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## Building Teacher Self-Efficacy to Improve Student Literacy

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WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Building Teacher Self-Efficacy to Improve Student Literacy

by

Travis Klak

AN ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

LONDON, ONTARIO

2019

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### Abstract

Literacy rates in schools across Nunavut have been a prevalent issue in recent years. Students are graduating with lower literacy levels than in many other parts of Canada. More specifically, the school in which I work also currently exhibits this challenge. This organizational improvement plan has a problem of practice at its core that probes how current research can assist me, as principal, in supporting teachers to more effectively implement a balanced literacy program throughout my school for the purpose of improving students' literacy levels in both of the community's languages – English and Inuktitut.

In order to address this gap in literacy skills, a comprehensive strategy is devised to be implemented aligning with best practices in literacy instruction. A distributed leadership approach will be used to collaboratively lead school staff towards effective execution of this plan utilizing Kotter's 8 step Change Path model. Initial stages of this plan center on developing a shared vision of literacy in the school, and then reading skills, and writing skills at the kindergarten through grade nine (K-9) level. Future considerations to this organizational improvement plan include foci on improving parental engagement with the school, and on writing skills at the high school level. Training for some aspects of balanced literacy has been conducted in previous years, however effective implementation has not been conducted in the past, thus the primary challenge of plan implementation is garnering staff support with this strategy.

*Keywords:* Distributed Leadership, Shared Vision, Balanced Literacy, Teacher Efficacy.

## **Executive Summary**

This plan formulates and analyzes a plan for a small, remote school in Nunavut to address low literacy rates. Several potential solutions are presented as is a rationale for the plan that was chosen.

Chapter 1 provides all relevant background information for the organizational improvement plan, and justifies the problem of practice that is central to this plan. The chapter begins with a brief organizational history of the community and school, the leadership position and lenses that this problem of practice is viewed through, as well as the model that is used to frame the problem of practice. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frame model is applied in this plan, and the structural and human resources frames play key roles in how the problem is framed. The problem of practice being tackled in this plan relates to utilizing current research to inform effective implementation of balanced literacy programming across my K-12 school in order to improve student literacy levels in both English and Inuktitut, the two languages use in the community. From this problem of practice, two key questions immerge. What strategies will allow my staff to engage stakeholders including parents and the community in general while implementing balanced literacy approaches in the school? How have balanced literacy programs been effectively implemented in other areas of Canada or the other countries that experience similar circumstances to those in Nunavut? Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols' (2015) Change Readiness survey was utilized to determine the readiness for change of our school. Results indicate that we are at a point of readiness to engage in this enacting this plan.

Chapter 2 of this plan focuses on the planning and development stages. Distributed leadership is discussed to be central to my leadership style, and is infused throughout the planning and implementation stages. Kotter's 8 stage model is utilized to provide a framework

for leading this change. Three potential solutions are discussed in this chapter: providing professional development opportunities for staff to improve self-efficacy, team teaching, and establishing professional learning communities with the first solution deemed to be the most appropriate for this school context.

The final chapter of this plan formally lays out the strategies and details that will be necessary to effectively tackle the problem of practice. Initial components of this plan center on creating a set of shared beliefs and understanding, commitment from the school to budget for literacy resources, the designation of a staff member as the school's literacy leader, and a shared literacy resource space in the school. Beyond this, I suggest that Kotter's (1996) focus on empowering employees directly aligns with building teachers' self-efficacy. In order to determine how effective the implementation of this plan has been, Killion's (2017) model is used. The final component of this plan is communication of the need for change to the community and other stakeholders. Cawsey and Deszca's (2011) Change Path model is used as the foundation of this communication. A discussion of next steps and future considerations follows my outline of implementation monitoring and communication planning. These next steps include addressing writing skills at the high school level, and including parental engagement strategies in order to encourage parents to become more involved in their child's education.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM**

### **Organizational History**

The educational jurisdiction in Nunavut, Canada is comprised of three, relatively small school districts. Each region is comprised of rural, isolated fly-in communities. Programs and services are administered at three levels: territorially, regionally, and locally through community district education authorities. The Department of Education services approximately 9,000 students in twenty-four isolated communities, and forty-two public schools. Of these schools, thirteen are K-12 schools, twelve high schools, thirteen elementary schools, and four middle schools. Racial composition in the region is primarily Inuit students, however outside of major centers, many schools have homogenously Inuit student populations. A history of residential schools has had a profound impact on the communities in the territory. This has led to loss of the Inuktitut language in many households, as well as higher rates of absenteeism amongst students, and lower literacy rates amongst both adults and children (Government of Nunavut, n.d.).

Schools in Nunavut follow a mix of Alberta, Northwest Territories, and locally developed Nunavut curricula. Mathematics, English Language Arts, and science follow the Alberta path, health courses follow Northwest Territories curriculum, and career and technology studies courses are a mix of predominantly Alberta curriculum, and locally developed Nunavut courses (kayak building, and parka making for example). While curriculum choices and departmental initiatives occur at the territorial level, course offerings, language of instruction models, and implementation strategies occur at the regional and community level, with regional school operations and local district education authorities ultimately deciding on how the school functions in the community. Depending on school size and teacher specializations, a wide range of curricular options can be made available. However, many communities with smaller K-12

schools lack the resources to be able to offer courses beyond those allocated as graduation requirements. Extra-curricular activities often occur in schools, as there are few opportunities for activities outside of the school, particularly in smaller communities where resources are scarce. These activities can include soccer, badminton, hockey, music programs, and others that may be of interest to groups of students (Government of Nunavut, n.d.).

Since 2014, Nunavut's Department of Education has been focusing on improving literacy skills for all students in each of the four territorial languages, which are: English, French, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun. Data directly discussing literacy rates in Nunavut is scarce, as up until very recently, the only standardized literacy assessment conducted in Nunavut was that of the grade twelve departmental exam in English Language Arts. In many communities, this is the only standardized exam that students have to take, as academic mathematics and science courses are not regularly offered in many communities. This departmental exam has often been the major stumbling block for students to graduate. Students with lower literacy levels may have to repeat the course or its exam several times before passing it, or may drop out of school before successfully passing the exam. In order to mitigate this issue, the Department of Education has developed a directive that requires all schools to take a balanced approach to literacy instruction at the kindergarten to grade eight levels. This involves intentional strategies to support reading, writing, and word study including guided reading, guided writing, word study, and oral language development.

In order to facilitate the balanced literacy approach in schools, two significant investments were made by the Department of Education. Firstly, each school has been allocated an additional teaching position that does not count towards the school's student educator ratio, that of learning coach. The role of the learning coach is to work alongside teachers in order to

improve literacy instruction within their classroom. Coaches have been provided extensive training by the department, and are required to undergo specified coursework over the first two years in the position to become familiar with all aspects of the role. Different communities have had varied success with this implementation, as staffing continues to be a prevalent issue. Many communities are understaffed with teaching positions, resulting in either no learning coach being hired, or learning coach temporarily being assigned classroom duties until the school is fully staffed. Secondly, the Department of Education has provided each school with the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, as well as supporting resources that go along with the program. The intention behind this was to provide standardized assessment data for literacy within each school that could be used to track student progress and underpin discussions between classroom teachers and learning coaches regarding how best to improve literacy levels amongst their students. Furthermore, data would be tracked, compiled, and stored regionally in order to gain insight into how best to improve literacy rates throughout the territory. Finally, the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention program was provided to each school in order to support students who continue to struggle with improvements in literacy when learning in a literacy rich classroom. Each region has taken a different approach to implementation of this program in how schools could use the Fountas and Pinnell resources as well as learning coaches.

Two types of leadership stand out at both the departmental level and school level across the territory – instructional leadership and distributed leadership. Distributed leadership focuses on group members regardless of status who are able to make meaningful change within the organization by sharing leadership tasks amongst staff (Spillane, 2005). Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) state that their extensive literature review highlights six key functions that are essential for instructional leadership:

- Constructing and selling an instructional vision
- Developing and managing a school culture conducive to conversations about the core technology of instruction building norms of trust, collaboration, and academic press among staff
- Procuring and distributing resources, including materials, time, support, and compensation
- Supporting teacher growth and development, both individually and collectively
- Providing both summative and formative monitoring of instruction and innovation
- Establishing a school climate in which disciplinary issues do not dominate

Instructional leadership is a key requirement for Nunavut principals, as the school principal is the curriculum and teaching specialist of the school. The remoteness of Nunavut communities poses challenges for teachers to access resources outside of the community, thus the principal is expected to be skilled and trained in Nunavut approved curriculum, in addition to being the instructional leader in the school. The principal is ultimately viewed as the link between classroom teachers and the resources they need to be able to effectively instruct in their classrooms. Recent reorganization within the Department of Education has eliminated curriculum consultant positions from regional school operations' oversight, placing an additional level of need on principals' instructional leadership capabilities.

As well, distributed leadership follows from the Inuit societal values *inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, *tunnganarniq*, *pijitsirniq*, *pilimmaksarniq*, and *piliriqatigiinni*. The eight Inuit societal values underpin all aspects of education in Nunavut, including principal leadership. A description of these values is found in Table 1. Shared leadership with respect to consensus-based decision making and goal setting are viewed as highly valued leadership traits.

Table 1.1

*Nunavut's Eight Inuit Societal Values*

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq	Respecting others, relationships and caring for people
Tunnganarniq	Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive
Pijitsirniq	Serving and providing for family and/or community
Aajiiqatigiinni	Decision making through discussion and consensus
Pilimmaksarniq	Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practicing and effort
Piliriqatigiinni	Working together for a common cause
Qanuqtuurniq	Being innovative and resourceful
Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq	Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment

Note. Reprinted from <https://www.gov.nu.ca/information/inuit-societal-values>. Copyright (2019) by Government of Nunavut.

The region in which my school is located has taken the lead in the implementation of this initiative, with senior level leaders in this region being the first to develop strategies for its execution. Schools in this region were the first to trial literacy programming, receive training, and pilot initial ideas related to the initiative, with the other two regions following in subsequent years after success was seen in many schools. However, due to previous school administrators' priorities, high staff turnover, and a variety of other reasons, little progress has been made in my school during the initial year of implementation. Coming to the school in the 2017-18 school year, I noticed significant deficiencies in the way this initiative had been implemented, particularly compared to that of the previous school at which I had worked, where the initiative had been much more recently introduced. This is likely due to multiple years of very high staff turnover, making it very challenging to build programming from year to year.

I first came to the North ten years ago, eight of those being in Nunavut communities. I began my career in Nunavut as a classroom teacher, then moved up to vice-principal, and my current position is that of principal at a relatively large kindergarten to grade twelve school of

approximately 320 students. In this role, I work under one of two superintendent of schools, as well as a locally elected district education authority. The superintendent ensures that school principals follow regulations and expectations set out by the Department of Education, while the district education authority ensures that the school is run in a manner aligning with the wishes and expectations of the community with respect to cultural programming, implementation of the community's language of instruction model, and special education.

### **Leadership Perspective and Lens Statement**

Several components make up my leadership position and the lenses with which I view the problem of practice. My view of leadership within the school I lead aligns with the research of Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008). Furthermore, three lenses frame my leadership practice: 1. Indigenous, 2. conservative, and 3. critical.

### **Leadership Position**

As an educational leader in my school in the role of school principal, I find it relevant to reflect on points made by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) on the elements that make up successful school leadership. Four points the authors make stand out to me as aligning most directly with my organization. Firstly, the authors state that school leadership is secondary to classroom teaching with respect to student learning. This illustrates the importance that must be placed firstly on quality classroom instruction, as this must be the priority when discussing school improvement. Teachers must be provided with all of the necessary tools and supports in order to be able to effectively improve student learning in their classrooms first. Once this has been established, effective school leadership plays a role in directing how those skills are utilized to maximize student achievement.

Secondly, the authors discuss that most successful school leaders draw upon a similar set of leadership practices, and the way in which those practices are implemented demonstrate responsiveness to the contexts in which they work. These practices include building vision and setting directions, understanding and developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the teaching and learning program (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). The first practice, as it relates to my school, will be to place a priority on creating a shared vision and common understandings across all staff and stakeholders with respect to what we expect to achieve in regards to literacy in the school. Each of the other practices are highly interconnected, and play a significant role in the improvement planning that will be developed in later chapters of this organizational improvement plan. Significant emphasis will be placed on the “developing people” side of things, through providing ample opportunities for staff to engage in the professional learning that will be necessary to acquire skills in balanced literacy instruction.

The third and fourth points brought up by Leithwood et al. (2008) are that a school leader improves student achievement indirectly through his or her influence on improving staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions, and that school leadership has the greatest influence on students when it is widely distributed. Both of these points indicate the importance of shared leadership and staff motivation, which are central ideals in my own leadership practice. For instructional leadership to flourish at my school, teachers must be given opportunities to take on leadership roles within that structure, both in formal and informal roles. Additionally, as Leithwood et al. (2008) point out, the more that teachers enact the above-mentioned core leadership practices, the greater their influence was on teachers’ capacities and motivation. Thus, there is an overwhelming need for me to share leadership across my staff, rather than simply taking on the role of sole leader in my school.

## **Leadership Lenses**

From the Nunavut perspective, this problem of practice can best be viewed through three lenses, that of the Indigenous, conservative, and critical. These ideological perspectives reflect a particular stance that researchers make when undertaking research (Creswell, 2013). The indigenous lens emphasizes oral traditions, care, respect, culture, language, and community, espousing a holistic and interconnected worldview (Iseke & Brennus, 2011; Hare, 2004; Martin & Garrett, 2010; Munroe, Borden, Orr, Toney & Meader, 2013). The conservative lens emphasizes an incremental approach to leadership and decision making, whereby new elements are introduced into longstanding structures gradually in order to properly integrate them within established traditions (Barkan, 2010; Gutek, 1997). The critical lens focuses on a commitment to social justice and transformative change by ensuring essential services and resources are accessible by all individuals in the school and community, as well as participating in the critical and radical movement towards social change (Breunig, 2009; Davies, Popescu, & Gunter, 2011; Kellnar, 2003; Ryan, 2013).

From the Indigenous lens, Nunavut principals need to take a culturally sensitive position when implementing literacy practices in schools. As this lens highly values the input of elders and traditional knowledge, it is vital that principals consult with the community in which they work, including elders and district education authority members in order to gain deeper insight into what the community's vision is with respect to literacy – not only in English, but in Inuktitut as well. As storytelling plays a key role in the transmission of Inuit knowledge in Nunavut, oral communication skills will be a key component in the literacy that is taught. Additionally, the Indigenous approach aligns with the Government of Nunavut's expectations to involve Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in all aspects of education. This essentially means incorporating traditional

skills and knowledge within the curriculum. This will be particularly key when implementing Inuktitut literacy, however in both Inuit culture must be brought into all aspects of literacy instruction, including locally developed books, as well as southern created books that involve topics related to Nunavut and the Inuit. While many differentiations exist regarding the northern and southern parts of Canada, in the context of this organizational improvement plan, the “South” is considered anywhere below the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel, and the “North” above the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. A delicate balance must be struck between traditional Inuit knowledge and southern ways of knowing. Traditional teaching is done primarily through modelling, practice, and performance, where someone skilled in a particular set of knowledge shows the student several times how to complete a task, and when the student feels ready to do it on their own, they try to do so. This type of teaching must ultimately be incorporated into the classroom.

From the conservative lens, the school is viewed as hierarchical, placing the school principal as the primary decision-maker in how the literacy program will be structured and enacted throughout the school, with a lesser focus on the learning coach as the secondary overseer and facilitator. Beyond this structure would be the teachers who actually put the expectations into place within their classrooms. Gutek (1997) states that an incremental approach needs to be taken in the conservative approach in order to integrate new programming into the longstanding structures of the school. Thus, it is important to not jump head first into changing the classroom structures that currently exist. Rather, teachers should be provided with adequate training, with time to incorporate their new learning into their classroom. Gianesin and Bonaker (2003) offer that student success in core subjects is vital to the conservative approach. Thus, students must be successful in acquiring literacy skills in both languages, English and Inuktitut. Additionally, teachers who are not successfully producing improvements in literacy

rates according to regularly collected benchmark assessment data would be provided with more intensive opportunities to collaborate with the learning coach and participate in other training opportunities in order to meet the expectations of student achievement within the school.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

Literacy rates in Nunavut have been noted to be lower than desired (Nunavut Literacy Council & Gibson Library Connections, 2007). Collected benchmark assessment data from the past year demonstrates that the vast majority of students at my school are reading and writing at least one grade below their current grade level. Nunavut's Department of Education has a mandate to uphold that all graduates will be fully bilingual by 2020. In order for the department to meet this mandate, it is up to school leaders to implement programming that will allow students to be fully literate in both English and Inuktitut upon graduation.

Over the past year, several key foundational pieces have been integrated to move the school forward. This includes a complete overhaul of the very much neglected school library through cataloguing of books, and strategically adding new books in areas of deficit. This has been possible in part due to funding through Indigo's Love of Reading program, as well as significant dedication on the parts of the school's learning coach and reading interventionist teacher.

Guided reading programs were developed for junior high, i.e. grade seven through nine classes, however due to staffing reductions and staff turnover, the capacity that was built during that year needs to be rebuilt and expanded upon with new teachers during the 2018-19 school year. At the department level, in order to support literacy development, the Department of Education for the Government of Nunavut allocated significant resources towards literacy

beginning in the 2013-14 school year, which included adding an additional learning coach position to each school, as well as providing each school with resources such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System and related Pearson materials. During the 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 school years, even with these supports in place, little headway was made with respect to literacy in my school under previous administration due to student attendance and staff turnover which became pervasive barriers in bringing about significant change in literacy instruction.

The problem of practice that is addressed in this organizational improvement plan is how current research can assist me, as principal, in supporting teachers to more effectively implement a balanced literacy program throughout my school for the purpose of improving students' literacy levels in both of the community's languages – English and Inuktitut. Lee and Schallert (2015) propose that students who are struggling readers can acquire reading skills through both reading and writing, as well as acquire writing skills through both reading and writing, as they both involve several similar sub-processes. Lee and Schallert (2015) suggest that focusing on both reading and writing throughout the implementation process will be necessary to achieve optimal results, rather than simply having a reading focus initially followed by a writing focus subsequently. In order to see gains in student literacy achievement throughout my school, it will be imperative to garner support from the community, staff, and students, as well as build staff capacity with respect to improved literacy strategies in classrooms. Culturally responsive literacy instruction will also be a priority within this organizational improvement plan. This involves three primary components: the use of culturally appropriate texts, engaging students' voices, and incorporating the knowledge that students acquire from their family and cultural background (Hefflin, 2002; Morrison, Robinson, & Rose, 2008; Toppel, 2013). The goal of

implementing this programming is to have a complete balanced literacy program running in each class from kindergarten through grade twelve, in Inuktitut for kindergarten to grade four, and in English for grades five through twelve over the next two school years.

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

Several theories or models will need to be examined and analyzed in order to gain insight into how to tackle the problem of effectively implementing literacy programming within my school. Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four Frames model is of particular interest as it provides a tool to analyze change initiatives through four distinct lenses, each of which provide a unique way of looking at the problem, and can be combined in order to gain deeper insight into solutions. Two frames in particular, the Structural and Human Resources, will be used to better understand or frame the problem of practice from the perspective of these lenses.

#### **Structural Frame**

The Structural Frame involves six significant assumptions that lay at its foundation. Each of these assumptions will be discussed in depth in relation to how they apply to my problem of practice.

***Assumption 1.*** Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives (p. 48). One of the primary goals of the Department of Education in Nunavut is to improve literacy levels in students. The department has taken a territory-wide approach in determining broad guidelines for how to do this, including the creation of a literacy framework for schools. However, the details of implementation rely heavily on school principals, as well as support from their literacy teams, including learning coaches. Thus, creating a strategic plan with my current staff in order to gain insight into how best to achieve this goal.

***Assumption 2.*** Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and appropriate division of labour (p. 48). In order to effectively increase literacy rates at my school, all teachers will need to take on leadership roles in order to effectively collaborate when implementing balanced literacy programs, particularly with respect to flexible groupings. One challenge with this, however, is that many teachers in this community have limited experience implementing balanced literacy programs in their classrooms. Thus, collaboration between more and less experienced teachers will be key in this respect.

***Assumption 3.*** Suitable form of coordination and control ensure that diverse efforts of individuals and units mesh (p. 48). Regional school operations have been supporting this goal over several years, however little progress has been made in my school prior to my arrival in the community. In order to move forward with achieving our goals for literacy, we will require active support from the local district education authority and community with respect to hiring practices that bring experienced teachers onto our staff who have the necessary experience and training with respect to literacy, and who are effective at collaborating with school staff and the community.

***Assumption 4.*** Organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal agendas and extraneous pressure (p. 48). In order to move forward, materials and teaching strategies must be chosen based on best practices, and proven results, particularly with FNMI students as well as English as a second language students. The foundations of our literacy framework are based on these principles, as was the choice for using Pearson created materials. Having these as required foundations for literacy programming in schools takes away personal agendas of teachers who may want to use other strategies or resources that may not achieve the same level of effect regarding literacy improvement.

*Assumption 5.* Effective structures fit an organization's current circumstances (including its goals, technology, workforce, and environment) (p. 48). My school is highly underfunded resulting in few resources such as computers as well as teachers willing to participate in fundraising efforts. As well, many of my teaching staff are relatively new to teaching in the North (and to teaching in general). High turnover in staff poses a significant challenge to making progress with initiatives, as heavily investing in teachers during their first year can either lead to teacher retention, or may be wasted when they leave the community shortly after. Several reasons exist as to why teacher turnover is so high in Nunavut. The primary reason is that most teachers are recruited from the south, thus they are coming to a new community, leaving behind friends and family for extended periods of time which is often challenging for staff, particularly those who have not lived away from family before. As well, the isolation of communities and high cost of living are often given as reasons teachers chose to move back down south.

*Assumption 6.* Troubles arise and performance suffers from structural deficits, remedied through problem solving and restructuring (p. 48). Two very significant challenges exist act as barriers to making progress with change initiatives. The first barrier, as discussed above is the high level of staff turnover in my school. Secondly, student attendance is lower than in many southern jurisdictions, particularly at the high school level. However, while attendance may be lower than in the south, our community has one of the highest attendance levels in Nunavut, something the community prides itself on. Collaboration with the local District Education Authority is vital to resolving this issue.

### **Human Resources Frame**

The human resources frame is centered on the relationship between people and organizations. A good fit between individuals and the organization allows “individuals [to] find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations [to] get the talent and energy they need to succeed.” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 135). As well, “investing in people on the premise that a highly motivated and skilled workforce is a powerful and competitive advantage” (p. 135) has proven to be highly successful for many organizations. It is with this in mind that developing teacher competencies in relation to the issues many teachers who are new to the North experience will provide my school with significant success down the road. Areas of focus in this regard include: infusing local culture within curriculum, effective classroom management, and effective literacy instruction for ESL students. This, and its converse, are one of the core assumptions behind the human resources frame of reference, and is the primary reason this frame is applicable to framing my problem of practice.

### **Guiding Questions Emerging from the Problem of Practice**

When considering the problem of practice being addressed in this organizational improvement plan, several questions emerge with respect to how best to proceed with addressing the problem. First of all, stakeholder engagement and support will form the foundation of addressing the problem of practice. What strategies will allow my staff to engage stakeholders including parents and the community in general while implementing balanced literacy approaches in the school? The community’s understanding of and willingness to participate in these changes will be key factor in its success, particularly as the locally elected district education authority holds a significant amount of control over education in the community. The way that this will unfold, mainly with respect to the Inuktitut component is highly dependent on the community’s acceptance of then Minister of Education Paul Quassa’s (P. Quassa,

professional communication, March, 2016) expectations of the use of the educational dialect in Inuktitut literacy programs.

Secondly, how have balanced literacy programs been effectively implemented in other areas of Canada or the other countries that experience similar circumstances to those in Nunavut? Many jurisdictions encompass student populations where English is a second language, and housing and poverty are significant concerns. Strategies that have been successful in these jurisdictions may prove to be a starting point when considering how to proceed with implementation in our school, as those jurisdictions, in many ways, more closely resemble the realities that we face.

Finally, what professional development opportunities need to be provided to teachers and other staff in order for them to be able to effectively carry out this program in their classrooms? Those teachers who have been in the community for more than a few years have had training on balanced literacy in the past, however, new teachers have not. This places teachers at my school at a wide range of skill levels with respect to literacy, making implementation much more challenging than starting with a longer-term staff. Bringing new teachers' skill levels up to those who are more experienced in this area will be necessary in order for the entire school to move towards the goals that have been set out. This will require school-level professional development, as well as individual teacher professional learning. As well, teacher efficacy and willingness need to be addressed as well, as without teacher willingness to engage in the change process, progress will likely be slow. Furthermore, with effective professional development opportunities provided to new staff, it is expected that this will allow new staff to be more effective in the classroom, and thus reduce staff turnover in coming years.

### **Vision for Change**

Three significant components influence my background, which ultimately impact my decision-making as a key change driver in my school. These will be discussed in further depth in this and subsequent chapters of this organizational improvement plan. Firstly, the idea of a shared vision motivates me to champion the need for change. Shared leadership occurs when “two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness.” (Bergman, Retsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012, p. 18). The second influencer is the idea of transformational leadership, which encompasses many aspects including: emphasizing intrinsic motivation amongst staff, promoting co-operation, and providing individual coaching and mentoring to followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Finally, my view on taking a consistent, methodical approach to change implementation aligns closely with a conservative viewpoint on leading change. Certainly, creating a sense of urgency and purpose for engaging in change are key drivers to move an organization forward, however jumping “head first” into new change initiatives has not worked well in the past in my experience.

### **Existing Gap between Present and Future State**

Considering the school’s organizational context and history, a significant gap exists between the present state of the school and the goals that are expected to be achieved at both the school and departmental level. Students are expected to be fluent speakers and writers in both Inuktitut and English by graduation, however many students are not fluent in one or both languages upon graduation. Significant funds and training have been provided by the department of education in order to ensure that schools are able to meet these required mandates. As Christensen, Goula, Prosser, and Sylvester (1976) state that teachers may become discouraged with implementing change initiatives due to several key factors, including lack of support, and

materials. It is with this in mind that in order to bridge the gap between current and future state, resources and effective professional development opportunities must be in place in order to move the school forward with meeting these mandates.

The vision for change that accompanies this organizational plan is to be able to effectively set in place guidelines to support teacher collaboration and growth in teacher capacity with respect to balanced literacy programs in all classrooms in my school. By doing so, I aim to help teachers achieve the Department of Education's goal of improving literacy rates across all students in both Inuktitut and English. Our school's mission statement mentions that:

We believe that all of our students have the right to a learning environment that is safe, caring, respectful, and respected, and an education that is centered around traditional values and language, promoting high academic standards and achievement, in order for them to learn and grow intellectually, physically, and socially, and to ultimately graduate and become lifelong learners, confident in their abilities, respectful to themselves and others, and capable of contributing to society and their community. We believe this is achievable through team work, where education staff, parents/guardians, and the community together hold themselves responsible and accountable for each student's success.

Thus, in order to fulfil our school's mission, we must be able to create capable learners with strong language skills in both Inuktitut and English. This highlights the importance of not simply focusing on English-based language skills throughout K-12, but also an intensive focus on early Inuktitut skills which may be lacking for many students who come from homes where Inuktitut is no longer the primary language spoken. Extensive research has been conducted into the role that first language plays on second language acquisition particularly with respect to

literacy (Nakamoto, Lindsey, & Manis, 2008; Ordonez, Carlo, Snow, & McLaughlin, 2002), highlighting the importance of developing a strong foundation of Inuktitut fluency in the younger years, followed by a strong foundation of English in the later years. Additionally, teaching materials must be culturally relevant, pointing to the importance of locally developed Inuktitut guided reading materials.

### **Priorities for Change**

Three distinct categories exist with respect to our school's priorities for change within the scope of this organizational improvement plan: leadership led change, teacher led change, and instruction. Each of these points will be discussed in further depth in Chapter Two, however will be briefly summarized here as well.

With respect to leadership led change, capacity first needs to be built within the school's leadership and literacy leadership teams. The leadership team is comprised of the school principal and vice-principal. The literacy leadership team is comprised of the school's learning coach, student support teacher, reading interventionist teacher, and the vice-principal who is also in the role of Inuktitut language specialist. All team members must be appropriately trained in all aspects of requirements and expectations for literacy initiatives that are to be implemented in the school. This includes guided reading and writing in both English and Inuktitut. With this in place, school and literacy leaders will be able to effectively guide classroom teachers through the implementation process through school-based professional development activities.

With respect to teacher led change, a significant component of this change will be with respect to professional development. A re-design of teacher evaluation tools for all school-based educators in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years has placed a much more significant role on

teacher professional development than in the past. Currently, teachers, principals, vice-principals, student support teachers, and learning coaches all have their own self-reflection tool and professional development plan tool that must be completed yearly in discussions with the school principal, or superintendent for principals' tools. These tools are centered on the individual's current strengths and areas for growth in their practice. Significant opportunities for professional development in the form of payment for credit and non-credit courses, and professional learning community activities, as well as a week-long block of professional development in February that is chosen by the teacher. The activities that the teacher chooses should align with their professional development plan. As Lieberman, Campbell, and Yashkina (2017) contend, it is important for teachers to identify their own professional development needs and goals in order to have a sense of ownership over their learning. This is precisely what the new teacher self-reflection and professional development plan documents are designed to achieve. In order to move forward with improving literacy outcomes in the school, the majority of teachers would likely place some importance in their professional development plan on developing their skills with respect to the various aspects of balanced literacy in their classrooms, unless they are already identified as being experts in that area.

Instruction ties in very closely with the two abovementioned areas. Beyond building teacher capacity with respect to literacy, teachers must improve teaching practices based on their professional goals in order to broaden literacy implementation within their classrooms. The learning coach and student support teacher act as support for teachers to do so. The learning coach's role is to work alongside classroom teachers, modeling new strategies, and helping them to find appropriate resources. The student support teacher's role is to provide classroom teachers with support for students with learning difficulties or behavioural challenges. With these

supports in place, teachers will be able to improve quality literacy instruction within their classrooms.

### **Change Drivers**

In order for the envisioned future state to become reality, two key areas will need to be addressed in collaboration with the broader community. Firstly, the regional school operations will need to be accommodating with how unscheduled hours are utilized in the school's schedule. Each school is allotted 45 unscheduled hours in their calendar that are to be used for various school improvement initiatives. The majority of this time will need to be allotted over the next several school years to focus on the components of literacy in the classroom that are not yet in place.

Secondly, in collaboration with the district education authority, a final decision needs to be made regarding the use of Inuktitut guided reading in elementary classrooms. During the 2014-15 school year, then Minister of Education, Paul Quassa announced the expectation that these resources be used in all Inuktitut speaking classrooms, in what is known as the "educational dialect" – a dialect that resembles a mix of South and North Baffin dialects. However, many communities that do not use one of these dialects have expressed significant opposition to this, as many community members across the territory feel that this will result in the loss of their community's dialect. It has been expressed by the regional school operations' that the mandated use of this program is in effect, and must be followed, however this will require specific support from our district education authority in order to be able to implement this.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

Holt, Armenakis, Feild, and Harris (2007) note that readiness is a primary factor that drives staff support for change initiatives. Systemic changes are generally implemented by leaders in order to reach specific goals, however this tends to lead to conflict in staff as initiatives are introduced. In order for implementation to be successful, conflicts must first be tackled in order to align staff beliefs with those of the organizational leader's. Thus, organizational readiness is necessary to determine before laying the groundwork for implementing change.

Cunningham et. al. (2002) mention several key contributing factors to readiness for organizational change. Staff self-efficacy, their perceived ability, tends to be the prevailing individual contributor. Staff who possess confidence in their ability to cope with change have been shown to be more likely to contribute to organizational change. Conversely, staff who have limited self-perceived capabilities related to the change initiative have been shown to be more resistant to change. The authors discuss that employees who are empowered in their jobs, with respect to the skills, attitudes, and opportunities necessary to engage in the change initiative have been shown to have improved self-efficacy and improved readiness for change (Cunningham et. al., 2002). Furthermore, "active jobs" – those which provide opportunities for mastery and incremental preparation for change – tend to be more confident in their ability to manage change and participate in organizational redesign. The points made by Cunningham et al. (2002) highlight the importance of providing opportunities for all staff to engage in professional development activities related to this change initiative. A conservative, incremental approach will have the most significant impact on ensuring all staff are ready to be involved in these changes as this allows opportunities to learn and reflect on that learning throughout the change process. Past experiences with rapid-fire style change initiatives has not provided meaningful

change, rather taking a more conservative approach to integrate new learning with past experiences will be a significantly better option.

Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2015) have developed a questionnaire that addresses an organization's readiness for change. Six dimensions are included: previous change experience, executive support, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, and measures for change and accountability. Each dimension receives a score between -2 and +2, thus resulting in an overall score between -10 and +25. Organizations with a score below +10 are noted to be challenging to implement change in.

As far as previous change experiences go, the school has undergone many previous change initiatives in the past, for example implementing new curriculum in various grades, and several different assessment initiatives over the years. Nearly all staff are on board with bringing about current changes, with some resistance due to the issues surrounding dialect mentioned in the previous section. In my understanding, these initiatives have been successfully implemented, resulting in a score of +2 in this category.

Support from senior management is very strong. The initial push for this initiative began with the senior leadership team in this region, which was then brought to the minister of education, which finally resulted in all schools in the territory following the same expectations. Beyond this, a clear vision has been developed by the department of education with respect to their expectations of literacy in schools. Regional school operations are very supportive of new ideas for implementing literacy in the school, particularly with adaptations that need to be made with respect to groupings, class sizes, reading levels, etc. Due to this, a score of +4 is assigned to our school.

Regarding the final three dimensions, teachers are for the most part very receptive to change. Many of our local teachers have been at the school for many years (20+ years). In some cases, resistance to change, particularly when it comes to implementing Inuktitut literacy in the educational dialect, is experienced, as there is a fear of the loss of the local dialect in doing so. Due to these factors, a change readiness score of +7 is assigned. Thus, in total, our school has a change readiness score of +13, placing us in a position of being likely ready to tackle change.

Cawsey, Deszca, and Ingols (2015) further discuss what they call the Change Path Model, which can be used by organizational leaders to help an organization through the change readiness process. As our school is ready for change, this model provides an additional process for our school to prepare before a major change takes place.

The first step in the process is what the authors call the “Awakening” phase, where a problem is identified within the organization, and then shared within the organization. The reality of low literacy rates was first determined at a territorial level by the Department of Education prior to 2014 based on student graduation information collected by the department, as well as students’ departmental exam and classroom marks in grade twelve across the territory. Once this issue was identified at the territorial level, schools were provided with the tools to do further, more in-depth assessments at the school level to determine literacy levels. These assessments were carried out in subsequent years, both as a benchmark to identify initial literacy levels, but also to assess the effectiveness of subsequent modifications of teacher practice and student intervention. This data was shared with teachers during the 2017-18 school year so that all teachers were aware of their students’ current literacy rates in English, and Inuktitut assessments are being carried out during the 2018-19 school year, as these assessments have been more recently developed.

Secondly, in the “Mobilization” phase, steps are presented that will move the organization towards the desired change. Our school is currently between the mobilization and acceleration phases at this time. As the plan for implementation is further refined, it will be shared with all organization members as well as stakeholders including the district education authority, regional school operations, and the community. This information will be distributed through a number of different mediums including presentations and in-servicing.

In the “Acceleration” phase, teachers are provided with all necessary resources and support in order to effectively implement the necessary changes in their classrooms. Over the course of the past year, our school has been able to acquire a vast amount of resources related to literacy including textbook and novel purchases and donations, Inuktitut guided reading and book resources provided through the Department of Education, as well as several in-service activities that have laid the groundwork for the changes discussed in this organizational improvement plan. Schedules have been developed this year to support collaborative literacy blocks amongst kindergarten to grade three, grade four to six, and grade seven to nine cohorts. These balanced literacy blocks within each cohort provide opportunities for students to work on literacy alongside their peers who are at the same (or similar) reading levels to them, rather than their age-grouped peers as they normally are throughout the rest of the day. This provides opportunities for teachers to provide more intensive literacy instruction to a group of students who are working on the same types of skills, rather than a class of students at a multitude of reading levels who are all working on different literacy skills.

Finally, in the “Institutionalization” phase, the changes that will have been made over the coming years need to continue long into the future. This is where staff turnover becomes a significant challenge. A focus needs to take place on ensuring that local staff have been

provided all necessary training and support in order to carry on these changes into the future. Local staff are the most likely to remain in the school over the long-term, as staff from southern areas in this community tend to only remain in their teaching positions over the short term. Ongoing support, resources, and professional development need to be offered to all staff in order to ensure they are up-to-date on best practices, and continue to move forward with implementation, even if there is staff turnover. The school's leadership and literacy leadership teams will be key in supporting this as well.

With the abovementioned points in mind, our staff are ready to engage in this change. Various aspects of balanced literacy have been implemented by staff at various times throughout their careers, thus all staff have at least some understanding of some or all of the components that make up effective literacy instruction. Opportunities exist for all staff to engage in professional development with respect to literacy via coursework or seminars put on by Nunavut's Department of Education. Furthermore, time has been scheduled into the school calendar for frequent (bi-weekly) in-services to address issues that may come up during implementation.

### **Conclusion**

Issues of substandard literacy achievement have been prevalent in my school over past years. Thus is due to a variety of reasons including high staff turnover for many years, and a lack of dedication to literacy in prior years. As the Department of Education has moved towards a focus on literacy education in all schools across the territory, it is necessary that the school direct its efforts with respect to school improvement in the area of literacy. The next chapter of this organizational improvement plan discusses possible solutions and strategies for tackling the implementation of effective literacy instruction in my school.

## CHAPTER 2: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### Leadership Approaches to Change

The leadership approach that aligns most closely with my leadership style as well as the problem of practice being tackled in this organizational improvement plan is that of distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership can be defined as a style of leadership in which group members, regardless of rank or status, are able to assume responsibility based on the nature of the task, and are able to take the initiative and respond creatively to meaningful change (Spillane, 2005). A normative viewpoint underlies this theory. By distributing leadership across a larger number of people, there is potential to build capacity within a school by developing both the professional and intellectual capital of teachers. While in some leadership approaches, the principal provides top-down leadership, Gronn (2003) mentions that with a distributed approach, the principal acts to support the leadership of school staff who demonstrate leadership skills, and work with them to build upon those skills.

Leithwood, Day, Sammon, Harris, and Hopkins (2006) categorize distributed leadership based on the level of spontaneity being exhibited within the organization. Planful alignment is considered the most effective type, which occurs when leaders deliberately plan and outline what change is expected, and components of that change are distributed amongst staff beforehand. Substantial deliberation and pre-planning occurs by administrators before the task is handed off to the staff member(s) who is/are most capable of completing the task. With this in mind, careful consideration needs to be paid when deciding how to share leadership amongst staff, and when planning the school's guiding coalition.

Distributed leadership has been shown in itself to have a variety of positive impacts on student achievement. Chang (2011) demonstrated that teachers' academic optimism can be increased when leadership is shared with teachers. Teachers' self-esteem and work satisfaction have shown to increase as well as teacher retention (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), in addition to increase in teachers' confidence in their abilities to lead, motivate, and encourage other adults (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2007). Leithwood and Mascall's (2008) study highlighted that significant student improvement with respect to both language and mathematics can be achieved, and Marks and Louis (1997) demonstrated direct links between teacher empowerment and professional community when shared leadership is implemented throughout a school.

Murphy and Beck's (1995) study showed that a broader involvement amongst staff members increased trust within the school as well as a greater willingness to contribute to the school as a whole. Trust is key in a healthy school culture, as it facilitates cooperation, enhances openness, promotes group cohesiveness, and improve student achievement (Hoy & Miskel, 2013, p. 193). This result along with Timperley's (2005) study illustrate the need for compromise in a healthy school environment. All teachers should be included in decision-making processes, however not everyone is ready for taking on a partial leadership role. Staff have different skill sets, and in some cases either lack the skills or desire to take on leadership responsibilities.

Leadership opportunities for staff are vital in developing a realistic vision of how to solve the issue at hand: "By externalizing the reference point for the meetings from teachers' beliefs and preferences about a marginalized problem of under-achievement to concerns about the achievement of individual students in their classes, solutions to the problems became manageable." (Timperley, 2005, p. 23). By structuring leadership activities in this manner,

educators also focus on finding solutions to issues within the classroom, rather than trying to find external solutions which may not transform classroom-based educational practices in the school. Research has demonstrated that teachers taking part in the decision-making process contribute to many aspects of school improvement, including teaching quality and increased student achievement (Glover, Miller, Gambling, Gough & Johnson, 1999; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). As teachers work together to tackle complex issues and develop plans for tackling these issues, teacher commitment has been shown to improve (Barth 2001; Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992). These results imply that by applying distributed leadership practices, student achievement and teacher efficacy can be positively impacted by the style of leadership that the principal exhibits or models. Pairing this leadership style with strong coaching of teachers is likely to have a significant impact on the given problem of practice.

### **Framework for Leading Change**

A change model very applicable to addressing this problem of practice is that of Kotter's 8 stages (Kotter, 1996). This change model closely aligns with the functionalist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The functionalist paradigm views the organisation as a living organism that requires four key functions in order to survive: adaptation, goals, integration, and culture. Adaptation can be seen in Kotter's first step, establishing a sense of urgency. In this step, the leader must study market and environmental realities in order to identify key issues and significant opportunities. The formulation and pursuit of goals can be seen predominantly in Kotter's third to sixth steps: create a vision, communicate the vision, empowering others to act on the vision, and planning for and creating short-term wins. Within these steps, the leader first create and communicate the vision that will help to direct the change effort. This vision will ultimately set in place realistic, achievable goals that can be acted upon by the team.

Once these goals/vision have been co-constructed with staff, it is important to be able to effectively communicate these goals with the team in order for each member to be able to successfully achieve the desired goals. Finally, empowerment of team members is also necessary, as this eliminates obstacles which act as barriers to change. Integration happens in the second step of Kotter's model, forming a powerful guiding coalition, whereby team members work together to enact the determined goals (Kotter, 1995). Finally, the seventh and eighth steps of Kotter's model, consolidating improvements and producing still more change, and institutionalizing new approaches, align with keeping and adjusting the mindset through culture. This acts as a continually reflective aspect of both Kotter's and the functionalist model, looking back at what has and has not work, and revising practices in order to further change.

### **Establish a Sense of Urgency**

The foundation of leading change lies in the sense of urgency around the given change. When an organization is complacent, it will lack an inherent drive to push forward with implementing change. Kotter (1995) states that a sense of urgency is often an area that is overlooked in organizations, and a key determining factor in whether change will be successful or not. Kotter (1995) further mentions that urgency is at an acceptable rate when approximately 75% of an organization's management is genuinely convinced that business-as-usual is not acceptable. In the context of my organization, this would require the vast majority of my staff to have internalized that past literacy practices used in the school are not effectively working for the majority of our students, and that improvements in this area need to be made immediately. Kobi (1996) outlines four areas that support the need for urgency of change: showing the attractiveness of the change, confronting employees with clear expectations, showing that it can be done, and creating a positive attitude to the change. Staff understand the need for change, and

a sense of urgency currently exists in the school. Furthermore, a change in instructional practice impacts literacy acquisition and ultimately student potential and life outcomes.

### **Create a Guiding Coalition**

Kotter (1995) contends that renewal programs often start with only a few people, but then continue to grow over time. However, successful transformation occurs when the guiding coalition has achieved a sort of critical mass of participants early on in the efforts. Kotter (1996) discusses that the coalition must be made up of members with the following characteristics:

- *position power*: key stakeholders must be on board so that those who are not yet committed to the cause cannot derail progress
- *expertise*: the coalition must be well-informed with respect to all relevant information pertaining to the change initiative
- *credibility*: the coalition must be respected within the organization, so that statements made by the coalition will be taken seriously by the staff
- *leadership*: the coalition must possess enough proven leaders in order to effectively drive the change

Beyond the points made by Kotter, several authors have added to the effectiveness of this step by providing additional requirements on the guiding coalition that were not discussed by Kotter (1996). Penrod and Harbor (1998) state that in order for change to be successfully implemented within an organization, frontline staff must engage in the desired change. This would require all teachers, student support assistants, and support teachers to be on board with this change initiative. Furthermore, multiple guiding coalitions may be necessary throughout the change process in order to effectively implement different components of the change (Sidorko,

2008). As this initiative unfolds, different leadership teams within the school will likely need to be developed in order to handle the complexities of the initiative. This type of distributed leadership is not something that has been utilized by past principals, rather a top-down approach has been the norm. Thus, having staff take on leadership within the school will be a significant change for many, as they have not taken on leadership roles before.

### **Develop a Vision Strategy**

Once the guiding coalition has been established, it then becomes their responsibility to develop the vision around the change initiative. This vision goes beyond the school's five year plan, and helps to clarify the organization's needed direction. Kotter (1995) discusses that the vision is often messy to begin with, however after the coalition has worked with the vision over a period of time, it will become more refined, as will the strategies that will support the vision to become reality. Having a clearly defined vision that can be shared with staff makes it easier for staff to understand and act on the change, particularly when the steps required are challenging (Kotter, 1996). However, while a clear vision is important in leading change, Cole, Harris, and Bernerth (2006) found that the clarity of the guiding coalition's vision is less important than the actual execution of the change. As Paper, Rodger, and Pendharkar (2001) mention, people tend to require a systemic methodology in order to map processes. Thus, it will be important that we clearly define the processes involved in the implementation of the change process in addition to having a clearly defined vision for the change.

### **Communicate the Vision**

Kotter (1996) states the importance of sharing the vision for change that has been developed and refined by the guiding coalition. He further states that successful leaders

implement all existing communication channels to broadcast the vision. This goes beyond simply mentioning the vision at a staff meeting, or public speech. Rather, the vision will be interwoven when discussing implementation issue, performance reviews, and in various meetings. Klein (1996) brings up several key communication strategies that link with Kotter's expectation of communication. Klein (1996) states that staff expect to hear official information from their direct supervisor. Thus, any significant pieces of information or messages that relate to the change implementation must be shared first by the school principal, and then further refined by school team leaders. However, with a distributed leadership approach in mind, official information can be shared through school team leaders, as long as the information being shared aligns between leaders. Repetition of key messages should be diffused through a variety of media in order to keep the vision at the forefront of staff's memory. Thus, in addition to Kotter's need for communication through multiple channels, communication also must take place through multiple media as well. Finally, Kotter (1996) mentions that two-way communication can be more effective than one-way communication. Thus, it will be imperative that information be shared in a collaborative manner, rather than using a top-down approach.

### **Empower Employees**

Kotter (1996) suggests that four major obstacles may exist for staff in implementing change: structures, skills, systems, and supervisors. The primary focus of this organizational improvement plan is to tackle the barrier of skills of teachers with respect to literacy programming. Furthermore, during the first half of the transformation process, Kotter (1995) mentions that no organization will have the momentum, power or time to eliminate all obstacles in their path, however it is imperative that they confront and remove major obstacles in order to move forward with the change process.

**Generate Short-Term Wins**

By celebrating short-term wins in the change process, it demonstrates to the organization that the efforts of engaging in the change are paying off, and help the guiding coalition to test their vision against real world conditions (Kotter, 1996). This must be done actively by determining ways of achieving clearly defined performance improvements, achieving the outlined objectives, and rewarding those involved with recognition (Kotter, 1995).

**Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change**

Short-term wins should be used to push the organization towards greater wins. Kotter (1995) states “[i]nstead of declaring victory, leaders of successful efforts use the credibility afforded by short-term wins to tackle even bigger problems.” (p. 66). Thus, it is imperative to not focus too much on the small victories, rather these victories must be used to further enact change in the school.

**Anchor New Approaches**

Kotter (1996) mentions factors that are critical to institutionalizing change within an organization. Firstly, employees need to be shown how the new approaches have helped to improve performance, and secondly, new employees must personify the new approach. Thus, continual updates on progress of the change must be provided to staff, and as new teachers come into the established school environment, they must also be ready and willing to join in with the changes that have been made in the school.

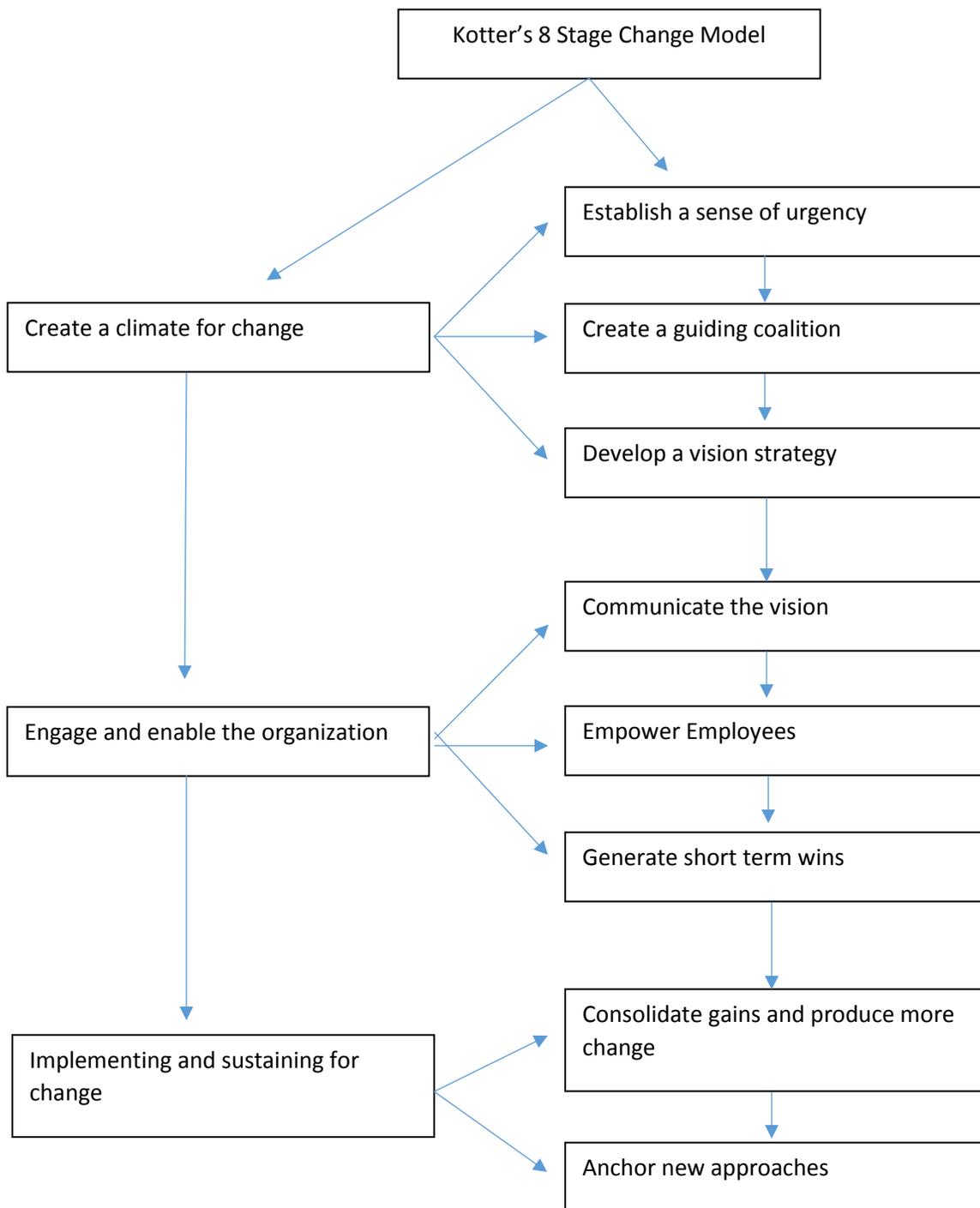


Figure 2.1 - Kotter's 8 Stage Model adapted from Kotter (1996).

**Critical Organizational Analysis**

The previous section of this organizational improvement plan looked at a framework for leading the change process within my school. This section will now discuss a model for analyzing my organization, that of Nadler and Tushman's Congruence Model for Organizational Analysis (Nadler & Tushman, 1980), and its relationship to the external environment. Cawsey et. al. (2011) discusses that this model can be used to determine how well the parts of an organization fit together (or do not fit together). This model places significant emphasis on the transformational process, and views the organization as being made up of individual components that interact with each other. Congruent organizations tend to work more effectively, while dysfunctional organizations tend to work less effectively (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Four primary components of this model will be discussed below: inputs, outputs, the organization as a transformational process, and the organizational components.

### **Organizational Problem Analysis**

This section will delve deeper into the formal analysis of my school with respect to the components discussed by Nadler and Tushman (1980). Eight steps exist in the analysis component of this model, each of which will be discussed below.

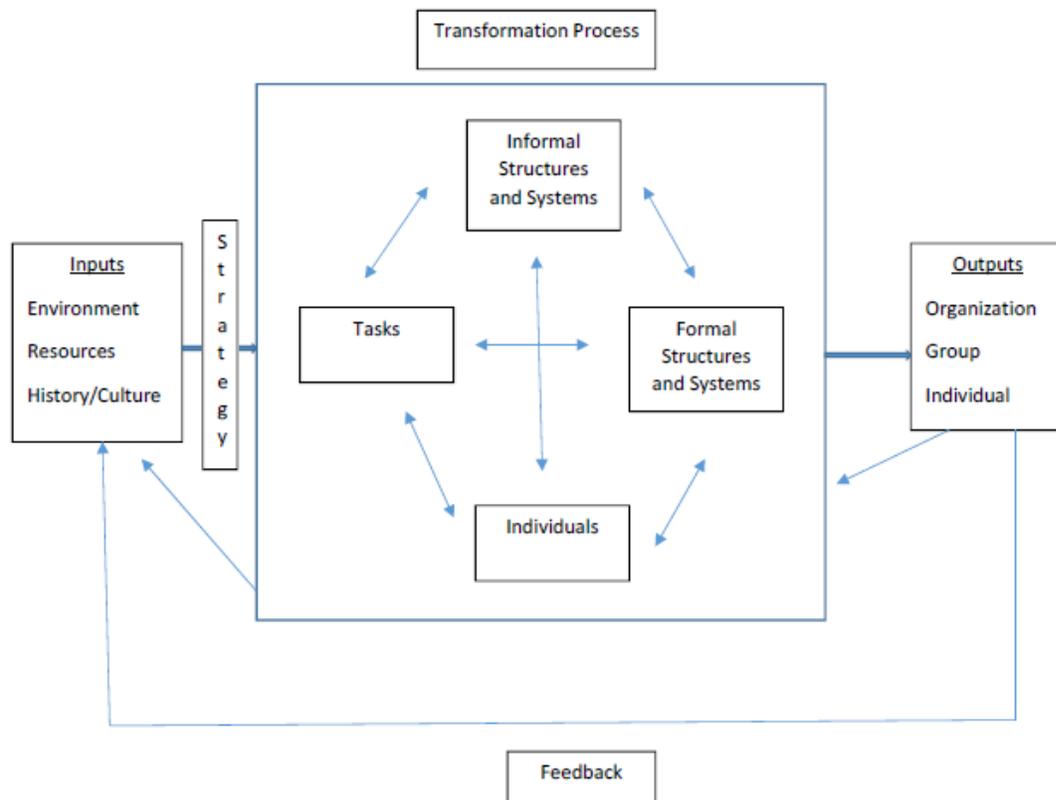


Figure 2.2 – Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model for Organizational Analysis adapted from Cawsey et al. (2016) and Nadler and Tushman (1980).

**Identify symptoms.** In order to identify the symptoms, it is necessary to gather all relevant data with respect to the problem of practice. This includes current and past student reading and writing data, student engagement data, and general student achievement data. Furthermore, data regarding student support levels will also play a role in this, as the cause of some student performance issues is tied to the learning challenges of particular students. With relatively high staff turnover between this year and last year, data also needs to be collected with respect to teacher efficacy in implementing balanced literacy programs in their classrooms. Longer-term teachers have been provided departmental training in this area, as well as some ongoing professional development at the school level, however new teachers have not had these same opportunities for professional growth. For longer-term teachers, in-servicing and

implementation under previous administration was done in a very sporadic manner. Thus, although many of our experienced teachers have some of the necessary skills, much of this knowledge has not been solidified in an effective manner.

**Specify inputs.** Inputs can be described as the factors that comprise the “givens” that the organization is facing (Nadler & Tushman, 1980, p. 39). These factors can be categorized into four main areas: environment, resources, history, and strategy. Environment is described as all of the factors outside of the organization that are being examined. In my context, this includes governmental regulatory bodies, special interest groups, students, and the two unions represented at the school – the NTA, Nunavut Teachers’ Association, and NEU – Nunavut Employee’s Union. These environmental factors are critical to the organization, as they make demands on the organization, placing expectations and limiting activities for engagement.

Resources can be described as the various assets that the organization has access to, including employees, technology, information, as well as less tangible assets such as the organization’s perception and climate. In the context of my school, this will include school staff – teachers, student support teacher, learning coach, student support assistants, and school administration, as well as the tangible resources available to us such as novels, guided reading materials, and e-readers. As Nadler and Tushman (1980) offer, two significant concerns exist in this factor. What is the relative quality of the resources with respect to the organization’s environment? To what extent can those resources be reshaped, i.e. how fixed or flexible are those resources?

The organization’s history has been shown to have a significant impact on an organization’s current functionality (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Thus, having a deep understanding of the organization’s major stages of development up to the point of change as

well as an understanding of the impacts of the events which have shaped that development is necessary. Finally, the term strategy describes a multitude of decisions around how the organization configures its resources with respect to the environment, or in other words, the issue of aligning the organization's resources with its environment. Nadler and Tushman (1980) discuss that the organization's strategy may be the most important input for the organization.

As previously mentioned, four categories of inputs exist: environment, resources, history, and strategy. With respect to the environment, there are several components that influence my school. Firstly, the Department of Education sets expectations around curriculum, departmental objectives, allocation of instructional time, and school staffing. The predominant curriculum of interest related to this organizational improvement plan relates to that of English and Inuktitut language arts. For English language arts, we follow the Alberta curriculum, for Inuktitut language arts, we follow locally developed curriculum from the Department of Education, and for the framework of balanced literacy, we use Fountas and Pinnell's system. Beyond the Department of Education, there is also a locally elected District Education Authority that has input into school programming, and the way it is implemented in the school. The school administration is required to report to both bodies, however the Department of Education is officially the employer. The final elemental factor is that of the school's community – the students and parents or guardians of students. Parents or extended family have had a wide range of experience with education, from very positive to very negative, particularly those who experienced the days of residential schooling (Preston, 2016). While parents want to see their children educated and prepared for the changing world, in many cases parental engagement with the school is limited due to this reason.

With respect to the school's resources, our school is comprised of 19 teachers including a student support teacher, a vice-principal, principal, additionally, one learning coach, one school community councillor, and four student support assistants. These staff members support a student body of approximately 320 students. We have access to significant physical resources, including an overhauled school library, literacy support material (guided reading and leveled literacy intervention materials), laptop labs, and up-to-date curriculum and textbooks. The school's operating budget allows the school to regularly add to school resources. A lack of attention to these resources by previous administration required significant amount of work to get to where we currently are over the past year.

Finally, with respect to the school's strategy, several components have been implemented over the past year in order to begin the process of improving students' literacy rates across the school. Firstly, the school has been focusing on building shared beliefs and understandings with respect to literacy. This is the foundation of what we want our school to look like in terms of literacy, and what we expect to achieve by doing so. Guided reading programs have been implemented in some classrooms, however not all due to lack of teacher efficacy. Literacy resources have been organized and compiled into one location for easy access by classroom teachers, and the learning coach. Professional learning communities have been established in each of the school's divisions in order to provide leadership to the other teachers in those divisions with respect to implementing literacy strategies.

**Identifying outputs.** The output of an organization include what the organization produces, how it performs, and how effective it is. Three significant factors influence an organization's performance. Firstly, how well does the organization meet its objectives? Secondly, how well does the organization utilize its resources? Finally, how adaptable is the organization?

The primary output of our school with respect to this organizational improvement plan is student literacy levels in English and Inuktitut. School data collected through the Benchmark Assessment System indicate the vast majority of students are below grade level with respect to English reading levels. Data collected from Inuktitut benchmarking tests also shows our elementary students are below grade level with respect to Inuktitut speaking and writing. Staff timetables this year have been developed to allow literacy block time in each grade from K-9, aligning with the Fountas and Pinnell guidelines for literacy blocks. Staff collaborative planning periods have not yet been implemented due to a reduction in staffing this year.

**Identifying problems.** The points discussed in the inputs and outputs indicate that a problem does exist. The primary problem that this information indicates is a lack of student achievement in English and Inuktitut literacy levels. The final four areas of this section address the question of “why” with respect to this deficit.

**Describe the organizational components.** According to Nadler and Tushman (1980), four components exist within the organization: task, individuals, formal organizational arrangements, and the informal organization, the first three will be focused on here. At this stage, data is collected about each of the previously mentioned components including information about critical components of the organization. The school serves to execute a variety of tasks, however in this context, the task of providing quality teaching and instruction is key. Based on this, addressing teachers’ efficacy with respect to literacy instruction will need to be an area to focus on going forward in this organizational improvement plan. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) provide a comprehensive discussion of effective teaching strategies in this area, and will be used as a guide for effective teaching practices with which to base improvements in teachers’ efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses

of action required to attain designated types of performance” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

Furthermore, when teachers possess a high level of self-efficacy, they “set the tone for a high-quality classroom environment by planning lessons that advance students’ abilities, making efforts to involve them in a meaningful way, and effectively managing student misbehaviour” (Zee & Koomen, 2018, p. 981).

Individuals within the organization include all school staff. For the purposes of this discussion, I will focus on teachers, as they will be the primary change implementers. Of our teachers, we have seven local teachers from the community, who have all been at the school over ten years. Several have been here over twenty, and two have been here over 30 years. The remaining twelve teachers are from southern parts of Canada, and have varying years of experience, mainly from zero to ten years. All southern staff have worked at the school three years or less. As Croninger, King Rice, Rathbun, and Nishio (2007) mention, three key areas of teachers’ qualifications influence reading achievement: experience of the teacher, professional coursework taken during pre-service programs, and professional coursework taken at the school level. Advanced degrees were shown to not be related to student achievement. All staff at the K-9 level have coursework in elementary education, while high school teachers have specialist degrees and training. None of the teachers except for the principal have advanced degrees.

Formal organizational arrangements involve the way that the school is structured. The school’s structure is fairly typical for a K-12 school, with a hierarchical structure as shown on the following page. The school has always followed a traditional top-down approach with respect to leadership in the past, however shared leadership is beginning to emerge where more teachers are willing to take on components of leadership within the school. While staff turnover has been high in our school, some Southern staff have begun to return year after year, resulting

in a somewhat more consistent staff, and thus more willingness exists for collaboration and taking on leadership roles within the school.

**Assess congruence.** Considering the information presented in the previous sections, there is a suboptimal congruence between the various pieces in the organization. The primary area of concern is the congruence between the task of the organization, i.e. literacy instruction, and the organizational arrangements (i.e. teacher efficacy with respect to literacy instruction).

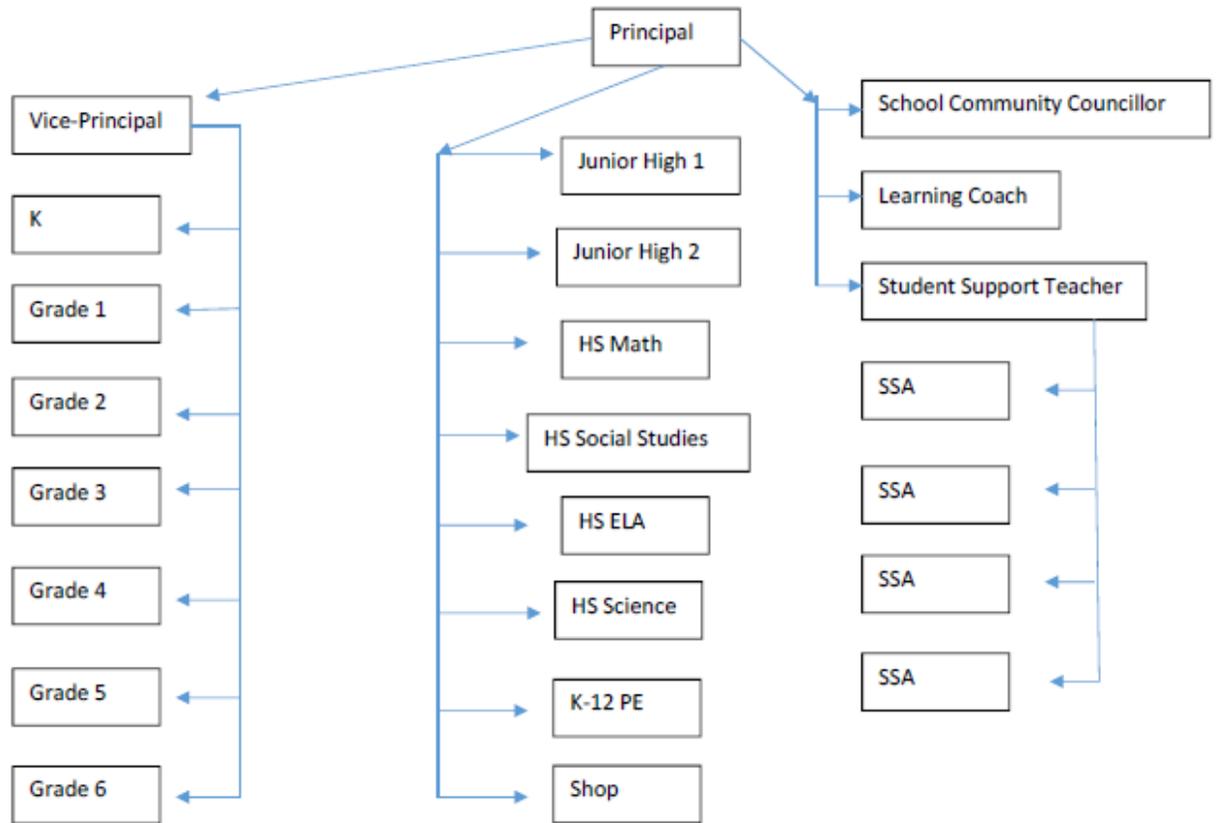


Figure 2.3 – School’s Organization Chart

**Generate hypotheses about problem causes.** The previous step alludes to a misalignment between two major components of the organization – literacy instruction and teacher efficacy

with respect to literacy instruction. Teacher efficacy has been shown to have a variety of positive impacts on quality of instruction. This includes teachers who work harder, participate in more informal learning (Lohman, 2006). Student achievement has been shown to improve (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006), as well as increased classroom management (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Furthermore, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy implement more innovative teaching strategies (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997) and set higher learning expectations for students (Wolters, & Daugherty, 2007). Addressing teachers' skills and knowledge with respect to effective literacy instruction will be the primary area that needs to be the focus for the remainder of this plan, as well as capitalizing on the impact of additional distributed leadership.

**Identify action steps.** In order to address the abovementioned issues, the following section will discuss possible avenues for addressing the problem of practice.

### **Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

Hanson, Bangert, and Ruff (2016) offer that three conditions must be met in order for teachers' skills to develop. Firstly, professional development and regular teacher support must be embedded within teachers' regular schedules. Secondly, teachers must be provided opportunities for self-reflection on their own expectations for students and personal choices of pedagogies. Finally, principals must support teachers' collaborative inquiry and interactions amongst staff. Nunavut's newly developed Professional Development Framework is aimed at addressing these areas of teacher improvement, and this framework will form the rationale for the choices of potential solutions to address the problem of practice.

#### **Solution One: Effective Professional Development to Improve Teachers' Self-Efficacy**

One potential solution for addressing the problem of practice discussed in Chapter 1 is the utilization of effective professional development in order to increase teachers' self-efficacy with respect to literacy education. Professional development is primarily used to increase teachers' skills and knowledge, and as Mizell (2011) mentions, without professional development, teachers' practice may not improve as significantly as when they participate in professional development. Teachers' knowledge of literacy has been shown to increase when they take part in intensive, extended professional development (Cantrell and Hughes, 2008). However, in order for professional development to be effective (Gulamhussein, 2013), several key components must be in place. Teachers must be fully committed to the professional development activities they are participating in, and actively participate in those activities as well. Furthermore, the impact of professional development activities on student achievement must also be regularly monitored in order to determine its effectiveness, and future areas for improvement (Joyce & Showers, 2002). In order to gain teacher engagement in professional development, a strong self-efficacy with respect to the desired skills and knowledge must be cultivated (Stephanou, Gkavras, & Doulkeridou, 2013).

***What needs to change?*** Efforts by past administration to provide professional development in the area of balanced literacy has been done in a very disjointed manner, as evidenced by discussions with staff members. Various components of balanced literacy have been focused on, however there has not yet been a holistic approach to literacy throughout the school. For example, in past years, guided reading has been a focus in kindergarten to grade six, however this has not gone far due to the wide range of reading levels in the higher grades, and limited English language arts time allotted in the early grades.

Moving forward, a more holistic approach must be taken. One framework for doing so is that of the Thirteen Parameters (Paterson, Rolheiser, & Fullan, 2009). In this framework, thirteen parameters are provided for instructional leaders to support school staff in bringing about improvements in literacy instruction. These parameters are:

Table 2.1

*Thirteen Parameters for Literacy Leadership.*

Parameter:	Description:
1	Create shared beliefs and understandings amongst all staff
2	Designate a staff member for literacy
3	Daily, sustained, focused literacy instruction
4	Principal as literacy leader
5	Early and ongoing intervention
6	A case management approach to monitoring student progress
7	Job-embedded professional learning in literacy
8	In-school grade or subject team meetings
9	Shared literacy resources in a designated area of the school
10	Commitment of school budget to acquire literacy resources
11	Staff commitment to literacy learning and professional development
12	Parental involvement in supporting literacy development
13	Appropriate literacy instruction in all areas of curriculum

Note. Adapted from Paterson, J., Rolheiser, C., & Fullan, M. (2009). *13 Parameters: A Literacy Leadership Toolkit*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education.

The parameters are able to be implemented independently of each other based on the needs of the school, however, following them in order is preferential. Parameters 1, 2, 6, 9, and 10 have been worked on and are currently in place, however the remaining parameters will need to be the focus of the remainder of the year if this solution is chosen.

**Resources.** A number of resources are currently in place with respect to the parameters described above. Firstly, we have a literacy coach in place who is responsible for leading the school with respect to literacy. She has been trained in all necessary components of this program, including guided reading and writing, shared reading and writing, read and write

alouds, and independent reading and writing. Our school is outfitted with guided reading materials, in both languages, that have been used by some teachers in the past. We also have a library with a wide range of newly acquired books and novels to support classroom literacy and classroom libraries that align with Inuit culture and at appropriate reading levels. Several staff members have been trained in leveled literacy intervention, which is being utilized for our struggling emergent readers. Additionally, time is a key resource necessary for engaging in this professional development. Each school in Nunavut is allotted 45 unscheduled hours in their calendar for professional development, as well as 4 days for departmental in-servicing. Furthermore, a week-long professional development block is provided for staff, that can also be incorporated into our school-wide professional development.

The primary component needed to enact this framework would be a solidified literacy action plan, and buy-in from all staff.

*Benefits and drawbacks.* Training for the learning has already been provided in previous years with respect to the thirteen parameters and how they align with implementing balanced literacy across a K-12 school. Resources are in place to support this as well, with novels, and guided reading materials in the school. The primary drawback to this solution is that it has not been effectively implemented in the past, and as such it is likely to be challenging to garner support from some longer-term teachers with this strategy.

### **Solution Two: Team Teaching**

Cantrell and Hughes (2008) discuss that literacy coaching and teacher collaboration can be significant means of support for teachers. By providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate and team teach, they are able to share their views regarding effective literacy

teaching practices, and this strategy of team teaching also brings about improvements in instruction through the increase of teachers' self-efficacy. Cantrell and Hughes' (2008) study highlights that through both literacy coaching and teacher collaboration, both individual and collective efficacy with respect to literacy instruction increased. With this in mind, one method of improving the confidence and efficacy of teachers would be to facilitate opportunities for literacy coaching as well as more collaboration through team teaching. Team teaching would be particularly effective when it involves teachers who are experienced with these strategies collaborating with teachers who lack those skills.

***What needs to change?*** In this potential solution, the major change that would be required is in the area of teacher scheduling. For effective coaching and teacher collaboration to be able to occur, at least during school hours, adjustments would need to be made to all teacher schedules. Pre-planning would need to occur in order to determine what teacher collaboration would be most effective, and how to get those teachers together during prep times that align with each other. Collaboration would likely be most effective within divisions (i.e. grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12). Furthermore, having a learning coach available to all teachers would require a very flexible schedule for the coach that allows for collaboration during any available prep times for teachers.

***Resources.*** Our school already has a learning coach in place, who is working with teachers with respect to effective classroom practices. Although long-term teachers have had some training with respect to various aspects of balanced literacy, significantly more training will be necessary across the entire school before gaps in knowledge will be filled. However, staff are willing to collaborate and work together, particularly with the relationship that has been developed between teachers and the learning coach over the past several years.

***Benefits and drawbacks.*** The primary benefit of this potential solution is that it provides teachers opportunities to collaborate and share their experiences and teaching practices that work with our students in our school. Additionally, teachers are already comfortable with collaborating with our learning coach and gaining skills and knowledge from her. However, two drawbacks or challenges exist with this solution. Firstly, in order for teacher collaboration to be effective, at least some of the staff must have skills in the areas that need to be improved upon by the remainder of the staff. Failing this, there must be enough motivation from all staff to participate in professional development, or professional learning in order to gain the skills individually or collectively. Additionally, teachers are not moving forward with skill development. The motivation for self-directed learning is not yet in place in many cases amongst the staff. Secondly, the need for schedules that allow for teacher-teacher collaboration during the school day is particularly challenging in a small school with a limited number of teachers and support staff. Many of our teachers, particularly our local teachers have commitments before and after school which makes collaboration outside of the school day very difficult in many configurations.

### **Solution Three: Professional Learning Communities**

A professional learning community can be described as a group of staff members who utilize an active, collaborative, learning-oriented, reflective approach to tackling problems encountered during teaching and learning (Datnow & Park, 2018; Mitchell & Sackney, 2001; Tony, 2018). They are developed to encourage and motivate educators (Dufour, 2003), and occur when teachers collaborate to regularly plan quality lessons that improve student learning (Schmoker, 2005). According to Garrett (2010), professional learning communities contain three distinct elements: professional collaboration, a focus on learning, and a focus on results.

In order for a school to be a professional community of learners, four factors must be present according to Hord (2004). These include: student learning, authentic pedagogy, organizational capacity, and external support. Student learning involves a shared vision amongst staff with respect to what effective teaching and learning looks like, including high-quality student work and the inclusion of real-world learning opportunities. Authentic pedagogy relates to the idea that all students must engage in authentic instruction and teachers must provide authentic assessment regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, and other factors. Organizational capacity relates to the skill set of staff to be able to work together as a team in order to further educational outcomes for students. Finally, external support relates to the help provided from external stakeholders such as the school board, district education authority, parents and the community in general.

***What needs to change?*** In order for this potential solution to be viable, all staff would need to establish a strategy that would work throughout the school to be able to collaborate, not only at the divisional level but also across divisions. Professional learning would need to be shared at these meetings, as well as an analysis of data with respect to current literacy practices, and improvements that could be made. High quality instruction is occurring in classrooms, however many students are still struggling with literacy. Thus, a focus would need to be on collaboration with respect to quality literacy practices, and all staff would need to be engaged in the professional learning process.

***Resources.*** The primary resource we have in this regard is teacher capacity. Our staff are willing to engage in professional learning, as long it leads to achievable, demonstrable results. External factors such as the school board, district education authority, and community are receptive to new ideas, and new strategies for increasing literacy achievement in our students.

***Benefits and drawbacks.*** The benefit of this proposed solution is that it allows opportunities for teachers to collaborate, and acquire and share professional learning. This should positively impact student achievement. However, as with the previous proposed solution, many staff are not available after school hours to be involved in this type of learning, and scheduling to accommodate shared blocks of time to meet throughout the day is a significant challenge.

### **Chosen Solution**

The problem of practice being tackled in this organizational improvement plan relates to improved student achievement in literacy. Three possible solutions have been provided above, each with their strengths and challenges. The second and third solutions rely heavily on staff collaboration, and thus time is a key factor with respect to teacher schedules. While collaboration forms the foundation of each approach, the first option allows for more flexibility with how it is implemented. Research clearly demonstrates that staff engaging in quality professional development, when done in an appropriate way, can have a significant impact on student achievement. These factors point to the first potential solution as the most appropriate for our context. Once teachers' self-efficacy has increased through professional development in year one of this plan, subsequent years will integrate components of solution two and three, as those solutions rely more heavily on teachers first being equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively implement the necessary strategies in their classrooms.

Table 2.2

#### *Summary of Proposed Solutions*

Proposed Solution:	Solution 1	Solution 2	Solution 3
Solution:	Utilize 13 Parameters	Co-planning	Professional learning

	<p>Framework</p> <p>Focus on daily, sustained, focused literacy instruction and early and ongoing intervention</p>	<p>opportunities for teachers</p> <p>Collaborative teaching opportunities for teachers</p> <p>Teachers work with learning coach for support</p>	<p>community established within school amongst and across school divisions</p>
<p>Changes Needed:</p>	<p>Take holistic approach to literacy instruction</p> <p>Focus on building teacher capacity with respect to each component of balanced literacy</p>	<p>Teacher schedules need to align with each other in order to provide opportunities during the day for teachers to collaborate</p>	<p>Focus on collaboratively improving literacy instruction across all classrooms</p>
<p>Resources Required:</p>	<p>All necessary resources in place already</p> <p>Guided reading materials, accessible library, and in-service materials are necessary for implementation</p>	<p>Learning coach already in place</p>	<p>School staff and external factors on board with collaborative practices</p>
<p>Benefits and Drawbacks:</p>	<p>Learning coach training has already taken place</p> <p>Resources currently in the school and organized</p> <p>This strategy has been ineffectively tried in the past with little success</p>	<p>Allows for teacher collaboration and improved practices through working with literacy coach</p> <p>Scheduling to accommodate this will be exceedingly challenging</p>	<p>Allows for professional learning and collaboration between staff</p> <p>Scheduling to accommodate this will be exceedingly challenging</p>

**Leadership Ethics and Organizational Change Issues**

Northouse (2016) discusses that ethical leadership relates to what the leader does, and how the leader behaves. With this in mind, the way the leader tackles issues in any circumstance is directly tied to their ethics. Five key principles form the foundation of ethical leadership according to Northouse (2016). These principles align with those discussed Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, and Spina (2013). The authors suggest a framework for ethical leadership

which encompasses three ethics, including care, justice, and critique (Starratt, 2005). Each of these will principles will be discussed in more depth below.

### **Respect, Service, and Care**

Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, and Spina (2015) point out that the principle care relates to the regard for the dignity and worth of others, and it requires leaders to be loyal to others, willing to acknowledge others' right to be who they are, and open to meeting them in their authentic individuality. Essentially, this principle includes the idea that all voices must be heard and valued. Additionally, within these ethics, school leaders must represent a strong moral purpose for their school to support students to “achieve their potential, feel good about learning, and develop skills and knowledge that will carry them into their futures” (Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, & Spina, 2015, p. 204). Sernak (1998) mentions that school leaders must provide a balance between power and care. Noddings (2003) discusses that when care is highly valued by educational leaders, they place greater emphasis on relationships and connections throughout the decision-making process, rather than taking a more hierarchical approach to leadership.

The primary purpose of this organizational improvement plan is to address deficits in student achievement that are directly impacting the points discussed above by Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, and Spina (2015). As literacy rates increase for all students within the school, learning in all areas, not only literacy will be made easier, as low literacy levels directly impact learning in literacy-heavy subjects such as social studies, science, and health. Along with this, students are building skills that will equip them with the skills they require in their futures, not only with respect to academics, but also with respect to individual and group work, and functional literacy. Students must be met where they currently are, and pushed to make

significant progress. Respect must be considered, particularly in regards to teacher-student and student-student interactions, as well as taking into account culturally appropriate teaching materials. A wide range of teaching materials are available within the school that directly relate to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) students, as well as locally developed resources, including books, in Inuktitut that are able to support literacy development in both languages, and in a culturally relevant manner. Furthermore, taking a more distributed approach to the leadership discussed in this plan, aligns with the views of Noddings (2003).

### **Justice, Community, and Critique**

The ideas of justice and community are highly interrelated. The ethic of justice relates to “equity, equality and equality of opportunity, ensuring that all students (regardless of their personal, social, cultural or academic circumstances) can learn to achieve” (Ehrich et al., 2013, p. 205). As Starratt (2005) discusses, the justice ethic relates to legal principles and ideas, and originates from two distinct schools of thought. The first centers on society, and the second centers on the individual.

The ethic of critique involves a strong commitment to social justice and transformative change (Breunig, 2009; Davies, Popescu, & Gunter, 2011; Kellnar, 2003; Ryan, 2013). With respect to teaching, teachers are required to foster critical literacy, critical thinking, and critical consciousness amongst students, which takes on many forms including being sensitive to race, culture, and gender, and addressing any inequities that may occur for any subgroup of students. From a leadership perspective, inequities and injustices amongst students must be addressed, and ensure that essential educational services are accessible to all students, while participating in the critical movement towards change. With respect to the ethic of critique, the primary challenge

that occurs is the ability of the school leader to take actionable steps towards eliminating those inequities and injustices, which if not taken can lead to action-paralysis.

### **Nunavut Teachers' Association Code of Ethics**

The final component of the discussion of ethics in this organizational improvement plan is that of the Nunavut Teachers' Association Code of Ethics (Nunavut Teachers' Association, n.d.). The purpose of this document is to outline appropriate conduct for those in the teaching profession in Nunavut. Furthermore, this document relates to both teachers and school leaders, as both groups of educators fall under the classification of "teacher".

Table 2.3

*Summary of Relevant Teacher Ethics according to the Nunavut Teachers' Association*

Section:	Ethic Number:	Ethic
Preamble	1	The member will strive to show consistent justice and consideration in all his or her relationships with pupils.
	2	The member will strive for friendly and cooperative relationships with the home
	4	The member will seek to make professional growth continuous.
Member-Pupil	1	A member's first responsibility is to the pupils in his or her charge.
	3	A member should always remember that the intellectual, moral, physical, and social welfare of his or her pupils is the chief aim and end of education.
	6	A member should at all times respect the individual rights, the ethnic traditions, and religious beliefs of his or her pupils and their parents.
Member-Public	4	A member will share the responsibility for improving the educational opportunities for all.
Professional Development		A member will strive to make professional growth continuous by study, research, travel, conference, and attendance at professional meetings.
Member-Member	1	A member should deal with other members of the profession in the same manner as he or she wishes to be treated.

Note. Adapted from Nunavut Teachers' Association (n.d.). Nunavut Teachers' Association Code of Ethics.

The table above discusses the relevant ethics that must be followed by Nunavut Teachers' Association members. These essentially express that all staff must place students as the top priority when making educational decisions, whether that be with respect to classroom programming or leadership decisions in the school. It is with these ethics in mind that this organizational improvement plan has been developed. Improved student achievement is one outcome all teachers wish to accomplish, however the process by which this is achieved may be more difficult for teachers who are reluctant to change. The ethics expressed by the association align directly with my personal ethics as an educator, and educational leader.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on five key areas of the organizational improvement plan: the framework for leading change, a critical organizational analysis, potential solutions for addressing the problem of practice, and finally leadership ethics and organizational change. A decision was made regarding the best approach and solution for tackling the problem of practice. The following chapter will delve deeper into the details of how this solution will be executed in the context of my school. Four key areas will be discussed: the change implementation plan, strategies for monitoring and evaluating the change process, a plan for communicating the need for change and the change process, and finally next steps and future considerations that extend beyond the scope of this plan.

## **CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION, AND COMMUNICATION**

The previous chapter in this organizational improvement plan focused on the planning and development stages of addressing the problem of practice. In this chapter, I will address the final three components of this organizational improvement plan: the plan for implementation of the chosen solution, strategies for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this implementation, and a plan for how to communicate the need for change and the change process.

### **Change Implementation Plan**

In chapter two, an analysis was conducted regarding possible solutions for addressing the problem of practice discussed in chapter one. The most appropriate solution of those offered involves providing staff with effective professional development with respect to literacy in order to improve teachers' self-efficacy as well as collective efficacy. By doing this, it is expected that we will be able to improve literacy levels for all students in grade K-12 in our school. Chapter two also described Kotter's 8 stage model, which forms the foundation on which the change implementation plan will be based. Steps in this model will be organized based on the timeframe for implementation, as well as the categories in the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) cycle (Conzemuis & O'Neill, 2002).

#### **Kotter's Steps 1-4**

Steps one to four comprise the Plan portion of the PDSA cycle (Conzemuis & O'Neill, 2002). These components will be implemented in the spring of the current school year. With respect to establishing a sense of urgency, all staff need to be aware of the current literacy levels of students across the school. This includes benchmark assessment data from both the previous

school year, as well as results from the initial round of data collection for the current school year. This will provide staff with a clear picture of the current state of literacy in the school, as well as how quickly students are progressing through benchmark assessment levels. Data indicates that current strategies are not pushing students up through reading levels at a sufficient pace to demonstrate evidence of students' reading skills at grade level. It is expected that this will create a sense of urgency amongst staff to implement additional strategies in teachers' classrooms and throughout the school. Once this sense of urgency has been established with staff, relevant articles that relate to effective balanced literacy strategies will be shared with staff, as a method of establishing a path forward to correct the issue.

Our school has already established a guiding coalition that will be responsible for supporting this change. The guiding coalition in our case is our school literacy team. This team involves the principal, vice-principal, learning coach, reading interventionist teacher, student support teacher, and division lead teachers. By having our guiding coalition structured in this way, it provides opportunities for teachers to participate in the leadership of these changes, while not becoming too cumbersome with involving the entire staff. The guiding coalition also helps to influence staff with respect to moving initiatives forward in the school. A key component of this coalition is the learning coach, who has formed positive working relationships with school staff over her time at the school.

Once the sense of urgency has been established, our school must develop a vision for literacy within the school. This step correlates to the first parameter (Paterson, Rolheiser, & Fullan, 2009) that was discussed in chapter two. According to Hill and Crevola (1999), four shared understandings and beliefs must be established amongst staff in order to move forward with literacy:

1. All students can achieve high standards given the right time and support.
2. All teachers can teach to high standards given the right assistance.
3. High expectations and early intervention are essential.
4. Teachers need to be able to articulate what they do and why they teach the way they do.

(p. 2)

These shared understandings and beliefs will influence the development of the guiding vision with respect to balanced literacy in our school. Focused discussion using several related articles will facilitate this activity (Fullan, Bertani, & Quinn, 2004; Hill & Crevola, 1999; Pankake & Moller, 2007; Scharer, Pinnell, Lyons, & Fountas, 2005; Sharratt & Fullan, 2006).

With the vision for literacy established in the previous step, communication of this vision and its implementation will follow. Regular meetings will need to be conducted amongst the school's literacy team in order to determine goals, outcomes and strategies for implementation. Much of this information will be discussed in the next step. As the process is implemented, regular sharing of information will need to be conducted with the school, community and school operations so that everyone will be regularly updated on the progress of this initiative. A detailed plan of how this communication will occur will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. Table 3.1 outlines the initial stages of planning for implementation that are required before tackling the professional learning component that forms the basis of this organizational improvement plan. A learning coach is in place within the school, and actively works with staff on improving their teaching practices. A literacy resource area has been set up in the school's library where teachers are able to easily find materials they will need to access. School leaders have had extensive training in effective literacy instruction. A common set of beliefs and understandings with respect to literacy will be the starting point from which professional

learning will develop. Once this has been established, a daily, sustained focus on literacy instruction will drive the rest of this plan.

*Table 3.1*

*Change Implementation Plan – Outline Steps 1-4*

Parameter:	Description:	When:	Description:
1	Shared beliefs and understandings among all staff	Year 1 – November	– In-service led by learning coach utilizing Literacy Leadership toolkit (Paterson, Rolheiser, & Fullan, 2009).
2	Designated staff member for literacy	Previous years	– Learning coach hired, in-serviced by Department of Education. – Long-term staff member who is able to effectively coach all staff members.
3	Daily, sustained, focused literacy instruction	Year 1-2	– See Table 3.2.
4	Principal as a literacy leader	Year 1-2	– Principal trained in literacy instruction - UPEI coursework through Department of Education. – Principal participating in regional literacy learning sessions. – Principal uses data to inform instruction and school planning process.
7	Job-embedded professional learning in literacy	Year 1-2	– See Table 3.2.
9	Shared literacy resources in a designated area of the school	Previous year	– School library established with area designated for literacy resources.
10	Commitment of school budget to acquire literacy resources	Ongoing	– Current and future school years' budgets reflect the need for literacy resources within the school.

### **Kotter's Step 5: Empower Employees**

This step involves the main planning for providing professional development for teachers to improve their efficacy with respect to literacy instruction. Four steps exist in the PDSA cycle: Plan, Do, Study, Act, which occur in a cyclical manner. This step in Kotter's model aligns with the Do component of the PDSA cycle. Behaviours of school leaders play a role in the effectiveness of professional development, particularly when the principal participates in the professional learning (Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Sherman, & Clayton, 2011). A balanced

program consists of several components, including student participation in read and write alouds, shared reading and writing, guided reading and writing, and independent reading and writing (Paterson, Rolheiser, & Fullan, 2009). Fountas and Pinnell (1996) mention twelve components of a balanced literacy program: guided reading, shared reading, read aloud, independent reading, collaborative reading, writer's workshop, guided writing, independent writing, modeled writing, shared writing, phonics instruction and related word practice, and a home reading component. When engaging in balanced literacy instruction, a gradual release of responsibility is exhibited throughout the process as students become more independent in each area (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Flexible groupings during literacy instruction allow for instruction to be conducted with a smaller variance in reading levels amongst the group. For students who are at the emergent stages of literacy in the upper-elementary and junior high cohorts, this instruction will occur in-class, with support from the school literacy team.

Professional development days have been scheduled into our school calendars over the next three years. It is expected that those days will be utilized over the next year and a half to provide in-servicing to teachers on each aspect of balanced literacy. Follow-up professional learning community meetings will occur between professional development sessions in order to have an opportunity for staff to reflect on their progress and learning, share strategies, discuss ideas that are working well, and areas that need further improvement. Teacher self-reflection has been noted to be essential to teachers' thinking (El-Dib, 2007). Professional development is also necessary to improve the quality of teaching, and ensure that teachers are able to meet the wide range of needs in diverse student populations (Desimone, 2009; Van Veen, Zwart, & Meiring, 2012). Stoll (2015) has shown that the utilization of professional learning communities can support teachers' professional development and support school improvement initiatives, which

can lead to improvements in both teacher and student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Prenger, Poortman, & Handelzalts, 2016).

This implementation plan begins with professional learning guided by the learning coach and elementary literacy lead teacher with a focus on phonics and guided reading. These components form the foundation of balanced literacy programming, and a common understanding of these concepts must be developed by all of our staff before tackling topics such as shared reading or read alouds in the following section. Regular monitoring will occur with teachers via walk-about and teacher interviews, as will PLC meetings and divisional team meetings in order to ensure progress is being made in all classrooms.

*Table 3.2a*

*Change Implementation Plan – Outline for Year 1 February - March*

When:	What:	Who:	Why:
Year 1 – February (Planning and beginning of implementation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional learning presented in phonics instruction and related word practice.</li> <li>– Learning coach and elementary literacy lead teacher to lead learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learning coach to work with 5-12 teachers on English literacy.</li> <li>– Elementary lead to work with K-4 teachers on Inuktitut literacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Phonics forms the foundation of literacy.</li> <li>– Phonics instruction necessary for students at emergent literacy levels across K-9 levels.</li> </ul>
Year 1 – March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional learning presented on guided reading.</li> <li>– Vice-principal and elementary literacy lead teacher to lead with K-4 teachers on Inuktitut guided reading.</li> <li>– Learning coach and junior high literacy lead teacher to lead 5-9 teachers on English guided reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learning coach and vice-principal lead in-servicing.</li> <li>– K-9 teachers involved in professional learning.</li> <li>– Vice-principal works with K-4 teachers, learning coach works with 5-9 teachers.</li> <li>– SST to provide training for 10-12 teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expectation that guided reading will be occurring in all K-9 classrooms by next in-service date.</li> <li>– 10-12 teachers work with SST on cross-curricular teaching at the high school level.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regular monitoring of progress in each classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure expectations are being met.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PLC meetings at midpoint to discuss strategies, effectiveness, and improvements in current</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collaboratively share learning with respect to implementation.</li> </ul>

	implementation phase, and reflect on learning up to this point.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers schedule regular meetings with vice-principal (K-4) or learning coach (5-12) to support professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teachers K-12</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vice-principal and learning coach to support professional learning with teachers, and help with teaching strategies.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible groupings established for 4-6, 7-9 for guided reading based on benchmark assessment data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning coach with support from literacy team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide range of reading and comprehension levels in these grades.</li> <li>More effective learning occurs when students based on reading and comprehension levels for guided reading.</li> </ul>

The remainder of year 1 will then focus on professional learning in the areas of shared reading and read alouds. As with the previous months, monitoring will primarily be comprised of regular classroom walk-throughs, professional learning meetings, and divisional meetings in order to build knowledge, collaboratively share knowledge, and ensure that expectations are being met in each classroom.

*Table 3.2b*

*Change Implementation Plan – Outline for Year 1 April - May*

When:	What:	Who:	Why:
Year 1 – April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional learning presented on shared reading.</li> <li>Vice-principal, learning coach, and lead teachers to lead discussions on topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>K-12 teachers involved in professional learning.</li> <li>Breakout groups for K-4, 5-9, 10-12, with focused learning for each cohort.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with focus on reading strategies.</li> <li>Build on knowledge of guided reading.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular monitoring of progress in each classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure expectations are being met.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLC meetings at midpoint to discuss strategies, effectiveness, and improvements in current implementation phase, and reflect on learning up to this point.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboratively share learning with respect to implementation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin planning for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many parents not</li> </ul>

	parental involvement activities (eg. literacy lunches).		engaged in school activities. – Promote community engagement with initiative.
Year 1 – May	– Professional learning presented on read alouds – Vice-principal, learning coach, and lead teachers to lead discussions on topic.	– K-12 teachers involved in professional learning. – Breakout groups for K-4, 5-9, 10-12, with focused learning for each cohort.	– Continue with focus on reading strategies. – Build on knowledge of shared reading.
	– Regular monitoring of progress in each classroom.	– All teachers	– Ensure expectations are being met.
	– PLC meetings at midpoint to discuss strategies, effectiveness, and improvements in current implementation phase, and reflect on learning up to this point.	– All teachers	– Collaboratively share learning with respect to implementation. – End of year wrap-up. – Work on planning for moving forward in new school year.

The final section of this plan follows the entire second school year. In this section, the remainder of the reading components are addressed: independent and collaborative reading, and each of the writing components follow: writer’s workshop, guided writing, independent writing, and modeled writing. Each of these components will follow a similar implementation strategy to the first year.

*Table 3.2c*

*Change Implementation Plan – Outline for Year 2 September - May*

When:	What:	Who:	Why:
Year 2 – September	– Consolidate professional learning thus far. – Ensure all staff have successfully implemented strategies thus far.	– All teachers K-12.	– Consolidate learning.
Year 2 – October	– Professional learning presented on independent and collaborative reading. – Vice-principal, learning coach, and lead teachers to lead discussions on topic.	– K-12 teachers involved in professional learning. – Breakout groups for K-4, 5-9, 10-12, with focused learning for each cohort.	– Continue with focus on reading strategies. – Build on knowledge of shared reading, read alouds, and guided reading.
	– Regular monitoring of	– All teachers	– Ensure expectations

	progress in each classroom.		are being met.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– PLC meetings at midpoint to discuss strategies, effectiveness, and improvements in current implementation phase, and reflect on learning up to this point.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collaboratively share learning with respect to implementation.</li> </ul>
Year 2 – November to April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional learning occurs sequentially for writer’s workshop, guided writing, independent writing, and modeled writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– K-12 teachers involved in professional learning.</li> <li>– Breakout groups for K-4, 5-9, 10-12, with focused learning for each cohort.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Build on reading strategies that have been worked on in previous sessions, and align those with writing components.</li> </ul>
Year 2 - May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Consolidate professional learning thus far.</li> <li>– Ensure all staff have successfully implemented strategies thus far.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All teachers K-12.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– End of year wrap-up.</li> <li>– Consolidate learning.</li> <li>– Work on planning for moving forward in new school year.</li> </ul>

**Kotter’s Steps 6-8**

Throughout the implementation of this professional learning, short-term wins need to be celebrated in order to build momentum and move implementation moving forward. The monitoring of success at each implementation phase will be conducted using PM Benchmark system. The decision for this was made by the Department of Education as a support for teachers to monitor student progress in literacy between benchmark assessment data collection. The rationale behind this was that if students are exposed to the same texts in the benchmark assessment system on a frequent basis, this may skew results, and ultimately lead to higher assessed reading levels than actual reading levels. With this in mind, teachers will regularly monitor and assess student progress with the PM benchmark system. At our regularly scheduled staff meetings, updates on student progress will be shared through anonymized data walls, as it is anticipated that progress will be made throughout the implementation phase. In the case that progress is not being made within a specific class or divisional group, more frequent and detailed

classroom visits will be conducted by school administration in order to pinpoint areas that are not being addressed or that could use further improvement in classroom instruction. These areas will be discussed with the teacher, and school administration will recommend additional, focused meetings in those topics between the teacher and learning coach. When these short-term wins are shared amongst staff, it is envisioned that this will continue to encourage staff to be committed to even bigger improvements in student achievement, and ultimately have all students reading and writing at grade level. Differentiated instruction is a key component in teaching in the north, and one that is infused in all of our classrooms, in order to account for different learning styles and areas of ability. Furthermore, students with individual learning needs or who require additional accommodations beyond differentiated instruction are provided with individual education plans or individual accommodation plans in order to ensure they are successful in their learning.

Beyond regular sharing of achievement updates, benchmark assessment data is collected twice per year, once near the beginning, and once near the end of the school year. This allows us to see the bigger picture with respect to improvements in literacy achievement for students. As data has been collected over recent years, we are able to look at trends across classrooms, classes, and timeframes. Significant improvements between these assessments will allow for the consolidation of the gains made during these periods, and encourage staff to further refine and improve on the strategies they are implementing in their classrooms.

The final component of this change is to anchor new approaches (Kotter, 1996). Staff need to discover for themselves how their learning has helped to improve student learning. This step relates highly with the previous step, as improved benchmark data illustrates this point. Additionally, as new teachers join our staff, they must be willing to participate in these changes.

A more detailed analysis of how implementation and monitoring will be conducted is discussed in the following section of this organizational improvement plan.

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

This organizational improvement plan centers on improving teacher efficacy with respect to literacy instruction. With this in mind, a framework needs to be chosen in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this plan that is applicable to monitoring teacher effectiveness. Killion's (2017) model is tailored to this. Her model is comprised of seven evaluation steps, which will be applied sequentially to monitor improvements. These steps are as follows:

- 1) Assess evaluability
- 2) Construct evaluation framework
- 3) Formulate evaluation questions
- 4) Collect data
- 5) Organize, analyze, and display data
- 6) Interpret data
- 7) Report, disseminate, and use findings (p. 41)

#### **Step One: Assess Evaluability**

In this step, it is necessary to determine how evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation plan will be carried out, and what it will look like. Two primary components of the implementation need to be monitored; how teachers are implementing the expected strategies in their classrooms, as well as what improvements in student achievement are being made with respect to reading and writing levels in Inuktitut and English. Over the past two years, assessment of teacher performance has moved from a more traditional assessment document, to a

self-reflection model, where teachers in collaboration with the school administration self-reflect on their teaching practices, discuss their self-assessment with administration, and develop a plan for professional development in key areas that need improvement. This organizational improvement plan relates directly to several of the professional standards in this self-reflection: know students and how they learn; know the content and how to teach it; know the Nunavut context and how to implement Inuit Qaujimagatunqangit; plan for and implement effective teaching and learning; create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments; assess, provide feedback and report on student learning; engage in professional learning; engage professionally with colleagues, parents/caregivers and the community; engage in inter-professional collaboration. Meetings occur at least three times per year to discuss where each teacher and principal feel they are, as well as what professional development could be implemented in order to improve professional practices. Monitoring of this plan directly ties in with teachers' self-reflection, and will be one focus of teacher-principal meetings. Teachers will be encouraged to reflect on what they see in their students' work that indicates what they need to continue to develop in their own practice.

### **Step Two: Construct the Evaluation Framework**

This step seeks to delve more deeply into how those tools will be structured. When discussing the monitoring of student achievement with respect to literacy, background data is available over the past several years in English. Benchmark assessment data has been collected for the past three years at least, which demonstrates individual students' progression through their academic careers, as well as improvements that they have, or have not, made during that time. Data is collected twice throughout the school year, and is tracked by the school's learning coach and school administration, and shared with classroom teachers. This data collection will

need to continue to be collected during those intervals throughout the implementation process. Students who are not making enough progress and have not yet been identified as needing individual accommodations or program planning are referred to the school's reading interventionist teacher who is able to provide more intensive, small group literacy instruction and support for students who require that level of instruction to groups of around five students at a time.

One significant challenge in evaluation in English literacy in Nunavut is that we are not able to use the leveling system included in the Fountas and Pinnell system. This is due to the fact that students are not immersed in English language instruction in the same way that southern students would be. English language arts only becomes a significant component of the instructional day in fourth grade at 50% of instructional time, and then sixth grade onwards at around 85% of instructional time. The leveling system used in the Fountas and Pinnell (1996) is broken down into twenty-six individual levels, each of which is associated with a distinct, consecutive set of literacy skills that allows educators to gauge where a student is along a continuum of ability from emergent to fluent. The leveling system is summarized below.

*Table 3.3*

*Fountas and Pinnell Text Level Gradient.*

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Level	Grade Level Goal
A, B, C, D	Kindergarten
E, F, G, H, I, J	Grade 1
K, L, M	Grade 2
N, O, P	Grade 3
Q, R, S	Grade 4
T, U, V	Grade 5
W, X, Y	Grade 6
Z	Grade 7-8
Z+	Grade 9-12

Note. Adapted from Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The primary concern is that this gradient system was designed for students engaged in English instruction from Kindergarten onwards, making it more complicated to adapt to the Nunavut context. Furthermore, different levels of English are spoken in students' homes, resulting in a wide range of fluency as students enter into the English-centered years. Thus, when assessing the effectiveness of literacy instruction in our context, we cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach, rather we need to consider where the student is starting, and how quickly they are moving through their fluency with respect to their peers. Monitoring of this process will involve the school literacy team in conjunction with the classroom teachers from each division.

With respect to Inuktitut fluency, we have more limited resources than what exists for English. Two components have been developed by the Department of Education, an Inuktitut reading level system - Uqalimaariuqsaniq, as well as an Inuktitut guided reading system that is based on the methodology of Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) system. The guided reading program is leveled in a way that accounts for the increasing complexities in the Inuktitut language, much the same way that Fountas and Pinnell's system increases in complexity throughout the reading levels. The Uqalimaariuqsaniq leveling system has five categories: pre-reader, early emergent, emergent, developing, and independent, that are broken down into concrete levels based on the complexity of the reading material. These levels are summarized in Appendix A.

The Inuktitut reading levels also do not correlate directly to a set of grade-level expectations. This is due to an inconsistency of Inuktitut fluency when students arrive at school. Inuktitut fluency varies widely from community to community, as well as between children in each community. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Inuktitut guided reading program will center on students' progression through the abovementioned levels, and the relative speed with

which they progress. Benchmark data has been completed, and will be used as a starting point for assessing effectiveness of implementation.

### **Step Three: Formulate Evaluation Questions**

In addressing this problem of practice, there are two main components that address its solution. Firstly, we aim at improving staff efficacy through professional learning activities which are aimed at providing staff with the necessary skills to effectively implement the plan discussed in this chapter. Secondly, through the implementation of those skills in the teachers' classrooms, we aim to improve students' literacy skills in English and Inuktitut. In order to determine the effectiveness of implementation, several key questions arise.

Is the professional learning addressing teachers' needs? Each teacher has their own strengths and weaknesses with respect to literacy – some have specialized training in this area, while others have had generalist training, while others have specialist training which has little to no focus on the teaching of literacy skills. Professional learning activities must be broad enough to cover the depth and breadth of information required for all teachers to gain skills in each component area discussed in the implementation section of this plan. However, collaboration between administration and staff to determine particular areas that need extra attention, as well as methods that will allow for the most effective implementation must be taken into account, such as subgrouping of teachers during professional development times that focus on different aspects or levels of skills being discussed during that session.

Are all staff implementing strategies being shared in professional learning activities? Frequent monitoring of staff implementation is necessary to ensure that this is happening. This will take the form of regular walk-throughs by school administration. The dynamics of the

learning coach and other positions necessitates the school administration doing this monitoring, as the learning coach position must be viewed by staff as that of support, rather than administration. In cases where it is not happening, or implementation is not being done effectively, what strategies can be implemented to support that teacher with moving forward? The learning coach, reading interventionist teacher, and student support teacher can offer support in this area, and focus on clarifying teaching methods, and strategies, offering opportunities to work with these ideas directly in their classroom.

What is the actual impact of this professional learning on student achievement? Are students moving through reading levels much more quickly than they were before these strategies were being implemented? Are some teachers having greater success with moving students forward in their literacy than others, and if so, why? Data collection will play a significant role in determining the impact on student achievement.

#### **Step Four: Collect Data**

This step is critical in assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of implementation of this plan. Three major components will be involved in data collection throughout this process. Firstly, regular classroom visits will continue to be conducted by school administration across all classrooms. This allows for regular monitoring of implementation to ensure all teachers are regularly implementing the skills that are being discussed during professional learning sessions. Teachers who are not effectively implementing newly acquired skills will then be offered additional opportunities to work with and plan with support teachers to hone their skills and practice implementing them in their classrooms.

Secondly, teachers will regularly monitor and assess student progress in their literacy development through the use of the PM Benchmark system. This assessment system offers teachers the opportunity to assess students' progress without affecting more formal BAS data. As teachers notice their students have acquired skills to move through reading levels, they are able to assess them to determine exactly where they fall on the spectrum. This, in turn, allows teachers to re-organize classroom libraries and other reading materials to align with current reading levels, as well as re-align flexible groupings for literacy instruction.

Finally, school-wide benchmark assessment data will be collected twice per year in both English, for grades 4 – 12, and Inuktitut for Kindergarten to grade 4. English assessment will occur using Fountas and Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System, and Inuktitut assessment will occur using the assessment tool that accompanies the Inuktitut guided reading program. Assessment data has been collected over previous years, thus current data will be compared with historical data to determine student progress.

### **Step Five: Organize, Analyze, and Display Data**

As classroom benchmark assessment data is collected, the school literacy team is then able to organize the data in a way that illustrates progress. As data is collected year after year, it can be organized in such a way that illustrates individual student progress. Furthermore, this data will then need to be translated into chart-form so that it can be displayed at the school level, and used during divisional meetings and professional learning sessions to form the foundation of discussions around effectiveness of that professional learning. This also allows the school literacy team to identify any areas that need to be focused on that are not currently being addressed, while providing visual information to teachers regarding how their class is progressing as a whole.

**Step Six: Interpret Data**

After the data has been organized and displayed, it must be analyzed by the school literacy team along with classroom teachers. This provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to gain insight into where students were when starting the implementation phase, and the progress each student is making throughout the implementation process. Analysis is aimed at pinpointing any areas that need further support, such as students who need additional focused instruction or leveled literacy intervention (Ransford-Kaldon et al., 2010). As this information is collected, it will inform decisions regarding how students are flexibly grouped for literacy instruction, which students would benefit from leveled literacy intervention, and which teachers may need additional support from the learning coach.

**Step Seven: Report, Disseminate, and Use Findings**

This final step involves sharing the data that has been collected and analyzed with stakeholders. Several levels of reporting will be necessary. Firstly, data needs to be shared with the school community so that all staff are aware of starting points, and progress being made within the school overall. For this level, data can be abstracted somewhat, rather than sharing information for individual students, it can be done by class, or divisional grouping. This gives staff a good overview of how effective the implementation has been, without having to go into the finer details that are analyzed by the school literacy team.

Secondly, reporting needs to occur to both the regional school operations, as well as the district education authority. School operations requires reporting of student literacy data as it is collected, twice per year. District education authority need to be provided with updates

regarding progress, rather than individual student data, so that they are up to date on implementation progress.

Finally, reporting to the community is done in several ways. The district education authority shares information with the community about general school programming. Teachers share student progress during reporting periods, and regular phone calls home to parents. The final component will be for engaging parents in their child's literacy learning through parental engagement activities. This will be discussed further in the last section of this chapter, as parental engagement in literacy will be a significant future consideration.

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

This section examines the process that will be undertaken for communicating the need for change, as well as the change process that was discussed in the previous section. The model that will be utilized for this communication is that of Cawsey et al.'s (2011) Change Path Model. The authors state that a communication plan has four phases: prechange approval, creating the need for change, midstream change and milestone communication, and confirming/celebrating the change process. Each of these aspects of the communication plan will be discussed below. This model was chosen as it aligns with the framework for leading the change process that was chosen in the previous chapter, that of Kotter (1996).

Communication of change initiatives has been shown to be a complex task, even when implementing multiple channels to share information. Cawsey et al. (2011) discuss that when implementing a change initiative, leaders often experience a multitude of rumors that spread through their organization, propagating misinformation along with the rumors. This is due, in part to staff not being clear on the rationale for the change, and the impact that will be

experienced by staff is often exaggerated within the misinformation that is being spread. Thus, in order to overcome the challenge of persuading staff to move in a common direction, a communication plan is necessary in order to “ minimize the effects of rumors, to mobilize support for the change, and to sustain enthusiasm and commitment” (p. 319).

Lewis, Schmisser, Stephens and Weir (2006) mention the importance of engaging all stakeholders in change initiatives. Kamarudin, Starr, Abdullah, and Husain (2014) contend that this “can be done through consultations and the exchange of feedbacks and ample time must be provided for this to take place” (p. 500). Thus, for effective communication to occur regarding change initiatives, all stakeholders will need to be consulted, with enough time provided for stakeholders to provide their input, and be able to include feedback into the school improvement process. As well, “it is also most crucial for change agents to ensure that information that is disseminated is the information that is needed by the staff. If not the information will be viewed as irrelevant and is of poor quality.” (Kamarudin, Starr, Abdullah, & Husain, 2014, p. 500). Thus, during the planning stages of how balanced literacy will play out in the school, it will be important to provide ongoing, quality communication to all stakeholders through regular sharing of information on the community radio station and letters home to parents.

Klein (1996) recommends seven principles which should form the basis of a communication strategy:

1. Message redundancy is related to message retention.
2. The use of several media is more effective than the use of just one.
3. Face-to-face communication is a preferred medium.
4. The line hierarchy is the most effective organizationally sanctioned communication channel.

5. Direct supervision is the expected and most effective source of organizationally sanctioned information.
6. Opinion leaders are effective changers of attitudes and opinions.
7. Personally relevant information is better retained than abstract, unfamiliar or general information. (p. 34).

The points stated by Klein (1996) highlight several key factors that underpin my communication strategy.

### **Prechange Approval**

The prechange approval phase forms the foundation of the communication plan. It is in this stage that the change leader must garner support from senior management and other stakeholders based on the expressed need for the change (Cawsey et al., 2011). In my case, this includes both senior level management, and the local district education authority, as these are the stakeholders who hold the influence and authority to approve the change. Firstly, senior management are on board with the changes discussed in this organizational improvement plan, as this follows from directives which have come from the Department of Education with respect to implementation of literacy programs in schools.

Convincing the district education authority of the necessity for change is expected to be a more challenging task, particularly with respect to Inuktitut guided reading. The use of this program in the educational dialect that was developed by the Department of Education is a contentious decision amongst many communities who do not use this dialect in their community. However, the decision was made by the Department of Education to use this dialect for Inuktitut literacy programming across the territory as a way of standardizing the language. While the

community understands, and advocates, the need for improving literacy levels in Inuktitut, there has been concern expressed regarding the potential loss of community dialect by implementing this program. As Cawsey et al. (2011) suggest, breaking down the proposed changes into smaller steps may help to increase the likelihood of success for the approval and acceptance of the need for change.

Furthermore, Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, and Lawrence (2001) discuss that timing is critical in the communication process, as involvement, persistence, and opportunism of others when timed correctly can have a significant impact on garnering acceptance of change. Additionally, the change needs to be linked to the school's goals, plans, and priorities according to Dutton et al. (2001). The communication of information with the district education authority will come in the form of sharing a video developed by the Department of Education that demonstrates the expectations from the Department with respect to literacy in both English and Inuktitut, along with the rationale for developing the educational dialect that is expected to be followed. Essentially this video outlines the requirements to set the change plan in motion in the community.

### **Creating the Need for Change**

This phase of the plan focuses on building an understanding of the need for change amongst staff and parents. As Cawsey et al. (2011) offer, the communication plan must provide an explanation of the deficit along with a detailed rationale for the change that will be engaged in. The authors mention that by creating a strong, credible sense of urgency, leaders will be more successful with garnering support, and without taking this step, the initiative will likely not make any progress, as there are many other priorities that are likely to take attention away from

the central initiative. Additionally, the vision for the change must be articulated in this phase, and the specific steps for the change plan need to be clarified.

Unlike the previous phase of this communication plan, in this step the bulk of pre-implementation communication will be shared. This includes communicating implementation plans with school staff, the district education authority, and the school operations. Each of these groups will be discussed below. Klein (1996) mentions several communication needs at this juncture: explanation of issues, needs and rationale, co-constructing a shared vision and first steps, reassurance, and the collecting of feedback.

**School Staff.** The beginning stage of this process has already been enacted. At the beginning of the school year, all staff participated in an in-servicing activity to develop a shared vision and common understandings around literacy instruction in our school. This aligns with the first parameter (Paterson, Rolheiser, & Fullan, 2009) discussed in the first section of this chapter. Our desire to accomplish the vision reinforces the need for change and improved literacy instruction throughout our school. Communication strategies will include several methods as in the following:

- 1) General information will be shared through divisional PLC meetings. This will allow the opportunity for staff to provide input and feedback into the details of how the implementation will proceed. School staff have had many opportunities to collaboratively work together over the recent years, and this has allowed staff to develop good working rapport with each other. Any staff members who do not wish to provide input in a group setting will be provided with opportunities to share in a more one-on-one environment with the school literacy team. While the implementation plan has been created in order to maximize progress with staff

- implementation and student progress, some flexibility must be built in to the plan in order to accommodate the needs of staff.
- 2) Follow-up information will be provided to staff via email in order to keep staff up to date with progress and future implementation. This information will be shared by divisional lead teachers who will be tasked with leading their respective divisional groups. This aligns with Klein's (1996) first two principles: message redundancy relates to message retention, and the use of multiple media is more effective than the use of a single type of media.
  - 3) In-service activities will reiterate information presented in previous in-service activities in order to ensure staff have a consistent understanding of the school's progress to date. Furthermore, next steps will be discussed in order to ensure that staff have a clear idea as to short-term, and long-term goals, and how those goals will be achieved. For staff who are reluctant to engage in this initiative, they will be provided with opportunities to work more closely with the learning coach who will be able to provide them with additional resources and support for improving literacy instruction in their classrooms. This also allows for deeper connections to be built between the teacher and learning coach, who acts as the primary literacy support in the school.

**District Education Authority.** Our locally elected district education authority represents the community with respect to how education is executed in our school. While it is the school operations that oversees the majority of the initiatives that occur within the school, the district education authority provides input as to how education takes place with feedback from the community. Due to this, it is imperative that the DEA be provided information regarding the

broader points of the implementation plan, while the finer implementation details can be left to be shared with staff and school operations. A general overview of the implementation plan will be shared during one of the monthly meetings. This plan will be included within my regular principal's monthly report. As we move into the implementation phase, regular updates will be shared with the district education authority through these reports at the monthly meetings.

**School Operations.** The primary discussion that must be engaged in between the school and the school operations will have already taken place during the prechange approval phase of this plan. It is expected during this phase, the Superintendent and Principal will have discussed, in depth, what the roll-out will look like. This will be done via email or telephone conversations, as face-to-face meetings can be challenging due to the remoteness of communities in Nunavut. Regular updates will be provided to the school operations in the next phase of this plan.

### **Midstream Change Phase**

This phase of the communication plan focuses on the sharing of information during the implementation portion of the change process, and acts as the "Do" portion of the PDSA cycle. Cawsey et al. (2011) state that stakeholders will expect that information be communicated to them regarding how things will operate, and future plans for implementation. As Mento, Jones, and Dirndorfer (2002) discuss, "how a manager implements change is as important as what that change is" (p. 46). Training needs to occur in order to help staff understand and use the new systems properly. The first section of this chapter outlines the implementation plan, as well as how staff will be trained with respect to in-service days. Furthermore, people need to understand the progress that is being made during implementation, and change leaders need to obtain feedback with respect to how these changes are accepted by staff (Cawsey et al., 2011). In order

to monitor communication throughout the implementation phase, three primary strategies will be implemented.

Firstly, regular updates will be shared face-to-face at divisional meetings. These meetings will allow an opportunity for divisional lead teachers and the school literacy team to share updates on future directions for implementation, as well as gather staff feedback regarding how implementation of previous steps has progressed. Secondly, follow-up information will be communicated and solidified via email in order to keep staff regularly updated with expectations and necessary resources. “Change websites, electronic bulletin boards, online surveys to sample awareness and opinions, and change blogs can all play useful roles in the communications strategy.” (Cawsey et al., 2011, p. 321). These methods of communication amongst staff will all be integrated into the second component of the communication strategy. Finally, information will be shared with parents, district education authority, and the broader community with an open house model. Santana, Rothstein, and Bain (2016) suggest that hosting an open house can be beneficial in improving parental engagement with the school. With this in mind, open house afternoons will be established in order to engage the community, and share information regarding this implementation.

The authors mention three roles that the open house is meant to support. Parents are able to advocate for their children by proactively addressing problems in the early stages. Parents are able to monitor progress of implementation by meeting with classroom teachers and discussing their child’s progress. It will also allow an opportunity to share information about strategies that parents can engage in that will allow for more effective implantation, including parental involvement in homework and after school reading. These face-to-face interactions will be

paired with letters home and communication through the school's Facebook account in order to maximize parental engagement in this improvement plan process.

### **Confirming the Change Phase**

The final phase of communication plan is aimed at celebrating successes of the implementation of the initiative. As Cawsey et al. (2011) state, celebration is often underrated in discussions of change initiatives. Celebrations throughout the implementation process mark progress, reinforce commitment, and reduce stress. Furthermore, this final phase of implementation also marks a key point where discussion of the entire change experience needs to occur, and transition into the next significant changes that will be occurring. In order to solidify the changes that have occurred, information will be shared with staff and the community as to the progress and effectiveness of this initiative. Face-to-face approaches are noted to be particularly valuable in this regard (Cawsey et al., 2011). With this in mind, staff successes need to be shared through collaborative sessions, and sharing of success stories with school operations and the district education authority.

### **Conclusion**

This organizational improvement plan aims at addressing deficiencies in literacy instruction, and student achievement within my school. Chapter one of this plan considered the underpinnings of my leadership approach, and educational context in which this plan will be implemented. Instructional and distributed leadership form the basis of my leadership style, while the Indigenous, conservative, and critical lenses are utilized to view my problem of practice. The isolation of communities and Inuktitut/English language models in Nunavut provide for unusual challenges in tackling the problem.

Kotter's 8 stage model (Kotter, 1996) was chosen as an appropriate model for framing the change that is outlined in this plan. The implementation plan outlined in this chapter is expected to be executed over one and a half school years. This is expected to be enough time to effectively and efficiently have the foundations of a balanced literacy program up and running in my school in English and Inuktitut. However, while this plan forms a solid basis for literacy, improvements will still need to be made over time. The success of this plan hinges on effective professional development for staff, as well as staff efficacy in the areas identified throughout this plan. Looking beyond this plan, the next step will be to focus on parental engagement, particularly with respect to literacy.

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

Once this organizational improvement plan has been enacted within the school, the next step in the process will be to look at improving writing skills at the high school level. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2013) reports that the differential between school marks and departmental exams in English Language Arts 30 is approximately 30 percent across Nunavut. There are two parts to this exam, a comprehension component and a writing component. Students generally score significantly higher on the comprehension component than the writing component, highlighting the need for a deeper focus on writing at the high school level. The vision for this would be to first enact the various components of this organizational improvement plan which focuses first on reading skills, and then writing skills at the K-9 level, and then follow this with a focus on writing skills at the grade 10-12 level. This will allow us to close the gap between writing skills and expectations at the grade 12 level.

One area that the Department of Education has focused on beyond improving literacy instruction is parental engagement in the school and classrooms (Nunavut Department of

Education, 2014). There is often a disengagement from parents due to a history of negative experiences with schooling in past generations, such as the residential school system. Certainly, times have changed, however many parents are still not actively visible in the school. This has a negative impact on learning, as in some cases the disconnect between the school and parents leads to less than optimal academic learning at home. With this in mind, the next step in planning will involve activities that encourage parental involvement in the classroom to assist their child in their literacy learning.

Several strategies may be implemented in order to facilitate parental involvement and literacy instruction. Things such as cultural activities that allow students and parents to engage in learning traditional skills as well as the language associated with those skills would be a starting point. Bringing in elders during language instruction time would allow an opportunity for further Inuktitut language development, as well as passing own traditional knowledge. With respect to involvement in English literacy, monthly afternoons that involve literacy activities can be designed by teachers in collaboration with school administration and the learning coach that will specifically invite parents to participate.

The Nunavut Department of Education (2014) recommends that schools develop a family engagement action plan in order to facilitate the inclusion of parents within the school. Furthermore, they make recommendations as to some effective strategies that can be included in this plan such as open houses in the school throughout the year, beginning the school year off with a feast or gathering for students and families, and having teachers visit students' homes at the beginning of the year in order to meet and get to know the families. These components will be worked into our school's family engagement plan, and extend this organizational improvement plan. However, exact details of what this plan will look like need to be examined

more closely, and in collaboration with staff and the school literacy team, as this is beyond the scope of the current organizational improvement plan.

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## Appendix A

*Uqalimaariuqsaniq Leveling System. Adapted from Inhabit Media (2018).*

Category	Level	Books at this level
Pre-reader	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- contain pictures only, no text</li> <li>- include topic, theme, simple story</li> <li>- help students practice left to right reading, turning pages</li> <li>- help students examine pictures</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- contain one symbol per page</li> <li>- match symbol to picture of familiar item</li> <li>- focus on first sounds of words</li> <li>- help students learn names of symbols and their sounds</li> </ul>
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- one word per page, up to 3 morphemes each</li> <li>- use pictures to help decode words</li> <li>- help students understand difference between symbols and words</li> <li>- build vocabulary for familiar objects/themes</li> </ul>
Early emergent	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- include simple sentences with 2-3 morphemes each</li> <li>- 1 line of text per page</li> <li>- include repeated words and patterns of speech</li> <li>- include only periods for punctuation</li> <li>- include familiar topics and themes</li> </ul>
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- include simple sentences with 3-5 morphemes each</li> <li>- have one line of text per page</li> <li>- use repeated words and speech patterns</li> <li>- include basic sight words, and some variety of punctuation</li> </ul>
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-12 pages long</li> <li>- include simple sentences with 4-9 morphemes each</li> <li>- have 1-2 lines of text per page</li> <li>- include repeated morphemes, words, and speech patterns</li> <li>- include basic sentences and additional morphemes</li> <li>- fiction or non-fiction with familiar topics</li> </ul>
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8-16 pages long</li> <li>- include sentences with 8-16 morphemes each</li> <li>- up to 3 lines of text per page</li> <li>- include some repetition, but generally longer sentences with greater complexity</li> <li>- include a variety of punctuation including commas</li> <li>- introduce a variety of new words</li> </ul>
Emergent	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12-24 pages long</li> <li>- up to 3 lines of text per page</li> <li>- some sentences continue across pages</li> <li>- less repetition and patterning</li> <li>- include dialogue and the word "said"</li> <li>- include pictures for support</li> <li>- include non-fiction with familiar topic, Did You Know? section, and glossary</li> </ul>
	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 32 pages long</li> <li>- up to 4 lines of text per page</li> <li>- longer, more complex sentences</li> <li>- include more dialogue, not necessarily indicated by "said"</li> </ul>

	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 32 pages long</li> <li>- 5 lines of text per page</li> <li>- more dialogue, and more complex sentences</li> <li>- include more basic sight words</li> <li>- variety of dialogue tags</li> <li>- 2-3 facts in non-fiction books</li> </ul>
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 32 pages long</li> <li>- 6 lines of text per page</li> <li>- topics/themes may go beyond students' experiences</li> <li>- include frequent dialogue between characters in fiction books, or 3-5 facts for non-fiction books</li> </ul>
Developing	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 40 pages long</li> <li>- up to 10 lines of text per page</li> <li>- ideas continue across pages</li> <li>- sentence complexity increases, including unfamiliar sentence structures</li> <li>- includes a variety of formats such as letters or brochures</li> </ul>
	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 56 pages long</li> <li>- up to 12 lines of text per page</li> <li>- include unfamiliar sentence structure, topics, and themes</li> <li>- focus on one idea</li> <li>- greater variety of fiction topics</li> <li>- 5-7 facts per page in non-fiction books</li> <li>- biographies of familiar subjects included s non-fiction</li> </ul>
	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to 64 pages long</li> <li>- up to 12 lines of text per page</li> <li>- more complex fiction titles involving novellas or mysteries</li> <li>- non-fiction that exposes students to new ideas or topics, and 6-8 facts</li> <li>- may include dialogue without tags</li> <li>- limited illustrations</li> </ul>
Independent	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 40-100 pages with smaller text</li> <li>- up to 24 lines per page</li> <li>- includes chapter books</li> <li>- topics and themes beyond students' knowledge</li> <li>- more variety and complexity in fiction</li> <li>- non-fiction with unfamiliar topics, multiple topics, sub-topics</li> <li>- few visuals</li> </ul>
	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50-160 pages</li> <li>- many lines per page</li> <li>- complex content, unfamiliar topics</li> <li>- complex fiction including figurative language, characters with good and bad traits</li> <li>- non-fiction with specific words define in text, illustrations, glossaries</li> </ul>