

# SIX LESSONS FROM DISTRICTS MAKING WELL-BEING A PRIORITY

## HOW AND WHY ARE SCHOOL DISTRICTS ABLE TO SHIFT THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITY CULTURE TO ONE THAT PRIORITIZES WELL-BEING?

We looked to school districts in Western Canada to answer this question through case study research. Common factors helped make and sustain change. These lessons can support others striving towards this goal.

### WHAT WE HEARD:

#### WELL-BEING IS WHOLISTIC AND REQUIRES BALANCE

Well-being encompasses many domains and can change based on the context. It requires individual and collective nurturing to find balance and promote resiliency and flourishing.



#### STARTING POINTS

- Create opportunities for school- and district-level conversation about well-being and how it is understood and valued
- Use frameworks such as comprehensive school health that acknowledge and describe multiple well-being domains to raise awareness and create shared understanding

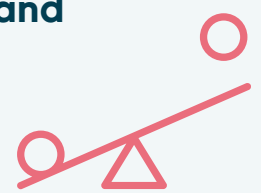


#### STARTING POINTS

- Recognize well-being related challenges as an opportunity for growth. Identifying changes needed to better support student and staff well-being can be an important first step to gathering buy-in and shifting practice
- Take a strengths-based approach to change - build on what is working, with a focus to make it better

#### STUDENT & STAFF WELL-BEING ARE INTERCONNECTED

Well-being needs for students and staff should be considered together. Student and staff well-being is interconnected and can influence both learning and teaching experiences and outcomes.



#### STARTING POINTS

- Make your personal vision and value for well-being a part of your leadership approach, whatever your role. This helps normalize and encourage it as a district and school priority
- Communicate an intention to support collective and individual well-being, with transparency that change is a process, not an end-result, and support to sustain this work (e.g., staffing & funds)

#### ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUSTAINS IMPLEMENTATION



Support from system leaders influences personal and professional prioritization of well-being. Leaders with a vision for well-being can foster sustainable changes, with resources to support action.



#### STARTING POINTS

- Create space for social connection in the workday. This practice helps to build trust, promotes collaboration and group cohesion, and enhances well-being
- Provide opportunities for meaningful engagement within well-being initiatives, including input in early development and adaptation

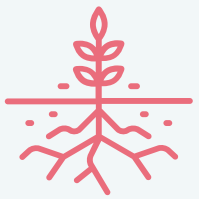
#### CONNECTION & VOICE AS A CATALYST TO WELL-BEING



Informal and formal opportunities create space for connectedness and open dialogue. Engaging staff and students in well-being decision-making promotes positive learning and working environments.

#### BUILDING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT WELL-BEING

Well-being related professional development and learning, partners, new staff onboarding and refresher training all contribute to build capacity and promote alignment across schools.



#### STARTING POINTS

- Identify allies within and outside your organization who bring knowledge, expertise and resources to support your well-being goals (e.g., professional development, evaluation)
- Integrate a well-being focus into existing professional development, with mechanisms to help share and apply knowledge more broadly, and promote shared leadership



#### STARTING POINTS

- Create and use a common language for well-being to help frame strategic district priorities plans, with clear goals and opportunities for input from school community members
- Convening a group with diverse perspectives helps to guide district implementation. Build a strong foundation, and be prepared to adapt plans where needed

#### CHARTING AND RE-CHARTING A COURSE



Transparent strategic planning gives direction and alignment to well-being priorities across the district. An ongoing planning process promotes collective well-being goals that respond to shifting contexts and emerging needs.