OUTDOOR & ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

From National Vision to System-Level Action.

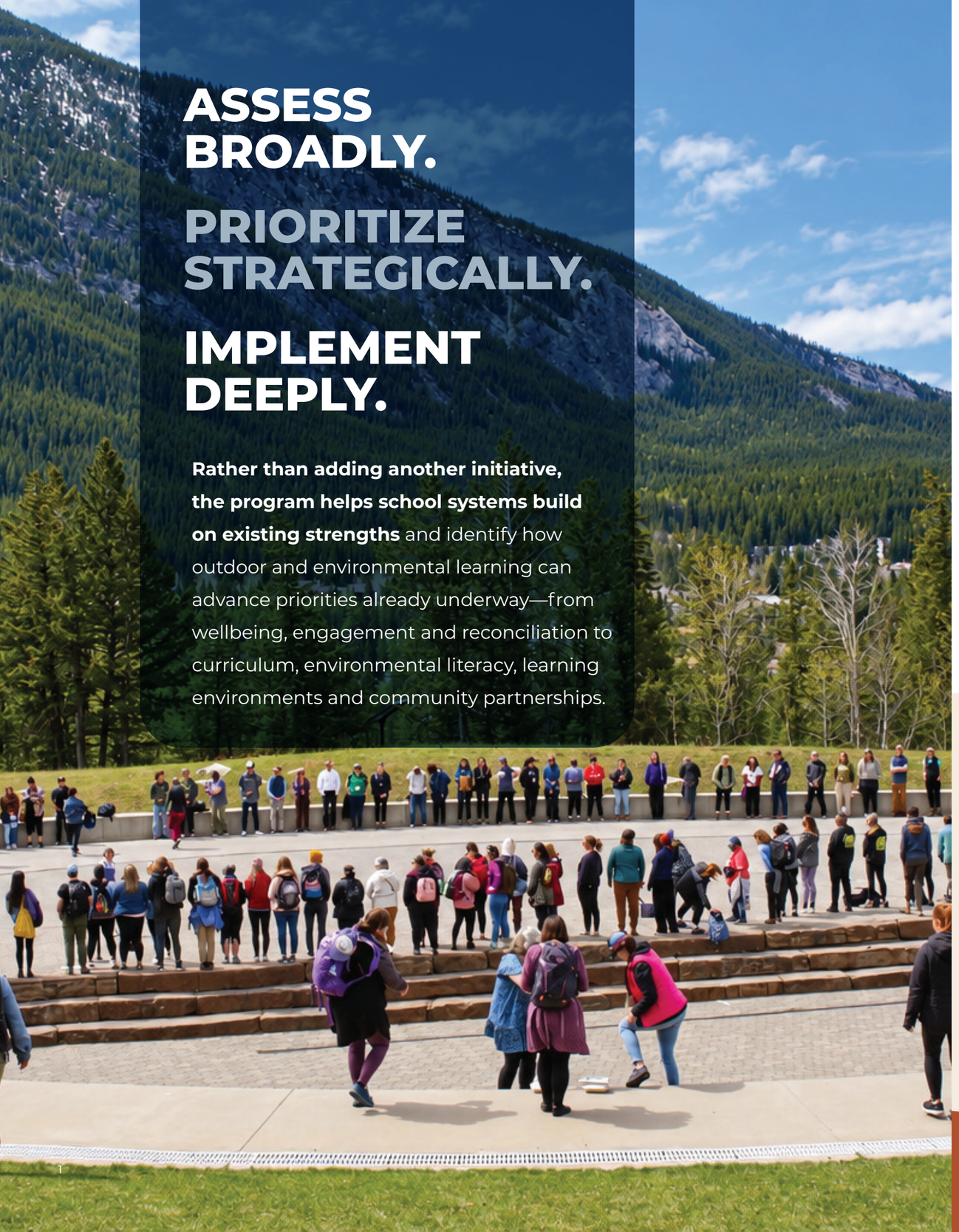
APR - NOV 2027

BANFF RESIDENCY
APRIL 21 – 24



TAKE ME OUTSIDE

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ASSESS BROADLY.

PRIORITIZE STRATEGICALLY.

IMPLEMENT DEEPLY.

Rather than adding another initiative, the program helps school systems build on existing strengths and identify how outdoor and environmental learning can advance priorities already underway—from wellbeing, engagement and reconciliation to curriculum, environmental literacy, learning environments and community partnerships.

Overview

The **Outdoor & Environmental Learning Leadership Program** is an intensive leadership and implementation experience for senior K–12 system leaders seeking to embed outdoor and environmental learning within the priorities, structures and everyday practices of their school systems.

Grounded in Canada's **National Framework for Environmental Learning (NFEL)**, the program brings together a national cohort of system leaders for a three-day experience in Banff, followed by six months of supported implementation, mentorship and peer learning. Participating systems will assess their strengths and opportunities across the Framework, identify one or two priorities for focused action, and develop a practical implementation roadmap suited to their own context.

Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and relationships will be integrated throughout the leadership experience. Participants will have opportunities to learn from Indigenous knowledge holders and explore how meaningful partnerships, reconciliation and Indigenous relationships with land and place can inform leadership decisions and system-level change.

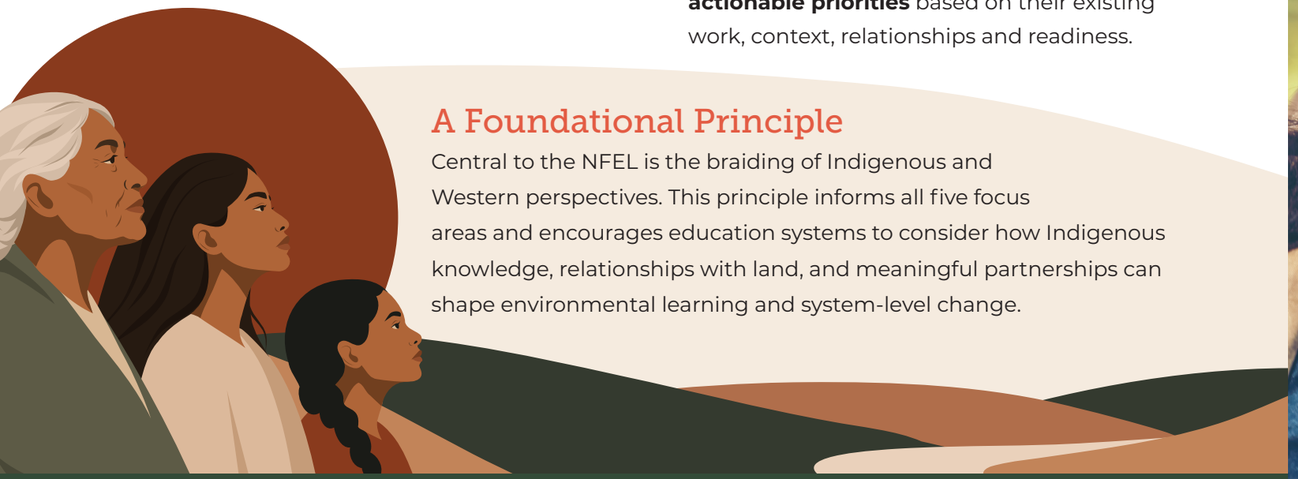
What Participants Will Gain

- A system-level assessment of strengths, gaps and opportunities across the five NFEL focus areas.
- 1–2 clearly defined implementation priorities aligned with their school system's context, needs and readiness.
- A practical implementation roadmap outlining initial actions, key partners, system levers and next steps.
- Stronger leadership capacity to build alignment, navigate barriers and advance systems change.
- Six months of supported implementation, including mentorship, cohort learning and shared problem-solving.
- Connections to relevant expertise and partners to support implementation within their school system.
- Initial indicators of progress to measure implementation, capture learning and inform longer-term decisions.
- A national cohort of peer leaders sharing experiences, insights and approaches to advancing outdoor and environmental learning.

FIVE FOCUS AREAS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Canada's NFEL provides a shared architecture for the Leadership Program, connecting outdoor and environmental learning with the priorities, structures and opportunities of K–12 school systems.

Rather than a prescribed implementation sequence, the Framework allows participating systems to assess their strengths, gaps and opportunities across all five focus areas, then to identify **1–2 clearly actionable priorities** based on their existing work, context, relationships and readiness.



A Foundational Principle

Central to the NFEL is the braiding of Indigenous and Western perspectives. This principle informs all five focus areas and encourages education systems to consider how Indigenous knowledge, relationships with land, and meaningful partnerships can shape environmental learning and system-level change.

EXPANDING EDUCATOR CAPACITY

- Professional learning & mentorship
- Leadership skills & growth
- Access to resources & expertise

CREATING FLOURISHING LEARNING SPACES

- School grounds & outdoor classrooms
- Access to local natural areas
- Learning environments & infrastructure

DEVELOPING DATA & RESEARCH

- Meaningful indicators of progress
- District-level research & evidence
- Research partnerships & shared learning

GROWING GREEN COMMUNITIES

- Relationships with Indigenous communities
- Municipal and community partnerships
- Shared stewardship & place-based learning

STRENGTHENING GREEN SKILLS

- Student leadership and experiential learning
- Secondary programming and career pathways
- Partnerships supporting green skills development

FOCUSED LEADERSHIP TO CREATE AND AMPLIFY MEANINGFUL PROGRESS



Outdoor Learning advances environmental literacy while contributing to student and staff wellbeing, reconciliation, engagement, experiential learning, curriculum priorities and stronger relationships with community, land and place.

Turning Priorities into Action.

How can school-system leaders move from a shared national vision for outdoor and environmental learning to sustained, system-wide practice?

The program brings together a national cohort of senior education leaders to explore this question through an inquiry and strengths-based approach for practical system-level action.

Grounded in the NFEL, the program connects holistic national vision with targeted local action to address individual system and context needs.

Through mentorship, peer learning and supported implementation, leaders strengthen their capacity to establish the conditions for lasting systems change.

THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MODEL



Three-Day Banff Residency

Three days of collaboration

Leaders gather in Banff to explore the NFEL, learn from experienced leaders and partners, assess their system's strengths and opportunities, and develop a focused implementation roadmap aligned with their priorities and context.



System Implementation

Turning priorities into meaningful action

Participants return to their school systems to activate their roadmaps, mobilize internal leadership and partnerships, address emerging barriers, and build momentum around their identified priorities.



Mentorship and Cohort Support

Guided implementation & peer learning (6 months)

Cohort members remain connected to their national colleagues through mentorship, facilitated peer learning and relevant expertise to navigate challenges, adapt their approaches, strengthen shared ownership and responsibility.

The work that happens after Banff is as important as the gathering itself. The program moves beyond traditional professional learning by supporting leaders as they translate ideas and intentions into practical system-level action.



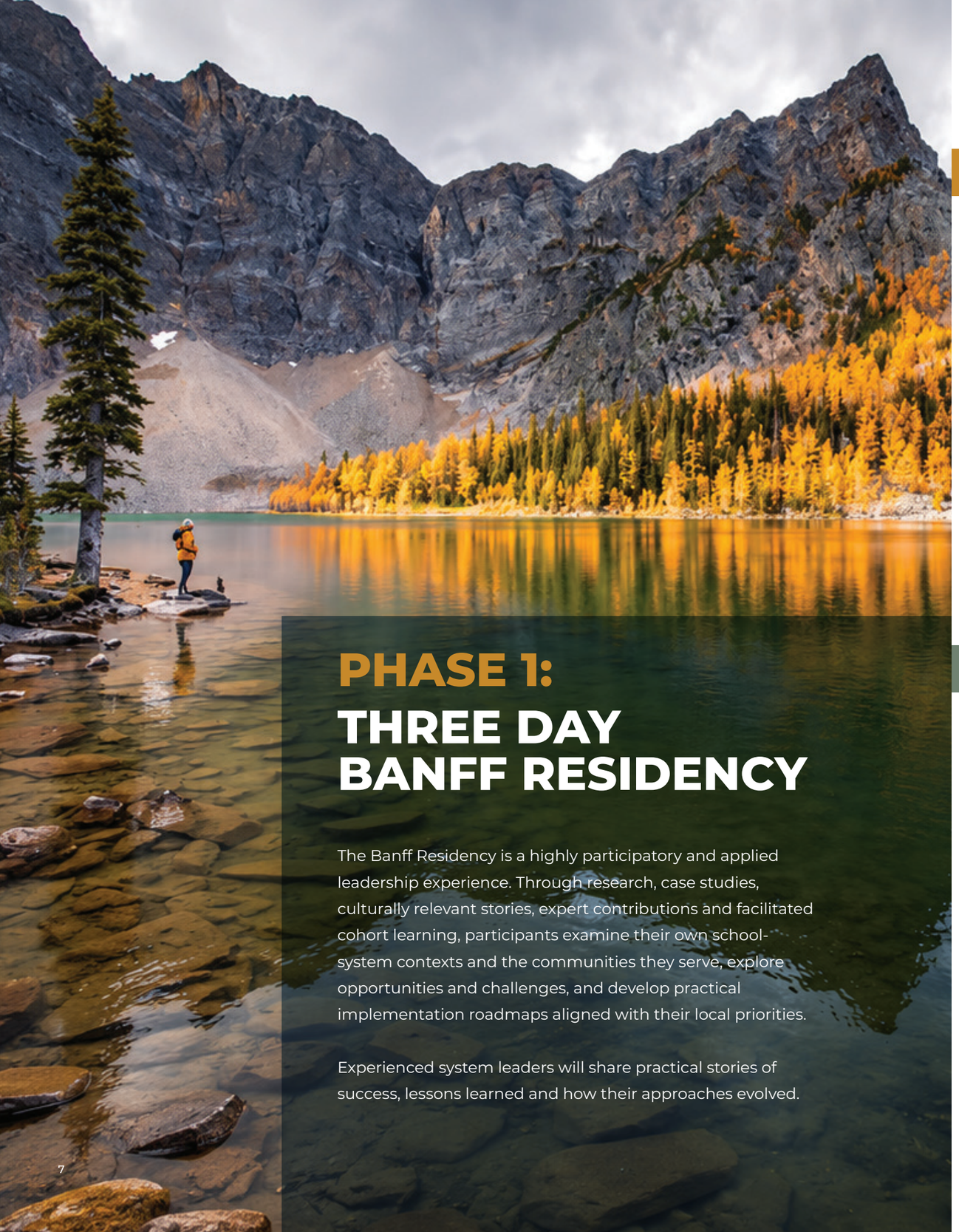
Target Audience

The program is designed for senior K–12 education leaders positioned to shape system priorities, mobilize resources and lead meaningful implementation, including:

- Superintendents, Directors of Education, Assistant Superintendents
- **Senior school system executive leaders** responsible for curriculum, instruction, Indigenous education, wellbeing, operations, people and culture
- **Other system leaders** positioned to influence strategic priorities, policy and implementation

Whether registering individually or as a team, participants will join a national network of education professionals dedicated to advancing systemic change in outdoor learning.





PHASE 1:
THREE DAY BANFF RESIDENCY

The Banff Residency is a highly participatory and applied leadership experience. Through research, case studies, culturally relevant stories, expert contributions and facilitated cohort learning, participants examine their own school-system contexts and the communities they serve, explore opportunities and challenges, and develop practical implementation roadmaps aligned with their local priorities.

Experienced system leaders will share practical stories of success, lessons learned and how their approaches evolved.

Day 1: Where Are We Now and Where Are We Trying to Go?

Review the national context and use the NFEL to assess where participating school systems currently stand.

- Explore the Framework's five focus areas
- Learn from school systems already advancing outdoor and environmental learning
- Assess existing strengths, gaps and opportunities across the five areas
- Identify current initiatives and system priorities that align with the Framework
- Examine opportunities for outdoor learning to advance broader educational priorities
- Identify emerging opportunities and barriers to implementation

Participant outcome:
A preliminary system-level self-assessment across the five NFEL focus areas, identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities to inform focused implementation priorities.



Day 2: What Will it Take?

Examine decision-making, organizational conditions and system levers needed to translate priorities into meaningful action.

- Where are the strongest opportunities for change?
- How can we build upon existing strengths?
- What policies, structures or practices create barriers?
- What resources are needed?
- Who needs to be involved?
- How can relationships with Indigenous communities and knowledge holders meaningfully inform implementation priorities?
- How can partnerships enhance progress?
- How can implementation align with existing system priorities?
- What evidence will help inform and guide progress?

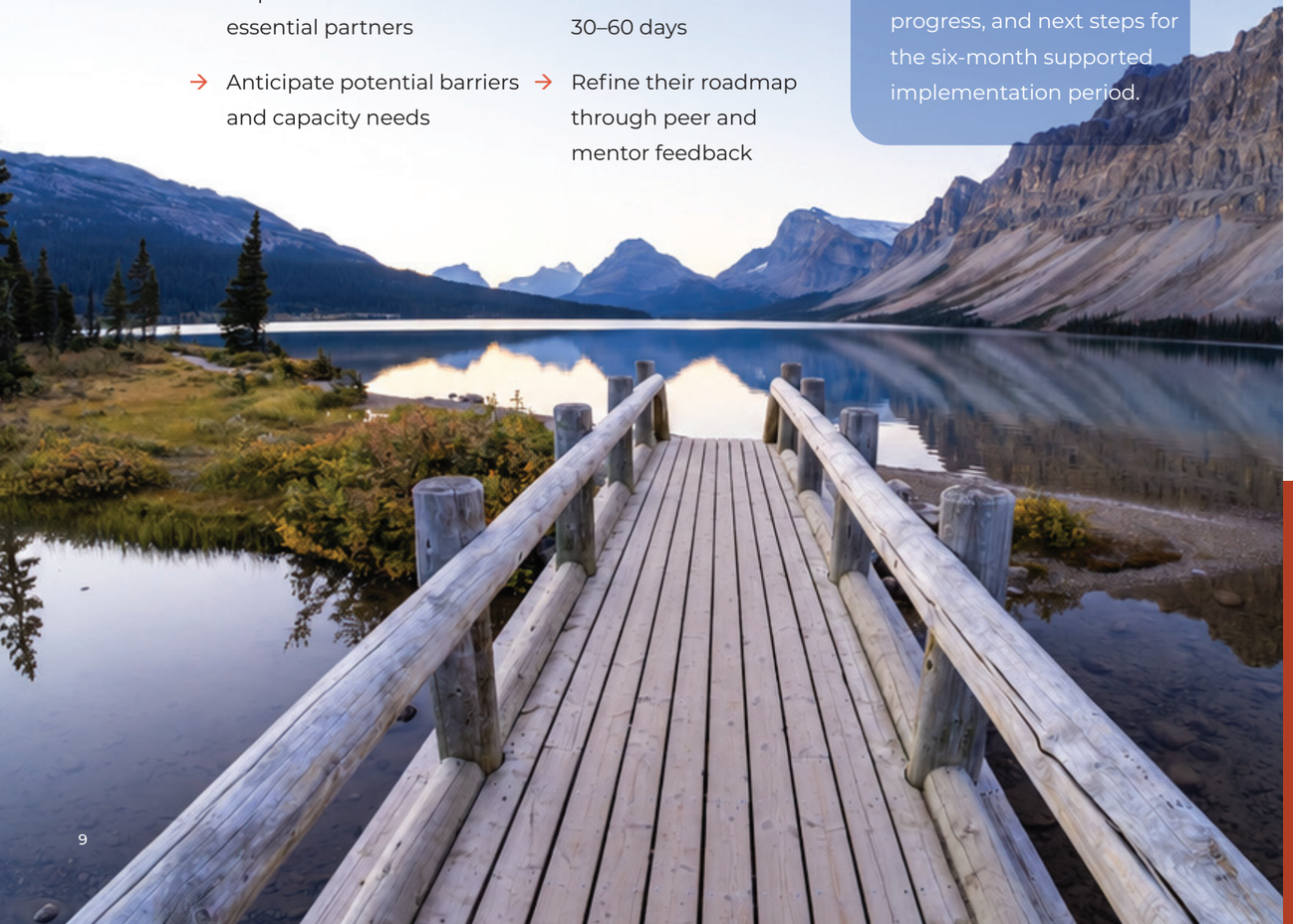
Participant outcome:
A clearer understanding of the leadership conditions, partnerships, resources and system supports needed to advance focused implementation priorities.

Day 3: Implementation Roadmap & Action Planning

Participants translate their school-system self-assessments, learning and emerging priorities into a practical implementation roadmap tailored to their school system and the communities it serves.

- Confirm 1–2 clearly defined implementation priorities
- Identify initial actions and key system levers
- Determine leadership responsibilities and essential partners
- Anticipate potential barriers and capacity needs
- Identify resources and supports required
- Establish initial indicators of progress
- Define immediate actions for the first 30–60 days
- Refine their roadmap through peer and mentor feedback

Participant outcome:
An initial, focused implementation roadmap identifying 1–2 priorities, key actions, system levers, partners, indicators of progress, and next steps for the six-month supported implementation period.



PHASE 2:
SIX MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION & LEADERSHIP SUPPORT



During this phase, leaders continue to strengthen relationships, connecting with their national cohort colleagues, experienced mentors and relevant experts. The program combines structured support and accountability with flexibility to respond to the real challenges that emerge during implementation.

Implementation & Cohort Support

Mentorship to help navigate leadership decision-making, organizational barriers and implementation challenges.

6 Monthly facilitated cohort sessions and **2 individual one-hour coaching sessions** focused on progress, shared learning and collaborative problem-solving.

Implementation checkpoints tailored to each system's roadmap, priorities and initial indicators of progress.

Small-group problem-solving sessions working through challenges with peers and mentors.

Targeted expertise and partnerships connecting leaders with relevant organizations, researchers and practitioners as needs emerge.

Peer-to-peer learning and collaboration between school systems pursuing similar implementation priorities.

Intended Outcome

The ultimate goal of the program is to equip and support committed educational leaders with the knowledge, skills, relationships and resources to advance outdoor learning within their school systems. Through focused implementation priorities, mentorship and collaborative learning, participants will build momentum, take meaningful action and strengthen the conditions for lasting systems change in the educational communities they serve.



Faculty, Mentors & Partners

The Leadership Program is led by Take Me Outside in collaboration with experienced K–12 system leaders, including superintendent Cheryl Lenardon, who brings practical experience advancing outdoor learning within a school system.

The program draws on additional expertise from Indigenous education leaders, researchers, national education organizations and outdoor and environmental learning partners, responding to the priorities and implementation challenges emerging within the cohort.

Long Term Vision

Over time, successive cohorts can contribute to a growing body of practical models, evidence and leadership experience that supports outdoor and environmental learning across Canadian school systems.

Research & National Learning

Bringing together school systems from across Canada creates an opportunity to document implementation, identify common barriers and enabling conditions, and share practical learning that can inform future approaches to the National Framework for Environmental Learning.

