

WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders:

The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

by

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### Abstract

Children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD] have complex needs that span an array of service providers (Stroul & Friedman, 1994; VanDenBerg, 2008) and given the paucity of supports for this population they may not receive the support that they require (Burns et al., 1995; Farmer et al., 2003). There is a considerable amount of research that supports the integration of services for children and youth with EBD through the wraparound approach (VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009). There also is research that supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration and provision of support for this population (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Grossman & Vang, 2009). However, there is limited Canadian research about the efficacy of the wraparound approach in the context of a community school. In order to explore this issue a qualitative, multi-case study was conducted of three community schools in the province of Manitoba to determine the extent to which community schools foster interdisciplinary collaboration and may support the implementation of the wraparound approach (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Goldman, 1999). The findings from this study suggest that at the practice level, the community schools that were studied fostered collaboration and the integration of support. In addition, the community schools that were studied possessed many of the requisite conditions that support the implementation of the wraparound approach as a process to guide individualized planning for children and youth with complex needs. Barriers to the full-scale implementation of the wraparound approach in the context of the community schools were identified and primarily included system level constraints on collaborative practices.

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Future research may involve piloting the implementation of the wraparound approach as outlined in the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*, ” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) in designated community schools within the province of Manitoba in order to build upon the strengths of community schools as effective host environments for the implementation of the wraparound approach and also to identify the means by which the system level constraints to collaborative practices might be overcome.

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## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction to the Study

The mental health and well-being of Canada's children and youth is in peril. The number of Canadian children and youth affected by mental illness is 15% or 1.2 million (Mood Disorders Society of Canada, 2006). Research indicates that approximately one in seven Canadian children and youth under the age of 19 is likely to have a serious mental disorder that impacts their development and ability to participate in the activities of daily life (Government of British Columbia, 2003). Of even greater concern, is the prediction that mental health challenges among children and youth in Canada will increase by 50% by the year 2020 (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2007). As the population of children and youth requiring mental health services continues to grow so too does the complexity of needs within this population. According to Tankersly and Landrum (1997) between 10-30% of children and youth with mental health challenges may suffer from more than one mental health disorder. Unfortunately, at any given time 25% of Canadian children and youth will not receive the mental health treatment that they require (Waddell, McEwan, Shepherd, Offord, & Hua, 2005). Mental health disorders have been identified as the leading cause of disability in Canada (Stephens & Joubert, 2001).

In addition to supports being limited, when they are received they are often delivered in a poorly coordinated and fragmented manner (Reid & Brown, 2008; Stroul, 2002; Stroul & Friedman, 1986, 1994; Waddell et al., 2005). The fragmentation of services has been most detrimental to children and youth with EBD and their families as they are often dependent upon multiple service systems to meet their complex needs (Duchnowski, Johnson, Hall, Kutash, & Friedman, 1993; Lourie, 1994).



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Due to limited and fragmented supports children's mental health has been referred to as "the orphan's orphan" of the health care system (Kirby & Keon, 2006), and Canada's emergency rooms have become the most often used mental health support as children and youth are typically moved to a crisis before they receive the support that they require (Waddell et al., 2005). Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that children and youth with EBD have experienced poor outcomes in school and in society (Kauffman, 2005).

In order to address the needs of children and youth with EBD and produce positive life outcomes, comprehensive, integrated supports from many disciplines including, but not limited to mental health, child welfare, justice and education are required (Bruns et al., 2004; Burns & Goldman, 1999; Dieker, 2001; Eber et al., 2002; Wagner et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2003; World Health Organization, 2004). In this qualitative, multi-case study, I will explore the characteristics of community schools that foster collaboration and align with the ten guiding principles of the wraparound approach (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Goldman, 1999). While there is much consensus in the literature about the efficacy of integrating supports for children and youth with EBD through approaches such as wraparound, questions remain about the practical implementation of integrated models of support that span service providers. Therefore, I will attempt to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba embody the organizational structures and models of professional practice that support the practical implementation of collaborative practices for children and youth with EBD from the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the process.

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Presently, in the province of Manitoba the utilization of the wraparound approach for children and youth with EBD has been encouraged across human service providers through the implementation of the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013). The province of Manitoba also recently amended *The Public Schools Act* to include *The Community Schools Act* which recognizes the community school philosophy and the community school model and outlines the role that community schools may play in the integration of support for children, youth, families, and communities in low socio-economic neighbourhoods (Government of Manitoba, 2012). While neither of these initiatives reference the other they are not mutually exclusive and if combined they may serve to enhance the provision of support.

### **The Manitoba Context**

Recognizing that supports for children and youth with EBD in Manitoba were being delivered in a poorly coordinated and fragmented manner, the government of Manitoba developed an interdepartmental pilot project between September 1990 and September 1993 to assess the impact of providing more coordinated services for this population. A small number of students with severe to profound EBD were randomly selected from existing human services caseloads in education, child welfare, health, mental health and justice to participate in the pilot. In the pilot project, the human services professionals supporting these children agreed to coordinate their services and work in a collaborative manner to develop and implement coordinated intervention plans. “In these cases there was a common understanding and commitment by all agencies and departments involved about the needs of the child and family.

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These needs were seen in the context of the whole child” (Manitoba Education & Training, Manitoba Family Services, Manitoba Health, & Manitoba Justice, 1995, p. 2).

As a follow up to the pilot project, the factors that supported collaborative planning for children and youth with EDB were identified and were found to be consistent with the philosophy and guiding principles of a system of care outlined by Stroul and Friedman (1986, 1994). According to Stroul and Friedman (1986, 1994), a system of care involved the provision of a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which were organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of severely emotionally and behaviourally disordered children and youth. In this regard, the system of care involved all caregivers in the provision of child-centered, family focused, comprehensive and, coordinated supports that are delivered at the community level (Stroul & Friedman 1986, 1994).

### **The System of Care in Manitoba**

Adapting Stroul and Friedman’s (1986, 1994) model of a system of care, the government of Manitoba developed “*The Interdepartmental Protocol Agreement for Children and Adolescents with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” which mandated collaborative planning, the coordination of supports across service providers and continuity of care through a system of care (Manitoba Education & Training et al., 1995). The Manitoba System of care was further defined as consensual process for coordinating multi-system services and developing individualized, shared service plans for children and youth with severe to profound EBD.

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It described the Manitoba System of Care as a process that is respectful of the experience of all team members and involves all participants in sharing information, resources and expertise when supporting children and youth with severe to profound EBD (Manitoba Education and Training et al., 1995).

There is much evidence that the objectives of the system of care as outlined in the, “*Interdepartmental Protocol Agreement for Children and Adolescents with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” (Manitoba Education & Training et al., 1995) were not realized in the province of Manitoba. In a pilot study (Bartlett, 2004) and in my thesis research (Bartlett, 2005), I utilized a multi-case study format to obtain the perspectives of human service professionals and caregivers about the extent to which the system of care in Manitoba was facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration for children and youth with EBD, and I learned that there were significant barriers to the achievement of this goal. In spite of the existence of a protocol that mandated the coordination of services for children and youth with [EBD] there were limited improvements in interdisciplinary collaboration for this population in the province of Manitoba (Bartlett, 2004, 2005; Bartlett & Freeze, 2005). According to human service professionals and caregivers, services for children and youth with EBD remained limited and fragmented, in spite of the provincial mandate to enhance support through more collaborative service delivery. It is not unusual for “...partners-schools and community agencies to have agreed on goals and memoranda of understanding that leave the status quo of the organizations entirely intact” (Dryfoos, 1995; p.157). These findings are consistent with the Manitoba Special Education Review (Proactive Information Services, 1998), and the Follow-up to the Manitoba Special Education Review (Manitoba Education, Training & Youth, 2001), and more recently an evaluation of an urban school division in Manitoba that found that only a small percentage of

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teachers reported receiving interdisciplinary support for children and youth with EBD (Proactive Information Services, 2006).

### **The Wraparound Approach in Manitoba**

Recently, the province of Manitoba has embraced the implementation of the wraparound approach for children and youth with severe to profound EBD and has released a revised inter-department protocol entitled the, “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) to replace the previous inter-departmental protocol that mandated the coordination of services based on the system of care philosophy. While the current protocol is also guided by the system of care philosophy, it now explicates a specific process by which the system of care philosophy might be achieved. The protocol represents an agreement between the departments of education, health, family services, and other designated agencies in the province of Manitoba who may provide support to children, youth and their caregivers. The protocol states, “The wraparound approach promoted in this protocol is designed to enhance the integration of multiple student services, encourage the most efficient use of resources, and promote continued monitoring and communication of students’ outcomes across caregivers and multiple service providers (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013; p.2). While a protocol may exist that promotes the utilization of the wraparound approach and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound EBD, a comprehensive plan to support its implementation in the province of Manitoba remains elusive. It is hoped that this research may inform the practical implementation of the wraparound approach as outlined in the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by identifying the most enabling conditions that may support its implementation.

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In this regard, approaches like wraparound, if implemented in the context of a school setting, which has been referred to in the literature as the school-based wraparound approach (Eber & Nelson, Eber, Nelson & Miles, 1997; Pachiano, Eber & Devine-Johnston, 2003), might provide the appropriate host environment for the implementation of this process.

### **Schools as a Host Environment for the Wraparound Approach**

According to Zins and Ponti (1990) the “host environment” is an essential element that must be considered in the implementation of any initiative. In the absence of a suitable host environment even the best conceived plans may not succeed. As a host environment, schools have some of the characteristics that may support the implementation of the wraparound approach including: (a) mandates for service provision, (b) structures for daily contact with children, adolescents and their families, (c) broad-based support like resource teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and social workers, (d) an individualized education planning process [IEP] that includes strengths-based planning, and (e) a continuum of behavioural supports (Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002). While most schools may possess these qualities, full-service community schools that integrate support from an array of service providers within the school setting might be better equipped to provide truly integrated, broad-based support. According to Dryfoos (1998),

A full-service community school integrates the delivery of quality education with whatever health and social services are required in that community. These institutions draw on both school resources and outside community agencies that come into the schools to join forces and provide seamless programs (p. 73).

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The partnerships that may exist within full-service community schools, referred to as community schools, as that is the terminology presently used in the province of Manitoba, may mitigate some of the challenges associated with interdisciplinary collaboration and thereby improve the receipt of services for children and youth with EBD.

### **Community Schools in Manitoba**

Recognizing the role of the school as the central hub of the community, in 2005, the province of Manitoba developed the Community Schools Partnership Initiative. The main purpose of the Community Schools Partnership initiative was, “....to support schools serving in low socio-economic neighbourhoods – helping them develop a comprehensive range of supports and approaches to meet the diverse needs of children, youth and their families” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006; p.3). The Community Schools Partnership Initiative referred to the integration of support as a way to, “connect public programs and services such as health care, recreation, childcare and family support on an as available and as needed basis to school sites, making them more readily available to community residents (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006; p.6). In May of 2012, the province of Manitoba amended *The Public Schools Act* to include *The Community Schools Act* which recognizes the community school philosophy and the community school model (Government of Manitoba, 2012). As a result, the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in Manitoba was replaced by the Community Schools Program and within the Department of Education, a community schools unit as well an advisory committee of deputy ministers from various branches of government was established. The deputy ministers’ committee on community schools has been charged with,

Ensuring that government departments work collaboratively using a cross-departmental approach to address issues relating to community schools, making recommendations to

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the government about financial priorities and resource allocations in relation to participating community schools, and assisting the community schools unit in establishing performance measures for the community schools program (Government of Manitoba, 2012; p.6).

There are currently 32 officially designated community schools in the province of Manitoba as recognized by the Community Schools Program. These community schools receive additional funding in order to provide a comprehensive array of support in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The funding that community schools receive also supports the employment of what is referred to as a community liaison or community school connector in the province of Manitoba and whose role is described as identifying, facilitating and coordinating the delivery of community school programming (Government of Manitoba). Research indicates that a community liaison or community school connector may play an essential role in the expanding partnerships and supporting the implementation of programming within a community school setting (Blank, 2005; Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003; Campbell-Allan, Shah, Sullenden, Zazore; 2009). The government of Manitoba through its' provincial policies has acknowledged the value of providing holistic and integrated support. However, there has been no connection made between the "*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*," (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013), and the *Community Schools Act* (Government of Manitoba), both of which were led by the Department of Education in the same province. This may be another example of loose coupling whereby the Community Schools Program may be disconnected from other provincial initiatives that promote interdisciplinary partnerships for children and youth.



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However, the wraparound approach and the community schools model are not mutually exclusive. If combined, the community school might provide the most appropriate host environment for the implementation of the wraparound approach.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The wraparound approach and the community school model are both based on the premise that the provision of holistic support is the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of children, youth and families. The wraparound approach and the community school model are complimentary, and if combined they may improve the provision of support and thereby improve the outcomes of the individuals whom they serve. In this regard, the wraparound approach, if based in a school and referred to as the school-based wraparound approach may provide: (a) a designated lead organization, (b) a clearly articulated process to guide planning, (c) case management through the use of wraparound facilitators, and (d) a means by which to measure outcomes.

Building on the structures and process in the wraparound approach, the community school (Dryfoos, 1995,1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002), as the centre of service provision may provide: (a) formal structures that foster interdependence among service providers, (b) opportunities to blend funding and de-categorize support, (c) a single point of entry to receive services and enhanced information sharing, and (d) opportunities to overcome discipline-based decision making through transdisciplinary teaming. Together, the benefits of the school-based wraparound approach, in the context of a community school, might serve to meet the needs of children, youth, families and the community at large.

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Therefore, it may be necessary to obtain the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in community schools in the province of Manitoba to determine the characteristics of community schools that foster collaboration as well as the extent to which collaboration is occurring. It also may be necessary to determine the extent to which the practices in community schools align with the ten guiding principles of the wraparound approach and thus may be meeting the needs of children and youth with EBD and their families (Bruns, Walker & The National Wraparound Advisory Group, 2008). In order to learn more about the characteristics of three community schools in the province of Manitoba that may support interdisciplinary collaboration and thus enable the implementation of the wraparound approach I posed the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a community school acknowledged in the literature that facilitate collaboration and support children and youth with EBD and their families?
2. According to the key stakeholders involved in the Community Schools Program, to what extent is collaboration fostered and are supports integrated in an environment like a community school?
3. What are the practices being used by the community schools in this study that reflect the wraparound approach and are effective in improving outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families, that will serve as a model for other schools and that will promote improvement and change?

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### Significance of the Study

There is a considerable amount of research that supports the integration of services for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009). There also is research that supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers support (Dryfoos, 1995; 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Grossman & Vang, 2009). However, there is limited Canadian research about the integration of support through the wraparound approach for children and youth with EBD in the context of a community school. In addition, given that community schools vary widely in their scope and in the type of services that they provide, it may be important to explore the community school model as it exists in Manitoba, as the unique experiences in this province should be reflected in the research literature as it may serve to inform future practice. Identifying the characteristics of community schools that foster collaboration and reflect the wraparound approach may, on a practical level, assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children with youth with EBD and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes. The identification of the characteristics of community schools that foster collaboration also may serve as a resource to the recently established Community School Program in the province of Manitoba, as outlined in the *Community Schools Act* (Government of Manitoba, 2012).

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It also may inform the implementation of the wraparound approach as outlined in the inter-departmental provincial protocol entitled, “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) that was recently released by the province of Manitoba.

### **Overview of the Document**

Chapter one of this study provides a description of the Manitoba context, a statement of the problem, and a description of the significance of the study. In Chapter Two, I will present a review of the literature and connect the literature to the stated problem. In Chapter Three, I will outline the methods and design of the study, describe my role as a researcher, explain the ethical implications of the research, as well as the process for data collection and analysis. In chapters four through six each of the three cases will be detailed within their own chapter that will include a description of the case, a summary of the programming provided, an introduction of the participants in alphabetical order using pseudonyms, and a summary of the data using the core themes that were identified. In chapter seven I will summarize the core themes that were identified in all three cases and in chapter eight I will provide a cross-case analysis of the variances across the cases. Finally, in chapter nine I will present my findings, the limitations of the study as well as conclusions and recommendations for future research.

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### Chapter 2

#### The Review of the Literature

In Chapter One, I described the challenge of identifying and implementing effective supports for children and youth with EBD. The research shows that the prevalence of EBD in children and youth continues to increase and so too does the propensity for poor life outcomes (Kaufmann, 2005; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein & Sumi, 2005). Based on this trajectory, it is essential to identify and implement evidence-based practices that provide comprehensive and integrated support (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009). To that end, fundamental changes in the way services are provided at the system, organization and team level, for children and youth with EBD needs to occur (Fixen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Walker et al., 2003). The wraparound approach (Burns & Goldman, 1999), in the context of the school setting, referred to as the school-based wraparound approach (Eber & Nelson, Eber et al., 1997, Pachiano et al., 2003), might provide both the process and appropriate host environment, to reduce the fragmentation of support for children and youth with EBD and their families. Wilson and Corbett (1983) found that more tightly coupled systems were more responsive to significant change efforts. Therefore, in order to further enhance collaboration and facilitate tighter coupling between service providers, the school-based wraparound approach in the context of a community school, might build a culture of interdependence and create the conditions that enable a truly integrated model of support (Dryfoos, 1995, 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2005).

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### **Definition of Terms**

There are competing definitions for children and youth with EBD and the existence of competing definitions will be explored later in this paper. The following definitions are provided in order to provide clarity with respect to the population being studied.

**Mental health and mental illness.** Mental health and mental illness are terms used by Health Canada and the World Health Organization to build a shared understanding and a common approach to the prevention and treatment of mental health challenges. In this regard, mental health is defined as the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think and act in a ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is further described as a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity. Whereas, mental illnesses are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour – or some combination thereof- associated with significant distress and impaired functioning (Government of Canada, 2006; Waddell et al., 2007; WHO, 2005;).

**EBD broadly defined.** Emotional and behavioural disorders have been broadly defined to include externalizing behaviors like aggression, disruption, and other forms of acting out, as well as internalizing behaviors including depression, anxiety and social withdrawal. Externalizing behavioural challenges refer to attentional and activity disorders, conduct disorders and antisocial behavior (Kauffman, 2005). According to the American Psychiatric Association (2000), attentional challenges like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD] are characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, while conduct disorders are characterized by aggression, property destruction, dishonesty, and theft, cruelty to people and

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animals and serious rule violations. Children and youth with Oppositional Defiant Disorder [ODD] are described as engaging in anti-social behaviour. They are easily angered, lose their temper, argue and defy adults and often refuse to comply with requests or accept limits (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Children and youth with externalizing behavioural challenges as described above are the focus of this research as they are consistent with Manitoba Education's definition of what constitutes an emotional and behavioural disorder in children and youth.

**EBD defined in Manitoba.** The educational system in Manitoba uses a severity based label for children and youth with EBD. Children and youth with behavioural challenges may be labeled EBD Level 2 or EBD Level 3. While the term disorder is used in Manitoba Education's definition of EBD, specific disorders like ADHD, Conduct Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder are not identified. EBD Level 2 describes a child or youth who displays very severe emotional and behavioural disorders characterized by inappropriate or disproportionate emotional and behavioural responses to various life situations. These children and youth are further described as requiring individualized programming and supports and ongoing formal interagency involvement. A child or youth who is labeled EBD Level 3 is described as severely/profoundly emotionally and behaviourally disordered. These children and youth are described as exhibiting profound emotional and behavioural disorders and associated learning difficulties requiring highly individualized programming and intensive support services at school and in the community. They also pose a danger to themselves or others as their actions are marked by impulsive, aggressive, and violent behaviour.

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This behaviour is described as chronic and pervasive in that it negatively affects all environments, including home, school, and community. Children and youth with severe/profound EBD or EBD Level 3 are also described as requiring a combination of statutory and non-statutory services from Manitoba Education, Family Services, Health, and/or Justice and must have 24-hour plans that outline this support (Manitoba Education, 2012a). The focus of this research will be children and youth who are identified by Manitoba Education as experiencing severe to profound EBD or EBD Level 3, according to Manitoba Education's aforementioned criteria. In this study, participants were asked to reflect on this population of students when responding to the questions that were posed, as research demonstrates that students with severe to profound EBD are most in need of integrated supports (Burns & Goldman, 1999; Bruns et al., 2004; Dieker, 2001; Eber et al., 2002; Wagner et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2003; World Health Organization, 2004).

### **Outcomes for Children and Youth with EBD**

Research has shown that children and youth with EBD experience less school success than any other subgroup of students with or without disabilities (Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein & Sumi, 2005). They also are more likely to be retained at some point in their schooling, become suspended or expelled and ultimately drop out of school (Knitzer, Steinberg & Fleisch, 1999; Rodney, Crafter, Rodney & Mupier, 1999,). Limited school success may be due in part to the existence of co-occurring learning disabilities, as one quarter to one half of all students with EBD has a diagnosable learning disability (Fessler, Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1991; Rock, Fessler & Church, 1997).



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Children with EBD who display anti-social behaviour prior to adolescence, are described as “early starters” and are more likely to have anti-social behaviour patterns that persist into adulthood including persistent mental health challenges, drug and alcohol abuse, poor physical health, lower educational attainment, unemployment and involvement in the criminal justice system (Moffit, Caspi, Dickson, Silva, & Stanton, 1996). Given that children and youth with EBD have not fared well in school and in society, identifying the most effective means of support for this population may be a somewhat daunting task (Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Kagan & Neville, 1993). However, what is evident is that the complex needs of children and youth with EBD cannot be met by one person. Research indicates that collaborative processes are necessary to improve outcomes for children and youth with EBD (Bruns, Burchard, Suter, Leverentz-Brady, 2004; Burns & Goldman, 1999; Dieker, 2001; Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Wagner et al., 2005; Walker, Koroloff, & Schutte, 2003; World Health Organization, 2004).

**Children and youth with EBD in schools.** Due to the increasing number of children and youth with EBD in Manitoba (Postl, 1995), and the paucity of supports for this population of students (Waddell et al., 2005), schools have been charged with attempting to meet the complex mental health needs of children and youth (Burns et al., 1995). Externalizing behavioural challenges like ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorders and Conduct Disorders often surface in childhood, with the average of onset being between 7-15 years (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, & Walters, 2005; Waddell & Sheppard, 2002), and as a result, educators may be the first to observe worrisome behaviours in children and youth (Hymel, Schonert-Reichl & Miller, 2006; Weist, 1999).

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Increasingly, the responsibility of educators to teach children and youth with EBD may be secondary to the more immediate need to stabilize what might be described as disruptive and at times physically aggressive behaviour.

In an evaluation of an urban school division in Manitoba, school administrators and teachers identified addressing the needs of students with EBD in elementary and middle schools as their number one priority when asked to reflect on the needs of their at risk population (Proactive Information Services, 2006). Manitoba is not the only Canadian province with an increasing number of children and youth being identified by the educational system as having EBD. According to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2006), students identified as having EBD represented the largest percentage of students receiving special educational services. Further compounding the challenges educators face with this population of students, may be that educators lack sufficient training and expertise to meet complex mental health needs (Bullock, Ellis, & Wilson, 1994; Maag & Katsiyannis, 1999). In the absence of interdisciplinary collaboration and support from (e.g., mental health, child welfare, justice, and families) teachers may feel that they have been left alone to meet the needs of students with severe behavioural challenges (Eber et al., 1997; Hobbs & Westling, 2002).

### **Definition of Collaboration**

Collaboration is a complex term wrought with ambiguity (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodrigues & Beaulieu, 2005; Horwath & Morrison, 2007). There are many competing definitions of collaboration that describe it as an interdisciplinary process, a style of interaction, a structural phenomenon, an attitude, and a relationship (D'Amour et al., 2005; Friend & Cook, 1990, Horwath & Morrison, 2007).

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In their review of the literature on collaboration, Horwath and Morrison (2007) confirmed the existence of competing definitions of collaboration and suggested that collaboration might be best understood along a continuum, from informal local partnerships to formal whole agency or system level interactions. The continuum they describe contains five levels of collaboration that include: (1) communication where individuals from different disciplines talk together, (2) co-operation where there is some low key joint work on a case-by-case basis, (3) co-ordination where more formalized joint working occurs but there are no sanctions for non-compliance, (4) coalition where joint structures exist and participants begin to sacrifice some autonomy, and (5) integration where organizations merge to create a new joint identity (Gregson, Cartlidge & Bond, 1992; Hallett & Birchall, 1992; Huxham & Macdonald, 1992; Marrett, 1971). Research in the area of systems of care, indicates that given the complexity of needs of children and youth with EBD, the integration of support is required for this population (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009), or the fifth level of collaboration as outlined by Howarth and Morrison (2007). However, a critical review of the degree of collaboration that is presently occurring among human service providers in the province of Manitoba, might reveal that collaboration is not at the level of integration, and is therefore insufficient to meet the needs of children and youth with EBD (Bartlett, 2005; Proactive Information Services, 2006).

### **Benefits of Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Children and youth with EBD, their families and service providers, benefit from the collective knowledge, skills and resources of a diverse group and the shared decision making and problem solving that results from effective interdisciplinary collaboration (Bronstein, 2003).

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Research shows that collaborative efforts for children and youth with EBD can lead to improvements in both academic and behavioural outcomes (Bruns, Burchard & Yoe, 1995; Eber, Rolf, & Schrieber, 1996; Malloy, Cheney, & Cormier, 1998). The benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration for children and youth with EBD also includes the provision of more holistic, child-centered services (Williamson, 2002), enhanced information sharing across service providers and with families (Barker, Bosco, & Oandasan, 2005), less duplication and redundancy in services provided (VanEyck & Baum, 2002), and the timely receipt of services (Cottrell, Lucey, Porter, & Walker, 2000). In times of shrinking budgets and increasing caseloads, one would think that the increased efficiency and cost effectiveness of interdisciplinary collaboration, as outlined by Johnson et al., (2003), and the child and family centered nature of teaming through a system of care (Stroul & Friedman, 1986, 1994), would be sufficient to encourage enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration among human service providers in Manitoba. In spite of the many benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration, and the existence of a provincial protocol promoting interdisciplinary collaboration through the wraparound approach, it remains elusive and loosely coupled from the everyday practice of human service providers in the province of Manitoba. According to Hernandez and Hodges (2003) human services is wrought with what is referred to as the “paper implementation” of policies and procedures that have no real impact on actual practice.

### **Barriers to Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

In order for a more responsive and integrated system of support to be established for children and youth with EBD, it is necessary to identify the barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration that exist at the various levels of interaction in a system of care.

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According to Walker et al. (2003), the barriers to effective high-quality collaborative planning should be examined through the lens of system, organizational and team level constraints in order to identify areas of weakness and facilitate change. In their analysis of the factors that promote high quality individualized planning, the team level refers to the child or youth, primary caregiver(s) and other service providers who play a direct role in the development and implementation of the plan. The organizational level includes organizations or agencies involved as partners with the team level that contribute services, staffing and funding to support the individualized planning process, while the system level or policy level encompasses the larger service system and economic context within which the organization and team operate. The system level “.... also includes those individuals and bodies that make decisions regarding policies and procedures and the allocation of resources that affect the functioning of the agencies and by extension the teams” (Walker et al., 2003; p. 5). While each level of support is referred to separately, it is recognized that the interrelationships that exist between each level of support are complex and “....contain feedback loops that operate within team processes and between processes and outcomes” (Walker & Schutte, 2004; p. 183). Through the identification of the barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration, it may be possible to overcome the obstacles that exist and facilitate tighter coupling between service providers so that they might be more responsive to the needs of children and youth with EBD.

**A lack of interdependence.** Interdependence is essential to collaborative processes because it motivates participants to work together as they recognize that collaborative practices yield better results than independent efforts (D’Amour et al., 2005). However, interdependence is highly dependent upon the system and organization that create the conditions that enable collaborative processes to occur.

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In this regard, systems and organizations require leadership to legitimize interdisciplinary collaboration through policies and processes that institutionalize collaborative practices and reward their occurrence (Fixen et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2003). The leaders of such initiatives are referred to as purveyors and they are described as instrumental in the implementation of any broad-based change initiative. Leadership also is required at the team or practice level to ensure that collaborative practices are implemented (Fixen et al., 2005). However, in the province of Manitoba there is a lack of clarity about who is championing the use of collaborative practices. The ambiguity that exists has led to the inconsistent use of collaborative practices. A critical review of collaborative processes in the Manitoba using the continuum of collaboration outlined by Howarth and Morrison (2007), might reveal that human service providers are operating at divergent and even contradictory levels of collaboration for children and youth with EBD. In this regard, the only human service provider who has been expected to collaborate at the level of integration is the field of education, in that funding for students with EBD in the educational system is dependent upon the documentation of integrated support across multiple service providers (Manitoba Education, 2012b), while other human service providers may not have similar expectations and may not have the receipt of resources tied to the degree of collaborative planning in which they engage. When processes for collaboration are not clearly articulated, and if there is an absence of leadership to direct collaborative practices, it may be difficult for the team of direct service providers to develop interdependence and act collectively in the best interests of children and youth with complex needs (Fixen et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2003). Ultimately, the absence of formalized policies and practices that foster interdependence among human service providers, may lead to a lack of cohesiveness among team members, ineffective planning and ultimately poor outcomes for the population to be served (Walker et al., 2003).

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**Competing definitions of EBD.** Literature in the area of interdisciplinary collaboration also reveals that in order for multiple service providers to communicate effectively they should speak a common language (Bruner, Kunesch & Knuth, 1992; Miller & Ahmad, 2000). There should be clarity and consensus regarding the terminology that is used so that support providers can communicate effectively toward a common goal (Salmon & Rapport, 2005). However, there are contested definitions for children and youth with EBD and as such, human service providers may become loosely coupled in that they may not speak the same language when it comes to identifying the individuals most in need of support. Confusion may be created when the labels used by the system, organization and team are not aligned. In this regard, Canada does not have a federal definition of children and youth EBD and since education is a provincial responsibility each province uses its own means of identifying behavioural challenges in the educational system (Csapo, 1981; Dworet & Rathgerber, 1990; Dworet & Maich, 2007). The existence of contested definitions is further complicated by the fact that some jurisdictions use disparate labels and criteria to determine eligibility for resources which may interfere with the provision of needs based support. When categorical labels are used educators may spend an inordinate amount of time trying to prove that a student requires support. Similarly, caregivers may find themselves visiting multiple professionals in pursuit of a diagnosis in order for their child to receive support at school even though the medical model of labeling children and youth may not be appropriate in an educational context (Jones, 2003). In this instance, a child may meet pre-determined criteria and be labeled in one jurisdiction and not in another (Altman, 1991; Duchnowski, Johnson, Hall, Kutash, & Friedman, 1993; Schorr & Both, 1991). At the team level, educators may feel frustrated when students in their classrooms with seemingly the same level of need are ineligible for much need support from other systems.

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It is difficult for systems to be responsive to the needs of children and youth with EBD and for service providers to work collaboratively when the label as opposed to the needs of the individual become the focus of the interdisciplinary team.

Salmon and Rapport (2005) conducted a qualitative study of case conferences in South Wales, United Kingdom for children and youth with complex needs, including severe behavioural challenges. The purpose of the study was to identify the nature and type of discourse used by interdisciplinary teams during case conferences. The interdisciplinary teams consisted of educators, social workers, mental health and health professionals, as well as the private sector. Through a thematic analysis of the discourse used during the case conferences, they concluded that the interdisciplinary discourse did not reflect collaborative practices. They noted that the discourse primarily centered on what they referred to as “single agency issues,” rather than multi-agency issues and included topics like each agency’s respective workload, waitlists and interventions (p. 40). They also noted that there were few attempts to clarify the terminology that was used by each respective discipline, even though there was evidence at times that various service providers did not understand the terminology being used by other members of the team. They attributed the lack of questioning for clarification of the terminology being used to the fact that participants were inhibited by the perceived hierarchies that existed within the group. If the terminology being used by interdisciplinary teams is not understood by all team members, and team members are reluctant to ask for clarification, it stands to reason that individuals may not be adequately served.



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**Inflexible funding.** Another significant obstacle to interdisciplinary collaboration for children and youth with EBD is the existence of inflexible funding structures (Katz-Leavy, Lourie, Stroul & Zeigler-Dendy, 1992; Knitzer, 1993; Manitoba Education Training & Youth, 2001, Olson, Whitbeck & Robinson, 1991; Proactive Information Services, 1998; Saskatchewan Special Education Review Committee, 2000). In order for interdisciplinary collaboration to occur for children and youth with EBD, the infrastructure must exist to allow for interagency partnerships and a common pool of resources must be made available (Fixen et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2003). Dollard, Evans, Lubrecht and Schaffer (1994) conducted case studies of the use of flexible funding dollars in rural settings in North Idaho and Upstate New York from 1991 to 1993. The cases involved children and youth with severe to profound behavioural challenges who were at risk of out of home placement and who required highly individualized services. The use of flexible funding dollars in both settings involved the provision of economic support for the family that could be spent on respite, recreation and transportation to support the child or youth in need. In one case in New York, flexible funding dollars were used to assist a family in making a security deposit on an apartment that was closer to much needed resources, to pay for some outstanding utility bills and complete some emergency car repairs. A new drum set, knee pads for skate boarding and a camping excursion also were supported by the flexible funding dollars. The total amount spent over a six month period was \$1498.00, significantly less than the cost of an out of home treatment facility for a similar amount of time. The conclusion of the study was that in order to support children and youth, the basic needs of the entire family must be met. They further found that in order for flexible funds to have a positive impact on the child and family they needed to be: (1) tailored to meet the individual needs of the child and family, (2) readily available, (3) easily disseminated, and (3) decided upon at the team level.

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Presently in the province of Manitoba, the existence of separate budget lines may lead human service professionals to guard and protect the resources of their respective agency to the detriment of the child and family in need. As a result, a competitive as opposed to cooperative spirit may emerge, particularly when resources are limited in times of fiscal restraint (Burns & Goldman, 1999). Under these conditions, interpersonal conflict may arise, as individuals may feel the need to defend themselves against what they perceive as a hostile and competitive environment (Garmston and Wellman, 1999), which may interfere with collaboration and thus the provision of support for children and youth with EBD who may depend on multiple service providers to meet their needs.

**Discipline-based decision making.** Sharing is an essential component of interdisciplinary collaboration, where the parties involved in an exchange relationship not only share resources, but also possess shared values with respect to understanding the presenting needs and the actions of the collaborative team (D'Amour et al., 2005). However, each discipline within the team may have its own philosophy, values and methodology, which may lead to loose coupling and thus incompatible expectations (Koff, DeFries, & Witzke, 1994; Weick, 1976). Clark (1994) describes the “cognitive maps” through which professionals are indoctrinated to view the world and the needs of their clients. These cognitive maps inform the values, identities and practices of the respective professions and may hinder the team’s ability to collaborate. The divergent views of human service professionals may lead to the emergence of territorial boundaries or “turfism” and interfere with their willingness to share. According to Schein (1972) human service disciplines, “...have not striven to reduce the conceptual boundaries that exist between their disciplines” (p. 4).

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Alschuler (2003) conducted an exploratory study involving focus group methodology in Illinois with representatives from child welfare, education and youth who were living in foster care. The purpose of the study was to identify the barriers to successful collaborative practices. During focus groups, both social workers and educators characterized their professional interactions as adversarial and attributed their challenges to a lack of understanding of the others' roles. The educators felt that the social workers withheld critical information that assisted them in supporting their students, whereas, the social workers felt that the educators expected to be informed about confidential information that was unnecessary for them to provide. Both the educators and students felt that the social workers were not truly involved in the students' lives because they had a lack of regular, direct contact. The social workers also felt that the educators were not committed to supporting students with EBD, and that they deliberately excluded these students from schools. The study concluded that there was a mutual distrust across disciplines and a general disbelief that the other discipline would follow through with their professional responsibilities. In addition to the conflict between social workers and educators described in the aforementioned study, Hobbs and Westling (2002) also found that educators often felt abandoned by mental health professionals, as they tried to meet the mental health needs of students with EBD in the context of the school environment. Clearly, interdisciplinary conflict is not limited to a particular discipline and may severely impede the provision of holistic support for children and youth with EBD and their families. When an individual demonstrates severe emotional behavioural challenges, the collaborative team of human service professionals may further polarize as the needs of the child or youth may be so complex that effective interventions may be difficult to identify (Richards & Vostanis, 2005). Unfortunately, these conflicts may be difficult to overcome and the collaborative team may dismantle in times of stress.

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**A lack of information sharing.** Research shows that mental health and child welfare have been slow to enlist educators as partners in collaborative planning for children and youth with EBD and, often have been guarded in their willingness to share information (Eber & Nelson, 1997; Lourie, 1994). In Manitoba, if mental health supports are received for children and youth with EBD, they are often made available outside of the local community and school (Postl, 1995). With multiple points of entry to receive services, educators may be unaware that services are being provided, and thus unaware of the therapeutic goals for the child or youth. Inconsistent responses to inappropriate behaviour in children and youth has been found to exacerbate behavioural difficulties (Mayer, 1995; Olweus, 1993). In the absence of adequate information, educators may intervene in a manner that is inconsistent with the therapeutic goals for the student and thus impede behavioural progress. Parents of children and youth with EBD also may be reluctant to share information with educators, as their relationship may be strained due to dissatisfaction with the school's response to their child's behaviour. Suspensions for behavioural incidents may lead to tension within the team, and thereby interfere with collaboration (Eber et al, 2002). Parents may at times feel blamed for the child's challenges, as opposed to supported by child serving agencies which may further impede the sharing of information during team interactions (Friesen & Koroloff, 1990). After observing individualized planning meetings for children and youth with significant needs for over a year, Walker et al. (2003), found that "...each service provider had their own plan that they kept referring to but never once did we see them share their plans with other members of the team" (p.55-56). Recognizing that inconsistent approaches to sharing information were interfering with providing support in the area of human services Alberta Human Services developed an *Information Sharing Strategy* (2012), to ensure that information sharing practices were clearly delineated

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among human service providers to enhance the provision of support for children, youth and families. The absence of guidelines for sharing information at the system and organizational level may further legitimize a lack of information sharing across service providers (Morse, 1992), to the detriment of collaborative planning.

**The absence of shared accountability for outcomes.** Another barrier to interdisciplinary collaboration is the fact that interdisciplinary teams supporting children and youth with EBD in Manitoba may not have shared accountability for outcomes. Each service provider may be accountable to his or her respective agency, and therefore they may engage in what Satin (1994) refers to as “parallel practice.” What this means is that human service providers may attend meetings, but ultimately the needs of the child may be secondary to needs of the service providers (Duchnowski et al., 1993). With the exception of educators, human service providers in Manitoba have not been required to provide evidence of collaborative practice and outcomes for children and youth, in spite of the fact that research in team effectiveness indicates that “....when individuals know that they will be accountable for carrying out tasks related to the goals, their motivation to complete the tasks improves” (Walker & Schutte, 2004; p. 185).

Walker et al., (2003) conducted research about what it takes for a wraparound team to be successful. In their study they completed a literature review and engaged semi-structured interviews with 55 stakeholders representing the system, team and organizational level of wraparound teams. In their research they found that many individualized planning teams met and talked about the child and family in need without any clear reference to documented goals.

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They further found that less than one third of the planning teams they observed maintained a shared team plan with documented goals and a process for the evaluation of progress. Based on their research, they developed a conceptual framework of the necessary conditions that must be met to achieve high quality wraparound support and identified, “A first priority for accountability at the system level is to ensure that programs which claim to be providing individualized support are in fact doing so. Policy and funding arrangements should require that programs provide evidence that they are adhering to a practice model....” (p.91). However, in the province of Manitoba there is an absence of shared accountability for outcomes, and as a result human service providers in Manitoba have remained loosely coupled from one another in the provision of support.

### **A Strategy for Change**

Significant changes to the manner in which needs are conceptualized and supports are provided are needed in order to address the needs of children and youth with EBD. These changes should involve moving beyond the creation of a provincial protocol that promotes the use of the wraparound approach to establishing a clearly articulated strategy to support its implementation. Relying on a memorandum of understanding between human service providers has been insufficient in fostering collaboration for children and youth with EBD (Bartlett & Freeze, 2005), and may continue to be insufficient if the implementation of the wraparound approach is not clearly articulated and agreed to by all stakeholders.

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Alternative approaches like the wraparound approach (Burns & Goldman, 1999), in the context of the school setting, referred to as the school-based wraparound approach (Eber & Nelson, Eber et al., 1997, Pachiano et al., 2003), might provide both the process and appropriate host environment to reduce the fragmentation of support and foster interdisciplinary collaboration. In order to further enhance the integration of support, the school-based wraparound approach might be most effective in the context of a community school (Dryfoos, 1995, 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002), where the school becomes the centre of service provision. To that end, the tenets of the wraparound approach in the context of a community school will be discussed, and the means by which this proposed model of support might help to overcome the barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration will be explored.

### **Wraparound: An Alternative Model to Foster Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

Unlike a system of care, the wraparound approach is a process for planning and individualizing supports for children and youth with EBD and their families. In the wraparound approach, services and supports are “wrapped around” the child or youth and their caregiver in that they are placed at the centre of the Wraparound plan, and their voice is paramount in identifying their individual and collective strengths, as well as in identifying informal, community-based resources that may be required to meet their needs (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg et al., 2009). Wraparound is not a set of services, but rather, it is a process for meeting the complex needs of children and youth and their caregivers through the integration of multiple systems and the development of individualized plans of care. The overall premise of the wraparound approach is to enhance options for children, youth, and their families by building collaborative wraparound teams, who together tailor supports that lead to improvements in

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outcomes (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg et al., 2009). There are ten guiding principles associated with the wraparound approach that have been accepted in the fields of mental health, child welfare and education, as well as by caregivers and they include: (1) family voice and choice, (2) team-based processes, (3) the utilization of natural supports, (4) a focus on collaboration, (5) the utilization of community based supports, (6) the provision of culturally competent approaches, (7) the provision of individualized support, (8) building on strengths, (9) persistence, and (10) outcome based support (Bruns, Walker & The National Wraparound Advisory Group, 2008).

In addition to explicating the specific phases and activities involved in wraparound process and providing a model for the development of an individualized wraparound plan (Walker, Bruns, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008), the wraparound approach also details the role of wraparound facilitators and provides training materials for individuals who might fulfill this role (Eber, 2003; Grealish, 2000; VanDenBerg & Rast, 2003). Given its focus on outcomes, there also are tools to measure the wraparound team's adherence to the principles of the wraparound process, from the perspective of the team members and from the vantage point of an individual who observes the team processes and provides specific feedback (Bruns, 2008; Bruns, Burchard, Suter, Leverentz-Brady, & Force, 2004). Given that the wraparound approach has a clearly articulated practice model and tools to measure the fidelity of implementation, it may provide the necessary structures that would enable the tighter coupling of service providers in the provision of support (Bruns & Walker, 2010).



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### Theoretical Basis of Wraparound

**Social Role Valorization.** There are several theoretical bases that together have influenced the development of the wraparound approach. Notably, the work of Wolfensberger (1983) and Social Role Valorization [SRV] is consistent with the wraparound approach in that SRV involves, “....the creation of support and the defense of valued social roles for people who are at risk of social devaluation” (p.234). Children and youth with EBD and their families may be particularly prone to devaluation because of the extreme nature of their behaviour and the stigma associated with mental health challenges, and therefore may require support to ensure that they too are accorded valued social roles in society. In keeping with the belief that all individuals deserve valued social roles, the wraparound approach also utilizes a strengths based model whereby, the strengths of the individual and family are not judged by an overly professionalized group of people and thus devalued, but rather the strengths of the individual and family form the basis of the wraparound plan of support (Burns & Goldman, 1999). Applying Wolfensberger’s (1983) work Chappell (1992) further defined SRV to include the de-institutionalization of individuals with disabilities and the use of community care where individuals live in “ordinary houses” and go to “ordinary schools” (p.35). This definition also aligns with the tenets of the wraparound approach in that one of the primary goals of this approach is to avoid restrictive out of home placements by assisting caregivers in accessing natural supports. Consistent with Wolfensberger’s work, the wraparound approach seeks to empower individuals who have been disempowered and ensure that the “family’s voice and choice” are fundamental in the receipt of support (Bruns, Walker & The National Wraparound Advisory Group, 2008).

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**Ecological Theory.** Bronfenbrenner 's (1979) Ecological Theory regards behaviour as developing in the context of several reciprocal interactions in the child, family, neighbourhood, community, and school environments. This theory is congruent with the wraparound approach, as the wraparound approach also regards the unique ecological environment of the child and family as essential in determining strengths, needs, and plans of support. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the child, family, neighbourhood, community, and school environments continually interact and affect each other and these interactions must be assessed holistically. In the wraparound approach, the complex interplay between these environments is recognized in the individualized planning process, and as much as possible supports are provided within the context of the natural settings in which these interactions occur.

**Environmental Ecology Theory.** Related to the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), Environmental Ecology Theory (Munger, 1998) also regards understanding the unique environment of the individual and family as essential to the success of any intervention. According to Environmental Ecology Theory, the multiple systems that affect the child and family must be considered in all aspects of planning and support. Environmental Ecology Theory underpins the wraparound approach, in that it too acknowledges that the most effective support is support that maximizes collaboration across systems, recognizing that no one system operates in isolation. "Effective wraparound programs change the surrounding environment of the child and thus foster lasting changes that occur in individuals, families and communities" (Burns, Schoenwald, Burchard, Faw, & Santos, 2000, p. 296).

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### **School-Based Wraparound**

The wraparound approach holds much promise as a best practice in meeting the needs of children and youth with EBD and their families (Burns & Goldman, 1999; Kendziora et al., 2001). It has been estimated that 100,000 children, youth and their families are being supported by the wraparound approach annually in the United States (Sather, Bruns, & Stambaugh, 2008). While wraparound is increasingly recognized as a process for supporting children and youth with EBD, closer attention is being paid to the need for a lead agency to be identified to guide the wraparound process and ensure the fidelity of implementation and adherence to its guiding principles. According to Walker et al. (2003), the assignment of a lead agency is a necessary precondition to the successful implementation of the Wraparound approach. By default, educators in Manitoba have been given the responsibility of leading systems of care, without the supports in place to effectively lead beyond the school setting (Bartlett & Freeze, 2005). The role of the lead agency would be to initiate, sustain and oversee the wraparound approach. The lead agency also would become the recipient of flexible funding dollars to support the use of the wraparound approach and enable the development of highly individualized plans of care (Walker et al., 2003).

It has been suggested that with appropriate supports in place, the school might provide the most effective “host environment” to initiate and sustain the wraparound approach (Eber, 1998; Eber & Nelson, 1997; Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Hienemann & Dunlap, 2001; Knoster, Villa, & Thousand, 2000). According to Zins and Ponti (1990), the “host environment” is an essential element that must be considered in the implementation of any initiative. In the absence of a suitable host environment even the best conceived plans may not succeed.

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In this regard, schools have a number of characteristics that may support the implementation of the wraparound approach including: (a) mandates for service provision (b) structures for daily contact with children, youth and their families, (c) broad-based support like resource teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and social workers, (d) an individualized education planning process [IEP] that includes strengths-based planning, and (e) a continuum of behavioural supports. (Eber et al., 2002).

**Mandated service provision.** *The Public Schools Amendment Act - Appropriate Educational Programming*, passed in 2005 in Manitoba mandates that educators “....utilize a collaborative school-family-community process where school communities create learning environments and provide resources and services that are responsive to the lifelong learning, social and emotional needs of all students” (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006; p.1). Based on the philosophy of inclusion, educators in Manitoba must provide appropriate programming to meet the needs of all students regardless of their disability. This mandate includes providing timely school-based assessments, specialized assessments, and if required, comprehensive interventions to address learning, social and emotional needs (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006). What this means is that educators in Manitoba cannot wait for other service providers to initiate the provision of much needed supports. Educators are mandated to act and provide interventions if they are determined to be needed by the child or youth (Maag & Katsiyannis, 1996). Even in the absence of support from other disciplines, educators are mandated to create comprehensive plans of support for children and youth with severe EBD, and therefore it stands to reason that the wraparound approach might be embedded in school-based planning.

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**Contact with children, youth and families.** Schools as mandated service providers have unparalleled contact with children, youth and families (Adelman & Taylor, 1997; Weist, 1997), and they are often the first place where mental health difficulties are identified (Hymel et al., 2006). Given their contact with children and youth, educators might be best able to identify the students who require support, which may in turn reduce the duplication of services and streamline the receipt of support (Eber et al., 2009). Schools are also increasingly regarded as critical centers in the prevention and early identification of EBD (Sprague & Walker, 2000; Walker et al., 1996). Schools may not only be able to meet the needs of children and youth with EBD through the wraparound approach, but they also may provide important prevention and early intervention programming that is critical in reducing the incidence of EBD. Utilizing the wraparound approach in schools also aligns with the new public health strategy in Canada, which not only calls for the coordination of services across disciplines and jurisdictions, but also calls for an emphasis on early intervention and prevention (Waddell et al., 2005). As such, the ease of accessibility of services in schools may enable schools to reach far more children and youth than when support is led by another service provider.

**Broad-based support.** Schools also have access to broad-based support like resource teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers. While support from the school-based team may be limited, and it may not eliminate the need for mental health and child welfare involvement, the availability of a diverse group of professionals in the school setting may strengthen the wraparound planning process (Eber et al., 2002), as no one discipline can adequately meet the needs of children and youth with complex needs (Ball, Anderson-Butcher, Mellin & Green, 2010). In a school-based wraparound plan, the specific objectives for the child or youth are identified. In order to support the achievement of the objectives in the wraparound

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plan, the school-based team may provide direct instruction in the strategies that promote the attainment of the behavioural objectives (Eber et al., 2009). Another benefit of the school-based wraparound approach is that the school provides a natural setting where children and youth have the opportunity to practice the skills that are necessary for successful social interaction. In the school setting, the school-based team and peers are able to provide feedback with respect to behavioural objectives, which also may lead to the further consolidation of appropriate behaviour (Evans, 1999). Finally, the school-based team also may play an important liaison role with other disciplines from mental health and child welfare which may serve to further enhance interdisciplinary collaboration (Mellin, Anderson-Butcher & Bronstein, 2011).

**Person centered planning processes.** The person centered planning processes that are used in schools like the IEP process is consistent with the tenets of the wraparound approach in that it involves strength-based, individualized planning that prioritizes family involvement (Eber et al., 2002). Schools also employ other forms of person centered planning including the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope [PATH] process (Pearpoint, O'Brien & Forest, 1993), and the Making Action Plans [MAP] process (Alpert & Ryndak, 1992; Forest & Pearpoint, 1992) as well as behaviour intervention planning (Sugai et al., 2000) that value the individual and incorporate child and family values in the process of developing highly individualized plans of support. Although the wraparound process involves extending the team beyond school-based supports and parents, to include natural supports and other life domains, the goals of planning and implementing interventions and measuring outcomes are common to the wraparound approach and as well as other person centered planning approaches used in schools. In Manitoba, educators already have been required to create 24-hour plans for children and youth with EBD in the absence of support from other service providers.

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As a result, transitioning to the wraparound planning process as outlined in the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013), may be a natural extension of the work that already occurs through the person centered planning processes that occur in schools and may begin to make what has been the primary responsibility of educators a more collaborative endeavor.

**A continuum of behavioural supports.** Sugai et al. (2000) suggest that behaviour is more likely to be improved in a school environment that promotes positive behaviour among all students through a continuum of behavioural supports, like the School-wide Positive Behaviour Supports [SWPBS] approach. This approach is based on the assumption that when all educators actively teach and acknowledge appropriate behavior, the number of students with serious behavior challenges decreases and the overall school climate improves (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Schools that provide consistent structures for organizing and applying effective behaviour interventions, through a continuum of supports may be better able to achieve sustainable behavioural improvements in vulnerable children and youth (Sugai et al., 2000). In the SWPBS approach, a failure to respond to a universal intervention is used as an indicator of the need for more intensive interventions, and it may provide assistance in identifying students who might require specially designed, individualized education plans (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Using the SWPBS model, schools cannot simply focus on students with severe to profound EBD, they must use a preventative approach to support appropriate social development and thus provide early intervention and prevention for all students. In order for teachers to effectively address behavioural challenges, using evidence-based practices like the SWPBS approach, requires intensive training in the area of behaviour.

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Thus, the utilization of the SWPBS approach also requires a commitment to the ongoing training of educators, so that they might be better able to provide a continuum of behavioural supports based on students' needs (Eber et al., 2002; Eber et al., 2009). According to Offord (2000), "...the number of children with clinically important emotional and behavioral problems is so large that clinical services alone can never deal adequately with the problem.... a combination of universal, targeted and clinical interventions are needed, all carried out against the background of a civic community" (p. 245). In this regard, the school can provide a continuum of behavioural supports, including early intervention and prevention, which may ultimately reduce the need for more intensive wraparound support (Eber et al., 2002).

### **Outcomes of Wraparound**

There is a growing body of research that indicates that high fidelity wraparound or wraparound that closely adheres to its ten guiding principles, leads to improvements in outcomes for children, youth and their families (Bruns, Suter, & Burchard, 2002; Bruns et al., 2005). Several studies have shown that when children and youth are supported through a wraparound process they display an overall reduction in problematic behaviour (Anderson, Wright, Kooreman, Mohr, & Russell, 2003; Burns, Goldman, Faw, & Burchard, 1999; Goldman & Faw, 1999; Yoe, Santarcangelo, Atkins, & Burchard, 1996). Placement in restrictive settings also has been found to be reduced for children and youth supported through the wraparound process (Anderson et al., 2003). In a matched comparison study in the United States, comparing children who were supported by the wraparound process to children who only received mental health support, results indicated that after 18 months 82% of youth who received wraparound support moved to a less restrictive setting, as compared to 38% of youth who only had received mental health support (Bruns, Rast, Peterson, Walker & Bosworth, 2006; Rast, Bruns, Brown, Peterson



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& Mears, 2007). Reductions in the number of out of home placements resulting from wraparound support also have been found to result in significant reductions in costs related to the provision of care (Kamradt, Gilbertson, & Jefferson, 2008; Rauso, Ly, Lee, & Jarosc, 2009).

There also is research to indicate that children and youth supported by the wraparound approach demonstrate improvements in school performance (Schubauer & Hoyt, 2003) and increased attendance (Duckworth et al., 2001). In addition, an overall improvement in family functioning also has been noted as a result of the receipt of wraparound support (Burns et al., 1999). Parents also have been found to report increased satisfaction with service provision when they have been involved in the wraparound approach (Heflinger, Sonnichsen, & Brannan, 1996). A Canadian study in Ontario found that Wraparound was more effective than traditional approaches in meeting the needs of children and youth with severe to profound EBD in five key areas. The areas included: (a) overall improvement in psychosocial and mental health functioning, (b) fewer out of home placement days, (c) enhanced assistance to families in achieving their goals, (d) greater parental satisfaction, and (e) as much as a 1/3 cost reduction when compared to traditional service provision (Brown & Loughlin, 2004).

The wraparound approach also has been found to be an effective tool in guiding team-based collaborative planning. In this regard, wraparound has been found to improve relationships between service providers (Goldman & Faw, 1999; Anderson & Wright, 2004). Case studies and descriptive accounts by key participants in the wraparound approach have revealed high levels of personal satisfaction and engagement with the wraparound process (Burchard, Burchard, Sewell, & VanDenBerg, 1993; Burns & Goldman, 1999; Cailleaux & Dechief, 2007; Kendziora, Bruns, Osher, Pacchiano & Mejia, 2001).

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### **Outcomes of School-Based Wraparound**

Research associated with the school-based wraparound approach has been found to lead to similar improvements in outcomes for children and youth with EBD. School-based wraparound has been found to reduce out of home placements (Eber, Osuch, & Rolf, 1996; Eber, Osuch & Redditt, 1996), and lead to improvements in academic performance (Eber et al., 1997; Pacchiano et al., 2003). Duckworth et al. (2001) studied the implementation of a school-based wraparound approach in the Southeastern the United States. In this study, the school served as the point of entry for wraparound services for students with EBD. Over an 18 month period, they found that office referrals were reduced by 64% and suspensions were cut in half. Notable improvements also were found in attendance and parental participation and engagement with the school. Unlike community-based approaches, the school-based wraparound approach has been found to enhance access to community-based resources and the use of natural supports (Epstein et al., 2005). When comparing school-based wraparound to wraparound initiated and led by a mental health agency, Epstein et al. (2005) found that school-based wraparound was more likely to include participation from parents and teachers, incorporate educational objectives in the planning process, and utilize a more organized meeting process. In a similar study comparing 47 families served by school-based wraparound and 36 families served by community-based wraparound Nordness (2005), found that school-based wraparound was more likely to include educational staff and discuss educational domains. This study also found that the school-based wraparound approach showed a higher level of interagency collaboration and a higher level of care coordination as measured by the Wraparound Observation Form Second Edition, a tool which measures adherence to the principles of the wraparound approach.

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An additional benefit of the wraparound approach, not found in other community-based approaches, included the role that it played in the early intervention and prevention of behavioural challenges in children and youth, which may ultimately reduce the need for intensive wraparound support in the future (Eber et al., 2002). The availability of trained staff and the expectation of adherence to a structured meeting format with clear objectives, as outlined in the IEP process may account for the enhanced collaboration that may occur in a school-based setting. Furthermore, the location of the school in the local community, as an accessible and familiar centre, also may enhance parents' willingness to engage in the wraparound process. The location of the school also may facilitate the involvement of natural, community-based supports (Eber et al., 2002).

### **Community Schools**

While schools may have some organizational structures that support the implementation of the wraparound approach, they alone are insufficient to sustain the wraparound approach and meet the needs of children and youth with EBD and their families. It is unrealistic to expect schools in Manitoba to lead the wraparound approach and provide the kind of comprehensive and integrated support that may be required for children and youth with EBD, in the absence of fundamental changes in the way supports are provided. In Manitoba, this may mean re-envisioning the traditional model of schools and replacing it with community schools. Embracing the paradigm shift from traditional schools to community schools (Dryfoos, 1995, 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002), might allow for the operationalization of the wraparound approach for children and youth with EBD, and their families in the province of Manitoba.

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Community schools are consistent with the wraparound approach in that services are individualized, child and family centered, integrated across service providers, and available at the community level (Dryfoos, 1995, 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). Given the evidence that children, youth and their families with EBD do not receive the services that they require, and when they do receive services they are fragmented and uncoordinated (Reid & Brown, 2008; Stroul, 2002; Stroul & Friedman, 1986, 1994; Waddell et al., 2005) it stands to reason that integrating much needed supports in the context of a community school may be a viable option to ensure the receipt of support for children, youth and their families (Hoagwood, Burns, Kiser, Ringeison, & Schoenwald, 2001).

### **Community Schools in Canada**

The tighter coupling of schools with other human service providers and community supports through community schools is occurring in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2015; Government of New Brunswick, 2015; Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advance Learning, 2015; Whole Child Program, 2015; Toronto District School Board, 2015; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015; Smith, 2006; Tymchak & The Saskatchewan Instructional Development Unit, 2001; Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006). In each jurisdiction, there appears to be an agreement that there should be a single, major, physical center to provide comprehensive services to meet the needs of children, youth and their families, and that the school should serve as this center. While this basic premise is shared across jurisdictions the terminology used to describe community schools varies. While some schools use the term community school others use the term full-service school.

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In spite of the differences in terminology, all jurisdictions describe their vision of school as that of a “hub” in their respective community, “....where a variety of coordinated services are available and where those in charge are working together to assure the optimal development for all children in the community” (Zigler, Finn-Stevenson, & Stern, 1997; p. 406). What also differs in each jurisdiction is the scope of services provided by the community school and the nature of the partnerships that exist between service providers with respect to governance and funding. The manner in which the community school concept has evolved also differs across jurisdictions, as does the degree of the integration of support (Graves, 2011). When support providers are housed in the same facility, in the context of a community school, there is the danger that the support providers might engage in parallel practice. In order to avoid this pitfall, clearly articulated policies and procedures outlining the nature of collaborative partnerships must be developed.

In 2008, the Nova Scotia Department of Education established a program called SchoolPlus to pilot the development of community schools in four school boards. As of 2015, the program included eight schools boards in the province of Nova Scotia. The model of SchoolPlus in Nova Scotia is described as a collaborative interagency approach supporting the whole child and their family with the school as the center of service delivery. Each SchoolPlus site has an advisory board consisting of representation from education, health, community services and justice who guide the integration of services (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2015). In 2007, the province of New Brunswick developed a Community School Plan with the goal of turning all schools into Community Centres of Learning. There are currently 35 Anglophone community schools that are described as creating alliances between schools and communities in the province of New Brunswick (Government of New Brunswick, 2015).

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In Prince Edward Island there are currently 32 community school sites that primarily focus on including recreation, arts and cultural activities to the programming that is provided by schools (Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advance Learning, 2015). In 2001, Yukon started the Whole Child Program, and its mission was to create community schools that link health and human services in a collaborative partnership, within the context of local schools. Presently, the Whole Child Program operates in one school in White Horse (Whole Child Program, 2015).

In Quebec the term Community Learning Center is used to describe its community schools and there are currently 37 operating in the province. The Community Learning Centers in Quebec are described as partnerships involving the provision of holistic services across disciplines (Learn, 2015). In Ontario, the Toronto District School Board offers a program called the *Priority Schools Initiative* which focuses on meeting the needs of the community by providing health and wellness, sports and recreation, leadership and development, arts and culture, counselling, settlement, literacy, social, environment, and civic engagement opportunities in designated school sites. The Toronto District School Board also provides what they call *Model Schools for Inner Cities*, which is an initiative that focusses on meeting the needs of the whole child by working together with students, families, community and governments to integrate support (Toronto District School Board, 2015). The province of Alberta is currently involved in a partnership with the University of Alberta to research the efficacy of holistic models of support that may be provided in schools and they use the term wraparound more generally to characterize the model of service provision (Government of Alberta Education, 2015). In 2005, British Columbia launched a program called School Community Connections to create schools described as “vital hubs” for community activities and services.

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Since that time, the program has been expanded to include schools called Neighbourhood Learning Centres. The Neighbourhood Learning Centres in British Columbia involve the integration of supports including, health, mental health, child welfare, child care and recreation (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015). In Saskatchewan there is an initiative called SchoolPLUS, which is described as a long term change project where Saskatchewan schools would become comprehensive service centers, offering an array of supports for children youth and their families (Saskatchewan Learning, 2015). In 2005, using the Saskatchewan SchoolPLUS initiative as a model, the province of Manitoba developed the Community Schools Partnership Initiative now called the Community Schools Program. The recent passage of the *Community Schools Act* in the province of Manitoba and the creation of the Community School program along with an inter-sectorial committee to support community schools may hold much promise for the future of community schools in the province Manitoba (Government of Manitoba, 2012).

### **Outcomes of Community Schools**

Stakeholders have come to recognize that integrating an array of services in the context of a community school is an effective way to meet the needs of children, youth, families, and the surrounding community and improve outcomes (Dryfoos, 1998; Kirst, 1993; Krysiak, 2001). Grossman and Vang (2009) suggest that,

The effects of integrated services in full-service schools can be multiplicative, rather than merely additive. By surrounding youth and their families with a constellation of activities and supports dedicated to improving students' well-being, integrated services in schools

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can improve not only the frequency and ease with which students use services but the nature of that use (p.7)

A review of 20 community schools in the United States found that students who attended community schools showed: (a) improved grades, (b) improvements in personal and family situations, (c) reduced dropout rates, (d) reduced behaviour and discipline problems, and (d) decreased self-destructive behaviour (Blank, Melaville, & Shaw, 2003). In a similar study involving the review of 49 evaluations of community school initiatives Dryfoos (2000) found that 36 out of the 49 schools reported academic gains, 19 demonstrated improved attendance, 11 showed a decline in suspension, 11 reported a reduction in substance abuse, 12 reported an increase in parental participation rates, and eight showed improved outcomes for individuals with complex needs who were receiving intensive services like mental health support. Through early and sustained contact with children, youth and families, community schools also have been found to facilitate early intervention and the prevention of academic, social, emotional and behaviour challenges (Flaherty, Weist, & Warner, 1996).

Epstein et al. (1997) found that when schools established comprehensive partnerships with parents and the community, students' attendance and academic achievement improved. When schools make a significant effort to involve parents and build community partnerships, parents and community members have been found to make significant contributions to academic learning, extra-curricular activities and the cultural richness of the school setting (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). Outreach on the part of the school also has been found to positively impact parental engagement, specifically, when teachers encourage parents to engage with the school, even when parents were described as being "hard to reach," it was found to increase parental participation (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Dauber & Epstein, 1993).



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Parents also have reported feeling empowered by opportunities to engage in partnerships with the school. Of note, the most efficacious partnerships were relationships that were described as reciprocal in nature with the school supporting the needs of the family and community and the family and community contributing their strengths to the school (Davies, 1996). Sanders and Harvey (2000) confirmed this finding and noted that partnerships with the school were the most collaborative when the school engaged in what they called as “two-way” communication with potential partners about the nature and scope of their involvement. The quality of relationships is often dependent upon the level of social trust that has been established through respectful interactions (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Payne & Kaba, 2001). Knowing the needs in the community and capitalizing on the strengths that exist within the community have also been found to lead to more sustainable improvements over time (Cicero & Barton, 2003; Dorfman, 1998).

It may be difficult to evaluate the outcomes of community schools in Canada as they vary significantly in the scope of services provided and in their stage of development. However, related research indicates that youth and their families are more likely to obtain mental health support in the context of a community school, as opposed to an off-site treatment facility (Weist, 1999), as accessing mental health support in a school may be much less stigmatizing than visiting a clinic setting (Harbin, McWilliam, & Gallagher, 2004). In addition to the reduction in stigma associated with receiving mental health support in a community school, there also are other benefits related to the increased accessibility of services in community school, including proximity and the reduced costs associated with the need for transportation (Catron, Harris, & Weiss, 1998).

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### Overcoming Barriers to Interdisciplinary Collaboration

**School-based wraparound in the context of a community school.** Combining the essential elements of the school-based wraparound approach in the context of a community school may provide the requisite conditions for a truly integrated model of support for children and youth with EBD and their families. The school-based wraparound approach and the community school model are both based on the premise that holistic support is the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of children, youth and families. The approaches are complimentary, and if combined, they may improve the provision of support, and thus outcomes for children, youth and families. In this regard, the school-based wraparound approach may provide: (a) a designated lead organization, (b) a clearly articulated process to guide planning, (c) case management through the use of wraparound facilitators, and (d) a means by which to measure outcomes. Building on the structures and process in the wraparound approach, the community school (Dryfoos, 1995, 1998; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002), as a centre of service provision provides: (a) formal structures that foster interdependence among service providers, (b) opportunities to blend funding and de-categorize support, (c) a single point of entry to receive services and enhanced information sharing, and (d) opportunities to overcome discipline based decision making through transdisciplinary teaming. Together, the benefits of the school-based wraparound approach, in the context of a community school, might serve to meet the needs of children and youth with EBD and their families.

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### **The Essential Pre-Conditions to Implement the Wraparound Approach**

**Designation of a lead organization.** One of the essential features that determines a system's readiness to implement the wraparound approach is the formal designation of a lead organization to manage its implementation (Walker et al, 2003). A critical review of the provision of support for children and youth with EBD in the province might reveal that while education has been expected to be a leader in the provision of support, it has not been formally designated as the lead organization, nor has it received the necessary resources to fulfill a leadership role. Fixen et al. (2005), describe the lead organization as the host site that agrees to make necessary changes to implement the evidence-based practice, "...and has also agreed to develop the functions to sustain the program or practice such as installing the core implementation components" (p. 25). In this regard, to fulfill the mandate of a lead organization in the wraparound approach, the lead organization must be supported at the system level through formal policies and funding that facilitates collaboration across service providers (Bruns & Walker, 2010; Walker et al., 2003). Designation as a lead organization means receiving support to create an infrastructure that includes funding for staffing, ongoing training, and the allocation of resources to facilitate the individualized wraparound planning process. The designation of a lead agency, charged with the responsibility to manage the implementation of the wraparound approach may enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, as it may provide the much needed leadership and direction that the wraparound team requires to provide integrated support.

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**A clearly articulated process.** In a review of the implementation of evidence-based practices in mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, education, employment services, and substance abuse, Fixen et al. (2005) found that,

The specification of core intervention components becomes very important to the process of developing evidence-based practices and programs, preparing programs for large-scale implementation, and monitoring core components to ensure that underlying concepts and goals are adhered to over time and across sites (p. 25).

Unlike a system of care, the wraparound approach has a clearly articulated practice model that provides a structured approach to service delivery. The practice model describes the four phases of the wraparound approach and the corresponding 32 activities that are included in the phases. The four phases of the wraparound approach include: (1) engagement and team preparation, (2) initial plan development, (3) plan implementation, and (4) transition. Support materials also are available that further describe the activities, their purpose and any documentation that should emerge from the activity, as well as any potential challenges that may arise in the process. Respecting that the wraparound approach promotes highly individualized planning, “....the intention was to define the activities in a manner that is sufficiently precise to permit fidelity measurement, but also sufficiently flexible to allow for diversity in the manner in which a given activity might be accomplished” (Walker, Bruns, & The National Wraparound Initiative, 2008; p. 4). Adhering to the wraparound principles and processes may enable the wraparound team members to gain a greater understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities on the wraparound team and support the implementation of a comprehensive, integrated plan of support (Walker et al., 2003).

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**Case management.** Another factor that determines a system's readiness to implement the wraparound approach is the availability of resources for staffing, and the ongoing training and development of wraparound facilitators who act as case managers for children and youth with EBD and their families (Walker et al., 2003). Case management is a strategy to coordinate and ensure access to an array of supports that will meet the child and family's needs. It may include various functions like assessment, service planning, coordination, and implementation, as well as monitoring and advocacy (Burns & Hoagwood, 2002). However, case management in the province of Manitoba has been poorly defined, and it often has been an added responsibility of educators (Manitoba Education & Training, et al., 1995). When case management becomes an added responsibility for educators, children, youth and families may not receive the level of support that they require, as educators may not typically receive release time to perform case management duties (Bartlett & Freeze, 2005). However, in the wraparound approach, there is a clearly articulated model of case management that specifies the roles and responsibilities of an individual referred to as a Wraparound facilitator. The wraparound facilitator is employed by the lead agency, and manages the development and implementation of the wraparound plan across service providers (Bruns & Walker, 2010). In order to support the training and skill development of wraparound facilitators there are comprehensive training manuals in wraparound facilitation (Grealish, 2000; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1998), and certification programs that provide opportunities for ongoing coaching and the refinement of facilitation skills (VanDenBerg & Rast, 2000). Although a clinical background in mental health has been suggested as strength of a case manager supporting children and youth with EBD (Evans, Armstrong, & Kuppinger 1996), training for wraparound facilitators in other jurisdictions, including the province of Saskatchewan, through the *Integrative Wraparound Approach* has been

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broad-based, and has included representation from health, mental health, child welfare, and education, as well as family advocacy groups (Amankwah, 2003). One theme that emerges from the literature is that the support provided by a trained wraparound facilitator enhances team effectiveness by guiding the wraparound team toward the achievement of common goals (VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1998; VanDenBerg & Rast, 2000). The presence of trained wraparound facilitators in the province of Manitoba also might enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, as they may provide leadership at both the organization and team levels to ensure that the principles of the wraparound process are adhered to and that the model is implemented with fidelity.

**Measurement of outcomes.** In determining a system's readiness to implement the wraparound approach there must be structures that foster shared accountability and the measurement of outcomes at the system, organization, and team level (Bruns & Walker, 2010; Walker, 2008; Walker et al., 2003). In the Manitoba it has been difficult to assess the effectiveness of interdisciplinary teams supporting children and youth with EBD as each service provider has been accountable to his or her respective agency, and the shared accountability for team practices and outcomes for children and youth has not been established (Bartlett & Freeze, 2005). The integrity of the wraparound approach is important because research has shown that individuals who have been supported by higher fidelity wraparound have demonstrated more positive changes as compared to individuals who have participated in lower fidelity wraparound (Bruns et al., 2005; Bruns, Rast, Peterson, Walker & Bostworth, 2006). Building on the need for the better measurement of fidelity, the Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System [WFAS] was developed by the Wraparound Evaluation and Research Team at the University of Washington.

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The WFAS includes the Wraparound Fidelity Index [WFI], the Wraparound Observation Form – Second Version [WOF-2], the Documentation Review Measure [DWP] (Bruns, 2008), and the Community Supports for Wraparound Inventory [CSWI] (Walker et al., 2003). The Wraparound Fidelity Index is a set of interviews that are completed with caregivers, youth, wraparound facilitators, and team members about the team's adherence to the ten wraparound principles. The Wraparound Observation Form – Second Version is an instrument completed by trained observers to assess the adherence to the key characteristics of the wraparound approach during family planning meetings. The Documentation Review Measure assesses the primary documentation created by the wraparound team which includes the wraparound plan, crisis plan and safety plan, transition plan, and meeting notes (Bruns, 2008).

Nordess and Epstein (2003) assessed the reliability of the Wraparound Observation Form-Second Version as an instrument to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the wraparound approach during family planning meetings. In this study thirty family planning meetings were observed and evaluated using the 48 items of the WOF-Second Version to determine evidence of the tenets of the wraparound approach. During the observations the inter-observer agreement across the 48 items of the WOF-Second was 96.7% (range 83.3 – 100%) and the average Kappa statistic was 0.886 (range 0.318-1.0). These results indicate that the WOF-Second Version may be a reliable tool to measure the fidelity of implementation of the wraparound approach. assessed Interdisciplinary collaboration for children and youth with EBD and their families may be increased when team effectiveness is assessed through formal procedures and feedback is provided to improve practice.

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The feedback loops are critical to keeping the evidence-based program “on track” in the midst of a sea of change. If the feedback loops (staff evaluations or program evaluations) indicate needed changes, then the integrated system needs to be adjusted to improve effectiveness (Fixen et al., 2005, p. 30).

Through assessment and feedback mechanisms that build shared accountability for outcomes, the interdisciplinary team may begin to view themselves as a collective. Through continuous feedback and improvements in practice, objectives might more readily be achieved and the team might be strengthened. Research in effective team practices has found that when a team experiences even modest success team cohesiveness increases (Walker & Schutte, 2004).

### **Essential Features of Community Schools that Support the Wraparound Process**

**Interdependence.** Another necessary condition for the implementation of the wraparound approach includes system level partnerships that institutionalize collaborative actions that translate the wraparound philosophy into action (Walker et al., 2003). Presently in the province of Manitoba, service providers are separated from one another through separate agency mandates, reporting structures, funding streams and physical space. Until system and organizational barriers are removed, even the best evidence-based practice like the wraparound approach may be difficult to implement. Therefore, establishing the wraparound approach in the context of a community school might provide the necessary infrastructure to begin the process of institutionalizing collaborative practices. According to Adelman and Taylor (1997),

Well-designed infrastructure mechanisms ensure there is local ownership, a critical mass of committed stakeholders, processes that can overcome barriers to stakeholders working together effectively, and strategies that can mobilize and maintain proactive effort so that changes are implemented and renewed over time (p. 418).



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In this regard, the establishment of a common facility like a community school would require shared governance to establish a common vision and to operationalize integrated practices (Adelman & Taylor, 1997). The leadership provided through the shared governance of a community school would span an array of service providers, and it might build a much needed commitment to the goal of integrating support. In a study of an urban elementary school, Epstein et al. (1997) described the valuable role that the school principal played in leading the expansion of collaborative partnerships. In this instance, principals were accountable for the development of community partnerships and also were evaluated as leaders based on how well they reached out to the community. Similarly, Sanders and Harvey (2000) found that the principal's vision for community involvement in the school setting determined the extent to which partnerships were developed with other stakeholders. In their research on implementation of evidence-based practices, Fixen et al. (2005), also refer to the invaluable role that leadership can play, "...without hospitable leadership and organizational structures, core implementation components cannot be installed and maintained" (p. 14). Stable leadership in the collaborating agencies and local systems are seen as key to the maintenance of effective collaboration (McMahon, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, & Griffith, 2000). Through stable and effective leadership in a community school interdisciplinary collaboration may be enhanced, as the partnering service providers may be supported by a host environment that engenders collaborative actions.

**Blended funding and the de-categorization of support.** The presence of a common pool of resources is another indicator of a system's readiness to implement the wraparound approach (Walker et al., 2003), and it has been described as one of the most significant obstacles to the integration of services (Blank et al., 2003).

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According to Adelman and Taylor (1997),

Given the range of stakeholders with vested interests, it seems inevitable that consensus building regarding redistribution of property and other resources will require a shared commitment to the process of system change and a lengthy period of transition. And none of this is likely without potent and focused leadership and a sound infrastructure to support change (p. 413).

The establishment of a shared governance structure, initially involved in the shared operational costs associated with a community school, may lay the groundwork for the eventual de-categorization of support and the blending of funding streams. De-categorization focuses on making funding streams less “categorical” by removing and reducing criteria to receive support. In this regard, funds from more than one program are “....blended into a single funding stream. De-categorization can be employed to support comprehensive system reform efforts that enact profound changes in the way social services are structured and delivered” (Flynn & Hayes, 2003, p. 17). Through the de-categorization of resources, labels would no longer be required, as the needs of the child and family would determine the receipt of resources. In a community school, interdisciplinary collaboration would be enhanced as team members might be less apt to be protective of resources as funding would be shared.

Huffine (2002) studied the impact of the King County Blended Funding Project in King County Washington State. The blended funding project involved the pooling mental health, social services and education resources in order to provide comprehensive support for youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

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The model used in King County involved a multi-disciplinary team accessing services using pooled funds with the parent/caregiver taking a lead role the development of the plan of support. The data collected from parent/caregivers in this study indicated that parents experienced high levels of satisfaction with this model of service provision as well as measureable improvements in feelings of empowerment. The King County Blended Funding Project also found significant improvements in the integration of youth and families within their local communities.

Kamradt (2000) also studied the impact of Wraparound Milwaukee a project that blended funding from the disciplines of justice, child welfare and mental health for youth involved with the justice system. In this project funds were coordinated through a managed care organization and were used to develop comprehensive plans of support. Clinical outcomes for 300 youth involved in Wraparound Milwaukee were assessed using the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale [CAFAS] and indicated that after 6 months the participants' CAFAS scores decreased from high to moderate and they also demonstrated a reduction in recidivism.

**Single point of entry and information sharing.** An additional prerequisite of wraparound planning is access to relevant and transparent information across service providers (Walker et al., 2003). Presently in Manitoba, supports are obtained from multiple service providers in multiple locations, each with their own separate mandates for service provision. The complex myriad of supports is a significant obstacle to the receipt of services for children, youth and families, and it is also a barrier to interdisciplinary collaboration (Waddell et. al., 2005). In a review of support for young children with EBD in the United States, Wiseman, Kates and Kaufman (2001) found the existence of 39 different funding streams, with no one program charged with providing comprehensive support.

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In a community school, a single point of entry for the receipt of services would be established, which may improve access to support, enhance information sharing, and ultimately lead to more holistic planning (Dryfoos, 1995; 2002). A community school also may be better able to develop common records management systems as compared to traditional “silo-based” service delivery models. Recognizing the need to enhance communication and information sharing, Wraparound Milwaukee created a common data base to house all information related to a child’s individualized plan of care. In this setting all wraparound team members were provided with access to relevant information in a shared database to assist with the provision of appropriate support (Hale, 2008). In a study researching the relationship between communication and interdisciplinary collaboration Carletta (2001) also found that frequent opportunities to meet not only formally, but also informally led to increased information sharing among team members. If information is readily available and accessible to all team members the provision of support may also be improved.

**Transdisciplinary teaming.** Working together in the context of a community school also may enable the wraparound team to overcome traditional, discipline specific roles and responsibilities. In describing community schools Adelman and Taylor (1997) state,

There is growing consensus that specialist-oriented activity must be balanced with a generalist perspective in order to develop a comprehensive, integrated approach. This kind of collaborative action involves stakeholders being united in a common vision that involves transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries in order to meet the needs of the child and family (p. 413).

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The research of Ball et al., (2010) also supports collaboration across services as a means of enhancing the provision of support. Transcending disciplinary boundaries may be made possible through a process referred to as transdisciplinary teaming. A transdisciplinary team is an interdependent relationship where professional territories are opened up as the team works together to find solutions to complex challenges (D'Amour et al., 2005; Koskie & Freeze, 2000; Linder, 1990). Professional territories are opened up through a process referred to as "role release," where individuals on a transdisciplinary team begin to use strategies and techniques from other disciplines as they are no longer bound by their respective discipline-based frameworks (Johnson, Zorn, Kai Yung Tam, Lamontagne, & Johnson, 1994). During role release, professionals are able to "let go" of their role, share expertise and value the perspectives, knowledge and skills of other disciplines. The process of role release involves several key elements including: (a) role extension, (b) role enrichment, (c) role expansion, and (d) role exchange. Role extension refers to members of the transdisciplinary team making efforts to increase their theoretical knowledge, so that they might more effectively contribute to the team's efforts. Role enrichment refers to the development of general awareness of other disciplines, through team interaction, including sharing information, terminology and best practices. Role expansion occurs when the transdisciplinary team begins to develop a common vocabulary, and apply their expanded theoretical knowledge base in the development of integrated plans. Role exchange occurs when the transdisciplinary team consolidates their understanding of the theories and methods of other disciplines, and willingly takes on the role of other service providers when needed (King et al., 2009). Research in effective team practices suggests that teams are more likely to be effective when they share common values related to their mission (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999). Through the process of transdisciplinary teaming, interdisciplinary collaboration

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would be enhanced as the wraparound team might more readily develop common values, without being constrained by discipline specific mandates.

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### Chapter 3

#### Methods – The Design of the Study

##### Research Approach and Foundations

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perspectives of parents, teachers, principals, community school connectors and partnering service providers about the characteristics of community schools that support collaboration and the integration of support that support children and youth with EBD and their families. I also explored the practices in a community school that reflected the guiding principles of the wraparound approach that have been found to be effective in improving outcomes for students with EBD and their families. Ultimately, through a review of the literature and an exploration of characteristics of community schools that foster collaboration I will identify the elements of community schools that promote collaboration as well as the obstacles that may exist that may be preventing with the integration of support for children and youth with EBD and their families.

I have elected to use a qualitative, multi-case study method for this study because I wanted to give participants, who were directly involved in supporting children and youth with EBD in community schools an opportunity to tell their stories. According to Merriam (1998) one of the goals of qualitative research is to "reflect the participant's perspective" (p. 116). I wanted to "give voice" to the people involved in supporting children and youth with EBD in the context of a community school. The phrase "giving voice" is associated with qualitative research and refers to empowering people who may not have had an opportunity to tell their stories, to share their insights and ultimately promote social change (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003).

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It is important to obtain the perspectives of the individuals involved in supporting children and youth with EBD in a community school, because their first-hand experiences supporting this population may provide evidence of its strengths and weaknesses and may provide suggestions to improve future practice. I will use a bounded case study approach. Creswell (2002) defines a case study as "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection" (p. 485). A case is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as, "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context." (p. 25).

**Role of the researcher.** As a Student Services Consultant in an urban school division, I am directly involved in supporting school teams and parents of students with EBD. In this role, I also have had the opportunity to observe first-hand some of the opportunities and challenges associated with supporting this population of students. I have chosen to use case study research and apply the constructivist paradigm outlined by both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003). According to the constructivist paradigm, individuals socially construct their own reality. The constructivist paradigm does not completely renounce the notion of objectivity, but rather it places value on the individual's own perceptions of their subjective experiences. Through case study research, I hoped to gain a deep understanding of the participants' lived experience and the rationale for their thoughts and actions.

**Selection of participants.** I used purposeful sampling to identify five school divisions in the city of Winnipeg and within a three hour driving distance from the city limits that have a community school as designated by the Community Schools Program in Manitoba as potential cases for my research. Purposeful sampling involves selecting informants who will facilitate the explanation of a developing theory (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003).



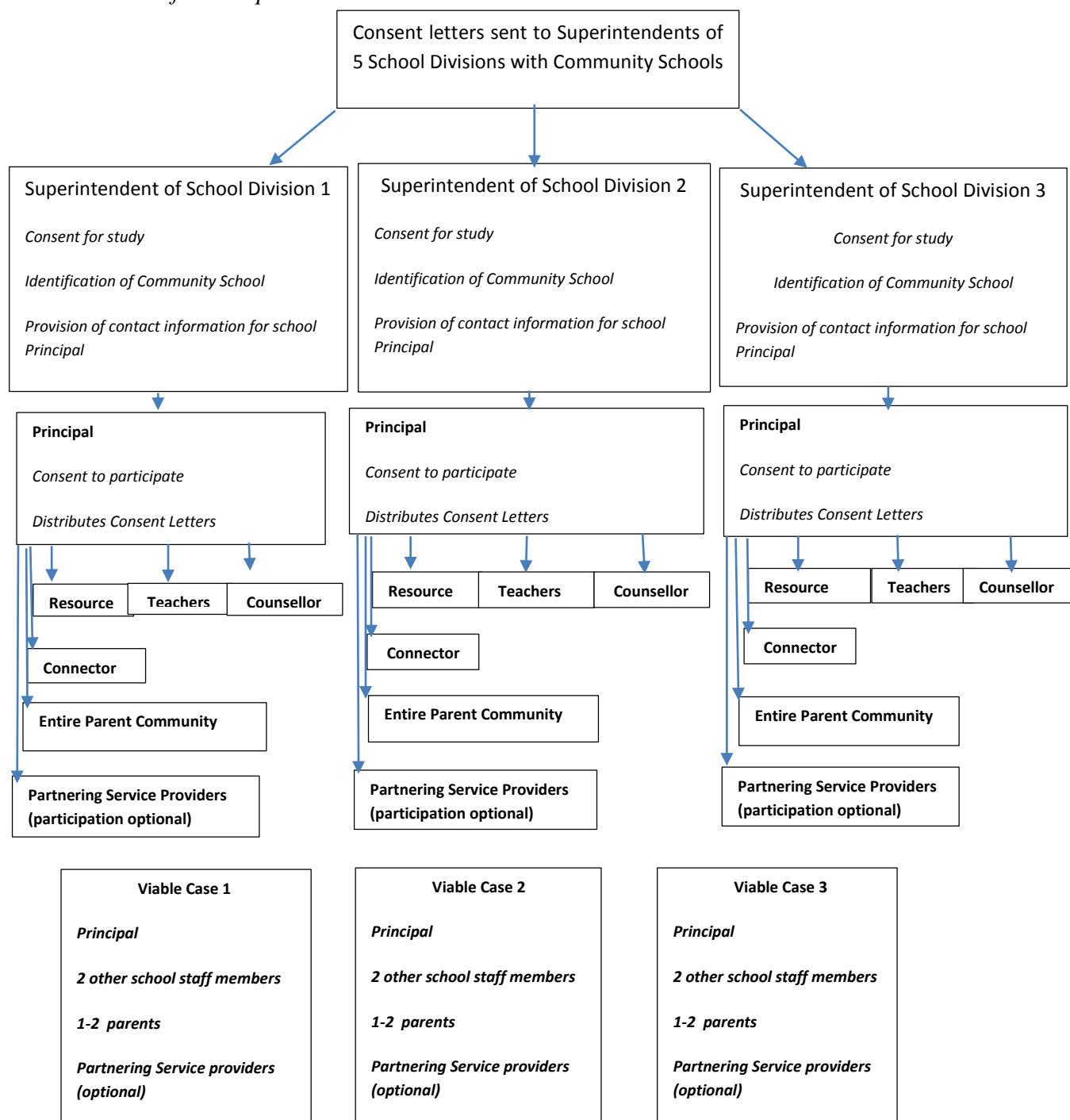
## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In order to participate in this study, the community school needed to approximate the following criteria: (a) have a designation as a community school for a minimum of five years by the Community Schools Program, (b) have a community school council or an inclusive group of decision makers to lead, monitor and evaluate the operations of the community school, (c) have a community school plan with a focus on learning, integrated services, parent and community partnerships, and community development as outlined in *Community Schools: A Support Document for Partners in the Community Schools Partnership Initiative* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006c), and (d) support students who are identified as severely to profoundly behavioural disordered or Level 3 EBD according to Manitoba Education's funding criteria (Manitoba Education, 2013). In order to select the community schools purposefully, I reviewed each school's website as most of this information is publically available. Information related to whether a school supports students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural challenges is not publically available however, this criteria was included in the letter to the superintendents of the school divisions that requested permission to conduct research in their respective school divisions. Using these guidelines for participation, I was able to limit the scope of the study and focus on the schools that facilitated an in-depth exploration of the topic to be studied. From the five school divisions that I contacted, I selected three school divisions to participate in my research based on the order in which they responded to my request. See Figure 1.0 for a description of the selection of the participants.

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Figure 1.0

## Selection of Participants



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In order to have a viable case in each community school I required participation from the school principal, and two other school-based personnel which may have included a resource teacher, a counsellor, a teacher and a community school connector, as well as a minimum of one parent or guardian. Given that a variety of partnering service providers were represented in each community school, I was unable to anticipate the agency responsible for providing informed consent for the participation of the partnering service providers until the school was identified. Given that I could not anticipate the agency responsible for granting consent for the participation of the partnering service providers prior to the commencement of the study, I did not require a partnering service provider to participate in the study in order to have a viable case.

Once I identified the school divisions that had community schools that met the aforementioned criteria, I sent letters to the superintendents of the identified school divisions in order to obtain consent to conduct research (Appendix A). In this letter, I explained the purpose of my research and provided a description of informed consent. I also provided information about the research process, its duration as well as the risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the superintendents to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted their school division to participate in the study.

Once I had the approval of the superintendent to conduct research, I asked the superintendent to identify the community school that would be the focus of the study and for his/her permission to contact the principal of the school to request his/her participation in the study (Appendix B). Once I had the approval of the superintendent and they had identified a community school, I sent the principal of the community school a consent letter by email requesting his/her participation in my study and in an individual, 1.5 hour interview.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The informed consent letter contained information about the meaning of informed consent, the purpose of the study, a description of the research process, its duration as well as the associated risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the principals of the identified schools to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to participate in the study.

Once I had the consent of the school principals to participate in the study I also asked the principals to distribute consent letters to key personnel involved in supporting students with severe to profound behaviour disorders in their community school by putting consent letters in their mailboxes or sending them by email (Appendix C). The individuals that I asked the principals to distribute consent letters to included, the resource teacher, counsellor, community school connector, as well as other teaching staff. The informed consent letter contained information about the meaning of informed consent, the purpose of the study, a description of the research process, its duration as well as the associated risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the school staff to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. The teaching staff were asked to contact me by email or telephone if they wanted to participate in my research and in an individual, 1.5 hour interview. As a part of the informed consent process, I informed the school staff of the superintendent's knowledge of the identity of the participating school and of the principal's knowledge of the study, as well as of the fact that the principal had distributed the consent letters on my behalf. I then selected two or three staff members from each community school to participate in the study based on who responded to my request first.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Additionally, I asked the principal of the community school to distribute consent letters on my behalf to the members of their parent community to request their participation in my study and in an individual, 1.5 hour interview (Appendix D). I asked for the letters to be distributed to the entire parent community. The informed consent letter contained information about the meaning of informed consent, the purpose of the study, a description of the research process, its duration as well as the associated risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the parents to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. I also provided information about how the parents could contact me regarding their willingness to participate in this study which included email, telephone or returning the consent letter to a drop box in the school office. In order to maximize the possibility that all parents had the ability to participate in this study, I asked for a box to be placed in the school office so that parents could return their consent forms in a signed, sealed, non-identifying envelope that I provided. As a part of the informed consent process, I informed the parent community of the superintendent's knowledge of the identity of the participating school and of the principal's knowledge of the study and that the principal had distributed the consent letters on my behalf. I then selected one parent from each community school to participate in the study based on who responded to my request first. In order to compensate the parents for their time I provided each parent with a \$20.00 Tim Hortons gift card.

Since partnering service providers also play a vital role in the work of community schools, I also asked for the school principals' assistance in distributing consent letters on my behalf by mail or email to the senior administrators of the partnering service providers who played a role in supporting their community school (Appendix E).

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The consent letters requested the approval of the senior administrators from the partnering service providers for their staff to participate in my research. The informed consent letter contained information about the meaning of informed consent, the purpose of the study, a description of the research process, its duration as well as the associated risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the senior administrators from partnering service providers to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted their staff to participate in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, I informed the senior administrators of the partnering service providers of the superintendent's knowledge of the identity of the participating school and of the principal's knowledge of the study and that the principal had distributed the consent letters to them on my behalf, and that the principal would also be distributing the consent letters to their staff on my behalf if their consent was provided.

Once I receive a signed consent letter from the senior administrators of the partnering service providers returned to me by email or mail, I asked the principal to distribute a consent letters to the partnering service providers in the community school by placing letters in their mailboxes or sending them by email (Appendix F). The informed consent letter contained information about the meaning of informed consent, the purpose of the study, a description of the research process, its duration as well as the associated risks and benefits. The information provided in this letter enabled the partnering service providers to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. I then asked the partnering service providers to contact me by email or telephone if they were interested in participating in my research and in an individual, 1.5 hour interview.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

As part of the informed consent process, I ensured that the partnering service providers were aware that the senior administrators of their respective organizations had approved the research and that the principal of the community school was involved in the distribution of the consent letters on my behalf. I also informed them of the superintendent's approval of the study and knowledge of the identity of the participating school. Once informed consent was received from the partnering service providers, I selected one partnering service providers from two out of the three community schools to participate in the study based on who responded to my request first. I did not receive consent from a partnering service provider in one of the community schools and therefore only two out of the three cases that were studied had participation from a partnering service provider.

Given that the superintendents of each school division were involved in the selection of the community school, the superintendent may have known the identity of the school personnel and partnering service providers who participated in the study. Given that the school principal also was involved in the study and distributed the consent letters on my behalf there is a possibility that they too may know the identity of the school staff and partnering service providers who participated in the study. Due to the fact that there are a limited number of community schools in Manitoba some readers of my research also may guess the identity of the participating schools and therefore also may guess the identity of the participants. In my letters to the superintendents of the school divisions and to all participants in the study, I clearly stated these possibilities and described the precautions that would be put in place to protect their confidentiality. I explained that I would use for all pseudonyms for the names of the schools and all participants and remove any identifying information from the interview transcripts.

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I asked the participants not to discuss their participation in the study with anyone and explained that I would not discuss their participation in the study as well. In order further ensure confidentiality, I explained that I would not share any of my data with the superintendents of the school divisions nor the principals of the community schools. I also offered to conduct all interviews away from the school at a mutually agreed upon location.

### Research Process

The data collection and the interpretation of the data occurred in three phases. The initial phase involved obtaining informed consent from the superintendents of the identified school divisions, as well as the school principals, key personnel and parents. This phase also included reviewing pertinent support documents in Manitoba such as: *Community Schools: A Support Document for Partners in the Community School Partnership Initiative* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006c), and *CSPI: Brochure for Supporting Families, Strengthening Communities, Helping Students Succeed* (Manitoba Education, 2013), and the new provincial legislation related to community schools included in the *Community Schools Act* (Government of Manitoba, 2012). I also reviewed copies of the community school plans, websites of the identified schools and school divisions, as well as community newsletters from the schools and partnering service providers to gather information about the student population, faculty size, as well as the grade structure of each of the community schools. I also used these sources of information to identify the operational characteristics of the community school including its governance structure, the services provided, the partnerships that existed and the funding sources if they were included in any of the aforementioned sources. I also reviewed other publically available information including Statistics Canada data to learn about each community's demographic profile including its history, socio-economic needs and cultural composition.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Furthermore, I reviewed the student specific planning documents that were used by each of the identified community schools, including the individualized education planning templates and behaviour intervention planning templates in order to gather information about how each school plans for students with EBD. A close review of this documentation helped to guide the interview process and contextualize the information provided.

The second phase of the research process involved conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with the principal, key school personnel, parents/guardians and partnering service providers in each of the three community schools that were identified. During the interviews, I obtained the perspectives of all participants about the characteristics of a community school that they felt fostered collaboration and supported students with EBD. The interview also included gathering information about their perceptions of the governance structure of the community school, programming, resources, funding and overall support for children and youth with EBD and their families. While these topics were addressed in the interview questions that were prepared beforehand however, the participants were free to provide additional information about issues that were relevant to them.

I summarized the findings from each community school in a case study format by providing what Merriam (1998) refers to as a “thick description” of each case (p. 29). Using the transcribed interviews from each participant patterns of experience were identified from direct quotes that indicated common ideas and experiences. Themes are defined as the units that represent the patterns in the data and they may include, “conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs” (Taylor & Bogden, 1989; p. 131).

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

After an aggregate overview of all three cases I codified and organized the information gleaned from the participants' interviews according to the themes and the categories that I felt represented the patterns that had emerged within the data.

I conducted a multi-case study to demonstrate the generalizability or diversity of my findings. A multi-case study involves two or more subjects, settings or depositories of data (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003). I identified eight themes that were common to the three cases that were studied, and I structured my description of each case using the common themes that were identified in the data. The final phase of the research process involved a cross-case analysis where I identified variances among the cases.

### **Data Collection**

The community school plans of each of the participating schools, individualized educational planning and behaviour intervention planning templates, as well as other pertinent documentation related to the individual community school initiatives were reviewed, as they provided an overview of the supports provided within the community school and insight into the priorities of each of the respective schools. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003) pertinent documents may enhance the rich description of the phenomenon to be studied. Additional data in this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the community school. Each participant was asked to participate in an interview of approximately 1.5 hours in length. I conducted semi-structured interviews because I want to give the participants the opportunity to tell their stories, but at the same time, I wanted to obtain some comparable data across cases.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The interview questions were constructed prior to the interviews, however, there was considerable latitude during the interview process so as to allow the participant to raise other points that were personally relevant. Qualitative interviews are intended to be flexible in that they allow the interviewer to pursue a range of topics and also provide the subject with the opportunity to shape the content of the interview (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003).

A total of 15 participants from three community schools were interviewed during the months of May, June and July 2014 at a time and place of the participant's choosing. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) the researcher should offer to conduct interviews at a time and location that is acceptable to the participant so as to enhance their comfort level. Twelve of the interviews took place in the community schools being studied, of those 12 interviews one interview carried over to a local restaurant. Three of the interviews took place at the partnering service providers' offices. I requested a second interview with a participant if I felt I needed to clarify a point raised or if additional time was required to complete the interview questions. All three school principals were interviewed for a second time. Two of the follow-up interviews with the school principals occurred in their offices, and one follow up interview with a school principal took place over the telephone. The first round of interviews ranged from 55 minutes to 115 minutes in duration with the average length of the interviews being 85 minutes. The second round of interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes in duration with the average length of the interviews being 45 minutes. During the interviews I tried to make the participants feel at ease. I maintained a relaxed posture and tried to use my body language and eye contact to encourage the participants to expand on their ideas.

I began each interview by thanking the participants for their time and inviting them to share anything that they felt might be relevant to the study.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Then, I asked the participants about their experience and/or training in teaching, parenting and working with a community school. The interview questions included information about the background of the community school, its governance structure, practices that supported collaboration, supports for students with emotional and behavioural challenges, funding and resources, outcome measures as well as strengths, challenges and future plans for the community school. I asked open-ended questions and followed up with probing questions to ensure an in-depth exploration of the issues. According to Bernard (1995) effective probes, “....stimulate an informant’s willingness to produce more information....without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data” (p.46). The interview guides for each participant in the study including the principal, teacher/school personnel, parent, and partnering service providers are provided in Appendixes G H,I, and J respectively. During the second interview with each of the principals they were asked to expand on their responses from the initial interview.

The interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist as soon as possible after the interviews. The transcriptionist adhered to a code of ethics and was held to a strict standard of confidentiality. The digital recordings were stored in a locked secure location and the confidentiality of all participants was respected at all times. Deception was not used at all throughout the course of this study. There were no apparent risks to the subjects or third parties. Some of the participants in the study commented that it had been helpful for them to reflect on their experiences in a community school. In this regard, they felt that participation in this study had heightened their awareness about the benefits of community schools and how they support children and youth with complex needs.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

At the conclusion of the interviews, the participants were reminded that they would receive a summary of the findings of the study.

After the interviews were transcribed a comprehensive member check process was used to allow participants to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of the interview responses (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Transcripts of each individual interview were emailed to the participants inviting them to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript and make any final comments. Each participant was then asked to return their transcript to me by email or traditional mail if any changes were required. The participants were given a period of two weeks to review the transcripts and no changes were requested. All copies of the interview transcripts were stored in locked, secure location in my home and will be destroyed upon the conclusion of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Creswell (2007) data analysis “....is best represented in a spiral image....” (p. 150). Creswell divides the data analysis spiral into four analytic circles. While the four spirals are described separately, each spiral overlaps and interacts and may occur simultaneously in the process of data analysis. The first data analysis spiral is related to data management. During the data management stage, I looked for key words or phrases that appeared within my field notes, interview data and key documents like the community school plans for each case. I then sorted the data from each case in file folders using the key words and phrases as headings. Once the data from each case was organized according to these key text units, I began the reading and memoing stage. During this stage, I read my field notes, interview transcripts, community school plans and other pertinent documents several times.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While I read the data and looked at it in its entirety, I wrote memos in the margins of the documents related to questions and ideas that emerged that assisted me in creating a detailed description of the case and its setting.

I then moved into the third stage of the data analysis spiral that Creswell (2007) refers to as the describing, classifying and interpreting stage. Through this process, I engaged in categorical aggregation which means that as multiple categories emerged within the data I identified themes that linked the categories (Creswell, 1998). In addition to categorical aggregation, I also engaged in direct interpretation, whereby, when a single instance was found within the data I sought meaning from it (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) further explains that categories can, “....represent information that researchers expect to find before the study, represent surprising information that researchers did not expect to find, and represent information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers” (p. 153). I used a within-case and cross-case analysis that included both “....description and thematic development” (Creswell, 2002, p. 486). Merriam (1998) aptly describes the analysis of data in a within-case and cross-case analysis:

For the within-case analysis, each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case...Once the analysis of each case is completed, cross-case analysis begins....” (pp. 194-195).

During the cross-case analysis I identified the variations that existed across the cases that were studied. The final phase of data analysis involved representing and analyzing the data collected.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

During this phase, I looked for common elements that were interwoven throughout the analyzed participant responses and in the literature in order to summarize the characteristics of community schools that were identified as supporting collaboration for children and youth EBD. According to Crabtree and Miller (1992), the use of “prefigured codes” from the literature or from a theoretical model are used in qualitative research, but they caution that they should not prevent the researcher from exploring emergent codes. I then applied a model suggested by Walker et al., (2003) which suggests reviewing collaboration through the lens of team, organization and system level issues as well as the continuum of collaboration developed by Horwath and Morrison (2007) in reviewing the analyzed participant responses to determine the extent to which collaboration was described as occurring within all three cases. Finally, using the ten guiding principles of the wraparound approach (Bruns, Walker & The National Wraparound Advisory Group, 2008), I reviewed the analyzed participant responses to determine the extent to which the principles of the wraparound approach were described as being evident in the community schools that were studied.

### **Ethical Issues in Research**

School Divisions in Manitoba that have schools that are designated as Community Schools according to the Community School Program are identified on the Manitoba Education website. As this information is publically available, I used it to guide the identification of the school divisions that I approached to participate in my research. In order to begin the study, I sought approval from the superintendents of the identified school divisions. In the letter that I sent to the superintendents, I explained the purpose of my research and provided a description of informed consent.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

I also provided information about the research process, its duration as well as the potential risks and benefits. In this regard, I informed the superintendents that while I would ensure the confidentiality of all participants, there may be a possibility that some readers of my research may be able to guess the identity of the school and of the participants in the study given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba. I framed this as a potential risk of participation in the study and ensured that all participants were aware of this possibility. Since I asked the superintendent to identify the community school to be studied as well as the principal of the school, the superintendent not only knew the identity of the principal but also may know the identity of the participants. I not only informed the superintendent of this potential risk, but I also informed all participants of this potential risk. The information provided in the consent letters enabled the superintendent, principal and school staff, parents and partnering service providers to make an informed decision about whether or not they wanted to participate in the study.

Once the superintendents provided consent for their school divisions to participate in the study and the principals of the schools agreed to participate, I asked the principals to distribute consent letters to the resource teacher, school counselor, teachers and the community school connected at their respective schools. I ensured that the informed consent letters indicated that the superintendent and principal were aware that the community school was the focus of the study and that their participation in the study was requested. I further provided assurances that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identity and that I would not share my data with the superintendent or principal. I also informed the participants that I would not discuss the research with anyone and requested that they also refrain from discussing their participation in the study with others as well.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

As I described the potential risks and benefits of participation, I informed all participants that readers of my research also may guess at the identity of the school and possibly their identity as a result. Through the use of pseudonyms and non-identifying information about the community school, I attempted to ensure the anonymity of all participants but given the limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba I explained that I could not guarantee anonymity.

### **Research Plan and Timeline**

A research proposal was prepared for defense on December 12, 2013. An application was then submitted to the University of Manitoba, Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board [ENREB] in January 2014 and approval was received in March 2014. The data collection process occurred in May, June and July of 2014. The analysis and synthesis of the data occurred from August 2014 until April 2015.

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### Chapter 4

#### Case 1 – The School without Walls

##### Introduction

First, a description of the School without Walls is provided that includes: (a) the identification of a pseudonym for the school and an explanation of the rationale for the pseudonym, (b) a description of the community school, (c) an overview of the student and community demographics, (d) a summary of Early Development Instrument [EDI] data for the community, (e) a description of the organization and governance structure of the community school, and (f) the identification of the community school programming that is provided in the following areas: education, nutrition, health and mental health, culture, recreation, community events, outreach and support for students with emotional and behavioural challenges. The programming that is identified is not meant to capture all of the programming that is provided at the community school, but rather it is mean to provide an overview of the programming that the participants in the study identified as a part of the community school programming and/or it was identified in pertinent documentation as a part of the community school's programming. In instances where a community school program is unique and only implemented in a limited number of settings the program will not be named, but rather it will be described in a more general way so as not to identify the community school where the program is being implemented. In cases where a community school program is used broadly and referencing the name of the program will not identify the community school, the specific name of the program will be used. The other two cases that will be presented in the subsequent chapters will be organized in the same way.

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### **Description of the Case**

The community school in case one will be referred to as The School without Walls because it denotes that the community school in case one is an open system that has become an extension of the community in which it is located. The School without Walls actively invites community participation and fosters partnerships with other service providers so as to remove the walls or barriers that may exist for its students and families in order to provide much needed resources and opportunities.

The School without Walls is a kindergarten to grade 8 school located in an urban setting and it has a student population of approximately 160 students. This community school is located in a school division that has a student population of over 10 000 students. The population of the school division is diverse and has both an urban and suburban component.

The School without Walls is a one story concrete structure built in the early 1970's that shares a space with an educational resource centre. The design of the school incorporates two circular structures that are joined by a rectangular shape. The school gymnasium is located directly inside the main entrance of the school. The school gymnasium is very large and can be divided into two separate gyms so that multiple programs can operate at the same time. The hallway at the main entrance of the school leads to the school office that has an open concept and overlooks some classroom areas as well as the library and resource area. The library and resource area also have an open concept and can be seen from several vantage points within the school. The classroom areas that are adjacent to the library appear to have once been open area classrooms but they are now largely enclosed. There is a full kitchen facility in the school where cooking programs as well as the daily school snack are prepared. There also is a designated

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family centre in the school that offers preschool and parenting programs as well as other programming provided by the community school. In the School without Walls there also is a childcare facility that provides care for kindergarten students as well as before and after school care for students from 6-12 years of age. There is an expansive field behind the school that has several soccer fields and baseball diamonds. The side school yard also contains a modern play structure.

### **Student and Community Demographics**

The School without Walls is located in one of the lowest income suburban neighbourhoods in the local urban area. A majority of the students come from lone-parent households and approximately 50% of the students have self-identified as Aboriginal or Metis. There also is an emergent newcomer population in this community. The median income of the residents is comparable to that found in the inner city. Over half of the children under the age of 6 reside in what are considered to be low income households (Statistics Canada, 2007). According to Statistics Canada (2007) if more than 30% of household income is used to pay rent, the cost of housing is considered unaffordable and in this community rent costs typically exceed 30% of the family income. Since rental costs in this community are higher than the inner city, yet incomes remain the same, the higher cost of rent impacts food budgets. As a result, there are several food banks in the local area which are accessed regularly by many of the families in this community.

This community is adjacent to middle and upper class neighbourhoods. However, this community is somewhat hidden in that it is not visible from the main traffic thoroughfare. An individual could travel down the main artery in this suburban area and never know that this pocket of low income housing exists. The lack of visibility of this community also may have

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contributed to its struggle to obtain much needed resources. The phrase “out of sight out of mind” captures why communities like this may not have had the level of advocacy from the local community that it may require.

In this community, there is no transit service directly in front of the subsidized housing complex where many of the students who attend the local community school reside. Given that a majority of the residents do not have access to a vehicle and many have more than one young child, walking to the nearest transit stop or even to access services like a full-service grocery store, particularly during the harsh winter months can be very challenging. The sidewalk that the residents have to traverse in order to obtain transit service or get to the nearest grocery store is about a 10 minute walk. Given that the sidewalk is next to the community school’s field, which is a large open space, it is often covered by snow drifts during the winter months and therefore pushing a child in a stroller or pulling a child on a sled during the winter months is very challenging. The overall lack of accessibility of resources and the barriers to transportation may contribute to the residents’ expressed feelings of isolation. In this community the most accessible place to obtain support and resources is the local community school which is in a direct site line from the housing complex where a majority of the students who attend the community school reside.

### **Early Development Instrument Data**

Every two years kindergarten teachers in several provinces and territories in Canada complete the Early Development Instrument [EDI] questionnaire on all kindergarten students to measure readiness for school across several areas of child development. The EDI is a part of a long-term, evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategy to promote the health and well-being of Canada’s children (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2011).

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Presently, there is EDI data from two out of the three communities that are the focus of this study (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2011). The areas of child development that are assessed in the EDI include: (a) physical health and well-being which means children are healthy, independent and rested each day, (b) social competence which means children play and get along with each other, share and show self-confidence, (c) emotional maturity which means that children are able to concentrate on tasks, help others and show patience and are not aggressive or angry often, (d) language and thinking skills which means children are interested in reading and writing, can count and recognize numbers and shapes, and (e) communication skills and general knowledge which means that children can tell a story and communicate with children and adults. The EDI provides important data that identifies the needs of the population and may serve as a guide for the local community school of the need to tailor support to meet the identified needs. Since EDI data collection is repeated biennially it also may allow communities to assess change over time and whether the supports that are being provided are having a positive impact on its children.

At the School without Walls the EDI data collected in each of the five domains of child development reveals that a majority of the children in the local community are found to be vulnerable or “not ready to learn” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2011). The descriptor vulnerable or not ready to learn is defined as children who scored in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of readiness skills. This statistic is worrisome given that a review of EDI data over several years has shown that approximately 50% of children identified as vulnerable in kindergarten were also observed to have long-term vulnerability in grade 3 (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2011). At the same time research has shown that, “vulnerability is not a permanent state” in that the readiness of some students may improve over time (Lloyd & Hertzman, 2009).

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Therefore, it is critical to identify effective early intervention practices and the role of the community school in improving the trajectory of children and families.

### **Organization and Governance Structure**

The School without Walls has been designated as a community school as part of the Community Schools Program for over five years. The kindergarten to grade 8 school has multi-age grade configurations at almost all grade levels. The kindergarten programming that is offered is a half-day program. The school day starts at approximately 9:00 A.M. and ends at 3:30 P.M. with a one hour break for lunch.

The administrative structure of the community school consists of a principal and vice-principal who lead a staff of approximately 35 professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff. There is a parent council at the community school but it has been difficult to sustain a base of active parent involvement, and therefore the role of the parent council has been somewhat limited. There also is an on-site family centre in the community school with a coordinator and an assistant coordinator who focus on providing early childhood education and parenting support. There is a community school connector who is employed by the community school who supports the needs of the students, families and the community by facilitating much of the programming that is provided. The role of the community school connector is vast and includes but is not limited to:

1. Providing after school programming for students on a variety of topics (e.g., generating self-respect and empowerment, play, organized sports and, nutrition) as well as walking students home after programs have concluded after school hours).

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2. Facilitating parenting programs that are designed to engage and empower parents.
3. Transporting parents to community school events when required as well as transporting students to medical appointments when required.
4. Supporting the operation of the community kitchen including purchasing and picking up supplies and supporting the daily provision of a snack for all students in the school.
5. Recruiting volunteers to contribute to the community school programming.
6. Coordinating and facilitating all aspects of whole school and community gatherings (e.g., the winter feast, family fun nights, and Families and Schools Together [FAST]).
7. Obtaining basic necessities like clothing to ensure that students' basic needs are met and providing clothing to students and families. This also includes ensuring that students who may not have had breakfast or lunch receive food during the day.
8. Seeking out partnerships with other local agencies such as the local health provider to conduct presentations at the community school based on an identified need.
9. Acting as a board member of the local community resource centre and other local community networks to develop coordinated community actions.
10. Contributing to the writing of grants to support the community school.
11. Surveying students and parents after programming has been provided to obtain feedback and guide future programming.
12. Monitoring attendance at community school events and programs as a way to measure the effectiveness of the program.



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### **Programming**

At the School without Walls there is a broad range of programming that is provided to meet the needs of children, youth, families and the community. There are educational programs, early childhood development initiatives, parenting and family support, a broad range of sports and recreational programs as well as cultural activities. A significant amount of the programming that is provided for school-aged students is provided after school hours. While most of the early childhood, parenting and family support is provided during the school day involves a partnership between the school, the family centre, and the local community resource centre that is located in a housing complex near the school.

**Educational programming.** Early childhood development is a focus of this community school in partnership with the family centre and local community resource centre. At the family centre in the community school there is a stay and play program for parents with children from birth to 5 years of age that is offered throughout the school year in which parents learn about how to promote healthy child development through play, song and the development of pre-literacy skills. During the spring there also is a pre-school program for 4 year olds that is offered twice a week at the family centre that specifically teaches school readiness skills to incoming kindergarten students. In this program, children not only have the opportunity to develop school readiness skills, but also have the opportunity to become acclimatized to the school environment and the kindergarten classroom.

The family centre coordinator also facilitates the Roots of Empathy Program which is an evidence-based program that operates in one classroom within the community school (Gordon, 2005). Participation in the Roots of Empathy Program has been found to reduce levels of aggression in children and foster social and emotional competence.

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The Roots of Empathy program, while beneficial to the students in the community school also provides a way to welcome new parents into the community school and to begin to build a connection between parents and the school early on in their child's development.

The School without Walls recognizes that its students often do not have access to quality reading materials outside of the school setting. Every year the students are taken on a field trip to a local book store and are provided with the opportunity to purchase a book of their choice. The rationale for the field trip is to create excitement about reading and to provide the students with an opportunity to select and purchase a book of interest to them. The closest library to this community school is over 1.5 kilometers away and therefore when the school is closed during the summer months the students may not have access to books. In order to help to overcome this obstacle and reduce summer learning loss, the community school recently opened and staffed its library on a part-time basis during the summer months to provide students with access to quality reading materials.

The School without Walls also has a partnership with a local university and a local high school to provide a mentorship program. The mentorship program is founded on the values of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity as outlined in the Circle of Courage (Bendtro, Brokenleg & VanBockern, 2002), and involves university and high school students fostering positive relationships and connections with the students at the local community school through joint participation in after school programming. The mentorship program provides opportunities to build a personal connection with a mentor while participating in structured physical activities, reading as well as goal setting for the future.

Additionally, there is a group of middle years students from the School without Walls who participate in a mentorship program that is provided by a local university.

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The program provides personal mentorship in the areas of sport, nutrition, arts and education. In addition to mentorship, the students are provided with an opportunity to explore the educational opportunities that exist at the post-secondary level. Continuing its focus on mentorship, the School without Walls has also invited Big Brothers and Big Sisters into the community school during the school day to provide in-school mentorship for students who may need to develop a connection with a significant adult.

Recognizing the need to provide exposure to post-secondary education, as many of the parents of the students at the community school have not completed high school or received a post-secondary education, the School without Walls has a group of 10 and 11 year old students who participate in a program that involves weekly attendance at a post-secondary institution. The goal of exposing students to post-secondary educational opportunities early on in their school careers is to encourage the students to continue their education beyond high school and ultimately break the cycle of poverty. In this program the students attend a local university on Saturday and transportation is provided. Parents are required to attend an orientation session to learn about the program and also are encouraged to play an active role in supporting their child's attendance at the program. As a way to further involve parents in planning for their child's future, there is culminating activity at the end of the program that involves inviting parents to the post-secondary institution to celebrate their child's completion of the program and learn about ways to further support their child in obtaining a post-secondary education.

The local community resource centre also supports the academic achievement of the students after school hours by providing several programs that support students' learning. For instance, the local community resource centre provides an after school homework program where students can receive support in completing homework as well as receive a snack.

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In addition to homework support, the community resource centre partners with the school to provide educational activities and physical activities specifically designed to meet the needs of boys. The activities include opportunities to engage in science experiments, educational games and sport. The location of these activities alternates between the school and the local community resource centre. There also is a program focused on meeting the needs and interests of girls that follows a similar schedule. The programming for girls also has included science experiments, educational games and sport and the activity is often chosen by the participants in the group. The location of the girls' program also alternates between the school and the local community resource centre.

**Nutrition.** The School without Walls, the family centre and local community resource centre have a shared focus on nutrition and offer several programs to teach children and their families about healthy eating. At the School without Walls nutritional support includes the provision of a daily mid-morning snack for the entire student population. Additionally, if a student has not had breakfast prior to coming to school the school also will provide the student with breakfast.

The community school connector as well as the local community resource centre partner in offering after school programming for students related to learning about healthy food choices and preparing healthy meals. When meals are prepared there is always an effort to ensure that additional food is prepared that may be taken home by the participants and shared with other members of their family. The community school connector and the family centre staff also partner in offering programming specifically for parents that involves learning about healthy food choices through activities like nutrition bingo which is followed by support and instruction in preparing a healthy meal.

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When parents play nutrition bingo they have the opportunity to win food items and they too have the opportunity to take home a meal for their family. When nutritional programs are offered for parents, the family centre in the community school provides child care so that parents with young children are able to participate. Recognizing that food security is an issue in this community the local community resource centre also provides a food bank once every two weeks for local residents.

**Parenting and family support.** Many of the parents who reside in the local community have had negative experiences in school and with the educational system. In order to overcome this obstacle the school has worked toward creating a welcoming environment where families feel comfortable and are willing to enter the school and engage in positive, non-threatening activities. One way that the School without Walls has addressed this need is by offering an informal parent program that is led by the community school connector and involves a parent discussion group. In this program, parents are invited to drop into the school, socialize and identify potential activities that may be of interest to the group, and that may ultimately lead to participation in a shared project. During this informal program, the parents have engaged in activities like card making and volunteering for local non-profit organizations. The parent discussion group has led to an increased openness on the part of some parents to become more actively involved in the community school. For instance, one parent who attended the informal parent group has subsequently volunteered to lead sewing instruction in an after school girls group that is offered at the community school.

Recognizing that many parents in the local area may have limited parenting support the School without Walls, the family centre and the local community resource centre have provided a range of parenting programs.

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For instance, the local community resource centre has facilitated the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program which is an evidence-based parenting program that supports the healthy emotional and behavioural development of children by teaching parents how to foster a positive family environment (Sanders, Kirby, Tellegen & Day, 2014). The local community resource centre and the family centre also have collaborated to offer the Nobody's Perfect Parenting program which is a preventative educational support program for parents with children from the ages of birth to 5 (Health Canada, 1997). This program explores positive approaches to parenting and problem solving. When this program has been offered the family centre has provided a space for the sessions as well as child care so that interested parents can attend. At the School without Walls, the Nobody's Perfect Parenting program has been facilitated by a local community resident who after attending the program became a trained facilitator.

Further recognizing the need to empower parents, the local community resource centre also provides parents with access to a telephone and a computer as many residents in the community may not have access to these supports in their own homes. The community resource centre provides a safe place to go and request assistance when completing a form or navigating the complexities of the local housing authority. The resource centre also provides parents with support in conducting a job search, preparing a resume and completing a job application.

**Health/mental health services.** The School without Walls also has a focus on supporting the overall health and wellness of the family unit. The student services teacher in the school is a school counsellor and provides regular counselling to students who require additional support. If a student requires more intensive emotional or behavioural support a referral may be made to the divisional social worker, psychologist or behaviour support teacher who are part of the clinical team that provides support to the community school as well as other schools within

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the school division. Additionally, the community school connector has enlisted the local public health nurse to provide information and conduct presentations for students and families on a variety of health related topics. If a parent requires health or mental health support the staff at the local community resource centre also may provide assistance in connecting the parent with the local community health organization.

**Cultural programs.** Given that over 50% of the students in the School without Walls have self-declared that they are Aboriginal or Metis there is an effort to include First Nations perspectives and teachings in the community school programming. One of the mentorship programs that was previously described is an example of how First Nations perspectives and teachings have been incorporated in the community school programming. The family centre also provides an early childhood program for parents and children from the age of birth to 5 that utilizes First Nations teaching as a part of its early childhood programming. In this program parents and children participate in activities that are based on First Nations traditions. The activities include the exploration of rhymes, songs, music, dance, art and literature. During this program an elder from the local community is invited to help model and support the facilitation of the activities. The family centre also provides instruction in traditional Metis Jigging. The Metis Jigging program follows the daily parent child drop-in program at various points throughout the year and serves as a way to engage both parents and children in physical activity while celebrating Metis traditions.

**Recreation.** In order to provide students with the opportunity to participate in recreational opportunities that might ordinarily be unavailable because they are cost prohibitive or because they lack transportation, the School without Walls provides a broad range of athletic programming that would typically be accessed through a community agency for a fee.

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For instance, the community school offers its own after school soccer league which mirrors a community club soccer program. In this program, the students are provided with soccer jerseys from a local sponsor and soccer games are organized at the community school and at another neighbouring school. The games occur immediately after school in the community school's field so parents can watch the game from their living room window if they wish to do so. However, the school has noted that increasingly parents have been walking across the field to watch their children play soccer. At the end of the season the students receive a team picture just like they would if they had joined a community club soccer program. One of the local high schools which has an elite soccer program also supports the community school's soccer league by enlisting some of their high school students to provide instruction in soccer skills. Additionally, when students from the School without Walls have expressed an interest in playing other sports beyond what the school has to offer or participating in summer recreational programming the school administrator and the physical education teacher have sought out the necessary sponsorship for the program and have facilitated the registration.

The School without Walls also operates a hockey academy for grades 5 and 6 students with the goal of expanding the program to include grades 3 and 4 in the upcoming school year. As a part of the hockey academy, the students spend one afternoon per week at a local arena learning hockey skills. When the students begin the hockey academy many have never skated before. All of the hockey equipment that the students use has been funded through various charitable organizations and the ice time also has been partially funded. The provision of a hockey program provides the students at the School without Walls with the opportunity to play a sport that for many families may be cost prohibitive.



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The School without Walls also provides a community wrestling program after school hours. There is also a flag rugby program that has had significant success and led to the community school participating in tournaments outside of the local urban area. While most schools also have track and field clubs and one track meet each year, the community school has had seven track meets over the course of the school year.

**Community events.** The community school offers an annual winter feast and typically has 400 to 450 people in attendance. During the winter feast students as well as their family and extended family are provided with a fully catered meal. During this celebration the tables are dressed with tablecloths and centre pieces and following the somewhat formal dinner there is a winter concert. It is truly a community concert in that pre-school children who attend the family centre as well as school age children perform.

Families and Schools Together [F.A.S.T] is another program that has been offered by the School without Walls for seven consecutive years (Families and Schools International). The FAST program is hosted at the community school one evening per week for a period of eight weeks and involves inviting children and their families into the school to share a meal together and explore strategies that foster healthy family relationships. During the evening teachers or members of a school's clinical team such as school psychologists or social workers model strategies as they play with children alongside their parents. The goal of the activities is to collectively explore strategies that support positive family relationships and feelings of parent empowerment. FAST also provides an opportunity for parents to become more involved in their child's school. After participating in FAST there is a parent leadership component in which parents are invited to become leaders in the organization and in the facilitation of future sessions.

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Furthermore, the community school hosts an annual family fun night that typically has several hundred people in attendance. The family fun night provides an informal opportunity for parents and children to meet their neighbours in a safe environment. The family fun night allows members of the community to eat together, participate in games and develop social connections in their local community.

**Outreach.** In order to support attendance at school and ensure students are safe on the way to and from school the School without Walls provides a walking school bus. The walking school bus involves an educational assistant picking students up in the morning at a central location near the local community housing complex. Then at noon hour the principal of the community school walks the students to and from home. Finally, at the end of the school day an educational assistant walks the students to their homes. The walking school bus not only encourages attendance and fosters students' feelings of safety and security in the neighbourhood, but also provides the school staff with opportunities for daily, face to face contact with families that might not otherwise occur.

During the winter months attendance at the family centre in the School without Walls drops. Recognizing that the weather sometimes precludes parents from attending the parent and child programming that is offered at the family centre, the community school decided to move its programming to the local community resource centre once per week in order to enhance its accessibility for parents. The community school plans to continue this practice in order to make their services more accessible during the winter months.

**Continuum of behavioural support.** The School without Walls has school-wide expectations in the area of behaviour that are outlined in its code of conduct.

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The code of conduct recognizes that social and emotional growth is a process that needs to be nurtured and fostered by all caregivers and outlines the following expectations: (a) taking responsibility to learn and make good decisions and adhere to divisional and provincial policies, (b) working and playing safely at all times, (c) dressing in a way that shows dignity and respect for oneself and others, (d) respecting all school and personal property and (e) treating all members of the school community with respect.

Foundationally, the School without Walls also focuses on building positive relationships with students and families. They strive to “never send kids home” as they believe that students need to feel wanted and accepted particularly when they are struggling. In addition to a code of conduct, the school also provides a continuum of behavioural supports to address students’ needs. The school-wide behaviour support model includes the development and use of social contracts in all classrooms that focus on creating classroom specific behaviour expectations for all students. In the event a student engages in behaviour that contravenes the school’s code of conduct or the classroom social contract the school uses a Restitution model and supports the student in learning from and repairing the situation (Gossen, 1998). There is also a specific focus on teaching students the skills they need to behave appropriately. A model called the Responsive Classroom, which views behavioural challenges as skill deficits is implemented in the classrooms to model and teach students the skills they need to successfully interact. The Responsive Classroom approach also involves opportunities for students to engage in the repeated practice of skills if they require more intensive support. In order to respect the cultural needs of the students the Seven Sacred Teachings that are a part of the traditional Aboriginal way of life and include love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth are also embedded into teaching practices and are used in the school to foster a culture of respect and

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sharing (Bouchard, Martin & Cameron, 2009). For student's with more intensive behavioural needs the school administrator and the student services teacher collaborate with the parents, classroom teacher, educational assistant and any clinical or outside agency support providers to develop individualized behaviour plans in addition to accessing the school-wide supports that are available. Some of the approaches to supporting more intensive behavioural needs that are included in students behaviour intervention plans involve completing social and emotional assessments to determine the developmental needs of the student, providing individualized support in teaching strategies for calming and self-regulation and individualized counselling at the school, and referral to outside health and mental health supports for more intensive support with parental support when required.

### **The Participants**

A total of six participants from the School without Walls were interviewed for this study. The participants included the school principal, the student services teacher who was the school counsellor, the community school connector, as well as two partnering service providers from a local community resource centre.

Nancy Archer was the Community Program Coordinator of the community resource centre that partners with the community school to provide support. Nancy had a degree in journalism and communications and has a background working in community development for not for profit organizations. She had been the Community Program Coordinator for approximately one year. The interview with Nancy also took place in the community resource centre. During the interview Nancy clearly articulated the vision of the community resource centre and expressed a commitment to creating a welcoming, safe environment for children, youth and families in the local community.

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Mark Davidson was the principal of the community school and had worked in this capacity for the past four years. He has worked in field of education for over 20 years and held a Masters of Education degree. The first and second interviews with Mark took place in his office at the community school. During my time in the school I had the opportunity to observe Mark interact with both the students and his staff on several occasions. He was extremely present in the hallways, classrooms and at recess times where he was observed to regularly make positive contact with students. He was a charismatic leader who was passionate about learning and meeting the needs of everyone connected to the school.

Lois Jackson was the Administrative Coordinator of the community resource centre that partners with the community school to provide support to students and families. Lois had been employed in this capacity for the past two years. She had a Bachelor of Human Ecology Degree and a background working in the area of addictions. The interview was conducted in the community resource centre located in a government housing complex that was in close proximity to the community school. Lois was eager to share the scope of programming that the resource centre offered and how the partnership with the community school had enhanced the services that they provided.

Ann Jones was the community school connector who had worked in this capacity for the past two years. Ann was a recent university graduate and held a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Community Health. Ann had started her career at this community school. The interview was conducted in an office adjacent to the school library which is a space that Ann used to house materials such as clothing and shoes that are given to students when needed. When I met Ann she was in the process of providing some students with clean clothing as they

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had come to school in clothing that had been soiled. Ann had several resources at her disposal including clean shirts, pants and runners so that the students could change and go to class.

Susan Lowe was the parent of a child in grade two with significant emotional and behavioural challenges who attended the community school. She was also a member of the community school's parent council and had been involved in supporting some of the initiatives that had taken place in the community school. Susan's interview took place in a meeting room in the school. Susan resided in the government housing complex that was adjacent to the school and was eager to share her perspectives about the community school and how it had supported her child and her personally, as well as other children and families in the community.

Donna Smith was the student services teacher and she has worked in the field of education for over 25 years. She was trained as both a resource teacher and a counsellor but had been working in the capacity of the school counsellor for the past year. The interview with Donna was conducted in her office. During the interview I had the opportunity to see how central Donna's role was to the functioning of the community school, as during our interview several staff and students sought her out for support. The interview was conducted at 9:00 A.M and I also observed that several students started their day with Donna by visiting her and a classroom pet that she kept in her office.

### **Summary of the Data –The School without Walls**

After an aggregate overview of all three cases several core themes emerged across the cases. The core themes included: (a) the critical role of the school principal in a community school, (b) the essential role of the community school connector, (c) the mindset of staff, (d) capacity building in the community, (e) the factors that contribute to collaboration, (f) a continuum of behavioural support, (g) perspectives about resources, and (h) how community

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school programming is determined and its impact. I also have identified the categories that emerged within each theme. Both the themes and categories are summarized below in Table 1.0.

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Table 1.0

*Themes and Categories Across the Cases*

Theme	Category
a. The critical role of the school principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulating a shared vision</li> <li>• Redefining the role of the principal</li> <li>• Alignment of all stakeholders</li> </ul>
b. The essential role of the community school connector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role clarity</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Professional learning and training</li> </ul>
c. The mindset of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared beliefs</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Choosing to work in a community school</li> </ul>
d. Capacity building within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Advocacy</li> <li>• Community based leadership</li> </ul>
e. The factors that contribute to collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open and regular communication</li> <li>• Longevity in one's role</li> <li>• Shared decision making</li> </ul>
f. Continuum of behavioural support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptance</li> <li>• Inclusive practice</li> <li>• Case management</li> </ul>
g. Perspectives about Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for multiple funding sources</li> <li>• The bureaucratic nature of funding</li> <li>• Sharing Resources</li> <li>• Stress related to resources</li> </ul>
h. How community school programming is determined and its impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of programming</li> <li>• Outcomes of support</li> </ul>



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Each of the aforementioned themes and the corresponding categories within each theme will be presented separately. To that end, I will use quotes from the participants in order to capture their perspectives as accurately as possible. I will quote the participants verbatim except in cases where there is a possibility that grammar may compromise the clarity of the point being made. In these incidences, I will make a few minor edits to enhance the clarity of what the participant has said. I also will use “....” to indicate when a part of a quotation has been omitted. Observer comments also have been added and are enclosed in square brackets. The term “All” will be used if all six participants in the case responded in a similar way to a question and shared similar ideas. The term “Most” will be used to indicate when four to five participants in the case responded in a similar way and shared similar ideas. I also have indicated when only one participant expressed a particular perspective or experience.

### **Theme 1: The Critical Role of the Principal in a Community School**

All of the participants at the School without Walls described the essential role that the school principal played in creating the culture of the community school and in ensuring that the needs of students, families and the community were met. Mark the principal was described as not just leading the school but rather leading the local community and partnering agencies toward a common goal by articulating a shared vision. Mark had an extensive background in the field of education having worked in the profession for almost 25 years. He had been the administrator of the School without Walls for the past four years and had been a school administrator in other settings prior to taking on his current role. Mark also had worked as a teacher at the School without Walls several years prior to returning to the school as the administrator and therefore he had a great deal of background knowledge about the history of the community and the community school. In addition to his experience as both a teacher and administrator, Mark had a Masters of Education degree in Educational Administration.

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**Articulating a shared vision.** The school principal was described by all participants in this case as essential to the success of the community school and to the community school initiatives. All participants described the principal of the School without Walls as the “leader” of the community school. His role in articulating the school’s vision to the school staff, students, community members and community partners and translating the vision into action was described as a key component in creating the culture of the School without Walls. While the school’s motto or vision, “Be the Best You Can Be” is quite general, throughout his interview the principal described what it meant in his own words. Mark spoke about the physical, mental and emotional needs of students and their families in the community and his unwavering commitment to engage all stakeholders in collectively addressing their needs. He conveyed his commitment to all students and families by saying, “There’s nothing that could walk through that door that we can’t deal with.” He also described the language that he used to articulate the school’s vision to his staff and community partners. He said, “...creating opportunities is what we’re about so removing barriers and creating opportunities.” The idea of identifying what the students and community members need and then broadening and deepening the supports that are available was an essential part of the vision he described.

He described that the traditional model of schooling where academics was the sole focus and where the school functioned in isolation from the community as never truly meeting the needs of students and families in this community. He said,

This is all they see [pointing to a picture of the school]. So where do you think

they go when they need any human services? Where – you know, if they’re

having trouble with housing, if they’re having trouble finding a doctor, if they’re

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having trouble with [Family Services] if they're having issues, any human services

related issues. Well, they come to us first, because where else are they going to go?

This is what they see every day and it's our job to help.

Donna the Student Services teacher also talked about the shared vision that existed in the School without Walls and the principal's role in making it a reality. She described Mark as "always going above and beyond to meet the needs of students and families." She continued, "He sets the bar for all of us, it's really kind of a no excuses approach." Donna pointed to a quote that she had hanging on her wall that she felt captured the message that the principal conveyed on a daily basis and it read, "A child is a symbol of hope. Point out their strengths and they will strive to meet them every time you are around them." The idea of focusing on strengths was evident in the principal's repeated message during his interview and it was also echoed by his staff and other community support providers. The message being that it was unacceptable to frame students' needs at deficits. According to Ann, the community school connector, Mark always reminds the staff and community partners that, "high needs equals high potential," and that every student in the school has the potential to be successful in life and that it was their collective responsibility to help them to achieve that goal.

During the interview with Lois a support provider at the local community resource centre that partners with the School without Walls she talked about Mark as "the driving force behind the community school." Nancy another support provider from the local community resource centre also said,

Mark knows what needs to happen for kids, families and really this community

and we support him. I mean – it's collaborative, he always asks for input and ideas,

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but someone needs to make it happen and I feel that he is the person we can really count on. I think that the community feels that way too. The families around know that he has their best interests at heart.

Susan, the parent of a child with significant emotional and behavioural challenges also talked about the vision of the school and the role of the principal in making the vision a reality. She referred to the principal by his first name and shared that “...Mark makes the school more than just *school*...I know that if my child needs anything she will be taken care of here. Mark even asks me how I’m doing.”

**Redefining the role of the principal.** At the School without Walls the role of the principal was described by all participants as all encompassing. It went beyond school-based leadership and focusing on the needs of students and the school staff to building community partnerships in very direct, hands-on ways. It was evident that all of the participants felt that Mark, the principal was not bound by a prescribed role of what a principal should be or what a principal should do within the community school. Mark was clearly open to doing whatever it took to support the school and the community and led by example. There was an overarching message conveyed by all participants that Mark was not going to ask his staff or community partners to do something at the community school that he was not willing to do or had not already done himself. The direct, hands-on nature of the support that he provided contributed to the respect that the other participants conveyed for Mark and also enabled him to lead from a position of knowledge. He clearly knew the students, staff, families and all of the stakeholders involved in the community school through his direct and regular contact with them.

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Mark described one of his primary roles as making a concerted effort to connect with the students in his care every day in a positive and meaningful way. He explained that unless he had a commitment outside of the School without Walls that he would be outside with the students at recess. He said, “The students are my priority! I always go out for recess. I never miss a recess, morning or afternoon. In four years I’ve never missed a recess.” The need to be visible and connect with students was seen as critically important at the School without Walls. Mark set the tone in the School without Walls that positive contact with students was paramount. He described how the teachers at his school did not sit in their classrooms waiting for students to enter the school. Mark said that it was an expectation that everyone at the School without Walls was ready and willing to welcome the students when they arrived. He continued,

Well they’re showing up because school is the best place that they want to be. You know I want kids to run out of the house. When kids come to school in the morning I don’t want them to wait outside with the door locked. When kids come to school in the morning regardless of whether it’s minus 10 or minus 5, we bring them in. We open up the gym, we pull out some equipment and we let them play. We want kids to be in school. My staff, they get it.

In describing the role of the school principal, Ann the community school connector also talked about the broad nature of his role. Ann said, “Mark wears a lot of hats around here. I guess you could say he is our go to person.” Ann explained that when the school has tried to find after school support for students with behavioural challenges so that they can participate in an after school activity, Mark has been willing to stay and provide direct support so that the programming has been accessible to all students.

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Mark described that another one of his roles has been to build relationships with parents and the community at large. He explained that the parents that he wants to get to know are often the parents who have the most difficulty entering the school, at least initially. He has overcome this obstacle by going to students' homes and connecting with their families in person. He said,

I don't wait for them to come to us. I spend a ton of time at [the government housing complex adjacent to the school]. I don't phone really...Most of the phones are changing frequently. So this really affords us the opportunity to have face to face interactions.

It was through these kind of face to face interactions that Mark felt he had earned the trust and respect of the parent community and the community at large. However, Mark described that getting to know families was just a part of his role in the community. Once he got to know the families and they trusted him, they started to come to him and ask for help with specific family challenges and Mark has welcomed the opportunity to provide support in many life domains.

Susan who resided in the local government housing complex also talked about the principal's role at the School without Walls. She described that when she was in school she could never have imagined having a conversation with a principal or asking a principal for help. She then described how Mike had changed her perception of school principals. She said,

Mike isn't hidden away in an office somewhere. He's outside talking to people. If I'm standing outside he will say come in and chat. He goes out of his way to get to know everyone.

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She then described from her perspective how the principal was viewed by other residents in the government housing complex in which she resided. She said, “I think that others know he wants the best for our kids. People around here talk...they know that Mark will go to bat for them.”

Donna the student services teacher also described Mark’s vast role as the principal of the School without Walls and how it has not only involved establishing connections with students, parents and the community, but also in building partnerships with multiple stakeholders and service providers. She said,

When I came to this school I was blown away by the number of supports that were here!

For a relatively small school there have been so many connections made with community partners that benefit our kids. Mark really keeps that going.

Nancy the partnering service provider at the local community resource centre also talked about the broad role of the principal of the School without Walls. In describing Mark’s role in she said, “We are just one small piece of the community school. He’s here in the [housing complex] a lot. I know he works with many other groups – not just us!”

**Alignment of all stakeholders.** One of the ways that the principal of the School without Walls ensured that the shared vision of the school became a reality was through what he described as “strategic hiring practices” and building what he called “strategic partnerships.” He spoke about the importance of hiring a staff and partnering with other support providers who align with the community school’s vision and share the belief in the need to educate the whole child. He gave an example of how he hired Ann the community school connector, “I am very strategic about who I hire, people with good backgrounds.” Ann’s got a degree in community

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health. We have a focus on connecting through nutrition and I needed a person with skills who could make nutrition and healthy living a part of what we do and do it well!”

Mark also referred to how he was “strategic” in building partnerships with other service providers and community stakeholders. In this regard, his effort to build partnerships with other stakeholders outside of the community school, that support the school’s vision has been a significant part of his role. He talked about how he directly seeks out partnerships with support providers who “...put kids first – removing obstacles and creating opportunities and always at no cost. We need to be on the same page.” Mark talked about how he is always looking to create opportunities for students and families that might not otherwise be available and always at no cost to the family. In the beginning of his tenure as principal, Mark spent a significant amount of time seeking out community partnerships to support the community school initiatives and he continues to do so now, but he shared that some community partnerships have become longstanding which has been of significant benefit to the community school. For example, he talked about how he connects with local businesses to provide everything from soccer jerseys, to ice time to sports equipment. He said,

It’s through our partnerships with our local community that we are able to remove of barriers and create opportunities. The organizations that partner with us care and they are invested in this community because they know it’s important.

### **Theme 2: The Essential Role of the Community School Connector**

The community school connector was described by all of the participants in the study as providing a significant contribution to the daily operations of the community school.



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In talking about the role of the community school connector, like the role of the principal, it was described as extremely broad and involved not only supporting the students and families through various initiatives, but also collaborating with the school staff and partnering service providers, obtaining material supplies and completing grant applications. It was further described as needing to be responsive to the presenting needs within the community school that could change on any given day. This kind of responsiveness also required what was described as a high level of flexibility and availability on the part of the community school connector to be at the school for several hours during the morning and then to take a break mid-day if possible and return to the school to provide after school programming.

**Role clarity.** When asked to define her role as the community school connector Ann began by stating how she felt she was really forging new territory and making it somewhat her own, based on the presenting needs within the community school and her background in community health. She said, “While I take direction from Mark, I still have a lot of flexibility to come up with programs that meet the needs of our kids. So it’s about finding out what the needs are and then trying to meet them.” Ann described some of her role, “....so usually during my day, it’s filled with looking for basic necessities like clothing, helping if there is a crisis or planning for after school programming. Normally most of my programs take place after school.” Ann also explained that she may have a schedule for her day but often needs arise that require her immediate attention. She explained,

There were several times where I’ve had to take kids to doctor’s appointments or to the dentist or to get eye glasses because their parents were unable to take them. I know there have been times where I’ve had to take a whole family to the dentist because the mom couldn’t read or write to fill out the forms and often

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these things just come up.

Donna the student services teacher also described how Ann was responsive to the students' needs. Donna said,

You just never know how the day is going to go. This morning we had some students come to school and they needed clean clothes. Ann has collected everything from shirts, to pants, to shoes. The kids feel comfortable going to her.

Ann stated that one of her goals in her role as the community school connector has been to broadening the scope of the programming that has been provided at the School without Walls. She felt that there had been a significant focus on sport when she started in her role two years ago and as a result, she had explored ways to expand the range of programming that was being provided. For example, Ann explained how she had started a program to try and build resiliency in young girls as she saw this as a presenting need. Ann described the girls group that she started,

We meet once per week on Thursdays after school from 3:30 P.M. until 6:00 P.M.

We do everything from crafting activities together, to an entire unit on media awareness.

We've had presenters come in and talk about cyber-bullying and about healthy relationships too. I've have had a great turn out at this program.

Another one of Ann's roles was to connect with parents and families in the community. In order to build connections with parents and families Ann described how she needed to be visible and welcoming whenever she interacted with a parent.

When I first started in this role I just watched what was happening. Then of course I got to know the kids first and the kids are a great bridge. I could say, "Are you Sam's mom?" and it went from there and led to people starting to approach me. That increased

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relationship with people and feeling safe enough to come to me when they need something - that's the biggest thing.

Susan, a parent also talked about Ann's role in connecting with parents and families at the School without Walls. She described how many parents have been reluctant to come to the school and how the community school connector has had a significant impact on whether or not families engage with the community school. Susan said,

Ann gets parents to come to the school because she's friendly and she leaves it open. Some people are shy and they don't want to talk a lot if they don't know people. Ann doesn't push too hard and she lets the parents decide [their level of participation].

Ann also co-leads programming like the after school soccer program, programming with the local community resource centre, and she supports the provision of parenting programs that are offered in the school and in the school's family centre. Ann described how the development and implementation of multiple programs requires regular meetings and planning time with the school principal, teachers, community resource centre staff, and family centre staff who all play a vital role in the provision of support. "Planning all that we do takes time but it's worth it for the kids. When you see the kids benefiting from all that we provide it is very encouraging." In this regard, the community school connector has to interface with multiple stakeholders on an ongoing basis in order to develop and implement the range of programming that is provided.

Another one of Ann's roles is to work directly with local community partners in the provision of support. Ann described how she is on the board of the local community resource centre and spends a significant amount of time meeting with this organization.

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She explained,

We make sure that we are working together because we are both working to provide community programming for the same community area. So just making sure that we are not doubling up on programming and making sure that we're hitting all of the targets is one of our goals.

However, Ann described how supporting the community resource centre has required a significant time commitment. She said, "...some months we have like four, five or six meetings...yesterday we were there for 2.5 hours...and it takes me away from what I'm doing here." She also said that she had received the same message from the school principal to try and balance her time and not spend too much time away from the community school.

Ann also talked about another community network that she was a part of but the timing of the meetings had been conflicting with a parenting program that she was offering so she had been unable to attend the meetings on a regular basis. It seemed that Ann was torn between the amount of time she spent outside of the school working with community partners and the amount of time she spent at the School without Walls directly supporting students and families.

Ann also described that a part of her role was to support the completion of grant applications. Some of the grant applications that she referenced were completed by her and other grant applications were completed by the local community resource centre's staff, as well as other partnering service providers. Ann explained that the school and the local community resource centre do not jointly apply for grants. She said, "We just try not to apply at the same time or for the same thing." The completion of grant applications was described as a stressful process and while the school was receiving community school funding Ann described how the funding of the local community resource centre was tenuous.

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**Flexibility.** The need for the community school connector to be flexible in order to work at the community school was described by all of the participants. In a needs driven environment like the School without Walls, the idea of being responsive to the needs that arise, whenever they arise was described as essential. When speaking about her work schedule Ann described her day starting early in the morning and ending in the evening. Ann said,

Last year I was only 30 hours per week so I was putting in 10-15 hours of extra time on the weekend and it was just getting ridiculous. But I live closeby and I would come to the school for 3-4 hours in the morning and then leave for an hour or two and come back and it was crazy. So this year we increased my hours to 35 which helped.

Ann's day often begins at 8:15 A.M. and ends at 6:30 or 7:00 P.M with a break during the middle of the day. When asked how she managed to keep that kind of a schedule she said, "...I don't have kids so I can commit and some people just can't right." While flexibility and availability were described as assets on the part of the community school connector it may be difficult to sustain this level of flexibility in the longer term.

Donna the student services teacher also described how present Ann was in so many of the initiatives that were offered at the community school. Donna said, "It seems like Ann is always here! She's here in the morning and stays late to help our kids. That's the kind of commitment that it takes." Mark also described Ann's role and how flexible she was in responding to the needs the students and the community. He explained that one of the obstacles to participating in much of the community school programming that is offered during the evening was ensuring that students got home safely after a program had concluded. While it was not formally written in a job description, the community school connector had become responsible for walking the students home after the conclusion of after school programming.

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Mark said,

Ann walks the students home after they participate in programming during the evening. It doesn't matter if it's minus 35 degrees, Ann walks the kids home down that long sidewalk and makes sure that they get right to their doors safely and then she walks all that way back to the school and I've never heard her complain about it!

**Professional learning and training.** Given the need to be flexible and responsive to the presenting needs at the community school, Ann described how she often worked more hours than she was contractually required to work. This led to her having a number of surplus hours that she needed to use at various times throughout the school year. When referring to her surplus hours Ann said, "...when there's PD days I'll use banked time on those days." In other words, Ann took days off of work in order to use her excess hours when there were professional development days that were being provided for the rest of the school staff at the School without Walls. Ann was taking days off when there were no students at the school so that she would not have to be absent on the days when the students were present. While this may be a very child-centered approach, it meant that Ann was not receiving the professional learning opportunities that other staff members in the school were receiving, which may have benefited her in her role as a community school connector and thereby also benefited the people that she serves. As a new graduate, Ann had begun her career at the School without Walls and while she had received an education in community health, she also may have benefited from opportunities to learn more about the community school, the educational system as well as the partnering human service professionals with whom she was working.

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Since Ann may not have been a part of all of the professional learning that was occurring at the school, this may have limited her ability to learn about initiatives and other areas of educational focus within the school and school division that could have supported her in her role as a community school connector.

Ann also explained that her salary was paid out of the community school funding that the school received. In reference to the community school funding, “....I think it’s around \$67 000 to \$70 000 and that’s for everyone. So I mean, I use that money, the gym teacher uses that money and my salary is half that.” The community school connector’s exclusion from professional development may have been a cost savings measure. In order for Ann to attend a professional learning session she would need to be paid from the community school funds. Given that the community school funds are limited, it may be necessary for the principal to decide whether it is more important to have the community school connector at the school providing direct support or participating in professional learning.

### **Theme 3: The Mindset of Staff**

All of the participants at the School without Walls explained that in order to teach in a community school the teachers needed to believe that it was their responsibility to educate the whole child. The idea that social and emotional learning was as valued as academic learning was described as being evident in the teachers’ practice. Teachers also were described as needing to be flexible and that meant being willing to take on multiple roles that might sometimes be viewed as outside of the scope of a traditional teacher’s role. In addition, an overarching theme from most of the participants was the notion that teachers needed to choose to come to the community school.

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The idea of being placed or transferred into a community school might be met with resistance if a teacher did not welcome the roles and responsibilities that go along with teaching students with complex needs in a community school setting.

**Shared beliefs.** All of the participants described how essential it was for the teachers at the community school to believe that it was their responsibility to support students and their families beyond simply teaching the curriculum. Mark the principal stated, “Let what kids need drive what we do at my school....people get it. My teachers, they get it. They understand how we have to do things for kids here and they understand why.” Donna the student services teacher also talked about the shared understanding on the part of the teachers of the need to meet the presenting needs of the students. She said,

The teachers know that if a child has had a terrible night and they need to talk to someone before they are ready to go to class that’s okay. We all know that if a child’s basic needs are not being met the learning isn’t going to happen so we need to address all of those needs first.

Mark provided another example of how the teachers at the School without Walls prioritize meeting the students’ basic needs. He described how teachers do not view the need to eat during the school day as interfering with instructional time. He explained how teachers do not ask questions when a student says that they are hungry they simply respond to the need. He said,

We don’t try to determine the cause of it....Did mom get up late? We don’t ask.... Any kid that comes down and just says they’re hungry, we’ll get them something and the teachers support that. It doesn’t have to be limited to just the daily snack that we provide to all of the students. That’s not how we operate.



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Susan the parent also described the teachers' unwavering commitment to meet her daughter's needs. Susan said,

The teachers here really care about my daughter. They have taken the time to get to know her and now they really understand her. They don't look at her as a problem even on her bad days. Some teachers might but not here.

**Flexibility.** The teachers at the community school were also described as needing to be flexible and not bound by a specific idea about how a school should operate or what their role as teachers should be. Specifically, teachers were described as needing to be flexible about the nature and level of support that they provided. While most of the participants acknowledged that teachers in all schools provide extra-curricular support, however, it was stated that the teachers at the School without Walls put in a tremendous amount of time outside of the school day performing duties that might not typically be expected of a teacher. When describing the commitment of one of his teachers Mark said,

This guy, he is phenomenal! I can't believe the amount of time he puts in! He spends his own time getting kids to sports camps in the summer and driving kids who have made a community team and can't get there. How many evenings does he just pick the kids up and drive them to community things? Too many to count and that's over and above all the sports that he runs here!

Ann the community school connector also talked about the willingness of teachers to stay after school and provide support. She described how she felt very supported in facilitating after school programming as the teachers also make a significant contribution to extending the school day in the best interests of students and often partner with her.

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Ann said,

Everyone plays a part in making the community school a success. Our teachers do what it takes. There is a group of us that run the after school soccer league and it's twice a week in April, May and June. That's just one example. They put in a lot of time!

The teachers also were described as being flexible in their approach to tardiness and attendance. Their flexibility was captured in the way that they approached the attendance issue. It was not as though they did not value punctuality and attendance, but rather they were described as not taking a punitive approach to addressing the issue and blaming the student for "breaking a school rule." Donna the student services teacher described the approach that was taken to tardiness and attendance,

Teachers don't get upset about it. We just say how happy we that they are here and then we do something about it like add them to our walking school bus. We don't embarrass them or blame them. If we did that we would never see them!

Mark the principal also described how the parent teacher conferences were also structured in a flexible way in order to maximize parental participation. Mark explained that the School without Walls did not follow a schedule whereby parents set up an appointment time to meet with their child's teachers. Instead, an open house format was organized and food was served. He said, "We're all about being flexible here....a schedule didn't work for our families, so the teachers said we need to change it and we did. The teachers know it's not about what they need it's about doing what works."

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Susan the parent also talked about the flexibility of the teachers and their willingness to listen to her perspective about the support that her daughter was receiving. Susan felt that the teachers were not “rule bound” as compared to some of the other service providers that she interfaced with on a regular basis. Susan said,

My daughter was really connecting with her EA and it took almost the whole year and I was finally feeling like things were working and then the year was over. I know that parents aren't supposed to pick the EA's but I said to the teachers she needs the same EA! They listened. It wasn't all about the rules and things like that it was about what was best for her.

Lois the partnering service provider at the local community resource centre also described how the teachers were flexible and did not judge the students or their families negatively if homework was not completed. Rather than complain about homework not being completed, Lois felt that the teachers tried to approach it in a proactive way. Lois said, “Sometimes the homework just can't get done at home and the teachers at [The School without Walls] recognize that....” Lois then went on to describe how the community resource centre was working with the school to respond to this need by supporting the completion of homework in their after school programming. She explained how the first thirty minutes of the after school programming that they were offering involved providing assistance with the completion of homework.

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**Choosing to work in a community school.** The range of needs of the students and families at the School without Walls were described as significantly broad and in order to address these needs in a comprehensive and caring way it required a significant commitment on the part of the teachers. Mark described how he felt that teachers needed to choose to work at the School without Walls. He said,

You need to have your best teachers stepping up and saying I want to go there [to the School without Walls]....You have to have good teachers come here. So you create the kind of place where good teachers want to come to be challenged by what's going on in the community and making a difference here....I've got a guy – a teacher – who brings all three of his kids here because that's how much he believes in the school. You have to have the right people.

Donna the student services teacher echoed Mark's comment about the need for teachers to "...really need to *want* to be here and feel passionate about all that we do..." The idea of a teacher being transferred or placed in a community school, if their beliefs did not align with the philosophy of the community school was regarded as detrimental to the students and families that they serve. Ann the community school connector, described how the principal hires teachers who really embrace the values of the community school. Ann said, "There is a lot of positive energy at this school! It makes teachers who have special skills especially in the area of sports want to teach here."

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### **Theme 4: Capacity Building within the Community**

Most of the participants at the School without Walls described how they had made an effort to help to build the capacity of the parent community. While the participants were committed to the notion of building capacity, they described that there were several challenges associated with assisting the parents with self-advocacy and the community in the process of community development.

**Self-advocacy.** Most of the participants talked about their desire to assist parents in the development of self-advocacy skills. Several of the interventions that were being provided by the School without Walls were designed to empower parents and increase feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. The desire to include the parents' perspectives in the programming that was being provided at the School without Walls also was seen as vitally important. However, it was described as challenging to encourage parents to take on an active role in determining the nature of the support provided. Ann described her struggle with trying to get parents to share their opinions.

Even when I'm trying to plan programming and stuff like that, I don't want to plan stuff that I think we should do. I'm always asking, what do you guys want to cook? What do you guys want to talk about? And I find I really struggle to pull ideas out of parents, it's a lot easier to pull ideas from the kids.

Ann recognized that the fact that the parents were coming to the school was really the first step in fostering their engagement with the activities that were occurring at the school, however, she found it challenging to help parents and community members to transition from simply entering the school and attending a program to actively contributing to what was

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occurring. Ann described how she had been working with a parent for two years in order to convince her that she should lead a sewing class at the school. She said,

We've been working with one woman for a really long time...for years and we finally got to the point where she feels comfortable. I really thought she should lead a program so now she's finally doing a session with my girl's group on Thursday. She's very into sewing and Aboriginal culture so she's going to do the session. But to get her to even feel confident enough to teach a class or anything like that took such a long time.

Lois the partnering service provider at the local community resource centre also described how many parents and community members have difficulty seeking out the support that they provide. She described the range of supports that were available at the resource centre but from her perspective parents and community members often needed to be in a crisis in order to access them. She said,

We want the residents to be empowered and take control of their futures and we are here to provide the support to help them do that. But sometimes, families need to be in a crisis, a major crisis, before they speak up.

According to Susan the parent she felt that there were several obstacles that were preventing parents in the local community from advocating for themselves and their children and taking on a more active role at the School without Walls. She described how many of the residents who resided in the local government housing complex have had very negative life experiences that have led them to believe that their voices are unimportant. Susan also described how parents and community members faced other personal challenges like addiction that were preventing them from becoming more active in School without Walls and in the community.

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In her opinion, addiction issues were very significant in this community and needed to be addressed if the goal of encouraging positive parental involvement with children and with the school were going to be achieved. She said,

We want parents to be involved with their kids and the school but in this community many parents are struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. They can't help their kids if they can't help themselves out of that.

**Community-based leadership.** The School without Walls has tried to foster leadership within the parent community through the organization of a parent council and in the local community through the creation of a board of directors of the local housing complex. However, both of these initiatives were described as being at a very emergent stage in their development and not yet at the point where they were self-sufficient organizations.

Ann the community school connector explained that the School without Walls was encouraging parental leadership through the formation of a parent council but that it was a slow process. There had been a desire on the part of a few parents to have a parent council, but that the operation of the parent council was largely led by the school at the present time. Ann, the Community School Connector had actually become a very active participant in the parent council as a way to provide much needed support even though she was not a parent. Ann said, "...I think that we have like two or maybe three people in the parent council....the parent council is basically me." Mark also described how the parent council needed support to function however, he said there had been some success with one parent who he described as having, "...a lot of capacity."

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Susan, the parent also described the need for the school to support the operation of the parent council. She described the support that the school principal provided to the parent council as positive and as modeling how a council might be run with the goal of eventually having it led by the parents. Susan said, “We have a small parent council because a lot of people don’t volunteer. They are probably afraid of what they might be getting into. They don’t know or they just need some help.” The idea of building parental capacity through the parent council was seen as one of the many responsibilities of the community school but at the present time it was not at the stage of independence the participants had hoped it would have been.

Similarly, it had been difficult to engage community members in the local housing complex to become members of the board of directors of the organization. Even if a resident joined the board it was felt that they required a great deal of support to participate in the activities that were required of the board. Nancy the partnering service provider of the local community resource centre said,

We are under pressure to have a viable board with community membership. But that doesn’t happen overnight. They need to learn about the role and what is required and we need to guide them along the way but we’re not even close to being at that point.

Ann the community school connector explained that the long term goal of the resource centre was for it to be run by the tenants in the local community. However, Ann said,

We found that there just isn’t the capacity in the community to do that right now. In the past when tenants tried to run it, they’ve had issues....So we are just trying to build community capacity while still running all of the programming and applying for all of the grants.



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Susan the parent also talked about the challenges associated with having community members in a leadership role at the local resource centre. She said that there were many individuals who resided in the local community who did not trust one another and therefore, having a local tenant in a leadership role could be problematic. Susan felt that the community was not ready for the local leadership of the resource centre until some of the tensions in the community had been resolved. She said, “There is always somebody calling CFS or the police on somebody else. Some people just don’t seem to trust each other. I stay out of it....”

The task of empowering the parents of the students at the community school and the community at large continues to be a significant challenge at the School without Walls. The larger task of community development seems to be a very important role of community school and partnering service providers. The participants seemed invested in this process but acknowledged that it would take a significant amount of time and a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders in order to build capacity within the local community.

### **Theme 5: The Factors that Contribute to Collaboration**

The participants identified several factors that they felt contributed to the collaborative culture of the School without Walls and to the collaborative partnerships that existed. All of the participants at the School without Walls spoke about how they thought that open and regular communication among all stakeholders had contributed to the collaborative culture of the community school and that it had made them feel personally valued. They also felt that longevity in one’s role on the team had led to an increased feeling of trust on the part of all stakeholders which also was identified as a building block of collaboration.

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Finally, the utilization of a model of shared decision making also was described as having contributed to the “spirit of collaboration” that was described at the School without Walls.

**Open and regular communication.** At the School without Walls there were many initiatives being facilitated by multiple stakeholders from various organizations. Given the scope of the programming that was being provided, open and regular communication was described as essential for the community school to operate successfully. All participants talked about the need to have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the needs of the students and of the community in order to plan and implement the interventions effectively.

Nancy the partnering service provider from the community resource centre described how she valued the regular meetings that she had with the principal and the community school connector as well as other community partners. She said,

We have regular meetings at least a few times per month and sometimes more frequently if it's needed. I feel like our meetings are productive. Everyone provides updates and then we get right down to planning and figuring out whose going to do what.

Ann the community school connector also described structured, open communication was central to ensuring that all of the partnering service providers had shared goals, but also to ensuring that resources were being maximized and that services were not being duplicated. Ann said,

We meet to make sure that we are working together because we are all working to provide community programming for the same community. We need to make sure that we are not doubling up on programming and we also need to make sure that we are hitting all of our targets.

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Susan the parent also talked about how she valued the structured, regularly scheduled individualized education planning meetings that occurred at the School without Walls. She said, “I find the IEP meetings are really important. The meetings are important to me because I always feel heard.”

While structured meeting times were described as an important part of setting the direction of the community school and the support it provides, all of the participants also spoke about how essential informal communication was among all of the stakeholders in the community school. Ann the community school connector shared how open the channels of communication were at the School without Walls. She said, “It’s really an open door policy here and everyone knows that.”

Nancy, the partnering service provider talked about how face to face, informal conversations were extremely helpful in her day to day work. She said, “I really like the way we touch base throughout the week. When we see each other and we take the time to chat even if it’s just for a few minutes. It helps that we are so close by.”

While informal communication was valued among the service providers at the School without Walls, it also was described as an essential way to connect with the students and community that they serve. Mike the principal talked about how he and one of the educational assistants operated the walking school bus that the school provides. Mike described how he walked the students to and from school at lunch hour and used this opportunity to connect with the students in his care as well as the families in the community. This kind of face to face interaction was described as invaluable and effective in breaking down any perceived barriers that may exist between the school and the community.

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Mike felt the more that he directly spoke to parents in their own homes outside of the school setting the more comfortable they felt approaching him at school. He called the personal connections, “building currency.” The more he personally connected with families the stronger he felt their relationship was and the greater likelihood it would have of withstanding any potential challenges that might arise in the future. Mike said,

[The educational assistant] does the school bus before and after school and I do it at lunch....I know where everybody lives. I know all of the kids....I just go and knock on doors....and now they [the parents] know someone who can help and who can do something.

Susan the parent also talked about how she valued the informal communication that existed between all stakeholders at the School without Walls and how she could contact her daughter’s teachers any time and even speak to the principal directly. She explained, “....Mike has made me feel like if my daughter’s had a bad weekend I can call him and let him know. He always says to bring her – we’re ready for her....I like that I can speak to him directly.”

The open communication that was described by all of the participants involved communication among the individuals who provided direct service at the School without Walls. However, the senior administrators of the organizations involved in the community school were described as being much less aware of the extent of programming that was occurring and of the impact that it was having on the students and the community.

**Longevity in one’s role.** The openness on the part of all participants to communicate was in part attributed to the longevity that they each had in their respective roles as either a principal, teacher, community school connector, parent or partnering service provider.

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They described how the establishment of open communication was dependent upon the development of a trusting relationship that they described as evolving over time. Mark the principal described how he had worked to foster a connection with the students and the community and that it had taken time to build their trust. He had been at the School without Walls for four years but prior to his tenure at the school they had not had the same principal for more than one year. Mark explained,

It's all relationship based. Everything is about relationships and you know this school had five successive one year principals before I got here....how could you come here for one year? My whole first year was you won't be around the first year kind of deal....and then it was, "He's still here!"

Mark explained that after he had been the principal of the school for a few years the community started to reach out to him. He explained how he had built relationships, "...but at the same time maintained what the school's about," and it appeared that the community had begun to appreciate and value the support that he was providing. Mark described how he had, "...worked through a lot of stuff with families and we always end up in a good place together." This kind of commitment to see challenging situations through to a mutually beneficial solution took commitment on the part of all parties, but it also took time, sometimes years to establish and according to Mark it was something that he could never have done in one year as principal.

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Ann, the community school connector also talked about the need for longevity in her role. She too described her first year as a year in which she learned about the School without Walls and tried to get to know the community while at the same time being respectful of boundaries. She said, “People need to be able to trust you and know that you are reliable. It takes a while for people to know that they can count on you and you can’t rush it.”

Donna, the student services teacher also talked about the history of loss that many of the students and families in the local community had experienced and how there was a reluctance to trust new people. She said, “Our social worker has been around for a while and because of that people will share and accept help. You can’t just arrive on the scene and expect to be well received. It doesn’t work like that.”

Nancy the partnering support provider at the local community centre also talked about how staff turnover can be detrimental to the establishment of relationships and thereby to the process of community development. She said,

Here at the [community resource centre] we are both relatively new. We appreciate that Mark has been around longer. He has some of the history and we all benefit from those pieces. When everyone is new it slows down progress and it’s like starting over again every year. The community can’t afford for that to happen.

**Shared decision making.** At the School without Walls there was a concerted effort on the part of the principal to ensure that all perspectives were included in decisions related to the community school.

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While Mark, the principal of the community school, was described as the leader by all participants, the decisions about how to support the students and the community were made in a collaborative manner. Mark conveyed the message that if anyone had a passion or interest area that would benefit the students and the community and they were willing to see it through to fruition, he was willing to listen to their idea and support them. The leadership at the School without Walls was described as democratic and therefore the participants expressed a willingness to bring ideas forward and express their opinions because they felt valued and respected by the other stakeholders.

Lois the partnering service provider from the community resource centre described how all of the stakeholders at the School without Walls were willing to listen to new ideas and proposals that were initiated by the local community resource centre. Lois said, “It’s not like they are going to say, “No, I don’t agree,” if it wasn’t their idea. It’s more about, “What do we need?” “How can we make it happen?”

Mark provided an example of how decisions were made at the School without Walls. He described how their actions were needs driven and responsive to the students and the community. Mark explained that they had noticed that attendance had dropped at the family centre that is housed within the school. It was winter and parents and children were not coming to the sessions that were being provided. As a result, the family centre and the School without Walls met with the local community resource centre and explained the issue and they came to a collective decision. Mark said, “....We decided to move the family centre to [the local community resource Centre] because that field is the big barrier for getting our families in.” The local community resource centre provided the space and the family centre from the School without Walls provided the staff and all of the material resources.

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Susan the parent also talked about the democratic way that decisions had been made at the School without Walls and how she felt like an equal partner with the school. Whether it involved a community school initiative or planning for her daughter she said she felt comfortable voicing her opinion. She said,

I never feel like people are looking down on me and thinking “What does she know?” It’s actually the opposite. I’ve been living in the [local housing complex] for a long time, I’ve seen a lot and I have a daughter with needs. I think that my experience is counted.

Ann also described how she wanted decisions about the programming that was provided by the School without Walls to incorporate the perspectives of the people it was designed to serve. In spite of her efforts to include the voices of the participants in the programs and implement a shared decision making model about future the future direction of the support that she was providing, it had been difficult to obtain input from the community and families. Ann explained that while it had been difficult to obtain ideas and opinions from the community she had continued to invite their feedback at the beginning and the end of each group that she offered. Ann also explained how she surveyed the students at the School without Walls as a way to value their perspectives and to be responsive to their needs. Ann said, “It’s way easier to get feedback from the students,” and to include their perspectives in the community school planning.

### **Theme 6: Continuum of Behavioural Support**

When asked about the support that was provided at the School without Walls for students with emotional and behavioural challenges the message conveyed by all of the participants was that there was an acceptance of all students.



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The model of support that was provided for students who displayed emotional and behavioural challenges was further described as being based on an inclusive model. In cases where a student presented with complex emotional and behavioural needs, the principal of the school also was described as playing a case management role and leading the intervention.

**Acceptance.** The acceptance of students with emotional and behavioural challenges seemed to be a part of the culture of the School without Walls given the strong messages conveyed by the school principal and the comments that were echoed by the other support providers and the parent in this case. They described how students were not sent home or suspended from school if they displayed what was described as challenging behavior. Mark described his approach to working with students and families. Mark said,

There's really nothing....kid-wise, that could walk through that door that we can't deal with anymore....unmanageable doesn't mean unmanageable because he won't do his work or unmanageable because he won't stay in the classroom, or unmanageable because he's taking his shirt off and yelling....That's not unmanageable! We can still manage that!

The idea of suspending a student also was framed as a last resort because the principal felt that school was the best and safest place for the students to be. He said,

Oh I give lots of chances! How many chances? You get a million chances....People might say, "Oh, how many chances are you going to give that kid?" Well, as many as they need. If I run out of chances I've got a box full more in trunk. It's the same with families.

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Ann the community school connector described some of the behavior that was displayed at the School without Walls by some of the students and the approach of the school to be supportive as opposed to punitive. Ann said,

A lot of the kids struggle with anger issues....Just the inability to control their feelings when they get upset....I know kids have broken windows here, thrown chairs and stuff like that....it's just not reasonable to punish these kids or suspend them....they need that love and they are acting out for a reason.

In spite of the fact that the philosophy of the school seemed to be the acceptance of students and families with the goal of not suspending them, Ann the community school connector mentioned that there were a minority of teachers who felt the approach to behavior management at the School without Walls was too lenient. Ann said,

I know some people sometimes disagree with how the students are disciplined. Like, when I first started here there was some conflict about how the kids were being disciplined and how some people felt that they should be disciplined.

While there may have been some staff members at the School without Walls who would have preferred that the approach to behavior management was less supportive, the principal of the school and the participants in this study conveyed an alternative point of view.

**Inclusive practice.** In addition to displaying an acceptance for all students and families, the participants at the School without Walls also described how the students regardless of their level of need were included in all aspects of the community school.

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The idea of labeling students as challenging and excluding them from a program was not an accepted practice. Ann said, “They’re all included – they are all in the soccer program, they all come to [the after school activities.] They’re definitely engaged. It just takes an extra effort after school to support with them [students with EBD] but I wouldn’t be singling them out.” Donna also described how the behavioural support that was provided at the School without Walls was focused on inclusion. She said,

We really practice inclusion! It’s okay to need something different. We are all individuals and the students are taught about that. We provide whatever the students’ need. It might be calming activities and alternate spaces in order to help them to self-regulate. We provide breaks. We feed students regularly. If they need to sleep we provide a place for that too. We offer special projects like we’re doing a skate board project to engage the students who need it. The gym is also always open too. It’s just what we do!

In describing the inclusive nature of the School without Walls, Donna the parent described how her daughter had been included in the classroom and in after school programming. She appreciated that she had not been separated from her peers because of some of her challenges. Donna said, “....She is a part of the classroom! She has support from her EA but she is a part of the class and she is on a positive path! She is showing her potential too and getting 3’s on the report card!”

Ann, the community school connector also described how the School without Walls was like a centre of inclusion. She described situations in which students had been “kicked out” of other schools and placed at the School without Walls only to thrive in the new environment.

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Ann described how she felt these students had been successful in the new setting because of the way they were welcomed and valued by the staff. She said,

We've also had students in a couple of cases that were sent here from other schools because their behavior was so "bad" that they sent them to us. One of them is an older student who was getting into fights and beating people up....and she is doing amazing here! We just accept her here.

**Case management.** All of the participants described how the School without Walls utilized a team approach when addressing the needs of all students and families. It also was stated that in very complex cases the principal of the school took on what could be described as a case management function with the support of the student services team. The principal's role was multi-faceted in that when a student and their family presented with intensive needs the principal often was involved in advocacy and outreach for the family in addition to the leading the support that was being provided at the school level.

Mike the principal described the kind of outreach that he engages in to support the students with complex needs and families in the community. Mark explained,

I've helped families with housing, I've gone to mediation meetings with housing with families who have been given a seven day eviction notice. I've done that several times. You know, people come and they say [Family Services] hasn't come and I don't have enough food in my fridge. We give them food....if they are short money or they need things we have ways to make those kind of things happen by connecting with the right places. And all of this you know is about building trusting relationships.

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Lois the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre also talked about how Mike the principal really led the team in complex situations where the child and the family were in need of intensive support. She said, “When we have situations where things are breaking down on all fronts with housing, parents being overwhelmed, kids out of control, Mike gets heavily involved. He will pull it all together.”

Susan, the parent also described how Mike the principal provided support on multiple fronts. She said, “....I guess you could say he is like an advocate for me and my daughter.”

Donna the student services teacher talked about the value of a team approach in addressing the needs of students and families and described how the clinical services team from the school division and the behavior support teacher played an invaluable role in the planning that occurred for students with complex needs and their families. She further stated, “....when situations sometimes get very difficult Mike is the one to connect with the family regularly and bring in whatever else we need.” When the community school connector was asked about how students with very complex needs were supported at the School without Walls she said, “...That would mostly be Mike who connects with those.”

### **Theme 7: Perspectives about Resources**

There were several issues raised by the participants related to the theme of resources. One area that the participants discussed included the need to access funding from multiple sources due to the fact that the funding from the Community Schools Program and the funding for the local community resource centre were described as insufficient to meet the needs of the students and community that they served.

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The bureaucratic nature of the receipt of funding dollars also was described as problematic in that it sometimes interfered with the timely receipt of support. The idea of sharing resources among service providers also was discussed as an efficient way to help to try and overcome the obstacle of limited funding dollars. Finally, the short-term nature of funding also was described as a stressor that created feelings of uncertainty among support providers and negatively impacted long-term planning.

**The need for multiple funding sources.** The funding that the School without Walls received as a designated community school as a part of the Community Schools program was described as insufficient in supporting the range of programming and services that the stakeholders at the community school wanted to provide. The community school was required to use the Community School Program funding to pay not only the salary of the community school connector but also fund a majority of the programming that the school provided. Ann the community school connector described just a few of the ways that the funding from the Community Schools Program was spent. She said,

The community school money is for everyone, so I mean I use that money, the gym teacher uses that money....My salary is half of it. If we want to pay the community club fee for a player that we think really needs a chance, the soccer fee for someone, volleyball camps. So lots of people – there's lots of people that get into that fund for various things.

Mike the principal also described how he needed to make difficult choices about how to spend the Community School Program funding.

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In reference to the need to pay the community school connector's salary out of the funding that was received Mark said, "[The community connector] works seven hours per day. She was six hours before, six and a half, so I take it out of the grant money and top her up for another hour a day. So we have less – but we need the human resources part too."

Given the limited amount of funding the School without Walls received they described how they needed to seek additional funding from multiple sources in order to provide what they described as comprehensive support. The time and effort involved in finding other funding sources and then applying for grants appeared to be a significant focus as the School without Walls. For instance, Ann the community school connector described several different grants and funders that were accessed to sustain the snack program at the School without Walls. She said, "...we have two main grants that fund our snack program now....because we were just running out of funds to do it any other way. And then we do Winnipeg Harvest pick-ups every two weeks."

In describing the hockey program at the School without Walls, Mark the School principal also described a plethora of grant applications as well as community contacts that had been made in order offer the school's hockey program. Mark said,

Last year [a funder] helped to fund some equipment for about 20 kids. We paid for some of the equipment, all the ice time, all the bussing....and we're expanding....We just purchased 60 jerseys....We did apply to [a funder] to get a grant for \$4000.00. We were denied initially because they said it's [another funder] who should be funding it....We also applied to [a local business] because we have a connection in there so we got a grant for about three grand for next year as well. We want to add a nutritional component [to

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the hockey program]...Our phys-ed coordinator, he's looking at the division helping out through his budget next year. Like I said, we want to expand it.

The school's hockey program is just one example of the programming that is supported by multiple sources. The soccer program was described as similar in nature in that it too was supported by a variety of grants and local businesses.

The local community resource centre does not receive funding from the Community School Program, but like the School without Walls it also had one primary funder. The local community resource centre also described how the funding that they received was insufficient to support the programming that they wanted to offer and as result, they too needed to apply for support from many other potential funders. Nancy the partnering support provider said, "Our funding just isn't enough to meet the needs. We end up having to apply so many different grants that I can hardly keep them straight any more. Applying for grants could be a full-time job!" Ann the Community School Connector also described how the primary funder of the local community resource centre expected the resource centre staff to apply for multiple means of support. Ann said, "Well, they apply for everything every time because they need to! The [primary funder] expects them to."

**The bureaucratic nature of funding.** In addition to Community School Program funding being limited and thereby requiring the need to access multiple funding sources, the process of accessing community school funding also was described as a complicated, bureaucratic process.



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The Community School Program's funding was described as being allocated to the school division and therefore, in order to access the funding that was received, the School without Walls needed to apply to the school division which involved an approval process. Ann the community school connector described how she sometimes found it difficult to access funding, "...Well, the school division is kind of interesting about budgets. They make it very difficult sometimes....I struggle to even pay for an instructor coming in to do Zumba classes....they hold onto the money at the board office...." Mike also talked about some of the budgetary restrictions that were put in place at the school division level that complicated the receipt of funding. Mike said,

We've got budgets. Some budgets carry over easier than other budgets. You know, especially stuff that's school-based. Stuff that's a divisional budget is sometimes – there is a risk that they could not carry it over. So we spend things differently.

**Shared resources.** Several examples of the strategies that the School without Walls used to share resources with partnering service providers were provided by the participants. The participants most often talked about the sharing of capital resources including the shared use of spaces like the school's gym or the school's community kitchen. Donna the student services teacher said, "...a lot of time when we program with them [the local community resource centre] it's due to space." When either the School without Walls or the local community resource centre received a grant there were times when they would also support each other in the implementation of a new program by providing additional resources like custodial support or volunteers. Mike the principal said, "...we just finished a positive parenting program that ran for eight weeks. They [the local community resource centre] got the grant. They got the facilitators. We provide the space and the equipment....So that's example of our partnerships...."

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The School without Walls also paid for custodial support on the weekends so that the school could remain open if the local community resource centre wanted to host an activity at the school. Mike the principal described this partnership,

[The local community resource centre] has a Christmas party every year and other gatherings. I cover the cost of the custodian. When you get a permit on the weekends you have to pay the custodial piece....so we partner with them on that.”

The local community resource centre also supplied volunteer facilitators to the School without Walls to assist with the provision of after school programming if they were available. Mike the principal explained,

Ann our community school connector got a grant through [a funder] for [an after school program]....so she bought some equipment and hired some facilitators. We’re probably getting 40 kids out for this now after school from K-6. It’s good. We partnered with the [local community resource centre]. If they have extra volunteers they will send them over as well.

When asked about the extent of partnerships and the sharing of resources with other agencies beside the local community resource centre the sharing was described as limited to sharing information about what each respective agency was doing in the community. Ann said,

There is also a [community network] and I’m part of that where a lot of service provider in [the local area] come and meet together...We all kind of talk about our own programming, what’s going on and work together that way. So we talk about not just necessarily the resource centre but the area.

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While the School without Walls and its partners worked together to creatively share resources in the best interests of the students, parents and the community they continued to be funded by entirely separate sources. Neither the Community School Program's funding dollars nor the funding for the local community resource centre were provided jointly to more than one service provider. In addition, the school and its partnering service providers did not jointly apply for any grants. Ann the community school connector described how the grant application process worked, "...we just try not to apply for the same thing." In this regard, there were no shared pools of money from which multiple services providers could draw. Ann also expressed a desire to share the Community School Program's funding dollars with the resource centre given some recent cut backs at the centre. Ann said, "...I want sometimes to give some of our money to them..."

**Stress related to resources.** The funding that designated community schools receive from the Community Schools Program is allocated annually. In spite of the fact that the funding for community schools is received on an annual basis, the participants at the School without Walls did not express concern that the funding for the Community Schools Program might end except for one passing remark by the school principal Mark who said, "...I just worry about the change in government," wondering if a new government might not support the current funding structure for community schools. Most of the stress related to funding dollars was related to concerns about obtaining additional funding through grant applications, and the uncertainty over whether or not the local community resource centre would continue to receive sufficient funding to remain open.

One of the community school connector's responsibilities was to apply for grants to support the programming that the School without Walls was providing. She described how some

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of the grants that she had applied for in the past might no longer be available in the future and when that occurs the process of applying for new grants can be challenging. She said in reference to a current funder, "...I think that they are kyboshing this. I think that there is only one more intake in October and I think they're done....when they take away grants like this we're kind of left scrambling...." While Ann the community school connector was concerned about the longevity of the funding sources that she was dependent upon she was more concerned about the local community resource centre and its viability as an organization given its current funding structure. Ann appeared so aligned with the resource centre that in speaking about their predicament she expressed personal worry. She said, "It affects me in the sense that I stress over it and I want them - I want the centre to keep going and I want it to stay open!" Ann explained the challenges the resource centre was experiencing in trying to obtain charitable status. If the resource centre could obtain charitable status it could increase its number of potential funding sources but obtaining charitable status had been difficult. Ann said,

[A funder] is down on our throats wanting us to get charitable status because they want us to apply for more grants because they have been funding us for 12 or 13 years. We're worried that if we don't get charitable status they're going to take away our funding because they've given us quite a few chances to get charitable status. But in order to get charitable status you need to have a functioning board and we're struggling with that! We're just worried....We're worrying that it might not keep going!

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Lois the partnering service provider also talked about the resource centre's funding challenges and her concern that they would have to discontinue the much needed programming that they provided. She said,

It really is consuming us right now. We've had funding cuts and we are afraid that there will be more. It's tough when everything is so uncertain. We want to plan and we know that the support is needed but there are just so many unknowns.

Susan, the parent of a child with emotional and behavioural challenges also talked about the local community resource centre and the invaluable support that it provides to the residents in the community and her concern that it might close. She said, "....I don't know the details but I heard that they might not continue to get funding. It has me worried because they make such a difference in the community and many people count on them."

### **Theme 7: How Community School Programming is Determined and its Impact**

There were some community school initiatives that were described as being strongly encouraged by the Community Schools Program including the provision of nutritional programming, outreach through the walking school bus, as well as early childhood and parenting support. However, outside of these initiatives, the School without Walls appeared to have a lot of latitude in determining the nature and scope of programming that it provided. In this regard, it appeared that the programming that was provided was strongly influenced by the vision of the school principal. At the School without Walls, the principal had a strong belief in the positive impact that the participation in sports had on students and their engagement in school. As a result, a significant amount of the support that the School without Walls provided focused on providing opportunities for students to participate in sports. When asked about the impact of the

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support that the School without Walls provided, all of the participants talked about “believing” it made a difference and shared specific examples of what they regarded as successes.

**The focus of programming.** The principal’s passion for sport and his personal belief in the positive impact that the participation in sports had on students’ engagement seemed to determine much of the support that was provided at The School without Walls. Mark said, “So a lot of what we do here is about connecting through sports....It all comes down to providing what the kids need. They need to be engaged at the highest level possible and engagement through sport works.” In describing his mission to make the participation in sports possible for all students at the School without Walls, Mark said,

We need to remove all of the barriers and removing all of the barriers means we need to remove the transportation barrier. We need to remove the cost barrier. We need to remove anything that interferes with participation. Even the supervision part of it. We need to remove it all!

Donna the student services teacher also spoke about the school’s focus on athletics and how there were so many varied opportunities for the students to participate in sports at the School without Walls. She said, “We have so many opportunities for students to play sports. They can always play the typical school sports but we also have things like rugby and wrestling. We even run an after school soccer program and a hockey program!”

It also appeared that given the principal’s passion for sports and the positive impact that he felt that the participation in sports had on the students had led him to recruit like-minded people.

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Mark described the background of some of the teachers and educational assistants that he had hired to support and expand the extensive array of athletic opportunities that existed at the School without Walls. Mark said,

We have the best phys-ed teacher in the division....We also have a guy – he’s a high level hockey coach – double A and triple A hockey. He’s an EA at the school.... We also have a community wrestling program....One of our EA’s is [a leader in the wrestling community]....We have a rugby program because one of my teachers is a provincial rugby coach....”

While the School without Walls did not exclusively focus on creating opportunities for students to participate in sports, a significant part of the support that was provided involved athletics. The athletic programming also was described as expanding in the future in order to increase the opportunities that were available to the students.

**Outcomes of support.** All of the participants in the study talked about their personal belief in the positive impact that the School without Walls was having on students, families and the community. They also provided examples of individual students, who in their opinion had benefited from the support that they had received. Most of the participants also described some measures that were being used to assess the impact of the support that was being provided that included tracking attendance at programs and obtaining participants’ feedback. However, it was acknowledged by most of the participants that it was difficult to assess the causal impact of a particular support that was being provided given that there were so many supports being provided at the same time.

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When Mark the school principal was asked about outcomes of the support that he School without Walls was providing he said,

So does all of this make a difference? Well, yeah. Does FAST, along with soccer, along with hockey. Does the school, along with the fact that it's staring at you all of the time, like does that make a difference? It has to! I have to believe that...All of these pieces are creating engagement within the school. So I can't say directly this, but this in conjunction with everything that the school becomes.

In describing her perception of the impact that the School without Walls was having. Ann said, "We're clearly teaching these children something....It's just nice to see them after a couple of years....we're doing something that's making them grow up in the right way!" Nancy the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre also talked about the positive impact that she felt the School without Walls was having on the children and families in the local area. She said, "...We see families who are more willing to talk to us and to the school. To me that's growth."

There also were examples provided by the participants that described what they felt the impact of the community school's programming had been on specific students. Susan, the parent described the positive impact that the support from the School without Walls had on her child. Susan said, "She's doing much better overall thanks to the way that she is supported here. I mean I still have to deal with issues and so does the school but it's not nearly as often as it used to be."

In describing the impact that the School without Walls had on students, Ann the community school connector said, "...The behavior seems mellower at school. A lot of the high-strung ones aren't as high strung."



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These kind of observations also were shared by Lois the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre. Lois said, “....during our programs we see a lot of siblings helping siblings and a kind of cooperative spirit that we didn’t used to see as much of. The kids seem to have a lot more positive attitudes....”

Given the school’s significant focus on sports and the athletic development of the students there were several examples of the athletic successes of several students from basketball, to track and field to soccer. Mark the principal said,

This student turned out to be quite the little soccer player....that’s the one where we facilitated club programming. [The gym teacher] has driven him to practices because he could be an elite soccer player. He’s only in grade 3 and he’s very skilled already. And a lot of the skill comes through what we’ve been doing here.

In addition to the observations of the participants, the primary means by which both the School without Walls and the local community resource centre assessed the impact of their programming was by tracking attendance. Ann the community school connector described how she has tracked attendance at all of the programs that she directly provided and how she also had given participants, “evaluation surveys” at the end of programs in order to obtain feedback to guide future programming. She described how one of the after school programs for girls had a marked increase in attendance. Ann said, “I started with two girls and now I have 16 or 17 coming here regularly.” She also described how parental attendance at soccer games had increased significantly. Ann said, “....The main one [program] that I would say I saw a change [in attendance] is the soccer program....Parents are just coming and watching and supporting their kids.”

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Nancy the partnering service provider also described that they had seen an increase in attendance at the programming that they were providing, in particular programming that involved learning about nutrition and food preparation. She said, “We’ve had to move some of our cooking programs to the school because they have a much larger community kitchen and we just didn’t have enough space for everyone....”

While the support provided by the School without Walls was broad in nature there was a significant focus on the athletic development of the students, it appeared that while all of the participants “believed” that the supports that were being provided were having a positive impact on the students and the community much of their assessment of the impact of the support was based on individual observations.

### **Summary of Case 1**

At the School without Walls the overarching commitment of all of the stakeholders involved in the community school to meet the needs of the children, youth, families and community was repeatedly conveyed by all of the participants and was described as contributing to the collaborative culture of the school. The principal’s description of the School without Walls as the first line of support for the community also resonated throughout the participant interviews. The relative isolation of this community and the close proximity of the school to the community in need had made the school a logical location for the integration and provision of a broad range of supports. The principal not only was described as the leader of the multi-disciplinary support that was provided but also as playing a case management and advocacy role for children, youth and families in need.

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The idea that there was no need too great and no behaviour too extreme that the school could not deal with exemplified the level of commitment that existed within this setting. The principal's description of how he was strategic in his hiring practices and strategic in building partnerships with outside service providers who shared a similar mindset also had helped the School without Walls to remain true to its mission of providing holistic support. The principal's passion for sport also had helped to guide much of the community school programming that was provided at the School without Walls. While the relationships with the direct service providers and the recipients of support were described as being very strong in this setting, it appeared that the principal may have had a disproportionate level of responsibility in ensuring that community school and its partners worked collaboratively to maintain and expand the level of support that was provided. Stress over insufficient funding to meet the needs of the community also was described as a concern by some stakeholders. Additionally, supporting the development of community-based leadership was described as an ongoing challenge in this setting and a long-term goal that needed to be addressed in order to support the sustainability of the community school initiatives. Overall, the School without Walls through its strong school-based leadership, broad-based support, skilled service providers and commitment to meeting the needs of the population it served possessed many of the essential conditions that may support the implementation of the wraparound approach as an individualized planning model.

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### Chapter 5

#### Case 2 – The Village with a Vision

##### Description of the Case

The community school in case two will be referred to as The Village with a Vision because this community was once an independent village before it was absorbed by the surrounding urban area. In spite of being absorbed by the surrounding urban area, the community is referred to as a village since it has retained some of its small town feeling given its relative isolation within the city. It is described as having a vision because the community school and its local community partners focus on cyclical planning using the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope [PATH] model to identify their collective vision and proactively plan to meet the needs of the community (Pearpoint, O'Brien & Forest, 1993). The principal described the Village with a Vision as always being able to “dream big,” in spite of the obstacles that they faced.

The Village with a Vision is a kindergarten to grade 5 school located in an urban setting. It has a student population of approximately 150 students and a staff of approximately 30 professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff. This community school is located in a school division that has a student population of approximately 10 000 students and approximately 30 schools. The population of the school division is diverse and has an urban, suburban and rural component.

The Village with a Vision is a one story building that has experienced several changes to its structure since it was originally constructed. Over several decades, the school has evolved into a U shape, with the original two wings forming rectangles that run perpendicular to the relatively newer central section of the school.

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The exterior of the school is a combination of stucco, concrete blocks and brick reflecting its various phases of expansion and renewal with the brick central section being the most recently constructed portion of the school. The entrance of the school is bright and opens to a central hall that is adjacent to the school office. The entrance has recently been renovated with tile and displays of students' art to make it inviting to students and families. There is a bench at the entrance of the school where parents can wait for their children and socialize with other parents if they wish. The classrooms are enclosed spaces but most have large windows, some of which overlook the large park at the front of the school which makes the classrooms feel open and airy. The furniture in the classrooms is modern and modular and most classrooms have couches and bean bag chairs where students can sit and relax if they wish. There is a large, new play structure in the school field. The school also has a designated family room that offers pre-school and parenting programs throughout the school year. In the family room there is a fully equipped kitchen facility where cooking programs as well as the daily school breakfast are prepared. There also is a nursery school and childcare facility located within the school building. The nursery school offers programming for 3-5 year olds during the school year and the childcare facility operates year round providing care for children from 2-12 years of age. Across the street from the Village with a Vision is a community resource centre that operates in partnership with the community school to provide a wide range of programming for pre-school children, school-aged children, youth, and adults.

**Student and community demographics.** The Village with a Vision is located in the inner city and is surrounded by a largely industrial area that includes trucking businesses, factories and rail yards.

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Approximately 50% of the students who attend the Village with a Vision have self-identified as Aboriginal or Metis and approximately 30% of the students are newcomers. The community is considered a low income neighbourhood in that out of 178 neighbourhoods surveyed in the local urban area it is ranked 135<sup>th</sup> in terms of overall household income. This community also has the third highest proportion of lone-parent households in the local urban area. Compared to other communities it also has a higher than average percentage of senior citizens with some of the residents being the fifth generation to reside in local area. The community has suffered the loss of several community resources due to its changing demographics as some of the younger generation has moved out of the local community. For example, a significant loss in the community involved the closing of the local recreation centre and the feeling that this community unlike other high-risk neighbourhoods had been overlooked when municipal funding was allocated.

The community also is described as a somewhat disconnected neighbourhood, in part given its geographical isolation on the periphery of a major urban centre. Due to the fact that there are large areas of land devoted to industry, the local neighbourhoods in this region are physically divided and therefore there is a lack of population density which has posed a challenge to the provision of services. Navigating the community on foot is difficult given that there are few sidewalks. Residents also report that concerns for personal safety prevent them from walking within the community. Even if an individual was to walk within the community there are few services locally available. For instance, there are no full-service grocery stores within walking distance and therefore access to affordable, healthy food is limited. The closest full-service grocery store is 3.5 kilometers away.

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There is one local convenience store that sells basic necessities where many families without access to transportation shop, however, the cost of these necessities is much higher than average. In addition, many residents do not have access to a vehicle which makes obtaining services even more challenging. Public transportation in this area is extremely time-consuming due to in-direct bus routes and longer than average wait times.

**Early Development Instrument data.** At the Village with a Vision, EDI data also has been collected about the kindergarten students in the local community in order to assess: (a) physical health and well-being, (b) social competence, (c) emotional maturity, (d) language and thinking skills, and (e) communication skills and general knowledge. In this community a majority of the children in the local community were found to be vulnerable or “not ready to learn” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2011). At the Village with a Vision, the community school staff and partnering service providers use the biennial data collected from the EDI to assist them in identifying their collective vision for the community school and in identifying how to best invest time and resources to support the healthy development of the children in this community.

**Organization and governance structure.** The Village with a Vision has been designated as a community school as part of the Community Schools Program for over five years. This kindergarten to grade 5 school has multi-age grade configurations at almost all grade levels and the kindergarten programming that is offered is a full day program. The school day starts at approximately 9:00 A.M and ends at 3:30 P.M. with a one hour break for lunch. The administrative structure consists of a full-time principal who leads a staff of approximately 30 professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff. There also is a parent advisory group rather than a parent council which is an informal group that advises the school on issues but does not have the administrative responsibilities of a formal organization like a parent council.

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There is also an on-site family room in the community school where programming is led by the community school connectors and other partnering service providers like the local community resource centre. There are two part-time community school connectors who facilitate the programming that is provided by the community school. The role of the community school connectors includes but is not limited to:

1. Providing programs that engage and empower parents that may include the local community resource centre.
2. Providing play groups for children from the ages of 0 to 5 and their parents in partnership with the local community resource centre.
3. Transporting parents and volunteers to the community school if required.
4. Operating the community kitchen, preparing and serving the daily breakfast and monthly hot lunch, as well as purchasing all cooking supplies.
5. Recruiting volunteers to contribute to all community school programming.
6. Coordinating and facilitating whole school and community celebrations and purchasing all supplies.
7. Locating and providing basic necessities like clothing to ensure that students' basic needs are met.
8. Participating in fundraising initiatives that enhance the programming that is provided by the school.

### **Programming**

The Village with a Vision offers a broad range of programming that focusses on meeting the needs of the whole child and building partnerships with families.



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There is a strong connection between the Village with a Vision and the local community resource centre which is a satellite office of the local multi-disciplinary community health provider. Together they provide early childhood programming, parenting support, opportunities for parent empowerment, mental health support, nutritional guidance, cultural programs and recreational opportunities. At the Village with a Vision there is a significant focus on developing students' pre-literacy and literacy skills and increasing parents' understanding of literacy. The overarching goal of literacy development is embedded in many of the community school's activities. The Village with a Vision also extends the school day by inviting students into the school before classes start in the morning by providing them with a healthy breakfast and by providing a broad range of after school activities.

**Educational programming.** The Village with a Vision is focused on early childhood development and provides several programs during the school day to support the healthy development of its children and families. There is an early childhood program that is offered in the family room once per week during the school year. This program is co-facilitated by the local community resource centre and the community school connector. There is no pre-registration required to participate in this program in order to make it as invitational as possible to all families. In this program parents have an opportunity to play with their children and learn strategies that foster healthy child development. The Village with a Vision also participates in an early literacy development program for 4 year olds that involves university students who are enrolled in a teacher education program visiting the homes of incoming kindergarten students to teach early literacy skills and model strategies for parents. The Village with a Vision also is one of the few schools in the province that provides a full day kindergarten program.

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Through the sponsorship of local businesses the Village with a Vision also helps families build their own home libraries. Every month kindergarten and grade 1 students receive a new book that they take home to read and keep as a way to build their own personal libraries. In an effort to further foster literacy development during the summer months the Village with a Vision also has mailed books to the homes of all grade 1 students on three separate occasions. Given that there are a significant number of senior citizens in this community the Village with a Vision also has accessed this resource by inviting local senior citizens to participate in a reading circles program. In this program, senior citizens read with the students and have a snack once per week for a period of 8 weeks. This program is offered several times throughout the school year. There is also partnership with a local high school in the school division that involves high school students coming to the Village with a Vision and reading with the kindergarten to grade 6 students. This partnership not only supports reading but also brings positive role models into the school to work with the younger students in a mentorship capacity. The focus on literacy is also evident at the local community resource centre in that they provide a family literacy and learning time in which they teach parents practical strategies to foster literacy development with their children.

**Nutrition.** The Village with a Vision prepares and provides a healthy breakfast every day to all students and staff. If a student arrives at school late they are taken to the kitchen before going to class so that they may have the opportunity to eat breakfast if they have not yet eaten. There also is monthly hot lunch provided to all students. At the Village with a Vision there is a focus on providing home cooked meals as opposed to purchasing prepackaged products or ordering food. Parent volunteers are invited into the school to participate in preparing the monthly hot lunches and all meals for community events.

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The community school connectors create food preparation stations with instructions about how to complete each part of the meal so that when a volunteer arrives it is easy for them to contribute to the process. One of the nutritional education programs that is offered at the Village with a Vision is a soup club. In this weekly program parents are invited to learn about healthy food choices and then prepare a soup. The goal of the program not only includes learning how to prepare a healthy meal, but also involves preparing a meal that can be taken home for one's family. This cooking program is offered throughout the year and the type of meal that is prepared varies. Recognizing that food security is a concern in this community, the local community resource centre that is across the street from the Village with a Vision also operates a bi-weekly food bank for local residents as well as provides a weekly free community lunch that is open to all residents.

**Parenting/family support.** The Village with a Vision in partnership with the local community resource centre tries to address the needs of the whole family system. Over the course of the year parenting programs like Triple-P Positive Parenting rotate between being offered at the Village with a Vision and at the local community resource centre (Sanders, Kirby, Tellegen & Day, 2014). When the programs are provided at the Village with a Vision a facilitator from the community resource comes to the school to facilitate the programming in collaboration with the community school connector. The Village with a Vision also provides a leadership training program for parents in the local community. The leadership program is facilitated by an individual from the community resource centre in partnership with the community school connector. The goal of the program is help parents to feel personally empowered and involves learning strategies that promote self-care, problem solving skills and personal goal setting.

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There also are several other programs provided by the Village with a Vision that seek to engage parents and welcome them into the school environment. One such program is a parent drop-in where parents are invited to the school to socialize and work together to identify potential activities that may be of interest the group and that may ultimately lead to a shared activity or project. This informal parent drop-in led to a group of parents identifying a shared need for increased physical activity. Based on this identified need, the community school connector sought out support from the local community resource centre who provided an athletic therapist to lead a weekly yoga program for parents. During the program the parent group noticed that the yoga mats that they were using were becoming damaged after repeated use so in order to prevent the yoga mats from becoming damaged any further the parents decided to make canvas bags to protect the mats. This led the community school connector to purchase a sewing machine and start a sewing program for parents to learn to sew and make canvas bags to protect the yoga mats. The community school also has offered a scrapbooking club for parents. In order to further empower residents in the community the resource centre across from the Village with a Vision also provides employment counselling, assistance with job searches as well as access to a computer and phone. There also is support in the form of computer training for individuals who may not have basic technology skills.

**Health/mental health.** In addition to its focus on literacy, the Village with a Vision also has a significant focus on supporting the mental health and mental wellness of its students and families. In this regard, there is a social worker, psychologist and behaviour support teacher who are provided by the school division to support the students in this community school as well as other schools within the school division.

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The local community resource centre that is across from the Village with a Vision is a satellite of a local multi-disciplinary community health provider that also has access to a broad range of health and mental health supports for children and families. The Village with a Vision and the local multi-disciplinary community health provider work together closely to share information and connect families with necessary supports including obtaining a family doctor, counselling and therapy. There is regular contact between the local multi-disciplinary community health provider and the school principal to identify opportunities for partnerships as well as opportunities to collaborate in the provision of support. This also involves shared advertising and the promotion events that are occurring at the community school or in the community at large. Of note, there also is a mental health clinician from the health authority who is based out of the Village with a Vision one afternoon per week. The mental health clinician accepts referrals through the school and provides direct counselling to both students and families. The Village with a Vision also partners with the local resource centre which is a satellite of the local multi-disciplinary community health provider to offer parent information nights at the community school on health related topics.

**Cultural programs.** The local community is diverse and has a high percentage of Aboriginal and Filipino students and families. The school provides an after school Aboriginal drumming group for students and the local community resource centre also offers an Aboriginal drumming group in the evenings for women in the community. The Village with a Vision and the local community resource centre are currently in the process of expanding their cultural programming to include a Pow Wow club. There also is an after school Tagalog class that is provided by an educational assistant from the Village with a Vision.

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The Village with a Vision also hosts an annual Metis family fun night to celebrate the Metis culture that includes traditional dancing, art and foods.

**Recreation.** At the Village with a Vision fifty students in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 participate in a hockey program once per week during the school day which is a partnership with a local hockey team. All of the students in this program are provided with hockey equipment and receive instruction in skating and the fundamental skills involved in learning to play hockey. Lunch also is provided for the students when they participate in this program. In addition to this weekly hockey program, there also is an after school hockey program that is offered once per week for 25 students and dinner is provided. Another after school program that is provided involves a partnership with a local university and involves university athletes coming to the Village with a Vision to provide instruction in basketball skills.

**Community events.** It has been a longstanding tradition for the Village with a Vision to host a holiday turkey dinner for 200-300 people. The dinner has been sponsored for several years by local businesses. There also is an annual family barbeque in June that includes activities and games for children and families as well as a family pancake breakfasts several times per year. In partnership with the local community resource centre, the Village with a Vision also hosts nutrition and health evenings where families have the opportunity to learn about healthy food choices. During the winter months the Village with a Vision hosts Friday night movies in the gymnasium and often have in excess of 70 people in attendance. The Village with a Vision and the local community resource centre also have collaborated on joint projects like fundraising for a new play structure and enlisting community involvement in the assembly of the play structure.

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**Outreach.** The Village with a Vision also provides a walking school bus each day. Two educational assistants from the school pick up between 8 and 15 students on any given morning. If a family is struggling to get their child to school on time and the family has a telephone the school also has provided early morning wake up calls in order to help the family begin to develop the routine of getting up early arriving at school on time. The community school connector also has volunteered to pick up parents so that they can attend school events if they do not have access to transportation. The Village with a Vision also has purchased a washer and dryer and when families are in need they are invited to use the washer and dryer at the school. In addition, the on-site mental health clinician who works at the Village with a Vision one half day per week and who is employed by a health provider receives referrals from the school and conducts home visits with families who have been identified as needing support. Outreach also occurs in partnership with the local multi-disciplinary community health provider who advertises through the school about additional programming that is available through their centre including teen clinics, nutritional counseling, assistance with housing, resume writing and job search support, social work support and access to a public health nurse.

**Continuum of behavioural support.** The Village with a Vision follows the school division's code of conduct. The code of conduct states that respect, integrity, responsibility, consultation and excellence are the core values of the school division and that their goal is to provide a safe and caring learning environment that fosters personal growth and prepares students to be responsible citizens. The code of conduct not only outlines the responsibilities of students, but also outlines the responsibilities of parents and staff in teaching positive behaviour.

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In addition to following the school division's code of conduct, the Village with a Vision also has school-wide behavioural expectations that support the divisional code of conduct and they include: (a) working and playing safely at all times, (b) being on time each day and being prepared to learn, (c) speaking, acting and writing politely to all students and adults, (d) keeping one's hands and feet to oneself, (e) refraining from fighting or play fighting, (f) respecting all school and personal property, (g) solving problems peacefully by talking and, (h) keeping the school neat and clean. Each classroom teacher also establishes specific classroom expectations that support and align with the divisional and school-wide expectations. In order to support appropriate behaviour the Village with a Vision also has rules that specifically relate to the breakfast program and the lunch program that promote a safe, healthy and relaxed mealtime atmosphere. The Village with a Vision describes its behavioural philosophy as utilizing the Restitution approach (Gossen, 1998). They believe that if a student makes a mistake the student should be involved in fixing the mistake so that they may learn from the event and leave the situation feeling strengthened. The school philosophy also was described as fostering a climate that accepts diversity and refrains from excluding students from special events or removing them from school teams because of challenging behaviour. The Village with a Vision also focuses on teaching positive behaviour at critical times in the school year like the beginning of the school year and following school breaks. There are also opportunities throughout the year in which students have further opportunities to practice expected behaviour and engage in activities that promote the philosophy of Restitution. The school also focuses on ensuring that student's basic needs are met. That means that in addition to providing breakfast and snacks the school has several calming and quiet areas available for student's to use if needed including a bed for students to sleep if they are tired.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

When students have more intensive behavioural needs the school engages in team-based planning with the classroom teacher, resource teacher, counsellor and principal and if necessary they also include the extended team that includes the divisional behaviour support teacher, the school psychologist and school social worker. When students have more intensive needs the team planning includes a mental health clinician who is on-site one half day per week and other partners from the local multi-disciplinary community health provider.

### **Introduction of Participants**

At the Village with a Vision a total of five participants were interviewed. The participants included the school principal, the grade one teacher who also was the literacy support teacher in the school, the community school connector, a parent who also had a part-time job as a community school connector and a partnering service provider from local multi-disciplinary community health provider.

Linda Johnson was a parent in the community school and also had recently become employed as a part-time community school connector. Linda had two children who attended the community school. One of her children was in grade 3 and the other was in grade 1. Linda's interview took place in the school office. Linda had lived in the community for 6 years and was new Canadian. She described the community school as being like a family where all students, parents and community members were made to feel welcome.

Amy Jones was the literacy support teacher as well as the grade 1 and 2 teacher. She had been employed at the community school for the past seven years and has worked as a teacher for the past 15 years. She has a Bachelor of Education degree as well as a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Education. Much of Amy's course work in her Post-Baccalaureate focused on the study of literacy.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Amy's interview took place in the office of the school. Amy was very open to participating in the interview and demonstrated a sincere commitment teaching the curriculum as well as focusing on the social and emotional needs of her students.

Lisa Michaels was the community school connector and she had worked in this capacity for the past 8 years. Lisa resided in the community and was very invested in community development. In addition to working as a community school connector, she was also a local business owner. Lisa's interview took place in the school office. Lisa had lived in the community for her entire life and was able to share the history of the community and what she viewed as the benefits of the community school.

John Richards was the principal of the community school and he had worked in this capacity for the past 6 years. John had been employed in the teaching profession for the past 20 years. John had a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Education degree. John was very willing to participate in the interview process and shared his community school's multiple year plan that involved a planning tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope [PATH]. John's first and second interview took place in his office. He described that his goal was to meet the needs of the whole child by building partnerships with parents and community members in order to achieve that goal.

Monica Taylor was a community facilitator for local multi-disciplinary community health provider that partnered with the community school to meet the needs of the local community. Monica has worked for the community health provider for the past ten years and has a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology. Monica's interview took place at the local multi-disciplinary community health provider's offices.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She described the local community as a “forgotten area” that was in desperate need of resources and spoke about the invaluable partnership between her agency and the community school and their shared role in meeting the needs of the local community.

### **Summary of the Data –The Village with a Vision**

#### **Theme 1: The Critical Role of the Principal in a Community School**

Most of the participants who were interviewed in this case described John, the principal of the Village with a Vision as the leader of the community school and as a leader in the community. John had been the administrator of the Village with a Vision for the past six years and prior to assuming his current role he also had been a teacher and an administrator in several other settings. In addition to his extensive background in school-based leadership, John also had a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration. John was described as the primary person who led the development of the vision of the community school, as well as the person who, through comprehensive planning, had helped to turn the community school’s vision into action. John’s focus on collective goal setting and on assessing progress toward the achievement of the vision was described as uniting all of the stakeholders involved in the community school.

**Articulating a shared vision.** Developing the vision for the Village with a Vision was a central part of John’s role as the administrator of the school. John was very invested in ensuring that all stakeholders involved in the community school contributed to the establishment of the school’s priorities and to the corresponding activities that took place. He described that the vision of the community school was for it to become “....a hub in the community.” Amy Jones the literacy support teacher and grade 1 and 2 teacher described how the Village with a Vision defined a “hub.”

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She said,

We embrace a broader vision of what school means because we imagine the lives of our students beyond the time that they are just in our classrooms and we try to make positive changes....We're here during the day supporting them [students], but we've extended the day. We're offering students and families opportunities that wouldn't otherwise be close and accessible to them.

Monica the partnering service provider also talked about the Village with a Vision as being the "centre" of the community. She said, "The school is becoming the hub in the community and what we've learned, especially in this community is that the school is the best place to reach people." Embracing a broader vision of what school meant at the Village with a Vision also involved establishing trusting relationships with students, families and the community. John explained that everything that they did at the Village with a Vision was "...based on relationships...." John described one of the primary messages that he sends to all of his staff, "...get to know your kids. Know who your kids' parents are. Know who their siblings are...." He encouraged the school staff to initiate the establishment of trusting relationships, as that was described as the means by which parents and the community would begin to feel comfortable entering the Village with a Vision and ultimately becoming active participants in the life of the community school. When John spoke he conveyed a sense of urgency. He said, "...We can't wait for them to come. We have to go and get them...."

In order to guide the development of the shared vision of the community school John utilized a planning tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope [PATH] (Pearpoint, O'Brien & Forest, 1993).

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He described how he had used this tool for several years at the Village with a Vision and in other settings and how it had been an effective process to bring stakeholders together and to invite multiple voices in setting goals, developing action plans, determining roles and responsibilities as well as measuring outcomes. John described how the vision had been established at his school,

I use a PATH planning tool....so we're on our third PATH right now. It's a collective vision that we've generated. And we have parents and community partners and all of our staff, our support staff, educational support staff, and clinical staff. They've all participated in the planning. And that draws our collective vision. [Pointing to a graphic of the PATH]."

John described some of the primary goals that were identified in the PATH that would help the school to become a "hub" and they included a focus on community engagement, fostering literacy skills and supporting early child development. One of the steps in the PATH process that John highlighted when describing their objectives included the development of what he called "the dream." John explained that in using the PATH process all of the stakeholders had been encouraged to dream about the ideal community school and not to be limited by their current circumstances. According to John, through the creation of a dream, the stakeholders had set high expectations for themselves and for the community school.

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He explained,

We dream so well. And I always laugh because you can see [pointing to the graphic drawing of the PATH] they had to tape additional pieces on to make the dream – it's so big right....and then we have more goals than I usually like. But we also meet them all!

Amy the teacher also described how the PATH process had helped all stakeholders identify shared goals and a plan to achieve the goals. She said,

Being a part of the PATH process was very powerful. [The principal] brought us together and we talked about what we thought was important for our school and our community. But it wasn't just talk. We set goals and everyone had a role. You can't get any clearer than that.

Lisa the community school connector also spoke about how the PATH had helped to unite the stakeholders at the Village with a Vision in that they had a common direction. Lisa said, "...we all get busy doing our jobs and it's nice to have something to unite us. It's kind of like answers the question, "Why are we doing this?"

**Redefining the role of the principal.** Most of the participants in this case described the role of the principal at the community school as multi-faceted and as responsible for leading both the school and partnering service providers toward the achievement of the goals that had been set in the PATH. The role of the principal also was described by most of the participants as extending beyond what might be described as the traditional role of a school principal to include highly individualized outreach to students and families.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Furthermore, the role of the principal also was described having the additional responsibility of supporting staff from several other service providers when they were welcomed into the Village with a Vision to be a part of the activities of the community school.

While most of the participants in the Village with a Vision described the principal as leading the community school and partnering service providers toward the achievement of the goals that had been set, the principal described himself more as a “facilitator” at the community school. He said, “....So my facilitator role is taking people who have a passion and taking our needs and putting them together...whenever I can bring people together I do.” In spite of the principal’s description of his role as a facilitator of the community school, the other participants shared that they regarded him as the leader and looked to him for guidance in each of their respective roles. Lisa, the community school connector talked about the role the principal played in leading much of the community school programming. She said, “[John] is such a huge part of it. I check with him for so many things. He really leads what we do here and in the community.” Amy, the teacher also said in reference to the leadership of the community school, “....I naturally see my principal as leading....I’m not sure how he does it, but he’s really quite magical in his efforts.” Monica the partnering service provider shared that she also regarded the principal as the leader of the Village with a Vision. Monica said, “He’s a driving force behind that school and they wouldn’t be where they are without him. I think that’s why he’s been there that long....I hope they don’t move him!”

The principal not only was described as leading the community school and partnering service providers, but he also was described as extending his role beyond what might traditionally be expected of a school principal.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In this regard, the principal of the Village with a Vision was described as making personal contact with students and families that included visiting homes in order to bridge the school with the community and to provide highly individualized support. Monica the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre captured the level of support that John provided to children and families. She said,

I don't really know what principals do besides from when I went to school, but I think he [John] steps out of those boundaries. He does a lot of one to one. I know he's gone to parents' homes and not to be confrontational. He's going to literally support and help them. And I don't know anyone who has done that.

Linda, the parent and community school connector also talked about the support that the principal provided and described how it extended beyond what she felt a principal might typically provide. She said, "[John] has made this school feel like a family... He knows practically everybody in this community and if they need help they know he will find a way to help them. He doesn't have to do that but he does...."

John the principal described how he felt the role of the Village with a Vision was to address more than just the academic learning needs of the students. He said, "I always think in terms of "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs when I think about our students and families." He explained how the school had purchased a washer and drier so that they could wash the students' clothing if it was required. He then explained how he had offered the same kind of support to parents. He said, "...we'll have parents come in and we offer them the same kinds of services. We'll say, "You want to sneak your laundry in here?" Always remembering that it's a dignity thing...."



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The role of the principal of the Village with a Vision not only included the leadership of the school and the supervision of school staff, but it also included overseeing several other support providers who were employed by other agencies and working in the community school. On any given day there were multiple support providers from many agencies working within the community school to support students and families. Monica, the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre explained that even though she was employed by another agency she looked to the principal of the Village with a Vision for guidance when providing support at the community school and in the community. Monica further explained that she had a desire to be present at the Village with a Vision in part, because the principal had made her feel like she was part of the school staff, not in a directive and supervisory kind of way, but rather in a welcoming and collaborative manner. Monica said,

[John] treats me like one of his staff....it can be difficult to go into places when you don't feel like you're a part of the team. You could feel like an outsider. John invites me in. So I feel like, I want to be a part of the school. He even invites me to graduations at the school and things like that....It makes me want to be there more.

**Alignment of all stakeholders.** In order for the Village with a Vision to achieve its goals, all of the participants recognized the value of developing partnerships with multiple stakeholders. John the principal described that the process through which he developed partnerships within the community involved personal contact and a concerted effort to not only share the school's vision, but also to learn about the mandates of other potential partners. He said, "I recognize their passion – when people are looking to support someone in their own neighbourhood ...." and by connecting their passion with the school's needs John described how several mutually beneficial partnerships had been forged.

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It was evident from all of the participants that learning about other community services, businesses and establishing partnerships took a significant investment of time but it was described as a worthwhile process. John the principal said, “...I have invested a significant amount of time in the community and it has paid off. We’ve done some great things together...” John provided several examples of how he had communicated the school’s goal of enhancing literacy skills to several potential community partners and in the process he had discovered several individuals who also shared a passion for literacy. The partnerships that resulted from this example of the principal’s outreach had significantly enhanced the school’s reading program. John explained one such partnership,

Now, for the last two years, I’d like to say they [a funder] have adopted us. They do a fundraiser every year and it’s all about supporting our literacy initiatives. We started a pilot based on the work of Richard Allington who says, “Put books in the hands of kids in their own home. Good fit books...” So I emailed [a funder] and said, “I was just listening to Richard Allington talking, here’s a video, we need to get this going and I need your support.” He actually came back to me and said, “No problem. We’ll do it! How much money do you need? And so he tripled what I asked for.

Monica the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre also described how John the principal made an effort to learn as much as he could about her agency so that they too could identify opportunities to collaborate in the best interests of students and the community at large.

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She said,

[John] asked if he could bring his whole team over here [to the resource centre]. He wants to know about what we do and he wants his staff to know too....Our latest project involves trying to bring affordable food into the local area and [John] really likes that idea and now he wants to be a part of it.

While some of the partnerships that had been developed between the Village with a Vision and members of the community were described as longstanding, John also spoke about his ongoing efforts to continue to identify new partnerships and to continue to expand existing partnerships as well.

### **Theme 2: The Essential Role of the Community School Connector**

The role of the community school connector at the Village with a Vision was described by all participants as a critical part of the daily operation of the community school. The responsibilities of the community school connector at the Village with a Vision were described as having expanded significantly over that past few years, which had resulted in the need to hire a second community school connector to assist with the provision programming. While the role of the community school connector was described as having expanded, most of the participants spoke about the fact that the role of the community school connector was not clearly defined and as result required a high degree of flexibility as it needed to be responsive to the presenting needs within the school and community. Most of the participants also described that it was beneficial for the community school connector to be a resident in the community as it facilitated the development of relationships with students and the community.

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Some of the participants described the need for more specific training for the community school connector in order to better enable the community school connector to provide the kind of support that the role appeared to require.

**Role clarity.** John the principal of the Village with a Vision described how their appeared to be a lack of shared understanding on the part of his school division about the employment status of the community school connector and how he had worked to try and have her employment status more clearly defined. He said,

When I got here this particular person [the community school connector] was a casual employee and after I'd been working here a couple of years already she didn't have an email, she didn't have an ID tag. That's crazy! So we actually got our HR department who was doing a job analysis that year or the next year....Actually I was kind of surprised because after going through that whole process, I think the comment I got was, this is really a glorified parent-advisory council role....and I was like, "No, it's not!"

Lisa the community school connector also described how when she was hired over five years ago her job description lacked specificity. She explained how the position was initially described to her,

It's actually funny because the only requirements were you needed to live in the area and you needed to know how to use a computer. Those were the two requirements. And when I was interviewed I was interviewed by the school principal at the time and he was looking for somebody that would just walk up to people and start talking to them and I do that all the time.

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Lisa Michaels the community school connector described how her role had evolved since she was initially hired and how it had expanded to include the provision of a wide range of support within the community school. She said,

Well it's [her role] has gone from finding programs for parents to be involved with their kids to providing a lot of thing that kids would need like boots or jackets...Running the breakfast program which is five days per week...Just finding things so if somebody asks, you know "Where can I go?" I'll say here's the number...I also do all the shopping that's needed for any programs.

Amy the literacy support teacher and grade 1 and 2 teacher described the role of the community school connector as needing to be responsive to students' needs. She said, "...if the kids need something they're on top of it..." Linda a parent who had recently become employed as a community school connector described how the role of the community school connector involved engaging parents and families. She explained her own personal interactions with Lisa, the community school connector and how she had welcomed her into the school environment. She explained that it was through the support of the community school connector that she had started to volunteer at the school and ultimately became employed as a community school connector. She said,

I know the role of a community school connector has a lot to do with making the parents feel comfortable in the school and needed. When I was sitting on the front bench at the school Lisa just came up to me and invited me to the breakfast. So I started to come more and more and soon I was volunteering here and then they hired me. It's been so good for me and my family.

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While the role of the community school connector was described as not clearly defined and needing to be responsive to the presenting needs within the school and the community, one common requirement in the role of a community school connector that was identified by all of the participants was the need for the community school connector to be a resident of the local community. Being a resident in the local community was described as enhancing the relatability of the community school connector to the students and families within the community and thereby increasing the likelihood that they would be able to foster a trusting relationship. Lisa Michaels the community school connector talked about how living in the local community had helped her to build connections in her role as a community school connector. She said,

Let's say I lived in an area that was considered richer than this community....There are some people who think, "Well you just think that you're better than the rest of us."

Whereas I'm born and raised in this community and people know it. So you get a different respect, it's kind of like a small town. When you live in a small town where you're not from, everyone looks at you sideways for the first while and then it's a very different feeling. But if you're from here then the odds are pretty good you've grown up with them, you know them or you're related to them somehow.

Linda a parent and community school connector described how living in the community had benefitted her in her role. She described that living in the community had enabled her to not only better understand the lived experience of the community members but also to develop friendships with the community members she that supported. Linda said, "....because living in the area you know the needs and what would benefit the community. You become friends with them as well when you're not coming from another part of the city."

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**Flexibility.** All of the participants at the Village with a Vision described the need for the community school connector to be demonstrate flexibility not only in the nature of the tasks in which they participated, but also in their work schedule. The community school connectors were described as needing to be available to work a variable schedule that changed depending upon the needs of the community school and the activities that were taking place at the community school. This flexibility included the need to work during the day as well as during the evening and at times involved the need to work an extended number of hours. Lisa the community school connector described how her schedule changed frequently depending upon the needs of the students and of the school. She said,

Nobody knows my hours. I don't even know my hours half the time....I try to stay around 23 hours a week. There have been times when I worked 40 hours, 37 hours a week....if there are things going on after school....it requires planning. Lots of scheduling yourself.

Linda the parent and community school connector also described how her hours were variable. In describing how she needed to be available when important events were occurring at the school she said,

I do breakfast every day from 7:30-9:00....and usually Mondays and Wednesdays I'm here all day and then Tuesdays and Thursdays if we have things to do I can work two hours here and two hours there. If we have evening events going on, I have to stay for that.

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It also appeared that the community school connectors may not have had the job security that other employees of the school division had given that they were described by the principal as “casual employees.” In spite of the casual status of their employment, the community school connectors remained highly committed to supporting the community school. In addition to working a very flexible schedule, one of the community school connectors put in several unpaid hours volunteering to support many of the initiatives at the Village with a Vision. Linda the parent and community school connector said, “....often I don’t even write down my hours. It’s mostly just voluntary.” In reference to her commitment to the community school, Lisa described how she connected with students and families when she was technically “off work” and out in the community. She said, “I feel like I’m constantly wearing my hat.” Lisa described how she wore her community school connector hat outside of school hours because she was personally invested in the community in making the community a better place.

**Professional learning and training.** Both of the community school connectors who were employed by the Village with a Vision did not have post-secondary education or training. While the principal of the school described a lack of post-secondary training as an asset in the role of a community school connector, one of the community school connectors expressed an interest in having increased opportunities for professional learning.

In describing how it was beneficial for the community school connectors to not have a post-secondary education John the principal said,

That actually works I think because in the role the idea of the community connector is that person is a bridge between the community and the school. And the school we’re seen as “we’re the school” with our university degrees and we look after things here. And



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the community is not. And I rely heavily on the census data for the community....and I know that graduation rates are very low and school success wasn't really there. So to have someone come in as a community connector who has degrees or any kind of programming that would just keep the barrier there.

John the Principal had a strong focus on providing professional development opportunities for the teachers and educational assistants at the Village with a Vision however it did not appear that the community school connectors were a part of these professional learning sessions. John the principal described some of the professional learning that he had accessed for the educational assistants at his school. He said,

So I always start the year off with the calendar. I say, "Okay guys, if I can get 80% or better on 1 or 2 days we'll line up some professional development for you....and the EA's in this building have had training on childhood trauma and the effects of that. They've had training in FASD and ADHD and working with First Nation students looking at multiculturalism.

Linda the parent and community school connector described how she "banked hours" and took time off when she was not as needed by the school which typically occurred on professional development days. Linda felt that if she were to have training "like the EA's do" she would be better equipped to do her job. She said,

So I think just having training kind of like the EA's do. Because I'm here with the kids all the time as well....and issues come up. Sometimes as a mom you know what to do. But there's certain skills I would like to have.

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According to Lisa the community school connector, when she worked with parents her role sometimes necessitated the provision of “....a bit of counselling support....without having any education or experience in it!” Linda the parent and community school connector also described how the level of support that some parents required was beyond what she was able to provide. She said, “They come to us with problems that we can’t deal with. Let say mental illness or a housing problems....” However, in these situation she described how the local community resource centre had been a very strong support to her in her role. She said,

We know that we can send them to [the local community resource centre] because that’s what they do, the whole health and housing and mental health issues....it’s great to have them as a partner to help us with the things that we can’t do at the school. We refer to them.

Lisa the community school connector described the primary way that she gained information that assisted her in her role as a community school connector was through interfacing with other community schools. She said, “....You find out a lot from the other community schools....we go to the workshops, we go to the gatherings, we talk to them.” Lisa explained that she had the opportunity to meet with other community schools twice per year. She said,

There’s usually a small workshop in the spring time and a fall gathering....At the fall gathering we actually set up, it’s called a gallery walk. And we take a back board. We take examples of what we are doing. We take a scrapbook. We take different things.

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While the opportunities to share ideas and current practices with other community schools were described as beneficial, providing additional professional learning and training opportunities also were described as needed in order to equip the community school connectors with the skills to meet the needs of the children, families and community members that they served.

### **Theme 3: The Mindset of Staff**

All of the participants at the Village with a Vision talked about the personal commitment that the teachers made to the students and their families in the community.

The teachers were described as focusing on building relationships with students and the multi-age classroom structure at the school meant that teachers often taught students for more than one year and as a result the relationship with students and families had been strengthened. Teachers also were described by all of the participants as being flexible in their approach to addressing students' needs in that they took into account each student's "individual story" when making decisions in the classroom. Some of the participants also referred to the stability of the staff at the Village with a Vision school in reference to their commitment to the community school and their desire to teach in a community school setting.

**Shared beliefs.** In describing the belief system that his teachers shared John talked about the value that they placed on every individual student. He said, "...everyone here knows that these kids are precious..." The shared belief system also involved a commitment to developing positive relationships with the students and their families. He said, "...They [the teachers] are really working on relationship first not with only the kids, but with families!" Amy the teacher attributed the strength of her attachments to her students and their families to the fact that she felt that they needed her support.

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In many instances, she had an awareness of the students' and families' personal challenges and rather than regarding their needs as beyond the scope of her responsibility as a teacher, she felt it was her responsibility to provide support. She said,

It sounds strange but I feel like I have a closer connection with these students and families because they have such diverse needs. I feel like they need me more. In other buildings the kids needed me and I taught them and I had great relationships with them on the academic level in my classroom, but here you really feel connected with the students and families.

**Flexibility.** All of the participants at the Village with a Vision described how the teachers demonstrated flexibility in their approach to supporting students and families. John described his teachers by saying "...they have amazing flexibility." The idea of "tailoring" their approach to meeting the needs of individual students and families was described as essential. John gave an example of how his teachers approach student's needs in the classroom. He said,

You can't just make snap decisions like that. You actually have to take into account, what's the kid's story been like? What's the weekend in their life been like? Where is the family at? And you kind of have to prepare for that.

Flexibility on the part of the teachers also included addressing the student's personal needs not just their academic needs. John the principal described how his teachers responded to a student's need to sleep during the school day.

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He said,

And the [teachers] just let [the students] sleep if they need to....Typically Monday mornings there's lots of kids who are totally dragged because they've had a rough weekend. And I think working in a community like this you start to realize that kids aren't walking in fresh after a weekend. They're walking in after maybe not eating, maybe they haven't slept well....we need to have them rest for a while.

Amy teacher also described how she needed to be flexible in matters related to attendance. She described how instead of lamenting about a student's absenteeism she and her colleagues needed to think of creative ways to support improved in attendance. She said,

I've never dealt with attendance issues like I have at this school because the kids usually just go to school. The other buildings I've been to kids just go to school and teachers don't have to really think about it. So here we've had to get very creative in our approach. We have to be willing to help get them here and take that on.

The teachers at the Village with a Vision also were described as providing intensive support to students and their families outside of school hours. There seemed to be a shared understanding that in order for the students to be able to access extra-curricular activities the teachers would need to play a direct role in the process. Lisa the community school connector described how the teachers ensured that the students were able to partake in a broad range of extracurricular activities.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She said,

The teachers drive kids to and from cross country, cup stacking, basketball, handball, hockey. Just driving kids where they need to be....so they pick them up, take them to a game, stay at the game and drop them off at home. Make sure they're in the door, wave to the parents.

In describing the teacher's need to be flexible in a community school In the event that the school has been unsuccessful in recruiting volunteers for an event the teachers are willing to find volunteers in their own families in order to ensure the viability of the event. John said, "....there's about six of us that have parents and aunts and uncles who actually come and volunteer here. So that's another sign of the people that work here."

**Choosing to work in a community school.** Some of the participants at the Village with a Vision talked about the stability of the teaching staff at the school and their commitment to supporting students and families in a community school environment. There was a core group of teachers who had been at the school for several years who were described as extremely dedicated to the students and families that they served. John the principal said, "...When I talk about the community school piece, I often couple it with the staff because I don't think that you could do community school with just anybody. It takes a pretty dedicated teacher..."

John the principal also highlighted the skill-set of his teachers. "...I always say our best and brightest with our most at risk....The teachers that I work with in this building are phenomenal! They are so well educated in literacy development and numeracy....in emotional understanding."

Amy the teacher had taught at the Village with a Vision for seven years and was committed to meeting the needs of the students and their families.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

However, from her perspective, teaching students with complex needs brought with it some challenges that she felt other teachers might not necessarily experience in other schools. These challenges didn't make her not want to leave the community school setting, but rather she described them as added pressures that she dealt with in her role as a teacher in a community school. On a personal level she said, "...it's really hard to go home to your own family and be so blessed and to know that your class, those kids might not go home to that..." Amy also described pressure she felt related to teaching students with complex needs,

As a teacher you do sometimes get hard on yourself because things come along like an assessment that's division wide. Or you go to professional development where you're with your peers and colleagues and they are talking about things they're doing academically in their class and you feel like you're not....but I know I'm doing the best job I can and I know I'm meeting the needs the best I can and doing what they really need me to do. If I came here every day and just taught the curriculum, if I didn't have that relationship and care about them I'd be missing the most important piece.

While the pressures that Amy described were issues that she sometimes struggled with she emphasized how committed she was to her students and their families and to providing the kind of holistic support that the Village with a Vision offered.

### **Theme 4: Capacity Building within the Community**

All of the participants at the Village with a Vision talked about the need to engage parents and community members in the process of developing self-advocacy skills and in contributing to community development.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

However, engaging the community to actively participate in and contribute to the community school was described as challenging by all of the support providers. While they felt that there had been some progress in engaging a limited number of adults in the community, they questioned the long-term sustainability of some of the gains. Monica the partnering service provider described the challenges that have existed in the local area with respect to community engagement. She said,

It's a huge gap, and that's reflected in the community with things like the community club closing because there was no one to run it. The hockey rinks were torn down because there was no one to maintain them....so all of these typical kinds of community things you would just see being shut down because there has been no engagement.

**Self-Advocacy.** One of the ways that the Village with a Vision was trying to help to foster community engagement was through the development of self-advocacy skills in parents and other community members. In order to build self-advocacy skills the community school connector in collaboration with a representative from the local community resource had facilitated an eight week leadership development program for adults at the Village with a Vision. Lisa the community school connector described the program,

The leadership program is all about self-awareness. It's about looking after yourself so you can look after your family. And there's a lot of people who don't do that at all....So you learn what your needs are. What you're doing to meet your needs and what you're not doing to meet your needs. We have four parents in the kitchen right now who are participating in the eight week program.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While Lisa the community school connector and Monica the partnering service provider were pleased about the fact that they had four parents who were participating in the program, they hoped that they would have had a higher participation rate. Lisa the community school connector described the mindset of some of the individuals in the local community and why it may sometimes be difficult for them to participate in opportunities like the leadership development program. She said,

I mean a lot of people think that this is where there just going to stay and nothing is going to happen. They're always going to be on assistance or they're always going to have mediocre jobs. I hope they realize that their not stuck because people feel they're stuck when they're from lower income areas.

Another obstacle that was identified as preventing adults in the community from becoming engaged in the community school were prior negative experiences with the educational system. One of the primary goals of the Village with a Vision was to create a welcoming environment where community members felt safe to enter the school and actively participate. In spite of these efforts many residents were described as not being able to overcome their prior negative experiences with the educational system. Lisa the community school connector said,

You totally rack your brain trying to think of ways to get people to start to think of school as a positive....Try to figure out what the magic wand is to get people to come in. Cause I can talk to people and text people and they say, "Oh yeah we're coming." And then they don't show. I'm not going banging on doors in this area. It can be dangerous. I know better.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Additionally, Amy the teacher described how a lack of transportation had prevented some families from accessing much needed resources for themselves and for their families in part because they were not easily accessible. She said, "...Many families don't have transportation ....I think when things are closer and when you have access to them it just makes it easier...It also makes it acceptable. You see that other people are doing it."

In spite of the challenges that existed with respect to engaging the community, all of the participants shared individual examples of community engagement. Lisa the community school connector talked about a parent in the community who had accessed training to become an educational assistant after participating in a parent group. Amy the teacher mentioned a local elder who had led a drumming group at the Village with a Vision. Linda a parent and community school connector described how a grandparent from the community who no longer had grandchildren attending the school had continued to volunteer on a regular basis. John the principal highlighted how the community had come together to build a new play structure for the school. While all of the participants were encouraged by these examples of parental and community engagement, most of the participants expressed concern about the sustainability of these gains and uncertainty over the extent to which they would be able to engage the community in the future. Lisa the community school connector said, "...It's funny because you get little handfuls of parents that will come and do things and volunteer for the school and then the next year, you're struggling to find people to do the same thing...."

The principal described the process of trying to engage parents as a responsibility that he was committed to but also one that he felt would require a significant amount of support over an extended period of time. In reference to how long he thought it might take to see changes in the level of engagement in the community he said, "...it may take a generation."

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Community-based leadership.** Some of the participants at the Village with a Vision expressed a concern that community school initiatives were primarily being led by individuals from outside of the community. John the principal explained that conflict in the community had led to the breakdown of the parent council and to the need for the principal, school staff and the community school connector to take over the leadership of the parent council. In describing the present challenges at the Village with a Vision John the principal said, “We’re talking about people who are trying the best that they can and they love their kids....but they struggle.” Monica the partnering service provider also described how her agency was trying to foster community based leadership. She said, “....it’s certainly a goal for this community to become more self-sufficient but it’s a work in progress. We really need to build the capacity first.” John the principal described his journey in trying to support the development of a viable parent council at the Village with a Vision. He said,

So in my first three years we managed to grow a really good cohort of parents. We had about 20-25 parents coming out to a parent council meeting....and did lots of work with them about how to self-regulate. Right? The next year we had an official parent council. They actually incorporated – because we hadn’t had one for many years. And it all blew a part because the social dynamics of the adults came into play too much. And it was disastrous actually! It set us back significantly.

Since the parent council broke down, a few parents in the community proposed the adoption of another governance model that they referred to as a “parent advisory.” The parent advisory has fewer responsibilities as compared to a parent council, and it is largely led by the school principal and the community school connectors.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

John described the new model,

They [the parents] are really clear –they’re like, we do not want to have a parent council.

We want a parent advisory where the community connectors and you [the principal] are assisting and we’ll do whatever we can....they don’t have to balance the bank

book....They don’t have to keep minutes....they don’t have to be here for a lot of it.

While the adoption of a parent advisory has led to less conflict, most of the participants felt that it had not addressed the underlying need to build capacity within the community so that in the future the community would be able to effectively lead the parent council.

### **Theme 5: The Factors that Contribute to Collaboration**

All of the participants at the Village with a Vision spoke about how they valued the collaborative culture of the school and the collaborative nature of their interactions with colleagues, the principal, partnering service providers and parents. They described the Village with a Vision as an “open system” where people felt comfortable expressing their opinions. The Village with a Vision was a relatively small school in terms of the number of students and the number of staff, and the size of the school was described as having created a greater need to share responsibilities and collaborate. Additionally, longevity in one’s role also was described by all of the participants as contributing to the trust that they had developed with other stakeholders. They also felt that multi-age structure of the school had facilitated the development of longer term connections with students and families.

**Open and regular communication.** All of the stakeholders at the Village with a Vision referenced the value of both formal and informal communication.

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They appreciated the structures that were in place to regularly bring “the team” together to discuss issues and plan and at the same time, they valued the informal conversations that they felt comfortable having with one another. Amy Jones the teacher talked about the open communication that existed at the Village with a Vision among the school staff. She said,

We have vertical team meetings and we have our [clinical supports] there. We also meet with our guidance and our resource about the needs and talk about how they can support us. We’re constantly discussing kids and needs and next steps.

John the principal also described how he valued a team approach and how he made an effort to encourage open dialogue and collaborative planning processes. He said,

We don’t write funding apps in isolation. We don’t write IEP’s in isolation. So we take our meeting room. We put it up on the projector. We have everyone sit together and we write it together....I think that collaboration and transparency benefits the students!

The relatively small size of the school and the supportive relationships that existed among the staff were described as contributing to their enhanced willingness to informally communicate and support one another. Amy the teacher described a typical interaction that might occur at the Village with a Vision. She said,

We’re a small building, but we’re a very close staff. I would say the collaborative nature of how we work is so important....People will just say, “Oh, I can do this piece or I can do that piece....”

Amy the teacher also described how she valued the informal communication that occurred between the teachers and the community school connectors.

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She said,

The communication I feel is very informal and really beneficial – and hopefully on their end too....If they were only here once a week or if we were only contacting them by email and saying, “Hey we need you here on this date,” That relationship piece wouldn’t be there. The trust wouldn’t be there.

Open and regular communication also was described as essential in building relationships with families. The Village with a Vision focused on inviting parents into the school whenever possible and having face to face interactions. After specifically redesigning the foyer of the school to make it more welcoming and encouraging all staff to greet parents and get to know them John described how more parents were starting to come to the school at the end of the day. He said, “....They [parents] have open and ongoing conversations with the teachers. So at the end of the school day we have a bunch of parents that are here...they are all lined up and very comfortable....”

Amy the teacher also shared that she preferred to have face to face interactions with families and that the school had made some progress in their efforts to encourage parents to come to the school. She said, “There’s also a huge communication piece involved with families. We have agendas that we can write in but I prefer to connect in person. We do have the privilege of a lot of families coming into our building right now.” Lisa the community school connector described how John the principal and teachers had made parents feel comfortable communicating with them. Village with a Vision. She said,

Parents feel that they can come and talk to him [the principal] which is a big, big thing.

Because often times, the school is seen as the institution and they can’t come in the doors.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

And can't talk to the teachers and the principal. And the teachers and other staff and principal here are very open. You know they will just stop and talk to a parent in the hallway.

Some of the participants also talked about the need for open and regular communication with outside service providers and explained that while strong partnerships existed between the Village with a Vision and community partners the ability to share information across services was sometimes limited by the need for confidentiality. John the principal explained,

Job one, we have to be respectful of confidentiality. However, when you have two different systems interface like police service, [child welfare] and the school...I can't just phone them and say, "Hey you might want to check on...."

Monica the partnering service provider felt that she could openly communicate with the school however, she too acknowledged the need to be respectful of confidentiality in her communication. Sharing information about activities that were taking place at the Village with a Vision or with other service providers in the community seemed to be the most seamless and frequent form of cross system communication. Monica said, "...[the principal] has reached out to me a lot about the services we have for families and what we can bring into the school." Linda the parent and community school connector also described how she regularly communicated with representatives from the local community resource centre about specific events. She said, "...if we have certain events going on, we will take a poster and she [a community partner] will put it up or she'll bring posters and put it up here and so we often exchange info...."

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Longevity in one's role.** All of the participants described how longevity in their respective roles had contributed to their ability to build trusting relationships with other stakeholders. The multi-age structure of the school also was identified as contributing to the teachers' ability to not only develop trusting relationships with the students, but also with families given that they often taught the same student for several years.

John the principal had been the administrator of the Village with a Vision for over five years. In less than ten years the Village with a Vision had three principals so John was the most consistent principal that the school had experienced for the past ten years. Since the Village with a Vision has a kindergarten to grade 5 structure John had been at the school long enough to get to know some students and families from the time that their child entered kindergarten until they transitioned to middle school. During his tenure John described how he had worked to establish strong connections with students, families and community partners and he acknowledged that it took time to build these trusting relationships. He said "...we've come full stride in the community schools partnership....Now that I've been here long enough, I know people.... relationship is all about time." It was not just the principal who had worked at the Village with a Vision for over five years, so too had a core group of teachers, as well as one of the community school connectors. John described how the longevity of one of the community school connectors in her role had enabled her to effectively engage in outreach in order to support the community school. He said, "...So she's just been here long enough that she's got different connections with different people. And knows about a lot of different kinds of programs and supports so she knows what's happening and can bring information back."



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Amy the teacher who had been teaching at the Village with a Vision for over five years about talked about how it took a long time to build trusting relationships with students and families at the Village with a Vision. She explained that since she had been teaching at the school for several years she felt that she was now at the point where students and families felt comfortable talking to her and that she had earned their trust. She said, “You get to know families and the community. You don’t know them right away. Families have trust issues and it takes a while to let you in and to get to know the kids and families and the dynamics.”

The early childhood programming that was being provided at the Village with a Vision also was described as a valuable way to get know families early on in their child’s development. Amy the teacher described how the pre-school programming was helping the school foster relationships. She said, “....we’re building really early relationships with those parents, trusting relationships and it pays off!” The multi-age structure of the Village with a Vision also was described as a means by which teachers were able to foster long-term connections with students and families. Amy talked about how the teachers prioritized the need to develop relationships with student and families and how the multi-age philosophy at the Village with a Vision facilitated that process. She said, “Because of our multi-age philosophy here we have combined classes. So we have longer exposure to children. I think that we hold onto kids. Over time the parents get to know us better too.”

**Shared decision making.** John the principal captured his approach to decision making when he referred to himself as a “facilitator” in that he tried to honour the collective voices of all of the stakeholders involved in the community school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

All of the participants at the community school also mentioned that they felt that their voices were heard in relation to decisions that were made at the Village with a Vision. They described John the principal as always seeking input not just from school staff but also from parents and other community partners.

Amy the teacher described the model of shared decision making that was utilized at the Village with a Vision from her perspective. She said,

I never thought of it this way but maybe because we're a community school, the team of staff here, and I'm not just talking about teachers, I'm also talking about support staff too, are so collaborative, so supportive that we would identify our principal as our leader but you wouldn't be able to say he's top down. Right, that he comes up with all the stuff and says, "Do this." Everyone is bringing ideas forward.

Lisa the community school connector also described how decision were made in a collaborative manner and referenced the school's use of the PATH process as an example of how the principal ensured that multiple voices were included in the decision making process. She said "Take our PATH for example, it includes everybody's hopes and dreams for our community. All of us had a say in what we wanted to do here." The idea of including multiple perspectives in decision making also was evident from the perspective of Monica the partnering service provider. She described that when she partnered with the Village with a Vision she felt there was a lot of discussion about how they could work together and share responsibilities which had led to the development of a positive relationship. She said, "Honestly I think that because of him [the principal] and the community connectors that they hire that we have a much better relationship. They ask questions and they really want to know what I think."

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Perhaps the most challenging group to include in decisions related to the Village with a Vision has been the parent community. In spite of these challenges, John the principal reiterated that they continued to provide opportunities for parents to be active participants in all aspects of the community school. He said, “We have a lot of opportunities for parents to come in and talk and help plan.” John explained how the Village with a Vision continued to strive to increase the level of parental and community involvement in the school and that he was committed to finding creative ways to foster their meaningful participation in the school.

### **Theme 6: Continuum of Behavioural Support**

All of the participants at the Village with a Vision described that the culture of the school was one of acceptance. In addition to the acceptance of all students, the Village with a Vision utilized inclusionary practices that honoured the unique strengths and needs of each individual student. If a student presented with an emotional and behavioural challenge or other complex need the team sought to understand as John the principal put it, “their individual story,” and then to provide the appropriate support that was required. In situations in which a student presented with complex needs most of the participants emphasized the role of the team in developing and implementing plans of support, while the partnering service provider identified the school principal as performing a case management function in these cases.

**Acceptance.** John the principal described how all students were welcomed and made to feel safe and cared for when they arrived at school. Regardless of their presenting needs, John described that it was the school’s role to try and meet their needs.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

He said,

We run a breakfast program....when a kid comes in late nobody is allowed to say,

“Where were you? Where have you been?” It’s “Hi, how are you? Good to see you! You are welcome here! Are you hungry? Let’s have some food.”

The Village with a Vision’s acceptance of students also was conveyed in their approach to suspension. John the principal described that the suspension of a student was a last resort and only occurred if there was a very severe behavioural incident. He expressed concern that when students were not in school there was the potential for them to be unsupervised and therefore at an increased risk of harm. John said, “Understanding the neighbourhood has also changed our discipline approach. We don’t suspend kids out of school unless it’s a serious event.”

The acceptance of students at the Village with a Vision also included ensuring that all students, regardless of need, had the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities. This approach meant that students who attended the Village with a Vision were neither excluded from, nor removed from an extra-curricular activity because of an emotional and behavioural challenge or other presenting need. John the principal mentioned that initially he experienced some resistance from a minority group of staff members when he enforced this approach to providing opportunities for students, however he described that now there was a shared understanding of the need to include all students in all aspects of the school. In describing how all students were included in extra-curricular programming John the principal said,

Well, I took some heat from some staff about it but now everybody’s on board. We don’t say no to kids. You can’t be kicked off a team or removed from a special event or excluded from a club because of your behaviour.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

One of the ways that the Village with a Vision had been successful in encouraging staff to unconditionally accept all students and to include students in activities was through proactive planning. The Village with a Vision developed individualized education plans and behaviour intervention plans as a team and communicated the plan of support to all stakeholders so that students had the assistance that they required in order to be successful across all settings. Amy the teacher explained how she ensured the behavioural support strategies that were a part of a student's plan were shared with all members of the team and how a team approach to intervention was used. She said,

Even with some of that special behaviour programming that we do...we talk to them [lunch supervisors] about that and let them know. Hey, this is what we have in place in terms of support...If you need to come and get me please do. That piece of knowing where I'm at.

**Inclusive practice.** All of the participants at the Village with a Vision described how they focused on meeting the individual needs of students. Whenever possible the school celebrated differences and taught the students that it was acceptable to have different “tools” to support their learning as well as their emotional and behavioural needs. Amy the teacher described the school's vision. She said, “I think that our vision is inclusivity for sure!”

One of the ways the Village with a Vision met the unique needs of individual students was through the creation of inclusive classroom spaces. John the principal described how the classrooms at the school supported a variety of learning styles. Every classroom had multiple work spaces and seating options to choose from so that students could learn in a way that met their individual needs. He said, “All of our classrooms are Reggio Emilia style.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

So they have different seating options. We also have couches and everyone's got access to them if that's what they need." Amy the teacher explained that the school also had an area for students to sleep if they needed to rest during the school day as well as other quiet spaces where students could take a break from sensory input if that was what they needed.

In addition to creating inclusive classroom spaces, the philosophy of inclusion was evident in the manner in which the Village with a Vision sought to support the emotional and behavioural needs of their students. In an effort to better understand the needs of the students in the school and some of their presenting behaviours, the school team looked at markers of childhood trauma and realized that a significant number of the students who attended the Village with a Vision were highly at risk. In order to address this issue, the Village with a Vision initiated a partnership with a mental health service provider to provide support for students and families directly on site at the school. The model included enhancing the range of support that was available at school so that it could be as inclusive as possible and at the same time address the needs that existed in a comprehensive way. John described the model of support,

Two years ago I took the [name of an agency's] demographic markers for childhood trauma. So you're ten criteria and if a percentage of your students had four or more of those markers then you're probably prone to childhood trauma effects and 65% of our students had four or more markers. It's huge! Right? That kind of got things rolling for supporting or consolidating that [name of agency] partnership with us.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Amy the teacher described one of the students who has benefited from this inclusive model of support. She said

He has thrown chairs, crawls under tables, hides away, tries to leave the building. I think he also struggles with interpersonal skills like making friendships and maintaining friendships....Our partnership with [a mental health provider] has been huge for this student and his family. That is what has allowed us to make gains with this student. It wouldn't have happened if it wasn't here at the school.

**Case management.** When students presented with complex emotional and behavioural needs all of the participants at the Village with a Vision described that there was a team approach to the provision of support. John the principal emphasized how everyone at the school played a role in supporting students who were struggling. He said, "It's all hands on deck. We don't have a team that we call together, it's like we are the team....If it's behaviour stuff we're going to meet together!" The principal John did not identify any one person as leading the plan of support for students with complex needs and described all team members as contributing to the collective planning and support that was provided. In spite of the emphasis on team intervention, Amy the teacher felt that the principal played a very direct role in supporting the students that she described as having a high level of emotional and behavioural needs. When students are struggling people know "...they need John." Monica the partnering service provider from the local community resource centre described John as performing a case management function when the support for students at the Village with a Vision involved interdisciplinary collaboration. Monica provided an example of how John often initiated contact with her agency when a child was in need to find out what kind of supports beyond what was currently available at the school might be accessed for the student.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She described John as not only performing this kind of outreach but also inviting multiple stakeholders to the school to develop a plan and then maintaining contact with all parties throughout the implementation of the plan. She said,

John will just call me up and ask for my help. We collaborate around plans and kids that they are really concerned about. He invites everyone to the table and we put our heads together. It's almost a little bit of wraparound which I really like.

### **Theme 7: Perspectives about Resources**

All of the participants at the Village with a Vision shared concerns about the fact that resources were limited and identified the need to access additional funding in order to maintain the current programming that they were providing for students and families. They further identified the need to expand the level of support that they were providing and in order to do so they described the ongoing pressure to find additional funders who might be willing to support the attainment of that goal. Some of the participants also shared that the receipt of funding had been further complicated by the bureaucratic processes that needed to be followed in order to access funding given that funding dollars often were not directly allocated to the community school or the local resource centre. In an effort to overcome the challenges associated with limited resources all of the participants described how they had developed partnerships to creatively share resources with other service providers. In spite of the partnerships that existed the uncertainty associated receipt of grants and the sustainability of corporate sponsorship heightened feelings of stress about resources among all stakeholders.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**The need for multiple funding sources.** John the principal of the Village with a Vision described that while the funding that school received from the Community Schools Program enabled them to offer a range of programs it was necessary to supplement this funding source. He said, “We’ve got our community school stream but I’ve pulled in lots of other funding.” John described an example of a partnership that the Village with a Vision had with a funder that had enabled the school to provide a hockey program for 50 students. He said,

We have a partnership with a [funder] so we have 50 students in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 who all learn to play hockey because of it. So 50 kids are given all of their hockey gear! They all are bussed to [an ice complex] once a week on Wednesdays. They get all licensed instruction. They all learn to skate and they get lunch and they come back to school.

John described how the additional funding that the school had received from multiple sources had significantly enhanced the opportunities that the Village with a Vision could provide for students and families. It was through ongoing outreach that John continued to expand the partnerships that existed between the Village with a Vision and other community agencies and businesses. John described how he had taken it upon himself to, “....go out looking for sponsor,” which included making personal contact with many potential funders.

Monica the partnering service provider described how the support that her agency provided in the community also was dependent upon multiple funding sources. She described how a significant amount of her time was spent, “....finding funding so I write a lot of funding proposals for initiatives in the community. It kind of changes throughout the year, because fall and spring are busy. I could be writing four proposals at a time.”

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The identification of potential funders and the completion of grant applications were described as additional responsibilities of both the principal of the Village with a Vision and the partnering service provider. Neither the principal nor the partnering service provider had been required by their employer to find multiple funding sources, but rather it was through their own personal initiative that they had sought to increase the resources that were available to the Village with a Vision. John provided an example of how the Village with a Vision had identified a significant amount of funding to improve the local park. He said, “We actually fundraised for two play structures in one year and seven months I think. We raised \$170 000.00 because we got a matching grant through [a funder]. And we built it all in one day.” The receipt of a significant amount of funding did not appear to lead to a feeling that the Village with a Vision could take a break from continuing to seek out additional support, instead it seemed to provide renewed energy and optimism that there might be more funding that could be obtained through additional outreach if they continued to work to obtain it.

**The bureaucratic nature of funding.** Some of the stakeholders at the Village with a Vision described the processes by which funds were accessed as complicated and as interfering with the provision of support. John the principal described how he wished that he had more direct control over how funds were spent to support the community school. He said,

I actually wish that there was more site-based management in this particular area....I don't know about other divisions but in our division I don't have quite as much....I mean, I have lots and lots of latitude but there are certain elements that are controlled sectorial that I have to jump through the hoops for.

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Monica the partnering service described how she too had to deal with several levels of bureaucratic approval when she was trying to access funding. She described how she continually had to provide evidence of the needs that existed within the community even though she felt that she had done so in the past. She said,

There is just all that red tape around funding all of the time....there are just too many guidelines which is so upsetting! We are often just saying the same thing over and over again. The needs are there and we all know it. There are much better ways that I could be spending my time supporting people instead of writing grant applications.

**Shared resources.** In addition to accessing multiple funding sources, another way that the Village with a Vision had tried to overcome the challenges associated with having limited resources had been to share resources among the service providers. In this regard, all of the participant provided examples how they had partnered in creative ways to ensure the most efficient and effective use of existing resources. Monica the partnering service provider talked about how her agency and the school had collaborated to offer parenting programs which often involved the shared use of space at either the school or the local resource centre. She said, “They have asked to use our space and we use their space. It works well!”

In addition to sharing capital resources like space, Lisa the community school connector described how expertise also was shared among the program facilitators from the local community resource centre and the community school connectors in order to support children, families and the community. Lisa the community school connector described how the program facilitators from the local community resource centre co-facilitated parent and child programs as well as programs for parents in partnership with them.

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Lisa said,

The facilitators from the resource centre and myself or the other community connector work together to provide programming. The facilitators come here [to the Village with a Vision] and they have a lot of materials and training so they set up the programs and we help them run it. We usually know the kids and families so people feel comfortable with us and that helps too.

Lisa described that the facilitators from the local community resource centre have specific training in the support that they provide in that some of the facilitators are dieticians and social workers. They also have resource materials that they use to organize the activities that take place. The role of the community school connector during these programs is to work alongside the program facilitator to provide support and encouragement to the participants during the sessions as well as outside of the sessions to help to support the transference of skills. Given that the community school connectors often know the participants they also may help to make the sessions personally relevant to the participants.

While all of the participants at the Village with a Vision described examples of the shared use of space and the shared use of their collective expertise in supporting children and families, they stated that they did not jointly apply for funding. The extent of the collaboration that took place with respect to accessing funding involved writing letters of support to potential funders in support of one another so that they could each access their own funding dollars. Although the Village with a Vision did not provide examples of joint funding to support common initiatives, Monica the partnering service provider expressed a desire to pool resources in the future.

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She said,

I want to work with John a little bit more next year. We both want to see more programming that has an Aboriginal focus. He has some money, we have some money, we have people that we know that are from the community and we want to work together to get this started....I think in the end we may get a Pow Wow club going.

**Stress related to resources.** A dependence upon outside funding sources to support the programming that was being provided by the Village with a Vision and the short-term nature of funding were described as creating feelings of stress and uncertainty by all of the participants. John the principal described how he had made a connection with a local business to support an annual feast provided by the Village with a Vision but when the individual who had agreed to provide the funding for the initiative left the company he became concerned about the future availability of the support. John reiterated what he had shared with his staff when this occurred. He said, “....Ok folks I’m going to have to pray about this because we don’t have a dime for this program and this guy isn’t working there anymore.”

In addition to changes in the business community leading to uncertainty over future funding, Monica the partnering service provider talked about how some grants that she had relied upon in the past had been eliminated. She said, “We’ve lost a lot of funding, a lot of funding has just shut down and it makes me worry about what’s going to happen for us in the future. It’s really hard to say.” Due to the loss of several grants, Monica described how the resource centre had been required to cut some of the programs that she felt had been essential services in the community.

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Linda a parent and community school connector shared Monica's concern about funding cuts and explained how there was a shared desire to "always do more" in the community but that there were financial constraints that had limited the support that they could provide. Linda said, "I feel badly sometimes because I think we need more programs but sometimes it's not in the budget. There are all sorts of things that we would like but we don't always have the funds."

In an effort to provide much needed support at the Village with a Vision, John the principal described how there had been times in the past when he had exceeded his budget. He said, "I know that our secretary treasurer will tell you that I've blown the budget twice now and they're really worried that I'm going to do it again this year." The pressure to be fiscally responsible and at the same time address the needs within the community was a challenge and an additional pressure placed upon the school principal.

### **Theme 8: How Community School Programming is Determined and its Impact**

The Village with a Vision had a great deal of autonomy in determining its areas of focus as a community school and had chosen to use the PATH process to enlist all stakeholders in identifying its collective goals. It appeared that while Village with a Vision's approaches to support were multi-faceted, a significant amount of what they described as their community school programming and as their community school partnerships were focused on literacy development. In this regard, the principal of the Village with a Vision had a strong passion for literacy and he shared that he felt that fostering a literate community was one of the essential building blocks that would help to empower the community. There also was an emphasis on using data to assess the impact of the support that was being provided by the Village with a Vision.

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Students' progress in the areas of literacy, behaviour, attendance as well as parental participation in programming were being assessed over time to help to determine if the Village with a Vision was achieving its desired results.

**The focus of programming.** The principal's passion for literacy and his belief that fostering a literate community would empower not only the students, but also the community at large guided much of the programming that was provided at the Village with a Vision. In order to support the achievement of this goal, much of the funding that the principal sought out from community partners was directed toward enhancing literacy programming. While all schools focus on the development of literacy skills, the Village with a Vision had made it their mission to not only teach literacy at school but also to help to build more literate homes in the community. John explained how he had sought out support from a community partner to fund the purchase of books that could be mailed to student's homes at several points throughout the summer months to help to reduce the possibility of a summer learning loss. According to John through the support of a local business, the school had been able to, "Put books in the hands of kids in their own homes. Good fit books - high quality books."

John also talked about how as a community school they had supported students and families in "...growing their own libraries," through the assistance of a community partner. Growing one's own home library did not simply involve giving students books it made the giving of a book a very special event that demonstrated its value. John described how books were distributed.

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He said,

We do a book blessing. We read the book. [A funder] or our superintendent comes in you know and we “plant” the book in our library. And then the students also take it home and “plant” it. We have a copy in the classroom library so then the text becomes familiar for the kids.

The Village with a Vision provided several opportunities for parents in the local community to learn about literacy. John described the school’s role in supporting family literacy. He said, “We’re basically teaching some families, this is what you do, you have books in the house.” In order to further connect with families and provide information about how to foster literacy development, the Village with a Vision regularly hosted literacy evenings at the school.

John said, “They are all kind of curricular tied. The teaching staff run it. The non-teaching staff support it. And we tend to have 80-90 people come out to those.”

Monica the partnering service provider also talked about how the early childhood programming that was offered at the Village with a Vision in partnership with her agency was designed to support parents in fostering early literacy development. Monica said,

Our parent and child program at the school helps parents learn how play can support their child’s learning. We have a lot of opportunity to sing and develop language and look at exposure to letters, numbers and books before the kids even come to school.

It also appeared that John the principal had surrounded himself with a staff who possessed a similar belief in the importance of literacy.



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John described his staff's skills. He said, "The teachers that I work with in this building are phenomenal! They are so well educated in literacy and numeracy...." The passion for literacy also included other members of the teaching staff as well as the extended school division team. John described the staff commitment to enhancing their professional learning related to literacy so as to improve the support that they were able to provide at the Village with a Vision. He said,

We have an early literacy professional learning community here where the director and two of her staff come and meet with our kindergarten team and sometimes with folks from our [clinical] office. And we just talk about early learning and literacy. And we'll go to PD together as well.

**Outcomes of support.** The Village with a Vision provided broad-based support and the means by which they measured the impact of the support that they were providing included multiple forms of assessment. For example, they assessed students' reading and writing achievement several times per year. They also assessed individual student's behavioural growth by measuring the frequency of behavioural incidents and the amount of time that students were observed to be on task. Additionally, attendance rates were regularly monitored. John the principal described how they measured students' reading growth. He said, "I just love Excel! We've got all of our reading levels and we keep track. "Did they grow?" "Is there movement or are they static?" John also explained how they assessed the students writing skills using a writing inventory three times per year. Amy the teacher described how the Village with a Vision focused on measuring students' academic progress longitudinally.

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She said,

We have a reading wall where we're tracking kids' reading growth. We also have student profiles that we keep in each classroom that we send off from year to year that will include math samples, writing samples and longitudinal measures of reading and writing on a continuum.

In describing how the Village with a Vision also assessed students' behavioural improvement, John the principal said, "We look at the frequency and intensity." John described that when supports are in place, "...we see an improvement in terms of decreasing escalations. If we can get in front of the behaviours, if we can understand what's causing them, then we see a decrease." He also went on to describe that another behavioural measure that they used was an assessment of students' time on task behaviour. He explained that they had seen a relationship between improvements in students' time on task and their overall academic achievement.

The Village with a Vision also had assessed students' attendance to determine whether it was improving over time. Specifically, they monitored whether the attendance of students who were receiving support from the walking school bus had demonstrated improved attendance. John described the outcomes that they had tracked after implementing a walking school bus program. He said, "The data so far on the kids who are involved is phenomenal." Lisa the community school connector concurred that the impact of the walking school bus had been significant. She said, "So the walking school bus, they come every morning and they have breakfast and the kids' attendance is better. Their learning is better!"

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One of the primary measures that was used to determine the impact that the support that the Village with a Vision was having on the parent community was monitoring parental participation rates. Linda a parent and community school connector described how the parent and child group that she had been co-facilitating with a partner from the local community resource centre had seen a marked increase in parental participation rates. She said, “It started with just one parent and now we have about nine parents so it’s really growing.”

Another measure of the impact of the support that the Village with a Vision was having on parents was the extent to which parents were willing to continue to access mental health services outside of the school once they had initially been provided with support at the school through the mental health partnership that existed. In reference to the outcomes of the mental health partnership John said,

The neat thing about this is the spin-off – half of the families that have been involved [at the school] now don’t need to go to the school anymore. Now, that they understand the benefit of the program they actually go to [the mental health provider].

The willingness of parents to now access support outside of the school demonstrated the impact that the on-site support may have had in building positive relationships with families and breaking down the stigma that may be associated with the receipt of support. The willingness of parents to now access service outside of the school has allowed the Village with a Vision to support a greater number of students and families in need.

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The Village with a Vision's focus on measuring academic, behavioural and attendance indicators for students and the engagement of families and the community through participation rates in community school programming had helped to inform the nature of the support that the school provided. While all of the participants shared specific examples of individual successes experienced by students and families, it was through the aforementioned measures that the Village with a Vision was longitudinally tracking the impact that it was having on children and families and continuing to refine its models of support.

### **Summary of Case 2**

At the Village with a Vision a collaborative culture had been built by honouring all voices and including multiple perspectives in the actions of the community school. For several years the principal of the Village with a Vision had utilized the PATH process to bring together multiple stakeholders in the development of a collective vision for the community school. The shared vision of the community school included becoming a hub in the community where not only children, youth, families and the community gathered, but also where they could access a broad range of services and supports. The Village with a Vision's relative isolation from much needed services and the centrality of the community school had made it a vital link in the provision of support. The principal of the Village with a Vision and the staff, as well as its community partners embraced the idea of expanding the role of the community school and broadening the scope of support provided and worked tirelessly toward the achievement of that goal. Collaboration also had been fostered by building trusting relationships with the children, youth, families and the community to be served.

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In this regard, the longevity of the principal in his role, as well as the longevity of a core group of teachers and the community school connector were described as contributing to the trust that existed within the community and to the ability of the community school to provide support across multiple life domains. Of note, the extensive array of partnerships that existed included but were not limited to the provision of mental health support on site within the school setting. At the Village with a Vision there were several instances in which the community school and its' partners collectively developed highly individualized plans of support for students with complex needs. The use of the PATH process also had helped to guide the assessment of the progress of the community school toward the achievement of its stated objectives. Monitoring students' academic and social emotional growth had enabled the Village with a Vision to continually be responsive to the presenting needs. Embedded in all aspects of the community school programming was its focus on literacy development that appeared to be largely due to the commitment of the school principal toward building a more literate community. Stress over insufficient funding and the need for greater community-based leadership were ongoing challenges faced by the Village with a Vision that they continued to work toward overcoming in the future. In summary, the Village with a Vision demonstrated a commitment to meeting the needs of children, youth, families and the community in a holistic way and by building collaborative partnerships it had been able to tailor its support to address broader community needs as well as the unique needs of individuals.

The Village with a Vision may serve as an effective host environment for the implementation of the wraparound approach as many of its practices and current models of support provision involved “wrapping” supports around the population that it served across multiple life domai

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### Chapter 6

#### Case 3 – The Hub of Hope

##### Description of the Case

The community school in case three will be referred to as The Hub of Hope because the school acts like a hub in that it is centrally located in a rural area and serves a number of small, surrounding communities. It is described as the Hub of Hope because the community has experienced a steadily declining population, the loss of employment opportunities and a high rate of poverty. In spite of these challenges, the community school has helped to create a sense of optimism within what some might call a “dying” community.

The Hub of Hope is a kindergarten to grade 12 school located in a rural setting. This community school has a student population of approximately 140 students and a staff of approximately 25 professional, paraprofessional and support staff. This community school is located in a school division that has a student population of approximately 1000 students in less than 10 schools. The population of the school division is entirely rural and it supports many small, diverse communities in the region.

The Hub of Hope is a one story concrete structure with portable additions as well as a high school wing that was added to the school structure approximately 25 years ago. The entrance of the school opens onto a long narrow hallway where the high school classrooms are located. The long narrow hallway leads to one gymnasium that is shared by the kindergarten to grade 12 students. The long narrow hallway also leads to the school office that is located at the centre of the school. Across from the school office is a wall with photos of past graduating classes that ranged from approximately 8 students to 15 students in any given year.

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There is a large, new play structure on the school grounds, as well as baseball and soccer areas in the school field. Adjacent to the school parking lot is a basketball court. In the back of the school field there is an out building that houses band equipment for the high school band program. The Hub of Hope also has recently created an outdoor classroom that includes a garden where fruit and vegetables are grown and used by the community school in cooking programs and in cooking for community school events. There also is a family room at the back of the school in one of the portable additions where programming that is led by the community school connector is offered. The family room is furnished with a couch, many tables and chairs as well as play materials for infants and preschool children. There also is a small kitchen facility in the community school that is used to prepare all food and provide cooking and nutritional programs. The school recently purchased a commercial dishwasher as one of the areas of focus in the community school programming is to promote environmentally friendly practices.

**Student and community demographics.** The Hub of Hope is located in a community that was settled in the 1860's by individuals of Metis and Eastern European descent and at that time it served as a Hudson Bay trading post. The community grew with the development of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, however in the 1960's rail service was not extended beyond the local community and since that time the population has steadily declined. Comparing the 1986 census data with the 2011 census data reveals that the population of the local community has declined by almost 30% over the past 25 years. Many of the residents in the community are farmers and commercial fisherman and their work is seasonal. There have been some local mining operations established in the area however the introduction of some limited industry has not prevented the steady decline of the population and the high rate of unemployment.

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The community also has a significant number of foster homes which have created a supplemental income source for some families.

Approximately 85% of the students who attend the Hub of Hope have self-identified as Aboriginal or Metis. Approximately 60% of the students also are in the care of a child welfare agency or in some form of extended care with relatives. Given that there are many students in care, the student population is highly transient. In any given school year, the student enrollment can fluctuate by approximately 15% as new students move into or out of foster placements in one of the local communities. Another factor that contributes to fluctuations in enrolment is that some students have a pattern of moving back and forth between the community being studied and two neighbouring First Nation communities.

Due to the steadily declining population two other schools in neighbouring communities have closed. Given the closure of these neighbouring schools, some students spend over one hour traveling each way to and from school on the school bus as they reside in one of the neighbouring communities that has experienced a school closure. As the local community continues to experience out migration class sizes also have steadily declined and therefore class configurations change each year and are usually multi-age. Despite the fact that enrolment is declining, the school continues to require separate spaces to accommodate the unique programming needs of its early, middle and senior years students who are all housed in the same building. For instance, there are no separate spaces like a cafeteria or multi-purpose room to accommodate the needs of the high school students and therefore the high school students must share space with the younger students.

The Hub of Hope has had a relatively stable teaching staff and support staff for the past 5 years. However, the leadership of the school has experienced a high turnover rate. In the past



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year the school has had three different principals. While the teaching staff has remained relatively stable, most of the teaching staff do not live in the local community or even in one of the neighbouring communities. Many of the teachers live at least a one hour to one and half hours away in a larger centre and commute to work each day. While most of the teachers live a significant distance from the school, the community school connector, the educational assistants and support staff at the school reside in the local area.

The resources in this community are extremely limited and include a community centre with a skating rink, a church, a museum that is open one day per week, a clinic that is staffed by a licensed practical nurse, a small general store that sells only basic necessities, as well as a restaurant. There are essentially two main roads in the community, one road where the school, recreation centre and museum are located and the other where the restaurant, general store and clinic are located. There are few homes in the immediate vicinity of the school as most residents live outside of the town proper.

The local community does not have essential services like a gas station or a major grocery store. The closest gas station is approximately 45 minutes away and the closest major grocery store is over one hour away. Many of the residents in this community do not have access to a reliable vehicle which contributes to feelings of isolation and limits access to affordable food. Another major factor contributing to the residents' feelings of isolation in this community is the fact that there is no cellular phone service available within a 10 kilometer radius of the community school. In interviewing the community school connector, she described the local area as a "dead space," in that an individual needs to drive approximately 10 kilometers outside of the local community in order to receive a cellular phone signal.

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In addition to not having cellular phone service in the local area, many of the residents do not have home telephones and therefore communication can be very challenging.

**Early Development Instrument data.** While EDI data that is collected in this community the data is not publically reported due to the small number of kindergarten students that are included in the data set. Instead the data from this community has been reported more generally and includes several surrounding communities so that the anonymity of the participants can be protected. The analysis of EDI data within this community and several other neighbouring communities indicates that a majority of the children in the local community were found to be vulnerable or “not ready to learn” however, there is evidence of some positive trends including an improvement in the areas of emotional maturity, communication skills, general knowledge and to a lesser degree social competence that have been reported (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2009).

**Organization and governance structure.** The Hub of Hope has been designated as a community school as part of the Community School Partnership Initiative for over five years. The kindergarten to grade 12 school has multi-age grade configurations at almost all levels. The kindergarten programming that is offered is a full-day program and it is offered every day. The school day starts at approximately 9:00 A.M and ends at 3:30 P.M. with a one hour break for lunch. Almost all of the students stay at school for lunch due to the fact that most of the students live a significant distance from the school and are transported by bus.

The administrative structure of the school consists of a principal and part-time acting principal who also teaches some core high school subject areas. The administrative team leads a staff of approximately 25 professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff. There is an active parent advisory council that supports the operation of the community school.

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The parent advisory council meets monthly and is involved in making decisions about the programming that is provided at the community school. Many of the members of the parent advisory council are on several committees in the school and not only lead fundraising events, but also volunteer their time to ensure the successful operation of the community school. There also is a designated family room at the community school where some of the community school's programming is provided. There is full-time community school connector who facilitates the programming that is provided by the community school. The role of the community school connector is vast and includes but is not limited to:

1. Providing after school, noon hour and evening programming for children, youth, and adults ranging from two evenings per week up to four evenings per week on a variety of topics (e.g., volleyball , a walking club, Aboriginal beading, skating, fiddle lessons, crocheting, recreational soccer, cooking classes, weight training).
2. Providing two weeks of summer programming for all school age students.
3. Providing specific parent and child programs that foster early childhood development.
4. Supporting the facilitation of the Roots of Empathy Program in the school (Gordon, 2005).
5. Providing informal counselling support to youth and facilitating connections with community resources including health and social work.
6. Transporting parents to events when required and transporting students to access community resources including health supports.
7. Facilitating the daily breakfast program and the weekly hot lunch program.

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8. Presenting information about the role of the community school at community events and writing a weekly newsletter about the programs and supports that are being provided by the community school.
9. Recruiting volunteers to contribute to community school programming.
10. Coordinating and facilitating all aspects of whole school and community seasonal celebrations (e.g., winter feast, family fun nights, [FAST]).
11. Locating basic necessities like clothing to ensure that students' basic needs are met.
12. Seeking out partnerships with other local agencies such as the local health provider to conduct presentations based on an identified need.
13. Attending monthly parent advisory council meetings and presenting about the actions of the community school.
14. Maintaining a budget of community school expenditures and sharing it with the parent advisory council.
15. Writing various grants to support initiatives at the community school.
16. Coordinating fundraising activities for the community school in partnership with the parent advisory council.
17. Surveying students and parents after they have participated in a community school program to obtain feedback and guide the development of future programming
18. Tracking attendance at the programming provided by the community school.

### **Programming**

The Hub of Hope is located in a remote community with limited resources and therefore the role of the community school is broad in scope.

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Given the small population in the local community, individuals who support the community school play a number of key roles in its daily operation. The Hub of Hope attempts to meet the needs of all of the residents in the local community by providing a broad range of programming that not only includes activities during the school day, but also includes a number of evening recreational opportunities, as well as summer programming for school-aged students. The Hub of Hope also provides early childhood programming, recreational opportunities, nutritional support as well as cultural and arts programs.

**Educational programming.** The Hub of Hope has a focus on early childhood programming and offers a preschool program two full days per week in the community school. In order to enhance the accessibility of the preschool program for children and families pre-school students are allowed to take the school bus to and from the program as long as another student over the age of 12 has been designated by a parent to supervise them. In order to support early child development and meet the needs of parents with pre-school children the community school connector also leads a parent and child program once per week in the family room that is located in the school. The parent and child program provides opportunities for parents to socialize and also learn about early literacy and play skills. The Hub of Hope also offers a Kindergarten Here I Come program that includes six half-day and one full-day session for 4 year old children in which they have the opportunity to come to the school and participate in school readiness activities prior to kindergarten entry. The Hub of Hope is also one of the few schools in the province that provides a full day kindergarten program that is offered every day.

An educational assistant facilitates the Roots of Empathy Program in one classroom in the community school each year with the support of the community school connector (Gordon, 2005).

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The Roots of Empathy program, while beneficial to the students in the school also provides a way for the community school staff to connect with parents in the community early on in their child's development and invite parental involvement in the community school. In an effort to foster early literacy development and foster literacy within the community all pre-school children and community members are also welcomed into the school library to borrow reading materials throughout the school year.

The Hub of Hope also has developed a garage band program for high school students in which they can earn a high school credit for their participation. In this program students learn to play a range of instruments including the guitar, drums and keyboards and also develop their vocal abilities. During garage band the students also are introduced to the process of writing and recording music. The garage band has performed at several local events and also has participated in musical competitions where they have won awards. In an effort to further engage high school students, the Hub of Hope also offers a course for grade 12 students entitled *Current Topics in First Nations, Metis and Inuit studies* (Manitoba Education, 2011). This high school course explores indigenous history and traditions in Canada and around the world and has been offered at this community school in an effort to address the expressed needs of high school students to learn about First Nations and Metis culture.

The Hub of Hope also has a focus on sustainability and has developed an outdoor edible classroom that includes a community garden. All of the students in the community school as well as parent volunteers have had the opportunity to learn about, and participate in growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables and using their locally grown produce in preparing healthy meals for the school breakfast program and other cooking programs that are offered at the community school.

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Recognizing that there are limited activities available to students during the summer months the Hub of Hope offers a two week summer program. The summer program includes opportunities to participate in recreational activities, activities that promote social skill development as well as arts and crafts. The activity schedule varies throughout the two week period during the summer months as the activities are designed to be responsive to the needs and interests of the students who are participating in the program. There has been an identified need for the students in the community to receive swimming lessons so the Hub of Hope has a plan to transport students to a neighbouring community to receive swimming lessons during the summer months as well.

**Nutrition.** The Hub of Hope prepares and provides a hot breakfast every day to all students from pre-school to grade 12. There also is a weekly hot lunch provided to all students. Previously, there was a charge for the weekly lunch but the school realized that by charging for lunch many students were unable to purchase the lunch due to financial constraints. There also is a snack provided twice per week. At the Hub of Hope there is a focus on using locally grown produce that is produced in the community school's garden. There also is a focus on preparing home cooked meals as opposed to using processed foods. Daily food preparation and service are led by the community school connector, an educational assistant and parent volunteers. Additionally, a local farmer in the area is a trained chef and she offers a cooking program at the community school on Tuesday evenings that is open to both children and adults. In this program, not only do the participants learn how to prepare a healthy meal, but they also perform a community service function in that the meal that they prepare is served as a hot lunch for the school the following day.

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The Hub of Hope also has a focus on using environmentally conscious practices and therefore the community school has purchased a commercial dishwasher so that they no longer use any disposable dishes or cutlery in the preparation of school breakfasts and lunches. The community school also composts materials that are used in the preparation of their breakfast and lunch program in the community garden. In partnership with the local health authority a nutritionist and dietician as well as the locally based Licensed Practical Nurse visit the school quarterly to provide instruction about healthy food choices and to enhance the students' understanding of the utility of the community school's garden. Building upon the school's emphasis on healthy eating, the Hub of Hope hosts an annual Halloween celebration that includes the provision of healthy treats once per year in the school foyer. Recognizing that food security is a concern in this community there are always snacks available for students in need.

**Parenting/family support.** There is an ongoing effort by the Hub of Hope to invite parents into the school to participate in activities with their children and also provide activities that are specifically designed to meet the needs of adults in the community. Once per week during the school day, the community school connector leads a parent and child program in which parents learn about early child development and participate in play activities with their child. During this program a healthy snack is also provided for all of the participants. While specific parenting programs are not explicitly taught during this time, positive parenting practices are modeled and discussed. If a parent is struggling to meet the needs of their child there is a clinic in the community that is staffed by a full-time Licensed Practical Nurse who provides informal counselling support and may refer families for additional support to the local health authority that is approximately one hour away.



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In addition to the parent and child program, there are many opportunities for community members to become meaningfully engaged in the community school through volunteerism. For instance, a local chef teaches a cooking program for adults and children, and as a part of this program the group prepares the weekly hot lunch that is served at the community school.

Another community member teaches Aboriginal beading and sewing leather products like moccasins. Responding to the request of community members to engage in structured physical activity during the evenings, the community school connector also started a walking club for adults one evening per week in the school.

**Health/mental health.** The Hub of Hope recognizes the need to support the mental health and mental wellness of its students and community members. Presently, there is a social worker employed by the school division who spends one day per week at the community school, however there have been times over the past several years that the school has been without the support of a social worker for extended periods of time. The Hub of Hope does not have a school guidance counsellor and as such, some informal counselling support is provided by the community school connector, the school principal and the local Licensed Practical Nurse at the community clinic. The Licensed Practical Nurse works full-time and provides some limited health services for the residents in the community including blood pressure monitoring, home visits for the elderly, support related to communicable diseases, birth control and immunizations. Approximately once per month a Public Health Nurse also visits the community and sees patients who may require assessment beyond what the Licensed Practical Nurse can provide. The Hub of Hope works closely with the local clinic to share information related to students' needs and connect families with necessary supports.

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This may include referring children and families for other health and mental health services provided by the local regional health authority in another community that is approximately a one hour drive away. Since the school division does not employ a psychologist and the health authority does not provide any on-site mental health support families must travel outside of the local community in order to access these kinds of supports.

**Cultural programs.** In order to meet the cultural needs of the community members the Hub of Hope provides several programs designed to acknowledge and celebrate its cultural diversity. In order to provide cultural programming, the Hub of Hope accesses resources in neighbouring communities as well as utilizes local volunteers. In addition to a local resident providing weekly evening instruction in Aboriginal beading, there also is an individual who resides in a neighbouring community who travels to the Hub of Hope and provides fiddling lessons for students over the lunch hour. The program has increased in popularity and as a result the school recently purchased 12 new fiddles to facilitate increased student participation in the program. The Hub of Hope also has an annual community feast that celebrates the Aboriginal, Metis and Eastern European ancestry of its residents. This celebration has been held at the school and has included a feast with traditional dishes from all of the cultures represented in the community. In addition, the school hosts an annual Aboriginal Day that is spearheaded by students who are a part of the school's social justice committee. The Aboriginal day includes a celebration of Aboriginal culture and activities like fiddling, beading, traditional storytelling, drumming and Jingle dancing.

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**Recreation.** Given the challenges with access to transportation in this community and the resultant inability of many students to return to the school for evening recreational opportunities, the school has increasingly focused on providing recreational programs over the lunch hour in order to maximize students' ability to participate. In addition to curling, volleyball, basketball, badminton, track and field, baseball and golf that are offered at the school, the community school connector has provided a number of additional programs that were described as a part of the community school programming. For instance, during the winter months the community school connector provides a skating program during the noon hour at the recreation centre across the street from the school. Fiddle lessons are also provided during the noon hour by an individual who resides in a neighbouring community. A crocheting program is also provided during the school day.

In spite of the fact that participation in after school activities may be challenging for some students and families, the Hub of Hope continues to make an effort to extend the school day by providing after school recreational programming that might not otherwise be available in the community. For instance, during the spring months the community school connector developed a recreational soccer program that involves approximately 50 students. The recreational soccer program includes students from the Hub of Hope playing against students in another town. The games are played at 5:00 P.M and there has been strong parent support for this program and an increasing number of spectators in attendance at the games. The Hub of Hope is open from between two nights per week to a maximum of four nights per week at any given time

**Community events.** As previously mentioned the Hub of Hope host an annual feast that in the past year involved a celebration of the various cultures that are represented within the community. This event is well attended and usually has over 250 people in attendance.

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Another community event that has been offered by the Hub of Hope has been the opportunity for families in the community to have a family portrait taken at the school, another opportunity that might not ordinarily be available in this community given its limited resources. The Hub of Hope also leads a community garage sale at the community center. There is also an annual Christmas dinner as well as a breakfast with Santa that are provided by the community school. The Hub of Hope also sets up a Christmas store for five consecutive days in December that allows members of the community to buy gifts locally given that the nearest major store is approximately one hour away.

**Outreach.** Given that the community that is served by the Hub of Hope is so geographically dispersed the community school connector actively engages in outreach by producing a weekly newsletter that is sent home with all of the students in the school. The newsletter provides a weekly update about the events that are occurring at the school and extends an invitation to all members of the surrounding communities to participate. The community school connector also engages in outreach by personally connecting with students and families and offering support when there is an identified need. Since the community school connector resides in the community, students and parents often seek her out outside of school hours to provide personal support. The school also actively encourages students' regular attendance by telephoning families who have telephones and making home visits when required.

**Continuum of behavioural support.** The school division in which the Hub of Hope is located describes its code of conduct as following the provincial regulations contained in the *Safe and Caring Schools Provincial Code of Conduct: Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences* (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014).

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This Provincial Code of Conduct is a ministerial directive intended to strengthen positive school-wide approaches to behaviour and create a safe and caring school environment. The Provincial Code of Conduct requires individual schools to establish individual school codes of conduct for students and staff. The Hub of Hope has developed its own school code of conduct that complies with the expectations in the Provincial Code of Conduct and establishes school-wide expectations for behaviour. The school-wide expectations at the Hub of Hope include: (a) students will speak and act politely and respectfully to all students and adults, (b) students are to demonstrate respect for diversity at all times, (c) students in the hallways/classrooms will walk in a safe and quiet manner and keep their hands and feet to themselves, (d) students will respect the authority of all school staff and comply with all reasonable requests, (e) students will be on time for classes and move directly from one class to another, (f) students will regularly come to class with the required materials and be prepared to work, to participate, and to complete their assignments on time, (g) students will respect all personal property, (h) students will resolve conflicts through discussion — in person or through mediation, and (i) students are not to participate in any violence, alcohol, drug, weapon, harassment, abusive behaviors or blatant disrespect. In addition to the school-wide code of conduct each classroom teacher also develops specific classroom behavioural expectations. The school-wide approach to behaviour involves a focus on character education and includes teaching students about the positive traits that may help them to develop into responsible citizens. It includes teaching students about the core values of mutual respect, honesty and fairness and embedding them into the school culture. An example of how the school embeds these core values into the school culture is through a school-wide approach referred to as Bucket Filling. In this model, the bucket represents your mental and emotional self.

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If a person has a full bucket they feel more confident, secure and friendly and they may be more likely to treat others in positive ways. Students and staff are encouraged to engage in bucket filling by saying or doing something kind, giving compliments, smiling, using names with respect, helping without being asked, and showing respect to others.

Additionally, the school social worker is directly involved in providing both targeted and intensive behaviour support. She works with specific classes as well as individual students to teach social skills and coping strategies that foster social emotional competence. In order to respect the cultural needs of the students, the Seven Sacred Teachings that include love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth are also embedded into teaching practices (Bouchard, Martin & Cameron, 2009). There is a mural that was painted by a student on the wall in the school that shows the Seven Sacred Teachings and incorporates the other Eastern European cultures that are represented in the school and community.

The school principal and the acting principal both shared that they use Restitution in their approach to supporting positive behaviour (Gossen, 1998). A restitution model has not been formalized in the school but the belief that students need to learn from behaviour and engage in making reparations for their actions guides the actions of the administrative leaders in this school. When students have more intensive behavioural needs the school creates individualized behaviour plans. The school social worker is usually a part of planning for these students along with the school principal and resource teacher.

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### **Introduction of Participants**

At the Hub of Hope four participants were interviewed. The participants included the school principal, a high school teacher who also was the acting principal, the community school connector and a parent who also was employed as an educational assistant at the community school.

Ken Evans was the grade 9-12 math and science teacher in the community school. Ken had taught at this community school for the past seven years. He also was the acting principal of the community school. Ken had worked in the field of education for the past 22 years as a teacher, principal and coordinator. Ken held a Bachelor of Education degree and Master of Education degree. Ken's interview took place in the principal's office and continued at the local restaurant. As a teacher who has resided in the community for several years, Ken shared the history of the community and how the needs of the students, families and local community have changed from his perspective.

Steven Healy was the principal of the community school and had worked in this capacity for less than one year. He had worked in the field of education for over 30 years as a classroom teacher and as an administrator. Steven had a Bachelor of Education degree and a Master of Education degree in Administration. Steven described his model of democratic leadership and his desire to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in the community. As a person who was new to the community school he felt that he was still learning about the needs of the community but shared that he was making connections and building relationships with students and the community as the new school leader.

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Melanie Marshall was the community school connector and had worked in this capacity for the past two years. Melanie had a college degree in business administration and was born and raised in the local community. Melanie was highly invested in all facets of the community school and had two children in grades 1 and grade 3 who attended the community school. Melanie's interview took place in the community room at the school. Melanie had an in-depth understanding of the needs of the community and was able to clearly articulate how the community school was striving to address the presenting needs.

Lauren Waters was the parent of two children who attended the community school. One of Lauren's children was a middle years student of her children was a senior years student. Lauren also was employed at the Hub of Hope as an educational assistant and had worked in this capacity for the past six years. Lauren had training in early childhood education and prior to becoming an educational assistant she provided outreach for the school by meeting with prospective kindergarten parents and inviting them to visit the school library. She also was responsible for visiting the homes of students who were truant from school and working with families to develop a plan to support more regular attendance. Lauren's interview took place in a room adjacent to the school library. Lauren was able to share her perspectives as both a parent and as an educational assistant.

### **Summary of the Data –The Hub of Hope**

#### **Theme 1: The Critical Role of the School Principal**

All of the participants at the Hub of Hope described the essential role that the school principal played in establishing the climate of the school and in identifying the collective vision.



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Steve was in his first year as the principal of the Hub of Hope and in his short time working in this capacity he had already built positive relationships with the students, the staff, and the community. Prior to taking on the role of principal at the Hub of Hope, Steven had worked in the field of education for over 30 years and had been a principal for over ten years. In addition to having a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration, Steven also was near the completion of a second Master of Education degree in the Social Foundations of Education. Prior to Steven's tenure as the principal of the Hub of Hope the school had three different principals in the course of one year. Steven's arrival at the Hub of Hope was described as having brought with it a sense of calm and a renewed sense of optimism that the relationships between the stakeholders involved in the community school would be strengthened under his leadership.

**Articulating a shared vision.** Recognizing that there had been some conflict in the past between the parent advisory council and the previous principal, Steven had taken on his new role as principal with an open mind and a desire to learn about the community before enacting any significant changes to the operations of the community school. Given that there also was an acting principal at the Hub of Hope who had worked in the school for several years, Steven relied on the acting principal's background knowledge to learn about the community before proposing any significant changes. Steven the principal said, "I'm learning about the school and the community so my big push this year is to build a positive school culture. More positive interactions....and I think we've been successful." The fact that Steven had invested time to learn about the school and the community and had not made broad sweeping changes had earned him the respect of the community. Lauren a parent and educational assistant described that she felt the way that the principal had entered the school and sought to learn about the community had been very respectful.

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She said,

I think he's more concerned and more aware of the whole community school now and what it is and what we do. He is great! He's truly involved and invested in the community school because he's taken the time.

Melanie the community school connector explained how Steven's "quiet" leadership had helped to reduce the divide that had previously existed between the school and some members of the community. She said, "He just has the right demeanor or personality for the school....I think that he really fits here...." Lauren the parent and educational assistant described that there was now a greater sense of unity among all of the stakeholders who were involved with the Hub of Hope. She said, "I definitely enjoy [the school] now....Everyone's always working together for the greater good!"

Steven's efforts to build a positive culture were evident in the manner in which he communicated with students and staff. Melanie the community school connector described how Steven was able to model the kind of respectful treatment of staff and students that he expected from everyone in the school in a way that had been well received.

Melanie said,

A teacher might say, "That's the fourth time I saw him wearing his hat in the hallway!" He [the principal] is like, "Ok, but he's at school today. Let's choose our battles and he can communicate that to a teacher without saying, "Oh, he's not doing his job," and communicate to students, "You know you need to stop doing that." He's really good at communicating what he wants to see and you see people following his lead!

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Redefining the role of the principal.** The role of the principal of the Hub of Hope was described as significantly broad-based. Given that the community school in this rural area was one of the only central places where people from a number of neighbouring communities could gather, the principal of the school was described as a very central figure in the community. As schools in this remote area had closed due to declining enrolment the principal had become responsible for outreach over a much more vast area, and as the school's sphere of influence had expanded so too had the diversity of the population that it served. Lauren a parent and educational assistant described the diversity that existed. She said,

We have Metis, we have Aboriginal, we have Ukrainian, and Polish people. There's just so many different people in this area. Of course we serve all of those areas. It's very diverse. And so the needs of the school and the community are to integrate all of those."

In addition to engaging in outreach with the residents from numerous diverse communities, the principal also was described as having to build connections with many partnering service providers. After having been a principal in other settings that were not community schools, Steven described how his role as principal in a community school differed. He said, "It does involve more coordination. So there's just extra bodies that you have to contact that are not within the school setting. Even though they are attached to the school." Ken the teacher and acting principal who had experience working at the Hub of Hope in an administrative capacity also described how the role of the principal in a community school differed from the role of a principal in other settings.

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He said,

You need to be part of the planning team. You need to work with the staff, community partnerships, social services, and people up in the department, the community connector, the rec commission for use of facilities and the municipality. You have to try and make connections for example with the local constable and RCMP too. It's trying to get more people, staff to have a shared vision.

**Alignment of all stakeholders.** Building alignment among the stakeholders involved in supporting the Hub of Hope required a significant effort on the part of the school principal given that there were some competing ideas about how the community school should serve the community and about how the community school's funds should be spent. Melanie the community school connector described the conflict that existed in the past. She said,

A new principal came in and had really different ideas. The principal was really shuffling the deck and in some cases, the points were really valid but there were some things that really didn't make much sense. There was such conflict between the two – the principal and the parent advisory [PAC] group, nobody would reason or compromise.

The role of the principal as a new resident in the community and the new leader of the community school involved trying to help to reconcile these differences and unite the stakeholders involved in the community school. Melanie the community school connector described the means by which in the principal had started to build alignment among the parent advisory group and the community school.

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She said,

[Steve] is really good at listening to everybody's concerns and saying, "Oh, I understand your concern." This is my reasoning and nine times out of ten they go, "Oh, okay."

We've had principals in the past who didn't do that. We went through three principals last year in the school year.

Ken the teacher and acting principal stressed that in order to ensure the alignment of all stakeholders involved in the community school it was important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved. He said, "The big thing is the roles and responsibilities have to be explained, clarified and strengthened because we've had situations where the parent advisory council came in and thought that they were going to run the show." In spite of the challenges that existed between the leadership of the school and the parent advisory council in the past, the partnerships between the Hub of Hope and other organizations in the local area and surrounding areas were described as having strengthened over time. Ken the teacher and acting principal described that the other organizations that partnered with the community school were aligned in the best interests of the community and the community school. He described how some of the partnering organizations were very community minded and had approached the school by saying,

Hey that's *our* school we should try to do something in partnership....I would say that's where its [the partnerships] have been strengthened with parts of the municipality, I would say social services probably and indirectly some of the other satellite groups like the Metis Federation or just the First Nations Resource Centre....making those connections....it has grown a lot. Informally too. Word of mouth.

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### **Theme 2: The Essential Role of the Community School Connector**

The community school connector was characterized as a leader in not only the community school, but also in the community at large. She was described as being so invested in the community that Lauren the parent and educational assistant at the Hub of Hope referred to the community school connector as “the hub” of the community. She said, “She’s our hub. She’s the one that knows what’s going on. Because families feel safe to go to her.” The role of community school connector was characterized as essential in part because of the personal commitment and investment that Melanie had made to make the community a better place. Melanie said, “I say all of the time that this is my school. I went to school here so I have a sense of ownership of this place.” The community school connector also was described as willing to work a very flexible schedule and provide support outside of school hours in whatever capacity was needed. The support that she provided including playing a liaison role with health providers and housing authorities, as well as informal counselling over and above the daily programming that she provided at the community school. In order to support her fellow community members in a manner that she felt they required Melanie also expressed a desire to further her education and training.

**Role clarity.** Given that the community school was located in an isolated, rural community Melanie described her role as multi-faceted in that she felt she served a variety of functions that might typically be served by other support providers in a larger urban setting.

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In describing her role Melanie said,

Basically what I do is connect the community with the school. So we try and give as many community members, not only parents or people that have a direct connection into the school but people who have no connection like seniors....and because we're such a rural, small community there's not a lot of resources outside of school for people. They don't know where else to go. It's us [the community school] or the RM office so a lot of people come here.

Melanie the community school connector also felt that she had a great deal of autonomy in her job in that the school principal supported her in "thinking outside of the box" to identify ways to reach the community. Melanie described the support that she received from the principal. She said, "I mean [Steven] is pretty good about flexibility and he trusts me. He is very supportive of pretty much anything I do." Melanie described that there was no prescribed job description for her role as community school connector and explained that it was through her own personal initiative that many of the extra-curricular programs had been started and many other partnerships had been forged.

In addition to structured programs like the breakfast program, the early childhood program and the extra-curricular activities that were offered by the school, the community school connector also was described as needing to be responsive to the needs of students and families during the course of the school day. Melanie described how the issues that might arise during the school day were difficult to predict, but that she needed to be prepared to leave one of her responsibilities and address a more immanent need if required.

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Given that there is no cellular phone service in the local area, and that many families do not have home telephones or a means of transportation, Steven the principal described how the community school connector was often called upon during the school day to respond to a crisis and transport students and families if required. He said,

There was a student – he was injured on the playground so we had to take him to the hospital. We wanted to get a hold of the parent and I called many times to their home and then their cell, and I texted the cell and no response all day. So that’s one of the things our community connector does is take kids to the hospital. And so the parents were over in [a neighbouring community] and when they finally got into signal range the phone was going off and ringing.

Melanie the community school connector not only responded to crisis during the school day but she also described how she was available to support children and families outside of school hours. Melanie resided in the community and she explained that living in the community had enabled people to reach out to her outside of the school setting if they were in need of support. She said,

I live right here. For example, this family was in town, they knocked on my door because you know, who knows what’s happening with their mom at home? She’s trying but she just doesn’t have the support that she needs from the system. But for example, I live here and they know and it’s like, I don’t turn off the community connector switch, you know what I mean?

**Flexibility.** Never turning “off the community connector switch” meant being willing to work a very flexible schedule during the day as well as during the evening.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Melanie's support to the community also had recently extended to include the provision of much needed summer programming. Melanie described her schedule,

I run the breakfast program for the whole school every day and there's things happening throughout the day....and then we have evening programming so I come back. I get an hour off for lunch too. Sometimes in the winter I do an hour skating program but I make it work out that I get my lunch somewhere.

In a community with little else in terms of resources Melanie the community school connector felt the need to "always find new ways to reach the community," and to make the Hub of Hope as accessible as possible. In order to reach the community Melanie explained how she had tried to open the school during the evenings as much as possible and facilitate a broad range of programs that would appeal to the interests of a variety of age groups. In spite of her effort to open the school four nights a week Melanie described how it had been difficult for her to sustain. She said,

Last year I was coming back Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday every night. And then my husband started working away from home....I was doing a different thing every night so I condensed it to two nights a week with more than one activity going on in the school so we'll have adult volleyball in the gym and Aboriginal beading in here [the family room] and a walking club in the hallway just so that I'm only here two evenings instead of four.

In addition to her role as a community school connector, Melanie also was on several other committees that support the Hub of Hope. Lauren the parent and educational assistant described how active Melanie was in all aspects of community development.

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She said, “Over those past two years, because she’s also part of this community so she has joined so many committees and works with all these people!”

**Professional learning and training.** Melanie described her role as extremely rewarding and explained how she enjoyed working to support the betterment of her community. In spite of the fact that she enjoyed the work that she was doing she found that there were times when her role as community school connector included responsibilities that were beyond the scope of her education and training. She said,

Our previous community connector was actually a social worker. Her education was social work but she moved up here and did that. So when I got the job, our students just kind of assumed that I would do what she did.

Melanie the community school connector explained how the students have come to her and sought out support for personal health issues as well as mental health challenges. While the Hub of Hope now has a social worker in the school one day per week, Melanie described that some of the concerns that the students come to her with require a more immediate response. She said,

I have kids who will come in here because they think that they have an STD or they think that they’re pregnant, or they cut themselves. So that still falls on me but we do have a social worker now who is here one day a week so I can connect with her.

Recognizing that it always may be difficult for the Hub of Hope to have skilled professionals on site who can address the needs of the students and the community given its remoteness, Melanie expressed a desire to further her education so that she could provide more comprehensive support.

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She said,

My wish list is for me to be able to go to [a college] two nights per week to take the Applied Counseling Program to further my education. It has become very obvious that if I don't do it, who else is going to? So if I could get that would be one more thing that I could offer to these kids.

In the interim, Melanie explained that her opportunities to participate in professional learning had been limited and given that enrolling in a counselling program was a long term goal, she felt that she needed regular and ongoing professional development to better equip her to support students and families.

### **Theme 3: The Mindset of Staff**

All of the participants at the Hub of Hope emphasized that the staff in a community school needed to embrace the opportunity to support students and families in multiple life domains. The Hub of Hope was not described as an extension of the community, but rather as “the centre of the community” and as the centre of the community the staff needed to be willing to not only perform an educational function but also actively support the overall well-being of students and families. In addition to having shared beliefs about the role of the community school in meeting the needs of the whole child, most of the participants also described the need for all staff to support the extension of the school day and to lead extra-curricular activities. The support of extra-curricular activities and other non-academic programming was described as requiring a high degree of flexibility on the part of all school staff.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In order to fully commit to supporting the Hub of Hope some of the participants described the need to understand the level of isolation in the community and in spite of the isolation choose to work and if possible live in the community.

**Shared beliefs.** In order to work in a community all of the participants described the need for all staff to be personally invested in meeting the needs of the whole child. Ken a teacher and acting principal described the shared belief system that he felt was essential in a community school. He said,

If I'm hiring staff I'm going to be looking for those people when interviewing them to have that shared sense of purpose that shared sense of vision that we are here to provide a lot more than just the curriculum! All schools are but as a designated community school there's a lot more things that we pull in.

Ken the teacher and acting principal further described the holistic manner in which the Hub of Hope was addressing education. He said, "The fact that we're able to address some of those issues of culture and social needs. The holistic things that are not necessarily explicit in curricular outcomes but are implicit in what we do." Lauren a parent and educational assistant provided an example of how committed the staff at that Hub of Hope were to addressing all of the students' basic needs. She said,

Our staff is amazing because they see the personal needs too. And immediately, if there is a need, you know, we need to feed these people or we need to send these kids home another snack because they're not going to have an after school snack at home. It's a caring school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Melanie the community school connector attributed the small size of the school to helping the staff to have more direct contact with students and therefore enhanced relationships that increased their ability to be responsive to student's basic needs.

It's one of the benefits of such a tiny school. Everybody knows everybody's first name and you can really walk down the hallway and tell if a kids' having an off day just because you see them every day. You know when somethings wrong, you can say, "How was your night?" "Did you have a good sleep?" "What's going on at home?" "Did you guys go grocery shopping lately?" "Did you go to [a major centre]?"

**Flexibility.** In order to be responsive to the needs of students and families the staff were described as having to be flexible about not only the nature of support that they provided but also the schedule that they followed. Working at the Hub of Hope meant that sometimes activities other than the curriculum took primacy, and all staff were described as needing to be supportive of that fact. Ken gave an example of how teachers needed to be flexible at the Hub of Hope. He said,

Sometimes we have to work outside of the normal routine. Well, we usually start at exactly 5 minutes to 9:00. Well maybe some days we don't [because the students are eating breakfast]. We have to have flexibility with our schedule.

Ken the teacher and acting principal also described that there were additional expectations placed upon teachers in a community school that necessitated a significant time commitment.

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He said,

So from a teacher's perspective it's very busy. Because one, we have the curriculum. But then you've got extracurricular activities that go beyond the year book, grad, student council, because we have the cultural component, we have the social emotional component connected to our school and the planning that goes with all that.

While all staff were described as needing to be flexible about their schedule and the time that they were willing to commit to support the extra-curricular activities that were offered by the Hub of Hope, most participants identified several factors that they described as limiting some of the teachers' ability to contribute to extra-curricular programming. A majority of the teachers at the Hub of Hope were described as "commuters" in that most of them did not reside in the local area or the neighbouring towns, but rather lived an hour or more away in a larger centre. The principal Steven described the need to commute as due in part to the fact that there was limited housing available in the local area. The fact that the teachers commuted a long distance to work each day was described as interfering with their ability to contribute to after school programming. Ken the high school teacher and acting principal described how he was able to contribute to the community school activities because he lived near the school but that most teachers did not live in the local area. He said,

We need to work at establishing more involvement from staff. There are only a couple of staff members that live in the community. So I would say, "You need me to come out for something? I'm here, it's not a big deal." Others are driving. So you know there's the expectation for people to get home safe.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Melanie the community school connector described that in addition to having to commute a long distance to and from the Hub of Hope some teachers also had family commitments that necessitated them leaving the school at the end of the school day. She said, “We need for more manpower....not a whole lot of teacher support. They have an hour or an hour and a half drive or they have families at home. Not all of them. There’s a few that help.”

In describing a teacher who was highly committed to the activities at the Hub of Hope and willing to contribute to after the school activities Melanie explained that she was a relatively new teacher who lived near the school and who did not have additional family commitments. Melanie said,

She’s really involved! She’s coached a lot of sports. And I know that if I have something specifically that I thought she could do to help, she would jump in. She’s a second year teacher, she doesn’t have a family you know and she lives 15 to 20 minutes away.

Due to the fact that a limited number of teachers were able to actively contribute to activities that were described as a part of the community school programming there was an increased reliance on the support staff in the school and volunteers from the local community. These individuals were described as having increased flexibility given their relatively close proximity to the school. They also were described as having increased flexibility because often their children or grandchildren attended the Hub of Hope and therefore they were described as being present because of personal commitments as well. Lauren a parent and educational assistant described the role that the educational assistants played in supporting the community school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She said,

They're giving up their time to coach baseball. They're giving up their time to participate in the after school activities like soccer and others. But see, the EA's in this building are all moms or grandmas. So if they're kids aren't here they've got grandchildren here.

Melanie the community school connector also described how she relies heavily on volunteers to assist her in the range of programming that is provided. She described the role of one of the volunteers,

I wasn't finding enough time to do all of this homemade baking and everything else. So she really stepped up. She prepares our canteen lunches....She will cook a batch of muffins or pancakes for the next day or she'll make my fruit parfaits or cut up the fruit for my smoothies. So she's a major help!

**Choosing to work in a community school.** Some of the participants in the study described the need to understand the level of isolation in the local community and the need to be embrace living in a remote area, and at the same time demonstrate a willingness to commit to providing more support than might typically be expected in a less remote school. Ken the teacher and acting principal described what drew him to teach at the Hub of Hope. He said,

For me when I started there was a sense of community. It's a small school, you get to know everybody and just with my passion and my specialty working in the area of resource I really felt rewarded professionally here.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

It was expressed that if an individual just needed “a job” and took a position at the Hub of Hope without embracing the whole community and viewing the needs of the community as a professional challenge then it might be detrimental to the community school. Melanie shared how her superintendent recruited teachers to teach at the Hub of Hope and tried to prepare them for the professional challenge of teaching in a remote community school. She said,

She [the superintendent] was talking about going to these recruitments for teachers and she said straight up in interviews, “Can you be isolated?” “It’s rural. It’s not like....you don’t understand. There’s not anything there, she said.” Because I don’t want somebody coming out here because they need a job and leaving in a week and being totally miserable and not wanting to be here.”

The situation that Melanie described was something that the Hub of Hope had experienced several times before. She explained how in the past the Hub of Hope had experienced a complete turnover in staff in one year. She said,

We’re in the middle of nowhere here you know. Teachers coming and going are a pretty common thing. It hasn’t happened in the last couple of years but I was reading a report from 2006. That year they had 100% turn over.

The high staff turnover rates were not only associated with the teaching staff. The principal Steven described the school’s most recent challenges with trying to maintain a social worker even for one day a week at the school. He said, “One [a social worker] came in, she was here for a while. She eventually left and then we had another one that was here until she found what was involved and she left in a matter of days.”

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Some of the participants seemed to convey the message that the individuals who worked at the Hub of Hope and who chose to live in the community displayed higher level of commitment and thus a greater likelihood that they might remain in their role for a longer period of time. Melanie described her joy that the new social worker had chosen to reside in the local area. She said, “It’s so great! Our social worker, her husband they *actually* chose to live in our community.” In discussing the role of the social worker, Melanie described that because the social worker lived in the local area, she had been able to contribute to the evening programming that was being provided at the Hub of Hope. She said, “Our social worker, she taught the Aboriginal beading program during the evening.” In this regard, local volunteers were described as an integral part of the support that was being provided by the Hub of Hope.

### **Theme 4: Capacity Building within the Community**

All of the participants at the Hub of Hope expressed a desire to engage more members of the community in participating in the life of the community school. However, engaging some members of the community was described as challenging given that some individuals were described as intimidated by the school and any kind of perceived authority. There also had been an emphasis at the Hub of Hope on the development of community based leadership through the parent advisory council [PAC]. While this organization had been very successful in mobilizing some of the community in fundraising efforts that promoted community development, the PAC group was described as not necessarily representing all of the community. There also were some tensions between previous principals and some members of the PAC which had interfered with the process of community building.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Self-advocacy.** There were many factors that were described as having contributed to some members of the community disengaging with the community school. Lauren the parent and educational assistant described what she felt was preventing some parents and community members from becoming engaged. She said,

They're afraid, they're nervous. And they're nervous about someone coming in and telling them how to do something. And a lot of times they have to deal with [child welfare] or somebody's always telling them how to raise their family and it's not their traditional ways. So you've got a stranger coming into their home and saying, "You need to do this." And they're not very open to coming into a building that's trying to tell you what to do either.

In light of the prior experiences that some community members may have had the community school connector described how she continually made an effort to try and be as invitational as possible to all members of the community when speaking about the community school. Melanie said, "At the year-end celebration I got up and spoke and said, "This is your school, you can come, we're family here and you can come in anytime you want." However, after making a plea to all community members to participate in the life of the school Melanie acknowledged that the target audience to whom she was speaking were not in attendance. Lauren a parent and educational assistant shared that it was important to repeatedly be as invitational as possible to all community members so that they might feel safe coming and speaking directly to the teachers about their child. She said, "We need to send the message that this isn't a bad place, you can come here and talk to the teachers about your child's education and you're not going to be put down for it."

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ken the teacher and acting principal who had taught at the Hub of Hope for seven years described how he felt the Hub of Hope was breaking down some of the barriers that had prevented parents from engaging with the school. He said,

I think that we've seen an improvement with parents wanting to come to the school.

Because the attitude has been there's a school, that's us, I went to school, I hated it and I don't ever want to go back. So some of that disconnect has stopped. They now see something different, they see it as a positive thing for their child to be in school.

Melanie the community school connector also described how she was encouraged by the presence of some community members whom she had never seen before enter the school.

In spite of feeling encouraged that there was some increased community engagement, she was saddened by a comment that was made to her by one of the community members when she acknowledged her presence and thanked her for coming to the school. Melanie described the exchange,

And it shocking to see, on someone's face, you know I walk up to them and say, "Oh, I'm glad you came," and they respond by saying, "Oh, I didn't think anybody would care that I'd be here." You know, that's kind of sad.

While there has been growth in some parents feeling comfortable participating in the community school events, one obstacle to parental participation and engagement that continues to exist is a lack of access to transportation. Even if some parents want to come to the school a lack of access to transportation may prevent them from being able to come to the community school. Steven the principal acknowledged how a lack of access to transportation can be an obstacle to parental participation in the school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

He said, “Just getting parents and having more parental involvement would be great. But that’s the very ideal because how do you get parents here if they don’t have vehicles?” Steven then described how a lack of transportation can even preclude some parents from picking up their children from school when they are ill, so the expectation that they come to the school during the evening may be even more challenging. He said,

When kids get here by bus, if we have to have them picked up during the day, it’s a scramble because when parents are saying they don’t have a vehicle, or their vehicle doesn’t start, or they don’t have gas and they have to get a relative that’s coming from a different area.

These kinds of challenges that many people do not have to face on a daily basis, capture the daily worries and challenges of many of the community members who reside in the area served by the Hub of Hope. It stands to reason that if you do not have access to reliable transportation and you live in a remote community that you may not be an active participant and advocate in your local community school.

**Community-based leadership.** The area served by the Hub of Hope was described as extremely diverse in terms of the cultural background of the residents, as well as in terms of their lived experiences. In spite of the diversity that existed within the communities served by the Hub of Hope, the community-based leadership was described as being representative of only a small segment of the population. Ken the teacher and acting principal explained how the participation and leadership of the programming that took place at the Hub of Hope often was led by the same, small group of people.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

He said,

It's hard sometimes because we have the same parents that are involved and come and do everything and anything. So it's trying to get those other parents into the building and to get them to do some sharing, some participating and some leading.

Similarly, in describing the community-based leadership of the parent advisory council [PAC] the principal Steven explained how it too was not entirely representative of the community. He said,

The majority of PAC members, the ones that show up all the time, they are part of the school [meaning they are employed by the school, most often as educational assistants]. The president is not, but they're not really representative of what we have here [the community]....the ones that you would like to have here, they're the ones you don't see.

Melanie the community school connector also described how PAC and all of the committees at the Hub of Hope were essentially comprised of the same group of people. She said,

We have parents at each meeting, the principal will come, a teacher, our trustee. We try to get a trustee to come in and do a report and myself. We have our playground, gardening committee. So one of those parents attends – we all wear a lot of hats around here. We're a parent, we're on the gardening committee, and we're an EA.

In addition to the parent advisory council being representative of a narrow segment of the population, there have been tensions between the parent advisory council and the school-based leadership.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The tensions that existed in the past involved competing ideas about how the Hub of Hope should operate and how decisions should be made. Melanie the community school connector described the conflict. She said,

We have a really powerful and boisterous PAC. Not everybody. Because we're a community school PAC is supposed to have a voice and sometimes I think that it goes to some of their heads. We're still a school. We still have to work together....there was conflict between some of those principals last year and our PAC, not everybody in the PAC, there's just some really strong opinions on there.

The conflict between some members of the PAC and the school administrator were not resolved and a new principal was hired at the school. The task of leading an organization like a community school may be challenging when multiple stakeholders have opposing opinions about the operation of the school and roles are not be clearly delineated.

In spite of the tensions that existed, the PAC was described as having had a very positive influence in the community and having played a significant role in the process of community development. Melanie the community school connector described the support that the Hub of Hope had received from PAC. She said, "PAC is really good at jumping in where ever they need to. They fundraise to help send our kids on field trips every year." Fundraising to send students to camp was just one example of the many initiatives that the PAC had supported. The overarching goal of community development was shared by all stakeholders at the Hub of Hope and through hard work and dedication some significant enhancements had been made in the local community.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Theme 5: The Factors that Contribute to Collaboration**

All of the participants at the Hub of Hope discussed the value of open communication among all stakeholders. However, they recognized that there were several factors that were interfering with the ability to freely share information in this community. They described some of the challenges associated with communication including the fact that most students were bussed to school and are not dropped off by a caregiver, limited access to the Internet, as well as limited access to telephones and cellular phone service, and a lack of transportation. All of the participants also described how longevity in their respective roles had contributed to enhanced feelings of trust and a greater willingness on the part of the individuals served by the community school to collaborate. A model of shared decision making also was seen as essential in the operations of the Hub of Hope however the model was not clearly defined.

**Open and regular communication.** In spite of the challenges associated with communication, Melanie the community school connector described how she made an effort to engage in outreach with the community. In addition to her many responsibilities at the Hub of Hope, she also produced a weekly newsletter that was available on-line and it also was sent home with students in order to communicate to parents about the activities that were occurring at the community school. Melanie explained one of the methods that she used to communicate with the community. She said, “Every week I do a [name of newsletter] it’s called. So I send a notice home talking about what events we have coming up that week, whether we have a special presenter or other activities.” Melanie explained that in order to enhance her ability to collaborate with the community she preferred to have personal, face to face interactions but she recognized that in this community that was not always a possibility.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She said,

It's really hard to communicate with people in the communities because we're more than [name of the town] here. It's because all of our kids are bussed in, there's not a whole lot of picking up at the door. So there's not a lot of personal communication with them.

While there were challenges associated with communication, Melanie described how her relationship with some members of the community had evolved to the point that they sought her out if they needed assistance and she welcomed the opportunity to provide support. She said,

The fact that I get phone calls and knocks on my door in all hours of the night. I think that they [the community] there's a connection you know. I guess I'm being hard on myself because I want to reach everybody that needs help.

Steven the principal also talked about the need for open communication in order to foster a culture of collaboration. He described the community school connector as being his "pulse on the community," and he explained that he regularly communicated with her in order to ensure that they both had an awareness of what each other was doing to support the operation of the community school. Steven said, "I communicate regularly with the community connector. She gives a report to the parent council and we are constantly communicating about what it is we are working on and providing to the community." Reporting back to the parent council was another critical form of communication that had helped to foster collaboration in that the parent council wanted to be kept informed of the operations of the community school so that they too could provide input.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In addition to communicating with parents and the in-school team Melanie the community school connector also described the positive relationship that she had developed with the local community nurse. In addition to coming to the school for scheduled meetings, the nurse was described as always being accessible by telephone in the event that her support was required at the Hub of Hope. Melanie described a crisis with a student and a situation in which she was able to call the nurse and she immediately responded to the school and provided the necessary support. Melanie described the fact that she could freely call upon the nurse at any time and that she could count on her support as an invaluable resource. While communication with the nurse had started around specific health issues it had recently expanded to include collaboration with the Hub of Hope in the development of the outdoor classroom and community garden that were created at the school to support healthy eating.

**Longevity in one's role.** The length of time that an individual had been in their respective role was described as being associated with increased trust and a willingness to collaborate. Recognizing that he was new to his role and new to the community the principal of the Hub of Hope had not made significant changes in the community school's plan, as he had been focused on learning about the community before any such actions were taken. He said,

We're using a lot of the plan that was already in place for now. I haven't been here long and I'm learning about this community. What I can say so far is that it has a lot of endearing qualities that I'm seeing.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

One of the teachers on staff was in a very different situation from the principal in that he had been on staff at the Hub of Hope for several years and he described how living and working in the community for several years had allowed him to make many positive connections. Ken the teacher and acting principal described his long-term connections in the community,

The fact that you know the population because some of the kids I taught have graduated but they were in grade 2 or 3 when I started here so I've seen them grow up and graduate. So I mean you know everybody. You have a sense of purpose. A sense of belonging and trust.

The community school connector had lived in the community for her entire life with the exception of a few years, so in spite of fact that she only had been working at the school for two years she was well known and respected in the community. Melanie described how many of the relationships that she had fostered in the community had taken several years to establish. She said, "It takes time - you have to build trust with them and I think I have that."

One of the individuals who had worked at the Hub of Hope for the longest was the school secretary. Melanie the community school connector described the secretary's longevity in her role. She said, "She's been here for 32 years. I remember her from when I was a little girl. She's been here forever!" She also described how the students felt comfortable talking to the secretary as she often reached out and provided assistance to students and according to Melanie the chances were that she had probably provided some kind of support to their parents when they were students at the school as well. This researcher had an opportunity to witness how comfortable the students were in approaching the secretary and seemed to view her in almost a "parenting" role.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

On one of the days that this researcher was at the Hub of Hope to conduct an interview she witnessed an interaction between the school secretary and one of the graduating students. The student entered the school's office where the researcher was sitting and asked the secretary who approximately 40 years older than her, if she had a dress that she could borrow for the prom that was being held that evening. The secretary responded supportively by saying that she would definitely go home during the lunch hour and look for a dress that she could lend her. She then suggested that perhaps the community school connector, who was younger and closer to her size might have something that she could borrow as well. The secretary assured the student that she would find a dress for her and told her to come back to the office at the end of the lunch hour. The student seemed very appreciative of the help and expressed relief that she would have something to wear that evening. The secretary then proceeded to call the community school connector to the office and when she arrived the secretary explained the situation and they both proceeded to list a number of names of people in the community that they thought might have a suitable dress for the prom in a size that would fit the student. The secretary clearly had developed very positive relationships with the students in the school and this interaction captured the sense of "family" that existed in the community school.

**Shared decision making.** In order to foster a willingness to collaborate all of the participants at the Hub of Hope described the need to include multiple perspectives when decisions were being made at the community school. There had been a history of conflict between a prior principal and the parent advisory council in which some individuals felt that decisions had been made unilaterally. Melanie the community connector described the situation. She said, "I think it got to the point where the principal was just, "Well too bad, I'm the boss, and what I say goes." And that didn't go over."

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ken the teacher and acting principal also talked about the conflict that had existed and how fragmented the decision making process had been. He said, “One group wants this, the other group wants this and then there is another group that doesn’t want anything...”

Given the conflict and fragmentation that had existed all of participants talked about the need for a leader to guide the Hub of Hope in a way that would bring all stakeholders together. In this regard, the current principal’s approach to decision making was described as differing significantly from the previous approach and leading to more positive collaboration. Lauren the parent and educational assistant described how the principal had fostered a climate of shared decision making. She said,

The community connector might say things like, “We would like to do this and we would like to get this done.” And he’s [the principal] always willing to discuss it all and you know he’s very open at PAC meetings and anything related to the whole community school piece. He’s very on board!

Steven the principal also described his approach to shared decision making and the need to collectively identify the priorities of the community school. He emphasized that the priorities of the community school were not “his priorities” but rather the priorities of the group. He said, “We sit down with everyone....and we all discuss what *our* priorities are.”

Melanie the community school connector provided an example of how she too had tried to ensure that multiple perspectives were included in the decisions about the activities that took place at the Hub of Hope.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

She said,

In the past there had been a lot of year end celebrations that were all about Aboriginal stuff. And when I got this job, I did hear from a lot of members that are not Aboriginal identified saying, “You know what? We’re Ukrainian, we’re Polish, and we’re German.” So we had a different celebration. We had a feast and we had different kinds of food from each culture. I tried my best for them to come together.

Melanie the community school connector also talked about how honouring multiple perspectives had enable the Hub of Hope to meet the needs of students and families in a more comprehensive way. She described how a decision had been made to provide all students with a weekly hot lunch for a fee of \$3.00 per student. In seeking feedback about the lunch program, Melanie explained how the school secretary brought forth an important perspective that led the Hub of Hope to change the lunch program and provide lunch for no cost to the students. She said,

The secretary asked us, “Do you think that you’re really reaching the kids that need that lunch?” Well we aren’t at all. Even if it’s only \$3.00. It could be a quarter and their mom and dad can’t get it.

The changes to the lunch program are an example of how inviting feedback and encouraging multiple perspectives in the decisions that were made at the Hub of Hope had helped to make the school more responsive to the needs of students and families.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### Theme 6: Continuum of Behavioural Support

The community in which the Hub of Hope was located was described by most participants as an accepting environment. Some of the participants at the Hub of Hope attributed the climate of acceptance to the high level of transiency in the community which had provided the residents with the opportunity to be exposed to many different individuals with a broad range of needs in spite of its small population. While overall the community was described as an accepting environment, the school used a behavioural model that incorporated both in school and out of school suspensions when students were involved in severe behavioural incidents. While suspension was used, the Hub of Hope also employed inclusionary practices that involved welcoming the participation of all students in the activities that were offered by the community school. In situations in which the students presented with complex needs the principal as well as the community school connector were described as taking on case management roles.

**Acceptance.** The community in which the Hub of Hope was located was described as a very welcoming and accepting environment by most of the participants. When a family arrived in the community and there was an awareness that they had needs, the community was described as rallying around the family to offer support. Lauren described the compassion in the community. She said, “As soon as a family is in need, anything they need, anything, clothing, food, whatever. There’s always people willing to help.” Lauren also described the role that community school connector had played in ensuring that families’ needs were met. She described an example of a time when the community school connector found out that a family in the community did not have the means to celebrate Christmas and so with their permission she started a Facebook page to obtain donations.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Lauren said, “Actually it’s a Facebook page that she can share with friends and with that the call went out for Christmas trees, for Christmas dinner hamper ideas. Things like that.” Lauren a parent and educational assistant also described how all students regardless of their needs were invited to partake in the community school programming. She said, “Our at risk students, once they get settled in they know that people are going to help them and accept them here and they are always welcome.” The principal of the school also was described as accepting and supporting students who were at risk and presenting with emotional and behavioural challenges. The principal described his personal model of behaviour support but conveyed that it was not officially in place at the school. He said,

Officially, we have no real guideline other than you have your expectations for your classrooms and you have your bottom lines....I follow the Restitution model myself. But that’s not an official thing....[The acting principal] and I are in agreement on that part because you always have to give the kids an opportunity to change what they’re doing.

In spite of the overall climate of acceptance of students with emotional and behavioural challenges and the use of a Restitution approach by both the principal and acting principal, there were a small number of teachers who were described as having a less than accepting attitude toward students with emotional and behavioural needs. While the principal and acting principal were using a Restitution approach, the principal described the detention and suspension structure that was in place at the Hub of Hope when he arrived and that was currently in place.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

He said,

So they have detentions at break time, they have detentions. They're called in-school suspensions that are out of class as well. Then we have in school suspensions that they're segregated from everyone. They don't have contact, so they're here in the office or they might be in another room. And then we have out of school suspensions and they can vary from one day up to five days and beyond that it goes to the division.

**Inclusive practice.** All of the participants provided examples of the ways in which the Hub of Hope tried to foster inclusion. In this regard, there was a strong emphasis on ensuring that all of the community school programming was made available to all students regardless of their level of need. In describing the participation of students with emotional and behavioural challenges in the community school programming the principal said, "They are definitely a part..." Melanie also said that all of the students were invited to the programs that were offered at the school and described how she had relied on volunteer support from the community in order to help to make the programs a positive experience for all students. Recognizing that some students might require additional support to participate successfully, Melanie said that she had several reliable volunteers who were always willing to provide assistance so that the programming was accessible to all.

The Hub of Hope also was described by some of the participants as supporting inclusion in the way that it had addressed not only the academic needs of students, but also their social emotional needs. The principal also described how there had been an increasing emphasis on incorporating the development of social skills in the classrooms as well as in the community school activities.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

He said, “....we’re bringing in the social skills, that’s what we’re doing here.” The instruction of social skills had taken on a school-wide focus in that the entire school was using a similar approach to learn about and practice how to positively interact with one another, which aligned with the vision of the school principal which was to “build a positive culture.” Lauren a parent and educational assistant described the approach that the school was using. She said, “You know it’s called “Be a Bucket Filler,” and it’s really teaching us all the power of positive reinforcement.”

Some of the participants also described how the school’s approach to individualized education planning [IEP] and behaviour intervention planning [BIP] had supported the inclusion of all students in the life of the school. The IEP and BIP meetings were described as always having a positive tone and focused on identifying creative ways that the needs of the students could be met. Melanie the community school connector described how there always was an emphasis on including all of the stakeholders at the meetings so that the plan that was developed involved a complete picture of the child and included all of the individuals who were expected to implement the plan. Melanie described the meetings,

For example this week, they had IEP meetings so the resource teacher she’ll gather everyone and sit and talk with all of the teachers, the parents, the social workers.

Everyone. They talk about the emotional needs of the kids and the educational needs. So she’s really good at that....pulling it all together.

**Case management.** All of the participants described the value of using a team approach when supporting students with complex emotional and behavioural needs.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In spite of the value that the participants placed on using a team approach, all of the participants described that given the isolation of the community it had been difficult to broaden the support team to include some essential services. Given the limited resources in the community Melanie the community school connector described how her role had expanded to include what could be described as case management functions in that she was involved in cross agency liaison work and the development of plans of support for entire families. Melanie described her role,

So in that instance I will talk to the local health nurse, come up with a plan and talk to the mental health which is located [in another community] which is almost an hour away... and help a mom who is sitting here in [the local community] with no transportation, figure out a way to help her daughter.

In some instances, the school principal also was described as performing what could be described as case management functions. The principal expressed a desire for the school social worker to play a case management role with the students who had complex emotional and behavioural needs however, the limited time that she was present in the school meant that in addition to the community school connector, the principal also was required to take on that role. Melanie described how the principal often interfaced with outside service providers in the best interests of students and families. She said, “He [the principal] is not afraid to call up a social worker and say,” “You know, this is what is going on here and I need for you to follow up with me and let me know.”

### **Theme 7: Perspectives about Resources**

All of the participants spoke about the Hub of Hope’s reliance on multiple funding sources in order to offer the range of programming that was being provided.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In addition to the need for multiple funding sources some of the participants described that the bureaucratic requirements of some funders had limited the autonomy of the community school in using funding in a manner that they felt would best support the local community. The sharing of resources among services providers also was described as a way to maximize the receipt of services for the community school. The stress related to resources at the Hub of Hope was primarily based on the limited availability of specialized support providers given the isolation of the community.

**The need for multiple funding sources.** Given that the Hub of Hope was a kindergarten to grade 12 school the community school connector described how she needed to obtain more support than might typically be required if the school was only an early years school or only a middle years school. She explained that the increased needs of a school that had a kindergarten to grade 12 structure had not been taken into account in the Community School's Program structure. She said, "We are a k-12 school that means paying for twice the presentations. Whereas a k-8 school can get one guy to come in and do a presentation and it applies to everybody. Where I have to constantly be finding more of everything."

In an effort to increase the support that was provided at the Hub of Hope, Ken the teacher and acting principal also referenced a number of funding sources that the Hub of Hope had accessed He said, "Due to the work of the staff and the community connector they were able to access grants to support things like the breakfast program, a snack program, the refurbishment of the playground....there's money out there."

One of the significant needs that existed at the Hub of Hope was the need for a multi-purpose room for the high school students.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Melanie described how the high school students did not have a dedicated space that they could use during unstructured times like breaks and lunch hour, and therefore they had to share spaces with much younger students. In an effort to meet this need Melanie described how she was continuing to try and find alternative funding sources outside of the current funding that the school received in order to make this goal a reality. She said, “I’m really trying hard to find some kind of funding that could [help build a multi-purpose room] because our school division is certainly not going to foot the bill and I can’t use community school money.” Melanie also described how the Hub of Hope actively engaged in fundraising activities in addition to writing numerous grant applications in order to supplement the programming that it provided. She said,

The school division only gives so much money to go places and it wouldn’t even get them [the students] to [a major centre] so we fundraise every year to make sure kids get to experience things. You know, maybe some of them will never get a chance to see a movie in a theatre.

Finding funding sources and writing grant applications was described as an important task in that it helped to ensure the ongoing expansion of the support that the community school provided however, it also required a significant investment of time on the part of many of the stakeholders at the community school.

**The bureaucratic nature of funding.** Melanie the community school connector described that she felt that there were unnecessary restrictions on how the funding that the school division received from the Community Schools Program could be spent that limited her ability to make purchases that she felt were in the best interest of the community school.

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She said,

In my experience, in the two years I've been here. They're [The Community School Program] very sticky about where you can spend it. You know for example last year, we put a sand box out there [pointing to the field]. I said I would like to buy some sand toys for a [parent child program] and for my summer programming....Anyhow, they said, "No sand toys."

In addition to the Community School Program having restrictions about how funding could be spent, the school division also was described as having direct control over the funding which could sometimes complicate the ease with which support was received. Melanie the community school connector explained that the school division is "basically the keeper of the funds." Ken the teacher and acting principal also described that there were politics behind how some of the resources that were allocated to the community school could be spent. The politics that he referred to included senior administrators who were removed from the community school setting making decisions about how the funding should be spent. He said, "...when you want to spend it [funding] on stuff related to programming you get told that you have to spend it here. Again, that's a disconnect. So there's politics behind it."

**Shared resources.** Given the limited resources in the local area there were several examples of how the community creatively shared resources for the betterment of the community. One of the primary ways that sharing occurred at the Hub of Hope was through the sharing of expertise. For instance, the local conservation district was described as volunteering to take the students on field trips. Lauren a parent and educational assistant described the support that the conservation district provided.

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She said, “They come here and share all kinds of information about the wetlands and the local birds. And they take us out on marsh tours and we get a sneak peak so they’re very involved.”

Melanie the community school connector described how the community nurse had supported the establishment of the outdoor classroom and community garden. The local nurse and a dietician from the health authority had shared their expertise in the area of nutrition and also taught the students about healthy eating habits. Melanie said,

The dietician did nutrition jeopardy and taught the students how to wash their hands properly and the UV light can see if there’s still germs. They brought in all of these different fruits and vegetables, one’s the students had never had.

Melanie the community school connector described how other local parent advisory councils in the surrounding areas also shared ideas and successes with each other in order to find ways to improve the support that they provided. She explained the reciprocal nature of these relationships and the fact that a neighbouring parent advisory council had recently visited the Hub of Hope to learn from their experience enhancing their playground. Melanie said, “So it’s funny they phone and come and visit and we learn from each other.”

Lauren a parent and educational assistant described how the rural municipality was also willing to share resources with the Hub of Hope in order to improve the community. She said,

They always have a lot [of supplies] so the RM has provided us with fill, gravel and equipment usage to support the improvement of our playground. So they’re always talking with me or the community school connector.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Stress related to resources.** Most of the stakeholders at the Hub of Hope talked about the limited nature of funding and how the limited nature of funding had prevented the community school from providing the level of support that all of the stakeholders wanted to provide. Melanie the community school connector described how she wanted to continue to provide a snack for the students but that she was no longer able to provide a daily snack. She said, “There is no snack because that part of the budget is gone...” Cuts and changes in funding models was a common experience however the most stressful and challenging issue related resources was described as the lack of availability of health and mental health professionals and a lack of access to transportation.

Melanie the community school connector described how the Hub of Hope had been without a social worker for a prolonged period of time and that access to a psychologist was almost unheard of in the local area. Melanie recounted a conversation that she had with the local nurse questioning why there was no psychologist that could service the community when there was a youth in crisis. She said,

So does the [name of a health provider] not have to have somebody in that position [a psychologist] that should be coming around in the community?” And she said, “Yes, there is a psychologist in [another community] but she won’t come out here.” I said, “That’s ridiculous!” And then as the school year went on, we got a social worker and when I talked to the nurse again about this young girl in need, she said, “It was down to cut backs again. You know, the province says, they’re not allowed to come out here because mileage is a concern.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The principal also described the impact that a lack of access to skilled health and mental health professionals in the area had on the children, youth and families. He described that there were a number of students in the community school with emotional and behavioural challenges who he felt were undiagnosed or not receiving necessary treatment. He said, “I’m sure we have a number of kids that have OCD, Tourettes but without diagnoses....we have students here that I know have FAS but they’re not getting support but what can we do?” Melanie the community school connector described how the local community also did not have a doctor or dentist. The one form of “specialized” support that they did have was a social worker but she was described as only being available to the school one day per week. Melanie said, “The social worker is here one day a week, if we’re lucky one and a half. And she’s a wonderful lady but she can’t be everywhere at once, basically she’s it.”

A lack of access to reliable transportation not only was described as limiting many people in the community from accessing support outside of the community, but it also was described as preventing people from participating in the programming that was being provided by the Hub of Hope. In describing how a lack of transportation was an obstacle to participating in after school activities Lauren a parent and educational assistant said, “You know it’s very difficult, the students want to be here, they want to stay, they want to play, but that obstacle is that they don’t have transportation.” Lauren also talked about how a lack of access to transportation was a significant detriment to the community and the work of the community school. She suggested, “Having the availability of a van, a bus, something to get people and adults and kids back to school to participate in sports and the music programs would be a huge benefit...”

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Theme 8: How Community School Programming is Determined and Its Impact**

While the Community Schools Program encouraged the implementation of programming that promoted early childhood development, nutritional support, recreational opportunities, as well as positive parenting strategies, the activities at the Hub of Hope were largely determined by the personal initiative of the community school connector and the availability of resources in the local community. One of the primary resources in the local area that the community school connector had tried to capitalize upon were the skills of its residents and their willingness to volunteer in support of the Hub of Hope. In terms of the assessment of the impact of the community school, the participants described that progress in the areas of literacy, behaviour, attendance and graduation rates, as well as parental participation in programming had been loosely monitored, but that it was difficult to draw any direct correlation between the actions of the community school and its impact on the students and the community.

**The focus of programming.** The community school connector's creativity and personal commitment to making the Hub of Hope an engaging place seemed to drive much of the support that was provided at the community school. Melanie the community school connector described her goal, "I always try to figure out ways to reach people." Melanie appeared to have a great deal of autonomy in determining the programming that was provided at the school, and while she communicated regularly with the school principal and the parent advisory council, she was largely responsible for identifying the activities at the community school and supporting the implementation of the programming. Lauren a parent and educational assistant acknowledged the community school connector's creativity and affirmed that she was responsible for developing the programming that was provided.

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Melanie said, “She has all of these programs running. All these ideas, I don’t know where she comes up with them but you know they are amazing!” Steven the principal of the community school also acknowledged that the community school connector determined much of the programming that occurred at Hub of Hope. He said, “The community connector is the one who runs the after school programming....” The community school connector explained how she had tapped into the skills of the residents in the local community in order to provide much of the programming that was provided by the community school. She said, “I try to draw from the community members a lot.” By tapping into the strengths that existed in the local community Melanie had been able to provide programming that had proven to be sustainable over time. Melanie provided an example of how she had sought out the support of a local resident to share her skills at community school. She said,

We actually have a lady who lives in our community who’s a trained chef and a farmer. And she volunteers her time and she comes and cooks and teaches the kids how to cook. So on Tuesday nights they cook the hot lunch for Wednesday to feed the school.

There were several other examples of local people who volunteered their time and shared their skills at the Hub of Hope. Some of the other volunteers included a person who provided fiddle lessons, a social worker who taught beading, another community member who taught crocheting, as well as other people who volunteered to serve at the school’s breakfast and hot lunch programs.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While the Hub of Hope did not exclusively rely on local residents to provide support at the Hub of Hope, a majority of the support that was provided was dependent upon the good will of the people that lived in the community who were described as having a personal investment in community development.

**Outcomes of support.** All of the participants at the Hub of Hope spoke about the positive impact that they felt the community school was having on all members of the community. The principal had recently arrived at the Hub of Hope and was in the process of learning about the community and the operations of the community school. When asked about the impact that the community school was having the principal said,

I don't know if they [the programs] are bringing about benefits because I've got nothing to compare it to. But I do know there's a difference here compared to other schools and it's more of a community than any other school.

This kind of observation that described the positive atmosphere of the community school was expressed by all of the participants. Melanie the community school connector described how the school felt like a "family." Lauren the parent and educational assistant described how people felt "comfortable" in the community school. While Ken the teacher and acting principal mentioned that everyone in the community felt "welcome" in the community school setting.

While the feelings evoked by the community school seemed to be the primary means by which the participants assessed its impact, there also was a reference to the need to increase the use of some more formal assessments of the students' learning.

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In this regard, the principal Steven described how he wanted to not only broaden the scope of the academic assessments that were being used at the Hub of Hope, but also increase the frequency with which the students were being assessed academically. In describing the current literacy rates at the Hub of Hope the principal said,

Low, we're a little low....Ours tend to be – very few are exceeding. We have more that are approaching and meeting. But it's lower as you go higher up in the grades. More are approaching as opposed to meeting....literacy is our focus.”

In describing improvements in the area of behaviour at the Hub of Hope, Steven the principal again shared some of his personal observations. He said,

So we do see behaviour changes and this is one of the first things I noticed when I came here. And it's really a plus to the school. Because when you do something for the kids they say, “Thank-you.” Here it's appreciated.

The observation that students at the Hub of Hope were appreciative of the support that they were receiving and frequently displayed their gratitude also was shared by Lauren the parent and educational assistant. She said, “The growth I see is just respect for the school, respect for the people in the school and being appreciative of what they've been given.”

Encouraging regular attendance was an ongoing challenge described by all of the participants at the Hub of Hope. The school had a system for monitoring attendance however, it did not appear that attendance had been monitored over the course of more than one year therefore, whether students' attendance was improving was unclear.

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The fact that a significant number of the students at the Hub of Hope were very transient meant that the overall attendance information that the school was tracking was not always being measured on the same group of students which complicated the use of attendance information as an indicator of the impact of the support being provided by the community school. The principal described the most recent attendance information that he had gathered. He said, “Well up until March, we were hitting about 84%. Since March it’s going down a lot like we have a bus it should have 45 kids on. And it is 20 at any one day, if it’s a good day.” The use of graduation rates to measure the impact of the community school also was complicated by the transience of the population. However, there were some general observations that Ken the teacher and acting principal shared. He said,

Basically if you track it, I want to say going on past experience, in grade 8 you’ll see them [students] and grade 9. Then as we start going through grade 10, we start to see a vast drop off so if you’re going to look at grade 11 you’re looking at maybe 50%.

However, the exact graduation rate is very difficult to measure given the high level of transiency in the community.

In terms of the support that was being provided to engage high school students, Ken the teacher and acting principal said that he felt that the impact of the band program had been quite positive in that it seemed to keep high school students attending school longer. He said, “...it has kept some of the kids – we were able to keep them at least until grade 11 instead of dropping out...”

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The participants at the Hub of Hope also shared their observations about the participation rates of parents at some of the community school programs as an indicator of community engagement. While increasing the engagement of the community was an ongoing goal, some of the participants shared that they had observed an increasing number of community members attending the activities that were being offered by the community school. In describing the participation rates at the parent and child program that she was offering, Melanie the community school connector said that she had not only seen an expansion of her target audience, but also an overall increase in the number of parents and children participating in the program. She said, “So parents come in here [to the family room] and it’s not just with their toddlers any more. They come in with their infants now too....and we were having up to six kids attending with their parents.” Another program that also was described as having high levels of participation from the community was the after school community soccer program. Melanie said that of all of the programs that the community school had provided, she had seen a very significant level of not only student participation but also community involvement in this program. She said, “Soccer draws the students and their families in.”

Through the leadership of the community school connector, the Hub of Hope was tapping into the strengths that existed within the local community in order to provide a broad range of support. Relying on the strengths of local volunteers meant that the community school had been able to sustain the support that was being provided over a longer term, given that the local residents appeared to be individuals who were committed to staying in the community for the foreseeable future. All of the participants shared that they felt that the community school was having a positive impact on students and the community. The observations related to the impact of the community school were largely based on personal observations.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### Summary Case 3

The Village with a Vision had built a collaborative culture largely by capitalizing on the commitment of its local residents to ensure that the community school was a welcoming and accepting place where all residents might be able to receive support. All of the participants described the community's dependence upon the community school and the major role it played in binding the community together and also in ensuring the well-being of its residents. Given the school closures in surrounding communities, the exit of industry and the declining population there was a sense that the Village with a Vision might be the only place where people could go to feel a sense of community. Given frequent changes in school leadership and the fact that most of the teachers lived outside of the local community the role of the community school connector in building a collaborative culture and providing a broad range of support had become essential. Not only did the community school connector guide the determination of the programming that was provided by the community school, but she also played a significant role in helping to access highly individualized support for students and families. In addition, the community school relied heavily upon the educational assistants and other local volunteers to ensure the community school was able to offer a range of programming and remain open during the evening. A lack of access to transportation and the fact the surrounding community was geographically dispersed was described as a significant obstacle to ensuring that the community school was accessible to all residents. The limited availability of trained professionals like social workers and psychologists to address the presenting needs within the community also had proven to be a significant obstacle to the receipt of support. It also had meant that individuals like the community school connector were sometimes charged with providing support outside of the scope of their education and training.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The provision of specialized training for individuals like the community school connector and other local residents like educational assistants might serve to enhance the nature and scope of programming provided in more remote community schools. Most of the stakeholders at the Village with a Vision were described as committed to supporting children, youth, families and the community across multiple life domains. Their commitment together with the central role that the community school plays in this community might enable the provision of the wraparound approach. Through additional training and the support of a practice model as outlined in the wraparound approach, the Village with a Vision might be able to mitigate some of the current challenges associated with supporting individuals with complex needs.

## Chapter 7

### Summary of the Themes Across the Cases

In aforementioned three cases the following themes were described: (a) the critical role of the school principal in a community school, (b) the essential role of the community school connector, (c) the mindset of staff, (d) capacity building within the community, (c) the factors that contribute to collaboration, (d) a continuum of behavioural support, (e) perspectives about resources, and (f) how community school programming is determined and its impact.

#### **Theme 1: The Critical Role of the School Principal in a Community School**

All participants described the principal as the “leader” of the community school and saw the principal’s role in articulating a shared vision to the school staff, students, community members and community partners and then translating the vision into action as a central part of the role. All of the participants also thought that the role of the principal in a community school was multi-faceted and that it no longer matched what could be described as the “traditional” role of a school principal. They described how the principal was charged with not only leading the school, but also with building partnerships with multiple stakeholders. The role of the school principal also was described as extending beyond the school itself to include the added responsibility of not just building partnerships with multiple stakeholders, but also ensuring that the partnerships that were formed outside of the school contributed to and aligned with the vision of the community school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Theme 2: The Essential Role of the Community School Connector**

The community school connectors also were described as essential to the daily operation of the community schools given that the community school connectors were responsible for the provision of several highly valued programs, as well as for providing individualized support to students and families. However, the role of the community school connector was not specifically defined, and it was described as being driven by the needs of the students and the community, as well by the skillset of the individual in the role. In addition, there were several benefits associated with the community school connector residing in the local area of the community schools. The need to be flexible was further described as a requirement in the role of a community school connector given that the role was not specifically defined and also due to the fact that the work schedule needed to be flexible and responsive to the presenting needs of the students and the community. This flexibility involved working during the school day as well as during the evening. It also involved working extended hours beyond what the community school connectors had been hired to work. The community school connector often was not a part of the professional learning opportunities that were afforded to other school staff given that they usually utilized their excess work time by taking professional development days off of work. The need for increased opportunities for professional learning given the scope of the responsibilities of a community school connector, and whether or not a community school connector should have more clearly defined prerequisite skills also were discussed.

### **Theme 3: The Mindset of Staff**

All of the participants explained that in order to work in a community school the staff needed to believe that it was their collective responsibility to educate the whole child.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The staff at the community schools also were described as needing to be flexible and not bound by a specific idea about how a school should operate or what their role as teachers, educational assistants and support staff should be. Specifically, teachers were described as needing to be flexible about the nature and level of support that they provided including being committed to providing a significant amount of support to students and the community outside of school hours. In one case, there were varying levels of teacher involvement which meant that the support staff including the community school connector, educational assistants and community volunteers were described as having to take on greater responsibilities in the provision of support. The range of needs of the students and families at community schools were described as significantly broad and in order to address these needs in a comprehensive and caring way it required a significant commitment on the part of all staff. Some of the participants said that the idea of a teacher being transferred or placed in a community school, if their beliefs did not align with the philosophy of the community school would be detrimental to the students and families that they serve.

### **Theme 4: Building Capacity within the Community**

There were several of the interventions that were being provided by the community schools that were intended to empower parents and increase their feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. However, most of the participants described that they had seen modest growth in this area and recognized that it would require a significant investment of time and support in order to see significant, sustainable changes over time.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The community schools also had tried to foster leadership within the parent community through the organization of parent councils however, most of the participants described some form of conflict in the parent organizations in their respective communities. In several instances these conflicts had led to the breakdown of the organization.

### **Theme 5: The Factors that Contribute to Collaboration**

Open and regular communication were described as essential for the community schools to operate successfully. All of the participants talked about the need to have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the needs of the students and of the community, as well as opportunities for informal communication in order to plan and implement support in a collaborative manner. All of the participants also described how longevity of their respective roles had led to the development of trusting relationships that they described as also contributing to effective collaboration. All of the participants expressed a willingness to bring ideas forward and express their opinions because they felt valued and respected by the other stakeholders involved in the community school.

### **Theme 6: Continuum of Behavioural Support**

The acceptance of students with emotional and behavioural challenges seemed to be a part of the culture of the community schools. However, there were varying degrees of acceptance and disparate views about how behavioural challenges should be addressed. In addition to creating a culture of acceptance for all students and families, the participants described how the students, regardless of their level of need were included in all aspects of the community school. All of the participants described how the community school utilized a team approach when addressing the needs of students and families.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In cases where students and families presented with intensive needs the principal as well as the community school connector were described as taking on a case management function to support students and their families.

### **Theme 7: Perspectives about Resources**

The funding that the community schools received as a part of the Community Schools program was described as insufficient to support the range of programming and services that the community schools wanted to provide, therefore additional funding needed to be obtained from other sources. The task of obtaining additional funding involved the principal and the community school connector seeking out additional funders to support the initiatives at the community school. In addition to the Community School Program's funding being limited, the process of accessing funding also was described as a complicated, bureaucratic process. Most of the participants talked about the sharing of capital resources including the shared use of spaces like the school's gym, the school's community kitchen or materials and equipment among the stakeholders involved in the community schools. The partnering service providers were funded by separate sources and therefore the sharing of resources that occurred often was the result of the personal initiative of the participants in the community school. Most of the stress related to funding dollars was related to concerns about obtaining funding through grant applications, and the uncertainty over whether or not current funding sources would continue in the future as well as a lack of access to skilled professionals to provide much needed support.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Theme 8: How Community School Programming is Determined and its Impact**

The principal's personal beliefs, the initiative of the community school connector, and the local availability of resources seemed to determine the nature of the support that was provided at the community schools. All of the participants in the study talked about their personal belief in the positive impact that the community schools were having on students, families and the community. They also provided examples of individual students, who in their opinion had benefited from the support that they had received. Most of the participants also described some measures that were being used to varying degrees to assess the impact of the support that was being provided that included tracking academic achievement, behavioural growth and the attendance of students. It also included monitoring the attendance of parents and community members at events and sometimes obtaining feedback from the participants about the support provided.

#### **Summary**

All three of the community schools in this study were described as having a positive impact in their respective communities. The leadership of the principal and the community school connector were described as essential in determining both the nature and scope of programming provided. Additionally, the partnerships that were forged with support providers outside of the community school also were largely the result of outreach performed by the school principal. While the community schools in this study made an effort to provide support that was responsive to the needs of the children, youth, families and the communities that they serve, the determination of this support varied and the formal measurement of its impact in some instances was not firmly established.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

All of the community schools in this study also provided a continuum of behaviour support and used individualized educational plans and behaviour intervention plans as frameworks to guide the provision of support. However, the role of the stakeholders in the provision of support was again largely guided by the school principal, and as such may have benefited from more formal structures at the system level to help bridge the interagency partnerships that existed in these instances.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### Chapter 8

#### Cross-Case Analysis

In chapters four through eight I provided the results of the research interviews and my interpretations based on the data that I collected. I used a thematic approach to organize the data and to determine patterns and connections within the data in each of the three cases that were studied. This chapter includes a further analysis of the data obtained from the participants through the interview process and will explore variations in the participants' perspectives relative to the eight themes that were identified.

#### **Theme 1: The Critical Role of the School Principal**

All of the participants across the cases felt that the leadership of the school principal was invaluable in a community school. The participants described how the principal needed to articulate a shared vision, participate in multiple aspects of the community school programming and guide the alignment all stakeholders in the community school. While there was agreement on these points, the most significant variation in this theme was not whether the principal was regarded as the leader, but rather the degree to which the principal actively led the community school programming. In two out of the three cases the principals had been the leaders of their respective community schools for five or more years and in those cases the principals were described as actively taking on the leadership of the community school. There were multiple examples of their leadership in all aspects of the community school and they confidently articulated their vision and spearheaded many of the initiatives and partnerships at the school.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In both of these cases all of the participants who worked with the principals talked about how they relied on the direction of the principal to guide them in their respective roles in supporting the community school.

However, in one case the principal had recently been hired at the community school and was described as having been the third administrator of the school during a one year period. In this case the principal described his role as focused on learning about the school and maintaining the goals and objectives from the previous year. While there was an acting principal who played an administrative role at the school, it appeared as though the community school connector at this school had a much larger role relative to the community school connectors in the other two cases, and also served in a leadership capacity relative to operation of the community school. There did not appear to be any training for the new administrator of the school about the expectations and responsibilities of being a leader in a community school, which may have served to assist the principal in taking on what was described as a much broader role than might typically be expected of a principal in another setting. In light of the expectations of a school administrator in a community school to take on not just the leadership of the school, but also an active role in community development and in the development of community partnerships it may be beneficial for the educational training of school administrators to address the unique aspects of a community school that may not exist in other settings. The idea of formal transition planning when there is a change in the leadership of the community beyond the community school connector, might also help to ensure that progress toward the achievement of the community school's objectives are not adversely effected when a new administrative leader takes over.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Theme 2: The Essential Role of the Community School Connector**

Most of the community school connectors described a desire to have opportunities to participate in professional development in order to assist them in providing support to children, youth and families in the community school. However, some of the participants differed in their perspectives about the prerequisite skills that a community school connector should possess in order to be hired in that role. In this regard, the principal of one of the urban schools felt that the community school connector should have post-secondary educational training that would help to further the objectives of the community school. For instance, in one of the urban community schools the community school connector had a Bachelor of Science degree in Community Health, and it was felt that this educational training had enhanced the provision of support in the community school. However, in the other urban community school the principal felt that a high school education was sufficient education to fulfill the responsibilities of the role and that further post-secondary education might interfere with the community school connector's ability to relate to and be accepted by the community being served. In the rural community school the community school connector shared that she personally wanted to obtain post-secondary education in counselling in order to better meet the needs of the community. The principal of the rural school knew that it would not be realistic in a remote setting to make the receipt of a post-secondary education a requirement of being a community school connector due to the challenges with obtaining skilled personnel of any kind.

The differences in opinions among the two urban administrators may be due in part to the fact that the community school connector's role was meant to be responsive to the unique needs of the community, and as such, it stands to reason that the roles and the requirements may differ across settings.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

However, in all cases the roles of the community school connector and the responsibilities that were required of the positions were vague. The lack of specificity about the core competencies of the role may have contributed to the differing opinions across settings about the level of education a community school connector required. If the actual responsibilities of a community school connector were detailed in their respective settings it might reveal the specific education and training that may be required of the position and further guide the determination of a professional development plan for the community school connector or influence the hiring of community school connectors in the future.

### **Theme 3: The Mindset of Staff**

In the two urban community schools the discussion about the need for staff to have a shared belief about the need to educate the whole child and also to display a high degree of flexibility in their role focused on the teaching staff. In these two schools the teaching staff were described as highly committed to the community school model and were directly involved in the provision of support outside of the school day. However, in the rural community school, most of the participants emphasized the role that the support staff and community volunteers played in contributing to what could be described as community school programming. In this rural community school, the staff including educational assistants, the community school connector, and volunteers from the community were described as the individuals who primarily supported the provision of the community school programming that occurred outside of school hours. The level of support for the provision of community school programming on the part of the teachers seemed to be related to the fact that most of the teachers did not live in the local area, while the support staff at the school were all local residents.

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Even though the teachers had to commute a significant distance, some of the participants in this case questioned the commitment of the teaching staff to the community school model of extending the school day and providing more holistic support. This observation leads to the question, “What should the role of teachers be in a community school?” In rural settings, it may be beneficial to clearly delineate the role of teachers in a community school and to require a commitment on the part of the teaching staff to actively engage in community school programming as opposed to allowing the leadership of extra-curricular activities to be completely voluntary.

### **Theme 4: Capacity Building within the Community**

All of the community schools were described as engaging in the process of community development. In the two urban community schools it had been very difficult to establish a parent council given that it had been challenging to find a group of parents who were willing and able to take on a leadership role. The ability of the local community in these settings to lead an organization like a parent council was described as a long term goal in that the parent community required ongoing support in the development of leadership skills. In contrast, in the rural setting it had not been difficult to identify a core group of individuals to establish and lead a parent council. In this setting there were a number of highly committed individuals who were identified as taking on a very active leadership role of this organization. While there was core group of individuals in the rural setting who were committed to the leadership of the parent council, the parent council was described as not being representative of the entire community.

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In spite of the differences among the community schools in their ability to establish a parent council, there was one common theme that emerged related to the theme of community-based leadership. It appeared as though all of the parent councils in the community schools had some form of conflictual relationships either within the council itself or with other stakeholders at the school level. Since establishing community-based leadership was described as essential to the success of the community school by all of the participants it appeared evident that the parent councils may require direct support and on-going guidance in the leadership of an organization like a parent council. In many instances the school principal in the community schools had taken on the added responsibility of supporting the parent council in developing as an organization, however, this may have been perceived as a conflict of interest given that some of the tensions that developed within the parent councils were at times directed toward the principal of the school. In this regard, the provision of support from an organization other than the school principal to help the parent councils to organize and lead might prove to be a worthwhile investment in community development. There may be a role for the Community Schools Program and other partnering service providers to support the development of community based leadership through the provision of professional learning opportunities and or the establishment of mentors or coaches to support the empowerment of parent councils in community schools. Support of community based leadership through a strong parent council may lead to the greater sustainability of change at the community level, as the local residents who have a personal stake in the betterment of their community will have obtained the necessary skills to lead an organization like a parent council in a community school.

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When professionals or other service providers leave their respective roles or when specific agencies no longer exist, the establishment of a core group of leaders within the local community may serve to insulate the community school from these kind of external changes over which they may have no control.

### **Theme 5: Factors that Contribute to Collaboration**

All of the participants across the cases described that there was an overall spirit of collaboration within the community school and with partnering service providers.

In the two urban community schools, while there were challenges associated with encouraging the community to enter the school, the students were not bussed to school and families except for in times of inclement weather were able to walk to the community school. The relative short distance of the community school from the homes of the students, families and community that it served had enabled some families to have regular face to face contact with the staff at the community schools and thus begin to build relationships and foster an increased willingness to collaborate with one another.

However, in the rural community school where almost all of the students were bussed to school, some over an hour each way, and the families lacked access to reliable transportation and cellular phone coverage it had proven to be significantly challenging to having open and regular communication with families and community members which was described as being detrimental to collaboration. Of particular note, a lack of access to transportation was identified as the primary limiting factor that was preventing students, families and community members from having contact with the staff at the community school and from participating in the life of the community school.

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In the two urban settings, a walking school bus had been implemented which had further provided opportunities for face to face contact with students, families and community members. In addition to improving students' attendance, the regular face to face contact provided by the walking school bus was described as being an effective form of outreach in building relationships with the community.

The lack of access to transportation in the rural community school was described as such a significant obstacle to the development of relationships within the community and in promoting participation in the activities of the community school, that it may require a specific and targeted response. In this regard, one of the participants described that several years prior a former principal had operated a school bus after school hours so that students could stay to participate in after school activities. The participant said that the school bus drivers in the community take the buses home when they are not in use so they are idle during much of the school day as well as during the evening. It was not clear why this kind of support was disbanded, but it appeared as though exploring options to utilize existing resources like the school buses during alternate times of the school day to not only pick up students but also community members to participate in the community school activities may be a worthwhile investment of time and resources.

### **Theme 6: Continuum of Behavioural Support**

All of the participants across the cases described the value of using a team approach when supporting students with emotional and behavioural challenges. However, the level of acceptance and the utilization of what might be described as inclusive practices varied in one of the community school settings.



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In the two urban community schools the participants shared that all staff had a shared belief system that included the unconditional acceptance of all students regardless of their emotional and behavioural needs. The range of behavioural supports provided for students in both of these settings was clearly articulated and there was an awareness among the staff of the whole school's expectations related to behaviour. The shared beliefs at these community schools espoused the unconditional acceptance of all students, and it also included an emphasis on avoiding the use suspension as a means of responding to students' behaviour. In both of the urban settings suspension was described as a last resort and as an approach that was not typically used. While in the urban settings both of the school principals described some initial resistance from a small segment of the teaching staff to the utilization of this approach, they described that the initial resistance had been overcome and that the staff now shared the same mindset with respect to promoting positive behaviour and responding to any challenging behaviour that may arise.

In the rural setting, all of the participants described that they personally felt the need to proactively support the individualized needs of students with emotional and behavioural challenges, however some of the participants felt that there were divergent approaches within the school with respect responding to this population of students. The rural community school also was described as utilizing a suspension model with varying degrees of detention and in-school and out of school suspension in response to students' challenging behaviour. Given that the rural school did not have access to the specialized resources that the urban schools had like a guidance counselor, a psychologist, a medical and/or mental health professional, it stands to reason that models like suspension may have been used in the absence of other perceived options. In the absence of specialized support it may be even more critical that teachers receive the necessary training to support this population of students using positive and proactive measures.

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It also may be essential that a pyramid of behavioural interventions is clearly articulated so that all stakeholders involved in the community school understand and can respond to students' needs with a shared frame of reference and in a manner that supports behavioural growth.

In addition to the responses differing in one of the settings about how to respond to challenging behaviour, there were disparate views across all of the settings regarding the case management of students with complex emotional and behavioural needs. In one urban setting the principal of the school was clearly described as taking on the case management role for students with complex needs. The task of cross agency liaison work and advocating for support for children, youth and families appeared to be an added responsibility of one of the principals. In the other urban community school, the principal himself emphasized the role of the team in supporting students with complex emotional and behavioural needs and did not attribute the case management function to one specific individual. While the principal did not describe himself as performing case management duties, the other participants who were interviewed in this case described the principal as taking on a case management role in bringing the necessary stakeholders together to develop plans of support, enlisting the support of partnering service providers and advocating for families. In contrast, in the rural community school the case management role of children, youth and families with complex needs was largely attributed to the community school connector. In spite of the fact that all of the participants expressed the desire for the school's social worker to perform that function, the fact that the social worker was only present in the school for one day per week meant that the added task of case management often was the responsibility of the community school connector. In this regard, the community school connector was described as contacting health, mental health and child welfare agencies who were at a significant distance and helping to coordinate plans of support.

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The school administrators and the community school connector in these cases were described as performing case management functions and yet the term “case management” was not consistently used. In community school settings where the focus is to integrate services from multiple service providers it may be beneficial to more clearly define the case management role for students with complex needs and officially designate a person to carry out the duties associated with a case management. When case management is clearly defined and the roles of the case manager are delineated it may lead to clarity within the team about their respective responsibilities as well as more focused intervention for students and families. When case management becomes an added responsibility to an individual’s role it may not receive the necessary attention that it may require.

### **Theme 7: Perspectives about Resources**

All of the participants across the cases described the need to access multiple funding sources in order to support the activities of the community school. Applying for grants and building partnerships with potential funders often was described as the responsibility of the principal, the community school connector and partnering service providers. In the two urban community schools, most of the stress related to funding was attributed to the fear of cut-backs and the uncertainty over whether or not a grant application would be approved. While in the rural setting, the aforementioned stressors related to funding also existed, the primary stress related to resources was described as being due to the lack of availability of services in the form of specialized personnel to meet the range of needs that existed within the community.

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Additionally, the lack of access to reliable transportation again was mentioned related to the theme of resources because not only were specialized supports not available in the local area, but also many of the individuals in the community were described as being unable to access support that may have been available in other larger centres because they did not have access to transportation. In remote areas there may need to be a strong commitment on the part of local governments to implement incentive strategies that promote the hiring and retention of specialized professional in rural settings. Additionally, all of the community schools identified that they did not receive common pools of funding that could be shared among service providers. This meant that both the community schools and partnering service providers applied for their own separate funding and that through the initiative of the individual members of the team creative ways to share resources were determined. However the sharing of resources often was limited to sharing capital resources like space and materials as well as expertise. In order to build truly collaborative partnerships among the stakeholders in a community school it may be beneficial to explore the provision of shared pools of money that can be utilized by community schools. The sharing of resources may lead to more collective goal setting and greater shared accountability for the actions and outcomes of the service providers.

### **Theme 8: How Community School Programs are Determined and Their Impact**

All of the community schools in this study seemed to have a great deal of autonomy in determining the activities in which the community schools engaged. In the two urban community schools the programming that was implemented seemed to be largely determined by the school principals. The principal's personal passion for sport at one of the community schools and the principal's personal passion for literacy at the other seemed to guide the focus of the programming that was being provided.

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This did not mean that the programming in both places was not broad in scope, but rather it meant that sports and literacy were clearly indicated in a majority of the initiatives in which these community schools participated.

In contrast, in the rural setting the factors that seemed to determine the nature of the programming that was provided were the personal initiative of the community school connector and the local availability of resources. The local availability of resources often meant capitalizing on the skills of volunteers within the community to provide programming. The rural community school did not have as many options in terms of partnerships with agencies, companies and funders as the urban community schools, and therefore it relied heavily upon the local community as a resource.

In terms of the measuring the impact that the community school may have been having on students, families and the community at large there were varying degrees of assessment being used to measure students' academic progress, behavioural growth, attendance, and graduation rates. There also were varying degrees of assessment being used to determine participation rates at community school offerings, as well to obtain feedback related to community school programming. However, one of the urban community schools had a significant focus on using assessment information to determine students' progress and had started to longitudinally monitor the growth of students' academic achievement. This urban school also focused on measuring students' behavioural improvements through a variety of means and monitored student's attendance as well as parent and community attendance at community school events. The other urban community school also described that they used assessment tools but seemed to emphasize the use of assessment to a lesser degree.

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However, this community school actively sought feedback from students, as well as parents and community members in order to help to determine its future programming.

In contrast, the rural community school seemed to focus less on the formal assessment of students' academic and behavioural progress as a means by which determine the impact of the community school however, increasing the use of assessment was described as a future goal.

There also did not seem to be any formal tracking of graduation rates given that the rural school was a kindergarten to grade 12 school. The participants in the rural setting described that due to the transiency of the community it had been difficult to track graduation rates over time.

In all of the cases the ability of the community school to have autonomy in determining the nature of the support that it provided was described as beneficial, given that this autonomy had allowed the community school to be responsive to the unique needs of their respective community. However, there may be a risk in providing support that one thinks is having a positive impact in the absence of specific methods to assess whether one's perception about the support is valid. Therefore, it may be important for community schools to begin to identify specific needs within the community that they want to improve or change and then identify corresponding evidence-based practiced that support the achievement of the goal, as well as corresponding means by which the achievement of the goal might be assessed. There seemed to be a strong emphasis on "thinking" and "feeling" that community schools were having a positive impact on children, youth, families and the community however, it may be beneficial to focus on the provision of some evidence-based practices and to formalize the means by which progress toward the achievement of the stated goals will be determined.

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There may be a role for the Community Schools Program to formally identify a number of evidence-based practices that should be used by designated community schools and the corresponding assessment tools to determine the impact that they may be having on the populations that they are intended to serve. If common interventions and assessments were utilized across community school sites it may help to ensure that the activities in which community schools are engaged are having the desired effect. Once such common tool may be the utilization of the wraparound approach across community school sites when supporting children, youth and families with severe to profound EBD.

The utilization of the wraparound approach and the corresponding assessment tools to determine the fidelity of its implementation may help to ensure that the support that is being provided to individuals with complex needs follows an evidence-based model which may lead to improved outcomes for children, youth and families.

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### Chapter 9

#### **Findings, Limitations, Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this chapter I will review the purpose of the research and revisit the methods and design of this study. I also will answer the three guiding research question that form the basis of this research. In responding to the research questions that were posed, I will draw from the analyzed participant perspectives and put their perspectives into the context of the literature. I also will describe how the findings of this study may inform the organization and practices of community schools and partnering service providers in a manner that fosters collaboration and the holistic provision of support. I will conclude the chapter with recommendations and suggestions for future research that may expand the knowledge base related to the areas that were studied.

#### **Review of Purpose**

At the outset of this study, I noted that in addition to support being limited for children and youth with EBD, it also often was delivered in a poorly coordinated and fragmented manner (Reid & Brown, 2008; Stroul, 2002; Stroul & Friedman, 1986, 1994; Waddell et al., 2005). I further identified several barriers to the provision of collaborative and integrated support for children and youth with EBD and their families (Walker et al., 2003), and I described the need to explore alternative approaches to the provision of support that might better meet the needs of this population. The wraparound approach was described as an approach that supported holistic planning and the provision of integrated support for children and youth with EBD and their families (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005; Bruns, Walker, & The National Wraparound Initiative Advisory Group, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009).



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Given that the province of Manitoba recently promoted the use of the wraparound approach by releasing an inter-departmental provincial protocol entitled “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013), which supports the implementation of the wraparound approach for this population and determined that it may efficacious to explore the conditions that may best enable its implementation. To that end, I outlined the research that supports the notion that community schools might provide the most appropriate host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers (Dryfoos, 1998; Grossman & Vang, 2009). Given that there are 32 designated community schools in the province of Manitoba, that are described as centres which, “connect public programs and services such as health care, recreation, childcare and family support on an as available and as needed basis to school sites, making them more readily available to community residents (Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006; p.6), and there is a provincial protocol that recommends the use of the wraparound approach, it was suggested that it may be beneficial to explore the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and whether they provide evidence of the ten guiding principles of the wraparound approach as outlined by Bruns, Walker and The National Wraparound Advisory Group (2008). In an effort to explore this issue I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a community school acknowledged in the literature that facilitate collaboration and support children and youth with EBD and their families?

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2. According to the key stakeholders involved in the Community Schools Program, to what extent is collaboration fostered and are services integrated in an environment like a community school?
3. What are the practices being used by the community schools in this study that reflect the Wraparound approach and are effective in improving outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families, that will serve as a model for other schools and that will promote improvement and change?

### Findings

#### Characteristics of Community Schools that Support Collaboration

Children and youth with EBD, their families and service providers, benefit from the collective knowledge of a diverse group and the shared decision making and problem solving that results from effective interdisciplinary collaboration (Bronstein, 2003). According to Zins and Ponti (1990) the host environment must provide the necessary preconditions that support the collaborative efforts of the team when supporting individuals with complex needs. Based on the research that supports the use of collaborative practices when supporting children and youth with EBD and their families (Bruns, Burchard & Yoe, 1995; Eber, Rolf, & Schrieber, 1996; Malloy, Cheney, & Cormier, 1998), I posed the first research question about the characteristics of a community school that support collaboration and thereby may meet the needs of children and youth with EBD and their families.

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While the first question that I posed focused on the collaborative practices in community schools that support children and youth with EBD, the participants across all settings consistently shared that they felt that the collaborative practices that they employed within the community school, not only benefited children and youth with EBD, but rather benefitted all children, youth, families as well as the community that they served.

Given that the populations served by community schools in this study were located in low-socioeconomic neighbourhoods characterized by high unemployment, a significant number of children and youth in care, high transiency, substance abuse, justice involvement, poor attendance rates, and in the case of the high school, low graduation rates, it stands to reason that the benefits of collaborative practices were not limited to children and youth with EBD. This finding is consistent with other research that described how community schools meet a broad range of needs and positively impact: a) achievement, (b) attendance (c) personal and family situations, (d) graduation rates, (e) parental engagement, and (f) early intervention and prevention practices for the entire populations that they serve (Blank, Melaville, & Shaw, 2003; Dryfoos, 2000; Flaherty, Weist, & Warner, 1996). This finding also supports the research by White and Wehlage (1995) who found that impact of community schools was far reaching and significantly contributed to overall community development (White and Wehlage, 1995). Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be limited to the positive impact that collaboration has on the needs of children and youth with EBD and will be referred to more broadly as the positive impact that collaboration has in a community school for all of the individuals that they serve, which may include children and youth with EBD.

In order to respond to the first question in this study I have synthesized the analyzed participant perspectives with the research literature by identifying common threads in both the literature and

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in the participant responses. The analyzed participant perspectives and the research literature were synthesized into three main characteristics of community schools that support collaboration and they included: (1) structure, (2) climate, and (3) resources. I will define each of the aforementioned characteristics and then summarize the participant perspectives and related literature in a tables 3.0 through 3.3. Given that the research indicates that the impact of community schools may be far reaching, identifying the characteristics of community schools that support collaboration may assist community schools in ensuring that the practices in which they engage most effectively meet the needs of the populations that they are intended to serve.

**Structure.** The structure of the community school referred to its structure as an organization within the community that was described as leading the provision of support. Specifically, the structure of the community school included its location as a central “hub” in the community, its leadership, the articulation of a shared vision to address the presenting needs, the means by which support was provided by multiple stakeholders and how outcomes were assessed.

**Climate.** The second characteristic of community schools that supported collaboration and thereby addressed the needs of the population that they served was its climate. The climate referred to the extent to which the stakeholders involved in the community school felt that the environment was positive and welcoming and promoted the establishment of trusting relationships, regular communication and the ability of professionals to transcend disciplinary boundaries when supporting the population that they served.

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**Resources.** The third characteristic of community schools that supported collaboration included the resources that were available to the community school. Resources were defined as funding to support the operation of the community school as well as the availability of staff and capital supports that were shared across service providers. Tables 2.0 through 4.0 provide a synthesis of the analyzed participant perspectives and the literature related to the aforementioned characteristics.

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Table 2

*Structure*

Concepts from the Literature and Participant Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support in a central “hub” at the community level (Grossman &amp; Vang, 2009; Dryfoos, 1998, 2002)</li> <li>• Identify leadership and articulate roles (Fixen et. al., 2005; Walker et. al., 2003)</li> <li>• Sustain leadership (Fixen et. al., 2005; McMahon, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, &amp; Griffith, 2000)</li> <li>• Identify the needs to be addressed (D’Amour et al., 2005; Dorfman, 1998)</li> <li>• Establish a shared vision (Sanders &amp; Harvey, 2000; Adelman &amp; Taylor, 1997)</li> <li>• Establish a collective response to the presenting needs (Walker &amp; Schutte, 2004; Cicero &amp; Barton, 2003; Blank et al., 2003)</li> <li>• Use evidence-based practices (Blank, Melaville &amp; Shaw, 2003; Fixen et. al., 2005)</li> <li>• Integrate support (Dryfoos, 1998; Kirst, 1993; Krysiak, 2000)</li> <li>• Measure outcomes (Dryfoos, 2002; Blank, Melaville &amp; Shaw, 2003; Flaherty, Weist, &amp; Warner, 1996)</li> </ul>

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*Table 3**Climate*

Concepts from the Literature and Participant Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that interactions are based on mutual respect and social trust (Payne &amp; Kaba, 2001; Henderson &amp; Mapp, 2002)</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for parental and community involvement that are reciprocal in nature and build on strengths (Brewster &amp; Railsback, 2003; Davies, 1996; Epstein et. al., 1997; Dauber &amp; Epstein, 1993; Epstein &amp; Dauber, 1991)</li> <li>• Value community partnerships and actively seek to expand them (Sanders &amp; Harvey 2000; Epstein et. al., 1997)</li> <li>• Generate opportunities for two-way communication between all stakeholders (Sanders &amp; Harvey; Walker et. al., 2003)</li> <li>• Openly share information (Barker, Bosco, &amp; Oandasan, 2005; Walker et. al., 2003; Dryfoos, 1995; 2002)</li> <li>• Transcend disciplinary boundaries (Ball et. al., 2010; D'Amour et al., 2005; Jehn, Northcraft, &amp; Neale, 1999; Koskie &amp; Freeze, 2000; Linder, 1990)</li> </ul>

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*Table 4**Resources*

Concepts from the Literature and Participant Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the availability of needed services and supports in the community school (Grossman &amp; Vang, 2009; Dryfoos, 1998, 2002)</li> <li>• Ensure the availability of broad-based professional support (Mellin, Anderson-Butcher &amp; Bronstein, 2011; Blank et. al., 2010; Blank, Melaville &amp; Shaw, 2003; Dryfoos, 1998, 2002)</li> <li>• Employ community school connectors (Campbell-Allan et. al., 2009; Blank et. al., 2010; Blank, Melaville &amp; Shaw, 2003)</li> <li>• Share resources (Campbell-Allan et. al., 2009; Blank, 2005; Fixen et al., 2005; Blank, Melaville &amp; Shaw, 2003; Walker et al., 2003; Adelman &amp; Taylor; 1997)</li> <li>• Ensure that funding is: individualized, readily available, easily disseminated and decided upon at the team level (Campbell-Allan et. al., 2009; Blank, 2005; Dollard, Evans, Lubrecht &amp; Schaffer, 1994).</li> </ul>



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Together the structure, climate and resources in a community school coalesce to provide the conditions that support collaboration. All of the aforementioned characteristics were cited as fundamental to the provision of support in both the literature and in the analyzed participant perspectives. While all of the aforementioned characteristics of community schools were described as being essential, the degree to which they existed in the community schools that were studied varied. Therefore, it may not only be necessary to identify the characteristics of community schools that support collaboration, but also the degree to which collaboration occurs. Identifying the degree to which collaborative practices are implemented may help identify opportunities where collaboration may be enhanced, which may ultimately lead to enhanced support for the populations that they serve.

### **The Extent of Collaboration in Community Schools**

Walker et al. (2003) also suggest that it is important to analyze collaborative practices through the lens of team, organization and system level partnerships. Therefore, in my response to the second question that was posed in this study about the extent of collaboration that occurred within the community schools, I will describe the degree of collaboration from the team, organization and system level perspectives. To that end, the team level will refer to the child or youth, primary caregiver(s) and other direct service providers who play a role in the provision of support, the organizational level will include organizations or agencies involved as partners with the team level that contribute services, staffing and funding to support the provision of support, and the system level will encompass the larger service system within which the organization and team operate.

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It is important to determine the extent to which collaboration is occurring at the team, organization and system levels in community schools as according to Walker et al., (2003), evidence of collaborative practice at all three levels has been found to improve the provision of support for individuals with complex, multi-system needs.

In describing the extent of collaboration that was occurring in the community schools that were studied I also will use the continuum of collaboration develop by Horwath and Morrison (2007). The continuum of collaboration describes five levels of collaboration which include: (1) communication where individuals from different disciplines talk together, (2) co-operation where there is some low key joint work on a case-by-case basis, (3) co-ordination where more formalized joint working occurs but there are no sanctions for non-compliance, (4) coalition where joint structures exist and participants begin to sacrifice some autonomy, and (5) integration where organizations merge to create a new joint identity (2007). Research indicates that when supporting individuals with complex needs collaborative practices that demonstrate the integration of support may be required in order to most effectively meet the presenting needs (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009). Therefore, it may be important to determine the degree to which the collaborative practices that are present within community schools approximate the fifth level of collaboration as outlined by Howarth and Morrison (2007), so that the areas where collaborative practices might be strengthened may be identified. In table 5, I will exemplify the degree to which collaboration was described as occurring from the analyzed participant perspectives.

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Table 5.0

*The Extent of Collaboration at the Team, Organization and System Level*

Level of Partnership	Degree of Collaboration
Team	5 - Integration - organizations merge to create a new joint identity
Organization	4 - Coalition - joint structures exist and participants sacrifice some autonomy
System	3 – Collaboration - more formalized joint working occurs but there are no sanctions for non-compliance

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**Team.** When describing the partnerships that existed at the team or direct service level in the community schools most of the participants across all three cases described what could be characterized as integrated practices or the fifth level of collaboration (Howarth & Morrison, 2007). Even participants who were employed by separate agencies described the principal of the school as the identified leader, and as the person to whom they looked for guidance in all matters related to the community school. While the principal of the community school might be the most appropriate individual to function in a leadership capacity, the principal's role in leading other partnering service providers in the best interests of the community school has not been legitimized through formal policies or agreements at the organization level or systems level. When an initiative is expected to involve the integration of support, the lead organization needs to be officially designated as such, and along with being charged with formal leadership responsibilities, the concomitant resources also need to be provided (Fixen et. al., 2005). The participants in this study attributed the integrated collaboration at the school or team level to the enabling structures within the community school, the positive climate, and the willingness on the part of individuals at the team level to creatively share resources.

**Organization.** The organizational level refers to the organizations or agencies involved as partners with the team level that contribute services, staffing and funding to enable the provision of support (Howarth & Morrison, 2007). In this study the organizational level is represented by the senior administrators of the school division and the senior administrators of the partnering service providers involved in the community school.

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The level of collaboration that was described by the participants as existing at the organizational level may be characterized as a “coalition” in that some joint structures for the provision of support were described as being present but the organizations involved in supporting the community school continued to operate as largely separate entities. There were some examples of organizations sharing space and at times sharing staffing to support the provision of a common initiative, however, the organizations involved in these coalitions continued to have separate mandates that guided their practice, separate funding and separate accountability structures, which Fixen et. al. (2005) describe as detrimental to collaboration. In this study, most of the joint work to support the community school seemed to occur not because it was mandated at the organizational level, but rather because a senior administrator at the organizational valued the work of the community school and had made a personal choice to support it.

**System.** The system level encompasses the larger service system within which the organization and team operate. In this study the system refers to the government or the systems that make decisions regarding policies and procedures and the allocation of resources that guide the functioning of the organizations and by extension the teams (Walker et al., 2003). The participants in this study described the system level as demonstrating the third level of collaboration referred to as co-ordination. Coordination occurs when there is some formalized joint working but there are no sanctions for non-compliance. Recently in Manitoba the *Community Schools Act* was passed (Government of Manitoba, 2012) and a Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Community Schools was established that has representation from several branches of government.

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The responsibility of this committee is to provide advice, “....about any matter relating to the community schools program and network including providing assistance in identifying services, programs and activities that may achieve the aims of the community schools philosophy and model” (Government of Manitoba, 2012). However, this description is vague and does not delineate the type of support nor the means by which the separate branches of government will work together to integrate support in community schools. Community schools continue to receive separate funding as do the other branches of government that are supposed to provide support in community schools.

**The vulnerability of community schools.** The community schools in this study provided evidence of integrated collaborative practices at the team level that may be largely attributed to the school principal and other key members of the school team like the community school connector. It appears that the strength of the integrated collaborative practices at the team level in the community schools in this study may be mitigating the more limited collaboration that was described as occurring at the organization and systems levels. However, the community schools in this study may be so highly dependent upon the team level for both leadership and the provision of support that they may be extremely vulnerable to internal personnel changes, and thereby unable to sustain the current integrated practices if changes within the team were to occur. Structures like shared governance models, mandates for service provision and shared resources have not been explicated at the system and organization level which are necessary in order to achieve a truly integrated model of support in an environment like a community school (Blank, 2005; Campbell-Allan et al., 2009).

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As a result, the system and organization levels remain loosely coupled with the direct work that is taking place within community schools in the province of Manitoba, and as a result the current support the community schools are providing may not be sustainable in the longer term. Given the lack of formal structures that support the integration of services at the system level, the Community Schools Program runs the risk of being yet another government program that is easily disbanded when a change in government occurs as there have not been significant changes within the government departments charged with supporting community schools.

### **Practices in Community Schools that Reflect the Wraparound Approach**

In order to respond to the third question in this study about the practices being used by community schools that reflect the wraparound approach I will identify the practices of the community schools in this study, according to the analyzed participant perspectives, that align with the guiding principles of the wraparound approach. Evidence of the guiding principles of the wraparound approach in the practices of community schools may demonstrate that the wraparound approach as an individualized planning process for children and youth with EBD might be best implemented in the context of a community school as the requisite conditions may exist to support its implementation.

While the wraparound approach is a highly individualized and structured approach to the provision of support for individuals with complex needs it may not be successfully implemented unless the host environment provides the conditions to support its implementation. It has been suggested that the school might provide the most effective “host environment” to initiate and sustain the wraparound approach (Hienemann & Dunlap, 2001; Knoster, Villa, & Thousand, 2000; Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Eber & Nelson, 1997; Eber, 1998).

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It may be argued that the community school model with its enhanced focus on the provision of support across multiple life domains with an array of available supports sets the stage for the implementation of the wraparound approach. A review of the analyzed participant perspectives in this study revealed that the community schools were already engaging in what could be described as the wraparound approach for children, youth and families with complex needs without specific adherence to a practice model. Although a practice model was not specifically followed the tenets of the wraparound approach were evident in the support that was being provided in these settings.

The literature described the wraparound approach as a process for planning and individualizing supports for children and youth with EBD and their families. In the Wraparound approach, services and supports are “wrapped around” the child or youth and their caregiver, in that they are placed at the centre of the wraparound plan and, their voice is paramount in identifying their individual and collective strengths, as well as in identifying natural and community-based resources that may be required to meet their needs (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg et al., 2009). Wraparound is not a set of services, but rather, it is a process for meeting the complex needs of children and youth and their caregivers through the integration of multiple systems and the development of individualized plans of care. The overall premise of the wraparound approach is to enhance options for children, youth and their families, by building collaborative wraparound teams, who together, tailor supports that lead to improvements in outcomes (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg et al., 2009).

**Family voice and choice.** The research indicated that when the school valued and promoted parental and community participation parental participation rates in the school increased (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Dauber & Epstein, 1993).



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The research also indicated that when schools made a significant effort to involve parents and build community partnerships, parents and community members were found to make significant contributions to academic learning, extra-curricular activities and the cultural richness of the school setting (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). In all of the community schools that were studied the engagement of families and the community in all aspects of the community school was a primary focus. The involvement of families in the community schools that were studied was characterized as reciprocal in nature given that the voice of the community was included in decisions related to the community school. The focus of the community schools in this study on ensuring that parental and community input were included in key decisions that were made at the community school is consistent with the wraparound approach in that as an individualized planning process for children and youth with EBD it also values the centrality of the child and family in the determination of the nature and scope of support that is provided.

**Team-based and a focus on collaboration.** West et al. (1998) found that team-based approaches created more options for the individuals that they were intended to serve and also led to the development of more effective plans. The research also indicated that the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration for children and youth with EBD included the provision of more holistic, child-centered services (Williamson, 2002), enhanced information sharing across service providers and with families (Barker, Bosco, & Oandasan, 2005), less duplication and redundancy in services provided (VanEyck & Baum, 2002) and, the timely receipt of services (Cottrell, Lucey, Porter, & Walker, 2000). All of the community schools in this study utilized what could be characterized as team-based, collaborative approaches in the operation of the community and in the provision of support.

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While the composition of the teams at the community schools varied, the notion that the incorporation of multiple perspectives could enhance the support that was provided was shared by all of the participants. The broad-based support that is available within community schools and the collaborative team structures that exist may enable the implementation of the wraparound approach in a community school setting given that the key people involved the provision of support may be present and the practice of integrating support at the team level may already be established.

**Natural, culturally competent, strengths-based support at the community level.** The research demonstrated that parental and community involvement in the school setting should build upon the strengths that they possess (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Davies, 1996; Epstein et. al., 1997; Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Strengths-based approaches that utilized natural supports that existed within the family and community have been found to enhance the sustainability of support. Furthermore, the accessibility of support at the community level also has been found to improve access to support and promote service utilization (Harbin, McWilliam, & Gallagher, 2004; Catron, Harris, & Weiss, 1998) One of the hallmarks of the community schools in this study was that they capitalized on the natural supports that individuals possessed within their respective communities in the development and implementation of the community school programming and in the provision of support. Building upon community assets in the provision of support parallels the wraparound approach in that it too emphasizes the use of natural supports at the community level in the development of individualized plans of support (Dorfman, 1998). Therefore, the implementation of the wraparound approach might be most efficacious in an environment like a community school that already values and utilizes the natural supports that exist at the local level.

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**Persistence.** The research indicated that the stakeholders in a community school setting needed to demonstrate a commitment to the provision of holistic support (Dryfoos, 1998). Adelman and Taylor (1997) described the need to have “....a critical mass of committed stakeholders....” in order to implement any broad-based initiative that is intended to be sustained over time (p. 418). All of the participants in this study described their personal commitment to providing broad-based support for children, youth and families in the context of the community school and described how they were not deterred by the complexity of needs that existed within the community school. The unconditional commitment of the stakeholders in a community school to the provision of support even when faced with challenges is consistent with wraparound approach. The wraparound approach as a model for providing individualized support necessitates the commitment of all team members to seek solutions to complex problems even when it may appear that all options have been exhausted. The community school might be the most hospitable environment to implement the wraparound approach because the stakeholders in a community school setting are united by a shared vision to meet the needs of the whole child and are not constrained by their defined roles in the provision of needed support.

**Individualized support.** The research indicated that the IEP and the BIP process as well as other person centered planning models that are used in schools are consistent with the tenets of the wraparound approach in that they involve strength-based, individualized planning that prioritizes family voice and choice (Eber et al., 2002). The research also described how the availability of a trained staff and the expectation of adherence to a structured meeting format with clear objectives, as outlined in the IEP and the BIP process has led to comprehensive planning in the school setting (Eber et al., 2002).

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All of the community schools in this study utilized an IEP and BIP process to guide the provision of support for children and youth with EBD. The utilization of a structured process to guide the provision of individualized support is consistent with the wraparound approach and therefore the implementation of the wraparound approach in a community school may be a natural extension of the work that is already taking place. Furthermore, community schools also may be a logical place to implement the wraparound approach because wraparound plans involve support that addresses multiple life domains which is consistent with the work of community schools in that they too typically engage in the provision of support across multiple life domains.

**Outcomes based.** In determining a system's readiness to implement the wraparound approach there must be structures that support the measurement of outcomes (Bruns & Walker, 2010; Walker, 2008; Walker et al., 2003). In this regard, the research indicated that individuals involved in the provision of support needed to know whether or not the support that they were providing was achieving the desired results. In order to measure the impact of an intervention the need to implement evidence-based practices was described as essential (Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg, Osher, & Lourie, 2009). In all of the community schools that were studied there was some evidence of the measurement of outcomes and some reference to the implementation of evidence-based practices in describing the broad-based support that was provided by the community school. However, when referencing the provision of individualized support for children and youth with EBD and other complex, multi-system needs the process that was relied upon was limited to the individualized education planning process and the behaviour intervention planning process and outcome measures were less clearly defined.

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In addition, the case management functions involved in the provision of highly individualized support for children and youth with EBD in the schools that were studied were largely the responsibility of the school principal and to some extent the community school connector. However, the roles of the case manager were not clearly defined and appeared to be an added responsibility of the school-based team.

### **Wraparound in a Community School**

When planning for individuals with complex multi-system needs the wraparound approach might further enhance the provision of support in a community school by clearly explicating the process by which support is provided, and providing a means by which to measure the outcomes of support. The wraparound approach has a clearly articulated practice model that provides a structured approach to service delivery. The practice model describes the four phases of the wraparound approach and the corresponding 32 activities that are included in the phases. The four phases of the wraparound approach include: (1) engagement and team preparation, (2) initial plan development, (3) plan implementation, and (4) transition. Support materials also are available that further describe the activities, their purpose and any documentation that should emerge from the activity, as well as any potential challenges that may arise in the process (Bruns & Walker, 2010). The wraparound approach also has a clearly articulated model of case management that specifies the roles and responsibilities of an individual referred to as a wraparound facilitator. The wraparound facilitator is employed by the lead agency, and manages the development and implementation of the wraparound plan across service providers (Bruns & Walker, 2010). In order to support the training and skill development of wraparound facilitators there are comprehensive training manuals in wraparound facilitation (Grealish, 2000; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1998).

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The research indicated that a trained wraparound facilitator enhances team effectiveness by guiding the wraparound team toward the achievement of common goals (VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1998; VanDenBerg & Rast, 2000). While the system and organizational barriers to the implementation of an integrated, collaborative practice like the wraparound may exist, the current team level supports within a community school may provide the foundation to support its implementation.

### **Limitations**

In this study I obtained the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in three community schools in the province of Manitoba. Therefore, the data collected involve the participants' perceptions of reality and as such were filtered by their own biases and predispositions. The study also was small in scale and involved only three jurisdictions. As a result, the results should not be generalized beyond the scope of this study. Although this study used a small and selective sample from three jurisdictions, efforts were made to ensure that the participants' perspectives were captured as accurately as possible. First, my advisor read my field notes to help to ensure that I accurately interpreted the stories being told. Second, member checking was used to help to ensure that the transcripts reflected the participants' intended messages. Third, the research was conducted outside of the researcher's place of employment to help to reduce the potential for bias. This research does not intend to imply that all participants in community schools would have similar perceptions.

In addition, this study may be limited due to the fact that of the three parents who were interviewed only one had a child with what could be described as severe to profound EBD.

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Since only one of the parents/guardians who were interviewed had a child with this profile of need the findings[NB1] may not necessarily capture the experiences of this population to the degree intended. Another limitation of this study was the absence of the perspective of a partnering service provider in the third case referred to as the Hub of Hope. The additional perspective of a partnering service provider in this remote community may have provided further insight into the nature and scope of collaborative practices in this setting.

### Conclusions

The first question that I posed in this study involved the identification of the characteristics of community schools that supported collaboration. In my response to this question I synthesized the analyzed participant perspectives and the literature in the field to identify three primary characteristics of community schools that were identified as being foundational to collaboration and they included: (1) the structure of the community school, (2) the climate of the community school, and (3) the resources that were available to the community school. I then detailed the specific elements that pertained to the aforementioned characteristics of community schools that supported collaboration. Given the complexity of needs within the community schools that were studied, the analyzed participants responses indicated that the collaborative practices that were identified not only benefitted children and youth with EBD, but also benefitted the larger population that they served. By identifying the characteristics of community schools that support collaboration it may assist community schools in ensuring that the practices in which they engage most effectively meet the needs of the population that they are intended to serve.

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In my response to the second question in this study I used the analyzed participant responses to explore the extent to which collaboration was occurring within the community schools by describing collaboration from the team, organization and system level perspectives. I also used the continuum of collaboration developed by Howarth and Morrison (2007) to characterize the degree of collaboration that was occurring at each of the aforementioned levels. I concluded that the optimal level of collaboration described as integration was occurring at the team level within the community schools that were studied, but that the collaborative practices at the organization level and system level were not yet integrated and therefore were loosely coupled from the team level and thereby impeding the provision of support. I explained how structures like shared governance models, mandates for service provision and shared resources were not explicated at the organization and systems levels which prevented the achievement of a truly integrated model of support.

In my response to the third question I reviewed the analyzed participant perspectives to determine if there was evidence of the ten guiding principles of the wraparound approach as outlined by Bruns, Walker and The National Wraparound Advisory Group (2008), in the community schools that were studied. I concluded that the guiding principles of the wraparound approach were evident within the community schools that were studied. I determined that there needed to be a greater emphasis on the use of evidence-based practices and the measurement of outcomes in both the individualized planning processes and in the provision of all other support provided by the community school. I suggested that an increased focus on the utilization of evidence-based practices like the wraparound approach when engaging in individualized planning may be effective in the context of a community school as the prerequisite conditions that will foster its implementation may already exist.



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### Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study have identified the characteristics of community schools that may foster collaboration and thereby address the needs of children and youth with EBD, as well as other populations who are served by community schools. It further identified the obstacles to the integration of support that may continue to exist in the province of Manitoba including the loose coupling of the organization and system levels from the direct work of community schools. These findings also indicate that many of the essential elements that may support the implementation of the wraparound approach as outlined in the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*,” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) may be evident within the community schools. The following additional areas might be studied in the future to provide suggestions about how community school might best meet the needs of the populations that they serve.

1. All of the participants spoke about the role of the principal not only as a school leader but also as a leader in establishing community partnerships. It may be beneficial to explore the education and training that may be required of school administrators when they are charged with leading a community school.
2. Most of the participants described that there was a lack of specificity about the role of a community school connector and that they may have responsibilities that are outside of the scope of their education and training. Future research might seek to determine the core competencies of a community school connector and identify the necessary professional development for an individual in that role.

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3. Most of the participants acknowledged that the role of teachers in a community school required a significant commitment. It may be important to explore how the commitment of teachers might be enhanced particularly in a rural community school setting.
4. All of the community schools that were studied had experienced some level of conflict within the parent council groups. In order to address this issue it may be worthwhile to explore how parent councils might be supported in their leadership role in community schools.
5. Some of the participants in the rural community school that was studied suggested using a school bus or purchasing a van to be used to increase access to community school programming outside of school hours and to provide outreach during the school day. It may be worthwhile to research the feasibility of this model of support and the potential benefits to children, youth, families and the community.
6. Identifying a community school as a pilot site for the formal integration of support with joint funding and staffing from all human service departments under the officially designated leadership of the community school principal might be an efficacious way to study the potential impact of integrated support for the population served by the community school.
7. Future research also might also seek to identify the potential evidence-based practices that should be implemented within community school settings and the means by which outcomes should be measured. Providing guidance to community schools about the practices that support early intervention, academic growth, social and emotional development, improved attendance, improved nutrition, high graduation rates and community engagement, as well as the means by which to measure the achievement of

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the desired outcomes might help to ensure that community schools in the province are achieving their stated objectives. The formal assessment of the impact of specific evidence-based practice over the long term in community school settings also may provide evidence of the most impactful interventions which might then be replicated in other settings.

8. An additional study might also explore training community school connectors as wraparound facilitators and assessing the potential impact of implementing the wraparound approach in the context of a community school for individuals with EBD and other complex needs.

### Concluding Statement

The findings from this study suggest that at the practice level, the community schools that were studied fostered collaboration and possessed the requisite conditions that would support the implementation of the wraparound approach as a process to guide individualized planning for children and youth with complex needs. Barriers to the full-scale implementation of the wraparound approach in the context of community schools were identified and primarily included system level constraints on collaborative practices. Future research may involve piloting the implementation of the wraparound approach as outlined in the “*Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders,*” (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) in designated community schools within the province of Manitoba in order to build upon the strengths of community schools as effective host environments for the implementation of the wraparound approach and also to identify the means by which the system level constraints to collaborative practices might be overcome.

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**Appendix A****Consent Form/ Superintendent**

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to request the participation of your school division in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This research is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It will give you an overview of the research and provide information about what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully. Should you consent for your school division to participate in this study you may do so by signing and returning this consent letter to me by mail or email.

**Rationale for the Research**

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of the Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and in rural areas within a 3 hour driving distance from the city of Winnipeg. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Research Plan**

My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. Participants will be asked questions about the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with EBD and families. My research will involve separate 1.5 hour interviews with a minimum of 3 personnel from the identified community school and a minimum of 2 parents/guardians associated with the community school. If possible, I may also conduct 1.5 hour interviews with 1-2 outside service providers. If I feel the need to gather further information I may ask participants to engage in a second interview of approximately 1 hour in duration.

I am also asking to review the community school plan and any other relevant support documents related to the community school that is identified, as well as a blank behaviour intervention planning template and blank individualized education planning template used by the school.

### **Role of the Superintendent**

I am asking for your assistance in identifying a community school to participate in this study and for your permission to contact the principal of the school to request his/her participation in the study. Once I have your approval and you have identified a community school, I will send the principal of the school a consent letter by email or mail and request that the signed consent letter is returned to me by mail or email.

### **Role of the Principal**

In addition to participating in a 1.5 hour interview the primary role of the school principal will to assist with the dissemination of consent letters on my behalf.

### **School Staff**

I will ask the principal to disseminate the consent letters to school staff including the resource teacher, counsellor, community school connector and other teaching personnel most directly involved in supporting students with severe to profound behaviour disorders in the community school by placing a consent letter in the mailboxes of these key personnel. In addition to the principal of the

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

school, I also will select a minimum of 2 other school staff members to participate in a 1.5 hour interview based on who responds by mail, email or telephone to my request first.

### **Parent Community**

I also will ask the school principal to send a consent letter on my behalf to the parent community requesting participation in this study. A letter requesting parental participation in the study will be distributed to all parents/guardians, however, I will randomly select 2-3 parents/guardians to participate in individual, 1.5 hour interviews. All parents/guardians in the school community will receive consent letters requesting participation in the study and from the consent letters that are returned by email, or by a drop box left in the school office, I will select 2-3 parents based on who responds to my request first. Through this process, I will be able to ensure the confidentiality of the parents/guardians who participate in the study. I also will inform the parent community of your knowledge as Superintendent of the school that has been selected to participate, as well as the principal's knowledge of the study. In order to compensate parents for their time I will provide them with a \$20.00 Tim Hortons gift card.

### **Partnering Service Providers**

I also will ask the school principal to distribute a consent letter on my behalf to the senior administrators of the partnering service providers who play a role in supporting the community school. The consent letter will request the senior administrators' approval to contact their staff and to request their participation in my research.

Once I receive consent from the senior administrators of the partnering service providers by email or mail I will ask the school principal to distribute a consent letter to the partnering service providers who work in the community school by placing the consent letters in the mailboxes of these staff members or by sending the consent letters by email. I will ask the partnering service providers to contact me by email or mail if they are interested in participating in my research. The partnering service providers will be asked to participate in individual, 1.5 hour interviews. As a part of the informed consent process, I will ensure that the partnering service providers are aware that the senior administrators of their respective organizations have approved the research and that the school principal was involved in the distribution of the consent letters on my behalf. I also will inform the participants that the superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school involved in the study. Once informed consent is received from the partnering service providers, I will randomly select 1-2 partnering service providers to participate in the study depending upon who responds to my request first by email or mail. Recognizing that it may be challenging to obtain informed consent from multiple outside service providers, I will proceed with the research in the community school without the participation of outside agency supports if necessary.

### **Interview Process**

A copy of the interview questions will be sent by mail or email to the participants for the purposes of consideration and preparation. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a password protected computer. A comprehensive member check will be used after the interviews have been completed in order to allow participants the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of interview responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transcripts of each individual interview will be

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

emailed or mailed to participants depending on which method they prefer. Participants will be able to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and they will also be able to make any final comments. In order to provide feedback a one page response form will be provided. If a participant prefers to receive the transcript by mail, a self-addressed, stamped envelope will be provided. It will take approximately 45 minutes to review the transcript and make any changes and/or comments. I will provide the participants a period of two weeks to review their transcript and provide feedback.

### **Confidentiality**

All information will be held fully confidential. I will not document the actual names of the school divisions, schools, agencies or any of the participants involved in the study. I will simply identify each by an unrelated pseudonym. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study, and therefore they may also guess the identity of the school personnel involved in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, it is important to note that I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, agencies or the identity of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. Through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the anonymity of the school division, school, and all participants.

While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support Wraparound planning for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes for this population.

### **Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.



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Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation on behalf of your school division. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Should you wish to withdraw your consent for this research in your school division you may do so by emailing or telephoning the researcher. **If you withdraw your consent, the research will cease and all records of the research in your school division will be destroyed.**

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (REB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca) Human Ethics Coordinator Margaret Bowman,

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Signature of Superintendent on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ School Division

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher**



**Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.**

**Principal Investigator: Nadine Bartlett**

**Mail: Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba**

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### Appendix B Consent Form/Principal

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

Dear Principal:

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This study is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. Should you consent to participate in this study you may do so by signing and returning this consent letter to me by mail or email or by contacting me by telephone.

#### **Rationale for the Research**

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Students with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and in rural areas of northern, southern and central Manitoba. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Research Plan**

My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. Participants will be asked about the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with EBD and families. In order to best respond to the interview questions, I am asking that participants focus on community schools and how they support students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

### **Role of the Principal**

Should you consent to participate in this study, I am asking:

1. For your participation in an individual, 1.5 hour interview at a mutually agreed upon location
2. For a second 1 hour interview if I feel the need to clarify a point that was raised during the interview
3. To review the community school plan and any other relevant support documents related to the community school that is identified, as well as a blank behaviour intervention planning template and blank individualized education planning template used by the school
4. For your assistance in distributing consent letters to your school staff, parent community and the senior administrators and staff of any partnering service providers in your school

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### Details Related to the Recruitment of Participants

#### School Staff

As the principal of the school, I am asking for your assistance in distributing consent letters to key personnel involved in supporting students with severe to profound behaviour disorders in your community school by putting consent letters in the mailboxes of your staff on my behalf. These individuals may include the resource teacher, the community school connector as well as other teaching staff. These individuals will be asked to contact me by email or telephone if they wish to participate in the study. I will select 2-3 staff members to participate in an interview based on who responds to my request first.

#### Parent Community

I am also asking for your assistance in distributing consent letters on my behalf to the members of your parent community to request their participation in an individual, 1.5 hour interview. I am asking for the letter to be distributed to the entire parent community, however, I will randomly select 1-2 parents to participate in the study based on who responds to my request first. In the letter of introduction to the parents, I will provide a description of the research and outline what their participation will involve. I also will provide information about how they can contact me regarding their willingness to participate in this study which will include email, telephone or returning the consent letter to a drop box in the school office. In order to maximize the possibility that all parents will have the ability to participate in this study, I am asking that a box is placed in the school office or other monitored location so that parents may be able to return their consent forms in a signed, sealed, non-identifying envelope that I will provide. As a part of the informed consent process, I will inform the parent community of the Superintendent's knowledge of the identity of the participating school and of your knowledge of the study as the school principal. In order to compensate parents for their time I will provide them with a \$20.00 Tim Hortons gift card.

#### Partnering Service Providers

Since partnering service providers also play a vital role in the work of community schools, I am also asking for your assistance in distributing consent letters on my behalf to the senior administrators of the partnering service providers who play a role in supporting the community school. The consent letter will request the approval of the senior administrators for their staff to participate in my research. Once I receive a signed consent letter from the senior administrators of the partnering service providers returned to me by email or mail I will ask you to distribute a consent letter to the partnering service providers in the community school. I will ask the partnering service providers to contact me by email or telephone if they are interested in participating in my research. The partnering service providers will be asked to participate in individual, 1.5 hour interviews.

As part of the informed consent process, I will ensure that the partnering service providers are aware that the senior administrators of their respective organizations have approved the research and that as the principal you were involved in the distribution of the **consent letters on my behalf**. Once informed consent is received from the partnering service providers, I will randomly select 1-2 partnering service providers to participate in the study based on who responds to my request first by email or telephone. Recognizing that it may be challenging to obtain informed consent from multiple

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

outside service providers, I will proceed with the research in the community school without the participation of partnering service providers if necessary.

### **Interview Process**

Interview questions will be forwarded in advance by email or mail for purposes of consideration and preparation. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a computer and then save the information to a password protected, external memory device. A comprehensive member check will be used after the interviews have been completed in order to allow participants the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of interview responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transcripts of each individual interview will be emailed or mailed to the participants and one page response form and self-addressed, stamped envelope will also be provided if the transcript is mailed. Participants will be invited to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and will be invited to they make any final comments. It will take approximately 45 minutes of your time to review the transcript and make any changes and/or comments. Participants will have a period of two weeks to review their transcripts and provide feedback.

### **Confidentiality**

All information will be held fully confidential. I will not document the actual names of the school division, the school or the participants involved in the study. I will simply identify each by an unrelated pseudonym. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study, and therefore they may also guess the identity of the school personnel involved in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, I need to inform you that the Superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school participating in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, it is important to note that I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, agencies or the identity of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. Through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the anonymity of the school division, school, and all participants.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support its implementation. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes. There are no identifiable risks associated with participation in this study. While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. **You may withdraw from this study by emailing or telephoning the researcher.** Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

**This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (REB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or e-mail [Margaret\\_Bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca) , A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

**Signature of Principal** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher** \_\_\_\_\_

☐

**Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.**

**Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange an interview.**

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Mail:** Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL



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## Appendix C

### Consent Form/School Personnel

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

Dear School Personnel:

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This study is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. Should you consent to participate in this study you may do so by signing and returning this consent letter to me by mail, email or by contacting me by telephone.

### Rationale for the Research

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Students with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of the Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and in rural areas within a 3 hour drive from the city limits. My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Role of School Personnel**

Should you consent to participate in this study, I am asking that you participate in an individual, 1.5 hour interview at a mutually agreed upon location. You will be asked questions about the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with EBD and families. If I feel the need to clarify a point raised I may ask for a second, follow up 1 hour interview. In order to best respond to the interview questions, I am asking that participants focus on community schools and how they support students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

### **Interview Process**

Interview questions will be forwarded in advance by email or mail for purposes of consideration and preparation. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a computer and then save the information to a password protected, external memory device. A comprehensive member check will be used after the interviews have been completed in order to allow participants the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of interview responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). If I feel the need to clarify a point raised I may ask for a second, follow up interview. Transcripts of each individual interview will be emailed or mailed to participants with a one page response form and self-addressed, stamped envelope if the transcripts are mailed. Participants will be asked to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and will be invited to make any final comments. It will take approximately 45 minutes of your time to review the transcript and make any changes and/or comments. Participants will have a period of two weeks to review their transcripts and provide feedback.



## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

### **Confidentiality**

All information will be held completely confidential. I will not document the actual names of the school division, the school, agencies or the participants involved in the study. I will simply identify each by an unrelated pseudonym. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study, and therefore they may also guess the identity of the school personnel involved in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, I need to inform you that the Superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school participating in the study. The school principal also has knowledge that his/her school is involved in this research and was involved in the distribution of the consent letters on my behalf. As a part of the informed consent process, it is important to note that I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, or the identity of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. Through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the confidentiality of the school division, school, and all participants.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support its implementation. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes. There are no identifiable risks associated with participation in this study. While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

### **Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and or refrain from answering

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You may withdraw from this study by emailing or telephoning the researcher. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

**This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or e-mail [Margaret\\_Bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca) , A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Researcher**



**Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.**

**Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange an interview.**

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Mail: Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba**

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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## Appendix D

## Consent Form Parent/Guardian

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This study is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

### **Rationale for the Research**

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Students with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of the Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the City of Winnipeg and in rural areas of northern, southern and central Manitoba. My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Should you consent to participate in this study, I am asking that you participate in an individual, 1.5 hour interview at a mutually agreed upon location. You will be asked questions about the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders and families. If I feel the need to clarify a point raised I may ask for a second, follow up 1 hour interview. In order to best respond to the interview questions, I am asking that participants focus on community schools and how they support students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

I have asked for this letter to be distributed to the entire parent community which means that all parents with children enrolled in the community school will be eligible to participate. However, I will randomly select 2-3 parents to participate in the study based on who responds to my request first.

If you have direct knowledge of how the community school support students with emotional and behavioural disorders your input in this study will be of significant value. Please consider your ability to respond to questions related to students with emotional and behavioural disorders and the support they receive in a community school prior to providing your informed consent. In order to compensate you for your time I will provide you with a \$20.00 Tim Horton's gift card should you choose to participate in this research.

Should you wish to participate in an individual, 1.5 hour interview I ask that you telephone or email me and return this signed consent letter to the box marked "Nadine" located in the school office in the envelope that I have provided that says: Return to School Office: Attention Nadine Bartlett

### **Interview Process**

Interview questions will be sent by mail or email in advance of the interview for the purposes of consideration and preparation. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a computer and then save the information to a password protected, external memory device. I also will provide you with a transcript of your interview so that you may have the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of your interview responses. Transcripts of each individual interview will be

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

emailed or mailed to participants with a one page response form and self-addressed, stamped envelope if the transcript is mailed. Participants will be asked to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and will be invited to make any final comments. It will take approximately 45 minutes of your time to review the transcript and make any changes and/or comments. Participants will have a period of two weeks to review their transcripts and provide feedback.

### **Confidentiality**

The school principal has distributed this consent letter on my behalf to the entire parent community of the school. I will randomly select 2-3 parents/guardians depending upon who responds to my request first to participate in an individual, 1.5 hour interview. As a part of the informed consent process, I need to inform you that the Superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school participating in the study.

It is important to note that through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the confidentiality of the school division, school, agencies and all participants. I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, or of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. All information will be held fully confidential. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the practical application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support its implementation. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes. There are no identifiable risks associated with participation in this study. While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

### **Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You may withdraw from this study by emailing or telephoning the researcher. If you withdraw from this study you will still be entitled to keep the \$20.00 gift card. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

**This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or e-mail [Margaret\\_Bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca) , A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

**Signature of Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



**Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.**

**Signature of Researcher**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**If you wish to participate in this research please sign the consent form and contact me by telephone, email or mail. My contact information is:**

**Principal Investigator: Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba,**

**Mail: Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba**

**You also may return this letter with your signature on it in the signed, sealed envelope**

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL



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### Appendix E

#### Consent Form Senior Administrator of Partnering Service Provider

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

Dear Senior Administrator:

I am writing to request your consent for your staff who work in a community school to participate in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This research is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It will give you an overview of the research and provide information about what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully. Should you consent for your staff to participate in this study you may do so by signing and returning this consent letter to me by mail or email or by contacting me by telephone.

#### **Rationale for the Research**

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of the Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and in rural areas within a 3 hour driving distance from the city of Winnipeg. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Research Plan**

My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. My research will involve separate 1.5 hour interviews with 1-2 partnering service providers in a community school on the topic of the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with EBD and families. If I feel the need to gather further information I may ask participants to engage in a second interview of approximately 1 hour in duration.

### **Role of Senior Administrator**

I am asking for your consent to contact your staff who work in a community school to request their participation in this study. Once I have your approval, I will send the principal of the school a consent letter by email or mail and request that he/she distribute a consent letter to your staff in the community school. I will ask the partnering service providers (your staff) to contact me by email, mail or telephone if they are interested in participating in my research.

As a part of the informed consent process, I will ensure that the partnering service providers are aware that the senior administrators of their respective organizations have approved the research and that the school principal was involved in the distribution of the consent letters on my behalf.

I also will inform the participants that the Superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school involved in the study. Once informed consent is received from the partnering service providers, I will randomly select 1-2 partnering service providers to participate in the study depending upon who responds to my request first by email or telephone.

### **Interview Process**

A copy of the interview questions will be sent by mail or email to the participants for the purposes of consideration and preparation. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the



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accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a password protected computer. A comprehensive member check will be used after the interviews have been completed in order to allow participants the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of interview responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transcripts of each individual interview will be emailed or mailed to participants depending on which method they prefer. Participants will be asked to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and they will also be invited to make any final comments. In order to provide feedback a one page response form will be provided. If the participant prefers to receive the transcript by mail, a self-addressed, stamped envelope will be provided. It will take approximately 45 minutes to review the transcript and make any changes and/or comments. I will provide the participants a period of two weeks to review their transcript and provide feedback.

### **Confidentiality**

All information will be held fully confidential. I will not document the actual names of the school divisions, schools, agencies or any of the participants involved in the study. I will simply identify each by an unrelated pseudonym. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study, and therefore they may also guess the identity of the school personnel involved in the study. As a part of the informed consent process, it is important to note that I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, agencies or the identity of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. Through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the confidentiality of the school division, school, agencies and all participants.

While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support Wraparound planning for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes for this population.

### **Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and

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intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation on behalf of your school division. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Should you wish to withdraw your consent for this research in your school division you may do so by emailing or telephoning the researcher. **If you withdraw your consent, the research will cease and all records of the research in your school division will be destroyed.**

**This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca) Human Ethics Coordinator Margaret Bowman,**

**A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

**Signature of Senior Administrator on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Organization**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Researcher**



**Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.**

**Principal Investigator: Nadine Bartlett**

**Mail: Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba**

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL



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### Appendix F Consent Form/Partnering Service Provider

**Project title:** Defining Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: The Wraparound Approach in the Context of a Community School

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Research Supervisor:** Dr. Zana Lutfiyya, Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about community schools and the manner in which they support students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a brief description of the research, the procedures and relevant details. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and any involvement, first, requires your informed consent. This study is the basis of a doctoral thesis that will be made publically available upon the completion of the research. This study is being funded by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. Should you consent to participate in this study you may do so by signing and returning this consent letter to me by mail or email or by contacting me by telephone.

#### **Rationale for the Research**

The province of Manitoba has recently released an interdepartmental protocol entitled *Wraparound Supports for Students with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013)*. The protocol outlines the use of Wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders, which involves the integration of services and supports, as well as the need for collaborative planning among all stakeholders. Wraparound planning is an evidence-based practice that has been found to improve outcomes for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders [EBD].

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Given that community schools offer a comprehensive range of supports, research supports the notion that community schools may provide the most effective host environment for the integration of support for children and youth whose needs span an array of service providers. This research study has been developed to determine the extent to which community schools in Manitoba possess the essential elements that support collaboration and the integration of support for children and youth with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders. This study will further explore the specific elements in community schools that may support the implementation of Wraparound planning so that they might be replicated in other sites and/or expanded upon to improve future practice.

### **Scope of the Research**

This study will take place in selected school divisions both in the city of Winnipeg and in rural areas of northern, southern and central Manitoba. In order to be selected to participate in this study a school must be designated as a Community School according to the Community Schools Partnership Initiative in the province of Manitoba. Only school divisions with schools that meet this criterion will be selected to participate.

### **Research Plan**

My research plan with participating school divisions is to collect data through an interview process. Participants will be asked about the community school's structure, organization, collaborative practices and supports for children and youth with EBD and families. In order to best respond to the interview questions, I am asking that participants focus on community schools and how they support students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

### **Role of Partnering Service Provider**

Should you consent to participate in this study, I am asking that you participate in an individual, 1.5 hour interview at a mutually agreed upon location. If I feel the need to clarify a point raised I may ask for a second, follow up 1 hour interview. In order to best respond to the interview questions, I am asking that participants focus on community schools and how they support students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural disorders.

### **Interview Process**

In order to best respond to the interview questions the questions will be forwarded in advance by mail or email. With the consent of the participants, I will audio tape and then transcribe each interview. I will audiotape the interview for future reference and to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. I will store the transcription on a computer and then save the information to a password protected, external memory device. A comprehensive member check will be used after the interviews have been completed in order to allow participants the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of my interpretation of interview responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Transcripts of each individual interview will be emailed or mailed to participants along with a one page response form and self-addressed, stamped envelope if the transcripts are mailed. Participants will be able to specify any additions, deletions or changes to the transcript, and will be invited to make any final comments. It will take approximately 45 minutes of your time to review the transcript and make any changes

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and/or comments. Participants will have a period of two weeks to review their transcripts and provide feedback.

### **Confidentiality**

All information will be held fully confidential. I will not document the actual names of the school division, the school, agencies or the participants involved in the study. I will simply identify each by an unrelated pseudonym. It is important to note that I will not discuss the identity of the school division, the school, or the identity of any participants in the study. I also will ask participants not to discuss their involvement in the study with others. Only my advisor, Dr. Zana Lutfiyya and I will have access to any raw data collected as part of the study. The data will be maintained in a locked filing cabinet located in my home, and will be destroyed after the completion of my dissertation.

A senior administrator in your organization has provided consent for this research to be conducted. In addition, the superintendent of the school division has knowledge of the identity of the school participating in the study. I also need to inform you that the school principal distributed this consent letter on my behalf.

It is important to note that given that there are a limited number of community schools in the province of Manitoba some readers of my research may guess the identity of the community school involved in the study, and therefore they may also guess the identity of the personnel involved in the study. Through the use of pseudonyms, I will protect the anonymity of the school division, school, and all participants.

### **Implications of the Research**

On a practical level, this study may inform the practical application of the *Wraparound Protocol for Children and Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders* (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2013) by demonstrating the organizational structures and elements of a community school that support its implementation. Identifying exemplary practices in community schools that reflect the Wraparound Approach also may assist all stakeholders in more effectively supporting children and youth with EBD and their families and thus lead to improvements in life outcomes. There are no identifiable risks associated with participation in this study. While it is unlikely that I will hear of or see abuse during the course of my study, should this occur, I am required by law to report my finding according to The Revised Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection.

### **Executive Summary of Findings**

If you would like an executive summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation. I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences. I anticipate that my dissertation will be completed by December 2014.

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding this research project and agree to participation. If you would like an executive

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summary of the findings of this research please check the box at the end of this consent letter. The findings of this study will be documented to complete my dissertation.

I also plan to write a short article summarizing the research for publication in scholarly journals and intend to present this research at education conferences.

The University of Manitoba may look at my research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. **You may withdraw from this study by emailing or telephoning the researcher.** Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

**This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122 or e-mail [Margaret\\_Bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca) , A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher



Check this box to indicate that you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this research.

**Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange an interview.**

**Principal Investigator:** Nadine Bartlett, Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

**Mail: Attention: Nadine Bartlett Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba**

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## Appendix G

### Interview Guide for Principal

The interview guides in this study were adapted from:

Phillips, S.M. (2008). Forging partnerships, opening doors: Community school case studies from Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Raham, H., & Bredberg, E. (Eds.) Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education, Kelowna: BC.

**PREAMBLE:** This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to provide your perceptions about the practices and factors in your community school that support children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders. Anonymity and confidentiality will be respected in the use of your comments, and no names will be reported in the research report. Please make sure that you have read, signed and returned the consent form to the researcher before beginning the interview.

#### PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of years in this position at this school  
 Number of years in administration  
 Number of years teaching  
 Number of years working in a community school setting

**Part B: Your views.** In this section we will discuss your community school and the practices and factors that you feel support students with emotional and behavioural disorders. Please feel free to make comments or to add other things that are important to you.

#### DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL

- What is the history of this community school?
  - How has your community programming evolved since its inception?
  - What is your school's vision/mission? How is the school's vision actualized through the community school programming?
  - Describe your grade configurations, enrolment trends, and school capacity to accommodate community schooling.
  - How would you characterize your student population and their needs?
  - What is the composition of your staff working in the community school programs (age, experience, qualifications, ancestral background, turn-over rates, etc)?
  - Describe your community and related conditions that support/hinder student success.
  - How would you characterize the needs of your students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

#### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES/COLLABORATION

- How does the principal's role in a CS differ from a traditional school settings?

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- What is the governance structure at your community school? How was it developed?
- What unique governance processes have been implemented to manage community programming?
- How have you fostered collaboration across service providers and with families?
- How have you fostered collaboration across service providers for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there a designated lead agency?
- How are the governance structures/policies articulated /shared?
- How are multiple services coordinated?
- How do you foster interdependence across service providers?
- How do you share information across service providers?
- What adaptations are required of staff from different organizations and agencies to function effectively in an integrated services environment?
- What are the roles for various groups in a community school such as parents? community members? funders? teachers? resource teachers? counsellors?
- Is there a designated person who supports the integration and delivery of services in a community school?
- What is this person's title? Role? Education/training?

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

- What types of community programs and resources does the school offer? For what populations? Offered by whom? For what purpose? Whom may I speak with further about these?
- What kinds of culturally responsive support does the community school provide?
- What kinds of mental health support does the community school provide?
- Are supports individualized? In what way and for whom?
- When are programs offered? Within and/or outside regular instructional time?
- What are the most unique aspects of your community school programming?
- Are there any supports that you think need to be added to your community school?

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

- How do you support positive behaviour in your school? Describe the continuum of behavioural supports.
- In what ways do the community school programs and services address the needs of students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What types of supports are provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How are supports accessed for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How do you document the supports provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of service providers in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour intervention planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of parents in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there an individual who leads/manages the planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Does the "community school connector" play a role in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders? If so, what is their role?



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- In what way do you think the community school benefits students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- In what way do you think the community school benefits families with children with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What is your understanding of wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

## FUNDING/RESOURCES

- Describe the funding sources available for your community school programming.
- How are funding allocations decided at the community school?
- What other inputs/resources are available for community school programs?
- Is there a common/shared pool of resources that is accessed across service providers?
- If there is a common pool of resources how is it used?
- How are funds used to support students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How are funds used to support the families of students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

## SCHOOL EFFECTS/OUTCOMES

- How do you measure the effectiveness and track the success of community school supports for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What is the evidence of significant success for students with emotional and behavioural disorders? (e.g.. school level measures, provincial evaluations, agency evaluations)
- How do parents feel about the school's support of children with emotional and behavioural disorders? What evidence can you provide of parental perspectives?
- How does the community feel about the school's support of children with emotional and behavioural disorders? What evidence can you provide of the community perspectives?
- How have you built shared accountability for improved student outcomes across service providers?
- How do you use data to increase the effectiveness of your community school programs?
- How do you share results with students, parents and the community?
- What remaining challenges face this school with respect to supporting children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders? Are there plans/ resources to address these challenges?

## OBSERVATIONS

- What are the factors that make this community school successful, in order of priority?
- What are the most pressing challenges facing your community school?
- What are the future plans for this community school?

Thank you for contributing to this research. Is there any other information that you would like to provide

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## Appendix H

### Interview Guide School Personnel/Teachers

**PREAMBLE:** This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to provide your perceptions about the practices and factors in your community school that support children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders. Anonymity and confidentiality will be respected in the use of your comments, and no names will be reported in the research report. Please make sure that you have read, signed and returned the consent form to the researcher before beginning the interview.

#### PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS

What grade(s) do you presently teach?      K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 H 12 12+ (*circle*)  
 Number of years at this school \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of years teaching \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of years working in a community school setting \_\_\_\_\_

#### PART B: YOUR VIEWS

In this section we will discuss your community school and the practices and factors that you feel support students with emotional and behavioural disorders. Please feel free to make comments or to add other things that are important to you.

#### DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL

- How has your community school programming evolved since its inception?
- What is your school's vision/mission? How is the school's vision actualized through the community school programming?
- How would you characterize your student population and their needs?
- Describe your community and related conditions that support /hinder student success.
- How would you characterize the needs of your students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

#### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES/COLLABORATION

- How does the teacher's role in a community school differ from traditional school settings?
- What is the governance structure at your community school?
- What unique governance processes have been implemented to manage community programming?
- How are multiple service providers coordinated?
- What are the primary management issues around effective planning and delivery of both educational and community programming services?

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

- What adaptations are required of staff from different organizations and agencies to function effectively in an integrated service environment?
- What are the roles for various groups such as teachers? Parents? Community members? Funders?
- Is there a designated person who supports the integration and delivery of services in a community school?
- What is this person's title? Role? Education/training?
- How does this person support you as a classroom teacher?

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

- What types of community programs and resources does the school offer? For what populations? Offered by whom? For what purpose? Whom may I speak with further about these?
- What kinds of culturally responsive support does the community school provide?
- What kinds of mental health support does the community school provide?
- Are supports individualized? In what way and for whom?
- When are programs offered? Within and/or outside regular instructional time?
- What are the most unique aspects of your community school programming?
- Are there any supports that you think need to be added to your community school?

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

- How do you support positive behaviour in your school and in in your classroom? Describe your continuum of behavioural supports.
- In what ways do the community school programs and services address the needs of students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What types of supports are provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How are supports accessed for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How do you document the supports provided for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of other service providers in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour intervention planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of parents in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there an individual who leads/manages the planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Does the "community school connector" play a role in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders? If so, what is their role?
- In what way do you think the community school benefits students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- In what way do you think the community school benefits families with children with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What is your understanding of wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

## FUNDING/RESOURCES

- Describe the funding sources available to your community school.
- How are funding allocations decided at the community school?

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

- What other inputs/resources are available for community school programs?
- Is there a common/shared pool of resources that is accessed across service providers?
- If there is a common pool of resources how is it used?
- What other inputs/ resources are required to deliver to support the community school (personnel, etc)?

## SCHOOL EFFECTS/OUTCOMES

- How do you measure the effectiveness and track the success of community school supports for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What is the evidence of significant success for students with emotional and behavioural disorders? (e.g.. school level measures, provincial evaluations, agency evaluations)
- How do parents feel about the school's support of children with emotional and behavioural disorders? What evidence can you provide of parental perspectives?
- How does the community feel about the school's support of children with emotional and behavioural disorders? What evidence can you provide of the community perspectives?
- How have you built shared accountability for improved student outcomes across service providers?
- How do you use data to increase the effectiveness of your support for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How do you share results with students, parents and the community?
- What remaining challenges face this school with respect to supporting children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders? Are there plans/ resources to address these challenges?

## OBSERVATIONS

- What are the factors that make this community school successful, in order of priority?
- What are the most pressing challenges facing your community school?
- What are the future plans for this community school?

Thank you for contributing to this research. Is there any other information that you would like to provide?

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL



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### Appendix I

#### Interview Guide for Parents/Guardians

**PREAMBLE:** This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to provide your perceptions about the practices and factors in your community school that support children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders. Anonymity and confidentiality will be respected in the use of your comments, and no names will be reported in the research report. Please read, sign and return the consent form to the researcher before beginning the interview.

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

- \_\_\_\_ Student(s) Grade(s) K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12+ (*circle*)
- \_\_\_\_ Parent(s) Guardian(s) or Grandparent(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Grades my child/children/grandchildren are in? Pre-K, K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12+
- \_\_\_\_ School Council Member
- \_\_\_\_ School Board
- \_\_\_\_ Other (please identify) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Number of years at this school \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: Your views.** In this section we will discuss your community school and the practices and factors that you feel support students with emotional and behavioural disorders. Please feel free to make comments or to add other things that are important to you.

#### BACKGROUND

- What are the goals and priorities of this school?
- How would you characterize the students at your school and their unique needs?
- What makes you feel welcome in the school?
- Describe your community and related conditions that support/ hinder student success.
- How do the services in the school help to meet the needs that are identified?

#### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES/COLLABORATION

- How does your role as a parent in a community school differ from that of a traditional school settings?
- What kind of input into decision-making do you and other community members have at the school?
  - What unique governance processes have been implemented to manage community programming?
  - Is there a designated lead agency?
  - How are the governance structures/policies articulated /shared?
  - How is information shared with parents and the community?
  - Does the community feel ownership in the school programming? In what ways do community members participate in school activities?

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- What are the roles for various groups in a community school such as parents? community members? funders? Principal? teachers? resource teachers? counsellors?
- Is there a designated person who supports the integration and delivery of services in a community school?
- What is this person's title? Role? Education/training?

### COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

- What types of community programs and resources does the school offer? For what populations? Offered by whom? For what purpose?
- What do you think are the most unique aspects of your community school's programming?
  - What kinds of culturally responsive support does the community school provide?
  - What kinds of mental health support does the community school provide?
  - Are supports individualized? In what way and for whom?
  - When are programs offered? Within and/or outside regular instructional time?
  - Are there any supports that you think need to be added to your community school?

### SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

- How does the community school support positive behaviour?
- In what ways do the community school programs and services address the needs of students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What types of supports are provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How are supports accessed for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of parents/community members in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour intervention planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there an individual who leads/manages the planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Does the "community school connector" play a role in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders? If so, what is their role?
- In what way do you think the community school benefits students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- In what way do you think the community school benefits families with children with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there anything you feel needs to be changed in order to meet the needs of students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families?

### FUNDING/RESOURCES/PERSONNEL

- Do you have a voice in how funding is allocated at the community school?
- What other inputs/resources are available for community school programs?
- Is there a common/shared pool of resources that is accessed across service providers?
- How are funds used to support students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

### SCHOOL EFFECTS/OUTCOMES

- How do you feel about the effectiveness and success of the community school in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What evidence is there of significant success?

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- What remaining challenges face this school in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families? How can these best be addressed? Are you aware of plans/ resources to address these issues?

**OBSERVATIONS**

- What are the factors that make this community school successful, in order of priority?
- What are the most pressing challenges facing your community school?

Thank you for contributing to this research. Is there any other information that you would like to provide?

## WRAPAROUND APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMMUNITY SCHOOL



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

## Appendix J

### Interview Guide Partnering Service Provider

**PREAMBLE:** This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to provide your perceptions about the practices and factors in your community school that support children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders. Anonymity and confidentiality will be respected in the use of your comments, and no names will be reported in the research report. Please make sure that you have read, signed and returned the consent form to the researcher before beginning the interview.

#### PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS

With which students do you work? K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12+ (*circle*)

Does your work also involve parents and families? \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Number of years delivering programs at this school? \_\_\_\_\_

What role/position do you fulfill at this community school? \_\_\_\_\_

#### PART B: YOUR VIEWS

In this section we will discuss your community school and the practices and factors that you feel support students with emotional and behavioural disorders. Please feel free to make comments or to add other things that are important to you.

#### BACKGROUND

- What is your role in this community school?
- How has your community programming/support evolved since its inception?
- What is the community school's vision/mission? How is the vision actualized through the community school programming?
  - What is the composition of your staff working in the community school programs (age, experience, qualifications, ancestral background, turn-over rates, etc)?
- Describe your community and related conditions that support/hinder student success.
- How would you characterize the needs of the students in this school with emotional and behavioural disorders?

#### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES/COLLABORATION

- How does your role in a community school differ from other settings in which your agency operates?
  - What unique governance processes have been implemented to manage community programming?
  - How have you fostered collaboration between your agency and the school as well as with other service providers?



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- How have you fostered collaboration between your agency and the school as well as with other service providers for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there a designated lead agency?
- How are the governance structures/policies articulated /shared?
- How do you share information across service providers?
- What adaptations are required for staff from different organizations and agencies to function effectively in an integrated services environment?
- What are the roles for various groups in a community school such as parents? community members? funders? teachers? resource teachers? counsellors?
- Is there a designated person who supports the integration and delivery of services in a community school?
- What is this person's title? Role? Education/training?

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

- What types of community programs and resources does your agency offer in the school? For what populations? How many are involved?
- What kinds of culturally responsive support does the community school provide?
- What kinds of mental health support does the community school provide?
- Who delivers these programs? When are they offered?
- In what way does your agency address the needs of children and their families? In the classroom? Outside of the classroom?

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

- How does your agency support positive behaviour?
- In what ways do the community school programs and services address the needs of students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- What types of supports are provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families?
- How are supports accessed for children and youth with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families?
- How do you document the supports provided to students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of service providers in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour intervention planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Describe the involvement of parents in the individualized educational planning process/behaviour planning process for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Is there an individual who leads/manages the planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- Does the "community school connector" play a role in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders? If so, what is their role?
- What is your understanding of wraparound planning for students with emotional and behavioural disorders?

## FUNDING/RESOURCES/PERSONNEL

- What funding sources/ support does your agency provide?
- What other inputs/ resources are required to deliver your programs in the school (personnel, etc)?
- What school division support is provided for your programs in this school?

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- What additional resources if any are needed to strengthen your program delivery?
- Are there shared resources across service providers?
- Is there a flexible pool of money to support the individualization of support?

## OUTCOMES

- How do you measure the effectiveness and track the success of your agency's role in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders? What evidence is there of the program's impact?
  - In what way do you think the community school benefits students with emotional and behavioural disorders?
  - In what way do you think the community school benefits families with children with emotional and behavioural disorders?
- How do you use data to increase the effectiveness of your program?
- How do you share results with students, parents and the community?

## OBSERVATIONS

- What are the factors that make this community school successful in supporting students with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families?
- What remaining challenges face this school with respect to supporting children with emotional and behavioural disorders and their families? Are there plans/ resources to address these?
- What are your agency's future plans for this community school?

Thank you for contributing to this research. Is there any other information that you would like to provide?