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Organizational Improvement Plan For Eliminating a Need for Alternative Programs By Way of a Paradigm Shift

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For Eliminating a Need for Alternative Programs

By Way of a Paradigm Shift

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Abstract

The problem of practice in this organizational improvement plan (OIP) is that the existence of Alternative Programs impedes progress to meaningful school change. The school board is moving toward a paradigm shift as indicated through a number of initiatives discussed in this OIP. This OIP was developed through a review of the literature on: Alternative Education, attitudes toward students labelled at-risk and through an examination of documents produced and disseminated by the Ministry. This OIP takes social critique perspective (Furman, 2004; Starratt, 2004) to understand purposes for referring students to Alternative Programs within the current paradigm. This OIP also explores the learning needs of students as they relate to the development of human identity, not as related to curriculum knowledge and career development. The emerging realization is that learning is a biological process which develops the identity of learners as self-authored beings (Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009). It is discovered that the Board is shifting toward an Ontologically Developmental Paradigm (Oh Neill, 2014). Such a shift changes the purpose of education from social reproduction to social reconstruction.

Keywords: adaptive leadership, alternative education, at-risk students, learning community, ontological development, paradigm shift, social-emotional learning, social justice

Executive Summary

The problem of practice addressed in this organizational improvement plan (OIP) allows the examination of structural issues and habitual behaviours that affect a willingness to change. The problem is that the continued existence of the Alternative Program within the board allows school staff to provide programing for students labelled at-risk without responding to the learning needs of these marginalized students.

It is argued in this OIP that referring students labelled at-risk to Alternative Programs is part of a cultural habitus influenced by psychological, communal and global environments. Even so, initiatives introduced to the board indicate a paradigm shift. The initiatives include: differentiation of instruction, concepts of learning community, project based or inquiry based learning, and social-emotional learning (SEL) and well-being. These initiatives focus on aspects of individual being rather than knowledge and financial success.

The primary audience for this OIP are positional leaders such as superintendents, principals and vice principals. As the change progresses, through the Adaptive Leadership framework, emerging leaders will ensure sustained momentum for the change. The new paradigm emerges from research demonstrating that meeting SEL needs, with the purpose of bringing students to a position of self-authorship, takes precedence in the learning process. The Ministry through the Board disseminates literature on the importance of SEL for learning readiness and resilience even as it continues working in the old paradigm.

The new paradigm shifts the former epistemological paradigm for knowledge accumulation and financial success to an ODP for personal growth and meaning making from the perspective of self-authored being. The structures of the paradigm are necessarily founded in the ethics of care, justice and critique because it recognizes the responsibility of schooling in social formation.

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Glossary of Terms

Alternative Programs/Alternative School

In the literature (Aron, 2003) an Alternative Program is a program that uses different teaching strategies and various modifications and accommodations, but which happens within the regular school. An Alternative School is an actual school separate from the regular school system. This distinction is often blurred because authors refer to the programs within Alternative Schools as alternative programs.

At-risk:

A simple understanding of an at-risk student is any student at-risk of failing a credit. The possibility of failing a credit is only an indicator of other risk factors. Students who are labelled at-risk in our setting have risk factors including but not limited to: mental health issues, victims of bullies, involvement in drug use in some way, lower socio-economic backgrounds, uninvolved or abusive parents, mild learning challenges, and typical non-attenders missing every class on a regular basis. Any or all of these factors could be combined. Any or all of these factors could influence the other factors.

Leadership:

There is always in leadership a sense of influence or control over others. In this context darker aspects of leadership exist as destructive forms of leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011) that use coercion and fear to gain support. Such support is not really followership because there is not a shared belief in the ideals the leader represents. Leadership, then, is not attached to a person but to the ideals that they represent. The individual is followed for their clear vision/understanding of those ideals and if they have a feasible plan. It is my contention that leadership is not a position but a purpose of human development akin to Maslow's (1972)

enduring idea of self-actualization or the idea of self-authorship (Hodge et al, 2009), but that is for a later work.

Ontologically Developmental Paradigm (ODP):

I introduced the concept of the ODP in an article (Oh Neill, 2014) written after related but independent action research projects done simultaneously by different teachers in the Alternative School. The paradigm began formation from readings into neurology (Calvin, 1997; Hebb, 1972) and enriched environments for brain based learning (Jensen, 2006). It became clearly defined in questioning the idea of school purpose which on one hand aimed at the reproduction of acceptable social behaviours (Begley & Zaretsky, 2004) and the production of docile bodies (Foucault, 1978) willing to do their work and pay their taxes and on the other hand to develop "fundamental [elements] of identity and culture" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 4) and be able to understand and critically interpret the world in which they live. While involved in this research, the internet was shifting the access to knowledge from a local school base to a global domain. Simultaneously, well-being was introduced into the lexicon of school leadership. The purpose of schooling was shifting. We were beginning to realize that "learning is always about 'being' and 'becoming': it is ontological" (Jarvis, 2009, p. 25). Thus, the concept of an ODP for education reached maturity in my thinking. The paradigm is *ontologically developmental* because it approaches education as a responsibility to develop the being of individuals - their personal identity and how they interact with others as opposed to their professional identity and their level of production for personal gain (Oh Neill, 2014).

Positional Leaders

Positional leaders are those people who have been hired into their leadership positions: the director of education, superintendents, learning co-ordinators, principals, vice-principals and department heads.

Secondary school

In our province a secondary school serves students who are aged 14-18. These students enter secondary school in Grade nine and are there for four years until grade twelve.

School Board

A school board is the organization that manages monitors and maintains the schools within a school district. This includes both elementary, secondary and alternative schools

Staff:

When I use the word "staff" I am referring to every paid worker in a school: principals, vice-principals, teachers, secretarial and support staff, custodians, bus drivers, and also any adult volunteer. I differentiate the paid workers from the unpaid workers who are the students.

Student being:

I use the term *student* being in the educational context. In Ontario children are legislated to attend school from ages six until eighteen (Bill 52, 2006). The designation of "student" on "being" is, thus, a legal construct not a natural occurrence. Within the current educational paradigm the primary focus of education is toward gaining knowledge and practical skills in the formation of a professional identity. It is a focus on what we are with a peripheral focus on who we are. Another way of understanding this is that it is knowledge or epistemologically driven rather than being or ontologically driven. A focus on student *being* then would shift the primary concern of education to nurturing the self-authorship of personal identity within a diverse community of individuals. Such a focus is understood to be an a priori concern for learning readiness and learning retention (Elias, 2014).

Chapter One

The Organizational Problem of Practice

Organizational Context

The process of referring students labelled at-risk to the Alternative School has become accustomed practice for providing these students educational opportunity. That a series of strategies exists that could address the needs of these students within the regular school, if there was a critical, collaborative and integrated effort toward change, suggests that the existence of the Alternative School acts as a barrier to the effective application of those strategies for the developmental growth of students labelled at-risk.

The school Board referred to in this OIP is a large board with a broad mix of urban and rural schools. The influence of the Ministry on the Board and the Board on its schools is stringent. Funding for schools is tightly controlled through the Ministry within a funding formula dependant on numbers of registered students. There are numerous statistic gathering tools used to monitor school performance in meeting Ministry indicators for success: credit accumulation; graduation rates; and a reduced gap in grade point average. The school board is further influenced by outside forces such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the demands of a changing market as well as research on learning and what are called 'best practices'.

The passing of the *Fewer School Boards Act* (Bill 104, 1997) reduced the number of school boards from 124 to 72. This was fourteen years after the formation of the first Alternative program to address the problem of secondary students who were not going to school, or who were disengaged from school. There were rural county boards and a large urban school board that amalgamated into the one large board that exists today. The purpose for school board amalgamations was to "provide for the establishment of district school boards; (b) permit the transition to a new system of education governance ... under which there [would] be fewer school boards and under which district school boards [would] govern schools, as defined in section 327

of the Education *Act*; (c) establish the Education Improvement Commission to oversee the transition to the new system of education governance ..." (Ontario Legislature, *Bill 104*, 1997). The new system of governance was more centralized and less locally sensitive. This centralization of decision making, with a centralized controlling commission of educational improvement, influences the structure of administration throughout the system.

The vision and mission of the board are clearly stated on the board website and on any public communications from the board. The mission of the board is closely aligned with the mission of the Ministry and school improvement plans are expected to align with the board. The mission statement is: *meet the learning needs of each student*. Success in this mission is measured through indicators such as credit accumulation, grade point average, and graduation rates. To achieve these markers students must pass or excel in their required courses. But does this meet 'learning needs'? This question is at the core of the problem of the existence of the Alternative School.

History of Alternative Schools

Alternative school settings have a long and diverse history. The idea of an "Alternative School" was formalized sometime in the 1960s and took on many structures. At one extreme are schools such as Summerhill (Neill, 1960) which, though founded in 1921 as a reaction to schooling, did not come to broad public attention until the sixties. Other Alternative Schools have been set up specifically for students involved with crime or with developmental challenges. Broadly, an alternative school is an educational environment outside of the regular school that works within the goals of the school district (Aron, 2003). This understanding of an alternative school fits with our alternative school.

There have been several typologies of Alternative education that have identified reasons for the creations of Alternative schools and programs (Aron, 2003; Raywid, 1994; Tobin &

Sprague, 1999). Aron (2003) develops a complex review of typologies of Alternative Schools and programs. Programs differ specifically from schools in that they occur within the regular school, yet Aron refers to both as programs (Aron, 2003). Ours is a school providing programs in separate classroom sites throughout the board. Over time the nature of alternative settings has changed. Where there were once specific situations set up for particular types of students alternative schools now cater to: youth who were completely disengaged from school (our original program); young mothers; students with learning challenges; young offenders transitioning back to school; or older students needing to graduate from secondary school. That being said our board still has special programs for young offenders that are not part of the formal Alternative School. While Aron points out that alternative schools are often sponsored by a number of financial stakeholders ours is fully funded through the board by the Ministry of Education.

The board website reports a secondary school enrollment in 2016/2017 of 23,751 students. Of the students, in that school year, 315 were referred to the Alternative School. In a 2014 report, cited in detail later, there were 470 students referred to the Alternative School for the second semester of 2013/2014. In any given year approximately one to two percent of the entire secondary school student population is referred to receive their education in an alternative setting. Some students referred do not choose to attend. The process of referral begins when students are flagged for concern due to their lack of attendance. The student is then discussed at a meeting of the Student Support Team. A team, of which I was once a member, at any school consists of: the principal, vice principal(s), the school counsellor, the Student Success Teacher, and members of the Guidance Department familiar with any students being discussed. The team discusses the life situation of the student, any strategies which have been tried and then recommends further action which may mean a referral to an alternative setting.

Sometimes students are sent to the alternative setting because of behaviour as well as poor attendance. Some students are returned because they previously experienced success; some attend because the flexibility allows them to arrive late or attend whenever they want. It is also known that still other students deliberately sabotage their semester in a traditional school to be sent to the Alternative School. Officially, the program is voluntary but often students are provided no other options. There is a system of interventions that is outlined for schools to follow prior to referring their students to the alternative program, however that often does not happen. Students are labelled at-risk for complex interdependent issues that may manifest themselves in various ways: mental health and social-emotional issues; complex problems with family and friends; learning challenges; substance abuse (possibly symptomatic of other issues); and the attitudes and responses of school staff (James & Taylor, 2010). One issue may or may not be the causal influence of the other.

The history of our Alternative School is primarily embodied in the image of a maverick teacher and a superintendent who created the first storefront location so the teacher could work with students disengaged from school or who were not attending. Within the board, the Alternative School program was started at a time when many such programs were sprouting up in Canada and the United States. The literature on alternative schooling reinforces the idea of applying a developmental practice to schooling (Aron, 2003; Mullen & Lambie, 2013; Raywid, 1994). To this end, the teacher was enabled to use whatever means necessary to re-engage students in a better future through education. Still, the global context of the Alternative School movement that includes programs such as Summerhill in England, Montessori schools, and is embraced within Progressivist ideals is not what exists in our board. I mention the alternative settings to provide an ideological distinction between ideas of Alternative schooling and our program which has become symptomatic of a problem with how we approach learning and how

we address learning needs. Our program serves the purpose of meeting standard expectations in fulfilling the goals of the board and the Ministry. The change envisioned in this OIP does not seek to return to old models but to improve the ability of school staff to work with students labelled at-risk through a change in school structures and school purpose so as to eliminate the need for the Alternative School.

Between the time of the first program and the current date much has been discovered about the process of learning and developmental growth needed for children to be ready and open to learning. Within this realm of knowledge are concepts of the learning community, differentiation of instruction, inquiry-based learning, and social-emotional learning associated with student well-being and safe and accepting schools. The school board has implemented each of these initiatives through a process of administrative decisions influenced from the Ministry. Differentiated Instruction was actually mandated for use by the Ministry in 2007 and added to the language in revised curriculum documents after that year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a). Any one of these initiatives could provide supports for at-risk students within schools and reduce the need for Alternative settings. It is the contention of this improvement plan that all of them implemented within a shifted understanding of school purpose and a different administrative structure, which will be outlined in this plan, could serve these students within the regular school. Yet there still seems to be a habitual need for Alternative programs.

Differentiation of Instruction

The process of Differentiating Instruction (DI) is one of discovering the interests, learning styles, and learning preferences of each student and then designing instructional activities that utilize student strengths (Hume, 2008). In the environment of accountability this is done to ensure student success in the subject areas of the standard curriculum; it applies directional influence on student preference toward the accumulation of prescribed knowledge

and predetermined benchmarks of success. However, fundamental to DI is respect for individual differences of learning and being which opens possibilities for ontological development.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based, or problem-based, learning allows students to explore projects of interest to them with guidance from the teacher in the investigation of problems associated with those projects. The curriculum emerges from the problems and the curriculum standards are assessed as they arise within the exploration and discovery process. The Ministry acknowledges Project-Based Learning as a "holistic strategy for engaging students in inquiry while instilling 21st century skills" (Hutchison, 2015). DI is essential in this form of learning.

Learning Community

The concept of learning community has several iterations. The professional learning community commonly referred to in educational literature was introduced to tighten up and reform school cultures of loosely coupled systems (Halverson, 2007). In this iteration, currently being used within our board, data-driven frameworks for school improvement create "communities of practice" focused on deriving information from assessment data generated by students in the classroom and through provincial testing. The focus of these "learning communities" is on how to increase the numerical values of credit accumulation, grade point achievement and graduation rates by managing the work of teaching with data and information (Brown & Mackie, 2007). Mitchell and Sackney (2000) provide an evolved form of the PLC in the Living Systems Learning Community (LSLC) which offers a more critical approach to learning and a less organizational perspective on community. There will be more detail on the LSLC in Chapter Two. Another iteration of learning community envisioned by Gibbs and Ushijima (2005) begins in the classroom through building relationships of respect and common

curiosity between students and teachers. Gibbs and Ushijima refer to this as the TRIBES Learning Community (TLC) and acknowledge the similarity between TLC and the communal practices indigenous peoples used for centuries to teach and develop strong communities.

In their discussion of how to grow this community out into the school Gibbs and Ushijima do not refer to data collection, which may be why the TLC program exists as an optional professional development strategy within our board. The formation of a learning community within the TLC dynamic begins with creating a personalized caring culture in which everyone is aware of the learning needs and motivations of others, staff, students and caregivers included. In this community individual diversity of being and development are respected and celebrated, much as they are in DI. Within such an environment the idea of removing students to another location is to acknowledge failure; a failure to find a way to reach and engage these kids. TLC incorporates the fundamental aspects of DI and inquiry-based learning within the weave of its design.

In this OIP the plan to communicate the need for change is connected within the three stages for developing a TLC (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008) because the central purpose of a TLC is to develop safe communities of learning through which people can develop healthy social-emotional skills and an excellent sense of self-worth. The LSLC provides a way to take the practices of the TLC and apply them at the board level. As a consequence, in subsequent chapters the TLC will be connected with the processes involved in Living Systems Learning Communities.

These three concepts and practices exist as separate strategies within our board and are not presented as an integrated response to meeting the ontologically developmental needs of each individual person within the organization. It is my contention that such an integrated response would eventually eliminate the need to refer students to Alternative programs.

Leadership Problem of Practice (POP)

The problem of Alternative classrooms is that their existence may actually impede progress in developing strategies for responding to the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of students labelled at-risk. Such a response would give them the skills to function in the regular school. As a result, it also impedes real school change.

Within our board referring students labelled at-risk to alternative classrooms in order for them to have success in credit accumulation, improved achievement levels and graduation rates, has become the cultural norm. While they may find success in these areas, it is not a given that actual learning needs are being met. Learning needs are not met through credit accumulation as learning is the biological process through which we discover who we are and how to act in the world (Jarvis, 2009). Learning needs are met through a pedagogy which addresses social-emotional health and well-being (Elias, 2014). We need to better understand how positional leaders facilitate the development of the understanding, the skills and the attitudes for responding to the social-emotional learning needs of students labelled at-risk. Leadership throughout the organization needs consistent and coordinated developmental responses to the recognized need for SEL as essential to 21st century learning readiness (Elias, 2014; King, Baxter Magolda, & Masse, 2011; Sliwka & Yee, 2015) eventually eliminating any need for Alternative programs.

Perspectives on the POP

The existence of a typology of alternative programs provides foundational work regarding the kinds of programs that assist these students in altering their life trajectories. Building upon this foundation are changing ideas about the purpose of education and the differentiation between education and schooling (Ryan, 2010). There is an increasing realization that education is not only about epistemological growth but also about ontological growth as evidenced in the increasing amount of literature on social-emotional learning and the

development of social competency (Elias, Defini, & Bergmann, 2010; Gundersen, 2014). This is evident also in the introduction of the idea of well-being as a stated responsibility of principals in the *Ontario Leadership Framework* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a). Within this shifting ideological context, there is a space in which to develop schools that are *primarily* more responsive to the ontologically developmental needs of students as core to the process of preparing them to fulfill the economically developmental needs of the societies in which they exist. Both these contexts are present within and around the board referred to in this improvement plan. It will be shown in this OIP that our board is already in the process of shifting from a social economic paradigm to an Ontologically Developmental Paradigm for education. Unfortunately, there are those structural imperatives (Bolman & Deal, 2013) customary within the Ministry and our board making it challenging to implement systems of behaviour capable of responding appropriately with a focus on well-being and SEL.

PESTE Analysis

A PESTE analysis of our Alternative programs provides a look at the various forces which influence ideas and decisions within the organization. It also provides a structure for perspectives on the problem of practice connected to three realms of influence: the micro environment or psychological influences on the individual, the meso or communal influences, and the macro or global influences. In this OIP an understanding of these three environments, with a focus on the Psychological Environment, frames the vision and plan to communicate change. Understanding these environments ought to assist staff in comprehending the forces that act on students that puts them in a position where they are likely to be labelled at-risk.

Political Perspective

Ontario government policies support an ODP for education. *Bill 13: an act to amend the education act with respect to bullying and other matters* states that, "The people of Ontario …

believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success" (Ontario Legislature, 2012, p. 1). Bill 13 states the need to support victims, witnesses, and *of the bullies themselves* recognizing that bullying is a symptom of social issues. Similar social influences exist for at-risk students (Robinson, 2004). Bill 13 also states that all schools must support students wishing to start Gay Straight Alliances and promote gender equity. This issue is one of being, or identity, and shows a shift toward an ontologically developmental purpose in schools. Students referred to our Alternative School may be, but are not limited to, bullies, victims of bullying, or members of the LGBT community.

Stepping Stones: An educator's guide to supporting students' health and well-being (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b), focusses on mental health and addiction issues, but recognizes the role of teachers in supporting healthy growth and development. *Stepping Stones* recognizes that teachers need to *be able to* respond when a problem arises. Another document, *Foundations for healthy schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014), develops approaches to teaching and learning through five areas contributing to healthy schools: student engagement; social and physical environments; partnerships between home, school, and the community. The ideas within these documents suggest attention to aspects of being rather than simply meeting credit accumulation benchmarks and closing achievement gaps, but school staff may not be ready or may be professionally unwilling to shift to a new paradigm (Schwean & Rodger, 2013).

Schwean and Rodger (2013) differentiate mental health as fundamental to human well-being from mental disorders. They describe a situation where school staff are ill prepared to respond to mental health needs of students, but note that schools are key to a national mental health strategy. Mental health is a developmental aspect of being which occasionally goes awry and becomes a mental disorder (Schwean & Rodger, 2013). As institutions of learning, an ontological process, schools are in a unique position for developing healthy individuals and

responding when things do go awry. A very different sort of professional development is needed to develop schools which are able to focus on ontological development through programs based on social-emotional learning, well-being and social awareness. The professional development needed is an important part of this improvement plan. It will be discussed in more detail further on.

Economic Perspective

At the end of the 2012-2013 school year two of our Alternative classrooms in rural settings were shut down as their enrolment was dwindling. Pupil funding in the province of Ontario is on a per-pupil basis. Students in those rural areas are now referred to itinerant teachers who meet with them once a week at community locations arranged between the student and the teacher. The upkeep on site locations is costly as are additional resources: books, paper, pencils, photocopied materials and other items. It could be argued that these costs are investments in the futures of students. However, a more effective investment would be a transformation of secondary schools into places where all students are able to have their learning needs met. We must recognize that learning needs are not all curriculum based. To have all school staff develop the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to respond to students' needs and model appropriate attitudes for students will take time. Teachers will need to gain an innate understanding of the importance of SEL to learning and the concept of ontological development. Additional funding will be required to allow that time for professional development and to provide resources. Some of this funding would be used to strengthen skills of the cadre of the current teachers in the Alternative School to help lead this process by sharing their knowledge and collaborating with teachers in regular secondary school settings.

Social Perspective

The school board developed a Safe Schools initiative to address issues around bullying and gender equity. Within the Safe Schools initiative it could be argued that moving students out of the regular secondary school is in the best interest of the school when these are the students who bully, who engage in physical or verbal altercations, who try to get other students to partake in substance use, or who just skip class,. However, these outward behaviours are symptomatic of other social concerns and issues. Bill 13 (Ontario Legislature, 2012) indicates the importance of working with these students to help them develop healthier ways of interacting in social environments. It is well established that the social-emotional learning these students require is essential to subsequent learning success (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Elias, 2014; Hodge et al., 2009; Mercer, 2013; Nicoll, 2014). While removing these students from the school offers a sense of relief to victims and school staff it also removes them from the social environment in which they need to learn to interact appropriately. Appropriate interaction is that which allows these students to function in an environment full of potential conflict and confusion without causing physical, mental, or emotional harm to themselves or others. It is important to remember that not all of the students referred to the Alternative program present antisocial behaviour, many have other forms of social dysfunction which might be better addressed in the environment in which they need to develop coping strategies. School staff need to create cultures in which students feel safe enough to test out their evolving social and emotional learning skills.

Technological Perspective

Our board is encouraging a “Blended Learning” model; blending online learning with face-to-face instruction. Blending learning is a strategy which promotes what is known as 'twenty-first century' learning. In *The School Effectiveness Framework* 21st Century teaching and learning includes critical thinking and problem solving through inquiry-based co-learning

within a pedagogy supported by diverse technologies (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013c, p. 29). Baxter Magolda (2007) informs us that twenty-first century learning outcomes require the development of "internal values that shape our identities and relations with others" (pp. 69-71). Magolda refers to this as self-authorship. Self-authorship requires reflection on experience; a critical evaluation of thoughts and feelings about what and why we are learning within a community of inquiry. This communal reflection is essential in a world dominated by technology and social connections that do not require physical proximity. For students labelled at-risk having difficulty with social interaction outside, and often inside, their family and friends the importance of this is magnified. It is my contention that removing them from regular school environments in which they might practice these skills and placing them in Alternative classrooms where they are told they can work independently without having to interact with others is not the best learning approach to build 21st Century skills.

Environmental Perspective

Referring students to the Alternative School has become accepted practice. Many teachers and principals (informal conversations) agree that if schools were able to respond to these students in an appropriate and meaningful way there would be no need for Alternative programs. Unfortunately, the main driving mandate of schools currently is to meet educational goals and curriculum deadlines. This mandate creates stress around performativity (Ball, 2003). Pressured by mandates to perform teachers may be unwilling to cope with students who do not attend, are disruptive in class, or have adverse influences on other students. It is easier to send these students to the Alternative setting where they might still attain credits and possibly address some of their personal issues rather than provide intervention strategies at the regular school. Students capable of finding success in the alternative setting understand the importance of learning; they attend as much as they can and make use of an on-site counsellor and are able to build

relationships with staff. These students want to learn, but not necessarily in the regular secondary school because they have been stigmatized by staff and students (Golden, Kist, Trehan, & Padak, 2005).

Equity Audit

Applying the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) *Equity Continuum* (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011) as a critical lens provides valuable insight. The work done at OISE influences policies of the board through its influence on the Ministry and so it is relevant to use this scale. The *Equity Continuum* provides a framework for considering and planning for the equitable treatment of all students regardless of background or social circumstance. It is designed to create a critical mindset that asks "difficult questions and [allows] divergent opinions to create a better environment for those students whom the current system has failed" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 7). It will be used here to determine if our Alternative settings meet these equitable measures. The *Equity Continuum* is divided into seven areas of concentration: classroom climate and instruction, school climate, student voice and space, family/caregiver-school relations, school leadership, community connections and culture of professional development. Each area of concentration includes a series of questions with a ranged scale: 0- not at all, 1-beginning, 2-some, 3-mostly and 4-fully in place. This section uses the form of the language from the questions to discuss how well the Alternative classroom setting fulfills the expectations of equitable schooling.

Classroom Climate and Instruction

Academic achievement in the Alternative classroom is mostly not tied to one particular social identity (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 11). However, the designation of "at-risk" creates a social identity for students who are referred to the Alternative program. These students are not typical students capable of adapting to the academic and social demands of high

school. As a consequence they are pushed, through the structures and expectations of schooling, to the margins (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2016). They are "marginalized". The Alternative setting acts as a soft ghetto for marginalized kids. It is a ghetto because it is a place designated for a particular type of student but it is not a harsh environment. Thomson and Pennacchia (2016) point out that the categorization and segregation from the mainstream starts a process of rehabilitation that attempts to influence students to adjust their behaviour and fit back into the system which retains our Alternative School within the social reproductive purpose (Begley and Zaretsky, 2004) of mainstream education.

There is a beginning centrality to issues of social justice (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 12) within Alternative classrooms but it is not a deliberate focus of the curriculum. By deliberate it is meant that topics of social justice appear in some course material incidentally but there is no in depth discussion or critical reflection. Some teachers will run special programs on anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-homophobia, but such instruction is not an expectation. Students may begin to see their lives reflected in some way in some of the material used in the classroom (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 13), but the same material is generally used for all students in a one size fits all application. The curriculum does not at all encourage learning through action (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 14) as students work independently on various subjects. Consequently they do not at all work together (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 14). Teachers using a variety of teaching methods in order to ensure that *all* students can access the curriculum (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 15) is fully in place as teachers must work with students individually on their individual courses. Student input is not at all essential (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 16) to the learning process as the curriculum materials are not affected by student interests even though students may occasionally negotiate what they produce for assessment. Finally, teachers within

the Alternative setting do not much collaborate with colleagues regarding equity-focussed work (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 17). The isolated nature of each classroom makes any collaboration difficult.

School Climate

The school demonstrates some climate of respect and collaboration regarding family, community, and global issues. The main focus of the work in Alternative School is credit accumulation, closing the grade point gap and increasing graduation rates, as dictated through Ministry objectives. Our Alternative classrooms are one way to achieve this for students who might otherwise fail. The school has the support of physical and psychological health (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 19) mostly in place. All classrooms provide some form of a nutrition program and most classrooms have access to a counsellor who may or may not be shared between two or three Alternative classrooms. However, there is usually no physical education program or time given for physical activity in our Alternative programs. For the most part the learning spaces are physically safe and clean environments, but they are not all aesthetically pleasing open spaces with natural lighting, good ventilation and warm and pleasing colours (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 20). Many of our Alternative classrooms are housed in whatever space was inexpensive and available. There is little to no access to media technology other than classroom computers, and no athletic or artistic equipment (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011. p. 21).

There is some quick and practical response to issues of discrimination (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 22) as part of the Safe Schools initiative and all schools within the board are accessible and have policies of progressive discipline. Unfortunately, progressive discipline often manifests itself as an increase in suspension time with each subsequent infraction. Restorative Justice (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 22) is understood as

a concept but is beginning to be used in only a few schools where staff are comfortable with the process.

Within our Alternative School there are no "clear procedures that encourage students, parents/caregivers, teaching and non-teaching staff to work together to address school climate issues" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 23). Alternative classrooms are fully in place as safe spaces that act as secure spaces "where students can affirm all aspects of their social identities and build a foundation of confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 24). As such they also act as an "intentional outreach to include the voices from non-dominant group members" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 25) but they do not represent a situation where "student ideas, opinions, perspectives, wants and needs are the basis for all that happens in the school" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 25) because the non-dominant group members have been removed to the Alternative setting from schools where these ideas are to be promoted.

Student Voice and Space

Diverse student interests and skills do not at all determine the curricular and extracurricular activities (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 26) in our Alternative School. The curriculum is provided through booklets that were purchased from another board, or through pre-structured online packages. Teachers differentiae instruction and assessment for each student as they discover how each student learns or might best demonstrate learning. However, it is prohibitively difficult for Alternative teachers to deliver a full range of courses in every subject, at every grade level and also respond to diverse student interests and learning styles. There is no extracurricular program in the Alternative school. A few students are involved in extracurricular activities at their regular school. There is no regular process or

structure in place that allows or encourages students to become involved in decision making in the classroom or the school (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 27).

Family/Caregiver-School Relations

With many of our more turbulent students their issues are centred at home. Communication with parents, prior to the student's referral to our Alternative School, is not an invitation to participate in school life (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 28) but is focused on addressing problem behaviour. For students with mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, or learning challenges the Alternative setting is often offered as a transitional program, but ends up being the preferred choice of parents when their children are successful. Once in the Alternative setting there is no question that families and family structures are respected, but they are also viewed in the context of factors that affect the students. Some parents are viewed as valuable resources of knowledge of their children (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 29) while others are viewed as the sources of student difficulties. There is very little consultation with parents in making key decisions regarding their children's school life (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 30) except in consenting to transfer them to Alternative School and during an initial orientation meeting before the child begins in the Alternative classroom. Respectful and validating communication (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 31) is fully in place but communication to parents within the Alternative setting is often confined to information about an absence and sometimes to discuss the transition back to the regular school. Other than the initial orientation family/caregivers are very seldom invited into the Alternative setting (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 33). While the school recognizes the socio-political events that shape family/caregiver involvement and the availability of time and resources it is of no consequence as these things do not have influence on the way that the school is run except in scheduling the initial interview.

School Leadership

The purpose or vision for Alternative school is not at all clearly communicated (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 35) except in its alignment with Ministry and board goals of credit accumulation, decreasing the achievement level gap and increasing graduation rates. The overall vision of meeting the learning needs of every student is clearly indicated on the board website, but the means for achieving this are bound to the centralized vision from the Ministry. Power in the school is not shared by all stakeholders in different ways (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 36). Decisions are made by formal positional leaders within the board and the school. When input is sought from teachers or support staff it is always framed within the expectation that any decision must align with organizational policy and goals which are determined by Ministry objectives. Though this approach ensures a consistency of practice, it does not open policy to critical appraisal. In connection to this push for alignment with Ministry and board directives, the board has "systematic policies and practices that help to train and maintain leadership" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 37), but the school has not. "School staff are supported and encouraged to develop and provide leadership" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 38) in areas determined important by the school and the board. As a consequence the possibility of influencing systemic change is severely diminished.

Community Connections

The Alternative school has some "policies and practices in place to ensure that [the people within] it [learn] from the knowledge of community agencies" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 39). The gleaning of such knowledge is at the discretion of teachers or counsellors at each location. The Alternative school is not at all involved in social justice and advocacy work in the community (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 40) although it is recognized that the school provides students support in addressing their personal issues. This

support is on an individual basis and is not extended to broader community needs. The primary focus of the Alternative school is on credit accumulation through a supportive environment. Occasionally teachers may engage students in discussing the issues that affect their community (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, pp. 41-42) but this is not reflected in the curriculum or apparent in broad school practice.

Culture of Professional Development

In the *Equity Continuum* (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011) culture is something which everyone does as a matter of common practice. A culture of professional development exists when everyone pursues professional development as a natural part of their daily working lives. Many teachers have "very different life experiences from that of their students" in Alternative School, but any questioning of "common sense assumptions about schooling" (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011, p. 43) is outweighed by the demands of meeting the learning goals of the Ministry. A new and different kind of professional development focussed on learning about the lives of students and their families only rarely occurs. Professional development does not often focus the attention of staff explicitly on their own social identities and privileges of class, ethnicity or gender. Within the accountability agenda professional development focuses on curriculum delivery and the interpretation of data to determine where students need help in understanding for credit accumulation. Ontological questions of social identity are not part of this consideration. Teachers are free to explore areas of particular relevance to their interests and students' needs but there is no direct encouragement to include equity and social justice in plans for professional development. Staff are provided opportunities for ongoing professional development, outside of Ministry directed P.D., in equity and social justice if they choose, but there is a difference between providing an opportunity and encouragement.

Equity Audit Summary

It can be seen from this assessment that most of the factors that create an equitable learning environment are not in place in the Alternative School. Individual teachers may, out of their own sense of justice, work to rectify this situation but there is no policy in place that addresses these issues. The audit itself aims at ideal situations. A few of these may be described as fully in place. Unfortunately, the processes through which students are identified as being at-risk act to segregate them to the Alternative School, which acts to reduce the level of equity. Many of the factors within the audit have a social-emotional component related to identity, inclusion, and issues of power around self-direction or decision making. The structures of the Alternative School begin with identification by others, exclude students from their home school, often without any options, and apply similar expectations of achievement. The difference in the Alternative setting is that students control their rate of course completion and have more opportunity for one-to-one assistance. This does not change focus from credit accumulation and grade point average in specified disciplines to a focus on the development of an individual with the capacity and independent desire to seek and to learn.

Guiding Questions Emerging from the POP

Alternative classrooms have become a part of our board's educational landscape. They provide a way for schools to maintain traditional values while housing students labelled at-risk outside of the mainstream. They also allow students labelled at-risk to receive the credentials they need to enter the workforce and become contributing members of society. They do not, however, create environments in which these students are able to practice the social-emotional skills they need to function well in the complex social environments of that society. Social-emotional learning (SEL) provides individuals with ways to cope in challenging situations and to learn from them and so are important to the learning process (Elias, 2014) and how they define

themselves (Jarvis, 2009). Elias (2014) discusses academic learning and SEL as though they are two things that occur side by side, but clearly indicates that when the social-emotional part is in crisis the academic learning is difficult or cannot occur (Elias et al., 2010). Students either do not do as well as they otherwise would or they are labelled at-risk. It is important from this perspective to make social-emotional learning the foundation for schooling and academic work an anchor for learning that gives students, and staff, the chance to discover themselves. Questions arising from the importance of SEL include:

- How do positional leaders act to motivate leadership and learning in staff around meeting the SEL needs of students, as well as themselves?
- What is needed to prepare school staff to respond with understanding in a way that promotes student well-being through SEL?
- How do school leaders at the home school create a learning environment in which SEL and well-being are the foundations for learning readiness and get students, parents, and staff involved in the process?

This OIP changes the focus of teaching from curriculum delivery to developing students who are aware of themselves, what they need to learn, and how to learn from challenging situations. This is not a discipline focus, but a developmental one. Many teachers may not be comfortable taking it on, even if they understand its essential nature, because they have not been trained and it is not a part of their professional mandate (Schwean & Rodger, 2013). This discomfort raises the following questions:

- What kind of PD is needed to prepare teachers for taking on this challenging role?
- What is the response to resistance and how do leaders get others involved in the process of explaining the changes to those who do not think of ontological development as part of their job?

Through discussions with colleagues it is easy to see that teachers in the Alternative School often come to their work with a different perspective. They see themselves as a necessary part of kid's lives. Many have experienced students who moved out of desperation to hope and fear a return to regular school will cause a regression unless changes are made to the regular secondary school (Edgar-Smith & Palmer, 2015). But this is why schools have to change; a change which we initiate by preparing for the end of Alternative Schools in our board. The Alternative teachers, I being one, already fear this course of action and, from past experience with change, do not think they will be given a choice or a voice in the matter. And so:

- How do school leaders involve the Alternative Teachers as leaders in the process of change?

Leadership Focussed Vision for Change

Moving schooling from the current paradigm of economic efficiency and dominant ideas of social success to a paradigm of ontological development and emerging ideas of personal well-being will take a unique form of Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Northouse, 2016; Owens & Valesky, 2004). Adaptive Leadership is particularly suited for the ODP because it attends to the difficulties of shifting beliefs and gives the responsibility for learning the reasons for and solving the problems of change "back to the people" (Heifetz et al., 2009). This means that positional leaders, those people hired into leadership roles, create and support situations through which each person is able to engage in leadership actions. In this regard, one of the more important behaviours of the Adaptive leader is to stand back and assess the psychological influences on and from staff while also being aware of the shifting influences from communal and global environments. As this plan moves forward, leadership will need to

be keenly aware of the existing dominant paradigm and even more aware of the forces that are pushing for change to the ODP.

According to Gutek (1997) the conservative view toward change is to make change cautiously and to do so in such a way as to maintain traditional values. Leadership and policy from a conservative perspective are "designed to integrate the new element into existing patterns without jeopardizing the integrity of traditional institutions and behaviour" (Gutek, 1997, p. 202). Our board is very much a conservative institution. And so, it was conservative ideals that motivated the creation of the Alternative classroom in our board. Underlying this motivation is the goal to provide all students with an education believed to make them successful in life through success in the workplace. As a consequence, the creation of Alternative classrooms in "storefront" locations does not threaten conservative values. It is a way to educate students that challenge the typical system while running the regular schools in the usual way. Once that first classroom was established and shown to be successful more were created and Alternative classrooms became the norm.

In my view, many of the initiatives detailed in this plan that may work to shift the school board to an ODP, and eventually eliminate the need for Alternative programs, were subsumed within the dominant structure to serve the purpose of conserving societal norms (Oh Neill, 2009). Positional leaders, and those working for change within schools, need to realize that research on learning and the technological access to curriculum knowledge are having the effect of shifting learning to its ontological core. They must also see that the means of making that shift already exist in their schools. They have only to use them as they were meant to be used: differentiation gives us methods of understanding how students view the world, inquiry based learning allows students to discover how they can interact with and affect the world, learning communities, as envisioned here, create environments where everyone accepts responsibility for the learning of

others. They need also to apply them as an integrated approach in a collaborative effort to align them with the shifting paradigm for education indicated in this plan.

A centralized hierarchy of leadership is not going to work in the new paradigm. Much the way social media gives the power of voicing concerns to the broader public, positional leaders within our board must be willing to listen for leadership voices. We cannot have community if only a few people are heard. Positional leaders must also recognize that learning ought not to be restricted to the disciplines covered in schools because learning is a biological process through which we discover ourselves in relationship to the rest of the world (Jarvis, 2009). Once this realization has been accepted, those people leading the change will need to be patient and able to communicate with those who may not be comfortable with the direction of change. In this regard the Alternative program is key. The planned removal of the Alternative program will precipitate broader change. It will beg the questions: What will we do with these students? How can we be expected to deal with their issues? How can we make this thing work? The answer is a paradigm shift as defined by Kuhn (1962) through which it is discovered that the current model of teaching children how to conform to social expectations does not fulfill the learning needs of children to discover how to *be* in the world.

Organizational Change Readiness

The board has already many systems of understanding that might be applied to the problem of practice: differentiated instruction and assessment, inquiry based learning, TLC, SEL and well-being. The structural forces in the system that negatively affect human resource development along the continuum toward the new paradigm are inured in professional praxis. These forces include the continued purpose of schooling for the reproduction of a dominant cultural norms (Begley & Zaretsky, 2004), the influence of neoliberal ideas embodied in the standard curriculum and the accountability agenda (Ryan, 2012), and the continued idea that

schooling will result in a successful career. These dominant cultural habits and neoliberal ideas influence schooling to such a degree that the board struggles to allow changes demanded by an evolved theory of learning that situates healthy social-emotional learning as a prerequisite for any learning about the self and the world (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Elias & Moceri, 2012; Gundersen, 2014). These customary ways of responding to students are supported within the structures that make the school system work to meet the overarching educational purpose of social reproduction. It is thus difficult to imagine, let alone institute, change. In addition to this systemic habitus the organization has other barriers to change such as: teacher realizations that their work in the Alternative setting has saved the lives of some students, student and parent preference for the Alternative classroom that gets them away from their experience with regular schools, and the material used which gives students less challenging opportunities for success. Work, in some instances, in the Alternative setting *has* saved lives (I have experienced this myself with several students) but this is due to the dedication of staff not the Alternative school. The Alternative setting is not essential for this to occur. Any school itself is not as essential as the collaborative effort of those working within it, be it a regular or Alternative school.

Experience with Change

It has been the practice of administration to move staff around without consultation in spite of language within the collective agreement that states that consultation must occur. The first such movement was done prior to the language being in the collective agreement and staff were given vague generalizations about the good of the organization but no clearly defined vision. The later disregard of agreed upon standards of practice created an atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty which made any change, good, bad or indifferent, difficult to manage. As a consequence, previous experience with change within our Alternative School setting has not

been positive. The problem of not having a voice in the process of change for those most affected by change will be addressed in this improvement plan.

Executive Support for Change

The existence of initiatives within the board that support a shift to an ODP suggest executive support for such a shift. The shift is made difficult to sanction by the success of the Alternative School in increasing measures deemed by the Ministry and the board as prime indicators of success in general: improved grade point average, graduation rates and credit accumulation. The expense of maintaining the Alternative School setting may be a factor which could influence support from some positional leaders at the board level. The ODP is a new concept to many within the organization as it has evolved out of relatively recent research. The concept of well-being is widely accepted but is interpreted in schooling within an economic framework (Blackmore, 2013) promoted through the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001). Well-being may involve financial security, but it needs to be understood as a complex balance between physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health. All in all, financial support is merely a tool for maintaining these essential elements. There is a need to clearly explain the importance of this concept to the improvement of schools for 21st century learning. Change agents need to have a deep understanding of learning as a biological process naturally attuned to ontological development (Jarvis, 2009). The organization is able to attract and retain "change champions" but the people chosen for this particular improvement need to think beyond behavioural norms that lead to habitual praxis. They must be people motivated by a desire to improve the learning environment for all people living within it and not by their own desires for organizational advancement.

The school board, through a long term focus on data-driven and data-informed improvement, has developed a complex information network for scanning and measuring the

progress of change initiatives. Through the use of professional learning communities for data analysis and program planning, the organization has developed an effective system for communication and monitoring of classroom practice. Through this process teachers are given a voice in the implementation of change, but change is directed from above by the Ministry through the board. Fortunately, there are those initiatives, discussed earlier, within the board which point to the appropriateness of the change suggested here; though the language specifically suggesting an ODP does not appear within those initiatives as the concept, from the work of Jarvis (2009), was introduced in an article I wrote for *Education Canada* (Oh Neill, 2014). It will need to be shown how specific programs for learning that already exist are subsumed within the philosophy of an ODP and how that paradigm can most effectively be applied to solve the problem of perpetuating Alternative classrooms.

The planned elimination of the need for Alternative education in our board is an impetus for changing the purpose of schooling. The ideas of resilience, differentiation of instruction to the learning needs of individuals, and the idea of inquiry based learning as it relates to self-directed learning provide support for the changes this problem infers. There is a lot going on within our organization that moves in this direction, but the overall structures of schooling: grade levels, goals for curriculum accumulation, curriculum and assessment structures act to resist this breadth of change.

There are, within the problem, unique opportunities to address such things as teacher attitudes toward students, student voice and issues of social justice as reflected in questions of equity which arose in the Equity Audit. The question of equity for students, staff and parents is inherent in the need to respond differently to students who are labelled *at-risk.* The effort to achieve the level of equity needed requires a clear understanding of the issues by everyone involved and an invested interest in meaningful change. Such change will require a collaborative

integrated approach by all school administrators, including those in the Alternative School. It will also require consistent messaging from the board about the importance of social-emotional learning, the nature of well-being and the shifting environment in which schools exist. Administrators will need to work in concert with staff to orchestrate leadership actions that motivate an understanding of the need for change. Administrators at all levels will need to encourage everyone within the board to become agents of change (Cawsey, Desca, & Ingols, 2012, p. 236). The first move in the direction of change is to understand where we are and the forces that are already acting upon us that initiate this evolution of schooling.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change

Through the 1990s the push for educational reform was motivated by dominant neoliberal forces wanting to make schools economically efficient (Sears, 2003). The call for efficiency is prevalent in the data-driven structures for professional learning communities (Halverson, 2007; Hord & Sommers, 2008). The forces of research in human development and a technology that brings knowledge to anyone through online information and access to others are pushing in other directions. The shift to an ODP is already in process but, in my view, there are few people in education who are ready for, or who have recognized the nature of this change. Dominant structures of schooling are not going to change overnight. Teacher knowledge of the psychological needs of students is limited to their interest in learning about it. Teachers know how to teach their disciplines and many do exceptionally well. Human learning, however, is not the same as school learning even though the processes of learning differ little. School learning is focussed on mastering a particular curriculum of study with the purpose of developing skills that assist in financial success. Human learning is focussed on developing relationships between the self and the environments in which we exist that define the nature of being and identity.

Priority of SEL

There are five generally accepted areas for social emotional learning: self-awareness, slef-management or self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making and problem solving (Elias & Moceri, 2012, p. 424). Self-awareness is the ability to recognize what motivates emotional response which includes an awareness of personal values, beliefs, and what one needs to learn to build on strengths and overcome limitations. Self-regulation is the ability to determine goals and use emotional energy to facilitate personal growth. Social awareness and relationship skills involve being able to demonstrate understanding and empathy for others in the process of building relationships of respect and mutual benefit. Responsible decisions solve problems in ethically constructive ways that do not bring physical or psychological to the self or others. Elias and Moceri (2012) emphasize, though, that SEL is much more than a list of skills. They stress the importance of SEL as pedagogical process that builds skills within a developmental trajectory that is influenced by a broad spectrum of communal and global agents including teachers, parents, media and other cultural agents that can have a profound effect on a child's life.

As an associate teacher in 2013, I discovered that teachers are primarily taught strategies that can be used to have students achieve success in discipline specific learning. But the rhetoric in documents from the Ministry, referenced in this OIP, recognizes the need for SEL and a sense of well-being, learning about the self and one's place in the world, and resiliency skills to learning readiness and learning retention. There needs to be meaningful professional development about what that means and how it will affect schools. Teachers, parents and students need to be aware of what documents include this understanding, why this pedagogy has priority over the curriculum, and how to design a learning environment that has ontological development embedded in the activities of the classroom, school and community. This means a very different kind of professional development (PD).

PD for Ontological Development

Professional development within our organization is usually one of three kinds: Ministry directed often focusing on literacy, numeracy or assessment, subject specific organized by teachers who are using a particular learning strategy, or specialized areas of focus such as the Safe Schools initiative, or Bridges Out of Poverty (Payne, Devol, & Smith, 2001). Sometimes the specialized focus is mandated by the board and presented during staff meetings or on PD Days but more often it is a choice of staff interested in learning more about a particular topic. Time for specialized PD is sometimes funded through the board, for example TRIBES which is included in the Safe Schools portfolio, while others are not. With the exception of important aspects of TRIBES, which I will discuss shortly, most PD provides strategies for having students behave in ways that will make them successful in the framework of dominant norms of success.

Students are labelled at-risk when their behaviour threatens their chance for success within that framework, but there are other risk factors. The PD that is needed for working with the students we label at-risk needs to be focussed on understanding the struggle for self-authorship, the social forces that influence action including schooling, that behaviour is motivated by emotionally charged values, and that learning happens differently when an individual feels a social-emotional imbalance that negatively affects their well-being. We need a PD program that is focussed more on developmental issues than professional accountability. From such PD, or included within it, would be the realization that the current reproductive function of schooling is not meeting important learning needs and that a change in the purpose of schooling will give students the abilities they require going into an uncertain future.

Another aspect of this PD would be to explain the structures and strategies within the board that already support this direction of change. Many initiatives were introduced with the suggestion that good teachers do them already, which creates feelings of guilt and possibly

shame. This is not what we want. What we do want is to show that what we are already doing is moving us toward the new paradigm. A prime example is differentiated instruction. DI can be used as a way to learn how students learn for the sole purpose of designing strategies that make accessing the curriculum less challenging or it can be used as a way for them to find out how best they learn anything. It can go only so far as to have them work to finish a credit or they can challenge themselves to use different modalities. It can also be used to discover ways to translate information from one modality into the one they prefer to use. Thus, the curriculum becomes an anchor for learning about how to interact with the world. The focus of learning is student *being*. We need this use of learning strategies to be the norm. We need staff to see how this focus will help students in all areas of learning because it is the core of the nature of learning.

The final part of this initial introduction to the ODP is to demonstrate to school staff, administrators and teachers, that such a shift is supported in policy and legislation. As Bill 13 clearly states: *all* students must feel accepted. Though the thrust of Bill 13 is for the inclusion of LGBTQ students and victims of bullying the use of the word "all" suggests that schools must accept and support every student. It is recognized that there is an inequity of power that requires extra support for LGBTQ students, but part of that support ought to be working with those students who bully or abuse other kids so that they will no longer behave as a threat. Ross Greene, whose book *Lost at school: Why or kids with behavioural challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help them* (Greene, 2008) was distributed to positional leaders within our board, identifies all challenging behaviours as a result of an unsolved problem or a lack of some form of skill (Greene, 2008). Children need help to discover these problems and more help in learning the skills.

Richard Lavoie (2007) found that determining what motivates children and responding to fulfill those motivations in socially acceptable ways worked wonders in having kids develop the means to negotiate challenges in more healthy ways. Both Lavoie and Greene were writing for school staff. There are well established strategies for fulfilling the core purpose of Bill 13 without asking students to learn in a separate location. In fact, they won't learn these things in Alternative School because the overarching expectation is on credit accumulation with only peripheral support on social-emotional issues. In concert with PD on the importance of social-emotional learning will be PD on how to respond to this need.

The Stage of Inclusion: Responsibility for Messaging

Who will deliver this message? The information regarding the importance of SEL to learning readiness ought best to be delivered by experts in the field. Professional reading would be provided on the subject, shared with all staff at the same time with the requirement that Principals and Vice Principals become familiar, if not well versed in the concepts while other staff, teachers and support staff would be given an option. This is because Principals and Vice Principals will need to model behaviours that support the new paradigm. The literature will be followed by PD. Initially this PD would be in staff meetings and would involve staff sharing their understandings and concerns around the new direction, or working out how to fit SEL into the curriculum work through inquiry based discussion and action research in their classrooms. This is the Stage of Inclusion (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008) through which people are welcomed into the community as valued resources. All ideas and concerns are valid and understanding and empathy are the goals to have everyone feel heard and valued. Positional leaders will need to be mindful of those on staff who do not speak in meetings and try to make contact later to show that their opinions are wanted. Positional leaders will need to touch base with the more vocal members to keep the conversation alive so that it is not seen as just something that was done at

the meeting. On the official PD day the expert gives clarification and/or confirmation about the thinking that has already transpired and answers questions about how things might work. The formal follow up would be at the next staff meeting with informal conversations out in the hall, the staff room, in classrooms with students in order to generate a restless energy regarding the change.

The Stage of Influence: Giving Voice

Next is the Stage of Influence in which some people take on the problems of how to make the new paradigm work while others may struggle to maintain the status quo. Positional leaders will need to ensure that the concentrated effort by early adopters willing to experiment is accompanied by formal and informal discussion in learning communities. They will also need data and artifacts to use in conveying the message of change. Everyone needs to stay calm and reflective. Positional leaders need to be aware of the fears and desires of staff and know who on the staff they can turn to for leadership. They will also need to be cognizant of new leaders and encourage them to use influence. Having influence is to feel valued (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008, p. 113) and so leadership, which is the power of influence, is waiting within everyone.

In the stage of influence it is most important that people confident in their sense of leadership help others to share leadership responsibility (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008, p. 114). Positional and emerging leaders need to be able to clarify conceptual points and respond to concerns in ways that give value to those concerns within the emerging context. They also need to be keenly aware that change is difficult and acknowledge feelings of fear, insecurity, and anger. This is the stage in which problems are discussed in departments or other organized teams. Collaboration between interdisciplinary teams should be encouraged. Staff wanting to try things out should make structured plans for the discussion and measurement of their own initiatives. All that practice with data in the old paradigm is of value in this developmental

phase. Students are at the heart of this shift and are the ones most affected and so their voices need to be included in any such plan. Since this is a stage of research and development, action research that moves us toward the third stage, parents also need to sign on both formally through consent and informally through involvement.

Alternative Teachers in the Stage of Inclusion

Before describing the communication plan that occurs for the third Stage of Community, I want to discuss Alternative teachers within the stage of inclusion. It is important to explain the idea that the planned changes are designed to reduce and eventually eliminate the need for Alternative Education. This will avoid the frustration and mistrust engendered in previous organizational changes when staff were given vague statements about the "big picture" and having a fresh perspective to explain changes that were simply based on cost cutting. It will not avoid upset or anger. It will be important that positional leaders coordinate efforts to ensure that Alternative staff may participate in the initial PD on SEL and be part of the group conversations as they represent a cadre of people who have been working with the problems of SEL as part of their job description. But Alternative staff need formal training in working for SEL because much of their knowledge is intuitive. They will also be trained as advocates for students for when they return to regular schools. When Alternative teachers return to the regular secondary schools they will do so as Student Support Teachers (SST). Teaching positions will need to be created for them and guaranteed for two years; one year for adjustment and improvement and a second for honing their skills. These positions will need to be negotiated with the union. All of this needs to be communicated to them *before* the Stage of Inclusion.

The Stage of Community: Developing Capacity

The Stage of Community is when the inter communication between schools begins. Each stage of the process happens at a micro, meso, and macro level, i.e. within the psychology and

mindset of participants, the community of each school and the board. Since the Alternative school has classrooms located all over the board the effects of the change will be across the organization. It is important that there is intercommunication between schools at principal meetings prior to the Stage of Inclusion and between all staff during the Stage of Community. Fortunately, our board already has in place a budget for this kind of inter-school sharing. Often in that program the sharing of ideas is teacher initiated, but there are also occasions where learning opportunities are created by principals or by the board. For this change to be successful collaboration between regular school staff and Alternative School staff must provide direction in this regard.

As can be seen from this brief outline the communication of the need for change once begun is continuous. When entering into an ODP, the structure of the learning environment needs to be focussed on growth, curiosity about identity, and the wonder about what can be done. The timeline for this framework is variable, with the understanding that some schools may progress faster or slower than others and that the whole organization will need time to adjust. How that will happen will be outlined later. It can also be seen that the communication is not strictly about the practice of sending students to the Alternative School because for that practice to reduce or be halted we need to change the nature of schools - change their being.

This shift moves our board toward its ultimate goal because it responds to the rising rhetoric within Ministry and board documents around wellbeing and learning. It recognizes that schooling no longer acts to reproduce the cultural habitus because that culture is in the process of change. Technological advancements have given students access to more information than schools could ever provide. Our understanding about learning shows that it is not just about knowledge etched into the tabula rasa of the brain. Learning is about becoming aware of oneself in the world and deciding who we are going to be. SEL is deeply rooted in the development of

our sense of self-identity. Our ontological development begins with genetic potentialities built into the structures of the brain and is nurtured or neglected through the effects of our lived environments: home, school, friendships, work, and media experiences.

We are all born with potential. It is circumstance that makes us unequal; it comes down to what we know and to what we are willing to learn. As learning is a process of personal becoming the individuality expressed by students labelled at-risk as they struggle within their circumstances becomes a valuable thing. The problems they face are the substance for meaningful learning about who they are and how to interact in the world. It is the contention of this OIP that removing them to an Alternative setting where they can work independently does not enter them into a world of discovery but segregates them within the structures of schooling. The problems these students provide us are necessary challenges for schools to move toward change. Learning to respond to them is what school communities need to meet the demands of learning for the 21st century. The continued presence of the Alternative School option allows schools to sidestep much needed change. But it is important to be aware that what is being proposed here is not simply moving the Alternative School into the regular school. The Alternative School represents a problem of practice that impedes a move toward change that is already present within many initiatives within the board. Having to meet the social-emotional learning needs of students labelled at risk within the regular school requires a shift in the nature of schooling that affects all students by changing the purpose of schooling. It creates schools focussed on the ontological development of children and prepares them, the children and school staff, for the twenty-first century and beyond.

Chapter Two

Theories to Model and Monitor Change

Framework for Leading the Change Process

The problem of practice identified is the continued availability of Alternative classrooms which creates a situation that permits schools to avoid making difficult substantial change. The habitual referral of students labelled at-risk to the Alternative setting excludes them from the social environments in which they most need to learn. Social-emotional-learning (SEL) has been established as a prerequisite to learning readiness (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Elias & Moceri, 2012; Gundersen, 2014). The changes needed to address this problem of practice, and retain students otherwise labelled at-risk within the regular school, require fundamental changes to the current priorities of education. It is for this reason that the Adaptive Leadership framework is a good way to start because we also need to change the way we think about leadership.

Adaptive Leadership requires an awareness of the broad socio-political factors that influence education before action is to be taken. The Adaptive leadership model also encourages a shift from positional power to a more democratic distribution of responsibility because it requires that leadership be allowed to flourish in others. I intend to use Adaptive Leadership in correlation with Schein's (2016) processes for changing organizational culture and to integrate both these frameworks with the process to build a Living Systems Learning Community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). The Living Systems Learning Community has direct correlations with Gibbs and Ushijima's TRIBE'S Learning Community (2002) which, as noted, has a familiarity within our board. Table 2.1 provides a schematic for this correlation.

Table 2.1:

Correlations between the planned leadership framework, change process and two end state results

Adaptive Leadership	Schein's Cultural Change	Living Systems Learning Community	TRIBES Learning Community
Obtain a breadth of awareness Identify Challenges: Technical or Adaptive	Discomfiture	Develop Personal Capacity	Stage of Inclusion
Regulate distress Maintain discipline attention	New concepts New understandings of old concepts New standards of judgement	Develop Interpersonal Capacity	Stage of Influence
Encourage and develop fresh leadership voices Give the work to the people - entrust leadership to others	Internalization Incorporation of new concepts into self-identity and ongoing relationships	Develop Organizational Capacity	Stage of Community

Table 2.1: There is a progressive movement from left to right in each row and also from the top to the bottom in each column. This means that the actions taken at one place ought naturally to lead to action in the neighbouring concept. Once begun, it must be noted, the whole process should develop into a stable system of continuous action.

The framework for Adaptive Leadership and the impetus for change involve an awareness of complex factors that influence the School and the board. The hierarchical connotation of the "getting on the balcony" metaphor used in the literature (Heifetz et al., 2009) is problematic in the context of the leadership approach discussed later so I refer to this as obtaining a breadth of awareness. In the context of ingrained cultural behaviours, this includes an awareness of the dominant social norms that define the board. These norms include the global, communal and psychological influences acting on and within the organization and the individuals affected by it, also referred to as stakeholders. The analysis of such information has

led to the identification of this problem of practice. The information gained through data collection and observation creates that sense of discomfiture (Schein, 2016) as it is discovered that what we are doing is not meeting learning needs. This discovery 'unfreezes' the organization. Sometimes the process requires encouragement as some people do not feel it within their purview to pursue this breadth of awareness. This is due to the socially constructed demarcation between leader and follower which is one perception needing change that is addressed in solutions to this problem of practice. Positional leaders will initially determine the technical and adaptive aspects of the change process. In this instance the announcement of a plan to eventually eliminate the need for Alternative classrooms will precipitate a wealth of adaptive challenges. The discomfiture developed from this announcement is designed to catalyze the desire for the "creation of psychological safety to overcome learning anxiety" (Schein, 2010, p. 300). The need to overcome learning anxiety will be met through the development of a living systems learning community.

To give the flavour of how these changes may be introduced I provide, now, an image of a possible initiating action. The announcement of the plan to eliminate the need for Alternative classrooms would come with the revelation of the plan for preparing the board for the shift to the ODP. The first step in the process will involve gaining a breadth of awareness as to why the change is warranted and how the change will proceed. This would include the planned creation of Student Success Teacher positions for teachers currently working in the Alternative School at an appropriate time in the change process. Prior to this announcement all staff, as stated in Chapter one, would have been provided literature on the importance of social-emotional learning and the development of living systems learning communities with structural reference to the TRIBES Learning Community already being used in some places within the board. The announcement would be made by principals during a PD day in the second semester of the

school year after presentations: on social-emotional learning (SEL) and its importance to the learning process, on the social-emotional challenges of many students usually labelled at-risk, on the challenges of working with these students for staff, on what is already being done within the board to support the change, and on Ministry initiatives that also support the change.

Presentations and workshops would be conducted by experts from outside the board as well as knowledgeable teachers within the board, preferably from within each school. Staff will be provided the questions outlined in this OIP for discussion and critical assessment on the issues involved in the proposed change. Staff meetings at the end of that year would continue the discussion and get further thoughts and concerns from staff. The summer break will be time for reflection. This initiating action would set the tone for the movement to a living systems learning community within the context of TRIBES. Teachers familiar with TRIBES could be invited to help in the organization of discussions moving forward. In the next phase the idea of the paradigm shift needs to be introduced so that people will know that what they are working toward is a different way of thinking about education.

In reference to Table 2.1 the idea for the initiating action just described fits into the upper left corner of the grid. The dissemination of information to staff prior to the announcement signals the coming change. As mentioned in Chapter one, it would be expected that positional leaders: superintendents, principals, and vice principals, read and understand the concepts involved, especially as they are going to act as critical leverage points for the development and adoption of the ODP. The idea of critical leverage is discussed in more detail in the section on "Leadership Approaches to Change". There may be quite a few staff not ready to adopt the concept that social-emotional learning needs to take a prior position to curriculum learning, for example. This information may cause both discomfort and/or a disjuncture with their idea of schooling as well as some degree of distress. If disjuncture is the place from which learning

happens (Jarvis, 2009) then a certain amount of distress is necessary for growth. The *regulation* of distress is essential within the Adaptive Leadership model. Positional leaders must maintain the right measure of tension to keep people engaged without scaring them off or making them unnecessarily defensive. They must maintain a disciplined attention on learning and the process of change (Heifetz et al., 2009).

The discomfort must be responded to with assistance and information. It is also important for positional leaders to utilize the intelligence of the people they work with and to model the learning community through action. Through guided PD and opportunities for staff to critically assess the new information in group discussion and personal reflection there will be time to understand new concepts and see how they may expand on or logically replace old concepts. For example, the connection between differentiation of instruction (DI) and the possibility for using that knowledge to have students discover how they learn and, possibly, how to translate one way of learning into their preferred modality, such as turning the information from a lecture into pictures, or music. Or, teachers may discover through critical assessment of their own practice how what they are already doing does or does not fit within the new paradigm. Staff may discover how SEL is already a large part of what they are doing on a subconscious level and merely need to come up with ways to make it a part of their conscious planning using the curriculum as an anchor point for challenges that promote ontological development.

As staff obtain a better idea of what they are working with they build personal capacity. One of the more potent aspects of building personal capacity, as outlined by Mitchell and Sackney (2000), is the difficult process of discovering discrepancies between our espoused theory and our theory in use. As Mitchell and Sackney (2000) note this is a difficult process because it requires articulating something that may be hard to fully understand. It can bring

about feelings of vulnerability and so it is important to be in a safe space, which is the main purpose of the Stage of Inclusion in TRIBES. Some people will move through the process more readily than others. These people can be encouraged, or rather, allowed to express their leadership, and help build interpersonal capacity as they become more comfortable within the stage of influence. As more people enter this mode positional leaders take their cue and solidify organizational capacity through the process of sustaining communal learning and development.

This overview weaves the processes for change from the four frameworks, presented in Table 2.1, into an integrated whole. The one phase moves into and overlaps with the other. Throughout the process it will be important to take moments for reflection on learning and the action toward change. Reflective practice is an integral part of the TRIBES framework (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2002, p. 186). Mitchell and Sackney discover that collective reflection helps to develop a systemic awareness of the forces that influence personal professional practice as well as processes that hinder and help schools" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 64). The process of continuous collective and individual reflection acts to build personal, interpersonal and organizational capacity by building professional and organizational wisdom. Such reflection along with professional conversations allows people to explore and "understand alternative perspectives and reconstruct the collective narrative (Mitchell & Sackney. 2000, p. 65) which offers a greater chance of developing a sustainable system. By developing this awareness and creating time for critical discussion and reflective practice we can create an organization devoted to ontological development. This development is of the identity of the staff and the organization. In such an environment staff may be more ready and able to respond to students labelled at-risk and so eliminate the need for an Alternative School.

Critical Organizational Analysis

In 2014 our School board made public, through its website, a study resulting from two

years of data collection through surveys of Alternative students, focus groups with Alternative staff conducted at the end of the two year period, and focus groups with Student Support Teachers and Guidance staff in the high schools (School Board, 2014). The focus groups with both Alternative staff and High School staff were held in June of 2014 and the information was presented to the board and made public at the end of 2014. Notably there were no focus groups with Alternative staff and high school staff together or with students and staff. The report identifies the Alternative school as a program designed to transition students back to their 'home' school and not as a final destination. Home schools are the high schools from which students are referred to Alternative programs. There are 27 secondary schools in our board. The report includes data from nine Alternative sites, two of which have since been closed in spite of the recommendation in the report to expand Alternative Education programming.

The report (School Board, 2014) indicates that 1,400 students were enrolled in the Alternative Program in the school year of 2013/2014 with an enrollment in the first semester of 2014/2015 of 470, meaning that a potential 1,870 students could have filled out the surveys. Of that number 12% responded to a Student Questionnaire in 2011/12, 9% filled out an Intake Questionnaire in 2012/13 and 8% responded to a Student Entry Survey in 2013/14. In 2013/14, 5% of the overall total completed an Exit Survey. There is only Exit data for one of the years and so no possibility of determining any change over time for end state data. There is no indication whether the Intake Questionnaire was similar to the Entry Survey and the actual surveys are not included in the report.

Data from the 2014 Report (School Board, 2014)

Even without the surveys, it is possible to infer from the data presented (Table 2.2) what sort of information was sought. The report states that 94% of the respondents want to graduate, 54% want to continue in post-secondary education and 35% want to enter straight into the

workforce. The report, while grouping items under the single heading of "issues", lists them as though they are independent variables when in reality the respondents may have overlap between one and the other or all. This overlap may account for the same numerical statistic for several issues.

Table 2.2

Data from School Board Report of 2014 (School Board, 2014)

Percentage of Alternative Students affected by specific issues within these four Categories:							
Serious life issues		**Regular School Experience**		**School Engagement [a]**		**Difficulty Finding Support with…**	
Specific Issue	**%**	**Specific Issue**	**%**	**Specific Issue**	**%**	**Specific Issue**	**%**
Personal problems	59	Do not like to study	63	Not completing assignments Falling behind in coursework	24 54	Assignment flexibility	53
Family problems	59	Struggle to succeed	52	Negative social scene Issues with peers	54 54	Personal issues	44
Mental Health issues	33	Find courses uninteresting	43	Conflict with students	42	School work	43
Substance Abuse	32	Not good at all subjects	43	Conflict with staff	43	Interactions with staff	30
Legal Troubles	19	Lack enjoyment	30	Lack of respect from staff	23	Sense of belonging	29

Note. A dotted line between Specific Issues indicates a close relationship or redundancy between those issues.

[a] Where the relationship between one issue and the other is glaringly evident there is no line between the percentage values.

Each of the issues under the heading of 'experience in regular school' may be addressed through differentiation of instruction and the application of learning theory. Again, under the heading of "School Engagement" there is a situation where lack of respect could lead to conflicts with staff. Why issues with peers and conflict with students is listed separately is not explained in the report. Each of these items appears to be considered as an independent factor. The final category rated difficulty in finding support for a range of issues. Of interest in this category are

the three areas: assignment flexibility, school work, and interactions with staff that relate directly to pedagogical relationships and structures which are addressed systematically within the philosophy behind TRIBES Learning Community (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008) and, by extension, the Living Systems Learning Community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). Personal issues and a sense of belonging can be addressed through SEL.

The recommendation in the report for high schools is that school staff improve their knowledge of and awareness of Alternative Education programs and processes. There is, currently, no defining statement given on the board website for Alternative Education. There was, at one point, a description of the program offered, but it is no longer there (School Board, 2014-2017). Early identification is recommended, but this is followed with the suggestion that the high schools increase flexibility with program options and interventions *within* their schools. As part of this, it is also recommended that high schools increase understanding and consideration of student needs as well as supports for social-emotional and mental health. The unanswered question is, are schools identifying early for referral to Alternative Education programs or in order to address needs within the school? On the other side is the recommendation to expand Alternative programs including locations, sites and capacity. It is not clear from the report whether capacity is related to number of students or the abilities of staff. A centralized, streamlined, consistent process is recommended with increased formality and structure in regard to referrals and communication between the home school and the Alternative School. The final recommendation is to increase the frequency of student contact with Alternative Education Itinerant supports. Itinerant teachers do not work out of a classroom location. They travel throughout the board and meet with students once a week at locations outside of any school.

Analysis of the 2014 Report (School Board, 2014)

It is difficult to offer an accurate analysis of this data given the low percentage of respondents on any data collection instruments. Even if the small sample were a good representation of a very diverse population the percentages are not significant. Other factors must also be considered. For instance, it is possible that the claim that 94% of the students desire to graduate is attributable to student answers designed to meet what they think was expected and not any critical consideration. Still, it is possible to assess attitudes expressed through the data collected and the recommendations. We can then determine the gap between the continued practice of referring students to Alternative School and the direction for learning suggested in board and Ministry policy.

Taking into consideration the redundancies noted above and with them the need to connect one issue with another in a complex network of mutual causality we can see that the statistical simplicity of the report does not fully address the issues involved. The report does show a concern for the social-emotional issues that the students may be faced with such as personal and family problems, mental health issues, substance abuse and legal issues. It also tacitly acknowledges, through student voices, that some courses in the regular school may be uninteresting, or not well suited to a particular learning modality as indicated in the questioning of skill in all subjects. This latter issue could be exacerbated by the insistence from the Ministry on adherence to a standard curriculum for *all* students.

Learning modality is considered important within the Ministry and the board as indicated in the mandating of Differentiation of Instruction and Assessment by the Ministry (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b) and the inclusion of DI as one of the interventions for students labelled at-risk within the home schools. DI uses Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligence frames and VAK (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) inventories to determine learning modality (Hume, 2008)

for the purpose of gearing instruction to student preference. Struggles to succeed are attributable to one or all of the factors listed in the report. It could be argued that it is classroom instruction that needs to deal with this issue, but the connective fibers of social influence cannot be addressed at a single point in the organization. Also, the priority for classroom teachers is currently on meeting curriculum standards, closing the achievement gap for students within their particular discipline and being accountable for program delivery. This structure of expectations puts stress on teachers to perform (Ball, 2003) within the parameters dictated by the Ministry. Fulfilling these requirements may meet learning directives but does not necessarily meet learning needs as we understand them from Chapter one.

Safe School literature from our board states that effective learning is possible when students feel safe and welcome. This statement acknowledges that social-emotional factors take precedence in learning before knowledge accumulation. This idea is reinforced by the surveys given to Alternative School students with their primary focus on family, peer groups and relationships between staff and students. In the guidelines for developing equitable and inclusive schools the Ministry states that:

> Everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstances – must feel engaged and included. Realizing the promise of our diversity is a continuous process grounded in actively respecting and valuing the full range of our differences. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 6).

It is clear from the responses to the board survey that Alternative School students are not feeling engaged or included in the learning environment of their home school. That the Alternative School was created to provide these students with a learning environment in which they could feel engaged and included merely magnifies the failing of the schools to do so. It may also indicate a systemic tendency to create ways of avoiding the changes needed to create a truly

equitable learning environment. The kind of change that is needed is indicated in board and Ministry documents and informed by research. From the perspective of Adaptive Leadership there are a number of technical challenges which, if addressed, could nudge the board in a positive direction. But, technical changes can work to maintain current systems in more efficient ways without instigating change. Many of the changes suggested in the 2014 Report are technical in nature. This OIP proposes a change that requires adaptation.

Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Five possible solutions for addressing the problem are:

1. More strongly enforce the use of the interventions within the school that are designed to retain students labelled at-risk

The list of in school interventions for students labelled at-risk within our board is similar if not the same as those within other boards, as determined by a comparative look at information from various websites. These interventions work for some but not all students; if they worked for all students there would already be no need for the Alternative School. It is also assumed that they are regularly applied before referral to the Alternative School. This may not, however, be the case given the recommendation for a centralized, streamlined, consistent process with increased formality and structure in regard to referrals. There is the suggestion in this recommendation from the 2014 report (School Board, 2014) that there is to be a stronger enforcement of use of interventions. A similar suggestion resides in the recommendation that school staff increase understanding and consideration of student needs as well as improve supports for social-emotional and mental health. But, given the conclusion that the interventions work in some cases not all, it may be that the interventions do not address the needs of students referred to the Alternative School.

2. Re-evaluate the board wide interventions designed to retain students labelled at-

risk to determine if they are effective, or if there are other interventions which would be more effective

This second possible solution follows naturally from the first. It must also be noted that the range of interventions given applies to a broad spectrum of reasons for students to be labelled at-risk. Of the 27 interventions listed in the 2014 Alternative School Report (School Board, 2014) two are related to needs for support with English as a Second Language, six are related to career and guidance supports three are related to student timetable namely: adjusted/modified timetable; individualized timetable; and timetable changes. Adjusting timetables may be frivolous because students who choose: not to attend class; to attend whenever they want; or to attend only those classes they like; are, essentially, already adjusting their timetable without any formal plan. Two of the other interventions are technological and one of those relates to specialized assistive software and technology. There have been a few students referred to my own Alternative setting who require such technology. Those students also had an additional challenge which suggests that for most students this intervention does not require a need for an Alternative setting. So, what other factors need to be considered?

The other technological intervention is Blended Learning. Blended Learning is the use of in class instruction 'blended' with online instruction. Blended Learning is being implemented across the board to such a degree that it is no longer an intervention so much as expected practice for *all* students. The same assessment applies to Differentiation of Instruction which is also listed as an intervention. Several of my own students have been offered the interventions of Credit Rescue and Credit Recovery, suggested in the report (School Board, 2014), and either failed due to lack of attendance or were referred to Alternative School due to other factors. Dual Credit does not work to retain students in home schools as evidenced, again, by the fact that many of my own students were also involved in Dual Credit.

Interventions of Peer Helping/Mediation/Mentoring and Tutoring/Peer Tutoring may work for some students labelled at-risk but many are unlikely to accept help from students outside their own peer group for a number of reasons: anxiety, issues of self-esteem, social-emotional challenges in interacting with others to name a few. Many students in Alternative School are linked with Community Supports, have Caring Adults on staff and have been referred to Students Services for mental health issues and the Student Success Team for school support. Many times the intervention suggested by the Student Success Team is Alternative School. The final intervention is listed as 'Student Voice' which will bring us to the third possible solution.

The majority of the interventions are fitted into the mandate for meeting the curriculum requirements not social-emotional learning. Students are labelled at-risk primarily because they are in risk of failing their classes. This risk precipitates an assessment of other risk factors. That the majority of interventions are geared toward this first indicator is telling and requires some serious consideration as far as an effective strategy is concerned.

3. Engage students in meaningful discussions about the issues that keep them from attending and provide supports based on problem solving activities planned with any students who require assistance.

Often, as noted, students are referred to the Alternative School, which is designated as a voluntary program, without consultation. The same lack of consultation occurs with the various interventions supposed to be put in place prior to referral to Alternative School. This could account for the 50 to 70% of the small number of respondents to the student surveys (School Board, 2014) who even knew about the interventions. The Ontario Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of student voice in program planning and in the construction of knowledge. To encourage this kind of involvement the SpeakUp initiative (Ontario Ministry of

Education, 2016) invites students to organize conferences for 30 students to have input on the following questions:

"1. What does it look like when you are engaged in your learning?

2. What holds you back from being engaged in your learning?

3. What actions can adults take to improve how education looks and feels?

4. What actions can students take to improve how education looks and feels?" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

According to the website these conferences are to be planned, organized and hosted by students and for students with the support of a teacher advisor and approval of the school principal. One such conference was conducted for students in Alternative programs in the last school year before the release of the 2014 Report on Alternative Schools (School Board, 2014). A SpeakUp (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016) conference for students in the Alternative School was unprecedented, but that conference was not initiated or organized by students. It was organized and hosted by two teachers who switched from teaching to positions as Learning Co-ordinators at the board office the following year.

The solution suggested in this OIP is less high profile and broader in scope. It is also a solution easily integrated into a systemic application of the Living Systems Learning Community. Similar questions to those given in the SpeakUp (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016) literature could be applied in helping students construct solutions to their particular problems. This could be done on an individual or group basis depending on the student and the nature of the identified issues.

4. Ensure that teachers work *with* Guidance, the Student Support Team, and school social workers to develop creative strategies that allow students labelled at-risk to stay in their home schools and provide time and resources to do so

Emphasis has been placed on the word "with" because the professional structures within schools departmentalize teacher activity into specific disciplines. Goss (2008) cites a study that found communication between counsellors and the rest of the school community to be nearly non-existent. One of the reasons she identifies as a cause of this is the perception of Guidance as being located hierarchically between administration and the rest of the school (Goss, 2008). There is also the pressure on teachers to meet the demands placed upon them through accountability measures (Ball, 2003), which makes the possibility of referring students elsewhere for non-curriculum matters a welcome resource. This mindset disconnects the living experience of the student from the formal learning process. Put in context of the need for an ODP, it differentiates learning from schooling. This solution may be subsumed in the development of a Living Systems Learning Community which recognizes learning environments as holistically interconnected spaces in which learning is a continuous process of growth and discovery (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). This attitude is essential for the developmental mindset which welcomes the challenges of any student labelled at-risk represent.

5. Re-evaluate the purpose of schooling and the influences that are pushing it toward an ODP that considers human development and personal growth as a priori to professional development through the accumulation of knowledge and an increase in numeric gain such as grade point averages.

This last suggested solution is a reiteration of the process being outlined in this OIP.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Leadership in this process must be ubiquitous. Adaptive Leadership encourages people in all areas of the organization to take on leadership. Sheppard, in his attempts to share leadership, found the need to use positional power to push his initiative through "existing 'mental models' of the majority of the organization's constituents" (Sheppard, Brown, & Dibbon,

2009). Similarly, there is the habitual expectation within our organization that the responsibility for leadership come from designated positions of authority. It is for this reason that I prefer Kershner and McQuillan's idea of the principal as a critical leverage point "in a school system that comprises a complex of interacting elements and dimensions" (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016, p. 5).

As a point of leverage, the principal is in the position to support leadership from others within the school community in solving the problem of how to integrate alternative practices into the fabric of the school and the board. We must be careful; some principals may not be up to the task. They may be too enamoured with power to totally surrender to people who may have a plan too far from their own, or they may be overwhelmed by those on staff who are themselves unwilling to share the field of power. The best strategy is to redefine leadership within the context of the ODP as a form of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2007) so that leverage points may emerge from anywhere in the organization.

Ontologically Developmental Leadership

Northouse understands leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2016, p. 6). Owens and Valesky (2007) described leadership in two contexts: leadership that refines and maintains the application of continued practice in a stable environment and leadership that "supports the use of collaborative methods" in an environment confronted with change. Fullan defines leadership as an individual commitment to improve things that is, above all, collective mobilization (Fullan, 2001, p. 9). Northouse, Owens, Valesky, and Fullan all agree that leadership is a quality of an individual who is able to influence others toward some objective. Fullan's addition of 'improvement' connotes a move toward *positive change*. There is no notion in any of these understandings that assumes that only special individuals contain leadership qualities. Leadership, as a quality, is

latent in every individual. It has only to be drawn out. This is a particularly essential outlook for Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009) which asks the 'leader' to give the work of leadership "back to the people" (Heifetz et al., 2009). But that leadership must move toward adaptive, positive change.

Guastello's (2007) work on leadership emergence from leaderless groups provides an excellent model for the current state of our organization, the nature of what needs to change, and the process to a desired end state. Like Adaptive Leadership, Guastello's (2007) work is grounded in complexity theory. Guastello provides a topological model in which there is a stable state into which a task is introduced. The people performing the task are not identified as leaders or followers. They are equals. This is a difficult situation to create in a system that is predominantly hierarchical as is our board. Presented with a series of problems such as those in this OIP:

1. How do leaders act to motivate leadership and learning in staff around meeting the SEL needs of students, as well as themselves?
2. What is needed to prepare school staff to respond with understanding in a way that promotes student well-being through SEL?
3. How do school leaders create a learning environment in which SEL and well-being are the foundations for learning readiness and get students, parents, and staff involved in the process?

There will eventually emerge, through a period of relative chaos or instability, a system of leadership (Guastello, 2007). It is a "*system* of leadership" because Guastello describes a situation in which different leadership types emerge to fulfill different roles. He refers to these as primary leaders and secondary leaders (Guastello, 2007, p. 360) where the primary leaders are task oriented and the secondary leaders are process oriented and provide support in technical

processes or in conflict resolution. From the perspective of Adaptive Leadership we can understand the task oriented mindset to be dealing with adaptive challenges and the process oriented mindset to be dealing with technical challenges. Through this a new stable system of interchange develops. Guastello establishes that the majority of the group, the 'non-leaders', is "technically unstable, meaning that members of this subgroup could wander into a leadership mode if the values of control parameters were conducive" (Guastello, 2007, p. 359). Guastello, thus, confirms my assertion that everyone has leadership as an innate characteristic and its emergence is a matter of circumstance as well as allowance, or encouragement. This is important when we are trying to develop an understanding of leadership potential or self-authorship in staff, but especially in students who would otherwise be labelled at-risk.

The discovery of leadership potential emerges through the development of self-authorship (Hodge, et al., 2009; King, et al., 2011). King et al. (2011) explain the process of self-authorship as a shift from meaning making structures dominated by the uncritical acceptance of an outside authority, socialized via schooling, to meaning making developed through encounters with dissonance sufficient enough to warrant change. "Adopting increasingly complex meaning making structures represents the developmental growth that underlies transformational learning and assists students in achieving the complex learning outcomes of liberal education" (King et al., 2011, p. 4). It is at this point that students realize their ability to develop their own systems of knowledge acquisition and to internally define their own beliefs and construct their own identity; be leaders in their own lives

The importance of achieving this vision of the self as an author of experience and identity to leadership is demonstrated in the work of Margaret Inman (2014) who had mid-level leaders examine their life histories to discover how their leadership evolved. Inman finds that sense making, drawing meaning from experience through associative connections, is core to leadership

development (p. 252). A person unable to draw these connective fibres together is unlikely to develop effective leadership qualities (Inman, 2014). There is a direct parallel between this process and the learning processes that develop self-authorship described above. These are the same processes of learning in which the individual is faced with a moment of disjuncture, discomfiture, or crisis with which they must come to terms and either change their way of thinking or live in a state of stasis or denial (Jarvis, 2009). As learning is an ontologically developmental process for self-discovery and how to interact with the world, leadership becomes the activity of fully flourishing selves. It is also the activity of independent learning we wish to encourage in students labelled at-risk.

As positional leaders adopt the metaphor of a critical leverage point they may become the conduits through which the board moves from one stable state, the hierarchical model of leadership from positional platforms, to another stable state in which leadership emerges within anyone able to identify problems, draw connections for understanding and move toward solving them. It becomes the work of positional leaders to motivate this breadth of awareness in others and to encourage leadership action until a point is reached where leadership is ubiquitous throughout the organization. This approach to leadership develops a holistic idea of being which is what we want to develop in staff as well as students by enhancing their social-emotional skills. It is also sympathetic to the school culture necessary for the development of Living System Learning Communities.

Mitchell and Sackney (2000) see community building "as an organic evolutionary process that entails the deep involvement of each individual in building processes, structures, tasks, and commitments that sustain and support the life of the community" (p. xviii). As such, they recognize schools as potential producers of new social orders and not as reproducers of dominant cultural forms. As socializing institutions schools fulfill the latter purpose, but as

communities of learners: students, staff and parents included, they move toward the former.

Institutional Structures that Impede the Shift to an ODP

In her discussion of how institutions think, Mary Douglas (1986) develops a complex concept of institution from the minimal understanding of institution as convention (p. 46). How conventions are arrived at between individuals who may be motivated by self-interest becomes central to her exploration. The developmental evolution from individual to a communal society is revealed as an interplay between self and other through analogous associations, often employing dichotomous structures of analogy with the environments in which we exist: haves/have nots, parent/child, leader/followers. We see similar dichotomies in the structures of schooling: teacher/student, academic/workplace, successful/at-risk. These are simple dualities that gain complexity through the numbers of them constructed and overlapped as individuals find themselves grouped within numerous likenesses. The "institutions bestow sameness" (Douglas, 1986, p. 61) through processes of determining classifications for things. The processes for classification are paradoxical because determining which things do or do not belong in a particular class of sameness means determining degrees of difference. It is the connective associations in classification that create the conditions for communal constructs. It is varying perspectives on difference that motivate changes in classification and move toward social change. A learning community strives to develop perceptions of difference in an effort to reach a just and equitable balance between the individual and society. Leadership in such a community comes from anyone able to make those connections.

The distillation of difference into structures of classification influences the direction of power by defining identities within restrictive guidelines. Douglas points out that it is through classification that institutions fix processes and hide their influence within standardized issues (Douglas, 1986, p. 92). It is this institutional habit of classification which places students in

dichotomies of success and of being at-risk; empowering one while marginalizing the other.

Lumby (2013) reveals several conceptions of power. The first is that of the individual who is able to purposefully prevent or convince others acting in ways that they otherwise might not. In this understanding of power distributing it to others reduces one's own. Lumby refers to this as a one dimensional engineering-type model (Lumby, 2013, p. 584) rejected by many for its simplicity, but we see it used often. The charismatic transformational leader who appears in leadership literature could fit into this model. Another conception of power has it residing in social structures which control information and the direction of activity. This conception of power is prevalent in structures of assessment that reify numerical values as determinant of worth. In such a systemic application of power people behave as they are expected out of fear or a desire to please, but the power is exercised from an external point. This use of power silences any dissent.

The three dimensional view of power (Lumby, 2013, p. 584) creates a situation in which people are socialized into internalizing the beliefs of the dominant culture and so believe them to be their own. This third dimension is the foundation of the current educational paradigm. The argument that follows in Lumby (2013) hinges on a fourth conception of power, from Arendt (1958), in which power is a property of a community which is bestowed upon an individual as long as the community is willing to allow that person to 'lead'. Why would this be? Why can we recognize so many conceptions of power? Perhaps power resides someplace other than individuals.

Going back to the Northouse (2016), Fullan (2001), and Owens and Valesky (2007) understandings of leadership we can see how leadership fits into these four conceptions of power. Leadership influences direction toward a particular goal. In the mono-dimensional conception of power leadership goals are to get people to do what the "leader" wants; essentially

to retain and exercise power. Such a goal is made 'common' through coercion of one kind or another and lasts as long as people believe the ruler (not leader) has power. In the two dimensional conception of power leaders create or maintain social structures that provide punishments or rewards, passes or fails, for coherence to conventional norms. This form of power is systemically intrinsic to schooling. The three dimensional form embeds those conventions in the people, a situation which could evolve over time from the two dimensional model as conventions become cultural norms. The goal is to maintain those norms which in turn maintain the structures of power. Each of these exercises of power is motivated by an ideal: the ideal of the powerful ruler, the ideal of conventional/traditional ways, or the ideal of social order. The ideology is the impetus for action and so it is the ideology in which power resides.

Ultimately, people rally around their beliefs and 'leaders' are given power, in the fourth understanding provided by Lumby (2013), because the 'leader' represents those beliefs, or the "leaders' are able to make essential adaptive connections between current states of behaviour and the changes needed to meet altering environmental realities. It is ideologies, our views of the world based on our experience and our beliefs, that define who we are and determine our response to fields of power. Superintendents, principals and vice-principals in our board need to seek out emerging leaders by creating spaces for ideological discourse that welcomes the input of staff, students and caregivers.

Leadership viewed as the fulfillment of ontological development through the realization of self-authorship places individuals in the position of having to understand diverse fields of power. This includes the power exercised through classification, discussed in Douglas (1986), which may function to restrict the expression of leadership by restricting access to power the way it marginalizes students labelled at-risk. Classification does this by standardizing communal understandings and defining the language used in discourse. Fenwick English (2012) reminds us

that "schools are reproductive and legitimizing agents of the larger social hierarchies in place" (p. 164). He points out that knowledge claims in Standards for Leadership act as a "marginalisation and/or erasure of competing voices and epistemological perspectives … ultimately embracing a culture of ... ruthless standardization and neo-liberal advocacy" (English, 2012, p. 157). Smyth and Shacklock (1998) emphasize the importance of 'dominant' and 'dominated' discourses because they ensure that certain views get to be represented, sustained and maintained, while others are classed as subservient or irrelevant. The self becomes at-risk, and students are labelled at-risk, within these systems of language and classification unless leadership is encouraged as critical discourse. This critical discourse needs to become the cultural habitus of schools especially in interactions with students and their parents/caregivers.

A Case in Point

Kay Fuller (2012) provides a vision of what this might look like through her study of secondary school principals (head teachers) who work with an "emancipatory intent". By this she means that the principals work:

> within the dominant managerialist educational leadership discourse that emphasizes accountability and surveillance in a neoliberal marketized school system... [to] create the learning conditions by which children and young people are freed or emancipated from the restrictions that currently might prevent them from learning and achieving (p. 673).

In this regard these principals view difference with a critical perspective that considers the impact it has on educational and other rights. Student difference includes classifications of: race, gender identity, age, sex, religious belief, language, disability, economic class, or ethnicity. These classifications allow for marginalization. People are treated as irrelevant or inferior others (Fuller, 2012, p. 674). Identifying these differences and their social effects on access to dominant cultural capital develops a breadth of awareness. As long as such behaviours

persist there will be a need for Alternative classrooms because some students will always be classified as being outside the accepted norms.

The principals in Fuller's study took action "to create the conditions that might enable [students] to know and understand themselves so as to exercise agency in the world" (Fuller, 2012, p. 679). Their actions in this went beyond academic achievement (Fuller, 2012, p. 681) as they became emotionally involved in caring for students. Such emotional commitment motivates essential risks such as "breaking the rules to develop curricula to meet young [people's] needs, sometimes in response to dialogue with them and their families making [schooling more relevant to the needs of particular populations]" (Fuller, 2012, p. 685]. Being able to recognize how technical models of curriculum development limit diversity and personal growth is one way to show that:

> dramatic personal and social change becomes possible [through] becoming aware of the way ideologies – sexual, racial, religious, educational, occupational, political, economic and technological – have created or contributed to our dependency on reified powers (Fuller, 2012, p. 686).

The principals in Fuller's study acted as leverage points for change in their buildings by becoming models of the behaviour needed to change the direction of education, not just their individual schools. They connected students, parents and teachers with people and resources by understanding individual and community needs not just by fulfilling curriculum goals. It is this attitude which this OIP seeks to encourage in leaders at all levels.

The issues of equity and inclusion central to Fuller's work were not considered in the data sought in the Alternative education summative report referenced above. Making connections to the social-emotional effects on students and staff of social, political, economic and identity inequities was noted as essential to the success for students in the schools in Fuller's

study (Fuller, 2012, p. 679). Similar to Inman (2014), the principals in Fuller's study exercised reflective practice to understand their relationship to the experiences of their students. It was as important to be able to recognize similar life experiences as it was to recognize disparities in experience. We see the importance of this comparative analysis reflected in the Equity Audit (Centre for Urban Schooling/OISE, 2011) applied in Chapter one. That such an analysis was not reflected in the Alternative School report (School Board, 2014) is telling. It indicates that issues of equity and inclusion may not be applied to students referred to Alternative Schools unless they are assumed to rest within other issues: problems with staff, issues with students, family issues. From documents referenced in this OIP, these issues are clearly important to the Ministry and the board. Leadership within the schools must consider these factors, but such leadership cannot come from a single positional point. It must be holistically developed and practiced throughout the organization if it is to have more than a technical success.

A Metaphor for Leadership within the ODP

This chapter will be concluded with an ideological metaphor for the behaviour of positional leaders within the ODP.

It is through collective awareness and ubiquitous leadership action that transformative change can occur. Each individual in the organization needs to be aware of the Spectrums of Influence (discussed in Chapter three) that affect themselves and others. As schools can maintain dominant social structures or create new social understandings through the development of critically astute individuals the Spectrums of Influence on schooling comprise psychological, communal and global environments. Leadership action must take these environments into account. This kind of social awareness is most needed by students labelled at-risk because with it they can understand the reasons and responses for conflict.

It becomes the purview of positional leaders, principals, vice-principals, and/or superintendents, to act as spiders on the organizational web. They must maintain the lines of communication represented by the strands of the web as well as the critical tension that make them a resonant force for change. Positional and emerging leaders are attuned to every vibration. The hairs of the spider represent sensitivity to every connection. The many eyes are aware of the needs and actions of others. Such awareness is essential in helping teachers develop strategies to meet the learning needs of students labelled at-risk and to be aware of the needs of the students themselves. When one section of the communicative web is sagging or weak the positional leader moves in to provide it support and steps back again to let it grow as it will. This is very important. When the lines of communication are broken positional leaders help to repair them or to connect them with more meaningful supports.

The legs of the spider represent the foundational breadth of awareness that takes into account the influence of systemic structures, the psychological states of the people within its community, and the broader global effect. This awareness propels it to action and to keeping the people informed. The spider is continuously connecting, maintaining, or repairing the connective threads of the organization while providing appropriate magnitudes of tension to maintain a disciplined discourse. The spider supports the leadership expression of others by providing and monitoring avenues for open exchange essential to the implementation and sustainability of this OIP.

Chapter Three

Implementation, Evaluation and Communication

Change Implementation Plan

This OIP explores eventually eliminating the need for Alternative programs. Thus the importance of social-emotional learning to well-being and learning readiness has been delineated in the previous chapters. Blackmore's (2013) concern about embedding social-emotional learning within the current economic paradigm speaks to some of the systemic challenges this proposal faces. There are many ethical problems revealed through the shift from an economic paradigm to the ODP. These ethical issues arise within the power relationships communicated between the psychological, communal and global Spectrums of Influence that affect decisions around schooling. I will work from the spider metaphor introduced at the end of Chapter two to explain a process for communication, implementation and monitoring that may address some of these ethical concerns. It will be necessary, within the context of the plan for implementation, to provide a more detailed understanding of the Spectrums of Influence in which education exists. This is necessary because it is the awareness of this spectrum which motivates leadership action through dialogical investigation (Freire, 1979). This awareness is the legs of the spider giving it motion through wisdom.

The suggested method for initiating the change process, given in Chapter two, of providing information about the importance of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) to the process of human development and learning, the priority that SEL has in the process of learning and becoming, and the announcement of the plan to phase out Alternative programs serves as an impetus for collective reflection, as in Fuller (2012). In these processes positional leaders, including principals, vice principals and superintendents, take a guiding but not a dictatorial role. They provide resources of time, texts, and temperament, meaning they maintain an environment in which dialogue is critical, just and caring (Starratt, 1994). All voices need to be heard. All understandings must be considered. To ensure that this occurs positional leaders need to

examine their own beliefs. They need to stand back from their own practice and take a critical look at their espoused theories and their theories in use. Before they can work with others to have them understand the importance of an ODP they need to believe it themselves. This is the "self" aspect of the psychological environment of influence. The "other" aspect of the psychological environment involves being aware of the beliefs and motivations of others.

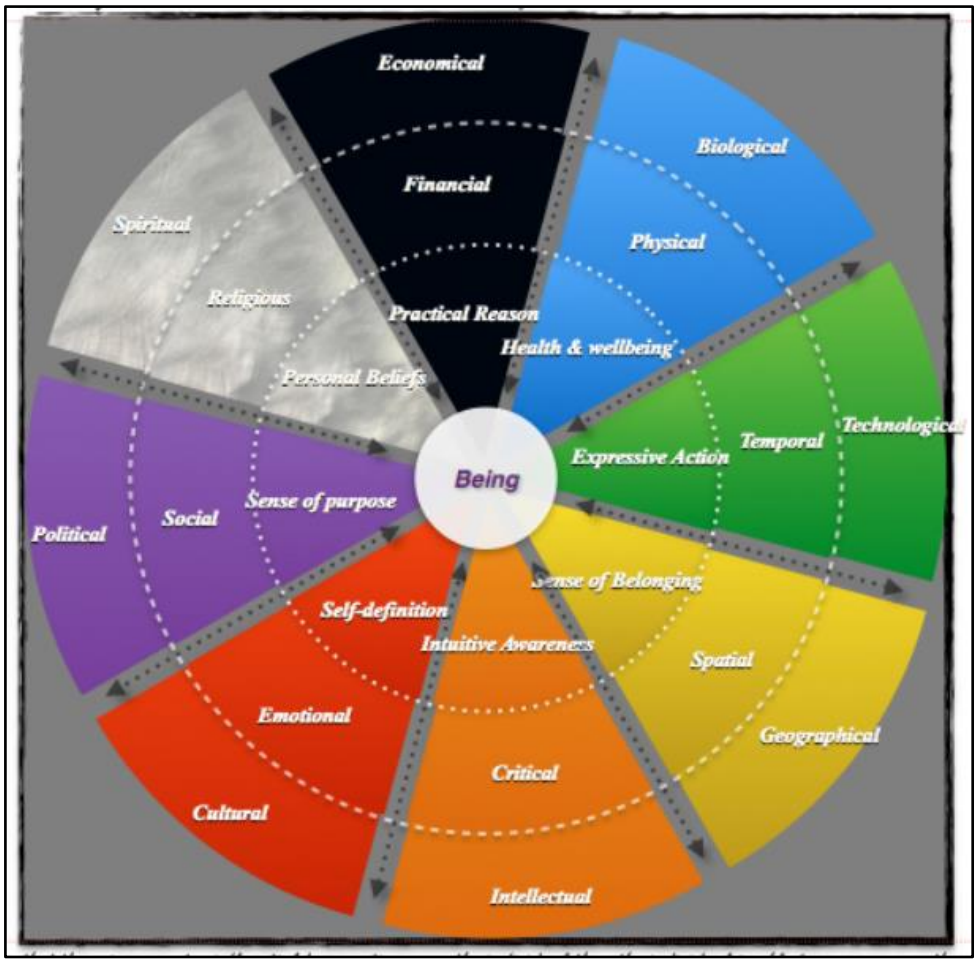

Figure 3.1. The Spectrums of Influence

Spectrums of Influence

The Spectrums of Influence (Figure 3.1) were partially adapted from the work of Begley and Zaretsky (2004) and Begley (2004) on processes of valuation and influence on values. The Spectrums are a complex web of influential environments which affect human decision making.

Begley and Zaretsky (2004) refer to their concentric circles as arenas. Understanding that an arena is also a place of negotiation and possible compromise, the competitive implications of the term are still disagreeable. The term "environments" suggests a wider, more holistic, field of influence. Using the term "environments" is supported in the document *Foundations for Healthy Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) which identifies social and physical environments as essential aspects in support of learning needs. The Spectrums of Influence are part of an ecological system. Though each part can be analysed independent of the others, the parts are necessarily blended and interwoven for the system to have any effect. At the center of the diagram is the concept of being, or the self. But the self does not exist uninfluenced by the other, those environments outside of the self. In fact, there is more influence on the self from other environments than individual beings are likely to exert on the web of influence that swirls around them.

The Psychological Environment

The first environment of influence is psychological and functions at the micro level of individual's inner thoughts and beliefs about self and the world. Bogotch, Miron, and Murry (1998) investigate this environment with their investigation into processes of valuation and the influence of context on moral decisions in urban school settings. Bogotch, et al, (1998) find that morality is "contextual, contingent, and in process, [and so] is constantly being redefined within the ongoing social context of individuals living or working together" (p. 304). This makes the decision making process contingent on personal experience and so the psychological makeup of the individual being. Actions taken in context that affect personal experience may shift personal beliefs. This has resounding implications for leadership in schools and the awareness positional leaders need of their staff especially with a potentially contentious change as the one proposed here.

The Communal Environment

The second environment of influence is Communal. For the purpose of this OIP community is understood as any environment in which there are a set of common beliefs and social/behavioural expectations. Our first communal interaction is usually with family. Begley and Zaretsky (2004) situate Community as an arena four stages removed from the self, understanding that the self exists as a part of any community. The understanding used here includes Begley and Zaretsky's (2004) notion of an arena of Community as well as of Profession and Organization (Begley & Zaretsky, 2004, p. 643). It is within the meso level context of community that we see the first interplay between the self and the other as the self begins to navigate the web of social expectation between personal belief, need and desire. It is in this environment where individuals need to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and develop the cognitive, motivational and affective processes (Bandura, 1993) that will allow them to flourish within their personal and social lives. The importance of a leadership that is supportive of this development through the provision of time, material and communication is central to this improvement plan. It is also central to learning and so the nature of this support needs to be holistic; that is, it must extend to and from staff, students, and the communal environment where possible.

The Global Environment

The third environment of influence is Global. The term 'global' is used as opposed to 'universal' to suggest the broader political and ecological influences that need to be considered within this environment. There is still a sense, in the Global environment, of the larger picture that universality suggests. The Global environment encompasses structures and social constructs which influence broader aspects of human interaction at a macro level. An analogy may be drawn in the difference between the Global environment and the other environments to the

difference between standard physics and quantum mechanics. The standards professed within the Global environment often do not match with the behaviour of individual particles of being at the quantum level. An awareness of the effect of each environment on the other and the processes of change they initiate is especially important in educational institutions because they are responsible for developing three value purposes for education: liberal notions of self-improvement, economic skill building to contribute to society, and the ideological purpose of socialization to perpetuate the continuation of desired social norms (Begley & Zaretsky, 2004) and, this OIP adds, a fourth as a priority - the development of autonomous beings able to interact in healthy ways with others.

An understanding of the Spectrums of Influence offers that breadth of awareness in the Adaptive Leadership Model (Heifetz et al., 2009) that provides impetus for building the meaningful web of communication with the critical tension essential for sustaining support for staff as they understand the importance of SEL to individual development and learning readiness. As can be seen in Figure 3.1, there are eight aspects of influence within each environmental spectrum. Though it is best that those working in schools understand the interplay between the three environmental Spectrums, the psychological environment requires most consideration, in the context of this OIP, because it is an understanding of this environment, both in self-reflection for leaders and in understanding the motivations of others that positional leaders ought to best influence change. A focus on this environment is important because learning is a process of discovering how to be authentically oneself within a highly influential social order (Starratt, 2007). Also, one of the most important developments in the learning process is self-authorship (King et al., 2011) and the discovery of how to lead oneself in the world (Jarvis, 2009).

Aspects of the Psychological Environment

This OIP proposes eight aspects of influence within the Psychological Environment as they evolved from a wide range of reading and reflection on learning and human development. They are: Health and Wellbeing, Expressive Action, Sense of Belonging, Intuitive Awareness, Self-Definition, Sense of Purpose, Personal Beliefs, And Practical Reason; a brief understanding of each follows:

The Health and Well-being aspect of the psychological environment has to do with both mental and physical health. This aspect may influence any one of or all of our actions. Mental health, in particular, has become a major focus of government initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). Well-being was added to the Ontario Leadership Framework in 2013 (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2013).

The Expressive Action aspect has to do with actions taken in the world that identify who we are to others. They can involve various levels of risk from emotional vulnerability to physical harm depending on the nature of the action. Expressive action is essential for the development of moral awareness as we act and reflect on our actions (Starratt, 2007).

The Sense of Belonging aspect has to do with the influence of groups or the need to feel part of something on the individual. A sense of belonging is uniquely bound to our sense of self and self-worth. This aspect is closely related to school engagement (Wilms, 2003).

The Intuitive Awareness aspect has to do with our innate sense of the environments in which we exist. Intuitive awareness often gets close to the truth of life's situations, but is often distracted by other spectrums of influence; it requires a critical calm.

The Self-Definition aspect has to do with the influence on our actions of how we perceive our own selves. This is related to Bandura's (1993) work on the perception of self-efficacy. As

this aspect is woven into the Sense of Purpose it becomes part of the process toward self-authorship and the transition to leadership through expressive action.

The Sense of Purpose aspect has to do with our desire to act in a meaningful way in the world. Often sense of purpose is co-opted by the influence of Finance, the need to belong, and other aspects of influence.

The Personal Beliefs aspect has to do with structures of belief that are held to be important to the individual. These may be associated with external constructs through religion or spiritual beliefs but we do not always adhere to such belief systems in our personal understandings of them.

The Practical Reason aspect has to do with those issues which influence basic survival and useful action. It is related to the Economical and Financial aspects of the Global and Communal environments through our existence within a dominant culture of commerce and acquisition.

At the heart of the Alternative program is the desire to assist students. Students labelled at-risk are often at-risk due to the influence of external factors and their behaviours are symptomatic of an undisciplined social-emotional reaction to this influence (Robinson, 2004). Many of the students do not have the knowledge, experience or role models to respond in healthy ways to things that are going on in their lives. They need a learning environment that works to strengthen their psychological environment so that it can influence their actions in the world. Staff attitudes toward students labelled at-risk vary but they often interact with them less, demand less work or effort, and/or defer responsibility to others such as guidance, the student support team, or Alternative programs (Golden, Kist, Trehan, & Padak, 2005). One of the external factors keeping these students at-risk becomes the schools themselves because the people in schools do not have the information, the skill or the mandate they need to respond to

the social-emotional needs and issues of personal development. Through self-reflection and investigation into what motivates both staff and students within the psychological environment positional leaders and other change agents moving the organization toward an ODP will be better prepared to reach people on a personal and professional level. This level of interaction is essential both to professional development and in the development of social-emotional skills for students labelled at-risk making the transition back to 'regular' school.

Implementation

With this awareness of self and others, positional leaders can begin to create dialogical hubs within the framework of a Living Systems Professional Learning Community and using pedagogical strategies outlined in the TRIBES framework (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2008). Dialogical hubs are formed to engage in critical analysis of organizational structures, personal beliefs and other aspects of influence that affect learning, not simply data analysis of student work as in the first iteration of Professional Learning Community discussed in Chapter one. This will have an operational effect on the structure of the organization without changing the positional hierarchy of responsibility (see Figure 3.2). Dialogical hubs will, similar to the work of Freire (1979), discuss how school structures of curriculum delivery and assessment either help or hinder the development of being, how ontological development can be central to the problem solving and skill building in each discipline or through integrated disciplines, and how to critically analyze learning needs from the perspective of ontological development as opposed to knowledge accumulation for career development. Positional leaders will open, or suggest lines of communication between hubs within schools, between schools within districts, and between community stakeholders and school personnel.

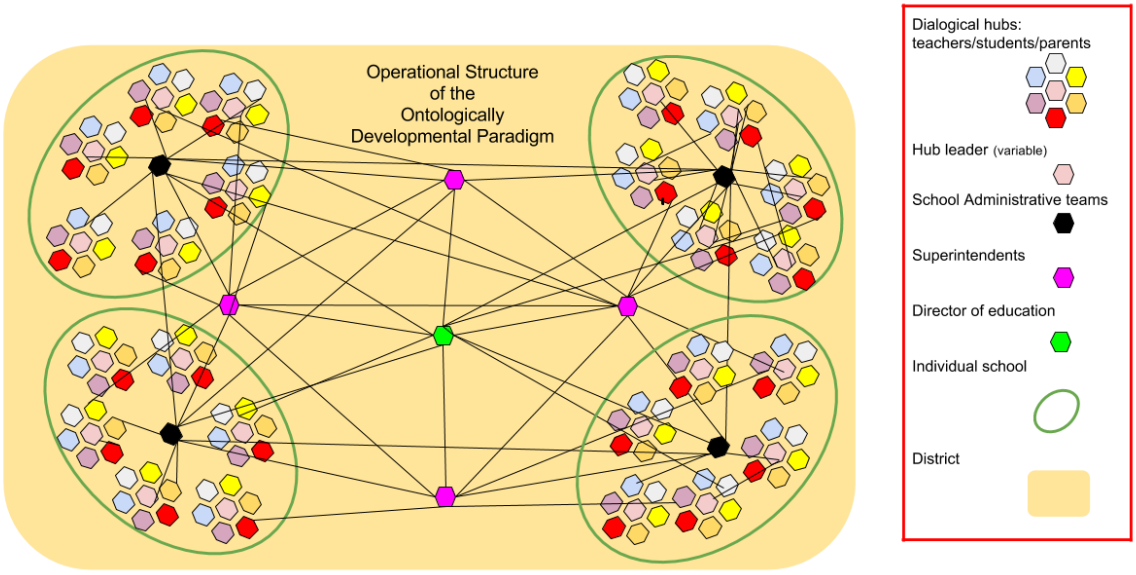

Figure 3.2. Operational Structure of the O.D.P.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

The announcement of the plan to phase out Alternative Programs brings the recognition of the need to investigate the learning needs of students labelled at-risk. It needs to be established at this time that the learning needs being considered are developmental in nature and not curriculum related. The importance of SEL to the learning process of *all* students must be emphasized but noted to be of particular importance for students labelled at-risk (Elias, Defni, & Bergmann, 2010; Gundersen, 2014). Within this idea is also the respect for difference and the importance of emotional safety and respect essential for learning readiness (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Elias & Moceri, 2012; Gundersen, 2014). At this point school administrators need to initiate the conversation around how to put priority emphasis on ontological development through embedding of SEL in curriculum delivery and lesson planning. In monitoring and participating in these discussions positional leaders can identify and recruit staff advocates who understand and appreciate the need for change in meeting student learning needs through SEL in

unpredictable times. These advocates can then begin the process of building learning teams, or dialogical hubs, around the school. They may also begin to formulate ideas for Action Research to explore learning strategies that support ontological development.

In the spider metaphor the hairs of the body represent sensitivity in leaders to the environment and the connections needed to keep the web of communication vibrant and effective. It must always be remembered that people will become what their environment allows them to become; we either simply survive or we flourish. To increase the potential for flourishing, positional leaders and emerging leaders must be aware of personal or social biases which may impede the scope of ontological development. To achieve this awareness, leaders must have knowledge of research in various areas, but especially in regard to attitudes to mental health issues, socioeconomic status, and gender and race issues. This is essential because many of the students who are referred to Alternative programs are members of these often marginalized groups.

More importantly, leaders need to create opportunities for staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders to have input into the learning experiences the school provides. Sometimes, the parents of Alternative school students are or have become hostile or indifferent to education or a particular school. Working to get these parents involved in the discourse, and building their trust will be challenging but invaluable. This may be done by creating community forums; first, within the school when dialogical hubs invite student input from all students. This cannot be a perfunctory procedure but needs to result in changes derived from student and/or parent input. The one Student Voice (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016) conference held for Alternative students resulted in promotions for organizers who could then have influence at the board level, but negligible change in program delivery. Students must experience their voices being both heard and acted on. This may increase parental involvement, and so, could be a project for

Action Research looking at whether increasing the effectiveness of student voice improves parental engagement.

The Importance of Community Input

Including the community, parents, students and community stakeholders in education in the process of meaning making through targeted information and critical discussion is essential to the ontologically developmental process. In this it is important to maintain the tenets of the ethic of community (Furman, 2004). Furman uses the term "deep democracy" which she defines as being a process of "open inquiry and critique - with a broad scope of participation across community members, while social justice, in turn, provides the moral compass for the processes of democratic community" (Furman, 2004, p. 229). In such a 'system' moral purpose and social justice is not the purview of a single transformational visionary but the responsibility of the entire community. The determination that ideas of social justice are culturally malleable and time sensitive (Bogotch, et al., 1998) shows the importance of the ethic of community to moral leadership within psychological and communal environments. The process of community building Furman (2004) writes about encourages individuals to engage in critical dialogue and action within the community. This process validates diverse perspectives which lead to more complex systems of meaning making. It is through the process of meaning making that we come to understand how we as individuals have the power to influence the environments outside the self (King et al., 2011) because we realize that knowledge and morality are socially constructed through communal discourse (Bogotch et al., 1998). School staff need to feel comfortable involving themselves in this discourse. They need to be able to welcome all students into the dialogical process, but especially those who would otherwise be labelled at-risk. This is essential so that staff can model the relationship building that leads to social-emotional learning.

In this shifting environment situational leaders need to stand back from the leadership role and look for opportunities for others to lead. This is achievable through the application of the Adaptive Leadership model (Heifetz et al., 2009) discussed in Chapter Two. By encouraging leadership actions in others and the creation of action networks for the development of action research projects situational leaders demonstrate respect for professionalism and require a professional ethic (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001) from teachers, students, parents and themselves. Recall, that the first leadership action described here was one of self-reflection and a gaining of personal and political awareness. Positional leaders may need to act as catalysts for this process in others through informal discussions to determine staff mental models, their perceived purpose for education, and reasons for teaching. I have led these kinds of discussions in staff run P.D. sessions and they have become very emotional reaffirmations of fundamental individual beliefs, or have caused people to reassess their roles within schools. A continuous reflective practice of this kind is essential (Inman, 2014) as the shift to an ODP requires changes in thinking in connection to the purpose for education from a knowledge delivery model for economic prosperity to a learning model for ontologically developmental growth.

Connective Communication to Counteract Discomfort

There may be challenges and resistance to the shifting paradigm. These challenges arise as we move away from a model that provides standardized knowledge for problems we have already solved to one in which what we know is merely a resource for exploring problems for which answers are not so defined. We are no longer focussing on fixed points in the web of our awareness but on the connective threads that give those points meaning in relation to each other. This idea is connected holistically to the identified need to address social-emotional learning for students labelled at-risk (Elias et al., 2010). We are not focussing on what needs to be learned but on who the learner is, how each learner learns, and the developmental purpose of learning.

As the ideology coalesces, staff can be encouraged more formally to develop and implement Action Research projects that apply learning strategies for embedding SEL into curriculum delivery as a priority learning goal. Action Research, with its structured methodology, allows staff to create knowledge and develop meaning and so provides another level of reflection for staff to engage in their dialogical hubs (Chance & Segura, 2009). Action Research may be new territory for many teachers and so situational leaders need to be aware of contemporary research and be able to provide staff with scholarly works, or connect them with experts in the field, as resources and learning partners; this is provided that staff are not making those connections themselves.

As teachers introduce students to learning activities which focus on the development of social emotional skills, with curriculum subjects acting as anchors for problem solving and investigation, they maintain observational journals. Part of the process of concentrating on social emotional development would necessarily involve students in reflective practice, as outlined in the TRIBES Learning Community (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2002) which allows students to explore and understand their learning goals as well as their emotional responses to conflict in group work and the motivations behind them. With permission, teachers and support staff, would record and report on these events within the Action Research framework. These reports would not necessarily be shared broadly but would be essential to discssions within dialogical hubs. It is through these practices that the focus on continuous development of the social emotional skills outlined by Elias and Morceri (2012, p. 424) would be embedded into curriculum delivery. Simultaneously all learning activities would provide students with a growing sense of themselves as self-authored beings in the process of ontological development.

Throughout the process of Action Research, emerging leaders and positional leaders should make it a matter of praxis to use individual and group reflection to understand results

from Action Research and to act on their realizations. Another important part of this process is communication between teachers, within and between schools, about what is being tried, what has worked in specific situations and what has failed. Staff share their processes and results in school, between schools, on school websites and at Community forums.

To ensure that this process is supported and valued positional leaders need to create, strengthen and maintain networks of communication and critical dialogue. More importantly they need to encourage members of dialogical hubs to reach out to make these connections and to step into 'leadership-being' through self-authorship. I am introducing the term 'leadership-being' as opposed to 'leadership roles' from the conclusions drawn about leadership as the external expression of self-authorship in Chapter two. Where networks have broken down emerging leaders may also tighten lines of communication or create new threads between divergent groups. The acceptance of diversity is essential when working with students labelled at-risk because they often challenge the norms of social expectation. The creation of a learning environment immersed in this attitude goes a long way to help staff develop strategies for engaging students labelled at-risk in the process of learning. It is important to celebrate ideas for new projects, the process of discovery, moments of success, as well as the lessons learned from failure. Positional leaders need to provide supports of time, money and information, but also push the thinking through participation in the critical dialogue. Leaders will also engage in and encourage reflective practice so that people have the opportunity to step back from their experience and assess the learning, the learning environment, and their own and others roles.

The Living Resource

A process of record keeping and information sharing will need to be established. As staff become involved in Action Research, or simply try things out, they need to seek out input from others. Positional leaders, as noted, play a role in this as they maintain awareness of what is

going on in their schools, their communities, and their districts. It is important, though, that all staff open lines of communication if a true Living Systems Learning Community is to evolve (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). As noted, this could include publication to school or board websites of ongoing Action Research, sharing of lesson plans and integrated learning models through the internet, or invitations for people to observe classes or schools in action. Throughout such a process it is important to listen to resistors and to seek out further problems of practice. Fullan (2010) points out that resisters often see things we may miss as we embrace the ideal. Idealistic thinking can be fraught with ignorance, which is why the maintenance of the dialogical web is essential. The overall awareness needed to develop is that schools need to consider ontologically developmental factors before knowledge accumulation and grade point average. The path to realizing that purpose will not be straight as can be seen from the operational diagram in Figure 3.2. It is important for leaders to listen for valid resistance which may open new connective threads to shifting the purpose of schooling. Ultimately, if we are going to develop a system which respects difference, and welcomes students who would formerly have been labelled at-risk, we must also welcome dissenters and listen to what they have to say (Fullan, 2010).

From the beginning of the change process staff in the Alternative School need to be aware of the plan to move them into positions within schools as student advocates. These teachers will perform this function within the role of Student Support Teachers (SST). It will be necessary to prepare Alternative staff for these new roles. Much like their students, they need to be able to identify systemic challenges as well as understand and work with resistance. Ideally, that resistance would not come from positional leaders. It may, however, be difficult for some positional leaders to adjust to the changing paradigm and so Alternative staff need to practice reasoned diplomacy. This means that they need to be fully aware of the aspects in the board that are already moving toward an ODP. They need to be able to explain the importance of SEL and

provide ideas for how to incorporate it into pedagogical practice. They also need to understand the new paradigm. Included in this preparatory process would be Guidance and counselling staff because they generally work in the area of ontological development anyway. This collaborative preparation would include discussions of specific learning needs of students formerly labelled at-risk and planning for their transition back to the larger school population. Through this process school staff may develop the knowledge, skills and sensitivity to respond to student needs. They will also be able to model those attitudes for others and over time gain an innate understanding of the importance of SEL to learning and the concept of ontological development.

Timing is everything. Once the plan to reduce and eliminate the need for Alternative programs is announced and the change process is set in motion the period of professional development and adjustment begins. The Alternative staff cannot be moved into schools until schools are ready. This may require a phased approach as some schools may make the shift more readily than others. Alternative sites serving those schools could be closed and their staff moved into the schools prior to other schools. There may always be lingering resistance to this kind of change but staff formerly working in Alternative classrooms will be ready to listen to and address this resistance. The ground work done on creating dialogical hubs will help in this regard as their will already exist a critical community of learners discussing the issues around the paradigm shift. Maintaining these critical networks is essential. Once the Alternative staff is moved into their new positions as SSTs one of their primary roles will be to monitor the student transition process and work with teachers having difficulty responding to the needs of particular students. In this, they need to be aware of what is successful within their schools as well as in other schools to provide objective and varied support. Through this process, they become involved in leadership action.

In the context of this OIP the living systems learning environment is created in schools through the processes of:

- increasing the awareness that SEL takes priority to curriculum delivery because it prepares students for learning development and in how to respond to SEL needs
- increasing the knowledge and understanding in positional and emerging leaders of educational research and encouraging knowledge construction through Action Research
- and developing an ethic of community in which deep democracy allows critical discourse around issues of social justice and equity (Furman, 2004)

This is an environment which a continuous engagement in the process of meaning making is encouraged (Baxter Magolda, 2007). It is an environment in which mistakes are viewed as opportunities for reflection and gaining knowledge. It is an environment in which diverse perspectives and ways of being are embraced as opportunities for further learning. As such, it is also a learning environment in which school staff and students are able to develop healthy responses to students who would formerly have been labelled at-risk. It is because of this that it is an environment which may eliminate the perceived need for Alternative programs.

Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change

It is in our nature to be nurtured through learning (Jensen, 2006). Learning is a biological process mediated through the senses and confirmed or refuted through reflection and actions within external environments. Learning is not restricted to schools. Learning needs are, thus, not met through credit accumulation, meeting curriculum expectations or decreasing the gap between overall grade point averages. Learning needs are met through carefully guided processes of ontological development; that is, processes through which the individual, staff and student, is provided opportunities for inquiry, self-authorship and social interactions within a safe and inclusive environment. In an environment where deep learning is valued, diversity and

individual difference are respected and protected as a valuable resource for ontological development within a social milieu. Once this realization is established, it can be seen that at the heart of the ODP is an ethical position. When it is holistically balanced within the operational structures of the board as well as classroom practice it becomes the critical measure through which all stakeholders determine how to respond to student need with care and for social justice. Getting to this realization will not be simple for some. Making the changes to the board that this paradigm requires may cause many a sense of uneasiness. This is just what we need for learning to occur.

Social justice must exist as a core motivation within the ODP. This is so because the ODP, as an educational paradigm, becomes part of the process for social formation. As such, it is the perfect paradigm for the social inclusion of those people currently on the periphery of social acceptance. Students in Alternative programs represent these marginalized groups (Foley & Pang, 2006). A paradigm shift of this magnitude requires a foundational structure in which stakeholders can centre themselves (Schein, 2016). Failure to maintain such a structure may result in a retreat to older, more comfortable ways of behaving which will not eliminate the need for Alternative programs. The reason the ODP works to eliminate the need for Alternative programs is that it develops an environment in which respect for individual diversity and the process of individual becoming is valued as part of the process of social development. It brings the individual to a place where they feel safe to express themselves, and possibly influence diverse social milieus. A framework for equity and social justice is essential for this to occur.

Kathleen Brown (2004) makes social justice the foundational support, the loom in her metaphor, for educational leadership. She points out that leadership preparation programs often give lip service to social justice but do not prepare educational leaders to respond to racial or ethnic conflict, gender inequities, or how “school policies and practices ‘devalue the identities of

some students while overvaluing others" (Brown, 2004, p. 78). This last point is particularly poignant in the context of students labelled at-risk. In light of this, and as indicated in the Equity Audit in Chapter one, the first ethical realization is that the removal of marginalized students to a program external to that provided other students reduces their opportunity to engage in a social-emotional (psychological) environment necessary for guided ontological development. That being said, it is also unethical to ask teachers and staff who have been functioning within the economic model of accountability and standardized assessment, influenced by the global and communal spectrums, to be able to make the shift to a new, though not foreign paradigm. Brown (2004) provides a schema for leadership development which we can adapt for use throughout the board as a holistic learning framework that addresses social justice as a primary purpose for schooling. Since the Adaptive Leadership Model (Heifetz et al., 2009) seeks to find leadership in others, Brown's framework fits well with this OIP.

Brown (2004), through Freirean critical ideology, proposes a warp of three theoretical perspectives: Adult Learning Theory, Transformative Learning Theory and Critical Social Theory. Adult Learning Theory uses self-directed learning, critical reflection, experiential learning for the creation of knowledge based on observation and reflection, and learning about how to learn. Transformative Learning Theory proposes a certain level of discomfort as people work to make sense of the world through processes of meaning making. It also uses critical reflection to question assumptions and determine the influences on meaning making schemas that may or may not create false or misleading information. Critical Social Theory makes this process of reflection a deliberate action for the continuous questioning of the kinds of environments we create. Critical Social Theory springs from Freire's work to demythologize reality and awaken critical consciousness (Brown, 2004; Freire, 1979). At the core of each of these theoretical positions is the idea that the educative process is an "ontological and historical

vocation of becoming more fully human" (Freire, 1979). Through this theoretical support structure Brown (2004) weaves a pattern of behaviour with a woof of three pedagogical strategies.

The first pedagogical strategy is Critical Reflection. Brown (2004) asks that leaders look at their own belief systems, what they profess to value and what their actions show they value, and the environments that influence their actions. As we are working to have all stakeholders realize their 'leadership-beings' it becomes the work of leaders to encourage this critical reflection in others. Brown (2004) follows this with Rational Discourse. "Rational discourse validates meaning by assessing reasons. It involves weighing the supporting evidence, examining alternative perspectives, and critically assessing assumptions. Rational Discourse is the forum in which "finding one's voice" becomes a prerequisite for full free participation" (Brown, 2004, p. 93). It falls to positional leaders, initially, to make these ethical tasks regular praxis. That is, Critical Reflection and Rational Discourse ought not to happen without some form of transformative change. Brown (2004) points out that "transformative learning actually poses threats to psychological security as it challenges comfortably established beliefs and values, including those that may be central to self-concept" (p. 88). Thus, in professional development and in classroom practice, care must be taken to know the people who we are trying to bring to potentially life changing realization and skill must be used in responding to any reactions they may have. As Schwean and Rodger (2013) indicate many staff are ill prepared to respond to these needs. Positional leaders at the district level need to provide monetary and professional development resources to both emphasize the importance of learning these skills and provide people the means to make them a part of their praxis. The last pedagogical strategy Brown advocates is Policy Praxis. Through Policy Praxis action in the world creates experience and we reflect on that experience and from that reflection we make decisions about how to

further interact with others and the environment. For this to really work there must be a commitment to critical inquiry and action. The true test of identity is not in what we say but in what we are willing to do.

Time also has other ethical concerns. There is the historical time in which schooling in its current form has existed and there is the time that is needed for change. The historical time must be considered within those moments of critical reflection and discourse. The influence of history is such that structures designed for one social purpose become so much a part of the way things are done that they are not questioned even though they may do more harm than good. When we are able to see that structures which have become habitual no longer meet the learning needs of students in a school there is a moral and organizational obligation to make changes that will meet those needs. But change takes time. Positional and emerging leaders must stay the course and engage in critical discourse which is the reason for dialogical hubs as innate to the operational model. There is also the matter of when to begin the transition away from Alternative programs. Staff and students will need to be prepared. The new paradigm must be understood, at least on an intellectual level if not embraced in personal values. Finally, schools must be well along the pathway to change. That being said, after the initial announcement to eliminate the need for Alternative programs, the transition of Alternative School staff and students should not be delayed too long. There is always the risk of people falling complacently into old patterns of behaviour. The many eyes of the spider leader, need to maintain an awareness of the needs and actions of others so they can know where they are on the change trajectory. They must engage in the critical discourse with staff and provide support and information when needed.

Brown's (2004) work provides us with a model through which to develop the philosophical core which resonates through the communicative web within the ODP. In the

change process diagram in Appendix A, the central diagram represents the philosophical heart through which the change process is to occur. It is a representation of the systemic mindset necessary for a successful shift toward the ODP to which the organization is already moving. That the board is moving toward this paradigm is evidenced in the initiatives and policy documents outlined in this proposal: differentiated instruction and assessment, learning communities, inquiry-based learning, recognition of the importance of well-being and social-emotional learning in leadership frameworks and policy documents such as *Foundations for healthy schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). It becomes the work of positional leaders: superintendents, principals and vice principals, to provide the supports and resources needed to maintain the system of communication and influence that moves toward the appreciation and adoption of this mindset.

At the centre of the diagram (see Appendix A) is the purpose for learning and so the purpose for schools; the ontological development of students and staff. The ethical frames include the ethics of critique, justice and care (Starratt, 2004) which are informed through the Critical social theory in Brown's model. The ethic of community (Furman, 2004) is taken up in the Living Systems Learning Community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011) in which we include: support for community health and wellbeing, student voice initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016), and the understanding and creation of school purpose as a process of meaning making (King et al., 2011; Patton, 2015). The process of critical analysis within the living systems learning community is informed through Transformative Learning Theory in Brown (2004). Finally, Adult Learning Theory informs the process of professional development through Action Research, community forums and critical dialogue, and communication and workshops with experts in the field. The initial critical reflection is that of the Spectrums of Influence. This reflection gives us the awareness we need to catalyze the change process through

the announcement of the phasing out of Alternative Education and the need to investigate learning needs of students labelled at-risk. The change process moves around the philosophical core until the final motions are made and we can assess where we stand on the path to the new paradigm.

Change Process Communications Plan

Essential for the sustainability of the ODP is a commitment to continuous communication through critical discourse. One component crucial to the communication plan is the availability of information and ongoing research activity for meaning making. Working knowledge of the complexities of qualitative research and how to work with participants in a collaborative way is also needed. Necessary for both of these components is the relaxing of performative pressures in the move from the environment of accountability and curriculum delivery to one of exploration and discovery. The more essential component of the plan is the behaviour of the individuals who must implement it. Positional leaders must become the initial models for the behaviours of critical discourse and dialogical investigation by welcoming input from all stakeholders and seeking out information.

The establishment of a process of record keeping and information sharing must ensure that lines of communication are equitable and resonant. This means that, though positional leaders may exist in a hierarchy of responsibility, they must act as the people in Guastello's (2007) study and treat other stakeholders as equals. Communication is resonant when the purpose and values of the ODP permeate the activities and conversations of those acting within the paradigm. To gain this resonance people need to have a critical understanding of the paradigm and the importance of it to healthy individual and social development. To this end the development of a living resource is suggested.

The initial resource is primarily for positional leaders to gain understanding of those initiatives implemented in the board so far which signal and support the shift to the ODP. This will be a living resource stored electronically and accessible to all stakeholders where appropriate so that they may join in the conversation in and around the paradigm. It will contain articles, scholarly papers, links to web sites and online videos, and suggested books. Eventually, it will contain descriptions of action research, lessons, projects and the reflections of staff, students, parents and other stakeholders. It will be vetted by a communications department for content which appears to be discriminatory or that uses harmful or hateful language. No contribution will be denied without a conversation with the contributor as to why it is not being included. Contributors will always be given the opportunity to rewrite. Contributions that offer dissenting arguments will not be denied, but positional leaders will be made aware of them so that someone within the organization may be found to provide a counter argument. If this process leads to a debate between contributors so much the better. In this way the resource will function within the ODP. The resource will also act as a repository for information and data.

The research aspect of this proposal requires that people understand the complexities of qualitative research. Patton (2015) informs us that qualitative research is about discovering how people construct and express meaning through ideas and everyday things. Patton (2015) cites work of Baxter Magolda and King from 2012 on self-authorship and how, in the process of learning meaning making is at first a social construct but becomes an individual construction as we discover what has value to us. The ODP has the development of self-authorship and meaning making as a foundational goal. In the current environment of the accountability agenda data collection is used as a means for transactional leverage to get people to self-regulate and conform (Ball, 2003). This environment is rife with distrust. But the two methods resemble each other and so communicating an idea of open dialogue, collaboration, experimentation and sharing of

successes and failures, especially failures, may be difficult for some people to embrace. (I deliberately reject the term "*buy* into" and the phrase "a difficult *sell*").

Staff will need to understand how to use the methods of qualitative research to make meaning through very intentional professional development. The data collection within the accountability framework can serve as a foundation for this, but the message needs to be clear that we are not as concerned about numbers as we are about how artifacts and actions create meaning. How do they let us know more about our students, our schools and ourselves? Such professional learning serves multiple purposes: increase the capacity of staff to observe and understand meaning making processes, shift the purpose of data collection from improving grade point averages and credit accumulation rates (these are by-products of the new paradigm) to a practical understanding of how and why people learn, let people know that the dialogistic model will replace the former accountability model which will, hopefully, engender more trust. These sessions need to happen very soon after the initial announcement and need to be linked to the idea of responding to students existing in some form of distress.

There is a multitude of literature on social-emotional learning. The board recently provided schools with a stack of resources to help staff understand the importance of SEL to bringing students to a place where they are open to learning and willing to try new things. This is yet another sign of a shift to an ODP. We all know that handing out resources does not always result in changes in thinking or implementation. Positional leaders need to start the discussion. They need to find people on staff who are already doing these things and encourage them to lead staff discussions both formally at staff meetings and P.D. sessions and informally in hallways, staff rooms and other settings. Such actions by positional leaders are an important part of the communication plan because they bring the message into the field. They let staff know that this way of thinking is recognized as being important and is a new direction of things. A video

statement from the Director of Education about the importance of social-emotional learning and the value of mental health for everyone in the organization would also go a long way to promoting the new paradigm. For the idea to permeate the organization it needs to be seen prevalently from every direction.

Communication with unions is essential. Within the Alternative setting relationships with the Union have been strained by decisions to move teachers without consultation. The closing of some sites and decisions not to replace educational assistants intensified the suspicion that the Alternative program is being phased out without any consideration about what needs to happen in schools to make that a viable choice. It is for this reason that this organizational improvement plan includes moving Alternative staff into supportive roles within schools. It is hoped this move will have union support as no teacher, or E.A. will go without work and all will be prepared for the change. The Unions will also need to be aware of the shift to the ODP and what it will mean for schools. Meetings with Union officials need to occur prior to the initial announcement so that any problems identified by unions may be addressed and potential delays avoided.

Once there is a resolution to any issues that Unions identify it would be good policy to hold public forums so that parents can gain an understanding of the new direction and the purpose for making the change. These forums ought to be conducted within the community schools. This choice of location brings the message closer to home. It also allows positional leaders at the local school level to test their understanding of the ODP, though they may not want to use that particular term in their presentations. The focus of these forums will be to demonstrate how this approach benefits all students not just those formerly labelled at-risk. The message will be about how social-emotional learning and attention to well-being are going to be the primary focus of learning and how this approach will improve academic performance and

their children's ability to adapt in a fast changing world. These forums may include a message from the director, but it is important that school staff is involved in planning these forums to best communicate the ideology as they understand it to keep with the spirit of personal meaning making and self-authorship.

The specific communication tactics outlined here are designed to construct the foundation that will bolster acceptance and participation in the ODP. It can be seen, though, from the Operational Diagram (Figure 3.2) that the paradigm itself is energized through social connection. Physiologically, the cells in our brains must make associative connections for us to comprehend and make meaning of the world (Calvin, 1996). The web of neural connections serves as a metaphor for the communication model that will make the difference in creating the kind of resonance the ODP needs. It becomes the responsibility of all stakeholders to take part in this process, but it is the actions of positional leaders that will model the communicative framework shown in the Operational Structure. In this sense, this Organizational Improvement Plan is a communication plan in that it advocates a holistic system of learning that is dependent on listening to and understanding the needs and desires of others and assisting them in in achieving a sense of personal growth, positive self-esteem, and the potential to flourish as self-authored beings.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

The ideology that supports the ODP exists at the core of many initiatives introduced to the schools by the Ministry and the board. For example, Differentiated Instruction puts the focus of teaching on who students are as learners. Inquiry-based learning and self-directed learning puts the attention on creative and critical thinking and asks learners to construct meaning through experience. Learning Communities invite learners to collaborate with and learn from different perspectives. *Bill 13: an act to amend the education act with respect to bullying and other*

matters (Ontario Legislature, 2012) focuses on respect for the person and the acceptance of diverse ways of being. *Stepping Stones: An educator's guide to supporting students' health and well-being* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013) considers the skills school staff require to assist students in developing strong mental health. Each of these requires respect for individual difference, fairness in participation, and the development of healthy ways of being individuals in a social context.

Recommendation 1: Clarify the ODP

Positional leaders need to have a strong grasp of the idea of ontological development as the purpose for education so that they can advocate for and assist staff in understanding the new paradigm as a philosophical premise for schooling that nurtures the learning process. Educational leaders need to look at the entire organization to discover what aspects, however small or personal, may impede the progress of schools to fulfilling this ontologically developmental purpose. It needs to be understood how the shift to the ODP will better serve the learning needs of students who would otherwise be labelled at-risk and so remove the need for Alternative programs.

Recommendation 2: Create a Communicative Web

Positional and emerging leaders must collaborate in creating information networks for disseminating these ideas and realizations throughout the board and to all stakeholders. This can be partially done through creation of the living resource, but will be most vibrantly accomplished through the development and maintenance of dialogical hubs for critical reflection. The value of the ODP to economic growth and financial prosperity must also be considered because it may be difficult for those adhering to the old paradigm to abandon their beliefs; to cover this briefly; healthy individuals who feel safe to express their beings are more able to adapt and flourish. This is especially true for students labelled at-risk (Elias, 2010).

Once the change process is set in motion there may be resistance to a shift from a hard data to a soft data environment. This will be particularly important in the area of assessment. How do we give a numerical value to ontological development? The short, but frustrating, answer is that we don't. We are assessing the process of learning. We are also assessing a person's ability to identify their own learning needs and to know how to learn. When they can't do this, we take time to teach them.

Recommendation 3: Develop Integrated Learning and Assessment Environments

As the learning environment shifts we need to develop a disciplined framework, an integrated discipline model, a project-based model or a system that is open to all of these methods. Teachers may need support in developing assessments for the mastery of the particular skills that bring individuals to a place where they seek out knowledge and learn independently and so enter leadership-being. This is the place where they create themselves as active persons in the social environment because learning must include an active participation through which we test what we know (Furman, 2004; Starratt, 2007) . For students labelled at-risk this act of knowledge creation and ontological self-authorship develops a sense of self-worth (King et al., 2011). It may also enable them to respond to their environment in less reactive ways,

The Ontario Ministry of Education already has groundwork for this kind of assessment. The *Growing Success* document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) outlines a series of learning skills and work habits rated on assessment reports with the following scale: Needs improvement, Successful, Good, and Excellent. These learning skills do not count toward credit achievement because they provide no evidence on an individual's ability to do the work in a particular discipline. Still, "it is expected that teachers will work with students to help them develop the learning skills and work habits identified" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). The Ministry also encourages the use of anecdotal reporting that gives clear explanations on

where students' needs are, what they are doing well, and the direction needed for improvement. In the environment of separate disciplines these anecdotal remarks are often subject specific, but they could just as easily be applied to the direction for growth in mastering learning skills. Also, the *Finding Common Ground* document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) looks at character development in schools at all grade levels. This work cites the research of Douglas Wilms noting the importance of character development and student engagement to academic success, again showing that ontological development ought to take priority to achieve academic success. Wilms notes that student engagement is affected by a sense of belonging which "has to do with feelings of being accepted and valued by their peers, and by others at their school" (Wilms, 2003, p. 8).

Recommendation 4: Provide Resources for Social-Emotional Learning

Positional leaders at the board and school level need to provide school staff with the resources that help them realize that removing students formerly labelled at-risk to an Alternative setting does not improve their sense of belonging; it takes marginalized students right off the page. Positional leaders and emerging leaders need to provide the knowledge and skills through in school support and professional development opportunities to allow staff to respond to the social-emotional needs that ultimately lead to learning success.

Unfortunately, many of these initiatives exist within the old paradigm of meeting standards of achievement which, by definition, do not provide models to excel. They also exist within the dominant culture of acquisition (Oh Neill, 2009); what Freire referred to as the "banking concept of education" (Freire, 1979) which commodifies the body and oppresses the soul (Foucault, 1978). Yet, these proposals have aspects within them that act as harbingers of the ODP. As such they show that schooling is moving in the direction of the ODP. This is

something that school staff and educational stakeholders need to know and understand, think about, communicate with others about and put into practical application.

There may be concerns that the ODP puts schools in a position traditionally reserved for parents and primary caregivers. *Finding Common Ground* (Ministry of Education, 2008) explicitly states that character development "is about all members of the community sharing the responsibility for supporting students and families in the development of character" and not "about schools taking over the responsibility of parents and families" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 7). Similarly, the ODP seeks to include parents, and other stakeholders in the process of improving their children's capacity to learn and to act in the world. The paradigm is *ontologically developmental* because it recognizes learning as the process through which personal identity forms and becomes self-authored. Character development is a by-product of the systemic application of the paradigm, not a primary goal.

In *Finding Common Ground* there is a definite agenda for the kind of character that is wanted: "responsible members of our communities [able] to demonstrate the universal values that we espouse as a society" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 9). There is, in this, still the idea of the reproduction of society to follow the status quo. The ODP invites learners to question what this actually means: How do responsible community members behave on a day to day basis? Are universal values truly universal? How do schools meet the learning needs of all students especially those that do not fit the mold or who seek to create their own meaning outside of curriculum frameworks?

It is expected that as the new paradigm is accepted the structures of schooling will change. The process of sorting students into grade levels based on age may be replaced with a process that accepts that each learner is at a different place in the process of becoming. As a consequence age may cease to be a factor for student advancement.

Recommendation 5: Evolve a Culture of Learning Development

Through process such as differentiation of instruction and those described in the TRIBES Learning Community (Gibbs & Ushijima, 2002), teachers and other school staff need to respond to the full spectrum of learning needs of each student everyday. This needs to happen in daily interactions with students both through learning activities within the classroom and in casual interactions within the whole school environment. Through this praxis the whole school becomes a learning environment for the ontological development of students and staff. The concept of lifelong learning, prevalent in adult learning theory, needs to be recognized as the way things naturally are. School is one place, not the only place, where learning happens. Schools may become less focussed on curriculum subjects and more focussed on learning processes and what they mean to human becoming. Problem-based, or inquiry-based learning is likely to dominate the educational environment because through it we can discover how disciplines are interconnected in meaningful ways. Also, students labelled at-risk are known to be more engaged in this type of learning (Carr & Jitendra, 2000; Heitin, 2012). We will need to consider these possibilities as we move more intentionally toward the ODP.

Conclusion

The problem with our Alternative programs is that they provide a place to send challenging students where they have the potential for success. As a consequence the changes that need to occur in schools to meet the learning needs of these students are not put into place. This OIP examines the changes that need to occur and outlines a plan for implementation. The impetus for that implementation is announcing the imminent end of the Alternative School. This is followed up with the knowledge and supports needed to respond to the learning needs of students labelled at-risk and to make the shift to the ontologically developmental paradigm (Oh Neill, 2014) necessary to meet the 21st century learning needs of all students

The School Board is already moving toward an ODP though it may not have the language it needs to define the shift. The problem represented by Alternative programs is endemic to systems of education as evidenced in the broad scope of literature cited here. The goal of eliminating the need for Alternative programs comes from a desire to create learning environments that address true learning needs. The changes required to fulfill this goal is a new understanding of educational leadership that includes a critical understanding of school purpose and a focus on social-emotional learning. These understandings must be grounded in ideas of social justice and equity that embrace the difference and diversity typically represented in students formerly labelled at-risk.

The ODP provides a way of thinking about leadership necessary to create a learning environment for staff and students that can respond to the ontologically developmental needs of *all* students. Unlike other approaches to leadership it is not attached to a charismatic individual or to a hierarchy of power through which transactional negotiations garner permission to act. The ODP provides a view of leadership as the expressive action of self-authored beings. Systems of education within an ODP are mandated to develop in each individual within the board: staff, students, and other stakeholders, the social capacity of self-authorship and the ability to express leadership action to influence the environments in which they coexist with others.

An educational organization, unlike any other organization, is particularly suited to an ODP because of its role as the behavioural and cultural knowledge giver of the society. This role is intensified in the case of students typically labelled at-risk who, having been marginalized, are in greater need of social inclusion. An ODP provides a way of thinking about social inclusion that does not ask individuals to surrender that which makes them unique, and so of great value. It does this by concentrating the attention of education on the objective awareness of the

individual as a developing being not on an organizational agenda or timetables for curriculum delivery. The ODP provides the flexibility schools need to respond to the social-emotional learning needs of students who would be labelled at-risk.

Positional leaders operating within the ODP take responsibility for encouraging leadership action in others. They do this by opening and maintaining lines of communication, being aware of who is involved in action research and connecting others who may need, or want to learn new pedagogical practice. They also provide information from educational research by either encouraging professional reading or getting researchers involved in their schools. This last does not have to be done by positional leaders, but positional leaders must provide a model of the learning community they wish to create. In short, they take the time to get to know and understand the people in their schools and to assist them in their personal and professional growth. They help them understand how to embed ontological development into curriculum mandates and how the one supersedes and may replace the other as a real learning need. They help them understand how this assists all students but especially those who would otherwise be labelled at-risk.

There are initiatives in place within the Board that signal the move toward an ODP. Existing as they do within the economic prosperity paradigm it is difficult for these initiatives to evolve schools because they are subsumed within the purpose of that dominant social paradigm. The need for Alternative programs exists within that dominant paradigm of learning for financial success and meeting basic goals of credit accumulation, increased graduation rates and higher grade point averages. That these initiatives have been introduced demonstrates recognition by institutional leaders of the direction for change. I suspect though, that it is difficult to shift that dominant mindset. It may also be that the initiatives were introduced within the dominant paradigm and it has not yet been recognized that they signal the need for a paradigm shift.

Schein's (2016) work on cultural change informs the path toward the ODP. It does this through a critical assessment of the various factors that need to be considered when people feel discomfort and need information and guidance. This discomfort creates a precarious position where people may resist change, which is essential to motivate the desire to learn (Jarvis, 2009). Schein (2016) advises strongly against causing this discomfort without a clear purpose for doing so. The ODP provides that purpose.

The Adaptive Leadership Model (Heifetz et al., 2009) gives us the structures we need to understand where we are in the organization and how it is influenced by various forces. It also gives us the theoretical impetus to motivate leadership-being in others, though Heifetz et al. (2009) do not use that term. Leadership-being expresses the idea that learning brings us to a point where we define our own being and influence the environments in which we exist: psychological, communal and global. It develops in the individual a necessarily ethical stance that respects the developing leadership-being of others. Some people need more time, more trust and more caring and to not be considered at-risk. It is this attitude toward learning that is at the heart of the ODP. As the attitude of ontological development (Oh Neill, 2014) permeates the Board it ultimately helps kids in need and eventually eliminates the need for Alternative Programs.

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Appendix A


Proposing the Reduction and Eventual Elimination of the Need for Alternative Programs Through a Shift to an Ontologically Developmental Paradigm for Education
MIND MAP for the following PoP
Alternative classrooms may actually impede progress in developing ways to respond to the social emotional learning (SEL) these students need within the regular school.
Staff and student Learning Needs
Ontologically Developmental
Professional Development
Ongoing Action Research
Scholar/Expert Forums/ Workshops
Ethical Frames
Care
Justice
Critique
Community Forums
Student Voice
Community Health and Well-being Support
Understanding/ Creating School Purpose
Living Systems Community of Learners
Social Justice and Equity
Educational Purpose
Determine staff mental models—perceived purpose for education, reasons for teaching—encourage personal reflection
Situational leaders encourage and support a try and see approach to learning
Situational leaders develop and create connective ties between diverse groups within and between schools and community
Situational leaders encourage leadership actions from staff/ students and other stakeholders—create action networks—include new and seasoned staff
Guidance and counseling staff work with Alternative staff and students to determine learning needs—SEL strategies
Improve meaning making capacity (King, Baxter Magolda, & Masse, 2011) of staff and students through targeted reading and informal discussion
When feasible implement ideas generated from Community Forums to demonstrate trust and generate further involvement
Hold community meetings to ask students and parents what they want from their schools—use Speak-up (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017) questions as catalysts for discussion
Ongoing information collection and analysis by all stakeholders
Begin to build learning teams for possible Action Research projects
Begin dialogical discussion on how to meet SEL needs through problems used in program delivery
Find and recruit staff advocates who understand and appreciate the need for change to meet student learning need in unpredictable times
Announcement of the phasing out of Alternative Education and need to investigate Learning Needs of Students labelled at-risk
1 Catalyst
Adaptive Leadership " (Heifetz, Grashowand Linsky, 2009)
Cultural Change (Schein,)
Living Systems Framework Community (Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L., 2011)
Use of individual and group reflection to understand results from Action Research. Staff share results in school, between schools and at Community forums
Staff work to develop and implement Action Research to develop learning strategies for embedding SEL into curriculum delivery as an actionty goal of learning
Staff encouraged to enlist assistance from scholars and other experts. Situational leaders need to be aware of new research and able to make communicative connections between staff and people with interest and/or knowledge.
Prepare Alternative staff for new rolls as student advocates within the roll of SST
Listen for validity in ongoing resistance and further problems of practice. Watch for implementation dips. Make sure all voices are being heard.
Prepare for final transitions being careful to be aware of ongoing tension, anxiety, resistance in staff and students and provide support where needed
Maintain, strengthen and continue to create networks of communication and critical dialogue. Where networks have broken down tighten lines of communication or change direction
Move Alternative teachers into new positions as SSTs. Maintain critical thinking networks. Monitor ongoing Action Research in schools.
Monitor student transition process, teacher response, staff reaction, promising practice.
Celebrate success—Celebrate ideas—provide support—provide critical thinking questions— maintain disciplined attention—continuously encourage reflective practice
Positional Leaders evaluate theories in Practice and Theories in use; Gain a Critical understanding of school purpose: liberal notions of self-improvement, economic skill building for contribution to society, socialization to perpetuate social norms (Begley & Zaretsky, 2004); understand learning as an ontological process (Jarvis, 2009) - "getting on the balcony" (Heifetz, Grashowand Linsky, 2009)
Prior to change: critical assessment of attitudes and organization
The central diagram represents the core philosophical structure through which the change process is to occur. That is, it is a representation of the systemic mindset necessary for a successful shift toward the Ontologically Developmental Paradigm to which the organization is already moving. It becomes the work of positional leaders: superintendents, principals and vice principals, to provide the supports and resources needed to maintain the system of communication and influence.