

Leading Schools in Challenging Context

By
Bruce Sheppard
bsheppar@mun.ca

A Reason to Celebrate!



- By international standards, students in public schools in Canada, and especially in Alberta, perform very well on the performance indicators of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Results of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the performance of 15 year-old students in science, mathematics, and reading place Alberta as being among the best in the world in each of those subjects (Bussière, Knighton, & Pennock, 2006).



What

Do

You

Mean by



Influence

You

Do

How

**Learner Success?
Educational Attainment?**

The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada



Serigraph from the collection of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (ARCHIVES No. 407199). Copied from CCL (2009). **The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada.**

Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach (CCL 2009)



- **Holistic**
- **Lifelong**
- **Experiential**
- **Rooted in Aboriginal language and cultures**
- **Spiritually Oriented**
- **Communal activity**
- **Integrates Aboriginal and Western Knowledge**

Domains

- **Learning in School**
- **Learning at Home and in the Community**

Indicators

- **Dropout Rate**
- **School Attendance**
- **Participation in Extra-curricular**
- **Community Involvement**

Expectations of Public Schooling in Canada



- **Strong Foundations**

- ❖ Reading
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ Numeracy

- **Attainment of Adequate Performance**

- ❖ English Language Arts
- ❖ Mathematics
- ❖ Science

- **Preparation for Post-secondary and Labour Market**

- **Citizenship and Personal Development**

- ❖ Common Moral Values
- ❖ Engagement in Citizenship
- ❖ Promote Healthy Living
- ❖ Social Skills
- ❖ Technological Competence
- ❖ Appreciation of the Visual and performing Arts and Cultural Heritage

Public Expectations of Schools



Two overarching goals:

- **That each student learns at the level of her/his potential...**
- **That each student feels safe in the school environment**

Social Justice in Canada: A Stark Reality Check!



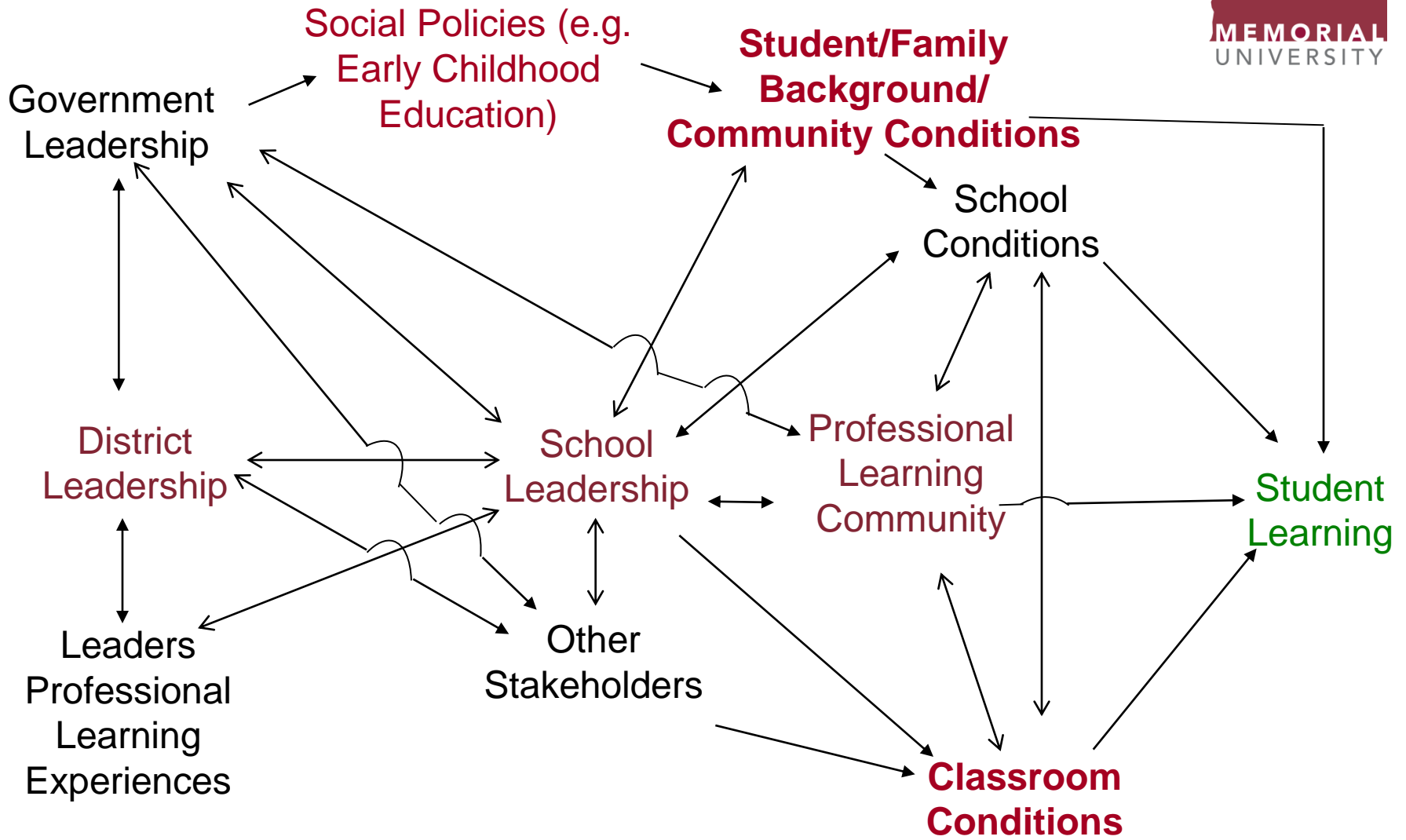
- Approximately 40% of Canada's Aboriginal population aged 20-24 and 25-64 have less than high school education! (Statistics Canada, 2006)
- In 2007, the employment rate of Aboriginal people between 25 and 54 years of age with a post-secondary certificate or diploma or a university diploma was 80.2%, compared with 70.4% for those who had completed high school and **[only]** 51.2% for those who had not. (Statistics Canada, 2007)

Given the consistent evidence that less than 15% of students' achievement can be attributed to what schools do (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2001), it is clear that the challenge before **would-be reformers** is significant.

And this is even more so in challenging contexts (Bracey, 2004; Levin. 2006; Reynolds, Harris, Clarke, Harris, & James, 2006)!

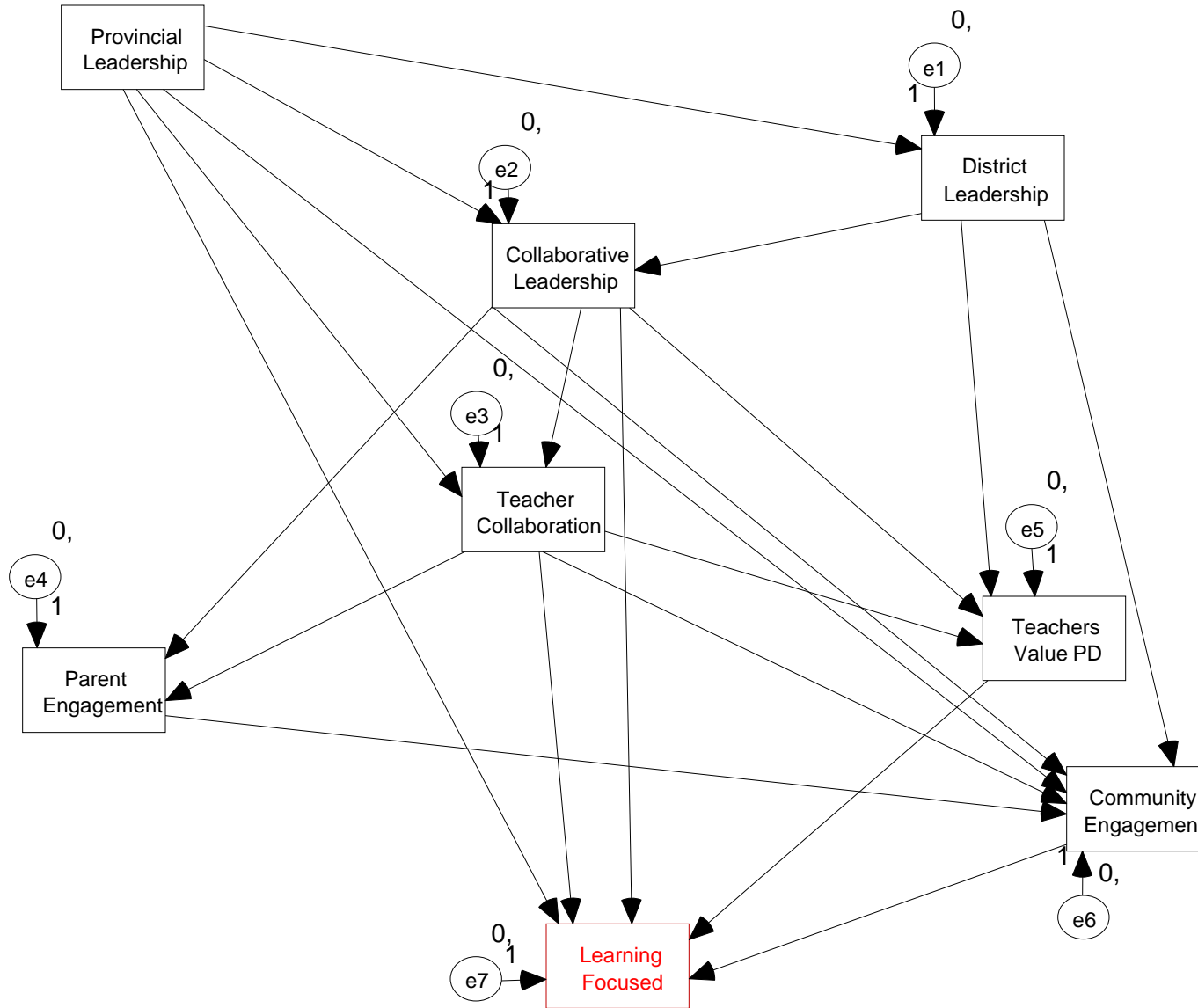
- **Education is a system, not a collection of parts!**
- **And student learning in whatever context is impacted by multiple factors**

Linking Leadership to Learning

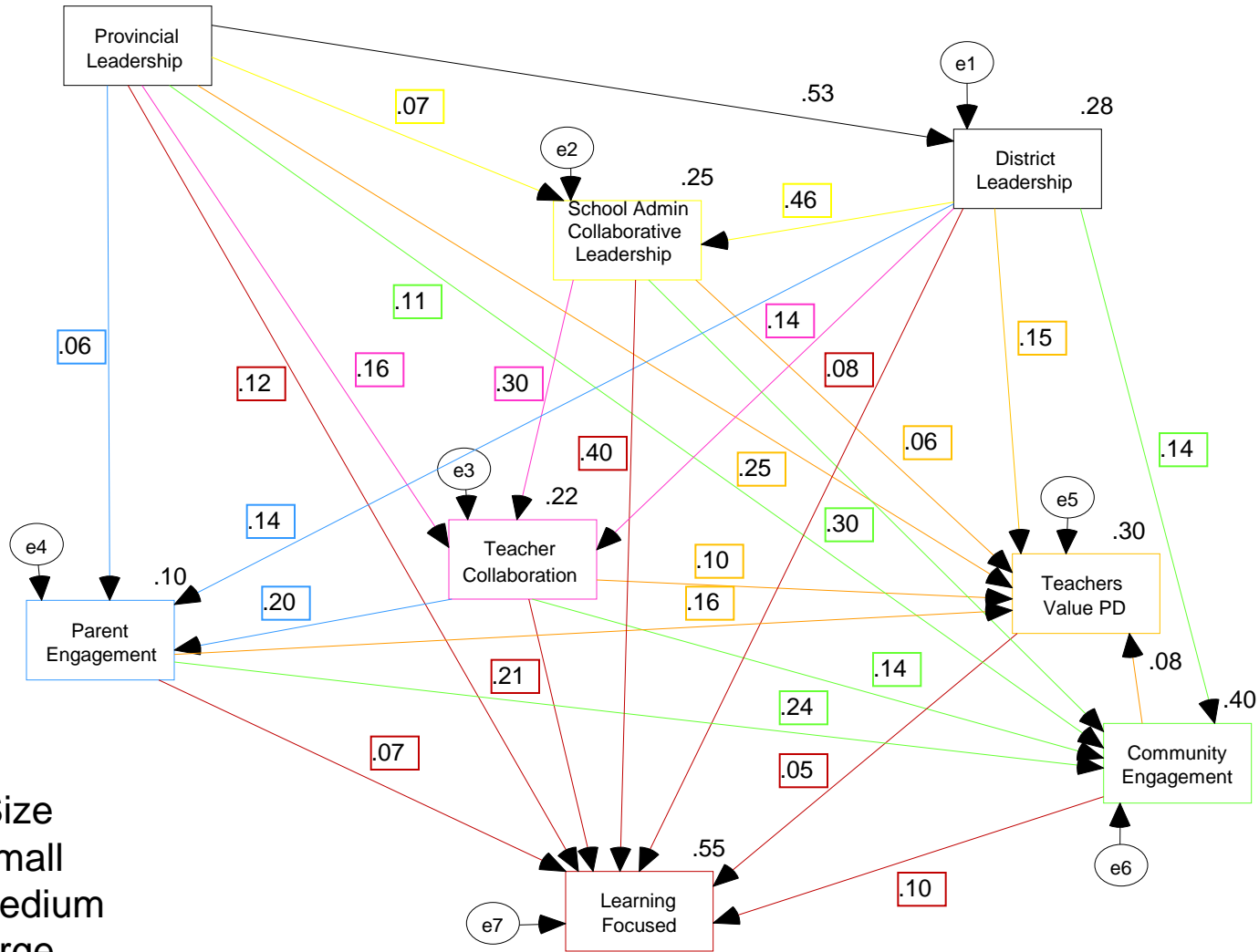


Adapted from Leithwood et al. (2004)

For schools to meet the learning needs of all students, governments, school districts, schools, communities, and parents must engage as partners to bring a focus on fostering sustainable improvement in support of student learning



Student Learning Focused



Effect Size
 <.10 Small
 >.30 Medium
 >.50 Large

Table 2. Standardized Total Effects



	PL	DL	SCL	TC	PE	CE	TVPD
DL	.526	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SCL	.313	.459	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
TC	.324	.274	.295	.000	.000	.000	.000
PE	.199	.194	.060	.203	.000	.000	.000
CE	.367	.361	.353	.185	.243	.000	.000
PVPD	.436	.261	.126	.147	.175	.079	.000
SLF	.427	.390	.512	.248	.101	.106	.053

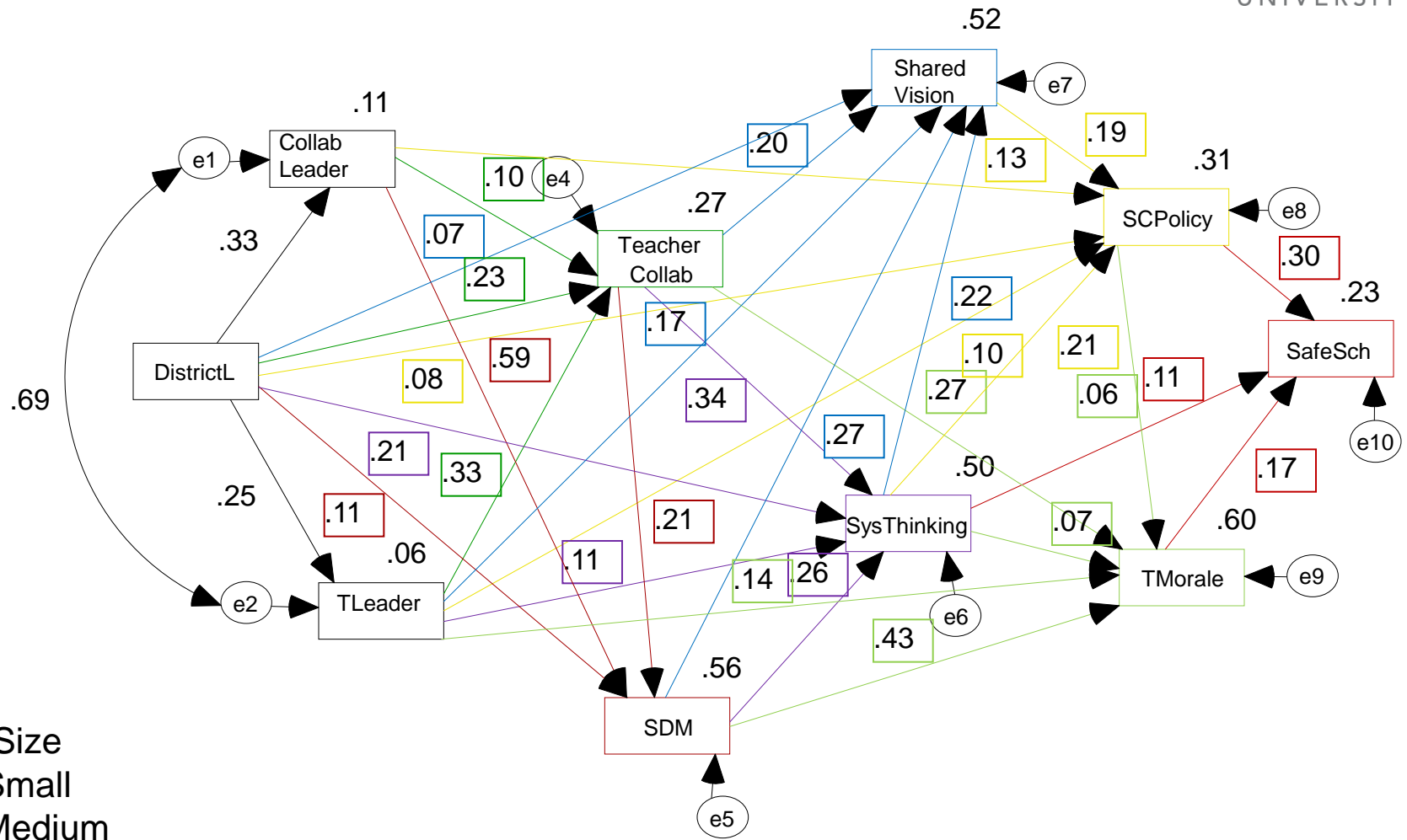
What do these findings suggest?



- **Our findings point to the importance of the engagement of multiple sources of leadership in the facilitation of a school's focus on teaching and learning.**
- **Without such leadership, it is likely that the hope for sustained learner success or improved educational attainment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students is unlikely.**

- **Parents and other community members may not be engaged in their children's schooling to the extent desired**
- **Given the accepted norms that have isolated schools from the community and parents, we posit that school insiders (teachers, school administrators, and school districts) have a leadership role to play in encouraging more parent and community engagement.**

Safe-Caring Schools



Effect Size
 <.10 Small
 >.30 Medium
 >.50 Large

Table 3. Standardized Total Effects



	DistL	TL	CL	TCol	SDM	SysT	SV	SCP	TM
TL¹	.247	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
CL	.326	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
TCol	.344	.325	.096	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SDM	.376	.069	.606	.211	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
SysT	.452	.241	.192	.400	.262	.000	.000	.000	.000
SV	.385	.302	.225	.342	.328	.220	.000	.000	.000
SCP	.315	.206	.213	.151	.119	.255	.191	.000	.000
TM	.339	.283	.312	.400	.454	.087	.011	.059	.000
SCS	.203	.137	.138	.159	.142	.205	.059	.306	.170

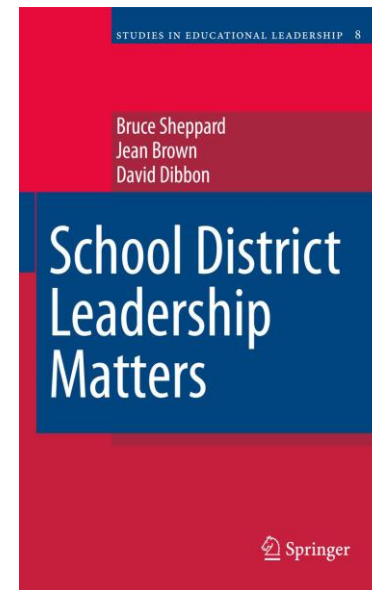
Implications

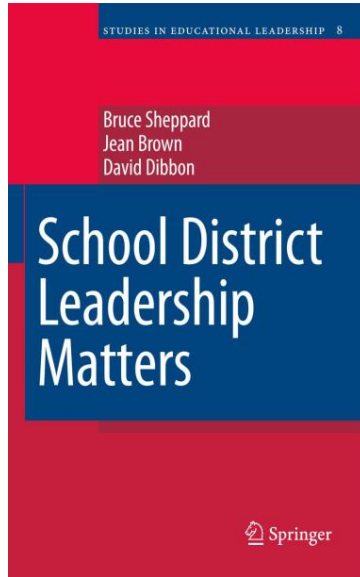
Increasing the number of Aboriginal Canadians who complete high school is a low-hanging fruit with far-reaching and considerable economic and social benefits for Canadians (Sharpe & Arsenault, 2009)

Recognition Five



Provincial and School district leaders must think systemically and strategically and enlist leaders from multiple sources to collaboratively engage in strategic thinking and adaptive learning





but only **effective** districts have a positive impact on student learning.

To realize these goals, the entire school system needs leaders who are...



- **Outraged...**
- **Courageous...**
- **Committed...**
- **Passionate...**

The challenge is great...

The reward is immeasurable!