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Creating a Unified School Culture in a Rural School Serving Families in Multiple Communities

Elliott Roellchen-Pfohl
Western University, eroellch@uwo.ca

Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) addresses the fractured culture of School X resulting from an influx of staff and students from neighbouring communities following rural school closures. The problem of practice (PoP) presented explores ways that a unified school identity can be developed in a receiving school with a student population coming from three separate communities. Through the utilization of both distributed and authentic leadership, the methods that principals of rural schools can use to address this problem are explored. The focus of the problem when viewed through social capital theory is that all stakeholders of the school have not been given the opportunity to build trusting relationships with one another so that a cohesive identity can be established (Liou & Chang, 2008). Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process model is used to guide the change implementation plan, which recommends putting into practice a relationship-based program requiring participation from students, staff members, and family members to repair the fractured school culture. The implications of the change plan are that the development of trusting relationships between staff members and families of students in the school will provide opportunities for all stakeholders to realize a sense of belonging in the school, contributing to higher levels of social capital and a more cohesive school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016). This will be of interest to leaders of rural schools serving families in multiple geographical communities, as well as schools receiving students and staff members from neighbouring communities following permanent school closures.

Keywords: rural schools, unified school identity, school culture, social capital, distributed leadership, authentic leadership

Executive Summary

Many rural schools in Saskatchewan are facing fractured school cultures after receiving staff members and students from neighbouring communities following permanent school closures. The forced reassignment of staff members and students often results in a lack of student participation in school sports and activities, complacent attitudes of staff members, and very little engagement from parents and community members (Bard et al., 2006; Blauwkamp et al., 2011; Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Surface, 2011). This OIP provides a comprehensive look into School X, a rural Saskatchewan school serving families from three geographical communities. Stakeholders of the school do not feel as though they have a role to play in the success of the school, causing low levels of social capital. Stakeholders of the school do not currently have a strong sense of belonging as members of the school community, resulting in the PoP which asks the question: "How can a unified school identity be developed in a receiving school with a student population coming from three separate communities?" This OIP theorises that relationships are the most influential aspect of school culture and implementing a solution focused on building strong relationships among stakeholders in all three communities will lead to a more cohesive school culture for School X (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the organization and the problem at hand. The organizational framework of education in Saskatchewan is broken down into five distinct units, and an overview of each unit provides a clear understanding of School X and its operations within the province. My philosophy of leadership as the change facilitator is explained, and the theoretical approach to leadership outlines the concepts of distributed and authentic leadership, which will both be utilized throughout the implementation of the OIP. The PoP is introduced as the challenge of what actions a principal can take to develop a unified school identity in a school

with a student population coming from three separate communities. When viewing the problem through the lens of social capital theory (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002; Lin, 1988), the school should serve members of all three communities and should allow all stakeholders to feel a sense of belonging within the school (Liou & Chang, 2008), which is not currently the case for School X. A PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) provides an overview of the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors of the organization, allowing for further insight into the driving forces for change. Three lines of inquiry stemming from the problem are explored as guiding questions and are used to guide the following chapters in their suggestions for solutions to the problem. The leadership-focused vision for change articulates the gap between the current and desired state of the organization, while drawing on distributed and authentic leadership theories to address the change at hand. The change readiness of the organization is also analyzed to determine competing forces that shape the change in order to best choose a suitable solution for change.

Chapter 2 provides the planning and development of a solution to be implemented in the organization to address the PoP. It begins by exploring distributed and authentic leadership and the ways that they will each be utilized throughout the change process. Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) tool is used to complete a critical analysis of School X, illustrating evident change gaps that need to be addressed at the student level, staff level, and parent and community member level. Three possible solutions are analyzed for the change solution: Comer's School Development Program, Kaplan and Owings' Culture Re-boot, and Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV). After the strengths, weaknesses, and resources required for each solution are considered, it is determined that PTHV is the most appropriate solution for establishing and maintaining a cohesive school identity for all

stakeholders and members of School X. The chapter ends with the ethical considerations and challenges that are unique to change leaders of rural schools, with respect to the personal level, professional level, and organizational level.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed change implementation plan for School X, including the necessary actions to be taken during each step of Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process. Supports and resources are discussed in detail, as well as anticipated stakeholder reactions. A table outlining the entirety of the change implementation plan provides an easy to follow guide to implement the change. Potential implementation challenges are discussed, including the complacent attitudes of current staff members that may not feel that any changes are necessary, as well as the temptation to be impatient when following Kotter's change plan. A detailed plan to communicate the need for change and the change process provides goals for the prechange phase, the phase which develops the need for change, the midstream phase, and the ending phase which confirms the change. The subsequent section provides an overview of monitoring and evaluation, and the importance of planning for each concept throughout the change plan for four distinct reasons: to provide expected outcomes based on the vision, to continue to assess the changing environment, to guide and pivot the change as necessary, and to bring the change process to a successful end (Cawsey et al., 2016).

The OIP closes with a discussion of the next steps and future considerations required to create a unified school culture in rural schools serving families from multiple communities. After the initial implementation of the OIP, the next step recommended is to revisit steps four through eight of Kotter's change plan, as the program has the potential to be ongoing for the foreseeable future of School X. After the implementation of the OIP is complete, future considerations at the student, staff, family and community levels should also be considered.

Acknowledgements

To my family and friends: *thank you for your constant support - I love you all.*

To Gram: *finally, a doctor in the family!*

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Acronyms

CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees)

FNMI (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit)

OCAI (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PD (Professional Development)

PESTE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Environmental)

PLC (Professional Learning Community)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

PTHV (Parent Teacher Home Visits)

RPSD (Rolling Prairie School Division)

SCC (School Community Council)

SRC (Student Representative Council)

STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation)

Definitions

School Culture: The guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates (Fullan, 2007) and "the unwritten rules that have been passed on through the decades" (Gruenert, 2008, p. 57).

Stakeholders: Those invested in the welfare and success of School X and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials.

OurSCHOOL Survey: A survey designed to collect information such as measures of students' inclusion and engagement, facilitated by an external consultant contracted by the Ministry of Education. All students in Grades 4-12 in Saskatchewan's public education sector are required to complete the survey twice yearly, while staff members and parents are also invited to complete the survey. The anonymous results are available for administrators to view and share with stakeholders as they see fit (RPSD, 2020).

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

This chapter begins with an introduction to the history and organizational structure of

School X and its school division, operating within the public education system in Saskatchewan.

The school is currently serving members from three geographical locations after rural school

closures, contributing to a fractured school culture. The leadership PoP is introduced and framed

within the organization to better understand the present gaps illustrating the problem and the

three main groups impacted by the problem: students, staff members, and families and

community members. Three guiding questions emerging from the problem are explored to

further guide the change plan. The leadership-focused vision for change is discussed in detail,

utilizing both distributed and authentic leadership styles. Lastly, the change readiness of the

organization is analysed to determine competing internal and external forces that shape change.

Organizational Context

School X is a public school located in Community X, a rural community in

Saskatchewan, Canada. The school has approximately 200 students enrolled in grades

kindergarten through twelve and employs approximately 30 staff members (i.e., principal, vice

principal, teachers, educational assistants, librarian, secretary, custodians, and bus drivers).

Located in a town with a population of less than 500, the school also serves the surrounding two

communities, as well as many farming families living in the area. Approximately 50% of the

students attending the school do not live in Community X and are bussed from their homes to

and from school each day, with some students riding the bus for more than 60 minutes each way.

The school building offers rental rates to the public for activities on the evenings and weekends

and it is utilized for music lessons, gymnastics, yoga, archery, and adult recreational sports.

Children can often be found on the playground after school hours and the football field is a

frequent hangout spot for teenagers on the weekends. The school also has two classrooms that have been leased out for the use of a privately funded daycare centre. The school was officially opened in 1953 and multiple generations of families have attended the school.

School X is located within Rolling Prairie School Division ([RPSD] anonymized for the purpose of the improvement plan). This is a large school division in both population and physical size, consisting of over 25 schools in more than 15 communities and spanning a geographical area of over 20,500 square kilometers. The schools have a combined enrolment of approximately 5,700 students and over 900 staff members. Five of the division's schools are located in an urban setting with the remaining 24 schools being rural, that is, in communities with a population of less than 10,000 residents.

Organizational History

In 2006, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a three-phase program to renew the provincial school system, with phase one being the renewal and restructuring of school divisions. Following this announcement, 71 public school divisions in the province were amalgamated to become the 18 school divisions that exist today (Ali, 2016); resulting in the forced closures of 46 schools provincewide (Ministry of Education, 2008). Participants of these closures noted that the changes were overwhelming for all stakeholders involved, as many changes were required to occur at once (Kirk, 2008). Due to the government's initial and subsequent renewal programs, School X has absorbed a number of students and staff members from two surrounding communities, School Y and School Z, in the last fourteen years. This influx of students and staff members has resulted in a lack of cohesion in the school's identity and a weakened sense of belonging for its stakeholders. As a student attending School Y during the June 2006 amalgamations, I experienced fear and apprehension as I was forced to attend

School X without any facilitated transition process or support while entering the new school. As I entered School X in the fall of 2006, I was welcomed by the staff but was expected to immediately conform to the identity of a School X student. Before School Z was closed in June 2014, more was done to support the student's transition as they joined School X students on field trips throughout the 2013-2014 school year and attended School X for a variety of activities to get to know their new students and classmates. Although the transition process was better supported than the closure of School Y in 2006, the students and staff members of School Z still felt as though they were expected to conform to School X's routines and procedures. As in many rural communities after school closures, the surrounding communities of School Y and School Z continue to work toward maintaining their own unique identities while also trying to fit into the structure of School X and its community (Bard et al., 2006; Blauwkamp et al., 2011; Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Surface, 2011).

To those who have not attended a rural school in Saskatchewan, it may be difficult to understand the lifelong impact that can exist because of one single school. To the few who have had the unique privilege of attending the same school as their parents and grandparents, a legacy of pride in the school is embedded in each family and the traditions of the school become synonymous with the traditions of the community and its members (Schollie et al., 2017). This unique opportunity allows students in rural Saskatchewan to build strong relationships with teachers and fellow students, as many of them are relatives and close family friends, which then strengthens the collective identity of the community (Miller, 1993; Onescu & Giles, 2012). To an outsider, Communities X, Y, and Z may seem eerily similar as they are each made up of primarily farming families of the same race and religion, and each town houses similar amenities (apart from a school). Yet, each community has been made up of traditions that have been

formed by each school serving multiple generations of families, contributing to a strong

community identity (Lane & Dorfman, 1997; Miller, 1993; Onescu & Giles, 2021). For example,

School Y was traditionally recognized as having a strong basketball team. Both the boys and

girls high school teams have won multiple provincial titles, and the school gymnasium walls

were adorned with banners displaying winning titles from the past four decades. School Y hosted

elite tournaments and was well-known in the province for producing high-level athletes. This

tradition of athletics is not valued in School X. A meaningful tradition of School Z was that they

valued music greatly. The school had a "Jam Club" consisting of students and teachers that were

given many opportunities to learn new instruments and foster a love of music while jamming

together during weekly rehearsals. The Jam Club hosted a performance each Spring in their

school gymnasium where students and staff members performed a concert of classic rock,

country, and popular music, with members taking turns playing multiple instruments throughout

the evening and sharing their vocal talents. With over 250 friends and family members attending

at the school and thousands more watching via a live stream, the concert also acted as a

fundraiser for the club to purchase new instruments and equipment. After the closure of School

Z, the meaningful tradition of Jam Club ended and continues to be disappointing for members of

Community Z.

Although the closures of Schools Y and Z occurred many years ago, a legacy of impact

that is cultural in nature continues to exist. As students and staff members from Communities Y

and Z continue to live in their respective communities while attending School X in Community

X, they are faced with the challenging reality of losing their own community's legacy of

traditions that were once based on the rural school that existed in their towns for generations

(Kirshner et al., 2010). The current disconnect of school culture in School X stemming from the

school amalgamations continues to persist because of the personal pride that is held by each member of Communities X, Y, and Z and each person's fear of losing their identity as a member of their respective hometown (Kirshner et al., 2010; Schollie et al., 2017).

Organizational Framework

The organizational framework of the education system in Saskatchewan is made up of five distinct units: the Ministry of Education, the local Board of Education, the School Division, the School Community Council, and the school. Each section of the framework has its own guiding values and beliefs, as well as distinct leaders with established leadership styles. Each of these elements of the framework have impact on the problem at hand.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is a branch of the Government of Saskatchewan, led by the Minister of Education. The ministry is responsible for creating the provincial K-12 curriculum that must be taught in all Saskatchewan schools and creating legislation and regulations for education in the province. The mission of the Ministry of Education is to provide:

> strategic, innovative, and collaborative leadership to the early learning and child care, Prekindergarten through Grade 12 education, literacy and library sectors. It promotes student success, well-being for Saskatchewan children and youth, and improved family literacy as a foundation of the province's social and economic growth. (Ministry of Education, 2020, "Mission Statement" section)

The ministry determines the yearly budget for education in the province, allocated through the funding distribution model. The ministry adheres to a *neoliberal* approach to public education, that is "the deregulation of private industry, increased regulation of the public sector, tax cuts (especially for corporations and the wealthy), privatization of the commons, and the weakening

of collective bargaining rights for workers" (Orlowski, 2015, p. 225). This approach is most evident through the ministry's consistent budget cuts to school divisions, causing reductions in staffing and resources at the school level each year. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to use education funds provided by tax dollars for standardized tests, having students perform more testing than any other province in Canada (Orlowski, 2015). To further illustrate the neoliberal approach, it is interesting to note that "Saskatchewan has the highest property and school taxes in the whole of Canada" (Dawson, 2008). Ultimately, this neoliberal approach was a guiding factor in the closing of Schools Y and Z in an attempt to save money on school operating costs (Perrins, 2016), contributing to the problem at hand.

School Board

The ten member Board of Education, consisting of six members elected from rural areas and four members elected from the city in which the school division board office is located, is the body responsible for governing RPSD. The Board is responsible for representing the public and establishing the direction of the school division, as is the case with all public school divisions in Saskatchewan. The Board delivers overall direction for the division through the creation of a strategic plan and various policies; by providing accountability to the provincial government; by providing human resources by selecting the Director of Education for the school division and delegating, evaluating, and reviewing her role; and by providing leadership through the approval of all finances in the yearly budget (RPSD, 2020). The Board office is located over 140 kilometers from School X and members of the Board almost never visit School X; most students, staff members, and families of those in School X do not know who the Board members are.

School Division

The Director of Education for the school division is entering her third year in the position and has made large strides in promoting change within the division during this short time. She creates awareness for change and empowers stakeholders by actively listening to concerns and encouraging transparency among all. Her commitment to the future leaders in our school division shows characteristics of transformational leadership, as she strives to develop efficient leaders (Northouse, 2019). The 2019 strategic plan of the division speaks to the importance of trust between school and community through the goal of enhancing meaningful relationships with students, parents, families, staff and community partners (RPSD, 2018). The guiding values and beliefs states that the division adheres to the value of trust, among others, and it believes that the organization is accountable to students, parents, and the community (RPSD, 2007). The school board and the school division adhere to the same mission, vision, guiding values, and beliefs that are focused on positive environments, collaboration, authenticity, accountability, and shared leadership (RPSD, 2020).

School Community Council (SCC)

Included in the 2006 three-phase program to renew the provincial school system was the establishment of School Community Councils (Ministry of Education, 2016). The government hoped that the SCCs would act as a way to maintain parent and community voice during the challenging time of amalgamations, and they would "retain local voice in larger school boards" (Amendt, 2019, p. 7). The SCCs replaced the local board of trustees and local school advisory committees, and are made up of volunteer parents and community members as well as appointed school-based members (i.e., administrators, one teacher, and one student). The role of the SCC is to "engage parents and community members in school planning and to share responsibility for

the success and well-being of all children and youth" (Ministry of Education, 2016). In a review of two SCCs in Saskatchewan, Stelmach & Preston (2008) found that parents were confused about their role on council and the purpose of the SCC. Without a guided transition and understanding of the new SCC policy, parents and principals alike were unsure of how much involvement parents should and could have in school improvement planning (2008, p. 63). Stelmach & Preston (2008) also found that parents on council were interpreted as community liaisons instead of vital members of school operations (p. 60), which currently holds true for the SCC members of School X. The current SCC for School X is made up of approximately ten parents, most of whom have elementary aged children attending the school. It has been difficult to recruit more parents or any community members to join, and it is especially challenging to encourage members to volunteer to take on the leadership role of the SCC. In recent years, a volunteer for president has not come forward so a shared presidency was put into place, with a different member chairing each meeting. Monthly meetings are open to the public and are advertised through our school's social media channels, yet only official members of the SCC choose to attend. It remains unclear to the school's staff members and the SCC members about the exact role the SCC should be playing in the events, decisions, and success of the school.

School

School X is led by a principal (myself) and vice-principal, both having teaching responsibilities in addition to their administrative duties. Both of the administrators, along with three other staff members, attended and graduated from School X as students. Three staff members were transferred to School X from School Z after its closure in 2006. The small teaching staff of twelve full time teachers delivers instruction to students in grades kindergarten through twelve, with every classroom housing multiple grades and some high school courses

being taught to three grades simultaneously. Located over 100 kilometers from the division

office and any urban schools in the division, the staff and students at School X often feel isolated

from the division as a whole. As is common in many rural schools, this sense of isolation causes

tension as new initiatives are often rolled out without adequate guidance and support to sustain

their success in the smaller, rural schools (Preston et al., 2013). There are often times in

conversations among staff members, students, and even community members when the argument

of "That is how it's always been done here!" is given, causing frustration to those who may

consider themselves outsiders to School X and Community X. The school is rooted in

intergenerational traditions that are not always inclusive of those from the surrounding

communities. This small school, comprising of a variety of students and staff members from

Communities X, Y, and Z, is where the OIP takes place.

Leadership Position and Lens Statement

As the principal of School X, I am recognized as a formal leader in both the school and

school division. The position entails duties including, but not limited to, overseeing daily

operations of the K-12 school, planning and facilitating monthly professional development for

the staff, observing and formally evaluating staff members on a rotational basis, generating and

adhering to the yearly school budget with funds allocated by the division, attending monthly

SCC meetings as the administration liaison, and setting goals and providing direction for the

school each year. As a leader in RPSD, I am expected to be self-sufficient and complaisant to the

expectations of the division. I lead School X with minimal hands-on support from the division

and am trusted to make all decisions at the school level. I am confident in my ability to make

well-informed decisions while always advocating for my staff, students, and community

members, but am sometimes questioned by the school division if my decisions do not completely

align with the ways that other schools in RPSD may operate.

As a lifelong member of Community Y and a graduate of School X, I am also seen by

many as an informal leader in the community. I volunteer my time and talents in a variety of

informal leadership roles including coaching multiple sports teams, cooking and serving meals

for community events, and holding an active role on the church council. I also held many

informal leadership roles within the school division before my time as an administrator, as I

facilitated professional development sessions for teachers on the topics of math, literacy,

technology, and First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) education. My administrative position,

along with my active role in the community, provides me agency to implement the proposed

actions in the OIP in hopes of developing a new and cohesive school culture for School X.

Personal Leadership Model

As the principal of School X, I value leadership that promotes a people-centred approach.

This approach is accomplished by providing opportunities for collaboration among staff

members and encouraging a team-like atmosphere (Preston, 2017). Research shows that this type

of leadership allows staff members of the school to generate pride in their work while also

promoting high levels of job satisfaction (Haar, 2007), which then contributes to the overall

school culture (Robiatun & Rusdi, 2020). I agree with Martin & Garrett (2010) when they share

that collaboration and shared leadership among all stakeholders is essential in promoting change.

I believe that as the leader of School X, my main responsibility is to encourage those around me

and to assist everyone in accomplishing a common goal (Northouse, 2019). This is made

possible by the specific strategies of setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the

organization (Leithwood et al., 2004). As a rural leader, I understand that my position is more

than just a job; "it is a lifestyle that tends to be closely watched by many local community members" (Preston et al., 2013, p. 3). For this reason, I have a responsibility to form and maintain positive relationships with parents and community members so that mutual trust can be established (Ashton & Duncan, 2012). My personal leadership model aligns most with the distributed and authentic leadership approaches and each will be utilized in promoting change within this OIP. Each leadership style which will be introduced in the following sections and then discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership has been defined in different ways throughout literature. It has been described as having multiple staff members take on responsibilities of leadership (Lee et al., 2012); the engagement of many people through action for capacity building (Harris & Mujis, 2005); the division of labour (O'Donovan, 2015); and an interdependency that is created when individuals act together (Spillane, 2005). The attributes most aligned with distributed leadership are collaboration, adaptability relationship building, and mutual support (Harris & Mujis, 2005; O'Donovan, 2015). Rural conditions require the utilization of distributed leadership which encourages more consensus, trust, and cohesion than when any other leadership styles are applied (Bergman et al., 2012). To encourage a cohesive school identity in School X, distributed leadership will be utilized. As a leader in a rural school, I recognize that my job cannot be done alone and that successful leadership must be shared among all staff members in the school (Preston & Barnes, 2017). By facilitating the distribution of various tasks and decisions among all staff members, teacher leaders will be given the opportunity to become highly influential in the future of the school (Anderson, 2008) and their personal wellbeing will be supported (Haar, 2007; Preston & Barnes, 2017). By supporting teacher leaders, the capacity for distributed

leadership is perpetuated (Zepeda, 2007). Leadership will also be distributed among stakeholders as students, parents, and community members will be encouraged to offer their talents to the school community, embracing the notion of social capital theory and the understanding that everyone has an important role to play in the success of the school (Wiesinger, 2007). A more thorough exploration of distributed leadership, along with the benefits and critiques of the approach, will be addressed in Chapter 2.

Authentic Leadership

Much like distributed leadership, authentic leadership does not have one single definition. It has been defined as a person who behaves according to their conscience and morals (Avolio et al., 2004); a recognition of self-knowledge and showing a connection between words and actions (Kouzes & Posner, 2002); being true to oneself and acting according to one's values and beliefs (Gardner et al., 2011). Although one concrete definition of authentic leadership does not exist, Shamir and Eilam's (2005) viewpoint of the intrapersonal approach is most applicable to rural leaders. Shamir and Eilam suggest that authentic leaders are greatly influenced by their personal life experiences which allows genuine leadership to exist through conviction and through the leader's self-knowledge. The attributes most aligned with authentic leadership are transparency (Alavi & Gill, 2017); self-knowledge (Shamir & Eilam, 2005); honesty, loyalty, and responsibility (Michie & Gooty, 2005). These values are especially important in rural circumstances, as successful rural leadership depends on collaborative relationships with staff members, students, parents, and community members (Preston & Barnes, 2017). As a rural principal, my history and involvement in the school and surrounding communities has been a benefit to me as this has been shown to promote trust between the community and the school (Barley & Beesley, 2007). The combination of my informal leadership roles within the school

and community assisted me in my transition from Grade 2 teacher to principal of School X in 2018, as I had already formed many strong relationships with stakeholders who trusted my capabilities as a leader. As a result of the personal experiences of graduating from, teaching in, and now leading my current school, I am able to utilize authentic leadership to provide unique guidance in my community. These critical life events have shaped my beliefs about leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) and will be an asset to me throughout the application of this OIP. A more thorough exploration of authentic leadership, including the benefits and criticisms of this style, will be addressed in Chapter 2.

Theoretical Approach to Leadership

This OIP is grounded in *social capital theory,* which is defined as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). In short, this theory describes "the resources rooted in relationships" (Zhao et al., 2012, p. 575). This is different than human capital, financial capital, and physical capital in the way that it is focused solely on relationships between people or groups of people (Putman, 1995). Putnam (1995) also describes social capital as the features of relationships, such as trust and traditions, that allow members to work together toward a similar goal. Two common forms of social capital exist: *bonding* social capital and *bridging* social capital. Bonding social capital occurs when strong relationships are formed between family members and close friends (Halpern, 2005; Preston, 2013), while bridging social capital describes the connections that are formed between separate communities or groups of people (Claridge, 2018). In the case of School X, opportunities to bridge the connections between members of Communities X, Y, and Z and the

staff members of School X will need to occur so that a cohesive school culture can be established.

Distributed and authentic leadership styles are most aligned with social capital theory in the ways that they each rely on relationships to find success. Distributed leadership is dependent on members working together, as it values collaboration and the sharing of a collective responsibility for student success (Uysal & Holloway, 2020). Authentic leadership values the development and maintenance of transparent relationships with stakeholders (Alavi & Gill, 2017). In a rural context, it is beneficial to utilize both approaches simultaneously because they complement one another in terms of building relationships that will promote bridging social capital. The alignment of these leadership approaches to social capital theory will continue to be discussed throughout the entirety of this OIP.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The neoliberal ideology guiding public education in Saskatchewan has resulted in the increase of blended communities and amalgamated schools following rural school closures. In an attempt to save money on school operating costs (Perrins, 2016), many small schools have been permanently closed and students forced to attend schools in neighbouring communities. The receiving schools are then faced with the difficult task of creating a unified sense of belonging for all stakeholders as an amalgamated school community. As many families continue to live in neighbouring communities, it becomes difficult for the receiving school to create a cohesive identity that will honor the traditions of all students and staff members, resulting in a fractured school culture. This is made visible by a lack of student participation in clubs and teams, a lack of staff interest in change, a lack of family engagement, and a lack of stakeholder investment in School X. Policies to ensure incoming families feel welcomed in the new space do not currently

exist. Principals are often left to plan and facilitate professional development for staff, as well as opportunities for students and parents, that will encourage the development of a unified sense of belonging in the school, but do not have the appropriate training or required resources. As the principal of a rural Saskatchewan school, the problem under investigation is: How can a unified school identity be developed in a receiving school with a student population coming from three separate communities?

Three distinct groups face challenges emerging from the organizational PoP related to the fractured identity of School X: the students currently attending School X, their families, and current staff members of School X. The attitudes of and relationships between these stakeholders, currently residing in and around three different communities, directly impact the culture of School X (Bauch, 2001; Oncescu & Giles, 2012). School closures often generate feelings of fear for students of not belonging in their new schools, and anxiousness of losing their identities that were once connected to their previous schools (Kirshner et al., 2010). Students in School X often bring forth ideas and conversations about traditions from past schools, but are met with the attitude of "That is not how we do things at School X." After forceful student transfers, many parents also feel resentment toward their child's new school (de la Torre & Gwynne, 2009). Following the closures of School Y and School Z, efforts were not made to ensure positive relationships were formed with families from the surrounding communities, resulting in a lack of parental engagement in School X. The overall culture of a school is directly influenced by the individual values, beliefs, and assumptions of each staff member (Schein, 2010). Since School X employs staff members that once taught in School Y, as well as staff members that once attended School X and School Z, the culture is disjointed. When viewing the collective identity of School X through the lens of social capital theory, the school is

more than just a building in the community – it is a common space serving community members from all three communities (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002; Lin, 1988). According to social capital theory, each person obtains their identity from the people around them, by following the rules established by the group and through the foundation of trusting relationships within the members of the group (Liou & Chang, 2008). In the case of School X, all stakeholders of the school have not been given the opportunity to build trusting relationships with one another so that a cohesive identity can be established.

<div align="center">**Framing the Problem of Practice**</div>

In order to better understand the PoP, it is necessary to frame the problem by looking back on the historical overview of school closures in Saskatchewan to situate the current challenge that many receiving schools are facing as they attempt to create a unified school identity while serving families from multiple communities. A PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) will provide an overview of the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors of the organization, allowing for further insight into the driving forces for change. In many cases, relevant literature has deemed it difficult to define the term *rural* (Preston et al., 2013; Schollie et al., 2017), as it has been used to describe both a way of life rooted in agriculture (Pizzoli, 2007; Schollie et al., 2017) as well as a community with a limited number of residents (Schollie et al., 2017). For the sake of this OIP, each author's chosen definition of rural for their particular research has been respected.

Historical Overview of the Problem

Since the passing of The School Act in 1965 allowed for the amalgamation of school boards, school closures have become very common in Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Archival Information Network, n.d.). Two separate educational review studies conducted in 1991 and

1993 recommended the restructuring of Saskatchewan school divisions by making them larger in

order to "strengthen their ability to provide a wide range of programs and services" (Perrins,

2016, p. 9). It was also suggested to have an increased role for parental involvement in decision

making at the school level (Government of Saskatchewan, 1996 as cited in Perrins, 2016). In

1996, a public consultation process was completed to determine how the restructuring should

occur to improve the quality of education, with an emphasis on ways that savings from structural

change could be used to benefit rural and northern communities (Perrins, 2016). The main goal

of the 2006 school division restructuring was to restore fairness and equity to the school system.

In 2009, a new funding model for education in Saskatchewan was presented. This new model

provides funds based on school division operating costs, instead of basing the majority of funds

given on a per-student rate (Perrins, 2016).

School Y, a K-12 school located 26 kilometers from School X, was closed in 2006 with

approximately 40 students enrolled. A large majority of students were forced to attend School X,

while the rest of the students transferred to schools in other neighbouring communities,

depending on the child's geographical location and distance to other available schools. All

children living in Community Y from that year forward were then mandated to attend School X,

as it was drawn within the school's transportation boundary. School Z, a K-12 school located 40

kilometers from School X, was closed in 2014 with approximately 40 students enrolled. Almost

all students were relocated to School X, along with about half of the staff members. The

geographical location of each community in relation to School X is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Location of School X and Neighbouring Schools
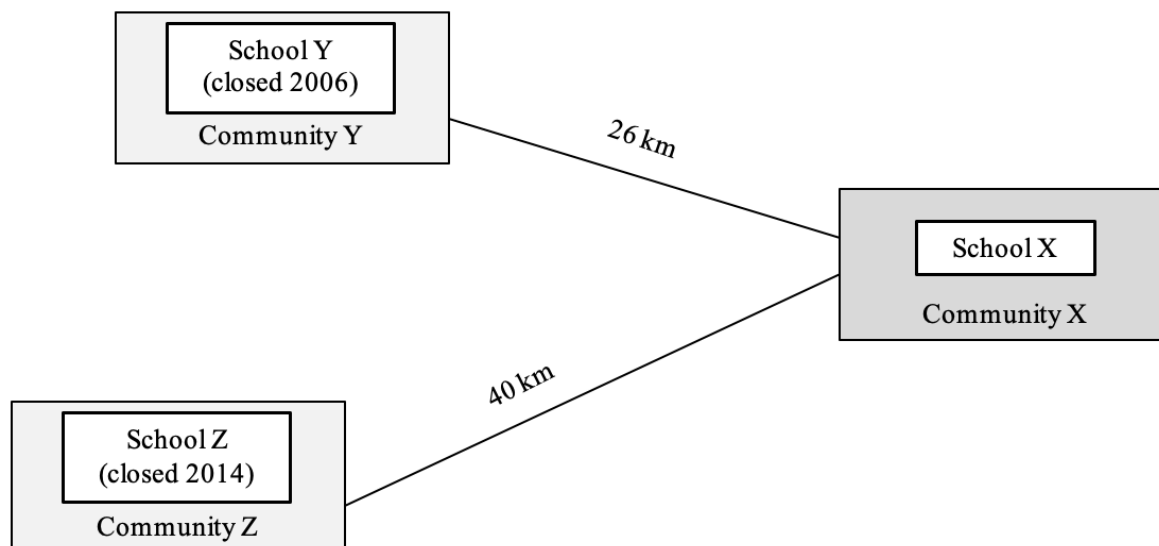
In rural Saskatchewan communities, the school building is more than just a school – it is an attractive feature that may bring newcomers to the community (Simms et al., 2014; Wrigley & Lewis, 2002); it is a community building used for recreational activities, gatherings, and celebrations (Halseth & Ryser, 2006; Lyson, 2002); and it is a significant factor in sustaining the rural traditions and heritage of each specific community (Morton & Harmon, 2011). Research shows that without a school in the community, members feel the sense of loss even years after the closure (Schollie et al., 2017). One participant, when discussing the reason members would prefer their rural school to stay open, stated "People want to work, live, play and pray and be educated in the community where they live" (Schollie et al., 2017, p. 53). It is a source of pride for residents of rural Saskatchewan communities to attend the same school which their parents attended, and to have the opportunity to one day send their own children to that same school (Morton & Harmon, 2011; Schollie et al., 2017). As a result of school closures, this opportunity for generational schooling occurring in the same building was taken away from the residents of Communities Y and Z, contributing to the problem at hand.

Political Factors

As previously discussed, the province of Saskatchewan is guided by the corporate agenda of neoliberalism. The leadership of the Saskatchewan Party has cut funding to education in lieu of personal tax cuts, resulting in a loss of learning conditions for students as well as school staff members (Orlowski, 2015). For School X, yearly budget cuts have contributed to an added feeling of stress within the school community as supports such as speech and language services and counselling are not readily available for students, causing frustration among parents. In some cases, parents have threatened to transfer their children to a different school in a new community in order to receive better services, further contributing to the lack of parent involvement in the school. This lack of trust between the parents and the school is a significant contributing factor to the problem of practice, as the low levels of parental sense of belonging indicates low levels of social capital (Ahn & Davis, 2020).

Economic Factors

The political factors of the organization overlap largely with the economic factors contributing to the problem at hand, as the Government of Saskatchewan is guided by the neoliberal approach with regards to their budgeting decisions (Orlowski, 2015). Most rural school closures are a result of scaling down economic costs and getting more "bang for your buck" (Lyson, 2002, p. 131). Some have argued that smaller schools may be more cost effective than many may think, as amalgamations bring on extra costs related to transportation and administrative mergers (Schmidt et al., 2007), but the operating costs of two school buildings for only 40 students each would be extremely difficult for the school division to justify. In the case of School X, the yearly budget is allocated by the school division and the principal must adhere to what is given, but extra funds can sometimes be acquired through fundraising if approved by

the Board. In the case of School X, yearly budget cuts have resulted in yearly cuts to staffing. As teaching positions are reduced, students programs are forced to end. Most recently, the band program for School X had to be discontinued because budget cuts did not allow for the hiring of a band teacher. This difficult decision caused disappointment among students, parents, and community members alike. The frustration of the school no longer offering a band program has caused further divide among stakeholders of School X.

Social Factors

To better understand the social factors affecting the problem, social capital theory is used. This framework "serves to explain the influence of social position on the development of human capital (which is measured by the level of education)" (Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016, p. 83). It is understood as the benefits of belonging to a group: having someone to go to for information and having someone to help when needed (Wiesinger, 2007). Rural communities often have high levels of social capital because low population numbers allow for more trusting relationships to be formed (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002), but this PoP illustrates the lack of social capital in School X's current school community. The effectiveness of social capital is dependent on the ability to bridge ties between communities (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Since efforts have not been made to build trusting relationships among all stakeholders of School X, the fractured culture and lack of sense of belonging continues to exist and the gap in social capital is perpetuated. When considering the three groups within the organization: students, staff members, and family and community members, each group presents its own challenges with regards to social factors. The students currently attending School X display low levels of social capital and a lack of trust in the school community. These gaps are made visible by a lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, a lack of respect for

school property, and a lack of positive relationships among students and staff members. Staff members voice frustration about the way things are done, often questioning why certain traditions from School X continue while traditions from Schools Y and Z have not been adopted. The parents in all three communities show low levels of participation in student activities and the SCC.

Technological Factors

Covid-19 protocols have made technological factors extremely important to School X, as online learning occurred from March to June 2020 and continued into the 2020-2021 school year as a choice for all families. While this should have allowed for more cohesion and collaboration from students and families regardless of their physical location, this was not the case in School X. As students returned to classrooms in the Fall of 2021, those that chose online schooling were further separated from the school community as they began learning with division-wide cohorts instead of remaining with classmates and teachers from School X.

Environmental Factors

The most influential environmental factor of School X is the school culture. Gruenert (2008) describes *school culture* as "the unwritten rules that have been passed on through the decades" (p. 57). This is directly influenced by the staff, students, and members of the greater school community (i.e., bus drivers, caretakers, parents, and community members). A partnership is developed between the school and members of the greater community, which is based on social interactions, mutual trust, and relationships, all of which cultivate a deeper sense of belonging (Bauch, 2001; Oncescu & Giles, 2012). Rural schools are often the hub of a community (Oncescu & Giles, 2012), which challenges School X and its members from surrounding communities. When a school is closed, the community members face an identity

crisis, as they are now members of two communities – one in which they live, and one in which they associate with the school. One's identity is a challenge to understand as it is both individual and collective, and it is the understanding of a person as themselves but also as their performance in society (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Gee, 1990). A valid fear of students after their school is closed is losing their identity as a student from their hometown's school (Kirshner et al., 2010). As they mourn their previous identity as a member of their old school, they also struggle to a conform and fit into the new school. Although friendships are fostered in the new school, students experience social and physical disconnection from their home community after the school's closure (Oncescu & Giles, 2012). Each of these challenges affecting the students, staff members, families and community members of School X have contributed to the current disjointed school culture, creating this multifaceted PoP.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice

Each parent's perception of school directly impacts their choice to initiate communication with teachers (Sanders & Epstein, 2005), and these perceptions impact the school's identity by setting the tone for whether or not parents feel welcomed in the school. Research shows a clear relationship between the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of parents and student success in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Davidson and Case's (2018) research found that sharing decision-making power through school-family partnerships, as well as developing trusting relationships with student's parents, was very beneficial for students. It is also interesting to note that Raty (2011) found that the ways parents remember their own schooling impacts their involvement in their child's schooling. This understanding alludes to the importance of honoring the schools that have been closed, and brings forth the question: What can be done to encourage

families of all students to engage in the change process so that the former schools, School Y and School Z, can be honored in School X's cohesive identity?

School culture is not a coincidence nor an accident; rather, it is created and can be changed (Constantino, 2003). Leaders have the ability to "embed and transmit culture" (Schein, 2010, p. 235) into their organization and teacher leadership has been found to be essential in successfully promoting change within the school (Angelle & Schmid, 2007). Teacher leaders are those who are willing to work in collaboration with the principal in order to create a stronger school climate and to build community (Cranston, 2000). Burke and Reitzes (1991) have found that one's identity is directly related to one's commitment to their role, meaning that as staff members of School X build a strong identity within the school, their commitment to promote positive change within the school culture will be evident. From these understandings comes the question: How can staff members be empowered to buy-in to the necessary changes and become leaders in the school to assist in creating a unified school identity for School X?

The closures of Schools Y and Z have impacted the social cohesion of each town, as rural schools often provide a means of identity in the community and, without the school, that sense of belonging for the citizens is lost (Bauch, 2001; Kirshner et al., 2010; Lipman & Haines, 2007; Oncescu & Giles, 2012; Witten et al., 2001). Many studies emphasize the importance of the connection of the school with the community as a whole. For example, interviews with community members, teachers, parents, students, principals, and administrators found that a close, collaborative relationship with the community was identified as critical to school success (Agbo, 2007; Barley & Beesley, 2007; D'Amico & Nelson, 2000). In this case, the community as a whole includes members from Communities X, Y, and Z collectively. The question

emerging from this challenge is: How can involvement from all stakeholders contribute to a unified school identity for School X?

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

The vision for change in this OIP is to create a unified school culture in School X. This cultural change will occur when opportunities for bridging social capital are created, which can be accomplished through the formation of trusting relationships between the school and its stakeholders. Frontier and Rickabaugh (2015) pose four questions about change that will be used to explore the leadership-focused vision for change. The questions are: "Why is the change necessary? How much change needs to occur? Where should the change occur? Who will participate in the change process?" (Frontier & Rickenbaugh, 2015, para. 3). These questions will allow a thorough exploration of the current gaps in the organization, the envisioned future state, the priorities for change, and the change drivers.

Currently in School X, there is a gap in the sense of belonging among students. These gaps are made obvious by a lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, a lack of respect for school property, and a lack of positive relationships among students and staff. A large variety of research has found that student involvement in extra-curricular activities contributes to a positive sense of belonging (Bouchard & Berg, 2017; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Nichols 2006, 2008; Osterman, 2000; Wallace et al., 2012). Many extra-curricular activities in School X, such as high school basketball and volleyball teams, are not able to join the league as there are not enough students committed to joining the team. Oftentimes, if there are enough players convinced to join by their friends, the team will begin strong but will not finish the season because of a lack of commitment and participation, forcing the team to forfeit. Vandalism of school property is also an ongoing challenge in School X. School devices such as laptops and

iPads, as well as school sports equipment such as racquets and balls, are often broken to the point of not being usable, demonstrating that many students do not take pride in the school's belongings. Another illustration of a low sense of belonging among students in School X is the lack of positive relationships among teachers and students. Bouchard and Berg (2017) found caring relationships between teachers and students to be an influential factor in student's sense of belonging. According to the 2019 OurSCHOOL survey, a provincially mandated survey for all middle years and high school students in Saskatchewan, the rate of students at School X that reported positive teacher-student relationships has dropped from 5.6 in 2018 to 5.0 in 2019; each year falling short of the Canadian norm of 6.5 on a 10-point rating scale.

Among the staff members at School X, there is a gap between the current state of separation and the desired state of collective efficacy and ability to work as a team unit, supporting one another and collaborating for the sake of the students. Teacher collaboration has been found to be the most significant factor in school improvement (Little, 1993; McLaughlin, 1997; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989; Slater, 2004). With the influx of new teachers and students over the past 14 years, School X has become a diverse environment of members, each with their own unique educational experiences and expectations making it difficult for everyone to feel a sense of pride in the new school as it continues to operate in its old ways. As new staff members are hired to join the school, they are quickly introduced to the core group's beliefs about the way things should be done and, through the socialization process (Schein, 2010), the fractured culture is perpetuated.

Although efforts are continually made to invite parents to take part in their children's learning at School X, only 50% of parents of students in grades seven to twelve attended the 2019 Fall Student Led Conferences (RPSD, 2019). The current gap of parental engagement in

the school is one more factor contributing to the school's lack of a cohesive identity, as parental involvement in schools contributes to higher levels of social capital and a stronger sense of community (Park et al., 2017). The SCC annual general meetings are not well attended, even with creative efforts attempted to gain participation like providing child-care during the meetings and offering prizes for participants. Community members, especially those from Communities Y and Z, have not been given opportunities to build trust with the school staff. Even those members without school-aged children are impacted, as rural schools often serve as more than just a school (Lyson, 2002). For these stakeholders that no longer have an operating school in their own community, they no longer feel associated with School X as it is not in their hometown. Rural communities often have high levels of social capital because low population numbers allow for more trusting relationships to be formed (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002), but these gaps illustrate the lack of social capital in School X's current school-community.

Envisioned Future State

The proposed future state of School X is for staff, students, and community members to come together to create a new and encompassing identity of the school for the benefit of all stakeholders. It would be a school that everyone is proud to attend, work at, and send children to. It would host a positive atmosphere that honors the surrounding communities through its traditions and rituals. It would have a joyful culture. It would see an increase in participation by all stakeholders. Students would become more involved in extra-curricular activities like sports teams and clubs. Teachers would be working collaboratively with one another and volunteering their time to coach and lead students outside of school hours. It would have high levels of parent engagement, as they would be involved in their children's learning through the SCC or attending school functions. Community members would hold the belief that the school is the hub of the

community and the students are the future of each town. They would be invited to lend their talents to the school to assist in teaching new skills to the students and would be excited to attend sports games and school events. There would be high levels of social capital (Weisinger, 2007), as everyone would feel like they have an important role to play in the school. The changes proposed through the OIP will inform change for all rural schools in Saskatchewan.

The envisioned future state of education in Saskatchewan would be one that is better prepared to support rural school amalgamations. The support will be seen through resources and training for rural administrators so that they can better facilitate cohesive school identities after receiving students and staff members following school closures.

When considering how long the change will take, one must remember that "culture change is a slow process" (Constantino, 2003, p. 12). The changes from the OIP will need to be prioritized, with the attitudes of stakeholders being the most important, as the stakeholders are "critical participants in the change process" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 199) and must be treated that way. Since the teachers, parents, and students did not have control over the changes that occurred in the past with regards to school amalgamations, they may now feel that they were passive throughout the process. This often causes feelings of power to diminish and each stakeholder may feel like they are no longer valued in the organization (Cawsey et al., 2016). The envisioned future state will value all stakeholders by regularly seeking their input and expertise, so that they take pride in School X.

Priorities for Change

Since it has been found that school culture is rooted in relationships (Deal & Peterson, 2016), the most significant priorities for change are the relationships among stakeholders. In School X, the lack of trusting relationships between students and staff members, as well as

parents and staff members, has contributed to the current state of a fractured school culture. The sense of belonging for students is also a contributing factor to the school's culture (Dukynaite & Dudaite, 2017). According to Albert (2012), the following three factors affect a student's sense of belonging in school: communication, opportunity, and participation (Dikynaite & Dudaite, 2017). These factors also become priorities for change as a unified school culture is created to increase the sense of belonging for all stakeholders. Communication is a priority for change among all stakeholders. Without clear communication, a cohesive identity cannot be established. Opportunity for collaboration at a school level and division level is another priority for change. Currently, because of the geographical isolation of School X, face-to-face collaboration with other teachers is unlikely. Creative modes can be used to assist relationship building among teachers, such as virtual collaboration. Students at the school will also need opportunities to collaborate with one another so that relationships can be built. Participation among all stakeholders is the final priority for change. By encouraging members from all three communities to engage in School X, it can become a community school in the sense that it is a school made possible by the contributions of community members, thus embracing the social capital theory (Constantino, 2003).

The key players for change are the stakeholders of School X. Internally, the stakeholders are the students, teachers, educational assistants, caretakers, librarian, secretary, bus drivers, and vice-principal – all of whom are led daily by the principal. Externally, the stakeholders are parents, community members, school division consultants, superintendents, and the director of education – all given direction from the Board of Education, which takes directives from the Government of Saskatchewan. The priority for change must be to include all stakeholders in the change process as "intrinsic motivation, instructional improvement, teamwork, and 'allness' are

the crucial elements for whole system reform" (Fullan, 2011, p. 3). The theoretical framework of

social capital (Weisinger, 2007) will help stakeholders understand that they can all benefit by

belonging to the group of School X, as everyone has a unique part to play in the combined

school's identity and culture. By digging deeper into bridging social capital, stakeholders will

come to realize that these newly formed relationships can provide access to new resources than

can be found within one's own community (Claridge, 2018). In this sense, an increase in

bridging social capital will provide all stakeholders the opportunity to build relationships with

other stakeholders whom they may not have otherwise (Putnam, 2000), thus establishing a

unified culture in School X.

Change Drivers

To best understand the change drivers, the question "Who has to change their behavior or

act differently for the change to be successful?" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 200) is considered. The

change cannot be taken on by the change leader alone, as the transformation of schools is too

large a task for one person to accomplish singlehandedly (Lashway, 2003, p. 3; Uysal &

Holloway, 2020). In the case of School X, the internal change will be led by myself as the leader

of the school, along with the school staff. The staff members have great impact on school culture

and it is crucial to note that "one of the key roles in fostering the sense of school belonging is

attributed to the teacher and school in general" (Dukynaite & Dudaite, 2017, p. 41). Distributed

leadership will be utilized to encourage all staff members of School X to be drivers of change by

going *all-in* with the proposed changes. This leadership style will also generate more

collaboration and trust among those involved (Bergman et al., 2004; Northouse, 2019). Authentic

leadership will also be used to gain trust from stakeholders, by creating connections through

critical life experiences (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). My own experience as a student in School Y

when it was closed and my forceful transfer to complete high school at School X has provided

me an authentic understanding of the experiences of many stakeholders.

Stakeholders of School X will also be recognized as prominent change drivers throughout

the OIP, as they have a critical role to play in the culture shift of School X. The culture of the

school is influenced by the beliefs, traditions, attitudes, and relationships of all members of the

school, including the stakeholders (Prokopchuk, 2016). Without family and community

engagement, a cohesive school culture along with high levels of social capital cannot be

achieved (Park et al., 2017). The school must institute an open door policy so that a cyclical

system can be established which consists of raising students within the school system for the

sake of establishing contributing community members who will then, in turn, send their children

to the school (Friedman, 1986; Gibson & Blandford, 2005). Without the participation of parents

and community members, this cyclical system cannot be achieved. When stakeholders are

invited to participate in the school community, the benefits are three-fold: for the members

invited, for the staff of the school, and for the students (Gibson & Blandford, 2005).

Organizational Change Readiness

Judge and Douglas (2009) have constructed a scale to assess eight dimensions which

determine an organization's readiness for change and they are: "trustworthy leadership, trusting

followers, capable champions, involved mid-management, innovative culture, accountable

culture, effective communication, and systems thinking" (p. 638). Cawsey et al.'s (2016) *Table*

4.1 Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change uses these same dimensions. According to the

rating scale, School X scores between 20-25 with the most points coming from the Executive

Support and Credible Leadership and Change Champions sections. As stated in the leadership

position and lens section, my role as the leader is one that is trusted by the community. This is an

advantage to the readiness for change, as having a history in the community and a community focus has been found to be an asset (Barley & Beesley, 2007; Preston et al., 2013). Another strength to the organization's change readiness is the leader of the school division, the Director of Education. As a senior leader, she has gained the trust of many stakeholders through the utilization of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2019).

The weakest area of change readiness for School X according to the rating scale is Previous Change Experiences. Since many stakeholders are predisposed to negative change due to the closures of Schools Y and Z, they may be resistant to the changes proposed through the OIP. To combat this, the change leader must use the negative feelings to produce an increased need for change, as "being dissatisfied with the status quo helps to ready the organization for change" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 106). Through the use of distributed leadership, all staff members of School X will be encouraged to work as a team to overcome the previous change experience by instead focusing on the new shared goals and change vision (Cawsey et al., 2016).

The school division's readiness for change can also be gauged by the recent actions of another school amalgamation within the division. In 2019, one community in the division had to combine their elementary and high schools into one building due to declining enrolment in both schools. Members of the school division worked alongside the school staff, community members, and stakeholders to establish a new school name, mascot, and team colours in order to promote a cohesive identity of the newly amalgamated school. These actions by the school division indicate that they see value in creating change that will improve the sense of belonging for members of a school community and the overall school culture.

Recent fundraising efforts in School X have also illustrated a readiness for change, as over $10,000 was raised in six weeks by staff members, students, parents, community members,

and local businesses in Communities X, Y, and Z. The funds are currently being used to renovate the library in School X to become a more student-centered and multi-functional space. This positive response to a physical change in the school has demonstrated a readiness for change among stakeholders of School X.

Forces Shaping Change

There are a variety of competing factors impacting the organizational change, both internally and externally. Internally, the most prominent factors impacting the readiness for change are the lack of time and resources for teachers in School X, as is evident in many rural schools (Preston et al., 2013). Staff members may be resistant to change, as when new initiatives are introduced, they are often done so without taking into account rural considerations, causing frustration among those impacted. Because of this, the OIP must be introduced in a sensitive manner by first heightening the awareness of the need for change (Cawsey et al., 2016). This awareness can be established by identifying common goals and by setting a vision that everyone will work towards (Cawsey et al., 2016). By first ensuring that the school is an open system (Lunenburg, 2010), staff members will be more willing to participate in the change.

Stakeholder resistance to change is another competing force, as all educational changes are usually met with resistance (Cibulskas & Janiunaite, 2005) and it is inevitable that some members of the organization will not want any change to occur. Original students of School X may be opposed to changes in the school as they do not believe that a change is necessary, creating a "disbelief in change" (Sakalas & Silogniene, 2000, as cited in Cibulskas & Janiunaite, 2005, p. 73). Some staff and community members may have conflicting ideas to that of the change initiator, known as "interest collision" (Cibulskas & Janiunaite, 2005, p. 68), deeming the change as unnecessary in their opinion. It is important to note that the resistance of one person

has the ability to impact multiple other stakeholders, as the defiance of change often attracts followers, which then influences others to join the resistance to change (Cibulskas & Janiunaite, 2005). In the same sense, the feelings of a group during reform become very influential on individual behavior, which can become a negative or positive factor during organizational change. Members of Communities Y and Z may find it difficult to become personally invested in the proposed changes, as they do no not have a personal connection to Community X; only a connection to School X that has been forcefully established. To avoid this, the change must not be introduced in an authoritarian way. Instead, the change initiator must invite all stakeholders to participate in the change process so that they feel significant and valued throughout the process (Cibulskas & Janiunaite, 2005).

Externally, the Ministry of Education's neoliberal guiding values may be a competing force that will impact the change. As the pressures on teachers continue to increase, their dissatisfaction with the current government is made obvious as teachers vote to reject new contracts proposed with an increase of number of hours spent in the classroom (Orlowski, 2015). The underappreciation of teachers by the ministry may impact the proposed change by causing teachers to be unwilling to make changes out of frustration with the current system.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 has provided an in depth understanding of School X and its organizational structure, as well as the structure of education within Saskatchewan, to better understand the implications of the problem at hand. The articulation of the PoP, along with the history of the problem, has provided a rich understanding of the challenges faced by rural principals leading schools that are serving families in multiple communities. The PESTE analysis (Cawsey et al., 2016) provided an overview of the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental

factors of the organization, allowing for further insight into the driving forces for change. Guiding questions emerging from the problem made it clear that all three affected groups need to be considered throughout the OIP: the students, the staff members, and the families and community members. The following chapter will focus on the planning and development of the OIP by exploring the leadership approaches to change and the framework chosen to lead the change process. A critical organizational analysis will be conducted and possible solutions will be explored to determine how to best move forward with the change implementation plan.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

This chapter introduces the leadership approaches to change, building on the previous discussion of authentic and distributed leadership styles. Three frameworks for leading the change process are compared and analyzed to determine the best approach for the problem at hand. A critical organizational analysis is conducted to articulate needed changes at the student level, staff level, and community level. Three possible solutions to address the problem are thoroughly investigated and a chosen solution is recommended. Lastly, the ethical considerations and challenges as they apply to the change process are considered.

Leadership Approaches to Change

When considering the current PoP, the need to create a unified school identity in a school with the student population coming from three separate locations, the role of a change facilitator is essential in establishing a cultural change (Deal & Peterson, 2016). In order to understand the complexity of this role, leadership expectations according to the province, the school division, and my personal leadership approaches will be explored.

In Saskatchewan, school leaders are expected to build positive relationships with stakeholders by "keeping the community fully and honestly informed about its schools" (LEADS, 2019) while respecting the necessary confidentiality requirements. According to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (2017), the principal is not only the instructional leader of a school, but also a key player in the facilitation of a shared mission and vision through the use of the collaborative school-based planning and leadership model (University of Washington, 2012). The leadership model illustrates the principal as having four distinct roles: creating a culture of learning through a shared vision and mission, improving instructional practice through evaluation of teacher performance, allocating school resources for success, and engaging in the

strategic management of people and processes for the school (2012). Each of these roles contribute to the overall culture of the school, further exemplifying the importance of my responsibility as the principal of School X and facilitator of the OIP.

In RPSD, a cohesive framework for leadership does not exist, causing inconsistencies from one school leader to the next. The beliefs of the school division allude to the importance of shared leadership, as it is recognised as a strength of the organization (RPSD, n.d.). Contemporary leadership theory continues to evolve from once believing that leaders were extraordinary heroes working all on their own, to recognizing that leaders can only find success with followers and leaders must be managers of their followers, to the more current understanding of the importance of relationships and collaborative approaches for successful leadership (Komives & Dugan, 2010). The leadership focused vision for change in this OIP is the creation of a unified school identity in a school with a population coming from three separate communities. This unification will require participation from all stakeholders working toward a common vision and end goal. The leader must take into account the organizational problem of a fractured school culture, while also recognizing the unique situational context of being a rural school. A combined approach of distributed and authentic leadership will be used to guide the efforts of change within School X.

Distributed Leadership

As discussed in Chapter 1, one single definition of distributed leadership does not exist; however, each definition places value in collaboration and the sharing of a collective responsibility (Harris & Mujis, 2005; Lee et al., 2012; O'Donovan, 2015; Spillane, 2005; Uysal & Holloway, 2020). The shift from an individual as the leader to a team-based approach allows for all stakeholders to share the leadership role (Lambert, 2003). In this case, the leader becomes

the facilitator rather than the sole decision maker, allowing others to offer insights and opinions, all while trusting relationships are being formed and sustained (Uysal & Holloway, 2020). This makes distributed leadership especially effective in School X, as healthy relationships become the driving force for change (Harris, 2009; Preston & Barnes, 2017). In the case of School X, I will utilize my facilitator role to encourage colleagues to take on leadership roles of their own, with each member playing a crucial role in the establishment and maintenance of a new and cohesive school culture. Studies have shown that the classroom is the most influential point of change occurring for students, heavily depending on the effective facilitation of change by teachers taking on leadership roles within their classrooms (Bishop, 2012; Williams, 2016). Parents and community members from all three communities will also be sought out and encouraged to take on leadership roles, as outlined in Kotter's fifth step of his change model, create a guiding coalition (Kotter, 2012). Stakeholders will be needed to participate in new traditions and norms to establish a new, cohesive school culture; thus, increasing the social capital of School X's greater community.

Hartley (2007) explains that a barrier to the distributed leadership approach is a lack of conceptual clarity, which has created a lack of empirical evidence of its worth. He also notes that without a clear definition of distributed leadership, many have chosen to use it in different ways, making the results of such studies incomparable. He explains the approach as a fad that resonates with contemporary culture, as it perpetuates the hierarchal form of government. As the change leader, this lack of clarity can be addressed by deciding upon one definition of distributed leadership to adhere to throughout the change process. For the sake of this OIP, the distributed leadership style that will be utilized will be one that shares a collective responsibility among stakeholders (Lambert, 2003). Although the responsibilities of staff members may be considered

more than that of parents and community members, each person will be empowered by working toward the collective goal (Uysal & Holloway, 2020; Wiesinger, 2007). As the leader, it will be my responsibility to clearly delegate the leadership roles and responsibilities to each stakeholder through clear communication and reasonable expectations.

Authentic Leadership

As discussed in Chapter 1, an authentic leader is one who has a strong sense of self-awareness and morals (Avolio et al., 2004) while also creating a culture of collaboration (Bento & Ribeiro, 2013). This ties closely to my own philosophy of leadership, as I understand that successful rural leadership depends on collaborative relationships with staff members, students, parents, and community members (Preston & Barnes, 2017). The role of the principal in Saskatchewan schools is recognized as "the heart of the school community" (STF, 2017, p. 1). Each principal must take into account and be responsive to her unique local context. This awareness is necessary because the principal's actions and relationships have a major influence on teaching and learning in the school, regardless of school size (Macleod, 2017). This makes authentic leadership appropriate for School X, as my experiences as a student and community member have allowed me to create common bonds with stakeholders, and my philosophy of leadership allows me to make decisions based on personal conviction and self-knowledge (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Before distributing leadership roles and responsibilities to colleagues and stakeholders and expecting everyone to be on board with the change process, trusting relationships must be formed through the application of authentic leadership. This will be done by taking time to have open conversations with stakeholders, listening to concerns with empathy, and making decisions for the greater good.

One barrier of authentic leadership is the challenge of clearly defining it, resulting in a generic understanding of what it entails (Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2018). Paralleled to the lack of conceptual clarity of distributed leadership, my role as the change leader is to choose a clear definition of authentic leadership that will be used throughout the change process. In regard to School X and this OIP, authentic leadership will be recognized as one who is transparent in their actions (Alavi & Gill, 2017)) and values honesty, loyalty, and responsibility (Michie & Gooty, 2005). This leadership style will act as the foundation needed to address the PoP, as a change in school culture is only possible when trusting relationships are formed (Prokopchuck, 2016).

Rationale for Distributed and Authentic Leadership

Distributed leadership and authentic leadership have been chosen as appropriate leadership approaches to fulfill the changes proposed through this OIP because of the similar values they share. First, both leadership styles value the development and maintenance of relationships (Harris & Mujis, 2005; Michie & Gooty, 2005; O'Donovan, 2015) Providing opportunities for relationships to be formed among members of Communities X, Y, and Z will be essential in addressing the problem at hand, as social capital is grounded in resources gained through relationships (Zhao et al., 2012). Second, both leadership styles value collaboration (Bento & Ribeiro, 2013; Uysal & Holloway, 2020). Collaboration is essential in rural communities, as it has been found that high levels of collaboration strengthen social capital as members are welcome to share responsibility for success (Wiesinger, 2007). Third, both leadership styles value trust (Bergman et al., 2012; Gardner et al., 2011). Building trust among stakeholders is essential, as everything a leader does to improve culture depends on building trusting relationships (Prokopchuck, 2016). These leadership styles complement one another by

allowing for trusting relationships to be established prior to the distribution of responsibilities, ensuring genuine participation from stakeholders.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

In order for organizational change to occur, the leader must first decipher *how* to change, which can be determined through the use of an appropriate change model (Cawsey et al., 2016). A suitable change model will encompass changes at all three levels: individual, team, and the organization. It is up to the leader to determine which model is most appropriate for the organization and its current problem; in the case of School X, the fractured school culture. The current changes required in School X can be classified as *radical* (Cawsey et al., 2016 adapted from Nadler & Tushman, 1989), that is, an overhaul or re-creation of School X's identity is required in order for a cohesive school culture to be created. This is important to keep in mind when choosing an appropriate change model, as the change facilitator must be willing to begin a sustained change that will not act as a quick fix. By understanding that cultural change sometimes takes years (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Schein, 2010), a change model that will support this long-term need is necessary. Cawsey et al. (2016) outlines multiple change models that can be utilized to promote organizational change, including Duck's five-stage model, Cawsey et al.'s four-stage model for change, and Kotter's eight-stage change model. Each of these models has been taken into consideration for the success of this OIP, with each posing benefits and limitations as discussed in the following sections.

Duck's Change Curve

Duck's five-stage model, referred to as the change curve, focuses on the understanding and management of the human aspect of change (Brenowitz, 2001; Cawsey et al., 2016; Duck, 2001). The five steps to guide change, according to Duck, are "stagnation, preparation,

implementation, determination, and fruition" (Duck, 2001). The first stage, stagnation, refers to the time when people do not believe that a change is necessary so the change leader must force a change to bring awareness to the stakeholders. The second stage, preparation, occurs when a dramatic announcement is made to propel the change forward. This results in mixed reactions from stakeholders, as some become nervous and some are excited for the impending change. The third stage, implementation, is when the change leader begins to institute operational changes to the organization as well as changes to the emotions and habits of stakeholders. The determination stage only occurs when stakeholders begin to understand that the change is truly occurring and each of their lives will be impacted by the change. The final stage, fruition, comes to be when stakeholders begin to feel confident in their new roles and the change has been perceived as a positive process (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Although this descriptive change model may seem like a good fit for School X because it applies a strong focus on the emotional reactions of those involved (Cawsey et al., 2016), it is rather jarring in nature and may not be easily accepted by all stakeholders. The stagnation and preparation stages of the model require forceful demands and dramatic announcements, which members of Communities Y and Z have already experienced through the process of their own school's closing. By implementing similar stages, members of those communities may feel uneasy and threatened. School X requires a gentler approach to change that will prioritize the involvement of stakeholders so that trusting relationships can be formed and bridging social capital can occur.

Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols' Change Path Model

The four phases of Cawsey et al.'s (2016) change path model are "awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization" (Ch. 4). During the first phase, awakening,

the need for change is identified and confirmed through data, the gaps in performance are

explored, and a powerful vision for change is developed. During the second phase, mobilization,

the change leader uses formal analyses to better understand the needed changes. The power and

cultural dynamics in the organization are assessed, the change is communicated with all

stakeholders, and the change leader continues to reflect on their own knowledge and skills so that

they can decipher how to best assist in the changes. Acceleration is the phase when

implementation begins. The change leader must continue to engage stakeholders in the change,

while also using appropriate strategies to maintain momentum. Small wins are celebrated and the

change vision continues to drive the change. During the final phase, institutionalization, the

change leader continues to monitor the change and make adaptations as needed while also

stabilizing the newly transformed organization. Oftentimes, the final two phases require a

cyclical process of adapting to new challenges that may arise while modifying the vision for

change (Cawsey et al., 2016). This model is said to be both descriptive and prescriptive, as it

combines features of both types of change models (Cawsey et al., 2016). For this model to find

success, the leader must critically analyze both the external and internal factors contributing to

the problem at hand.

This change model may work well for School X because it requires a great deal of

communication between the change leader and the stakeholders. The second phase, mobilization,

is relevant for School X, as a stakeholder analysis is conducted to determine those who will have

direct impact on or be directly impacted by the change. By understanding and recognizing the

key stakeholders, the leader will better understand how to employ the change to find higher rates

of success (Deszca, 2020). The limitations of this change path model are that the phases can be

construed as too vague. Since the changes in School X require participation from a significant

number of people, along with many stakeholders sharing the distribution of leadership roles, a change model with more specific steps would be most appropriate.

Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Process

Kotter's highly structured framework for change consist of the following steps: "establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering employees for broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring new changes in the culture" (Kotter, 2012). Establishing a sense of urgency, Step 1, is necessary for all in the organization to understand the need for change. This can be done by "aligning [stakeholders] around a commonality and clarifying where energy should be directed" (Kotter, 2018, p. 10). Step 2, creating the guiding coalition, utilizes distributed leadership by allowing a variety of team members and stakeholders to join in the change efforts. This becomes "the nerve center of the 8-step process" (Kotter, 2018, p. 13) as, without the guiding coalition, the organization will continue to rely on a traditional sole leader and change may not occur. For the third step, a strategic vision must be formed and shared with all involved so that stakeholders can be inspired and a clear understanding of the envisioned future state can be used to guide the change efforts (Cawsey et al., 2016). A terrific strategic vision is "communicable, desirable, flexible, feasible, imaginable, and simple" (Kotter, 2018, p. 16). The fourth step, communicating the change vision, requires the change leader to communicate the change vision through multiple means in order to build a "volunteer army" (Kotter, 2018, p. 19) that will freely participate in the change and be excited to work toward the desired state. Step 5 involves removing barriers to enable action to take place (Kotter, 2018). This is often the most difficult task in an educational organization, as the principal does not have the ability to fire or replace staff members who may

be acting as a barrier to the success of the change. The change leader must understand the current

beliefs, values, and habits of those in the organization to determine the "strong resistant forces"

(Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 42) that need to be changed. The sixth step is to generate short term

wins. Since the change process may take many months or even years, it is important to celebrate

small victories in order to maintain a high level of morale and motivation (Cawsey et al., 2016)

so that stakeholders do not get frustrated with the process. The seventh step is to sustain

acceleration by continuing to revisit the goal of the future state, by continuing to get more

members of the organization involved and by continuing to press forward with the change

process (Cawsey et al., 2016; Kotter, 2018). This is essential in avoiding burnout and fatigue

among stakeholders. The final step of Kotter's (2018) eight-stage change process is to institute

change in order to create cultural change through the new behaviors of those involved, which

directly relates to the PoP recognized in School X. This step encompasses the objective of the

OIP – for a cultural change to occur. For the sustainability of change, leadership and

management are both needed because "strong management is needed to handle the day-to-day,

and strong leadership is needed to capitalize on unpredictable opportunities" (Kotter, 2018, p.

31).

This change model envisions the establishment of a network of leaders that are eager to

continue moving forward and excited about new opportunities that arise (Kotter, 2018). By

describing each task that the change leader needs to complete, Kotter provides a descriptive

outline that is easy to follow and also provides instructions on when and how to know the

organization is ready for the next steps (Cawsey et al., 2016). This model is very similar to the

change path model as they both utilize similar actions, with the difference being that Kotter has

separated the larger phases into smaller steps. It is most appropriate for working toward the

change vision of creating a unified school culture because of its focus on the creation and involvement of a guiding coalition and volunteer army to assist with the change. Each of these groups will allow stakeholders of the school to become involved through distributed leadership. This involvement in leadership roles has been shown to positively impact school culture by building a stronger sense of community, forming trusting relationships, and building a sense of efficacy among stakeholders (Prokopchuk, 2016). This, in turn, will contribute to higher levels of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Kotter's change model is also the best fit for a radical and sustainable long-term change, such as culture building, as it allows for the change leader to make adaptations throughout the process by returning to and repeating specific single steps when necessary. As the culture change could take years, there may be a turnover of principals leading the change in School X. Kotter's eight-stage change process will provide specific steps for any change leader to follow, whether they initiated the process or were introduced to it during the course of change.

Critical Organizational Analysis

After determining *how* to change, the change leader must then decipher *what* needs to change (Cawsey et al., 2016). This is done by choosing an appropriate framework to conduct a critical organizational analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to reveal the current gaps in the organization; the visible and invisible symptoms, drivers, and forces at the school, community, and school division levels; and the desired future state. For the case of School X, Quinn's competing values model will be used to conduct a critical organizational analysis because of its focus on the individual and organizational culture. The framework provides a tool with which to view both the individual and organizational levels of analysis within the organization (Cawsey, et al., 2016), which is relevant for School X and the problem at hand, as the PoP is centered

around the need for a unified school culture to be established and maintained for all stakeholders to acquire a sense of belonging in School X. After analyzing both the individual and organizational culture within the organization, a clearer understanding of what needs to change will be established and will be used to guide the change implementation plan moving forward.

Quinn's Competing Values Model

Cameron and Quinn (2016) recognize that organizational culture is "extremely broad and inclusive in scope" (p. 36). Because culture is so complex, they argue that an underlying theoretical framework must be utilized in order to understand which dimensions of organizational culture to focus on; that is, the competing values model. The competing values model was created as a result of research conducted on the most prominent aspects of effective organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). It was found that four dominant culture types primarily exist among organizations. They are: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Each of these dimensions defines the core values of an organization, that is, their organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). A clan culture is one that is similar to a family. It values shared goals, cohesion, participation, and a sense of togetherness. An adhocracy culture is an organization that is constantly evolving with new developments and technologies. A market culture is one that is focused on costs and the external environment. These organizations focus on conducting transactions and gaining profit. Lastly, organizations operating under the hierarchy culture are those with formalized structures and formal policies. While neither of the culture types are identified as good or bad, it is important to understand the dominant culture of one's organization so that the appropriate dimensions can become the focus for change (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Each culture type, along with the assumptions, beliefs, values, artifacts, and effectiveness criteria of the organization, are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Competing Values Framework's Four Culture Types

Culture Type	Assumptions	Beliefs	Values	Artifacts (behaviors)	Effectiveness Criteria
Clan	Human affiliation	People behave appropriately when they have trust in, loyalty to, and membership in the organization.	Attachment, affiliation, collaboration, trust, and support	Teamwork, participation, employee involvement, and open communication	Employee satisfaction and commitment
Adhocracy	Change	People behave appropriately when they understand the importance and impact of the task.	Growth, stimulation, variety, autonomy, and attention to detail	Risk-taking, creativity, and adaptability	Innovation
Market	Achievement	People behave appropriately when they have clear objectives and are rewarded based on their achievements.	Communication, competition, competence, and achievement	Gathering customer and competitor information, goal-setting, planning, task focus, competitiveness, and aggressiveness	Increased market share, profit, product quality, and productivity
Hierarchy	Stability	People behave appropriately when they have clear roles and procedures are formally defined by rules and regulations.	Communication, routinization, formalization, and consistency	Conformity and predictability	Efficiency, timeliness, and smooth functioning

Note. Adapted from Table 13-1 (1984), in Robert E. Quinn and John R. Kimberly, "Paradox, planning, and perseverance: Guidelines for managerial practice," in New futures: The challenge of managing corporate transitions (pp. 295–313), edited by J. R. Kimberly and R. E. Quinn, 1984, Homewood, IL: Dow Jones–Irwin. Copyright 1984 by Dow Jones–Irwin. Adapted with permission from The McGraw-Hill Companies.

This model provides "both a framework that bridges individual and organizational levels of analysis and a framework to understand competing value paradigms in organizations" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 84). This is extremely useful for School X, as the culture of the organization is highly influenced by both internal and external stakeholders. When considering Kotter's (2018) eight-stage change process as a framework for leading the change in School X, this critical organizational analysis will occur during multiple steps throughout the process. During Step 3, developing a vision and strategy, the competing values model will be used to determine the current and desired beliefs and values of the organization so that a goal can be

chosen to guide the change process. In Step 5, empowering employees for broad-based action, this analysis will be used to determine what those barriers are, as discussed below through the gaps between the current and envisioned state of the organization. Step 8, anchoring new approaches in the culture, may be most important for the ongoing success of change, as it requires the change leader to continually return to Quinn's competing values model to determine if changes occurring are positively impacting the school culture and to institute new changes accordingly.

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

Cameron and Quinn (2011) created a tool based on the competing values framework which can be used to diagnose the current organizational culture and create an overall organizational culture profile for School X. The tool is the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). In the first step of the analysis, six dimensions of the organization are analyzed to identify the culture of the current state. The second step uses the same instrument to determine what needs to be further developed to reach the desired future state of the organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The six dimensions of focus for the assessment instrument are "dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organizational glue, strategic emphasis, and criteria of success" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 30-32). Each of the six categories have four statements regarding that specific area of the organization. To complete the analysis, a total of 100 numerical points are allocated for each of the six sections, and points are assigned by the examiner for each statement when considering the *now* culture and then again for the *preferred* or envisioned culture. The score in each category creates the organizational culture profile (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). A sample of the assessment instrument is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument Sample

| 1. Dominant Characteristics	Now	Preferred
The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to share a lot of themselves.		
The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total	100	100
2. Organizational Leadership	**Now**	**Preferred**
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		
Total	100	100

Note. Adapted from Cameron, K. & Quinn, R. (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework.* John Wiley & Sons.

The instrument boasts the benefits of being "practical, efficient, involving, quantitative, qualitative, manageable, and valid" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 24). The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument was completed by myself, the principal of the school. According to the OCAI, School X is currently operating at a high level of hierarchy (45.83) with a high focus on internal integration and a balanced focus between flexibility and stability, as shown in Figure 3. This means that School X currently operates under a formalized and structured workplace with

the most crucial aspect being "keeping the organization functioning smoothly" (OCAI online, 2019, p. 7). Although this may seem like an organizational asset, it means that members of School X are conservative, cautious to try new things, and believe they need to act appropriately only because of formal rules (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011). The envisioned future state of School X would operate under a dominantly clan culture type (63.33), as shown in Figure 3. This future state would be internally focused and people oriented (OCAI online, 2019). There would be high levels of involvement from a variety of stakeholders and success would be measured by addressing the needs of citizens and "caring for the people" (OCAI online, 2019, p. 7). Values of the clan culture type include commitment, communication, and development as the leader works as a facilitator and mentor to build the team (OCAI online, 2019).

Figure 3

School X Assessment Profile
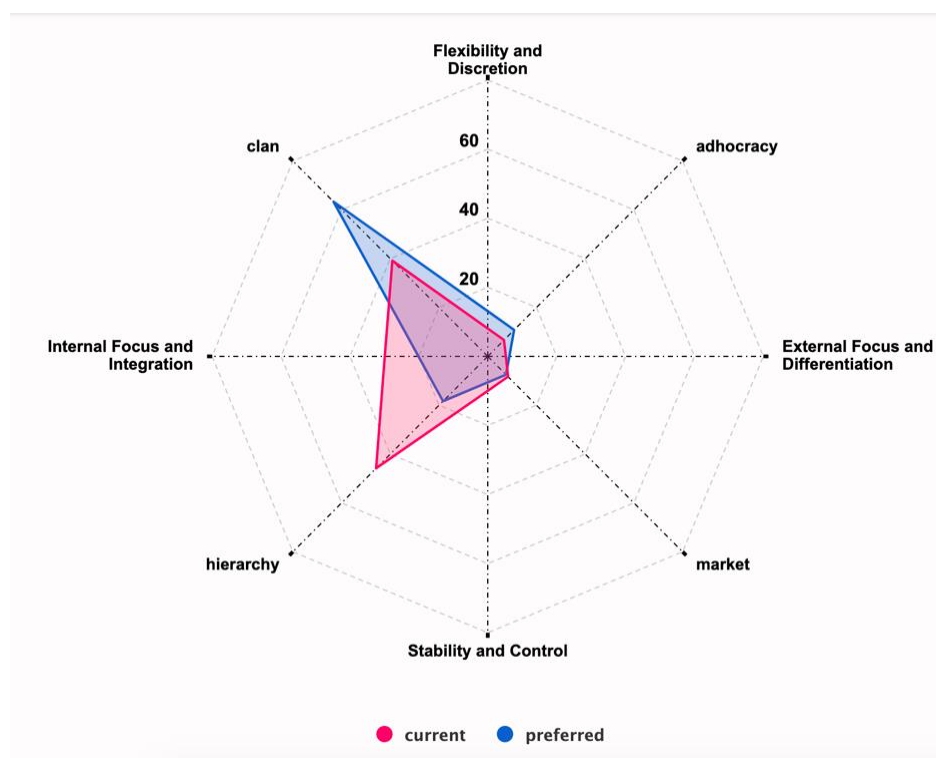
Note. From https://www.ocai-online.com/ Reprinted with permission.

It is important for the change leader to match their leadership style with the dominant culture of the organization so that successful change can occur. This will enhance organizational effectiveness while assisting in the facilitation of cultural change (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Since the envisioned future state of School X is to operate as a clan culture, distributed and authentic leadership will both be effective as they each focus on collective responsibility of stakeholders and shared goals, mirroring the values of the clan culture.

Gap Analysis

Cameron and Quinn (2011) describe organizational culture as "the way things are" (p. 21). Currently in School X and its school community, the culture is fractured. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are gaps in the sense of belonging among students in the school, the separated state of staff members, and the lack of parental and community engagement. Each of these gaps are contributing to the current state and perpetuate the need for a unified school identity of School X. The following sections will discuss visible and invisible symptoms, drivers, and forces at multiple levels of the organization in order to determine *what* needs to be changed in the context of the OIP.

Student Level

At the school level, gaps exist among the sense of belonging of students. Helping students become aware of their school culture and the impact they each have on the creation and maintenance of the school's culture is a very difficult task (Higgins-D'Alessandro & Sadh, 1997). A change in the overall student sense of belonging needs to occur. Many argue that a sense of belonging among students is crucial to their personal well-being and academic success (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Thomas, 2012). As a result of the change process, students in School X will all feel high levels of belonging within the school. These feelings will be made known by

their participation in school clubs and activities, their respect for school technology and equipment, and an increase in positive relationships among students and staff members, as measured by the OurSCHOOL survey.

Staff Level

Currently, the OCAI results illustrating the high levels of hierarchy are made evident by the attitudes and actions of most staff members. Many are very cautious to try new things and are extremely hesitant and pessimistic when new initiatives are proposed. The overall attitude of the adults in the school is that certain things must be done only because of formal rules that need to be followed (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011), for example: the provincial curriculum that needs to be taught. As each staff members brings forth their own personal experiences about schooling based on their time as students and any teaching experience prior to School X, it has become difficult for every member to find a sense of belonging and sense of pride in being a member of School X. The envisioned future state would see staff members working together and making decisions based on the mission and vision of School X. Their collaborative efforts would contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

Parent and Community Level

It must be recognized that organizations do not exist or operate independently without influence from their external environment (Cawsey et al., 2016). It is for this reason that School X cannot be analyzed as an isolated environment; rather, the community members and stakeholders must be also be taken into consideration to critically analyse the organization. At the community level, the lack of school engagement from families and stakeholders needs to change. The current gap in parental and community engagement in the school is one more factor contributing to the school's lack of a cohesive identity, as parental involvement in schools

contributes to higher levels of social capital and a stronger sense of community (Park et al., 2017). This engagement will be made possible by ensuring the school is an open system that constantly interacts with the bigger environment (Lunenburg, 2010), the bigger environment being Communities X, Y, and Z. Currently, each community operates on its own for recreational activities such as curling and skating, seasonal activities like trick-or-treating and Santa Claus parades, and religious events. Although this is great for the preservation of each individual community, it can be seen as a disadvantage to the cohesive identity and culture of School X. In order for members of School X to come together to form a cohesive school culture, members must be given opportunities to come together and build relationships, further increasing levels of social capital among all stakeholders.

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

The vision for change in this OIP is to create a unified school culture in School X. This cultural change will occur when opportunities for bridging social capital are created, which can be accomplished through the formation of trusting relationships between the school and its stakeholders. In order to address the fractured school culture in School X and establish and maintain a cohesive school identity, three proposed solutions have been carefully considered: Comer's School Development Program, Kaplan and Owings' Culture Re-boot, and Parent Teacher Home Visits. The following sections will provide a description of each proposed solution to outline the benefits, drawbacks, and resources needed, along with a comparison of the proposed solutions, and the rationale for the chosen solution.

Proposed Solution 1: Comer's School Development Program

The School Development Program was developed by Comer as a collaborative process to allow principals, teachers, parents, and community members to make shared decisions about

education. It is based on Hoyle's (1992) idea that "people who must implement the decision must make the decision" (p. 81). The program adheres to three guiding principles: "no-fault problem solving, consensus decision making, and collaboration among all stakeholders" (Squires & Kranyik, 1996, p. 31).

While very similar to traditional site-based management, Comer's program has been found to be more successful because site-based management rarely includes aspects of parental involvement, school culture, and the importance of strong teacher-student relationships (Squires & Kranyik, 1996). The School Development Program establishes three distinctive programs that are created to support a change in the school culture while focusing on children's total development (Squires & Kranyik, 1996). Each of the groups is led and attended by stakeholders of the school, demonstrating the need for distributed leadership by the change leader. The program also strongly believes that every person in the school community has an important role to play in the reform process, drawing on social capital theory (Liou & Chang, 2008). The three sub-programs required to facilitate Comer's School Development program are: the parents' program, the mental health team, and the school planning and management team.

The parents' program works to ensure the school is welcoming in order to encourage strong communication between the school and families, so that joint decision making and planning can occur. This program is based on the belief that "parents are the child's first teachers" (Squires & Kranyik, 1996, p. 30). The mental health team is made up of school staff members and their focus is to encourage school-wide preventative measures, as opposed to case-by-case management of individual students (Squires & Kranyik, 1996). The team researches and designs ways to improve the school climate by building positive relationships among staff members and students in the school (Squires & Kranyik, 1996), which could be successfully

utilized through the approach of authentic leadership (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The school

planning and management team works to coordinate the first two teams by establishing policies

and curriculum based on the guiding question: "What's best for children?" (Squires & Kranyik,

1996, p. 31). This team also collects data and determines academic and school goals in a

comprehensive school plan for the year, including a plan for the professional development of

staff members and parents. This would not be entirely possible in the case of School X, as the

Ministry of Education mandates curriculum which cannot be altered.

To implement the School Development Program in School X, the most significant

resources required are people, time, and funds, as leaders must attend national training sessions

to become certified in the approach, followed by rigorous staff development in the form of three

separate week-long training sessions throughout the year. Many schools have found success

through the program when it was employed at the division level, which is beyond my scope as

the school principal.

Strengths

The implementation of the program will address the present gaps in staff collaboration

through the formal training and collaborative efforts. The present gaps in stakeholder

involvement will also be addressed through the creation of the parent and mental health

programs, as well as the school planning and management team.

Weaknesses

The foundation of site-based management requires the school to essentially manage

themselves, apart from the school division. While it would be ideal to have parent committees

making decisions for the school based on what is best for the students, this may not be possible

in School X because of the current lack of parental involvement. The allocation of funds to send

teachers to the training program does not currently exist, and the time required to facilitate each of the three programs may not be feasible for members of School X. The ability for the school planning and management team to propose a curriculum, a comprehensive school year plan, and a professional development plan is also not feasible, as these are mandated by the province and school division for School X. The program is most effective when it is implemented division-wide, which is beyond my scope as the principal. For these reasons, it is not currently possible to administer Comer's School Development Program in School X.

Proposed Solution 2: Kaplan and Owings' Culture Re-boot

Based on Kaplan and Owings' (2013) book *Culture Re-Boot: Reinvigorating School Culture to Improve Student Outcomes*, this proposed solution is clearly laid out in a three to five year process of changing schools through the act of *reculturing* the school*,* as opposed to merely imposing new rules or policies and expecting lasting change. It is proposed that by making changes that "stimulate and support teachers to make meaningful changes from the inside" (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 1), the school culture will be improved. The authors recognize that "school culture is not static" (2013, Kaplan & Owings, p. 2), it is able to be changed through the actions of an effective leader. The following steps are discussed as necessary to providing a culture re-boot: develop professional capacity for shared influence, establish a student-centered learning culture, promote and create strong parent-community ties, and then develop a plan for action (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

By utilizing distributed leadership and steering away from "traditional top-down decision making" (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 103), shared authority can be established, which will promote the development of professional capacity and shared influence in the school. By establishing robust professional learning communities (PLCs) among staff members,

collaborative teams will be created to develop collective inquiry, action orientation and experimentation, and continuous improvement (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). Teachers and staff members will be encouraged to observe one another's classroom practices to gain new ideas. They will then experiment using these new ideas in their own classrooms, observe and reflect on their learning, and then meet with their PLC group to discuss how the process went (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). This attempts to shift away from the PLCs that have been mandated in the past in School X, as there has never been designated time during the school day for teachers to observe one another. This component may be challenging for current staff members that have displayed complacent attitudes toward change and are not interested in participating in a change implementation plan or do not believe that any changes are necessary. This solution will require human resources in the form of a substitute teacher to occasionally cover classes so that teachers can observe in other classrooms. This will also require time allocated for teacher planning with new ideas gained from observations, for data collection, and for PLC meeting times for discussion. More than five years ago, RPSD mandated that all schools allocate monthly PLC time into their school calendars, in the form of student early dismissal. In School X, this time has never been used appropriately. In my experience, this time each month has most often been used for staff meetings, to discuss the newest division-wide initiatives, or for professional development time – not as a time for PLCs to meet.

The second step of the culture re-boot is the establishment of a student-centered learning culture, which relies on the creation of caring relationships between students and staff members (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). In order for a student-centered learning culture to exist, the environment must be safe and orderly, and teachers must have high and achievable expectations of all students. Teachers will be challenged to *re-boot* their expectations of students through the

use of a brief teacher survey that will be conducted to determine each teacher's (and staff member's) rating of their expectations for student achievement, comparing how it is valued in their own classroom compared to the school as a whole. Students will also be invited to complete the survey to help staff members understand their perceptions of the expectations given to them. These activities can take place during the monthly PLC time or during the scheduled professional development days throughout the school year that are led by the administrators.

Arguably the most important part of the solution for School X to establish a cohesive school identity and improved school culture is through the creation of strong parent-community ties from all three communities. It is worth noting that this does not simply mean inviting parents and community members to participate in school-hosted activities or using community members as resources for the school; rather, it is to adopt the belief that the greater school community is a place where great opportunities exist for our students and where social capital can be utilized (Kruse & Louis, 2009). This requires a shift in thinking among the staff members, to embrace the cultural asset model of understanding and for teachers to "enter into partnerships with parents, caregivers, community leaders, and local agencies" (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 177). Community members from Communities X, Y, and Z will be given opportunities to rethink their perceptions of the school during monthly open-house events, which will encourage shared decision making and allow for relationships to be built among stakeholders. The events will allow for the discussion and honoring of values from Schools Y and Z that are deemed important and should continue in School X, working toward a cohesive identity as a school serving three geographical communities. This step could occur during Kotter's fourth step of the change framework, as the change vision is communicated to the stakeholders and a volunteer army is created (Kotter, 2018). This will require time and human resources for organizing and

facilitating, as well as money for hosting the monthly events, which can be allocated through the school's yearly budget.

In order to sustain momentum for the re-boot that may take up to five years – or may never truly be considered complete – the change leader must ensure consistent communication among all stakeholders (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). This will require the resources of time and people, as leadership teams from the staff, students, parent, and community members will need to volunteer their time to attend monthly meeting and planning sessions. Celebrations are also required so that momentum is not lost and small goals and changes can be acknowledged, as is deemed important in Kotter's sixth step of his change framework: generate short-term wins.

Strengths

This proposed solution attempts to create a shift in the culture of the school through relationships among teachers, students, parents, and community members. The formation of strong relationships will provide opportunities for all stakeholders to challenge their assumptions about the school and to be invited to be active participants in the success of the school. The steps of the Culture Re-Boot fit well within Kotter's eight-stage change process.

Weaknesses

This solution is based on the idea of using the establishment of PLC's to *reculture* the school through teacher observation and conversations. PLC's have previously been mandated for all RPSD schools and not yielded positive results, as the allocated PLC time is often used for staff meetings or discussions instead of true professional learning communities. It is also difficult to have robust PLC's in a school with such a small number of people on staff, as each teacher is required to act as a generalist while teaching multiple grades and subjects each year. This solution may also be overwhelming for staff members, as it involves multiple new initiatives

with the implementation of PLC's, accepting feedback from student surveys, and experiencing a shift in mindset for the culture re-boot to be successful. As the principal, I believe that this solution will be met with resistance from the staff members of the school, as the initiative of PLC's has been mandated in the past without yielding success.

Proposed Solution 3: Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV)

Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV) is a model designed to "promote a mutually supportive and accountable relationship between educators and families" (McKnight et al., 2017, p. vii). These relationships will be the guiding factor in creating a unified school culture, as this cohesion depends on a mutual connection of all stakeholders (i.e., students, staff members, administrators, parents, and community members) (Deal & Peterson, 2016). In simple terms, PTHV is the act of teachers going into student's homes to ask the families, "What are your hopes and dreams for your child?" (McKnight et al., 2017). After a relationship is formed, the visits can be used to provide academic and behavioral information about the child, and to share upcoming school events with the families (Wright et al., 2018). This model has been shown to promote a shift in the mindsets of both educators and families (McKnight et al., 2017) as well as increased empathy among educators (Veseley et al., 2017), and has been shown to provide a significant increase in family involvement in the school (Meyer et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2018). School culture is built on connections made by relationships (Deal & Peterson, 2016) and this program will allow for authentic relationships to be formed through openness and dialogue to create trust among stakeholders (Deal & Peterson, 2016). By meeting outside of the school, the power dynamic is shifted from teachers to parents, encouraging a more "egalitarian relationship" (McKnight et al., 2017, p. 28). This also provides the opportunity for trust to be established among families and staff members, as trust is built on benevolence, honesty, and community

(Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Although the visits themselves are the focus of the program, the most influential aspect is what occurs after the visits take place, when relationships are established (Henke, 2011; McKnight et al., 2017; Wright, 2018). By forming relationships with parents and learning more about the traditions of each family along with their hopes for each child, the teachers will gain a wealth of knowledge about the stakeholders of the school. This knowledge will then be used to make changes in the school environment that will honour all students, so that a cohesive identity can be established. As a result of the visits, teachers will become aware of resources in surrounding communities that they would not have learned about otherwise, thus tapping into accessible knowledge that can be shared in the school and raising social capital levels (Putnam, 2000).

In the case of School X, educators will need to first be taught about the benefits of home visits and must align with the core practices of the program so that visits are conducted in an orderly manner. This can be done during professional development days or staff meeting times and will be led by the administrators. Distributed leadership will be utilized, as teachers will be encouraged to become leaders within their own classrooms while planning and following through with the PTHV model. Families of students will also need to be prepared for the visits, by first learning about the rationale for the program and the expectations during the visits. This information can be provided to families through the information sharing means that are already utilized by School X: a school messaging system (i.e., automated phone and email services), the school newsletter, community newsletters, and paper notes sent home with students. The process adheres to the following five core practices:

Visits are always voluntary for educators and families and arranged in advance, teachers are trained and compensated for visits outside their school day, the focus of the first visit

is relationship-building, educators and families discuss hopes and dreams, no targeting –

visit all or a cross-section of students so there is no stigma, educators conduct visits in

pairs, and after the visit, reflect with their partner. (McKnight et al., 2017, p. 26)

By ensuring that all parties understand that there will never be a surprise visit, parents will be

more relaxed and may be more willing to invite staff members into their homes (McKnight et al.,

2017). It would be unfair for teachers to be expected to conduct home visits by volunteering their

time, so the visits should take place during the school day and it would be ethical to compensate

for mileage, as teachers would have to travel to surrounding communities to meet with families

outside of Community X. Teachers need to be trained about the visits to encourage them to not

make any prior assumptions about the family, to be open to the program, and to discuss potential

fears about the program (McKnight et al., 2017). As a key component of the program, the first

visit does not discuss any academic or behavior aspects – the focus is purely on relationship-

building by asking about the hopes and dreams for the child (McKnight et al., 2017). This is

intended to create comfort among all participants, to create the foundation for a positive

relationship, and encourage participants to simply learn about one another (McKnight et al.,

2017). By making a concrete plan to visit the families of all students in School X, nobody will

feel negatively targeted by the program (McKnight et al., 2017). This is doable, as there is a

small population of students in School X, with approximately 80 families of students enrolled.

This means that each family could be visited throughout the school year, with at least eight

family visits being planned each month. Lastly, by always visiting in pairs, educators are given

physical safety by not going alone and are also given the opportunity to reflect with one another

after the visit (McKnight et al., 2017). This reflection process is instrumental in ensuring the

home visits are not isolated occurrences; rather, they are opportunities that bring value back to the school through new understandings and relationship building.

Home visits by educators has been found to bring forth significant changes in assumptions and perceptions about schooling and increase communication between school and home (McKnight et al., 2017). It is the perceptions of parents and educators that impact the culture of the school, and their changes can contribute to a more positive and cohesive school culture to emerge (Prokopchuk, 2016). By "blurring the boundaries between classrooms and livings rooms" (Johnson, 2014, p. 359), it is expected that a more cohesive school culture will be created. Schein (2010) explains that organizational culture has three distinct levels: artifacts, espoused values, and assumptions. Artifacts are the visible items in the school that represent the beliefs and values of the organization, along with the feeling one gets as they enter the building (Schein, 2010). Artifacts also include ways that decisions are made, how time and physical spaces are used, and how conflicts are handled (Schein, 2010). As participants are involved in the PTHV program and stakeholders get to know one another better, it is anticipated that School X's artifacts will begin to better represent the beliefs and values of members from all three communities, instead of primarily those from School X. Espoused values are the things that guide the stakeholders in their work – their reasons why (Schein, 2010). These values contribute to what becomes normalized in the organization (Prokopchuk, 2016). Currently, it is normalized for students to have low levels of participation in school events and for staff members and parents to be frustrated with the current state of the school. By spending time with the families of students of School X and by participants developing empathy and understanding for one another, it is the hope that these genuine relationships will produce a new and more inclusive normal in terms of espoused values of School X. The third level of organizational culture, assumptions, are

the underlying beliefs that stakeholders have about School X (Schein, 2010). These assumptions will be most affected by the home visits, as families will be given opportunities to learn more about the school through genuine relationships, and staff members will learn more about the students, providing everyone with numerous opportunities for assumptions to be challenged and altered.

Many employees of School X have worked in the school for more than ten years but have never spent time with some of the student's families, especially those from Communities Y and Z. In the same sense, multiple generations of families have attended School X, yet some have not been involved in any school events or been given opportunities to establish positive relationships with any employees of the school. By participating in home visits, barriers that are currently hindering School X will be faced and challenged, aligning with the fifth step of Kotter's change framework, enabling action by removing barriers. It is also my hope that the relationships built through the PTHV program will encourage more engagement by parents in school activities, such as the School Community Council. By establishing trusting relationships between the school and the families of students, social capital will increase as teachers will become more aware of each family's skills and capabilities, and families will be encouraged to share those skills and capabilities with the school for the benefit of all students (Ayios et al., 2014).

The most significant resource required for this solution is time, as staff members will need to take time out of their workday to participate in the home visits. This time can be granted with substitute teachers being hired to cover for staff while they are out of the building, which then also requires financial resources. These financial resources can be made available by allocating yearly budget funds to this solution, and it is within my scope as the principal to do so.

The greatest challenge of PTHV is predicted to be the negative attitudes of some participants. There is potential for significant pushback from a number of staff members and family members who are not eager to participate in the program, especially those who are currently contributing to the complacent culture of the school and acting as barriers to change. If this occurs, reliable research will be used as a valuable tool in educating stakeholders on the benefits and impact of the program, in hopes that all members will choose to participate. Authentic leadership will also be utilized, as the establishment of genuine and trusting relationships will be required for stakeholders to be open to change through the PTHV program.

Strengths

The greatest strength of the PTHV program is that a similar program has not been previously attempted in School X or the surrounding communities. This new approach may be an exciting shift from previous school-wide initiatives that have not been based on trusting relationships among staff members and families. PTHV has the potential to become a sustained practice within the school community, with very little training or resources required. As the program finds success, it is implied that more families will choose to become involved. With the inclusion of families in the program, they will be treated as critical stakeholders in the change process, allowing supportive participants to positively influence the change in school culture and attitudes toward School X (Cawsey et al., 2016). This solution addresses the vision for change of creating a unified school culture in School X by increasing bridging social capital among staff members of the school and families of students currently attending School X. By providing opportunities for stakeholders to form relationships and learn from one another, bridging social capital levels will increase (Putnam, 2000). This solution focuses on trusting relationships being built, which is the basis for cultural change to occur in an organization (Bauch, 2001;

Prokopchuk, 2016; Oncescu & Giles, 2012). By honoring the knowledge, hopes, and dreams of the parents, staff members of the school will enable the parents to adopt a meaningful role in their child's education, further enhancing the overall culture of School X (Pushor, 2018).

Weaknesses

This drastic change in practice may cause stakeholders to become hesitant of the program and choose not to volunteer in the beginning stages. This will be combated through the sharing of resources and data, as well as by allowing time for trust to be built through authentic leadership strategies of listening genuinely to concerns and offering time for honest conversations to transpire (Bommer et al., 2005; Stanley et al., 2005; Tansley & Newell, 2007).

Comparison of Proposed Solutions

With each of the proposed solutions, a shift in the culture of School X is required. Solutions one and two propose that the shift can occur through a management framework in the school as a result of effective leadership while following specific steps in sequential order. Solution three suggests that a change in school culture relies on an adjustment of attitudes of the stakeholders of School X, which may only occur through the most participative actions of visiting student homes, interacting with their families, and building relationships. Solutions one and two take place primarily in the school, while solution three takes place primarily outside of the school. A summary of each proposed solution and its ability to address the change gaps required in School X is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Proposed Solutions Relating to Change Gaps

	Solution 1: School Development Program	Solution 2: Culture Reboot	Solution 3: Parent Teacher Home Visits
Addresses student sense of belonging?	no	**yes**	**yes**
Addresses positive student-teacher relationships?	**yes**	**yes**	**yes**
Addresses staff collaboration and decision making?	**yes**	**yes**	yes
Requires a change in staff mindset to embrace new traditions?	no	**yes**	**yes**
Will increase stakeholder engagement?	**yes**	**yes**	**yes**
Will encourage more participation in SCC?	no	**yes**	**yes**
Can be completed without formal training for staff?	no	**yes**	**yes**
Requires the utilization of distributed leadership?	**yes**	**yes**	**yes**
Requires the utilization of authentic leadership?	no	no	**yes**
Proposes a new approach that has not been previously attempted in School X?	no	no	**yes**

Chosen Solution

After analyzing and comparing all of the options, proposed solution three is chosen as the most fitting for School X. ~~It meets the criteria of addressing each of the guiding questions arising from the problem as discussed in Chapter 1, with involvement at the student level, staff level, and community level.~~ It has been found that the implementation of a PTHV program has led to increased parental engagement in schools, increased teacher collaboration, and the establishment of positive relationships among teachers and parents (Henke, 2011), with each of these actions being shown to positively contribute to the overall culture of a school (Prokopchuk, 2016; Schein, 2010). PTHV is best instituted through the utilization of distributed leadership, as each teacher will have to take on a leadership role to schedule and participate in the home visits and follow up conversations with families. Authentic leadership will be an asset to the program, as the success depends on the development of trusting relationships as a foundation for the

evolution of the school culture. The program is guided by social capital theory, as parents and community members are invited to have a crucial role in the success of the school. By creating opportunities for bridging social capital to occur among staff members and stakeholders in all three communities through conversations during home visits, the culture of the school will be impacted by the formation of trusting relationships and a stronger sense of community (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Prokopchuk, 2016; Putnam, 2000). Lastly, the program is possible to implement through my scope as the principal of the school. Cawsey et al. (2016) recognizes that a more participative solution is necessary for organizations such as School X where behavioral-social changes are involved, like the improvement of a school's culture. The PTHV program is a more participative solution than the first two options, as families of students are invited to participate in conversations with staff members in order to learn more about one another and form trusting relationships. Solution three is also a shift from the PLC-based approaches of solutions one and two that have already been attempted in the past and have not been shown to make significant changes in the culture of School X. The school requires a radical shift in thinking which will uproot the complacent attitudes of those involved, and solution three attempts to procure that change. With the inclusion of staff members, students, and parents in the proposed solution, an attempt to generate a shift in school culture will be more successful than if the staff members are isolated in the solution (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

This OIP is grounded in social capital theory, as it depends on the participation and involvement of numerous stakeholders from Communities X, Y, and Z to support the proposed change. Social capital is deeply embedded in relationships, as it is founded on trusting relationships being formed so that stakeholders can benefit at the personal, organizational, and

community level (Ayios et al., 2014). The essential elements of ethical leadership are "respect for others, serve others, display righteousness, foster relationship, and reflect integrity" (Sharman et al., 2018, p. 37). One challenge to social capital theory is that as bonds of support are formed within one close-knit group, they may unknowingly exclude members that do not share the same norms and values, resulting in damaged group norms for the larger school community (Ayios et al., 2014). This has already been occurring; as bonds have formed among students, teachers, and family members of those originally from School X, members from Schools Y and Z feel excluded and the fracture school culture continues. It may be difficult for members of all three communities to form trusting relationships with one another, as loyalty often falls upon family members (Fukuyama, 2000). This means that some stakeholders, when forced to make difficult decisions, may choose to support a family member or relative instead of doing what is morally sound or best for the group as a whole. By first reflecting upon my personal, professional, and organizational codes of ethics, I will be better equipped to determine how I will approach ethical challenges stemming from the PoP.

Personal Code of Ethics

As an authentic leader, my leadership is rooted in my strong ethics, trustworthiness, and explicit moral direction (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Northouse, 2019). My personal experiences of growing up with a family that values strong moral standards has influenced my leadership style by allowing me to build strong bonds with stakeholders through shared experiences. My personal belief in the authentic approach to leadership means that each decision that I make is in the best interest of others (Northouse, 2019). As an ethical leader I follow Brown, Trevino, and Harrison's (2005) understanding that I use my "social power adequately in making transparent decisions and influencing others" (Sharman et al., 2018, p. 37). I truly believe that it is my moral

obligation as the leader of the school to advocate for the needs of all by only promoting changes that will benefit all stakeholders.

Professional Code of Ethics

As a teacher in Saskatchewan and a member of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), I am expected to follow the code of professional ethics in my daily actions. As a principal, it is my responsibility to ensure that the teachers in my school are also adhering to this code. These ethical ideals include 18 commitments to the profession, to teachers, and to the community (STF Bylaw 6, 2017) including showing respect to all stakeholders, keeping parents and community members informed and involved in educational decisions, and keeping the trust regarding confidential information. Other staff members in the school (i.e., educational assistants, secretary, librarian, caretakers, and bus drivers) belong to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). They are also expected to adhere to their code of conduct which consists of nine statements related to respect, communication, commitment, and responsibility (CUPE, 2010).

Organizational Code of Ethics

The ethical responsibility of RPSD is to provide a valuable education to all students, through the direction of teachers and staff members hired by the division (RPSD, 2010). The division believes in the value of collaborating with and remaining accountable to students, parents, and the greater community (RPSD, 2010). The current director of education for the school division adheres to Heifetz's (2009) perspective on ethical leadership, in that she is responsible for providing a "holding environment" (p. 104) where everyone feels trusted, nurtured, and cared for. She establishes this environment for administrators through individual

meetings routinely throughout the school year to hear concerns without judgement and by sharing genuine support for a plan moving forward.

Ethical Leadership in Response to the Problem of Practice

The presented PoP in the setting of School X requires unique ethical considerations, as many stakeholders share deep personal connections with one another. The relationship factor is complex since many stakeholders are family members, relatives, coworkers, and friends outside of the school context. This is also true for myself as I work with teachers who once taught me as a student, many of the students in School X are my relatives, my siblings currently attend the school, and the small community setting means that I am seen as the principal even when I am not in the school building. Outside of school hours, while attending a hockey game on the weekend or eating out at the local restaurant, I am still considered the principal and leader of the school and am expected to act accordingly. This is also true for my colleagues, as members of my staff hold other roles in the community aside from being employees of School X (i.e., coach, business owner, employee at local establishment), creating the need for unique ethical considerations.

In order for the proposed solution of PTHV to provide any benefits to the culture of School X, all members involved must act ethically; that is, every person must understand that their behavior and decisions impact others (Sharman et al., 2018). While some family members may be hesitant to partake in the PTHV program because of a negative relationship with the school, they must be met with empathy and understanding and must never be forced to participate. It is also essential that staff members be given the opportunity to reflect on their personal code of ethics before entering into student's homes, so that they are clear on what to do

in the event that an unethical situation arises. In order for this self-reflection to be possible, stakeholders must strive toward "unbiased judgement and action" (Sharman et al., 2018, p. 37).

One specific instance that may arise is the ethical responsibility of reporting suspected student abuse. In Saskatchewan, teachers have a legal duty to report to authorities if they suspect student abuse or danger (Research & Records, 2019), yet many teachers are hesitant to do so because they are afraid of the family blaming them if actions are taken by social services. As an authentic leader, I will empathize with my colleague if this situation arises, while also reminding them of their legal obligation to report.

Another ethical duty is keeping personal information of students and families confidential. This is extremely challenging in a small town, as many staff members have experienced circumstances of being approached by parents in public places outside of school hours and wanting to discuss school matters. In these circumstances, the teacher will want to speak carefully to protect the privacy of all students while also working toward maintaining the trust of the disgruntled parent. It can be predicted that ethically challenging conversations will arise often throughout the PTHV process, and teachers will be expected to adhere to their professional code of conduct while also showing respect and compassion for the families involved. The utilization of distributed leadership also brings forth ethical challenges, as there will be many circumstances when I will not be present during a situation to make a required decision. By entrusting leadership roles onto multiple staff members, each will be tasked with decision making that may require ethical considerations. This relies heavily on trusting relationships being built between my colleagues and myself, so that I can be assured that they will always make decisions that are morally sound, based on our professional code of ethics, and resulting in the benefit of all stakeholders of School X.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an opportunity to explore the planning and development of a solution to be applied in School X. Through a deeper understanding of distributed and authentic leadership, the ways that they will be implemented throughout the change process have become clear. The critical analysis of School X determined change gaps at the student level, staff level, and parent and community member level. The possible solutions were critically analyzed and compared to determine what is best suitable for School X and the problem at hand. The following chapter will outline the implementation, evaluation, and communication required throughout the execution of the proposed solution.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Chapter 3 discusses the change implementation plan in detail, following the guidance of Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process. The supports and resources required for the plan are included, along with the anticipated reactions from stakeholders and the challenges that may be faced as a result of the plan. The change process monitoring and evaluation plan is discussed, as the continuation of monitoring and evaluation is critical throughout the entire change implementation plan. The plan to communicate the need for change and the change process provides a detailed plan as to who communicates with whom and when throughout the change implementation plan. Finally, the next steps and future considerations provide areas of interest moving forward and hopes for the future of education in rural Saskatchewan.

Change Implementation Plan

The leadership-focused vision for change in this OIP is to increase the sense of belonging for all stakeholders of School X by developing a unified school identity that honors members from three different communities. In Chapter 2, Quinn's competing values model was used to critically analyze the organization. The Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument determined that School X operates predominantly in the hierarchy culture type, but the envisioned future state is to function primarily in the clan culture type (OCAI, 2019). Gaps at the student level, staff level, and parent and community level were all acknowledged, with priorities for change recognized at each level. At the student level, the priority for change is to increase the student sense of belonging, student involvement in school activities, and student respect for school property. At the staff level, the priority is for authentic collaboration and collective efficacy to guide school-wide decisions. At the parent and community level, the priority for change is to increase participation on the SCC and to increase parent and community

engagement in school activities. Distributed and authentic leadership will be utilized in order to plan for and implement the change in School X and its school community.

Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Process

This section will describe the change implementation plan in detail, while also exploring and planning for the resources and supports required, the reactions of stakeholders, and the potential implementation challenges that may arise. Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process provides the structure of the change implementation plan. This plan will guide the proposed solution of Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV), in hopes of building trust and a positive sense of belonging among stakeholders while creating a unified school identity for all members of School X, resulting in an improved school culture.

Step 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Kotter (2012) clearly outlines the greatest challenge in proposing an organizational change when he says, "With complacency high, transformations usually go nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem" (p. 38). Among staff and students at School X, this sense of complacency is demonstrated through the lack of interest and participation in school activities by students, low levels of efficacy among the staff, and the almost non-existent presence of parents and community members within the school. In order to provide a sense of urgency for the solution at hand, the complacency must be minimized (Kotter, 2012). This can be done by setting higher standards in formal plans and through informal interactions, altering internal measurement systems that may be measuring the wrong items, increasing the amount of external performance feedback that the staff gets, and rewarding those who are willing to speak honestly about the problems (Kotter, 2012). One suggestion from Kotter (2012) that can be easily implemented by the principal is to "insist that people talk

regularly to unsatisfied customer, unhappy suppliers, and disgruntled shareholders" (p. 46). In the case of School X, the customers, suppliers, and shareholders are the students, parents, and community members. By insisting that staff members regularly have conversations with all of the stakeholders, the urgency level will be raised as each staff member will become more aware of the concerns and challenges each stakeholder is facing with regard to the fractured culture of School X. This step requires a bold leader who is willing to take risks for the sake of the desired outcome (Kotter, 2012). It is an asset that I have only been in a leadership position in School X for three years, as transformations often occur when a new person is placed in a leadership role in an organization because past actions will not have to be defended and cannot be blamed for the current state of discontent (Kotter, 2012). It is during this step that the staff will be introduced to PTHV and the reasons why it has been chosen as a solution to the PoP. Through a mandatory training period during allocated professional development time, staff members that have volunteered to join the program will participate in a training session before the visits begin. It is crucial to remember that the program is always voluntary for staff so that those who may be hesitant to participate do not cause negative reactions for everyone. Staff will be engaged through professional development sessions which will be used to share data outlining the success of the program in other communities and testimonial videos. Dr. P, an expert in the implementation of the PTHV program in Saskatchewan, will be invited to assist in the facilitation of these settings, as she can share authentic experiences about the successes of the program in schools and communities similar to School X. Time will also be used to discuss anxieties and fears about the program, as well as any questions or concerns arising so that all members can be put at ease before the program begins. Specific guidelines for the program will

also be discussed and determined during this time, including the timeline of a typical visit, expected conduct, ethical considerations, staff member responsibilities, and debriefing protocols.

Step 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition

The second step requires the crucial process of building a guiding coalition, that is, a team that trusts one another and has a shared objective to guide decisions (Kotter, 2012). The team must be able to guide the change effort and must encompass four key characteristics: "Position power, expertise, credibility, and leadership" (Kotter, 2012, p. 59). Position power means that there are enough people on the team that they can provide momentum, and there are not so many people left out that they can overturn the process (Kotter, 2012). In the case of School X, the team must include the most influential students, staff members, parents, and community members. These would be the principal (myself), the vice-principal, the president of the Student Representative Council (SRC), the president and members of the School Community Council (SCC), the Mayor of Community X, the Mayor of Community Y, the Mayor of Community Z, and any other stakeholders that hold high levels of positive influence among their peers. It is important that the guiding coalition includes members from all three communities so that all stakeholders feel represented throughout the process. In the area of expertise, the team members must represent a varying degree of influence so that intelligent decisions can be made (Kotter, 2012). To ensure credibility, most members of the team must have good reputations within the school and community (Kotter, 2012). This will allow for more trusting relationships to be formed between the members of the guiding coalition and the participants in the change process. The final characteristic that must be exemplified within the team is leadership (Kotter, 2012). The group must be made up of proven leaders so that the change process can be successfully led by them. By distributing leadership roles among all members of the guiding

coalition, each member will feel a sense of responsibility for the change and social capital will increase (Tansley & Newell, 2007). Trust among members and a common goal are crucial to the success of the team (Kotter, 2012). Trusting relationships need to be created carefully and should not be rushed. Trust can be built with a variety of carefully planned off-site events that include a lot of discussion and joint activities (Kotter, 2012). For School X, this may look like inviting the proposed members of the guiding coalition to attend a community event in each community over the course of many months so that everyone feels respected and included. During these outings, time will be given for conversation in the form of a sharing circle where each person can speak without interruptions. It is important that I share with the members of the guiding coalition that they are all essential to the changes proposed for School X, as I cannot do the required work on my own. Responsibility charting (Cawsey et al., 2016) will be a useful tool to help each member realize that they are playing an important role in the change process. As the leader builds trusting relationships with members of the guiding coalition through authentic leadership, stakeholder social capital will increase and contribute to the success of the change (Ayios et al., 2014; Tansley & Newell, 2007).

Step 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy

After a sense of urgency has been established and the guiding coalition has been assembled, the vision and strategy must be developed. Kotter (2012) explains that vision is a "picture of the future" for the organization, and it must include specific direction on why those involved in the change should strive toward the desired state (p. 71). In the case of this OIP, the vision must include the goal of the desired state of a unified school culture for School X, which will be attained through the development and maintenance of trusting relationships among stakeholders. It is important to note that an authoritarian approach and micromanagement have

been proven to be harmful when attempting to create successful change (Kotter, 2012). Instead, the leader must "break through resistance with vision" (Kotter, 2012, p. 70) which will help paint a picture of the desired state for the stakeholders. For successful change, the vision will provide three things: first, it will simplify the process so that all stakeholders understand the need for change; second, it will act as motivation for participants; and third, it will help to effectively coordinate the actions of all members involved (Kotter, 2012). The vision is also essential in guiding the strategy, plan, and budget, as it is a clear goal that can be looked to when making all decisions related to the change process. During this step, the competing values model (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) will be used to determine the current and desired beliefs and values of the organization so that an appropriate vision and strategy can be developed to guide the change process.

Kotter (2012) suggests that the leader draft the first version of the vision and present it to the guiding coalition, but I do not believe that this fits well with my beliefs of authentic leadership nor will it be positively accepted by the guiding coalition, as it presents an authoritarian approach. Instead, each draft will be created by the entire guiding coalition group through my facilitation as the change leader. The Director of Education for the school division will also be invited to assist in the facilitation of the planning sessions. The vision will then be refined by the guiding coalition and any other essential stakeholders that have been invited to participate, over the course of one semester, or longer if needed. We will then draft a second version and it will continue to be refined by the stakeholders involved. It is important to work as a team and for students and families from all three communities to be invited to participate, so that traditions and beliefs from each community can be honoured within the vision. After multiple stakeholders have been given the opportunity to share their desired future state of

School X and their goals have been incorporated into a statement that is "imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible, and communicable" (Kotter, 2012, p. 74), the vision and strategy will be complete. For example, the vision for School X might be: *It is our goal to become a school that represents all students and staff members, regardless of where we live. As we create a unified identity, the culture of our school will become an inclusive environment where every stakeholder feels honoured. We believe that our school culture relies on trusting relationships to exist among stakeholders. We value our stakeholders and we take pride in our school.* It may then be condensed into a shareable statement, such as: *Creating a unified identity through trusting relationships.* When the vision has been finalized, it will be shared with the greater school community during Step 4: communicating the change vision and it will act as the foundation for change moving forward.

Step 4: Communicating the Change Vision

Although Kotter identifies communication as the fourth step in his eight-stage process, it is imperative that communication with stakeholders occurs throughout the entire change implementation plan. The communication plan will be discussed in full detail in the following section: Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process.

Step 5: Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action

This is the step when the action begins. The PTHV program will officially start and volunteers – both staff and families – will begin their visits. Staff members will make arrangements with families that volunteer to join the program, which will begin with the members of the guiding coalition. The purpose of the first visit is to have an open conversation about the family's hopes and dreams for their child, as the first visit is meant to be entirely relationship building (McKnight et al., 2017). Staff members will go in pairs, to be given the

opportunity to debrief after each visit. The debrief among staff members will provide

opportunities for self-reflection, biases to be challenged, and motivation to continue with the

program (McKnight et al., 2017). For this step, the most important aspect is empowerment

(Kotter, 2012). It is anticipated that the completion of the first four stages will have empowered a

large amount of School X's stakeholders to be prepared for and excited about the change

process, but it is inevitable that there will still be apprehensions (Kotter, 2012). As the leader, I

must ensure that these apprehensions are met with kindness and understanding so that all

stakeholders feel heard and valued. During this step, the competing values model (Cameron &

Quinn, 2011) will again be used to understand what barriers may need to be addressed before the

action can be successful. As stated earlier, the visits are just the first step of the program, with

the newfound relationships being crucial to the following steps encouraging student participation

and stakeholder engagement (Henke, 2011; McKnight et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2018). As a

result of these new relationships being formed, teachers will begin to share with one another

what they have learned about families and what skills certain stakeholders can share with the

school community. This sharing of responsibility and resources is the foundation of bridging

social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Step 6: Generating Short Term Wins

Celebrating short term wins is extremely useful in maintaining momentum in the

program, keeping morale of participants high, helping stakeholders recognize that their efforts

are contributing to change, undermining those who may act as barriers to the change, and

providing data to assist in the restructuring of the change plan if needed (Kotter, 2012). Without

recognition of short term wins, there may not be any opportunities to create long term successes

that could take years to achieve (Kotter, 2012). A good short term win, according to Kotter, is

either "visible, unambiguous, or clearly related to the change effort" (2012, p. 126). In the case of School X, short term wins must be planned for and recognized at each level of influence (i.e., student level, staff level, family and community level) so that each group involved in the change process will be motivated to continue their efforts toward the change implementation plan. Each of these short term targets are discussed in further detail in the following section: Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation.

Step 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

As the celebration of short term wins encourages momentum throughout the change process, it can be abruptly halted if urgency no longer exists (Kotter, 2012). In order to keep urgency at a steady rate and producing more change, the change leader must not back down prematurely and interdependence among any group involved must not occur (Kotter, 2012). In order for all groups involved in the change process to remain connected and committed to the change, I must utilize the values of distributed leadership by continuing to encourage those around me to take on leadership roles within the change plan. Students must be leaders among their peers; staff members must be leaders within their classrooms, with their students and parents of their students; parents must take on the role of sharing knowledge with their children; and stakeholders must continue to volunteer to share their skills and knowledge with the school and its members. Each of these levels of action will contribute to the overall cohesive identity of School X and its stakeholders by contributing to a positive school culture for the benefit of all. As an authentic leader, it is important that I reassure all participants of the change process to continue with their efforts, especially when it feels like adequate change has already been made. Prematurely quitting and feeling satisfied before the true success of the program will cause momentum to stop and the change process to come to a halt. Kotter (2012) warns that this step in

the change process can sometimes take years, or even decades, as it requires sustainable and continuous efforts from leadership so that momentum from the short term wins provide guiding urgency toward larger scale projects.

Step 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

As the final step in the change process, this is the most relevant to the OIP as it requires the maintenance of the changes so that the new approaches can be anchored in the culture, for fear of regression (Kotter, 2012). This is the most difficult task, as the aspects of culture that are the most difficult to change are the shared values that are almost invisible (Kotter, 2012). As the leader, I will continue to make the desired state a priority by providing time at monthly staff meetings and SCC meetings to reflect on the successes and challenges of the PTHV program, the goals of the desired state of School X, and the current barriers that need to be addressed. During this step, the change leader must continually return to Quinn's competing values model (Cameron 7 Quinn, 2011) to determine if changes occurring are positively impacting the school culture, and to institute new changes accordingly. Anchoring change in a culture is the last step because it relies on the success and results of the previous seven steps in order for changes to occur. As the leader, I must be willing to assess the current situation and repeat previous steps in the change process before new approaches can be anchored and a true culture change can occur. The success of Step 8 requires all decisions to be made based on new practices, otherwise the old culture will continue to prevail.

Supports and Resources

The greatest resource required during the entire change implementation plan is time. There must be allotted time for multiple conversation with stakeholders during each step of the plan. Ample time will be provided for staff members and members of the guiding coalition to

learn about the PTHV program while sharing their concerns and anxieties, to role play in preparation for visits, and to be informed about the success of other schools that have implemented the program. Human resources will include many volunteers in terms of staff members, volunteers from all three communities to act as members of the guiding coalition, and parents and families willing to participate in the program. The help of many volunteers will allow for distributed leadership to be utilized, so that multiple stakeholders feel empowered to assist in the change, thus increasing social capital (McCallum & O'Connell, 2009) in the school's surrounding community. The only technology resource required is a translation service that the school division currently subscribes to, as some families do not speak English and the translation service will be required for the home visits. Depending on the Covid-19 restrictions in place, some guiding coalition meetings and family visits may need to take place through an online service. Financial resources will be required to provide compensation for Dr. P, the PTHV expert, to be invited to lead professional development sessions for the staff and the guiding coalition. Funds will also be required to compensate staff for their mileage costs when visiting homes, and to pay for substitute teachers to cover staff that may plan home visits during school hours. Finally, information will be crucial during the first three steps of the implementation plan as the sense of urgency is created and stakeholders prepare for the implementation of the PTHV program. Data showing current gaps in School X, examples of effective and ineffective change visions from other organizations, and facts and successes of PTHV programs in other schools and communities will be required. A summary of all supports and resources required during the change implementation plan are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Change Implementation Plan

Kotter's Steps	Goals	Stakeholder Responsibilities	Supports and Resources Required	Timeline
Step 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency	-increase the sense of urgency -decrease complacency	-**Principal**: provide information to staff about PTHV, facilitate PD training sessions -**staff members**: participate in the learning, be open to honest conversations about the current state and gaps, converse with stakeholders to develop a better understanding of concerns	-**time**: there must be uninterrupted time given for staff to participate in the PTHV training PD sessions -**time**: for staff to converse with stakeholders (phone calls during prep times, casual conversations on their own time outside of school hours) -**financial**: money must be allocated to hiring experts in PTHV to lead PD sessions for the staff -**information**: PD for staff on PTHV (expectations, testimonial videos, data, case studies, role play scenarios)	**Yea One:** One semester (September – January)
Step 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition	-build a team of students, staff members, parents, and community members to guide the change process	-**Principal, Vice-Principal, SRC president, SCC president and members, Mayor of Community X, Mayor of Community Y, Mayor of Community Z**: all members are responsible for becoming leaders within the guiding coalition team	-**time**: must be allocated time for the guiding coalition to meet at the school and to attend off-site events for team building -**human**: the guiding coalition requires many stakeholder volunteers -**financial**: money must be allocated to hiring experts in PTHV to lead PD sessions for the staff -**financial**: mileage may need to be covered for members attending off-site events -**information**: data about current gaps must be shared to understand importance of needed change	**Year One:** One semester (February – June)

Step 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy	-simplify the process -motivate participants -coordinate actions of those involved	-**principal**: facilitator of the group -**guiding coalition**: will be the main participants -**additional stakeholders**: will be invited and welcome to join, ensuring members from all three communities are involved	-**time**: there will be time allocated bi-monthly for the guiding coalition to meet to discuss and work through the creation of the vision and strategy for the change process -**information**: data showing current gaps, examples of effective and ineffective change visions from other organizations -**safe space**: to allow for open and honest conversations among stakeholders	**Year Two:** One semester (September – January)
Step 4: Communicating the Change Vision	-share the plan with all stakeholders	To be discussed fully in the following section: Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process.		Ongoing
Step 5: Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action	-remove barriers that may inhibit change -begin the PTHV program	-**principal:** oversee the program, remain open to questions and conversations from all stakeholders -**staff members:** begin home visits. Speak with families to arrange times that work best. -**guiding coalition:** volunteer to be visited first, share positive experiences with all stakeholders	-**time**: time to arrange and participate in home visits -**human**: volunteers to join the program -**technology**: translation services for families whose first language is not English (RPSD subscribes to a free interpretation service for all staff to use) -**financial**: mileage may be compensated for staff attending home visits	**Year Two:** One semester (February – June)

Step 6: Generating Short Term Wins	-maintain high level of morale and motivation -sustain participation in the program	-**principal:** continue to oversee the program -**principal, staff members, guiding coalition:** use monitoring and evaluation tools to determine when small wins occur	To be discussed fully in the following section: Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation.	Ongoing
Step 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	-continue revisiting goals of the desired future state -continue recruiting participants -continue pressing forward with change process	-**principal:** keep momentum high by prioritizing the goals of the desired state -**principal, staff members, guiding coalition:** continue to participate in the PTHV program	-**time:** monthly staff meetings will be used to continue to revisit goals of the desires state to guide decision making -**human:** stakeholders will continue to share positive results of the PTHV program to recruit more participants	Ongoing
Step 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture	-institute changes that alter behavior of stakeholders	-**principal:** continue to revisit steps if necessary, make decisions based on the new culture -**staff members:** make decisions based on the new culture -**guiding coalition:** make decisions based on the new culture	-**time**: allocated time to revisit Kotter's eight steps as necessary -**time**: adequate time to reflect on the program and analyze data collected through monitoring and evaluation tools outlined -**human**: ongoing participation from stakeholders in upholding the new culture present as a result of the PTHV program	Ongoing

Stakeholder Reactions

It is anticipated that there will be mixed reactions from stakeholders during the change implementation plan as each stakeholder's reaction will depend on their understanding of the situation and their past experiences (Cawsey et al., 2016). Those stakeholders who are currently frustrated with the state of School X may have a welcome reaction to any proposed change, and those who are complacent in their positions may feel that change is not necessary. The students, staff members, and parents that are originally from School X may be the most resistant to change, as they often voice their opinions that things do not need to change, and they believe things should continue to be done according to School X's traditions. As an authentic leader, I must empathize with each of my staff members so that trusting relationships can be formed and a culture of collaboration can be created (Bento & Ribeiro, 2013). As the change leader, I must ensure that barriers to change are removed so that stakeholders feel comfortable with the proposed change (Kotter, 2012). The removal of the skills barrier will be most effective in generating buy-in from all stakeholders, and this barrier will be removed by providing information about the program and allowing for an overabundance of opportunities for stakeholders to discuss their hesitations and have questions answered by experts. Cawsey et al. (2016) outlines the expected reactions of stakeholders before the change, once the change is announced, and after the change. Before the change is announced, the anticipation and anxiety phase causes stakeholders to worry about what is to come and many will be in denial that any change is necessary. During the change, the shock, denial, and retreat phase occurs, and many stakeholders will be challenged with the new reality. After the change is implemented, there is expected to be an acceptance phase when stakeholders adapt to the new normal and acknowledge the changes that have occurred (Cawsey et al., 2016). As the change leader, I will need to

understand and recognize each of these reaction phases from the stakeholders involved in the change to that I can assist them in moving toward the acceptance phase.

Potential Implementation Challenges

The complacent attitudes of current staff members will pose a challenge throughout the implementation plan, as some may not believe that change is necessary. By utilizing authentic leadership and ensuring that each staff members feels genuinely cared for and heard in their concerns, trust will be built (Bommer et al., 2005; Stanley et al., 2005; Tansley & Newell, 2007) and those who may have been resistant to the change will be open to hearing about the need for change and the change implementation plan. Relational transparency (Kemis, 2003) will also be crucial in allowing honest conversations to occur with stakeholders about the current gaps in School X and the desired state. Kotter (2012) shares that the greatest challenge to creating an effective vision is impatience. Since the process is often uncomfortable and time consuming, members feel urged to choose a vision quickly in order to end the process. This results in an ineffective vision that will taint the remainder of the change process. As the leader, I must be diligent in following the process so that our time is used effectively and all members feel that their participation is worthwhile. Time will be a challenge during all steps, as many staff members believe they are already challenged with not enough time to complete their everyday duties. I must ensure that time is clearly allocated and defined for the purpose of the change implementation plan, which will also help stakeholders understand the importance of the plan. Another challenge anticipated is families that are not willing to participate in the program. I will need to ensure that multiple opportunities are given to share positive examples of the program in other communities similar to ours and provide time for anyone who is hesitant to have their concerns raised and questions answered, while also sharing resources and data to ease any fears.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

After the change implementation plan has been decided upon, a sense of urgency has been established, a guiding coalition has been formed, and a vision and strategy has been created, the change plan must be formally communicated with stakeholders before broad-based action can occur (Kotter, 2012). Cawsey et al. (2016) shares the four main purposes of a communication plan for change: to help the organization understand the need for change, to help individuals understand the impact the proposed change will have of them, to communicate any proposed structural or job changes, and to "keep people informed about progress along the way" (p. 320). Although Kotter's eight-stage change process outlines the communication plan occurring as the fourth step, it is most beneficial for ensure communication throughout the entirety of all steps. Cawsey et al. (2016) discuss four phases in the communication process during the change, they are: "the prechange phase, developing the need for change phase, the midstream phase, and confirming the change phase" (p. 332). Each of these phases encompass multiple of Kotter's (2012) steps in the change process and are summarized below.

The Prechange Phase

The goal of the prechange phase is to convince top management that the change is needed (Cawsey et al., 2016). In the case of School X, I am considered top management of the school as the principal, which grants me the authority to approve needed changes. In the bigger picture, the Director of Education for the school division is top management, with the authority to make large scale changes within the school division. The change plan will be communicated to her by myself through a one-on-one conversation. It is anticipated that she will be open to the change and excited to participate, as it coincides with the newest school division plan that she has recently proposed to the Board. The prechange phase also coincides with the first, second, and

third steps in Kotter's change process as a sense of urgency is established, the guiding coalition is formed, and the change vision and strategy are established. During Kotter's first step, as the sense of urgency is established, I will communicate with all staff members of the school by sharing data outlining the need for change and information about the PTHV program during designated PD sessions. As the guiding coalition is formed and the change vision and strategy is established, I will communicate with members of the coalition through follow-up phone calls after each meeting to gain a better sense of the attitude of the group and to shift future plans if necessary.

Developing the Need for Change Phase

Only after all members of the staff and guiding coalition have a firm hold on the change implementation plan and are excited about the new vision and strategy will the change vision be communicated with the remaining stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, bus drivers, and community members), as outlined in the fourth step of Kotter's change process. The change vision must be clear and concise so that everyone understands the common goals and directions of the change plan (Kotter, 2012). As discussed in the third step of the change implementation plan, establishing a vision and strategy, the change vision statement for School X may be: *Creating a unified identity through trusting relationships*. This statement will act as a reminder to all stakeholders of the ideal future state of School X, one that is unified because of the establishment and maintenance of trusting relationships among stakeholders. For the PTHV program to be successful, it must be continually reminded to all parents that the program will always be voluntary so that they do not feel pressured to participate. Communication with stakeholders must be methodical and consistent so as to not result in a "stalled transformation" (Kotter, 2012, p. 87). Everyone must be reminded of the rationale for the implemented change

and must be "reassured that they will be treated fairly and with respect" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 321). Authentic leadership values relational transparency, meaning it values communicating openly and sharing motives in an appropriate manner (Kemis, 2003). Through the utilization of social capital theory (Adler & Kwon, 2002), that is, reiterating the message that all members of School X's larger community have an important role to play in the change process, trusting relationships will be formed in order to propel the change process forward. As the school's larger community continues to build connections with one another through conversation and relationship, social capital will increase (McCallum & O'Connell, 2009)

It is important for the change vision to not get lost in the myriad of other communications that happen daily from the school. Newsletters, phone calls, emails, automated system-wide broadcasts, social media posts, classroom notes from teachers, school website announcements, and school division initiatives constantly bombard School X's stakeholders with an overabundance of information on a daily basis, which may cause the important change vision and strategy to become lost. To ensure this does not happen, sharing the change vision will be a group effort by all staff members and it will be an ongoing process throughout the change implementation plan. Kotter's (2012) suggestions to effective communication of the vision are by simplicity and examples. The vision will be introduced to all stakeholders through an exciting reveal at a kick-off event at each community with students and invited parents and community members that will be planned by the members of the guiding coalition, as they will have the greatest insight into what type of event will be successful in each community. It will then be used on all school stationary, staff email signatures, school letterhead, and newsletter slogans as a constant reminder of our envisioned future state and as a guide for all decisions.

The greatest challenge to communicating the change vision with stakeholders is not having a clear vision and strategy (Kotter, 2012). The guiding coalition must be trained to answer all questions on their own regarding the change implementation plan, as they are now the face of the new vision when interacting with stakeholders. Many students, parents, and community members will have specific questions about why the change is necessary and why PTHV has been chosen as a solution, and specific questions about the logistics of the program. For this reason, I must ensure that all members of the guiding coalition understand the vision and strategy and feel comfortable having these conversations with stakeholders, some of whom may be family and close friends. I will ensure this by having personal phone calls with each member of the guiding coalition as a follow up to each session that we have, so that I can answer any questions they may have and build an open relationship where each member feels comfortable to share hesitations and fears. As the change leader, I must be open to two-way communication about the change vision and be ready to pivot if members are not on board (Kotter, 2012). This means that timelines may need to be altered if more time is needed before the guiding coalition feels comfortable in communicating the change implementation plan with stakeholders.

Data and information will be crucial while communicating the change vision, as parents and community members will be learning about the PTHV program for the first time. There must be clear information about the program and time provided for questions to be asked so that anxieties are reduced and the purpose of the program is fully understood. The members of the guiding coalition will be instrumental in providing positive examples of the program to participants and being open to honest conversation about the hesitations and fears involved. Staff members and guiding coalition members will be taught about the stages of reactions to change: "anticipation and anxiety phase; shock, denial, and retreat phase; and acceptance phase" (Cawsey

et al., 2016, p. 246) so that everyone can plan for all stakeholder's reactions to the change implementation plan. The most challenging anticipated reactions from stakeholders during the communication stage is of those that may be hesitant to participating in the PTHV program. It must be continually reinforced that the PTHV program is always voluntary and always preplanned (McKnight et al., 2017) so that families will feel welcome to willingly participate. There will never be an unplanned drop-ins from teachers to check up on a parent and the purpose of the visit is never to be judgemental, but to learn about the family's knowledge and to form relationships that will contribute to a more unified school culture (Prokopchuk, 2016).

The Midstream Phase

Throughout the change process and as the PTHV program unfolds, communication must be provided to all stakeholders so they understand how things are going and what will happen next (Cawsey et al., 2016). In order to support the continuation of the program, stakeholders will need to be informed of progress being made. The monitoring of progress will be described in more detail in the following section: Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation. It is expected that if new initiatives have been met with enthusiasm, they may eventually wear off and the momentum of the change may come to a halt (Cawsey et al., 2016). To respond to this, I will need to ensure consistent communication is utilized to sustain interest in the program, as outlined in the communication plan below. My enthusiasm for the change will be a guiding factor in the staff's enthusiasm, which will also affect the student and parent enthusiasm and interest, increasing the volunteer army of participants in the program, as in Kotter's (2012) sixth step. To counteract any gossip or rumours that arise, I will have to provide clear, timely, and candid communication (Cawsey et al., 2016) to all participants about the impacts of the changes so that

gossip or fear does not overcome the attitudes of the stakeholders. This will reduce anxiety and uncertainty, while increasing the stakeholders' willingness to participate (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Confirming the Change Phase

Communication must continue throughout the entire change process, especially when goals are attained, so that stakeholders can be given an opportunity to celebrate achievements and remain excited about the changes occurring. For School X, small and large successes will be celebrated at the student level, the staff level, and the community level. At the student level, monthly assemblies will be used to share goals that are reached in regard to student participation in school activities and steps taken toward a unified school identity. At the staff level, weekly update emails will be used to celebrate small victories as well as during monthly staff meetings. At the community level, successes of the PTHV program and actions contributing toward a unified school culture will be shared through monthly newsletters, on the school website as they occur, and through school functions and planned celebrations. As the change facilitator, I must remember that celebrations are a valued way to "mark progress, reinforce commitment, and reduce stress" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 322). This will encourage the celebration of short-term wins in order to consolidate gains that will produce more change and, in turn, anchor new approaches into the school culture, as described in Kotter's (2012) final three steps of the change process.

Communication Summary

Cawsey et al. (2016) speaks to the importance of a communication channel that includes generic tactics such as emails and reports, as well as more personal tactics like telephone and face-to-face conversations. There will be times throughout the change implementation plan when

informal communication channels are utilized for ease of use and time, as well as times when

rich conversations are necessary and planned for, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Communication Plan

Kotter's Steps	Goals	Communication Planned
Step 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency	-increase the sense of urgency -decrease complacency	-principal to share data of current gaps during staff PD sessions -staff members to make monthly phone calls to families to listen to concerns and gain better sense of urgency
Step 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition	-build a team of students, staff members, parents, and community members to guide the change process	-facilitator to share PTHV information during PD sessions
Step 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy	-simplify the process -motivate participants -coordinate actions of those involved	-principal to phone members of guiding coalition as a follow up to monthly meetings, to help determine next course of action -principal, staff members, guiding coalition members encouraged to have candid conversations with one another to share hesitations or fears about PTHV
Step 4: Communicating the Change Vision	-build a volunteer army of participants	-guiding coalition members to share finalized change vision and change implementation plan at kickoff event in each community -principal to share data about the PTHV program and data about its benefits and successes with all stakeholders through newsletters and school website announcements
Step 5: Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action	-remove barriers that may inhibit change	-principal to ensure staff members are educated on the program, the reasons why it was chosen, the data showing why it will bring success, and all have been given opportunities to share hesitations and concerns
Step 6: Generating	-maintain high level of morale and motivation	-school to share small wins and thank you notes in monthly newsletter that is emailed to all families and

Short Term Wins	-sustain participation in the program	printed for community members as well as on school's social media channels -staff members to share successes of the program with one another at monthly staff meeting – allow others opportunity to share their experiences -staff members to share school wide successes at monthly assembly
Step 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	-continue revisiting goals of the desired future state -continue recruiting participants -continue pressing forward with change process	-families to share positive testimonials from PTHV participants in a monthly email and on school website and social media channels to encourage a larger volunteer army
Step 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture	-institute changes that altar behavior of stakeholders	-principal to ensure PTHV information is available in the welcome package for all new students and families joining the school community

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the entire change process, it is imperative that ongoing monitoring and evaluation tools be used for four distinct reasons: to provide expected outcomes based on the vision, to continue to assess the changing environment, to guide and pivot the change as necessary, and to bring the change process to a successful end (Cawsey et al., 2016). An appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework will also provide opportunities to address the results, management, accountability, learning, program improvement, and decision making throughout the change implementation plan (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). *Monitoring* is understood as the ongoing collection of performance information focused on the change process (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). This information is used to help the change facilitator determine how the change process is going and what changes need to be made throughout the

implementation plan. Monitoring will occur during all eight steps of Kotter's change process as a means for keeping the plan and participants focused on the end goals. Alternatively, *evaluation* pertains to periodic means of collecting data that will measure the performance of the overall plan (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Planned evaluations will take place during a select number of steps throughout the change implementation plan, as discussed in the upcoming evaluation section.

Donaldson (2007) recommends stakeholders be included in the process for creating the monitoring and evaluation plan, as this has been found to strengthen ownership in the program and encourage more use of the tools selected. As a leader who values distributed leadership, I will share my initial change process monitoring and evaluation plan with those involved while remaining open to new ideas for assessment tools brought forth from stakeholders throughout the change implementation plan. I will also encourage staff members and members of the guiding coalition to accept responsibility for many aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of the change process, as it will not be feasible for me to do everything myself.

For this OIP, the overall goal is to create a unified school identity for School X as a school serving students and families from three separate communities. A unified school identity will have impact on three distinct groups: students and their families, staff members, and community members. The change will become evident in closing the gaps of student participation and respect for school property, staff collaboration, and parental and community engagement, as discussed in Chapter 1. The monitoring and evaluation tools chosen to address the change goals identified for each group of stakeholders is detailed in Appendix A. The following sections will outline the planned change process monitoring and evaluation tools to be used throughout the change implementation plan.

Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring will occur during most of Kotter's change process, which will help guide future planning and determine necessary adjustments that need to be made throughout the change implementation plan. During Step 1, the principal and vice-principal will keep anecdotal notes during PD sessions regarding the sense of urgency of staff members, based on their participation in the sessions and their perceived attitudes toward the PTHV. During Step 2, while the guiding coalition is formed and meets to learn about the change process and the PTHV program, monitoring will take place to determine the next course of action. These monitoring tools will consist of informal conversations with members after monthly meetings, in person or by telephone, to provide opportunities for candid conversations about hesitations or questions about the program. Exit slips following staff PD sessions will help evaluate the sense of urgency and will determine when the next step is ready to be conducted. Members of the guiding coalition will also complete exit slips after each planning session to help the facilitator gauge the guiding coalition's members' comfort level and knowledge of the PTHV program before it is shared with the stakeholders. These exit slips will be used to share a question or concern about the program, and to complete a scale showing their level of comfort with beginning the program. Phone calls with parents and community members following the communication of the change vision will allow all staff members to gather a sense of understanding of the communities and to determine if broad-based action is ready to occur. At this time, an online survey will be used to gain a sense of understanding from parents and community members. Online surveys have been used in the past to gather information from parents and community members and have been an effective way to allow stakeholders to provide their thoughts and concerns with the school from their own home.

Evaluation

In addition to monitoring tools, formal evaluations will be used to collect data that will determine if the change implementation plan has produced successful results. Attendance numbers of staff members and families participating in the PTHV will be kept to determine whether the program is growing and if participants of the program are contributing to a unified school culture through an increase in family involvement in the school (Meyer et al., 2011; Wright et al., 2018) and a shift in values that are normalized in the organization (Prokopchuk, 2016). A formal evaluation of the PTHV program will be done through surveys completed by staff members and families involved in the program every three months. Since the goal of this OIP is to create a unified school identity, which depends on a shift in school culture, it is imperative that formal culture assessments (Schein, 2010) take place at least once yearly during the change implementation plan. The assessments will be facilitated by myself as the change facilitator, with the help of a variety of different stakeholders each time (i.e., staff members, students, parents, and community members) and will consist of self-assessments and group interviews. The culture assessment takes approximately two hours to complete and the topics of "artifacts, espoused values, shared underlying assumptions, cultural aids and hinderances, and decisions on next steps" (Schein, 2010, p. 319-324) are discussed. The culture assessment will be used to gather a complete picture of School X's culture before the change implementation plan begins, during Step 1. It will be completed again during Step 8 of the change implementation plan to determine if the plan has been successful. The OurSCHOOL survey will also be completed twice yearly by students, staff members, and parents which will provide data sets surrounding sense of belonging, pride in School X, and positive student-teacher relationships; all factors influencing the overall school culture.

Social capital of the school community will also be evaluated to determine if levels have increased as a result of the change implementation plan. Dufer, Parcel, and Troutman (2013) have created a social capital measurement model that assesses variables at the school level, including "student participation in extracurricular activities" (p. 7), and at the family level, including "parents attend school events" (p. 7). This measurement model will be used to assess the combined social capital of School X and its stakeholders to provide a baseline measurement before the implantation plan begins during Step 1 and will be repeated during Step 7 to determine whether the proposed changes have been effective. A summary of the change process monitoring and evaluation plan is illustrated in Table 5.

Next Steps

The next steps of the OIP will be to continually revisit steps four through eight of Kotter's eight-stage change process, as the PTHV program has the potential to be ongoing for the foreseeable future of School X. The continuing success of the PTHV program will require constant monitoring of participants and the effects of the program on the culture of the school and the impact it has on the sense of belonging of students, staff members, and family members, as well as the evaluation of social capital levels to determine if the changes proposed contribute to the establishment of a cohesive school identity for all stakeholders of School X. After the two years that have been planned for in the change implementation plan have been completed, it is anticipated that the OIP will lead to an increased level of communication between school and home, bringing forth significant changes in assumptions and perceptions about schooling (McKnight et al., 2017) which will lead to a more positive and cohesive school culture in School X (Prokopchuk, 2016). If this is the case, the next step would be for the change leader to create and provide more opportunities for parents and community members to come into the school to

Table 5

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Process	Monitoring	Evaluation
Step 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency	-anecdotal records kept by principal and vice-principal on the attitudes of staff members during PD sessions and during follow up conversations	-complete a Culture Assessment (Schein, 2010) -complete Dufer, Parcel, and Troutman's (2013) social capital model measurement for a baseline measurement
Step 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition	-informal conversations with members of guiding coalition as a follow up to monthly meetings, to determine next course of action -exit slip after each planning meeting to gauge each member's level of knowledge and comfort with the program	
Step 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy	-anecdotal records kept by principal and vice-principal on the attitudes of participants during planning sessions and during follow up conversations	-complete a Culture Assessment (Schein, 2010)
Step 4: Communicating the Change Vision	-follow up phone calls and informal conversations with parents and community members to ensure they understand the program and questions are answered -online surveys to gain a sense of understanding from parents and community members	

Step 5: Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action	-checklist of staff members and families volunteering to participate in the PTHV program	-complete The School Culture Survey (Gruenert & Todd, 2015)
Step 6: Generating Short Term Wins		-keep record of number of staff members and families participating in the PTHV, celebrate when milestones are achieved
Step 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change		-complete Dufer, Parcel, and Troutman's (2013) social capital measurement model to determine if changes have increased social capital levels
Step 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture	-ongoing monitoring of sense of belonging among all stakeholders through casual phone and in-person conversations -ongoing monitoring of PTHV program through conversations with participants	-evaluation of PTHV program through surveys completed by staff members and families involved in the program every three months -OurSCHOOL survey to be completed twice yearly by students, staff members, and parents to provide data sets surrounding sense of belonging, pride in School X, and positive teacher-student relationships

share their knowledge with the students through a partnership program, which will further

contribute to a unified school culture (Schein, 2010).

Future Considerations

After the implementation of the OIP, further considerations at the student, staff, and

family and community levels will be required. At the student level, there will need to be

continuous opportunities given for students to form a positive sense of belonging within School

X through the participation of school events and clubs and by sharing traditions from Schools Y

and Z so that they can be embedded into School X's new traditions and values. At the school

level, collaboration efforts will need to continue to be made a priority so that staff members are

given the opportunity to work together as a team, which will contribute to a unified identity. At

the family and community level, PTHV will continue to allow for positive relationships to be

strengthened among families and the school, and for staff members to learn about the talents and

skills of families. Parents and community members will need to be given many opportunities to

share their talents and skills with the school, so that they can feel a sense of belonging in the

school and in passing on knowledge to future generations, which will increase social capital

levels within each community. Since a shift in culture is such a difficult process (Barth, 2002), it

can take multiple years to be successful (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Kotter, 2012; Schein,

2010) and the change leader must continue to persevere toward the goals of the desired state.

For future consideration, the SCC will be a crucial element for the unified identity of

School X and all rural schools in Saskatchewan, as the role of the SCC is more valuable than is

currently realized. The shift from fundraising efforts to sharing and planning ways that

stakeholders can become involved in the learning of the next generation of citizens will allow for

their position to be greatly valued by the staff and students alike. Time and resources will need to

be given to build a strong relationship between the SCC and the staff of School X, allowing for the SCC to become a true partner in education. SCC members will become more involved in schooling operations which will in turn provide opportunities for more trusting relationships to be formed between the SCC and staff members.

As the enrolment of small schools in Saskatchewan continues to decline, it is inevitable that more schools will be closing, resulting in an increase of many rural schools absorbing students and staff members from surrounding communities. The influx of these new members and families will require deliberate and careful planning by the receiving school's administrators to ensure a course of action is in place to establish a unified school identity through a shift in school culture. Planning by the school division is also necessary to help with the transition period of school closures, so that those from the neighbouring communities feel valued and accepted in the new schools. It has been found that implementing the PTHV program in a division-wide setting has led to increased parental engagement in schools, increased teacher collaboration, and positive relationships were established among teachers and parents (Henke, 2011). It was also found that the program provided a more influential learning community for all stakeholders, as school leaders and teachers were challenged to redefine their roles in engaging with the school community (Boske & Benavente-McEnery, 2010). School divisions will need to be aware of the importance of stakeholder involvement so that appropriate planning can be done when school closures occur, in order to establish a unified school identity as outlined by this OIP.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 has provided a detailed change implementation plan for School X, guided by Kotter's (2012) eight-stage change process. The supports and resources required for each step are explored, along with the ways that distributed and authentic leadership methods can be utilized

to achieve the change goals recognized. A comprehensive communication plan will ensure that the change plan is shared with stakeholders so that momentum toward the goals remains consistent. The monitoring and evaluation plan will allow the facilitator of change to make changes as needed throughout the change implementation plan. With the information provided, I am confident that any principal facing a similar problem of practice to School X can use this OIP to begin the change process in their own school and community.

This OIP has provided an in depth look into rural education in Saskatchewan and the challenges faced when schools are permanently closed and students and staff members are forcefully relocated to schools in neighbouring communities. It has attempted to answer the question: "How can a unified school identity be developed in a receiving school with a student population coming from three separate communities?" Social capital theory has been used as a lens through which to view the problem, as the effectiveness of social capital is dependent on the ability to bridge ties between communities (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), pointing toward the solution to the organizational problem at hand. Through rigorous research on the topic, it has been realised that a school's culture is influenced by the students, staff members, and parents and community members of the school's greater community (Cawsey et al., 2016; Macleod, 2017; Prokopchuk, 2016; Schein, 2010). The school's culture is greatly influenced by relationships among all of the stakeholders, and these relationships can be strengthened through time spent together in home visits (Johnson, 2014; Park et al., 2017; Prokopchuk, 2016). It is my hope that this OIP be a valuable resource for school leaders in rural communities wishing to build cohesive school identities for the benefit of all stakeholders of their schools.

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Appendix A

	Change Goal (current gaps identified in Chapter 1)	Baseline (at program commencement)	Target (by end of program)	Monitoring and Evaluation Tools
Students	-Student sense of belonging -Student participation in extra-curricular activities -Vandalism -Positive student-teacher relationships	-gap in sense of belonging among students -lack of participation in extra-curricular activities -lack of respect for school property -lack of positive relationships among staff and students	- higher percentage of parents attending Student Led Conferences -more students participating in school sports and activities -less vandalism of student property	-as measured through SLC attendance -evaluated through Dufer et al's (2013) social capital measurement model -monitored through visual observation and office referrals for vandalism
Staff Members	-Collective Staff Efficacy -Fractured school culture	-gap between current state and desired state of collective efficacy -the socialization process (Shien, 2010) perpetuates the fractured culture	-teachers collaborating with one another -teachers volunteering to coach and lead school functions -all teachers participating in the PTHV program	-monitored through observation and anecdotal records
Parents and Community Members	-Participation of SCC's	-lack of parents attending student led conferences -low attendance at SCC meetings -members of surrounding communities feel disengaged from any school -low levels of social capital (Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2002)	-50 families participating in the PTHV program -parents are proud to send their students to School X -community members volunteering their time and talents in the school -high levels of social capital	-as measured by the OurSCHOOL survey -as measured by Dufer et al's (2013) social capital measurement model