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Challenging Anti-Black Racism: To Improve the Efficacy and Success of Black Administrators. Organization Improvement Plan

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Abstract

The success of Black students has been at the forefront of discussion and planning in many school boards. As a result, we have seen many solutions and proposed solutions addressing anti-Black racism. Some of these solutions included de-streaming courses, revisions on how Black students are suspended, the inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical race theory in the curriculum, to name a few. These institutionally proposed solutions are all great and even add value to the educational experience of Black students. Although these strategies greatly enhance students' experience, they fail to challenge the status quo of society. These strategies continue to preserve society's status quo in which Black administrators are underrepresented in our schools. A society in which Black students rarely, if ever, see an administrator who looks or sound like them. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) seeks to highlight the anti-Black racism that results in the underrepresentation of Black school administrators. The proposed solution of mentoring will ultimately disrupt the status quo by preparing Black educators to meet the challenges brought on by working in an environment which created for them. Viewed through the lens of critical race theory (CRT) the mentoring proposed seeks to break the shackles of anti-Black racism, and propel Black educators to a state of preparedness by creating a professional learning community with will be a constant guide for any challenge they encounter. The proposed mentoring solution will work cohesively with all stakeholders impacted by this OIP using both transformational and inclusive leadership approaches the reality of improving Black administrators' effectiveness will only result in even greater success of our Black students in our schools.

Keywords: critical race theory, underrepresentation, transformational leadership, mentoring, anti-Black racism, culturally relevant pedagogy.

Executive Summary

Over the last few decades, and even more so in recent years, we have witnessed significant growth in the Black population in many of our Canadian cities (Oyeniran, 2021). The growth we have seen has been attributable to the changes in immigration and, to a more considerable extent, globalization, made possible by a shift in Neoliberalism ideals in society. According to James (2021) and Wacquant (2008), neoliberalism renders such a political statement that it provides freedom for all to pursue education and opportunities without imposed constraints. The thought of no imposed restrictions is a reality for the majority in our Eurocentric Caucasian society but is nothing more than a theoretically ideological concept that I fear will never materialize for Blacks.

The reality for Blacks is that we are in a system that was not designed for us or created with us in mind. Even with this knowledge, we have seen numerous authors, such as Marks (2011), simplifying the issue that for Blacks, all it takes is intelligence, hard work, a little luck and help from others to succeed. Unenlightened and crude statements such as Marks (2011) express naivety and ignorance by refusing to acknowledge the systemic and institutional racial barriers Blacks must experience before succeeding. Marks (2011) was more instructive in suggesting that for Blacks, advance intelligence and education is a compelling necessity, but this pathway also comes with its fair share of anti-Black racism. The Problem of Practice (PoP) and, by extension, this OIP seeks to challenge anti-Black racism by highlighting the gaps in the current infrastructure. The goal of the OIP is to recommend a framework that will be foundational in improving the efficacy and success of Black administrators, by increasing representation, (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2007; James & Turner, 2017; OPC, 2020).

Chapter one of this OIP lays the foundation for the PoP emerging from observations in the school board of DOES (anonymized). The established foundation in this chapter will inform

the reader of the author's agency, positionality and passion as they navigate through the organizational context, history, and vision relating to the problem of practice. The author's lived experiences are intricately interwoven into the fabric of the problem of practice. This has also influenced the three-guiding question for this OIP. The three guiding questions will furnish insights into where the organization is in relation to the PoP, the impact of the significant absence of Black administrators in our schools. They will also explore the board's readiness for change based on the culture of its leadership team, community, and all other stakeholders. The three guiding questions were designed to highlight and expose anti-Black racism at the micro, meso and macro levels within the board.

A careful and in-depth SWOT analysis of the organization of DOES has revealed that while the board has a few strategies in place to combat societal, and systemic racism, they lack action to carve away some of its institutional racism. Additionally, chapter one will also lay a foundation to illustrate that the current strategies used in DOES do not challenge the status quo of a white lead organization. Instead, the strategies attempt to fix the issues at the bottom (students and teachers), while the top and middle (leadership areas) remain unchanged.

Chapter two will examine the proposed solutions, the planning and development of these solutions as well as the characteristics of my transformational and inclusive leadership approaches, which are very important in implementing the proposed solutions. Considering my proposed solutions, the type of organization, my leadership approaches, and my desired outcome, a re-designed Kotter's (2012) change management model was the best fit to initiate the desired changes. The Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model was considered the best for analyzing the changes as it focuses on internal factors, which fits well with my agency and positionality as a vice principal and an activist as one of the co-chairs of the DBAG. It will also be a huge driving force behind the three solutions (decolonization, growth mindset and

mentoring) outlined in chapter two to effectively challenge status quo and fight anti-Black racism. However, after careful analysis of what is required to implement each solution, it was clear that mentoring would be the best fit based on my agency and positionality.

Chapter three synthesizes it all, by tying all three chapters together, looking at the change plan's implementation, evaluation, and communication. The first section of this chapter looks at the process involved in implementing the change, followed by the proposed mentoring solution from chapter two. Doerwald (2015) definition of mentoring led to the formation of the ABC of mentoring. With (A) for aptitude, (B) for Boundaries and (C) for the competence of mentoring. These were also used to establish the three pillars of mentoring. The mentoring process will be an attempt to increase the amount of Black representation in administration and other areas of leadership. Chapter three also suggests how the changes would be communicated and evaluated, using a detailed knowledge mobilization plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the plan were so important that it required the use of both the PDCA and DICE cycles to fully capture its effectiveness.

Chapter three concluded with the next steps and future considerations after the OIP is implemented. In the next steps, it was suggested that we take action to continue to challenge inequity in our classrooms, schools, and community. As for future consideration, the importance of having strengthened infrastructure and ensuring more commitment to having a diverse staff, with an aim hiring more Black administrators. It may take some time for the curtain to be drawn on the discussion and activism relating to the prospects of equity in the distribution of leadership opportunities for Black educators in the education system. Though there is urgency in this matter of equity and adequate representation of Blacks in leadership in education, I am aware that changes will be slow and emergent. My goal is to ensure that change is present and consistent, but only time will tell.

The African Affirmation and Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the indigenous Africans, who were forcefully removed from their native lands and dispersed across the New World. This involuntary migration heavily contributed to the movement of African descended people across the African diaspora to places like Canada. As students and learners, we deem it highly necessary to think deeper, and examine the processes that led to the dispossession of Indigenous people on this land and settler colonialism. Stolen people, on stolen land. In entering a conversation about anti-Black racism, it is important to center the humanity of Black children and Black families and examine systems, such as the education system that act up on them.

Source: Dr. Natasha Henry – President, Ontario Black History Society, Educational Consultant, and Historian- Ontario Principal Council provincial meeting Niagara on the Lakes, (2023).

Land Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that I live, work, and learn on the stolen, traditional, unceded and un-surrendered lands of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. A people of a stolen promise, stolen cultures, and a stolen future. I would like to thank them for their stewardship and example of the preservation of this land I call home.

Acknowledgement

As this doctoral study ends, I must acknowledge a few who have inspired me throughout this arduous journey. I would first give God the glory as only He could have given me the will to start, to endure and succeed. I must also acknowledge and say a huge thank you to my family, who endured three years of me being more focused on completing an assignment than going to a basketball game, the movies, or just hanging out. The impact this journey has had on my family is so profound I must thank them twice; Sharon, Shadae, Shayann and Jade, you four, have inspired me to push through to the end, even when I question myself asking, why I am doing this. I hope that having completed this degree will be an inspiration for you all in your future endeavours. And to my father-in-law, Dr. Samuel Myers, thank you for being my reader and editor, as well as and offering wisdom, encouragement, and support.

I want to thank my cohort, who worked together unselfishly, supporting, and encouraging one another. You reminded me of completing my teaching degree in Jamaica, where I could again hear the words, “Let us help each other as we are not competing for one degree; there is a degree for all of us in the program.” My K-12 cohort 2020-2023, you are all rock stars in my book. To all the professors at Western who worked with me along this journey, I salute you. I would like to thank Dr. Katie Maxwell, whose words caused me to fully understand the work I had ahead of completing this program. I would also like to thank Dr. John (Scott) Lowrey, whose work not just showed what the path looks like but also taught me how to traverse the path to completing this journey.

Finally, I salute my colleagues in my school and my school board who encouraged me, as well as my colleagues in my Black affinity group. I am confident that you have all contributed to my journey and left indelible marks on my career.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CT	Critical Theory
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CRP	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
DBAG	DOES Black Affinity Group
DICE Cycle	Duration, Integrity, Commitment and Effort
DOES	District of Eastern Ontario
FTE	Full-Time Educator
LTO	Long Term Occasional Teacher
OIP	Organizational Improvement Plan
OPC	Ontario Principal's Council
OT	Occasional Teacher
PAR	Position of Additional Responsibility
PC	Principal's Council
PD	Professional Development
PDCA Cycle	Plan, Do, Check and Adjust
PDSB	Peel District School Board
PoP	Problem of Practice
PQP	Principal's Qualification Program
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat Analysis.
SOI	Superintendent of Instruction
TCC	Terms and Conditions Committee
VP	Vice Principal
YRDSB	York Region District School Board

Chapter 1: Posing the Problem

We have witnessed noticeable and undeniable increases in the number of Black students in classrooms, as well as the irrefutable underrepresentation of Black teachers and administrators in many of our schools. This is evident in the reports from the Peel District School Board and York Region District School Board (PDSB, 2020 & YRDSB, 2021) revealing that only seventeen percent of the school board's student population is white while sixty-seven percent of its administration and teaching staff is white. These represented numbers are not unique to only these school boards as they can be observed in almost all other school boards through Ontario. My reality as a Black man along with the data shared above have caused me to develop a worldview based of a radical structuralist paradigm Burrell & Morgan (2017). The radical structuralist paradigm is one that is committed to radical structural change which encourages emancipation and a decrease social domination Burrell & Morgan (2017). My desire to see a society and a structure which values and welcome Blacks led me to the critical race theory of Delgado & Stefancic (2001), which they defined as a "radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power" (p.144). These concepts will help me to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the struggles of Black administrators.

These lenses have led me to conclude that the underrepresentation of Black teachers and administrators creates a disadvantage for Black students. In addition, Valverde, (2009) articulates that, Black administrators have been disproportionately represented in schools and school boards compared to their white counterparts. This recognition of the disproportionate representation of Black administrators in our school system has led me to investigate whether anti-Black racism is a reason for the dismal representation and ultimate success and effectiveness of Black administrators.

Leadership Position, Lens Statement and Professional Voice

This section will delineate my leadership position, my positionality and leadership agency, as well as my ethical and social justice lens within the organization for this Organization's Improvement Plan (OIP).

Leadership Position

Depending upon whom you ask, leaders are crafted by their environment and circumstances. These are circumstances that are both personal and vicarious. The term leadership is not easily defined, and its definitions are as varied by the circumstances of those who define it. Klingborg et al. (2006), perceives leadership as continuously changing or evolving due to circumstances. After considering various descriptions and definitions of leadership, the best fit for my leadership approaches and the purpose of this OIP comes from James' (2011) statement that leadership is a set of collaborative processes and influences what will result in the transformation of organizational structures, culture, and practices. Simply put leadership is dynamic rather than static.

I firmly believe that a leader, as outlined by Klingborg et al. (2006) and Prochazka et al (2018), must display teambuilding qualities, honesty, integrity, and the capacity to motivate others. In today's economic society and employment institutions, leaders need be supportive, inspiring, and selfless with an unbiased, ethical view to take on social injustices as they challenge the status quo (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011; Thompson, 2017) of society. A leader needs to be a critical thinker who uses ethical reasoning outside of personal emotions; one who is a team player knowing that they need the support of others to fulfill their role and the organization's mission. Liu (2017) reminds us that the care and concern we have for others shows the kind of leader we are, much more than the title or position any institution labels with us.

A synthesis of all the definitions and descriptions above would seem to suggest the role of a leader extend far beyond being just, supportive, inspiring, and selfless. With this knowledge, Alvesson & Spicer (2011) take leadership a bit further by describing them as saints, gardeners, friends, commanders and even cyborgs. Ciulla (2005) believes that a leader needs to be fair and one who looks out for the best interest of all. They display these leadership qualities by ensuring they are ethically supporting the entire community, not just a selected few (Tuana, 2014; Ciulla, 2005). In any field, especially education, what remains critical is that a leader must be flexible, ethical, willing to change and possesses multiple qualities with a willingness to serve the community.

This enthusiasm to serve my community, a calling to the role of an educational administrator, my strong worldview on anti-Black racism, and the deep desire to succeed as a Black administrator have all fueled and ignited my enthusiasm to identify and challenge anti-Black racism faced by Black administrators. My enthusiasm to serve and my strong worldview were both instrumental in the formation of my Problem of Practice (PoP).

Positionality and Leadership Agency

The position I have within a school board in Eastern Ontario called DOES (a pseudonym) is that of a vice principal within the high school panel. However, because of my skin colour, I am perceived and identified not just as an administrator but, more importantly, as a Black administrator with lived experiences of barriers brought about by racism (Dei, 2018). My lived and vicarious experiences of being a representative of my race, being denied certain privileges offered to my white colleagues and withheld from me, and being passed over for numerous promotions have led me to challenge the injustices of racism. These experiences have also led me to develop what (Van der Kooij de Ruyter & Miedema, 2013) called a personal and organized worldview of race, racism and the privileges and struggle brought about by the two.

As a vice principal within the organization, I have limited official capacity as a change agent as it relates to the overall fulfilment of my PoP. However, my change agency increased considerably as a member of the principal's council terms and conditions committee (TCC) and as one of three co-Chairs of the DOES' Black affinity group (DBAG). As a member of the (TCC), I can communicate directly with the local president and the council about issues relating to the struggles of Black administrators. In addition, through our various committee meetings (as the only Black administrator), I am able to convey some of the reports I receive from my colleagues who from the DBAG for which I am a co-chair.

As the co-chair of the DBAG, I can hear our members' complaints and concerns, which are then brought back to the terms and conditions committee and the president of the principal's council. My agency also allows me to meet with the coordinator of equity for the school board. The president of the PC and the coordinator of equity both meet with the director of the school board to report on the concerns of the staff. The ability to report directly to these offices and officers who meets directly with the director, has afforded to me the opportunity to outline the social injustices within the board faced by Black administrators.

Social Justice Lens

The social justice lens is one which, according to Bettez & Hytten (2011), encompasses numerous discourses, which include critical pedagogy, critical theory, and critical race theory, to name a few (Trought-Pitters, 2017). At any given time, one facet or another of social justice can always be seen being challenged or enforced, for example, the underrepresentation of Black administrators in schools.

It can be argued that most Black administrators are overworked and burnt out from the daily battles of racial and social injustices (Gorksi, 2019; Walehwa, 2020). These battles are more intense and frequent because they are so few Black administrators representing the Black

race within the school board. This is unlike white administrators, whose privileges allow them to not having to represent their entire race (McIntosh, 2019). This is one of the views and practices that a critical theory lens that will help to identify and challenge.

Critical Theory

A critical theory lens seeks to dismantle and emancipate society's ambiguous views of class, gender, or race (Thompson, 2017; Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). By definition of critical theory, not only explains prevailing societal cultures and powers but also offers alternative means of being which liberate those suppressed and shackled by accepted societal norms which otherwise would enslave them (Harney, 2014). Critical theory is best applied to break free of the restraints of society's power and culture which could include class, gender, or race all of which could impede the success of Black administrators (Bei & Knowler 2022; Trought-Pitters, 2017).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Delgado & Stefancic (2001) views critical race theory as the means of challenging and correcting the Eurocentric narratives of society. In order to dismantle and break free from the shackles of racism, we must understand and identify the barriers created by the Eurocentric and oppressive system of society in which we live. Critical race theory is most effective in identifying the obstacles brought on by race (Delgado & Stefancic 2001; Rexhepi & Torres 2011). Critical race theory can then be applied to challenge some of these hurdles and seek to find solutions to overcoming these systemic and institutional impediments placed on Black educators. Having the knowledge and understanding of critical race theory will aid in navigating or even resolving some of the issues of challenges resulting from anti-Black racism. Critical race theory is the key to unlocking the shackles of this oppressive system and releasing Black administrators from the tyranny of its bondage into a realm of success.

Organizational Context

The goal of this section is to highlight the political, social, and cultural landscapes of a school board DOES in Eastern Ontario. This section will also provide the context of the PoP and an overview of the organization, including its structure, leadership, and current landscape.

Overview of the Organization

The organization of DOES has styles of leadership that are Eurocentric, bureaucratic and tinged with a splash of neoliberalism. Its Eurocentric and bureaucratic approaches sometimes seems to repudiate ethical values, as well as any care, kindness, charity, and relief (Green, 2016). The Eurocentric and bureaucratic approaches of DOES have far-reaching implications for Blacks as it constrains growth and development (Radebe, 2017), in order to maintain the status quo. One may even conclude that a hierarchical structure is designed to delay decision-making due to the increased bureaucracy (Johnson, 2019) which will keep the promotions of Blacks to a minimal level. The organization's hierarchical structure is historically patriarchal and Eurocentric. This structure maintains power and privilege over the minority race, as outlined by Billing & Alvesson's, (2000) argument that the patriarchal leadership style is more about control and dominance.

In contrast, Hekman (1999); Pini (2005) illustrate that the current matriarchal approach of the board is more relational, which could account for the changes in governance which could be extremely beneficial today (Carli & Eagly 2001). However, despite the drastic shift in leadership paradigm, there is still one constant, the absence of Black leadership. The absence of Black leadership at the board level in superintendents, directors, associate director, or lead principals, is sometimes easier to argue due to meritocracy and assumed race superiority (Dei, 2019; Battiste, 2010). One may even contend that since majority of the leadership staff are white then status quo demands that we also need white superintendents, directors, associate director, or lead principals.

But how can we argue the absence of Black administrators at the school level where over 40 percent of the students are identified as being Black?

The lack of representation has become even more evident since our schools and classrooms are becoming much more visibly diverse James & Turner (2017). However, the growth in Diversity within the schools and classrooms is not replicated in other areas of leadership within the school board, especially those of Black administrators. Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli (2007) gave us data from 294 administrators surveyed in Ontario and Quebec, of which twelve percent, identified themselves as racial minorities and even a smaller percentage as Black. Thirteen years later, the Ontario Principals Council (OPC) published their findings showing even grimmer prospects that of 2846 principals and vice principals, only 122 or 4.3% are black, while 2,349 are 82.3% are white.

The statistics of Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli's (2007) and the OPC's (2020) report showed significant underrepresentation of Black educators and Black administrators in our schools and school boards in Ontario. Being, perplexed as to why there is such a low representation of Black educators in leadership, I decided to conduct a SWOT analysis (Appendix A) of my school board to understand why Blacks educators are not more represented in areas of leadership. Conducting this study at a micro level will provide some understanding of the issue at a meso or even macro level.

SWOT- Strength

Further analysis of my board through SWOT revealed that we had great strength in the diversity of students than we have in our schools' leadership. The school comprises of students from numerous races, ethnicities, religions, and cultures, with 54% percent of its students identified as marginalized and thirty-eight percent identified as Black (DOES, 2021). The importance of diversity in any school board cannot be overstated, as, without it, we would have

leaderships who unethically serve their interests and those of their race (Ciulla, 2005). This is evident in the hiring process where we find schools having 95% white teachers regardless of the demographic of the students of the schools (PDSB, 2020; YRDSB 2021; OPC, 2020).

SWOT-Weakness

The organization's weakness resides in the underrepresentation of Black teachers and administrators to justly represent that ever-growing diversity in the school board. The lack of equitable representation of Black teachers and Black administrators creates a further barrier to suitable inclusive education (Mindzak, 2016; OHRC, 2007). One must wonder whether this seemingly intentional lack of equitable Black representation in administration is nothing more than a further fortification of the invisible barriers brought on by the patriarchal and Eurocentric system (Carbajal, 2018). The fact is that there are several Black educators ready to take up the mantle and free themselves from the encumbrances that limit their progress by taking on teaching leadership and administrative roles.

One of the identified gaps from my SWOT analysis is also identified in the equity roadmap (2020) as the inequitable representation of Black Teachers. To bridge this gap, the equity roadmap (2020) speaks of finding ways to increase equity and representation for Black students and Black teachers, respectively. However, the need for increasing equity and representation for Black administrators in the DOES school board lacks official recognition within the equity roadmap framework. I have the agency to bring this to the attention of internal and external stakeholders. Since increasing support for Black students and teachers remains a priority to the DOES school board. I remain hopeful that the organization would also support increasing efficacy for Black administrators. This hope has become a catalyst in critically assessing and challenging some societal norms that are barriers for Black administrators and has led to the framing of my Problem of Practice.

SWOT- Opportunities

The opportunities for organizational growth which emerge from the SWOT analysis related to having equitable representation of Black administrators in the organization are numerous. Three of those opportunities are highlighted and discussed below: better decision-making, more significant professional growth opportunities, and creativity and innovation (Stahl, 2021).

Better Decision-Making

As a result of having leaders who are Black, the decision-making process will hopefully emerge more inclusive as these leaders would have an input in the process. As a result, we will see tremendous success in Black teachers and students as they now have representatives in making decisions.

More Significant Opportunities for Professional Growth

Having Black administrators in schools means opportunities for the staff to be taught about culturally responsive pedagogy during professional development (PD) workshops. These experiences will help increase cultural awareness and culturally responsive pedagogy. I have also seen firsthand where a Black person on an interview panel results a more meaningful interview question and answer period as it relates to the talk of equity and diversity.

Creativity and Innovation

Persons from different cultures and backgrounds will provide different perspectives during the decision-making process. In addition, the variety of cultures and experiences will mean that the ideas put forth to consider will be inclusive to all staff members and students. The inclusiveness of diversity in the decision-making process is what will boost creativity and innovation (Randel et al. 2018; Groysberg, Connolly, 2013).

SWOT-Threats

The greatest threat confronting DOES school board is retaining Black educators who have become frustrated after many unsuccessful attempts to get jobs in the schools and leadership. Many have decided to move into other sectors and other school boards to provide for themselves and their families. Roberts & Mayo (2022) remind us that a racially mixed work force bears better performance and more originality than one that is racially identical. My SWOT analysis of the board has revealed gaps which are needed to be addressed and one of these gaps, if satisfied, could result in great success for my school and the board. But according to Thompson (2016) these gaps are barriers that are further perpetuated by Neoliberalism and bureaucratic leadership approaches, which have resulted in very few Black administrators in our schools.

Leadership Problem of Practice

In recent years we have seen minimal changes that one could even regard as a paradigm shift in senior leadership as a female was hired into the most senior position in the school board. The change in female leadership (Hekman, 1999; Pini, 2005) resulted in DOES' equity road map (2020), a 3-year plan to increase the diversity of the teaching staff with the aim to increase the representation of minorities in the classroom. The equity roadmap articulated by the board includes all minority groups, including LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous people, and all other marginalized affinity groups. While this is great because it is inclusive, it also is so diversified that it has the potential to lose its effectiveness. After seeing the gap in this pathway plan, the dire need for more Black administrators, and the increasing struggles due to racism experienced by the few of us Black administrators within the school board, I decided on my current Problem of Practice (PoP).

This PoP focuses on addressing the ongoing anti-Black racism and systemic barriers experienced by Black administrators in a K-12 public school board in an Eastern Ontario School District. The reality of racism is lived experience for many Black administrators, and the challenges they experience are the direct product of the recurring everyday reality of anti-Black racism in our schools, school boards, and society. The racial struggles, discrimination and racism suffered by Black administrators are not new (Thompson, 2016). Blacks have been shackled for centuries by the obstacles and prejudice established by a Eurocentric society. As a result, we see very few Black administrators in our schools today. According to Gorksi (2019) and Walehwa, (2020), those we do see, are over-worked, and burned out from the struggles for racial justice.

Black administrators also have a vital role in bridging the ever-widening gap between Black students and success. Black administrators are fundamental in providing tangible support for Black students. This substantial support for Black students by Black administrators will influence and guide students into becoming educators and even administrators to not just bridge but fill this gap. To achieve this kind of success, what change policies and strategies must be implemented to address the underrepresentation, biases and inequalities experienced by Black administrators in our K-12 public school boards in Ontario?

Framing the Problem of Practice

This section identifies some historical and Eurocentric barriers that impede Black administrators' success. These historical and Eurocentric barriers can best be understood and challenged using critical race theory. George (2021) describes CRT as not just a mere name but as actions to create an equity state of being. Similar sentiments were also echoed by (Price, 2016) who reminded us that CRT helps us to exam the oppressive practices of the dominant race and helps us to finding ways of deconstructing them. Identifying and deconstructing these hindrances will expose the absolute truth behind the continued omission of Black administrators from

critical leadership positions in the past and even in today's modern and 'diverse' society.

Thompson (2016) also informs us that CRT has always played major roles in the identifying and exposing inequalities in organizations. This thought is at the heart of my PoP as discussed in the next section. This next section will also unveil what is at the rotten core of anti-Black racism and the benefits it bestows on those who uphold its immoral and tyrannical principles.

Why Change

The implications of anti-Black racism on Black administrators have a far-reaching effect on their success and efficacy and on our most essential and vulnerable stakeholders, our students. To understand the unbridled impact of the underrepresentation of Black administrators in our schools, we first must acknowledge that there is a noticeable, unethical, and unjust absence of Black administrators in our schools. After examining the data from (PDSB, 2020; YRDSB 2021; & OPC, 2020), I am left asking what could be a rhetorical question, of why in mine and all other school board administrators are predominantly white. Before I answer or attempt to answer this question, I want to quickly point to the fact that this argument is not about Black administrators taking over or surpassing the number of white administrators in mine or any other board. Instead, it is about seeing a fair representation of Black administrators in our schools in the board compared to the Black student population (Smith, 2016).

One of the most significant obstacles to the inclusion and subsequent fair representation of Black administrators in leadership is the universal and ubiquitous desire to maintain society's status quo (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). This unbridled resistance to change manifests itself through the status quo and into areas such as hiring practices resulting in the ever-growing underrepresentation of Black administrators.

Status Quo and Hiring Practices

Racism in today's modern society has historical roots extending back to the colonial manipulations of the 'conquered' in the empire. Tuck & Yang (2012) declaration informs us of the cunning and genocidal techniques associated with colonialism and its impact on the colonized people. This tyrannical and tortuous history is today used to justify various practices and ideologies under the banner of capitalism, which is used to profit from the commodification of Blacks. These visible and institutional practices, such as passing over promotions and not interviewing Black applicants, are the subtlest racial aggressions of daily life for many Black educators like myself.

Our Canadian history is painted and tainted by a patriarchal, racist colonial history (Khalifa et al., 2018). Sadly, even though our Canadian society today has evolved into a diverse, progressive and, for some, a neo-liberal society, we still see signs of anti-Black racism aimed at nurturing and protecting the status quo. These acts of racist behaviour are not confined to any specific areas of society and therefore is very visible even in our education system. Many of these racist acts and behaviour are observed and practiced in our education system which was founded and still operates on Eurocentric, patriarchal and colonial structures (Khalifa et al., 2018). Even more tragic is that our education system, which should be the catalyst of societal change, is, according to Capper (2019); Erevelles (2011) and Graham & Slee (2008), being used to defend and protect the tyrannical status quo. One way of preserving the status quo is to limit or even block anyone or any race that will disrupt the power and privilege held by those in charge through the hiring process.

Hiring Practices

One of the first rules to remember is that there is no neutrality, as we all have our own biases. However, these biases become even more visible when looking at the hiring practices related to Black and white applicants. DasGupta et al. (2020) gave us some hard statistics

showing that a white applicant's resume will receive three times the number of call-backs of Black applicants. They continue to argue that the difference in call-backs jumped to twelve times in favour of white applicants if they both declared having a criminal record.

This information is reminiscent of white privilege exposed by Pinkett et al. (2018), as a white applicant is now, on average, nine times more likely to be hired than a Black applicant with or without similar criminal records. Even though one usually cannot be hired into education with a criminal record, a white person with one can work at the meso or macro level of the industry (Ross, 2017). This again speaks to McIntosh's (2019) white privilege, as scouring the internet could not produce one Black convict working as an educator in a school in Canada. According to Diangelo's (2018) definition, white privilege is a sociological construct that indicates the benefits granted to white people, which people of colour cannot enjoy in any context. After examining these circumstances, I was led to conclude that the conscious and unconscious actions of our Eurocentric society are to promote white privileges to protect the status quo.

Having examined the societal inequalities of hiring practices I have to wonder about the hiring practices of my board which shows similar traits of imbalance and inequalities in the representation of Black administrators. The conclusion I was able to arrive at revealed that prior to 2020 the policies on our books were outdated. The realization of these outdated policies lead to the creation of (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 in (2022) which was an equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion update. The three earlier mentioned documents focused on revamping job postings that clarify job requirements, outreach strategies used during the recruitment process, the screening and short-listing of applicants using standardized assessments, an aim to creating a diverse hiring and selection committee and final documentation and retention. These outdated policies served nothing but to maintain the

Eurocentric practices of the board thereby limiting the equitable representation of Blacks in administration.

The Underrepresentation of Black Administrators

The history of slavery and segregation has taught us that for centuries, the power to hire was in the hands of the white Eurocentric colonialists. They protected their power and privilege through nepotism and only hired other ‘whites.’ This practice pushed aside many Blacks who may have been a more qualified or experienced fit for the job than those hired. The practice of racial discrimination could be manifested in nearly all sectors of the economy where Blacks are less likely to get a job over their white counterpart. In the education sector, this practice has restricted the number of Black educators and administrators in our schools and further perpetuated poverty and the limitation of the success of Blacks (Pinkett et al. 2018; DasGupta et al., 2020).

As for the Black educator who worked hard enough not to be denied entry into this ‘Eurocentric brotherhood,’ they experienced significant difficulties as they navigate and try to penetrate the politics and policies around them (Ryan & Tutors, 2017). McIntosh (2019); Pinkett et al. (2018) and Ross (2017) all revealed some reasons for the dismal representation of Black administrators in our schools. The equation at this point is simple, if we are not hiring Black teachers, then who will become Black administrators? Secondly, if the status quo is to protect the power and privilege of the colonialists, then it dictates that whites must be promoted over Blacks so that this equation can be maintained.

The issue of underrepresentation and maintaining the status quo become even more apparent and concerning to me once I became a member and eventual co-chair of DOES’s Black affinity group (DBAG). Being one of the co-chairs and having access to our registry, I quickly discovered that the group comprised between 100-150 Black educators within the board. More

than eighty percent of the group were long term occasional teachers (LTO) or occasional teachers (OT). Of the twenty percent who were full-time educators (FTE) there are six administrators across both panels, including me, who is one of only two high school administrators from the high school panel.

After listening to the concerns of my colleagues during meetings and discovering some of the reasons for so few full-time Black teachers, and observing that there were even fewer Black administrators in my school board, we laid out an action plan to mentor each other with the aim of building capacity in each member of DBAG. It was then I realized that the need for change needs to be swift so that it can be seen immediately in the lives of our Black administrators, Black educators and, even more so, our Black students.

As it were to add insult to injury, my SWOT analysis outlined in Appendix A, revealed numerous shortcomings when we compare the ratio of Black students to Black educators. The analysis also revealed the devastating impact that underrepresentation has on our Black students and the loss of numerous Black educators who had to find alternative employment opportunities to support themselves and their families. This loss of Black educators and potential Black administrators is devastating news for our students as DasGupta et al. (2020) outlined that having a Black teacher or administrator can result in a thirteen percent increase in enrolment in post-secondary schooling and decrease the probability of dropping out by twenty nine percent for Black students. Therefore, reducing or removing the significant disparity may improve the success of many students, especially those who are Black.

Finally, one of the most significant observed needs for changes and the most urgent need for the success of my OIP came from one of my experiences during the pandemic. On the first day of my role as vice principal (VP), I saw a Black student waiting outside the main office. She did not look as if she was panicking or in a hurry. After a few minutes, I went outside to ask if

she was ok or needed help, and this was when I had one of the most humbling yet terrifying experiences of my career. This student said she came to the office to find out if I was the principal and to meet me as she was in grade twelve and had never had a Black administrator. As mentioned before, this action humbled me and solidified the urgent need for changes to see more Black administrators in our school offices and ensure their efficacy and success. This experience left me with numerous questions, some of which have become my guiding questions below.

Guiding Questions

This section dives into the guiding questions for my OIP derived from my PoP. These questions are situated in the critical paradigm and will further explore the framework for the OIP from social justice and critical worldview perspectives. My guiding questions are essential as they will help to outline the different models and approaches, past and present, which can help support the development and implementation of the change management plan. By answering these questions, the overreaching importance of my PoP and OIP will be recognized and solidified. These questions have emerged from my SWOT analysis and illustrated that the diversity in educational leadership needs to be changed at the micro, meso and macro levels in my school and school board for us to see any improvements in equitable representation, which is so desperately needed in the school board. Recognizing this issue, even with my limited agency and positionality I have an ethical responsibility to help make or encourage the change.

The Micro Level

1. What are some of the changes in strategies that must be implemented to address the underrepresentation, biases and inequalities experienced by Black administrators/ leaders in my 7-12 school in DOES school board in Ontario?

The first question, as stated above, aims to explore ways of challenging the status quo of the privileged at the micro level. The policies and strategies that must be implemented to address

the underrepresentation, biases and inequalities experienced by Black administrators in my school in the board of DOES must be ones that will create an equitable representation of Black administrators starting at the Micro level. The data presented by Ryan, Pollock, and Antonelli's (2007) and OPC's (2020) reports, paint a sad picture of the significant underrepresentation of Black administrators in Ontario at the macro level which a reality at the micro level as well. Our solutions must start at the point of most impact, which is at the micro level, so we can see changes at the meso and macro levels.

The key to building any kind of success strategy is to start building from the ground up. Changes to correct the imbalance as it relates to the underrepresentation of Black leaders in our school much also start at the ground level within our schools. Changes at the micro level include primarily the leader and her/his work environment. At this level we of course need to see more Black leaders within our schools, this must however come from the macro level down.

Therefore, at the micro level there must be conversations around challenging our own biases, suppositions, and discrimination (Lopez, 2013; Singleton, 2015) to combat racism. Another change which must be reflected in our teaching, unlearning, and learning is that of greater inclusion of culturally relevant responsive pedagogy in our schools. This inclusion will ensure that we are creating positive experiences for our Black students, teachers, and administrators (Dei, 2007; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

While these changes are great, at the heart of the problem of underrepresentation of Blacks leaders in our schools is the lack of hiring Blacks teachers as well as providing an environment that will increase their efficacy and success. The inclusion or increases in Black leadership in our schools will only mean greater success to many of our stakeholders in the education system, which will be explored in the second guiding question.

The Meso Level

2. Who is impacted from the lack of equitable representation of Black administrative leadership in our schools, and how are they affected?

The above question will explore the impact of underrepresentation at the meso level. The underrepresentation of Black administrators in our schools helps to create negative stereotypes of Blacks. These stereotypes have resulted in actions that have prompted massive inequalities and disparities for Black administrators, to protect and preserve the status quo. These stereotypes have placed many Black administrators in areas where they are destined to fail. Pinkett et al. (2011) tell us that many Black leaders, are usually placed within environments that define them based on racial stereotypes, baseless assumptions, or ignorance created out of biases. Despite these stereotypes and biases, this question also seeks to expose the hard reality that a greater representation of Black administrators will mean a challenge to the status quo resulting in the loss of some privileges previously enjoyed.

At the heart of the problem of who is impacted by the lack of representation of Black administrators in our schools are our Black students. The underrepresentation of Black leaders and administrators in our schools mean that majority of our Black students will not have a role model who looks like them, who sounds like them or someone who may have had similar lived experiences which they have overcome. Goings, Walker & Wilkerson (2019) advises us that the absence of Black roles models in our schools lead to many school-based stressors for Black students. These school-based stressors include observed negative behaviors which leads to higher suspension and expulsion rates, seen in among many of our Black students. These negative stressors will also lead to poor academic performance of Black students. These symptoms can only be fixed if there is an organization that is exhibiting a readiness to change. The third guiding question below looks at the impact at the macro level.

The Macro Level

3. How will the current culture of DOES impact its readiness for change within the school, board, community, and other stakeholders of having more Black administrators in our schools?

The advantages of having an equitable representation of Black administrators in the school board will procure great benefits for all. These benefits from the diversity these Black administrators will bring at the operational levels will play an active role in better and more informed decision-making. The decisions made and the path taken will now be more considerate of the impact it has on the Black students and staff of the organization. The second aspect of this question will show the positive impact the small but impactful change would have on the learning and behaviour the school at the micro level in our students.

As a Black administrator and, as already stated, one of only two Black administrators at the high school level, I have seen most of the Black students in my school gravitate towards me. They are no longer afraid to make reports or seek an ally. In short, my presence in the school has empowered the Black students. As a Black administrator the empowerment my presence gives is only matched by the positive role model that they now see daily. Gonzalez (2002) reinforces this point showing that Black students thrive better in educational environments where they are able to relate to other Blacks. These Black educators and leaders with whom they are able to identify would as roles models help to positively shape their experiences and outcomes as productive Black scholars

The resistance to change in the school board of DOES is like that of any other school board, and always comes back to the maintenance of the status quo. This resistance to change will ensure that Black leaders or potential leaders will continue to be omitted from the possibility of promotions. The fact is that any changes in the status quo will result in the reduction of the

Eurocentric leadership and ideals of the current society. We have however seen at least on paper the (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 in (2022) all pointing to required and desired change.

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

This section will look at what needs to be changed, the vision for the change, and how the changes will improve the current conditions in the board. We have seen that this present society has experienced exponential growth in diversity because of globalization. These changes in diversity mean we must constantly readjust our thinking and growth mindset to adapt to new changes continually. The cycle of change is never-ending and, in some areas, will require a little more work and struggle to be made into a reality.

Hiring Policies

One such sector of never-ending change is education, which has seen the need to be more accommodating to the various ethnicities, cultures, religions, and sexual orientations of students and staff in recent times. Of all the different types of diversity, it usually is the most obvious (as it is the most visible than all others), and generally, at the bottom of this group, you will find the Black ethnicity. Brown, Cox & Horowitz (2019) revealed that many Americans think being Black hurts one's ability to get ahead and sees being Black as a disadvantage. One could interpret this statement and argue that it is an American problem. However, the act of not hiring or not promoting a person owing to the colour of their skin is not unique to the U.S.A, as Canada, too, has its share of anti-Black racism.

One of the systemic racist practices in an organization against Blacks that requires much work to change is in the hiring and advancing process. For some organizations, including in many of our schools, Blacks are sometimes hired, but the advancement process is slow and or not at all. Many would argue that Canada is a welcoming, all-inclusive, accommodating, non-

bias, and non-discriminatory country. However, the daily lives of minorities will tell a different story for those of us who are ‘noticeably different’ by race, skin colour, and ethnicity.

Delgado, Stefancic (2001) contended that racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status, and because of this, race is a social construct, not a biological reality. As many of us Blacks have come to realize, this social construct also is a means of maintaining the power, privilege and status of the majority group while suppressing Blacks. I will admit that, at times, racist behaviour is not a conscious decision. But it also shows that racism is so systematically entrenched in society that it seems normal and occurs naturally. The norm of racism in society has crept into our schools as we cannot separate our schools from the society in which we live (Thompson, 2016). Even seven years after, Thompson’s (2016) declaration remains true and can be easily observed in various practices in most of our school boards in Ontario (Office of the Premier, 2020; James & Turner, 2017 and CBC, 2022).

The depth to which racism extends as it relates to hiring practices may be hard to prove. There is also no evidence of any HR policies which limits or prevents the hiring of Black educators. However, the evidence would suggest that if Black educators are qualified, willing, and available to work, why are we not seeing more Black educators being hired? Why would it take policies such as the Equity Road Map (2020), Policy P.146.HR (2021) and Memo 3 (2022) to encourage or force the equal hiring of Black educators? The conclusion of the matter here is that if anti-racist social justice policies are being used to fix an issue such as the hiring of Black educators, then the problem must be one related to racism.

The success of our Black students can be improved significantly, DasGupta et al. (2020), by simply hiring more Black teachers and administrators. I am aware this is easier said than done as, in most cases, one can see that the hiring practices seemingly restrict or, in some areas, exclude Blacks. This practice is nothing more than another layer of protection for society’s status

quo and the privileged who enjoy it. However, if this change is to be made into a reality, we must start rethinking and unlearning some of the things we know and are taught by our colonial masters.

A Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Learning the new culture and unlearning the old is a step in the right direction, which must be done systematically and deliberately, starting with our youth in their classrooms. Tuck & Yang (2012) argued that decolonizing the mind is the first step toward a growth mindset, which starts with introducing culturally responsive pedagogy in our classrooms, and schools for the teachers through professional development. Tuck & Yang (2012) argument is that a growth mindset through culturally responsive pedagogy in education will help to reveal and vanquish the monster called colonialism. It will assist in forming critiques of the colonialized presentation of history while questioning and even rejecting their epistemology. Those regarded as privileged must see clearly where this so-called privilege comes from, where it is heading and understand its damage to the less privileged or visible minorities, especially Blacks.

The realization of change must start with teachers using culturally responsive curricula driven by the goal of self-determination and centred around indigenous knowledge systems (Battiste, 2010; Dei, 2019). The decolonization in our schools and classrooms must come from culturally responsive pedagogy, where our teachers are equipped with the pedagogy that will encourage a change in the mindset of our students.

Decolonization, culturally responsive pedagogy, and critical race theory all help rewrite and teach our people's actual history while correcting the past accounts (Miller 2020) written by the victor or the conquerors. Battiste (2010) highlighted that the only way to move ahead and grow is to free our minds and return to the indigenous way of thinking and living by unlearning the Eurocentric views and teaching. Dei (2019) says that education is a catalyst and medium for

changing people's mindset, some of which took decades for individuals to grow. Yet, any radical paradigm shift or power challenge to bring about equity in the educational organization will always generate resistance from those who wield power (Bei & Knowler, 2022). The challenges Black educators like myself and others, like me must endure to become an administrator is not just an indicator but proof of the resistance which exist to bring about. Equity.

Equity in Education

Before we can start advocating for equity in education, we should first understand what true equity is in education. Educational equity is a means of exposing and correcting racism in education through radically proposed solutions (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Capper, 2019). Most of the proposed solutions will expose many of the disadvantages experienced by Blacks so that those in power can enjoy their privileges. However, the radical solutions through critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) will provide the ability to question assumptions and challenge the status quo (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011) by imagining new possibilities.

The elation for imagining new possibilities for equity in education was caught at the macro level in 2017 in Ontario, which resulted in the creation of the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan. The purpose of the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan (2017) was to fix the equity gaps in Ontario's education system. But it also provided us with a great understanding and insights into what equity looks like in Ontario's education system. As well, the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan (2017) provided a clear revelation of the racial inequities with the possible solutions it outlines; logical and educated people do not provide solutions unless there is a problem.

One highly influential contributor to the plan and to education in Ontario, Jennifer Adams, the Director of Education of the OCDSB (2017), stated that "Equity is a strategic priority, and our school district is committed to reducing barriers to learning to improve equity of

access and opportunity for all students” (p.8). Unfortunately, while this is not just a bold gesture but a much-needed action plan, I am once again seeing an action plan which omits and ignores the need for an increase in Black administrators or even a pathway to improve and increase the efficacy of the few that are already in the system.

The plan for reducing barriers to learning for our Black students in our classrooms, schools and school board is excellent. However, let us not forget that having more successful Black administrators, based on the reports of Ryan, Pollock, Antonelli (2009) and OPC (2020), is a sure way of improving the success of Black students. I include this reminder because in all the reports I have read, there is conspiratorial evidence where Black administrators are inadvertently omitted or overlooked from the plans. I am, however, constantly reminded that I live in a Eurocentric society that is based upon meritocracy and superiority myths of privileges constructed and maintained in a racist society (Battiste, 2010). Here again, we see that any wind which shakes the tree of power is one which goes against nature and will always be met with barriers and blockades.

My task then is to ensure that the deeply entrenched policies and practices of anti-Black racism in my organization are identified, highlighted, and challenged. It must be disrupted and possibly eradicated to increase the efficacy and success of Black administrators. Even though I am a Black administrator living and working in a Eurocentric society, I am a firm believer that what I do or not do now in my time of influence will affect those who will come after me. I know that this idea of equity in education is more extensive than my role as a vice principal; it is more significant than my role on the terms and conditions committee (TCC), and it is more significant than my role as co-chair of (DBAG).

I acknowledge that we live in an era in which there must be more culturally responsive action, awareness, and representation in all sectors of the economy. For this to happen in

education, Black leaders need to be the architects and gardeners, (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011) who will design, build, and nurture these seedlings into beautiful flowers. Inequity arising from racism will always be a tough topic to discuss, but it is a conversation worth having, and who better to talk about it than a person who has struggled under the injustices of inequity? It is conversations about inequity arising from racism that will ignite the much-needed changes that will bring about required growth and development within our organizations.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

The struggles faced by Black educators to move from a teacher to a department head are further compounded by the acts of bias discrimination and racism as we attempt to traverse the pathway towards administrative leadership. My proposed PoP is nothing more than a small indicator of the problem of racism and the difficulties Black administrators must endure if they have any desires of success. My PoP was formed, as a result of my strong worldview resulting from my lived experience and an overarching desire to challenge and maybe even influence the status quo towards change.

Chapter 2 will guide into the planning and development process highlighting the internal and external factors causing and affecting change. Chapter 2 will also explore the organizations readiness for change as well as possible solutions best suited for the success of the OIP.

Chapter 2 Planning and Development

Planning and development are complementary processes inherent in any organization because of change or intended changes both internally and externally. The success of the changes will be contingent upon several variables. This chapter will explore some of these variables, such as the leadership approach to change, the framework for leading the change process, the organizational readiness to change and some possible solution to address my problem of practice (PoP).

A recent surge in woke culture (Kanai & Gill, 2020) has led to increased social consciousness with calls for dismantling white supremacy along with organizational and systemic racism. This modern-day racial struggle (woke culture) uses critical race theory as the ultimate weapon to identify and challenge any social systems, structures and policies that continue to propagate marginalization to uphold the societal status quo (Andreotti, 2021; Khalifa et al, 2018 and Rexhepi & Torres, 2011).

The process of deconstructing and decolonizing can genuinely be very arduous. This process can be further complicated by the leadership approach to change which drives or supports this process. This OIP seeks to underscore the importance of the deconstruction of this social construct called Blackness, a contributor of anti-Black racism, according to Dei (2018), within our hollowed walls of education and, by extension, our society. The deconstruction of the social construct will break down some of the systemic barriers that exist in the community and, more importantly, in education.

Leadership Approach to Change

Two decades ago, I entered the distinguished hallowed halls of the education profession, filled with enthusiasm and ready to serve. I felt it my duty to help my students realize their fullest potential, which would, in turn, boost the school's prominence. At that time, I considered

myself a servant leader. Two decades later, I still desire to serve with a slightly different focus. Physical and psychological maturity has shown me the realities of our current society. These realities have changed my perspective from a servant to an inclusive and transformational leader. This change in attitude came with a determination to forge an existence free of racism and replace it with equity and equality for Black educators and administrators like myself.

These issues of racism, inequality and inequity ultimately informed my problem of practice. I soon realized that this path I was on required a leader with empathy placing a high value on people, a leader who listens, teaches, mentors, and empowers people simultaneously. These exceptional characteristics are exact descriptors of my two main approaches to leadership, those of transformational and inclusive leaderships.

Transformational Leadership

The prospect of challenging anti-Black racism to improve the success of Black administrators like me and others in DOES is as exciting as it is frightening. The excitement comes from how needed changes could be forged. The frightening aspect of this is the uncertainty of the types of resistance that could be a by-product of challenging society's status quo. As a Black educator who believes in and practices transformational leadership, I understand that the changes I seek will transform the realities of many Black administrators by identifying and challenging systemic and institutional anti-Black racism in my organization. According to Haynes (2014), revolutionary changes in an organization is a response to the anticipation of significant changes in the environment or technology within the organization.

It is argued that transformational leadership is simply a process that changes and transforms people by focusing on their values to create for them a bright future (Northouse, 2019; Bass, 1985; Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2018). More importantly, Moradi Korejan & Shahbazi, (2016); Northouse (2019) suggests that transformational leadership is concerned with

long-term goals, values, emotions, ethics, and standards. One of the great benefits of transformational leadership is that it augments other leadership models, such as inclusive leadership. Transformational leadership further strengthens inclusive leadership and is vital to my work in attempting to challenge the status quo and the barriers brought about by anti-Black racism for Black administrators. Moradi Korejan, & Shahbazi (2016) definition works best for me as it aligns with my agency as co-chair of DBAG and my positionality as a Black administrator.

Navy (2020) used Maslow (1943) to espouse that it is only after satisfying the basic physiological needs, safety, and the psychological needs of belonging and esteem that you can fulfill the most significant needs known to man. Man's greatest need, according to Maslow, is self-fulfilment, and it is at this level that we are motivated. This ideology shared by Maslow is almost 80 years old but is still relevant today if we are truly desirous of being motivational.

Moradi Korejan, & Shahbazi (2016) continues to remind us that a transformational leader is one that works to support the improve of an organization's performance in uncertain times. In today's ever-changing society a transformational leader like myself is needed to highlight the need for change and to be the facilitator of such change. As a transformational leader with the agency and positionality of a vice principal I am confident that I can influence impactful change that will reflect the need for changes in teaching staff, my colleagues, and the senior leadership.

As a Black transformational leader, I believe that my positionality as a Black underrepresented administrator will be motivating and empowering to my colleagues. As the co-chair of the Black affinity group and as a representative on the TTC, a combination of transformational and inclusive leadership styles does nothing but boost my positionality and even my agency. The diversity of both the transformational and inclusive leadership approaches also work harmoniously; as using both styles produce an effective synergy (Echols, 2009).

Inclusive Leadership

My attempt to confront and challenge this monster called anti-Black racism is a gruelling task. Such a radical fight usually requires, as often highlighted, a positionality and agency that is far greater than that of a vice principal. As such, I am aware that my role as vice principal grants me limited official capacity to implement this radical change within the school board of DOES.

It, therefore, means I must apply what Bourke & Espedido (2019) would consider deliberate and specific leadership styles to accentuate the injustice of the underrepresentation of Black administrators in our schools. Much like all other radical changes reducing the margins (Pollock et al., 2022) must also start from the bottom up, blowing as a slight wind before it progresses into a hurricane of change. Inclusive leadership does all these and more as it speaks to my core and ethical responsibility to build capacity (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014; Randel et al., 2018) in other Black administrators and potential leaders using the DOES equity framework to support the action change.

Inclusive leadership as defined by Carmeli et al. (2010) is leader who is open enough to allow employees to emerge with new concepts creating an environment where it is safe and accommodating for all. Inclusive leadership helps to create a framework and infrastructure that empowers those who are in minority, catering for their psychological needs. Inclusive leadership create an infrastructure which allows inclusion of heterogenous people from varied races a background with the aim of generating some level of equity and inclusion (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2020).

It is often falsely assumed that once you hire a Black employee through equity frameworks, like the one in DOES, they will be quickly promoted through the ranks, but (Randel. et al., 2018; Cook & Glass, 2013; Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; Hom, Roberson & Ellis, 2008) all argued that is not the case. If the infrastructure to boost the efficacy and success of

these employees is not in place, then their effectiveness and success will be limited. The DOES equity framework is a good starting point as it seeks equity for our students, but it lacks the direction and function of creating an immediate, short-term, or long-term structure which seeks to hire or promote Black administrators to soften this issue of underrepresentation. Using inclusive leadership, I intend to plant the seeds that will eventually grow the branches of this infrastructure (Ashikali et al., 2020; Echols, 2009), which allows for our Black students' success and the success of Black administrators as well.

Inclusive leadership works better with diversity than any other style of leadership (Randel et al., 2018). I therefore anticipate that I will be more effective working with my Black colleagues to address the drastic underrepresentation of Blacks in administrative roles in my school board. According to Echols (2009), inclusive leadership ensures minoritized persons are perceived as included, empowered individuals, while promoting, and developing culture aimed at maintaining the integrity of any marginalizing group. These characteristics of inclusive leadership, along with my transformational leadership approach, will be better for effecting desired changes in the organization of DOES.

Finally, inclusive leadership would integrate all the above ensuring integrity and minimizing the feeling of marginalization by any group. This is especially important as challenging the status quo usually means someone or a group's power or privilege is impacted, and this would produce tremendous resistance. The combination of both approaches of leadership will encourage greater buy-in to the eventual solutions which will be proposed and implemented. One's leadership approach is only one aspect of achieving overall success as we also must consider the best framework to present these changes for them to be persuasively accepted.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

The prospect of change is both needed and inevitable for the success and survival of any organization. According to Deszca et al. (2019), organizational change is a means of improving the organization's effectiveness using calculated variations of components connecting the mission, vision, values, culture, strategy, goals, structures, process, technology and even people of the organization. Both internal and external factors drive the inevitability of changes in any organization.

These factors are what Burke (2017) called anticipatory or reactive circumstances. Burke (2017) explained that anticipatory factors are organizational changes which incrementally redirect or reorientate the internal alignment of individual components or subsystems in anticipation of future events. According to Burke (2017), reactive change is the incremental internal changes made to realign the organization in response to external environmental changes that seek to realign the organization. The reactive and anticipatory changes desired are why Kotter's change management model fits the intention of this paper, as this model examines the readiness for change from both internal and external factors (Brisson-Banks, 2010).

The required changes within the organization of DOES to combat anti-Black racism are both reactive and anticipatory. For example, the equity roadmap (2020) is a framework that anticipates an ever-growing Black population in the board, while Policy P.146.6 (2021) is reactive to the actual growth in the Black population. My PoP is also reactive, to the underrepresentation and anti-Black racism faced by Black administrators within the board. As a result, it does require a carefully planned and implemented change model that supports the initiatives already in place in the organization to be successful.

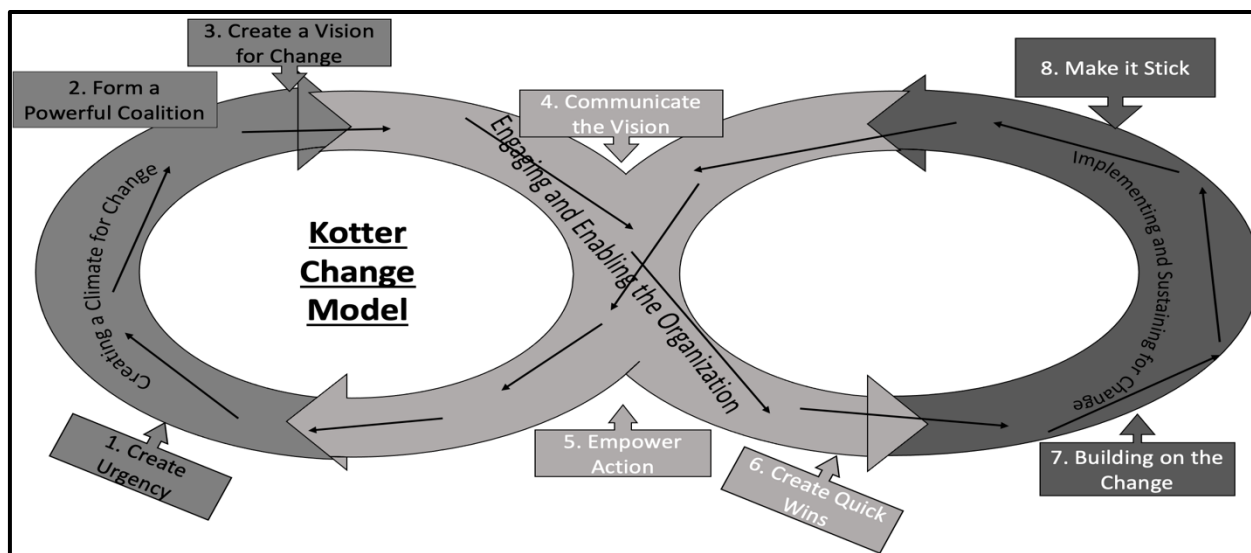
The DOES three-year equity roadmap plan (2020) and the (Policy P.146.6, 2021) through the human resource department seek to address issues of racism within the board. The proposed

outcomes of both plans focus similarly on Black students and teachers to promote equity and improve representation, respectively. However, the three-year equity road map plan (2020) and (Policy P.146.6, 2021) both lack focus or specific mention of improving Black administrators' representation or success in the school board. Therefore, the changes required to bridge the observed gap between the three-year equity road map plan (2020), the (Policy P.146.6, 2021) and my OIP must be carefully implemented to be successful. Kotter (2012) change model postulates a structure suitable framework for leading the change process.

Kotter change model (2012) is one that is portrayed as a linear step by step plan. Hayes et al. (2007) however advises that changes are gradual, incremental, sometimes turbulent, and even unstable but not linear. Figure 1, depicts a modified and redesigned version of Kotter's change model (2012) combined with the ideas of Hayes et al. (2007) that change is often non-linear and unpredictable is a picture-perfect fit for the work of my OIP. The perpetual, incessant and according Hayes et al. (2007) gradual, incremental, sometimes turbulent nature of change are best represented by the infinity cycle, which is a holistic representation of Kotter's change model depicting the never-ending, uncertain, and unpredictable nature of change.

Figure 1

Kotter's Change Management Model



Note. A redesign of Kotter's Change Management Model (2012), showing the three stages and eight steps. Adapted from *Organizational Change: An Action-Oriented Toolkit* (3rd ed) by Deszca et al. (2019). *Organizational Change - International Student Edition: An action-oriented toolkit*. Sage Publications INC (p.65).

The first and perhaps one of the essential points to remember is that change is never linear (Fullan, 1994; Haynes et al. 2007; Boyatzis & Dhar, 2023). It travels unpredictably and sometimes moves forward, backward, and forward again to re-evaluate where we are and where we will be going next. Although presented linearly, Kotter's Change Management Model (2012) in my view works perfectly in an infinity loop as planning and implementing change is continuous and ongoing and is always changing directions as outlined in Figure 1. The first stage, creating a climate for change, has three steps which seek to create excitement and build agency for change. The second stage, engaging and enabling the organization also has three steps, and this stage uses the built excitement and agency to create change. The final stage, implementing and sustaining for change, builds on the created changes and freezes them, creating a new culture in the organization. The activities and desired outcomes of the three stages and eight steps are all outlined in Appendix B.

Creating a Climate for Change

At stage one, the goal is to establish an excitement with the desire for change within the organization, setting the mood and enthusiasm for change. Setting the foundation for change is one of the most critical actions. Kotter (2012) reminds us that about seventy-five percent of the organization's management needs to buy into the idea. Since the culture of the organization of DOES is hierarchical, the goal would be to share the results of the SWOT to demonstrate the need and the urgency for change. The focus of the information presented from the SWOT at this

time will be the impact on our Black students as well as the potential and continued loss of Black educators to other sectors due to frustration of not finding jobs.

Creating an Urgency for Change

Grooms et al. (2021) inform us that the loss of Black educators from the education sector is undoubtedly an urgency which must be addressed as Black educators are twenty-five percent more likely to leave the profession than their white counterparts. My SWOT analysis has revealed that one of the most significant shortfalls in the organization of DOES is the hiring or promotion of Black administrators. It is through inclusive leadership that the barriers of anti-Black racism in the organization, which result in the lack of hiring of Black administrators, will be addressed. Because inclusive leadership encourages growth and empowerment through the promotion of culture (Echols, 2009), it became the best leadership approach to promote this climate for change by uniting people fighting for the exact cause.

Forming Powerful Coalition

Change starts with one person, but it takes a team and sometimes even an organization to effect the change. Therefore, establishing an alliance or partnership with as many educators as possible is vital. The alliances formed will start with those who have similar visions, values and lived experiences. Even though it would be great to have only Black administrators as the members of the coalition, we are too few in numbers and will need administrators of different ethnicities to be more effective. Even though this vision is to improve the representation of Black administrators in our school and education institutions, having a diverse cross section of minority ethnicities and identities will speak volume in terms of our mission. Since this is a mission of equity and not one of domination, it will be realized, through a transformational and inclusive leader who will model these expectations through collaboration. It is at this stage of Kotter (2012) change model that my transformational leadership would be most influential to my

colleagues, and other stakeholders. This influence would not only empower but also promote the vision of boosting the representation of Black educators.

Creating a Vision for Change

The level of success of almost any initiative lies in the clarity of how the initiative is articulated. A vision for change is no different and must be intelligibly planned, laid out and presented. The clarity of the vision will most certainly help convince others about the change being sought. The clarity of the vision will help the stakeholders, allies, co-conspirators and even the detractors see the reason and need for the suggested change. A vision must also include clarity as one of the strategies that will be used to achieve success. This clarity will enable the change leader to see and buy into this vision for change by gaining the trust of stakeholders (Gravin & Roberto, 2011).

Gaining the trust of individuals is one of the significant assets of transformational inclusive leadership. These leadership approaches would effectively remind stakeholders of the moral and ethical need for change. They also show that this desired change can only be accomplished by working with stakeholders at all levels of the organization.

Enabling and Engaging the Organization

Enabling and engaging the Organization takes up the middle three steps of Kotter's (2012) change model. These three steps provide information about the change process, building trust and creating a feeling of empowerment for the disenfranchised.

Communicating the Vision to Create Buy-in

The key to any successful communication is honesty. This vision of addressing the underrepresentation of Black administrators will undoubtedly create apprehensions and even trepidations among stakeholders. At this level, communication must be clear, consistent, constant, and concise. The clarity of communicating the vision will allow us to attempt to change

the deficit mindset (Ladsen-Billings, 2020) of some of those who have not yet displayed a full buy-in. Communications will also seek to influence the receiver to become allies to the cause. It will also influence those who are allies to become co-conspirators, and those who were co-conspirators to become accomplices (Jana, 2021). The idea of all co-conspirators and accomplices is to get persons on board who are not just supporters but those who play an active role in making and creating the change.

Empowering Others to Act on the Vision

The proverbial term no one is an island is accurate and highly applicable in this case. Kotter's (2012) fifth step speaks true to this concept. As a transformational and inclusive leader, I am constantly working on building the capacity of those around me (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014; Randel et al., 2018). One of the first steps in building capacity is ensuring that each person feels a sense of belonging. Listening is the best way to bring about this sense of belonging (Kouzes, Posner, 2017). Maslow's (1943) hierarchy tells us we need to feel a sense of belonging and safety before we can self-actualize.

Create Short-term Wins

A sense of accomplishment is a great motivator and a means of empowerment. The victory must be shared to motivate my accomplices and the various stakeholders. This a great way to encourage us to share any success of a newly hired Black administrator or one that is promoted. Over the last year, we have been able to post these successes on the DBAG's google classroom, and we also made announcements of it during our monthly meetings. This, unfortunately, excluded my co-conspirators and accomplices. To ensure inclusion for all participants, we would be doing newsletters through a consortium weblink we would share. This weblink would also be an excellent way of promoting our success and maintaining a connection for sustained growth.

Implementing and Sustaining Change

The final two steps of Kotter (2012) change model are about preserving the change which has taken place. However, before one can maintain the difference, one must analyze what was done and look for ways of improving.

Building on the Change

At this step, it is essential to keep the momentum going. Kotter (2012) reminds us that when momentum is lost, there is regression. To keep the momentum ongoing, it is essential to have a clear vision, clear communication, and consistent celebration of small victories such as the hiring or promotion any Black administrators. Equally, we must ensure that through critical race theory, any injustice that is noticed is challenged with immediacy and equity. These are the only actions that will ensure the momentum is not only continued but also persevered.

Making it Stick

The final and perhaps one of the most important of Kotter (2012) change model is to ensure continuity by safeguarding the change so that these new changes will become everyday practice. The longevity of the change decides whether the change was just a meaningless change to check a box or was it a change that will push the organization into an era of transformation. The desired changes of this OIP will only be effective if these changes are long-term, and for these changes to stick, the DOES organization must be ready for change. In order to ensure that the changes will stick, one must establish how ready the organization is for such changes.

Organizational Change Readiness

Organizational readiness is an all-inclusive approach that influences what is being changed, how the change is being implemented, the circumstances under which the change is occurring, and the individuals involved in this process (Wang et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2016 Armenakis et al., 2007). In this section, I will be exploring how ready the organization of DOES

is for the proposed changes in status quo, power, and privilege, which will result from my OIP. Successful change implementation is heavily based on the organization's readiness for change, which must be understood and identified by its leader or leaders if the change will be effective (Deszca et al., 2019). To maximize the success of this OIP, a careful analysis of the organization of DOES was conducted through a SWOT analysis. Having identified the gaps, I can now turn my attention to understanding and possibly resolving some of the issues of anti-Black racism to fill the identified gaps. These identified gaps in DOES have been determined to have resulted from internal and external driving forces.

After the completion of the SWOT analysis, I came to the realization that the organization was ready for change. The (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 in (2022) are all indicators and policies which are aimed at challenging the status quo. These policies are confirmation that organization of DOES is showing an organizational readiness for change. Considering the required change as well as my agency and positionality I recognized that the Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model is best suited to analyze and highlight the performance problems within my organization requiring change.

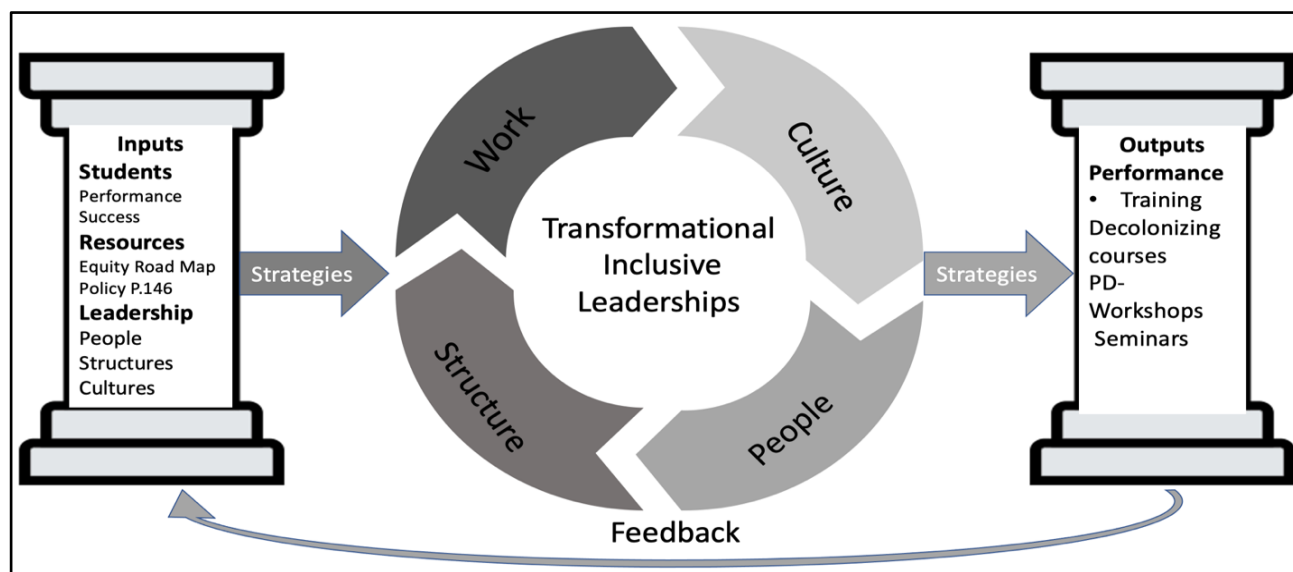
Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model

A scrutiny of Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model reveals that it is heavily focused on internal performance factors. Although tackling the issue of anti-Black racism must be done internally and externally, my agency and positionality allow me to focus mainly internally. Therefore, the Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model is the perfect fit for my OIP. Figure 2 below is a depiction of how the congruence model would be used to analyze the organization of DOES to establish its readiness for change. The congruence model is used to outline the current strategies used as inputs, as well as the possible strategies in output

performance which can be used to combat the issue of underrepresentation of Black administrators in the organization of DOES.

Figure 2

Nadler and Tushman Congruence Model (1980)



Note. Application of the Congruence Model for DOES organization from *Organizational Change: An Action-Oriented Toolkit* (3rd ed.), by Deszca et al. (2019). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, p. 95. Copyright 2016 by SAGE Publications.

The first step in using the Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model is to analyze its input, highlighting DOES' environment, history, and resources, revealing that the organization's infrastructure did not support Black administrators. The Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model also highlighted the transition process of work, culture, structure, and people, which primarily still reflects the Eurocentric and colonial beliefs of the past. All these factors explain why we have a limited number of Black administrators within the board, with me being the first for my school.

The organization's culture and structure have been identified as a patriarchal, Eurocentric, and a bureaucratic hierarchy. This structure not only limits the number of Blacks in the organization but also limits the growth and development of Blacks, which prevents them from becoming administrators Morgan (2006). The people and culture of DOES, viewed from the neoliberal lens, disavow all values of ethics and care (Brown et al., 2005; Green, 2016). The Nadler & Tushman congruence model highlighted in Figure 2 is the current status of my organization which shows the strategies it has put in place creating a readiness to change.

The current output of DOES, namely the (Equity Road Map, 2020) and (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3 (2022), are evidence that we see some internal changes which indicates that the organization is already in some aspects to grow with the changes I am seeking to establish through my OIP. For these reasons, the Nadler & Tushman (1980) congruence model aligns perfectly with my PoP and will benefit the OIP. The Nadler & Tushman congruence model alignment with this PoP because it is one in which all its factors or drivers are inter-connected and it is internally focused; just like most of the changes occurring in the organization of DOES. The output from the Equity Road Map (2020), Policy P.146.HR (2021) and Memo 3 (2022) shows how reliant one area is on the next for the production to change. We must see changes in the organization's structure, culture, work, or people. The model also illustrates that we do not accomplish much independently, but combined, working together will have a more significant impact.

As a result of the various injustices against Blacks in society, there is a tremendous surge in the fight for social justice. This fight manifests itself in multiple ways, which have resulted in numerous protests and legal battles in a fight for equity and, in some cases, justice. For example, in recent times we have seen the 'me too movement' Regulska (2018) having huge impacts in the entertainment industry providing justice for women who have been exploited. In addition, the

battle for justice and equity has moved into the organization resulting in the struggle to close the observed gap of the underrepresentation of Black leaders and administrators. This is evident in the recent woke culture (Kanai & Gill, 2020) being used in an attempt to remove the shackles of Anti-Black racism.

Throughout my analysis with Nadler & Tushman congruence model, the interrelatedness of the four components of the transformation process was undeniable. The connection between culture and work, culture and structure, work and people, culture and people, work and structure and people and structure dimensions could not be separated, and their performance was centered around how compatible they blend.

It is a fact that initiatives are being put in place to endorse policies with the aim of remedying the racial imbalance highlighted by the analysis of Nadler & Tushman congruence model. The inequality we see is a product of the input and the desired output of the privileged who make policies and govern the board. It does not matter how many policies you make and even put into the organization. If there is no effort to modify the work, culture, structure and people, the organization will continue its racialized and discriminatory practices. According to Antonelli, Pollock & Ryan, (2007), “the bottom line is that educators of colour have much to offer students, colleagues and communities; the presence of a diverse educator workforce has the potential to make our schools better places” (p.6). Until this is realized, we (Black educators and administrators) will continue to experience racialized and discriminatory professional practices used by the privileged to maintain the imbalanced status quo of power and privilege.

The desired outcome from addressing the identified gaps in the DOES organization is a better representation of Black administrators. Evenly critical is an infrastructure which supports the hiring, promotion, and success of Black educators and administrators. Throughout the improvement process, Nadler & Tushman congruence model (1980) should be used consistently

to check the organization's performance, identify changes, and adjust strategies accordingly. This action must be taken to maximize the success of the solutions and make necessary changes should the need arise. The SWOT analysis and the analysis for change readiness from the Nadler & Tushman congruence model (1980) has also revealed that the organization of DOES has gaps and is ready for change.

Strategies/Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

A transformative, inclusive change leader must ensure that the changes envisioned, encouraged, and implemented are necessary, incremental, and impactful. A change leader needs to be strategic in the actions taken toward change to guarantee that the change does not create despair. The leader needed to accomplish these desired transformations is a continuously improved change leader. According to Deszca et al. (2019), a continuous improvement change leader is one who logically contemplates the improvement process while working towards systematic through carefully planned small achievements.

As a transformational, inclusive leader, the changes I visualize will be slow, small, impactful, and revolutionary. Leithwood & Jantzi (2000, 2006 & 2021) argued that transformational leadership is one of the most revolutionary and best suited for organizational growth. Some of the changes that are required to minimize or possibly eliminate this issue of anti-Black racism and spark corporate development within the school board of DOES are:

1. Changes in policies with the aim of eventual decolonization.
2. Influencing Students by creating in a new growth mindset.
3. Specific and targeted support for Black administrators through the process of mentoring.

The three solutions listed above are by no means the exhausted list of possible solutions for this issue of anti-Black racism, but they are solutions which can be utilized based on the results of the SWOT analysis, Appendix A. The effect and impact of anti-Black racism are

organizational, institutional, and systemic and are deeply entrenched in society's practice and culture, and the best way to minimize this impact is through decolonization.

Solution 1: Changes in Policies and Practices – Decolonization

One of the largest and perhaps the main barriers to equity and equality are many policies and practices of the school board of DOES. It is a fact that these policies do not directly or explicitly incite any of the anti-Black racism experienced on the board. However, I would argue between the equity road map (2020), the policy P.146.HR, (2021) and the de-streaming of courses for our students, none these policies and practices have done much to promote the representation of Black administrators. I would infer that because Eurocentric colonizers make these policies, it does not cater to marginalized minorities, especially Blacks, within this Eurocentric education system. The creation of these policies inadvertently maintains the Eurocentric rule and status quo.

Embedded in decolonization is having those who were colonized write their own history or path (Dei, 2019). The history we know today was written by our colonizers about their exploits and conquests, as history was never written in favour of the conquered. We have been reminded that we cannot use the masters' tools to demolish the masters' houses (Lorde, 1979,1984; Bowleg, 2021). Though I am not looking to dismantle the masters' house, this statement holds much truth. For there to be decolonization within the organization of DOES, we have to see changes in areas like classroom curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom resources (Andreotti, 2021; Lopez, 2020).

Admittedly, we find some of this happening already through de-streaming workshops for various courses at different grade levels and PD sessions focusing on critically relevant responsive pedagogy. But, again, the focus of all these activities are on the students of the

organization. While this is great, we need to see more focus on building a pathway for the entry and success of Black administrators into a system which was not made for us or with us in mind.

As an administrator on the board of DOES, policy change is not a solution I can implement. However, through my agency as co-chair of DBAG and as a member of the TCC, I am able to report on the challenges faced by our Black teachers who are interested in administration and the struggles they experience to get to the interview process. In addition, my agency and positionality as the co-chair of DBAG and a vice principal also gets me periodic meetings with superintendents and the executive director, and in recent times members human resources department.

Through my meetings with the members of the TCC, I can discuss concerns with my colleagues, who can then make proposals. These proposals are then reported directly to the president of our local PC, to whom I relate the notably evident underrepresentation of Black administrators on the board. In addition, the president of the PC regularly meets with the upper leadership teams of the board, where my concerns about having school administrations reflect the diversity of the demographics of the student population within the board would be presented.

There is no doubt that decolonizing education is producing actions that are currently challenging white supremacy and white privilege which is how colonialism presents itself today within our education system (Lopez, 2018; Parekh et al., 2018). Changes are never easy, and any change that will challenge or cause any shift in power or privilege will always be met with resistance. However, using the CRT coupled with my transformational and inclusive leadership styles, I can not only challenge anti-Black racism in my school but also influence my teachers to implement critically relevant pedagogy in their classes. I also serve as a role model for students and my colleagues to prove that it is possible to become a Black administrator and a Black

leader. I know that this strategy could undoubtedly take years to flourish into the flower of change, but changes will come.

Reagan (2010) articulates that the integration or token inclusion of racial ceremonies is not decolonization. It is not reciting a prewritten land acknowledgement; instead, it involves a paradigm shift from a cultural denial of the rights of Black and indigenous peoples. I am mindful that because of how ingrained anti-Black racism is in our education system, institution, and organization, any change solution must be long-term, with short-term gains and rewards. These intervals of change will only be made, if as we decolonize our minds, we also develop a new way of thinking.

The (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 (2022) were all new policies put in place over the last 3 years. The idea of these policies is to promote more diversity on staff throughout the board. As a result of the need to develop and implement these policies one can infer that the absence of the policies made the practice of not hiring or promoting Blacks easier as there was no accountability for not doing so.

Solution 2: Growth Mindset (Change Mindset 2.0)

Growth mindset as described by Tao et.al (2022) is refers to the belief that we can change our reality by changing the way we think. For many individuals including myself, we are limited by our way perception and as such need to challenge ourselves. Having sat on many interview panels for position of additional responsibility (PAR) and seeing only two Black applicants for these roles, I wondered if Blacks were being streamed out of the hiring process. Though this may be so I have no way of proving this, but one thing I did prove is that many of these Black educators who were qualified to apply did not as they believe that history has shown that they will not be success going through the process and if so why bother? This means that if we do not have Black educators applying, we will not see Black educators in these roles.

One of the strategies for challenging anti-Black racism is through growth mindset or a new way of thinking. Marley and the Wailers (1980) through song tell us to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery, as only we can free our minds. These words echoed over forty years, are still accurate and applicable today. To be free from our colonial ways of thinking and being, we must unlearn some things we have learnt and embrace new things. (Tuck & Yang 2012; Fanon, 1963) argued that decolonizing the mind or growth mindset is only the first step toward overthrowing colonial regimes, systems, and policies. The holy Bible also informs us that the only way to transform ourselves is by renewing the mind, Romans 12:2. This social transformation that I am hoping for will be a stretch for the growth mindset theory, which is more individualized in its approach. But my changed mindset 2.0 is more of a communal focus with a social justice agenda or expectation.

To realize this new mindset in my school and school board, we must increasingly use more culturally responsive pedagogy in our schools, in classrooms, and professional development seminars. A new growth mindset promotes decolonization, which supports self-determination and helps restore culture and traditions in education (Munroe et al., 2013). This implementation cannot be just a checkmark; it must be for an outcome of change and growth. Reagan (2010) furnishes details that decolonization includes political philosophies, knowledge, and culture, resulting in a shifting social perception and power or a changed mindset. A similar sentiment was shared by the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) in its (2021) Anti-Black Racism Strategies study by unequivocally declaring that there is a gap and that the board. This gap must be “challenged to change the mindsets of staff who see Black students as disruptive, threatening, and unable and unwilling to achieve academically” (p.5). A growth mindset is an effective means of changing the beliefs of individuals, groups and, eventually systems, as challenges are often seen as opportunity for growth (Jacovidis et al, 2020).

A growth mindset works in two ways, one of the ways I discussed at length above. The second aspect of this is that a growth mindset also includes unlearning some of the things we have learnt in the past. Navarro and Moya (2005) tell us that unlearning is the removal of ineffective knowledge that will impede us from learning new and more advanced ways of understanding and appreciating our position as equals in the board. Education nurtures personal growth, and a changed mindset is about learning new things. The changed perspective leads to the desire to unlearn old things, learn new things, and become more socially progressive. It is a mindset that will generate a tendency to face all challenges graciously, persevere through obstacles, grow from criticism, find lessons and inspiration to succeed, and motivate others to do the same. This process then involves the unlearning of white supremacy and learning that Blacks are equal. It also entails Blacks seeing themselves as equal and not underserving in any way. This therefore means that Blacks educators also have to develop a new growth mindset.

Solution 3: Specific and Targeted Support for Black Administrators - Mentoring

One of the greatest supports you can give to Black administrators is to acknowledge the role racism plays in their lives, as well as the hiring and promotion of more Black administrators. Equally opposite to the greatest support is the difficulty of finding a Black administrator as a mentor (Newton-Thompson, 2020). As the Co-chair of DBAG, one of my missions has been to build capacity in Black educators to see them free themselves from the shackles of mental slavery, where they see themselves as equals and take up the mantle of leadership. I quickly discovered that this work involves decolonizing the mind and helping to change my colleagues' mindsets. During conversations with some members of DBAG, it was revealed that most of them sadly refused to apply for positions of additional responsibility (PAR) or heads of department because the incumbents are white and are perceived to have an entitlement to these positions. Some were simply afraid of having the experience I had, when I was hired as principal (in

another school board) over a white incumbent, only to have the remaining staff perceive and treat me as a job stealer, and the cause of the removal of their beloved white colleague. The actions of these teachers showed the importance of having a group in your race that will support you and be your ‘ride or die’ partners.

A ‘ride or die’ partner shares similar struggles you have faced or are facing. The importance of having partners who share similar struggles you have encountered is highlighted by DeCuir-Gunby & Gundy (2016) and cannot be overstated or simplified. Sadly, as indicated by the OPC (2020) report, this is not a reality for Black administrators in many of the school boards in Ontario, including mine. As a result, the goal is to form a Black administrators’ collation to bring Black administrators together. These regularly planned meetings would be designed for the purpose of making plans, encourage movements, track growth and plan the next steps. As the Co-chair of DBAG, I have reached out to other Black affinity groups in other school boards to work on how we can come together to support one another. However, similar to DOES, there are just a few Black administrators in these other Black affinity groups.

This setback of not having many Black administrators on the boards also creates another hurdle which must be cleared. A mentor can relate to things with which they are familiar. Having prior knowledge or experiences about the struggles of anti-Black racism will prove to forge an even stronger bond between mentors and mentees. Sullivan (2004) indicated that having partners with similar needs and experience makes it perfect to build viable relationships. Viable relationships in mentoring can lead to hiring and recruitment, better support, and positive professional development, all of which will ultimately create reciprocated benefits for both mentors and mentees.

Newton-Thompson (2020), whose focus of the study was on Black female administrators, stated that the daily challenges Black administrators face are insurmountable, which is best

navigated by advice from experienced administrators with similar experiences. Newton-Thompson (2020) statement validates the importance of having Black administrators who can be mentors for other Black administrators. Atiba-Wesa (2012) says mentoring is an effective way to build professionalism, efficacy and success in professionals. It is for this reason; I would use mentoring as a means of not only increasing the representation of Black administrators but also as a means of increasing the efficacy and success of those who are already there. My agency and positionality as the co-chair of DBAG has created the perfect starting point for introducing and developing a mentoring program.

The personal mentoring, I have done so far has already yielded success, as I have mentored two teachers applying for the roles of department heads. Positions which they both got and are currently working in today. This miniscule bit of success is causing me to think of what this mentoring program would resemble on a larger scale involving the entire affinity group of DBAG. Using only Black administrators would put too much strain on one person resulting in a need for ‘accomplices’ to be successful. As one of only two Black administrators in the board’s high school panel, I have been invited to sit on interview panels involving many Black and other marginalized groups interviewing for various positions. As a result, I have been a part of the process of helping other Black teachers moving into roles never before held by a Black educator, for example a guidance counselor and a systems instructional coach. Only to have conversations with these individuals after the interview thanking me for my presence as it gave them a confidence boost, realizing this interview was not just to check a box, but instead an attempt to create change.

Benefits, Drawback and Outcome of the Solutions

The three solutions mentioned above, all come with their pros and cons. The first solution which looks at changes in policies and practices, is viewed through a decolonizing lens. The idea

behind this solution is to remove some of the Eurocentric policies existing in the board and replace them with policies which are more inclusive and diverse. This would include more aggressive policies similar to the (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 in (2022) which all focuses on building diversity within the board. This means the eventual hiring and possible promotion of Black educators like myself. This solution would be the perfect response to guiding question 3 as it not only looks at policies but focuses more at the macro level of the organization. Santiago et al. (2016) reminds that policy initiatives at the macro level redefines across administration levels the responsibilities for education. As such this proposed solution is outside of my agency and positionality and could not be used.

The second solution entails growth mindset (change mindset 2.0) examines the idea of using various methods such as seminars and PD sessions to help staff of the majority ethnicity to see Blacks as equals, and remove the idea of one ethnicity being more superior than the other. Kaseorg (2017) tells that at the meso level the school board can instruct its staff to take professional development courses which requires the cognitive and emotional participation of staff individually, positionally or even system wide. This solution would also see Black educators unlearning some of the unproductive information that will hinder us from learning new and more advance ways of understanding and appreciating our position as equals. This would see more Black educators applying for positions as they now see themselves as equals and not inferior to the white colleagues within the board. This solution like my guiding question 2, examines the possibilities at the meso level. After careful examination of this solution, I realized that this again was outside of my agency and positionality and as such could not be used as my solution.

The third and final proposed solution which looks at mentoring Blacks educators to become leaders and Black administrators to improve efficacy and success. The solution would

answer my number 1 guiding question. Kaseorg (2017) informs us that the development of a positive working atmosphere plays an important role in the school climate. As such at the micro level changes also promote the professional development of teachers with the aim to influence factors such as the efficacy of leaders. The success of this plan would be realized using the three pillars of mentoring, those of workshop, PLC and building capacity. A careful analysis of this solution caused me to realize that it is within my agency and positionality and as such would be the most appropriate to use.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

The changes required to improve Black administrators' efficacy and success must be ongoing and persistent. Tsoukas & Chia (2002) remind us that programs for change trigger continuous transformation in organizations and provide comprehensive resources for making growth a reality. The changes sought by my Problem of Practice will also hopefully trigger changes that will benefit Blacks and perhaps other marginalized groups in the school board of DOES and other school boards. These changes will challenge the status quo and hopefully set a new norm for Black administrators, helping them to achieve greater efficacy and success.

The success of the changes desired through this PoP will be contingent on the solution that aligns best with my agency and positionality. It is also based on what is currently happening in the organization and the solution being applied. Of the three proposed solutions, the one which best aligns with my positionality and agency is mentoring, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

The successful implementation of any change plan is highly dependent upon the clearly expressed direction of the process and desired outcome of the project. This chapter examines the development, communication, and implementation of the change management plan for the organization of DOES. The procedures described in this chapter will furnish the suggested framework required to effectively address the problem of practice challenging anti-Black racism: to improve the efficacy and success of Black administrators. Essential to achieving the desired outcome of the PoP is monitoring and evaluating the change process and planning the next steps and future considerations for the continuity of the newly introduced framework.

Change Implementation Plan and Kotter's Change model

In chapter two, three potential solutions were presented as possible strategies designed to address the problem of practice. After careful analysis, it was clear that mentoring was the best solution for this OIP's success. Even though decolonization and a growth mindset are two excellent and practical solutions, my positionality and agency would limit the effective implementation of either strategy.

As a transformational and inclusive leader, I am of the belief that mentoring current and potential Black leaders is vital for various reasons, including, increasing the number of Black administrators, and giving students a voice through representation while facilitating professional growth and advancement (Vitale, 2010). In addition, Inzer & Crawford (2005) inform us that "mentoring promotes six qualities that a person moving into a management or leadership role must learn: (a) politics of the organization, (b) norms, (c) standards, (d) values, (e) ideology, and (f) history of the organization" (p.36).

The execution of this mentoring plan is vital to the continued growth and need to equitable representation of Black teachers and leaders in the board of DOES. The planning of

this mentoring program was done in a manner that will seamlessly fit into and build on the desired outcome of the (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 (2022) frameworks. These frameworks for board driven and has the interest of Black educators and administrator embedded with it push for a more diverse staff within the board. The underrepresentation of Black leaders is so great that the of (Equity Road Map, 2020), (Policy P.146.HR, 2021) as well as Memo 3.2 (2022) requires a bit of help for them to be more focused on the problem at hand.

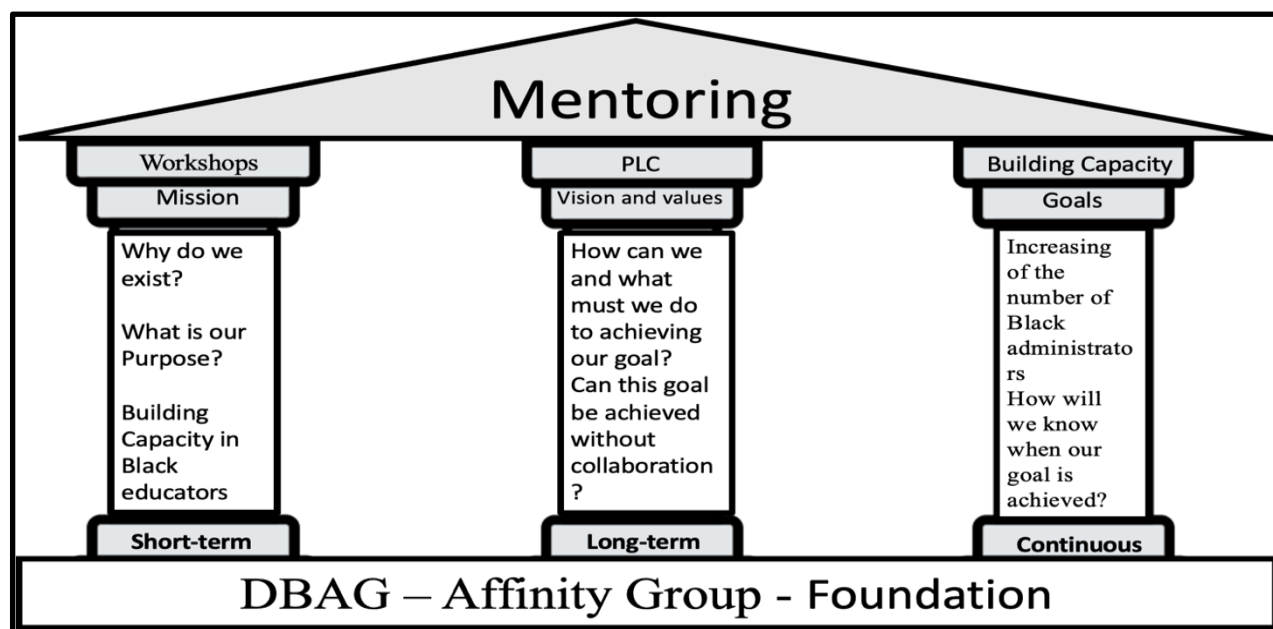
DBAG is a sanctioned affinity group and is the board's only Black affinity group. As a result, DBAG would form the basis or foundation of the plan and much of the recruiting will be done through it. However, acknowledging the fact that we also have Black educators in our LGBTQ2+, Muslim, or Jewish communities just to name a few, as such invitations will be sent to these Black educators as well to become participants in this initiative.

The ABC of Mentoring

Doerwald (2015) defined mentoring as the deliberate pairing of an experienced and knowledgeable partner (mentor) with a less proficient member of staff (protégé) with the expectation of growth in career and mental and emotional development. The definition suggested by Doerwald (2015) established what I call the ABC of mentoring. Figure 3 is an excellent depiction of the ABC of mentoring; where is (A) aptitude, (B) is for Boundaries and (C) is for Competence. These will form the three stages of mentoring which I will implement, and will be executed through (A) various workshops, (B) the Professional learning community (PLC) and finally, (C) Capacity building or a mentoring program. Figure 3 illustrates the laid plan for the mentoring program. Pillars 1,2 and 3 all work together to create the steps involved in completing the mentoring program.

Figure 3

Strategic Plan for Mentoring- The Three Pillars of Mentoring



Note. The three pillars of mentoring, highlighting the mission, vision, values, and goals accompanied by suggested timelines, Hollingsworth (2023) Western University OIP.

The (A) of Mentoring - Workshops and Kotter's Change Model steps 1-3

Mentoring through workshops, or what many call formal mentoring (Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Holt et al., 2016; Smith, 2019), is an effective way of uniting mentors and mentees into a setting which promotes capacity and relationship building (Abdullah et al., 2009; Hansford et al., 2003). The designed workshops will be the first step in the mentoring process, critical to the mentoring program's success. The workshops will be designed to run on a short-term basis (Figure 3) to, establish the mission of the OIP, identify the participants (mentors and mentees), as well as eventual grouping of both mentors and mentees (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Mentors and mentees may be grouped based on skills and areas of interest, gender, and area of specialization, that is high school or elementary.

In designing a workshop, it is anticipated that mentors will be the first group to formally gather to form the workshops and initiate this mentoring process. This gathering prepares the mentors with the entire mentoring program's vision, mission, and goals. This first workshop is fundamentally important as mentors are often left to create a purpose without fully understanding the vision, mission, and goals (Abdullah et al., 2009).

Once training is initiated, mentees and mentors will be grouped based on interest, primary or secondary panels, gender or other characteristics which may arise (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). The grouping of mentors and mentees is extremely important, as individuals with conflicting differences will result in failure (Newton-Thompson, 2020). A mentor is more effective when they share lived experiences with their mentees. Sharing lived experiences means that the mentors and mentees are of the same race and gender. As a result, where it is not possible to pair mentors and mentees of the same race, I will at least ensure that mentees choose if they want same gender or someone of the opposite sex mentoring them so that meaningful relationships may be formed. This initiation stage of the mentoring process, is described as the beginning of the relationship building process, where mentors and mentees become acquainted. This stage is essential, as DuFour (2004) reminds us that mentoring should constitute long-lasting and robust collaborative relationships.

This workshop stage of the mentoring process will be integrated with stage one or steps one to three of Kotter (2012) change model which is described as creating urgency, forming a powerful coalition, and finally creating a vision for change. At this stage the workshops would focus on establishing the purpose of the program, to ensure all mentors have the same directives, which is aligned with the first step of Kotter (2012) model creating urgency. Participants will be provided with the need for change, the reason for this change and the process that will be used to effect these changes. The second step of Kotter's (2012) change model, forming a powerful

coalition will see mentors and mentees being paired together where they will begin to learn about each other with the aim of building positive and lasting relationships. Step three of the first stage of Kotter's (2012) change model is creating a vision for change, the vision for change will be shared with the participants and will be made obvious through the large number of mentees we have compared to the small number of mentors. This therefore means that in stage one, we are building from the ground up (Appendix B), which will take between one to four months (figure 4).

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Workshops greatly benefit all parties, mentors, mentees, and the company. Blake-Beard (2001) informs us that mentoring workshops are formal and organized mentoring sessions sanctioned by the organization as it supports a desired change within the organization. Wakahiu (2013) tells us workshops benefit both the mentors and the mentees as capacity grows for the mentees and further develops for the mentors.

The (B) of Mentoring - Professional Learning Community (PLC) Workshops and Kotter's Change Model steps 4-6

A professional learning community (PLC) is widely used in various capacities to build teachers' and students' teaching and learning experiences. According to Jones et al. (2013) and DuFour (2004), PLC provides professional growth and development opportunities for all parties involved. To increase the knowledge and ability of Black educators already in leadership and those interested in leadership, a PLC would be created as a part of the mentoring framework change plan. As outlined in Figures 3 and 4, the PLC phase of the strategic plan will be the basis of setting the visions and goals of the group (DuFour, 2004) and provides a means of effective collaboration (Reynolds, 2016). During this stage of the strategic plan, the PLC is designed to build comradery within the group to increase knowledge of leadership (Doerwald, 2015) while

removing barriers to success. The importance of having a group of like-minded professionals with many varied skills to call upon in times of crisis cannot be overstated. A group of like-minded professionals will share the same vision, may have the familiar qualities about ethics and social justice. Like-minded professionals would be a great resource to provide guidance in times of crisis which is precisely what Doerwald (2015); Reynolds, (2016) envisioned to be gained from comradery and effective collaboration.

Schlager & Fusco (2003); Fullan, (2010); Jones, Stall & Yarbrough (2013) all agreed that planned professional development through activities such as Professional Development (PD) day for educators benefit only a tiny percentage. Fullan (2010) went on to quantify this number, stating that only ten percent benefit from these activities. The alternative provided by Schlager & Fusco (2003), Fullan (2010), and Jones, Stall & Yarbrough, (2013) are PLC, as it is often aligned with the educators' goals and visions, which can be very effective in the long-term.

Reports from chapters one and two provided evidence of significant underrepresentation of Black administrators in our schools in Ontario (Gorksi, 2019; Walehwa, 2020; Thompson, 2016; Pinkett et al., 2011; OPC, 2020). The evidence of underrepresentation presented would also support the need for a program, system, or framework that is aimed at increasing the number of Black administrators, which is best fulfilled through a PLC for mentoring. In addition, Sullivan (2004) reminds us that having someone with lived experience as a guide will build relationship knowledge and overall capacity.

As a Black administrator who is one of two represented in the high school panel, having a PLC with training and knowledge in anti-Black racism or a group who have had similar experience as I have had would be beneficial to me. The idea of a PLC as a part of the mentoring program is to ensure Black administrators and Black educators who are interested in

administration will have a community that will help them to navigate the intricacies of the politics, policies, and practices of the board.

It is no coincidence that Kotter (2012) change management model, identified in chapter two as the change model of choice as it is a viable option for not just managing a change but also creating change. Kotter's change model stage two, looks at engaging and enabling the organization. This stage includes steps four to six which examines communicating the vision, empowering action, and creating quick wins. Miller (2020) reminds us that if we are to succeed, we need to have common practice. These common practices must be communicated as the vision, as an established PLC will characterize the groups or organization's visions and values and ensure consistency in what and how it is done.

Once we have established a solid and practicable PLC, we can prepare to move on to the next evolutionary step in the mentoring process that of empowering action. The fifth step of Kotter (2012) change management model encourages us to 'empower the action,' which empowers Black administrators and those with leadership interests to become more effective. In their daily jobs. The sixth step of stage two seeks to create short wins which is identifying and celebrating success. This is an important aspect of any action plan. The identification and celebration of success will motivate both mentors and mentees. These short wins will be realized through short term goals that will be set. Other short-term wins outlined are reducing or removing barriers to success, forming powerful collaboration, and increasing knowledge and competencies, just to name a few Figure 4. One such short term goal is the possibility of increasing the number of Black educators interested in leadership and making applications to either the principal qualification program (PQP) or position of additional responsibility (PAR). Since a PLC is meant be a continuous resource available to all mentors and mentees, we will have continuous and ongoing celebrations on these successes.

The (C) of Mentoring - Mentors and Mentee Programs/ Capacity Building Workshops and Kotter's Change Model steps 7&8

Sullivan (2004) reminds us that perfect and viable relationships are built through having a colleague or an associate with similar needs and experience. As Black educators and administrators, we must remember that the education system was not made for us or with us in mind. As a result, experienced Black leaders should guide new and potential leaders to the best practices to effectively navigate the labyrinth called Black administrators' success and efficacy.

The third stage of Kotter (2012) change model looks at implementing and sustaining change and includes the two final steps that of building on change and making it stick (Figure 1). (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Newton-Thompson, 2020) all agree that successful mentoring builds capacity, which should open doors to employment and other opportunities. This capacity building used to build on change and is expected to empower mentees, boost their confidence and promote personal, intellectual and professional development in the workplace. Capacity building also highlights that the interconnection and relationship among partners (in this case, mentors and mentees) must be carefully and intentionally well-thought-out to support the vision of the PLC and the goal of these leaders (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2014; Randel et al., 2018).

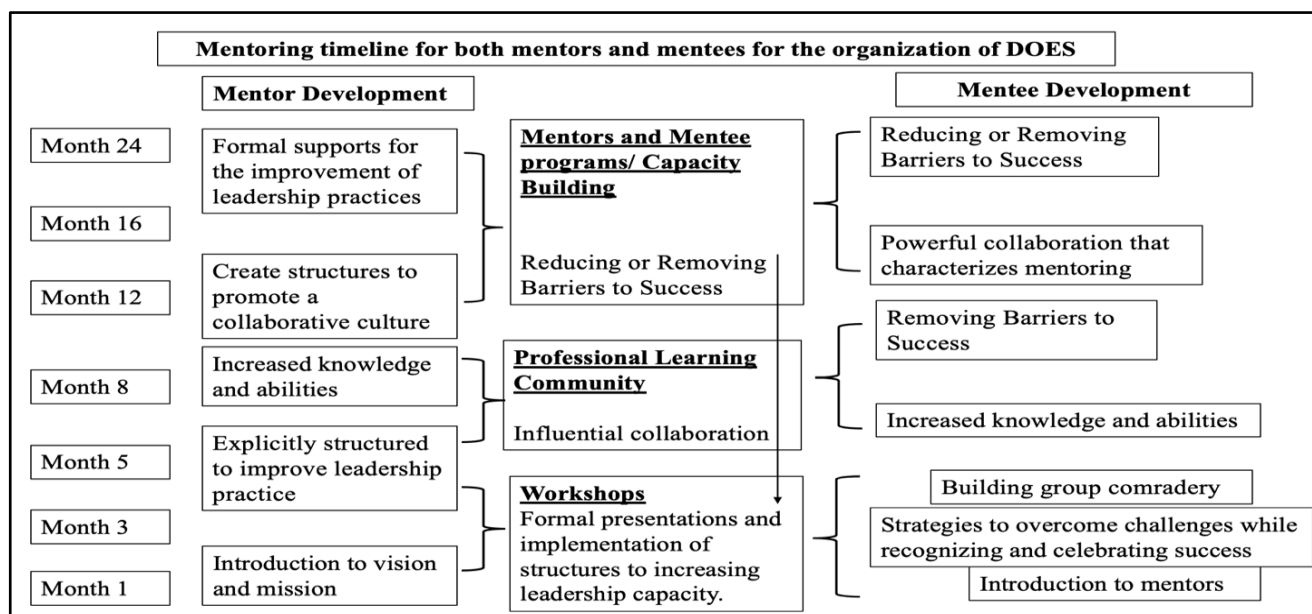
This capacity building pillar of mentoring evolves from the workshop and PLC stages to become an integral resource and tool for mentors and mentees in the program. Therefore, capacity building is one of the most perfect and flexible tools which can be used continuously over two years as is outlined in Figure 4. Figure 4 also reflects the possibility of extending the timeline to three years if the desired outcome is not met in two years. Since we are seeking to increase Black administrators' representation in the school board both capacity building and PLC

will be used throughout the entire mentoring program due to both their capacities to be influential and create change.

The capacity building process becomes an increasingly challenging process as we have a massive problem of underrepresenting Black administrators in our school and school board (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2007; OPC, 2020). For this reason, accomplices according to Jan (2020), must be included in the mentoring program's communication, planning and implementation, as well as in building capacity. This is especially important since mentors in this case will definitely not be all Black administrators due to the substantial underrepresentation of Black administrators (Mindzak, 2016) and thus accomplices from other race are required. Inclusive leadership is another excellent tool for capacity building and continuous maintenance. The CCDI (2020) suggests that inclusive leaders are steadfast in showing an unwavering commitment to addressing exclusion and racism in the workplace. This can appropriately be accomplished by creating an inclusive capacity-building environment over a projected long-term period.

Figure 4

Mentoring Timeline for Mentors and Mentees



Note. The timeline and structure of how the mentoring infrastructure will be implemented over a minimum of two years Hollingsworth (2023).

Negative Consequences of Mentoring (Limitation)

Despite having the best intentions, mentoring could create a few negative consequences to both the mentor and mentee/protégé (Tong & Kram, 2013; DuFour, 2004 and Eby & McManus 2004). For example, Tong & Kram (2012) contended that in the absence of careful selection of mentors and careful grouping of protégés, it is easy to develop a dysfunctional relationship between the two. On the other hand, Eby & McManus (2004) remind us that protégés can develop negative habits of the mentors, which could result in a decrease in potential mentors. However, these negative consequences do not outweigh all the positives outlined above that have been gained from mentoring. This dysfunctional relationship and the development of negative habits are less frequent and is mitigated using positive capacity building, to develop collaborative relationship, while creating a more inclusive culture, resulting in employee happiness and satisfaction which are all products of mentoring.

The likely negative consequences of plan implementation must always be considered to mitigate these problems. The implementation plan of this OIP would identify and resolve these issues at the workshop stage, for example, outlined in Figure 4, where collaborative relationships are formed DuFour (2004). The mission, values and goals are established at this level are to resolve any identified dysfunctional relationships. The established mission, values and goals help us be very selective of who is used as mentors and with whom these selected mentors are paired (Newton-Thompson, 2020). The negative consequences of any plan are best mitigated through not only careful planning and implementation but also through effectively communicating the change process as well as the desired need for change. The following section will identify how

negative consequences of any plan are mitigated through communication, by learning it's how, when, and importance to the change process.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

One of the greatest dangers of organizational change is the intrusion of poor communication. The danger of inadequate communication can lead to resistance to the change or rumours of the negative aspects of the change (Hansma & Elving, 2008; DiFonzo, Bordia & Rosnow, 1994; Smelzer & Zener, 1992; Christensen, 2014). The effectiveness and success of any change plan are heavily based on what and how it is being communicated (Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996; Barrett, 2002; Schulz-Knappe, Koch & Beckert, 2019). Communication thus becomes an essential tool in improving the efficacy and success of Black administrators by challenging anti-Black racism in the organization of DOES.

How will the Change be Communicated?

Communication of the changes must be executed regularly using horizontal and vertical communication (Postmes et al., 2001). According to (Postmes et al., 2001), horizontal communication occurs laterally with colleagues or equals within or outside an organization. For example, horizontal communication allows me to communicate between my fellow VPs in the high school panel in the organization of DOES and those in the elementary panels through the Black affinity group of DBAG. Since the aim of this OIP seeks to build efficacy and success of Black administrators while improving the representation of Black administrators in the organization, communication must also be made to teachers and other stakeholders above and below my positionality.

This type of communication is commonly known as vertical communication. Postmes et al. (2001) inform us that the vertical level of communication involves information going above and below the status of the communicator. This will see communications going to principals,

SOIs (above my positionality) and to Black teachers (below my positionality) interested in leadership. The communications will be about the strategies that will be put in place to drive the success and efficacy of Black administrators and Black teachers interested in leadership.

This is important as any change to be implemented must first be communicated to those who are affected by anti-Black racism as well as those who will be affected by the challenged status quo, which could result in a slight shift in power. To this end, the mission, vision, and goals of the OIP must be effectively communicated to racialized and non-racialized leaders. In addition, as a source of comparison, it is crucial for the barriers faced by Black administrators to be used to highlight the many privileges enjoyed by their non-racialized colleagues (Hamilton-Hinch et al., 2021; Khalifa, 2018).

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

The knowledge mobilization plan expressed as my communication matrix outlined in Figure 5 answers the questions of the intended audience, how and when the information is circulated and how the success of the communication is measured (Lavis et al., 2003). In addition, Deszca et al. (2019) indicated that a good communication plan is needed to mobilize change, maintain excitement for the change, and mitigate possible challenges. These communications, as outlined below, will occur through meetings, minutes of the discussion from DBAG, newsletters, an update on DBAG google classroom, and various social media platforms owned by DBAG.

As a transformational and inclusive leader of change, I am always mindful of how and what I communicate. I am also attentive to my mode of communication as there is a clear distinction between informing and communicating (Hansma & Elving, 2008). Communication is essential for this OIP as it will be used to form a coalition (Hansma & Elving, 2008), empower action, create quick wins, to build on change (Kotter, 2012). Communication also helps to build

interpersonal relationships through collaboration with followers, which is what ethical leadership is all about (Brown et al., 2005). The leader must uplift all organization members (Ciulla, 2005) ethically, and one of the best tools to use is a good communication plan.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan and Kotter's (2012) Change Model

In developing the communication plan, the eight stages of Kotter's (2012) change management model were considered to guide and boost the communication's effectiveness. Below are the eight steps of Kotter (2012) change management model which is interconnected with the communication plan, as shown in Figure 5.

Creating a Sense of Urgency

The first set of communications will be horizontal and vertical to create a sense of urgency (Kotter, 2012). Letters and emails will be sent to the board's senior leadership team to achieve buy-in to the program. Communications will also be directed to Black principals and vice principals inviting them to become mentors for the potential future leaders (mentees) as captured in Figure 5. Based on potential mentees' responses, some non-Black administrators (considered allies and accomplices to the cause) interested in mentoring will also be invited. Communications at this stage will formally acknowledge the underrepresentation of Black administrators in our board while presenting a plan for change to complement the existing equity roadmap (2020). This communication will also serve as a call-out for mentors and expressions of interest for mentees. Verbal, written and graphic modes of communication will be used for in-person (face-to-face or virtual) meetings with all stakeholders.

Building Coalition

Building a coalition will be the foundation for communications at this level as in step two of Kotter's (2012) change management model. Communications will be sent to all the stakeholders to forge partnerships between mentors and mentees and between mentors, mentees

and other senior management personnel who were bought into the plan. The inclusion of the boards' senior management will only enhance knowledge mobilization efforts to increase buy-ins to achieve the desired success of the OIP (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2001). In order to generate buy-ins from senior management personnel I will communicate directly with my SOI and through the TCC and DBAG establish communications through the president and equity coordinator respectively. At this stage, the further aim of communication involves building a positive relationship between mentors and mentees (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). During this period of collaboration, the objective will be to have a face-to-face meeting as, according to Klein (1996), face to face is one of the most effective means of communication.

Establishing a Clear Vision

According to Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang (2016), communication is encoded by its sender and must be decoded by the receiver; as a result, communication must be clear and precise. The goal at this stage as outlined in Figure 5 is to ensure the communications for all stakeholders are not just easily understood but are flagrantly and elegantly phrased to enable complete buy-in. Failure to establish a clear vision during the communication period could result in catastrophe for the entire program. A clear vision will also provide the mentors with guidelines and mentees with clear expectations and expected outcomes of the program.

Stolle (2014) believes that a clear vision sets the stage for the effective execution of a plan. Therefore, the project's success depends upon establishing a well-defined concept. Within the well-defined vision, one must explore the pathway and barriers that could potentially present themselves. Keeping this idea in mind, I would include my vision to my SOI and other members of the leadership team, to whom the goals, barriers, and impact of the success or failure of the mentoring program.

Communicating the Vision

The fourth step of Kotter (2012) model lends itself to communicating the vision, which is essential to effective leadership. As previously established, a good idea must be clear, purposeful, and precise. In other words, for this vision to be compelling, it must speak to the personal beliefs of most of its stakeholders. As the visionary of the plan and a leader who is motivated for change, I must consistently and visibly demonstrate the need for change and the positive impact this change will have on the organization

Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang (2016) inform us that communication can take many forms; it can be verbal, nonverbal, written, computer-aided or electronic or even through one's action. Volcker (2014) and Stolle (2014) remind us that a vision without action is nothing but an illusion, and communicating one's vision is the first step to putting it into action. Therefore, in addition to using various forms of communication to introduce and provide updates on the plan, I will have the vision repeated and highlighted as much as possible. Establishing and highlighting the vision is so essential that it can also be seen as the three pillars of mentoring within the PLC section. As outlined below, communication to stakeholders will vary based on which pillar of the mentoring plan we are on and the message's desired audience.

Empowering Others

At this stage of Kotter (2012) change management model, communications will be used to inspire and uplift the mentors, mentees, and other stakeholders. This inspiration will come from various means of communication that empower individuals, promote, and develop culture, and encourage growth while maintaining the integrity and not marginalizing any group (Echols, 2009). Using deliberate leadership such as transformational and inclusive leadership, I must communicate assurance and not trepidation or apprehension. Christman (2007) reiterates that most infamous leaders used fear to control and convince, which would give the appearance of a

buy-in. Phillipy (2008) and Echols (2009) continue to remind us that fear does not empower or help build capacity and develop leadership as it instead creates nothing but anxiety and fearfulness.

Quick Wins

Critical to the success of any plan is motivating participants. One of the best motivating ways is to celebrate any short-term success of the initiative or goal. In celebrating quick wins, I would focus on any promotions which may be an outcome of the mentoring program, using public praise during workshops (Cummings & Worley, 2018) and DBAG's monthly meetings.

Participants could share how their capacity has grown because of working with their mentors. To recognize the work of the mentors and mentees publicly and practically, one of our workshops would be in the form of a dinner or an award ceremony to celebrate hard work and success to encourage more growth and success (Daft, 2002). Kotter (2012) advises that Short-term or quick wins must be observed to help employees feel better about the change program and enjoy continued and improved results. This celebration is important as most people love being noticed and receiving recognition for their work and accomplishments.

Build on Change

At this level, we continue to celebrate the wins through emails, newsletters, and in-person meetings while we brainstorm on how to improve on the successes we have cultivated. We would also examine any mistakes made and seek ways to correct them or avoid repeating them. Finally, new goals would be set based on the achievements realized and the challenges identified to encourage continued growth.

Even at this stage, one can expect pushback and resistance Laig & Abocejo (2021); therefore, it is essential to continuously build on these new changes to continue the momentum

of change. Furthermore, consistently building on the momentum through communication is one sure way of combating some of the flaws of Kotter (2012) change model.

Figure 5

Knowledge Mobility Communication Matrix

Kotter's Change Model and DOES' communication Matrix				
Create a climate for change				
Engage and enable the organization				
Implement and sustain changes				
	Who/Audience	How/Method of Communication	When/timeline	Evaluation
1. Create urgency	All existing Admins (black administrators as well as conspirators), Principals and SOI.	Emails, Meetings, DBAG's google classroom, and social media sites. As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	The success of this communication is determined by the number of responses are received, be it negative or positive.
2. Build Coalition	All interested in administration (department heads and teaching staff), and those already in the mentoring program.	Emails (broadcast email) Meetings DBAG google classroom, and social media sites.	Weekly at first, during the workshop the monthly to generate continued interest	Increased expression of interest, registration, and attendance to the leadership group.
3. Create a vision	All those who are interested in leadership and those already in the mentoring program.	Email, monthly bulletins, and formal meetings	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	The amount of feedback gathered on the success and areas of improvements from the mentoring program.
4. Communicate Vision	All who are supporters (conspirators) of the growth of Black leadership	Email (broadcast email) Meetings, As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	Growth in and continued support from DBAG members interested in leadership and in the number of co-conspirators and accomplices.
5. Empower others	All members of the DBAG affinity group and those already in the mentoring program.	Email (broadcast email) Meetings, DBAG's google classroom, and social media sites. As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	Feedback on vision of growth as well as on areas of needed improvements.
6. Create quick wins				
7. Build on change				
8. Embed the change	Supervisors – Principals, SOI and Leadership teams.	Email, news-letters and in person meetings (where and when possible)	Monthly and then quarterly.	Positive feedback and affirmations from the principal, SOI and leadership teams.

Note. Created and adopted from Lavis et al. (2003) Knowledge Mobilization Plan and Kotter's, (2012) Change Management Model

Embed the Change

The final level of Kotter (2012) change model is about ensuring the new cultures created must become a natural action or activities of the organization (Laig & Abocejo, 2021). Further changes must become daily practices for them to become common practices of the organization. Hopefully, these practices will result in improved representation of Black teachers and administrators to increase equity and diversity. The increase in representation of Blacks administrators in the organization of DOES is not a destination but a journey that impacts the lives of our Black, underrepresented students, administrators, and teachers. Continued two-way communication between mentors and mentees, the planning organizer, and all other stakeholders will reinforce the changes, building the new culture and supporting the vision.

Why is it Important to Communicate?

In conclusion, as a transformational and inclusive leader, one of the more significant responsibilities to creating change is to develop and sustain effective communication (Pauley, 2009) within and to the organization. One aspect of sustaining effective communication is the inclusion of culturally responsive communications Minnican & O'Toole (2020). This means ensuring that the cultural differences of Black educators are accommodated, respected, and understood during the communications process. Since Black educators also differ in social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or ability Minnican & O'Toole (2020) these characteristics and identities must also be acknowledged and accommodated.

As the sender or encoder of the messages, I must ensure that the stakeholders who are receiving and decoding the messages are fully aware of the changes, the plans, and the processes of these changes, so they will be able to support it, become allies and even promote the changes.

As a means of supporting culturally responsive communications I will ensure the Euro-centric and patriarchy ceremonial ‘tap on the shoulder’ is not one of the means of identifying candidates for the mentoring program. Candidates will be selected based on their expressed interest in the program and in personal growth. These expressed desires will be harnessed through the various capacity building meetings through DBAG during our monthly meetings.

As the agent of change, I will also constantly communicate with the DBAG group members and the terms and conditions committee of the principal’s council, the mentors, and mentees, SOI and other members of the board’s leadership team. I must ensure that the illusion of accomplishment Shaw (2011) does not become the reason for failure. I also understand that through effective planning and communication each stakeholder’s environmental and personal barriers do not block, filter, or distort the encoded messages during the decoding process Rakich & Darr (2000). All this must be carefully monitored and evaluated to maximize the plan’s success, as monitoring is designed to build a quality control system in the change process.

The Change Process

The changes sought through this OIP is one that is bold, but needed in the organization of DOES. Though some of the changes required for the success of this OIP will come through the policies like Equity Road Map (2020), Policy P.146.HR (2021) and Memo 3 (2022), the change for this OIP will be concentrated on the Black infinity group (DBAG) as this group forms the foundation of my mentoring plan (Figure 3). One of the main reasons for this is due to the fact that the policies of the board are beyond my agency and positionality.

The celebration of short wins, and voluntary debriefing of workshops and will be conducted through our regular monthly DBAG meetings. This is done for a few reasons, firstly the meeting space is an established safe space for Black educators throughout the board. Secondly, the successes and experiences of the mentees will serve as a boost for educators who

had who did not sign up or may have been skeptical about the program. Finally, this action could lead to future recruits for the program.

Change Process, Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation process of this mentoring plan involves collecting and analyzing information to measure progress toward achieving the goal of increased representation among Black teachers and administrators. The monitoring and evaluation process will help to identify what is working at each pillar of the strategic plan for mentoring, figure 3, and have it reinforced. Conversely, the monitoring and evaluation process will also determine what is not working to make informed decisions on improving these areas of limitation (Neumann et al., 2018). As the mentoring plan is monitored for this OIP, I will be looking to learn from the experiences of the mentors, mentees, co-conspirators, accomplices who participated in the program.

There will be careful examination of the outcome of each step of the implementation process of the mentoring program, during the evaluation and monitoring process. The knowledge gained from this information will be used to guide future planning and activities involved in the mentoring process. The information gathered will further be used for making informed decisions on how to continue to further empower Black administrators like me, as well as Black teachers and department heads, into effective leadership. The evaluation process will help in identifying the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Through evaluation, I will also be able to determine the program's impact, efficacy, relevance, and sustainability.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Mentoring Process

The organization's failure to see or recognize a problem does not mean the problem does not exist (Austin, 2004; Young & Levin, Willin, 2014). The aim of this OIP is to disrupt the school board of DOES' status quo by challenging the racial biases limiting Black teachers and

administrators' efficacy and success in advancing to leadership and at the administrative level. This mentoring plan is meant to challenge the power and privilege of those unwilling to share (DiAngelo & Tatusian, 2016; Anderson, 2017). I am mindful of the fallout, which could come from people protecting the power and privilege they think belong to them. This is where my transformational and inclusive leadership qualities will shine as one strategy to gain buy-in is to show that the actions of the mentoring program are not an attempt to take control but a move towards equity and equality. The monitoring and evaluation process of the mentoring plan will reveal not just an increase in our co-conspirators and accomplices to the cause of equity and equality but also those who are resistant to the change and may need a bit of prodding. The impact monitoring and evaluation have on the mentoring plan is profound as it can help to identify gaps in the implementation plan. Monitoring and evaluation can also show areas of success as well as areas which must be tweaked or removed from the mentoring process. Deszca et al. (2019) advise that monitoring and evaluation also help to elucidate prospects, describe the need for change and make corrections during the implementation of the mentoring plan.

How will the Change be Monitored and Evaluated?

Monitoring and evaluating the mentoring plan must be ongoing and periodic (Kariuki, 2014). It is imperative to make stops and assess various stages of the implementation of the mentoring plan process to make informed decisions about the success and direction of the plan. For example, through the monitoring and evaluation process I may discover that there is a conflict brewing between a mentor and a mentee, I will be able to investigate the issue and make necessary changes especially if both were incorrectly paired due to gender or school panels. As previously indicated in chapter two, change is not linear and sometimes requires us to take a step

backward to change the path. For this reason, my interpretation of Kotter (2012) change model is in the form of an infinite symbol as highlighted in Figure 1.

Evaluation should not be done only at the end of the project, as Kotter's change model in step six, Figure 5, shows the need to celebrate quick wins before the project ends. These quick wins are revealed by evaluating and monitoring the progress of the implemented task using the DICE and PDCA monitoring models. Both models are combined with increase accuracy and efficiency as the DICE model does not consider soft change factors, such as the emotions and feelings of employees and the PDCA cycle does not consider things such as infrastructure. And the desire change I am working towards requires a strong and robust management commitment as well as an infrastructure to accommodate the change.

The DICE Model

DICE Model will be used to assess the change and its effect on the OIP. DICE is an acronym that stands for Duration, Integrity, Commitment and Effort (Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson, 2014). DICE will examine the period of the entire initiative or the time between structured changes of learning milestones, the integrity team's performance, the commitment of management and employees and finally, the effort required from the organization to implement while investigating the development of the organization's infrastructure.

The nature of the DICE model lends itself to the transformational leadership style I am utilizing for this OIP, as Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson (2005) reiterates that the DICE cycle allows companies to tap into the intuition and knowledge of their employees, and according to Morleo et al. (2007) transformational leadership seeks changes through the standards and attitudes of employees.

Duration. The Duration as it relates to the DICE model looks at the frequency for each review stage of the project (Deszca et al., 2016). At this stage of the model, scores using the

range one to four are assigned based on the interval between each review, with one being the most favourable and four the most unlikely to yield success (Sridharan, 2021). The DICE model uses the following formula $DICE\ Score = D + (2 \times I) + (2 \times C1) + C2 + E$, with possible outcomes, according to Sridharan (2021), ranging from seven to fourteen are in the 'win zone' and are very likely to succeed, fourteen and seventeen are in the worry zone and are risky, while any scores over seventeen are in the woe zone and are very risky. According to Deszca et al. (2019), a score of two is awarded for review intervals between two to four months; three is the score between four to eight months and four for anything more than eight months. This characteristic of the duration level if DICE is an indicator that a greater frequency of assessments, produces a better likelihood of success.

Integrity. Integrity examines the ability of the team to complete the project on time (Sridharan 2021; Deszca et al., 2019). A score of one according to Deszca et al. (2019) highlights that the leader has the capability and the support of fifty percent of all coworkers. While a score of four is awarded if the leader lacks on all fronts and two to three if the abilities lie somewhere in between. The integrity emphasizes the importance of my inclusive and transformational leaderships styles as both encourages the cooperation and support of staff.

Commitment. This stage looks at the buy-in of senior managers. A score of one is awarded if the senior managers' arguments constantly highlight the need for change. If there is neutrality, a score of two to three is awarded and a score of four for little or no support. The commitment stage of DICE reinforces the importance of proper communications to increase the number of buy-ins as the more buy-ins you have the higher score you receive.

Effort. The final stage or factor in the DICE model is effort, which looks at the effort required by each above and beyond their duties to effectively implement the plan (Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson, 2014, Deszca et al., 2019; Sridharan, 2021). The efforts of employees outside of the

mentoring program will be limited to mainly moral support while the effort those in the program is dependent upon their timeline for success. The greater the timeline the less effort required.

PDCA

According to Lei (2021), the PDCA cycle focuses on quality management during the planning, executing, inspecting and adjustment periods of the change implementation process. The PDCA cycle is not new and can be traced back to 1951, evolving from the Shewhart cycle, the Deming circle, and PDSA (Moen & Norman, 2009). The PDCA cycle is an acronym which stands for: Plan, Do, Check and Adjust. Lei (2021) impresses that the PDCA is the perfect tool to solve qualitative or soft issues in the organization. In addition, the PDCA concept lends itself to identifying and recognizing small tasks and accomplishments as a pathway to accomplishing the larger goal.

The PDCA model is the perfect tool for curriculum design and strategic delivery planning, meeting staffing needs and evaluating staff for student services and support (Lei, 2021; Moen & Norman, 2009). The PDCA lends itself to developing soft change factors, such as the qualitative way of life for employees and staff and therefore aligns perfectly with my inclusive leadership approach.

Plan. At the planning stage, the idea is to identify the opportunity for change and establish the required processes to acquire the desired results. Individual or smaller shared tasks are noted and focused on at the planning stage until accomplished. A priority checklist is also established as a more directed means of meeting the desired target. Since the plan is to increase Black representation in leadership and the classrooms the check list would include in number of interests generated from the communications and how to improve or increase the interests.

Do. At this stage, a priority list is created from the plan which was made above. Once identified tasks are prioritized, work can begin to complete small and easy tasks to celebrate

small wins (Lei, 2021). The idea is to ensure that each job is completed at the highest possible quality. At this ‘do’ stage of the plan personal visits and one on one communications would be used to improve or increase communication and thus generate more interest in the mentoring program.

Check. This is where we would validate the results from the previous stages. The assessments at the check stage can be done formally and informally but must be done consistently. The check stage does not limit itself to any specific type of assessment and will accommodate any type or style of assessment (Moen & Norman, 2009). At this stage I will take a breather and assess how the implementation of the mentoring plan is progressing. The results from this will advise me of what actions needs to be taken.

Act/Adjust. This constitutes the final stage of the PDCA model, where adjustments are made to correct areas of deficiencies based on the outcome of the previous step. The plan and actions are re-evaluated to maximize the desired result. At this stage, good practices are reinforced to build a new culture. At this stage I would readjust my commutations or the pairing of mentors and mentees as required. These possible actions are taken with the aim of maximising the success of the mentoring program.

The PDCA and DICE Cycles Combined

Figure 6 illustrates how both cycles are combined and applied to evaluate and monitor the plans put in place to improve the representation of Black teachers and administrators in schools and classrooms in the organization of DOES. Schukow (2020) argues that the absence of Black leaders in our education system is not because of not having of Black educators interested in leadership but because those at the helm refuse to let them admittance.

The Plan and Duration Phase

At the first phase of the PDCA is planning and at the first phase of DICE we have the duration. The planning phase of the PDCA cycle, the plan would be to show how can we improve the representation of Black educators (teachers and administrators) in the board. At the Duration phase of the DICE cycle, a timeline will be formulated to fulfill the established plan from the PDCA cycle. At this level the developed plan for mentoring program, which would cater specifically to Black teachers and administrators and primarily run by Black administrators over timeline of two to three years as outlined in Figure 6.

The Do and Integrity Phase

In the Do and Integrity phase the idea is to implement and put into action the plan created in the previous phase. Figure 6 looks at the mentoring program formed and the best way to get complete buy-in from colleagues and senior management staff. At the Do and Integrity phases, the actions for change will challenge the power and privilege of those who maintain status quo (DiAngelo & Tatusian, 2016; Anderson, 2017). Both the need for the plan and actions of the phase is because of the SWOT analysis done for this OIP on the organization of DOES. Hayes, (2014) tells us that SWOT analysis will paint a holistic picture of an organization's performance within its environment while revealing the required steps to correct these shortcomings.

The Check and Commitment Phase

At this phase, we examine the effectiveness of the plan and the implementation stages. The goal of this phase is to establish whether the earlier planned activities were practical and if we have any growth in the interest of mentors and mentees. This phase will also ascertain whether we have reasonable buy-ins from our SOI and other senior leadership team members and as many different stakeholders as possible. Having the buy-ins of SOI and other senior leadership team members is crucial as it the success of any organization or the success of any organizational change is dependent up the support of all stakeholders (Meyern & College, 2021).

Moen & Norman, (2009) shared similar sentiments believe that when employees or stakeholders take ownership of an initiative, there is excellent efficiency within the workplace. For this reason, it is crucial to have the SOI, other leadership team members and other stakeholders all endorse the program, as this will build positive cultures and promote professional learning communities (PLCs) within the organization. Furthermore, (Moen & Norman, 2009; Lei 2021) informs us that where efficacy is present in schools, stakeholders feel more empowered to influence important decisions.

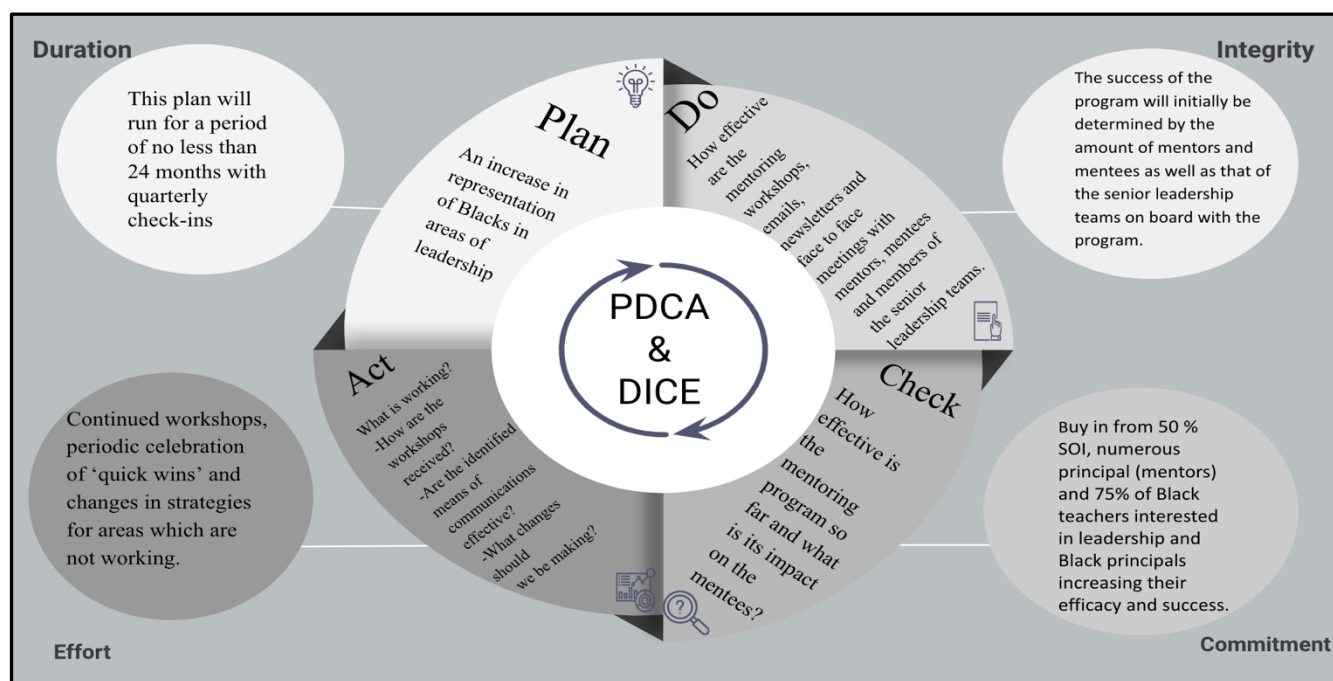
The Act and Effort Phase

As a transformational inclusive leader who embraces new ways of thinking with a commitment to enlighten the minds of others, I see this phase as one that will be used to determine the barriers to the mentoring program's success. Here we will also celebrate quick wins (Kotter, 2012), while identifying what works and what does not. This phase is by no means the end of the program; according to Taylor et al. (2013), as once we reach the end of the PDCA cycle, we, need to resets and begin the process again.

A detailed examination of the plan or the pathway to possible breaches will be established, and a means of weaknesses to identify and make necessary adjustments of support strength to enhance the plan's effectiveness and the organization. This deep dive into the point of the plan is needed as this is an effective way of building even greater capacities of the mentees. Moreover, since the phase focuses on training and encouraging innovation and talent (Lei, 2021), it blends in perfectly with the third pillar of mentoring, capacity building.

Figure 6

The DICE and PDCA Cycles



Note. An adaptation of the DICE from Deszca et al. (2019) and the PDCA from Moen & Norman (2009) models combined into one for maximum efficiency.

Future Considerations and Next Steps

We have arrived at a place and time where we can no longer see ourselves as victims. As Black educators and administrators, we need a new growth mindset and change our thinking; our perceived barriers and hurdles must become steps or rungs on the ladder as we climb to success. We have seen and heard of changes and possible changes and started to see some movements, but the most challenging enterprise is still ahead. We, however, must be mindful that inequitable representation of teachers and administrators creates a significant barrier as stakeholders' access what they believe is equitable and inclusive education (Mindzak, 2016; OHRC, 2007).

The next two sections will take in consideration the aftermath of the OIP. Changes are never static so we must continue to plan for these changes. In my future consideration section, I

will focus on two considerations that can further strengthen the outcome of this OIP. The two future considerations outlined serves as two strategic steps in not just strengthening goals of my OIP but also as a means of increasing the equity and diversity of the school board of DOES. My next steps will outline three strategies that must be taken to ensure that we continue to progress into a paradigm shift where we see more representation of Blacks educators in leadership positions.

Future Consideration

The steps outlined in this OIP are the immediate steps to be taken leading to the desired changes. Throughout the OIP we have come to see that change must be continuous in order to be effective. This continuous change will only come from the continued actions taken upon conclusion of the OIP. Firstly, having completed the first year of the OIP, the communication with the SOI and other senior leadership team members will be around the creation of opportunities into which Blacks can grow and be promoted. For example, the success of the OIP would have prepared Black teachers to move on to department heads or administration. The SOI would be informed that the preparations are in place now, and we need the infrastructure into which these prepared candidates can be placed. This first future consideration would be focused on diversity in leadership.

Now that the first consideration has led to the creation or strengthening of infrastructure the second future consideration would be focused on diversifying the teaching staff. We have seen through this OIP the importance of having representation in the classroom for our Black students. We need to get to a point where Black students have teachers and administrators who look and sound like them, and can genuinely empathize as they have similar lived experiences. As a result, this time, the message would be that we already have a mentoring infrastructure in

place and these new hires would be added to the mentoring process in an effort to build community and capacity to maximize efficacy and success.

Next Steps

We must continue to challenge inequality and white privilege (McIntosh, 1989), which also brings the unconscious bias of white superiority (DiAngelo, 2016). It is the unconscious bias which leads to a denial of the existence of racism. The denial of the existence of racism is merely saying because you cannot see it, it is not there, (Austin, 2004; Young et al., 2014). This idea is far from the truth and must be unlearned, as many in our Canadian society, including some in the organization of DOES, believe that we see so little racism or we are not as bad as the USA, so we must be good. As a result, one of the next steps is to provide a wakeup call to those who deny the existence or the effect of racism. This ‘wakeup’ call will be made through continued lobbying from DBAG and the TCC for all board staff to complete an anti-Black racism course. This action hopes to raise awareness of Black students, teachers, and administrators’ struggles, ranging from our most senior leaders to the teachers in the classrooms.

The next step in this would be to increase the number of allies fighting for the cause, especially since new policies are slow to implement (Gutek, 2013). Allies, accomplices, and co-conspirators will help us ensure that policy changes are not only seen on paper as in the past but are acted on and implemented. Finally, the organization of DOES has seen significant growth in diversity over the last few years, in both students and potential teachers; we, however, have not seen a substantial increase in diversity. As a next step, we have a continue to empower Black educators to the realization of taking the step to achieving or recognizing their maximum leadership potential. The three simple next steps outlined above would support the changes that will continue to challenge the status quo, to shape a new reality, of equity and equality.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

The adage that there is always room for improvement was emphasized throughout this OIP. A problem in my organization was identified and became my Problem of Practice. This PoP had an equity and social justice lens, which resulted in the disruption of the status quo within the organization. My worldview, critical race theory, positionality, and agency all played a part in framing the Problem of Practice. The SWOT analysis, which was completed in chapter one, helped to articulate my leadership vision for change

The framed PoP and the challenges of the desired changes were also sufficient in bringing to life my transformational and inclusive leadership qualities highlighted in chapter two. It was the two leadership approaches which helped to form the proposed solution, and my agency and positionality, along with the desired outcome, all helped to determine the best solution to be implemented. The suggested best solution was not radical enough to quickly create a paradigm shift. Still, with careful implementation, it will change the status quo and develop changes over time, eventually resulting in a paradigm shift.

In chapter three, a well-defined mentor plan was implemented through the lens of Kotter (2012) change model. An intense check and balance system using DICE and PDCA was used to analyze the possible success of the plan. The DICE and PDCA were also used to identify gaps in the plan and identify the best ways of plugging those gaps. The success of the OIP will see an increase in the representation of Black educators in our school, a strengthening of the efficacy and success of Black administrators as well as an increase in the voices and success of Black students. Improving Black administrators' effectiveness and success is always my vision, but the ultimate goal is always the success of our Black students.

Narrative Epilogue

How does one explain nearing the end of a journey that circumstances tell you should never have taken place? For this doctoral program, light can be seen at the end of the tunnel, and I can finally say it is not an oncoming freight train but the beautiful sunrise of new possibilities to come. As I sat to write this epilogue, the reality of this illusion became even more real as my Doctor of Education hoodie arrived at my front door. There is no doubt these last three years have resulted in significant personal, professional, and academic growth in many and varied ways. At the start of this doctoral journey, my intent and problem of practice started out looking at the plight of the Inuit of Nunavut, but after profound reflection, my eyes were opened to the struggles of my people. I soon realized that I am the best person to tell of our struggles and to find ways of lessening or even eliminating some of these very struggles.

The topic I finally rested on is near and dear to me, as it impacts me, my two daughters and their mother, who is also an educator in Ontario. The impact, however, is not limited to my family only, as the few Black administrators, hundreds of Black teachers, and thousands of Black students and families throughout my board and the province are also impacted. The work in the organizational improvement plan is intended for my organization, but the narrative is not only my story. It is the story of the past and present for Blacks in education at every level, and if we do not start making some drastic changes, it will also be the story of the future.

Throughout the entire process, I truly realized this task's size and scope. I have questioned and have been asked about my agency and positionality to effect these changes. While the sad reality is both my agency and positionality limits me, I am confident that writing this Organizational Improvement Plan may inspire someone with more excellent agency and positionality to demand or implement changes which will be of benefit to my children and grandchildren living as Black people living in this country of immigrants.

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Appendix A: DOES' SWOT Analysis

Strengths (What we are doing Well Internally)	Weaknesses (Things we could improve internally)	Opportunities (Areas for growth externally)	Threats (Potential risks from external sources)
<u>Growth in Diversity</u> Over the last few years, we have seen a growth in Diversity within our schools and ultimately in our school board.	<u>Lack of growth in Diversity</u> The growth in Diversity in our students do not match the increase in teacher and administrators or Diversity.	<u>Growth in Diversity</u> The number of Black administrators and teachers in our school offices and classrooms increased.	<u>Loss of Diversity</u> If qualified Black educators (teachers and administrators) are not employed on the board, they will find employment elsewhere to feed and maintain their own families.
<u>A Paradigm shift</u> Matriarchic director In school board of DOES has seen its first female director. This change has seen several suggested changes to match society's growth and movement.	<u>Slow to change</u> Bureaucracy continues to hinder or slow the changes being put forth. This created barriers to growth plans by introducing a 3-year plan for increased equity, but these changes are needed now.	<u>A Diverse increased desire for leadership</u> Over the last two years (coincides with the paradigm shift). There has been an increase in Black educators expressing interest in leadership and other areas which were predominately Eurocentrically dominated.	<u>Impact on Blacks</u> Increased micro-aggressions. Legitimate promotions are seen as tokenism. Hesitation to enter the competitions for headship and leadership.
<u>Recognized Weakness</u> The board was able to recognize its shortcomings in promoting Diversity within the board. This recognition gave rise to the DOES' Equity Roadmap (a 3-year plan). Employee Survey and sit down with equity and affinity groups.	<u>Recognizing the need for change</u> It took numerous decades before the need for change was recognized. It was not until the board, by many outsiders, was called the 'white board' before changes started to occur.	<u>Increased in the Black population</u> Despite the labels and barriers, we have seen a growth in the Black population. This growth has created the opportunity for the school board of DOES to be more proactive than reactive and hire more Blacks into their various areas of qualifications.	<u>A feeling of uncertainty</u> With the noticeably decades before recognized and needed changes were put forth, will the 3-year Equity Roadmap be able to 'fix' in years? What should Black educators and administrators expect at the end of the 3-year roadmap commitment period?

<u>Numbers don't lie</u>	<u>Numbers don't lie</u>	<u>Numbers don't lie</u>	<u>Numbers don't lie</u>
54% of students have shared that they are marginalized and 38% identified as Black (DOES, 2021) survey. There is considerable room for positive growth.	80-90% of all teachers in the school board of DOES are white. Only 2-4% of all administrators on the board are Black.	With the changes and potential changes from the employee survey and the equity road map, there is the hope of being able to recruit Black leaders to form other boards of Education.	The dismal numbers of 10-19% Black teachers and 2-4% Black administrators could be a deterrent to a new, qualified, and experienced Black educator from joining the board.

Appendix B: Activities to Success for Kotter's Change Model

Stages and Steps	Activities	Desired outcome
<u>Creating a climate for change</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating an urgency for change 	<p>Communicate results from the SWOT analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish the need and reason for the desired changes. Focusing on our Black students as the benefactors of this change. Align the need for change with the PD workshops which is already centered on the decolonialization of the resources in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing any anxiety which may exist from the fallout of the loss of power and privilege from challenging the status quo. Increasing the excitement of possibilities of the changes Create a readiness for change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming powerful coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forge better and deeper relationships with colleagues Black and all other ethnicities. Use the newly forged relationships to focus on strategies to build this one change vision. Setup regular team building and team involvement activities, so that each member of the team feels valued and validated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming and establishing not just allies but co-conspirators and accomplices, as allies usually provide support while co-conspirators and accomplices act with you. Reducing or eliminating any resistance to this change vision Generating emotional commitments from colleagues, principals and SOIs and other stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a vision for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build coalition within the senior leadership team (SOI, president of the PC) to name a few. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a clearly established vision Have an established vision that is now

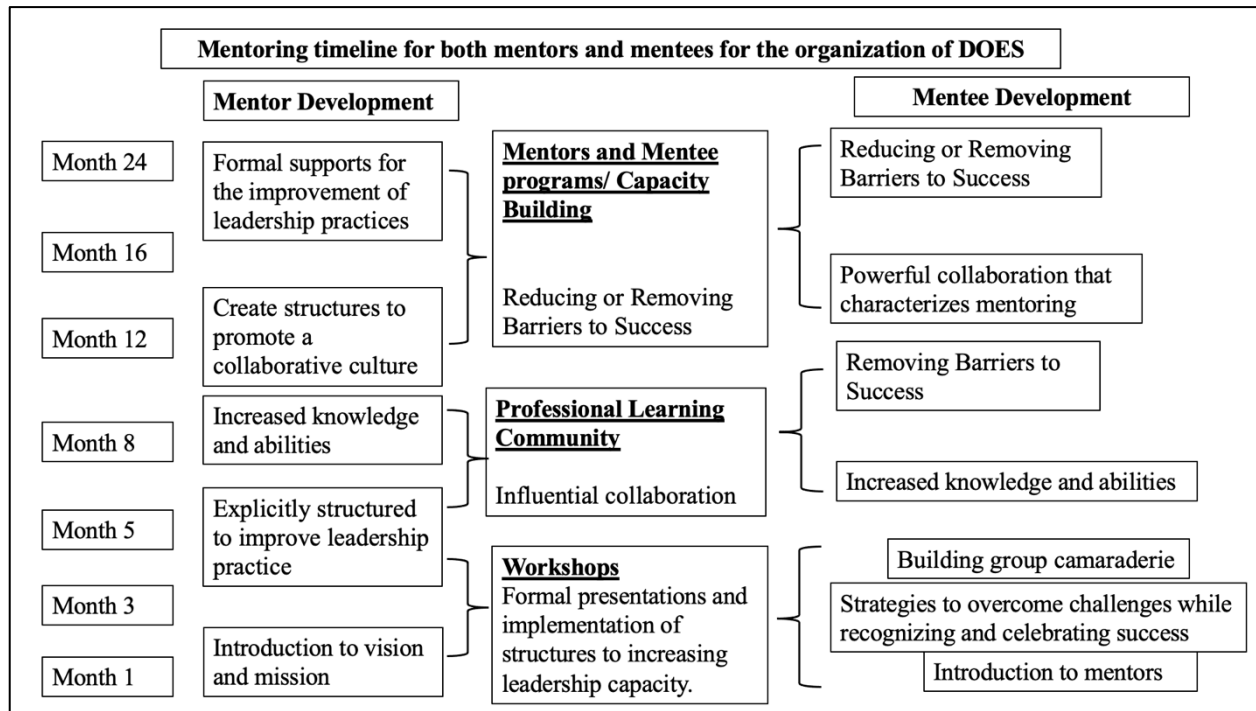
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing criteria for success and of success. ▪ Create strategies to effectively implement this vision. ▪ Remind stakeholders of the moral and ethical need for change for our Black administrators. 	<p>owned and practice by a group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a clear sense of how Black administrators fit into the organization.
Enabling and engaging the organization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating the vision to create buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear communications ▪ Weekly updates to communicate progress or barriers. ▪ Honestly address apprehensions and trepidations of all stakeholders. ▪ Consistent and constant communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that all stakeholders fully informed and updated on the progress and barriers to the change. ○ Provide reassurance to colleagues and leaders about any misconception or concerns. ○ To be able to work with the entire team to remove barriers and ensure progress. ○ Increase the need and reasons for the increased representation of Black administrators.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering others to act on the vision (removing Obstacles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From the buy-in step, enlist other leaders who share similar vision to use some of the strategies I am using in my school to increase the vision. ▪ Take quick action to combat identified barriers. ▪ Identify and recognize allies and co-conspirators and accomplices who are supporting the change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognize partners who are highlighting the underrepresentation of Black administrators. ○ Reinforce positive actions to remove barriers. ○ Increasing the number of partners with the same or similar vision.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create short-term wins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inviting partners and new hires to a group session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build enthusiasm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inviting all newly hired Black administrators to DBAG - DOES Black Affinity Group. ▪ Highlight any new hires of Black administrators of DBAG's internal social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extend the desire to increase the push towards success. ○ Celebrating success. ○ Building confidence in other Black administrators, potential Black administrators as well as our students.
Implementing and sustaining change		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze the actions and pathways taken so far. ▪ Look for new ideas to increase the success of the initiative. ▪ Continue to invite or build new partners and allies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decide if the same pathway is viable. ○ Decide on changes to be made if any. ○ Continue to set new goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it stick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review plans, step and success. ▪ Talk about strengths, and areas of improvement needed. ▪ Highlight success. ▪ Study and lean from mistakes and failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Looking at plans going forward, compare what worked and what needs to be changed. ○ Reinforce stories of success. ○ Increase the number or partners or buy-in until we are as close to 100% as possible.

Appendix C – Mentoring timeline for mentors and mentees for the organization of DOES

A - Workshop	B - Professional learning community (PLC).	C - Mentors and Mentee programs/ Capacity Building
Explicitly structured to improve leadership practice	Removing Barriers to Success	Powerful collaboration
Building group camaraderie	Increased knowledge and abilities	Reducing or Removing Barriers to Success
Formal presentations and implementation of structures to increase leadership capacity.	Influential collaboration	Increased knowledge and abilities
Strategies to overcome challenges while recognizing and celebrating success	Explicitly structured to improve leadership practice	Create structures to promote a collaborative culture
Formal support for the improvement of leadership practices	Building group camaraderie	Powerful collaboration that characterizes mentoring

Appendix D



Appendix E

Kotter's Change Model and DOES' Communication Matrix

Kotter's Change Model and DOES' communication Matrix				
Create a climate for change		Engage and enable the organization		Implement and sustain changes
	Who/Audience	How/Method of Communication	When/timeline	Evaluation
1. Create urgency	All existing Admins (Black administrators as well as conspirators), Principals and SOI.	Emails, Meetings, DBAG's google classroom, and social media sites. As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	The success of this communication is determined by the number of responses are received, be it negative or positive.
2. Build Coalition				
3. Create a vision	All interested in administration (department heads and teaching staff), and those already in the mentoring program.	Emails (broadcast email) Meetings DBAG google classroom, and social media sites.	Weekly at first, during the workshop the monthly to generate continued interest	Increased expression of interest, registration, and attendance to the leadership group.
4. Communicate Vision	All those who are interested in leadership and those already in the mentoring program.	Email, monthly bulletins, and formal meetings	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	The amount of feedback gathered on the success and areas of improvements from the mentoring program.
5. Empower others				
6. Create quick wins	All who are supporters (conspirators) of the growth of Black leadership	Email (broadcast email) Meetings, As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	Growth in and continued support from DBAG members interested in leadership and in the number of co-conspirators and accomplices.
7. Build on change	All members of the DBAG affinity group and those already in the mentoring program.	Email (broadcast email) Meetings, DBAG's google classroom, and social media sites. As well as DOES' affinity group broadcast announcements.	Updated as needed, weekly at first, during the workshop stage. semi-monthly, during the workshop to PLC stage. Monthly during the PLC. Weekly and semi-monthly during the Capacity building stage to celebrate success.	Feedback on vision of growth as well as on areas of needed improvements.
8. Embed the change	Supervisors – Principals, SOI and Leadership teams.	Email, news-letters and in person meetings (where and when possible)	Monthly and then quarterly.	Positive feedback and affirmations from the principal, SOI and leadership teams.

Notes