

Fairvale High School:

Using *Tell Them From Me* to set targets for school improvement in the school plan.

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Introduction

This case study looks at how Fairvale High School has been using *Tell Them From Me* data. It particularly focuses on the way Fairvale High School has been using *Tell Them From Me* data to set targets for school improvements in their school plan.

Background

Fairvale High School is a comprehensive government school located in Fairfield West in the south west Sydney local government area of Fairfield. It has an enrolment of 1,371 students with 88 per cent of students coming from a non-English speaking background. The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)¹ value is significantly lower than the state average, but NAPLAN results are above similar schools. The attendance rate was 93 per cent in 2015 (My School 2015).

Using *Tell Them From Me*

Fairvale High School participated in the pilot student survey in 2013, and has subsequently completed the 2015 and 2016 student survey. The school also participated in the teacher survey in 2014. The school leadership feels that it is useful to do the *Tell Them From Me* surveys as they provide valuable baseline and trend data which can be used in school planning.

The data from the surveys are shared with the 24 executive staff (who also each receive a hard copy of the one-click report), as well as the three strategic leadership teams at Fairvale. Fairvale High School has also shared its data with Moorebank High School and vice versa so that both schools can get an idea of what a similar school's results looked like. The schools found this sharing of data useful for the teacher survey in particular where there has been no replica line² to date.

Tell Them From Me is an online survey system that assists schools to capture the views of students, teachers and parents. The survey system has been devised by Canadian company, The Learning Bar, under the leadership of Professor Doug Willms. Dr Willms is an expert in education who led the development of questions on student engagement for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

The surveys have been offered to NSW government schools since 2013/2014 (student and teacher surveys) in pilot form, and to all schools since 2015 (student, teacher and parent surveys). The surveys have been adapted to suit the NSW context.

In 2015, 236,000 students from 1,157 NSW government schools completed the student survey; 14,000 teachers did the teacher survey; and 29,000 parents completed the parent survey.

Using *Tell Them From Me* data to set targets for school improvement in the school plan

The school plan

Fairvale's school plan for 2015-2017, focuses on three strategic directions: wellbeing and personal development for all staff and students; achieving academic excellence; and developing strong community partnerships. Data from the *Tell Them From Me* student survey and teacher survey helped inform these strategic directions, in particular the 'interested and motivated', 'skills/challenge' and 'sense of belonging' measures from the student survey. All three strategic leadership teams at the school drilled down into the *Tell Them From Me* data (in conjunction with other data such as attendance data, suspension data and academic achievement data) to inform a situational analysis for the school plan which then led to the three strategic directions being determined.

1 ICSEA is a measure of school socio-educational advantage created by ACARA.

2 The replica line viewable in the student interactive charts allows schools to compare their school with a virtual replica school. The virtual replica school is a like for like comparison group.



Targets for improvement

Tell Them From Me data is being used as improvement measures for two of the three strategic directions in the school plan: achieving academic excellence; and wellbeing and personal development for all staff and students.

1. Academic excellence

In the academic excellence area, the school leadership team would like to see an increase in the percentage of students who say they are 'interested and motivated' from 35 per cent to 40 per cent. The school leadership team has noted that students are very compliant at the school (for example, they turn up on time and do not truant), but are not necessarily academically engaged. One of the strategies that Fairvale is introducing to increase interest and motivation at the school, is a 'house' system that supports classroom achievements as well as sporting achievements. The idea is that the house system will create 'house spirit', building on the fact that the students already have a sense of pride in their school and perceive the school as a sort of community hub (Figure 1).

The school leadership team would also like to increase the number of students in the desirable high skills/high challenge quadrant in the *Tell Them From Me* survey from 42 per cent to 50 per cent by 2017 (Figure 2). To increase levels of high skill/high challenge, Fairvale High School is instigating a series of initiatives focused on creating a culture of high expectations; including goal setting, study skills and quality feedback processes, as well as a gifted and talented program.

There has been a concerted effort to develop the gifted and talented program in particular, with 25 staff already trained through the GERRIC program at the University of New South Wales. Fairvale has also been working with Macquarie University to investigate utilising a digital platform for learning. The school hopes that the increase in knowledge and skills with regard to both gifted and talented education and digital learning, will become embedded into faculties and that teaching and learning across the school will be of a high level and more stimulating.

Figure 2: Students who report high skill/high challenge

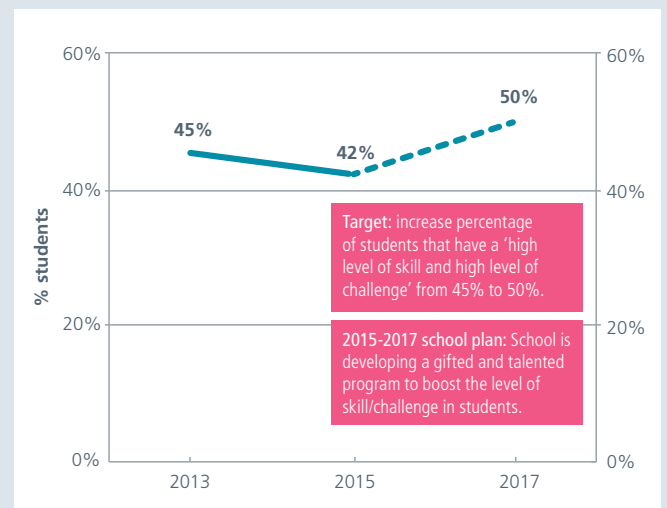
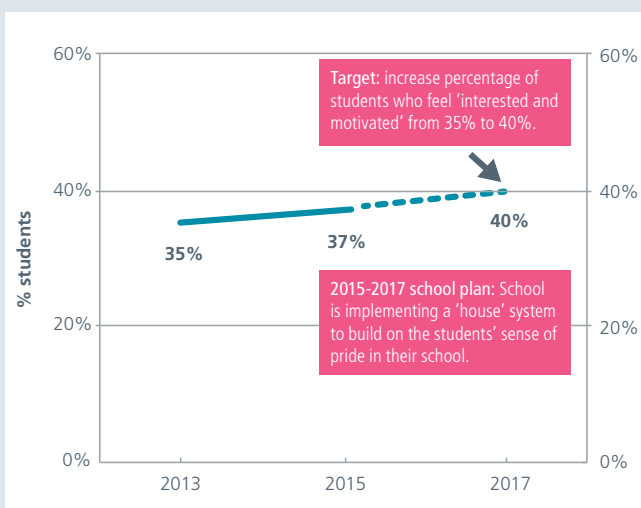


Figure 1: Students who are interested and motivated



2. Wellbeing

Fairvale High School is also aiming to increase the percentage of students who indicate they have a positive sense of belonging in the *Tell Them From Me* student survey from 69 per cent to 74 per cent. The school leadership team sees sense of belonging as a useful proxy for wellbeing and is keen to maximise the wellbeing of the school's students. The school's strategic focus on wellbeing also deliberately incorporates staff wellbeing as a result of the findings of the TTFM teacher survey conducted in 2014. The school leadership team has set a target of increasing staff satisfaction across the areas identified as needing improvement by 10 per cent in the teacher survey by 2017.

Reference list

My School 2015, My School: Fairvale High School, viewed 30 March 2016, <https://www.myschool.edu.au/>.