



all
in **for**
youth

Year **3**
EVALUATION
REPORT

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

- 3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 4 YEAR 3 EVALUATION DATA SOURCES
- 5 THE AIFY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES
- 14 AIFY: VISION AND MISSION
- 17 AIFY: THE PARTNERSHIP
- 21 AIFY: YEAR 3 IMPACTS
 - 22 YEAR 3 IMPACTS AT A GLANCE
 - 23 QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING
 - 25 FAMILY SUPPORT
 - 27 IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT
 - 32 OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT
 - 33 SYSTEMS CHANGE
- 36 AIFY SUPPORTS: ACCESS, USE,
CAPACITY AND IMPORTANCE
- 46 LOOKING FORWARD
- 53 CLOSING REMARKS
- 56 REFERENCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the last three years, the AIFY partners and stakeholders have been working hard to ensure some of Edmonton's most complex and vulnerable students and families have the opportunity to access critical supports that will leave a lasting impact on their lives. For the AIFY Initiative, children and families with complex needs in vulnerable school communities will thrive and achieve success in their lives when they have access to wraparound school-based supports.

This annual evaluation report presents what the AIFY work looked like for its third year of operation in 5 central Edmonton schools (From September 2018 – August 2019). Being aware of and understanding the needs of the **AIFY School Communities**, being guided by a **Vision and Mission** of the AIFY work, and the collaborative efforts of the **AIFY Partnership** have all contributed to significant outcomes of the AIFY work to date. These outcomes represent changes occurring in five key areas: **Quality Teaching and Learning, Family Support, In-School Support, Out-of-School Support, and Systems Change**.

This report also breaks down what service delivery in Year 3 looked like in the AIFY schools by reporting on the **Access, Use, Capacity, and Importance** of the AIFY services for the children, youth, and families served in the 5 school communities. In Year 3, we continue to see how the AIFY school communities are benefitting from the AIFY supports and how stakeholder collaboration and relationships make this happen. There has been a lot of growth in the initiative and in stakeholders since its inception. AIFY schools also feel like a home for many students and families that are part of these school communities. Since Year 1, the AIFY schools have wrapped around their students and families and have been determined to support as many of them as possible to ensure they have the best possible chance to achieve success in their lives. As a result, students and families feel supported in these school communities and see the potential the future holds. Families have also consistently shared how appreciative they are to have access to the AIFY supports and to be connected to all the caring people who work in each AIFY school. Families also can't imagine what life would be like without these schools and this level of support in their lives.

The AIFY work continues to be done by passionate and committed school and agency practitioners, who continue to support the wellbeing of children, youth and families in the AIFY school communities. As AIFY has become seamlessly integrated into each school, The AIFY initiative is also **Looking Forward** at ways it can continue to grow and evolve to best support the children, youth, and families it serves. Too many people have fallen through the cracks in the past. AIFY has demonstrated how its model of service delivery and collaborative practice can prevent this from happening. Thinking about the future, sustainability and next steps will continue to be a key area of focus for the AIFY partners. This work makes a difference and the AIFY partners are determined to see how AIFY can inform systems change so more children, youth, and families have access to the supports they need to thrive and succeed in life.

Year 3 EVALUATION DATA SOURCES

The following AIFY evaluation data sources were used to inform the Year 3 evaluation findings presented in this report.

<h3>STUDENT Resiliency Survey</h3> <p>Completed by 1,165 Grade 4 – 12 students across the 5 AIFY schools</p>	<h3>FAMILY Survey</h3> <p>Completed by 71 parents/caregivers from the 5 AIFY schools</p>	<h3>SCHOOL Staff Survey</h3> <p>Completed by 70 teaching staff from the 5 AIFY (Does not represent all teaching staff working in these schools for Year 3)</p>	<h3>AGENCY Staff Survey</h3> <p>Completed by 18 agency staff (out of 23 agency staff working in the AIFY schools)</p>
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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

29 Students interviewed	18 Parent/Caregiver interviewed	3 Agency Staff Interviewed	12 School Administrators Interviewed
11 Community Partners Interviewed	10 Operations Partners Interviewed	9 Steering Committee Partners Interviewed	

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

41 School Staff participated	24 Agency Staff participated	11 Agency Leaders participated
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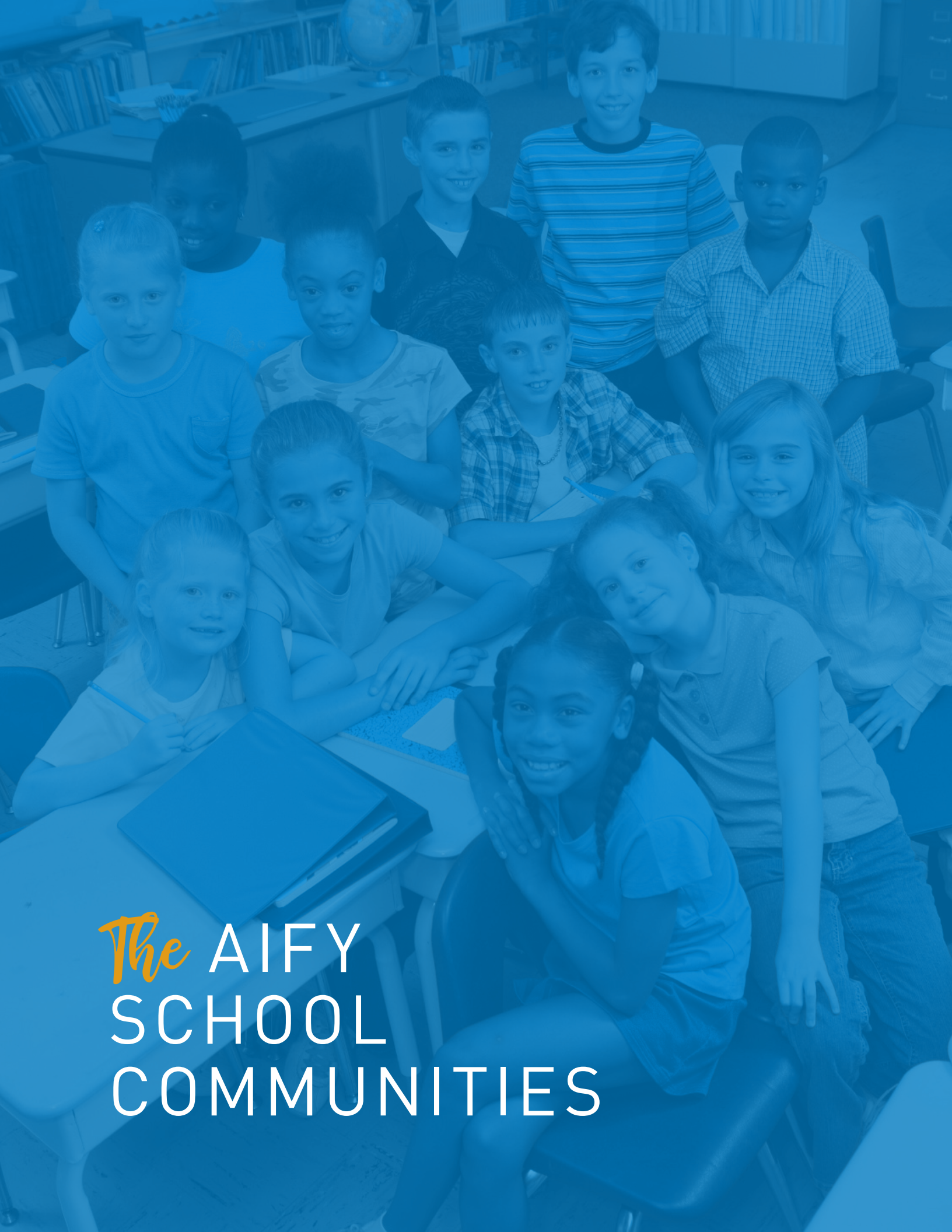
SECONDARY DATA FROM AGENCY PARTNERS

AIFY Service Delivery Data (e.g., Magnitude of service use)

SECONDARY DATA FROM SCHOOL PARTNERS

AIFY School Data (e.g., Academic data, student demographics)	District Data (e.g., District surveys, reports)
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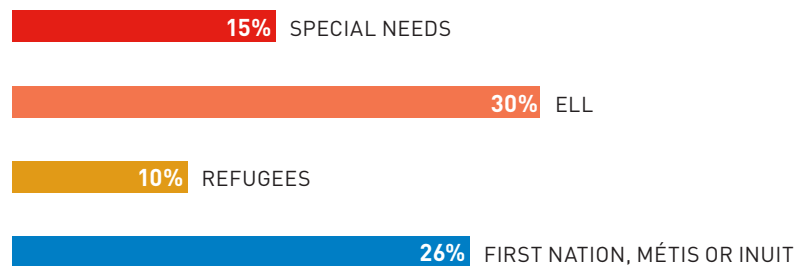
The AIFY
SCHOOL
COMMUNITIES

The AIFY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

There are 5 AIFY Schools in Central Edmonton:

- Delton Elementary School (Pre-K to Grade 6)
- John A. McDougall Elementary School (Pre-K to Grade 6)
- St. Alphonsus Elementary/Junior High (Pre-K to Grade 9)
- Spruce Avenue Junior High (Grade 7 to 9)
- Eastglen High School (Grade 10 – 12)

For Year 3 of the AIFY Initiative (the 2018/2019 school year), approximately **2,229 students and their families were part of these 5 school communities** (i.e., all students and their families, not just students and families who access targeted AIFY supports). Among these students, many represent English Language Learners (ELL), Refugees, Self-Identified First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students, and students with Special Needs (on average; there can also be some overlap in students who identify as these groups).



The Complexities of Students and Families

Each of these school communities has unique qualities, but they also share key similarities. These schools serve some of the most socially vulnerable students and families in Edmonton and have always struggled to meet the complex needs of these students and their families. The complexities experienced by these students and families are varied and can range in degrees of severity. Hearing from School Administrators, school staff, and families, some of these complexities are:

- Family histories of trauma
- Lack of trust
- Unstable home lives
- Transiency
- Being newcomers to Canada (Immigrant and Refugee Families)
- Food insecurity
- Mental health challenges
- Addictions
- Domestic violence
- Parenting challenges
- Financial struggles
- Behaviour challenges in children

Family survey results also demonstrated the range of complexities experienced by families that are part of these schools communities. Participating parents and caregivers were asked to report whether their children had experiences with Family Violence, Substance Abuse, Poverty, and Mental Illness in their families (n = 66 parents/caregivers who responded to these survey questions). They reported the following:

27%

of children had experiences with Family Violence

20%

of children had experiences with Substance Abuse

36%

of children had experiences with Poverty

45%

of children had experiences with Mental Illness

Strengths of Students and Families

Although these students and families face many complexities and vulnerabilities they also possess many strengths. For example, families demonstrated how much their families support one another, regardless of the complexities and vulnerabilities they are experiencing. Parents and Caregivers who completed the family survey reported they . . .

- Help and support each other (94% agreement; n = 62)
- Help each other accomplish goals (83% agreement; n = 55)
- Solve problems together (88% agreement; n = 58)
- Handle the good and bad times together (82% agreement; n = 61)
- Mostly get along with one another (83% agreement; n = 55)

Students who attend the AIFY schools are also very ambitious. In interviews, students shared their ambitions for their career and personal goals. Some of the personal goals students included:

- To be a good listener
- “To stop fighting”
- To develop self-discipline
- Get good grades
- Complete High School
- Go to University
- Get better at reading and writing
- “[Be] a good guy”
- “Work as hard as you can”
- Make good friends
- Learn about their culture
- Be more active and healthy

Students also demonstrated their ambition towards educational success. On a student resiliency survey (Fall 2018), Grade 4 to 12 students were asked if they plan to complete high school.

98% of student respondents (n = 1,112) indicated they plan to complete high school

The intention to achieve this important educational milestone demonstrates resiliency among these students despite the complexities and vulnerabilities they are experiencing in their lives.

We also asked students to describe themselves in our interviews. It's important to note that students do not define themselves by the complexities or challenges they face.

Students described themselves in light of their skills and abilities:

"I describe myself as creative. Very artsy." (Student)

They talked about their work ethic and personalities:

"I work as hard as I can to achieve my goals. I am very ambitious, pig headed, stubborn."
(Student)

"I'm confident about myself in what I do and stuff. And I'm not insecure in anyway..."
(Student)

"I'm funny."
(Student)

"I'm energetic, and happy"
(Student)

And they shared some of their core qualities that define them as people:

"[I'm a] helpful person. Kind... generous. Humble."
(Student)

"I'm a good helping hand."
(Student)

"I would say that I'm a family guy who really likes to talk to other people and help when I can."
(Student)

"I feel like I'm more of a helping caring person"
(Student)

Parents and caregivers also see these strengths in their children and expressed the hopes and dreams they had for their children in interviews. Some of the common hopes for their children were to:

» **Achieve Educational Milestones and "get a good education"**

"I think my hopes and dreams for (my children) is that they both see...continue to see themselves as learners – and that school is a good place to be...and I think that the All In For Youth has really helped with that, so it makes school like a home – for them, so I hope that they continue to see themselves [as] learners, and to see school as a positive place to be." (Parent)

» **Have good careers in the future**

"get into some kind of a job that they really like, and can support themselves [with]" (Parent)

» **Reach their potential**

"I didn't go to college, so I want to make sure he goes as far as he wants to study, and I'll try my best to support him, and just make sure he goes up there and able to make something for him[self]...be successful because I never had that opportunity until I was old ...when I was young, in my teenage age, I just finish[ed] high school and that was it, and I had to go help myself, so I don't want him to be that way" (Parent)

» **Not experience the same challenges parents/caregiver faced**

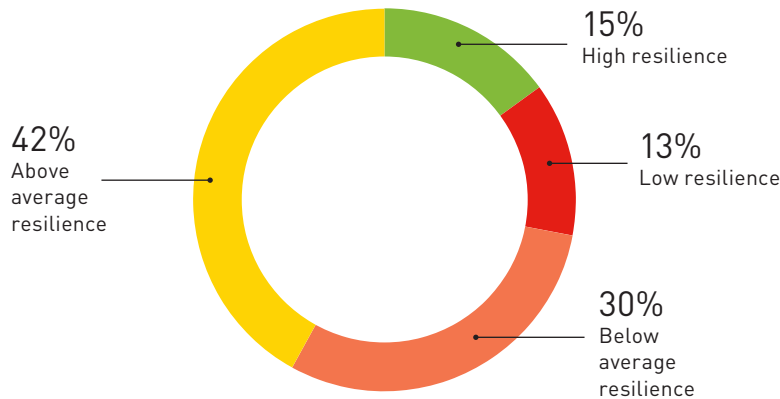
"We work hard...we try and do the best for our kids as [as much as] we can...I love my kids and I wish the best for them. And I just want to see them succeed in life and not have to deal with some of the struggles that I had to deal with when I was in high school." (Parent)

» **Be happy**

"...that they are happy and well adjusted...all those kinds of things, that they have lots of friends and family..." (Parent)

Student Resilience

The AIFY schools and initiative are also committed to tracking and supporting the resilience of students through an annual student survey. Knowing that the more resilient students are the more likely they will be to achieve success in their lives and thrive, regardless of circumstances. Based on the Fall 2018 student survey (n = 1,165 student respondents), just over 50% of Grade 4 to 12 students in the AIFY school communities are reporting 'High' or 'Above Average' levels of resilience in Year 3 of the AIFY initiative. The current resilience profile also demonstrates that while some students have this strength, just over 40% of their peers report 'Below Average' or 'Low' levels of resilience.



School Cultures

AIFY schools have and continue to work hard to create school cultures that are that are welcoming, respectful, trauma-informed, and create a sense of belonging. Since Year 1 of the AIFY Initiative, we have consistently heard from students and families about their perceptions of the AIFY schools. The majority of students and families we shared how the schools are welcoming, caring, and inclusive. Students and families continued to express how the school and its staff support and welcome students and their families.

"...parents are always welcome here...I never feel like we're not, even if we have some challenges, which I've had this year, I think there's always an openness to talking with parents, and I think an appreciation of how demanding some days are for parents...I think there's a sense of understanding here that I appreciate." (Parent)

"...you feel not only welcome you feel comfortable to tell if there is an issue or something happening with your kid. Or an issue if something happening with another kid in the school. You feel welcome and that you are able to talk about that." (Parent)

"Actually, they're all very welcoming (adults in the school)...when I first started here all of them, they came up to me and introduced themselves and asked me if I was going to be in their class...they're very good teachers." (Student)

"If...anything went wrong, they'd help me in any way." (Student)

Family survey results from parents and caregivers support these interview findings. 85% of parent and caregiver respondents (n = 60) felt welcome whenever they visited the school and 81% (n = 59) thought the school was a safe place for their children.

IN THE LIT:

When exposed to adversity, resilience is defined as:

- The capacity of individuals to navigate their ways to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that enhance their well-being;
- The capacity of individuals' physical and social contexts to provide those resources;
- The capacity of individuals, their families, and their communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways to provide resources.

(Definition from the Resilience Research Centre, M. Ungar, 2016)

IN THE LIT:

Fostering student's resilience can help them engage in less antisocial behavior, lowers their rate of academic failure, and decreases their chances of becoming depressed (Ungar et al. 2019; Luthar & Ansary, 2005; Zubric & Robson, 2003). Children's developmental outcomes under stress can also be improved with higher levels of resilience and supportive environments (Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012).

Unfortunately, and likely connected to the social vulnerabilities of students and families in these schools, only 54% (n = 40) of parents and caregivers reported that the neighbourhood around the school is a safe place for their children. Somewhat improved from Year 2, where 44% of parents and caregivers felt the neighbourhood around the school was a safe place for their children.

School administrators, school staff, and agency staff also speak about their trauma-informed approach and how it supports successful outcomes for students and families. From Year 1 to Year 3 of the AIFY initiative, schools have demonstrated continuous growth in their trauma-informed knowledge and practice. Agency staff, who entered schools with a trauma-informed lens, worked with schools to successfully integrate and have worked hard over the last three years to share their knowledge about trauma-informed practices, which many schools have adopted and implemented school-wide. Now, in Year 3, school administrators describe their schools and their staff as trauma-informed:

“...we talk about trauma informed practices here. We practice that every single day.” (School Administrator)

“people who come into the school...have commented to me that we definitely are a trauma informed school...they can see the practices that we have in place. We don't suspend kids, it's very much restorative. We talk to families. ...it's not...this disciplinary action...” (School Administrator)

“...they said that, ‘If you want to come see a trauma-informed school and what it looks like, you come here.’” (School Administrator)

School Staff also try to adopt a trauma-informed lens when working with students and families in their schools.

“But here if you are not helping with all of the other stuff outside of the home there [are] no academics happening, anyways. So I think the number one thing in a school like this is relationships with the kids. It's like super important. And with their parents too not just with the kids but with the families too, for sure.” (School Staff)

“...[We are] focused on trauma informed practices. Lots of questioning.” (School Staff)

We also used a teacher survey to ask teachers about their understanding and perceptions of trauma-informed practices. 81% of teachers (n = 57) across the 5 AIFY schools said they knew what trauma-informed practice was and 86% (n = 60) indicated the importance of using trauma-informed practices when working with complex students and families in their schools.

Parents and Caregivers also spoke to the qualities they see in the teachers and support staff make families feel welcomed in the school. Parents and Caregivers said people who work in the school were,

- Positive

“...all of them...their personalities are...genuine. That whole school...teachers and helpers [are] generally good natured...They're usually pretty positive...” (Parent)

- Caring
- Encouraging

“The teacher...she is really lovely. She's always smiling. I see how she engages with the kids. It looks like from the movies... it's like magic. When she's with the kids, I feel like she's really there. She's enjoying herself, too... and the [teachers] seem to... love their job, that's what I see. Very passionate about it,

IN THE LIT:

The presence of vandalism, harassment, and gang activity are some of the things that can influence how people perceive the safety of their neighbourhood (Fite et al., 2010). When families do not feel safe in their own neighbourhood, this can impact child delinquency, anxiety, and depression. However, when families believe their neighbourhood is safe, this is associated with better educational outcomes for children and less risky behaviors (Fite et al. 2010).

about what they're doing. Because teaching is something that you're doing for the society. It's really big work because you are forming futures and I feel like they are the experts." (Parent)

- Straight-Forward
- Patient
- Honest

From the family survey, parents and caregivers also reported people who work in the school were respectful (92% agreement; n = 65), sensitive to families' need (87% agreement; n = 62), took the time to get to know them (70% agreement; n = 50), and cared about the wellbeing of the children and families in the school community (87% agreement; n = 62).

From the student survey, students also felt that positive, caring adults are part of the school communities and they feel they can go to these adults for help if they have a problem.

80% of Grade 4 to 12 students (n = 908) said there was positive role models in the school they can go to for support, guidance, encouragement, and advice.

87% of Grade 4 to 12 students (n = 973) said there is an adult in the school they can go to for help with a problem.

Finally, the focus of the AIFY schools demonstrates their dedication and determination to offer the best supports possible to students and families in their school communities. School administrators shared that they do have high expectations for their students, but they are also committed to giving students and families "a helping hand up" to help reach expectations.

"...when we came here... – sometimes it felt like there was hand outs being given, but I think we've tried to [re]shape our culture and the AIFY play an instrumental piece of that...[we are] giving them a helping hand up. As opposed to a hand out." (School Administrator)

School are also focused on the educational outcomes, but are working hard to balance the non-educational needs of their students and families.

"We're a school that our focus is to equalize some social capital inequities, and we do everything we can to provide a safe, caring, supported environment for our kids, and then provide the educational tools that they need to be successful when they leave our community, both academic based, but also life and health and relationship and social/emotional based..."

(School Administrator)

"I feel like it's a community hub. A place where families come in and they can meet, connect, build relationships in their community. I think there's a huge focus on student achievement and like with our literacy program and our numeracy and our focus really on just even the whole child, the success for the whole child." (School Administrator)

In Year 3, we heard how schools continue to shape themselves into places where students and their families can thrive. Students and families in these schools face numerous complexities and challenges in their lives, but they also have many strengths that schools are working hard to support and nurture. We also heard how it was the combined efforts of the different stakeholders working in these schools that has help shape the school culture and help students and families feel supported and welcome.

Each AIFY school has experienced a culture shift during the last three years. This shift began in Year 1 with the initial implementation of the AIFY model and the additional staff brought into schools to support students and families. At first, the shift was gradual and in some cases, the school culture may have been built up after the implementation of the AIFY supports.

“...I think the teachers are more on board now. And like our admin said that this year, like all of our teachers are staying, which isn’t something that normally happens. So like, we’ve really created that community which I think is really helpful.” (Agency Staff)

By Year 2, we started to hear more about the ways schools were changing, how they felt different because of AIFY, and how AIFY was being integrated into each school’s existing culture. In Year 3, stakeholders are now describing school cultures that have shifted considerably from what we heard in Year 1 of AIFY.

In Year 3, the following culture shifts were identified across the five AIFY schools:

» **Staff mindsets have shifted**

- Adults who work in the schools are now thinking differently about the behavior of the students and their families. Adults working in the schools acknowledge the importance of understanding a student’s/family’s history; they now focus on understanding behaviours and where they may be coming from.
- Adults in the AIFY schools are trauma-informed and continue to be supported in their development of trauma-informed practice and knowledge

“I feel like the culture within the school continues to shift and the messaging continues to shift about... being more trauma-informed and understanding that for a lot of kids, this is last chance... this is it. If we don’t figure out how to support these youth, the chances of them being successful if they leave here and ... we haven’t helped them be successful, they probably won’t right?” (Agency Staff)

» **Schools practices have shifted to be more trauma-informed**

- School staff are adopting practices or strategies and embedding them in their classrooms to support the complex needs of their students
- For example: Elementary schools have ‘Calm Boxes’ in their classrooms to help students who may be struggling to engage in class, schools are making the office a safe space for students to come and decompress, as opposed to being a place of discipline, schools are taking different approaches to disciplinary actions and involve restorative practices, schools work hard to ensure students/families know they are always welcome and wanted in the school.

» **The AIFY supports have been fully integrated in each of the five schools and are described as operating “seamlessly”**

- Agency staff are seen as part of the school staff
- Students don’t differentiate agency staff from school staff
- There is ‘buy-in’ from the schools for the value and importance of the AIFY work
- Students and families are now self-referring and requesting supports for themselves; also demonstrating a greater awareness of the supports available at the school

» **Relationships among all types of staff working in the schools have been established and maintained, which contributes to effective collaboration among staff**

IN THE LIT:

School cultures play an integral role in learning and teaching. Having a strong and positive school culture is associated with better teacher moral and student achievement (MacNeil et al. 2009). Research shows that positive school cultures are fostered by having strong communication and collaboration between school administrators, teachers, students and parents. Further, collaborative school cultures and environments have been linked to improved levels of student achievement (Gruenert, 2005).

IN THE LIT:

When teachers and educators operate through a deficit model approach, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can end up feeling like outsiders, “others”, who are lacking in some way (Martin, 2018). Practices based on or informed by deficit mindsets can oppress marginalized students and can result in blaming the student for poor educational performance (Zakaria, 2019). In contrast, strength based models of teaching can enhance the educational experience of students. Using a more strength based mindset is linked to students exhibiting less risky behavior and building positive traits (Renkly & Bertolini, 2018). Furthermore, strength based approaches (that value students assets) are linked to increased student achievement and graduation rates.

IN THE LIT:

Trauma informed practices in schools allow teachers to understand that students’ past trauma and life experiences impact current behavior and learning (Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016). One key component of trauma informed schools is having mental health professionals embedded in the schools, which allows the school staff to receive additional resources and enables students to have quick access to mental health professionals (Phifer & Hull, 2016).

- » Students and families continue to describe the schools as safe places where they feel welcome; Students and families know people at the school care about their wellbeing and will help them if needed

It has taken 3 years to see these shifts occur across the schools and there are likely many factors that contributed to these shifts (e.g., administrator leadership, belief in the AIFY vision/mission/model, consistency in staff). These kinds of culture shifts are not easy to achieve and, as demonstrated here, they take time and the involvement/influence of many different stakeholders.

“...I think school culture has made a dramatic shift from Year 1 by Year 3. We are not convincing anyone of what we are trying to do, or the mission and values [of the work]...I feel that is pretty widely accepted across our sites and that we are on the same page which is great and makes things easier. And ...I think administrators are actively educating their peers around some of this ... and helping establish that understanding... why we are not expelling students and why we are using restorative justice measures and those kinds of things ... They are advocating for us...” (Agency Leader)

IN THE LIT:

There are many well-known challenges in implementing social supports in schools. The many complexities surrounding implementation can result in confusion and overwhelm staff due to lack of expectation and experience of practice, which can contribute to why social supports take a long time to run efficiently (Burns et al. 2010). Additionally, there is very little consensus on the best way to integrate supports in schools and how to best package it (Atkins et al. 2010). Subsequently, there is a continual learning, adjusting, and experimenting process in the early days of service integration in schools (Horn et al. 2015). Moreover, research shows it takes time and constant adjustments and adaptations to optimize the services and their implementation.

IN THE LIT:

A key factor in culture shifts in schools is personalization, which means creating personal connection between students and their school environment (e.g. to teachers, support staff, curriculum, and other adults in the building; Lewis et al. 2016). This shift can result in increased school connectedness, which is linked to increased educational motivation, class engagement, and school attendance. Additionally, the school leadership team (i.e. Principals, key staff, teachers) is a major factor in developing and sustaining school culture shifts because they play a key role in defining and implementing changes (Lewis et al. 2016). Lastly, building shared visions and goals in the school can contribute to strong school cultures. For instance, promoting and celebrating milestones, events, and achievements can foster a cohesive school environment (Lewis et al. 2016). Overall, personalized relationships, strong leadership, and building a common vision all contribute to school culture shifts, which all take time to create and sustain.



AIFY:
VISION *and*
MISSION

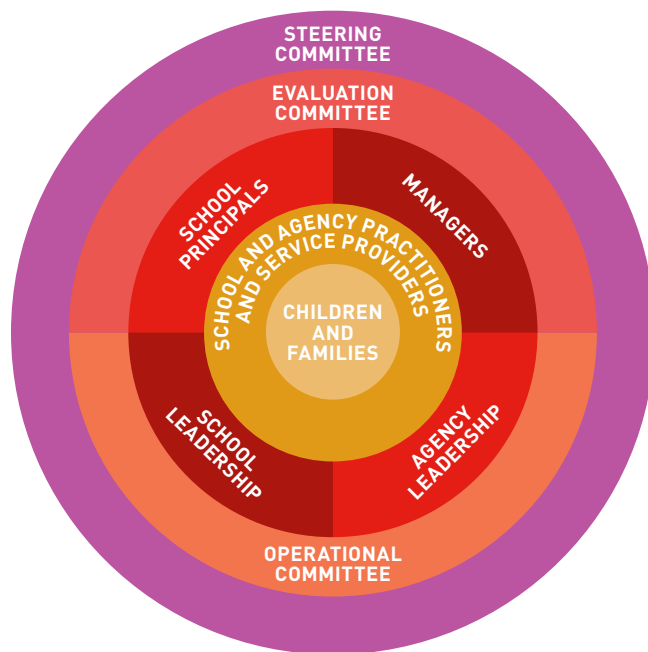
AIFY: VISION *and* MISSION

AIFY partners and the initiative have the following theory of change:

Children and families in vulnerable school communities have complex needs. Education alone cannot meet these needs. Giving children and families access to wraparound school based support will help children and their families thrive. In turn, children will achieve success in both school and life.

For the last 3 years, the AIFY initiative has been working on producing this change for students and families by supporting the implementation and maintenance of a collaborative model of school-based supports in the 5 AIFY school communities.

The AIFY Model



- Agency partners share manager and agency leadership positions
- School leadership positions filled by assistant principals or other schools leaders (e.g., curriculum coordinators)
- Practitioners and service providers made up of school staff and agency staff:

- Teachers
- Educational Assistants
- School Liaisons
- District Consultants
- Other school support staff
- Mentoring facilitators
- Out of School Time Coordinators
- Success Coaches
- Roots and Wings Family Support Workers
- Mental Health Therapists
- Nutrition Support Staff

SCHOOL STAFF

AGENCY STAFF

This type of model of support is an evidence-informed model of service delivery that is a different, more effective way of working to support the complex needs of students and their families. Based on existing research we know wraparound, community-based models of support are better able to provide comprehensive formal and informal supports at an accessible location for students and families (Painter, 2012). Also, these types of supports are better equipped to provide a continuity of care, compared to tradition models of support (e.g., individuals must access and navigate services on their own, interact with many different service providers; Painter, 2012). Wraparound supports are also seen as more effective because they focus on enhancing parents'/caregivers' lives, alongside children's lives (Duckworth et al., 2001). The goal is to ensure a child's home environment is also able to contribute

to their positive development. Parents/caregivers have also been found to be more trusting of and willing to participate in wraparound models of support. These wraparound, community-based type models of support are not yet the norm. They do require a lot of capacity and resources, but based on research we can see that the expected outcomes of this type of support are greater and longer lasting than found in previous models of support.

“...being community-based, so being where families go is really important and can't be understated. They don't have to find an agency ... or a hospital ... or go somewhere [else]. It's just a part of their day-to-day activities. They're going to that school, their child's going to that school, so it's embedded in the community. So, for me...I think that's really an important piece. And when I talk to people across the country, we're unique in that respect too. Like it's not a common way [to do things]. People talk about school-based services, but we've done something [different] in All in for Youth, we've taken it to another level.” (Steering Partner)

“... when you look at those five schools, that collaborative effort, I have to believe, has a much greater impact, influence, and ultimately, long term results for kids and our families. The coordination of services for a school principal who needs those services... I've watched principals in some of our socially complex schools, they're spending all their time in [an] emergency [response] role ... and of course they need to do that, but to what end? Where's the instructional leadership those teachers need...the level of change leadership? You're so exhausted here, that big picture [of] who's watching the culture? And... even planning a staff meeting? ... so a collaborative approach, the wraparound approach [is] setting our families and children up for success... you hear that in the voice of our teachers and our principals... through this project, that 'I get to teach. I can focus – I can support my teachers more in their professional learning because I'm not trying to connect them with the right services outside of my school.’” (Operations Partner)

The AIFY initiative is committed and determined to sustain this model of support in AIFY schools, based on the impacts of the work to date. The mission of the initiative, in addition to providing this level of collaborative support to students and families, is to also explore ways to share and scale this model of support so other cities (urban and rural) across Alberta can also use this model of support (with adaptations) to also meet the complex needs of their school communities.

“... how can we make sure that... – it's valued enough in [the] community, and in politics, that we can get that sustainable funding where it's viewed as a right for kids and families to have access to the services that they need, to have their needs met so that they can be successful in school.” (Operations Partner)



AIFY: *The*
PARTNERSHIP

AIFY: *The* PARTNERSHIP

All in for Youth engages a number of community and school partners in the development, implementation, and maintenance of the AIFY initiative:

- Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brother Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area (BGCBig)
- City of Edmonton
- e4c
- Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD)
- Edmonton Public Schools (EPSB)
- Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF)
- The Family Centre (TFC)
- The Mental Health Foundation
- REACH Edmonton
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Even though this is only the third year of AIFY, many of the AIFY partners have longstanding relationships spanning decades and have collaborated with each other on previous projects and initiatives. Across the AIFY partners, 3 – 20+ year partner relationships are represented. The AIFY partners have also adopted shared leadership and collaborative practices in their work with AIFY. No one partner is the leader or decision maker for the AIFY work. Partners come together to support the initiative and make decisions as a group, utilizing the expertise of different partners depending on the decisions that need to be made.

Each of these partners has provided numerous resources and capacity to help make the AIFY work happen. Countless hours, staff capacity/support, funding, expertise, and additional resources have been willingly given by the partners to support AIFY's success. Many of these contributions are also provided in addition to operating funds allocated for the 5 AIFY schools.

“There are layers and that relationship, we can call on each other for different pieces... and people are willing to give and that's what partnership is about... when you're called on, then you make the time and you do a good job and... you contribute.” (Steering Partner)

For example, the evaluation team participated in approximately 30 in-person meetings from August 2018 to August 2019 with different AIFY partner groups (e.g., operations meetings, Steering meetings, meetings with individual partners; does not include phone meetings to connect with partners multiple times throughout the year) to support the AIFY evaluation (e.g., develop the plan, review data collection methods, coordinate data collections, etc.). This is only a small portion of the time commitment provided by partner organizations as many of the AIFY partners also have additional meetings throughout the year (on a regular basis) to support the AIFY work (e.g., weekly meetings within organizations among staff, monthly meetings between agency partners, other meetings as needed to support the fundraising for the AIFY work). This demonstrates the level of commitment of the AIFY partners as this is time/resource intensive work, all done in collaboration. This also demonstrates the level of time and resources needed to contribute to effective collaboration.

“... seeing the commitment that people have made to just stay at it, and keep reflecting and moving forward...and practicing and adapting... and... it’s been a very wholesome process for a long time, involving many, many hours of work for many players... and I think that that speaks to the fact that people are trying to find what is the right practice to support our families and their children and our neighbourhoods, so that we can get better and [have] greater success...” (Steering Partner)

“... it has been a wonderful, rewarding experience, but a lot of work, and so I think that everything you read on collaboration and how much time it takes is very real... it takes lots of time, lots of relationship building, and lots of conversations and communication.” (Operations Partner)

In interviews with AIFY Operations and Steering partners we also heard what they believe contributes to success in collaborative partnerships.

- Backbone support needed
- Commitment to the work
- Good communication
- Roles and responsibilities established
- Shared outcomes established
- Good relationships
- Good planning
- Shared goals/vision
- Time and resources
- Have the “right people around the table”
- Stability/consistency in partners

“...it just impresses upon me how like supportive ... our members are of the work, and that despite them having so much other stuff on their plates that they need to do, that they continue to remain connected to it ‘cause really and truly, to continue to have these ED’s coming to the table, looking at how can we influence change on the ground? What needs to happen?, I think really speaks to their commitment, and it just – it’s so impressive to me because we know there’s so many demands on people’s time, and it’s so challenging to try and get everything done, and I think the work would not be where it is without that, right? It’s really – it comes from the top, and so the fact that we continue to have that level of buy in and support has really enabled us to do what we do, and we wouldn’t be able to be as effective or successful, to this point, if some of those people had stepped away, so I just really [want to] recognize that ‘cause I think that they are – it’s tremendous.” (Operations Partner)

“What I think has been really important is that the various committees have the right people from the right levels of the organizations, as well, who are able to navigate their system. So, knowing who to have at those different tables, and how they can translate what’s happening in community to their systems has been really helpful and really – I think it’s a key characteristic of this collaborative that’s helping it to be successful.” (Operations Partner)

The Operations and Steering partners also identified challenges they experience in their working partnership (e.g., navigating different perspectives or needs of partners, finding the time needed to support the work, communication, etc.). In spite of these challenges partners still perceive the partnership as effective and a positive experience.

IN THE LIT:

One benefit of collaborative partnerships in educational settings is that school staff and service partners come to the table with various backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives that can support effective planning and meaningful interventions in students’ lives (Shasby & Schneck, 2011). Additionally, collaborative partnerships have multiple partners with resources and knowledge to properly address a common issue (FitzGerald et al. 2016).

IN THE LIT:

Key things to take into consideration during collaborative partnerships includes listening to the expectation of all partners, maintaining communication and collaboration, and taking into account administrative and logistical issues (Macpherson, 2017).

“...there is such a commitment to this work that I’m very proud of that.”

[Steering Partner]

“... it’s been quite fascinating seeing the work that’s being done with the partnership. I’ve come from over a decade of working in nonprofits, and certainly have not seen partnerships working to this extent, for sure... it’s been very, very pleasing to be a part of something [like this], and just the tremendous amount of positive activity that’s happening around it... seeing the work that happens for the participants and their families, it’s just tremendous.” [Steering Partner]

“I would say it’s been very good... I brag about the partnership quite a bit because one of the things that I think that’s unique about it is the different people that are at the table... you have your agencies, yes. But you also have your funding partners there and you have your school boards there. And that sounds pretty typical, but it’s actually atypical... I feel very fortunate that we have a group of people that are thinking together and doing together.”

[Steering Partner]



AIFY:
Year 3
IMPACTS

AIFY: Year 3 IMPACTS AT A GLANCE

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

- » AIFY supports help school staff teach students more effectively/efficiently
- » School Staff feel more support in schools
- » School Staff are able to focus on teaching and learning in schools
- » Positive relationships between schools and agencies are maintained
- » School Staff in each AIFY school use trauma-informed practices
- » Decreased School Staff turnover in AIFY schools

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- » Positive relationships maintained with caring adults out-of-school (e.g., adult mentors)
- » Positive relationships with community partners maintained
- » Increased student volunteerism
- » More external community partners involved in the AIFY work
- » Student and family out-of-school needs are met

FAMILY SUPPORT

- » Decreased feelings of isolation among caregivers
- » Improved parental capacity (e.g., self-esteem, confidence, parenting skills/abilities)
- » Improvement to family mental health
- » Increased stability in families
- » Improved family relationships
- » Increased food security
- » Positive relationships are maintained between family members and caring adults in the school
- » Families are more involved in school communities
- » Families' needs are met (e.g., basic needs, financial)

SYSTEMS CHANGE

- » AIFY partner relationships maintained
- » Effective/efficient information sharing practices between schools and agencies maintained
- » More schools want to implement AIFY in their school communities
- » Improved access to supports for students and families (e.g., barriers to access removed)
- » AIFY partner working differently (with each other and internally) and influencing how others are working together

IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- » Students have the intention to complete high school
- » Improved attendance
- » Improved school readiness for children
- » Successful school transitions for students
- » Improved student resiliency
- » Improved student reading ability
- » Improved student mental health
- » Decreased student truancy
- » Improved student behavior
- » Positive relationships maintained between students and caring adults in the school
- » Student needs are met (e.g., basic needs, transportation, nutrition)
- » Improved academic performance
- » Improved social skills
- » Improved peer relationships

AIFY: Year 3 IMPACTS

To help identify and track impacts of the AIFY work across the years, AIFY partners developed a logic model to map out expected impacts and outcomes of the AIFY work in the Short-term (First 1 to 2 years), Mid-term (in 3 to 5 years), and Long-term (in 6 – 10 years). These outcomes are also organized by the 5 outcome areas AIFY identified when they developed the AIFY model of support: Quality Teaching and Learning, Family Support, In-School Support, Out-of-School Support, Systems Change.

This section of the report presents the Year 3 (Mid-term) impacts and outcomes of AIFY for each outcome area. In Year 3, many of the projected mid-term outcomes are being achieved. Outcomes are illustrated through qualitative data (interviews/focus groups with AIFY stakeholders) and quantitative data (stakeholder survey data, secondary data from AIFY partners). Data presented in this report are considered exemplars of the occurrence of an expected impact/outcome of Year 3 impacts and outcomes, but it will not be a complete picture of all the data.

QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

School staff are able to focus on and be supported in their teaching and learning objectives with students and families

IN THE LIT:

Having wraparound social supports present in schools allows teachers to access valuable knowledge and resources from agencies. As a result, teachers report that they are more patient with students, the amount of stress they experience decreases, and they concentrate more on teaching and academics (Sibley et al. 2017). Further, Ouellette et al. (2018) explain that the school environment is one key factor in eliminating teacher stress and increasing contentment in schools. Consequently, both of these studies suggest that having wraparound supports and various agencies present in vulnerable schools contributes to an improved school environment (Sibley et al., 2017; Ouellette et al. 2018). As well, teachers involved in wraparound, collaborative models report less emotional exhaustion, greater personal achievement, and an improved teaching environment (Valli, Stefanski & Jacobson, 2016), and these types of models of support gives them the freedom to focus on teaching students (Quinn & Dryfoos, 2009).

» AIFY supports help school staff teach students more effectively/efficiently

“Well obviously I know that they (AIFY staff) do make our days and our jobs a lot easier. And one thing that I find really important in my role is that as you are learning your role and there are so many systems whether its child and family services, its family centre like all the services, police service... you can navigate the system and you can learn as you go but when you have lots of professionals in the building who can teach you those things, it just makes your job ... smoother” (School Staff)

» School Staff feel more support in schools

“Over the last few years..., [if] there is a student at high risk, you don’t go to the meeting thinking, how am I going to help this family? Where am I going to start? I think who’s going to help me with this family, and ...you go in and get that information and you speak with the families and then it’s just... it’s comforting and really more efficient to be able to know...[this]. The family is struggling, I’m going to go to the roots and wings worker” (School Staff)

“I would also probably look for another job if we didn’t have All In For Youth in this school. I don’t know if with the population we have, [if] we have the highest vulnerability rating in the district. I believe, with this population [and] without these supports, I don’t know that we could do our job. Kids coming to class hungry in the afternoon, abused in the morning” (School Staff)

- 93% of school staff (n = 65) said they can rely on their AIFY colleagues to help them support students and families when needed.

» School Staff are able to focus on teaching and learning in schools

“I’d say like if I was in front of like my MLA...I would tell them... my classrooms have been getting ever more complex and without the AIFY team... – I know the curriculum I cover would be like cut drastically in half, not even in half – like cut even in more. I would [tell them] that the curriculum outcomes would not be achievable at all.” (School Staff)

» Positive relationships between schools and agencies are maintained

“We...continue to meet with our All In For Youth team throughout the year as well and like we see them because they are in the building so we have relationships with them like they are part of our staff” (School Staff)

84%

of school staff (n = 59) and 78% of Agency Staff (n = 14) said that their school and the agencies involved in the AIFY work are collaborating successfully.

90%

of school staff (n = 63) reported feeling comfortable sharing their opinions (e.g., about students, families, the school) with the AIFY agency staff that work at the school.

» School Staff in each AIFY school use trauma-informed practices

“We ...talked about the word trauma informed and how pretty much every staff member has that in the back of their head and specifically because of [our Roots and Wings worker]... she did such a good job of reminding us of whatever was happening in the building... keeping in mind that perspective and that lens.” (School Administrator)

“...I think we all learn to have – because of the huddles and because of the sharing about kids at staff meetings, I think we all learn to look for that journey in all our kids, right. And not label... Being more trauma sensitive, for sure.” (School Administrator)

“I think teachers here in the school are definitely more trauma informed because of that background they (AIFY staff) have as well” (School Staff)

50%

of School Staff (n = 35) reported that their attitudes about students’ disruptive behavior has changed.

57%

of School Staff (n = 40) said their instructional strategies have changed (e.g., changes made to meet the needs of students/families).

» Decreased School Staff turnover in AIFY schools

“We have staff staying. I believe one of the reasons staff stay here is because students are supported through AIFY and the other [reason] is our commitment to literacy. Staff indicate that they continue to work in our complex, high needs school community because of the support provided to students and families. I know that without the support of our AIFY team, teachers would probably apply out.” (School Administrator)

“For the 2018–2019 school year we had the least amount of staff turnover. The wraparound supports have supported the complex needs in classrooms and teachers report that they are feeling like they are better able to support the families and student needs in their class. AIFY provides timely supports and staff are better able to work with partners to seek out targeted professional learning, implement immediate strategies with support and access aligned resources for specific needs. The alignment of AIFY priorities with school processes, systems and values, help to support staff with common purpose, understanding and alignment of actions.” (School Administrator)

FAMILY SUPPORT

Families have access to supports in schools that contribute to their overall wellbeing and are able to build skills to maintain healthy family functioning over time.

IN THE LIT:

The challenges experienced by children, youth, and families impact the whole family, and thus addressing the needs of children and youth requires a family-centered approach and collaboration between families, schools, and social service agencies in the community. (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Interventions are more powerful when families are involved and supported, and that family members should have a voice in the services provided to them (Powell, Batsche, Ferro, Fox, & Dunlap, 1997).

» Decreased feelings of isolation among caregivers

“Yeah, I would say it’s huge... You’ve had families who were isolated and were not able to even come to the school and we haven’t even seen them, so reaching out to those families, knocking at the door, right and saying, ‘Hey I’m here to help you’ and taking them like, some emergency hamper or whatever it is, it has been really helpful.” (Agency Staff)

- Only 26% of Parents/Caregivers (n = 17) said they often feel isolated from other people.

» Improved parental capacity (e.g., self-esteem, confidence, parenting skills/abilities)

59%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 39) said that with the help of supports available at the school, they have gained more skills to be a good parent/caregiver.

61%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 40) said they feel less stress as a parent/caregiver.

56%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 37) said they are better able to cope with the emotional demands of being a parent/caregiver.

86%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 57) said they feel confident as a parent/caregiver.

86%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 57) said they feel good about their parenting skills and abilities.

88%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 58) said they strive to achieve success in their life.

» Improvement to family mental health

“... we’re more happy in general I think, just knowing that there is somewhere else to turn you know, other than just family, you know, if you don’t feel comfortable telling your family every little detail.” (Parent)

• Across the 5 AIFY schools, the Treatment Impact for the Mental Health Therapists was 79%

- Formal Clients (students and families) of the mental health therapists in the AIFY schools use an outcome rating scale to evaluate the service provided by the therapist, this measure produces a ‘Treatment Impact’ score. The industry standard of treatment impact is set at 50%.

» Increased stability in families

“[if we didn’t have these supports] ...We’d probably have child welfare at my house” (Student)

- 55% of Parents/Caregivers (n = 36) said with the help of supports available at the school, their family life is more stable.

» Improved family relationships

“...sometimes you play and then from there you start to ask questions but in a way that he doesn't feel like he's attacked. All these things, I have changed and improved my relationship with my son. Yeah. So, it is better now.” (Parent)

48%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 31) said with the help of supports available at the school, their family relationships have improved.

67%

Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 60) indicated they felt their relationship with their children has improved.

» Increased food security

- Students and families that are part of the AIFY school communities had better access to food supports (e.g., 150 emergency food bags provided to families in Year 3)

“They know that, middle of the afternoon whether its class time or not if they are hungry they can come down and get a piece of fruit or I've always got a yogurt to toss at them, or something, right? And I think that kind of transitions to the rest of the school ... I think it's like that at any of the AIFY schools...That's just part of the wraparound care. If you got a full belly you're more willing to talk, you're more willing to pay attention in class, you're more willing to show up!”

(Agency Staff)

“I personally love nutrition – like, that's the e4c... that is a saviour for us... Best program I've ever seen...” (Community Partner)

- 218, 414 meals served throughout Year 3 to students and families

» Positive relationships are maintained between family members and caring adults in the school

“I think for me, relationships are seamless with the families that have been here for 3 years and know me really well. They know my expectations, the kids know my ...some consequences, I'm the one that has to instill that, and I still have to have a healthy relationship ... So, I have to have all those pieces and keep that relationship with the parent and the kid. So, my relationships are really strong because they have to be, so that I can still have a good relationship with them but instill consequences when necessary... I think I have a really good relationship with a lot of parents...” (Agency Staff)

“I mean, I have a really good relationship with dad. We don't work formally, he doesn't meet, he doesn't want that sort of support but when we see each other, its good conversations, it's very open. It's very honest.” (Agency Staff)

47%

of School Staff (n = 33) said they have stronger relationships with families in the school communities.

61%

of Agency Staff (n = 11) said they feel school staff have stronger relationships with families in the school communities.

» Families are more involved in school communities

“This is only my third year here, but I've had multiple parents this year come in and say I need support, as a parent or as a family we need support. Which I haven't seen before this year. And I think a large portion of that this year is they've heard of other families getting support or they've seen the support their child is getting [support] and they are hoping we can give them as a family or a parent more support or point them in the right direction”

(School Staff)

“A big success for me would be having parents becoming more involved. So I had a student last year who did not [have any] parent involvement at school and then by end of year, the parent was coming on school trips.” (School Staff)

» Families’ needs are met (e.g., basic needs, financial)

“And then we also have a boutique support in the basement, where families are able to access anything that they need, and these are all donated stuff, so we make sure that they are clean, no bed bugs, nothing like that. So we have toy stuff; we have boots, underwear, anything that they need, right, so they can access it.” (Agency Staff)

64%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 45) said that when they need help, they see the school as a source of support.

81%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 57) said that, for the most part, they think the people who work in the school have contributed to the wellbeing of my family.

77%

of Parents/Caregivers (n = 55) said they are happy with the quality of support they receive from the school.

IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

Students have access to supports in school that contribute to their overall wellbeing and help them build skills to achieve school success.

IN THE LIT:

Wraparound supports in schools are so important because they provide a wide range of services that specifically address students’ academic, social, physical, and mental health needs (Miranda et al., 2018). In-school supports that address these needs also tend to provide students and families an opportunity to connect with caring adults in the school community. For vulnerable youth, having a strong and positive relationship with a caring adult protects them from negative, health-related outcomes and promotes positive developmental outcomes, including the development of social skills and school competence (Sieving et al., 2017). These type of support collaborations address the complex needs of students and families, improves school environments, supports student learning, and fosters community growth (Kim, 2017; Warren, 2005).

» Students have the intention to complete high school

“So yeah, every year it’s been like steady, [the students have shown] gradual growth in this direction of like ‘I’m going to finish high school and I’m going to be successful after’.” (Agency Staff)

- 98% of students (n = 1, 112 Grade 4 to 12 students) reported on Year 3 resiliency survey said they plan to complete high school.

» Improved attendance

“I feel like it helps [with] attendance... All In For Youth goes above and beyond to get our kids to school ... It has a huge impact on their education, [field trips, and programs]. Because all those experiences gives them language and all those experiences they can write about. That [experience] gives them the hooks for learning content. Without that, they are just learning abstract stuff that they have no experience for.” (School Staff)

“Another thing that’s really interesting is looking at the kids that are more at risk... In the sense of their attendance at school, they may not have perfect attendance, but they come and I think part of it is some of our youth struggle with that academic resilience. They’ve got resilience in the community, really strong survival skills, but just within the building I think that sometimes

there's such gaps in their learning or I think helping them to find that intrinsic motivation is a little bit difficult sometimes, but it's interesting that they attend... quite a number of them are actually here consistently..."

(School Administrator)

"Well, we've got kids that are coming here every day. If we didn't have some of these supports in place if we didn't have the positive framework that exists, they wouldn't be coming to school."

(School Staff)

- 54% of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 42) indicated they felt their child's attendance had improved in Year 3.

» Improved school readiness for children

- There was a 29% - 59% improvement in Kindergarten students school readiness across three of the AIFY schools, based on a standard early years assessment (Early Years Evaluation; EYE) done in the fall and spring of Year 3.*

**School District staff are more likely to be delivering interventions for Kindergarten children to support their school readiness (e.g., Inclusive Education supports Kindergarten students in the EPSB District; Family School Liaison workers in the Edmonton Catholic District offer this support), but having AIFY supports in schools to support the rest of the student body and their families can help these District personnel focus on supporting these younger children and their families in the AIFY school communities.*

» Successful school transitions for students

89%

of Grade 6 students (n = 116) at the AIFY schools successfully transitioned to Grade 7 within their respective school Districts

85%

of Grade 9 students (n = 132) in the AIFY school successfully transitioned to Grade 10 within their respective school Districts

The remaining students left their respective school Districts after Grade 6 and 9, and could not be tracked, but that also doesn't mean they didn't successfully transition to Grade 7/10 in another school District

» Improved student resiliency

"When they (the students) come to me it's almost like they've got a level of resiliency now. And maybe not specifically the skill for what their immediate concern is, the question or the problem solving. But they are very open to it. And ... knowing the resources we have, the kids have more awareness of what is out there and what our resources are [available] for them as well. Whereas if I was to go back ten years they would be sometimes non-verbal, they would kind of [be] thinking they are in trouble... I just find that... they're coming in more armed with that openness and that ability to have conversations which makes it a whole lot easier for us to start the problem solving process" (School Staff)

94%

of School Staff (n = 78) at the AIFY schools said that their school helps students develop resiliency (2018/2019 District Feedback Survey)

75%

of Grade 5, 8, and 11 students at four of the AIFY schools (n = 187) said their school helps them develop resiliency (2018/2019 District Feedback Survey)

» Improved student reading ability

- 70% of Grade 1 to 9 students in three of the AIFY schools (JAM, Delton, Spruce Avenue) had 1 or more year's growth in their reading.

“... a success from last year that kind of gets overwritten a lot and I guess I didn’t even think about it until you brought that up, is that literacy targets is one of [our] main targets. And last summer, I always put a focus on those targets, but I don’t really speak to them a lot because I don’t do the assessment, I don’t have access to that. But ... we did reading every day and I think some people were like, ‘Why are we doing this? Kids don’t want to do that in summer.’ But the reality was that we had kids in the newcomer class reach new higher reading levels throughout the summer, which usually you see a regression in reading levels, so they were actually able to go into more regular stream classes ... this year than in past years. And the newcomer teacher was almost in tears at the beginning of the year. She was like, ‘How is this possible?’ ...she tirelessly work[s] on getting those [summer program] forms done for us, getting them here, which is exhausting because there’s a huge language barrier but at the same time, she knows it’s worth it because of those little pieces. And a kid feeling success in school, they’re going to feel success in so many other places in their lives. So just those little things that I wouldn’t have talked about otherwise unless you literally brought that up.” (Agency Staff)

“...the scenario of my son...when he wasn’t getting help and stuff, his grades were barely making it, and now he’s almost up to where he needs to be for his grade level... he was at a grade three level of reading, and now he’s up to a grade six.” (Parent)

- 73% of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 71) indicated they believe their children’s reading had improved during Year 3.

» Improved student mental health

“...The counselling helps him. The fact that he has somebody outside of the home that he can go to and talk to about anything, I think that really helps him... the after school programs, he absolutely loves those, and the mentoring program, he loves that, so...he seems happier, and he’s getting a bit better to deal with...Well, for the past four years – like, when he started in (this school), he was having basically what I call meltdowns... he’d get to the point where he’s kicking and screaming and all over the floor, and, like, you’re scared he’s gonna hurt himself, and he has hurt himself, bouncing around, and bouncing his head off the wall or something like that, and now... I haven’t seen a meltdown like that in probably about a year or a year and a half...” (Parent)

“It’s good [since I’ve been seeing the mental health therapist], I got the right medication [and I’m] working on my anxiety” (Student)

“[I] think it’s great because there [are] less mental breakdowns and crying in the hallway. ... The students ... felt very supported when it came to mental health issues and having the supports that they needed when they needed them... they self-identified without any prompting.” (School Staff)

» Decreased student truancy

“Yeah, no I would be devastated if we didn’t have her (mental health therapist)... our attendance would be so poor... So if we lose that (the AIFY services), we actually would probably see huge truancy issues, more families coming in and out and disappearing. So having AIFY is one of the anchors that keeps our kids here” (School Staff)

“[My daughter’s] only been suspended once this year instead of a few times.” (Parent)

» Improved student behavior

“And I swear, by the end of March, it was like I didn’t even think about him. He was just this well-behaved kid in program. I can’t even believe it. That shocked me so much...this is a kid where, I guess I should put in context, the classroom was being evacuated because he was throwing things. He was so violent, he was so aggressive... He’s doing so much better in the class and OST. In a matter of, I don’t know, we’ve all hit a piece with him, and I think he’s like, ‘Okay.’ It really shows what that wrap-around can do to just change the direction for a kid.” (Agency Staff)

70%

of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 67) indicated they think their children's behaviour in school has improved.

62%

of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 60) indicated they think their children's behaviour in school has improved.

» Positive relationships maintained between students and caring adults in the school

"... – well that's definitely a huge part of it (having social relationships), like I have a student who came from having very few people in his life that supported him to learning what it's like to have several people in his life supporting him... He's connected to all these other people through AIFY and it's just been such a relief for me, but also it's made such a huge impact for him" (School Staff)

"I feel happy that I have some people (AIFY staff) to talk to about it (problems and issues in student's life). I wouldn't feel comfortable talking about it [to my parents], sorry. I wouldn't feel comfortable talking about it to my other parent because they might tell my other parent." (Student)

"They (the teachers) support me...[when] I'm down and sad they help me. [They] make me really happy. Like laugh and stuff" (Student)

64%

of School Staff (n = 45) said they have stronger relationships with students.

80%

of Grade 4 to 12 students (n = 908) said there are positive role models in the schools they can go to for support/guidance/encouragement/advice.

87%

of Grade 4 to 12 students (n = 973) said there is an adult in the school they can go to for help with a problem.

» Student needs are met (e.g., basic needs, transportation, nutrition)

"For example..., going to get them glasses and stuff, that the parents were not able to. And she (AIFY worker) was just right on it! And those sorts of things. ...there has been some nice successes like, couple kids who couldn't literally see and now have glasses." (School Staff)

"... she's my client, so I set goals with them... One of them was to get a job and we went to Kingsway and handed out resumes. And she actually got an interview! ...so she's really excited about that..." (Agency Staff)

"... we don't only have clothes; we also have beddings...beddings very important, and we also have food supports where we're able to store canned food and things like that in the basement, and so they can pick and choose which ones they want, and they take it...That has been really helpful, and then we have, you know, the girls' stuff. Like, they get to take pads and all of that. It's been going really – like, they really didn't have this kind of support before us getting involved in [the school]." (Agency Staff)

• 86% of Parents/Caregivers (n = 61) said they are happy with the quality of support their children receive from the school

» Improved academic performance

"...now he's going to school all the time and his grades are getting better every day." (Parent)

"... it's just better because they help me learn and they do that with some other students too. ... Cause like it really gets us (the students) to expand our learning and they help lots us (school staff and support staff), like I got my marks up a lot this year" (Student)



89%

of Agency Staff said students are more engaged in the school with the help of AIFY supports.

75%

of Parents/Caregivers said their children were more engaged in school (based on parent/caregiver survey responses for 97 children in the AIFY schools).

74%

of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 67) indicated they believe their children's ability to learn has improved.

» Improved social skills

"I didn't really like talking to people. And at home, I would just go home on the bus. I wouldn't talk to anyone on the bus, I wouldn't say good morning to the person who checks off your name, or like goodbye. I would just walk on the bus, go straight to the back, and sit in my favorite spot. Not talk to anyone, and then when I got home, open the door... take my shoes off, put my back pack down, and go to my room. And then I wouldn't come out, only to go to the bathroom and eat. And after eating, I wouldn't do anything. I would just go back to my room. But now, I'm not a troubled kid. I actually like talking to people now, sometimes if they're rude to me... I don't [react angrily]. And ... it's helped me because now I can actually interact with people. And people that I interact with (support staff) help me." (Student)

» Improved peer relationships

"I also like [OST Coordinator] and everyone who does the after-school activities. When I was in grade 10, I didn't really know that many people, so I always did those [programs], and that's how I made all my friends" (Student)

"... you'll see kids who maybe when they come to our building or they're already here, can be isolated or have a hard time connecting with peers and then through the support of the All in for Youth workers, it doesn't take long before you walk into a lunch room and you see them with 3, 4, 5 kids around them and it's not forced, that's their friends." (School Administrator)

"So, we were just talking about that this morning with this one student, who's socially awkward. ... with the All in for Youth team and with all the teachers, we've made a difference with that child now that he can be in a classroom and be more than tolerated by his peers because he's learnt some strategies. So those strategies will go far for him..." (School Administrator)

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT

Students and families have access to out-of-school supports (e.g., after school programming, summer programming, community programs) that contribute to their overall wellbeing and help them to build skills to achieve success in life.

IN THE LIT:

Research shows that community-based after school programs have the potential to transform youth behaviors and attitudes (Abuya et al. 2019). They also give children and youth the opportunity to establish long-term consistent relationships with caring adults, which is linked to improved grades, having better family relationships, and reduced drug and alcohol use (Abuya et al. 2019). Additionally, after-school programming contributes to students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success. For example, youth who attend after-school programming tend to experience more self-confidence, higher self-esteem, more positive feelings about school, healthy social behaviors, as well as greater academic achievement. These programs also help reduce problem behaviors in youth, such as aggression and noncompliance (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

» Positive relationships maintained with caring adults out-of-school (e.g., adult mentors)

"The mentoring program, I have a few students that do use that, and it seems to be great for them. They have... a role model for them, someone that they can confide in and talk to that's not connected the school, that's not gonna judge them, that's not gonna penalize them for saying whatever, and I think ... it's great. Our grade fives I think go to the mentoring program, yeah, so I think it's great. It's something that the kids look forward to, and it's something that I think that they actually enjoy. It's not, like, 'Oh, I'm forced to do this.' It's made fun, and it's accessible to the school." (Community Partner)

- 217 elementary and junior high students in the AIFY schools benefited from a mentoring relationship
- In particular, there were 32 community based mentoring matches during Year 3

» Positive relationships with community partners maintained

"With the team, and them being able to lead some of the groups, and having the therapist here, I don't have to worry about things like doing risk assessments. Typically, I wouldn't have to worry about doing as much of that informal counselling because we have the therapist and we have (success coach), and he's quite amazing, so he covers a lot of what I would be doing if (success coach) wasn't here." (Community Partner)

"And it seems like there's good communication in terms of sharing information and being connected with what's happening." (Community Partner)

"The [AIFY] staff are super flexible. And I know that we...we need a lot of space. We need the gym a lot, which I know is hard for other people to work with. But [OST Coordinator] does an amazing job and she makes it work with our team." (Community Partner)

» Increased student volunteerism

"... now being here for 3 years, seeing those kids that are graduating out still wanted to be connected. So, I've had a couple past kids that are wanting to come back to the school, especially in those August weeks. They're like, 'Hey, I just wanted to come visit', which I really didn't see the first year and maybe it's just because my relationships have improved, obviously. But then my grade 9s right now, are already asking me how they can still be part of OST and part of the school community." (Agency Staff)

» More external community partners involved in the AIFY work

"... we also know we're having really amazing impacts with the kids that we're serving and great partnerships built around all of the sites now. We've just secured two more for next year in terms of corporate partnerships. So that would set up each All In For Youth demonstration site

with a corporate partner, which is really exciting. And really based around their needs. Some really innovative programs that have met the individual needs of that school like Spruce and the basketball program, for example. Which really meets that grade 7-9 interest-based program with relationships that speak to them. And then we have [an] Indigenous focused program with [at] JAM this year so working with a group of Indigenous students there and ... the Government of Alberta is in their second year with St. Alphonsus...Delton still has Intact, that's many years in the making. Yeah, we have a couple for next year which is really exciting, so I think the business community and the government is buying into this work by showing up as mentors which is pretty impactful way to show up." (Agency Leader)

» Student and family out-of-school needs are met

"I also really value the out of school care program too just because I know there's lots of parents that are working, and they're trying to support [their families]..." (Community Partner)

"Yeah, it's really hard, where will he go? ...what [to do] after the school? Oh my God - I thank God that there is the after school. I really thank God. It really helped me a lot." (Parent)

"... when they were younger, hav[ing] to pay for daycare, obviously, or something after school. So, for me, it would be a lot more expensive, and it's a single parent that's always - that's always hard." (Parent)

"...realistically I can't afford to get my kids into extra-curricular activities at this point cause right now we're fighting with the government. We don't even get our child tax cut right now. It's really tight living. So, our life would probably be a lot more... tighter living... if we didn't have some of the help. And the kids probably wouldn't get these experiences that they have gotten if it wasn't for [the school] and its programs. It would never happen because, I'll be honest, it's hard to live these days...Even with full child tax credit and a decent job, it's tough." (Parent)

SYSTEMS CHANGE

The collaborative efforts of the partnership contribute to changes in current operating systems (e.g., schools, government sectors, social service industries) that allow the complex needs of students and families in the school communities to be more effectively and efficiently met.

IN THE LIT:

Research shows that community-based after school programs have the potential to transform youth behaviors and attitudes (Abuya et al. 2019). They also give children and youth the opportunity to establish long-term consistent relationships with caring adults, which is linked to improved grades, having better family relationships, and reduced drug and alcohol use (Abuya et al. 2019). Additionally, after-school programming contributes to students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success. For example, youth who attend after-school programming tend to experience more self-confidence, higher self-esteem, more positive feelings about school, healthy social behaviors, as well as greater academic achievement. These programs also help reduce problem behaviors in youth, such as aggression and noncompliance (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

» AIFY partner relationships maintained

"Just working on this project has actually...increased my relationship, in a really good way, with a lot of the partners around the table. We can call [each other when] other things come that have nothing to do with All In For Youth... because we've built this relationship by being involved in this project." (Operations Partner)

"... it's all such great people. I have nothing but respect for [people] that are in the room" (Steering Partner)

» Effective/efficient information sharing practices between schools and agencies maintained



“... the systems change stuff is definitely the hardest...we’re looking...all the way up to... government, ministries... because we’re working with education and Child and Family Services and Mental Health, and...all of these big things that trickle down to our work... on the frontline level, but how do we change those things? And so that’s the really tough part... systems change is tough, but...we’ve made some progress with perseverance, right, just pushing through and... even with Edmonton Public... the info sharing agreement, that’s massive... that’s a massive, massive thing that happened as a result of perseverance and... hopefully, that will change other districts and education and... Child and Family Services and everything kind of working together a bit more, so even though sometimes it seems like we didn’t make a lot of progress on systems change, that’s a really big one....” (Operations Partner)

» **More schools want to implement AIFY in their school communities**

“Well, I know other school principals, especially with our inner city schools, are very well aware of it (AIFY). And wished it was in their building. But the reality is, the funding’s not there, so if all of a sudden [if] the funding was there, we could have three more schools easily because they hear about it” (Steering Partner)

» **Improved access to supports for students and families (e.g., barriers to access removed)**

“What we’ve done is we’ve provided mental health services locally in community. Nobody else is doing that to that extent. That’s pretty wild.” (Steering Partner)

“... being community-based... being where families go is really important and can’t be understated. They don’t have to find an agency or a hospital and go somewhere. It’s just a part of their day-to-day activities. They’re going to that school, their child’s going to that school, so it’s embedded in the community...for me I think that’s really an important piece...when I talk to people across the country, we’re unique in that respect too. Like it’s not a common way [of doing things]. People talk about school-based services, but we’ve done something [different] in All in for Youth [and] we’ve taken it to another level” (Steering Partner)

“That’s the biggest impact... we’re overcoming barriers... one [AIFY] school with a high immigrant population ...culturally [it] wasn’t within their culture to talk to a stranger about their family problems and that kinda thing... they had no experience with therapists or psychologists or anything like that, ... so there was no kind of natural connection for them to kind of.....connect ... the therapist and Roots and Wings worker actually just met the parents ... they just meet together in the front, and [the AIFY agency staff] meet people coming in...they were just handing out coffee, and people were accepting coffee, and in the beginning they just took the coffee and left, and then, after a while...they would say a few words, ...and they started to get to know somebody...and they started talking, and then they – and they literally started a parents group; you know, a coffee club... but it was really just getting to know each other...so it wasn’t like going to see the therapist...they weren’t getting a referral... they weren’t being sent somewhere... they were literally just getting to know somebody, and then the conversation went to like, ‘hi, what’s happening?’, you know, and ‘where are you from?’ ... and then it would get into – people would start talking about their lives and what was going on, and then it was, like, ‘could I talk to you? I’d like to talk to you about that’, you know, then it wasn’t going for therapy; it was talking to that person. It was way more natural and way more accessible.” (Operations Partner)

» **AIFY partner working differently (with each other and internally) and influencing how others are working together**

“... I can say from my experience working and sitting at so many other tables, that there are pieces of the All In For Youth model that I shared with others to help guide sort of some challenges that we were having in terms of our own structure, and the reason that I did that was because it’s a model that has been working. So I sat at a table (of another partnership), for example, where they had a steering committee and a working group, and then another group of what they referred to as facilitators, or folks who were delivering a program, and the communication was really poor...and so one of the things I did was talk about All In For Youth and our structure, and how we had steering and operations...it was really helpful ‘cause they changed what their structure looked like, and that was partly based on what I had shared about it work[ing] so well with All In For Youth.” (Operations Partner)

“We’ve expanded the partner’s knowledge of what each other does and we have identified gaps ... so there’s no duplication in the All in for Youth schools. The partnership of everybody just knowing who’s doing what has really moved it forward. The partnership has been essential. No one organization could have done this single-handedly” (Steering Partner)

“So, we’ve used the information sharing agreement for All In For Youth as a catalyst... we’re working on one with [another government ministry], we’re working on one with [another municipal organization], so we’re taking that construct and looking at where else in the organization would it be valuable to have this same kind of agreement. So, it hasn’t stopped at All In For Youth...yes, the conversation is continuing... and we have got agreements that are close to being signed now with other organizations.” (Operations partner)

A photograph of a man and a young boy looking at a book together. The man is on the right, leaning over the boy on the left. They are both looking down at the book. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

AIFY SUPPORTS:
ACCESS, USE,
CAPACITY *and*
IMPORTANCE

AIFY SUPPORTS: ACCESS, USE, CAPACITY *and* IMPORTANCE

Access

One of the biggest impacts of the AIFY work to date has been its ability help students and families more easily access supports and services. Since Year 1, we have heard how students' and families' ability to access supports has improved markedly because the AIFY supports are school-based. Supports and services are available in a place where students and families spend a lot of their time and it is a more natural setting to develop these family connections to supports.

"I think it's important because a lot of the families we are working with don't have resources or access to these services outside of their school. And so, I think that is the fundamental piece of this. They are at school and we are there meeting their needs from a very basic place. All the amazing things we are able to do within that space of time and access to those families is kind of you know, all of our impacts and that. But I think just from a basic place of having it on their site in a place where they are comfortable and familiar with is like kind of the foundation." (Agency Leader)

AIFY service providers and schools can also be very responsive to the needs of students and families, as they arise, because the supports are in the schools.

"... services are accessible immediately, whether that's today or tomorrow, but they're immediate, compared to trying to reach out to services...being right in the school; having the agency staff know the families and youth, as well. That access has been immediate" (Operations Partner)

In the past, students and families faced numerous barriers when accessing supports related to transportation, finances, lack of knowledge about supports available, lack of trust with service providers, past negative experience with service providers, and wait times for services. AIFY removes these barriers to access and responds to the needs of students and families in their school communities.

"So, all these, all these supports are found in one place at the school where it doesn't actually require for the parent to take time off. They are allowed to be in crisis, and we take care of those situations." (Agency Leader)

"I think that it's just that ease of access for families... services do exist, but it's the accessing them that's the barrier. [For] the families, not everybody's coming into it with the same knowledge [of] how would I find that service? How can I physically get to that service? I think that in order to support this community, we have to be right within the community; they have to be able to access us, and so what better way than saying, here we are right in the school, and this kid is coming every single day, and we've got a support here where they are already. We don't have to try to find the support elsewhere; we don't have to try to arrange how to get there elsewhere ... sometimes the parents are struggling, and they don't know that there's a service for that, and we're right within the school saying, 'Hey, here we are; we're this service. If you need something, we're here', and so I think that they're getting that service right away, or even knowing about it beforehand. So, if something comes up, they're saying, 'Hey, there's somebody that can help me with this, and I can walk in today when I pick my kid up. I can walk in and look for

IN THE LIT:

Research shows that vulnerable families accessing school-based supports reduces barriers to learning, promotes academic achievement, and increases positive development (Dearing, 2016) School-based services that are conveniently located for families reduces the obstacles that newcomers (i.e. language barriers) or people living in poverty (i.e. transportation issues) may face when accessing external services (Dearing, 2016).

support in this', and then immediately there's action. It's not like, 'Hey, I need this', and ...'Okay, well let's book a meeting three weeks from now.'...well if you're in crisis, that's actually not super ... helpful, right?' (Agency Staff)

"... the accessibility of [the supports] being in a school is essential."
(School Administrator)

AIFY also improves access by reaching out to students and families who are less likely to reach out for supports themselves. There are numerous reasons why some students and families are resistant to receiving supports. The advantage to school based supports is that agency staff, with the help of teachers and school administrators, can connect with students and families and build trusting relationships needed to deliver necessary supports to students and families. Consistently, across the three years of AIFY, we heard how relationships built between schools and families or service providers and families are a key contributor to an AIFY school's ability to support their students and families. This model of support delivery has enabled AIFY to break barriers and provide better supports to students and families with complex needs.

"And that's the reason we're here [in the school]...to be more accessible to these families who would not necessarily be able to access that support. Whether it be funding or transportation or childcare, all those things are barriers for mental health and we're trying to alleviate some of that."
(Agency Staff)

"Unfathomable things have happened to some of these families and...they're so resilient in so many ways. But if we weren't here, would they get service? I don't think so, maybe not." (Agency Staff)

"... having all those supports concentrated in one place, it is lifesaving work."
(Agency Leader)

On the family survey, 78% of parents/caregivers (n = 55) indicated they know who they can go to for help in the school. 70% (n = 46) also said they know how to access resources and supports from the school when needed. This speaks to the level of awareness families have about the ways their schools can help them.

In focus groups, School Staff and Administrators also spoke about how their ability to access supports for their students and families has consistently improved thanks to AIFY. In the past, these stakeholders would spend a great deal of time sleuthing out ways to support their students and families with needs that were not education based. Now, with skilled professionals working directly with school staff and also located in the school building, school staff and administrators expressed the impact of this improved access.

"...you have a whole group of people who can help you navigate through different ways of getting families connected and helping kids out. So it's a lot more efficient to have a team like this than to muddle through and figure things out on your own. To have professionals who know what they are doing." (School Staff)

"... in your room you can still focus on the academics because I am not trying to figure out the housing and food and other pieces with you. So I know that when you are with me I can focus on that. So that ... extra time outside of school that you would spend with that kid, them having that support elsewhere so we can just focus more on the academics has helped a lot."
(School Staff)

83% of school staff surveyed also reported they can easily access AIFY supports for their students and families when needed.

IN THE LIT:

It is important to foster trust in service provider and client interactions in order to better assist clients and produce better client outcomes (Ogundipe et al. 2019). Having trusting relationships with support workers contributes to better mental health care for clients and meaningful communication between clients and service providers. Respect, compassion, and warmth are words used by clients when describing positive relationships they develop with support workers (Ogundipe et al. 2019)

IN THE LIT:

Vulnerable school communities present a multitude of challenges to school administrators, teachers, and other school staff (West-Olatunji et al., 2011). Without wraparound supports in schools, teachers and other school staff are on the front lines trying to meet the holistic needs of students, without adequate training and insufficient resources. Subsequently, this greater responsibility often leads to teacher burnout and more school-based conflict (West-Olatunji et al., 2011).

With the AIFY supports, School Administrators and School Staff feel they can focus on their role as educators, which best served the students and families in their schools. .

“you can do your job! You can focus on what you are actually hired to do! Which is teach.” (School Staff)

“For example... our mental health therapist has dealt with some significant mental health issues this year and ones that I might understand at a very basic level, but am in absolutely no position to provide ongoing counselling, monitoring, treatment...intervention. I don't have that background and again, not sure that it would be the best use of my time given my job is to support students and staff in this building ...and I think that that is the point of AIFY, right. That information or that support or those practices don't have to rest in the hands of educators who don't have the knowledge or the experience or the training to do the job that our students and families deserve.”

(School Administrator)

Use and Capacity

The following visual provides a snapshot of the AIFY service use across the 5 AIFY schools for Year 3.



This snapshot of AIFY services represents the overall picture of use for universal supports/services and more targeted supports/services (e.g., short-term engagement work vs. formal work).

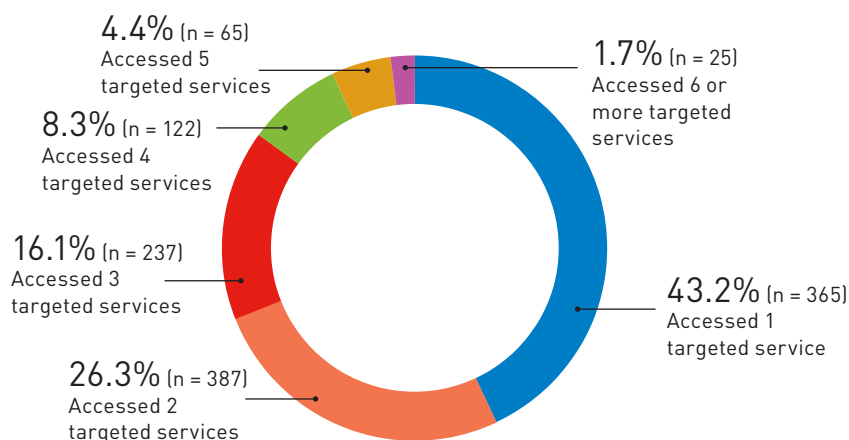
Through the evaluation, and with the help of AIFY partners, we can also describe what service use looks like for students and families who are accessing more targeted AIFY support across the AIFY schools (e.g., not just accessing nutrition support, which is a more universal support across the schools).

» 1,471 students and their families accessed 1 or more targeted AIFY support for Year 3

This is 66% of the total number of students and their families enrolled in the 5 AIFY schools. A 2% increase from Year 2, with 122 more students now accessing 1 or more targeted support in Year 3.

- The proportion of students accessing more targeted supports can differ across AIFY schools.
 - Delton = 56% of enrolled students (n = 257)
 - JAM = 95% of enrolled students (n = 333)
 - St. Alphonsus = 63% of enrolled students (n = 281)
 - Spruce Avenue = 99% of enrolled students (n = 220)
 - Eastglen = 50% of enrolled students (n = 380)
- 51% (n = 749) of these students were Male and 49% (n = 722) were Female
- 30% were ELL students (n = 445)
- 11% were refugee students (n = 165)
- 24% were Self-identified First Nations, Métis, or Inuit students (n = 346)
- 13% were students with Special Needs (n = 192)
- 1,050 of the students in the cohort also accessed universal nutrition supports, in addition to targeted AIFY supports

The cohort of students accessing targeted supports also tend to access multiple supports. Only 43% (n = 365) of these students and their families accessed 1 AIFY support. Whereas, 57% (n = 836) accessed 2 or more AIFY supports across the school year.



This demonstrates how multiple supports can wraparound students and their families. It also demonstrates the complexity of need for these students and families.

IN THE LIT:

A few major benefits of having numerous school-based, wraparound supports is that it increases access of social supports for families in need (Eber et al. 2002). Additionally, schools with wraparound supports are better prepared and equipped to support the complex needs of children and their families and are better able to intervene early (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018). When wraparound supports are available in schools, children show better overall functioning, improved mental health, and less behavioral disorders (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018).

Students and families may need to access multiple supports in order to have their complex needs met and to have better outcomes.

The magnitude of the Year 3 AIFY support use is demonstrated, but the capacity required for these supports also needs to be considered. In Year 2, the workload or capacity of the different AIFY agency staff/supports was presented to illustrate the demand for AIFY supports in the AIFY school communities, that are made of students and families with complex needs that often require intensive and multiple supports (see page 4-5 of this report for details about the complexity of need in the AIFY school communities). This presentation of agency staff workload also helped also helped demonstrate whether agency staff were working below, at, or above their expected capacity. The following table presents data for Year 3 agency staff workloads (with the Year 2 workloads included for comparison).

	EXPECTED CASELOAD		ACTUAL CASELOAD (YEAR 2)	ACTUAL CASELOAD (YEAR 3)
Mental Health Therapists	20 – 25 Active Case Files representing Students and Families Served as Formal Clients (Full-Time Staff)	Delton =	32	44
		JAM =	22	37
		St. Alphonsus =	25	17*
		Spruce Avenue =	21	55
		Eastglen =	38	64
Mentoring Facilitators	80 – 100 Children Served (Full-Time Staff) 40 – 50 Children Served (Part-Time Staff)	Delton =	89	56 ^{PT}
		JAM =	63	51 ^{PT}
		St. Alphonsus =	46 ^{PT}	59 ^{PT}
		Spruce Avenue =	40 ^{PT}	51 ^{PT}
		Eastglen =	31	38
Success Coaches	8 -10 Students Served as Formal Clients (Full-Time Staff)	Delton =	11	16
		JAM =	5**	7
		St. Alphonsus =	8	10
		Spruce Avenue =	10	15
		Eastglen =	18***	8
Roots and Wings Workers	10 – 13 Families Served as Formal Clients (Full-Time Staff)	Delton =	13	22
		JAM =	14	26
		St. Alphonsus =	17	11**
		Spruce Avenue =	14	26
		Eastglen =	13	13

*The St. Alphonsus Mental Health Therapist in Y3 was only part-time

^{PT} Almost all Mentoring facilitators were part-time for Y3, a cut back from the previous year

**JAM lost their success coach partway through Y2; St. Alphonsus transitioned to a new Roots and Wings worker partway through the year

***Eastglen had 2 success coaches in Y2 and transitioned to 1 success coach for Y3

Cells highlighted in gold indicate when agency staff are working above expected capacity in the given year. For Year 3, almost all of the agency staff were working above expected capacity whereas in Year 2 only a handful of staff were working above capacity. This speaks to the needs in the school communities and the demand for supports. Also, capacity data does not reflect additional time agency staff spend in meetings, collaborating to deliver services, and connecting with students/families informally.

Some of the AIFY supports, like OST, do not have expected caseloads like other AIFY supports, but OST also has a limited capacity of students they can serve, based on the number of OST staff or volunteers they can have in each AIFY school. For Year 3, OST support was also accessed by students and families to its maximum capacity and in some schools, the requests for OST enrollment (i.e. during registration periods) were always greater than the number of students they could enroll. For example, OST agency staff at Delton, JAM, and St. Alphonsus were able to track their requests for OST compared to their enrollment capacity.

- Delton could only enroll 53% - 64% of its OST enrollment requests for fall, winter, and spring programs
- JAM was able to fulfill 95% - 100% of its OST enrollment requests for winter and spring programs
- St. Alphonsus was only able to fulfill 78% - 85% of its OST enrollment requests for winter and spring programs

Only one school was close to meeting the demand for OST support and in another school, the demand for support was almost 50% greater than the capacity of the OST support. This specific example also demonstrates the high level of need for AIFY supports in Year 3.

This increased or unmet demand for supports was also discussed in focus groups with agency staff working in the AIFY schools.

“Because of capacity, so it might be that 100 spots were requested, but we can only fill 50 of them, and so that’s been a real challenge ... I definitely feel that we aren’t meeting the need ...or I’ll have kids that said, ‘I didn’t even know OST was happening. Like, I would love to join a club’, and I say, ‘Well, we’re full’, so we can’t even extend that knowledge to the rest of the school and the families, to be able to offer [it] to them. We’re just stretched too thin...”

[Agency Staff]

“... we have amped up in terms of really working with our students and our families. I’ve noticed greater need, more students...during the Christmas time that was really where a lot of parents really found that they need us more... a lot of kids, a lot of trauma..... not only client based but informal ..., but she can only take so many clients... and those informal clients almost take as much time, because there is so much need” [Agency Staff]

“... the biggest challenges is that there’s not enough time in the day, there’s not enough me. I feel like there’s not enough me... And I have to set boundaries around myself where I don’t give too much, cause I also have a family at home and young kids to take care of, and a partner. So that... would probably be the biggest sort of challenge...not enough time. Too many... it’s too high of a population for one of me.” [Agency Staff]

“So, it’s becoming that there’s more kids less service, right, or more demand and...[the] saturation point has been reached.” [School Administrator]

Agency staff also completed a survey (n = 18 completed surveys) and responded about their workload for Year 3. While agency staff reported some challenges or struggles with their work, it is also important to note that agency staff have a high morale, feel their work is making a difference, and there was low staff turnover in Year 3 (which has decreased since Year 1).

39%

(n = 7) of agency staff reported they often struggle to balance their work responsibilities and the needs of students and families they support.

44%

(n = 8) reported they can feel worn out at work because of the demands of their job and the complex nature of the children and families in the schools.

39%

(n = 7) reported the support needs of students and families in the schools exceeds their current ability/capacity (e.g., demand is greater than their current capacity).

28%

(n = 5) said their current workload/caseload was hard to manage.

Importance of Supports:

In student and family interviews across the years, we have heard how valued the AIFY supports are and the importance of these supports for the wellbeing of families. From a Year 3 parent interview, the following quote speaks to the importance of supports for families.

“I couldn’t see my child being as well adjusted as they’re starting to become because, without those supports, it would just be me trying to muddle my way through something I’ve never had to deal with, personally.” (Parent)

On the 2019 family survey,

77%

of parents/caregivers (n = 55) said the supports/services they receive from the school are useful.

86%

of parents/caregivers (n = 61) said the supports/services their children receive are useful.

63%

of parents/caregivers (n = 44) said that without the AIFY supports offered by the school, they and their families would not be doing as well.

The supports from the school are also helping families meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. From the family survey,

64%

of parents/caregivers (n = 42) said the supports available at the school helped meet their family’s basic needs for food.

48%

of parents/caregivers (n = 31) said the supports available at the school helped meet their family’s basic needs for clothing.

46%

of parents/caregivers (n = 30) said the supports available at the school helped meet their family’s basic needs for shelter.

Families also ranked the top three AIFY supports they felt were most important for their children and for themselves. For Year 2 and Year 3, the three most important supports identified by parents and caregivers (n = 71) on the family survey were OST support, nutrition support, and Counselling support.

	Y2 RANK	CHILDREN'S RANK Y3	PARENTS'/ CAREGIVERS' RANK Y3
After-School Program	1	1	2
Snack and Lunch Program	2	2	1
Counselling (e.g., child, Family, Adult)	3	3	3

School staff also value the AIFY supports in their school communities. It can be challenging to support the complex needs of the students and families in the AIFY school communities. School staff from the AIFY schools who completed a survey for the evaluation (n = 70 school staff across the 5 schools; does not include all school staff working in the AIFY schools) reported the following.

59%

of school staff (n = 41) struggle to balance their teaching responsibilities while trying to meet the non-educational needs of their students and families.

56%

of school staff (n = 39) had difficulty focusing on their teaching because of the complex needs of students in their school.

86%

of school staff (n = 60) feel worn out at work by the demands of their job and the complex nature of students and their families.

However, by having the AIFY supports and agency staff working in the schools, schools staff also reported they have more support to,

- understand the complexities of students and families (87% agreement; n = 61)
- manage students' disruptive behavior (80% agreement; n = 56)
- help families with their complex needs (90% agreement; n = 63)
- help students with their learning (79% agreement; n = 55)

84% of school staff (n = 59) also felt students were more engaged and 76% (n = 53) felt families were more involved in school with the help of the AIFY supports/agency staff.

Also,

94%

(n = 65) said the AIFY supports have helped make the school feel like a safe, more positive space for everyone

94%

(n = 66) said the AIFY supports and staff have had a positive impact on the wellbeing of students and their families.

In interviews, parents and caregivers also expressed what they thought their life would look like if the school supports were taken away or they no longer had access to them in the future. Without access to these supports, families said,

- Their children would fall through the cracks
- Their family would give up and stop trying

"...I think [life] would fall apart. Like, my son wouldn't even have one-on-one, and he'd be lost, and I'd be trying to do it at home, and I probably wouldn't be going to work as much and stuff... I don't think he'd go very far in... school. Like, I think he'd... just give up... without the supports and stuff... [I would think] I'm just gonna give up. [It] is easier to give up than try." (Parent)

IN THE LIT:

When various wraparound supports are available at schools, teachers reported that they were more patient with students because of the information they received from service agencies supporting those children (Sibley et al., 2017). As well, when students and families accessed holistic supports at school, this contributed to decreased teacher stress, allowed teachers to feel supported in the school, increased the amount of time they spent focusing on academics, and resulted in more positive interactions with students (Sibley et al., 2017).

IN THE LIT:

By not receiving the proper holistic supports for their complex needs, vulnerable students can end up having more adverse behaviors (e.g., defiance, frustration, and less hope at the end of school day; Brunzell et al. 2015). By not receiving proper support for a long period of time, students can be more likely to develop reactive attachment disorder, disinhibited social engagement disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In addition, students experience lower academic achievement, are more likely to fail a grade, and are more likely to be suspended and/or expelled (Brunzell et al. 2015). Lastly, if social supports were no longer available in schools, parents would receive less social support and information, which could contribute to increased responsibilities and stress (West-Olatunji et al. 2011).

- Families would become isolated
- More serious interventions needed for children in the future
“I would not be surprised if I [would] have had to commit my child for the damage being done.” (Parent)
- Families would become food insecure
- Families not be able to support the social-emotional development of their children
“I guess they wouldn’t have someone they could talk to... my oldest daughter struggled a lot with friends and last year, she was alone a lot because she couldn’t connect with the other kids and she didn’t have very many friends and she was ... trying to have a bunch of friends and [the Mental Health Therapist] told her, ‘It’s better to have 1 friend than just a bunch of friends.’ So, I think... it opened her eyes to make one really close best friend versus a group of friends. So... she [could] still be struggling socially that way, if someone wasn’t there to sit her down [talk to her]... she doesn’t always listen to what I say. So, I figure if another adult says it, then they listen, right.” (Parent)
- Families would not feel a sense of community or belonging among other families in the school
- Families would experience financial hardships
“I would say it’d probably be a bit more difficult, especially getting the extra bread. That’s really helped us out as a family. And then sometimes [the Roots and Wings worker] gets fresh vegetables and things like that. And that really helps, you know, like carry us through to pay day and stuff. And ... realistically I can’t afford to get my kids into extra-curricular activities at this point cause right now we’re fighting with the government. We don’t even get our child tax cut right now. It’s really tight living. So, our life would probably be a lot more... like tighter living, you know, if we didn’t have some of the help. And the kids probably wouldn’t get these experiences that they have gotten if it wasn’t for [the school] and its programs. It would never happen because, I’ll be honest, it’s hard to live these days, you know? Even with full child tax credit and a decent job, it’s tough.” (Parent)

Families also shared how much they appreciate and value the supports they are able to access in the schools and what that means for their lives and the lives of their children.

“Because it will help society in the long run because if you have well adjusted children who learn to be accountable for their choices, then they’re doing good... ‘cause if they learn how to cope with stress and anger and all of the negativity that can happen, then when they become adults, they’ll be more well adjusted, which means they’ll be better productive members of society, which benefits the world as a whole.” (Parent)

“I would argue the scenario of my son. Like, when he wasn’t getting help and stuff, his grades were barely making it, and now he’s almost up to where he needs to be for his grade level.” (Parent)

“I thank God that there is the after school [program]. I really thank God. It really helped me a lot.” (Parent)

“So I don’t have the resources even financial or even [as an immigrant]... or anything so I could not access any programs or activities for her if it wasn’t for this program.” (Parent)

85% of parents/caregivers (n = 56) said that if their child had to change school, it was very important that the new school have the same supports and services as the AIFY school.

IN THE LIT:

Based on Federal records of program spending that provides financial support or services to people with low income and other vulnerable groups (e.g., Guaranteed Income Supplement, Disability Benefits, other programs), Canada spent just over \$39 billion dollars in 2017/2018. This spending has steadily increased since 2013/2014 (\$32 billion). This type of support and the costs will continue to increase if appropriate wraparound supports and interventions are adopted and implemented to better support our children and families who are often part of these vulnerable groups of people in Canada (Smith & Ammar, 2017).



LOOKING
FORWARD

LOOKING FORWARD

Recommendations from Stakeholders in Year 3:

From interviews and focus groups, students, parents/caregivers, school staff, school administrators, agency staff, and agency leaders recommended for how the AIFY work can continue to improve in the schools. The following is a summary of the recommendations provided by these stakeholders and represents the most common recommendations discussed across AIFY stakeholders.

AIFY Support Capacity

- Schools are grateful for the supports they have, but more AIFY staff are needed to meet the high needs of each school. [Recommendation made by all schools]

“The only thing I would say is we need two success coaches... Or even two therapists!” (School Staff)

“The only solution I can see is adding more people.” (School Administrator)

“A second [Mental Health therapist is needed]... they are swamped. That would be the biggest thing. Like another one of each of those people. Especially in a building this size I think would be perfect. Especially now that like our students are growing.” (School Staff)

- Staff need to be full-time and consistent
- Most supports have reached their capacity and many students/families are still in need

“Maybe take people more often. Like, I know [Mental Health Therapist] is busy, but she barely takes me. I ask her and then she doesn’t take me for a month and then finally takes me.” (Student)

- Would be helpful if there was a way to calculate or tailor (e.g., a formula) how many agency staff are needed in a school and the types of supports needed in an AIFY school (e.g., based on size of school population, needs, other relevant data)

“It would be helpful to understand if there was ... a formula of staff to school attendance ratios. [For] the average three hundred [student] school, what [are] the average services they should have? And if we start getting into the four hundred students, five hundred students and six hundred students what does that look like? Because I think our schools are increasing in capacity, we decreased [our services] from what we originally started with. And so they are feeling the stress of that right now. What is the formula for growth, right?” (Agency Leader)

Collaboration among Stakeholders

- Agency staff would like to see communication improved so information flows down from higher levels of the initiative
- Agency staff also said better communication was needed around the expectations schools and agencies have for them
 - There is still some confusion around job descriptions, boundaries of agency staff roles

- School staff suggested there be more follow-up with agency staff to discuss students and the supports they receive.
 - Some school staff would also like to be included more in the ways agency staff support students; school staff could help complement the work that is being done to support students

“It’s really valuable [collaborating and communicating with agency staff] because... it’s not just the students in my class, but also a lot of things they discuss may not be things that I’ve heard... It would be nice to know what strategies they were working on [with the agency staff]. Something like that spreadsheet or adding on a spreadsheet to it, just like another page about what they’re working on [and sharing it with the teacher]” (School Staff)

“It’s a little different this year, but last year I had two girls that...were there constantly [with the agency staff] and she was their number 1 person... it was great. I wanted them to have that connection, but I had no idea... she kept talking about the goals they were working on and they were things that I found out afterwards [which] I could have very easily been supporting in the classroom too ...but there was no communication back and forth [with the agency staff]” (School Staff)

- Agency leaders also recommended agency staff have shared spaces in the school to see how each other works because this can support team cohesion and agency staff relationships

“...at [some AIFY schools] we have a little bit more of people working more together in the same room. And I think that helps them see what the other side is doing and what roles look like and the reality of other people’s roles. And we talked about ... maybe there needs to be from a frontline place... there needs to be a monthly I don’t know, like lunch... meeting, where you talk about either trends or events that are coming up in the All In For Youth world because I think that because sometimes we see that when we have that separation it becomes just about this is my work load, this is your work load and everybody just goes and does. Instead of the collaboration....”

(Agency Leaders)

- School Administrators would like to see better communication with Child Family Services
 - Communication with this external community partner can be challenging at times, specific to information sharing that could help support students and families in the AIFY schools (e.g., information sharing might be one-way, school to CFS, but schools could benefit from two-way information sharing to ensure the students and families involved with CFS get the best support possible and can develop support plans that are as informed as possible
 - One school administrator wondered if it would be possible to have a CFS liaison that would specifically work with the AIFY schools
 - ~ This would be ideal as there would be some consistency and make connecting and working with CFS more efficient for the schools
- Some agency staff said they would like to have access to the student resiliency data that schools receive, to support service delivery

AIFY Programming

- Some school staff suggested improvements be made to specific AIFY supports/ programs
 - E4c: Some school staff had some concerns about the portion sizes of snacks provided for their students. School staff may believe their students need more food (e.g., a full breakfast) and can feel like snack portions are insufficient as a result, even when portions of snacks are in line with recognized guidelines (e.g., Health Canada nutrition guidelines, Alberta Health nutrition guidelines). More connections/collaboration may need to occur between nutrition support partners and school staff to hear about school staffs' nutrition concerns for students and for school staff to gain more information about the nutrition support model in their school (e.g., How it was developed, what determines portion sizes of snack).

“Part of the AIFY is a snack program and mandated by the program...is like 2 portions... today we had celery and they would get two bits of celery for their snack and a dip. And that’s what they deemed an appropriate amount, but for our school, the majority of my class, this is their breakfast [and it is not enough]” (School Staff)

- OST: Have fewer clubs, but more select clubs that cater to the interests of students

“Two of my kids were picked to be in those clubs too and they did not want to go. They’d flat out refuse... maybe [they could have] more - like fewer, higher impact clubs that last for longer” (School Staff)

- School staff felt Agency Staff training is valuable, but it’s not convenient for these training sessions to take place during school hours
- Almost all of the school staff across the AIFY schools said more physical space is needed for AIFY supports in the schools
- School Administrators, Agency Leaders, Operations, and Steering partners expressed the desire to see AIFY get sustainable funding for the current AIFY work and future AIFY work (e.g., scaling out to other schools)

“...the funding for the work to make sure it can happen as best as it can.”

(Agency Leaders)

AIFY Processes and Structures

- Some School Administrators felt it was important to continue reflecting on how meetings are working (e.g., circle of supports, huddle meetings) and continue to make changes as necessary to ensure they remain as useful/effective as possible
 - Some agency leaders also felt more meetings might be needed for leadership groups, to stay connected and informed about the work (e.g., any challenges that come up)
 - Some operations partners also discussed how stakeholders should be periodically reflecting on the AIFY work throughout the year and use these reflections to inform their practice on an ongoing basis; regular reflection was seen as important and pro-active, instead of waiting for evaluation results to be shared and then reflected on; some partners already do this and it is a good practice to maintain and build up.
- AIFY leaders said a coordinated AIFY communication strategy is needed to ensure all AIFY stakeholders/levels are as informed as possible about the work going on and expectations/next steps of the work

- Example: Being able to see meeting minutes from the different AIFY meetings (e.g., supervisors seeing co-management meeting notes, sharing of operations meeting notes)
- Example: Create a shared, online platform (e.g., with Google Drive) where AIFY information/resources are all in one place for stakeholders doing the AIFY work to access (e.g., key messages, AIFY binder resources)

“if there is some kind of centralized agreed upon, managers down, just so that there was no miscommunications, because it happens often” (Agency Leader)

“[after] co-management meetings... [there are] times where there will be a Circle of Support meeting right after and there’s not been information shared. And I know that as a fact! ...Are we not going to bring that up because we just talked about it minutes ago [in the co-management meeting]?” (Agency Leader)

“...we’ve asked for that like if they could just do a quick summery in the Circle of Support. Could you guys do a quick summery of what you guys talked about...Important information...” (Agency Leader)

- Some agency leaders recommended an AIFY manual be developed where AIFY practices/processes can be outlined and shared
 - Share steps taken to build relationships, handling staff transitions, detail the structure of the AIFY model, how the collaborative works together effectively
- Some agency leaders also feel a shared measurement and reporting processes needs to be developed for the AIFY work
 - E.g., Data would be AIFY data or “AIFY numbers” and not broken down by the specific partners organizations.

“Who’s numbers are these when really, it’s All In For Youth numbers. And like we’ve talked about this at our ... meeting where we are talking about how we could get that and it’s almost like All In For Youth needs its own data base. Because there is lots of times like for example, at the end of the year here. We have these lists of all these kids, and we have all of our staff spending all of this time going around and being like oh, I worked with this kid and oh, me too! When really that should be happening throughout. And it is, but it is not being recorded anywhere. It’s just at the end of the year we mash it all together. And that is not a great way to collect data.” (Agency Leader)

- Without these kinds of processes in place it can be stressful to address requests for data/reporting; stakeholders try to accurately and comprehensively summarize the AIFY work being done in schools, but can be difficult without ways to address overlap because of the collaborative effort to support students and families
- Would also help to give more notice of forthcoming data/reporting requests and more time to provide the information requested

“Well, and data is always going to be messy in the social services field like it’s trying to represent social situations with numbers for the most part. Like its always going to be a little bit messy but I think we are starting to figure it out more and more. But the ... strong[er] we are on the leadership team than we can give frontline clear expectations.” (Agency Leader)

- Some Agency Staff felt there could be better branding of AIFY in the schools (Agency Staff)
 - More visible branding/promotion of AIFY services/supports

- Could have t-shirts for staff to wear at open houses, business cards, posters to display within schools
- Some Steering partners also felt that branding could be improved so that people know AIFY is an initiative run by a collaborative partnerships; some people still assume AIFY is a United Way initiative
- Some agency staff also recommended a set of 'go-to' resources for teachers and other school staff be compiled
- Some Steering and operations partners feel there needs to be more diversity at the AIFY tables (e.g., operations, steering) or more variety in the types of organizations who are AIFY partners (e.g., include more partners from organizations that also support the AIFY schools)

"One of my big issues with it is the lack of diversity at that table." (Steering partner)

"...we've got a good solid group, [but] have we missed out? Like, should there be someone there representing indigenous children?" (Steering Partner)

"...making sure to continue to have diversity in service providers who are at the table, and making sure to make those connections, and to make sure that the population that we are involved in looks a lot more like the table that's making the decisions." (Operations Partner)

"... if there's still areas of struggle within the programming, are there other partners, that should be at the table, that could fill those gaps? You know, is it health? Is it – do we need a representative from Alberta Health or Human Services or Justice?" (Steering Partner)

Next steps for AIFY:

In Year 3, interviews with operations and steering partners provided insights on the work of AIFY and its impacts for students and families, we asked these partners what they believe the next steps are for the AIFY work. There was not a consensus on next steps, but the following are the most common next steps that were identified by these partners.

- Develop a plan for what happens to AIFY after the pilot is complete
 - A plan to scale AIFY out to more schools could be developed; would need to then consider the current capacities/resources of partners and whether this type of expansion is possible
 - With limited resources and the current political climate an exit plan may need to be developed or tough decisions may have to be made by partner organizations to continue supporting the AIFY, in spite of these limitations
 - Partners believed this plan for the future should be developed by the steering committee; but could be facilitated by an external person/group so honest opinions/feedback can be provided

"...and we keep getting the questions about scaling – do we scale up? Do we scale out? How do we do that? – and so it seems like we're at this point where...what does it look like after five years? Is there an exit plan? Is there a scaling? Is there what? ... – because I think we've had this stability this year to be able to kind of like start to think about it that's thinking about our knowledge mobilization and all those other pieces, it's just become more pressing to start to decide what it means after year five, right?..."

(Operations Partner)

“... I think we’re going to have to continue to work together to be creative in how we do things...I think that creativity and innovation is going to have to really come into play in the future. And looking at being realistic about should we be looking at growing, should we be looking at maintaining and adjusting.” [Steering Partner]

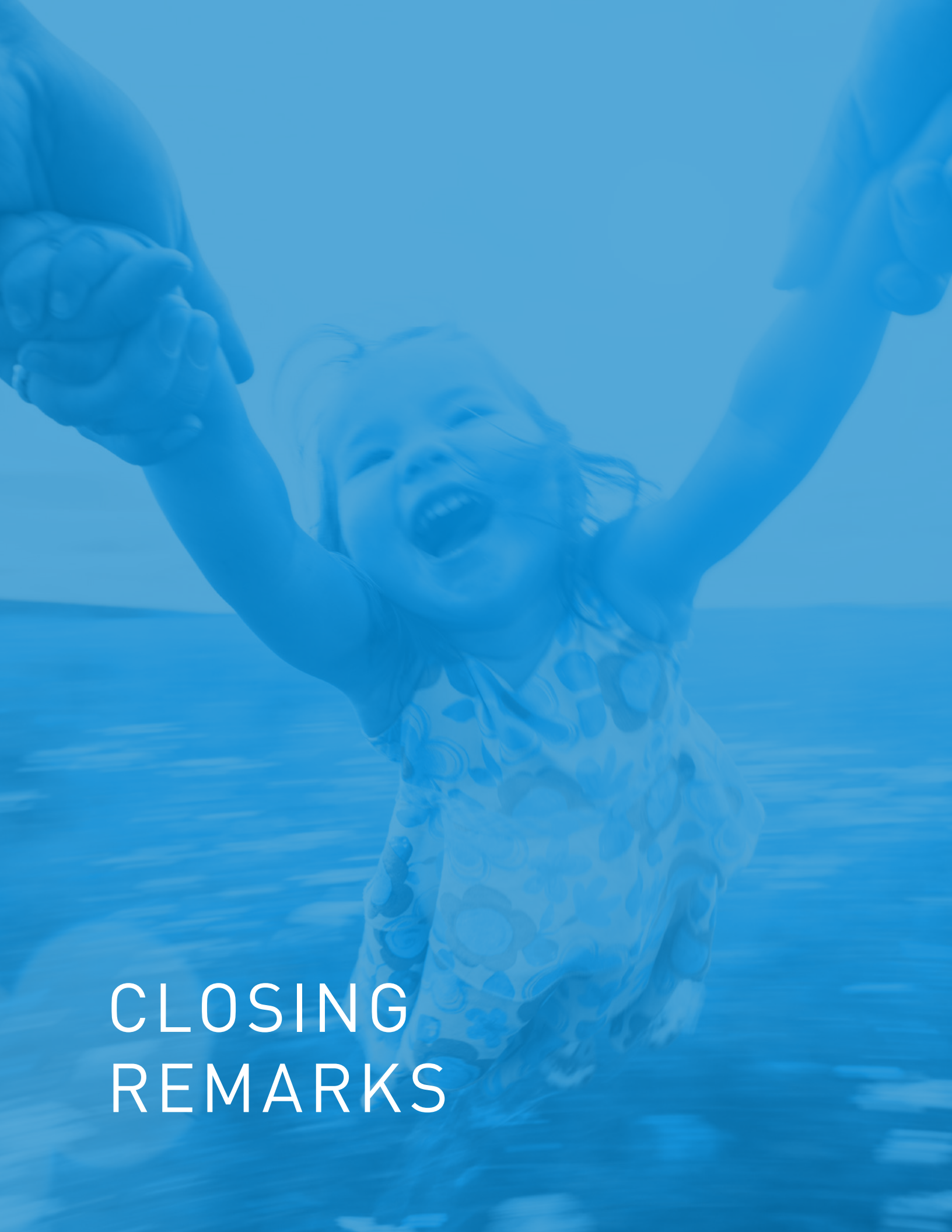
“... In terms of organizational change, one of the conversations that we have that has really stuck with me has been ... if through the work that we’re doing, and the evaluation findings we’re getting and the success we’re having on the lives of the children – the students, the families, the school community – and we know that this is working, then at what point are we willing to say this is where we want to invest our resources? And we’re gonna stop doing this other work because, while it is having an impact, it’s not as effective as this. We have limited dollars, and so we need to really start to think about it, and just by naming that – I don’t know where they’ve landed on that, to be completely honest, nor do I know where I would ... want to see us land on that, but the fact that we’re starting to take that risk of saying we can’t be all things to everyone, need to priorities, we need to figure this out because, sadly, funding is limited and will continue to be limited, so what piece of – how can we change your practice?” (Operations Partner)

- Share the AIFY work more widely
 - Share the model of support, AIFY processes, AIFY practices, evaluation findings, learnings etc. more widely with different audiences
 - Need to increase awareness of the AIFY work taking place
 - This sharing could end up influencing other non-AIFY schools on a wider scale

“Well, I think the biggest action that I would like to see is getting this disseminated; getting the findings disseminated to a wider audience in way that is digestible or accessible, you know, to really let people know what’s going on, so that there would be kind of more of an interest or even more of an appetite, you know, for seeing this. I know that the schools that don’t have these supports are really interested in what’s happening because they need the supports, right, but we had to start with a limited number of schools, but what we’d really like to see is that this be the model for community based mental health.” (Operations Partner)

“I’m hoping...That people will see a different way of working and maybe they won’t have all the supports there, but they adjust it and maybe they work with the agency more closely down the street...” [Steering Partner]

“... how can we make sure that ... it’s valued enough in community, and in politics, that we can get that sustainable funding where it’s viewed as a right for kids and families to have access to the services that they need, to have their needs met so that they can be successful in school.” (Operations Partner)



CLOSING REMARKS

CLOSING REMARKS

In Year 3 of the AIFY initiative, we continue to see how the AIFY school communities are benefitting from the AIFY supports and how stakeholder collaboration and relationships make this happen. There has been a lot of growth in the initiative and in stakeholders since Year 1. The initiative has continued to adapt and evolve based on learnings throughout the years. Stakeholders working in the schools to support student and families have also been on a journey, from not being clear on each other's roles, to now seeing one another as an integral and integrated part of each school community.

87%

of School Staff (n = 61) and 89% of Agency Staff (n = 16) said the AIFY supports and staff have been integrated well

81%

of School Staff (n = 56) and 100% of Agency Staff (n = 18) said the supports are operating successfully

"...the first year and the second year were hard ... year 3 has been pretty seamless... we've got a lot more trust. We've got a lot more access to things..."
(Agency Staff)

"I really feel this project, of all the one's I've been involved in my career has absolutely just been nailing it. It's becoming so seamless." (School Administrator)

For the last three years, the AIFY partners and stakeholders have been working hard to ensure some of Edmonton's most complex and vulnerable students and families have the opportunity to access critical supports. It is tough work, but stakeholders working directly with the students and families are also quick to share how doing this work also impact their lives.

"I never leave work at work, I carry an emotional/mental load home with me as I worry about my students' safety and wellbeing. All of this, and I wouldn't trade any of it for another school. I am rewarded in ways that are difficult to describe. The students that are hardest to manage are the ones that come back time and time again. I can see how I make a difference every single day."
(School Staff)

"It is the most rewarding job I have ever had. There are many aspects of my work that are impossible to catch on paper or in numbers, but building relationships and just being that support person and having a safe space for kids [has] such a huge impact on kids. There are some kids that come for a hug every day and I know that might be the only hug they get from anybody that day." (Agency Staff)

Families have also consistently shared how appreciative they are to have access to the AIFY supports and to be connected to all the caring people who work in each AIFY school. The AIFY schools end up feeling like a home or family for many families and students that are part of these school communities. Since Year 1, these schools have wrapped around their students and families and have been determined to support as many of their students and families as possible to ensure they have the best possible chance to achieve success in their lives. As a result, students and families feel supported in these school communities and see the potential the future holds.



- 72% of Parent/Caregiver responses (n = 61) indicated they feel more positive when they think about the future of their child

“Please know that the supports are making a positive impact on the lives of students. I’ve witnessed firsthand that difference – students have quit smoking/using drugs, others have shared that after years of isolation they now have friends thanks to OST, or they’re able to live with a parent without arguing thanks to Counselling. AIFY is making a huge impact for these kids...” (Agency Staff)

Finally, it is with the AIFY supports in place and the collaborative efforts of all the stakeholders that students and families are caught before they fall through the cracks. This level of support and model of support is needed to help schools catch these students and families, even before they start to fall. Without these types of supports in schools, families do not see positive outcomes for themselves and their children.

“It’s a big deal for us that [my son] is doing well in school, and he will continue to do well, but he really is vulnerable to falling through cracks if we don’t keep supporting him. He’s the kind of...kid who will either go on this incredible trajectory, or will really be challenged to school if he doesn’t get the right support...And it’s not so much academic as just the kind of stuff that All In For Youth does...that’s why connection is so important to him.” (Parent)

IN THE LIT:

Blair and Rever (2016) highlight the negative consequences of children living in poverty, which includes negative child development outcomes, poor mental health, and academic underachievement. Therefore, it is imperative to address children and families complexities as soon as possible to limit exposure to poverty and its likely effects. Early prevention and intervention can positively influence school readiness, academic learning, and act as a buffer for stress. Furthermore, in terms of return of investment of students finishing high school, on average for a single student (Based on US Dollars), there would be an estimated \$139,100 increase on tax revenues, \$40,500 in health savings, \$26,000 in crime savings, and \$3,000 in social welfare savings (Levin, 2017).

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