3 innovative ways education leaders are making progress every day with Thoughtexchange

For more than seven years now, we've been helping leaders of large organizations solve major, system-wide challenges by engaging thousands of people in more meaningful discussions.

During that time, Thoughtexchange has helped engage more than 2 million people around critical decisions that affect them. And this exciting part of our business continues to grow every day.

At the same time, we've been building a mobile version of Thoughtexchange that leaders are using to quickly reach out and make progress with groups of less than 150 people.

We're proud to say that leaders across North America are having success running Standard Exchanges using mobile devices. They're having fast, bias-free group conversations every day about things that matter to their organizations.

Over the past few months, we've been hearing about these successes from K-12 education leadership teams we work with. And because we've seen how powerful these discussions have been, we wanted to share with you three of our favourites.

Our hope is that these examples will inspire similar conversations in your organization.

School planning in Ottawa-Carleton

Exchange Question: What are some next steps/strategies/initiatives that you will be undertaking in order to address student wellbeing in your school?

Once a month at Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) in Ottawa, Canada, Superintendents of Instruction meet with their principals to explore school data and plan future work. The meetings happen in different locations at the same time and provide important venues for principals to engage in conversations with their superintendencies.

For their September 2017 meeting, OCDSB used Thoughtexchange to let principals share their planned strategies for supporting student wellbeing. The exchange

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> **Andrea Rahim, Strategic Business Analyst at OCDSB**
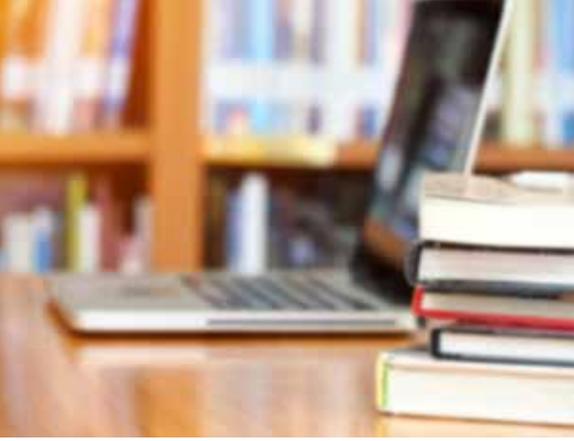
brought together principals from throughout the district, who were meeting at various locations, to share their thoughts together on a key topic.

"We had a great response to the exchange," says Andrea Rahim, Strategic Business Analyst at OCDSB. "It was shared with all principals, across superintendencies. So, although they were physically only with other principals from their superintendency, they were sharing and starring ideas across the district."

Child abuse resource in Calgary Catholic School District

Exchange Question: What are your thoughts (pro and con) on the effectiveness of the new child abuse handbook?

Calgary Catholic School District Chief Superintendent Gary Strother and Superintendent of Information and Technology, John Deausy are working with the Sheldon Kennedy Centre for Child Advocacy on a groundbreaking guide that will help school districts across Canada better integrate youth who have suffered abuse at home back into the school system.

As they prepared to roll out the guide, Strother and Deausy brought together administrators from the district to launch the resource guide and get feedback that would create ownership of the guide. They used Thoughtexchange to gather and prioritize input from more than 100 people in a matter of minutes. Read more about this exchange here.

Hiring a new principal in Arcadia Unified School District

Exchange Question: As a parent/community member, what qualities would you like to see in the new principal?

When it came time to find a new principal to lead a local elementary school, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services at Arcadia Unified School District in California, Kevin Hyrciw knew he needed to find the right person.

A key to finding the right person was learning what qualities the school community valued, in a way that would also create support for the new leader from day one. Hyrciw used Thoughtexchange to quickly reach out and ask the school community what mattered most to them in their new principal, before making a hire.

"The initiative was such a success that this has now been made part of Arcadia's best practices for hiring of key personnel such as principals," Hyrciw says, noting that they use exchange results in three stages: to establish evaluation criteria for screening; to formulate questions for interviewing; and as baseline data for the principals to build their first-year goals.

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**Kevin Hyrciw,
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services at Arcadia Unified School District**

Have you had a great experience using Thoughtexchange Standard?
We'd love to hear about it. Please share your story at stories@thoughtexchange.com.