

**Living Sky School Division No. 202**

# **STRATEGIC REPORT 2021-2022**

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## Preface:

This report is based on our one-year interim plan, and some of the outcomes proved difficult to attain within such a short period. Many worthwhile actions were taken toward goal attainment, but fully realizing the outcomes we had set out to achieve will take more time. The pandemic brought unique challenges to the school division to which we had to respond. We, like the Ministry of Education, will continue to focus on many of the same outcomes in 2022-23.



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# About Us

Living Sky School Division is located on Treaty 6 territory, traditional land of the Nêhiyawak, Nakawe, Dene, Lakota, Nakota, Dakota and Métis people.

The Division is governed by a ten-member, locally elected Board of Education. The Division's strategic plan provides overall direction for everything the Division does and serves as an anchor to ensure that all the system's actions are aligned.

Our main office is in North Battleford. Our 28 schools are located in 15 communities as far north as Meadow Lake, south to Kerrobert, east to Hafford and west to Macklin. In addition to elementary, high and preK-12 schools, we also have two associate schools, three colony schools and a virtual school.

## Board Chair's Message

Living Sky School Division celebrates the learning opportunities that our students receive from pre-kindergarten to their final high school year. This excellence and innovation in programs and delivery is a tribute to the committed staff who work to ensure all students in our school division receive the best education possible.



The strategic plan is the Board's map for continuing our journey toward excellence. The priorities, goals and action items clearly articulate the Board's commitment to ensure we all support student achievement.

Success for each and every student is what matters. We want to ensure that our students develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their full potential. This report is our commitment to being honest and transparent with our stakeholders and to celebrating the many successes of our students and staff.

Ronna Pethick  
LSKYSD Board Chair

# Director's Message

As you will discover while reading this report, 2021-22 was a busy year.

To ensure the best service delivery possible both now and into the future, we initiated system-wide change, starting at Central Services.

There are many ways to structure an organization - each has its advantages and drawbacks. What is clear is that organizations that have a shared sense of purpose, encourage self-led individuals and teams and work as a whole achieve better results.

We are working to create an innovative, empowered, connected and accountable organization – one with a culture rooted in our shared values, structures designed to support coordination and collaboration, and processes that allow us to strengthen core services and innovate for the future.

The change we are undertaking is foundational; it's not cosmetic, and the transformation could be great both for students and staff. It will take significant time to complete the journey.

Although there is certainly literature to consult regarding how to implement organizational change, none of it provides a precise recipe that one simply has to follow from start to finish. We've discovered that change of this magnitude is not linear, and results can be unpredictable.

We have taken large steps forward, followed by a few steps back. We have started work that we have had to stop to try something else, and we have had to set aside assumptions to be open to new possibilities. This has not always been an easy journey, but it's certainly had its inspiring moments, and with the help of our Board and many, many committed colleagues, it will continue.

Thank you, everyone at LSKYSD, for being who you are. Thank you, families, for trusting us to work every day with your children. And thanks to all our communities for supporting our staff and schools.



Brenda Vickers  
Director of Education



## OUR MISSION

*Shaping Our Future Through Thoughtful Schools*

## OUR VISION

*Growth Without Limits, Learning For All*

## OUR VALUES

- **Genuine Relationships**  
*Mutual trust and respect!*
- **Belonging**  
*Everyone can play!*
- **Integrity**  
*Owning everything we do!*
- **Innovation**  
*What if we could?*
- **Well-being**  
*Bringing our best everyday!*

# Strategic Journey

Living Sky School Division is committed to continuous learning and growth. As an organization, it is imperative for the system to provide excellent service to students now, by managing the present circumstances, and in the future, by creating structures that allow us to innovate.

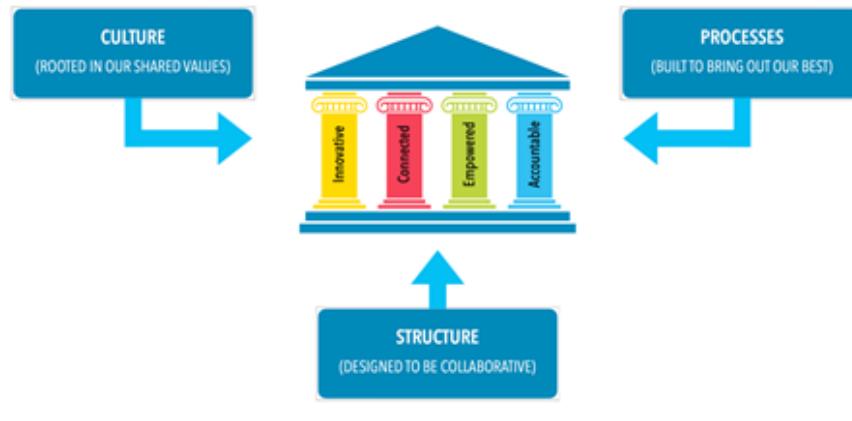
We have been facing external pressures such as decreasing budgets and continued urbanization for a while. Each year, we have struggled to piece together a budget and have worked harder to maintain the services we offer with fewer people and other resources. It became apparent that this model was not going to take us where we want to go in the future. We need to be able not just to maintain, but to grow and improve. It was time to consider a major change in the way we were operating.

**The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence - it is to act with yesterday's logic.**  
- Peter Drucker

## A Framework for Change

*It is not possible to do the same with less and get more; we have to do something different!*

Achieving an innovative, connected, empowered and accountable organization requires shifts in three areas.



The purpose of the framework is to outline a plan that provides a way forward. The organization is shifting, and will continue to shift, in three areas: culture, processes and structure.

The aim is to create an innovative, empowered, connected and accountable organization by:

- Creating a structure that facilitates and supports coordination and collaboration, and
- Establishing processes that allow us to strengthen core services and innovate for the future.



### Definitions

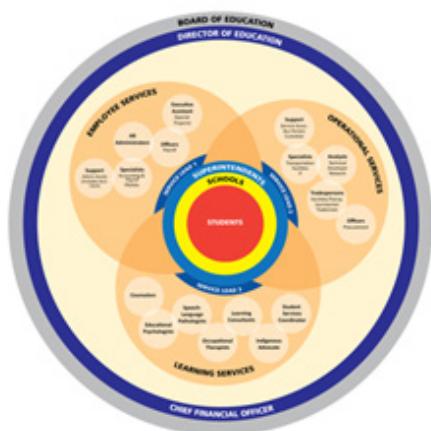
**EMPOWERED** Empowered staff are self-led and able to work within the processes and frameworks that govern us all. They ensure their decisions reflect LSKYSD's values, strive to improve, seek advice more often than permission and offer their support to others.

**CONNECTED** Connected staff work across former departments, seeing themselves as part of the Division as a whole. They build strong relationships with colleagues.

**INNOVATIVE** Innovative staff find solutions to problems. They make changes for the better when the status quo no longer works.

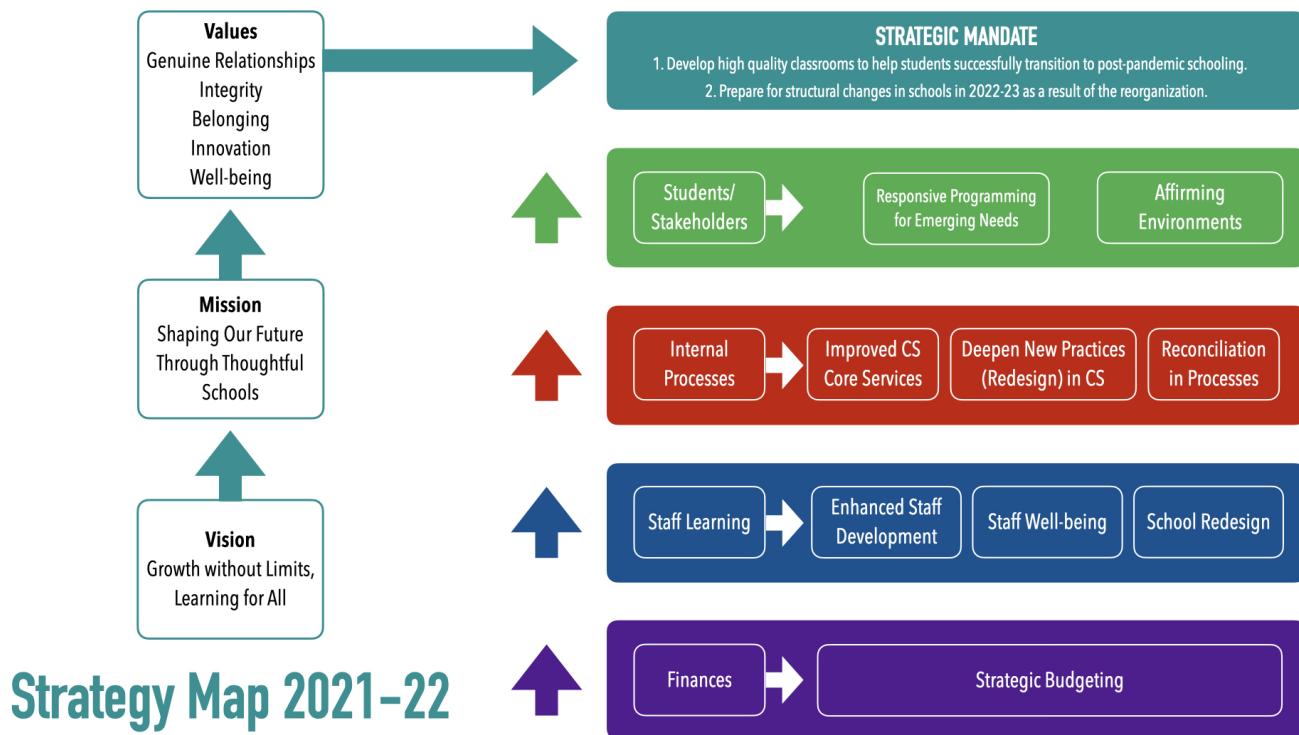
**ACCOUNTABLE** Accountable staff own their actions and decisions. They commit to what can be reasonably expected and follow through on their obligations, recognizing how their work and actions have an impact on others.

Work has begun in all three areas of the change framework. The shift started with restructuring our Central Office.



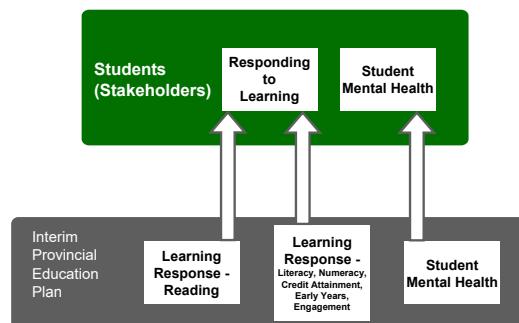
The redesign incorporated ideas from Fred Laloux's concept of teal organizations. More specifically:

- The new design is flatter than typical hierarchical structures.
- Teams work to achieve common goals; departments do not operate in stovepipes.
- Individuals can belong to multiple teams.
- There is high autonomy and an expectation to coordinate with others.
- Leadership and decision-making are distributed throughout the organization.
- People are inspired by and driven by a sense of purpose – a Why.



The actions on the next pages, taken to support our strategic outcomes, also strengthened the four pillars of our framework for change: innovation, empowerment, connection and accountability.

Our interim plan was aligned with the provincial interim plan. It included nine outcomes in the four areas identified in a balanced scorecard approach: Students and Stakeholders (green), Internal Processes (red), Staff Learning (blue) and Finances (purple).



# 1.1 **Student Mental Health**

## **Actions:**

- 1.1.1 Create Common Language
- 1.1.2 Include Mental Health in School Learning Improvement Plans
- 1.1.3 Enhance Mental Health Literacy

## **Why is this important?**

Mental Health refers to our cognitive, emotional and behavioural wellness – how we think, feel and behave. When we are mentally healthy, a sense of purpose and our ability to manage life's highs and lows allow us to thrive.

### **Focus Summary:**

**Goal:** 100% of LSKYSD students will demonstrate a shared language related to mental health, be empowered to self-select strategies for resiliency and well-being, and know the pathways to support and service.

**Measures:** staff surveys (December, March and June), course completion

### **Results:**

- At least one person at every school was trained in Mental Health First Aid.
- Counselling and Mental Health Capacity staff developed a common language for the Division to use.

### **Our Next Steps:**

- Continue to build on progress made in understanding and implementing trauma informed practices.
- Train trauma specialists and add a behaviour support team to the list of resources for schools.
- Continue to develop data collection practices for mental health initiatives.



## **Responsive Mental Health Plans**

Everyone's journey toward being mentally well is unique. Each school, and more specifically the students in each school, have distinct needs.

Last year, school administrators established mental health actions for their schools as part of their School Learning Improvement Plans. Some chose to focus on strategies to improve student self-regulation; others chose to use rubrics from established programs to try to collect data to give them a baseline understanding of how students were doing with their mental health.

Each school is best situated to identify and address the issues most relevant to their students. Central Services can offer supports as required.

## What did we learn?

- Mental health practices in elementary grades grew more than mental health practices at secondary grade levels.
- Creating a common language will take more time to deploy to students than initially thought, as staff needed time to master it first.
- Staff, especially our principals and vice-principals, needed to spend much time focusing on COVID-19 protocols and not necessarily on the impacts the pandemic was having on mental health in their schools and on them personally.
- Because each school created its own responsive plan for mental health, it was more difficult to measure student growth on a division level, as metrics were different for each school.
- Last year was an exploration year for many schools. The level of understanding regarding mental health needed more development with staff than originally thought, and in turn, this affected our ability to accurately measure the impact of initiatives on students.



## Strengthening the Pillars

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

**Empowerment and Accountability** – Schools were empowered to recognize needs and teach mental health strategies relevant to their students. Schools were accountable for assessing students' mental health needs and creating strategies to support mental wellness. Others helped with this work.

**Connection** – Both school and Central Services staff have roles to play in enhancing student mental health. Many plans had school and office-based personnel working together.

**Innovation** – The model described was a new way to address student learning about mental health and strategies to enhance resilience.

**“Schools have a profound influence on children, their families and the community. Young people's ability and motivation to stay in school to learn and utilize what they learn is affected by their mental health. Schools are crucial in building or undermining self esteem and a sense of confidence”** - **World Health Organization 1995**

# 1.2

## Responding To Learning

### Actions:

- 1.2.1 Develop Common Language and Practices
- 1.2.2 Ensure a Data-informed Approach
- 1.2.3 Provide Superintendent Support

### Why is this important?

Responding to learning involves growing each student – taking them from where they are and moving them forward. To be able to respond, it is necessary to collect evidence, analyze the evidence, make instructional decisions, plan and reflect. This process repeats itself several times throughout the year.

### Focus Summary:

**Goal:** 100% of LSKYSD students will grow in the area and at the pace targeted by their school in their School Learning Improvement Plans.

**Measures:** administrator surveys and in-person coaching meetings

### Results:

- Student growth will be measured by plans set by each school. This year, we were building capacity by beginning to develop data cycles that will support this goal moving forward.
- 85% of schools implemented at least one data cycle. 52% completed more than one cycle.
- 65% of schools reported growth in student learning as a direct result of their data cycles.
- Superintendent/administrator conferences about PDSA were held with 100% of schools.

### Our Next Steps:

- Implement common administrator release time in 2022-23 to continue the development of these new processes and encourage continued sharing/feedback.
- Continue to strengthen the PDSA cycle process, ensure it is valuable, and have 100% of schools use the PDSA cycle to support student growth.

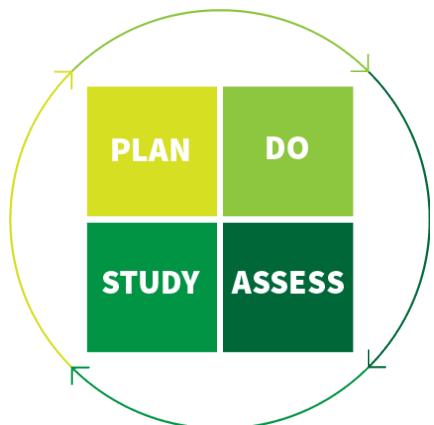
**Each school had the opportunity to choose goals that responded to the learning needs of its students. Schools developed their own measurements and data cycles.**

### PDSA and Data Cycles

The Plan-Do-Study-Assess (PDSA) method helps us use data in two ways:

1. To plan and determine need.
2. To show where we should adjust or adapt.

Going through the prescribed four steps guides the thinking process into breaking down a task into steps, evaluating the outcome, improving on it, and testing again. Most of us go through some or all of these steps when we implement change in our lives, and we don't even think about it. Having the steps written down often helps people focus and learn more.



A data cycle, then, occurs when all four steps of the cycle happen deliberately. The problem one is trying to solve may require going through multiple data cycles, changing small pieces here and there to create minor (or major if required) adjustments.

## What did we learn?

Schools are on different journeys. Some have been using data cycles for several years; others are new to the formal use of data cycles to improve student learning. Many reflected that these cycles do help them understand what is working well and what needs to be changed. The focus in this area has given administrators time to strengthen reflective abilities and seek to understand the bigger picture when it comes to responding to learning of all students. This goal is more long-term than one year, and as each school is using a distinct plan, measurements and cycles, how we best measure overall student growth needs to be considered further.



### Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

**Empowerment and Accountability** – Changes to student learning can be made by school-based leaders as they use the processes to build confidence at the school level by acting upon local and authentic data. Data illustrates what is working and what is not, and administrators are held accountable to the data with superintendent coaching.

**Connection** – The PDSA process is collaborative. School administrators are connected to each other through shared experience and group learning.

**Innovation** – We meet students where they are at and are empowered to find new ways to respond to their learning needs.

## FEATURE STORY: Data Cycles in Action

### COLLABORATIVE WORK

Amanda Risling,  
McKittrick Elementary School

*We completed a formal cycle in our grade 1/2 classroom this year. We saw a lot of growth in phonological awareness and readiness to read. We tracked data for every skill and group and met every two weeks to change groups, skills, etc.*

### RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Candice Benson,  
Leoville Central School

*Our elementary staff tracked reading improvements with our students in grades 1 to 6 using the Science of Reading strategies in grades 1 and 2 and Guided Reading programming from grade 3 to grade 6. We tracked using assessments from How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction.*

### STUDENT GROWTH

Christine Gibson,  
Lawrence Elementary School

*We used running records and writing samples for our literacy development. Teachers used these running records, writing samples and anecdotal notes to determine what each student needed to focus on to move forward in their reading or writing. Teachers chose one or two students each month from their classes to focus on and set goals for their reading or writing.*

## 2.1 Central Services Realignment

### Actions:

- 2.1.1 Redesign *Shark-horse* Jobs
- 2.1.2 Staff All New Positions
- 2.1.3 Align Work to New Roles

### Why is this important?

By redesigning and re-orientating positions at Central Services, we can eliminate shark-horse positions and allow individuals to have a clearer sense of how their role's purpose and duties align with LSKYSD's mission, vision, values and strategic mandates. While reorganization is messy at first, over time it will lead to a more focused and nimble team of colleagues who experience the positive impacts of their actions on the Division.

### Focus Summary:

**Goal:** By the end of the third quarter, all staff with workspace in Central Services whose roles are new or significantly redesigned will be working within their performance objectives and duties, and in alignment with the four pillars of the re-organization. Duties held outside this purpose will take up no more than 20% of time.

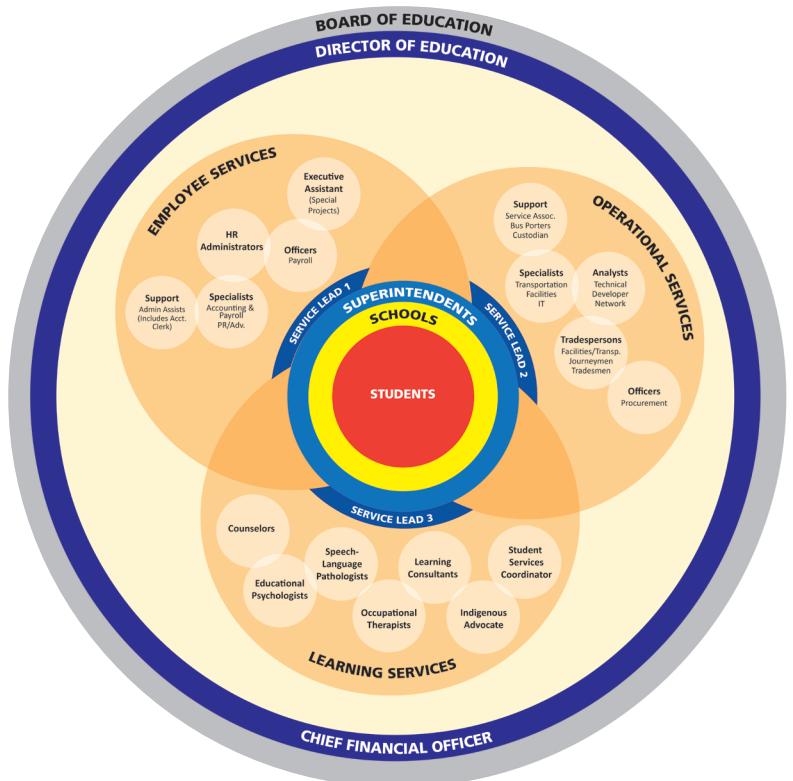
**Measures:** performance management meetings and observation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

#### Results:

- *Shark-horse* positions have been fully identified within Central Services, redesigned, and the newly created positions have been staffed.
- There is about 80% alignment of newly created roles to performance objectives and duties (goal met).

#### Our Next Steps:

- We will continue to monitor those positions that have not met the 20% outside-of-role duties mark and look for ways we can continue to ease, share or innovate work taking focus away from core services in those positions.



### What did we learn?

- In a reorganization, positions need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are achieving their mandates and are not becoming shark horses. Organizations operate better when mandates and core services are clear.

## Strengthening the Pillars

Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:

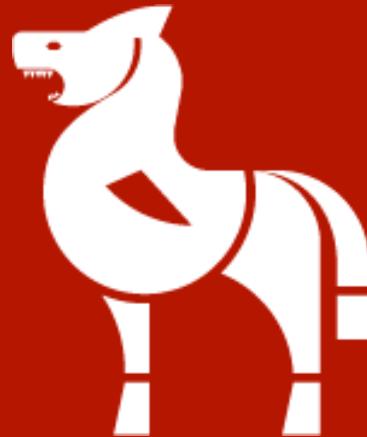


**Empowerment and Accountability** – With clear role expectations and well-designed jobs, people are more confident and empowered to own their roles. When we understand how our roles are connected, we work better as a team and hold each other accountable.

**Connection** – Our roles are connected; we depend on the work of others to do our work well. By establishing clear mandates and by learning to work on effective functional and cross-functional teams, we will achieve greater success.

**Innovation** – Flattening the hierarchical structure of our organization empowers everyone to be leaderful. Although many of the positions at Central Services remained the same, the way we work together has changed significantly.

## FEATURE STORY: What is a *shark-horse*?



**Favourite Food:**  
Core service work time

**Biggest Weakness:**  
A clearly defined position mandate

**Main Habitat:**  
Organizations that have downsized or are going through a redesign

A *shark-horse* position is one that feeds off of other positions. When a position is not filled after someone retires or leaves an organization, the work that person did still exists, so it gets divvied up among other roles.

A *shark-horse* position is created when a role takes on so many leftover tasks from other roles that it stops an employee from being able to perform the duties necessary for the organization to succeed. These key duties are called core services.

Employees in *shark-horse* positions may find it very hard to manage their time and may be heard saying things like *there just isn't enough time in a day to get all my work done!* or *I spend all my time just putting out fires!*

## 2.2 **Central Services Self- management**

### **Actions:**

- 2.2.1 Design a Diagnostic Tool
- 2.2.2 Develop a Training Plan
- 2.2.3 Deliver Internal Training

### **Why is this important?**

Self-managed staff are empowered to make decisions, within their role's parameters, accepting accountability for strengthening present core services and innovating for the future.

### **Focus Summary:**

**Goal:** 75% of Central Services staff will be successful self-managers.

**Measures:** self-management diagnostic tool and performance management meetings

#### **Results:**

- 51% of Central Services staff are successful self-managers:
  - 26/65 employees did not feel they had made their work transparent to their coworkers (*Information Transparency*).
  - 20/65 employees did not participate in a tough but honest conversation (*Conflict Resolution*).
  - 64/65 employees successfully practiced self-management in the area of *decision-making*.
  - 64/65 employees successfully practiced self-management in the area of *role development*.
  - 65/65 employees successfully practiced self-management in the area of *performance management*.

#### **Our Next Steps:**

- Provide training in weaker areas of self-management (*Conflict Resolution and Information Transparency*) to Central Services staff.
- Use the digital workplace platform that is in development to assist with information transparency.



### **What is self-management?**

One key difference between a hierarchical organization and a self-managed organization is the presence of decision-making authority. A self-managed organization decentralizes decision-making power to different levels of the hierarchy. In this form of organization, all employees have the authority to make most of their work-related decisions, including setting priorities and strategies.

To help us measure whether employees at Central Services are successful self-managers, a cross-functional team was brought together to create a Self-Assessment Checklist that helped us monitor development in five key areas:

1. Decision-making
2. Role Development
3. Information Transparency
4. Performance Management
5. Conflict Resolution

Employees completed the assessment twice during the year. Service Leads reviewed the responses to the assessments with employees and provided coaching.

## What did we learn?

Through using the diagnostic tool, we learned that 51% of our Central Services team believe they are successful self-managers. We also learned that the areas of self-management Central Services staff find most challenging are *Conflict Resolution* and *Information Transparency*.

- Difficult conversations and how to engage with co-workers with honesty will be an area of focus in the new school year.
- Making work transparent to colleagues should become easier with the launch of our new digital work-place, which aims to further connect our team members and provide a single source they can go to for information.

**In a forest, there is no master tree that plans and dictates change when rain fails to fall or when the spring comes early. The whole ecosystem reacts creatively, in the moment.**

*-Frederic Laloux*



### Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

**Empowerment and Accountability** – Staff know their responsibilities and can make decisions within the parameters of their roles and aligned with our values. With empowerment comes accountability to ourselves, one another and those we serve.

**Connection** – To be able to self-manage requires creating processes and tools that guide us all. These include a set of well-defined values.

**Innovation** – This is a new way of working together, designed to ultimately lead to greater employees satisfaction and better results.

## FEATURE: Staff Thoughts on Self-management



*Hearing that LSKYSD was shifting to become a self-managed workplace was a big part of why I applied to the organization. The idea that I would be truly given the capacity to be the expert in my field, not only in title, but in collaborative teams, budget decisions, planning, etc., is something that really appealed to me. It is empowering to feel that trust from the organization and also challenges me to continue to learn and expand my skillset for the betterment of myself and also for the betterment of the whole team.*

*-Kelsie Valliere  
PR/Advancement Specialist*



*What I love about self-management is the shift to asking more advice than permission. This has allowed me to own my role and to make decisions much more quickly, which in turn lets me provide quicker service to the people I serve.*

*-Whitney Elder  
Administrative Assistant*

## 3.1 Three-box Approach

### Actions:

- 3.1.1 Create Position Summaries
- 3.1.2 Identify Core Services and Success Indicators
- 3.1.3 Train Staff on Three-box Theory

### Why is this important?

The Three-box Approach frames work in a way that allows individual employees and planning teams to identify and run with opportunities for innovation. To become nimble, individuals must be able to articulate the mandates of their positions and those of the teams on which they regularly participate.

### Focus Summary:

**Goal:** By the end of the year, 100% of staff in Central Services will work in a role that has a well-defined mandate and on a functional team that has well-defined core services.

**Measures:** completion of position summaries, core service focus groups

#### Results:

- Overall, 85% of staff at Central Services have completed position summaries and work on a team with defined core services and success indicators.
- Broken down into the three work areas:
  - 87% of Central Services staff have completed position profiles.
  - 91% of Central Services teams have defined their core services.
  - 82% of Central Services teams have defined success indicators.

#### Our Next Steps:

- Complete work for the remaining 15% of positions/teams.
- Deepen use of core services and success indicators to drive team innovations and decision-making.

### What is Three-box Approach?

The Three-box Approach, by Vijay Govindarajan, is a model used to help organizations begin to innovate for the future. It asks us to think about our culture, structure and processes and decide if they serve the past, present or future.



#### Box 1: Manage the Present

This box helps us maintain and/or strengthen practices that meet our current goals. Box 1 work should take up most of what we do every day, but not all of it. This is very important work but can sometimes get in the way of helping us prepare for the future.



#### Box 2: Reflect on the Past

This box asks us to let go of practices that used to be helpful but are kept around only because of habit or tradition. This helps ensure we are pruning areas of our organization or practices that are under-performing. If we do not take time to reflect on the past, habits/practices can hold us back from performing Box 1 tasks to the best of our abilities.



#### Box 3: Create the Future

Box 3 encourages us to invent new practices that creatively meet emerging needs. This work is full of unknowns because it is all about the future. We are taking an educated guess at what might happen. This work must take up at least some of what we do every day or else we will be stuck reacting to changing events around us. Box 3 pushes us to consider what ifs and act proactively.

## Tying It All Together

To distinguish work between the three boxes, employees must be very clear on what their responsibilities are in their positions. Much of the work completed this year was focused on core services (Box 1). As we look toward next year, we hope to challenge teams to start exploring the two other boxes.

## What did we learn?

The initiatives under this outcome were entirely overhauled in January after we realized that our previous approach wasn't going to be effective. We learned that the best way to start thinking about Three-box work is to look at how we define Box 1. By focusing our work on defining position profiles, team core services, and success indicators, we are now in the place where we can have good conversations about work in the three boxes to move LSKYSD forward.

We also learned that true collaboration and consultation take time. We didn't complete this work because we didn't rush it. It was more important to us that staff had a real say in how their jobs were defined, that teams experimented to find good measures of successful service, and that all our work aligned with team and Division mandates.



## Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*



**Empowerment and Accountability** – Staff know what is expected and how their roles contribute to the overall success of the organization. Staff helped create and agreed to their core services, and when this work has been completed, we will all be accountable to provide the services we promised of ourselves and our teams.

**Connection** – Sharing our core services with everyone in the school division connects us. It is clearer how everyone contributes to success and how we depend on each other to do our work well.

**Innovation** – Being clear about our mandates/core services, identifying success measures and gathering feedback on how we're performing helps us know when things are working and when we need to innovate.

## **3.2 Staff Mental Health**

### **Actions:**

- 3.2.1 Launch Grant Funded Programs
- 3.2.2 Develop Mental Health Literacy and Ensure Mental Health First Aid Training
- 3.2.3 Build Staff Awareness of Resources

### **Why is this important?**

To thrive at work, one must be well. Mental health is defined as *a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her community.* (MHWB Policy Brief)

### **Focus Summary:**

**Goal:** By the end of June 2022, staff across the school division will have increased knowledge of mental health resources and supports available to them.

**Measures:** training completion and staff surveys

### **Results:**

- We completed professional development training with The Nest Project.
- 100% of schools have developed a Mental Health First Aid Plan.

### **Our Next Steps:**

- Develop wellness teams to implement strategies that are needed at each school for staff wellness.
- Hold a mini Mental Health Symposium for LSKYSD to share resources with teams.
- Ensure a mental health focus at Administrative Council meetings (as requested by principals and vice-principals).

**In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.**

*-Canadian Mental Health Association Website*



### **Mental Health First Aid**

As part of Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's Mental Health First Aid Training directive, one person from each school completed training and assisted in including mental health planning in their School Learning Improvement Plans. These plans were

directly tied to the needs of the staff and students in each school, so schools were able to choose an area of focus that was most relevant to them. School staff also determined how this information would be tracked and shared.

In our staff surveys, employees were asked questions to determine whether they were aware of the plans that had been developed. Data below is based on 117 responses:

- **82%** responded they felt the Mental Health First Aid Plan (MHFA) at their school was useful.
- **86%** responded they knew who the MHFA-trained employee on staff was.
- **87%** responded that they were aware of the warning signs exhibited by an individual who is in mental health crisis.

## What did we learn?

Staff want access to personalized mental health tools. By the end of the year the tools we were providing such as newsletters, general information from Central Services on the topic, etc. were no longer being utilized. We believe that creating wellness teams at each school, able to respond to needs at a local level, will help ensure our staff are getting the support they need in a new way.

Some schools had a strong focus on mental health right from the beginning of the year, and these schools continued to build and grow through the tools and training we provided. Other schools were just beginning to implement this focus in their schools. These schools did not seem to see the same level of success but were at least able to start their journey. All schools are very aware that creating strong mental health practices for staff and students is important. They will continue to create more learning opportunities in this area in the next school year.



### Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

**Empowerment and Accountability** – Schools created Mental Health Plans that directly addressed staff needs. Staff are aware of mental health resources available to them and key individuals who can assist with mental health questions. In turn, staff are accountable for learning and trying new strategies.

**Connection** – School plans require connecting with experts in the school division for guidance and training.

**Innovation** – This is a new approach to offering mental health supports.

## FEATURE STORY: Mental Health Symposium

As with most other school divisions, we have recognized the pressures affecting staff, whether from actual classroom needs and situations, lingering impacts of the pandemic, or other routine aspects of managing their lives in an ever increasingly complex world.

The question is, *how can we grow self-care and resiliency in staff, so that they might become better able to meet and rise to the challenges they face both professionally and personally?*

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, hosted a two-day symposium called *Working Together – What's Strong with Us?* A contingent of LSKYSD employees attended.

The presentations and workshops provided an opportunity to hear from peer school divisions about many of the initiatives they had underway. We also learned about work being undertaken in other provinces, and we had the opportunity to network with several professionals and subject matter experts in the field of employee wellness.

Employee mental wellness is certainly a challenge affecting Education across the country, if not the continent.

The group of LSKYSD attendees is now operating as an informal team to take the materials and learnings to translate them into practical actions for our Division. The team has met once since the symposium, and its work will continue into the new school year.

In the interim, one of the symposium's keynote speakers, Wade Repta, delivered a condensed version of his presentation to our Administrators' Council.

Mental health issues are complex, deeply personal, and still carry a stigma with them. Our challenges will be two-fold:

1. Finding meaningful, practical tools and resources for employees to self-select as needed, without the Division being perceived as either prescriptive or intrusive.

2. Equipping leaders to recognize early where struggles might be taking place and being comfortably capable to provide guidance.

## **3.3 Values- based Decisions**

### **Actions:**

- 3.3.1 Initiate Values Training
- 3.3.2 Develop Service Questionnaire
- 3.3.3 Begin Decision-making Using Our Values
- 3.3.4 Implement Quarterly Service Evaluation

### **Why is this important?**

Living Sky's values are not merely words framed and hung on a wall to be forgotten. By living our values, staff at Central Services ensure that we are fulfilling Living Sky's mission and vision, and we are providing exceptional service to those whom we serve, internally and externally.

### **Focus Summary:**

**Goal:** Demonstrate that staff with work spaces in Central Services are making values-based decisions regularly to provide high quality customer service in line with our purpose.

**Measures:** quarterly Service Experience Questionnaire responses (baseline 6.5; target 8.0).

### **Results:**

- 7.2 service rating (based on final Service Experience Questionnaire that went to all administrators)
- School administrators reported improved service over worsened at a ratio of 7:1.

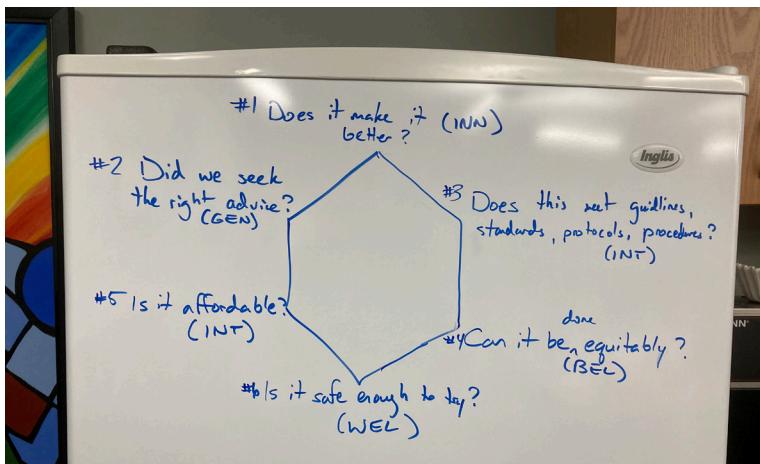
### **Our Next Steps:**

- Continue to train staff in the importance of running decisions or ideas through the Values Hexagon to ensure alignment with our values.
- Begin to roll the training tools out to schools.

### **LSKYSO Values**

Much time was spent not only on developing our values and what they mean, but also on providing specific examples of what each value looks like in action to ensure all employees are on the same page. Here is a sample of examples (and non-examples) for each value:

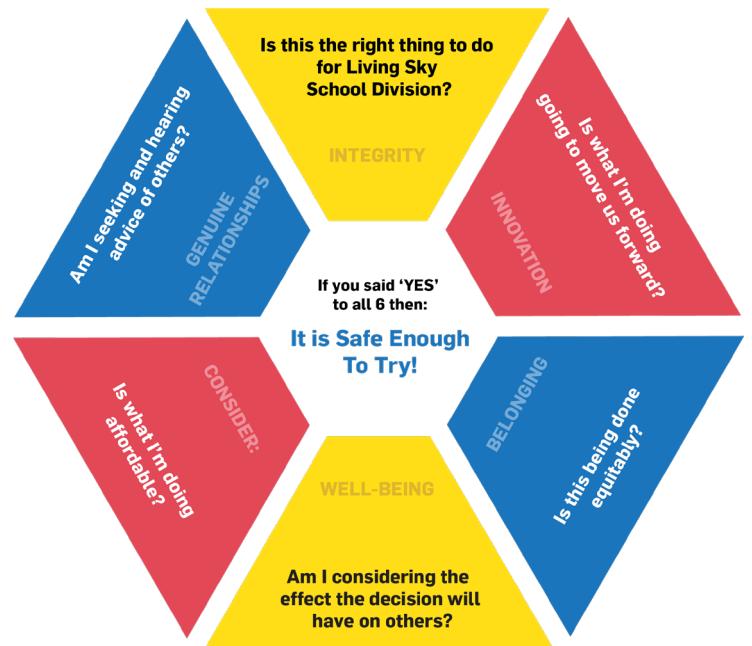
<b>Genuine Relationships are...</b>	<b>Genuine Relationships are not...</b>
...being transparent in our communication, disclosing what we are at liberty to share.	...telling everyone everything. There are legal and professional obligations to NOT share personal information of students and staff.
<b>Belonging is...</b>	<b>Belonging is not...</b>
...building relationships with our coworkers.	...assuming we all have to be best friends.
<b>Integrity is...</b>	<b>Integrity is not...</b>
...being genuine in our interactions, speaking honestly even if it is difficult to do so.	...making allowances for others doing wrong or looking the other way.
<b>Innovation is...</b>	<b>Innovation is not...</b>
...being conscious of our assumptions.	...being afraid of failure or overly cynical.
<b>Well-being is...</b>	<b>Well-being is not...</b>
...knowing when we are physically, mentally or emotionally unwell and taking action to get better.	...coming to work sick, suffering alone or not seeking help.



## The Values Hexagon

The Values Hexagon is an accountability tool that challenges employees to focus on what is best for the organization. It is one of the many tools developed and implemented this year to help us ensure we are living our values and incorporating them into our daily work. To think it all began with a sketch on a fridge!

Pictured above is the first draft of the Values Hexagon; beside it is the current version.



## What did we learn?

The change we are undergoing is foundational; it's not a minor tweak to what we've always done. Truly using values to inform practice is worthwhile work, but it isn't easy!

**“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.” - Roy E. Disney**



## Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

**Empowerment and Accountability** – Understanding the values and being able to ensure decisions align with them is a necessary piece of empowerment. All decision-makers are accountable to making sure that what we do matches who we want to be.

**Connection** – A common understanding of our values and what they look like in our daily work connects us more deeply.

**Innovation** – Defining values specifically and developing innovative tools to ensure our actions reflect our values is a new practice.

## 4.1 Redesigned Budget Process

### Actions:

- 4.1.1 Offer *Budget for Beginners* Training
- 4.1.2 Reorganize Budget Management
- 4.1.3 Create a New Budget Framework

### Why is this important?

Finances represent a significant constraint on school division operations. By rebuilding the budget development and management processes in line with the four pillars of the reorganization, LSKYSD will be able to operate more nimbly and responsively.

### Focus Summary:

**Goal:** By the end of the year, 100% of budgets will be held by empowered and accountable budget managers.

### Results:

- *Budget for Beginners* training was completed with all new budget holders.
- We completed our first budget using design thinking methodology with an expanded budget holder group.

### Our Next Steps:

- Continue to explore how we can build our new budgeting process.
- Seek ways to generate income independently as a school division to fund innovation.

### Innovating the Budget Process

With all the change taking place within our organization, it only makes sense that we needed to align the way we budget with our new philosophy and way of doing business. Though our Chief Financial Officer is still accountable for the overall budget, we now have more people responsible for individual pieces of the budget.



We also needed to create more one-ness surrounding budget conversations. Yes, we many have more people managing small pieces of it, but if we are all only concerned about our piece of the pie, it will be hard to truly get anywhere. So, we took more time to look at our budget. We involved more people, used new ways of thinking (new exercises) and came together as a group to decide what areas needed more focus, what innovation we needed to fund, etc. Ultimately, strategic initiatives came first. It wasn't a perfect process, but it was a great first step in aligning our budget with our new way of thinking.

## What did we learn?

By involving more team members in the budgeting process, the budget itself becomes more transparent within the organization. We are more aware of necessary expenses and can collectively decide on what innovative projects should be prioritized based on alignment with our strategic plan. This step was also essential as we move toward self-management. People have access to resources when they need them and are accountable to the organization for their own piece of the budget.

**“Don’t tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I’ll tell you what they are.”**

*- James W. Frick*



### Strengthening the Pillars:

*Let's tie this back to our foundational pillars:*

#### **Empowerment and Accountability**

Employees are empowered to make budget decisions that align with our plan and accountable for managing their budgets and following through on planned actions.

**Connection** – Our new process involves many people who understand that there is ultimately one budget that needs to be strategically employed. The budget is the plan.

**Innovation** – Design thinking was employed to develop new budgeting processes.

## FEATURE STORY: Empathy Interviews



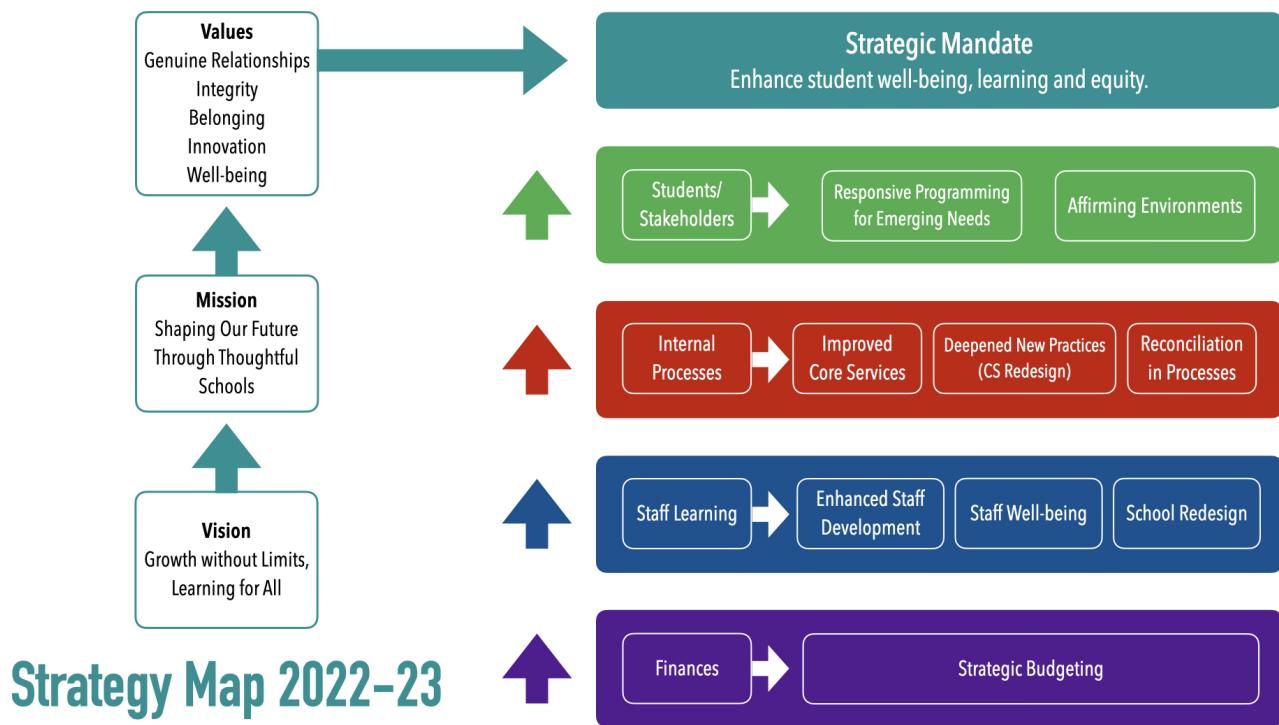
This year, as part of the budgeting process, we reached out to several people we serve and conducted empathy interviews. Unlike the information collected from a typical focus group, the data collected through empathy interviews is more open-ended and often shared through stories. Along with people's words, interviewers paid attention to actions, gestures, the physical environment, body language, and tone of voice. We then came together to share our interview experiences, and this helped us determine where we should focus some of our spending.

We chose staff, community members and parents who were classified as extreme users for our interviews. Extreme users are more likely to find workarounds to current problems that should be solved. They can provide insight that is very helpful when designing solutions. The interviews proved to be a very powerful budgeting tool that we will certainly use again in the future.

# 2022-2023 Planning

The Ministry of Education has renewed its one-year interim plan for next year. Our plan is aligned with the provincial plan. It also consists of outcomes related to our redesign.

We have constructed a strategy map that comprises the key areas of focus for the next school year.



## 1. Students (Stakeholders)

### 1.1 – Responsive Programming for Emerging Needs

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, 80% of the projects designed to address emerging needs will indicate that they are on track.

Actions:

- 1.1.1 – Offer Cree 10 virtually.
- 1.1.2 – Create a team for complex cases.
- 1.1.3 – Create an early learning Cree program.
- 1.1.4 – Undertake a redesign at Cando School.
- 1.1.5 – Experiment with *Ten Days From Home*.
- 1.1.6 – Experiment with centralized nutrition.

### 1.2 – Affirming Environments

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, all schools will have advanced their work in reconciliation and student mental health.

Actions:

- 1.2.1 – Take at least one action toward reconciliation in every school.
- 1.2.2 – Take at least one action toward well-being in every school.
- 1.2.3 – Ensure administrators take part in *Leading to Learn*.

## **2. Internal Processes**

### **2.1 – Improved Core Services (Central Services)**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, all teams or individual positions will have adjusted and/or enhanced their core services in response to feedback or data.

Actions:

2.1.1 – Finalize mandates, core services and success measures. Share with schools.

2.1.2 – Create a survey to gather feedback on core service delivery.

2.1.3 – Use a PLC, PDSA action plan, or an alternative structure, to analyze data gathered on core services and determine next steps to adjust and/or enhance them.

2.1.4 – Provide coaching or training as needed.

### **2.2 – Deepened Practices at Central Services**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, all Central Services staff will have demonstrated deepened use of new processes (Advice Process, Values Hex, PIT).

Actions:

2.2.1 – Expand Monday Morning Huddles to include all Central Services staff and to focus on practicing and deepening use of new processes.

2.2.2 – Create opportunities for cross-functional teams.

2.2.3 – Focus on the Accountability pillar:

- Create a training module.
- Practice peer-to-peer feedback.
- Train staff on conflict resolution.

### **2.3 – Reconciliation in Processes**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, we will have moved forward in all targeted areas on the Inspiring Success rubric.

Actions:

2.3.1 – Deepen relationships with Indigenous education leaders (Honouring Relationships).

2.3.2 – Apply a decolonizing lens to procedures and protocols.

2.3.3 – Integrate perspectives of the IAC and Elders' Council into decision making and design.

## **3. Staff Learning**

### **3.1 – Staff Development**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, projects/actions designed to enhance staff development will have been created or implemented. Staff will have demonstrated increased competency.

Actions:

3.1.1 – Create and implement focused training for new educational assistants (All Aboard!).

3.1.2 – Revamp the Leadership Development Program.

### **3.2 – Staff Well-being**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, all schools and Central Services will have advanced their work in staff mental health.

Actions:

3.2.1 – Develop wellness teams at schools and Central Services.

### **3.3 – School Redesign**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, all schools will have advanced their work in new processes as part of the redesign or in the SLIP process.

Actions:

- 3.3.1 – SLIP Work: Assess the SLIP processes, identify a target area for improvement and monitor growth.
- 3.3.2 – Redesign Work: Identify core services/accountabilities, implement strategic planning/thinking, use the Advice Process, and demonstrate PIT planning and implementation (including establishing and monitoring success criteria).

## **4. Finances**

### **4.1 – Strategic Budgeting**

Outcome: By the end of 2022-23, a redesigned process will have aligned with and enhanced our strategic plan.

Actions:

- 4.1.1 – Monitor efficiencies, generate funds, reallocate reserves and follow the data.
- 4.1.2 – Start a foundation.