

BELONGING (SUMMARY)

Empathize

- 1. Who are we doing this for? Think of all the people this might affect.**
 - Students: everyone, introverts, new students, international students, grade 8's, immigrants
 - Staff: new staff, TOC's
 - Parents
 - Community: guests
- 2. What challenges do these people have that are related to "Belonging"? Capture some detailed stories.**
 - Language barriers: parents don't speak the same language – hard to communicate
 - Apathy: generational expectations and views of school
 - Caring about the whole student rather than just about grades
 - Misunderstanding different cultures
 - Eliminating stereotypes
 - Students may not have anyone they connect with (students or staff)
 - Fear of being judged
 - Some people are just introverts and do not want to interact
 - Isolation felt by many different people
 - Social media has changed how students socialize
 - Staff finding ways to balance the relationships and social dimensions in the classroom with academics
 - Parents are sometimes difficult to communicate with (no presence)
- 3. How will improving Belonging improve the culture of our school?**
 - More ownership of learning and confidence in being there
 - Improved attendance and being on time
 - Greater participation in events
 - Students wanting to help each other
 - Feeling of the school as a safe and comfortable place for all
 - Celebration of staff and students
 - Increased intrinsic motivation to learn and participate
 - Greater empathy for each other

Define

- 1. What are we trying to solve? Create some "How might we..." statements.**
 - How might we increase the feeling of ownership?
 - How might we foster a safe environment?
 - How might we be more inclusive for all?
 - How might staff connect better with students?
 - How might we create more meaningful dialogue with students?
 - How might we create respect for all people, property, environment?

- How might we empower students to self-regulate?
- How might we create an environment where anyone can walk in and feel good about being there?
- How might we all foster and reinforce an environment of respect for others?
- How might we include ALL students in class participation?
- How might we transition students from being passive learners to more active and proactive learners?
- How might we help students find their sense of belonging (clubs, classrooms, friend groups)?

2. *What are the obstacles?*

- Finding different ways for students to participate in school life
- Time and space to do more
- Consistency amongst staff
- Staff willingness to be open to change
- Anxiety
- Fear of failure / judgement
- Lack of knowledge about what is happening with students – shared communication

Ideate

What are some solutions?

- More student-driven activities
- More connections built between older and younger students
- Focus on a few big initiatives and really promote them, making them habitual or try to create meaning and tradition
- More field trips, retreats to help student bonding/relationships
- More leadership opportunities for all students
- More group activities in the classroom
- More fun time and icebreakers
- Be more consistent with the removal of phones in the work environment for both students AND staff
- Students and parents should be discouraged from leaving for extended periods of time during the school year
- Greeting staff and students in the morning
- Regular check-ins with students to model caring and also checking in on their condition before starting the class
- Be vigilant about hurtful or disrespectful comments
- Learn names as soon as possible and call each other by name
- More student-initiated clubs (have a clear process to do so)
- More student-designed school swag
- More comfortable common spaces for students to go and build connections and create a sense of belonging
- Celebrating positive behaviour, focussing on what people have done and why they deserve accolades
- Smaller classes and groupings to help students get to know each other
- More prep time, smaller class sizes
- Empowering students to become leaders - group leadership