

## STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TOOL

*Who are the key stakeholders in my state that must be engaged?*



**The purpose of this mapping tool is to support identifying what stakeholders to engage when determining whether to transition to a through-year assessment system, planning for a transition, and designing and piloting a new assessment system.**

### **Guidance:**

Rather than simply identifying a list of stakeholders to engage, we suggest creating a stakeholder map which visually captures the network of stakeholders who are impacted by your state's assessment system. A stakeholder map can help you not only identify who to engage, but can illuminate valuable information that can influence how you engage and ways the network may need to be improved to support the development and implementation of your vision. A stakeholder map can help demonstrate:

- + The connections between stakeholders and the strength of these connections
- + The influence and power centers within a network
- + How resources, information and influence move within the network
- + The roles stakeholders play in the network
- + Gaps in connections and opportunities for relationship building

Below we outline the key steps in creating a stakeholder map and provide a simple example. Stakeholder maps are best created in groups in a dynamic setting. We recommend creating a stakeholder map during an event like a team meeting, an advisory council meeting or during a strategic planning retreat and revisiting it over time. Aim to ensure the group creating the stakeholder map has a diverse set of perspectives and relationships. Depending on the level of detail or complexity you want to capture, you may create multiple stakeholder maps focused on more targeted networks.

To create the map, utilize a large blank space—such as white board or chart paper. Sticky notes can be useful for capturing the names of stakeholder organizations, groups and individuals. Alternatively, you can utilize software designed for mapping connections.

## Steps for Creating a Stakeholder Map:

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### **Step 1: Identify the topic and boundaries of your system. *What scale will you be working at?***

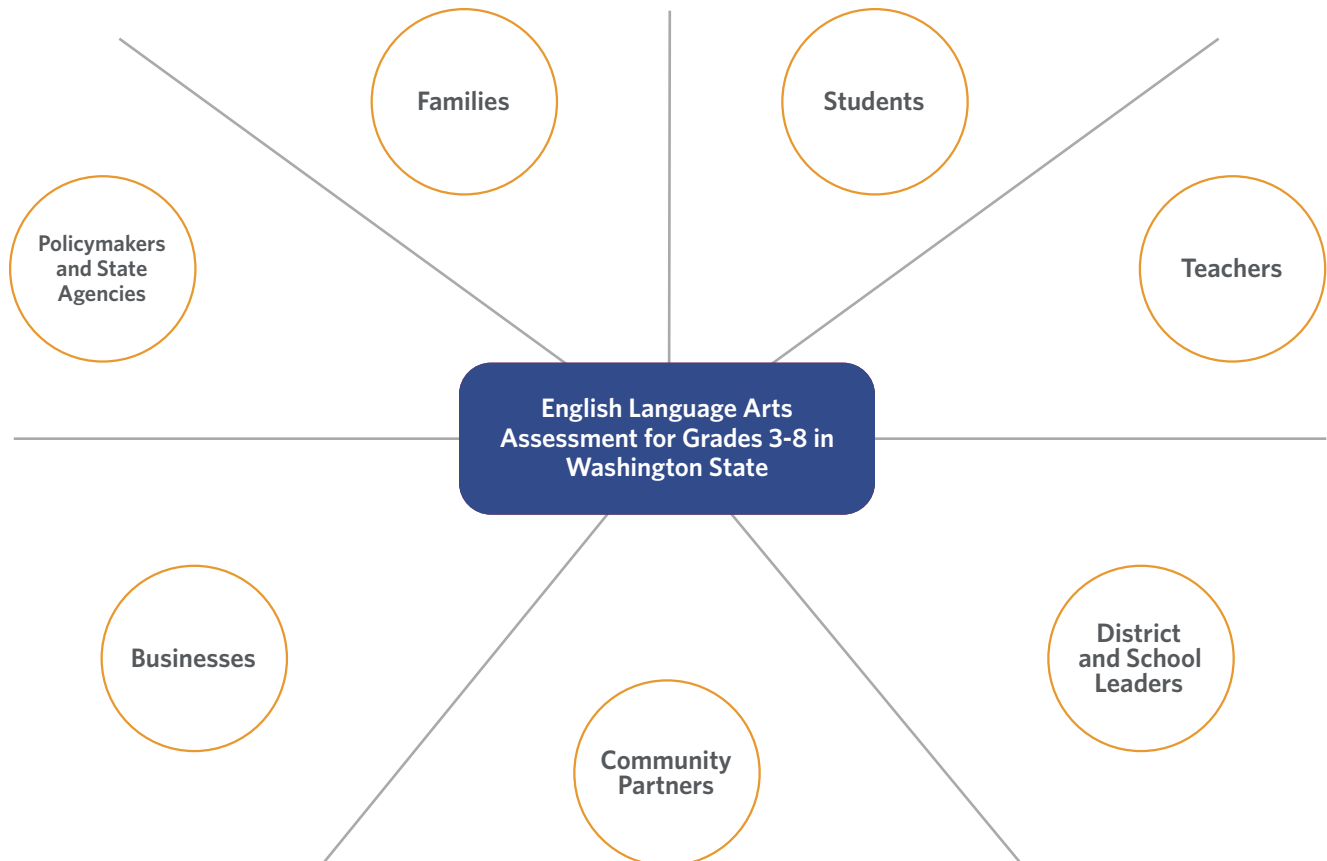
- + The topic describes the system and/or issue you are working on, while the boundaries describe the scale or geography of your system. In this case, at its most basic the topic is your state's assessment system and the boundaries are your state; but you should get more targeted depending on your vision—what subject are you focused on? What grade levels? If you are in the development phase, your boundary might be smaller—the set of schools and districts you are piloting your assessment system in.

English Language Arts  
Assessment for Grades 3-8 in  
Washington State

*Example: Identify topic and boundaries of your system*

## Step 2: Frame your system. *What groups of stakeholders are involved?*

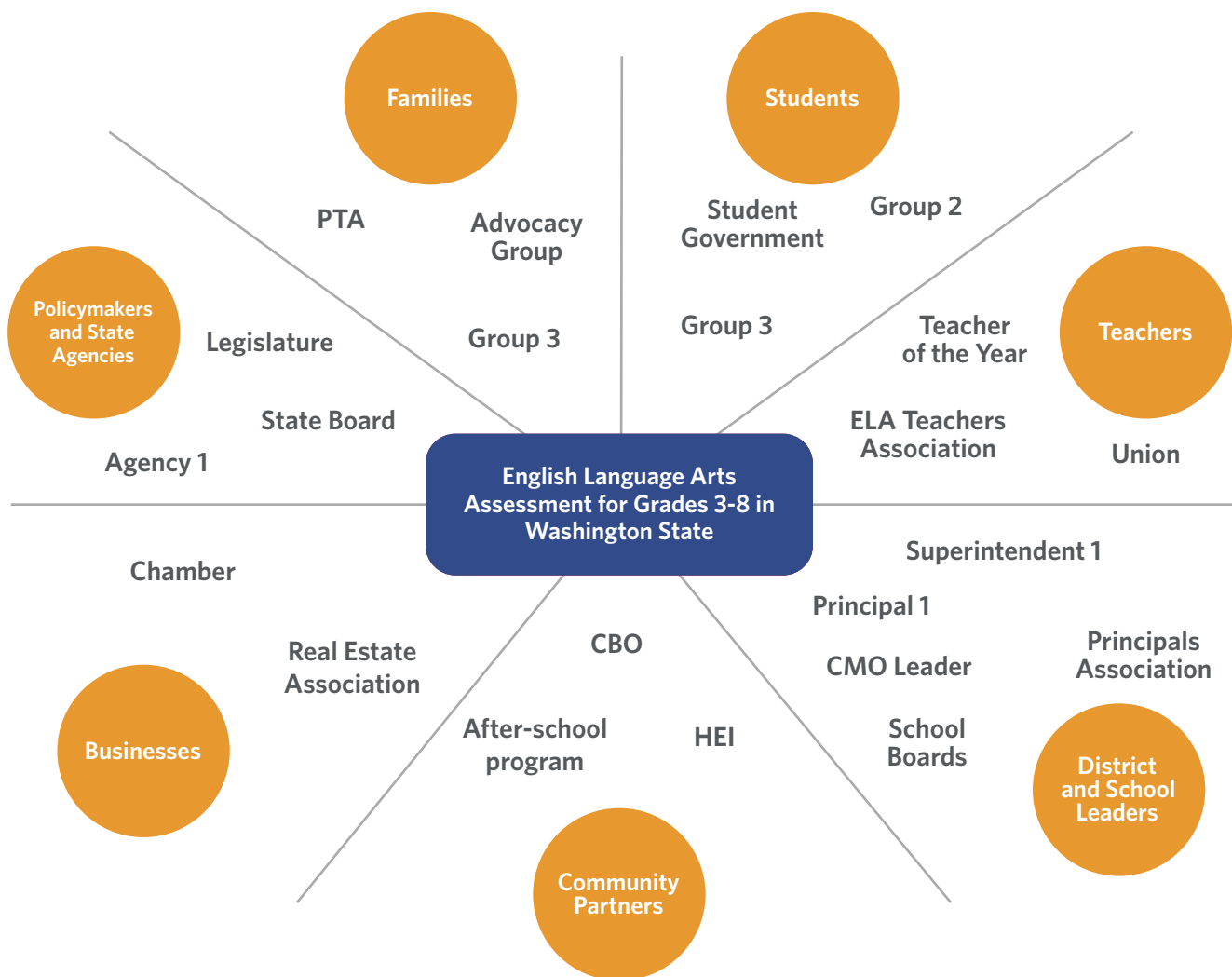
- + The frame of your system is the stakeholder groups within the boundary of your system who are impacted by the topic. These groups will serve as the structure or primary nodes of your network. The identification of stakeholder groups provides an opportunity to expand who is involved in shaping the vision for your assessment system—try to think creatively about groups that should have input on this vision beyond the groups you engage with regularly. Use the questions below to help prompt thinking:
  - + What stakeholders are most proximate to the problem?
  - + What stakeholder groups have historically been underrepresented in discussions about K12 education and assessment?
  - + What stakeholder groups utilize the data produced by state assessments? What groups make or could make decisions using the data?
  - + What stakeholders do you interact with on a regular basis?
  - + What stakeholder groups provide funding for assessment?
  - + What stakeholder groups research assessment or use assessment data in their research?
  - + What stakeholder groups create policy on assessment?



*Example: Frame your system*

**Step 3: Name key stakeholders and their roles. *Who are the specific organizations, groups and individuals within each stakeholder group who have influence, should have influence or are connected to this work?***

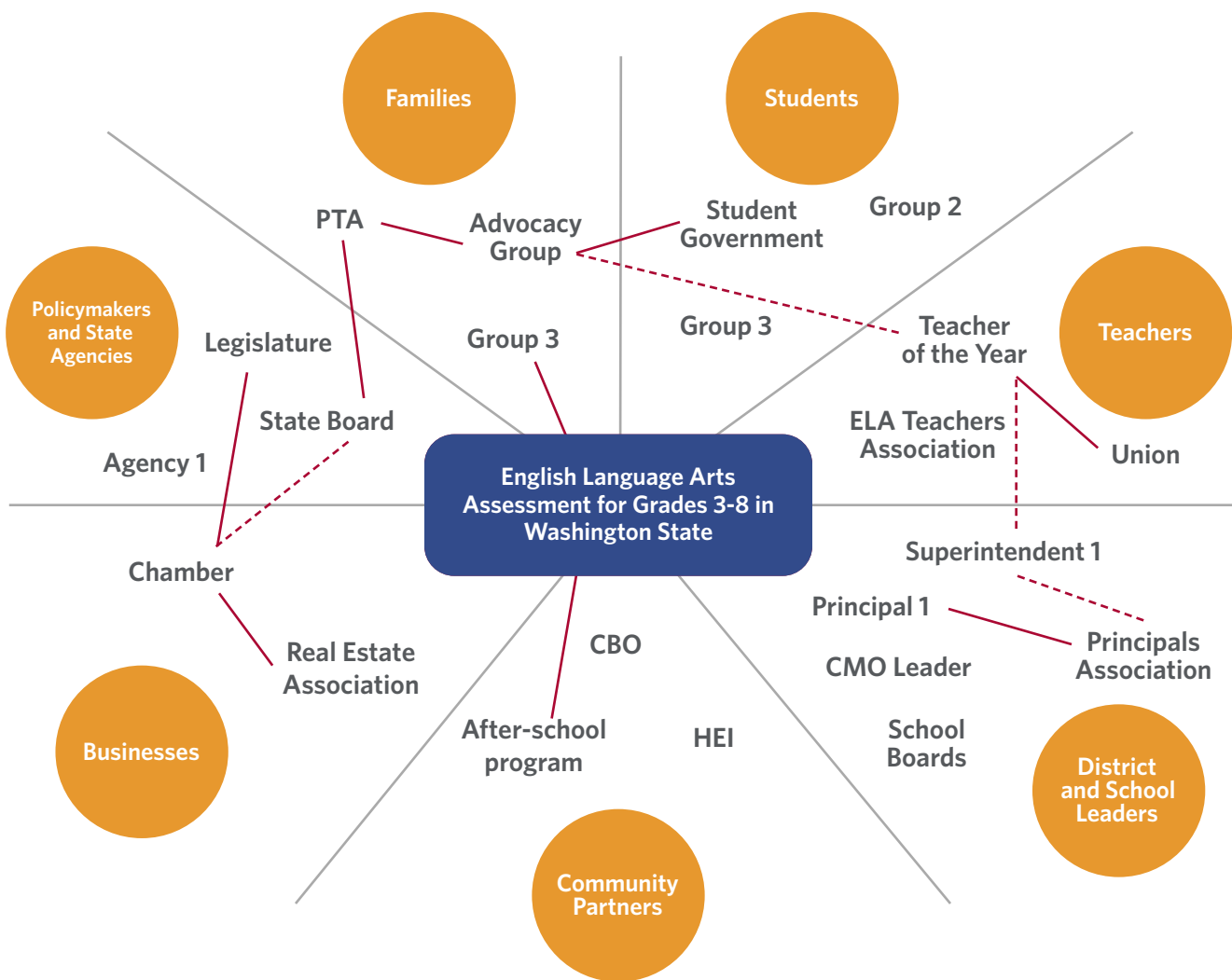
- + This step offers an additional opportunity to expand who is involved in shaping the vision of your assessment system. Think about who has been historically underrepresented in discussions on K12 education and assessment.
- + This step will be deeply influenced by the knowledge of those creating the stakeholder map and the resources you are utilizing. None of us are experts on all the stakeholder groups. Consider your biases and limitations and who might provide input on the specific organizations, groups and individuals to engage with in stakeholder groups you have limited knowledge of.



*Example: Name key stakeholders and their roles*

### Step 4: Make connections visible. *How are these individuals, groups and organizations connected?*

- + Draw lines between individuals, groups and organizations. Utilize solid lines to indicate strong relationships and dotted lines to indicate growing or weaker relationships.
- + The goal of drawing these connections is to help illuminate how information and resources move within the network, who may shape the perspectives of other stakeholders, and what gaps exist. To accomplish this focus on capturing the most impactful connections, rather than aiming to be comprehensive.



Example: Make connections visible

## Resources:

In creating this tool, our thinking was shaped by Srikanth “Srik” Gopal and Tiffany Clarke of FSG’s **Guide to Actor Mapping**, which is an excellent resource for more detail.