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Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education

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Abstract

Student engagement within District X is at an all-time low. As District X strives for more equitable learning opportunities, they also work to serve the unique and varying needs of students despite the rising physical and mental health concerns, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that shook students and adults alike, resulting in a global collective trauma and led to the shutdown of schools worldwide in March 2020. These issues are especially prevalent within our most underfunded and underserved populations, such as Indigenous populations. As Canadians, Indigenous relations and calls to adopt Indigenous ways of knowing and being are at the forefront as we work toward adopting the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action, precisely actions 62-65 as they pertain to education. The Indigenization and decolonization of our teaching and learning practices are essential to reconciliation; however, an Indigenous resurgence can only be accomplished when we begin to put our relationships first. *Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education* is relational, restorative, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, brain-aligned, and an approach where students are engaged in deep and liberating learning opportunities where power is shared with all. It supports the Indigenization of and decolonization of our curriculum, policies, teaching and learning, and assessment practices. Therefore, *Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach* will be at the forefront of this Organizational Improvement Plan, as it is only when our physiological needs are met, that we feel safe, we feel an innate sense of belonging, and others believe in our ability to learn, that we can be genuinely engaged and there can be learning for all.

Keywords: Indigenous education, Indigenization, relationships first, student engagement, decolonization, deep learning

Executive Summary

Student engagement and learning for all is integral to ensuring a public education system steeped in equity. However, student engagement and learning for all cannot be attained until we first ensure that the physiological needs of students are met, that they feel safe, that they feel they belong, and that staff believe that every child can be successful (Tranter et al., 2018) -- that the adults in their lives do collectively think that they are capable and competent (Hattie, 2012). The three chapters of this organizational improvement plan (OIP) will seek to outline the problem of practice (PoP) as it presently exists within District X and then propose a solution to the PoP and outline a change implementation plan that will help guide the organizational change.

District X (a pseudonym) is on the precipice of transformational change. However, change will require a continuous and firm commitment to serve all students equitably, regardless of where they live, their socioeconomic status, or how they identify. For example, District X (2020-2023) wants to ensure a more equitable approach to education for all children. Battiste (2013) argues that “every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change—education can be liberating or it can domesticate and maintain domination” (p. 175). To guarantee transformative change, there must be a shift away from conventional and test-driven schooling, which focuses on standardization. Syverson (2009) argues that standardization has a destructive effect on teaching and learning and is especially damaging for those who come from historically underserved and marginalized groups. Thus, probing pedagogical concerns and issues impacting the success of underserved and marginalized students, particularly our high percentage of Indigenous students, sets the stage for this organizational improvement plan.

Chapter Two outlines leadership approaches and a leadership framework and analyzes organizational information to help determine the best change path forward for District X. Deszca

et al.'s change path model (CPM) (2020) is the change management framework chosen for this OIP. A critical organizational analysis using Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model (1989) is also included that helps to identify and address the gaps as they presently exist within District X. Three possible solutions are proposed to address the identified PoP as well as social justice and ethical issues identified when looking to ensure a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies that better engage all students within District X so they can be more successful. The three solutions are outlined, and Chapter Two identifies the chosen solution. The context of equity, ethics, and social justice as it relates to this PoP and the intended OIP is also discussed.

Chapter Three focuses on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and communication of the organizational change process proposed for the 4-5 cohort schools and outlines possible next steps for these and other schools within District X. The implementation plan outlines a path to building more relational, trauma-informed school communities where we focus on equity, celebrate diversity, and utilize student strengths to help improve student engagement and learning for all. It starts with building, fostering, and repairing our relationships, as it is our connection to our community, our sense of safety, and our sense of belonging that allows every learner the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

Finally, the OIP outlines the next steps and provides a narrative epilogue that discusses my thoughts about my experience and plans for future work. I advocate that we must become "inbetweeners" and break down the silos that have existed between Indigenous peoples and settlers (Wilson-Raybould, 2022) if we are to move forward respectfully on a path toward Indigenization and decolonization. However, we must do this in a good way, which encourages a relational and sustainable approach that will benefit everyone living here. We cannot do this while we continue to rank children and focus mainly on their deficits. *Head, Heart, and Hands:*

A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education, steeped in Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being, sets us up for a healthier and more sustainable future – one that we will be proud to pass off to the next seven generations.

Acknowledgments

Before I begin, and in the spirit of self-reflexivity, I must acknowledge my standpoint as a Mi'kmaw educator and scholar whose ancestors have faced generations of colonization and the intended erasure of our culture and heritage. I understand and pay homage to the strength of my ancestors. We are still here because of you. We are examples of Indigenous survivance.

As a Mi'kmaw woman looking to reclaim her rightful place in history, I strive to make my ancestors proud. I work hard to live by the seven sacred teachings, knowing that who I am in this world and how I traverse it has the potential to create ripples for generations to come.

As an educator who has felt both the sting and the kindness of educators, I aim always to be an upstander and an ally for learners of all ages. As an English, Drama, and Technology teacher, I am an educational advocate. I am a researcher with a keen interest in storytelling, relationality, and Indigenous Education. I acknowledge that my positionality has influenced my work as it helps me make sense of “our” stories. My research is, and exists as, an act of Indigenous survivance.

Many people have supported me on the long, winding path that brought me here. First, I must thank my mom, dad, family, friends, and hometown community. I am thankful to the land that has sustained me, to my ancestors before me, and to the communities of strong and kind folks who helped to raise me. I am who I am because of the people and places who raised me. Strong and resilient, I continue to advocate for those who have been underserved for far too long.

To my colleagues – thank you for sharing readings that you thought I would appreciate and for the kind and encouraging words that helped me get here. To Dan, Donna, Dorothy, Niki, and Georgina, I am not sure you will ever realize how much I appreciated the chats and the encouragement – but I always did. You have been inspirational mentors and friends.

To Dr. Candace Brunette-Debassige and the entire team that wrapped around me during my time as a Head and Heart Indigenous Research Fellow - thank you! I am, and will continue to strive to be, a better researcher and more vigorous advocate for Indigenous rights and education because of my time with you. Thank you for being fantastic mentors.

Thank you to Dr. Myers and the Team at UWO. Dr. Beate Planche, we did it! Thank you for understanding that my path had to be different, as health and life events sometimes get in the way. I appreciate your kindness and understanding and for gently pushing me when I needed it most.

To Minnie, thank you for sharing your voice and story. It changed me. You deserved to see yourself represented and to learn your language. I will never stop advocating for you and every Indigenous student in this province.

To my husband, Glen, I know the last few years have been trying. Thank you for supporting me and reminding me that all the hard work would eventually pay off.

To my daughter... my sweet, sweet Sophie Eunice Simms... how can I ever thank you for all you are and all you've brought to my life? You are my gift. You have helped to heal my heart. Thank you for the beautiful letter and the words of encouragement that kept me going when the path was challenging. This is for you. Share your gifts – the world needs them.

And, finally, thank you to our province's knowledge keepers and elders who continue to share teachings and stories as we work toward reclamation. I have always known the power of stories. Now that this journey is ending, I am preparing to tell my story – our stories. I know it is not just how we learn but the path we must take to make sense of it all and to heal.

But now, they say the time has come for the hardest work. 'If we want to live at peace with ourselves, we need to tell our stories.' - Richard Wagamese, *Indian Horse*

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Acronyms

CIP	Collaborative Inquiry Process
CPM	Change Path Model
DoS	Director of Schools
FoS	Family of Schools
HHH: RF	Head, Heart & Hands: A Relationships First Approach
KHP	Kids Help Phone
NPDL	New Pedagogies for Deep Learning
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
PISIS	Programs Itinerant for Safe and Inclusive Schools
PBL	Play-Based Learning
PLC	Professional Learning Cohort
PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
PoP	Problem of Practice
RJ	Restorative Justice
RTL	Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy
SDP	School Development Process
TLT	Teaching and Learning Teams

Definitions

Change Readiness: is “the cognitive precursor to the behaviours of either resistance to, or support for, a change. It is reflected in organizational members’ beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully make those changes” (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 681).

Deep Learning: is defined by Michael Fullan, Joanne Quinn and Joanne McEachen as “quality learning that ‘sticks’ with you for the rest of your life; it increases student engagement through personalization and ownership...; it builds skills, knowledge, self-confidence, and self-efficacy; it builds new relationships with and between the learner, their teachers, families and communities; and it deepens the human desire to connect with others to do good.... Deep learning focuses on the...6Cs: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking... [and] four elements: learning partnerships, pedagogical practices, learning environments, and leveraging digital. The whole set is fueled by collaborative inquiry” (Ferlazzo, 2018, para. 2).

First Relationships: First Relationships, according to Kelly et al. (2008), “is based on early childhood development research that has accumulated since the 1970s and has definitively shown that early social-emotional well-being is rooted in the development of early caring relationships and that responsive and sensitive caregiving is the foundation for future learning in social-emotional, language, and cognitive domains” (p. 287).

PESTE Analysis: is a “strategic management method utilized to examine the external macroenvironmental factors” such as the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental contexts (Kokkinos et al., 2023, p. 5).

Relationality: Relationality is defined as a “defining aspect of global Indigeneity,” “relational understandings that emerge from specific Indigenous nations,” and “as a manifest within inter-Indigenous connections” (Wildcat & Voth, 2023, p. 475). However, according to Wildcat and Voth (2023), it is also essential to deepen “our ability to critically use relationality to address power within and outside of Indigenous communities” as it “will place us in a better position to overturn colonial dynamics” (p. 482).

Relationships First: Relationships First is defined by Dorothy Vaandering as an “approach to justice that is being adapted by educators” and is a “philosophical framework that encourages us to see the world and everyone in it as worthy and interconnected. It’s a shift away from judging and measuring, and a move toward honouring” and “encourages educators to recognize that when a child or adult does something that is harmful, it comes from a need that is not being met or their own experience with harm that has not been addressed” (Hunt, 2020, para. 6).

Relational Leadership: is a leadership approach that adopts a relational view of leader-follower relations that focuses on the “joint achievement of leaders and followers” for the benefit of the collective (Drath et al., 2008, p. 651).

Restorative Justice: is defined by Dorothy Vaandering as “a philosophical framework that encourages us to see the world and everyone in it as worthy and interconnected. It’s a shift away from judging and measuring, and a move toward honouring. It’s putting relationships first” (Hunt, 2020, para. 6).

Transformative Leadership: is leadership that “begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise of not only greater individual achievement, but a better life lived in common with others” (Shields, 2011, p. 2).

Chapter One: Introduction and Problem

Every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change—education can be liberating or it can domesticate and maintain domination. (Battiste, 2013, p. 175)

District X (a pseudonym) is on the precipice of transformational change. However, change will require a continuous and firm commitment to serve all students equitably, regardless of where they live, their socioeconomic status, or how they identify. For example, District X (2020-2023) wants to ensure a more equitable approach to education for all children. To guarantee this happens, the transformation must shift away from conventional and test-driven schooling, which focuses on standardization. Syverson (2009) argues that standardization has a destructive effect on teaching and learning and is especially damaging for those who come from historically underserved and marginalized groups. Thus, probing pedagogical concerns and issues impacting the success of underserved and marginalized students, particularly our high percentage of Indigenous students, sets the stage for this organizational improvement plan.

Organizational Context

The site for improvement is District X, a K-12 public education entity located within an Atlantic Canadian province. District X is a public body of the province and was formed when several other districts amalgamated. This amalgamation saw many of the upper management positions and corporate services centralized in the largest metro region of the province, with regional offices created in three of the other most populated areas. A Board of Trustees oversees the organization, and a Director of Education is responsible for the organization's management. District X employs a relatively top-down organizational and leadership structure, which operates from a managerial and hierarchical leadership style in daily interactions. This structure is particularly evident in its top-down communication structure. However, district administrators

have been working to employ more transformative (Shields, 2004) and contingent leadership (Fiedler, 1971) approaches, allowing district leaders to respond as needed to promote transformative change. Although we are not quite there yet, evidence of transformative growth is seen in the many examples of distributed leadership with shared power (Bush, 2015). As District X aims to serve schools' unique and varying needs, unique and individualized responses are needed to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

The district is responsible for between 200 and 300 diverse school communities, several alternate sites, more than 50,000 students, and between 9,000 and 10,000 teachers, support staff, and administration, many of which are in rural communities. In 2019-20, District X had a multitude of school make-ups with a mixture of tiny rural schools, with as few as one student; small schools; medium-sized schools; large schools; and very large schools, with more than 1000 students. There are many different configurations: K-12, primary/elementary, junior high, and high schools (District X, 2020-2023). Our district encompasses a vast geographical area, with some schools only accessible by boat or plane. District X, as an entity of the province's government, must provide a three-year strategic plan to the Minister of Education, and its mandate stipulates that the district must “administer primary, elementary and secondary educational services across the province and is given this authority under the Schools Act, 1997” (2020). One challenge is applying this over-arching strategic plan to diverse educational and community settings.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

District X's (2020-2023) most current Strategic Plan aims to ensure student engagement and learning for all. The district's vision is to become an educational leader while ensuring all students reach their full potential within safe, caring, and inclusive school environments (p. 3).

After lengthy strategic planning consultations with various partners in 2020, the district has outlined three strategic goals for the strategic planning period of 2021-2023 that include:

- supporting a culture of student engagement and success,
- supporting a culture of equity, health, and well-being across all levels of the school system, and
- enhancing organizational effectiveness. (District X, 2020, p. 4-5)

These three goals signal an intentional move away from more traditional practices, such as a focus on testing and standardization, often associated with conventional schooling. The past few years have involved much unlearning of past practices that helped propagate the status quo, and our present district goals are more focused on learning than standardized tests (District X, 2021). Additionally, recent educational reforms align with a pragmatist approach to teaching and learning where teachers are encouraged to teach less to make room for more student engagement and learning for all (Tan, 2006).

District X has had a history of implementing many new programs and initiatives. A more precise understanding of the purpose of these programs, the relationship between them, and better communication around the factual theoretical underpinnings of the changes is needed. Therefore, District X's newest school development framework attempts an actual organizational change steeped in theory-based constructs aimed at continuous improvement to ensure student engagement and learning for all (Evans et al., 2012).

Organizational State

There is a significant divide amongst educators interested in improvement between perceptions about how things are done and how they should be done (District X Teacher Voice Social Media Page, 2021-2023) as students move from kindergarten to Grade 12. In primary-

elementary school, there is a focus on play-based learning (PBL) and Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL). Still, as students progress through our education system, the focus is more on subject-based teaching with a heavy emphasis on standardization. As per provincial guidelines, academic students in secondary schools continued to write high-stakes assessments worth 40% of their course value until the COVID Shutdown of 2020. At the junior high and high school levels, with its increased focus on colonial and Eurocentric practices such as subject area teaching, testing, and standardization, Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) Survey Data indicates that we are seeing a steep decline in student engagement (PMF, 2016-2022).

The management of District X, previously centered around a realist educational philosophy (Tan, 2006), is focused on preparing students for life in a knowledge-based economy. As a result, there is a heavy focus on subject-based teaching, centered around the premise that tasks and extrinsic rewards in the way of grades have been the best way to prepare students for the job market (Tan, 2006).

In the spring of 2020, just days before our province shut down because of a global pandemic, District X partnered with an outside consultant who helped to pave a more equitable and positive way during the dark times of the pandemic. Furthermore, in District X, the Safe and Responsive Schools Policies (2013/2020), with its focus on safe, caring, and inclusive schools along with its emphasis on being responsive to the needs of students and the three critical pillars of SEL, literacy, and numeracy, also helps to illuminate a brighter path forward for our district.

Leadership Position and Lens

As a Programs Itinerant for Safe and Inclusive Schools (PISIS) for District X, I am expected to be a courageous leader willing to challenge the status quo and help school teams implement provincial policies and, in particular, our policy that focuses on creating safe and

inclusive schools (2013) with fidelity. I am also responsible for helping to write and implement government policy and work alongside school staff and students, district staff, department staff, and community partners, regionally and provincially. However, in working with administrators and teachers, specifically for twenty-one schools, there is a significant opportunity to affect change at the school level. My direct report is to my Assistant Director at the regional level.

Role in the Change Process

As a PISIS at the provincial level, I model and coach educators and district staff, particularly in healthy relationships, celebration and respect for diversity, and how to develop inclusive and more equitable learning opportunities. As a member of District X's programs team, my role entails being a change leader and coach alongside school teams for many district and provincial strategic goals and actions, including relationships first, trauma-informed practices, deep learning, responsive teaching and learning, and provincial policies, and their connections to our most current Strategic Plan and school development process. Our present provincial procedures entail a shift from a system that traditionally encouraged top-down and dependent thinking. Our Department of Education has also committed to a significant long-term investment in Indigenous Education and a relationship-first approach. There is a push for all our learners, students, and educators to become agents of change (Fullan et al., 2018). As a relational and transformative leader, I work alongside school teams to support the implementation of our province's safe school policy.

I have earned a trusted and influential voice in my position, with my messaging now being far-reaching. After six years as a PISIS, I have moved from "outsider to insider" in many of my more than twenty-five schools (Herod, 1999, p. 8). Furthermore, as a member of District X's Deep Learning facilitator's team, I have worked closely with district staff and the schools to

begin to incorporate the four elements of deep learning identified by NPDL: new pedagogies, learning partnerships, learning environment, and leveraging digital, which also includes the six global competencies: collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, citizenship, communication, and character (Fullan et al., 2018).

Leadership Lens

My relational approach comes through in personal and professional spaces where my stance on social equity issues is active and far-reaching. I challenge thinking as it pertains to policies, decisions, and conversations that contribute to the propagation of the status quo, but I am also a transformative and relational leader (Shields, 2018) who believes in the power of relationships and connectedness and tries to live by my Indigenous values where relationships are honoured (Wilson, 2008). I believe in always trying to come from a place of understanding versus judgement where there is a belief that all people are worthy of mutual respect and dignity. I also see the need for and model a transformative leadership approach, sharing power with others versus trying to exert power over them (Shields, 2010). My stance towards social justice, relationships, and restorative practices recognizes the need for a variety of leadership approaches that are contingent on the challenges of the day, but I always strive to put relationships first and promote equity and social justice (Shields, 2018; Wilson, 2008; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Vaandering, 2013; Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Therefore, I believe the leadership approaches that best suit this OIP are transformative and relational.

Theoretical Approach to Leadership

As a leader who aims to be courageous and live by my Indigenous values, the theoretical leadership approach that I feel best suits this OIP is a transformative (Shields, 2011) and relational (Wilson, 2008) theoretical leadership approach if we are to realize positive change. I

am a leader who is always ready and willing to embrace and support characteristics of sustainable leadership, such as diversity and inclusion. Always an advocate for developing socially just learning environments for all within our organization, I believe in sharing power and leadership to guarantee the commitment of all. I continuously reflect on my beliefs, my worldview about education, and how my proposed OIP came about.

One of the leadership approaches that best fits is transformative because, at the heart of my plan, it is political, power, and justice-oriented, collaborative, and change-oriented (Creswell, 2014). Transformative leadership, according to Shields (2011), “begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise of not only greater individual achievement but a better life lived in common with others” (p. 2). Shields (2010) stipulates that transformative leaders must be courageous leaders, take a stand, and advocate for more just and equitable schools and pedagogical practices for all our learners. Shields (2010) calls on all educators to “...adopt transformative leadership practices before more students are lost and society damaged irreparably” (p. 584). This will take both transformative and relational leadership.

Relational leadership theory also influences my leadership approach (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Relational leadership is a leadership approach that adopts a relational view of leader-follower relations that focuses on the “joint achievement of leaders and followers” for the benefit of the collective (Drath et al., 2008, p. 651). Wilson (2008) states that “identity for Indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors...and future generations...” and that “rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationships with other people or things, *we are* the relationships that we hold and are part of” (p. 80). Educators cannot be confined if they are to effect real change; they need to be “...free to choose the methods, techniques, and

procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). But in doing so, they must always put relationships first. To assess improvement, it will be important to seek a variety of ways to measure and evaluate the impact of our collective impact. Working collaboratively with other community partners, we will ultimately determine success by strengthening relationships and increasing student engagement and learning for all. All students, staff, and our communities will benefit from relationships as the foundation of our ontology, as this will help reduce our education system of the hierarchy within (Wilson, 2008, p. 92).

Transformative and relational leadership is critical when teams and communities are diverse (Kearney & Gebert, 2009). Forging trusting relationships, particularly with our Indigenous students, staff, and families, is paramount considering the history of harm that has been done because of our public education system. Justice Murray Sinclair (2015) stipulated in the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC) that with respect to building these trusting relationships, “there are no shortcuts” (p. 18). We are responsible for ensuring our methodology is relational and supports the community, as we are relationally accountable to our community (Wilson, 2008). Because of this, I argue that relational and transformative leadership most influence my leadership for organizational improvement.

Influence of My Mi'kmaw Heritage

My growing knowledge of and respect for my Mi'kmaw heritage further influences my drive to be a more transformative and relational leader. I have an innate sense of relational accountability to those I serve and an inherent need to serve as a mediator in helping to uphold the many relationships between schools and these natural and sacred laws (Wilson, 2008).

To reconcile the tragedies of our dark past, which included the intended erasure of our Indigenous ways of knowing and being, researchers suggest that we must challenge the

Eurocentric, colonial ways of doing research (Smith, 2013). Battiste (2013) calls for a critique of current practices and a “global reclamation” of educational practices influenced by Indigenous ways of knowing and being, inclusive of and accepting of Indigenous storytelling, and with a focus on deep listening as a sound methodology. Indigenous ways of knowing and being have been excised and often had their legitimacy disregarded by those in academia for far too long.

As an Indigenous scholar and educator, this has led to many “trigger events” (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, as cited in Avolio & Hannah, 2008, p. 235). Trigger events include the development of a growing sense of unfair treatment and inequity in access to powerful and deep learning opportunities for many underserved and marginalized students, which have indeed influenced the leader that I have become and aspire to be. This project, my life trajectory inclusive of the intersectionality of many elements of my identity (Capper, 2019), and the events leading up to this project ensure that I am a leader who understands the need for learner and leader agency.

Leadership Agency

Organizational leaders must work diligently to encourage the development of leaders who are agents of change and who accept and understand diversity (Aycan, 2008, as cited in Mittal & Elias, 2016). Deszca et al. (2020) suggest that leaders need to understand the perspectives of others and how these then affect change. Leadership that celebrates diversity will mean moving from standardization toward a more relational and learner-centered approach to pedagogy. Working closely with my assigned schools, I have direct influence over helping them implement our provincial policies that advocate for responsive teaching and learning practices and help to create safe and caring schools by modelling best practices for district staff, administrators, teachers, and students as they pertain to the policy from an asset-based lens. A

judgement-free lens that seeks to understand is imperative to achieve buy-in and effect change.

Capper (2019) calls on leaders of social justice to:

advance their own identity development across race, gender, social class, language, ability, sexual/gender identity, religion, and their intersections to inform their social justice leadership practice. In turn, leaders must engage with their staff processes that can inform teachers' own identity development. In doing so, teachers can learn how to engage in this identity development work with their students. These identity development processes among leaders, staff, students, and community may in turn, contribute to the social justice identity of an educational setting. (p. 219)

We must support a courageous leadership system that is both relational and transformative, where all diversity is celebrated, where we can coexist in socially just schools, and help build collaborative cultures if we genuinely want to effect change. However, this is not easy to do within a system still steeped in Eurocentric and colonial practices that propagate the status quo in many aspects of its existence.

Leadership Problem of Practice (PoP)

The PoP being addressed in this OIP is the impact of a gap that exists between mandated conventional schooling, steeped in Eurocentric and colonial practices such as competition and examinations, and more relational and powerfully deep learning opportunities that foster student engagement, well-being, and learning for all. Reimagining what learning might look like in District X will offer opportunities to consider significant shifts in practice.

With its focus on standardized curriculum outcomes, teachers in District X feel pressure to prepare students to write tests. As a result, tensions begin to mount for students before they even reach junior high school. Educators and students feel this pressure until the end of

schooling when they were, before the pandemic, required to write high stakes end of schooling evaluations within all academic courses. Therefore, this PoP will seek to address how a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies can better engage and serve all students more equitably, particularly those who have historically been underserved and marginalized.

Framing the PoP

The COVID shutdown in the Spring of 2020 served as a much-needed wake-up call for educators and leaders within District X. Student engagement was at an all-time low, and student apathy was at an all-time high. There is a push for more engaging and equitable learning opportunities as an understanding of deep learning, universal design for learning (UDL), social-emotional learning (SEL), and more inclusive assessment practices are beginning to spread throughout our district. In addition, the release of District X's (2021-2023) current Strategic Plan highlights student engagement and success along with equity, health, and well-being as the focus areas. This move signifies a shift from focusing predominately on academic excellence for the first time.

Furthermore, our school climate data paints a sad tale as less than half of our students from grade 3 to grade 12 report that they experience a positive school culture, less than half of our students say that they feel like they belong at their schools, and less than 40% of students report that they feel engaged at school. Less than 20% of students say they are engaged in school by the time they reach their grade 11 year (Province X, 2021).

Furthermore, several submissions to the government and reports released by the Child and Youth Advocate's Office (2017-2023) within Province X also indicate a need for change in how we support and educate our children. A 2019 report focussed on Indigenous children in care within Province X noted that of the more than 1000 children in care, more than one-third of them

are Indigenous children. They called for systemic change to ensure more culturally appropriate responses are used to keep Indigenous children safe, close to families and home communities, and connected to their culture. In a submission to the task force responsible for a 2017 educational review, the Child and Youth Advocate calls for a coordinated, collaborative, and integrated response to issues around inclusive education, violence in schools, partial school day programming, LGBTQ inclusion, and the alarming rates of chronic absenteeism. They also note that this collaboration must provide space for the partners most impacted, our students, to share their experiences.

According to an economic report released in the spring of 2021, our province faces a dire economic situation (Province X, 2021). The report indicates a need to adapt the teaching and learning pedagogies to ensure students are better positioned and prepared to take on significant debt challenges. It calls on students to be ready to take their places in an advanced technological economy by ensuring that they have the needed 21st Century skills and competencies in math, science, reading, and technology and are motivated learners with skills in entrepreneurship if they are to be successful in helping to create a healthy future for their province.

Not only are our students facing an economic crisis, but according to a recent health report released by Province X (2022), they are also facing a health crisis. The report highlights several reasons for system change. Of the ten provinces, the report finds that the citizens of Province X have:

- a higher rate of deaths from heart disease, cancer, and stroke;
- the lowest life expectancy
- the highest level of complex health needs among children; and

- the highest proportion of older people with three or more chronic illnesses. (Province X, 2022, p. 1)

The report, building on findings from an earlier provincial mental health action plan and a task force report on improving educational outcomes, also finds that the suicide rate for Province X has tripled for all age groups and that the rates of mental health issues and mental illness have also drastically increased. The report, recognizing the impact of the social determinants of health (education, childhood experiences, social, economic, and environmental factors, to name a few) on the overall health and wellness of our citizens, calls for a more comprehensive and integrated approach between health and education for children and young people. The report also calls for a more equitable and integrated approach to health promotion and early intervention that ensures better access to care for all students across the province, regardless of how they identify and where they live.

Historical Overview of the PoP

Mittal and Elias (2016) stipulate that how leaders exercise power is deeply impacted by culture and that a cross-cultural lens of how power affects distinct cultures is essential if we are to learn how to truly celebrate diversity within our organization and throughout the world. Furthermore, cultural understanding is critical within our increasingly globalized and interconnected society as “culture is a framework that guides as well as bounds a collective” and is best achieved by enhancing a leader’s understanding of diverse cultures and their influence mechanisms as our societal and national cultures help to shape our beliefs and attitudes (Mittal & Elias, 2016, p. 61).

Our system works within a paradox: our province’s call for better responsive teaching and learning practices and safe and caring schools versus the focus on the need for end-of-school

high-stakes assessments. Since raising test scores is often equated with educational improvement, these high-stakes assessments have cultivated a culture of teaching to the test that starts before students arrive at junior high school and intensifies leading up to grade 10. These test-focused classrooms do not leave much space to consider individualized student identities and needs. Like other Canadian provinces, students are sorted into general versus academic streams. Students pursuing an academic stream were forced to write high-stakes assessments in all core Grade 12 course before the pandemic and there is a call by some educators and policy makers to return to this outdated and high-stakes practice.

Therefore, leaders looking to effect change must understand what needs to change and adopt a change model that makes sense for their organization. With a comprehensive understanding of their organization and its many interrelated and interdependent parts, change leaders can better understand “how” they fit together, “what” needs to change, and “why.” According to Sinek’s (2009) theory of value proposition, an organization needs to always start with its “why” as it is an organization’s “why” that compels people to buy in. For District X, this clarity of focus will be essential in helping to determine a change path forward.

Socially just organizations look to undertake goals and actions that will contribute positively to all its members, understanding that change is essential to building a responsive education system. We need to be able to respond to student learning needs, mental health, physical health, and social-emotional needs as they arise because students cannot engage in learning or higher-order thinking until these needs are met. They need to know that the adults in the building believe in them, have high expectations for them, and are willing to support them (Tranter et al., 2018).

Within Province X, like so many other Canadian provinces, there has been an unhealthy reliance on standardized tests to measure the success of our education system. Krechevsky et al. (2010) argue that there is increasing reliance on the results of standardized tests to measure teacher, administrator, and school effectiveness. They argue, however, that formative assessment is a better indicator of good teaching and student learning and helps support the development of a school's identity. In addition, focusing on testing leads to high teacher stress levels and ill-being (Krechevsky et al., 2010). This increasing pressure often leads teachers to leave out curriculum outcomes and teach to the test, irrespective of all other concerns presently at the forefront within District X.

Government and District Priorities

Leadership must be a shared responsibility between District X and its partners at the Department of Education. District X's (2020) Strategic Plan identifies three strategic issues as its focus for 2020-2023 as the result of a lengthy consultation and planning process with internal and external partners. It also highlights the importance of all leaders, students, teachers, staff, administrators, and district leaders working together to meet these goals. Regarding this PoP, the strategic issues of student engagement and success and equity, health, and well-being are fundamental as the district aims to fulfill its School Development Goal (2020-2023) of ensuring student engagement and learning for all. However, despite the commitment and vision of those in leadership to focus on equity, health, and well-being, a sustainable vision for change and growth can only happen when leadership is a shared responsibility; however, this is difficult within its existing hierarchical structure. It takes "empowered teams with the right mix of skills and abilities, operating with a focused vision" and "agreed-to expectations concerning performance, modes of operation, and other predefined standards and shared commitments" (Deszca et al.,

2020, p. 386). Therefore, we must develop a system steeped in collaborative professionalism that fosters leadership and learning for all and encourages educational partners to work toward developing individual and collective efficacy in support of “Student Engagement: Learning for All,” a belief that is now front and centre of the Province’s School Development Process. Furthermore, Province X’s newest Department of Education policy (2019) calls for more learner-centered and responsive teaching and learning practices to better support students' literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning within a safe, inclusive school community. Using a relational and transformative leadership approach, my PoP is focussed on assisting staff in the schools I work with to shift teaching and learning pedagogies to better engage and serve students who have been underserved and marginalized. Before moving forward, it is essential to take the time to identify the factors shaping the PoP as it exists within District X.

Factors Shaping the PoP

To both articulate and provide a succinct analysis of this PoP, it is essential to consider how broad external factors impact education. This is best determined by conducting a PESTE analysis (Deszca et al., 2020). A PESTE analysis is a “strategic management method utilized to examine the external macroenvironmental factors” that may impact an organization (Kokkinos et al., 2023, p. 5).

Political, economic, social, technological, and environmental contexts, including micro, meso, and macro factors, shape this PoP. We will start with how political factors are presently affecting District X.

Political Factors

The political factors include a small and declining population base. According to various projection scenarios by Stats Canada (2019b), the population of Province X is predicted to lose

close to 100,000 people by 2043. The province is geographically vast and relatively isolated, with a high percentage of people living in poverty, a continued dependence on natural resources such as oil for revenue, and approximately one-fifth of our population self-identifies as Indigenous. In addition, the demographic trend of our rural communities leans toward a less educated, as well as an older and retired population base. Undoubtedly, there will be educational repercussions for students attending school in these communities, as the community is educated out of the children, and the children are educated out of the community (Corbett, 2006, p. 289).

As a publicly funded school district, District X is responsible and reports ultimately to the Department of Education. Therefore, when determining what political factors directly affect this PoP, it is imperative to understand that this includes all government decisions, policies, and government stability and instability affecting education in Province X.

Economic Factors

The median total household income for the largest urban center within the district was less than \$90 000 versus approximately \$70 000 median income provincially (Stats Canada, 2019). However, economic factors vary from school to school, as funding is determined based on the number of students enrolled at each school in the province. Sadly, this means that schools in urban areas of the district, where there are often already so many opportunities, get more sizable operating budgets. These budgets allow for additional opportunities for students living in those regions, whereas students living in our rural areas often lack opportunities and resources.

Sociological Factors

District X is home to a large Indigenous population. According to Stats Canada (2019), approximately 50,000 people identify as Indigenous. However, more than 100,000 applications were received by the landless Mi'kmaq First Nation Band formed by a Recognition Order on

September 22, 2011, within Province X, which calls for integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being into all curricular areas. Our province has two central policies that guide district work. These policies focus on the need to be responsive to our learners and ensure that all students and staff work within school communities that are safe, caring, and inclusive. These policies promote an equity approach and call on educators to celebrate diversity in all its beautiful forms. These two policies call for a “students first” philosophy where teams of teachers and other school staff are expected to work closely together to ensure that we are responding to the needs of all students, regardless of whether they have an identified exceptionality. Our provincial policy identifies social and emotional learning as one of three key pillars to student success and wellness, along with literacy and numeracy. This policy was implemented within all K-6 schools, and there are plans for phased implementation in Grades 7-12.

Furthermore, Province X’s policy, which promotes a safe and caring school approach, is expected to be implemented with fidelity in all schools within District X. This policy advocates for inclusive educational practices, encouraging all partners to believe that all students can learn and that differentiated instruction is expected to be embedded in the classroom.

As educators within District X, we must acknowledge the need for and create space for Indigenous practices and ways of knowing and being in schools. More than 100,000 Indigenous students and family members seek more access to their traditional languages, teachings, and learnings. For many in our district, this absence of access brings forward deep-seated historical trauma and memories of a dark history. Unfortunately, policies and systems of oppression, such as our outdated and historically inaccurate curriculum documents, which focus on erasing Indigenous ways of knowing and being are still in place. Educators within District X can

contribute to reconciliation and the reclamation of what has been lost by including Indigenous history, voices, resources, and teaching and learning practices.

Technological Factors

Due to the staggering population decline afflicting our rural communities, students in rural communities often must rely on District X's virtual learning centre to ensure that they meet graduation requirements. There are now more than 100 schools in our province where students are enrolled in one or more of the many courses offered by The Virtual Learning Centre (2021).

Although distance education has the *potential* to equalize educational opportunities for rural students, course designers and instructors need to ensure that they are also providing engaging and inclusive learning. More is required than the course has been offered since some people need help with the discipline necessary for distance courses. As many of our schools are located in very rural areas with limited and erratic internet connectivity, it is also an issue that must be considered.

Environmental Factors

The vast geography mixed with the rural-urban divide ensures that many students cannot access needed mental health, dental, and medical services. However, opportunities are not available to those living in larger and more urban centers as they cannot easily access outdoor learning spaces suited for land-based learning. Due to the constraints of many subject-based curriculum outcomes, teachers fear being unable to cover the mandated curriculum. According to Barnett (2013), "more teachers will lead, and more administrators will teach, and in doing so, will blur the lines of distinction between those who teach and those who lead" if encouraged to challenge, resist, and contradict historical hierarchical constraints that have previously isolated and divided teachers and devalued the knowledge and expertise that teachers possess (p. 437).

Therefore, it is essential to understand the PoP and the tensions between District X and Province X as it presently exists. Moving forward, it is necessary to consider the guiding questions that emerge from the identified PoP.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the PoP

Considering the historical focus on colonial and conventional schooling, testing, and standardization in our province, it is imperative to consider how these factors contribute to ill-being and perpetuate the status quo by considering the guiding questions. To determine how a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies better engage and serve students within District X, particularly those historically underserved and marginalized, the following four guiding questions emerge from the identified PoP and are outlined below.

Guiding Question 1

Understanding the need to cultivate a safe, healthy, inclusive school culture where students and staff feel that they belong and have voice, choice, and agency is a precursor to student engagement and learning for all; the first guiding question is how do we cultivate a healthy community of learners who are engaged in helping to bring about educational change? This change will require a transformative and relational leadership approach to share power with students. But educators need to be "...free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). However, this healing cannot happen without prioritizing relationships first and understanding that we are all relationally accountable to each other (Wilson, 2008).

Guiding Question 2

The second guiding question is how can we cultivate a culture where we share power with our learners versus exerting power over our learners? As learners and thinkers, we need to

be change agents with a moral purpose, understanding that as constructivist thinkers, learners “actively construct or make their own knowledge and that the experiences of the learner determine reality” (Elliot et al., 2000, p. 256). Using a deep learning model (Fullan et al., 2018) leads us to understand learning better as a constructivist process. The change path model represents a process that can integrate the more holistic nature of more significant changes in pedagogy and learning. Therefore, learning leaders need to be willing to learn alongside and with their staff (Robinson, 2012) if they are to participate in building a shared vision. This change cannot happen without strong, supportive learning relationships and leaders willing to challenge the status quo. To ensure student engagement and learning for all, our relationships with ourselves and others must be at the center of everything we do. If we want to share power with our students, they must be equal and participate in our assessment planning and practices. Our assessment practices should preserve the dignity and well-being of all students versus becoming something that we “do to” our students, which contributes to our students' ill-being. There is a good body of research in deep learning, powerful learning, Indigenous education, relationships first, and restorative justice in education (Barth, 2002; Kelly et al., 2008; Wilson, 2008; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Vaandering, 2013; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Wildcat & Voth, 2023; Fullan et al., 2018; Shields, 2018; Shields & Hesbol, 2019; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020). However, it will take time and more research into Indigenous ways of knowing and being and restorative justice (RJ) to effect change in practice and pedagogy. If we genuinely want to effect change – where the diversity of all is celebrated, where we can coexist in socially just schools and help to build collaborative cultures – then we need to support a system of relational and transformative change where the well-being of all and their relationships to each other and their world are at the forefront.

Guiding Question 3

The third guiding question seeks to understand how can fostering learner voice and choice contribute to student engagement, agency, and learning for all? Borba (2021) states that kids are not just happier but healthier when we honour who they are and their strengths, and if we are to help cultivate a generation of thrivers, we must make space for students to develop their strengths and talents. These changes can only happen when we share power with them versus exert control over them. If we are to ensure that we are creating safe, healthy, and inclusive classrooms, we need to go directly to those we work with and serve and be ready to change our practices, policies, and procedures based on the data we collect – we cannot do that without engaging and valuing our learners' voices to fully gauge what is working and gather ideas for growth and change (Cumby, 2012, p. 236).

Guiding Question 4

The final guiding question digs into how can the cultivation of collective efficacy help to create more equitable learning environments where teachers and students all experience a better sense of well-being and connection to their culture and school communities? Ultimately, achieving change is impossible without ensuring all partners are committed and involved. All team members need to believe that all students are capable and competent. Spilt et al. (2011) indicate that teacher self-efficacy positively affects classroom processes, student academic achievement, and teacher well-being. Furthermore, Donohoo et al.'s (2018) research also suggests that collective teacher efficacy is the number one predictor of student achievement. Robust teacher collective efficacy cannot be achieved without first creating space for shared power between administrators and staff and staff and students, as it is only when we feel

genuinely safe that we belong and are valued members of a community that collective efficacy can be achieved.

As stated by Stevenson and Tooms (2010), “teaching is about nothing if it is not about change. If as teachers, principals, or professors we do not believe we can affect change, then so much of what we do becomes meaningless” (p. 4). Leaders are responsible for ensuring a culture of learning for all. Magno (2015) argues that “school leaders are perhaps best located to challenge, and possibly change, the power/knowledge relations and technology of domination that exist in schools” (p. 72). As Magno (2015) highlights, we have moved past educational leaders contributing to the status quo – we are in the age of “learning subjects” where “visioning, seeking change, collaborating, etc.” (p. 70) are the central part of the mandate of effective and influential school leaders. Therefore, the aim of identifying this PoP is to ensure that the OIP will be in the form of an improvement plan that can provide a framework that will guide change and ensure more equitable and engaging learning opportunities for students within District X who have historically been underserved. Organizational change cannot be successful without a clear vision for change.

Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

My vision as I work alongside school teams, district staff, and community partners is to cultivate healthy relationships where power is shared with all. I work with teams to develop a culture of collective efficacy where strong relationships and well-being are central to our vision and goals. As a PISIS, I know that this means that I must concentrate on areas where I can impact change: working with schools to ensure a more relational and trauma-informed culture, analyzing their school-wide data, working with school teams to develop a professional learning plan, modeling best practices for educators within their classroom environment, and working

together to design powerful and deep learning opportunities that allow for student agency, voice, and choice.

To generate conditions that lead to more significant equity, educators are responsible for ensuring that our pedagogical practices do not purposely perpetuate the status quo. According to Donohoo (2017), school leaders have the added responsibility of helping to create the conditions for rich professional learning that leads to a change in thinking and practice. They are also responsible for helping guide and lead collaborative learning through professional inquiry and building collective efficacy. As a leader who puts relationships and the needs of learners first, I believe that learners “actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner” (Elliot et al., 2000, p. 256). As citizens of a democracy, we are morally obligated to help grow school cultures where students can become change agents ready and able to help solve the problems of our world. Using a deep learning model (Fullan et al., 2018) leads us to understand learning better as a constructivist process where students engage the world to change the world. Therefore, learning leaders need to be willing to learn alongside and with their staff (Robinson, 2011) and students if they are to participate in building a shared vision and strong communities. According to Katz and Dack (2013), the quality of classroom instruction is the undisputed number one factor that affects student learning. We cannot improve student engagement rates and ensure learning for all without strong and supportive learning relationships where teams of learners believe they can positively impact student engagement and learning for all (Bandura, 1997).

Building on the work of Bandura (1997, 2000), Donohoo et al. (2018) determined that collective efficacy has a ripple effect and that with its effect size of 1.57 (Hattie, 2016), Teams of educational partners are capable of remarkable things. However, this will take co-labouring and

building collective and collaborative learning cultures, where there is an agreement that, as a collective, we are responsible for the success of all the students (Sharratt & Planche, 2016). The findings from a 2016 study by Lyons et al. substantiate the importance of both individual and collective agency in helping to ensure an inclusive education, but this will take positivity and action. This connection to the collaborative community aligns with Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Battiste, 2013). We must aim for purposeful leadership, allowing for a “deeper exploration of sustainability” than previously promoted (Bendell et al., 2017, p. 426). When this goal is achieved, organizations like ours can ensure the organizational commitment of organizational members. This will only happen if we learn, adapt, compromise, continuously re-evaluate, have an open mind, and stay committed to the collective vision long enough to see it through (Deszca et al., 2020).

According to Battiste (2013), “learning is a lifelong enterprise” (p. 181), where a learner’s strengths and talents should be celebrated and where education should be healing. This contrasts with our present and more traditional education model, steeped in colonial and Eurocentric practices, which perpetuates the status quo.

We are so fortunate that our schools within District X are filled with diverse learners and each brings with them many assets that should be celebrated. Giambrone (2014) states that there is hope and that “the current infusion of a ‘global dimension’ in the K-12 curriculum in classrooms and schools is providing an opportunity for an effective response to these trends” (p. 25). Decolonizing education will mean moving away from the neoliberal trends in education, such as standardized testing and streaming, toward a more culturally relevant and culturally conscious organization. Battiste (2013) says that decolonizing education is an act of love, and we must be willing to do more than rebel against the many injustices of traditional education. We

must be courageous enough to “remake it, imagine it, and teach it” (p. 190). Students crave engaging learning environments that promote direct interaction with their teachers and peers and innovative classrooms where they get immediate feedback and can develop productive relationships with teachers and their fellow students (Clayton et al., 2010). Action is needed to ensure that our places of education truly become engaging, inviting, safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments where student diversity is valued and celebrated and there is learning for all. Thankfully, many factors driving change within District X align with my vision for change.

Change Drivers

For this OIP and the PoP that has been identified, it is essential to note that internal and external change drivers are interconnected and cannot be separated, as to do so would perpetuate the growing sense of fragmentation that has permeated our system for years. It is essential to acknowledge the identified necessity for change (Whelan-Barry & Somerville, 2010) that is evident in several recent reports released by Province X on educational reform, economic concerns, overall health (particularly mental health), strategic plan consultations, as well as the last five years of school climate data and numerous Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) Reports dating back many years. There have been many less effective change drivers over the years within District X, which included individualism versus a focus on the collective good of our community of learners, technology for technology’s sake without a guide on how to leverage for learning’s sake, and fragmented policies (Fullan, 2011), and especially testing and evaluation (Fullan, 2016), which was historically a significant driver in this province. Fullan (2011) warns that education systems working toward large-scale, whole-system change need to avoid focusing on the “wrong policy drivers” (p. 539). Therefore, as District X aims for student engagement and learning for all, the proposed change drivers to address this PoP are well-being

that includes social intelligence and learning, equity investments, and systemness, which together Fullan (2021) labels the “The Human Paradigm.”

Other authors and scholars, such as Dennis and Hargreaves (2021), contend that there can be no real student achievement without engagement and that there can be no engagement without student well-being. This belief aligns with the work of Tranter et al. (2018) and helps to support my vision for change as they advocate for a new path, the Third Path.

The Third Path, consisting of eight integral conditions, is the interweaving of the academic and well-being paths. Their research concludes that we can only ensure student engagement (a precursor for identity, mastery, and meaning) by ensuring safety, regulation, belonging, and positivity. Their research supports the belief of Indigenous groups worldwide about the importance of embedding a focus on building healthy communities where the health and well-being of the collective should be the focus of all. Most importantly, the student-teacher relationship is at the heart of well-being and learning for students of all ages (Hattie, 2011; Tranter et al., 2018). For a healthy relationship, there needs to be a willingness to share power with students and an inherent belief that all humans are capable and worthy of respect and dignity (Vaandering, 2013). We must focus on teaching the mind, body, and spirit; hooks (2003) calls this engaged pedagogy. Battiste (2013) says that the intercepting of the spiritual connection to learning is inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Therefore, a relationships first approach that is trauma-informed, brain-aligned, and aimed at transformative and socially just education for all needs to be at the heart of everything we do in education and a focus for all relationships from the classroom and community to those sitting at policy writing tables – we can liberate teaching and learning only when we are willing to harness authority and share power (Planche, 2019) and decision-making with all members of our schools and communities.

In my context, the first change driver influencing system planning is a need to bring relationality and well-being, including social intelligence and learning, to the forefront. Change driver one serves as an internal and external driver as the health and the well-being of students and teachers are paramount after the release of Province X's *Report on Education* (2017), which serves as an external change driver. The move of the province to adopt the Comprehensive School Health and Wellness Framework (2016) means that there is a recognition of the interdependence of health and education. As Hargreaves and Shirley (2022) indicate, well-being, which they call an "ethical imperative" (p. 161), needs to be put ahead of all other priorities, especially standardized tests. Similarly, Rincon-Gallardo (2020) outlines the impact conventional schooling, with its connections to Fredrick Taylor's scientific management principles, has had on the well-being of students. He argues that traditional schooling fosters a system focusing on standardization, testing, accountability, punishments, and rewards, which contributes to "colonization" (p. 458). He concludes that conventional schooling has been detrimental to the health and well-being of students, particularly those from marginalized groups. Hargreaves and Shirley (2022) argue that the only way to ensure well-being for all is to leverage and focus on three essential forces: prosperity for all, ethical technology use, and restorative nature. They also call for a shift away from the focus on academic achievement and standardization and argue that "universal well-being must be an ethical imperative" and call on educators to ensure that we "promote well-being and learning for all" (p. 161).

Change driver two is an equity approach to education, as is outlined in two of Province X's key educational policy documents, both external change drivers. The province's policy documents stipulate providing students with what they need to be successful and utilizing a UDL approach to education. Again, looking at the reports by the OCYA, it is essential to note that the

rights of children to quality education, as outlined by Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, have not historically been a change driver for politicians. However, with the implementation of Province X's newest educational policy and our work with the NPDL Team, there is a renewed sense of ensuring that we are meeting the needs of all students and a recognition that this has not always been the case. Shields (2010) calls on all educators to "...adopt transformative leadership practices before more students are lost and society damaged irreparably" (p. 584). This mitigates that leaders must also:

...acknowledge that gender, sexuality, income, and other factors lead to even further marginalization. Because minoritized students have been disadvantaged by historically oppressive structures, and because educators and schools have been – intentionally and unintentionally – complicit in reproducing this oppression, culturally responsive school leaders have a principled, moral responsibility to counter this oppression. (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1275)

For the purposes of this OIP, change driver three is the aim for systemness, which has been identified as a strategic goal for District X and was at the forefront of planning as we sought to reimagine learning throughout the pandemic. Fullan (2021) calls systemness a meta-driver, stating that "we need the first three drivers [two drivers for my PoP] integrated, along with an explicit push to change the system" (p. 31). As a PISIS, I work with school teams to help create understanding around the connections between policies, curriculum, safe and inclusive schools, and classrooms. Understanding these connections will allow me a keen insight into assisting schools to move forward in such a way as to help them achieve a sense of systemness. This cannot happen without creating a culture of collaboration where all partners, including students, believe in the power of the collective to bring about change (Eels, 2011; Donohoo et al., 2018).

This is not something that can be mandated. Philpott and Oates (2017) argue that teachers need to own the processes of their PLCs, which are all pivotal contributors to building a shared vision with agreed-upon norms and guidelines if they are to be successful. Therefore, for the intended OIP, it is imperative that the focus is on the right change drivers to ensure student engagement and learning for all students within safe, inclusive, and healthy school communities. Adopting effective pedagogical tools and practices that ensure student engagement and learning for all will be pivotal to ensuring system change.

Thus, the vision for change for this OIP seeks to ensure a strong learning culture and a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies to improve student engagement, but most importantly, to better serve historically underserved and marginalized students. Next, it is essential to determine District X's readiness for change.

Organizational Change Readiness

The pandemic, a crisis of epic proportions, has helped to ready District X for organizational change by fueling a sense of urgency, bringing to light many inequities within the education field, and highlighting the need for educational change that does not continue to propagate the status quo. Deszca et al. (2020) contend that an external crisis helps to accelerate the need for change and can help mobilize educational partners at all levels. Chilenski et al. (2007) advocate for the integration of organizational and community psychology literature to help ensure “a more comprehensive and meaningful assessment of readiness” (p. 13). Therefore, it will be imperative that as a change agent, I adopt and model a disciplined approach to data gathering, analysis, and action planning with partners from my participating Family of Schools (FoS) (Deszca et al., 2020). It is also essential that other internal and external partners are engaged in the collaborative inquiry process if I am to ensure buy-in and collective efficacy

(Deszca et al., 2020). Deszca et al. (2020), Rafferty et al. (2013), and Napier et al. (2017) all stress the importance of effective communication throughout the change process and that this cannot just be top-down. To ensure positive change experiences, we need an excellent communication plan and a robust and well-thought-out change plan involving all key partners (Napier et al., 2017). Therefore, it will be imperative that we establish and maintain effective communication from the beginning. Throughout the change process, it is also essential that I continuously check my assumptions and biases (Deszca et al., 2020), as it is critical in helping to build understanding and trust throughout the change process. Deszca et al. (2020) include the eight dimensions that help a change leader determine an organization's readiness for change that were identified by Judge and Douglas (2009): trustworthy leadership, trusting followers, capable champions, involved middle management, innovative culture, accountable culture, effective communications, and systems thinking. Going through the process of analyzing District X's readiness was enlightening and helped determine District X's readiness for change.

Although change is never easy and never a straight path, some tools help identify needed change and growth areas. Deszca et al. (2020) include a tool that allows change leaders to assess their organization's readiness for change across several dimensions: previous change experiences, executive support, credible leadership, change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, measures for change, and accountability. The survey also serves as a way for change agents to identify areas where growth is needed to ensure organizational readiness.

Therefore, for this OIP change readiness will be defined as,

The cognitive precursor to the behaviours of either resistance to, or support for, a change.

It is reflected in organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the

extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully make those changes. (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 681)

Furthermore, Deszca et al. (2020) indicate that an organization's change readiness is "determined by the previous change experiences of its members, the flexibility and adaptability of the organizational culture; the openness, commitment, and involvement of leadership in preparing the organization for change, and member confidence in the leadership" (p. 106).

Rafferty et al. (2013) stipulate that a multilevel perspective must be adopted as change readiness differs across individuals, groups, and organizations, and these differences must be considered. Napier et al. (2017) argue that you cannot neglect the human factor when looking at an organization's readiness for change, and this cannot happen without first engaging all partners at all levels of the change process, including the readiness assessment, and planning for the change process. They note that understanding the organization's culture is essential to successful implementation. Therefore, I must commit to engaging early and often with individual school and district teams to ensure staff buy-in and collective efficacy.

In assessing District X's readiness for organizational change, the *Rate the Organization's Readiness for Change Questionnaire*, presented by Deszca et al. (2020), was used to determine District X's readiness and has been outlined in Appendix A. Although Deszca et al. (2020) state that this tool should not be used as a research tool, there is great potential in using this tool with school teams as a pre-assessment tool in determining readiness for change. I have no doubt that someone else completing this process would arrive at a different score based on their own lived experience; however, there would be much to be learned in analyzing this data and the potential conversations that would ensue. As a change leader, I realize we must undergo this process alongside critical partners for each of our twenty-one schools.

Although there were some areas where I questioned where District X would sit along several dimensions, based on completing the questionnaire and an overall score of 24, there is no doubt that District X is ready for change. Assessing where District X lies on this readiness scale was informative and provided me with further direction in the following areas.

Previous Change Experiences

Although our organization has had many recent positive experiences with change, particularly in student engagement and learning for all, the mood of our organization presently is somewhat negative. Many change leaders are trying to stay positive, focusing on the goals ahead; however, so much has happened these past three years, and educators are feeling stressed and underappreciated. The Rafferty et al. (2013) review aligns with Tranter et al.'s (2018). It indicates the need for psychological and other forms of safety, belonging, and positivity before students and adults alike are ready for engagement in learning and, therefore, organizational change. There is much evidence to support that educators know that change is needed, but many feel like there are too many added expectations without the necessary support. Therefore, overall, the score here was a 0 and most definitely a noted area for focus.

Executive Support

As we work toward student engagement and learning for all, there has been much support for change by District X's Executive Team, and they have been heavily involved in learning and support for learning across the system as we have engaged with the NPDL Team. Although there is a relatively clear picture of the future, many external factors inhibit significant educational change as we must work within the outdated and tight constraints of mandated curriculum from K-12. Furthermore, there is a lack of trust based on previous historical events where educators

felt a lack of support from management at District X and EDU; therefore, the score for this section was 2.

Credible Leadership and Change Champions

It is important to note that senior and middle leaders within District X have been working extremely hard over the past few years to build a culture of trust within our organization and with the work that we have been doing with NPDL. There has been a collective effort to ensure that we are building a community of capable and respected change champions where there is collective efficacy and coherence. Napier et al. (2017) indicate that all levels of the organization must be involved in the organizational change process. The work that District X has been doing as a Programs Team has been truly remarkable. There has been a significant push to build strong and trusting relationships and to create a model of the communities we are striving to create in our schools, and considering the geography of our district, this has been no minor feat. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the hard work of senior leaders and the District Collaboration Day Team has paid off, as the score for this section was 9, the highest possible. One positive outcome of the pandemic was our ability to leverage digital technology to stay connected and build stronger collaborative and learning relationships. There is also no doubt that senior leaders will view the proposed changes as needed and appropriate for our organization, as there is an openness to change and the beginnings of a path forward.

Openness to Change

Although some scanning mechanisms are presently in place to monitor the environment within District X, there is still much work to do regarding using this data to inform change. Students, staff, and caregivers can complete a school climate survey every Spring, and data is collated for every school within the province and shared with school teams to inform their

School Development Process action planning and goal setting. There are presently some significant things that could be improved with this process. There are schools where the data analysis process is taken very seriously, and school teams dig into the data to inform decision-making; however, this is presently very school-specific as there is an identified district learning need in this area. Furthermore, there are also few school teams who really know how to make sense of the data available to them and to recognize the interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries (Deszca et al., 2020). The score for this section was 10 of a possible 15 points, bringing attention to the fact that much great work is being done in this area, but there is still work to do with openness to change.

Rewards for Change

Although there is no formal reward system for change to accompany this OIP, there is the reward of building stronger relationships and healthier school communities in collaborative efforts. There are many possible benefits for students and educators alike in learning, well-being, relationship building, and connection to the community. Also, many rewards will come from the opportunity to celebrate the learning that comes with more experiential and project-based learning that can be shared with individual schools and the district. District X has been working very hard to celebrate innovation and creative teaching and learning: district-wide virtual "Stories Around the Campfire" is such an event. There were no points for this section.

Measures for Change and Accountability

Although presently an underutilized tool within District X, our school climate data surveys completed by school staff, students, and caregivers and then collated by EDU staff do provide the district with one particularly good measure for evaluating satisfaction with the culture of each individual school, assessing the need for change, and tracking individual school

and districtwide progress. There is much work to do in attending to the data collected within individual schools and the district that could help District X put faces to the data (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012) and better manage resources more equitably. Therefore, the score for this section was 3 out of 4 points.

Readiness for Individual School Communities

In identifying District X's readiness for change, it is also imperative to consider individual school situations throughout the region and their willingness to participate in district learning opportunities. When given the choice to participate in professional learning (PL) with other schools, district leaders, and the NPDL team, teams from all twenty-one of my Family of Schools (FOS) came onboard, ready, and willing to learn and work toward the school development goal of improving student engagement and learning for all. In some ways, the pandemic has served as a significant driver in helping to prepare District X for change. The pandemic experience appears to have opened the eyes of many to the inequities that presently exist within the field of education.

Chapter One Conclusion

As Chapter One described the PoP and introduced the context, vision, and leadership agency for organizational change related to the PoP, Chapter Two will expand on the discussion of leadership approaches, outline a change framework, consider appropriate solutions, and serve as a space to analyze pertinent data that will help to guide the development of and define the best, most relational, equitable, ethical, and socially change path forward for District X. There will be resistance, and some will refuse to embrace change. However, it is no longer sustainable for education systems to live in the past – we are in flux and must embrace a willingness to change.

Chapter Two: Planning and Development

Education is what got us here, and education is what will get us out.

- Justice Murray Sinclair

Chapter Two discusses leadership approaches, outlines a leadership framework for managing change, and analyzes organizational information to select the best change path. The context of equity, ethics, and social justice as it relates to this PoP and the intended OIP is also discussed. Establishing why change is needed will be the overarching goal of this chapter. Deszca et al.'s (2020) change path model (CPM) is the change management framework fitting this OIP. A critical organizational analysis using Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model (1989) is also offered to identify and address gaps within District X. Possible solutions are proposed to address the identified PoP as well as social justice and ethical issues identified when looking to ensure a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies that better engage all students within District X so they can be more successful.

Leadership Approaches to Change

In my role as a Programs Itinerant for Safe and Inclusive Schools (PISIS), and given my stance around social justice, relationships first, and trauma-informed practices (Desautels, 2020), I recognize the need to employ a variety of leadership approaches to work collegially and collaboratively alongside twenty-one different school teams. A transformative and relational leadership approach is vital to ensure more personalized learning and build strong learning relationships. Leaders must challenge the status quo by becoming more transformative in our practices by developing positive relationships with students and staff and facilitating and engaging in moral dialogue (Shields, 2004). Transformative, culturally responsive (Khalifa et al., 2016), and socially just leaders help to create safe, caring, and inclusive school communities by

aligning school-wide goals and practices; they “lead in ways that promote inclusion, equity, and excellence for every student” (Shields & Hesbol, 2020, p. 17) and ensure that all students experience agency, feel respected, and understand that their teachers and administrators hold high expectations for them. By creating engaging, culturally sensitive, safe spaces, such as within talking circles and using art to express themselves, better health outcomes and experiences result (Latimer et al., 2018). As Grumet (1995) offered:

our relationships to the world are rooted in our relationships to the people who care for us, [that] curriculum is never the text, or the topic, never the method or the syllabus [and that] the conversation that makes sense...of things....It is the process of making sense with a group of people of the systems that shape and organize the world we can think about together. (As cited in Shields, 2004, p. 19)

Transformative and relational leaders must be willing to work collaboratively with school and district teams to build a shared vision of change based on first knowing our students and being relationally accountable to them (Wilson, 2008).

Relational Leadership

Shields (2004) contends that socially just learning is relational and deeply rooted in democratic processes so that power can be shared. Leaders concerned about developing more equitable and socially just places of learning must make time and space to acutely understand students’ lived experiences (Mansfield, 2014). Surveys and student focus groups explain achievement gaps more accurately than testing data (Mansfield, 2014). After all, student voice and agency are essential to developing spaces of learning that are more culturally responsive (Khalifa, 2021) and help us create agents of change who can more fully participate as informed learners and problem solvers. Focusing on tests and standardization promotes a deficit-thinking

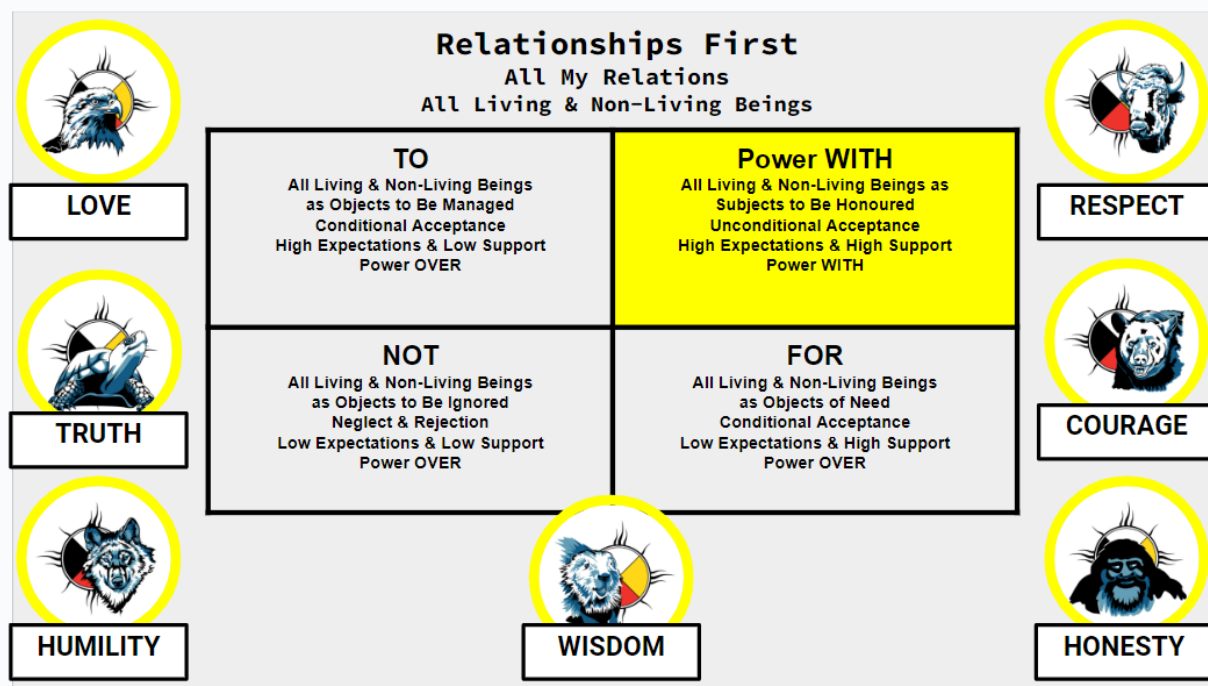
model of education that is not in line with more relational and Indigenous ways of knowing and being and does not allow space for formative growth and development. Instead, existing literature on the subject suggests that this deficit model of education leads to a growing sense of ill-being and student disengagement (Rincon-Gallardo, 2020).

The use of the Relationship Window (RW), as is outlined in Figure 1, is grounded in the theory of Restorative Justice (RJ) (Vaandering, 2013; Evans & Vaandering, 2016) and was previously proposed to guide how all partners engage with each other and their environments, provides all leaders with an understanding of how to share power WITH various partners in a good way. The RW, when we are working from the upper right quadrant and living into our seven sacred teachings, provides a clear model we can use to engage others in building relationships where there is high support and high expectations. When we work from this quadrant and live according to and in line with our seven sacred teachings, our schools will become spaces where power is shared WITH all, diversity is celebrated, and there is a focus on equity for all (Vaandering, 2013). However, if we find ourselves working from either of the other three quadrants, we are working from a space where we are exerting power over others and not living according to our seven sacred teachings. For example, if we work from the bottom left quadrant, we are not living according to our seven sacred teachings. We view others as objects to be ignored, have low expectations for them, and provide low support. We do NOT accept them. We neglect and reject them. If we work from the top left quadrant, we have high expectations for others, but we do not provide them the support or care they might need to succeed. We do TO them. We treat others as objects to be managed and with conditional acceptance only as long as they do as we say. Again, we are not living according to our seven sacred teachings. If we are working from the bottom right quadrant, we look at others as objects in need, and although we

provide them with high support, we have low expectations for them. We do FOR them versus empowering them to become agents of change as we do when we work from the top right quadrant.

Figure 1

The Relationships Window & Seven Sacred Teachings



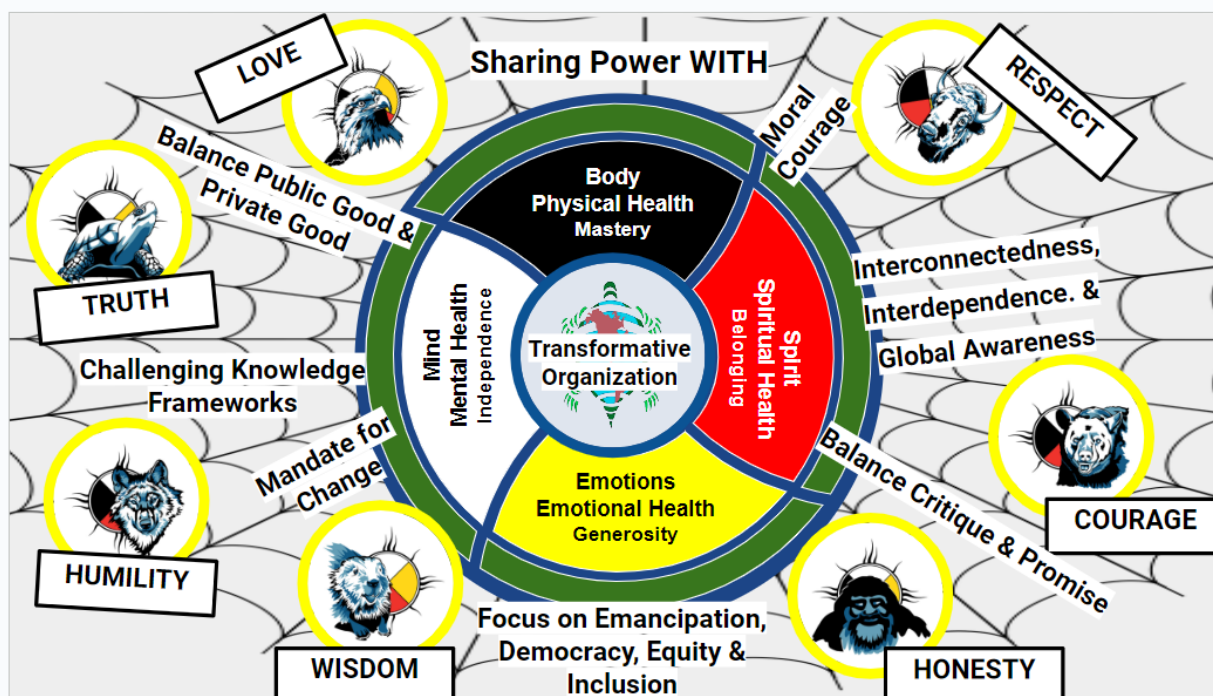
Note. Created by author and adapted from the Relationships Window with Permission from Dorothy Vaandering, 2013, p. 329 and The Seven Sacred Teachings free to use and adapted from Southern First Nations.

Using the underpinnings of the RW (Vaandering, 2013) alongside the seven sacred teachings (Southern First Nations, 2023), the medicine wheel and the circle of courage (Brendtro et al., 2014)., and Shield's (2018) eight tenets of transformative organizational change as demonstrated in Figure 2, Indigenous ways of knowing and being intersect alongside Western

ways of knowing and being, to help contribute to a more profound sense of knowing ourselves, each other, building and sustaining connection within our school communities as we look toward transformative change (Reyneke, 2020). The Mi'kmaw concept of Etuaptmunk, Two-Eyed Seeing (Marshall, 2004; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwanna et al., 2009; Greenwood et al., 2018), helps to contribute to greater understanding as we look forward, aiming to celebrate the gifts of all learners and to build strong communities where we work toward Indigenization, healing, and reconciliation with our students as agents of change (Peltier, 2018).

Figure 2

A Transformative Approach to the Circle of Courage

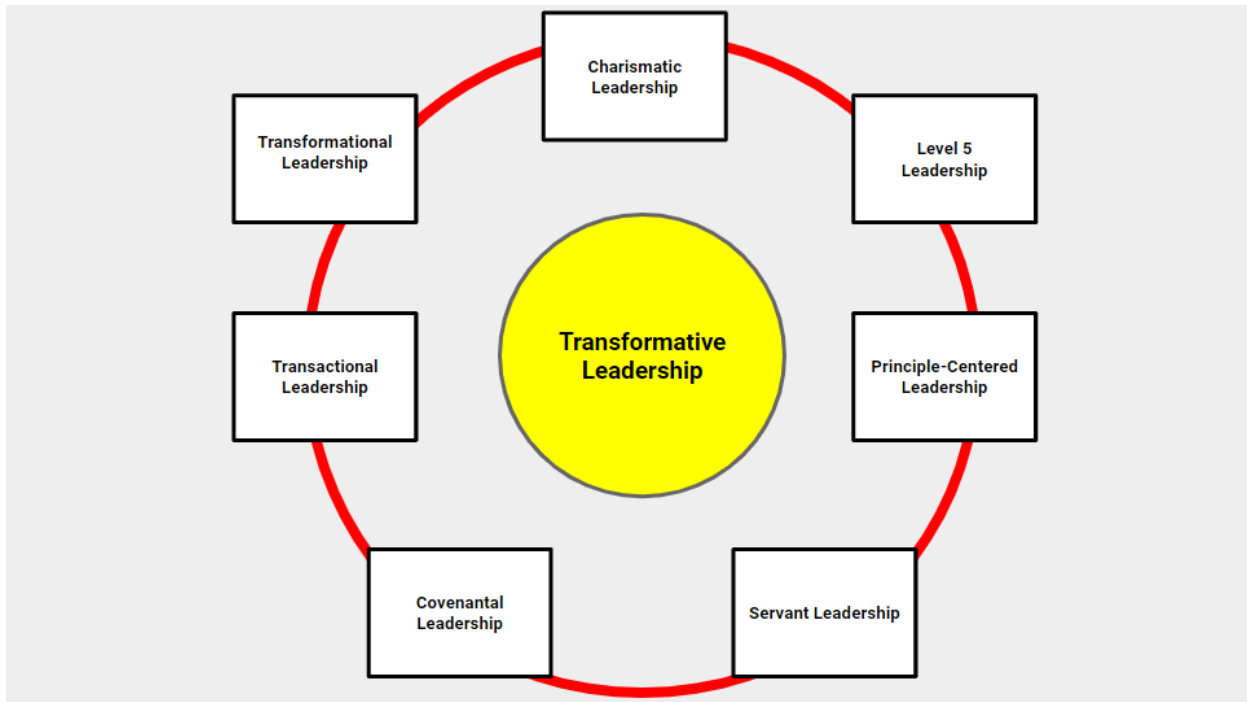


Note. Created by author and adapted from The Seven Sacred Teachings free to use and adapted from Southern First Nations; Circle of Courage by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, & Steve Van Bockern; Relationship Window by Dorothy Vaandering; & Eight Tenets of Transformative Organizations by Carolyn Shields.

Ultimately, our identity is grounded in and interconnected like the threads of a web: our relationships with the land, our ancestors, and future generations. Therefore, we must understand that “*we are* the relationships that we hold and are part of” (Wilson, 2008, p. 80). We must also create spaces to help ensure the healthy development of the whole child: mind, body, emotions, and spirit. A visualization of this image is presented in Figure 2, adopting the colours of the earth, the water, and the colours of the medicine wheel. This visual demonstrates how we can come together to heal in a way that is responsive to the needs of the individual and the collective (Latimer et al., 2018). Figure 2 also outlines a holistic health perspective demonstrating how our heart, mind, and body affect our actions. As relational leaders, we live according to the seven sacred teachings, understanding that we are responsible for sharing power with others versus exerting power over them. As relational leaders, we also aim to ensure the betterment of our communities. We can only do this when we also adopt a transformative leadership approach. A relational and transformative leader aims to support collective and individual needs and is discussed further in the next section.

Transformative Leadership

Transformative leadership is “an ethically based leadership model” that commits to living and leading in a way that upholds our values and honours our long-term commitment to the health and well-being of our communities (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 176) as outlined in Figure 2. They note that transformative leadership integrates critical features of six of the most highly respected types of leadership, as displayed in Figure 3, to ethically transform our organizations by challenging issues of social justice: transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, level 5 leadership, principle-centered leadership, servant leadership, and covenantal leadership.

Figure 3*Transformative Leadership*

Note. Adapted from: Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence by Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post., J. & Cheokas, G., 2012, p. 181

Shield's (2018) eight leadership tenets of transformative organizational change, as outlined in Figure 2, call on leaders to share power with those in their care, to exhibit moral courage to focus on our interconnectedness, interdependence, and global awareness; to balance critique and promise; to focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and inclusion; to fight for change; to challenge knowledge frameworks; and to balance public good and private good. Establishing a professional learning cohort (PLC) will help to ensure transformative and culturally responsive change and help support educators in our quest to decolonize and Indigenize policies and pedagogy (Schnellert et al., 2022). Transformative leadership, and

therefore large-scale transformative change, is only possible with us building a strong and relational PLC where power is shared with those in our care.

Shields (2010) proposes transformative leadership as a way to achieve social transformation and offers “a more inclusive, equitable, and deeply democratic conception of education” and of society (p. 559), which is outlined in Figure 3 and includes her eight tenets of transformative organizations (Shields, 2018). Calling on the work of Freire (1998), Shields (2010) also suggests that large-scale social transformation can only happen with a change in educational practices and pedagogies. Organizations looking to be culturally reactive and responsive can only do so by challenging the status quo and replacing unhealthy practices with more relational and transformative ones (Barth, 2002; Shields, 2018; Shields & Hesbol, 2019; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020). Freire (1970) called for establishing personal and dialogic relationships within education spaces to liberate and transform. This belief is in line with Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Wilson, 2008), as we can only ensure transformative change if we put the needs of our community ahead of our individual needs. A transformative and relational leadership approach will help to drive this change. A relational approach to leadership pushes us toward a collective belief that no matter a child’s circumstances, with high expectations and high support, all children can learn and become active and contributing members of our communities.

Teacher-teacher and student-teacher relationships depend on good collaboration and safe and trusting relationships, whereby teachers and students collaborate to measure evidence of impact. To understand the collective impact, teams need to determine if changes in classroom practice positively influenced student outcomes by examining specific evidence of student learning (Donohoo et al., 2018). Transformative and relational leaders understand that deep and liberating learning will create citizens who are better able to contribute to solving the problems

of their democracy and lead to the development of citizens who can participate more constructively in civil society (Giroux, 1995; Macedo, 1995; Shields, 2010). Although there will be resistance, transformative leaders start with teams willing to forgo deficit thinking. They are ready to work together to make informed decisions and ensure a more responsive and equitable approach for all children. To ensure a positive change experience, we need to utilize a change framework that better fits the needs of our school communities.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

Educational organizations are constantly changing; however, positive change is only possible with a well-thought-out organizational change plan and monitoring framework. These changes are often internally and externally driven (Deszca et al., 2020) and must include all partners in decision-making. According to Deszca et al. (2020), all employees must buy into the vision, understand the direction and perspective of where the organization is going, and understand why they should embrace their changing roles and expectations. Ideally, the vision should be adopted by all within the organization so that if one leader departs, the organizational commitment of all its members will help sustain those changes because change from the top down cannot be dictated (Deszca et al., 2020). Several frameworks could be used to guide schools through organizational change; however, for this OIP, I compare Kotter's Model (KM) and Deszca et al.'s (2020) Change Path Model (CPM) to determine which of these models will be most effective.

Kotter's Eight-Stage Change Process

Kotter's (2012) Eight-Stage Change Process outlines the change process via its detailed step-by-step guide that helps with planning and implementation. Step one entails establishing a sense of urgency, which Deszca et al. (2020) say is essential in older organizations reluctant to

change. They say that leaders are responsible for helping reveal the threats. Step two entails creating a guiding coalition by selecting and working with a team of 10-50 folks who are established leaders within their schools, are knowledgeable, and have the respect of their colleagues (Deszca et al., 2020). It is important to note that this step is very hierarchical and colonial in its layout and structure. Step three involves developing a vision and a strategy; the implementation plan and process can be created from this vision. Step four consists of communicating the vision change via multiple means and methods. It is not until step five that leaders and teams look to empower many employees into action. Step six is about generating and celebrating short-term wins and helping keep teams motivated. Step seven consolidates gains and produces more change by pressing forward until change infiltrates the entire organization. Finally, step eight involves anchoring the change approaches to ensure that change becomes embedded into the organization's cultural norms and values. However, this overly structured step-by-step process makes this model too rigid and constraining for the relational and transformative change needed within District X.

Change Path Model

The Change Path Model (CPM) provides organizational leaders with an easy-to-understand framework that includes the following four stages: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2020). The Change Path Model provides both the process and the prescription for change, and the authors argue that their model provides more direction than some and less than others, such as Kotter's Model (2012), which they note can be restrictive and is often top-down (Deszca et al., 2020). On the other hand, the CPM provides clear, but not restrictive, guidance for organizations and leaders looking to adopt a more disciplined approach to organizational change (Deszca, 2020). While the authors specifically

note the importance of determining what needs to change and how the organization should go about managing the change process, any organizational change model must begin with why change is necessary if leaders are to ensure buy-in by educators, students, and other partners alike (Deszca et al., 2020). The why we are here and the why change is imperative will allow the how and what to fall into place (Sinek, 2009).

Although both frameworks have the potential to help provide the structure to drive organizational change, considering the equity and social aspects of the needed changes and the transformative and relational leadership approaches, the CPM is the best fit for District X. Therefore, I will utilize CPM and a Collaborative Inquiry Process (CIP) to encourage effective relationship building and collaboration and which will guide the organizational change process to address my PoP. In addition, utilizing a CIP at each stage will help encourage collaborative reflection, data analysis, and data-informed decision-making to ensure student engagement and learning for all.

Awakening Stage

The awakening stage involves identifying the problems, communicating to various partners that there is a need for change, and planning for moving forward. This stage involves four main elements outlined below (Deszca et al., 2020). The first element involves identifying the need for change via comprehensive data collection and critical organizational analysis. For example, the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) school climate, Review360 (R360) behaviour, attendance, and academic data all indicate a need to reassess current teaching and learning practices to improve student engagement and learning for all. In addition, systemwide evidence suggests student engagement decreases as students move from elementary to high school.

We are presently in the process of redirecting/reorienting our organization as we shift to a deeper learning model within District X (2020), as there has been a need identified by all levels of the system. We aim to reimagine learning to ensure our students are ready for present and future realities (Deszca et al., 2020). The second element involves conducting a thorough gap analysis between our current and envisioned states to highlight the existing gap. A traditional focus on evaluative assessment is out of line with the more enlightened thinking of Indigenous peoples worldwide, who believe that all children are born with extraordinary gifts and can learn given the correct pedagogical practices, support, and equitable opportunities (Battiste, 2013). It also calls for our refusal to continue propagating the status quo as an act of advocacy (Tuck & Yang, 2014). The third element involves collaboratively developing a vision for change. The final element of the awakening stage involves clearly articulating the vision for change via multiple modes of communication. As a transformative and relational leader, it is essential to challenge the status quo and help partners envision how these proposed changes can help ensure student engagement and learning for all.

Mobilization Stage

The mobilization stage of the CPM also involves four main elements: seeking to identify formal and informal systems and structures that help make sense of the change needed and then leveraging those systems and structures to help bring about change; assessing the power and cultural dynamics at play; communicating the need for change; leveraging change agent personality, knowledge, skills and abilities for change benefit (Deszca et al., 2020, pp. 52-3). Realistically, some community partners will oppose change; however, a thorough review and presentation of the available data, as per the already entrenched School Development Process (SDP), will help identify where things are working well and areas of growth and inform

decision-making. There are teams of educators within each of my 21 schools who are ready and willing to take on the change agent role. Our school and district teams must continue acknowledging and celebrating employees who are already open to and embracing change (Deszca et al., 2020). The CIP, which has already been established within these schools at varying degrees due to the SDP and our work with the NPDL team, will help encourage a collaborative approach to analyzing and responding to the available data. A transformative and relational leadership approach will be critical as we aim to respond collaboratively to the data indicating a need for a change in pedagogical practice to improve student engagement and learning. A transformative leadership approach will be essential in helping identify social justice and equity issues within District X. Working relationally and modelling relational accountability (Wilson, 2008) will be a necessary part of this stage as I work with school teams. A personal and moving communication plan to communicate this data and its stories to school and district teams will also be pivotal as we aim to work to mobilize and prepare to move into the acceleration stage of the CPM.

Acceleration Stage

The acceleration stage builds on work from the previous two stages, utilizing the existing SDP structure to continue engaging with school and district teams to implement and measure goals and actions. At this stage, it will be essential to continue supporting individual and group learning needs in building collaborative relationships and to help grow their understanding of pedagogical practices that help improve student engagement through deep and powerful learning opportunities. Effective and timely communication continues to be pivotal throughout this stage, as well as celebrating small and big wins by sharing success stories around improving student-

teacher learning relationships. It is essential to engage deeply and empower others to support and develop an effective change process (Deszca et al., 2020).

Institutionalization Stage

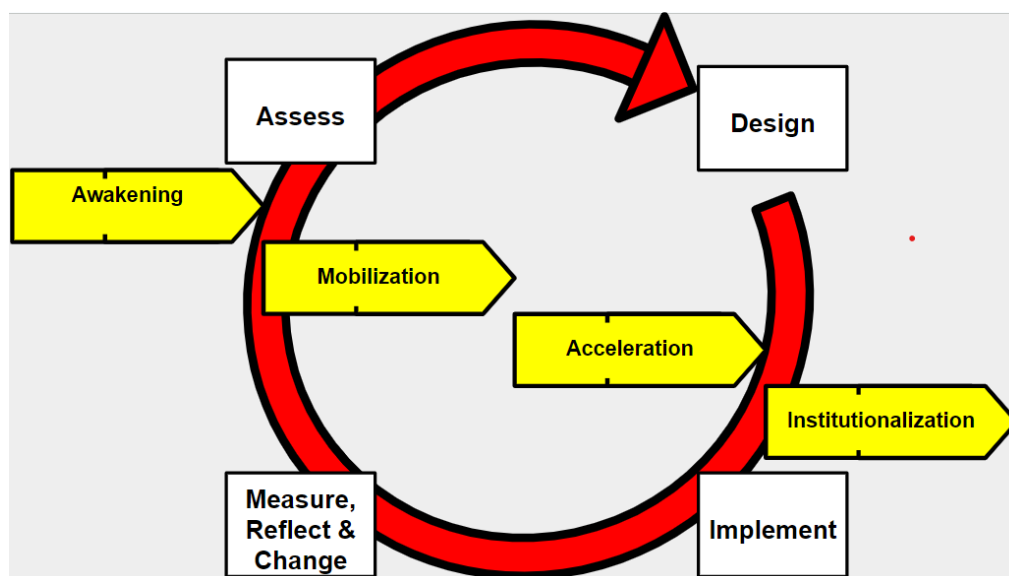
Although the CIP, as outlined in Figure 5, will be essential at all stages of the change process, it will be crucial at this stage as we aim to measure the evidence of impact throughout the institutionalization stage of the CPM (Deszca et al., 2020). At this stage, we continue to measure evidence of impact, respond based on our analysis of all available data, and celebrate our evidence of impact by sharing our stories. Using the already established SDP and the already established PLCs as part of our RTL Policy, collective efficacy will grow as collaborative relationships are strengthened, helping to institutionalize the change.

For this PoP, it is imperative to include learners of all ages as members of school PLCs, as children and young adults have the potential to impact programs and policies concerning them positively. In addition, the meaningful engagement of students can contribute to a better world for all of us (Patton et al., 2016). For example, students, families, and staff can all participate in community focus groups and sharing circles. They will inevitably enrich the data that will help to use the group to change the group.

The CIP will ensure a more individualized and responsive change plan. hooks (2013) advocates for engagement in dialogue to dismantle barriers and challenge the status quo. Establishing collaborative teams, including students, who work together to gather and respond to data is essential in moving forward. Dialogic leadership, where power is shared with students (Shields, 2004), allows transformative and relational leaders to critique and respond to the present system with its many inequities and respect the promise of every child (Shields, 2010).

Figure 4

Deszca et al.'s Change Path Model & Collaborative Inquiry Process



Note. Adapted from: “The Change Path Model,” by Deszca et al., 2020, p. 60 and Collaborative Inquiry Process by the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Content Team, 2019, Permission Granted and Retrieved from <https://deep-learning.global/making-it-happen/collaborative-process/>. Copyright [2023] by NPDL.

As educators, our practice must be relational and reflective as we are accountable to those we serve in the “ceremony” of education and life (Wilson, 2008). The CIP, for effective and transformative change, is ultimately an act of transformative ceremony. Shields (2004) contends that we should consider curriculum a conversation. The CIP, as outlined in Figure 4, allows us to engage in reflective conversations with ourselves, our school/district PLCs, and, most importantly, our learners.

The CPM alongside the CIP, as demonstrated in Figure 4, again adopting the colours of the medicine wheel, provides all partners with a detailed understanding of how systemic change can be achieved and the importance of assessing where we are, designing and implementing

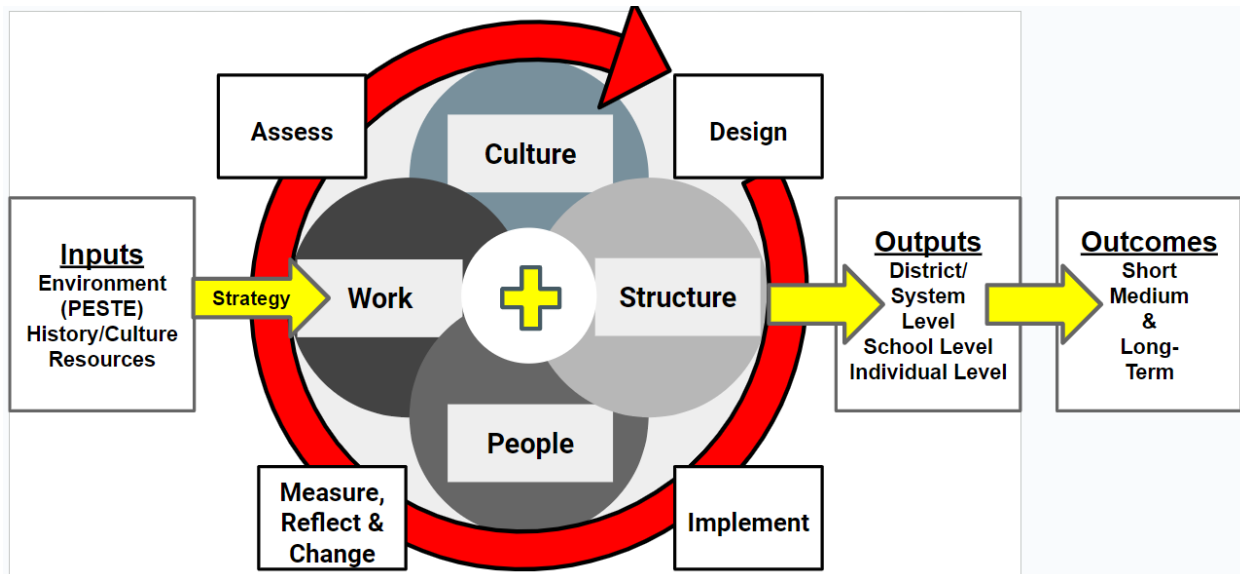
practices, and strategies that help to move forward in a more relational and trauma-informed manner, then measuring and reflecting on where we are in meeting our goals, and then changing our strategies and practices based on the evidence of impact. This reflection process will help to guide us as we move through the four stages of the CPM, working to awaken, mobilize, accelerate, and institutionalize the system changes.

Critical Organizational Analysis

Nadler and Tushman's (1989) Congruence Model, alongside the CIP, as seen in Figure 5, can help change agents within District X understand what needs to change, allowing them to diagnose and plan for effective change. According to Deszca et al. (2020), the Congruence Model is based on the principle that an organization can be successful when the work, the workers, the organizational structure, and the culture all fit together.

Figure 5

Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model & Collaborative Inquiry Process



Note. The Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model. Adapted from *Mind Tools*, by the Mind Tools Content Team, 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.mindtools.com/adofd5j/the-nadler-tushman-congruence-model>. Copyright [2022] by *Mind Tools* and *Collaborative Inquiry Process* by the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Content Team, 2019, Permission Granted and Retrieved from <https://deep-learning.global/making-it-happen/collaborative-process/>. Copyright [2023] by NPDL.

Considering the history of colonial and conventional schooling, testing, and standardization within District X, it is imperative to consider how these factors contribute to ill-being and perpetuate the status quo. Assessing gaps in each component of the congruence model is essential: inputs, work, people, structure, culture, and outputs – and then analyzing how they relate to one another and positively or negatively affect outcomes at the district, school, and individual levels.

Inputs

After completing a PESTE Analysis and determining the change readiness of District X in Chapter One, there is no doubt that we are ready for change. A shift in teaching and learning pedagogies is needed to improve student engagement and, most importantly, serve historically underserved and marginalized students better. Furthermore, it is imperative to note the increasing diversity within District X and how this affects school culture. This shift will help ensure a more equitable approach to education within District X and allow schools to be more culturally responsive by supporting better collaboration, learner voice, choice, and agency and helping cultivate a powerful sense of collective efficacy. As a district leader, I serve as a culture builder (NPDL, 2020), helping school leaders and their teams identify the gaps that must be addressed before the transformation is successful. Working alongside school teams to help them cultivate

their sense of collective efficacy, we need to co-create a shared purpose that helps to ensure more understanding and less judgement, growing a strong sense of well-being and belonging and sharing and distributing leadership across the organization. The four interactive elements outlined by Nadler and Tushman (1989) work in tandem with the strategies - solutions for change – which are culture, structure, people, and work.

Culture

A school's and district's culture can have a far-reaching impact that influences all classrooms and staff. Never has this been more apparent than it is right now as we head into our fourth year of a global pandemic. Educators are tired and overwhelmed, and students are experiencing more mental health challenges than ever before. Never has it been more critical for leaders and educators to focus on building strong relationships and connections between leaders and staff, teacher to teacher, teacher to student, and student to student. These guiding questions outline two essential areas for improvement:

1. How do we cultivate a healthy community of learners who are engaged in helping to bring about educational change?
2. How can we cultivate a culture of sharing power with our learners versus exerting power over them?

With this, there must be more effective communication as communication is filtered down the hierarchical chain of command.

The need for change in School District X is genuine. Our entire education system needs unfreezing as we have reached a crisis of epic proportions (Deszca et al., 2020). Our provincial data highlights student disengagement, attendance, safety, and inequity in learning attainment as four of our main priorities. One of the questions I highlighted earlier was: How has the intense

focus on standardization and testing affected student engagement and learning for all? Although we just finished up the third year of our three-year learning journey with Dr. Michael Fullan's team from New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), there are still so many folks who are still calling for a return to "normal" in education - even though our system-wide data indicated that "normal" was not working for a large percentage of our students, particularly those who have historically been underserved.

Within District X, where more than 100,000 people self-identify as Indigenous, it is more imperative than ever that we "visibilize" (Mullen, 2020, p. 671) the detrimental effects that colonization has had on the lives of Indigenous peoples of our province – particularly as it pertains to educational outcomes and the interconnectedness that exists between poorer educational outcomes and social determinants of health and health inequities later in life (Health Canada, 2022).

People

In a recent survey conducted by the Teachers Association (2022) affiliated with District X, it was found that only 7% of about 2500 respondents who completed the survey reported feeling very happy; approximately 40% reported feeling somewhat happy; almost 30% reported feeling neither happy or unhappy; approximately 25% reported feeling somewhat unhappy, and more than 5% of respondents reported feeling very unhappy. When asked what the top six factors impacting their mental health and well-being are, approximately 2000 respondents indicated increased stress, anxiety, depression, etc. was one of the top factors; close to 2000 respondents reported that managing student behaviour and juggling multiple responsibilities was one; more than 1700 respondents indicated that worrying about students and compassion fatigue was one; and approximately 1400 respondents highlighted that the consistency/clarity/timing of

communications from the employer was among one of the top six factors affecting their mental health and well-being.

Furthermore, for those that chose other as one of the top six factors, survey participants indicated things like the disconnect between the Department of Education, District X, and their Teaching Union; the way that staff is treated by administration; public perception of educators; not receiving enough resources or proper professional learning when entering a new position or during the implementation of new policies and programs; as well as a toxic work culture. When asked how they are coping with the daily stresses of their jobs, less than 3% reported that they were coping very well; approximately 30% reported they are coping well; close to 50% reported that they are somewhat coping; a little more than 20% reported that they were barely coping; and approximately 2% reported that they were not coping at all. Bolman and Deal (2017) stipulate the importance of reframing that it is essential to think of and analyze our organizations from more than one angle (the angle of the beholder can often be short and biased). Therefore, researchers must consider situations from broader angles and seek to “develop alternative diagnoses and strategies” (p. 6-7).

One of the questions guiding this study is: How will fostering learner voice and choice contribute to student engagement, agency, and learning for all? In a qualitative study of youth within District X, Issahaku and Adam (2022) highlighted a need to address youth poverty and invest in entrepreneurship programs and policies that encourage youth to discover and foster their artistic skills. They also found a need to invest in intergenerational bonding and policies and education that help to support an understanding of and respect for various aspects of diversity. Their findings also indicate a need for further investment in youth mental health programs. These findings are echoed in the increased demand for the services of the Kids Help Phone (KHP)

(2021), which saw a 350% increase in demand for services in 2020 at the height of the pandemic, with that increased demand continuing in 2021 with KHP serving youth 4.7 million times. Statistics Canada (2022a) reported that just over 40% of youth reported having excellent or very good mental health in late March and early April of 2020 versus 62% in 2018. They say that this was the most significant drop for any age group. Furthermore, the KHP Insight Data by Location (2023) for our province indicates that for youth ages 5-25,+ some of the top issues discussed were mental/emotional health, anxiety/stress, relationships, depression, suicide, isolation, and school.

Our students and staff are more unwell now than before the collective trauma we all experienced during the pandemic (Kalsched, 2021; Kids Help Phone, 2021; Stats Canada, 2022a); therefore, we must engage in creative activities that engage the imagination. In addition, Perry's (2017) research found that the best trauma treatment is to increase the number of healthy relationships. Therefore, we must collectively look to growing healthy relationships among staff, students, and community partners to heal as a school district.

Within a colonial system, historically, human interactions often involve an exchange of power. In moving forward, we need to come from a place of seeking outcomes that are respectful of all and do not propagate the status quo. Educational organizations are constantly in the flux of change – those that survive are those that adapt and evolve to meet the changing demands of the time (Deszca et al., 2020). According to Wheatley (1994), 'you need to get the vision off the walls and into the halls' (as cited in Deszca et al., 2020). Most importantly, as Deszca et al. (2020) argue, it is imperative that all employees within an organization buy into the vision and that they do not just see themselves as "just doing a job" – they need to "get" the vision of the organization and understand the direction and perspective of where the organization is going and

why” if they are going to really and truly “embrace” their roles within the organization. Sadly, this is not presently the case within District X, as evident in the growing displeasure and unease on a social media site about teacher's voices.

Work

Ultimately, as places of learning, our focus must be on learning versus teaching; this has yet to be the common focus within Province X. In Focus Group Data collected since 2016, students have called for opportunities to learn things that matter: mental health, current events, and financial literacy. They have stated that they feel like what they are doing now at school is not preparing them for the real world. Students often find it challenging to identify their strengths. Historically, our district has focused on covering material in preparation for end-of-unit and end-of-schooling assessments. The jammed-pack curriculum, with its many outcomes, has meant the focus was on pre-established plans and did not always consider our learners' jagged learning profiles. However, much data supports that this method of teaching, assessing, and moving on to the next unit was not a model that worked for many students. A lack of student engagement and a sense of belonging has permeated our system (PMF, 2017-2022).

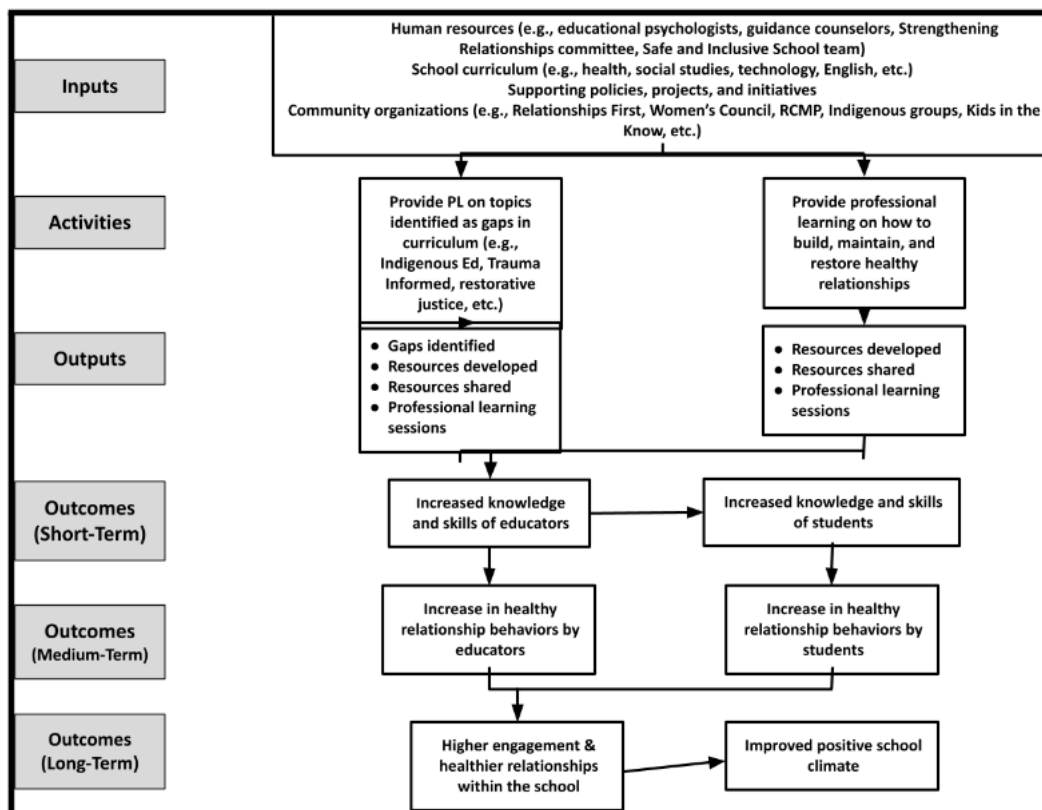
Outputs

In evaluating the outputs, looking at the organizational, team, and individual performance is essential. Therefore, the gap that this OIP should help to eliminate is the gap that exists between mandated conventional schooling steeped in Eurocentric and colonial practices and more powerful and deeper learning opportunities that foster student engagement, well-being, and learning for all. Ultimately, as Sharratt and Planche indicate (2016), it will take the collaborative and collective work of many willing to adopt an inquiry stance and position and learn alongside each other to put FACES to the data: “system leaders working alongside school leaders, school

leaders working alongside teacher-leaders, teachers working alongside teachers, and teachers and students working alongside each other” (p. 212) if the organizational change is to be successful. There will undoubtedly be setbacks throughout the planning and implementation stage; however, effective communication and a collaborative inquiry stance (Donohoo, 2017) are most important throughout the change process.

Kalsched (2021) postulates that there has been something possibly great and worth holding onto that has resulted because of the pandemic and the collective suffering, and that is “a new capacity for feeling” (p. 458). Still, it is up to us to hold onto this and grow it through building spaces and developing cultures at school where we are relationally accountable to one another – where we put our relationships first. But this means that we must be willing to move away from the culture of school where we focus on our students' deficits and rank and pit them against one another by leading them to believe the old lie: that our grades determine how successful we will be in life.

The critical organizational analysis has helped identify gaps, as demonstrated in the Logic Model that has been created and is visible in Figure 6. This analysis will fuel the motivation to implement strategies to help ensure a transformative change. Gaps that were identified included a lack of learning outcomes focussed on fostering healthy relationships between students, between students and educators, between educators, and between students/educators and the wider community. Some gap areas were consent education, diversity, 2SLGBTQ+ understanding and acceptance, and how to form, strengthen, and heal relationships when harm has been done.

Figure 6*Logic Model*

Note. The Logic Model has been created after analyzing the inputs and gaps within District X. Planned activities and outputs have been included here to help fill these gaps with the anticipated short, medium, and long-term outcomes outlined for District X.

Overall, the most significant gap area is the need to attend to the well-being of our community and improve learning relationships. Many are no longer able or willing to ignore the need for educational change and stand ready to mobilize and advocate for more just and equitable pedagogical practices, a precursor to student engagement and learning for all. There are several possible solutions that will help to fill the existing gap and that will ultimately help ensure positive organizational change for District X.

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

In looking forward to possible solutions, the chosen solution must help to ensure a shift in instructional and assessment practices that will help to improve student and staff relationships and, ultimately, their well-being. Only after we feel safe, secure, and pivotal members of our school communities can we ensure engagement and learning for all (Tranter et al., 2018). For our students who have historically been underserved and marginalized, a move to a relationships first approach, where we recognize and live into our relational accountability to others, is essential to help ensure more positive school and life outcomes (Wilson, 2008; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Bruhn, 2020; Desautels, 2020). The first proposed solution will involve mentoring and coaching school administrators in the new school development process in hopes of helping to improve student engagement and learning for all. The second solution will involve professional learning for school administrators in trauma-informed and relationships first approaches to help guide the changes in teaching and learning practices. The final proposed solution will help the cohort schools adopt *Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education*, contributing to a healthier sense of well-being and more equitable and engaging learning opportunities for all students.

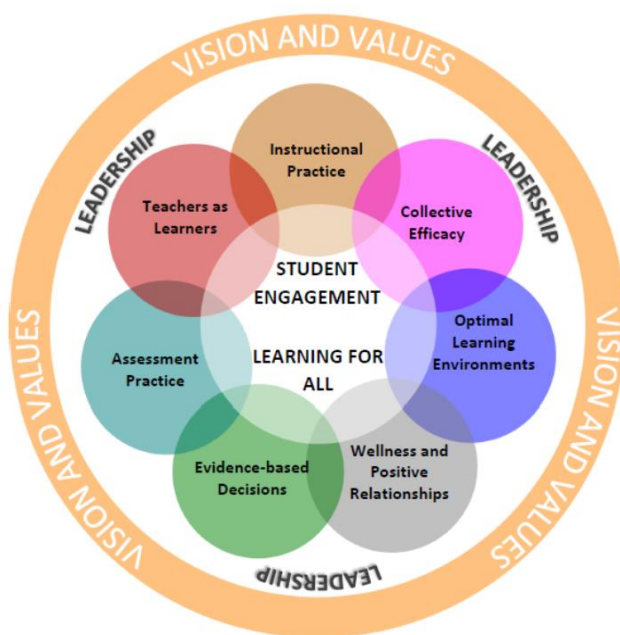
Possible Solution 1: Mentoring and Coaching School Administrators in the Province's New School Development Process

Change cannot be achieved without learning in the CIP entrenched within every aspect of the SDP. There is much data to support that the status quo is not a path forward that will help ensure student engagement and learning for all, any more than it has for the past 150 years. There are many areas for improvement, evident in our attendance, PMF, School Development, and graduation rate data; after the second year of the implementation of the three-year Strategic

Plan for District X (2020-23), PMF data (2022) still indicates that student engagement drastically decreases as students move from elementary school to high school, as does students' sense of safety. The province has adopted a new SDP mandated by EDU to help with this process (Figure 7). This process "is a systematic approach designed to guide and focus a school towards achieving its learning goals and to create an environment where all students are engaged in learning. It is results-oriented, involving collective reflection, data analysis, problem-solving, planning, and continuous improvement" (para. 1). As shown in Figure 7, this changing structure encompasses research-based and interdependent determinants that can help schools within District X identify where their focus is needed. Therefore, one of the most important first steps in working alongside the 4-5 Cohort Schools would be to form a PLC and ensure that all school teams are involved and understand the importance of this process to help drive change within their schools.

Figure 7

The Mandated School Development Process for District X



Note. From *School Development*, by Department of Education Province X, n.d. [Organization Website].

One of the significant gap areas within District X has historically been the self and team reflection process, particularly regarding using available data to help identify and respond to these gaps. The SDP structure provides a framework that we can use to help support and guide organizational change. Historically, there has been a reluctance to focus on the Wellness and Positive Relationships Determinant. For example, of my 21 schools, only four focused on this determinant in 2020-2021 and only six in 2021-2022. However, evidence has supported that the need is much higher.

The present structure ensures that the principal is the team lead supported by their Director of Schools (DoS) and the Family of Schools (FoS) team assigned to work with their school. So, although school administrators would be a part of a district PLC, this learning opportunity structure will not be shared with the entire school team. They also will not benefit from the coaching and modelling built into this process. The SDP must be a task shared across the school team; therefore, technology and information resources might be required to address the gap areas indicated by each school. The gap areas have been identified and need to be met in professional learning, as the focus has been mainly on the principal's learning. An increase in PL for administrators in the SDP would have to include PL for other staff if it is guaranteed to improve evidence of impact. Therefore, evidence of impact will continue to be low as this solution does little differently than what has always been done to improve student and staff well-being, engagement, and learning for all. In looking to help identify district-wide learning needs, the following solution ensures that there is more PL for school administrators, which our FoS team would be responsible for helping to support.

Solution 2: Professional Learning for School Administrators in the Area of Trauma-Informed and Relationships First Approaches to Help Guide the Changes in Teaching and Learning Practices

Our principals and assistant principals are the lead learners within our schools. Historically, they have forged a strong relationship with our district leaders, and these past few years, we have worked hard at developing a more defined FoS structure. This move has resulted in helping our district meet the professional learning needs of our school administrators, particularly our school principals. However, this structure continues to separate and enforce the historical hierarchical structure that is indeed a leftover remnant of a very colonial and Eurocentric model of education. Therefore, if this solution is chosen, it must outline a plan to ensure our school administrators' learning is filtered down to their school teams.

Within this proposed solution, there exists the potential that other critical team community members will be limited in receiving key messages or learning that will help drive needed changes and ensure that educators are Indigenizing and decolonizing their teaching, learning, and assessment practices. Effective communication has also been identified as a gap area. This proposed solution would do little to help ensure a more effective communication structure where power is shared with all key community members.

Similarly to the first proposed solution, there is little change in the requirement for human resources, a slight increase in financial resources to cover the travel of school administrators to attend professional learning, and the potential for an increase in technology needs to meet the potential of virtual learning. There is also an increase in professional learning literature and resources to support learning growth in this area. However, there is also an expected increase in evidence of impact as there is a commitment to further learning for at least

the school administrators. My role as a facilitator will involve helping our FoS team support the learning of the school administrators. Depending on the school administrator, this learning may be shared with other school partners, which could impact the well-being, engagement, and learning of all.

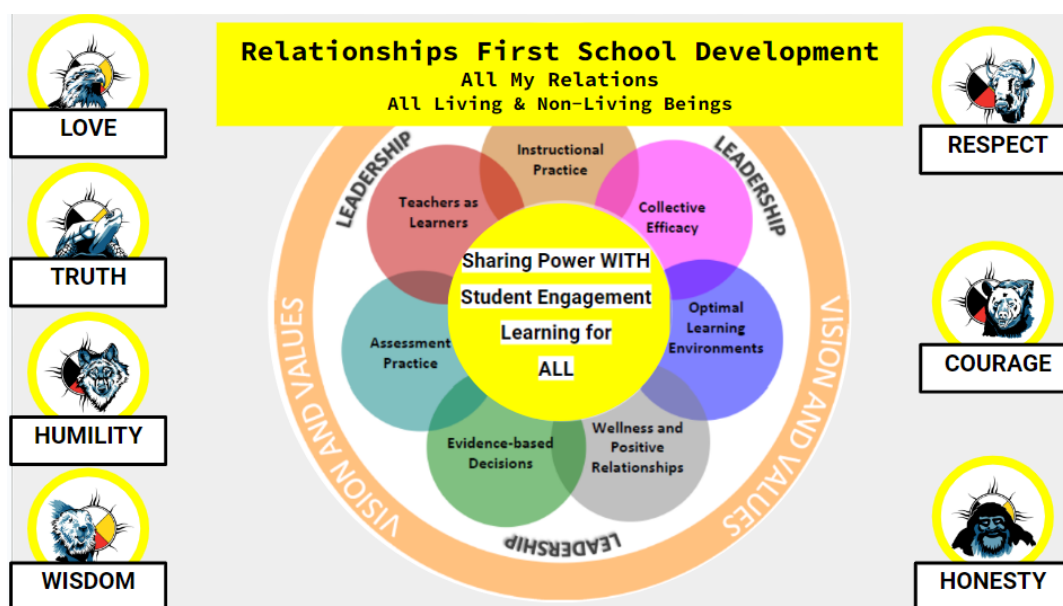
Possible Solution 3: Cohort Model of Sustained Professional Learning for Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education

The third and recommended solution is a cohort model of sustained professional learning (PL) for each of the 4-5 cohort school teams. PL in the area of Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education (HHH: RF) will help to guide and inform changes in teaching and learning and is a prerequisite to deeper and more powerful learning pedagogies. There will need to be PL for all educators in this area and the opportunity to co-create lesson plans and evaluate and measure change within PLCs. The purpose of education is to enable one "...to seek and find one's own enlightenment" (Kant as cited in Tate, 2016, p. 18). The partnership between NPDL provides District X with a PLN framework to continue building (Schnellert et al., 2022). This pre-established network helps to ensure hope for a brighter future for all students, no matter where they live in our province or how they identify, and a path forward that might allow us the opportunity for change that our students and our communities so desperately need. Within the Deep Learning Framework (Fullan et al., 2018), students are no longer treated as empty vessels to be filled. Instead, students become partners in their learning journey and agents of social justice and societal change as they learn to "engage the world" to "change the world" (Fullan et al., 2017). A HHH: RF Approach to assessment includes a collaborative and reflective process shared between student and teacher, which will improve student well-being and engagement. This reimagining of the student-teacher

relationship, where power is shared, is outlined in Figure 8, and it will lead to a community of learners with students as collaborative and equal partners in the learning journey. A detailed plan of action, outlined in Appendix F, provides the human and capital resources to help ensure the success of this model.

Figure 8

An Indigenized & Relationships First Approach to School Development



Note. Adapted from *School Development*, by Department of Education Province X, n.d. [Organization Website].

Although the third and final solution would mean an increase in human, technology, information, time, and other resources, this would also result in more substantial evidence of impact when it comes to an improvement in well-being, engagement, and learning for all as power and learning will be shared with all partners within the school community. The extra costs of this solution would be paid for in partnership between the school and the district.

Furthermore, as there are plans for a cohort model, the leadership will be shared. If a critical partner were to leave their position at the school, the team knowledge would exist to allow for continued growth and improvement.

Chosen Solution

Adopting a 4-5 school cohort model that employs a Collaborative Inquiry Process (CIP) will engage students, educators, and school and district teams in continuous cycles of action research. The CIP entails each partner assessing where they are with meeting goals, designing, implementing, reflecting on, and adjusting learning, endless cycles of gathering and analyzing data to measure and evaluate evidence of impact on the individual, and schoolwide and districtwide conditions to build on positive change continuously and positively. Working alongside the FoS Team, based on school data, 4-5 cohort schools will be chosen to participate. School teams must be willing to participate and commit to relational and transformative change where power is shared with all within the community, including our students. To ensure a commitment, school teams will have to provide half of the sub time for their school team to participate, and the district sub bank will be used to offset the costs for schools with limited sub days.

A change in pedagogical practices that encourages a HHH: RF Approach, provides an opportunity to engage in deep learning and liberating learning (head) that is relational, culturally responsive, contributes to the good of society (heart), and that allows them to take action by becoming agents of change (hands) through experiential, land-based, inquiry and problem-based learning. As agents of change, students can experience liberating learning by engaging the world to change the world (Fullan et al., 2017). They will help to support the move away from the traditional banking style of education (Freire, 2000). Therefore, Table 1: *Assessment of Possible*

Solutions outlines the reasoning behind the chosen solution as it helps to best decrease the gap that exists between the traditional style of education, where educators deliver information in traditional teacher-led classrooms, leaving students in our province disengaged, and in need of change (PMF, 2021) and our goal of improving the well-being and engagement of all.

Table 1

Assessment of Possible Solutions: Low, Medium, or High Impact

Possible Solutions	Human Resources	Financial Resources	Technology Resources	Information & Resources	Time	Evidence of Impact: Improvement in Well-Being, Engagement & Learning for All
Mentoring and Coaching School Administrators in SDP	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
PL School Administrators in HHH: RF Approach As Precursor to Need for Change in TLP	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Cohort Model of Sustained Professional Learning for All: TLA, HHH: RF Approach As a Precursor to Change in TLP	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High

As a PISIS, part of my role involves modelling and coaching healthy and relational approaches that will help to benefit staff and student well-being. Schoolwide goals must be

agreed upon by all partners and modified and ratified as the needs of the group change. However, if this solution is to be successful, we must commit to a HHH: RF Approach in all we do as leaders working to support the teams in each cohort school. To be effective relational, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and restorative approaches need to be integrated into the fabric of everything we do, which includes the day-to-day operations at the district and schools. Establishing co-constructed group norms, relationship-building circles, problem-solving circles, and schoolwide assessment practices that help to promote collaborative, culturally responsive, healthy, and relational approaches is also pivotal. A connections over compliance and a restorative approach is a proactive and relational approach to creating a healthy school climate and provides an alternative to punitive approaches to class and schoolwide discipline (Desautels, 2020).

It is essential to acknowledge that there are limitations to this solution. Ultimately, this solution will take much unlearning and learning as we work toward Indigenizing and decolonizing our practices, policies, and approaches. This will not be easy for some.

Wilson (2008) says accountability for our relationships is impossible if we pretend to be objective. CIP provides a model of inquiry that, like Indigenous ways of knowing and being, is meant to be asset-focused versus colonial and deficit-focused. It is only through strong connections to the community that we are indeed able to break the cycles of intergenerational trauma and begin to heal our people and our communities.

As I stated earlier, there are more than 100,000 within our province who identify as Indigenous and the effects of colonization and Eurocentric practices that have forced assimilation and compliance have been far-reaching. The chosen solution allows for relationship building, and healing and provides educators and students with empowering learning opportunities that

will ultimately benefit the collective. In the next chapter, I will discuss the design process, implementation, and change plan for the small cohort of representative school teams who volunteer to participate.

Leadership Ethics, Equity, Social Justice, and Decolonization Challenges in Organizational Change

There are so many facets of a student's identity that are beyond their control: race, cultural background, gender identity, where they grow up, and their socioeconomic situation (Giambrone, 2014). Far too often, our policies and curriculum work to exasperate the deficits of children versus elevate their strengths that can be utilized to improve student engagement and learning for all (Battiste, 2013; Rincon-Gallardo, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to consider the ethical considerations of a HHH: RF Approach as the chosen solution.

Challenges to Consider

Two provincial policies call for a safer, healthier, and more inclusive approach to education within District X. However, we also have an outdated and jam-packed curriculum that creates a paradox of sorts: our responsive teaching and learning policy (Province X, 2023) and our safe and caring schools' policy (Province X, 2013) call for a more learner-centered approach to education. These policies call for equitable opportunities and responsiveness to student needs. However, there is still a hyper-focus on outdated curriculum documents with a colonial and Eurocentric focus that does little to help ensure a relational and equity approach (Province X, 2023).

District X's (2020) most current Strategic Plan mission also aims to ensure student engagement and learning for all. The district's vision is to become an educational leader while

striving to ensure that all students can reach their full potential within safe, caring, and inclusive school environments (p. 3) and has outlined three strategic goals for 2021-2023 that include:

1. Student engagement and success for all;
2. equity, health, and well-being;
3. and operational effectiveness (District X, 2020, p. 4-5).

The provincial Health Action Plan (Province X, 2022) and The Report on Improving Educational Outcomes (Province X, 2017) both call for a more comprehensive and integrated approach between health and education. The reports also call for a more equitable and integrated approach to health promotion and early intervention that ensures better access to care for all students across the province, regardless of how they identify and where they live. In addition, this PoP addresses how a shift in teaching and learning pedagogies can better engage and serve all equitably, particularly those historically underserved and marginalized.

Many challenges to equity and social justice have been highlighted. For example, many inequities exist between students in urban and rural schools. Corbett (2006) says that for rural education to be meaningful, it needs to be contextual and place-based; this is impossible in a system overly focused on test-taking and standardization. An education system that is socially just will need to commit to a HHH: RF Approach that is responsive to the needs of students, schools, and communities, regardless of where they live, their socioeconomic status, or how they identify.

Addressing Ethical Responsibilities

Ethics, according to Starratt (2004), is “a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and values that support a moral way of life” (p. 5). District X hosts a myriad of partners with a multitude of beliefs, assumptions, and values. Therefore, to ensure a supportive environment that

honours the worth and dignity of all, we must work toward building a culture where leaders operate from a place of understanding versus judgement (Vaandering, 2013; Bruhn, 2020). However, this power does come with ethical responsibilities for all to help create safe, caring, and inclusive environments. Strengthening relationships and connections to the community leads to powerful and emancipatory learning opportunities that celebrate and make space for all the beautiful diversity within every one of us. Collaboration is essential to member empowerment and successful contribution (Western, 2008; Evans, 2011; Bendell et al., 2017). We need to leverage the strengths and expertise of all our members if we are going to build strong relationships successfully, a shared focus on educating the whole child, and develop a strong sense of community (Deszca et al., 2020). To ensure sustainability, the members of our organization must work together to determine our shared values and goals (Bendell et al., 2017).

The Social Justice Context

Discussing the proposed solution's social justice concerns is essential in looking forward to a more relational, transformative, liberating, and deeper learning model. One such concern is how to determine the 4-5 cohort schools and their teams. However, working alongside the FoS team, using available data, and communicating clearly the outlined 3–5-year plan will help to ensure that this process is as fair and equitable as possible. Furthermore, effective and frequent communication will also help to alleviate this concern, as schools that are interested in moving forward will be the schools that participate first. This OIP can also be shared with other FoS Teams interested in moving forward with this plan in other parts of the district.

Furthermore, social justice concerns exist around the students who get to benefit from this shift away from the trend toward standardization and education that is steeped in Eurocentric and colonial practices and is built around the intended assimilation of Indigenous and other

groups of people (Freire, 1970; Battiste, 2013; Miller, 2018; Rincon-Gallardo, 2019; Bruhn, 2020). Again, the FoS must choose schools based on need and willingness to participate. Schools where pedagogical and assessment practices have historically underperformed in this area should be prioritized as there is a greater need in those schools for more ethical, equitable, and culturally responsive practices that will benefit all students (Battiste, 2013; Miller, 2018). Educational leaders must work to ensure that we create learning environments, structures, and procedures where we support all students' diversity and lived experiences. Educators who focus on conventional schooling, with its intense focus on testing and standardization, “teach a superficial pursuit of knowledge and meretricious mistreatment of knowledge” (Starratt, 2005, p. 126).

A “schools’ choice of curriculum and learning and teaching approaches,” with a focus on education about and for human rights, with well-chosen literature, will play a significant part in ensuring education rich in “possibilities for helping people to understand how enthusiasm, commitment and a thirst for action against wrongs” (Tate, 2012, pp. 212-3) and can help to transform education. Schooling is a moral and intellectual activity whereby students can and should be able to engage their true and authentic selves (Starratt, 2007; Battiste, 2013; Rincon-Gallardo, 2019).

When a school team aims to be socially just, they are always looking to undertake initiatives that will contribute positively to all its members, understanding that “change is a normal state” and that it is our job to “challenge the status quo, adapt and improve” (Deszca et al., 2020). By ensuring that educators are versed in the ethic of care, the ethic of the profession, the ethic of community, the ethic of justice (Starratt, 2012) and using the CPM in tandem with the Relationship Window (Vaandering, 2013) and the NPDL Deep Learning Framework (2021), it becomes possible to build and strengthen relationships amongst all partners, identify, monitor,

and ensure staff buy-in and change of practice as we move forward with providing equitable and engaging learning opportunities for all learners (District X, 2020-2023).

Our job as district leaders in working with the 4-5 cohort schools must be to meet all schools, staff, and learners of all ages, where they are, and without judgment. The nature of large-scale change calls for a careful and delicate approach to ensure that individuals and groups do not feel threatened by the proposed changes. Negative change experiences are often linked to poor communication, hasty implementation, insufficient planning, and lack of involvement in decision-making (Napier et al., 2017). Skilled change leaders, like great educators, have high expectations and are willing to support those in their care, helping them learn and adapt as they build a coherent vision for change (Deszca et al., 2020). Therefore, communication must be two-way and lateral, making staff feel connected (Deszca et al., 2020). In the drive to equalize educational opportunities for all students, particularly those underserved by our system presently, an effective communication model must be established between all partners whereby all begin to challenge actions and decisions that propagate the status quo.

Although the district is moving forward and looking to become more lateral in its approach, there is still much work to be done in communication; it will take a willingness to face conflict head-on and engage in difficult conversations. There will no doubt be educators who struggle with ethical and moral difficulties and must decide whether to speak up or stay silent (Campbell, 2008) when faced with challenging the Eurocentric and colonial practices that have underserved Indigenous and other marginalized students. However, educators have a moral and ethical obligation to refuse to continue doing things that are harmful to our Indigenous and other underserved students as

Refusal makes space for recognition and reciprocity. Refusal turns the gaze back upon power, specifically the colonial modalities of knowing persons as bodies to be differentially counted, violated, saved, and put to work. It makes transparent the metanarrative of knowledge production—its spectatorship for pain and its preoccupation for documenting and ruling over racial difference. Refusal generates, expands, champions representational territories that colonial knowledge endeavors to settle, enclose, domesticate. We again insist that refusal is not just a no, but is a generative, analytic practice. (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 817)

Even though there is much agreement that change is needed across the organization, there is also much harm that has been done these past few years as all employees and students within District X have fought to make it to the other side of the pandemic; everyone is burnt out and in need of understanding, care, and connection. There has not been a better time for some of the proposed changes and solutions, as this OIP aims to create space for building stronger school communities where power is shared with all. Our schools should be spaces where all members of the school community feel safe, cared for, and included. Most importantly, our schools should strive to create learning spaces where our children learn to love learning and understand that, as citizens, they have a responsibility to their communities. Most children will not go on to become scholars; however, all students will become citizens (Starratt, 2007). Therefore, our places of learning must become microcosms of the world we want to create. If we want our children to become engaged citizens who are problem solvers, critical thinkers, good collaborators, and good citizens who care about the collective, ethically, any chosen solution must prepare students for the world they are inheriting. They need to understand their relational responsibility to be good citizens and

live in reciprocity with all that lives and breathes and all that does not live and breathe to protect our planet for the next seven generations.

Chapter Two: Conclusion

In 1915, John Dewey wrote, “What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy” (p. 3). Therefore, as was outlined in Chapter Two, a relational and transformative leadership approach will be essential in helping to bring about transformative change within the 4-5 cohort schools. Whatever the challenges, change leaders must effectively balance a keen insight with a steadfast drive for action that better supports all learners (Deszca et al., 2020). Chapter Three will seek to outline an implementation plan, propose tools to monitor and evaluate the change process, lay out a communication plan, and suggest next steps and future considerations.

Chapter Three: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Communication

Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.

- bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*

The third and final chapter of this OIP encompasses the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and communication of the organizational change process for the 4-5 cohort schools and an outline of possible next steps for these and other schools within District X. While the expectation of the work is 3-5 years, the implementation plan is primarily concerned with year one and two. This implementation plan outlines a path to building more relational, trauma-informed school communities where we focus on equity, celebrate diversity, and utilize student strengths to help improve student engagement and learning for all. It starts with building, fostering, and repairing our relationships, as it is our connection to our community, our sense of safety, and our sense of belonging that allows every learner the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

Change Implementation Plan

In looking to implement *Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education at District X (HHH: RF)*, as proposed in Chapter Two, the Change Path Model (CPM) (Deszca et al., 2020) will be used as the process to address the solution as we work to help improve student engagement and learning for all, highlighting the short, medium, and long-term goals. We can only accomplish this goal of building just and harmonious relationships if we are willing to learn, understand, and act (Wilson-Raybould,

2022). Therefore, true organizational change will take using our head, heart, and our hands. Although many leadership styles focus on building and strengthening relationships, few paths outline how to grow and strengthen relationships. (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Therefore, in this plan, it will be essential to outline how to build, strengthen, and restore relationships when there has been harm. Focusing on choosing schools that include a junior and/or senior high population will help ensure that the program rolls out where data suggests that PL in deeper learning, stronger relationships, more culturally responsive practices, and trauma-informed practices are needed most. As the reader will recall, my leadership role as a Programs Itinerant for Safe and Inclusive Schools (PISIS) involves coaching and mentoring. Therefore, one of the critical strategies throughout the Implementation Plan will include the eventual coaching and mentoring of all key community members. It is important to note that I am only one person and, therefore, will employ the leadership skills of my Family of Schools (FoS) team and our cohort teams to help ensure the implementation plan's success. As the capacity of our teams grow, their comfort in modelling best practices and leading PL, and the school's dependence on our coaching and mentoring skills will decrease. As we work to outline and integrate a relational and transformative leadership approach, a social justice stance that focusses on emancipation, interconnectedness, interdependence, global awareness, and the collective good of humanity is essential (Shields, 2012) and will help us engage partners in conversations where they feel safe and begin to develop a sense of belonging. Modelling and integrating a relational and transformative leadership approach will assist educators in schools in making connections within their classrooms and schools. Modelling learner voice, choice, and agency in PL for educators and in instruction and assessment practices for students will be vital in helping to create an equitable and safe space where learner engagement is enhanced and there is learning for all. As

we implement the process outlined in the CPM, pilot participants will be engaged early and often as part of the CIP to begin and choose the best path forward for our journey. This Change Path will be outlined further in the following section, along with an overview of strategies and actions that will be key at each critical stage.

Using the Change Path Model to Guide Implementation and Change

With its four interrelated and overlapping stages as a part of the framework, the CPM offers organizational leaders an easy-to-understand framework: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2020). Utilizing a collaborative inquiry process (CIP) as we cycle through each stage of the Implementation Plan helps partners assess, monitor, and evaluate change during implementation and will be instrumental in planning for change and determining evidence of impact for a HHH: RF Approach and how this is beginning to positively impact student engagement and learning for all. For our 4-5 cohort pilot schools within District X, this will entail a systematic review of available quantitative and qualitative data sources that will allow us to determine the evidence of impact and plan for the next steps. While there are many different data sources, I will concentrate on the PMF, R360, attendance, classroom, and schoolwide data. Assessing these available data sets will allow our FoS and Cohort School Teams to determine if our actions have positively impacted student engagement and if these actions have led to better learning outcomes. Working alongside the classroom teachers, school administrators, cohort teams, and FoS teams, we will analyze the data to determine what additional data (Focus Group, Survey, Value Walk) needs to be collected to ensure that all voices are heard. In assessing evidence of impact, these tools must be used in unison to help the staff we are working with see the need for change, determine the next steps forward, and assess impact indicators.

Short, Medium, and Long-Term Goals

There are many planned short, medium, and long-term goals for this OIP, as outlined in the Logic Model earlier in Figure 6. In looking at the short-term outcomes, this OIP will help the staff to increase their knowledge and skills in a HHH: RF Approach. This will entail reinforcing trauma-informed teaching and learning strategies, culturally responsive strategies, teaching students about self-regulation and brain-aligned practices, and teaching social skills, as outlined in Appendix D. A HHH: RF Approach will ultimately lead to strengthening relationships to enhance well-being. It is only when students are well that they genuinely can be engaged and learn. Students and staff will exhibit healthy relationships through this universal and whole school work. The long-term goal of this collaborative work is to develop healthier relationships within the school, leading to a healthier school culture where students' safety, physiological, and belonging needs are met to increase engagement and learning for all and working collaboratively with school leaders in these schools, as well as the staff who are engaged in the process. The cohort teams are the first phase of leading this work, and they will then help guide this work at the cohort schools. Establishing the Cohort PLC and utilizing the school-based PLCs already in place will serve as one of the primary implementation strategies from the awakening stage to the institutionalization stage.

Cohort Schools: Commitments, Supports, and Resources

PLCs will be utilized to help use the group to bring about organizational change within the cohort of schools. As a member of the Cohort PLC and in supporting the school-based PLCs, the teams will attend at least one monthly meeting with their PISIS and other FoS team members as needed. Cohort team members will also have the opportunity to participate in a Cohort Google Classroom to share ideas and resources. For example, cohort team members can share sample

lessons, PL videos & resources, and sample agreements. These will also be included on the project website and social media posts. Celebrations of the evidence of impact will be shared at all staff meetings, leadership meetings, and FoS meetings. There will also be a commitment to attend the cohort PL during late August, again in mid-December, as well as demonstrate a willingness to participate in site visits from PISIS and other members of the FoS team throughout the year to co-plan for in-class coaching and mentoring, as well as a demonstrated willingness to participate in individual and team visits and planning with other members of the 4-5 cohorts. There will be a further commitment to help facilitate the whole staff's November, December, and May PL. All cohort members will also be expected to help develop the follow-up plan for 2024-25 in the SD plan as outlined in Appendix F.

To participate in the project, the highest anticipated cost will be for the travel and hotels for the two October PL Sessions for the 4-5 cohort school leads: \$9200 (from the DoS Budget with approval from the Executive). The cost for the Cohort 2-Full Day PL in the middle of October - 5 schools x 5 people = 25 = \$8600. There will be 46 sub days needed. Travel costs will be approximately \$2800 (for schools). The materials are \$110/school for a total of \$550 in workshop materials. Otherwise, the only required resources will be travel, accommodation, etc., for PISIS and any FoS members traveling to schools to support them with implementation.

The establishment of teams of 4-5 staff members at each of the 4-5 cohort schools, led by one of the school's administrators, has received positive support from administrators and will help ensure the success of this pilot process within District X. The establishment of a cohort team will help ensure staff awakening and leadership sharing as we move toward whole-school Tier 1-3 implementation of what will be known as a head, heart, and hands: a relationships first (HHH:RF) approach, as outlined in Appendix E. As outlined in the Responsive Learning Policy

(Province X, 2020), a tiered approach to learning is an instructional framework used by Teaching and Learning Teams (TLT) to develop and implement planned responses to student and schoolwide data. According to the RL Policy (Province X, 2020), TLTs are “a school-based team of educators who collaborate at least once a month and more often if required, analyzing teaching and learning data to inform responsive teaching and learning practices” (p. 8). TLTs are expected to utilize all available academic and behavioural data to inform decisions at the universal, targeted, and intensive tiers. The first tier is the universal tier, where it is expected that if you do an excellent job at this tier, 80% of students will meet with success; the second tier is the targeted tier, where you should have no more than 15% of students needing interventions in this area if you have done an excellent job with the tier one implementation; the third tier is the intensive tier, where no more than 5% of students should fall if staff have done an excellent job with teaching and learning at the universal tier (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011; Matattall, 2008; Katz, 2012). Year One HHH: RF practices will focus on Tier 1-3 relational, social, and emotional interventions of increasing intensity (Rodriguez et al., 2016) that help to promote a more relational, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive pedagogical approach. For a detailed list of Tier 1-3 RT/TI Interventions, please see Appendix E. An intervention for a child needing support in building, maintaining, and healing relationships might be the opportunity to engage in problem-solving circles or the opportunity to go to a safe space when they find themselves becoming dysregulated and in need of a break or connection with a trusted adult. All tiers must be universally designed and responsive to the needs of all students to ensure equitable access for all learners.

Focusing on the cohort of 4-5 junior and senior high schools will help ensure the best evidence of impact as our provincial data stipulates that these students are our most disengaged

and feel the least amount of school belonging. Relationships and Well-Being is one of seven interdependent determinants outlined in the province's SDP, shown in Figure 8. Specifically, a HHH: RF Approach must be identified within the SDP and individual teacher Professional Learning Journeys (PLJ) at all schools interested in participating. The cohort teams should include between 4-5 staff members (at least one administrator, a guidance counsellor, and a good cross-section of classroom, specialist, and instructional resource teachers who have historically been very relational leaders) who voluntarily commit (Darling-Hammond, 2023) to taking on a leadership role for this project, and who then will be specified on the Google Form submission, as demonstrated in Appendix G. Their commitment will be formalized when teams are chosen based on their submission forms and schoolwide data that supports the school's reasoning for participating in this cohort project. The Project Forms will be due by the end of September, with decisions made and final invites sent to the 4-5 cohort schools before the end of the first week of October with an outline of the planned PL Gathering.

PL will help participating partners be encouraged to see the connections between previously fragmented policies, procedures, and approaches throughout the PL, coaching, and mentoring process. For example, the Safe Schools policy (Province X, 2013) focuses on building relationships with students and adults. Still, there is a fundamental disconnect as people do not understand how this policy connects to the SDP. A thorough understanding of the SDP and the RTL Policy is also essential in adopting a HHH: RF approach as outlined in Appendix D. Schools will be encouraged to develop a whole-school HHH: RF Approach using the SDP (three to five years) to guide the planning and implementation as shown in Appendix F.

The FoS Team, drawing on the expertise of other community partners: Indigenous groups throughout the province, groups who specialize in HHH: RF Approaches, health authorities, and

other community, provincial, national, and international partners as identified, will create and provide professional learning opportunities for school staff to help develop a school-wide HHH: RF Approach. As a PISIS, working alongside the FoS team, I will be available to support staff professional learning and implementation and to support capacity-building at all levels. The Cohort Team Members, alongside the school administrator, will be responsible for leading this learning at each of their respective schools. They will serve as the go-betweens between our Cohort and FoS teams, learning and then sharing their learning with their schools' teams. School administrators will continue learning alongside our FoS team, digging deep into research on HHH: RF practices that will help cement them as learning leaders within their schools. A HHH: RF approach that emphasizes the importance of building healthy, nurturing relationships, just and equitable learning environments, healing from trauma, transforming conflict, and repairing harm are essential in moving forward as we aim to provide the connection and the glue between these fragmented initiatives (Darling-Hammond, 2023).

The two days of PL for the Cohort Teams together will help to set the tone for a strong Fall start-up. School teams will leave with an understanding and plans for the next steps in their school implementation. Their October SDP PL and the District X Data days, which District X's Leadership Team determines, will allow cohort leaders to model relational approaches in their whole school PL days and share what an introduction to at HHH: RF approach can look like in their classes. The ongoing and planned PL from October-May will provide educators with modelling and coaching opportunities that will allow them to build a HHH: RF approach into all that they do. Therefore, it will be essential that all educators are provided with examples of what this approach might look like in their subject area and across subject areas. It is imperative that maths and science subject-based teachers, in particular, see what this could be like as they work

to ensure subject-area goals are met, as historically, this has been where we have seen the most significant staff resistance. After the two days of PL for the Cohort, cohort educators will be mentored and coached in taking time to implement greetings at the door, facilitate circle check-ins, lead relationship-building activities, and incorporate touch points and brain-aligned practices that help to ensure a more relational approach and begin to ask HHH: RF guiding questions when students are not engaged - learning to connect with students before correcting them as outlined in detail in Appendix D. This same coaching and mentoring process will then be offered to all staff as they request it after participating in their first day of whole school HHH: RF PL in November. With the support of the FoS Team, the Cohort team will begin to offer to coach and mentor as their comfort level increases in leading the Universal Tier Strategies and Interventions, outlined in detail in Appendix E. When we truly live our relational accountability to all of our students and staff, we begin to understand individually and collectively that with high support and high expectations, we can create safe spaces for all to be vulnerable and take risks.

Awakening

Awakening, for the cohort teams and staff within each cohort school, must also include district, school, and community and will begin in September. Here, we will have the opportunity to identify and discuss the gaps as they presently exist and dream of a future in education in our province where there is a HHH: RF approach. This consultative process will help to increase the understanding of the need for a more relational and trauma-informed approach and help identify how we can best meet the short, medium, and long-term goals within the Logic Model, as shown in Figure 6.

The proposal, supported by the DoS, will be shared with the other members of the FoS school administrators and their school team from our FoS in September, which will begin the

awakening stage. An overview of the project will be shared in September at the first FoS Leadership Team gathering to elicit interest from administrators interested in moving forward as a member of the cohort group. The buy-in and support of administrators will be essential in ensuring the leadership capacity needed to ensure the success of this project (Hall et al., 2021). The study by Hall et al. (2021) concluded that a project such as this needs to be adequately resourced and implemented with intentionality to ensure successful implementation and positive change. As was noted earlier, creating a Cohort PLC will be an essential strategy in helping build the leadership capacity needed to sustain this project. The awakening of critical partners at the district and school levels will help drive the change as we use the group to change the group. They will become leaders in schools to continue and grow this work.

Those school administrators from our FoS who are interested in moving forward as part of the cohort will invite us to present an overview of the project at their staff meeting in September. A Google Form, as outlined in Appendix G, will then be shared with all interested schools, and expressions of interest will be due in late September. This form will be distributed to elicit school teams' interest in participation and to collect pre-project data to see where school teams are in readiness for change.

Other key strategies of the awakening stage are co-planning, coaching, and mentoring. Our PLCs must understand that "learning is a collective activity, not individual; it is built on relationships. It is about the relationship with self, with history, with language, with learning, with family, with community" (Makokis et al., 2010, p. 1). According to Donohoo (2017), school leaders have the added responsibility of helping to create the conditions for rich professional learning that leads to a change in thinking and practice; they are responsible for helping to guide and lead collaborative learning through professional inquiry and building

collective efficacy. The buy-in of these key partners will be critical within District X, where there has been a sense of complacency about “how we do things around here” for a long time. Furthermore, there are many experts in the field (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Brown, 2018; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Thorsborne et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2023) who recommend a cohort model, starting with a small group of committed staff members in the first year of implementation. This first group can mentor other colleagues as they become comfortable and begin to lead the learning within each school community.

The awakening stage of the Implementation Plan also involves using all available data to identify what needs to change, highlighting the gap between the present and future state along with a vision for change, and working alongside the key partners to highlight the need for change and to consult with them about the specific changes needed within their schools (Deszca et al., 2020). An essential step within the awakening stage involves collaboratively developing this vision for change that will help lead to the necessary transformative change and that helps ensure relational accountability to all students and staff we serve. It is also essential that the awakening stage clearly articulates the vision for change via multiple modes of communication outlined in detail in the Implementation Plan as outlined in Appendix C.

Mobilization

Throughout the mobilization stage, building and strengthening the relationships within the cohort and expanding the reach of the cohort within each school will be essential as we continue to mobilize and leverage the impact of the Cohort and already existing school-level PLCs. The cohort PLCs will work alongside the FoS team by modelling and coaching to help with whole school implementation and developing HHH: RF approach lead learners will be essential as we work toward institutionalization (Hall et al., 2021).

For organizational leaders working with District X, the actions inside each stage of the CPM will help to provide the path and structure that will help to strengthen key partnerships and awaken critical partners such as district leaders, school leaders, educators, students, Indigenous leaders, and community members to the need for change (Deszca et al., 2020). For this project to succeed, they will also need the space and opportunity to contribute to the vision for change. Collecting and analyzing external and internal school engagement and belonging data will continue to help inform and drive organizational change as we work to leverage critical partnerships. Leveraging these key partnerships will become an essential part of the mobilization work: families, Indigenous knowledge keepers and elders, community members, health workers, and school council members, to name a few. A crucial part of my work as a PISIS is helping to build and strengthen relationships with partners to help drive positive change. Working alongside the cohort teams, my duties will continue here as we aim to make sense of existing data and collect new data to help ensure positive change.

The mobilization of critical partners is crucial, albeit connected to the awakening stage. Throughout the mobilization stage, the awakening stage must be extended to include all vital partners with an understanding of how all are connected. It is essential to build communities where all students are engaged and there is learning for all.

We can only develop a healthy school community by first understanding that we are all relationally accountable to all that lives and exists within our web. Our behaviours and our inputs have the potential to impact the outputs of all others within our web. We cannot ensure organizational change until we understand each participant's perspective on what change is needed, and this is an integral part of the work during the mobilization stage. Therefore, a key strategy during the mobilization stage is to provide safe spaces for all to have a voice via a focus

group and value walk for those interested. Whole school PL is also essential at this stage. These steps allow us to assess power dynamics and begin building and strengthening relationships with all partners, ensuring that all feel that their voices are heard and that they all can contribute to the vision for the collective good of each of their school communities quickly and effectively.

Unlike Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which was Eurocentric and individualistic, in many Indigenous belief systems, children enter the web already self-actualized (Kapisi et al., 2022) with their gifts and passions, and it is the responsibility of the community to ensure that all members understand that we are all relationally accountable to each other (Kapisi et al., 2022; Wilson, 2008). It is for the collective good that we are responsible.

At the mobilization stage, strategies deepen, and there must be a sense of why this work is essential and that we can do better, and indeed, we must do better – for both our educators and our students. Therefore, as we work to mobilize educators, students, and other partners, all must understand that teacher well-being is directly impacted by their relationships with colleagues and school leaders. Teacher well-being is also directly connected to their relationships with their students (Spilt et al., 2011). Drawing on the research of Lazarus (1991), they find that teachers, like their students, have a healthier sense of well-being when their relationships with students are strong and healthy, finding that these relationships affect teachers' professional and personal self-esteem.

Adopting practices such as talking and healing circles, steeped in Indigenous ways of knowing and being, with a history of helping to promote the democratic value of consensus, will be another critical strategy from the mobilization stage and is needed to ensure that we are successful in helping to ensure that we learn to put relationships first throughout the mobilization stage and beyond. Therefore, it is essential that as I work with teams and individuals, I model

coming together in a circle, in a relational way, which allows teachers and students, teachers and leaders, to sit together and share stories, helping to build empathy and understanding. It also allows all who participate to connect on a deeper level, as Benham (2007) suggested in the following:

Our stories illuminate knowledge in such a way that it connects us to the roots of who we are as individuals and as a community. For native/indigenous people, narratives are evocative accounts of sovereignty and loss, as well as identity and home. They are detailed and contextual, recognizing the importance of community and place. (p. 2)

Children cannot learn in environments where they do not feel safe, supported, or like contributing and valued members of their community (Tranter et al., 2018), and the adults must get to experience this at the mobilization stage as it will help increase support for the project.

Therefore, throughout the mobilization stage and leading into the acceleration and institutionalization stage, team leaders, educators, students, and other school community members must be invited to join the cohort teams from each school. Then, team leaders, educators, and students will be mobilized and empowered to help lead the change at each school as they also become the facilitators. Cohort team members from each school will begin to plan and lead these circles as their comfort level increases and then start to mentor other educators within their schools.

Acceleration

The acceleration stage, which will take us from around March to May, will utilize the CIP and involve the broader group of change recipients' efforts as we implement the change plan. PLCs play a pivotal role at this stage to support the development of new understandings and skills and to create safe spaces for sharing “our stories” of successful implementation. Students,

crucial PLC members, will also learn the skills needed to be reflective thinkers and problem solvers by engaging in universal tier work in circle sharing, brain-based practices, and trauma-informed practices that help grow and nurture healthy and empathetic relationships. They, too, will become a part of the group used to change the group. They can help by providing the data around needed changes via focus groups, value walks, class circles, and community discussions that will help contribute to new understandings that help strengthen community connections.

Educators and school teams can be engaged at every level to systematically engage and empower others throughout the support, planning, and implementation of change by ensuring that all have leadership opportunities as well as to ensure that all voices are engaged in focus groups, talking circles, and via survey data at key stages. Working alongside the Director of Schools (DOS) and District Leadership team attached to our Family of Schools (FOS), each school team will comprise the critical partners to help drive and ensure positive organizational change by engaging them in the change process via circle check-ins, focus groups and as change leaders helping to drive the changes within and outside of their school communities. Engaging partners and continuing to increase the collective efficacy of our teams will continue to be critical at the AS when developing and deploying the school's change teams, and ensuring communication with the various partners will help elicit support and embed these changes within the school's culture and celebrate these changes and critical milestones. Key actions in the universal tier work will continue as part of the SDP, as well as targeted and intensive interventions as required based on data analysis by the Cohort and TLTs as we aim to continue building a relational school culture that is universally designed and responsive to all needs within our school community.

Our students, educators, administrators, and district and community partners can and must be leaders and encouraged to advocate for change to avoid further disconnection and re-triggering past traumas (Kalsched, 2021). According to Perry and Winfrey (2021), Māori elders believe and teach that healing from trauma, depression, and anxiety takes immersing ourselves in connections to the community and cultivating our sense of belonging. By highlighting and creating opportunities for strengthening relationships within classrooms and throughout the school community, we begin to plot the path to healing and reconciliation as we build and nurture healthy school communities using our universal tier work. Through this focus on the universal tier, we begin to “know” each other – our strengths and needs- and build empathy and understanding. Creating these safe spaces that are asset-focused and responsive to the needs of our school community will help us create safe spaces for engagement and learning for all.

Celebrating small wins and milestones throughout the whole-school implementation of the HHH: RF Approach is essential. Although implementation is a multi-year process, celebrating milestones and evidence of impact will be crucial to help share best practices and engage and empower all partners to make sure acceleration happens. We need to be ready and willing to listen more and talk less as we work to share power with our students for the collective good of our schools and communities.

Hattie’s visible learning research (Corwin & Osiris, 2019) indicates that the number one predictor of student achievement is collective efficacy at 1.57. It should follow that we work toward “de-schooling well-being” (Rincón-Gallardo, 2020) using the most current best practices based on available data to determine choices we are making about what to continue doing, what to do more of, and what to stop doing.

It is also essential that we seek to understand resistance to change and to work together to overcome obstacles, and this will mean always working to come from a place of understanding if we are to be successful in this end. As with our students, our educators and staff bring multiple strengths and passions into our schools. We must harness and celebrate these as we aim to accelerate forward and institutionalize change.

Institutionalization

The institutionalization stage, which will take us from around the end of year one into the subsequent school year, will depend on internal and external factors such as changes in staff and other unavoidable events. All decisions must help entrench the HHH: RF approach within the cohort schools and develop and institutionalize monitoring and evaluation metrics that will ready our district for further expansion. Every decision we make as an organization needs to put our learners and the health and well-being of our communities first, which will allow the 4-5 cohort schools to reap the optimal benefits of the changes and set the stage for future improvement-based initiatives. It can be argued that the problem in education has not been an unwillingness to change but that there have been too many top-down changes (Fullan, 2021). Many policies and initiatives have been implemented in the past few years to help ensure the institutionalization of organizational change. However, we must help them understand that a HHH: RF approach is not a new thing but a way for us to ensure the success of all the other policies, procedures, and programs that, up until this point, have led to a severe sense of fragmentation (Fullan, 2021). We cannot do this if we do not begin to question all practices that contribute to the ill-being of our students and staff.

The detailed implementation plan, as seen in Appendix C, provides an overview of the PL plan for school close-out days and individual educator planning and best practice modelling to take place within the classrooms of individual educators.

Working alongside district and cohort leads in staff and other PLC meetings; teams will aim to entrench a HHH: RF approach into every aspect of the school operations and pedagogical practices, ensuring they are relational, trauma-informed, brain-aligned, learner-centered, and culturally responsive.

The successful implementation and institutionalization of the Tier 1 interventions and supports are the most important if we are to ensure successful implementation: building and re-affirming relationships and community; developing values and social-emotional capacity; working together, and instilling responsibility for self, others, and community well-being (Brown, 2018). Here, we must look at the SDM and ensure that all decisions we make about assessment, instruction, and our learning environments are made using this new lens and help to ensure relational accountability.

Teams will also measure and evaluate the effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 Supports, as outlined in Appendix D. An essential aspect of the institutionalization stage is tracking changes and measuring the evidence of impact periodically using the CIP to gauge progress and make changes where needed.

In response to the data, teams will respond to the school community's needs by developing and deploying new structures, systems, processes, knowledge, skills, and abilities to bring new life and stability to the transforming organization. The following section will outline the monitoring and evaluation plan.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Connecting to the CIP model and leadership approaches to change, a monitoring and evaluation framework for the HHH: RF Program will be developed to track and assess the progress and results of projects implemented in schools over a three-to-five-year period. It includes definitions, tools, and processes to facilitate monitoring and evaluation work. It is to be used by PISIS, in partnership with the DoS and FoS teams, and school teams to monitor and evaluate the HHH: RF project within each school cohort. The monitoring and evaluation process for the project is highlighted in Appendix F. Although evaluation and monitoring serve two different functions, evaluation questions must be incorporated into the monitoring plan, performance indicators and targets must be combined with appropriate evaluation questions, that monitoring needs to draw on a range of data, and there needs to be a knowledge of the data available and a plan for data collection to fill any gaps identified (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).

Monitoring

Monitoring, a pivotal part of the CPM and the CIP, will be an ongoing and essential tool throughout the implementation process. Hunter (2009) defines monitoring as “the systematic collection and analysis of information as a project progresses” (p. 6). The CIP involves all educators working together regularly to “define problems, co-plan, co-teach, co-monitor and interpret outcomes, and then consider together ‘what’s next.’ When teachers collaboratively develop and test their conceptions, they can better grapple with new theories and practices” (Schnellert & Butler, 2014, para. 6). The main goal of the monitoring process is for tracking. Its purpose is to improve “efficiency and adjusting the work plan, if necessary” (Hunter, 2009, p. 14). The focus is on the projects “inputs, outputs, [and] outcomes” (Hunter, 2009, p. 14).

The CIP will be used at all levels and with all project partners to help monitor project progress through “self-evaluation, participatory evaluation, rapid participatory evaluation” (Hunter, 2009, p. 14). These “participatory approaches” (Hunter, 2009, p. 16) are essential to ensuring buy-in and the quality of the project as it increases project sustainability. Utilizing and modelling the CIP at all levels for learners of all ages will help to demonstrate the collective learning for the collective good, an essential aspect of Indigenous ways of knowing being. The practice and importance of self-reflection on the health of our communities is crucial to building and sustaining more relational school learning cultures as it allows us to negotiate between our individual and collective needs (Hunter, 2009). Students will be involved in helping to design, assess, and monitor their learning; teachers and administrators will have the opportunity to collaborate to assess, design, implement, reflect, and adjust learning within their schools and across cohort teams. District leaders will work alongside educators and students to determine the learning conditions that support deep learning and design strategies to create improved conditions (NPDL, 2019).

Focusing on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, particularly a more asset-based view of learning versus the deficit model of our present Eurocentric and colonial model, can help us look forward to asking questions like: What goals can we set for improvement and growth? The strengths-based model used by the Maori people is “compatible with Kaupapa Māori concerns that whānau strengths be recognized and built upon to facilitate whānau ora (wellness)” (Cram, 2010, p. 1). Wilson (2008) advocates for a relational approach that is ultimately relationally accountable and calls for a system that does not pretend to be objective. Using focus groups and value walks to engage students and all partners in helping to lead change within each

school community is one way to ensure that our relationships with all are valued and that all partners have a voice and are inspired to become agents of change.

Evaluation

Evaluation, on the other hand, historically has been utilized sometimes at the midterm but most often at the end of a project when looking to determine what exactly has been accomplished and to assess the evidence of impact based on the actions identified in the strategic plan (Hunter, 2009). According to Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) evaluation is defined as “the planned, periodic, and systematic determination of the quality and value of a program, with summative judgement as to the achievement of a program’s goals and objectives” (p. 150). It is important to note that the evaluation “summarizes and complements information collected through monitoring and then adds to this through planning for evaluation to provide answers to the evaluation questions” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, p. 151). The main action of evaluation is assessment, which aims to improve “effectiveness, impact and future programming” (Hunter, 2009, p. 14). Like monitoring, information sources include “self-evaluation, participatory evaluation, rapid participatory evaluation,” but it also includes “external evaluation and interactive evaluation” (Hunter, 2009, p. 14). Our FoS team will undertake this data collection alongside our cohort team; however, to ensure data reliability, other data for evaluation purposes will be gathered by external evaluators (Hunter, 2009). Our PMF Data, for example, is collected by our provincial data analysis team, and results are then sent to schools for analysis and to be used as an essential part of their SDP.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Change Path Model

At the awakening stage, it will be essential to establish baseline school and provincial data to help us paint a clear picture of the problems to be addressed. As we begin to mobilize, it

will be essential that we set clear, measurable, and realistic objectives, that the targets are clear, and that we identify and define our project indicators that will be used to determine evidence of impact (Hunter, 2009). Throughout the mobilization stage, it is also essential to solidify the gap analysis for each cohort school and determine the next steps. At the acceleration stage, there will be more focus on planning and implementation (Descza et al., 2020) as per our SDP. In aiming to be successful with the institutionalization of the change implementation, it will be essential to monitor progress along the way as part of the CIP. Measurement is necessary to ensure successful institutionalization of the proposed changes (Descza, 2020). As part of the evaluation process, assessment is vital to determine if “the changes have been incorporated into the fabric of the organization” (Descza, 2020, p. 54) and to ensure institutionalization.

Indicators of Success: A Relationships First Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation

There are many possible indicators of success, such as an improvement in the annual school climate survey (PMF), particularly in the categories of positive school climate (staff, students, and families), school belonging (student), student engagement, and school safety (staff, students, and families). Teacher efficacy (staff), collective efficacy (staff, students, family, and community members), and teacher expectations (students) could also be positively affected. As we move throughout the first year and in planning for successive years, it will be essential to draw on the data to determine evidence of impact. A study by Darling-Hammond (2023), drawing on six years of student survey data and California administrative data, examined the use of restorative practices in 485 middle schools and their impact on school and student outcomes and found that exposure to restorative practices improved academic achievement, reduced suspension rates, and disparities, decreased schoolwide misbehaviour, substance abuse, and student mental health challenges, as well as improved school climate and student achievement.

This study also found that although all students benefited from restorative practice exposure, one aspect of a HHH: RF approach, underserved and marginalized students benefited the most (Darling-Hammond, 2023). Therefore, as we work to determine the evidence of impact, qualitative and quantitative data will be essential as it will allow for a more detailed evaluation (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016) of the evidence of the effect of a Relationships First approach. For example, if the implementation is successful, we should see behavioural incidents reported in R360, our behaviour management software program, and the number of suspensions decrease. Student and staff attendance should improve. There is more to the whole-school implementation of a HHH: RF Approach than just the numbers. A HHH: RF Approach that is TI and steeped in Indigenous ways of knowing and being also encapsulates restorative justice. Llewellyn et al.,

...call us to ground our evaluations in relational theory, because relationships lie at the very heart of RJ's "success." How much time and energies are we putting into restorative practices that build relationships? How are relationships changing? And how are systems changing because relationships and the community's priority on them have changed? (as cited in. (as cited in Brown, 2018, p. 261)

Furthermore, Hall et al. (2021) stipulate that data collection and sharing of the data will be essential in helping to ensure buy-in and successful implementation. Data sharing is vital for reluctant staff, families, and caregivers. Appendix F outlines a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that is evidence-based and well-designed, providing a coherent focus for the organization of monitoring activities to help guide the implementation of this OIP and the monitoring and evaluation plan.

In keeping with the messaging of the RTL Policy and as part of my role as a PISIS, I plan to work alongside school teams to assess, collect, analyze, and engage in the triangulation of

both quantitative and qualitative data that includes the PMF, R360, attendance, academic and classroom and schoolwide data. The existing SD and PLC teams in each school will learn how to analyze available data and measure and assess evidence of impact. Moving through each cycle of assessing, designing, implementing, measuring, reflecting, and changing as we move through the stages of the CPM (Deszca et al., 2020), we will respond to data, creating and designing to measure and assess evidence of impact as it pertains to increased student engagement and learning for all (School Development Model, 2021). This approach will offer “the breadth that quantitative data provide in relation to a situation or issue, with qualitative data offering depth” and provides a more “holistic view” (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016, pp. 165-6).

Assessing Evidence of Impact

To assess evidence of impact, I will utilize the CIP as outlined by Fullan et al. (2018), which has also been outlined in the Province’s RTL Policy (2023) as essential to building a relational, collaborative, and responsive learning culture that quickly and effectively responds to learner needs as they arise.

For this OIP, and if positive change is guaranteed, effective and productive learning relationships must exist between and amongst *all* key partners. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will help determine how each partner group feels about the changes at crucial points along the way and help determine the next steps. Critical theorists, such as Alcott (1991, 1992), argue that “speaking for the less powerful, such as learners, risks embedding powerlessness further” (as cited in Cumby, 2012, p. 237).

As we aim to include Indigenous ways of knowing and being within our curriculum here in District X, this connection to a HHH: RF approach “provides a way forward in terms of recognizing how past indigenous and spiritual traditions speak to current and future societies” (p.

330). The intent is to create cultures that respect students and emphasize all “human beings as worthy, interconnected, and relational” (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012, p. 151). The focus thus becomes developing strong relationships. As stated previously, our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework must value the voices and stories of all our partners, as this will help create safe, caring, and inclusive environments where students become agents of change and where there is space for student voice and choice. Angus (2006) argues that:

There is a moral responsibility for leaders and teachers to invoke student voice--to insist upon, enquire into, try to understand, interrogate, and generate student voice as best they can. The important thing is the attitude and belief that students have voices and opinions and wisdom that is to be respected. The aim is to develop ‘emancipatory leadership’ (Fielding) so that the voices, values, cultures, and actual life circumstances of students are respected, engaged with, and are incorporated into the life of the school in curriculum and teaching practice. (pp. 378-379)

However, Fullan (2001) stipulates that it is not enough to build collaborative cultures where there are close relationships. Collaborative cultures must also be built around the right vision for change and on the right things; otherwise, they risk doing more harm than good.

When a school aims to be socially just, they are always looking to undertake the heart work that will contribute positively to all of its members, understanding that “change is a normal state” and that it is their job to “challenge the status quo, adapt and improve” (Deszca et al., 2020). The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will help to determine our evidence of impact across partner groups.

To measure and evaluate change, it will be essential to continuously cycle through cycles of CIP by assessing, designing, implementing, measuring, reflecting, and changing to ensure

evidence of impact on student engagement and learning for all. Therefore, using this model for this OIP will further contribute to a sense of systemness. Monitoring and evaluation of available quantitative and qualitative data, as outlined in the previous section, will be essential to assess the change plan's effectiveness. Monitoring the implementation process throughout each key stage of the CPM will help ensure program fidelity and eventual institutionalization. As a PISIS, working alongside the cohort teams, we will monitor the implementation process closely and often as we ingrain this implementation plan into the daily lives of our Cohort teams and our TLTs. The CPM provides clear and non-restrictive guidance for organizations and leaders looking to adopt a more disciplined approach to organizational change (Deszca et al., 2020

Using the CPM and the CIP will help ensure the implementation plan is refined in response to the monitoring and evaluation findings at regularly scheduled times throughout the change process. Our district and school teams will triangulate the Pre-Project Survey Data, Mid-Year Project Survey Data, and End-of-Year Project Data and identify a list of indicators from school-level data, a list of indicators from topic area data, up to three topics identified for the 3-year plan, input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other community partners, and students) to aide decision-making as the project unfolds and we work to determine next steps. Communication will be an essential aspect of a successful implementation plan.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and Change Process

We must understand “communication as a tool, process, and social transformation” (Heide, 2008, p. 299). A transformative and relational leadership approach is essential, as establishing healthy, trusting, and collaborative cultures can build collaborative and safe learning cultures. As is the case for all organizational change, it is a challenge to articulate the need for

change. But, as Sinek (2009) indicates, we must start with why change is needed if we are to appeal to the hearts and minds of all partners. Before partners can be persuaded to adopt a new view of the future, three things must be evident to them: the “why,” “what,” and the “how” of the change (Beatty, 2015, p. 1). In a study by Neill et al. (2020), two significant findings were revealed:

First, an open and participative communication climate directly contributes to employee affective commitment to change and behavioral support for change. Second, communication climate featured by openness and participation boosts employee identification with the organization, which, in turn, leads to positive employee reaction to change. (p. 289)

Therefore, in developing an effective communication and knowledge mobilization plan, the plan must be relational, and power must be shared with all. The following sections will outline the communication strategies of each of the stages of the CPM that will be used to support a successful implementation and change process.

Communication Plan: The Awakening Stage

When leading or managing change, leaders will ultimately face various challenges, and without planning for and anticipating the challenges, there is a significant risk that these intended organizational changes will not materialize. It is not enough to have your vision posted on the walls of buildings; the vision of any organization needs to be inherent in every decision made by every organization member (Wheatley, 1994; Deszca et al., 2020). Deszca et al. (2020) contend that it is imperative that all employees within an organization buy into the vision and understand the direction and perspective of where the organization is going and *why* if they are going to embrace their roles within the organization. The vision needs to be adopted by all within the

organization so that if one leader departs, the organizational commitment of all its members is enough to sustain through those changes (Deszca et al., 2020). Therefore, at the awakening stage, I must seek to build awareness, interest, buy-in, and support among all the key partners.

Modelling a HHH: RF Approach will help make all partners feel like their voice was valued in the co-construction of the Vision for Change, which helps determine the path forward. Creating a project blog and website, which will help to share our “Story” from the awakening to the institutionalization stage, will help to keep all connected and informed.

Throughout the awakening stage, we must personalize the key messaging and advertising as we do an all-call for the participant cohort schools. Utilizing the project website, blog, emails to schools, and social media posts with personalized project hashtags will help solidify the project's brand. Regular in-person collaboration will also be essential during critical decision-making and as we work to share the messaging at strategic times and with strategic community partners: FoS Team Meetings, FoS Leadership Meetings, Staff Meetings, Classes, Indigenous Groups, Health sector, and other key partner groups.

Further, an open and participative communication climate will also help to facilitate upward employee communication during change. Modelling a relational and trauma-informed approach by coming together in a circle and providing other open and regular opportunities for collaboration will help to ensure that employees, students, and other vital partners can safely and constructively “voice their concerns, questions, doubts, and possibly negative feelings toward change without hesitation, which offers management opportunities to understand employee immediate reactions and address employee resistance” (Neill et al., 2020, p. 290). Change will fall by the wayside without a well-thought-out organizational change and communication plan that includes all partners, including students. According to Block (2009),

Shifting our thinking and practice about the politics of experience can achieve reconciliation in several dimensions of community that are the source of so much grief. If we care about youth instead of trying to control and inculcate them, then we have to deal with our adultism. This means we have to change the nature of our listening. Create places and people that welcome youth, where youth see themselves reflected in those who have chosen to work with them. (p. 165-6)

To ensure the success of this OIP, clear, timely, and consistent communication must be at the forefront moving forward as we work to share power and decision-making with critical partners and implement an effective knowledge mobilization plan. Therefore, communication and collaboration, where power is shared with all, will be essential in ensuring partner buy-in at each of the phases of the CPM, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Communication Plan: The Mobilization Stage

At this stage, it is essential to “hear from students about their learning, their progress, their struggles, and their motivation to keep learning” (Donohoo et al., 2018, p. 42). It is also essential that school leaders build a collaborative, non-threatening, evidence-based instructional environment with a focus on “knowing thy collective impact” (Donohoo et al., 2018, p. 43). Sabzalian (2019) argues that ensuring an equitable approach to schooling where all students experience liberating and powerful learning experiences will require more than conceptual knowledge or collective efficacy; it will require that teachers “develop a relational practice of care, commitment, courage and connectedness” (p. 217). To accomplish this, leaders and educators must be willing to relinquish authority so that students can exercise voice, choice, and agency, as healthy relationships require that we share power. Hargreaves and Harris (2015) state that “leadership is...about influence, movement, and change: it is about how the dots flow on a

journey of development and transformation from one point in time to another. This raises the basic idea that in times of change, leadership is also a narrative, a quest or a journey” (p. 35). Therefore, moving through the phases of the CIP, particularly at the mobilization stage, there must be adequate communication, where folks are consulted and informed, there is clear and concise messaging, and there is substantive consultation with all partners as “communication is indispensable when persuading people to support change” (Beatty, 2015).

In seeking to expand awareness, interest, buy-in, and support for the change to all those who will be affected, there must be sufficient data gathering at the mobilization stage as additional information will help to inform the project from critical partners via circle sharing, focus group sessions, and through survey data that is then shared with all partners to help inform and drive the next steps and decision-making moving forward. It is also essential to share additional information with those who will be the early participants in the change initiative and to celebrate early successes and achievement of milestones throughout each phase that will help to continue sharing our “Story” from the awakening to the institutionalization stage. At the mobilization stage, it will be essential to ensure personalization of the key messaging and the vision for each school community with information geared toward each key partner group by having identifiable messaging for each group easily accessible on the website, the blog, group emails, and social media posts with personalized project hashtags for staff, students, families, and other key community partners. Again, as throughout the awakening stage, regular in-person collaboration will be essential as we work to share critical decision-making and messaging. Celebrating our “stories” of early successes and significant achievements will also be crucial as we build capacity and support and will help accelerate and entrench the changes.

Communication Plan: The Acceleration Stage

Throughout the acceleration stage, it is essential to continue to elicit feedback and provide timely information to all change recipients and the external community outside of the cohort schools regarding:

- current activities
- next steps
- recognition and celebration of the achievement of key milestones

Continuing to solicit partner feedback and to share key messaging via the project blog and website will help to accelerate changes. At this stage, cohort schools will be working to personalize their messaging and vision for change by ensuring they engage in regular updates via email, school websites, maintain and utilize opportunities for in-person collaboration, and engage all partners in key decision-making. Our FoS team will also continue to share and celebrate our evidence of impact at strategic times: FoS team meetings, FoS leadership meetings, staff meetings, with classes, as well as with crucial community partner groups via website videos, blog posts, infographics, podcasts, and webinars.

Therefore, at the acceleration stage, it is hoped that our cohort teams and students will be able to utilize the CIP to reflect on where to go next and to help build the system's capacity to support the implementation of a HHH: RF approach. The CIP will help us ensure that critical partners hear the stories of success within their own and other cohort schools, as celebrating the positive impact will help to appeal to the hearts and the minds of all as we work to ensure all become agents of change lending their hands to help ensure the success of this project.

Communication Plan: The Institutionalization Stage

The collaborative inquiry process will allow deep reflection and collective efficacy to develop through collaboration and community learning. As we work toward creating relational school communities where “research must maintain accountability to all of the relationships that it forms” (Wilson, 2008, p. 137), it is essential that all quantitative and qualitative data is utilized to help determine evidence of the impact and next steps leading into year two and beyond. The effective communication of relevant available data will help to ensure the commitment of the cohort schools as we move into year two of the 3-5 Year Change Plan. It is here that we will continue to determine and plan for further PL needed in the area of HHH: RF approaches, Data Analysis, Assessment Practices (See School Development Model Graphic - Figure 8), and Deep and Powerful Learning opportunities that will be individualized to each school based on the evaluation and monitoring year-end plan. Using CIP, all staff, students, and partners' voices will be heard (staff meetings, focus groups, PMF Survey Data, R360 Data, etc.), and the next steps will be identified by referencing the RTL Policy/Safe & Caring Schools Policy. However, it will take leaders who live this relational accountability to understand that we cannot afford to look the other way in the face of injustice. But we do this in a way that also ensures relational accountability.

There is so much we can learn about how to connect better, our many strengths, and the world around us if we are open to doing research in a more relational way. Smith (2013) provides insights into Indigenous connections to the world and each other by stating, “Indigenous knowledge in terms of the environment is well recognized as traditional ecological knowledge. Indigenous knowledge extends beyond the environment, however; it has values and principles about human behavior and ethics, about relationships, about wellness

and leading a good life” (p. 267). So although there are many obvious power inequities and “persistence of Western/European hegemony that threaten environmental and human sustainability” (Huaman & Martin, 2020, p. 4) we must also “examine issues of power, representation, participation, ownership, accountability, social justice, and transformation in research that involves Indigenous populations” (Huaman & Martin, 2020, p. 2-3).

The CPM provides an overarching frame, and collaborative inquiry is an implementation and monitoring process within the structure that will help guide all aspects of the change process, including the communication plan.

Evidence of Impact: Celebrating and Communicating the Milestones

Undoubtedly, there will be obstacles along the way; however, it is also essential to document the evidence of impact for all partner groups. Celebrating and communicating milestones will help to build support. Although “communications often rely heavily on rational arguments... emotional appeals can be just as or even more effective than rational ones” (Beatty, 2015, p. 11). As a part of communication planning, we must share emotional stories of students, staff, and families who are seeing the improvement in student engagement and learning for all and how establishing a culture where we put our relationships with each other first allows us to know each other better and to determine the needs of each learner. Social Media is often overlooked as a reliable platform to share evidence of impact. Setting up social media accounts to accompany this project and creating innovative and catchy hashtags will help celebrate the positive effects and learnings at critical stages. The project blog and website that is designed for the sharing of project implementation, resources, and best practices will also help to share the evidence of impact widely and offer a hub whereby resources for all key partners can be shared as well as a space where our stories of impact can be shared. A podcast and regular webinars will also help to serve the purpose of sharing key learnings and evidence of the impact of everyday

happenings as well as a way to connect with speakers and leaders within the province as well as nationally and internationally as we look to grow our professional learning capacity and identify essential learning needs for staff, students, and families. We can also share our evidence of impact by building into the structures of regular meetings: staff meetings, PLCs, FoS meetings, family-school meetings, assemblies, and any other vital meetings where feedback or sharing is required. It is also essential that each cohort team takes time to celebrate within their communities and outside District X. The cohort model will also allow for the cross-sharing of best practices within cohort leadership team meetings. We can also help spread the message by encouraging teams to search out and share at conferences, as this will help build the capacity of our cohort teams and help celebrate our work provincially, nationally, and internationally.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

A Knowledge Mobilization Plan (Lavis et al., 2003) is needed to communicate the need for change clearly and persuasively to relevant audiences. Lavis et al. (2003) outline five questions that help to guide effective knowledge transfer:

1. What should be transferred to decision-makers (the message)?
2. To whom should the research knowledge be transferred (the target audience)?
3. By whom should research knowledge be transferred (the messenger)?
4. How should research knowledge be transferred (the knowledge-transfer processes and supporting communications infrastructure)?
5. With what effect should research knowledge be transferred (evaluation)? (p. 222)

To ensure effective knowledge mobilization, the right information must reach the right audience most efficiently to help ensure partner buy-in for the organizational changes outlined within this OIP. Knowing our partners via focus groups, surveys, and available quantitative and

qualitative data is the only way to ensure that the path forward is the right one for each key partner group. The CIP will help to ensure that mistakes from year one are not repeated in year two and beyond as we work to measure and evaluate the evidence of impact. It is essential that all employees feel a sense of “oneness and belonging to the organization” as it “was found to contribute to their attitudinal and behavioral support for change” (Neill et al., 2020, p. 291).

Table 2

Knowledge Mobilization Plan to Support Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach

Stage	Type of Communication
<p>Awakening Stage</p> <p>Seeking to build awareness, interest, buy-in, and support among critical partners regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need for a HHH: RF Approach ● Sharing & co-creating the vision for change ● Beginning to outline the path forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Starting a blog and website for the project that will help to share the “Story” from the awakening to the institutionalization stage ● Personalizing the message & advertising the All Call for participant schools (website, blog, emails to schools, social media posts with personalized project hashtags) ● Regular in-person collaborating and critical decision-making & messaging shared at strategic times: FoS team meetings, FoS leadership meetings, staff meetings, classes, key community partner meetings: Indigenous groups, health, etc.
<p>Mobilization Stage</p> <p>Seeking to expand awareness, interest, buy-in, and support for the change to all those who will be affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathering additional information that will help to inform the project from key partners in circle sharing, focus group sessions, and through survey data that is then shared with all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing to share key messaging via the project blog and website that will help to continue sharing our “Story” from the awakening to the institutionalization stage ● Personalizing the message & vision for each school community with information geared toward each key partner group (website, blog, emails to schools, and social media posts with

<p>partners to help inform & drive the next steps and decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharing additional information with those who will be the early participants in the change initiative ● Celebrating early successes and achievement of milestones 	<p>personalized project hashtags for staff, students, families, & key community partners)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular in-person collaboration and critical decision-making and messaging continue to be shared at strategic times: FoS team meetings, FoS leadership meetings, staff meetings, classes, and essential community partner meetings: Indigenous groups, health, etc. ● Celebrating our stories of early successes & achievements via website, videos, blog posts, infographics, podcasts, and webinars, as well as in-person and via virtual webinar events (public & key partner groups)
<p>Acceleration Stage</p> <p>Continuing to elicit feedback and provide timely information to all change recipients and the external community outside of the cohort schools regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● current activities ● next steps ● recognition and celebration of the achievement of key milestones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing to share key messaging via the project blog and website that will help to continue sharing our “Story” from the awakening to the institutionalization stage ● Personalizing the message & vision for each school community with information geared toward each key partner group (Website, Blog, Emails to and schools, social media posts with personalized project hashtags for staff, students, families, & key community partners) ● Regular in-person collaboration and critical decision-making & messaging continuing to be shared at strategic times: FoS Team Meetings, FoS Leadership Meetings, Staff Meetings, Classes, Key Community Partner Meetings: Indigenous Groups, Health, etc. ● Celebrating our stories of early successes & achievements via website videos, blog posts, infographics, podcasts, and webinars, as well as in person and via virtual webinar events (Public & Key Partner Groups)

<p>Institutionalization Stage</p> <p>Continuing to elicit feedback and provide timely information to all change recipients and the external community outside of the cohort schools around the evidence of impact and lessons learned of the first year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● collecting data that will help inform future decision-making ● confirming what has been accomplished ● reinforcing the benefits achieved by the change ● celebrating success and the contributions of those who have contributed to it ● identifying lessons learned that may help inform future change initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing to share key messaging via the project blog and website that will help to continue sharing our “story” from the awakening to the institutionalization phase ● Personalizing the message & vision for each school community with information geared toward each key partner group (Website, Blog, Emails to Schools, and Social Media Posts With Personalized Project Hashtags for Staff, Students, Families, and key Community Partners) ● Regular In-person collaboration and critical decision-making & messaging continuing to be shared at strategic times: FoS Team Meetings, FoS Leadership Meetings, Staff Meetings, Classes, Key Community Partner Meetings: Indigenous Groups, Health, etc. ● End of Year Data Collection (Focus Groups, PMF Data, Survey Data, R360 Data, Attendance Data, Other Available Quantitative and Qualitative Data) ● Celebrating Our Stories of Early Successes & achievements via Website Videos, Blog Posts, Infographics, and Podcasts, as well as in Person and Via Virtual Webinar Events (Public and key Partner Groups) ● Year One Key Learnings: What Worked? What Didn’t? Where Did We See Evidence of Impact? ● Sharing Data stories with Key Partner Groups Via the Year One Strategic Plan & Planning for Year Two
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Furthermore, Shields (2010) argues that the evidence demands that we join with other courageous leaders by adopting transformative leadership practices that help to ensure more equitable environments and pedagogical practices for all children “before more students are lost

and society damaged irreparably” (p. 584). Advocacy efforts fall short when school leaders speak for students rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Educators must understand that educators' learning is enhanced through healthy and dialogic relationships with our students (Fielding, 2001). Teaching and learning are interdependent acts, a shared responsibility between all partners, including students – our most important partners. Therefore, any work in knowledge mobilization must strive to “take back control of research so that it is relevant and useful” (Kovach, 2015, p. 59).

Next Steps and Future Considerations

In looking forward to the end of year one, we must have a precise gauge of where there has been the most evidence of impact within the cohort model and where there has been the most evidence of impact within each school in the area of student engagement and learning for all. By focusing on relational accountability and ensuring we put our relationships first, we can reconstruct a more socially just and equitable reality for those previously underserved and marginalized and help improve the health and well-being of all those we serve. However, we cannot accomplish this without questioning the status quo, practices, and policies that make up our current “reality” and which have continued to underserve some of our most marginalized youth and families. Although it is outside my scope to be able to determine whether students have to write the end-of-school provincial exams, continuing to work alongside school teams from these and any future cohort schools, we can ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to experience a more positive school climate and deep and liberating learning opportunities where they have the chance to truly share power with their teachers and school leaders, to ensure that their voices are heard, they have a choice and therefore can experience how student agency contributes not just to healthier students, but also to a healthier sense of

teacher well-being (Spilt et al., 2011). This relational approach will lead to a more culturally responsive school culture where students are more engaged, and there truly is learning for all.

Joe (2021) states there is a need for “two-eared listening” when it comes to reconciliation that ensures healing, where there is an acknowledgment of the harm done by practices that devalued Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Joe (2021) argues that it is time to truly listen and that we have two ears and only one mouth for a reason; we need to aim to listen twice as often as we speak. To do so, we must be willing to adopt an *Etuaptmumk*- two-eyed seeing approach (Marshall, 2004) – in all that we do. Marshall states in Bartlett et al. (2012) that: “Two-Eyed Seeing refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to using both of these eyes together” (p. 335). To reconcile the harm done to Indigenous peoples and communities, we must reframe how we do research and our relationships with Indigenous people. We can only do this by respecting and including Indigenous people and their voices (Walters & Simoni, 2002). A commitment to inclusion allows us to replace colonialism with the opportunity of a relational and restorative community where all share in the decision-making. This commitment to inclusion and reconciliation is not a task that can be taken on by schools and educators alone – all partners have a part to play. We can ensure engagement and learning for all by empowering students and staff.

We can begin to heal by reclaiming and re-imagining education that includes a true commitment to reconciliation here in this province. Therefore, it is also essential that any future considerations plan for ensuring a relational and culturally responsive approach, understanding that this approach will not only help reclaim Indigenous ways of knowing and being but also ensure that we create spaces where all community members can see themselves represented in

every facet of their school communities. We can ensure student engagement and learning when we grow communities where learners feel safe, feel like they belong, see themselves represented, and have a voice, choice, and agency. Anything less is “narrow and unlovely” and ultimately “destroys our democracy” (Dewey, 1915, p. 19).

Chapter Three: Conclusion

Chapter Three outlined the change implementation plan and a plan for evaluating and monitoring the chosen solution via the CIP. The chapter also outlined the communication plan, as it is pivotal that all partners feel heard and fully informed. Battiste (2013) indicates that for more than a century, Indigenous peoples have been subjected to a forced assimilation plan that rejected and suppressed Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This forced assimilation has been a reality for Indigenous people in our province for more than 500 years. The damage has been vast and far-reaching, leading to the intergenerational trauma of generations. Therefore, any plans for change need to help build, maintain, and heal relationships, all precursors to student engagement and learning for all. We must ensure student engagement and learning for all by ensuring that a HHH: RF approach is integrated into all decision-making. The work that we do to Indigenize and decolonize education will not just benefit our Indigenous students – the work of decolonizing and Indigenizing will benefit all of our students – particularly those have historically been underserved and marginalized. Adopting a two-eared listening (Joe, 2021) and two-eyed seeing approach (Marshall, 2004) is essential to provide proper consultation and to ensure that we are better able to meet the needs of all students, no matter where they live or how they identify.

Narrative Epilogue

As an Indigenous woman working to reclaim many aspects of my culture and Indigeneity the confining nature of the OIP process has been frustrating at times. However, I also believe that through the years of this journey I have begun to find a path forward that allows me to see more clearly the need for speaking truth to power (Wilson-Raybould, 2021). To do this ethically and morally, we must adopt a two-eyed seeing (Marshall, 2004) and a two-eared listening approach (Joe, 2021). We must become “inbetweeners” and break down the silos that have existed between Indigenous peoples and settlers (Wilson-Raybould, 2022), taking the good from Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and the good of Western ways, if we are to move forward respectfully on a path toward Indigenization and decolonization. Indigenization and decolonization cannot be an afterthought. All students, staff, and families must learn the importance of being relationally accountable to all living things, which encourages a relational and sustainable approach that will benefit everyone living here. It is only through our relationships that we can truly begin to heal. Adopting a HHH: RF approach is the first step in leading our schools and communities toward Indigenization and decolonization. This relational approach will help to encourage others to buy in as data supports the positive impact that proposed changes could have on student engagement, empowerment, and learning as well as on their relationships with each other and all those within their school community. Otherwise, we will never be able to close the achievement gaps as achievement gaps that result from empowerment gaps (Shields, 2004). It is only then that we can be successful in moving toward our path to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and a resurgence in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Indigenization and reconciliation are about ensuring that our students leave our places of

learning with a wide range of competencies that will empower and prepare them for helping to heal, protect our planet, and solve problems for the next seven generations (MacDonald, 2020; Shultz et al., 2022). Ultimately, to ensure that we provide all students with equitable opportunities, we need to ensure the establishment of relationships and learning environments that are culturally responsive and where success is determined by the strengthening of relationships, a precursor to better student engagement and learning for all.

We can only truly reconnect with Indigenous values when willing to challenge and decolonize white colonial methodologies. Within District X, there are still many policies and structures in place that are steeped in colonial and Eurocentric practices that will need to be re-imagined if we are to serve all students equitably. A system that propagates the status quo, pits child against child, and subjects our children to dehumanizing practices where we force them to focus on their deficits versus celebrating the many strengths and talents each child is gifted with, contributes to ill-being (Battiste, 2013; Rincon-Gallardo, 2019). The results of Mullen's (2020) systematic review of 85 articles and reports on the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples within Canada results in four overarching themes: "colonizing through testing cultures; building Indigenous education system-wide; unsettling colonial teaching and learning; and unpacking discourse central to decolonization" (p. 676) and calls for "consciousness-raising and culturally responsive education" (p. 685). hooks (1999) argues that we cannot heal in isolation and calls for us to come together in relationships with our communities to heal – she states that "Healing is an act of communion" (p. 215). This collective healing is essential, particularly after the collective trauma of the past three years. As educators, we are perfectly positioned to help heal as well as to lead learning that will help us shift away from colonial and Eurocentric practices that have

contributed to the status quo and to ensure more equitable representation moving forward (Hall et al., 2021).

Competition and standardized testing hinder more creative, deep, and liberating learning opportunities. As transformative leaders, we must also be willing to challenge what have historically been the wrong policy drivers (Fullan, 2016). Systems organized around ensuring accountability of educators and students are damaging to the development of high trust, a requirement of positive school culture, and “greater equity and excellence for children in all school contexts” (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015, p. 86). Poverty, like racism and the achievement gap, is socially constructed and is shown to impact the lives of underserved children at school negatively and later in life (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2022). Therefore, social justice needs recognition, and high-stakes testing and accountability pressures need to be recognized as two driving forces impacting the marginalization of various underserved populations (Freire, 2000; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Furman and Gruenewald, 2004; Shields, 2003; Rincon-Gallardo, 2019). Ultimately, we are responsible for refusing to continue making choices that we know propagate the status quo and prevent students and families from being liberated.

Therefore, the next step is to tell the story I wish I could have shared here. I feel I have a responsibility to continue gathering stories of Indigenous survivance, a research project that I hope will end in a book: *Growing and Healing Through Our Stories of Indigenous Survivance: Reclaiming & Reimagining Learning in Province X*. I believe we can only approach Indigenization and decolonization by taking the time to see from another’s perspective and truly listening for understanding and reflection. The fact is that “there’s no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom”

(Freire, 2000, p. 19). In *Liberating Learning*, Rincon-Gallardo (2019) argues that Freire (1970) and Dewey (1938) and pedagogies inspired by Freire (1970) and Dewey (1938) must converge if we are to ensure that students experience learning that is genuinely liberating (p. 12) versus oppressive schooling as it has existed for more than 150+ years.

We have reached a crossroads and must recognize that we can no longer continue down the same path that has contributed to the many disparities, particularly for historically underserved groups, such as our Indigenous students (Godlweska et al., 2017). The curriculum must be adapted to prepare our children for the future and ensure that it is culturally responsive and Indigenized to tell the true story of colonialism and its effects on the province's Indigenous peoples (Godlweska et al., 2017). We must also be willing to make choices that ensure a more equitable approach for all students, such as was the case during the Spring of 2020 when District X chose to focus on equity to ensure that the devastation of the pandemic did not negatively affect graduation rates for the 2019-2020 school year. This decision resulted in a significantly higher graduation rate for the province and the students within District X (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Brendtro et al. (2014) call on educators and leaders to reclaim the youth at risk by recommitting to our relationships as this will help to reverse our patterns of failure and futility, by-products of a colonial and Eurocentric education system, and to reclaim our relational responsibilities to one another by “having the courage to care” (p. 57). Brendtro et al. (1990, 2014) also encourage us to turn back and reclaim the critical values outlined in the Circle of Courage that help us flourish as human beings: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Indigenization and reconciliation will also mean living in a good way and following the seven grandfather teachings: honesty, humility, truth, wisdom, love, and respect and it will also mean sharing what we hold most sacred so that our minds can be one again (Catenazzo,

2023).

We must first start with an understanding that, as humans, we are all worthy of respect and dignity. We cannot do this within the confines of schools, where we continue to focus on compliance over connections (Desatuels, 2020). Our classrooms need to become microcosms of the democratic communities we strive to create – where we model and strive to create healthy communities where power is shared with all. It is impossible to accomplish this unless we commit to a Relationships First approach to education, as it helps teachers build healthy and relational classroom cultures whereby teachers and students can work together in a space where power is shared. A Relationships First Approach to education also helps to build more relational and collaborative school cultures where teachers can work together to create a collaborative culture where collective efficacy abounds. A relational and restorative approach is a proactive approach to building a healthy school climate where school discipline is handled in a relational and restorative way. Only then will we successfully build trauma-informed and restorative schools (Brummer, 2021), where we put our relationships first and learn that we are relationally accountable to each other (Wilson, 2008).

I leave you with this quote by Robyn Wall Kimmerer (2020), who I believe says it beautifully and best:

The trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective. Exactly how they do this, we don't yet know. But what we see is the power of unity. What happens to one happens to us all. We can starve together or feast together. All flourishing is mutual. (p. 15)

By implementing *Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education*, we begin to put our relationships first – with each other and our planet – and choose that all flourishing is mutual. It is only by coming together and sharing power with

all that we can begin to heal from the harm that has been done. It is only in coming together, reclaiming, and braiding our Indigenous ways of knowing and being alongside the ethical and valuable aspects of Western ways of knowing and being that we can truly begin to repair and reconcile, allowing space for the relational and healing power of the collective – the way I truly believe it was always meant to be. **Children were never meant to be ranked.** They were always meant to be celebrated for the individual gifts they bring into our world – gifts that were always meant to be shared with the collective for the betterment of our collective.

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Appendix A

Change Readiness: Assessment of District X

Readiness Dimensions	Readiness Score
Previous Change Experiences	
1. Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	+2
2. Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	+2
3. What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	-1
4. What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	-2
5. Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	-1
Total Previous Change Experiences	0
Executive Support	

6. Are senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	+2
7. Is there a clear picture of the future?	+2
8. Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	-1
9. Has management ever demonstrated a lack of support?	-1
Executive Support Total	2
Credible Leadership and Change Champions	
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	+1
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve their collective goals?	+1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	+2
13. Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	+1
14. Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	+2
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	+2

Credible Leadership and Change Champions Total	9
Openness to Change	
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment?	+1
17. Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	+1
18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries	+ 1
19. Does "turf" protection exist in the organization?	+1
20. Are the senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	- 1
21. Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	+1
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	-2
23. Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	- 1
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	+1

25. Does the organization have communication channels that work effectively in all directions?	+1
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	+2
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	+2
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy needed to undertake the change?	+2
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	+1
Openness to Change Total	10
Rewards for Change	
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	+1
31. Does the reward system focus exclusively on short-term results?	+1
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	- 2
Rewards for Change Total	0

Measures for Change and Accountability	
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	+1
34. Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	0
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	+1
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	+1
Measures for Change and Accountability Total	3
Total Readiness for Change	+24

Appendix B

The Change Path Model: From Awakening to Institutionalization

Awakening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the PoP & Need for Change ● Conduct a Gap Analysis Using Nadler & Tushman's Organizational Congruence Model (1989) ● Develop a Draft of the Vision for Change ● Spread Awareness of The PoP & Communicate a Draft of the Vision for Change
Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify Formal & Informal Processes for Making Sense of Change ● Assess Power & Cultural Dynamics at Play ● Communicate the Need for Change to All Partners (Data: Quantitative & Qualitative (i.e. PMF, Academic, Student, Staff & Other Partner Stories, etc..)) ● Using Cohort Model, Leverage Change Agent Personality, Knowledge, Skills & Abilities for Change Benefit ● Seek to Understand Resistance for Change & to Work Together to Overcome Obstacles
Acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Systematically Engage & Empower Others in Support, Planning & Implementation of Change ● Use Appropriate Tools & Techniques to Build Momentum, Accelerate & Consolidate Progress ● Manage Transition, & Celebrate Small Wins & Milestones

Institutionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Track Changes Periodically Using Collaborative Inquiry Process Cycle to Gauge Progress & Make Changes Where Needed● Develop & Deploy New Structures, Systems, Processes & Knowledge, Skills & Abilities to Bring New Life & Stability to the Transformed Organization
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Note: Adapted from: Deszca et al. (2020). Organizational change: An action-oriented Toolkit. Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix C

Implementation Plan Breakdown for the 4-5 District X Cohort Teams and Individual PL With Each School Team

Stage	Timeline	Participants	Actions
<p>Awakening at the District Level</p> <p>Beginning of Mobilization at the District Level</p>	<p>September</p>	<p>PISIS, DoS and our FoS District Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Propose OIP Project Overview to Family of Schools (FoS) Team and the DoS Attached to my FoS for Funding/Resource Approval - Help to bring awareness to the problem that has already been identified provincially by our Department of Education through the PMF Data and other data sources - Engage school team members and district staff in conversations as well as team meetings that help to build awareness of the PoP - Continue to share message and resources via social media platforms, emails around the importance of a relational and trauma-informed approach as a precursor to student engagement - Continue to engage leaders, school, district staff, and students in dialogue via staff meetings, focus groups, value walks, etc. that help to contribute school, district, and provincial data around the need for change - Using the Collaborative Inquiry Process, school teams must identify strength and

			<p>growth areas as per the previously established SD Process and Actions for next year that <u>must</u> include a focus on SD Determinant Wellness and Positive Relationships for a school to be chosen as one of the cohort schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct program assessments that include reviewing program output and outcomes success to determine whether there is a need for change in how programs are run and operated • Engage in formal and informal dialogue with clients before and after sessions and ask them about their experience at the organization and whether they would like to see change around the capacity
<p>Awakening at School Administrator Level</p> <p>Beginning of Mobilization at School Administrator Level</p>	<p>September</p>	<p>PISIS Supported by DoS and FoS Team Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FoS Team to facilitate overview of the data and project at First Leadership Meeting of the year outlining the Project and the 3-5 Year Plan that outlines learning plan and the commitment that will be required to ensure positive cultural change from schools who wish to be considered
<p>Awakening at All Grade and/or Jr. High-High School Levels</p> <p>Beginning of Mobilization at School</p>	<p>Late September</p>	<p>PISIS Supported by FoS Team & School Administrators Who Would Like to Move Forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate Intro to provincial data, the rationale for - the “Why” change is needed, and HHH: RF Approach - clear vision for change - at Staff Meetings of All Grade and/or Gr. 7-12 Schools whose administrators are interested in participating and whose School

<p>Level Continued</p>			<p>Development Data supports the need for a Relationships First & Trauma-Informed Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teams who have commitment from at least 5 members of their school team that must include at least: 1 school administrator, 1 Guidance Counsellor, 1 IRT Teacher, 2 Subject Area Teachers will then complete Relationships First/Trauma-Informed PL <u>Cohort Form</u> (Appendix G) and Commit to the Project and PL Plan for at least the next 3-5 Years.
<p>Continuation of Mobilization at School/District Level</p>	<p>Early October</p>	<p>PISIS Supported by DoS & FoS Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all data collected from forms and all available schoolwide/district data to determine the 4-5 Cohort Schools - Relay message to successful schools and next steps
<p>Awakening at Community Level Via Social Media Posts & New Website</p> <p>Awakening & Mobilization Continues With School Cohort Teams</p>	<p>September- October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan for return to school - Communication - Prepare for 2-day intro PL for the 4-5 Cohort Teams - Mid-October 2 Day PL 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing Data to Support the Need for Change Via Social Media and District Correspondence - Website Goes Live: Resources, Sharing, and Celebrating Progress of Project - Day 1 PL for Cohort Teams: planning for Building Relationships and Setting Goals - Learning Retreat for PL and Cohort Teams. - Surveying the Landscape using the School Development Model All Participants Reflect Using the Pre-implementation Survey to Determine: How

			<p>Relational/Trauma-Informed am I? How Relational/Trauma-Informed is My Pedagogy? My Assessment Practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundations of HHH: RF Approaches - values & empathy activity - Building strong relationships - Basics of talking circles and other relational, brain-aligned supports (Tier 1) - Tier 2 Supports - Tier 3 Supports <p>Day 2 (November 2023 - Shut down days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship with self and others - Circles for curriculum - Sharing and planning time - Circle nuances - Integrating SEL, Trauma-Informed, and HHH: RF <p>Planning for September - how to prepare for a relational/trauma-informed culture: understanding the neuroscience of relational and trauma-informed practices and connection to student engagement/learning for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does trauma impact the developing brain and body? - How do connection, resiliency, and growth help us heal and become whole?
Awakening at	September-November	PISIS & FoS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage community members via surveys,

<p>Community Level Via Social Media Posts & New Website</p> <p>Awakening & Mobilization Continues With School Cohort Teams</p> <p>Acceleration Begins</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro PL day for team members - Set goals & expectations - Notify school community - Prepare schedules - Gather data, resources, and materials for future meetings. 	<p>School Cohort Teams at Each of the Cohort Schools Students & Staff at Each of the Cohort Schools School Council Members</p>	<p>focus groups, and one-on-one interviews to learn about their experiences at the organization and where they see a need for change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish an understanding of what the future desired state looks like and determine whether achieving the desired state requires an organized and structured change process • Compile a list of all partners to inform and engage as a part of the change - Develop steering committees [internal, external & youth] to help provide feedback during the change process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working to systematically engage & empower staff, students, and community members in support, planning & implementation of change - Continuing to utilize social media and website to share best practices, resources, evidence of impact, stories, etc. - Celebrating incorporated into all cohort meetings, staff pl, etc.
<p>Awakening, Mobilization & Acceleration Continues</p>	<p>Late November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro. 1 Day PL with the entire staff to explain/describe the initiative - Start implementing check-in circles - A brief intro to parents/caregivers at Curriculum/Family Night 		<p>Day 1 PL With the Whole Staff at Each Cohort School</p> <p>Foundations of HHH: RF - values</p> <p>Building strong relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data around Trauma - Effect of Trauma on the Brain

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How TI Practices help to create environments where students can learn rather than exist in hyperarousal - Relationship with self and adults - Basics of talking circles - Basics of Relational & TI approach and how it can help us to respond in a relational way that helps students to learn to regulate (Tier 1) - continuing to build & strengthen relationships at all levels while continuing to assess power/cultural dynamics at play while engaging and empowering other team members at all schools to support in planning & implementation of change - celebrating a part of PL - showcasing what's happening at each of schools as part of learning journey - Understanding their school data - Using CIP - Making a plan for moving forward (short, medium & long-term goals)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early December - ½ PL Day for School Staff - all staff: teachers, SAs, TLAs, Custodians, Secretaries, Bus Drivers - during close-out - Complete 2nd monthly meeting & discuss goals, materials, early experiences 	<p>PISIS & FoS Team Internal committee External committee</p>	<p>Day 3 (Early December 2023) Trauma-informed HHH: RF Approach Tier 2 & 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding their school data - Using CIP - Making a plan for moving forward (short, medium & long-term goals)

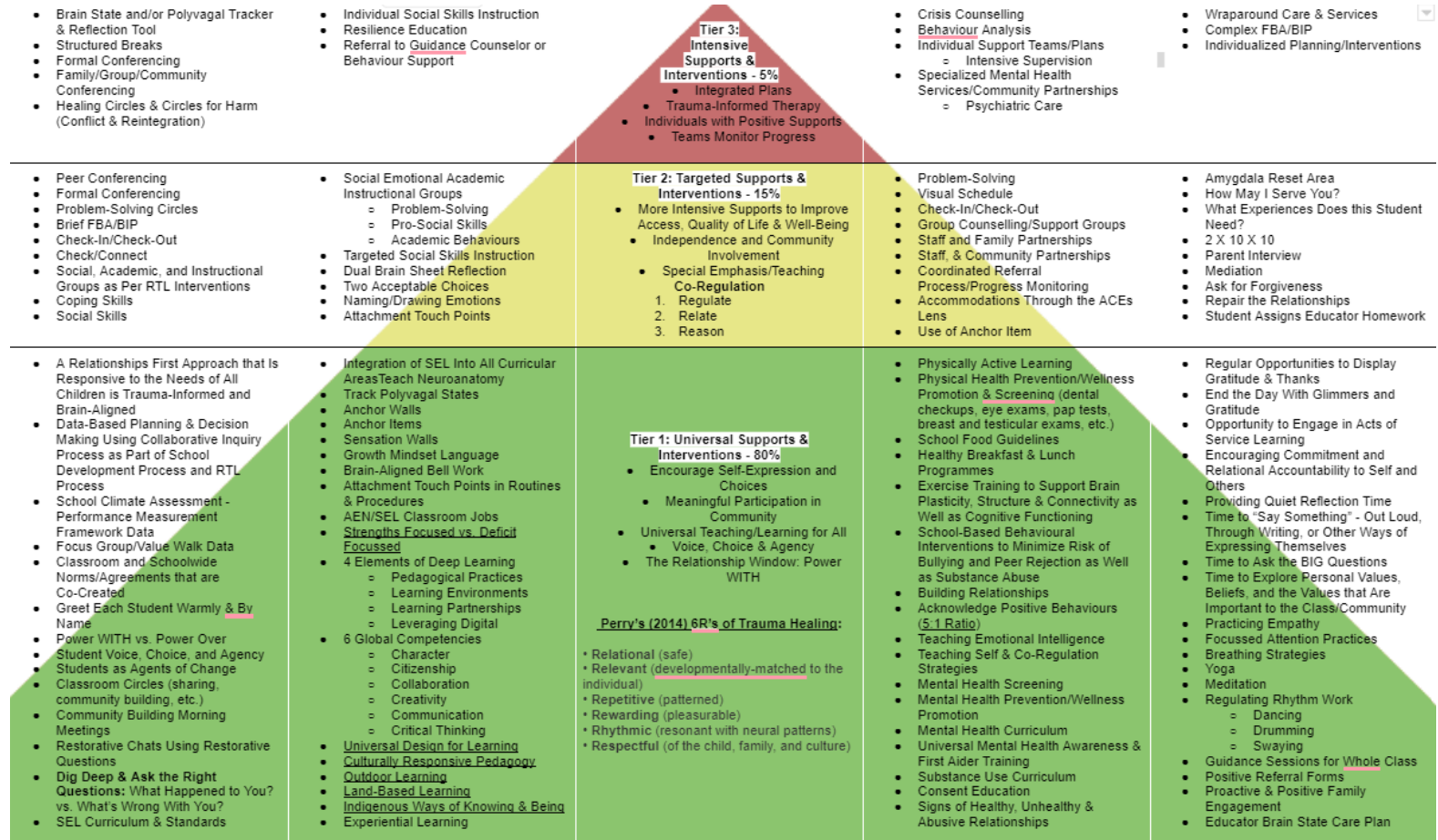
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue w/ check-in circles - Plan for implementing curriculum circles - In-class support from PISIS 		
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration Continue</p> <p>Plans for Institutionalization Begin</p>	<p>January 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly meeting - Check-in circles - Start implementing curriculum circles - In-class support from SIS 	<p>Cohort Teams at Each of the 4-5 Schools With Support of PISIS & FoS Teams</p> <p>Internal committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize town hall for the local community and partners about HHH: RF - Finalize new SD plan with feedback from external committees to ensure that community voices and needs are being represented alongside the organization's needs - Consult with community partners about program plans and learn about options available to strengthen supports for students: food, resources, etc. - Work with different cohort teams to determine their tasks and responsibilities and develop a timeline for all deliverables - Work with youth steering committee through monthly focus groups to assess program needs and gauge what's working and what needs refinement - Develop partnerships with local organizations - Develop a schedule to review the implementation plan progress and to evaluate the status of the plan - External evaluation committee will be selected
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Continue check-in & curriculum circles - Cohort PL Day 3 	<p>Cohort Team at Each of 4-5 Schools</p> <p>Internal and external committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External evaluation committee will meet once monthly during this stage to ensure effective transition of programming - Maintain relationships with other organizations that contribute to the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-class support from PISIS 	<p>Employees and staff</p> <p>School Council Supported by PISIS & FoS Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage staff and district in professional learning training on HHH: RF Approach to all other SD Determinants and other relevant PL needs to be identified through data analysis
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Revisit goals & expectations - Review/discuss concerns & questions - In-class support from PISIS 		
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Check-in & curriculum circles - In-class support from PISIS 		
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Check-in & curriculum circles - In-class support from PISIS 		
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Check-in & curriculum circles - Prepare for ½ day PL for the whole staff - In-class support from PISIS 		
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization</p>	<p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final ½ Day PL with whole staff-each cohort school - Monthly mtg. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ½ day 2 - May with the whole staff - Planning for September - how to prepare for a relational culture - Circle nuances

<p>Continue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check-in & curriculum circles - Complete ½ day PL for the whole staff - Identify new team members for September - Revisit & reassess Year 1 goals - Plan for Year 2 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating HHH: RF Approaches that are brain aligned intro to all curriculum areas where staff are comfortable - Working with all staff, determine who feels they are comfortable to move forward independently with limited support when needed and those who are still apprehensive and need more classroom coaching and modelling in September
<p>Awakening, Mobilization, Acceleration, and Institutionalization Continue</p>	<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly mtg. - Check-in & curriculum circles - Establish a Year #2 plan (i.e., with an expanded team who are interested) - PL Day 1 for a new cohort with members of Cohort 1 who are interested in helping to lead PL and share best practices (establishment of a mentorship program to help grow and sustain the work) 		

Appendix D:

Head, Heart, & Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing & Decolonizing Education - A Tiered Approach to Support Whole Health & Well-Being



Note. Created by author and adapted From *Revelations in Education*, by Desautels, 2020 & *RTL*, by Department of Education Province

X, n.d. [Organization Website].

Appendix F

School Development Strategic Action Plan: Head, Heart, & Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing & Decolonizing Education - Project Evaluation Linkages to School Development - District X

Year One

Strategic Issue: Wellness and Positive Relationships as Outlined in SDP as 1 of 7 Interconnected Factors Affecting Student Engagement and Learning for All		
Evidence Used to Identify Strategic Issue:		
<p>Copy the information collected in year 1 monitoring table – school needs are identified. Information will come from sources such as the PMF Data, School Development Surveys, OECD Reports for Province, Student/Staff/Families/Caregiver School Community Focus Groups, Value Walks and Survey Data, Attendance Rates, Review 360 Behavioural Data, Any Other Quantitative and Qualitative Data that is available.</p>		
Objectives Year 1	Sample Process Indicators (Monitoring)	Sample Monitoring Questions
<p>Awakening Stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School strengths and needs are identified via internal and external data analysis - Identify the gap between the present and desired state and make the case for change through the vision for change - Build and strengthen relationships and evaluate the readiness for change of key partners, whose approval is needed to proceed, and gain their approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-Project Survey Data, Mid-Year - Project Survey Data, End-of-Year Project Data - list of indicators from school-level data - list of indicators from topic area data - up to three topics identified for the 3-year plan - input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other community partners, and students). - input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other community partners, and students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the school currently performing in the area of HHH: RF? - What has been the response rate for the pre-mid-end of years Project Data Surveys for all Partners? - Are we beginning to see improvement in their sense of voice, choice, agency, engagement, and learning outcomes? - What is the PMF Data Improvement from Pre-Project and then for 3 Year Period of Project? Has all available school-level data been reviewed for noticings/wonderings? -Has relevant topic data been reviewed? -What topics have been identified for a work plan/PLJ?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are educators including this learning need within their Professional Learning Journey? - What evidence of impact are they recording? - What needs to change? - What would successful change look like in concrete terms? - What will successful change look like when it is institutionalized? - What are the risks associated with not changing? - What are the potential risks associated with different courses of action? - Do the proposed changes align with the school’s mission, vision, core values and beliefs, strategies, and risk tolerances of the organization? If not, are there changes needed in these areas? What might these changes look like? - Based on feedback from various partners, what actions and behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable by the school?
<p>Mobilization Stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess power and influence and begin strengthening relationships and building coalitions of support - Assess formal and informal systems and processes - Assess the school’s readiness to change - Confirm approval to proceed and 	<p>Using all available data and determining what other data needs to be collected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -list of indicators from school-level data -list of indicators from topic area data -up to three topics identified for the 3-year plan -input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the measurement tools used during this phase steering and directional tools? (i.e. Data gathered from PLC meetings, Focus Groups, Surveys, Circle Check-Ins as per Collaborative Inquiry Process Reflection for all partners, etc.) - Using the CIP to chart progress, identify and celebrate milestones, and to assist in making adaptations and corrections as

<p>communicate the need for change and vision for change broadly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a draft implementation plan and begin implementation 	<p>community partners, and students).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 	<p>needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are we tracking the allocation of resources (time, people, money) to of various activities? - How are we using the CIP to assess evidence of the impact the changes are having on other important factors (R360 Data, Classroom Data, Assessment Data, School-Wide Data, etc.)? - How will we mark and celebrate our evidence of impact and key milestones?
<p>Acceleration Stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and deploy your school change teams - Finalize and deploy your communication plan - Finalize and deploy your implementation plan and execute - Manage the transition - Celebrate key milestones along the change-path 	<p>Using all available data and determining what other data needs to be collected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -list of indicators from school level data -list of indicators from topic area data -up to three topics identified for the 3-year plan -input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other community partners, and students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the measurement tools used during this phase largely steering and directional tools? (i.e. Data gathered from PLC meetings, Focus Groups, Surveys, Circle Check-Ins as per Collaborative Inquiry Process Reflection for all partners, etc.) - Using the CIP to chart progress, identify and celebrate milestones, and to assist in making adaptations and corrections as needed. - How are we tracking the allocation of resources (time, people, money) to various activities? - How are we using the CIP to assess evidence of the impact the changes are having on other important factors (R360 Data, Classroom Data, Assessment Data, School-Wide Data, etc.)? - How will we mark and celebrate our evidence of impact and key milestones?
<p>Institutionalization Stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and deploy monitoring 	<p>Pre-Project Survey Data, Mid-Year Project Survey Data, End-of-Year Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are we using the CIP to assess our overall progress?

<p>and evaluation plan that will help to guide the change process from the awakening phase through to the institutionalization phase and aid in risk management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that other existing structures, systems, and processes are brought into alignment with the change (a relationships first and trauma-informed approach to assessment, instructional practices, and learning environment are essential) - Work to ensure the change is fully adopted and ready for the school for future changes. 	<p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -list of indicators from school level data -list of indicators from topic area data -up to three topics identified for the 3-year plan -input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, Indigenous knowledge keepers/elders, other community partners, and students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Triangulate our formal post-change review (focus groups, survey data) with PMF Data to assist in capturing what has been learned along the way and to formally document for future use. - How are we celebrating what has been accomplished, sharing this with all partners, and setting the stage for next steps?

Actions		Person(s) Responsible		Timeframe		Evidence of Effectiveness	
Submit the HHH: RF Approach project annual work plan completed by project PISIS working alongside FoS & School Cohort Teams (template example below)		From work plan		From work plan		Submit the HHH: RF Approach project data collection table completed by project PISIS (template example below)	
HHH: RF Approach Project Annual Work Plan							
Goal: To build capacity within (school name) to enhance student engagement and learning for all, the relational and trauma-informed and well-being of students, staff, and community members by implementing a HHH: RF Approach in all areas of SD.							
Objective 1: Select an objective that aligns with at least one of the five project outcomes. See table 2 and 3 in the HHH: RF Approach project monitoring and evaluation framework for examples.							
Activity/Tasks (WHAT/HOW)	Lead(s) WHO	Timeline (WHEN)	HHH: RF Approach	Target Population	Budget	Status/Activity Progress	

			Component(s)			

HHH: RF Approach Project Data collection table:				
Outcome Objective	Copied from work plan.			
Evaluation Question(s)	Pulled from the suggested questions list or defined by HHH: RF Approach project team.			
Outcome Indicator	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Sources	Timeline	Data Analysis Method
What are you going to measure?	What tools can be used to collect information?	Where or from who will you collect the data?	When will you collect the data?	How will the data be analyzed and displayed?
Support Plan				
Professional Learning Time Required			Financial Support Required	
From Work Plan			From Work Plan	
Year-End Summary				
Progress on Strategic issue			Next Steps	
Submit year-end HHH: Relationships First project report plan for each cohort school - completed by PISIS working alongside FoS & school teams			Working alongside school cohort teams & using end of year data collected from all partner groups, all other available data - develop and submit year 2 - annual HHH: RF Approach project work plan to be finalized in Fall when PMF data is released by District X.	

Table 1: Monitoring/Evaluation of HHH: RF Project - Year 1-3

Objectives Year 1	Sample Process Indicators (Monitoring)	Sample Outcome indicators (Evaluation)	Sample Monitoring Questions
FoS/School development team	-# of meetings	-Increase in topic area	-is the team participating in

<p>is engaged to participate in HHH: RF project development and implementation.</p> <p>Increase capacity of school staff to promote HHH: RF Practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -participation rate in meetings -meeting notes/minutes -# of PL sessions delivered -PL participation rate* 	<p>knowledge among school staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase in knowledge about community supports among staff -Feedback on project sessions and/or resources. -Active participation in/with project sessions and/or resources. -Level of engagement among staff. -Comparing participation rate* over time (Y1, Y2, Y3) 	<p>project meetings?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -are there people missing from the project team?
<p>Youth are identified/invited to take part in HHH: RF project development and implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -# of meetings youth attended -youth participation rate in meetings -meeting notes/minutes -# of feedback responses obtained from students re: school topic selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feedback on project sessions and/or resources. -Active participation in/with project sessions and/or resources. -Level of engagement among students. -Comparing participation rate* over time (Y2, Y3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -are youth participating in project meetings? -are their ideas incorporated into project plans? -Have students shared in age-appropriate decision making? -Have students had input into project activities, their design, implementation, and evaluation? -Are students actively participating in project activities? -Which of the HHH: RF components have been addressed?
<p>School needs are identified for each cohort school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --list of indicators from school level data -list of indicators from topic area data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -data collected from focus groups, value walks, surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have the Pre-Mid Year-End of Year Surveys been completed? -has school level data been

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -up to three topics identified for 3-year plan -input gathered from relevant partners (staff, families/caregivers, students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in and level of engagement in data collection process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed? -has relevant topic data been reviewed? -What topics have been identified for work plan?
<p>Community partners are identified/invited to participate in project development and implementation based on school need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -# of community partners invited to participate -# of community partners engaged in the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -community partners are engaged in collaborative processes. -Level of engagement between teachers/families/caregivers and community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -are community partners participating in project meetings? -are their ideas incorporated into project plans? -are there community partners missing from the project team? -do community partners have an identified role on the project team.
<p>Increase/Improvement in identified topic areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -# of resources developed -# of resources distributed -# of sessions held -session participation rate* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Changes in school level data, related to topic area, over time. -Increase in relational and trauma-informed behaviours among students. -% (or #) of students reporting an increase in skills related to topic area. -% (or #) of students reporting an increase in knowledge in topic area -% (or #) of students reporting intention to change behavior because of the intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have relational and trauma-informed behaviours increased among students? -Have students learned a new skill, learned about a new resource or been given new information to help them make relational and trauma-informed choices? -Which of the HHH: RF components have been addressed?
<p>Increase collaboration and engagement between teachers, families/caregivers, and community members in efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -% (or #) of teachers involved in project -% (or #) of families/caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School staff /families/caregivers/community partners are engaged in collaborative processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has collaboration increased between teachers and families/caregivers? -Has collaboration increased

to promote relational and trauma-informed.	involved in project -# of community partners involved in project -# of collaborations (contacts) between teachers and families about the project (Y1, Y2, Y3)	-Level of engagement between teachers/families/caregivers and community members.	among teachers and community partners? -Which of the HHH: RF components have been addressed?
Increase or strengthen existing partnerships to support well-being within the school.	-# of existing partners involved in HHH: RF projects -# new partners engaged in supporting well-being	-Willingness of partners to work on future projects. -Level of engagement among community partners.	-Are new partners engaged in efforts to promote relational and trauma-informed? -were partnerships valuable to achieving project outcomes?
HHH: RF project work plan is developed for Year 2 & 3 by June.	-# of planning meetings -participation rate in meetings -# of ideas generated to address topic areas.	-Willingness of all partners to participate in yearly planning: data analysis, evidence of impact, next steps.	-is there a clear plan developed using the HHH: RF work plan template?

Note. Adapted From *School Development*, by Department of Education Province X, n.d. [Organization Website].

Appendix G

Head, Heart, & Hands: A Relationships First Cohort: Expression of Interest (Sample of Data to be Included in Google Form)

If your school is interested in participating in the 2023-2026 **Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education Cohort**, please complete the following questions to provide information about your school and the interested staff.

**Project Contact: Program Itinerant for Safe and Inclusive Schools, Sherra Robinson
sherraleerobinson@?????.ca**

* Indicates required question

School Name

*

School Location

*

Team Lead

*

A willingness to commit to each of the following to ensure success of the project: *

Please Check that You and Your Team Can Commit to All the Below if You Would Like to be Considered for this Head, Heart, & Hands: A Relationships First Cohort:

- 2-day intro PL in August (Days to Be Given Back from District Bank for Further Learning Throughout the Year)
- September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, & June Team meeting with SIS Itinerant
- Including Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach in school development plan 2023-2024, 2024-2025, & 2025-2026
- Including Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach in team members' Professional Learning Journey Plans for 2023-2024, 2024-2025, & 2025-2026

- 1/2-day whole-school PL in each of Oct & May (2023-2024), Oct & May (2024-2025), & Oct & May (2025-2026)
- Commitment to Implementation Timeline

Feeder Schools (if any):

Team members - name and role in school (min 3 classroom teachers, 1 IRT/Guidance Counselor and 1 admin, max team size 5)
*

Rationale:

Why does your school want to participate in the **Head, Heart, and Hands: A Relationships First Approach to Indigenizing and Decolonizing Education Cohort**? What do you hope to gain from participation? What data do you have that makes your school a good candidate for this cohort?

*

What, if any, experience does your school/team members already have with a HHH: RF approach?

*

Do you have any questions or additional comments to add?

*

"In relationships we are broken and in relationships we are healed." Judge Ed Wilson

