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Encouraging a Sustainable Model for Professional Learning: Implementing District Wide Initiatives as an External Consultant in the United States

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Abstract

Effectuating the adoption of research proven instructional practices across the classrooms of an entire school district is a daunting task. Traditionally, the incorporation of external consultants has been met with mixed responses particularly when it involves teacher professional learning and the sustainability of learned practices in the classroom. This Dissertation-in-Practice seeks to understand the complex relationship that exists when external consultants partner with school districts to assist in the adoption and implementation of instructional practices across an entire organization. Through the incorporation of instructional and transformational leadership lenses, the role of the external consultant is leveraged as a mechanism to support a change implementation process that seeks to balance the desires of senior organizational leadership, with the autonomy of the site-based leadership. It was determined that the best course of action for implementation was to include a flexible model that allowed sites to move through the change implementation process by leveraging monitoring and assessment practices to determine the next steps in implementation. By encouraging mobility and flexibility throughout a linear change process, the external consultant along with site and district leadership can lean on communication and knowledge mobilization practices to ensure an equitable approach to change. When change implementation occurs without the input or consideration from classroom teachers and other members of an organization, there is a greater potential for failure of change. This dissertation seeks to plan an implementation process that will result in capacity realization of instructional practices for the entire organization.

Keywords: external consultant, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, implementation, professional development, professional learning

Executive Summary

This Dissertation-in-Practice (DiP) explores the complexities of an external consultant working in partnership with a school district to effectuate change implementation that seeks to improve instructional practices in the classrooms. This dissertation considers the implications of Desert View School District (DVSD, a pseudonym) as an organization seeking to adopt visible learning instructional practices across the entire school district (Hattie, 2009; 2013; 2023; Hattie et al., 2021). The importance of examining the impact of a partnership between external consultants, district leadership, and schools is essential to help DVSD execute a professional learning plan that seeks to improve instructional practices for all teachers.

The first chapter highlights the organizational contexts, leadership lens, and the leadership approaches that seek to be applied to address the presented problem of practice. Desert View School District operates in a hierarchical and structural functionalist leadership structure (Capper, 2018; Gertner, 2023). The three levels of governance (macro, meso, and micro), work to direct the organization to actively establish the best possible education for the students and communities they serve. Within this organization the superintendent (macro), the curriculum, instruction, and assessment department (e.g., assistant superintendent, and director (meso)), and the schools (principals, and teachers (micro)) have sought professional learning to support instructional practices in the classrooms. In doing so, they have sought out the support of external consultants to support professional learning initiatives, which has created a dilemma of rarely yielding the anticipated impacts with teachers (McKeown et al., 2019; Riordan et al., 2016).

The first chapter also explores problem of practice focused on the need to address the lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives across DVSD. This is

achieved through the exploration of instructional and transformational leadership approaches that will be leveraged by the external consultant to assist in the implementation of professional learning initiatives across DVSD. By framing the organizational context within the problem of practice, the chapter also outlines a vision for change and a comparison of the current state, and the future state of the organization should change be adopted and implemented.

The second chapter sets up the organizational contexts for plausible change at DVSD. This begins with an examination of the leadership approaches to change, while factoring in the positionality and involvement of an external consultant. To properly effectuate change at DVSD it was determined that the blending of the transformational and instructional approaches to leadership would be the best suited considering the complex nature of involving an external consultant in the process (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kwan, 2021). Each leadership approach individually has its strengths, yet a blended combination of the two allow for the most impact when driving instructional shifts in practice (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Shava et al., 2021). The blended approach will be leveraged using a modified version of the change path model as the framework for leading change (Deszca et al., 2019). This modification allows for flexibility between the acceleration and realization stages to remove some of the linearity of the original model and to also allow for a more equitable implementation process.

This chapter ends by examining the change readiness of DVSD, including the organizational contexts and plausible equity challenges that may exist in the process. Ethical considerations were also highlighted to frame the realities of implementation across an organization. Finally, three plausible solutions were evaluated according to established criteria, and it was determined that the autonomous site-based plan has the most potential for successful implementation.

The third and final chapter details the implementation plan, including framing the potential challenges and the reactions to change by the change participants. By highlighting aspects of managing change, the chapter delves into the fundamentals of communication and knowledge mobilization as implementation is in process. It is imperative that there is an equitable exchange of both communication and knowledge between the change leader and the change participants, and the change implementation process must afford multiple opportunities to do so (Li et al., 2021; Murray et al., 2020). Finally, this chapter explores the monitoring and evaluation processes as change is implemented at DVSD. Through a series of formal and informal assessments, data will be collected to determine the success of implementation and will be used to determine next steps in the change process.

As school districts navigate the complexities of professional learning, a balanced leadership approach that leverages the desires of school principals, district goals, and external consultants is a plausible recipe for successful change. Sustainable, and coherent professional learning experiences for all teachers within an organization are possible when districts engage in a measured and equitable approach to implementation.

Land Acknowledgement

As a settler of the land and in the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth to the land in which I live, I would like to honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis, and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, as well as the Iyarhe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina nations. I acknowledge that this territory is home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta District 6. Finally, I acknowledge all Nations—Indigenous and non—who live, work and play on this land, and who honour and celebrate this territory. This sacred gathering place provides all with an opportunity to engage in and demonstrate leadership on reconciliation.

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I cannot wait to see what is in store for our family in the future, as we welcome our newest joy into the world in 2025!

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List of Acronyms

AP	Assistant Principal
ASUP	Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services at DVSD
CIA	Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department at DVSD
DiP	Dissertation-in-Practice
DIR	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
DVSD	Desert View School District (Pseudonym)
IL	Instructional Leadership
ILT	Instructional Leadership Team (e.g., principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, and lead teachers)
P	Principal of School at DVSD
PD	Professional Development
PoP	Problem of Practice
PDSA	Plan-Do-Study-Act Model
SUP	Superintendent of Schools at DVSD
T	Teachers at DVSD
TL	Transformational Leadership

Definitions

External Consultant/Expert: A term used to describe my role within a school district. The external consultant or expert is contracted by the school district to lead improvement initiatives. They are often regarded as experts due to their contributions to K-12 education (e.g., books, articles, content, etc.).

High Impact Instructional Practices (Visible Learning Instructional Practices): An interchangeable term used for this DiP to describe practices that yield a high effect size as calculated by the Visible Learning Research. A high effect size measures above 0.4. Influences described in the DiP can be found by investigating research conducted by Hattie (2023).

Macro Organizational Level: For the purposes of this DiP, this term will be used to describe the members of the organization who operate between the meso level and the schools. This includes the assistant superintendents, directors, as well as district coaches who operate as instructional leaders that work with schools. They are members of the curriculum, assessment, and instruction team.

Meso Organizational Level: A term used to describe what some school districts refer to as the senior leadership team. In the case of this DiP, this term will be used to describe the following members of the organization: Board of Trustees and the Superintendent.

Micro Organizational Level: This term will be used in the DiP to describe members of individual schools (e.g., principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and teachers).

Professional Learning/Professional Development: A term used interchangeably to describe the professional learning workshops (whether single day or multi-day) that teachers attend with the intention of improving their practice. On many occasions these workshops are often prescribed to them by their leadership teams (either school leadership or district leadership).

Stakeholders (This term will not be used): To disassociate from the colonial undertones of this term, other terms will be used such as: members of DVSD, partners, collaborators.

Chapter 1: Leadership and Organizational Influences on Professional Learning

Know thy impact. A statement that is famously attributed to educational researcher Professor John Hattie and the visible learning research is a phrase that resonates with educators, leaders, and researchers who engage in their own professional learning and development (Hattie, 2009). The rationale behind the phrase is a challenge to evaluate the decisions being made in our schools, and the positive, or in some cases, negative impacts they have on student learning.

This phrase is often what leads teachers, schools, and school districts to seek out professional learning workshops in hopes that their practice will be improved. The dilemma that exists is that rarely do professional learning workshops ever yield the anticipated effects for teachers or students (McKeown et al., 2019; Riordan et al., 2016). This is the case at Desert View School District (DVSD, a pseudonym), where the school district has historically undertaken multiple professional learning initiatives to build capacity and collective teacher efficacy of instructional practices in the classroom (Bandura, 2018; Donohoo, 2017; Hite & Donohoo, 2021). Many of the professional learning initiatives undertaken do not yield the intended impact as anticipated as teachers have not implemented practices in the classroom which has led to negative views of the impact of professional learning in general from staff.

This Dissertation-in-Practice (DiP) outlines the problem of practice and a plan for change to address the inconsistencies in professional learning across DVSD. Through the exploration of this DiP a recommendation for a more sustainable and coherent model of implementation will be highlighted in hopes that teachers, schools, and districts will truly be able to know thy impact.

Positionality

When looking at the impact of my positionality that exists both outside and within DVSD, it is imperative to provide a short summary of my professional journey which has led me

to my current professional role as an outside or external consultant that is hired by school districts across North America.

Throughout my time in the classroom as a junior and senior high social studies teacher, I found myself longing for a more formal leadership role and it was a former principal of mine turned assistant superintendent in my school district who recommended me for a district leadership position. As a classroom teacher, I valued professional learning that was both pertinent to the realities of a classroom and grounded in research. His hope was that I would assume a district consultant role, in which I would provide professional learning workshops across our school district.

As a district curriculum consultant, I appreciated the opportunity to engage in educational research as I prepared professional learning for schools and teachers. It is through this experience where my capacity for instructional leadership grew exponentially. It was important in this role that I maintained a high degree of knowledge regarding curriculum frameworks and pedagogical knowledge within my field of social studies (Alberta Learning, 1999). Through this role I also engaged in a lot of personal learning about instructional coaching and the impact of professional learning on teachers, which led to instructional coaching becoming a passion of mine (Knight 2009; 2013; 2018; 2022). Part of the new learning was to come to the reality that certain professional learning workshops are often not appreciated by the teachers attending. When teachers have a voice and choice over their professional learning, they are much more open to professional learning and much more likely to implement aspects of their learning into practice (Parker et al., 2020; Rodman, 2019; Sprott, 2019). Thus, later in my district consulting career I leveraged more teacher voice and input to ensure I was providing support that the teachers wanted and needed. Incorporating teacher voice and influence over the professional learning I

was providing is something that has been an essential element of my current role and is a key parameter to ensuring all teachers have an equal say into the professional learning they receive.

My professional leadership roles and experiences have afforded me opportunities to author books alongside some key educational thought leaders in K-12 education. Having a community of support in this group of authors provides perspectives that influence my professional role as an external consultant working with school districts across North America. An external consultant is hired by public institutions to provide support measures and guidance based upon their understanding of issues faced by the institution according to their area(s) of expertise (Dedering et al., 2015). The context of my position as an external consultant is complex as school districts contract services to improve their local professional learning knowledge, using me as the expert, yet in many cases I have little leadership influence over the teachers I work with. This contributes to a unique interpretation of my voice, agency, and leadership lens (Bolman & Deal, 2015; Bolman & Deal, 2021; Bolman & Gallos, 2021).

Leadership Voice and Perspective

In many ways my voice and agency regarding this DiP is influenced by the fact that my positionality is that of an outsider working within a school district (Phillips & Hamann, 2021). There are important nuances, and cultural norms I need to be aware of and in many cases will cater to. My role as a guest in the districts I serve requires me to be cognisant of the changing cultural norms that exist within each of them. It is also important to consider the impact my cultural perspectives have on the districts I am working in (Fisher, 2021). I need to be conscious of the realities of implementation when leading professional learning, rather than assuming success based upon my own interpretations (Heidbreder, 2017). I also need to be conscious of holding an expert bias, as I engage in work with schools and teachers. More thoroughly, this is a

perspective held when individuals are viewed as experts in their field and lead multiple groups through similar initiatives. This can distort the perception of understanding, meaning there are occasions where I may assume what is common knowledge to me is common to everyone (Faust, 2012). My expert bias will need to be understood to ensure my agency as an outside consultant is supportive of proper change and implementation.

The organizational structure of DVSD will be discussed in the next section; however, it is important that the statement be made in this section as to provide the context of the meaning of an external expert. The senior leadership team at DVSD sought out my expertise after attending a workshop I hosted in 2020. Their decision was to hire me on a contract basis to lead their district through the implementation of professional learning initiatives that focused on consistency with instructional practice (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). Schools and teachers have historically struggled to understand the impact of instructional practices and shifting their practice, so an incorporation of visible learning instructional practices hopes to increase the quality of teaching happening in the schools (Hattie, 2023). Thus, my voice addressing this problem of practice, is that of an external consultant who is tasked with leading the implementation by acting as a support to district leadership, school leaders, and teachers. My leadership agency when working closely with teachers in schools is to leverage voice and trust so that I can provide guidance and leadership in a safe and trusting manner (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; 2015b).

Lens of Leadership

Through the experiences of leading schools and teachers from an external position, it is necessary to integrate two approaches to leadership to both share expertise and encourage implementation: transformational and instructional leadership frameworks. Since most of my experiences leading professional learning are rooted in requests from building and district

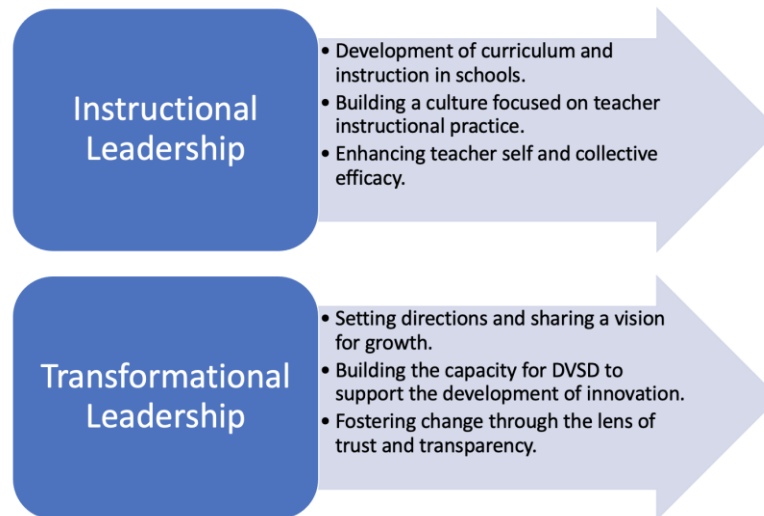
leadership, it is imperative that instructional leadership (IL) is used when working with teachers (DeWitt, 2020). My role as an instructional leader is to ensure teachers are doing what is best for student learning, with the goal being student growth and progress over achievement. This is done by ensuring staff are harmonizing their pedagogy to match the goals for the school, developing and fostering a positive climate (Hattie & Smith, 2021). The main focus of my IL philosophy is to provide professional learning opportunities that are clear, focused, and in line with the implementation plans of the school site or district (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The IL focus also appeases philosophies of many school districts as the intentions of many professional learning initiatives are rooted in instructional leadership. When engaging in professional learning workshops with schools, a hinge point of success is whether the learning is implemented and is sustained beyond my involvement. Thus, it is imperative building leaders are also involved in the professional learning process. Being able to leverage the existing IL expertise of school principals will lead to a greater likelihood of adoption and implementation of proposed initiatives (Özdemir et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership (TL) is also a theoretical framework that I have employed while working as a district consultant in my previous role. While IL is necessary when working with teachers, TL is required when communicating goals of implementation to a group of schools or whole district. (Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018; Simola et al., 2010). Key leadership partners such as, senior leadership, principals, assistant principals, and lead teachers may also be involved when the scale of implementation and professional learning requires it (Bass, 1990; Lasrado & Kassam, 2020). Leveraging the four components of TL: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, is key to the successful implementation across multiple sites (Northouse, 2022, p.193).

Current research has critiqued the exclusive use of one theoretical leadership lens and suggests for a combination of lenses, for example research conducted on the positive impacts of balancing IL theory and TL theory to positively influence implementation (Aas & Brando, 2016; Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kwan, 2020; Shava et al., 2021). Figure 1 illustrates the attributes of both instructional and transformational leadership theories that contribute to my lens of leadership as an external consultant.

Figure 1

Attributes of Instructional and Transformational Leadership



Note. This figure is included to summarize key attributes of each leadership framework as they pertain to the problem of practice presented for DVSD (DeWitt, 2020; Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Kilag & Sasun, 2023; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Ninkovic & Knezevic Floric, 2018; Sun & Leithwood, 2012; Yulianti et al., 2021).

Having an external role privileges the ability to communicate with multiple members at once to align appropriate aspects of IL and TL that are important for the success of the professional learning initiatives. This includes ensuring there is a common communication thread in all schools, encouraging the support of school collaborators to assume some leadership responsibility, and to foster a sense of vision for the success of implementation (Li & Liu, 2022;

Sun & Leithwood, 2012). It is imperative to have a clear understanding of the context of the organization to effectively deploy leadership lenses as necessary to reflect the leadership perspectives already held within the school and district.

Organizational Context

Desert View School District is in a community situated in the county of a major metropolitan area in California. While being influenced by the metropolitan area of the county DVSD serves one medium sized community, population range of 90,000 to 175,000 people, the main industry that supports the community is military and aerospace in nature.

Desert View School District operates in a region that has a challenging set of social circumstances. The community characteristically has high crime rates, higher than average instances of divorce as well as high percentages of children in foster care (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021). Due to the industrial nature of the community, the population tends to be more transient. The high cost of living combined with lack of available employment has shifted the demographic of students in schools over the past decade. Over 55% of the students in the district identify as Latinx, a term used to describe persons living in the US who are originally from Mexico or other regions of Central and South America, with the second largest student demographic being African American (Desert View Organizational Documents, 2020). The demographic that is served by the school district would be classified as lower socio-economic status, and all schools operate with 100% free lunch among other grant funded initiatives that are designed to support the learning of the students. Much of the grant funding is allocated for professional learning, which must be used over the course of the school year. Due to the restrictive nature of the spending of grant funds, much of DVSD's spending is dedicated to supporting the professional learning of their teaching staff through a variety of professional

learning workshops. The funding is allocated to both the senior level administration and to site-based school principals (Ps) as well. While the direction of spending is up to school principals and assistant principals (APs) in most cases it is the senior leadership team who sets the direction for how the grant funds should be spent regarding professional learning. The direction and implementation of professional learning is so important to the superintendent of schools (SUP), that the direction and allocation of funds is for professional learning is published in DVSD's strategic planning documents for 2023 – 2026 (Desert View Organizational Documents, 2023).

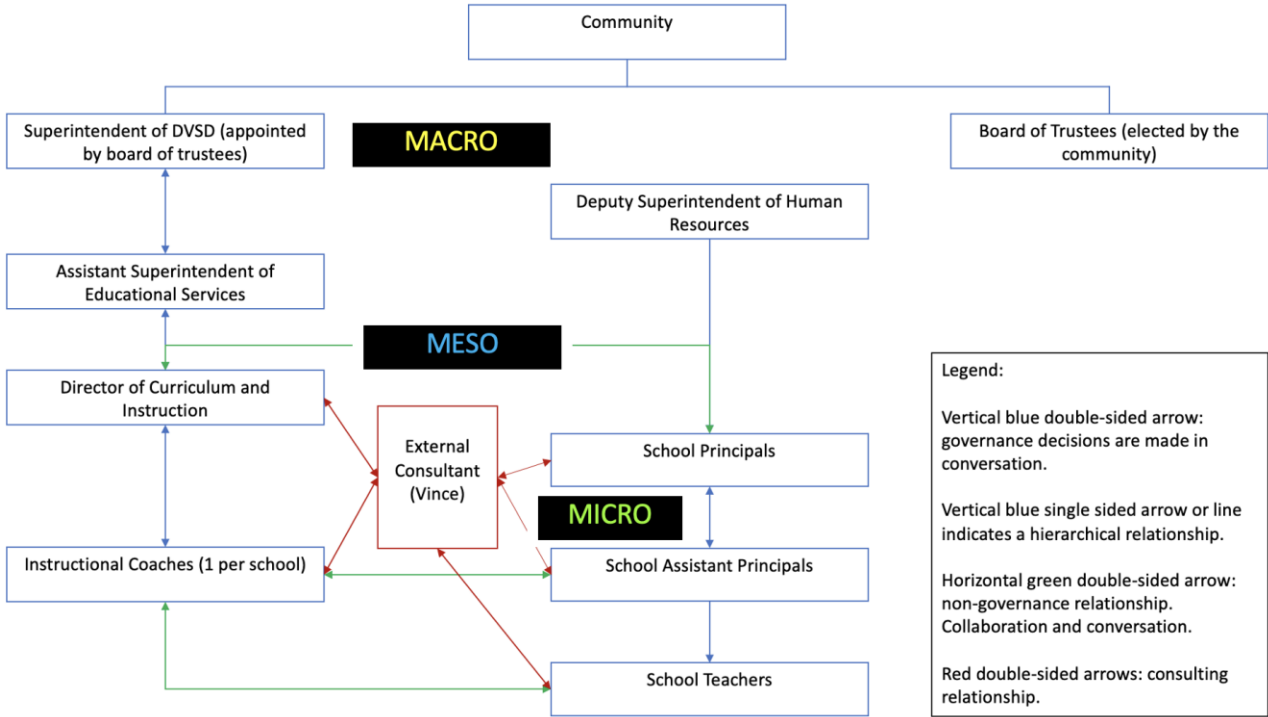
The assistant superintendent (ASUP) and the director of the curriculum and instruction department (DIR) at DVSD are responsible for assisting in setting the direction and promoting the implementation of professional learning initiatives cast by the superintendent (SUP). Often school districts will partner with outside education agencies to assist in the implementation of initiatives and more specifically, the delivery of professional learning workshops. This aligns with the desires of the grant funding initiatives, as well as provides teachers (Ts) and staff with perspectives of educational thinkers from across North America. Desert View School District had previously worked with me during the pandemic on the topic of assessment from a distance. Since then, they have hired me as an outside consultant to work with schools and facilitate the implementation of the selected professional learning initiatives cast by the SUP. The initiatives are then directed by the curriculum, instruction and assessment (CIA) department to work alongside Ts and schools. As an external consultant my position exists between the CIA department, the school principals, and the Ts in the schools, as the leadership structure of DVSD allows.

Leadership Structure of DVSD

Desert View School District is organized in a hierarchical nature, like many school districts in the United States (Gertner, 2023). Figure 2 provides an overview of the organizational structure of the district with the SUP and board of trustees who are at the top of the hierarchy. The senior leadership team comprising the ASUP and the director of curriculum and instruction (DIR), with their respective teams are in the meso sphere of the organization. The schools themselves with Ps, APs, and Ts are in the micro sphere of DVSD (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2019). Each school also has an instructional coach, who serves to support T instructional practices in the classroom.

Figure 2

DVSD Organizational Structure



Note. Figure 2 illustrates the organizational structure of DVSD as well as my position within the organization. The incorporation of Macro, Meso and Micro is to illustrate the organizational levels that exist at DVSD. A larger version of this figure can be found in Appendix A.

The interaction of the three levels of organization, and my role within it, is unique. Being in a position that exists to support the implementation of initiatives set by the meso and macro level of the organization can create a sense of confusion in the micro level of DVSD. In looking at how the structure of DVSD is organized, Capper's (2018) assessment of the purpose of structural functionalism is on point with the goals of the district. Concentrating decision making power with the higher level of DVSD favors efficiency and effectiveness through regulation and establishment of rules (Capper, 2018). This is further examined in the analysis of the three organizational levels at DVSD.

The Macro Level of DVSD

Desert View School District is organized in a manner that is seeking to achieve established goals and objectives and there is a focus on efficiency and performance through a division of portfolios. This includes district-wide educational and instructional goals, budget allocations, and the decisions made by the board of trustees (Glatthorn et al., 2018). These macro-level components set the foundation for educational practices and resource allocation across the district. My leadership role and influence at this level of the organization is minimal to non-existent. In keeping with the structural functional approach to leadership, the SUP casts the vision and has supported the decision to include external support through implementation.

The Meso Level of DVSD

While the senior leadership team (e.g., SUP and trustees) sets policy and seeks to disseminate information and governance to schools, the meso level of DVSD is responsible for implementation. This level establishes how district-wide policies are implemented, adapted, or modified to meet the unique needs and characteristics of each school. This involves examining school structures, curriculum development, the impact of instructional leadership teams (ILT) at

school, and the use of external consultants to assist in the implementation of professional learning (Owens & Valesky, 2022). At the DIR level of DVSD there is a desire to motivate changes at the school level where principals have a higher degree of autonomy. In this case, the structure is hierarchical as the vision and governance for professional learning come from a higher level of leadership and are essentially thrust to the school principals to implement. There is still support from the district departments and myself as the external expert to support change, however there is a lower degree of efficacy as the decision was not made in collaboration with principals (Leithwood et al., 2020; Leithwood & McCullough, 2021; Sun & Leithwood, 2012). My leadership role and influence at this level exists to provide support, advice and perspective regarding implementation and to provide specific instructional leadership supports to members at this level of the organization. While there is more autonomy at this level, it should be noted that the meso level of DVSD still has final say over decisions made at the macro level. Thus, in many ways the meso level works as in a compartmentalized manner, that is not reflective of complete freedom of decisions.

The Micro Level of DVSD

At the school site level of the organization, the P and their ILT are responsible for the site-based approach to implementation. It is at this level where the true impact of the decisions made at the macro and meso level is apparent. At DVSD, my role in the organization is to support and lead schools through the professional learning process. This also means that I must be able to adapt the change implementation process to fit the needs of each individual school, while aligning with the goals of the whole organization as prescribed by the macro and meso levels (Glickman et al., 2017; Glickman et al., 2024). It is at this level where most of my leadership and influence can be exercised. In working with individual schools, Ps, and Ts to

guide and implement professional learning initiatives, IL principles will be important, as this level is where I have the most autonomy as an external consultant.

Due to my role within the organization, the structural functional solution of restructuring will not remedy the issue and thus my positionality exists to influence practice within a restrictive hierarchical organization (Capper, 2018). This is evidenced by the interactions of the macro, meso, and micro levels of the organization and my role in supporting each level. As indicated in Figure 2, my role as an external expert is designed to permeate across levels of DVSD to ensure implementation is occurring according to the desires of the macro level, while balancing the autonomy of school Ps in the micro level. There is little interaction between the macro level of DVSD and me, however that does not mean that the superintendent and the board of trustees are unaware of the change implementation process. There is an expectation from the macro level of the organization that lines of communication will be open between the superintendent and myself.

Equity and EDI at DVSD

Desert View School District has an explicit focus on equity to best serve the student demographics of the community. To serve a student population that is impacted by higher rates of poverty, and a community that is ethnically diverse DVSD has mandated one of their five goals in their strategic plan to focus exclusively on equity (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2023a). Particularly the focus of the equity goal is to ensure that all students are not only affirmed in their learning, but that they are also supported in the person they are and the person they want to become. The belief is that all students have the right to a quality education in a safe and secure environment free from any form of discrimination. There is a focus on the use of restorative practices and positive behavior interventions in the schools across the district

(Hannigan et al., 2020; Myers et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2022). The district provides Ps, and their staff with a variety of resources and supports to ensure all students are receiving the academic and behavior supports throughout their learning journey (Hollie & Russell, 2022).

Desert View School District aspires to create school and classroom environments where all students and staff feel welcome to be their authentic selves. There is a dedicated team, operating in the meso level of the organization, that exist to support staff and students as they seek to create more equitable classrooms that provide an academic learning experience for students of all backgrounds. Desert View School District is pushing to incorporate an intersectional approach to EDI initiatives and to seek out voices from all members of the school district in the implementation and evaluation of these initiatives (Umeh et al., 2023). This shift towards intersectionality and influence over EDI initiatives from all members of the organization has permeated to instructionally focused professional learning as well. There is a district wide push to include the voices of all staff regarding the implementation of all initiatives that impact the micro level at DVSD to ensure equity of voice in the professional learning Ts and staff are receiving. Thus, balancing my positionality with the organizational context presented leads to a unique and complex leadership problem of practice.

Leadership Problem of Practice

An emerging challenge for school districts is the selection of site-based professional learning workshops by school leaders that may not align with the overall direction of the organization. This can lead to a discrepancy of knowledge and understanding with district required professional learning as well as negative perceptions of professional learning in general, which can be detrimental to the overall vision of a system (Loeb & Plank, 2008; Zhanjun et al., 2016). The noticeable variance of both topic and consistency of teacher professional learning has

resulted in a conflicted understanding of the purpose of professional learning (Azorin et al., 2020; Butler et al., 2004; Firestone et al., 2005; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Stevenson, 2019). The delivery of a one-off model of professional learning is not serving the needs of Ts and has resulted in a lack of implementation and teacher burnout. This can lead to “*initiativitis*”, the constant overwhelming feeling of too many initiatives undertaken at once (Campbell & Fullan, 2019, p. 15). The impact of these decisions made by senior leadership at DVSD are felt in schools by Ts and Ps alike. The disconnect by those who are making decisions about professional learning, and those who are engaging in professional learning has caused a leadership dilemma in the school district. The misalignment of reality of success with professional learning initiatives versus actual implementation has impacted the collective leader efficacy at DVSD (DeWitt, 2022). District leadership may source external experts and professional learning consultants to work in partnership with district and school leaders to facilitate the implementation of professional learning initiatives (Hamilton et al., 2022). In the case of DVSD, consultants are sources to assist in the implementation of visible learning instructional practices (Hattie, 2009; 2016; 2023) These experts are often viewed as a separate entity in service of the district and can be limited in their ability to develop relationships with teachers and site-based leaders. As an external consultant working in partnership with both school and district leadership, the problem of practice under investigation is the need to address the lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives across DVSD.

Context of My Problem of Practice

The problem of practice presented exists in the context of a school district that is struggling to develop a common instructional and pedagogical knowledge base for teachers in their schools. The purpose, utility, and sustainability of professional learning is not unique to

only DVSD but is a common concern for school districts across the world (Sims & Fletcher, 2021). The current subscription of professional learning at DVSD and in other districts trends towards implementing professional learning practices that are personally favorable whether by interest, collegial discussion, rumored through social media etc., rather than professional learning that is relevant to needs in the classroom. There is a lack of implementation of professional learning that focuses directly on evidenced based practices that are established based upon an organizational gap analysis. It is almost as if the selection of a professional learning initiative is successful by chance, rather than by design. The desired shift of professional learning to a fully implemented program is one that has potential to significantly impact the perspectives toward professional learning held by members of DVSD, as well as their desires to sustain the professional learning initiatives after the initial learning and implementation has been established (Cordingley et al., 2015).

The equity context of this problem of practice is the current lack of representation in the decision-making process of what specific professional learning should be implemented. Currently senior leadership and district leadership (SUP and ASUP) cast the vision, direction, and implementation plan for professional learning at DVSD without much consultation from Ps, APs, and Ts. This is an ongoing issue with the existing practice, and one that is addressed in this DiP. More will need to be done to understand the impact of these decisions that are made without considering the interests and identities of teachers. It is imperative that teacher voice, interest, need, and desire, are considered when deciding on the best course of implementation for professional learning initiatives within the school district. More inclusion of teachers in the decision-making process promotes a greater depth and quality of professional development (McKeown et al, 2019). Through this medium the desired autonomy and the influence of

external consultants can be leveraged to allow for a more equitable approach to professional learning (Salokangas et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020).

Framing the Problem of Practice

The intersection of professional learning, often referred to as professional development (PD), leadership roles and responsibilities, and the involvement of external consultants can cause certain dilemmas when looking at the true impact of professional learning on students as well as the perceptions of the value of professional learning by teachers (Admiraal et al., 2021; Simmie, 2023). This is similarly the case with the presented problem of practice as it exists at DVSD. This section serves to frame the problem of practice within a theoretical context to provide a clear understanding of the trends and perspectives held when looking at the impact of professional learning from a leadership stance.

Views of Professional Learning in Schools

Professional learning is an entity of the teaching profession that is subject to conversation and debate within schools and classrooms as to its value and importance (Manno, 2016). Due to the variance of schools, types of professional development workshops, and desires of teachers to participate in said training the perspectives on the value and importance of professional development are contextual to specific experiences faced by teachers (Moeller et al., 2023).

It is important to acknowledge that as research about education improves so does the significance of professional learning to maintain current with high impact practices. In this case, professional development is critical to school and district improvement (Cardno, 2005). A significant issue highlighted by Cardno (2005) as well as Pritchard and Marshall (2002) is related to the variety of mediums in which professional learning is delivered. The different types of PD can be categorized as follows: *the smorgasbord approach* where teachers have multiple options

presented to them, *the fill the day approach* where teachers are forced into a presentation or workshop to meet the requirements of the day, *the do it all approach* where schools adopt every opportunity presented to them by the district, and *the weekly shot approach* where teachers are expose to different short exercises every week (Cardno, 2005). Despite these models and in many cases, despite the fact teachers have a choice in many of their professional learning workshops, no model of professional learning has been verified as the most effective for impacting school improvement (Pritchard & Marshall, 2002). This often has to do with a variety of barriers that exist between those providing professional learning, and those attending professional learning workshops.

The barriers of implementing effective professional development were also studied by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014), to solicit more understanding of teacher perspectives about their professional learning. After surveying and interviewing over 1,300 Ts, Ps, district PD organizers and external consultants, an overwhelming trend was that most participants were critical of professional learning while highlighting sentiments of PD failing to meet the needs of teachers. More specifically, professional learning missed the mark in connecting the content of the professional learning to actual classroom practice (Boston Consulting Group, 2014). The implications of these perspectives fall on the shoulders of school districts and organizational leaders who are responsible for the implementation of PD, yet teachers also feel the impact of failed workshops. Anderson and Young (2018), and Anderson (2022) acknowledge that overall districts struggle to implement and adopt effective practices due to the misalignment of PD to school improvement initiatives. It is imperative for organizational leaders to understand the impact and responsibility they have when considering effective professional learning practices and their impact on school Ps, and Ts alike. Not only should school and organizational leaders

assist in the planning of PD, they also must be active participants in the professional learning (Anderson, 2022; Cardno, 2005). Leadership participation in professional learning workshops is a characteristic of organizations that have high-quality professional learning practices.

Characteristics of High-Quality Professional Learning

To understand the impact of PD that works well, an analysis of literature on the topic of high-quality PD and high performing districts is important for the framing of the problem of practice presented. Leithwood and Azah (2017) analyzed the characteristics of high performing school districts and their relationship to PD. In cases of success, the professional learning that focused on skills that can be embedded within the classroom had high effects. The key to PD as described is to keep higher expectations of instructional leaders and IL in schools seeking to improve practice. When PD asserts a specific content focus, active learning opportunities, coherence, multi-day workshops and seeks collective participation it meets the attributes of high-quality professional learning (Desimone & Garet, 2015). The challenge presented to organizations who seek to implement high-quality PD is to translate the above attributes into practice. Professional learning must be linked to classroom practice and must include a clear understanding of what successful implementation looks like and ultimately should enable teachers to change their practices as they align with organization change (Desimone, 2011; Redman et al., 2018).

To ensure impactful implementation, a final characteristic of high-quality PD incorporates a collaborative approach to the planning, development, and implementation process that includes teachers, leadership teams, district personnel, and external consultants if necessary (Desimone & Garet, 2015). It is important to include teachers in the process to ensure PD workshops are practice oriented, and it is important leadership from various levels of the

organization are included to ensure the PD aligns with the desired organizational improvement (Leithwood & Azah, 2017; Redman et al., 2018). Aspects of TL can be leveraged to distribute decisions to teachers to allow for a more equitable representation in the PD process (Macias, 2017). Collaboration in the decision-making process is also important as teacher PD requires guidance and IL from principals, district leaders, and external consultants working alongside teachers to create sustained implementation of professional learning over a desired period (Macias, 2017; Patton et al., 2015; Redmond et al., 2018; Riordan et al., 2016).

The Impact of External Consultants

The value of involving external consultants in the professional learning process is debated in schools and in research, and in many cases the teacher perception of external consultants is not always favorable (Lotan et al., 2019). A common critique of the use of external consultants lies in the belief that school districts outsource public funds to a neoliberal industry that often implements cookie cutter approaches that are labeled as professional learning (Phillips & Hamann, 2021). When deployed appropriately, however, external consultants can be a very useful resource for school districts. The value and utility of external consultants is visible when they exist to work alongside leaders, coaches, and teachers as they provide support for implementation and ensure accountability to pre-established goals and criteria.

This is particularly the case when the external consultant is working alongside small groups of teachers during the implementation process (Burns et al., 2018; Timperley et al., 2007). Lotan et al., (2019) support this statement by acknowledging that outside consultants are impactful when they consider local contexts of schools they work with and constructing PD workshops based on the localized needs of the teachers. When external consultants are employed

in a collaborative manner and work alongside the key members of school districts, impactful professional learning can occur.

Internal Perspectives Regarding Professional Learning

Desert View School District engages in yearly staff satisfaction surveys, as well as end of semester staff surveys to gauge both the sentiments and perspectives of teachers in classrooms. While the purpose of each survey is to establish a clear understanding of the concerns and dilemmas faced by teachers in the schools, it also serves to set the foundation for the strategic plans for the following school year; included within the strategic plan is budget allocation for professional learning (Desert View School District, 2023). With over 1000 teachers in 23 different schools the survey data contains valuable insights regarding the direction of professional learning (Desert View School District, 2022a). Qualitative data analyzed from the surveys indicated a trending perspective that there is a lack of teacher consultation regarding the direction of initiatives that impact classrooms and a lack of teacher consultation regarding the supporting professional learning workshops offered (Desert View School District, 2022a; Desert View School District 2022b). This information is coupled with the challenging demographic of students in the classrooms across DVSD, this is further expanded in the analysis of external factors in the next section.

Analysis of External Factors

When looking at external factors that surround and potentially influence DVSD's organizational processes, it is imperative to acknowledge the sociological and economic factors of the community. According to DVSD's strategic plan for 2023 – 2026 (2023), of the 14,974 students, 90% of them are socioeconomically disadvantaged. This coincides with the community information presented earlier in the chapter and describes demographic shifts within the

community and the school district. Historically the community was demographically divided, and the west side of the community was more economically affluent. This led to ‘west side schools’ having a different perspective on the needs and desires for students. This perspective has changed as the west side and east side of the community and their schools are more similar in the demographic of students in the classroom. This has led to all teachers advocating for more deliberate classroom support, and for professional learning that seeks to improve student growth and progress regardless of socioeconomic status (Desert View School District, 2022b).

Examining internal perspectives and external influences about DVSD as an organization allows for a better understanding of the problem of practice presented and subsequently will allow for a more precise vision for change. As well as framing the problem of practice, it is important to consider guiding questions that will help gain a greater understanding to move towards organizational change.

Guiding Questions from the Problem of Practice

To fully comprehend the residual influences of problem of practice presented, it is important to consider other guiding questions as DVSD moves through the change implementation process. The following questions relate to the intersection of positionality, role and responsibility within the DVSD organization, and the problem of practice.

- How might my influence as an external consultant impact the implementation process and the adoption of professional learning initiatives across the school district?
- What might be the implications for members of DVSD if only some of the schools adopt and continue to apply knowledge learned from the professional learning workshops?

- To what extent will the legacy of the professional learning be sustained once my time at DVSD is complete?

The questions presented above serve as a guide and a reminder there are multiple influences on the change process, and the implementation of new initiatives as proposed by me as an external consultant.

Understanding the uniqueness of my role, and the shifting influences I have within the organizational structure of DVSD is the rationale behind the first and third guiding question presented. Due to the reality of my role as an outside consultant, there is a risk that the change implementation process I present will be perceived differently since I am not a member of DVSD. This also influences the longevity of the proposed initiatives as there is a possibility that when my work is done at DVSD, the implemented changes may return to the previous state (Thornberg, 2014). The second guiding question is presented to consider the impact of certain schools adopting the changes, while others do not. To influence change across the collective schools of DVSD, it is important to consider the impact of having certain schools choose to implement the change initiative autonomously without my support. As DVSD moves towards change and implementation, these guiding questions will help to frame the focused vision for change.

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

Change for the sake of progress and improvement is more favorably sought out by leaders who want to make a positive lasting impact (Langley et al., 2009). Understanding what is required for change and improvement within an organization challenges leaders to look internally at the cultural norms that are in place, and simultaneously communicate a clear vision of a desired organization once the change process is complete (Leo & Wickenburg, 2013). It is

also of importance for change leaders to consider the ethical impacts of change, the residual and lasting influences change will have on the organization, and the sustainability of change to prevent the organization from rebounding to its previous state (Burns et al., 2018). This section will explore the vision for change as it pertains to the problem of practice presented at DVSD.

Vision for Change

Casting a vision for change requires the change leader to establish appropriate parameters for success. Changing an organization without reason does not yield favorable results, rather change for the sake of progress aligns more appropriately with a liberal view of education. In theoretical terms, the desired change would be incremental and in favor of progress (Guttek, 2014). In the case of DVSD, the desired change would seek to remedy instructional decisions made in the classroom that are not rooted in research and lean more towards the improvement of instructional practices with the intention to have a greater impact on the learning of all students in the classroom (Shirrell et al., 2019). Balanced, moderate change at DVSD will lead to positive outcomes for not only the teachers and students in the classroom, but for all members of the organization (Plazek, 2012).

My vision for change is to establish a collaborative, and collective desire for all members of DVSD to seek out and implement professional learning experiences that are rooted in research (Hattie, 2009; Hattie et al., 2021). By encouraging a system of professional learning initiatives that are focused on research, there is a greater potential for quality implementation of high impact practices in schools and classrooms which will directly lead to increased efficacy of instruction (Donohoo, 2017; Donohoo & Katz, 2019). It is possible for professional development to be both appealing to teachers and aligned to district goals for improvement. To ensure this, it is imperative that within the vision of change there is a collaborative effort and equitable

representation of all levels of the organization involved in the planning and decision-making process. This includes district leadership, school leaders, teachers, and in some cases external consultants, working together to benefit instructional practices across a school district (Kraft et al., 2015; Zheng et al., 2019). Encouraging a balance of both the macro and meso levels of leadership to cast the vision and encourage accountability with the interests, desires, and perspectives of teachers will encourage a change process that is not only more equitable in representation but also more sustainable in its implementation (McLure & Aldridge, 2023).

Current State of DVSD

Desert View School District is currently subscribing and participating in multiple professional learning initiatives to address a series of district and organizational goals set by the SUP and the board of trustees. The resulting effects include attrition, negative feelings about initiatives, and professional learning overkill. Communication from the macro and meso branches of DVSD also impart feelings that all PD initiatives are important, leading to more pressures on teachers to ensure proper implementation. Some of the professional learning workshops presented by external consultants, have historically given pre-programmed material. The workshops are also often conducted without any feedback from teachers regarding content, or delivery of material. All coupled together, the current state of DVSD has led to feelings that PD is something that is done to teachers, rather than done alongside teachers. The result of this is passive participation and the notion that PD is attended to check a box or to appease the upper levels of the organization has led to general feelings of discontent among the teachers in the district (Desert View School District, 2022a).

Future State of DVSD

To achieve the vision for change there are considerations that will need to be made by the leadership at DVSD. Primarily, it will be very important to invest in a new process of determining PD that meets the interests, needs, and desires of teachers while aligning to district goals. Leaders from all levels would need to establish a consensus to ensure PD is collaboratively programmed between all members of DVSD. When the process of PD selection and implementation includes external consultants, it should be done in a manner that includes flexible delivery that suits the custom needs of the schools within DVSD. More specifically, external consultants should be leveraged for their instructional expertise and rather than have them deliver a pre-programmed workshop they should act as a collaborator working alongside the schools and teachers (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Shava et al., 2021). An accountability process should also be included to evaluate the impact of professional learning on all levels of the organization. Establishing a series of success criteria for change relating to specific leadership levels at DVSD will promote more accountability to the process of PD as understood by all members of the organization (McLure & Aldridge, 2023).

The future state of PD implementation at DVSD will have positive impacts on other organizational actors as well. Aligning professional learning workshops to district goals and needs with teacher input will result in a reduction of variance in professional knowledge towards a more harmonized understanding of PD priorities (DeWitt, 2020; 2022a). This means the depth of professional knowledge would be more consistent across schools at DVSD, thus as teachers and leaders move between schools in the district there is a lesser likelihood they will need to relearn PD priorities and initiatives at their new school. Reducing the variance of PD offerings will also allow for a more deliberate deployment of the knowledge and skills of the school

instructional coaches (Knight 2018; 2022). Each school at DVSD has an instructional coach, and using their abilities as internal experts with a direct network to other coaches and instructional expert will lead to a more sustainable approach to PD implementation (Aldridge & McLure, 2023). When coaches have fewer initiatives to consider, they can develop their capacity to better understand the intricacies of implementing more specific PD initiatives at their school site (Knight, 2022).

A reduction of breadth of PD offerings and a refocus on professional learning that is targeted to the needs of students and teachers while being rooted in research will lead to a more equitable approach and understanding of implementation. Having more teachers involved in the decision-making process also addresses the inequity of representation in PD leadership decisions. A balanced approach is more likely to encourage the future state of DVSD to have a sustainable approach to professional learning.

Priorities for Change

As mentioned previously in this chapter, DVSD as an organization exists in a structural functional environment. As such, the priorities are not to change the leadership structure completely but rather to create a greater balance of organizational interests and the inclusion of more perspectives in the decision-making process regarding professional learning within the district (Yue et al., 2019). The priorities for change outlined below are intended to be accomplished within the hierarchical leadership structure that exists within the school district.

A main priority for change is to engage in a gap analysis and communicate the findings to the meso and macro level leaders at DVSD about impactful professional learning. Through this process, more teacher voices could be invited to the leadership decision making table in hopes they would influence the direction of professional learning within the district (Ermeling &

Yarbo, 2016). A specific survey examining teacher perspectives on professional learning priorities would also be created and sent to those who may not have the opportunity to engage in a direct dialogue with leadership. This priority is important as it would begin to encourage members of all levels of the organization to make their voice heard.

A second priority for change involves my role and positionality as an external consultant working with schools, and within the organizational structure. It is imperative that my roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined to the members of DVSD to ensure that my expertise and the expertise of future external consultants is used most effectively (Dedering et al., 2015). To do this, teachers and leaders at schools would be consulted to determine their perspectives on the best possible use for external consultants. These considerations would also be examined at the meso level, with the caveat that moving forward with PD requires a move away from external consultants delivering pre-packaged, canned workshops. There is a necessary collaborative effort that must occur to ensure clarity of the role of external consultant at DVSD.

A third priority would be for each level of the organization to engage in a predictive inquiry process and brainstorm what potential roadblocks may arise at each organizational level regarding the implementation process. The ability to hypothesize potential roadblocks or speedbumps to implementation will encourage members of DVSD to better prepare for potential challenges in the future (Amzat, 2019; Hartnell et al., 2019). The predictive inquiry process would also provide the members of each organization the opportunity to consider alternative perspectives regarding the implementation process. The considerations for implementation found in the inquiry process will also provide some context for potential implications of implementation.

Leadership Considerations

To properly effectuate the change process, leadership roles and responsibilities at each level of DVSD must be clearly understood. While there is a more rigid approach to organizational leadership within the district, that does not discount the importance of understanding how leadership at each level plays an important role in the change implementation process.

The meso level of DVSD is responsible for setting the district goals and ensuring there are measures in place to meet those goals. In the current situation, there is a disconnect between this level and the other levels of the organization regarding casting the vision for change. It is important for members of the meso level of government to recognize opportunities for more direct teacher involvement in organizational goal setting, particularly regarding goals that directly impact classrooms, rather than goals that are perceived by the meso level as improving practices in classrooms (Capper, 2018). Cultivating a collaborative environment where teachers and other members of DVSD have an opportunity to have their perspectives heard and considered is important for the success of change implementation (Aldridge & McLure, 2023). This can be done by removing some of the barriers to school decision making, and by allowing Ts and Ps to have more influence over certain decisions made at this level (Honig & Rainey, 2012).

The macro level of DVSD is responsible for creating the conditions for change implementation. This includes the deployment of resources and funding, the determination of the PD schedule as well as the content provided in the PD sessions, and the hiring and usage of external consultants. Leadership at this level concerns itself with overcoming resistance to change or to implementation of new initiatives. To establish a more legitimate potential for

change, leaders at this level must engage in direct communication and collaborative efforts with members of the micro level (Lewis, 2006). There is also an opportunity here to build expertise and capacity with the network of instructional coaches and other district leaders regarding IL focused initiatives (Aldridge & McLure, 2023). The importance of this level of DVSD to the success of implementation cannot be understated, the participation and support of leaders from the district office has the potential to make or break the implementation process.

The micro level of DVSD burdens the load of implementation. As most of the initiatives are cast by other levels of leadership it is the case that Ts and Ps are incorporating new learning from PD into classroom and school practice. This is where the impact of implementation can be observed. It is then the case for leadership to ensure there is a culture focused on IL and professional classroom practices that align with PD initiatives and district goals (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). The P and APs of the school are also tasked with ensuring there are supports in place at the school, and that there is an appropriate environment for implementation. Meaning that the structures are in place to ensure the school and the classrooms are moving more deliberately from potential to implementation (Cusack & Bustamante, 2024; Hattie et al., 2020).

At DVSD, it is imperative the organizational leadership levels work as collaboratively as possible within a restrictive organizational structure. Ensuring there are clear expectations, roles, and responsibilities regarding implementation will facilitate the change implementation process.

Chapter 1 Summary

This chapter explored my unique leadership position, leadership philosophies, and experiences that have led me to my current leadership role; I also explored the various impacts and influences on my leadership lens. It is important to also highlight the impact my current role

has on my positionality, and the leadership philosophies that I value as I work with school districts.

The PoP introduced the need to address the lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives across DVSD. This leadership PoP frames my role as an external consultant working in partnership with a school district that is struggling to change instructional practices in schools. Examining existing leadership structures as well as the influence of a structural functionalist organization, it is clear teacher influence is lacking in the current state of the decision-making process regarding professional learning initiatives. The vision for change is one that looks at a reconceptualization of the role of an external consultant as one that works in partnership with schools and levels of leadership within a school district to ensure there is equitable voices influencing professional learning decisions blended with instructional leadership practices that are rooted in research. The next chapter of this DiP explores change implementation frameworks and charts a pathway for the change implementation process at Desert View School District.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

The future of Desert View School District's (DVSD) classroom instructional practices requires deliberate leadership approaches to change, as well as a clear and well-intended framework for change that is rooted in sustainability and applicability to the organizational context, accounting for ethical considerations and the impact of a partnership with an external consultant.

To successfully lead DVSD through change implementation, attributes of instructional leadership (IL) and transformational leadership (TL) approaches will be used as my positionality allows me within the organizational structure of DVSD. Independently each leadership approach has valuable insights into leading change; however, the incorporation of both approaches will better serve the needs of DVSD (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kwan, 2021; Shava et al., 2021). The framework for leading the change process will be a modified version of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019). The modification is intended to encourage mobility and flexibility through a linear change process and will allow for a more organic perspective on change implementation to address the presented problem of practice. This chapter also address DVSD's readiness to embark on the change implementation process, which will be the foundation of determining three strategies to address the presented problem of practice.

Leadership Approach to Change

To lead the change implementation process at DVSD, aspects of both IL and TL approaches will be employed. To ensure the problem of practice is addressed throughout the change implementation process, a combination of these theories and practices is necessary to ensure there is a balance of leadership influence from myself as an external consultant (instructional) and the existing district leadership (transformational) (Aas & Brando, 2016;

Bellibaş et al., 2021; Kwan, 2020; Shava et al., 2021). As I interact with the different organizational levels throughout implementation, attributes from each leadership theory will need to be leveraged (Kwan, 2020; Shava et al., 2021).

Attributes of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

The key attributes of both IL and TL as they pertain to my leadership influence at DVSD were presented in the previous chapter; however, it is pertinent to explore how the blend of each approach has the potential to positively influence the change implementation process within the organization. Individually these leadership approaches offer many positive influences on leadership yet collaboratively their attributes can better satisfy the needs of DVSD as an organization embarking on change. In examining various leadership approaches, Aas and Brandmo (2016) acknowledge that most widely advocated models of leadership approaches also leverage many of the same leadership practices within them causing an alignment of practices across approaches.

As highlighted in the previous chapter TL and IL have unique attributes which will be emphasized depending on the context of the situation. Factoring in my role within DVSD and the context in which I was hired to lead the change process, approaches of TL will be applied as a medium of delivery to align the practices of instruction that DVSD is hoping to implement. A blended approach to IL and TL will be the most impactful for driving change aligned to visible learning instructional practices (Aas & Brandmo, 2016; DeWitt, 2022a; Hattie et al, 2021).

Blending Leadership Approaches

The blending of TL and IL approaches is supported when considering the scope of changing the instructional practices of an entire educational organization. Transformational leadership could not only increase the capacity of the collaborators within DVSD by creating and

culture for change as well as casting a vision for change but when blended with aspects of IL, members of both the micro level and meso level of the organization will instructionally move closer to meeting their goals (Aas & Brandmo, 2016). Transformational leadership approaches offer a moderating role of building culture and clarifying goals while strengthening the effect of IL on teacher change (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Shava et al., 2021). In essence, the inclusion of TL approaches creates a greater opportunity for innovation and understanding of the necessities faced by an organization in the pursuit of improving IL approaches (Bellibaş et al., 2021). The incorporation of the IL approach is also fundamental to the change process. This is especially true in the case of DVSD, as the main goal of change implementation is the improvement of visible learning instructional practices across classrooms.

Instructional leadership is a necessary ingredient for school improvement efforts and the impact of an instructional leader improves dramatically when the leader is also highly rated in TL (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Shava et al., 2021). Bellibaş et al. (2021) examined the moderating effect that TL and IL have on teacher professional learning and subsequent instructional practices. When TL influence is low so is the impact of teacher professional learning on instructional practices, which is a clear indicator of change at DVSD. Incorporating approaches from both TL and IL will benefit the change process by illuminating the importance of accountability and quality assurance regarding the implementation of the goals established by the instructional leader (Kwan, 2021). Overall, by leveraging TL and IL organizations can create a culture of teaching and learning and establish an environment where high impact instructional practices are the focus of all levels of the organization.

Leadership Approaches in the Context of DVSD

The interconnected approach of IL and TL will be essential to the success of the change implementation process, especially considering my positionality within the DVSD itself. Due to the fact the proposed initiatives impacting teacher instructional practices have been set by the macro and meso levels of DVSD, the situation necessitates the application of different leadership approaches depending on the context of implementation and my influence within it.

The meso level of DVSD under the direction of director (DIR), and assistant superintendent (ASUP), is responsible for casting the vision for implementation and ensuring there are support mechanisms in place to meet the goals established for implementation (Faupel & Süß, 2019; Yue et al., 2019). Transformational leadership will be required by the principal and their instructional leadership team (ILT) for implementation at the school level. They will be required to establish an environment for implementation predicated on trust, openness, and honesty (Cusack & Bustamante, 2024; Hattie et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b). In my role, I will be acting as a member of the ILT team within schools to support the professional learning environment by incorporating the TL approach. When it comes to the delivery of the professional learning initiatives to the teachers (Ts) across the district, my role requires the incorporation of the IL approach.

The IL approach will almost exclusively be used at the micro level, as this is where my leadership capacity has the most influence on the implementation process. The school ILT and I will engage in the use of IL approaches to ensure Ts are developing their capacity according to the goals proposed by the macro and meso level of DVSD. The use of IL approaches in my role is to help increase T self and collective efficacy (DeWitt, 2020; Gümüş et al., 2022; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Teacher efficacy can be described as the confidence in themselves and their own

ability to promote student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teacher efficacy is related to efforts invested in teaching, goal setting, persistence and resilience when setbacks occur, and likelihood to be open to change (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). When teachers as a collective are efficacious, their capacity for instructional improvement increases and can be further developed through aspects of IL (DeWitt, 2020; 2022a). It is important to also acknowledge that each of the presented leadership approaches when combined, will provide perspectives on what needs to change as well as approaches to effectuate changes within DVSD.

Leadership Approaches and Change at DVSD

Having a combined lens of TL and IL from which to examine DVSD allows for a greater breadth of understanding the change that needs to occur within the organization. Because the presented problem of practice requires two different approaches to leadership, it will allow me to determine what aspects of the organization will need to change in each approach. Incorporating IL as an approach will help me determine the impact of school leaders as instructional leaders within their own building. A gap in IL would be apparent if principal leadership is not entirely instructionally focused. When a principal is a lead learner as well as a leader who is instructionally focused and learning centered, there is a direct correlation to the success of professional learning initiatives and improved instructional practices (Piyaman et al., 2016).

Effective instructional leaders dramatically impact the quality of teaching and can also reduce the impact of lower socio-economic status on student achievement by maintaining high expectations of instructional practice and student achievement (Gümüő et al., 2022; Shaked et al., 2021). A gap in TL would be apparent if the organization itself has not fostered readiness for commitment by evoking behaviors in support of change (Faupel & Süő, 2019). It is important for members of the senior leadership team to be cognisant of the importance of establishing an

environment ready for implementation (Cusack & Bustamante, 2024). To inspire organizational change, there must be select individuals within DVSD who will serve as agents of change at their local sites since the breadth of implementation is so wide. It is through the lens of transformational leadership theory that these individuals will engage in early implementation of the professional learning initiatives desired by district leadership (Northouse, 2019; Northouse, 2022; Rafferty et al., 2013). The transformational leader's influence often moves their audience to accomplish more than is expected of them and thus if this is not in place it is possible change may not be as impactful as anticipated (Northouse, 2019).

External Consultants and Motivating Change

My role within the organization gives me agency to move change forward within a restrictive organizational structure. As mentioned previously, decisions regarding professional learning and expectations of instructional practices in classrooms have already been established at the macro and meso level and while I was hired by district leadership to lead and support change implementation I am still doing so in a limited capacity. My role has been established to lead change within the micro level of the organization and thus my capacity to effectuate change at the school level is much more achievable. While the intersectionality of my external influence within the organization may be a challenge for some, including me as an accountability pillar for implementation will help with change motivation (Burns et al., 2018; Lotan et al., 2019; Timperley et al., 2007).

Having an external perspective will also allow me to liaise with district leadership while directly facilitating the change process in the schools. External consultants who are transparent about change processes, who bring a level of expertise to the change process, and who provide a mature outlook on the perceived change process can positively influence change implementation

(Barnett & Weidenfeller, 2016). The limitations to my role as a leader are directly related to the organizational structure and my role within it. Being external to DVSD will bring challenges to the implementation process, as it will be important for me to respect the desires of the macro and meso level of the organization as they contracted my services. It is imperative that I align the desires of the higher levels of the organization while leading the change process within the micro levels.

The presented leadership approaches and my role in utilizing these approaches within the context of DVSD attempts to reduce the marginalization of voices and promote more participants in the change process. It is important for me to maintain the TL approach when working with Ts and schools to ensure there is that development of collective teacher efficacy in an environment where all are welcome to have a voice in the change process and more importantly the implementation of instructional practices (Ninkovic & Knezevic' Floric, 2018). It is important to maintain the awareness that the restrictive structure of the organization may result in feelings of marginalization with certain members of DVSD. This is necessary to ensure that my leadership lens and approach remains ethical and socially just as I lead change. The selected organizational framework and process is also designed in a manner that will allow for the voices of all members of DVSD to be heard.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

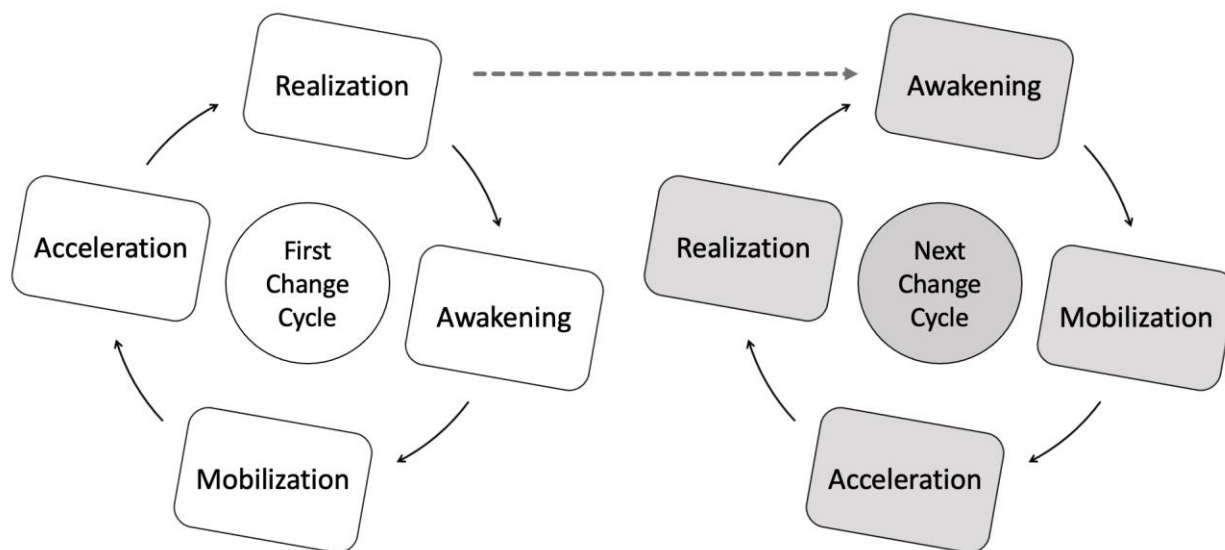
The intersection of leadership approaches, organizational realities, and the positionality of an external consultant proposes a unique set of challenges for change implementation at DVSD. When looking at a change framework that seeks to not only shift the practices of a school district, but also provide IL to schools the change path model provides a framework that can be used to shift practice at DVSD (Deszca et al., 2019).

The Change Path Model

The change path model provides a comprehensive framework to address my problem of practice which exists in a complex organization. Being positioned to effectuate change in numerous autonomous schools within an organization requires a framework that addresses both the desires of an organization as well as the needs of individual schools. The change path model satisfies this requirement through its four steps, however; some adaptations were made to the model to remove the linear approach. The shift from linear to circular was intended to demonstrate that change is not linear and is continuous rather than static. Figure 3 highlights the modified change path model with the four steps as follows: awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and realization; the original term of ‘institutionalization’ was replaced by ‘realization’ to remove westernized and colonial undertones (Deszca et al., 2019).

Figure 3

A Modified Change Path Model



Note. The cyclical adaptation of the change path model provides organizations with the ability to reengage in a process of change once realization has been met in the first change cycle. Adapted from Deszca, G. F., Ingols, C. A., & Cawsey, T. F. (2019). *Organizational change: An action-oriented toolkit* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

It should be noted that a second framework was included to both highlight and indicate that in the context of this problem of practice change will be occurring in selected sites, with a focus on adjusting instructional practices at certain schools prior to the entire existing organizational structure (Baumgartner, 2013). The deliberate inclusion of a second framework is to highlight the potential for organizations to engage in a second iteration of the change path model to continue to expand the influence of change across the entire organization. This shift is predicated on the completion of the following change path model steps outlined below.

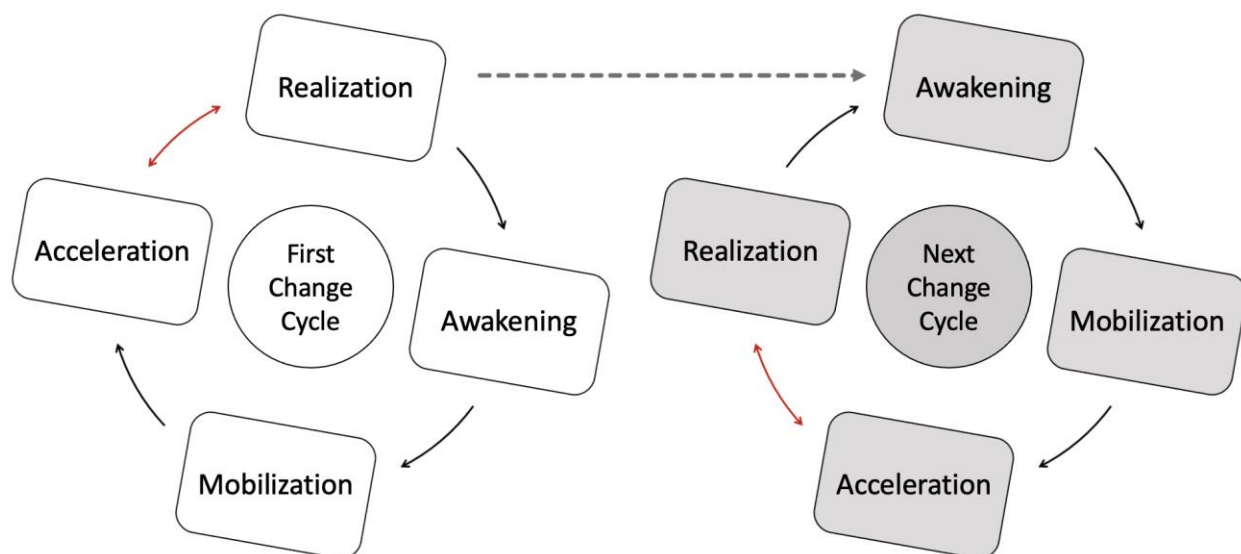
The awakening stage of the model can be described as the period when a gap that exists within an organization is identified. At DVSD, senior leadership noticed the lack of coherence in the adoption of professional learning initiatives as school sites. Using existing survey data and historical analysis of previous implementation efforts, the senior leadership noticed a significant gap in which they are hoping to remedy through the inclusion of an external consultant and shifting leadership responsibilities (Northouse, 2022; Thornberg, 2014).

The mobilization stage of the change path model can be described as the beginning stages of implementation where senior leadership begins to consider the cultural implications of change as well as consider the organizational diagnostics. Hamilton et al. (2022) describe this stage as the design stage of implementation, where change agents from both inside and outside of the school districts would be solicited to help consider how they use their reputations and relationships to begin to effectuate change. It is in this stage where TL skills will be important to motivate school leaders as they seek to assume some responsibility for the implementation at their school site (Donohoo, 2017; Donohoo & Katz, 2020; Kwan, 2020; Li & Liu, 2022). This will be explored in the next section of the chapter.

The acceleration stage of the change path model is where planning and implementation takes place. This section of the model is dedicated to the deployment of resources, activation of an action plan, and to build momentum for change. In the case of DVSD this is a critical element to the development of better teaching practices in classrooms and the creation of a coherent professional learning model. Hu et al. (2022) highlight the importance of common language, and understandings of professional learning, in the success of implementation of professional learning initiatives. Without a common language and established criteria for success communicated to all collaborators, implementation efforts may be compromised (Donohoo & Katz, 2019).

The final stage of the change path model is known as realization. In this concluding stage of the model, it is proposed that change has occurred, and the organization is existing in a new state. It is at this point where organizations can be evaluative and measure the effectiveness of implementation (Hamilton et al., 2022; Kang et al., 2013). This is also where there may be an establishment of new practices and considerations which could spark a necessary move into another change path model. A proposed addition to this modified model can be found in Figure 4 where a double-sided arrow marks the ability for an organization to move between acceleration and realization. This addition encourages the ability for organizations to return to the acceleration stage to refine implementation efforts prior to moving into realization.

For a fluidity of movement between the final two stages to be impactful, monitoring and evaluation must be aligned with localized expertise (Neumann et al., 2018; Voelkel et al., 2023). The version of the change framework presented above provides schools with the ability to gauge their implementation efforts prior to the end of the change process, leaving flexibility for the change leader.

Figure 4*A Flexible Change Path Model*

Note. The double-sided arrow between acceleration and realization has been added to the modified change path model to promote the ability of organizations to return to implementation efforts should they not be ready for full scale realization. Adapted from Deszca, G. F., Ingols, C. A., & Cawsey, T. F. (2019). *Organizational change: An action-oriented toolkit* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications

The Value and Importance of the Framework

The framework as presented in Figure 4 provides opportunities for flexibility as well as the ability for schools to engage in the change process within their localized context. The framework itself also has value for DVSD senior leadership and me who are responsible for overseeing the change process. Most significantly this framework concerns itself with not only the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of change, but also asks ‘why’ change may be necessary. Throughout the change process, the framework tasks the leader to continually engage in seeking out voices of all members of the organization (Ham & Dekkers, 2019). This notion of seeking alternative perspectives, especially in the first three steps of the framework, gives opportunities for ongoing

feedback and will fundamentally improve the change process overall (Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016; Ngyuen & Ng, 2020).

Leadership Approach Within the Framework

The blended leadership approach of IL and TL aligns well with the presented framework as it reconciles the desires of school principals to be autonomous in their implementation effort, with the district's desire to incorporate visible learning instructional practices across DVSD (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). In the early stages of the framework, awakening and mobilization, the TL approach will be applied to develop and disseminate the vision for change, and to reinforce the need for change (Usman, 2020; Zainab et al., 2022). Throughout the change process the leader is tasked to continually reach out to empower others in the change implementation process and through this empowerment to also celebrate small milestones (Lasrado & Kassan, 2020; Miniai et al., 2020).

The IL approach will be applied in the later stages of the framework when implementation efforts are concentrated in the schools. Leveraging the school principal as the transformational leader of the building, my role will be to deliver the IL approach necessary to drive professional learning forward and build teacher collective efficacy (Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2023). Providing ongoing professional learning workshops through the mobilization and acceleration stages of the framework that model visible learning practices will help teachers grow in their professional practice and align with district goals as well (Hattie, 2023; Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

Limitations of the Framework

The change path model when presented in its original form was very linear and rigid in its approach to change (Deszca et al., 2019). It is predicated on the idea that change occurs in an

organized step by step manner that can be controlled by higher levels of the organization (Burnes et al., 2016). This in essence is a limitation of the framework and is a major contributing reason as to why the framework was manipulated to better suit the context of the implementation effort at DVSD. Another limitation of the presented framework is the lack of specific research about the change path model itself, which is because it was a framework created for a specifically for a single book. To remedy this, further external research was conducted on the information within the framework to establish a greater degree of legitimacy rooted in published research.

The modified and flexible approach to the change path model is a better fit for implementation at DVSD. The change path model by design seeks to encourage all members of the organization to voice their perspectives throughout the change process, which is important to the sustainability of the change implementation process at DVSD (Deszca et al., 2019; Ham & Dekkers, 2019). The ability for members to move through the framework at their own pace also encourages a more equitable approach to implementation by allowing a degree of autonomy at each of the school sites (Crilly & Sloan, 2014). The framework as presented in its modified and flexible form will drive a positive change implementation process at DVSD, predicated on DVSD's readiness for change.

Organizational Change Readiness

Desert View School District's senior leadership team has been actively looking to refine teachers' instructional practices to create a greater understanding and implementation of high impact instructional strategies across the district (Hattie et al., 2021). The organizational leadership at the macro level engaged in an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, which has led them to determine they need to develop a strategy for change (Nadler & Tushman, 1989).

Another way to examine the reality of readiness at DVSD would be to look at Greiner's (1997) research on organizational change readiness. Greiner (1997) would describe DVSD in a revolutionary state known as the crisis of control. This stage of revolution is described as a situation that occurs when autonomous managers prefer to autonomously lead without considering the impact on the rest of the organization. When considering the organizational context and associated problem of practice at DVSD, the managers would be the school principals who are making localized decisions regarding the implementation of the initiatives set by senior leadership (Machin, 2019). This crisis aligns with the theory that although the crisis itself is not an ideal situation for an organization, it is necessary for growth and change. It is through these revolutions that change leaders are required to adapt, develop, and shift their leadership model to fit the necessary changes required to solve the crisis (Greiner, 1997) To further examine DVSD's readiness for change from the perspective of all levels of the organization, there are some existing pieces of evidence that can be analyzed.

Drivers for Change Readiness

The drivers for change at DVSD can be attributed to both internal and external pressures faced by senior leadership. The main external driver for change comes from the declining student achievement scores on state standardized tests, which are publicly available for parents, students, and community members to see (DVSD Public Documents, 2022c). The availability of these results has increased public pressure on the meso level of DVSD to act to improve instructional practices in school. Funding, enrollment, and other financial implications are directly related to results and the community has selected teacher instructional practices and influences on student learning as an area to blame (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2023a). This pressure is what led senior leadership to initially connect with me as an external support to aid in the

implementation of visible learning instructional practices (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Hattie et al., 2021).

Internally student data, staff satisfaction surveys, and year end staff reflections have been analyzed to compare school sites to determine degrees of variance that exist in instructional practice, as well as variance in attitudes towards existing professional development. One unique attribute of DVSD is that most if not all schools have very similar student socio-economic and cultural demographics, thus variance can be measured to determine where teaching practices may be lacking at certain schools (Desert View Organizational Documents, 2020b). Each school principal is also responsible for setting the course for teacher PD at their school site, which has contributed to the variance across DVSD.

The desire for change is driven by internal and external pressures to improve instructional practices which will in turn influence a better learning experience for the students of DVSD. It should be noted that historically at DVSD there has been pressure placed from the macro and meso levels on the schools, teachers, and principals to implement other initiatives such as: new curricula, behavior support initiatives, and grading initiatives, often without input from the micro level. This has led to some resisting forces for change.

Resisting Forces and Equity Challenges

The hierarchical organizational structure of DVSD, has historically led to some of the member's voices not being considered when it comes to the direction and focus of professional learning initiatives. More specifically, teachers and some school leaders have commented that the professional learning seems to have met the requirements of the macro and meso levels of DVSD without consideration of the needs of the teachers. Especially considering they are the ones who are forced into professional learning they do not value, or enjoy (DVSD

Organizational Documents, 2020b). There is a constant feeling that DVSD is consistently taking on too many initiatives at once, without the consultation of all members within the organization (Ibrahim & Nartgun, 2020; Kuh, 2015). This is contributing to an inequitable approach to the implementation of professional learning that is not desired by all at DVSD (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). The lack of consultation has led to a decreased level of efficacy across leadership levels and represents the lack of awareness in using the perspectives of teachers and school principals to assist in the implementation of professional learning (DeWitt, 2022a).

To necessarily address the complications of a structural functional organization and to mitigate the effects of not consulting all members of DVSD, there are some changes that likely will need to occur. While a wish list of changes would be ideal, due to my positionality much of the desired change will need to occur within this organizational structure rather than making changes to the organization itself.

Engaging in a gap analysis of DVSD would necessarily lead to a conversation around de-implementation to determine what initiatives need to be stopped, reformed, or reimaged (DeWitt, 2022b; Hamilton et al., 2023; Walsh-Bailey et al., 2021). Through this process, partners from all levels would have their voices heard to diagnose some of the lingering symptoms of inefficiencies from past implementation efforts. A gap analysis would also allow the macro and meso levels of DVSD to organize information to ensure the resources spent on future implementation efforts are used in the most efficient manner (Tsai et al., 2012). The micro level of the organization is a space where members can voice their opinion on what previous initiatives have worked, and what have not to reduce the number of initiatives already on their plate. This will occur in an official capacity during the awakening stage of the implementation plan highlighted in the next chapter and will also make room for initiatives that are more aligned

with the desires of the teachers in the classrooms (Rodman, 2019). The implementation plan will be executed to align with the desires of teachers and ensure they are concurrently involved in the communication process during change.

Readiness for Change

There are signs at the macro and meso levels of DVSD that indicate the organization is ready for change. By contacting me to provide professional learning and support the senior leadership indicated they are willing to engage in a change process while the readiness for change at the micro level will require further gap analysis. To ensure all levels of DVSD are ready for change will require an analysis of organizational development to determine if there is an opportunity for ethical and socially just approaches to change implementation (Capper, 2018; Rafferty et al., 2013). Conversations with the micro level of DVSD will be essential to assess what aspects of previous implementation efforts were fruitless to engage in a de-implementation process prior to the adoption of another change implementation effort (DeWitt, 2022b; Hamilton et al., 2023; Lai & Chung, 2015). All of this would occur during the awakening stage of the suggested framework.

The uniqueness of my positionality as an external consultant affords me opportunities to communicate to multiple levels of DVSD, and as such I can influence the fit of the change path model framework within the organization. Communication is essential to the success of the change implementation effort, and it is imperative that all levels of DVSD are collaborative in their desires for change as well as the markers of success. Being an external member of this organization will allow the communication to come centrally from me, to equitably listen to the needs of all members of DVSD and ensure the change plan is continually fitting within the context of the organization (Cannata & Nguyen, 2020). A desired change is to ensure there is a

greater level of input from school principals, teachers, and all other members in the micro level of the organization. Leveraging the voices of teachers will in turn allow for a better understanding of what successful implementation can look like at the micro level, as well as a likelihood of greater adoption and sustainability of professional learning initiatives in the schools of DVSD (McKeown et al., 2019).

Responsibilities of Organizational Actors

Much of my leadership responsibilities exist within the micro level of DVSD, while simultaneously executing the desires of the macro and meso levels. This requires an understanding of my role as an external consultant and the responsibilities of those within the organization I am partnered with to properly effectuate change. Within the scope of change, the most significant responsibilities for implementation will fall on the shoulders of school principals and their teaching staff (Horner et al., 2017).

Regarding school wide implementation, my role in conjunction with the school principal will be to ensure there is clarity of understanding regarding the purpose for professional learning as well as the goals of the professional learning. Essentially, it is imperative that there is no gap in the goals of professional learning set by macro and meso levels and understandings of those goals by the teaching staff (Ferreira & Schulze, 2014). In working closely with teachers within the school, my leadership responsibility will be to deliver the instructional strategies linked to research and practice in a manner that is conducive to implementation. Through this, the teachers will be responsible for taking their learning and implementing the instructional practices in their classrooms knowing that they have support from myself and the school ILT (Huang & Shimizu, 2016).

At the meso level, my role is to ensure that there is an adequate blueprint for implementation that takes into context voices from all members of DVSD and is based upon positive outcomes. A clear path to demonstrate implementation generally will result in greater adoption, especially when there is demonstrable evidence that use of the instructional practices results in successful outcomes (Horner et al., 2017). It is at this level where the communication aspect of the implementation is refined and delivered to other members across the organization. Thus, the responsibilities of the members of this level of DVSD are more related to providing support to principals and teachers as they engage in implementation efforts. Collectively the responsibilities of the organization and organizational actors should all be cohesive in their intentions to meet the desired goals regarding change and implementation (Murray et al., 2020). To ensure the organization is moving towards implementation in a manner conducive to sustainability and long-term success there are ethical considerations that must be addressed prior to engaging in change.

Leadership Ethics in Organizational Change

Leading change as an external consultant requires an understanding of the ethical dilemmas that exist within an organization in which I am a guest. It also requires the responsibility of upholding the ethics that already exist within DVSD (Heidebreder, 2017). There are specific ethical considerations that must be upheld as DVSD works through the change implementation process to address the presented problem of practice. The following section will address the ethical considerations and challenges that will present themselves throughout the implementation process and examine the roles, responsibilities, and commitments of the organizational actors involved in or impacted by the change. More specifically, this section will

highlight the ethic of justice, the ethic of care, and the ethical dilemma of coherence at DVSD (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2022).

Ethic of Justice

The ethic of justice predicates that decisions being made within an organization always consider the fair and equal treatment of all people according to established laws, and rules with a commitment to equity, equality, and need (Starratt, 1991; 2005). The senior leadership team in the case of this presented problem of practice is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of implementation are reflected equitably across all involved schools. Being an outside member of the organization myself, I am also responsible for upholding this ethical responsibility as I interact with schools and principals. It is imperative that the ethic of justice is considered to ensure the decision-making process involving implementation efforts is equitable to all members of DVSD, including teachers. Often, when professional learning is thrust upon the schools and teachers with no discussion the ethic of justice is rarely considered (Zhang et al., 2021). To ensure implementation that is both enduring and sustainable, it is the responsibility of the meso level of the organization to establish conditions of implementation that are fair, just, and appropriate for the context of all collaborators involved (Berges Puyo, 2022).

Ethic of Care

The ethic of care requires a willingness to acknowledge people in their authentic self, a fidelity to establishing loyal relationships, and meeting people where they are with openness and honesty (Starratt 1991; 2005). The responsibility for upholding the ethic of care should permeate across all levels of DVSD's organizational structure. Strong relationships and an establishment of trust are essential for both the meso level leaders and school principals to mitigate and move past historically negative viewpoints on change implementation (Simola et al., 2010; Tschannen-

Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Regarding implementation, there is a desire by principals to run the change process at their schools autonomously without being micromanaged by district leadership and deserve to be treated with dignity as they do so. Specifically, it is my responsibility to encounter them as authentic leaders of their school and honor their voice as they make decisions about implementation in their school. The delicate balance will then exist to ensure that the school leaders autonomously align their goals with the desires of district senior leadership. This will be done deliberately during the beginning stages of the change process, when school leadership teams, the external consultant, and district leadership collectively build the school plan for the year. This will equitably ensure the desires of both levels of the organization are respected.

When considering the implementation process that occurs within each school, it is important for the principal, the ILT, and myself act ethically when working with teachers. Teachers will be approaching change with differing levels of comfort and desire, and it is important to also recognize them in their authentic self and honor their voices and perspectives (DeWitt, 2022b). Transformational leadership approaches rely on the ethic of care, more specifically, the ethic of care increases the impact of TL approaches and has been attributed to a higher degree of adoption with other members within an organization (Simola et al., 2010).

Coherence at DVSD

As an organization, DVSD is pursuing coherence when it comes to the implementation with the desired professional learning initiatives. While being driven by the macro and meso levels of the organization it is still a responsibility of mine to develop a sense of shared responsibility and accountability when it comes to the attitudes and dispositions regarding change (Mintrop, 2012). It is imperative there is a degree of consistency between the internal

accountability of teachers, and the external accountability expected from senior leadership, which is a responsibility I as an external consultant will be responsible to manage through a series of monitoring and evaluation practices highlighted in the next chapter (Timperley et al., 2007). At the school level, the PI and the ILT's efforts to connect professional learning opportunities to school wide improvement are essential to the development of coherence (Stosich et al., 2018). This includes, collaborating with staff regarding an improvement strategy, helping develop efficacy beliefs with teachers, and communicating the importance of PD opportunities to build instructional strategies (Stosich et al., 2018). Coherence is also established when leadership understand that capacity can be developed regardless of where schools and teachers are currently (Cobb et al., 2018). Lastly, from an organizational perspective coherence is also developed when senior leadership determines the best use for external expertise and the degree to which they are involved in the implementation process.

The three ethical considerations and challenges presented will be a focal point in which potential solutions will be assessed to determine appropriateness. While organizations that engage in change face multiple ethical dilemmas, the presented ethic of justice, ethic of care, and coherence are the most potent to consider as DVSD engages in the change implementation process.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

To address the complexities of the presented problem of practice, balanced with organizational realities presented at DVSD three possible solutions will be presented. To appease desires for DVSD to remedy the lack of implementation of professional learning initiatives across their organization the following solutions will be explored: a train the trainer model of professional learning, the delivery of district wide PD workshops, and autonomous site-based

plans for PD implementation. Each of these solutions will be examined to see how they may function at DVSD and will also be evaluated against the same scoring criteria to determine the plausibility of actualization.

Evaluation Process

Each of the proposed solutions were evaluated in four categories each comprising of three criteria, where each individual criterion was scored on a scale from one to four. The categories, criteria, and scoring indicators are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Evaluation Process Overview

Category	Criteria	Scoring
Resources Required (Cost)	1. Time 2. Human 3. Fiscal	1 (High) ----- 4 (Low)
Potential to Address Gaps	1. Structural 2. Instructional 3. Voice and Perspective	1 (Low) ----- 4 (High)
Potential to Address Ethical Considerations	1. Justice 2. Care 3. Coherence	1 (Low) ----- 4 (High)
Potential to Address Guiding Questions	1. Guiding Question 1 2. Guiding Question 2 3. Guiding Question 3	1 (Low) ----- 4 (High)

Note. The guiding questions are as follows: (1) How might my influence as an external consultant impact the implementation process and the adoption of professional learning initiatives across the school district? (2) What might be the implications for members of DVSD if only some of the schools adopt and continue to apply knowledge learned from the professional learning workshops? (3) To what extent will the legacy of the professional learning be upheld once my time at DVSD is complete?

The scoring for each of the criterion was placed into a visual bar graph and is included in the summary of each proposed solution. The points from each category were calculated to determine the average score per category for each of the three proposed solutions. The average

scores for each proposed solution were also compiled into a comparative bar graph which will be analyzed to determine the best possible solution for addressing the problem of practice. The degree to which each proposed solution addresses the categories and criteria presented will be explained in the following section.

Proposed Solution 1: Train the Trainer

The train the trainer solution follows the notion that by delivering professional learning to the APs and members of the ILT, they themselves can disseminate the necessary information to their staff back at each individual school site. This solution follows a more traditional view of professional learning that many teachers are comfortable with (Butler et al., 2004). The nuanced difference with this is that rather than teachers receiving the professional learning, it will be the early adopting instructional leaders of the school.

By engaging a select few to become early adopters, the change leader can build capacity and generate a richer understanding about the problem that DVSD is facing, and the necessary shifts required for improvement (Fullan, 2011). The responsibility of site-based implementation then shifts to the ILT. The train the trainer model proposes that all participating school ILTs would attend monthly professional learning workshops hosted by the external expert. Through this method it is the hope of senior leadership that teachers will be more receptive to the professional learning initiatives since the message is delivered locally from their own leadership team (Knight 2018; 2022). The proposed solution was evaluated using the process outlined in Table 1, and the results are represented in Figure 5.

When looking at the time, human, and financial cost of the train the trainer solution, the category overall does not score very high. Although the cost of incorporating occasional PD days run by an external is more cost effective than other models of professional learning, the human

resources would be costly. This is especially true should each school engage in full implementation within their own school sites, using allocated PD time already built into their weekly schedule (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2019). Since dedicated time would be allocated for professional learning sessions, the message would be delivered to local change agents who then would turn around and deliver the message to their staff. Thus, the sacrifice of resources would come from gathering teachers together to work on the implementation at their own school (Hamilton et al, 2022).

Figure 5

Evaluating Solution 1



Note. A larger version of this graph is available in Appendix C.

While being more cost effective, there is no guarantee the impact of these sessions on teacher professional learning, and the implementation of instructional practices which is main reason for the lower scores on whether this solution will address gaps. Yielding the implementation to the school building does offer to provide more opportunities for voice and perspective to be considered, however there is no guarantee of instructional improvement. The structural gap would also remain as all schools are receiving the same PD, which enforces the desires of the macro and meso level of instructional improvement and reform.

When looking at the potential to address ethical considerations, this proposed solution scores well for addressing the ethic of care, ethic of justice, and the pursuit of coherence. While not perfect, this solution ensures that all schools would be at the same place in their learning at the same time, which aligns with the senior leadership's desire for coherence. The dilemma faced in this solution hinges on the implementation of the learning. Due to schools having their own control over school wide implementation, there is a potential to lose some coherence should implementation not go according to plan. Although leaders do have their desired autonomy, there is no relationship of collegial trust being built between myself as expert and their teachers which may compromise the perceived integrity of my message (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In looking at the ethical considerations this solution addresses, there is a clear understanding of whether this solution will address the guiding questions presented.

My influence as an external consultant exists when delivering content to the ILT teams during the PD sessions which not only compromises school wide adoption of initiatives but also the legacy of the instructional practices when my time at DVSD is complete (Aldridge & McLure, 2023). Overall, it is possible this proposed solution could work to disseminate the necessary pedagogical knowledge desired from the meso level but may be compromised at the implementation level.

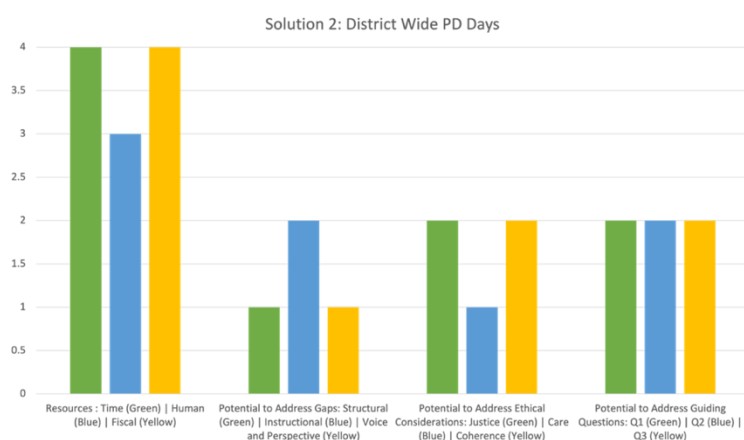
Proposed Solution 2: District Wide PD Days

This proposed solution of district wide professional learning is the most desirable to some members of the senior leadership team as it seeks to have the professional learning sessions broadcasted virtually each quarter for all teachers to watch from their own classrooms. The content and purpose of these quarterly sessions would relate directly to the implementation of instructional practices in the classroom, which align with the desires of the macro and meso

levels of the organization. When implemented appropriately virtual PD has the potential to increase the pedagogical knowledge of teachers and could lead to a greater scaling of overall professional learning at DVSD (Lara-Alecio et al., 2021). By casting an overall vision for professional learning at DVSD, both the meso level leadership and I would have a focal point to build towards and would result in future conversations with school principals as they construct their own conceptual map to successful implementation (Northouse, 2019; Shamir et. al, 1993). The proposed solution was evaluated using the process outlined in Table 1, and the results are represented in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Evaluating Solution 2



Note. A larger version of this graph is available in Appendix C.

This proposed solution requires the least expenditure of resources, to address the presented problem of practice. By being the most cost-effective solution, since presentations will be virtual on scheduled PD days, this is also an exceptionally feasible and efficient way to disseminate key information to all teachers. The use of time and human resources would depend on the extent to which each teacher implements their learning in their own practice, and the

responsibilities for the external consultant would be minimal to none other than the delivery of content.

This solution does not guarantee anything beyond a surface level understanding of professional learning initiatives and in fact could prove to be detrimental to the reduction of instructional gaps and for the success of the implementation effort (Hamilton et al., 2022). This solution also maintains the status quo regarding the structural/organizational gaps, as well as the lack of voice and perspective currently present at DVSD. This model would ensure that the PD would be delivered in a manner that is acceptable to the macro and meso levels of the organization without any input from other members of the organization.

The delivery of information in this manner will also assist in establishing a common language which is desirable to both senior leaders to establish a foundational level of coherence across the school district (Wallace, 2009). Due to the lack of consideration for the ethic of care, there is potential for teachers to not feel valued in this approach to PD; and coupled with the fact that this proposed solution also has the least degree of accountability for teachers, implementation efforts may be compromised. The ethic of justice is moderately upheld in the sense that all school are receiving the same message regarding instructional PD, and it would then turn to the principal of the school to maintain autonomy of implementation as they oversee implementation of said initiatives in their schools (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2022).

This solution fails to comprehensively address the guiding questions related to the problem of practice. Being present for only district wide PD minimizes my ability as an outside consultant to influence the implementation process and the overall adoption of instructional practices. Also, there is a greater potential that not all sites would engage in the implementation process, which not only impacts immediate implementation opportunities but also the legacy of

this change once my role at DVSD is complete (Dedering et al., 2015). Overall, this solution works to disseminate information to the micro level of DVSD but may not result in any adoption of instructional practices in the long term.

Proposed Solution 3: Autonomous Site Based Plan

This proposed solution requires the school principal in partnership with the external consultant to determine what support is required at their school to fulfill the proposed implementation goals set by district senior leadership. Once a discovery process is completed, the outside expert would then work locally with the school staff to ensure the professional learning initiatives are understood and implemented with fidelity (Hattie et al., 2021). The meso level leadership at DVSD would also support each school as they embarked on their site-based implementation process.

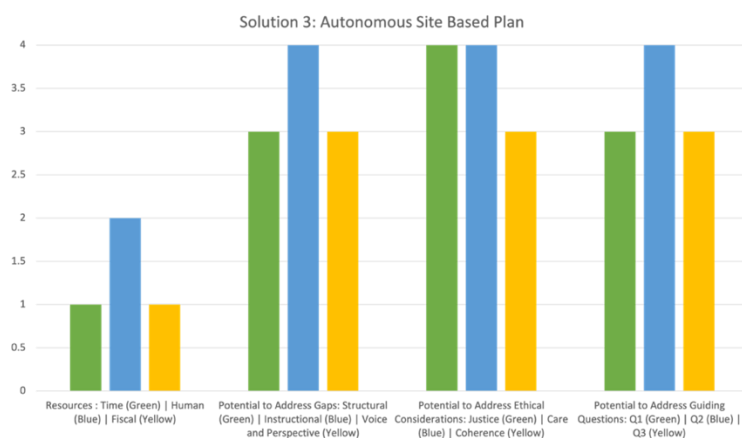
For this solution to be successful trust, collaboration, and open dialogue are required from the principal, the teaching staff, and district leadership (Snyder, 2013). The conversations and feedback that stem the open dialogue would be used by the consultant to determine what the next course of action would be to continue with successful implementation (Azorin et al., 2020). The proposed solution was evaluated using the process outlined in Table 1, and the results are represented in Figure 7.

When analyzing the presented data, it is clear this solution would require the most resources to ensure success which may not be desirable to the senior leadership team, especially considering Desert View School District has over 20 schools. Having an external consultant work in partnership with each school will require a lot of time, and fiscal resources which may appear to be unrealistic and not feasible, making this solution challenging for some members of DVSD to accept (Dedering et al., 2015; Odendaal, 2018; Phillips & Hamann, 2021).

Although requiring the most resources to ensure success, this solution would satisfy the anxieties surrounding accountability and actual implementation specifically when addressing the gaps that currently exist within the organization. Having a more hands on approach as an external consultant means I can ensure there is a greater opportunity for teachers voices to be heard, and to ensure their perspectives are known at the district level which in turn addresses some of the structural gaps that currently exist (Burns et al., 2018). There is also a greater opportunity to ensure instructional gaps are addressed as implementation efforts are observed in a more immediate manner. Having a closer relationship with teachers in schools will allow for a greater depth of professional learning, and thus increases opportunities for a greater impact on instructional practices (Lotan et al., 2019).

Figure 7

Evaluating Solution 3



Note. A larger version of this graph is available in Appendix C.

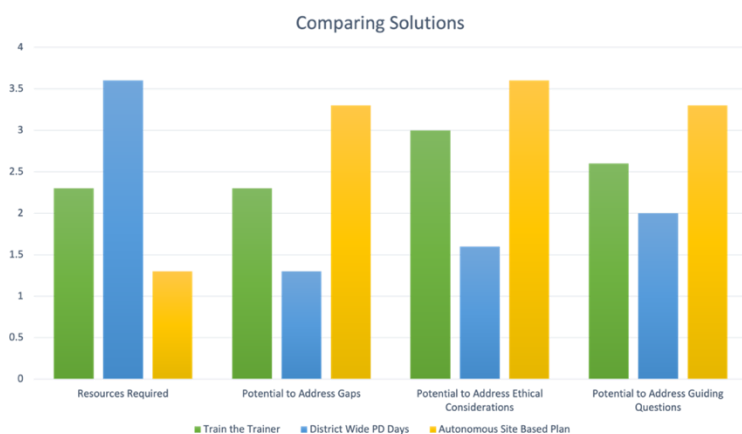
This proposed solution also allows for a great potential to address ethical considerations within DVSD, more specifically the ethic of justice and the ethic of care. By providing opportunities for schools to engage in autonomous site-based plans, each local ILT will have the opportunity to address implementation while considering the impact on their staff (Honig &

Rainey, 2012). Encouraging schools to remain autonomous in their implementation while adhering to desired goals set by the senior leadership teams allows for a greater recognition of both the ethic of justice and the ethic of care. When considering coherence, this solution still requires school sites to trend their implementation towards district goals and the use of the external consultant at each site will promote accountability and fidelity to the implementation process (Lotan et al., 2019; Timperley, 2007).

This proposed solution also has great potential to address the guiding questions presented. The reality of time and resources allocated to this solution will create difficulties for all schools within the organization to engage implementation at the same time, and it is possible that there will need to be multiple implementation cycles within DVSD (Anderson, 2020). Despite this fact, the inclusion of an external consultant working directly with schools has the potential to encourage a more sustainable approach to implementation across the district and more importantly a greater potential for the legacy of implementation to sustain beyond my involvement. Ultimately this solution would allow for the greatest potential for high impact instructional practices to be implemented in the classroom while honoring the desires of principals to maintain autonomy over the professional learning decisions happening at their school (Rafferty et al., 2013).

Selected Solution: Autonomous Site-Based Plan

When looking at each of the proposed solutions and evaluating them according to the same criteria, solution 3, the autonomous site-based plan has the greatest potential to address organizational gaps, ethical considerations, and the presented guiding questions. Figure 8 presents the averaged categorical data for each proposed solution and compares how each solution scored against the categories, and each other.

Figure 8*Comparing Proposed Solutions*

Note. A larger version of this graph is available in Appendix C.

Despite being the most financially costly, the autonomous site-based plan solution is the recommended solution for the most impactful change implementation process. The meta-analysis conducted by Timperley et al. (2007) determined that external consultants, when used effectively and efficiently, can positively influence the implementation of professional learning initiatives. More specifically external consultants have the most success when they: provide tools for teachers to use, incorporate the most up to date research, challenge beliefs and existing practices, ensure fidelity to the intended program, keep on task to the intended outcomes, and support the leadership teams (Fullan, 2006; Garet et al., 2001; Kang et al. 2013; Timperley et. al, 2007).

When considering best approaches to leading DVSD through the implementation process, this solution is the most appropriate to leverage my expertise with the autonomous desires of principals across the school district. While it is plausible to assume that if the goal of DVSD was simply to disseminate information then the other two solutions would be more appropriate. Yet, the importance of successful implementation is important to all levels of DVSD as an organization, to the extent that more funding has been allocated for the professional development

of staff to better align with desired instructional practices (Desert View Organizational Documents, 2023).

For successful implementation, it will be paramount to consider how to gather more feelings of empowerment, engagement, and adoption of implementation from the individual school leaders. This will require lateral capacity building to ensure there is coherence established across the district (Fullan, 2006; Hargreaves, 2003). Establishing a process where the external consultant can engage other members so there is a degree of peer-to-peer learning occurring will encourage a greater number of principals and teachers to accept the new initiatives and allow for a more seamless implementation process at each individual school site (Knight 2018; 2022). It is important to create an environment where the perspectives of all members are welcomed in the provision of ongoing feedback to uphold the ethics of care and justice and to maintain equity of ideas regardless of organizational role (Berges Puyo, 2022; Simola et al., 2010). The success of the proposed solution hinges on the development of a robust and rigorous change implementation plan, which developed and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Summary

The focus of this chapter was to present the leadership approaches, the framework, and ethical considerations at DVSD regarding the change implementation process. Incorporating a blend of IL and TL approaches through a modified version of the change path model will promote the greatest likelihood of change adoption within the organization. In looking at possible solutions to address the problem of practice, it was determined that the recommended solution is the autonomous site-based plan which encourages the greatest amount of teacher influence in their own professional learning. This solution will also balance the desires of the senior leadership to maintain coherence across the organization while ensuring all voices and

perspectives are considered in the implementation process. The next chapter will explore the implementation of the selected solution through the change framework presented earlier in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

As Desert View School District (DVSD) begins to embark through change implementation to meet the proposed solution presented in the previous chapter, it is imperative the process is deliberately and meticulously planned to ensure the greatest potential for successful change (Ham & Dekkers, 2019; Hamilton et al., 2023; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). This chapter outlines the details supporting the application of the flexible change path model at DVSD as the organization charts a course for implementation (Deszca et al., 2019). Overall, this chapter purposes to address the complexities of the implementation plan including an overview of the plan itself, the plan to communicate change, and the monitoring and evaluation process. Using the blended transformational (TL) and instructional leadership (TL) approaches, this final chapter intends to provide a plausible and contextually relevant approach to change implementation within DVSD. This chapter will also provide opportunities to consider next steps and future considerations for all members of the organization.

The Change Implementation Plan

The change implementation process will follow a flexible change path model framework which was described in the previous chapter and is also presented in Appendix B (Deszca et al., 2019). Due to the scope of change the process itself will unfold in two stages with 12 schools embarking in year one and 12 schools in year two. It is important for the organization to move through the change process at a reasonable pace to ensure long-term sustainability across schools (Stouten et al., 2018). Ensuring the load of implementation is manageable will also afford opportunities to develop relationships across organizational levels and ensure that the voices of all members of DVSD are considered throughout the process (Mirata & Bergamin, 2023). Establishing a process that engages half of the schools at a time allows for minor adjustments to

be made during the second implementation process and can use lessons learned from the first process to simultaneously adjust aspects of the process while maintaining fidelity to the model (Mirata & Bergamin, 2023). The following section outlines a summary of implementation at each step of the plan.

Implementation Summary

At the awakening stage, the district leadership and the external consultant will examine data points from the previous school years to determine the reasons for the lack of coherence, as well as examine negative sentiments of professional learning held by teachers. The external consultant and district leadership, upon having conversations with a variety of members of DVSD, will develop and disseminate a professional learning plan that seeks to develop the instructional practices of teachers that align with the visible learning research (Hattie 2009; 2023). At the mobilization stage a formal professional learning workshop will be hosted by the external consultant and will be attended by all schools who adopt into the implementation process. This workshop will serve to introduce the research and instructional strategies that are rooted in the research. This workshop will then be supplemented with the external consultant working with each school's ILT to create a school implementation plan, and map out professional learning workshop dates for the school year. There will also be an opportunity for the external consultant to further work with each school's instructional leadership team (ILT) to develop their fluency in the instructional practices (Hattie et al., 2021). The intention of this step is to allow the ILT to continue to support their teachers when the external consultant is not onsite.

In the acceleration stage, the external consultant will be working with the teaching staff of the schools during allocated meeting time as well determined professional learning days to

deliver content intended to support the implementation of instructional practices. The content and frequency of time the consultant spends with each school staff is dependent on the planning process in the mobilization stage. When the consultant is not onsite to support, it is the responsibility of each school's ILT to ensure there is continued implementation of practices in classrooms. The last stage of the framework is where much of the monitoring and evaluation will occur, thus this stage will not begin until the ILT at each school in partnership with the external consultant agrees that the teachers have developed a sense of fluency of practice and a foundation of knowledge regarding the new instructional practices. This does not mean that informal observations and monitoring will not take place during the acceleration stage but rather that more formalized evaluation and monitoring will take place at this stage. It is through this process that district leadership, ILT's, and the external consultant will determine whether the school should return to the acceleration stage or continue in the realization stage.

A long-term goal for change is the successful initiation and implementation of visible learning instructional practices that were learned through a sustainable and coherent professional learning process (Hattie 2009; 2013; 2023). This goal is coupled with the hope that the approaches learned by classroom teachers are continuing to be implemented once my role as an external consultant has concluded. These long-term goals align with the desires of the macro and meso levels of DVSD, while the coherence aspect of the long-term goal aligns with the desires of the micro level. To ensure these long-term goals are met a series of shorter-term success criteria, and medium range goals are included in the change implementation plan overview in Appendix D. The purpose of all goals mentioned in the change implementation plan overview is to continually develop the collective teacher and leader efficacy of the members of DVSD as they sharpen their instructional practices (Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2023; Hite & Donohoo, 2021;

Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2023). Table 2 includes specific examples of short-term goals at each stage of the change implementation process. These presented short term goals will serve as checkpoints through each stage of change implementation, and as such will also be considered in the monitoring and evaluation of school progress, which is highlighted later in this chapter.

Table 2

Short-Term Implementation Goals

Change Path Model Step	Short-Term Goals
Awakening Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To engage in a gap analysis to determine and confirm the reasons for a lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives in schools and classrooms. 2. To develop and disseminate a vision for future professional learning implementation at DVSD.
Mobilization Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure all school sites are aware of the need for change and expectations for change are discussed and communicated 2. To identify and leverage localized change agents or early adopters in schools (e.g., Instructional Leadership Team) to assist in the implementation process.
Acceleration Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop new and needed knowledge and understanding of visible learning, and its application in the classroom (Hattie 2009; 2023; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). 2. To build momentum, fluency, and early implementation of instructional practices in classrooms.
Realization Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To analyze the impact of the professional learning on the instructional practices in the classroom and determine the degree of fluency and implementation (Heidbreder, 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Kang et al., 2013; Timperley et al., 2007). 2. To examine the attitudes, thoughts, self-efficacy and collective efficacy of teachers in the process of implementing the instructional practices. 3. To use the data gleaned from monitoring and evaluation practices to either move back to acceleration or to plan for another implementation cycle with the remaining 50% of schools.

The systematic process of change aligned with the presented framework allows for cautious and calculated implementation considering the context of DVSD as an organization, and my role within the organization itself. This process will allow for the reconciliation of desires of school autonomy over change and a whole district shift towards better instructional practices. The ability to leverage my unique positionality is positive to influence change and build the collective efficacy of teachers within a school site as well as school sites across the district (DeWitt, 2022a).

Leadership Approaches and Personnel in the Change Process

As DVSD progresses through the stages of the implementation process both TL and IL approaches will be used depending on the context of implementation. The purpose of including both aspects of the selected leadership approaches will depend on the personnel with whom I am interacting with, as well as the specific stage of implementation process (Bellibaş et al., 2021, Shava et al., 2021). The presented overview, available in Appendix D, highlights the specific points in the implementation process where the leadership approaches will be applied. Realistically however, implementation processes are fluid and as such, opportunities for the application of unplanned leadership approaches may arise. As DVSD navigates through the implementation process it is also plausible that the personnel engaging in change may vary as well. Certain members of DVSD will be more involved in the implementation process and others will be involved on a more casual basis, thus it is crucial for schools to have strong ILTs.

During the first cycle of implementation, the process will welcome schools on a volunteer basis in hopes to leverage the principals who hold the early adopter disposition when it comes to change and progress (Koning et al., 2014). As each school leverages the expertise of their ILT, it is important that the principal ensures that all perspectives of staff are represented on the team.

This ensures the development of the school ILT is equitable and inclusive of all representations at each school site. An inclusive process of having all perspectives represented at the ILT will enhance the impact and commitment to the implementation process (Stoisch, 2023; Volante et al., 2023). It is also important to include each school's instructional coach as a representative on the team, as they are a direct link to the meso level of DVSD.

A key attribute of the ILT in each school is the notion that the team will need to make decisions regarding the implementation process. Often principals are reluctant to relinquish decision making power, which then reduces the function of the ILT to an advisory board resulting in lower efficacy (Stoisch, 2023). To offset this potential issue, the principal must communicate their intention to become a learning collaborator alongside the ILT and allow an open dialogue and democratic decision-making process. It is through this action the ILT shifts its purpose from one leader to more collaborative in nature (Stoisch, 2023; Weiner, 2014). It is then imperative that the roles and responsibilities as well as the purpose of the ILT is transparent, meaning all members of the ILT have a clear understanding of the importance of their role (Weiner, 2014).

If the school's ILT can operate as detailed above and is a true representation of the perspectives of the rest of the staff, they will have a lasting influence on the momentum of change within the organization (Mestry, 2019). Ensuring the perspectives of all members of DVSD are considered is fundamental to the change process, including when members are openly critical and reactive to steps in the change process. My leadership role in this case is to ensure there is a process where critiques are heard, understood, and considered as I navigate through implementation (Garet et al., 2001; Kang et al. 2013; Timperley et. al, 2007).

Reactions to Change

As the DVSD progresses through the change implementation process, soliciting feedback from all members involved is important for myself as an external consultant and change agent. It is also important to ensure lines of communication are established informally to allow all members of DVSD to have access to answers about the process, should they have queries. As outlined in Appendix D, there will be formal opportunities for feedback from all involved, yet establishing a trusting environment where all members know I am accessible will in turn be a catalyst for a smoother implementation process (Mirata & Bergamin, 2023). Ensuring my accessibility as a change agent is understood will allow change participants to have access to me when I am onsite, and through email or virtual conference calls when I am not physically present. To formalize this understanding, my availability will also be highlighted in the knowledge mobilization plan presented in the next section of this chapter.

The implementation framework that DVSD will follow provides formal opportunities for input, and feedback on the implementation process. The ability to move back and forth between the acceleration and realization stages within the framework will allow greater opportunity to gather input and solicit feedback in a formalized manner during the monitoring and evaluation processes. More specifically, opportunities for wide scale feedback will be provided to teachers and schools throughout their implementation journey in a variety of capacities: surveys, local data conversations, the implementation walkthrough tool, and the evaluation rubric will be shared with all staff right from the beginning of the process to ensure transparency (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2024; Kim & Lee, 2021). This ability to give and receive feedback enhances the knowledge mobilization process, with the intention that all members of DVSD can transfer knowledge in multidirectional manner. Lastly, each school's ILT will be accessible to

solicit feedback on the occasions when I am not present on the school site. The feedback and input process in the presented framework is essential to a smooth transition increasing the likelihood the changes made will be more permanent (Lewis, 2006).

Managing Transitions Through an Inquiry Process

As DVSD seeks to implement change, schools can choose whether they will pilot the change process in the first year with the remaining schools engaging in the change in year two. The reasoning for this is twofold, with the first reason being related to human resources. As the sole external consultant responsible for overseeing the change, it is important that I have enough time with the schools, ensuring there is a degree of accountability and fidelity to the process (Timperley et al., 2007). The second reason is related to the sustainability and coherence of the implementation process itself. Engaging in an implementation process with fewer schools will ensure the change process is more deliberate and calculated, which will in turn create a smoother implementation process for the second groups of schools (Radin Umar et al., 2018). The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process itself will help determine whether the schools at DVSD are ready to transition away from the dependency on me as an external consultant.

Due to the scope of organizational change, the implementation process will take place across each school simultaneously. Meaning, principals and ILTs will have control over the implementation process while my role as consultant will be to provide IL support. As I oversee the process, it is important to encourage the appreciative inquiry perspective (Steyn, 2009). In the case of this change implementation process, appreciative inquiry is the skill of asking relevant and positive questions to encourage members of DVSD to approach the implementation process through a lens of self-determination (Mather, 2023). Through the orientation of

appreciative inquiry members of DVSD will approach change from a positive lens, rather than a lens of uninformed criticism, which is how change has historically been viewed in this organization. Uninformed criticism can be surmised when a population engages in critique with little contextual understanding or appreciation of reality (Fenstermacher, 1978).

Ultimately, the purpose of incorporating the appreciative inquiry perspective is to develop efficacy at each school level and ensure that through the implementation process all members of the school feel confident in the success and sustainability of this change (Mather et al., 2024; Zhang & Wu, 2023). It is not necessarily the case that appreciative inquiry will be used as an evaluation framework, but rather a medium or perspective through which change agents and change participants can collaborate and interact.

Challenges to Change

Being an external expert working in an unfamiliar school district has its own set of challenges related to the implementation of change. The first challenge is based on stereotypes and perspectives some members of DVSD have of me as a guest in their school district. Trying to implement change when there is little history in a school district is often very difficult and often involvement from outside experts can be perceived as an intrusion (Phillips & Hamann, 2021). An existing challenge to effectuating change at DVSD will be to build a community of trust with all collaborators in all levels of the organization (Yue et al., 2019). A second challenge is that my position involves no evaluative influence, and as such I act as more of a support for DVSD and their members. Due to this circumstance, it is possible that some of the resistant members to change may not see me as a legitimate driver of change. As such, I will need to ensure that I am acting in the best interest of the senior leadership team to cast the vision for change as well as working with the principals of the schools as the support for their instructional

leadership (Campbell & Fullan, 2019). To equitably address the balance of leadership influence between these two levels of the organization, it will be essential that a trusting relationship is prevalent to all members of the organization. For this to occur, members of senior leadership will need to communicate to the schools the value in having myself present to facilitate change and highlight the common vision for change among all levels of the organization (Thornberg, 2014).

An overall challenge that pertains to the balancing act of my position is communication. When engaging in successful change implementation it is imperative that all members are privy to the same information and that the information is delivered clearly and in a timely fashion (Men & Yue, 2019). It will be a challenge to establish and maintain this level of communication across the macro, meso, and micro levels of DVSD. Adding this responsibility on top of coordinating other aspects of change implementation will require a lot of effort. As such, I will need to leverage key leaders and ILTs to support with the communication efforts as implementation progresses.

When looking at equity challenges of change implementation, the most significant challenge will be ensuring all collaborators feel their voices are considered. Historically at DVSD many teachers felt that professional learning was thrust upon them, as noted in staff satisfaction surveys (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2021). It is therefore of the utmost importance all perspectives are considered when approaching how implementation efforts will be handled at each school. This will add pressure to the mobilization stage of change as collecting information from all member voices will be important and equally challenging.

The change implementation process at DVSD is wide in scope, as the entire organization is hoping to shift the instructional practices of the teaching staff, and the coherence of professional learning. The success of the implementation effort hinges on the ability for the

change leader to communicate with members of DVSD through the entire process. This plan to communicate change will be expanded in the following section.

Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process

The efficacy in which an organization communicates influences the degree to which change implementation is generally accepted across an organization (Lewis, 2006). For successful change implementation at DVSD, it is important to consider organizational communication and the impact it has on the success of the professional learning initiatives. Communication is a key performance indicator of the success of a project and is quintessential for coordination and collaboration efforts, it also helps members of the organization self-organize toward to common goal (Sicotte & Delerue, 2021). When communication is transparent and consistent it also promotes an environment of trust and equity, which in turn will promote greater engagement with the change process (Grissom & Condon, 2021; Larsson & Larsson, 2020). This is especially true considering the breadth of change occurring in multiple schools at the same time. It is imperative members of all levels of DVSD feel comfortable enough to be transparent and clear regarding the implementation process so that communication can function in a dialogical manner through equitable communication practices.

Building Awareness

It is imperative that DVSD prepares for the change implementation process by building awareness for change. Frontloading organizational members with important information regarding the reasoning for change will allow for a process where all participants can have a degree of understanding towards the reason change may be necessary (Fater, 2013). Building awareness for change is a critical aspect of the awakening stage of the implementation process. It is in this stage where macro and meso level members will engage in a gap analysis using end of

year staff surveys from the previous year. The collection of data and evidence through the gap analysis process will promote an evidence-based rationale for change based conversations with school principals and other leaders of the micro level of the organization (Fater, 2013; Golden et al., 2017). The awakening stage also includes consultations and conversations with all principals regarding the proposed change implementation plan to solicit feedback and promote a dialogue around the desire for DVSD to improve instructional practices. This process of building awareness serves two main purposes, the first being the importance of developing strong working relationships between the meso and micro leaders (Honig et al., 2010). The second is to establish a school leader network where principals can engage in open and honest conversations regarding the change process (Honig et al., 2009). The school leader network will have formal opportunities to meet throughout implementation, but it is the hope that through the establishment of this network there will be organic opportunities for communication between leaders as well.

Communicating the Path of Change

Since implementation is occurring across organization levels, there are multiple decision-makers and influencers who will be leveraged to ensure two-way communication reaches all collaborators. It is also important to note that throughout the process there will be formal and informal channels of communication established for all members involved in the implementation process. Table 3 highlights the types of communication channels that will be leveraged to encourage communication throughout change.

At the meso level, the director (DIR), the assistant superintendent (ASUP), and myself will work to establish priority lines of communication and messaging which will be delivered to the principals of the schools participating in the change implementation process. This line of

communication will be an open two-way dialogue which will ensure that school principals are heard. At the micro level, the school principal and their ILT will assist in the communication with all the teachers. I will also be working directly with teachers and will have a dialogue open with the teachers as well. Having established lines of communication is intended to ensure that all members of the organization have transparency and opportunities to have their perspectives heard as change occurs at DVSD (Li et al., 2021; Murray et al., 2020).

The formal lines of communication established with points of contact is to ensure the communication delivered to all schools is consistent with the desires of the meso level of organization to maintain coherence. This also allows for an expedited response time should certain members have feedback on the communication they received (Kim & Lee, 2021). The informal lines of communication will allow the meso level members to have a greater understanding of the realities of change implementation experienced by members of the micro level.

Table 3

Formal and Informal Communication Channels

Formal Channels	School ILT meetings with external consultant, scheduled principal network meetings, optional virtual teacher network meetings, quarterly surveys, professional learning workshops
Informal Channels	Email communication between teacher and instructional coach, conversations with external consultant, informal teacher conversations

Note. The success of both formal and informal communication channels is predicated on a supportive organizational environment that is open and transparent.

Knowledge Mobilization at DVSD

An integral aspect of successful implementation is the transfer of knowledge between change agents and the participants of change. Although DVSD encourages open communication

channels between all participants and change agents, this alone does not guarantee a transfer and mobilization of knowledge. Determining the degree to which knowledge is transferred throughout the implementation process will allow a greater understanding of the efficacy of the implementation process itself (Campbell et al., 2014).

Table 4

Knowledge Mobilization Across Implementation

Stage of Implementation	Knowledge Mobilization Process	Knowledge Mobilization Tactics, Methods, and Strategies
Awakening	Multidirectional (MD) → Linear (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gap analysis of previous year teacher survey to gather perspectives and influence change planning (MD) - Initial principal meeting to discuss implementation (MD) - Meso and external consultant to create and cast vision for change (L)
Mobilization	Linear (L) → Multidirectional (MD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional learning workshop for participating schools to intro change process (L) - Principal networking opportunity (MD) - Principal and district staff meeting to draft School Implementation Plan (MD) - ILT and external consultant charting professional learning sessions for individual schools (MD)
Acceleration	Linear (L) → Multidirectional (MD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External consultant delivered professional learning workshops (L) - Participants providing feedback on the success of implementation in classrooms (MD) - Monthly virtual networking events for teachers (MD) - Teachers and ILT teams collaborate to implement practices in classrooms (MD)
Realization	Multidirectional (MD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal and formal observations of classrooms to prioritize conversations regarding success of implementation (MD) - ILT staff meetings with teachers to gather feedback on implementation process (MD) - Quarterly staff surveys to gather feedback anonymously (MD)

Understanding that knowledge transfers differently than communication flows will provide a greater opportunity for organizations to move from intention to implement to actualization of implementation (Cusack & Bustamante, 2024; Hattie et al., 2021). As change implementation occurs there will be ebbs and flows of knowledge mobilization at DVSD. Table 4 provides examples of knowledge mobilization through the change implementation process, and Appendix E graphically represents the ebb and flow of knowledge mobilization. This is particularly true as the organization balances internal and external factors influencing the transfer of key knowledge to and from participants and change agents (Brown, 2012). While DVSD maintains open communication channels through the change process it should be noted that the knowledge mobilization process will waiver between linear and system models of mobilization (Best & Holmes, 2010).

Throughout the implementation process, multidirectional knowledge transfer seeks to allow for growth of knowledge between change participants as their individual efficacy grows. This individual efficacy, and new learning is then transferred among change participants during networking events and opportunities for collaboration. The multidirectional mobilization of knowledge positively influences the collective efficacy of all change participants within the organization (DeWitt, 2022a; Donohoo, 2017).

The Role of the Change Agent

Although knowledge mobilization and communication have different roles in implementation it is the responsibility of the change agent to use the knowledge learned as a litmus for communication throughout implementation. Knowledge learned from participant feedback, both formal and informal will allow the change agent to vary the timing and pacing of delivery, which favors capacity building of participants rather than speed of implementation

(Mosher et al., 2014). New learning and knowledge transfer is equally important for the change agent to ensure the success of implementation. Learning about the lived experiences of classroom practice influences how the change agent may approach delivery of professional learning and the support that coincides the implementation of new instructional practices in classrooms (Bowen & Martens, 2005). The change agent will also be responsible for using new knowledge learned to track progress and measure success. The new knowledge will be tracked through the informal classroom observations, and conversations with teachers as they engage in the implementation process. This will be combined with more formalized evaluation processes, outlined later in this chapter. Thus, the knowledge mobilization plan, and subsequent communication is directly linked to monitoring and evaluation processes.

Anticipating and Framing Potential Issues

Aside from survey responses and formal feedback, a simple indicator of potential issues would be the degree of progress made in schools regarding the implementation of instructional practices in classrooms. It would be indicative if the degree of fluency in the classroom is disconnected from the anticipated goals set by the ILT and myself during the school implementation plan meeting. The implementation plan itself (Appendix D) also accounts for potential challenges, at each stage of the process. While the plan may not encompass all potential issues, it is important to establish an understanding across all levels of DVSD that implementation will have its share of challenges. It is also imperative that I leverage my role as an external consultant to frame the challenges for all audiences as moments to engage in learning (Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016). This is especially impactful when the external consultant is involved in an extended collaboration period that sustains over the course of multiple engagements, rather than the traditionally subscribed singular professional learning engagement (Ermeling & Yarbo,

2016). Encouraging an organizational environment that prioritizes multidirectional knowledge transfer and communication will promote a collaborative organizational effort towards successful implementation, regardless of challenges that may arise (Cannata & Nguyen, 2020).

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation play a pivotal role in the success of a change implementation plan. Though different, each aspect of analysis work together to assess the impact of change. At DVSD, the change implementation process will leverage the Plan-Do-Study-Act Model (PDSA) to monitor and evaluate progress (Laverentz & Kumm, 2017). This section will explore the differences and applications of both monitoring and evaluation as they pertain to successful implementation at DVSD and will also outline the monitoring tools available at DVSD to support the PDSA as a method of assessment within the school district.

The Purposes of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation serve as critical steps in education to establish what Park et al. (2013) refer to as continuous improvement in education. It is understood that DVSD is in a period of establishing continuous improvement through the systematic implementation of professional learning initiatives and instructional practices among the district teaching staff. Therefore, it is imperative that the assessment of the change occurs both during the process and at a separate moment at the ‘end’ of the process to determine impact (Andreoli & Klar, 2021; Davidson, 2005). Monitoring and evaluation are the processes in which assessment will occur, yet each have their own unique attributes and functions.

Monitoring as a means of assessment occurs at the same time as the implementation process and its purpose is to develop an understanding of the process in real time with the goal of adjusting the process of implementation as necessary, the monitoring process also encourages

accountability to the change process (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). By engaging in data gathering, process monitoring, and the contextualization of change implementation in real time evaluators can make the best possible determination of how to adjust the course of implementation to ensure a higher potential for success (Rossi et al., 2004). Monitoring can be considered a process of information gathering by members who are engaging in the process of implementation themselves, so long as the information gathered is informally measured against established markers of success (Turner & Zolin, 2012). The key attribute of monitoring as an assessment process is the ability to engage multiple members in an ongoing manner with the purpose of providing context for a more formal evaluation process (Rossi et al., 2004).

Evaluation as means of assessment serves the purpose of looking back at the process of implementation to make an overall determination of the level of success according to predetermined goals and criteria. High quality evaluation must include formal, systematic, and thorough procedures that assess the impact of implementation. These evaluations must also be rigorous in their design, data collection, and adherence to proper protocols of information analysis (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007; Walton & Russell, 2004). In most cases evaluation of program or change implementation will be conducted by external members who are not directly involved in the change process. This ensures a fidelity to the process and a degree of objectivity when analyzing the results of the assessment compared to pre-established criteria for success (Abd Al-Khadhim, 2023). Added to this process is the notion that the results of the evaluation are communicated to all members with a degree of objectivity as well (Neumann et al., 2018).

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model for Monitoring Change

The PDSA model was selected as the evaluation tool for DVSD due to its practicality, simplicity, and adaptability (Laverentz & Kumm, 2017). As an outside consultant, the clarity of

this model will require less preparation for all members when compared to other complex evaluation models. It is designed to support all ranges of improvement efforts, from relatively simplistic school changes to whole scale district implementation, and thus can be applied in many different contexts quite easily (Moen & Norman, 2010).

The adaptability of this model will encourage district members to use the PDSA model to evaluate whole scale implementation while school principals evaluate implementation in their schools simultaneously. The PDSA model serves the purposes of evaluating success in a multitude of manners, can ensure internal consistency by engaging members in monitoring and evaluation, and can be used to test small scale changes as well as full scale initiatives with clear measurable aims (Vermont Agency of Education, 2019). The intersection of the PDSA model with the lens of appreciative inquiry will promote conversations that are rooted in the improvement of practices, intended to grow the instructional capacity of teachers in their classrooms. Keeping growth and improvement at the focal point of conversations that focus on positivity first will also allow a more open reception to these monitoring and evaluative events (Mather, 2023).

The PDSA model has many other benefits apart from the previously highlighted attributes. Langley et al. (2009) outline the adaptability and applicability to real world situations, and the fact that this model has been used extensively in real world industries as a strength of the PDSA model. Having a model that is not just theoretical in nature also provides opportunities for it to be modified to fit the uniqueness of implementation at DVSD. Allowing for testing of interventions and observing the effects during implementation can assist in mapping and understanding the impact and purpose of quality implementation at a systems level (Bohnenkamp et al., 2023; Speroff & O'Connor, 2004). This model can then allow for a

systematic series of evaluations where the purpose is gaining essential knowledge and understanding what the next steps are in continuous quality improvement (Sagun & Prudente, 2023). This links to the presented change framework as the implementation process can move back and forth between the acceleration and realization stages depending on knowledge gleaned from the monitoring and evaluation process. Through the establishment of monitoring and evaluation for continuous improvement, there will be a greater degree of coherence in professional learning approaches, and implementation of instructional practices in classrooms across the district (Park et al., 2023).

The PDSA Model and Implementation at DVSD

Due to the iterative nature of the PDSA model, there will be opportunities to engage in frequent stages of monitoring and evaluation throughout the district wide implementation process. At each individual school, monitoring will occur consistently throughout the acceleration stage of the implementation plan (Sagun & Prudente, 2023). The school improvement plan (SIP) will be used as the criteria that will be monitored during the do and study steps of the PDSA model. A template of the improvement plan can be found in Appendix F. In this case the PDSA model will be used internally by school leadership teams to monitor the progress their school is making regarding the implementation of professional learning initiatives with the purpose of adjusting the implementation efforts (Abd Al-Khadhim, 2023). The district leadership team will conduct a district wide evaluation of implementation using the PDSA model at the midpoint and end of the school year. The purposes of these PDSA evaluations are to examine the impact of implementation from a district wide lens (Bohnenkamp et al., 2023).

Methods and Tools to Collect Data During Implementation

As DVSD progresses through change implementation there are methods and tools that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress. The methods and tools will include a mix of quantitative and qualitative data designed to be assessed against each school improvement plan. Appendix G expands on the change implementation plan highlighted in the previous section to include examples of monitoring and evaluation across each stage of implementation.

During the awakening stage of implementation, the district leadership team will use the previous school year's staff satisfaction survey and end of year academic reflection to examine quantitative data for a gap analysis (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2022). Qualitatively the district leadership team will meet with each school principal individually to discuss the attitudes and perspectives of the school staff concerning the view of professional learning at their site. Lastly, district leadership will examine staffing mobility lists for a possibility of staffing trends related to professional learning initiatives. Collectively these will be used to establish a vision for change and communicate the change across DVSD.

When DVSD moves to the mobilization stage, the focus of monitoring and evaluation will shift more locally to each participating school site. The first method of evaluation will both during and occur after the initial professional learning session with the principals and their instructional leadership teams. During the session district leadership will engage in conversations with participants, and after the session the external consultant will send a post-workshop feedback survey to all participants (Johnson, 2016). Conversations will also occur between district leadership, leadership teams, principals, and the external consultant when each school creates their SIP. The SIP will also be used as the success criteria in which future evaluations

will measure. Each school's SIP will be used as quantitative data points to collect later in the implementation process.

The acceleration stage of the implementation model will be the longest stage of implementation where school sites will have more autonomy and responsibility in the monitoring and evaluative process. During this stage as schools are building momentum, fluency, and capacity the ILT team and the school leadership team will be engaging in ongoing monitoring of progress. The purposes of the PDSA monitoring process in this case will be to determine what aspects of implementation are resonating and which may require refinement and adjustments. As established in the mobilization stage, the SIP will be used as criteria for successful implementation (Van Den Bergh et al., 2014). Also, during this stage, there will be opportunities for ILT teams from participating schools to network and discuss their progress. These conversations will be attended by the external expert as well as district leadership and will be considered as qualitative data collection.

Realization, the final stage of the CPM, is where the data collection and evaluation take the most formalized role. During this stage the district leadership team will engage in two PDSA evaluation cycles occurring at the end of the semester and again at the end of the school year. At this time formal observations will occur to see instructional practices being used in classrooms. This qualitative walkthrough will be supported by DVSD's implementation walkthrough tool and implementation evaluation rubric to allow for simultaneous quantitative data collection (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2022). During these two occurrences the teaching staff of the evaluated schools will also be sent surveys to anonymously gather their perspectives and feedback on the implementation process. The survey content will be based upon content from the school improvement plan (Appendix F). Once surveys and walkthroughs are completed, the

district leadership and the external expert will meet with each school's ILT team individually to analyze the data and decide next steps for the SIP. The cumulative data will be analyzed to assess the overall status of implementation. At this point the leadership team will decide to amend, continue or adapt the implementation process for the remaining schools at DVSD.

Bridging Data and Praxis

Ensuring there are opportunities for both meso and micro level leaders and teachers to examine collected data and engage in knowledge mobilization is the focus of bridging data and praxis in the monitoring and evaluation process. It is imperative that all participants have access to the data to ensure equity of access for all. Reducing barriers and increasing accessibility to the data reinforces the importance of teachers' perspectives throughout implementation. Having teachers actively working with the data also shifts their perception of implementation from traditionally held perspectives of professional development towards active professional learning (Stewart, 2014). The overarching goal of bridging data and praxis is two-fold, firstly it is to encourage a process where teachers are free to interact with the evaluative data with the intention of reflecting upon and refining their praxis (Sellings & Brandenburg, 2018). The second priority is to use data conversations to transfer knowledge back to the change agent for the refinement of the implementation process. Through this all participants in the change process, regardless of title or position, are encouraged to collaborate and engage in a reflective process to improve or refine their impact on successful implementation (O'Brien et al., 2022). The redesigned change implementation framework (Appendix F) allows DVSD to move between realization and acceleration, promoting opportunities for deliberate refinement and reflection of practices based upon monitoring, evaluation, and mobilized knowledge.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

Continuous improvement and sustainability of the learned visible learning instructional practices is the goal for change implementation at DVSD (Hattie 2009; 2023). It is important to consider future considerations and next steps once the initial change implementation process has finished. These next steps and future considerations will influence the extent to which DVSD maintains fidelity to the initial goals of change. As well, future considerations and next steps will allow DVSD as an organization to shift to meet the needs of new organizational contexts and changing organizational environments (Strunk et al., 2016). The following section outlines potential next steps for DVSD as well as future considerations for the sustainability of change.

Once implementation is realized with the initial adopting schools, and district leadership has engaged in the evaluation process the next step would be for the implementation cycle to restart with the remaining schools. It is important to note that this second implementation effort would be refined based on knowledge gained from the evaluation process to promote greater efficacy and efficiency. The second implementation cycle would need to ensure there is an open process for all perspectives to be welcomed, to establish a better understanding of how the second iteration will better serve the needs of teachers in the classrooms (Davis & Beidas, 2021). Examining in detail what aspects of implementation worked well, what did not work, and what aspects need refinement through the perspectives of all stakeholders will promote a greater contextual understanding of change (Davis & Beidas, 2021; DeWitt, 2022b; Hamilton et al., 2023). The purposes of delving into this contextual inquiry extends beyond the evaluative methods used at the end of the implementation cycle, towards planning for the next cycle of change in a more deliberate manner (Hamilton et al., 2023).

Moving forward it is critical to examine the role of the external consultant in the change process keeping in mind that the original application of the consultant was always intended to be temporary. Continuing to leverage the external consultant to assist with the implementation effort should also be balanced with the intention to reduce the dependency as implementation efforts continue (Odendaal, 2018; Sugai & Horner, 2006). The balance of reducing external consultant involvement is predicated that district leadership ensures that internal capacity is developed and realized, and that collegial trust is fostered between meso level leaders and school principals, ILTs, and other local change agents (Cusack & Bustamante, 2024; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; 2015b).

Developing capacity locally will promote a greater potential for the sustainability of the desired changes established previously. The degree to which the external consultant is used could be limited to opportunities to support the district leadership by providing professional learning to new staff joining the district or could be used to support school leaders as they continue to establish the instructional practices in their classrooms. DVSD could also continue to build instructional capacity by continuing to engage in visible learning professional development to sustain or nurture existing practices in the district as well (Hattie 2009; 2023).

As DVSD continues to improve as an organization, there is potential more implementation processes will be undertaken. It would be of benefit to the organization to spend time evaluating the impact of this implementation process to determine whether it is a viable framework for future change. The impact of change frameworks can be circumstantial depending on a variety of contexts and as such it is valuable to determine whether a different framework would be better suited for future contexts (Reed et al., 2021). It is also possible that future organizational contexts may render aspects of the current change framework moot, thus as

DVSD seeks to make changes in the future there is an opportunity to de-implement aspects of the current framework that will no longer be significant (Grimshaw & Patey, 2023). It is important for the organization to maintain an evaluative mindset when looking at the existing change framework, because as the organization grows so do the contextual influences on change. Regardless of the success of the current framework, it is important to consider a future framework that balances the desires of change advocates with a process that is supported by change participants (Sklar, 2018). In certain cases, the current framework as presented will suffice, and in others it will be beneficial to explore a different option better suited to the organization context as it exists in the future.

Chapter 3 Summary

The focus of this chapter was to highlight fundamental aspects of the implementation, and evaluation processes as they pertain to change and improvements at DVSD. The change implementation plan intends to leverage a flexible change path model to facilitate the implementation of visible learning instructional practices in classrooms across the organization. This process will require school leadership teams, district leadership, and the external consultant to build, execute, and evaluate a plan of action that intends to improve instructional practices. Through this process, it will be imperative to leverage the voices and perspectives of all members of the district to ensure there is an equitable approach to implementation. This will be managed with specific communication and knowledge mobilization plans that will ebb and flow throughout the change process. It is important for change agents to understand the difference between knowledge transfer, and communication as each is invaluable to successful implementation and ensuring the process is as equitable as possible.

Aspects of knowledge transfer will also influence the evaluation of implementation success. As the last stage of the implementation process, evaluation will measure the extent to which implementation was successful. This will be conducted in a multi-directional approach that balances district leader observational data with teacher survey and conversation data. The monitoring and evaluation process is intended to refine the implementation effort in hopes to be as successful as possible. Finally, this chapter ends by recommending next steps and future considerations for DVSD as they continue to improve their organizations instructional practices.

Narrative Epilogue

Introducing or bringing about change is not an easy feat, especially when working as an outside consultant or expert who is ‘foreign’ to a school district. The process of examining my leadership role and responsibility as an external consultant in an organization provided unique understandings of my capacity in leading change. It was through an organizational analysis that I was able to fully comprehend the importance of my role as an external consultant who would function as a leadership support mechanism to assist DVSD in a wide-scale initiative to improve instructional practices in classrooms. It was very important for me to dive deep into understanding the organizational structure of DVSD to also understand how to best effectuate the change implementation process as an individual who is hired to facilitate change and lead teachers instructionally through new learning. Adapting the change implementation framework to fit the needs of DVSD is an important step to ensuring implementation is more deliberate and simultaneously flexible experience. Implementation for the sake of implementation has not served the organization thus far so it is important to understand that flexibility, communication, and knowledge mobilization operates best when it is shared, multidirectional, and welcoming of the perspectives of every member of DVSD. To ensure implementation will be flexible in its

approach, a series of monitoring and evaluation instances are set up to not only understand the extent to which change is progressing, but to also understand the influence of implementation on the change participants. Overall, this Dissertation-in-Practice seeks to welcome and include the perspectives of all change participants in hopes that the changes made are sustainable and coherent across the organization itself.

The Dissertation-in-Practice experience for me was also incredibly significant to my growth as a scholar-practitioner. I am reminded of a quote from my colleague and friend Professor John Hattie (2013) when he reminds teachers and leaders to ‘know thy impact’. This process has afforded me multiple opportunities to reflect upon the impact I am having every day when I work with teachers and leaders across North America and internationally. I have grown tremendously in understanding the perceptions of my role in research and praxis and have been able to better understand how to lead as an external consultant. I have also been able to grasp a greater context of external consultants and their ability to properly position themselves for the greatest potential of successful implementation. The process of researching, reading, planning, and writing this dissertation was long, arduous, and without a doubt the best decision I have made in my professional career. I am thankful I had the opportunity to explore, reflect, and grow.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143218764176>

Appendix A

DVSD Organizational Structure

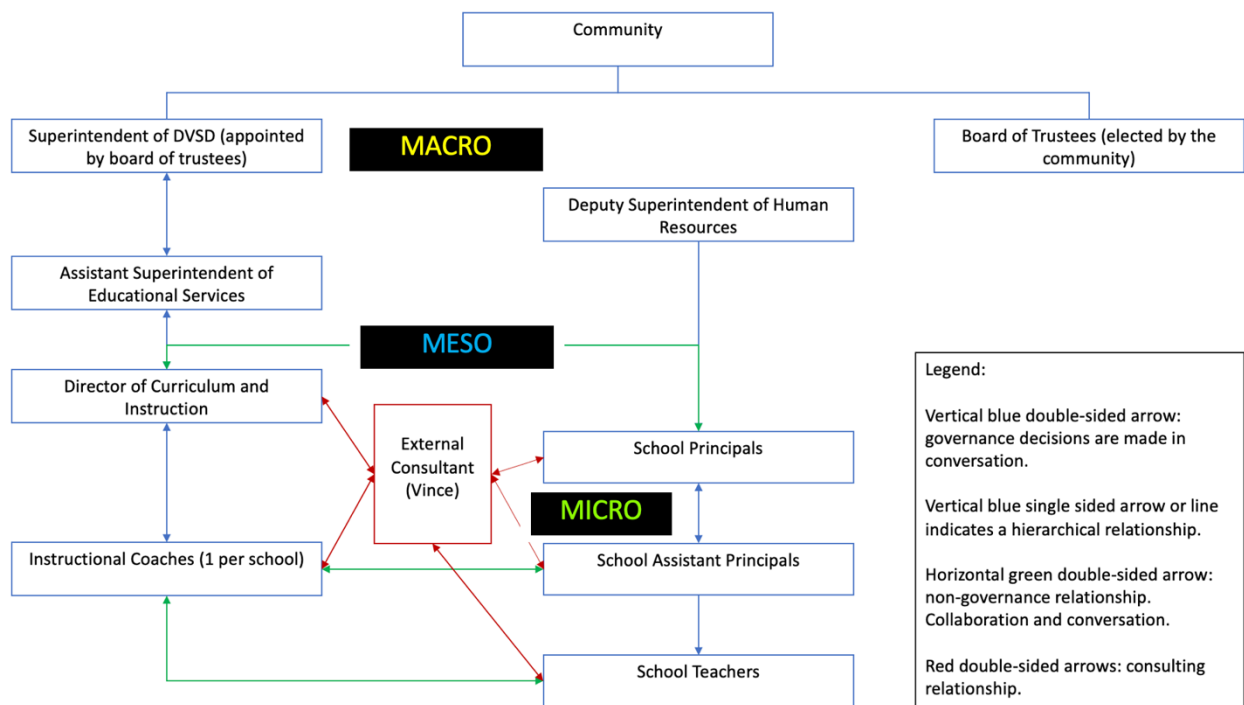


Figure A. Organizational structure of DVSD as well as my position within the organization. The incorporation of Macro, Meso and Micro is to illustrate the organizational levels that exist at DVSD.

Appendix B

The Flexible Change Path Model

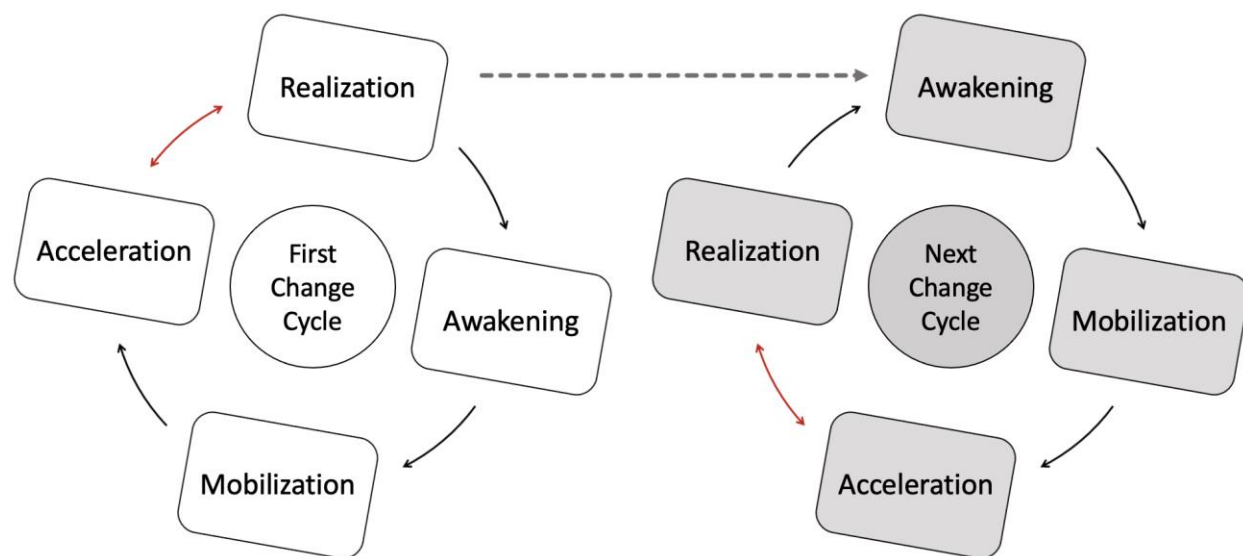


Figure B. The double-sided arrow between acceleration and realization has been added to the flexible change path model to promote the ability of organizations to return to implementation efforts should they not be ready for full scale realization. Adapted from Deszca, G. F., Ingols, C. A., & Cawsey, T. F. (2019). *Organizational change: An action-oriented toolkit* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications

Appendix C

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice (Figures)



Figure C1. Solution 1 evaluation.

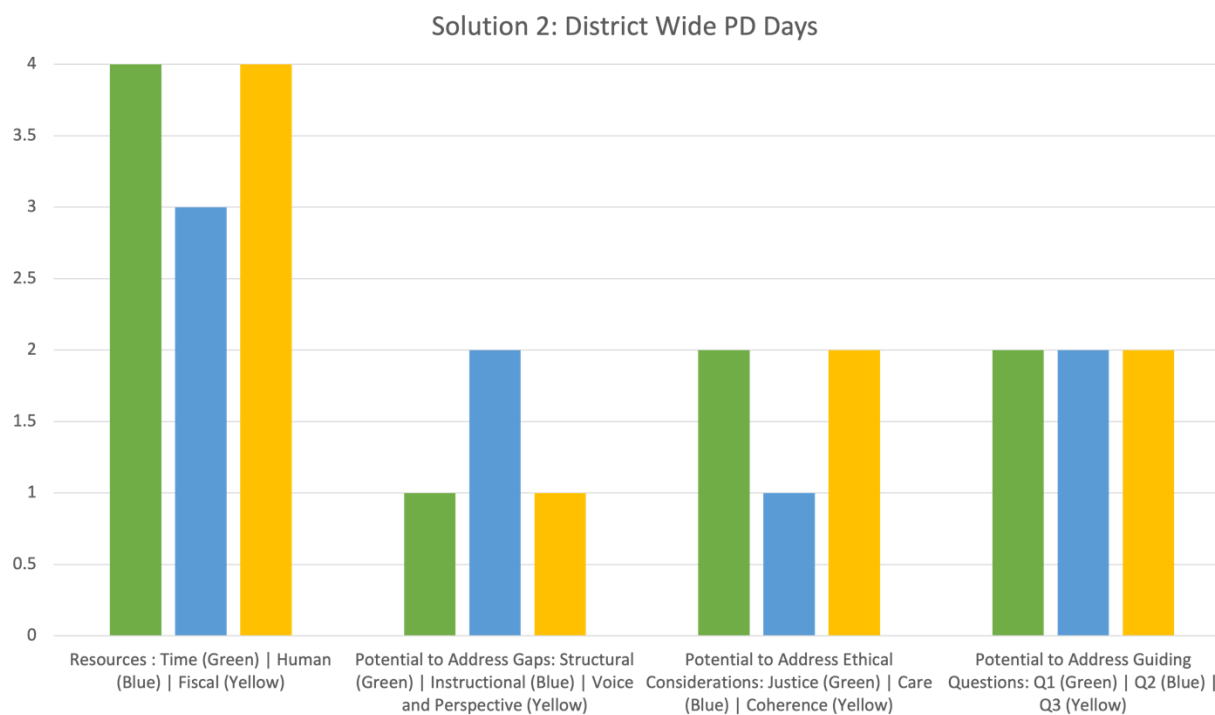


Figure C2. Solution 2 evaluation.

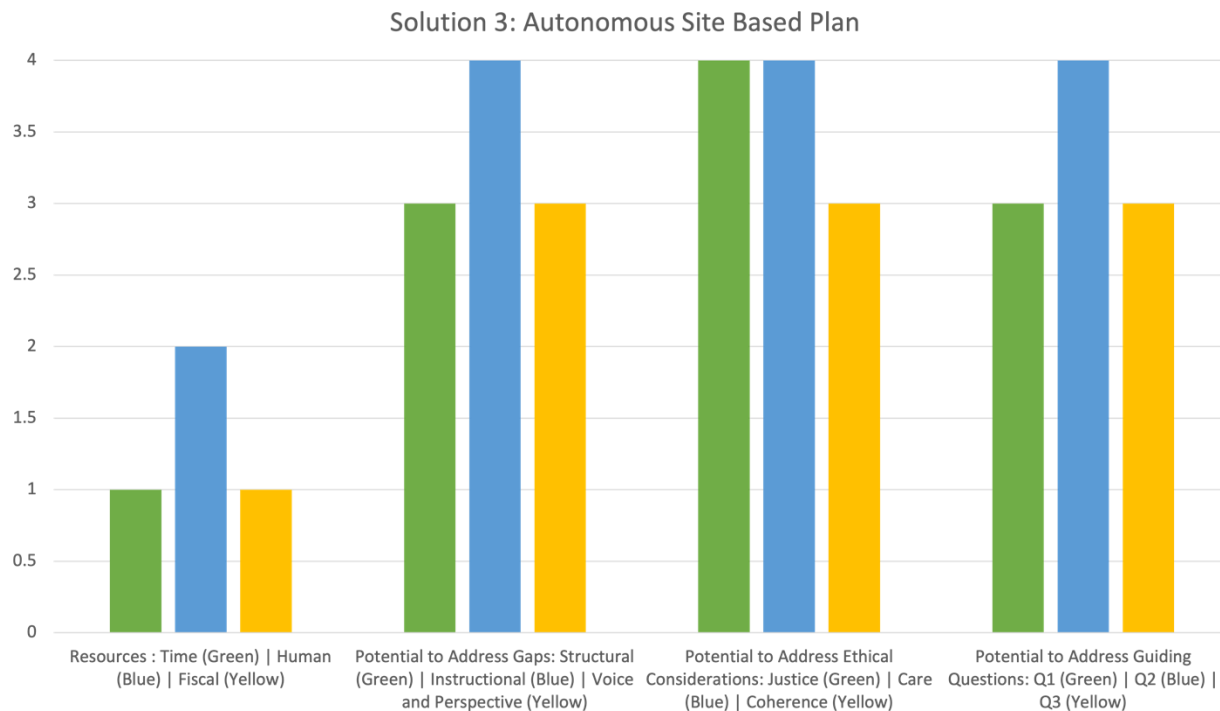


Figure C3. Solution 3 evaluation.

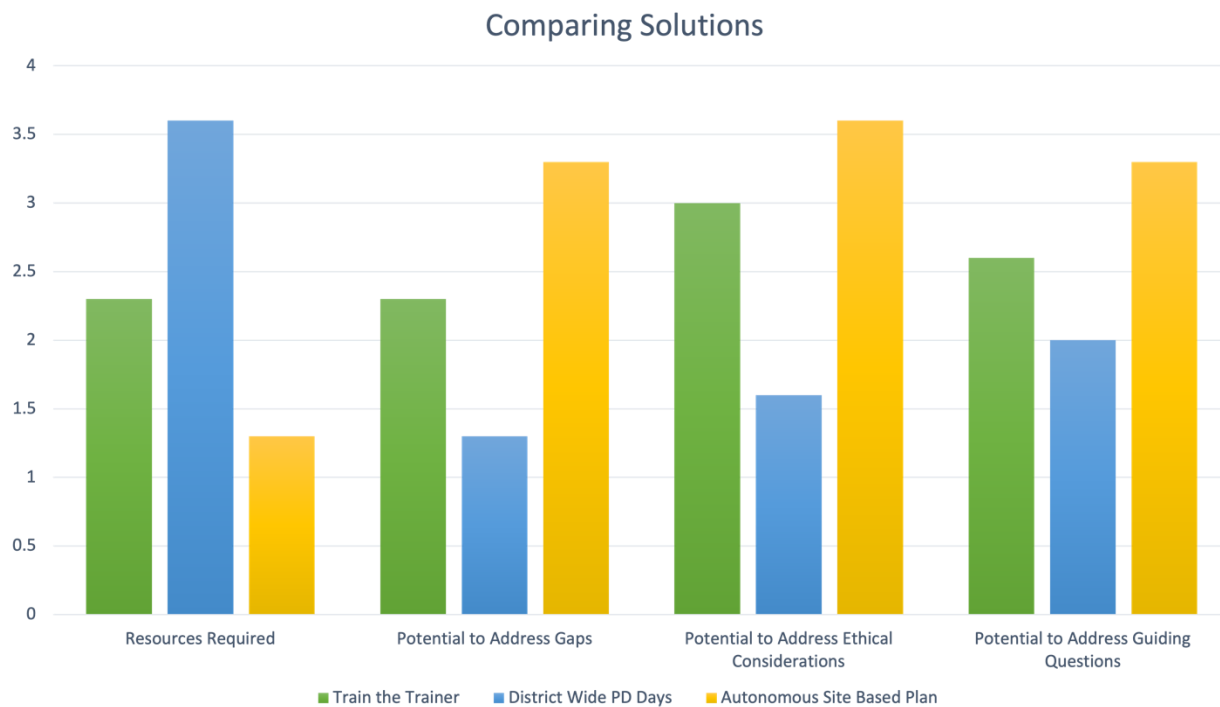


Figure C4. Comparing the three proposed solutions.

Appendix D

Change Implementation Plan Overview

<i>Change Path Model Step</i>	<i>Success Criteria and Short-Term Goals</i>	<i>Collaborators, Actions, and Resources</i>	<i>Leadership Approaches</i>	<i>Potential Challenges</i>
Awakening Stage	<p>1. To engage in a gap analysis to determine and confirm the reasons for a lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives in schools and classrooms.</p> <p>2. To develop and disseminate a vision for future professional learning implementation at DVSD (Deszca et al., 2020).</p>	<p>1a. External Expert (EE), Assistant Sup (AS), and Director (DIR). - Analyze previous year staff surveys to gain perspective.</p> <p>2. EE, AS, DIR, and Principals (Ps) - Meet with principals to introduce external expert, discuss implementation, and select the schools for year 1 implementation.</p> <p>3. EE, DIR, AS - Create and communication vision for change across DVSD. (Northouse, 2022; Timperley et al., 2007).</p> <p>Resources Required: - Half day workshop to meet with all principals and discuss implementation.</p>	<p>Transformational leadership approach will be used here as through the conversations with school and district leaders will form the perspective and approach to communicate a vision for change implementation across the school district.</p>	<p>1. School leaders questioning the fact that DVSD is bringing in an external consultant.</p> <p>2. Effectively building relationships with school leaders that is founded on trust, transparency, and openness.</p> <p>3. Potential for the communicated vision to not be universally accepted or welcomed by some teachers and members of DVSD.</p>

		<p>- Two days onsite (and subsequent virtual meetings) to work with meso and macro levels and create a vision for change.</p>		
<p>Mobilization Stage</p>	<p>1. To ensure all school sites are aware of the need for change and expectations for change are discussed and communicated</p> <p>2. To identify and leverage localized change agents or early adopters in schools (Instructional Leadership Team) to assist in the implementation process.</p>	<p>1a. Professional learning workshop with all participating schools with the focus on the goals of implementation from a district level. Opportunity for principal networking.</p> <p>1b. District leadership will engage in meetings with schools to chart individual implementation plan (SIP) for school staff.</p> <p>2a. External expert to meet with individual school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to set a professional learning course of action based on SIP (DeWitt, 2022; Donohoo, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2007).</p> <p>2b. Individual professional learning session for school site ILTs.</p>	<p>Transformational leadership approach will be used when focusing on the goals of implementation and communicating the need for an SIP.</p> <p>Instructional leadership approach will be used when working with ILTs to set the professional learning course and build SIPs.</p> <p>Instructional leadership approach will be used when delivering professional learning sessions for ILTs.</p>	<p>1. Ensuring there is enough time allocated for the initial professional learning session.</p> <p>2. Ensuring there is a balance of information and opportunities for Ps to collaborate during the session.</p> <p>3. Ensuring SIPs are constructed with instructional practices as the main focal point. Schools at DVSD often have a multitude of initiatives that are all equally important but can detract from instructional improvement.</p>

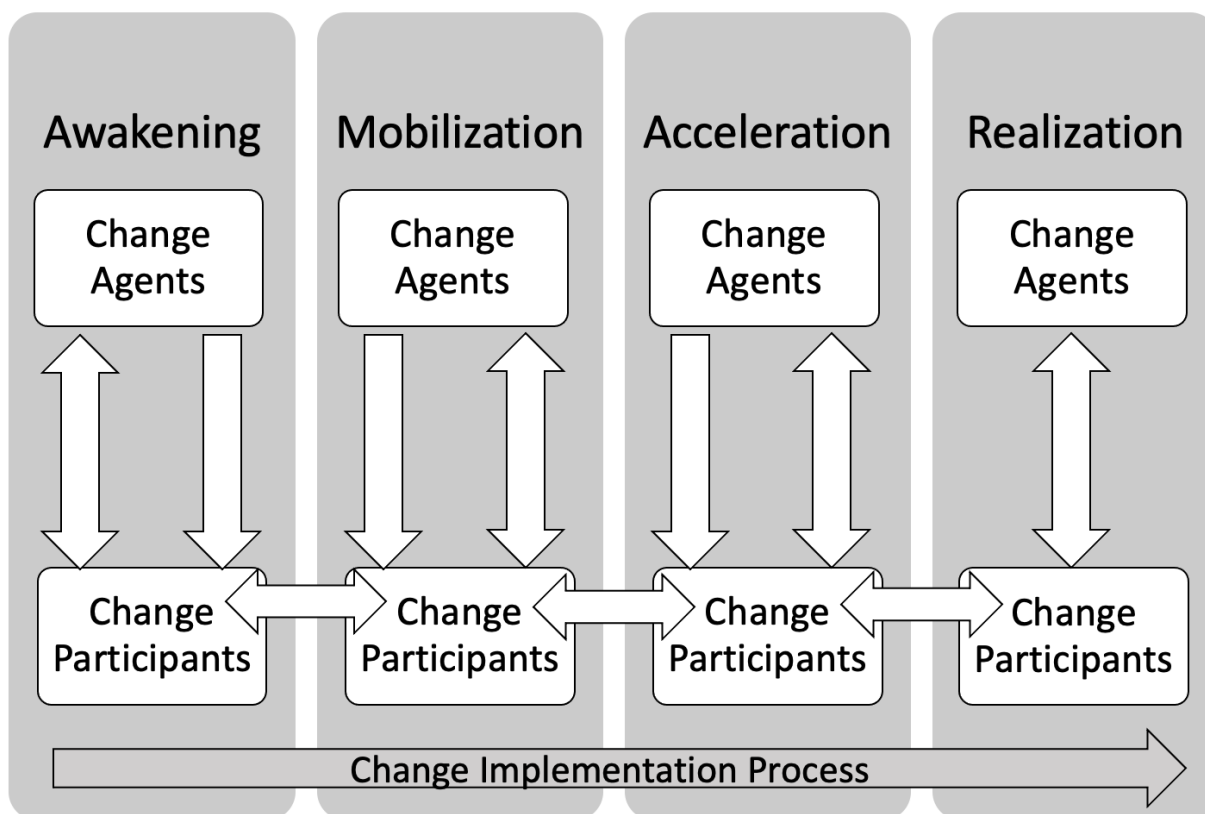
		<p>Resources Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One full day onsite to host alignment PD workshop for all participating schools. - One full day for each participating school for EE to lead ILTs through professional learning session. 		
<p>Acceleration Stage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop new and needed knowledge and understanding of VL, and its application in the classroom (Hattie 2009; 2023; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). 2. To build momentum, fluency, and early implementation of instructional practices in classrooms. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A series of professional learning workshops (EE) will be delivered individually to each school as it aligns with their SIP. There will be virtual opportunities every month for staff from all schools to network and share ideas. 2. School ILTs will oversee and support the implementation of instructional practices in classrooms when the EE is not available. Ts, ILTs, and Ps are all able to communicate with EE throughout the process. <p>Resources Required:</p>	<p>Instructional leadership approach will be used when delivering professional learning sessions for Ts in schools.</p> <p>Transformational leadership approach will be used to support ILTs as they work at their school with their teachers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing an environment where teachers feel comfortable to share their learning, and their challenges throughout the learning and implementation process. 2. A potential for an implementation dip when ILTs work with their teachers. By not having in person access to the external consultant every day, there is a change some Ts may regress in their instructional practice.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EE and ILT team at each school will determine how many PD days each school will require to assist with implementation (ranging from 4 to 8 days per site). - Monthly virtual networking opportunities will require facilitation from district coaches. 		
DVSD will be able to move back and forth between Acceleration and Realization stages.				
Realization Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To analyze the impact of the professional learning on the instructional practices in the classroom and determine the degree of fluency and implementation (Heidbreder, 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Kang et al., 2013; Timperley et al., 2007). 2. To examine the sentiments, attitudes, and thoughts of teachers in the process of implementing the instructional practices. 3. To use the data gleaned from monitoring and evaluation practices to either move back to acceleration or to plan for another implementation cycle with the remaining 50% of schools. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Periodic observations (“cabinet walks”) to see instructional practices being used in classrooms (Using DVSD’s “Implementation Walkthrough Tool” and “Implementation Evaluation Rubric”) (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2022). 2. Quarterly surveys will be sent to Ts to gather anonymous feedback. ILTs and EE will meet with staff during existing staff meetings to assess the progress of implementation, and attitudes towards implementation. 	<p>Instructional leadership approach used to maintain an evaluative mindset when observing the instructional practices in the classroom.</p> <p>Transformational leadership approach used when determining next steps for implementation with senior leadership and school ILTs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing a shared language of observation, and implementation as senior leadership, ILTs, and the external consultant evaluate progress. 2. Despite having formal feedback opportunities there is still a chance some Ts may feel they were not heard or considered in the process. 3. Formal observations may reveal that the implementation process

		<p>Resources Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Half day per school for walkthroughs, EE, and district leadership.- 2 days per quarter for district leadership, ILTs and EE to meet to discuss teacher feedback data.		<p>was not as successful as intended which may impact the long-term sustainability of change.</p>
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Appendix E

Representation of the Knowledge Mobilization Plan



Note. The white arrows indicate the directional flow of knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is mostly multidirectional, but it should be noted there are certain cases in which knowledge transfer is linear. Knowledge transfer seeks to grow and permeate across change participants as they themselves grow their individual capacity. Through opportunities to collaborate and network, the knowledge is then transferred among individuals to further influence the scope of knowledge mobilization across the organization as it moves through the change implementation process.

Appendix F

Desert View School District's SPIA Template

Aspects of the following template have been manipulated to maintain anonymity.

Desert View School District School Plan for Improvement and Achievement Template

Purpose and Description:

Briefly describe the purpose of this plan (Select from Schoolwide Program, Comprehensive Support and Improvement, Targeted Support and Improvement, or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement)
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Briefly describe the school's plan for effectively meeting the ESSA requirements in alignment with the Local Control and Accountability Plan and other federal, state, and local programs.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

Plan Summary:

The Story: Describe the students and community and how the school serves them.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
SPIA Highlights: Identify and briefly summarize the key features of this year's SPIA.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

Needs Assessment:

Based on a review of performance on the state indicators and local performance indicators included in the State/School Dashboard, progress toward SPIA goals, local self-assessment tools, stakeholder input, or other information, what progress is the school proudest of, and how does the school plan to maintain or build upon that success? This may include identifying any specific examples of how past increases or improvements in services for student groups, including low-income students, English learners, homeless youth, and foster youth have led to improved performance for these students.
Greatest Progress
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Greatest Needs
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Performance Gaps

[Insert Text Here]

Supplemental Services: If not previously addressed identify the two or three most significant ways that the school will use federal categorical funds to provide supplemental services for eligible, at-risk students, including low-income students, English learners, homeless youth, foster youth, and others, as identified.

[Insert Text Here]

Educational Partner Involvement:

How, when, and with whom did the school consult as part of the planning process for this SPSA/Annual Review and Update?

[Insert Text Here]

Resource Inequalities:

Briefly identify and describe any resource inequities identified as a result of the required needs assessment, as applicable.

[Insert Text Here]

Goals, Strategies, & Proposed Expenditures

* Complete a copy of the following table(s) for each of the school's goals. Duplicate the table as needed. *

District Goal Alignment:

[Insert Text Here]

Goal 1:

[Insert Text Here]

Identified Need:

[Insert Text Here]

Annual Measurable Outcomes:

Metric/Indicator	Baseline/Actual Outcome	Expected Outcome
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>	<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>	<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

* Complete a copy of the strategy/activity table for each of the school's strategies/activities. Duplicate the table, including Proposed Expenditures, as needed. *

Strategy/Activity: Students Served by this Strategy/Activity
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Detailed Account of Strategy/Activity:
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

Proposed Expenditures for this Strategy/Activity: List the amount(s) and funding source(s) for the proposed expenditures. Specify the funding source(s) using one or more of the following: LCFF, Federal (if Federal identify the Title and Part, as applicable), Other State, and/or Local.	
Amount(s)	Source(s)
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>	<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

Annual Review

* Respond to the following prompts relative to this goal. If the school is in the first year of implementing the goal, an analysis is not required, and this section may be deleted. *

Analysis: Describe the overall implementation of the strategies/activities and the overall effectiveness of the strategies/activities to achieve the articulated goal.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Briefly describe any major differences between the intended implementation and/or the budgeted expenditures to implement the strategies/activities to meet the articulated goal.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>
Describe any changes that will be made to this goal, the annual outcomes, metrics, or strategies/activities to achieve this goal as a result of this analysis. Identify where those changes can be found in the SPIA.
<i>[Insert Text Here]</i>

Appendix G

Monitoring and Evaluation in the Change Implementation Plan Overview

<i>Change Path Model Step</i>	<i>Success Criteria and Short-Term Goals</i>	<i>Collaborators, Actions, and Resources</i>	<i>Leadership Approaches</i>	<i>Potential Challenges</i>
Awakening Stage	<p>1. To engage in a gap analysis to determine and confirm the reasons for a lack of coherence and implementation of professional learning initiatives in schools and classrooms.</p> <p>2. To develop and disseminate a vision for future professional learning implementation at DVSD (Deszca et al., 2020).</p>	<p>1a. External Expert (EE), Assistant Sup (AS), and Director (DIR). - Analyze previous year staff surveys to gain perspective.</p> <p>2. EE, AS, DIR, and Principals (Ps) - Meet with principals to introduce external expert, discuss implementation, and select the schools for year 1 implementation.</p> <p>3. EE, DIR, AS - Create and communicate vision for change across DVSD. (Northouse, 2022; Timperley et al., 2007).</p> <p>Resources Required: - Half day workshop to meet with all principals and discuss implementation.</p>	<p>Transformational leadership approach will be used here as through the conversations with school and district leaders will form the perspective and approach to communicate a vision for change implementation across the school district.</p>	<p>1. School leaders questioning the fact that DVSD is bringing in an external consultant.</p> <p>2. Effectively building relationships with school leaders that is founded on trust, transparency, and openness.</p> <p>3. Potential for the communicated vision to not be universally accepted or welcomed by some teachers and members of DVSD.</p>

		- Two days onsite (and subsequent virtual meetings) to work with meso and macro levels and create a vision for change.		
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation During Awakening</i>	Gap analysis to determine predisposed ideas regarding implementation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff Satisfaction Survey 2. End of Year Academic Reflection 3. Staff Mobility Lists 4. Individual meetings with school principals. 			
Mobilization Stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure all school sites are aware of the need for change and expectations for change are discussed and communicated 2. To identify and leverage localized change agents or early adopters in schools (Instructional Leadership Team) to assist in the implementation process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Professional learning workshop with all participating schools with the focus on the goals of implementation from a district level. Opportunity for principal networking. 1b. District leadership will engage in meetings with schools to chart individual implementation plan (SIP) for school staff. 2a. External expert to meet with individual school Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to set a professional learning course 	Transformational leadership approach will be used when focusing on the goals of implementation and communicating the need for an SIP. Instructional leadership approach will be used when working with ILTs to set the professional learning course and build SIPs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring there is enough time allocated for the initial professional learning session. 2. Ensuring there is a balance of information and opportunities for Ps to collaborate during the session. 3. Ensuring SIPs are constructed with instructional practices as the main focal point. Schools at DVSD often have a multitude of

		<p>of action based on SIP (DeWitt, 2022; Donohoo, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2007).</p> <p>2b. Individual professional learning session for school site ILTs.</p> <p>Resources Required: - One full day onsite to host alignment PD workshop for all participating schools. - One full day for each participating school for EE to lead ILTs through professional learning session.</p>	<p>Instructional leadership approach will be used when delivering professional learning sessions for ILTs.</p>	<p>initiatives that are all equally important but can detract from instructional improvement.</p>
<p><i>Monitoring and Evaluation During Mobilization</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District leadership conversations with stakeholders. 2. Post workshop feedback sent by EE. 3. Planning conversations between Ps and district leadership during planning meeting. 4. SIP for each participating school. 			
<p>Acceleration Stage</p>	<p>1. To develop new and needed knowledge and understanding of VL, and its application in the classroom (Hattie 2009; 2023; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016).</p>	<p>1. A series of professional learning workshops (EE) will be delivered individually to each school as it aligns with their SIP. There will be virtual</p>	<p>Instructional leadership approach will be used when delivering professional</p>	<p>1. Establishing an environment where teachers feel comfortable to share their learning, and their challenges throughout</p>

	<p>2. To build momentum, fluency, and early implementation of instructional practices in classrooms.</p>	<p>opportunities every month for staff from all schools to network and share ideas.</p> <p>2. School ILTs will oversee and support the implementation of instructional practices in classrooms when the EE is not available. Ts, ILTs, and Ps are all able to communicate with EE throughout the process.</p> <p>Resources Required: - EE and ILT team at each school will determine how many PD days each school will require to assist with implementation (ranging from 4 to 8 days per site). - Monthly virtual networking opportunities will require facilitation from district coaches.</p>	<p>learning sessions for Ts in schools.</p> <p>Transformational leadership approach will be used to support ILTs as they work at their school with their teachers.</p>	<p>the learning and implementation process.</p> <p>2. A potential for an implementation dip when ILTs work with their teachers. By not having in person access to the external consultant every day, there is a change some Ts may regress in their instructional practice.</p>
<p><i>Monitoring and Evaluation During Acceleration</i></p>	<p>1. School leadership team (ILT) to engage in local processes of monitoring and evaluation using the PDSA model.</p> <p>2. ILT teams from all schools to meet quarterly to network and discuss about progress (EE and district leadership to lead the meeting).</p>			
<p>DVSD will be able to move back and forth between Acceleration and Realization stages.</p>				

<p>Realization Stage</p>	<p>1. To analyze the impact of the professional learning on the instructional practices in the classroom and determine the degree of fluency and implementation (Heidbreder, 2017; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Kang et al., 2013; Timperley et al., 2007).</p> <p>2. To examine the sentiments, attitudes, and thoughts of teachers in the process of implementing the instructional practices.</p> <p>3. To use the data gleaned from monitoring and evaluation practices to either move back to acceleration or to plan for another implementation cycle with the remaining 50% of schools.</p>	<p>1. Periodic observations (“cabinet walks”) to see instructional practices being used in classrooms (Using DVSD’s “Implementation Walkthrough Tool” and “Implementation Evaluation Rubric”) (DVSD Organizational Documents, 2022).</p> <p>2. Quarterly surveys will be sent to Ts to gather anonymous feedback. ILTs and EE will meet with staff during existing staff meetings to assess the progress of implementation, and attitudes towards implementation.</p> <p>Resources Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Half day per school for walkthroughs, EE, and district leadership. - 2 days per quarter for district leadership, ILTs and EE to meet to discuss teacher feedback data. 	<p>Instructional leadership approach used to maintain an evaluative mindset when observing the instructional practices in the classroom.</p> <p>Transformational leadership approach used when determining next steps for implementation with senior leadership and school ILTs.</p>	<p>1. Establishing a shared language of observation, and implementation as senior leadership, ILTs, and the external consultant evaluate progress.</p> <p>2. Despite having formal feedback opportunities there is still a chance some Ts may feel they were not heard or considered in the process.</p> <p>3. Formal observations may reveal that the implementation process was not as successful as intended which may impact the long-term sustainability of change.</p>
<p><i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i></p>	<p>1. Scheduled district leadership PDSA cycles (end of semester and end of school year). This includes cabinet walks/formal observations.</p> <p>2. Implementation Walkthrough Tool and Implementation Evaluation Rubric</p>			

<i>During Realization</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Teaching staff implementation feedback survey4. School ILT meeting with district leadership and EE to evaluate school implementation5. District leadership and EE to analyze year end data to evaluate district implementation successes and failures.
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