



# Innovative Learning Environment Project

## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PROJECT

An inclusive, credible evidence base must draw on multiple sources, including evidence from research, practice and experiences, and quantitative and qualitative data. Research in the area of district level program analysis states that "all those committed to achieving reforms that result in breakthrough impacts agree that whatever method [of assessment] they use to learn about their work, it must enable them to continuously make interventions more effective." *Broader Evidence for Bigger Impact* (2012)

1

### Evidence From Educational Research

The Central Okanagan's Innovative Learning Environment Project (ILEP) is grounded in research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Developments (OECD) and the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Recommendations (2016).

The primary evidence from research guiding the Innovative Learning Environment Project in the Central Okanagan is drawn from the OECD's *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*. "The OECD's Innovative Learning Environments project [analyzes] how young people learn and under which conditions and dynamics they might learn better." *CERI - Innovative Learning Environments* (2012)

Fundamental to creating innovative learning environments based on the OECD's 7 Principles of Learning is examining the dynamics between the elements of the pedagogical core. By shifting the role of educators, the way we approach curriculum design, and the way we use resources and interact with the environment, we can dial up the role of the learner to empower them to be at the center of their own learning.

Evidence is also drawn from the World Summit for Education, which is an international initiative aimed at transforming education through innovation and collaboration. "The OECD's work on innovative learning environments identified six particular domains of school and classroom based activity [for innovation]: regrouping educators and teachers; regrouping learners; rescheduling learning; widening pedagogical repertoires and mixes of pedagogies; collaborative planning, orchestration and professional development (authentic professional learning communities); and inquiry learning." *Creative Public Leadership: How School System Leaders Can Create the Conditions for System-wide Innovation* (2016)

Research indicates that innovative learning environments enable students to thrive because learning is personalized, meaningful, and student driven. Innovative learning environments are created when educators shift the four elements of the pedagogical core based on the 7 OECD Principles of Learning and the WISE Recommendations.

## OECD's 7 PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The learning environment recognises learners as its core participants, encourages their active engagement, and develops in them an understanding of themselves as learners.

Learners at the centre

The social nature of learning

The learning environment is founded on the social nature of learning and actively encourages well-organised collaborative learning.

The educators within the learning environment are highly attuned to the learners' motivations and the key role emotions play in learning.

Emotions are integral to learning

The learning environment is acutely sensitive to the individual differences among the learners, including their prior knowledge.

Recognizing individual differences

Stretching ALL students

The learning environment devises learning opportunities that demand hard work and challenge from all, but without excessive overload.

The learning environment operates with clarity of expectations using assessment strategies consistent with these expectations; there is a strong emphasis on formative feedback to support learning.

Assessment for learning

Building horizontal connections

The learning environment strongly promotes "horizontal connectedness" across areas of knowledge, skill, and subjects as well as to the community and the wider world.





Students in the Central Okanagan

2a

# Evidence from Central Okanagan Public Schools Educators' Practice and Experiences



## Innovations Around the Pedagogical Core

Teachers in the Central Okanagan are creating innovative learning environments based on the OECD Principles of Learning by shifting the elements of the Pedagogical Core in the following ways:

LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE

Recognising individual differences

### The Role of Educators

**Teachers:**

- build strong relationships and foster a sense of belonging
- see themselves as learners, researchers, documenters, and collaborators
- make decisions based on current educational research
- model curiosity and deep thinking
- make thinking visible
- provide opportunities for students to explore their passions and grow their competencies
- build adaptive expertise

### The Role of Learners

**Students:**

- contribute to creating a culture of belonging for all
- build their skills while actively exploring relevant learning
- make their thinking visible
- contribute to the collective knowledge of the group
- use their interests to guide learning
- set goals, collect evidence, and reflect on their progress to deepen learning
- engage in feedback cycles with peers
- see themselves as change makers
- take on leadership roles

The Core

### The Environment and the Use of Resources

**Environments are designed to:**

- enhance and personalize learning
- support learner agency
- create safety and comfort
- include different learning spaces, including nature and the community

**Resources:**

- spark curiosity
- go beyond texts and the internet to include: experts, peers, images, videos, hands on materials, thinking materials, nature, community...
- are accessible to students and students have agency to use them to explore learning

### The Design of Curriculum

**The curriculum is designed to:**

- be personalized to meet learners where they are at and help them grow
- be connected to the interests and passions of students
- be competency driven and concept based
- build toward big ideas
- connect subjects to each other and the world
- have students explore meaningful questions through inquiry based learning
- include a wide repertoire of learning approaches

Stretching ALL students

BUILDING HORIZONTAL CONNECTIONS





# Innovations Around the WISE Recommendations

Teachers in the Central Okanagan are transforming learning for their students around the World Innovation Summit for Education's recommended six domains of innovation in the following ways:



## REGROUPING EDUCATORS

### Educators are:

- working with administrators to maximize collaboration time with colleagues
- co-planning, co-teaching, co-reflecting, and co-assessing
- conferencing with students individually and/or in small groups
- offering workshops to provide students with choices
- connecting with others across grade levels and subject areas and across schools
- working closely with non-enrolling staff to collaboratively meet each learner's needs

## REGROUPING LEARNERS

Teachers purposefully and strategically group and regroup learners, within the classroom and/or in combination with other classes, in various ways to maximize learning for each learner.

### Learners can be grouped in many ways, including:

- personal areas of interest
- skills they want to develop
- personal learning intentions
- individuals with a variety of strengths
- learning styles
- social emotional needs
- as a whole class or community

## RESCHEDULING LEARNING

### Educators are:

- reimagining their daily learning schedules, eliminating specific blocks of time, and being flexible to go at the pace of learning
- considering what good things they can give up to do even greater things
- finding ways to integrate and connect learning across subject areas
- taking the learning outside and connecting to learning partners in the community
- listening to students and connecting learning to student interests and needs
- bringing students from other classes and/or schools together

## WIDENING PEDAGOGICAL REPERTOIRES

### Educators are using a wide variety of pedagogical approaches, including:

- pedagogical documentation
- inquiry based learning
- place conscious learning
- making thinking visible routines
- design thinking
- story workshop
- math congress and challenge based math
- standards based and strengths based assessment
- setting intentions with learning maps
- using materials as thinking tools

## AUTHENTIC, COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

### Educators are:

- engaging in ongoing dialogue with learning partners and connecting to learning networks
- collaborating in schools and across schools
- learners alongside their students, not experts
- researchers who are engaged in pedagogical documentation
- engaging in inquiry themselves as a part of their professional practice to collect data to determine their next steps
- modeling vulnerability as they learn and take risks with others
- developing their adaptive expertise
- giving each other feedback and contributing to the collective knowledge

## PERSONAL & INQUIRY BASED LEARNING & LEARNER AGENCY

### Educators are:

- creating environments where all students belong and feel safe to take risks
- using inquiry based learning to empower students and put them at the center of their own learning
- provoking student thinking to inspire wonders and develop curiosity
- providing opportunities for students to make their thinking visible
- providing opportunities for students to build collective knowledge while exploring their questions
- documenting to inform planning and to further learning

Find more information about inquiry and pedagogical documentation here:

<http://bit.ly/InquiryBasedLearning-ILT>

<http://bit.ly/PedagogicalDocumentationILT>



## Evidence From Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Quantitative and qualitative data has been collected from educators and students in eleven different schools in the Central Okanagan. The Central Okanagan's Instructional Leadership Team brought teams of educators from these schools together in a learning partnership network designed to connect educators across the district to continue to grow their adaptive expertise and to support collective knowledge building.



The first data set reflects teachers' responses to questions regarding changes in their practice and their sense of collective efficacy and well-being. The second data set reflects students' responses to questions regarding their learning. The final data set is taken from global achievement data in all required areas of learning.

"In order to transform learning, the most important cultural shift that must occur is the creation of cultures in schools where both adults and children are seen as learners who have deep agency and ownership over the learning that they do."

~Richardson and Dixon

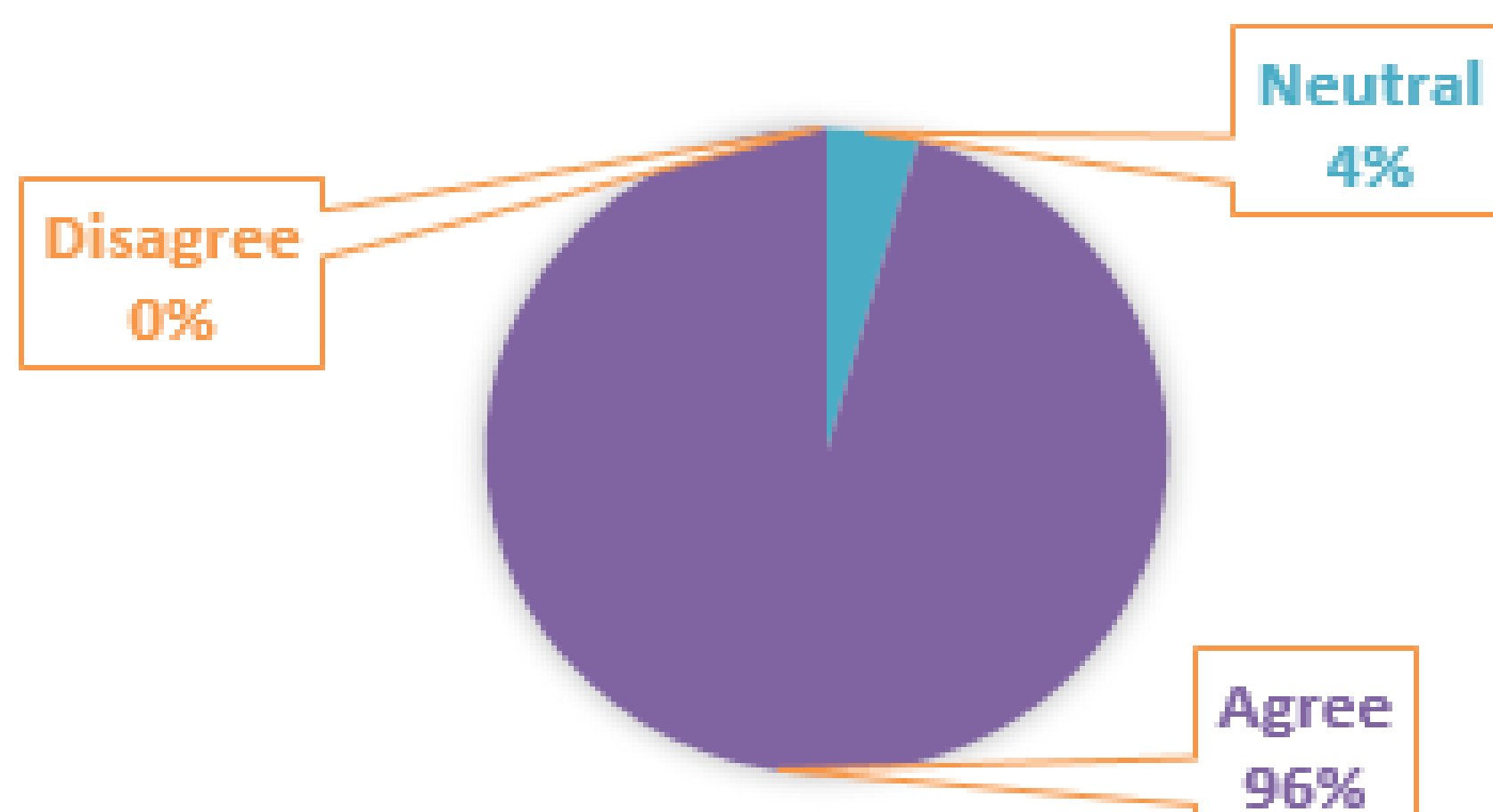
3a

### Self Efficacy

The impact on my learning that comes from meeting with people who are interested in taking risks has been essential to pushing forward. Doing these things alone is nearly impossible. The push and inspiration I got from the other educators in this prototype has been instrumental in making me constantly move forward with my students. Every inter-school visit, every chance to sit and talk with the educators at our meetings, every chance to reflect with my partner about the learning: all of these things have made me strong for my students."

~ Karin Dumont, Grade 8 teacher at KLO Middle

**I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN MY ABILITY TO (AND CAN PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF) DESIGNING LEARNING BASED ON PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES THAT BEGIN WITH THE VOICES AND INTERESTS OF MY LEARNERS IN ORDER TO PLEASE THEM AT THE CENTER OF THEIR LEARNING.**



*"We believe that kids' thinking is so valuable and that they are capable of taking more ownership of their own learning than ever before. We have shifted the role of the learner by how we approach instruction and assessment."*

~ Jenni Rubuliak, Grade 3/4 teacher at Chute Lake Elementary



"[I feel I have] become a part of a culture where everyone sees themselves as a learner and where, as Dylan Wiliam writes, 'every teacher believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better and know that there is no limit to what they can achieve.' One thing that I know for sure is that after being a part of so many inspirational experiences and opportunities these past couple years, and being able to connect and work with a group of educators who have a clear vision of what education could be, I will never be able to go back to where I was before. These experiences have given me the courage to honour my values about children and how they learn, the support I have needed to get through the difficult times, and the insight to know that "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." [Helen Keller]

~ Kerry Pazio, Grade 1/2 teacher at Shannon Lake Elementary



"Regularly having the opportunity to meet, share and learn from like minded people has completely quashed any doubts that use to sneak into my head around if we were doing the right thing. The gift of time has been so vital in changing my practice. Getting to see the shifts of the pedagogical core in action in other communities is so amazing. I have learned so much in these inter-school visits. The ability to come back together on such a regular basis and hearing other people share their experiences has also really been important to me in helping my confidence in continuing this shift in education. I am much more willing to take risks and be vulnerable with new things because my confidence has grown so much being a part of this."

~Kristy Mansley, Grade 6 teacher at Rutland Middle





3b

## Collective Efficacy

"The biggest impact [teaching in a] Learning Community had on me was that it allowed me to share my vulnerabilities while taking learning risks with colleagues and students. It also gave me the opportunity to work with like-minded individuals who have empowered and motivated me to try new things within my learning community."

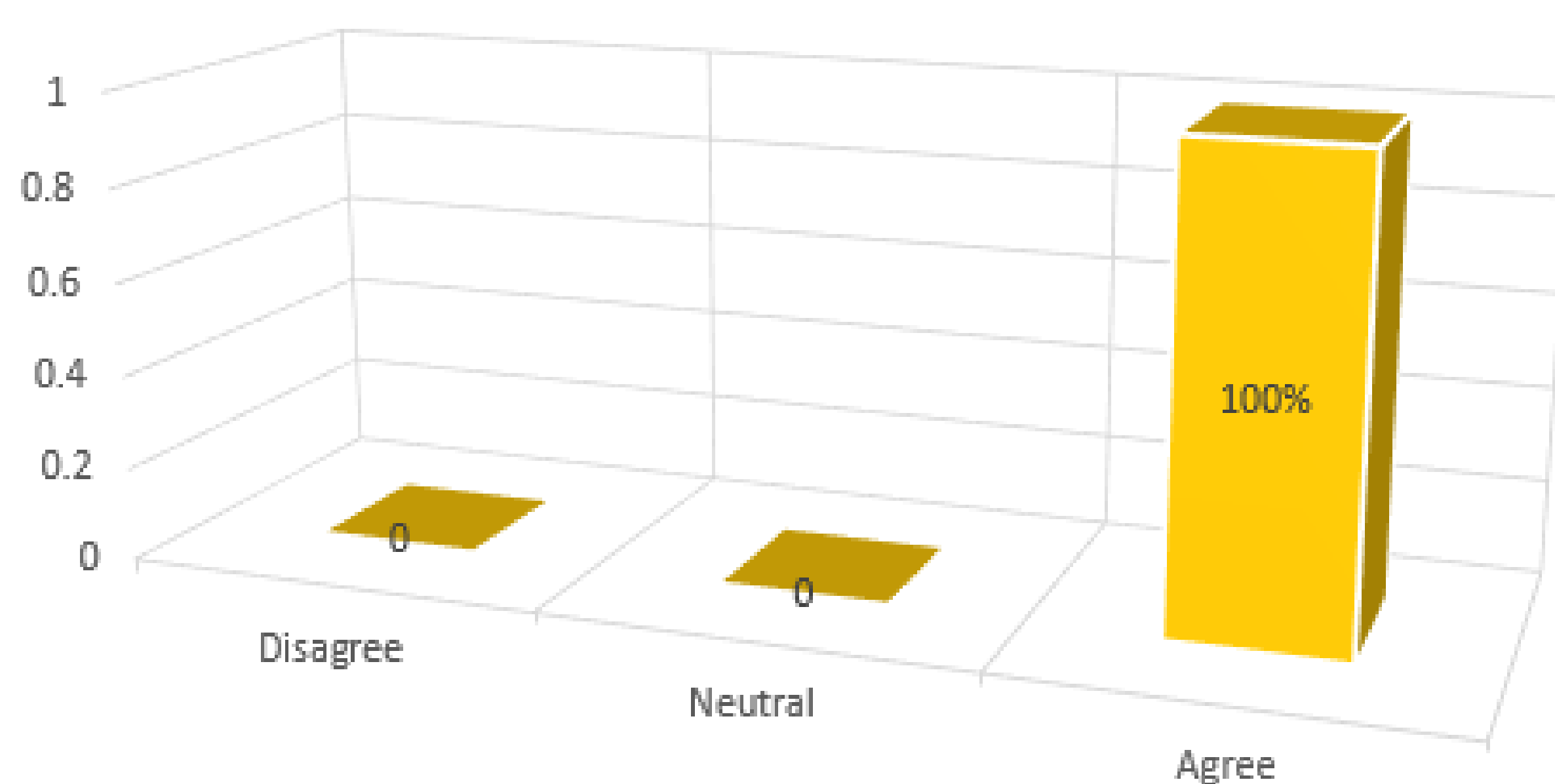
~ Michelle Naka, Grade 4 teacher at Black Mountain Elementary



"Collaboration is powerful and when we work together it allows us to bring out the best in each other and find new and meaningful ways to engage all learners. I am excited to keep moving forward, to create new opportunities for students, to connect and collaborate with teachers and to be a part of shifting education into what it can be!"

~ Kim Buchanan, Grade 1/2 teacher at Shannon Lake Elementary

I see myself as a learner and fully engage in collaborative professional learning, co-planning, co-teaching, and reflection with my colleagues and other education professionals.



"We have a sign in our community that says 'be brave and curious.' We are all in it together, trying and failing together. [Being a part of this prototype] gives me the courage to try. The courage to just try new things, fail, and try again."

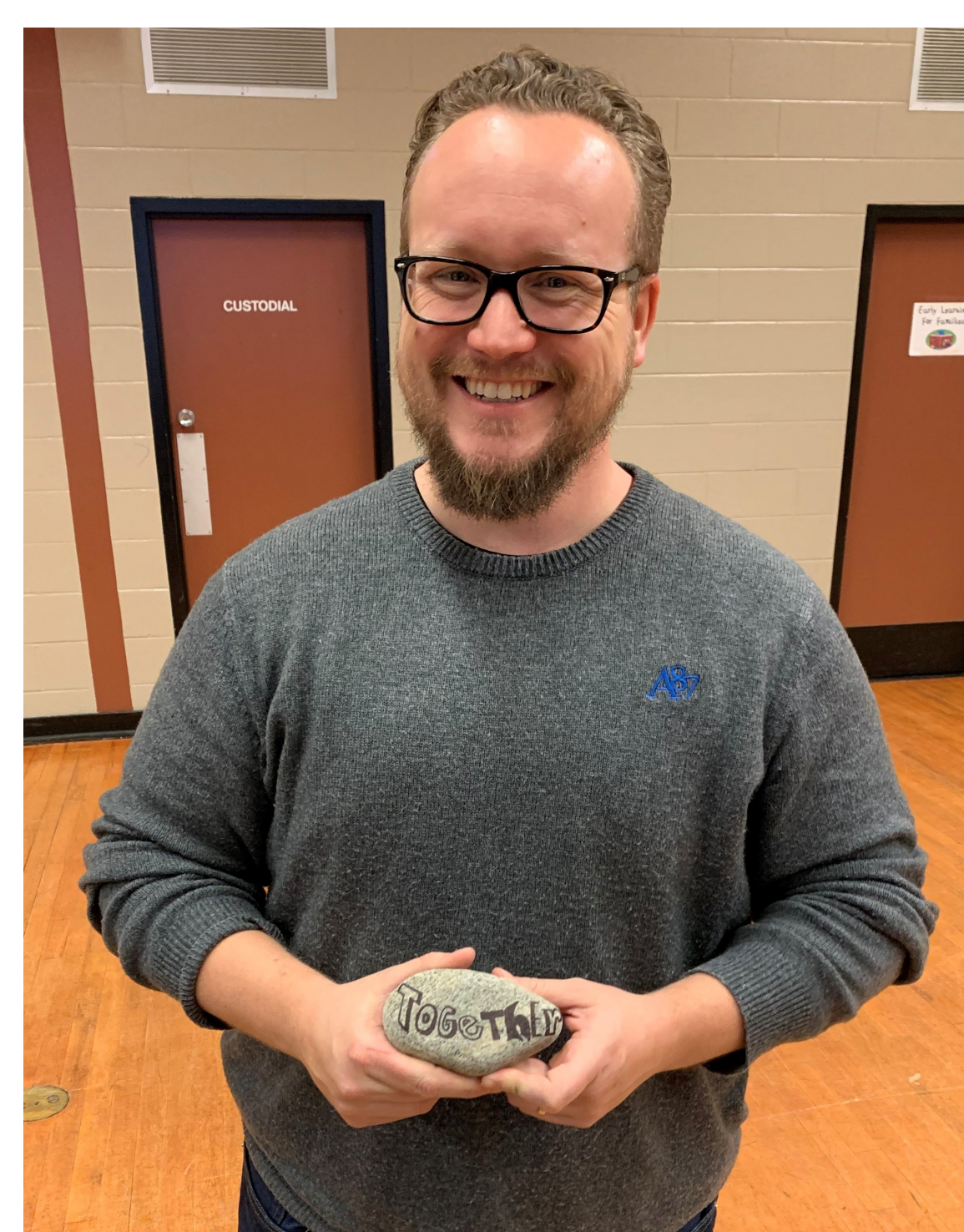
~Jenn Moffatt, Grade 3-4 teacher at North Glenmore Elementary

3c

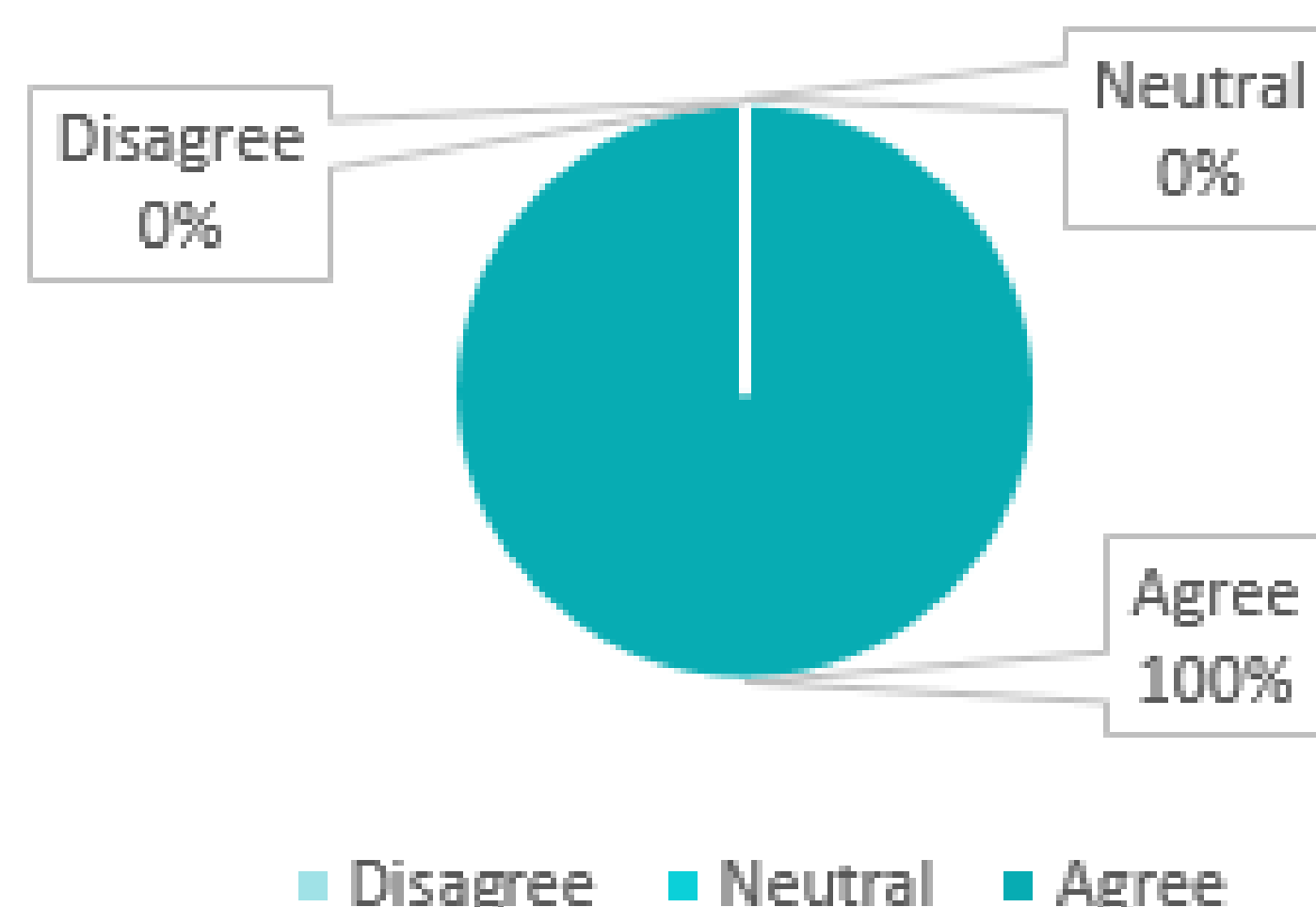
## Well-Being

"We talk about learning in silos, and even in community, you get so caught up in your own little group. Realizing the strength in the power of observation and collaboration with other communities is amazing. My big take- a-ways from visiting other communities is how powerful this is and that we are making each other better teachers - that collective efficacy piece. Within a month it was so transformative!"

~Kevin Dent, grade 8 teacher at Dr. Knox Middle School



As a result of collaborating with my colleagues, I have a higher sense of personal well-being and self-efficacy as an educator. I experience more joy, and I am more motivated to continue to learn and grow in order to meet the needs of my students.



"This experience gave me a place where I felt like I belonged, where my ideas were heard and valued and where I felt a true connection with others who are on this same journey. It has pushed the limits of my thinking, challenged the way I see things, and helped me build new awareness and knowledge about all of the possible ways we can transform learning for our students. It has given me clarity about how to "talk the walk" and not just "walk the talk." I have a better understanding of why and how we are shifting the pedagogical core and I can now confidently share how the OECD principles are a part of our learning community and come alive in everything we do."

~ Kerry Pazio, Grade 1/2 teacher at Shannon Lake Elementary

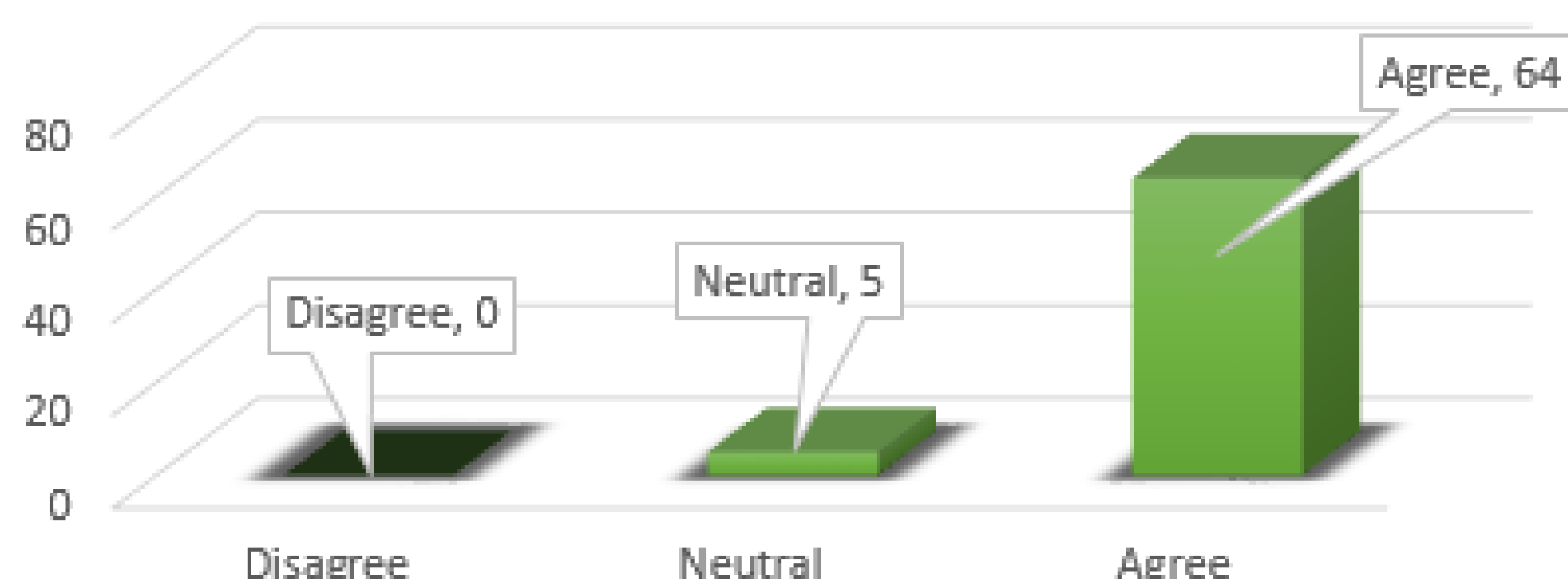


3d

## Empowering Students



Teachers empowering students through making thinking visible, documentation, setting personal learning goals, and collective knowledge building.



"By changing my role as an educator, I was able to start changing the role of my learners by increasing student agency. Students feel empowered to communicate their thinking, especially when they know that you are using their wise words to build the collective knowledge of our community. By creating structures, such as knowledge building circles, students feel more willing to make themselves vulnerable to share. Through creating a culture of inquiry, driven by the student curiosities, students feel a sense of empowerment."

~Haley Dean, Grade 6 teacher at Rutland Middle School

"Our learners are more at the center with visible thinking strategies to support and make their learning more evident within the culture of our Learning Community. Our students are beginning to take charge of documentation as "Learning Detectives" by sharing insightful and unique evidence of learning they see within our community!"

~ Erin Burton & Hilde Dietzel, Grade 2/3 teachers at Rutland Elementary



"The biggest shifts I've made with the 4 elements of the pedagogical core throughout the prototype has been using documentation to turn the student dial up and the teacher dial down."

~ Heather Letkeman, Grade 3/4 teacher at North Glenmore Elementary

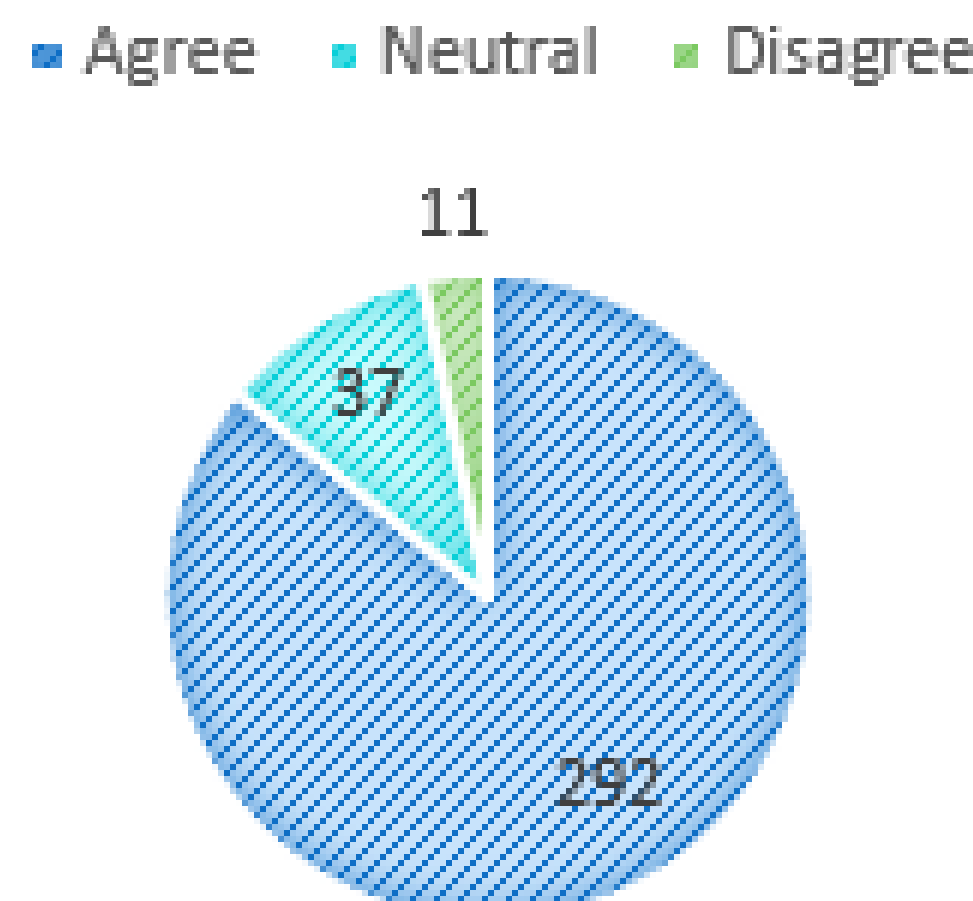
3e

## Student Learning



### Sense of Belonging

I FEEL LIKE MY TEACHERS CARE ABOUT ME AND BELIEVE THAT I WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.



"We have been putting more emphasis on social emotional learning because we know that happy kids learn better! We know that establishing a relationship with each and every one of our students helps them to take risks as learners, to stretch themselves, and to understand their strengths and weaknesses."

~ Jenni Rubuliak, Grade 3/4 teacher at Chute Lake Elementary

### Ownership Over Their Own Learning



"The biggest shift I've made with the four elements of the pedagogical core throughout the prototype has been using inquiry-based learning instead of only covering content. I've been letting students guide their own learning through their interests."

~Jody Crumb, Grade 4 teacher at Black Mountain Elementary

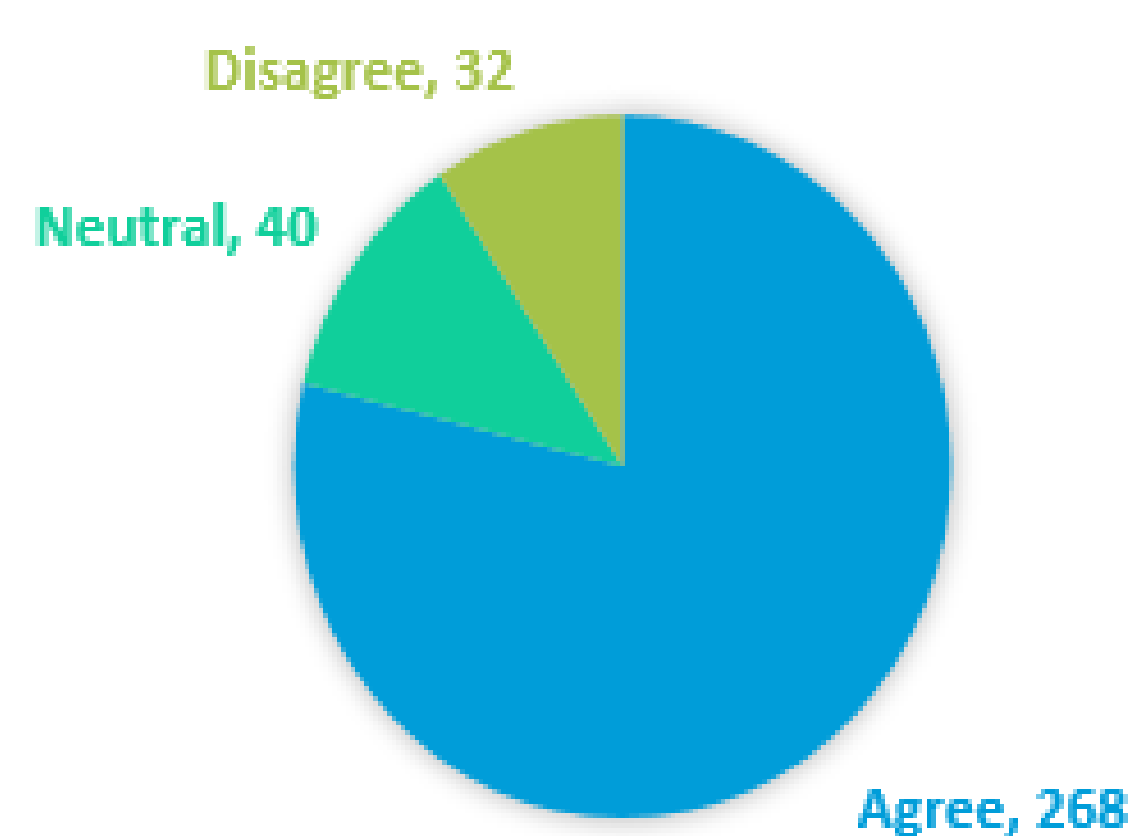
"Now I know that teaching is a partnership between children and adult learners where adults set the tone but kids set the pace and follow their curiosities."

~ Matt Olson, Grade 4-6 teacher at Peter Greer Elementary

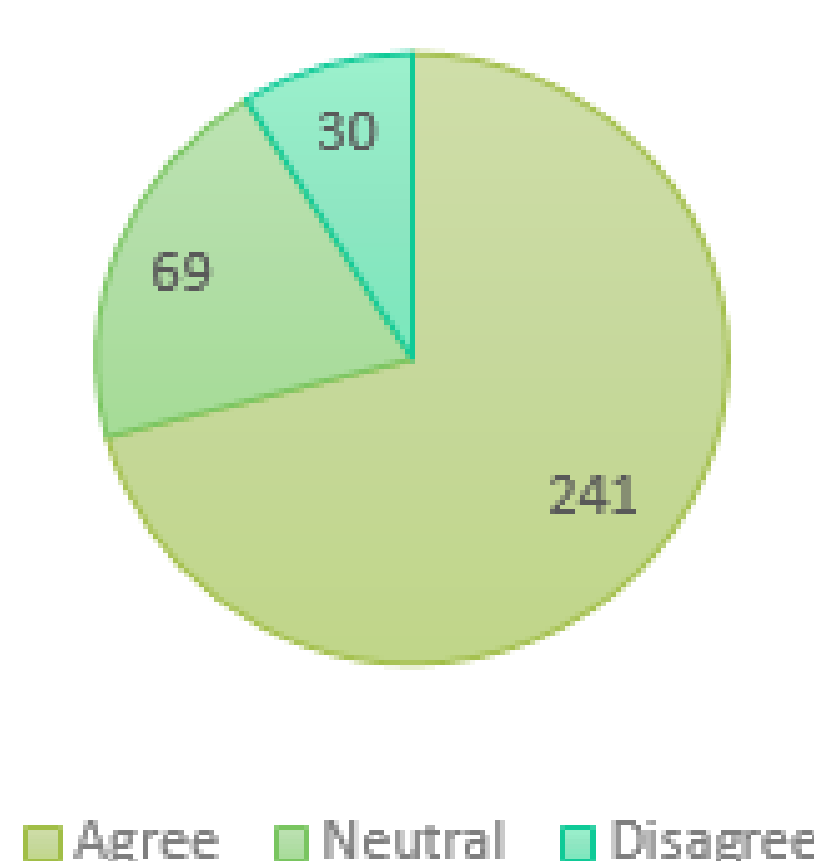
"Watching all of our learners this year, they know what to do now and they are using the language. They know how to sort into inquiry teams, use learning maps, and set intentions for their own learning. They are running it. There is new learning every single day."

~Jenn Davis, Grade 5 teacher at Mar Jok Elementary School

I HAVE CHOICE IN MY LEARNING AND FEEL LIKE WHAT I LEARN ABOUT IS IMPORTANT TO ME.



I know how I am doing with my learning, I can set goals and figure out what I need to do next to reach them.



"Through this experience, I have become more comfortable with dialing down the teacher role and shifting the responsibility and ownership of learning onto my students. I have watched them become more comfortable taking the 'driver's seat' in their own learning. They understand that their individual voices and interests matter and they are demonstrating a growing understanding of themselves as learners. The impact of shifting ownership has been huge; students are becoming more self-aware, self-reliant, self-driven learners. They seem more emotionally invested in what we are doing."

~Pam Thibert, Grade 3/4 teacher at Chute Lake Elementary