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Weaving the Braid of Culturally Responsive Leadership Within Policy and Governance to Improve Indigenous Student Success

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Abstract

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) explores a Problem of Practice (PoP) that highlights the need for why the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team within the Raven Bay School Division (RBSD, *pseudonym*) would benefit from using a culturally responsive leadership approach when making decisions and how this may be achieved through policy and governance to guide their practice. The goal of this OIP is to examine why this leadership approach would be relevant for the Board of Education and the Senior Leadership team when they are making any policy and governance decisions, as it relates to Indigenous Education and how this leadership approach could positively support the improvement of educational outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous learners across the RBSD. The recommended solutions found within this OIP are intended to show how the RBSD can weave together a culturally responsive braid of policy and governance to address their goal of improving Indigenous learner outcomes found within their strategic.

If this OIP is implemented, the solutions could be turned into strategies that work towards positively closing the current achievement gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners within the RBSD. Thus, beginning to shift the negative narrative of the culture of low expectations for Indigenous learners within the RBSD to a positive narrative of equity and success through the lens of culturally responsive leadership.

Executive Summary

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) explores a Problem of Practice (PoP) on why the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team within a K-12 public education school division in British Columbia, Canada, would benefit from using a culturally responsive leadership approach to guide their policy and governance decision making processes when supporting their strategic plans goal of improving the educational outcomes, achievement results and inequity gaps that exist between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners across their school division.

Culturally responsive leadership (CRL) is the leadership approach that I selected as the change driver for my OIP as I feel that after examining multiple leadership approaches this was the one approach that was the most relevant to my PoP of; what organizational strategies can be developed and used with the Board of Education and the Senior Administration leadership team within the RBSD that will support them to achieve their goal within their strategic plan of how to positively change the overall personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous learners within the RBSD. Therefore the goal of this OIP is to examine and uncover how the RBSD can use their current policy and governance structures as the appropriate entrance points for them to support their Indigenous Education goal found within their current strategic plan (2020-2025).

Chapter 1, Strand I of weaving the braid of culturally responsive leadership within policy and governance to improve Indigenous student success examines how education in Canada has not always been a positive experience for Indigenous children and families, including how the residual effects of the Residential School System 1876-1996 (TRC, 2015) has left lasting intergenerational impacts on children and families and

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their current experiences with public education (TRC, 2015). Resulting in the historical and current achievement gaps and racial inequities throughout the education system between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report that was released in 2015 uncovered the need across all government sectors in Canada to redress their relationship with Indigenous peoples and the urgency to work towards reconciliation and quality of service from local, provincial and national levels (TRC, 2015). This includes the public education system across Canada and how it is are being called upon by the TRC through Calls to Action within education to find new ways to change the lived experiences, and educational outcomes of Indigenous learners locally within school divisions. In order for education systems to begin this work and enact these Calls to Action from a local level, the education system must be willing to first learn what these Calls to Action are, and then be willing to move towards action and be open and willing to create new opportunities, strategies and experiences within and across the entire education system that are culturally safe and relevant that meet the needs of the Indigenous communities, families and learners they serve. Justice Murray Sinclair, who was the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated, “It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to Reconciliation” (TRC, 2015).

In order to redress the legacy of Residential Schools and advance the process of Canadian Reconciliation, and work towards closing the academic, opportunity and racial gap that currently exists within public education between Indigenous and Non-

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Indigenous learners (HAWD, 2019 & AGRIE, 2019) education systems will need to begin this work locally. To do this, local education systems will need to begin and do this work in good faith, and it must begin with the leadership team who has the ability to influence and shift policy, governance and processes within the education system.

This is why this OIP has selected the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team within the RBSD to be the change drivers of this work as they are the ones who will need to begin to align their strategic goals, vision and processes on how they will authentically examine the Calls to Action on Education found within the Truth and Reconciliation final report, including two other significant guiding documents on Indigenous Education that are relevant for Indigenous Education within the British Columbia public education system. These two other guiding documents are Articles 14 and 15 from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2019) and the 11 recommendations that came from the British Columbia Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education (AGRIE, 2019) as these two guiding documents woven together with the TRC Calls to Action on education will inform the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team with significant data and results on the gaps and inequities that Indigenous learners are faced with, including some strategies that could assist in narrowing and closing these gaps for Indigenous learners at a local level.

Thus, authentically creating space for a new layer of strategies to evolve within the RBSD that hold up Indigenous education as a priority and work towards closing the achievement, opportunity and racial inequity gaps that continue to grow between

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Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners throughout the RBSD. Chapter 1 therefore set the table for this OIP and introduced the history, context, vision and goal for the RBSD, as well it introduced my problem of practice of what organizational strategies could be used within the RBSD with the Board of Education and Senior Administration to improving the overall personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous learners.

Leading into Chapter 2, Strand II weaving the braid of culturally responsive leadership within policy and governance to improve Indigenous student success of this OIP is where this OIP begins to weave together the supporting documents on Indigenous education that was introduced in Chapter 1. This coincides with examining what is Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL) and ‘why’ I chose CRL as the leadership approach to support this OIP my PoP, and the change drivers and influencers that have been identified throughout this OIP. Chapter 2 will then discuss the Indigenous education goal of the strategic plan, and the policy and governance work that the RBSD Board of Education and Senior Administration has in front of them as it relates to their vision and goal of improving the personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous learners they serve, and how CRL may support this work. Chapter 2 further explores the components of Strand II of the sweetgrass research braid, the 4Rs of Indigenous pedagogy; relational accountability, reciprocity, relationships and relevancy (Wilson, 2008) and ‘why’ the 4Rs were chosen as the appropriate Indigenous framework to assist the Board of Education and the Senior Administration to lead a change process within the RBSD. With Chapter 2 then putting forward six key considerations that

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support my PoP within this OIP and how these six considerations should be viewed as significant strategies, and if they are implemented will support the intentions of this OIP. Chapter 2, Strand II therefore examines culturally responsive leadership, the 4Rs of Indigenous pedagogy, along with six possible solutions, including the ethical considerations that need to be considered for the successful implementation of this OIP.

Chapter 3, Strand III of weaving the braid of culturally responsive leadership within policy and governance to improve Indigenous student success of this OIP is where the 3 strands of this research braid become woven together; culturally responsive leadership, policy and governance. Chapter 3 pulls together what we learnt in Chapter 1 on what the changes are that need occur, to what we learnt in Chapter 2 on the best leadership approach, framework to use, including the possible solutions on how to get there. And, weaves it all together through; implementation, evaluation, monitoring and communication, which also includes how to best prepare for any potential barriers this OIP may face within any one of the Strands I, II or III. This organizational improvement plan collectively embodies the true intentions of Indigenous pedagogy, by using Indigenous research, frameworks, and scholars to wrap around and inform an Indigenous problem of practice on what the best possible solutions and strategies could be used to support my problem of practice.

Keywords: Aboriginal, Aboriginal Education, Colonization, Culture, Decolonization, Educator, Emotional Intelligence, Ethical, Experiential Learning, First Nations, First Peoples, Indigenous, Indigenizing Education, Reconciliation, Social Emotional Learning, Worldview.

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I would like to acknowledge my Ancestors, and Elders from where I come from as your strength, support, and advocacy keep me grounded in who I am, and the rich culture, and traditional knowledge that is within our family. I would also like to acknowledge the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and the Coast Salish Peoples on whose traditional territories that I have had the privilege of completing my doctoral journey on. I sincerely hold up my hands in gratitude to my loving family who have been walking alongside me during this doctoral journey. They have effortlessly provided me with love, guidance, spiritual support and the cultural strength that I have continued to need while I have been balancing my personal, professional and academic life.

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In closing I have stepped into this doctoral journey to be able to add more Indigenous voice and perspectives into the academy and in the words of Linda Smith (2005) “The space that Indigenous knowledge seeks to occupy within the institution might be seen as tricky ground, as they could be viewed as intruders or imposters inside a western construct, and unwelcome by the guardians of the academic tradition”. That my relatives and friends, is why I am here.

Həyşx'qə / Thank you

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Glossary of Terms

These definitions will provide the reader with a clearer understanding of how these terms are used throughout this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP).

Aboriginal is a term defined in the Constitution Act of 1983 that refers to all Indigenous people in Canada, including “Indians” (status and non-status), First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. More than 1.5 million people in Canada identified themselves as Aboriginal on the 2016 Census, the fastest growing population in Canada. While still appropriate, the term “Aboriginal” is being replaced by “Indigenous” and the term “Indigenous” will be used throughout this document to refer to Aboriginal peoples (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

Aboriginal Learning is the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) states that Aboriginal Peoples in Canada have long advocated their own values, cultural traditions and ways of knowing. Their perspective on learning reflects an enduring philosophy and way of living that integrates all knowledge and experience throughout each stage of a person’s life. Aboriginal learning is a highly social process that nurtures relationships within the family and throughout the community. These relationships serve to transmit social values and a sense of identity, and also help to ensure cultural continuity. As a result, the value of individual learning cannot be separated from its contribution to the collective well-being (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Aboriginal Rights is defined by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF, 2015) where they state that Aboriginal peoples of Canada hold Rights as a result of long-standing ancestral use and occupancy of the land. The Aboriginal right to hunt, trap, and

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fish on ancestral lands are examples of Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights will vary from group to group depending on the customs, practices, and traditions that have formed their distinctive cultures (CRRF, 2015).

Assimilation is the practice of bringing into conformity with the customs and attitudes of a group. In the context of this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP), assimilation refers to blending in ad dominant Euro-Canadian culture, without distinction (Pape & Dodds, n.d., p.69).

Colonization, Colonialism is the action or process of taking control of people, land, and waters by an outside entity who then occupies the land, extracts its value, and dominates the people (Pape & Dodd, n.d., p.69).

Culture is the mix of ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral and social norms, knowledge and traditions of a group of individuals who have historical, geographic, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic or social context, and who transmit, reinforce and modify those ideas, values and beliefs, passing them on from one generation to another. It results in a set of expectations for appropriate behavior in seemingly similar contexts (CRRF, 2015).

Decolonization is the restoration of cultural practices, thinking, beliefs, and values that was taken away or abandoned (during the colonization period) but is relevant and/or necessary for survival and wellbeing. It is the birth and use of new ideas, thinking, technologies and lifestyles that contribute to the advancement and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples (Yellow Bird, 2014).

Educator is the term chosen in this writing to identify persons facilitating and/or teaching the provincial curriculum, and/or Indigenous Knowledge in classrooms and schools. Educators are Teachers, Principals and Vice-principals, Counsellors,

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Psychologists, Social Workers, Youth Care Workers, Aboriginal Education Assistants and Support Workers and/or any other school staff who are working with students on improving their personal and academic achievement results. An Educator can also be community members such as Elders, traditional knowledge holders, Life Coaches, parents and guardians. Educators of Traditional Knowledge and social emotional learning have the common purpose of building holistic competence in students (KASIS, 2016).

Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman, 1995).

Ethical is practices which foreground active personal responsibility for making ethical choices, an ethical actor in relationship with others and located in a context (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p.13).

Experiential Learning is connected to lived experience and reinforced by traditional ceremonies, meditation, storytelling, observation and imitation (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

First Nations is the self-determined political and organizational unit of the Indigenous community that has the power to negotiate, on a government to government basis, with B.C. and Canada. Currently, there are 615 First Nations in Canada, which represent more than 50 nations or cultural groups and about 60 Indigenous languages. This term does not have a legal definition but should be used instead of the term “Indian,” which is inaccurate, and offensive to many (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

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First Peoples are the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada, as well as Indigenous peoples around the world (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2016).

Holistic Education is education that engages and develops all aspects of the individual (emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual) and the community, and stresses the interconnectedness of all life under the Creator (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Indigenizing Education is the weaving of Indigenous thought, perspectives and worldviews across the K-12 system and processes that make up schools (Alfred, 2004 and Dion, 2010).

Lifelong Learning is learning that begins before birth and continues through old age and involves the intergenerational transfer of knowledge (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Positionality is a concept articulated by Linda Alcoff (1988) and others, namely that race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identities are markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities. Knowledge is valid when it includes an acknowledgment of the knower's specific position in any context, because changing contextual and relational factors are crucial for defining identities and our knowledge in any given situation (Maher, 1993).

Reconciliation is defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining new and respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians (TRC, 2015c).

Social Emotional Learning is the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) suggest the foundation of social emotional learning (SEL) is based on five person- centered SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness,

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responsible decision making, self- management, and relationship management (CASEL, 2011).

Transformative Change is the change to thoughts and behavior that works to create an educational system that is a place of connectedness and caring, and a place that honors the heritage, knowledge and spirit of every First Nations student (Battiste, 2013. Pg. 66).

Worldview is a way of seeing the world as connected to histories, traditions, modes of thought, and types of ideas about existence, values, social and economic systems, and relations between living beings as well as between living beings and non-living ones (B.C. Early Learning Framework, 2019).

List of Acronyms

AGRIE: Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education

CASEL: Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning

CRRF: Canadian Race Relations Foundation

CRG: Culturally Responsive Governance

CRL: Culturally Responsive Leadership

FNESC: First Nations Education School Committee

HAWD: How Are We Doing Report

IK: Indigenous Knowledge

KASIS: Keeping Aboriginal Students in School

LEA: Local Education Agreement

MOE: Ministry of Education

OIP: Organizational Improvement Plan

POP: Problem of Practice

RBSD: Raven Bay School Division

SEL: Social and Emotional Learning

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose

“The drum has been called the heartbeat of Mother Earth, the heartbeat of nations, the heartbeat of all life. Its sound evokes natural imagery, awakens the senses, and stirs the soul. It's a symbol of life, symbol of hope, a symbol of healing. And it's a vital part of Indigenous culture”.

– Elder Howard Walker, James Smith Cree Nation

Education in Canada has not always been a positive experience for Indigenous children and families, including how the residual effects of the Residential School System 1876- 1996 (TRC, 2015) has left lasting intergenerational impacts on children and families and their current experiences with public education (TRC, 2015). Resulting in the historical and current achievement gaps and racial inequities throughout the education system between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report that was released in 2015 uncovered the need across all government sectors in Canada to redress their relationship with Indigenous peoples and the urgency to work towards reconciliation and quality of service from local, provincial and national levels (TRC, 2015). This includes the public education system across Canada and how it is being called upon by the TRC through Calls to Action within education to find new ways to change the lived experiences, and educational outcomes of Indigenous learners locally within school divisions. In order for education systems to begin this work and enact these Calls to Action from a local level, the education system must be willing to first learn what these Calls to Action are, and then be willing to move towards action and be open and willing to create new opportunities, strategies and experiences within and across the entire education system

that are culturally safe and relevant that meet the needs of the Indigenous communities, families and learners they serve. Justice Murray Sinclair, who was the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated, “It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to Reconciliation” (TRC, 2015).

In order to redress the legacy of Residential Schools and advance the process of Canadian Reconciliation, and work towards closing the academic, opportunity and racial gap that currently exists within public education between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners (HAWD, 2019 & AGRIE, 2019) education systems will need to begin this work locally. To do this, local education systems will need to begin and do this work in good faith, and it must begin with the leadership team who has the ability to influence and shift policy, governance and processes within the education system.

These continued gaps in the achievement results (HAWD, 2019) and lack of systemic alignment to these guiding documents on strategies to improve Indigenous education (AGRIE, 2019) is what has resulted in my Problem of Practice (PoP) and this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP). There are 3 Strands of my OIP; Chapter 1 (Strand I) Indigenous student data, Chapter 2 (Strand II) Indigenous Education guiding documents on improving outcomes and Chapter 3 (Strand III) Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL). The intent is to examine strategies that are culturally safe and relevant that may assist the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team in becoming responsive to their goal of improving the personal and academic results for the Indigenous students they serve.

The RBSD is part of the public education system in British Columbia, Canada and in 2016 the British Columbia Ministry of Education was audited by the British Columbia Auditor General. This audit was regarding the Ministry of Education's service delivery of Indigenous Education to school divisions across the province of British Columbia, and how they were supporting school divisions on the implementation of Indigenous Education strategies that would improve the overall outcomes and achievement results for Indigenous students (AGRIE, 2017). This audit resulted in 11 recommendations being made back to the British Columbia Ministry of Education on how they can make further improvements to the British Columbia Public Education system by supporting Boards of Education at local levels through the 11 recommendations, if these recommendations were implemented they would directly aim to support the achievement results of Indigenous students that they serve locally and assist them in working towards closing the gap at a local level. The Ministry of Education responded to the BC Auditor General's recommendations with the following statement:

The Ministry of Education has a responsibility to Indigenous students, their caregivers and communities to provide high-quality learning experiences and improve educational outcomes. The Ministry is committed to aligning those efforts with the commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry fully supports the rights of Indigenous peoples to have control of, and decision-making responsibility for, Indigenous education, and is committed to continuing to work with First Nations partners who are interested in moving towards jurisdiction in education (AGRIE, 2019, p.7).

Therefore the purpose of my Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) is then to examine how the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team who are the

actors that influence the policy and governance within the RBSD can further become culturally responsive within their leadership and decision-making practice. This OIP intends to do this through examining each strand to uncover what may be some culturally safe and relevant solutions that will support the RBSD in being responsive to their goal of Indigenous Education within their strategic plan. This OIP will not only examine my Problem of Practice on Indigenous Education, but further position the relevance as to why there is a need for the RBSD to use a culturally responsive leadership as an approach to support their change process. Including the benefits of having a leadership style that is rooted within cultural safety, and brings in Indigenous pedagogy and methods to support the system from a cultural lens (Department of Education Western Australia, 2015). Being, an Indigenous scholar this OIP is positioned and written from an Indigenous worldview and I believe because I am aware of this, it further supports my Problem of Practice (PoP) from an authentic and relevant place. To further achieve this the use of cultural imagery of a braid of sweetgrass will be used as the 3 Strands (I, II, and III) to identify specific factors within this OIP, including the incorporation of Indigenous storytelling as a way to draw out the PoP and address it throughout each chapter as the braid of research becomes woven together to create an Organizational Improvement Plan. For, when these strands become woven together, they will represent not only the strength of the vision that the RBSD has for how they want to improve the personal and academic achievement results for the Indigenous students that they serve, but how this can be done in a culturally responsive and safe way. One that is rooted within Indigenous ways of knowing and being, but one that is also responsive to Reconciliation in education. This includes the relational accountability that I hold to the

Indigenous community an Indigenous scholar, through reciprocity. Where I can embed parts of my culture and identity in an authentic way in this OIP to support the development of strategies for Indigenous students moving forward in a good way within the RBSD while I account for the relationships that are needed to be developed, maintained and respected for where these Indigenous students and families come from (Wilson, 2008).

Organizational Context

RBSD is a diverse, K-12 public education school division within the province of British Columbia, Canada. This school division has a population of 14,000 students, 2,800 of these students have self-identified as having Indigenous ancestry and come from many diverse communities; First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit. This self-identification process does align with the British Columbia Ministry of Education's policy and requirements of self-identification of Indigenous students. This self-identification process is how the funding is provided by the Ministry of Education to school divisions so that they can provide additional support services to improve Indigenous student outcomes (MOE, 2020). With the priority of Reconciliation as a goal in public education within British Columbia, and 20% of the overall student population at RBSD identifying as Indigenous the RBSD is examining additional ways that they can further align their local school division goals and priorities so that they can improve the overall outcomes for the Indigenous learners that they serve.

The RBSD has a five year strategic plan with five goals, and one of their five goals is specifically focused on Indigenous Education, and how they can improve the overall personal and academic achievement outcomes for the Indigenous learners that they serve (RBSD, 2020). Through this goal emerged the PoP and an entrance point and opportunity for this OIP to assist in weaving together relevant research and examine

what types of solutions may benefit the RBSD and address this problem of practice in a way that was responsive, reflective, respectful and reciprocal in closing the achievement gap that currently exists across their system between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.

Raven Bay School Divisions; Vision, Mission and Values

The vision of the RBSD is that it is one learning community, where all students can achieve their full potential. They have a long-standing positive relationship with the Indigenous communities that they serve which are identified as the traditional territories of (2) local First Nations for which their school division is situated, as well as the Métis and Urban Indigenous community for which also have a significant number of Indigenous learners that attend schools throughout their school division. The RBSD openly express publically and at the public board table the value of these relationships with the Indigenous communities that they serve and have placed these relationships as a priority for them to maintain and seek consultation with as they begin to navigate how to change the outcomes for their students, and view these Indigenous communities as rights holders for the education of their children and want to honor authentic consultation (LEA, 2015). This has been solidified within the RBSD through formal educational agreements between these Indigenous communities and the Board of Education. These formal agreements are identified as; Local Education Agreements (LEA) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Although the RBSD is proud of the continued relationships that they have and maintain with these Indigenous communities they are looking forward to examining Strand I of their story and local achievement results for Indigenous learners (Niemi, 2020). So they can create space to examine this problem of

practice and potential forthcoming solutions and strategies that are deemed to be culturally relevant and culturally safe for the Indigenous students and families they serve.

Raven Bay School Division; History and Context

Raven Bay School Division is a medium sized school division in British Columbia, it has a student enrollment of 14,000 students, 20% (2,800) of this student population self-identify as Indigenous. Over the last ten years (2009-2019) the achievement results, lived experiences and racial inequity gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has not narrowed, rather it is static and/or growing wider where the range of the gap remains between 35-50% difference in the achievement results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners within the RBSD (HAWD, 2019, p.14). Also, it must be noted that the non-Indigenous students within this school division continue to make positive gains in their achievement results and now match the provincial achievement rates for non-Indigenous students at 89-91% completion rates (HAWD, 2019, p.15). Leaving the gap to negatively further expand between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students within the RBSD creating this inequity in achievement results for Indigenous students at a 46% completion rate and non-Indigenous students at 86% completion rate (HAWD, 2019, p.15). These results and the RBSD's strategic plan are what led to my problem of practice for this OIP and the public urgency that the RBSD has expressed on working towards changing these results (Niemi, 2020).

The RBSD has expressed that they continue to face the emerging challenge of how to authentically and systemically implement the Calls to Action on Education that were released in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report in

2015 (Niemi, 2020, TRC, 2015). They also vulnerably express that many of the teachers, and administrators within this school division fear ‘cultural appropriation’ or ‘getting it wrong with good intentions’. And how these fears are what is predominantly preventing them on ‘the how’ to shift their teaching and leadership approach and practices (Niemi, 2019). Further, the RBSD teachers and administrators expressed that they truly want to authentically do this within their practice, but that they just really don’t know how too, and expressed the vulnerable need of further support and guidance on how to explicitly do this in a way that is culturally safe and reflective of Reconciliation (KASIS, 2016, p.36). The result of not knowing how to do this, will then only further continue to perpetuate ‘tokenism’ and ‘superficial’ ways of teaching Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Continuing the cycle of Indigenous students not seeing themselves authentically reflected throughout and within the curriculum, and/or school communities and classrooms that they are currently learning in and/or schools that they are attending (Littlebear, L, 2016, p.73).

Further, these challenges that have been identified do impact the way Indigenous students continue to see themselves, their identity, their culture, and the sense of belonging they have to their school communities, resulting in further disparaging feelings of systemic racism they feel and experience on a regular and ongoing basis in some locations across the education system (HAWD, 2019 & KASIS, 2016). This has been described in the Auditor General’s Report on Indigenous Education as the ‘culture of low expectations’ and this can be seen through the achievement results that are collected and reported out on of the Indigenous students in comparison to non-Indigenous students within the RBSD (AGRIE, 2019 & HAWD, 2018). When these

results were examined over the last ten years (2009 - 2019) the data shows that Indigenous students do have lower attendance rates, lower academic success rates, and lower graduation/ completion rates between themselves and their non-Indigenous peers within the RBSD (FNESC, 2019). These results and growing inequity gap is why the RBSD has a public urgency to make Indigenous Education a priority and a goal within their strategic plan.

Raven Bay School Division; Organizational Structure and Leadership Approaches

The public education system in British Columbia, Canada is to lead and implement the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum for students at a local community level that is governed through a public elected Board of School Trustees. The mission of public School Board Trustees across the province of British Columbia, Canada is to find strategies that will improve local student achievement (BCSTA, 2018). This OIP then views the elected School Board of Trustees as the ones being directly responsible as the actors to not only influence but to redress through their policy and governance structures and practices the inequity gap that continues to exist between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous they are responsible for within the RBSD (BCSTA, 2018). The Board of Trustees has one employee within the RBSD and that is the Superintendent. The Superintendent employs a Senior Administration team to assist with implementing all areas of the curriculum, policies, the school act, and human resources. The RBSD announced publicly that they are committed to developing and implementing culturally safe strategies that work to redress and change the outcomes for Indigenous learners they serve and have identified a number of strategies that they currently have in place that serve as a foundation to build upon. Some of these strategies

are; A hiring rights tribunal special agreement contract so that educational staff across the system can be hired preferably with Indigenous ancestry, one professional learning day in the calendar year is given a specific focus on learning about Indigenous worldviews and perspectives for all staff, there is an Indigenous Education Department within the RBSD that supports all grades K-12 with Indigenous staff, along with the RBSD has a middle management role for an Indigenous principal who can lead many discussions in and around Indigenous Education topics, policies, processes and achievement. Although these foundational structures are in place within the RBSD, more needs to be in place across the system to support this work to improve the results. This is how my PoP evolved so I could examine the current structures and gaps and assist in becoming responsive to the goal of the strategic plan within the RBSD.

Leadership Position and Lens Statement

This OIP is intended to examine a problem of practice to uncover some strategies and solutions that aim to support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration of the RBSD on ways that they can further become culturally responsive within their policy and governance structures across the system and leadership practice. In turn meeting their intended goal of improving the achievement results for Indigenous students within the RBSD. Indigenous Education and equity in Indigenous student achievement across an education system is an area of research that is near to my heart, a passion and value that I hold, and a place where I have chosen to explicitly focus my professional career within education. For I was identified and labelled as a vulnerable Indigenous youth when I went through the public education system within British Columbia (1986-2001). I was able to overcome the systemic barriers of racism, and the

low expectations the system had for me, by having access to proper supports through alternate education. I did face many challenges along the way that impacted my learning and overall educational experience within public education. Giving me the drive, and passion to step back into the same system that I had struggled many times with on finding a successful way out of. I am aware of my positionality and bias for this change to move forward in Indigenous Education however, I also feel that I am in a leadership role that has the ethical responsibility and privilege to assist in systemic change by supporting the discovery of new and emergent ways to remove existing barriers that Indigenous learners are still faced with today inside our public education system. This includes supporting amendments to policy and governance structures that are culturally relevant for current and future generations of Indigenous learners yet to come into the RBSD.

Research on the success of Indigenous learners within public education tells us that Indigenous student school success is inextricably linked to relationships, and none more profoundly than the relationship the Indigenous student has with their family. For, it is through how their families have experienced education that will impact the relationship Indigenous student will have with their current school community (KASIS, 2016, p.44).

The Four Contextual Factors Impacting Outcomes for Indigenous Learners

Contextual factors are the characteristics that are unique to a group, community, society or individual (IGI Global, 2018). Within the context of this Organizational Improvement Plan only the contextual factors that are impacting the public education system within British Columbia and more specifically within the RBSD will be

examined. This will be done by examining the current ways in which Indigenous Knowledge (IK) cultural safety and culturally responsive leadership is woven into policy and governance and the leadership practices of the Board of Education and the Senior Administration of the RBSD. Including, what strategies can be further developed that are culturally responsive to support their decision making processes when they are making systemic decisions that impact the outcomes and service delivery for the Indigenous students and families that they serve across the RBSD.

Cultural Factor

Although the Ministry of Education within British Columbia, Canada has revised the curriculum to include Indigenous Worldviews and Perspectives across all grade levels and subject areas. They have failed to explicitly address cultural safety and cultural unsafety for students, educators and administrators across the public education system (KASIS, 2016, p.56). This failure to do so continues to then impact all parties by the continuation of some ‘superficial teachings’ of Indigenous culture, language and history. The theoretical underpinnings of cultural safety used for this OIP research comes from Jessica Ball’s work with the Early Childhood Development Intercultural Partnership at the University of Victoria (Ball, 2009). According to Ball, Cultural Safety is “the outcome of interactions where individuals experience their cultural identity and way of being as having been respected or, at least not challenged or harmed” (Ball, 2009, p.3). Furthermore, it is imperative to understand that cultural safety is not determined by the provider of a service, rather cultural safety is determined by the recipient of a service. To place cultural safety into the context of this OIP this

means that cultural safety within education for Indigenous students and families is then defined by the Indigenous students and their families across the RBSD.

Ball (2009) further examines that when there is a lack of cultural safety and/or a plan to increase cultural safety within an education system then cultural unsafety continues to occur even if it is unintended. Cultural un-safety is “a subjective sense that one’s cherished values, goals, language, identity & ways of life are denigrated or threatened in an encounter, or that one is being asked to venture into a foreign culture without knowing how to function in it and without positive accompaniment” (Ball, 2009, p.46). A culturally un-safe social environment causes stress and in some cases duress.

Economic Factor

The British Columbia Ministry of Education provides special purpose targeted funding to school districts for Indigenous Education. These funds are allocated based on the number of students that self-identify on their school registration as having Indigenous ancestry. The funding allocation that is received is at a provincial rate of \$1,500 per student, and is funding that is targeted for additional supports that are specific to improve the overall outcomes for Indigenous students within local school districts (MOE, 2018). These targeted funds are specific in that they can only be spent on the use for programs and services that go above and beyond what any Indigenous child is already receiving as part of their regular public education program. Meaning that these funds can only be used to fund Indigenous culture, language and additional support programs that enhance educational outcomes for the Indigenous students who generate these targeted dollars, through the process of student self-identification of their

Indigenous ancestry (MOE, 2018). This OIP aims to also examine this targeted funding, the processes that are in place across the RBSD around this funding and see if there are any gaps in the way that the targeted funding is allocated in relation to the achievement results for Indigenous students.

Political Factor

Indigenous Education can be viewed at times as a political topic in education from early learning to post-secondary. Being the reason ‘why’ it is important for Boards of Education and Senior Staff to meet through the process of collaboration, consultation and ongoing involvement with the local First Nations and the Indigenous communities they serve. For if there is a lack of consultation, nor if it does not occur, there will always remain a stigma of us and them (Battiste, 2013, p.128). This is not healthy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, or educators. This OIP will aim to examine if there are any strategies that can help to improve the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team in their work with the Indigenous community and this political view and external view of the education system.

Social Factor

In Lee Brown's PhD dissertation (2005) titled *Making the Classroom a Healthy Place: The Development of Affective Competency in Aboriginal Pedagogy* he explains that emotional competency in Aboriginal pedagogy is taught through the use of values. He goes on to say that the process of decolonizing education happens then in part through the assertion of Indigenous values. Brown describes affective competency in Aboriginal pedagogy as involving: The recognition of traditional Aboriginal value systems as an essential component of education; Recognizing and incorporating the student's value

system into curricula; and allowing emotions to be “expressed and enthusiastically incorporated into the life of the school and the everyday activities in the classroom” (Brown, 2005, p. 36)

Examining the research of Brown (2005) and what I believe is emerging on how to better align the values of Indigenous Education to the values of the RBSD is that the Board of Education, the Senior Leadership team, the local First Nations and the Indigenous Education department all need to come together and begin to focus their conversations on what they collectively identify as the continued barriers they are seeing within their Indigenous achievement results that can be found in Strand I of this OIP.

If the context and mission of the RBSD is to move towards implementation of their Indigenous Education goal in their strategic plan, relevant strategies will need to be identified on how to do this work.

Also part of the work to change the achievement results for Indigenous learners will be based upon building relationships between the education system and the community. These relationships need to reflect good faith and come from a place that is meaningful and relational with the community, parents, grandparents and extended family members of the Indigenous students that the RBSD serves (KASIS,2016). For it is the way that these families have and continue to experience public education that profoundly influence what their children think, feel, and do in classrooms today. Therefore, one can look at public education as then both the cause and cure for harm and injustice. The starting point of unpacking and self-reflection of Strand I will be to critically examine the Indigenous student data within the How Are We Doing Report from the British Columbia Ministry of Education. And during this examination

pinpointing what are the exact intersections of these crossroads for where any improvements, gaps and/or barriers are, and the possible changes that can be made.

Research within Indigenous Education over the last ten years (2010-2020) has often indicated that Indigenous students love school and that this is through the early and enriching relationships these students have at an early age with school staff . However, there is still a predominant disconnect between the relationship the student has with their school community and the relationship that the school community has with the students families. This disconnect has largely been identified because many Indigenous families are simultaneously still managing the legacy that colonization and residential schools has imposed on their lives past and current (KASIS, 2016, p.39). Reconciling this incongruence and acknowledging the role Canadian society has had in creating it will be an important step towards decolonizing the education practices within the RBSD as they begin to move forward to reconciling relationships with the Indigenous families and communities that they serve. Thus, relationally moving towards a better future that includes the explicit focus of narrowing the achievement gap that currently and continues to exist between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners that they serve within the division.

As Chapter 1, Strand I begins to unpack and examine the RBSD narrative on what does Indigenous Education look like for them, and what are their achievement results informing them of ? It is important that this unpacking of information be done through a guided process and attached to their intended goal within their strategic plan.

Leadership Problem of Practice

Although the RBSD's strategic plan has a goal that focuses on improving the overall achievement success of Indigenous students, this goal does not explicitly address any specific strategies on how they intend to achieve this. Nor, is there a clear understanding between the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team of what the gaps are in what their current achievement results are informing them, and this is imperative so they can begin to develop strategies for the areas of where they need to move forward and close the gaps in achievement within the RBSD between their Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. In the absence of a strategy or strategies to support a goal or goals within a strategic plan it allows for the Board of Education, the Senior Administration team and the RBSD as a system to interpret individually how these results can change on their own terms, placing a significant risk on a non-binary, non-systemic approach occurring in an way that may not be informed by Indigenous community and/or done in a culturally relevant and/or culturally safe way.

Given, the value and public commitment that the RBSD has proclaimed to changing the results for Indigenous learners, through their formal education agreements with the Indigenous communities, Bill-41, Reconciliation and the Calls to Action on Education and the goal within their strategic plan and the inconsistent and lack of direction on strategies that the RBSD has on implementing this goal. I have framed my Problem of Practice around what organizational strategies can further support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team that is culturally responsive and culturally safe to support them in their work in implementing the goal of Indigenous Education within their strategic plan.

Problem of Practice Statement

As the administrator of Indigenous Education within the RBSD I have designed my problem of practice to examine what organizational strategies can be further developed and used with the Board of Education and Senior Administration within the RBSD that is culturally responsive and culturally safe to support them in achieving their goal within their strategic plan of how to positively change the personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous students. This OIP seeks to address what are some possible strategies are that are culturally relevant, responsive and safe again, weaving back to my PoP on what organizational strategies can be developed and used with the Board of Education and Senior Administration within the RBSD that will support them to achieve their goal within their strategic plan of how to positively change the personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous students.

Gap Analysis

In taking into consideration the goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD's strategic plan (2020-2025), and the 40% inequity in the achievement gap that exists between Indigenous (49%) and non-Indigenous learners (89%), and the public commitment the RBSD has to improving the relationship and consultation with the Indigenous community. It seemed that the 2020-2021 school year would then be a chance to begin to examine Strand I, II and III and uncover what potential strategies could aim to support the vision of how to improve the achievement results for Indigenous learners and close the 40% gap in inequity of these results within the RBSD through the decisions that the Board of Education and Senior Administration are making through policy and governance (HAWD, 2019, p.14). Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated "While Indigenous children

were being mistreated in Residential schools by being told they were heathens, savages and pagans and inferior people – that same message was being delivered in the public schools of this country” (TRC, 2015). In order to redress the legacy of Residential schools and advance the process of Canadian Reconciliation, education systems locally need to begin to authentically examine these Calls to Action on Education and work towards policy revisions and leadership practices that include strategies and methods that no longer ignore these recommendations on the Calls to Action on Education but that fully embrace them and inform the system of system reform and change for Indigenous students (TRC, 2015).

Framing the Problem of Practice

During the 2019-2020 school year as I was beginning to develop my own problem of practice, I knew that I wanted to stay focused in my area of experience within Indigenous Education. As, I felt that this was not only congruent with who I was as an Indigenous scholar, but also that my problem of practice would assist in challenging some current barriers that my school division was currently being faced with in Indigenous Education. During this time, the RBSD was also undergoing the development of a revised five year strategic plan for the 2020-2025 school years. As indicated in this OIP one of the goals that the Board of Education arrived on within their strategic plan framework was a goal that focused on changing the achievement results for Indigenous students. This goal was significant, and was aiming to change a trajectory of educational outcomes and close a gap of inequity that existed within their system, yet it did not have any strategies on how they intended to do achieve this as a Board of Education . So, I then began to navigate my own inquiry around what did we currently

know about our Indigenous learners within the RBSD and I did this by examining the current achievement results for Indigenous students within the RBSD (HAWD, 2019). I did this with the intentions of being responsive to the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan, trying to formulate a list of questions and information that I felt was relevant for the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team to examine so they could begin to develop a change process and implementation strategy for this goal. During this process of inquiry and examination of data, achievement results and the reading of reports on Indigenous Education this is where my problem of practice emerged. As, I discovered that there was a significant gap in this area, and if real change was to occur within the RBSD explicit strategies rooted within Indigenous pedagogy should be developed to support this goal in an authentic and culturally safe way, for the Indigenous students and families that they intend to serve through this goal as the RBSD. This is then where the vision of my OIP began to emerge from an inquiry problem of practice to weaving the braid of culturally responsive leadership through policy and governance to improve the outcomes for Indigenous student success. This is where the imagery of Strand I, II and III emerged and what components could or should be held within each of these Strands so that relevant data on Indigenous Education would inform this goal within the strategic plan and be guided by an Indigenous framework. A framework that then supported the Board of Education and Senior Administration team in aligning and examining their worldviews and leadership practices on how they envisioned Indigenous Education within the RBSD. As this OIP begins to weave the 3 Strands (I, II, and III) into a research braid of sweetgrass throughout each chapter it is asked that the reader envision each strand as holding

specific knowledge that not only informs the PoP but significant data and research that is intended to strengthen the organization. When these 3 strands become woven together it is intended to provide direction on how the RBSD may implement their vision moving forward on how to improve their overall personal, academic and racial inequities within Indigenous Education from a culturally responsive and culturally safe way. Listed below are what each of the 3 Strands hold to inform this OIP.

Strand I

Will hold the achievement results for Indigenous learners within the RBSD that are reported publicly in the How are we going report from the British Columbia, Ministry of Education (HAWD), which include the literacy, numeracy, and completion rates (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2018). The intention for Strand I to hold this information is because the RBSD first must self-examine their current narrative and story on their own achievement results locally for Indigenous learners, so they can gain a deeper perspective in what areas that they may need to improve and develop strategies for to support improvement to their overall results.

Strand II

Will hold the Federal and Provincial Ministry guiding documents that inform Indigenous Education in Canada and the Province of British Columbia. These guiding documents have been selected for this OIP and inform my PoP are; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report which include the Calls to Action on Education nationally (TRC,2016), The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 14 and 15 which pertain to Indigenous Education (UNDRIP,2019) this is a document that is also extremely relevant to this OIP as it became legislation in the province of British Columbia known as Bill-41 in November (2019) and the third

document in Strand II is The British Columbia Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education, which include 11 recommendations on Indigenous student achievement improvement (AGRIE, 2019). These documents were thoughtfully selected for Strand II as they are credible sources that provide recommendations on how to support Indigenous Education from a global, national and provincial level (ADRIE, 2019, BC Legislature, 2019, B.C. Ministry of Education, 2018, & TRC, 2016). With the intention of this Strand then informing the RBSD on current research and guiding documents that may assist them in examining their blind spots and gaps as they examine their own Indigenous Education achievement results and narratives from the HAWD report found in Strand I.

Strand III

Will hold culturally responsive leadership (CRL) as the leadership approach that will be used within this OIP to support the PoP. It will examine why CRL was chosen as the leadership approach for this OIP as it reflects an antiracist, antioppressive, critical self-reflection approach to leadership that supports the views and considerations of marginalized students and families and their experiences within education (Davis, Gooden & Khalifa, 2016). When examining leadership approaches that would be most relevant for this OIP I really navigated between transformative leadership and culturally responsive leadership – and although I felt transformative leadership aligned more with the positions of the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team I wanted to be congruent with the intentions of the goal of improving the outcomes and inequity gap for Indigenous learners across the RBSD so I focused in on one leadership approach and the one that I felt most closely aligned to the vision of strategic plan was Culturally

Responsive leadership. Further, I felt that this leadership approach also aligned to support Strand I and Strand II of the achievement results and self-examination of where gaps may exist for Indigenous learners. Therefore, Culturally Responsive Leadership will be seen woven throughout this OIP and more so, specifically on the ways that the Board of Education and Senior Administration could begin to use this leadership approach as a way to improve their own policy, governance and decision making practices.

Moving Indigenous Education Forward through Culturally Responsive Governance

One of the roles of my position within Indigenous Education is to support the RBSD on how they can achieve best practices within the use of their targeted funding for Indigenous Education, along with developing accountability measures that link this funding to Indigenous student success. I feel that through the development of my OIP I will be able to further align strategies and best practices, to current results by being able to examine the achievement results from a local level. I feel that I will be able to do this because I will garner a deeper understanding of the trends and inequity gaps for Indigenous students. Further, I feel that I will be able to build a stronger foundation for the sweetgrass braid of research as I examine what should belong in Strand I, II and III and how the data is relevant to the goal of the strategic plan. I feel that this processes of unpacking the information from a systemic approach will support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team by being able to provide them with all of the relevant research they need in one location so that they can make better informed decisions when it relates to Indigenous Education. With the intention of this OIP becoming a woven framework where all these elements that inform Indigenous

Education can now be woven together. Thus, when Strand I, II and III are in one location the work of a culturally safe process can be developed that supports the key actors and influencers of the RBSD on how they can begin to unpack, examine, and move towards a process of developing strategies that are relevant and pertain to Indigenous Education from a culturally responsive leadership lens. In order to begin building the framework of Strand I, II and III authentically, the following questions need to be considered:



Figure 1.1 Building the Framework of Strands I, II and III of the Sweetgrass Braid

Further, when examining guiding documents that inform recommendation on Indigenous Education it would be negligent to not weave in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report on the impacts that the Residential School System had on First Nations across Canada (TRC, 2015). This report also includes 94 Calls to Action, which can be viewed as strategies on how we as a Canadian Nation can work together across sectors to start improving the relationship between First Nations and non-First Nations in Canada. This is through the implementation of these 94 Calls to Action across the following areas; Child Welfare, Education, Culture and Language, Health and Justice. This OIP needs to hold space in Strand II to bring in the specific calls to action on education so they can become a relevant part of the policy and decision making process within the RBSD. One that is reflective of culturally responsive leadership and culturally safety. Figure 1.2 identifies the various sectors that the 94 Calls to Action impact across Canada.



Figure 1.2 Sectors of the 94 Calls to Action from the TRC

In order to understand why I have chosen to use the TRC Calls to Action on Education as one of the guiding documents that outline best practices for moving Indigenous Education forward in Canada. The Calls to Action are found within (Appendix A) and they emerged from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission forums that were held across Canada between (2012-2014) on the historical effects of colonization and the stories of historical trauma that survivors shared about their experiences within the Residential School System. Resulting, in how these traumas that survivors experienced have been passed down generationally where we are still currently seeing these residual impacts on Indigenous students and families, identity, academic success, grade to grade transitions and sense of belonging Indigenous students have to their school communities today (KASIS, 2016, p.23).

When looking forward, it should be stated that the TRC final report is a national document that was designed to assist Canada on ways to bridge and restore the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada across all public and private sectors that were identified in Figure 1.2. *Sectors of the 94 Calls to Action from the TRC*. In examining this report what I have come to learn is that this national report is complex, political and limiting in regards to the way the education system, educators, administrators and local school boards understand these calls to action, the report, and how they as an education system are to embrace, embed and implement these Calls to Action on Education throughout their policy and governance structures ,classrooms, school communities, teaching and leadership practices. Now, knowing that the Calls to Action on Education were developed as a means to assist in changing the current experience for Indigenous students and families in the all sectors

but in particular to this OIP the education sector, is why this document is being pulled into Strand II of this OIP to act as a guiding document to support the change process within the RBSD. As it can guide and support the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan. Change process takes time, and moving a system towards culturally responsive leadership, will require a plan, space for vulnerability, decolonizing processes, and the ability to critically examine self-biases while being prepared to deconstruct and reconstruct worldviews (Battiste, 2011). The time of reconciliation is upon us, and to truly step into the work and begin to change the outcomes and lived experiences of the Indigenous learners and families within the RBSD this must be done with good intentions, a good heart and a good mind and the actors and influencers of policy and governance need to be open to being guided through a process to embodying new learning and ways of knowing (Cajete, 2012).

This level of engagement and accountability of being responsive and moving towards understanding the Calls to Action within education really do become a local matter for Boards of Education and Senior Administration on how they can make these calls relevant to their own policies and governance structures. This OIP has determined who the actors and influencers are within the RBSD as it relates to the Calls to Action on Education and this has been identified in Table 1. Actors and Influencers that Impact the Calls to Action within Education.

Table 1.1

Actors and Influencers that Impact the Calls to Action within Education.

Actors and Influencers in Policy and Governance	Priority of Policy Area	Actors Reason for Exerting Influence	Degree of Influence	Alliances or Oppositions
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada	High Priority	Reconciliation in Canada	Low – Able to draft the Calls to Action from the community consultations that were held but have no accountability or influence on how systems implement or respond to the Calls to Action	No Alliances
Ministry of Education British Columbia	Medium Priority	Improved Graduation Rates for Indigenous Learners in British Columbia	Medium – The Ministry of Education has the ability to influence local School Districts on how to implement Indigenous pedagogy and the Calls to Action but currently they do not have any accountability measures in place to monitor this	Alliances with the Indigenous Education Department, Local School Boards and the Superintendent
Local School Boards	High Priority	Improved Graduation Rates for Indigenous Learners within their School Districts	High- Local School Boards hold the responsibility for Student Achievement and can implement strategies for accountability on how to respond to the Calls to Action	Alliances with the Ministry of Education, the Superintendent and the Indigenous Education Department

Superintendent of Schools	High Priority	Reconciliation with the Local Indigenous community and improved local Indigenous graduation rates	High – as they follow the directions of the Local School Board	Alliances with all staff and departments within the School District, the Local School Board and the Ministry of Education
Senior Administration	Medium Priority	Cultural Safety systemically, improved Indigenous Graduation Rates	Medium – as they follow the directions of the Superintendent	Alliances with the Staff and Departments within the School District
Indigenous Education Department	High Priority	Reconciliation, Cultural Safety, Authentic Teaching of Indigenous Pedagogy	Medium – High – as they need to follow the directions of the Superintendent, but also the mandate from the Ministry of Education on Indigenous Education	Alliances with the Ministry of Education, Superintendent, Local Indigenous Community, School Board
Local Indigenous Community	High Priority	Reconciliation, Cultural Safety, Local Nation Awareness, and Improved Indigenous Graduation Rates	Medium – They can add pressure onto Local School Boards but have no decision-making authority	Alliances with the Local School Board and Indigenous Education Department
Principals and Teachers	Low-Medium Priority	Cultural Safety, Authentic Resources for teaching practice and Reconciliation	Low – They need to follow the direction of the Senior Administration Team	Alliances with the Indigenous Education Department and Senior Team

This OIP will use a mixed methods approach of incorporating Indigenous quantitative and qualitative data sets that will be used across Strands I, II and III of my OIP. All of these data sets are public documents that were generated either by the federal or provincial government in Canada to inform processes, achievement results and/or best

practices on improving the outcomes of Indigenous learners within the K-12 public education system. Each strand within my sweetgrass research braid will rely on these various Indigenous quantitative and qualitative data sets that will be clustered together. Each have been specifically chosen for a purpose on how relevant they are and how they will act to inform each strand, with the intent that none of these strands will run parallel or in isolation of each other. Rather, the intent is to have all three strands I, II and III woven together to form a braid of sweetgrass that will act as an educational bundle that is culturally rich with information that is relevant to Indigenous Education and data to help inform decision making processes as it relates to Indigenous students within the RBSD. The three strands are as follows and include the documents that will be clustered together within each of the sweetgrass strands and can be found in Figure 1.3 Braiding the Strands of Sweetgrass.

Strand I: The academic achievement results of Indigenous learners within the RBSD (Literacy, Numeracy, Achievement and Attendance Rates , HAWD Report).

Strand II: Federal and Provincial Guiding Documents on Indigenous Education in Canada (TRC Final Report, UNDRIP and Bill-41, AGRIE, Targeted Funding Guidelines, and RBSD Strategic Plan)

Strand III: Culturally Responsive Leadership as a Leadership Approach (Actors of Influence, Collaboration and Consultation, Professional Learning, and Decolonizing Methods).



Figure 1.3 Braiding the Strands of Sweetgrass

Challenges Emerging from Problem of Practice

Reflecting back to the rationale of my problem of practice and the desire that the RBSD has to change the achievement results for Indigenous learners, it must be acknowledged that through this change process some challenges and barriers will emerge, this also includes bias, privilege, vulnerability and the culture of change as a system. Which is why the leadership approach of CRL was chosen to assist in this work and to support the careful navigation that will need to take place with proper metrics in place to ensure culturally safety is be accounted for and included in all aspects of the developing change process within the RBSD. Examining the research of Borrows, Chartrand, Fitzgerald & Swartz (2019) they indicate that the “Implementation of Indigenous rights is expected to be comprehensive and systemic. Implementation has always been thought to include reform, policy and legislative avenues, the synergy of which will lead to full implementation. A legislative framework, one that includes

mandates for a review of existing policies and practices, an action plan, annual reporting mechanisms and a complaints mechanism, is an especially powerful first step toward full implementation” (Borrows, Chartrand, Fitzgerald & Swartz, 2019).

So, as the braid of research continues to be woven together it is about being aware of these potential challenges that may emerge, so that an appropriate response and strategy can be developed to support the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews as part of the change process and support plan in overcoming potential barriers. This also includes acknowledging each barrier out loud as they emerge, so transparency is clear and the reduction of the us and them mentality begins to breakdown. Lastly, it is important to consider incorporating what the research is telling education systems in the guiding documents from Strand II (AGRIE, 2019) this would include the explicit use of the 4 R’s of Indigenous methodology; respect, relevance, responsibility, and reciprocity and how the 4Rs will be used as the framework for this change process moving forward.

Shawn Wilson (2008) describes in his book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*:

“An Indigenous paradigm comes from the foundational belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond this idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge. Who cares about those ontologies? It’s not the realities in and of themselves that are important; it is the relationship that I share with reality. (Wilson, 2008, 2001).

As an Indigenous scholar and researcher, I am aware of the complexity and potential political views that my problem of practice may surface for some of the actors and influencers that my OIP aims to assist. However, I also deeply believe that my problem of practice is an emergent problem that we need to examine within the RBSD

so we can try to better understand what are the healthy, safe, and culturally responsive strategies that move the alignment of the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan to the outcomes that will directly impact the overall success rates for the Indigenous students that the RBSD serves.

Emma Loman and Adam Barker (2015) in their book: *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada*, highlighted another challenge that I believe will emerge throughout the examination and implementation of my OIP is settler identity.

Lowman and Barker (2015) best describe settler identity as:

“Identities are complex, shifting, and multiple. To speak of identity, it to speak of the point at which we make assumptions and pre-cognitive decisions. It is to speak of the part of ourselves where the individual meets society and says, I belong here. While internalizing important lessons for how to belong. Identities are deeply rooted but are also potential sites of challenge. An identity that is obscured or ignored now can also be centralized and acted on in the future. Because identities are shifting and multiple, we believe it is important to interrogate some of the common ways the settler identity functions in order to very intentionally try to shift how we think about ourselves and our relationships with the wider world” (Lowman & Barker, 2015).

In best understanding how to navigate settler identity challenges and the barriers that I may face within my OIP I have listed some potential questions and pondering thoughts that I need to consider when weaving together the sweetgrass research braid, and they are:

1. Who are the actors/influencers within the change process?
2. What are the actors/influencers core values and beliefs about Indigenous Education?
3. What is the actors/influencers current understanding of Indigenous consultation?
4. What is the actors/influencers current fears about vulnerability and cultural safety?

5. How does the actor/influencer best develop relationships?
6. How does the actor/influencer view research as credible?
7. What prior knowledge is the actor/influencer bringing to the table about local data?
8. How comfortable does the actor/influencer feel about examining personal bias?
9. What is the actor/influencers breadth of knowledge with Indigenous Education?
10. How will I know that the actor/influencer believes in the validity of the information?
11. How will it be determined that the actor/influencer needs more time with self-efficacy?

And as I sit within this section of challenges of my OIP I want to also remind myself that as an Indigenous scholar I need to reflect and think about my own story, my narrative of who I am, where I come from, my own privilege and why I have chosen to take on this problem of practice. So that I can be mindful of including in my OIP what Davidson and Davidson (2018) discuss in their book *Potlatch as Pedagogy: Learning through Ceremony* that Indigenous research should also include the following considerations:

1. Learning Emerges from Strong Relationships
2. Learning Emerges from Authentic Experiences
3. Learning Emerges from Curiosity
4. Learning Occurs through Observation
5. Learning Occurs through Contribution
6. Learning Occurs through Recognizing and Encouraging Strengths

7. Learning Honours the Power of the Mind
8. Learning Honours History and Story
9. Learning Honours Aspects of Spirituality and Protocol

This OIP is being intentional about creating space for the weaving together of two worldviews and perspectives and acknowledges that various challenges will emerge and need to be considered, however holding the space to examine, unpack and acknowledge these challenges is what will ultimately allow for an authentic and culturally safe process to occur. One that is relevant to the change proposed and in this case the change is about improving the outcomes for Indigenous students within the RBSD through supporting the Board of Education and the Senior Administration with strategies that are culturally safe and relevant.

Leadership – Focused Vision for Change

The goal of this OIP is to support the RBSD in being able to align their goal of Indigenous Education within their five year strategic plan (2020-2025) to some organizational strategies that are developed with the Board of Education and Senior Administration as they begin to navigate through a change process in a culturally responsive way.

Change Readiness

The RBSD is governed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education and the school act of British Columbia on the delivery of public education curricula and services that support the educational learning outcomes for all students within the education system. The British Columbia Ministry of Education has had some provincial changes over the last eight years (2012-2020) that directly impact Indigenous Education and the expected service delivery of curricula across the K-12 system. The two significant changes are 1. The British Columbia

Ministry of Education now requires all school districts across the province to have strategic plans, and these strategic plans need to be submitted to the Ministry of Education for accountability purposes. The Ministry of Education also requests of school districts how they are being responsive to the TRC, UNDRIP, the BC Tripartite Agreement as it relates to the Indigenous students and communities that they serve. This annual request keeps Boards of Education across the province actively engaged in the conversation around Indigenous Education and the How are we doing report (HAWD). 2. The British Columbia Ministry of Education has revised the entire K-12 curricula across all grade levels and subject areas to now have the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in all subject areas and grades.

With the emergent of these two significant changes to education within the province of British Columbia, it has positioned the RBSD in an active place to be ready for change as it relates to Indigenous Education and the improvement of the achievement results for Indigenous students (MOE,2019). The Board of Education within the RBSD does have formal education agreements with the Indigenous communities it serves, along with a targeted funding model on additional service delivery and the annual in-service training day for Indigenous Education for all staff across the education system. Building upon this momentum that has occurred within Indigenous Education provincially over the last eight years and the newly released Indigenous Education reports, and the RBSD (2020-2025) strategic plan and goal for Indigenous Education, I feel that the RBSD is ready to embrace this change and will work collectively with all their partner groups to ensure that there is a process of authentic consultation in place moving forward. I do not feel that there is any resistance for the need to change within the RBSD, rather I feel it is just about the opportunity to now develop the process. A process that is culturally responsive, relevant and reflective of the Indigenous students, families and communities the RBSD serve.

Indigenous Methods

Indigenous Education strategies should be rooted within Indigenous knowledge and framed through Indigenous Methodology. As this gives the researcher the permission to explore Indigenous identity, culture, language, and traditions, through personal story and narratives (Battiste, 2013). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) also explains Indigenous Methods as a way for Indigenous researchers to give validity to Indigenous knowledge, language, and culture. By using personal narratives as part of their research in developing outcomes. I intend to use Indigenous methods as part of my OIP when examining possible organizational strategies that are culturally relevant to support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration teams goal of Indigenous Education within their strategic plan. I intend to do this so that I can safely weave together Indigenous knowledge, culture, language, and traditions into this OIP for the purpose of supporting the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan of the RBSD. By using Indigenous methods, it allows the Indigenous researcher the ability to better understand the impacts the participants have had in their lives that have shaped his/her lived experience(s) (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous methodology further allows the researcher to explore his/her role, and obligations that he/she has as an Indigenous researcher in the research relationship; this includes the accountability that you have to your relations. Accountability demands that the researcher has a personal vested interest in the integrity of the methods that he/she is using, and the usefulness of the results for future use in the Indigenous community. Weber-Pillwax (2001) along with Wilson (2008) suggest that Indigenous methods; have four key factors known as the 4R's of Indigenous research and learning:

respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility. By following the 4R's of Indigenous methods within my OIP it ensures for me as the Indigenous researcher that I am upholding my ethical responsibility in a safe way for myself, my relations, and the Indigenous community that I am intending to serve through my problem of practice.

Moving Indigenous Education Forward Through Policy and Governance

What I have come to realize is that my role as the researcher is that I also have a vested interest in the successful implementation of this OIP. And, that in order to do that I will need to have a well-developed framework, knowledge of the resources that I intend to use to support my inquiry, and an effective outline of the actors and influencers that will be involved at various times throughout my research. This also includes a strategy or strategies for seeking the proper supports internally from the school district and externally with the local First Nations and Indigenous community that the RBSD serves. However, this can only come when systemic supports are aligned from various levels of governance, leadership and local First Nations community involvement (Battiste, 2013).

As I continue to weave these narratives together I will need to have the self-courage to dive deeper, become reflective, reflexive and responsive in order for my problem of practice to be authentic and responsive to the needs, challenges, barriers and stories that I will have the privilege to carry and embed into this Organizational Improvement Plan. Leading to the problem of practice of what organizational strategies can be developed to support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team as they work towards the implementation of the Indigenous Education goal within the strategic plan of the RBSD. The auditor general of British Columbia states in their final

report on Indigenous Education that “Graduating from school greatly improves a person’s life chances, particularly for employment and income-earning prospects. But when in 2000 only 39% of Indigenous students graduated from high school in B.C., compared to 78% of non-Indigenous students efforts need to be made more explicitly at the local education level” (AGRIE, p.10)

And that local Boards of Education need to examine what directions that they have taken to specially close these gaps, and examine what they are locally doing to monitor their Indigenous student data trends, achievement results and the way that they are reporting out on the measurements of how they intend to effectively close these gaps from a local level. Explicitly in the British Columbia Auditor General’s Report on Indigenous Education it clearly indicates that “In the absence of clear direction and a focused and shared system-wide effort, the education system may continue to fail many Indigenous students by not closing the gaps as rapidly as possible, across the district” (p.12). This statement leans back into my problem of practice of how to identify strategies that are culturally safe and relevant that have clearly defined metrics with assigned shared responsibility to support the goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD strategic plan.

This OIP aims to assist the RBSD in being able to closely examine their variations of effectiveness and evaluate their measures and findings in a way that they can move forward to improve their policies and leadership practices to become more culturally relevant to their goal for improving Indigenous Education across the system.

Further, as the RBSD moves to develop and implement strategies that support the goal of Indigenous Education the Board of Education should acknowledge the

findings of the British Columbia Auditor General's Report including the statement that: The British Columbia public education system continues to impact Indigenous students by having racism of low expectations. As, this was highlighted in the (AGRIE,2019) report that this is the phenomenon of educators and district staff across the province of British Columbia and their attitudes of having lower expectations for students based on preconceptions or biases stemming from social attitudes. Aligning to the relevance of why the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team would benefit from using CRL as an approach to support their decision making as it relates to policy and governance within Indigenous Education and the implementation of this goal within their strategic plan.

The British Columbia Auditor General also gave the explicit example of the use of B.C. School Completion Certificates also called evergreens, and how they were originally intended to be given out as a certificate to recognize the work of students with significant special needs who could not be expected to graduate from high school. However, the AGRIE report found in their audit that Indigenous students were more likely than non-Indigenous students to be granted an Evergreen – even when Indigenous students who did not have a special needs designation (AGRIE, p.13). Again, connecting back into my OIP as to the 'why' it is that I have chosen CRL as the leadership approach to anchor and support this change process forward .

Change Drivers

For systemic change to occur within the RBSD the key actors and influencers for systemic change first need to be identified, consulted, and involved within this Organizational Improvement Plan. And as research indicates, for the success of

culturally responsive leadership to occur successfully within a system and adopted within an institution, there is a need for a leadership preparation plan to emphasize the rationale of the approach. (Toure, 2008, p.1288). This OIP must also consider what further data and research may need to be clustered within Strand I, II and III that would include; who the key actors and influencers are within the RBSD, including any specific data, reports, and/or governing policies that may impact the actors and influencers in their ability to make decisions. Once all of this information is collected together it will inform a preparation plan for the change driver of who will lead the change process within the RBSD as it relates to the Indigenous Education goal within the strategic plan.

Figure 1.1 identified these actors and influencers, however they may be amended and/or shift in their level of priority as they begin to fit into their level of influence as it relates to the work and implementation priorities of this OIP for the RBSD. I have also identified the following reports as the significant guiding documents that will not only inform this OIP throughout various chapters but these reports are relevant to the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan and the key actors and influencers who have been identified to assist in driving this change forward.

1. Raven Bay School Division Strategic Plan (2020-2025)
2. Raven Bay School Division Policies on Indigenous Education
3. Ministry of Education Policy and Audit Requirements on Indigenous Education
4. HAWD Report (2019) How are we doing report from the Ministry of Education
5. First Nations Local Education Agreements (2014-2019)
6. Superintendents Dimensions of Practice
7. Board of Education Dimensions of Practice

8. Truth and Reconciliation Final Report Calls to Action on Education
9. Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report and Calls to Action
10. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
11. The British Columbia Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education

Chapter 1 Conclusion

Chapter 1 highlights the significance of connecting culturally responsive leadership to the decision making and leadership practice of the Board of Education and Senior Administration to support policy and governance processes and structures as it relates to Indigenous student outcomes within the RBSD. As the administrator of Indigenous Education, I am in support of the RBSD finding new strategies that are culturally safe and reflective of the 4Rs of Indigenous pedagogy which are; relevant, reciprocal, respectful, and relational. And as Chapter 1 highlighted the goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD and how the intentions are to improve the overall personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous students, then it must be mentioned that the school division will need to become reflexive and vulnerable in examining their own data that informs them of their own narrative of Indigenous Education within the RBSD, however this must be done through a process that is culturally safe for all participants.

Chapter 2, focuses on what is culturally responsive leadership and why it was chosen as the leadership approach to support this organizational improvement plan in moving forward towards the goal of improving the educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Chapter 2 also examines the key actors and influencers that are necessary to be involved in helping to move the RBSD forward through this transformational change.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Chapter 1 introduced the history, context, vision, and goal for the RBSD and my problem of practice of what organizational strategies could be used with the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team to better support their goal of improving the overall personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous learners. This chapter will build upon the problem of practice that was introduced in chapter 1 and lean into further examining what CRL is and why this is the leadership approach that was chosen to best support the RBSD in helping them weave together their vision and goal of improving the personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous students.

Further examined will be the components of Strand II of the sweetgrass research braid, and how to connect the 4Rs of Indigenous methodology (Wilson, 2008) relational accountability, reciprocity, relationships and relevancy into this chapter as the framework that will be used for leading the change process. This chapter will conclude with six key considerations/solutions to the problem of practice that should be considered by the RBSD as these solutions/strategies could support the intentions of the Indigenous Education goal within the strategic plan. Strands I, II and III support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration on ways in which they can develop their leadership and decision making practice to become more culturally safe, relevant, relational, reciprocal and respectful of meeting their goal and intentions of Indigenous Education.

Leadership Approach to Change

As the administrator of Indigenous Education within the RBSD I have designed my problem of practice to examine what organizational strategies can be used with the Board of Education and Senior Administration team that will support them to achieve their goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan. I aim to address and uncover what these strategies are and/or could be as I weave together Strands I, II and III of this sweetgrass research braid. In order for this to occur I must First examine the leadership approach that will be used to support this OIP, and why it was selected. I have chosen to use Culturally Responsive Leadership for this OIP for it not only aligns with the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan, but it also aligns with the values of Culturally Responsive Schools and how there is a strong ethos that is based on respecting and valuing the diversity within the school community. Further CRL builds upon the skills and prior knowledge of what Indigenous students are bringing with them to the classroom to ensure that learning is relevant for them (Department of Education Western Australia, 2015).

Before the change process is discussed, this chapter must be positioned in the foundation of what culturally responsive leadership is, and how this leadership approach when used while making decisions that relate to Indigenous learners will support a more balanced, ethical and culturally safe process for all parties involved (KASIS, 2016, p.42). I believe that this leadership approach will not only impact the organizational leaders, actors and influencers from the RBSD on a professional level, but it will impact them on a personal and individual level as this leadership approach does require oneself to examine their worldview, values, beliefs and biases and to not just look, but see and

to not just touch but feel, and not to just listen but hear, and not just to take but to give (Kirkness, 2013, p.169). Culturally responsive leadership therefore provides a method to examine as a collective the depth and awareness of how a system can move towards becoming responsive in a way that is culturally safe and relevant for the Indigenous students and families that it serves. CRL as an approach will support my the problem of practice and assist in guiding the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team as they develop measurable outcomes and strategies to improve the personal and academic results for Indigenous learners within the RBSD.

What is Culturally Responsive Leadership

Culturally responsive leadership is derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, which involves those leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Common practices include emphasizing high expectations for student achievement; incorporating the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities into the school curriculum; working to develop a critical consciousness among both students and faculty to challenge inequities in the larger society; by creating organizational structures at the school and district level that empower students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic communities (Johnson & Fuller, 2014).

Becoming a culturally responsive leader is all about creating a movement away from oppressive structures within the education system and focus in on the inequities that interplay with power, privilege , and the culture of low expectations that exist for marginalized students (Sleeter, 2011, p.11). Culturally responsive pedagogy also at

times can be misunderstood for cultural celebration, and great risk comes with this misunderstanding, because CRL is not just about celebrating the diversity that exists within the education system, rather it is more focused on how you disrupt and alter the day-to-day decision-making processes to consider the impact of “sameness.” If we have the courage and conviction to challenge our historical practices and to move to “newness” inspired by our knowledge of the lived experiences of our students and their families, then we can say we are doing the work of culturally responsive leaders. (MacKinnon, 2018).

Author Bonnie Davis (2012) describes CRL by indicating that “If we want to raise the academic achievement of all students in our schools, we must address the school culture and personal lens with which we view our students.” This is the critical starting point for all school leaders. If we are to make change, we must first look at our attitudes and beliefs about the children and families we serve. What we believe about our students is generally developed out of dominant discourses and knowledge that have been maintained within our education system for decades, as well as our own privilege, biases, and power. Power is at work through the ideas and practices that have come to appear as “normal” in schools. Privilege, on the other hand, is about the assignment of particular benefits to certain groups over others. Privilege comes in many forms and in different degrees for different people (Davis, 2012, pp.37- 39).

CRL is also connected to Culturally Relevant Teaching, a term that was coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings in 1994. This term describes how teaching practice that is culturally relevant incorporate three things within their curriculum and teaching practice and those are; 1. Holding high expectations for all students 2. Assisting students in the

development of cultural competence and 3. Guiding students on how to develop a critical and cultural consciousness, where the uniqueness of each student is not just acknowledged, but nurtured (Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J.E., 2011, pp.66). CRL is also connected to bias, and what we believe about our students and their families. If we are to become culturally responsive leaders, it is critical to examine our biases, for what we believe matters. Our beliefs inform our decisions, which in turn, have an impact on the children and communities we serve. Looking to ourselves for context enables us to see our students as products of their lived experiences, revealing the ways in which they, like ourselves, sometimes feel included as well as excluded (Ladson-Billings, G. 2011, pp.383- 396). After looking in the mirror and reflecting on our beliefs and practices, we must then examine our impact on student learning and well-being. To do this, we must come to know our students (Niemi, S., & KASIS, 2016).

CRL pushes systems to examine their deficit thinking, decision making, privilege, power, biases, and inequities that exist within their practices and processes as it relates to the ethnicity and culture for the students they serve (Department of Education Western Australia, 2015, pp.5-9). In turn allowing for the opportunity to then deconstruct and reconstruct a system to become responsive based on their findings. CRL as a leadership approach does interconnect well with my problem of practice of what organizational strategies can be used with the Board of Education and Senior Administration team to assist them in closing the achievement gaps and racial inequities that exist within the RBSD for Indigenous learners (HAWD,2019) .

When leaders begin to understand and embed culturally responsive leadership into their leadership practice, they may experience many personal growth changes and

challenges in regard to their own worldview and personal biases (KASIS, 2016). This process of critical self-examination of deconstructing and decolonizing their practice around the topics of racism, privilege, power, culture, and deficit achievement thinking must not be rushed. Rather, these leaders need to be guided through a culturally safe process with a trained facilitator who can walk along side them to coach and care the vulnerability that may arise for them from unpacking this information. Battiste (2013) states that :

Education is the belief in possibilities. It is a belief about knowledge systems. It is a belief in the capacities of ordinary humans. We as educators must refuse to believe that anything in human nature and in various situations condemns humans to poverty, dependency, weakness, and ignorance. We must reject the idea that youth are confined to situations of fate, such as being born into particular class, gender, or race. We must believe that teachers and students can confront and defeat the forces that prevent students from living more fully and more freely. Every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change. In other words, education can be liberating, or it can be domesticate and maintain domination. It can sustain colonization in neo-colonial ways or it can decolonize it (Battiste, 2013, pp.175).

Culturally responsive leadership then has the power and ability to impact, inform and shape policy and governance within an organization. However, only after those that are responsible for decision making have all gone through the proper training and professional growth development in being able to better understand what culturally responsive leadership is, and how it can be used to inform their decision making processes. I do believe that culturally responsive leadership can inform my problem of practice and assist with deconstructing and reconstructing the collective worldviews around policy and governance decisions that are relevant to the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan (2020- 2025) of the RBSD.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

“The concept of leadership has been an enduring topic of research as we try to understand how to create the changes we desire in our world. In the educational arena, leadership has been the subject of debate for decades, as educational professionals aim to determine the one best way to provide leadership for student achievement” (Senge, 2008, p.25).

As I begin to align this section of my OIP to the 4Rs of Indigenous research methodology and culturally responsive leadership, I will highlight the need to critically examine why the RBSD would benefit from an Indigenous framework that supports their goal of Indigenous Education. For, an Indigenous framework can assist in weaving together two worlds of knowing and being to support a goal and intended outcome that has an Indigenous focus. Leaning into what Styres (2013) informs us about Indigenous research and criteria;

While researchers are trained to conform to the models provided for them, Indigenous researchers have to meet these criteria as well as Indigenous criteria which can judge research as not ‘useful’, ‘not indigenous’, ‘not friendly’, ‘not just’. Reconciling such views can be difficult. The Indigenous agenda challenges Indigenous researchers to then work across these boundaries. It is a challenge which provides focus and direction which helps in thinking through the complexities of Indigenous research (p.140).

I have chosen the 4Rs as the Indigenous framework that will assist in propelling this change forward within the RBSD. As the 4Rs locate this change path in relation to the key foundational principles of Indigeneity. Which is the only place from which any of us can write or speak with any degree of certainty. “The position of who we are in relation to what we know, in this way, I then am accountable for my own cultural location, which situates me in relation to my community” (Styres, 2019). When you acknowledge your positionality and privilege it peels back the layers of your intentions, motives, and rationale for why you are stepping into the research, allowing you to come

in as your authentic self so that you can connect your head and your heart in a good way for the work you are about to begin. This is why I have chosen the 4Rs as the framework to support culturally responsive leadership as it allows my OIP to then weave together policy and governance that is then respectful, relevant, reciprocal, and responsible of the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan of the RBSD.

The 4 Rs as a Framework to Guide Culturally Responsive Leadership.

Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1991) first proposed the 4Rs as a way to guide universities and colleges in supporting Indigenous student success and the role and responsibility that the institution has for the ways in which they provide Indigenous Education for the Indigenous students that they serve (Kirkness, 2013). An Indigenous axiology is built upon the concept of relational accountability. Right or wrong; validity, statistically significant; worthy or unworthy: value judgements lose their meaning . What is more important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations in the research relationship – that is, being accountable to your relations. The researcher is therefore a part of his or her research and inseparable from the subject of that research (Wilson, 2000).

Respect

In considering what respect looks like from an Indigenous perspective as it relates to this OIP it can be viewed as to what Pidgeon (2019) describes as “What does it mean to truly indigenize the academy, and the fundamental question around who is setting the agenda. Is it the Euro-western interpretation of Indigeneity (where the institution determines what is valued as Indigenous) or is it the Indigenous communities within and outside the institution that are setting the agenda?” (p.222). Respect can then

be defined within this context of this OIP as cultural safety, and if the RBSD can define and describe how they view respect as it relates to the Indigenous students that they are intending to serve as part of their goal they have identified within their strategic plan. And if they can define how the Indigenous community inside and out were involved in the planning, and delivery of the overall goal and strategies that they intend to move forward with as a school division.

Relevance

When examining the strategic goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD and the strategies that emerge to support this goal in moving forward to achieving the intended outcome of improving the achievement results of Indigenous students. The RBSD must ask themselves are these strategies relevant to the Indigenous students we are serving and were these strategies developed through a respectful process that involved the Indigenous community inside and out in the planning and development (AGRIE, 2019). Ensuring that they again, are relevant and culturally safe for the Indigenous students that they are intended to serve. Relevance can then be viewed in relation to this OIP as collaboration and collective decision making from the beginning with the Indigenous community inside and out as it pertains to topics, policies and decisions within Indigenous Education.

Reciprocity

The work of Indigenous scholars as warriors of truth is an act of reciprocity (Alfred, 2004). Reciprocity is an act of reconciliation with Indigenous communities and should be viewed and regarded as an act of intent on how the institution intends to be in relationship in a meaningful and purposeful way with the Indigenous community they

serve inside and out. Reciprocity then can be viewed in relation to this OIP as the ways that the RBSD are using the research presented in this OIP from the guiding documents on Indigenous Education as best practices and informed processes on the protocols of the best ways that they can move forward to support their intended goal of Indigenous Education. Philosophically asking themselves as the Board of Education and Senior Administration if the decisions that they are making about Indigenous Education include reciprocity and an authentic benefit for the Indigenous communities that they serve.

Responsibility

When we examine responsibility as it relates to this OIP and the intentions that the RBSD has to the goal that they have defined for Indigenous Education within their strategic plan I reflect on what Pidgeon (2019) discusses on how transformation will be influenced by those that are making the changes and how then “Indigenizing the academy, insurgent education, decolonizing education – or whatever other concepts we use to speak to the authentic ways of Indigenous being and knowing – support Indigenous student success to meet the broader goals of Indigenous self-determination and empowerment through this transformation within our education system” (p.225). Aligning then the responsibility of the system to culturally responsive leadership and the work that they as a Board of Education and Senior Administration need to uptake as part of their collective responsibility to inform their personal and professional leadership practice and worldviews as they make systemic decisions that relate to the Indigenous students and families they serve.

The 4Rs were chosen as a framework to lead this change process within this OIP as they are grounded in Indigenous worldviews, thought, research and perspective. Too,

often Western frameworks from non-Indigenous scholars are used and adapted within public education as an attempt to change the outcomes for Indigenous students within an education system, leaving the adapted Western framework not relevant for the Indigenous students as it does not reflect their worldviews, perspectives or ways of knowing and being. The 4rs are grounded in Indigenous research and were developed by Indigenous scholars, making them the most relevant model to support this change process for improving the outcomes for Indigenous students; as the 4Rs lean into the values of Indigenous worldviews and are viewed and regarded by the Indigenous community as being authentic and relational (Kirkness, 2013).

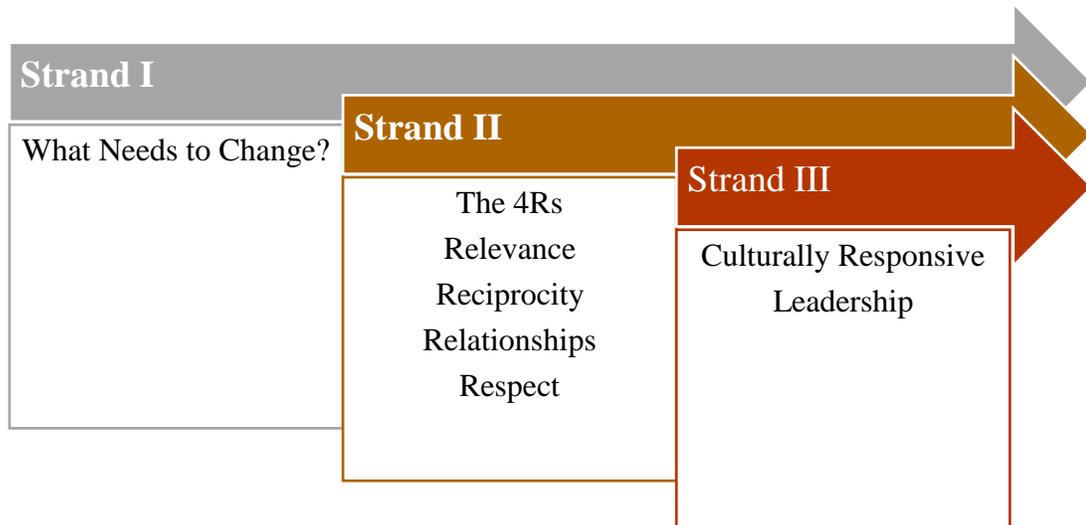
Critical Organizational Analysis

This section examines how the RBSD can begin to weave together the parts of Strand I, II and III of this OIP on what is needed to change, to show the process of how this change can occur through the use of the 4Rs as a framework. Chapter 1 informed this OIP that the RBSD continues to struggle with an achievement gap that exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (HAWD, 2019). As a result of this data, the RBSD has committed to a goal within their strategic plan that focuses on Indigenous Education and as research continues to tell us “Closing the racialized achievement (opportunity) gap has been one of the central issues in education research for over a decade” (Khalifa, 2016). And in order to authentically examine this what Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) realized through their research in educational leadership is that culture plays a significant role in shaping the thinking, behaviours, and practices of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the actors of influence and decision making (p.1279). Weaving together; Chapter 1 findings on what to change,

with Culturally Responsive Leadership as the leadership approach and the 4Rs as a framework is what is reflected in Table 2.1 of Weaving the Braid of Culturally Responsive Governance. Merging these elements together in this section will be done through the use of the 4Rs and I will do this by describing how culturally responsive leadership applies to each of these 4Rs and how this is linked back to chapter 1 on what this OIP has identified as what needs to change in order to support my problem of practice of what organizational strategies can best support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team of meeting their goal of improving the personal and academic achievement results and racial inequities that exist for the Indigenous students within the RBSD.

Table 2.1

Weaving the Braid of Culturally Responsive Governance



Weaving together the Braid of the 4Rs

As the 4Rs are explored in this section, this OIP will also navigate the guiding questions that are found within Strand I, Strand II and Strand III so that this OIP captures the essence and intentions of what needs to be woven together. This includes the what we know needs to change, to the how we intend to do that in this OIP through the use of the 4Rs as a framework and how these 4Rs can be supported through the use of culturally responsive leadership as a leadership approach. If the intention of the RBSD as stated within their strategic plan is to change the trajectory of the personal and academic achievement results for the Indigenous students that they serve, then the use of these 4Rs as they are written within this section of this OIP can then be viewed as an Indigenous method for how the Board of Education and the Senior Administration may want to paddle forward to support their vision of implementing their goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD.

Organizational Analysis and Relevance

Each of the 4Rs will have a table that will provide some guiding questions that support each of the following Strands I, II and III of the braid of research that should be considered when developing any strategies that support the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan of the RBSD. These guiding questions support a relational approach to weaving in Indigenous thought, perspectives and worldviews into policy and governance across the system as it relates to the goal of Indigenous Education and the intended outcomes that the RBSD has indicated that they want to achieve within the next five years (2020-2025).

Table 2.2

Relevance within the Braid of Sweetgrass

Strand I	Strand II	Strand III
What do we know about the RBSD that needs to change in regards to Indigenous Education? And how do we know this information?	How do we know that the intended change is Relevant for Indigenous students? And how do we know that the intended change aligns with the goal of the RBSD?	In what ways will culturally responsive leadership support the intended change and influence that Board of Education and Senior Administration in their leadership and decision making practice?

The Raven Bay School Division has committed through their five year strategic plan to a goal of improving the achievement outcomes for the Indigenous students that they serve. They have access to their local data that informs them on the literacy, numeracy, and graduation results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and the gap that continues to exist between them (HAWD, 2019). If the Board of Education and the Senior Administration are aware of this information and have access to these results from a local and provincial level, the question then becomes are the strategies that are being used to support this goal relevant to Indigenous students? And how will the influencers that are developing these strategies lean into culturally responsive leadership to guide them in their decision making processes? A way to examine relevance would be for the RBSD to collect all their local and provincial data and achievement results as it pertains to Indigenous students. As they begin to collect all of these data sets, it would be then appropriate to work alongside the Indigenous community inside and out of the RBSD to assist within the deconstructing of what these

data sets are informing them about the achievement results of the Indigenous students that they are serving. As, what culturally responsive leadership informs us is that the leader and in this case the board of education and the senior administration of the RBSD need to have self awareness of self and his/her values, beliefs, and/or dispositions when it comes to serving children of a marginalized race, this is known as critical consciousness (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016).

In bringing together the Indigenous community with this leadership group it would allow for authentic and relevant conversations to occur about the data sets in a way that is not derived from a Euro-western thought, rather a co-collective thought of two worldviews deconstructing the data where there is an infusion of Indigenous voice and thought into the process from the beginning. Thus, allowing for strategies then to be developed together that support what the data sets are telling the RBSD about the Indigenous students that they serve, and what the Indigenous community informs the division about what they feel is relevant as strategies to change the trajectory of these results.

Organizational Analysis and Reciprocity

The Raven Bay School Division has committed through their five year strategic plan to a goal of improving the achievement outcomes for the Indigenous students that they serve. They have access to their local data that informs them on the literacy, numeracy, and graduation results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and the gap that continues to exist between them. If the Board of Education and the Senior Administration are aware of this information and have access to these results from a local and provincial level, the question then

becomes what Indigenous research within Indigenous Education is the RBSD using to inform them about their goal that they have committed to?

Table 2.3

Reciprocity within the Braid of Sweetgrass

Strand I	Strand II	Strand III
What do we know about the RBSD that needs to change in regards to Indigenous Education? And how do we know this information?	How do we know that the intended change is Reciprocal for Indigenous students? And how do we know that the intended change aligns with the goal of the RBSD?	In what ways will culturally responsive leadership support the intended change and influence that Board of Education and Senior Administration in their leadership and decision making practice?

Reciprocity can then be viewed within this OIP in relational to what Wilson (2008) describes as “the responsibility that comes from bringing a new idea into being (or articulating/making visible an existing one) the new relationship has to respect all of the other relationships around it. Forming and strengthening these connection gives power to and helps the knot between to grow larger and stronger. We must ensure that both sides in the relationship are sharing the power going into these new connections. As, without reciprocity, one side of the relationship may gain power and substance at the expense of the other” (p.79). This OIP does see that the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team does have a responsibility in understanding what reciprocity means as it relates to their goal of Indigenous Education, as these influencers are entering into a relationship within the Indigenous community that is built on ensuring they are not only giving back in the relationship through the use of research that is

relevant to their goal of supporting Indigenous students. However, the intention of reciprocity would be to also support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team through culturally responsive leadership in arriving at the why they would need to do this. As, culturally responsive leadership informs us that “when school leaders reproduce racial oppression, a number of practices are visible; including internalized racial inferiority, the embracing of color-blind ideology, and the maintaining of exclusion around the topics of race, culture and community, leading to detrimental outcomes for marginalized students ” (Gooden, 2005, Khalifa, 2013, and Lopez, 2003, p.1286). The weaving of reciprocity within this OIP will need to be done with intention, a good heart and a good mind. As, this element of the 4Rs can be hard for both sides if there has been no foundational relationship established as conversations within this element can be hard, vulnerable and emotional especially when trying to arrive together through a change process.

Organizational Analysis and Relationships

The Raven Bay School Division has committed through their five year strategic plan to a goal of improving the achievement outcomes for the Indigenous students that they serve. They have access to their local data that informs them on the literacy, numeracy, and graduation results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and the gap that continues to exist between them. If the Board of Education and the Senior Administration are aware of this information and have access to these results from a local and provincial level, the question then becomes what measures are in place that solidify the relationship that the RBSD has with the Indigenous community it serves.

Table 2.4

Relationships within the Braid of Sweetgrass

Strand I	Strand II	Strand III
What do we know about the RBSD that needs to change in regards to Indigenous Education? And how do we know this information?	How do we know that the intended change is rooted within Relationships with the Indigenous community inside and out of the RBSD? And how do we know that the intended change aligns with the goal of the RBSD?	In what ways will culturally responsive leadership support the intended change and influence that Board of Education and Senior Administration in their leadership and decision making practice?

How does the RBSD know that these relationships are authentic to supporting their overall goal of their strategic plan of improving the personal and academic achievement results of Indigenous students. Moving into what culturally responsive leadership then tells us that “culturally proficient leaders take responsibility for helping each student understand himself or herself as a unique, competent, and valued member of a diverse cultural community rather than a deprived minority in a dominant culture, culturally responsive leadership would then therefore promote these conditions through a systemic vision” (Lindsey, 2004, p.44). Weaving together the understanding of the why that the RBSD needs to affirm through policy and governance their commitment to authentic relationships with the Indigenous community inside and out to assist them in achieving their goal and vision for Indigenous Education across their division.

Organizational Analysis and Respect

The Raven Bay School Division has committed through their five year strategic plan to a goal of improving the achievement outcomes for the Indigenous students that they serve. They have access to their local data that informs them on the literacy, numeracy, and graduation results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and the gap that continues to exist between them. If the Board of Education and the Senior Administration are aware of this information and have access to these results from a local and provincial level, the question then becomes what metrics are in place to measure the accountability of validity of respectfully embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the strategies that support their goal of Indigenous Education within the RBSD.

Table 2.5

Respect within the Braid of Sweetgrass

Strand I	Strand II	Strand III
What do we know about the RBSD that needs to change in regards to Indigenous Education? And how do we know this information?	How do we know that the intended change is Respectful of Indigenous ways of knowing and being? And how do we know that the intended change aligns with the goal of the RBSD?	In what ways will culturally responsive leadership support the intended change and influence that Board of Education and Senior Administration in their leadership and decision making practice?

How then can the Board of Education use culturally responsive leadership as the approach to support them in ensuring that their decision making and leadership practice is then congruent, authentic and respectful of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Culturally responsive leadership therefore, can assist the Board of Education and Senior Administration in this area of my OIP by helping them to understand the importance of the why and how to resist deficit constructions of marginalized children within their decision making and leadership practice. As, research within culturally responsive leadership informs us that “educational leaders need to be explicit in how they resist oppressive education and leadership practices for marginalized students” and this comes from when they can personally examine their own privilege and personal biases on “deficit-orientated opinions and views about students and families of minority, and how it is possible that historically education systems have blamed poor students, and those of minority for the problems in education” (Flessa, 2009; Mckenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p.1289). Navigating this OIP back into what the Auditor Generals Report on Indigenous Education (AGRIE, 2019) informed the British Columbia Ministry of Education on how a culture of low-expectations exist for Indigenous students across the British Columbia education system as it relates to the data and evidence gathered within the audit between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners. So, as one examines how to move forward in a respectful way of weaving in Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the RBSD it should be considered that this be done through a culturally responsive leadership lens, that does involve the Indigenous community inside and out.

Further weaving together Strand I, II and III of how culturally responsive leadership can be used as a leadership approach within education to support the Board of Education and Senior Administration through their policy and governance structures to support their decision making when it relates to closing the achievement gap of inequity for Indigenous students within the RBSD.

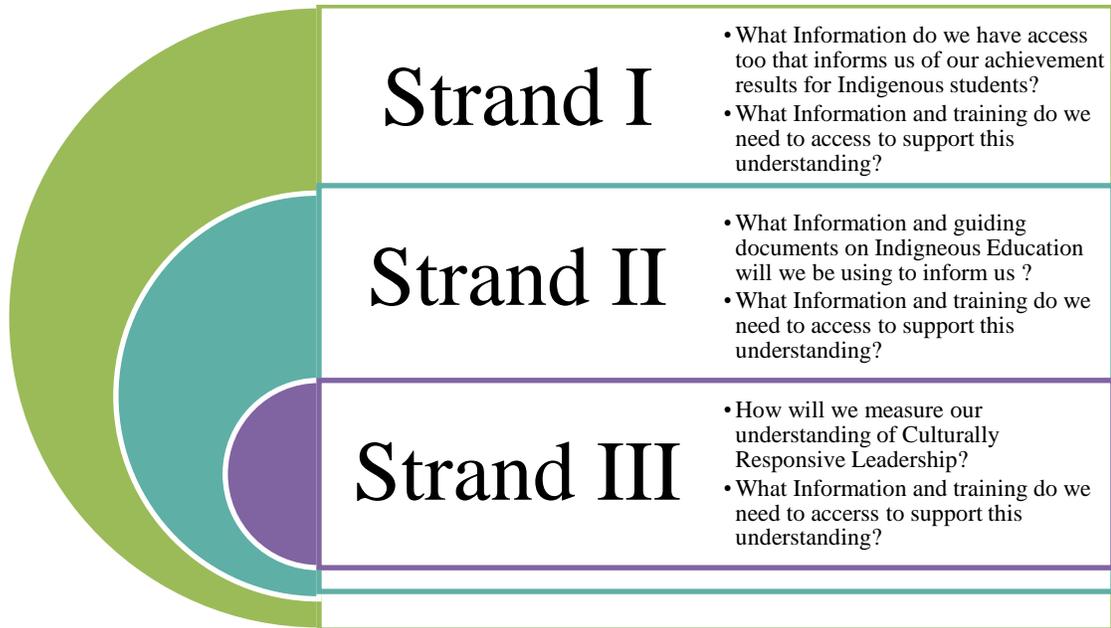
Possible Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Through the examination of what needs to change for Indigenous students within the RBSD found in Strand I, II and III. Six possible solutions have been identified that aim to support the Board of Education and the Senior Administration on how this may be done through the dimensions of using culturally responsive leadership as the method of weaving together a culturally responsive governance framework that supports decision making and processes as it relates to policy and governance and the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan.

Weaving the Braid of Culturally Responsive Leadership with Policy and Governance

Weaving the braid of culturally responsive leadership with policy and governance inside the RBSD will require the time for the Board of Education and the Senior Administration to first understand what are the components of Strand I, II and III of this OIP and what resources may be required for them to further understand and unpack this information in a way that is culturally safe, and reflective of the Indigenous communities that they serve. Taking some dedicated time will allow the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team space to develop a process and collaboration structure that is supported by the appropriate human and material resources that are reflective of all Strands I, II and III of this OIP. This includes identifying any action items that they need to achieve together to develop group consensus including identifying who the key actors and influencers are within the RBSD and the Indigenous community they serve that need to be a part of this process. Table 2.6 Culturally Responsive Governance Organizer serves to assist the RBSD in organizing Strands I, II and III for the work that they have ahead of them.

Table 2.6

Culturally Responsive Governance Organizer

Leading into the six key considerations and possible solutions that will assist the Board of Education and the Senior Administration on addressing my problem of practice of what strategies can be used with the Board of Education and Senior Administration to support their intended goal of improving the outcomes for Indigenous students within the RBSD. The six possible solutions that have developed from this OIP are listed below.

Solution No.1

Define Culturally Responsive Leadership and the 4Rs with the Board of Education, Senior Administration and the Indigenous Community. This solution would be to introduce the problem of practice with the Board of Education, Senior Administration and the Indigenous communities that the RBSD serves. This would be done by bringing these

collective groups first individually together and then collectively together, as these initial conversations would need to be explicit in understanding that each of these actors or influencers may view the problem of practice differently through their scope, agency and worldview. During these gatherings there would then be a need to garner each of their understandings of the goal within the strategic plan as is pertains to Indigenous Education and how the problem of practice aligns to better supporting them in developing the appropriate strategies through the use of culturally responsive leadership and the 4Rs. This will require dedicated time, and a reiteration of defining culturally responsive leadership and the 4Rs so that all of the actors can first individually see themselves and where they sit within their own leadership practices and then collectively how they view culturally responsive leadership and the 4Rs as a working group. Allowing for the evolution of some strategies on how they can collectively best provide capacity within Indigenous Education that ultimately supports their strategic goal of improving the personal and academic achievement outcomes for Indigenous students and families within the RBSD.

Solution No.2

Examine the Relevant Indigenous Achievement Data and Guiding Documents on Indigenous Education (AGRIE, UNDRIP, TRC) with the Board of Education, Senior Administration and the Indigenous Community. This solution supports the RBSD and the Indigenous communities they serve as they begin to weave together their understanding within culturally responsive leadership, the 4Rs and the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan. Once there is a collective understanding of CRL, it would then be the appropriate time to examine all of the relevant achievement

data, and guiding documents that inform Indigenous Education; The British Columbia Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (Articles 14 and 15 as it pertains to Indigenous Education), and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action on Education. The examination of all these relevant documents can be done as a collective group, as this would allow for all of the key actors and influencers as a collective group to now build upon the 4Rs of respect, relationships, relevance and reciprocity as they begin to unpack their understanding and positionality in sharing their personal worldviews collectively together as they begin to develop an understanding of these documents that inform them of Indigenous Education. The intention of this solution is that the working group that is established are now beginning to become cohesive and align their new and collective knowledge to culturally responsive leadership practice and the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan for the RBSD.

Solution No.3

Develop an Indigenous Education Accountability Committee. As the RBSD Board of Education, Senior Administration and the Indigenous communities continue to build upon their understanding of what needs to change within Indigenous Education to improve the outcomes for the Indigenous students they serve. This solution suggests that the RBSD develop an accountability committee as a measure through policy and governance that is responsible for the regular, and ongoing evaluation of the goal and strategies that emerge to support Indigenous Education. I envision that this committee would seek to have 'Cultural Brokers' from all levels and sectors within the RBSD and the Indigenous communities that they serve. As this would allow for authentic bridge

building and adhesion to occur when examining how the strategies that support the goal of the strategic plan for Indigenous students are actually impacting and/or creating barriers to the implementation of this change process. This solution further suggests that the Indigenous Education Accountability Committee be aligned with the five year term of the strategic plan, to ensure that Indigenous Education continues to remain a priority of the Board of Education and that this is done through the proper development of this committee through the RBSD policy and governance reporting structures.

Solution No.4

Develop a role for an Indigenous Administrator on Senior Administration. This solution suggests that another metric of ensuring that Indigenous voice has a continued place within policy and governance and decision making within the RBSD is that a position be created for a Senior Administrator that is responsible for the Indigenous Education portfolio from an executive level. Where this position will become part of the Senior Administration team and work alongside the Board of Education and Superintendent to support the goal of Indigenous Education. This solution also suggests that this position have a hiring rights exemption for candidates who identify as Indigenous. Thus, leaning back into the 4Rs of holding relational accountability that this position will hold to the Indigenous community that they serve within the RBSD. Further, this solution also suggests that this position, is given the ability to make decisions and participate in all actions that relate to Indigenous Education within the RBSD. This would include policy and governance decision making, budget, consultation, hiring aspects, and systemic reform and change of the Indigenization of the RBSD as it relates to the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan.

Solution No.5

Evaluate existing Indigenous Education Strategies. In order to know where to go next in the evolution of Indigenous Education strategies that support the problem of practice. There needs to be a method and metric of how the RBSD evaluates their current Indigenous Education strategies as a system. As, this evaluation process will then inform the 4Rs of ensuring the relevance of Indigenous ways of knowing and being are embodied in the way that strategies are developed and implemented across the RBSD. This solution suggests that this evaluation of Indigenous Education strategies fall into the work of the Indigenous Education Accountability Committee, and that they are brought forward for evaluation by the Senior Administrator of Indigenous Education within the RBSD. This would then allow for authenticity of scope, sequence, positionality, and cultural safety. This solution suggests that in order for the RBSD to become responsive to their goal of improving the outcomes for Indigenous students, there does need to be a structure in place to collect, review, monitor, evaluate and readjust to what is respectful, relevant, relational and reciprocal to the Indigenous students they serve, including the intended outcomes that the RBSD is trying to improve within Indigenous Education.

Solution No.6

Develop an Indigenous Education Policy. This solution suggests that as the RBSD continues to seek and support positive transformation of Indigenous Educational outcomes through relevant learning and action from respectful, and reciprocal relationships, alongside other practices of Reconciliation. This solution therefore suggests that the RBSD move towards the development of a specific policy on

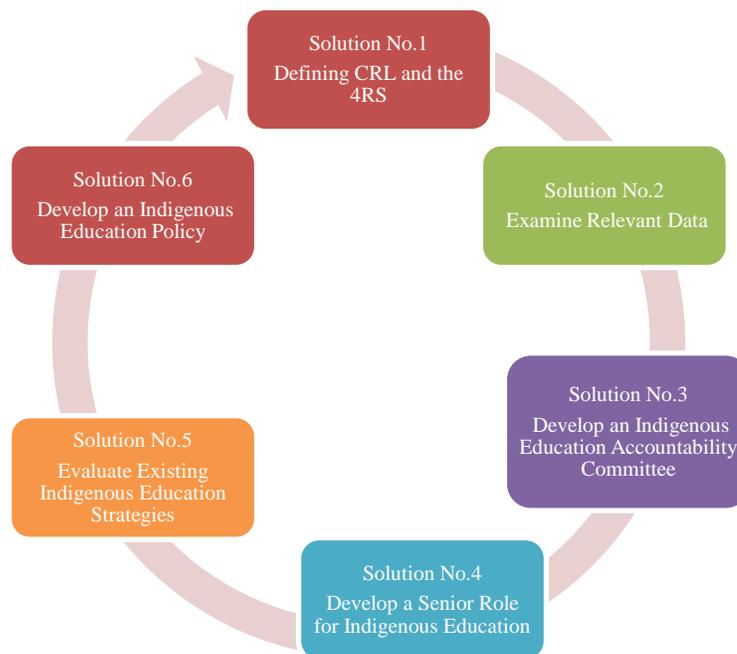
Indigenous Education that affirms their continued commitment to the weaving of this relationship with the Indigenous communities they serve. This solution envisions that this policy would be one that equally applies to all persons that are associated with the RBSD; employees, students, other learners, the Board of Education, and all community partners. Further, this solution envisions that the development of an Indigenous Education policy would then move this commitment of the RBSD from a select group of stakeholders; the Board of Education, Senior Administration and the Indigenous community to all members (Principals, Vice-Principals, Teachers, Support Staff, Students, Families and Partner Groups) that are now associated with the RBSD. Thus, providing a mechanism through policy and governance of a systemic Indigenization process where Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing and relating are now incorporated into all aspects of the educational system. Where there is a deliberate and public affirmation of weaving together two worlds; Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and Western knowledge systems.

These six possible solutions that are proposed within this OIP should be considered as a process that will need to be scaffold in to the change process of the RBSD as they all require time, a plan, and consultation. Each of these solutions are intended to work alongside each other as they build a collective understanding from each other. These solutions have been proposed in the sequence No.1 – No.6 on what would allow for the best implementation of a change process that involves a collective effort of a system and community as they come together to address a change process that is responsive to meeting the needs of the Indigenous Education goal within the strategic plan. Upon examining these solutions the RBSD should define a reasonable timeline of

up to two school calendar years to lay the foundation and begin the work to move through the sequences from solution one to solution six.

Table 2.7

Six Solutions to Support the Change of Indigenous Education



Ethical Considerations and Challenges

This section pertains to the ethical considerations that must be reviewed as part of this organizational change process. Throughout this section two worldviews of ethical considerations will be reviewed, An Indigenous Worldview and a Western Worldview both of these worldviews must be equally considered for this organizational improvement plan to be able to move forward in a good way. Further, this section will also identify where there is a convergence of these ethical considerations as a starting place for the RBSD to be able to weave this work together in a good way. One that is

reflective of all partners in this change relationship as they begin to binary fuse together their role and position as it relates to; culturally responsive leadership, the 4Rs, privilege, racism, and reconciliation. This process needs to be reflective and respectful of the ethics brought forward for consideration within each worldview; as they will each need to be examined as this OIP weaves together a way forward in how it supports the overall goal of improving the outcomes for Indigenous Education within the RBSD.

Ethical space was theorized initially by Roger Poole in his book *Toward Deep Subjectivity* (1972), and applied by Willie Ermine (2007) to the two sets of intentions confronting the in-between space that connects Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems. Ermine's inspiration came from the space that is created when Indigenous and Western thought are brought together. It is not a merger or a clash, but a space that is new, electrifying, and even contentious, but ultimately has the potential for an interchange of dialogue of the assumptions, values, and interests each holds. Adding ethics to this space then speaks to the harms and enhancements, and entertains our personal capacity and our integrity to stand up for a cherished notion of good, responsible and duty. In other words, it makes one consider the limits of the boundaries one chooses, and reconsider how what one chooses may infringe on another's space or standards, codes of conduct, or the community ethos in each community. It is a space that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can begin to truthfully speak to the predicaments and issues that face them and the standards they speak for. It is an enabling space that needs to be a foundation for a first encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2013, p.105).

Indigenous Leadership Ethics

Indigenous leadership ethics can be found in the 4Rs of Indigenous Education; relational accountability, reciprocity and respectful relationships and relevance (Battiste, 2013). When Indigenous scholars, and/or researchers are embarking on a research journey and more specifically to the change process of this OIP the following ethical questions need to be considered: What is relational accountability of the Indigenous community to the Indigenous students that they serve as it relates to this OIP and the

change process that they are about to embark on? What Indigenous community protocols need to be considered from a local nation perspective before the work in this OIP is conducted on their traditional territory? Leaning into what Smith (2012) informs us about decolonizing processes and contesting spaces is that “Indigenous perspectives and ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationships with each other and with the environment, the term respect is consistently used by Indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships with each other” (p.125).

So, what then should the RBSD take away from this section of this OIP on Indigenous Leadership Ethics; I would suggest that they take away that everything takes time, including the time to build relationships with the Indigenous community. However, once these relationships are established a layer of authenticity and trust can begin to form, and this will continue to deepen and strengthen if the Indigenous community feels that they are in a reciprocal relationship that is not rushed and forced upon, rather one that is organic and relevant to their needs of the Indigenous community (AGRIE, 2019). Finally, this OIP would suggest that the RBSD develop strategies that are relevant to Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as this would allow for a shared collectively in the accountability of Indigenous Education between the RBSD and the Indigenous community it serves.

Western Leadership Ethics

There are some ethical considerations that must be considered within this OIP as it pertains to the board of education and the senior administration of the RBSD. These ethical considerations are found within the following governing documents:

1. The British Columbia School Act on Public Education
2. The British Columbia School Trustee Associations Code of Ethics that govern local boards of education
3. The British Columbia School Superintendent Association Dimensions of Practice that govern senior administration
4. The Teacher Regulation Branch and Code of Ethics for Teachers for those actors and influencers whom also hold a valid teaching certificate

When reflecting on all these governing documents and the problem of practice within this OIP it is imperative that those who are initiating this change process pull all these documents together, deconstruct and examine them to ensure that there is a clear understanding and assessment of any potential barriers and/or challenges that may be faced when trying to implement this OIP. For, Fine (1993) tell us that truly “the only safe way to avoid violating principles of professional ethics is to refrain from doing social research all together” (p.267).

Convergence of Ethical Considerations: Indigenous and Western Worldviews

Although it is imperative to understand that two worldviews of ethics need to be considered when implementing a change process for the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan. As there is a need for both to be independently considered as they do differ within their intents, there is a convergence where these worldviews overlap and fuse together. This convergence is found within the guiding documents that inform the British Columbia Ministry of Education on best practices for Indigenous Education.

1. The Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education
2. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
3. The British Columbia Tripartite Agreement
4. The How Are We Doing Report on Indigenous Education
5. The Truth and Reconciliation Final Report and Calls to Action on Education

These guiding documents, along with that transformative curriculum change that the British Columbia Ministry of Education went through to include Indigenous worldviews and perspectives across all grade levels and subject areas (2012- 2020) serve as the confluence where these two worldviews come together and provide ethical considerations for the public education system that are culturally safe, informative, relational and relevant to the goal of improving the personal and academic achievement results for Indigenous students.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Chapter 2 focused on culturally responsive leadership as the leadership approach to support this OIP. This chapter also examined the 4Rs of Indigenous methodology (Smith, 2012) and how they can be used to propel change forward when they are woven together with culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa, 2016). Also chapter 2 explored what needed to change, and how this change could be accomplished through a braid of culturally responsive governance using the 4Rs and culturally responsive leadership as the core values to support this change. And lastly, this chapter offered six solutions to be considered that would address the problem of practice and the ethical considerations that need to be considered alongside these solutions when weaving together Indigenous and Western worldviews and perspectives. The final chapter of this OIP will explore the implementation, evaluation and communication plan of the organizational change process.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Evaluation and Communication

Chapter 2 examined culturally responsive leadership, the 4Rs as the Indigenous framework to propel this organizational improvement plan forward, along with six possible solutions, and the ethical considerations that need to be considered for the successful implementation of this OIP. Chapter 3 should be viewed as Strand III of the braid of weaving together culturally responsive leadership within policy and governance. Where the three guiding documents of Indigenous Education will be examined deeper in this section; The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action on Education (TRC, 2015), The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2020) Articles 14 and 15 and The (11) recommendations found in the British Columbia's Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education (AGR,2019).

Each of these guiding documents will set the table in a specific way from what we learned in Chapter 1 / Strand I on what the changes were that need to occur, to how this can be attained within the public education system to better meet and improve the outcomes for Indigenous students. Further, this chapter will serve as the final component on how it is that the RBSD can use these guiding documents as a way forward to support the disruption of the existing narratives of the current culture that may exist on the low expectations of Indigenous students and their abilities to thrive and transition seamlessly throughout the K-12 public education system (AGRIE, 2019). This will be done through the examination of a clear change implementation plan with the identified key actors and influencers that will lead this change within the RBSD and the Indigenous community.

Change Implementation Plan

Currently, the RBSD went through the process of developing their second five-year strategic plan (2020-2025). One of the five goals within their strategic plan was Indigenous Education and how the RBSD could improve the personal and academic outcomes and racial inequities of the Indigenous students they serve. Through this strategic goal the intent for my OIP and PoP is to support the Board of Education, Senior Administration and the identified Indigenous partner groups within the RBSD on how they can develop a culturally responsive governance framework. This framework would aim to assist the working group on how to connect their decisions around the strategies they develop to support their goal in the strategic plan to be aligned and informed by the three guiding documents that support best practices within Indigenous Education. In using a framework as such will allow for the strategies that become developed from this working group to reflect cultural safety, and authenticity of Indigenous ways of knowing and being that are relevant, relational, respectful and reciprocal on how they are incorporated and implemented in a good way that is culturally responsive. Including what the partner groups and Indigenous communities are sharing in how we can paddle forward as a collective to meet the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan.

First, these strategies to support this goal on how they are implemented will need to be identified through a series of consultation meetings that will need to be held with the Senior Administration team of the RBSD in working alongside the Indigenous Education leads, and Indigenous community partners who will help to guide the work of Indigenous Education. Weaving together Strands I, II and III to show the clear

connections between the PoP – the goal of the strategic plan – and the strategies that have arrived from the consultations and how these strategies connect back to the three guiding documents for Indigenous Education and the evolution of what will become a culturally responsive framework that will weave this work forward as we paddle towards the change process and implementation. Figure 3.1 is a visual of how the three guiding documents are wrapping around Strands I, II and III to support this change process.

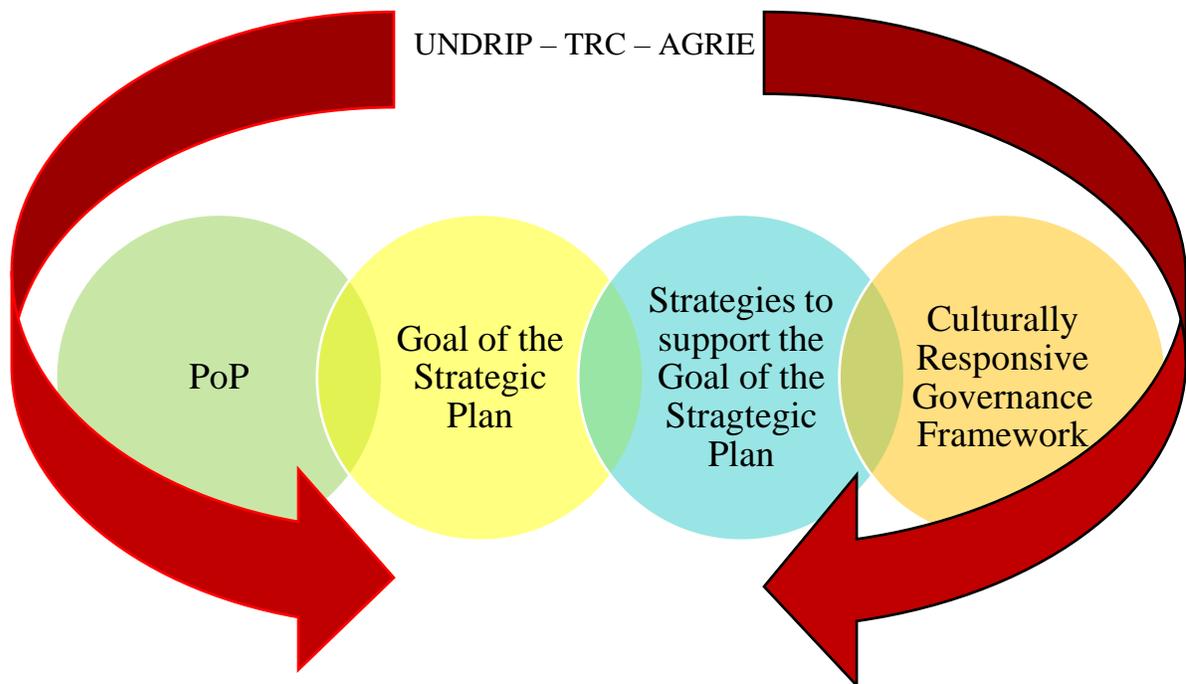


Figure 3.1 Weaving together Recommendation in Indigenous Education

The plan for managing this implementation and change around this goal will need to be carefully thought out, and will require a significant amount of consultation with the proper actors and influencers to ensure that the change implementation plan is properly supported from a senior level of governance. As this may require some funding for resources, and an allocation of release time from the RBSD's general operating

budget for the change recipients to be able to come together to conduct the following business:

1. Come to a common understanding as a collective on what culturally responsive leadership is.
2. How to work collectively towards building a culturally responsive framework that will support this change and implementation plan.
3. How to then develop through the lens of culturally responsible leadership a culturally responsive governance model for the RBSD.
4. How we are going to respond in a culturally responsive way when we monitor and need to adjust the change as it is becoming implemented and woven into the culture of RBSD.

Taking into consideration if the intended change is to implement a culturally responsive framework that supports the problem of practice and the strategies of the organizations goal of improving Indigenous students personal and academic success across our system. There will be a need to organize, cluster, and scaffold together the learning for each partner and stakeholder group on whom is going to either be the governors of accountability of the change, and/or the influencers of this change and/or the change recipients whom will lead the change across the system.

One of the beautiful things about this change process is that this OIP is showing how an organization can develop a culturally responsive policy and governance framework within their organization to three guiding documents that sit outside the organization yet have the same goals of improving the personal and academic outcomes for Indigenous

learners within an education system. In theory weaving these documents recommendations on Indigenous Education while bringing together all the governors, stakeholders, rights holders, influencers and change recipients when beginning the work of change implementation. Grounding this change process from the influence of Indigenous research, legislation and recommendations for best practices in Indigenous Education that sit outside the organization. Leaning into these documents will not only set the table for the development of a culturally responsive change process, but will help to guide the conversations with each partner group that the RBSD is holding discussions and professional learning with as the work begins to weave this change process into the culture and fabric of the organization.

Authentic and meaningful consultation and collaboration will be required with all partner groups within the RBSD and the Indigenous communities they serve as this will help to set the table in a good way for this change implementation plan. As this proposed change is a delicate topic that is aimed at changing the personal, academic and lived experiences of a marginalized group of students within the public education system. To begin this change process, of developing a culturally responsive framework to support the goal of improving the personal and academic outcomes of Indigenous learners within the RBSD. This change implementation plan within this OIP will be guided by a culturally responsive framework that will hold the 4R's of Indigenous research as the core values; Respect, Reciprocity and Relationships and Relevance (Kirkness, Barnhardt, 1996).

Shawn Wilson (2008) Cree scholar from Opaskwayak Nation in northern Manitoba, Canada states in his book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods:*

[O]ne of the select great strengths that Indigenous scholars bring with them, is the ability to see and work within both Indigenous and dominant worldviews. This becomes of great importance when working with dominant system academics, who are usually not bicultural. As part of their white privilege, there is no requirement for them to be able to see other ways of being and doing, or even to recognize that they exist. Oftentimes then, ideas coming from a different worldview or outside of their entire mindset and way of thinking. The ability to bridge this gap becomes important in order to ease the tension that it creates (Wilson, 2008, pg.44).

Further, Wilson (2008) posits Respect, Reciprocity and Relational

Accountability as Indigenous Methodologies, and cites Evelyn Steinhauer's statement:

“respect is more than just saying please and thank you, and reciprocity is more than giving a gift” (Wilson, 2008, pg.86). Indeed, Indigenous research principles are meant to ensure that the research conducted by Indigenous scholars “will be honored and respected by their own people” (Wilson, 2008, pg.59). Such research criteria are then so fundamental to Indigenous communities that they “will not allow entry by researchers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, until they have met the Indigenous communities' conditions” (Wilson, 2008, pg.59).

According to these principles, researchers must engage in “deep listening, and hearing with more than ears” and develop a “reflective, non-judgmental consideration of what is being seen and heard” as well as “[a]n awareness and connection between logic of mind, and the feelings of the heart.” Ultimately, researchers bear the “[r]esponsibility to act with fidelity in the relationship to what has been heard, observed, and learnt” (Wilson, 2008, pg.59). Wilson goes on to further suggest that from an Indigenous perspective, research is then ceremony, because it is about making connections and strengthening them, which is a process that takes “a lot of work, dedication, and time” (Wilson, 2008, pg.89-90).

Weaving the 4R's into the fabric of a culturally responsive framework will take a series of authentic consultation meetings ideally taking up to (12-16) weeks to complete. 'Setting the table' – with each round of consultation meetings with the perspective partner groups will require a checklist of the appropriate documents and guiding questions to begin this work in a good way. Table 3.1 Setting the Table will serve as the purpose of this checklist for this OIP.

Table 3.1

Setting the Table Checklist

Setting the Table Checklist	
✓	The 4Rs: Respect, Reciprocity, Relevance, and Relationships
✓	Culturally Responsive Leadership Guiding Questions
✓	Strand I, II and III
✓	Indigenous Education Goal Within the Strategic Plan
✓	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
✓	Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action on Education
✓	British Columbia Auditor Generals Report on Indigenous Education

With the checklist as a consideration, this OIP has identified the following groups to assist in moving this change path forward in Indigenous Education and they are; Local First Nations, Métis Nation, Urban Indigenous Community, Board of Education, Senior Administration, and the Principal and Vice-Principal Association. All of which would become 'Cultural Brokers' in assisting in bringing forward their perspectives on the change process of improving the outcomes for Indigenous students

within the RBSD. *Figure 3.2* describes The 4Rs and the Influencers of the Change Process.

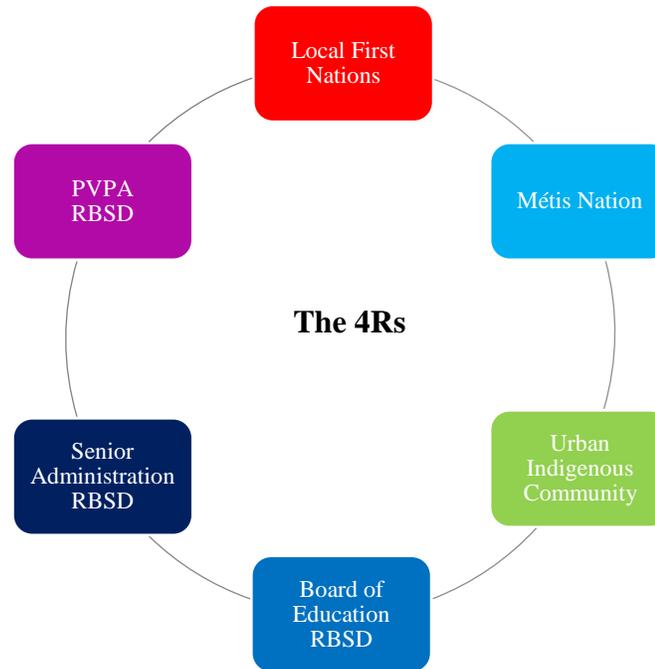


Figure 3.2 The 4Rs and the Influencers of the Change Process

The rationale will be to first meet with each of these groups separately. As this will allow for a vulnerable and authentic consultation initial meeting to occur around culturally responsive leadership, change process, and the intention of an implementation plan as it relates to each partner groups involvement and how they see their role positively impacting the outcomes for Indigenous student success within the RBSD.

Keeping in mind that each partner group will arrive at the table seeing through a different lens, and worldview from which they hold their area of expertise and influence over. And, for this change process and implementation plan to become effective there

will need to be time, and consultation given to each of these groups separately at first so they can begin to position themselves within the work ahead.

In my current role as the Indigenous Education administrator for the RBSD it would be viewed as an appropriate position within the organization to work alongside the Senior Administration team to help guide and facilitate this change process and implementation plan moving forward because in this role I have been able to establish relationships and layers of trust with each of the identified partner groups. I am also Indigenous, and I feel that I carry with me in my bundle a layer of credibility of championing Indigenous Education in my career over the last fifteen years, being held up by my community for the work that I have done. All of which are viewed as factors in various ways for different partner groups, in the relationship and accountability we hold to one another (Wilson, 2008).

Some will value into my skills, education and years of experience, and some will value my culture and identity, not placing one value more significant than the other, just different views from different partner groups. And, I believe that it is imperative that I am fully aware of my privilege that I carry as I enter into each of these consultation meetings so I can adapt and meet the intended outcomes of gathering each group together to meet the intended outcome of the change process and implementation plan and how we intend to collectively arrive there together.

As I prepare for these consultation meetings, I will need to be best prepared not only for putting together an internal team from the Indigenous Education department that can help me to co-facilitate these consultation days to gather information, but to

ensure members of the senior leadership team are also available to help host round table discussions and collect feedback in a culturally safe way on the how the discussions taking place reflect a culturally responsive change path moving forward. Awareness of certain Indigenous and non-Indigenous protocols that are required by each partner group must be considered and included on how to properly invite them to these consultation meetings. Active listening is required as the invitation process needs to come from the partner groups on who they feel need to be in the room, and ideally where they feel that these meetings should be hosted. All of this is done with the intent of creating safety of each partner group so there is not the feeling of a power imbalance during this consultation process, and that this work is being done in a good way from the beginning.

The following considerations have been made as a guide for the RBSD when working with the following partner groups to ensure that ethics, protocols, and the 4Rs are followed to ensure that the work that is intended to begin is done in a good way:

Local First Nations

Considerations: First a meeting with the education directors of each local First Nations should be arranged to discuss the rationale of hosting a consultation meeting, and why RBSD feels that it would be important to capture the local First Nations voice in this change process and implementation plan as it relates to their children. Guidance then needs to be taken from the education director of the local First Nations on if a formal invitation would need to go to Chief and Council and leave it to Chief and Council to decide whom needs to be in the meeting and/or if the education director will take on the facilitation of inviting the community members that they feel need to be in the room.

Also, a conversation should take place at this time in regards to where these consultation meetings should be hosted, in order to create the feeling of cultural safety and that it is more accessible to the community members of the local Nations if it were to be hosted in their community. Once this information is known a budget can be prepared for the following items; rental of the meeting space, food for the meeting, likely the meeting will be hosted as a community dinner, honoraria for the Elders in attendance and be prepared to gift the participants whom come to attend and witness this event and do this good work together.

Table 3.2

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Local First Nations

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Local First Nations	
✓	Contact Education Director at the Local First Nation
✓	Discuss the proposed meeting, rationale and location
✓	Confirm meeting location
✓	Confirm who will take on the responsibilities of the invitation
✓	Ask protocol questions around, opening of the meeting, food, budget, gifting, and honoraria for Elders and select guests
✓	Set proposed meeting date is possible

Métis Nation

Considerations: First ensure that you have met with the local First Nation communities, as RBSD is conducting business within their territory and this would be a protocol to consult with them first. Once this has been completed then reach out to the Métis community and do this through the Memorandum of Understanding Agreement Protocol (MOA) that the RBSD has in place in regards to the process of consultation with the

Métis community. This ensures that the consultation team is contacting the appropriate Métis representative(s) and walking through a similar process of discussing who and how the invitation should go out to the Métis community members, the location of the meeting, the honoraria for the Elders and the appropriate gifts for the participants.

Table 3.3

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Métis Community

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Métis Community	
✓	Contact the appropriate Métis community members as defined through the Memorandum of Understanding
✓	Discuss the proposed meeting, rationale and location
✓	Confirm meeting location
✓	Confirm who will take on the responsibilities of the invitation
✓	Ask protocol questions around, opening of the meeting, food, budget, gifting, and honoraria for Elders and select guests
✓	Set proposed meeting date is possible
✓	Set proposed budget for RBSD

Urban Indigenous Community

Considerations: After, the meetings with the local First Nations communities and the local Métis community, It would be appropriate to reach out to the Urban Indigenous community and this should be done through the Terms of Reference Protocol (TOR) that the RBSD has in place in regards to the process of consultation with the Urban Indigenous community. This would ensure that the consultation team is then contacting the appropriate representative(s) and walking through the similar process of how the invitation goes out to the Urban Indigenous community members, the location of the meeting, the honoraria for the Elders and that the appropriate gifts are provided.

Table 3.4

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Urban Indigenous Community

Working With Partner Groups Check List: Urban Indigenous Community	
✓	Contact the appropriate Urban Indigenous community members as defined through the Terms of Reference.
✓	Discuss the proposed meeting, rationale and location
✓	Confirm meeting location
✓	Confirm who will take on the responsibilities of the invitation
✓	Ask protocol questions around, opening of the meeting, food, budget, gifting, and honoraria for Elders and select guests
✓	Set proposed meeting date is possible
✓	Set proposed budget for RBSD

Board of Education and Senior Administration

Considerations: As the consultation team prepares to meet with the Board of Education and Senior Administration, they will need to ensure that they have held all initial meetings with the Indigenous community partner groups first. As it will be through those consultation meetings that information will be provided on what they envision is the path forward towards developing a culturally responsive change process and implementation plan as it relates to their involvement as a partner. And, it is through these recommendations and considerations that RBSD will need to ponder and consider as they continue to paddle forward in weaving together what will become the culturally responsive governance framework that will lead this change process within the RBSD.

In the consultation meeting with the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team the consultation team will need to draw out of the Board of Education and the Senior Administration team the thoughts, and views that they have on

what they envision as a culturally responsive change process and implementation plan, but also be guided through a conversation on how their potential western views of governance within RBSD may have some alignment and overlap with what the Indigenous communities values, and beliefs of this proposed culturally responsive change process and implementation plan is. The consultation teams work will then be to draw both of these worldview values and beliefs together; Western and Indigenous so they can come closer together and be woven together into the culture of the RBSD's goal of improving the personal and academic outcomes and racial inequities of the Indigenous students across their education system.

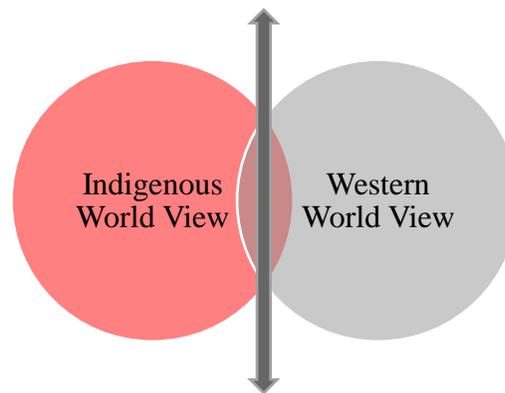


Figure 3.3 The Space in Between Indigenous and Western Worldviews

Principals and Vice Principals Association

Considerations: This partner group will be the last to be consulted as when meeting with this group the consultation team will need to garner a deeper understanding of the vision of the culturally responsive change process and implementation plan from the Indigenous community, Board of Education and Senior Administration and how the RBSD is intending to connect these worldviews to the strategies that will guide the goal

of improving the personal and academic outcomes of Indigenous student success across their education system. Once this understanding has been developed a meeting with the Principal – Vice Principal local executive will be requested to examine with them the best method to host some meaningful consultation with their association members. So, further feedback can be gathered on the how to implement the plan and discuss any potential barriers that the RBSD may face as the work begins to weave this culturally responsive governance framework into the school communities and classrooms of the RBSD.

Ideally this consultation will take place during the paid workday and be hosted over a ½ or full day with a meal provided. Honorariums and/or gifts for those employee members participating will not be provided as these association members are already being paid for their workday by the organization. However, planning with the Principal-Vice Principal executive will ensure the consultation team meets the needs of being able to get as many of their members out to this meeting and capture as many stories as possible as part of this process. It is important to remember that during the first consultation meetings with the partner groups that it is important not to rush the process, and that this will take time. Wilson (2008) reminds us of the work of Tafoya (1995) that stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen. (Tafoya, 1995, p.12). Because if this is not done in a good way following protocol and creating space for Indigenous storywork there could be significant delays and/or challenges during the implementation stage that

could become very political and/or damaging to the intended outcome and goal of the strategic plan on improving the personal and academic results for the Indigenous students within the RBSD.

Indigenous methods will need to be used while hosting these consultation meetings and this includes using the framework of ‘setting the table’ as found in Table 3.1 to ensure that proper feedback loops to all of the partner groups from the information that was collected during the initial meetings are woven together to highlight everyone’s voice during the consultation meetings. Again, the gathering and correlating of this data and information will take time, but it is through the communication and authentic involvement as noted in the three guiding; The Truth and Reconciliation Report on the Calls to Action in Education (Appendix A), The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Appendix B) and The Auditor Generals Report on Indigenous Education (Appendix C) that will help the RBSD arrive in a good and meaningful way where all the partner groups can see themselves reflected in the way forward and in particular the Indigenous communities that the RBSD serve.

Limitations: Potential Barriers and Challenges

The following two categories of limitations will be discussed: bias and worldviews, and political impacts. As these limitations are of importance to capture in this OIP as they can become a pitfall and/or a barrier if they are not acknowledged as a potential limitation and/or if they are not considered on how the RBSD may overcome them if they experience them throughout their change implementation process.

Bias and Worldview

The RBSD may be faced with having to spend more time educating the rationale and why to some partner groups over the others as they may not be fully understanding of the three guiding documents that inform best practices and recommendations to improve Indigenous Education that will be guiding this process. This also includes, spending time with each partner group in better understanding the why it is that we are meeting?

1. What is the Problem of Practice Question that has brought us all together?
2. What is Culturally Responsive Leadership and our guiding questions?
3. What are the 4R's of Indigenous research?
4. What is Indigenous Storywork?
5. What is the goal for Indigenous Education within the strategic plan of RBSD?
6. What is UNDRIP, TRC, and the AGR and what do these documents inform us?
7. What will our Culturally responsive governance model look like within RBSD?

So, this may take a series of time and conversation to navigate through first before we can arrive in a good way to have meaningful dialogue without hard bias and worldview impacting the intended outcome of the goal of achieving improved Indigenous student success.

Political

As the RBSD navigates through this consultation process they must also be very aware and cognizant that going through consultation on Indigenous Education is very emotional and impactful for many of my partner groups as they have had varied experiences with Education and that these emotions and feelings may arise during this

change process and implementation and that these may impact the direction and time the RBSD will need to spend in co-developing this plan moving forward. As a caretaker of facilitating the change process the RBSD will need to examine their own bias, lived experiences, relationships, power differential and ways to acknowledge and work through this so they are truly adapting and getting the authentic information from my partner groups who are identified to come forward and help us collectively move these strategies forward to support the goal of improving Indigenous student success across our education system for the current and future generations yet to come. As this OIP moves fluidly from the Change Implementation Plan to the Limitations that may arise for this OIP that must be considered the RBSD must consider taking a moment to pause and reflect on if they need to go back, and re-evaluate any considerations that have emerged for any of the partner groups inside or out that have been identified as part of this change process. By taking the moment to pause, reflect and readjust when required.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Thomas King (2003) tells us that “the truth about stories is that's all we are” so as the RBSD starts to examine how they are going to implement, monitor, and evaluate this change process they need to hold the narrative's and the quantitative data that they have gathered through their rounds of consultation's with partner groups and community members. As they are the ones who have helped the RBSD understand the road forward for this work to be done in a good way. And as they continue to hold their intent with culturally responsive leadership being at the core of this work to serve as a guide for all those involved, then they will be truly able to develop a culturally responsive governance model and framework that will monitor and evaluate this change process

and implementation as they continue to weave the path forward. So, what does the RBSD then know about culturally responsive leadership? Johnson (2007) informs us that:

While most assets-based approaches to multicultural education have focused on classroom teaching, some researchers have used a culturally responsive framework in relation to school leadership. Culturally responsive leadership, derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy, involves those leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that create inclusive schooling environments for students and families from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Common practices include emphasizing high expectations for student achievement, incorporating the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities in the school curriculum, working to develop a critical consciousness among both students and faculty to challenge inequities in the larger society, and creating organizational structures at the school and district level that empower students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic communities (Johnson, 2007, p.141).

Reminding us that personal connections, explicit intent, and some potentially hard self - personal work will need to be done on a daily and regular basis. As culturally responsive leadership is not something that can or should be viewed as a program. Rather, it is something that you need to walk with every day, and as education systems, we need to be able to create the space, time, and opportunity for all those involved in this work to be able to examine their own personal bias, lived experiences, and shared narrative's on how they want to shape the future moving forward. This truly can only be done through experiential learning, time, intent, and system support, showing that culturally responsive leadership is valuable, honoured, respected, and a leadership approach that the board of education and the senior administration of RBSD will be using as a way forward. Weaving together the new narratives and lived experiences for the Indigenous students and families that they service.

In this section this OIP examined the tools that RBSD will use to monitor and evaluate this culturally responsive change process and implementation plan. And how the 4R's of Indigenous research will be used to guide the framework and keep the change process rooted within Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The 4R's that emerged out of Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) reminds us that the 4R's ; Relavance, Reciprocity, Respect and Relationships are foundational when conductging research because:

Relational accountability to discuss the topic of ethics and research from an Indigenous perspective. Ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationships with each other, and with the environment. The term respect, is consistently used by Indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity through the respect of place, of everyone and everything in the universe so that balance and harmony is kept. Respect is reciprocal, shared constantly, and an interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct. So, as a storyteller you then hold the responsibility for who you share this information with. As well as, for ensuring that it is shared in an appropriate way, at the right place, and time. And in receiving the story, you are an active listener, and are responsible for putting the story into a relational context. That makes sense for you, and to listen with an open heart, and an open mind. Then, if you choose to pass along the story, or the words, you then also take on the responsibilities of the storyteller yourself. (Wilson, 2008, p.126-127).

So why are the 4R's important to hold as a core value and incorporate into the evaluation process and connect back to the problem of practice, the intended change, and involve the actors, influencers, and community members who have become part of this change path to changing the personal and academic results in the RBSD for Indigneous students. As this work to weave this change into the fabric of the RBSD can be done in a good way by leaning into the 4R's of Indigneous research as the foundation. Thus creating a structure for space and time to value the importance of 'Indigenous Storywork'. Sto:lo and St'at'imc scholar from the University of British Columbia Jo-ann

Archibald (Q'um Q'um Xiiem) explains in her book *Decolonizing research: Indigenous storywork as methodology* (2019):

As a result of research with Indigenous Coast Salish/Sto:lo Elders, cultural knowledge holders, and educators from Indigenous communities in British Columbia, Canada. During the multi-year research process, she became a beginner storyteller to better understand the process of “meaning-making” using Indigenous traditional and life experience stories for educational purposes at all levels of education. In the role of storyteller, she had to learn more about the nature of and protocols for telling and using Indigenous stories, and had to get herself culturally worthy to work with these precious stories. In Coast Salish cultural gatherings, the spokesperson who oversees the event says “*My dear ones, the work is about to begin.*” When we hear these words, we pay attention to the cultural work that is about to take place because we know that we will either be involved in some way or we will be impacted by this work. Archibald coined the term “Indigenous storywork” so that storytellers, story listeners, story learners, researchers, and educators can pay attention to and engage with Indigenous stories for meaningful education and research (Archibald, 2019, p.1).

So why does Indigenous Storywork hold importance as part of this this evaluation and monitoring process within this culturally responsive change implementation plan? Because this is a proposed culturally responsive monitoring, and evaluation framework. And space for the 4R's and Indigenous Storywork should be held as the core values that connect the work we are about to begin in a good way within RBSD. This includes honouring the stories of our partner groups who we initially consulted with as I will be proposing that these partner groups come together to form a

the Indigenous Education Accountability Council (IEAC) which should become a formal partner to the board of education with this council's goal of monitoring, and evaluating the change process, as it relates to the problem of practice and the goal of the strategic plan of changing the personal and academic outcomes for the Indigenous students within the RBSD. And that our times when we gather together is viewed as a ceremony where we will nourish our hearts, minds, and bodies through these relationships, and stories for the work we are doing together as an IEAC ensuring that we are holding up relational accountability as our priority to each other and not using a western paradigm of privilege as the core value of the framework that is guiding this work forward.

To share an example within this OIP of what 'Indigenous storywork' is, and how story can shape the narratives to better inform the IEAC of the monitoring and evaluation process of this change implementation plan this OIP has brought in this exemplar to show the value and power of story. This story is found within Archibald (2019) book *Decolonizing research*:

Coyote story searching for the bone needle

Old Man Coyote (OMC) decided to go hunting for deer to replenish his food supplies he packed his bag with his hunting and other gear. After a long, unsuccessful day of walking up Hills and down valleys and through thick forest, with no deer in sight, he decided to set up his camp for the night by starting a fire for his meal. After supper, he sat by the cozy warm fire unrubbed his tired feet from the long day's walk. He took his favorite moccasins out of his bag and noticed that there was a hole in the toe of one of them. He looked for his special bone needle to mend the moccasin but couldn't feel it in the bag. OMC started to crawl on his hands and knees around the fire, which was blazing by this time, to see if he could see or feel the needle. He went around and around the fire many times. Just then Owl landed next to OMC because he watched OMC go around and around the fire. He asked old man coyote what he was looking for.

OMC told Owl his problem. Owl said that he would help his friend look for the bone needle. After he made one swoop down around the area the fire, he told old man coyote that he didn't see the needle. Owl said that if that if it were around the fire then he would have spotted it. He then asked OMC where he last used the needle old man coyote said that he used it for quite far away in the northern direction to mend his jacket. Owl then asked OMC why he kept going around and around the campfire when the needle clearly was not there. OMC replied well it's well it's easier to look for the needle here because the fire gives off such good light, and I can see better here. - Often the Indigenous trickster forgets about or ignores the good teachings that come from the land, ancestors, families, and communities. Trickster subsequently gets into trouble when the story stops. It is at this juncture that the story listener or researcher is implicitly invited to work with the story and begin making meaning from and with the story. Old Man Coyote had a bone needle, which could symbolize knowledge of Indigenous stories.

He did not treat this bone needle respectfully, responsibly, or reverently and could not use it when it was needed. However, OMC had another chance to find and take care of the bone needle. He was fortunate to have a friend such as Owl, who may symbolize Elders who provide guidance for helping OMC get ready to work with the bone needle. First, OMC will need to stop going around in circles; a similar action is using research methodologies that are not beneficial for Indigenous people, but continue to be used because they are well known (Smith, 2012). He will need to leave the warmth and light of the fire in order to engage in a decolonizing research approach, which requires that he and we ask critical questions about colonial impact, and question what is not working, and understand why (Battiste, 2013; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, RCAP, 1996). OMC will need to prepare himself for a research journey to find the bone needle. This journey may symbolize developing or finding pathways founded in Indigenous methodologies, such as Indigenous story work.

OMC may learn to acknowledge and respect the power and beauty of Indigenous stories, take the necessary time to develop trusting and responsible research relationships, use reverential practices to protect the stories and people's spiritual nature, and strive for arrest reciprocal beneficial outcome for Indigenous people, communities, and researchers. Let's envision that OMC and the Owl find the bone needle. They may try to use the bone needle for various purposes and subsequently take better care of it. Understanding the bone needle's function as a tool may be like trying to understand how Indigenous traditional and life experience stories can help people live better lives.

Engaging in holistic meaning-making involves using the heart which is the emotions, the mind which is intellectual, the body which is physical actions, and the spirit which is spirituality, as well as recognizing the relationships of all of these realms to oneself, family, community, land, environment, and the wider society. Telling stories in a research context provides time and space for the research participant to tell the story that is pertinent to the situation. The mean-making process continues when the researcher searches for ideas, seeking an interrelated understanding of historical, political, cultural social, or other contextual impacts upon Indigenous Peoples, their stories, and their communities.

Developing, sharing, and representing these storied understandings requires a synergetic action on the part of the researcher to use applicable Indigenous story work principles. This sharing may also spark an idea or an understanding for the story listener or the reader. A new spark could be, where the fire symbolizes an Indigenous sacred fire that is used in ceremonies where a fire keeper constantly watches over it until the ceremony has concluded and then carefully puts it out. The embers from the sacred fire could be like Indigenous stories that spark our emotions, make us think more deeply, and help us problem solve and take courageous action to overcome the negative legacy of research in Indigenous communities (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). We are fortunate to learn from our dear Elders who can help us understand their good teachings, many of which were embedded in their traditional stories. We need to listen holistically to their lived stories of experiencing the trauma of Indian residential schools where they were separated from their families and communities during their childhood (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Their resilience and resistance to this form of colonization continues to be inspirational.

We have a responsibility to share these storied understandings with others, to keep these embers alive in our heart, mind, body, and spirit, so that the future generations, especially Indigenous children and youth, have opportunities to learn an live Indigenous story work. Old Man Coyote interjects with a thought that before he can use Indigenous story work, he must understand why he keeps going around in needless methodological circles. Decolonizing research and decolonizing methodologies have an important role to play in Indigenizing research journey (p.2-4).

In taking into consideration the research of Shawn Wilson (2008) and the research of Joanne Archibald (2019) and where this OIP arrived in this section in regards to the change implementation plan around incorporating a culturally responsive governance framework for evaluation and monitoring of this change process. In order to move this change forward in a good way there should be the development of an Indigenous Accountability Education Committee (IAEC). This committee could take on a traditional language name in the future through consensus with the IAEC as it is intended to hold space and be relational to the work of the RBSD and the community it serves. The structure of this committee should have (2) seats allocated for the various partner groups; Elders, local First Nations, Urban Indigenous community, the Métis Nation, Indigenous students, Principals - Vice Principals Association, Indigenous

parents, Senior Administration, the Board of Education, and the leader(s) of the Indigenous Education Department. This committee should also be recognized as an equitable partner to the Board of Education through the development of a culturally responsive governance IEAC policy that will allow for the opportunity to have regular interface and conversations around accountability, evaluation, and the monitoring of the work of the IAEC. This should include IEAC discoveries, and updates on their findings of the strategies that they are supporting becoming braided into the culture and climate of the RBSD, and/or any amendments or annual recommendations that they feel are required as they continue to assist in moving this work forward in a good way. When I envision the IEAC I see them being guided by the 4Rs – leading into a proper and effective communications strategy that will be needed to support the implementation and phases of this work moving forward.

Change Process Communication Plan

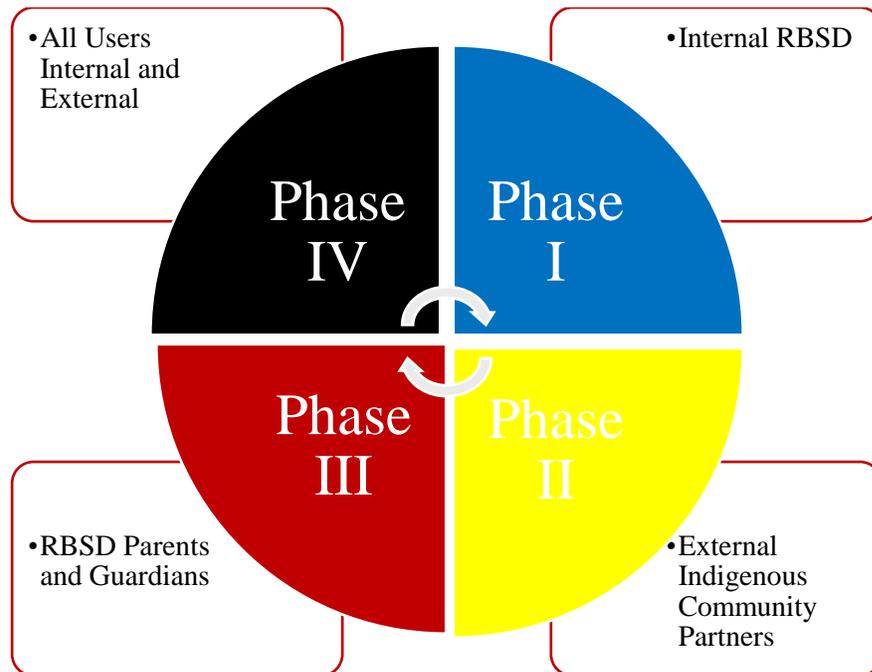
Change requires time, a plan and various methods to reach partners and recipients across a system. Table 3.5 RBSD Indigenous Education Communication Plan supports these phases of communication that will be required, and who should be captured during each of those phases as part of the RBSD. In having a proper, explicit and responsive communication plan that includes all participants allows for the growth of new relationships and the active involvement of all change recipients.

Organizing this change communication plan in phases does allow for the RBSD to be reflective on who they are communicating with, and the opportunity to gather feedback from their partner groups, become reflective on this feedback, adjust and amend any processes that they require while adhering to their intentions of being

culturally safe, and authentic in the relationships that they want to have in moving this change forward in a good way that aligns to their goal of improving the outcomes for the Indigenous students they serve across the RBSD.

Table 3.5

RBSD Indigenous Education Communication Plan



The following sub-sections of this OIP will examine some explicit methods on communicating this change process and the intent for why these may be authentic ways in reaching the broader community and which phase these communication methods would benefit from being enacted in.

Meetings with Community Partners

Indigenous community partners will serve a significant role in the successful implementation of this change process. In order for this to be done in a good, authentic

and respectful way regular and ongoing meetings should occur with them once their has been a decision by the Board of Education and Senior Administration to move forward. These meetings should begin to occur in Phase II of the communication strategy and carry forward on an ongoing and regular basis. This would allow for the 4Rs to become rooted within the fabric of the RBSD and assist in informing of when and how amendments and adjustments would need to occur throughout the change implementation process. These Indigenous community partners would be the partners that have been identified as part of the RBSD found within chapter 2 of this OIP.

Work with the Communications Officer of the RBSD

The RBSD has a communications officer that is responsible for rolling out all the communication from the Board of Education and Senior Administration within the RBSD. The communications officer should be consulted during Phase I of this communication strategy to discuss how they see their role fitting into this change process and what relevant information they would require and in what method. This would then allow for a broader reach of communication to all users as the change plan becomes implemented.

Social Media Blitz

Consideration should be given to the use of ongoing social media platforms to communicate the information about this change process. This would support the internal and external participants of this change. The Information and Technology department should be consulted on the best processes, platforms and regulations around what can and should be used to communicate this information. This conversation around social media should be enacted within Phase I of the communication plan.

Podcast on Culturally Responsive Leadership within RBSD

A Podcast should be enacted during Phase III as this would then allow for feedback to arrive to the RBSD on what hot topics need to be included in the broader communication that is going out for the internal and external participants of this change process. The podcast could then address questions, common themes and emergent topics in and around the transformation of change within Indigenous Education.

Effective communication will be required for this OIP as it moves from a plan to implementation as the change being sought is significant and affects many participants internally and externally that are part of the RBSD. Having a clear, explicit, and effective communication plan will not only further assist with staying congruent with the 4Rs but will also allow and create space for all participants to become fully aware of this change, and develop a sense of belonging to this change that the RBSD is going through. Thus, further positively impacting the results that are intended to be achieved within their strategic goal of improving the personal and academic outcomes and racial inequities for Indigenous students.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

Chapter 3 has described a change implementation plan for the RBSD that aims to enhance and improve the educational outcomes for Indigenous students. This change plan includes the importance of authentic consultation with Indigenous community partners, the Board of Education, Senior Administration and Principals and Vice-Principals all of whom will become influencers and agents of this proposed change.

Further, this chapter examined the importance of looking at limitations from an Indigenous and Western worldview and why both must be considered when examining

the change implementation process, and how both of these worldviews do intersect with each other, and where the potential for bias and political views can emerge. Leading into why ‘Indigenous Storywork’ will become a core value in assisting to move this work forward in a good way that remains congruent to the 4Rs of Indigenous pedagogy. Further, creating space for a process of communication that needs to be authentic, meaningful and reflective of all participants, as this ensures that ability to build upon the relationships and develop a shared vision and collective ownership to this change process and the intended outcomes of this OIP.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

In this section of my OIP it is important that the RBSD unpack all the research and considerations that have been examined throughout this document and look forward to the relevant next steps and future considerations for their work in closing the achievement gap for Indigenous students across their system. And how they may move this work forward and not just make it a project, but rather make it shape shifting for the organization in the way that they positively implement lasting change that impacts the achievement results for Indigenous students. This OIP has been able to breathe life into what could become a new narrative, and lived experiences for Indigenous students and families within the RBSD. This also includes, looking into the future of what further work could assist with deeply rooting the IEAC as a method to support the initial problem of practice and what has become the goal of the RBSD in response to their strategic goal of improving Indigenous Education across their K-12 system. Looking forward into the future it is imperative that the RBSD and the partner groups listen with

an open heart and open mind to what Zinga (2019) is discussing in Teaching as the creation of ethical space, where she states:

More Research is not needed to identify systemic problems within Canadian education systems, nor is it needed to help individuals understand why Indigenous students have to navigate contested spaces in all levels of education. What needs to be researched and deconstructed is why so little has yet to be done to address these systemic problems or, as Atleo (2014, n.p.) contends to, “challenge the status quo.” (Zinga, 2019, p.285).

If we hold these words as part of the considerations moving forward, and really begin to examine the future steps of the RBSD it really is not about doing further research. Rather, it's about applying action to the research that has already been done and what we have been informed of based on this research. As this is what will truly start to develop the structure and solidify a pathway forward through this change process From the findings of this OIP I have considered and will discuss two significant next steps for the RBSD that I believe will help them to begin this work of changing their trajectory for success within Indigenous Education and they are; the development of an Indigenous Education Accountability Committee and Quarterly meetings, and the development of an Indigenous Education policy within the RBSD.

Indigenous Education Accountability Committee

My recommendation here is that the RBSD develop an Indigenous Education Accountability Committee (IEAC) and begin to hold regular quarterly meetings with the IEAC, the Board of Education, and all the members of the Senior Leadership team of the RBSD. And, that consideration be given at these quarterly meetings that they are held using the culturally responsive framework that was developed as the governance model for conducting business within Indigenous education. This would then ensure that the

discussions were then focused on the change path progress, the needs, narratives and stories that all the members in these quarterly meetings are seeing in the field from their scope and worldview. I envision that these meetings will take place in a setting that allows for relationships to develop and not be conducted at the Board of Education table in a formal western governance way. I see these meetings taking place within a culturally safe environment that leans into the land and sets the table for equity and the 4R's to emerge of Relevance, Respect, Reciprocity, and Relational Accountability (Wilson, 2008). I see the IEAC quarterly meeting opening with the acknowledgement of traditional territory, a round of introductions being held in a circle, then a meal being shared with each other. Looping back into a circle process that will be guided by the five questions that are found within the culturally responsive framework within this OIP. Assisting all parties to be able to participate in the conversation so that they can respond, reflect, and story tell as part of the relationship building amongst all members who are present. I would say ideally the meeting should happen between 4:00 PM and 9:00 PM, allowing for enough time for introductions, a meal, time for a reflective conversation around the five guiding questions and relationship building that is connected to the goal of Indigenous Education within the strategic plan.

Development of an Indigenous Education Policy for RBSD

A final recommendation and future consideration for the RBSD will be the development of an Indigenous Education policy that includes partnerships, reconciliation, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. I see this policy being co-created with all the members of the IEAC and a working group from the RBSD. I envision that the creation of this Indigenous Education policy could be a goal to

complete as the RBSD and the IEAC move through the five year strategic plan and strengthen their relationships with each other by walking in two worlds of understanding. Having, this become a goal that can they can arrive on as a collective could not only further the work of the group, but deepen the relationship and commitment that the RBSD has to improving the personal and academic outcomes and racial inequities for the Indigenous students and families they serve. Thus, showing their solidarity to reconciliation and the calls to action found within the Truth and Reconciliation final report (TRC, 2015).

This organizational improvement plan aimed to address a specific problem of practice within the Raven Bay School Division. Which is an achievement gap in the results between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners and how this can be done in a culturally responsive way through policy and governance. This problem of practice is not an isolated problem that is only evident within this school division, this is a educational gap within public education across Canada for Indigenous students. This is why I have chosen to dedicate my professional and doctoral work on trying to examine and find new ways and entrance points through education, policy, and governance structures that aligns Indigenous Education research to informs us of the ways that we need to be moving forward in to change the lived experiences and academic outcomes for Indigenous students within public education. As educators we have an ethical responsibility within our education systems to be responsive to the Calls to Action on Education and we must learn from our past to change the future.. It is our responsibility, it is our time, it is this generation and our children are worth it.

Forward We Paddle Together, for this Generation and the One's Yet to Come.

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Appendix A

Truth and Reconciliation Final Report

http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

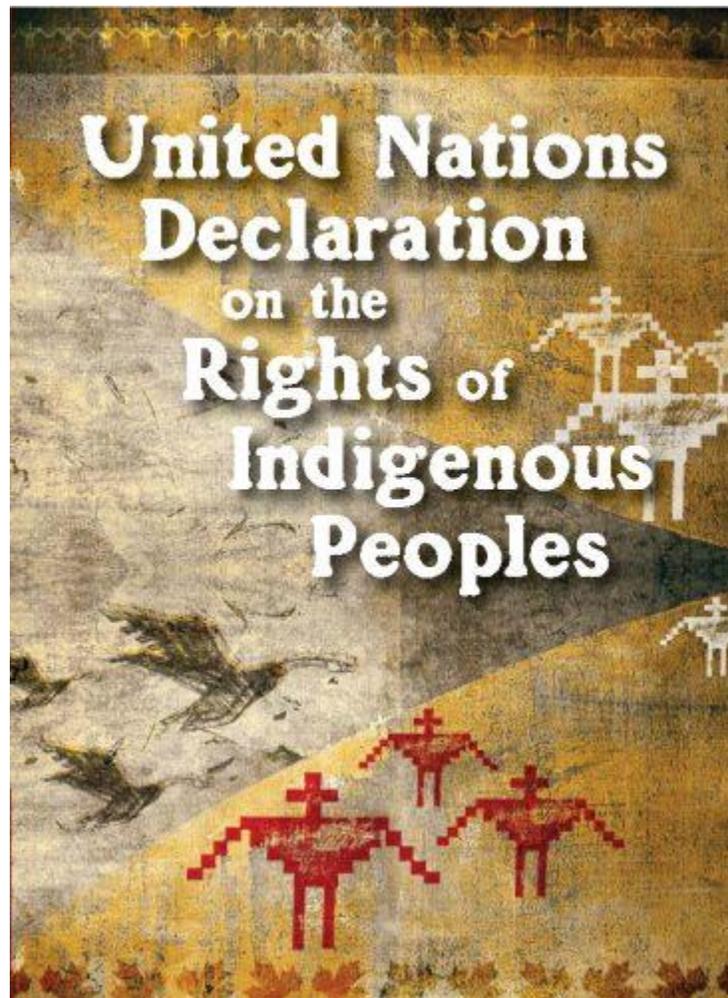
**Truth and Reconciliation
Commission of Canada:
Calls to Action**



Appendix B

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf



Appendix C

British Columbia Auditor General's Report on Indigenous Education

https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/publications/reports/OAGBC_Ab-Ed-Progress_RPT.pdf

