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## Learning: What Counts and Who Decides?

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## Abstract

Educators, educational leaders, and policymakers continue to develop academic interventions for secondary school students who experience ongoing struggles. This approach is understandable given the neoliberal educational goal to support students' becoming contributing members of society. However, time spent responding to symptoms (i.e., students failing courses) merely maintains the status quo. It negates the exploration of a deeper cause of these struggles. This organizational improvement plan (OIP) explores and initiates a change to respond to a cause of these challenges: lack of student voice in learning environments resulting in diminished student achievement and limited awareness of postsecondary pathway possibilities. Although mentioned in education policy and visionary statements, the application of student voice is inconsistent, limited, and often performative as the domination of normalized adult voice prevails. Two-Eyed Seeing and the ethic of the best interest of the student will support the elevation of student voice in reimagining their formal learning experiences. It will further the interrogation and expansion of student demonstration of their learning, privileging student-driven approaches over teacher-centered ones. Transformative and followership leadership approaches situate all participants as learners, collaboratively exploring, identifying, and disrupting assumptions about student learning and teaching practices while co-designing changes that evolve from current reality. This is realized through a discovery-based inquiry cycle, an iterative change model, and a monitoring framework that tracks formative and summative indicators of progress and success. This OIP prioritizes including student voice, situating students as drivers of their learning experience, and reimagining adults' role in making a difference for a child.

*Keywords:* student voice, Two-Eyed Seeing, best interest of the student, followership leadership, transformative leadership, social justice

## Executive Summary

The desire of education leaders and policymakers to improve student achievement and well-being is well documented in research (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018; Sussman, 2015) and practice (KDSB, 2021a). Initiatives, including Ontario's Student Success Program (SSP), speak to this priority (MoE, 2022a). However, many adult-driven initiatives neglect to consider or include student voice meaningfully (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Student voice, if mentioned, is often done to support adult decisions or initiatives (Conner et al., 2015). This has inspired the Problem of Practice (PoP) that has catalyzed this organizational improvement plan (OIP): The lack of student voice in learning environments resulting in diminished student achievement and limited awareness of postsecondary pathway possibilities (e.g., school, apprenticeships, career training, or employment). This OIP aims to challenge the adult-dominated educational narrative by considering this PoP within the context of a large school district in Ontario while exploring different approaches that increase the presence and role of student voice in education.

Chapter 1 explores organizational context through the intersections of various factors that have created tension between meeting Eurocentric and neoliberal expectations championed by the Ontario Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Kamino District School Board (KDSB, a pseudonym) and demands for the inclusion of greater diversity. Although challenging, this has created opportunities to explore current and potential values in education. The vision of this OIP is to evolve teaching practice to change student learning experiences such that understanding of student success broadens beyond a sole focus on neoliberal priorities (e.g., credit accumulation) to consider other values and worldviews, as learned through Two-Eyed Seeing. This is especially important for students in SSPs who are at risk of not graduating due to low credit acquisition.

KDSB operates under the direction of the MoE, which privileges neoliberal values (e.g., standardization, quantitative data, and the job market) over all others (CPAC, 2021; MoE, 2022a). KDSB is a large district governed and operationalized through hierarchical structures that value team- and trait-based leadership. It is situated within a highly educated, increasingly diverse community that is (rightfully) seeking the inclusion of more personal and culturally relevant values within K-12 learning environments. This is evidenced in the KDSB's strategic plan (KDSB, n.d.a) and the Indigenous, Human Rights, and Equity Roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b), where high expectations through innovative approaches and increased cultural and identity-based representation are sought in learning environments. Although conflict-ridden on the surface, this tension creates opportunities to consider leadership and learning approaches that move beyond a focus on quantitative outcomes towards exploring student learning as a personalized journey that includes lived experiences and pathway goals.

Chapter 2 frames this OIP through an iterative approach that values relationships and reflection, promoting an environment of continuous learning. Transformative and followership leadership challenges hierarchical realities embedded within leading and learning through relationships that seek contribution (Kellerman, 2008), co-design change-making (Shields, 2022), and enable shifts between change leaders, change implementers, and change facilitators (Burke, 2018). The change path model (CPM) (Deszca et al., 2020) is people-centered and uses a cyclical approach that applies new learning to existing thinking, situating change as a continuous process rather than a series of linear, episodic steps. The A-VICTORY (Holt et al., 2007) change readiness analysis tool identifies the organization's readiness to embrace this change while highlighting key growth areas in the change implementation plan. The use of this tool continues

the theme of reflection as this analysis provides a status update while also identifying areas for ongoing learning.

In Chapter 3, the CPM will be used to structure and guide the change implementation plan for the chosen postsecondary experience (PSE) solution, reinforcing an iterative, reflective approach to change that seeks to embrace and embed voices (e.g., student, parent, partner, and educator) to evolve staff practice and positively change student learning experiences. Following an appreciative inquiry approach, the CPM will guide the design, implementation, and monitoring of this change effort to ensure the intended change is realized throughout and at the end of this implementation plan. This approach recognizes the value of the learning journey while celebrating outcomes. Lavis et al. (2003) provided a structure to guide the dissemination of learning, which continues a relational and learning focus that cultivates an environment of curiosity for participants and observers through dialogue (Angus, 2006), information-seeking (Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014), and sensemaking (Lewis, 2019). Kaplan and Norton's (1996) balanced scorecard strengthens the implementation and communication plans by focusing on various formative (short-term) and summative (long-term) indicators of progress. This guides the implementation as formative learning is applied immediately, and summative evidence of this change initiative's impact (or institutionalization stage of the CPM) is captured.

This OIP presents a problem well documented in research and evidenced by the impact on student achievement and well-being, especially for students in student success programs. It describes a personally meaningful, student-driven solution that is built from an asset-based lens that leverages student strengths and interests, creating the conditions to reimagine what learning looks like and expand what counts in learning, helping students see themselves as successful, and opening their eyes to the potentially prosperous future before them.

## Acknowledgement

I am privileged to live and learn on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin homelands, and I offer my thanks for their stewardship of these lands. I hope this organizational improvement plan (OIP) sparks the exploration of more inclusive and meaningful learning experiences for students historically harmed and silenced by the education system.

I would not have contemplated, initiated, or accomplished this benchmark in my learning journey without the support of my family. My wife, who demonstrates endless patience, has been an eternal champion who helped me know that I could do this. She supported me through the challenges, celebrated my successes, and was always open when I needed to talk through some new thinking. I would not have started this journey without her support and encouragement. Throughout my entire life, my mother and sister have been there to support me. They have always energetically encouraged me with each new challenge. Knowing they were there and checking in on my progress has meant more than I can express. Although no longer with us, I know my father would be incredibly proud of this accomplishment.

My learning through this experience has been one of the most impactful of my life, and I owe an incredible gratitude to my professors and colleagues in this program. Each of these colleagues inspired me and influenced my thinking. I wish to especially thank Dr. Dianne Yee for bringing fresh thinking and a positive approach to her hours of coaching and support. Additionally, I am grateful to my colleagues and friends who have helped in varying ways through this process. Your interest and encouragement have meant an enormous amount to me.

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## List of Acronyms

BIPSAW	Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-being
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
Co-op	Cooperative Education
CPM	Change Path Model
DSB	District School Board
K-12	Kindergarten through Grade 12
KDSB	Kamino District School Board (a pseudonym)
KMP	Knowledge Mobilization Plan
LP	Learning Partner (a centrally assigned teacher)
MoE	Ministry of Education
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
OPSBA	Ontario Public School Board Association
PoP	Problem of Practice
PSE	Postsecondary Experience
SO	Superintendent (or Supervisory Officer)
SSP	Student Success Program
SST	Student Success Teacher

### **Glossary of Terms / Definitions**

**Appreciative Inquiry Cycle:** The appreciative inquiry cycle is a structured, participative, relational inquiry cycle that guides actors through the exploration of a problem leading to the creation of something new through four phases: discovery, dream, design, and delivery (Conklin, 2009).

**Complexity Theory:** Stacey's complexity theory looks beyond individual elements, exploring behaviours or outcomes produced through the interaction of those constituent elements (Mason, 2008).

**Critical Paradigm:** The critical paradigm seeks to challenge the status quo by empowering people (especially those who are disempowered), questioning and exploring assumptions to make change happen, and recognizing that our understanding of reality is grounded in social interaction and human choice (Fielding, 2006; Green, 2017; Scotland, 2012).

**Eurocentric / Western:** The terms Eurocentric or Western signal the centrality of Western-European values and beliefs such that values, what are deemed important, and understanding of success are measured against Eurocentric norms (Dei, 2018).

**Followership Leadership:** Followership leadership situates followers as an intrinsic part of the leadership process, centering the interactions and relationships amongst and with all participants (followers and leaders), minimizing the supremacy of role, and elevating leadership as a collaborative process of contribution (Kellerman, 2008; Taylor & Hill, 2017).

**Grounded Theory:** As a branch of social justice theory, grounded theory is a qualitative approach that seeks to construct knowledge through an iterative process of using new learning and evidence to generate new knowledge (Charmaz, 2014; El Hussein, 2017; Lassig, 2022).

**Indigenous Paradigm:** The Indigenous paradigm looks holistically and seeks interconnections. It approaches learning by including voices, encouraging participation, and embracing the contribution of a community of people while valuing the lived experiences of others. It is often shared through oral tradition that illustrates an authentic two-way approach to teaching and learning (look-listen-learn). Learning is contextual, and a trial-and-error approach is valued and encouraged, reinforcing the value of experiential learning and meaningful personal connections (Hatcher et al., 2009; Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016; Munroe et al., 2013).

**Neoliberalism:** Neoliberalism defines policy approaches that embrace quantitative, standardized, economic, employment-outcome, marketized, and global competitive priorities (Apple, 2016b; Davies, 2007; Grimaldi, 2012).

**Social Justice Theory:** Social justice theory seeks to elevate marginalized people, enhancing opportunities for all by identifying and challenging practices that maintain and reproduce inequalities, barriers, privilege, and hierarchy while increasing the weight of historically unheard voices and augmenting access and opportunities (Charmaz, 2014; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016; Ryan & Tutters, 2017; Theoharis, 2010; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016).

**Student Success Programs:** Student success programs provide additional learning support to individual students experiencing barriers to success and are at risk of not graduating from high school (Ontario Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020).

**Student Voice:** Student voice includes opportunities for students to share ideas and ask questions, be provided with intentional space to share ideas, have their ideas listened to by adults, and have their ideas influence matters that impact them (Lundy, 2011).

**Transformative Leadership:** Transformative leadership is a dialogue-driven, reflective, reciprocal, relationship-based, participative approach that challenges inappropriate uses of

power, questions assumptions, and takes steps and actions to make change happen, including realigning systems and structures to achieve the desired change (Elias et al., 2006; Shields, 2022; Smith & de Klerk, 2022, van Oord, 2013).

**Two-Eyed Seeing:** Two-Eyed Seeing emerged from Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall's teachings and shared learnings. It is grounded in relationships and seeks the creation of a welcoming and inclusive environment. Two-Eyed Seeing seeks to celebrate the strengths of different ways of learning and knowing, celebrating the uniqueness of Indigenous and Western worldviews and approaches, and ensuring each is equally respected and valued (Bartlett et al., 2012; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009).

## **Chapter 1: Problem Posing**

This organizational improvement plan (OIP) presents the opportunity to reimagine the purpose of learning, analyze current teaching approaches, and explore how learning can be diversified to positively change student learning experiences. This involves moving beyond Eurocentric norms that prioritize neoliberal outcomes while reinforcing hierarchical and one-way approaches to learning and communication toward the inclusion of diversified values and beliefs (Dei, 2018). Chapter 1 will explore my positionality, leadership approaches, and contextual influences on the current state of student learning.

### **Positionality and Lens Statement**

My leadership positionality is grounded in reflection, collaboration, listening, building upon strengths, and fostering an environment of wonder and curiosity where considering alternatives is commonplace. While management might be about completing a series of tasks, leadership is about people (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007; Starr, 2016) and realizing opportunities through respectful and asset-based interactions, prioritizing connections with people over deference to formal roles (Liou et al., 2015). Commitment to people is furthered through my awareness of the privilege I was born into, identifying with the dominant, Eurocentric society as a White, cis-gendered man. With that privilege comes the responsibility to “make visible the invisible” (Apple, 2016a, p. 511) by actively seeking and naming normative practices, interrogating those practices, and making changes to go beyond advantaging some to advantaging all (Shields, 2004). For example, as a white settler, I honor the privilege of learning about and including the Mi’kmaq Two-Eyed Seeing approach in this OIP. Two-Eyed Seeing seeks recognition of Western and Indigenous ways of learning and knowing (Iwama et al., 2009). Initially framed by Mi’kmaw Elder Albert Marshall (Bartlett et al., 2012), “Two-Eyed Seeing is



the gift of multiple perspectives” (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 335), connecting people and knowledge. Rather than merging diverse knowledge, it recognizes and explores the intersections between different values (Iwama et al., 2009) while reinforcing that each value is equally respected (Bartlett et al., 2012; Hatcher et al., 2009). Two-Eyed Seeing prioritizes relationships and prompts consideration of a more comprehensive view beyond what any one view can reveal (Iwama et al., 2009), reinforcing the essential impact of co-learning and collaboration (Hatcher et al., 2009). This learning prompted my exploration of creating opportunities with students for whom the system continues to fail, such that their values are recognized, and their experiences in school are positively changed.

### **Role and Responsibilities**

My role as a superintendent (SO) in a large school district in Ontario allows me to realize these beliefs through action. I work directly with many schools while supporting innovation, adolescent learning, student success, and student voice portfolios. These portfolio responsibilities inspire me to engage in social justice work as I aim to foster a more inclusive and student-driven learning experience for all students (Apple, 2016a), especially students from historically underserved communities whose voices remain unheard. Innovation, a pillar in the Kamino District School Board’s (KDSB, a pseudonym) strategic plan (KDSB, n.d.a), opens many opportunities to question the status quo (Green, 2017) and explore possibilities (Ya’akovy, 2006) to reflect better the learning needs and identities of the students we serve. This requires shifting from sharing opinions to posing questions that encourage dialogue, prompt wonder and curiosity, and actively search for learning and pathway opportunities previously seen as unattainable.

Further, the concept of student voice creates space to explore the application of power in educational environments (Johnston et al., 2021; Nelson, 2017). I can leverage my positional

authority to elevate the voices of others by questioning whose voice fills the space, modeling an approach that builds awareness of other worldviews, recognizing diverse values, and supporting those values in driving the next steps. Through the adolescent learning and student success portfolios, I intentionally look at who defines the purpose of learning while highlighting and exploring the impact of traditional, predetermined learning strategies on students.

SOs have responsibilities and obligations to the Ministry of Education (MoE), their district school board (DSB), and their schools. Provincially, the role of the SO is defined in the Education Act (Government of Ontario, n.d.) as supporting schools, continually improving education, ensuring compliance with MoE and DSB policies and procedures, and reporting to the MoE and DSB as required. I meet these responsibilities by advocating for change (Shields, 2010) and being a change agent (Pinto et al., 2012). Maintaining the status quo is the antithesis of my leadership philosophy. Consequently, I prioritize connections with people by co-developing professional learning opportunities with principals and vice-principals, supporting educators in expanding opportunities with students (not for them), working directly with educators to explore new ways of learning, and searching for more ways to capture learning. Most importantly, my professional position involves listening to students, families, and the community to better understand their priorities, learn about their experiences, and work collaboratively to evolve our education system to meet their needs better. Rather than being constrained to what was or is, I look to what could be by diversifying student learning experiences and embracing new approaches to demonstrating learning.

### **Beliefs that Frame Understanding**

I believe every student has areas of genius. They have hopes and ideas of what could be and come to school deserving an experience supporting their dreams' attainment. Given that

perspective, I have a moral obligation and responsibility to support the ongoing evolution of personalized approaches to learning that are co-designed, recognize diverse values, and positively impact student learning experiences. What I see, how I construct knowledge, and what I believe to be important are framed through the critical paradigm, the Indigenous paradigm, Two-Eyed Seeing, and social justice theory. I believe the status quo is in place because it has met the prior needs of the dominant culture. However, it has excluded the needs of many others (Shields, 2022). Nothing serves everyone equally well, and we must challenge the status quo (Fielding, 2007) to ensure we evolve practices to meet those needs better. The urgency of this problem is illustrated through gaps in access and opportunities between different groups and people in our society (Breunig, 2019; Morcom & Freeman, 2018; Theoharis, 2010). This reality needs to change such that those currently disadvantaged are advantaged. In alignment with the critical paradigm, we must challenge the idea that one person holds all knowledge and shift the view of power from a one-way, hierarchical lens to a shared, two-way approach (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007). My personal and professional positionality affords me the opportunity to humbly include and build awareness of the Indigenous paradigm and the Mi'kmaq Two-Eyed Seeing approach (Iwama et al., 2009). The Indigenous paradigm challenges the status quo by disrupting taken-for-granted truths (Iseke & Brennus, 2011), furthered through Two-Eyed Seeing which values the lived and learning experiences of each person, Indigenous and non-Indigenous (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Iwama et al., 2009). Social justice theory reinforces these priorities by situating each person as an expert in their own life (Mehra et al., 2007). This theory goes beyond welcoming voices by searching out marginalized people (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016), drawing their voices forward to break the silence, and cultivating an environment where the search for possibilities is commonplace (Theoharis, 2010).

Learning must go beyond being student-centered, which describes something done to or for a student, toward a student-driven approach that puts control into the hands of the student (Brion-Meisels, 2015). Voice, specifically student voice, must move beyond teacher-defined choice (e.g., choose between two different assignment options) to practices that embed student voice, space, audience, and influence (see Appendix A), where the inclusion of their voice is not merely a gift from adults but a right and expectation of and for all students (Lundy, 2007).

### **Leadership and Equity**

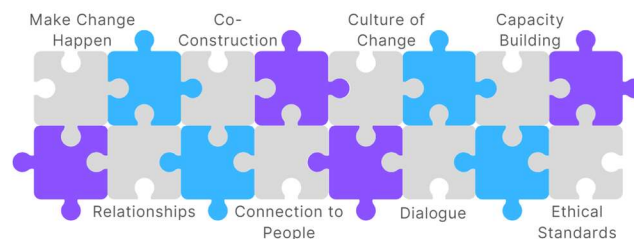
Leadership through change requires that challenges be collaboratively embraced and reframed as emerging opportunities. It is about looking beyond barriers toward possibilities. We must, as learned through Two-Eyed Seeing, recognize and seek to learn more about diverse approaches to learning and knowledge connected to, framed by, and discovered through everyone's worldview (Burnes et al., 2018). Leadership can focus solely on outcomes, especially in our provincially-driven neoliberal environment (Lewis et al., 2006). However, I see leadership as more. Leadership is a journey and a process (Connolly et al., 2019) enriched by embracing diverse ways of knowing. It must include exploring alternatives, considering additional values, and awareness of personal biases and assumptions (Morcom & Freeman, 2018). I believe leadership is a relational, co-constructed experience (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2012) that evolves through dialogue (Angus, 2006; Patterson, 2013) and provides opportunities for reciprocal, collaborative learning where every participant is situated as a learner (Ciulla, 2005).

Transformative and followership leadership approaches (as illustrated in Figure 1) align with these beliefs and perspectives, prioritizing a relational approach that seeks meaningful social justice change (Celoria, 2016; King & Stevenson, 2017). Transformative leadership connects people, builds self-efficacy, and maintains high moral and ethical standards. It aims to

do the right thing (Baek-Kyoo & Nimon, 2014) over doing things right (Ciulla, 2005). Transformative leadership seeks a culture change (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007) by being authentic and transparent. It engages followers to continue to build their capacity as leaders. Followership leadership partners with transformative leadership (Burnes et al., 2018), situating leadership as a relationship between follower and leader (Billot et al., 2013), diminishing the supremacy of role and increasing the focus on collaborative contribution. Followership leadership levels the power dynamics in the omnipresent hierarchy (King & Stevenson, 2017) by supporting a co-constructed approach that can, on the surface, appear inefficient and chaotic (i.e., rather than one person directing action, a group of people with different types of knowledge collaboratively develop a plan). However, this superficial chaos provides more opportunities to engage with resistance, identify the source of the resistance, and work to build shared understanding through dialogue and the ongoing exchange of ideas (Carsten et al., 2010). This approach values diverse voices and perspectives through a collaborative exploration of change. Followership leadership increases motivation, builds capacity, and inspires more significant commitment to the work, reinforcing transformative goals of embedding authentic, long-term, meaningful change (Billot et al., 2013; Carsten et al., 2010).

### Figure 1

#### *Priorities and Connections in Transformative and Followership Leadership*



*Note.* Adapted from Kellerman (2008) and Shields (2022).

My leadership stance is about learning and is grounded in relationships and listening. It is about challenging accepted practices so more students experience the success they deserve. Transformative and followership leadership support this goal by seeking to make authentic change happen (Duffy, 2008; Neumeister, 2017; Patterson, 2013) through partnerships rather than through hierarchy (Carsten et al., 2010; Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007), prioritizing the journey and (not or) the outcome (Billot et al., 2013), and valuing people and their experiences over the production of products (Coyle & Foti, 2021; Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018; Northouse, 2021). These actions challenge normative structures and systems (Pinto et al., 2012), creating the conditions to openly question bias and assumptions. This is equity work in practice. Moving beyond performative hope for equity, this approach intentionally removes access barriers for those historically underserved. It seeks, welcomes, and increases the weight of the voices of people who have been historically silenced (Mitra & McCormick, 2017; Romm, 2022). Through a two-way exchange of ideas (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016), it creates opportunities to share voice and leadership among all participants (Burnes et al., 2018) rather than the privileged few. Finally, it embraces other ways of doing, learning, and being, thus shifting the focus from a dominant Eurocentric standard (Dei, 2018) to a standard established by and reflective of the values of those directly impacted (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007). The next section will explore the intersection of these approaches within an established organizational context.

### **Organizational Context**

Organizational context is influenced by static and fluctuating internal and external factors (Lewis, 2019; Mason, 2008). Each factor provides information on expectations, creates challenges, and fosters opportunities regarding what could be (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Theoharis, 2010). The KDSB is privileged to serve 70,000 to 80,000 students in 125 to 150

schools in an urban center in Ontario. 10,000 to 12,000 educators and support staff cultivate learning environments that maximize impact on student achievement and well-being.

Politically, my organization is firmly embedded within a neoliberal paradigm where standardization and quantitative measures define success, and the pressure of global competitiveness is ever-present (Grimaldi, 2012; King & Stevenson, 2017). Provincially, what is valued and, as importantly, what is not, is signaled through the provincial publication of high-stakes standardized test results and graduation rates (MoE, 2022b). The KDSB reinforces these values by publishing quantitative achievement rates (KDSB, n.d.c) and the highest marks for students going to university (KDSB, n.d.d), with no mention of other pathway options.

These political goals are realized through policy and come with an economic cost. In 2003 the government established and resourced student success programs (SSP) in each DSB to accelerate student credit attainment and improve graduation rates (MoE, 2020). The KDSB established these programs, allocating student success teachers (SST) to each secondary school supported by a central principal and SO. This requires additional annual funding of approximately \$6 million. This significant draw on KDSB resources must result in positive change, which is monitored by submitting annual MoE and KDSB reports.

Two social influences frame and drive the KDSB: governance and decision-making approaches. Locally elected trustees govern DSBs (Ontario Public School Board Association [OPSBA], 2018) and are accountable to constituents while simultaneously being mandated to meet MoE expectations. These individuals, policymakers, and elected provincial officials have the power to communicate direction by establishing a vision and setting policy (Campbell & Fullan, 2019; OPSBA, 2018). Our community is politically engaged and highly educated (Statistics Canada, 2019), creating an environment where many have knowledge and access

(Campbell & Fullan, 2019) to pursue priorities that guide the KDSB's direction. However, some in the community (for example, new Canadians who do not know how to access the system or students so disenfranchised by the system that they do not feel anyone cares to help them) do not share this opportunity of access. Thus, access is inconsistent, and consequently, the weight of their influence varies.

The political and policy factors referenced earlier directly impact cultural factors that influence the KDSB. A policy focus on standardized approaches and quantitative measures has been infused in leadership approaches that value decontextualized learning, discrete skills, and efficiency (Grimaldi, 2012; Munroe et al., 2013). These approaches have been inculcated into instructional approaches that reproduce uniformity, creating conditions that make alternative or personalized approaches the outlier.

### **Influencing the Leadership and Shape of the Organization**

The KDSB's approach to leadership shapes its culture and communicates organizational values. In the KDSB, trait-based leadership (Northouse, 2021) is used to identify leaders, while team leadership is used to realize its vision. These leadership approaches reinforce a hierarchical approach to leadership and governance, valuing and reproducing standardized and outcome-based perspectives (Starr, 2016; Yosso, 2005) that secure the status quo (Kotter, 2012). They establish parameters directing who has decision-making power (Campbell & Fullan, 2019), restricting those who can make change happen to a privileged few (Grimaldi, 2012).

Candidates for formal leadership positions must participate in a trait-based (Northouse, 2021) competition process that serves to assess their mastery of prescribed, standardized characteristics and skills (KDSB, n.d.e) as defined in the Ontario Leadership Framework (Institute for Educational Leadership, n.d.). This approach allows the organization to match skills



with identified needs efficiently. It is quantifiable and, consequently, easier for everyone to understand. However, it also communicates what the organization values in leaders and sets the framework to describe a limited understanding of leadership. This approach centers the individual and their inherent skill set, devaluing the potential contribution of others and disregarding context (Northouse, 2021).

Functionally, my organization uses team leadership. Schools, families of schools, and various departments individually engage with different aspects of work aligned with their strengths and portfolios to achieve the organization's vision. Team leadership efficiently accomplishes tasks and provides a structure to track progress. However, it remains silent on the ethical debate exploring the difference between doing something right or doing the right thing (Ciulla, 2005). Team leadership prioritizes task completion but may not challenge the status quo (Northouse, 2021). It does not question who defines the right way to do something. Further, it minimizes opportunities for collaboration, indirectly fostering a siloed approach and limiting co-learning opportunities. Both leadership approaches are straightforward and easily monitored. However, they can reinforce and reproduce a single, Eurocentric lens (Dei, 2018).

These factors, combined with student and parent demands to increase voice and personalize learning create tensions that continue to shape the KDSB. These tensions challenge policies and practices, creating opportunities to explore new possibilities. This exploration of possibilities opens the opportunity to discuss the purpose of learning and consider who has the privilege of making that determination. Further, it reveals the difference between talking about something and taking action to make change happen: to make a difference in a child's life. As we explore what could be, the emerging tensions place the KDSB on a precipice of change from the comfort of what was towards a place of discomfort and exploration regarding what could be.

## Equity

Education in Ontario privileges neoliberal priorities with perfunctory attention given to equity (Bogotch, 2000; Roache & Marshall, 2022). Neoliberal priorities are emphasized to facilitate efficient monitoring and reporting (Davies & Bansel, 2007), as seen through mandated evaluation reporting requirements in MoE publications such as *Growing Success* (MoE, 2022c). The MoE regularly speaks to standardized test results when speaking about the health of the education system (Abeti & Patton, 2018; Global News, 2022). Additionally, policy changes are often grounded in neoliberal values. This was seen in 2021 when the MoE released a new math curriculum, and the MoE highlighted increased employment as a driver for this new curriculum (CPAC, 2021). In March 2023, the MoE announced an apprenticeship pathway to support students in graduating high school while noting the need for skilled trade workers (MoE, 2023). Neither of these announcements spoke to the student learning experience. Instead, they focused on neoliberal outcomes that benefit society.

Equity receives far less attention than its neoliberal counterpart and is generally only spoken to from a visionary lens (MoE, n.d.a). When present, mentions of equity are often limited to task suggestions and recommended considerations, with limited accountability measures resulting in minimal known evidence of impact. For example, Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (MoE, n.d.a) suggests surveys to collect identity-based data without providing support to utilize the collected data, demonstrating performative engagement with equity. Further, the MoE recently signaled a diminished priority on equity by removing equity and identity-based language from updated curricular documents (Jones, 2021; MoE, n.d.b), eliminating the limited equity prompts that had previously existed in the documents.

We know that not all students seek the same goals nor value the same indicators of progress (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Khalifa et al., 2019; Pidgeon, 2015). However, in contrast with Two-Eyed Seeing, policy often communicates only Western goals for students (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Noyes, 2005), minimizing the potential for authentic personalization of learning. The system actively disenfranchises students as only certain types of learning are valued, lived experiences are disregarded, and opportunities to truly explore learning that supports the achievement of student pathway goals are limited (Lumby, 2012; Mitra, 2018).

However, the KDSB has taken steps to move equity from a performative realm to a transformative reality. It has published a visionary Indigenous, Human Rights, and Equity Roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b) to action equity and increase accountability with all community members we serve. The need for this work has been shared by the community and reinforced through data demonstrating reduced achievement for students who identify from underserved communities (KDSB, 2021a; KDSB 2021b). It communicates a commitment to improving representation, valuing personalized learning, and increasing the inclusion of historically underserved voices. This work embraces a collaborative approach to leadership and seeks to engage the strengths of all involved (Billot et al., 2013; Coyle & Foti, 2021).

### **Responsibilities, Commitments, and Aspirations**

Education should create opportunities for all students (Ehrich, 2015). However, as described earlier, the traditional neoliberal structures and values we adhere to (Apple, 2016a, Portelli & Koneeny, 2013) do not achieve that holistic goal. As educators, we have a moral responsibility to meet the needs of all students (Starratt & Stelmach, 2003). We must work to repair the ongoing harm done to so many whose needs are unmet and for whom education serves as an oppressive force, disregarding who they are as a whole person (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011).

Given the varying weights afforded to different voices, existing challenges of equity to access must be acknowledged. Provincially, efforts regarding equity remain primarily in the performative realm. The KDSB, however, is taking significant steps to recognize harm, committing to the realization of change that makes a positive difference in students' lives. Opportunities are emerging to engage in more equity-based and socially-driven work to elevate marginalized voices, embrace culturally relevant lived experiences, and challenge the status quo. Our strategic plan (KDSB, n.d.a) and equity roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b) are bold and ambitious documents that reinforce our responsibility to meet the needs of all students as we move to a place where learning is more about experimenting and less about creating the perfect performance (Biesta, 2019). These documents confirm the KDSB's aspirations to do better for all students. The next section launches from these aspirations and will illustrate my leadership problem of practice.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

Current one-way approaches to education establish two distinct roles: students who receive decontextualized knowledge (Hatcher et al., 2009) and educators who convey knowledge (Angus, 2006). Educational leadership maintains control over what is learned, when it is learned, how it is learned, and how that learning can be demonstrated (Angus, 2006) with little opportunity for authentic student input. This approach does not include student voice or value the student's identity or lived experiences (Mehra et al., 2007), further disconnecting students who struggle or identify with historically underserved communities (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Current systems have established an oppressive environment (Louie, 2020) that reproduces Eurocentric values (Bogotch, 2000; Khalifa et al., 2019) through a teacher-driven model where certain traits, skills, and approaches are privileged. This requires that students adapt

to system needs rather than the system adjusting to student needs (Lumby, 2012; Yosso, 2005). In this environment, some succeed while others, presented with endless barriers, develop an identity of failure, disengage over time, and ultimately leave school before graduating (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018; Noyes, 2005). Traditional learning goals (i.e., decontextualized and mandated curricular expectations) do not necessarily align with students' definitions of success (Pidgeon, 2015) which diminishes their connection between school and their life (Mitra & Gross, 2009), reinforcing their struggle to find purpose in formal learning (Lumby, 2012). Disengagement is seen through diminished participation, increased negative behaviours (Mitra, 2018; Noyes, 2005), lower achievement (Mitra, 2018), and a diminished sense of hope (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). This reality has prompted the exploration of this Problem of Practice (PoP): The lack of student voice and personal experience in learning environments results in diminished student achievement and limited awareness of pathway possibilities.

For students to be successful, they need to be perceived as capable learners by educators, and more importantly, they must see themselves as capable learners (Johnston et al., 2021). Educators and educational leaders must ensure students are part of decision-making that impacts their lives (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018; Government of Canada, 2021), moving toward a student-driven approach that increases the influence of their voice (Lundy, 2007). Learning must shift from a prescriptive program (Fielding, 2007) to one of exploration that embeds student goals, reinforced by their lived experiences (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Smyth et al., 2003). Prevailing leadership practices that rely on standardization reinforce an environment of control and compliance (Angus, 2006) rather than a student-driven environment that embraces student voice to ensure participation and influence in co-designing their learning experiences (Johnston et al., 2021). Leadership must facilitate the inclusion of student voice, shifting from a system that

maintains adult control (Freeman, 2016) and validates adult decisions (Starratt & Stelmach, 2003) to a place that embraces student interests and agency, recognizing the value of formal and informal learning experiences (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014; Brion-Meisels, 2015; Fielding, 2007).

Many young people are left behind as they struggle to overcome the structural obstacles established within the system (e.g., evaluations based mainly on written tests or prescribed content). This is evident through the growing need for intervention programs, such as the aforementioned SSPs. Through a critical and social justice lens, educational leaders must challenge existing systems and structures, remove obstacles, and embrace greater diversity in learning and knowing (Capper et al., 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Fielding, 2007; Green, 2017). Considering Indigenous learnings, in collaboration with the KDSB's Indigenous Learning Team, will open opportunities for educators and educational leaders to, through a deep exploration of personalized learning, learn about practices that value each voice, embrace lived experiences, and prioritize the journey over the destination (Hare, 2004; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iseke & Brennus, 2011). The following section will describe various drivers and influential factors that frame this PoP while illustrating its importance.

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

#### **Historical Overview**

This OIP seeks to explore a problem fueled by education systems and structures grounded within the functionalist paradigm, a paradigm that embraces the status quo through a reluctant view of change (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gutek, 2013). This lens is reinforced through a provincially-driven neoliberal, conservative environment that celebrates standardization, where achievement is the individual's responsibility (not the system's), and success is determined

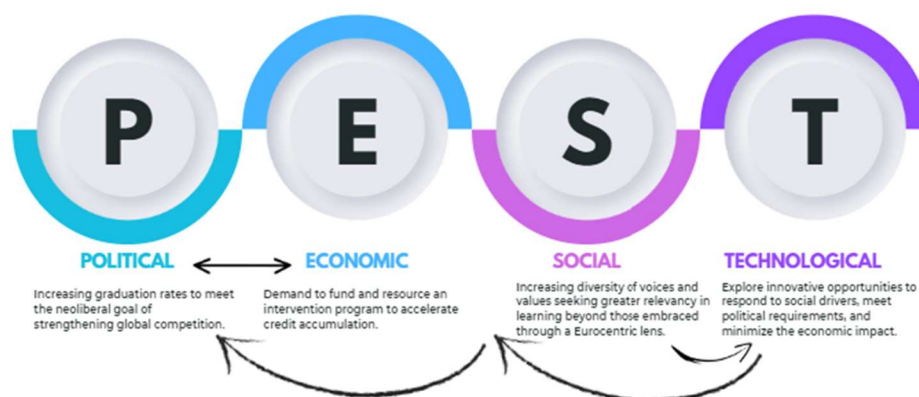
through an economic lens (Grimaldi, 2012). The dominance of the functionalist paradigm is reinforced through a hierarchical system that shapes learning by the values and assumptions of a dominant culture (Lumby, 2012). It predetermines the definition of success for all students (Khalifa et al., 2019), prioritizes answers over the exploration of possibilities (Apple et al., 2002), situates students as passive recipients of predetermined knowledge (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006; Thompson, 2009), and fosters an environment grounded in performing rather than experimenting (Biesta, 2019).

### PEST Analysis

A political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) analysis helps describe specific change drivers (Ho, 2014), helping to detail discrete factors to consider and explore. However, it situates each factor in isolation. Continuing with the theme of relationships and connections, this OIP will explore the factors identified in a PEST analysis through the lens of intersections (see Figure 2). By exploring the impact of these intersections, the lens shifts from examining discrete elements to exploring impact. It moves the priority from information to understanding.

### Figure 2

#### *PEST Analysis*



*Note.* Connections between key factors influencing this PoP and OIP, adapted from Ho (2014).

This PEST analysis reveals several key factors that catalyze this PoP and drive the work of this OIP. As previously noted, increasing graduation rates to enhance global competitiveness in the job market (Grimaldi, 2012; MoE, 2023) is one political factor influencing work in education. This goal requires economic consideration as the government resources programs to ensure the goal is achieved. Social drivers emerge from the appeals of community groups and parents seeking a more diversified approach to learning. Finally, through a technological lens, we are prompted to contemplate innovative approaches as we explore the advantages and disadvantages of current, normalized approaches to learning.

Each of these factors is important in its own right. Exploring their intersections highlights individual contributions while exposing overlapping areas of commonality and dissonance, fueling deeper engagement in this work and demonstrating a level of readiness not seen when looking at each factor in isolation (Ho, 2014). For example, the MoE wants increased graduation rates to reinforce a stable job market (MoE, 2020). To meet this goal, they allocate significant funding to support the creation of space, resources, and staffing in each high school for programming to support graduation for students struggling to complete their courses. This program is essential for meeting provincial achievement and success goals. However, it does not foster evolving, innovative approaches that positively change students' experiences. When we overlay a social lens of parent and community voices that are increasingly (and rightfully) advocating for the inclusion of personalized, meaningful, and culturally relevant learning, we are prompted to re-evaluate what success looks like and how learning can evolve to realize an expanded understanding of success. That leads us to consider innovation (through a technological lens). Innovative approaches to learning seek to challenge established practices (Lewis, 2019; Smith & de Klerk, 2022), embed approaches that foster environments for student



voice, and ensure students can connect with (i.e., is relevant to their lived experiences) and find meaning (i.e., connects to their goals) in their learning. It supports students as they forge connections between their learning, life, and pathway goals. This description illustrates how exploring these intersections builds a more robust understanding of the need for change, supporting actions to move educators from a place of theoretical analysis to a place of practical change (Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018).

### **Social Justice Considerations**

Social justice, anti-oppression, and decolonial approaches catalyzed this PoP and are woven through this OIP. The domination of particular approaches and values over others creates barriers to access for some students. This results in diminished success and the development of identities of failure (Noyes, 2005). The system is not designed for the individual, and consequently, individual experiences do not count in normalized classroom practices (Angus, 2006; Bourke et al., 2018a). As the core of this OIP is grounded in social justice values, this work requires learning more about students, who they are, and what they value. This OIP seeks to build awareness of and determine steps that elevate social justice priorities by intentionally identifying and challenging normative practices (Patterson, 2013) and acting through an asset lens by intentionally recognizing and engaging with each person's strengths (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015).

Indigenous learnings have taught us that success goes beyond meeting narrowly defined graduation requirements (Pidgeon, 2015). Engagement through a critical lens will facilitate the exploration of power through a limitless lens of potential (Johnston et al., 2021). Social justice reminds us that engagement with voice is only impactful if it leads to changes in practice that positively impact those historically underserved (Whitty & Wisby, 2007). Finally, Two-Eyed

Seeing reminds us that merging all needs into one approach is not required nor recommended. Instead, our exploration requires identifying, accepting, celebrating, and making space for the strengths of multiple worldviews, values, and beliefs (Iwama et al., 2009).

### **Data Informed**

The importance of this PoP is well documented in research (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018; Sussman, 2015; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012), and the urgent need to take up this work is illustrated through internal and external data. Internal data situates the significance of this OIP. It reinforces the need to ground this work in purpose-driven student voice and indicates readiness to engage. External data demonstrates the ongoing diversification of our community and the power of that voice in influencing change.

As a result of being immersed in a neoliberal environment, quantitative data remains a primary source of internal data used to monitor student achievement in the KDSB. Monitoring strategies embraced in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being (BIPSAW) evidence this reality. The BIPSAW is a provincially mandated structure that DSBs develop annually. It confirms DSB-level learning priorities along with monitoring metrics. Some examples of the data collected include achievement data from formal reporting periods (e.g., report cards) and the number of professional learning opportunities offered to and attended by staff in the KDSB (KDSB, n.d.g). These quantitative metrics provide a valuable, multi-year synopsis of this data, confirming overall KDSB engagement and achievement above the provincial average. However, it also highlights lower achievement and credit accumulation rates for students who have struggled and who identify from historically underserved communities (KDSB, 2021a). This quantitative data reinforces the urgency of this work as we see an imbalance between those who are advantaged and those disadvantaged by current approaches.

Recent actions in the KDSB indicate a desire to capture and consequently increase the value of qualitative measures in understanding the student experience. In 2019 a student survey sought to explore an understanding of student belonging (KDSB, 2021b). Up to 20% of students felt they did not belong in school. They shared the importance of seeing themselves in their school and their connections with others. They further shared that their learning experience was a primary factor in their sense of belonging. Through stories (KDSB, 2022a), students shared that lack of meaning in learning negatively impacted their motivation.

Embracing cultural and identity diversity through student voice enhances the rich tapestry of the community's ideas, values, traditions, and beliefs. It creates opportunities to explore approaches to learning beyond a single lens. External data sources confirm our community's (and schools') growing diversity. Majorville Public Health (n.d.) (a pseudonym) shared that as of 2016, 25% of our community's population was born outside Canada, and 20% speak a first language other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2021). This information demonstrates an upward trend in the diversification of our community (City of Majorville, n.d).

This changing demographic inspires the interrogation of established approaches to learning and prompts changes in practices to better meet the needs of the students before us today. For example, through the voices of the Indigenous community upon whose land we live and learn, the KDSB has established an Indigenous Education Council (KDSB, n.d.f) whose voice has resulted in the development of Indigenous-specific learning programming. This example reflects the KDSB's willingness to listen, embrace changing values, views, and needs, reaffirm the value of community voice, and make changes reflecting current needs and values. The next section will frame guiding questions to explore learning that reflects current needs.

## **Guiding Questions**

Embedding diverse values in learning experiences is essential to prevent students from developing beliefs that who they are and what they bring are not good enough (Dei, 2018; Yosso, 2005). Some students have developed an identity of failure (Noyes, 2005), having been forced into systems and structures that do not reflect who they are or what they value (Lalas & Valle, 2007). The inability to influence their learning compromises those experiences, deepening gaps rather than building meaningful connections between their life and learning.

### **Guiding Question #1**

The need for this PoP is reinforced by a systemic focus on the status quo, viewing power as finite, and limiting engagement with equity through the lens of disparity in test scores (Ehrich, 2015; Khalifa et al., 2019). Aspects of my theoretical framework support challenging these normative approaches. The critical paradigm sets the foundation for this work by challenging existing systems and power structures (Apple, 2019; Rexhepi & Torres, 2011), while social justice theory supports the participation of everyone involved (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016), intentionally seeking historically unheard voices (Mehra et al., 2007). Grounded theory moves this further by reinforcing the importance of building knowledge rather than relying on learning discovered by others (Lassig, 2022). This will facilitate authentic belonging (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016). The critical paradigm, social justice theory, and grounded theory prompt the interrogation of this question: How could student voice be realized to enhance their learning experiences?

### **Guiding Question #2**

Education is tightly structured to achieve predetermined outcomes (Grimaldi, 2012). It has established an environment where students defer to the decisions made by adults (Sussman,

2015). With this power, these adults confirm what has meaning and is valued, intentionally or not, and set the parameters around what is possible (Rudduck, 2006). It also assumes that power is finite and that empowering some (e.g., students) requires losing power for others (e.g., adults). An opportunity is thus presented to explore leadership's role in maintaining a finite view of power or engaging with a win-win approach (Kerr & Andreotti, 2018; Shen & Xia, 2012), where building power in one person is not reliant on taking power from another. This prompts consideration of the question: What impact might transformative and followership leadership approaches have on realizing a win-win approach to using and engaging with power?

### **Guiding Question #3**

Social justice and grounded theories center equity (Charmaz, 2014). Driven to advocate for those whose voices are unheard (Capper et al., 2006), they seek enhanced learning environments and opportunities for all students (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006). However, performative equity discussions do not move beyond gaps identified through test scores (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015), focusing on individual deficits, not systemic barriers. One way this view is evidenced in the KDSB is through BIPSAW metrics (KDSB, n.d.g), which, although beginning to include identity-based data, continues to prioritize disparity in achievement. These systemic approaches narrowly define what counts in learning (Biesta, 2019), limit evidence of student achievement to the quantitative realm, and disregard many aspects of the student (Bourke et al., 2018a), such as their experiences and goals. Our understanding of students and, consequently, our approaches with them are thus developed from knowing only a slice of the person, not the whole person.

We need to look for the multitude of strengths that students bring to school daily (Hatcher et al., 2009; Park, 2018). When only pieces of the student are recognized, and only

certain approaches to learning are embraced, much of what they bring is devalued (Yosso, 2005). This prompts the exploration of the question: How can engagement with a change model build capacity in staff to confidently evolve learning practices from current, predetermined, Eurocentric approaches (Dei, 2018) to ones that seek and embrace the whole child through student voice and student-driven approaches? These three questions will prompt consideration of a visionary change in the next section.

### **Leadership – Focused Vision for Change**

Cawsey & Deszca (2007) shared a story of two people laying bricks. When asked what they were doing, one said they were building a wall, while the other said they were building a cathedral. This narrative speaks to the scope of vision each person embraces, whether the focus is on the task or the more critical goal being sought. The vision embedded within this OIP goes beyond a task and minor refinements (Smyth et al., 2003). It seeks social justice-fueled transformative change moving from a teacher-centered model to one driven by student voice (Lundy, 2007; Noyes, 2005). In alignment with followership leadership, it moves from an environment that situates students as passive recipients of learning to active participants in learning (Thompson, 2009). It shifts the work from trying to change students to engaging students as the drivers of their experiences (Mitra, 2018). This approach centers on those directly impacted: students.

In this OIP, the vision for change is influenced by the ability to look beyond accepted norms. Influenced through Two-Eyed Seeing, it involves a willingness to seek, engage with, and embrace diverse values and beliefs. Traditional learnings and evaluative practices are grounded in a Eurocentric model and reflect those same values and beliefs (Khalifa et al., 2019; Kovach, 2021; Styres, 2017). This normalizes comparisons against a Eurocentric standard (Dei, 2018).

Anything that falls outside those parameters is not valued and, consequently, not formally counted (e.g., in formal evaluation or on report cards). The vision of this OIP seeks to recognize the influence that culture, experience, and identity have on goals, embrace diversity in values, and reframe that diversity through an asset lens (Lumby, 2012). Students, especially those historically underserved (Ehrich, 2015), must be able to build meaningful connections and a strong sense of purpose between their life, learning, and pathway goal (Hatcher et al., 2009; Morcom & Freeman, 2018; School-College Work Initiative, 2016).

### **The Gap between Current and Future State**

As previously discussed, the conservative, neoliberal environment within which education and the KDSB are situated prioritizes standardization (Angus, 2006), economic outcomes (Grimaldi, 2012), adult dominance in decision-making (Lundy, 2007), and a strong commitment to past practices (Apple, 2016a). Normalizing these priorities has created an environment of predictability that comforts some students and staff while limiting opportunities for others. This OIP moves from a place where learning is a teacher-choreographed performance with predetermined outcomes (Duignan, 2014) to a series of student-driven experiences that encourage their exploration of possibilities (Biesta, 2019). Further, engagement with a student-driven approach elevates student voice and celebrates their lived experiences. Through an asset lens, this highlights the strengths of diversified voices and practices (Shields, 2004). Ultimately, this OIP aims to move beyond a controlled approach guided by narrowly defined success criteria that meet the needs of some to a student-driven approach that values their voices and experiences and serves the needs of all.

## **Future State Improvement and Inequity Challenges**

The future state sought through this OIP challenges inequities and seeks meaningful, purposeful learning for all students. It is situated within the critical and Indigenous paradigms and supported by social justice and grounded theories and Two-Eyed Seeing. Through a critical lens, this OIP seeks to eliminate barriers (Green, 2017), going beyond minor tweaks (Smyth et al., 2003) toward transformative changes. Social justice and grounded theories further support this work by advocating for those with unheard voices (Capper et al., 2006; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016), valuing learning beyond the written curriculum (Breunig, 2019), and embracing the evolution of teaching practices as new learnings about the student inspire changes in existing practices (Lassig, 2022). The Indigenous paradigm seeks learning that is contextual and experiential (Hatcher et al., 2009), prioritizing relationships (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Iwama et al., 2009) through co-learning that fosters meaningful connections (McConnell, 2019). Two-Eyed Seeing seeks to respect different ways of knowing while providing the opportunity to explore the connections between diverse ways of knowing and being (Iwama et al., 2009). These perspectives support the evolution of staff practices to change student learning experiences positively. This work will create a future that has grown from a predetermined, decontextualized, traditional approach that meets the needs of some to an exploratory, contextualized, experiential approach that values more voices and meaningfully meets the needs of all students.

## **Priorities for Change**

Multiple priorities are being sought and explored through this OIP. The MoE and KDSB are steadfast in their desire to increase student achievement (MoE, 2022a) and well-being. Additionally, students, parents, and the community are rightfully seeking authentic, identity-based, and culturally relevant learning experiences for their children where meaning and purpose



are centered (KDSB, n.d.f; Munroe et al., 2013). I believe that reframing what learning experiences look like will realize these priorities.

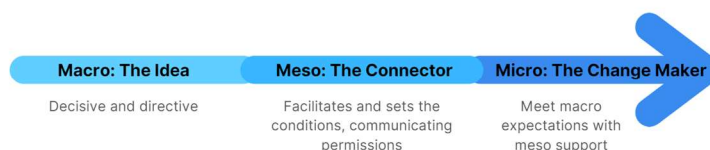
The work of this OIP will positively enhance student learning experiences by identifying and questioning traditional practices (Fielding, 2007) and normative parameters in curricula (Iwama et al., 2009) through involvement with student voice, prioritizing learning with personal experiences and pathway goals. This must take precedence over a focus on predetermined outcomes decided upon by an elite few (Duignan, 2014). Change priorities include student voice, embedding a student-driven approach, embracing diversified values and beliefs, and reframing the concept of power. Research has shown that creating student-driven learning experiences powered by student voice will increase attendance, engagement, participation, achievement, and well-being (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). Recognizing that learning goals are individual and influenced by identity and cultural background (Lumby, 2012), this work will augment what counts and is valued in formal learning experiences. It will prioritize acceptance of multiple ways of knowing (Iwama et al., 2009), increasing access to meaningful learning for students who identify with a non-dominant community. Finally, this OIP will reframe the concept of power from a finite view to an infinite one that builds the followership leadership values of mutual influence and reciprocal learning (Carsten et al., 2010; Mitra & McCormick, 2017). Rather than suggesting that teachers step aside (Mitra & McCormick, 2017), this OIP will situate them in partnership with students in the learning experience, reinforcing a relational approach that engages in mutual influence (Carsten et al., 2010; Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018). My priority is to shift learning from something done to students to something experienced with and by students.

## Leadership Considerations

Leadership at the macro (i.e., political), meso (i.e., system- and school-based), and micro (i.e., educator and student) levels must be considered. As with other aspects of this OIP, these leadership considerations are not viewed in isolation. Instead, they are viewed through how each connects and ultimately influences the other (see Figure 3).

### Figure 3

*Connections within Macro, Meso, and Micro Levels*



*Note.* This graphic illustrates the relationship between micro, meso, and macro levels.

Leadership at the macro level involves provincially and locally elected officials. This leadership is political, public, and highly scrutinized as it sets the direction for all DSBs across the province. Provincial leadership tends to function through trait and team approaches (Institute for Educational Leadership, n.d.), supporting a standardized approach that seeks clarity in messaging and efficient monitoring to communicate the impact of the directions provided. Leadership at this level is decisive and directive.

Leadership at the meso level is system- and school-based. This is a complex layer of leadership as the meso level needs to coordinate achieving the aspirational goals set at the macro level while cultivating the environment and building confidence for educators and students to engage in the work at the micro level. In the KDSB, this is actioned through a team leadership approach that allocates tasks according to portfolio and strengths (Northouse, 2021). However, there are opportunities to explore transformative and followership leadership at this level by prioritizing relational and collaborative approaches that build shared understanding as changes to

student learning experiences are explored (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2012; Liou et al., 2015).

Leadership at this level is highly influential.

Leadership at the micro level traditionally looks to educators. Power is situated with educators who decide what learning looks like and how it is demonstrated (Noyes, 2005; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018). Educators need to know they have permission to explore learning in new ways (Kotter, 2012; Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018; Starr, 2017) to support students, especially those disenfranchised by the education system. They need to be guided to learn more about, seek, and work with student voice in exploring approaches that connect school and life (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014). The meso level needs to ensure that the micro level has the permission and support to try new approaches to meet the expectations established at the macro level. Transparent, relational leadership will help all participants feel valued and supported in exploring new opportunities (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017). The micro level is the most vulnerable, given their limited access to power and reliance on others.

### **Chapter 1 Summary**

The vision of this OIP seeks a change in student learning experiences by embracing practices beyond normative ones, shifting students from the passenger's seat to the driver's seat as they steer their learning in a way that reflects who they are to meet their pathway goals. This OIP seeks to benefit students who have struggled and been underserved, shifting learning from something that must be endured to a meaningful experience that changes the lives of all students, making what was perceived to be impossible, possible. Chapter 2 begins realizing this work by considering contextual factors (i.e., neoliberal outcomes and community requests for greater cultural and personal relevancy in learning) through leadership that models a collaborative and transformative approach, centering people while valuing journey and outcome.

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

Leading involves collaboration, relationship building, and making change happen (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017). Too often, change is discussed but not actioned. Too often, people are spoken of but not involved. Using transformative and followership leadership, this organizational improvement plan (OIP) will engage with change through a relational, people-centered approach that embraces diversity in voices and values in student learning experiences. Chapter 2 explores a change in practice by analyzing leadership approaches, completing a change readiness analysis, identifying a change model, and determining a solution to my Problem of Practice (PoP).

### **Leadership Approach to Change**

Servant and authentic leadership were considered among other leadership approaches to respond to the needs identified through this OIP. Servant leadership engages with change by assisting others (Palumbo, 2016) and seeks to build community (Northouse, 2021). Authentic leadership grounds change in vision and values (Cook, 2012), prioritizing transparency to build trust (Wiewiora & Kwalkiewicz, 2019). However, transformative and followership leadership share the people-centered and transparent values embedded within servant and authentic leadership while having a stronger focus on making change happen and being grounded in vision and values (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Tuanna, 2014). These approaches, in alignment with Two-Eyed Seeing, intentionally seek and engage with the strengths of all participants (Kellerman, 2008; Mittal & Elias, 2016), broadening an understanding of purpose while building leadership capacity in others (Billot et al., 2013; Starr, 2016). These leadership approaches cultivate an environment that will collaboratively explore and develop new learning opportunities driven by student voice, changing their learning experience.

## **Why Transformative and Followership Leadership?**

Merging key aspects of transformative and followership leadership supports the change needed to respond to my PoP. As previously noted, my organization is on a precipice of change as we continue focusing on student achievement and well-being while exploring approaches, including Indigenous learnings (Pidgeon, 2016), that embrace diverse ways of knowing that have not been historically recognized within a Western education system (Khalifa et al., 2019).

Transformative leadership is pivotal to this work as it requires a move from theoretical contemplation to practical application (Shields, 2010). It is authentic and transparent (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017; Northouse, 2021), prioritizing relational connections with change participants. This relational priority integrates with followership leadership (Celoria, 2016), which seeks to empower followers (Iwama et al., 2009; van Oord, 2013) by including, through social justice and Indigenous priorities, those voices that have been historically unheard (Baek-Kyoo & Nimon, 2014; Celoria, 2016) and building their leadership capacity (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2012). Working in harmony, transformative and followership leadership approaches encourage collaboration in the interrogation of normalized practices (Roache & Marshall, 2022; Shields, 2010), simultaneously building confidence in questioning practices and the capacity to change those practices (Billot et al., 2013; Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2013). Interaction is pivotal (Mittal & Elias, 2016) in realizing transformative goals through a followership spirit. These approaches create the conditions to explore practices collaboratively, consider previously unheard perspectives, and shift from looking for one answer to considering multiple options.

The creation of momentum fuels change. For people to embrace this change, they must see that it is achievable, that they are not alone, and that it is grounded in strong moral and ethical purposes. Transformative and followership leadership establishes an empowering

environment fueled by possibilities rather than being hindered by obstacles (Carsten et al., 2010; van Oord, 2013). They stand firmly in a people-centered approach that seeks to embrace, empower, and influence others while engaging multiple voices, thus fostering awareness of the Indigenous value of community and the Two-Eyed Seeing goal of building shared experiences (Connolly et al., 2019; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009).

### **Agency and Limitations**

My positionality affords me significant influence in building awareness of diverse worldviews. As a superintendent (SO), I can influence change in my district through innovation, student voice, and student success portfolios which action the critical and Indigenous priorities to challenge the status quo (Fielding, 2007; Iseke & Brennus, 2011). These permit me to work with system leaders, school-based leaders, and classroom-based educators. I chose followership leadership as it encourages a coaching approach that mitigates and works with resistance. This supports the co-build of an environment that constructively resists the status quo and explores ideas to further our thinking (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2012). By asking questions and placing ideas and potential practices in the space, I encourage, in alignment with the critical paradigm, discussions of existing practices and wonderings about what could be done differently (Apple, 2019). In doing so, I cultivate the conditions (Starr, 2016) that encourage risk-taking such that trying something new shifts from being an outlier to commonplace. Educators need to know that they have the KDSB's support in trying different approaches to learning (Morimoto & Guillaume, 2018). They need to believe that school and system leaders view alternate outcomes as learning opportunities, not opportunities to criticize (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2013; Deszca et al., 2020; King & Stevenson, 2017; Starr, 2016). I help others to know that the KDSB supports them (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2013) in exploring student-driven learning.

My distance from the classroom, my higher risk tolerance, and the potential for people to only share what they feel I wish to hear are fundamental limitations throughout any change initiative. I must watch for these limitations and take steps to mitigate them. Although privileged with the positionality to influence practice, my distance from the classroom creates a challenge in my having little control over making authentic change happen and diminished credibility as educators question my understanding of classroom realities. As a change agent, I bring a vision forward though I rely on change receivers (e.g., classroom-based educators) (Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014), those working directly with students, to action the change (Deszca et al., 2020) beyond mere compliance. Followership leadership prioritizes space for all where participants can feel heard, creating the conditions to work through challenges collaboratively to build a shared understanding (Kellerman, 2008) rather than imposing a compliance-based environment.

As a person who is not overly risk averse, I must be sensitive to the risk tolerance of others, leading with them from where they are, not from where I am. Without this sensitivity, I can disengage or silence others and, consequently, restrict their participation in the change. If I lead such that educators disengage, the change will be compromised, and students' experiences will remain unchanged. I must monitor and maintain a balance between comfort and discomfort (Mason, 2008) to ensure that participants remain involved as the change progresses.

Finally, my positional authority can create an environment where others may agree with my suggestions simply because of my role. Participants in the change process may share information demonstrating progress while withholding challenges or obstacles (Deszca et al., 2020; Sharif & Scandura, 2014). This may come from feeling pressure to share what they believe I wish to hear for fear of retribution (Burke, 2018). An environment of limited sharing neglects opportunities for further exploration and collaborative problem-solving (Carsten & Uhl-Bein,

2012). This speaks to the need to consider leadership approaches that build trust between individuals and within the organization (Smith & de Klerk, 2022).

### **Leadership Approach and the Need for Change**

I believe embracing leadership approaches that are collaborative and relational creates “checks” to question positionality, bias, and assumptions, ensuring the way forward represents the best thinking and diverse values of the group. Transformative and followership leadership facilitates those “checks” by developing a working partnership grounded in trust, continuously focusing on making change happen (Campbell & Watson, 2022). These collaborative leadership approaches cultivate conditions where questions and ideas, regardless of who initiated them, are welcome, constructively interrogated, and prioritized for further development (Billot et al., 2013; Pinto et al., 2012; Taylor & Hill, 2017).

This open approach to questioning practices creates opportunities to identify and diagnose challenges and consider opportunities. It prompts people-centered conditions to explore the impact of decisions and actions and, through a social justice lens, consider equity, ethical, and identity-based implications (Roache & Marshall, 2022; Karpinski & Lugg, 2006; Yosso, 2005). Respecting the Indigenous paradigm, these leadership approaches go beyond rushing toward one solution for a problem. They seek, through the guidance and wisdom learned through Two-Eyed Seeing, to authentically hear as many voices and consider as many perspectives as possible (Iseke & Brennus, 2011), working together through consensus building to understand problems, question solutions, and engage meaningfully (Billot et al., 2013; Celoria, 2016; Coyle & Foti, 2021). The next section will explore change models that support the realization of change on the relational foundation established through transformative and followership leadership.

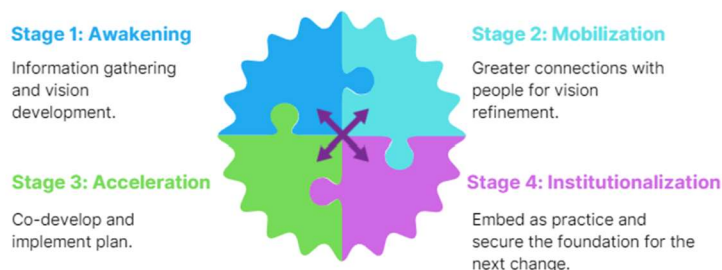


### **Framework for Leading the Change Process**

Engagement with the “how” of this change must include historically unheard voices (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012) and situate change as an ever-evolving process. I initially considered Lewin’s 3-Step Model: Unfreeze-Move-Refreeze (Burke, 2018). It establishes a sense of urgency early in the change process, seeking increased participant ownership over the change while minimizing externally imposed directions. However, it is silent on the role of voice and presents change as a linear, episodic process (Burke, 2018) rather than an ongoing one. Beckhard and Harris’ model, *Managing the Change Process* (Deszca et al., 2020), was also considered as it includes clear, actionable steps and authentically articulates the “why” behind the change. However, like Lewin’s model, it frames change as episodic. Further, it centers on the leader and is thus incommensurate with the followership leadership values embedded in this OIP. Neither model emphasizes the people-centered aspects at the core of followership leadership, nor do they model the innovative approaches to change within transformative leadership.

#### **Change Path Model**

Deszca and Ingols’ change path model (CPM) (Deszca et al., 2020) shares the centrality of vision and clarity of stages embedded within the Lewin and Beckhard and Harris models. It is, however, more participative, relational, iterative, and responsive. Its structure models an approach that interrogates accepted practices through a lens of curiosity, embracing innovative and creative solutions. A unique feature of this model is the embedded, reciprocal interaction between the various stages. Those who engage with the model are not constrained to follow established, linear steps. Instead, learning at one stage influences other stages, illustrating a fluid and evolutionary approach to change rather than an episodic one. The CPM involves four stages: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4***The Change Path Model*

*Note.* Stages and interconnections within the change path model (Deszca et al., 2020).

Stage one, awakening, involves information gathering through ongoing scanning of internal and external factors. This information contributes to the initial vision for change and initiates the development of a shared understanding of what needs to change. This is key to gaining participants' attention and building a long-term commitment to the change process. Stacey's complexity theory (Mason, 2008) will strengthen this commitment by building greater awareness and understanding of the purpose behind this work. It is a non-prescriptive, non-linear approach that explores relationships, recognizing each factor's ongoing impact on another (Sanger & Giddings, 2012), creating the conditions to understand the problem better.

At stage two, mobilization, the vision is further developed and established. This stage gathers more information through a participative approach that includes more people, especially people who do not usually have a voice. Formal leaders must recognize that everyone will be at a different place along a continuum of understanding this problem. At this stage, with the guidance of Two-Eyed Seeing, through dialogue (Shields, 2004), and in alignment with transformative and followership leadership, space is created for leaders and followers to learn more about different perspectives while exploring the challenge and potential solutions through different eyes (Apple, 2016a; Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017). Communication through various forms is vital at this stage

for transparency and to maximize participation in building shared understandings (Lewis, 2019). Engagement with the awakening and mobilization stages is multidirectional, as new learning at one stage inspires revisitation of the other.

At stage 3, acceleration, the learning from the awakening and mobilization stages are consolidated and applied by engaging with participants to co-design and implement a plan that responds to the identified need. Leadership at this stage is adaptable, flexible, and responsive to new learning and thinking. Again, this model is cyclical in that movement back and forth between stages is commonplace as new learning prompts reconsideration of previous thinking.

Stage 4, institutionalization, begins as the change becomes embedded as practice, and the transition to the desired state becomes formalized. The continuation of monitoring is a crucial aspect of this stage. Being transparent regarding the desired change and what indicates achievement of that change is pivotal in knowing that the change effort is progressing. This continues the focus on ongoing reflection such that new learning is applied to strengthen the overall change effort. This cultivates the foundation for the next change, situating change as an ever-present friend instead of an occasional guest (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007; Lewis, 2019).

As mentioned, connections with people are central to this OIP, and the CPM realizes that priority. It values engagement with voices to guide and be part of the learning and change process. It creates the opportunity for people to move from and between the change agent (i.e., initiator), change facilitator (i.e., creator), and change recipient (i.e., implementor) roles (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017; Deszca et al., 2020), modeling a non-hierarchical and community-centered approach in alignment with followership leadership and honouring the Indigenous paradigm. As seen in Figure 4, this model is multidirectional. New learning can result in revisiting another stage, ensuring the development of shared understanding, cultivating a strong vision, and

developing a solid change plan. Communicating the “why” of the work while situating change as a meaningful, purposeful, ongoing experience reinforces the need to grow educator practices to meet the evolving needs of students. On the change continuum, this model is situated further from an episodic experience toward a continuous one (Burke, 2018; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

### **Considerations and Limitations of the Change Path Model**

Most organizational change is first-order (Bartunek & Moch, 1987), which looks at modifying existing systems (Burke, 2018; Lewis, 2019) while not pushing much beyond the status quo. Given my PoP’s challenge of the status quo, first-order change is insufficient for this OIP. However, second- and third-order changes seek revolutionary, structural changes (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Burke, 2018; Ryan & Watson, 2021). Their difference resides in participants’ control over their views and the priorities driving the change. Second-order change is significant and requires that a particular interest be promoted (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). This could work to respond to this PoP, given the desire for increased student voice in learning experiences. This approach to change could impose that view. However, that would not support the relational foundation woven throughout this OIP.

Third-order change is tethered to supporting others in determining which view is important, challenging established systems. It welcomes the introduction of perspectives while allowing others to reflect and move forward organically (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Ryan & Watson, 2021). Third-order change increases awareness of different perspectives while diminishing dependence on a given way of seeing things. Given this information and my PoP’s desire to inspire significant revisioning and recreation (Deszca et al., 2020; Ryan & Watson, 2021) of what learning can look like in schools, the change sought through this OIP falls within third-order change. It aligns with the demands for change embedded within transformative

leadership while modeling followership leadership priorities where collective voices build shared understanding. This respects the individual growth of participants as they consider new learning and reflect upon their views (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017), building confidence in looking at change as a process of continuous improvement.

No one model can respond to every change initiative. A particular model is chosen because it facilitates the desired change within a given context. For example, the CPM facilitates actioning the KDSB's priority on innovative change (KDSB, n.d.a). In alignment with my DSB's equity roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b.), it also situates change as an omnipresent friend that ensures the ever-evolving needs of students are met.

However, this model has limitations that need to be noted. Although stated as a strength and a primary reason for selecting the CPM, the reflective and iterative aspects could lead to staying caught in the cycle of reflection and discussion and not moving toward action. In responding to this concern, it will be necessary to balance sharing ideas and collecting new information with decisive action to move the work forward. This approach will respect the reflective foundation of the model, value the relational priority in followership leadership and Two-Eyed Seeing, and respond to the transformative need to take actions that make change happen.

The lack of a linear approach is another limitation that must be acknowledged. Although a benefit from the perspective of always being open to changes influenced by new learning, the lack of a linear approach can create anxiety in some people, compromising their participation in the change process. Responding to this lack of linearity includes strengthening communication and identifying clear indicators and opportunities that showcase and celebrate progress, thus balancing flexibility with the need for benchmarks.

### **Equitable Outcomes Through the Change Path Model**

The CPM furthers the achievement of equity outcomes through its intentional inclusion of voices (Deszca et al., 2020; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2017), its inherent approach to balance power dynamics (Nelson, 2017; Romm, 2022), and its structure prioritizing change that remove barriers of access for students (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018; Mitra & McCormick, 2017). The CPM embeds the inclusion of voices and engages all voices in building and refining the vision and direction of the work (Deszca et al., 2020). Through collaboration, it encourages building shared understandings. The CPM encourages continuous back-and-forth discussions through a responsive and iterative approach as new learning leads to adapting and evolving the vision and plan. This model reinforces student voice priorities by encouraging ongoing reflection and collaborative learning by listening to and providing space for student voice to influence their experiences (Bourke et al., 2018a; Lundy, 2007) (see Appendix A). The CPM furthers the Indigenous worldview and social justice values of listening by engaging with those outside of the dominant culture (Dei, 2018). This model creates the opportunity to action equity work by structuring a change effort to remove barriers with a process grounded in drawing in all voices, especially historically unheard voices. The use of this model requires consideration of the change readiness factors being explored in the next section.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

Organizations have an operational and moral responsibility to engage in change (Cawsey & Deszca, 2007; Fullan, 2006). Change is essential to ensure the relevancy and viability of the aspirational and operational aspects of an organization. As noted in Chapter 1 (see Figure 2), this is driven by community diversification, requests for more personally relevant learning, and calls for innovation while meeting neoliberal needs. Specific to my organization is ensuring the

evolving needs of students are met (Holt & Vardaman, 2013). Change, however, is difficult and complex, especially given the roles involved and varying degrees of comfort in engaging with change. It naturally questions the status quo and seeks a move from a comfort zone towards something that will, at least initially, create different levels of discomfort for anyone involved with and impacted by the work.

### **Change Readiness: Considerations and Roles**

Determining change readiness is an active process through which preparation for change is assessed, and change implementation plans are influenced (Rafferty et al., 2013). It requires intentional considerations of cognitive and affective aspects. Figure 5 visualizes four key cognitive elements that help determine an organization's readiness for change: an awareness of organizational members' belief in the purpose of the change, their capacity to make the change happen, their belief that educational leaders will support their efforts and ensure access to appropriate resources, and their belief that the results from the change effort will be worth the discomfort of the change experience (Hustus & Owens, 2018; Rafferty et al., 2013; Santhidran et al., 2013). Affective aspects include emotional perspectives woven through and influencing each cognitive aspect (Rafferty et al., 2013).

### **Figure 5**

*Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Change Readiness*



*Note.* Elements of organizational readiness, adapted from Rafferty et al., (2013).

To engage, participants in the change process need to understand and believe in the purpose behind the change. This element is highly dependent upon context and worldview. The organization's and individual's traditions, beliefs, and attitudes will consequently influence their receptivity to authentically participate in the change process (Holt & Vardaman, 2013).

Participants must believe they have the skills to enact this change (Rafferty et al., 2013). Historical experience with change in the organization will influence this aspect of change readiness. Positive past experiences will lead to greater readiness as confidence and self-efficacy have been built. In contrast, negative past experiences will lead to greater hesitancy and resistance as confidence and self-efficacy have been eroded (Weiner, 2009).

Additionally, it is incumbent upon leaders to create the conditions and prepare participants for change (Santhidran et al., 2013). Change implementers are at the most significant level of risk, being directly involved in the change work. Participants in the change process will be empowered by the belief that they have the support of their senior management (Morimoto & Guillaume, 2018) and will be appropriately resourced to implement a change initiative (Hustus & Owens, 2018). The level of leadership involvement is pivotal in maintaining and building the confidence of change implementers (Deszca et al., 2020; Starr, 2016). This further communicates a commitment to the people (Ehrich, 2015) and the overall change effort.

Ultimately, participants need to know that the discomfort of change will result in something better. They need to believe it internally while also seeing support provided and evidence of progress showcased regularly. This will fuel the change initiative.

### **Change Readiness Model, Responsibilities, and Opportunities**

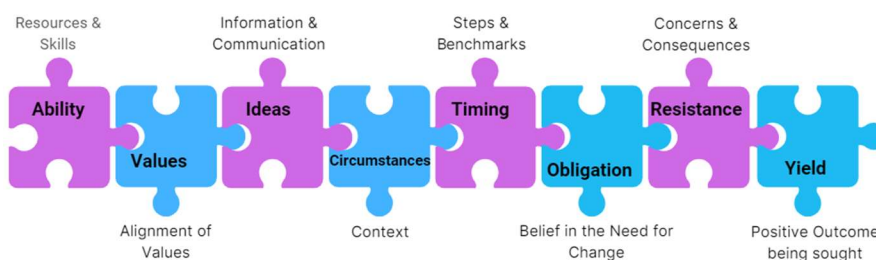
The change described in this OIP seeks to increase the inclusion of student voice and enhance student-driven approaches to learning in student success programs (SSP) to enrich



learning so that achievement, well-being, and pathway awareness improve. As previously noted, this requires reimagining what learning looks like in SSPs and questioning who is empowered to make that determination. The Davis A-VICTORY model (Holt et al., 2007) provides a guided structure that facilitates a comprehensive and progressive change readiness analysis that builds greater awareness of an organization's change readiness status by analyzing strengths and identifying areas requiring additional attention. Figure 6 provides a visual of the A-VICTORY model.

**Figure 6**

*Davis A-VICTORY Model*



*Note.* The Davis A-VICTORY change readiness model, adapted from Holt et al., 2007.

Although presented in isolation, intersections between these dimensions influence the understanding of change readiness and the overall change effort. Using the A-VICTORY model (Holt et al., 2007), evidence of readiness will be described (see Appendix B) by analyzing established practices and pressures with aspirations embedded within the change. A conclusion of limited, cautious, or strong readiness will be determined for each dimension of this model. A limited determination demonstrates considerable obstacles impeding the change initiative. A cautious determination denotes the existence of a minor tension within the dimension that is likely solvable as an exploration of that tension has already begun. Finally, a strong determination suggests that the current context and the aspiration align, resulting in minimal impediments to the change initiative.

*Ability* speaks to the available resources and skills needed to engage the change. The KDSB demonstrates its commitment to realizing its vision by funding collaborative learning and planning time for educators. This collaborative time builds skills and strengthens confidence in doing this work. However, the ability to replace educators to allow for collaboration is an ever-increasing challenge, given existing staff shortages (Ontario College of Teachers, 2022). This misalignment between the KDSB's aspiration and operational realities creates inconsistencies in engaging in this professional learning. Although inconsistent, where possible, these opportunities are facilitated, resulting in a cautious level of readiness for the *Ability* dimension.

The *Values* dimension looks at the alignment of the organization's values with those embedded within the change effort. The KDSB has co-constructed ambitious visionary statements that seek more personalized learning experiences (KDSB, n.d.a; KDSB, n.d.b). However, tensions surface when met with firmly established traditional and standardized practices (e.g., unit tests and reading prescribed literature) (Portelli & Koneeny, 2018). Again, questions emerge regarding the realization of this work when considering the collision of the KDSB's aspirational goals (e.g., equity and innovation) and system realities (e.g., neoliberal expectations). Leadership is pivotal in supporting educators in embracing and working with the KDSB's vision. However, the ability of leaders to engage fully in this work, given the scope of their work, is inconsistent. The pieces are in place to align the values of the KDSB and its members. However, inconsistent application of these pieces results in the *Values* dimension resting at the cautious level.

The *Idea* dimension prompts consideration of the accuracy, perception, and communication approaches of information related to the change. The KDSB regularly collects, analyzes, and reports on quantitative achievement rates to trustees, senior staff, schools, and the

community. The KDSB has recently begun to include some qualitative and identity-based data (KDSB, 2021b), demonstrating a willingness to expand its understanding of achievement and success. The significance of engaging with data beyond neoliberal norms while publicly engaging in discourse about that evidence signals a change in thinking and direction. This demonstrates a strong level of readiness for the *Ideas* dimension.

*Circumstances* speaks to aspects of the KDSB's environment that impact the change. For several years, student success teachers (SST) have engaged in professional learning regarding how to authentically change student learning experiences to shift from those that foster an identity of failure (Noyes, 2005) to those that realize individual success (Biesta, 2019). This thinking was applied as we began preliminary work reimagining learning within the new reality imposed by COVID-19 when traditional practices became difficult and new approaches were required. Connecting with the *Timing* dimension, the theoretical learnings that SSTs had explored were more easily and readily applied at a time when using different approaches was necessary. Due to a coincidence of the *Timing* and *Circumstance* dimensions, a time of great challenge resulted in increased willingness to explore meaningful learning experiences for students. This impact demonstrates a strong readiness for the *Circumstances* and *Timing* dimensions.

*Obligation* speaks to the belief in the need for change. In the KDSB, virtual and in-person spaces have been created for educators to engage in sensemaking activities (Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014), facilitating the co-construction of understanding regarding equitable learning practices. Within the context of SSPs, SSTs have been learning more about why students are struggling and the impact of limiting student voice in their learning experiences. They have been exploring alternatives to support meaningful student re-engagement with learning. SSTs have

experienced the results of imposing a narrow definition of learning and success on all students. Consequently, most have embraced the need to engage differently with students. The *Obligation* dimension demonstrates strong readiness to support change efforts.

The *Resistance* dimension speaks to something that inhibits involvement with change. The omnipresent demands of neoliberalism (Portelli & Koneeny, 2018) anchor the system in traditional practices that value standardization and limit what is recognized in formal learning environments. However, the pull of the status quo collides with the push of innovation (Burke, 2018). A deficit lens would see this tension and resistance as an immovable force. Instead, through an asset lens, resistance provides opportunities to understand different values better, become aware of others' perceptions of proposed changes, and identify potential concerns and consequences of the change effort (Cawsey & Deszca, 2007). Realistically, resistance will slow the change process even when viewed through an asset lens. Given the tensions created through the identified push-pull and the negative impact on the speed of engaging with change, the *Resistance* dimension demonstrates a limited level of change readiness.

Finally, *Yield* speaks to the perceived benefits of the destination outweighing the work associated with the change journey. As noted in the *Resistance* dimension, the pull of neoliberalism continues to dominate. This creates significant challenges in engaging with different approaches, priorities, and goals in learning. Given this tension and the power of neoliberalism, the KDSB is at a limited level of change readiness for the *Yield* dimension.

Challenges are present in each element of this change readiness analysis. However, no element illustrates impenetrable barriers. Each area of caution creates opportunities to overcome challenges by scaffolding learning, reframing perspectives, and looking beyond limitations toward accepting innovative and creative approaches, as described in the next section.

## **Strategies and Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

Research has demonstrated that the inclusion of student voice positively influences student learning experiences (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Noyes, 2005; Robinson & Taylor, 2013). Through surveys, students in the KDSB have expressed a desire to increase their voices' inclusion to support more meaningful learning experiences (KDSB, 2021b; KDSB, 2022a). Additional evidence demonstrating the positive academic impact of preliminary initiatives that include student voice on student achievement, well-being, and graduation rates (KDSB, 2021a; KDSB, 2022b) has been shared with our trustees and senior staff.

The need for this OIP is strengthened by analyzing intersections between key drivers. Those drivers include the voices of students and parents who are seeking more personally meaningful learning that reflects who they are, what they value, and their postsecondary plans (KDSB, n.d.f; KDSB, n.d.h; Mehra et al., 2007; Mitra, 2015), the government's commitment to neoliberal priorities (CPAC, 2021), and the plateauing of student achievement and graduation data (MoE, 2022b). Traditional instructional (e.g., all students reading the same novel) and evaluative practices (e.g., five-paragraph essay) are insufficient for this PoP. This PoP requires intentional engagement with new approaches to learning and broadening what is accepted as the demonstration of learning. Exploration of innovative approaches is essential to changing students' learning experiences. This is especially important for students in SSPs, given their likely negative experiences with learning in their educational journey (Brion-Meisels, 2015; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018) thus far. They deserve our collective effort in creating new, more meaningful learning experiences with and for them.

The three proposed solutions described below were catalyzed by an acknowledgement that current practices do not meet the needs of all students. Each of these proposed solutions is

centered on student voice, cultivating an environment that embraces student-driven learning experiences. Before determining one chosen solution, an analysis of each option will examine the level of engagement with student voice and aspects of equity through a social justice lens. Ethical considerations will be explored using the lens of the best interest of the student (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). Additionally, resources, possibilities connected with my role, and the implications of these proposed solutions will be discussed. These proposed solutions seek to evolve educator practice while positively changing student learning experiences.

### **Proposed Solution #1: Enhanced Cooperative Education**

The first proposed solution looks to reimagine an existing program: cooperative education (co-op) (see Appendix C). Co-op is an established program where students further their learning in a workplace setting (MoE, n.d.c). However, the inclusion of student voice in building these experiences is often limited to the voice and possibly space elements of Lundy's (2007) parameters of student voice, where space is intentionally created for students to share ideas (see Appendix A). This solution considers what it would look like to overlay the learning cycle of community-connected experiential learning (School College Work Initiative, 2016) by including participation in experiences outside of school and connecting learning with other aspects of their life. Students and educators would co-create learning experiences beyond current co-op models. This solution does that by proposing an enhanced version of co-op where the student from a SSP engages with a team of people in a workplace directly connected to their pathway goal. They will explore contextual challenges and design potential solutions to those challenges. Students will engage meaningfully in workplace challenges by developing collaborative and problem-solving skills and building their knowledge regarding the influences of the contextual factors of that workplace. Ultimately, this experience will allow students to

build confidence in engaging in complex work with others. They will see the impact of their contribution while exploring a pathway of interest. Students will document their learning in a manner they choose and use that documentation to guide discussions with their teacher, who will capture evidence of learning for credentialing and reporting.

### **Proposed Solution #2: Postsecondary Experience**

Many postsecondary experience (PSE) awareness opportunities are performative through presentations to students. Additionally, students are often required to research options on their own time. These approaches do not build an understanding of opportunities or remove barriers to access. This second proposed solution (see Appendix C) seeks to facilitate student exploration of a series of PSEs, connecting that learning to the acquisition of credits for students in SSPs. This will directly connect PSEs, credit accumulation, achievement, and pathway goals. Students in SSPs struggle in formal learning settings, are behind in credit accumulation (MoE, 2020), and are likely to see limited PSE options (Ryan & Rottmann, 2007). This solution will be co-constructed by students, teachers, and PSE partners supporting student participation in several PSEs connected to their interests. In this proposed solution, students will partake in PSEs in four-week blocks, including (but not restricted to) auditing university courses, auditing college courses, shadowing entrepreneurs and business leaders, engaging in apprenticeships, or job shadowing. Like the first proposed solution, students will document their learning in a manner they choose, working with their SST, who will connect student learning with one or more curricular areas. The first proposed solution provides the opportunity to build skills associated with one workplace environment, while this solution supports students in “trying out” a series of PSEs. This trial-and-error approach (Hatcher et al., 2009) builds student awareness of the myriad of options available, empowering the student to determine which experience suits them best.

### **Proposed Solution #3: Student Led Working Groups**

The third proposed solution (see Appendix C) involves offering student-led working groups for students in SSPs. Students in SSPs have struggled in traditional learning settings and feel disconnected (KDSB, 2021b; KDSB, 2022a). They are unlikely to be the students that adults or peers seek for input (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). It is doubtful that they would engage in student leadership initiatives and are likely to ignore student voice surveys because they feel distanced from the school system (Cummings Mansfield, 2014; Mitra, 2018). In this proposed solution, students in SSPs will have time to collaborate with peers in other schools, discussing topics of interest connected to school, learning, and PSEs. Examples might include sharing strategies that are effective for them, discussing approaches that disenfranchise them, noting where they see gaps and opportunities in the system, and exploring their hopes and dreams. Discussions with students will determine whether staff are present during this discussion or if there is another way that they wish to share their thinking and ideas. For some students, this experience may be the first opportunity where their voice has been intentionally sought. However, the staff is not obligated to act on the student voice being shared, and there is no connection between this solution and credit accumulation.

### **Engagement with Student Voice**

Engagement with student voice occurs along a continuum from participation to empowerment (Mitra & McCormick, 2017). As previously noted, Lundy (2007) considers student voice within four frames (see Appendix A): voice, space, audience, and influence. An analysis of the level of student voice engagement through these frames looks to whether students can share ideas and thoughts (i.e., voice), whether intentional space has been created for their voices (i.e., space), whether those in positions of power are intentionally listening (i.e.,



audience), and whether student voice is realized through changed practices (i.e., influence) (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018). The four frames will be viewed along a continuum, moving from performative engagement at the voice level to transformative engagement at the influence level, demonstrating the application of what was learned through listening.

From the student voice lens, the third proposed solution is the weakest. It provides an opportunity for voice through an established space. However, there is a risk of minimal audience engagement and no formalized structure for their voice to influence change. The first proposed solution is strong because the structure is established to formalize an audience to listen to the student. However, the influence stage relies upon external partners to embrace the student's ideas and work with them to embed aspects of their ideas in the solutions. Adults can and do minimize student voice (Cummings Mansfield, 2014; Mitra & Gross, 2009), and options for the school and student to mitigate that risk in the first solution are limited. The second proposed solution is the strongest regarding student voice. In the second solution, opportunities are developed with the student as their voice drives the experiences they wish to try. Recognizing the potential influence of adult priorities in this second proposed solution, the student maintains the power to assess what they learned through the experience to achieve the ultimate goals of this solution.

### **Consideration of Equity and Ethics**

Intentional work with equity actively searches out inequities (Charmaz, 2014) and seeks to disrupt the dominance of one worldview over another (Ryan & Tuters, 2017; Theoharis, 2010). An equity analysis will look at how proposed solutions remove barriers to participation (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016), elevate unheard voices (Baroutsis et al., 2016; Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004), expand understanding and considerations of what constitutes curriculum (Breunig, 2019), and build confidence in engaging with possibilities (Theoharis, 2010). This is

secured through the ethic of the best interest of the student (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). That ethical lens requires an intentional analysis of the impact of decisions made through an individual student's lens rather than through the eyes of adults or groups of students.

Each proposed solution seeks to remove barriers to including student voice at school. The first proposed solution seeks to increase their voice through an authentic work experience, and the second by structuring the PSEs from their voice and determining their learning through their voice. The third focuses entirely on hearing student ideas. These solutions engage with the ethic of the best interest of the student by connecting directly to student voice rather than interpreting that voice through adult eyes and priorities (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). The first two proposed solutions prioritize the authentic application of student voice through the best interest of the student. However, the third solution risks the efficacy of the best interest of the student as the focus is less on the individual and more on the group.

Other aspects of equity worth considering relate to what is considered learning (Breunig, 2019) and whether students' self-efficacy is strengthened to embrace the next phase of their learning journey (Angus, 2006; Theoharis, 2010). The third solution creates the conditions for students to share learning from beyond the classroom. However, they can not guarantee that their sharing changes learning practices. The first proposed solution creates the space for voice and audience to hear student voice. While this does provide for a deep exploration of one PSE, the adults are not guaranteed to act on that voice. The second solution allows the student's interests and outside-the-classroom experiences to guide the PSE with which they wish to engage. This goes beyond awareness to building confidence in their capacity as a learner as they can experience success in a PSE opportunity. This solution minimizes adult priorities and situates students in the driver's seat to determine the experiences and gauge the impact of those

experiences. Although each proposed solution actions equity and models the best interest of the student, the second proposed solution does so more significantly.

### **Required Resources and Support**

Tangible resources are not required for any of these proposed solutions. However, the need for leadership support, time, and funding varies in each. As the SO responsible for innovation, student success, and student voice (KDSB, n.d.i), I have the positionality to draw attention to the urgency of this need and the possibilities of these proposed solutions. I can embed aspects of this thinking in system and school leaders' professional learning, work directly with school principals with central support to pilot various initiatives, and hear directly from educators and students before, during, and after an initiative. My engagement creates permission for other educators to put new thinking into the space (Kotter, 2012). Time and funding are interconnected in education as engagement with staff often requires replacement teachers so that classroom teachers can be part of developing change initiatives. With these proposals, pulling central and school-based principals together with classroom-based teachers will be necessary to co-build understanding, implement plans, and collaboratively support each other through the implementation and debriefing stages of the change (Deszca et al., 2020; Northouse, 2021).

The first and second proposed solutions are time and funding intensive. Intentionally working with and emphasizing student voice will require professional learning to co-design new school-based learning strategies and approaches that realize the intended purpose. Time will be required to build and engage partnerships to ensure that partners understand the purpose and are supported to brainstorm ideas and strategies to implement, such that the intention aligns with the impact. These solutions represent the evolution of existing structures, creating a connection with some comfort as we grow from an established foundation. However, there is a risk in staying

within that comfort zone and not evolving into something new. The school will need time, replacement staff, and central support to build capacity in identifying indicators of success to monitor at the outset and actively monitor throughout to ensure the realization of student-driven experiences and discussions. Given this information, the third option is most appealing financially.

### **Implications / Effects**

Intentional involvement with student voice is a shared benefit of these proposed solutions. Student voice drives these options, establishing a student-driven foundation for the implementation of each solution. Each proposed solution creates opportunities to explore possibilities the students may not have previously considered, and each engages the voices of students disenfranchised by the system. These provide opportunities for those students to see the inherent value of their thoughts and recognize their strengths.

Student influence over the learning experience is worthy of consideration. The system is structured to empower adults who often make decisions for students in what they assume to be the student's best interest (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). However, these proposed solutions challenge that approach by empowering student voice, shifting from viewing power as a limited resource to a renewable, inexhaustible one (Johnston et al., 2021; Nelson, 2017). Each solution falls differently along this continuum. The third solution, although strong with voice, is uncertain regarding the influence of that voice and is thus situated at a weaker place along the continuum. Given their direct engagement with voice, the first two proposed solutions are more robust in their potential to strengthen student self-efficacy as learners. However, the second proposed solution situates students in the strongest position as their voice builds the experience, and their voice determines the relative success of those experiences.

**Chosen Solution: Proposed Solution #2 - Postsecondary Experience**

Of the solutions proposed, this chosen solution has the greatest potential (see Appendix C) to evolve educator practice and change student learning experiences while beginning to repair the harm caused by imposed learning structures that seek a uniform outcome for all students. The PoP being addressed will resonate with SSTs who see the negative impact of sole reliance on traditional approaches on some students. This solution is innovative and involves authentic experiences, all of which align with SST priorities. Additionally, followership leadership will ensure a community approach that builds understanding, providing time for participants to explore concerns and strengthen their confidence in working with diverse approaches to learning. SSPs are filled with students whose achievement and well-being have been negatively impacted by dominant, adult-driven practices. The identity of failure cultivated within many of these students (Noyes, 2005) needs to be countered by innovative approaches to learning that center the student (Bourke et al., 2018b; Nelson, 2017), consider the impact of their learning experiences on their social and emotional well-being (Park, 2018), and value a broader spectrum of learning experiences (Apple, 2016b; Khalifa et al., 2019).

My OIP aims to move from a performative exploration of student voice in student learning to a transformative one that sees the evolution of learning practices leading to positive changes in learning experiences for students in SSPs. All the solutions proposed in this OIP will do that. However, the second solution creates the opportunity to capture the learning from students as they engage in a series of co-constructed PSEs. It was chosen due to the strength of its alignment with key elements of the critical and Indigenous worldviews and its transformative potential through social justice theory and Two-Eyed Seeing. This solution puts the best interest

of the student into action by positively impacting their achievement and well-being through a changed, student-driven learning experience.

Through critical and social justice lenses, the needs of historically underserved students can be met (Pinto et al., 2012). Through a critical lens, this solution challenges existing secondary school structures (Fielding, 2007; Green, 2017) by capturing and assigning credit to learning through PSEs. Honouring the gift of Indigenous and Two-Eyed Seeing learnings prompts an intentional move away from a siloed, one-way (Iwama et al., 2009; Munroe et al., 2013) approach to learning toward one that merges several experiences authentically, strengthening a sense of purpose for the student (Hatcher et al., 2009). Further, Indigenous perspectives recognize the value of whole community support (Battiste, 2013) in creating opportunities for increased participation and strengthening students' well-being and efficacy (Hare, 2004). This aligns with the social justice priority to increase opportunities for all students (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006), especially those historically marginalized (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2016). It further reminds us to consider learning beyond a single event (Morcom & Freeman, 2018) to include the growth garnered through a series of experiences over time (Hatcher et al., 2009) inside and outside the classroom (Bourke et al., 2018b).

Finally, a significant factor that influenced the choice of the PSE solution is the ability to consider and action the ethic of the best interest of the student (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). Neoliberalism disregards the student's emotional well-being (Grimaldi, 2012). This PoP and this OIP aim to intensify awareness of the need for and power of elevating student voice so that learning experiences are meaningful for the student (Biesta, 2019; Morcom & Freeman, 2018), consequently ensuring consideration and raising the importance of their social-emotional well-being (Elias et al., 2006). This will happen when the individual student's needs are authentically

sought, explored, and understood (Mitra & McCormick, 2017), and the impact of actions to involve student voice is viewed through the student's lens rather than filtered through the adult's best intentions (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004). Adults will continue to establish parameters (e.g., as policymakers). However, those parameters may shift (e.g., viewing the role of the teacher as a co-facilitator of learning rather than a conveyor of knowledge) as student voice receives the respect it is due.

### **Chapter 2 Summary**

Once implemented, students can explore PSE options that may have previously seemed unattainable (e.g., university and apprenticeships). They will have the chance to experience various options that support the achievement of their pathway goals and, more importantly, experience success that will fuel their confidence as they plan their launch into their post-high school life. This solution is unique because the student's learning through each experience will be captured in collaboration with their SST, allowing students to earn credits while exploring interests. Rather than experiencing compliance and seeing finite options, this solution creates conditions for students to see and try out the infinite possibilities before them.

Chapter 3 will outline an approach to this change effort. The realization of this solution in response to my PoP is grounded in collaborative, reciprocal, and relational approaches that value and elevate historically unheard voices by modeling strategies grounded in dialogue. It will action a two-way approach to learning that shifts from something created by one group (e.g., adults) for the consumption of another (e.g., students) to a series of co-constructed, meaningful, and relevant experiences that strengthen student belief in their abilities, their hopes, and their dreams.

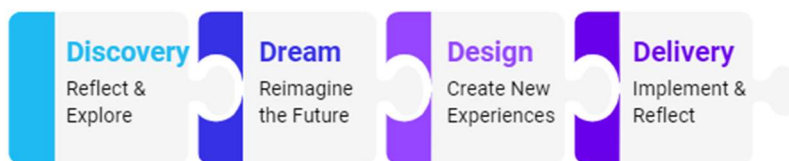
### **Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation**

This organizational improvement plan (OIP) is about changing students' learning experiences by elevating voices (Angus, 2006), increasing access to opportunities (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011; Yosso, 2005), and viewing power through a win-win lens (Shen & Xia, 2012). It involves reimagining what the learning environment looks like (Shields, 2022) such that, to use a theatrical metaphor, students are situated as the lead actors in the play. Adults serve in supporting roles, working with, and responding to student needs and cues. It expands what is valued and what counts as the demonstration of learning (Bourke et al., 2018b). Through a collaborative approach, participants in this change implementation plan (see Appendix D) will co-develop and experience the change plan, creating a sense of ownership for all involved and securing long-term commitment to this change effort (Morimoto & Guillaume, 2018).

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

The appreciative inquiry cycle (Conklin, 2009) will support an intentional shift from prioritizing task completion to valuing the exploration of learning experiences through a discovery lens. This inquiry cycle has four phases (see Figure 7) that harmonize with the four stages of Deszca and Ingols' (2020) change path model (CPM) (Deszca et al., 2020). In alignment with the CPM's awakening stage, the discovery phase prompts exploring positive learning experiences. The dream phase emerges during the mobilization stage to create the space to consider options and possibilities where, in this case, students can reimagine their future. The design and delivery phases work seamlessly with the acceleration and institutionalization stages as thinking moves into action and student voice is realized in practice. Appreciative inquiry aligns with this OIP by supporting the inclusion of more voices while recognizing the value of the journey and the destination (Conklin, 2009).



**Figure 7***Appreciative Inquiry Cycle*

*Note.* The appreciative inquiry cycle, adapted from Conklin, 2009.

**Stage 1: Awakening**

The awakening stage frames the initial vision while building belief in the need for this change, strengthening educator efficacy in participating in this initiative. The discovery phase of appreciative inquiry guides the work of this stage by looking for and at learning approaches and environments where students experience success (Conklin, 2009). Information-seeking (Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014) and sensemaking (Lewis, 2019) will, in alignment with the Indigenous paradigm, encourage reflection and prompt reconsidering assumptions through analysis and dialogue. This allows participants to enhance their awareness of various drivers (e.g., MoE and DSB direction and community requests) while building a more robust and shared understanding of impact informed through different sources of data and evidence (e.g., achievement reports, observations, and student engagement) (Park, 2018). This opening stage provides the opportunity to build awareness of the symbiotic potential created by exploring differing values (i.e., neoliberal priorities with personalized and identity-based values) noted in the change readiness analysis by leveraging the learning experiences through the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This stage seeks to build understanding regarding student-driven learning. This first step involves drafting a vision that will, in alignment with social justice theory, evolve as more voices emerge. As a superintendent (SO), I serve as a change agent and initiator. I bring positional

authority to this change effort, prompting confidence in the change sought while establishing an environment of permission for others to participate in this work. Our system principal and I will identify five pilot schools based on their historical involvement with alternative forms of learning and engage in activities to catalyze their awareness and understanding of the impact that student-driven learning can have on their overall learning experience.

Student success teachers (SST) from these five pilot schools bring credibility from their on-the-ground experience, serving as a foundation for others to build awareness of and comfort in exploring and accepting this approach (Cawsey & Deszca, 2007). Educators and principals will have seen SSTs using alternative, student-driven learning approaches with students through the COVID-19 pandemic, as traditional approaches were not always possible (van Barneveld, 2020). Building a shared understanding of the impact of these approaches will support the initial development of a vision for this student-driven focused change initiative.

## **Stage 2: Mobilization**

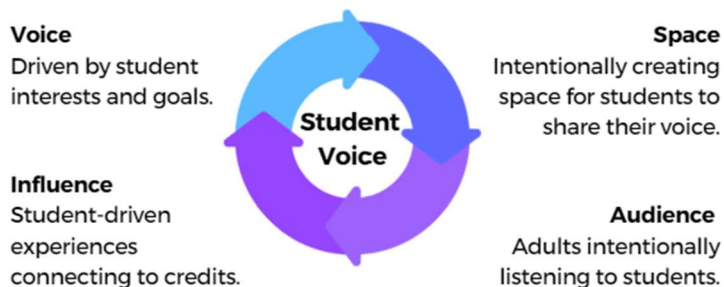
This OIP aims to authentically move beyond narrowly defined neoliberal outcomes that continue to dominate definitions of success (Portelli & Koneeny, 2013). Creating informal networks that connect flexible and creative people representing diverse voices and perspectives (Kotter, 2012) will realize that priority. The team leadership approach embraced by the KDSB creates the environment to embrace the use of networks. However, networks for this change initiative will align more with the followership leadership approach embedded in this OIP. Rather than distributing tasks to move an initiative forward, these networks will establish learning cultures that build capacity through the co-construction of something new (Carsten & Uhl-Bein, 2012).

Followership leadership is realized through the mobilization stage as more voices are engaged (especially historically unheard voices), drawing in additional perspectives to continue refining the vision for this change initiative (Deszca et al., 2020; Romm, 2022). This creates a foundation for theoretical hopes to become practical realities. Enhanced information-gathering and sensemaking will occur for this change initiative as students, parents, and postsecondary experience (PSE) partners bring diverse voices and perspectives together to further collaborative learning. The mobilization stage of the CPM propels movement along the appreciative inquiry continuum from the discovery to the dream phase, where more voices are welcomed, hopes are explored, and future possibilities are considered to become practice (Conklin, 2009).

The system principal and I will clarify the purpose for bringing this network together with participants, simultaneously confirming system-level support for this change initiative (Morimoto & Guillaume, 2018). These discussions will reinforce the need for student voice in educational decisions that affect them (Lundy, 2007) by centering student voice in all learning and planning (see Figure 8). Of all the voices in this network, student voice will be intentionally privileged, and all ideas and suggested practices will be discussed with students to avoid the normalized tendency for adults to make decisions based on their interpretation of student needs (Lundy, 2007). To center adult interpretation would inadvertently reinforce a teacher-centered approach. By working with students at each step, student-driven approaches will dominate, and a change in practice will begin to take hold.

### **Figure 8**

*Student Voice as the Primary Driver*



*Note.* The application of Lundy's (2007) four elements of student voice.

The vision for this change initiative will continue to be refined by empowering student voice, allowing adults in the network to hear about learning approaches that have proven effective for individual students. Further, students will share interests and pathway goals with PSE partners, parents, and SSTs to brainstorm possible experiences that align with student interests, leveraging their strengths to further their learning. Students will also participate with SSTs and PSE partners to map (or connect) experiences with curricular expectations. This step builds capacity in SSTs to capture non-traditional evidence of learning and ensure it counts in evaluation and reporting practices while expanding PSE partners' parameters in considering experiences beyond the classroom. For students, this demonstrates system recognition of the Indigenous value of the importance of experiences beyond the classroom, leveraging their strengths and building their skills and knowledge. Here we see the expansion of learning practices sought through Two-Eyed Seeing, from priorities on standardization and meeting system needs (i.e., Eurocentric) to ones that value student voice and student priorities (i.e., Indigenous) (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006; Portelli & Koneeny, 2018).

### **Stage 3: Acceleration**

The acceleration stage aligns with the design phase of the appreciative inquiry cycle, where what is created is driven by student voice (Conklin, 2009), cultivating opportunities for them to experience their hopes and dreams. During this stage, learning from the awakening and

mobilization stage is applied in the co-construction and implementation of a plan designed to experience diverse and innovative learning opportunities. It will create opportunities that strengthen students' belief in their abilities as capable learners and expand the possibilities before them by creating the conditions to try, for example, an apprenticeship or university course. They will have the chance to feel successful in previously deemed unattainable opportunities (Mitra, 2018; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). It further provides the opportunity for students who thought university was the only option to realize that, for example, an apprenticeship aligns more with their learning preferences and will help them attain their goals in a more personally meaningful way. Students will learn that selecting one PSE now does not negate exploring another in the future, thus establishing a foundation of lifelong learning. Most importantly, the PSE will empower students by showcasing their skills, privileging their interests, and supporting the pursuit of their goals in contrast to seeking achievement of the goals established by others (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Students will see the application of their voice (Lundy, 2007) and, consequently, build confidence in their ability to access different PSEs (Bourke et al., 2018).

With support from co-op teachers and experiential learning partners (LP), students will work with SSTs and PSE partners to take their hopes and dreams and co-construct a series of challenging yet achievable PSEs that allow the student to explore their pathway goals through several authentic experiences. Throughout the implementation phase, students will identify and discuss different aspects of their learning with their SST (e.g., how they enjoy learning, what they do not enjoy, and where they see their strengths). They will work together to highlight the development of their skills and approaches to thinking while celebrating their strengths and experiences in different contexts. Throughout, SSTs will document evidence of student

achievement by connecting (or mapping) evidence of learning (e.g., discussions, observations, and products) with curricular expectations. This documentation will be reviewed with principals to determine and confirm the credits earned through these non-traditional experiences. This approach introduces and consequently creates the permission to challenge the status quo by exploring the practice of privileging contextual and authentic experiences (Hatcher et al., 2009) (e.g., running a business), not to replace but to provide an enhancement or alternatives to traditional learning approaches (e.g., decontextualized assignments). It will further fuel the students' confidence in their abilities and showcase their capability within these new learning environments, confirming PSEs of interest and helping students determine the next steps in their learning and life journey. In response to the first guiding question in Chapter 1, this stage illustrates the significant ways student voice can be included to shape and design meaningful learning experiences that build their awareness of pathway options and strengthen their confidence in achieving their goals.

#### **Stage 4: Institutionalization**

Finally, the institutionalization stage formalizes the consolidation of the learning from this change initiative. At this stage, the idea becomes practice while simultaneously setting the stage for future change. Monitoring through sharing and reflection fuels ongoing improvement and drives enhanced and expanded participation in this change initiative. It enables the analysis of anticipated outcomes, ensures sensitivity to unanticipated outcomes, and helps all stakeholders recognize the full impact of their contribution to this change effort (Burke, 2018).

SSTs, students, and PSE partners will capture quantitative data and qualitative evidence to encourage ongoing reflection. Improvement in credit accumulation, increased graduation rates, and trends in PSE applications will be analyzed and shared by SSTs, principals, and SOs,

meeting neoliberally influenced organizational priorities. SSTs, parents, and PSE partners will gather qualitative evidence of impact by listening to and sharing evidence of student growth, discussing PSE partner observations, and listening for student expressions of hope and future possibilities. This stage realizes the delivery phase of the appreciative inquiry cycle, where what is most important to students will emerge (Conklin, 2009). Combining quantitative and qualitative indicators of impact will showcase the personal impact of student-driven learning, inform the next steps for improvement, and motivate continued exploration of the values espoused through the KDSB's strategic plan (KDSB, n.d.a) and equity roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b).

### **Change Implementation Plan Considerations**

Reflecting upon the learnings of Two-Eyed Seeing, this solution illustrates the importance of not discarding one set of values for another. I seek to diversify options, not replace existing practices. Again, in alignment with appreciative inquiry, this change initiative seeks to value the journey, not only the destination (Conklin, 2009). It demonstrates the importance of considering multiple ways of working with students so system needs do not subsume individual needs. Through Two-Eyed Seeing learning, this change initiative seeks to respect and recognize diverse views rather than being devoted solely to dominant values. The change readiness analysis completed in Chapter 2 and the description of contextual factors in Chapter 1 identified several areas that present challenges, create limitations, and require consideration when engaging in this change effort. Two considerations of note are the different stages of SST readiness across the KDSB and the potential for adults to misuse student voice.

SSTs have had different lived (personal and professional) experiences and bring different assumptions to their work. As noted in the A-VICTORY analysis, they are each at different places along this change continuum, demonstrating varied values in practice across the KDSB.

This change implementation plan will intentionally begin with those SSTs most ready to embrace and explore this change. However, over the next few years, our focus will expand to include SSTs who fear challenging the status quo or do not believe in the Problem of Practice (PoP) that inspired this OIP. This reality is a pivotal factor in creating this implementation plan. It has influenced a gradual approach to this change initiative that supports educators in observing and learning from their point of access. This approach illustrates a response to the third guiding question in Chapter 1, which looks at how a change model can build staff capacity. It allows educators to explore how various values can be met, evolve their understanding of the purpose of learning and education, and build their skills gradually such that they feel confident exploring student learning differently. This approach looks at change readiness to confirm the current status and identify areas of growth in a process grounded in building long-term change.

Additionally, there remains the potential for student voice to be misused. Angus (2006) and York and Kirshner (2015) have described how student voice has been used performatively to serve adult needs. Awareness of this possibility must be at the forefront of all adult participants so that they can disrupt the normative tendency for adult voices to dominate (Thompson, 2009). However, the ethic of the best interest of the student (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2017) and the primacy of their voice is woven throughout this change implementation plan as the plan situates students as the drivers, privileging their voice over all others. This is built from a PoP grounded in research and practical evidence. The plan requires ongoing adult learning directed by student voice and driven by student experiences. It reframes power by situating adults as partners and facilitators with students, focusing on empowering student voice (Theoharis, 2007).

The evidence gathered and monitored throughout this change implementation plan will prepare educators and the organization to continue evolving learning practices to improve



student achievement and well-being. As students and societal expectations are not static, neither should our approach to learning remain the same. This change initiative challenges and corrects the belief that education must be identical for everyone. Instead, it focuses on specific students for whom current practices repeatedly fail. Imagine what could happen if all learning practices were observed and judged from the lens of student strengths and goals rather than solely on the gaps identified through Eurocentric systemic priorities established long ago (Green, 2017; Grimaldi, 2012). The next section will illustrate how knowledge and learning will be shared to build awareness, buy-in, and confidence in participating in student-driven learning experiences.

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

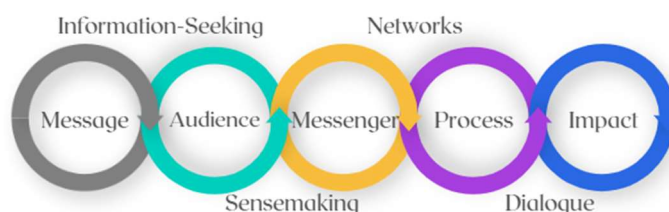
Communicating about, throughout, and after a change initiative needs to move beyond providing information (Edmonstone, 2018) toward using that information to learn and evolve individual practice and organizational culture. This assumption drives the approach to communication for this PSE change initiative. In alignment with the spirit of this OIP, the inclusion of diverse voices (Theoharis, 2010) to develop an innovative approach to learning through a two-way exchange of ideas and experiences will be undertaken (Hatcher et al., 2009). Rather than impart knowledge, this knowledge mobilization plan (KMP) will seek to spark curiosity and evolve practice through discourse to engender and action new ideas. This KMP will reinforce the value of collaborative learning and strengthen understanding of the urgent need and capability to make change happen, especially for historically underserved students (Green, 2017; Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014).

This KMP will enable student voice, embrace diversified learning opportunities, and value individual and collective contribution (see Appendix E). The dissemination of information by creating learning opportunities to explore and evolve individual and organizational values and

practices is framed by the considerations identified by Lavis et al. (2003). Those considerations include the message (i.e., what is being communicated), the audience (i.e., who receives the message), the messenger (i.e., who communicates the message), the process (i.e., how the message is communicated), and the impact (i.e., the difference made) (see Figure 9).

### Figure 9

#### *Knowledge Mobilization Plan*



*Note.* Communication considerations, adapted from Lavis et al., 2003.

In alignment with the themes promoted through followership leadership, this KMP will promote collaborative and iterative communication strategies (Lavis et al., 2003; Lewis, 2019), including information-seeking and sensemaking activities through two-way dialogue structured through a networking approach. This will support individual growth in the short term, leading toward a shift in organizational culture (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Ryan & Watson, 2021) that embeds personalized, innovative learning in the long term. Through networks (Kotter, 2012), partners will come together to explore new ideas and approaches through information-seeking activities (Hogvold Olsen & Stensaker, 2014) to evolve understanding and beliefs through dialogue and reflective sensemaking activities (Babak-Alavi & Gill, 2017; Lewis, 2019). This collaborative learning approach creates an environment that elevates hidden voices and views, positions learning as a journey, enables individual reflection, and fuels collective action (Park, 2018; Weiner, 2009). This communication approach will further the priorities woven through this OIP, including challenging the status quo (Fielding, 2007), engaging with non-traditional

learning (Breunig, 2019; Mitra, 2018), celebrating an explorative approach (Hatcher et al., 2009), and seeking to capture and apply new learning (Lassig, 2022).

As a SO, I am a hub connecting system- and school-based educators and leaders in realizing this change initiative. Through the KDSB's strategic plan (KDSB, n.d.a) and equity roadmap (KDSB, n.d.b), trustees and senior staff have signaled their support of innovative and personalized learning experiences with students. They are aware of various student-driven learning experiences that my department and I have cultivated in recent years and have demonstrated support given the evidenced impact on student achievement (KDSB, 2021a). I am not always in schools or classrooms to make these changes happen. However, this KMP leverages my credibility built through my collaborative work in the KDSB and the positional authority afforded by my role to cultivate an environment for staff, students, parents, and PSE partners to feel empowered to explore and enable the PSE opportunity.

### **Message: The Inclusion of Student Voice - What Can Learning Look Like?**

Student voice shapes the vision that drives this OIP. Listening to and working with student voice intentionally considers and applies the ethic of the best interest of the student (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007) to avoid defaulting to normalized, adult-dominated approaches. It honours student perspectives (Stefkovich & O'Brien, 2004), authentically illustrating the value of student voice (Robinson & Taylor, 2013). Although demonstrating a readiness to work with student voice, the change readiness analysis in Chapter 2 (see Appendix B) also illustrates inconsistency in its application across the KDSB. This communication plan needs to address that inconsistency by building understanding and embedding student voice across all schools.

As previously noted, understanding the urgency for this change initiative will be realized through the awakening stage of the CPM. The system principal and I will create the conditions

for participating SSTs and principals to build their understanding of the impact of student-driven and teacher-centered learning through facilitated discussions about achievement data from students in Student Success Programs (SSPs). Additionally, they will hear directly from students regarding the impact of various learning experiences through pre-recorded videos. By analyzing student evidence and listening to student voice, SSTs and principals will strengthen their understanding of the limited (and potentially harmful) impact of sole reliance on teacher-centered learning practices (e.g., pre-determined assignments that prioritize curricular content without considering student voice or student needs) that continues to erode student confidence (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Smyth et al., 2003).

The mobilization stage creates the conditions to include student voice directly through brainstorming. Again, as the SO, I will build our understanding of this need based on achievement data and previously shared student voice to confirm purpose while communicating KDSB-level support for this change initiative. PSE partners, parents, principals, SSTs, LPs, the system principal, and I will listen to the students who have agreed to participate in this pilot to learn more about their previous learning experiences while hearing about how they learn best, what they are interested in, and what they hope to experience after high school. This approach transparently and intentionally privileges student voice and situates adults as learners, moving from traditional, teacher-dominant roles to the collaborative learning stance encouraged through transformative and followership leadership (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2017; Shields, 2022).

Formal and informal opportunities to discuss the process of empowering, capturing, and applying student voice through the PSEs will be facilitated and encouraged in the acceleration and institutionalization stages. This plan will encourage all participants to share learning and challenges with colleagues and peers. For example, students will speak with peers in SSPs while

SSTs share their learning at KDSB SST meetings. School principals and I will facilitate discussions at the monthly leaders' meetings to share the vision, process, student experience, and impact, building awareness, understanding, and capacity. The system principal and LPs will work with students to share their experiences on the KDSB website, creating space for fresh perspectives as others discover these learning opportunities (Conklin, 2009). It creates the space to hear suggestions from people not directly involved in the PSE solution while preparing others for future participation by sparking curiosity about this change initiative.

**Message: Diversifying Access to Learning - What Counts as Learning?**

Normalized values driven by adult priorities frame current educational practices (Portelli & Koneeny, 2013). As students, parents, and educators learn more about what options are available from PSE partners and build awareness and confidence using these options, adult dominance will make way for student-driven perspectives and experiences. The PSE solution seeks to expand understanding of what counts in learning (i.e., what is captured, documented, and reported) beyond a sole focus on neoliberal definitions of success (Davies & Bansel, 2007) and examples of learning (e.g., written tests), prompting consideration about what else could count (e.g., experiential learning directly connected to the students PSE goals). To achieve this, learning opportunities must be reimagined to expand beyond the primacy of curriculum and content to include intentional and direct connections with the student's life experience and pathway goals (Iwama et al., 2009; Rodriguez-McClellon, 2021). Communication will facilitate the value and use of these skills in capturing different demonstrations of learning (e.g., describing the critical structures of starting a business), ensuring that diversified approaches to that demonstration of learning are valued alongside traditional approaches (e.g., book reports).

Participants will have strengthened their understanding of the need for increased inclusion of student voice in the awakening and mobilization stages through analysis of data (i.e., information-seeking) and student-driven dialogue (i.e., sensemaking) regarding the impact of various learning experiences. Discourse about student voice in the awakening and mobilization stages sets the foundation for co-creating PSEs in the acceleration stage. The acceleration stage shifts the brainstorming into practice as PSE partners share different ideas (e.g., auditing a university course or building part of a house with a tradesperson), and students share their interest in each idea. Further, students will have the opportunity to ask about trying out different experiences. SSTs will demonstrate support by asking questions as the PSE partners and students co-design the experience. SSTs and principals will work with PSE partners and students to map (or connect) evidence of learning onto curricular expectations to demonstrate how this learning can be captured within the traditional and mandated evaluation and reporting structures (e.g., the KDSB's use of evidence records and provincial report cards) (KDSB, n.d.j; MoE, 2022c). This helps students and educators meaningfully connect theoretical learning and practical experiences. It further allows SSTs and principals to showcase how to operationalize the PSE solution to other principals and educators. Any change is risky for change implementers (Bastian et al., 2021). By bridging new practices with existing structures, participants can connect with something familiar, easing the discomfort inherent in engaging in something new (e.g., capturing learning while a student works alongside a radio announcer) and increasing their willingness to consider participating (Lewis, 2019).

The institutionalization stage provides for the capturing and sharing of students' stories from this experience. Students will share their experiences through dialogue with SSTs and PSE partners. SSTs will capture student voice directly through video (with the student's permission)

for sharing with others in the KDSB and community and through the KDSB's website. I will prompt conversations with senior staff and trustees through discussion, emails, and formal reporting to demonstrate the realization of their vision to embed more innovative and personalized learning in practice. These communication strategies support collaborative learning by gradually introducing new approaches to learning while encouraging educator and parent involvement at different points of the implementation plan.

**Message: Looking Beyond Discrete Roles Toward Contribution - Partnerships**

Among the threads woven throughout this OIP is the concept of power, specifically in undertaking steps to reframe our understanding of power in educational settings. This is fueled by transformative and followership leadership, prioritizing a critical message that looks beyond discrete roles (i.e., teacher designing and directing student learning through assignments) toward contribution (i.e., teacher encouraging student voice to facilitate the co-development of learning experiences) (Coyle & Foti, 2012; Northouse, 2021). The CPM reinforces and models a reflective approach that cultivates a reciprocal learning environment (Lewis, 2019). It supports moving beyond traditional power-laden hierarchical roles where some are situated as knowledge holders and others as knowledge receivers (e.g., teachers to students or principals to teachers) (Dong, 2017; Hatcher et al., 2009).

Communication strategies and structures were chosen for this OIP to reinforce the concept and benefit of partnerships throughout the PSE solution. SSTs and principals will partner to have a two-way dialogue exploring their learning after analyzing examples of traditional and student-driven learning experiences. This approach does not recognize role or title. Instead, it prioritizes collaborative learning. In the mobilization stage, partnerships expand as parents are welcomed into the space and invited to share their hopes for their child, highlighting their child's

strengths and unique skills. These hopes and strengths inform the co-creation of experiences with students who may have lost sight of the strengths they possess. PSE partners are brought in not to share their programs (which describes a one-way communication approach) but to listen to student needs and hopes and to work collaboratively with the team to modify programs and build new experiences that serve the student's needs (demonstrating a two-way communication approach). This collaborative interaction will support all participants in building an understanding of the value and impact of authentic learning beyond the classroom.

Additionally, through followership and transformative leadership approaches, the hierarchical divide between teachers and students will diminish as SSTs use their power to elevate student voice. By asking questions to prompt student contribution and encouraging students to share interests, SSTs will model a win-win approach to power (Shen & Xia, 2012), where the SST does not need to lose power for the student to gain power. This illustrates an authentic response to the second guiding question in Chapter 1 relating to the impact of these leadership approaches on realizing a win-win approach. Collectively, this communication plan elevates each participant without diminishing the voice or contribution of any individual. This demonstrates a transformative approach that values all contributions and builds confidence in this initiative and the education system (Ontario Public School Board Association [OPSBA], 2018; van Oord, 2013). The next section will focus on a monitoring strategy that continues to model transparency and an iterative approach to engaging in a change process.

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

As previously discussed, woven throughout this OIP is a desire to challenge the status quo (Fielding, 2007), elevate the voices of those historically unheard (Theoharis, 2010), move beyond educational norms grounded in Eurocentric values (Dei, 2018; Kerr & Andreotti, 2018),



celebrate the learning journey not just the destination (Hatcher et al., 2009), and recognize that what counts in the existing neoliberal environment may not hold the same meaning for everyone (Morcom & Freeman, 2018; Pidgeon, 2015). The changes sought through this OIP require expanding what counts as learning and pursuing a shift from the domination of standardization such that learning is meaningful for the individual (Bourke, 2018). Through a structured and intentional approach to monitoring, this initiative provides the opportunity to communicate these values (Biesta, 2019) while additionally tracking progress (Neuman et al., 2018) and identifying and making needed adjustments (Coward & Glennon, 2010).

This monitoring plan will continue reinforcing the reciprocal, reflective, and interactive themes embedded in this OIP. From a monitoring and evaluation lens, Kaplan and Norton (1996) highlight what they refer to as double-loop learning, where new learning creates the opportunity to reconsider current thinking (Lassig, 2022; Tikhonravova, 2017). This approach models a shift from prioritizing one answer to valuing curiosity by exploring multiple options. Opportunities are thus created to question perspectives, biases, and assumptions. Kaplan and Norton's balanced scorecard (BSC) (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) uses multiple voices, increasing the inclusion of diverse perspectives and prompting enhanced consideration and reconsideration of ideas and thinking. These voices create an informal communication loop that, along with formal processes, strengthens trust and establishes transparent accountability (Neuman et al., 2018).

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Balanced Scorecard Overview**

Any change initiative seeks to move an organization from its current state to a new, desired state (Weiner, 2009). The BSC helps illustrate the change journey with a focus on formative and summative indicators that demonstrate the realization of the change (Neuman et al., 2018). Formative indicators capture evidence over time that demonstrates the short-term

progress of the change while highlighting needed adjustments to realize this change. Summative indicators demonstrate the full realization of the change initiative. Using both recognizes the value of the change journey while celebrating its outcomes (Kaplan & Miyake, 2010).

As discussed in earlier chapters, current educational practices require students to learn and demonstrate their learning through predetermined mechanisms at prescribed times with little to no opportunity to include their voice (Bourke et al., 2018b). The desired state sought through this OIP elevates student voice, situating them as co-developers of their learning experiences, and prioritizing their interests and pathway aspirations as the primary drivers to achieve their goals. This OIP seeks to change educator practice such that student learning experiences are positively changed, fueling the ongoing evolution of educator practice. The BSC harmonizes with the CPM, reinforcing the communication of learning generated through the KMP. This change initiative requires a monitoring framework that seeks, values, and facilitates ongoing engagement with diverse peoples and voices (Keser Ozmantar & Gedikoglu, 2015) to continue the drive to make change happen such that, in alignment with appreciative inquiry (Conklin, 2009), student learning experiences are more personally meaningful.

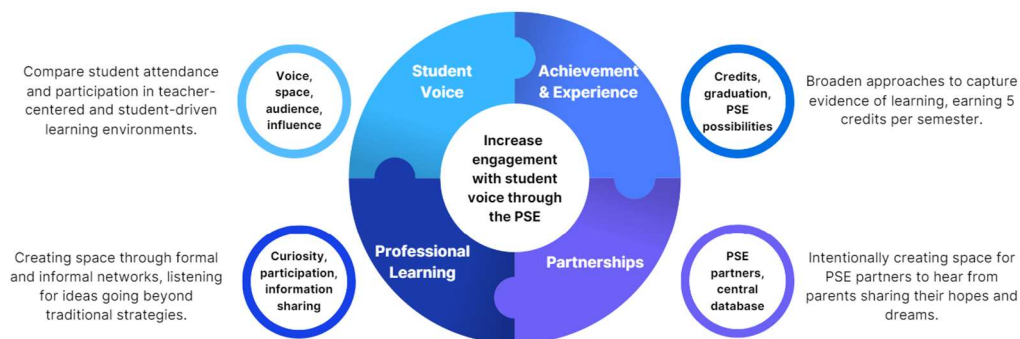
In this OIP, the BSC is also a motivational tool (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) that highlights the voices of various stakeholders and facilitates the recognition of various achievements along and at the end of a journey. Acknowledging the journey cultivates an environment that conceptualizes change as evolving along a change continuum rather than looking at a series of isolated events. The BSC illustrates the impact of the actions taken to realize the vision and the identified strategic objectives to make a difference in the lives of children.

## The Structure of the Balanced Scorecard

The BSC situates vision and strategy at its core. Orbiting that center are the priorities for a change initiative along with the objectives (i.e., the specific goal), measures (i.e., what is observed to monitor the achievement of the goals), targets (i.e., benchmarks or indicators), and initiatives (i.e., the work to achieve the goal) (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). The monitoring narrative for this change initiative launches from the vision of increasing the inclusion of student voice to improve achievement and PSE awareness. The strategies chosen to meet this vision are outlined in the PSE description in Chapters 2 and 3. The BSC will structure formal monitoring and evaluation from priority areas, including student voice, achievement and experience, partnerships, and professional growth (see Figure 10). A more detailed outline of the BSC for this initiative is in Appendix F.

**Figure 10**

*The Postsecondary Experience through the Balanced Scorecard*



*Note.* Adaptation of Kaplan and Norton's (1996) balanced scorecard with the PSE.

### Monitoring Priority: Student Voice

The PSE opportunity seeks the increased influence of student voice on their learning experience. It seeks to move from teacher-centered to student-driven learning. Lundy's (2007) four elements of student voice (i.e., voice, space, audience, and influence) create a continuum of

engagement with student voice to monitor achievement from performative thoughts to transformative influence (i.e., creating space to hear student voice that drives the creation of their learning experiences) (see Appendix A). Discourse through the analysis of evidence identified in the implementation plan will look to the achievement of students influencing their learning experiences (Bourke & Mentis, 2013). Where influence has not yet been achieved, participants will explore ideas to increase student influence.

Specific aims or targets for student voice will evolve throughout various aspects of the implementation of this initiative. Initial data analysis in the awakening stage of the CPM will seek to identify how the historical inclusion (or lack thereof) of student voice impacted their achievement and belief in themselves as capable learners. The mobilization stage will analyze formative factors such as the type of participant discourse, the topics being explored, the space privileged for students, and the time usurped by adults (i.e., adults sharing their thoughts instead of listening, confirming what they have heard, and asking questions to learn more). Intentional tracking of the time privileged to listen to and understand student voice will be compared with the adults' intentional or inadvertent tendency to direct student thinking.

Monitoring at the acceleration and institutionalization stages of the CPM provides more opportunities to gather and share evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of privileging student voice. Formative behaviour indicators such as attendance and participation (e.g., sharing ideas, asking questions, and completing assignments) (Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007) provide early indicators of progress or challenges. Summative evidence through psychological indicators, including student ability to describe the purpose of their learning and articulate connections between learning and pathway goals (Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007), will demonstrate the student's shift from operating within compliance (i.e., completing a task because an educator

asked them to do so) to one of influence (i.e., engaging in a co-constructed experience that is personally meaningful). Further movement along Lundy's (2007) student voice continuum will be evidenced as students express more postsecondary goals and identify diverse ways to engage with those options (e.g., apprenticeship or university). We will see growth in their understanding of the possibilities before them as they move from expressing limited options to seeking and applying to diverse PSEs previously disregarded. Learning about the positive results of this work through formal and informal information sharing will minimize fear of risk-taking and counter concerns related to challenging the status quo (Morimoto & Guillaume, 2018).

### **Monitoring Priority: Achievement and Experience**

The dual priority of achievement and well-being illustrates the need to meet the system's neoliberal goals while valuing the student's overall learning experience. Students can be successful by neoliberal standards without any meaningful connection with the learning experience (Bourke et al., 2018b; Khalifa et al., 2019). Thus, they can struggle to find their purpose in learning (Noyes, 2005). Measures and targets through various phases of this initiative will capture evidence of the summative impact of this learning experience on student achievement. However, it will also expand from the dominant neoliberal indicators of evidence to include those more formative and potentially meaningful indicators for individual students (Pidgeon, 2016). In doing so, the PSE reinforces the dual, Two-Eyed Seeing approach where one value or system is not subsumed by another (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016).

Practices to monitor neoliberal expectations are already embedded in the KDSB (KDSB, n.d.g) as trends in credit accumulation and graduation rates continue to be analyzed. The anticipated result of students earning a minimum of five credits each semester in the PSE during their grade 11 and 12 years will solidify this initiative through a neoliberal lens, increasing the

likelihood of being accepted as a long-term practice. However, neoliberal indicators of success do not speak to the student's experience, and restricting monitoring to these neoliberal standards would be incommensurate with the spirit of this OIP. Eliminating these indicators is not within the scope of my influence. However, expanding what can be monitored is within my influence.

Striving to embrace a dual approach, the measures and targets in this OIP will look to capture personally meaningful evidence for the student that demonstrates their move from compliance (e.g., completing assigned tasks) to exploration (e.g., inquiring and making suggestions). This work begins at the awakening stage when the impact of student-driven work is captured, discussed, and further understood. The work of this initiative is grounded and developed through the mobilization and acceleration stages of the CPM, where targets will include students increasingly and independently articulating postsecondary interests and options previously considered unattainable. The collection of student stories will be pivotal in showcasing the impact of their learning experiences on achieving their goals and their efficacy as learners. Through the mobilization and acceleration stages, educators and PSE partners will monitor students increasing independence in engaging in the learning experience. Further, these partners will listen for connections students make that describe how the experience reshapes their self-efficacy in reaching their goals. Finally, educators will monitor student ability to describe how different experiences support their goals as they narrow in on approaches that resonate best for them. For example, a student may have previously sought a college experience but learned that they could achieve their goals in a more personally meaningful way through an apprenticeship. This monitoring priority demonstrates the benefit of meeting both individual and system needs.

**Monitoring Priority: Partnerships**

Partnerships support the co-creation of meaningful learning experiences with students. The ancillary benefit of this focus is building greater awareness of the possibilities in education and building trust in and with the education system (OPSBA, 2018) with all participants.

Each stage of this change implementation plan includes PSE partners and parents. Parents have high expectations and hopes for their children's future and will ensure that the network's focus remains on the individual student's needs. Capturing opportunities when parent voice pushes educators beyond traditional practices will provide formative evidence of progress, reinforcing the transformative goal to make change happen (Shields, 2022). At the awakening and mobilization stages, it will be pivotal to observe parents and PSE partners listening to students while co-constructing ideas that center student voice without filtering that voice through adult priorities. Summative targets for partnerships will include securing a minimum of three PSE partners for each PSE in the first year (to increase as more students participate) and creating a central database of PSE partners to secure the long-term sustainability of this initiative.

Pre-existing PSE partnerships could present a barrier to this initiative. The pull to rely on existing programs will be considerable. However, those programs are not personalized (e.g., pre-packaged programs supporting a museum visit) and do not include student voice. As the priority in this OIP is on privileging student voice (Bourke & MacDonald, 2018), educators will work with partners to monitor the co-construction of learning experiences, building the capacity of participants to articulate the personalization of a given idea.

**Monitoring Priority: Professional Learning**

Professional learning will build belief in the need for student-driven learning while strengthening educator efficacy in participating in this change. Educators must embrace the risk

inherent in exploring beyond traditional classroom practices (Portelli & Koneeny, 2018). Evidence of this growth and indicators of resistance will be captured through the number of SSTs expressing interest in participating in this initiative, followed by the number of SSTs, principals, and student support professionals asking questions about this opportunity. While involvement demonstrates immediate support for the initiative, questions demonstrate curiosity and an openness to trying something new, furthering capacity building and the likelihood of embedding this as a long-term practice. Through formal and informal networks, educators will pose questions and offer suggestions to help us monitor the depth of understanding of this change initiative. Additionally, the number of schools advocating for participation will indicate a movement from interest to a willingness to embed this in regular practice.

### **Chapter 3 Summary**

Iterative, reflective, and reciprocal practices are woven throughout this OIP and embedded within the design, communication plan, and monitoring framework of this change implementation plan. The CPM, KMP, appreciative inquiry, and BSC are driven by information-seeking and sensemaking practices, encouraging ongoing learning and applying that learning to revise thinking and understanding continuously. These structures frame an approach that seeks new thinking and models acceptance of diversity of values, approaches, and ideas, building individual capacity that ultimately evolves organizational culture.

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

In recent decades, provincial education policy changes such as SSPs have been designed and implemented to respond to concerningly low graduation rates (MoE, 2020), and those benchmarks have seen significant improvement over time (MoE, 2022a). However, a cohort of students remains at risk of having or developing identities of failure (Noyes, 2005). They



continue to struggle through a historically influenced and mandated system designed with requirements to meet systemic priorities (e.g., drive the job market) (Gianesin & Bonaker, 2003), with little consideration for the student's needs and interests (Guttek, 2013).

Neoliberalism serves as a dominant force in the province, driving policy in the KDSB that is effective for some and destructive for others (Baroutsis et al., 2016). Interventions for those struggling often force students to conform to the system rather than adapting the system to meet students' needs (Lumby, 2012). As a SO, I can begin to change this reality.

This OIP launches a change initiative that evolves staff practice and changes student learning experiences. The PSE is an example of an approach that centers the student as the driver of their learning experiences fueled by their strengths, interests, lived experiences, and pathway goals. This aligns with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), denoting the requirement for children to have a say in decisions that impact their lives. The next steps and considerations for this initiative will focus on medium-term capacity building for long-term sustainability through the transformative application of student voice, confirming connections to the KDSB vision, and building capacity in embracing multiple approaches to learning.

Although woven through this OIP, the evolution of the application of student voice, ensuring movement from performative discussions (e.g., feedback surveys) to transformative actions (i.e., students influencing and informing teaching practice), must be maintained as a priority to counter existing adult domination (Mitra & Gross, 2009). This will require educators and PSE partners to embed the practice of continuously applying the ethic of the best interest of the student (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2017) by challenging ideas and suggestions to ensure that

they authentically respond to student voice rather than justifying educator decisions. As the SO for student success, I will maintain a spotlight on this need.

Senior leaders and decision-makers need to be aware and understand how this alternative approach to learning meets and pushes the KDSB's vision to support student achievement and well-being (KDSB, n.d.a; KDSB, n.d.b). I will speak with educators, educational leaders, and trustees through system meetings to discuss how this initiative meets the KDSB's vision while simultaneously making a difference in students' lives. This sharing will include neoliberal achievement data while also including evidence of student voice illustrating the impact the PSE has had on their plans, confidence, and pathway goals.

Educators must continue building capacity to move beyond a singular approach to education (Iwama et al., 2009). Expecting all students to learn and demonstrate learning the same way dismisses the unique experiences and attributes of the individual student. It neglects to consider who they are, their interests, and their strengths. We need to embrace a dual approach (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2016) in education, where diverse methods of learning and ways of demonstrating that learning are not looked upon with suspicion and instead, are recognized as providing students more opportunities to showcase their strengths, celebrate their identity, and reach their pathway goals. Stakeholders need to continue analyzing this change initiative's impact, recognizing its impact on student achievement and well-being, and building confidence in growing beyond a singular approach to learning (Iwama et al., 2009).

### **Epilogue: Make a Difference in the Life of a Child**

The journey of writing this OIP has prompted my wonderings regarding the concepts of power and relationships. I recognize the privilege my positional authority provides me as a White man with an influential senior-level position in a large K-12 DSB. Perceptions of power,

understanding how to access and use power, and reframing power from a zero-sum (Johnston et al., 2021) to a win-win (Shen & Xia, 2012) lens have challenged my thinking and prompted further considerations. I look to elevate unheard voices by strengthening an understanding of community, not reinforcing a hierarchy. This thinking emerged as I explored the purpose of learning in education. The omnipresent focus on increasing student achievement can benefit students but is situated more to meet the neoliberal goals of society. That meets one need. It does not speak to the impact of learning or learning structures on students' self-efficacy as life-long learners. My goal in this OIP has been to highlight student learning experiences, including their journey and chosen destination, to empower them to drive their learning.

My journey in writing this OIP centers on the idea of relationships. The concept of relationships is embedded within research and is regularly spoken of in my organization. However, my learning through this experience has exposed the performative use of that word and prompted the need to explore a deeper understanding of the purpose and application of relationships within education. It needs to evolve from a transactional and personally beneficial idea (Burnes et al., 2018) to one where relationships cultivate interactive opportunities to reflect upon how we engage, identify whose voice matters and how that voice is influential, and how existing systems and structures serve to prevent or enable access to decision-making tables.

My learning continues to be situated around people and experience. My hope through this OIP is that I have seeded wonderings in readers to challenge the narrow definitions of student success embedded in existing programs, push our collective understanding of what learning looks like, and expand our understanding of what counts and how learning is demonstrated such that embracing diversity and difference is a daily practice. This is the work of equity. This will make a difference in the life of a child.

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## Appendix A

### Four Factors of Student Voice (Lundy, 2007)

	<b>Voice</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<b>Description</b>	Students can share ideas and thoughts informally.	Intentional space has been created for students to share thoughts and ideas.	Those in positions of power intentionally listen to student voice.	Changes are realized through and due to student voice.
<b>Example (non-exhaustive)</b>	An example of voice includes overhearing students sharing thoughts with peers in the halls and observing a lack of attendance in certain classes.	An example of space includes scheduling time and rooms for student groups (e.g., student councils) to come together and discuss concerns and plan events.	An example of audience includes the staff advisors in student groups (e.g., gay-straight alliances) and principals meeting with groups of students to hear their ideas and suggestions.	An example of influence includes student-led events (e.g., school dances) and co-developing learning experiences with their teachers (not a choice provided by the teacher).

  
 Along a continuum

## Appendix B

## Organization Change Readiness Using the Davis A-VICTORY Model (Holt et al., 2007)

	Limited readiness	Cautious readiness	Strong readiness
<i>Ability</i> speaks to the availability of resources needed to implement the change.		Collaborative time limited by staff shortages.	
<i>Values</i> looks at the alignment of the organization's values with those embedded within the change effort.	Collision between the KDSB's aspirational goals (vision) and system realities (standardization).		
<i>Ideas</i> prompt consideration of communication approaches as the accuracy and perceptions of the information related to the change are analyzed.			Recent inclusion of identity-based data included with the KDSB practice of regularly collecting and analyzing quantitative achievement data.
<i>Circumstances</i> analyzes the organizational context.			Ongoing professional learning.
<i>Timing</i> speaks to the inclusion of a plan with timelines and benchmarks.			Reimaging of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
<i>Obligation</i> speaks to an individual's belief in the need for change.			Understanding the need to adapt practices in SSPs.
<i>Resistance</i> looks to potential tensions created, for example, through the imposition of a set of values and beliefs.	The dominating power of the status quo.		
<i>Yield</i> speaks to the benefits of the change outweighing the costs of the change effort.		Privileging omnipresent neoliberal outcomes.	

## Appendix C

## Comparison Chart for Proposed Solutions

	Strong	Moderate	Weak
Criteria	Proposed solution #1:	Proposed solution #2	Proposed solution #3:
<b>Student voice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space is created for voice with audience.</li> <li>Influence is reliant on engagement by external partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning experiences are co-created with their voice.</li> <li>Learning criteria is determined by the student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space is created for voice.</li> <li>No obligation for audience nor requirement to change practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Equity and ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authentic work engagement increases access to workplace options.</li> <li>Opportunity is defined by student voice with learning potential defined by student voice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to explore multiple PSEs increases access to possible PSE experiences.</li> <li>Opportunities and learning defined by student voice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to opportunities is not addressed as solution focuses on sharing ideas with no structure to action those ideas.</li> <li>Influence controlled by adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment by senior leadership.</li> <li>Professional learning is time and cost intensive.</li> <li>Partner dependent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment by senior leadership.</li> <li>Professional learning is time and cost intensive.</li> <li>Partner dependent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment by senior leadership.</li> <li>Limited requirements regarding time and organizational commitment.</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will know their voice has been shared with the potential to contribute to resolving a challenging workplace problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of the experience determined by the student.</li> <li>Student will learn more about experience they had not considered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will know their voice has been shared.</li> <li>Actioning of voices is uncertain.</li> </ul>

**Appendix D**

**Change Implementation Plan**

This chart provides an overview of the change process and timelines to implement the PSE solution for students directly connected to SSPs. The implementation of this solution follows Deszca and Ingols’ (2020) change path model.

Students will drive the development of this learning opportunity. Using a theatrical metaphor, they are the lead actors in this play. All others are supporting actors. Parent voice is pivotal in guiding this work and informing SSTs who serve as primary supports. As an SO, I will be continuously present, engage in active listening, ask questions to prompt further consideration to refine and focus the vision, remove barriers where possible, facilitate access to resources, and demonstrate district support for this innovative approach to learning.

<b>Stage and purpose</b>	<b>Goals / indicators of progress</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Steps* and timeline</b>
<b>Awakening</b>			
Build belief in the need for change.  Build self-efficacy to engage the change.	Create space that reflects the priorities in transformative and followership leadership.  Build belief in the need for	SSTs  System & school principals  Learning partners (LP)  Superintendent (SO)	May-August <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a small working group of identified stakeholders from 5 pilot schools.</li> <li>• SO describes the tenants of followership and transformative leadership along with the PSE opportunity.</li> <li>• Identify students in SSPs who are struggling and at risk of not graduating.</li> <li>• Working group will compare evidence of impact on students and student learning using examples from traditional assignments and student-driven experiences.</li> </ul>

	<p>change established.</p> <p>Build confidence and commitment to engage with the change.</p> <p>Draft a working vision.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in visioning discussions reflecting on the previous learning impact discussion, reflecting on the districts strategic plan and equity roadmap, and identifying gaps between vision and practice.</li> <li>• Discuss where the PSE responds to identified gaps.</li> <li>• Brainstorm evidence that would demonstrate the impact of this idea in practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Mobilization</b>			
<p>Engage more voices, especially previously unheard voices and those directly impacted by the change.</p> <p>Gather more information and perspectives.</p> <p>Further develop the vision.</p>	<p>Expand the network to include those impacted by the changes.</p> <p>Refine the working vision.</p> <p>Seek and identify barriers to students accessing learning.</p>	<p>Students (directly connected to SSPs)</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Community partners</p> <p>SSTs</p> <p>System &amp; school principals</p> <p>Learning partners (LP)</p>	<p>September-October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the working group to include students and parents from participating schools (voice &amp; space).</li> <li>• SO and system principal to share the PoP and the PSE opportunity to hear student feedback (space and audience).</li> <li>• Revisit and revise vision, prioritizing information shared by students (influence).</li> <li>• Privilege student voice, creating space to listen to their hopes and goals and experiences in school.</li> <li>• PSE partners and LPs will listen to identify potential partnerships (audience)</li> <li>• SSTs will listen for access points and barriers experienced by students (audience).</li> <li>• SSTs and LPs will create sample exemplars mapping experiences with curricular expectations.</li> <li>• Create a “loop back” process to discuss evidence of impact as new learning is acquired</li> </ul>



		Superintendent (SO)	
<b>Acceleration</b>			
<p>Reflect on learning from the awakening and mobilization stages.</p> <p>Co-develop an implementation plan.</p> <p>Implement the plan.</p>	<p>Co-develop a plan that realizes the vision.</p> <p>Collaboratively implement the plan.</p> <p>Highlight equity work in action.</p>	<p>Students</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Community partners</p> <p>SSTs</p> <p>System &amp; school principals</p> <p>Learning partners (LP)</p> <p>Superintendent (SO)</p>	<p>November-January: Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will share their interests and pathway goals.</li> <li>• The network will co-construct a series of PSE experiences in alignment with student goals.</li> <li>• Principals will identify any barriers and speak with the superintendent to explore options to overcome.</li> <li>• SSTs and students to build a living document of approaches the student would like to use to share their learning, questions, and ideas.</li> <li>• SSTs and students will collaborate on how best to capture evidence of learning.</li> <li>• Establish a reflection timeline between student and SST, between SST and partner, and between SST and parent.</li> </ul> <p>February-June: Initial Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will engage with each PSE experience.</li> <li>• SSTs and students will establish a monitoring schedule.</li> <li>• SSTs will map evidence of learning to curricular expectations.</li> <li>• Principals will review the evidence with SSTs and students and determine which credits have been earned (reflecting on experience and pathway goals).</li> <li>• SO and system principal will coordinate the sharing of information and stories, gradually building system capacity.</li> <li>• The network will meet regularly to review the impact of the work and apply learnings to strengthen this approach to learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutionalization</b>			
<p>Monitor impact of this change.</p>	<p>Year 1: 5 pilot schools participating</p>	<p>SSTs</p>	<p>Year 1: February-June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network will gather evidence of impact from students.</li> <li>• SSTs, and PSE partners will refine this learning experience.</li> </ul>

<p>Share impact to embed in practice across the district.</p> <p>Establish the foundation for the next change.</p>	<p>(individual change engagement).</p> <p>Year 2: Half of the secondary schools participating (individual change engagement leading to a shift in organizational culture).</p> <p>Year 3: All secondary schools participating (organizational culture shift).</p>	<p>System &amp; school principals</p> <p>Learning partners (LP)</p> <p>Superintendent (SO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share impact, success, and challenges with the district to increase awareness and build greater individual commitment to this type of learning experience.</li> <li>• Expand the number of students engaged in the opportunity.</li> </ul> <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students engaged in the PSE to share their experience with SSTs at 10 other schools.</li> <li>• SSTs from the pilot schools to work with SSTs from the ten new schools following the stages above to build awareness, understanding, and capacity, and share evidence of impact (proof of concept).</li> <li>• SSTs work closely with LPs to sustainably expand partnerships.</li> <li>• Principals at participating schools to share their observations and suggestions with new participating schools.</li> <li>• Maintain a continuous learning framework, looping back to earlier stages as new learning prompts new thinking and ongoing enhancements to the learning experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Year 3: (follow timelines above)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow year 2 plan.</li> <li>• Expand to all secondary schools.</li> <li>• SOs will engage directly with schools resisting engagement to show leadership support and identify an access point.</li> <li>• Continue to involve student voice to determine what their next step should be and begin to explore the next change effort.</li> </ul>
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\*Although presented in a linear manner here, steps for this change implementation plan are reciprocal, providing ongoing opportunities to reflect and apply new learning.

## Appendix E

### Summary of Knowledge Mobilization Plan, Adapted from Lavis et al., 2003

Message	Audience	Messenger	Process	Impact	CPM*
Inclusion of student voice.	SSTs, principals	SO, system principal	Information-seeking and initial sensemaking using achievement data and student stories.	Strengthening the urgent need to make this change happen.	A
	PSE partners, SSTs, principals	Students, parents	Privilege student voice and situate adults as listeners.	Understanding options, opportunities, and barriers to current and potential future student experiences.	M
	Educators, principals, PSE partners	Network members	Sensemaking regarding the inclusion and impact of student voice in this change initiative through dialogue and the district website.	Building curiosity by sharing learning and ideas.	Acc I
Diversifying access to learning.	PSE partners, SSTs	Students	Analyze the impact of teacher-centered and student-driven learning experiences.	Increasing achievement from student-driven learning.	A M
	SSTs, educators	Students, PSE partners	Be responsive to student questions and requests. Connect experiences to curricular expectations.	Co-creating PSE learning experiences and documentation exemplars.	Acc
	Senior staff, trustees	SO	Share evidence and engage discussion regarding impact.	Realizing the visionary priorities of innovation and personalization.	I
Beyond roles toward valuing contribution.	Fluid	Fluid	Partnering to learn, plan, implement, and grow. Examples: -SST and principal dialogue to understand urgency. -PSE partner and student to identify need, discuss opportunities, and develop plan. -SSTs, students, and PSE partner connecting learning experience to curricular expectations.	Urgency understood and work supported. Experiences co-planned and successfully implemented. Multiple credits earned through PSE experiences.	A M Acc I

\*A=Awakening; M=Mobilization; Acc=Acceleration; I=Institutionalization

## Appendix F

### Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard (1996), Adapted for the Postsecondary Experience (PSE)

<b>Priority and objective</b> (i.e., goal)	<b>Measures</b> (i.e., high-level observation)	<b>Targets</b> (i.e., specific evidence to inform impact)	<b>Initiatives</b> (i.e., actions)
<b>Student voice:</b> Increase the influence of student voice on their learning experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Space</li> <li>• Audience</li> <li>• Influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved student attendance, active participation.</li> <li>• Adults asking questions to build understanding.</li> <li>• Tracking space for student voice and adult voice.</li> <li>• Student ability to articulate meaning in their learning.</li> <li>• Students articulating increased PSE options.</li> <li>• Increased student belief in capability as a learner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the impact of teacher-centered and student-driven learning.</li> <li>• Discourse to increase understanding of the impact of student voice and engagement with the co-creation of student-driven experiences.</li> <li>• Intentional space created for student voice.</li> </ul>
<b>Achievement and experience:</b> Embrace dual indicators of success: neoliberal indicators of success while valuing the student's experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit accumulation and graduation rates.</li> <li>• Increased engagement with PSE possibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the PSE, students will earn a minimum of 5 credits per semester.</li> <li>• Students able to graduate on time with their cohort.</li> <li>• Students able to articulate a career path.</li> <li>• Students articulating PSE interests with fewer educator prompts.</li> <li>• Increasing applications to PSEs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal and formal mechanisms for sharing evidence of impact.</li> <li>• Intentional mapping of experiences to curricular expectations.</li> <li>• Listening to students, capturing evidence of impact on their belief in PSE options.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Partnerships:</b> Authentic engagement with parents and PSE partners to co-create meaningful experiences with students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantity and quality of partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased space provided for parent voice.</li> <li>• Minimum of 3 PSE partners for every PSE opportunity in year 1 (to increase as more students added).</li> <li>• PSE partner willingness to allocate time to listening to students and parents.</li> <li>• PSE partner adjusting existing options and developing new options tailored to student pathway.</li> <li>• Creation of a central database of partners and experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents articulating their hopes for their child.</li> <li>• Parents and PSE partners actively listening to and asking questions of students.</li> <li>• Co-construction of experiences with students (not for).</li> <li>• Challenging the efficacy of pre-existing programs in meeting individual student needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional learning:</b> Enhance educator leadership capacity to consider and advocate for innovative learning experiences that are meaningful for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing alternative learning experiences that connect students with PSE.</li> <li>• SST engagement with non-traditional learning experiences.</li> <li>• Questions from educators and partners seeking to learn more (demonstrating curiosity).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSTs engaged in discussions exploring student-driven learning strategies.</li> <li>• Other educators asking questions and having discussions about student-driven learning structures.</li> <li>• Sharing learning from other educators, parents, students.</li> <li>• Gradual increase of school participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and questions surfacing through formal and informal networks.</li> <li>• Intentionally sharing successes and challenges experienced through the implementation process with system and senior leader.</li> </ul>