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Creating a safe, caring and inclusive school environment through a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response.

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Abstract

In 2004, the province of British Columbia introduced the Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools guide to provide the vision toward which all schools and Boards in the province must continually strive (BCEd., 2008a). As a leading document, this guide provided provincial standards for codes of conduct while also identifying attributes of safe, caring and orderly schools. As stated in the guide's introduction, the challenge is for schools, districts and communities to develop or adopt strategies and programs that will work for them (BCEd., 2008a). Acknowledging that local solutions to address local problems are required, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) explores how K-12 public school principals can distribute leadership in the creation and implementation of a school code of conduct to effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make their schools safe, caring and inclusive. The purpose of this OIP is to provide school district leaders and school-based principals in Dogwood Grove Public Schools (DGPS) with a plan for organizational change that utilizes the school code of conduct as the vehicle for addressing inappropriate student verbal and physical behaviour school-wide. This OIP also incorporates Distributed Leadership (DL) as a key leadership practice for district leaders and school-based principals to employ while identifying the potential it has for promoting collaboration and building leadership capacity in principals and their staff. This OIP focuses on directly educating students regarding the desired behaviours, emphasizing preventative possibilities in practice and response, while also stressing the importance of restorative solutions to redress harm. This OIP concludes with a series of recommendations which district leaders and school principals can utilize as they work to distribute leadership in the co-creation and implementation of their school code of conduct. If implemented, this OIP is anticipated to effect positive change in increasing socially responsible behaviour thereby making schools more safe, caring and inclusive.

Keywords: Code of Conduct, School Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Distributed Leadership, Change Improvement Plan, Student Behaviour, Organizational Theory, Restorative Practice.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Executive Summary	vii
Glossary of Terms.....	x
List of Figures	xix
List of Appendices	xx
Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem.....	1
1 Organizational Context	1
1.1 Leadership Problem of Practice	5
1.2 Perspectives on the Problem of Practice.....	9
1.3 Emerging Questions.....	22
1.4 Leadership-Focused Vision for Change.....	23
1.5 Organizational Change Readiness	26
1.6 Communicating the Need for Change.....	30
1.7 Conclusion	33
Chapter 2: Planning and Development	34
2 Introduction.....	34
2.1 Framework for Leading the Change Process	34
2.2 Critical Organizational Analysis.....	39
2.2.1 Input.....	40
2.2.2 Strategy.....	41
2.2.3 Output.....	41
2.3 Possible Solutions to Address this OIP.....	46
2.3.1 Solution 1: Governance.....	47
2.3.2 Solution 2: School Code of Conduct.....	49

2.3.3	Solution 3: Systems Theory.....	49
2.3.4	Solution 4: Distributed Leadership Practice.....	50
2.3.5	Solution 5: Implementation of Professional Learning Communities.....	52
2.4	Leadership Approaches to Change.....	53
2.5	Conclusion.....	56
Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication.....		57
3	Introduction.....	57
3.1	The Change Implementation Plan.....	58
3.1.1	The Awakening Stage.....	62
3.1.2	The Mobilization Stage.....	65
3.1.3	The Acceleration Stage.....	68
3.1.4	The Institutionalization Stage.....	70
3.2	The New School Organizational Chart.....	72
3.3	Transition Management Plan and Evaluation.....	76
3.3.1	Four District Components.....	77
3.4	Building Momentum: Short-term Goals.....	79
3.5	Building Momentum: Mid-term Goals.....	80
3.6	Building Momentum: Long-term Goals.....	81
3.7	Limitations.....	81
3.8	Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation.....	81
3.9	Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change.....	83
3.9.1	Rights.....	84
3.9.2	Responsibility.....	84
3.9.3	Respect.....	85
3.10	Change Process Communications Plan.....	86
3.10.1	Prechange Approval Phase.....	88

3.10.2 The Need for the Change Phase.....	88
3.10.3 Midstream Change Phase.....	89
3.10.4 Confirming the Change Phase.	90
3.11 Recommendations.....	91
3.11.1 Recommendations within the 1 st cycle of the Change Implementation Plan.	92
3.11.2 Recommendations within the 2 nd cycle of the Change Implementation Plan.	93
3.12 Conclusion	94
References.....	95
Appendices.....	116

Executive Summary

DGPS is rising to meet the challenge of its vision of *Success for All* in every school in the District. The school district is expected to improve student learning and graduation rates through alignment with the BC Ministry's revised curriculum, new assessment and reporting practices, and increased efforts to make schools safer for students to learn and teachers to teach. The Ministry of Education is promoting these efforts with resources and extended timelines to help support and improve teaching and learning in schools across the province.

In DGPS, District leaders and the Board of Education are requesting that school-based K-12 principals address a co-existing improvement challenge focused on the results of the recent provincial Satisfaction Survey. In some District schools, as many as 30% of students report not feeling safe at school, which is believed to be a major deterring factor in all students learning at high levels. District and school data from both the provincial Satisfaction Survey and the McCreary Adolescent Health Survey indicate that students in District schools do not feel safe, cared for, or included in their neighbourhood school.

In an attempt to gain perspective on this problem of practice, data was disaggregated and findings indicate that students are uncertain of behavioural expectations at school; they do not feel welcome nor do they feel they are treated fairly by adults in their schools. In reviewing each school's code of conduct, it was realized that the response to student inappropriate behaviour is typically punitive, and students and other school stakeholders are not collaboratively involved in the development of the code. It is believed that without a collaboratively developed code of conduct that focuses on educative, preventative and restorative practice and response, District schools are without the school-wide supports they need to deliver high-quality instruction in a safe learning environment.

Changing the way students feel about their safety while at school will not be an easy task. This change will involve strategic planning regarding how all staff respond to inappropriate student physical and verbal behaviour while also focusing a school-wide system of positive behavioural supports that aligns with every aspect of school operations. Sustained efforts from principals in distributing leadership to staff along with the appropriate and focused use of PLC time, professional development and in-service training to build principal and teacher efficacy would go a long way to support and build enduring efforts to make District schools and their communities safer places for everyone. Research suggests that safe schools align leadership, curriculum, school-wide practices, and professional

development with high expectations for all students. Research also suggests that these schools similarly build a strong sense of community, develop teamwork among staff, work in partnership with parents and the community, and use data to inform decisions to create a cycle of continuous improvement.

District support for safe school practices is a key component for building the capacity of schools to address all aspects of student learning in safe, caring and inclusive school environments. It is for this reason that the process of building school capacity involves setting priorities at the District level that ensure strong and appropriate instructional, transformational and distributive leadership practice at each school. DGPS must therefore provide ongoing in-service training for principals in order for them to be the best leaders they can be in this safe schools change initiative. The District must likewise develop and promote policies and administrative procedures that encourage and hold all staff accountable for their role in the creation of safe, caring and inclusive schools.

Schools must continually make choices regarding how they allocate resources so that their change efforts are not unfocused, disjointed, or have staff working at cross-purposes. The District must also assist its schools in coordinating and concentrating their resources on both behavioural and academic instruction. The commitment to focusing District and school budgets in this area is key in supporting educative, preventative and restorative efforts which will, in turn, help raise community confidence in the local public education system.

Continuing to use data is important for identifying areas of focus, diagnosing problems, and matching concrete solutions to educational needs. That said, schools cannot work in isolation from other schools, their school community, or the District. Schools need to align practice with other schools in the district and also request the assistance of community stakeholders because positive behaviour interventions must be modeled by all the adults in the system. The local unions can also be invaluable allies in the process of change if they are invited to work in partnership on this safe school initiative. Collaboration among all stakeholders is essential.

Schools rarely have the capacity to make this type of organizational change on their own. There is a need for District leadership, skilled principal leadership and the cooperation and commitment of school staff to provide the critical impetus and support for the process of change. This OIP presents a leadership framework for understanding this important change initiative and uses an analysis of extant data to provide an appropriate change path.

Described in chapter two are some possible solutions to address the problem as well as a discussion of appropriate leadership approaches to change.

As DGPS faces the challenge of creating safe, caring and inclusive schools, it is time for everyone to renew their commitment to future generations. There is a role for each and every member of the school community in raising expectations for all students, providing safe learning environments, aligning educational resources and behavioural instruction, and defining a long-term change plan. Chapter three provides a change implementation plan with process monitoring and evaluation strategies. Highlighted in this chapter is the change process communications plan to ensure that communication with all stakeholders is an ongoing consideration in the most appropriate and informed way possible. Chapter three culminates in a number of concrete recommendations that District staff and school principals can undertake, as well as involve parents and community members in the process. Through this plan, all stakeholders in DGPS can work together to recreate all schools as safe, caring and inclusive places.

As DGPS works on this most important initiative, collaboration and co-creation will remain essential to ensuring the instructional and transformational changes occur through a distributed leadership approach as all students are empowered to reach their full potential and thrive in a rapidly changing and diverse society.

Glossary of Terms

The following definitions will provide the reader with an understanding of how these terms are used throughout this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP).

Assistant Superintendent: The Assistant Superintendent reports to the superintendent of schools and is responsible for the general supervision of schools in the District, for the implementation of approved programs, and for the evaluation of staff and programs. As well as supervision, the assistant superintendent is responsible for curriculum, instruction, and leading the future direction of the school district as a part of the senior management team (Make a Future, 2017).

BCPVPA: The BCPVPA is the professional association for principals and vice-principals in most Districts in British Columbia (Make a Future, 2017).

Board of Education: The Board of Education (or The Board) refers to a board of school trustees constituted under the School Act that oversees all public schools in the district. It is commonly referred to as a "school board", although "Board of Education" is the term that is used in Ministry publications from 2007 onward (BCEd., 2017a).

Bullying: Bullying is a pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour, often with the goal of making others uncomfortable, scared or hurt. It is almost always used as a way of having control or power over their target, and it is often based on another person's appearance, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity (ERASE, 2017).

Caring Schools: Caring Schools are schools where it is known that a sense of belonging and connectedness is a necessary element in the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment. Caring schools are ones in which members of the school community feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to relate to one another in positive, supportive ways. All aspects of school life embrace and reflect diversity. The school is an inviting place for students, staff, parents and visitors. Staff members make conscious and concerted efforts to help other members of the school community feel connected (BCEd., 2008a).

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE): Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) consists of representatives of support staff employees in the public education sector which includes trades, clerical, IT, maintenance and student support workers (Make a Future, 2017).

Community Council: The Community Council is composed of senior staff, representatives from CUPE and DGPS teaching staff, students, parents, RCMP and other stakeholders who are brought together when needed to address complex diversity and equity issues in the District. The Community Council is an ad hoc council of the District Safe Schools Committee. The perspectives and knowledge of each member are critical to breaking down barriers, enhancing communication, restoring harm, and creating a more inclusive school community.

CommunityLINK: CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) funding is designed to support the academic achievement and social functioning of vulnerable students. Programs and services can include breakfast, lunch and snack programs, academic supports, counselling, youth care workers and after-school programs (BCEd., 2017b).

Democratic Approach: A democratic approach to education promotes active participation of all individuals in a school community, especially students, for the betterment of society (Pollock, 2015a). In this approach students are not passive learners, but instead play a role in shaping and even creating their education. Such a view encourages students to be co-constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients (Portelli & Vibert, 2002). Schools are vital to maintaining a democratic society and they should embody the values of equality, fairness, and participation by fostering a safe place for individuals to voice their opinions.

Democratic leadership: Pollock (2015a) suggests that democratic leadership is a participative and group-oriented form of leadership, contains a moral dimension, and holds similarities to distributed and collaborative forms of leadership. Pollock (2015a) contends that democratic leadership has a strong ethical dimension, supporting a democratic and egalitarian organizational culture. Such leaders seek to empower their personnel and involve them inclusively in the decision-making process (Pollock, 2015a).

Director of Instruction: The Director of Instruction is a multifaceted District level leadership position with a focus on educational and student services. The director may be responsible for student curriculum, professional development programs, special education services, specialized programs, and human resources. In a human resources capacity, the director may be involved in a range of activities including labour relations, recruitment and retention, and employee records (Make a Future, 2017).

Distributed Leadership: Distributed Leadership is a model of leadership that focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles. It is primarily concerned with leadership practice and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement. A distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Distributed leadership is "the sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles across the school organization" (Mayrowetz, Murphy, Seashore Louis, & Smylie, 2007, p. 470). A distributed leadership model focuses on having leaders throughout the organization that participate in decision making rather than there being one authoritative leader who makes all decisions (Tian, Risku, & Collin, 2016). For the purpose of this OIP, distributed leadership practice is framed as a product of the joint/collective interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines (Spillane, 2006).

EDI: EDI refers to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and is a questionnaire developed by Dr. Dan Offord and Dr. Magdalena Janus at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University. The questionnaire has 104 questions and measures five core areas of early child development that are known to be good predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes: Physical Health and Well Being, Language and Cognitive Development, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge. (EDI, 2013; Human Early Learning Partnership, 2016)

Elementary School: An Elementary School is an organization having at least one teacher and administrator, which provides educational programs to students in grades Kindergarten (K) to grade 7; ages 5 - 12.

ERASE: ERASE is a BC provincial anti-bullying strategy promoting that every child deserves an education free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, intimidation and violence. The ERASE (Expect Respect and A Safe Education) Bullying strategy is part of the Province of British Columbia's efforts to personalize learning and supports for all students. ERASE Bullying builds on the Province's Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools Strategy (BCEd., 2008a) which focussed on creating schools where students are free from harm, where clear expectations of acceptable behaviour are held for all members of the school community, and where there is a sense of connectedness. ERASE Bullying will help ensure every child feels safe, accepted and respected, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion or sexual orientation. ERASE Bullying also builds on effective programs already in place and will ensure there are consistent policies and practices across all 60 school districts, backed by strong community partnerships and support (ERASE, 2012).

In-service: In-service or in-service training pertains to job specific training that occurs during the work day. The employee is paid to attend and the training is decided upon by the employer.

Instructional Leadership: Effective instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement. Research conducted by Elmore (2000), and Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) confirms that this important role extends beyond the scope of the school principal to involve other leaders as well. Instructional leadership then, involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth. Quality of instruction is the top priority for the principal practicing instructional leadership where the commitment is to the core business of teaching, learning and knowledge. The principal would redesign the school organization so staff members could meet on a regular basis to discuss how to do their jobs better and ultimately help students learn more effectively.

LGBTQ+: LGBTQ+ is a common acronym for lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), transgender and transsexual (T) people, though the letters can be arranged in any order. The acronym may also be written to explicitly include two-spirit (often T, TS or 2), intersex (I), queer (Q) or questioning (Q or ?) people. For example, LGBTTTTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex and queer. The plus sign indicates that there may be other letters added, such that it can also include straight allies (A or SA) (Here to Help, 2016).

Orderly Schools: Orderly Schools are schools that are free from chaos and confusion, and alive with the sights and sounds of purposeful learning activities. Routines for repetitious activities are well established so students' minds and bodies are free to focus on the learning and development work at hand. A business-like atmosphere exists, yet there is creativity and fun in abundance. Everyone feels a sense of meaningful accomplishment, and feels the school is a good place to be. All members of the school community are informed about and exercise their rights and responsibilities as school citizens (BCEd., 2008a).

PBIS: PBIS is an acronym referring to Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports which is a framework for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioural interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behaviour outcomes for all students. PBIS is not a packaged curriculum, scripted intervention, or manualized strategy. PBIS is a prevention-oriented way for school personnel to (a) organize evidence-based practices, (b) improve their implementation of those practices, and (c) maximize academic and social behaviour outcomes for students. PBIS supports the success of ALL students (PBIS.org, 2016).

Principal: Principal, as defined by Terziu, Hasani, and Osmani (2016), refers to the prominent and influential person in the educational process. The principal is responsible for the overall administration and operation of the school in a manner consistent with local policies and provincial guidelines. Further, the principal oversees the implementation of the District priorities, educational programs and the development of the School Plan and is responsible for the educational welfare of students (Make a Future, 2017).

Professional Development: Professional development pertains to any training or workshop that staff decide upon because of their desire to learn about a specific topic. Professional development occurs on professional development days but can also take place outside the work day.

Safe Schools: Safe Schools are schools in which members of the school community are free of the fear of harm, including potential threats from inside or outside the school (BCEd., 2008a). Butcher and Manning (2005) describe a safe school as “one in which the total school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff, and visitors to interact in a positive, non-threatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school while fostering positive relationships and personal growth” (p. 56).

School Climate: School climate is defined as the quality and character of school life with a focus on the perceived quality of the relationships within the school community; between and among students and adults. (ERASE, 2017). School climate is perception based and refers to the individual experiences and feelings that students, teachers, and staff have about the school; it could be summarized as the *attitude* or *mood* of the school (Gruenert, 2008).

School Culture: School culture is grounded in shared values and beliefs and can be described as *the way we do things* (Gruenert, 2008). It is the shared beliefs, values and priorities of people within a school community: teachers, parents, students, school administrators, community partners and beyond. It is not about religion, race or socio-economic status (ERASE, 2017). School culture pertains to a school’s norms, unwritten rules, traditions, the way people communicate, interact, and includes the various types of expectations. Culture is more deeply ingrained in a school, and therefore may only be altered over a longer period through systematic change in a school’s climate (Gruenert, 2008).

School Violence: Violence in schools refers to any activity that can create a disturbance in an educational system. It includes verbal and physical altercations. It is also bullying through electronic means or social media, threats, weapon use, or gang activity. School violence can also be defined as a physical or verbal altercation on the way to school, on the way home

from school, or at a school-sponsored event that can cause physical or psychological harm to another individual, school, or community (Blanco, 2016).

Secondary School: A Secondary School is an organization having at least one teacher and administrator, which provides educational programs to students in grades 8 to 12; ages 13 - 17.

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy can be described as a belief in one's personal capabilities (Bandura, 1997, p. 4). Another way in which self-efficacy is described is the word "self-esteem." It can be considered how one feels about oneself and one's abilities.

Socially Responsible Behaviour: Social responsibility involves the ability and disposition to consider the interdependence of people with each other and the natural environment; to contribute positively to one's family, community, society, and the environment; to resolve problems peacefully; to empathize with others and appreciate their perspectives; and to create and maintain healthy relationships (BCEd., 2008a).

Superintendent: The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of a school district, responsible for the supervision of schools, implementation of approved programs, evaluation of senior staff, overseeing of district budgets and reporting to the Board of Education. The superintendent plays a key role in advising the Board of Education and recommending actions to address current and emerging issues (Make a Future, 2017).

Transactional Leadership: Transactional leadership is most concerned with maintaining the normal flow of operations. Transactional leaders use disciplinary power and an array of incentives to motivate employees to perform at their best. The term "transactional" refers to the fact that this type of leader essentially motivates subordinates by exchanging rewards for performance (Ingram, 2017).

Transformational Leadership: A transformational leader goes beyond managing day-to-day operations and develops strategies for taking the organization, department or work team to the next level of performance and success. Transformational leadership styles focus on

team-building, motivation and collaboration with employees at different levels of an organization to accomplish change for the better (Ingram, 2017). Leithwood (1994) identified three categories of leadership in the area of transformational leadership: (1) utilizing the concepts of setting directions, (2) developing people, and (3) redesigning the organization. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) developed a framework based on two generalizations: (1) transformational leadership directly affects teacher perceptions in the areas of student achievement and student grades, and (2) it also indirectly affects student outcomes by influencing perceptions of organizational learning, teacher commitment, and school characteristics. According to Marks and Printy (2003), transformational leadership is needed to lead schools through reform efforts where changes are developed through ideas, influence, and consideration for the individual in the process. For the purpose of this OIP, transformational leadership is defined as setting directions, redesigning the organization, and developing people (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

List of Tables

Table 1.1 2016 Satisfaction Survey Participation Rates.....	6
Table 1.2 2016 Satisfaction Survey Results – Bullying.....	6
Table 1.3 2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Safe at School.....	7
Table 1.4 Findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey - Safe at School.....	7
Table 1.5 Findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey - Feel Safe at School.....	7
Table 1.6 2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Knowledge of Expected Behaviours.....	8
Table 1.7 2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Welcome at School.....	17
Table 1.8 2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Adults Treat Students Fairly.....	18
Table 1.9 Analysis of DGPS School Codes of Conduct.....	18
Table 1.10 2015-16 DGPS District Suspension Data Totals.....	19

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 The Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016).	58
Figure 3.2 Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework.	69
Figure 3.3 New School Strategic Organizational Chart.	73
Figure 3.4 The Four District Components.	74
Figure 3.5 The Best Interest Model	83
Figure 3.6 The Change Process Communication Plan.....	87

List of Appendices

Appendix A: District Student Suspension Summary (Historical) 116

Appendix B: Sample Anonymous Survey 117

Appendix C: Sample Equity Audit 119

Appendix D: Conduct Expectations..... 124

Appendix E: New School Organizational Infrastructure 125

Chapter 1: Introduction and Problem

1 Organizational Context

DGPS is a medium sized school district in the province of British Columbia with schools reaching across both urban and rural communities. Programs and services are administered from a District Administration Centre (DAC) which employs approximately 1500 individuals of which 55% are support staff, 41% are teachers, and 3.5% are school principals. 59% of school principals are female, 41% are male and their average age is 50 years. The District senior team is comprised of a Superintendent/CEO, Secretary Treasurer, Assistant Secretary Treasurer, Director of Facilities, Executive Director of Human Resources, Executive Director of Communications, and a Manager of Information Systems. The senior team is 71% male and 29% female; all of whom are Caucasian. The learning side of the District's senior team is comprised of the Superintendent/CEO, three Assistant Superintendents and two Directors of whom 67% are male, 33% are female; and 17% are Aboriginal.

In the 2015/16 school year 13,500 students were enrolled in DGPS from kindergarten through grade twelve with the majority of students attending classes in one of the district's 32 elementary or six secondary schools. Although incidents of inappropriate student behaviour have declined over the past 20 years (Appendix A), incidents of bullying, fighting, substance misuse and/or aggression continue to pose significant problems in District schools. Senior staff are concerned that the level of students' inappropriate verbal and physical behaviour is causing a significant number of students to feel unsafe and therefore opt to leave the District before graduation.

The core business of DGPS is to provide a high-quality education to all students enrolled in the District. The District's strategic plan is a blueprint that helps maintain exemplary qualities while supporting the continuous improvement of student learning. Through the process of public consultation, the Board has developed three goals that form the foundation of the strategic plan: (1) Meet each student's unique needs; (2) The continuous improvement of instruction and assessment; and (3) Enhanced facilities for learning (DGPS, 2014, p. 3).

The District maintains a neoliberal focus on increased accountability and economic efficiencies as a solution to underfunding (Fleming, 2011, p. 125). The provincial teachers' federation is vehemently anti-neoliberal which has placed significant strain on the working relationship between senior staff, principals and the DGPS Teachers' Association because Neoliberalism focuses on the individual's responsibility for all aspects of their life; hence, suggesting that schools ignore the vast social differences that exist amongst people. It is because neoliberalism uses the argument that the success of each person should and will be determined by their own ability to compete in the market, free of preferential or differentiated treatment, that the teachers' federation is vehemently opposed. For example, the "colourblind" attitude is often presented as a neoliberal approach to education wherein teachers and principals adhere to the belief that they do not see the colours or races of their students, but rather, solely the skills of the individual (Pollock, 2015a). While proponents of neoliberalism view this approach as a step towards equality, the teachers' federation believes that it fails to address the issue of equity and perpetuates the status quo by ignoring the systemic bias and disadvantages faced by non-dominant groups (Pollock, 2015a). As the District's senior staff nurtured the neoliberal ideology as a financial strategy, principals' attention was focused on instructional leadership for greater efficiency and accountability, while the District focused on generating revenue. This approach to neoliberalism further strained the relationship between teachers and principals in the district (Bloxham, 2013; Ross, 2010; Ryan, 2012). The District began the consolidation of differentiated programs for students who learn differently in an effort to restrict teachers from utilizing practices and programs that were not viewed as being productive to the economy. The teachers' federation believed that teachers were covertly being held accountable through the administration of a provincial standardized test because a strong emphasis was placed on results and efficiency; again, this added to their vehement opposition to neoliberalism. The District proceeded to dismantle special education, differentiated learning programs, and courses/programs that focused on unique, non-traditional topics all due to increased accountability, efficiency and financial gain. Ryan (2012) studied the effects of neoliberal ideology on student diversity and determined that racialized, LGBTQ+ and differently-abled students are routinely ignored, discriminated against, excluded and feared as a

result. Ryan (2012) and Ross (2010) argue that instead of solving issues of social justice, neoliberal practice aggravates the issues through money-making strategies linked to corporatization, marketization and privatization. DGPS has also prioritized the closing and consolidation of schools, raised class sizes and rental fees in order to address annual budget short-falls. These practices continue to accentuate the rift between the local teachers' union and the district while also distracting principals from leading an educative, preventative and restorative practice and response in their school due to underfunding, and issues of class composition (BCTF, 2016).

In 2012, Premier Christy Clark announced a new province-wide ERASE (Expect Respect And a Safe Education) Bullying strategy aimed at helping every child feel safe, accepted and respected, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation (ERASE, 2012; Halford, 2012). Together the ERASE Bullying strategy (ERASE, 2012) and the standards for school codes of conduct (BCEd., 2007) were updated to require school codes to reference all prohibited grounds of discrimination as listed in the BC Human Rights Code. However, despite this political push from government on the insistence of addressing student safety at school, the collaborative development and implementation of school codes of conduct across all district schools remains inconsistent. Therefore, if DGPS expects school principals to employ a collaborative consultation processes with all stakeholders to develop their school's code of conduct the District will have to create opportunities for principals to develop the necessary skills and strategies in order to do so (Noonan, Tunney, Fogal, & Sarich, 1999).

Everyone would agree that schools are not impervious to inappropriate verbal or physical student behaviour. Therefore, it would follow that because of their position, principals carry the responsibility of ensuring the creation of a safe, caring and inclusive learning and teaching environment at their school. According to the leadership standards developed by the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPA) (BCPVPA, 2013, p. 25), standards 6, 7, and 8 pertain to the principal's role in creating that safe school environment. These leadership standards are not mandated into practice by the Ministry of Education, but are aimed at providing school principals with some basic guidelines, structure and strategies to assist them in their role. Currently, the

BCPVPA provides regular professional development for their members on the standards and DGPS senior staff actively support principals in participating.

Recent studies have examined the characteristics of safe schools and how such strategies can reduce student harmful verbal and physical behaviour (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009; Brunner & Lewis, 2007; Burns, 2014; Crawford, 2003; Kyriakides & Creemers, 2013; Leff, 2014; Sindhi, 2013). This research has demonstrated that school leadership is integral to the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community urging principals to work within and beyond the boundaries of their school as they initiate, lead and maintain safe, caring and inclusive school practices (Wright, 2009).

Over the past decade DGPS principal leadership practices have grown away from transactional leadership to a combined transformational and instructional leadership style due to the significant focus placed on raising student achievement. School principals have been working to motivate their staff through a more democratic, participative and relationship-based leadership style than ever before. This combined transformational and instructional leadership effort has focused the principal's skills on building a professional learning community (PLC), shared decision-making processes and, in a sense, getting back to basics. The principal has therefore focused on leveraging time, supporting ongoing professional development, used resources to support a diverse instructional plan and, promoted a culture of inquiry and improvement. At the same time principals have also been working to replace hierarchical practices with facilitative and collaborative ones as the District's previous hierarchical administration gave way. With the resignation of a rather dictator-style superintendent came the reorganization of the school board office resulting in a new complement of senior staff. Presently, the transformational change has been significant and it appears that the learning environment in District schools has a much more inclusive learning direction, the organization is much more positive, and the people are much more collaborative and open to innovation than in the recent past.

Five years ago, I became an assistant superintendent with a portfolio encompassing student services, diversity and equity. I work with two other assistant superintendents who have portfolios pertaining to elementary and secondary school operations. Together, along with two directors of instruction and the superintendent, we

form the Department of Learning Services. We work directly with the Board of Education who rely on us to keep them apprised of the functions on the learning side of the organization. With the creation of the ERASE Bullying Strategy in 2012 the Ministry of Education began to place increased emphasis on districts addressing issues of diversity. The DGPS Board of Education fully endorsed my senior position in 2012 with its focus on diversity and equity and has looked to me to ensure that we are not only meeting Ministry expectations, but that we are exceeding them in our efforts to address the needs of our marginalized and vulnerable students so they feel safe and welcome to learn in District schools.

1.1 Leadership Problem of Practice

The problem of practice (POP) that inspires this OIP explores how K-12 public school principals can distribute leadership in the creation and implementation of a school code of conduct to effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make their schools safe, caring and inclusive.

The primary extant data utilized in determining the gap between current practice and the desired state was obtained from the BC Ministry of Education's Satisfaction Survey (BCEd., 2015) which is an annual province-wide census of Grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 students, their parents and staff (any employee) in public schools. The questions were developed with input from partner groups, teachers and experts in educational measurement and were utilized province-wide. While many DGPS schools can identify some success in addressing issues of student safety, especially in the areas of acceptance of diversity and belonging, recent DGPS Satisfaction Survey data portrays a significant gap between the perceptions of school staff and those of students. To initiate this discussion, I will first outline the participation rates of the six respondent subgroups involved in the survey. In the 2015/16 school year, 100% of DGPS schools participated in the student satisfaction survey at grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 but not every student in these grades completed the survey. Both parent and staff participation rates were quite low; however, it must be noted that 404 parents completed the survey which represents a sizable parent contribution to the data. The fact that only 144 staff (namely teachers, principals and education assistants (EAs) completed the survey presents a significant limitation in the generalizability of that segment of the data as it is not representative of

the population of 1500 DGPS staff. Table 1.1 contains the participation rates for the 2015/16 school year.

Table 1.1

2016 Satisfaction Survey Participation Rates

Group	Participation Rate	%'age
Grade 4	850/1036	82%
Grade 7	815/1122	73%
Grade 10	694/1424	49%
Grade 12	487/1673	29%
Parents	404/6095	07%
Staff	144/1500	10%

The data presented in Table 1.2 clearly demonstrates that nearly 30% of students in grade 4 experience peer behaviours that they interpret as bullying, teasing or being picked on and it appears that parents are accurate in their interpretation of what their children are experiencing at school.

Table 1.2

2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Bullying

Group	Question	Many Times/ All the Time
Grade 4	At school are you bullied, teased or picked on?	29%
Grade 7	At school are you bullied, teased or picked on?	22%
Grade 10	At school are you bullied, teased or picked on?	21%
Grade 12	At school are you bullied, teased or picked on?	16%
Parents	Is your child bullied, teased or picked on at school?	28%
Staff	Is your school a safe place to work and learn?	98%

From available data, there appears to be a significant gap between what school staff interpret as safe and what students are actually experiencing. This brings to the forefront the issue of limitations in the data. There are two significant limitations that must be identified at the onset. First, there are no definitions of terms used in the survey making it reasonable to expect that all persons completing the surveys (students, staff and parents) would interpret the meaning of terms in a different way (e.g. treated “fairly”, “safe” at school, etc.). Secondly, the questions pertaining to feeling “safe” at school that were asked of students were worded quite differently for staff thereby making it difficult to compare and contrast the results. However, despite these limitations and the low staff

participation rates in this survey, it remains unacceptable that as many as 30% of students are bullied, teased or picked-on in District elementary schools and that it remains a significant problem through to grade 12. Table 1.3 indicates that on average, 24% of students in grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 report not feeling safe at school which is supported by Table 1.4 from a different survey indicating that upwards of 21% of students (ages 10 - 19) report feeling unsafe at school. In gleaning information from these two surveys, it appears that both parents and staff underestimate how students are feeling in terms of their safety while at school.

Table 1.3

2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Safe at School

Group	Question	Many Times/ All the Time
Grade 4	Do you feel safe at school?	77%
Grade 7	Do you feel safe at school?	78%
Grade 10	Do you feel safe at school?	69%
Grade 12	Do you feel safe at school?	79%
Parents	Do you think your child is safe at school	86%
Staff	Is your school a safe place to work and learn?	86%

Table 1.4

Findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey - Safe at School

Group	Question	Agree / Strongly Agree
All students	Safe at School	75%

Confirming these results, Table 1.5 contains data from the 2013 Adolescent Health Survey (Smith et al., 2015), providing valuable information about how students are feeling about their safety both in and around their school.

Table 1.5

Findings from the 2013 BC Adolescent Health Survey - Feel Safe at School

Group	Question (Feel Safe at School - Location)	Always
All Students	In your classroom	72%
All Students	In the washrooms	61%
All Students	In the changing rooms	61%
All Students	In the hallways and stairwells	63%
All Students	In the library	78%

All Students	In the cafeteria	70%
All Students	Outside on school grounds	59%
All Students	Getting to/from school	63%

The data in Tables 1.2 and 1.5 give reason to pause and consider if students, staff and parents understand the definitions of bullying and the concept of feeling safe at school. In analyzing the 2015/16 district suspension data (Appendix A) it was determined that of the 227 suspensions issued in that school year, 74% were from secondary schools and 26% were from elementary schools. Of the 227 suspensions issued 54% were for reasons described as behavioural: assault, bullying, fighting, intimidation, physical aggression, threats, and/or weapons. Again, there is a gap between what the data reveals and the students', staff's and parents' interpretation of a safe school. Parents and staff appear to believe that schools are more safe, caring and inclusive than students' interpretation of their day-to-day reality.

In reviewing the codes of conduct published by each DGPS school it was noted that 100% of district schools have an updated and published code. If this were done in full compliance with the Ministerial Order it would be expected that all students would know and understand the behavioural expectations placed upon them by their schools. Table 1.6 provides data indicating high percentages of students knowing how their school expects them to behave, which is incongruent with the 20 – 30% of students reporting that they are bullied, teased or picked on at school.

Table 1.6
2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Knowledge of Expected Behaviours

Group	Question	Sometimes/M any Times/ All the Time
Grade 4	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	86%
Grade 7	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	88%
Grade 10	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	70%
Grade 12	Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	70%
Parents	Does your child's school provide clear expectations for student behaviour in the school	80%
Staff	Does your school provide clear expectations for student behaviour in the school?	68%

There remain three obvious gaps highlighted by available data: (1) knowing students are not clear on the behavioural expectations at their schools, (2) students are not directly taught the desired behaviours, and (3) asking students if they feel safe at school is not the same as asking parents and staff if they feel the school is a safe place. Therefore, this OIP will seek to bring about organizational change to address the gap between principal leadership in the collaborative development, implementation and direct teaching of the school code of conduct and the students' feelings of safety and belonging at their school.

1.2 Perspectives on the Problem of Practice

Because a safe school environment is a prerequisite for productive learning (Lacoe, 2016), students must feel safe in order to concentrate in class and learn. Through her research Lacoe (2016) determined that ensuring the safety of each student in the classroom is a critical first step in improving educational outcomes and reducing racial and ethnic achievement gaps. It is because of these very issues that Ministerial Order 276 was created in 2007 setting out the standards for codes of conduct for both schools and school districts (BCEd., 2007). One of the specific requirements of the order was that schools and school districts make reference to the BC Human Rights Code in the development of their code of conduct. Despite this order, Barsotti (2008), through a freedom of information request, discovered poor implementation of Ministerial Order 276 across the province. Armed with this information, politicians of the day attempted to address implementation concerns through the development of safe schools legislation; however, the proposed bill did not make the floor of the legislature when the ERASE Bullying strategy was finally adopted in 2012. Ministerial Order 276/07 was then updated to make the requirement more specific (Barsotti, 2008; G. Hansman, personal communication, August 2, 2015) with changes to section 6(a) requiring a reference to all the prohibited grounds of discrimination (Steffenhagen, 2012), not just a reference to the BC Human Rights Code. Today the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order outline both process and content elements that must be addressed in the development of school codes (BCEd., 2007, p. 4). The standards state that students, parents and staff must be involved in the development of the code, that there is wide knowledge of conduct expectations in the school and school communities, and that the code is kept up-to-date to address current circumstances and emerging issues (BCEd., 2007, p. 4). In addition, a

provincial handbook, *Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide*, was developed to set the expectations that there will be active teaching of conduct expectations woven into regular classroom learning activities, that the implementation of codes will be monitored and strategies improved as necessary, and that there is consultation with other schools in the district to ensure compatibility of conduct expectations (BCEd., 2008a). In practice, principals should invite representation from the school Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Student Council to participate in this work. To be sure that the voices of other students are heard, additional student and parent involvement may also be appropriate, for example, student-led multicultural or gay/straight alliance members (BCEd., 2008a, p. 5).

Furthermore, the Code of Conduct Order states that Boards must ensure that schools make their codes of conduct available to the public and distribute them to employees, parents and students at the beginning of the school year. When students enroll during the school year they and their parents must be provided with a copy of the code of conduct (BCEd., 2008a, p. 5). The Order also requires the code of conduct to be displayed in prominent locations in the school where visitors, as well as people who are regularly in the school, can read it. In truth, the code of conduct cannot have a positive impact on the culture of a school unless it is communicated consistently to everyone at least annually (BCEd., 2008a, p. 5). It is also good practice for students and their parents to have an opportunity to discuss the expectations set out in the code with someone on the school staff (BCEd., 2008a, p. 5).

The Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order delineates specific elements which must be included in each school's code: purpose, expectations, rising expectations as students mature, considerations for students with special needs, consequences, and an explanation that the Board will take all reasonable steps to prevent retaliation against a student who has made a complaint of a breach of the code of conduct (BCEd., 2007, p. 6). A further addition to the elements of the code of conduct specific to DGPS is that the district requires that all consequences be educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response. Furthermore, in DGPS this problem of practice is focused on the work of school principals as they distribute leadership at their school sites for the

collaborative development and implementation of their school code of conduct as the means to address student inappropriate verbal and physical behaviour.

Theoretically, this important work is best characterized through three dominant perspectives: democratic, liberal and critical theory. These theoretical perspectives challenge principals to address issues of student safety and belonging while also identifying their need to understand and pursue leadership for social change. The democratic perspective emphasizes that every student must be valued, listened to, and encouraged to participate actively in their learning while upholding equality between persons (Graves, 2011; McLaughlin, 2005; Pollock, 2015a). A principal who endeavours to incorporate a democratic approach to educational leadership believes that active participation of all students in the school community is integral to the betterment of the wider school community. Students must play a role in shaping and creating their education as co-constructors of knowledge (Portelli & Vibert, 2002) which is why schools are so vital in exemplifying the values of equity, fairness, and participation through the creation of a safe place for students to learn, grow and develop. The principal then, as a democratic leader, must be participative and group-oriented, demonstrate strong ethics, empower staff, and involve all stakeholders in decision-making processes (Woods & Gronn, 2009; Pollock, 2015a). Democratic leadership can be modelled by principals through their interactions with staff, students, parents, key stakeholders, and especially by making themselves accessible and visible in the school community (Kellerman, 2007; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

In DGPS, the democratic perspective is the dominant is thought to be the ideological approach most practiced but I am not certain that principals and district leaders truly understand this *modus operandi* in terms of their practice. McLaughlin (2005) suggests that schools are responsible for the survival of democracy as they teach students how to question, and Graves (2011) recommends that students practice democracy in school because collaborative decision making is inherent in the world outside the classroom. If true democratic practice is not occurring in District schools this could be a major contributing factor to students feeling that they are not being heard and subsequently resulting in their feelings of not being safe. Katz (2016) reminds us that democracy is not simply about taking a vote and going with the majority response; it

means that the necessary leadership skills are required to balance the rights of the individual with the desires of the collective. It is true that DGPS continues to work toward the development of a collaborative, consultative and democratic culture as it holds the belief that everyone has equal rights and can participate in the making of decisions (Rottmann, 2007); however, these issues appear to have taken second place as revenue generation and deficit abatement maintain highest priority. Despite the need for fiscal austerity, I believe that DGPS strives to divert its focus away from the realities of reduced revenue to a stronger focus on student learning in safe, caring and inclusive schools; however, the inconsistent application of a democratic approach leaves students ill prepared to face uncomfortable situations and without the skills to responsibly exercise their freedom to participate in a civic society. Such an education would encourage student engagement in the curriculum and prepare them to carry these skill sets outside of the school and into the realm of civic and democratic life (Cook & Westheimer, 2006).

A core tenet of liberalism is the protection of the freedom of the individual and the development of citizenship for a healthy society (Coutts, 2004). Combined with this, liberalism maintains a strong belief in distributed decision-making among groups (Kellerman, 2012). The principal then should be involved in nurturing difference within and between classrooms, empowering staff and preparing them to deal with complexity, diversity and change (Dearborn, 2013; Raven, 2005). The liberal approach requires the principal and the staff to provide a holistic education that prepares students to face change, diversity, and complexity in life. Therefore, the liberal theoretical focus would prompt the principal to consider implementing school-wide character education programs where students are taught how to develop positive relationships, the value of intrinsic motivation, social responsibility, empowerment and other life skills (Berkowitz & Bustamante, 2013; Osborne, 2005).

Finally, critical theory can assist schools by guiding them in understanding and prioritizing social justice issues (Baker-Martinez, 2012). The use of critical theory can reduce bias and discrimination and create safer schools by exploring ways of deconstructing and transforming structures that allow inequality to exist (Meyer, 2010). Critical theory insists that educators and principals be emotionally and intellectually engaged in research-to-practice and continually question and re-examine the data, the

content in the lessons presented to students, as well as the behavioural expectations placed upon them. As Bogotch (2002) advises, issues of social justice cannot be separate from the practice of educational leadership and so, it is important that principals develop leadership skills for social justice and temper those skills with liberal, democratic and critical theories to effectively lead positive behavioural change initiatives in their schools. The critical approach focuses the principal's attention on past experience and reflection in order to re-examine their school-specific systems for all forms of oppression, injustice, and inequality (Kellner, 2003; Nichols & Allen-Brown, 1996). The principal must not only ensure that essential services or resources are available and accessible, they must also ensure that they themselves are active participants in bringing about social change.

Together these three theoretical perspectives (democratic, liberal and critical theory) support the vision that all students have the right to learn in a safe, caring and inclusive environment while also providing a strong foundation for the District's vision of *Success for All* (DGPS, 2014).

In reviewing the literature on safe schools, it is apparent that researchers, principals and educators use the terms school climate and school culture interchangeably. However, I liked the straightforwardness of Stover's (2005) and Gruenert's (2008) definition that climate is the way students and staff perceive their school whereas culture pertains to the values, beliefs and behaviours within the school. School principals are typically charged with transforming their school environments which usually extends beyond maintaining high levels of student achievement to implementing other change initiatives. Marzano, Walters, and McNulty (2005) and Schein (2016) describe organizational [school] culture as a natural by-product of people working in close proximity and it can have either a positive or negative impact on the organization [school] as a whole. Bolman and Deal (2013) state that culture is both a product and a process; as a product culture embodies wisdom accumulated from experience, and as a process it is renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become the teachers themselves (p. 263). Barth (2002) explored the power of [school] culture and determined that it was both the most important and the most difficult job of the principal to change the prevailing culture of a school. Bolman and Deal (2013) stress the importance of school leaders as being the key individuals in shaping school culture.

Through their day-to-day work, principals communicate core values which are then reinforced through the staff's actions and words and if parents are included in the dialogue they can also bolster support to their child's school (Hill, 2014).

Even though DGPS data indicates a decline in school violence over the past 20 years, the review of current literature reveals that safety in schools is still considered to be the quintessential condition necessary for teaching and learning (Grier & Chaddock, 1999). It is the school principal who leads the creation of an atmosphere that will ultimately determine the level of safety, caring and inclusivity in the school (Bogotch, Miron, & Murry, 1998). Hyman and Perone (1998) make the link between learning and a safe school and community environment in that achievement is compromised when students are fearful and constantly worried about their safety.

Astor et al. (2009) concluded that schools with low levels of violence are organized and structured by the leadership of a strong, visionary, influential and well-respected principal. More importantly this research indicated that it was through the principal's ability to persuade all stakeholders of the value and importance of their mission (p. 443) that the principal was able to create and sustain a violence-free school, suggesting that the selection of an organizationally strong and visionary principal may be the single most important intervention that reduces the incidence of violence in a school (p. 452).

Historically organizations functioned with a hierarchical leadership approach where the leader gave orders and the subordinates complied (Hickman, as cited in Leff, 2014, p. 36). This approach changed when transformational leadership emerged in the 1990s moving the school principal from a control-oriented transactional leader to a more transformational leader who collaboratively sets direction, redesigns the school specific organization, and focuses on developing people (Fullan, 1992; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Consequently, principals need to be conscious of their leadership style and how it impacts their school. More pertinent to this OIP, school culture has been linked to safe schools (Ramsey, Spira, Parisi, & Rebok, 2016). Literature suggests certain components of safe schools are consistent in the research: caring relationships between students and teachers, clear mission and vision of the school, and a safe and orderly school environment (Leff, 2014; McCarley, Peters, & Decman 2016;

Ramsey, Spira, Parisi, & Rebok, 2016). A safe school environment allows the teacher and student to focus on academics and social skill development which promote academic achievement and appropriate student behaviour (Espelage, 2010; Guerra, Williams, & Sadek, 2011; Leff, 2014, p. 50). Safe, caring, participatory and responsive school cultures have a tendency to nurture greater attachment and belonging to the school in addition to providing an ideal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning (Blum, 2005; Hudson Davis, 2016; Osterman, 2000). Therefore, the entire school must function as a learning community working collaboratively to address students' harmful verbal and physical behaviours that contribute to students feeling unsafe. Issues of social justice will always challenge ethics and values, civic and personal responsibilities and understandings across race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, culture and socio-economic status; but principals must find a way to ensure that their school collaboratively develops and directly teaches their code of conduct in order to make progress in this important work. Effective codes of conduct must go beyond a list of rules; instead they must include a rationale for the expectations set in the codes (BCEd., 2008a). It is important for all members of the school community and the public to understand the reasons for the code, for example, to make the school a safe, caring, and inclusive environment for learning and working (BCEd., 2008a).

To understand other perspectives on this POP within the context of DGPS, I have undertaken a *PESTE* analysis as described by Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2016, p. 6). *PESTE* is an acronym for the political, economic, social, technological and environmental factors used to assess the context of an organization as that organization prepares for a change initiative.

Politically, Section 168 (2) of the School Act gave the Minister of Education the authority to enact the Ministerial Order entitled Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order (M276/07). Enacted in 2007, this Ministerial Order (M276/07) requires each Board of Education to develop a Code of Conduct District Policy stating that each school within the district must have a code and that the code is to be implemented. DGPS complies with M276 of the School Act and has ensured the establishment of a code of conduct for students enrolled in all educational programs provided by the Board. In addition, DGPS has created Board Policy 2.3 and Administrative Procedure 344

establishing the local requirement of a school code of conduct that prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's or a group's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, or sexual orientation. DGPS acknowledges that students' feelings of safety and belonging, including freedom from discrimination, can seriously affect their ability to learn in school (BCEd., 2008a). Therefore, schools must be places where students are free from harm, where clear expectations of acceptable behaviour are held and met, and where all members feel they belong.

At present, 21% of DGPS schools have engaged in the implementation of a school-wide system of positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS) (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010) that is linked to the implementation of their school code of conduct. Sixteen years have lapsed since PBIS was first introduced in the district and the barriers to implementation in the other 79% of schools can only be attributed to competing priorities.

Economically and socially, the district has been battling the effects of underfunding of public education. DGPS is bound by law to balance its annual budget and in doing so has been forced to cut programming, student services and resources resulting in continued increases in class sizes with ensuing negative impact on schools (Martins, 2016). Parents who have the funds move to more affluent areas of the District thereby undermining the natural representation of diversity within schools and the social cohesion of the communities. Many of the District's racial minorities, such as Aboriginal, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Arab, among others (Statistics Canada, 2013) live in areas of lower socioeconomic status and do not have the resources to move to different neighbourhoods to attend specialized programs due to associated costs. Therefore, I agree with Martins (2016) that underfunding creates and compounds the inequity between schools and it falls to Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) who are left to raise funds for programs and resources that are cut from school budgets.

Delving further into the social aspect, if school connectedness and the relationship between students and adults in the school are considered to be important social factors in the development of safe, caring and inclusive schools, the 2015-16 Satisfaction Survey data reveals some very important information for DGPS. The data revealed that 30% of

DGPS students feel that no adults at their school care about them. This data is significant and would certainly contribute to students not feeling welcome and/or safe while at school.

The data in Table 1.7 indicates that grade 10 students are feeling least welcome in their school. However, this data also indicates that all schools have room for improvement and that there remains a significant gap between what staff believe and what students report in grade 10. It also must be noted that, of the 144 staff who completed the survey, only 65 percent of them feel that their school is welcoming and inclusive of all students.

Table 1.7

2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Welcome at School

Group	Question	Sometimes/Many Times/ All the Time
Grade 4	Do you feel welcome at your school?	79%
Grade 7	Do you feel welcome at your school?	71%
Grade 10	Do you feel welcome at your school?	58%
Grade 12	Do you feel welcome at your school?	67%
Parents	Do teachers care about your child?	80%
Staff	Does your school welcome and include all students?	65%

Technology is becoming increasingly important to students and educators in terms of teaching, learning and social interaction. Educators struggle with the age and speed limitations of District technology but they are also struggling to provide engaging lessons for students that teach appropriate conduct on social media. Most students have their own technology, which they use both for social purposes and learning. Expectations regarding appropriate student behaviour in virtual environments also tie in with other aspects of the curriculum in terms of teaching students to be civic-minded and socially responsible, online or not (Froese-Germain, 2008) and must be included in the code of conduct. The Ministry of Education has created an online reporting tool as part of the ERASE Bullying strategy to assist in combatting issues of bullying. Over the past five years there have been a total of 121 ERASE Bullying reports from DGPS of which physical, verbal and cyber bullying were the most prominent.

And lastly, to better understand the Environmental issues at play within District schools I will now focus on how students feel at school and whether they know and understand the school's expectations of them in terms of their behaviour. Table 1.8 indicates that as students advance from elementary into secondary school their feelings about being treated fairly diminishes to a point where over 50% of students in grades 10 and 12 feel that they are not treated fairly at their school (BCEd., 2015).

Table 1.8

2016 Satisfaction Survey Results - Adults Treat Students Fairly

Group	Question	Sometimes/Many Times/ All the Time
Grade 4	Do adults in the school treat all students fairly?	79%
Grade 7	Do adults in the school treat all students fairly?	62%
Grade 10	Do adults in the school treat all students fairly?	47%
Grade 12	Do adults in the school treat all students fairly?	46%
Parents	Are you satisfied that staff treat all students fairly at school?	67%

This data indicates that there is a need for principals to collaborate with key stakeholders as their collective views are critical to understanding and addressing these complex issues (Northouse, 2016). Ryan and Rottmann (2007) indicate that for meaningful and persistent change to occur it must include those who are affected by the change and it needs to be embedded in collective rather than individual practice. Therefore, the Ministry's requirement that the code of conduct be collaboratively developed and directly taught is key to this OIP.

As stated earlier, the Ministerial Order for school codes of conduct outlines the elements that should, at a minimum, be incorporated in all codes in British Columbia schools. Table 1.9 represents the data tabulated from a review of all DGPS 38 schools' codes of conduct.

Table 1.9

Analysis of DGPS 38 School Codes of Conduct

Item	Element to be Included	% included
1	the purpose of the code of conduct	100%

2	methods of promoting expected behaviour and correcting unacceptable conduct	21%
3	age and/or maturity expectations	0%
4	acceptable conduct – including informing adults about safety concerns	100%
5	unacceptable conduct – including disruptive behaviours and serious misconduct like bullying, harassment and intimidation	100%
6	consequences for unacceptable conduct	100%
7	notification of parents and/or other adults	100%

Note: These seven components were obtained from the Codes of Conduct Checklist produced by the Ministry of Education (BCEd., 2008b).

This review reveals that 21% of DGPS schools outline a method for promoting expected behaviours and, in digging deeper, these same schools also report the utilization of a school-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program or equivalent to directly teach expected behaviour. Therefore, 79% of DGPS schools do not have this component included in their code of conduct.

One might expect that students in grades 4 and grade 7 would clearly understand how their school expects them to behave because they have one teacher for the majority of their school day. Contrary to this expectation, Table 1.6 reveals that between 12% and 14% of students in grades 4 and 7 have reported that they don't know how their school expects them to behave. Of increased significance is the finding that 30% of grade 10 students report that they are unclear about how their school expects them to behave. Therefore, if students are not directly taught the code of conduct's behavioural expectations, it would stand to reason that student inappropriate behaviours would remain at unacceptable levels, which can be viewed in Table 1.10.

Table 1.10

2015-16 DGPS District Suspension Data Totals

Type	Percent
Fighting	42%
Physical Aggression	28%
Threats	10%
Assault	9%
Bullying	7%
Weapon	4%

Note: Total district suspensions (including in-school and out): 227

Closely aligned with the DGPS Satisfaction Survey results, the 2013 Provincial Adolescent Health Survey indicates that 25% of DGPS youth reported that they do not feel safe at school (Smith et al., 2015). The Adolescent Health Survey also indicated that youth who feel unsafe at school are more likely to miss school than their peers (36% vs. 18%) and are less likely to have post-secondary plans (14% vs. 31%) (Smith et al., 2015). The survey also indicated that youth who felt unsafe at school were less likely to rate their overall health as good or excellent (10% vs. 35%) as well as their mental health (14% vs. 46%) (Smith et al., 2015). This is highly significant information providing a wider perspective of the lives of students in DGPS schools.

It stands to reason then that all stakeholders associated with promoting safe, caring and inclusive schools must assume responsibility for resolving this problem of practice. They must work together to better understand issues of bullying, intimidation and harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia, and discrimination in order to teach new skills to students so they can respond appropriately. School staff and the community must respond consistently to all incidents in a fair and reasoned manner, using interventions that are educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response. They must continuously assess their school environments for evidence of improvement while also recognizing and celebrating achievements (BCEd., 2008a). Safe, caring and inclusive schools do not “just happen”; they are developed by committed people using appropriate policies as well as ever-improving procedures and practices which are the building blocks for safe schools (BCEd., 2008a).

Racism, classism, and sexism are ever-present in public schools but they are often masked by a fiction of tolerance between social groups and a myth of neutrality about the principal's work (Rizvi, as referenced in Riehl, 2000). Both Fullan (1992), and Katz (2012) stated that principals are not fundamentally oriented toward change and Riehl (2000) reveals research stating that it is quite difficult to move them out of their structuralist perspective and into one that is socially transformative. Through a review of literature Riehl (2000) found that principals tend to view the existing social order in their school as legitimate, promoting the values of democracy and meritocracy, and adopting a managerial orientation instead of a socially transformative one (p. 59). According to Anderson and Grinberg, as referenced in Riehl (2000), Foucault would have maintained

that, as a practice constituted by power relationships, school administration is fundamentally incapable of asking critical questions, not because it seeks to serve dominant interests but because it is "trapped within a discourse of efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness that make problematization or critical reflection difficult" (p. 344). Despite this difficulty, principal leadership is required to provide guidance and support to teachers and students so that they can work and learn in a safe environment. In short, socially transformative leadership within a district experiencing such demographic change as DGPS requires the principal to first uncover their blind spots to view, understand, and counteract inequity (Cooper, 2009). The principal can then inspire and mobilize others to remove barriers that keep school community members divided. This involves directly working on the social and cultural problems that physically and ideologically present themselves in order to build bridges so that public education is democratic and emancipatory rather than marginalizing and oppressive (Cooper, 2009, p. 719). Policies and procedures can be of assistance but they must do more than punish or minimize unsafe, aggressive and violent behaviour; the goal must be to develop a true sense of community where students are educated in appropriate conduct and when inappropriate, they are provided opportunities to redress the harm, restore relationships, and be affirmed of a place of belonging.

Astor et al. (2009) determined that the most important variable found in schools with low violence in high violence communities was the leadership of the principal. These schools emphasize a school change approach rather than the implementation of a packaged school violence prevention program. These authors found, after three years of collaboration on the school change approach, that all schools demonstrated a school-wide awareness and understanding of violence, the implementation of consistent procedures, the integrated use of cultural diversity into the curriculum, visual manifestations of caring, and the beautification of school grounds. Therefore, in order to effect positive change in creating safe, caring and inclusive schools the principal must be a strong transformational leader who can set directions, redesign the school organization, and develop people. Astor et al. (2009) claim that the principal needs an overarching philosophy of education that connects school safety directly to the organization and the vision and mission of their school (p. 451).

1.3 Emerging Questions

In reflecting on my POP within the context of DGPS I have outlined a number of questions requiring consideration. First, which are the essential leadership approaches to bring about a safe, caring and inclusive school environment? Research by Astor et al. (2009) and Elias et al. (1997) suggest a leadership commitment is necessary for the creation of a safe school environment while Astor et al. (2009) emphasized enhanced capacity building along with whole school approaches as the main components for driving the safe schools change initiative. Other researchers have focused on fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive practices, school-wide initiatives, and building connections between schools (Riehl, 2000; Sindhi, 2013; Theoharis, 2007). Yet others have focused on the ability of teachers to differentiate instruction to include all students (Katz, 2016). As there is no single leadership approach to the creation of a safe, caring and inclusive school, a few key approaches will be considered.

A second question pertains to principal efficacy for leading social change. Specifically, which strategies do principals need to develop and sustain to enact social justice in their schools? Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) reported that principals may feel efficacious for leading in particular contexts, but their sense of efficacy may or may not transfer to other contexts, depending on the perceived similarities of the task. However, Bandura (as cited in Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) proposes three specific approaches that are necessary for developing self-efficacy in managers and I believe we can apply this to principals. The first is guided mastery, which includes instructive modeling to acquire a skill or competency, followed by guided skill perfection, and lastly the transfer of the training back to the job context. These components are very important in the work of the principal especially if they are not well versed in working collaboratively to design and implement strategies for social change. These topics are typically not found together in the literature so some reasonable analogies will be utilized to bridge the available research to principal leadership for safe schools.

The final question stemming from this POP pertains to getting the local unions onside so they will encourage their members to participate in the annual Ministry of Education satisfaction surveys. The work to resolve this issue is pivotal in collecting meaningful longitudinal data. A major barrier is that the provincial teacher's federation

adopted a position in 2009 prohibiting their membership from participating in the government's satisfaction survey as outlined in the Members' Guide to the BCTF (BCTF, 2009, p. 54). The question is, could we find a middle ground where the local union executive would agree to teacher participation in at least part of the survey without going against their provincial federation's directive? Perhaps a local solution might be to work closely with the DGPS teachers' union to collaborate and make local changes to the survey questions to address local and provincial concerns. It would be most valuable to this OIP to have an annual survey in which teachers participate.

1.4 Leadership-Focused Vision for Change

The core business of DGPS is to have all students learning at high levels in a safe environment; however, the opposite appears to be true. Teachers tend to be reactive instead of educative, preventative and restorative in addressing student behavioural issues. From a review of all DGPS codes of conduct, 25/38 list reactive strategies for addressing student inappropriate behaviour (such as sending the student out of the room or sending the student to the principal's office), and principals also tend to be reactive in these schools by resorting to suspension instead of placing emphasis on prevention and restorative practice. The District has recently been focusing on district-wide assessment to drive improvements in curriculum and instruction, and creating a data tracking mechanism to identify students who have been making limited progress. At the same time DGPS has not been investing the same effort in the ongoing issues of bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and harassment. Although self-evident, it must be reiterated that if students arrive at school fearing for their safety, they will be unable to learn and be productive (Lacoe, 2016). Therefore, principal leadership is germane to the type of organizational change necessary to address this POP. Accordingly, four priorities for change in DGPS have been highlighted in order to move forward with this OIP.

The first priority is that the principal must lead the collaborative development and implementation of their school's code of conduct thereby reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour resulting in a more safe, caring, and inclusive school environment. To accomplish this Bolman and Deal (2013) suggest that information and education are necessary to raise awareness of the need for change (p. 115). Therefore, building awareness and support through disseminating information rather than edict will

assist schools in utilizing their code of conduct as the vehicle to move organizational change forward. Bolman and Deal (2013) and Cawsey et al. (2016) suggest that communication difficulties can be planned for and overcome with a well-organized communication plan.

The principal's acumen in the area of Distributed Leadership (DL) is a second priority which is crucial for this change to be implemented successfully. Bolman and Deal (2013) predict that when staff collaborate and come to accept the information and related data analyses, the ground will be fertile for the collaborative development of the shared vision and change plan (p. 116).

The third priority for change in this OIP is the effective implementation of the school's code of conduct so that it remains at the forefront in the school and school community.

Mulford and Silins (2003), and Leithwood, Patten, and Jantzi (2010) identified four main components of leadership practice that would be beneficial to principals for creating lasting change. First, they found that transformational and distributed leadership had the greatest effect on organizational learning (p. 13). By providing moral support, principals can establish a culture of caring and trust, promote participative decision-making, work toward staff consensus on school vision and goals, and establish priorities. Secondly, they determined that successful change hinges on the development of a collaborative professional learning organization that is focused on collective teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004, p. 15). The third component promotes the use of various measures of student outcomes beyond academic achievement to chart the change in student behaviour and their feeling of being welcome and included at school. This component could also extend to students being able to control various aspects of their own learning thereby giving them ownership and direct involvement (Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002). And lastly, the fourth leadership component required for lasting change involves consideration of the context of the student's environment outside of school (Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002, p. 636) and subsequently, collaboratively involving parents and other key stakeholders in the development and implementation of the code of conduct (BCEd., 2008a).

According to Bolman and Deal (2013), the key to accomplishing anything that requires the concerted actions of others is to reframe the perception of the situation to accommodate the various stakeholders. With this in mind, an important piece of this fourth priority is for the principal to acknowledge that staff and students are already doing many things correctly and that there are many promising practices already in place.

In considering a leadership-focused vision for change the principal could also make use of Bolman and Deal's (2013) four leadership frames through which to gather data, make decisions, and to determine and explain behaviour. First, in utilizing the structural frame for leadership, the principal would emphasize alignment of Ministerial Orders, district policy and administrative procedures, and provincial guidelines for establishing and implementing the code of conduct. The principal's role would be to clarify school goals; manage the internal and external environment; develop a clear structure for change; clarify lines of authority; and utilize data to make informed decisions rather than relying on assumptions (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Second, through utilizing the human resource frame, the principal could focus on understanding the symbiotic relationship between staff, students and other key stakeholders and once understood, allow for the expression and utilization of talents and skills (Hill, 2014). The principal who focuses on this leadership frame would experience momentum toward the goal because staff, students and stakeholders would feel motivated to do their best. According to Bolman and Deal (2013) this leadership frame places the principal as a facilitator and collaborator who coaches and motivates, encourages participation, and empowers others (Hill, 2014). These principals would be moving their code of conduct into practice because of their investment in the talents and skills of their staff thereby developing a caring and trusting culture with empowerment and teamwork as the foundation (Hill, 2014).

Bolman and Deal's third leadership frame is the political frame which focuses on issues of competition, power and conflict. Principals who use the political leadership frame would focus their attention on interest groups' agendas, power, coalition-building, negotiating conflicts, and creating compromises. The fourth leadership frame is the symbolic frame through which the principal would concentrate on school symbols, rituals, ceremonies, stories and celebrated people. This leadership frame captures the

school organization as an on-going story and staff come together to create context, culture and meaning to their assigned roles which brings artistry and self-expression into their work (Schein, 2016). Principals following the symbolic frame would make changes through dedication to the organizational vision. They would also tend to be very visible in the school and often rely heavily on the vision, traditions, and values of the organization.

1.5 Organizational Change Readiness

One sure way to advance any change initiative within the context of DGPS is to create dissatisfaction with the status quo. Dissatisfaction can be initiated by sharing survey and performance data, school and district policy and procedures, and by challenging inappropriate behaviour in order to create frustration with the present state (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Staff's readiness for change will also depend on the outcome of previous change initiatives, principal's skills in DL, and the various PESTE factors discussed earlier (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016, p. 6). Cawsey et al. (2016, p. 205) also recommend that power structures and informal dynamics be understood and aligned before undertaking any change initiative. Therefore, this OIP could easily incorporate a school-specific stakeholder analysis tool to assist in analyzing stakeholder groups as they work to understand the power structures that will guide readiness through all stages of the initiative (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Cawsey et al. (2016) report that change leaders need to become cognizant of the lag that often exists between what they have discovered as a result of data analysis, and what is known by others in different parts of the organization. Engaging stakeholders through multiple communication channels so they become convinced of the importance of changing now and not continuing with the status quo (Cawsey et al., 2016; Srinivasan, 2008) will be needed. A detailed stakeholder analysis will help to shape the development of strategic actions and risk analysis. The school's readiness for organizational change will greatly influence its ability to attend to stakeholder voices indicating that change is needed (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 106).

The change theory that will be utilized to frame this OIP will be Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model. This model consists of four phases designed to guide organizational change: the first phase, *Awakening*, will guide the principal in leading staff

to determine why change must occur; the second, *Mobilization*, will lead staff through the process of data analysis so they can make sense of the desired change; the third phase, *Acceleration*, will guide the principal and staff in reaching out to engage and empower others in support, planning, and implementation of the change initiative; and lastly, *Institutionalization* will guide the team in measuring their progress while helping to make the change a lasting endeavour (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Through Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Awakening Phase principals may come to understand that there is confusion in the supervisory relationship between teachers, their school principal, and their union. Perhaps it will be identified that these difficulties are not due to personality conflicts, but instead due to the misalignment of an individual school's mission and vision with that of the District. There are Board policies and procedures in place to establish optimal teaching and learning conditions pertaining to student safety and staff conduct; determining if school principals and their staff know they exist will be a starting point.

It is hoped that by utilizing Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Mobilization Phase that school principals will build teacher efficacy in addressing issues of student safety, acceptance and belonging (Bandura, 1977, 2002; Bandura & Adams, 1977). However, in order to address these difficult issues, they must first be identified, clearly articulated, prioritized and owned by staff, principal and key stakeholders in order to ensure that the school code of conduct is designed to address the priority issues specific to the school.

Incorporated within Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Awakening and Mobilization Phases is the clarity that will guide principals during political confrontations and confusion that typically results from new information and changing direction. Bolman and Deal (2013) state that enduring differences, scarcity of resources, conflict and power issues are the major elements of the political frame that must be identified and dealt with effectively as part of the change plan.

Last, but not any less significant, is the guidance provided by Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Acceleration and Institutionalization Phases which address the necessity of collaborating with key stakeholders and maintaining clear communications from the onset of the change initiative. It is anticipated that a thorough review of school level data from satisfaction surveys, suspensions, and the school code of conduct will reveal that

both staff and students will need to reconfirm their connection to the school vision, goals and behavioural expectations as they are pivotal in this work. This work is truly significant as connectedness is directly related to the development of a school-wide system of positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS), or the equivalent, in which all staff work together toward the shared vision of a safe, caring and inclusive school to support student learning.

The goal of school principal leadership is to shape the vision, create the culture, cultivate leadership in others, improve instruction and manage the site (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). This suggests that, “Successful leadership involves using social influence processes to organize, direct, and motivate the actions of others. It requires persistent task-directed effort, effective task strategies, and the artful application of various conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills” (McCormick, 2001, p. 28).

And finally, Wood and Bandura (1989), and Paglis and Green (2002) report that a principal’s sense of efficacy is necessary to endure and persevere in leading the change initiative through direction setting, gaining and maintaining followers’ commitment, as well as overcoming obstacles to change. It cannot be sufficient to just hire and retain principals who have demonstrated instructional, transformational and distributive leadership; they must also believe that they can do the job (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Bandura (2002) explained that “when faced with obstacles, setbacks, and failures, those who doubt their capabilities slacken their efforts, give up, or settle for mediocre solutions. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities redouble their effort to master the challenge” (p. 120). Therefore, principals’ efficacy will influence the level of effort and persistence put forth in their daily work, as well as their resilience in the face of setbacks.

In addition to principal efficacy for taking on issues related to creating safe, caring and inclusive schools it is important to note that there are also competing internal and external factors at play. An important component of a safe, caring and inclusive school is its ability to identify the range of needs of students and determine how they influence student behaviour (BCEd., 2008a), especially students from visible and invisible minorities. Sometimes students express their needs through inappropriate behaviour; therefore, if principals, as well as teachers, parents, and key stakeholders are

to respond appropriately and effectively to these behavioural issues, they need to understand the roots of the inappropriate behaviours, as well as the messages students are communicating through their actions (BCEd., 2008a). The internal voice of students can be obtained from DGPS school specific Satisfaction Surveys, school-created surveys, together with data from other provincial surveys.

A competing internal factor is that the DGPS Teachers' Union is not supportive of teachers completing the Satisfaction Survey, making the case that it is tantamount to teachers evaluating teachers and therefore they prohibit their members from participating. Consequently, only 11% of DGPS teachers participated in the Satisfaction Survey in the 2015/16 school year.

Two other competing internal factors that take attention away from creating and implementing safe, caring and inclusive schools are resources and competing district priorities. Resources are limited and the priorities for how to allocate those resources are many. The current vision of the District supports resource allocation to academic areas, often leaving issues of social, emotional and/or personal safety unaddressed. In addition, the many competing District priorities take attention away from addressing these matters through social justice and inclusiveness.

Competing external factors also make it difficult to give necessary attention to issues of safe, caring and inclusive schools often resulting in issues not receiving the priority they deserve. First, there are many Ministry of Education competing priorities that principals and their staff must attend to in terms of compliance measures, revised curriculum, and reporting procedures. Secondly, the recent 2016 Supreme Court of Canada ruling to return teacher contract language to its 2002 status (Sherlock & Shaw, 2017) is doing much to distract principals from day-to-day school leadership, and student safety and belonging initiatives.

Lastly, and likely a significant contributing external factor to the inability to focus on matters of safe, caring and inclusive schools is that 86% of both parents and staff feel that their school is already a safe place for students to learn. It is believed that both parents and staff would feel differently if they saw the student data and were given the opportunity to participate in dialogue regarding the development of their school's code of conduct through which to address these identified issues.

1.6 Communicating the Need for Change

This OIP focuses on the utilization of the processes and procedures of Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model theory of change. In Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model the communication plan is comprised of four phases: (1) the preapproval phase where plans are devised to garner support; (2) the need for change phase where communication plans explain the rationale, reassure staff, and clarify the steps in the change process; (3) the midstream change phase to inform all key stakeholders of progress and to obtain feedback; and (4) confirming/celebrating the change phase where communication plans are devised to inform all stakeholders of successes and to celebrate improvements (p. 320-321).

The creation of a school-based anonymous survey is the first tool to be discussed in relation to communicating change as it has been identified by Cawsey et al., (2016, p. 312) as an important method for collecting information and providing feedback. It would be a valuable exercise to share the draft survey with the unions of both teachers and support staff so they are aware and can provide feedback. This collaboration with the unions would prove beneficial to increase the return rate of such surveys. The survey tool would also permit school teams to capture stakeholder attitudes, opinions, and experiences at specific points in time while gaining the opportunity to track the results longitudinally (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 311). Political agendas do not disappear through the use of a survey, but they make it possible for participants to provide anonymous feedback and input that they may not provide publicly (p. 311). Anonymous surveys can be used to identify internal and external stakeholder expectations, measure satisfaction levels, assess attitudes and beliefs across the school community, and determine specific areas for improvement. The survey can also stimulate and advance conversations and insights regarding what is going on, how people are feeling and how things can be improved. This communication approach can be used to enrich the interpretation of the extant data and to more fully explore the implications for action (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 312). Therefore, in this OIP principals are encouraged to utilize the sample anonymous survey included in Appendix B as they work with their staff and students in the collection of site-specific data. Discussions on the use of a survey instrument would raise awareness

and understanding of data analysis while also communicate support and commitment to action that will benefit all members of the school community.

The second tool to be used in communicating change is the stakeholder analysis tool as it will help schools to identify all stakeholders in their school community and to use their feedback to help communicate the change initiative. Cawsey et al. (2016, p. 196) define stakeholder analysis as the process of identifying the key individuals or groups who can influence or who are impacted by the proposed change initiative, and then work strategically with those individuals or groups to make them more open to the notion of change. Included in this process is the analysis of position, motives, and the power of all key stakeholders which is vitally important to the principal in assessing the school's readiness for change. Stakeholder analysis also identifies the formal and informal connections between people, structures and the systems at play (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 199). Not only does this communication strategy make it more likely that stakeholders will support the idea of change, but it will put the principal and other school-based leaders in a better position to manage them and the context (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 199; Srinivasan, 2008). The stakeholder analysis process can assist principals and school staff in thinking carefully about who will be affected and who has to change their behaviour in order for the initiative to be successful. In the implementation phase of this initiative, stakeholder analysis will help the principal to identify how and when stakeholders should be involved and with whom to communicate regarding project progress. During the monitoring phase, stakeholder analysis will serve as a valuable tool to provide a baseline against which to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement by stakeholders, both those supportive and those in opposition (Srinivasan, 2008). As Cawsey et al. (2016) have determined, different stakeholders will be at different stages of readiness for change; therefore, using the Change Path Model in this OIP will ensure that all stakeholders are accounted for, engaged, managed and communicated with, while their readiness for change is monitored at all stages of the change process.

While some stakeholders may recognize that there are differences between school communities and the populations they serve, staff working within those schools may not know or understand the nature and impact of existing safety, diversity and equity

differences. Therefore, the third and final communication tool that will be utilized is the equity audit. The equity audit is a systematic way for the principal to assess the degree of equity or inequity present in specific areas of their school's programs, instructional practice, student safety, and achievement. The equity audit can provide an opportunity to reflect on areas in need of improvement and garner support for improvements needed to further school, department and/or school community commitments to safety, belonging and inclusion. In terms of the actual tool itself, a generic one has been created (Appendix C) based on a number of examples that have been collected and synthesized. Completion of a site-based equity audit will help schools better understand areas of strengths, needs and concerns. Using such a communication tool would provide an opportunity for principals and their staff to reflect upon what they are doing well and how they might enhance student safety, equity and the acceptance of diversity in the future. Therefore, the goal in using an equity audit in this OIP is to have school principals lead their staff in communicating their site-specific data to reveal information on identified safety issues and program inequities, to generate discussion of the key safety issues (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004), and to provide a corrective to potential biases (Sullivan, 2014) that may affect school alignment with district and provincial policies, and Ministerial Orders.

It can be expected that not all principals are aware of their association's leadership standards assigning them the role of challenging structures that create barriers to equity and inclusion while leading the development of an inclusive and collaborative school culture (BCPVPA, 2013, p. 17) as these standards are not mandated into practice. Therefore, there is a need for each school in the district to adopt an accountability strategy to chart their progress toward this goal. With this in mind, the implementation of this OIP will include a measurement strategy to assess the degree of change in the behaviours of staff and key stakeholders at the school level, and the degree of impact of those changes on reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour as measured through the annual student Satisfaction Survey results (Parisse-Brassens, 2016). The anonymous school-based surveys could also be repeated as a strategy to measure change over time for staff as well as for students. And finally, measuring the impact of staff and stakeholder change on reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour would

require the comparison of survey results, extant and site-based longitudinal data, review of the school's code of conduct in relation to the required components, and the examination of school-based documents related to communication, collaboration and consistency of approach.

1.7 Conclusion

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is significant in that it adds to our understanding of how to improve schools as organizations through leadership directed at a specific Problem of Practice (POP). Research literature as well as provincial and district policy all suggest that the school principal maintains the key role for leading the creation of safe, caring and inclusive schools. The principal then, through a range of leadership skills including Distributed Leadership (DL), must provide the fundamental understanding and guidance to key stakeholders so they can play their integral role in this important work. Chapter Two will focus further on the Distributed Leadership approach within the context of this OIP.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

2 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the context of Dogwood Grove Public Schools (DGPS) and the vision to which the District aspires in addressing the identified problem of practice (POP). The POP pertains specifically to creating and implementing a school code of conduct that will, hopefully, effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make District schools safe, caring and inclusive. Because the leadership required to address this POP involves a process of influencing others, there is an ethical dimension that must be considered (Northouse, 2016). In this chapter, I will discuss Distributed Leadership (DL) as the key leadership skillset for principals to utilize as they lead this initiative, analyze policy and procedure, and utilize data to inform and measure progress along the change path.

2.1 Framework for Leading the Change Process

The proposed organizational change requires an adaptation to the development and implementation of the school code of conduct, which may impact the school's structures, processes and systems so as to enhance their effectiveness in creating schools that are safe, caring and inclusive for all stakeholders (Cawsey, Deszca, & Ingols, 2016). Researchers and theorists have been determined to help organizations with how to change for over half a century (Fullan, 2001a) while more recent literature has focused on providing leadership that rallies others to take on leadership roles to confront problems that have not yet been successfully addressed (Fullan, 2001b). Moving schools to better meet students' social/emotional and academic needs requires not only a change in instructional practice but also an understanding of the ethical nature of leadership (Northouse, 2016). Heller and Firestone (1994), Leithwood et al. (2007), and Stefkovich and Begley (2007) agree that principals, with a clear understanding of what they are leading, have an authentic and noble agenda of encouraging staff leadership because they have the important role of bringing DL to life in their school. Furthermore, Heller, and Firestone (1994) argue that successful change does not result from the work of a single change agent but from the effective performance of a series of change leadership functions (p. 3). This suggests that certain tasks need to be accomplished, but it does not necessarily matter who completes them. Similarly, Heller and Firestone (1994) and

Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam (2010) agree that the focus should be on identifying the important functions and not on attempting to determine the right role to fulfill those functions. It is also a known fact that the change process is rarely linear, and because of this, leaders of change may begin with a particular vision but may arrive at some variation of that vision in the end (Cawsey et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important from the onset that principals be mindful that the process of creating safe, caring and inclusive schools will require adaptations, compromises, re-evaluations, open-mindedness and ethical action while remaining committed to the shared vision (Cawsey et al., 2016).

In examining the literature on leading a change process, there is an abundance of research on collaborative teams focusing on processes, challenges, outcomes, and the effectiveness of a single leader and their change plan (Fleming, 2014; Kellerman, 2016; Northouse, 2016; Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013). This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), however, focuses on how leadership can be distributed within a school and the District to bring about school-wide change in student behaviour. Through a review of leadership change theory, DL was selected as the leadership approach to be utilized within the Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016) to create a framework for leading the change process in this OIP. There is sufficient evidence in the literature that leads me to believe that DL will make a positive difference to school and District processes and outcomes resulting in increased student learning in both social/emotional as well as academic domains (Fleming, 2014; Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 32; Northouse, 2016; Spillane, 2006; Supovitz & Tognatta, 2013; Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011). Therefore, in my role as assistant superintendent, I will lead this OIP through the development of a leadership model that will merge DL with the transformational and instructional leadership practices that are currently employed by principals in DGPS.

The change model that was selected to bring about this desired change is Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model because it articulates a change process that is organized systematically from a critical organizational analysis that stimulates interest and awakens staff, through to mobilization, acceleration and institutionalization of the desired change plan. The specific steps in the Change Path Model will be synthesized relevant to DL in the final section of this chapter.

As well as exploring the literature on DL, this chapter incorporates a brief analysis of professional learning communities (PLCs) to inform the framework for leading the change process within Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model. Available research on DL suggests that focusing on the school principal as the sole leader is restrictive, as other staff can play important leadership roles in leading and managing schools (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003; Harris, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2007; MacBeath, Oduro, & Waterhouse, 2004; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Additionally, the value of a DL approach is supported by the work of Heck and Hallinger (2010) through a four-year study of 198 primary schools where they compared the efficacy of four leadership growth models to account for patterns of change in school leadership, school improvement capacity, and student learning outcomes. Through this research, Heck and Hallinger (2010) determined that leadership and leadership-capacity-building operate as mutual influences, indicating that school leadership is a highly responsive and contextualised relational process. Accordingly, the complex nature of instructional practice requires staff to share leadership responsibility and expertise rather than work in hierarchies with a defined division of labor (Elmore, 2000). Thus, through the utilization of DL, knowledge and practice can be distributed across roles rather than remain with any one specific role or person. Gronn (2008) would likely object to the assertion that DL is the remedy to the leadership ills in any change process because, as a former strong proponent of DL, he has now become suspect of the ability of DL to promote and develop the leadership potential of small groups. Moreover, Gronn (2008) argues that a more appropriate descriptor for DL might be *hybrid*, rather than *distributed* because he maintains that the principal's role as *leader of leaders* cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, I argue that the school principal must continue to manage their facility, personnel, and finance, while at the same time promote effective, ethical leadership for safe, caring and inclusive schools. I also contend that principals must nurture school learning environments where all staff are encouraged to share their knowledge, build trust, and share in the distribution of leadership for change (Spillane, 2006; Spillane et al., 2003).

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) conducted a four-year study where they identified responsibilities, actions, and interactions of leadership that operate together

throughout daily routines in schools. In furthering this work, Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) determined that:

Leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, knows and does. Rather, it is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks. (p. 5)

Spillane et al. (2004) and Gronn (2008) agree that understanding the *how* and *why* of leadership are key aspects of understanding DL practice. Spillane et al. (2004) determined that DL theory focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among both formal and informal leaders, asserting that school leadership practice is not about the leaders themselves, but their leadership activities. Leadership activity then, as mentioned here, involves three essential elements: leaders, followers, and the situation (Kellerman, 2007; Spillane et al., 2004) where the interaction between each element is continuous and DL practice constitutes the activity performed by each person involved.

Elmore (2000) reports that DL theory requires principals to release some control over daily leadership because it is not possible for them to control all aspects of the process. Consequently, principals must be willing to distribute some of the leadership functions to their staff. Elmore (2000) considers everyone as being responsible for the leadership and management of the school. To this end, the development of strong relationships among staff would certainly increase productivity within the school thereby engaging each staff member to take responsibility for contributing to the change plan (Elmore, 2000).

In this OIP, the aim of DL is the improvement of all aspects of teaching practice and performance (Elmore, 2000); therefore, the skills and knowledge that pertain most to this POP are those that affect the creation of school environments focused on clear expectations for student conduct. School leaders must create environments in which everyone is comfortable having their individual as well as their collective ideas and practices subjected to analysis by their peers. As Eaker, DuFour, and DuFour (2002) state, school staff who work in isolation are the rival of any collaborative school improvement initiative. The building of strong staff relationships will aid in the understanding that all learning grows out of differences in expertise rather than

differences in formal leadership (Elmore, 2000, p. 21). Accordingly, the principal must have the knowledge and skills to build and distribute leadership practice, otherwise the desired change will not occur. At the same time, the principal must also create opportunities for staff to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for their work while progressing with the change plan. Elmore (2000) proposes that DL and ongoing professional learning are critical elements to distributed school leadership practice, and Spillane (2006) further adds that collaborative interactions between leaders and followers should also be considered as an essential component of DL.

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) define PLCs as collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve goals linked to a common vision. The collaborative team is the engine that drives the PLC effort and serves as a fundamental component of school leadership. The PLC concept operates on the premise that leadership should be widely distributed throughout the school, inherently developing the leadership potential of all staff members (DuFour et al., 2006). The role of principals in a PLC is to be a *leader of leaders as well as of followers* rather than just a leader of followers; subsequently, building staff leadership capacity becomes a main priority (DuFour et al., 2006).

DuFour and Eaker (1998) and DuFour et al. (2006) concur that PLCs manifest as groups of staff who meet regularly during the school day to discuss key aspects of student learning, thereby bringing about increased collaboration, cooperation, trust, honesty, cohesion and loyalty as core values. Despite a warning by Woods and Gronn (2009) that the value of democracy is often omitted in literature on DL, I believe that when these core values are established, ethical and shared leadership practices can start to take root in the school's culture.

DL must involve all members of the school staff as it creates a shared responsibility, shared commitment, and shared ownership of the change plan. According to Fullan (2002), sustainability depends on many leaders, and thus, the qualities of leadership must be attainable by many, not just a few (pp. 417-418). Gronn (2008) raises the question regarding what DL can add in terms of leadership value, and I believe that within the context of DGPS, DL will enable certain principals to move out of their existing leadership siloes and hierarchical models, and cause them to initiate the journey

into shared leadership practice as concerted action (Woods & Gronn, 2009). The goal then is for the principal is to advance the work of being a *leader of leaders* (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002, p. 22).

2.2 Critical Organizational Analysis

The focus on what to change in DGPS through this OIP is to have K-12 public school principals distribute their leadership practice in the creation and implementation of a school code of conduct that will effect positive change in reducing students' inappropriate behaviour. As outlined in chapter one, the primary extant data utilized in determining the gaps between current practice and the desired state is obtained from the BC Ministry of Education's Satisfaction Survey data from 2016. This data indicates that a significant gap exists between the perceptions of school staff and students regarding DGPS schools being safe places in which to learn. From the tables presented in chapter one it is clear that almost 30% of students experience peer behaviours that they interpret as bullying, teasing, or being picked-on and the data also illustrates that parents know this to be true. It is a moral and ethical concern that as many as 30% of DGPS students report being unsafe at school and parent and staff survey data results continually underestimate how unsafe students are feeling as they attend their neighbourhood school on a daily basis.

In reviewing the codes of conduct published by each DGPS school in June 2016 it was noted that 100% of District schools have a code of conduct that is updated and published. Full compliance with Ministerial Order M276 (BCEd., 2007) would result in all students knowing and understanding the behavioural expectations placed upon them by their schools. Table 1.6 indicates high percentages of students reporting that they know how their school expects them to behave but this is incongruent with the 20 – 30% of students reporting that they are bullied, teased or picked-on. The larger question remains, if students know the expectations, why is it that some students continue to feel unsafe at school? This question could be answered by analyzing the two obvious gaps in available data; first, measuring the difference between knowing what is expected in terms of student behaviour and demonstrating that expectation; and, secondly, addressing the difference in perspective gained when asking students if they feel safe at school versus asking parents and staff if they feel the school is a safe place.

In recent years, much work in DGPS has been done in the areas of instructional practice, assessment, and collaboration through the development of PLCs. The next step in bringing out the desired change is for principals to now distribute their leadership and become *leaders of leaders* in order to continue to build their staff's capacity and efficacy in addressing student social/emotional as well as academic learning in their schools. To this end, the application of DL is anticipated to bring about the collaborative development and explicit implementation of the school's code of conduct necessary for the development of safe, caring and inclusive schools.

Nadler and Tushman's (1989) Congruence Model is a useful tool to analyze gaps that exist in the organization between current and desired states. This model suggests that in order to fully understand an organization's performance, one must first understand the organization as a system comprised of its basic elements: the input it draws from both internal and external environments, the strategies it employs to translate its vision into practice, the output as the desired change it wishes to create in order to fulfill its strategic objectives, and the critical transformation process through which people, working within the context of both formal and informal leadership roles, convert input into output (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). The real challenge is to determine how the interaction of these various components would result in an increased level of performance in a school; therefore, it is important to be clear about the nature of each component, and its role in the organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1989). In the following subsections, I will apply the Congruence Model as developed by Nadler and Tushman (1989) to District schools as they pertain to this OIP.

2.2.1 **Input.**

There are three main categories of input in DGPS schools which affect them in different ways: the school environment, resources and history.

The environment. Each school exists within, and is influenced by, the District and the Ministry of Education. Drilling down, each school environment includes students, staff and key stakeholders who are directly affected by technological, economic, political and social conditions; labour unions; and special interest/advocacy groups. The environment affects each school differently by imposing demands and constraints while also providing opportunities.

Resources. The second source of input pertains to the school's resources, which include human, material, financial and technological resources. Resources may also include less tangible items such as the school's reputation among key stakeholder groups, as well as its internal climate.

History. The way an organization functions today is a reflection of events that have occurred in its past (Heyler, 2015). I believe this to be the same in schools. In order to predict a school's capacity to act now or in the future, one must understand the critical developments that shaped it over time: the strategic decisions, behaviour of key leaders, responses to crises, and the evolution of values and beliefs. The history of DGPS and its 38 school sites is a case in point. Apart from having a new superintendent every two years enacting and removing various initiatives, each individual school has a history of its own ranging from threats of school closure, being situated in areas of concentrated levels of poverty or affluence, or trying to meet the needs of a student population where 30% are indicating that they do not feel safe at school.

2.2.2 Strategy.

Each District school faces two levels of strategic issues. The first strategic level is pragmatic, involving staffing, scheduling, and the various components involved in running a school. The second strategic level involves district and school leadership which at present is often hierarchical. The desired state is to have all principals distribute their leadership, which would create a set of decisions about how to configure the school's resources in response to the identified gaps and opportunities within the context of the school's history. Together, these strategic issues address the diversity of students and staff, the dynamics of the school community, ethical stewardship, and the desire to have students learning at high levels while feeling safe, cared for and included at school. The goal is to have students want to be at school every day because the learning activities are inclusive and engaging for all learners, and they feel safe as they learn.

2.2.3 Output.

The mission of each school in the District is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy (BC School Act, 1989). At the District level, output is measured in terms of attendance rates, grade-to-grade

transition rates, graduation rates, district discipline data, Satisfaction Survey data, community survey data, and other measures. At the school level, output is measured in terms of the performance and behaviour of students, school attendance rates, school grade-to-grade transition rates, school discipline data, school specific Satisfaction Survey data, and local school community survey data. Finally, outputs at the individual level include the behaviour, involvement, and performance of all the people within the organization and the degree to which they feel safe, cared for and included in their school and school community. One of the issues in the District, however, is the lack of consistency in the collection and utilization of data at both the school and individual student levels.

While some principals may recognize that there are differences between their school communities and the populations they serve, staff working within the school may not know or understand the nature and impact of existing safety, diversity and equity issues. Therefore, a necessary tool to be utilized is the equity audit (Sullivan, 2014). The equity audit is a systematic way for staff to assess the degree of equity or inequity present in specific areas of their school's programs, instructional practice, student safety, and learning. In terms of the actual tool itself, a generic tool has been created (Appendix C) based on a number of examples that have been collected and synthesized. Completion of a site-based equity audit will help schools better understand areas of strength, need and concern. The purpose of using an equity audit in this OIP is to have school staff review their site-specific data to reveal inequities in programs and services for students and to generate discussion regarding identified safety issues (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004). The results of the equity audit can also be used to plan corrective action to mitigate the issues that are negatively affecting the school and its alignment with District and provincial policies, and Ministerial Orders (Sullivan, 2014).

In order for school principals and their staff to understand their school's inequities at deeper levels they may wish to delve into the input aspect of Nadler and Tushman's (1998) Congruence Model by utilizing a PESTE analysis as described by Cawsey et al. (2016, p. 6). PESTE is an acronym to describe the *political, economic, social, technological* and *environmental* factors used to assess the context of an organization as that organization prepares for a change initiative. PESTE was utilized in chapter one to

understand the various perspectives on this POP within the context of DGPS. I am suggesting here that principals and their staff also utilize PESTE within the context of their school site. Schools would naturally drill down further than I have, but I wanted to indicate some of the broader issues that would likely become unearthed in the process.

Political. Politically, the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order (M276) requires each Board of Education to ensure that all schools within the district collaboratively develop and implement their code of conduct. DGPS is in compliance with M276 as each school site has established and published a code of conduct for their students. In addition, DGPS has created Board Policy and Administrative Procedures establishing the local requirement that a school code of conduct prohibit discrimination on the basis of an individual's or group's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, or sexual orientation. The District acknowledges that students' feelings of safety and belonging, including freedom from discrimination, can seriously affect their feelings of safety and thereby their ability to learn at school (DGPS, 2012). Therefore, it is written into a Ministerial Order and Board policy that schools must be places where students are free from harm, where clear expectations of acceptable behaviour are held and met, and where all individuals feel they belong.

An additional piece that falls into this political domain is the importance of working with the local unions. It is important to be open and transparent with the unions when school teams are designing staff surveys. Gestures such as keeping the unions informed and requesting their feedback on survey development only serve to build stronger working relationships. This is equally as important with other stakeholder groups.

Economic. Economically, DGPS is bound by law to balance its annual budget and at times has been forced to cut programming to do so. It is common practitioner knowledge that cuts to student support services, staffing and resources results in worsening existing negativity in schools and increasing the inequity between schools (Hemmingway, 2016; Martins, 2016). Parents who have available funds move to more affluent areas of the District, thereby disrupting the natural representation of diversity within schools and the social cohesion of school communities. Many of the District's

racial minorities, such as Aboriginal, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Arab students live in areas of lower socioeconomic status and do not have the resources to move to more affluent neighbourhoods to attend specialized programs due to associated costs (Statistics Canada, 2013). For this reason, Martins (2016) argues that underfunding creates and compounds the inequity between schools. In DGPS it has fallen to Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) to raise funds for programs and resources that have been cut from school operational budgets. Therefore, if parents do not have the funds to support the fundraising, the school goes without, thereby compounding the problem due to economic disadvantage.

Social. School connectedness and the relationship between students and adults in the school are considered to be important factors in the development of safe, caring and inclusive schools; however, the 2015-16 Satisfaction Survey data reveals some very disturbing information for District schools to consider. The data reveals that 30% of DGPS students do not feel that the adults at their school care about them. This data is significant and would certainly contribute to students not feeling welcome and/or safe while at school. The data in Table 1.7 also indicates that grade 10 students are feeling the least welcome in their school. This data indicates that there remains a significant gap between what staff believe and what students report in terms of safety, caring and inclusivity.

Technology. Technology is everywhere in 2017, from K-12 classrooms, school busses, public transit and public buildings, not to mention that nearly every student carries a personal device. Some students are using technology simply for communication or to develop their advocacy skills by leveraging social media to make their voices and causes heard. Sadly, other individuals use technology to spread hate and contempt. Lived experience of DGPS school principals indicates that the majority of student to student conflict inside school actually begins outside the school day on social media (Reckdahl, 2016). Despite the District's acceptable use policy, schools must still contend with placing appropriate boundaries on the use of technology while understanding that it is a 21st Century tool that can be utilized to engage students in their learning and understanding. The challenge is to define the line between use and misuse and directly teach the desired behaviour.

Environment. Environmental factors are also an important key to deepening one's understanding and connectedness to the school and school community. A promising approach is creating learning environments where students are directly taught, given frequent opportunities to practice, and receive regular reinforcement of pro-social skills (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Greenberg et al. (2003) report a solid and growing empirical base indicating that well-designed, well-implemented school-based prevention and youth development programming can positively influence a diverse array of social, health, and academic outcomes (p. 470). Furthermore, Greenberg et al. (2003) have also determined that strategies characterizing effective school-based prevention programming must involve the following student-focused, relationship-oriented, and classroom and school-level organizational changes: (a) directly teaching children to apply social and emotional learning (SEL) skills and ethical values in daily life through interactive classroom instruction and providing frequent opportunities for student self-direction, participation, and school or community service; (b) fostering respectful, supportive relationships among students, school staff, and parents; and (c) supporting and rewarding positive social, health, and academic behaviour through systematic school–family–community approaches (p. 470).

At the heart of the DGPS discipline strategy are the school codes of conduct and the student handbooks that have traditionally communicated the codes to students and parents (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988; Mukuria, 2002; Scheinfeld, 2009). From a review of available literature on codes of conduct in K-12 public education in Canada and the US it is apparent that the prospective role that codes of conduct can play in shaping desired student behaviour is not yet emerging and particularly, research on the relationship between the code of conduct and the degrees of inappropriate student verbal and physical behavior is non-existent. In the past, codes of behaviour were described as being “sparse, vague, overly broad, and general, and they gave little if any guidance to students in defining what conduct was prohibited and punishable” (Goldsmith, 1982, p. 188). As a result, this OIP is focused on creating an updated context in which DGPS can play a leadership role in the development and implementation of codes of conduct. The goal is to focus schools' attention on appropriate student conduct; to help schools clarify behavioural expectations; to help

schools write codes that are educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response; and to ensure consistency throughout schools in the district.

As stated earlier, in the fall of 2007, the School Act was amended making it mandatory for all Boards of Education in the province to establish codes of conduct in accordance with Provincial standards and ensure that schools within their school district implement the codes (BCEd., 2008b). However, similar to research conducted by Goldsmith (1982), in 2008 DGPS had encouraged schools to develop their own codes of conduct based upon provincial guidelines but by the time this evaluation was conducted in the summer of 2016, some eight years later, there was no evidence of collaboration with stakeholders and only six of them had included a method for directly teaching the desired behaviours. This leads me to believe that in order for this to occur, the District will have to take a greater leadership role in ensuring that schools are including this piece and that principals and school leadership teams are receiving the in-service training required in order to put these elements into practice.

2.3 Possible Solutions to Address this OIP

Cawsey et al. (2016) reminds us that too much emphasis on congruence may have an adverse effect on the organizational change effort; however, successful solutions lie in finding the balance of flexibility and adaptability within the need for alignment. Consequently, after the gaps are prioritized at each school site, principals and their staff will need to be flexible and adaptable in selecting solutions that will address what they have identified as the greatest priority while remaining aligned with District and Ministry expectations.

I have developed five possible solutions to address this POP and I believe that all five solutions need to be implemented in order to have the greatest impact. The first is a strong commitment of DGPS senior staff to the utilization of DL for the collaborative development and implementation of school codes of conduct which I believe is necessary to have in place prior to schools attempting their site-specific solutions. However, the following solutions were designed so that individual schools could begin the journey at Solution 2 in the event DGPS cannot provide full endorsement and support.

2.3.1 **Solution 1: Governance.**

This first solution would be the ideal place for the District to begin the process of addressing what the data has revealed and commit to strategies that will ensure all District schools create and implement a school code of conduct that will effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make schools more safe, caring and inclusive. The first strategy would be for the District to update its governance structure to create a District Inclusion Policy. This policy will set the stage for all the work that is yet to occur at individual schools. The policy will signify the Board's firm commitment to the principles of respect, acceptance, safety, and equity. It will recognize and honour diversity, and value the contributions of all members of school communities to form the solid foundation of the District's safe, caring and inclusive school practice.

In the Inclusion Policy DGPS must state its recognition that visible and invisible diversities exist and therefore is committed to creating inclusive school environments for all who learn and work in the District. The Board must affirm that a school learning environment that reflects diversity, inclusivity, and equity is essential in supporting the highest levels of individual growth and achievement. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all employees reflect on how their interactions help create a respectful, accepting, safe, and supportive environment for students and staff of each school community. The policy would clearly articulate that all members of the DGPS community have the right to expect that all of the Board's policies, procedures, programs and communications would be inclusive and respectful, taking into consideration visible and invisible diversities including but not limited to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, culture and socio-economic status. Within the policy the Board would state its expectation that all students, staff, and members of the school communities will develop and adhere to a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response thereby fostering school cultures that are responsive to diverse social and cultural needs, understand how diversity impacts access to and outcomes of education, recognize the injustice of marginalization, and advocate for social justice and promote human rights (DGPS, 2016). With the strength of such a policy to support them, schools will be able to participate confidently in the ongoing

development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment of everyone, cultivating mutual respect, civility and a sense of belonging (DGPS, 2016).

A second part to this solution is that DGPS will need to consider hiring two social justice advocates (SJAs) as part of the District's itinerant staff, who would provide direct service and leadership to the District's 38 schools. There is one other district in the province where this is in place and the results have been very positive although their main focus has been on LGBTQ+ issues. In DGPS I would have the SJAs assist schools by providing curricular and extra-curricular supports to engage students, staff and the community in addressing social justice issues including, but not limited to, race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and ability (DGPS, 2016). The SJAs would work within all areas of DGPS including input into Board policies and administrative procedures, and chairing District committees. The SJAs would coordinate and provide assistance with district-wide initiatives, events, student leadership groups, and staff in-service and professional development related to inclusion.

The third part of this solution would be for the District to have each school identify an Inclusion Advocate who would represent their school in the areas of inclusion and social justice and attend monthly meetings with the SJAs. The SJAs would then model DL practice as they would become the leaders of the school-based inclusion leaders. Together they would work to ensure consistency of implementation of the school's code of conduct as it pertains to the direct teaching of desired behaviours and the development of school-wide systems to address inappropriate student verbal and physical behaviour at each school site through using the code of conduct as a teaching tool.

Lastly, the District would create a District Safe Schools Committee to advise and provide feedback to District staff and the Board of Education on Ministry directives, implementation of Board policies and administrative procedures, and system initiatives as they relate to the District's Inclusion Policy. Moreover, committee membership would be comprised of community leaders, teachers, support staff, community support agencies, trustees, and senior staff who would provide advice and direction regarding initiatives within the district. Furthermore, the District Safe Schools Committee would identify areas for greater student, parent, and community engagement in support of a positive

school culture and school-wide approach to positive behaviour supports and interventions (PBIS). Please see solution 3.

2.3.2 Solution 2: School Code of Conduct.

The second solution pertains specifically to the creation and effective implementation of the school code of conduct, because a review of all 38 school codes revealed that more work must be done on clearly outlining student behavioural expectations in the codes of conduct and ensuring that they are consistently taught and actively promoted. A process must be created to incorporate the active teaching of conduct expectations into regular classroom learning activities, monitoring the implementation of existing codes and improving strategies as needed, and consulting with other schools in the district to ensure compatibility of conduct expectations. Woven through all this work is that school codes are educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response.

2.3.3 Solution 3: Systems Theory.

Each school would implement PBIS or a similar approach as a school-wide system of positive behavioural management. School-wide preventive interventions such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Sugai & Horner, 2006), Community of Learners (Bielaczyc & Collins, n.d.), or Restorative Practice (Berkowitz, n.d.; McCluskey et al., 2008; Lustick, 2016) have been proven successful in promoting a positive school culture and reducing inappropriate student behaviour. Establishing, teaching, and reinforcing schoolwide rules and routines constitutes a widely accepted approach to addressing violent and disruptive behaviour in schools by focusing on school values rather than on the children themselves as day-to-day practice must be preventative, educative and restorative: educative because it seeks to directly teach desired behaviour thereby increasing acceptable behaviour (Nelson, Martella, & Galand, 1998); preventative in that it helps ensure that school practices do not cause or reinforce disruptive behaviour; and restorative in that the goal is to mitigate the harm done and restore the relationships and the student's place in the school community (Zehr, 2015).

2.3.4 **Solution 4: Distributed Leadership Practice.**

Duif, Harrison, and van Dartel (2013) report that the need for distribution of leadership within a school is not only a pragmatic issue of reducing the principal's workload, but it would have a positive impact on the self-efficacy of teachers and other staff members by encouraging them to show leadership based on their expertise in a collaborative work culture (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Adams, 1977; Hattie, 2009; Tian et al., 2016). The emphasis here is on leadership as interaction and practice rather than relying upon the actions associated with the formal leadership role of the principal. The interdependence of the staff and the school and community environment means that leadership activity is distributed in the interactive web of actors, artefacts and the situation (Spillane, 2006).

DL has various dimensions, such as what Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) refer to as shared purpose, social support, and voice (p. 1222); however, these dimensions do not prescribe what should be done in order to practice DL more effectively to produce desired outcomes. Carson et al. (2007) refer to these dimensions collectively, as an internal team environment enabling shared leadership because they work together to produce the kind of team context that encourages team members' willingness to both offer leadership influence and rely on the leadership of other team members (p. 1222). A distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; leadership practice is viewed as a product of the collective interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation (Spillane, 2005, p. 144). DL, like all leadership theory, can provide a frame that helps school leaders and others interpret and reflect on practice as a basis for rethinking and revising it (Spillane, as cited by Timperley, 2005). In this way, a DL approach can be a powerful tool for transforming the practice of leadership (Spillane, 2012). Principals cannot single-handedly try to lead complex school settings on their own. Spillane (2006) reports that DL provides school principals and those who work with them with a set of analytical tools to support reflection on their leadership practice. The DL framework can serve as a diagnostic tool for assessing leadership in schools that takes the focus directly to the day-to-day leadership work (Spillane, 2006). Spillane (2006) further adds that DL, as a diagnostic device, can press the school staff to investigate the leadership routines in the lived reality as well as in the formal structure of the school (p. 90).

A DL view of leadership also recognizes that leading a school requires multiple leaders which would require principals to share leadership responsibilities (Gronn, 2008; Spillane, 2006). Assisi (2015) reports that giving up control is key to finding success as a leader. However, Assisi also states that principals may have the most challenging part to play in a change initiative as they set out to share the leadership role, and *trust their people*. This DL approach is a collaborative effort undertaken between staff who trust and respect each other's contributions, and by using the principles of DL principals can empower their staff to make decisions, learn from mistakes and reach new heights (Aussi, 2015). As part of the recommendations outlined in chapter 3, principals will be provided with in-service training and other learning opportunities to develop their leadership skills in this area.

Spillane and Sherer (2004) state that DL involves understanding how leadership practice is stretched over the work of various school leaders and explores the leadership practice that is generated in the interactions among these people. This means that DL practice involves more than developing a leadership framework that is inclusive of the work of all leaders in the school and it would also involve more than just identifying which leaders are responsible for which functions (Spillane & Sherer, 2004). Therefore, Spillane (2006) argues that DL is not just about leaders and leadership functions but about the *practice* of leadership. Spillane and Sherer (2004) and Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) argue that leadership practice is constructed in the interaction of leaders, followers, and the situation which becomes a co-production of all three. Therefore, balancing day-to-day leadership practice with the broader situation is critical, and adding a professional learning community (PLC) perspective would be very helpful. By PLC, I am referring to collaborative teams who work interdependently (DuFour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). The PLC perspective helps to situate the analysis of leadership practice in the broader context and forces the issue of putting these instances of practice into context. In such a context, Woods (2015) determined that leadership is emergent, arising from the ongoing flow of interaction across the school and its hierarchy, not simply the actions of a small leadership elite.

2.3.5 **Solution 5: Implementation of Professional Learning Communities.**

DGPS teacher professional development must change from the traditional “one-shot” workshop and be replaced with a professional learning community (PLC) model that places all school staff at the center of a supportive learning model (Blankstein, Cole, Houston, & Hope, 2008). Stoll et al. (2006) affirms that the PLC model is connected with the concepts of inquiry, reflection, and school self-evaluation. The term PLC could be used to describe grade level teams, a school committee, a department, or an entire school district (DuFour, 2004). This solution pertains to a PLC created by school staff who are committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve (Blankstein et al., 2008).

The PLC offers a powerful response to the expectations for increased knowledge on how to address students’ inappropriate behaviour and student learning. Blankstein et al. (2008) tell us that the power of a PLC resides in its focus on improving the knowledge and skills of an entire school staff, as opposed to improving selected teachers, so that all students, not just some students, experience success as per the DGPS mission statement, *Success for All*. Blankstein et al. (2008) tell us that the most successful PLCs align their practice with the descriptions of the three words in the acronym:

P =Professional. WHO will participate in the PLC? The answer includes those staff in the school who have the responsibility and accountability to deliver an effective instructional program to students, ensuring that students achieve high standards of learning. PLCs include the administrators, teachers, and instructional support staff, who are counsellors, librarians, school psychologists, and others.

L =Learning. WHAT will dominate the work of the PLC? The needs of the professionals are paramount, the content and activities, the knowledge and skills, that they feel are necessary to support improved instructional practice and to increase their effectiveness. The PLC is structured around adults learning so that they develop, over time, the competencies required to ensure successful student learning.

C =Community. HOW is learning structured and organized to support educators in advancing their knowledge and skills? PLCs require structures and processes to leverage the benefit of adult collegial learning (pp. 23-24).

The professional learning community offers a structure that accelerates and supports the professional learning of the staff in the school in a community setting. Thus, a PLC offers a significant staff development and school improvement approach that contributes to whole-school improvement and the school's overall effectiveness (Blankstein et al., 2008). Schein (2010) argues that a school culture that enhances learning balances all stakeholders' interests; focuses on people rather than systems; makes people believe they can impact their environment; makes time for learning; encourages open communication; believes in team work; and has approachable leaders. Ensuring learning and collaboration at all levels requires culture building that focuses on promoting professional learning within PLCs as fundamental to the change process (Stoll et al., 2006).

2.4 Leadership Approaches to Change

As in the past, school principals are held responsible for the teaching and learning conditions within their schools. However, unlike past practice, principals are now empowering staff to take on leadership roles in student achievement as well as in student conduct. Distributed leadership expands the role of traditional leadership beyond the formal leader to include staff in the work of leading change initiatives within schools (Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Halverson, 2002; Leithwood, Mascal, & Strauss, 2009; Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009; Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). The understanding of learning and behavioural issues that develop within a school can be greatly influenced by the interactions of the staff within that school.

The concept of leadership as distributed across school staff has proven to be a useful framework for understanding how schools might achieve their preferred organizational state (Timperley, 2005). In this OIP, DL includes teachers who would become empowered through the implementation of PLCs, and based on their expertise would become a leader in their school for the purpose of improving student behaviour, and subsequently, student learning.

According to Gronn (2003), Distributed Leadership Theory suggests the principal work to extend leadership throughout the school to include both individuals and teams of staff. Principals yet remain the key leader in the school who sets the tone for

collaborative practice to occur. Within a DL approach, the principal is no longer the only leader and instead, works to support the notion that any staff member can demonstrate leadership within the school (Gronn, 2003). It must also be stated that not everyone in a school may desire or have the skills to be a leader, and therefore collective leadership in a group is also acceptable (Harris, 2003). A review of successful leadership practice in school improvement reveals a consistent finding that power need not be dispersed within the school but instead between people (Day & Sammons, 2013; Leithwood, Jantzi, Ryan, & Steinbach, 1997). In order to do this, the principal's leadership behaviours have to change within the school. Collaboration opens the possibility for teachers to become leaders and to be able to create changes for school improvement (Hermann, 2016). DL is essentially a group activity that is relationship bound, rather than individual bound (Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Harris & Spillane, 2008). A key focus of the principal's leadership practice now is to focus on team-building that includes all members of their staff, and students where appropriate. Spillane (2005) and Harris and Spillane (2008) support this leadership practice suggesting that leadership no longer rests exclusively on the principal's skills and knowledge, but also on the interactions between staff within their school context. DL consequently is centered on the interactions between people (Spillane, 2005). Therefore, depending on the particular leadership task, the leader's knowledge and expertise may be best explored at the group or collective level rather than at the individual level (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p. 25). The idea of leadership distributed across multiple people and situations has proven to be a more useful framework for understanding the realities of schools and how they might be improved (Hermann, 2016). It must also be noted that empirical evidence on how leadership is distributed within more or less successful schools is not yet available.

In his review of theory and research regarding DL, Bolden (2011) reported that the key contribution of DL is not in offering a replacement for other leadership approaches, but in enabling the recognition of a variety of forms of leadership in a more integrated and systemic manner (p. 264). Bolden reports that the potential ability of DL to achieve this is limited by its use in specific educational contexts leaving it detached from the wider leadership literature. However, within the context of this OIP, DL is not presented as a program that can be purchased or as a prescription to be followed. In this

OIP DL is presented as a leadership approach to change which principals can add to their leadership skill repertoire to build capacity within their school to address issues of student conduct and learning. Bush and Glover (2012) and Jones (2014) state that while the DL approach enables the expertise of more people to be acknowledged and influence change, it relies heavily on the endorsement and support of the formal leadership hierarchy. Therefore, DL is challenging work for principals who utilize this approach but it has proven to build staff capacity (Murphy et al., 2009) because it extends decision making to those who are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the decision-making process (Fullan, 2002).

In this OIP, the DL approach is intended to be a means through which a school principal can reflect upon their leadership practice. The conceptual foundation for DL in this OIP stresses the point that the unique contributions, knowledge, and expertise of a network of staff must be created to assist in the process of improving student conduct. If used in this manner, DL has the capacity to produce effective school improvement because it involves a greater number of individuals in the leadership process and empowers school staff to take a more active role in their own environments (Baloglu, 2012; Hulpia & Devos, 2009; Tian et al., 2016).

Copland (2003) argues that for DL to succeed in schools, at least three important organizational preconditions are required (pp. 379-380). First, DL implies the development of a culture within the school based upon collaboration, trust, professional learning, and collective responsibility. Second, DL implies a need for strong consensus building regarding the important gaps that need to be addressed at the school because without a clear understanding of what constitutes the key issues, DL work can become dissipated and undirected (Copland, 2003). Therefore, reaching consensus can only occur through the collection and analysis of data that sheds light upon the issues at hand and the progress being made toward making the school more safe, caring and inclusive. Finally, DL also implies the need for increased expertise in terms of strategies for improving teaching and learning for all those working in the school, regardless of role (Copland, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2007). If DL is suitably practiced it will require everyone to engage in the development of the necessary professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to consistently deliver on moving the school toward the preferred organizational state.

Therefore, in order for DGPS to bring about the desired change in schools and achieve the new vision, principals and their DL teams must focus on the behavioural, social, and cultural conditions in their school environments. This chapter offers a framework of possible solutions that support a DL approach to leading school change. The DL leadership approach is proposed as a necessary skill set for school staff to develop in order to cooperatively share leadership for the purpose of making their schools safe, caring and inclusive. It is important to note that the framework solutions, although described separately, are all interrelated.

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, Chapter Two has focused on planning and development. In an attempt to create a school code of conduct that will effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour, a DL framework for leading the change process has been selected to address the ethical and moral imperative embedded in this POP. Relevant research literature was analyzed and information and data gathered to inform Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model for DGPS and its stakeholders. Chapter three will clearly outline the pragmatic and systematic employment of the change implementation plan, which will include change process monitoring, evaluation, ethical considerations and the change process communication plan. And lastly, Chapter Three will articulate next steps and future considerations.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

3 Introduction

Chapter Two focused on the development of a leadership framework for understanding the need for change in Dogwood Grove Public Schools (DGPS) based upon extant data and information obtained to guide the selection of an appropriate change path. In this chapter, I will develop the plan for implementing, monitoring and communicating the organizational change process to address this problem of practice: to explore how K-12 public school principals can lead the collaborative creation and implementation of a school code of conduct to effect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make their school safe, caring and inclusive. This chapter culminates in the identification of recommendations that will provide school principals with the tools and skills they require for the collaborative development of the school code of conduct which will serve as a school-wide vehicle for addressing inappropriate student behaviour in an educative, preventative and restorative manner.

Unacceptable conduct is a significant problem in DGPS as determined by the 30% of students feeling unsafe in District schools due to bullying, teasing, or feeling that they are being picked-on. These types of incidents are widely known to negatively affect student achievement as well as students' sense of well-being at school. Sugai, Sprague, Homer, and Walker (2000), Astor, Benbenishty, and Estrada (2009), and the BCPVPA Leadership Standards (2013) for principals and vice principals in BC place school principals in a key leadership role for maintaining safe schools. Sugai et al. (2000, p. 94) report that it takes committed people using appropriate and ever-improving policies, procedures and practices to make schools safe, effective and controlled. Through their research, Sugai et al. (2000) determined that, "the strategies used by schools for preventing and responding to violence need to be tailored to the feature of the behaviour and the environmental context in which the behaviour is observed" (p. 94). To this end, the BC Ministry of Education (BCEd., 2008b) has clearly stated that all members of BC school communities must share in the commitment to maintain safe, caring and orderly schools by teaching, modeling and encouraging socially responsible behaviours that

contribute to the school community, solve problems in peaceful ways, value diversity, and defend human rights (p. 9).

In this chapter I will identify the elements of the change implementation plan through which DGPS schools will utilize their code of conduct as praxis for creating safer schools. The subsequent sections will describe the process for monitoring and evaluating the change plan, discuss leadership ethics in relation to organizational change, and present the communications plan that will keep all stakeholders informed. The concluding section of this chapter will present next steps and future considerations.

3.1 The Change Implementation Plan

For the purpose of this OIP, the change implementation plan is designed to assist all schools in the District prepare their site-specific plan of action to address student inappropriate verbal and physical behaviour in order to make their school more safe, caring and inclusive.

With this as the objective, I have reviewed Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols' (2016) *Change Path Model*, Lewin's *Changing as Three Steps* (CATS) (Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016), Kotter's *Eight-Stage Change Process* (Pollack & Pollack, 2015), Beckhard and Harris' *Change-Management Process* (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 52) and the works of Fullan (2001a, 2008) to provide a framework for implementing the desired change that would help eliminate barriers and potential pitfalls that could make the plan vulnerable to failure. After much time spent comparing models, I have selected Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model because I believe the authors have incorporated the "best of the best" processes and content from the literature to guide a change plan. Knowing that the use of the Change Path Model may not guarantee success, it will concretely organize the change process for District and school leaders and help those affected by the change become more receptive to it. I have chosen to represent Cawsey et al.'s (2016) Change Path Model in a cyclical manner to highlight the cycle of awakening people to the need for change, assessing for action, developing an action plan, and monitoring and adjusting the plan for lasting sustainability. The elements identified in Figure 3.1 represent steps in a cyclical process, and as such, once the planning process has completed one cycle of the model, any one (or more) of the four elements could be emphasized when the cycle begins again depending on the specific needs of the school.

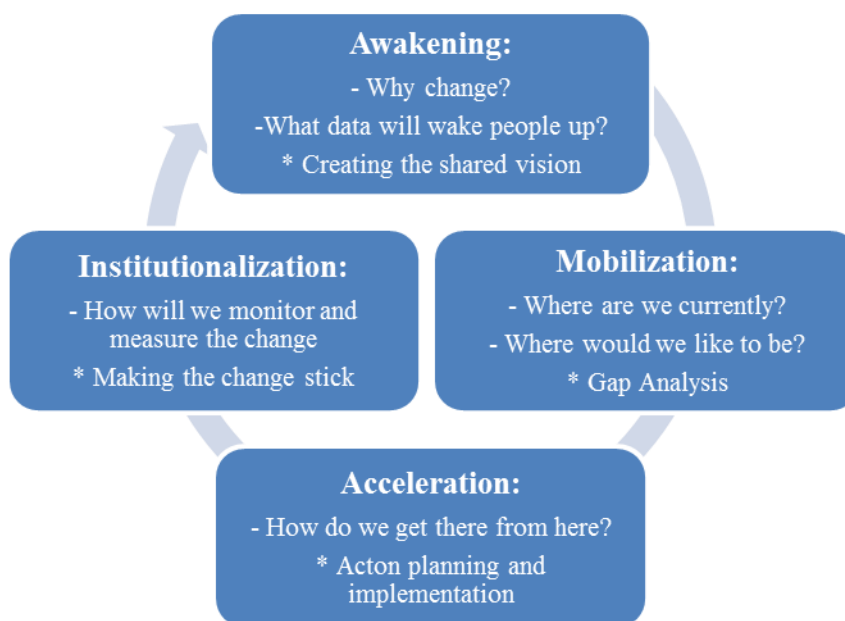


Figure 3.1. Adapted from The Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Because of my sphere of influence as a senior staff member in DGPS, this OIP is created with two separate, ideally concomitant components; the first involves work at the District level and the other has a school focus. Each can occur independently, but the best-case scenario is that the District works on its components in tandem with the work being done at schools. However, if for any reason the District is not able to take on its components, this OIP provides the actions necessary for an individual school to address students' inappropriate verbal and physical behaviour at their site.

This OIP emphasizes the development of a collaborative culture in which principals use Distributive Leadership (DL) as a means to actively engage students, staff and other key stakeholders in the process of creating, reviewing and implementing their school's code of conduct as the vehicle to effect the desired change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). DL in the context of this OIP pertains to "the sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles across the school organization" (Mayrowetz, Murphy, Seashore Louis, & Smylie, 2007, p. 470). A DL model in a school would focus on having school leaders participate in decision-making

rather than there being just one authoritative leader [principal] who makes all of the decisions.

In 2007, the BC Minister of Education created an order establishing provincial standards for a code of conduct under section 85 (1.1) of the School Act (BC School Act, 2007). From that point, all school districts in the province were to have implemented district policy and procedures to ensure that codes of conduct were established and put into effect. Therefore, the implementation of the code of conduct is both a Ministerial Order and a District Policy and consequently, it must be put into place. It is anticipated that when staff and key stakeholders become committed to a collaborative process to achieve the desired future state they will become more invested in the change plan and readily work toward the creation, implementation and direct teaching of the school's code of conduct. As stakeholders discover that the desired future state will be more effective in addressing student behavioural issues they will come to terms with the need for personal and organizational changes that they may have otherwise resisted or opted out of.

The Change Path Model was selected because it can assist DGPS in addressing resistance to change by helping stakeholders question the status quo through the creation of a culture of change that is "incremental by design", as described by Cawsey et al. (2016, p. 244). This process would allow stakeholders to ask questions while seeking better ways to accomplish everyday tasks thereby creating a desire to learn new ways of doing things (Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990, p. 164). Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990, p. 165) purport that this new learning will further enhance system effectiveness and result in an even stronger commitment to change; and that any improvements in commitment, coordination, and competence will create a growing sense of staff efficacy (Armenakis & Harris, 2009).

This change implementation plan is dependent upon DL for increasing the capacity of principals to make those small scale and incremental changes by infusing them as part of ordinary organizational practice (Beycioglu & Kondakci, 2014). Tolerance of ambiguities, the ability to respond to emergent local needs, the creation of healthy and autonomous Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Gallucci, 2008), and collaborative team learning (Boyce, 2003) are some of the fundamental skills and attributes of the distributive leader.

While individual schools are incorporating DL into their change plan, DGPS senior staff play an important role in supporting principals and their schools. Through my work on the District's senior team I will emphasize, with my colleagues, the importance of supporting principals and their schools as they implement DL practice. As senior staff on the learning side of the organization, we will endorse DL as an important practice to be employed in addition to the skills principals already utilize in terms of transformational and instructional leadership. In my role as assistant superintendent I am well positioned to coach principals on the Change Path Model, and explain how DL can assist them in updating their school code of conduct, while also emphasizing that this work must be done as it is both a District and a Ministry mandate. However, as senior staff we would all need to emphasize that this work can best be accomplished through a collaborative and distributive approach to leading change, which school staff and stakeholders would find more palatable than presenting it as a District mandate or directive.

In terms of the District's commitment to this change plan, that commitment would be evidenced through the hiring of two part-time coordinators into the position of Social Justice Advocate (SJA) whose role it would be to model DL as they work with teachers and school teams to review data, identify concerns, and initiate change as illustrated in the new school organizational infrastructure in Appendix E. The SJAs would report to a member of senior staff and be available to assist principals and their staff in addressing the challenging issues of bullying, intimidation, harassment and discrimination. They would work to break down political barriers by also being members of the District teachers' association's Social Justice Committee.

Senior staff's work in educating the Board of Education is also very important as trustees must understand the change process being utilized and the necessity and importance of the work. It is through educating and aligning trustees with this work that senior staff would be in a position to acquire additional staffing, for positions such as the SJAs, to support and promote this effort in District schools.

The final aspect of District support in this change plan is the creation of a District Safe Schools Committee with membership comprised of key stakeholders, including trustees. The purpose of the committee would be to listen to the voice of stakeholders and

utilize that information to inform District safe schools practices. The committee would also double as a Community Council that could be brought together when necessary to advise the District when faced with complex safe schools matters involving racism and/or discrimination. Also, with the SJAs as co-chairs of the new District Safe Schools Committee, they would enlist membership, not only from stakeholders, but from the broader community in order to further break-down political and power barriers.

I believe that a successfully implemented safe, caring and inclusive school code of conduct must include a school-wide approach (BCEd., 2008a) as no single staff member or group can be expected to address student behavioural problems in isolation; nor can anyone be permitted to opt out. Therefore, the proposed change implementation plan is comprehensive in that it is to be created in collaboration with all key stakeholders. Each school in DGPS may be at a different stage in creating a safe, caring and inclusive school due to their site-specific context in terms of their visible and invisible diversities including but not limited to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, culture and socio-economic status. However, the implementation plan presented here would permit each school to continue in the most appropriate direction according to their collaboratively created action plan. Finally, as stated earlier, regardless of the District's ability to commit to the components identified under their jurisdiction in this plan, individual schools can still create the vision of their desired future state to meet the goal of a safe, caring and inclusive school that promotes student learning. The four stages of the Change Path Model as outlined in Figure 3.1 will now be discussed individually.

3.1.1 The Awakening Stage.

Schools in the awakening stage are in the process of recognizing that students have the right to feel safe at school and this needs to be addressed by all stakeholders. The school principal and staff are united in their understanding that students require a safe, caring and inclusive school environment in which to learn. This stage would begin with principals reviewing and sharing the school's data with staff, students and parents. The data would indicate that change needs to occur to make the school more safe, caring and inclusive and that they must work together to unfreeze from past patterns (Cawsey et al., 2016; Schein, 2010, p. 293) which have served only to maintain the status quo. Through the process of reviewing data, it would become clear that they must awaken to

the need for change that is incremental and continuous but also reactive and responsive to the data (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 21; Nadler & Tushman, 1998). During this process, principals, as change leaders, must understand that some staff may find the development of a change process revolutionary while others may not be threatened by it at all (Cawsey et al., 2016).

Codes of conduct describe the expectations for how students are expected to conduct themselves at school, while attending school functions, or when engaging in other conduct that impacts the safe, caring and inclusive nature of the school (BCEd., 2008a, p. 7). Principals will need to review with staff the expectations outlined in Ministerial Order 276/07 (M276/07), Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct, District policies and administrative procedures and share with staff expectations already in place by the province and District to improve student safety. Discussions would need to ensue regarding how this work constitutes a moral imperative for student safety and that it can easily assist the school in determining their vision for the desired future state.

The standards outlined in M276/07 set out the processes to be followed in the development of school codes of conduct specifically stating that students, parents and staff need to be involved in both the development and the annual review of the code (BCEd., 2008b, p. 4). During this stage, principals would work with key stakeholders to identify the concerns indicated by the data and begin creating the awareness of the need for change. The various surveys and equity audit discussed in chapters one and two would now be completed with students, staff and parents to better understand student behaviour in the school and school community. A thorough review of data from the school's satisfaction survey results, school disciplinary data and school-specific survey data would likely determine several key issues that require attention: e.g. bullying, fighting, discrimination, intimidation, harassment, and general feelings of being unsafe (Tables 1.1 – 1.7).

In this awakening stage, there would be a lot of reading, auditing, inquiry, and discussion about the nature and context of student inappropriate behaviour in the school and how to bring about improvement. Bringing about change would not be the same at each school site as each school has a different culture and staff dynamic (Schein, 2016).

Clearly, each principal would need to initiate change and work with their key stakeholders to get an action plan in motion.

Principals would find gaining approval for change less intimidating when staff understand how the change will positively impact both students and the school community and how the school code of conduct can be the vehicle to move them forward toward the envisioned state (Cawsey et al., 2016). Framing change in ways that reduces any sense of incongruence with existing structures and systems will also reduce any sense of disruption and risk that the plan would entail. This would also allow the principal to move in a systematic fashion, learning and modifying systems and structures in ways that look incremental in the short term but have significant long-term effects (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 167).

The question of *why change* may not at first be evident to everyone. The initial behaviour of some stakeholders may be complacency, resignation and in some cases the desire to ignore the problem and remain frozen (Schein, 2016, p. 322). The principal would need to develop and strengthen relationships with staff and work to distribute leadership within the school and among other key stakeholders to get people involved and engaged (DuFour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Elmore, 2000; Harris, 2005; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

Nadler and Tushman (1989) report that incremental changes are not as intense as strategic changes and can usually be implemented without altering the organization's basic management processes. Therefore, the relative intensity of a school's change plan would be affected by their school culture and complexity (Schein, 2016). Complexity in schools could be due to the size of the staff and student population, together with the diversity inherent in the school in terms of the number of geographic dispersion areas, and diversities in terms of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, etc.

It is important that in this awakening stage the principal not only work with school staff, but also solicit representation from various parent groups such as the school Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and from student groups such as the Student Council to empower them to participation and provide input into the development of the conduct expectations for acceptable behaviour. To be certain that the voices of all student groups

are heard, additional student and parent involvement may be solicited from multicultural groups, gay/straight alliance (GSA), and established athletics. In addition to outlining acceptable student behaviour, the code must also outline expectations for unacceptable conduct. It would be a good idea to include at least one statement that communicates that all behaviours are not listed in the code, but that those cited are examples; otherwise, quibbling about unacceptable behaviour that is not explicitly listed may occur (BCEd., 2008b, p. 7). Some examples of how acceptable and unacceptable behaviours could be written can be found in Appendix D.

The distribution of leadership could be orchestrated and managed by having stakeholders work in a change focused PLC, hereafter referred to as the *Change PLC*, as they work through the various stages of creating the desired school culture by developing a school-wide approach to student behaviour. The principal could work to motivate staff and other stakeholders by having them assume leadership roles in developing the change initiative(s) that will move the school toward the desired future state and instill a sense of ownership and enthusiasm in the work. It is important at this stage not to inadvertently set the school up for failure by attempting a complicated change plan without the necessary foundation or buy-in from key stakeholders (Jaffe, Crooks, & Watson, 2009). If the school is not yet ready to take on a school-wide approach to addressing student behaviour it would be wise to develop smaller prevention and restorative initiatives that would assist the school in building momentum toward the larger issues (Jaffe et al., 2009). Schools in the awakening stage may already have some prevention initiatives and restorative practices in place but these may be isolated and not integrated into a larger plan. Therefore, the discussion at the Change PLC would need to cover these various aspects.

3.1.2 The Mobilization Stage.

A school in the mobilization stage has a good understanding of its needs, has created a list of issues that require attention, and is in the position to use the data to create a clear plan of action. The school principal provides leadership as they work together with staff and key stakeholders to collaboratively review data and information in order to gain insight into issues that require an educative, preventative and restorative focus. The principal and other staff leaders meet with each stakeholder group to discuss the issues

that are priorities for them. The use of a gap analysis questionnaire would invite key stakeholders to consider the data presented in relation to their own beliefs and context while asking questions such as *Where are we currently?* and *Where would we like to be?* thereby providing space to reflect on the results and implications of the gap analysis for input into the code of conduct implementation and practice (Stoll & Temperley, 2010). The gap analysis process would be the commencement of the mobilization stage. There may be staff and other stakeholders who would want to get started immediately to address the problems indicated through the data analysis who would also be interested in taking on leadership roles to make the change initiative successful. Staff who resist would need some extra support, coaching and/or mentoring. The school principal would need to recognize and reinforce staff and stakeholders' efforts as they begin to articulate and embrace the change plan while also honouring and promoting their leadership within the school.

As identified in chapters one and two, an important gap that must be addressed is the discrepancy between what school staff interpret as safe and what the student voice is revealing. DGPS District survey data indicates that as many as 30% of students report not feeling safe at school. Several student issues will become glaringly apparent as outlined in the Awakening Stage. Principals must work closely with their staff as they may discover that their existing school code of conduct is not a living document; that it is not educative, preventative or restorative, and/or that it is not specific or detailed enough to address the actual issues that students are experiencing at school. It may be that formal school-wide systems instilling the school's code of conduct may be faulty or they simply may not exist. Principals would need to work with key stakeholders to create initiatives that address these issues and explicitly teach the desired behavioural expectations. The ultimate goal is that the school collaboratively develops their code of conduct which is educative and preventative in practice and provides a restorative response (Cawsey et al., 2016).

The Change PLC would also need to address the consequences for unacceptable behaviour and outline them in their school code of conduct. M276/07 states that the code must take into account students' age, maturity, and special needs. M276/07 and District policy sets the expectation that responses to unacceptable conduct should be pre-planned,

consistent, and fair; disciplinary action should be educative, preventative and restorative, rather than punitive; and as often as possible, students should be encouraged to participate in the development of meaningful consequences for violations of the school's code of conduct (BCEd., 2008b, p. 8).

It is known that within any student population there are students with varying levels of intellectual ability, students who have various special needs, and students falling within a range of different developmental stages (BCEd., 2008b). It would be a necessary activity during this mobilization stage to address such differences in student levels of understanding to ensure that they are reflected in both expectations and consequences for conduct. Staff and stakeholders must be made aware that M276/07 mandates that codes of conduct are to include statements that make it clear that their application will not discriminate against a student who cannot meet a behavioural expectation because of a disability.

Preventing inequity due to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion, culture and socio-economic status is about educating students to develop the attitudes, skills and approaches necessary for enabling all members of the school community to recognize and value diversity (Safe@School, 2013). Prevention begins with actively and respectfully identifying difference by providing for many possibilities in all change planning, interactions and communications.

A school in the mobilization stage actively works through their Change PLC to establish goals to assist in the overall plan for making the school environment safe for all students. This Change PLC would need to meet on a regular basis with all teacher leaders present, or if it is a small school, all staff could be present. At this time, decisions would be made that reinforce or change current school processes and procedures, and in-service would be organized to support the plan and get stakeholders ready for specific initiatives (Jaffe et al., 2009). Consensus would need to be reached among stakeholders with respect to the vision for the desired state which would provide a great deal of hope and energy as they envision the implementation of a sustainable plan.

3.1.3 The Acceleration Stage.

A school at the acceleration stage is committed to their action plan and the implementation steps involved. The action plan would be straightforward at each school site because it would explicitly address the list of identified issues requiring attention.

The principal would discuss the issues with key stakeholders and endeavour to have others take on leadership roles as they continue to work collaboratively to implement the plan. This approach is aimed at changing the way staff think about their role and give them a reason to engage in the change initiative. The principal may learn from some staff that they want to develop their leadership skills and this would be encouraged through the distributed leadership processes set in place in the school. Because the school change plan would be long term, the principal must remain committed and unfettered despite unexpected barriers and hurdles inherent in promoting leadership in others. The principal must also be mindful of their nonverbal communication during all change events.

It is at this stage where the principal would begin reviewing expectations of staff performance, initiating formal supervision practices, and engaging with the District human resources department to address any staff performance issues that may come to light. The principal would need to develop a communication plan that is personal, collaborative, constant and direct (Cawsey et al., 2016) so everyone is on the same page at the same time. Staff will need to be recognized for their hard work and/or for their leadership. This recognition and celebration would reinforce the change plan, build efficacy, and encourage late adopters to get on board (Cawsey et al., 2016).

A key focus in this acceleration stage is on further integrating initiatives and maintaining a sense of renewal. The new initiatives may actually be enhancements of existing programs and not necessarily the addition of a new program or structure. The direct teaching of the code of conduct would now be embedded in the school curriculum and culture and therefore does not stand alone or stand out. Staff, students, parents and other key stakeholders now take responsibility for the existence, direct teaching and implementation of the code. There is recognition that the maintenance of the code requires an active, ongoing commitment to review, evaluate, and respond to what is happening in the school and to share expertise with others beyond the school (Jaffe et al.,

2009, p. 42). It is known that in schools, DL entails a deliberate organizational redesign by the principal and purposeful engagement by the other school staff (Tian et al., 2016, p. 157). In the context of this OIP, an example of this redesign has been prepared and the proposed new school organizational infrastructure is presented in Appendix E.

It is important that the Change PLC consider how to integrate this work with other programs and supports already existing in the school. Research indicates that schools use many different strategies and programs to prevent violence and promote a safe, caring and inclusive school (Bradshaw, 2013, p. 291) which can become overwhelming and lead to poor implementation fidelity (Bradshaw, 2013). As mentioned in earlier chapters, PBIS is a school-wide approach that provides a framework for the integration of existing programs and strategies (Villa & Thousand, 2017). Because PBIS is a three-tiered system, students whose needs are not met by the school-wide system implemented in Tier one (Sugai & Horner, 2006) would receive more targeted support in Tier 2, or even intensive support in Tier 3. Figure 3.2 represents the existing three tiers of intervention in DGPS.

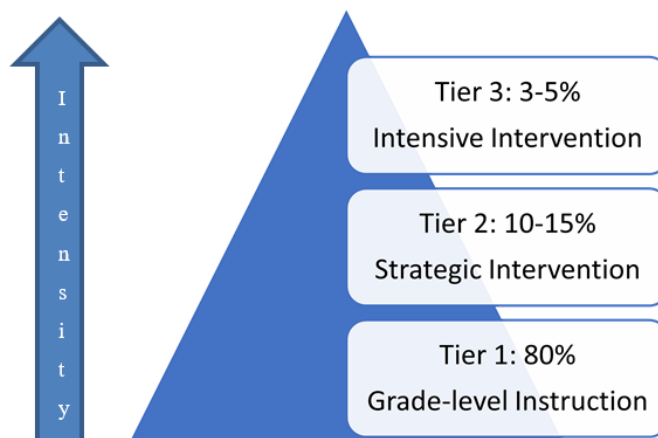


Figure 3.2. Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework.

If PBIS were to be added in Tier 1 all students would receive grade-level instruction through direct teaching of the desired behaviours as outlined in the code of conduct. If the school decided not to use PBIS they could build the teaching into their existing Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, or perhaps consider some other school-wide system or program. According to the literature, 80 percent of students will

succeed with research-based instruction, differentiation and re-teaching in Tier 1 (Jones, 2013). Tier 2 represents short-term strategic interventions that some students, approximately 15%, will require in order to successfully negotiate grade-level expectations (Jones, 2013). And lastly, Tier 3, the top tier of the triangle, represents the intensive instruction and services that approximately 1 – 5% of the student population would require in order to increase their skill level to the point where they would be able to interact successfully with grade level expectations (Jones, 2013). The visual representation in Figure 3.2 serves to reinforce the notion of increased focus and intensity from the base of the triangle, upward. There is much to learn and various components to consider when a school selects RTI or PBIS as their school's framework for behaviour intervention. This OIP does not get into the specifics of implementation of these frameworks but there are many quality resources available to aid staff in this endeavour.

The principal would need to be the leadership pillar in supporting staff, working with stakeholders and maintaining continuity and momentum toward the change plan. Morale and commitment should be expected to rise as everyone works together toward the common vision of the desired future state which also increases teacher and principal efficacy (Lambersky, 2016; McCluskey et al., 2008; Sehgal, Nambudiri, & Mishra, 2017). In summary, Cawsey et al. (2016) indicate that the key practices in a successful implementation plan are ownership and commitment to change, intentional prioritization of time, and school-wide accountability that includes strong communication and clear decision-making processes.

3.1.4 The Institutionalization Stage.

Schools at the institutionalization stage have their code of conduct well integrated into all aspects of school life, providing the school with the capacity to respond effectively to any new issues that arise (Jaffe et al., 2009, p. 42). M276/07 states that schools must make their code of conduct available to the public and that it is disseminated to all staff, parents and students at the beginning of the school year. When students enroll during the year they and their parents receive a copy of the code of conduct. The code must also be displayed in prominent locations within schools where visitors as well as others who are regularly in the school can read it (BCEd., 2008b).

Given that most school sites in DGPS are relatively small, principals would be able to measure progress directly as they work to institutionalize their change plan; integrating it into the fabric of the school. Some changes would be clearly evident as students would start to appear happier and staff would be responding to students in educative, preventative and restorative ways; accordingly, other necessary changes would only become evident through the analysis of future stakeholder surveys and data. Change PLC members would come to realize that school-wide systems, such as PBIS or RtI, would take longer periods of time to enculturate. However, through adherence to a collaboratively agreed upon change plan, school leaders would be able to pinpoint evidence that their efforts have had a positive effect on the culture of their school thereby creating one much better aligned with its stakeholders and environment (Cawsey et al., 2016). Some such evidence would be correlational, derived from school-based data assessing the relationship between various aspects of the school environment, and also from student outcomes per disaggregated student demographics. Other evidence would be causal, being derived from evaluations of PBIS initiatives or other interventions that were selected to alter student behaviour in desired ways.

In practice, schools would need to consistently communicate their code of conduct to everyone on at least an annual basis. Schools could include their code of conduct in the school handbook that is provided to families at the beginning of each school year (BCEd., 2008a). Parent-teacher events, newsletters and school websites are other opportunities to communicate and reinforce the code. In the institutionalization stage, communications should not only remind students and parents of conduct expectations but also celebrate improvements in creating a positive school culture (BCEd., 2008a). During this stage, school assemblies would assist in reinforcing and refreshing school-wide understanding of the expectations of the school code of conduct. This stage brings about the consistent teaching and active promotion of the behavioural expectations throughout the school year that includes the development of a sense of pride and ownership in the code (BCEd., 2008a).

Successes must be celebrated all along the way and new staff, students and parents must be welcomed and encouraged to join staff and be mentored to become future leaders. It is in this stage of implementation that the school can be a role model as a

dynamic school that is willing to share experiences and expertise with others (Jaffe et al., 2009, p. 42).

The implementation of the first school change plan is just the beginning. Despite the leadership and commitment to the change plan and the code of conduct, the school must remain consistent and coordinated to maintain the appropriate levels of safety, caring and inclusiveness. Each of the stakeholders must also know and understand their role in maintaining positive change. Thus, the first change plan would assist stakeholders in learning more about the school and school community and the critical factors in successful school-wide practice. New lists of important issues would be created that would take the school to the next level of development in safe, caring and inclusive school practice. Goals must remain fluid, be influenced by the opinions of others, and evolve as everyone learns how to address issues of inappropriate student verbal and physical behaviour (Cawsey et al., 2016).

To ensure that a review of the school code of conduct takes place in the school year, a process of review should be regularly scheduled and reconsidered in light of emerging circumstances (BCEd., 2008b, p. 6).

3.2 The New School Organizational Chart.

Figure 3.3 outlines the key features of the desired school operational infrastructure that would fully integrate behavioural learning supports with classroom instruction and school-wide implementation. This operational infrastructure was designed with DL and the Change PLC which are necessary for developing a comprehensive and equitable system to address the barriers to both behavioural learning and teaching.

Figure 3.3 was designed utilizing existing staff and refocusing the role of the school-based 0.2 FTE Inquiry and Innovation Coordinator (I&I Coordinator). The original role of the I&I Coordinator was to encourage teacher/staff innovation and inquiry with the new curriculum and assessment practices. This implementation plan would require the I&I Coordinator to take a leadership role in the planning process for directly teaching students the desired behaviours while also encouraging leadership in others. These conversations would occur at the Change PLC meetings. In addition, staff time during the work week would be required for the Change PLC to meet regularly in order to share data and create short and long-term action plans and next-steps. This would be

accomplished by adjusting the length of one school day per week to permit teachers and other staff to meet during the work day. This would not require additional funding but instead, a modification to the school day for students. The challenge would be to first work this through with the Board, both the teacher and support staff unions, and then with the parent community so they understand the rationale for releasing students earlier on one school day and lengthening the other days just enough to maintain the Ministry prescribed number of instructional minutes per week. With this in place, there would be no cost for teacher release time to attend PLC meetings as they would all be held during the work day.

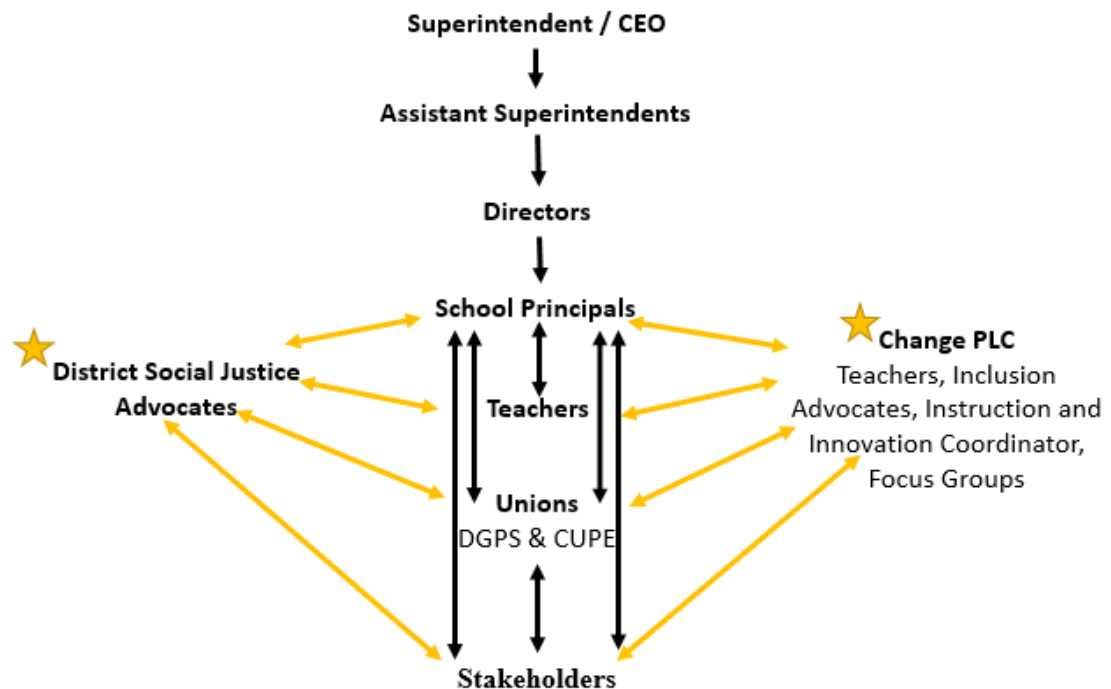


Figure 3.3 The New School Strategic Organizational Chart. This chart indicates the original aspects of the organization (in black) and the additional components as the result of a DL approach as suggested through this OIP (in yellow).

Figure 3.4 illustrates the seven essential components that are addressed in this OIP. The first three are the school-based components which are star shaped and include

School Inclusion Advocates, School Principal Leadership, and the School Change PLC. The four essential District components are circle shaped and include the District Learning Framework, District Social Justice Advocates, District Leadership (including District Governance & Ministerial Orders), and the District Safe Schools Committee. These seven essential components have the potential to bring about significant change but they hinge on the skill set of the school principal as they build and distribute leadership to their staff giving them responsibility and accountability in ensuring the vision for the desired future state is maintained.

The function of the school Change PLC is to work on system/organizational development while focus groups take on specific items to accomplish in the short-term and provide information back to the Change PLC. The school Inclusion Advocate would serve as a known safe person at school while also taking a lead role with the focus groups to ensure that the voices of both visible and invisible minorities are considered.



Figure 3.4. These are the seven essential components of this OIP.

A budget would also need to be identified and secured from both District and/or school funding in order to assist with safe school intervention strategies. The resources

for such intervention strategies would have to be prioritized through the allocation of the school's instructional resources budget that they receive each year for supplementary materials. Technology would also be required to develop a record keeping system for student behaviour if one is not already in place. DGPS has a readily available PBIS data collection tool that can be provided to each school free of charge. However, of all the items listed above, the largest demand would be on time for staff to meet and plan. The case would have to be made to staff that the Change PLC meeting time during the work day was a significant win and the expectation is that other meetings would need to be scheduled during the week once students are dismissed at the end of the teaching day. These after school meetings would not need to be long, but if regularly scheduled and efficiently run the work would stay on schedule. Therefore, in order to ensure continual coordination and cohesion, the principal, I&I Coordinator, Inclusion Advocate, and focus group leaders must be present when the Change PLC team meets to work on change plan development and implementation during the work day, and other smaller group meetings would need to be held after school.

As the school's main change agent, the principal would continually be involved in articulating both the need for change and the desired future state. At the same time the principal would need to manage the school's structural changes and staff's emotional and behavioural responses to change efforts so that ethically, nothing gets compromised to a danger point (Cawsey et al., 2016). The principal, together with their teacher leaders, would need to consider the question, "How can this change be put into place without seriously straining the organization of the school?" The principal and other staff leaders would work on the Change PLC to formalize a structure that would enable the school to carry on operating effectively while implementing the school-wide changes to managing student behaviour. The Change PLC would specify midpoint goals and timelines that would help motivate all stakeholders. The goals would need to be far enough away to provide direction but close enough together to provide a sense of progress and accomplishment while also providing an opportunity for midcourse changes in plans (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 328).

3.3 Transition Management Plan and Evaluation.

An important factor to be considered as part of the change plan is transition management. Transition management is about keeping people informed in order to reduce anxiety (Cawsey et al., 2016). Careful consideration must be given to how things would be different and how the change plan would affect the way things are done. A frequently asked questions site (FAQ) could be developed, as part of the communication plan, so stakeholders would have a go-to place for information. The I&I Coordinator and/or Inclusion Advocate could be the ones authorized and provided with the capacity to do this important communications work.

While District leaders and key stakeholders may recognize that there are differences between school communities and the populations they serve, staff working within those schools may not know or understand the nature and impact of existing safety, diversity and/or equity issues. Therefore, the equity audit information would be useful, as mentioned in the awakening stage, to assess the degree of equity (or inequity) present in specific areas of the school's programs, instructional practice, and learning outcomes. The equity audit would provide an opportunity for the Change PLC to reflect on areas in need of improvement and garner support for improvements needed to further school, department and/or school community commitments to safety, belonging and inclusion. Using such a communication tool, in terms of a transition process, would provide an opportunity for the school principal and their staff to reflect upon what they are doing well and how they might enhance student safety, equity and the acceptance of diversity in the future. Therefore, the goal in utilizing the information from an equity audit at various times in the school's change plan would be to have the Change PLC lead staff in discussing their site-specific data to reveal information on program inequities, to generate discussion regarding key safety issues (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004), and to provide a corrective to potential biases (Sullivan, 2014) that may affect transition toward school alignment with district policies and Ministerial Orders.

There would be a need for each school to consider transition strategies as they create their change plan timeline and progress through the Change Path Model. With this in mind, the implementation of this OIP would include an evaluation strategy to assess the degree of change as measured annually through the satisfaction survey and more

frequently as measured through the school-based data collection process (Parisse-Brassens, 2016). Transitioning through the change plan would require measuring the impact of change through the comparison of survey data results, extant and site-based longitudinal data, a review of the school's code of conduct in relation to the required components and available behavioural data, and an examination of school-based documents related to communication, collaboration and consistency of approach.

The final phase in transition management would occur in and around the same time as celebrations are occurring in recognition of what has been accomplished during the institutionalization stage. Project completion, and school year completion, can sometimes be a bittersweet time for staff because they may not be working with one another in the future. The experience can be very influential to their future development and this would require processing time to be brought to closure. I suggest that principals or other school leaders conduct an after-action review (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 329) which involves reviewing the change experience as a whole and learning from what has transpired along the way. There needs to be a candid assessment of the change process and the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches used through the transitions (p. 329). The assessment would ask the following questions: (a) what were the intended results, (b) what were the actual results, (c) why did the actual results happen, and (d) what can be done better next time? As stakeholders explore these questions, the approaches, tools, and sources of information and insights that have the potential to improve performance in the future need to be identified and recorded so that others can access and learn from it (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 329). This knowledge is potentially the most significant legacy that those involved with the change can leave for themselves and others who will follow (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 329).

3.3.1 Four District Components.

The goal of DL in DGPS is to engage staff in developing their leadership capacity for student behaviour change; school effectiveness; relationship development; and safe and inclusive school planning. These components correspond with the moral imperative to provide safe school environments in which teachers can teach and students can learn. It is hoped that DGPS senior staff would be able to commit to the four District components as identified in Figure 3.4 to ensure that all schools create and implement a school code

of conduct that would affect positive change in reducing students' harmful verbal and physical behaviour in order to make schools more safe, caring and inclusive. As stated earlier, if the District cannot implement these four components, the three school-based strategies outlined in this OIP are sufficient for a school to make this work school centered and assist them in moving forward with creating a safe, caring and inclusive school environment.

The first component under the jurisdiction of the District is the development of a new Inclusion Policy and supporting administrative procedures in the areas of special needs, multicultural and race relations (MCRR), and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). This would take some time to develop as there are presently three separate policies that stand alone and have District committees written into them; each chaired by a School Board Trustee. Using my influence as an assistant superintendent, my plan would be to first merge the committees and secondly create an over-arching policy on inclusion. I would then create three separate administrative procedures which would assist schools in addressing issues related to Racism and Discrimination, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and Special Education. There would need to be a great deal of stakeholder collaboration in order to accomplish these tasks and I also suspect that there may be competing pressures of the day presenting barriers to the implementation of this new policy and administrative procedures. An example of a competing pressure is the result of the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling in granting the BC Teachers Federation a win in terms of restoring 2002 collective agreement language pertaining to teacher work conditions that was stripped away in provincial teacher contract negotiations at that time (Sherlock & Shaw, 2017). This reinstatement of this 2002 collective agreement language means that teachers will now have no more than two students with special needs in their classrooms. This ruling does not promote inclusive practice and will cause a set-back in progress until schools determine how to move through this political quagmire and regain a focus on inclusivity.

A second District component pertains to the creation of two District Social Justice Advocate (SJA) positions and sustaining these positions over time. The worry in creating such positions is that they could easily be slated for elimination during annual budget strategy sessions if they are not valued and championed by senior staff and the Board.

The District receives a *CommunityLINK* grant from the Ministry targeted toward supporting vulnerable student populations and this grant would be the best place to secure the funding for the SJA positions and therefore not rely on the annual operating budget process for this important staffing. The recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling will require an increase in the number of classroom teachers thereby putting many non-enrolling positions at risk of being redeployed (Sherlock & Shaw, 2017). Without the SJAs and their DL function DGPS would once again not have strong District partners connected with schools as they implement their school's code of conduct.

The third District component would be the creation of a District Safe Schools Committee where the District social justice advocates would be the chairpersons and the committee would be comprised of key stakeholders including trustees. The important work of advising and providing feedback to District staff and the Board of Education on how plans are moving in District schools would be a key function of the SJAs on this committee. The committee would meet and review district data relative to school safety and provide feedback to inform the District's strategic plan.

The fourth and final District component would be the development of a District Learning Framework which would include the four major learning objectives for the district. It is proposed that in DGPS the Learning Framework Goals would include (1) Revised Provincial Curriculum, (2) Assessment and Reporting, (3) Collaborative Inquiry, and (4) Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools.

3.4 Building Momentum: Short-term Goals.

Three short-term goals will assist with building momentum. The first short-term goal in this OIP would be to work with the two existing District trustee-lead committees, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), and Multicultural and Race Relations (MCRR) and begin the discussion about updating the District's policy in each of these areas. DGPS is currently in the process of updating and reorganizing the aging collection of District policies and procedures, so the time is ripe to enter into discussions about SOGI and MCRR becoming administrative procedures to provide guidance to schools. The suggestion would also be put forth to each committee to consider the development of a new District policy on inclusion. A second short-term goal would be to make a presentation to the Board of Education to express the need for SOGI and MCRR to

become administrative procedures to go along with a new policy on Inclusion. A third short-term goal would be to have schools increase their participation in the provincial satisfaction survey so there would be strong data to utilize each fall when setting school goals and performance targets. A component of this would be to select schools to volunteer in piloting the newly updated student satisfaction survey questions and provide feedback to the Ministry. The updated satisfaction survey questions will be ready for March 2017 implementation. Next school year the Ministry is hoping to update the teacher and parent satisfaction survey questions.

3.5 Building Momentum: Mid-term Goals.

Four mid-term goals will be discussed to assist with building momentum. Assuming the short-term goals have been successful, the first mid-term goal would be to work with both SOGI and MCRR committees to draft the District's Inclusion Policy and then to consult with key stakeholders on this new policy. The Inclusion Policy would then be presented to the Board before going out for a 30-day consultation period to gather responses from the wider community. The second mid-term goal would be to canvass each of the District's 38 schools seeking a staff member who would be willing to volunteer as a school-based Inclusion Advocate. The SJAs would provide in-service training, resources and support to the Inclusion Advocates so they could begin the process of bringing the school's code of conduct to the forefront of conversations, and discuss the advantages of a school-wide system of behaviour management to make their schools more safe, caring and inclusive. The third mid-term goal would be for the principal to begin conversations with their staff regarding their school's data and begin the process of determining what the data is revealing about the school. Existing PLC time can be utilized to discuss this data and begin the initial synthesis and ranking of behavioural issues that must be addressed. And lastly, the fourth mid-term goal would focus the reincarnation of the current sporadic PLC time into a Change PLC that meets regularly to focus on gaining an understanding of the requirements of M276/07 regarding the utilization of the school's code of conduct as the vehicle for the creation of a safe, caring and inclusive school.

3.6 Building Momentum: Long-term Goals.

Two long-term goals are proposed. The first long-term goal would be the development of a documented procedure at the Change PLC meetings where the leaders from the school focus groups could report out and collaborate on how to ensure the voice of both visible and invisible diversities are included and heard. Secondly, the Change PLC would need to collaborate with key stakeholder groups to determine how to move forward with creating the school's code of conduct inclusive of a school-wide system of behaviour support and intervention.

3.7 Limitations.

There are five possible challenges in the development of this OIP. First, the original District Policies for MCRR and SOGI had listed a school board trustee as chairperson. This may have led to an intense feeling of ownership of the District committee and it may be difficult to initiate change. Second is the issue of competing priorities. The new revised provincial curriculum and reporting mandate could stand to override the vision for this important change plan and ways must be found to ensure its survival. Third, it is possible that staff and key stakeholders choose not to create a Change PLC in order to drive the necessary improvements needed for the creation of safer, more caring, and inclusive schools. Fourth, the position of Inclusion Advocate is voluntary and therefore it is possible that there may be no staff member willing to take on this role, attend after school meetings, and keep staff updated regarding key issues at Change PLC and regular staff meetings. Fifth, as an assistant superintendent I have a certain sphere of influence at the DGPS District level to promote a willingness of senior staff to endorse this important DL work which may not be possible in other school districts where the person wishing to make such a change is not a senior district leader.

3.8 Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

In this OIP the change plan would utilize the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to drive its continuous evolution. In the 'Plan' stage the improvement goal is identified, the 'Do' stage sees the change tested, the 'Study' stage examines the success of the change and the 'Act' stage identifies the adaptations and next steps needed to inform a new cycle (Taylor et al., 2014, p. 291). The PDSA is user-friendly, easily understood, and motivates people to join in and utilize it as a planning and management tool (Latta & Downey,

1994, p. 119). The PDSA cycle in the context of this OIP requires the establishment of a representative group to form the Change PLC. This group would need to be the most familiar with the problems associated with inappropriate student behaviour and one or two people who are most familiar with the PDSA process. Once the problem has been identified, e.g., the need for a school-wide system of behaviour management, the team may engage in a matrix analysis for prioritizing possible solutions. In the PLAN phase the Change PLC would ask; *What is the problem? What changes are desired? What is the improvement target and objective? What resources are available?* (Latta & Downey, 1994, p. 120) The Change PLC would need to collect and analyze data and develop an improvement plan using this action-planning process. In the DO phase of the cycle the Change PLC will need to implement and monitor the improvement plan, plus keep data as needed to check / evaluate progress against baseline data. The Change PLC will need to make minor adjustments as required. During the STUDY phase, the Change PLC will determine progress that has been made toward the improvement target/objective. They will note other ramifications that have been caused by implementing this particular solution or strategy.

The Change PLC will document what has been learned about the supporting systems, procedures and processes (Latta & Downey, 1994, p. 120). The final phase of the cycle is the ACT phase in which the Change PLC will decide together either to abandon the improvement strategy, modify it, strengthen it, or continue without modification. Now that the PDSA cycle has gone one complete cycle, the Change PLC will begin at PLAN again and update the plan based on what was learned during the first full cycle and then they will continue the cycle again.

In addition to the PDSA Cycle, school teams would find it helpful to continue to use surveys to capture stakeholder attitudes, opinions, and experiences at a particular point in time and then track those attitudes over time (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 311). Surveys have been mentioned on several occasions in this OIP as a tool to access the opinions of internal and external stakeholders and to assess attitudes and beliefs, and an example of such an instrument can be found in Appendix B.

3.9 Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

Northouse (2016) tells us that ethical leadership pertains to what leaders do and who leaders are in their behaviour. The choices that a leader makes and how they respond in any given circumstance is informed and directed by their ethics (Northouse, 2016). The same is true of the DGPS organization in its commitment to providing high quality education for all public-school students within a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment.

I believe it is a tremendous ethical burden to propose to make change in people, and because of this, ethics is central to the practice of DL in this OIP. Stefkovich and Begley (2007) position school staff as having a great deal of power in determining students' best interests and that it is incumbent upon all school leaders to make ethical decisions that truly reflect the needs of students and not their own adult self-interest (p. 215). Stefkovich and Begley (2007), as do Cawsey et al. (2016), stress that ethically sound decisions require a great deal of self-reflection as these decisions profoundly influence others' lives. Therefore, as Cawsey et al. (2016) advises, we must continually work the change plan ethically and adaptively. Otherwise we risk destroying credibility and trust with stakeholders. Figure 3.5 is a visual representation of the lens utilized in this OIP to guide this ethical work which is based upon the *Best Interests Model* as developed by Stefkovich and Michael O'Brien (2004), and Stefkovich and Begley (2007). This



Figure 3.5. This model has been adapted from Stefkovich and Begley (2007) as it guides ethical leaders in a decision-making process regarding student's

model guides ethical leaders in a decision-making process regarding student's best interests based upon the elements of *rights*, *responsibilities* and *respect*.

3.9.1 **Rights.**

As a public-school district, DGPS has the ethical responsibility to undertake the important work of addressing student rights within the framework of federal and provincial legislation, as well as through Ministerial Orders and District policy. In a safe school students are free from the fear of harm, including potential threats from inside or outside the school (BCEd., 2004). The attitudes and actions of fellow students, staff and parents support an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion, and ensures a constant focus on student learning. Students have the right to feel that they belong at their school and have opportunities to relate to one another in positive, supportive ways as belonging is a necessary element in the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment (BCEd., 2004). All aspects of school life should embrace and reflect diversity because the school must be an inviting place for students, staff, parents and visitors (BCEd., 2004).

DGPS also has the ethical responsibility to inform all members of the school community about their rights and responsibilities as school citizens and how to exercise those rights (BCEd, 2007). Expectations about acceptable behaviour, respect, decorum and responsibility must be generally understood. Responses to violations must be based consistently on sound principles that are appropriate to the context (BCEd, 2007). DGPS has the ethical responsibility to ensure that everyone feels a sense of meaningful accomplishment and feel that the school is a good place to be. All stakeholders are informed about and exercise their rights and responsibilities as school citizens in preventing serious misconduct, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and intimidation from occurring. The *Best Interests Model* maintains that all student rights are fundamental to the concept of a student's best interests (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007).

3.9.2 **Responsibility.**

DGPS has the ethical responsibility of addressing the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. The District has a unique responsibility and opportunity to meet this challenge both by teaching understanding and respect for all persons, and by

modeling understanding, acceptance and respect for all persons in practice. All stakeholders must work together to better understand issues such as bullying, intimidation, discrimination and harassment, racism, sexism and homophobia, and to learn new skills to respond to them (BCEd., 2007). Many scholars have discussed our moral imperative as adults to make the best possible ethical decisions regarding the education of children within public schools (Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Ontario Principals' Council, 2003; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014). I am applying this model to my OIP in hopes that it will assist stakeholders in responding consistently to incidents of student inappropriate verbal and physical behaviour in a fair and reasoned manner, using interventions that redress harm, strengthen relationships and restore a sense of belonging (BCEd., 2007).

3.9.3 **Respect.**

The *Best Interests Model* conceptualizes respect as a positive, mutual interaction, focusing on the individual (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). This aspect of the model involves treating all students with respect and also expecting students to treat others in the same manner. DGPS has the ethical responsibility to meet this challenge by using school-wide efforts to build community, foster respect, inclusion, fairness and equity (BCEd., 2008a). To this end, DGPS would work to encourage understanding, acceptance, mutual respect and inclusion, in order to make its school communities equitable for all people (BCEd., 2008a).

Durlak and DuPre (2008) stress the importance of fidelity, adaptability and sustainability of the safe school change plan. The change plan cannot be implemented in isolation and it must align with Ministry, District and school policy frameworks. Schools would likely require resources to implement their change plan successfully with the largest demand being on release time for collaboration; therefore, the implementation of the Change PLC during the school day would be a high priority. Whichever school-wide intervention framework or program the school decides upon, they must receive the in-service required to build knowledge, skill and commitment for implementation and fidelity. Stepancic (2014) stressed that cyberbullying is a key barrier to any safe school implementation plan and the selected program must also address this factor. A commitment from the District to provide endorsement of DL in combination with the

implementation of the Change PLC along with sufficient human and material resources is necessary for successful implementation of this OIP. Safe, caring and inclusive schools also require the active participation and alignment of stakeholders in order to increase acceptable student conduct systematically and successfully (Armenakis & Harris, 2009).

3.10 Change Process Communications Plan

According to Cawsey et al. (2016), a communications plan for change should focus on four key areas: (1) to infuse the need for change throughout the school and school community, (2) to enable stakeholders to understand the impact the change will have on them, (3) to communicate any structural and instructional changes that will influence how things are done, and (4) to keep stakeholders informed about progress along the way (p. 320). Implementing a successful communications plan is an essential component to establishing support for safe, caring and inclusive schools. Instrumental to this OIP are four phases: (a) prechange approval, (b) creating the need for change, (c) midstream change and milestone communication, and (d) confirming and celebrating the change success (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 320). In Figure 3.6 I have taken these four phases and aligned them with the work of Goodman and Truss (2003) while also infusing the 7+1 Communication Strategy from a class presentation by Elizabeth Westersund (2017) from Husky Energy. According to Goodman and Truss (2004), achieving an effective match between all four quadrants of the wheel, while taking into account the four contextual features, appears to be the main challenge facing those charged with designing change communication strategies (p. 227).

As with any communication plan, there will be times that the change team must decide to veer off the plan to address some emergent issue. It is also important to note that good skilled communication must occur at all times, not just in the steps of the change plan as identified in Figure 3.6.

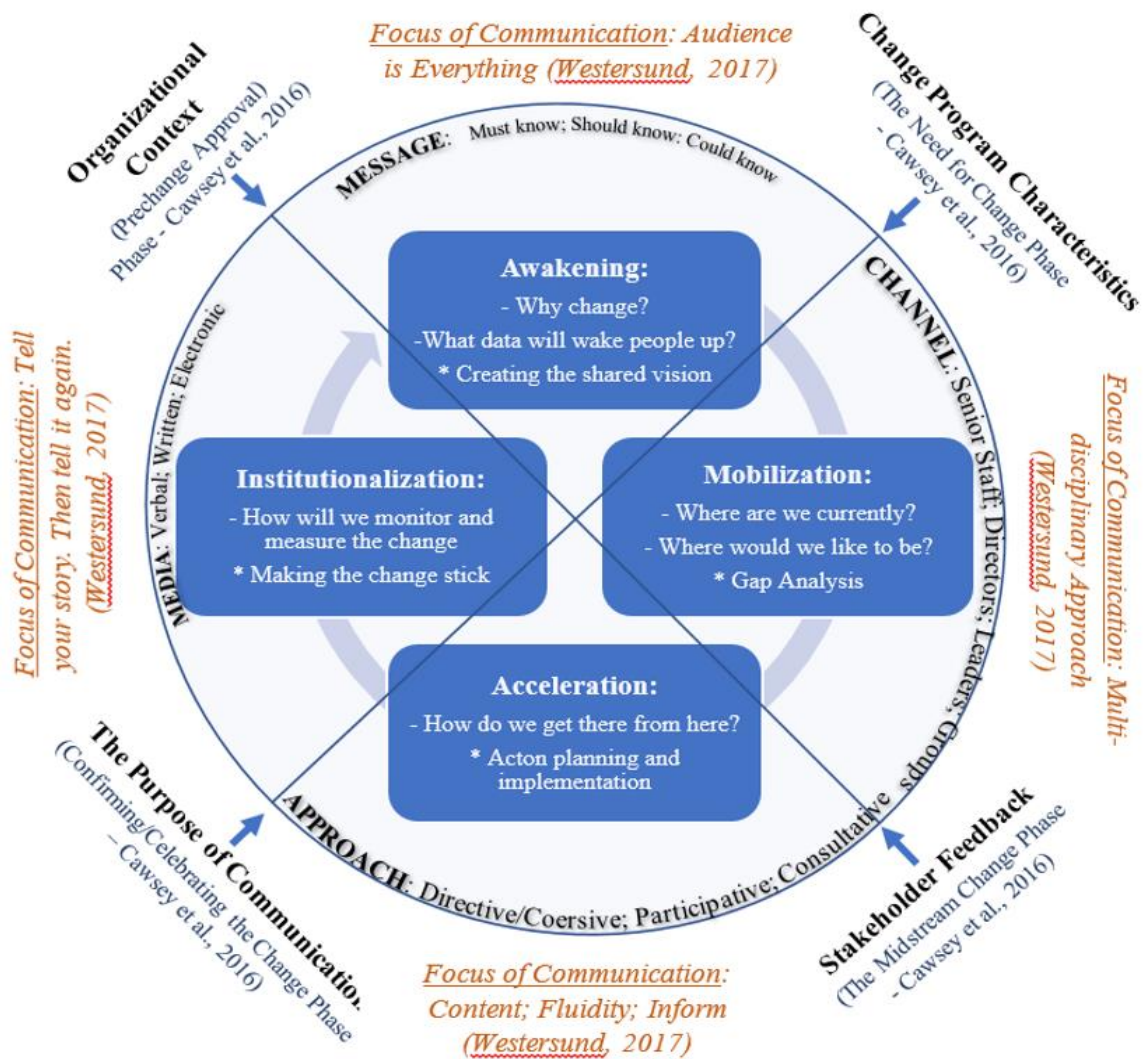


Figure 3.6. This Change Process Communication Plan is based upon the work of Cawsey et al.'s (2016) *The Change Path Model* (blue) which has provided the organizing framework for this OIP. Superimposed is *The Change Communication Wheel* (black) from the work of Goodman and Truss (2004), and lastly, infused throughout are the insights from Elizabeth Westersund (2017) from her class presentation outlining her *7 + 1 Communication Strategy*.

Next I will outline the communication plan for this OIP by discussing each of the four phases proposed by Cawsey et al. (2016) while infusing the work of Goodman and Truss (2004), and Westersund (2017).

3.10.1 Prechange Approval Phase.

Especially important in the Awakening Stage (Cawsey et al., 2016), the message at this time considers who must know, who should know and who could know (Goodman & Truss, 2004). According to Westersund (2017), the audience is everything at this stage. Ideally a member of senior staff would initiate this piece by convincing other senior leaders and the Board of Education that this change is needed in DGPS schools. The message would awaken them to District data and the story it reveals (Cawsey et al., 2016). Principals would begin to use distributed leadership to build capacity in staff at their schools and together principals and their school-based leaders would influence the needed change at their site. Senior staff would request the development of a new Inclusion Policy to give schools the authority to do the work that needs to be done. Aligning the school change plan to the District's strategic plan and priorities is critical in this communication. During this phase, communication would occur at District meetings of senior staff, at closed Board Meetings and during information discussions with trustees. Principals would also begin to have conversations at school staff meetings, department or grade level meetings and during one-to-one conversations with staff.

3.10.2 The Need for the Change Phase.

Especially important in the Mobilization Stage (Cawsey et al., 2016), the message at this time would be focused on the desired future state. Westersund (2017) indicates that it is most important for the communication plan to be multi-disciplinary and this corresponds very well with Goodman and Truss' (2004) indication that the channels of communication must be focused on senior staff, directors, managers and other formal leaders in the system. To increase awareness of the need for change comparative data would be utilized, for example, Table 1.3 indicates that on average 24% of students in grades 4, 7, 10 and 12 report not feeling safe at school, which is supported by Table 1.4 from a different survey indicating that upwards of 21% of students (ages 10 - 19) report not feeling safe at school. There are also many other priorities that will inevitably compete for stakeholder attention; therefore, a very good rationale and plan for

developing and demonstrating the need for change must be in place. Cawsey et al. (2016) remind us that the vision of the desired state must be clearly articulated along with the specific steps of the change plan (p. 321). At the same time as making the case for change, staff and other key stakeholders need to feel assured that they will be treated fairly and with respect throughout the process and that there will be a benefit to them in the end (Al-Saleh, 2013; Klein, 1996). During this time the school principal could also open discussions at staff meetings and hold focus group sessions to review and discuss data. There continues to be great value in face-to-face presentations and discussions.

3.10.3 Midstream Change Phase.

Fitting nicely in the Acceleration Stage (Cawsey et al., 2016), the conversation in this phase is about how to reach the desired state as the change continues to unfold. Staff and other key stakeholders would want to have specific information communicated to them about future plans and how things will look as the plan moves forward. This is when Westersund (2017) notes that the focus of the communication plan should now be on content; it must be fluid in its ability to reach stakeholders with its main focus to inform. Again, as Goodman and Truss (2004) have determined, the communication approach must be constantly reconsidered as there may be a need at one point to be directive, but for the most part it would be participative and consultative. As the various focus groups need to be formed at each school site, as part of the DL process, staff would want to understand the process regarding how individuals were selected for the various tasks.

Staff in-service training would also be necessary as new methods of student behavioural data collection are put into place so staff can learn how to use the system properly. Progress will need to be articulated at various points in the plan via staff meetings, PAC meetings, newsletters, memos and assemblies. The principal and the other school-based change leaders need to obtain feedback regarding the acceptance of change and the attitudes of staff and stakeholders affected by the change plan (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 322). It is likely that misconceptions will develop and there must be avenues available to combat this. During this phase, Cawsey et al. (2016) remind us that extensive communication on the content of the change is important as everyone begins to understand their new roles within the structures and systems. Also, as the newness wears

off, sustaining interest and enthusiasm and remaining sensitive to the personal impact of change will continue to be important. The school and District leaders involved in this change will need to remain excited about the change and communicate that enthusiasm often. Recognizing and celebrating progress, achievements and milestones will all need to be part of the communications plan. Cawsey et al. (2016) remind us that an effective communications plan can reduce the number of rumours by lowering uncertainty, lessening ambivalence and resistance to change, and increasing the involvement and the commitment of all staff and key stakeholders (p. 322).

This change plan will utilize District and school websites for communicating change to parents and the wider community. District websites can be used for data collection and resource location, house online and printable surveys to sample opinion, as well as serve as a collection depot for other types of pertinent social media. Face-to-face communication cannot be underestimated as a valuable method of communication where staff and key stakeholders have the opportunity to hear from DGPS District staff and ask questions about the change and its impact (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 322; Daft & Lengel, 1986).

3.10.4 Confirming the Change Phase.

I considered this phase of communication particularly important at the Institutionalization Stage (Cawsey et al., 2016) with the focus placed on monitoring, measuring and celebrating the successes of the change initiative. Celebrations are also needed along the way to mark progress, reinforce commitment and reduce stress. Goodman and Truss (2004) determined that communication at this time would need to be verbal, written and electronic (my addition) while Westersund (2017) tells us that this is the time to “Tell your story. Then tell it again.”

During this phase, the change experience will need to be discussed and unfinished tasks identified. A key aspect to this phase is to communicate the need to position the school for the next change cycle as change is not over, only this particular phase (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 322). Daft and Lengel (1986) and Cawsey et al. (2016) remind us that when the information is routine, memos and blanket emails can work well, but when things become more complex, ambiguous and personally relevant to staff, the richness of the communication channel needs to increase. Communication channels vary in their

communication richness, and as such, Bauer, Erdogan, and Carpenter (2012) categorize face-to-face conversations, videoconferencing and telephone conversations as being high in information richness while e-mails, handheld devices, blogs and memos fall into the medium range, with formal written documents and spreadsheets falling into the least rich of all modes of communication.

As in the research of Goodman and Truss (2004), in previous change initiatives teachers and principals in DGPS organizations felt that they had been informed of changes after, rather than before the event, that senior management was out of touch with their concerns, that others were better informed than they were about the changes, and that they did not understand how the changes would affect them. Goodman and Truss (2004), and Armenakis and Harris (2009) tell us that building evaluation mechanisms into the communication strategy would help change leaders realize, at an early stage, that miscommunication is taking place.

In Figure 3.6 I have incorporated the implications of the research of Goodman and Truss (2004). The integrity of Goodman and Truss' (2004) model is maintained in the four quadrants representing the message, media, channel and approach. This is where change managers must make active decisions regarding the best communication approach to adopt. This *best approach* is dependent on four elements that are external to the wheel, the organizational context, the change program characteristics, the purpose of the communication, and employee response (p. 225).

3.11 Recommendations

This OIP urges DGPS District staff and its school leaders to leverage their code of conduct as the vehicle for action to address student behaviour. This work must be undertaken with conviction and the understanding that addressing safety in District schools will remain part of the foundational work that requires ongoing attention. I believe that we need to re-conceptualize school safety in terms of student unacceptable conduct in relation to equity and social justice as it pertains specifically to the school learning and extra-curricular environments. The creation of safe spaces, equitable rules and guidelines, through a well-developed and actioned code of conduct can address unacceptable conduct as staff collaborate and distribute leadership to create safe, caring and inclusive schools. Equity in schools would be evident when all students see

themselves equally reflected in the curriculum, whether it be from the standpoint of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, etc. at school or during extra-curricular activities. Schools cannot continue to operate merely in a punitive manner by continuing to respond to unacceptable conduct only when it occurs, and this OIP emphasizes the need for an educative, preventative and restorative practice and response for preparing for, and addressing, all types of unsafe or illegal acts in schools.

Once the change plan is in place and the cycles of change have begun, there are eight suggestions for next steps as future recommendations that I would like to make with an emphasis on equity, where safety is positioned alongside human rights and social justice.

3.11.1 Recommendations within the 1st cycle of the Change Implementation Plan.

3.11.1.1 *Recommendation 1: In-service on Restorative Consequences for the Code of Conduct.*

As soon as practicable, there must be in-service training provided for principals and their school-based inclusion advocates to work with the facilitators from the local John Howard Society and the Department of Learning Services to review the direct teaching and consequences sections of their school codes of conduct to ensure that an educative, preventative and restorative approach is included.

3.11.1.2 *Recommendation 2: In-service for Principals on Distributive Leadership.*

As soon as practicable, a discussion needs to be held at a principals' meeting about the advantages of a DL approach and the advantages of adding this leadership practice to their repertoire of leadership skills. Then, on a planned timeline, in-service training would need to be scheduled for principals at various intervals as the change plan moves forward. In-service could take the form of a guest speaker, book study, or article readings that would be discussed as the learning component at principals' meetings.

3.11.1.3 *Recommendation 3: Review and Improve Questions for the Satisfaction Survey.*

Now that a review of the student questions has been completed and implemented, schools could volunteer to review and update the questions for parents and teachers. At the same time, the local teachers' union would be consulted in order to work out a

solution to the impasse regarding their willingness to permit teachers to participate in future satisfaction surveys.

3.11.1.4 *Recommendation 4: Creation of the District Inclusion Policy.*

One way to give schools the firm foundation they require as they begin this important work at their schools is to have a solid District policy to support them which clearly states the expectations of all staff in how they respond to visible and invisible diversity.

3.11.2 **Recommendations within the 2nd cycle of the Change Implementation Plan.**

3.11.2.1 *Recommendation 5: Stakeholder Membership on the Change PLC.*

Work could be done to incorporate key community stakeholders on the Change PLC at each school. It is important to include these stakeholders in the discussions and problem-solving sessions. It may be that they are invited to attend key meetings or it might be that the school team wants them present for each meeting. It may be the chairperson of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) who is invited to attend as an initial step toward this goal.

3.11.2.2 *Recommendation 6: Share Codes of Conduct between Schools.*

Once schools complete their first PDSA cycle it would be important for principals to get together and share codes between schools and learn from one another.

3.11.2.3 *Recommendation 7: Governance Updates for Sustainability.*

It is recommended that the District undergo a process for updating its policies and administrative procedures to further infuse a common language and vocabulary pertaining to educative, preventative and restorative practice and response throughout. This common language can also be incorporated into the next version of the District's strategic plan.

3.11.2.4 *Recommendation 8: Staff Leadership Capacity Building and Collaboration.*

This effort of sustaining overall school improvement will continually include improving the capacity of teachers, support staff and principals to continually develop their leadership skills. School principals will continue to be the key school leaders and with this role comes the opportunity to operationalize distributive leadership while supporting staff throughout the change plan. One way to continue to support staff leadership capacity building is to provide ongoing professional development and in-

service aligned and focused on sustaining the Change PLC in the area of PBIS or other school-wide system (Villa & Thousand, 2017).

3.12 Conclusion

In summary, Chapter Three has focused on the pragmatic and systematic implementation, evaluation and communication of this organizational improvement plan (OIP). This chapter has culminated in a series of recommendations planned around two cycles of the Change Path Model (Cawsey et al., 2016). District leaders and school principals can utilize these recommendations as they distribute leadership in the creation and implementation of the school code of conduct. Leadership can be expanded and extended when more members of the organization contribute their knowledge and skills toward bringing the change plan to fruition (Tian et al., 2016, p. 157). The result of applying a DL approach to implementing a school code of conduct is anticipated to effect positive change in increasing socially responsible behaviour thereby making schools more safe, caring and inclusive.

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Appendices

Appendix A: District Student Suspension Summary (Historical)

		STUDENT SUSPENSION SUMMARY by INFRACTION - HISTORICAL DATA																																						
		September 1996 - June 2015																																						
Assault	B & E	Defiance	Disobedience	Drugs/Alcohol		Fighting	Fire		Fireworks		Harrassment		Misbehavior		Smoking		Snowballs		Theft		Truancy		Vandalism		Verbal Abuse		Violating Contract		Weapon		TOTAL ALL SCHOOLS									
				El	Se		El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se	El	Se				
TOTAL 15/16	4	11	0	0	8	8	4	0	2	79	12	63	0	2	0	0	0	12	19	33	22	0	6	0	0	1	8	0	0	3	6	18	0	0	1	3	54	164		
TOTAL 14/15	10	6	0	0	1	14	3	3	0	88	3	49	0	1	0	1	0	2	6	10	2	8	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	4	1	15	0	0	1	26	214	
TOTAL 13/14	6	6	0	0	6	20	0	1	1	98	19	23	0	1	0	0	1	3	11	7	8	12	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	7	4	0	3	4	0	1	2	1	63	188
TOTAL 12/13	30	16	0	0	16	21	3	15	3	97	26	45	0	0	0	1	0	1	10	18	8	26	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	3	1	0	8	6	0	1	5	7	110	263
TOTAL 11/12	37	13	1	0	38	33	9	20	5	121	45	89	1	5	1	0	1	8	19	38	12	40	0	0	0	0	2	16	0	26	0	12	9	21	0	2	6	5	186	449
TOTAL 10/11	65	14	0	0	30	46	12	23	0	168	63	101	1	1	1	0	8	31	41	64	0	4	2	2	2	26	0	43	3	13	10	12	0	2	9	9	260	668		
TOTAL 09/10	53	10	2	2	26	33	13	31	7	255	78	91	5	3	0	2	0	3	59	34	41	84	0	0	0	0	5	19	0	68	3	15	12	20	0	7	9	6	313	863
TOTAL 08/09	59	16	0	0	18	47	9	31	8	141	54	74	8	4	1	1	1	2	24	32	28	54	3	11	7	5	6	22	0	47	1	12	11	24	0	7	6	8	226	538
TOTAL 07/08	52	34	1	0	57	69	28	20	8	186	55	99	5	12	0	4	0	19	29	51	22	94	3	29	13	3	7	16	3	86	0	16	10	41	1	10	15	17	309	806
TOTAL 06/07	78	39	2	0	40	48	21	38	14	189	64	135	8	4	0	3	1	5	41	58	45	83	0	27	21	17	10	20	1	37	5	15	10	30	10	22	12	14	374	784
TOTAL 05/06	55	20	0	0	17	16	29	3	21	166	66	134	4	4	1	0	0	5	43	35	34	42	0	2	25	9	8	3	8	37	16	2	7	36	2	1	9	3	345	518
TOTAL 04/05	56	32	0	1	61	23	31	36	13	205	104	116	6	3	0	0	2	19	36	66	42	47	0	1	7	5	20	20	4	54	5	13	17	23	0	17	12	9	416	680
TOTAL 03/04	78	37	0	0	58	16	19	53	1	168	102	115	11	3	3	2	8	21	36	41	53	60	3	1	9	1	12	18	4	81	4	5	25	21	3	5	2	4	431	662
TOTAL 02/03	58	41	0	1	53	26	21	51	10	167	126	118	4	4	3	1	0	5	59	44	53	49	0	5	2	2	15	0	60	3	19	29	32	1	1	8	5	445	661	
TOTAL 01/02	63	18	0	0	69	13	14	41	5	167	127	117	11	3	0	0	1	13	33	41	53	30	0	3	20	1	15	11	3	26	1	6	35	27	0	0	3	7	453	524
TOTAL 00/01	96	25	0	1	125	8	27	33	10	145	197	105	2	10	1	1	2	7	52	32	70	36	1	6	30	16	16	19	2	29	11	9	40	26	5	3	9	2	698	513
TOTAL 99/00	98	28	0	4	93	12	78	44	16	176	189	108	4	4	0	1	3	12	28	53	86	28	6	16	52	20	17	14	2	74	14	3	43	48	6	2	3	14	738	661
TOTAL 98/99	99	39	0	0	72	23	74	57	11	137	233	164	8	1	2	2	2	11	31	35	136	37	15	8	1	2	15	21	27	56	12	6	27	44	2	0	7	7	774	660
TOTAL 97/98	116	24	0	0	116	3	40	40	17	103	341	177	9	6	6	1	3	8	52	34	105	52	12	4	15	8	30	29	83	12	8	47	25	1	0	9	6	951	611	
TOTAL 96/97	89	30	0	0	111	8	47	38	26	134	386	204	6	3	0	4	1	5	79	45	137	66	16	7	78	3	21	12	5	62	6	19	49	39	24	2	6	2	1097	675

Appendix B: Sample Anonymous Survey

Assessing Ourselves, Assessing Our Schools

In addition to data about school safety provided through provincial satisfaction surveys, boards of education and schools might also choose to develop surveys to promote thinking and discussion about bullying, harassment and intimidation in their school communities. A sample is provided below.

- Bullying a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour, with negative intent, directed from one person to another where there is a power imbalance.
- Harassment any unwelcome or unwanted act or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating or offensive to another person.
- Intimidation the act of instilling fear in someone as a means of controlling that person.

1. How safe do I feel at my school? How welcome? How much do I feel like I belong?
Why?
2. How would I describe the relationships between staff and students in our school?
Relationships among staff? Relationships among students?
3. How could I contribute to a sense of community in my school? What am I doing already? What could others do? What are others doing already?
4. How would I describe our school culture? How diverse is the culture? How well does it welcome diversity?
5. Have I ever discriminated against anyone for any reason? Have I ever witnessed someone else's act of discrimination? Have I ever felt discriminated against?
6. Have I ever bullied, harassed or intimidated anyone for any reason? Have I ever witnessed someone else being bullied, harassed or intimidated? Have I ever felt bullied, harassed or intimidated?

7. How effective are the bullying, harassment and intimidation prevention initiatives at our school? How do we measure their effectiveness? How do we use the information we gather to shape the way we address bullying, intimidation and harassment?
8. How do I feel about teaching or learning about bullying, harassment and intimidation at school? What would be the best way to do it? What challenges would need to be overcome? What opportunities exist already?
9. How are issues of bullying, harassment and intimidation communicated to parents? The broader community? How are parents involved following incidents affecting their children as victims, aggressors or bystanders? How is the broader community involved in resolution options?
10. What does “safe school” mean to me? What would it look like? Feel like?

* Adapted from Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide. (BCEd., 2008a)

Appendix C: Sample Equity Audit

Equity Audit Data Collection and Analysis - General and Social Class Data and Analysis (Report Fraction and percentage for each as applicable)	
1. Number of Students in your district:	
2. Number of staff in your school (certified and noncertified):	
3. Number of students in your school:	
4. Number of students who transferred or moved into the school the last academic year (disaggregate by race, disability, gender, ELL):	
5. Students who transferred out of the school in the last academic year (disaggregate by race, disability, gender, ELL):	
6. Fraction and percentage of staff in your school who are associated with student services (e.g., special education, education assistances, counselors, psychologists, nurses, bilingual specialists, reading specialist, gifted and talented specialist):	
Status of Labeling at Your School (Report total number [fraction] and percentage)	
1. Students labeled “gifted” in your school:	
2. Students labeled “at-risk” in your school:	
3. Students labeled with a disability in your school:	
4. Students labeled ESL or bilingual in your school:	
5. Students who attend an alternative school/setting:	
6. Students with any other kind of label in your school (include the label):	
7. Total students who are labeled in your school (adding together questions 1-6):	
Discipline Data	
1. Students who were suspended in the past year (disaggregate these data by gender, race, disability, ELL; divide into in-school and out-of-school suspensions):	
2. Students who were expelled in the past year (disaggregate these data by gender, race, disability, and ELL; divide into in-school and out-of-school suspensions):	
3. Students who were placed in an Alternative Interim Placement in the past year (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
4. Low attendance and/or truancy (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
5. Other relevant discipline data:	
General Achievement Data	
1. Fourth-grade achievement (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
2. Either-grade achievement (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
3. Tenth-grade achievement (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
4. Graduation rate (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
5. Graduation rate (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
6. Drop-out rate (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
7. Participation in ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement exams (disaggregate by gender, race, disability, ELL):	
Social Class (Report fraction and percentage)	
1. Students receiving lunch program in your education setting:	

2. Students receiving lunch program in other schools in your district at the same level (elementary, middle, secondary):	
3. Students identified with a special needs designation (all categorical areas) in your educational setting:	
4. Of the number of students identified for special education, what fraction and what percentage receive a school lunch program?	
5. How does the response to Item 4 compare to Item 1? The answers should be similar.	
6. Students identified as “gifted” in your setting who are on the school lunch program. Compare the response to Item 1.	
7. Students identified as “at-risk” in your setting who receive school lunch program. Compare your response to Item 1.	
8. Report two pieces of academic achievement data in your setting (preferably reading and math) as they relate to social class.	
9. Collect social class comparison data on at least two other areas in your school/setting (e.g., parent-teacher organization, student council, safety patrol, and band).	
10. Social Class Data Analysis Do not exceed one page. (University students, support the analysis thoroughly with the literature.) What do these social class data mean? In your analysis, include the strengths and areas for improvement in serving students of lower social classes within your school’s curriculum, instruction, and culture, and other learning opportunities. Identify concrete, specific ideas for remedying the weaknesses.	
Race and Ethnicity Data and Analysis	
Race and Ethnicity (Report fraction and percentage for each)	
1. Students of color in your school: How does this compare to other schools in the district?	
2. Students of color in the total district:	
3. Students labeled for special education:	
4. Of the number of students labeled for special education, what fraction and percentage are students of color?	
5. How does this number and percentage compare with those in Item 1?	
6. Of the number and percentage of students labeled “at-risk,” what fraction and percentage are students of color? Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
7. Of the number and percentage of students labeled “gifted,” what fraction and percentage are students of color? Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
8. Total staff who are people of color in your school: Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
9. Certified staff who are people of color in your school:	
10. Uncertified staff who are people of color in your school:	
11. People of color serving on the school board:	
12. (a) Report two pieces of academic achievement data (preferably reading and math) as they relate to race/ethnicity. (b) Collect race/ethnicity comparison data on at least two other areas in your school/setting.	
13. Race and Ethnicity Data Analysis	

Refer to the social class section for directions. Include the following: Discuss the problems with the phrase, “I don’t even see the person’s color,” and “But we do not have, or have very few, students of colors in our school/district, so race isn’t an issue here.”	
English Language Learners (ELL) and Bilingual Data and Analysis ELL (Report fraction and percentage for each)	
1. How many English language learners are in your school and what languages do they speak? How does this compare to other schools in your district?	
2. How many English language learners are in the total district?	
3. How many students are labeled for special education?	
4. Of the number of students labeled for special education, what fraction and percentage are English language learners?	
5. How does this fraction and percentage compare with those in Item 1?	
6. OF the number of students labeled ‘at-risk,’ what fraction and percentage are English language learners? Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
7. OF the number and percentage of students labeled “gifted,” what fraction and percentage are English language learners? Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
8. What is the English language learner service delivery model used in your school?	
9. What is the total number of certified and uncertified staff who are bilingual in your setting? Compare the response with that for Item 1.	
10. What is the total number of staff who serve as bilingual or ELL teachers or teaching assistants in the school?	
11. Bilingual people serving on the school board:	
12. Report two pieces of academic achievement data (preferably reading and math) as they relate to this area of diversity.	
13. Collect students English language learner comparison data on at least two other areas in your school/setting.	
14. English Language Learner and Bilingual Data Analysis (see directions for Social Class Data Analysis)	
(Dis)Ability Data and Analysis Students With (Dis)abilities (Report fraction and percentage)	
1. Number of students labeled with (dis)abilities in each grade level in your school:	
2. Number of students labeled with disabilities in your school: How does your school compare with other schools in your district?	
3. Fractions and percentage of students by disability label, i.e., behavioral challenges, cognitively disabled, learning disabled, severely disabled, and so on:	
4. Number of students labeled with disabilities in your district:	
5. Number of special education referrals each year: How has this changed over time?	
6. Of those students referred, what fraction/percentage were then identified for special education?	
7. Do all students with disabilities in your school community attend the school they would attend if they were not labeled? Explain.	
8. Do some students with (dis)abilities who do not live in your attendance area attend your school or district? Explain.	

9. Report two pieces of academic achievement data (preferably reading and math) as they relate to (dis)abilities.	
10. Collect (dis)ability information in at least two other areas in your school/setting.	
(Dis)ability Data Analysis (see Social Class Data Analysis for directions) Gender Data and Analysis Gender (Report fraction and percentage for each)	
1. Females on the teaching staff at the elementary level: Middle school level: High school level:	
2. Females teaching science and math classes at the middle/high school level:	
3. Females teaching English (and related courses) at the middle/high school level:	
4. Females teaching history (and related courses) at the middle/high school level:	
5. Females teaching the highest level of math students at your school:	
6. Females teaching advance placement courses at the high school:	
7. Out-of-school suspensions or expulsions by gender:	
8. Females/males with an emotional disability:	
9. Females/males on the administrative team:	
10. Females/males at the elementary, middle, and high school administrative level:	
11. Females/males on school board:	
12. (a) Report two pieces of academic achievement data (preferably reading and math) as they relate to this area of diversity. (b) Collect gender comparison data on at least two other areas in your school/setting.	
Gender Data Analysis (see Social Class Data Analysis for directors) Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data and Analysis	
1. Does your district have any active policies that address sexual orientation and gender identity?	
2. Assess your school or district's anti-harassment policy. To what extent does it address sexual orientation and gender identity?	
3. How many staff are open about their LGBT identity to other staff? To students? To families and community?	
4. What percentage of teachers in your school would be proactive in supporting LGBT staff, students, and families? What percentage would be neutral? What percentage would oppose being supportive of LGBT staff, students, and families?	
5. Does your school/district provide domestic partner benefits to its employees?	
6. To what extent are invitations to school functions, staff gatherings, and so forth inclusive of LGBT relationships?	
7. How and to what extent does your district's curriculum provide instruction related to sexual orientation and gender identity?	
8. If a group of students approached your building principal and requested to begin a Gay/Straight Alliance, how would your principal and/or district respond?	
9. Does your middle/high school have a Gay/Straight Alliance? If not, why not? If so, assess the efforts of this group.	
10. Assess your school's library/media holding related to sexual orientation and gender identity. To what extent do students in your school have access to information about sexual orientation and gender identity, what is the nature of this information?	

11. To what extent are school enrollment forms inclusive of nontraditional families?	
12. To what extent has professional development addressed sexual orientation and gender identity?	
13. To what extent do students at the elementary level receive information about and have access to information about nontraditional families (i.e., when they early elementary grades complete family units, how many books and materials are available to these classrooms about nontraditional families)?	
14. To what extent are students teased or called names because of their gender identity or sexual orientation in your school? How do you know? To have extent are data collected on this?	
15. To what extent are students at your school required to adhere to a gender-specific dress code (e.g., at holiday concerts, are girls required to wear dresses and boys required to wear suits)? Sexual Orientation Data Analysis (see Social Class Data Analysis for directions)	

*Adapted from: Frattura, E. M., & Capper, C. A. (2007). *Leading for social justice: Transforming schools for all learners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Appendix D: Conduct Expectations

Examples of areas that should be addressed in the conduct expectations include:

- respecting self, others and the school
- helping to make the school a safe, caring and inclusive place
- informing a “tellable” adult in a timely manner (in advance, if possible) of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation or discrimination
- engaging in purposeful learning activities in a timely manner
- acting in a manner that brings credit to the school

Examples of behaviour that should be considered unacceptable include:

Behaviours that, either in person or through social media:

- interfere with the learning of others, including their emotional well-being
- interfere with an orderly environment
- create unsafe conditions
- are not inclusive

Acts such as, either in person or through social media:

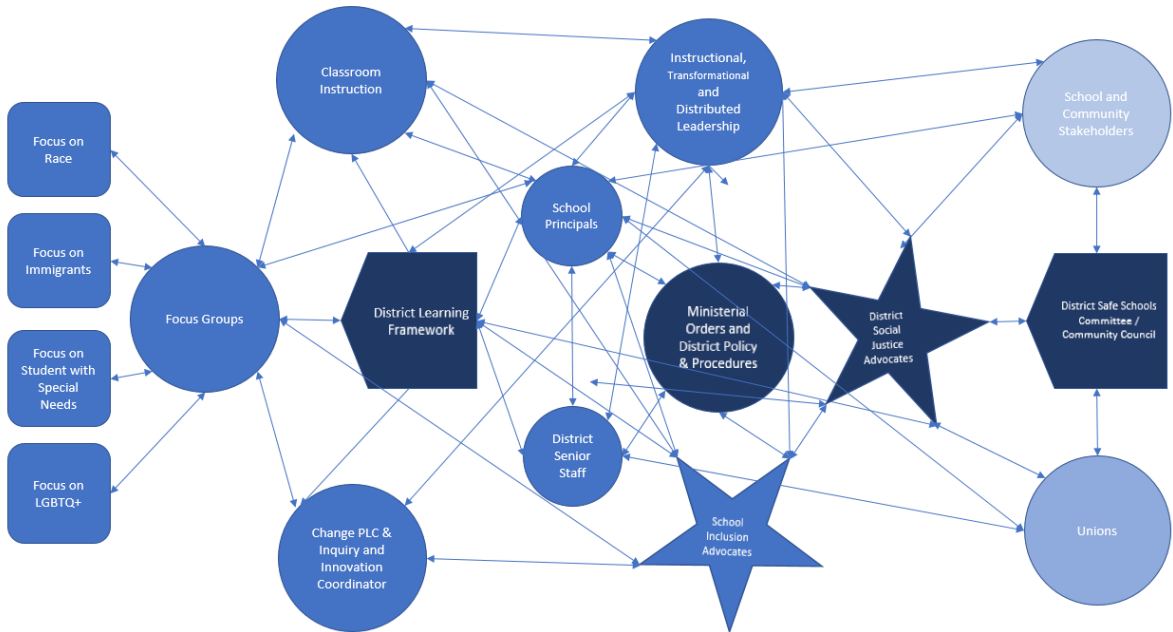
- bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination
- physical or verbal violence and/or aggression
- retribution against a person who has reported incidents

Illegal acts, such as:

- possession, use or distribution of illegal or restricted substances
- possession or use of weapons
- theft of or damage to property

* Adapted from Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide. (BCEd., 2008a)

Appendix E: New School Organizational Infrastructure



A school's new operational infrastructure and connection to the four key District components (dark blue; relates to Figure 3.4). This diagram illustrates the interactions between the various stakeholders and their direct impact on the classroom and various marginalized groups.