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## Building Capacity in K-12 Educational Leaders to Address the Opportunity Gap

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## Abstract

While there is a niche of students who benefit from alternate education programs, there is a growing concern with the exclusionary nature of these programs and the limited research published regarding the effectiveness of these programs meeting the needs of students they serve (Smith et al., 2007). There is also concern that alternate programs contain a large percentage of students from marginalized groups and that they are reinforcing and perpetuating some of the challenges they were meant to address through the process of othering students. Othering is an incident where groups or an individual are labeled as not fitting in with the norm, it is the us vs. them mentality (Cherry, 2020; Spencer-Iiams & Flosi, 2021). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), rooted in ethics, equity, and social justice, investigates how to build educational leaders' capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap for students considered marginalized and eliminate exclusionary practices in their neighborhood school. Using a critical theory lens and through the transformative and inclusive leadership approaches, an organizational analysis using Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model is explored. This analysis leads to the creation of a change plan that incorporates a diagnostic framework, the Change Path model (Deszca et al., 2020), and a dialogic framework, the Dialogic Change model (Kuenkel et al., 2021). It is suggested that by developing a leadership development series that incorporates Lead Learner Teams (LLTs), educational leaders will gain the capacity to address the opportunity gap and eliminate exclusionary practices in schools (Katz et al., 2018).

*Keywords:* alternate education programs, capacity building for educational leaders, exclusionary practices, opportunity gap

## **Executive Summary**

My experience in leading alternative education programs for youth who do not achieve success in regular high schools has profoundly influenced my learning and development as an educator. It has compelled me to review my beliefs regarding education and the opportunities it can provide students. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) aims to find a solution to build educational leaders' capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap for students considered marginalized in Panoptic school district (a pseudonym). Opportunity gap refers to inputs, the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities (Education Reform, 2009).

Chapter 1 is an overview of the problem. An analysis of the organizational context and its aspirations are presented. Transformative and inclusive leadership approaches are explored, and the problem of practice identified. Gaps in leadership preparation, limited focus on equity and inclusive approaches, priority of rejecting deficit thinking, engaging in difficult conversations, and opening the curricular space are all acknowledged (Shields, 2012). The Continuum of Awareness of Change and the Response to Readiness mapping tools, reveal that the organization is ready for change (Deszca et al., 2020).

Chapter 2 outlines the necessary steps in planning and developing the solution to the problem of practice. A leadership approach to change based on transformative leadership and inclusive leadership is presented. The instructions for change are based on the diagnostic Change Path model presented by Deszca et al., (2020) and Kuenkel's (2020) Dialogic Change model. Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model is used to complete an organizational analysis. Three possible solutions emerge from this in-depth analysis. While all proposed solutions are feasible,

developing a professional development series using Lead Learner Teams (LLTs) is the chosen solution to build educational leaders' capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap.

Finally, Chapter 3 delineates a plan for implementing and communicating the change plan. By generating short, medium, and long-term goals related to implementing LLTs it becomes possible to monitor and assess the change. The Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model will be used for effective change management (Deming, n.d.).

Rooted in ethic, equity, and social justice this OIP requires a shift in educational leaders' attitudes with respect to students with complex needs, to act beyond traditional frameworks and transform the learning experience for student groups considered marginalized.

## **Acknowledgments**

My Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is a culmination of three years of dedication and hard work, that required support from family, friends, colleagues, classmates, and professors.

I would like to thank my friends and family. While it seemed that I would never arrive at the end, you provided words of encouragement and motivated me to keep going. A special thanks to my mom, Charlotte, who supported me by reading through the many papers submitted and the many drafts of this OIP.

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## **Acronyms**

BCPVPA (British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principal Association)

LftM (Leadership from the Middle)

LLT (Leader Learning Team)

LOCSL (Learning Organization and Compassionate Systems Leaders)

OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

## Definitions

**Achievement gap:** refers to outputs, the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results and benefits (Education Reform, 2009).

**Alternate education programs:** educational opportunities that fall outside the traditional K-12 curriculum; environment that includes additional supports for students.

**Capacity:** ability to use and understand information to make decisions, and communicate any decision made.

**Deficit thinking:** the notion that students (particularly those of low-income and/or racial/ethnic minority background) fail in school because such students and their families have internal defects (deficits) that thwart the learning process (Valencia, 1997).

**Dialogic model:** processes where action follows dialogue, confirming that conversational-based activities can allow for new possibilities to emerge (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021).

**Diagnostic model:** processes that involve an objective analyzes of the organization and the development of a plan to alter the organizational state.

**Exclusionary practices:** act or practice that excludes a particular person or group of people

**Inclusive leadership:** the capacity to manage and lead a heterogeneous group of people efficiently, while respecting their uniqueness in an empathetic way (Rojnik et al., 2016).

**Marginalized student:** students who do not have a connection with school are identified as anti-school kids, youth living in poverty, youth with disabilities, and youth from visible minority groups and Indigenous communities (Dubois-Vandale, 2010).

**Opportunity gap:** refers to inputs, the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities (Education Reform, 2009).

**Othering:** an incident where groups or an individual are labeled as not fitting in with the norm, it is the “us vs. them” mentality when thinking about relationships (Cherry, 2020).

**Status quo:** existing state of affairs, the way things are now (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

**Transformative leadership:** theory of leadership where a leader works with teams or followers beyond their immediate self-interests to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change.

**Under-serviced:** students who are negatively affected by processes, structures, barriers, and bias that privilege white students (Fullan & Gallagher, 2020).

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

Students with complex needs are not being adequately supported in their neighborhood school and as a result, are being referred to alternate programs. The aim of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is to create a plan to support educational leaders (refers to K-12 principals and vice-principals) in the development of neighborhood schools that are intentional in providing opportunities for all students to experience success and not be referred to an alternate program. The term ‘neighborhood school’ is used in this OIP to refer to public schools that are within walking distance or short drive to the student’s residence. Alternate programs contain a high population of students considered marginalized (Vallee, 2017). Marginalization has many definitions since there is little agreement in literature or policy about its causes (Jenson, 2020; Macpherson, 2016; Dubois-Vandale, 2010). This OIP uses a definition that looks at *marginalization* through an educational lens: students who do not have a connection with school, are identified as anti-school kids, youth living in poverty, youth with disabilities and youth from visible minority groups and Indigenous communities (Dubois-Vandale, 2010).

This OIP will support what researchers prescribed: how to help educational leaders acquire the skills to proactively identify and overcome challenges related to educational success for students from groups considered marginalized and to intentionally create more opportunities for these students to engage and access quality educational services within their neighborhood school (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017; Macpherson, 2016; Theoharis, 2007). This first chapter introduces the organization this OIP is intended for and the leadership problem of practice it will address. A leadership position, lens and vision for change are provided. The final section of the chapter will explore the organizational change readiness.

## **Organizational Context**

McMillan (2018), defined *organizational context* as the organization's culture, encompassed by the background, environment, and atmosphere. To explore deeper, a PESTE framework is used to provide an overview of the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors influencing components of Panoptic. The background provides an overview of Panoptic and how it aligns with the Ministry's goals and direction for education. The environment section presents the organizational structure, leadership approaches and practices, as well as the political, economic, technological, and environmental factors that influence Panoptic. The atmosphere section explores the social and cultural context of Panoptic.

### **Background**

Panoptic is a small public school district in British Columbia, Canada, that services a community of approximately 7,000 students from a range of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. It is composed of multiple elementary schools (Kindergarten to Grade 5), middle schools (Grades 6-8), one high school (Grades 9-12), an adult and online learning program, and three alternate programs that currently support approximately 130 students in the district. One alternate program supports students in Grades 8 and 9, while the other two support students in Grades 10-12.

Panoptic recently completed a panoramic view of the district's strengths and areas of need to develop a strategic plan that aspires to transform the student experience, inspire learning, and guide the district toward the province's policy for student success (Panoptic school district website, 2021). The province's framework states that public schools must strive to create and maintain conditions that foster success for all students and promote fair and equitable treatment



for all by following explicit conditions (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.). Specific to the problem of practice (PoP) in this OIP are four conditions:

1. equitable access to and participation in quality education for all students,
2. school cultures that promote understanding of others and respect for all,
3. decision-making processes that give a voice to all members of the school community,
4. policies and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment.

According to Panoptic and the Ministry of Education, success means accumulating credits and working toward graduation. Despite many supports, some students fail to succeed in neighborhood schools, and when all options fail, an alternative program may be considered. Many alternate programs function outside of a student's neighborhood school. Although done with the best intentions, for students, this means leaving their friends and familiar neighborhood and possibly having to travel a greater distance to school.

Alternate programs have been around since the 1960s and have many structures (Aron, 2003). Defining alternate education is a complex phenomenon due to the number of different purposes for the program and the variety of types of alternate programs (Oh Neill, 2017). In Panoptic, alternate programs known as continual or storefront schools have been in operation for more than twenty-five years. *Continual schools* provide educational experiences for students whose life situations have resulted in decreased attendance or dropout; while *storefront schools* refer to schools that students need to attend due to suspension or expulsion from their neighborhood school (Steward, 2020). Many students in Panoptic's alternate programs have come from a neighborhood middle school or the high school due to disengagement and/or behavioral reasons. Students are referred to these programs by a counsellor or school leader. A district referral form that outlines the students' strengths, struggles, supports, and wishes is

submitted to the district screening committee. Based on the completed form and information presented by the neighborhood school staff, the district screening committee determines the best location, services, and supports needed for the individual student.

## **Environment**

Panoptic has a top-down hierarchical structure, which means giving more control over decisions to those at the top of the organization (Sisney, 2016). Organizations rely on hierarchical structures, a downside to this is the believe that those at the top of the management ladder have the solutions to the major problems they face (Hollander, 2009). Given the small number of people in the top positions within Panoptic, those individuals are working to create a more horizontal structure, where employees are given more responsibility, which creates open communication, and improves coordination and implementation of change (Sisney, 2016).

In Panoptic, a mix of leadership approaches are seen, situational leadership at the executive level, instructional leadership from the directors of instruction, and relational for many of the educational leaders. This mix of leadership approaches provides multiple lenses to explore a change initiative. According to Shepard and Galway (2016), school district leaders are more likely than government actors to directly impact school leaders and school effectiveness. Directors in Panoptic use practices that support incentives from the top down and uphold district policy and procedures. They do this by working with leaders to serve as change advocates based on their awareness of explicit and implicit forms of oppression and marginalization within schools (Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015).

The executive leadership team, those at the top of Panoptic (superintendent, assistant superintendent, secretary treasure, Human Resource manager, and two directors of instruction) are fully committed to transforming student learning experiences through a continuous learning

framework of practice which includes review, refine, and reflection (Panoptic school district website). The superintendent and assistant superintendent have expressed in monthly meetings the need to address the opportunity gap that students from marginalized groups experience. Although the term *achievement gap* is commonly used, it refers to outputs, the inequitable or unequal distribution of educational results and benefits; in this OIP the term *opportunity gap* is used instead. The term refers to inputs, the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities (Education Reform, 2009). It puts the onus of the challenge on the leader to directly address this issue by being conscious of providing more opportunities for students to achieve success (Flores, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016).

### ***Political factors***

Politically, the reforms and reorganization occurring in Panoptic have been continuous over the past number of years. New provincial curriculum and reporting orders, new learning management systems introduced to district staff and all new members in the top positions of Panoptic within in the last 3 years has produced a lot of change. This change has brought new lenses to policies and procedures, which upon review have been found to be open, general and leave holes for individual interpretation. This may have been done intentionally to allow for autonomy within a school, but one conclusion drawn from reviewing policies in Panoptic is that the policies are not sufficient in addressing the issue of equity.

### ***Economic factors***

On the financial aspect the district is working to remain in the black. The secretary treasure of Panoptic has reached out to educational leaders and asked them to provide their voice in determining the distribution of funds between elementary, middle, and secondary schools. There has been an expressed desire to distribute funds in a manner that is equitable and fair to

all. Another resource included in the economic factor is people resources. Within Panoptic, the Human Resource department takes control over the hiring process and places staff within buildings. This is done in consultation with the union representative and human resource manager but there is limited input from the educational leader, making it challenging for schools to develop congruence among staff.

### ***Technological factors***

The advent of technology and increased mobility results in a changing world and evolving school system. Panoptic has embarked on a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to school initiative, allowing a percentage of the student population to have access to information at their fingers. While this is a positive innovation, the worry is for those students who do not have a device due to social/economic situation, the underprivileged being left behind. Technical equipment available within the school also becomes an equity issue, as there may be more technology available in one school because it has been purchased by the school Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Schools within socio-economically challenged neighborhoods are unable to raise the funds required to support the purchase of technology, leaving the underprivileged group of students behind.

As leaders use technology to gather data, the large quantities of it can be mind-boggling and with security concerns related to data management and security, the concern for viruses and hacking has leaders looking for support. To support educational leaders, Panoptic has hired a new IT Director who is ensuring security, while overseeing the implementation of Microsoft Office and the BYOD innovation.

### ***Environmental factors***

With increased concerns over global warming, the destruction of the environment, sustainability, and social responsibility, societal pressure for environmental change has increased. Panoptic endorses environmental change by ensuring all new school buildings are LEED approved, meaning they are healthy, efficient, carbon and cost-saving green buildings. The district is also attempting to reduce the amount of paper used within schools, trying to make as much digital as possible, and supported students attending the student climate strike in June 2021.

### **Atmosphere**

Panoptic resides in a small community, so when something good or bad happens in a school, it is reported in the newspaper right away and is the hot topic of discussion in the community. The organization has a complex history. The executive team has experienced multiple changes over the last couple of years: four different superintendents, three different assistant superintendents, two new directors within the last two years and a new board of trustees within the last year. The history of challenging relationships between union groups and management continues but the executive leadership team is moving toward a more collaborative and nuanced approach. Panoptic has developed a strategic plan for 2019-2024 that is focused on inspiring learning and guiding the district toward the provinces policy for student success.

Panoptic aspires to be a continuous learning organization, pushing all stakeholders to think and act beyond traditional frameworks. The school district is on a path that is focused on meeting what Fullan and Gallagher (2020) called the *new moral imperative*, addressing the ability for all students to be good at life by ensuring excellence in educational programming, equity for all, and well-being.

### ***Social factors***

The district is committed to addressing inequities and has a superintendent that leads by recognizing the power of human agency and acts against on inequalities, ensuring that actions and decisions do not reproduce educational and social inequities (Green, 2017). One step taken to address inequities was to approve a posting in June 2019, for a district vice-principal responsible for improving equity for all students. Another example of the commitment to improving achievement for marginalized student groups was in a news bulletin that came out June 2020, which outlined the school districts commitment to inclusion and diversity, and the desire to move to create greater equity. The follow up to that announcement was the hiring of an outside agency to complete an equity audit of the district during the 2021 school year and release the results during the 2022 school year.

### ***Cultural factors***

Panoptic has a mixed demographic as reported in the Executive Summary of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Gap Analysis Report (2021). Of the student respondents, ethnicity consisted of students identify as white (31.3%), East Asian (22.5%), South Asian (10.4), mixed race (8.8%), Black (7%), and Indigenous (2.2%). The report documented 14 languages spoken and 9 different religious backgrounds among students. It also pointed out that a small number of students identified as non-binary (2.5%), transgender (0.7%), and bisexual (12.9%). The report is viewed as a snapshot as most student respondents were from the high school, representation from elementary was less than 5%. Staff demographics were quite different with 57.6% identifying as white, 10.2% as East Asian, and 10.6% as South Asian. This is an area of focus for human resources.

As far as tradition within the organization, Panoptic has continued many traditions, while slowly moving away from others. The district vice-principal for equity has provided a year overview of religious and special dates to be acknowledge, while the district vice-principal for indigenous supports has created new acknowledgments and traditions to be used. The district is moving away from celebrations and traditions that do not align with its vision and mission.

The PESTE factors described above influence the change direction Panoptic desires to move toward. These factors are also considered part of the input components for Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model. This organizational analysis model is used to frame the PoP through its four fundamental elements used to analyze an organization: tasks, people, formal, and informal organization. This model was selected to analyze Panoptic for several reasons, first it supports change leaders in their ability to analyze and see areas requiring action. Second, it contains activities that require critical inquiry to identify the dysfunctional norms within the organization and third, it provides a complete picture of the organization, its components, and how they work together. This model provides the change leader with an opportunity to understand how the formal systems and structures influence people's behaviors. The last reason this model was selected is because it contains a critical change leader activity that identifies the dysfunctional norms and dynamics within the organization (Deszca et al., 2020).

The more congruence among the four elements the better the organization performance will be. Some researchers criticize congruence, pointing out that "too much emphasis on congruence potentially (could have) an adverse or dampening effort on organizational change" (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 79). It can be argued that in the long run, tight congruence in a stable environment leads to ingrained patterns inside the organization. It is important to remember that the key lies in balancing the need for flexibility and adaptability with the need for alignment

(Deszca et al., 2020). The analysis of the four fundamental elements is explored in greater detail in chapter 2.

While the executive leadership team and trustees work to develop congruence and alignment within Panoptic, they understand the current need for alternate programs but aspire to have neighborhood schools designed with educational programs that support the success of all students in academics, as well as their behavioral, social, and emotional needs. The next section focuses on my personal leadership lens, position, and approach to create congruence and alignment within Panoptic.

### **Leadership Lens, Position, and Approach**

In Panoptic there is a variety of leadership approaches used, as presented in the previous section. This section focuses on my personal leadership position, lens, and approach, as well as my role in the desired change for Panoptic. I express my agency, power, and theoretical approach to my leadership practice and present how my position, lens and approach influence my research approach, design, and methods.

#### **Leadership Lens – Critical Theory**

After reviewing philosophical worldviews, reflecting on my experiences and beliefs as a White woman in a middle level leadership position, I place my philosophical view within critical theory, with a transformative and inclusive approach. Critical theory strives to combine philosophy and social sciences, to achieve human release from circumstances of domination and oppression (Bohman, 2021). It specifically supports individuals in their understanding of issues regarding inequity, power, and oppression. These principles follow an Aristotelian philosophy related to the idea of pragmatic virtue and have been identified as a basis for the construction of a conceptual model of inclusive leadership. Critical theory allows educators to see the hidden



objectives and pose questions to challenge underlying domination and provides a critical approach to initiate change for marginalized groups and act against oppressive conditions. A limitation to a critical lens is that it provides little in terms of practice and agency (Jagpal, 2017).

Agosto and Roland (2018), in their review of research on intersectionality and educational leadership, pointed out how researchers have named and criticized the Western, Eurocentric styles and theories of leadership based on the normative (White) lens in educational leadership practice (García & Byrne Jiménez, 2016; López, 2016; Horsford, 2012; Reed, 2012; Witherspoon & Arnold, 2010). The criticism is the limited research using intersectionality to examine the processes, practices, policies, and structures in schools. This is important as students from marginalized groups not only experience discrimination at the individual level, but also at the institution level. Like the researchers above, I position my work to support the reconceptualization of leadership based on the experiences of marginalized societal groups and their voices.

As an accomplished educational leader committed to inclusion and success for all, I align with this view, as I strive to inspire and motivate followers to perform in ways that create meaningful change for students. I use my power and voice to focus on collaboration and get people to extend beyond their boundaries and rethink stereotypes. In my role as district principal, I believe it is important to create a safe and effective learning environment for everyone: students, teachers, parents, and the school community. I do what I do to understand and influence the state of education for differently abled students. I feel that knowing why I do what I do and being intentional with my actions supports my leadership approach. In leadership, I strive to perfect what Howard Gardner refers to as the 3 'e's of good work: ethics, engagement, and excellence.

## **Leadership From the Middle**

In the hierarchy of Panoptic, I am in a middle leadership position as a district principal, which means managing and leading multiple school sites and programs at one time. *Leading from the middle* (LftM) as explained by Fullan (2015) refers to working to effect change within the organization in two directions: above, influencing policy and procedure, and below, influencing school culture and instruction. *Bottom-up change leadership* means involving those affected by the change. While bottom-up change is important, it does not result in overall system improvement and enables some schools to improve, while other's do not. This makes the gap between high and low performing schools grow even wider (Anderson, 2020; Fullan, 2015).

From the middle, I use my leadership to empower good governance practices and to inspire and invest in others. I frequently step back from the emergent fires of the day, from the forces of habituation, and consider what am I really doing when I arrange my schedule.

My desire, while a challenging and lofty one, is to support the changes required above in policy and procedure and support my colleagues to be proactive in creating change below within their schools. LftM is an important concept to support the desired change in Panoptic because it helps shift thinking from outdated models and aligns with a transformative leadership approach.

## **Transformative Leadership Approach**

Transformative theory arose during the 1980s and evolved in the 1990s from researchers who felt that “post-positivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that do not fit marginalized individuals in our society” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). Transformative theory as an umbrella term includes perspectives intended to be emancipatory, participatory, and inclusive (Romm, 2015). It allows leaders to look for the best outcome for both individuals and the collective as they find ways to overcome disparities between dominant and non-dominant or

marginalized populations (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Transformative leadership as a critical leadership theory focuses explicitly on inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice. Leadership from this viewpoint raises the bar of the leader's commitment to society, the organization, followers, and to becoming their very best selves (Caldwell & Anderson, 2018). I align with this leadership approach because it contains an action agenda for reform that has the potential to change lives.

Transformative leadership has some disadvantages. First, it is difficult to define parameters because it covers such a wide range of activities and characteristics. In addition, some researchers have argued that it focuses primarily on leaders thus, it has failed to provide attention to followers (Taylor & Brownell, 2017; Mgqibi, 2015; Hollander, 2009). This is where inclusive leadership can be effective.

### **Inclusive Leadership Approach**

There is an assumption that inclusiveness can be achieved with existing leadership styles, but this is not true. *Inclusive leadership* is the ability to manage and lead a heterogenous group of people efficiently, by respecting their uniqueness (Rojnik et al., 2016). This approach is based on key theorists such as psychologist Edwin Hollander, Robert K. Greenleaf and his concept of servant leadership, and author/consultant Frederic Laloux who writes about self-management, empowerment and building successful companies (Rojnik et al., 2016). It stems from social psychology and in their literature review of inclusive leadership, Najmaei and Sadeghinejad (2019) pointed out inclusive leadership emerged from advances in leadership studies suggesting that leadership be inclusive, less leader-centric, and more follower-oriented.

Inclusive leadership is a form of transformative leadership that addresses the impact of power and privilege and promotes and capitalizes on diversity. It focuses on leading from the

middle and attends to individuals at risk of exclusion by looking at their needs, aspirations, and empowering them to fully participate (Rojnik et al., 2016; Ryan, 2006). It involves the principles of fairness and respect, value and belonging, safety and openness, and empowerment and growing (Deloitte, 2012).

Even though the field of inclusive leadership is young, leaders should be inclusive because it benefits organizations in numerous ways (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad, 2019). Transformative and inclusive leadership support the need for leaders to be able to demonstrate that diversity is not a burden, but that it provides the opportunity to learn with and from each other, creating more access points to learning and opportunities for student success.

### ***My Role in the Potential Change***

According to Bohman (2021), critical theorists aim to create reflective conditions and when aligned with an inclusive leadership framework allows leaders to reflect on one's privilege, suspending personal authority, being willing to experience vulnerability, and admitting one's ignorance. This is important because leaders strive to improve our understanding of what it means to be disengaged and protect youth from being excluded. My role as a critical theorist, using a transformative and inclusive approach, involves inquiry and work that moves the needs of student groups considered marginalized to the center of the school's efforts, in hopes of increasing opportunities for success. As an inclusive leader, I lean toward collaboration rather than the manipulation of followers. I recognize and share what Green (2017) called the *power of human agency*, to act against inequalities, and consistently question whether my decisions reproduce or eliminate inequities. This situates me in a position to support the development of

leader's capacity to transfer the focus of responsibility for achievement from the student to leaders and teachers.

It is important for me to maintain the district's strength and integrity with students, parents, staff, and community by maintaining positive partnerships, and empowering others to ensure responsible and accountable decisions are made. This aligns with researchers who point out that an empowerment regime is important to address the opportunity gap, because it involves taking an assertive rather than deficit view of parents and communities and sees them as experts on their own children (Beard, 2018; Horsford et al., 2018). I agree with researchers who point out that leaders and teachers can make a difference and that they are capable of influence in ways that either challenge or reinforce existing inequalities (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Stevenson & Tooms, 2010).

While my agency to create opportunities for students considered marginalized to experience success in their neighborhood schools may seem a bit dreamlike, I believe that using a critical theoretical framework, aligned with transformative and inclusive leadership, I can support colleagues in proactively addressing the opportunity gap. It is important to remember that no matter what the leadership style or level in the organization, every decision made, and action taken impacts other elements of that organization. The next section looks at the leadership problem of practice in Panoptic.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice (PoP)**

For leaders to promote change toward more inclusive and equitable schools, they need to be informed by theories, paradigms, and practices that are rooted in creating change (Taylor & Brownell, 2017). This section will explore the problem of practice (PoP) presented in this OIP. It

will present a relevant gap between current practices that create an organizational problem and a more desirable, achievable organization state based on revised practices.

### **Problem to Be Changed**

While schools in Panoptic meet the needs of many students, they struggle to meet the academic, behavioral, and social and emotional needs of some students. These struggles are seen in the lack of opportunity from systems, structures, and adults. Leaders who use the term opportunity gap instead of achievement gap, believe that given the resources and opportunities they deserve, all students can achieve success (Mooney, 2018). Leaders in Panoptic are frustrated because they know that exclusionary practices occur in their schools but are unsure how to create positive change to rid them. Instead of meeting the complex needs of students, they are typically referred to alternate programs. Although a niche of students do benefit from these programs, there is a growing concern of both the exclusionary nature and the limited research published regarding the effectiveness of these programs meeting the needs of students they serve (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021; Ssemanda, 2016; Simone, 2012).

Current practices in Panoptic while not intentional can be considered exclusionary. Exclusion in education is seen as students not having the life prospects needed for learning, students not engaged in meaningful learning experiences, lack of recognition of prior learning or learning acquired from non-formal programs, and barriers to learning how to contribute to community and society (UNESCO, n.d.). Exclusion includes but is not limited to exclusionary relationships and social exclusion. Marginalization derives from *exclusionary relationships* based on power and involves a lack of opportunities for targeted groups (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021; Broomfield et al., 2020; Alakhunova et al., 2015). *Social exclusion* is an

inability to participate in economic, social, and cultural life, in effect alienating and distancing from mainstream society (UNESCO, n.d.).

It is important for Panoptic to see how the misalignment between action in schools and district policy is hindering improved results (Deszca et al., 2020). While maintaining alternate programs, students with complex needs can always be referred out. Leaders in Panoptic are encouraged to alter their practices and develop their capacity to challenge the status quo, remove exclusionary practices and increase opportunities for under-served students to remain in neighborhood schools, eventually eliminating the need for alternate programs. The term *under-served* is used instead of terms like *at-risk* or *vulnerable* because these terms put the responsibility on the student, who is already negatively affected by the configurations, obstacles, and bias that privilege white students (Fullan & Gallagher, 2020). Leaders need to embed structural inclusion of diverse groups into a reconstructed mainstream (Chunoo et al., 2019; Kowalchuk, 2019). This can be achieved as they use a critical lens and become transformative, inclusive leaders who feel an ethical responsibility to eliminate deficit mindsets, while they take purposeful steps to change schools on the behalf of and with student groups considered marginalized.

### **Problem of Practice (PoP)**

An emerging challenge in public education in BC is the increase in the number of alternate programs designed to provide an educational experience for students who do not fit the mold of school and the increase of the number of students attending these alternate programs. Not fitting the mold is experienced more frequently by students considered marginalized and places these students at a disadvantage as they transition to adulthood (Dunleavy & Milton, 2010). Within Panoptic the success rate based on graduation data for student groups considered

marginalized is approximately 75%, which is 10% lower than the success rate for non-marginalized students (BC Ministry of Education, 2020). To address this discrepancy many school districts, including Panoptic, have developed alternate programs, also known as type three facilities, to re-engage and support this group of students. As pointed out by BC Ministry of Education Alternate Education Policy (2009), alternate programs “focus on educational, social and emotional issues for students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school program.” The BC Ministry of Education (2009) discovered that alternate programs contain a disproportionate number of under-serviced students and students identified as marginalized.

Leaders in Panoptic continue to express frustration because they are aware that exclusionary practices continue to occur in their schools, but they are unsure how to create positive change. They understand that the barriers students face, are due to actions and biases that may or may not be deliberate but need to be removed. They are looking for support with changing mindsets, providing equitable distribution of resources, and creating more opportunities for students with complex needs. The PoP under investigation is how to build capacity in educational leaders to proactively address the opportunity gap for student groups considered marginalized and eliminate exclusionary practices in neighborhood schools.

### **Framing the Problem of Practice**

To frame this PoP in a broader context a historical overview will be provided, followed by a rationale for the change in Panoptic by exploring the forces shaping the practices that created the PoP. The PoP is framed using the PESTE factor analysis discussed earlier and a social justice context. The final section frames the challenges of the PoP, potential factors, influences, and internal and external data shaping the PoP guiding questions.



## **Historical Overview**

By law in BC, every child has a fundamental right to public education that will provide them with the tools and skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. When students are not a part of society, they are excluded from the opportunity to develop the appropriate skills to meaningfully contribute (Macpherson, 2016). The hope was that alternate programs would allow the most under-serviced students an opportunity for success by providing supports through differentiated instruction, specialized program delivery, and enhanced counselling services (BC Ministry of Education, 2009).

In Panoptic, alternate programs have been in place for more than 30 years. These programs at one time were supporting more than 300 students, who travelled from across the lower mainland of BC to attend these programs. Over the years, Panoptic has changed its policy regarding student enrollment and now only accepts students living in the Panoptic school district boundary. This has reduced the number of students in the programs and therefore the number of staff assigned to these programs. As the number of staff has been reduced over the years to a skeleton crew, it has become even more challenging to support this student group in achieving success.

## **Why Change in Panoptic**

The main reason for the change in Panoptic is found in the field of educational leadership, which has called for the development of leaders who can eliminate disparities between dominant and non-dominant student groups (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021; Bloomfield et al., 2020; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). This literature provides leaders with an opportunity to use critical inquiry to unpack and interrogate inequities within their school, allowing them to pose questions to challenge underlying domination (Della Rovere, 2014). The change will

support the examination of structural inequalities, such as the practice of tracking students, standardized assessments, and a teaching force that does not represent the diversity of today's student body. *Tracking* in education refers to where the student will be placed during high school. Based on standardized test scores, students are grouped together and put on one of the following tracks: vocational, general, or academic. Tracking is believed by some researchers to create a social disparity (Darling-Hammond, 2013). The change is necessary to break through the entrenched deficit perspectives and allow for deliberate dialogue regarding disparity and marginalization occurring at the school level (Beard, 2019).

Another reason for the change is due to the growing concern that alternate programs are reinforcing and perpetuating some of the challenges they were meant to address through the process of *othering* students (Spencer- Iiams & Flosi, 2021). Othering is an incident where groups or an individual are labeled as not fitting in with the norm, it is the *us vs. them* mentality when thinking about relationships (Cherry, 2020). In Panoptic, leaders are looking to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes within themselves and their staff that allows them to meet the diverse needs of all learners and not engage in othering.

Finally, the change will create alignment with the Diversity in BC School Framework (2017). This framework aligns with the *School Act* (BC Law, 2022) and infers that school systems must strive to ensure that differences among learners do not impede their participation in school, their mastery of learning outcomes, or their ability to become contributing members of society. Boards of education and schools are expected to develop and implement policies and practices that honor diversity and respect the rights of all individuals (BC Ministry of Education, 2017). While alternate programs are supported through BC education policy, they seem to contradict the *School Act*, because they operate under a deficit paradigm, as they support the

more diversified and complex needs of students and take the pressure off neighborhood schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013).

### **Problem of Practice Within Panoptic**

The number of students in Panoptic referred to alternate programs has increased over the last three years, with the largest increase this past year due to challenges students experienced from the pandemic. One of the three alternate programs in Panoptic is located within the neighborhood school, the other two are in a shopping plaza due to limited available space in schools and the community. Historically, it was thought that this student group would be more successful in buildings that did not represent the traditional school. Alternate programs struggle at times to provide opportunities for student success due to limited resources and staffing, which results in fewer courses offered, and limited access to resources such as science labs, gym for physical education, and music programs. Aligning with the notion expressed by Bloomfield et al. (2020), that alternate programs are at times second-rate schools regarding their limited curriculum choices and opportunity to choose a different path.

The ability to create inclusive, equitable and socially just schools is seen by leaders as a challenge due to the lack of preparation and capacity in how to create this (Younas et al., 2020; Xiaotao et al., 2018). As pointed out by Shields (2012), educational practices based on ignoring inequities, either by blaming social, economic, or political factors, are manifestations of firmly rooted systemic bias. Leaders in Panoptic who ignore inequities will be more likely to reproduce school as it is and not transform the learning experience. Research findings have demonstrated that educational leader's need to take it upon themselves to proactively do something about the challenges that prevent students from being able to succeed, marginalization will continue

(Ssemand, 2016). The following section uses portions of the PESTE analysis to identify forces within Panoptic that continue the status quo and limit opportunities for student success.

### ***Political***

Education reform and advocacy organizations are actively reshaping how school districts and educational agency's function. These reforms are restructuring the governance and leadership of school systems in profound ways. Educational leaders and advocates are facing barriers that make it increasingly difficult for schools to serve as places of opportunity, especially for the most disadvantaged students. Barriers that are structural, economic, and institutional continue to impact the opportunities provided (Horsford et al., 2018). In Panoptic there is a limited focus on preparing leaders for the politics of education and education policy. Many leaders find themselves in difficult conversations around education policy and practices with staff members, students, parents, and other colleagues more frequently and feel ill prepared at times to discuss the issue. This not only undermines their ability to be effective leaders but also to demonstrate the leadership capacity, political awareness, and advocacy important to leadership for educational equity (Horsford et al., 2018).

Panoptic has committed to social reform and social justice work by completing its first equity audit in 2020. It is focused on challenging the status quo as data was collected from students, staff, parents, and community groups and an executive summary of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion gap analysis was created and will be explored by leaders in upcoming months. The executive team has been working with an outside agency to collect the data and through a team approach a plan for continuous improvement will be created.

### ***Economic***

While traditional high school programs are funded through course-based funding, alternate programs are funded at 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalent). Course-based funding does not always produce enough funding for the school to support the complex needs of today's students. Another funding model example that continues the status quo is found in counselling support. In a high school the ratio of student to counsellor is approximately 250:1, whereas in an alternate program that number is drastically reduced to approximately 60:1. This funding model has been in place for decades and maintains the status quo, making it challenging for high schools to effectively support the complex needs of students, resulting in these students unfortunately being referred to an alternate program.

In early 2019, the BC Ministry of Education conducted a funding model review, and in October 2019, the BC School Trustees Association wrote a letter to the minister urging them to allow boards of education an opportunity to pilot and provide feedback should a new funding model for K-12 be implemented. Currently, the exploration of models continues with no plan for change.

### ***Social***

While non-educational entities contribute to the educational reform, the economy and social reforms within BC are focused on equity. Equity can be viewed through many unique lenses. One is the White privilege status, which refers to the advantages of being White in society (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017). This privilege status effects the social construct on a macro level with the neo-liberal agenda of maintaining the status quo. Flores & Gunzenhauser (2021) found that despite the growth of the concept of opportunity gap, the concept is largely absent

from school leaders' talk. Their article stresses the importance for leaders at all levels to deepen and broaden their ability to tackle difficult conversations concerning educational inequalities.

Within Panoptic inequalities occur for many reasons including a lack of understanding and a lack of social acceptance, intolerance, stigmatization, and prejudice. This causes problems in the provision and organization of education, where marginalization can at times be seen through the distribution of resources, socioeconomic factors, within the curriculum, and in the environment (Padhi, 2016).

The desired change in Panoptic sees the political, economic, and social forces being internally attended to by educational leaders with confidence from knowledge and skills gained to address the status quo and opportunity gap. By challenging the status quo and increasing opportunities for all students, educational leaders can be seen addressing social justice principles.

### **Social Justice Context**

Social justice is four interrelated principles: equity, access, participation, and rights. The concept focuses on equal access to opportunity, privileges, well-being, health, and wealth. Schools are one of the most powerful institutions where social stereotypes are reproduced, making them a key place to be challenged (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Too often, subordinate group members are assumed to be the ones who need to be modified or fixed to make them a better fit into the organizational norms, rather than questioning what needs to change to make the organization more inclusive for all (Gallegos, 2014). Leaders who confront power and interrupt oppression in systems, as needed in Panoptic, are social justice leaders (Chunoo et al., 2019).

Liethwood and Marscall (2008) contend that leaders must guide schools through increasingly complex situations and must be critical by continuously asking themselves, who is being well-served, who is left out or harmed. They must then interrupt policies, practices, and

procedures that, intentionally or not, perpetuate unequal outcomes for students who are furthest away from opportunity (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017; Jackson & McIver, 2016). Leaders who embrace transformative and inclusive leadership are taking a social justice approach by developing a critical consciousness of their power and privilege; and by prioritizing education as a human right, and lifelong learning as a modern-day necessity (Hollander, 2009).

Given the rapidly diversifying school-aged population in Canada, a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and socially just ways of leading change, is required. Global studies of leadership styles found that authoritarian leadership within education is still commonly practiced in many countries of the world (Thompson, 2017). As this leadership practice is incompatible with inclusive societies and equitable schools, it is important for leaders to open their minds to a new paradigm of thinking and leading. The research for this PoP aligns with previous scholars who examined the impact of attending alternate programs (Broomfield et al., 2020; Goran, 2019) and those who investigated the school leaders' impact on providing more opportunities for students from marginalized groups (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021; Chitpin, 2019; Ssemanda, 2016). The notion of intentionally addressing the opportunity gap and status quo is discussed widely and as one researcher commented, mainstream education must be reconstructed to reflect the diverse cultural, ethnic, and language groups within it (Banks, 2006). The challenges related to reconstructing mainstream education in relation to this PoP are presented next. The potential factors, influences, and guiding questions are then explored.

## **Challenges**

The three challenges presented have emerged from the review of inputs as outlined in Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model. The first challenge was to increase the success rate for students from groups considered marginalized. Research has demonstrated the importance of

leaders' developing their ability to critically analyze gaps in educational practices, to address them and shift practices (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2021). The second challenge involved the leaders' ability to intentionally focus on social justice and equity within their school. Educators tend to avoid discussions that engage in the possibilities of pedagogical and political leadership (Wiener, 2009). The third challenge addressed preparation and building capacity in leaders to be change agents. Educational leaders lack the preparation and training to be critical and uncover, understand, and address institutionalized and individual instances of racism and ableism (DeMatthews, 2020). Research findings support the need for specific professional development opportunities for educational leaders. Albanese (2020) in their thesis recommended that professional development regarding knowledge of policy, involve active learning and the examination of identities, values, beliefs, bias, and other factors that influence policy work, and suggested that leaders acknowledge that many students do not experience fairness and agency in the school system.

### **Potential Factors and Influence**

Leaders play an increasingly significant role in making changes in their organization in both evolutionary and revolutionary ways. The ability to successfully address these challenges will be influenced by the following factors: deficit thinking, stigmatization, prejudice, limited understanding of the student groups, inadequate cultural awareness, and lack of acceptance (Chitpin, 2019; Flessa, 2009). Research confirms that inequities will continue if school staff see children from diverse cultures or impoverished backgrounds through a deficit lens (Beard, 2019; Gorski, 2014). Deficit thinking is considered a form of victim blaming. It views the alleged deficiencies of poor and minority student groups as predominantly responsible for these students' school problems and academic failure and frequently, holds structural inequalities blameless



(Shields, 2012). Leaders with cultural awareness are better prepared to support teachers to be culturally responsive and promote a responsive school environment to support students from marginalized groups (Khalifa et al., 2016). The desired change in Panoptic will need to begin with leaders developing knowledge and skills to break through entrenched deficit perspectives and allow for deliberate dialogue regarding deficit thinking and marginalization at the school level (Simone, 2012; Weiner, 2009).

### **Guiding Questions**

According to the OECD (2015), many potential candidates for educational leadership positions hesitate to apply for several different reasons, one of which is insufficient preparation and training. Considering the complex nature of today's schools, the first driving question for this PoP is: How can educational leaders build capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap and increase success rates for student groups considered marginalized?

Currently, in Panoptic there is limited opportunity to develop the language and capacity to recognize, respond to, and address systemic biases and inequities (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017). The organization requires leaders to attend two meetings per month that focus on providing updates regarding managerial tasks and upcoming initiatives. Meetings need to involve learning and building capacity, as well as cover managerial issues. The challenge is to provide training, share experiences, and outline day-to-day actions that encourage leaders to think and act with the bigger picture in mind (Fullan, 2019). This leads to the second guiding question: What frameworks and/or systems can leaders implement to challenge the status quo and develop a lens and language for equity within their school?

Finally, as the leader for alternate programs, I am striving to develop the capacity to recognize, respond to, and address marginalization because like many school and district leaders,

I feel unprepared to adequately lead, create, and cultivate educational environments where all children are achieving academic success. A literature review focused on alternate programs, marginalization, and equity, showed that there was widespread evidence that many conditions may set the circumstances for amplified marginalization of students (Jenson, 2020; Kowalchuk, 2019; Beard, 2018; Goddard et al., 2017). This review led to the final guiding question: What changes are required in neighborhood schools to reduce the number of students being referred to alternate programs?

### **Leadership-Focused Vision for Change**

This section lays out the gap between the present and future state of Panoptic and describes the benefits of the change and outlines change priorities. Based on the guiding questions leading the change, this section emphasizes the importance of collaboration among key change drivers and embeds how this change creates a commitment to equity and social justice.

#### **Vision for Change**

The vision for change in Panoptic is to eliminate at least two if not all alternate programs. As Panoptic moves to support leaders in all schools to implement inclusionary rather than exclusionary practices, focus on equity, and build capacity, this vision will be seen. Leaders will build capacity to focus on relationship-based programming (food, self-regulation, supportive culture), student engagement (program flexibility, clear student transitions, staff connections), and community supports and partnerships (facility and location), all characteristics of effective alternate programs (Goran, 2019).

This vision of transformation for Panoptic aligns with the BC Education Plan (BC Ministry of Education, 2015), the policy for student success (BC Ministry of Education, 2018)

and Panoptic's strategic plan (2019- 2024) because they all speak to a commitment to enhance the learning experience and prepare students to be productive citizens.

### **Gap Between Present and Future State**

To determine the future direction of an organization requires diagnosing where the organization is in the present moment (Deszca et al., 2020). Currently, Panoptic provides a successful school experience for most of its students with a six-year graduation rate of approximately 85% (BC Ministry of Education, 2020). Students in alternate programs tend to take an additional year to graduate due to gaps in attendance, learning, and social and emotional challenges. When analyzing Panoptic's ability to develop a leaders' capacity to address the opportunity gap, three gaps were identified: lack of an inclusive approach, not using a lens and language of equity, and lack of time for knowledge development and capacity building.

#### ***Lack of Inclusive Approach***

Inclusive leadership is the ability to manage and lead a heterogenous group of people efficiently, by respecting their uniqueness (Rojnik et al., 2016). This leadership approach recognizes differences between individuals and celebrates them, enabling all students to access educational content and participate fully in their studies. Many leaders in Panoptic use a relational approach to leadership, making discussions around deficit thinking and marginalization difficult. Many of them do not yet feel comfortable using a transformative or inclusive approach, resulting in students continuing to fall behind their peers.

#### ***Not Using a Lens and Language of Equity***

Lens of equity is a group of considerations that can be used to guide an individual to see and understand how their decisions and actions either break down or reinforce system barriers (Simmonds, 2019). This lens is commonly used to complete an analysis of practices and an

inspection of school policies, curriculum, resources, and culture (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017). The lens of equity should be used at all levels of a school system to ensure a clear meaning of equity in relationship to everyone's role (Jackson & McIver, 2016). Equity in schools involves learning opportunities that are relevant, personally meaningful and support the needs and potential of the student and is only achieved when student differences are acknowledged and recognized as valuable learning tools ((Fullan & Gallagher, 2020; Belisario & Ngan, 2011).

Another view of equity is using language. Leaders have commented that language changes so often, it is difficult to stay politically correct, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the significance of language. It is important to be conscious of how language impacts others because, at times, it can be exclusionary, even when not intended to. It is important to develop language that does not reflect prejudice, stereotypes, or discriminatory views, because this is hazardous to a positive culture. Inclusive language does not exclude people from feeling accepted, it uses principles such as people-first language, terms that relate to the listener, and is cautious of using generalizations (BC Public Service Agency, 2018).

### ***Lack of Leadership Preparation and Development***

In schools where leaders have limited understanding of the scope and importance of equity work, implementation is in danger of being superficial, resulting in situations that continue to support the privileged and maintain the status quo (Jackson & McIver, 2016; Macpherson, 2016; Della Rovere, 2014). Many principals and vice-teachers move into the role with limited or no training. Leadership preparation and knowledge regarding change processes only occurs for those who seek out additional training and learning opportunities. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed as Panoptic moves toward its desired vision.

Some leaders feel there is no choice but to maintain the status quo as they lack the willpower, knowledge and capacity needed to challenge it. This gap emphasizes the importance of developing knowledge and strategies required to address deficit thinking and shift mindsets. Leaders who engage in deliberate dialogue regarding marginalization have the potential to eliminate deficit thinking and provide an equitable education for all students. It is easy to claim to be an advocate for students who are marginalized, but the reality is, that deficit thinking is so embedded that it continues to unknowingly affect actions and words that occur in schools every day (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Beard, 2018; Simone, 2012).

### **Benefits of the Future State**

As leaders become more knowledgeable and strategic with how to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools, they will create future schools with leaders who use a critical lens and transformative approach to create inclusive structural supports required to design responsive schools with a social justice orientation (Maton & Nicholas, 2018). These leaders will use evidence-based strategies to meet the increasing demands of an ever-changing, diverse group of students. Panoptic will benefit by having leaders with greater capacity and high job satisfaction, schools will benefit by providing more opportunities for student success, and the system will benefit from increased graduation rates.

### **Priorities for Change**

The Congruence Model analysis identified three key priorities that need to be addressed for Panoptic to reach its desired future state. They include the rejection of deficit thinking, engaging in difficult conversations, and opening the curricular space (Shields, 2012). Each involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of existing knowledge frameworks (Steward, 2020).

### ***Rejection of Deficit Thinking***

Researchers indicate that the single most important factor in academic achievement of students from marginalized groups is the explicit rejection of deficit thinking; not just on the part of one teacher, or in one classroom, but school-wide, initiated and encouraged by the school leader (Beard, 2019; Khalifa et al., 2016; Gorski, 2014; Shields, 2012).

One consequence of the combination of neoliberal and neoconservative discourse in multicultural education has been to construct diversity as a problem and to position students from marginalized groups as having deficits that need to be addressed (Joshee & Sinfield, 2010). A deficit lens assumes a student's ability to achieve is determined by race or income rather than ability (Shields, 2012). This oppression most often comes when school staff hold deficit-oriented opinions regarding children from marginalized groups (Khalifa et al., 2016).

### ***Engaging in Difficult Conversations***

To address the opportunity gap and equity, leaders should begin with raising the critical consciousness of school members through dialogue (Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015). An inclusive leadership approach focused on dialogic change through difficult conversations results in better outcomes, increased ownership, and a sense of belonging (Agger-Gupta and Harris, 2010). Panoptic needs to allow time for deliberate dialogue regarding marginalization.

Leaders may not believe in the importance of using a dialogic model, and some may not feel comfortable leading difficult conversations, but it is important to ensure this type of professional development occurs for equity to be imbedded across all levels in Panoptic.

### ***Opening the Curricular Space***

Opening the curricular space refers to changing the dominant classroom pedagogy from teacher centered to a more learner centered, inclusive, and democratic community of learners

(Shields, 2012). What is needed is for Panoptic to determine how to teach, mentor and coach leaders in critical inquiry, so that they reflect on how and why knowledge about society and education is constructed the way it is, and why some constructions dominate while others are suppressed or oppressed (Kowalchuk, 2019). This will create space for individuals to bring their lived experience to the conversation. According to researchers, conversation is the curriculum, and studies of using this approach have cited better rates in student motivation, improved self-esteem, and most importantly, more tolerance toward diversity (Evens et al., 2012; Shields, 2012).

### **Drivers for Change**

Drivers for change include those who hold roles that can influence and contribute to the change (Fossland & Sandvoll, 2021). One key actor to this change is the district vice-principal of equity, who will be responsible for creating a continuous improvement plan based on the equity audit, while I support the capacities of leaders to address the opportunity gap within their school.

As the work of leaders becomes more complex, they need to build the skills, competencies, and knowledge required to be effective in accomplishing their work. They need to follow the *right drivers* for change: capacity building, collaboration, pedagogy, and system (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). *Collective capacity building* involves educators at all levels of a system engaged in learning and creating change required to raise the bar and close the gap for all students (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Collaboration is important as a driver for change as it involves everyone learning, pedagogical improvements, flexibility, and leaders being dynamic to meet identified needs. The method of instruction and practices used in schools and classrooms need to open, be inclusive for all, and culturally relevant (Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Khalia et al., 2016). As

leaders critically examine the system, they will identify changes required to move Panoptic toward the desired future state.

To realize this vision for Panoptic, continuous capacity building needs to be the focus. Transformative and an inclusive leadership approach used through a critical framework will create an organization that empowers good governance practices, allows leaders to be closer to closing the opportunity gap, and encourages leaders to develop their reflective practice.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

The change in Panoptic needs to be intentional and involve a shift in fundamental ways of operating (Burke, 2018). To determine the organizational readiness for change the relationship between people, processes, and the system should be reviewed. This section begins by exploring previous change experiences in Panoptic and outlines its change readiness based on two mapping tools: Continuum of Awareness of Change and the Response to Readiness mapping tool (Deszca et al., 2020). It finishes up with an overview of the competing internal and external forces shaping the change.

### **Previous Change Experiences**

Panoptic has a complex history due to multiple changes to the executive leadership team: four different superintendents, three different assistant superintendents, two new directors of instruction, and a new secretary treasurer, all within the last three years. All this change has led to misalignment among priorities and unsuccessful change initiatives. Along with a history of challenging relationships between union groups and management, implementing change in Panoptic is considered difficult.

Leaders in Panoptic have experienced an enormous amount of change within the last three years due to the Covid pandemic and have demonstrated strength, resilience, and courage,



as they worked through the different challenges this pandemic presented. Staff as well, have been required to make changes and demonstrated a variety of emotions through this time. The desired change for this OIP requires change in behaviors, actions, beliefs, and in the how the system functions. This type of change will bring about disruption and cause some to experience a variety of emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and conflict for some (Lewis, 2019).

### **Assessing Change Readiness**

Change readiness refers to members' commitment and efficacy to implement change. This definition follows the common use of *readiness*, which implies a state of being both psychologically and behaviorally prepared to act (Weiner, 2009). Based on the actions and discussions with key actors in Panoptic, an initial picture of key actors' change readiness was created, by documenting initial impressions on the Continuum of Awareness of Change and the Response to Readiness mapping tools (see Appendix A for a visual representation of initial impressions based on the two mapping tools). These tools allow change agents to track adjustments in attitudes and determine a stakeholders' level of readiness for the desired change. They provide the change agent the ability to reflect on different dimensions that key actors may exhibit such as trustworthiness, trusting followers, capable champions, innovative culture, accountable culture, effective communication, and systems thinking (Deszca et al., 2020).

According to these tools, Panoptic is ready for change, as many key actors have an awareness, interest, and desire to act on this PoP. Many of the key actors see the misalignment between the words of the strategic plan and actions taken. These actors believe that a realignment can be accomplished and are ready to move the district toward the desired vision. The primary actors this OIP is intended for, principals and vice-principals, have the awareness, interest, and desire to create change but need to gain the skills to address social justice concerns by going

beyond a focus on curriculum and transform school structures and mindsets for the good of all. The individual needs of learners will be ignored, behavior will be misunderstood, and those from marginalized groups will continue to be excluded, if change does not occur.

While leaders in Panoptic are guided by ethics of care, they seek support in conceptualizing their role in relation to this change. A transformative and inclusive leadership style is key to supporting this change because it verifies the need for leaders to be able to demonstrate that diversity is not a burden but instead provides everyone the opportunity to learn with and from each other, creating more access points to learning (Schnellert et al., 2020). Many of the leaders in Panoptic demonstrate the readiness and commitment to make this change but struggle to find the courage and flexibility to address the external and internal forces shaping the change.

### **External and Internal Forces Shaping Change**

There are several external and internal forces that leaders in Panoptic will need to review and address in relation to this PoP. The first external force is the Covid pandemic, as the pandemic has affected marginalized youth and their families the hardest. This group experienced the highest cost due to self-isolation effecting their health and social and emotional well-being (Pathways to Education, June 2020). Leaders need to work with their staff to ensure that the complex needs of their students are met and ensure that the students' educational life needs are reviewed before making a referral to an alternate program. Another external force shaping the potential change is the BC Alternate Education Program Policy. School districts will continue to offer alternate programs while this policy continues, providing neighborhood schools with an out for not meeting the needs of all students. By working toward the desired future vision, leaders will be taking action to advocate for social justice.

Internal forces to be addressed include individuals' biases, assumptions, and perceptions (Evans et al., 2012). By becoming aware of these forces, leaders through a social justice context will be better prepared to increase diversity and root out systemic bias through communication. The willingness of leaders to learn and lead throughout the change process is another internal force, especially given the burn out rate among leaders due to the pandemic. Another internal force is the policies and procedures in Panoptic, while many state a mission to meet the needs of all students, this cannot be done until deficit assumptions are overcome, and mindsets change (Shields & Hesbol, 2019). To address these forces, Panoptic will need to place a greater emphasis on implementation and action of equity for student groups considered marginalized.

### **Summary**

This chapter introduced and presented a problem found among the leaders in Panoptic and provided an overview of Panoptic using Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model. The chapter examined transformative and inclusive leadership approaches as they align with a critical theoretical framework. By critically examining and challenging the status quo and working to improve the unfair conditions that students from marginalized groups are subjected to, leaders will create educational equity for all but even more so, for those students from marginalized groups. The PoP was framed in the broader context of literature and guiding questions were generated to help guide the organization to its vision for change. The chapter concluded by presenting key actors' readiness for change. The tools indicated that the key actors have an awareness, interest, and desire to act on the required change. Chapter 2 will explore the frameworks that leaders should consider for planning and developing the change path in Panoptic.

## **Chapter 2: Planning and Development**

Chapter 2 focuses on developing the change path for leaders in Panoptic. Organizational change has been described as a socially constructed process, that is a realignment of how key stakeholders see themselves and their perspectives on an issue (Agger-Gupta & Harris, 2017). Bringing about change in an organization is about devising a collective learning strategy for better adaptation (Pianesi, 2019). Therefore, change leaders are required to reframe the change makers' job from pre-conceiving deliberate strategies that people will implement to managing the process of strategic learning.

This chapter develops a leadership framework for understanding and propelling the change forward and looks at transformative and inclusive leadership approaches to change. For leading the change process a hybrid framework of the Change Path model from Deszca et al., (2020) and the Dialogic Change model from Kuenkel et al., (2021) are outlined. Possible solutions to address the PoP are then presented, with one selected for this OIP. The chapter concludes with an overview of equity, ethics, and social justice considerations related to the change process.

### **Leadership Approaches to Change**

The chosen leadership approaches used to propel the change forward as described in Chapter 1 are transformative and inclusive leadership. These leadership approaches together complement each other and support leaders in building capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap and eliminate exclusionary practices, which is key to increasing student success. The opportunity gap if not addressed systemically, hinders certain individuals from reaching their potential and excelling in society. This requires leaders who are willing to transform mindsets and behaviors, engage in difficult conversations, and open the curricular space.

Transformative leadership will support the change because it starts with critical inquiry focused on democracy and social justice, as well as critiques inequitable systems and generates possible solutions (Shields, 2012). A model of transformative leadership presented by Shields and Hesbol (2020), highlights the importance of transforming the environment into an inclusive, respectful, and equitable setting to allow members of the organization to focus on improving outcomes for students. The model prepares leaders by identifying eight tenets required for deep and equitable change. These tenets include moral courage, redistribute power and democracy, emancipation and equity, new knowledge frameworks and mindsets, public and private good, critique and promise, interdependence and interconnectedness, and global awareness, and equitable change (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). As leaders in Panoptic become familiar with and embody these tenets, they will be better equipped to propel the change by intentionally addressing mindsets and knowledge frameworks (Shields & Hesbol, 2020).

Instead of focusing on key individual needs and being leader centered, as transformative leaders can do at times, an inclusive leadership approach is also to be incorporated. Research distinguished inclusive leadership as a relational construct that contrasts with traditional forms of leadership. It has been stated that the need to explicitly incorporate the notion of inclusivity into the underlying theoretical foundation of leadership (Younas et al., 2020; Sugiyama et al., 2016; Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Unlike other leadership theories inclusive leadership is more *follower centered* than *leader centered* (Northouse, 2016). Inclusivity requires moving from marginalizing to expanding processes, which is made possible by disrupting and redirecting within the system (Kozleski, 2020). Inclusive leadership in schools means creating an inclusive culture, by having a common definition of inclusion; an authentic sense of belonging;

commitment to the notion that ‘all’ means every student; and a presumption of competence for all student (Oskarsdottir et al., 2020).

A combined approach of transformative and inclusive leadership allows leaders to address both organizational and human development. Leaders who embrace this combined approach tend to engage in learning opportunities to enhance their ability to produce productive results, are courageous in the face of uncertainty, and constantly adapt to shifting landscapes (Gallegos, 2014). Transformative and inclusive leadership will propel the change in Panoptic by addressing the gaps and priorities for change (see Table 1). These approaches will support change in behaviors and beliefs that leaders hold, develop new roles and relationships to facilitate difficult conversations, and support approaches to work.

**Table 1**

*Leadership Approach to Propel Change*

Gap	Leadership Approach	Priorities for Change
• Leadership preparation	• Transformative/inclusive	• Rejection of deficit thinking
• Focus on equity	• Transformative/inclusive	• Engage in difficult conversation
• Opportunity gap	• Transformative/inclusive	• Opening curricular space

*Note.* Transformative and Inclusive approach used to address the gaps and priorities for change in Panoptic.

How to support the development of leaders to become individuals who seek out knowledge and skills to lead more systemically and compassionately is critical. Transformative and inclusive leaders do this, allowing them to understand what society has come to realize, the world is an intricate, interconnected, and interdependent system (Walinga, 2017). The next section provides a framework for addressing how to create the desired change within Panoptic.

## **Framework for Leading the Change: How to Change**

Leading change is having a nuanced understanding of the surrounding reality (Fullan, 2020; Pianesi, 2019). It requires openness to truth and the ability to avoid the habits of past experiences, allowing the leader to deal with change without being tied to old models of thinking (Caldwell et al., 2018). This section will define the type of change, compare, and analyze relevant change processes, and outline assumptions that may be related to the change. It concludes with a deeper look at the selected change model.

### **Change Processes**

The type of change suggested for Panoptic is a large-scale change of re-imaging the way of work within the organization. This type of change anticipates the scope of the change and through incremental adjustments, strategic reorientation will hopefully occur. When determining how to implement the desired change in Panoptic, two approaches to change were explored: diagnostic and dialogic. Different diagnostic frameworks have been presented in research: Lewin (1940), Kotter (1996), Duck (2002), and Deszca et al., (2020). Diagnostic frameworks involve an objective analysis of the organization and the development of a plan to alter its state. A diagnostic approach tends to follow a positivism ontology, meaning there is a belief in only one truth or reality regardless of other perspectives. The disadvantages to diagnostic approaches are that assumptions made by individuals involved can alter the outcome and if there are too many opposing factors the focus on the change could dwindle (Bushe & Markshak, 2016).

When looking at diagnostic frameworks a review of Lewin's change model stages (1940) and the Change Path model by Deszca et al., (2020) were selected. Lewin's change model of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing, while easy to understand, oversimplifies the change process and portrays the refreeze stage as an acceptable frame of mind (Deszca et al., 2020).

While the unfreezing and change stages align with the change suggested for Panoptic, the refreezing stage does not align with the continuous improvement framework currently used in Panoptic. The Change Path model is a diagnostic approach that is not to be seen as a linear process because conditions change in unanticipated ways, and leaders need to be able to adjust and realign as they go (Deszca et al., 2020). This model merges both process and direction and provides a template that breaks down the organization to gain a more in depth understanding and better visualize of how all parts work together.

A new way of looking at change is being presented by some researchers. They take a perspective that looks at organizations as groups that are in a constant state of flux and that change is more about redirecting the change that is already underway (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021; Bushe & Markshak, 2016). To redirect change, a dialogic framework is desired. A dialogic approach describes processes where action follows dialogue, confirming that conversational-based activities can allow for new possibilities to emerge (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021). Dialogic approaches are better suited to complex challenges and according to some, may be returning given the more complex, unclear, and uncertain problems emerging in organizations today (Development Network, 2021). Leaders using this approach tend to follow a constructivist ontology and work within dialogic networks, where change is continuous and more transformative (Bushe & Markshak, 2016). Dialogic approaches have been explored through both small and large-scale studies and researchers feel that there is enough evidence supporting the approach to ultimately provide effective pedagogical responses (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021; Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020). This approach extends problem-solving beyond linear, rational models and demands a more holistic, inclusive process, which results in more systemic and sustainable solutions.



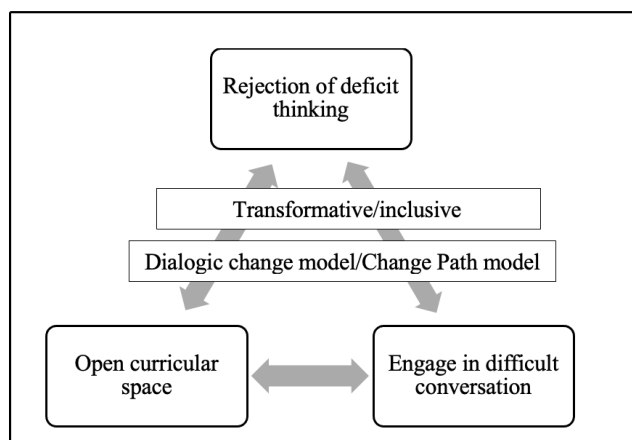
Dialogic approaches to change, while effective to address the PoP, do have limitations. The first is the power relations between leader and follower, as many leaders continue to use an authoritarian approach and dominate the situation. Another is the limited experience in engaging in effective dialogue. Both leaders and followers need to understand guidelines for dialogue and value its effect (Garcia-Carrion et al., 2020). While this can be seen as a barrier, it is also an indication of the need for this type of training for leaders. Another concern is the ethical point of view of dialogue, not all voices are tolerant of diversity (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021). Finally, this approach can also lead to boundless possibilities, making individuals overwhelmed with options when it comes to decision-making.

### **Selected Change Processes**

In searching for the best change process, the alignment with the selected leadership approaches, the centralization of power, and the ability to address the priorities for change were reviewed. The selected change processes are the Change Path model from Deszca et al., (2020) and the Dialogic Change model from Kuenkel et al., (2021) (see Figure 1). A hybrid of a diagnostic and a dialogic framework for the change process is suggested so that leaders can, if required, can change practices, which was called *concurrent inquiry* by Hastings and Schwarz (2021). The approach that leaders inquire about organizational reality and be mindful of how and when they determine to shift between a diagnostic to dialogic approach and vice versa (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021).

### **Figure 1**

*Alignment of How to Change, Leadership Approach to Change, and Priorities for Change*



*Note.* Hybrid approach between dialogic and diagnostic change models.

The Change Path model involves the stages of awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2020). It allows leaders to feel more control over the change process within the organization, aligning with a transformative leadership approach. When schools have transformative leaders, they help individuals see how change will benefit them and what the positive outcomes will be, making followers more willing to support the change (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Using an inclusive approach with this model ensures that all voices are heard, and that the human aspect of the organization is not forgotten. This approach requires leaders to diagnose the changing dynamics within their organization and have knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses to better relate to the needs of their followers (Faupel & Sub, 2019).

The use of the Dialogic Change model through a transformative and inclusive approach reflects a required change in thinking about innovation and change. A Dialogic Change model balances dialogue and the collective intelligence, with result-oriented process and communication design (Kuenkel et al., 2021). It consists of four phases: exploring and engaging, building, and formalizing, implementing, and evaluating, and sustaining and expanding impact (Kuenkel et al., 2021). Dialogic models view change as continuous and focus on changing mindsets and what people think (Buche & Marshak, 2009). It includes activities of disruption,

storytelling, and organizational learning (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021). These two models align because they both contain steps that begin with communicating, move onto mobilizing others, continue with evaluation and lead back to communicating (Battilana et al., 2010). They also work well within Panoptic as they align with the continuous improvement framework. An overview of how the stages in the diagnostic model and phases within the dialogic model work together is presented next (see Figure 2 for a representation of how the models work together).

### ***Awakening, Exploring Stage / Engaging Phase***

The chosen frameworks align because they both begin with an exploration and engagement with followers to raise awareness of the change, understand the context, and build a team to support the change (Kuenkel et al., 2021). During this step, all internal and external inputs are explored to gain a true understanding of what is going on within the organization (Deszca et al., 2020). It involves leaders of the change beginning strategic conversations with one another, so that people in the organization start to agree on what change is, how to understand it, and what it assumes (Pianesi, 2019).

### ***Mobilize, Accelerating Stage / Building, Formalizing, and Implementing and Evaluating Phase***

The next step in both models involves strategic conversations to mobilize others and gain co-workers' support for and acceptance of the desired change. It is important to clarify common goals, plan the future together, and consolidate agreements and required structures for dialogue (Kuenkel et al., 2021). Both models use a transformative and inclusive approach because they have leaders and followers engage in reflective activities to evaluate the change and ensure individuals feel confident in new work routines (Deszca et al., 2020; Battilana et al., 2010). By communicating and being transparent during this time change leaders are expanding accessibility

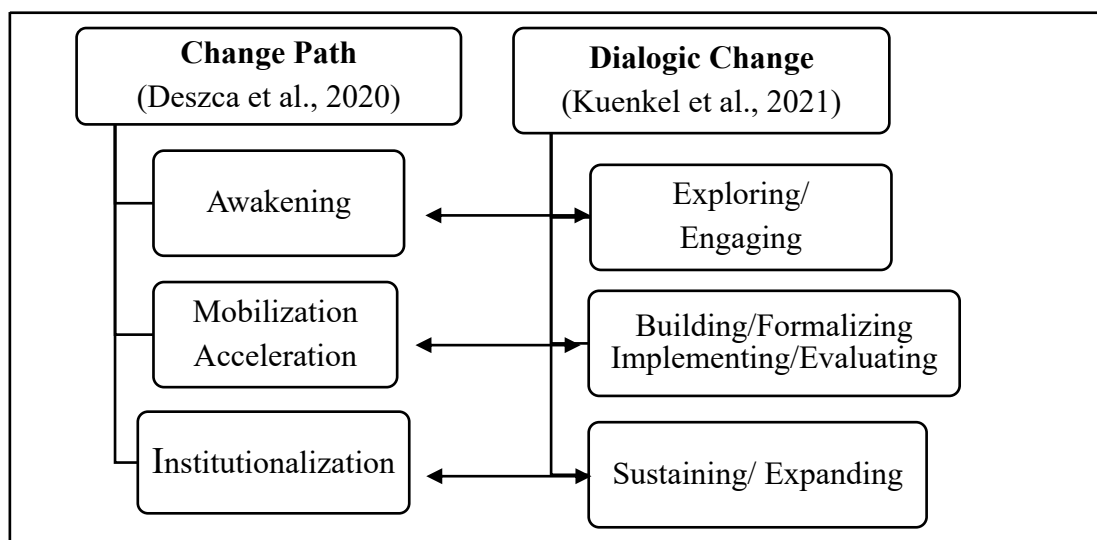
and building people's collective stance of inclusion through ongoing learning (Deszca et al., 2020; Pianesi, 2019). In the Dialogic Change model, the implementing and evaluating phases are together to ensure results are examined before becoming established mechanisms in the organization.

### ***Institutionalizing and Sustaining Stage / Expanding Impact Phase***

The final step involves the use of tools to measure and evaluate the success of the change. Evaluating refers to measures that leaders employ to monitor and assess the impact of implementation efforts (Battilana et al., 2010). This step will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

### ***Figure 2***

#### *Models of How to Change*



*Note.* Alignment between models of how to change presented by Deszca et al., 2020 and Kuenkel et al., 2021.

This section explored different frameworks for how to create change. It defined the type of change in Panoptic as incremental and compared and analyzed the Change Path model and the Dialogic Change model, the two suggested frameworks for leading the change in Panoptic. The

next section will examine what to change, this is determined by the critical organizational analysis using Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model.

### **Critical Organizational Analysis: What to Change**

Through the lens of transformative and inclusive leadership, this section focuses on key elements of the transformation process of the Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model. This model is used to determine what to change in Panoptic. The model consists of several *elements*: inputs and outputs (presented in Chapter 1), and the elements associated with the transformation process which are: the work, people, formal and informal elements. Below is an overview of these elements in relation to the PoP in Panoptic.

#### **Work Element**

The element of work focuses on what needs to get done and how it will get done. At the macro level in Panoptic, the work of changing the neoliberal agenda needs to occur. This requires leaders to have the courage and skills required to engage in difficult conversations and take conscious steps to improve unfair conditions (Ylimaki, 2012). Constraints on the system, lack of internal supports, design practices, and resources, need to be critically reviewed and revised to ensure that structures are in place to influence behavior and open the curricular space. If this work is left unchecked, these constraints will continue to limit opportunities for students to see themselves in resources and feel a sense of belonging.

At the micro level, the work of leaders in Panoptic is complex. They need to be able to address their own and followers' biases, assumptions, and perceptions that are used to shield them from the truth (Evans et al., 2012). To do this, they need to acknowledge deficit mindsets and examine them critically. There are several reforms calling for the elimination of deficit mindsets in education; as they have found that traditional leadership practices were unlikely to

succeed and that the belief of this is how we do things around here, will continue if not addressed (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Hannay et al., 2013).

Leaders are not working on this alone, they should be thinking, dialoguing, and working with staff, students, and parents to create conditions in which all people may be empowered and have a voice. This OIP supports the work of leaders in recognizing the dynamics of power and marginalization and supports them in implementing shifts in practices within their schools to increase opportunities for all students. It is unreasonable to expect that this important work be done on the fly. Designated time for discussion should be provided with the expectation of engaging in dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion (Jackson and McIver, 2016; Macpherson, 2016). For leaders to do this, they need to believe that they can make a difference and that they are capable of influencing staff in ways that challenge existing inequalities.

Embedding inclusive practices is not a cosmetic change but requires the work of fundamentally thinking through what it means to design practices and spaces that are rooted in inclusivity (Nkomo et al., 2014). Rather than exerting control over and directing others, an inclusive approach is encouraged to empower others by eliciting their perspectives in conversation and supporting them in identifying opportunities.

Without an inclusive leadership approach to this change, an element of an inclusive society is missing, and such a society cannot be pieced together by policy changes and advocacy campaigns without leadership to set examples and lead the way (Thompson, 2017). The work required in Panoptic requires reaching across boundaries to create alliances and partnerships with people directly and indirectly connected to the work (Heifetz and Linsky, 2017). These strategic connections will provide leaders opportunities to understand the impact of change, increase the

likelihood of accomplishing critical outcomes, and provide the power to get things done (Gallegos, 2014).

### **People Element**

People directly and indirectly responsible for the work are encouraged to develop an awareness of their power and privilege and the inequalities occurring around them. Within Panoptic, key leaders directly responsible for the work are the superintendent, assistant superintendent, directors of instruction, district leaders, and school-based leaders. These leaders strive to cultivate a culture where followers have a sense of belonging and value. The superintendent focuses on empowering employees and engages in transformative practices, to promote equity, diversity, and social justice for all (Horsford et al., 2018). Leaders in Panoptic cannot force others to engage in personal development, but they can lead by example and model through their own personal and professional behavior (Evans et al., 2012). Their role is to support teachers in providing equitable access to rigorous curriculum, actively teaching about social diversity and justice, and personally modelling understanding and respect for all persons (BC Ministry of Education, 2008).

Those indirectly responsible for the work include teachers, support staff, and community partners. These individuals are influenced by their beliefs, mindset, knowledge and skills, motivation levels, and supports available to them. To support a shift in their behavior and mindset, leaders need to understand the impact of the change on people indirectly responsible for the work.

To open curricular spaces and transfer the focus of responsibility for academic achievement from the student to leaders and teachers, means ensuring that critical pedagogy around discourse, hegemony, and the hidden curriculum are addressed (DellaRovere, 2014;

Linton, 2011). *Critical pedagogy* refers to teachers encouraging students to critique structures of power and oppression. *Discourse* is the interchange of ideas primarily through conversation; *hegemony* is the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group; and the *hidden curriculum* refers to norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and social environment.

### **Formal Elements**

Formal elements within Panoptic effecting the PoP presented here include the hierarchal structure and the alignment of policy and procedure. These operational factors within Panoptic require clarity and realignment. When looking at the work through an inclusive lens, the hierarchical model is dysfunctional, because it does not promote system-wide approaches or allow for a safe environment for true, open dialogue. Inclusive organizations are more likely to develop shared leadership across all levels and include mutual recognition, reciprocal understanding, trust, integrity, and an intercultural moral point of view, allowing tasks to be mutually beneficial and deliver long-term results (Mose, 2019; Gallegos, 2014; Pless & Maak, 2014). While incremental steps in Panoptic have been taken to restructure, more work is required in this area.

The last formal area to address is the Administrative Procedures Manual (2020). While there are several procedures to support leaders, these policies are open, general, and leave room for individual interpretation. This may have been done intentionally to allow for autonomy within a school, but one conclusion drawn from reviewing policies in Panoptic is that they are not sufficient at addressing equity issues. Panoptic will need to consider future policy development designed specifically to address the unique needs and conditions of student groups considered marginalized.



## **Informal Elements**

The informal elements of Panoptic include factors such as norms, core values, unwritten rules, as well as levels of fairness, trust, and risk-taking (Deszca et al., 2020). The vision in Panoptic is to create a place where students love to learn in a safe, engaging, and inclusive environment. According to strategic plan, Panoptic values collaboration, engagement, equity, inclusion, innovation, and integrity. The ideas that guide Panoptic include the following: every student has the right to full and equitable opportunity, acknowledging that each person has a different starting point, we are all learners, and our diversity makes us stronger. These are being developed as the district aims to shift the culture to be open and curious, student-focused, and forward thinking (Panoptic, 2019).

Given historical challenges and number of changes that have occurred in Panoptic, there is a range of levels of fairness, trust, and risk-taking among leaders and their staff. It will be important during the transformation process for leaders to emphasize the collective rather than the individual. In this vein, individuals and groups are not operating in silos but rather working together, taking risks, and building trust as they work toward common goals that benefit all. As well, continual examination and revising implicit norms will be required to ensure they minimize bias (Gallegos, 2014). While the shift in informal elements is underway, there is still a long way to go to reach the desired change presented in this OIP.

The assumption is that the more congruent or aligned these elements are, the better the organization's performance will be. Some researchers criticize congruence, as they claim that too much weight on congruence could have an unfavorable effect on organizational change (Deszca et al., 2020). While this may be true, it is important to remember that the key lies in balancing the need for flexibility and adaptability with the need for alignment (Deszca et al., 2020). A

transformative and inclusive approach to the transformation process suggested for Panoptic while creating alignment will also foster participation, ownership, and commitment across all levels, necessary for executing workflows associated with the desired change (see Appendix B for a visual representation of the transformation process). As Nadler-Tushman's Congruence model is an organizational analysis tool and does not recommend actions for addressing the problem, the next section provides possible solutions to address the PoP.

### **Possible Solutions to Address the PoP: What to do**

To reach the desired long-term vision in Panoptic, it will be important for leaders to be provided with professional development that goes beyond surface level learning and addresses the impact of power and privilege on the school experience (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad, 2019; Shevlin-Woodcook, 2017; Macpherson, 2016). This section looks at what to do, it provides three possible solutions to address the PoP and its guiding questions presented in Chapter 1. Each solution is described in detail, outlines the resources needed, and has a description of the benefits and implications. Finally, using evidence-based practice and connections to research the selected solution is revealed.

#### **Proposed Solution 1: Leader Learning Teams (LLTs)**

To address the POP and guiding question - how can educational leaders build capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap and increase success rates for student groups considered marginalized within their schools? - it is suggested that Panoptic create leader learning teams (LLTs) (Katz et al., 2018). LLTs are defined as “vehicles for building instructional leadership capacity through leadership learning inquiry” (Katz et al., 2018, p. 86). LLTs are small groups of 5-6 leaders, each working on an individual leadership inquiry that relates to a place where they feel stuck in relation to influence. It involves an inquiry-driven, capacity-building process that

provides leaders with a method to learn how to enact intelligent practices in responsive ways and allows leaders to engage in their own inquiry while receiving support from the collaborative group (Katz et al., 2018). LLTs follow a structured conversation that allows for a critical analysis of an individual's work and is intended to push all group members' thinking and learning beyond what they could accomplish on their own (Katz et al., 2018). LLTs center on what the leader wants to learn and encourages learning that is focused on leadership practice that enables specific outcomes. Efficient and effective LLTs are collegial and professional, promote relationships, allow for work between self and others, and promote open and honest critique for improved conditions (Katz et al., 2018).

LLTs provide leaders with an in-depth understanding of the nature of a situation through critical inquiry and focus not on influencing others but on working through an inquiry framework and a professional learning cycle together. Together the LLTs follow the inquiry framework:

- Develop an inquiry question – what's your challenge of practice and why?
- Develop a working hypothesis and plan to investigate it – how do you intend to intervene and why?
- Determine success criteria and associated evidence to be collected and how.
- Implement the plan.
- Analyze the evidence in relation to the success criteria.
- Reflect on the learning.
- Determine next practice for the inquiry cycle to continue (Katz et al., 2018).

As leaders work together to answer guiding questions for the inquiry, they are exposed to the professional learning cycle, which involves planning, assessing, and reflecting. LLTs provide

leaders with the opportunity to support their leadership development and challenges them to use intelligent practices in responsive ways.

One barrier to LLTs is the notion of collaboration and honest critique required to work through the inquiry. Leaders will have varying degrees of experience in collaboration and critique and may require additional support with this. Another barrier is the limited research on the effectiveness of LLTs specifically. If LLTs are put under the umbrella of leading professional learning communities or networks of leading, there is support for their effectiveness (Katz et al., 2018).

### ***Required Resources for LLTs***

Creating a leadership development series can be very time consuming and costly. The financial aspect to consider is the purchase of *The Intelligent, Responsive Leader* by Katz et al., (2018). Panoptic has approximately 40 leaders who will require the book, making this a small financial investment. The larger investment will come in the form of time required by leaders to learn the protocols suggested and become proficient at them. Time will also be required to plan and prepare for meetings, organize teams, and ensure accountability. A final resource consideration would be the possibility of outsourcing a professional consultant to support this work.

### ***Benefits and Implications of LLTs***

The benefits of LLTs include developing a critical lens, collaboration, and building capacity among leaders. LLTs provide leaders with time to critically inquiry about practices and processes occurring in their schools that intentionally or not, marginalize student groups, and collectively identify strategies and practices that can be implemented to prevent marginalization. They encourage collaboration as they are based on the belief that working together is better than

individually, which aligns with an inclusive and transformative approach. The inquiry framework which LLTs work through supports leaders in developing their knowledge, skills, and capacity as leaders.

There are two key implications of creating LLTs, the first is that leaders will be provided with professional development that focuses on evolving leaders as learners and the second is that LLTs will strengthen the capacity for change on both the individual and organizational levels.

### **Proposed Solution 2: Learning Organization with Compassionate Systems Leaders (LOCSL)**

To address the PoP and guiding question - what frameworks and/or systems can leaders implement to challenge the status quo and develop a lens and language for equity within their school? - it is suggested that Senge's Learning Organization framework (Evans et al., 2012) and Schroeder and Rowcliffe's Compassionate Systems Leaders (2019) be implemented. A *learning organization* encourages learning to continually transform itself to excel (Evans et al., 2012). Learning organizations are viewed as a process that occurs over time and involves knowledge acquisition and improved performance. It's building blocks include systematic problem solving, experimentation, learning from experience, learning from others, and transferring knowledge (Gavin, 1993). There are five key disciplines that innovated learning organizations master: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning (Smith, 2021). Compassionate systems leaders conceptualize compassion to be an appreciation for the systemic force that influences people's feeling, thoughts, and actions (J-Wel, 2019). It combines compassion, system thinking, and leadership relationally. Compassionate systems leadership incorporates practices that are effective in building individual insight, improve well-

being, and strengthens interpersonal relationships all while deepening the understanding of how the whole system contributes to outcomes (Compassionate Systems Leadership, n.d.).

LOCSL helps leaders create systems designed to facilitate learning, challenge the status quo, and create flexibility to changing conditions (Senge et al., 2015). Leaders in Panoptic will play a critical role in establishing norms of collaboration to support learning and provide staff with opportunities to engage in dialogue. While each leader is at a different proficiency level to do this, LOCSL will provide them with the professional development required to increase their proficiency.

LOCSL aligns with transformative and inclusive approaches by creating a professional form of learning that can be seen at every level of the organization and encourages ongoing learning to grow capacity and foster relational practices (Evans et al., 2012). A misalignment with the leadership approach occurs because learning organizations at times can ignore the power difference. One drawback to this solution is that it can be complicated to implement and takes a long time to take root (Lewis, 2019). Another drawback is the notion that learning may not be conscious or intentional and therefore may not improve conditions.

Framing leadership through a compassionate lens and learning systems thinking requires a shift in behavior and beliefs (J-Wel, 2019). The implementation of LOCSL will provide leaders with tools to better understand the forces at play regarding marginalization and exclusionary practices and support them with how to work together to move in the desired direction.

### ***Required Resources for LOCSL***

To bring this solution to reality, all leaders must participate in the Compassionate Systems Leadership certification program developed by Senge, Boll and Hanig (Schroeder & Rowcliffe, 2019). The cost to enroll in the program is a limitation if all leaders are to attend.

Other considerations would be the time spent in workshops, monthly online learning sessions, and time spend with coaches and peer mentors. It will also require time to develop infrastructure and resources to support and coordinate learning activities across all levels (Schroeder & Rowcliffe, 2019).

### ***Benefits and Implications of LOCSL***

One benefit of this solution is the collective learning process designed to increase the potential of people working together on the same challenge (Schroeder & Rowcliffe, 2019). It allows individuals to learn on the job to balance inquiry and advocacy. Another benefit is that LOCSL fosters reflection and more conversation. This is required for individuals to really understand each other's reality, they must actively listen to points of view different from their own. The final capability focuses on shifting to a co-creation of the future and proactively addressing problems rather than reacting (Senge et al., 2015).

By implementing this solution, it engages leaders across boundaries to let go of what needs to be removed and supports their ability to remain in one's own emotional space and not shut down (Senge et al., 2015). This is required as we continue in uncertain times due to the pandemic and climate changes. Many are feeling a sense of empathetic distress and feel powerless to alleviate or resist it. Leaders need to be aware that emotions play a determining role in the success or failure of a strategy. They need to pay close attention to the emotional journey and manage the experience so that they can turn indifference into excitement and connect and balance each piece of the change (J-Wel, 2019).

### **Proposed Solution 3: Appreciative Inquiry**

To address the POP and guiding question - what changes are required in neighborhood schools to reduce the number of students being referred to alternate education programs? - it is

suggested that the Appreciative Inquiry model be explored. Appreciative Inquiry is an asset-based approach to social engagement that uses a cyclic process of questioning and dialogue to help participants uncover existing strengths, advantages, or opportunities. The cycle consists of determining a definition, discovery, dream, design, and destiny (Bushe & Markshak, 2016). As groups work through this cycle, they are continuously improvising and building their skill to notice and celebrate successes.

Appreciative Inquiry model contains five principles: constructionist principle, the principle of simultaneity, the anticipatory principle, the positive principle, and the poetic principle (Bushe & Markshak, 2016). The constructionist principle recognizes the many truths out there because the principle states that language used shapes social reality. The principle of simultaneity looks at inquiry as an intervention and claims that the minute a question is asked, we begin to create a change. The anticipatory principle states that organizations and people tend to grow in the direction of their positive images of the future, meaning that if we are likely to get more of what we anticipate, it makes sense to look for and talk about what is already working well and where we want to go in the future. The positive principle is the momentum of positive effect and social bonding that is generated through questions that strengthen the positive core (Bushe & Markshak, 2016).

Appreciative Inquiry does have some drawbacks. One is the limited evidence supporting the model's efficacy, and the second is the model's emphasis on positivity. Another drawback is that critics claim positive framing shuts down discussion of problems, meaning that positive transformative change is unlikely to take hold if problems are ignored, left unaddressed, or overlooked (Bushe & Markshak, 2016).



### ***Required Resources for Appreciative Inquiry***

A leadership development series based on this solution would require minimal financial support to get started but given that appreciative inquiry requires a considerable amount of time to inquire, think, and critical review, it may not be the selected solution. It will be important for Panoptic to provide financial support to allow schools to complete a critical review of curricular resources, processes, and procedures. This will allow for the purchase of new resources to reflect the diversity within the school.

### ***Benefits and Implications of Appreciative Inquiry***

One of the benefits of Appreciative Inquiry is the engagement in discussion and dialogue that it involves. This builds collegiality and leadership. Appreciative Inquiry also allows individuals to share their strengths and provides opportunity to start from a position of strength rather than deficits (Hargraves, 2021). In the field of education, conversations of this sort address the growing demand for leadership that is socially just and equitable (Pollock & Campbell-Stephens, 2011).

The implication within Panoptic is helping leaders and their staff to see and think critically about the curriculum in terms of who's missing, what is absent and whose story is being told or omitted (Kowalchuk, 2019). It involves engaging in what has been described as deconstructing the curriculum through a lens of cultural responsiveness and relevance (Khalifa et al., 2016). This allows for the selection of resources, activities, and lessons that provide students who are considered marginalized to feel they belong, because they see themselves reflected in the culture of the school and its resources (Jackson, 2016). The final implication is developing leadership capacity to create opportunities and success for student groups considered marginalized.

### **Selected Solution: Leader Learning Teams (LLTs)**

While all solutions provide a path to moving Panoptic toward its desired vision and address the guiding questions, the implementation of LLTs is the selected solution. LLTs focus on leaders and support them in building the capacity to engage in difficult conversation, support followers in shifting their mindset and behaviors, and open the curricular space, which, as pointed out in Chapter 1, are the best ways to eliminate marginalization and increase opportunities for students. This solution involves critical inquiry and aligns with transformative and inclusive leadership approaches because it focuses on collaborative inquiry built through open and honest critique and questioning. It also aligns with both change approaches because it involves diagnosing a problem and using dialogue to create a plan to overcome it.

Solution 2, the implementation of LOCSL, would require more time and resources to carry out. It would prolong the desired change, whereas Solution 1 requires less time before leaders can begin implementing it within their schools. While it does focus on leadership development, Solution 2 does not always align with an inclusive approach, because it can allow leaders to ignore the power difference.

Solution 3, the implementation of Appreciative Inquiry, was not selected because it does not focus on leader development. While it does support an inclusive approach and aligns with the change models, its emphasis on the positive will not allow for the more nuanced conversation needed regarding marginalization and the opportunity gap.

To plan for the change, the frameworks of the Change Path model and Dialogic Change model have been explored. The above combination aligns with the structural process of change within Panoptic and with a transformative and inclusive approach because it highlights a relationship-based approach, supports leadership capacity, and emphasizes the need to develop

new knowledge (Kuenkel et al., 2021; W. Edwards, 2020). While the transformative process within the Congruence Model identified opportunities for streaming work and supporting change, it does not focus on the ethics, equity, and social justice approach to change, which this next section does.

### **Leadership Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice**

This section explores leadership ethics, equity, and social justice in relation to the selected leadership approaches: transformative and inclusive leadership. It provides an overview of considerations and challenges related to the stages/phases of the selected frameworks for how to the change: the Change Path model and the Dialogic Change model. The section closes with a conclusion for chapter 2.

#### **Leadership Ethics**

Ethics has been described as moral principles that govern behaviour and values (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Principals and vice-principals in BC, as members of the BC PVP association, are guided by a code of ethics which contains moral principles and values that guide leaders' professional behaviour. These include: ensuring the well-being of students is the fundamental value in all decisions and actions; respect the rights of all individuals; meet professional responsibilities with honesty, integrity, and respect for others; support the principle of due process; respect all confidential information; abide by the School Act and Ministry Orders; maintain the standards stated in the BCPVPA Code of Professional Practice; strive for excellence in school leadership; and promote quality leadership in education (BCPVPA, n.d.).

The BCPVPA code of ethics encourages leadership ethics to be conceptualized through the ethics of care. Ethics of care has been described as a feminist philosophical perspective that uses a relational approach toward ethics and decision-making (Burton, 2013). Transformative

and inclusive leadership approaches are ethical in that they are grounded in doing the right thing, providing voice, and are relationship-based. Ethical leaders focus attention on communicating about ethics and making the ethics message salient (Demirtas, 2015). To ensure no harm to students and staff in school buildings, leaders have an ethical responsibility to confront the realities of structural inequalities (Flessa, 2009). If ethical choices are not stressed, the continuation of exclusionary practices will continue (Fernandes, 2019).

Leaders need to build a critical awareness to inquire into the moral, cultural, and political challenges and then act on those challenges (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Critical theorists are seen as individuals having the ability to advocate for the emancipation of groups, study issues of power and highlight political issues (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). The transformative leadership approach aligns with ethical leadership because it emphasizes vision, values, and intellectual stimulation. It differs from ethical leadership in that ethical leaders may at times emphasize standards and moral management, which are considered more transactional approaches (Brown & Trevino, 2006). An inclusive leadership approach is considered ethical because like the concept of ethics of care leaders put the concerns for others ahead of their own.

During each stage/phase of the change process suggested for Panoptic and in the leadership development series the following ethical concerns will need to be addressed: altruism, relationships, and extra attention consideration. Altruism holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary, at the sacrifice of self-interest. It will be important for leaders in Panoptic to put aside their self-interests and put the interest of student groups considered marginalized at the forefront of decisions. They have an ethical responsibility to eliminate deficit viewpoints and support others in the process as well (Burton, 2013). Leadership is all about relationships. Leaders have an ethical duty of care that emphasizes the

notion that all individuals are interdependent in achieving their interests and those particularly under-served to our choices deserve extra consideration. Using an ethic of care approach, I consider my duty to those who are powerless rather than powerful. It is important for me to support leaders in building their capacity to provide extra consideration for those considered under-serviced, to ensure all students receive an opportunity for their needs to be met (Carman, 2015).

There are numerous gray areas in leadership ethics when dealing with complex situations like marginalization and the opportunity gap. Leaders at one point in their career will be faced with a challenge to their credibility and integrity. Doing the right thing may not always be seen as the correct action by some (Carman, 2015). Another challenge is connected to the organizational culture because some leaders may work in or themselves create oppressive environments. This is a challenge as it means that followers who may be aware of ethical problems occurring might be afraid to speak out for fear of being ostracized or terminated (Carman, 2015).

The concept of ethics of care ensures that leaders are working from a moral perspective that ensures no harm, while this is important, even more important is leaders taking action to create opportunities and remove the barriers that currently disadvantage marginalized groups, these are leaders focused on equity.

## **Equity**

Equity means different things to different people. For example, if you are focused on equity within educational finances, the definition selected would focus on improving the unfair distribution of resources and priorities change within policies. For this OIP, equity is focused on the differences in access to opportunities in schools, so it is defined by things that can (effort) be

controlled and things that cannot (sex, poverty, race) be controlled. In most situations, equity is defined by the inequities that are seen.

Leadership for equity is complex, messy, contextual, and influenced by experience (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). Research confirms that inequities will continue if school staff see children from diverse cultures or impoverished backgrounds through a deficit lens (Gorski, 2014). The success of creating equity is tied directly to the ability of the leader to create a shared sense of importance related to issues of equity and their ability to collaboratively create and move equity forward (Macpherson, 2016). In schools where leaders have limited understanding of the scope and importance of equity work, implementation is in danger of being superficial, resulting in situations that continue to support the privileged and maintain the status quo (Jackson & McIver, 2016; Macpherson, 2016; Della Rovere, 2014).

According to researchers, the lens of equity should be used at all levels of a system to ensure a clear meaning of equity in relationship to everyone's role (Jackson & McIver, 2016; Gallegos, 2014). Organizations that are inclusive support equity as they develop shared leadership at all levels and include mutual recognition, reciprocal understanding, trust, and integrity (Pless & Maak, 2014). While advancing equity through the change path, leaders in Panoptic will potentially meet resistance from within their own schools and communities. This resistance comes directly from the momentum of the status quo, obstructive staff attitudes and beliefs, and insular and privileged parental expectations (Theoharis, 2007). This resistance for some may be subtle, while for others may be forceful. It is important to remember that it is not change that people resist, it is being changed (Lewis, 2019).

The system in Panoptic will not be able to produce greater schools without leaders who are prepared, understand the importance and their responsibility in achieving more equitable

outcomes for all students, and who feel confident and capable of doing this (Robinson et al., 2017). Given the complex nature of leading for equity, this OIP hopes to inspire leaders to seek out opportunities to develop critical skills to identify and address equity issues and create more opportunities for student groups considered marginalized.

Leadership for equity takes a perspective that invites leaders to critically analyze political and social issues, as well as social inequity (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). Leadership for equity practices disrupt inequitable school cultures and work courageously and consistently for transformative change that provides justice and excellence for all. While these leaders may not be labeled social justice leaders, they are at the confronting oppression end of the social justice action continuum.

### **Social Justice**

Social justice leadership is action orientated and involves the identification of oppressive and unjust practices and action in replacing them with equitable, culturally response ones (Shields & Hesbol, 2019). A common thread found in readings for this OIP was that voices of individuals considered marginalized were seldom heard due to organizational structures (Kowalchuk, 2019; Agger-Gupta & Harris, 2017; Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015). This OIP investigates the need for leaders in Panoptic to identify, plan, and create social change and dismantle organizational structures in their schools to intentionally reject deficit thinking, engage in difficult conversations, and open the curricular space to create more opportunities. Panoptic has a responsibility and desire to transform the learning experience for all students. To do this the leadership team needs to ensure that the leadership development series offered goes beyond surface level learning and that it intentionally addresses the impact of power and privilege on the school experience (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Chunoo et al., 2019; Najmaei & Sadeghinejad,

2019; Shevlin-Woodcook, 2017; Macpherson, 2016). This aligns with researchers with a transformative and inclusive view as it confronts social oppression at all levels (Mertens, 2010). Schools are one of the most powerful institutions where social stereotypes are reproduced, making them a key place to be challenged (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).

It is apparent that for leaders to transform schools to meet the needs of the changing demographics of students, at the intersection of entrenched teachers and technical approaches to leadership, is complex and highly engaging work that requires an ethic of care and an awareness and drive for equity and social justice.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented leadership frameworks for understanding and propelling the change forward in Panoptic. Aligning with both transformative and inclusive leadership approaches, the hybrid approach of using both the Change Path model (Descza et al., 2020) and the Dialogic Change model (Kuenkel et al., 2021) were presented as methods for how to ensure the change addresses both the organization and the people within it. Focusing on the inputs and the transformation process of the Congruence Model, led to the identification of what to change and what to do. Leaders need to work on developing an awareness of their power and privilege and the inequalities occurring around them to create a shift in behavior and mindsets.

The selected solution for what to do, is the implementation of a leadership development series using leader learning teams (LLTs). This aligns with the transformative and inclusive approach as the work completed by LLTs involves dialogue to support change in attitudes, addresses the priorities of building capacity, focusing on equity, and opening the curricular space. This combination leverages inclusion and collective learning to strengthen the change efforts in Panoptic. The chapter concluded by outlining the aspects of ethics, equity, and social



justice that will bring about challenges and need to be addressed during each step of the change process. Chapter 3 will address what is still required, a detailed implementation plan that outlines the methods to be used for measuring and evaluating the process, and a plan to communicate the change process in Panoptic.

### **Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication**

Chapter 3 begins with an overview of the change implementation plan and explores the implications of the desired change by looking at the improvements it will bring. The focus of the chapter is how to manage the transition through the change process. The chapter identifies methods used to monitor and evaluate the change process and tools and tracking methods for how to measure and evaluate the process are suggested. Next, a plan for communicating the need for the change and the process is explored. This includes information about how to build awareness, how to frame the change for various audiences and comprises a knowledge mobilization plan. Lastly, the chapter addresses next steps and future considerations for Panoptic.

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

The change plan is intended to address the gaps within Panoptic related to the PoP presented in chapter 1. This plan is anticipated to take approximately two years and will not be fully institutionalized for some time. The first change in Panoptic is occurring within the existing structure and is making small incremental changes, making this a first-order change (Lewis, 2019). A first-order change occurs on the behavior level without impacting the operating rules of the system. As opposed to a second-order change, which involves working in significantly different ways from what has been done before (Lewis, 2019).

The change implementation plan fits within the context of 2019 – 2024 strategic plan for Panoptic, as it aligns with two priorities. The first is to transform the student experience and the second is to ensure full participation in learning by all students and adults. Under-served students need school-based leaders to identify, address, and change school practices that cause barriers for them. The only way leaders will be able to do this is by gaining the knowledge and skills required, which will be accomplished through the implementation of a professional development series using LLTs. The change initiator (myself) and change leaders (district vice-principal of equity and directors of instruction) will be the change team responsible for designing and guiding the implementation of the leadership development series among principals and vice-principals.

This plan aligns with the professional development structure within Panoptic because it involves focused conversations, leverages current practice, and motivates action for social change. Panoptic encourages all members to pursue professional development and expects that all employees will continually learn. The organization recognizes that it shares responsibility to enable and promote professional growth, but it must also consider the limitations of available funds and time. By implementing a professional development series, the hope is to see a rejection of deficit thinking, an increase in difficult conversations, and the curricular space being opened for all.

### ***Improving the Situation***

This plan improves the situation in Panoptic as it supports leaders becoming more knowledgeable and strategic with how to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in their school. The plan will lead to improvements across the organization because it addresses the guiding questions of this OIP. First, professional development will be provided which will build the leaders capacity to proactively address the opportunity gap and increase success rates for

students from marginalized groups. The professional development series will need to go beyond surface level learning and provide leaders with continued opportunities for growth. Throughout the series, leaders will develop the capacity to use evidence-based strategies to meet the increasing demands of an ever-changing diverse group of students.

Leaders who embrace this process will develop transformative and inclusive leadership approaches that provided an opportunity for leaders to gain a critical consciousness of their power and privilege and an understanding of social inequities, so that they are able to act on them and create social change (Hollander, 2009). Transformative and inclusive leadership approaches require leaders to demonstrate ethical attributes such as an ethic of care, moral goodness, human impact, and social betterment (Duignan, 2020). An inclusive lens will improve the situation in Panoptic as it aligns with the principles of critical theory and will support leaders in challenging the status quo, eliminating exclusionary practices, and working to improve the unfair conditions students are subjected to (Della Rovere, 2014). During this series, leaders will have an opportunity to explore frameworks before applying them with members of their school community.

Finally, Panoptic will benefit by having leaders with greater capacity and high job satisfaction. Schools will benefit by providing more opportunities for student success and the system will benefit from increased graduation rates. This plan will improve the situation in Panoptic as it moves the organization from the present to the desired future state, where schools are places focused on relationship-based programs, increasing student engagement, and creating community partnerships. By focusing on these changes in neighborhood schools, the hope is that more students will then remain in their neighborhood school, reducing the number of students being referred to alternate programs.

## **Managing the Transition**

The following section outlines the strategies used during each step of the transition process. Using the change models and leadership approaches presented in chapter 2, allows the change team to be strategic and anticipate limits and issues that may arise. The implementation plan begins by creating awareness of the first-order change and the creation of the leadership development series by the change team (Lewis, 2019). The actual development of the learning series is beyond the scope of this OIP, but specific suggestions for the series are highlighted (see Appendix C for an overview of the implementation of how to change using both the diagnostic and dialogic approaches).

### ***Awakening / Exploring and Engaging (January - June)***

The awakening step of the Change Plan model focuses on the need for change and the importance of developing an understanding of the need for change (Deszca et al., 2020). The goal during this time is to begin preparing the organization for the change. The Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Deszca et al., (2020) is to be completed by the change team, as it allows them to address assumptions and identify areas that need attention to enhance readiness. The leaders in Panoptic need to see that by participating in the leadership development series they will build the capacity to create change in their school and alter practices to transform the learning experience for students.

From the Dialectic Change model, the first step exploring and engaging requires an understanding of the context, creating dialogue regarding potential obstacles, and gathering a cross-section of engaged people to exchange ideas (Kuenkel et al., 2021). The cross-section of people for this plan includes the change initiator, change leaders, and the task force (superintendent and assistant superintendent). These key actors have begun informal discussions

regarding the change in relation to the recently completed equity scan. It will be important for this group to identify those who can fill in gaps between different levels within the organization. These connectors who fill in the gaps, will need to ensure that stakeholder groups such as trustees, teachers, parents, and students become aware of this plan. By involving stakeholders at the start of the process the change team will hopefully gain support.

This step is underway in Panoptic as the district leadership team shares student achievement data according to the BC Ministry of Education student learning survey and the CHART (Capturing Health and Resilience Trajectories) data. Discussions regarding this data lead directly to issues of the opportunity gap and how to address exclusionary practices.

An issue that may arise during this step is conflicting change agendas. As the district has its strategic plan and goals, so to does each school. Each school has a yearly school learning plan that leaders build professional development for staff around, if the school members do not select a goal directly related to the desired change, the leader could experience conflict as to where to put their focus and energy.

During this step the change team will also need to either design the series of learning opportunities or they will need to explore the option of bringing in a consult to support the development and implementation. At this time, given financial limitations, the change initiator with support from the team will design the learning series. The series will need to be informational, intentionally build leaders capacity and provide opportunity to practice the LLTs inquiry framework (Katz et., 2018). To ensure engagement and buy-in, a pre-survey regarding overcoming deficit thinking, engaging in difficult conversations, and opening the curricular space will be created by the change team and given to all leaders to help shape the professional

development series. By the end of this step, the change team will need to accomplish the following:

- generate awareness of the proposed change through continued discussions,
- have all leaders complete a pre-survey for the leadership development series, and
- design the leadership development series.

***Mobilization, Acceleration / Building and Formalizing, Implementing (September - June)***

From the Change Path model, the second step is to increase mobilization and accelerate the change. Given that many of the leaders in Panoptic are ready for the change, it will be important to ensure that their influence spreads to build a coalition of support for those who will be affected by the change. This needs to be done to gain commitment from those leaders who may not be as interested or have no desire to participate in the series. This step also involves determining which tools will be used to track and monitor the change (discussed later in the chapter).

This step of the Dialogic Change model ensures the change team has common goals, agrees with the plan, and that the leadership development series structure is formalized. It will be important for roles, contributions, and the allocation of work be jointly designed to offer safety during the unpredictable and complex implementation (Kuenkel et al., 2021). Upon approval from the superintendent, the implementation of the series can be mobilized. The first leadership development series led by the change initiator and supported by the members of the change team, is suggested to last one school year (September to June). It is recommended to have one monthly meeting lasting approximately one and half to two hours, and then two shorter check-ins, fifteen to twenty minutes, during the monthly formal district leadership team meeting and the principals and vice-principals' meetings.

The series should begin by exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools, to set the stage to address the issues of the opportunity gap and exclusionary practices. Case studies are encouraged, as they allow leaders to understand, reflect upon, and address the complexities and challenges of leading in an effective way and show the application of theory to real-world situations. Case studies will also provide leaders with the opportunity to reflect and act on questions related to the priorities of this OIP, such as:

- Can you identify any ways in which your school reproduces inequitable situations?
- How do you define cultural capital, deficit thinking, color-blind racism, and minoritized?  
How might you help others to understand and address them?
- Do you think marginalized groups should put the past behind them? How can this be done with compassion and equity? What is the role of members of the dominant or privileged group?
- Identify ways in which educators punish students for their family circumstances and discuss strategies to overcome them (Shields, 2012).

At this step, transparent communication among stakeholders will be key. Those at the top of the hierarchy of Panoptic will need to be kept informed and aware of how the process is going. Leaders will need to be aware of the key information regarding the professional development series, such as dates, times, and location for meetings. They will also require the book *The Intelligent, Responsive Leader* (Katz et al., 2018) as the series is encouraged to take a book club approach. This will expose leaders to the importance and relevance of LLTs and introduce them to the inquiry protocols.

As the professional development series continues through the school year, it will be important for the change team to manage and sustain the energy of the change. LLTs are hard

work, they involve planned conversations that serve as a critical analysis of personal beliefs, organizational structures, and other aspects of influence that affect leading and learning. They are intended to push the group members' thinking and learning beyond what they could achieve on their own (Katz et al., 2018). The opportunity to work with colleagues will provide leaders with the support needed to navigate complex change and the team approach will also allow for critical conversation that can lead to changes in practice. LTTs encourage leaders to examine their actions and determine if they are getting better or not and how they know this (Katz et al., 2018). This work requires energy to sustain it and the change team will need to be mindful of activities throughout the year, so not to overwhelm and burnout leaders.

The goal of this step is to demonstrate that change is possible (Kuenkel et al., 2021). As the leadership development series is rolled out, the change team will need to:

- establish learning mechanisms and monitoring systems,
- ensure transparent communication, and
- manage and sustain the energy of the change.

### ***Institutionalization / Sustaining and Expanding Impact (September - June)***

The final step for both change models is to evaluate and determine further development to solidify, sustain and, if desired, expand the change. Leaders will be encouraged to reflect on their practice, to step back from their experience, and assess their learning (Oh Neill, 2017). The change team will need to create and deploy a post- survey to focus on key features related to the priorities of the change and connect to questions asked on the pre-survey. The data collected throughout step two and from the pre- and post-surveys, can then be consolidated to evaluate the plan and suggest changes.



To proactively address the opportunity gap and exclusionary practices during the institutionalization phase, the change team will need to be thoughtful, reflective, transparent, and able to create space where leaders are willing and comfortable to share ideas. They will need to consider developing or refining the plan to maximize the use of conclusions recommended and lessons learnt. This should include paying particular attention to linking learning to program improvement and to redesign where required (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

The next step is to consider how to best engage stakeholders in identification of recommendations without compromising independence or objectivity (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). It will be important for the change team to develop a dissemination strategy that best supports potential use of evaluation conclusions. Using the data collected, a formal report is to be generated and shared with stakeholders. It will be important to consider different types of reports and their audiences (see the Communication Plan section later in the chapter for more detail).

The goal of this step is for the change team to:

- deploy a post-survey to focus on key features related to the priorities,
- consolidate information, reevaluate the plan, suggest implementation changes, and
- generate and share a formal report.

The expected results during the transition process include a successful implementation of a dialogic model and the beginnings of knowledge gained being transferred to other situations (Kuenkel et al., 2021). To determine if the change should be institutionalized it is important to ensure performance indicators are met throughout the change process.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

To achieve the desired future state for schools in Panoptic, the change team will need to meet the goals laid out for each step of the implementation plan and use the following key

performance indicators (short- and long-term indicators) to gauge success of the leadership development series.

The short-term indicators relate to the first-order change include all leaders expressing an interest and participating in the professional development series. Participating in the leadership development series will allow for engaging discussions that challenge the status quo and move away from deficit mindsets. Another short-term goal will be leaders gaining personal awareness of their actions as they develop an understanding of their power and privilege and build skills to identify inequalities within their school. Finally, throughout the transition, an increase in the leaders' levels of confidence in their ability to address tensions, reflect individually and collectively, and build up their motivation should be observed. The change team will use activities such as exit slips, short discussions, and self-reflection surveys to indicate that the short-term indicators have been met.

Long-term indicators are connected to the second-order change, which involves organizational level changes that will hopefully be seen over time. The first long-term goal would be leaders actively facilitating dialogue to critically examine the status quo, unlearn exclusionary practices, and create structural change in schools. Along with this, is leaders advocating for improved alignment between norms and routines, which will be evident in policies and procedure handbooks within Panoptic (Zoltners Sherer & Spillane, 2011). The final long-term indicator would be the elimination of alternate programs.

Reaching these short- and long-term indicators will lead to a reduction in the concept of othering, by supporting students from marginalized groups to remain in their neighborhood school and ultimately, eliminate the need for alternate programs within Panoptic. Successful professional learning programs that focus on developing leaders as learners will strengthen the

capacity for change, on both individual and organizational levels (Aas, 2017). As the change team works to meet the key performance indicators, they will need to anticipate stakeholder reactions and be ready to respond to potential issues, challenges, limitations, and priorities.

### **Stakeholder Reactions**

Understanding the position of stakeholders is essential if the change team is to alter the forces that resists change and strengthen those that promote it. Readiness for change will need to be viewed through a continuum because where a stakeholder is regarding readiness, will impact their reaction. The change team is encouraged to use the Stakeholder Analysis tool and the Force Field Analysis tool (Deszca et al., 2020) to help determine the organizational dynamics at play and potential reactions. Stakeholder Analysis looks at the positions, motivations, and power of all key stakeholders. The purpose of the analysis is to develop a clear understanding of who can influence the outcomes and thus be in a better position to appreciate and recognize how best to manage the context (Deszca et al., 2020).

Conducting a Force Field Analysis will help determine the pressures for change, power dynamics, and cultural norms (Deszca et al., 2020). For change to be successful, there must be a strengthening of the driving force. Finally, the change team needs to create a contingency plan that allows for adjustments in responses to anticipated reactions. The contingency plan should be created by the team and indicate critical decision points, who makes those decisions, and what to do if the decisions or the events do not go as planned (Deszca et al., 2020).

### **Potential Implementation Issues**

There are many potential issues that will impact the implementation including teamwork, interest level, desire to use a dialogic approach, and multiple initiatives. There are general issues that may arise regarding teamwork, such as confusion around who does what and is the work

done by the team or a specific member of the team. To overcome this, the roles and responsibilities of each team member should be determined during the first step. Regular meetings should be held, and it should be decided how they will be recorded, and how deadlines and milestones will be shared. The team should also have an approval process that states who makes the final decision (Lewis, 2019). More complex teamwork issues that may arise include disagreements, uncertainty around decision making, and uncomfortable feelings or not feeling safe within the group, which can all lead to resistance. Change leaders will need to rethink resistance. They need to recognize resistance as stress and manage it by accepting emotions and listening to participants. The team need to ensure they have the proper resources and supports to create a safe space, to help leaders explore risk in ways which suspend judgment and provides opportunities for individual growth (Deszca et al., 2020).

Another potential issue is the lack of interest from leaders to increase their personal awareness, social biases and create change. While many in Panoptic claim to have the awareness, of the change required, many get uncomfortable and uneasy when it comes to identifying and sharing these. This is essential because many of the under-serviced students are members of marginalized groups and impacted by the above factors (Oh Neill, 2017). Leaders must, therefore, have knowledge of their own biases and be familiar with research in various areas, especially regarding mental health issues, social-emotional learning, and socioeconomic status (Oh Neill, 2017). To address this, the change team will need to ensure leaders understand the background to the change, the rationale for the change, and their obligation in supporting this through a social justice lens, as outlined by the BC Leadership Standards (2017), BCPVPA Leadership Standards (2019), and the School Act.

The next implementation issue is that leaders may not believe in the importance of using a dialogic model, and some may not feel comfortable leading difficult conversations. The change team should acknowledge the discomfort and stress that comes from having difficult conversations, but they will also need to remind leaders, that they have an ethical responsibility to address the opportunity gap and eliminate exclusionary practices within their schools.

There are always several initiatives occurring at the same time within an organization which can be another implementation issue. In the design of leadership development programs, there seems to be a challenge in finding the balance between system and reform needs, and school and individual needs (Aas, 2017). Initiatives such as school goals, district literacy, numeracy, and climate initiatives may involve different leaders, the change team needs to be aware of all initiatives, those involved, and the timeline for them, so that they can find a balance between initiatives and not impede progress (Deszca, n.d.).

The final implementation issue is related to the expansion of the change. Because leaders are nonunionized members within Panoptic, they can be directed to participate in this process. Whereas the teaching and support staff have a collective agreement that gives autonomy to professional development, making participation voluntary, possibility limiting the expansion.

### **Challenges, Limitations, and Priorities**

Challenges, limitations, and priorities will impact the implementation in a variety of ways. Many see resistance to change as a challenge. For followers impacted by the change in Panoptic, resistance will range from subtle to forceful. The change team is encouraged to view resistance as energy being brought to the initiative and to promote critical thinking to serve as a check and balance against resistance, groupthink, and self-delusion (Lewis, 2019).

Leaders who refuse to change organizational structures and processes might be accused of ethical laziness, given how these structures and processes discriminate against many students (Starratt, 2005). This is seen as a potential challenge with meeting equity and social justice needs and will be important for leaders to address by taking steps to overcome the obstacle of adopting inclusive leadership over authoritative leadership. This is required to correct the misalignment between intentions of inclusivity and actual behavior. Behaviors of inclusive leadership may at times be seen as caring for, rather than leading others, but they occur simultaneously providing high-quality work (Minehart et al., 2020).

It has been documented that the feeling's followers have regarding the change team, make a difference in the success of the change and it has been confirmed that transformative leadership positively predicts commitment to change (Deszca et al., 2020; Guerrero et al., 2018). Followers impacted by the change need to have their desires, needs, and obligations to the change checked before the change begins, to reduce uncertainty and anxiety from rumors. During the change, leaders will be required to check-in with followers to support any feelings of shock and denial that members may experience, and after the change to acknowledge the change and increase its acceptance (Deszca et al., 2020). Leaders are encouraged to address the desire in followers first before their needs and obligations for a successful change to occur. This may be challenging because individuals have preconceived beliefs and mindsets that are difficult to change. The change team along with leaders, should disrupt the current state, acknowledge deficit thinking, and examine it critically during the LLTs' series using a tool such as Molnar and Lindquist's 4- step process (Weiner, 2009). This process involves more nuanced conversations that open channels to allow focused discussions regarding the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimension of the change (Lewis, 2019).

As Panoptic implements a leadership development series to create change, the change team must address other key obstacles to learning such as a culture of blame, lack of incentive to learn, tunnel vision, loss of institutional memory, insecurity, and the pace of change (Kusek & Rist, 2004). The team will also need to consider the supports and resources of time and financial assistance. Substantial time will need to be invested for planning the leadership development series. Financial assistance from the organization's operational budget will be required to purchase the book *The Intelligent, Responsive Leader* (Katz et al., 2018) for leaders and to provide enhancements to the series such as food and prizes.

The change plan presented will improve the situation in Panoptic as it will enhance a leaders' ability to use evidence-based strategies to meet the increasing demands of an ever-changing, diverse group of students. To manage the transition each step of the change models will need to meet its goals and the identified performance indicators. To do this the transition will need to be executed with precision and flexibility. To experience success with the implementation, time must be incorporated for the change team to learn from past projects, build in proper accountability structures, and create effective plans (Kusek & Rist, 2004). The change team will certainly come across implementation issues and challenges from stakeholders, but with proper preparation, monitoring and tracking, the team will be able to address the situation and continue to move forward.

### **Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

This section begins by distinguishing between monitoring and evaluation. It continues by suggesting tools that can be used to measure and monitor the plan and follows with a review of the PDSA cycle and it connects to the change models and leadership approaches. The section

ends by exploring methods to evaluate and refine the implementation based on responses to monitoring and evaluation findings.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks address a range of different intentions.

Monitoring is continuous and timely, while evaluation is done periodically and moves beyond the tracking focus of monitoring (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Monitoring change allows the team to track progress, adjust strategies, and ensure learning (Kuenkel et al., 2021). It is used to support accountability and is concerned with identifying a deeper, nuanced understanding of the change, and developing explanations for what is identified (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

Finally, monitoring allows stakeholders to see progress and in return increase commitment to the change (Kuenkel et al., 2021).

Evaluation focuses on forming judgments. It should be used as a learning process, with an explicit learning focus that encourages dialogue to ensure decisions are made based on findings (Kuenkel et al., 2021). Evaluation findings should be presented in a detailed report that includes lessons learned, what has worked and what has not, and recommendations for implementation improvement (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Both monitoring and evaluation draw from a pool of common tools. The choice of which tool and measure to incorporate should be made according to the need, timing, expertise, and resource feasibility (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

### **Tracking Change**

The change team will need to identify what it is they are trying to accomplish and actively keep track of the activities to assess the results achieved (Kuenkel et al., 2021). To track change, three questions will need to be answered:



- What is trying to be accomplished?
- How will it be known that a change is an improvement?
- What real changes can be made that will result in improvement (Murray, 2018)?

Simple tools that are to be used to keep the change team on the right track include items such as to-do lists and check lists. The change team will also be encouraged to use tools such as exit slips, mini-surveys, and semi-structured guided focus group discussions. These tools align with the change plan as they involve a dialogic approach and allow leaders to share their personal growth (Starratt, 2005). These tools will be created and monitored by the change initiator, supported by the change team.

The team should be tracking how the change is going in relation to the three areas of need recognised through the Congruence Model analysis described in chapter one. The first area of need is to build leaders' capacity to focus on inclusive approaches to reject deficit thinking. To address this, each leader will need to focus on personal awareness and development regarding their bias, assumptions, and beliefs. While tracking change in an individuals' beliefs and mindsets is complex, specific questions can be crafted that focus on rejecting the deficit mindset, comfort and experience with difficult conversations, and experience with opening the curricular space. These questions will be part of pre-survey developed and administered to collect data to be used in planning the leadership development series and to track progress of learning at the end of the series in a post-survey. Suggested questions for this include:

- On a scale of 0-10, how would you rate yourself as a leader?
- What is your response to someone who questions your decision-making abilities?
- Are you open to suggestions from employees and coworkers?

- A leader must not hold any grudges or biases against anyone in the team. Do you agree with the statement?
- Do you feel providing guidance without any pressure is a trait of a good leader?

The use of surveys requires the change team to address ethical issues such as privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent. Survey responses do have limitations, which include the process for gathering the data and the English language proficiency of respondents (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Even with these limitations surveys and semi-structured interviews with a dialogic approach should be created by the team, as they align with the leadership approach and change model. These surveys and interviews allow leaders the opportunity to critically reflect, share their personal growth, and look for suggestions for the next steps of their learning journey. Another important tool for monitoring and assessing inclusive leadership progress is the Inclusive Leadership Scale (Hollander, 2009). This tool emphasizes the positives in leader-follower relations and measure the qualities leaders may possess. This tool can be used for self-reflection, to determine how one might behave differently using an inclusive approach, or it can be used to encourage discussion regarding appropriate inclusive behaviors (Hollander, 2009).

To know that the change moving in the right direction, the team will track progress that addresses the need of leading with a lens and language of equity to address the status quo. Leaders participating in the series should be asked to answer specific questions that are appropriate, effective, and efficiently show impact (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). This can be done by tracking the language used, practices discussed, and sentiments made during conversations leaders have with their LLTs regarding data and specific case studies (Deszca, n.d.). The change team is also encouraged to collect completed self-reflection tools and visual records of learning (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). This can be achieved by providing leaders

with time to reflect and use tools to monitor their individual progress, such as the 10 MindFrames for Leaders (Hattie & Smith, 2020), the BC Leadership Standards (2017) and the BCPVPA Leadership Standards (2019), will allow leaders the opportunity to understand their context, relationships, and capacity for the change.

For the leadership development series to make a difference in the leaders' professional practice it will need to track the third proposed need, which is to support leaders' ability to open the curricular space to address the opportunity gap. Aligning with transformative and inclusive leadership approaches, a critical examination of frameworks, systems, and resources used in schools during the development series is required. This will provide leaders with the opportunity to identify barriers and challenges that students from marginalized groups experience. In the long-term the hope is to see a reduction in the number of students referred to alternate programs, since the neighborhood school is now better able to meet their complex needs. These tracking tools will allow the change team to monitor leaders' development in their ability to address the priorities of this OIP. While these tools monitor progress, a final evaluation of the success of the implementation process is required.

### **Evaluating Change**

The practical tool to evaluate the implementation plan is the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle. The PDSA cycle was chosen for this OIP because it is not just for individual learning, but also for organizational learning (Crowfoot & Prasad, 2017). This cyclic framework focuses on the need to develop new knowledge from learning and is guided by theory that aligns with an inclusive approach and the continuous improvement framework used within Panoptic. The cycle involves going through four prescribed steps (Plan, Do, Study, Act) to guide the thinking process and allows for the monitoring of outcomes, improving on it, and testing it again

(Deszca et al., 2020). The whole process should be short in duration and contain a small sample size for feedback (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2020). This cyclic process provides the opportunity to determine if the change is an improvement and what changes can increase improvement. Implementing PDSA in a cyclical process allows for continual examination of data and processes, this helps focus the discussion so that it does not become conflicted by personal interests (Atkinson et al., 2020). The change team will implement PDSA to assess, monitor, and evaluate each step of the change process.

During step one (Awakening/Exploring and Engaging) of the change models presented, information is gathered, awareness is generated, and a plan for change is created. At this step, the plan is for the change team to determine what needs to be accomplished. The do step is the creation of awareness for the plan through different means of communication and creating the learning development series. The change team will need to review literature and the developed learning series, to ensure that it incorporates the best approaches to professional learning for leaders (Aas, 2017). Another do item for the team, is to communicate with stakeholders and get their buy-in for the change. The final step is act, this is when the team will need to solicit feedback regarding the leadership development series through the pre-survey to take corrective action to resolve any issues that may arise. Before moving to the next step of the change process, the team will need to determine if any adjustments need to be made.

The change team will need to finalize and put the leadership development series into action during step two (Mobilization, Acceleration / Building and Formalizing, Implementing). It will be important for the change team to have a plan to communicate with all stakeholders during this step to ensure they are aware of the plan and the action taken to meet the short- and long-term goals of the plan. The do step involves the change team in action, as they deliver the series.

The last step is act. The change team will need to be able to respond to reactions, challenges, and priorities by figuring out ways to shift course if required. They will need to act on lessons learnt, adjust, and continue the momentum.

During the final step (Institutionalization / Sustaining and Expanding Impact), the team will need to plan for the development of a final report that will evaluate the impact and determine whether to act on institutionalizing and sustaining the change. The team will need to take time to critically examine the process and determine what was successful in reaching the goals and what may need to be adjusted or corrected.

PDSA is a flexible tool, but that flexibility can also be a detriment if proper structures are not in place. PDSA has other potential drawbacks: the funds required to carry it out properly, conflicting priorities, and the fact that PDSA can be situationally specific and not generalized (Murray, 2018). While the PDSA tool is used to evaluate each step of the implementation process, a final evaluation of the change plan will need to be completed and shared with all stakeholders.

An evaluation is a synthesis of data gained from the tools used to monitor the change and occurs during the final step of the implementation (Institutionalization / Sustaining and Expanding Impact). When looking to evaluate the change, the use of internal evaluation should be the primary process selected. Strengths of using an internal evaluation include the evaluators familiarity with the required change and understanding of the context. It allows for the evaluation to occur in real time and places the evaluators in a better positioned to disseminate results because they were involved in building the evaluation. Finally, this approach builds evaluation capacity in the organization and tends to be more economical (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). There are limitations of using internal evaluations which include internal evaluators may

not be as objective as an external evaluator, the internal evaluator may not have the sufficient skills and experience to undertake the required evaluation, and they may have conflicting work priorities making it difficult for internal evaluators to find the proper amount of time to complete the evaluation thoroughly. The last limitation is that internal evaluators may be guarded in their statements to protect staff and avoid rocking the boat (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Within Panoptic, the internal evaluation would be completed by the change team and shared with all stakeholders and the community.

Evaluation involves the creation of a written report with data representation to effectively describe the process and typically adopts a strength-based approach (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). It is important to consider different types of reports and their audiences, to communicate the message in the best method possible. Informal methods such as confirming, sharing stories, and expressing values and visions, should all be added to the report (Lewis, 2019). The following questions could be useful for the change team to discuss during the evaluation:

- Has new or additional information been uncovered on any aspect of the plan's underlying assumptions, principles, and decisions?
- Are the plan's expected goals being achieved?
- Have there been any unintended consequences?
- What has been the impact of implementation on available resources?
- Has the risk of negative outcomes increased or decreased?
- Is the return still reasonable and viable (Ingram, 2019)?

The final evaluation should be drafted by the change team and include assumptions regarding thinking and behavior of those involved, structures to be changed, and statements about the roles of those involved (Lewis, 2019). It is extremely important that existing

assumptions are checked against available data and discussed with relevant team members to ensure that they capture the expected change process (Kuenkel et al., 2021). The final report will include required revisions for the development series to onboard new leaders and advance current leaders in their practice.

### **Refining Implementation**

Even parts of an organization commonly perceived as stable, are unstable (MacDonald, 2021). The ability to refine the implementation process means to turn raw data and information into something with practical use (Ingram, 2019). The findings from monitoring are beneficial because they provide feedback, generate knowledge, promote learning, and guide actions (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Using exit slips, semi-structured interviews and self-reflection, the change team will be able to gather information and participants reactions. This can then be used to refine the change plan where appropriate (Lewis, 2019). The PDSA cycle will also identifying elements that require refining and addressing them requires a collective process both before and while engaging in change. Based on findings, the implementation plan may need to adjust resources such as people, require additional financial support, and more time for LLTs to connect and practice skills may be required (Kusek & Rist, 2004). This information and data will also be important for the formal report created to share with stakeholders. Determining how to share this information and data requires the change team to create a communication plan, which is presented next.

### **Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process**

The art and science of applied communication needs to be implemented for successful organizational change (Salek, 2021). The final section of this OIP outlines the communication plan and describes how awareness for the change will be built, how issues, questions, and

anticipated reactions from various stakeholders will be address and concludes by outlining how knowledge mobilization can occur.

### **Communication Plan**

Effective communication supports transformative and inclusive leadership approaches in generating public relations (Men, Yue & Liu, 2020). While we cannot control whether a member reads the message through email or paper, or listens to messages over the phone, the method of how information is presented is controlled by the change team (Kirzinger, 2021). To align with the leadership approaches, the change initiator will use a collaborative approach with change leaders and the district communication manager to create a formal communication plan. This plan will include timing of communication, message to be shared, the audience the message is intended for, and the vehicle used (see Appendix D for a visual representation of the communication plan). It will be important for the communication plan to include methods to be used for official announcements and two-way communication for input and updates (Lewis, 2019). The communication will be done internally through the district communication manager and the change team.

To reduce uncertainty and misinformation regarding the change, the team is encouraged to focus on three key areas when planning for communication: disseminating information; soliciting input to discover inaccuracies, interpretations, or misunderstandings; and personal contact to clarify any misconstrued information (Lewis, 2019). This approach emphasizes that communication during each step of the change process requires practice, training, and investigation. This connects to the critical theory and an inclusive approach because the communication exists to examine, facilitate, and coordinate the many voices in the organization (van Vuuren & Elving, 2008).



The change initiator and communication manager will work together during the first step (Awakening/Exploring and Engaging) to create and disseminate information that will generate awareness of the change. This will be done through messages during face-to-face meetings and email. The primary source of communication will be through the weekly bulletin, which is used to disseminate information to leaders every Friday through email. During this step, it will provide a means to disseminate information and explain the need for change, and how the change is being implemented.

The first announcement of the leadership development series using LLTs will be done by the superintendent and occur during the face-to-face district leadership team meeting in July. The second announcement will come through the weekly bulletin in the fall from the change team and will describe the implementation of the leadership development series. During this step, the change team will also solicit input regarding interest and support for the change and then connect personally with individuals who may have misconstrued information.

Because timing is everything, once the plan is announced, and the change process is set in motion, the period of adjustment begins (Oh Neill, 2017). During the second step (Mobilization/Acceleration and Formalizing/ Implementing), communication will be two-way, from the change team through the weekly bulletin and during monthly in person meetings. This communication will include updates regarding the learning process, adjustments that are being made, and successes to be celebrated (Deszca, n.d.). The second part of communication will include input from participants gathered through both written and verbal means. During the final step of implementation, the evaluation report will be created and made available through print and email to those who participated, district leadership staff, and the trustees; and will also be shared with the public by making it accessible on the Panoptic district webpage. Using google translate,

barriers to understanding the message presented in the final report are removed (Kirzinger, 2021).

### **Responding to Anticipated Reactions**

The change team is encouraged to communicate positive reactions and celebrate success, as well as share failures and respond to negativity. This is important for transformative and inclusive leadership approaches because they emphasize open communication. It will be important for the change team to communicate the awareness that the choice-of- change process has been made but that the team is open to input and suggestions along the way (Hastings & Schwarz, 2021). Those affected by the change tend to focus their responses into five specific reactions: discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy, principal support, and valence (Lewis, 2019).

#### ***Reaction 1 Discrepancy***

Leaders not willing to communicate or talk with each other to overcome difficulties can create discrepancies (Lewis, 2019). Communication can help focus on collective intelligence and engage actors individually and informally in dialogue. The change team may experience this because some leaders may not feel comfortable or want to air their limitations. To overcome this, it is important for change leaders to clarify different needs and solve a potential conflict outside of the formal structures. This allows time for informal conversations, creating opportunities where those involved can better acquaint themselves with each other to build safety and comfort (Kuenkel et al., 2021).

#### ***Reaction 2 Appropriateness***

While the change team seeks approval for the change process and communication plan, stakeholders may not take the time to thoroughly read through plans and during the implementation may question the appropriateness of the approach and direction. To overcome

this, the use of an inclusive approach through engagement is encouraged. It will be important to engage these actors on an individual basis and support their understanding of the change being communicated during the beginning steps of the process (Kuenkel et al., 2021).

### ***Reaction 3 Efficacy***

Conflicts may arise when communicating the decision-making process, speed of implementation, or monitoring and evaluation requirements are shared (Lewis, 2019). When change leaders are under pressure to deliver, they naturally resort to their old ways of doing things, making it important to have decision-making structures and reporting requirements all communicated and transparent. It is suggested that the change team create mutual understandings through structured dialogue about constraints, expectations, and rationales (Kuenkel et al., 2021). This will increase efficacy as everyone works from the same understanding.

### ***Reaction 4 Principal support***

Lack of willingness to come to an agreement when analyzing a situation can cause tension and create more questions. Some stakeholders may not agree and may even try to derail or stop the initiative. To overcome this, the change team should try to understand any fears and constraints individuals may have (Lewis, 2019). Change team members need to be the primary support for individuals through the process and need to determine their willingness to facilitate coming to a solution separately and informally. If no willingness persists, it is suggested to postpone the individual's involvement and work backstage to influence a shift or explore the possibility of moving on without the individual in question (Kuenkel et al., 2021).

### ***Reaction 5 Valence***

Clashes of interest, ideology, or hidden agendas can arise from different members affected by this change and create a challenge in uniting everyone. Leaders may not agree with

the selected approach and a clash of opinions could occur (Lewis, 2019). To help overcome this, the change team is encouraged to use an inclusive approach by looking at the wholeness and collective of all participants (Ferdman & Deane, 2014). It is important for the change team to clarify underlying interests, in conversations carefully construct dialogue focused on the change, and during meetings ensure structured dialogue to make a difference. Finally, the change team should be transparent and let leaders state their differences and discuss them. If no solution is found, the change team should seek support from other important actors (Kuenkel et al., 2021).

These reactions and responses regarding communication allow the change team to frame issues and generate solutions to continue the implementation. The final component of the change plan is knowledge mobilization.

### **Knowledge Mobilization**

Knowledge mobilization can be understood as an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of activities relating to the production and use of research results, including knowledge synthesis, dissemination, transfer, and exchange (SSHRC, 2017). It is important for the change team to share knowledge gained during the leadership development series to help information transfer through the organization and out to the field of educational leadership. Knowledge mobilization will occur in Panoptic through multiple channels including snapshots that include fact sheets, road maps, infographics, through face-to-face meetings, and the weekly bulletin.

The change team and leaders will be encouraged to share their personal learning through means that work best for them. For some it may be sharing through formal or informal means of writing, while for others it may be using social media such as chat groups or twitter. The chance to share learning at a conference or through a panel discussion is another an option that can be explored to share lessons learnt.

Knowledge mobilization supports capacity building, helps to change practice through interactive training, and provides documentation to share with trustees and the public (Toronto Metropolitan University, n.d.). The change team will be encouraged to complete a knowledge mobilization matrix that outlines key stakeholders, tools to be used, events to learn at, networks to share learning with, and media publication (Toronto Metropolitan University, n.d.). For example, to share learning with trustees and community members printed material (evaluation report), email, and open discussions should be used. This can be done during board meetings, during evening learning events and through special publications such as annual reviews.

This OIP will contribute to the knowledge and practice in educational leadership by supporting leaders in the acquisition of skills to proactively identify and overcome challenges related to educational success for students from marginalized groups and to intentionally create more opportunities for these students to engage and access quality educational services within their neighborhood school, ultimately reducing the need for alternate programs (Shevlin-Woodcock, 2017; Macpherson, 2016; Theoharis, 2007).

## **Summary**

Chapter 3 focused on creating a framework for implementing the professional leadership development series using LLTs in relation to the goals and priorities for change in Panoptic. The chapter highlighted how to manage the transition and different methods to address stakeholders' reactions, implementation issues, and challenges. Next, the plan for monitoring and evaluating the change was developed, formats to gather feedback were shared, and the communication plan to disseminate information was formed. Finally, the chapter concluded by sharing different methods for sharing lessons learnt and ensuring that knowledge mobilization occurs. The last

section of this OIP address next steps and future considerations and provides a conclusion for the OIP.

### **Next Steps and Future Considerations**

The next step in Panoptic would be to determine how to integrate LLTs with new leaders each year to continue to build capacity and to determine the best method to create learning teams within schools. After the first year of implementation, leaders will have a varying degree of capacity to tackle the priorities of this plan. It will be important for the change team to continue the leadership development series to ensure that capacity among leaders continues to increase and spread throughout their district. Leaders will need to identify, recruit, and support staff advocates who understand and appreciate the need for this change. These advocates can then begin the process of building learning teams and creating learning focused dialogue in their buildings (Oh Neill, 2017).

As leaders take action to build their capacity to address the priorities within the change plan, it will be important for the change initiator to begin a program evaluation regarding alternate programs, to reduce the phenomenon of othering. The long-term vision for change in Panoptic is to eliminate at least two if not all alternate programs. This will need to be done in consultation with the assistant superintendent, in accordance with the Administration Procedure - Program Evaluation (Panoptic, 2020). Taking this action will help accelerate the goal of eliminating alternate programs but given the required radical change in practice it may take multiple years to fully see this long-term vision. I could not possibly estimate the time it would take to get to the desired vision of no alternate programs, while the Ministry of Education continues to fund alternate programs differently than they do traditional high schools, alternate programs will continue to exist.

## **OIP Conclusion**

Organizational improvement is a process, driven by data and implemented through intentional conversations among stakeholders (Atkinson et al., 2020). This OIP outlines a PoP that was identified through the Congruence Model analysis of Panoptic. It described the organizational structure and what needs to change in relation to the PoP. The OIP presented the combination of a critical theory lens with transformative and inclusive leadership approaches to explore the reason for the change. To chart the change, the Change Path model and Dialogic Change model were selected because they provide guidance for leaders to gain the capacity to challenge the status quo, reject deficit thinking, remove exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for under-served students to remain in neighborhood schools, eventually leading to the elimination of alternate programs. The creation of the leadership development series using LLTs is the selected solution because the series is intended to support leaders in building the capacity to address educational equity and excellence for all students but even more so for student from marginalized groups.

Rooted in equity, diversity, and social justice this OIP requires a shift in educational leaders' attitudes with respect to students with complex needs, to act beyond traditional frameworks and transform the learning experience. As a transformative, inclusive leader who supports students with complex needs, I feel it is my obligation to leverage my position for equitable opportunities for all students. As leaders become more knowledgeable and strategic with how to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools, they will create future schools with leaders who use a critical lens and transformative approach to create inclusive structural supports required to design responsive schools with a social justice orientation (Maton & Nicholas, 2018).

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## Appendix A

### Panoptic Stakeholders Responses and Readiness Levels to the Change

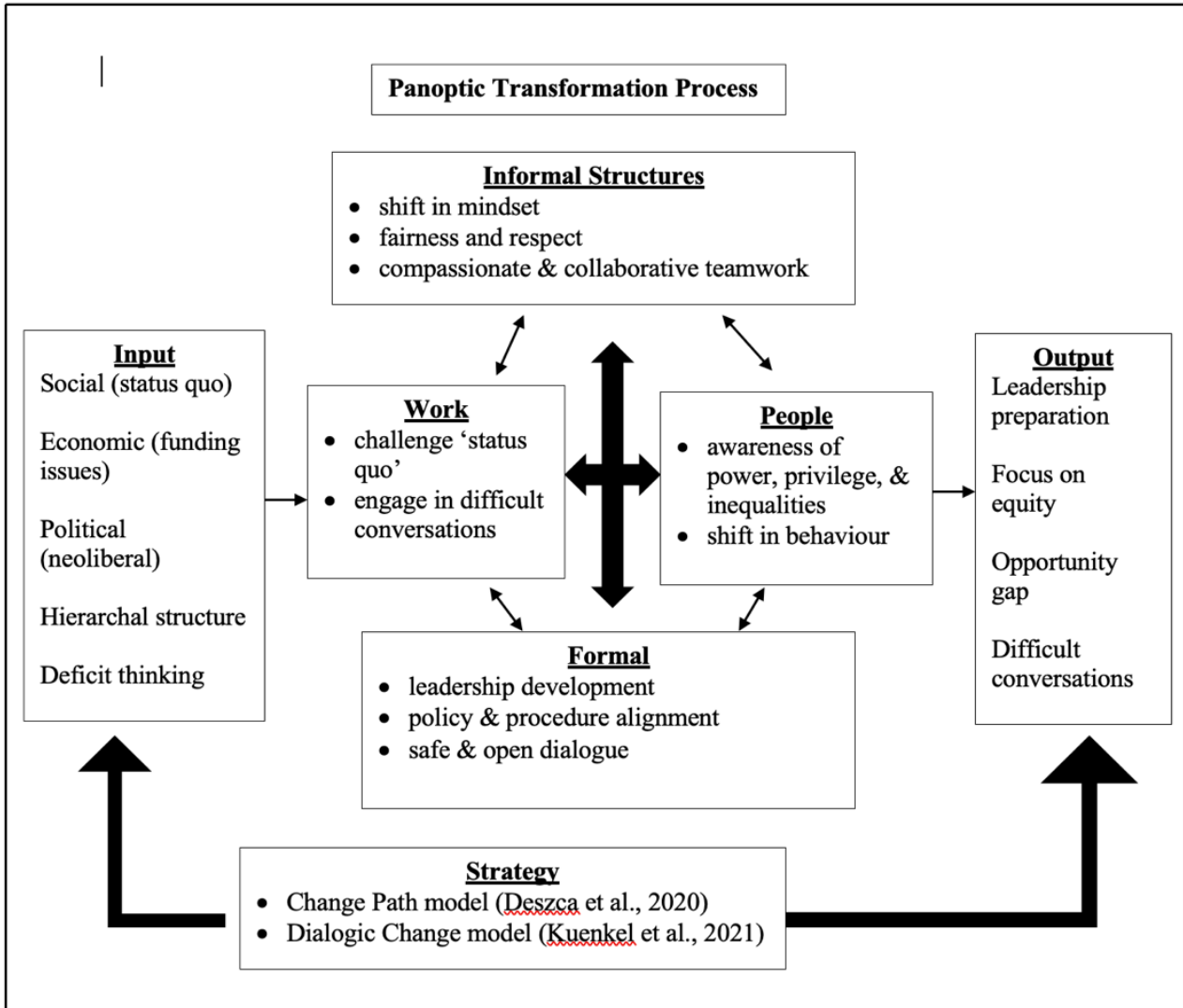
Stakeholder	Response	Readiness
Principal & Vice Principal Association	Many in this role have had challenging experiences with previous change, yet the majority continue to have an openness to	Awareness + Interest + Desire - many acting - involved middle management

	change, multiple levels of leadership credibility	
District Principal Alternate and Online Learning (myself)	Positive experience with change, openness to change, proficient level of leadership and change experience	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Trustworthy leadership & Trusting follower
District Vice-Principal Equity	Openness to change, change experience	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting New member
Directors of Curriculum & Instruction	Credible leadership and change champions, willingness to support and coach others, desire to focus on equity and excellent	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Trustworthy leadership, System thinking
Secretary Treasurer	Supportive, ensures measurement of change and accountability	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Capable champions
Assistant Superintendent	Credible leadership and change champion, willingness to support, desire to focus on equity and excellent	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Trustworthy leadership
Superintendent	Credible leadership and change champion, willingness to support, desire to focus on equity and excellent	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Trustworthy leadership
School Board (Trustees)	Supportive, desire to focus on equity and excellent	Awareness + Interest + Desire - acting Capable champions



## Appendix B

### Panoptic Transformation Process



## Appendix C

### Implementation of How to Change

Timeline	Action Taken	Goals	Stakeholder	Resources
January - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awakening</li> <li>• Exploring &amp; engaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate awareness, interest</li> <li>• Determine roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Design leadership development series</li> <li>• Establish learning mechanisms and monitoring system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• Task force</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readiness for Change Questionnaire</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Financial</li> </ul>
September - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilization</li> <li>• Acceleration &amp; building</li> <li>• Formalizing &amp; implementing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness, interest</li> <li>• Ensure transparent communication</li> <li>• Implement LLTs</li> <li>• Manage and sustain the energy of the change</li> <li>• Deploy post-survey</li> <li>• Consolidate information, suggest changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• Leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book (Katz et al., 2018)</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Financial</li> </ul>
September - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalization &amp; evaluating</li> <li>• Sustaining &amp; expanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate and share report</li> <li>• Refine and adjust series</li> <li>• Extend the plan to onboard new leaders</li> <li>• Provide additional development time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• Task force</li> <li>• Leaders</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Financial</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### Communication Plan

Change Model Step	Timeline	Message	Audience	Communicator	Vehicle
Step 1	January - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change vision</li> <li>• Plan &amp; set goals</li> <li>• Generate awareness and support readiness</li> <li>• Gather and respond to concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P &amp; VP</li> <li>• District leadership staff</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent</li> <li>• Communication manager</li> <li>• Change initiator</li> <li>• Change team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F during</li> <li>• Monthly meetings</li> <li>• Email</li> </ul>
Step 2	September - December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information regarding leadership development series</li> <li>• Adjustments being made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P &amp; VP</li> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F</li> <li>• Weekly bulletin</li> <li>• Email</li> </ul>
	January - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update regarding engagement</li> <li>• Learning and practice</li> <li>• Celebrate successes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P &amp; VP</li> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F</li> <li>• Weekly bulletin</li> <li>• Email</li> </ul>
Step 3	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights of evaluation-goals met</li> <li>• Ongoing learning required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P &amp; VP</li> <li>• District leadership staff</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• District communication manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F</li> <li>• Weekly bulletin</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• District webpage &amp; print media</li> </ul>
	September – June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise series to onboard new leaders and advance current leaders in their practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P &amp; VP</li> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• District leadership staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change team</li> <li>• District communication manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F</li> <li>• Weekly bulletin</li> <li>• Email</li> </ul>