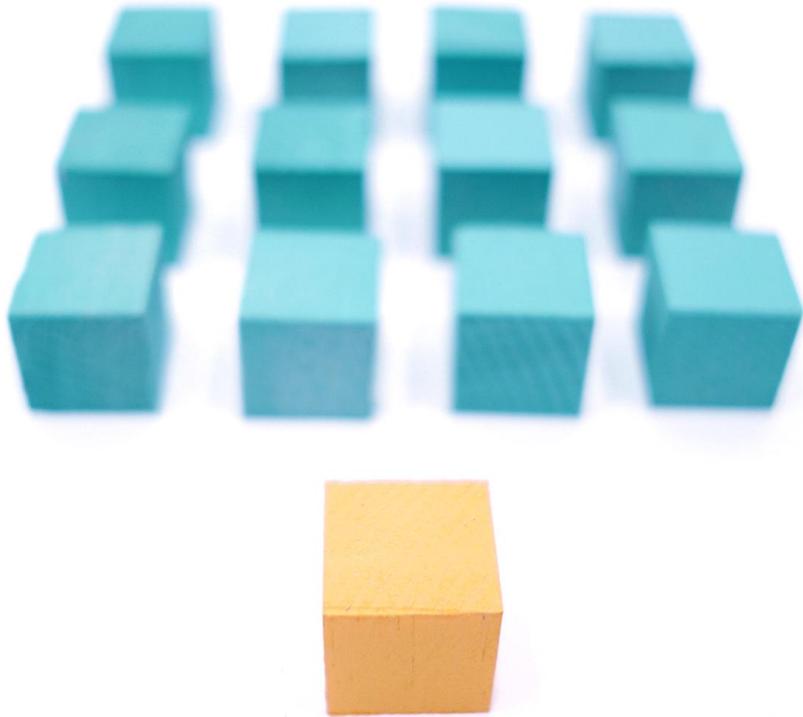


# ACCELERATION WITHOUT SLOPPINESS

How to set the right permissions in an environment when people are getting used to faster change.

1. **Create Clarity** - ambiguity is an enemy of healthy permissions.
2. **Let the Permissions Work** - micromanagement is an enemy of sustaining healthy permissions.
3. **Lead on the Front End of a Process**
4. **Set Up an Inclusive Change Environment** - contributions from myriad voices transform results.





## SET PERMISSIONS

**Lead from the front at the beginning in order to create space for community input and inclusion. Permissions broaden and deepen when our change processes make authentic room for all constituents.**





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Good reasons to postpone, resist, be discriminating. In fact, the way to give permissions legacy for institutions and for leaders is to balance “use it or lose it” with finesse and temperance.

Are we ready to go through this process?  
Are we committed to completing the processes we begin?



When you're thinking  
about PERMISSIONS,  
you're thinking about  
TAKING ACTION



When you're thinking  
about LIMITS,  
you're thinking about  
NOT TAKING ACTION



## BRIEF REFLECTION:

- Beyond your annual goals, how do you know what your permissions are?
- How are those messages conveyed?
- How and how often are they reinforced?
- What are two of your most important permissions?
- How would you name how your school's permissions have changed in the last year?
- What is unclear about your permissions?

