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Developing Comprehensive Indigenous Education Programs through Meso Level Leadership to Promote Indigenous Student Success

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Abstract

Annual reports to the B.C. Ministry of Education on Indigenous student progress in 2019/2020 indicated notable gaps in academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous students. Meso level leaders are responsible for developing new programs and resources to support Indigenous student success. They do not yet have the skills and knowledge to address the gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) presents a collaborative inquiry approach to decolonize the K-12 system that promotes interwoven perspectives of Western and Indigenous epistemologies, pedagogies, and methodologies. A collaborative professional learning community (PLC) of meso level leaders provides the space for building relationships and defining common ground to bridge gaps between Indigenous knowledge and tenets of Western education. Adaptive and Indigenous leadership methodologies are identified that support meso level leaders in promoting Indigenous student success. The change implementation plan includes Stroh's four stages (2015) connected to the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) to ensure that all partners are mindful of local traditions, protocols, ceremony, and stories to inspire change. The plan-do-study-act (PDSA) approach provides a monitoring and evaluation process and incorporates four phases of communication (Deszca et al., 2020) including ongoing consultation with local Knowledge Keepers and Elders. This OIP aligns with the organization's mission to focus on strategies and resources to improve success for Indigenous students, and develop programs to support Indigenous culture, languages, and history (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Keywords: Indigenous, meso level leadership, education, adaptive leadership, decolonize, collaborative inquiry, professional learning community

Executive Summary

There is an acute moral purpose underpinning this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) to decolonize K-12 programs in the Cascade School Division (a pseudonym). Western colonialism has been the foundation of school curriculum and culture in Canada for over 150 years (Loppie et al., 2020). Newly developed programs must eradicate the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous students if schools are to achieve decolonization and cultural safety (Gerlach et al., 2017). The Problem of Practice (PoP) is that meso level leaders responsible for Indigenous education programs do not yet have the skills and knowledge to close the gaps in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The OIP developed to address this PoP supports those meso level leaders who will need to engage with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, scholars, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. Co-constructing Indigenous education programs will include a focus on policies, programs, curricula, and community relationships (Archibald & Hare, 2017; McGregor, 2019).

The Cascade School Division includes 60 districts in rural and urban communities across the province with 198 separate First Nations (FNESC, 2021). School districts are situated on the unceded, traditional territories of these nations. The B.C. K-12 curriculum embeds Indigenous perspectives and resources at all grade levels. A new sense of urgency to rectify past injustices to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students has emerged in the province with the recent uncovering of children's burial sites near Indian Residential Schools (Penner, 2021). The Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change Questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020) was used to analyze the Cascade School Division, and the resulting score indicates a strong position for change. New government policies support this change plan to advance Indigenous education programs

including the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA, 2019) and the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA, 2018) signed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEESC).

Adaptive and Indigenous leadership approaches value different perspectives and flexibility and foster holistic, non-hierarchical leadership to support meso leaders (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014; Julien et al., 2010; Nelson & Squires, 2017; Stewart & Warn, 2017). Stroh's four-stage change process (2015) focusses on collective impact, building on a foundation of trust, shared language, and shared vision. Planning for change in the organization is structured through tuning, adapting, re-directing, and re-creating (Deszca et al., 2020). Four solutions to address the PoP are proposed and the development of a meso level PLC and an integrated model for collaborative inquiry to guide the process is chosen. Issues of ethics, equity, social justice, and decolonization are discussed as they relate to Indigenous learners including: culturally responsive education; anti-Indigenous racism; responsibility and reciprocity; and the reconciliation journey.

The change implementation plan connects Stroh's four stages (2015) to the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNEESC, 2008) to promote a two-eyed seeing approach (Iwama et al., 2009) encompassing Indigenous and Western worldviews and perspectives. This ensures that all partners are mindful of local traditions, protocols, ceremony, and stories to inspire change. Murray's iterative (2018) Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle provides a monitoring and evaluation structure. A focus on the 4Rs, including reciprocity, relevance, respect, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) is incorporated throughout the process. The communication plan maintains consultation and collaboration between change agents and Indigenous educators, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders to ensure an authentic and relevant focus

on decolonization. Incorporating the four phases of communication (Deszca et al., 2020) to align with the four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015) and the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) ensures a carefully crafted approach to communicating the change journey, milestones, and successes.

This OIP is a starting point for meso level leaders who are committed to establishing equity and inclusion in the K-12 school system. Of utmost importance, is to remove existing barriers to Indigenous student success and promote student agency and well-being to enhance the life chances of all learners.

Acknowledgements

I am honored to have worked and learned with three remarkable mentors, teachers, cultural advisors, and most importantly, friends, who first accepted my basic ignorance of the deeply disturbing history of colonial oppression in my community, then slowly introduced the many layers of their rich history through stories, song, dance, and art, to eventually guide me on this journey of reconciliation in the latter years of my career. Sahplek, Yeltsilewet, and Xwalacktun, I raise my hands to you with gratitude and respect, and know that I will keep learning new lessons as I walk beside you. This work is dedicated to you. Huy chexw a.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Acronyms	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem	1
Organizational Context	2
Leadership Position and Lens Statement	9
Leadership Problem of Practice	14
Framing the Problem of Practice	16
Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice	23
Leadership-Focused Vision for Change	27
Organizational Change Readiness	33
Chapter Summary	36
Chapter 2: Planning and Development	37
Leadership Approaches to Change	37
Framework for Leading the Change Process	42
Critical Organizational Analysis	49
Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice	55
Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change	68

Chapter Summary	73
Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication	74
Change Implementation Plan	74
Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation.....	83
Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process	92
Next Steps and Future Considerations	100
Chapter Summary	103
Conclusion	104
References	106
Appendix A: Rating Readiness for Change Questionnaire.....	119
Appendix B: Readiness: Setting the Table.....	121
Appendix C: The Spiral of Inquiry.....	123
Appendix D: Understanding and Acceptance: Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge.....	124
Appendix E: Commitment: Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One’s Actions.....	126
Appendix F: Focus, Momentum, and Correction: Learning Involves Patience and Time.....	128
Appendix G: Ministry Data on Indigenous Student Achievement.....	130
Appendix H: Student Satisfaction Survey.....	131
Appendix I: Monitoring Tools and Purpose.....	132
Appendix J: Communication Plan	134

List of Tables

Table 1: Cascade School Division – Aboriginal Reports (2019/2020)	22
Table 2: Comparison of Four Solutions: Resources Required	64
Table 3: Potential for Each Solution to Address the Gaps in the K-12 System	65
Table 4: Stroh’s Four Stage Process and the First Peoples Principles of Learning	77

List of Figures

Figure 1: Cascade School Division Organizational Chart7

Figure 2: Force Field Analysis of the Cascade School Division32

Figure 3: Types and Categories of Change in the Cascade School Division48

Figure 4: Using the Congruence Model to Analyze the Cascade School Division50

Figure 5: Four Stage Process and Iterative PDSA Cycle Change Process Overview Model67

Figure 6: Target Areas of Meso Level Leadership to Improve Indigenous Student Success70

Acronyms

B.C. (British Columbia)

BCPVPA (BC Principals and Vice Principals Association)

BCSSA (BC Superintendents of Schools Association)

BCTEA (BC Tripartite Education Agreement)

BCTF (BC Teachers' Federation)

CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees)

DRIPA (BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act)

EDID (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization)

FA (Faculty Advisor)

FNESC (First Nations Education Steering Committee)

FoE (Faculty of Education)

ITC (Indigenous Teacher Candidate)

K-12 (Kindergarten to Grade 12)

NOIIE (Network of Inquiry and Indigenous Education)

OAGBC (Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PDCE (Professional Development and Community Engagement)

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

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

PLC (Professional Learning Community)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

ProD (Professional Development)

SA (School Advisor)

SOI (Spiral of Inquiry)

TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Committee)

UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People)

WIL (Work Integrated Learn)

4Rs (Reciprocity, Relevance, Respect, and Responsibility)

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

The current mandate by British Columbia's Ministry of Education to develop programs to support Indigenous student success will require a collective effort on the part of non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators, leaders, students, and parents to engage in a complex process of system change. According to annual division data submitted to the Ministry of Education, Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division (a pseudonym) need increased support in K-12 programs (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The release of a national report in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) about Indian Residential School impact includes calls to action that target the K-12 sector (Sinclair, 2017). It is critical that educators are professionally equipped to respond to the changing demands of Indigenous education (Child & Benwell, 2015). Meso level leaders responsible for developing and supporting Indigenous education programs in school districts include assistant superintendents, directors, and district principals. Macro level leaders are superintendents, elected school trustees, and Ministry of Education representatives. Micro level leaders are principals, vice principals, and teacher leaders.

The Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) developed to address this Problem of Practice (PoP) supports those meso level leaders who will need to engage with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, scholars, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. They will focus on policy, programmatic, curricular, and community relationship needs to co-construct Indigenous education programs (Hare & Davidson, 2015; McGregor, 2019). There are two organizations involved, the university where I work, and school districts in the Cascade School Division. This chapter explores the organizational context, my leadership agency and personal leadership lens, the problem of practice, guiding questions, a vision for what needs to change in the organizations and an analysis of the school district organization's readiness for change.

Organizational Context

The problem of practice (PoP) for this organizational improvement plan (OIP) is best understood through an exploration of the organizational context. The historical context of Indigenous education in B.C. and issues of social justice and equity will guide the development of a plan that will support Indigenous learners in the K-12 school system.

The Cascade School Division spans across B.C. and includes 60 districts in rural and urban communities. It is important to note, the widely varied geographical landscapes across this province have fostered the rich cultural histories of 198 unique First Nations. In addition, there are over 30 different First Nations languages and 60 dialects spoken across these communities (FNESC, 2021). School districts are situated on the traditional territories of these nations. The B.C. Ministry of Education's redesigned curriculum embeds Indigenous perspectives and resources at all grade levels. It also encourages the development of Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements for districts to develop Indigenous education programs in collaboration with local First Nations (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The Cascade School Division includes K-12 public schools, private schools, and independent schools. There are 568,271 students in the division, with 66,397 self-identifying as Indigenous (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The six-year completion rates for 2019/2020 include an overall rate of 86% for students in the region, while only 71% of Indigenous students completed school within this timeframe (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). In addition, the transition rates of students in Grades 11 to 12 were 94% overall in 2019/2020, with 86% of Indigenous students moving on to Grade 12 (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Student sense of belonging is measured according to annual student satisfaction surveys (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The significant gaps

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in core areas of achievement are evident in annual district reports (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Broader Context

The broad political, economic, social, and cultural contexts of the Cascade School Division have had a direct impact on Indigenous education programs and student success in the K-12 school system. The ongoing oppression of Indigenous students and their families has posed significant barriers to student success at all levels of the system (Jimmy et al., 2019).

Indigenous education is a politically charged subject in the current B.C. context due to a growing sense of urgency to rectify past injustices to First Nations People, Métis, and Inuit (Penner, 2021). Eurocentric education in B.C. has been condensed to a patriarchal, bureaucratic enterprise of government for over 150 years and it is only in the past decade, that boards of education have been required to develop Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements in partnership with community leaders (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). New government policies have been developed to advance Indigenous education programs such as the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA, 2019) and the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA, 2018). These policies are foundational to improving school programs to support Indigenous learners.

The Indigenous Education Funding Policy (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) outlines targeted funding that must be determined through collaboration between district boards of education and local Indigenous community advisors. These funds are intended to support newly developed Indigenous education academic programs, cultural supports, and language revitalization.

Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives are centered on stewardship of the land

(Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Land-based pedagogy has contributed to a regeneration of the cultural, spiritual, and political practices embedded in local Indigenous communities (Wildcat et al., 2014). The Cascade School Division has multiple nations with different languages and cultures, which means that meso leaders must ensure authentic connections and consultation with all communities. School culture is core to supporting Indigenous students in developing a sense of belonging (McGregor, 2019). Many schools in the division are working closely with local Knowledge Keepers and Elders to enhance Indigenous culture and language in schools (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Child & Benwell, 2015). A community-based delivery of programs supported through the university's partnerships with school districts and Knowledge Keepers creates an environment of informed leadership, effective practices, and improved student achievement (Held, 2017; Julien, et al., 2010; Stewart & Warn 2017).

Theoretical Frameworks

Two frameworks that underpin this post-secondary organization and the school districts it supports are postcolonial theory and a community of inquiry. Postcolonial theory is foundational to the university's goal to decolonize Faculty of Education programs and culture (Learning Transformed, 2019). A community of inquiry is embedded in the learning strategies outlined in the newly revised curriculum (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) which provides the fluid, reflective spiral of understanding that is most representative of Indigenous research, epistemology, and pedagogy (Held, 2017; Iseke, 2013; Peltier, 2018). Understanding the core tenets of postcolonial theory is important for educators seeking to embrace an organic, non-hierarchical system for change that transcends traditional Western structures (Munroe et al., 2013). Focusing on Indigenous education in school districts requires a holistic stance so that the

learning spirit is supported throughout the change process. Using evidence-informed, systematic inquiry to explore programs provides collaborative space for change (Kaser & Halbert, 2013).

Shaping Leadership in the Organization

The traditional K-12 context in B.C. is founded on settler colonialism which includes embedded patterns of oppression in government policy originally designed to eradicate Indigenous peoples (Ahenakew, 2016). European colonialism based on an assertion of the universality of Western knowledge (Stein, et al., 2021) has been the foundation of school curriculum and culture. Newly developed programs must expose the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous students if schools are to achieve decolonization and cultural safety (Gerlach et al., 2017; McGregor, 2019). Postcolonial theory frames decolonization of the school system with a focus on the oppression of Indigenous people through dispossession of land, cultural genocide, and violence (Stein, et al., 2021). Meso leaders who are responsible for developing school programs must first acknowledge their own connections to colonialism (Hojjati et al., 2018).

These contexts have shaped my leadership journey over the past decade. Understanding the background of settler colonialism in my own schooling and upbringing is foundational to this OIP. Lessons learned from Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the organization have enabled me to understand an Indigenous lens of leadership that guides my work (Stewart & Warn, 2017).

There are many layers to this work, including determination of challenges and finding ways to engage others in problem solving (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Problem solving through shared agency, trust, and kinship (Wilson et al., 2020) is core to leadership in this context. The ongoing work of bringing together non-Indigenous and Indigenous leaders involves a building of relationships and acceleration of information mobilization (Plowman & Duchon, 2008) that requires a collaborative and flexible stance in my leadership.

Aspirations of the Organizations

The B.C. Ministry of Education has redesigned the K-12 curriculum to incorporate Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (FNESC, 2021). The Professional Standards for BC Educators (2019) now includes the 9th Standard, which requires educators to incorporate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldviews and perspectives into curriculum. Annual district *How Are We Doing?* reports on Indigenous student progress (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) show notable gaps in academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous learners in the Cascade School Division. The mission and vision of the university center on the well-being and success of all learners (Learning Transformed, 2019). However, the values are based on longstanding Western traditions and culture that have stifled Indigenous learners (Stein et al., 2021). There is a growing sense of urgency in the province to rectify long-standing inequities, prejudice, and torment of Indigenous peoples. The recent uncovering of 215 children by the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation has been a catalyst for improving Indigenous education programs across Canada (Penner, 2021). Goals of both organizations include improving Indigenous student success. Provincial data, post secondary research, and ongoing consultation with Indigenous students and their families through satisfaction surveys, circle gatherings, and district forums have led to this OIP.

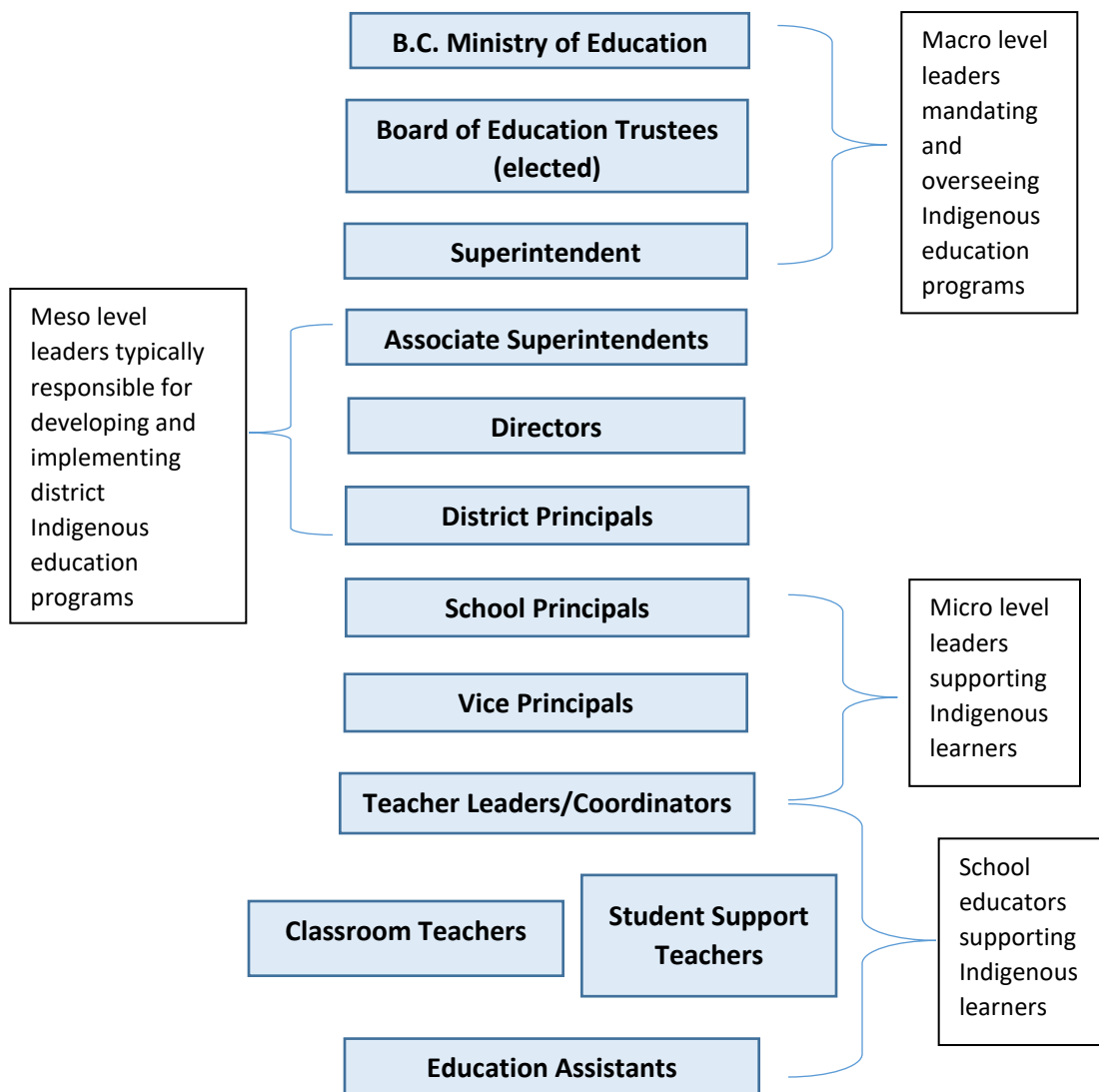
Organizational Structure and Leadership Approaches

The Cascade School Division is governed by the B.C. Ministry of Education. Each of the 60 districts has a board of education responsible for setting policies. Elected trustees oversee operating and capital budgets and monitor the management of education programs. Superintendents report to trustees. These are macro level leaders in the system. All other leaders report to the superintendent. Meso level leaders responsible for Indigenous education programs

can include associate superintendents, directors, and district principals. Principals and vice-principals are micro level leaders responsible for the operation of the school system in a site-based model. Meso level leaders are responsible for academic achievement, school management, curriculum development and implementation, resource development and management, program development, and professional development. Figure 1 outlines the Cascade School Division's organizational structure for school districts.

Figure 1

Cascade School Division Organizational Chart



This OIP includes two organizations as the university supports school districts with a focus on professional development and teacher education programs in the Faculty of Education. The visions and goals of the organizations are maintained through strategic plans, district plans, and school plans. Newly recommended school-based Indigenous Education Plans provide guidelines and resources to support Indigenous learners and their families (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021; FNEESC, 2021). The Cascade School Division includes one of the largest teacher unions in Canada (BCTF, 2021). With senior leaders working outside of the union, there are distinct lines of authority that can cause barriers to consultative processes within the organization (Naylor & Schaefer, 2003). New policies and guidelines for Indigenous education in the Cascade School Division require increased professional development and funding (FNEESC, 2021).

The leadership within the Cascade School Division is hierarchical, with a top-down approach in each district. The board of education oversees the superintendent, who disseminates information and decisions through the senior leadership team to principals and teachers. The lack of power over decision-making can foster distrust and anxiety amongst school-based educators (Wang, Waldman, and Zhang, 2014). The one-way communication in this union environment often hinders progress with new initiatives and programs (Johnson, 2019) and will need to be considered in this plan for system change.

The organizational structures and leadership approaches relate to Western ideologies and practices. This OIP is designed to support Indigenous learners in schools, with Indigenous leaders, advisors, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers being integral to the change process. Incorporating tenets of Indigenous educational theories and adopting a more fluid, non-hierarchical approach will be important for the meso level leaders engaged in this process. My

leadership position and perspective will impact this OIP as I work towards sustaining learning and growth in Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division. These will be discussed in the following section to lay the foundation for this change plan.

Leadership Position and Lens Statement

Understanding and valuing relationships is core to this organizational improvement plan. A holistic, flexible, non-hierarchical approach is emphasized in Indigenous leadership that will promote harmony and social order in an organization (Julien et al., 2010; Wildcat et al., 2014). Embracing an Indigenous leadership model as a non-Indigenous person requires ongoing self-reflection and checking of familial bias and prejudice (Smith, 2016). The work of decolonization in the Cascade School Division is not the sole responsibility of Indigenous educators and leaders who have already suffered long-term oppression and trauma. Stein et al. (2021) challenged non-Indigenous people to take up this work and develop the patience, humility, and accountability to grasp the many layers of decolonization and move forward in a good way.

The next section will focus on how these perspectives are embedded in my leadership lens and why they are at the core of my work with meso level leaders who are responsible for Indigenous education programs. A discussion of my personal leadership position and approaches to leadership practice provides context for my role in this change plan.

Personal Leadership Position

I am a settler working and living on the unceded traditional territories of the x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm, səlilwətəl, and Skwxwú7mesh peoples in the Coast Salish Átl'ka7tsem region of Western Canada. My formal role is Assistant Dean responsible for professional development and community engagement programs in the Faculty of Education at a public B.C. university. My unit is responsible for providing credit and non-credit courses and programs to support faculty,

students, teacher candidates, and practising educators in the K-12 system. This allows me many opportunities to connect and work with meso level leaders throughout the 60 districts in the Cascade School Division who oversee Indigenous education programs and initiatives. It also allows me the opportunity to work with faculty in the planning and development of teaching and learning that focuses on decolonization and reconciliation aligned with the university's strategic plan (Learning Transformed, 2019).

I have been increasingly informed about Indigenous education over the past 15 years in several roles that led to my position as Assistant Dean. I am a non-Indigenous educator who has worked as an adjunct professor with the Indigenous education team in the Faculty of Education teaching Aboriginal Education in Canada for teacher candidates. I was the director of instruction responsible for Indigenous education in a K-12 school district for 10 years and worked closely with local Skwxwú7mesh Elders, leaders, and community members to develop Indigenous education programs. I have been a coach and mentor for the provincial Improving Transitions for Indigenous Learners project (McGregor, 2019) for 5 years, working with district leaders to improve Indigenous student transitions in their schools. I joined the local metro Indigenous education consortium for meso leaders for 4 years, working to improve Indigenous education programs to support student success. These roles provide a foundation of legitimacy for me in working with educational leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders in the K-12 system of the Cascade School Division.

The strength of my role as an Assistant Dean is unique because it is not specifically aligned with a single district, the Ministry of Education, or any one Indigenous organization. Rather, I am a mobilizer of information across these entities and can bring people together to advance initiatives and build community. I oversee an educational leadership program offered

through the university that is designed to support meso leaders interested in system change in their organizations. There are over 300 alumni of this program who are currently working in the K-12 system in the Cascade School Division, with another 65 participants joining this year. The program incorporates local Indigenous leadership resources and case studies to provide participants with new ways to embed Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in their practice.

My role would be to advance Indigenous education initiatives in the Cascade School Division as a facilitator in the potential change process. My position in the university allows me to bring Indigenous research, pedagogy, and worldviews into professional development programs that will support meso level leadership in school districts.

Personal Leadership Lens

Martin and Garrett (2010) describe the importance of interrelationships in Indigenous worldviews and the importance of kinship responsibility. My lens of leadership is highly connected to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives which are community based, collaborative, and relational.

Theoretical Approaches to Leadership

My personal leadership lens is based on both adaptive leadership and Indigenous leadership approaches. The notion of a pluralistic organization theory incorporating many perspectives and mental models (Bolman & Deal, 2017) aligns with my personal leadership lens. Over the past decade, I have worked to develop a more holistic view of leadership that weaves in Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. This has required a breaking down of the colonial structures and perspectives that are embedded in my training and background. Working closely with Skwxwú7mesh cultural advisors and Elders during my time as a director in a school district, I slowly began to understand the magnitude of my ignorance and the need to learn about

Indigenous worldviews and perspectives on my own, rather than burdening others with this work (Stein et al., 2021). Dion (2007) spoke to the dominant discourse of the *perfect stranger* in education, who justifies years of inaction over the oppression of Indigenous people by claiming and maintaining ignorance. As a non-Indigenous leader, I cannot claim allyship for myself (Stein et al., 2021), but must be recognized and welcomed as an ally by Indigenous colleagues or friends. I am honored to have been welcomed as an ally in my workplace and community, but know that the work to dismantle my settler colonial mindset is ongoing. In leading this change, as a non-Indigenous person, I must continue to check my own familial biases and ensure that I am honest, respectful, and sensitive in building relationships with all meso level leaders (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith, 2010).

Adaptive Leadership. According to Wilson et al. (2020), adaptive leadership is competencies-based, embracing collective and generative approaches that are not leader-centric and are more suited to today's uncertain future through shared problem solving and collective agency. Adaptive leaders must engage in problem solving by working directly with people within the organization (Randall & Coakley, 2007). This requires multi-frame thinking (Bolman and Deal, 2017) and an ability to grasp complex cultural and philosophical stances for system change.

My leadership approach is collaborative and flexible. My goal is to engage others with whom I am working in core decision-making and task oriented activities so that they feel valued and involved in their work. The ability to adapt and change direction with members of my staff has been a major part of our unit's success during the global pandemic. Over the past two years, we have pivoted tasks and goals to support online teaching and learning in the faculty and our team has been instrumental in supporting a massive change process.

Northouse (2019) described the importance of shared responsibility in adaptive leadership where solutions are not easily determined. As a leader, I have continued to adapt systems and resources to meet the needs of the organization. I have a strong management team, and each leader is responsible for a group of workers including union and non-union staff. Accountability is based on financial and programmatic targets for the faculty. I rely heavily on my relationships, flexibility, and communication with faculty and staff. My adaptive approach has allowed me to quickly respond to the needs of the organization (Boylan, 2018), and this has ensured ongoing success in the unit.

Indigenous Leadership. I focus on a horizontal structure of leadership (Kaser & Halbert, 2013) in my organization that allows for all voices to be heard whenever possible. This aligns with Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Stewart & Warn, 2017). With 198 different nations in the Cascade School Division, I need to understand the many different perspectives and needs of local leaders to facilitate meaningful discussions about equity in education.

Understanding and respecting an Indigenous leadership approach guides my work as a leader. This includes a holistic, cyclical focus where all actions and relationships are connected and the focus is on the greater good of the organization (Julien et al., 2010). The importance of the 4Rs in Indigenous leadership: responsibility, relevance, respect, and reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) guides my planning for professional development programs. Traditional Indigenous approaches such as storytelling, workplace spirituality, and harmony (Julien et al., 2010) also resonate with me as a leader, and I have worked to develop these core tenets in my own practice.

The notion of Indigenous leadership connects to the trusting relationships we need to establish with people in the organization. Walumbwa et al. (2008), referred to the capacity of

leaders to promote a positive ethical climate that will foster the relationships between members of the organization and promote greater self-awareness. As I work with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous meso leaders in the Cascade School Division, developing a climate of trust and respect has been key to building relationships across cultural boundaries.

Frick et al. (2019) discussed the importance of collaboration between school leaders, parents and guardians, and community members to broaden their understanding of different perspectives to support system change. This is sensitive work, and requires collaboration with Knowledge Keepers and Elders on a regular basis. Educational programming in the K-12 sector must meet the needs of all learners so that they achieve success (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Addressing issues of inequities and marginalization in the Cascade School Division will be outlined in the following discussion of the problem of practice.

Leadership Problem of Practice

The problem that is foundational to this OIP is that Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division are achieving below non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions. The current mandate in the Cascade School Division curriculum (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) to develop programs to support Indigenous student success will require a collective effort on the part of meso level leaders to engage in a complex process of system change. This work is guided by, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007), the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015), and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA, 2019). Meso level leaders in school districts are required to provide an annual report to their boards of education outlining specific data pertaining to Indigenous programs and student success rates. Data includes six-year graduation

rates, student satisfaction surveys, student achievement reports, and transitions reports (Kitchenham et al., 2016). Sense of belonging is measured through provincial student satisfaction surveys (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Meso leaders develop and promote programs to support Indigenous students based on their annual data, with a focus on academic achievement, language, culture, and history (McGregor, 2019; Rosborough et al., 2017).

This OIP focuses on meso level leaders to impact change because they are in key formal leadership roles responsible for curriculum and program development, cultural and community relationships, and student achievement (Kitchenham, et al., 2016; Rosborough, et al., 2017). Meso leaders oversee the development of Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) and manage district How Are We Doing? reports on Indigenous student progress (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). They lead district professional development programs and establish connections with post-secondary institutions (Learning Transformed, 2019). McGregor (2019) outlined the positive impact of meso leaders directly involved in supporting Indigenous student transitions in a provincial study. Halbert and Kaser (2022) emphasized the importance of meso leaders in facilitating school inquiry case studies for equity and quality. According to Istance (2015), networked learning systems that balance formal and non-formal leadership have proven successful in supporting change initiatives in school systems.

Meso level leaders are in a strong position to lead change in their districts with support from their superintendents and trustees. However, the Ministry of Education has recently mandated new curriculum and graduation standards for Indigenous education (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) that will require significant upskilling for meso leaders who are not knowledgeable or trained in Indigenous methodologies, pedagogies, and epistemologies. School districts across the province require improved strategies and resources to support Indigenous

learners, families, and communities according to Child and Benwell (2015). They identified district meso leaders as catalysts for change in a study of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in schools. Archibald and Hare (2017) spoke to the core themes of relationships, holism, and interconnectedness in advancing Indigenous worldviews in education. Meso level leaders responsible for Indigenous education must understand and incorporate these worldviews and perspectives into program development to support all learners in a good way (Battiste & Henderson, 2009). This OIP includes solutions that will support meso level leaders who must advance recent Indigenous education initiatives mandated by the Ministry of Education.

The Problem of Practice

The problem of practice statement is: Meso level leaders lack the skills and knowledge to address the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions in the Cascade School Division. The OIP will address specific needs connected to policy, curriculum, and community relationships to provide meso level leaders with the tools to improve Indigenous education programs. This plan must provide for strong relationship building throughout the change process to honor and develop Indigenous leadership methodologies (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Stewart & Warn, 2017). An exploration of the broader contextual forces in the Cascade School Division will help to frame this problem of practice.

Framing the Problem of Practice

This problem of practice (PoP) is framed within the macro culture of First Nations People, Métis, and Inuit in Canada, which is steeped in ancient traditions and holistic understanding (Hare et al., 2011). There are multiple epistemologies connected to Indigenous learning and teaching, that must be acknowledged as interwoven threads in the overall fabric of

Indigenous education (Battiste, 2002). To address this PoP, it is important that leaders do not adopt a pan approach to Indigenous pedagogies and perspectives because this would discount the worldviews and traditional knowledge of individual nations across the country (Jimmy et al., 2019). School districts in the Cascade School Division are located on different territories with unique histories and this is an important consideration in the development of a change plan for this PoP.

Historical Overview

In framing this problem of practice, it is essential to consider the historical context of Indigenous education in the Cascade School Division. There is a history of systemic racism in the division and across the country. Indigenous students are often not well connected to school culture, their parents and community leaders do not feel comfortable in schools, and very few Indigenous educators are involved in program development in most districts (McGregor, 2019; Papp, 2016). The white-settler paradigm underpinning the K-12 school system continues to restrict Indigenous student success. A history of Indigenous racism in B.C. includes: poorly developed school and community connections, a dominant narrative of white superiority, a lack of authentically curated Indigenous education resources, and a deficit lens of Indigenous learners (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; McGregor, 2019).

The Equity in Action Project (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) is designed to determine the needs of Indigenous learners in B.C. These equity scans indicate the need for system change through co-construction of programs and policy change. Frameworks for support of Indigenous education programs have not been well developed (Davies & Halsey, 2019). Meso leaders will need to establish carefully crafted goals through collaborative inquiry to ensure that all voices are

heard and valued, to ensure an equitable process (Held, 2017; Kaser & Halbert, 2013; Papp, 2016).

Organizational Frameworks

The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) were developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC, 2021) and the B.C. Ministry of Education as part of the English 12 First Peoples course. Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, scholars, and Elders helped to ensure authenticity in representing an overview of First People's epistemology and pedagogy while honoring the values connected to teaching and learning. These principles are embedded in the Cascade School Division curriculum and provide a teaching and learning framework for Indigenous education.

The theoretical framework of a community of inquiry will guide planning and research to achieve the future state in this OIP. Kaser and Halbert (2013) discussed the Spiral of Inquiry (SOI), a dynamic approach to innovation that can facilitate change in learning environments. Using evidence-informed, systematic inquiry to explore educational programs involves a comprehensive process including, scanning, focusing, developing hunches, professional learning, taking action, and checking. A collaborative inquiry approach aligns with Indigenous methodologies of embedding storytelling in leadership (Julien et al., 2010).

Review of Literature

Core themes underpinning Indigenous education in the Cascade School Division include, Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, Indigenous pedagogy and research, and Indigenous and Western leadership methodologies for system change. These will be explored to further frame the PoP.

Child and Benwell (2015) developed an extensive research project for the B.C. Ministry of Education to determine how well the First Peoples Principles are understood, the decision-making protocols underpinning the implementation of programs to support Indigenous students, and whether or not these programs are making a difference for K-12 learners. The research project included a comprehensive engagement process with Indigenous communities and the final report includes recommendations to improve recognition of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in school programs.

Illustrating the connections between Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) explored qualities associated with each knowledge system. They spoke to the power of finding common ground. Munroe et al. (2013) explored the power of facilitated dialogue between community leaders and educators to determine ways to bring harmony between Indigenous ways of knowing and 21st century learning. Developing a two-eyed seeing approach as described by Albert Marshall, a Mi'kmaq Elder, will allow meso leaders to navigate this educational landscape (Iwama et al., 2009). This involves threading together the strengths of Indigenous knowledge with the strengths of Western knowledge to develop a strong fabric of understanding (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Held, 2017; Munroe et al., 2013). Peltier (2018) engaged in participatory action research with Indigenous scholars to focus on relational connections in research. The narratives outlined the importance of understanding the spiritual space of *All My Relations* including those from the past, present, and future.

Australian researchers explored the work of Indigenous leaders who are building connections between Indigenous and Western organizations (Stewart & Warn, 2017). A relational approach to leadership underlies this work with a focus on spirituality and holism in the workplace. School principals are key to shaping the success for Indigenous students in their

schools, according to Davies and Halsey (2019). The authors identified social networks, reciprocity, and trustworthiness as key leadership tools that make a difference for students.

There is an acute need to promote greater equity of outcomes for all learners in the Cascade School Division (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Child & Benwell, 2015; McGregor, 2019). A strengths-based approach will help shift the deficit lens often used in relation to Indigenous students. The literature supports a focus on both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing to improve Indigenous student success.

PESTE Analysis

A PESTE analysis (Deszca et al., 2020) outlines external factors that impact system change including the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental aspects of the organization. This analysis is typically used for strategic planning and high-level decision-making for change. This OIP focuses on the political, social, and environmental factors in the Cascade School Division because they are particularly relevant to decolonization and reconciliation. Meso level leaders engaged in this change process must understand the impact of these factors in the unique context of Indigenous education (Battiste and Henderson, 2009; Child & Benwell, 2015; Sinclair, 2017).

Political Factors

The political landscape underpinning Indigenous education has become increasingly heightened with the recent uncovering of children in Indian Residential Schools across the country (Penner, 2021). The people, policies, and practices connected to this work are guided by several key documents. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee's calls for action in relation to education policy (TRC, 2015) outline specific goals to improve Indigenous education programs. Cascade School Division's revised curriculum incorporates curricular competencies based on

Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. The Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education (OAGBC, 2015) recommends more policy and curriculum leadership from the B.C. Ministry of Education. The B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA, 2019) promotes policy and legislation for integrated educational perspectives. The B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA, 2018) ensures funding to support First Nations education curriculum, language and culture, and special education programs in each district in the Cascade School Division.

Economic Impacts

The economic pressure on a system that is failing Indigenous students is increasing as school district leaders are required to determine how they will improve student achievement. First Nations regional education funding is outlined in the BCTEA (2018) to support funding for all First Nations students. School districts are required to use this funding to fulfill the TRC calls to action (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Newly developed Indigenous education strategic plans in post-secondary institutions require significant commitments for funding and resources (Learning Transformed, 2019).

Social and Cultural Considerations

Indigenous students have struggled with a sense of belonging in their schools (McGregor, 2019; Papp, 2016). Focusing on the cultural and social aspects of the K-12 system is an important step to decolonization and self-determination. Fostering well-being in the post-residential school era requires a focus on Indigenous knowledge for healing (Battiste & Henderson, 2009). Educational leadership is recognized as a vehicle for reconciliation where district leaders can engage in the work of decolonization (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Sinclair, 2017). Cultural authorization incorporates the internal and external processes of leadership to

honor all voices (Evans & Sinclair, 2016; Stewart & Warn, 2017) and this must be a core focus for meso leaders. The Cascade School Division has multiple nations with different languages and cultures, requiring meso leaders to ensure authentic connections and consultation with all First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members.

School District Data

Based on school districts' Aboriginal reports *How Are We Doing?* (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) there are notable gaps in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division. Sense of belonging is measured by annual student satisfaction surveys that include a question about feeling welcome in school. The six-year completion rates show a significant gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Ministry standardized tests for numeracy and literacy also indicate large gaps in proficiency levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Table 1 outlines the discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students based on annual provincial data.

Table 1

Cascade School Division Aboriginal Reports (2019/2020)

Student Group	6 Year Completion Rates	Transitions (Gr 11 – 12)	Student Satisfaction Surveys (“Feeling welcome all the time”)		Academic Achievement (Proficient Level)	
			Elementary	Secondary	Grade 10 Literacy	Grade 10 Numeracy
All Students	90%	94%	73%	64%	74%	40%
Indigenous	71%	86%	57%	55%	56%	18%

Note: Provincial data from Aboriginal Report *How Are We Doing?* – Government of B.C.

Developing an awareness of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, language, culture, and history will help educators to support Indigenous learners (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Child & Benwell, 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). This is key to decolonization of the system.

Broader Context and Social Justice Issues

The culture of whiteness that is pervasive in the K-12 school system continues to stifle Indigenous youth (Loppie et al., 2020). This whiteness underpins the ongoing racism directed at non-dominant, marginalized communities in North America (Di'Angelo, 2018). The longstanding oppression of Indigenous students based on ideologies of superiority and deficiency must be challenged and eliminated. A new educational culture that builds on the strengths and potential of Indigenous people must become the new normal in the K-12 system.

An ethically grounded system leader will bring together groups of people who have suffered oppression and loss and find the space to allow them to share their stories, acknowledge reconciliation, and journey forward together (Senge et al., 2015). A collective focus on co-creating the future of Indigenous education through generative conversations and strategies is core to this OIP.

With the PoP framed according to the broader contextual forces underlying Indigenous education in the Cascade School Division, it is important to review core challenges and factors that influence the problem. Guiding questions from the PoP will be discussed in the following section to further explore what specifically needs to change in the Cascade School Division.

Guiding Questions from the Problem of Practice

Questions raised from this PoP focus on Indigenous students at the centre of system change. Decolonizing the Cascade School Division will require culturally responsive models for change that allow for multiple perspectives (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith, 2010; Held, 2017).

An emerging issue in decolonization is that of balancing the affective, relational, and pedagogical labour in institutional change so that the burden is not placed on Indigenous people to do this work (Stein et al., 2021). Meso level leaders must recognize this and address their responsibility to work towards decolonization of schools.

Emerging Challenges

Challenges emerging from the main problem include issues connected to organizational structures, Indigenous pedagogies and culture, and student agency. Understanding the political landscape of Cascade School Division's Indigenous education system is daunting. There are layers of history, culture, and tradition that must be understood by educational leaders. Relationships are massively important and success in the organization depends on sophisticated and integrated social skills (Kotter, 1985). The potential factors contributing to these challenges will be explored in the following section.

Organizational Structures

The Cascade School Division maintains structural strategies and relational strategies founded on a colonial hierarchy that causes barriers for most Indigenous students (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Papp, 2016). School schedules follow linear guidelines based on a set timetable. Teachers work within tight timelines and there is little room for flexibility in delivery. The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008), outline core structures that will facilitate Indigenous student success. A main principle is that "Learning involves patience and time." Timetables need to allow for more flexibility to support different needs of learners and promote student agency (Child & Benwell, 2015; McGregor, 2019). In addition, schools in the Cascade School Division focus on traditional Western hierarchical perspectives of the student/teacher relationship. Indigenous teaching paradigms must be adopted by educators to provide an

additional space for learning that is better suited to Indigenous learners (Held, 2017; Papp, 2016; Peltier, 2018).

Western and Indigenous worldviews in education do have some core connections. Common Indigenous pedagogies and themes that now transcend the B.C. curriculum include inquiry-based learning, oral literacy and storytelling, experiential learning, sustainability, collaborative problem solving, flexible instructional strategies, and core competencies (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). These approaches are mutually supportive and relevant for all learners. Meso leaders are responsible for developing organizational structures that facilitate these pedagogies and themes. A guiding question is, “How can school districts develop structural strategies and relationship strategies to improve Indigenous education programs?” It is critical that organizational structures are redesigned so that Indigenous students feel connected and safe at school (Gunn et al., 2011; Preston & Claypool, 2013).

Indigenous Pedagogies and Culture

Educators in the Cascade School Division engage in Western pedagogies and cultural norms at all levels of the system. These pedagogies underscore the ongoing struggle for Indigenous students in a K-12 system that does not meet their needs as learners (McGregor, 2019; Papp, 2016). Assessments of student achievement in the Cascade School Division are structured through standardized testing for literacy and numeracy (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). These do not allow for the traditional Indigenous pedagogies that incorporate oral language, holistic perspectives, and collaborative learning (Battiste & Henderson, 2009).

Understanding the core tenets of Indigenous pedagogy and culture is an important step to decolonization of school programs. This OIP focuses on two-eyed seeing (Iwama et al., 2009), language, and culture revitalization in developing Indigenous education programs to support all

learners. Two-eyed seeing allows for the weaving of Western and Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in education. Davies and Halsey (2019) explored the work of Australian school principals who incorporated the lessons of the medicine wheel to honor culture, agency, and beliefs of Indigenous students. Balancing the central leadership models of Western schooling with Indigenous methodologies and flexible school culture created enduring practices to support all learners. Held (2017) suggested moving beyond two separate paradigms and creating a multi-paradigmatic space incorporating the strengths of both Indigenous and Western learning systems to provide a superior perspective for educators. Gunn et al. (2011) determined the critical need for language and culture revitalization to be included in school programs to promote sense of belonging for all students. A guiding question is, “How can districts enhance two-eyed seeing, language, and culture revitalization in Indigenous education?”

Meso leaders need to incorporate respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) into school culture, pedagogy, and professional development (Peltier, 2018). Land-based pedagogy has also contributed to a regeneration of the cultural, spiritual, and political practices embedded in local Indigenous communities (Wildcat et al., 2014). Storytelling is central to Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies (Julien et al., 2010) and interrelationships between Indigenous people and the natural world are framed through the ancient stories of the Elders (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Wilson, 2008).

Student Agency

Annual How Are We Doing? Aboriginal reports (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021), indicate that many Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division do not feel safe or welcome at school. The colonial culture that is pervasive in school classrooms does not align with traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and this is a barrier for Indigenous learners (Battiste, 2002). Developing student sense of belonging with a focus on inclusive programs and

the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) will promote student learning. Relationships, Indigenous worldview, and identity are foundational to Indigenous student success (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Preston & Claypool, 2013). A guiding question is, “What structures and systems can be developed to promote student agency and empowerment through Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy?” A learner-centred framework that incorporates community, culture, identity, ceremony, and place as key structures to promote student sense of belonging will promote student success (McGregor, 2019). Indigenous learners need to feel connected to their community and culture to achieve their best (Peltier, 2018). Co-creation of curriculum with community advisors will allow meso leaders to improve Indigenous programs that will promote student agency (Munroe et al., 2013).

Potential Lines of Inquiry

These lines of inquiry will guide this OIP to focus on the development of a supportive and innovative culture in the Cascade School Division that will recognize, value, and enhance Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in schools. Ongoing consultation with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers will ensure relevant, and authentic problem solving. These lines of inquiry will guide meso leaders in the plan for system change that focuses on the vision of improving Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division to facilitate Indigenous student success. The leadership-focused vision for change is based on both Western and Indigenous perspectives on pedagogy, epistemology, and methodology and will be outlined in the next section.

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

A national report (Sinclair, 2017) on the impact of Indian residential schools on students and their families exposed the systemic racism and oppression of Indigenous people throughout

the country. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) established 94 calls to action including a focus on education. These reports guide my vision for change as they provide core concepts related to decolonization and reconciliation in Canadian schools. Anuik et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of a shared understanding of education. The authors spoke to the importance of focusing on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners for system change and decolonization. Developing a vision for change requires weaving Indigenous worldviews and perspectives into revised curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture.

Vision for Change

In the Cascade School Division, meso level leaders do not yet have the skills and knowledge to address the gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions. My vision for change is to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in these areas so that all learners achieve success and a sense of well-being as they progress in the K-12 school system. This vision aligns with the organization's mission as outlined by the Ministry of Education, stating that Indigenous education in the Cascade School Division will focus on strategies and resources to improve success for Indigenous students, and develop programs to support Indigenous culture, languages, and history (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Supporting Organizational Actors

Key actors who are directly involved with this PoP are meso level leaders, teachers, and students. The desired future state will improve their situation, as Indigenous learners will achieve increased success at school as a result of the new Indigenous education programs developed by meso leaders to support teachers in the classroom.

Each district in the Cascade School Division has been required to develop an Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement with local Indigenous communities and educational leaders. These agreements include goals and strategies to improve Indigenous student success. Meso level leaders in school districts are required to provide an annual report outlining specific data pertaining to Indigenous programs and student success rates. Data is qualitative and quantitative, including six-year graduation rates, student satisfaction surveys, parent satisfaction surveys, student achievement reports, school case studies, and student interviews (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The regional government requires school and district leaders to develop and promote programs based on their annual data that will support Indigenous student success with a focus on academic achievement, language, culture, and history. Current data shows significant gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Meso level leaders in the Cascade School Division are responsible for developing Indigenous education programs in all regions of the division. The Ministry of Education provides some professional development opportunities to support Indigenous education each year, but leaders need more resources and support. Individual and group mobilizations are facilitated by circle gatherings and professional development opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (Garmston & Wellman, 2016). School districts must develop and sustain a balance between Indigenous and Western worldviews and perspectives in education to best support the needs of all learners (Anuik et al., 2013; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Munroe et al., 2013).

Priorities for Change

Four core priorities for change supported by this vision are described by Stroh (2015) as change approaches that encompass systems thinking for collective impact. These approaches

include: mutually reinforcing activities, common agendas, shared measurement, and continuous communication. Mutually reinforcing activities to support history, context, and ideology include understanding the wealth of knowledge available to support Indigenous students through traditional culture, ways of knowing, and the framework of the medicine wheel, to revitalize their learning and success in schools (Hare, 2004). It is important to develop a deeper understanding of how youth are responding to the Cascade School Division's competencies-based curriculum. In particular, a review of the social and personal core competencies in relation to the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) would provide some valuable links to traditional ways of teaching and learning to promote student agency and success.

Establishing common agendas so that all agents of change embrace Indigenous worldviews and perspectives is another core priority. This vision for change includes the requirement for educators to understand, embrace, and embed Indigenous principles of learning in school-based pedagogy. Child and Benwell (2015) developed a comprehensive research project for the Ministry of Education that included gatherings with Indigenous communities in five school districts throughout the Cascade School Division. Participants were highly engaged in this collaborative research and although the initial purpose was to determine pedagogical and methodological improvements to support Indigenous learners, an overall vision for Indigenous education emerged through these discussions. The final report includes specific recommendations to improve Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in school programs.

Shared measurement for research that is both qualitative and quantitative is a priority for change that connects tenets of Indigenous research to Western methodology. Munroe et al. (2013) explored ways to bring harmony between Indigenous ways of knowing and 21st century learning. They focused on the commonalities between the student centred approach of 21st

century methodologies and traditional ways of knowing to decolonize programs.

Continuous communication is another core priority in this vision for change. Armenakis and Harris (2002) described the importance of discrepancy and efficacy messages to create readiness for change. Change agents need to develop a sense of urgency for system change, but also believe that it will be possible. In this OIP, the communication strategies need to promote a shared commitment and encourage meso leaders to work together across cultural boundaries that may be difficult to navigate. These priorities centre on improving Indigenous student success. The core focus for these priorities is to incorporate Indigenous pedagogies, epistemologies, axiologies, and methodologies into the system.

Change Drivers

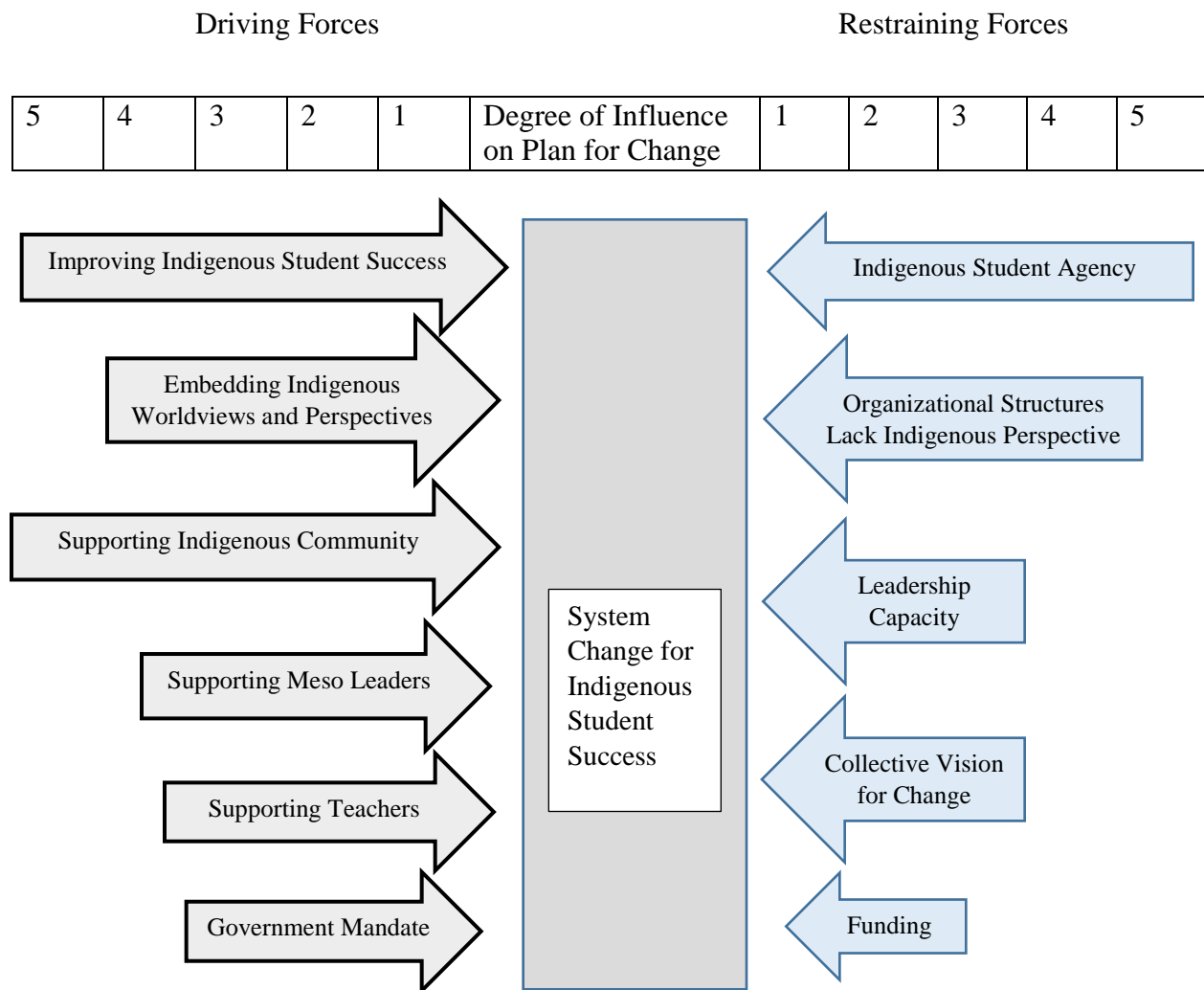
A force field analysis (Deszca et al., 2020) outlines the driving and restricting forces that affect this process of system change. These forces in the organization are both internal and external.

Change drivers include educational and cultural leaders who will focus on Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements, Tripartite Education Agreements, First Nations Education Steering Committee reports, and district strategic plans to promote change (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Educational and cultural leaders involved in this work will include district leaders, school educators, Indigenous educators, and Indigenous community leaders. Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements will be key in providing the qualitative and quantitative measures to monitor student progress and establish evidence informed practices as districts begin to develop comprehensive plans for improvement. Tripartite Education Agreements will provide guidelines for funding the education of Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division. Finally, district strategic plans will be reviewed by meso leaders as guiding documents for

continuing Indigenous education program development. Figure 2 provides a force field analysis of the Cascade School Division including the degree of influence each force would have on a plan for change.

Figure 2

Force Field Analysis of the Cascade School Division



Note. Arrows depict both internal and external forces. Degrees of influence are based on annual How Are We Doing? Aboriginal reports to the Ministry of Education (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021), with a score of 5 rating highest.

Equity, Social Justice, and Decolonization

This problem of practice is steeped in issues of equity, ethics, and social justice and requires careful consideration of Indigenous research, leadership, and pedagogy. The moral purpose of this work must guide the change process at every level and ongoing consultation with Elders and Knowledge Keepers is core to the process.

It is essential to ensure that all agents of change understand and embrace Indigenous worldviews and perspectives through the use of the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) to guide this work. Indigenous scholars and researchers must be invited to engage with meso leaders and frame the plan for change (Held, 2017). Engaging with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers will promote authenticity and trust (McGregor, 2019; Wilson, 2008). Recognizing the burden on Indigenous people to engage and educate non-Indigenous leaders must be checked throughout the process (Stein et al., 2021).

Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division continue to face historical, social, emotional, and academic barriers to success. Meso leaders need to explore the organization's readiness for change in collaboration with Indigenous educators and Knowledge Keepers to activate systemic changes to current educational systems that marginalize Indigenous learners. The next section will explore Cascade School Division's readiness for change based on specific tools for assessment of organizational change readiness (Deszca et al., 2020).

Organizational Change Readiness

Understanding the many complexities of the Cascade School Division and developing a strategy for system change will take patience and time. Determining the organization's readiness for change is an important phase in the change process. There must be opportunities for all voices to be heard at this stage to foster a shared understanding of why change is important

(Beckhard & Harris, 1987) and the vision for change (Deszca et al., 2020).

The Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change Questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020) will be used as a starting point for this change process (Appendix A). This tool includes 6 dimensions to establish the organization's readiness for change including: previous change experiences, executive support, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, and measures for change and accountability. There are 36 questions framed in the questionnaire, with possible scores ranging from -25 to +50. If the organization scores lower than 10, the authors maintained that the change plan is unlikely to be successful.

Using this questionnaire to analyze the Cascade School Division, I have determined a total score of 35 for the organization, which indicates a strong position for change. It is particularly helpful to note the strength of accountability and reporting measures in the organization, as well as high levels of executive leader support for this change, which will be of benefit to meso leaders in this context.

The first dimension explores previous change experiences in the organization. The Cascade School Division is governed by the Ministry of Education, and there have been some major curricular and programmatic changes over the past decade. A newly revised curriculum was introduced in 2016 and is now fully adopted (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). New student progress reporting policies were mandated in 2016 and have been uniquely addressed in each district (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) was introduced in 2018 and is now a guiding tool for the funding of Indigenous education programs across the Cascade School Division (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

The second dimension is executive support in the organization. This will depend on each

district's senior leadership team, as the system is hierarchical. The B.C. School Superintendents Association has a leadership readiness tool called *Dimensions of Practice* (BCSSA, 2014), which provides senior leaders with a framework to lead system change. The B.C. Principals and Vice Principals Association also has a framework called *Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice Principals* (BCPVPA, 2019) to support school-based leaders. These frameworks provide some common language across the division that is helpful in maintaining strong standards for leadership and this will facilitate discussion and planning in the change process.

The third dimension includes credible leadership and change champions. This OIP focuses on meso leaders for system change. They are the change champions who will have the most impact in this process. In the Cascade School Division, meso leaders have already been working according to government and district mandates to improve Indigenous student success.

Deszca et al. (2020) described the fourth dimension of openness to change as critical to this assessment. The Cascade School Division continues to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action (2015) through program development, staffing, and resources. Educators across the division are seeking professional development to work towards decolonization. Post-secondary institutions have incorporated Indigenous education courses in teacher education programs. There is an openness to new perspectives that will support engagement in this plan.

The Cascade School Division has several measures for change and accountability built into the system. These include government mandated Foundation Skills Assessments, annual Indigenous education reports, Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements, Frameworks to Enhance Student Learning, Tripartite Education Agreements, and Superintendents' reports to the ministry.

There is a growing sense of commitment in school districts to address the longstanding culture of oppression and racism against Indigenous people in the Cascade School Division. The ongoing discoveries of hidden burial sites in Indian Residential Schools has spurred new drive and determination to work towards reconciliation (Penner, 2021). This work requires persuasive, positive communication, collaborative decision-making, and deep-rooted trust in leadership (Armenakis & Harris, 2009).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the organizations and framed the PoP with a focus on the specific gaps in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the Cascade School Division. Issues connected to organizational structures, Indigenous pedagogies and culture, and student agency framed emerging challenges in decolonizing the K-12 system. A discussion of my leadership agency underpinned the vision for all learners to achieve success and a sense of well-being as they progress in the K-12 school system. This chapter determined a readiness for change in the school district organization based on the six dimensions of the Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change Questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020). The next chapter explores the key leadership approaches and a leadership framework that will best support the meso leaders engaged in this change plan. An analysis of organizational information and data will guide the planning and development stage and provides the foundation for four possible solutions to this PoP. The underlying issues of equity, ethics, and social justice are discussed in Chapter 2 according to four themes relevant to Indigenous education, including: culturally responsive education; anti-Indigenous racism; responsibility and reciprocity; and the reconciliation journey. We have an ethical responsibility to change the narrative for Indigenous students and this OIP is a move towards decolonization in the Cascade School Division.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 1 has outlined the PoP, organizational context, leadership lens, and vision for change. It is critical to understand the underlying historical context of Indigenous education in the K-12 sector with a focus on the need to decolonize policies, pedagogies, and practices (Stein et al., 2021). Chapter 2 will look at how these organizational elements underpin a plan for change that incorporates leadership approaches that are adaptive, and align with an Indigenous context that is flexible and holistic (Julien et al., 2010). Stroh's (2015) four-stage change process is reviewed as a framework for implementation as it connects to the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008). An analysis of the Cascade School Division using Nadler and Tushman's congruence model (1989) explores gaps and key components in the organization to determine needed change. A thorough discussion of possible solutions to address the PoP determines the most appropriate strategies that will lead to the desired future state. Finally, considering the significant barriers to Indigenous students through the lenses of ethics, equity, and social justice exposes the essential moral purpose of this work moving forward.

Leadership Approaches to Change

A focus on adaptive and Indigenous leadership approaches will be used in this change process. Interactions with meso leaders and educators will be designed to support and improve professional learning to sustain practices (Boylan, 2018) and improve Indigenous education programs. The adaptive leadership approach frames this change process with a core focus on the activities of the leaders in relation to their work with other educators in the organization. Wilson et al. (2020) described the nature of adaptive leadership where leaders may collaborate with others to explore new perspectives. This PoP focuses on the leaders in the K-12 school system in the Cascade School Division, who are responsible for program and curriculum development and

will need to explore new perspectives. Understanding and focusing on an Indigenous leadership approach will also guide this OIP. The importance of the 4Rs in Indigenous leadership: responsibility, relevance, respect, and reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) encompasses this plan. Meso leaders will need to connect with Indigenous community leaders to develop new programs. Julien et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of community connections, storytelling, and consensus for action in Indigenous leadership. These leadership approaches align with the literature to support system change in the Cascade School Division. Further discussion of adaptive and Indigenous leadership will outline how these approaches support this change process.

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership engages leaders in closely connecting with followers as they help them to face problems and find solutions. This is especially important in supporting non-Indigenous leaders in this change process, who will need to address their own familial biases to do this work (Stein et al., 2021). Northouse (2019) outlined four core tenets of adaptive leadership including: systems, biology, service, and psychotherapy. These tenets align closely with Indigenous leadership methodologies that focus on collective agency, environmental influences, community support, and nurturing family (Davies & Halsey, 2019). According to Boylan (2018), interactions between leaders and followers are core to adaptive leadership in that they support and improve professional learning. The author described the importance of adaptive leaders working to assist people as they confront difficult problems. They work to mobilize, motivate, organize, orient, and focus the attention of participants. The non-Indigenous meso leaders addressing this PoP will be required to navigate very sensitive and highly charged political problems relating to Indigenous education. Educational leaders grappling with the

constant political and societal challenges in their organizations can benefit from an adaptive approach because it allows for flexibility (Nelson & Squires, 2017). Different perspectives are valued and interactions and relationships between leaders and followers are considered important to develop throughout the change process. Reciprocity and respect are core to this change plan (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) and these values are based on fluid, relational leadership.

Meso leaders in the Cascade School Division develop, implement, and review curricular changes throughout the system. It is beneficial for these senior leaders to facilitate program development because they have a broad influence in their districts and are accountable for high-level portfolios including academic achievement, school management, curriculum development and implementation, resource development and management, program development, and professional development. Leadership at this level is critical for change throughout the organization and is “exercised through strong visions and corresponding strategies intensely focused on learning via shared, collaborative activity” (Istance, 2015, p. 33). McGregor (2019) outlined the importance of meso leaders as allies with Indigenous educators and students as they were able to “assist in shifting teaching practice and policy, champion Indigenous educational pedagogy and practice, and model how to enact an ally-informed professional identity” (p. 45). Meso leaders are in a position to support new approaches to learning. Through collaborative inquiry and a commitment to change initiatives, these educators are “opening up thinking, changing practice, and creating dramatically more innovative approaches to learning and teaching” (Halbert & Kaser, 2022, p. 7).

Adaptive leadership in the context of this PoP requires an understanding of the socially constructed differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the Cascade School Division. Campbell-Evans et al. (2014) described adaptive leadership as the “capacity to work in

the zone of productive disequilibrium” (p. 549). The followers in this context are all working in a zone of disequilibrium as they navigate new leadership methodologies and work to develop collective agency as a professional learning community. Boylan (2018) described adaptive leadership as an informal process that allows leaders to quickly respond to the needs of an organization. Interactions between leaders and followers are core to adaptive leadership in that they support and improve professional learning. As early theorists for adaptive leadership, Heifetz and Laurie (2001) emphasized the need for leaders to quickly determine challenges in the organization and build collective agency for problem solving. Adaptive leaders mobilize the creation of networks and collaborative systems to solve problems.

An adaptive leadership approach will be used in this change process to respond to the tension and imbalance in school districts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies, pedagogies, and epistemologies. This approach promotes positive engagement and fluid problem solving. Catalytic conversations that evolve from these collaborations promote trust and ongoing connectivity (Plowman & Duchon, 2008).

This approach is missing a focus on the 4Rs (Kirkness & Barndhardt, 2001), and the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) that specifically promote opportunities for meso leaders to explore new ways to support Indigenous students’ well-being and achievement. An Indigenous leadership approach is therefore critical to include in this OIP so that meso leaders are able to facilitate the work of decolonization authentically, and with relevant purpose.

Indigenous Leadership

Indigenous leadership methodologies are critical to this work. Martin and Garrett (2010) described the importance of interrelationships in Indigenous leadership theory and the focus on kinship responsibility. Julien et al. (2010) spoke to the importance of community and

connections in Indigenous leadership. A flexible, cyclical, non-hierarchical approach is emphasized to promote harmony and social order and support the greater good of the organization. A relational approach underlies Indigenous leadership theory with a focus on spirituality and holism in the workplace (Stewart & Warn, 2017). Another core tenet of Indigenous leadership is a focus on collaboration and consensus building for decision-making (Julien et al., 2010). In Indigenous leadership theory, culture is considered a leadership resource and storytelling is foundational in guiding decisions (Child & Benwell, 2015; Kenny, 2012). Kirkness and Barnhardt's 4Rs (2001) also underpin an Indigenous leadership approach and must be incorporated into the change plan at all stages. The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) are grounded in culture and equity. These principles will be used to guide the change process. This change plan requires a view of decolonization focusing on equity through culture (Battiste, 2002; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith, 2010).

The term *Indigenous* is all-encompassing, and may lead to generalizations about Indigenous people as a whole, rather than recognizing the very distinct communities and nations across the country (Stein et al., 2021). The Cascade School Division has schools located on many different territories. Meso leaders must understand the needs of their local community. The traditional lessons of the medicine wheel are powerful guides for leaders, where the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical principles help us to understand how life evolves, how all things are connected, and how all things move towards their destiny (Hare, 2004; Julien et al., 2010).

Understanding and applying Indigenous leadership strategies into their own practice allows meso leaders to model the importance of decolonizing their work. Circle gatherings, district forums, and family feasts are all examples of strategies that honor all voices and promote a more equitable space for collaboration. During the change process, recognition of Indigenous

interpretations and representations of culture, language, and history must be integral to decision-making (Iseke, 2013). Recurring tenets in Indigenous leadership methodologies will underpin this work, including long-term perspectives, adaptation to change, commitment to the collective good, and relationships with the environment (Battiste, 2002; Wildcat et al., 2014).

With these leadership approaches securely embedded in the change process to ensure authentic, relevant support for meso leaders, a framework for leading the change process must also align with the fluid, non-hierarchical nature of this work, given the highly sensitive landscape of Indigenous education in the current context (Penner, 2021). The next section will explore two frameworks for leading change to determine which is most suitable to support the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) and Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Child & Benwell, 2015).

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Two frameworks for organizational change will be explored as possible models to guide this PoP: the knowledge building system (Wenger et al., 2002), and the four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015). Core to these models for change is a focus on shared vision, reciprocity, and community building, which are integral to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Child & Benwell, 2015). These change models support a common theoretical framework based on a community of inquiry, and they provide structures and strategies that align with adaptive and Indigenous approaches to leadership.

Comparing Frameworks for Change

Wenger et al. (2002) proposed five phases in the knowledge building system as a change model that is fluid and organic in nature. The authors focused on the sense of *aliveness* in an organization as a catalyst for authentic and meaningful change. This notion aligns with

Indigenous leadership approaches and perspectives through a holistic lens for change. Coast Salish Elders speak to the connections between living and learning (Hare & Davidson, 2015). Incorporating the intergenerational, experiential, narrative, and relational ways of knowing (Hare & Davidson, 2015) into the change process creates a sense of aliveness in the organization. Careful curation of participants' knowledge and history allows for an adaptive leader to focus on relationships and build trust through a holding environment (Northouse, 2019).

The five phases proposed by Wenger et al. (2002) include: prepare, launch, expand, consolidate, and transform. In Phase 1, leaders lay the foundation for change and assess the organization in its current state. Strategies include: identifying gaps, surveying participants, and mapping goals based on the vision for change. In Phase 2, leaders launch the process by considering strategic urgency, participant expertise, and culture. Wenger et al. (2002) suggested three possible approaches for launching a change initiative: a high visibility versus low visibility approach, a top-down versus bottom-up approach, and a parallel versus sequential approach. In Phase 3, leaders expand and integrate various participant groups. The importance of this phase is that participants are beginning to create shared values and a collective vision, which can promote deeper commitment to the organization. In Phase 4, leaders consolidate communities by elevating their status through functional integration in the organization and legitimizing their role in the change process. Knowledge development becomes integral to the culture of the organization through institutionalization of communities as stewards of knowledge, integration with other functions of knowledge development, and alignment of structures and systems in the organization. The final phase of this change model is when leaders transform the organization through the development of communities of practice that continuously build and enhance knowledge development in the system. These phases support the notion of a pluralistic

organization theory incorporating many perspectives and mental models (Bolman & Deal, 2017) which is central to adaptive leadership and aligns with this PoP.

Stroh's four-stage change process (2015) centers on the need for a collective vision and participants taking ownership for system change. This model includes core stages that have been developed based on Senge's creative tension model (1990) focusing on the energy extended between current reality and vision for change, which is core to developing shared understanding.

This model connects to the adaptive theory of leadership, where leaders create the space for different perspectives to be considered in the change process. Heifetz and Laurie (2001) focused on the importance of adaptive leaders being able to quickly access challenges and inspire others to collaborate towards finding a solution. The four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015) incorporates similar change strategies, including building a foundation for change to engage participants, helping people face current reality by understanding current context, helping people choose what they want through analysis and choice, and bridging the gap between participants' wants and the broader vision for change.

In Stage 1, change leaders engage key members and help them distinguish their current reality from assumptions they may have made based on organizational data and personal narratives. Through collaborative inquiry and capacity building, leaders strive to create common ground from which to work with all members in the change process. Stroh proposed the Ladder of Inference as a tool to improve self and group advocacy through metacognitive strategies for reasoning and problem solving. Stage 2 is a relatively complex stage in the change process, including systems mapping and interviewing structures that are designed to help people to develop their own analysis of their current context. As participants begin to organize information and develop mental models to clarify their understanding of the organization in its current state,

they are encouraged to see the big picture of system change. Systems mapping is important and catalyzing conversations increase collective awareness of the organization so that members begin to see alternatives and a vision for change. Participants are encouraged to identify key variables and consider where the organization has been successful, and what kinds of interventions will be needed to promote positive and effective change. In Stage 3, change leaders support members in developing analyses of the pros and cons of possible system change based on an exploration of the status quo. Through self-exploration and “uncovering the bottom of the iceberg” (Stroh, 2015, p. 149), people engaged in this stage of the change process work towards an explicit choice that is core to change in the organization. Stage 4 is highly charged with self-reflection and assessment and would require much support and adaptive leadership strategies to successfully promote decision-making and initiate consensus where needed.

In an exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of these change models, it is noted that both models require extensive trust building strategies and would benefit from adaptive and Indigenous leadership approaches as they focus on the activities of the leader in different contexts that are highly follower-centered. Strengths of Stroh’s four-stage change process (2015) include: it is a step-by-step model that is easy to follow, the focus is on supporting participants with many opportunities for feedback, the process is flexible so that multiple tools and strategies can be incorporated to suit the context, there is a focus on collective agency which allows for varied perspectives, the mapping stage is critical in providing a structure for organizing information to be used in analysis and decision-making, and the process includes powerful questions to facilitate system change. Several weaknesses in Stroh’s model include: the close connections between each stage, such that if one is not successfully employed, the process will fail, the process is heavily reliant on relationship building and leadership expertise to guide

participants through the stages, Stage 2 could be difficult as participants are engaged in high stakes problem-solving discussions, and the whole process is lengthy.

In reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the knowledge building process (Wenger et al., 2002), strengths include: it is a step-by-step process that is easy to follow, it embraces all viewpoints and provides space and time for members to explore values and beliefs, it offers participants opportunities to explore alternative viewpoints that might expand their understanding of the challenges, and it is fluid and organic as participants are encouraged to explore the notion of aliveness and community vision. Weaknesses in this model are that it relies on member optimism for change, which would need to be encouraged, participants must be closely engaged with each other throughout the process, and it is a lengthy process.

Stroh's four-stage change process (2015) has been chosen for this OIP because it focusses on collective impact, as the stages in this model build on a foundation of trust, shared language, and shared vision. In addressing some of the weaknesses of this model, change agents will need to ensure that each stage is fully employed by following timelines established in the implementation plan. Leaders in the process should incorporate the strengths of Indigenous methodologies and protocols including a strong focus on relationships, community, culture, and ceremony (Wilson, 2008) to develop collective agency. The most challenging phase of this model will be in the second stage, where participants dig deeper into their own understanding of the organization and develop a vision for change. This PoP is based on highly political and sensitive factors that may trigger difficult discourse. The catalytic conversations involved in this plan may take time through which to work.

Castillo (2018) pointed to the importance of leaders being proactive in mobilizing people for change because, "through proactivity, adaptive leaders create a shared sense of purpose,

manage through influence, enable people to learn through experimentation, build platforms for collaboration, and are open to unpredictability” (p. 104). In this PoP, meso level leaders will be working in a very unpredictable context as they explore different political, social, educational, and cultural drivers in the system.

Types of Organizational Change

Planning for change in the school district organization must allow for collective agency, collaboration, and inclusivity (Garmston & Wellman, 2016; Wang, et al., 2014). Indigenous leadership methodologies focus on shared decision-making and consensus to ensure that all voices are heard (Peltier, 2018; Wilson, 2008). Deszca et al. (2020) outlined two categories of organizational change: discontinuous or radical and continuous or incremental. Discontinuous change happens suddenly, with great impact, whereas continuous change occurs more gradually, with slowly realized results. Continuous change would be better suited to the holistic, organic perspectives that align with Indigenous leadership methodologies in the context of this organization (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Julien et al., 2010; Stewart & Wren, 2017).

Four types of change within these categories include tuning, adapting, re-directing, and re-creating (Deszca et al., 2020). Tuning and adapting garner incremental results over time, while re-directing and re-creating generate radical changes in a relatively short timeframe. Further, the authors divide these types of change between planned and reactive dimensions (Nadler & Tushman, 1989) based on how the change occurs in the organization. Figure 3 provides an overview of change initiatives in the organization.

One of the most impactful changes in the organization has been the requirement for districts to complete 5-year Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements in partnership with local First Nations People, Métis, and Inuit (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The introduction

of the BCTEA (2018) to guide funding to support Indigenous students was also a radical change initiative. Other radical impetuses for change are the 9th Standard (2019) and DRIPA (2019), both of which now guide boards of education in decision-making and planning. Continuous or incremental tuning change initiatives include community circle gatherings for ongoing feedback, new resources, and comprehensive student portfolios to monitor progress (Child & Benwell, 2015). An adaptive change is the ongoing improvement of professional development to support teachers with Indigenous education in the classroom (FNESC, 2021).

Figure 3

Types and Categories of Change in the Cascade School Division

	Incremental/Continuous	Radical/Discontinuous
Planned	Tuning Change to school records policy to include Indigenous Student Education Plans/Portfolios	Re-directing Development and implementation of Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements
Reactive	Adapting Creation and delivery of annual Indigenous Education Professional Development series	Re-creating Introduction of the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (2018) and the Equity in Action Initiative (2018)

Note. Adapted from Nadler, D.A. & Tushman, M. (1989). Organizational framebending: Principles for managing reorientation. *Academy of Management Executive*, 3(3), 196.

These change initiatives provide core information in the planning and development stages of this change process. They must be considered throughout the development of the OIP. The next section will provide a critical organizational analysis to further explore what needs to change based on change readiness information collected, a gap analysis, and other findings.

Critical Organizational Analysis

Identifying the reasons for needed changes in the organization requires an analysis of change readiness data and a review of organizational components. The congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980) will be used to support this analysis as it provides a thorough review of components of the organization and how they are connected.

Diagnosing and Analyzing Needed Change

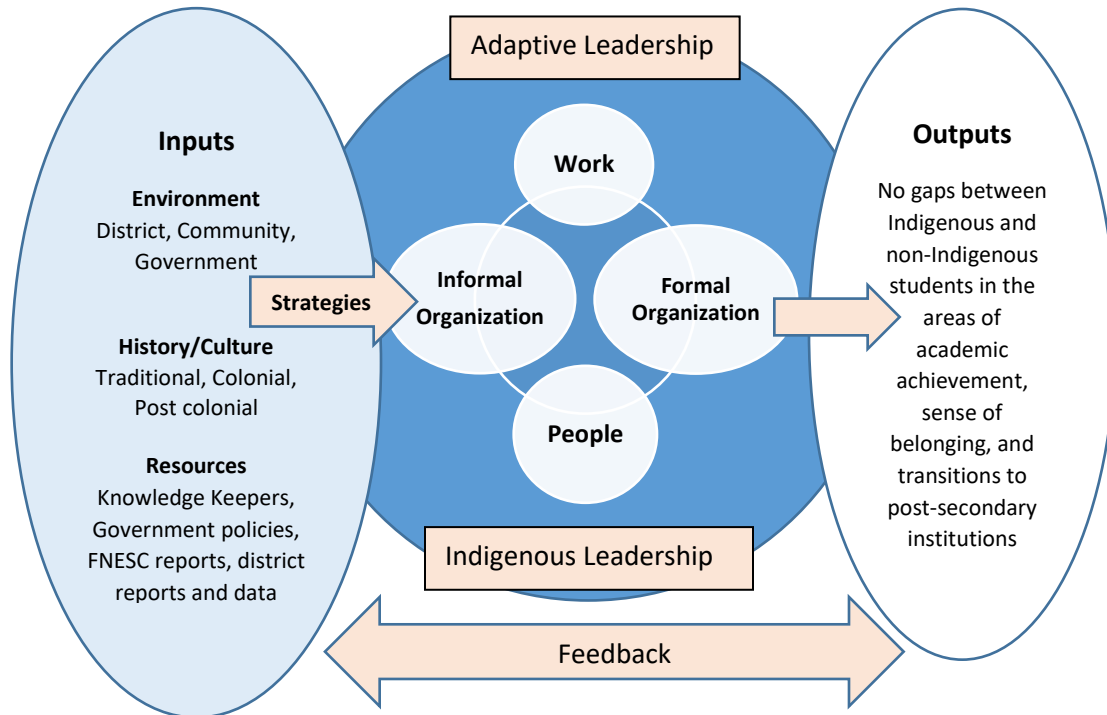
The congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1980), provides a framework to analyze the internal elements of the K-12 school system. The four components of work, people, formal structures, and informal structures will be explored. The interaction between these four elements is important in the development of an OIP based on this PoP.

Deszca et al. (2020) outlined the importance of flexibility and adaptation in leadership for change, which aligns with Indigenous methodologies, worldviews, and perspectives (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Julien et al., 2010). Providing time and space for participants to work through the process honors Indigenous protocols and ensures authenticity in the collaborative process. Regular feedback and checking in on progress underpins this model.

Adaptive and Indigenous leadership strategies underpin the transformation process as meso level leaders aim to develop congruency among the core elements of work, people, informal, and formal organizations. Figure 4 outlines a congruency model to analyze the Cascade School Division.

Figure 4

Using the Congruence Model to Analyze the Cascade School Division



Note. Congruence model adapted from “A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behavior,” by D. Nadler & M. Tushman, 1980, *Organizational Dynamics*, 9(2), p. 47.

Inputs

The key input factors that influence the organization include the external environment, historical context, and resources. The PESTE analysis outlined in Chapter 1 describes the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors to consider in developing a plan to improve Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division. Based on the context of this PoP, and the need to understand the barriers facing Indigenous students, a focus on the political, social, and environmental inputs is most important for meso leaders seeking to improve the system (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Gunn et al., 2011; Papp, 2016).

In considering the historical factors framing this analysis and the resources available to the organization, findings are based on information documented by FNESC (2018), B.C. Ministry of Education (2021), Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan (2020), and the Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom Report: Moving Forward (2015). Indigenous worldviews and perspectives are a core focus in the Cascade School Division's K-12 curriculum, (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Acknowledging the devastating legacy of colonization in Canadian schools has been the most visible development affecting Indigenous education (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Munroe, et al., 2013). Boards of education have been required to develop district Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements with local Indigenous leaders and educators. These agreements have provided important guidelines for school districts in planning programs and supporting Indigenous learners. Other resources available to support the organization include the mandated B.C. Curriculum (2012), the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) and the district annual reports *How Are We Doing?* (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Knowledge Keepers share traditional ways of knowing and being, which is a powerful resource for meso leaders (Child & Benwell, 2015; McGregor, 2019).

The strategy of the organization is based on the B.C. Ministry of Education's mandate to "advocate for quality First Nations education in B.C. (both on-reserve and off-reserve)" (Child & Benwell, 2015, p. 1). These agreements include: The New Relationship Agreement (2005), the Transformative Change Accord (2005), and the BCTEA (2018). Meso level leaders in the K-12 school system must understand the characteristics of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, the attributes of responsive schooling to support Indigenous learners, and the indicators of

success that will provide evidence to support systemic change (Child & Benwell, 2015). This strategy is in line with the organization's environmental inputs, history, and resources.

The Transformation Process

The dynamic and open systems approach of this framework supports the transformation of resources to outputs, which will allow participants to better engage in the change process. In working towards the transformation process of this model, considering the four internal components of the organization, (the work, the people, the formal organizational structure, and the informal structure) there have been improvements in developing congruence among them over the past decade, but there are still many gaps between the present state and desired future state of the K-12 system. The work of this organization is to provide a thirteen-year education system that will improve school success for all Indigenous students. The people in the organization connected to this PoP are generally responsible for academic achievement, school management, curriculum development and implementation, resource development and management, program development, and professional development. The typical portfolio of these leaders encompasses all levels of the system, including acting in liaison roles between their districts and local nations. Anuik et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of a shared understanding of education and the learning spirit that must be nurtured in our schools.

The Cascade School Division is structured according to specific ministry guidelines for district leadership, accountability, human resources, finance, and student learning. There are 60 school districts, each with a superintendent, secretary treasurer, and depending on the size of the district, an associate superintendent(s), director(s), and district principal(s). Indigenous education usually falls under the leadership of directors and district principals. The board of education is led by elected school trustees and senior leadership members. Decisions and responsibilities are

district specific, within core parameters outlined by the Ministry of Education. This structure allows for districts to develop Indigenous education programs based on the specific needs of their community. There are significant differences between rural and urban districts in terms of accessibility, human resources, and facilities, which affect program development. The culture of the organization is of great importance in addressing this PoP because relationships and culture are core to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; McGregor, 2019; Wildcat et al., 2014). The Ministry of Education has provided extensive resources through the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC, 2021) that have allowed educators to improve their own understanding of local issues, historical context, and student needs. Provincial professional development has centered on Indigenous education over the past 5 years and districts are required to demonstrate ongoing relationship building with Indigenous leaders through the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (2018).

Outputs

There are both visible and invisible symptoms, drivers, and forces framing this PoP at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Visible symptoms at the individual and group levels are documented by each district (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) and include: lower Indigenous student achievement results on the Foundation Skills Assessments for elementary students, lower participation rates of Indigenous students in required government examinations, lower six-year graduation completion rates for Indigenous students, and lower numbers of Indigenous students receiving awards and scholarships compared to non-Indigenous students (Child & Benwell, 2015). At the organizational level, visible symptoms include low numbers of Indigenous educators in the K-12 system, fewer principals and vice principals of First Nations, Métis or Inuit descent, facilities that do not acknowledge or represent local territories, and

limited resources to support Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum (Archibald & Hare, 2017; McGregor, 2019). A primary area of concern that has been documented in the *How Are We Doing?* reports (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021), is how transitions affect continuity of learning for Indigenous students and the impact this has on student achievement (McGregor, 2019). The invisible symptoms that frame this PoP are perhaps the most disturbing, including a history of systemic racism, lack of equity, and white privilege in educational institutions across the Cascade School Division (Sinclair, 2017; Stein et al., 2021).

Congruency

Resources are being developed through agencies such as the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), and the Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE). Provincial committees have been established to provide support across districts and enhance professional development (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements guide school leaders in the creation of Indigenous Education Plans. These elements are relatively well aligned, and monitored by ministry mandated district accountability contracts (Frameworks for Enhancing Student Learning) and Provincial Satisfaction Surveys (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The informal structures in the organization including culture, are an area of focus for this PoP because there is still much work to do in aligning Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants' worldviews and perspectives (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Munroe et al., 2013; Peltier, 2018).

Exploring the central components of the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1989) includes the work, which is the development of new Indigenous education programs and initiatives, the people, which includes non-Indigenous and Indigenous meso level leaders, the

formal structures and processes, which include the B.C. curriculum and legislated policies for Indigenous education and decolonization, and the culture, which is the most important internal element based on Indigenous axiologies, epistemologies, and methodologies (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Jimmy, et al., 2019). Finding strategies to align these elements underpins this OIP with a goal to eradicate the systemic racism that exists in the Cascade School Division. The challenge is to determine how best to implement change in this organization that will close the gap between the existing and desired future state. The following section will explore three possible solutions to address the PoP that focus on decolonization of the K-12 school system through the collaborative efforts of non-Indigenous and Indigenous meso leaders.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Determining possible solutions to address this PoP requires careful consideration of the core components of the organizations. These include, the people, culture, formal structures and processes, and the overall work involved in closing the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, sense of belonging, and post-secondary transitions. Four solutions proposed are: providing a comprehensive professional development series for the K-12 sector to improve educators' understanding of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Child & Benwell, 2015; Steeves et al., 2020), decolonizing Faculty of Education programs (Battiste & Henderson 2009; Munroe et al., 2013; Wildcat et al., 2014), creating a collaborative inquiry framework to support meso leaders with change (Kaser & Halbert, 2013; McGregor, 2019), and establishing a meso level professional learning community (Harris & Jones, 2020; Watson, 2014). These solutions align with the goals and aspirations of the organizations that center on the well-being and success of all learners (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021; Learning Transformed, 2019). Each solution is

explored in the following section including a review of supporting literature and discussion of how it would be applied in the Cascade School Division. A preferred solution is identified to be applied to the implementation plan in Chapter 3.

Professional Development Series for the K-12 Sector

Professional development to improve educators' understanding of Indigenous axiologies, epistemologies, pedagogies, and methodologies is a critical step towards decolonization (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith, 2010; Held, 2017). Meso leaders will facilitate the development of a series that is planned throughout the year to provide ongoing opportunities for K-12 educators to develop Indigenous programs and resources with regular feedback and support from facilitators. This series would be modelled on the work of Child and Benwell (2015) who developed an extensive research project to determine how well Indigenous educational principles are understood, the decision-making protocols underpinning the implementation of programs to support Indigenous learners, and whether or not these programs are making a difference for students in the K-12 system.

A professional development series would be developed in collaboration with Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous educators who are employed by school districts in the Cascade School Division (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Meso leaders responsible for Indigenous education programs would ensure that this series focuses on Indigenous knowledge systems, culture, and history as key to improving existing programs (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2002; Peltier, 2018). Themes include: connectedness and relationship; awareness of history; local focus; engagement with the land, nature and outdoors; emphasis on identity; community involvement; the power of story; traditional teaching; language and culture; and experiential learning (Child & Benwell, 2015). Lines of inquiry to consider in developing the professional

development series focus on how educators can be supported to better understand the unique needs of Indigenous communities to determine appropriate program development specific to context (Davies & Halsey, 2019; Wildcat et al., 2014), what structures and systems can be developed to promote student agency and empowerment through Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy (McGregor, 2019), and how meso level leaders can enrich their understanding of the importance of reciprocity, responsibility, relevance, and respect in Indigenous pedagogy and learning (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001).

Specific resources including time, human, fiscal, and information will be required for this professional development series. Time needs to be allocated for meso leaders to plan the sessions and bring participants together throughout the year. Human resources include meso level leaders in school districts. Information about each community and school district in the region will provide context specific resource development. Fiscal resources include costs of professional development activities and financial support for Elders and Knowledge Keepers including transportation and honorariums.

There are many benefits to this proposal. It supports the Ministry of Education's mandate to improve Indigenous education by including local Elders and Knowledge Keepers in facilitated discussions about curriculum and resources (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). This proposal values the Indigenous worldviews and perspectives embedded in local communities and provides a dynamic space for sharing and dialogue. It also helps to develop relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and cultural advisors working in school districts, which supports a focus on decolonization (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Battiste & Henderson, 2009). Professional development that balances Western and Indigenous pedagogies supports all learners (Munroe et al., 2013; Peltier, 2018). Some challenges involved in this proposal include

the time needed to bring meso leaders and other educators together, the lack of trust between many Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and leaders as a result of the existing culture of anti-Indigenous oppression that must be addressed (Stein et al., 2021), and funding required to support the development of sessions and resources.

Decolonization of Faculty of Education Programs

The white-settler paradigm underpinning the Cascade School Division's K-12 system is a barrier for Indigenous students (Stein et al., 2021). Decolonization of undergraduate and graduate programs in the Faculty of Education is a core goal in the organization's strategic plan (Learning Transformed, 2019). This will directly impact meso leaders responsible for Indigenous education programs in their school districts as new teacher graduates from the university will be trained in Indigenous methodologies and pedagogies and ready to share their knowledge in the classroom to support all learners.

Indigenous scholars and researchers outlined the importance of holistic approaches to teaching and learning that focus on traditional ways of knowing and being (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Held, 2017; Iseke, 2013, Kovach, 2009). McGregor (2019) focused on the importance of student sense of being, belonging, and becoming to promote successful transitions to post-secondary programs for Indigenous students across the Cascade School Division. Decolonizing programs to support educators in the K-12 system is critical to removing barriers for Indigenous learners (McGregor, 2019; Steeves et al., 2020). Providing integrated Indigenous education courses and workshops in the Faculty of Education will support the work of meso leaders who need to upskill their knowledge of Indigenous pedagogies and methodologies.

Munroe et al. (2013) explored ways to connect Indigenous ways of knowing and 21st century learning. This research provides a different stance on decolonization by bridging the

strengths of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives with the strengths of the student-centred approach of 21st century education. According to the authors, three core strategies for improving program development included, two-eyed seeing, language and culture revitalization, and co-creation of curriculum with community. This research further explored the importance of students as curriculum developers, which connects closely to the literature supporting inquiry-based learning and collaborative problem-solving (Kaser & Halbert, 2013).

New Zealand's Te Kotahitanga program to support Indigenous learners is an example of successful system change for decolonization with a focus on specific strategies used by school leaders (Papp, 2016). Three core Indigenous values of Manaakitanga (Respect), Whanaungatanga (Belonging), and Hirangatanga (Excellence) were incorporated into school culture, pedagogy, and professional development. The core values incorporated in this research closely mirror the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) used to develop the B.C. K-12 curriculum (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). These principles frame the work of meso leaders in school districts and are embedded in many courses in the Teacher Education Program. Educators must adopt a more holistic approach to teaching and learning to better meet the needs of Indigenous learners in the classroom (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Battiste & Henderson, 2009).

Resources to support this solution include time, human, fiscal, and information. Attempting to decolonize post-secondary programs would be a lengthy process requiring extensive consultation with Indigenous scholars and researchers and unlearning of colonial axiologies and epistemologies (Stein et al., 2021). Human resources include local Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors, and Indigenous researchers and scholars in the Faculty of Education. Fiscal resources include the costs attached to course development and implementation. Information is directly connected to local Indigenous

worldviews and perspectives to inform the authentic development of programs within local context.

Meso leaders in charge of Indigenous education in their districts would benefit from newly trained teachers bringing a decolonizing approach to their practice and sharing their knowledge with school colleagues. The ultimate benefit of this solution is that Indigenous learners, researchers, and practitioners would work in an equitable, inclusive environment. Decolonizing Faculty of Education programs is an ongoing initiative in the faculty (Learning Transformed, 2019) however, it is extremely complex. The biggest challenge to this solution is the time needed to educate faculty and staff so that dominant colonial discourses are dismantled at all levels. The work is beyond the scope of this OIP, but will be incorporated as an underlying strategy throughout the change process which will be described in Chapter 3.

Collaborative Inquiry Framework

The theoretical framework of a community of inquiry would guide planning and research to achieve the future state. An inquiry framework provides meso leaders with the structure to promote systemic change in school districts. The spiral of inquiry model (Kaser & Halbert, 2013) would be used to assist educators in developing new programs. An inquiry-based solution to this PoP provides a “systematic approach for educators to identify professional dilemmas and determine resolutions through shared inquiry, problem solving, and reflection” (Donohoo, 2017, p. 60). This collaborative inquiry model provides guidelines and structures that would be beneficial to district leaders engaging in system change. The spiral of inquiry fits the Indigenous lens of fluid, reflective pedagogy (Held, 2017; Iseke, 2013; Papp, 2016; Peltier, 2018) and would allow educators to maintain direct connections to the learners they are supporting.

Through an inquiry lens and a series of case studies, Archibald and Hare (2017)

uncovered core themes of relationships, Indigenous worldview, transformational change, learning processes, and identity, as foundational to Indigenous student success. A primary area of concern that has been documented by McGregor (2019), is how transitions affect continuity of learning for Indigenous students and the impact this has on student achievement. In McGregor's study, transitions teams in schools worked with meso level leaders to link directly to student learning through collaborative inquiry and professional development. This network of local, meso level leaders became the catalyst for system change in many districts.

Lines of inquiry to consider in developing collaborative inquiry frameworks focus on how meso level leaders can develop connections between the social and personal core competencies (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) and the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008). It is essential to determine the role of Indigenous leaders to improve school programs as they cannot be burdened with the sole responsibility of this work (Stein et al., 2021).

Specific resources needed to develop collaborative inquiry frameworks include time, human, fiscal, and information. Time is needed for meso level leaders to receive training and development in the spiral of inquiry model. People involved include Indigenous and non-Indigenous meso leaders and school educators. Funding through school districts in the Cascade School Division is part of the B.C. Tripartite Education Agreement (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) and would be targeted for meso level leaders to connect across districts and with Indigenous leaders, and to pay for release time for school based educators to upskill in collaborative inquiry strategies using the spiral of inquiry. The benefits to this solution are myriad. Appreciative collaborative inquiry supports a strengths-based lens of Indigenous pedagogies, knowledge, and traditions (Archibald & Hare, 2017), student agency is supported and encouraged through the spiral of inquiry framework (Kaser & Halbert, 2013; McGregor,

2019), and training educators and learners to focus on inquiry-based learning underpins the core and curricular competencies in the K-12 curriculum (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Challenges to this solution are that it requires educator and leader commitment, educators may be at different entry points in understanding inquiry based pedagogy which is time consuming and complex, and this solution requires district funding to support training and implementation that may be targeted for other initiatives.

Meso Level Professional Learning Community

Developing a focused meso level professional learning community (PLC) is another possible solution to this PoP. This solution focuses on the importance of all learners in the system (Vescio et al., 2008; Watson, 2014). The literature on PLCs points to the benefits of improved teacher efficacy through the support of colleagues and leaders who provide structured and ongoing support in the PLC (Harris, 2011; Istance, 2015; Watson, 2014). Timperley et al. (2018) discussed the importance of adaptive expertise as educational leaders need to consider their circle of influence beyond the classroom and school and adapt strategies needed for system change. PLCs require nimble and responsive leadership according to the authors, and adaptive expertise is key for successful change. This notion of flexible, fluid leadership aligns with the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) which would resonate with the Indigenous leaders involved in a meso level PLC.

PLCs come in many shapes and forms. Harris and Jones (2010) studied and developed school reform programs in Wales based on the implementation of PLCs across the country. These PLCs provided a space for educators to access, develop, and mobilize knowledge as a strategy to achieve continuous improvement in the organization. Harris (2011) emphasized the importance of collective vision and understanding in the development of PLCs, which focuses on

reciprocal accountability in organizations that involve multiple individuals as leaders. Creating a meso level PLC embraces the concept of collective agency through multiple leadership roles in adaptive leadership (Boylan, 2018) and could enhance teacher commitment to strategies proposed, as there are more opportunities to build “a positive culture of trust, cooperation, and responsibility” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008, p. 235).

Lines of inquiry to consider in developing a meso level PLC to support Indigenous learners focus on how professional development can advance the three core strategies for improving program development including, two-eyed seeing, language and culture revitalization, and co-creation of curriculum with community. In addition, it is important to consider how school districts can develop structural strategies and relationship strategies through a coaching model to facilitate the improvement of existing Indigenous education programs (Archibald & Hare, 2017; McGregor, 2019).

Creating a meso level PLC requires a variety of resources including time, human, fiscal, and information. Time would be needed for educators to participate in the development process. Financial support for resources, development, growth, and improving practices would be required. Information specific to local nations and community needs would be foundational to the process to ensure authentic program development.

There are many benefits to this solution. It supports the Ministry of Education’s goals to improve Indigenous learner success and well-being (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021), it promotes high collective efficacy which can increase student achievement (McGregor, 2019; Timperley et al., 2017), and educators who share a common vision and goals should feel more supported in developing their understanding of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives. Challenges include time for meso leaders to connect across districts and communities, funding to

support the work of the PLC, and the underlying need for a change in culture as members of the PLC will adopt different perspectives of their work in the Cascade School Division.

Comparing and Contrasting the Four Solutions

In comparing and contrasting these four solutions, they are all closely aligned to the PoP and each provides a unique set of opportunities to improve Indigenous student achievement.

Table 2 provides a comparison of the four solutions including resources required for implementation. These solutions will all take time, and the OIP is planned within an 18-24 month implementation period.

Table 2

Comparison of Four Solutions: Resources Required

Solutions	Resources Required to Address the Solution			
	Time	Human	Fiscal	Information
Pro D Series for K-12 Sector	High	High	High	Medium
Decolonization of FoE Programs	High	High	High	High
Collaborative Inquiry Framework	High	Medium	Low	Low
PLC for Meso Leaders	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low

Note. Resources required to address the solution measured on a 3 point scale, from high to low.

The professional development series provides a space for educators to tackle the issues and come to some common understanding about how best to support Indigenous learners. Decolonizing Faculty of Education programs ensures that Indigenous learners, practitioners, and researchers live and work in a culture of safety and equity (Held, 2017; Stein et al., 2021). Developing collaborative inquiry frameworks is unique in that educators and leaders have a

structure to guide the process that incorporates common goals and group direction to improve student achievement (Kaser & Halbert, 2013; Timperley et al., 2017). Finally, creating a meso level PLC brings leaders together for ongoing, continuous professional development to improve Indigenous student success in schools. These solutions relate to each other in that they all focus on bringing meso level leaders together to find ways to support Indigenous learners with a focus on collaborative inquiry and collective agency. Table 3 compares the potential of each solution.

Table 3

Potential for Each Solution to Address the Gaps in the K-12 System

Solutions	Potential to Address the Gaps			
	Work	People	Informal Structure	Formal Structure
Pro D Series for K-12 Sector	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Decolonization of FoE Programs	High	High	High	Medium
Collaborative Inquiry Framework	Medium	High	High	Medium
PLC for Meso Leaders	High	High	High	Medium

Note. Potential for each solution to address the gaps in the four internal elements of the K-12 system in the Cascade School Division based on a 3 point scale, from high to low.

Rational for Proposing the Chosen Solution

The chosen solution is a combination of the collaborative inquiry framework and the meso level PLC. The spiral of inquiry (SOI) is a powerful tool to support meso level leaders using a collaborative inquiry approach to improve Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division. The fluid, cyclical nature of this inquiry model aligns with Indigenous methodologies and allows for ongoing feedback throughout the process to ensure that meso

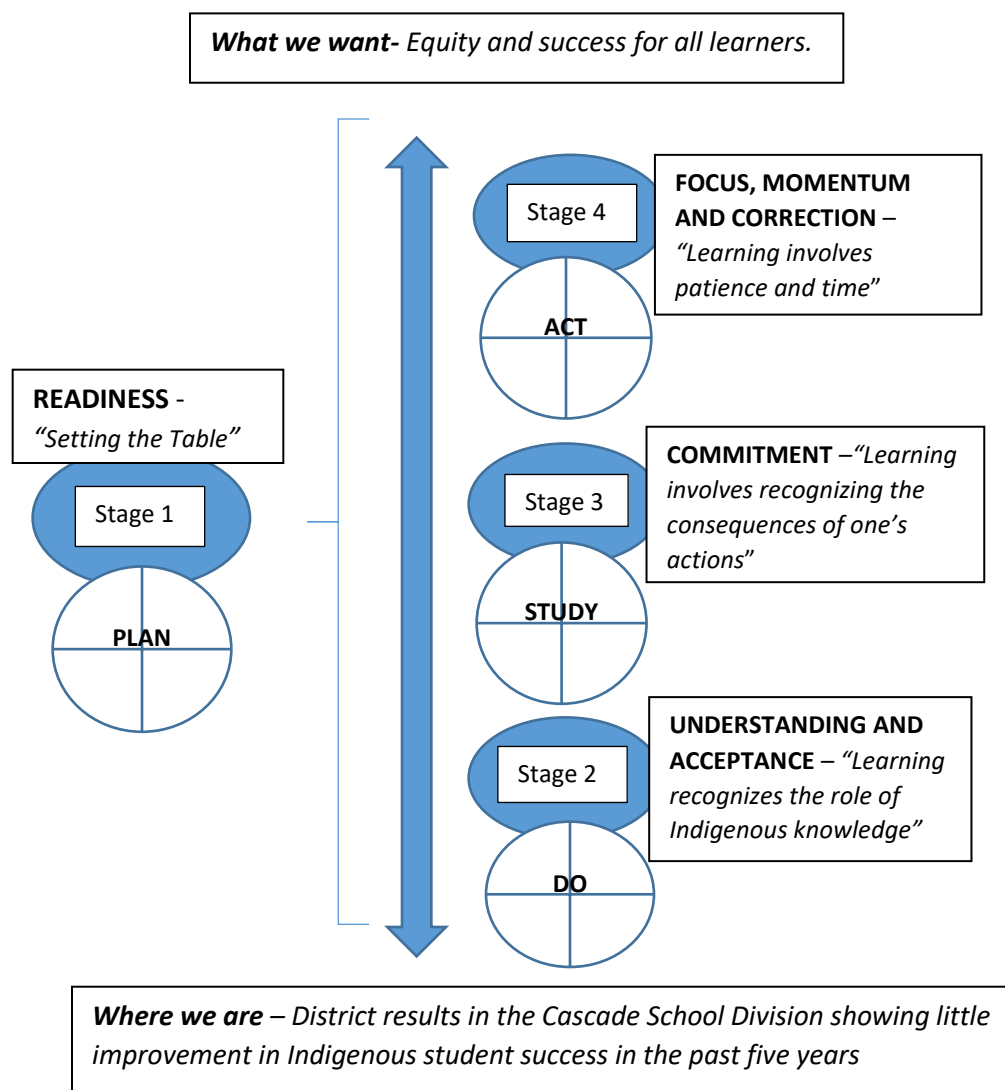
leaders are addressing the right things, at the right time, for the right people. This strategy will be incorporated into the implementation plan outlined in Chapter 3.

This solution is aligned with adaptive and Indigenous leadership approaches. Stroh's four-stage change process (2015) centers on the need for a collective vision and participants taking ownership for system change. This model connects to the adaptive theory of leadership, where leaders create the space for different perspectives to be considered in the change process (Wilson et al., 2020). This solution also aligns with an Indigenous leadership approach as the focus on collective agency, collaboration, and fluid, reflective practice is foundational to a PLC (Harris, 2013; Vescio et al., 2008; Watson, 2014). Developing a structure of collaborative inquiry as a theoretical framework for this OIP will help to proactively engage leaders in improving school programs (Istance, 2015; Kaser & Halbert, 2013). This connectivity facilitates deeper learning through alignment and coherence in models of educational activity (Istance, 2015). Promoting dialogue and action planning that will address barriers to reconciliation, decolonization, and self-determination, is central to this OIP.

It is important for all members of an organization to consider multiple perspectives as they work together. This process is holistic, with Deming's Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model (Murray, 2018) incorporated throughout for ongoing feedback and revision and also to evaluate the whole plan in its entirety. Meso leaders will collaborate closely throughout the process to establish genuine improvement and plan for next steps. Embedding the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) is core to this OIP. Connecting Indigenous principles to the four stages ensures a two-eyed seeing approach to system change (Iwama et al., 2009) and honors Indigenous methodologies. Figure 5 provides an adapted version of Stroh's (2015) process incorporating the PDSA cycle and weaving Indigenous principles throughout each stage.

Figure 5

Four Stage Process and Iterative PDSA Cycle Change Process Overview Model



Note. Adapted from "Four Stages of Leading Systemic Change" by D. P. Stroh, 2015, *Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results.* Chelsea Green Publishing.

Bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, cultural advisors, and leaders together to plan for change will be a sensitive undertaking (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith, 2010).

Many Indigenous participants will still be recovering from an Indian Residential School history, with intergenerational complexities ongoing in families and communities (Sinclair, 2017). The next section will explore the considerations and challenges of leadership ethics, equity, social justice, and decolonization with a focus on how meso leaders can ensure that they are including all voices in the change process to build an equitable plan for change that will promote decolonization and reconciliation in the Cascade School Division.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

This PoP centers on issues of ethics, equity, social justice, and decolonization as they relate to Indigenous learners in the Cascade School Division. The redesigned curriculum addresses the long-standing colonial culture of anti-Indigenous oppression in the K-12 system (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). The ongoing discoveries of children's burial sites in Indian Residential Schools across Canada this year has exposed the historic complacency and lack of interest in the political sector to eradicate deep rooted systems of prejudice against Indigenous people in this country (Penner, 2021; Sinclair, 2017).

Four core themes that directly impact Indigenous education will be discussed in this section with a focus on the challenges they pose to the change process, the responsibilities of the organizations, and the role of meso leaders working to support Indigenous learners. These themes include: culturally responsive education; anti-Indigenous racism; responsibility and reciprocity; and the reconciliation journey. Issues of equity, social justice, and decolonization are woven throughout each theme to align with the holistic perspectives of pedagogy and practice core to this OIP.

Culturally Responsive Education

Hare et al. (2011) defined the New Warrior as the Indigenous youth who has transcended

the oppressive colonialism of the past and has embraced the positive, intergenerational mentorship of Indigenous leaders who use the cultural knowledge and teachings of the Elders to support their communities. Indigenous pedagogies focus on identity, culture, language, and traditions. The authors emphasized the importance of moving from a deficit lens of Indigenous students to a strengths-based perspective of young Indigenous learners who are engaged, connected, and inspired at school. The Indigenous Youth Warriors represent the new generation of students who will learn and lead in a different way, building strong, self-determining nations for the future. Culturally responsive programs will be designed to support these learners.

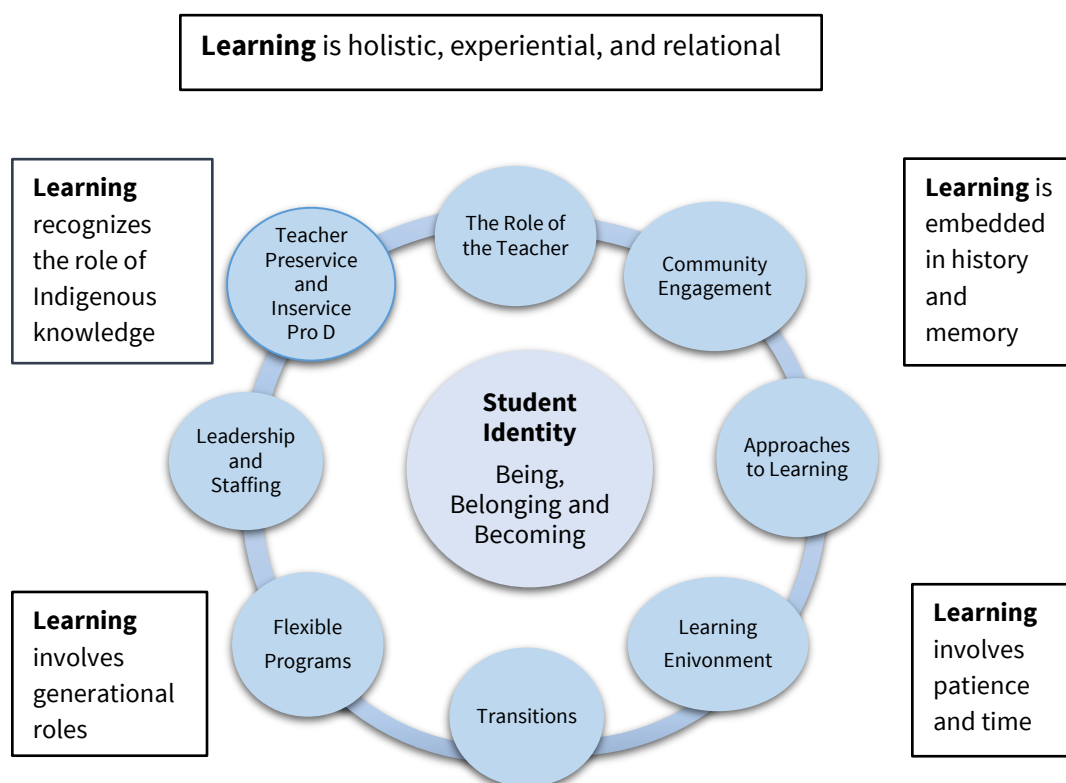
Through an inquiry lens and a series of case studies, Archibald and Hare (2017) uncovered core themes of relationships, Indigenous worldview, transformational change, learning processes, and identity as foundational to Indigenous student success in K-12 schools. These stories are richly woven with tradition, language, culture, and the four principles of the medicine wheel to support culturally responsive program development.

The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) frame the attributes of culturally responsive programs as guiding principles threaded throughout. At the core of this work is the importance of student identity, and the learner's social and emotional sense of self through understandings of being, belonging, and becoming (McGregor, 2019). The importance of culturally inclusive curriculum and teaching pedagogy must underpin meso level leadership for system change. Leaders throughout the Cascade School Division need more support in the development and implementation of authentic and relevant Indigenous education programs that will enable all learners to cross the stage with dignity, purpose, and options (Kaser & Halbert, 2013). Figure 6 outlines the target areas of meso level leadership to improve Indigenous student

success with a focus on the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008). These principles are incorporated in the revised curriculum (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021).

Figure 6

Target Areas of Meso Level Leadership to Improve Indigenous Student Success



Note. Adapted from “A Learner-Centered Framework” by C. McGregor, 2019, *Improving transitions for Indigenous learners through collaborative inquiry: AESN transitions research report, 2016-2018*. For the Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE).

Anti-Indigenous Racism

There are significant differences in the types of racism encountered by non-dominant people in Canada including systemic racism, relational racism, and epistemic racism (National Collaborating Center for Indigenous Health, 2020). Systemic racism is built-in, long-standing prejudice that undermines the abilities of non-dominant people. In the Cascade School Division,

colonial structures have led to the persecution of Indigenous learners for hundreds of years (Ahenakew, 2016). Relational racism is overt, action-oriented, and apparent at all levels of Canadian society. Continued negative narratives of Indigenous learners and their families have impeded student achievement in the K-12 system (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). Non-Indigenous meso leaders need to understand and recognize relational racism within the K-12 system to ensure a culture of safety for Indigenous students (Gerlach et al., 2017). Epistemic racism underpins the Cascade School Division with Western knowledge regarded as superior to Indigenous knowledge throughout the system (Battiste, 2002). The organizational actors in this OIP will be required to find a balance between Western and Indigenous knowledge to decolonize school programs (Munroe et al., 2013; Papp, 2016; Peltier, 2018; Stewart & Warn, 2017).

Non-Indigenous educators and leaders will have to work to pull apart, expose, and address these racisms to move forward in a good way. This PoP is founded on addressing long-standing colonial oppression and anti-Indigenous racism. Creating the space for meso leaders to develop open and honest relationships in a PLC is a step towards eradicating anti-Indigenous racism in the K-12 school system through shared understanding and collective vision for change (Child & Benwell, 2013; McGregor, 2019; Peltier, 2018).

Responsibility and Reciprocity

The fabric of the school system must encompass more Indigenous worldviews and perspectives to encourage social structures to support Indigenous learners. Adopting a focus on respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barndhart, 2001) is critical for educators involved in this OIP. Meso leaders will need to connect with Indigenous community educators and leaders and build relationships throughout the process to ensure relevant, authentic program development (Julien et al., 2010). Jimmy et al. (2019) described the different

sensibilities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people through the metaphors of bricks and threads. Braiding these approaches involves respecting each orientation and opening our perspectives to work more collaboratively in an organization.

Connecting to community and understanding the importance of reciprocity of ideas supports collective agency in the organization (Harris & Jones, 2010). Reciprocity is expressed through the shared exchanges between teachers and learners and a balance between Western and Indigenous ideologies (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). Questions to consider at each stage of this change process include a focus on the barriers to Indigenous parent engagement in schooling, and finding ways to engage local Knowledge Keepers and Elders in the development of school programs where appropriate, without over burdening them with this work. Meso leaders in this OIP will demonstrate an ethic of responsibility in the change process to ensure that all participants at every stage are accountable for developing Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in school programs.

The Reconciliation Journey

Indigenous people have nothing to reconcile. They are not responsible for the years of prejudice, torment, and oppression through which they have suffered at the hands of white settler colonials in this country (Ahenakew, 2016; Stein et al., 2021). Meso level leaders need to consider how they have benefited from the displacement of Indigenous peoples in their communities. The continued struggle for justice and land rights is unique for local Indigenous people living in a society entrenched in postcolonial liberalism (Raibmon, 2018) and this OIP focuses specifically on anti-Indigenous racism to address this struggle. Reconciliation is not a simple concept that can be achieved with a few changes to school programs and limp efforts to engage in Indigenous culture. Settler colonialism in the K-12 context encompasses foundational

roots of oppression in a variety of systems, including political, economic, epistemological, ecological, and relational (Stein, et al., 2021) that were designed to excise Indigenous peoples (Ahenakew, 2016). Meso leaders must acknowledge their relational ties to colonialism as a step towards reconciliation (Hojjati et al., 2018).

Chapter Summary

Stein et al. (2021) exposed the burden on Indigenous people to decolonize higher education programs due to a reticence in non-Indigenous people to unwittingly promote colonial patterns of behavior by leading measures for change that they may not understand. This then translates to a lack of action because “it is generally expected that Indigenous people will hold space for non-Indigenous peoples’ affective responses to learning about their complicity in historical, systemic, and ongoing harm. This labour comes with significant emotional and physical costs for Indigenous people” (Stein et al., 2021, p. 28). Meso leaders in this OIP will need to take on the burden of decolonization to begin the journey to reconciliation.

Chapter 2 presents Stroh’s four-stage change process and aligns leadership approaches identified to facilitate system change to address the PoP. The development of a meso level PLC and an integrated model for collaborative inquiry to guide the process is the chosen solution. A final discussion of equity and decolonization includes four themes: culturally responsive education; anti-Indigenous racism; responsibility and reciprocity; and the reconciliation journey.

The next chapter will provide a comprehensive outline of the change implementation plan, suggestions for evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies, and the importance of communication strategies to promote shared commitment across the Cascade School Division. This plan will support meso leaders to work together across cultural boundaries so that a new model of shared knowledge systems can be employed in the redesign of K-12 school programs.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

Chapters 1 and 2 outlined the need for organizational change in the Cascade School Division through an analysis of the K-12 system that identifies a significant gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the areas of academic achievement, post-secondary transitions, and sense of belonging. The chosen solution is to develop a meso level professional learning community (PLC) that focuses on the spiral of inquiry (Kaser & Halbert, 2013) as a powerful tool to support a collaborative inquiry approach to organizational change. The cyclical nature of this inquiry model aligns with Indigenous methodologies (Munroe et al., 2013; Wilson, 2008). Stroh's four-stage change process (2015) will be used to guide this work and Deming's Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model (Murray, 2018) will be incorporated throughout the process. This model was presented in Figure 5 with the goal of equity and success for all learners underpinning the change plan. Chapter 3 will provide a comprehensive implementation plan including monitoring and evaluation structures and strategies for communication and knowledge mobilization in the Cascade School Division.

Change Implementation Plan

The four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015) allows all change agents to engage in the work together through an exploration of complex cultural and philosophical stances for system change. Each stage of the process incorporates opportunities for shared understanding, storytelling, and time and space for all voices to be heard, which is core to Indigenous education (Gunn et al., 2011; Held, 2017; Julien et al., 2010).

The Ministry of Education's goal and overall strategy to provide all students with equitable education programs and resources (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) underpins this OIP. As discussed in Chapter 1, provincial government policies to improve Indigenous education

programs have been adopted over the past five years. The policy to mandate Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021) was a first step towards decolonizing school districts. These enhancement agreements are foundational to the change process because they were developed in collaboration with Indigenous community leaders. This implementation plan fits within the organizational structure in that it will target the district leaders and cultural advisors who are responsible for Indigenous education.

The transition will be managed through the chosen solution discussed in Chapter 2. The spiral of inquiry (SOI) has been used by hundreds of educators across B.C. to improve school programs and student support systems (Archibald & Hare, 2017; Kaser & Halbert, 2013; McGregor, 2019). The change implementation plan includes four defined stages over a period of 18-24 months. Indigenous and non-Indigenous meso leaders across the Cascade School Division will have access to a professional development series offered through the university with approval and support from the Ministry of Education's Superintendent and Associate Superintendent of Indigenous Education (both of whom are currently connected to several programs/initiatives in our faculty at the university). The PLC of meso leaders will use the SOI to determine what needs to change, why change is needed, how change will be undertaken, and which tools or measures will be incorporated to gauge progress and ensure ongoing improvement of the K-12 system (Garmston & Wellman, 2016; Nelson & Squires, 2017; Stroh, 2015).

Understanding participants' reactions to change in the highly politicized context of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization, will be an ongoing challenge during this change process. Much of this work will involve collaborative problem solving and ongoing discourse between educators and cultural workers who come from very different backgrounds. An adaptive approach to leading each stage will ensure carefully crafted opportunities for individual and

group agency (Beckhard & Harris, 1987; Boylan, 2018; Garmston & Wellman, 2016). An Indigenous approach at each stage will foster a culture of trust and shared purpose. Kovach (2009) pointed to the importance of healing and transformation in Indigenous research frameworks, and the need for all researchers to be prepared for acute emotional triggers through the inquiry process. Establishing a culture of self-care at the outset of this work will ensure that all participants can check out of the process at times if needed to deal with any triggers or emotional distress that may arise during discussions. All programs in the Faculty of Education include guidelines for equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (Learning Transformed, 2020). The spiral of inquiry (SOI) includes a checking phase that provides participants with a feedback loop to discuss concerns or changes needed.

In foregrounding social justice issues discussed in Chapter 2, including a deeply rooted history of colonization and anti-Indigenous racism, this implementation plan will require personnel who have a thorough understanding of current issues in Indigenous education. The partners invited to engage in this change implementation plan have been required to meet B.C. Ministry of Education targets to improve Indigenous student achievement over the past decade (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). Providing the resources, space, and guidance for participants to establish a robust professional learning community (PLC) with ongoing relevant and authentic support, is core to decolonizing the system. Reconciliation is a new discourse for many people, and a focus on collective ownership of policies, procedures, and protocols is crucial for educational transformation (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Stein et al., 2021).

The four stages in this plan are connected to the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) and the local protocol of “Setting the Table” (Sahplek, personal communication,

2013) to ensure that all partners are mindful of local traditions, protocols, ceremony, and stories to inspire change. Table 4 links the four stages to core principles most relevant to Stroh’s four-stage process.

Table 4

Stroh’s Four Stage Process and the First Peoples Principles of Learning

Stroh’s Four Stage Process	First Peoples Principles of Learning
Stage 1 - Readiness	Setting the Table
Stage 2 – Understanding and Acceptance	Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge
Stage 3 - Commitment	Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One’s Actions
Stage 4 – Focus, Momentum, and Correction	Learning Involves Patience and Time

Note. Adapted from “Four Stages of Leading Systemic Change” by D. P. Stroh, 2015, *Systems thinking for social change: A practical guide to solving complex problems, avoiding unintended consequences, and achieving lasting results*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

Each stage is presented in this section including a brief explanation of the process and a chart outlining short and long-term goals, educational and cultural leaders who will engage in the change process, resources, timelines, financial support, information needed, and possible challenges for implementation.

Readiness: Setting the Table

In Stage 1 of Stroh’s four-stage process, change agents are brought together to get ready for the process. These people are the most important resource in the change implementation plan, and this stage must be managed carefully, so that all partners feel valued and heard from the outset (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Meso level leaders including school educators, Indigenous

educators, district leaders, and Indigenous community leaders will be invited to come together in a series of circle gatherings to establish common ground and build a foundation for this process. In the Cascade School Division, most districts have completed Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreements with the support of local Indigenous advisors or cultural leaders (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). These agreements required all partners to navigate cultural barriers and work together in determining goals to support Indigenous student success (Kitchenham et al., 2016).

Change leaders in this OIP will work to engage key participants and help them distinguish their current reality from assumptions they may have made based on familial background and personal stories (Dion, 2007; Senge, 1990). Through collaborative inquiry and capacity building, leaders will strive to create common ground from which to work with all members in the change process. Stroh's (2015) Ladder of Inference helps to improve self and group commitment through metacognitive strategies for reasoning and problem solving. This tool focuses on the importance of people developing an understanding of the larger vision for change while recognizing the reality of challenges and their individual responsibility for the whole system (Wenger et al., 2002). Indigenous leadership approaches focus on the greater good of the organization (Julien et al., 2010), which aligns with the Ladder of Inference model. Adaptive leadership theory (Castillo, 2018; Randall & Coakley, 2007) supports this work as there is a focus on three archetypes in need of change including: values versus behavior, competing commitments, and ethnic penalty (Dean, 2019).

Key catalysts for change have been discussed in previous chapters, including the OAGBC (2015), the Equity in Action Initiative (2018), BCTEA (2018), the 9th Standard (2019), DRIPA (2019), and the Indigenous Education Funding Policy (B.C. Ministry of Education,

2021). Meso level leaders are familiar with these documents in terms of district policies and procedures and will use them to ensure that anti-Indigenous and colonial practices are exposed and eradicated as they develop new school programs.

The readiness stage will take 3 months to establish the groundwork and develop a professional learning community (PLC) of meso leaders spanning rural, remote, and urban districts. This stage mirrors the work of Child and Benwell (2015), who completed a series of provincial circle gatherings over 3 months to collect narratives to develop a report on Indigenous worldviews to support curriculum development for the Ministry of Education.

Local Indigenous leaders often use the term, “Setting the Table” (Sahplek, personal communication, 2013) where people come together and prepare for the work ahead. Appendix B includes the goals, resources, timelines, and challenges in Stage 1.

Understanding and Acceptance: Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

Once the foundation has been established, meso level leaders will move to the second stage of the change process, which includes the use of Kaser and Halbert’s (2013) spiral of inquiry (SOI). Working through the SOI will provide a structure to establish interviews, organize information, and develop preliminary systems analyses. This aligns with Stroh’s (2015) focus on mapping tools in Stage 2, which allow participants to look for trends and identify important variables. The SOI includes phases that promote catalytic conversations as change agents develop new alternatives to support Indigenous learners. These phases include, scanning, focusing, developing a hunch, learning, taking action, and checking (Appendix C).

The adaptive leadership approach frames this change process with a core focus on the activities of the leaders in relation to their work with other educators in the organization. Northouse (2019) described the nature of adaptive leadership where leaders may help others explore and change their values and perspectives. The SOI is an excellent tool to support

adaptive leadership with a strong focus on collaborative inquiry (Garmston & Wellman, 2016).

An Indigenous leadership approach focusing on the importance of traditional knowledge, land-based learning, and storytelling to develop curriculum (Julien et al., 2010) will guide meso leaders in ensuring equity for all learners. Focussing on Indigenous leadership tenets of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001), will underpin the inquiry process. Change agents should allow for a year to work through the SOI. This is a typical timeline for educators in the province who use the SOI for case study implementation goals as part of the Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE). The goals, resources, timelines and challenges in Stage 2 are outlined in Appendix D.

Commitment: Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One's Actions

In the third stage, Stroh (2015) presents the importance of exploring the status quo and determining the pros and cons of system change. As an adaptive leader, and focusing on an Indigenous approach to this work, I will continue to develop strong relationships and build trust with meso level leaders as this work is steeped in historical and political narrative (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Battiste, 2002; Stewart & Warn, 2017).

Participants will engage in a cross analysis of the advantages and disadvantages associated with system change. Adopting an Indigenous leadership approach, I will promote the use of the dimensions of the medicine wheel. Incorporating the spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions will support Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in this stage. It will be important for these educational leaders to assess the beliefs, attitudes, and values of students, families, and educators to make an explicit choice as to how the challenges must be addressed and supported. This is a key stage in the change process as participants need to align their self-interests and highest aspirations to determine whether or not they support the collective

vision (Stroh, 2015). Some participants may need more time to assess and reflect before committing to the plan. Appendix E indicates the goals, resources, timelines, and challenges of Stage 3.

Focus, Momentum, and Correction: Learning Involves Patience and Time

Finally, in Stage 4, change agents work to bridge the gap between existing district structures and programs and the proposed improvements determined through the collaborative inquiry process in Stage 2. At this stage, meso leaders develop a plan that aligns goals, metrics, and structures and establishes funding models to support program implementation. Meso level leaders need to be proactive in finding ways to better understand the wealth of local knowledge available to support Indigenous students. This requires extensive collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit researchers, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and practitioners. Professional development to support the PLC at this stage is designed to provide meso leaders with the tools to mobilize knowledge and engage senior leaders in discourse to support decolonization of school programs. This rewiring phase (Stroh, 2015) is core to increasing awareness, shifting mental models, and building on the collective vision to improve Indigenous education programs to support Indigenous student success. An Indigenous leadership approach supports the holistic and fluid nature of this work as districts develop new ways to support learners and maintain feedback structures to ensure that student agency and success is of paramount focus. Castillo (2018) pointed to the importance of leaders being proactive in mobilizing people for change because, “through proactivity, adaptive leaders create a shared sense of purpose, manage through influence, enable people to learn through experimentation, build platforms for collaboration, and are open to unpredictability” (p. 104). The goals, resources, timelines, and challenges of Stage 4 are included in Appendix F.

Limitations

Limitations to this plan are primarily based on existing colonial structures, racial bias, geography, and the underlying barriers to Indigenous leaders who have suffered years of oppression and racism (Stein et al., 2021; Stewart & Warn, 2017). The specific challenges at each stage of the implementation plan have been discussed, however, change agents must also understand the broader issues connected to this work.

Existing colonial structures in schools must be dismantled and redesigned. Indigenous pedagogies, methodologies, and epistemologies as discussed in previous chapters are incorporated at all levels. Representation of Indigenous leadership is critical in school districts. Staffing policies must dictate inclusion and varied representation at all levels of the system. Indigenous students deserve to feel welcome and valued. Maintaining a two-eyed seeing approach (Iwama et al., 2009) that focuses on holistic development and achievement of all learners will include the lessons of the medicine wheel (Hare, 2004). This work is extremely complex based on the acutely sensitive subject of anti-Indigenous racism in the K-12 system. Policy changes for truth and reconciliation take time and effort (Sinclair, 2017).

Non-Indigenous meso leaders need to embrace systems change for equity with a significant focus on relationships to challenge their own familial and historical racial bias as discussed in Chapter 2. It will take time to build trust across cultures and address white-settler paradigms (Ahenakew, 2016; DiAngelo, 2018). Change agents must be entirely committed to making a difference for all learners in their districts. It is likely that some partners will suffer from fatigue in this highly charged political landscape (Stein et al., 2021).

A unique challenge in B.C., is the geographical scope of the province. As presented in Chapter 1, the widely varied landscapes across this province have led to the diverse cultural histories of 198 First Nations. Bringing change agents together from a wide range of First

Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities will be challenging. Reaching rural and remote communities to ensure inclusivity is an important consideration at each stage of the process.

The dominant discourse of white superiority and the ongoing colonial narrative in the Cascade School Division are huge barriers to reconciliation (Frick et al., 2019; Loppie et al., 2020). Indigenous meso leaders who are engaging in this change plan will need time, resources, and ongoing evidence from other non-Indigenous partners that they are truly committed to decolonization through authentic engagement and trusting relationships. Change agents engaged in this implementation plan will need specific strategies to monitor and evaluate the process to ensure that the right people are working on the right things at the right time, to support all learners. The next section outlines the tools and measures needed to support this implementation plan.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation plan for this OIP has been firmly established in the preceding section, with specific guidelines to maintain priorities for decolonization. Determining specific tools, strategies, and resources for monitoring and evaluation ensures effective system change to improve Indigenous student success. Understanding the overall monitoring and evaluation framework helps participants to engage more fully in this change process. This section also includes methods to refine the implementation plan as needed.

Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) outlined the importance of a more integrated and holistic approach to monitoring and evaluation with participatory strategies to develop collective agency before moving on to the implementation phase. Monitoring is represented as an ongoing tracking process to review progress and determine areas needing improvement. Evaluation is represented as a final conclusive process where information gleaned from the monitoring functions is

analysed to develop conclusions about the success of the plan (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Monitoring is therefore continuous, and evaluation is periodic. A monitoring and evaluation framework provides the tools to adjust, correct, or regulate the implementation plan according to conclusions derived (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). In relation to this OIP, adaptive and Indigenous leadership approaches scaffold the theoretical framework of a community of inquiry, guide strategies and decisions, and underpin the communication plan (Deszca et al., 2020). An integrated approach to monitoring and evaluation aligns with Indigenous research and methodology in that it is horizontal, fluid, and connected (Held, 2017; Iseke, 2013; Julien et al., 2010).

The four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015) outlines a structured and comprehensive change model for this PoP. The PDSA approach provides a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that participants continue to check which aspects of the system need to change, how they will change, and whether or not these changes are effective in moving from the present to future desired state in the organization. A focus on the tools and activities appropriate to measure progress in this context, suggestions for adjustments to implementation based on evidence collected, and specific data to support this plan are explored. The *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) are woven throughout this monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure Indigenous worldviews and perspectives are authentically framed and honored. In addition, a focus on the 4Rs, including respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) is incorporated throughout the process. With a PDSA cycle completed in alignment with the four-stage change process, the goal is to improve the quality of the work with each cycle, until the change is embedded in the organization (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015).

Stroh's four-stage model connects to both an adaptive and Indigenous approach to

leadership, where leaders create the space for different perspectives to be considered in the change process. Developing a PLC of meso level leaders provides a space for these educators to work together with a common purpose. Maintaining ongoing monitoring practices and developing judgements and conclusions (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016) facilitates opportunities for consensus in decision-making, which is core to Indigenous worldviews and perspectives (Julien et al., 2010). The PDSA cycle will be used to establish genuine improvement and plan for next steps. The theoretical framework of a community of inquiry is integrated throughout this change plan with a specific focus on collaborative inquiry using the spiral of inquiry (SOI) model (Kaser & Halbert, 2013) in Stage 2 of the process.

Applying the PDSA Cycle to Stroh's Four Stage Change Process

The PDSA cycle can be adapted to the more fluid structure of this change process in keeping with Indigenous research and knowledge perspectives (Held, 2017, Peltier, 2018). The PDSA cycle allows for flexibility in the implementation of the improvement plan as it may be employed at different points throughout the process as needed. It provides opportunities to review what is working, what is not, and make appropriate changes to the plan on an ongoing basis. Deszca et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of ongoing assessment in the change process because “what gets measured affects the direction, content, and outcomes achieved by a change initiative” (p. 422). The difference between monitoring and measuring in this process is important. There are many available measurement tools to collect data available for meso level leaders in the Cascade School Division including: ministry data, district data, Indigenous education reports, and school data (see Appendix G). School district leaders are well versed in using these tools for annual reporting, but Indigenous community leaders may need support in making connections to the plan. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data will be used

because information is so varied in this context and many different sources need to be reviewed. Much of Indigenous research and knowledge is mobilized orally (Battiste, 2002, Wildcat et al., 2014; Wilson, 2008) including narratives, storytelling and circle gatherings. This qualitative data must be recorded sensitively. Indigenous leaders will be used to working in these knowledge spaces, but school district leaders may need support in scaffolding the importance of context in the stories and discussions. The quantitative data is typically made up of reports, surveys, plans, questionnaires, and contracts (see Appendix H). In this implementation plan, it is of paramount importance to include all participants in as many opportunities as possible, to provide regular input and feedback because the focus on traditional Indigenous methodologies and knowledge must be carefully considered at each step. Monitoring strategies in this plan involve a comprehensive collaborative inquiry process (Appendix C) based on the SOI (Kaser & Halbert, 2013), that provides change leaders with an iterative framework for research including scanning and checking phases where participants monitor and document progress and revise the plan based on evidence collected. Appendix I provides a summary of the monitoring tools to be used at each stage and what those tools are intended to monitor to support implementation of this change plan.

Plan Step and Stage 1 – Readiness: Setting the Table

The plan step of this cycle includes establishing goals and outcomes and determining evidence to support the change process. Change agents will communicate the objective of this change process, which is to improve Indigenous education programs to support student success. In this step, based on the chosen solution of creating a PLC, meso leaders engage in group dialogue and discussion to question the status quo and make predictions as to what will happen

and why. They then create a plan to measure the change and determine what qualitative or quantitative data would be relevant.

Tools, measures, and data to track change and gauge progress in this stage include circle gatherings to bring together meso level change leaders in rural and urban regions. Organizational data include the annual district How Are We Doing? reports, District Indigenous Enhancement Agreements, School Indigenous Education Plans, Ministry Satisfaction Surveys, and District Tripartite Education Agreements (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2021). In addition, personal narratives and storytelling are essential Indigenous tools for research and knowledge mobilization (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Child & Benwell, 2015; Munro et al., 2013).

Do Step and Stage 2 – Understanding and Acceptance: Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

In the second step of the cycle, change agents carry out the plan for change and provide time for careful documentation of both the process and any underlying barriers or challenges that may arise. It is also important to record unusual or unexpected observations at this stage, as they may be used to inform adaptations in strategies moving forward (Deszca et al., 2020).

Stage 2 of this change process is a lengthy one, and includes the use of Kaser and Halbert's (2013) spiral of inquiry (SOI). Working through the spiral provides a structure to establish interviews, organize information, and develop preliminary systems analyses. This aligns with Stroh's (2015) focus on mapping tools in Stage 2, which allows participants to look for trends and identify important variables. The SOI includes phases that promote catalytic conversations as meso leaders develop new alternatives to support Indigenous learners. These phases include, scanning, focusing, developing a hunch, learning, taking action and checking. The SOI complements an Indigenous leadership approach with a flexible, iterative cycle that

provides space and time for developing collective agency and relationship-building (McGregor, 2019). The adaptive leadership approach frames this change process with a core focus on the activities of the meso leaders in relation to their work with other educators in the organization and an ongoing focus on initiative, accountability, and flexibility (Zimmely, 2016).

Tools, measures, and data to track change and gauge progress in this stage include a one-year application of the SOI framework for collaborative inquiry processes to scan context and address needs with the aim to get to the checking phase by June, so that evidence-based corrections can be established for the following year. This stage also includes the development of systems analyses to check on alignment of factors and support of achievement of the vision and creation of mental models to influence participant behavior. Systems mapping tools and resources are employed in the scanning and focusing phases of the inquiry process. Ongoing Indigenous leadership tools throughout the collaborative inquiry processes in Stage 2 include embedding the narratives and storytelling shared by Knowledge Keepers and Elders. This ensures that all change agents continue to focus on the lens of decolonization throughout the process.

Study Step and Stage 3 – Commitment: Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One's Actions

In the study step of the cycle, change agents complete an analysis of the data. This is a strength of the PDSA cycle, where participants can actively engage in the metacognitive processes of reflection and re-evaluation as they work through the change plan. In comparing the resulting data to predictions made in the first step of the cycle, there are opportunities to go deeper and increase meso leaders' understanding of complexities in the context of Indigenous education. A summary of what has been learned so far leads to the final step in the cycle.

In Stage 3, Stroh (2015) outlines the importance of exploring the status quo and determining the pros and cons of system change. As an adaptive leader working to embed Indigenous leadership methodologies, my relationships with participants must build a culture of trust. It will be important for meso leaders to assess the beliefs, attitudes, and values of students, families, and educators to make an explicit choice as to how any challenges must be addressed and supported. This is a key stage in the change process as change agents need to align their self-interests and highest aspirations to determine whether or not they support the collective vision (Stroh, 2015).

Tools, measures, and data to track change and gauge progress in this stage include the ongoing implementation of a robust communication plan to engage all participants, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. In particular, it will be important to determine areas in need of improvement for Indigenous learners based on local feedback from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educators and leaders. Establishing a case for change includes a cross analysis of the pros and cons with all other participants within the school context and determining an explicit choice as to how best to improve Indigenous education programs. Change teams review historical district, school, and ministry data on student achievement, graduation rates, and satisfaction surveys to compare the status quo with the case for change. Creating Both/And solutions graphs (Stroh, 2015) facilitates problem solving and alignment of purpose.

Act Step and Stage 4 – Focus, Momentum, and Correction: Learning Involves Patience and Time

The last step of the PDSA cycle is action-oriented, with core decisions to be made based on data collected in previous steps. This is where participants determine what changes are to be

made in the next cycle of this iterative model. If no changes are identified, the improvement plan is ready for implementation.

In Stage 4, change agents work to bridge the gap between existing district structures and programs and the proposed improvements outlined through the collaborative inquiry process in Stage 2. Meso leaders work to develop a plan that aligns goals, metrics, and structures and establishes funding models to support program implementation. This rewiring phase (Stroh, 2015) is core to increasing awareness, shifting mental models, and building on the collective vision to improve Indigenous education programs to support Indigenous student success.

Tools, measures, and data to track change and gauge progress in Stage 4 include increasing community input and awareness through a carefully crafted communication plan that will need to be regularly updated and revised. Updating goals, plans, metrics, structures, and funding strategies is key in Stage 4 to expand change agent involvement in this acting step.

Establishing a process for continuous learning and feedback ensures that the PDSA cycle is well positioned in the change process and can be rewired if needed (Stroh, 2015). School educators may need further support in reinforcing the chosen purpose. Refining data and interventions based on new goals promotes transparency in the process. This is when meso leaders evaluate and refine the change plan. Checking in with Indigenous students and families through meetings, surveys, or gatherings to gauge the process and shifting mental models shows that all perspectives are needed and valued. It will also be critical to engage meso level leaders in touchback meetings to review the change process and provide feedback. Finally, this change plan must be shared with community and district leaders to maintain strong relationships and authentic purpose.

Refining the Implementation Plan

This work will be ongoing, as districts develop new ways to support learners and maintain feedback structures to ensure that student agency and success is of paramount focus (McGregor, 2019). Reviewing the data or evidence may uncover issues or gaps that must be addressed. For example, it may be determined that not all meso leaders sufficiently understand core Indigenous worldviews and perspectives that need to be incorporated into the change process for authentic change. Providing training and support will be ongoing and can be integrated at any of the four stages.

Relationships with participants will be supported and enhanced throughout this change process. There may be dissonance between the meso leaders as both Western and Indigenous perspectives come into consideration for programs. The common vision to support student achievement through the development of more equitable programming and resources is central to the plan. A focus on this dimension throughout the process with regular check-ins will ensure that change agents are on track with vision and goal setting.

An Indigenous leadership approach provides opportunities for all voices to be heard and valued in decision-making. Respecting the importance of Indigenous methodologies that consider past and present practices and obligations will ensure an authentic and relevant process for Indigenous participants. Facilitated dialogue, surveys, and reports measure satisfaction with the process and inform evidence-based revision to the plan.

As an adaptive leader, I will need to move on any changes quickly and effectively. The communication plan ensures that all participants are well informed and engaged in the process. Once changes have been successfully implemented the PDSA cycle returns to step one and new learning begins.

Using measurement tools that incorporate elements most relevant to the context is essential. Ensuring that all change agents understand the, who, what, and why of the change process is up to the change leader. Deszca et al. (2020) noted the importance of member commitment because “when organizational members see particular quantifications as legitimate, believe their actions will affect the outcomes achieved, and think those actions will positively affect them personally, the motivational impact increases” (p. 422).

A focus on continuous improvement is needed throughout the change process. Working through a collaborative inquiry approach and encouraging the importance of a growth mindset in the process (Dweck, 2006), promotes learning and growth in Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division. Developing a robust communication plan ensures that all participants and external partners are well informed and engaged in the process. Transparency in communication strategies fosters trust and promotes shared agency (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). A communication plan that will incorporate opportunities for reflection, analysis, and feedback to augment implementation strategies will be discussed in the next section.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

As outlined in previous sections of this chapter, this OIP involves a comprehensive change process encompassing phases of readiness, adoption, and institutionalization (Armenakis et al., 1999) using Stroh’s four-stage process (2015). Continuous change is promoted as established strategies move forward and catalyze renewed initiatives for change. The communication plan brings together the three phases with carefully crafted messages that facilitate motivation and commitment to change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002).

Armenakis et al. (1993) identified five key components of change messages including: discrepancy, efficacy, appropriateness, principal support, and personal valence. Discrepancy

messages tackle the underlying question as to whether or not change is actually needed. In this change plan, the Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change Questionnaire (Deszca et al., 2020) outlined in Chapter 1 provides an assessment of readiness based on a detailed analysis of the Cascade School Division. Participants will have access to this tool to determine how existing practices and performances differ from those of the desired state. Participants in this process must be convinced that they have the agency and ability to make a difference for Indigenous learners in the Cascade School Division. Messages of efficacy may be challenging for non-Indigenous meso leaders who are uncertain about their role in this work (Stein et al., 2021). As the initial change leader, I will need to find ways to scaffold communication strategies with them. This could involve direct reports, meetings, or emails. Messages that speak to the appropriateness of this change will be based on themes of decolonization, reconciliation, and self-determination (Hare & Davidson, 2015). Participants will be provided with research and resources to support ongoing messages through professional development opportunities during the change process. The institutionalization phase frames the need for resources and participants' resolve as key conditions for successful change. Messages that focus on principal support for change agents in this process must incorporate government policies and procedures based on the guiding documents discussed in Chapter 2. Armenakis and Harris (2002) also described messages that address personal valence. This OIP encompasses a shared approach to change and collective agency amongst partners. The social justice lens underpinning this plan to decolonize school programs to support Indigenous learners will include messages of hope and positivity for equitable school programs in the future.

Strategies to convey these messages include persuasive communication, active participation, and management of information (Armenakis et al., 1993). The communication plan

engages participants from diverse backgrounds and with different perspectives of the current education system in the Cascade School Division. Any communications must be handled sensitively with appropriate consultation and collaboration between change agents and cultural advisors, Indigenous educators, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders to ensure an authentic and relevant focus on decolonization. (Battiste & Henderson, 2009).

Persuasive communication strategies are incorporated throughout the four stages in Stroh's change process (2015) and include annual district reports, circle gathering discussions, online meetings, letters, and presentations. Active participation is a core strategy in this change plan as all meso leaders are encouraged to engage in a comprehensive collaborative inquiry process in the second stage of implementation. Self-discovery (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975) is promoted through the metacognitive processes of the spiral of inquiry (SOI) as participants work together to solve problems and develop solutions to improve Indigenous education programs. Strategies to manage information include external and internal sources such as school data, student satisfaction surveys, annual district reports, community meetings, meetings with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Ministry of Education reports, and family meetings.

There is an acute need for shared participation and ongoing commitment for successful implementation of this OIP. Deszca et al. (2020) pointed to four main goals of a communication plan including: presenting the need for change, determining impact, identifying changes to implementation plans, and sharing stories of progress. A well-developed communication plan eliminates barriers of miscommunication, supports mobilization, and maintains positivity and commitment to the process.

Deszca et al. (2020) outlined four phases of communication including pre-change approval, developing the need for change, midstream change and milestone communication, and

confirming and celebrating the change success. This communication plan is designed around Stroh's four stages. Appendix J presents an overview of the proposed plan aligning the stages with phases of communication (Deszca et al., 2020). Target audiences include internal and external participants. Internal participants are students, teachers, school leaders, community cultural advisors, Knowledge Keepers and Elders, district leaders, and faculty. External participants are parents, Ministry of Education representatives, researchers and scholars, and community representatives. At all stages of this work, as discussed in Chapter 1, consultation with Indigenous educators, leaders, students, families, researchers, scholars, Knowledge Keepers and Elders is paramount. An Indigenous leadership focus on respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barndhardt, 2001) guides communication strategies and maintains an honest focus on decolonization, reconciliation, and self-determination throughout the process.

Pre-Change Phase

Communication in the Readiness stage provides participants with an overall understanding of the organization's vision and values, builds relationships and trust between change agents, maps priorities and goals, creates a strong network of participants, determines roles, and sets direction for the implementation plan. This pre-change phase lays the foundation for the change plan and ensures partner approval and desire for change. My role in the faculty is closely connected to the Dean and all initiatives are guided by the strategic plan (Learning Transformed, 2019). Deszca et al. (2020) outlined the task of determining support from top management in the pre-change phase. Approval to support a PLC that will work to decolonize K-12 programs in the Cascade School Division will be easily obtained because it aligns with equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (EDID) initiatives led by the senior leadership team. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2, this OIP will be shared with the Superintendent and Assistant

Superintendent of Indigenous Education in the Ministry of Education to foster enthusiasm and support and influence future policy development.

One of the core tenets of Indigenous leadership is the importance of relationships which, in turn, builds trust (Julien et al., 2010; Stewart & Warn, 2017). In the pre-change phase of this communication plan, participants have opportunities to connect, share ideas, and begin to build a network. Community circle gatherings, family and school meetings, student lunch circles, meso leader meetings, and staff meetings foster relationship building. In-person interactions will be encouraged when possible, in keeping with Indigenous protocols and traditions (Child & Benwell, 2015). Storytelling, personal narratives, song, and dance provide space for traditions and ceremony to promote authentic, meaningful interactions through cultural support (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Wilson, 2008).

Developing the Need for Change

A focus on the reasons why change is needed is established in the second phase of the communication plan (Deszca et al., 2020). In Stroh's four-stage change process (2015), change agents are encouraged to face reality and accept their responsibility. Understanding and recognizing the barriers for Indigenous learners in the Cascade School Division is a first step to decolonization (Stein et al., 2021). Communication messages focus on meso level leaders in school districts, teachers, vice principals, principals, senior leadership teams, and boards of education. Consultation with students, families, Indigenous educators, Knowledge Keepers, researchers, and Elders will be critical in defining the need for change. Strategies for communication include circle gatherings, PLC meetings, presentations, interviews, and stories. These communications may be in person or virtual, depending on audience preference. The purposes of these communications include: garnering information from both Indigenous and

non-Indigenous participants, analyzing the factors impacting Indigenous student success, engaging change agents in preliminary discussions about the need for change, and stimulating a shared resolve to find solutions and work together for change (Stroh, 2015).

Focusing on the need for change in this phase also aligns with Stroh's (2015) third stage of establishing commitment. Communications will focus on meso level leaders in the PLC who need to commit to the process with full understanding of the pros and cons involved. This is when messaging from change agents must emphasize the moral purpose of decolonizing the K-12 system with a focus on equity and social justice. In this stage, Stroh (2015) recommends a thorough review of possible short-term solutions and careful consideration of the long-term obligations and possible challenges to the change process. Meso leaders will need time to explore their role in the process to make an explicit choice and commit to the plan. Given the political context of this OIP, extra time must be spent to ensure change agents' understanding of the long-term effects of anti-Indigenous racism in B.C. Online and face-to-face communications including storytelling, PLC meetings, reports, surveys, informal meetings, and media communications support this phase of the communication plan.

Midstream Change

Stage 4 of Stroh's change process involves bridging the gap between what participants care about, and where they are in the organization so that they can work towards the desired state. Deszca et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of a continuous, fluid approach to change with a communication plan that allows for regular check-ins with participants to gauge progress, provide support, review systems and structures, adjust strategies, and re-align goals as new issues and needs emerge. Feedback from participants is ongoing with a strong focus on affirmation of purpose and recognition of positive gains in the process.

Communications in this phase focus on meso level leaders, students, teachers, vice principals, and principals. Connecting with students is critical in the midstream phase, as meso leaders must ensure that new strategies and structures are supporting all learners as intended. Discussions will allow for all voices to be heard and honor Indigenous protocols and methodologies. Participants must understand the progress being made and accept the change initiatives (Deszca et al., 2020). Change leaders will address any misconceptions or emerging issues and ensure clear communication to maintain participant engagement and desire for change. Acknowledgement and celebration of milestones crossed is essential throughout the Midstream Change phase. Communications will be shared with parents, families, community leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, boards of education, and ministry representatives. Communications include memos, letters, stories, artwork, ceremonies, reports, presentations, video narratives, and student reflections. New program implementation, resource development, and increased student success and satisfaction are all milestones to be celebrated both internally and externally.

Confirming and Celebrating Change

In the final phase of the communication plan, change agents continue to build on the focus and momentum for change (Stroh, 2015) but take time to confirm successes and celebrate progress. As outlined in Chapter 2, this work is based on highly sensitive issues of anti-Indigenous racism that have become increasingly politically charged over the past year (Penner, 2021). It is critical that change agents garner feedback from Indigenous students, educators, parents, cultural advisors, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and leaders, to ensure that progress is appropriately recognized and is relevant for participants. Tools to measure success must transcend Western methodologies and incorporate Indigenous pedagogies, epistemologies, and

worldviews. Communications will vary depending on the audience. Formal presentations to senior leadership teams, boards of education, and ministry representatives include reports, district plans, letters, and district-wide correspondences. Communications with students, families, community leaders, Knowledge Keepers and Elders include in-person celebrations or circle gatherings focusing on student and teacher stories and artifacts. As emphasized throughout this OIP, a truly decolonized approach to communication blends the formal presentations and reports on student success required according to district and ministry mandates with the stories and artifacts shared in local celebrations and gatherings.

Monitoring a communication plan must include how well change messages have been understood, received, and adopted by participants in the organization (Barrett, 2002). Four questions for participants that would guide this communication plan include:

1. What is the new vision for Indigenous education programs in the Cascade School Division?
2. What is your level of understanding of the proposed changes to Indigenous education programs?
3. What changes do you see occurring in schools that demonstrate this new vision?
4. How are you receiving information about the changes in your school district?

According to Barrett (2002), the success of a change communication plan is largely based on the role of leaders. Five key factors are identified for effective communication: senior leadership's commitment to effective communication, reciprocal engagement between leaders and participants, quick follow up on participants' suggestions, immediate action to address barriers to communication, and ongoing assessment of the communication plan.

Communication is core to any change process. Motivation, readiness, and enthusiasm for change are fostered by messages and communication strategies (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). The partners engaged in this change plan will need to build relationships and trust as they enter into complex discussions based on anti-Indigenous racism throughout the K-12 system (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Frick et al., 2019; Held, 2017). The moral purpose of this work must be considered and respected at all stages of the process. The next section will outline future considerations of this OIP centered on a lens of decolonization and reconciliation.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

This OIP is a first step for meso level leaders who are working towards decolonization and reconciliation in their school districts. The PoP focuses on specific gaps in Indigenous student success due to the ongoing barriers outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. With a two-year implementation plan, change agents will have the space and time to identify key areas requiring further support. The spiral of inquiry (Kaser & Halbert, 2013) is designed to foster a collaborative process of assessment, focus, action, and reflection with three over-arching questions to guide the process:

1. What is going on for our learners?
2. How do we know?
3. Why does it matter?

In my role as Assistant Dean of Professional Development and Community Engagement (PDCE) in the Faculty of Education, I collaborate with meso level leaders across the province who are working to redefine Indigenous education in their school districts. I also work closely with the Associate Dean, Indigenous Education to develop non-credit and credit programs, create

new resources, and support Indigenous teacher candidates. Over the past year, while developing this OIP, I have determined four key areas for future consideration:

1. Incorporating the 4Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) into course syllabi, policy and procedure documentation, marketing and communications, and credit/non-credit program planning in the Faculty of Education
2. Providing education and resources to support staff and educators who work with Indigenous teacher candidates in the Faculty of Education
3. Creating integrated professional development opportunities focussing on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to support school district boards of education in developing new policies and procedures
4. Creating a new Indigenous Cultural Advisor staffing position in the PDCE unit to support ongoing development of non-credit programs and resources

Incorporating the 4Rs

The recent launch of the Faculty of Education's new strategic plan (Learning Transformed, 2019) spurred the development of the Equity and Inclusion Task Force and a specific portfolio addressing equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization (EDID) for one of the Associate Deans. Our senior leadership team is working to create an advisory committee to begin the process of decolonizing Faculty of Education policy and procedural documents. I am exploring a framework to support faculty and staff in rewriting formal documents using the 4Rs as a thematic guide when considering content and language moving forward. I have used the 4Rs (Kirkness & Barndhardt, 2001) with students, staff, and school leaders to help frame a decolonized lens in many areas and they have been well understood and often adopted as educators work to develop Indigenous education resources.

Supporting Indigenous Teacher Candidates

A new proposal to enhance practicum experiences for Indigenous Teacher Candidates (ITCs) has been approved this year. I am supporting the project in several areas including: the development of a 4-module online resource for faculty advisors (FAs) and school associates (SAs) to strengthen the FA-SA-ITC supervision model; facilitating the development of new online resources to support ITCs with preparation for practicum; and scaffolding staff and faculty work to establish an ITC Mentoring Network. Sinclair (2017) spoke to the importance of increasing Indigenous teacher capacity in the K-12 system to work towards reconciliation and self-determination. The *Enhancing Practicum through Indigenous Relations* project provides strategies for decolonizing the teacher education program and working towards more equitable learning opportunities for Indigenous students in the university. This will in turn, have a major impact on school districts moving forward, as more Indigenous teachers will bring their worldviews, pedagogies, and perspectives to the classroom.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)

School trustees work closely with superintendents to oversee operating and capital budgets and monitor the management of education programs. They bring a wide variety of perspectives to the board of education and are ultimately responsible for the success and well-being of all students in their districts. As gatekeepers of school programs, trustees are expected to navigate myriad new educational programs and often complex political initiatives. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2021. Indigenous education is a highly politicized space in which to work (Gunn et al., 2011). Non-Indigenous trustees would benefit from a well-designed professional development series on UNDRIP and DRIPA (2019) to enhance their understanding of the core

issues underpinning Indigenous education in B.C. Our professional development and community engagement (PDCE) unit will be supporting the development of a six-module online and face-to-face series designed for senior leadership teams and trustees to support mobilization of both documents. The goal is to ensure that school district initiatives incorporate these guidelines to support Indigenous learners moving forward.

Indigenous Cultural Advisor

The PDCE team is diverse, encompassing worldviews and perspectives from across the globe. However, we do not have any First Nations People, Métis, or Inuit on the team, and although we work closely with Indigenous scholars, researchers, and educators in the Faculty of Education for program development, we need to restructure internal staffing to include a local Indigenous Cultural Advisor. Two of the core priorities in the strategic plan (Learning Transformed, 2019) relate to the importance of this next step:

1. Recognize, celebrate, and promote diverse research, scholarship, knowledge practices, and intellectual traditions.
2. Foster sustainable relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with Indigenous communities.

The underpinning focus of this OIP is to improve Indigenous education programs to support Indigenous learners. An Indigenous Cultural Advisor will ensure that future programs and resources embed local Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies and that the 4Rs (Kirkness and Barndhardt, 2001) are incorporated at all levels of our work.

Chapter Summary

With an underlying focus on two-eyed seeing (Iwama et al., 2009) throughout this OIP, the core strategies for implementation, evaluation, and communication presented in Chapter 3

provide a balanced plan for meso leaders seeking to improve Indigenous education programs. Weaving together Stroh's four-stage change process, Deming's PDSA cycle (Murray, 2018) and the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) provides a strong foundation for monitoring and evaluation. Further, incorporating the four phases of communication (Deszca et al., 2020) to align with the four-stage change process (Stroh, 2015) and the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (FNESC, 2008) ensures a carefully crafted approach to communicating the change journey, milestones, and successes.

This is complex work, requiring constant check-ins with Indigenous partners to ensure an authentic, relevant, and respectful change process. Honest communication, flexible tools for assessment and evaluation, and a strong commitment to building lasting relationships at all levels of the organization will enable change agents to inch closer towards reconciliation in their school districts.

Conclusion

This OIP is an integrated change plan for decolonization of the K-12 system in the Cascade School Division. Meso level leaders must dismantle the colonial aspects of schooling and focus on a two-eyed approach (Iwama et al., 2009) incorporating Western and Indigenous knowledge systems that ensure practices are not forced on students, but serve to build and support their learning. It is critical that change agents engage in ongoing consultation with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Elders, scholars, educators, students, and families as they work through this change plan. Student voice and agency must be of paramount focus to build relationships and a culture of safety and trust (Gerlach et al., 2017; McGregor, 2019).

Boylan (2018) pointed to the need for leaders to be genuinely interested and supportive to be catalysts for change. Working in a space of disequilibrium and uncertainty (Campbell-Evans

et al., 2014) is challenging for educators, but not as challenging as the barriers facing Indigenous students and families in this country. It is our moral obligation as educational leaders to change the narrative in our schools so that all students feel safe, valued, and able to achieve their best.

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Appendix A: Rating Readiness for Change Questionnaire

Readiness Dimensions	Readiness Score
Previous Change Experiences	
1. Has the organization had overall positive experiences with change?	0 to +2
2. Has the organization had recent failures with change?	0 to -2
3. Is the mood of the organization positive?	0 to +2
4. Is the mood of the organization negative?	0 to -3
5. Does the organization appear to be at a standstill?	0 to -3
Executive Support	
6. Are senior managers directly involved in promoting the change?	0 to +2
7. Is there a clear vision of the future?	0 to +3
8. Is senior leader success dependent on the change occurring?	0 to +2
9. Are some senior leaders unlikely to support the change?	0 to -3
Credible Leadership and Change Champions	
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	0 to +3
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve their goals?	0 to +1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain respected change champions?	0 to +2
13. Are meso level leaders able to successfully link senior leaders with the rest of the organization?	0 to +1
14. Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as appropriate for the organization?	0 to +2
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	0 to +2
Openness to Change	
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the internal and external environment?	0 to +2
17. Is there a culture of scanning and reflection in the organization?	0 to +2
18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on core causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries?	0 to +2
19. Does a "silo" mentality exist in the organization that could affect the change?	0 to -3
20. Are middle and/or senior leaders locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	0 to -4
21. Are members of the organization able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	0 to +2
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	0 to +2
23. Is conflict suppressed, and smoothed over?	0 to -2
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	0 to +2

25. Does the organization have communication channels that work effectively in all directions?	0 to +2
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	0 to +2
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	0 to +2
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the ability and time to undertake the change?	0 to +2
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	0 to +2
Rewards for Change	
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	0 to +2
31. Does the reward system focus exclusively on short term results?	0 to -2
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	0 to -3
Measures for Change and Accountability	
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	0 to +1
34. Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	0 to +1
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate student satisfaction?	0 to +1
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	0 to +1
Scores can range from -25 to +50	
<i>If the organization scores below 10, it is not likely ready for change and change will be very difficult</i>	

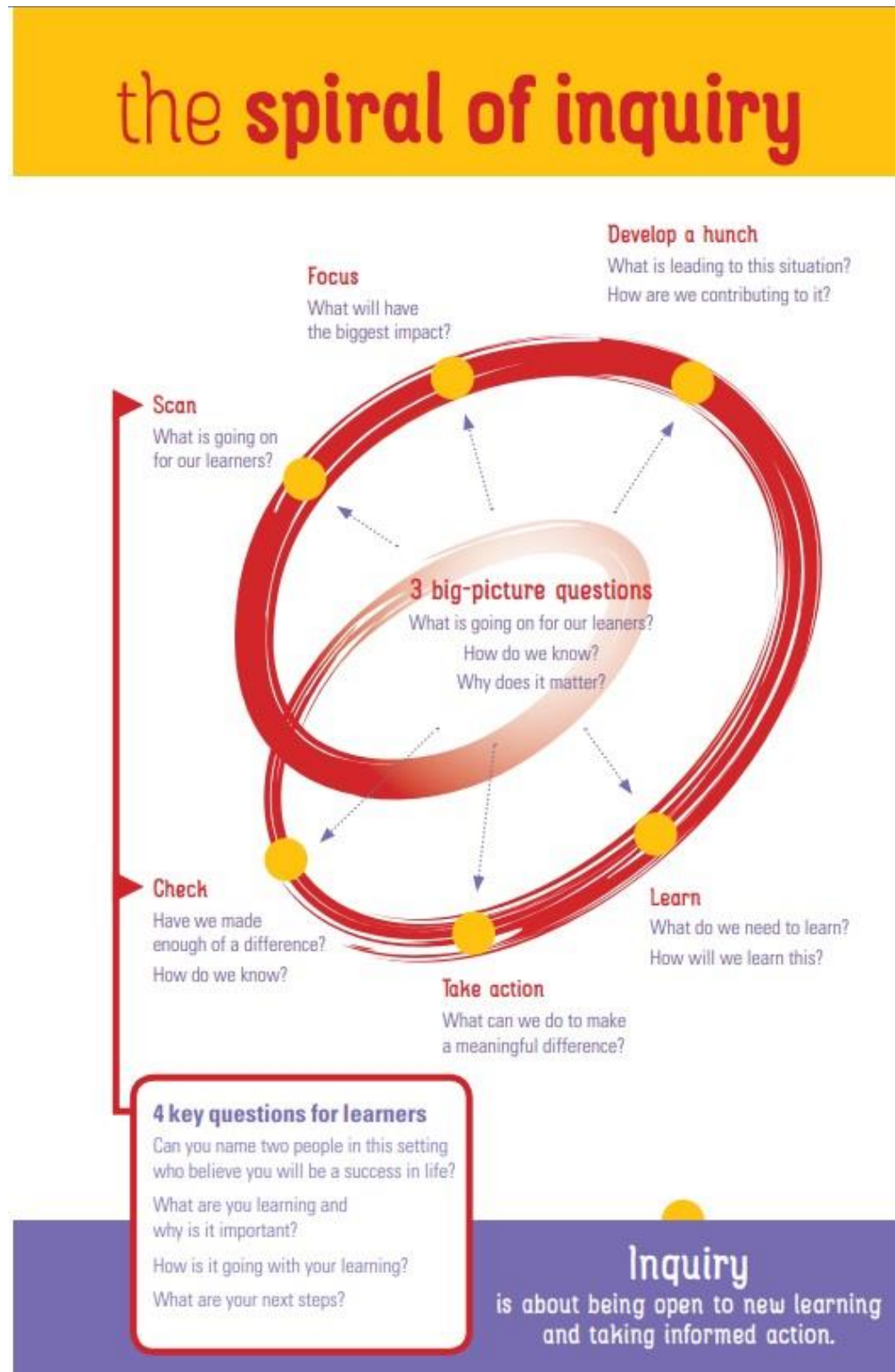
Adapted from Deszca et al., 2020.

Appendix B: Readiness: Setting the Table

STAGE 1 - READINESS	“Setting the Table”	
Goals and Priorities	Short Term: *Communicating the need for change *Engaging change leaders *Developing gap analyses *Understanding data and building collaborative capacity (What do you see? How do you feel? What do you think? What do you want?)	Long Term *Establishing collective vision *Building relationships *Supporting student success in school *Activating strategies to support truth and reconciliation in the B.C. school system
Educational/Cultural Leaders and Responsibilities	Educational/Cultural Leaders	Responsibilities
	*Change Leader	* Oversight of development and implementation of change plan * Establishment and implementation of ongoing communication plan throughout the change process
	*District Leaders	*Share district data, school data, and ministry reports
	*Indigenous Educators	*Share local Indigenous education goals and priorities
	*School Educators	*Share school-based Indigenous Education Plans, student demographic and achievement data
	*Indigenous Community Leaders	*Share community narratives, traditional priorities, cultural structures/supports, and family goals for student success
Proposed Timelines	*3 months to bring together meso level change leaders in rural and urban regions including the 6 Provincial Chapters: Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Kootenay-Boundary, Thompson-Okanagan, Northern, and Vancouver Island. This timeline aligns with the work of Child and Benwell (2015) in establishing provincial circle gatherings to develop a report on Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives	
Supports/Resources Needed	*Organizational Data including: “How Are We Doing?” Ministry reports	

	<p>District Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements School Indigenous Education Plans Ministry Satisfaction Surveys District Tripartite Agreements *Personal narratives and storytelling *Traditional protocols and cultural structures shared by Knowledge Keepers *Stroh's Ladder of Influence as a guiding tool *Communication Plan to develop transparency, build trust, and promote a shared understanding of this plan for change *Funds to support the circle gatherings</p>
Challenges	<p>* Communication across districts may be difficult to align due to varied contexts * Community leaders may need support in connecting with school districts both physically and emotionally * District leaders must prioritize Indigenous education programs in terms of strategic planning, budget, and cultural enhancement</p>

Appendix C: The Spiral of Inquiry



Source: Kaser & Halbert, 2013

Appendix D: Understanding and Acceptance: Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge

STAGE 2 – UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE	“Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge”	
Goals and Priorities	<p>Short Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identify people who know the history/background of the organization *Develop systems analyses to check on alignment of factors and support of achievement of the vision *Organize, synthesize, and improve quality of information *Support people in creating their own understanding of the need for change *Add mental models to influence participant behavior moving forward *Create catalytic conversations through systems mapping to promote acceptance, improve awareness and develop solutions 	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Establishing collective vision *Building relationships *Improving change agents’ understanding of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives *Supporting student success in school *Activating strategies to support truth and reconciliation in the B.C. school system
Educators/Cultural Leaders and Responsibilities	Educators and Cultural Leaders	Responsibilities
	*Change Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Oversight of development and implementation of change plan * Establishment and implementation of ongoing communication plan throughout the change process
	*District Leaders	*Provide training and resources to support understanding and application of the Spiral of Inquiry framework

	*Indigenous Educators	*Share local Indigenous education research and knowledge mobilization relevant to their territory/nation
	*School Educators	*Engage in collaborative inquiry processes using the Spiral of Inquiry to scan context and address needs: What is happening for learners? How is it going? Where to next?
	*Indigenous Community Leaders	*Engage in collaborative inquiry using the Spiral of Inquiry to explore community context/needs to support goals for student success
Proposed Timelines	*1 year minimum to work through the Spiral of Inquiry with all participants, following the natural cycle of the school year. Introduction and training on professional development days and after school sessions in Sept/Oct. Begin scanning phase in late October. Aim to get to the checking phase by June, so that evidence-based corrections can be established for the following year. Celebrate successes throughout the year. This timeline aligns with the traditional case study implementation goals of the Network of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE) used in the province for over a decade (Kaser & Halbert, 2013)	
Supports/Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Spiral of Inquiry Framework and connected resources for implementation *District or school funds to support professional development and resources *Personal narratives and storytelling provided by Knowledge Keepers and Elders *Systems mapping tools and resources *Communication plan to develop transparency, build trust and promote a shared understanding of this plan for change 	
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Relies on participant metacognition and reflection at many phases of the inquiry process *Requires strong guidance from change leaders and careful navigation of very complex and sensitive dialogue in catalytic conversations *Requires careful systems mapping and analysis for relevant solutions to emerge *The scanning phase is often lengthy and it may be difficult to pinpoint a focus *Participants must commit to at least a year of working together to participate in the entire collaborative inquiry cycle 	

Appendix E: Commitment: Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One's

Actions

STAGE 3 – COMMITMENT	“Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions”	
Goals and Priorities	Short Term: *Change agents determine needs/wants *Create analysis of pros/cons of change vs status quo *Participants make explicit choice in favor of improving Indigenous education programs	Long Term *Establishing collective vision *Building relationships *Supporting student success in school *Activating strategies to support truth and reconciliation in the B.C. School System
Educators/Cultural Leaders and Responsibilities	Educators and Cultural Leaders	Responsibilities
	*Change Leader	* Oversight of development and implementation of change plan * Establishment and implementation of ongoing communication plan throughout the change process
	*District Leaders	* Identify the case for status quo based on historical data in schools and district
	*Indigenous Educators	* Determine areas in need of improvement for Indigenous learners based on local community feedback – establish case for change
	*School Educators	* Cross analysis of pros/cons working with all other partners within school context and considering all learners’ needs
	*Indigenous Community Leaders	*Provide feedback on cross analysis of pros/cons and work with other change agents to determine explicit choice as to how best to improve Indigenous education programs
Proposed Timelines	*3 months for change teams to review district, school, and ministry data and compare status quo with case for change. Determine explicit choice based on the higher goal of improving existing Indigenous education programs in each district. Continue to celebrate small successes with partners	
Supports/Resources Needed	*Historical district and school data pertaining to status quo re: student achievement, graduation rates and satisfaction surveys	

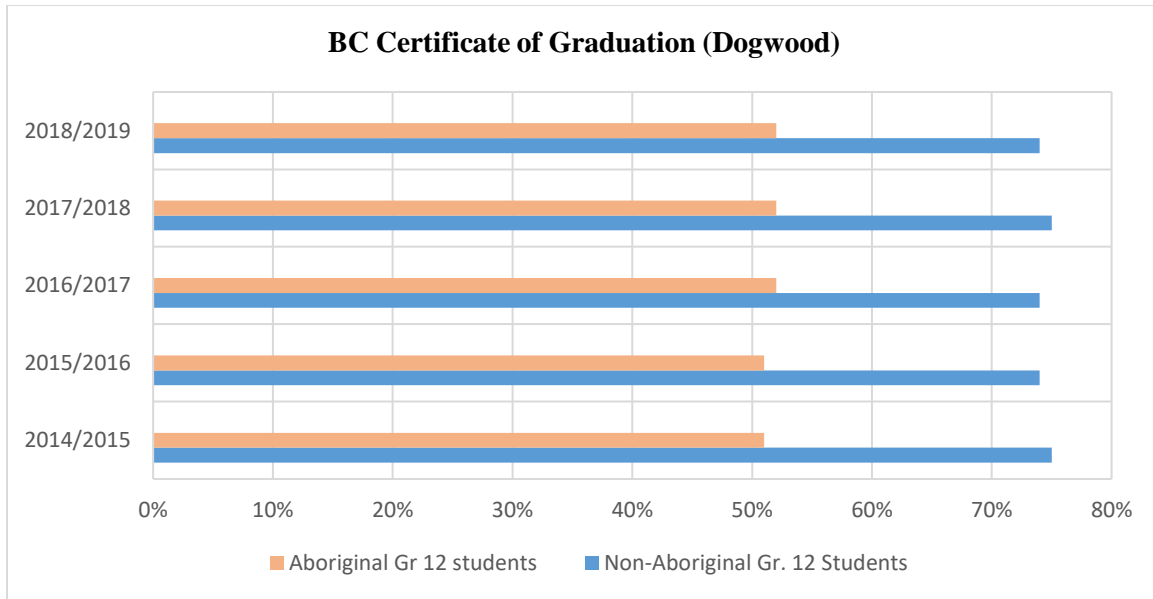
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Tools to create Both/And solutions graphs for problem solving and alignment*funding to support release time for school leaders and provide resources for documentation, mapping, analysis, etc.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Difficulty finding common ground for all participants*Time needed to work through the alignment phases and weaken the case for status quo*Avoiding the racism of low expectations*Proposed changes to Indigenous education programs need to align with revised B.C. curriculum

Appendix F: Focus, Momentum, and Correction: Learning Involves Patience and Time

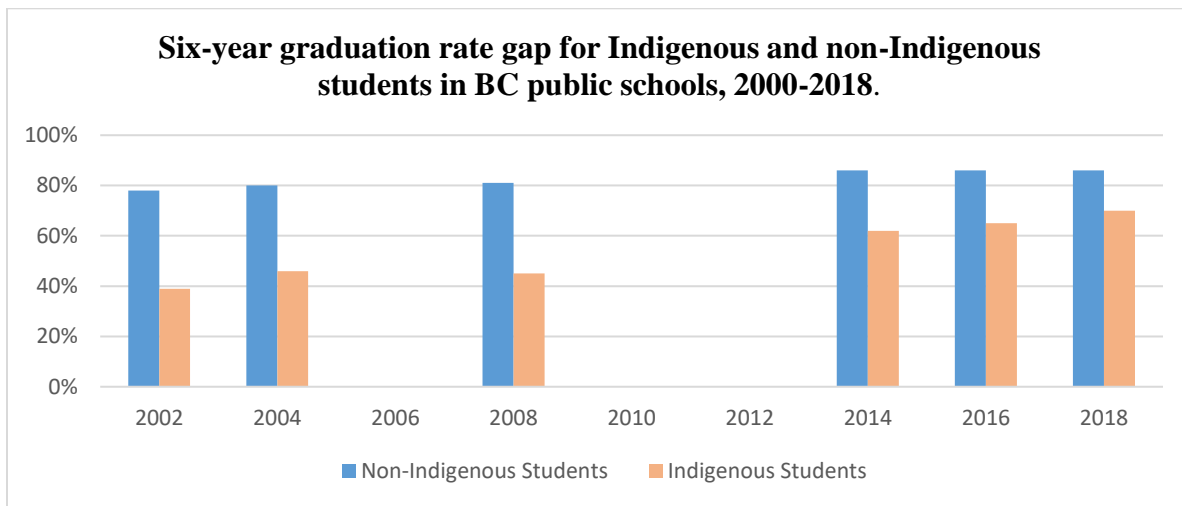
STAGE 4 – FOCUS, MOMENTUM, AND CORRECTION	“Learning involves patience and time”	
Goals and Priorities	Short Term: *Increase community input and awareness *Update goals, plans, metrics, structures and funding strategies *Develop an implementation plan *Expand participant involvement	Long Term *Establishing collective vision *Building relationships *Supporting student success in school and reconciliation in the B.C. school system *Establish a process for continuous learning and feedback
Educators/Cultural Leaders and Responsibilities	Educators and Cultural Leaders	Responsibilities
	*Change Leader	* Oversight of development and implementation of change plan * Establishment and implementation of ongoing communication plan *Expand participant involvement *Develop a long term implementation plan
	*District Leaders	*Create feedback systems/structures to rewire existing feedback relationships if needed *Support school educators and Indigenous educators in reinforcing the chosen purpose (updating goals, plans, metrics, incentive, authority, and funding) *Refine data based on new goals *Evaluate/refine plan
	*Indigenous Educators	* Refine interventions with community input *Check in with Indigenous students and families to gauge the process and shift mental models
	*School Educators	*Establish a process for continuous learning using the Spiral of Inquiry *Check in with Indigenous students for feedback and planning next steps
	*Indigenous Community Leaders	*Engage with district, school and Indigenous leaders to review the change process and provide feedback

		*Share revised plan with Chief and Council
Proposed Timelines	*2 - 6 months based on time needed for alignment of what people want and the vision which will require reviewing/refining data, evaluating/revising the plan and establishing a realistic and manageable process for continuous learning and outreach	
Supports/Resources Needed	*Funding to support professional development, resources, release time for educators, implementation of the communication plan, circle gatherings in communities, school review of data and reporting to Boards of Education and Chief and Council. Funding to support final celebration with partners.	
Challenges	<p>*Fatigue with the required effort to change the organization may result in some participants dropping out of the process</p> <p>*Funding structures are often dependent on annual budgets and economy</p> <p>*District and school leaders may change roles and no longer have the ability to engage in the change process</p>	

Appendix G: Ministry Data on Indigenous Student Achievement



Note: Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia based on Ministry of Education data.



Note: The graduation rate is measured as the percent of first time Grade 8 students who receive a certificate of graduation within 6 years. Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia based on Ministry of Education data.

Appendix H: Student Satisfaction Surveys

Sample Student Learning Survey – K-7

1. What activities would you like to do after school? (Open-ended response)
2. Do you participate in any Indigenous activities at school? (Never ... All of the time)
3. Do you participate in any ongoing Indigenous activities outside your school day? (Never ... All of the time)
4. 6. Is school a place where you feel like you belong? (Never ... All of the time)
5. 7. How many adults do you think care about you at your school? (None ... 4 or more adults)
6. 8. I am happy at my school. (Never ... All of the time)
7. 9. What changes would you like to see happen in your school? (Open-ended response)
8. 10. Do you feel welcome at your school? (Never ... All of the time)
9. 12. Do you like school? (Never ... All of the time)
10. 13. If you have a problem, can you get the help you need from adults at your school? (Never ... All of the time)
11. 14. Do you feel you have choice about what you are learning? (Never ... All of the time)
12. 15. Are your questions valued and welcomed by the adults at your school? (Never ... All of the time)
13. 16. Do you feel safe at school? (Never ... All of the time)
14. 17. Have you ever felt bullied at school? (Never ... All of the time)
15. 22. Is there any part of your learning where you need more help? (Open-ended response)
16. 24. Are you learning about Indigenous people at school? (Never ... All of the time)
17. 26. Are you learning the local First Nations' language(s) at school? (Never ... All of the time)
18. 33. If you do not understand something at school, do you ask for help? (Never ... All of the time)
19. 40. Are you learning to explain the way you solve problems? (Never ... All of the time)
20. 41. Do you have chances to show your learning in different ways (pictures, models, writing)? (Never ... All of the time)
21. 42. Are you learning ways to think of and explore new ideas? (Never ... All of the time)
22. 43. Are you learning how to care for your mental health? (Never ... All of the time)
23. 44. Are you learning how to care for your body? (Never ... All of the time)
24. 53. I like making new friends and meeting people at school. (Strongly disagree ... Strongly agree)
25. 54. Does school make you feel stressed or worried? (Never ... All of the time)
26. 56. Do you feel good about yourself? (Never ... All of the time)

Appendix I: Monitoring Tools and Purpose

STAGE	MONITORING TOOLS	PURPOSE
<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 1</p> <p>PLAN</p> <p>Readiness</p> <p>Setting the Table</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Circle Gatherings *Personal Narratives and Storytelling *HAWD Reports *District Indigenous Enhancement Agreements *School Indigenous Education Plans *Ministry Satisfaction Surveys *District Tripartite Education Agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Feedback from meso leaders *Community and family feedback on student wellness, sense of belonging and aspirations for post-secondary training or growth *Student achievement data *District goals and strategies to support Indigenous student success *School goals and strategies to support Indigenous student success *Student feedback on sense of belonging and wellness *Review funding and other district structures to support First Nations learners
<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 2</p> <p>DO</p> <p>Understanding and Acceptance</p> <p>Learning Recognizes the Role of Indigenous Knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Spiral of Inquiry (SOI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Scanning *Focusing *Developing a Hunch *Learning *Taking Action *Checking *Establish interviews, organize information, analyse systems, embrace stories
<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 3</p> <p>STUDY</p> <p>Commitment</p> <p>Learning Involves Recognizing the Consequences of One's Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Circle Gatherings, Surveys, Discussions *School, District, and Ministry Data *Pros/Cons assessment *Both/And Solutions Graphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Assess beliefs, attitudes, and values *Engage students, families and educators *Reflection and Re-evaluation *Determine areas in need of improvements for Indigenous learners *Establish case for change *Align purpose

<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 4</p> <p>ACT</p> <p>Focus, Momentum, and Correction</p> <p>Learning Involves Patience and Time</p>	<p>*Family and Community Meetings and surveys</p> <p>*Review goals, plans, metrics, structures, and funding strategies</p> <p>*Communication Plan</p> <p>*Meso leaders meeting</p>	<p>*Check in with Indigenous students and families to determine progress and needs</p> <p>*Rewire plan if needed based on feedback from students, families and educators</p> <p>*Community input and awareness</p> <p>*Feedback and planning next steps</p>
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Appendix J: Communication Plan

Four Stage Process (Stroh, 2015)	Phases of Change (Deszca et al., 2020)	Target Audience	Communication Strategies	Purpose
Stage 1 Readiness	Phase 1 Pre-Change Approval	Meso level leaders, students, teachers, vice principals, principals, families, community cultural advisors, senior leadership	Circle Gatherings, PLC meetings, letters, presentations, interviews, forums, stories, ceremonies	*Develop awareness *Establish need for change *Build relationships, *Establish values/vision
Stage 2 Understanding and Acceptance Stage 3 Commitment	Phase 2 Developing the Need for Change	Meso level leaders, teachers, vice principals, principals, senior leadership teams, boards of education, students, families, Indigenous educators, Knowledge Keepers, researchers, and Elders	Online/in-person communications, PLC meetings, storytelling, reports, social media, surveys, informal meetings	*Garner information *Analyze factors *Discuss need for change *Review pros/cons *Stimulate shared resolve to find solutions
Stage 4 Focus, Momentum, and Correction	Phase 3 Midstream Change and Milestones Phase 4 Confirm and Celebrate Successes	Meso level leaders, students, teachers, vice principals, principals, students parents, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, boards of education, and ministry representatives. All participants, including internal and external as outlined above	Memos, letters, reports, presentations, video narratives, and student reflections Reports, district plans, letters, district-wide correspondences, in-person celebrations, circle gatherings, stories and artifacts.	*Gauge progress *Provide support *Review systems and structures *Adjust strategies *Re-align goals *Recognize positive gains *Build on the focus and momentum for change *Confirm successes and celebrate progress.