Teacher Well-Being and Living Schools

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Abstract

Teacher well-being is a growing concern in the education field as teachers are the foundation of our education system. Unfortunately, teachers are burning out at alarming rates due to the low priority of their well-being in the current hierarchical system. The focus of this research study was to determine factors that influence the state of teacher well-being throughout schools in Manitoba and to determine how the presence of Living School Attributes and Practices (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) can contribute to the well-being of teachers. An explanatory sequential mixed method design was implemented in two phases. The first was a quantitative electronic survey to acquire initial information on teacher well-being variables with 83 participants; a well-being scale based upon Carney’s (2015) well-being model was developed for the survey. The data revealed significant correlations between teacher well-being and Living Schools, Living Schools and New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), and Well-Being and NPDL. The second phase employed qualitative one-on-one interviews based upon results from the first survey, with a focus on seven teachers who are thriving within their school environments. Four themes developed from this data and are all inter-related and connected to one another. The four identified themes are: 1) School Climate; 2) Teacher Resilience and Personal Competency, 3) Relationships; 4) Living School Attributes and Practices and Well-Being. The study supported the use of the Living School Framework to help enhance teacher well-being. It indicated that teacher well-being is a very complex topic and can be very individualized for specific teachers, therefore there is not one single solution to enhance teacher well-being; instead using the Living Schools Framework can enhance well-being for all, sustainably.
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List of Acronyms

**ESD** - Education for Sustainable Development

**GAFE** - Google Applications For Education

**HPS** – Health Promoting Schools

**JCSH** – Joint Consortium for School Health

**NPDL** – New Pedagogies for Deep Learning

**PD** – Professional Development

**PE** – Physical Education

**PERMA** – Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment

**PLC** – Professional Learning Community

**SEL** – Social and Emotional Learning

**WHO** – World Health Organization
Chapter 1: Introduction

Teachers are critical contributors to education systems, are vital in the development of future global citizens and the sustainability of the planet. Unfortunately, teacher well-being has often been neglected in past years, and was recognized as a country-wide issue at the 2018 National Summit on Teacher and Staff Well-Being (Well Ahead, 2017). Teacher well-being is directly linked to the health, well-being and academic success of students (McCallum & Price, 2012) so it is absolutely necessary to understand the factors that contribute to, or detract from, teacher well-being. It is also important to recognize the barriers to changing the education system at the government, division, and school levels. The focus of this research study is to determine factors that influence the state of teacher well-being throughout schools in Manitoba and to determine how the presence of Living School Attributes and Practices (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) can contribute to the well-being of teachers.

November is a tough month for Manitoba educators, the sky begins to darken for endless hours and the weather begins to turn up its wicked humour; report cards have just drained the energy out of teachers and making it through the next 30 days seems like an impossible feat. With no breaks or time for themselves and a demanding extra-curricular schedule picking up its pace, educators, myself included, tend to be at odds at this time of year trying to balance their professional and personal schedules. While November is a particular challenge for myself, I began to deconstruct the tough balance teachers strive to strike on a daily basis and I started to question the health of our schools and teachers’ well-being. This sparked my interest in teachers’ experiences, perspectives and ideas on ways to improve their well-being. Through my own experience teaching in the classroom over for the past 13 years and the knowledge I have acquired through various courses in the Master of Education (Sustainability, Creativity, and
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Innovation) Program at Cape Breton University, I have become intrigued by the state of teachers’ wellness and the impact it has on their teaching and lifestyle.

In order to understand the multiple factors that control teacher well-being, the following discussion considers literature on: Happiness, Well-Being, and Sustainability, Teacher Well-Being, and finally on Living Schools with new pedagogies. As a whole, these sections of literature address the significance of teacher well-being in the education system.

**Happiness, Well-Being, and Sustainability**

Research on happiness and well-being has reinforced the significance of positive emotions, not only in creating healthy citizens but also for the health and sustainability of our planet (Carney, 2015; Hopkins, 2013; O’Brien, 2016; Roffey, 2012). While the literature on happiness and well-being tends to focus on individual or national well-being, O’Brien (2010) asserts that sustainability principles must also be considered because individuals, communities and nations do not exist in isolation - human and environmental health are interconnected.

The Manitoba provincial government recognizes the importance of sustainability in the education system; the Government of Manitoba had encouraged every school in Manitoba to have an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) plan in place by 2019. The focus of ESD in Manitoba is to change the way sustainability is integrated into curriculum; instead of teaching students about sustainability, it requires students to live sustainably. The purpose is to implement key themes such as poverty alleviation, human rights, health and environmental protection, and climate change into the education system (Government of Manitoba, n.d.). Drawing these types of connections to sustainability emphasizes the link between well-being and sustainability and its relevance in the education system.
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In the Province of Manitoba, the overarching goal of the education system has moved away from a narrow model of academic excellence and into a more holistic model (Hopkins, 2013) “to ensure education in Manitoba supports students experiencing and learning about what it means to live in a sustainable manner” (Government of Manitoba, n.d.). Sustainability is also the focus of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], (n.d.) as it discusses Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an umbrella for many forms of education that already exist, and new ones that remain to be created. Continuing with this idea, Hopkins (2013) shares the emerging realization that ESD appears to improve the overall quality of the education system and he advocates for a repurposing of education with a vision of well-being for all. O’Brien (2016) draws a connection between sustainability, happiness and well-being through the term Sustainable Happiness and defines it as “a happiness that contributes to individual, community, or global well-being without exploiting other people, the environment, or future generations” (p. 9) contributing to well-being for all, sustainably. The concept of well-being for all, sustainably brings an enhanced perspective to teacher well-being.

While there are numerous approaches to understanding well-being, Carney’s (2015) Model for Well-Being addresses well-being at school and incorporates three main components: Resilience (the ability to cope with life’s disappointments, challenges, and pain); Active (a focus on regular exercise to help maintain mental and physical health); and Flourishing (the optimal level of mental health). Carney expanded upon Seligman’s (2011) definition of well-being that is based upon five elements that are outlined with the acronym PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment) (Seligman, 2011). Carney is a school psychologist and the target audience of his book is teachers; his work was recommended
Teacher Well-Being

While there is significant work on the well-being of students in the education system, teachers are often overlooked as important factors contributing to the overall health of schools. There is valuable literature on well-being from Seligman (2011) but there seems to be limited focus on teachers’ well-being as an integral part of the education system. The studies that do address teacher well-being tend to come from the perspective that it is the sole responsibility of the individual teacher with less attention on changing the structure of the education system (Manitoba Teachers’ Society, 2017). While there is acknowledgement regarding the significance of promoting healthy teachers from the perspective of their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health as the Joint Consortium for School Health (2013) recommends, there is a lack of applicable strategies connected to improving overall teacher well-being in the education system (Carney, 2015). Bricheno, Brown, and Lubansky (2009) identified gaps in the body of evidence relating to the well-being of teachers, ranging from: clearly identifying the meaning of “well-being” to investigating the “influences of school and demographic factors (such as gender, age, experience, sector) on teacher wellbeing”, and finding out how impactful relationships with colleagues are on individual teachers’ well-being (p.11).

O’Brien (2016) developed the term Sustainable Happiness by connecting sustainability, happiness, and well-being and has applied to concept to the education system. Additionally, O’Brien and Howard (2016) have developed a Framework of Attributes and Practices for Living Schools that is founded on an education vision of well-being for all, sustainably, thus integrating sustainability, well-being, and education in an holistic manner. Living Schools reflect, “the deep
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learning that happens when an entire school reflects *well-being for all*” (O’Brien, 2016, p. 186).

It is important to note that *well-being for all* involves all individuals and communities including the ‘other than human’ life on our planet (O’Brien, 2016). However, to date, there is no published research that has explored teacher well-being and Living Schools.

With the research gaps in mind, and others that will be discussed below, my aim was to identify which Manitoba teachers are thriving in their school environments then to explore in greater depth why certain teachers are flourishing. Additionally, I explored what Living School Attributes and Practices (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) were present in environments where teachers are experiencing high levels of well-being. The following section considers teacher well-being within the context of Health Promoting Schools (HPS) and I also take the stance that HPS complement Living Schools, with Living Schools viewed as a more comprehensive, holistic framework that can incorporate HPS.

**Living Schools and Health Promoting Schools**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Health Promoting Schools (HPS) are schools that constantly strengthen their capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working (WHO, 2009). While reviewing literature on HPS (JCSH, 2013), I was intrigued by the amount of research supporting the well-being of students but the limited amount of focus on teachers in transforming the education system. The Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) involves a whole school approach that does include teacher and staff well-being though the emphasis is on student well-being. The JCSH framework includes four interrelated pillars: Social and Physical Environment (the quality of the relationships among and between staff and students in the school community), Teaching and Learning (resources, activities and provincial/territorial curriculum where students gain age-appropriate knowledge and experiences, helping to build the
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skills to improve their health and well-being), Healthy School Policy (management practices, decision-making processes, rules, procedures and policies at all levels that promote health and well-being, and shape a respectful, welcoming and caring school environment), and Partnerships and Services (supportive working relationships within schools (staff and students), between schools, and between schools and other community organizations and representative groups; community and school-based services that support and promote student and staff health and well-being) (JCSH, 2013). References to sustainability are notably absent.

However, inquiry into Living Schools, which is predicated on an education vision of well-being for all, sustainably (O’Brien & Howard, 2016) reveals a more comprehensive framework that incorporates HPS, new pedagogies (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014), and sustainability. The Living School Framework reinforces the importance of new pedagogies, a term that has been used by Fullan (2013) and described as New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL). New pedagogies include: encouraging a new learning partnerships between teachers and students, encouraging new learning partnerships amongst teachers, restructuring deep learning tasks towards knowledge creation and purposeful use and finally, enabling the use of digital tools and resources that enable and accelerate the process of deep learning (Fullan, 2013). However, O’Brien and Howard (2020) assert that new pedagogies can also include outdoor learning, yoga, Indigenous ways of knowing even though these are not necessarily ‘new’ but align with the goals and principles of new pedagogies. From this perspective, new pedagogies help create a community-enriched environment with interconnectedness, with both people and nature, in order to enhance well-being for all based upon inquiry-based strategies that affect real-world change (O’Brien & Howard, 2016).
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The Living School Attributes and Practices Framework developed by Howard and O'Brien (2018) conveys the Living School Attributes and Practices under the headings of Values and Vision, Leadership, Teacher and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being. While the framework is presented in columns, O'Brien and Howard (2020) state that the Attributes and Practices are not meant to be understood as isolated entities but rather to work in concert.

HPS and Living Schools are both relevant to the research because they address teacher well-being. Living Schools in particular, place teacher well-being within the context of student well-being, community well-being, and ecological well-being since it is centered on the education vision of well-being for all, sustainably.

As I began to research HPS and Living Schools, I was drawn to the issue of teacher well-being for various reasons: 1) it is severely overlooked; 2) I believe that teachers are the foundation of our education system; 3) through experience, I find the lack of time dedicated to teacher well-being to be troublesome; 4) well-being needs to be more than the responsibility of individual teachers, and 5) the dialogue on teacher well-being has started so now the critical conversations need to continue to grow and expand in order to make sustainable changes to the education system, both at the provincial government level and within individuals schools and divisions. My main research question is: **What factors influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba?** A second line of inquiry is related to the sub-question: **Which Living School Attributes and Practices are present in educational environments where teachers are thriving and how do these Attributes and Practices contribute to teacher well-being?**
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Implications of the Research

The purpose of this research study is to identify what contributes to, or detracts from, teacher well-being in terms of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellness based upon Carney’s (2015) Well-Being Theory. Secondly, the focus is to determine how the presence of Living School Attributes and Practices, developed by Howard and O’Brien (2018), may contribute to teacher well-being. While learning from professionals in the field, I was able to compare teachers’ well-being to determine how improvements can be integrated throughout the education system at the school and divisional levels to further enhance well-being for all. As noted earlier, changing the core education system at the government level is more challenging and time consuming so it is not the only feasible solution to enhancing teacher well-being, but also making sustainable changes at local levels can be done immediately.

I conducted a Mixed Method design in two phases: the first was a quantitative electronic survey to acquire initial information on teacher well-being variables, which included questions that reflect some of the Attributes and Practices of a Living School; the second phase was qualitative one-on-one interviews with a sub-set of survey respondents based upon results from the first survey, with a focus on teachers who are thriving within their school environments. The purpose was to initially acquire data from teachers with diverse perspectives and backgrounds to further my understanding of teacher well-being in Manitoba generally, then analyze the data to determine if different Attributes and Practices of the Living School Framework are present where teachers tend to be thriving. The Living School Attributes and Practices could be helpful in order to improve the overall wellness of teachers by supporting research already developed on Living Schools as well as to discover any new Attributes and Practices that can be further identified.
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As identified in my review of literature and research findings, well-being has different interpretations to everyone and cannot be the sole responsibility of the individual teacher. While it is difficult to implement changes at the government level, though not impossible, changes can be made within school divisions and individual schools in order to enhance the well-being of teachers and contribute to well-being for all, sustainably which can be guided by the Living Schools Framework. There are many references to the “system” that needs to change in this thesis; I am also referring to school divisions and individual schools not strictly the provincial government system.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Happiness, Well-Being, and Sustainability

One’s understanding of happiness can vary across individuals and cultures (Happiness Research Institute, 2015). The growth and development of happiness research has made considerable contributions to positive mental health (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006), positive schools (JCSH, 2008) and national well-being policies (Happiness Research Institute, 2015) demonstrating the academic integrity of the research. Happiness researchers use various terms to study happiness, ranging from subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and experienced well-being (Carney, 2015; Happiness Research Institute, 2015; O’Brien, 2016; Seligman, 2011) to name a few. Studies may consider positive emotions or the more general experience of contentment, life satisfaction or well-being (Seligman, 2011; Veenhoven, 2006). O’Brien (2016) notes that often times, popular notions of happiness and material consumption are intertwined in our consumer society and individuals may confuse the “path to the ‘good life’ as the ‘goods life’” (Kasser, 2006, p. 200). This means that people may associate happiness with material consumption; an association that O’Brien (2016) believes is reinforced through advertising. A counterpoint to correlating happiness with material consumption can be found in the idea of “genuine wealth” (Anielski, 2007) that explores the kind of non-material wealth that contribute to a person’s happiness and well-being. Examples of genuine wealth are having healthy relationships, access to education, enjoying a natural environment, acts of generosity and relishing in simple pleasures.

Seligman’s (2011) early research originally focused on happiness using the term authentic happiness but he now believes that well-being is a more rigorous concept. O’Brien (2010) integrates well-being and sustainability within her definition of Sustainable Happiness as
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“happiness that contributes to individual, community, or global well-being without exploiting other people, the environment, or future generations” (O’Brien, 2016, p. 9). The concept of sustainable happiness and mindful consumption can be important when understanding the significance of well-being.

There are diverse approaches to understanding well-being that are influenced by one’s academic discipline (Falkenberg, 2014) and a discussion of this discourse is beyond the scope of this paper. For example, scientific approaches would calculate well-being as something that is measurable rather than subjective, compared to a humanities approach that would approach the topic in a more subjective manner. As this study is concerned with education, I have chosen to utilize Carney’s (2015) school-based model for well-being with a humanities approach. Carney writes that, “a state of well-being encompasses a sense of enjoyment in life, of realizing our potential, meeting challenges, being productive, respecting ourselves and others, and making a positive contribution to our communities” (p. 3). Carney’s model for well-being is supported by three overlapping spheres, with strong, caring, relationships at the centre, as demonstrated by Figure 1.
Carney’s Model for Well-Being incorporates the three main components that will later be connected to the Living School Framework: Resilience (the ability to cope with life’s disappointments, challenges, and pain); Active (a focus on regular exercise to help maintain mental and physical health); and Flourishing (the optimal level of mental health) while connecting to the whole school approach. In the middle of Carney’s well-being model is **Strong Caring Relationships**, which is open for interpretation regarding the types of relationships and connections that would be included. However, it is implied with the three approaches (the whole-school, whole-community approach and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approach) that
will be elaborated on in the next section. Carney expanded upon Seligman’s (2011) definition of well-being that is based upon his five elements that are outlined with the acronym PERMA:

- **Positive Emotion** is the pleasant life to measure life satisfaction and happiness
- **Engagement** is connected to positive emotions and is subjectively measured
- **Relationships** is about building community and making positive connections
- **Meaning** is the sense of purpose and has a subjective component so it can be connected to positive emotion but should be measured independently
- **Accomplishment** is connected to achievements (p. 20).

The five elements categorized by Seligman (2011) demonstrate the complex nature of well-being. He states, “No one element defines well-being, but each contributes to it. Some aspects of these five elements are measured subjectively by self-report, but other aspects are measured objectively” (Seligman, 2011, p. 24). In Seligman’s earlier work on authentic happiness, he focused on just three elements: positive emotion (what we feel), engagement (flow) and meaning (purpose in life) (Seligman, 2011). His more recent work is critical of some happiness research. He sees well-being as a more rigorous concept though the elements of well-being under the PERMA acronym appear to extend the original three elements associated with happiness and adding two more: relationship and accomplishment. However, it appears that positive relationships are given equal ‘weighting’ in the PERMA model whereas Carney sees positive relationships as central to well-being. O’Brien’s (2013) definition of sustainable happiness integrates happiness and well-being and reinforces the interconnected nature of both. While it is noted that relationships are important (Carney, 2015; Seligman, 2011) it is also the focus of positive psychology (in the well-being theory) in order to increase flourishing on the
planet (Seligman, 2011) and an important place to start is in the schools and classrooms within communities. Nevertheless, positive psychology literature can be viewed as anthropocentric as well-being and flourishing refer almost exclusively to human beings with infrequent recognition that human flourishing should not be at the expense of other animals and the biosphere (O’Brien, 2016).

As happiness research evolved, O’Brien (2005) recognized the absence of sustainability perspectives in the literature and coined the term Sustainable Happiness (O’Brien, 2016) as defined earlier in this Chapter. While the literature on happiness and well-being tends to focus on individual or national well-being, O’Brien (2010) asserts that sustainability principles must also be considered because individuals, communities and nations do not exist in isolation. This means that an individual’s lifestyle, an organization’s practices, and a nation’s policies impact other people, ecosystems, and future generations. O’Brien’s definition affirms that one’s happiness should not be at the expense of others or the natural world.

**Teacher Well-being**

Sustainable happiness and well-being can be applied to the foundation of our education system: teachers (Carney, 2015; Holmes, 2005; O’Brien, 2016). Teachers are involved in about a thousand interpersonal contacts every day (Holmes, 2005); it is the quality of these contacts that either fosters a sense of well-being or contributes to a toxic working environment. Referring to teacher well-being, Holmes (2005) states that “well-being requires harmony between mind and body” (p. 6). When teachers have a sense of control over their work to become choice-makers and change-makers they are more likely to feel a sense of being respected and valued which can contribute to their well-being (O’Brien, 2016) and the kind of harmony that Holmes (2005) describes.
It has been my experience over 13 years of teaching that a common concern from teachers is that they do not have enough time to balance their demanding teaching schedule, the “extra” demands of the profession and their personal life. The consequence is that there is little time on weekends during the school year to develop and sustain relationships or to enjoy the little moments in life because they are always doing school-related work and school-related errands. Roffey (2012) offers a “Respect Remedy” to help foster teacher well-being, recommending that administrative leaders and colleagues demonstrate respect for teachers’ time and acknowledge this respect through actions and words as a positive contribution to teacher well-being.

Holmes (2019) discusses the need for teachers to focus on their individual well-being as well as the need for schools to contribute to the well-being of their teacher for the success of the school and students. When teacher well-being is prioritized, a supportive working environment can be created, resiliency skills can be developed and innovative practices can be implemented (Cherkowski, 2020). Important contributing factors connected to teacher well-being include workload, stress and balance (Homes, 2019). As workload and balance can influence stressors for teachers, they will be discussed within the notion of teacher stress.

Teacher Stress

One of the major contributing factors to negatively affect the well-being of teachers is the stress associated with the teaching profession. According to Geving (2007) up to one third of teachers are stressed. More recently, Collie, Shapka, Perry, and Martin (2015) found that there are many factors contributing to teacher stress in Canada: sociodemographic characteristics can influence teachers’ experiences of well-being such as age, gender, school community and experience; female teachers report higher stress while older and more experienced teachers tend
to report higher general well-being along with small or rural school setting teachers and
generalist teachers usually report lower school-related stress. While many of these factors may
be outside of the direct control of teachers, it is vital to take care of the aspects that can be
changed or influenced to reduce stress and foster greater well-being. Curry and O’Brien’s (2012)
study reinforces that teachers are faced daily with both work-related and institutional stress
factors. Some common educational stressors they identify in the research include: schools and
school systems have become increasingly more bureaucratic, greater service delivery demands in
the form of heavy demands with fewer resources, expectations on teachers to manage difficult
student behaviour including misconduct, violence, and lack of student motivation, a lack of
planning time, an increased emphasis on accountability measures to support effectiveness, and
the exclusion of teachers from policy-making procedures (Curry & O’Brien, 2012). With the
increasing demands on teachers’ time, it seems reasonable to question how they can find the time
to attend to their own happiness and ensure they are taking care of their own well-being, in their
personal and professional life. These sources of stress also reinforce the need to focus on
changing the education system, not just placing one more responsibility on individual educators.

With the abundance of stressors in teachers’ lives, it is not surprising that teacher burnout
rates continue to rise. The Canadian Teachers Federation (Froese-Germain, 2014) conducted a
nationwide survey with a focus on teachers’ work-life balance and found that the vast majority of
teachers who responded feel torn between their teaching responsibilities and their responsibilities
outside the workplace (54% indicated significantly). A majority of teachers (79%) believe their
stress related to work-life imbalance has increased over the last five years; only 4% said it had
decreased over this period. Finally, 85% of teachers reported that work-life imbalance is
affecting their ability to teach the way they would like to teach with 35% indicating that it was
having a significant impact (Froese-Germain, 2014). A stressed adult is less flexible, less tolerant and less creative (Roffey, 2012) so these studies support the need for school systems to ensure teacher wellness is addressed. These studies also demonstrate the importance of recognizing the need for balance in teachers’ lives as Holmes (2019) states that it is also about the teacher’s individual balance and the significance of well-being as a cylindrical process.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

As discussed above, there are many significant factors impacting teacher well-being such as workload and organizational level stress (school level issues). Student-related stress (related to student behaviour) is also a factor influencing teacher well-being (Collie, Shapka, Perry, & Martin, 2015). Roffey (2012) describes three dimensions affecting (both positively and negatively) teacher well-being, which are: feeling valued and cared for, feeling overloaded, and job stimulation and enjoyment. These factors are important to social and emotional learning (SEL) which involves the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and have empathy for others and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2013). Carney (2015) discusses five SEL competencies that have been applied to students but are also important for teachers:

1. **Self-awareness** is focusing on knowing and integrating internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions for the role as a teacher, as well as knowing strengths and limits and attention to lifestyle balance.

2. **Managing Emotions** occur when high levels of self-awareness contribute to resilience, which in turn can lead to the managing emotions in terms of self-regulation.
3. **Self-Motivation** connects to emotional tendencies or professional attitudes that guide teachers to reach their goals with an attitude of optimism to create a positive atmosphere in the school.

4. **Empathy** is the heart of social emotional competence; when teachers engage in caring relationships with students and foster their successful development, they share empathy and experience the sense of meaning and competence that helps to flourish as teachers. Teachers can also extend empathy to colleagues and other staff, fostering a more inclusive and caring whole school environment.

5. **Managing relationships** addresses depends largely on the development of social skills and fostering healthy relationships.

The focus on the emotional well-being of teachers through SEL is significant, since teachers need to attend not only to students’ academic and psychological needs, but also to their own emotional health while keeping up with the responsibilities of the job such as: implementing curriculum, assessing students, dealing with parents, and fulfilling many other professional duties (Shanker, 2012). All of these responsibilities are extremely demanding and can easily overwhelm teachers whether they are novice teachers or ones with longstanding experience. While Cherkowski (2020) acknowledges these responsibilities set up by policy-makers are well-intentioned, it is also important to recognize that teachers often try to balance these on their own leading to isolation and additional stress that detracts from their well-being. This intersection between SEL and work demands is an example of how system level policies such as assessment demands and administrative duties affects the ability of teachers to manage their workplace well-being. It is evident that teacher well-being warrants greater attention so the next step is to identify successful practices and strategies that can be applied at the individual and systemic
levels (both government and school levels). While it is important for government systems to change to prioritize teacher well-being, it can be a very slow and difficult process, making changes within individual schools and divisions are far more feasible in order to enhance teacher well-being.

**Indicators, Strategies and Practices for Teacher Well-being**

It is important to recognize the indicators of teacher well-being in order to recommend effective interventions. In the previous section, I considered the role of SEL in teacher well-being, therefore it is no surprise that teachers who report higher levels of positive emotion (regulating their own and building positive relationships) are more engaged in teaching (Brackett et al., 2010). But a key question is, how do teachers achieve this ability to effectively self-regulate? Furthermore, what other indicators are associated with teacher well-being? Carney (2015) outlines characteristics of teachers who have high levels of well-being as ones who:

- have positive relationships within and outside the classroom
- are responsive, flexible, and empathetic
- have a positive sense of autonomy and self-worth
- are proactive and positive about engaging in new initiatives
- have well-developed solution-finding skills
- have a sense of meaning, purpose and future goals
- have good social emotional, communication and resilience skills
- are part of a caring, inclusive and respectful professional environment. (p. 178)

This list does not mention specific activities or ideas but instead demonstrates the need to incorporate a process where all of the characteristics mentioned can be integrated through the education system. Notably absent from the characteristics listed above is the Active component
of Carney’s well-being model which would need to be added as it is one of the major contributors to well-being (Carney, 2015). Another valuable aspect that needs to be incorporated into Carney’s list would be well-being for all, which would contribute to sustainable happiness for teachers. However, in a forthcoming chapter by O’Brien and Howard (2020), Carney’s model has been revised to incorporate well-being for all.

Roffey (2012) focuses primarily on the first bullet from Carney’s list above - the significance of the quality of relationships within a school and the way it affects teacher well-being and their ability to cope well with various stresses that are inevitably part of the profession. The way teachers feel makes a difference in their ability to respond effectively to the challenges they face on a daily basis (Roffey, 2012). As previously noted, positive relationships is also one of the five elements of Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model. Furthermore, Carney (2015) created a checklist for Teacher Mental Health:

1. Teacher well-being is recognized as an important and positive goal
2. The importance of social emotional skills for teacher efficacy and well-being is acknowledged and supported
3. Teachers give attention to lifestyle balance and personal well-being strategies
4. A caring, inclusive professional environment encourages belonging, commitment, trust, professional autonomy and positive collaboration
5. Individual strengths are recognized, differences are respected, risk taking and effort are acknowledged and teachers have a voice in decisions
6. Teachers are engaged in regular opportunities for meaningful professional learning.

(Carney, 2015, p. 200)
It is important to note that the checklist is a product of both elements that are within the teachers’ individual control and others that are a factor of the professional environment. It is my view that all of these components can be addressed in a transformed education system at the school level, which can be demonstrated through Living Schools; if teachers feel that they are important members of the school community while having voice and agency then they will feel valued, an important step contributing to their well-being and hopefully prioritized within the transformed system. Additionally, if teachers are attending to well-being for all, this means that student well-being, community well-being, and ecosystem health and well-being are recognized as intertwined with their own.

**Whole Community Approach**

Health Promoting Schools (HPS) represents a whole-community approach to student and staff health and well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), HPS are defined as ones “in which all members of the school community work together to provide pupils with integrated and positive experiences and structures which promote and protect their health” (WHO, 2009, p.5). It extends to the curriculum, school environment and community and is also directed towards staff well-being. This reinforces the perspective that a successful education system needs to have a whole community approach. In Canada, HPS is often referred to as Comprehensive School Health (JCSH, 2013). The Comprehensive School Health Framework that the national organization called the Joint Consortium for School Health involves a whole school approach that includes four interrelated pillars:

- **Social and Physical Environment** - the quality of the relationships among and between staff and students in the school; the emotional well-being of students and influenced by relationships with families and the wider community.
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- **Teaching and Learning** - resources, activities and provincial/territorial curriculum where students gain age-appropriate knowledge and experiences, helping to build the skills to improve their health and well-being.

- **Healthy School Policy** - management practices, decision-making processes, rules, procedures and policies at all levels that promote health and well-being, and shape a respectful, welcoming and caring school environment.

- **Partnerships and Services** - supportive working relationships within schools (staff and students), between schools, and between schools and other community organizations and representative groups; community and school-based services that support and promote student and staff health and well-being (JCSH, 2013).

This means that in order to have a successful HPS, all the guidelines must be incorporated as a whole and not just a select combination of the parts. HPS ensure the school and community work in unison to guarantee that every student and teacher has multiple opportunities to enhance their mental, spiritual, emotional and physical health in a safe and caring environment. JCSH recognizes the importance of integrating education in a holistic manner in order to encourage healthy behaviours with a focus on well-being for teachers and students but an important factor, sustainability, has been omitted. In order to reflect well-being for all, the HPS framework needs to close the gap and extend to the natural environment as research confirms that connecting with nature is associated with positive emotions (O’Brien, 2016) that is beyond the scope of this thesis.
School Culture

School culture is another key to creating a healthy state of well-being amongst teachers. “A supportive professional culture is as important for success and well-being of teachers as a caring and inclusive classroom is for students” (Carney, 2015, p. 192). Carney emphasizes this with:

To be effective teachers, we need a sense of belonging and commitment—a strong sense of connection to our school and to our professional learning community. We need to feel that what we do matters and that we have an investment in being there. To create that foundation of belonging and community, as school environment needs to explicitly foster the values of respect, acceptance, and care, extending both to and from all staff. When these values are discussed, promoted and practiced each day at all levels of the school, they can create a culture that encourages not only students learning, but professional learning and positive collaboration (Carney, 2015, p. 192).

Approaching teacher well-being, not as an individual responsibility but as a shared one, creates an opportunity for schools and divisions to work in partnership with relevant authorities and professional associations to keep well-being as a key feature of teacher induction, mentoring and ongoing professional learning programs (McCallum & Price, 2012). However, “professional learning efforts targeting teacher wellbeing should aim for more than simply reducing stress and burnout — they should also strive to cultivate positive patterns of thinking and feeling” (Cook et al., 2017, p. 15). These skills need to be developed in teachers in order to improve their overall health and well-being. This is an area where the Living School Framework comes into play by
incorporating the Attributes and Practices to change the setup of schools as a whole instead of relying solely on teachers to take care of their own well-being.

There are multiple ways in which a community can grow and flourish in order to enhance well-being at all levels of the school community. Jones, Bouffard and Weissbourd (2013) focus on The Community Connection:

1. **Whole school approach** - the promotion of positive teacher well-being requires a whole school approach; building social emotional skill development and practices into daily teachers, staff and administrator interactions can promote a positive and healthy school environment

2. **Encourage emotional awareness** - make talking about and exploring the emotions involved in teaching and learning a regular part of staff meetings, logs or journals; incorporate SEL training in professional development

3. **Incorporate reflection into daily routines** - take time for regular reflection - even if it is at the beginning or end of the day; could set up partner teams for regular reflective discussions and make these part of school meetings; it is critical for dealing with challenging situation and taking advantage of new opportunities

4. **Tackle stressors** - talk about circumstances and situations that are sources of stress; focus on finding solutions or ways of managing to ease stress and frustration; stress cannot be eliminated, but we can find ways to deal with it; strategies can include: deep breathing, stop to assess before reacting, keeping active and catching negative thinking traps

5. **Create a culture of continuous improvement and mutual support** - work together to encourage an environment of positive collaboration and support, respect for differences,
acknowledgement of effort, a voice in decision making and positive goals of improvement (as cited by Carney, 2015, p. 182-183)

Many of the community approaches above involve school communities and do not require government intervention or change. This is relevant as changing the education system requires an overhaul to both the government system and local school communities. While government policies supporting teacher well-being in terms of standardized testing, resources support and class size are significant factors contributing to teacher well-being, schools can also enhance well-being at the local level. It is evident that there needs to be a system of support in order to grow and succeed in our schools, especially when it comes to well-being, which can be developed through building relationships and a culture of respect. When teachers are able to engage with their colleagues to create meaningful learning practices, it can lead to teachers who are passionate about the work they do (Cherkowski, 2020).

In Hong Kong, Wong and Zhang (2014) explored the perception that kindergarten teachers across cultures experience high stress that affects their well-being, focusing on the relationship between kindergarten teachers’ well-being, perceived school culture and personality type. Their results indicate that teachers who perceived their school culture positively had higher levels of job satisfaction and self-esteem and fewer mental health complaints. Naghieh, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson and Aber (2015) argue that initiatives addressing the well-being of teachers are directed more towards the individual and therefore do not tackle the causes of stress in the workplace. Instead, they suggest that organizational-level interventions from school divisions can provide potential avenues for proactive approaches to teacher well-being.

McCallum and Price (2010) support a similar argument by suggesting that teachers need well-being in place as a priority to assure their own well-being is included in their school
community for their effectiveness in the classroom. If teachers can model positive strategies, this will have a positive influence on student well-being. There is a clear link between teachers’ well-being, their role in the classroom and school community, and the success and satisfaction of children and young people while in the educational years (McCallum & Price, 2016). This is further support for the view that educator and learner well-being is an individual, collective and community responsibility not a lone venture. In summary, improving school environments and the health of teachers are suggestions as key to addressing teacher well-being.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

Carney (2015), O’Brien (2012, 2013, 2016), and Seligman (2011) all acknowledge relationships and community as an important factor in well-being in our society with our education system being a vital part of that society. Teacher engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs) has been argued to be highly effective in supporting changes in teacher beliefs and practices (Owen, 2016). It is through ongoing professional learning in a supportive context, and genuinely engaging and connecting with peers beyond teamwork that professional reinvigoration and teacher well-being can be enhanced (Owen, 2016). PLCs provide scope for “challenging ideas to increase potential for success, gaining greater accomplishment through joint work and nurturing positive emotion and sharing of good feelings” (Owen, 2016, p. 217). Webb et al. (2009) reinforce the benefits of PLCs in promoting teacher well-being and identify the “centrality of relationships and emotions to the atmosphere and stability of PLCs” (p. 419). They discuss an awareness of cultural and contextual influences on the effectiveness of PLCs and suggest that democratic and equitable school climate afford greater opportunities to identify school limitations and to determine creative ways forward (Webb et al., 2009). Through PLCs,
community and collaboration is encouraged and vital in the implementation of a successful education environment.

**Well-Being for All, Sustainably**

“Education for sustainable development (ESD) is not a particular programme or project, but is rather an umbrella term for many forms of education that already exist, and new ones that remain to be created” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], n.d.). Hopkins (2013) shares that the emerging realization is that ESD appears to improve the overall quality of the education system and *well-being for all*. As discussed in Chapter 1, the provincial government of Manitoba recognizes the importance of sustainability in the education system by encouraging every school in Manitoba to have an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) plan in place by 2019. It is important to note that since the ESD policy was developed, there has been a change in the provincial government leadership. Instead of a focus on sustainability in the education system, an educational review is underway and was to be published in the spring of 2020. Therefore, the focus on sustainability has taken a backseat until this educational review is complete.

The initial goal of ESD was to change the way sustainability is integrated into curriculum; instead of teaching students about sustainability, it requires students to live sustainably. As previously discussed, Hopkins (2013) explained the overarching goal of the education system has moved away from a narrow model of academic excellence to a more holistic model. Hopkins (2013) shares that in order to change the education system we need to produce citizens with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to live in a sustainable manner. Hopkins (2013) classifies stages of development in schools when infusing ESD if the infusion is to emerge as a systemic purpose; the most advanced stage is when “the whole community works
collaboratively to build more sustainable regions” (p. 125). Additionally, Hopkins (2013) states that “with the beginning of the UN Decade of ESD, the United Nations University developed such a community/regional ESD experiment to research the possibility of schools and indeed all the formal and non-formal education actors in a region working to build sustainability” (p. 125). Hopkins’ (2013) vision of well-being for all forever is the ideal philosophy embracing well-being both individually and collectively (O’Brien, 2016). The type of education Hopkins strives for can be represented in Living Schools.

**Living Schools**

O’Brien and Howard’s (2016) concept of Living Schools outlines, “the deep learning that happens when an entire school reflects well-being for all” (O’Brien, 2016, p. 186). They developed a framework called the Living Schools Attributes and Practices (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) that provides an overview of the diverse elements one would find in Living Schools. (See Figure 2). The framework has five major headings including: Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being.
Figure 2 portrays the relevance of Health Promoting Schools as a vital attribute to the implementation and success of a Living School and is specifically mentioned in the column under the heading of Health and Well-Being. Likewise, an important element within the final column is teacher well-being:

Living schools are predicated on a deep sense of meaningful contact with others and the larger living world that fundamentally carries our lives forward. In advocating a sense of reverence for life, education in a Living School offers a transformative mode of thinking that cultivates compassion. The curriculum of the Living School is one founded on understanding the vitality of one’s place within
the larger living landscape as being inextricable from human well-being. (O’Brien & Howard, 2016, p. 123)

As demonstrated by the list of Attributes and Practices, schools can encompass the Living School Framework into their existing school with some physical adaptations, philosophical changes and innovative practices.

Many schools have elements of a Living School but implementing all of the Attributes and Practices of a Living School Framework, as identified by Howard and O’Brien (2018), would enable a school community to realize the full scope and potential that is possible with the whole school approach to well-being for all. One reason for this is that the Attributes and Practices are not meant to be viewed as isolated elements but rather a portrait of elements that work in concert to enhance well-being. “A Living School involves approaches to learning that enable students and teachers to be fully engaged in the depth of things in ways that enhance well-being for all” (O’Brien & Howard, 2016, 119).

The important point to note is that the Living School Framework is creating a whole community, where well-being for all is critical. It is also essential to note that schools may already have initiatives and practices that reflect the Living School Framework. For example, schools can incorporate an outdoor classroom to be used by the whole school community with learning gardens (Williams & Brown, 2012), use place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003), and focus on Project-Based Learning (Zhao, 2012). As well, schools can develop PLCs to give teachers voice and agency along with an opportunity to share resources (Owen, 2016), use product-orientated learning to support student engagement and authentic products (Zhao, 2012), use a Flipped Classroom Approach (Bergmann & Sams, 2014), and include community involvement in school projects and activities that extend to real-world learning and collaboration.
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There are many specific examples from the Living Schools Framework that schools have developed and acknowledged; below is a list of examples based on the five framework headings:

1. **Values and Visions**: “Be the Change” groups, Global Cardboard Challenge, creating a AAA Committee, developing a “Little Green Thumbs” garden, creating a wellness committee, Cultural Days, Animal Therapy, Horticulture Program, Breakfast Clubs, School of Choice;

2. **Leadership**: Student Leadership Committees can be formed, Multi-cultural events, focus on a Genius Hour, creating Compost Programs, a Social Committee, Monthly Learning Service;

3. **Teaching and Learning**: Co-teaching opportunities, Inclusive Education with Professional Development (PD) opportunities, Active start, School-Wide Wellness breaks, SKILLS Canada, Talent Show;

4. **Nature and Place Based Orientation**: Outdoor Classroom, Community Garden, Art Therapy, Insect Hotel, Beehive Boxes, Quiet/Meditation space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons;


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1 “Be the Change” groups are WE Day initiatives, social justice groups, created by Marc and Craig Kielburger who committed to making a difference domestically and internationally with WE schools and WE villages (WE Charities, 2019).

2 Global Cardboard Challenge is an annual event that provides children with an opportunity to collaborate, learn, and build through creative play; children are invited to build anything they can using cardboard and recycled material (Imagination, n.d.).

3 AAA Committee: A support document for the Aboriginal Academic Achievement (AAA) grant provides information to assist school divisions with developing AAA plans and measuring outcomes of programming that is focused on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students’ academic achievement (Government of Manitoba, 2015).

4 Skills Canada is a “Canadian non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of careers in technology and skilled trades. One of their major initiatives is the annual Skills Canada National Competition” (SKILLS, n.d.)
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The shared examples above encompass the aim of the Living School Framework (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) and well-being for all, sustainably.

Living Schools as a Whole Community Approach

Health Promoting Schools should be integrated as an essential part of a Living School. As Young (2015) implies, “both health promoting schools and sustainable schools require a whole-school approach which goes beyond the learning and teaching of the classroom to all aspects of school life including the social and physical environment of the school and its surrounding communities” (p. 28). The consistent reference throughout the literature to the whole school and community approach illustrates the significance of each Attribute and Practice of the Living Schools Framework, exemplifying that this would not be possible if teacher well-being is neglected.

Living Schools encompass an education vision of well-being for all (staff, students and the community, as well as the non-human inhabitants on the planet). Considering this with Carney’s (2015) model for well-being, Living Schools have the potential to build “strong, caring relationships” through cross-curricular learning, community involvement while building meaningful and sustainable relationships with nature. The Healthy School component within Living Schools fulfills Carney’s Active category and suggests well-being is met both physically, spiritually and mentally for not only students but also teachers. As O’Brien and Howard (2016) point out, “The Living School fosters contact and dialogue with the world” and, “teachers in a Living School are challenged to find, or rediscover, the joy, the mystery, and inherent love in learning about the world and become guides and facilitators who respect and nurture the integrity of what comes natural to children, an awe and wonderment for the world” (p. 119). It follows
that if Living Schools contain all of the elements mentioned, well-being for all will be integrated throughout the local and global community.

**New Pedagogies and Living Schools**

Living Schools embrace the involvement and well-being of whole communities while creating a healthy environment for lifelong learning to extend beyond the walls of a classroom in a creative and meaningful way. A particularly relevant element within the Living School Framework is the focus on pedagogies that are committed to inquiry-based strategies to affect real world change supporting students to develop innovative ideas to become change-makers (O’Brien & Howard, 2016). This can enhance the learning process to create more purpose with meaningful projects to reflect passions and interests that can be captured by the term “new pedagogies”. New pedagogies in the NPDL literature focus on three components: New Learning Partnerships (between teachers and students), Deep Learning Tasks (restructure towards knowledge creation and purposeful use), and Digital Tools and Resources (that enable and accelerate the process of deep learning) (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Teachers have a new role in the system based on NPDL and become learners along with the students in their classrooms through collaboration, both with the students and other teachers. One of the emerging roles within these New Learning Partnerships is building trust within relationships between students and teachers (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Through NPDL, teachers are required to act as both an activator (teacher-student relationships, reciprocal teaching, feedback, metacognition and teacher clarity) and as a facilitator (inductive teaching, student control over learning) with the activator role used three times more (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014, p. 20) to ensure students are engaged. Fullan and Langworthy (2014) note that most teachers’ motivation is to ignite learning, kindle curiosity and creativity while providing opportunities but many come across working
conditions that hinder that ability. By shifting the role of the teacher through NPDL, the teachers are able to re-focus on learning and passion as an important step to helping transform the education system, which can be done without government policy changes.

While digital technology is a central theme throughout the literature on NPDL (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014), the Living School approach encourages the application of digital technology with the aim of incorporating sustainability, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, connecting with nature, and sustainable happiness (O’Brien, 2016). A major driving force behind the Living School Framework is to enhance opportunities for students and teachers to be choice-makers and change-makers who have the values and capacity to contribute to well-being for all (O’Brien & Howard, 2016).

The literature supports the need to address the state of teacher well-being and develop strategies to support and enhance well-being for all. The stress on transforming the education system as a whole instead of putting the responsibilities solely on the individual teacher has been a major point of focus within the literature. As it is difficult to make changes at government levels regarding policies and demands, there also needs to be changes made at divisional and school levels to promote well-being for all. The Living Schools Framework, with the five major headings of Attributes and Practices (Vision and Values, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being) that need to be integrated in unison can be the change the school system needs. It not only enhances teacher well-being but well-being for all. This study will demonstrate the Attributes and Practices that are present in situations where teachers are thriving and the significance of broadening this scope in the education system.
Chapter 3: Methodology

As a reminder, my primary research question was: What factors influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba? A second line of inquiry is related to the sub-question: Which Living School Attributes and Practices are present in educational environments where teachers are thriving and how do these Attributes and Practices contribute to teacher well-being?

Ethics

This research study was approved by the Research Ethics Board of Cape Breton University and was considered low risk for the participants. Even so, some teachers may have felt uncomfortable or vulnerable sharing some reflections, experiences or insights. Publication of the findings could compromise confidentiality due to the description of school setting, programs or geographical location. In order to reduce risk, the school, school division and community names are anonymous. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms are used to maintain the participants’ anonymity and with any quotes that are drawn from their posts. I was careful not to reveal any personal information in any of the findings that could risk revealing the identity of the participants. Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study through a letter of consent. The letter also outlined the potential risk of participation, the possible benefits to the participants and steps taken to protect confidential information. Participants were also informed that their participation in this study was voluntary and were asked to sign a consent form but were still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Research Design

Following ethics approval from Cape Breton University, I used a mixed method research design research approach (Creswell & Clark, 2007) for this study, and more specifically, an
Explanatory Sequential Design with two phases with the data collected over two consecutive phases. Therefore, I was able to collect and analyze the quantitative data first then collect qualitative data in the second phase of the study to help fill in any gaps in the research to determine why some teachers are thriving and if Living School Attributes and Practices are contributing factors.

**Design Phase I – Survey.**

First, an electronic survey (appendix A) was distributed to teachers in Manitoba, via Google Forms, to determine various factors that affect teacher well-being with a focus on: Demographics, Stress, Balance, Well-Being/Happiness (drawing upon Carney's model for well-being), NPDL and finally the Living School Framework with questions from each of the major attributes (Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being). There was also a final question on the survey asking if participants were willing to take part in the second phase of the research, the interview. I had 83 teachers participate in the first phase of the research and seven participants participate in the second phase.

The Balance, Stress, Well-Being and NPDL questions were presented on the survey as a 5-point Likert Scale. The Living School Attributes and Practices scores were based on a checklist.

There were also short answer questions included in the survey for participants to expand their answers in the categories of stress and PLCs. I also included five questions at the end of the survey that were optional to answer with a focus on enhancing well-being to help identify trends:

1) What is one improvement that could be made in your school to enhance teacher well-being?
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2) What is one improvement that you could personally make to enhance your well-being?

3) What is one thing your school does well to support teacher well-being?

4) Why do you believe teacher well-being is important?

5) Do you believe you will be able to keep up your current pace for the remainder of your career? Please explain.

I initially analyzed the data collection from the first phase survey to determine which teachers were thriving based upon Carney’s (2015) theory of well-being. This was done by creating an average for each score in the four categories (Resilience, Flourishing, Active and Relationships) from the survey, since some categories had more questions than others; once averages were generated in each category, the four scores were added together for a total well-being score. I then contacted teachers who had the highest well-being score and who had agreed to participate in the second phase of the research through the final question on the survey.

**Design Phase II – Semi-structured Interviews.** The second phase of my research study involved one-on-one interviews with seven participants selected because of their positive well-being scores, which I took as an indication that they are thriving. Again, interpretation of the data in the second phase drew upon research from the Literature Review. The main objective was to understand and analyze why certain teachers are thriving and if Attributes and Practices of Living Schools are present in these environments; I also analyzed if multiple Attributes and Practices or any new Attributes and Practices were present, then compared teachers’ well-being based upon Attributes and Practices within their schools.

The interview was piloted on one participant, a colleague whose data was not used as part of the set, in order to check for misunderstandings, repetitive ideas and missing content. There
was one suggestion to review the Living Schools Framework beforehand as some participants may not be aware of the framework and may find it difficult to list all of the attributes present in their school during the interview.

I provided participants with interview questions (appendix B) and a new consent form prior to the interview in order for them to read the materials in advance of the interview. My aim was to keep interviews within an hour to respect participants’ time. Prior to the interview, I also shared and discussed the Living Schools Attributes and Practices Framework so that participants could understand the focus of the interview before starting.

All interviews were conducted in English and all were able to be done in person at an agreed upon neutral location. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed by myself then sent back to the participants for review. Member checks were done as a way to validate my qualitative data (Mirriam, 1998). This was done during and post interview. The results of the interviews were returned to the participants to confirm and validate the data that was shared in the interview. In order to create valid themes, it was important to ensure that the categories emerged from multiple participant perspectives then I was able to make comparisons based upon the categories and themes were able to emerge.

**Participants - Phase I.** I wanted to focus on teachers in Manitoba and safeguard their confidentiality within the first phase of the research. In order to do this, I wanted to ensure teachers had the opportunity to use their personal email addresses to help reduce risks to the participants and have authentic responses. After contact with School Boards Manitoba, it was suggested I use local school board associations to distribute the surveys, so I sent the survey through local associations. I encouraged teachers to use their personal email addresses, but in the end, the choice was up to individual teachers.
There were 83 responses to the survey, which I deemed to be sufficient for the purposes of this study. The slightly smaller response rate could have been due to the timing in the school year, as the survey was distributed in June, a very busy time of year for teachers.

Participants – Phase II. For the second phase of the study, I wanted to select the Top 10 scores from the average Well-Being scores based upon Carney’s (2015) Well-Being Theory, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The survey’s final question asked if the respondent would be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview. Of the top 10 scores, only six responded positively to that final question on the survey. Therefore, I moved on to the next four who responded positively to the final question on the survey. Of the new Top 10 (14 in total), only five responded to the email I sent requesting an interview. Consequently, I emailed five more teachers, who responded positively to being interviewed on the initial survey and had high scores in the well-being category, resulting in two more teachers confirming their willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview. Thus, the selected participants scored in the Top 20 of the 83 participants; seven declined to be interviewed as indicated on the final question of the survey and six participants did not respond to my email contact, therefore I had seven (7) participants confirm an interview.

Since the purpose of my interviews was to try to gain a more in-depth understanding of why certain teachers are thriving, all the teachers I interviewed scored high on the well-being scale and had various factors that contribute to their well-being. I did not select teachers based upon their demographics because that could have been an important factor or trend that contributed to their well-being. All seven participants were female with five interviewees having 11-20 years teaching experience and two with 6-10 years experience. Three of the participants
were high school teachers, two were early/middle years teachers, one was strictly an early years teacher and one was solely a middle years teacher.

**Analysis**

**Phase I: Survey analysis.** In the first phase, quantitative data collection was based on the criteria previously mentioned in a questionnaire survey (appendix A). Data was collected from participants to learn about the state of the teachers’ well-being; the initial questions were general and the majority of responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale to keep consistency throughout the survey; there was also room for short answer responses in some categories.

Data, as a whole (83 responses), was analyzed in multiple ways. The first was to analyze individual teachers’ well-being in terms of the initial quantitative data based upon: Demographics, Stress, Balance, Well-Being/Happiness (with a focus on Carney’s model for well-being and SEL competencies), NPDL, and finally Living School Attributes and Practices. I transferred the survey data from the original Google Form into a Google Sheet. From there scores were created and correlations were generated based upon Pearson’s correlation coefficient to show the linear relationship between two variables.

**Stress Score.** I analyzed teachers’ stress scores based upon a general, self-rating stress question (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995). Then the stress category was broken down into sub-categories that typically create stress for teachers. These were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale.

The first general question was, “On a 5-point scale, how stressed are you, on a weekly basis, due to school-related issues (including students, parents, time, administration work, other staff members)?” and this question drove the correlations of other well-being data. The stress
score was inverted, as “5” initially represented “extreme” stress so now “1” represented extreme stress in order to run correlations with other factors.

Furthermore, the stress related questions were based upon the following:

- Preparation time
- Report card demands
- Paperwork/Administrative demands
- Parent demands
- Meetings
- High needs students
- Assessment demands
- Duty or other supervision
- Extra-curricular activities
- Lack of support from other staff
- Lack of support from administration

In order to analyze this data, average scores were created based upon teachers selecting a five as their answer the on the 5-point Likert scale. Graphs were produced in order to visually compare the stressors that contribute the most to teachers’ stress.

There was an additional question on coping with stress to determine various methods teachers are using to typically deal with stressors in their lives. A checklist was created for the final section in the Stress section of the survey with a focus on stress related symptoms that teachers have each week based upon cognitive symptoms, physical symptoms, emotional symptoms and behavioural symptoms. Graphs were also tabulated here to visually compare stress symptoms teachers are managing in their lives.
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There was also a section for short answer responses, “What else causes stress in your professional life not mentioned so far?” This generated various responses that were compared and categorized, which further aided in the development of validity in the interview phase of the research.

**Balance Score.** Respondents were asked to self-reflect on their Lifestyle Balance by using the following ranking scale based upon the amount of time they devote to each category on an average week:

1- No time (0%)
2- Little time (5%-10%)
3- Average time (10-15%)
4- Most of my time (15-25%)
5- Too much of my time (more than 25%)

There were eight questions that addressed: Family, Work/Career, Finances, Health and Nutrition, Fitness (activity), Spirituality, Personal Growth and Learning and Fun, Leisure and Recreation. From this, average scores were tabulated in each category. A graph was created to illustrate the average balance scores participates shared in their survey.

**Well-Being Scores.** Teachers’ well-being scores were self-reported and based on their SEL associated with Carney’s (2015) theory of Well-Being. Again, the 5-point Likert scale was used with these questions. The well-being score was categorized into four sections: Resilience (10 questions), Active (6 questions), Flourishing (9 questions) and Relationships (6 questions). Due to a different number of questions within the sections, scores were averaged in each category in order to provide a fair representation of the data. In order to determine and compare teachers’ well-being, averages were calculated within each category and an overall well-being score was determined for each participant by adding up the averages. I kept the well-being scores
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divided into categories based upon Carney’s (2015) theory of well-being in order to compare the data, both separately and collectively, in each category.

There was also an extended short answer question under the Relationships category regarding Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in schools, “If you are a member of a PLC in your school, do you find them valuable to your professional well-being? Please explain why.” This provided me with an opportunity to compare how teachers use and view PLCs in their individual schools.

NPDL Scores. For the section on New Pedagogies in NPDL, participants were asked to rate their well-being on a 5-point Likert Scale. The focus of the four questions was on: 1) New Learning Partnerships between teachers and students, 2) New Learning Partnerships amongst teachers, 3) Deep Learning Tasks that are restructured towards knowledge creation and purposeful use is highly regarded and 4) Digital Tools and Resources, that enable and accelerate the process of deep learning is a main focus area of development. Participants’ scores ranged from 4 to 20 and an average score was generated for this section.

Living School Attributes and Practices Score. The Living Schools score was based upon a checklist of Attributes and Practices from Howard and O’Brien’s (2018) Living School Attributes and Practices Framework (Figure 2 from the Literature Review). This section of the survey was categorized according to the Living Schools Framework: Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation and finally, Health and Well-Being. There were 30 Attributes and Practices in total. Living School scores were calculated with a sum of all the Attributes and Practices consequently scores ranged from 0 to a possible 30.
Correlations. The purpose of my research was to determine factors that contribute to teacher well-being and if Living School Attributes and Practices contribute to teacher well-being. I used Pearson’s correlation coefficient to determine if a relationship existed between various factors. The initial question on the survey regarding Stress (scores were inverted as previously mentioned) was a driving factor in the calculation of the first section of correlations:

- Stress Score and Average Resilience Score
- Stress Score and Average Active Score
- Stress Score and Average Flourishing Score
- Stress Score and Average Relationships score
- Stress Score and Total Well-Being score

It was also important to test the relationship among other factors. The New Pedagogies score was also used to run correlations based upon the following:

- Stress Score and Average New Pedagogies Score
- Well-Being Score and Average New Pedagogies Score

The final section of correlations was determined using the Living Schools scores based upon the following:

- Living Schools Score and Well-Being Score
- Living Schools Score and Stress Score
- Living Schools Score and Average Resilience Score
- Living Schools Score and Average Active Score
- Living Schools Score and Average Flourishing Score
- Living Schools Score and Average Relationships Score
- Living schools and Average New Pedagogies Score
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The analysis of survey data produced scores in stress, NPDL, well-being (total and separate categories) and Living Schools. This data analysis was considered with my interviews in the second phase of the study.

**Phase II: Semi-structured interview analysis.** As the interviews were transcribed, they were coded one at a time. As similar codes emerged, some codes were combined, some were deleted and memos were written to help understand the significance and impact of the data (Creswell, 2012).

Since the main objective was to understand and analyze why certain teachers are thriving and if Attributes and Practices of Living Schools are present in these environments; I analyzed if multiple Attributes and Practices or any new Attributes and Practices were present and then compared teachers’ well-being based upon Attributes and Practices within their schools. In order to code and analyze the interview data, I organized the data into themes on separate sheets to further code the qualitative interview data. Interviews were coded using inductive techniques to allow for participants’ insights to emerge (Charmaz, 2006). Initial interviews established initial codes and categories (Saldana, 2009) with more codes emerging through subsequent interviews. As similar codes emerged, ideas were categorized by theme (Creswell, 2012). There were predictable patterns used for reporting, standardized structure was evaluated based on the strength of each area found within this structure. Data was divided into text segments or sentences, analyzing each group of similar sentences to find meaning; results were themes and descriptions then these were interpreted to find meaning (Creswell, 2012). Interpretation of the data reflected existing research and literature on well-being and Living School Attributes and Practices.
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After initial coding of all qualitative data, I did a second and third round of coding to check for subsequent codes that may have emerged in later interviews to see if some were present in initial interviews. From this, codes emerged, and themes were developed.

The internal validity of evaluation data and findings was strengthened through the mixed method explanatory sequential design. To avoid weak or questionable data, this study gathered data through more than one technique. Collecting information from a variety of sources and with a variety of techniques can confirm findings (Mirriam, 1998). Therefore, since I was able to obtain many of the same results from the questionnaires, with both Likert scales and short answer responses, and the interviews, I have a high level of confidence in the validity of the data. Using both qualitative and quantitative data allowed for triangulation.

**Limitations**

One limitation to the study could be teachers’ background knowledge regarding Living Schools. Teachers could have various interpretations of what the Living School Attributes and Practices mean. During the second phase, I learned that some teachers have Living School Attributes and Practices in their classrooms but not throughout the whole school, a vital component in the Living Schools Framework.

A second limitation with the survey was there could have been some confusion regarding the section on New Pedagogies. The wording used in the initial survey asked about teachers’ well-being so it is unclear as to whether the teachers were rating their well-being or focusing on the New Pedagogies themselves. Additionally, both the survey and interview data were drawn from self-reports and are therefore entirely subjective.
Chapter 4: Findings

The first phase of the research, the survey (appendix A), was designed to provide demographic data and develop various scores to run correlations as previously mentioned and to select participants for the second phase of the research: the interviews (Appendix B). From those interviews, I was able to generate main themes to help explain and answer my research questions: What factors influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba? Which Living School Attributes and Practices are present in environments where teachers are thriving and how do they contribute to teacher well-being?

Demographics

There were 83 total surveys completed with 73.5% identifying as female and 26.5% identifying as male. Ages varied among participants with 12% aged 22 to 29, 48.2% aged 30 to 39, 30.1% aged 40 to 49, 8.4% aged 50 to 59 and 1.2% were 60 years or over.

The grade levels the participants taught were: 38.6% taught Kindergarten to Grade 4, 39.8% taught Grade 5 to 8, and 55.4% taught Grade 9 to 12. The teaching experiences varied with 14.5% teaching for 1-5 years, 18.1% teaching for 6-10 years, 55.4% teaching for 11-20 years and finally 12% teaching for 20+ years.

There were a variety of subjects taught by the participants with some teachers teaching more than one subject. In total, there were 30 participants teaching ELA, 27 teaching Math, 27 teaching Science, 27 teaching Social Studies, 16 teaching French, 12 teaching PE, 11 involved in Student Services, 4 teaching Art, 3 teaching Special Education, 3 teaching Performing Arts, 3 teaching Vocational trades, 2 were Teacher Librarians and 2 teaching Business.
Stress Scores

The first general question related to stress asked teachers to rate their stress on a weekly basis due to school related issues on a 5-point Likert scale. The average results varied with 1.2% of participants scoring 1 (no stress), 15.7% scoring 2 (little stress), 39.8% scoring 3 (some stress), 38.6% scoring a 4 (higher stress) and 4.8% scoring a 5 (extreme stress) as demonstrated in Figure 3 below.

*Figure 3: How stressed are you on a weekly basis?*

These stress scores were the basis of the correlations tested, using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, between other variables in the survey data. This stress data was inverted for the purpose of running correlation scores, as previously mentioned in Chapter 3.

*Table 1: Stress Score descriptive statistics used to test Correlations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original Stress Score</th>
<th>Inverted Stress Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>/83</td>
<td>/83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEACHER WELL-BEING AND LIVING SCHOOLS

Next, the participants were asked how stress affects their personal wellness. The results were as follows: 1 (not at all) 0%, 2 (a small amount) 14.5%, 3 (somewhat) 42.2%, 4 (very much) 33.7% and 5 (extremely) 9.6%. These scores are similar to the initial stress scores in Figure 3. It is also important to recognize that no participants selected “1” as their response indicating the overlap of stress in personal and professional lives of educators and the significance of a healthy balance in teachers’ lives. This was a point of discussion in the second phase of the research.

In addition to the general stress questions, there were 13 stress related questions based on school stressors. The questions were set up as a 5-point Likert scale, the same as the previous two stress questions. The list of stressors included:

- Lack of prep time
- Report cards demands
- Paperwork and administrative demands
- Parent Demands
- Meetings
- Assessment Demands
- Duty or Supervision
- Extra-curricular Activities
- High Needs Students (Academic)
- High Needs Students (Behaviour)
- Lack of Support from other Staff
- Lack of Support from Administration
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Figure 4 illustrates the number of teachers (out of a possible 83) who selected each stressor at an extreme stress level, so a score of five (5) on the 5-point Likert scale. The graph in Figure 4 demonstrates “behavioural high needs students” and “academic high needs students” as the highest source of stress for educators with “duty” and “meetings” receiving the lowest number of “5”s.

Figure 4: Additional Stressors

In addition, “high needs students”, both academic (3.58) and behavioural (3.51), drove the highest mean scores as stressors for teachers in this study. “Duty” (2.22) and “extra-circular activities” (2.5) drove the lowest mean scores as stressors for participants.

Additionally, there was a short answer section on the survey allowing participants to respond to additional stressors in their lives. The following stressors were shared in the short answer portion of the survey with some appearing multiple times in the survey results:

- Coworkers- conflict, lack of communication, uncooperative, negative attitudes, drama (11 responses)
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- Administration - changing, demands, lack of leadership, poor communication (6 responses)
- Personal life/Balance: debt, family responsibilities, health (6 responses)
- Many ‘hats’ of teaching (4 responses)
- High class sizes (3 responses)
- Pushed teaching fads (new professional development goals) (3 responses)
- Professional bullying/unprofessionalism (2 responses)
- Constant emails which require a response either parent or administrative (2 responses)
- Technology (2 responses)
- Pressure to have students earn credits (2 responses)
- Lack of sleep (1 responses)

Some of these stressors also appeared in the second phase of the research along with other detractors to participants’ well-being shared in the short answer questions at the end of the survey.

**Stress-related symptoms**

Participants were also asked to check all stress symptoms they felt on a weekly basis based upon cognitive stress, physical stress, emotional stress and behavioural stress. Figures 5 through 8 visually represent those statistics. Teachers were able to check multiple symptoms within each category.
As demonstrated by Figure 5, there are many cognitive stressors for teachers with many symptoms scoring high. The highest stress symptoms in the cognitive category was “anxious or worrying thoughts” with 55.4% of participants selecting this symptom with “seeing the negative” and “constant worrying” following closely with 54.2% and 49.4% respectively.

As noted in the Figure 6, two physical stress symptoms soared above the others with “exhaustion” scoring the highest at 84.3% and “aches and pains” scoring 56.6%.
Figure 7: Emotional Stress Symptom

Figure 7 shows many emotional stress symptoms for teachers with “feelings of being overwhelmed” scoring the highest at 72.3% and followed closely by “irritability and short temper” with 66.7%.

Figure 8: Behavioural Stress Symptoms

Finally, Figure 8 indicates the highest behavioural stress symptom as “eating more or less” at 68.7% with “poor sleep habits” and “procrastination” following closely behind.

As can be seen from the data in the figures above, teachers seem to be displaying multiple stress related symptoms on a weekly basis.

Balance Scores

Balance scores were created to determine the way teachers were balancing their time commitments outside of school. Teachers were asked to rank the amount of time they devote to each category on an average week: 1 (no time or 0%), 2 (little time or 5%-10%), 3 (average time
or 10-15%), 4 (most of my time or 15-25%) and 5 (a lot of my time or more than 25%). The categories were based upon Family, Friends, Work/Career, Finances, Health and Nutrition, Fitness, Personal Growth and Learning, and Fun and Leisure.

Figure 9: Balance Mean Scores

Figure 9 demonstrates the mean scores for each category in the balance section of the survey. The lower score in fitness (1.87) also relates with many of the short answer questions responses on the survey where teachers shared that in order to improve their overall well-being they could exercise more frequently and live a healthier lifestyle. This section also connects to the Active category in the well-being section of the survey, which was also the lowest score amongst the four categories (see Table 2 below).

Well-Being Score

The focus of the well-being portion of the survey was to determine what factors contribute to a teacher’s experience of thriving. This section was divided into four categories based upon Carney’s (2015) well-being model: Resilience, Active, Flourishing and
Relationships. Averages were generated within each category in order to create a fair representation of well-being to ensure categories with more questions did not skew the overall well-being results. Then the four averages were added up to create an overall well-being score. These descriptive statistics in Table 2 were used to test correlations between variables such as stress, NPDL and Living School Attributes and Practices.

Table 2: Four Categories of Well-Being descriptive statistics used to test Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Resilience Average</th>
<th>Active Average</th>
<th>Flourishing Average</th>
<th>Relationships Average</th>
<th>Well-Being Total Averages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Resilience scores contained the highest average scores with 4.1 and the lowest standard deviation at 0.48 whereas the Active category was the lowest of the four categories with an average of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.73. These scores align with earlier results regarding balance and stress short answer questions. In order to calculate a well-being score, the four averages were added up to ensure no categories outweighed one another.

The well-being data was further analyzed with respect to the specific questions within each of the categories relating to well-being to help answer the initial research question of: **What factors influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba?**

The highest mean score for participants in the Resilience category was the question: *I have positive relationships within the classroom with students* with a mean score of 4.6. The
lowest mean score in Resilience was *I am proactive and positive about engaging in new initiatives* with a mean score of 3.8.

The Active category was broken down in to six questions with *I am able to connect with others through various situations in a social environment* scoring the highest mean score of 3.6. The lowest mean score in the Active category was *I get 8 hours of sleep each night* with a score of 2.7.

The Flourishing category contained nine questions. The category of *I feel my job has meaning and purpose on a daily basis* had the highest mean score in the category with a 4.2 and the lowest mean score with a 2.4 score was *I practice mindfulness at various points throughout the day*.

The final category in the well-being section of the survey was on Relationships with six questions with the highest mean score in *I feel strongly supported by at least 2 other staff members at my school* with a 4.4. On the opposite end was *I am able to ask for help or support when I need it*, with a score of 3.5.

An additional question was included under the Relationships section regarding PLCs. The first question asked if PLCs were present in their school communities, 81.9% responded positively. There was an additional short answer question on the survey regarding the value of PLCs in their schools: *If you are a member of a PLC in your school, do you find them valuable to your professional well-being?* Positive responses regarding PLCs were:

- They give an opportunity to meet with teachers and compare what is being done in each classroom
- PLCs allow for teachers to share ideas, which encourages excellence in teaching and growth in students
This year our school teams met for half a day rather than one period per cycle. It made a huge difference in our ability to meet our school’s literacy and numeracy goals.

Yes, it's a great way to work collaboratively

They are valuable in providing opportunities to work on common goals and share ideas. Certain projects can be completed through PLC work that would not happen without them.

Yes. I am thankful to have the opportunity to meet to discuss best practices on a regular basis. I appreciate hearing about what others are doing and working with colleagues to find solutions for some of the issues that come up.

I think PLCs are valuable because you can set your own learning priorities/goals and work with colleagues that share your interests. If I am interested in the topic being explored then I am more likely to be engaged and contribute.

Yes! We have noticed it strengthen our overall efficacy among our staff and it is so valuable to watch other teachers teach.

Yes, feel it is valuable because it allows us to spend time with like-minded teachers who are passionate about their craft, and tools to help motivate and inspire other teachers.

With the meetings being required, it gives us a regular opportunity to interact with other professionals for problem solving/support that if we did not have to meet may otherwise be overlooked due to the urgency of other tasks.

I find them very valuable if they are run well and everyone is on the same page.
- Some that I have been a part of have very unclear specific goals. I have also been part of them where they are very effective and I have time to discuss issues and meet goals with a group of people teaching the same subjects.

- Yes, they are valuable. They allow time to work collaboratively, share ideas, resources and to learn from colleagues.

Some negative responses were:

- No. We are told what we are to suppose[d] to do during that time by our admin (which is usually something that is not applicable to our everyday teaching). We often request to be able to use the time for something we deem as valuable but are not allowed to if it does not follow the criteria given by admin.

- Not especially. They have actually never been focused on anything that I have taught. We have some that are division wide "francais orale" focused which we are obliged to participate in. I find it difficult to contribute or use the content and discussions in my own teaching as I do not teach many French language courses this year.

- No, as I was leading a PLC that did not align with my own professional growth goals.

- No. We were provided with 5 choices at the beginning of the year. Some of us were "prescribed" certain PLCs. For example, I teach K-12 music, and I was put into the Outdoor Education PLC because it was the closest thing to an applicable group.

- The PLC I am part of frustrates me, as it seems to focus exclusively on literacy in the written form and does not look at literacy in visual or other representational forms that science and math often require.

- Not always. Often the PLC is selected by the board office and mandated to the division.
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- No, every year they have changed and this year part way through our agenda and goals within them changed to the topic chosen by our admin.

- Nope, our PLC focus is top down from senior admin. Not teacher lead.

The common reasons why teachers had a negative perspective on PLCs were due to the fact that they were either “forced” upon them, not applicable to their teaching or had a very “top-down” approach from upper administration.

In addition to the PLC short answer question, there were questions on the survey relating to well-being, one asked: what is the one improvement that could be made in your school to enhance teacher well-being? Suggestions for improvement included:

- Wellness days (19 responses)
- Collaborative colleagues (8 responses)
- Supportive administration (8 responses)
- Equitable class size (7 responses)
- Team building (7 responses)
- More prep time (5 responses)
- More ‘celebrations’ (4 responses)
- Communication (4 responses)
- Autonomy (4 responses)
- Teacher voice (4 responses)
- Positive feedback (4 responses)
- Self-guided PD (3 responses)
- Safety (2 responses)
- More frequent breaks (2 responses)
These ideas and suggestions were helpful in driving and supporting the second phase of the research.

**NPDL Scores**

Participants were also asked to score their school in terms of New Pedagogies for Deep Learning. The questions focused on New Partnerships among staff, New Partnerships with students, Deep Learning Tasks and the use of Digital tools and Resources and were scored on a 5-point Likert Scale. The statistical data in Table 3 was used to test correlations between variables.

*Table 3: New Pedagogies for Deep Learning descriptive statistics used to test Correlations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Learning Partnerships between teachers and students are encouraged</th>
<th>New Learning Partnerships among teachers are encouraged</th>
<th>Deep Learning Tasks restructured towards knowledge creation and purposeful use is highly regarded</th>
<th>Digital Tools and Resources that enable and accelerate the process of deep learning is a main focus area of development</th>
<th>New Pedagogies Average Score /5</th>
<th>New Pedagogies score /20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were also given an overall score out of 20 for their responses with a minimum score of four (4) as there were four questions in total. I also calculated an average score for New Pedagogies, which was 12.10, that was used in the correlations with other variables such as stress, well-being scores and Living School scores. These scores are inconsistent across participants illustrating that some schools may prioritize NPDL. The lowest score in the Digital Tools category could be due to funding obstacles for different schools and divisions.
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Living Schools Scores

The final section of the survey explored Living School Attributes and Practices. The questions were divided up amongst the Attributes and Practices: Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-based Orientation, and Health and Well-being.

### LIVING SCHOOLS ATTRIBUTES & PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values &amp; Vision</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Teaching &amp; Learning</th>
<th>Nature &amp; Place-Based Orientation</th>
<th>Health &amp; Well-Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School community members are committed to.</td>
<td>Organizational structures are characterized by:</td>
<td>Pedagogical practices are influenced by:</td>
<td>Schools reflect a commitment to:</td>
<td>School community demonstrates practices designed to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Engaging with the world**
  - Developing a cultural awareness of other's world views and identities
  - Demonstrating and modeling care for plants, other animals, and the rest of the natural world
  - Developing compassion for oneself, other people and all living things as well as skills to address positive change
  - Promoting the health and well-being of students, staff, the wider community, and the natural environment
  - A solution-focused growth mindset when facing challenges and opportunities
  - Creating trusting and respectful relationships in the school community
  - Respecting indigenous world views and traditional ways of knowing

- **Ensuring teachers and students have voice and agency**
- **Developing strong collaborative relationships with staff, parents, guardians, and community**
- **Creating opportunities for professional development for transformative learning**
- **Cultivating an ethos of equity, inclusion and diversity**
- **Explicit support for sustainability education and well-being**
- **Encouraging risk taking to explore new ways of living, learning, and working in a safe environment**
- **Collaborative processes**
- **Holistic approaches to teaching and learning**
- **A commitment to inquiry-based strategies to affect real-world change**
- **A spirit of inclusion, student centered and differentiated learning**
- **The development of creativity and creating a climate for risk taking and student agency**
- **Modeling healthy and sustainable lifestyles**
- **Authentic assessment of and for learning practices**
- **Using natural, social, built environments, including the school envelope to foster learning**
- **Incorporating outdoor learning relative to location of school**
- **Developing ecological literacy of students and teachers**
- **Incorporating furniture, light, classroom resources sustainably and to promote well-being**
- **Developing strong ties to community and commitment to active citizenship**
- **Develop emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of students, staff, and teachers**
- **Support the principles of health promoting schools**
- **Explore the links between human health and the natural world**
- **Explore the relationships between sustainability, happiness, and well-being for all**
- **Support positive communication in the classroom, at school and with the wider community**
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Figures 10 through 14 reveal teachers’ selection of Attributes and Practices in their schools. Each teacher was able to check as many applicable Attributes and Practices as was represented in their schools.

Figure 10: Values and Visions

Values and Visions

Engages with the real world
Develops cultural awareness of others’ worldviews and...
Develops and models care for plants, other animals and...
Develops compassion for oneself, other people, and all...
Promotes the health and well-being of students, staff,...
Has a solution focused growth mindset when facing...
Respects Indigenous Worldviews and traditional ways of...
None of the above apply

Scores

Figure 11: Leadership

Leadership

Ensures all teachers and students have voice and agency
Develops strong collaborative relationships with staff,...
Creates opportunities for professional development for...
Cultivates an ethos of equity, inclusion and diversity
Has explicit support for sustainability education and...
Encourages risk taking to explore new ways of living,...
None of the above apply

Scores
Figure 12: Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning

- Is a collaborative process
- Has a holistic approach
- Has a commitment to inquiry-based strategies that...
- Has a spirit of inclusion, student-centred and...
- Is developed on creativity and creating a climate for risk...
- Models healthy and sustainable lifestyles
- Has authentic assessment of and for learning practices
- None of the above

Scores

Attributes and Visions

Figure 13: Nature and Place Based Orientation

Nature and Place-Based Orientation

- Uses natural, social, and built environments to foster...
- Incorporates outdoor learning relative to the location of...
- Develops ecological literacy for students and teachers
- Incorporates furniture, lighting, classroom resources...
- Develops strong ties to community and commitment to...
- None of the above

Score

Attributes and Practices
From this data, teachers were given a score out of 30 based upon the number of Attributes and Practices they selected as present in their schools. These scores were used to test correlations between other variable such as stress, well-being and NPDL (see Table 4).

Under the Values and Visions category, “developing compassion” and “respecting Indigenous worldviews” scored the highest with “developing an awareness for others’ worldviews” scoring the lowest. Under the Leadership category, “creates opportunity for professional development” had the most selections from participants with “sustainable education” selected the least amount of times. Under the Teaching and Learning category, “inclusion with a student-centred focus” scored the highest with “risk taking and modelling a sustainable lifestyle” scoring the lowest. Nature and Place-based orientation had the most selected under “community ties” and the lowest selection was focused on “ecological literacy”. The final category of Health and Well-being had a high selection under the “positive communication in the classroom” and the lowest was “explores the links between human health and the environment”. The Values and Visions category was the strongest amongst the five with Health and Well-Being scoring the lowest as a whole. Another significant point to address in
TEACHER WELL-BEING AND LIVING SCHOOLS

these results is that sustainability-related attributes in each category were checked less often than any other.

Table 4: Living Schools Score descriptive statistical data used to test Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score /30</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>/83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations

Stress Score and Well-Being Scores

Using Google Sheets, various correlations were tabulated using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient. The first set of correlations tested were between the overall stress score and well-being scores. Average well-being scores were calculated, as previously mentioned, to ensure a fair representation of the results.

The correlations were calculated based on the statistical data from Table 1 and Table 2 shared earlier in this chapter.

Table 5: Stress and Well-Being Correlations using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inverted Stress Score</th>
<th>Person’s r</th>
<th>Average Resilience Score</th>
<th>Average Active Score</th>
<th>Average Flourishing Score</th>
<th>Average Relationships Score</th>
<th>Total Well-being score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.001 n.s.</td>
<td>0.168 n.s.</td>
<td>0.139 n.s.</td>
<td>0.145 n.s.</td>
<td>0.164 n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.992 n.s.</td>
<td>0.129 n.s.</td>
<td>0.210 n.s.</td>
<td>0.191 n.s.</td>
<td>0.138 n.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n.s.=non-significant

I found there were positive but not significant relationships among the inverted stress scores and well-being score (r(83)=0.164, p=ns) along with the other well-being scores in the four categories as demonstrated by Table 5. The three categories of Active, Flourishing and Relationships demonstrated correlations with the stress score and the Resilience category showed positive but not significant correlations with the stress score. When looking back at Figure 3, it
can be noted that all teachers responded to higher stress levels with only one participant choosing “1” to represent their stress levels so as a whole, thus teachers seem to be a stressed group in general. The stress score indicates that stress does play a role in the well-being of the teachers surveyed, but there are other contributing factors to a teacher’s well-being.

**New Pedagogies Score Correlations**

Average New Pedagogies scores were used to test correlations between the stress score and well-being score. The correlations were calculated based upon the statistical data from Table 1 and Table 3.

*Table 6: New Pedagogies Correlations using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Pedagogies Score</th>
<th>Inverted Stress Score</th>
<th>Well-Being Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson’s r</td>
<td>-0.056 n.s.</td>
<td>0.288*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.615 n.s.</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.01, n.s.=non-significant

The two correlation calculations for new pedagogies drove two different results. The new pedagogies scores was not correlated to a significant degree with the inverted stress score ($r(83)=-0.056, p=ns$). On the other hand, there was a significant correlation between the new pedagogies score and well-being score ($r(83)=0.288, p<.01$). The correlation between the inverted stress score and the NPDL score could be caused from the limitations mentioned in Chapter 3. Since the wording used in the initial survey asked about teachers’ well-being it is unclear as to whether the teachers were rating their well-being or focusing on the New Pedagogies themselves.

**Living School Score Correlations**

Living School scores were compared to well-being scores, average Resilience scores, average Active scores, average Flourishing scores, average Relationships scores, stress scores and average New Pedagogies scores. The correlations below were calculated based upon Table 2 and Table 4 statistical data.
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Table 7: Living Schools Correlations using Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Schools Score</th>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Average Resilience Score</th>
<th>Average Active Score</th>
<th>Average Flourishing Score</th>
<th>Average Relationships score</th>
<th>Well-Being score</th>
<th>Inverted Stress Score</th>
<th>New Pedagogies Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td>0.293*</td>
<td>0.083 n.s.</td>
<td>0.486***</td>
<td>0.521***</td>
<td>0.453***</td>
<td>0.088 n.s.</td>
<td>0.544***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *p<.05, ***p<.001, n.s. = non-significant

The Living School score correlations had much stronger relationships between the variables: well-being scores and new pedagogies score. There was a positive but not significant relationship between the Living Schools score and the inverted stress score (r(83)=0.088, p=ns).

A strong and significant correlation was found between the Living School score and New Pedagogies score (r(83)=0.544, p=<.01). As well, a strong correlation was found between Living Schools and the well-being score (r(83)=0.453, p=<.01). Of the four categories within the well-being scale, the average Relationships score had the strongest correlation to Living Schools (r(83)=0.521, p=<.01) and the average Active score had a positive but not significant correlation to Living Schools (r(83)=0.083, p=ns).
In summary, the main findings in the quantitative data correlations were:

a) A significant positive correlation between the new pedagogies score and well-being score \( (r(83)=0.288, \ p=<.01) \).

b) A strong and significant positive correlation was found between the Living School score and New Pedagogies score \( (r(83)=0.544, \ p=<.01) \).

c) A strong and positive correlation was found between Living Schools and the well-being score \( (r(83)=0.453, \ p=<.01) \). As well as, positive and significant correlations between Living Schools and Relationships \( (r(83)=0.521, \ p=<.01) \), Flourishing \( (r(83)=0.486, \ p=<.01) \) and Resilience \( (r(83)=0.293, \ p=<.01) \).

The above results suggest a positive relationship between well-being and Living Schools. Since new pedagogies are a part of Living Schools, it is no surprise that there is also a
relationship between new pedagogies scores and well-being scores, as well as new pedagogies and Living School scores.

**Interview responses**

Results from the initial phase, the survey, were used in the selection of participants for the interview. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the seven participants were chosen out of the Top 20 well-being average scores from the survey. Table 8 highlights some demographic data alongside their various scores.

*Table 8: Qualitative Interview Participants using pseudonyms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Well-Being Score / 20</th>
<th>Living School Score / 30</th>
<th>Stress Score / 5</th>
<th>New Pedagogies Score / 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kelsey</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>PE (Senior)</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abby</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>Teacher Lib, SS, ELA, Math, Science (Early/Middle)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Music, SS, ELA (Early/Middle)</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Janaya</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>ELA, French, Math, Science, SS, Art (Early)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>EAL (Senior)</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Brittney</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>PE (middle)</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>ELA, French, Math, Science, SS, Art (Middle)</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To begin each interview, participants were asked to self-assess their well-being on a scale of 1-10. All participants responded positively, scoring themselves as a 7 or 8 for the majority of the year. This supports the initial findings of the survey in the selection of participants who are thriving according to the well-being scale. As illustrated by Table 8, all seven participants are
mid-career teachers and female with various grade levels and subject levels. The table also shows each participants’ scores in Well-being, Living Schools, Stress and NPDL.

**Themes.** Four broad themes emerged from the transcribed interviews. The themes are interrelated. The four identified themes are: 1) School Climate; 2) Teacher Resilience and Personal Competency; 3) Relationships; 4) Living School Attributes & Practices and Well-Being.

**Theme 1: School Climate.** School climate was the first theme to emerge regarding teacher well-being, with a focus on school goals and strong administration. Common ideas discussed ranged from visions for the school, respect, strong teacher voice and agency, and strong communication.

All participants spoke about the fact that their schools have a strong administration contributing to a positive school climate. They shared that their administrators have open door policies, are present in the school by constantly interacting with staff and students and are flexible and supportive. One participant, Janaya, an early years classroom teacher whose school scored 30 in the Living School Attributes and Practices category confirmed, “he [my principal] is always walking around…he is on school tours, or he comes into classrooms on a regular basis…” she continued, “we book them twice a year to celebrate something with our kids.” She admitted that everyone participates in these celebrations and it is a positive experience, for teachers and students, where no one feels forced or stressed. Another participant, Brittney, a middle years PE teacher said, “we have very supportive administrators. And they are both fantastic and they care very much about the well-being of their staff.” She also pointed out that there had been an administrative change in her school four years before and that they were a “sinking ship” before her current administration stepped in. She also explained:
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They [administrators] are very supportive, they are very positive. They are very good with checking in with all staff. They are very visible in the building. They will do things like, they will be sure to recognize teacher appreciation week or just because it is the Friday before report cards are due, here are some treats for you guys. They are very involved and want to be involved in the school, they get together outside of school or play in the staff vs students sports game at lunch. They coach… they [administrators] will pop in randomly to classrooms and the gym. They will come into the gym pick up a racquet and start rallying with a kid.

Six of the seven participants mentioned various Attributes and Practices they thought made a strong administrator ranging from having strong communication skills, trust and ensuring all staff felt valued. Abby, an early years classroom teacher and teacher librarian, described factors that contribute to her well-being include “being heard, having professional opinions respected and having a strong sense of collegial relationships.” The value of acknowledging staff was a common idea amongst participants as well. Kelsey, a high school PE teacher, noticed that her principal is very good at thanking people for what they do and does little “shout-outs” to staff; she brings in treats for teacher appreciation week and brings in little snacks that she thinks teachers will enjoy.

Another consistent comment that was common amongst participants was that administrators were taking risks themselves, therefore encouraging their staff to do so. Kelsey has a new principal who has been in her building for two years; she has been impressed by the risks her new administrator is willing to take by bringing in new ideas that are ‘outside the box’. She feels that through this risk taking, other staff members are more willing to take those risks as well. One of the other participants, Madison, also has a
newer principal to her building who is keen on taking risks. Her principal works with
divisional teams to bring learning coaches into the school to create more of an open-door
policy encouraging teachers to take more risk and step outside their comfort zones. She
observed teachers’ initial reactions as reluctant around this change but once they realized it
was benefitting everyone, the climate and openness began to change. However, it took a
change in mindset for them to realize that the learning coaches were not there to judge their
teaching but to create new practices in a supportive manner.

Many participants also spoke about their administrators stressing the importance of
mental health. Four of the participants acknowledged the importance of their principals
recognizing the need for mental health days as sick days. In terms of the contractual
information shared by the participants in this research study, no contracts had mental
health days incorporated within their collective agreements. This is significant as many
teachers would not consider a mental health day to be a sick day but with supportive
administrators, this seems to be more standard with no judgement associated with the day.

A second common factor contributing to teacher well-being in many of the
interviews within the theme of school climate was school goals and visions. Six out of the
seven participants discussed the importance of goal setting in their schools, along with the
teachers’ role in the planning was equally important; Abby remarked that all staff
participate in the school plan together, which “is good because then we all feel ownership
over it.” Another participant, Sarah, a middle years teacher, voiced the idea that teachers
do not all agree in her school all the time, but they all work towards a common goal and
further discussed how school planning is a fun day at her school where everyone looks
forward to participating in the process. Brittney expressed that an important goal in her
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School was stressing inclusiveness and togetherness within the school community to ensure all members of the school community are happy and feel valued, including both staff and students. As previously mentioned, as the themes are intertwined, this also falls into the Living School theme as teacher voice and agency is a significant factor in the Leadership category.

As mentioned throughout the theme of school climate, strong administrators were common amongst the participants. Nevertheless, five of the interviewees echoed their frustrations with previous administrators who did not meet the needs of the teachers in the school. Teachers admitted that in the past, they have had administrators who have had a very 'top down' policy where teachers felt they did not have a voice or were seen as valued members of the school communities. Sarah said, “I don’t think our governing bodies are [concerned with teacher well-being] and our divisions are responding to the needs of the government and passing it on to our administrators who are passing it on to us [teachers].”

Common traits among administrators perceived as problematic were that they were in their office more than in the school community (classrooms, hallways, gym), micromanaged the staff and lacked positive communication skills. Sarah also expressed, “nothing is more important than an administrator that takes an interest in teachers and trusts them to do their jobs.” The feeling of trust between all members of the school community (administrators, teachers and students) was an important contributing factor in building a positive school climate.
Theme 2: Teacher Resilience and Personal Competency.

While the school climate and administration in these participants’ schools contribute to their well-being, all of these teachers have very strong personal competencies contributing to their own well-being that have developed over their teaching career.

Carney (2015) discusses five SEL competencies for teachers: self-awareness, managing emotions, social self-motivation, empathy and managing relationships. These competencies were visible in the qualitative phase of the research. All participants are mid-career teachers, an essential factor as they explained how their experience has helped shape their management of these competencies. The participants’ use and development of these strategies are all contributing factors to their overall well-being, both professionally and personally. Within this theme, discussions were based around confidence, positive mindsets and balance.

One of the first competencies that appeared multiple times in each interview was the confidence, through self-awareness, the participants had in their job performance and role as a teacher. Kelsey recalled that building her confidence was due to her years of experience along with positive role models and leaders in her life, which have allowed her to keep growing. All of the participants mentioned confidence as an imperative factor contributing to their well-being but it was a continuous process as they continue to grow and develop in this area. Sarah directly states, “I feel confident and I feel I am good at what I do. I have some good self-efficacy.” As teachers move through their career with permanent contracts, they felt that they could truly develop themselves as teachers and they were not continually playing catch up, they had a foundation of materials and resources while developing strong relationships with colleagues. This was affirmed by Kelsey when
she said, “I have been teaching for 13 years, and I would say over the past six years is where I have really started to focus on overall well-being on a new level.”

Building upon that idea, Madison recalled, “self-awareness is such a huge piece in the well-being thing I see so many people burning out because they don’t even see if happening. Self-awareness and self-reflection is a skill and not everyone has it.” From a middle career perspective, teachers are able to be more mindful of these ideas because they have made these same mistakes in the past and have worked hard to improve their self-awareness. Megan also mentioned the significance of the stage of her career sharing that from her perception, “many middle career teachers see what they have done in the past but are not afraid to change and are willing to put in the time and effort to do so.” Abby started her teaching career later in life, but she feels she has an advantage over her colleagues because she is still early enough in her career to be excited and motivated but does not have a young family at home to so she can focus on herself and her balance in that regard.

This moves into the positive mindset that all of the participants mentioned throughout their interviews as well. They shared that they regularly try to have a positive mindset even though they have rough days; they always remember why they started teaching in the first place. They all share the passion they have for their job but it has not necessarily been an easy learning experience. Sarah gave an example from her teaching journey:

I wasn’t always [positive]. I took a year off after I got a little beaten up by the whole thing. And thought, well do I really want to teach?

And it was a very good year, to take that time and think about it and
TEACHER WELL-BEING AND LIVING SCHOOLS
decide am I really a teacher? And what I did decide was what I really
loved was being in the classroom. Then I ended up at this sweet little
school where the parents love it and the administrator was awesome.
That saved me.
This sense of meaning permitted Sarah to continue to do what she loves due to her
perseverance and determination. Teaching gave her a sense of meaning and a second
opportunity in the classroom therefore, allowing Sarah to be more mindful and value the
importance of self-care and to prioritize her well-being. All seven participants had this in
common, although they all had different methods and ways to take care of themselves,
being aware of what works for them and their needs.
One of the most common ideas within Teacher Resilience and Personal
Competencies was balance. Participants discussed the importance of balance in their lives
and explained it did not happen overnight either as it took years to develop or is still a
work in progress. Kelsey mentioned, “I have not always had this balance; I definitely think
my experience as a teacher has helped me because you are constantly dealing with other
people’s emotions and feelings in terms of students and even teachers.” To build upon that
idea, Abby had a serious health incident last year that affected her mindset and she realized
she needed to slow down. When reflecting upon the balance in her life she noticed, “I’m
trying to spend less time on school stuff and trying to contain it because there is always
going to be work to do.” She revealed how she sets an alarm at the end of the day telling
her to go home; before her serious health complication she would stay at work until the
custodian kicked her out at the end of the day but she has learned the importance of taking
care of herself and finding that healthy balance in her life. Kelsey expressed a similar
thought, “I realized that my professional life does not always need to come home into my personal life.” All participants mentioned similar situations or ideas of ensuring they made time for themselves, but it was also a common point that they all had to be very mindful of this idea and it was a learning experience for them in one way or another. Megan realized this when she was in the middle of a conversation with her partner at home but was suddenly distracted by a school email, which prompted her to take more of a direct step to create some separation between the two aspects of her life.

An interesting fact that six of the participants had in common was that they spend a lot of time doing extra-curricular activities, averaging about 4 to 6 hours per week, ranging from coaching sports, facilitating clubs and directing musical concerts. This did not detract from their well-being but instead contributed to their thriving. Madison, a music teacher, described this as her passion:

Being the music teacher, there are big events that we put on, where there is pressure and it is busy and it is evening commitments or after school events which you would think would bring the [well-being] number down but this is also what I love .... On paper it looks like I shouldn’t be [thriving] but this is what I love and I am with these kids and seeing them on stage and at these concerts and getting audience feedback, this is what I feel I was meant to do.

All of the participants share the same drive and love for their job and their students. Abby reflected, “I genuinely love what we do; I do, I think it is the best job I’ve ever had. I wish I had done it when I was in my 20s.” She spoke about how her job feeds her passion, as she is fortunate to have a teaching position where she can use her own passion for
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project-based learning and sustainability practices. Sarah, a basketball coach, explained that coaching has a dual purpose for her as “it is a way to deal with the darkness of winter” but also gets her in the gym more to be active and have fun with her students. Two other basketball coaches expressed a similar idea; both Kelsey and Megan put in 150+ hours of extra-curricular time during the school year but love the opportunities to work with kids outside the school to build strong relationships. Brittney continued with this coaching theme, as she not only coaches multiple sports in her school but also coaches competitive sport at the national level. Every participant had the same mindset regarding the “extra” time they put in; it was all positive, gave them motivation and allowed for deeper connections.

A significant trait common amongst participants was that the extra-curricular hours did not cause them stress, it was the “extra” demands that were the root of their stressors such as administrative paperwork, new report cards, long (‘unnecessary’) staff meetings, political agendas, duty and divisional forms or meetings. Many of these ‘extra’ stressors have nothing to do with a teacher’s primary job in the classroom. What many of these stressors do is detract from teachers’ well-being by adding more to their already full plate. Sarah made an insightful point about the politics behind education:

Stop with the political movement to quantify the art of being a teacher. You cannot quantify what we do. So there is all this, how do you measure this? You know, it is in business and health care. Education is an art and a science; anyone can learn the science to being a teacher but there is an art form that you cannot. So every time some measuring tool comes along that tries to do something with that art it takes away from yourself.
A final common idea within the Teacher Resilience and Personal Competencies theme for participants was that all of them have something outside of school that makes them happy, six of them discussed the importance of physical exercise on a regular basis as a major contributing factor to their well-being. Many of them discussed life-long learning, whether it was in the form of a post-baccalaureate or master’s degree or learning a new skill or attending clinics or PD of their choice outside of their school buildings. Kelsey shared factors that contribute to her well-being as seeking out her own PD with collaboration grants, national conferences and completing her master’s degree because, “I have pushed myself for me. I would get bored. You know going through the motions and not pushing myself to go to the next level.”

As the participants shared their strategies for well-being, it was clear there were common traits and mindsets amongst them. Teacher Resilience and Personal Competencies are major contributing factors to teachers’ well-being as a whole. It is also important to note that these teachers did not develop these skills overnight. It took years of experience to figure out as they all continually work on these practices. These competencies also enhance the relationships the participants share in their school communities.

**Theme 3: Relationships.** The relationship theme focused upon participants’ connections to their colleagues and their students. This was built upon common ideas around PLCs, collaboration, and team building.

Student relationships and connections was a driving force and common trait amongst participants’ well-being. As mentioned in the previous theme of Teacher Resiliency and Personal Competency, most of the participants spend hundreds of hours on extra-curricular activities working with students and all those teachers commented on the
importance of those relationships to their well-being. This also links to the first theme of building a positive school climate. If teachers are happy, it is common for students to be happy and if students are happy then teachers tend to be happy as well, a virtuous cycle that continually feeds off one another.

Megan mentioned, “the students make me feel that my time spent with them is valued and appreciated.” She continued to discuss the unique community she is able to form in her specialized learning environment. She teaches in a larger high school but is able to teach students for multiple periods per day allowing strong relationships to build within her own community. Former students come to her classroom for homework help in their free time. As well, students come to hang out with their peers in her classroom for their lunch period, a somewhat uncommon trait in a high school environment. Of the seven participants interviewed, she seems to be thriving more based upon her student relationships rather than her colleague relationships. She remarked that she has relationships with colleagues in her building that she developed due to her own personal interests and activities, but her department or team did not seem to enhance her well-being. It seems that her strong relationships with students drive her well-being and her SEL competencies discussed in the previous theme.

Six of the participants teach in a smaller school community where many of them have the opportunity to teach students multiple times helping them build strong relationships with those students. Abby mentioned that with only 110 students in her school, “it is nice and actually contributes to my well-being because I know every kid in the building and I know them well.” She has a unique position in her building as she teaches part time in the classroom and is a part-time teacher librarian, so she continually
TEACHER WELL-BEING AND LIVING SCHOOLS

works with other classrooms on project-based learning throughout the school year. Abby also gave examples of multiple clubs she facilitates with students to build strong connections with the students outside the classroom. Kelsey noted that in her school, teachers are able to teach students multiple times enabling stronger relationships to form between students and teachers so even the toughest kids with the toughest backgrounds are able to come out with some sort of positive interaction with their teacher in the end.

Kelsey revealed that she feels she can take more risks in her teaching because of her relationships with her students. “I think my students contribute to my professional well-being in terms of the relationships I have with them and that I am able to build, and they tend to buy-in to things [programs] I am trying to build in the school.” Due to the strong relationships she has with students, she has been able to develop programs, initiative innovative activities and do more learning trips outside of the school because of the trust that has been developed over time. As mentioned earlier, all themes are interconnected so if teachers and students have strong relationships and have high levels of well-being then a positive school climate can develop and continue to strengthen.

Relationships amongst colleagues was the most common theme between participants throughout the interviews. Teachers discussed PLCs, team teaching, collaboration, team building and staff attachment. For many of the teachers in smaller schools, they noted the family feel their staff has in their buildings. All participants discussed ways for staff to bond outside of the school building ranging from BBQs, breakout/escape rooms, holiday parties, and staff get-togethers outside of the school day. It is also important to note staff bonding within the school. Six of the participants discussed having a common lunch hour. Kelsey described an initiative created by staff in her building to have monthly staff lunches to give
everyone a chance to go to the staffroom on that day to connect and she has noticed an improvement in staff morale. Madison indicated her staff had a wellness fund where they used the money to attend a night out with an escape room for staff bonding. Continuing with the idea of staff inclusiveness, Brittney noticed that members of her staff really push the idea of staff togetherness by going out after school and ensuring everyone was invited and included to encourage staff bonding.

Creating a positive climate amongst staff is crucial for the health of the school. This can also be done through collaboration within the school and teaching environment. Five of the teachers discussed team teaching and collaboration time within their schools and Kelsey mentioned that due to the smaller size of her school, her Physical Education (PE) team applied for a collaboration grant to work with other PE teachers in other schools. She said, “one thing that really benefitted me this year that would contribute to my well-being was to connect with colleagues outside my building who are very similar to me in terms of coaching and teaching.” She continued to explain that collaborating with people who share her passions has allowed her to grow and improve as a person and an educator therefore contributing to her well-being.

Within other schools, teachers discussed the value of team teaching. Janaya explained that in her building they do a lot of team building with teachers and students. She gave examples that every grade level team has an expert, so she is the writing expert because that is her niche. Therefore, she will teach writing in one of her team teachers’ classrooms so that teacher can observe her and then that teacher, the math expert, will teach in her classroom so she has the chance to observe. She said it helps balance her team and her teaching because it alleviates pressure. Her team has “teaming periods” built into
their schedules in order for them to have productive time to collaborate. Madison also spoke about her experience with peer observations as a positive one. At her school, the administration encourages an open-door policy for peer observations within the building as well as working with the divisional learning coaches. Initially it was a learning curve, but as teachers have begun to value the process, it has become much more normal and teachers have started to build more confidence in themselves. Brittney also shared the way her school uses teaming periods in the gym to help manage the environment but to also allow more innovative learning and teaching.

Through her experience, Sarah expressed the value of a strong teaching partner. She talked about the significance of collaborating with her previous teaching partner as well as his ability to help keep her balanced. She said, “he was so calm, if I would get myself worked up, he was the most perfect teaching partner for me.” She also discussed the importance of collaboration time. Her middle years team receives an hour a cycle to create meaningful educational materials. She revealed that she wants to bring in a new initiative in her teaming periods this year by bringing in innovative articles to support learning and teaching. With the flexibility to tailor the collaboration time to their needs, it benefits everyone involved.

Even though all of the participants spoke about supportive colleagues, there were some examples where the participants had stress in the past due to unsupportive colleagues. Since all of the participants were middle career teachers, many have had experiences with non-supportive colleagues who have been detrimental to their overall well-being. Two of the participants noted that they have had toxic teaching partners in the past who contributed to additional stress in their lives. Two participants remarked that they
have had to deal with staff bullying in the past, either directly or indirectly in their
buildings. Therefore, even though the seven participants are thriving at this time, it has not
always been the case for them. Megan remembered a detractor to her well-being was
“individuals who are toxic and cannot separate personal from professional lives”. Sarah
echoed that same sentiment sharing that “negative, drama-filled colleagues” also detracted
from her well-being. A trait that all of the participants had in common was how they deal
with those negative experiences at school; they shared that they remove themselves from
those toxic situations, they are able to find the positive aspects to their building and
surround themselves with other like-minded people. This, in turn, connects to the theme of
Teacher Resilience and Personal Competency, as these teachers have the luxury of
experience to help guide their well-being.

Even though negative relationships have plagued the interviewees in the past, they
have learned valuable lessons from these experiences and the positive relationships
outweigh the negative ones. A note worth mentioning is that not one of the teachers
interviewed discussed students as the primary cause of any stress or as a detractor to their
well-being. As analyzed in the quantitative data, stress from student needs (both academic
and behaviour) was the leading stressors for participants. There could be different reasons
why the interview participants did not mention these, such as they are not experiencing
such student issues at the moment or that they can rely on their years of experience or the
strong relationships they have developed in the school community. Considering all of the
teachers interviewed are thriving, it makes sense that many of their students seem to be
happy as well. Of course, there are many factors that contribute to student well-being that
are beyond the role of their teacher and are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, in
this small case number, all teachers did report strong relationships with their students.

Many of these positive relationships can be incorporated into the Living School Attribute and Practices Framework for many reasons. As demonstrated, relationships with students and amongst staff are driving factors in the well-being of the participants interviewed.

**Theme 4: Living Schools and Well-Being.** The Living School Attributes and Practices are connected to the three previous themes and all enhance the well-being of the participants. Tables 9 through 15 outline some examples of Living School Attributes and Practices that were discussed in the interviews.

*Table 9: Living School Attribute Examples*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #1: Kelsey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values and Visions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School goals: Wellness, WE day groups, creating a Wellness Committee, Pedometer Challenge, School of Choice, LGBQT groups, Weekly memos, Staff Intramural teams, Orange Shirt Day⁵, Terry Fox Activities, “School” trip, Common School Goals, Open House⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Council, Leadership Class, Athletic Council, Grad Committee, Yearbook, creating Compost Programs, Social Committee, “Tell them from Me” survey⁷, Staff meetings, Celebrations, Staff Exit Slips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching opportunities, Inclusive Education (garden/planters), School-wide Wellness Breaks, SKILLS Canada, Talent Show, Intramural Programs, Google Classroom, Female Fitness PE, Coach’s Corner, Collaboration Grant, Student Laptops, Google Apps For Education (GAFE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature and Place-Based Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Classroom, Quiet Space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Healthy Food Choices in cafeteria, “New Age” Furniture, “Get Outside Day”, Beach Volleyball Courts, Community Rink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Well-Being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Workshops, Indigenous Speakers, Wellness PD for Teachers, Escape Rooms, Staff Lunches, Staff Paddle Board Challenge, Divisional PD on Wellness and Mindfulness, Clubs: boxing, yoga, running</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵ Orange Shirt Day is part of a legacy project to “commemorate the residential school experience, to witness and honour the healing journey of the survivors and their families, and to commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation” (Orange Shirt Day Society, 2019).

⁶ Open Houses are an evening dedicated to connecting new students to the school; new students come to the school with their parents for an information night.

⁷ *Tell Them From Me* is “a dynamic web-based student survey and optional teacher and parent surveys, which together assess 16 student outcomes pertaining to student engagement and wellness and 15 aspects of classroom and school learning climate that are known to affect learning outcomes.” (Willms & Flanagan, 2010)
### Table 10: Living School Attribute Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #2: Abby</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values and Visions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Be the Change” groups, Global Cardboard Challenge, Creating a AAA committee, “Little Green Thumbs” garden, Cultural Days, Animal Therapy, Breakfast Clubs, LGBQT groups, ESD Committee, PD (“Circle in a Box Activity”⁸ and United Way “Poverty Exercise”⁹), Treaty Training¹⁰, Collaboration Time, School Goals, Performance showcase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership, Multi-cultural Events, Genius Hour, Compost Programs, Social Committee, Monthly Learning Service, Patrols, Peacemakers¹¹, PD committees (Learning &amp; Behaviour and Academic &amp; professional development), team school planning, SMART¹² goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching Opportunities, Inclusive Education with PD opportunities, Active start, School-wide Wellness Breaks (Go Noodle¹³, Brain Breaks), Talent Show, Makerspaces¹⁴, MYRCA¹⁵, “Listen at Lunch”, Library Tech, Design Challenge, Project Based Learning – Co-teaching, Coding/Q-bots, Performance Showcase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature and Place-Based Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Classroom, Community Garden, Quiet/Meditation Space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons, recycling Program, Vermicomposting, Ducklings, Butterflies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Well-Being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Workshops, Indigenous speakers, wellness PD for teachers, Early Dismissal, Outdoor Classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #3: Madison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values and Visions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School garden, Breakfast Clubs, School of Choice, Collaboration Time, School goals, NPDL, Learning coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership Committees, Genius Hour, Compost programs, Social Committee, Monthly Learning Service, LEADERS* (social justice and student council), Dragon Boat fundraiser, “Tell them from Me” survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁸ Circle in a Box Activity is a workshop to share the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada and experience what it must have felt like to live in these communities during colonization, residential schools, the Sixties’ Scoop and now.

⁹ The United Way Poverty Exercise is a unique, interactive group experience that provides a glimpse of what it might be like for Winnipeg families struggling with poverty (https://unitedwaywinnipeg.ca/living-on-the-edge/).

¹⁰ Treaty Training is a workshop from the Treaty Education Initiative (TEI) to train teachers with the new resources created to increase knowledge and understanding of Treaty Relationships and build bridges between all people in society (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2020).

¹¹ Peacemakers are older students who are on the playground at recess to help with conflict resolution.

¹² SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

¹³ Go Noodle is an online forum with various videos in movement and mindfulness for students (https://www.gonoodle.com/).

¹⁴ A makerspace is a collective workspace in a school to facilitate learning, exploring and creativity; they can contain high tech machines or no technology at all.

¹⁵ The Manitoba Young Readers’ Choice Award (MYRCA) aims to promote reading and Canadian literature by giving young people the opportunity to vote for their favourite Canadian book from an annual selected list. Books are nominated based on their quality and reader appeal. (http://www.myrca.ca/about-us/history/).
**Teaching and Learning**

Co-teaching Opportunities, Inclusive Education with PD opportunities, World Down’s Syndrome Day\(^\text{16}\), School-wide Wellness Breaks, SKILLS Canada, Talent Show, Peer Observation, Deep Learning Initiative, Learning Coaches, Passion Projects, Sensory Room

**Nature and Place-Based Orientation**

Outdoor Classroom, Community Garden, Quiet/Meditation Space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons, Earth Day, Adopt a highway, Town Cleanup

**Health and Well-Being**

Mindfulness Workshops, Indigenous speakers (Elders), Wellness PD for teachers, Staff Wellness fund, Escape rooms, June BBQ, Friday Meetings, School Wide Activity Days, Staff Appreciation Days

### Table 12: Living School Attribute Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #4: Janaya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values and Visions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE Day groups, AAA committee, School Garden, Cultural Days, Animal Therapy, Breakfast Clubs, School of Choice, PD Canadian Museum for Human Rights, “This Week at School”(^\text{17}), Collaboration Time, Common School Goals, PLCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership, Big Brothers/Big Sisters(^\text{18}), Friends Club, Spirit Committee, Patrols, Peacekeepers, Playground Committee (grant money), Multi-cultural Events, Genius Hour, Social Committee, Monthly Learning Service, Flag Day, “Girls in the Know”(^\text{19}), program, Movie Nights, Active Learning (Inquiry), School Wide Writes, Sock Hop, “Artists in the School”, Running Club, Debate Club, Divisional Team Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching, Inclusive Education with PD opportunities. Active start, School-wide Wellness Breaks, SKILLS Canada, Talent Show, PD committees (Literacy, Numeracy, Social Responsibility), Smart boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature and Place Based Orientation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Classroom, Community Garden, Art Therapy, Quiet/Meditation Space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons, Recycling, Camp Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Well-Being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Workshops, Indigenous Speakers, Wellness PD for Teachers, Team Building (Breakout rooms), Social Committee- teachers, Potlucks, “pools”, BBQs, PD- Controlling Stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13: Living School Attribute Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #5: Megan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values and Visions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE day groups, Global Cardboard Challenge (boats), AAA committee, School Garden, School of Choice, LBGQT groups, Beadwork Circles, Orange Shirt day, Indigenous Drummers Workshop, “School” travel trips, Growth Mindset books, NPDL, Peer Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) is March 21\(^\text{st}\), a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.

\(^{17}\) A weekly memo sent out by administrators to keep open communication for staff.

\(^{18}\) Older students in the school are connected with younger student on a one to one basis to help with school and social issues.

\(^{19}\) “Girls in the Know” is to educate and empower girls, together with those who love them, by providing tools to establish a strong sense of self. (https://girlsintheknow.org/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership Committees (Student Council, Gym Leaders), Genius Hour, Compost Programs, Social Committee, Best Buddies, Leadership* crew, Social Justice Group, Grade Wars, “Tell them from Me” Survey, Learning Leaders, New Teachers meetings, Peer Mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching Opportunities (peer observation), SKILLS Canada, Talent Show, Deep Learning Initiative, Inquiry Based, Google Classroom, IPads, Chromebook, Innovation Week, Polyglots, Game Club, Art Club, “Reach for the Top”, Sports groups, Special Olympics, French Club, Flex Ed program, Musical/Play, Improv, Outdoor PE, Female fitness classes, PLCs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature and Place-Based Orientation</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Classroom, Community Garden, Quiet Space, outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons, Compost, Recycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health and Well-Being</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Speakers, Workout Spaces, Staff Social Committee, Golf Tournament, Pay It Forward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Living School Attribute Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: #6: Brittney</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values and Visions</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA committee, School Farm, Wellness Committee, Cultural Days, Animal Therapy, Horticulture Program, Breakfast Clubs, School of Choice school, GSA (Pride), School Goals (Numeracy and Literacy), TEAMS*, Daily Smudge, Grad Powwow, School Goals, School T-Shirts for Grade Levels, Blanket Activity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leadership Committees, Multi-cultural Events (Diwali Celebration, Filipino Independence Day, Aboriginal People’s day), Compost Programs, Social Committee, Monthly Learning Service, Assembly Committee, Student Voice committee, Clubs (Knitting club, Sports, Young Artists, Magic, Dungeons and Dragons Clubs), Student Run Intramurals, Grade Wars</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching Opportunities (Teaming Periods), Inclusive Education with PD opportunities, School-wide Wellness Breaks, SKILLS Canada (TAS), Talent Show, Special Olympics program, Teaming Periods, TEAMS*, Social Media</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature and Place-Based Orientation</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Classroom, Farm Club (gardens, greenhouse, water/rain barrel, vermicomposting, canning/pickling/cooking), Farmers’ Market, Art Therapy, Quiet/Meditation Space, Outdoor PE, All Gender Washroom, Parent Council Education Workshops, Learning Commons, Gathering Space</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health and Well-Being</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Workshops, Nature Walks, Indigenous Speakers, Wellness PD for teachers, Friday “staff meetings”, “ED” camp (divisional), Fitness Space, Coach’s Goldeyes Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 Flex Education program is a flexible program for students who have not had success in a tradition education classroom; schedules are modified with more one-on-one support from specially trained teachers.

21 An initiative from the Flex Education program to do something nice for groups in the schools throughout the year from writing positive quotes around the school, providing teachers with hot chocolate to giving students a little treat before their exams.

22 The KAIROS Blanket Exercise program was developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators to foster truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. ([https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/](https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/))
Participants all reflected on the benefits of Living School Attributes and Practices in their schools and the impact on their well-being. In this next section, I highlight common elements in each category that emerged as important.

**Values and Visions**

The Values and Visions category connects well to the initial theme of School Climate. Ensuring students and teachers feel that they have a voice and a sense of agency is a vital component to any Living School and therefore enhances *well-being for all*. Many of the ideas and initiatives discussed within the Values and Visions category overlap with other Attributes and Practices which makes sense as the Living School Framework is meant to “involve approaches to learning that enable students and teachers to be fully engaged in the depth of things in ways that enhance well-being for all” (O’Brien & Howard, 2016, 119). As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the Living School model needs to involve the whole community.

Brittney revealed a whole school initiative in her school called TEAMS. She described the initiative as:
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So each teacher in the building has their own TEAMS, and they have pulled kids from every grade level so it is a mix of kids so it is to build more community. We wanted to get them to talk about more social topics and different things like how to build community or empathy, what can we go out in the community and do. So life inside of school and life outside of school.

She also shared how the TEAMS concept was also a way to integrate more celebrations in the school ranging from Diwali celebrations, Grad Powwows, Aboriginals Peoples’ Day and Filipino Independence Day. Janaya also mentioned the importance of her school’s monthly assemblies to create a strong school community where they also celebrated things like “Flag Day”.

Five of the participants discussed the incorporation of Indigenous worldviews and traditional knowledge in the whole school community and the other two shared such initiatives in their own individual classrooms. Participants mentioned the value of participating in Treaty Training, Blanket exercises, Circle in a Box activities, drumming ceremonies, daily smudge options and Indigenous speakers in the school and PD days at the Human Rights Museum. Participants recalled the value of these experiences in building relationships and connections outside of the structured education system. The opportunity to work with other staff or students in a non-conventional learning environment, by Western standards, was positive for all individuals involved.

Leadership

The second category, Leadership, strongly connects to the third theme of relationships. An important point to note is four of the participants interviewed are all Acting Administrators; they take on the administrative role when administration is out of
their building demonstrating the strong leadership abilities of these teachers. This also explains why the participants have initiated many programs and ideas in their schools. For example, Kelsey initiated her Coach’s Corner program to allow the administration and PE department to meet on a consistent basis to ensure open lines of communication. Abby shared multiple initiatives she has started in her school from “Active Start,” a school garden, and collaborative project-based learning. Brittney talked about her PE department pushing active breaks with the “Sally Squat” challenge, “Baby Shark” abdominal challenge and “Cha-Cha Slide” plank challenge. These programs align with a Living School but it is important to understand that in order for a Living School to be successful it needs to involve the whole school community, including nature, with a supportive administration to enhance well-being for all, sustainably.

The open-door policy of administrators mentioned in the first theme contributes to the leadership component of the Livings School Framework. Providing opportunities for teachers and students to take risks and develop new initiatives allows leadership skills to grow and develop. Many of the teachers discussed the value of choice regarding PD in their schools. Recently, schools have encouraged teachers to choose PD that is applicable to their needs in the classroom allowing their teachers to learn and develop skills that pertain to their needs. This connects to the Personal Competency and Resilience theme discussed earlier in this chapter. When teachers have an opportunity to choose their PD, they are more passionate about the learning experience therefore leading to higher SEL. Kelsey explained how her administrator has encouraged her to attend national conferences for PD and helped her in applying for her collaboration grant for her PD time.
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It is also important for leadership skills to be developing in students in the Living Schools Framework to strength the school culture while creating fewer additional responsibilities placed on the teacher. Six of the teachers discussed the important role of student council in their schools to initiative student projects and create a stronger school community. Janaya spoke about the “Peacekeepers” program at her school where the older students patrol the playground to help with conflict resolution with the younger grades. Her school also has “Friends” club where the older students (Grade 5s) play games and teach social skills to the younger students in the school. Megan had a similar example with the Leadership Group in her high school where older students interact with the Grade 9 students on a monthly basis to build school community while teaching various skills from a student perspective. The Leadership Group runs the Grade 9 orientation day at the school to make those initial connections with the younger students, plans a school-wide activity day for the school and runs school tours for new students to the building. Allowing students multiple opportunities to become leaders in the school is a strong building block for a successful Living Schools. This also enhances teacher well-being, as they are able to facilitate projects rather than just lead them.

Teaching and Learning

Many of the teachers discussed inquiry-based learning as an important goal of their school plan falling under the category of Teaching and Learning in the Living Schools framework. Janaya said that her school’s new push last year was “Active Learning” which is essentially inquiry learning so the optimal learning model that can be used in any subject area. Since Abby’s job is a teacher-librarian, her main objective in her school is to co-teach with classrooms on project-based learning. Two of the teachers shared a big push from
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their division was the Deep Learning model based upon NPDL (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014) but it is currently in the development stage, so a lot of work and PD needs to be incorporated in order for it to be fully implemented into their schools. They have “learning coaches” in the division who work directly with the schools to implement deep learning and inquiry-based learning throughout the division. One participant shared their school’s initiative of “Innovation Week” where high school teachers have a full day with their classes instead of just one class period in order to allow more innovative practices and cross-curricular learning without the restrictions of a schedule. She also discussed Google Applications for Education (GAFE) applications used throughout her school and the use of Google Classroom and student Chromebooks in her school. There were also many examples of Genius Hour, flipped classrooms (Bergmann & Sams, 2014) and project-based learning (Zhao, 2012) in individual classrooms but it did not seem to be a school-wide initiative.

**Nature and Place-Based Orientation**

Each participant discussed a school garden that could fall into the Nature and Place-Based Orientation but not all gardens and outdoor classrooms were fully utilized by the whole school community. Abby discussed the initial school garden that she helped set up with student and the community last year.

It [school garden] has been fabulous. We had 8 yards of soil on the 2 hottest days of the year and I had all these grade 4 and 5 students moving the soil into the garden boxes using a wheelbarrow and lots of buckets. They worked their tails off to do it. They felt such a sense of accomplishment. Then when the zucchini flowered before the end of the school year, they were over the moon. They were so excited.
Brittney’s school has a fully functioning “farm” at her school. This could be considered a Living School Attribute and Practice. Students tilled gardens, built a greenhouse, set up a rain barrel, a vermicomposting and compost system. The majority of the classrooms in her school use the farm in some form.

So kids are learning to grow food from seed and start working with other kids. And then they get the whole community involved and they will do pickling and canning and cooking. We had, one of last staff PD days at the end of June, when we talked about what everyone does in their space, you could go see what they do on the farm. They had some people come from the Collegiate but they were all involved in the process and what needed to be done. Within their systems for growing beans or peas and how they had to grow up so they built different systems for that. The kids tend to it in the summer. There is a social media account and last June they had a farmers and makers market so they had kids making this and that and selling their produce and plants.

Another initiative that was mentioned by Janaya was a playground committee that was set up at her school. Students applied for a $25,000 grant and then were able to design a logo. Then there was an ultimate playground design competition in the school and the “winners” were chosen to help create their new playground with a nature theme. Nature can be one of the strongest relationships that can be developed by schools and a contributing factor to well-being for all. Kelsey’s school has the benefit of a river behind her school. “I had some of my Grade 12 students make a rink on the river and it worked awesome and just getting the kids outside and everyone has said they are in such a good mood from doing that.” She also discussed the use of outdoor space beyond PE, she said,
“even the science teachers take their class and tested the river to see what kinds of chemicals and things are in the river and to determine how clean it is.” Brittney also gave multiple examples of using outdoor spaces in PE in her school from outdoor games in the summer to skiing and skating in the winter. Megan mentioned that many classes perform outdoor learning activities or attend camps during Innovation Week but it was not a regular occurrence in her building. Sarah also mentioned that her students have an annual camping trip each year.

It is important to note that while participants discussed students’ interaction with nature there was little discussion involving teachers using nature to enhance their own well-being. Madison was the only participant who discussed her administrator trying to fix up an outdoor space for staff to go out and have their lunch. Interacting more with nature can have a direct impact on well-being. As the last category in the Living Schools Framework is Health and Well-being, which scored the lowest in the initial survey, a possible way to improve this category score could be to incorporate more nature and outdoor learning.

**Health and Well-Being**

The last category, Health and Well-Being is a vital component of the Living School Framework. Interviewees initiated the majority of the examples discussed in the interviews and this was not surprising considering the experience, leadership and initiative of all the participants interviewed.

Kelsey had a couple of examples of strong relationships in her school as her Grade 12 PE class set up and led a Terry Fox run at her school. “It was short, only an hour, but it got everyone moving. Every single student and staff member was moving. It was small but
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worth it.” As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, she also set up a pedometer challenge with her staff, organizes monthly staff lunches, her PE team setup a triathlon in her school for student and staff, and a staff paddleboard challenge. These types of “challenges” incorporate all elements of the Living School Framework and well-being for all.

As mentioned previously, Brittney’s school had a monthly school wide initiative during their afternoon break. “So every other day, in the gym, if you wanted to take part you could, um, and we had different challenges so for one month it was the “Sally Squat” Challenge, so just at the break we would go on the intercom and say, “It’s Sally time” and kids would run to the gym.” She said the break was only five minutes but the gym would be full of kids trying the challenge. Then the next month they did the “Baby Shark” challenge and then next month the “Cha-Cha Slide” plank challenge. Just as Kelsey’s challenges involved the whole school community, the types of challenges that Brittney set up have provided that opportunity within the school community as well.

Most participants discussed new PD days introduced in their division in the last couple of years with a focus on wellness and mindfulness. The common critique from the participants based upon these PD opportunities was that they are very much “one size fits all” approach. Each teacher shared what they needed for their well-being and each one had a different answer demonstrating the need for individuality and choice within these PD opportunities. Kelsey said, “well-being is different to everybody so something I would suggest for our admin would be at the beginning of the year we should just have a flip chart or something and everyone could take a sticky note and write down what makes them well.” Abby shared the same sentiment, “yoga is not necessarily something I would choose [as wellness]. One of my friend’s schools had a day where people could do something of
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their choice…so knitting or reading, etc.” This theme continued throughout the interviews.

Megan shared some great insights regarding well-being:

I would like to actually see the promotion of wellness. I know in other [school] divisions, they actually have a wellness PD day where you submit your plan for your idea of wellness. It could be going to [local spa] for the day, to going running, to going for yoga or gardening, cooking, etc. and you do that with a group. I think that would be very encouraging. Again, building on that social aspect, getting people out of their classrooms to work and collaborate with one another. The minute you start to collaborate, you form a bond and you see that teacher in a new light and gain an ally.

As exemplified through the interviews, well-being has a different meaning to different people. The Living Schools Attributes and Practices Framework allows the whole community to thrive and contributes to well-being for all, sustainably. This is also supported by the quantitative data, regarding the significant positive correlation between well-being and Living Schools scores.

The positive significant relationships between variables (Well-Being & Living Schools, Living Schools & New Pedagogies and Well-Being & New Pedagogies) in the first phase of the data support the findings in the second phase of the data through the four main themes developed. Figure 16 visually represents a brief summary of the findings of this study.
The analysis of the two phases of research, both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, have been presented throughout this chapter. The next chapter will connect the data back to ideas raised in the Literature Review in Chapter 2.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this research study was first to determine the various factors that influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba. Secondly, it was to determine which Living School Attributes and Practices are present in educational environments where teachers are thriving and the way these Attributes and Practices contribute to teacher well-being. In this chapter, the findings discussed in the previous chapter are discussed with respect to the review of literature from Chapter 2. The connections are explained with a focus on the following: Teacher Well-being, Relationships, Living Schools, and finally Stressors and Detractors to teacher well-being.

Teacher Well-Being

Holmes (2019) discusses the need for teachers to focus on their individual well-being, but also recognizes that it is essential for schools to contribute to the well-being of their teachers for the success of the school community. One of the main ideas that was persistent throughout the research phase, in both the quantitative and qualitative data, was teacher well-being has different meanings and interpretations to everyone and there is no single approach that works for all teachers. Nevertheless, there are many common factors shared amongst teachers who are thriving in Manitoba.

Carney (2015) outlined characteristics of teachers who have high levels of well-being as ones who have positive relationships, are flexible and empathetic, have a positive sense of autonomy and self-worth, engage in new initiatives, have well-developed solution-finding skills, have a sense of meaning and purpose, have good SEL skills and are part of a caring, inclusive and respectful professional environment. Carney’s list is missing the Active component of his well-being model, just as it was in many of the survey data responses. When comparing this list
to responses from the participants interviewed in the second phase of the research, each teacher demonstrated these characteristics in some form. Six interviewees in the qualitative interviews shared their use of various activities to enhance their well-being that would fall under Carney’s Active category. When analyzing Carney’s well-being model with participants’ responses, it was clear that teachers who seemed to be thriving were able to check off many attributes in all of the categories of the well-being model. Participants revealed their strong development of SEL competencies, various types of healthy relationships (with both colleagues and students), as well as many initiatives they have embarked upon that contribute to the Living Schools Framework.

It was evident that the teachers who seemed to be thriving in the interviews have all taken individual actions to enhance their own well-being, both personally and professionally, but also work in healthy school environments. As well-being was deconstructed through the research, it was clear that teachers cannot be solely responsible for enhancing their own well-being as many are already struggling with balance in their lives. While it is important for teachers to develop strong SEL skills, it is also important for government systems and schools to understand that in order to have healthy and successful schools, teacher well-being needs to be prioritized sooner rather than later.

**Resiliency and Personal Competencies**

Referring back to the Resilience data from the well-being section of the initial survey, the mean scores were the highest amongst the four categories (Resilience, Flourishing, Active and Relationships) at 4.2 out of a possible five (5). The highest mean score for participants within this category was focusing on positive relationships within the classroom with students and the lowest mean score in Resiliency was regarding being proactive and positive about engaging in new initiatives, but still had a high score compared to other categories. In the interviews, the
participants shared many Living School Attributes and Practices in their school, many of which they were integral in initiating. Overall, teachers are able to score high in the Resilience category. Shanker (2012) acknowledges this, noting how the list of responsibilities continue to grow in a teacher’s portfolio and job description. These demands are often handed down by government systems that have a tendency to neglect the well-being of teachers. However, as these demanding criteria continue to propagate in the teaching profession, some teachers have stronger resiliency skills and SEL competencies than others. According to the participants interviewed, this could be due to multiple reasons ranging from their positive school climate, strong administrators, healthy relationships and strong personal competency skills developed due to maintaining balance in their lives and their overall confidence due to experience in the field.

Carney (2015) discusses five SEL competencies for teachers: self-awareness, managing emotions, social self-motivation, empathy and managing relationships. These all contribute to teacher resiliency and personal competency, one of the main themes that emerged through the qualitative phase of the research. It is no surprise that teachers who report higher levels of positive emotion (regulating their own and building positive relationships) are more engaged in teaching (Brackett et al., 2010). The survey data supports this as the question on managing emotions in the Resilience category of the survey had a mean score of four (4) out five (5). The qualitative interviews also demonstrated this characteristic amongst participants. A contributing factor to the participants’ self-awareness was the high level of confidence they have acquired through their experience as mid-career teachers. This overall confidence is also due to the self-awareness that these experienced teachers possess.

While the Resilience category of the well-being section scored the highest in the first phase of the research, the Flourishing and Active categories contained the lowest scores. This
contradicted the data collected from the interviews. The reason for this is that teachers who are thriving, the interviewees, work in schools with a positive school climate and administrators, along with possessing higher levels of personal well-being through balance (with a focus on living a healthy lifestyle) and personal competency skills. “A supportive professional culture is as important for success and well-being of teachers as a caring and inclusive classroom is for students” (Carney, 2015, p. 192). Referring back to Brittney’s interview, she recognized the importance of a supportive administrative team who care about the well-being of their staff. These types of comments were common throughout the interviews but not all Manitoba teachers are supported by their administration, as demonstrated by the survey data, thus creating an imbalance between the two phases of research data.

**Improving Teacher Well-Being**

An interesting note in the quantitative survey data was under the suggestions for improvement for well-being, teachers shared multiple recommendations. The three most common suggestions were wellness days, collaborative colleagues and strong administrators. All three of these suggestions were discussed during the interviews and seemed to be contributing factors to the well-being of the interviewees.

All of the suggestions shared in the survey, with the exception of “prep time” which is in the control of divisional collective agreements, are improvements that administrators can manage within the schools. As previously mentioned, there needs to be changes to the education system as a whole to improve teacher well-being; the education system includes the provincial government, the individual schools and divisions. Government changes can involve prep time, resources, classroom support, curriculum regulation, assessment methods and professional development opportunities just to name a few. However, it may take a significant period of time
to make changes at the provincial government but creating positive changes at the school and divisional levels can be done in a more timely manner before too many teachers leave the profession due to burnout. These ideas to enhance teacher well-being can be implemented through the Living School Attributes and Practices Framework. As demonstrated by the interviews in this study, there are schools in Manitoba where these aspects of Living Schools are currently practiced. Interviewees spoke about collaborative time built into their schedules, team teaching opportunities and supportive administrators that enhance their well-being. Interviewees also shared the inclusion of teachers in their school planning and goals, contributing to teacher voice and autonomy. Professional development and wellness days are also important areas of discussion emerging in the teaching profession. Some teachers spoke of choice PD days, wellness days, and team building activities as important contributing factors to their well-being. Cherkowski (2020) supports this, sharing that teachers feel a greater sense of well-being in their workplace when they feel heard and valued for their ideas, have opportunities to collaborate, and feel supported by colleagues.

Furthermore, each of the factors in Carney’s (2015) checklist for Teacher Mental Health was checked off in the qualitative interviews with participants, contributing to their own well-being in significant ways. Interviewees shared strategies they have used to improve their own personal competency skills while maintaining a healthy balance in their lives. Nevertheless, as these seven participants greatly contribute to their own well-being, their school communities also enhance their well-being through PD opportunities, PLCs, collaborative/team teaching, strong school culture and trust in their professionalism allowing them to take risks and flourish in the school community. This indicates that local schools can play an active role in contributing to teacher well-being.
As mentioned in Chapter 2, in Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model it appears that positive relationships are given equal ‘weighting’ whereas Carney (2015) sees positive relationships as central to well-being (Figure 1 in Chapter 2). One of the main themes that emerged from the qualitative data was the significance of relationships to teachers’ well-being, with both colleagues and students, supporting Carney’s (2015) model for well-being. One may note that the central relationship section of the model is open to interpretation and does not define specific types of relationships involved. Other researchers such as Roffey (2012) also focus on the significance of quality relationships within a school and the impact it has on teacher well-being along with aiding teachers’ abilities to cope well with various stressors that are inevitably part of the teaching profession. During the interviews, a lot of attention was focused on relationships with students, colleagues and families but little attention was paid to nature. This absence will be further discussed later in this chapter.

In the initial survey, the category of Relationships under the well-being data had a mean score of 3.97 out of a possible five (5), the second highest behind the Resilience category, in the well-being section. Within this section, the question with the highest mean score was regarding support from other staff members in the school and on the opposite end asking for help or support. This demonstrates the isolation that some teachers may feel in the profession leading to stress and inadequate well-being, as research shows isolation can be a major detractor to teacher well-being (Holmes, 2019). As it is important to have quality relationships, it is also essential to manage them, as discussed by Carney (2015) under the final SEL competency addressed, well-being depends largely on the development of social skills and fostering healthy relationships. Some participates spoke of unhealthy relationships in the past that have been detrimental to their
well-being. Megan and Sarah remembered detractors to their well-being were toxic coworkers who could not balance or separate their personal and professional lives. Sarah acknowledged that she has learned from these experiences and ensures a separation between her professional and personal relationships, which has enhanced her overall well-being. Brittney also had similar experiences by being “burnt” by a colleague in the past who could not separate their professional and personal lives. The participants admitted that they do participate in activities out of the building with their staff to help with team building but set clear boundaries for themselves and their colleagues. This clearly demonstrates ways teachers are taking control of their own well-being. These are valuable skills that would benefit all teachers and may be especially important skills for early career teachers to develop.

**Professional Learning Communities**

A highly effective method to enhance strong relationships amongst staff is through PLCs. Teacher engagement in professional learning communities can be highly effective in supporting changes in teacher beliefs and practices (Owen, 2016). All seven teachers in the interviews and 81.9% of the survey participants indicated that they have PLCs in their buildings. When practiced well, PLCs not only benefit the academic progress of the school community but also enhance quality relationships. Webb et al. (2009) reinforce the benefits of PLCs in promoting teacher well-being and identifies them as central to relationships and emotions contributing to a strong community.

There were various positive responses regarding PLCs in the survey data mentioned in Chapter 4. One participant shared, she has noticed it strengthen the overall efficacy among her staff and it was so valuable to watch other teachers teach; this helps build trust, strong relationships and teacher autonomy. Another participant acknowledged PLCs are valuable
because they allow teachers to spend time with like-minded teachers who are passionate about their craft and provide tools to help motivate and inspire other teachers. Some common ideas shared were that PLCs allow time to work collaboratively, share ideas and resources and to learn from colleagues.

The overall unanimity throughout both phases of the research was the positive attributes brought forth by PLCs. While there were some negative comments connected to PLCs, the reasoning was usually due to the way they are run, not the PLC itself. The common reasons teachers had a negative perspective on PLCs were because they were either “forced” upon them, not applicable to their teaching or had a very “top-down” approach from upper administration. Learning the problems associated with PLCs can provide opportunities to improve the function of the group. Allowing teachers to share problems about various attributes in their building can provide an opportunity for not only enhancing the attribute, but also strengthening teacher voice and agency, a vital contributor to teacher well-being.

**Whole School Approach**

The Joint Consortium for School Health (2013) supports a whole school approach and recognizes the importance of integrating education in a holistic manner in order to encourage healthy behaviours with a focus on well-being for teachers and students. The four interrelated pillars can all be managed and fulfilled through PLCs through the social and physical environment, teaching and learning, healthy school policy and finally partnerships and services (JCSH, 2013).

When analyzing the findings of the research data as a whole and comparing them to existing research in the field of well-being, these four pillars are present in the school communities where teachers are thriving. Again, these factors can be implemented by the school
administration to create healthy and caring school communities, just as the Living School Framework demonstrates and therefore do not need changes to the overall government system in order to create sustainable changes within schools.

Throughout the qualitative interviews, all teachers discussed the important relationships they have developed with students in various ways and the positive way it affects their well-being. The interviewees contribute hundreds of extra-curricular hours working with students in numerous ways and they all noted that this contributes to their well-being, rather than detracting from it. McCallum and Price (2010) discuss the relationships between teacher and student well-being and the impact they have on each other. During the interviews, teachers shared the positive impact their students have on their well-being indicating that these strong relationships can contribute to teacher well-being in a positive manner. Each participant acknowledged the strong community feeling in their school environments. Megan mentioned that she teaches in a larger school but works hard to create a safe community within her classroom and her specialized program so the students make her feel that her time spent with them is valued and appreciated. This connects to the four pillars from the JCSH (2013) focusing on the whole school community. Six of the seven participants have similar experiences and school communities where they have the privilege of teaching students in multiple grades and/or subjects allowing them to develop stronger and deeper relationships. As previously mentioned, the Relationships categories in the well-being section of the quantitative survey scored the second highest of the four categories demonstrating the significance of building strong, caring relationships supported by the central focus of Carney’s (2015) well-being model. This is also a significant Attribute and Practice in the Living Schools Framework, specifically NPDL.
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**Neglected Relationships**

One important relationship that seemed to be neglected by participants based on data from both phases of the research was the relationship with nature. Another significant point to address in these results is that sustainability-related attributes in each category of the Living School Framework were checked less often than any other. This could be due to multiple reasons such as sustainability is a relatively new initiative in Manitoba since school plans were only introduced in the last five years. As Sarah admitted in her school, they were just developing an ESD committee this year. Kelsey also mentioned that her principal is an advocate for ESD initiatives; they were just at the implementation phase as well. The provincial government of Manitoba had recognized the importance of sustainability in the education system by encouraging every school in Manitoba to have an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) plan in place by 2019. Outdoor education is a significant factor in ESD that schools can use to implement ESD plans. It is important to note that since the ESD policy was developed, there has been a change in the provincial government leadership. An educational review is underway that was supposed to be published in the spring of 2020 and has been postponed until 2021. What that means for ESD in Manitoba is unclear.

Hopkins’ (2013) vision of well-being for all forever is the ideal philosophy embracing well-being both individually and collectively (O’Brien, 2016). O’Brien and Howard’s (2018) concept of Living Schools outlines the importance of the whole school community involved in the process. Since an important component of the Living School Framework is that it is not meant to be viewed in isolation but rather as a whole, an important part of that whole is the role of nature and sustainability in these communities. While participants discussed students’ interaction with nature, there was little dialogue involving teachers using nature to enhance their
well-being. Madison was the only participant who shared that her administrator is trying to create an outdoor space for staff to utilize. Interacting more with nature can have a direct impact on well-being (O’Brien, 2016). Therefore, if schools and communities aim to enhance well-being for all, sustainably in order to move to the Living Schools Framework, then more emphasis needs to focus on the concepts of nature and sustainability.

Living Schools

A common notion within the well-being research and both phases of this research study is that well-being is a unique factor based upon the individual teacher (Holmes, 2019). There is no “one size fits all approach” to improve teacher well-being; therefore, a different approach and philosophy needs to be implemented. The Living Schools Attributes and Practices Framework can be the approach that can lead to well-being for all, sustainably. Remembering Howard and O’Brien’s (2018) concept of Living Schools outlines “the deep learning that happens when an entire school reflects well-being for all” (O’Brien, 2016, p. 186). The framework provides an overview of the diverse elements one would find in Living Schools. Recall the framework has five major headings including: Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being that were part of this research study. It is also important to remember that these attributes all contribute to the Living School Framework and need to be implemented as a whole. As discovered in the research, many teachers acknowledged some Living School Attributes and Practices present in their schools, but in order to enhance well-being for all, attention needs to be directed towards all Attributes and Practices.

The positive significant relationships between variables (Well-Being and Living Schools, Living Schools and New Pedagogies and Well-Being and New Pedagogies) in the first phase of the data support the findings in the second phase of the data through the four main themes.
developed (School Climate, Resilience and SEL competencies, Relationships and finally Well-being and Living Schools). As analyzed in the first phase of the research, a strong and positive correlation was found between Living Schools and the well-being score. As well as positive and significant correlations between Living Schools and Relationships, Flourishing and Resilience categories. This data indicates that it is possible that teacher well-being creates an environment with more engagement with Living School Attributes and Practices. It also demonstrates examples of environments where there are limited Living School Attributes and Practices and teachers seem to have low well-being scores.

Throughout the qualitative interviews, participants shared multiple examples of Living School Attributes and Practices in all five categories of the framework. Many examples were common in all participants’ schools (see Tables 9 through 15) such as student leadership groups, strong administration communication with staff, PLCs, staff meetings, integration of technology, choice of PD days, outdoor gardens/spaces, celebrations of learning and community, social justice groups and Indigenous/multi-cultural celebrations. It is important to mention that many of these examples were driven or supported by the participants who were interviewed. These teachers seem to thrive from their involvement in these activities. We might ask, do these teachers drive the Living School Framework or does the Living Schools Framework create environments for teachers to thrive? I believe that the answer is both. It seems that the reason these teachers are thriving is due to their personal SEL competencies and resiliency skills as well as their school communities. Their school communities allow them to thrive because of their school culture, driven in part by their strong administrators, and the strong relationships they are able to develop with both students and colleagues. This in turn, allows teachers to have the freedom to be creative with a strong voice and self-efficacy, and thrive in their surrounding
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environments therefore encouraging others around them to do the same. However, well-being does need to have a starting point and the Living School Framework can be that starting place for school communities.

Living Schools (O’Brien & Howard, 2020) focus on the more than just human relationships, which is a key factor in well-being for all, sustainably. Considering this with Carney’s model for well-being (2015), Living Schools have the potential to build “strong, caring relationships” through cross-curricular learning, community involvement while building meaningful and sustainable relationships with nature. As shared earlier in this chapter, the latter idea needs more development and emphasis.

Whole Community Approach and Health Promoting Schools

There are multiple ways in which a community can grow and flourish in order to enhance well-being at all levels of the school community. Various ways to enhance well-being can be to include the whole school approach, to encourage emotional awareness and daily reflection, tackle stressors and creating a culture of support (Jones, Bouffard & Weissbourd, 2013). The Living School Framework encompasses these connections and traits. Similarly, the themes (School Culture, Resilience and SEL competencies, Relationships and Well-being and Living Schools) that emerged in the qualitative interviews support this idea of the whole community connection. Teachers are well when there is a sense of community. Schools are not just physical spaces but are communities where there can be trusting, supportive, and caring relationships that create a shared sense of belonging (Cherkowski, 2020).

A vital component of the Living School Framework is Health Promoting Schools, which represents a whole-community approach to student and staff health and well-being. Once again, when we break down the Living School data, the Health and Well-being category scored the
lowest in the quantitative research phase and was the most neglected in the qualitative interview examples. As schools start to navigate and consider well-being, we have seen changes in types of PD offered to teachers, the incorporation of mental health days as sick days, and more inclusion of mindfulness as shared in the qualitative interviews. Due to the complexity of individualized well-being, it can be difficult to create meaningful and authentic experiences that benefit teachers as a whole. This is exactly why enhancing teacher well-being cannot be just a single solution; it needs to involve a healthy environment and the whole community to allow teachers to thrive according to their needs.

**New Pedagogies**

Another essential factor contributing to well-being is the way educators teach. A particularly relevant element within the Living School Framework is the focus on new pedagogies that are committed to inquiry-based strategies to affect real world change supporting students to develop innovative ideas to become change-makers (O’Brien & Howard, 2016). Through NPDL, teachers are required to act as both an activator and as a facilitator in order to enhance student engagement. By shifting the role of the teacher through NPDL, teachers are able to re-focus on learning and passion leading to transforming the education system in not only the way students learn but the way teachers teach. Teachers no longer need to be the experts in all areas of the learning environment but instead can allow students to fully engage in activities, alleviating pressure and even stress on the teacher. Two participants in the qualitative research spoke specifically about initiatives in their school division regarding new pedagogies in NPDL but both said it was much more of a hierarchical approach with limited involvement with teachers on the ground level. Both participants acknowledged the value in theory but were unsure of what it looked like in practice. For instance, with the limited attention on sustainability,
perhaps the lack of understanding and uptake thus far is due to it being a newer philosophy; it still may be in the development phase and needs more time to be established in the school system in order to see the true benefits. Six of the participants spoke about inquiry-based learning as an important goal in their schools; although it looked different in each school and situation, it was still an initiative many schools are deeming a priority. This demonstrates a positive development in supporting NPDL and therefore could lead to stronger teacher well-being as a whole.

When reflecting on the quantitative data and the correlations, a strong and significant correlation was found between the Living School score and new pedagogies score. This is not surprising since new pedagogies are part of the Living School Attributes and Practices Framework. There also was a significant correlation between the new pedagogies score and well-being score. This also demonstrates that new pedagogies are associated with teacher well-being. It may be the case that by changing the way teachers teach and the demands on teachers; it can also enhance and build stronger relationships with students allowing a new community to flourish. This, in turn, can limit stressors and detractors to teachers’ well-being.

**Stressors and Detractors to Well-Being**

Teachers’ responsibilities are constantly changing in our rapidly changing society creating pressure to meet curriculum requirements while leading and implementing new initiatives to increase educational outcomes (Cherkowski, 2020). While these obligations are well intentioned, they can leave teachers feeling stressed and overwhelmed. In the quantitative survey, the first general question asked teachers to rate their stress on a weekly basis due to school related issues on a 5-point Likert scale with 38.6% scoring a 4 (higher stress). This illustrates that teachers often try to handle increasingly complex and challenging working conditions, all while trying to look after their own well-being and that of their students.
Recalling Megan mentioning in her interview the many hats of teaching that can cause an overwhelming feeling that leads to stress and eventually burnout. This is part of the larger systemic issue in education that needs not only to be changed at the local level, in schools and divisions, but at the provincial government levels as well. The provincial government is responsible for significant factors affecting teachers such as standardized testing, reporting methods, classroom resources/support and curriculum criteria that can detract from their well-being.

When looking back at Figure 4 in Chapter 4, high needs students (both behaviour and academic) were the highest source of stress for survey respondents with duty and meetings being the least. However, in the qualitative interviews, teachers did not mention students as causes of stress. This could be for various reasons such as the strong relationships these particular teachers have developed with students in and out of the classroom setting, the strong school culture present in these schools or even the presence of Living School Practices and Attributes with a focus on NPDL.

When teachers were asked about other stressors they faced in their lives, many shared conflict with coworkers through lack of communication, unwillingness to be cooperative, negative attitudes and drama were the most common response, followed by a lack of leadership and personal balance in their lives. If schools shifted their culture to incorporate well-being for all, sustainably, then perhaps many of these additional stressors could be alleviated in the school community.

During the qualitative interviews, some of the participants echoed the same frustrations. Five of the interviewees admitted to problems with previous administrators who did not meet the needs of the teachers in the school. Greenberg, Brown and Abenavoli (2016) support these points.
discussing the source of teacher stress through a lack of strong leadership in the school organization, the high demands of the job from government systems, the lack of applicable resources available for teachers and finally teachers’ SEL in order to manage their own stressors and balance. As demonstrated by the interviews, Greenberg, Brown and Abenavoli’s (2016) stressors are not major sources of stress for teachers who are thriving in the interviews but have many common traits with results from the survey data from teachers who may be struggling with various stressors in their profession.

While many of these stressors may be outside of the direct control of teachers, it is vital to take care of the aspects that can be changed or influenced to reduce stress and foster greater well-being. Curry and O’Brien’s (2012) study reinforces that teachers are faced daily with both work-related and institutional stress factors that are out of the control of individual teachers such as increased demands, fewer resources and lack of planning time. Again, this can be in the control of the provincial government and even school divisions. As Roffey (2012) mentioned a stressed adult is less flexible and stress affects teachers’ physical health, performance and effectiveness (Greenberg, Brown & Abenavoli, 2016).

Carney (2015) addresses many stress-related symptoms within four categories: Cognitive symptoms (anxious thoughts, worrying, seeing the negative, inability to concentrate), Physical symptoms (exhaustion, aches and pains), Emotional symptoms (feeling overwhelmed, irritable/short tempered, moodiness) and Behavioural symptoms (eating issues, sleeping issues, procrastinating). Results from the survey data show very high stress-related symptoms. Some of the higher scores were seeing the negative/anxious thoughts, exhaustion, moodiness, irritability, feelings of being overwhelmed, poor eating/sleeping habits and procrastination. When more than 50% of teachers are reporting high stress symptoms in a variety of categories it is a great cause
of concern that needs to be addressed immediately before teacher burnout rates reach this magnitude as well.

In the quantitative data, I found there were positive but not significant relationships among the inverted stress scores and well-being score along with the other well-being scores in the four categories as demonstrated by Table 5. When looking back at Figure 3, it can be noted that all teachers responded to higher stress levels with only one participant choosing “1” to represent their stress levels so as a whole, teachers seem to be a stressed group in general. This indicates stress does play a role in the well-being of the teachers surveyed, but there are other contributing factors to a teachers’ well-being as well. As I realized during the qualitative data and the emerging themes (school climate and SEL competencies specifically), some teachers are able to manage their stressors more effectively. One of the major common traits amongst qualitative participants was their strong SEL competencies and specifically the balance they have learned through years of experience.

**Balance**

There is a significant need for balance in teachers’ lives as Holmes (2019) shares that in order to obtain a balanced life for a teacher, work should not negatively affect their life outside of school. Teachers’ individual balance needs to be a higher priority but it is also important to realize it is an ongoing learning process that can take time and experience to develop and once again, it cannot be solely the responsibility of individual teachers but also develop in the education system even starting in the education institutions for teacher training. When participants were asked how stress affects their personal wellness, teachers selected “3” (somewhat) and “4” (very much) the most. It is also important to note that no participants selected “1” as their response, indicating the overlap of stress in personal and professional lives
of educators so it is imperative that teachers manage a healthy balance in their lives. If teachers learn to balance their time through teacher training, PD opportunities and other professionals in the field, then it is more likely they will be able to find a balance between their work and home life; this is imperative to living a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

During the qualitative interviews, respondents acknowledged the significance of their personal well-being and the steps they take to ensure their personal health is a priority ranging from being physically active, to mindfulness activities, eating healthy, “relaxing” time and making time for healthy relationships. Referring back to Figure 9 in Chapter 4, the mean scores were demonstrated for each category in the balance section of the survey. The lower score in fitness also connects with many of the short answer question responses on the survey where teachers shared that in order to improve their overall well-being they could exercise more frequently and live a healthier lifestyle. This section also links to the Active category in the well-being section of the survey, which was also the lowest score amongst the four categories.

Carney’s well-being model (2015) clearly identifies the Active component as a vital contributor to well-being but it seems to be neglected in many teachers’ lives and this could due to a lack of balance. When teachers feel they do not have enough time in the day, often their personal well-being is neglected and physical activity is usually the first attribute off the list because it may not be seen as a priority. Six of the interviewees discussed the importance of physical exercise on a regular basis as a major contributing factor to their well-being so this could be another central factor to their high well-being results. Of the four categories within the well-being scale, the average Active score had a positive but not significant correlation to Living Schools. This indicates that schools do not seem to place high value on the Active category on the well-being scale. If teachers are finding it difficult to balance their personal and professional
lives and their physical health suffers because of it, schools could take a more active role to value teacher well-being and physical health just as they do student well-being. Kelsey provided some examples in her school of improving teachers’ active well-being through their pedometer challenge and staff kayaking challenge. These activities not only boost teachers’ physical activity but also enhance connections within the school community. This could also be done through a whole school approach, with both students and teachers enhancing their well-being and this would stimulate the growth of positive relationships between students and teachers.

As discussed throughout this chapter, the seven experienced teachers in the qualitative interviews have all been able to develop balance and strong personal competency skills due to their experience in the education system. It is important to learn from these mid-career teachers in order to improve well-being for teachers across demographics. In order to help support teachers, schools can set up peer mentorship programs to connect mid-career teachers with early career teachers, educational programs can teach SEL competencies and skills in their programs and schools can include SEL competency PDs and PLCs to help enhance well-being for all through balance and resiliency.

**Limitations**

There are some limitations to this study that I have addressed in previous chapters throughout this thesis. I further reflect upon these limitations as my study has concluded.

The results from the first phase of the research, the quantitative data were largely based upon scores in Stress, Balance, Well-Being/Happiness (drawing upon Carney’s model for well-being), NPDL and finally the Living School Framework with questions from each of the major attributes (Values and Visions, Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Nature and Place-Based Orientation, and Health and Well-Being). Limitations could have been in self-reporting which
can be inconsistent based upon teachers’ individual perspective and therefore be subjective. Results could have also been influenced by the time of year the survey was distributed, early June, as the school year was wrapping up.

Another limitation to the research could be due to the scales not being validated such as Carney’s well-being scale, NPDL or the Living School Framework. As discussed in Chapter 3, some teachers appear to have been unfamiliar with the Living School Framework so they could have various interpretations of what the Living School Attributes and Practices mean. During the second phase, I learned that some teachers have Living School Attributes and Practices in their classrooms but not throughout the whole school, a vital component in the Living Schools Framework. Individual classroom attributes would be an example of having a Living Classroom (O’Brien & Howard, 2020).

Another limitation with the survey was there could have been some confusion regarding the section on New Pedagogies. The wording used in the initial survey asked about teachers’ well-being so it is unclear as to whether the teachers were rating their well-being or focusing on the New Pedagogies themselves.

A final limitation to the research could be the sample size may not reflect the diversity of teachers in Manitoba, the sample may not be a true representation of teachers in the province in terms of race, gender, and rural/urban split. I feel that this was due to the timing of the distribution of the survey at the end of the school year when teachers were busy wrapping up the year.

**Summary**

Teacher well-being is an important issue to address in our ever-changing education system and in general, teachers are struggling. As teachers juggle to maintain balance in their
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lives, often their well-being becomes neglected. As illustrated in the review of literature and both the qualitative and quantitative research data, addressing well-being cannot be accomplished through a uniform approach as teachers are all unique individuals, therefore there is no easy tactic or solution to helping maintain teachers’ well-being. However, the Living School Attributes and Practices Framework can set a foundation in place to enhance \textit{well-being for all, sustainably}.

As discovered through the themes that emerged in the interviews, teachers who are thriving have some elements in common such as working in a positive school climate with supportive administrators, strong and caring relationships, resilient SEL competencies and Living School Attributes and Practices in their schools. An important factor to remember is that teachers need to feel that their voices are relevant and acknowledged; involving teachers in the planning process of their school allows them to connect more to their work and their students. Governments can place greater value on teacher well-being when creating policies in our education system but if provincial governments are not changing policies, schools and teachers need to implement changes in areas they can control.

As addressed in this chapter, Teacher Well-being, Relationships, Living Schools, and Stressors and Detractors to well-being are all connected to the success of school communities and overall teacher well-being. Addressing teacher well-being from a personal and school perspective, teachers are able to thrive when they are in a positive school climate with supportive administrators by eliminating stressors that overlap into their personal lives. I learned through the qualitative phase of the research, the significance of SEL competencies for teachers’ well-being along with developing balance in their lives. Thriving teachers have acquired these strong SEL competencies through years of experience, so a question for further research could consider how
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less experienced teachers develop these skills earlier in their career. Potentially, this can be accomplished through peer mentors within school communities, through PLCs and through choice PD and wellness opportunities, which are all part of the Living School Framework. As teachers develop strong resiliency skills, they are better equipped to manage their personal and professional well-being by developing balance in their lives. Teachers also acknowledged the significance of various relationships in their lives, both with students and colleagues, allowing them to thrive in their school communities. When teachers are able to build strong connections in their buildings, they are able to flourish, creating supportive environments as a whole. The one relationship that needs to be enhanced would be their relationship with nature and a focus on well-being for all, sustainably.

It is impossible to completely eliminate stressors in teachers’ lives; they are inevitably part of the teaching profession. Nevertheless, it is possible to manage these stressors in a productive way that can, in turn, enhance teacher well-being. If Living School Attributes and Practices are developed in schools, it is my view that these stressors will not become major contributing factors that detract from educator well-being. Once teachers develop strong SEL competencies leading to resiliency, managing relationships in a productive manner and feeling valued in their school communities, major growth and well-being for all will certainly follow, as long as schools continue to develop ESD plans without full support from the provincial government as this has become neglected by the current provincial government in Manitoba.

Conclusion

The focus of this research study was to determine factors that influence the state of teacher well-being throughout schools in Manitoba and to determine how the presence of Living School Attributes and Practices (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) can contribute to the well-being of
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teachers. As teacher burnout is on the rise in schools across the country, it is more important than ever to understand what contributes to teacher well-being so we can utilize strategies that can enhance well-being for all, sustainably.

There is no uniform approach to well-being. A single strategy will not work for all teachers, it is a much more complex issue that requires a redesign approach to school practices. The Living Schools Framework can be an approach to enhance teacher well-being, which will in turn enhance well-being for all, sustainably. The framework allows school administrators to address the needs of everyone (and everything) in their school community so that teacher well-being will continue to develop and flourish as demonstrated by the qualitative phase of this research study.

The review of literature examined various factors that contribute to teacher well-being along with the significance of it to our education system. My research offers support for theories of well-being developed by Seligman (2011) and Carney (2015) along with sustainable happiness from O’Brien (2016). With various approaches to enhancing well-being ranging from SEL competences (Carney, 2015), the whole community approach (JCSH, 2013) and the Living School Framework (Howard & O’Brien, 2018) it is clear that this research study contributes to existing research.

Research Conclusion

When I first started researching and analyzing teacher well-being, I quickly realized the complexity of the topic. As demonstrated by the survey results in the quantitative data, teachers are struggling for multiple reasons and many feel they will burn out before the end of their career. The final question of my survey asked if they (teachers) believed they would be able to keep up their current pace for the remainder of their career. The results varied with 44.6 % of
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teachers responding “no”, 30.1% of teachers responding “hopefully/maybe” and 25.3% of teachers responding with “yes”. With only 25.3% of teachers responding that they can keep up their current pace of teaching for the remainder of their career, the system needs to change in order to support teachers moving forward in our education system.

The main findings in the quantitative data correlations were noteworthy with a significant positive correlation between the new pedagogies score and well-being score ($r(83)=0.288$, $p=<.01$). There was a strong and significant positive correlation between the Living School score and New Pedagogies score ($r(83)=0.544$, $p=<.01$). As well as a strong and positive correlation was found between Living Schools and the well-being score ($r(83)=0.453$, $p=<.01$). Similarly, positive and significant correlations between Living Schools and Relationships ($r(83)=0.521$, $p=<.01$), Flourishing ($r(83)=0.486$, $p=<.01$) and Resilience ($r(83)=0.293$, $p=<.01$). The above results suggest a positive relationship between well-being and Living Schools demonstrating the effectiveness of the framework in schools where teachers are thriving.

The positive correlations between variables indicate significant changes that can be implemented in schools through the Living Schools Framework. Just as many of the participants shared in the qualitative interviews, they are thriving because of their school culture and administrators, the SEL competencies they have developed along with strong relationships they have formed and finally, the Living School Attributes and Practices that are currently present in their school communities.

My research questions were: **What factors influence the state of teacher well-being in schools in Manitoba?** **Which Living School Attributes are present in environments where teachers are thriving and how do they contribute to teacher well-being?** The factors, as demonstrated by the participants in this research, that influence the state of well-being in
Manitoba teachers are: school culture, strong administration, SEL competencies and teacher resiliency, strong relationships, and the presence of Living School Attributes and Practices along with a focus on NPDL and HPS. Since there was a positive and significant correlation between Living School Attributes and Practices and well-being from the quantitative data, it was no surprise that the seven interviewees all shared various Attributes and Practices that are present in their schools. The missing Attributes and Practices from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research were those connected to nature and sustainability.

**Implications**

At the time of writing this paper, we are in the middle of a global Covid-19 pandemic. With our world turned upside down and our education system looking very different with online and virtual learning, the flexibility and adaptability of teachers has become even more evident. Along with many important frontline workers, the province of Manitoba has announced teachers as essential workers. If teachers are essential to our society, one may ask why is teacher well-being not a priority in the education system? It seems that teachers and education are generally devalued in some political contexts, which needs to change in order to create a strong foundation in our society.

Skilled teachers are not easily replaceable and it takes years for them to develop the skills to become confident and highly effective in their jobs, so it is important to keep these teachers in the education system in order for them to continue to grow and help develop these skills in new teachers entering the education field. My interest in the subject of teacher well-being stemmed from my experience and from those of my colleagues, but it has grown exponentially. As the research has demonstrated, teacher well-being is a growing area of concern that needs to be
addressed to support teachers in our society in order to avoid burnout and improve quality of life to support sustainable happiness and well-being.

There is value for teachers knowing that they are not alone in this system, knowing that many others struggle just as they do. However, it is equally important for teachers to have hope and trust that they work in caring and supportive environments where their work and time is valued. When I started this research, I had no clear answer to my research questions, I had many hypotheses but many of them involved government change and intervention or innovative PD days. I quickly realized that many government policies are out of not only the control of teachers but that of administrators as well and will take years to change. When researching the Living Schools Framework, it became clear to me what needed to be done. The Living School Framework is a movement that can work in all schools without the need for government change. Living School Attributes and Practices can be implemented into schools through administrators and teachers, just as my qualitative interviews demonstrated. As indicated through the literature review in Chapter 2, many researchers (Carney, 2015; Holmes, 2005; Holmes, 2019; Hopkins, 2013; JCHS, 2008; Jones, Bouffard & Weissbourd, 2013; O’Brien, 2016; O’Brien & Howard, 2020; Owen, 2016; Roffey, 2012; Webb et al., 2009; Veenhoven, 2006) share the same philosophy that a more holistic approach to well-being needs to materialize to enhance teacher well-being and well-being for all. The Living School Framework encompasses all these ideas and more into a structure that can create an environment to enhance well-being for all, sustainably.

While completing various courses in my Masters of Education Program at CBU, O’Brien’s (2016) idea of Sustainable Happiness always stuck with me: “happiness that contributes to individual, community, or global well-being without exploiting other people, the
environment, or future generations” (p. 9). What if we changed our mindset in our schools to follow this idea? I believe schools can follow this philosophy, by implementing the Living Schools Framework in any education system, which will benefit all members of the school community contributing to well-being for all, sustainably.

**Recommendations**

I have found the process of researching teacher well-being very rewarding and look forward to continued research in the field. I can make five recommendations based on my study.

1. Validate the teacher well-being scale based upon Carney’s (2015) model of well-being and continue research regarding factors that affect teacher well-being specifically, not just well-being in a general sense.

2. Encourage administrators across the country to use and implement the Living School Framework. This would be valuable for schools as a whole and to enhance well-being for all, sustainably. If administrators are willing to take more risks in their schools, implementing this model would have positive effects across the board for everyone involved in the school community. I would also strongly suggest administrators include teachers in the planning and implementation phase of this model; with more teacher participation in planning, there will be more buy-in. Further, the Living School Framework needs to be developed as a whole school approach since one cannot just add some Attributes and Practices in the school to expect success.

In my research, there were elements of Living School Attributes and Practices in schools but there was no school that exemplified a comprehensive Living School Framework of Attributes and Practices.

3. Find and share examples of schools that have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, the Living School Framework. If possible, researching these schools before and
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after implementation could shed light on the effects of this approach on the well-being of the teachers. This is the focus of O’Brien and Howard’s (2020) research and a great resource for other schools starting their Living School journey.

4. Increase emphasis on nature experience and sustainability education in schools. My study illuminated a major gap in fostering relationships with nature and implementation of sustainable practices in school communities. It is impossible to acquire well-being for all, sustainably without nature playing a significant role. Relationships with nature may be implied in Carney’s (2015) well-being model or Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model, but neither is specific enough when it comes to nature and thus teachers’ and students’ relationships with nature may be neglected. The province of Manitoba has ESD as a clear focus but there has not been more development or initiatives province wide.

5. Provide teachers, both new and experienced, with more strategies and skills to develop stronger SEL competencies. This can be done through PD opportunities and within teacher education programs. Allowing teachers to develop these valuable skills earlier in their careers equips educators with important tools to help them as they move through their careers, which may help them be better able to maintain balance in their lives, develop stronger relationships, and enhance their resiliency and problem-solving skills, all of which could help alleviate stressors that inevitably come up in the teaching profession.

Teaching is a complex profession with so many fluid parts; teaching daily lessons is just one part of this multifaceted system that continues to evolve and change with new pedagogies and practices constantly developing. My job has drastically changed over the past few weeks with the global pandemic forcing the suspension of classes and creating new online learning communities. I have learned just how vital relationships are in our profession; not having regular
physical contact with my students or my colleagues really pushed me into isolation as I am sure it did others. More than ever, it is evident just how significant those connections are to our school community and to our well-being. This pandemic has also demonstrated the adaptability and dedication of teachers; this is new and uncharted territory for all of us working in situations we never thought possible before. But here we are, creating online lessons, engaging with students in new ways and using technology that is new to many of us. Just as we learn from this experience, it is more important than ever to take care of ourselves. Teachers are the nucleus of our education system and we need to ensure they are taking care of their well-being so they can continue to support students and do their jobs to the best of their abilities for the remainder of their career. We do not want teachers just to survive their career, we want them to flourish. Nobody ever said teaching was easy, but it can be one of the most rewarding professions if we create a system where the priority is well-being for all, sustainably.


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Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. (2020). What is the treaty education initiative? 


Appendix A: Survey

Teacher Well-Being: An Inquiry into the Well-Being of Teachers & Connections to Living

School Attributes

Demographics

1. What is your age range?
   - 22 to 29 years old
   - 30 to 39 years old
   - 40 to 49 years old
   - 50 to 59 years old
   - 60 +

2. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Prefer not to share

3. How many years have you been teaching?
   - 0 to 5 years
   - 6 to 10 years
   - 11 to 20 years
   - 20 + years

4. What grade(s) do you currently teach? (check all that apply)
   - K to 4
   - 5 to 8
   - 9 to 12
   - Adults

5. What subject(s) do you currently teach? (check all that apply)
   - ELA
   - Math
   - Science
   - Social Sciences
   - Light Vocational
   - Heavy Vocational
   - Art
   - Performing Arts
   - Physical Education
   - Flex Education
   - Student Services
   - Other

6. How many schools have you taught at over the course of your career?
   - 1
   - 2 to 5
   - 6 to 10
   - 11 +
7. How many different courses/classes are you currently teaching this year?
   o 1 only
   o 2 to 4 courses
   o 5-6 courses
   o 7-9 course
   o 10 +

8. How much prep time do you currently receive per 6-day cycle?
   o Less than 2 hours
   o 2 to 4 hours
   o 5 to 6 hours
   o 7 + hours

9. What is the student population at your current school?
   o Less than 100
   o 101 to 300
   o 301 to 500
   o 501 to 800
   o 801 to 1000
   o 1000 plus

**Time Commitments**

1. How much time to you spend prepping outside of school hours on a weekly average?
   o 0 hours
   o 1 to 3 hours
   o 3 to 5 hours
   o 6 to 9 hours
   o 10 + hours

2. How much time do you spend marking outside of school hours on a weekly average?
   o 0 hours
   o 1 to 3 hours
   o 3 to 5 hours
   o 6 to 9 hours
   o 10 + hours

3. How much time do you spend on extra-curricular activities outside of school hours on a weekly average?
   o 0 hours
   o 1 to 3 hours
   o 3 to 5 hours
   o 6 to 9 hours
   o 10 + hours

4. How many hours of mandatory duty do you have each week?
   o 0 hours
   o 0 to 0.5 hour
   o 0.5 to 1 hours
   o 1.5 to 2 hours
5. Do you have a duty-lunch?
   o Yes
   o No

5a. Do you run activities during your duty-free lunch hour?
   o Yes
   o No
   o N/A

5b. How much time per week do you spend running activities during your duty-free lunch hour?
   o 0
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

6. How many mandatory meetings do you have at school each month?
   o 0
   o 1–2 meetings
   o 3–4 meetings
   o 5+

7. Are you ever asked to cover other classes during your prep time?
   o Yes
   o No
   7b. If yes, approximately how many times per month?

Divisional Contract Information

1. How many paid personal days are you entitled to each year?
   o 0
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

2. How many unpaid personal days are you entitled to each year?
   o 0
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

3. How many extracurricular days are you entitled to each year?
   o 0
b. How many hours does it take to accumulate each day?

4. How much mandatory Professional Development time do you partake in each year, on average?
   - 0 days
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3 days
   - 4 days
   - 5 + days

5. How much Professional Development time (by your choice) do you partake in each year, on average?
   - 0 days
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3 days
   - 4 days
   - 5 + days

6. How much school time do you receive to write report cards per school year?
   - 0 days
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3+ days

7. How much time do you spend in your school on wellness days or activities per year?
   - 0 days
   - 1 day
   - 2 days
   - 3 days

Lifestyle Balance
Please rank the amount of time you devote to each category on an average week
1- No time (0%)
2- Little time (5%-10%)
3- Average time (10-15%)
4- Most of my time (15-25%)
5- Too much of my time (more than 25%)

1. Family (Extended Family)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
2. Family
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - N/A

3. Work/Career
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

4. Finances
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

5. Health and Nutrition
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

6. Fitness (activity)
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

7. Spirituality
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - N/A

8. Personal Growth and Learning
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
9. Fun, Leisure and Recreation
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

Stress

1. On a 5-point scale, how stressed are you, on a weekly basis, due to school related issues (including students, parents, time, administration work, other staff members)
   o 1 (no stress at all)
   o 2 (little to no stress)
   o 3 (some stress)
   o 4 (above average stress)
   o 5 (extremely stressed)

2. On a 5-point scale, how much stress is caused by each of the following:
   1 (no stress)
   2 (little stress)
   3 (some stress)
   4 (above average stress)
   5 (extreme stress)

2a. Prep time
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

2b. Report card demands
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

2c. Paper work/Administrative demands
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

2d. Parent demands
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
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2e. Meetings
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2f. High needs students
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2g. Assessment demands
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2h. Duty or other supervision
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2i. Extra-curricular activities
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2j. Lack of support from other staff
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2k. Lack of support from administration
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
21. Other (comment section available)

3. On a 5-point scale, how much does school stress affect your personal wellness?
   - 1 (not at all)
   - 2 (a small amount)
   - 3 (somewhat)
   - 4 (very much)
   - 5 (extremely)

4. How do you cope with school related stress? (check all that apply)
   - Breathing techniques
   - Walking
   - Exercise
   - Adult colouring/crafting
   - Journaling
   - Massage/Spa Days
   - Outdoor activities
   - Mindfulness/Meditation
   - Other (open for comments)

5. Please check all of the stress-related symptoms you recognize regularly (approximately once a week) in yourself. Please check all that apply.

a) Cognitive Symptoms
   - Memory problems
   - Inability to concentrate
   - Poor judgement
   - Seeing only the negative
   - Anxious or racing thoughts
   - Constant worrying

b) Physical Symptoms
   - aches and pains
   - diarrhea or constipation
   - nausea or dizziness
   - chest pain or rapid heartbeat
   - loss of sex drive
   - frequent colds
   - exhaustion

c) Emotional Symptoms
   - moodiness
   - irritability or short temper
   - agitation or inability to relax
   - feeling of being overwhelmed
   - sense of loneliness and isolation
   - depression

d) Behavioral symptoms
   - eating more or less
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- sleeping too much or too little
- isolating yourself from others
- procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax
- nervous habits (e.g. Nail biting or pacing)

Teacher Well-Being

Resilience

For the following section, please rate your well-being on a scale of 1-5.

1- Non-existent
2- Rarely
3- Sometimes
4- Usually
5- Frequently

1. I have positive relationships within the classroom with students
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2. I have positive relationships within the school with other staff members
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

3. I am responsive, flexible and empathetic within the classroom and in my life
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

4. I have a positive sense of autonomy and self-worth
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

5. I am proactive and positive about engaging in new initiatives
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
6. I have well-developed solution-finding skills
   ○ 1
   ○ 2
   ○ 3
   ○ 4
   ○ 5

7. I have a sense of meaning purpose, and future goals
   ○ 1
   ○ 2
   ○ 3
   ○ 4
   ○ 5

8. I have good social emotional, communication, and resiliency skills
   ○ 1
   ○ 2
   ○ 3
   ○ 4
   ○ 5

9. I am part of a caring, inclusive, and respectful professional environment
   ○ 1
   ○ 2
   ○ 3
   ○ 4
   ○ 5

10. I am able to manage my emotions.
    ○ 1
    ○ 2
    ○ 3
    ○ 4
    ○ 5

Active

For the following section, please rate your well-being on a scale of 1-5.

1. I am physically active each day (working out, going for a walk, running, playing sports, yoga, cycle classes)
   ○ 1
   ○ 2
   ○ 3
   ○ 4
2. I take opportunities to get massage therapy each month.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

3. I get 8 hours of sleep each night.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

4. I eat a healthy and balanced diet as part of my lifestyle.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

5. I am able to connect to my spiritual beliefs and needs.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

6. I am able to connect with others in through various situations in a social environment.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

**Flourishing**
For the following section, please rate your well-being on a scale of 1-5.
1- Non-existent
2- Rarely
3- Sometimes
4- Usually
5- Frequently

1. I often experience positive emotion at work such as joy, happiness and excitement.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5
2. I feel my job has meaning and purpose on a daily basis.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

3. I practice mindfulness at various points throughout the day.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

4. I often remind myself of why I entered teaching in the first place and what I love about it in order to stay motivated and not get caught up in the small stuff.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

5. I frequently set myself small goals each week and set about achieving them.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

6. I frequently celebrate my achievements.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

7. I frequently stop and reflect on what I accomplish over a certain time period.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

8. I feel like my work and time is valued in my school.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5
9. I receive positive feedback and reinforcement from my administration
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

Relationships
For the following section, please rate your well-being on a scale of 1-5.
   1- Non-existent
   2- Rarely
   3- Sometimes
   4- Usually
   5- Frequently

1. I feel strongly supported by at least 2 other staff members at my school.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

2. I feel strongly supported by the school executive (administrative team) with a strong sense of belonging.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

3. I am able to connect well with students and parents to form a relationship.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

4. I offer frequent support to others with care, concern and compassion.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5

5. I am able to ask for help or support when I need it.
   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5
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6. I recognize I am working as a member of a larger team and strive to achieve the school vision.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

7. Do you have PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) in your school?
   - Yes
   - No

If you answered Yes, please respond to the following 3 questions.

7a. How many hours per week do you spend in your PLC groups?
   - Less than 0.5 hours
   - 0.5 to 1 hour
   - 1 to 1.5 hours
   - 1.5 – 2 hours
   - 2+ hours

7b. Are you provided with extra prep-time to participate in PLCs?
   - Yes
   - No

7c. Do you find PLCs valuable to your professional well-being? I find PLCs valuable because ________.

New pedagogies in the NPDL

For the following section, please rate your well-being on a scale of 1-5.

1- Non-existent
2- Rarely
3- Sometimes
4- Usually
5- Frequently

1. In my school, New Learning Partnerships between teachers and students are encouraged.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

2. In my school, New Learning Partnerships amongst teachers is encouraged.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
3. In my school, Deep Learning Tasks restructured towards knowledge creation and purposeful use is highly regarded.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

4. In my school, Digital Tools and Resources, that enable and accelerate the process of deep learning is a main focus area of development.
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

Living Schools Attributes

Please check all that apply to your school in each section.

1. Values and Visions
   - engages with the real world
   - develops cultural awareness of others’ worldviews and identities
   - develops and models care for plants, other animals and the rest of the natural world
   - develops compassion for oneself, other people, and all living things as well as skills to address positive change
   - promotes the health and well-being of students, staff, the wider community, and the natural environment
   - has a solution focused growth mindset when facing challenges and opportunities
   - creates trusting and respectful relationships in the school community
   - respects Indigenous worldviews and traditional ways of knowing
   - none of the above

2. Leadership
   - ensures all teachers and students have voice and agency
   - develops strong collaborative relationships with staff, parents, guardians and the community
   - creates opportunities for professional development for transformational learning
   - cultivates an ethos of equity, inclusion and diversity
   - has explicit support for sustainability education and well-being
   - encourages risk taking to explore new ways of living, learning, and working in a safe environment
   - none of the above

3. Teaching and Learning
   - is a collaborative process
   - has a holistic approach to teaching and learning
   - has a commitment to inquiry-based strategies to affect real world change
   - has a spirit of inclusion, student-centred and differentiated learning
   - is developed on creativity and creating a climate for risk taking and student agency
   - models healthy and sustainable lifestyles
   - has authentic assessment of and for learning practices
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○ none of the above

4. Nature and Place-based Orientation
○ uses natural, social, built environments, including school envelope to foster learning
○ incorporates outdoor learning relative to the location of the school
○ develops ecological literacy of students and teachers
○ incorporates furniture, lighting, classroom resources sustainably to promote well-being
○ develops strong ties to community and commitment to active citizenry
○ none of the above

5. Health and Well-Being
○ develops emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of students, staff, and teachers
○ supports the principles of health promoting schools
○ explores the links between human health and the natural world
○ explores the relationship between sustainability, happiness and well-being
○ supports positive communication in the classroom, at school, and with the wider community
○ none of the above

Enhancing Well-Being

1. What is one improvement that could be made in your school to enhance teacher well-being?

2. What is one improvement that you could personally make to enhance your well-being?

3. What is one thing your school does well to support teacher well-being?

4. Why do you believe teacher well-being is important?

5. Do you believe you will be able to keep up your current pace for the remainder of your career? Please explain.

Interview

○ I agree to be contacted for a one-hour interview regarding teacher well-being.
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Teacher Well-Being: An Inquiry into the Well-Being of Teachers & Connections to Living School Attributes

Interview Questions

1. On a scale of 1 – 10, how do you rate your well-being?

2. What are some factors that contribute to your professional well-being?

2b. What are some factors that contribute to your personal well-being?

3. What are some factors that detract from your professional well-being?

3b. What are some factors that detract from your personal well-being?

4. What do you feel are some strengths in your school?

5. What do you feel are some weaknesses in your school?

6. How would you describe the climate of your school? What are some factors that contribute to this?

7. Currently, what is a professional development goal for yourself? What are some steps that have been taken towards that goal?

8. Currently, what is a goal of your school? What are some steps that have been taken towards that goal?

9. Does your school participate in any wellness activities for the teaching staff throughout the school year? If so, can you give some examples.

10. How does your administration promote teacher well-being in your school?

11. What type of support system do you have in your school?
12. Attached is the Living School Framework. Can you provide examples from your school of programs or activities that fall into each of the following categories? There are some examples provided already.