

**ANALYSIS OF THE NSW
SMARTER SCHOOLS
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
CROSS-SECTORAL IMPACT
SURVEY: Phase 1**

Final Report

Advisory Council for the Centre for
Education Statistics and Evaluation

8 November 2012

Acknowledgments

This work was completed with the assistance of the Secretariat to the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Advisory Council.

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Contents

Tables..... vii

Figures..... ix

Acronyms and abbreviations xiii

Executive summary.....xiv

 The Smarter Schools National Partnerships.....xiv

 Strategic Purpose of the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS).....xiv

 2011 CSIS reports xv

 The strength of the evidencexvi

 Summary of key findings..... xvii

 Implications for education in NSW..... xxii

 State strategic level evaluations – areas for further exploration xxiii

 Next steps for the CSIS xxiii

PART 1: INTRODUCTIONxxv

1. The Smarter Schools National Partnerships 1

 1.1 The National Partnership Agreements..... 1

 1.2 National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality 1

 1.3 National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy..... 2

 1.4 National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School
 Communities..... 3

2. Evaluation of the NSW Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNPs) 5

 2.1 Implementation of the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS) 5

 2.2 Survey participant groups..... 6

 2.3 Survey waves 6

 2.4 Survey distribution 2011..... 7

 2.5 Analytical approach: in-depth analysis of patterns of change..... 8

 2.6 Important considerations in interpreting the quantitative findings 9

 2.7 Analytical approach: sampling, coding and theme analysis of responses
 to open-ended questions..... 10

 2.8 Important considerations in interpreting the qualitative findings 11

PART 2: DESCRIPTIVE REPORT 14

3. Profile: how representative is the respondent sample? 15

 3.1 Who are the schools participating in the SSNP? 15

 3.2 What are the characteristics of survey respondents’ schools and how do
 they compare with all participating schools? 16

 3.3 Were the profiles of all respondents who completed the survey similar
 to the overall profile of participating schools on key factors? 18

- 3.4 Were there any statistically significant differences between those who responded to the survey and were exited, and those who responded and completed the survey? 20
- 4. Profile of survey respondents: demographic data 24**
 - 4.1 Respondent principal demographics 24
 - 4.2 Respondent executive demographics 25
 - 4.3 Respondent teacher demographics 25
- 5. Respondents’ perceptions of changes prior to commencing in the SSNP (p survey) 28**
 - 5.1 Principals’ views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey) 28
 - 5.2 Executives’ views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey) 39
 - 5.3 Teachers’ views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey) 46
 - 5.4 Conclusion 51
- 6. Respondents’ perceptions of change attributed to the SSNP in the first year of participation (n survey) 53**
 - 6.1 Principals’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey) 53
 - 6.2 Executives’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey) 68
 - 6.3 Teachers’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey) 75
 - 6.4 Preliminary comparison between different Partnerships 81
 - 6.5 Conclusion 82
- 7. Respondents’ perceptions of changes attributed to the SSNP in the second year of participation (e survey) 84**
 - 7.1 Principals’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey) 84
 - 7.2 Executives’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey) 99
 - 7.3 Teachers’ views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey) 106
 - 7.4 Preliminary comparison between different Partnerships 112
 - 7.5 Conclusion 113
- 8. How staff see the SSNPs working—successful strategies, significant changes and challenges 115**
 - 8.1 Overall findings 115
 - 8.2 Principals and executives described a range of things their schools had in place prior to the SSNPs 116
 - 8.3 Reflecting the scope and focus of SSNP reforms, principals, executives and teachers perceive a range of strategies working well in their schools 119

- 8.4 Principals, executives and teachers perceive a range of significant changes occurring in their schools.....126
- 8.5 Principals, executives and teachers are seeing positive outcomes for students and teachers from the changes introduced.....131
- 8.6 Respondents perceive a range of challenges in implementing the SSNPs....133
- 9. Descriptive report conclusions147**
 - 9.1 The function of the descriptive report.....147
 - 9.2 Respondents’ views prior to commencing the Partnerships (p survey).....147
 - 9.3 Respondents’ views in the first year of participation in the SSNP (n survey)148
 - 9.4 Respondents’ views in the second year of participation in the SSNP (e survey)148
 - 9.5 Successful strategies, significant changes and challenges149
- PART 3: INTERPRETIVE REPORT151**
- 10. Extent of change over time: significant gains were seen at different times for principals, executives and teachers.....152**
 - 10.1 Introduction152
 - 10.2 For principals, most significant gains were seen early in their school’s SSNP participation.....154
 - 10.3 For executives, in most areas significant gains continued over time throughout their SSNP participation.....158
 - 10.4 For teachers, in some areas significant gains were seen at different times, and in others gains continued over time161
 - 10.5 Conclusions163
- 11. How different SSNP initiatives influence improvements in teaching capacity and executive leadership capacity165**
 - 11.1 Introduction165
 - 11.2 Improving teacher capacity and skills166
 - 11.3 Improving executive leadership capacity.....175
 - 11.4 Conclusion176
- 12. The influence of context on changes in teaching capacity and executive leadership capacity178**
 - 12.1 Introduction178
 - 12.2 Contextual factors that influence the extent of improvement in teacher capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity.....181
 - 12.3 SSNP activities and impacts may counter the influence of some important contextual factors on SSNP outcomes.....183
 - 12.4 Contextual factors that do not influence gains in SSNP teacher and executive leadership capacity/skills184
 - 12.5 The influence of staffing related changes on principals’ perceptions of increased teacher capacity185
 - 12.6 Conclusion186
 - 12.7 Tables summarising significance of contextual factors187
- 13. Interpretive report conclusions.....193**

13.1 The function of the interpretative report.....193

13.2 The strength of the statistical evidence193

13.3 Evidence about the effectiveness of the SSNP194

13.4 When change is occurring for which group of respondents—teachers, principals and executives194

13.5 Shifts in educational practices critical to achieving SSNP outcomes: where the greatest gains and least gains are seen.....195

13.6 How contextual factors influence change in schools197

13.7 State strategic level evaluations – areas for further exploration198

APPENDICES199

Appendix 1: Detailed approach to quantitative analysis of responses to closed survey questions200

Examining when greatest gains are seen.....200

Examining the activities and impacts significantly associated with changes in teacher and executive leadership capacity201

Examining which contextual factors are significantly associated with changes in teacher and executive leadership capacity202

Generating summary variables for analysis204

Creating the outcomes matrix204

Validating the outcomes matrix.....205

Appendix 2: Detailed approach to analysis of responses to open-ended survey questions.....215

Sample for analysis.....215

Analysing and interpreting the qualitative data216

Creating Word clouds216

Developing, testing and refining the coding framework217

Appendix 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS.....224

Appendix 4 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS.....226

Tables

Table 1.	Survey distribution.....	7
Table 2.	Principals’ perceptions of impact of staffing changes on the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives (p survey)	38
Table 3.	Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (p survey).....	52
Table 4.	Principals’ perceptions about the impact of staffing changes on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (n survey).....	67
Table 5.	Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (n-survey)	83
Table 6.	Principals’ perceptions about the impact of staffing changes on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (e survey)	98
Table 7.	Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (n survey).....	114
Table 8.	Which groups were asked questions about what domains	153
Table 9.	Significant changes and effect sizes between principal cohorts.....	155
Table 10.	Change in principals’ views on sector support and alignment.....	157
Table 11.	Significant changes and effect sizes between executive cohorts.....	159
Table 12.	Significant changes and effect sizes between teacher cohorts.....	162
Table 13.	Domains and their association with gains in teacher capacity/ skills	167
Table 14.	Summary variables significantly associated with executive self-rated leadership capacity	176
Table 15.	Contextual factors tested and reason for testing	180
Table 16.	How partnership type, school type and the location of the school influence gains in teacher capacity	188
Table 17.	How partnership type, school type and school location influence gains in executives’ ratings of their own leadership capacity (executive survey only).....	190
Table 18.	How the student profile of schools, years of experience of staff in role and student performance influence gains in teacher capacity.....	191
Table 19.	How the student profile of schools, years of experience of staff in role and student performance influence gains in executive’s ratings of their own leadership capacity (executive survey only)	192

Table 20. How employment variables influence principal’s ratings of gains in teacher capacity..... 192

Table 22. Coding framework: significant changes, why and consequences 218

Table 23. Coding framework: most significant challenges..... 220

Table 24. Coding framework: most successful/ cost-effective strategies..... 221

Table 25. Additional codes 223

Table 26. Characteristics of participating schools..... 224

Table 27. Characteristics of respondent schools (schools returning one or more surveys) ... 225

Table 28. Demographic data: principals (based on completed survey data) 226

Table 29. Demographic data: executives (based on completed survey data) 226

Table 30. Demographic data: teachers (based on completed survey data) 227

Figures

- Figure 1. Proportions of survey completers, as compared to all participating schools, by affiliation..... 18
- Figure 2. Proportions of survey completers, as compared to all participating schools, by school type 19
- Figure 3. Rates of principals who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation..... 21
- Figure 4. Rates of executives who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation..... 21
- Figure 5. Rates of teachers who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation..... 22
- Figure 6. Rates of principals who completed and were exited from the survey across school type 22
- Figure 7. Rates of executives who completed and were exited from the survey across school type 23
- Figure 8. Rates of teachers who completed and were exited from the survey across school type 23
- Figure 9. Principals’ perceptions of overall improvements in teacher capacity since 2010 (p survey) 29
- Figure 10. Principals’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010 (p survey) 30
- Figure 11. Principals’ perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey) 32
- Figure 12. Principals’ perceptions of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010 (p survey)..... 34
- Figure 13. Principals’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010 (p survey) 35
- Figure 14. Executives’ perceptions of overall improvements in teacher capacity since 2010 (p survey)..... 39
- Figure 15. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010 (p survey) 40
- Figure 16. Executives’ perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey) 42
- Figure 17. Executives’ perceptions of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010 (p survey)..... 44

Figure 18. Executives’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010 (p survey)45

Figure 19. Teachers’ perceptions of overall change since 2010 (p survey)46

Figure 20. Teachers’ perceptions of changes in professional development experiences since 2010 (p survey)47

Figure 21. Teachers’ perceptions of changes in professional development outcomes since 2010 (p survey).....48

Figure 22. Teachers’ perceptions of school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)49

Figure 23. Teachers’ perceptions of school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)50

Figure 24. Teachers’ perceptions of their engagement with schools’ strategic direction, goals and expectations since 2010 (p survey)51

Figure 25. Principals’ perceptions of improvements in teacher capacity since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)54

Figure 26. Principals’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)55

Figure 27. Principals’ perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)57

Figure 28. Principals’ perceptions of changes in developing instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)59

Figure 29. Principals’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey).....61

Figure 30. Principals’ perceptions of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)63

Figure 31. Principals’ perceptions of school/ system alignment since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey).....64

Figure 32. Executives’ perceptions of improvements in teacher capacity and their own leadership capacity, since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)68

Figure 33. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)69

Figure 34. Executives’ perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)71

Figure 35. Executives’ perceptions of changes in developing instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)72

Figure 36. Executives’ perceptions about whether the SSNP has improved planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)74

Figure 37. Teachers’ perceptions of overall change since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)75

Figure 38. Teachers’ perceptions about improvements to their professional learning experiences since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)76

Figure 39. Teachers’ perceptions about improvements to their professional learning outcomes since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)77

Figure 40. Teachers’ perceptions about school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)78

Figure 41. Teachers’ perceptions about school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)80

Figure 42. Teachers’ perceptions about their own engagement with their school’s strategic direction, goals and expectations since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey).....81

Figure 43. Principals’ perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)85

Figure 44. Principals’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2009/2010 (e survey)86

Figure 45. Principals’ perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)88

Figure 46. Principals’ perceptions of changes in instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)90

Figure 47. Principals’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since 2009/2010 (e survey)92

Figure 48. Principals’ perceptions of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation since 2009/2010 (e survey).....94

Figure 49. Principals’ perceptions of school system alignment resulting from SSNP participation since 2009/2010 (e survey)95

Figure 50. Executives’ perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)99

Figure 51. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2009/2010 (e survey)100

Figure 52. Executives’ perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)102

Figure 53. Executives’ perceptions of changes in instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)104

Figure 54. Executives’ perceptions of changes in planning policy, action and resourcing since 2009/2010 (e survey) 106

Figure 55. Teachers’ perceptions of overall change since 2009/2010 (e survey)..... 107

Figure 56. Teachers’ perceptions of changes in professional development experiences since 2009/2010 (e survey) 108

Figure 57. Teachers’ perceptions of changes in professional development outcomes since 2009/2010 (e survey)..... 109

Figure 58. Teachers’ perceptions of school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)..... 110

Figure 59. Teachers’ perceptions of school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)..... 111

Figure 60. Teachers’ perceptions of their engagement with schools’ strategic direction, goals and expectations since 2009/2010 (e survey)..... 112

Figure 61. What the school was/ will be building on..... 117

Figure 62. Strategies perceived as successful 119

Figure 63. Changes perceived as significant 126

Figure 64. Outcomes of significant changes 132

Figure 65. Perceived challenges associated with implementation of the SSNPs..... 133

Figure 66. Domain and summary variables associated with improved teacher capacity (principal survey)..... 170

Figure 67. Domain and summary variables associated with improved teacher capacity (executive survey)..... 170

Figure 68. Activities and impacts relating to improved teacher skill (teacher survey)..... 171

Figure 69. Summary variable matrices 206

Acronyms and abbreviations

AIP	Annual Implementation Plan
AIS	Association of Independent Schools NSW
C4E	Centre for Excellence
CEC	Catholic Education Commission NSW
CESE	Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSIS	Cross-sectoral Impact Survey
DEC	Department of Education and Communities
EMSAD	Educational Measurement and Schools Accountability Directorate
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HAT	Highly Accomplished Teacher
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
ITQ	National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality
LN	National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy
LSES	National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NP Plan	National Partnership Plan
NPEC	National Partnerships Evaluation Committee
NSW	New South Wales
NSWIT	New South Wales Institute of Teachers
SSNP	Smarter Schools National Partnerships

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the 2011 Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS), which captured responses from 662 of the 936 NSW schools participating in a Smarter School National Partnership (SSNP). In total, 4,376 individuals completed a survey: 393 principals, 1,331 executives and 2,652 teachers.

The 2011 CSIS provides a snapshot of the extent of change in key education practices achieved in SSNP schools by September 2011.

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) approved National Partnership Agreements supporting reforms in school education. As part of SSNP agreements, all three school sectors—Government, Catholic and Independent—instigated three Partnership initiatives, each with a particular reform focus:

- National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ NP)
- National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy (LN NP)
- National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities (LSES NP).

While working towards a common overarching goal, each SSNP has its own focus, reform areas and associated strategies, as well as different funding arrangements and levels of flexibility in implementation. Within each SSNP there are a number of different interventions, some of which are mandatory. Recognising international evidence that high quality teaching is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes,¹ all three SSNPs incorporate strategies to improve teacher capacity.

Although the planning phase for all three SSNPs began in 2009, implementation began in different years for different SSNPs and for different cohorts of schools. The SSNPs are also of varying duration. The LN NP has now ended; schools are continuing their participation in the ITQ NP and LSES NP, with the support of the three sectors.

In considering the findings of the CSIS, the different foci and stages of implementation of the SSNPs should be taken into account as this influences what schools are working on and what they could reasonably be expected to have achieved.

Strategic Purpose of the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS)

The CSIS was developed to inform overall assessments of the effectiveness of the SSNPs in NSW and to provide contextual information for four partnership-specific strategic

¹ Rowe, K.J., 2003 The importance of teacher quality as a key determinant of students' experiences and outcomes of schooling, ACER, Improve Learning, discussion paper prepared on behalf of the Interim Committee for a NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2003).

evaluations that are also underway. The CSIS also documents both the extent of reform in critical education practices at the individual staff member, school and system level and the sustainability of the reforms, through each round of surveys.

ARTD was commissioned on behalf of the NSW Minister for Education to undertake the analysis and reporting of the CSIS, which consists of an annual survey of principals, executives and teachers working in schools participating in the SSNPs, and a proposed biennial survey of non-school based staff members who support SSNP implementation. This work is now overseen by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Advisory Council (CESE AC).

The CSIS collects information about changes in education practices and the impacts of these on a range of outcomes from three viewpoints: teachers, executives and principals. The information being collected is both relative and retrospective—the survey asks respondents to compare education practices in schools and classrooms prior to participating in the SSNP with where they are now. This allows the survey to account for different subjective starting points and to ask about the added value of being involved in an SSNP.

2011 CSIS reports

The analysis of CSIS responses was done in two stages generating two distinct reports. The first stage was a descriptive analysis, which presents the detailed responses for each survey question by respondent group (see Part 2 of this document). It provides clear signposts for CESE AC, state and Commonwealth policy makers and strategic evaluators about where change is occurring and for whom. The Descriptive Report also summarises responses to open-ended questions, which give school staff members' views about what are successful and cost effective strategies, and of how implementation challenges have been addressed.

The findings from the second stage of analysis are presented in the Part 3. The Interpretive Report examines in detail the nature of the changes uncovered in the Descriptive Report, with a focus on when change occurs, examining where the greatest gains are seen and what survey-related and other contextual variables were most strongly associated with achieving the overall outcomes of increasing teaching capacity/skills and executive leadership capacity.²

Summary variables were developed, which combined questions or items based on an outcomes hierarchy to provide a theory of change and to facilitate regression modelling (by reducing the number of variables entered into the model; thus increasing power to detect a significant effect). A wide range of statistical tests were then employed to ensure that the data met the assumptions of the analyses to be used. Where any assumptions were violated, alternative tests were applied to compensate for the nature

² These two questions are in the 'overall impact section' of the CSIS

of the data. For example, in our examination of when greatest gains are made we used non-parametric tests due to the non-normally distributed nature of the data.

We also carried out tests on the outcomes matrix we developed, using a series of regression analyses to assess associations between different levels. The significant nature of associations gave us added confidence in using this approach.

The strength of the evidence

In itself the 2011 CSIS is only one source of evidence at one time point, which is observational and self-reported. As such, the findings need to be corroborated by state level strategic evaluations and through subsequent waves of the CSIS, which will enable longitudinal analysis. Additionally, there are some particular limitations to the analyses in the two reports.

The Descriptive Report

The response rate (at least one survey completed from 71% of schools) and the characteristics of respondents' schools (which are fairly representative of all schools participating in an SSNP) mean the CESE AC can be confident that the patterns of change emerging from the descriptive analysis can be generalised to all NSW SSNP schools. There were, however, slightly lower responses from some school types and partnership types (e.g. secondary schools and schools in the ITQ NP are slightly under-represented).

Even so, some findings may be an artefact of the way the survey was constructed, that is both what questions were asked and which questions were asked of which respondent groups.

The qualitative data was inconsistent and sometimes of poor quality, either lacking in explanation or difficult to decipher, which made extracting the intended meaning of some comments difficult. This is the nature of qualitative data given in response to open questions in a survey, which often have limited explanatory power because the views of the person providing the feedback cannot be probed or clarified. The findings, however, have value in that they can be tested or triangulated with other qualitative data being collected for the strategic level evaluations of the SSNPs and with the quantitative analysis.

The Interpretive Report

The strength of the evidence generated from the statistical analysis is impacted by the nature of the data and the findings are indicative only.

Because no specific hypotheses about change were identified by the survey designers and no longitudinal data at this time, all the statistical analyses undertaken for the interpretive report are currently exploratory in nature.

The outcomes hierarchy was developed from the survey as a means of aiding statistical analysis. As a result, summary variables could not be identified for all domains across all levels of the hierarchy for all respondent groups. Statistical analysis of patterns was therefore limited to the identified domains. This is particularly important to note with respect to analysis of findings from the teacher survey, which contains fewer domains. It is also important to note that principals, executives and teachers received different versions of the survey with different questions – thus, the make-up of summary variables is somewhat different for each respondent group, which affects the interpretation of outcomes.

Regression models are sensitive to the order in which data is entered, and have the potential for random effects. While regression models do identify ‘predictors’ of change, the fact that all questions were asked at a single time point limits our ability to talk about one area as ‘causing’ change in another. The analysis at this stage can only suggest that certain changes in some areas (e.g. ‘teaching, learning and professional development’) appear to influence outcomes. As is customary, all assumptions underlying the regression model were checked, to ensure that the use of this analysis was statistically valid.

Summary of key findings

Overall, the results show that at the broadest level, the SSNPs are successfully driving educational reform in NSW schools and assisting schools to build on changes that had already begun prior to receiving SSNP funding.

In general, schools had already started to improve their accountability, leadership, school planning, and made professional development more accessible, prior to participating in a SSNP. Some schools had been involved in delivering new literacy and numeracy programs, and individual staff members reported increased skills and capabilities across a range of educational practices before becoming involved in a SSNP. However, findings showed that educational practices at the school and individual practice level critical to achieving SSNP outcomes had shifted to some extent over and above these changes already occurring in schools.

The extent of change varies across the five reform areas: teaching, learning and professional development; management practices and accountability; instructional leadership, planning and policy; sector support; and school/ system alignment. The extent and magnitude of change among teachers, principals and executives also differs. Context also matters in that certain factors appear to mediate the extent of change achieved in reform areas by individuals, and at the school level.

Some SSNPs seem to have achieved more impact in some reform areas. Differences between the three types of SSNPs generally reflect varying emphases on reform foci and different funding arrangements. For example, the ITQ NP schools consistently report collaborating more with universities and other schools than either LSES NP or LN NP schools. Respondents from LSES NP schools generally reported greater increases in

parent, NGO and local and Aboriginal community engagement than schools in other partnerships, (although the extent of change in this area is still smaller than for other reform areas).

Findings from the descriptive report

The extent of change occurring in schools involved in an SSNP for less than a year [ITQ NP 2011 to 2013 and LSES NP 2011 to 2014 cohorts]

After a relatively short time period, schools in both the ITQ NP and LSES NP were implementing many SSNP activities. For example, respondents reported moderate to large changes in the amount of time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings, and that collective responsibility for teaching/ learning was stronger. But, reflecting the duration of their involvement and the time needed to implement change, teachers and executives did not report as much change in their actual practices in the classroom.

In addition, a relatively low proportion of respondents reported that their school was more effectively engaging parents and local communities; Aboriginal groups in particular. These survey results are open to interpretation, for example schools may have already been effectively engaging local communities without perceiving the need for an increase.

Across most survey items, respondents involved in the ITQ NP reported less change at this early stage of implementation. The exception is in the reporting of changes related to collaboration. In ITQ NP schools, a higher proportion of respondents reported they were collaborating with teachers outside their school and university staff compared with respondents in the LSES NP schools. For LSES schools, all respondent groups said there had been little change in how much they were collaborating with their peers and other professionals outside of the school.

The extent of change occurring in schools involved in an SSNP for approximately two years [ITQ NP 2010 to 2012, LSES NP 2009 to 2012, LSES NP 2010 to 2013 and LN NP 2009 to 2011 cohorts]

A high proportion of the principals, executives and teachers responding to the survey after almost two years of implementing the LSES, LN and ITQ SSNP in their school reported moderate, large or very large increases in many of the practices and impacts of the SSNP. The overall patterns are similar to those reported by respondents in the first year of implementation, but the extent of reported increases is greater.

Sizeable proportions of principals and executives reported large positive changes in areas such as management reporting and accountability practices, leadership capacity and practice and the standards of teaching, learning and professional development, compared with the period prior to commencing the SSNP. Teachers also reported increases in the quality and availability of professional development and consequent

improvements in their practice, although on the whole they reported less change than did principals and executives.

Engagement with parents, local and Aboriginal communities, NGOs, other schools and universities remain areas of least reported change, although there is some variation in these areas by Partnership. Respondents from LSES schools generally reported higher levels of increased engagement of parents, NGOs and local and Aboriginal communities than LN or ITQ schools.

As was the trend for those in the early stages of implementation, respondents from ITQ schools generally reported higher levels of increased collaboration with universities and other schools than either LSES or LN schools.

Successful strategies, significant changes and challenges for SSNP

Reflecting the broad reforms under the SSNPs and the varying activities under each, principals, executives and teachers described a range of strategies as having been successful within their schools. The most common were providing professional development, new staffing arrangements, use of new programs, collaborative approaches, and use of relief funding or additional staff and scheduled meetings to provide the time to get things done.

Principals, executives and teachers reported a range of significant changes occurring in their schools. Often the described changes overlapped with strategies perceived as successful; probably because some early stage outcomes of SSNP involvement, like collaborative practices, are also strategies to achieve higher level outcomes.

There were many perceived challenges in implementation—the workload, time and resources involved, in particular. But many of the challenges relate to the strategies others (or, in a minority of cases, the same respondent) see as successful. For example, changing the school culture around collaboration was seen as both a challenge and cited by others as a successful way to increase teachers' skills. Administrative requirements and funding issues were also important perceived challenges.

Interpretive report

When change is occurring and for which group of respondents

At the individual level, educational practices continue to improve the longer a teacher is involved in SSNP as does their teaching capacity.

Individuals participating in SSNPs across NSW report they are changing education practices and implementing school improvement reforms. Principals report initiating organisational change in their school. But there were differences in the reported extent of change between principals, executives and teachers, and when and in what areas gains are being reported. Differences among principals, executives and teachers seem

generally to reflect their different priorities and ways of engaging in the SSNPs related to their respective roles.

In general, principals appear to be taking up SSNP activities and changing practices to a greater extent earlier than either executives or teachers. In contrast, for executives and teachers, the rate of change was more even and in smaller increments across the years of participation, although the changes occurred at different time points for different activities and impacts.

The patterns can be explained by the diffusion of innovation theory³, which says that new ideas or practices are taken up at different rates by the population. In schools, principals are responsible for introducing new ideas and leading innovation in practices and learning. In the SSNPs, this role has been clearly articulated with principals being ultimately responsible for implementing the SSNPs and improving the professional learning, school improvement and organisational culture in their schools. It appears that principals are taking an early and intense interest in getting SSNP activities up and running, and have a positive perspective about the extent of change occurring. Changes appear to take longer to diffuse to teachers and executives, reflecting the time required for professional development and implementation of reforms before performance outcomes are evident. The results may also reflect the time taken to establish SSNP reforms and change school culture—principals need time to establish activities, undertake school improvement planning and develop instructional leadership skills before they can influence other staff.

Shifts in educational practices critical to achieving SSNP outcomes: where greatest gains are seen for individual teacher, executive and principal practices

Activities that target teaching practices, skills and understanding, and collaborative practice appear to be successfully improving the quality of teaching in schools.

For teachers, the greatest positive changes in practices are: the growth in use of planning to meet individual student needs; collaborating with other teachers and embracing collective responsibility; and the increased availability of in-class support.

At this stage, two areas of gain were strongly positively associated with perceived increases in teacher capacity: the availability of professional development for teachers and instructional leadership for principals and executives.

For principals, the greatest reported gains are in aspects of instructional leadership—that is, arranging instructional support for individual teachers and more widely establishing and supporting mentoring. A large increase was also evident for aspects of ‘external planning and policy’, which includes survey items relating to how well schools are engaging with parents, communities and other schools. At this stage, it was not

³ Diffusion of Innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology, popularized the theory in his 1962 book *Diffusion of Innovations*.

possible to analyse what gains across the reform areas are associated with gains in principals' instructional leadership capacity because they were not asked not rate the overall impact of reforms on their leadership capacity.

Executives reported small gains across a range of practices. Gains in understanding effective leadership, increased opportunities to apply these skills and greater confidence in doing so are significantly associated with increases in self-rated leadership capacity.

Shifts in educational practices critical to achieving SSNP outcomes: where greatest gains are at the school level

The SSNPs appear to be having their greatest impact, in improving the availability of teaching, learning and professional development opportunities in schools, and teachers' abilities to access high quality professional development. The greatest gains in teacher capacity are associated with the early stage of implementation with professional development being more available and of higher quality and with mentoring and in-class support being more widely available. Teachers continue to make gains after two years of involvement in an SSNP in planning to meet individual student needs, collaboration with other teachers, and accepting collective responsibility for teaching and learning.

The association between professional development being more available and improvement in teacher capacity is consistent across teachers, executives and principals. This is reflected in their responses to open-ended questions, which describe improvements in professional development as one of the significant, educational changes that has resulted from the SSNP.

Reported gains in instructional leadership for principals and executives are also moderately associated with greater gains in teacher capacity.

Changes occurring in other organisation and system level processes such as the use of evidence, management and management accountability, policy and practice and SSNP effects on sector support did not show any relationship with increased teacher capacity.

How contextual factors influence change in schools

The context in which schools are implementing SSNPs can influence the magnitude of the impact .of reforms, where self reported improvements in teacher capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity are used as measures of change in schools.

But the picture is complex and the strength of the influence of certain contextual factors, particularly the type of SSNP, varies both with the respondent group and with participation in particular SSNPs. All SSNPs have a focus on improving teacher quality with were many reforms in common across the Partnerships and all have resulted in some gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity.

The ITQ NP was implemented using a hub and spoke model in government schools and some Catholic schools, where the hub school (recognised as a high performing school) provided support to spoke schools. One emerging finding is that the ITQ NP has been associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity than other SSNPs. Amongst spoke schools, this pattern is particularly prominent in principals' and executives' responses. Amongst hub schools, this pattern is particularly prominent in executives' and teachers' responses (although this view was not shared by hub-school principals).

There are several possible explanations for these differences, based on the nature and foci of the intervention. ITQ NP hub schools were chosen because they were high performing schools so might be harder to see improvement from a higher starting base. On the other hand, ITQ NP spoke schools received no SSNP funding directly, and some may not have realised that their involvement in reform activities initiated by a 'hub' school equates participation in the SSNPs – which would have affected the perceived relevance of the survey questions.

Contextual factors that influence the magnitude of improvements for teacher capacity are the type of school, the teachers' years of experience, the location of the school, ICSEA score value and type of students. But for some factors, the association appears to disappear when SSNP summary variables were added to the model, particularly from executives' perspective. One potential interpretation of this shift in significance, which will require further exploration with longitudinal data, is that implementation of the SSNPs may be ameliorating the influence of these contextual factors on changes to teaching capacity and/or executive leadership capacity.

Lastly, the association between improvements in teacher capacity and years of teaching experience suggest that more experienced teachers are coming from a higher base, meaning there is less room for improvement.

Implications for education in NSW

While the findings of the 2011 CSIS are just one source of evidence about the complex and multi-faceted educational reforms, they highlight a number of lessons for future directions for education in NSW.

- Investing in education reform can bring about improvements in schools, which can reasonably be expected to result in improved student academic performance and engagement.
- Principals are actively leading reforms. Investment in building principals' instructional leadership is associated with school improvement and increased teacher capacity.
- Investment in teacher learning and professional development is directly associated with increased teacher capacity. Mentoring and in-class support are particularly effective, and require relatively few resources.
- Future reform initiatives should recognise the time needed for reforms to achieve momentum and diffuse new practices through all levels of staff in a school.

- Providing schools with funding and flexibility in staffing arrangements can enable them to focus on professional development where it is needed most.
- At the system level, there may be more work and/or evidence needed to encourage schools to increase engagement with parents, Aboriginal and other local communities, given the potential benefits to the school and improved student outcomes.
- At the system level, more may need to be done to encourage and support collaboration with experts and other school staff outside of one's own school.

State strategic level evaluations – areas for further exploration

The CSIS provides a rich source of data for state strategic level evaluations and highlights areas that may be further explored as part of their work. These include:

- The mechanisms driving the differential improvements and take up of practices between teachers, principals and executives. Can these be explained by behavioural theory or are other reasons more important?
- The true extent of the increase in teacher capacity, given that principals, teachers and executives report different magnitudes of improvement.
- The relative impact of the different SSNPs on key outcome measures and the lessons for education reform in NSW.
- The reasons behind the small perceived impact on schools' engagement of local communities, local Aboriginal communities, parents, external partners.
- The different perspectives of principals and teachers about the magnitude of change, particularly in regard to increases in teacher skills and capacity.
- The reasons contextual factors such as the type of school, location of school and characteristics of students enrolled impact on outcomes for teacher capacity in schools.

Next steps for the CSIS

The CSIS provides comprehensive information about the impact of the SSNPs in NSW schools but further refinement of the survey questions would assist analysis and interpretation of the results.

Future analysis

The analytical approach for future waves should use regression modelling to test the relationship between contextual factors and summary variables derived from the survey and the extent of change on key outcomes over time. The next waves of data will be longitudinal, which will allow for more robust analysis and the ability to identify areas where changes have persisted; areas where changes have diminished; and the magnitude of these changes. This modelling will also allow us to identify those factors that are most strongly associated with change over time, and to determine the relative contribution of the variables of interest.

For appropriate rigour in the statistical analysis, it is required that the choice of key outcomes, summary and contextual variables is hypothesis driven, based on the findings

of the first report and/or the strategic state level evaluations and the respondent profile. In addition, consideration should be given to creating a simpler suite of summary variables based only on domain to structure the analysis of the survey results.

Sampling

Because ITQ NP schools and secondary schools were slightly unrepresented future survey sampling could direct more attention to these groups e.g. over-sampling to ensure a representative spread of groups.

Refining the CSIS questions

The following refinements are needed to aid interpretation of CSIS responses.

- Add an overall question asking principals to rate the overall impact of being in an SSNP on their instructional leadership capacity.
- For all survey questions: ensure that all survey items have the same scoring scale (a 7 point scale starting at 'decreased' and ending in 'not applicable'). This will enable all related items to be combined into a single summary variable where appropriate (which cannot be done for items that currently have a different scoring scale).
- For employment questions: Combine the 18 items (9 positive and 9 negative) into 9 items, each with a scoring range from 'impeded' to 'positively supported', and ask principals to provide a figure on the proportion of certain types of staff (full time, casual, experienced etc) and the magnitude of turnover (e.g. is the proportion of inexperienced staff large or small). The addition of quantitative data to this question will allow conclusions to be drawn more readily about the impact of small versus large proportions of certain types of staff and high versus low turnover.
- Reduce the number of open-ended questions to provide more reliable qualitative data:
 - Combine the three open-ended questions on significant changes into one question. A new combined question could be 'What have been the most significant, educationally important, changes for your school under the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) and why?'
 - Replace the open-ended questions, 'What were the two most successful and cost effective strategies that you used so far?' and the teacher equivalent 'From your perspective, what strategies have been the most successful?' with a closed question covering successful strategies and rating of cost effectiveness, developing the response categories from the analyses of responses to these questions made by 2011 respondents
 - Adding a closed question to ask if successful strategies were also cost effective might be appropriate.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. The Smarter Schools National Partnerships

This section describes the three Smarter Schools National Partnerships, their aims and activities, and the intentions of the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS) to measure the impact of the Partnerships across the three NSW school sectors. It provides key information for understanding the operating context and interpreting the survey data.

1.1 The National Partnership Agreements

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) approved National Partnership Agreements aimed at raising education standards in all schools. In NSW, all three school sectors—NSW Government, Catholic and Independent—implemented three of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNP):

1. National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality
2. National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy
3. National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities.

The three National Partnerships (NPs), while working towards a common overarching goal, each had aims and strategies specific to their particular focus area. Within each there are a number of interventions, some of which are mandatory.

The three partnerships commenced with planning in 2009, but vary in terms of commencement year and duration. The NP on Literacy and Numeracy has now ceased; the two others are in the implementation phase.

Support for Aboriginal students, teachers, school leaders and school-community partnership activity is embedded across all NPs, with strategies in-line with the aim in NSW to halve the 2008 achievement gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy by 2012, and to eliminate the gap by 2016.

1.2 National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality

Under the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ NP), NSW will deliver system-wide reforms targeting critical points in teachers' careers, from pre-service through to leadership, designed to attract, develop, retain and reward a high-calibre workforce. It also aims to improve the quality and availability of teacher workforce data. It is a five-year program, commencing in 2009, and conducted in two staggered cohorts, each of three years duration.

Strategies under this partnership included

- teacher professional learning
- new and better pathways into teaching
- new professional standards to underpin national reforms

- nationally accredited process for accrediting/certifying Accomplished and Leading teachers
- joint engagement with higher education providers to improve teacher quality
- quality placements for teacher education courses
- school Centres for Excellence (including the employment of Highly Accomplished Teachers and paraprofessionals and the sector equivalent)
- improved mobility of the teaching workforce
- improved quality and availability of teacher workforce data, and
- improved management and continuous improvement in schools (linked to professional learning and national standards).

In addition reward reforms included

- improved pay dispersion to reward quality teaching
- improved reward structures for teachers and leaders who work in disadvantaged rural/remote and 'hard to staff' schools
- improved in-school support for teachers and leaders, particularly in disadvantaged 'hard to staff' schools such as those in rural/remote areas or with high Indigenous enrolments
- increased school based decision making about recruitment, staffing mix and budget
- continual learning for all teachers, and
- Indigenous teachers' and school leaders' engagement with community leaders.

In the Catholic sector, some of the Centres for Excellence operate as 'virtual Centres for Excellence'.

1.3 National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy

The National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy was implemented in 135 primary schools and in 12 combined primary/ secondary schools. Its main strategies were high quality, evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy, strong leadership, and effective use of student performance information. Teachers and school leaders in participating schools used whole-school approaches to professional learning, focused on reading, numeracy and the development of leadership capacity.

Whole-school or whole-class reading programs included

- Focus on Reading 3-6
- Accelerated Literacy
- Reading to Learn
- Mindful Learning: Mindful Teaching
- First Steps Literacy 2nd Edition - Reading
- English as a Second Language.

Whole-school or whole-class numeracy programs included

- Taking Off With Numeracy
- Count Me In Too
- Learning in Numeracy K-8

- First Steps Numeracy
- Numeracy Matters.

Schools also identified students at risk of achieving at or below minimum standard in NAPLAN in literacy or numeracy and developed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for them.

Individual reading interventions included

- MULTILIT
- Mindful Learning: Mindful Teaching
- Individual learning plans
- Working Out What Works
- First Steps Reading
- Supporting individual readers
- LEXIA
- Reading for Students at Risk
- Reading Tutors
- QuickSmart Literacy.

Individual numeracy interventions included

- Taking Off With Numeracy
- QuickSmart Numeracy
- Individual learning plans
- First Steps Numeracy
- Low SES Numeracy Pilot
- Numeracy Matters.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership was a two-year program from July 2009 to June 2011. There was an additional group of schools participating in a one-year addendum program (L&N Addendum), from Semester 2, 2010⁴.

1.4 National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities

The National Partnership on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities (Low SES NP) aims to provide the best quality teaching in schools where it is most needed. The Partnership provides flexibility for schools to decide on effective strategies for their context. Activities included

- teacher professional learning, including developing leadership capacity
- external partnerships with parents, other schools, business, the community, parent education, community engagement
- whole-school planning and evaluation

⁴ Schools participating in the addendum program were not included in the Cross Sectoral Impact Survey, except if they were engaged in another of the partnerships.

- employment of Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) (or the sectoral equivalent) and paraprofessionals
- flexible school organisational changes
- use of new technologies in teaching.

Some schools participating in the Low SES NP also implemented literacy and numeracy initiatives from the Literacy and Numeracy NP. Some schools also used funding to employ additional executive staff to assist with implementation and lead whole of school professional learning.

The Low SES NP involves four cohorts that each participate for four years, implemented in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. Two additional cohorts of government schools are undertaking a two-year reform extension, which commenced in July 2010 and January 2011 respectively⁵.

⁵ Schools participating in the reform extension were not included in the Cross Sectoral Impact Survey, except if they were engaged in another of the partnerships.

2. Evaluation of the NSW Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNPs)

High quality, rigorous and independent evaluation of the SSNPs is a priority for NSW education. Evaluation is guided by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Advisory Council (CESE AC)⁶—members were ministerially appointed, and include academics, NSW education stakeholders and high level national and international representatives.

Four state-level strategic evaluation projects have been commissioned on behalf of the NSW Minister for Education, to assess the impact, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the National Partnership activities across school sectors. These evaluations will report over the years from 2012 to 2017, commensurate with the completion timeframes of the initiatives being evaluated, and investigation of the sustainability of the changes made. Program-level evaluations of literacy and numeracy programs implemented for the Literacy and Numeracy SSNP in NSW were also commissioned. Evaluations were completed and reports released in early 2012.

In addition to these projects, the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS) was developed to inform overall assessments of the effectiveness of SSNP initiatives in NSW and to provide contextual information for the four state-level strategic evaluations. The survey will also capture shifts in education practice critical to achieving the SSNP outcomes and collect qualitative data about which strategies are perceived as most successful, cost effective and how significant challenges have been addressed.

2.1 Implementation of the Cross-sectoral Impact Survey (CSIS)

The CSIS collects data from schools participating in the SSNPs.⁷ It is being administered in several waves to account for the differing commencement dates of participating cohorts and the different duration of each Partnership, with administration occurring until 2017.

The first CSIS was administered in 2011 to principals, executives and teachers in schools at varying stages of implementation of the Partnerships. This report presents the findings of the analysis of the 2011 survey responses.

The Cross-sectoral Impact Survey Project Reference Group, which includes representatives from government, Catholic and the independent school education sectors, is guiding the implementation and analysis of the CSIS.

⁶ The CESE is a new body, which has taken on the functions of the National Partnerships Evaluation Committee (NPEC) as just one of its roles

⁷ Excludes schools participating in the LN Addendum program (commenced in 2010) and the LSES Reform Extension Initiative (commenced in 2010 and 2011).

2.2 Survey participant groups

Three main **versions** of the CSIS were developed to accommodate three **participant groups**.

- **Principal:** all principals of all SSNP schools
- **Executive:** all executive/ leadership team members of all SSNP schools
- **Teacher:** all teachers in a sample of SSNP schools.

A survey for key non school-based staff involved in high-level policy and administration of the SSNP is also being developed to provide insights about the impact of the SSNP on system-level support for schools.

2.3 Survey waves

2.3.1 Initial implementation (September 2011)

All cohorts participating in the SSNP were surveyed in 2011, except those participating in the one-year LN Addendum program and the two-year LSES Reform Extension Initiative, which are beyond the scope of the CSIS. For each participant group, four **variants** of the survey were administered to accommodate the various commencement dates of SSNP **cohorts**.

- 2009/2010 cohort (labelled 'e', for end)
- 2011 cohort (labelled 'n', for new)
- 2012 cohort (labelled 'p', for pre)
- Catholic schools working with the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) 'Virtual Centres for Excellence' initiative (either as a 'hub' or a 'spoke') (labelled 'c' for Catholic).

Some principals who had formerly worked at SSNP schools during the SSNP period received a fifth **variant** of the survey (labelled 'f', for former).

All future administrations of the survey (until sustainability) will be the same 'e' variant'.

2.3.2 Future iterations of the survey

Future administrations of school-based surveys are anticipated to occur for cohorts of schools at various points in their participation in SSNPs, approximately occurring

1. mid-point (for Low SES NP schools only)
2. on completion
3. two years after completion ("sustainability" surveys), which are a variant of the standard 'e' survey.

These subsequent survey cycles will be of significantly smaller scale than the 2011 administration, reflecting the smaller number of schools eligible to be administered the CSIS in accordance with the staggered SSNP start and finish dates.

The table below outlines our current understanding of when surveys will be distributed; it shows the full term of the CSIS but the current project and plan will only cover the years until the end of 2013 (phase 1).

2.3.3 Overview of data collection

Table 1 outlines when surveys will be distributed across the full term of the CSIS.

Table 1. Survey distribution

SSNP cohort ⁸	N schools in cohort	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
LN 2009–2011	147	e#		2 yr post				
LSES 2009–2012	138	e		e	2 yr post			
LSES 2010–2013	193	e		e		2 yr post		
LSES 2011–2014	191	n^	e	Mid pt	e		2 yr post	
LSES 2012–2015	115	p*		Mid pt		e		2 yr post
ITQ 2010–2012 ⁹	64	e	e		2 yr post			
ITQ 2011–2013	125	n		e		2 yr post		

The ‘e’ survey was not only administered at the end of a school’s participation in the SSNP, but also when they had been participating in the Partnership for at least 2 years and/or at the mid-point of their participation.

^The ‘n’ survey was distributed to those schools that were new to implementing the SSNP, i.e. for <12 months.

*The ‘p’ survey was distributed to schools that had not yet commenced participation.

2.4 Survey distribution 2011

The CSIS was developed and administered online via Survey Monkey in September 2011 (Term 3). Distribution of online survey links and collection and storage of responses was managed by the Educational Measurement and Schools Accountability Directorate (EMSAD).

⁸ The schools participating in the one-year LN NP Addendum program (commenced in 2010) and the two-year LSES Reform Extension Initiative (commenced in 2010 and 2011) are not included in the CSIS.

⁹ The Partnership was in place from 2010–2011: however, state funding for the Centre for Excellence (C4E) initiative has been extended an extra year, hence the ‘end’ survey in 2012. This is also the case for the 2011 cohort.

2.4.1 Survey exits

Survey respondents who had not been at their current school long enough to assess the impact of the SSNP were exited from the survey after answering demographic questions. Principals, teacher and executives were exited if they became a member of staff in their current school in Term 2 or Term 3 of 2011.

2.4.2 Survey responses

At least one completed response was received from 662 (of 936) schools (71%). There were 393 completed responses received from principals (approximately 42%). Exact response rates for teachers and executives cannot be calculated, as it is unclear exactly how many teachers and executives received the survey because principals were responsible for forwarding on the survey.

Our descriptive report showed that the schools that responded to the survey were broadly representative of all schools participating in the Partnerships.

2.5 Analytical approach: in-depth analysis of patterns of change

The initial analysis of the first year findings of the CSIS (provided in the Part 2 Descriptive report) showed that principals, executives and teachers perceived a range of improvements in their schools as a result of participation in the SSNPs. While those that had not yet commenced in the SSNPs also noted a range of improvements in their school over the previous two years, these changes were generally of a lesser magnitude.

The analyses for the interpretive report were designed to explore in greater detail the nature of the changes uncovered in the descriptive report. A key focus of the analyses is to determine when change occurs, examining where the greatest gains are seen and, on the survey-related and contextual variables, most strongly associated with overall outcomes of teaching capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity.

The outcomes of teaching capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity were selected to provide this information as they were the only quantitative questions included in the overall impact section of the CSIS survey, and they were part of a specific survey section (e.g. management, leadership). They were not included in any of the summary variables to avoid confounding analysis.

We developed summary variables, which combined questions or items based on an outcomes hierarchy to provide a theory of change and to facilitate regression modelling (by reducing the number of variables entered into the model; thus increasing power to detect a significant effect). The construction of the SSNP variables by domain and testing of the robustness of the approach is shown in Appendix 1, Figure 69.

We employed the full range of statistical tests to ensure that the data met the assumptions of the analyses to be used. Where any assumptions were violated,

alternative tests were applied to compensate for the nature of the data. For example, in our examination of when greatest gains are made we used non-parametric tests due to the non-normally distributed nature of the data.

We also carried out tests on the outcomes matrix we developed, using a series of regression analyses to assess associations between different levels. The significant nature of associations gave us added confidence in using this approach.

The approach we used is further detailed in Appendix 1.

2.6 Important considerations in interpreting the quantitative findings

Overall, we are confident in the findings from our analyses however, there are several limitations to the design and nature of the data, which should be considered when interpreting the quantitative findings in this report. Foremost of these are

1. **Construction of the Survey:** It is possible that some findings are an artefact of the way the survey was constructed, that is both what questions were asked, and of which respondent groups.
 - The outcomes hierarchy was derived from the CSIS as a means of facilitating statistical analysis. As this hierarchy was not part of the survey construction, summary variables are not identified for all domains for all levels of the hierarchy for all respondent groups. Analysis of patterns was therefore restricted to the identified domains. It is important to note that the teacher survey covered fewer domains than the executive/principal surveys.
 - Because principals, executives and teachers received different versions of the survey with different questions, the make-up of summary variables is somewhat different for each respondent group, which makes interpreting the findings difficult for some outcomes.
2. **Nature of available data.** The CSIS data is observational and comes from a self-report survey. In addition the data is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, and the designers of the survey had not identified specific hypotheses about change to be tested. Therefore all analyses undertaken for this report are exploratory in nature, and any associations found at this point need to be subject to further exploration with longitudinal datasets, which will be available for subsequent waves of survey data. The decision to draw both independent and dependent variables from the CSIS was a response to the limited data available at this point in time, and stemmed from a desire to understand more about preliminary patterns in the data, from which hypotheses may subsequently be formed, rather than to draw any definitive conclusions.
3. **Implementation of regression analyses.** Regression models are sensitive to order in which data is entered, and have the potential for random effects. While regression models do identify ‘predictors’ of change, the fact that all questions were asked at a single time point limits our ability to talk about one area as ‘causing’

change in another. The analysis at this stage can only suggest that certain changes in some areas (e.g. 'teaching, learning and professional development') appear to influence outcomes. As a result, the findings of the two-step regression model in the contextual chapter need to be viewed as secondary findings of interest that must be further explored in subsequent datasets. These findings should also be viewed within the limitations of the survey data as raised in point 1. As is customary, all assumptions underlying the regression model were checked, to ensure that the use of this analysis was statistically valid. Details on these statistical considerations are provided in the technical appendix (Appendix 1).

4. **Examining when greatest change occurs:** Only one round of the survey has been implemented so no pre- and post-data exist for any one cohort. To provide some insight at this stage the analysis compared different groups of schools, in different SSNPs, at different stages of involvement—comparing those yet to start in the LSES Partnership in 2012 (p), and those who commenced in the LSES and ITQ in 2011 (n) to explore the first question, and comparing those who commenced in the LSES and ITQ in 2011 (n) with those who commenced in the L&N, LSES and ITQ in 2009 and 2010 (e) to explore the second. In future reports, the analysis will compare responses for the same cohort over time, although the ability to do this will be impacted by staff turnover.
5. **Examining the influence of employment factors:** The principal survey questions assessing the impact of employment changes and the proportion of part-time, casual and inexperienced staff on SSNP implementation do not identify the magnitude of staff turnover or proportions of staff. This means that the report can only comment on the impact of staff turnover and composition, without knowing how many have left the school or what the proportions of part-time, casual and inexperienced staff are, i.e. principals of schools with both high and low proportions of turnover and staff in certain positions might see these as having a negative impact on implementation.
6. **Response rates:** There was at least one complete response from 662 of the 936 schools participating in the SSNPs in NSW (71%), but the response rate among principals, executives and teachers were lower. In the descriptive report (see Part 2) we analysed the patterns of respondents across various demographic factors, and found that, overall, the respondents were fairly representative of all participating schools. There were slightly lower responses from some school types and partnership types (e.g. schools in the ITQ NP and secondary schools are slightly under-represented) and this should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

2.7 Analytical approach: sampling, coding and theme analysis of responses to open-ended questions

The interpretive report also draws on the qualitative data summarised in the descriptive report from chapter 8—that is, responses to open-ended questions in the survey - to explore significant changes, successes and challenges and what the SSNPs were building on.

Qualitative data were analysed from a sample of respondents for all seven qualitative questions that appeared in one or other versions of the survey and responses from all principals for two of these questions. Respondents to the p survey were not asked questions about the impacts of the SSNP.

The process involved

- selecting a stratified random sample of respondents to include in the analysis
- developing, testing and refining a coding framework and assessing agreement between coders
- analysing coded data to understand patterns across the dataset and explore the reasons behind these trends, and
- creating word clouds using the Wordle Program, which give prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text; in this case the responses to the open questions.

The approach used is detailed in Appendix 2.

2.8 Important considerations in interpreting the qualitative findings

Overall, we are confident that the report represents the overall findings from the qualitative data within the limitations of the dataset, but there are some important considerations to keep in mind when reviewing the qualitative findings.

1. **The data was inconsistent and sometimes of poor quality**, either lacking in explanation or difficult to decipher, which made extracting the intended meaning of some comments difficult.¹⁰ This is the nature of qualitative data given in response to open questions in a survey, which often have limited explanatory power because the views of the person providing the feedback cannot be probed or clarified. The findings have value in that they can be tested or triangulated with other qualitative data being collected for the strategic level evaluations of the SSNPs and with the quantitative analysis.
2. **Completing open questions is voluntary and we have no evidence to assess whether the views of those who did or did not answer these questions differ.**
3. **The analysis covers a sample of respondents.** Given the concentration of responses within certain codes we are confident that we have captured the main themes, but it is important to remember that responses represent a sample of all respondents.
4. **The profile of sample respondents does not reflect the profile of all respondents on all demographic categories or by survey type (p, n, e, c).** While we randomly selected a stratified sample of respondents for the analysis, it was not possible to stratify by all key demographic criteria. The sample was chosen to be representative of the three school sectors and the four school types, not other

¹⁰ The quality of responses was not coded so it is not possible to quantify (quantify?) the proportion of quality responses.

criteria or survey type (p, n, e, c). For this reason the main focus of the analysis is not on difference by demographic category or survey type—as these were more appropriately and meaningfully handled in the quantitative analysis. But for the largest thematic categories we were able to explore differences in patterns across the respondent types and partnership types¹¹. For the questions on successes and challenges, which had a higher proportion of coded data (because all principal responses were included), we also considered the school's location: metropolitan, provincial or remote.

5. **While the questions for principals/ executives and teachers all focus on the same topics, the wording of two questions differs somewhat between principals/ executives and teachers.** We have included responses to these questions in the same analysis to facilitate comparisons where possible, but it is important to remember the difference in framing of the questions between the survey types might have influenced responses.
 - **Significant changes.** Principals/ executives were asked '*What have been the most significant, educationally important, changes for your school under the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) (so far)?*'; teachers were asked '*What have been the most significant teaching and learning changes for your school under the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s)?*'
 - **Successful strategies.** Principals/ executives were asked '*What were the two most successful and cost effective strategies that you used so far?*'; teachers were asked '*From your perspective, what strategies have been the most successful?*'
6. **Respondents interpreted differently the questions about why a change was significant and the outcomes of that change.** In their responses to the question about reasons for significance, some referred to an outcome of a change, some to a quality of the change or other reason, including not having had access to a particular type of support previously or the support being of higher quality now. This means data for this question and for the outcomes question was sometimes overlapping and sometimes difficult to interpret, particularly across respondent groups.
7. **It was difficult to link the data on change to the reason it was significant.** Because the survey questions on change and reason for significance were separated, it was sometimes difficult to make connections between them. Because some mentioned multiple changes with multiple reasons, exploration of links between codes was difficult, limiting our analytic power. For this reason, we have concentrated on exploring reasons of significance for the main changes perceived as significant.
8. **Some respondents referenced strategies that were successful but not cost-effective.** A minority of respondents described a strategy they said had been most effective but not cost effective. It is unclear if others thought strategies were effective but not cost effective without specifying this.
9. **It was sometimes difficult to interpret whether schools were building on something positive or addressing a deficit.** The original intention was to separate out responses to the question about what the SSNPs were/ would be building on

¹¹ We did not explore differences for Question 2 about why changes were significant because the question was interpreted differently by different respondents, and because differences might only reflect different interpretations.

into addressing deficits or building on prior successes but, in some cases, it was often unclear whether the reference was positive or negative.

10. **We have not mapped the responses on successes and challenges to the quantitative analysis.** The intention was to map the codes for the questions on challenges and successful strategies back to the quantitative dataset as variables to be used in the quantitative analysis. But the data resulted in too many codes to meaningfully map back so we have not undertaken this analysis. We have suggested changes to the questions in future iterations of the survey to address this issue.
11. **We have selected quotes to provide insight.** Because not all responses were equally explanatory, we selected illustrative quotes for this report to provide insight about how something works rather than because they broadly reflect all responses.

PART 2: DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

3. Profile: how representative is the respondent sample?

This chapter reports on the profile of

- all schools participating in the SSNP in NSW
- schools with at least one respondent to the CSIS
- schools with staff who completed the CSIS.

The purpose is to assess for differences that might impact on the generalisability of survey findings to the broader SSNP participant population. Overall, we found that the profile of respondent schools is comparable to that for all schools participating in the SSNP.

The participating school dataset

Overall, 936 schools are participating in the SSNPs in NSW. We used administrative data to understand the characteristics of this cohort so they could be compared to schools that responded to the survey.

3.1 Who are the schools participating in the SSNP?

3.1.1 What is the pattern of participation across the three different SSNP?

Most schools (88%) are participating in only one of the three SSNP—schools participating only in the LSES make up more than half (56%) of all participating schools, while another 21% of participating schools are only in the ITQ and 10% are only in the LN. A smaller proportion are participating in more than one Partnership: 7% in both the LSES and ITQ, 5% in both the LN and LSES and 0.3% schools in both the LN and ITQ. Only 0.3% schools are participating in all three Partnerships.

3.1.2 What are the characteristics of participating schools?

Type and size of participating schools

- Government schools make up the majority (80%) of participating schools; Catholic (17%) and Independent (3%) schools make up smaller proportions.
- Just over two-thirds (67%) of participating schools are primary schools; one-fifth (20%) are secondary schools; combined (8%) and special schools (4%) make up the remainder.

- The average number of full-time students enrolled in participating schools is 333 (range is 5–1866).

Location of participating schools

- Participating schools cover a wide range of regions. South Western Sydney, with just over one-fifth (21%), has the highest proportion of participating schools, followed by the North Coast with 15% and Western NSW with 14%.
- There is a fairly even split of schools between metropolitan (49%) and provincial (47%) locations; only 4% are remote schools.

Appendix 3 provides full details of participating schools.

3.2 What are the characteristics of survey respondents' schools and how do they compare with all participating schools?

The respondent school dataset

There is at least one survey response from 699 (of the 936) participating schools. To identify and account for any particular trends at the school level that could limit the generalisability of the survey findings, we compared the profile of respondents' schools to that of all schools participating in the SSNPs. To assess for significant differences, we compared profiles of non-respondent schools (i.e. schools with no respondents to the survey) with respondent schools (i.e. schools with at least one respondent to any survey) using a chi-square test of independence.

3.2.1 Overall the characteristics of respondents' schools are fairly comparable to participating schools

Overall, the characteristics of respondent schools are broadly aligned with those of all participating schools, but there are some slight variations by affiliation, school type, region and Partnership participation. While the differences were statistically significant, they were small. Where there are lower numbers of respondent schools from certain affiliations or partnerships, these may represent areas where future survey sampling can direct more attention to ensure a representative spread of groups.

3.2.2 What is the pattern of participation across the three SSNP for respondents' schools?

The majority of respondent schools are participating in the LSES (60%); 12% are participating in the LN. Schools participating in the ITQ make up a smaller proportion of

respondent schools (13%) than they do of all participating schools (22%); this difference is significant and is likely related to the low response rate for ITQ schools. As a result, all other Partnerships and configurations of participation are slightly over-represented.

3.2.3 What are the characteristics of respondents' schools?

Type and size of respondents' schools

- Government schools make up the majority (81%) of respondent schools; 14% are Catholic schools and 4% Independent schools. Independent schools are slightly over-represented among respondent schools and Catholic schools slightly under-represented; these differences are small but statistically significant.
- Over two-thirds (69%) of respondent schools are primary schools; 19% are secondary schools and the remainder are combined (9%) and special (3%) schools. Primary schools are slightly over-represented among respondent schools and secondary schools slightly under-represented; these differences are small but statistically significant.
- The average number of full-time students enrolled in a respondent school is 325 (range is 6–1866), which is very similar to that for participating schools.

Location of respondents' schools

- Respondents' schools are well spread across the regions, with 21% from South Western Sydney, 15% from the North Coast, 14% from Western NSW and 10% each from the Hunter/ Central Coast and Western Sydney. Smaller percentages of schools were from the Illawarra and South East (9%) New England (8%), the Riverina (8%), Northern Sydney (3%) and Sydney (2%). Overall, the proportional spread of schools is comparable to that for all participating schools. Schools from South Western Sydney, New England and Riverina are slightly over-represented and schools from Northern Sydney and the Illawarra are slightly under-represented.
- Respondents' schools are fairly evenly split between metropolitan (50%) and provincial (45%) locations; only a small number are remote schools (5%). This spread is comparable to that for all participating schools, with no statistically significant differences.

Respondent school characteristics are shown in full in Appendix 3.

3.3 Were the profiles of all respondents who completed the survey similar to the overall profile of participating schools on key factors?

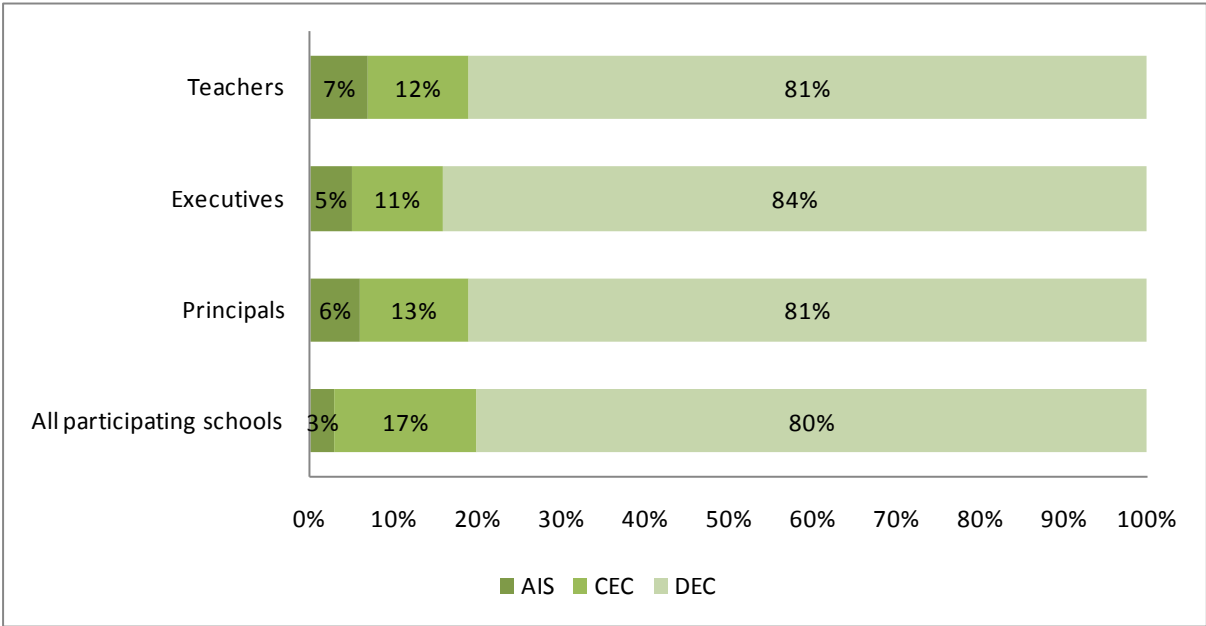
The survey completers dataset

Because respondents who had not been at their school for long enough to understand the impact of the SSNPs were exited from the survey after the demographic data section, only 662 schools had participants who completed the survey. Across these schools, there were 4376 survey completers (393 principals, 1331 executives and 2652 teachers). To assess whether the findings would generalise to all participating schools, the profile for each set of survey completers was compared to the profile of participating schools on two key factors: affiliation (Government, Catholic and Independent) and school type (primary, secondary, combined and special). The analysis for this section is based at the level of each survey completer rather than at the school level as in prior sections

3.3.1 Completed surveys by school affiliation are broadly comparable to participating schools

Overall, the spread of survey completers across school affiliation was similar to that for participating schools, with some minor variation (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Proportions of survey completers, as compared to all participating schools, by affiliation



Note: AIS = Australian Independent Schools, CEC = Catholic Education Commission, DEC= Department of Education and Communities

School affiliation for principals who completed the survey

The proportional spread of principals who completed the survey across the three school affiliations is generally comparable to that for all participating schools, with some small variations. Specifically, principals from Independent schools are slightly over-represented and principals from Catholic schools are slightly under-represented.

School affiliation for executives who completed the survey

The proportional spread of executives who completed the survey across the three school affiliations is comparable to that for all participating schools.

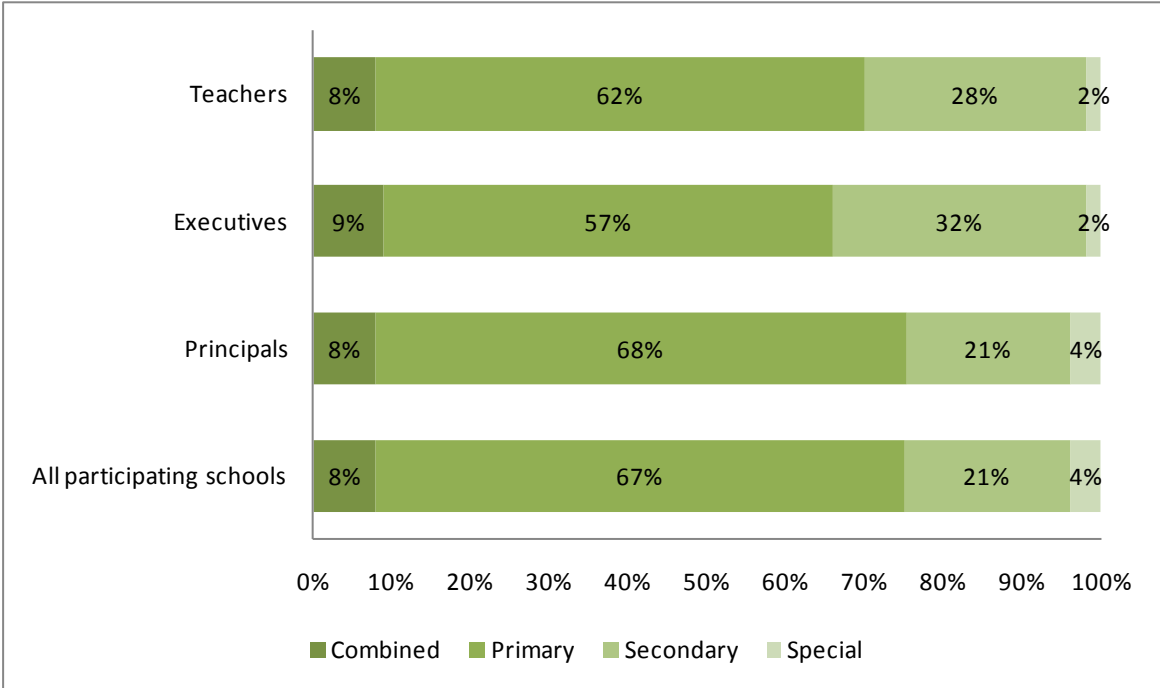
School affiliation for teachers who completed the survey

The proportional spread of teachers who completed the survey across the three school affiliations is generally comparable to that for all participating schools. As with principals, slightly more teachers who completed the survey are from Independent schools and slightly fewer from Catholic schools, compared with all participating schools.

3.3.2 Completed surveys by school type are broadly comparable to participating schools

Overall, the spread of survey completers across school type was similar to that for participating schools, with some minor variation (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Proportions of survey completers, as compared to all participating schools, by school type



School type for principals who completed the survey

The proportional spread of principals who completed the survey across school types is generally comparable to that for all participating schools, with no variations.

School type for executives who completed the survey

The spread of executives who completed the survey across the four school types is similar to the profile of all participating schools, with no variations.

School type for teachers who completed the survey

The proportion of teachers who completed the survey from each school type is somewhat comparable to the profile of all participating schools. However, teachers from special schools are slightly under-represented and teachers from secondary schools are slightly over-represented.

3.4 Were there any statistically significant differences between those who responded to the survey and were exited, and those who responded and completed the survey?

Survey completers and exiters

We assessed differences between those who completed the survey and those who were exited from it to determine whether respondents of any particular school type or affiliation were exited from the survey at greater rates. To do this we compared percentages of exiters and completers for each set of survey completers according to affiliation and school type.

Rates of survey completers and exiters are generally comparable across affiliation

The spread of principals and executives across the three affiliations was similar for those who completed the survey and those who were exited from it, with no statistically significant differences (see figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Rates of principals who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation

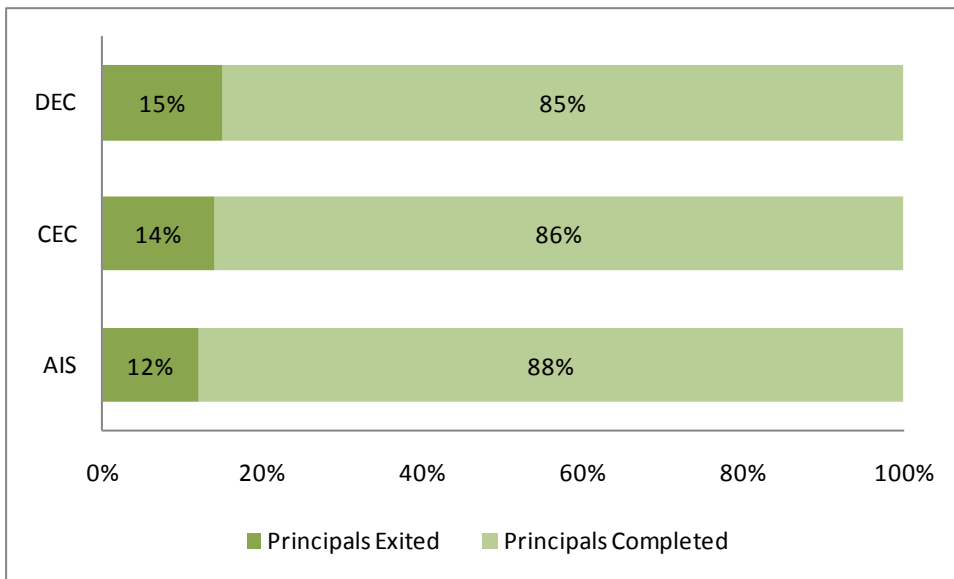
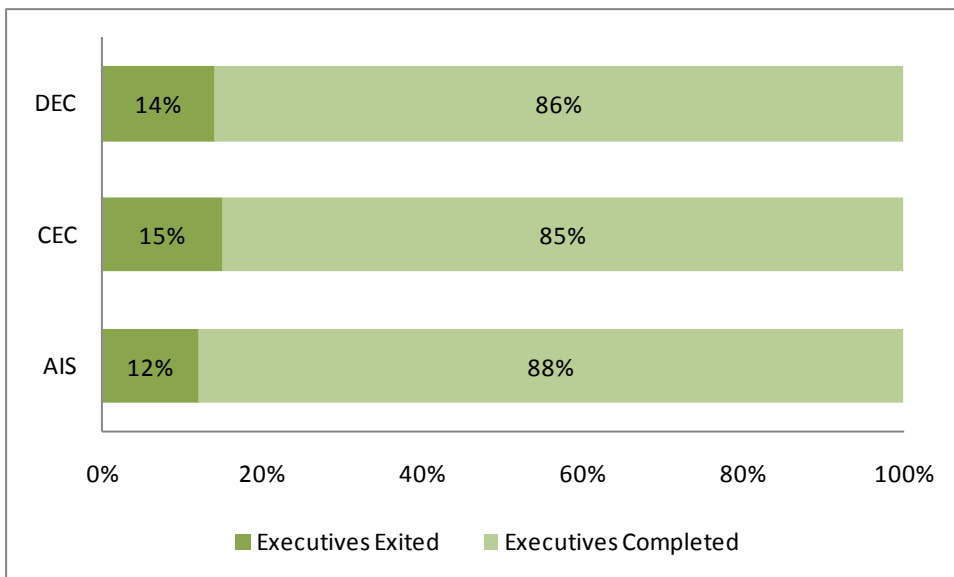


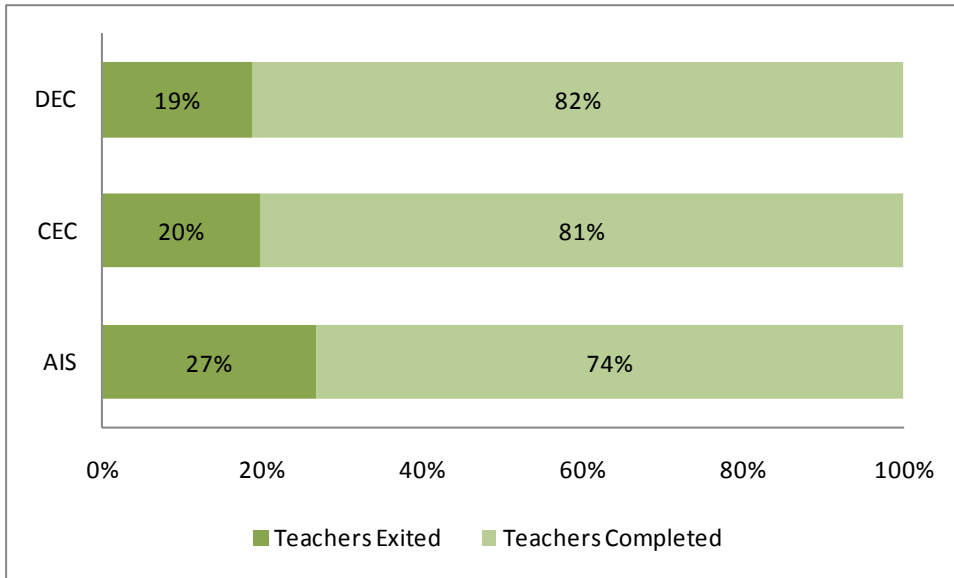
Figure 4. Rates of executives who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation



For the sample of teachers, slightly more teachers from Independent schools were exited from the survey (27%) than teachers from the other affiliations. This difference is statistically significant, and means that the profile of teachers with complete survey data contains proportionately fewer teachers from Independent schools¹² (see figure 5).

¹² Because proportionately more teachers from Independent schools responded to the survey overall, they are not under-represented among survey completers.

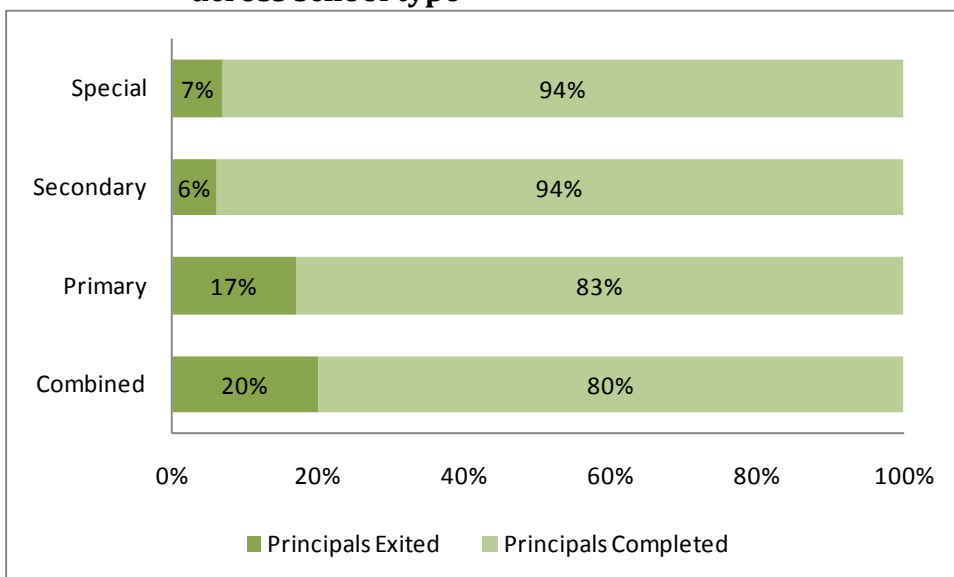
Figure 5. Rates of teachers who completed and were exited from the survey across affiliation



3.4.1 Rates of survey completers and exiters are somewhat less comparable across school type

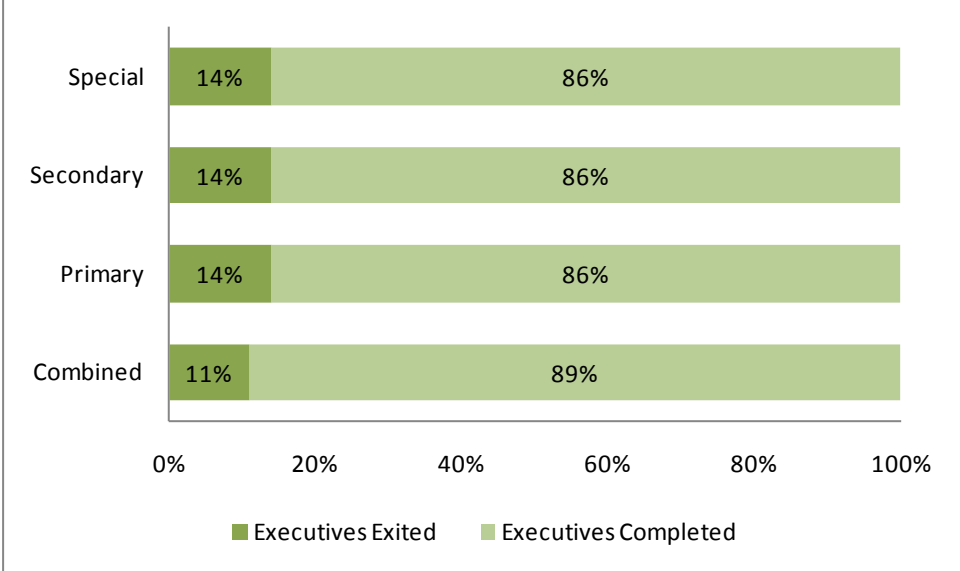
Principals from combined (20%) and primary schools (17%) were exited from the survey at a slightly higher rate than those from secondary (6%) and special schools (1%). This difference in exit rates across school type is statistically significant, meaning that principals from secondary and special schools are somewhat under-represented among survey completers (see figure 6).

Figure 6. Rates of principals who completed and were exited from the survey across school type



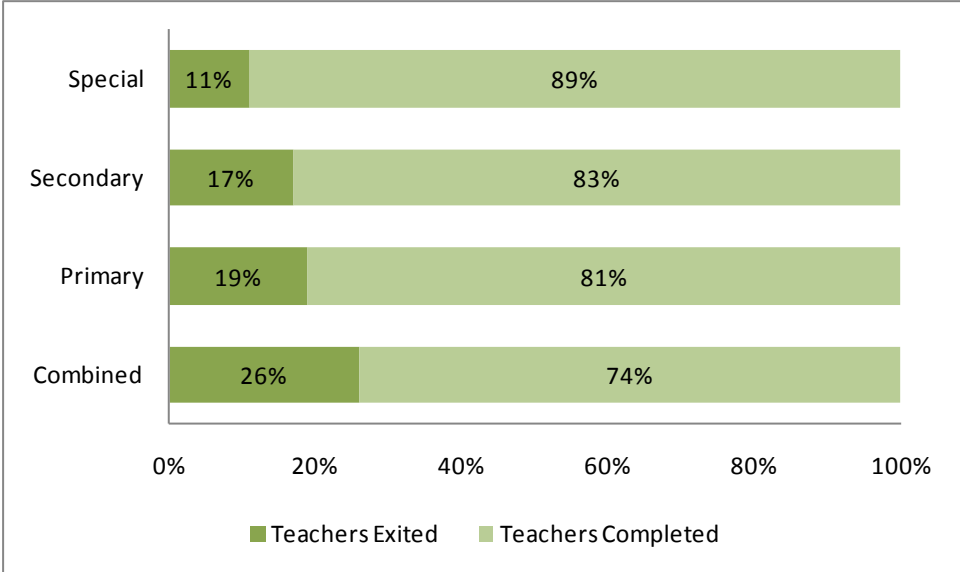
There are no statistically significant differences in rates of executives exited from the survey across school types (see figure 7).

Figure 7. Rates of executives who completed and were exited from the survey across school type



Teachers from combined (26%), primary (19%) and secondary (17%) schools were exited from the survey at a slightly higher rate than those from special schools (11%). This difference in exit rates across school type is statistically significant, meaning that teachers from these schools are somewhat under-represented among survey completers (see figure 8).

Figure 8. Rates of teachers who completed and were exited from the survey across school type



4. Profile of survey respondents: demographic data

Survey demographic data

The survey had a small number of questions (different items for principals, executives and teachers) to capture demographic data from both those who exited and those who completed the survey.

Demographic data was analysed by respondent group and survey variant (e, n and p) within each. Where characteristics were similar across variants, trends are reported as a whole, with figures in brackets representing the percentage range across different survey variants. Differences by role across survey variants are highlighted separately, as they may influence reporting-of-change data.

Finally, any differences by demographic factors between teachers who completed and those who exited the survey were compared using the chi-square test of independence. But these tests could not be run for principals and executives because of the small sample sizes and low rates of exit from the survey.

4.1 Respondent principal demographics

4.1.1 Principal demographic profile: hands-on and experienced, but fairly new to the school

Across all survey variants, respondent principals are generally established in their role, with over half having worked as a principal **for more than five years**. Most (82%–89%) had only been principal of their current school for 1–3 years. A small proportion (7%–13%) are **acting or relieving** principal at their current school.

In general, most principals reported being **personally involved in instructional leadership** within their school, with only 2%–15% reporting that this task is delegated to others.

The overall mean number of teaching staff per school was 22 (range 0-105), and this did not vary significantly across survey variants.

4.1.2 Two main differences between principal demographics by survey variant

Demographic characteristics of principals are generally consistent across survey variants, with two exceptions. Principals who completed the p survey are different to principals completing e and n surveys on two items.

- Firstly, there are slightly more **acting/ relieving** principals in the p survey variant (13% as compared to 7%–8% in e and n survey schools).
- Secondly, a lower proportion of principals in the p survey variant reported **delegating instructional leadership** (2% as compared to 10%–15% across e and n survey schools).

Detailed breakdowns of each demographic factor by survey variant are presented in Appendix 4.

4.2 Respondent executive demographics

4.2.1 Executive demographic profile: generally experienced and in full-time position, but new to the school

More than half of executive respondents have been working as an executive for **more than five years**. But, as for principals, most executives had only been working in their **current school for up to three years** (78%–90%). Almost one-quarter of executives are working in their current role in an **acting** or **relieving** capacity. The majority (88%–93%) reported being in a **full-time** position.

4.2.2 No differences between executive demographics by survey variant

Patterns are consistent across executive respondents in all three survey variants.

Detailed breakdowns of demographics for executives in each survey variant are presented in Appendix 4.

4.3 Respondent teacher demographics

4.3.1 Teacher demographic profile: of varying ages and accreditation levels and new to their school

Experience: Across all survey variants, about half of the teacher respondents (45%–50%) have been teaching for **more than 10 years**, with a further 19%–24% teaching for 3–5 years. While teachers are experienced, the data highlight teacher mobility, with most (81%–91%) only at their current school for 1–3 years.

Employment: The majority of teachers who responded are employed on a **full-time** basis (80%–86%) and are in **permanent** positions (76%–80%). Only one-fifth (20%) are **temporary** staff and very few (1%) are **casual**.

Education and accreditation: Education level varies among teacher respondents. Just over half of teacher respondents (55%–60%) hold a Bachelor degree as their highest level of education, while 16%–20% hold a Graduate diploma and 7%–14% hold an Undergraduate diploma. The remainder hold either a Masters degree (10%), a Doctoral degree (0.2%) or another type of qualification (3%).

Almost half of the teacher respondents (45%–49%) hold a Professional Competence Accreditation, 5%–6% hold a Professional Accomplishment Accreditation and only 2% hold a Professional Leadership Accreditation. The remaining 42%–47% said that they held an ‘other’ type of accreditation, for example, not having any accreditation, or currently undertaking their first accreditation.

A second demographic question asked teachers about the accreditation level they are currently undertaking. About two-thirds of teacher respondents are not currently undertaking further accreditation. Another 17%–20% are currently undertaking Professional Competence Accreditation, 7%–11% are currently undertaking a Professional Accomplishment Accreditation and 1% are currently undertaking a Professional Leadership Accreditation. Finally, 8% are currently undertaking a level of teacher accreditation not specified within the response set.

Demographics: Teacher respondents are from a wide range of age groups with an even spread of respondents across the age brackets from 20–60 years. A small number of teachers (4%) are aged 60 and over.

4.3.2 Two differences between teacher demographics by survey variant

Demographic characteristics of teachers are generally consistent across survey variants, with two exceptions.

- Firstly, teachers in the p survey group are slightly **more** likely to have an undergraduate diploma (14% as compared to 7%–8% in e and n schools).
- Secondly, teachers in the p survey group are slightly **less** likely to be aged 30 and under (20% as compared to 25%–27% across e survey and n survey schools).

Detailed breakdowns of demographics for teachers in each survey variant are presented in Appendix 4.

4.3.3 Differences in teachers exited from survey and those who completed the survey

Teachers who were exited from the survey were different to those who completed the survey on three factors: age, education and employment.

Demographics and education: Teachers exited from the survey are more likely to be **younger** (30 and under); this difference is statistically significant. They are also more likely to be **currently undertaking** their Professional Competence or Professional Accomplishment accreditation and to have completed a higher level of further education (Masters or Doctoral degree).

Employment: Teachers exited from the survey are more likely to be **temporary** or **casual staff**; this difference is statistically significant. There are no significant differences in rates of exited teachers for **full-time** as compared to **part-time** staff.

5. Respondents' perceptions of changes prior to commencing in the SSNP (p survey)

This chapter contains a brief description of respondents' views on changes in their abilities, practices and schools prior to commencing in the SSNP. The p survey asked respondents to reflect on changes and developments in their schools since early 2010 and many from all three groups (principals, executives and teachers) reported that over this period there had been increases in many of the areas also targeted by the SSNP. This suggests that other initiatives to improve teaching quality are also driving change in schools. For each survey item, the percentage of respondents reporting any change (small, moderate, large or very large) is given, followed by the proportion reporting moderate to very large change (moderate, large or very large).

The data set (p survey)

The final cohort of schools to commence the LSES (2012–2015) was surveyed prior to commencement provided they weren't already involved in another SSNP. Thus, these respondents can provide a benchmark of the level of change and development activities occurring in schools due to initiatives other than the SSNPs. A total of 690 people completed the p survey: 45 principals, 156 executives and 489 teachers. For profiles of respondents and the schools in which they work see chapters 2 and 3.

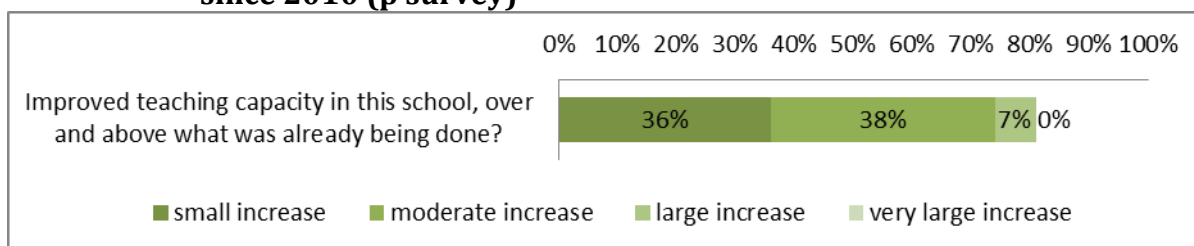
5.1 Principals' views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey)

On the whole, most principals reported small changes for themselves, staff practices and their schools; only a small proportion reported moderate to large changes occurring prior to involvement in the SSNP.

5.1.1 Overall impact of changes since early 2010

Overall, 81% of principals said that teacher capacity in their school had improved since early 2010; 45% said the improvement had been moderate or large (see figure 9).

Figure 9. Principals' perceptions of overall improvements in teacher capacity since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 42.

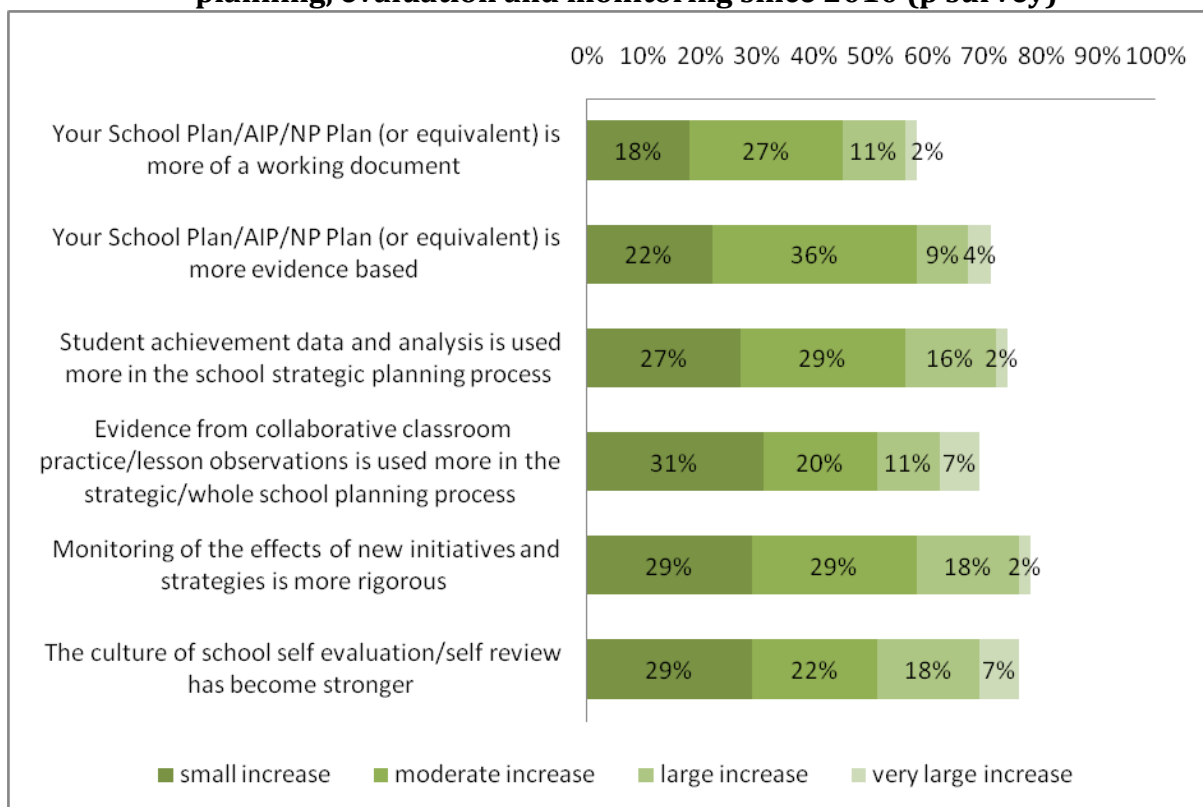
5.1.2 Principals' views of management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010

The majority of principals reported some changes in their schools since early 2010 in the areas of management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring. Over half (58%) described their school plan (or equivalent) as more of a working document and 71% said it was more evidence based, with 40% and 49%, respectively, describing the changes as moderate to very large (see figure 10).

About three-quarters (74%) are now also using student achievement data and analysis more in the strategic planning process, with 47% describing the increase as moderate to very large. Similarly, 69% reported using evidence from collaborative classroom practice more in strategic/ whole-of-school planning, with 38% reporting the increase as moderate to very large.

Over three-quarters (78%) reported increasingly rigorous monitoring of the effects of new initiatives, with 49% reporting moderate to very large increases. Overall, 76% said the culture of school self-evaluation and self-review had increased; 47% reported the change as moderate to very large.

Figure 10. Principals' perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 45.

5.1.3 Principals' views of teaching, learning and professional development since 2010

Principals responding to the p survey were positive about improved outcomes for teachers and students from professional development activities compared to early 2010, although fewer reported increases in the availability of professional development options for teachers (see figure 11).

Overall, principals were very positive about changes in outcomes from teaching, learning and professional development since early 2010, with 76% saying that students in the school are more engaged with teaching and learning and 80% saying that the overall quality of teaching has improved (40% and 39% reported moderate to very large increases, respectively).

While 56% of principals said they were now more able to arrange for instructional support to be provided to individual teachers (31% reported the increase as moderate to very large), only 35% said their ability to provide this support themselves had increased (19% reported the increase as moderate to very large).

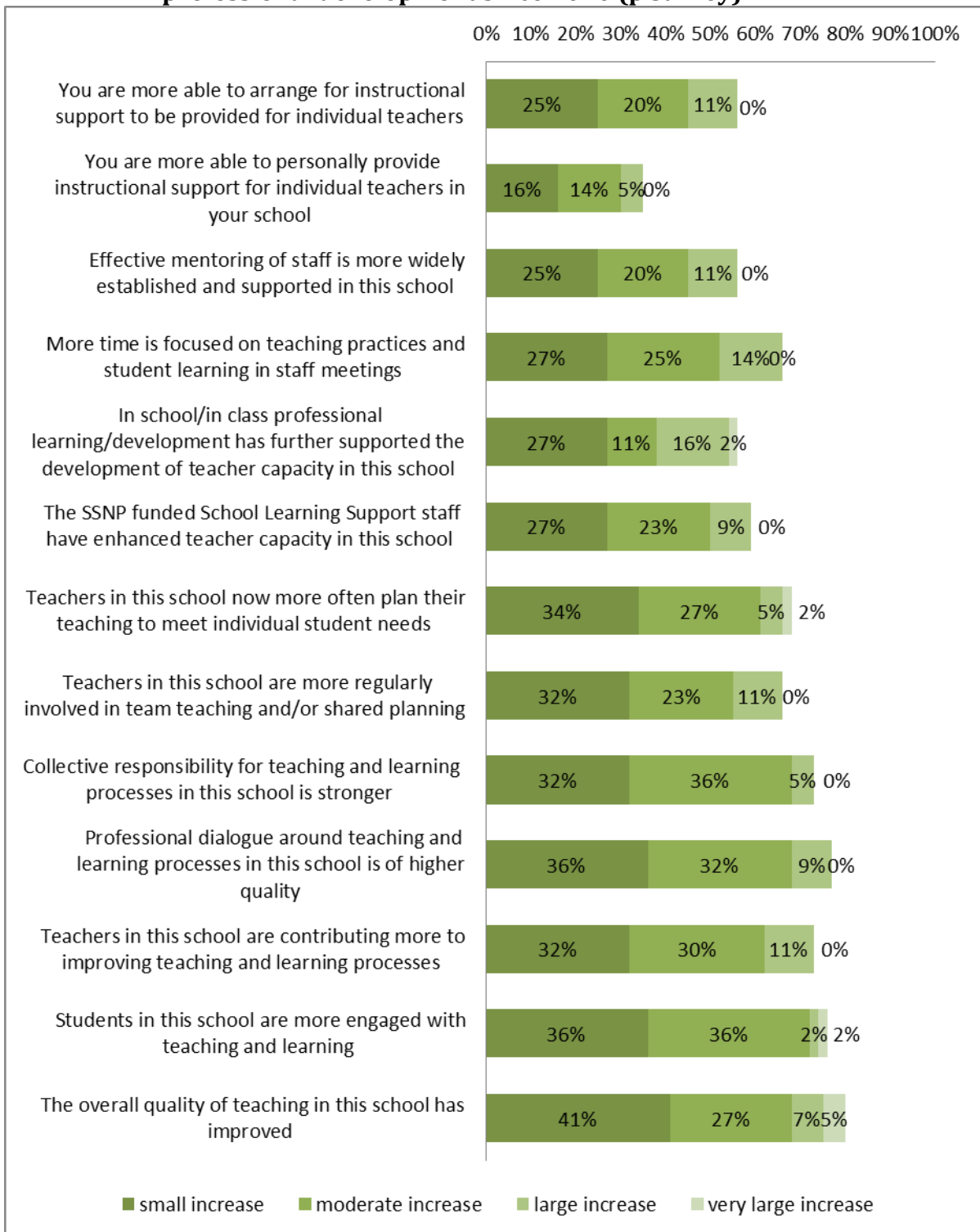
Many principals described increases in the establishment and support of effective mentoring (56% reported any increase, 31% reported a moderate to very large increase), the amount of time focused on teaching practices and student learning in staff

meetings (66% reported any increase, 39% reported moderate to very large increase) and in-school/ in-class professional development (56% reported any increase, 29% reported a moderate to very large increase). Interestingly for the p survey, 59% of principals also said that SSNP-funded school learning support staff had enhanced teacher capacity in the school (32% reported a moderate to large increase).

In terms of teacher behaviour, over 65% of principals said that teachers now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs and are more regularly involved in team teaching and/or shared planning (35% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Principals were very positive about changes in teacher attitudes: about three-quarters (73%) reported increases in collective responsibility for teaching and learning processes and that teachers are contributing more to improving these processes (41% described a moderate to very large increase). A similar proportion of principals (77%) reported that professional dialogue around teaching and learning is now of a higher quality (41% described a moderate to large increase).

Figure 11. Principals' perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 44.

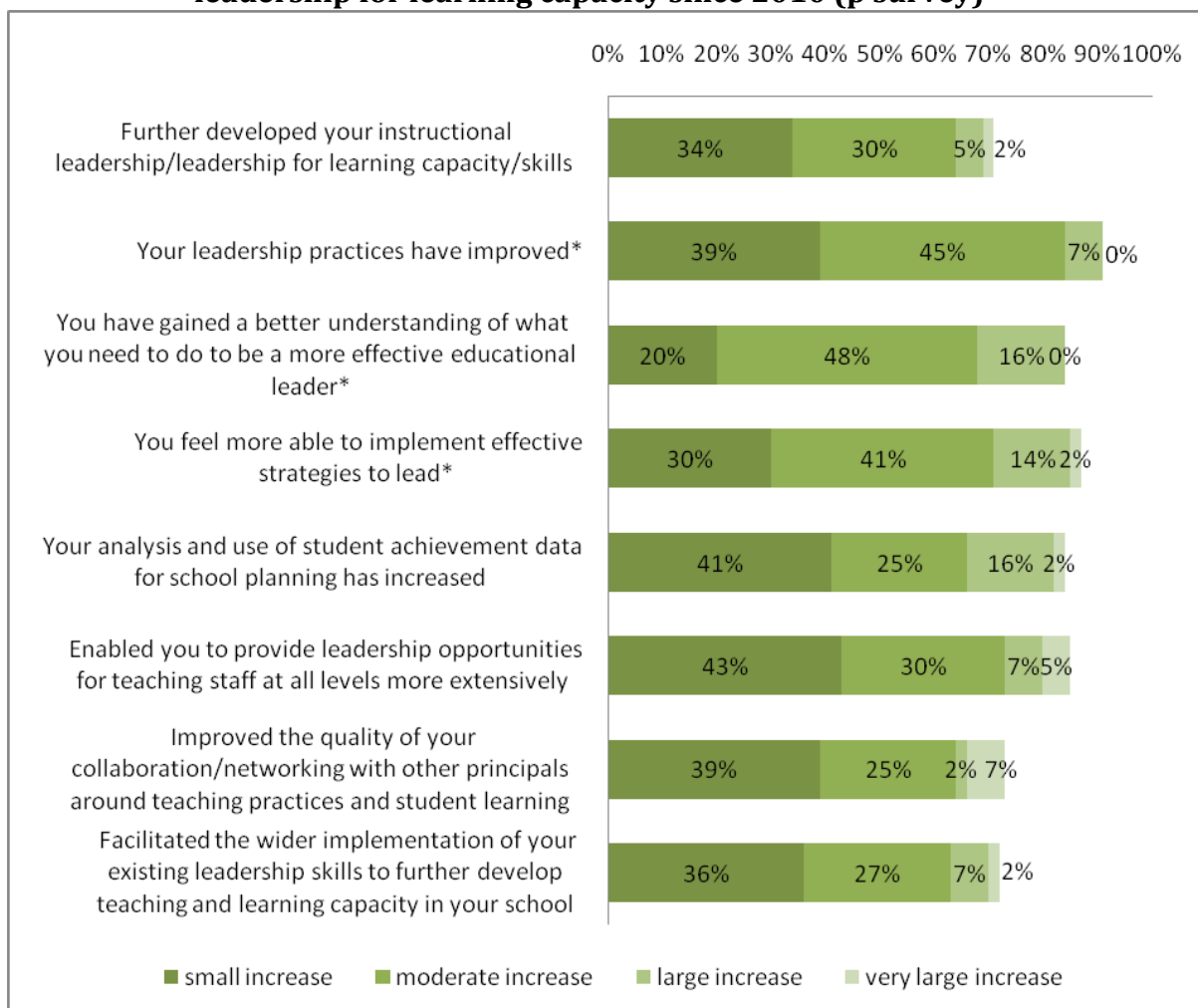
5.1.4 Principals' views of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010

Principals responding to the p survey indicated that their leadership skills and practices had increased across a range of areas since early 2010. Just under three-quarters (71%) reported that recent initiatives or strategies in their school had further developed their skills or capabilities in instructional leadership or leadership for learning (37% reported a moderate to very large increase) (see figure 12).

Principals indicated they had gained a lot from their formal and informal professional learning experiences since 2010, with 91% saying their leadership practices have improved (52% reported a moderate to very large increase), 84% said they have gained a better understanding of what they need to do to be a more effective educational leader (64% reported a moderate to very large increase), 87% said they are more able to implement effective strategies to lead (43% reported a moderate to very large increase) and 84% said their analysis and use of student achievement data for school planning has increased (43% reported a moderate to very large increase).

The majority of principals were positive about the extent to which recent initiatives or strategies had supported leadership and collaboration: 85% said they were more able provide leadership opportunities for teaching staff at all levels (42% reported a moderate to very large increase), 73% reported an improved quality of their networking or collaboration with other principals (34% reported a moderate to very large increase) and 72% said they are now better able to implement existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity in their school (36% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Figure 12. Principals' perceptions of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 44. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

5.1.5 Principals' views of changes to planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010

Many principals responding to the p survey reported advances in the areas of collaborative planning and action, broader community engagement and collaboration with other institutions since early 2010, although the extent of reported change varied across the planning, policy action and resourcing initiatives (see figure 13).

Over 80% of principals reported increases in the extent to which shared school improvement goals are more focused and more actively promoted and that there is now a stronger culture of collaboration of and shared responsibility for outcomes (45%, 49% and 47% reported moderate to very large increases, respectively).

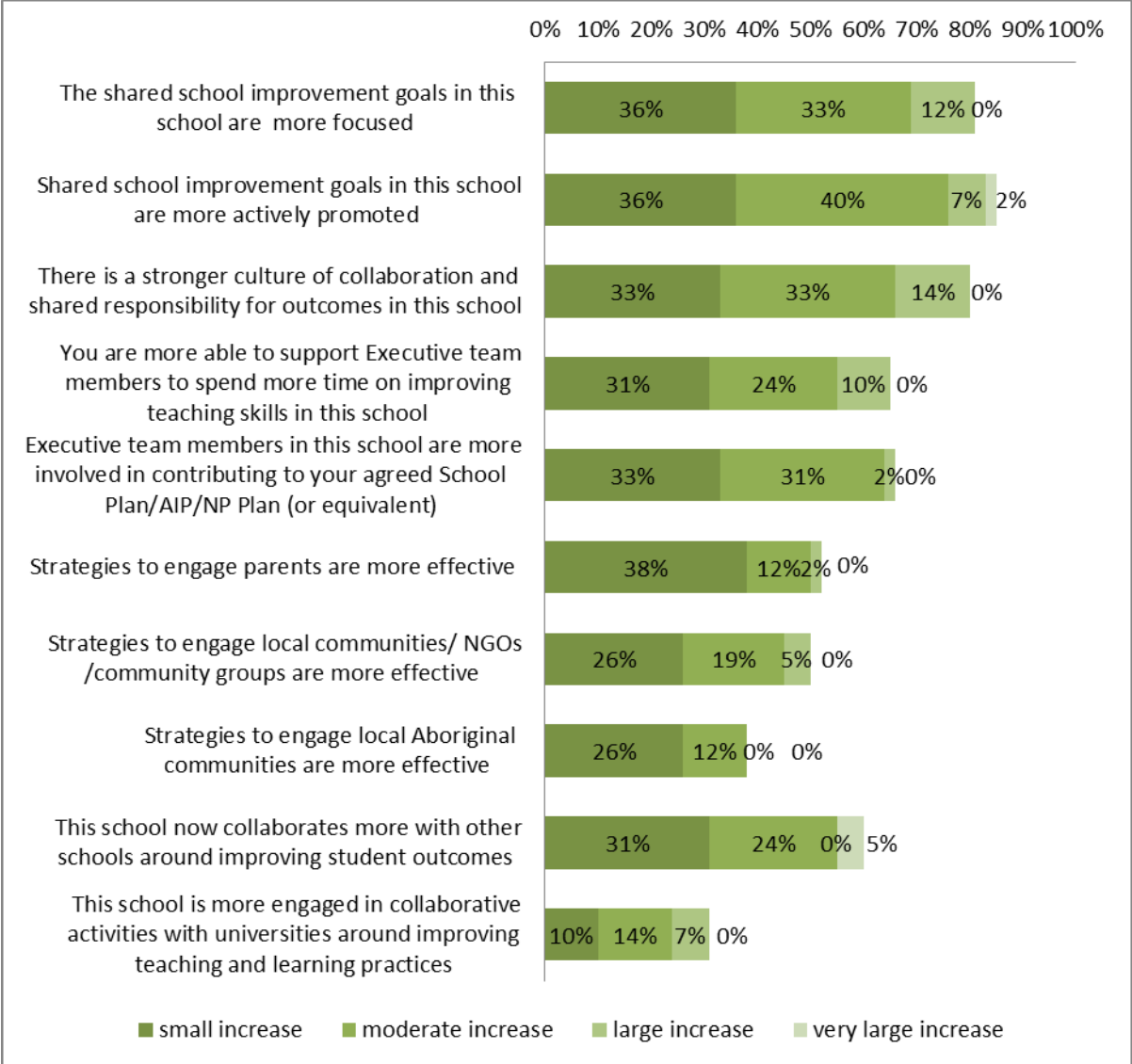
Approximately 65% of principals reported an increased ability to support executive team members, allowing them to spend more time on improving teaching skills in their school. A similar proportion reported that executive team members are more involved

in contributing to the school plan (or equivalent) (34% and 33% reported moderate to large increases, respectively).

Fewer reported increases in the effectiveness of strategies to engage the broader community. Approximately 50% of principals reported increases in the effectiveness of their strategies to engage parents and local communities, community groups and NGOs (14% and 24% reported moderate to very large increases, respectively). Fewer (38%) reported increases in the effectiveness of strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities (12% reported a moderate increase).

Principals were almost twice as likely to report increased engagement with other schools (60% reported any increase, 29% reported a moderate to very large increase) than with universities (31% reported any increase, 21% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Figure 13. Principals’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 42.

5.1.6 Principals' views of staffing impacts since 2010

The final section of the principal survey explored the impact of changes in staffing and conditions of employment since early 2010. Principals responding to the p survey reported both positive and negative impacts in these areas, with the positive outweighing the negative.

A relatively large proportion of principals (up to 52%) indicated that one or more of the 18 questions about staffing impacts were not applicable to them, as they did not have those positions (e.g. no executive team) or staff in that category (e.g. no inexperienced teachers). As such, we have removed the 'not applicable' responses from the denominator to better understand the impacts in schools where staffing changes have occurred (see table 2).

New staff

Ninety percent of principals reported that changes in executive team membership were seen to have positively supported the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives in schools, with 60% reporting a moderate to very large positive impact. Similarly, 80% of principals reported changes in teaching staff were seen to have positively supported the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives in schools, with 57% reporting a moderate to very large positive impact. Eighty-three percent of principals reported that changes in teaching staff in particular areas were seen to positively support the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives, with 45% reporting a moderate to very large positive impact.

About 54% of principals reported that these changes in executive and teaching staff also impeded the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives in their schools, with approximately 18% saying the impact was moderate to very large. Findings suggest changes in teaching staff in particular areas was most disruptive, with 62% reporting these changes have impeded the successful implementation or maintenance of new initiatives in their school.

About one-fifth (19%) of principals reported no executive team changes (10% had no executive team), 17% reported no changes in teaching staff and 31% reported no changes in teaching staff in specific areas since early 2010.

Acting/relieving and temporary/casual staff

Eighty-four percent of principals reported that the proportion of acting/relieving or temporary staff on the executive team was seen to positively support the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives (58% reported a moderate to very large impact). A slightly lower proportion of principals (76%) said that the proportion of temporary or casual teachers had supported the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives and fewer (39%) described this impact as moderate to very large.

The proportion of temporary or casual teachers seems to have been more of an impediment than the proportion of acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team. Sixty-one percent of principals said the proportion of temporary or casual teachers impeded the successful implementation or maintenance of new initiatives (29% reported a moderate to very large impact), while only 42% reported that acting/ relieving or temporary executives were an impediment (16% reported a moderate to very large impact).

Sixteen percent of principals reported no acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team (10% had no executive team) and 10% reported no temporary or casual teachers.

Part-time staff

While the majority of schools did not have part-time executive team members, where they did occur, these staff appear to have been more of a support than impediment. Sixty-five percent of principals with part-time executive team members reported this to have had a positive impact, while only 40% reported it as an impediment.

Similarly, more principals reported the proportion of part-time teachers as having a positive (62%) rather than a negative impact (38%).

Less than half of principals (42%) reported having no part-time executives (10% had no executive team) and 12% had no part-time teachers.

Inexperienced staff

A large group of principals reported that the proportion of inexperienced executive team members and teachers positively supported the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives in their school (83% and 86%, respectively), almost half (41%) described the impact as moderate to very large.

Twenty-one percent of principals reported having no inexperienced executive team members and 12% reported having no inexperienced teachers.

Table 2. Principals' perceptions of impact of staffing changes on the implementation or maintenance of new initiatives (p survey)

Staffing group and type of question	No impact	Any impact	Moderate to very large impact	Not Applicable
	% respondents where question is applicable			% all respondents
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>				
Q1 New executive team members	10%	90%	60%	29%
Q7 Acting/ relieving executive team members	16%	84%	58%	26%
Q11 Part-time executive team members	35%	65%	45%	52%
Q15 Inexperienced executive team members	17%	83%	41%	31%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>				
Q2 New executive team members	47%	53%	20%	29%
Q8 Acting/ relieving executive team members	58%	42%	16%	26%
Q12 Part-time executive team members	60%	40%	20%	52%
Q16 Inexperienced executive team members	41%	59%	34%	31%
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>				
Q3 New teachers	20%	80%	57%	17%
Q5 Teachers in special areas	17%	83%	45%	31%
Q9 Casual teachers	24%	76%	39%	10%
Q13 Part-time teachers	38%	62%	38%	12%
Q17 Inexperienced teachers	14%	86%	41%	12%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>				
Q4 New teachers	46%	54%	17%	17%
Q6 Teachers in special areas	38%	62%	24%	31%
Q10 Casual teachers	39%	61%	29%	10%
Q14 Part-time teachers	62%	38%	24%	12%
Q18 Inexperienced teachers	35%	65%	32%	12%

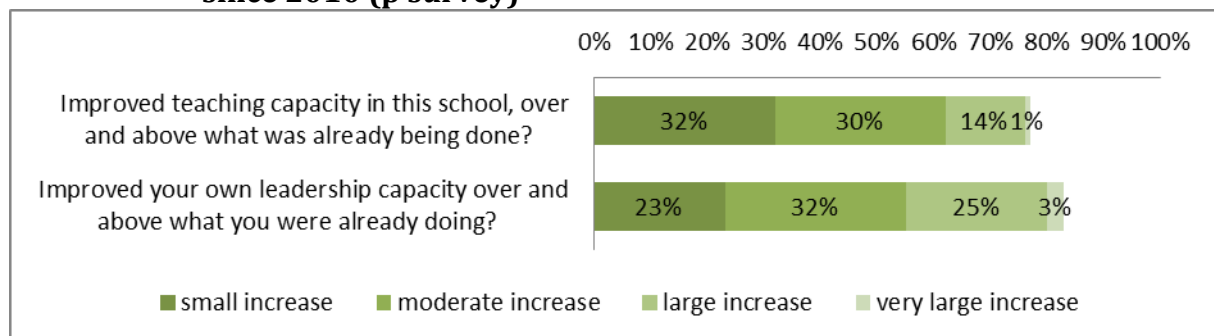
5.2 Executives' views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey)

On the whole, executives' responses to the p survey showed a pattern of moderate to large changes for many since early 2010, and small or very large changes for a much smaller proportion. For most items in this survey a small proportion of executives reported negative changes.

5.2.1 Overall impact of changes since early 2010

Overall, executives reported that teaching capacity in their school and their own leadership capacity had increased. About three-quarters (77%) reported that teaching capacity had improved (45% described the increase as moderate to very large) and 83% that their own leadership capacity had improved (60% described the increase as moderate to very large) (see figure 14).

Figure 14. Executives' perceptions of overall improvements in teacher capacity since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 143.

5.2.2 Executives' views of management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010

The majority of executives reported some positive changes in the areas of management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring in their schools since early 2010. About two-thirds described the school plan (or equivalent) as more of a working document (66%) and more evidence based (69%), with 55% and 59%, respectively, describing the change as moderate to very large (see figure 15).

Three-quarters (75%) of executives reported an increase in use of student achievement data and analysis in the school strategic planning process; 63% reported the increase as moderate to very large. Similarly, 68% of executives reported an increase in the use of evidence from collaborative classroom practice and lesson observations in strategic and whole-of-school planning processes, with 49% describing the increase as moderate to very large.

Just under three-quarters (71%) reported increasingly rigorous monitoring of the effects of new initiatives; 58% described the change as moderate to very large. Similarly, 74% reported that the culture of school self-evaluation and self-review had increased (58% described the change as moderate to very large) and 73% reported that accountability for teaching and learning activities had increased (56% described the change as moderate to very large).

Figure 15. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 156.

5.2.3 Executives’ views of teaching, learning and professional development since 2010

Executives responding to the p survey were, on the whole, positive about increases in the availability of professional development options for teachers since early 2010. A high proportion reported that professional development had a positive impact on teacher practice; fewer reported increased student engagement (see figure 16).

Almost three-quarters (74%) reported that the overall quality of teaching had improved (49% described the increase as moderate to very large) and 66% that students are more

engaged with teaching and learning (45% described the increase as moderate to very large).

A large proportion of executives (72%) said that their ability to personally provide instructional support for teachers in their school had increased since early 2010, with 51% describing the increase as moderate to very large.

The majority of executives (almost 70%) described increases in a range of practices to enhance teacher skills

- establishment and support of effective mentoring (47% reported the extent of change as moderate to very large)
- amount of time in staff meetings focused on teaching practices and student learning (53% reported the extent of change as moderate to very large)
- in-school/ in-class professional development (48% reported the extent of change as moderate to very large)

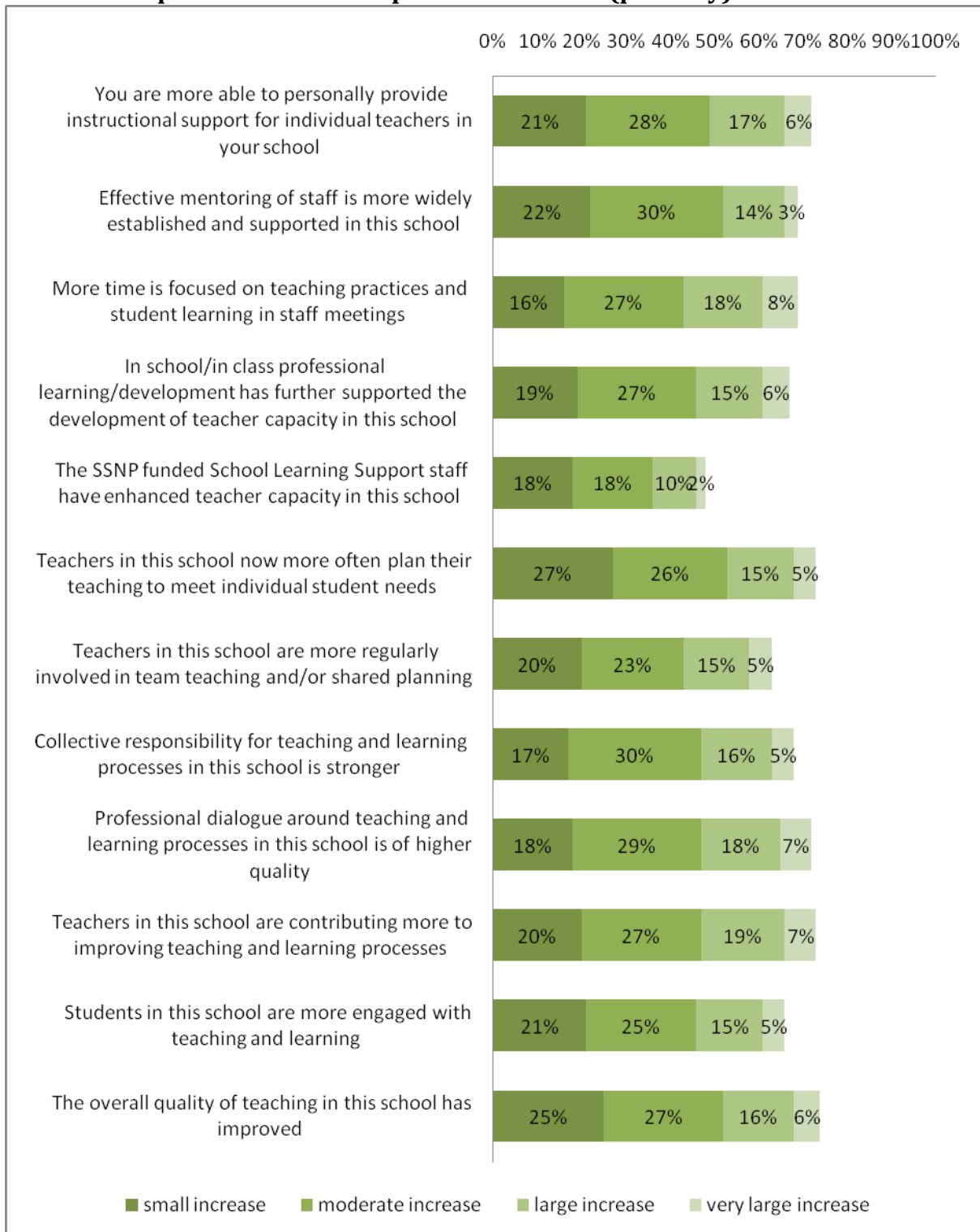
Interestingly for the p survey, about half of executives (48%) said that SSNP-funded school learning support staff had enhanced teacher capacity in the school (30% reported the increase as moderate to large).

In terms of teacher behaviour, over 73% of executives said that teachers now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs (46% reported a moderate to very large increase). Just under two-thirds (63%) reported that teachers are more regularly involved in team teaching and/or shared planning (43% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Approximately 70% reported increases in

- collective responsibility for teaching and learning processes (51% reported the increase as moderate to very large)
- the quality of professional dialogue around teaching and learning (54% reported the increase as moderate to very large)
- the contribution of teachers to improving teaching and learning processes (53% reported the increase as moderate to very large).

Figure 16. Executives' perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 154.

5.2.4 Executives' views of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010

Executives responding to the p survey indicated that their leadership skills and practices had increased across a range of areas since early 2010. Three-quarters (75%) reported that recent initiatives or strategies in their school had further developed their skills or capabilities in instructional leadership or leadership for learning (48% reported a moderate to very large increase) (see figure 17).

Executives indicated they had gained a lot from their formal and informal professional learning experiences since 2010, with 85% saying that

- their leadership practices have improved (67% described a moderate to very large increase)
- they have gained a better understanding of what they need to do to be a more effective educational leader (68% described a moderate to very large increase)
- they are more able to implement effective strategies to lead (64% described a moderate to very large increase).

Additionally, 81% of executives reported that their analysis and use of student achievement data for school planning has increased (56% reported the increase as moderate to very large).

The majority of executives were positive about the extent to which recent initiatives or strategies in their school have supported leadership and collaboration. Approximately 76% said recent initiatives

- provided more leadership opportunities (53% described the increase as moderate to very large)
- improved the quality of their networking or collaboration around teaching practices and student learning (51% described the increase as moderate to very large)
- facilitated the wider implementation of existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity (52% described the increase as moderate to very large).

Figure 17. Executives' perceptions of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 150. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

5.2.5 Executives' views of changes to planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010

Many executives responding to the p survey indicated that, since early 2010, there had been advances in the areas of collaborative planning and action, broader community engagement and collaboration with other institutions, but the results were variable across different types of initiatives (see figure 18).

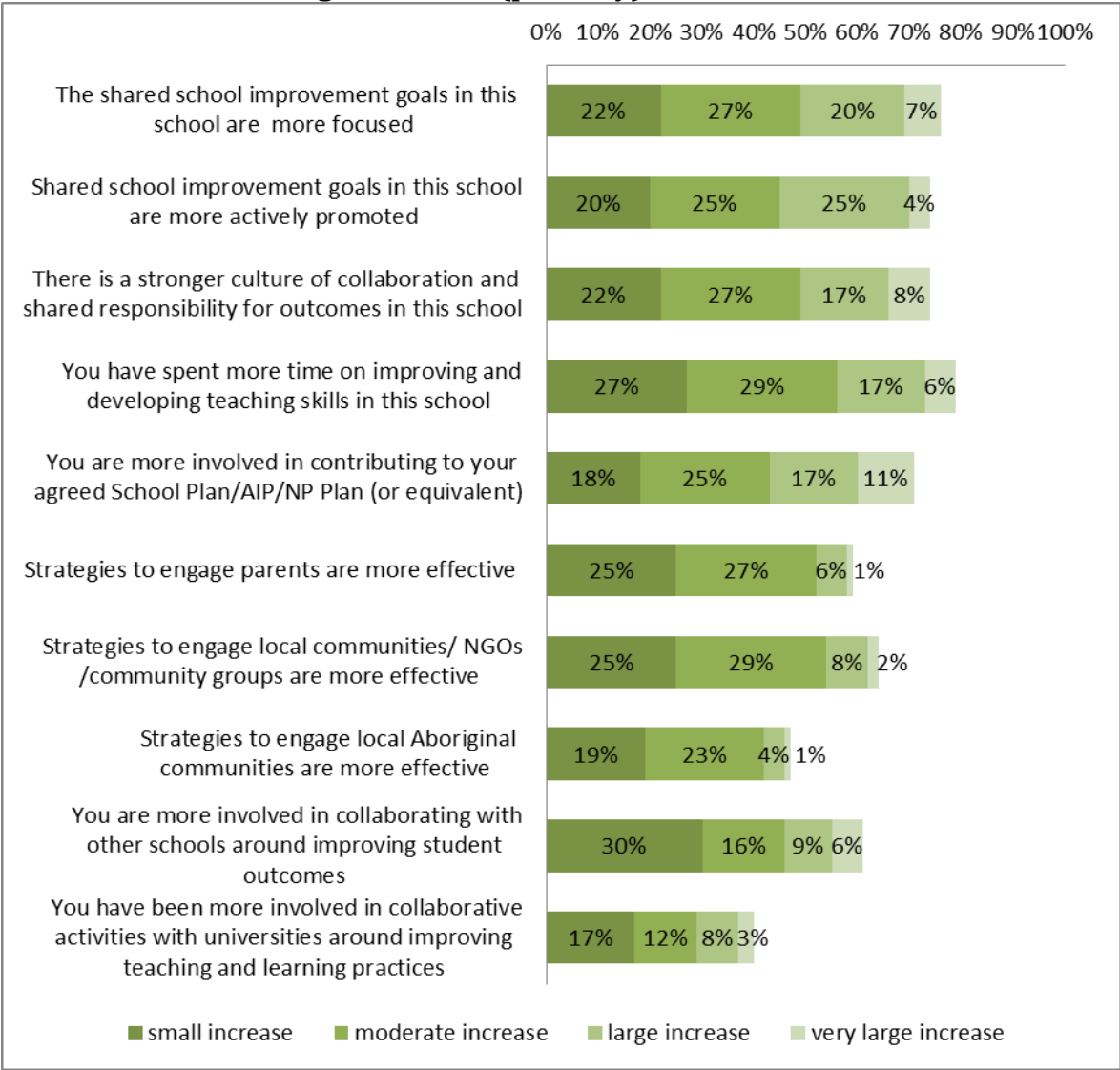
Approximately 75% of executives reported that school improvement goals are more focused and more actively promoted and that there is now a stronger culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for outcomes (approximately 53% reported moderate to very large increases).

Over three-quarters of executives (79%) reported having spent more time on improving and developing teaching skills in their school (52% reported a moderate to very large increase) and 71% reported that they are more involved in contributing to the school plan (or equivalent) (53% reported a moderate to large increase).

Fewer reported increases in the effectiveness of strategies to involve the local community since 2010. Fifty-nine percent of executives said strategies to engage parents were more effective (34% reported a moderate to very large increase) and 64% that strategies to engage local communities, community groups and NGOs were more effective (39% reported a moderate to very large increase). Less than half (49%) reported an increase in the effectiveness of strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities (28% reported a moderate to very large increase). Thirteen percent reported that this was not being done.

Executives were much more likely to report increased engagement with other schools around improving student outcomes (61% reported any increase, 31% reported a moderate to very large increase), than with universities around improving teaching and learning practice (40% reported any increase, 23% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Figure 18. Executives’ perceptions of changes in planning, policy action and resourcing since 2010 (p survey)



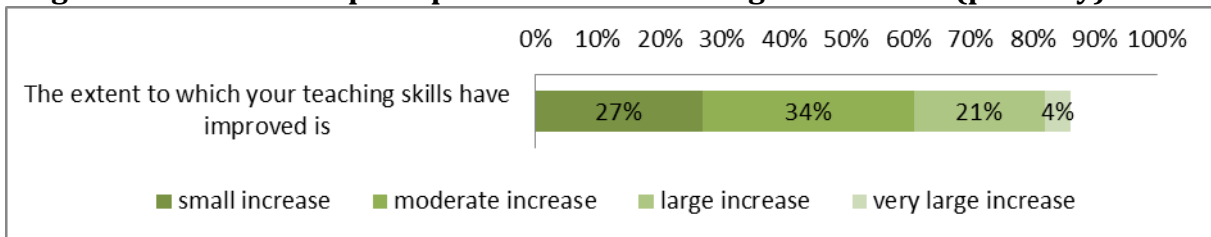
Note: N = 150.

5.3 Teachers' views about changes prior to commencing the SSNP (p survey)

5.3.1 Overall impact of changes in teaching skills since early 2010

Teachers responding to the p survey were very positive about the extent to which their teaching skills have improved since early 2010, with 86% saying their skills have increased and 59% describing the increase as moderate to very large (see figure 19).

Figure 19. Teachers' perceptions of overall change since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 461.

5.3.2 Teachers' professional development experiences since 2010

Overall, teachers reported increases in their opportunities for professional development compared to early 2010, but a few reported decreased access or that some opportunities were not applicable or not being done (see figure 20).

Over 60% of teachers said that there had been increases in their opportunities for skills development, the amount of time they spent engaged in it and the quality of the professional development they received; over 45% of teachers described these increases as moderate to large. Similar proportions of teachers reported increases in collaborative teaching practices and in participation in training in the use of student data for lesson planning.

Just over half (52%) reported increased opportunities for leadership, 37% described the increase as moderate to large.

The lowest increases were reported for collaboration with universities or other schools around improving teaching and learning practice, with 24% and 40% of teachers, respectively, reporting any increase in these activities. In answering these two questions teachers were also more likely to report decreased involvement in these two activities (11% and 7%, respectively) or that they were not being done (26% and 14%, respectively) than for other professional development activities.

Figure 20. Teachers' perceptions of changes in professional development experiences since 2010 (p survey)



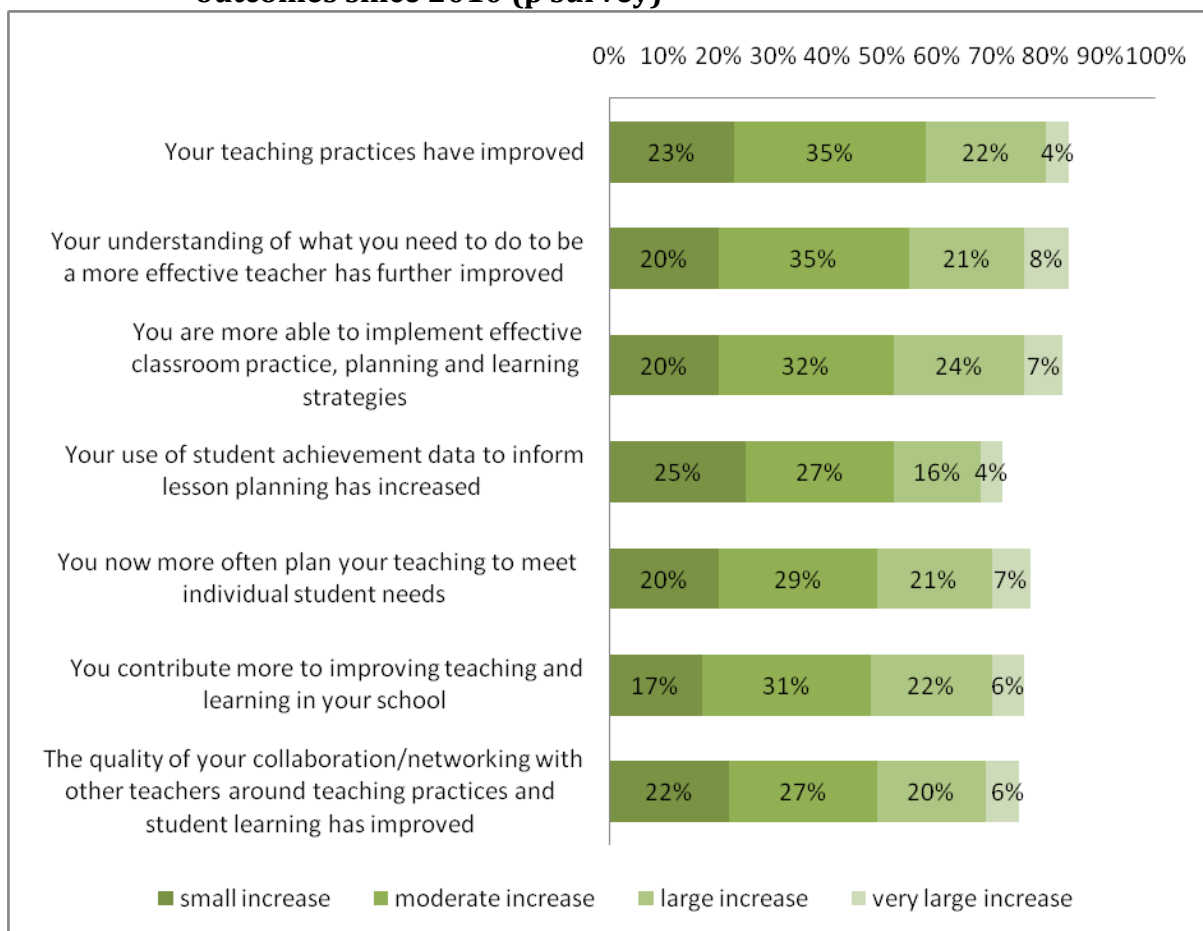
Note: N = 489.

5.3.3 Teachers' professional development outcomes since 2010

A very high proportion of teachers indicated that, as a result of the professional development they had undertaken since 2010, their teaching practices and understanding of what they need to do to be a more effective teacher had improved and that they are more able to implement effective classroom practice, planning and learning strategies. Over 84% of teachers reported increases and over 50% described the increases as moderate to very large (see figure 21).

Teachers reported a high level of increases in relation to key teaching practices and contributing to professional development in the school. Just under three-quarters (72%) said their use of student achievement data to inform lesson planning had increased (47% reported a moderate to large increase) and 77% said that they now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs (57% reported a moderate to large increase). Over 75% of teachers said they now contributed more to improving teaching and learning in their school and they had a higher quality of collaboration with other teachers around teaching practices and student learning (59% and 53% reported moderate to large increase, respectively).

Figure 21. Teachers' perceptions of changes in professional development outcomes since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 489.

5.3.4 School actions to support teacher learning and professional development since 2010

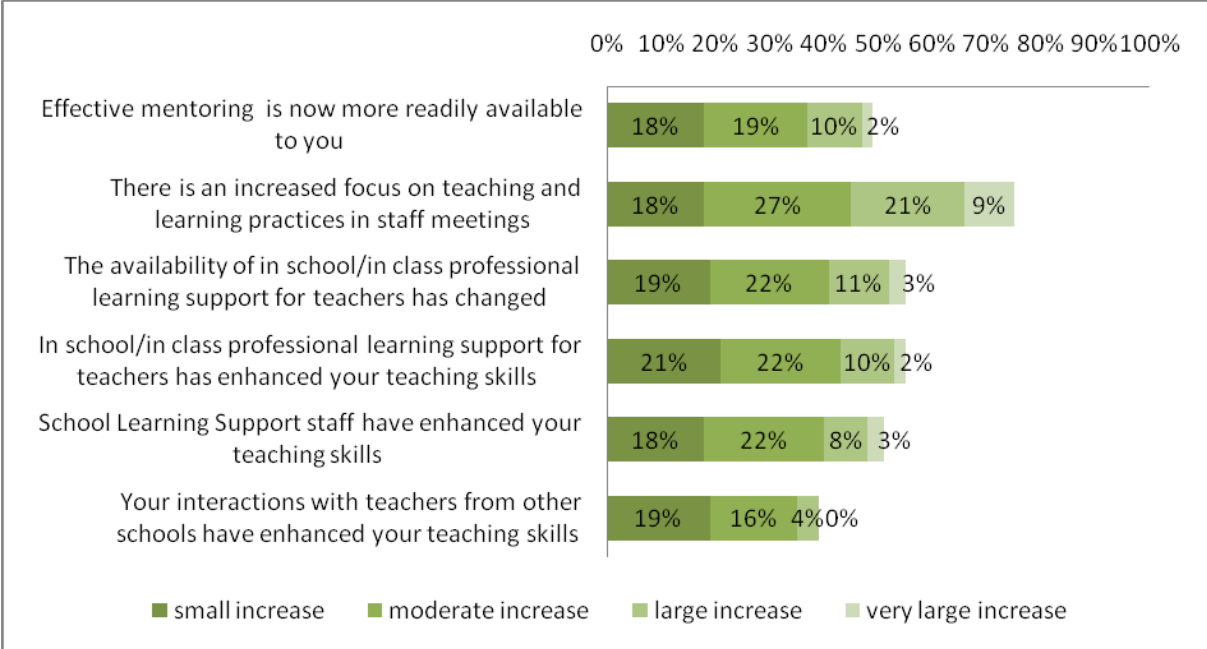
A large proportion of teachers reported an increased availability of in-school professional learning support and enhanced teaching skills, compared to early 2010, although a small percentage reported decreases or that these activities were not done (see figure 22).

Just under half of teachers (49%) said that effective mentoring is now more available to them (31% reported a moderate to large increase). Three-quarters (75%) described an increased focus on teaching and learning practices in staff meetings (57% reported moderate to large increase). Just over half (55%) reported an increased availability of in-school/ in-class professional learning support (36% reported a moderate to large increase). Similar proportions of teachers reported that this support enhanced their teaching skills.

Over 50% of teachers said that school learning support staff had enhanced their teaching skills (33% reported a moderate to large extent). Interactions with teachers from other schools were reported as having enhanced teaching skills to the least extent,

with 39% of teachers reporting an increase and 20% reporting a moderate to very large increase, while 20% reported that this had decreased or was not done.

Figure 22. Teachers’ perceptions of school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)



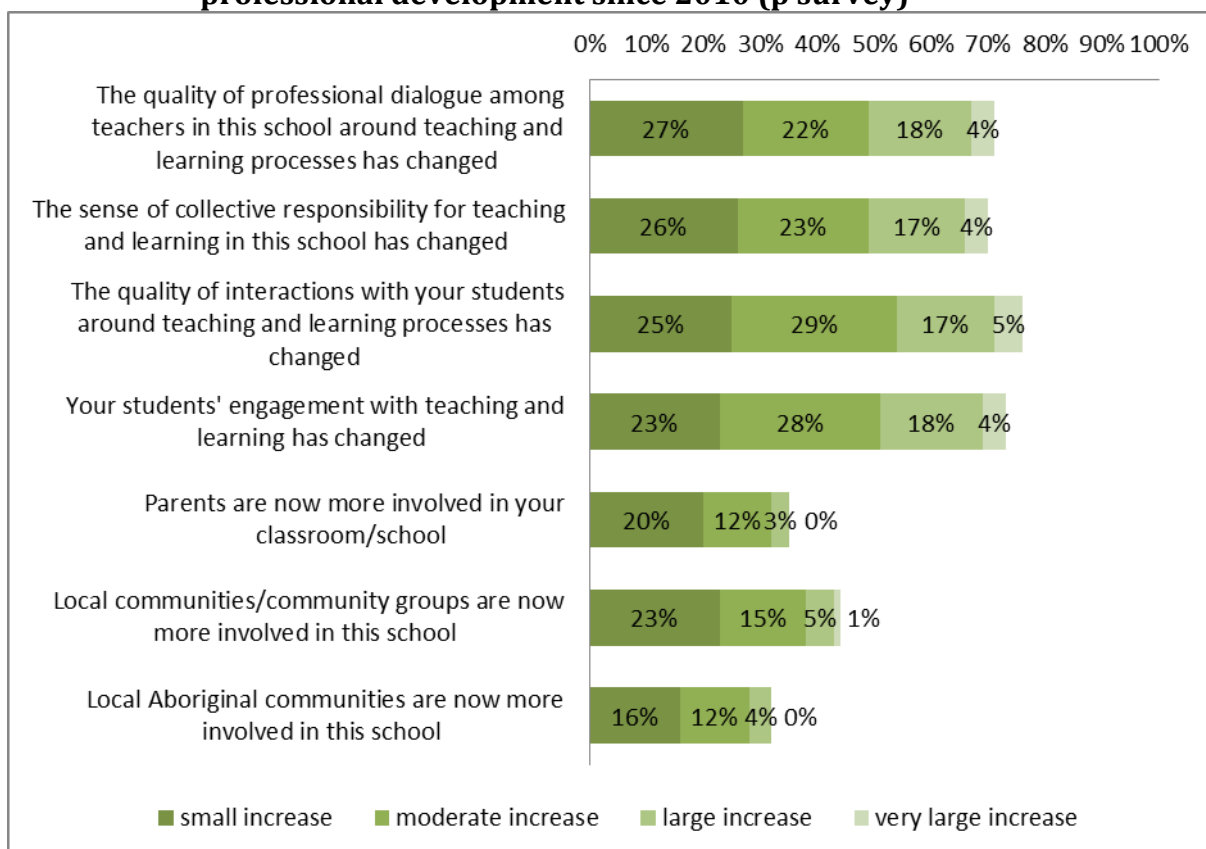
Note: N = 483.

5.3.5 School outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since 2010

Teachers in the p survey group were very positive about the changes in interactions among teaching staff and with students compared to early 2010; however, a lower proportion reported changes in interactions with parents and local communities. Approximately 70% of teachers said that both the quality of professional dialogue among teachers in their school and the sense of collective responsibility around teaching and learning processes had increased compared to early 2010 (44% reported moderate to very large increases). Approximately 75% reported an increased quality of interactions with students and increased student engagement with regard to teaching and learning, compared to early 2010 (50% reported moderate to very large increases) (see figure 23).

About one-third (35%) reported an increase in parent involvement compared to early 2010 (15% reported a moderate to very large increase). Forty-four percent reported increased involvement of the local community and 32% reported an increased involvement of local Aboriginal communities (moderate to very large increases, 21% and 16%, respectively). These three questions all received 15–22% decreased/ not done/ don’t know responses.

Figure 23. Teachers' perceptions of school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since 2010 (p survey)

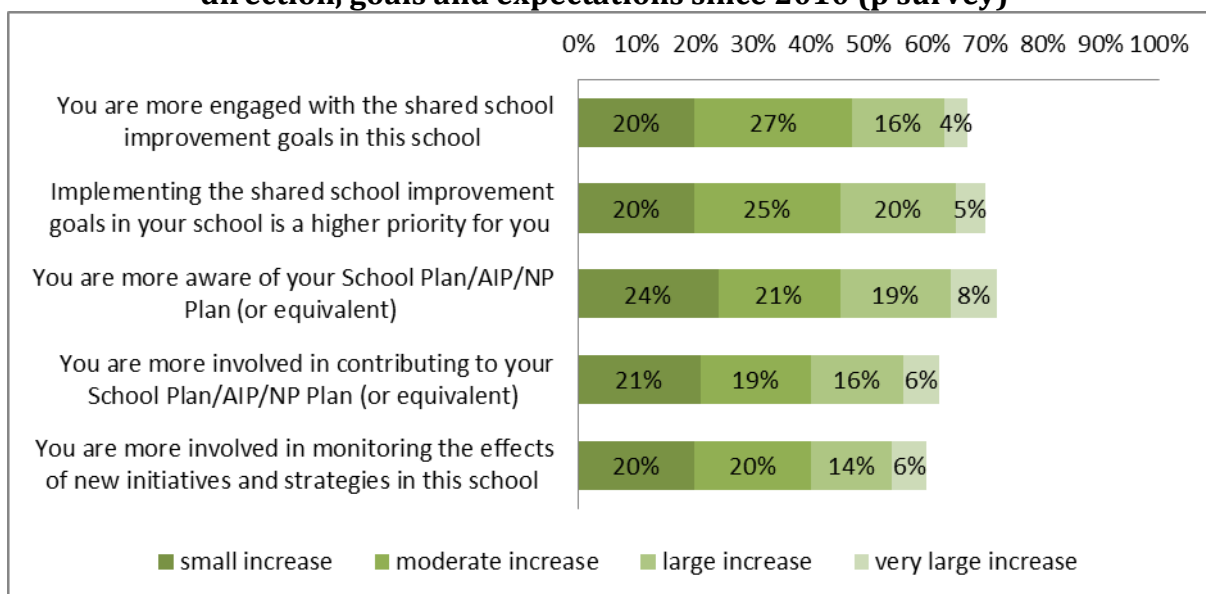


Note: N = 483.

5.3.6 Teachers' engagement with schools strategic direction, goals and expectations since 2010

Large proportions of teachers responding to the p survey described increases in their engagement with school strategic directions, goals and expectations, compared to early 2010. About two-thirds of teachers (67%) said they are more engaged with shared school improvement goals and 70% said that implementing them is now a higher priority for them (moderate to very large increases, 47% and 50%, respectively). Seventy-two percent of teachers reported that they are now more aware of their school plan (or equivalent) and 62% reported being more involved in contributing to it (moderate to very large increases, 48% and 41%, respectively). Sixty percent of teachers said they are now more involved in monitoring the effects of new initiatives in their school (see figure 24).

Figure 24. Teachers' perceptions of their engagement with schools' strategic direction, goals and expectations since 2010 (p survey)



Note: N = 479.

5.4 Conclusion

The p survey was sent to schools that were due to commence the SSNP in 2012. It asked about developments since early 2010 to establish a baseline of the change already occurring in schools. Principals, executives and teachers responding to this survey were very positive about the level of change already underway in their schools before commencing in the SSNP, suggesting that other initiatives to improve education standards are also driving change in schools. Even though they had not yet started SSNP activities, many reported moderate, large or very large improvements in the areas of accountability, leadership, school planning and access to professional development. Many principals, executives and teachers also reported increased skills and capabilities across a range of areas. However, a much lower proportion reported that they are effectively increasing parental, local and Aboriginal community and NGO involvement with schools.

All respondent groups completing the p survey reported that the overall quality of teaching in their school had improved to some extent since 2010, with teachers providing the most positive assessment of the improvement. A higher proportion of teachers also reported that there is more time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings, and teachers are planning more to meet individual student needs.

As shown in table 3, principals, executives and teachers all similarly rated the increases in collective responsibility, higher quality professional dialogue and improved collaboration with peers, although more principals identified smaller increases in all of these areas.

Principals and executives reported greater increases than teachers in the use of student data and in collaboration with other schools and universities, but only a low proportion of respondents reported increases in collaboration with universities.

Table 3. Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (p survey)

Question	Principals		Executives		Teachers	
	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase
Overall quality of teaching has improved	80%	39%	74%	49%	86%	59%
Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established	56%	31%	69%	47%	49%	31%
More time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings	66%	39%	69%	53%	75%	57%
Teachers plan teaching to meet individual student needs	68%	34%	73%	46%	77%	57%
Collective responsibility for teaching/ learning is stronger	73%	41%	68%	51%	70%	44%
Professional dialogue around teaching is of higher quality	77%	41%	72%	54%	71%	44%
Improved quality of collaboration with peers around teaching/ learning	73%	34%	76%	51%	75%	53%
Your analysis of student data has increased	84%	43%	81%	56%	72%	47%
Collaborates more with other schools	60%	29%	61%	31%	40%	22%
More engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching/ learning	31%	21%	40%	23%	24%	12%

6. Respondents' perceptions of change attributed to the SSNP in the first year of participation (n survey)

This chapter contains a brief description of respondents' views on changes in areas targeted by the SSNP that occurred in their schools in their first year of participation. Many respondents in all three groups surveyed (principals, executives and teachers) reported positive changes even though they had only been involved since the beginning of 2011. Although the ITQ respondents also reported positive changes, the extent of change reported was lower than for the LSES apart from in the area of collaboration. For each survey item, the percentage of respondents reporting any change (small, moderate, large or very large) is given, followed by the proportion reporting moderate to very large change (moderate, large or very large).

The data set (n survey)

The n survey was distributed to schools that commenced in the SSNPs in 2011: 191 Low SES schools and 125 ITQ schools. A total of 115 principals, 283 executives and 576 teachers completed the n survey.

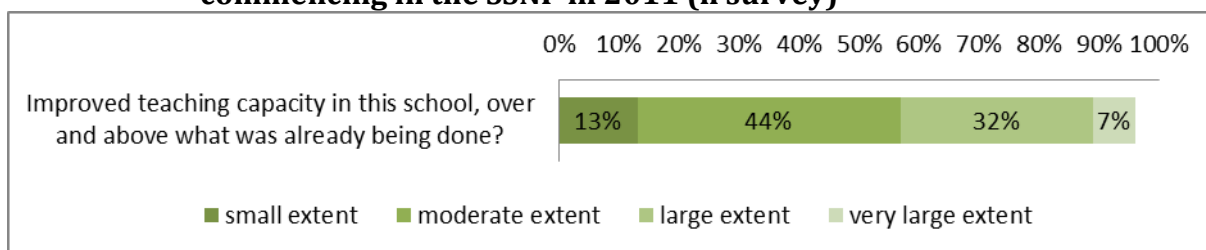
When the survey was distributed these schools had been implementing SSNP initiatives for approximately 9 months, and were thus at an early stage of development.

6.1 Principals' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey)

6.1.1 Overall impact of changes in teacher capacity since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Overall, principals were very positive about the impact of the SSNP in their schools during the first year of participation. Almost all principals (96%) who responded to the survey reported that the SSNP had improved teaching capacity in their school over and above what was already being done, 83% reported a moderate to very large improvement (see figure 25).

Figure 25. Principals' perceptions of improvements in teacher capacity since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 112.

6.1.2 Principals' views of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

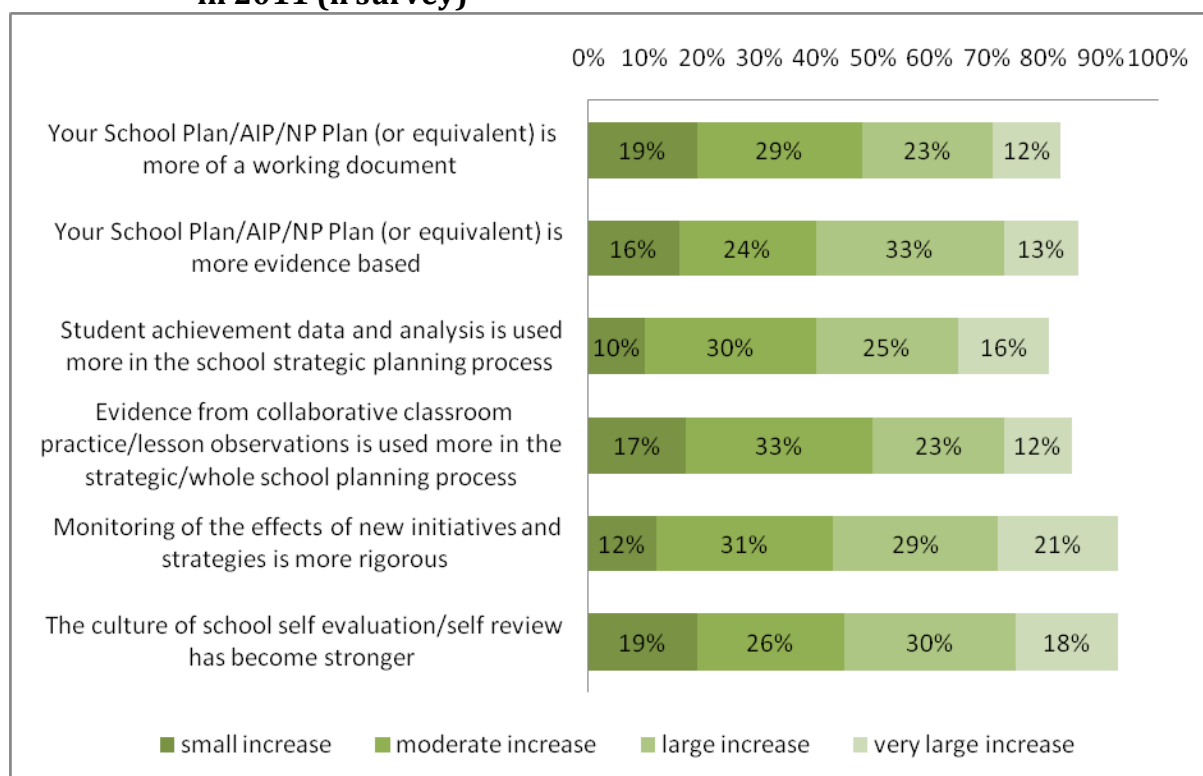
Most principals reported positive changes in the way their school plans (or equivalent), the strategic use of evidence in planning processes, the rigour of monitoring of new initiatives and the culture of self-evaluation since commencing in the SSNP. Across all six survey items, principals either reported some positive change in practice or that their approach had remained the same. No principals reported negative changes and just 2% reported that these questions were not applicable to them or the practice is not done (see figure 26).

Most principals indicated that their school plan (or equivalent) is now more of a working document (83%) and more evidence based (89%), with 64% and 70% of respondents, respectively, describing the extent of these changes in practice as moderate to very large.

Most schools (81%) are now also using student achievement data and analysis more in the strategic planning process, with 71% describing a moderate to very large increase in the use of these data. Similarly, most principals (81%) reported using evidence from collaborative classroom practice more in strategic/ whole-of-school planning, with 68% reporting a moderate to very large increase.

Of the items on management and planning, principals reported the largest increase in practice in the rigor with which effects of new initiatives and strategies are monitored. Most principals (93%) agreed their approach is now more rigorous, with 81% reporting a moderate to very large increase in this practice. These principals also indicated that the culture of school self-evaluation and self-review is stronger, with 19% reporting a small change in this culture and 74% reporting a moderate to very large change.

Figure 26. Principals' perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 115.

6.1.3 Principals' views of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

After less than a year of participation, principals overwhelmingly agreed that their school had, to some extent, changed their teaching, learning and professional development processes or the quality of practices as a result of the SSNP (see figure 27).

Most principals (93%) reported that the overall quality of teaching in their school had improved to some extent. Just under one-fifth of principals (18%) agreed that there had been a small increase in the quality of teaching, 34% reported a moderate increase and 41% reported a large or very large increase.

For 12 of the 13 items measuring the quality of professional learning processes or teacher practice, 86% or more principals reported some positive changes.

More than 80% of principals reported a moderate to very large increase in two of the processes that support teaching practice and learning/ professional development. These are

- time focused on teaching practices and student learning in staff meetings (81% reported a moderate to very large increase)

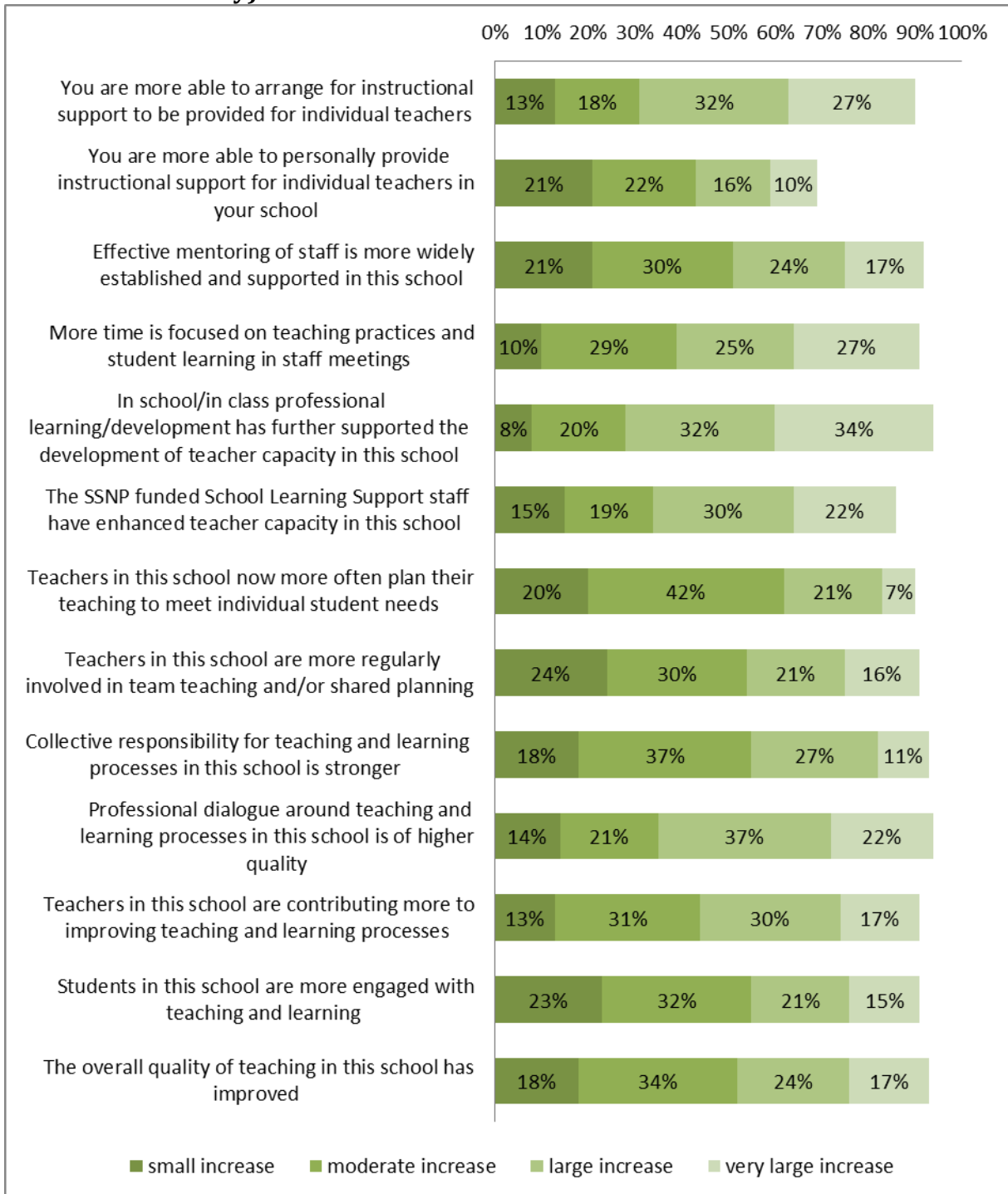
- extent to which in-school/ in-class professional learning/ development has further supported development of teacher capacity (86% reported a moderate to very large increase).

A high proportion of principals also reported seeing moderate to large increases in teachers' collaborative practices for three items

- quality professional dialogue around teaching and learning processes (80% reported a moderate to large increase)
- extent to which teachers are improving teaching and learning processes (78% reported a moderate to large increase)
- strength of collective responsibility for teaching and learning (75% reported a moderate to large increase).

A smaller proportion of principals reported a change in their ability to personally provide instructional support for individual teachers; 24% said this had remained the same, 21% reported a small increase and 48% reported a moderate to very large increase.

Figure 27. Principals' perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 115.

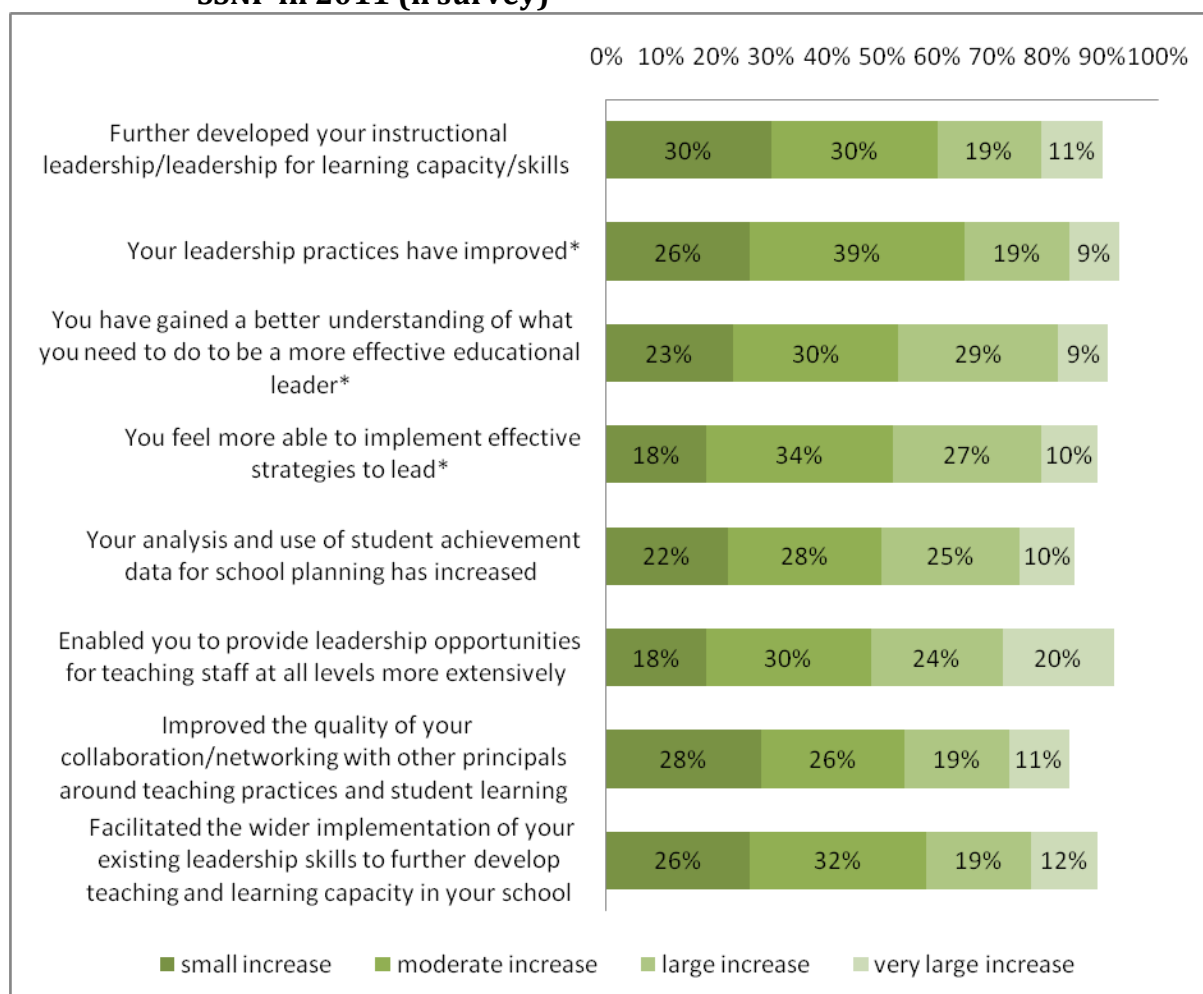
6.1.4 Principals' views of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

A high proportion of school principals (90%) agreed they have further developed their instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity to some extent since commencing in the SSNP, but some had increased their capacity to a small extent, while a similar proportion had increased their capacity to a moderate or large extent (see figure 28).

Specifically, most principals (90% or more) reported that their own understanding of what is needed to be a more effective educational leader, their leadership practices and their ability to implement effective strategies to lead have improved to some extent as a result of their formal and informal professional learning experiences. Principals have most commonly reported a moderate improvement in their leadership practices (39%). More than one-third of principals reported large or very large increases in their understanding of what is needed to be a more effective educational leader and their ability to implement effective strategies to lead.

Most principals (95%) are providing leadership opportunities for teaching staff more extensively than they were before commencing in the SSNP. Just under one-third (30%) of principals reported a moderate increase in the opportunities they are able to provide and 44% reported a large or very large increase. Most (90%) also said they are now using their existing skills more widely to further develop teaching and learning capacity in their school. Of those who reported changes in this practice, most reported small (28%) or moderate (26%) increases.

Figure 28. Principals' perceptions of changes in developing instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 115. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

6.1.5 Principals' views of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Most principals (more than 90%) reported positive changes to school improvement planning processes and the commitment of staff to improving teaching quality. Principals most commonly reported a moderate improvement in these areas, but there were also a relatively high proportion of principals reporting either large or very large increases for four items

- shared school improvement goals are more actively promoted (44% reported a large or very large increase)
- stronger culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for outcomes (37% reported a large or very large increase)
- more able to support executive team members to spend more time on improving teaching skills (31% reported a large or very large increase)

- executive team members are more involved in contributing to agreed school plan/ Annual Implementation Plan (AIP)/ National Partnerships Plan (NP Plan) (or equivalent) (34% reported a large or very large increase).

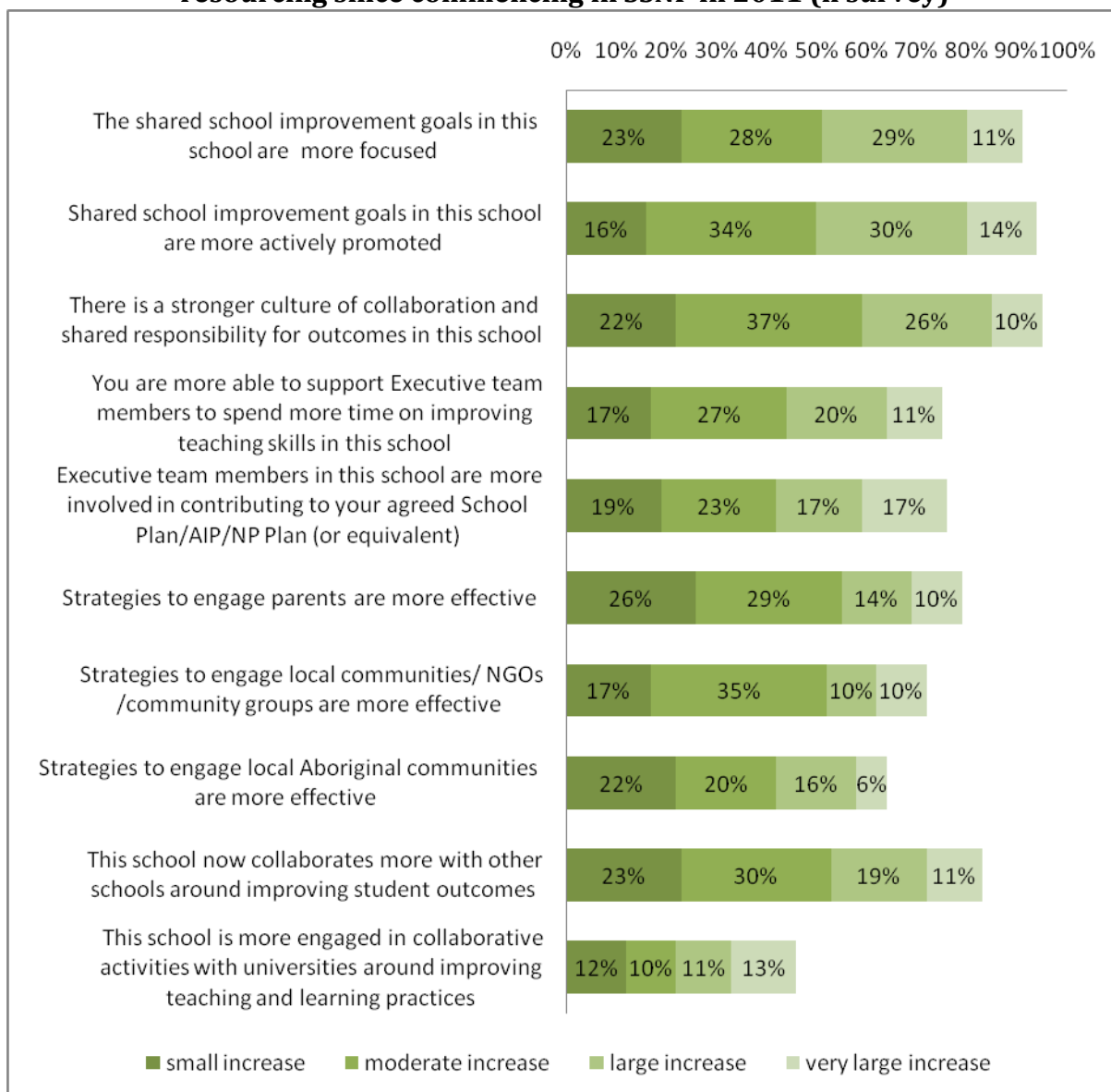
A high proportion of principals (84%) also reported their school is collaborating more with other schools around improving student outcomes; they most commonly reported the increase in this practice as small (23%) or moderate (30%).

Although principals also reported positive changes in how effectively their school engages with the community, the extent of change was less than for other practices covered in this section of the survey. For the items on engagement, principals were more likely to report they had remained the same or the activity was not being done or was not applicable.

- 25% of principals indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities had remained the same, 11% reported that this was not being done or was not applicable.
- 23% of principals indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage local communities/ NGOs/ community groups had remained the same, 5% reported that this was not being done or was not applicable.
- 17% of principals indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage parents had remained the same, 4% reported that this was not being done or was not applicable.

There was a low level of change in the extent of collaboration with universities. One-third of principals reported they are no more engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching and learning practices now than they were before commencing in the SSNP, a further 18% reported that this activity was either not being done or was not applicable to their school (see figure 29).

Figure 29. Principals' perceptions of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 115.

6.1.6 Principals' views of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

A high proportion of principals (80% or more) reported some positive changes in how well they are supported by their sector/ system/ region/ Diocesan/ AIS (sector) to implement the SSNP compared with the quality and level of support provided for other school improvement initiatives. The kinds of support canvassed in the survey include monitoring of initiatives, advice, follow-up and provision of resource materials (see figure 30).

Overall, 80% of principals agreed that sector support for the SSNP has been more adequate for their school's needs, with 52% reporting the extent of this change as

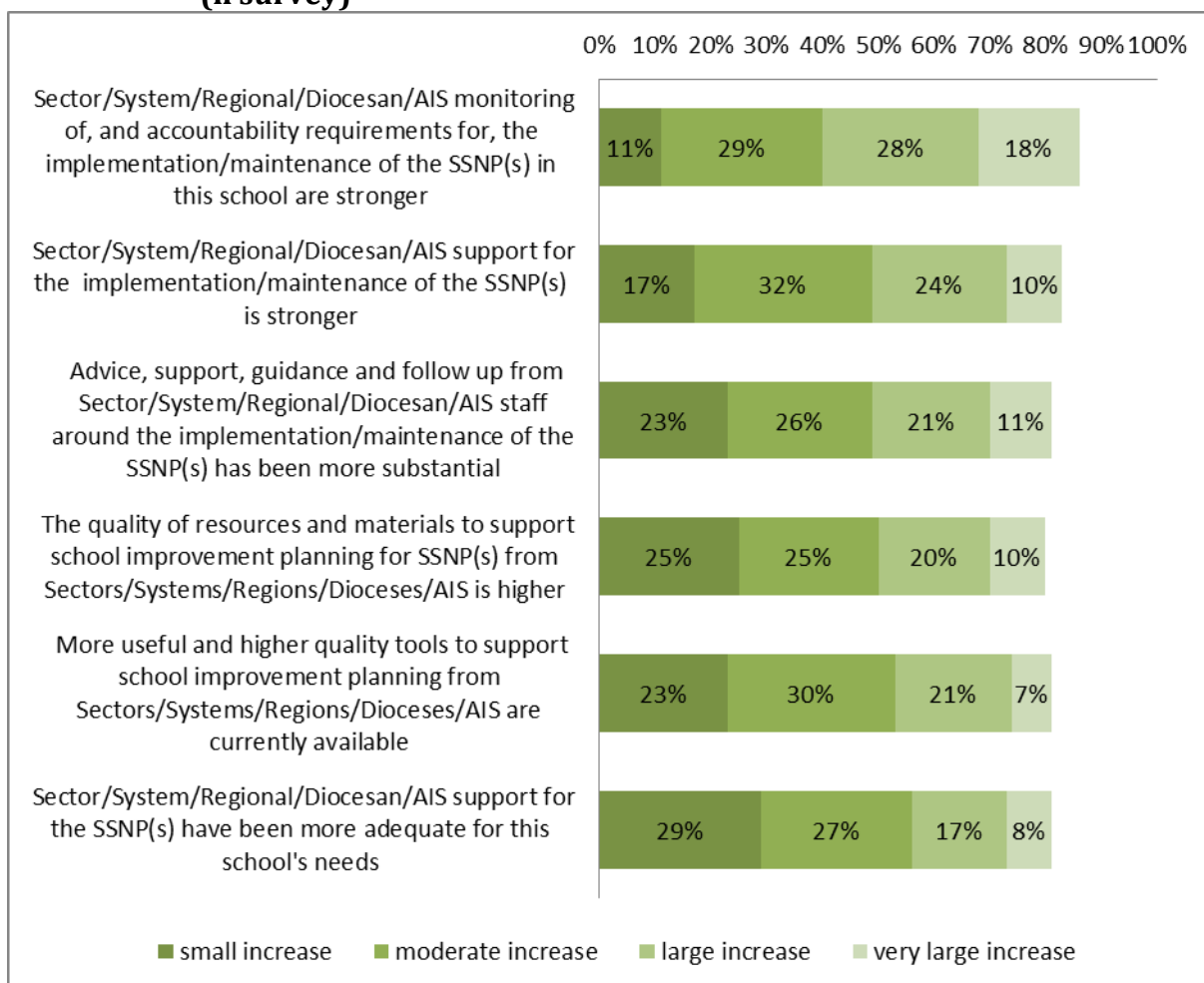
moderate to very large. Two principals (2%) said it is too early to tell, 2% that the level of support had decreased and 16% that it had remained the same.

Most principals (85%) indicated that sector monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, the implementation and maintenance of the SSNP are stronger, with 74% describing the extent of this change in practice as moderate to very large. Similarly, most principals (82%) indicated that support for the implementation and maintenance of the SSNP is stronger, with 66% of respondents reporting the increase in strength of support as moderate to very large.

Principals mostly indicated (82%) that advice, support, guidance and follow-up from sector staff about the SSNP has been more substantial compared to that for other school change initiatives, with 59% reporting the extent of this change as moderate to very large.

Just over half of principals (55%) reported that there had been a moderate to very large increase in the quality of resources and materials to support school improvement planning. Similarly, a fairly high proportion of principals indicated that the tools provided by their sector to support school improvement planning are more useful and of higher quality, with 58% reporting the extent of this change as moderate to large.

Figure 30. Principals' perceptions of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 114.

6.1.7 Principals' views of changes in school/ system alignment since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

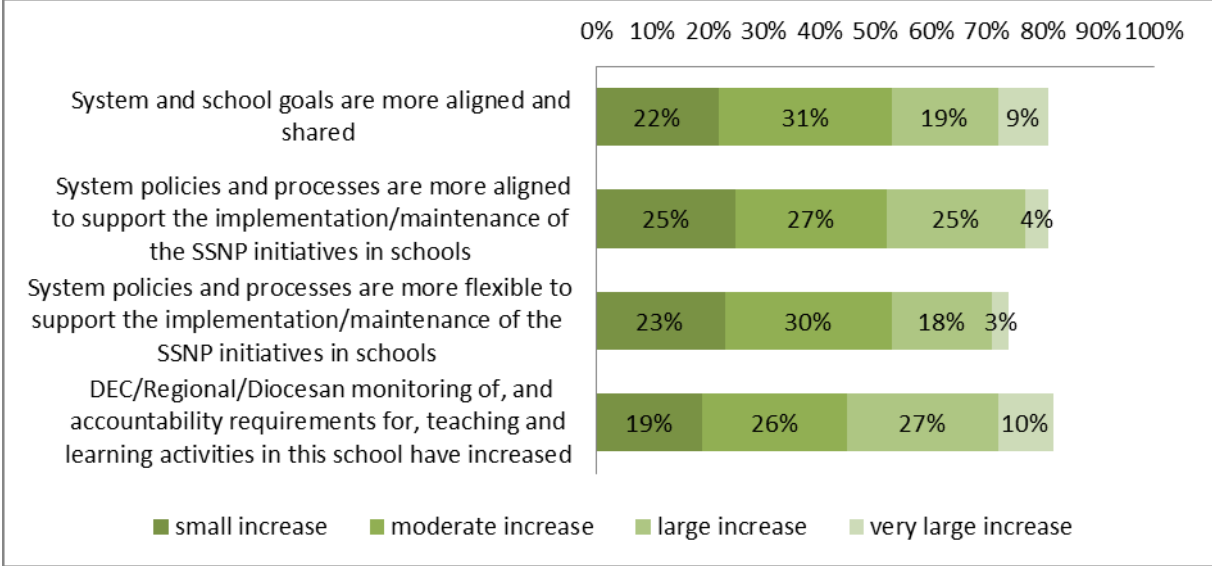
A high proportion of principals (81%) indicated that, under the SSNP, school and system goals, policies and processes are, to some extent, more aligned than in previous school change initiatives. The extent of change is similar across the two survey items seeking principals' views about system and school alignment. Specifically, 81% of principals said system and school goals were more aligned and more than half of principals reported a moderate to very large increase in the alignment of system policies and processes to support implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (see figure 31).

Relatively fewer principals indicated that system policies and processes are more flexible to support implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP: 73% reported some positive change; half described the extent of change as moderate to very large.

Principals were also asked if their sector had increased monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, teaching and learning activities in their schools: 81%

reported these had increased to some extent; 63% described the increase as moderate to very large.

Figure 31. Principals’ perceptions of school/ system alignment since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 108.

6.1.8 Principals’ perceptions about the impact of staffing changes on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP

The final section of the principal survey explored the impact of changes in staffing and conditions of employment on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP since commencement. This group of principals commenced in 2011.

A relatively large proportion of principals (up to 52%) indicated that one or more of the 18 questions about staffing impacts were not applicable to them. This finding is not unexpected given these schools relatively short period of involvement in the SSNP (see table 4). This means there has been less time for staff members to leave or be absent. As such, we have removed the ‘not applicable’ responses from the denominator to better understand the impacts in schools where staffing changes have occurred.

New staff

Changes in executive team membership were seen to have positively supported the development of SSNP in schools by 88% of principals, with 81% reporting moderate to very large positive impacts. Similarly, changes in teaching staff were seen to have positively supported the development of SSNP in schools by 90% of principals, with 83% reporting moderate to very large positive impacts. Changes in teaching staff in particular areas were seen to positively support the development of SSNP by 80% of principals (73% reported a moderate to very large impact).

Twenty-eight percent of principals reported that changes in executive had also impeded the development of the SSNP in their schools, with 15% saying the impact was moderate to very large. Changes in teaching staff seem to have been more problematic, with 38% of principals reporting some impact and 18% reporting a moderate to very large impact. Changes in teaching staff in particular areas were less disruptive, with 27% reporting these changes as having impeded the successful development of SSNP in their school, although 18% reported a moderate to very large impact.

About 35% of principals reported no executive team changes (9% had no executive team), about 19% reported no changes in teaching staff and about 33% reported no changes in teaching staff in specific areas since commencing the SSNP in 2011.

Acting/ relieving and temporary/ casual staff

Ninety-two percent of principals reported that the proportion of acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team was seen to positively support the development of the SSNP (79% reported a moderate to very large impact). A slightly smaller group of principals (88%) said that the proportion of temporary or casual teachers had supported the implementation of the SSNP and rated the impact as moderate to very large (73%).

The proportion of temporary or casual teachers appeared to be more of an impediment than the proportion of acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team. Twenty-nine percent of principals said the proportion of temporary or casual teachers impeded the successful implementation of the SSNP (17% reported a moderate to very large impact) compared to 23% who reported acting/ relieving or temporary executives were an impediment (10% reported a moderate to very large impact).

Approximately 34% of principals reported no acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team (2% had no executive team) and approximately 9% reported no temporary or casual teachers.

Part-time staff

Although the majority of principals did not have part-time executive team members, these positions appear to have supported rather than impeded the development of the SSNP. Seventy-eight percent of those principals with part-time executive team members reported this to have had a positive impact, whereas 25% reported that it impeded the development of the SSNP in their school.

Similarly, the proportion of part-time teachers was rated by principals as more of a positive impact (88%) than an impediment (29%) in the implementation of the SSNP in their school. Forty-six percent of principals reported no part-time executives (6% had no executive team) and 22% had no part-time teachers.

Inexperienced staff

A large group of principals reported that the proportion of inexperienced executive team members and teachers positively supported the implementation of the SSNP in their school (80% and 84%, respectively) and for most the impact was moderate to very large (70% and 67% reported a moderate to large impact, respectively). Fifty-two percent of principals reported no inexperienced executive team members and about 25% reported no inexperienced teachers.

Table 4. Principals' perceptions about the impact of staffing changes on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (n survey)

Staffing group and type of question		No impact	Any impact	Moderate to very large impact	Not Applicable
		% respondents where question is applicable			% all respondents
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>					
Q1	New executive team members	12%	88%	81%	33%
Q7	Acting/ relieving executive team members	8%	92%	79%	35%
Q11	Part-time executive team members	22%	78%	69%	52%
Q15	Inexperienced executive team members	20%	80%	70%	52%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>					
Q2	New executive team members	72%	28%	15%	36%
Q8	Acting/ relieving executive team members	77%	23%	10%	37%
Q12	Part-time executive team members	75%	25%	15%	52%
Q16	Inexperienced executive team members	72%	28%	15%	52%
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>					
Q3	New teachers	10%	90%	83%	16%
Q5	Teachers in special areas	20%	80%	73%	29%
Q9	Casual teachers	12%	88%	73%	6%
Q13	Part-time teachers	12%	88%	67%	20%
Q17	Inexperienced teachers	16%	84%	67%	24%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>					
Q4	New teachers	63%	38%	18%	22%
Q6	Teachers in special areas	73%	27%	18%	35%
Q10	Casual teachers	71%	29%	17%	11%
Q14	Part-time teachers	71%	29%	15%	22%
Q18	Inexperienced teachers	70%	30%	13%	26%

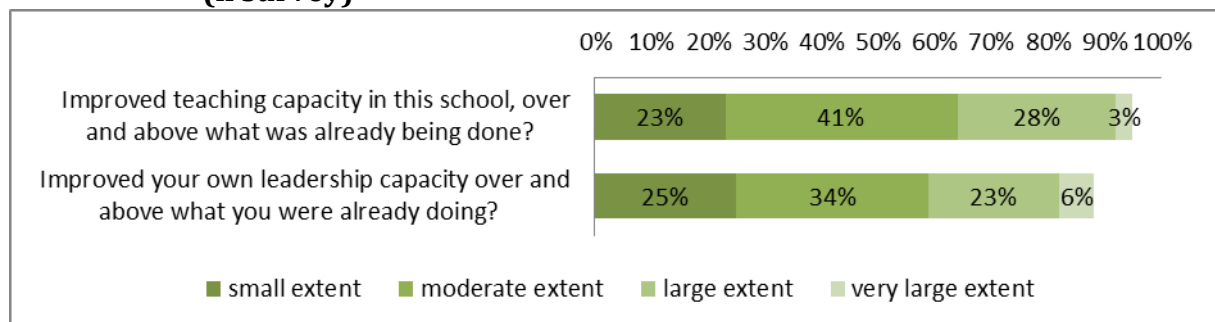
6.2 Executives' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey)

6.2.1 Overall impact of changes during 2011

Overall, school executive staff members were very positive about the impact the SSNP had on their schools and on their own abilities in their first year of participation. Almost all executives (94%) who responded to the survey reported that the SSNP had improved teaching capacity in their school, over and above what was already being done. Most described the extent of this change as either a moderate (41%) or large (28%) improvement in teaching capacity (see figure 32).

Executives were also fairly positive about the impact of the SSNP on their own leadership capacity, over and above what was already being done. Most executives (88%) reported that their own leadership capacity had increased to some extent, with 62% describing the increase as moderate to very large.

Figure 32. Executives' perceptions of improvements in teacher capacity and their own leadership capacity, since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 252.

6.2.2 Executives' views of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Most school executives reported positive changes in how school plans are developed, the strategic use of evidence in planning processes, the rigour of monitoring of new initiatives and the culture of self-evaluation since commencing in the SSNP. Across five of the six survey items, executives reported either some positive change or—much less frequently—that their approach had remained the same. Just one executive, reported a negative change for one item: that the school plan/ AIP/ NP Plan (or equivalent) is more of a working document. Only 1% of executives reported that this item was not applicable or the practice was not done (see figure 33).

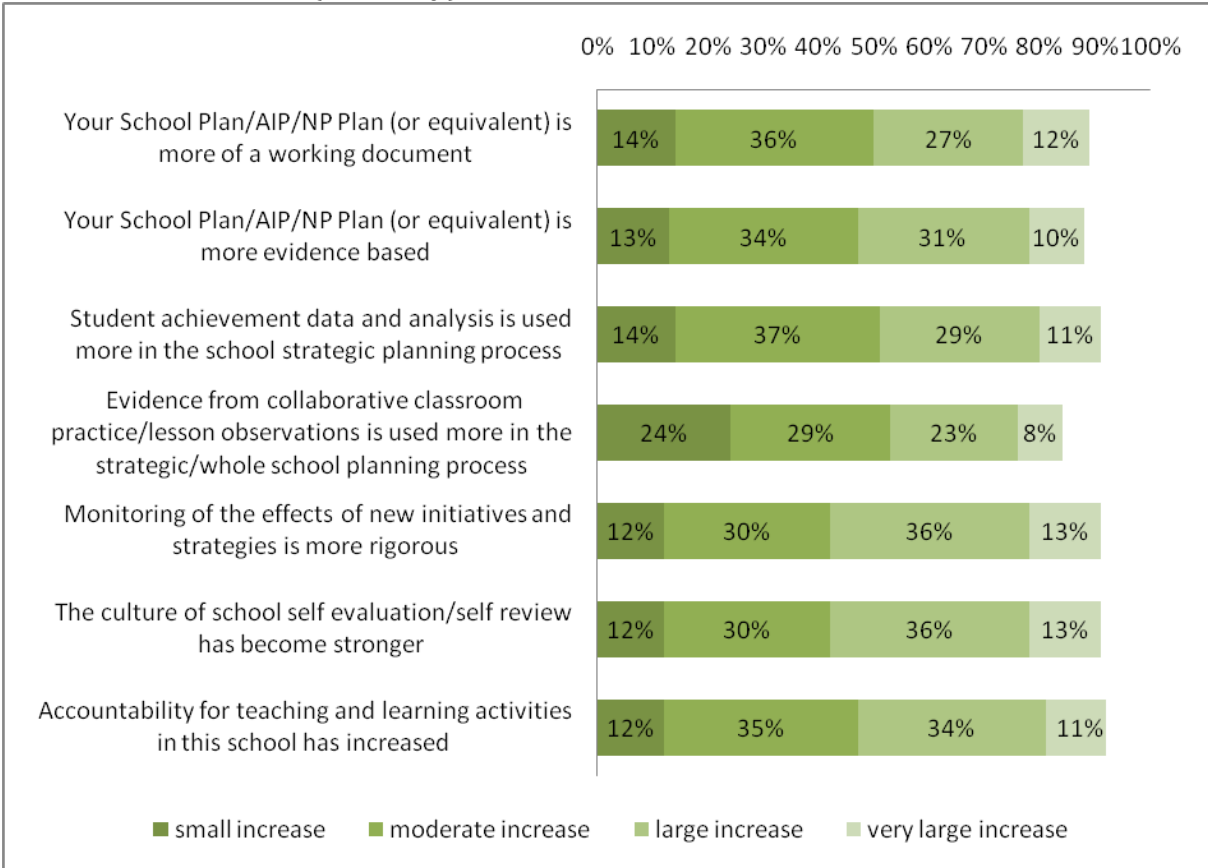
Most executives indicated that the school plan (or equivalent) is more of a working document (90%) and more evidence based (88%), with 75% of respondents describing the extent of change as moderate to very large for both items.

A high proportion of executives (91%) also indicated that their school is now using student achievement data more in strategic planning processes, with 77% describing the increase in the use of these data as moderate to very large. Similarly, 84% of executives reported the school is using evidence from collaborative classroom practice more in strategic/ whole-of-school planning, with 60% reporting the increase as moderate to very large.

Of the items on management and planning, executives reported the largest increase in practice in the

- rigour of monitoring the effects of new initiatives and strategies (49% reported a moderate to very large increase)
- strength of the culture of school self-evaluation/ self-review (49% reported a moderate to very large increase)
- level of accountability for teaching and learning (45% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Figure 33. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 283.

6.2.3 Executives' views of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

After less than a year of participation, executives mostly agreed that their school had, to some extent, changed their teaching, learning and professional development processes or quality of practices as a result of the SSNP. But executives commonly report either no change or a smaller amount of change for the four items measuring changes in teaching practices or teacher/ executive skills.

Most executives (93%) reported that the overall quality of teaching in their school had improved to some extent. Just under one-fifth of executives (19%) agreed there had been a small increase in the quality of teaching, 39% reported a moderate increase and 35% reported a large or very large increase. A high proportion of all executives (90%) reported some change and 71% reported a moderate to very large increase in student engagement in teaching and learning at their school (see figure 34).

Of the items on teaching and learning, most change was reported for

- time focused on teaching practices and student learning in staff meetings (75% reported the extent of change as moderate to very large)
- extent to which in-school/ in-class professional learning/ development has further supported the development of teacher capacity (75% reported the increase as moderate to very large).

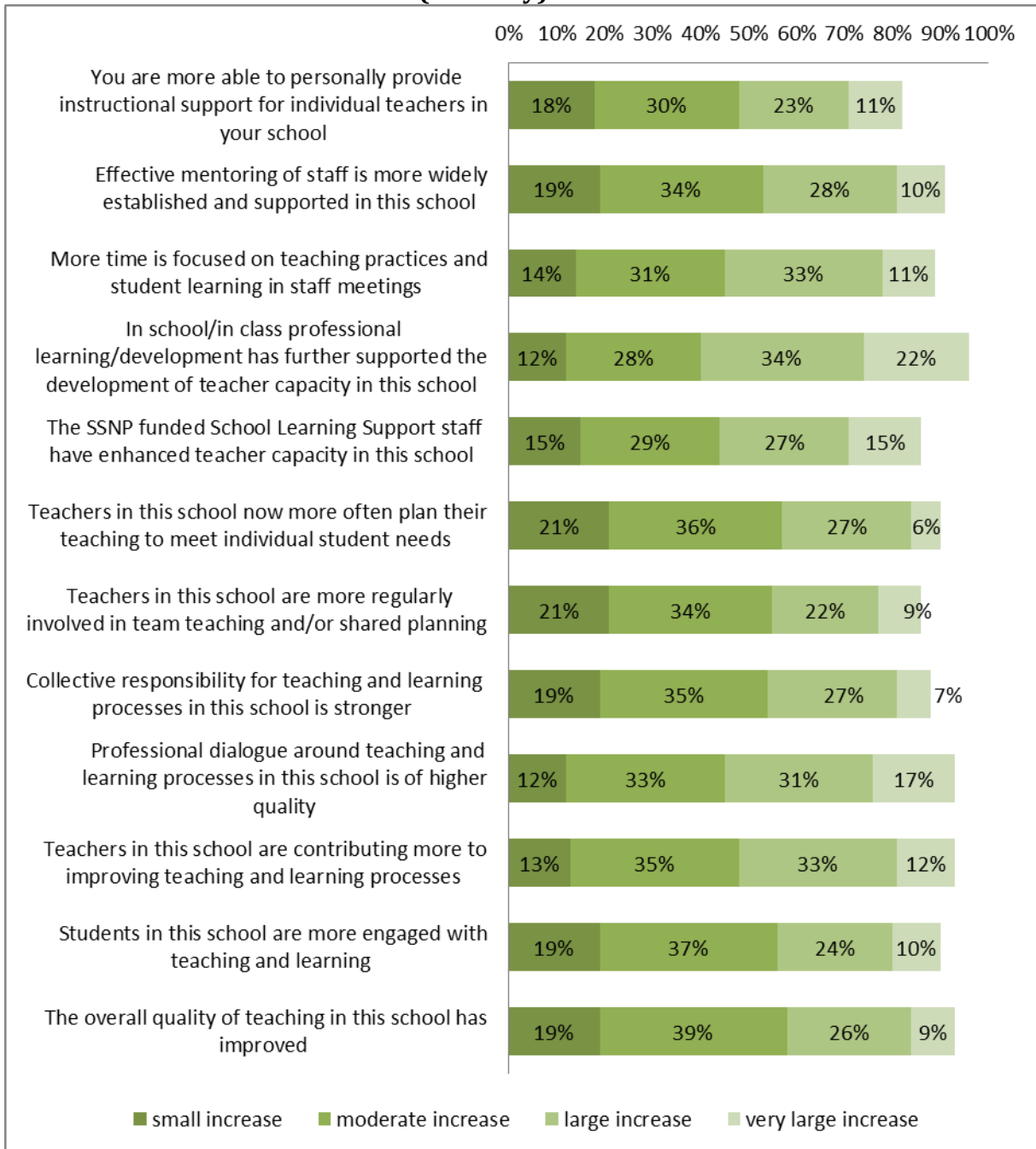
A high proportion of executives also reported moderate to large increases in the

- quality of professional dialogue around teaching and learning processes (81% report the extent of change as moderate to large)
- extent to which teachers are contributing to improving teaching and learning processes (80% report the extent of change as moderate to large).

Fewer executives reported changes overall for four items that measure skills or behaviour/ practice. Given the relatively short time these schools have been participating in SSNP, this could be expected. The items for which fewer executives reported change were

- ability to personally provide instructional support for individual teachers in their school (1% of executives said this had decreased, 16% said this had remained the same, 18% reported a small increase)
- regularity of teachers' involvement in team teaching and/or shared planning (14% of executives said this had remained the same, 21% reported a small increase)
- strength of collective responsibility for teaching and learning processes (12% of executives said this had remained the same, 19% reported a small increase)
- frequency of teachers planning their teaching to meet individual student needs (10% of executives said this had remained the same, 21% reported a small increase).

Figure 34. Executives' perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 279.

6.2.4 Executives' views of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

A high proportion of executives (90%) agreed they have further developed their instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity to some extent since

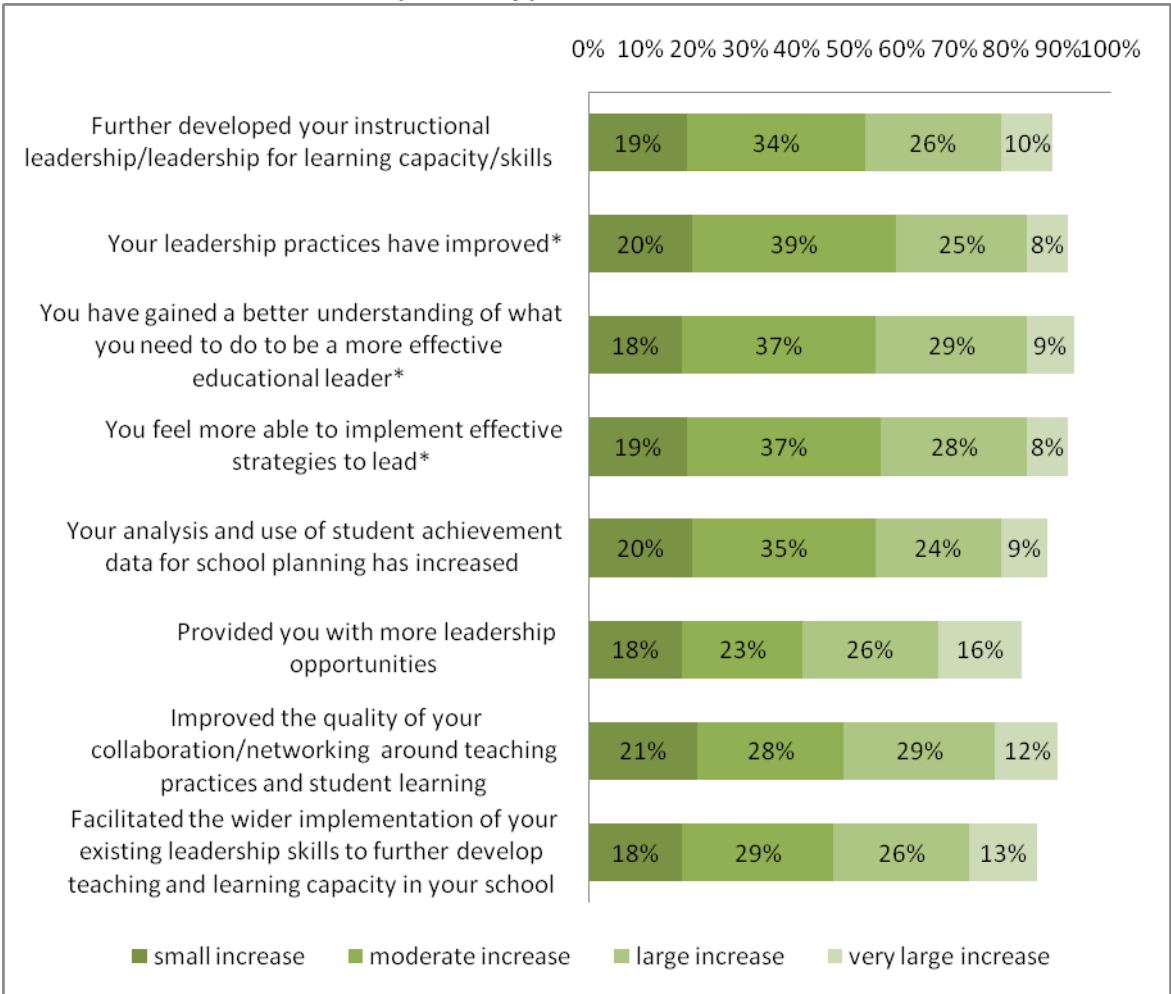
commencing in the SSNP. Just under three-quarters (70%) described the increase in their capacity as moderate to very large (see figure 35).

Executives reported changes of a fairly similar magnitude for all seven survey items on leadership. For all, 65% or more described the extent of change as moderate to very large; more than one-third described the change as large or very large.

A higher proportion of executives reported more extensive changes for two survey items

- 75% of executives reported that their own understanding of what is needed to be a more effective educational leader had increased by a moderate to very large extent
- 72% of executives reported that their leadership practices and their ability to implement effective strategies to lead have improved by a moderate to very large extent.

Figure 35. Executives’ perceptions of changes in developing instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 276. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

6.2.5 Executives' views of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Most executives (more than 83%) reported positive changes to school improvement planning. Of all the questions on planning and resourcing, a higher proportion of executives report moderate to large improvements on three items

- extent to which shared school improvement goals are more focused (36% of executives reported a moderate increase and 35% reported a large increase)
- extent to which shared school improvement goals are more actively promoted (34% of executives reported a moderate increase and 38% reported a large increase)
- strength of the culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for outcomes (33% of executives reported a moderate increase and 32% reported a large increase).

Executives also commonly said they are contributing more to school improvement planning goals.

- Over three-quarters (79%) reported a moderate to very large increase in the time they spent on improving teaching skills (48% reported a large or very large increase).
- Over two-thirds (69%) reported a moderate to very large increase in their contribution to their agreed school plan/ AIP/ NP Plan (or equivalent) (44% reported a large or very large increase).

A high proportion of executives (78%) are collaborating more with other schools around improving student outcomes. Where change had occurred, this was described as a small (22%) or moderate (22%) increase in collaboration.

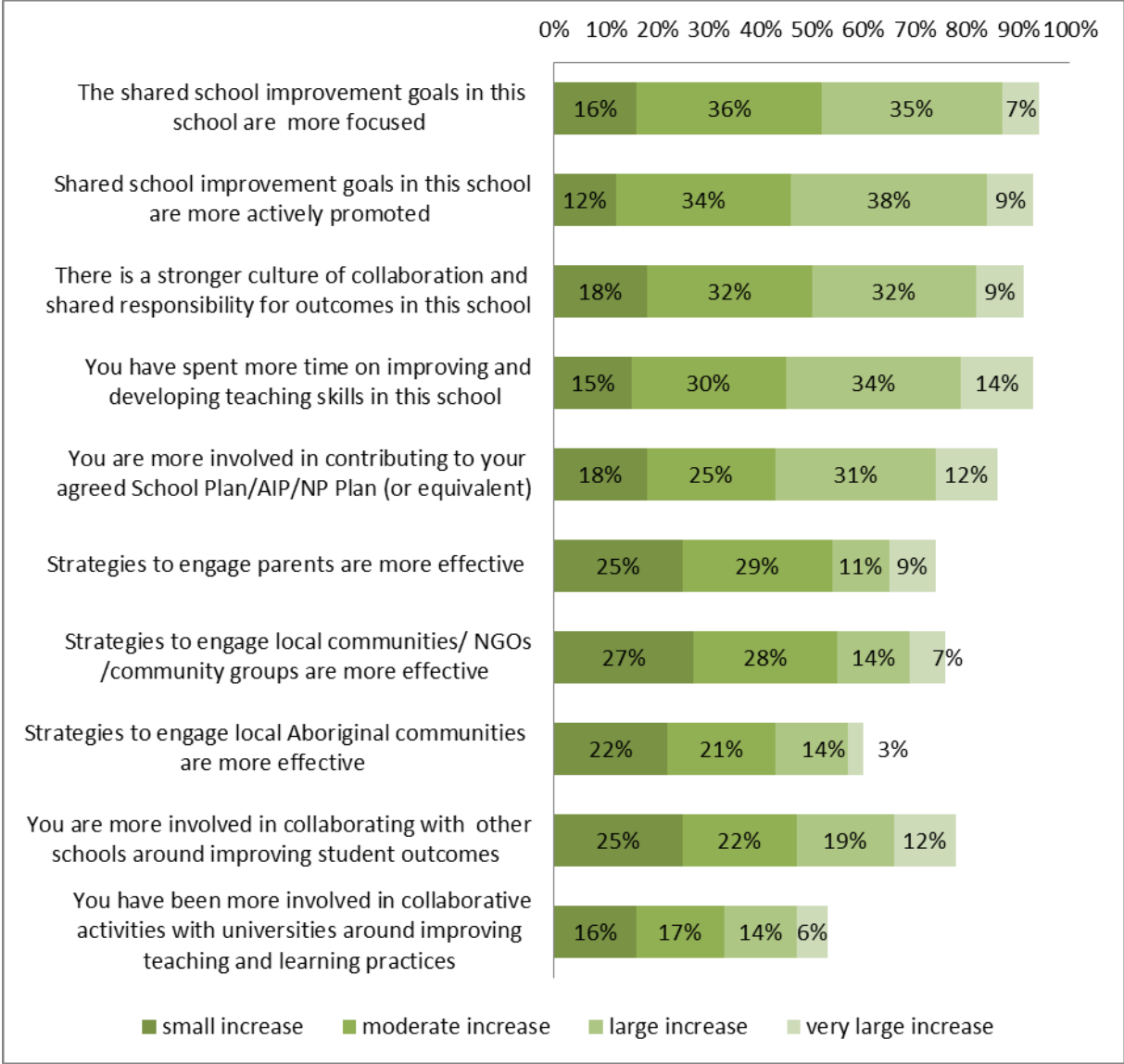
While positive changes were also reported in how effectively schools engage with the community, the extent of change was less than for other items in this section of the survey. For the items on engagement, executives were more likely to report that they had remained the same or the activity was not being done/ not applicable than for other planning and resourcing practices.

- 31% of executives indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities had remained the same, 8% said it was not being done or was not applicable.
- 22% of executives indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage local community groups and NGOs groups had remained the same, 2% indicated that it is not being done or was not applicable.
- 22% of executives indicated the effectiveness of strategies to engage parents had remained the same, 2% indicated that it was not being done or was not applicable.

There was also a lower level of change in the extent of collaboration with universities. Just over one-third of executives (36%) reported they are no more engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching and learning

practices than they were before commencing in the SSNP. Eleven percent reported that this activity is either not being done or was not applicable to their school (see figure 36).

Figure 36. Executives’ perceptions about whether the SSNP has improved planning, policy, action and resourcing since commencing in SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



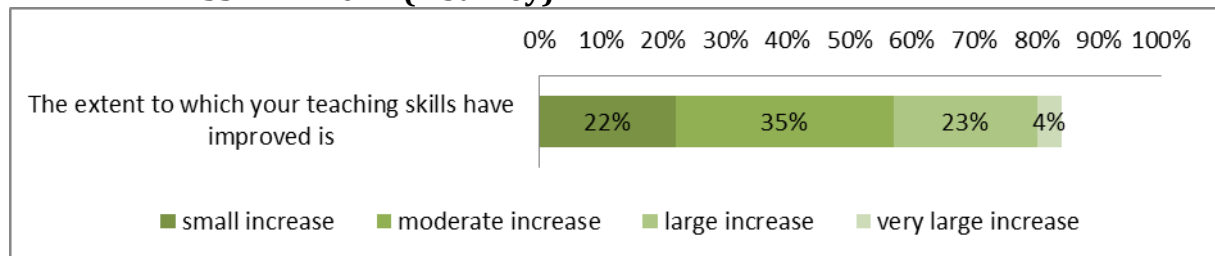
Note: N = 275.

6.3 Teachers' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP during 2011 (n survey)

6.3.1 Overall impact of changes in teaching skills since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Teachers responding to the n survey were very positive about the extent to which their teaching skills have improved since participating in the SSNP, with 84% indicating their skills have increased to some extent and 64% describing the increase as moderate to very large (see figure 37).

Figure 37. Teachers' perceptions of overall change since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 522.

6.3.2 Teachers' views of changes in professional development experiences since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)

Teachers commonly reported that they have more opportunities for professional development and improving their teaching skills and that the quality of the training has improved.

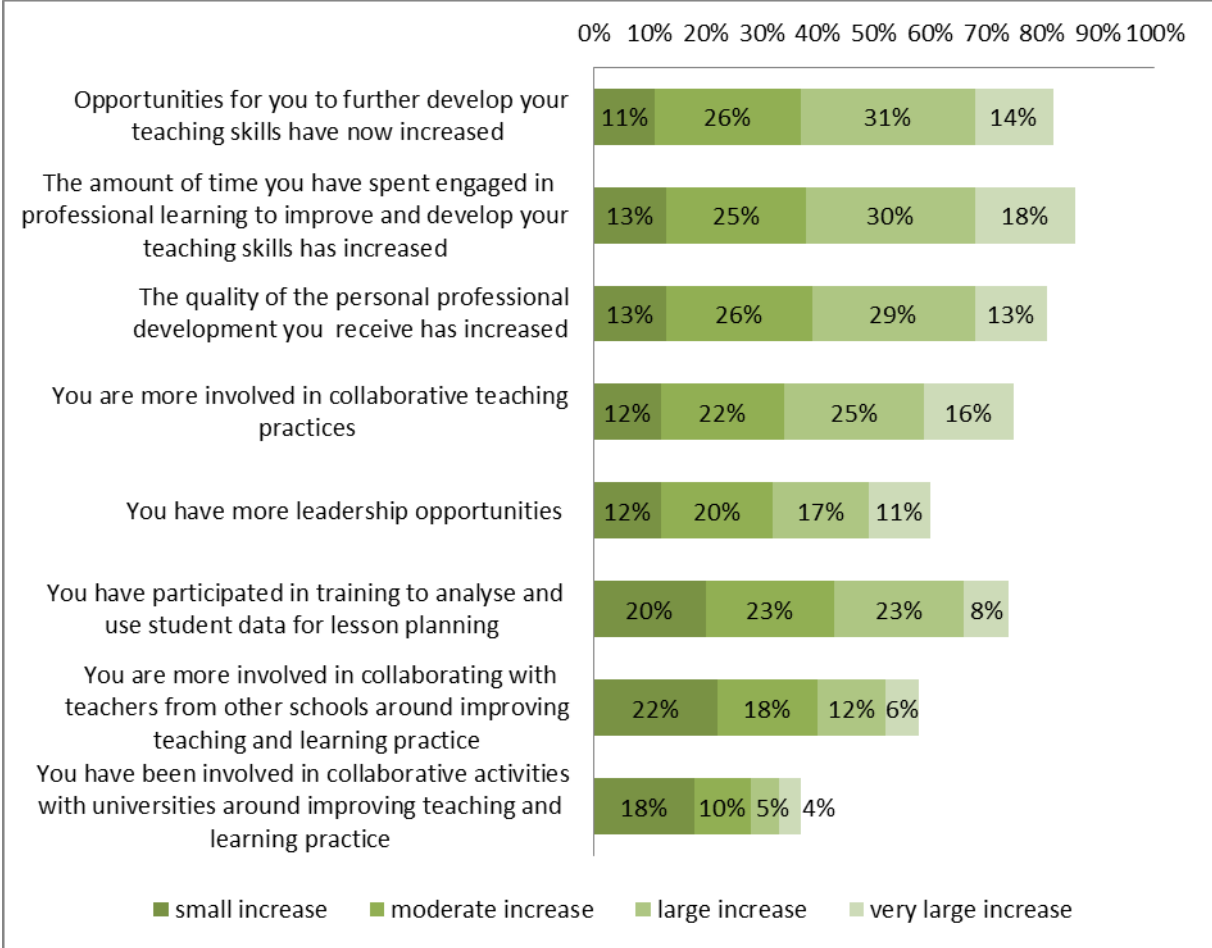
Over 81% of teachers reported some increases in their opportunities for skills development, the amount of time spent on professional learning and the quality of the professional development they received. More than 68% of teachers described the quality of professional learning opportunities as increasing by a moderate to very large extent. Slightly fewer teachers reported being more involved in collaborative teaching practices (75%) and participating in more training in the use of student data for lesson planning (74%) than they were prior to the SSNP (see figure 38).

Relatively fewer teachers reported having more leadership opportunities (60%), with almost half of teachers (48%) describing the increase in opportunities as moderate to very large.

A lower proportion of teachers also reported any increase in collaboration with peers or academic institutions outside the school. A relatively low proportion of teachers say they are collaborating more with universities (37%) or other schools (58%). In answering these two questions, a small proportion of teachers said they were less

involved (5% and 3%, respectively), or not collaborating with universities or teachers from other schools, or the question is not applicable to them (17% and 8%, respectively).

Figure 38. Teachers’ perceptions about improvements to their professional learning experiences since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 576.

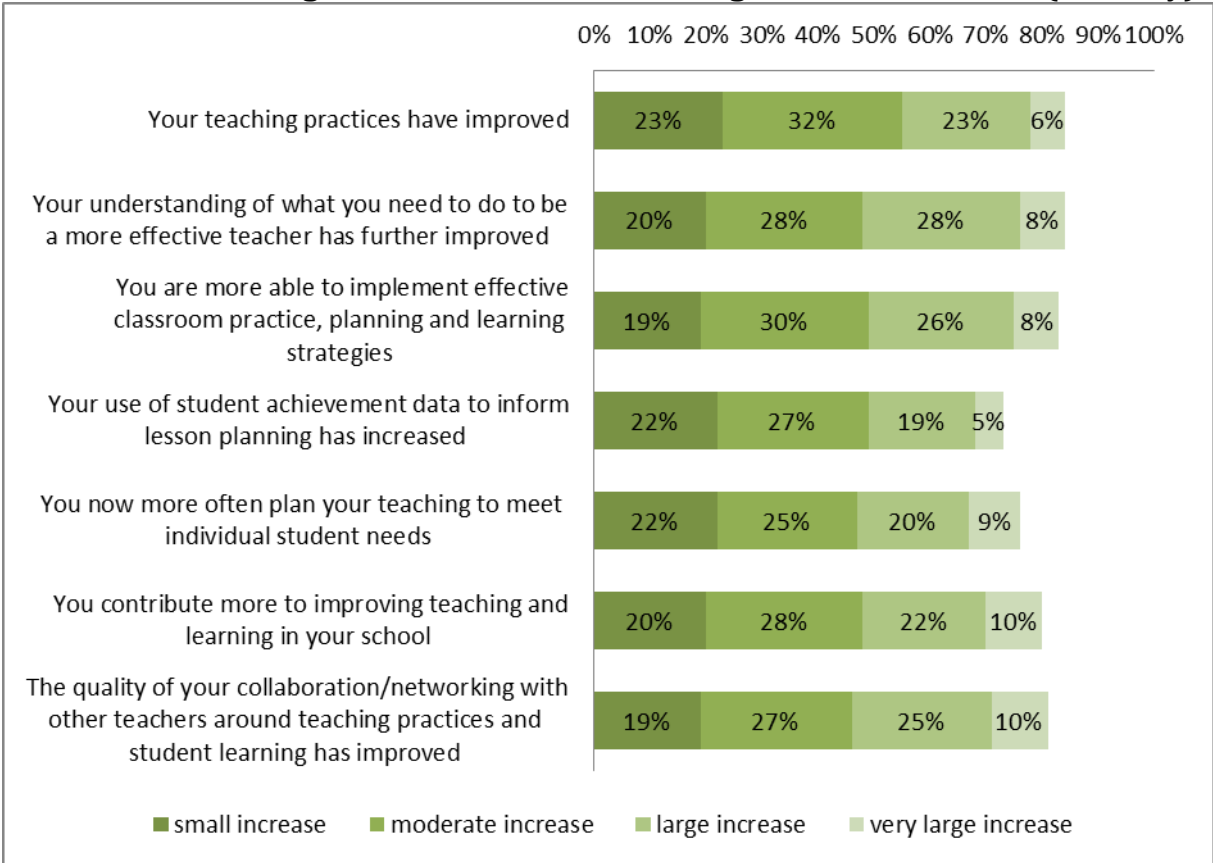
6.3.3 Teachers’ views of changes in professional development outcomes since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)

The survey also asked about outcomes from participating in professional development activities. A high proportion of teachers reported that their knowledge about how to be an effective teacher has increased to some extent and that they are actively applying what they have learnt in the classroom and in their interactions with peers. Teachers’ responses were consistent across the survey items, with 80%–84% reporting some changes in their teaching practices, their understanding about what they need to do to be a more effective teacher and their ability to implement effective teaching practices in the classroom. More than 60% reported moderate to large improvements for all these outcomes (see figure 39).

Slightly fewer teachers reported implementing two specific practices they might be expected to use to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. Just under three-quarters (73%) of teachers said their use of student achievement data to inform lesson planning had increased, with around half (51%) describing the increase as moderate to large. Similarly, 76% of teachers said that they now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs (55% reported the increase as moderate to large).

Another outcome of professional development explored in the survey is whether teachers are contributing more to professional learning in the school and sharing their expertise with peers. A high proportion of teachers (80%) reported contributing more to teaching and learning in their school, with 60% describing the increase in their contribution as moderate to very large. Similarly, 81% of teachers reported improvement in the quality of their collaboration with other teachers and 62% said the improvement had been moderate to large.

Figure 39. Teachers’ perceptions about improvements to their professional learning outcomes since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 576.

6.3.4 School actions to support teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

Teachers commonly reported that schools are taking action to support their learning and professional development. It also appears that the work of the professional learning

consultant or equivalent is enhancing many teachers' skills. Teachers' interaction with other school learning support staff and with teachers from other schools seems to have had less impact at this early stage in implementation of the SSNP.

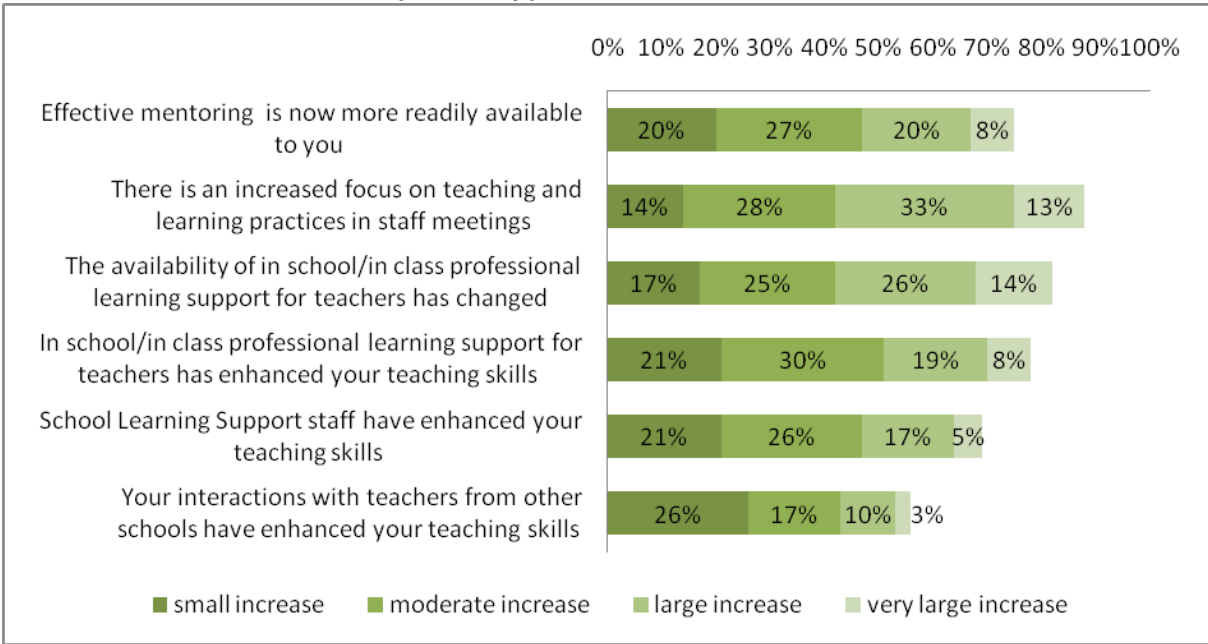
Teachers perceive the greatest changes school's actions to support them are an increase in

- the focus on teaching and learning practices in staff meetings (88% reported some increase, 74% reported a moderate to large increase)
- in-school/ in-class professional learning support for teachers, for example, the work of professional learning consultants or equivalent, a key strategy of the ITQ (82% reported some increase in this support, 65% reported that the increase had been moderate to very large).

Three-quarters of teachers also said that more effective mentoring is now available to them, 55% described the increase in availability as moderate to large.

A high proportion of teachers (78%) indicated that the in-school/ in-class support has enhanced their skills to some extent mostly reporting the changes as moderate (30%) and large (19%). But a relatively high proportion of teachers indicated that school support learning staff (44%) and interactions with teachers from other schools (57%) had no impact or only a small impact on their teaching skills since commencing in the SSNP. Additionally, a small proportion of teachers also said either they had not interacted with school support learning staff (4%) or teachers from other schools (8%) or did not know if their skills had improved through these interactions (3%–4%) (see figure 40).

Figure 40. Teachers' perceptions about school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 567.

6.3.5 School outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011

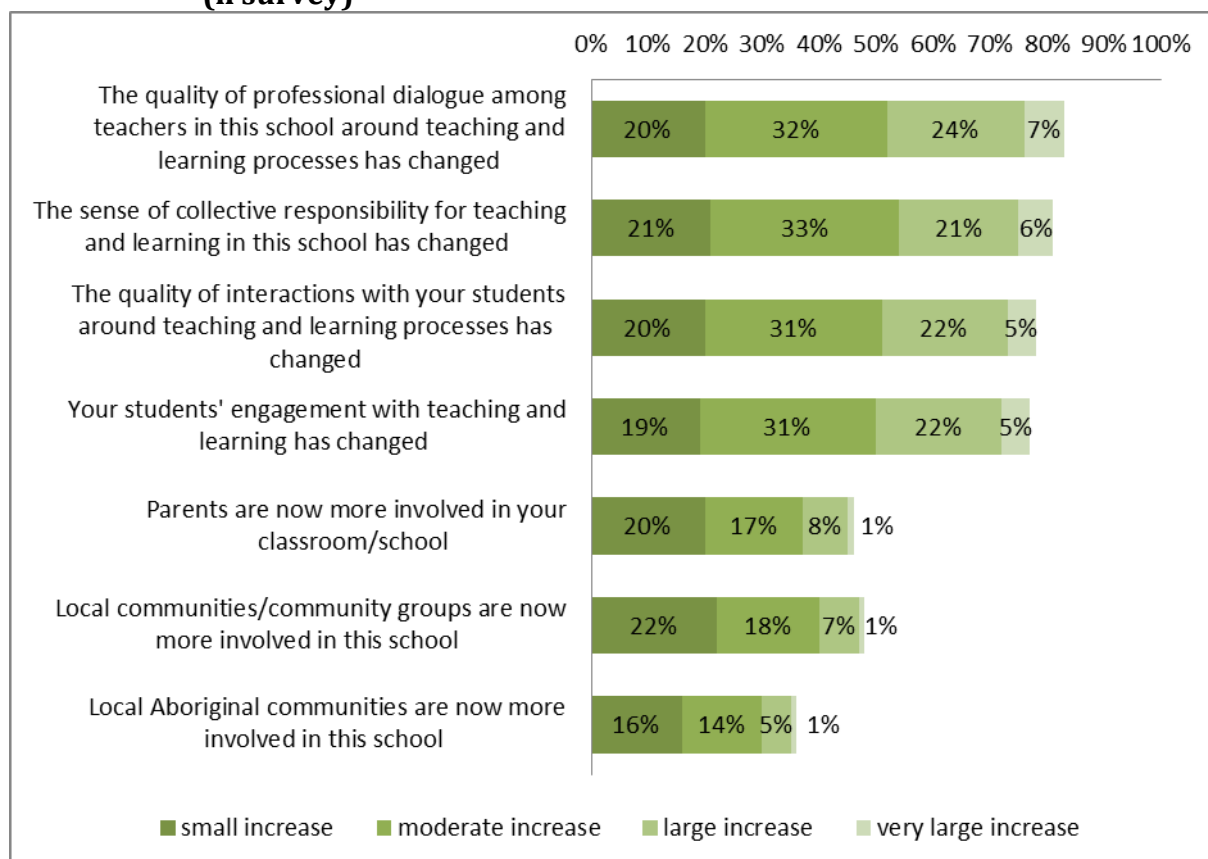
Teachers were mostly positive about the impact of teacher learning and professional development activities associated with the implementation of the SSNP at the school level among teaching staff and students, but most teachers perceived no impact on parent, local and Aboriginal community involvement in the school.

Teachers' views on school level outcomes for teaching staff were consistent across the two outcomes measured in the survey. Approximately 80% of teachers said that the quality of professional dialogue among teachers in their school and the sense of collective responsibility around teaching and learning processes had increased since commencing in the SSNP in 2011. About 60% reported the increase in professional dialogue and in collaboration at their school as moderate to very large.

Teachers also indicated the increased focus on professional development is having an impact on students. Over three-quarters (78%) of teachers reported an increase in the quality of their interactions with students and 77% reported an increase in student engagement with teaching and learning. More than half of the teachers described the increase in the quality of their interactions with students (58%) and student engagement in teaching and learning (56%) as moderate to large.

Overall, fewer teachers perceived that parent, Aboriginal and other community involvement in their schools had increased and those that have changed report lesser increases than for other school level outcomes. Only 46% of teachers indicated that there had been any increase in parent involvement, 48% reported an increase in local community involvement and 36% reported an increase in local Aboriginal group involvement. Thirteen to twenty percent of teachers reported that involvement decreased/ not done/ don't know (see figure 41).

Figure 41. Teachers' perceptions about school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



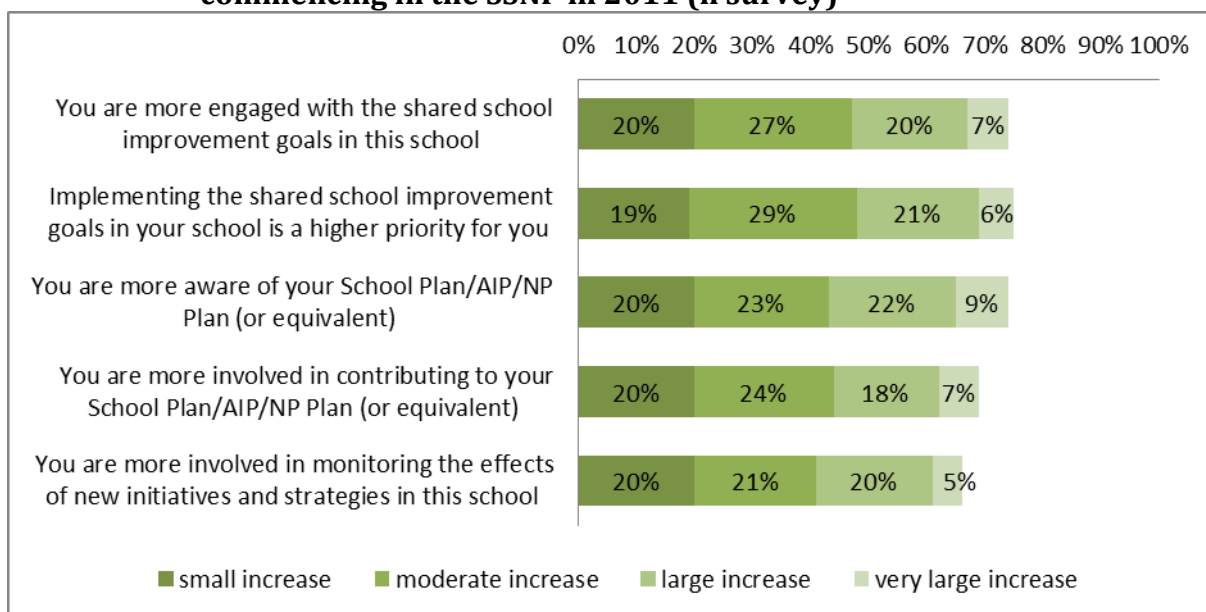
Note: N = 567.

6.3.6 Teachers' engagement with their school's strategic direction, goals and expectations since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)

Approximately three-quarters of teachers indicated that they are more aware of and engaged with their school's strategic directions and school improvement goals since commencing in the SSNP in 2011. Although around two-thirds said they were more engaged in specific activities such as contributing to their school plan (or equivalent) or in monitoring the effects of new initiatives in their school.

Sixty-four percent of teachers said they are more engaged with the shared school improvement goals in their school and 75% said that implementing the goals is a higher priority for them now than immediately prior to the start of the SSNP (moderate to very large increases, 54% and 56%, respectively). Seventy-four percent of teachers reported that they are now more aware of their school plan (or equivalent) and 69% reported being more involved in contributing to it (moderate to very large increases, 54% and 49%, respectively). Sixty-six percent of teachers said they are now more involved in monitoring the effects of new initiatives in their school (see figure 42).

Figure 42. Teachers' perceptions about their own engagement with their school's strategic direction, goals and expectations since commencing in the SSNP in 2011 (n survey)



Note: N = 564.

6.4 Preliminary comparison between different Partnerships

When we compared the data for respondents involved in the LSES with those involved in the ITQ and those involved in both Partnerships, the pattern of responses across the items was remarkably consistent.

A higher proportion of teachers, executives and principals from schools involved in the LSES consistently reported positive change across most areas of interest compared with their peers involved in the ITQ. The difference was between 8 points and 25 points per item and was greatest when comparing principals' responses from one Partnership with principals involved in the other Partnership. The small number of respondents from schools involved in both Partnerships reported the extent of change consistently as somewhere in the middle of the ITQ and LSES responses.

The difference disappeared for the question about the availability of in-school/ in-class support, where respondents across all Partnerships reported similar increases in availability. The pattern of differences was reversed for questions about the extent each group of staff members had collaborated with their peers from other schools and universities and whether these interactions had enhanced teacher's skills. A higher proportion of respondents involved in the ITQ reported they were collaborating more now with their peers from other schools and staff at universities. The difference in the extent of collaboration being reported was greatest between executives where there was a 25-point difference between executives working in schools involved in the ITQ and their peers involved in the LSES.

Comparison of the responses by Partnership, including the effects of multi-partnership participation, will be explored in more depth in the next, interpretive report.

6.5 Conclusion

The SSNP had been implemented for a relatively short time period—an estimated nine months—when the survey was completed. Even so, the results show that schools are implementing many SSNP activities and respondents perceived they are already achieving some change in practices, particularly those related to professional development and learning. But this cohort reported more gains at the activity level than in teacher practices and a relatively low proportion of respondents reported that they were more effectively engaging parents and local communities—Aboriginal groups in particular—in their schools. For LSES schools, all respondent groups say that there has been little change in how much they are collaborating with their peers and other professionals outside the school.

All groups reported that the overall quality of teaching has improved to some extent since the SSNP started. Further, respondents report a relatively high level of take-up of some activities. For example, a similar proportion of principals, executives and teachers report that more time is being focused on teaching practices in staff meetings (see table 5) and a high proportion of all groups report that collective responsibility for teaching/learning is stronger.

But in general, a higher proportion of principals and executives than teachers are reporting positive changes. In particular, fewer teachers than principals and executives reported that planning to meet individual student's needs and use of student data had increased. More principals than executives or teachers report they are collaborating with their peers.

Respondents involved in the ITQ are not reporting as much change at this early stage in implementation across most items. The exception is in the area of collaboration; a higher proportion of respondents involved in the ITQ report they are collaborating with teachers outside their school and university staff compared with respondents in the LSES.

Table 5. Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (n-survey)

Question	Principals		Executives		Teachers	
	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase
Overall quality of teaching has improved	94%	83%	94%	72%	84%	64%
Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established	92%	71%	93%	74%	75%	55%
More time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings	91%	81%	91%	72%	88%	74%
Teachers plan teaching to meet individual student needs	90%	70%	96%	84%	76%	54%
Collective responsibility for teaching/ learning is stronger	93%	75%	86%	65%	81%	60%
Professional dialogue around teaching is of higher quality	94%	80%	88%	69%	83%	63%
Improved quality of collaboration with peers around teaching/ learning	84%	56%	90%	69%	75%	63%
Your analysis of student data has increased	85%	63%	88%	68%	73%	51%
Collaborates more with other schools	83%	60%	78%	53%	58%	36%
More engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching/ learning	46%	34%	53%	37%	37%	19%

7. Respondents' perceptions of changes attributed to the SSNP in the second year of participation (e survey)

This chapter contains a brief description of respondents' views on changes in areas targeted by the SSNP in their second year of participation. Respondents in all three groups (principals, executives and teachers) reported sizeable increases in the areas targeted by the SSNP, which suggests that the impact of SSNP increases over the course of participation. For each survey item, the percentage of respondents reporting any change (small, moderate, large or very large) is given, followed by the proportion reporting moderate to very large change (moderate, large or very large), and the proportion reporting large or very large change.

The data set (e survey)

The e survey was distributed to schools that commenced in the SSNPs in late 2009 or early 2010: 147 LN schools (2009 cohort), 138 LSES schools (2009 cohort), 193 LSES schools (2010 cohort) and 65 ITQ schools (2010 cohort). The small group of principals whose former schools participated in the SSNPs are also included in this section. A total of 233 principals, 892 executives and 1687 teachers completed the e survey.

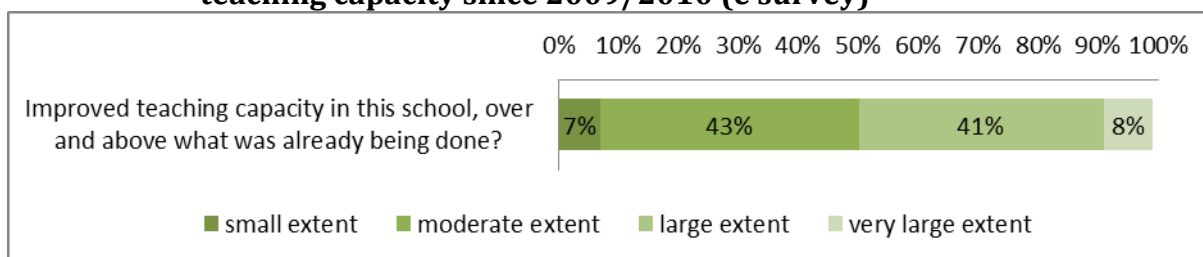
By the time the survey was distributed these schools had been implementing SSNP initiatives for approximately 20 to 24 months. These schools were thus at a more mature stage of implementation and respondents were more able to assess the extent of impact.

7.1 Principals' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey)

7.1.1 Overall impact of changes in teacher capacity resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Overall, principals are very positive about the impact of the SSNP in their second year of participation. Almost all principals (99%) who responded to the survey reported that the SSNP had improved teaching capacity in their school. Principals generally reported the improvement as either moderate (43%) or large (41%); about half (49%) described it as large or very large (see figure 43).

Figure 43. Principals' perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 228.

7.1.2 Principals' views of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

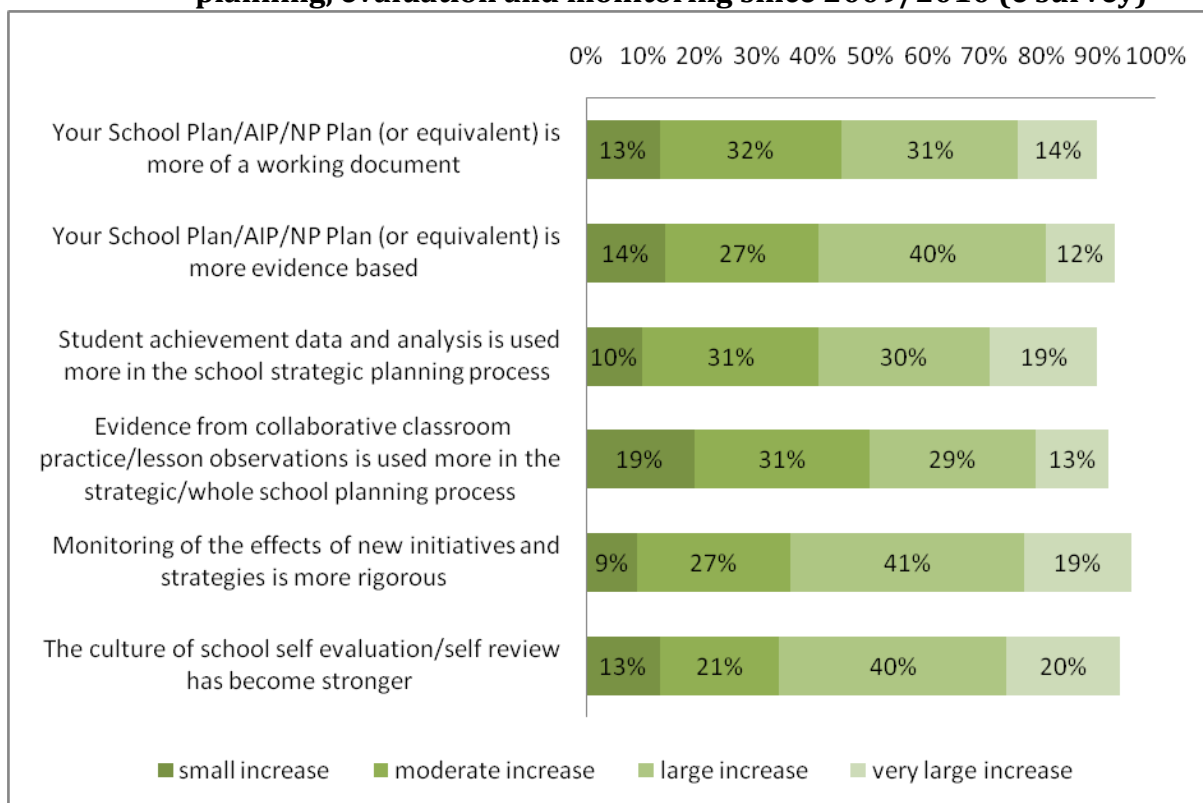
Almost all principals responding to the e survey reported positive changes in how school plans are developed and used, in the strategic use of evidence in planning processes, in the rigour of monitoring of new initiatives and in the culture of self-evaluation. Across all six items, most principals reported positive changes in practice and a high proportion described large or very large changes. No principals reported negative changes and just 1% reported that these questions were not applicable to them or the practice was not done (see figure 44).

Almost all principals indicated that their school plan (or equivalent) is more of a working document (90%) and more evidence based (93%), with 77% and 79% of principals, respectively, describing moderate to very large changes (45% and 52% reported large or very large, respectively).

Almost all schools (90%) are now more often using student achievement data and analysis in the school strategic planning process, with 80% describing moderate to very large increases (49% reported large or very large). Similarly, 92% of principals reported using evidence from collaborative classroom practice more in strategic/ whole-of-school planning, with 73% reporting moderate to very large increases (42% reported large or very large).

Almost all principals (96%) reported increasingly rigorous monitoring of the effects of new initiatives, with 87% reporting a moderate to very large increase (60% reported large or very large). Almost all (94%) reported that the culture of school self-evaluation and self-review is stronger; 81% described a moderate to very large change (60% reported large or very large).

Figure 44. Principals' perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 233.

7.1.3 Principals' views of changes in teaching, learning and professional development resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Principals responding to the e survey were positive about changes to teaching, learning and professional development as a result of participation in the SSNP. A high proportion reported increases in the availability of professional development options for teachers and in the implementation of teaching practices that are key to the SSNP.

Overall, 98% of principals reported that students in the school are more engaged with teaching and learning and that the overall quality of teaching has improved; over 50% reported a large or very large increase (85% and 88% reported a moderate to very large increase, respectively) (see figure 45).

Almost all principals (97%) said they are more able to arrange for instructional support to be provided to individual teachers (86% described a moderate to very large change). About three-quarters (74%) said their own ability to provide this support had increased (52% reported a moderate to very large increase).

Approximately 95% of principals described increases in

- the establishment and support of effective mentoring (76% reported a moderate to very large increase, 46% reported a large or very large increase)
- the time spent in staff meetings focused on teaching practices and student learning (84% reported a moderate to very large increase, 60% reported a large or very large increase)
- in-school/ in-class professional development (88% reported a moderate to very large increase, 67% reported a large or very large increase).

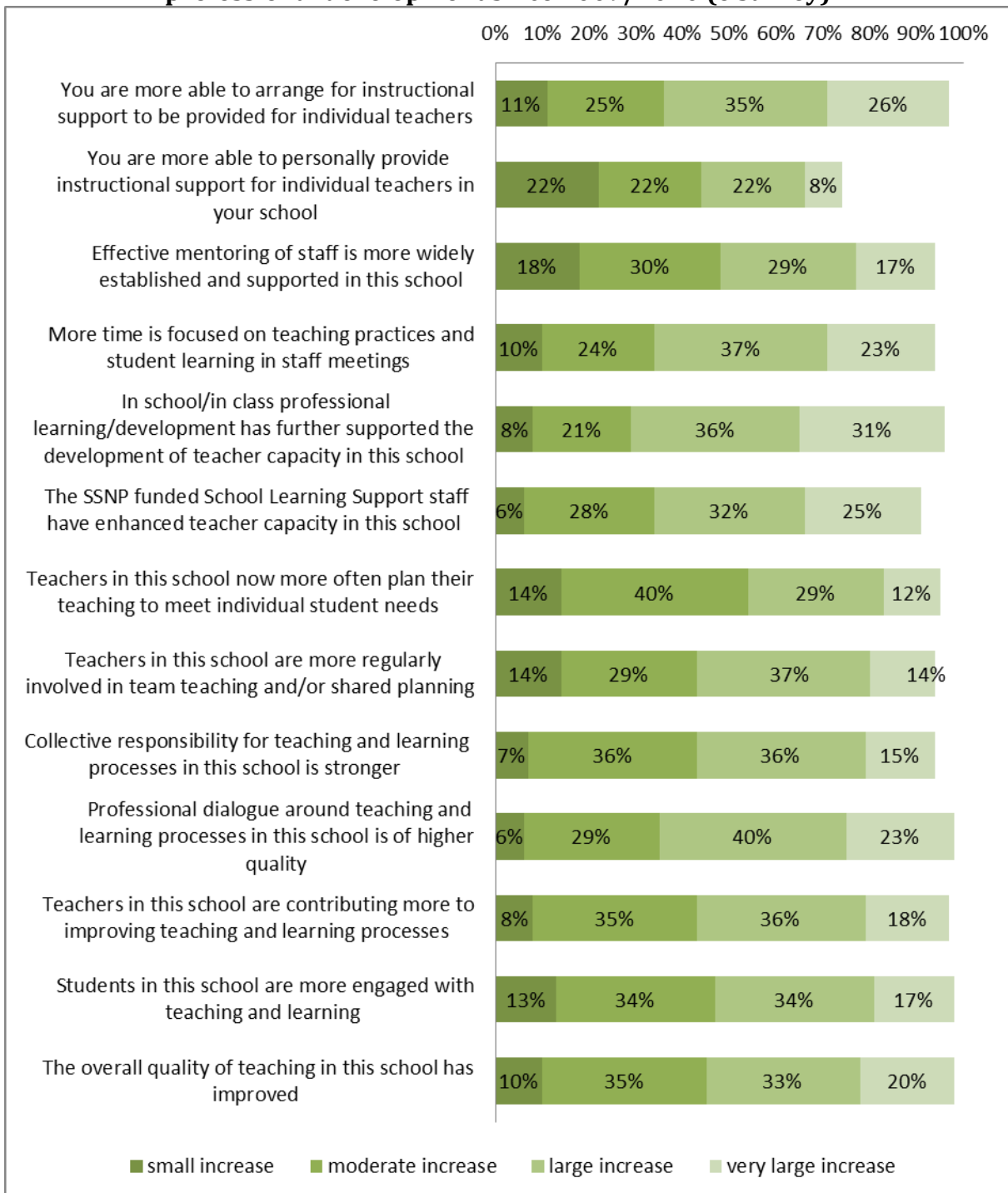
Slightly fewer principals (91%) reported that SSNP-funded school learning support staff had enhanced teacher capacity (85% described a moderate to very large change, 57% reported a large or very large change).

In terms of teacher behaviour, approximately 95% of principals said that teachers now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs and are more regularly involved in team teaching and/or shared planning; 80% described a moderate to very large change (51% and 41% reported large or very large, respectively) compared to before the commencement of the SSNP.

A very high proportion of principals (94%–98%) also reported positive changes in teachers' collaborative practices for three items

- strength of collective responsibility for teaching and learning (87% reported a moderate to large increase, 51% reported large or very large)
- quality of professional dialogue around teaching and learning processes (92% reported a moderate to large increase, 63% reported large or very large)
- level of teachers contribution to improving teaching and learning processes (89% reported a moderate to large increase, 54% reported large or very large).

Figure 45. Principals' perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 232.

7.1.4 Principals' views of changes in instructional leadership and leadership for learning capacity resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Principals responding to the e survey indicated that their leadership skills and practices have increased across a range of areas, but a lower proportion described large or very large change in this area.

Overall, 92% reported that recent initiatives or strategies in their school had further developed their skills or capabilities in instructional leadership or leadership for learning (77% reported a moderate to very large increase, 36% reported large or very large) (see figure 46).

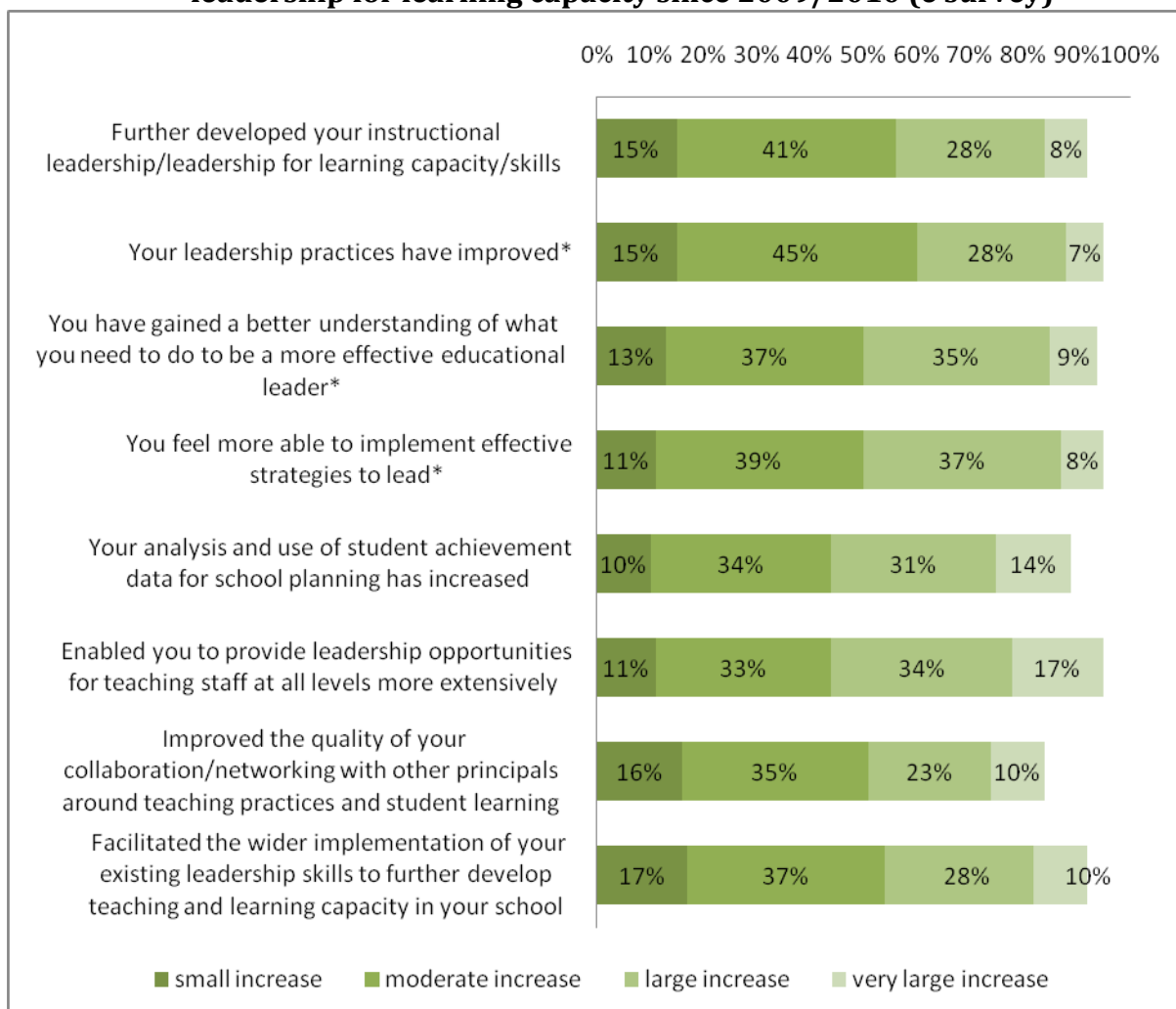
Principals indicated they had gained a lot from their formal and informal professional learning experiences since commencing the SSNP, with approximately 95% saying

- their leadership practices have improved (80% reported a moderate to very large increase, 35% reported large or very large)
- they have gained a better understanding of what they need to do to be a more effective educational leader (81% reported a moderate to very large increase, 44% reported large or very large)
- they feel more able to implement effective strategies to lead (84% reported a moderate to very large increase, 45% reported large or very large).

Most principals (89%) reported that their analysis and use of student achievement data for school planning has increased (79% reported a moderate to very large increase, 45% reported large or very large).

Most principals were very positive about the extent to which recent initiatives or strategies in their school had supported leadership and collaboration: 95% said they are more able to provide leadership opportunities for teaching staff at all levels (84% reported a moderate to very large increase, 51% reported large or very large), 84% reported an improved quality of networking or collaboration with other principals around teaching practices and student learning (68% reported a moderate to very large increase, 33% reported large or very large) and 92% reported they are now better able to implement existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity (75% reported a moderate to very large increase, 38% reported large or very large).

Figure 46. Principals' perceptions of changes in instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 232. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

7.1.5 Principals' views of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Many principals responding to the e survey indicated that there had been advances in the areas of collaborative planning and action, broader community engagement and collaboration with other institutions, although the extent of reported change varied across the planning, policy action and resourcing initiatives (see figure 47).

Approximately 96% of principals reported that shared school improvement goals are more focused (85% reported a moderate to very large change, 51% reported large or very large) and more actively promoted (88% reported a moderate to very large change, 53% reported large or very large). A similar proportion reported that the culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for outcomes is stronger (85% reported a moderate to very large change, 50% reported large or very large).

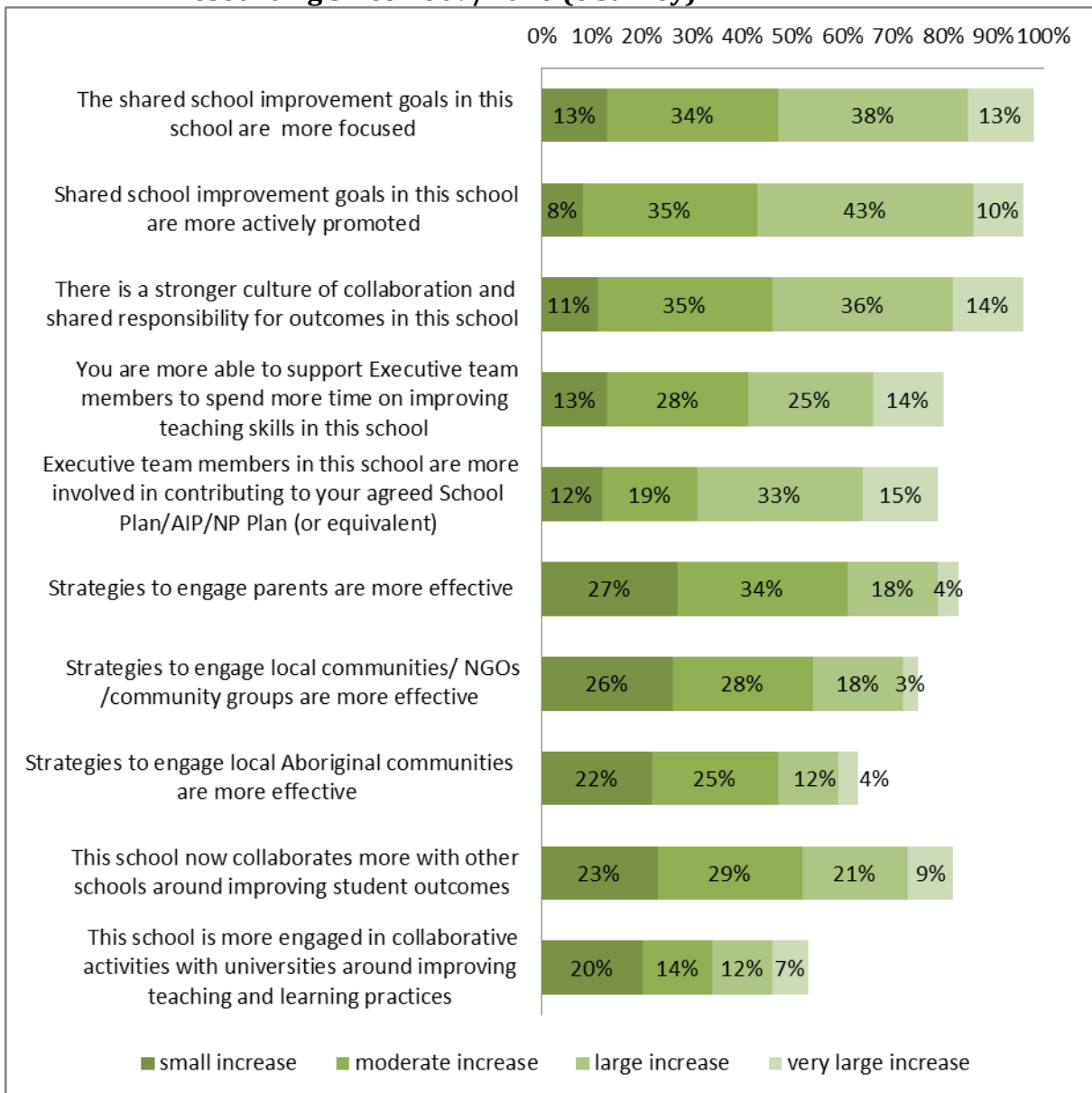
Many principals (80%) reported being increasingly able to support executive team members to spend more time on improving teaching skills, and a similar proportion reported that executive team members contribute more to the school plan (or equivalent) (67% reported moderate to large increases, 39% and 48% reported large or very large increases, respectively).

Lower proportions of principals reported increases in the effectiveness of strategies to engage the broader community since commencing the SSNP and the reported changes were not as sizeable as other initiatives.

- 83% reported an increase in the effectiveness of their strategies to engage parents (56% reported a moderate to very large increase, 22% reported large or very large).
- 75% reported an increase in the effectiveness of their strategies to engage local communities, community groups and NGOs (49% reported a moderate to very large increase, 21% reported large or very large).
- 63% reported an increase in the effectiveness of strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities (41% reported a moderate to very large increase, 16% reported large or very large).

While a relatively high proportion of principals (82%) reported increases in collaboration with other schools (59% reported a moderate to very large increase, 30% reported large or very large), a much smaller proportion (53%) reported being more engaged in collaborative activities with universities (33% reported a moderate to very large increase, 19% reported large or very large. Twelve percent said the question was not applicable or this activity was not done).

Figure 47. Principals' perceptions of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 232.

7.1.6 Principals' views of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation resulting

Across all items used to assess sector support, a high proportion of principals (80% or more) reported some positive changes in how well they are supported by their sector/ system/ regional/ Diocesan/ AIS (sector) to implement the SSNP compared with the quality and level of support provided for other school improvement initiatives (see figure 48).

Overall, 81% of principals agreed that sector support for the SSNP has been more adequate for their school's needs; 60% reported a moderate to very large change.

A few principals said sector support is worse now across all survey items in this section, 11%–15% reported that support has remained about the same and 3% reported that sector support was not applicable or was not done.

Principals mostly reported improvements as moderate or larger across all items measuring change in sector support. Most principals (88%) indicated that sector monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, the implementation and maintenance of the SSNP in their school is stronger; 77% reported a moderate to very large change. Similarly, most principals (83%) indicated that support for the implementation and maintenance of the SSNP in their school is stronger with 69% reporting a moderate to very large change.

Most principals (81%) also indicated that advice, support, guidance and follow-up from sector staff about the SSNP had been more substantial compared to other school change initiatives prior to the SSNP; 65% reported a moderate to very large change.

A large proportion of principals (84%) reported an increase in the quality of resources and materials to support school improvement planning from their sector (68% reported a moderate to very large increase). A similar proportion (86%) reported an increase in availability of useful and high quality tools to support school improvement planning; 65% reported a moderate to very large increase.

Figure 48. Principals' perceptions of SSNP effects on sector support for/ adding value to school implementation since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 232.

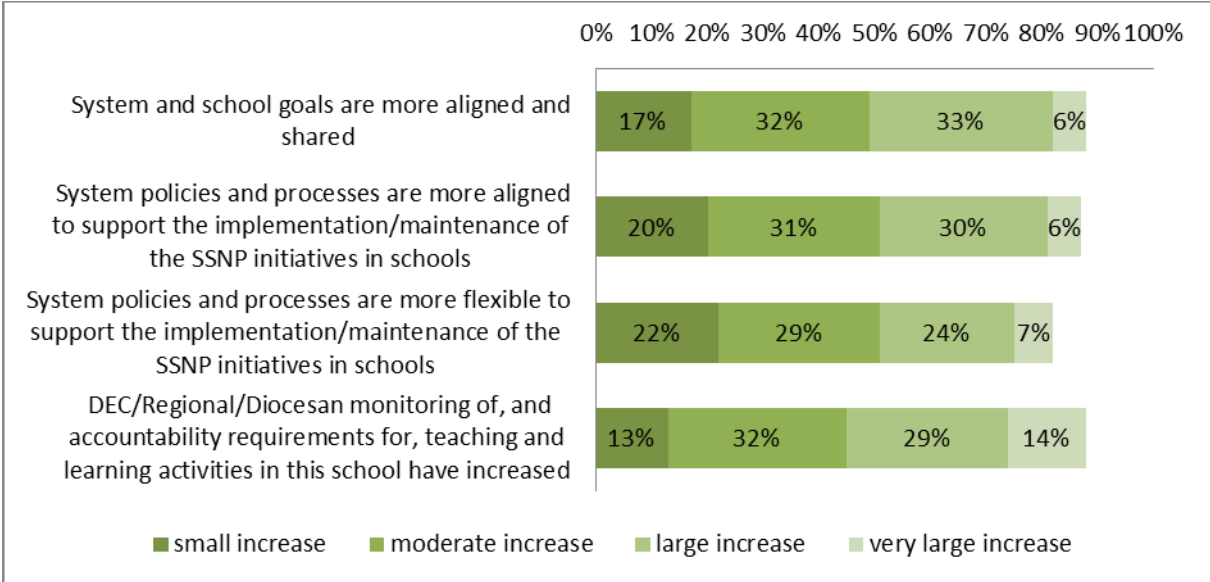
7.1.7 Principals' views of changes in school/ system alignment resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

A high proportion of principals (88%) indicated that school and system goals, policies and processes are, to some extent, more aligned than in previous school change initiatives. The extent of change is similar across the two items that directly ask principals' views about system and school alignment. Specifically, 71% of principals indicated that there has been a moderate to very large increase in the extent to which system and school goals are aligned. Similarly, 67% of principals reported a moderate to very large increase in the alignment of system policies and processes to support implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (see figure 49).

Relatively fewer principals indicated that system policies and processes are more flexible to support implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP, but the proportion reporting increased flexibility was still quite high: 82% reported an increase, 60% reported a moderate to very large increase.

Principals were also asked if their sector had increased monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, teaching and learning activities in their schools: 88% reported these had increased to some extent, 75% reported a moderate to very large increase.

Figure 49. Principals’ perceptions of school system alignment resulting from SSNP participation since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 219.

7.1.8 Principals’ views on staffing impacts on the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP since 2009/2010

The final section of the principals’ survey explored the impacts of new staff, temporary or acting staff members, part-time staff and inexperienced staff compared to the period prior to commencing the SSNP. Principals reported both positive and negative impacts, with the positive outweighing the negative.

A relatively large proportion of principals (up to 54%) indicated that one or more of the 18 questions about staffing impacts were not applicable to them, as they did not have those positions (e.g. no executive team), or staff in that category (e.g. no inexperienced teachers). As such, we have removed the ‘not applicable’ responses from the denominator to better understand the impacts in schools where staffing changes have occurred (see table 6).

New staff

A high proportion principals (93%) reported changes in executive team membership as having positively supported the development of SSNP in schools, 83% reported a moderate to very large positive impact (69% reported large or very large). Similarly, 92% of principals reported that changes in teaching staff were seen to have positively supported the development of SSNP in schools, with 84% reporting a moderate to very

large positive impact (59% reported large or very large). Changes in teaching staff in particular areas were seen to positively support the development of SSNP by 87% of principals, 81% reported a moderate to very large impact (51% reported large or very large).

About 45% of principals reported that these changes also impeded the development of the SSNP in their schools, with approximately 25% reporting a moderate to very large negative impact (approximately 16% reported large or very large).

Approximately 22% of principals reported no executive team changes (10% had no executive team), 13% reported no changes in teaching staff and 25% reported no changes in teaching staff in specific areas.

Acting/ relieving and temporary/ casual staff

Eighty-nine percent of principals reported that the proportion of acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team was seen to positively support the development of the SSNP (81% reported a moderate to very large impact, 59% reported large or very large). A similar group of principals (88%) said that the proportion of temporary or casual teachers had supported the implementation of the SSNP, although fewer rated the impact as moderate to very large (72%) or large or very large (53%).

For schools almost two years into the implementation of the SSNP, the proportion of temporary or casual teachers appeared to be no more of an impediment than the proportion of acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team. Thirty-five percent of principals said the proportion of temporary or casual teachers impeded the successful implementation of the SSNP (19% reported a moderate to very large impact, 9% reported large or very large) compared to 32% reporting that acting/ relieving or temporary executives were an impediment (16% reported a moderate to very large impact, 8% reported large or very large).

About one-quarter of principals (24%) reported no acting/ relieving or temporary staff on the executive team (10% had no executive team) and approximately 5% reported no temporary or casual teachers.

Part-time staff

Although the majority of principals did not have part-time executive team members, these positions appear to have been more a support than an impediment the development of the SSNP. About three-quarters (77%) of those principals with part-time executive team members reported this to have had a positive impact (68% reported a moderate to very large impact, 44% reported a large or very large impact), whereas 41% reported that it impeded the development of the SSNP in their school (14% reported a moderate to very large impact).

Similarly, more principals reported the proportion of part-time teachers as having a positive impact (83%) than as an impediment (43%) in the implementation of the SSNP in their school (65% and 17% reported moderate to very large impact, respectively).

Forty-two percent of principals reported having no part-time executives (12% had no executive team) and 14% had no part-time teachers.

Inexperienced staff

A large group of principals reported that the proportion of inexperienced executive team members and teachers positively supported the implementation of the SSNP in their school (84% and 85%, respectively), over-two thirds reported a moderate to very large positive impact (68% and 71%, respectively) (44% and 48% reported large or very large, respectively).

About one-third (35%) of principals reported no inexperienced executive team members (12% had no executive team) and 16% reported no inexperienced teachers.

Table 6. Principals' perceptions about the impact of staffing changes on the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP (e survey)

Staffing group and type of question		No impact	Any impact	Moderate to very large impact	Large to very large impact	Not Applicable
		% respondents where question is applicable				% all respondents
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>						
Q1	New executive team members	7%	93%	83%	69%	31%
Q7	Acting/ relieving executive team members	11%	89%	81%	59%	34%
Q11	Part-time executive team members	23%	77%	68%	44%	54%
Q15	Inexperienced executive team members	16%	84%	68%	44%	47%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>						
Q2	New executive team members	59%	41%	24%	17%	33%
Q8	Acting/ relieving executive team members	68%	32%	16%	8%	34%
Q12	Part-time executive team members	59%	41%	14%	8%	53%
Q16	Inexperienced executive team members	66%	34%	18%	10%	45%
<i>Positively supported implementation</i>						
Q3	New teachers	8%	92%	84%	59%	11%
Q5	Teachers in special areas	13%	87%	81%	51%	23%
Q9	Casual teachers	12%	88%	72%	53%	4%
Q13	Part-time teachers	17%	83%	65%	45%	13%
Q17	Inexperienced teachers	15%	85%	71%	48%	15%
<i>Impeded implementation</i>						
Q4	New teachers	52%	48%	25%	15%	14%
Q6	Teachers in special areas	53%	47%	25%	12%	26%
Q10	Casual teachers	65%	35%	19%	9%	6%
Q14	Part-time teachers	57%	43%	17%	9%	14%
Q18	Inexperienced teachers	59%	41%	18%	7%	17%

7.2 Executives' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey)

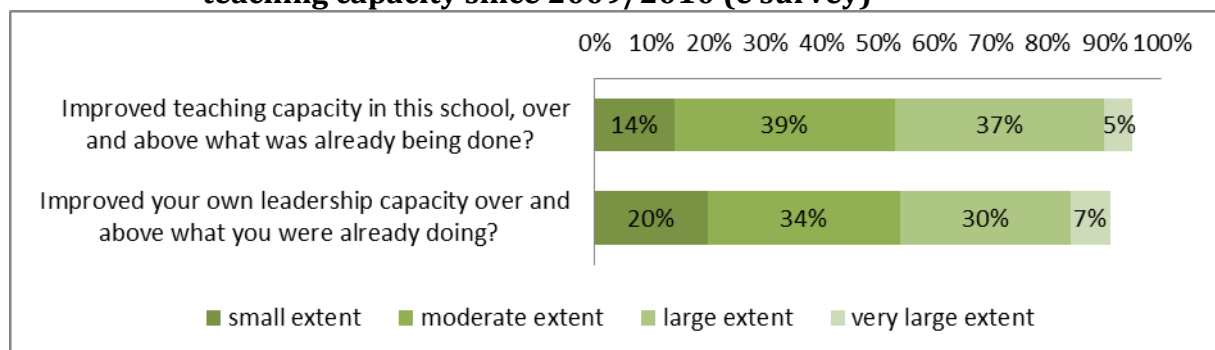
7.2.1 Overall impact of changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Overall, executives in their second year of participation in the SSNP are very positive about the impact on their school and their own capacity (see figure 50).

Almost all executives (95%) reported that the SSNP had improved teaching capacity in their school, over and above what was already being done, 81% reported a moderate to very large increase (42% reported large or very large).

Executives were also generally positive about the impact of the SSNP on their own leadership capacity, over and above what they were already doing: 91% reported that their own leadership capacity had increased to some extent, 71% reported a moderate to very large increase.

Figure 50. Executives' perceptions about whether the SSNP have improved teaching capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 802.

7.2.2 Executives' views of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Almost all school executives reported positive changes in the development and use of school plans, the strategic use of evidence in planning processes, the rigour of monitoring new initiatives and the culture of self-evaluation since commencing in the SSNP. For five of the six aspects measured by the survey, more than 50% of executives reported large or very large increases. Less than 1% reported negative changes in these aspects and a similarly small proportion reported that they were not applicable or were not done (see figure 51).

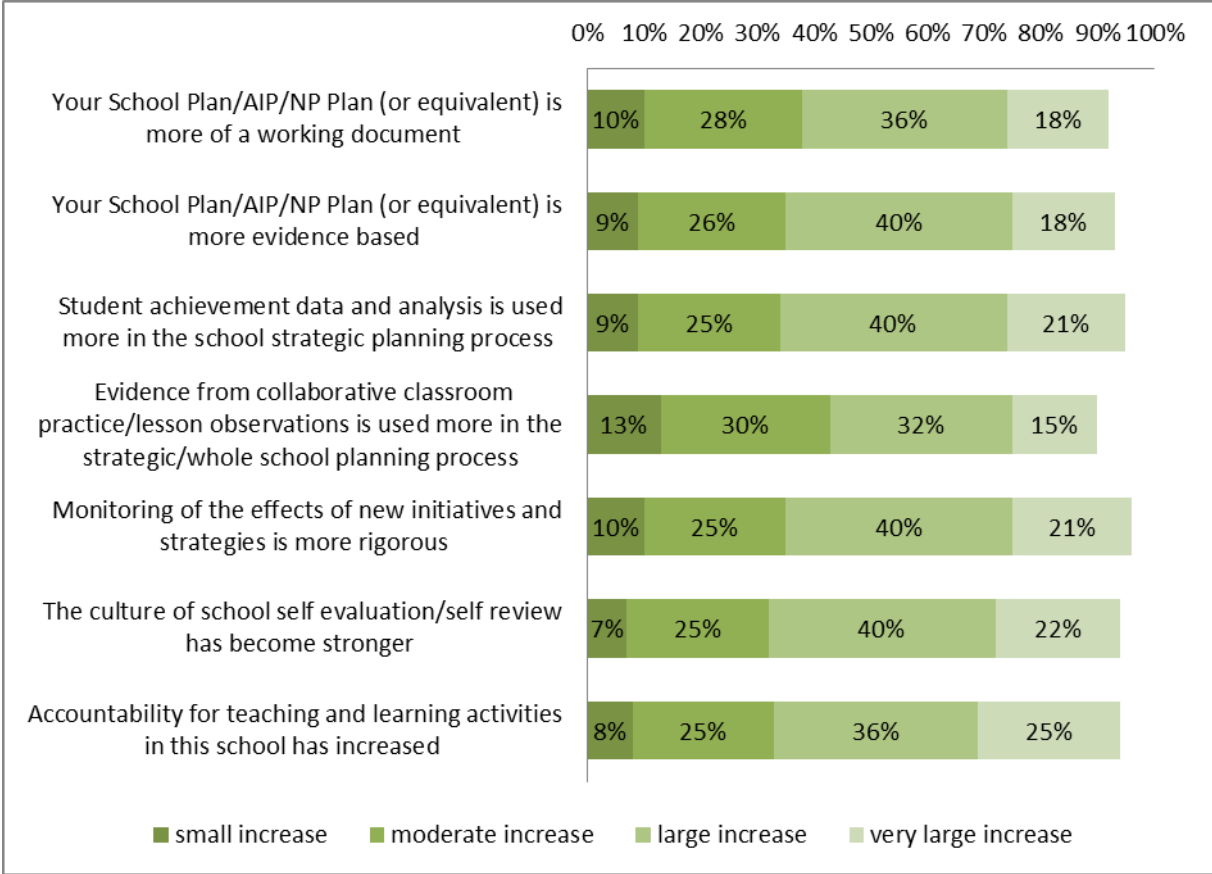
Almost all executives reported that the school plan (or equivalent) is more of a working document (92%) and more evidence based (93%), with 82% and 84% of respondents,

respectively, reporting moderate to very large changes (54% and 58% reported large or very large, respectively).

Almost all schools (95%) are now also using student achievement data and analysis more in the school strategic planning process; 86% reported a moderate to very large increase (61% reported large or very large). Similarly, 90% of executives reported using evidence from collaborative classroom practice more in strategic/ whole-of-school planning; 77% reported a moderate to very large increase (47% reported large or very large).

Almost all (96%) reported increasingly rigorous monitoring of the effects of new initiatives; 86% reported a moderate to very large increase (61% reported large or very large). Overall, 94% reported the culture of school self-evaluation and self-review increased; 87% reported a moderate to very large increase (62% reported large or very large).

Figure 51. Executives’ perceptions of changes in management, accountability, planning, evaluation and monitoring since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 892.

7.2.3 Executives' views of changes in teaching, learning and professional development resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Executives responding to the e survey were positive about outcomes for teachers and students from professional development activities compared with prior to the commencement of the SSNP. A high proportion reported professional development had enhanced teacher practice and increased student engagement (see figure 52).

Overall, executives were very positive about changes in outcomes from teaching, learning and professional development since commencing in the SSNP, with 98% saying that students in the school are more engaged with teaching and learning and that the overall quality of teaching has improved (85% and 88% reported a moderate to very large increase; 49% and 55% reported large or very large, respectively).

A large proportion of executives (86%) said their ability to personally provide instructional support for teachers in their school had increased; 74% reported a moderate to very large increase (45% reported large or very large).

Approximately 93% of executives described increases in

- the establishment and support of effective mentoring (80% reported a moderate to very large increase, 53% reported large or very large)
- the amount of time focused on teaching practices and student learning in staff meetings (82% reported a moderate to very large increase, 58% reported large or very large)
- in-school/ in-class professional development (86% reported a moderate to very large increase, 66% reported large or very large).

Slightly fewer (90%) reported an increase in the extent to which SSNP-funded school learning support staff enhanced teacher capacity (81% reported a moderate to very large increase, 56% reported large or very large).

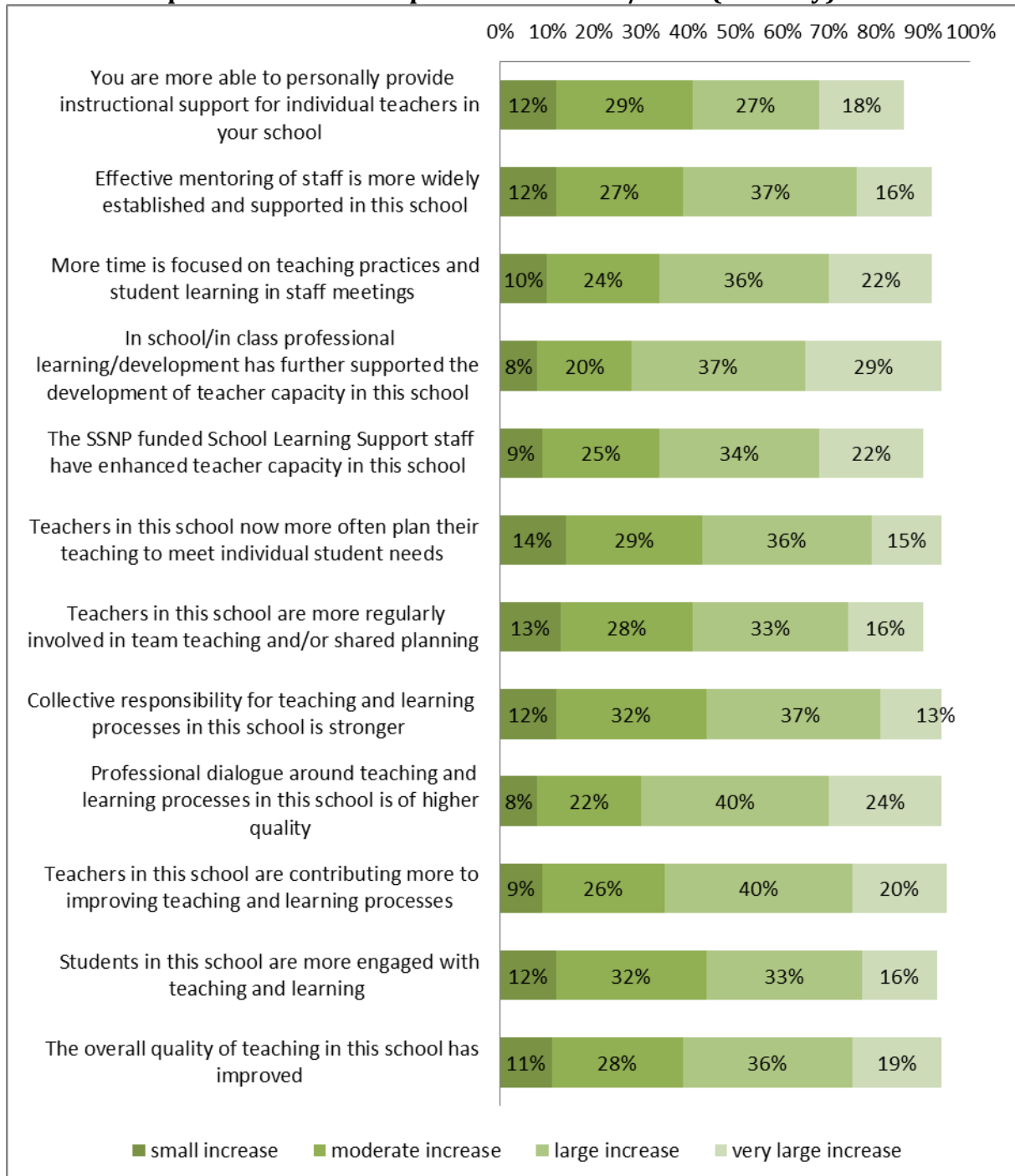
In terms of teacher behaviour, approximately 94% of executives said that teachers now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs (80% reported a moderate to very large increase, 51% reported large or very large) and 90% said that teachers are more regularly involved in team teaching and/or shared planning (77% reported a moderate to very large increase, 49% reported large or very large) compared to before commencing in the SSNP.

A very high proportion of executives (94%–95%) also reported increases in

- strength of collective responsibility for teaching and learning (82% reported a moderate to very large increase, 51% reported large or very large)
- quality of professional dialogue around teaching and learning (86% reported a moderate to very large increase, 63% reported large or very large)

- level of teacher contribution to improving teaching and learning processes (86% reported a moderate to very large increase, 60% reported large or very large).

Figure 52. Executives' perceptions of changes in teaching, learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 882.

7.2.4 Executives' views of changes in instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Executives responding to the e survey indicated that their leadership skills and practices had increased across a range of areas compared with prior to commencing the SSNP. A high proportion (93%) reported that recent initiatives or strategies in their school had further developed their skills or capabilities in instructional leadership or leadership for learning (77% reported a moderate to very large increase, 45% reported large or very large) (see figure 53).

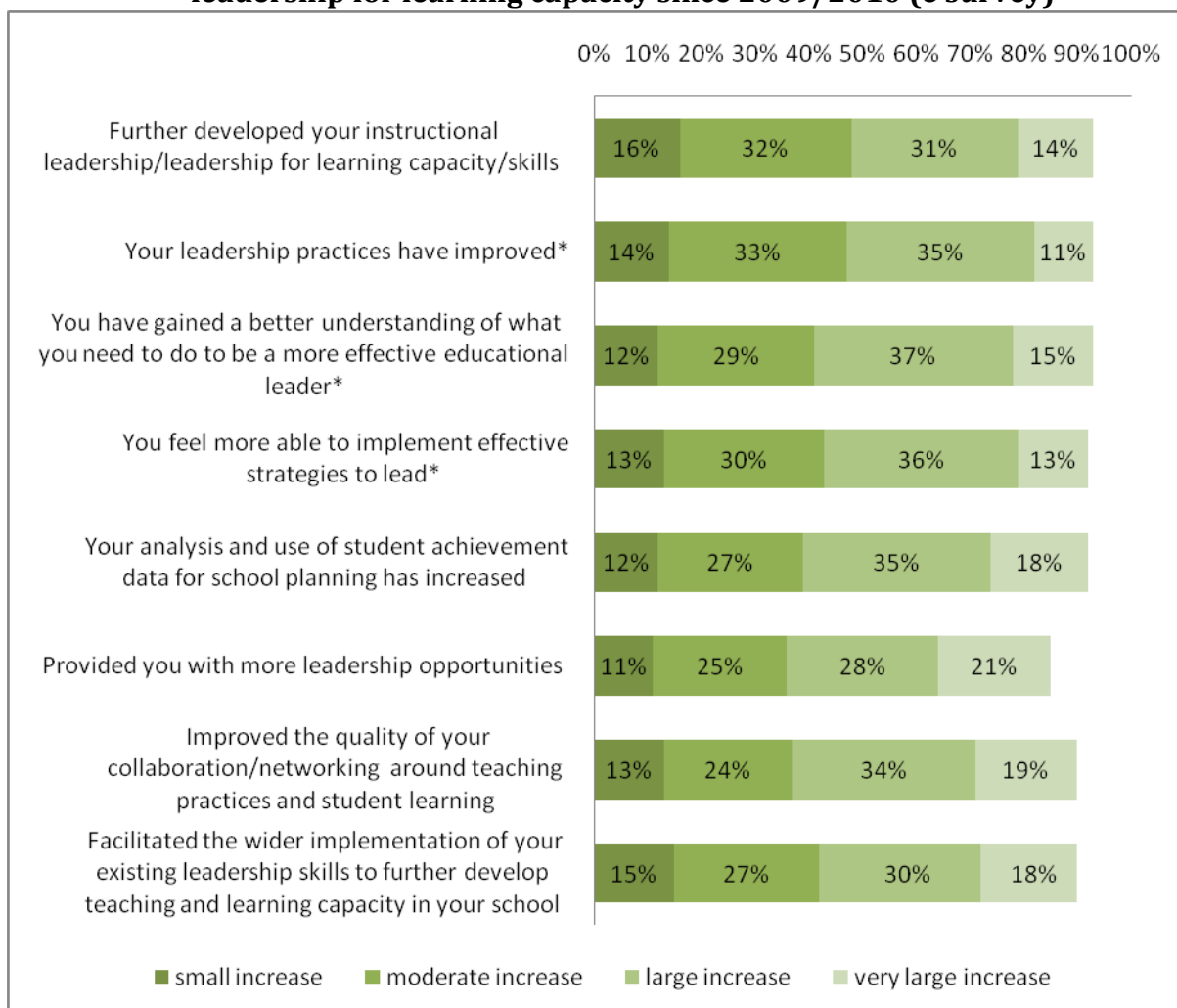
Executives indicated they had gained a lot from their formal and informal professional learning experiences since 2010, with approximately 93% saying

- their leadership practices have improved (79% reported a moderate to very large increase, 46% reported large or very large)
- they have gained a better understanding of what they need to do to be a more effective educational leader (81% reported a moderate to very large increase, 52% reported large or very large)
- they are more able to implement effective strategies to lead (79% reported a moderate to very large increase, 49% reported large or very large)
- their analysis and use of student achievement data for school planning has increased (80% reported a moderate to very large increase, 53% reported large or very large).

The majority of executives were very positive about the extent to which recent initiatives or strategies in their school had supported leadership and collaboration compared with prior to commencing in the SSNP. Approximately 88% said recent initiatives had

- provided them with more leadership opportunities (74% reported a moderate to very large increase, 49% reported large or very large)
- improved the quality of their networking or collaboration around teaching practices and student learning (77% reported a moderate to very large increase, 53% reported large or very large)
- facilitated the wider implementation of existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity (75% reported a moderate to very large increase, 48% reported large or very large).

Figure 53. Executives' perceptions of changes in instructional leadership/ leadership for learning capacity since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 881. *Indicates questions without the response option of 'decreased'.

7.2.5 Executives' views of changes in planning, policy, action and resourcing resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Most executives responding to the e survey indicated that there had been advances in the areas of collaborative planning and action, broader community engagement and collaboration with other institutions compared with prior to commencing in the SSNP, but the results were quite variable across the Partnerships (see figure 54).

Approximately 95% of executives reported increases in the extent to which shared school improvement goals are more focused and more actively promoted, and that there is now a stronger culture of collaboration of, and shared responsibility for, outcomes (approximately 84% reported moderate to very large increases, 56% reported large to very large).

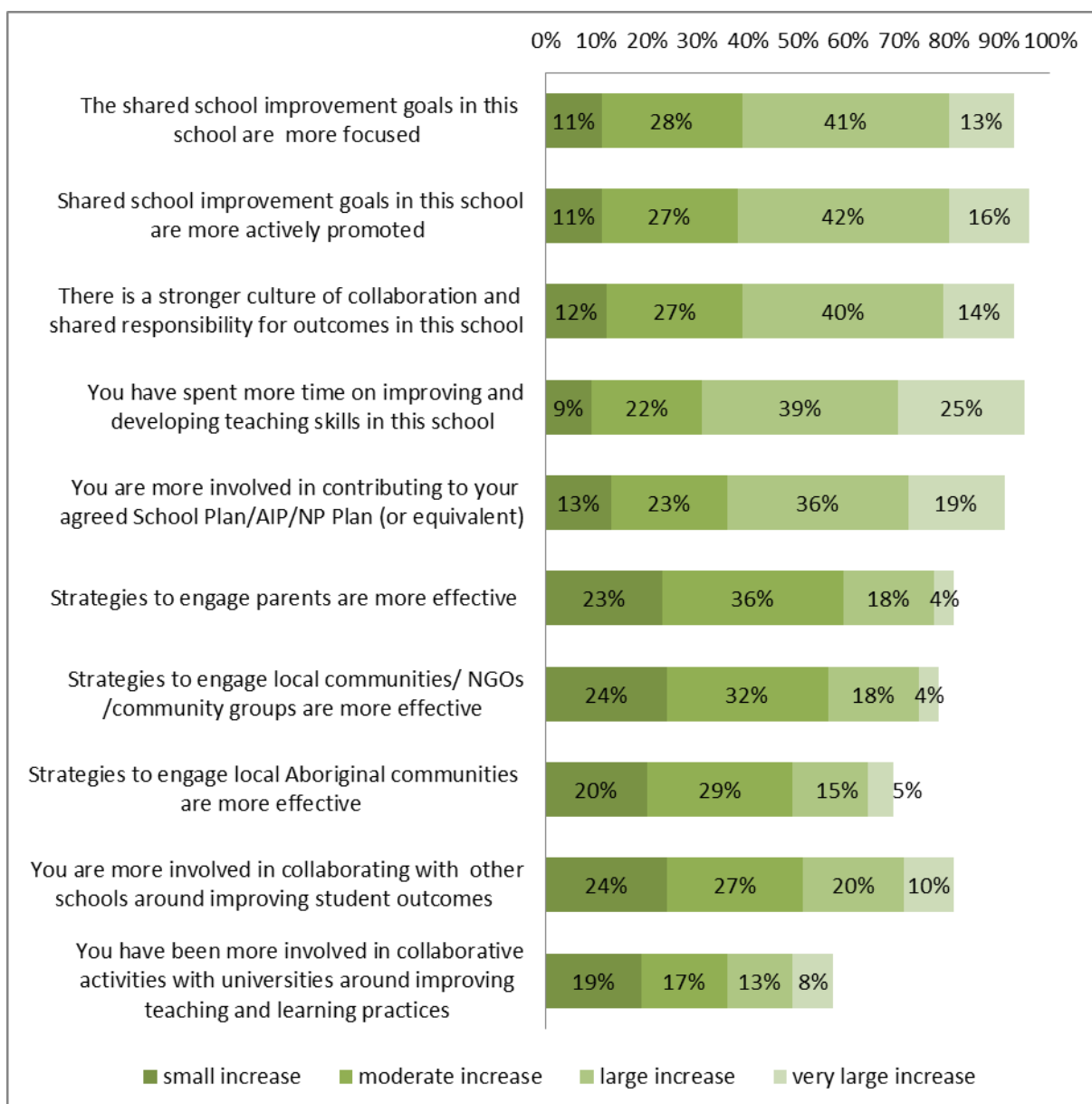
Almost all executives (95%) reported having spent more time on improving and developing teaching skills in their school (86% reported a moderate to very large increase, 64% reported large or very large) and 91% reported that they are more

involved in contributing to the school plan (or equivalent) (78% reported a moderate to large increase, 55% reported large or very large).

A lower proportion reported positive change in the level of community involvement in the school than in other aspects of planning, action and resourcing since the commencement of the SSNP. Eighty-one percent of executives said strategies to engage parents were more effective (58% reported a moderate to very large increase, 22% reported large or very large) and 78% said that strategies to engage local communities, community groups and NGOs were more effective (54% reported a moderate to very large increase, 22% reported large or very large). Fewer (69%) reported strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities were more effective, with 49% reporting a moderate to very large increase (20% reported large or very large). Nine percent also reported engaging Aboriginal communities was not being done.

Executives were much more likely to report increased engagement with other schools, (81% reported any increase, 57% reported moderate to very large, 30% reported large or very large) than with universities (57% reported any increase, 38% reported moderate to very large, 21% reported large or very large).

Figure 54. Executives' perceptions of changes in planning policy, action and resourcing since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 872.

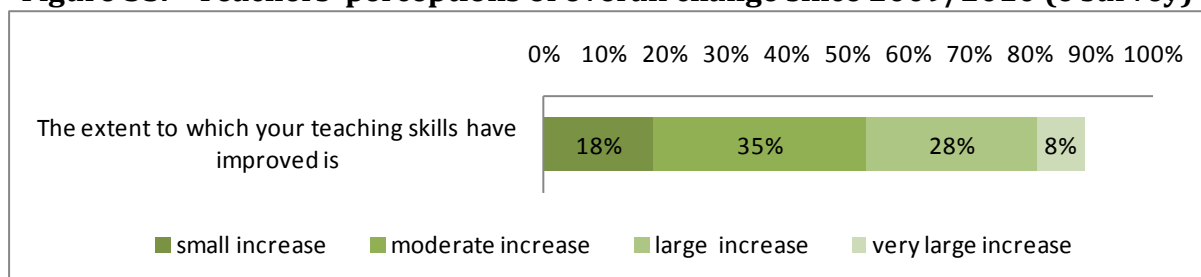
7.3 Teachers' views about changes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010 (e survey)

7.3.1 Overall impact of changes in teaching skills since 2009/2010

Teachers responding to the e survey were very positive about the extent to which their teaching skills have improved since commencing in the SSNP, with 89% saying their

skills had increased; 71% described the increase as moderate to very large and 36% as large or very large (see figure 55).

Figure 55. Teachers' perceptions of overall change since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 1570.

7.3.2 Teachers' perceptions of changes in professional development experiences resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Overall, teachers reported sizeable increases in professional development opportunities since commencing in the SSNP. But small proportions reported decreased access or that some opportunities were not applicable or were not being done (see figure 56).

Approximately 84% of teachers said there had been increases in

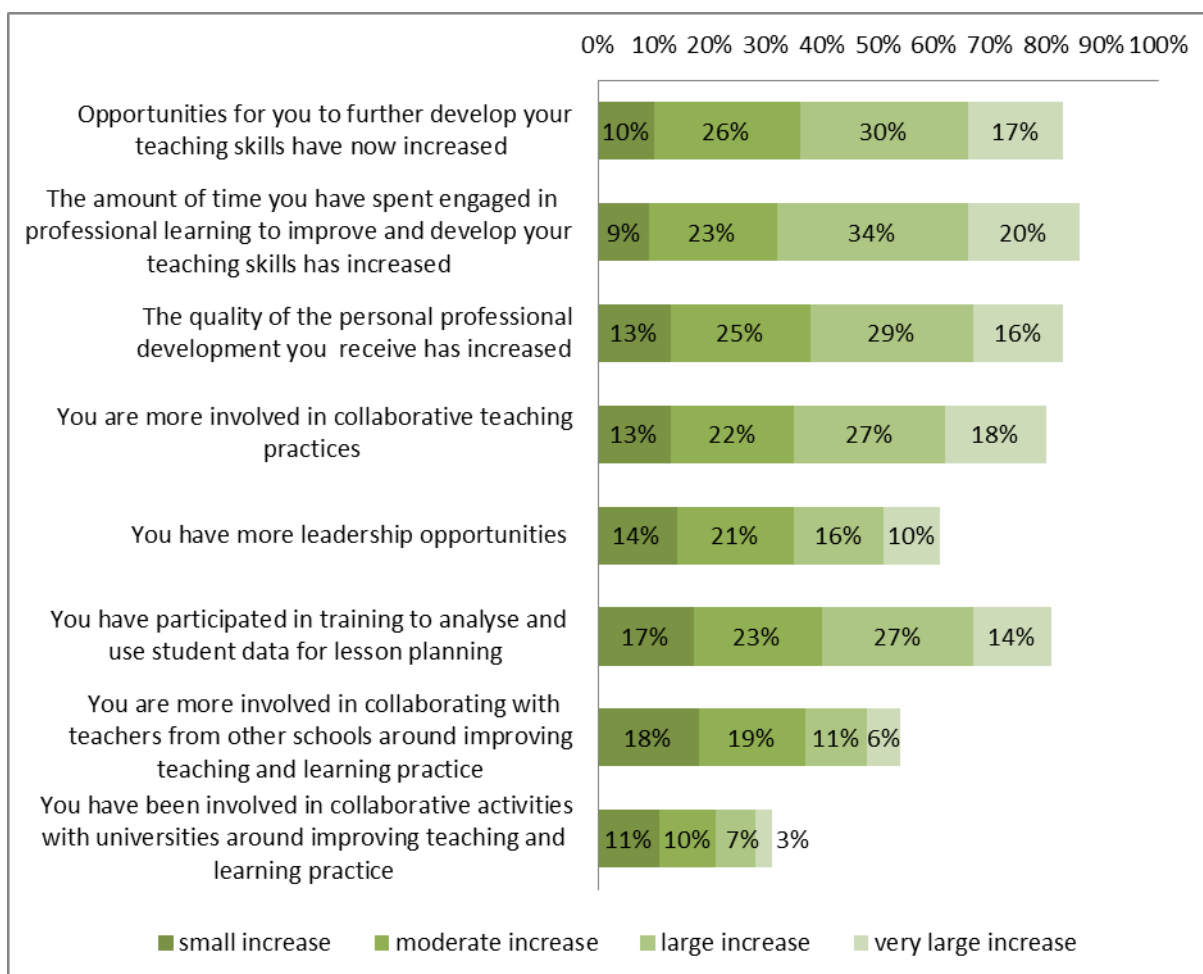
- their opportunities for skills development (73% reported a moderate to large increase, 47% reported large or very large)
- the amount of time spent engaged in professional development (77% reported a moderate to large increase, 54% reported large or very large)
- the quality of the professional development they received (70% reported a moderate to large increase, 45% reported large or very large).

Approximately 80% of teachers reported increases in collaborative teaching practices and in participation in training in the use of student data for lesson planning (approximately 65% reported moderate to very large increases and 43% reported large or very large increases).

Increases in opportunities for leadership were reported by 61% of teachers and described as moderate to large by 47% (26% reported large or very large).

The lowest increases were reported for professional development that occurred through collaboration with universities or other schools, with 31% and 54% of teachers, respectively, reporting any increase. In answering these two questions teachers also indicated the highest proportions of involvement were decreasing (7% and 4%), or not available (not done) (18% and 8%, respectively).

Figure 56. Teachers' perceptions of changes in professional development experiences since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 1687.

7.3.3 Teachers' perceptions of changes in professional development outcomes resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

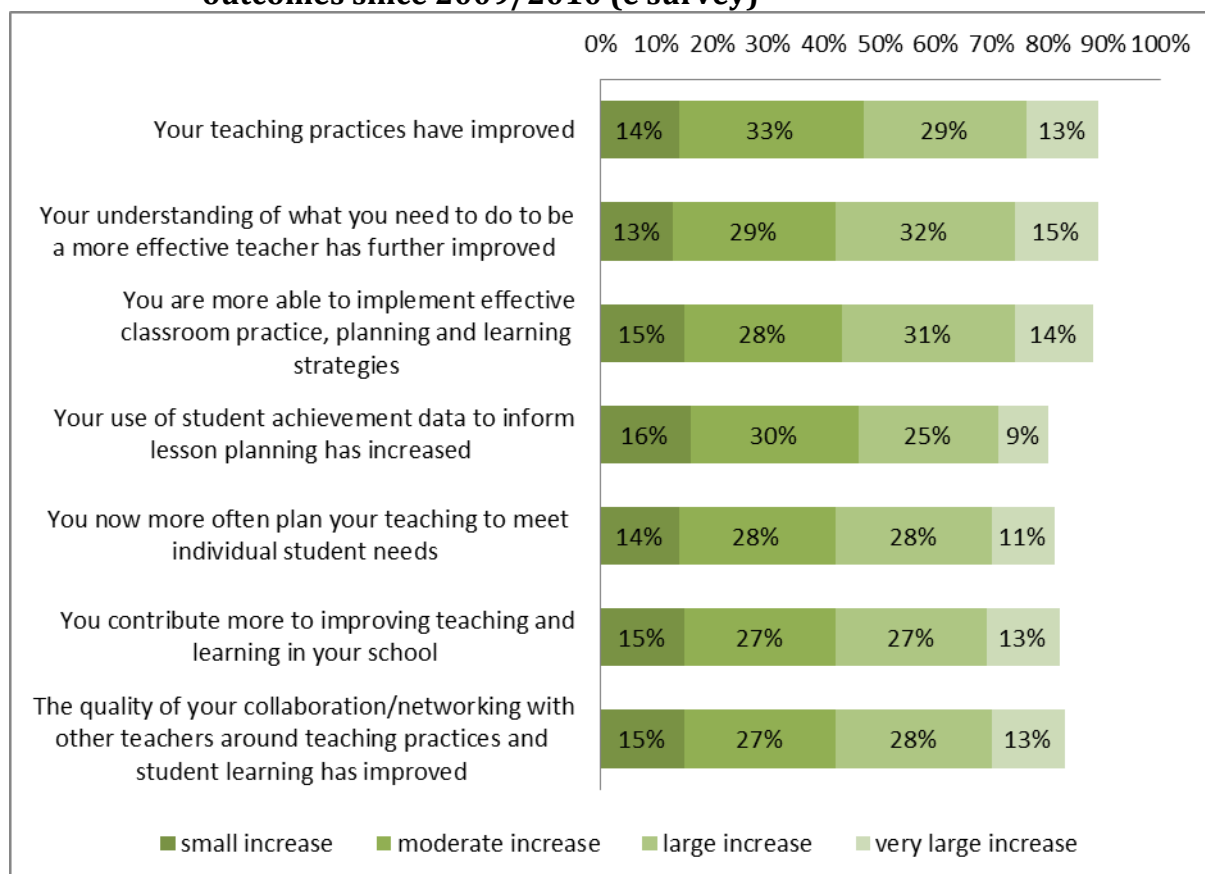
A very high proportion of teachers answering the e survey indicated that their teaching practices and understanding of what they needed to do to be a more effective teacher had improved and that they are more able to implement effective classroom practice, planning and learning strategies. Over 88% of teachers reported increases in these areas, with over 73% describing the increases as moderate to very large and over 42% as large or very large (see figure 57).

Teachers reported a high level of increases in relation to key teaching practices and contributing to professional development in the school. Approximately 82% said

- their use of student achievement data to inform lesson planning had increased (64% reported a moderate to large increase, 34% reported large or very large)
- they now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs (67% reported a moderate to large increase, 39% reported large or very large)

- they now contributed more to improving teaching and learning in their school (67% reported a moderate to large increase, 40% large or very large)
- the quality of their collaboration/ networking with other teachers around teaching practices and student learning had improved (68% reported a moderate to large increase, 41% reported large or very large).

Figure 57. Teachers’ perceptions of changes in professional development outcomes since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 1687.

7.3.4 School actions to support teacher learning and professional development resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

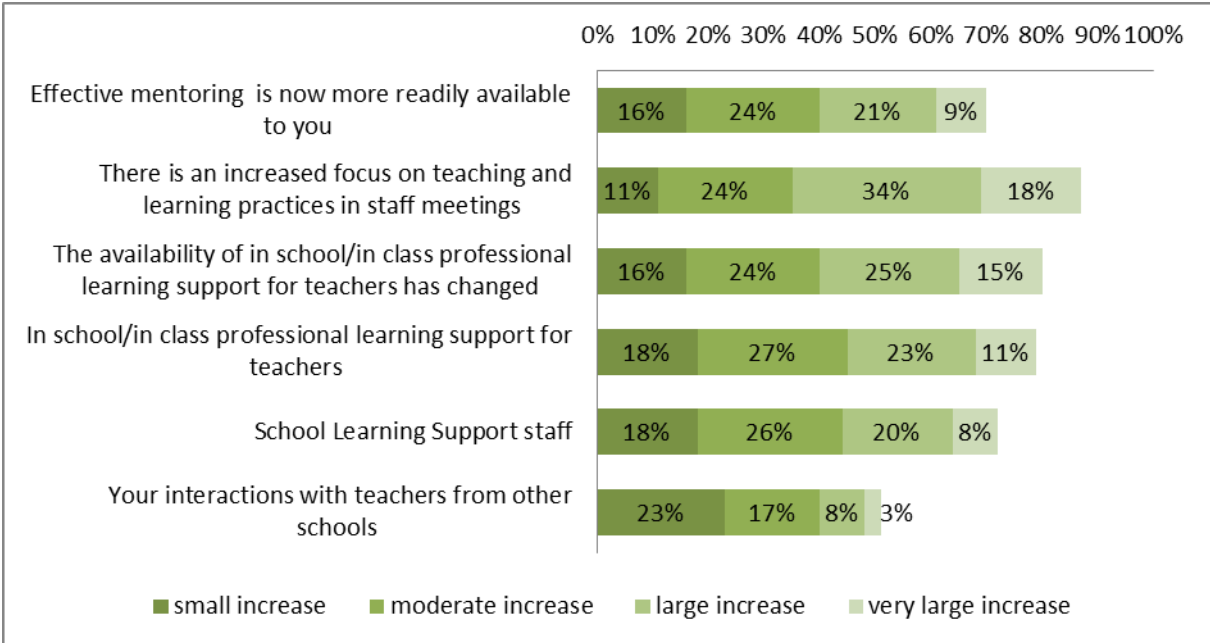
A large proportion of teachers answering the e survey reported increased availability of in-school professional learning support and enhanced teaching skills as a result, compared to prior to commencing the SSNP, although a small percentage reported decreases or that these activities were not done (see figure 58).

Seventy percent of teachers said that effective mentoring is now more available to them (54% reported a moderate to large increase, 30% reported large or very large) and 87% of teachers described an increased focus on teaching and learning practices in staff meetings (76% reported a moderate to large increase, 52% reported large or very

large). The increased availability of in-school/ in-class professional learning support (e.g. from a Professional Learning Consultant or similar) was described by 80% of teachers (64% reported a moderate to large increase, 40% reported large or very large). Similar proportions of teachers reported this support enhanced their teaching skills.

Over 72% of teachers said that school learning support staff had enhanced their teaching skills to a greater extent than prior to commencing the SSNP (54% reported a moderate to large extent, 28% reported large or very large). Interactions with teachers from other schools were reported as having enhanced teaching skills to the least extent, with 51% of teachers reporting any increase, 28% reporting a moderate to very large increase and 10% reporting that this had decreased or was not available.

Figure 58. Teachers’ perceptions of school actions to support teacher learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 1662.

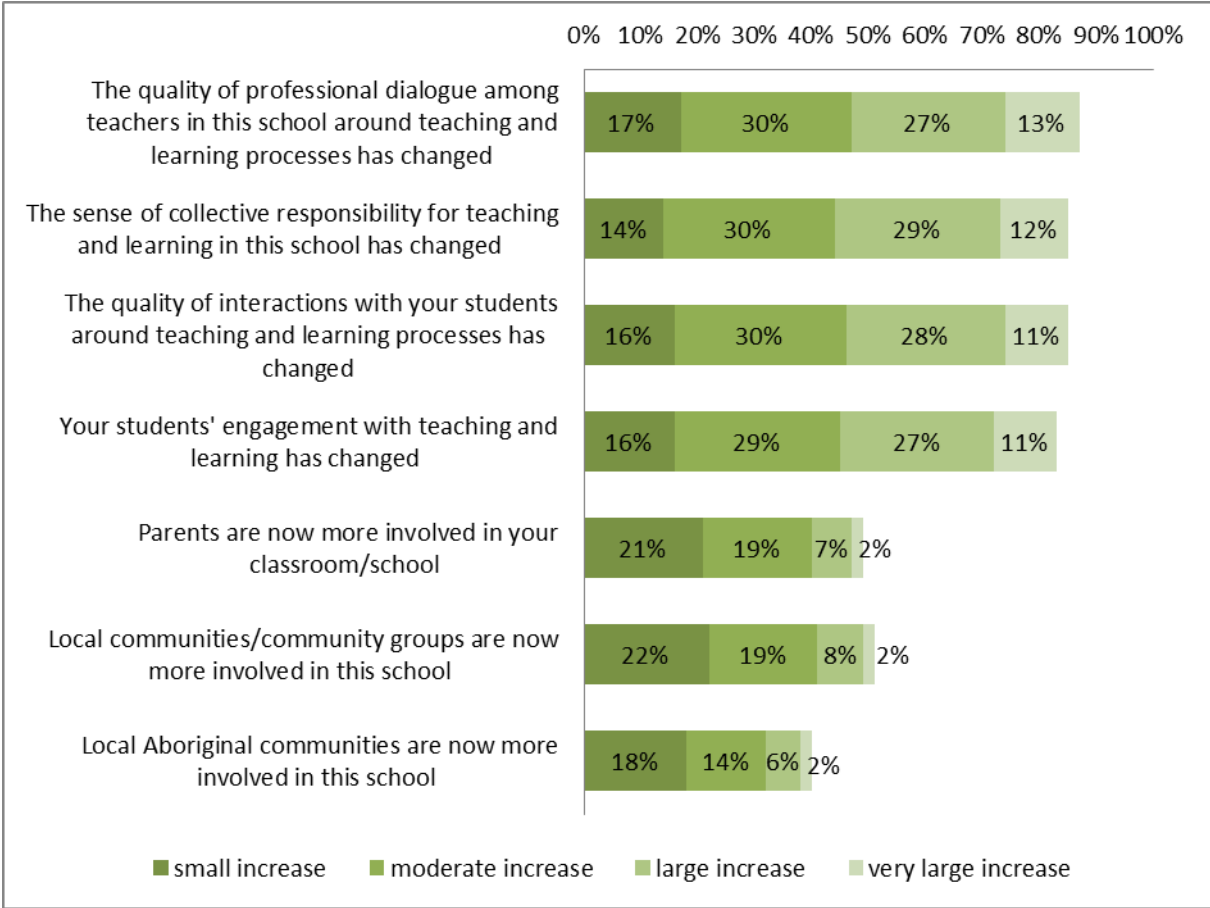
7.3.5 School outcomes from teacher learning and professional development resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Teachers in the e survey group were very positive about the changes in interactions among the teaching staff and with students compared to prior to commencing the SSNP, however interactions with parents and local communities were not seen to have increased to the same extent. Approximately 86% of teachers said that both the quality of professional dialogue among teachers in their school and the sense of collective responsibility around teaching and learning processes had increased compared to prior to commencing the SSNP (70% reported moderate to very large increases, 40% reported large or very large). Approximately 84% reported an increased quality of

interactions with students, and increased student engagement, with regard to teaching and learning compared to prior to commencing the SSNP (68% reported moderate to very large increases, 39% reported large or very large) (see figure 59).

An increase in parent involvement compared to prior to commencing the SSNP was reported by 49% of teachers (28% reported a moderate to very large increase, 9% reported large or very large). Increased involvement of the local community and local Aboriginal communities were reported by 51% and 40% of teachers, respectively, (moderate to very large increases, 29% and 22%, respectively). These three questions all received 5%–8% decreased/ not done/ don't know responses.

Figure 59. Teachers' perceptions of school outcomes from teacher learning and professional development since 2009/2010 (e survey)



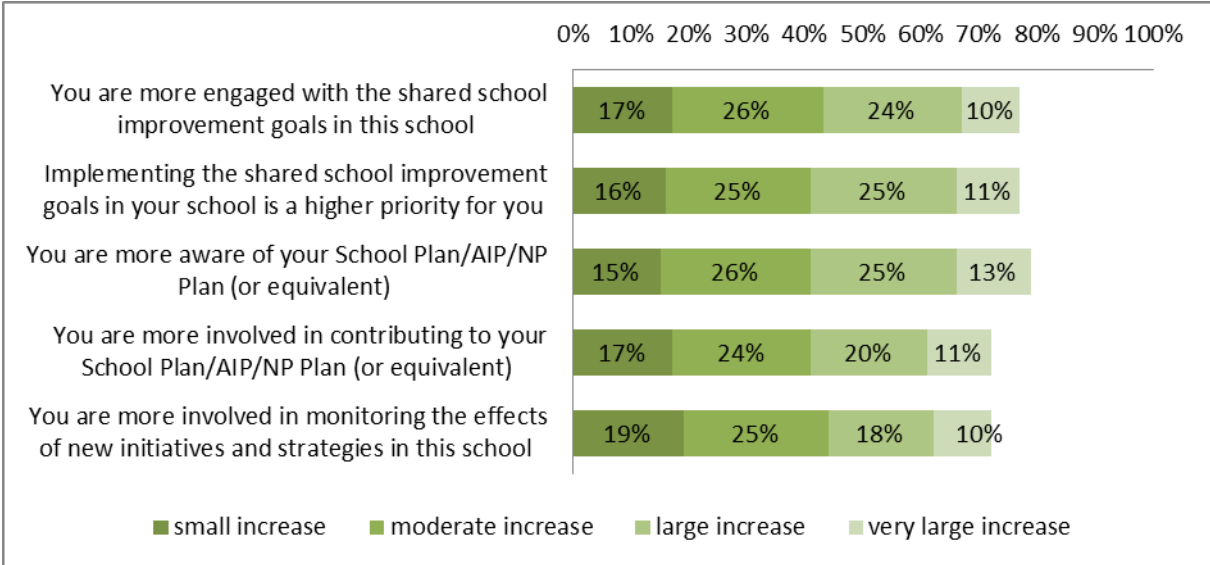
Note: N = 1662.

7.3.6 Teachers' engagement with school strategic direction, goals and expectations resulting from participation in the SSNP since 2009/2010

Large proportions of teachers in the e survey group described increases in their engagement with school strategic directions, goals and expectations, compared to prior to commencing the SSNP. Seventy-seven percent of teachers said they are more engaged

with the shared school improvement goals in their school and that implementation is a higher priority for them now (60% reported moderate to very large increases, 35% reported large or very large). Seventy-nine percent of teachers reported that they are now more aware of their school plan (or equivalent) and 72% reported being more involved in contributing to it (64% and 55 % reported moderate to very large increases, respectively; 38% and 31% reported large or very large increases, respectively). Seventy-two percent of teachers said they are now more involved in monitoring the effects of new initiatives in their school (53% reported a moderate to very large increase, 28% reported large or very large) (see figure 60).

Figure 60. Teachers’ perceptions of their engagement with schools’ strategic direction, goals and expectations since 2009/2010 (e survey)



Note: N = 1658.

7.4 Preliminary comparison between different Partnerships

When we compared the data for respondents involved in the LN and LSES with those involved in ITQ and those involved in multiple Partnerships, the pattern of responses across the items was remarkably consistent.

A higher proportion of teachers, executives and principals from schools involved in the LN consistently reported positive change across most areas of interest compared with their peers involved in the LSES, with a further decrease in proportion to those involved in the ITQ. The differences ranged from less than 1% to over 40% in terms of the proportions of those reporting any increase, although more frequently in the range of 5%–15%. The differences were generally more marked in those reporting a large or very large change.

The pattern of differential reporting of change varied on two sets of questions. Respondents from the LSES schools generally reported higher levels of increased

engagement of parents, NGOs and local and Aboriginal communities than the LN or ITQ schools. Respondents from the ITQ schools generally reported higher levels of increased collaboration with universities and other schools than either the LSES or LN schools.

Comparison of the responses by Partnership, including the effects of multi-partnership participation, will be explored in more depth in the next, interpretive report.

7.5 Conclusion

After almost two years of implementation, large proportions of respondent principals, executives and teachers reported moderate to large and large or very large increases in many of the practices and impacts of the SSNP. The overall patterns are similar to those reported by respondents after one year (the n survey) but the extent of reported increase or impact is greater.

Sizeable proportions of principals and executives reported large increases in changes in areas such as management reporting and accountability practices, leadership capacity and practice, and the standards of teaching, learning and professional development, compared with the period prior to commencing the SSNP. Teachers also report increases in the quality and availability of professional development and consequent improvements in their practice, although their reported increases are generally more measured. Overall, 98% of principals, 94% of executives and 89% of teachers surveyed in the second year of participation said that the overall quality of teaching had increased as a result of SSNP.

Engagement with parents, local and Aboriginal communities, NGOs, other schools and universities remain areas of least reported change, although there is some variation in these areas by Partnership. Respondents from the LSES schools generally reported higher levels of increased engagement of parents, NGOs and local and Aboriginal communities than the LN or ITQ schools. Respondents from the ITQ schools generally reported higher levels of increased collaboration with Universities and other schools than either the LSES or LN schools.

In looking at the level of agreement across the three types of respondents, as measured by the common questions in table 7, it would appear that there is a strong level of agreement between principals and executives on all measures, with teachers more reserved in their assessment, yet still overwhelmingly positive. The area of greatest disparity is in collaboration with other schools, where teachers reported an increase of almost 30 percentage points less than principals or executives. This may reflect differences in the opportunities available. Increased collaboration with universities remains the activity with the least increase for all respondents, particularly for teachers.

Table 7. Comparison of responses to common questions, proportions of respondents indicated any positive change and moderate to large increase (n survey)

Question	Principals		Executives		Teachers	
	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase	% positive increase	% moderate to very large increase
Overall quality of teaching has improved	98%	88%	94%	83%	89%	71%
Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established	94%	76%	92%	80%	70%	54%
More time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings	94%	84%	92%	82%	87%	76%
Teachers plan teaching to meet individual student needs	95%	81%	94%	80%	81%	67%
Collective responsibility for teaching/ learning is stronger	94%	87%	94%	82%	85%	71%
Professional dialogue around teaching is of higher quality	98%	92%	94%	86%	87%	70%
Improved quality of collaboration with peers around teaching/ learning	84%	68%	90%	77%	83%	68%
Your analysis of student data has increased	89%	79%	92%	80%	80%	64%
Collaborates more with other schools	82%	59%	81%	57%	54%	36%
More engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching/ learning	53%	33%	57%	38%	31%	20%

8. How staff see the SSNPs working—successful strategies, significant changes and challenges

This chapter presents the findings from an in-depth analysis of the qualitative responses to the open-ended survey questions from a sample of survey respondents. It considers the following questions.

- What have been the most significant, educationally important, changes and why?
- What are the outcomes of these changes?
- What strategies have been most successful (and cost effective in the case of principals and executives)?
- What have been the most significant challenges in implementing/ maintaining the SSNPs?

Questions about the implementation of the SSNP were not included in the p survey.

8.1 Overall findings

The qualitative data show that a range of targeted initiatives were already occurring in schools—particularly a focus on literacy and numeracy or use of specific literacy and numeracy programs— prior to the implementation of the National Partnerships. While the SSNPs provided additional support for some of these initiatives, positive changes were already occurring as a result of these initiatives in a range of areas. The quantitative analysis of change over time, explores these patterns further.

Reflecting the broad reforms under the SSNPs and the varying activities under each, principals, executives and teachers **described a range of strategies as having been successful within their schools**. The most common were **providing professional development, new staffing arrangements, use of new programs, collaborative approaches, and use of relief funding or additional staff and scheduled meetings to provide the time to get things done**.

Principals, executives and teachers (across the three surveys) reported a range of **significant changes** occurring in their schools, reflecting the positive perceptions about the changes occurring in schools in a range of reform areas targeted by the SSNPs. Often the changes described overlapped with strategies perceived as successful, probably because some early stage outcomes of SSNP involvement, like collaborative practices are also strategies to achieve higher level outcomes. The **changes occurring were seen as leading to positive outcomes for teachers and students**, but the separation of the three questions on significant change, reasons for significance and outcomes of changes makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about links between changes and outcomes. The quantitative analysis on associations between SSNP activities and impacts is better placed to consider these relationships (see chapter 7).

There were **many perceived challenges in implementation—the workload, time and resources involved, in particular**. But many of the challenges relate to the strategies others (or, in a minority of cases, the same respondent) see as successful. Administrative requirements and funding issues were also important perceived challenges.

There do seem to be some differences of view by SSNP, but these generally reflect the three SSNPs' different reform foci and funding arrangements. Likewise, differences among principals, executives and teachers seem generally to reflect their different priorities and ways of engaging in the SSNPs related to their respective roles.

Approach to the analysis

This chapter draws on the qualitative answers from a sample of survey completers and includes all principal respondents for the questions on successes and challenges. We began by developing a coding framework from the data for each qualitative question, and then coded the data using Nvivo 9. Our analysis explores the major themes, relates these to the quantitative findings provided in the descriptive report and explores differences between respondent types and Partnership types for large thematic categories.

8.2 Principals and executives described a range of things their schools had in place prior to the SSNPs

Principals and executives described a range of activities and approaches in their schools that the SSNPs built on, or will be building on, in the case of those yet to commence in the SSNPs. This is in line with the quantitative findings, which showed a range of positive changes in key reform areas already underway in schools that had not yet begun implementing the SSNPs.

Among the activities being built on, **a focus on literacy and numeracy or specific literacy and numeracy programs** were dominant. Previous professional development and support for teachers were also important. It is generally unclear how schools funded these initiatives prior to the SSNPs, and some respondents may in practice have been referring to things introduced under the SSNPs. But some noted previous initiatives having come through the Priority Schools Program, the Secondary Schools Learning Strategy, the Country Areas Program, Successful Language Learners or MindMatters. And they did not always indicate how the SSNPs had built on existing initiatives, but those who did generally described an existing initiative as having helped in preparation, provided a good springboard, or been extended with additional funding.

Some schools also referred to their existing teacher capacity or positive school culture. But it was not always clear whether respondents saw something as an area for improvement or an existing strength.

Figure 61. What the school was/ will be building on



*Created from data coded in Nvivo with wordle.net

8.2.1 Building on literacy and numeracy focus or specific programs

Generally respondents mentioned a program name or literacy and numeracy focus, but some principals and executives described being able to extend the programs they already had in place to more classes or to the whole school through SSNP funding. Some of those who did not specify the programs being built on referred to being able to strengthen programs and/or clarify their purpose under the SSNPs.

Box 1 Illustrative quotes about building literacy and numeracy focus in schools

Accelerated Literacy was partially implemented in this school prior to NP - NP enabled this approach to be implemented across the school. [Executive]

Introduction of QuickSmart two years prior to funding - this gave us a head start on implementing the program this year because it was already established. [Executive]

Guided Reading. We have groups for our Guided Reading and we continued and built on this program by allowing time for teachers to write more inferential questions for the texts. This is an identified need for our students. [Executive]

8.2.2 Professional development and in-class support for teachers

Professional development, mentoring and in-class support for teachers (for example, Student Learning support officers) were important among the things being built on/ to be built on by the SSNPs.

Box 2 Illustrative quotes about professional development and in-class support for teachers

The teacher professional learning has always been strong, the Partnership has allowed staff to have release time to plan and reflect on the implementation of quality teaching such as Instructional Rounds, Focus on Reading and L3. The school had an induction program, but it has now been strengthened with the support of the HAT, differentiating the induction for Early Career and experienced teachers. [Principal]

Completion of The School Leadership for Team Improvement Modules has continued to build the capacity of teachers to be productive members of our school community, with a greater willingness to take on a leadership role. [Executive]

8.2.3 Existing capacity and practices

Existing teacher knowledge, skills and practice or the school's focus on quality teaching and teacher effectiveness were also important among the approaches the schools in the SSNPs were building on or said they will build on.

Principals and executives also described a range of other strategies and practices in place prior to the SSNPs, in areas targeted by the SSNPs. These include use of technology, welfare and transition programs, use of evidence (for example, to drive programming), targeting of student need (for example, through Individual or Personalised Learning Plans), collaborative and whole of school approaches, collaboration with external stakeholders, strategies to improve student engagement or literacy and numeracy and innovative approaches to programming (for example, literacy blocks). Some also mentioned building on leadership-related strategies and existing capacity, improvements to planning processes, use of resources and broader improvements to school facilities.

Some referred to existing student outcomes and positive aspects of their school's culture, including a holistic approach to learning, striving for improvement, high expectations of achievement, commitment and ownership of directions, openness to constructive feedback and willingness to change. But it was not always clear whether respondents were referring to deficits or strengths so whether starting from a good or addressing issues that were deficits.

8.3 Reflecting the scope and focus of SSNP reforms, principals, executives and teachers perceive a range of strategies working well in their schools¹³

When asked what they considered the most successful strategies (and cost-effective, in the case of principals and executives), respondents listed a range of approaches and strategies, reflecting the broad scope of SSNP reforms, and the differing foci and related strategies of the three SSNPs. But some predominant approaches and strategies emerged, particularly **providing professional development, training and mentoring, new staffing arrangements, use of new programs (for literacy and numeracy in particular), use of collaborative and whole of school approaches and use of relief funding or additional staff and scheduled meetings to provide the time to get things done.**

Figure 62. Strategies perceived as successful



*Created from data coded in Nvivo with wordle.net

8.3.1 Providing professional development, training and mentoring

All three SSNPs have an emphasis on providing professional learning and development opportunities to support new approaches and strategies. These opportunities are predominant among the initiatives that staff perceive as successful (with feedback often given simply given as PD without further explanation). Many respondents did not describe professional development initiatives in any detail or why they considered these as successful, but those who did referred to use of **mentoring and coaching, internal staff expertise, in-school (or in the case of teachers, in-class) professional development, and training in specific literacy and numeracy programs, leadership,**

¹³ This section draws on coded responses from ALL principals and includes only n and e survey data as this question was not relevant for nor asked of p survey respondents.

use of technology or use of data. Some also mentioned use of lesson observations, lesson studies, modelling and demonstration.

Some principals and executives referred to training for all staff or all teachers, and some to training for specific staff members, including new teachers. This may reflect the need for different strategies based on school context and staffing complement, something that could be explored in the strategic State-level evaluations.

8.3.2 New staffing arrangements—new positions and additional staff

Given the staffing-related changes made possible with LSES NP and ITQ NP funding, it is unsurprising that changes to staffing arrangements is one of the main approaches perceived as successful, and that it seems to be more important among respondents from schools implementing LSES and less so among respondents from schools implementing LN. Reflecting their different roles, staffing arrangements also seem to be more important in principals' minds than in teachers'.

Staffing-related changes include **both new positions, and additional staff in existing roles.** The specific staffing positions cited as effective include assistant and deputy principals or other executives (some with a particular focus, for example, on ESL, technology, literacy and numeracy, transition and welfare), head teachers or teachers with a specific focus (for example, on literacy and numeracy, quality teaching, welfare, ESL, Best Start and technology), support staff (Student Learning Support Officers in particular, but also teacher's aides, Support Teacher Learning Assistants and Aboriginal-specific support staff), Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) and teacher educators or equivalents, other professionals like speech pathologists, and paraprofessionals.

While not true for staff arrangements more broadly, providing support for teachers in the classroom seems to be a more important strategy among respondents from provincial and remote schools, perhaps because these schools would not have had the student numbers to fund these roles prior to the SSNPs.

Some schools have been able to **use temporary, casual and part-time staff more effectively** over longer periods—thus maintaining consistency—which might explain why the quantitative data shows some principals see the proportion of staff in these positions as positively supporting SSNP implementation (see descriptive report and analysis of employment factors in chapter 13 of this report).

Some respondents described how staffing-related strategies have worked in their school.

Box 4 Illustrative quotes about how SSNP staffing-related strategies have worked

Using APs as mentor/ coach/ team teachers and to release staff for collegial visits. This has accessed the expertise we already have in the school, including CRTs. This has been less expensive than a HAT and far more flexible. [Principal]

The employment of LSOs to work with students and para professionals to work alongside staff. Having said this, the success of these programs were dependent on the role of the Teaching Learning Facilitators. [Principal]

Employing a school learning support officer to spend a half an hour each fortnight phoning all parents whose children are receiving awards at assembly that coming fortnight, which has ensured a better cross-section of our community coming through our school gates to celebrate the achievements of our students. [Executive]

The employment of 2 HTs Teaching and Learning. This has placed a focus on the core business of every school, even when so many other things are happening. [Executive]

Having extra support staff to demonstrate lessons or assist in hands on activities. Having a speech therapist to assist teachers in their talking and listening lessons as well as taking students who have significant speech difficulties (we have a large amount of students who have really poor phonemic awareness as they come from non-English speaking backgrounds). [Teacher]

The constant contact, support and follow up by the HAT on every area covered and discussed has kept the momentum of the program and the strategies in full swing. Her inspiration and enthusiasm is immeasurable and has ensured the success of the program.

While describing staff-related strategies as effective, some principals noted that they are also expensive; one mentioned having used assistant principal positions instead of a HAT as this was cheaper. Some comments also emphasise the importance of getting the right person to fill the position, not just having the position itself.

8.3.3 Use of new programs and interactive technology

The SSNPs provide funding to implement new and innovative programs and initiatives. Introducing specific literacy and numeracy programs is a focus of the LN, in particular, and also occurs under the LSES. So it is unsurprising that these programs are common among the strategies respondents cited as successful, and that they are more important among respondents from schools simultaneously implementing both the LSES and LN (dual SSNP involvement) and less so among respondents from schools implementing ITQ. They also seem to be more important among teachers from schools further along in implementing the SSNPs (e survey), perhaps because all schools in the LN were in this cohort.

Respondents commonly mentioned QuickSmart, which has a focus on both literacy and numeracy, as successful. But one respondent noted this program, while it works, is not

cost effective for a small school. In general, respondents more commonly referred to literacy than numeracy programs. It's not clear whether this is because schools more commonly chose to implement literacy programs or because the literacy programs selected were more effective than the numeracy programs; this could possibly be explained through strategic level evaluations of the SSNPs.

The literacy and numeracy programs listed varied, perhaps just reflecting schools' differing choices in implementation. Literacy programs mentioned include **Reading to Learn, Focus on Reading, Accelerated Literacy, Reading Recovery, Literacy The Next Step and Multilit**. As with QuickSmart though, one respondent suggested Reading to Learn, while effective, is '*most expensive and demanding*'. Numeracy programs mentioned include **TOWN, First Steps, Mathletics and TENS**.

There seem to be some differences of view between principals, executives and teachers about which programs are effective. For example, with the literacy programs, principals in the sample more commonly mentioned Multilit, while executives mentioned a range of literacy programs, and teachers leaned towards Focus on Reading. These differences are possibly because of their different levels of experience with the programs but, again, it may just reflect the different programs implemented in respondents' schools.

Some respondents mentioned **other program types** that had been effective in their schools, including Smart Start, Best Start and transition programs, behavioural programs (like Positive Behaviour for Learning) and resilience-building programs.

Other respondents referred to **using technology**—mostly interactive whiteboards—but principals also mentioned videoconferencing for meetings and/or providing support and Moodle (virtual learning environments). For others, the support with the use of technology was the effective strategy rather than the technology itself. Some of the professional development and staffing positions mentioned above also relate to facilitating use of technology.

8.3.4 Use of relief funding or additional staff and scheduled meetings to provide the time to get things done

The SSNPs provide additional funding for new staff and relief time for existing staff to participate in professional development and other SNNP related activities and these strategies were seen as effective.

For these respondents, the emphasis is on having the time or scheduling the time to implement some of the other strategies often reported as effective; the former is achieved through funding available under the SSNPs for release time and additional staff, the latter under management approaches to implementation and support. For this reason it makes sense that these strategies appear to be more important among principals and less so among teachers because principals are more focused on organisation of activities and teachers on the outcomes of this organisation, including increased collaboration, planning and professional development opportunities. These

strategies also seem more important among respondents from schools implementing LN and less so among those from schools implementing LSES; the reasons for this are unclear, but may relate to the LN focus on developing whole of school approaches, which require time for collaboration.

Executives and principals mentioned using release time for teachers, and in some cases staff supporting teachers, for a range of activities including planning, sharing, reflecting and learning. Principals also described releasing staff to mentor others, releasing executive members to plan, mentor, support, supervise and/or manage professional development and releasing principals to support, plan and/or lead.

Some respondents mentioned successful timetabling generally and some principals described managing release time in a particular way as working well, for example, allowing a longer block of time or coordinating release time between teachers and supervisors, whole stages, teachers in pairs or particular Year groupings to share.

Respondents of all types described the use of scheduled meetings or days for planning, sharing and/or learning. Reflecting the busy school environment and competing priorities, for some teachers it was important to have timetabled professional development. Some principals referred to effectively timing these scheduled sessions, but had different views about what worked—perhaps reflecting different school contexts and staff preferences—with some in favour of setting time aside out of hours, on weekends or public holidays.

Box 5 Illustrative quotes about how schools used relief funding and additional staff

After our first year we recognised we needed to be smarter organisationally. We combined RFF funding and National Partnership funding to provide every teacher with every second Friday free of teaching and playground duties. All K-2 teachers met one Friday and all 3-6 teachers met the second Friday. Teachers planned together, had professional development activities together etc. [Principal]

Definitely having our team leader off class full time. She worked with staff groups and went into all primary classes and team taught. Her knowledge of the strategies and experience from other classes, was an asset to the program. [Executive]

The designated time for teachers to engage in professional development has been very successful. Allocating a period a fortnight for teachers to engage in professional learning allowed teachers to better their professional practice on a regular basis. [Teacher]

8.3.5 Use of collaborative and whole of school approaches

The SSNPs aim to generate cultural change and involve the efforts of all staff, so it is not unexpected that collaborative and whole of school approaches are also important among the perceived effective strategies. These strategies appear to be more important among respondents from schools implementing LN and less so among those implementing LSES. This may be because whole school engagement in literacy and numeracy is one of the three key reform areas under the LN, but it might also be because all of the LN cohort began in the SSNPs in 2009—while some of the LSES cohort began only in 2011—meaning LN schools have had longer to build collaborative approaches and see their effects. From the available data it is not possible to say definitively whether the difference relates to the SSNP respondents are involved in or to the time spent in the SSNPs, because while these strategies seem more important among teachers and executives from schools further along in implementing the SSNPs (e survey), all schools in the LN fall within this cohort. This might be explored in strategic level evaluations of the SSNPs.

That principals seem to reference these strategies less commonly is probably because they are more likely to talk about scheduling time for collaboration or having the funding to release staff to work together rather than the on-the-ground activity itself.

Respondents of all types commonly referred to **collaborative planning—whether at team, stage, grade or whole of school level**; for teachers it is sometimes unclear whether the reference is to school-level planning or planning for classes/ Year groups. Some respondents noted **increased dialogue or opportunities for sharing** generally; among teachers sharing can occur for a range of purposes, including programming, learning and data analysis. **Whole of school approaches** (for example, to literacy and numeracy) and/or focus (for example, quality teaching and school goals) and coordination are also among the strategies listed.

Box 6 Illustrative quotes about how collaborative and whole of school approaches worked within schools

Cooperative planning by grade partners and lead teacher provided opportunities for discussion of individual teacher and student needs. [Principal]

Implementing a whole school program, sharing a common vision/ goal with clear paths to get there. This has promoted a collective responsibility. [Teacher]

8.3.6 Collaboration with external stakeholders

Collaboration with external stakeholders is important to the ITQ and LSES—with the focus on relationships with other schools in the ITQ NP and on community and parent relationships in the LSES. But working with these stakeholders was less commonly mentioned as a successful strategy. There are too few references to really explore differences by SSNP, except to note that in some aspects the patterns reflect the different emphases of the respective SSNPs as well as the quantitative findings by SSNP—with those from ITQ schools more commonly noting collaboration with other schools and those from LSES schools more commonly noting collaboration with parents and community.

Of the types of external relationships described, the most common was with other schools. The ways schools collaborate comes through in some of the comments, including sharing professional development and learning opportunities (sometimes using the expertise within the different schools), sharing resources, visiting other schools (for example, to share, learn, reinforce confidence in own practice, inspire to better practice and see successful programs and resources in action), and making exchanges from large to small and primary to secondary schools. One respondent articulated how their particular approach worked.

Some respondents also cited working with external experts, for example consultants and universities, as helpful. While the references to support through internal staffing arrangements (as described in the section on staffing above) were more common, one respondent articulated why they favoured external over internal support, suggesting the importance of flexibility in models of implementation.

Box 7 Illustrative quotes about the benefits of collaborating with other schools or external agencies

Teacher exchange from a small school context to a large school context. This type of exchange is very specific for the individual and presents an opportunity to see a range of experienced practitioners at work. The cost of this is comparable to sending the same teacher to a course on a topic in a metropolitan centre. [Executive]

By far using outside consultancy - you pay for what you use - it is targeted, focused, accountable and has expertise. You can build in sustainability by developing systems, processes, scaffolds and resources. This is great value for money compared to employing additional staff full time. [Principal]

8.3.7 Other strategies related to the SSNP reform areas

Some respondents also mentioned other strategies as successful, but less commonly. These include changes to programming and ways of working in the classroom (for example, smaller learning groups), strategies to target and meet student need, use of evidence, use of leadership capacity or opportunities to lead and use of additional resources and quality resources.

8.4 Principals, executives and teachers perceive a range of significant changes occurring in their schools

Like the successful strategies, the changes respondents described as significant fall into a wide range of areas targeted by the SSNPs. And many of the significant changes overlap with perceived successful strategies because many early stage outcomes are also strategies that will achieve higher level gains.

The changes described are generally at the activity and early outcome levels, and the most predominant are related to **professional development, collaborative and whole of school approaches and use of new programs and interactive technology**. Changes to programming and class set-up, use of evidence, targeting of student need and new staffing arrangements are also among the main changes perceived as significant.

Figure 63. Changes perceived as significant



*Created from data coded in Nvivo with wordle.net

From the available data it is not possible to tell whether the changes described are the most commonly referenced because they are the areas that most schools focused on, because they are the areas in which schools made the greatest gains compared to the

prior situation or because respondents perceived these changes to have had most impact. Respondents articulated different reasons for which changes were significant—often because of **the outcomes they generate**, but in some cases because of **the particular qualities of the change**, for example, professional development being provided for all staff, or new programs and initiatives being of high quality.

8.4.1 More professional development, training and mentoring

The descriptive report showed positive changes in the availability or quality of professional development, support and mentoring. Changes related to professional development are predominant among those described as most significant in the qualitative data: these changes commonly relate to having **more opportunities and funding for professional development, and scheduled sessions for or more regular professional development**.

There were also many references to **changed approaches to professional development**—including whole of school, school-based and more collaborative or interactive development—and others to development being **more focused or aligned with school goals/ targets**. For some the significant change was access to better quality or more effective development.

Changes in this area are also significant because of the outcomes they lead to, including increases in dialogue and discussion, teacher knowledge, capacity and openness to change, as well as improvements to teaching practice. Some also related these changes to increases in student engagement and outcomes.

8.4.2 Collaborative and whole of school approaches

The descriptive report showed positive changes in collaborative approaches. These changes are also predominant among those described as significant in the qualitative data, and seem to be more important among respondents from schools implementing LN than those implementing LSES.

Respondents described differing changes to collaborative or whole of school practice as significant, including **having collaboration at school and teacher level or wider collaboration more generally**. Others described their school as now having a **shared direction or focus, whole school implementation of particular strategies/ programs or greater consistency of approaches**. These changes are also described as significant because they can bring staff together, increase collegiality and sharing, help develop a common language, and encourage staff to leave their comfort zone and change their approaches. Collaboration is also seen to improve student learning.

8.4.3 Access to new programs and interactive technology

Having new or better programs and initiatives and use of technology emerged as one of the dominant changes perceived as significant. These changes seem to be more important among respondents from LSES schools, perhaps because of this SSNP's funding arrangements and focus on providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities.

Changes in programs are described as significant for various reasons—these programs are seen as high quality and they can foster reflective practice, consistent practice and collaborative work, better target student needs, improve teaching and learning and increase student engagement and learning outcomes.

Increasing use of technology is perceived as significant for varying reasons, ranging from the fact it can facilitate collaboration and support student engagement and learning, to the fact these resources might not have been available without the SSNP funding.

8.4.4 Changes to programming and class arrangements

Reflecting a key aim of the SSNPs, and the LSES focus on innovative learning opportunities in particular, changes to programming and class arrangements are among the changes perceived as significant. Respondents commonly mentioned **having a greater focus on literacy and/or numeracy** in the classroom and **different approaches to teaching or programming**, including working in smaller groups or one-to-one and using more hands-on and interactive approaches. Some mentioned having focused programming for particular age groups, and others team teaching.

8.4.5 Increased or better use of evidence

Increased capacity for using, and use of, evidence is an important aspect of the LN and LSES in particular, and the descriptive report showed a high proportion of principals, executives and teachers reporting positive changes in the use of data. The use of evidence is also an important change noted in qualitative responses, particularly among respondents from schools implementing both the LN and LSES simultaneously (dual SSNP involvement).

In some schools, there is an **increased teacher ability to use data**, in others the **focus on data** has reportedly increased, and in others still, there are now **more conversations among staff about data and evidence from research**. Some respondents mentioned using particular data more often or better, including NAPLAN, SMART data, research and attendance data; while some described improved access to or knowledge of data tools, for example, rubrics and assessment tasks and tools to track progress.

At the school level, use of data is perceived to facilitate better planning and monitoring of school plans, provide direction and focus and increase accountability. At the class and student level, use of data is perceived to help teachers better identify student need, plan lessons and interventions, track and monitor student progress and reflect on practice; some respondents described data-driven teaching and ‘assessment for learning, not of learning’.

8.4.6 More or better targeting of student need

Better targeting of education activities to meet student need is one aim of the SSNPs, and the descriptive report showed many principals and executives reporting positive changes in the extent of planning to meet student need. Targeting of student need is also described as an area of significant change in the qualitative data.

Respondents referred to **better catering for individual needs**, an **increased capacity to meet student needs** or an **increased focus on meeting student needs** within the school. As noted above, improvements in targeting of need are often associated with increased or better use of data, but also with reduced class sizes and increased in-class support. Respondents described meeting individual needs in a range of ways, including through specific interventions, programs or strategies (particularly literacy and numeracy groups), Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and individualised targets, as well as smaller class or small group work, student-centred teaching and better differentiation of the curriculum. Some described better meeting the needs of, or catering for, specific groups of students, including low performing students, high performing students, those from different cultural backgrounds and those from Aboriginal backgrounds. Respondents described how these changes can increase student engagement and outcomes.

8.4.7 Changes to staffing arrangements

Changes to staffing arrangements are also reported to be significant, particularly among respondents from schools implementing LSES and schools implementing both LSES and ITQ (dual SSNP involvement), and less so among schools implementing LN, which had different funding arrangements.

The most significant staffing changes are described as **having more funds for staffing**, and **access to qualified or specialist staff** and **support staff**. Other changes include increased flexibility in staffing, in particular increasing the availability of principals to support teachers through professional development and support in the classroom, and giving principals time to manage the school effectively.

These changes are perceived as significant because they were not possible without funding and because of what they enable in practice. They can provide support and professional development for teachers and facilitate positive changes in teaching and learning, student engagement and student outcomes. Specified roles can help achieve

critical reforms and develop community links. Access to learning support staff or additional teaching staff can enable smaller group work and individualised classroom support.

8.4.8 Teacher-related changes

The SSNPs aim to increase teacher capacity and improve practice, and consistent with the positive findings in the descriptive report respondents described a range of teacher-related changes in the qualitative responses. These relate to an **increased focus on teaching and pedagogy, changes in teacher attitude and/or knowledge and skills, and changes in practice**. While these categories can be thought of as a continuum of outcomes which may be expected to correspond with a school's stage of implementation, there are not clear patterns of different responses by stage of implementation (i.e. between p, n and e surveys). The differences, though, are evident in the descriptive report, which showed that changes occurring in schools not yet implementing the SSNPs were generally of a lesser magnitude than those in schools that had already commenced.

Respondents reported varying changes in teacher attitude, including increased reflective practice, increased expectations of students and of themselves, and increased openness to change and trying new things; with the latter noted particularly among teachers who might have been resistant to changing their practices. The changes described in teacher ability include increased knowledge, skills and capacity for teaching generally and teaching literacy and numeracy in particular, as well as for use of data to inform practice and use of technology. At a higher level, some respondents described improvements to teaching practice and teacher effectiveness, which can lead to improved student outcomes.

8.4.9 Collaboration with external stakeholders

Consistent with the descriptive report, which showed respondents were less likely to mention large gains in external collaboration, they also less commonly listed working with these stakeholders among significant changes in qualitative responses, and the numbers were too small to explore difference by SSNP type.

Where collaboration was mentioned, these respondents talked about improving relationships with colleagues or sharing resources with other schools. Some described having increased parent engagement, particularly among Aboriginal families, or having strategies to better engage parents, including workshops, improved communications and parent involvement in Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) development. Others said their school had increased community involvement more broadly through visits to community organisations, advertising school events in the local media, formal partnerships and having more extracurricular activities in the community. Some had been able to engage external professionals, for example to support literacy and numeracy.

8.4.10 Other changes

Respondents also mentioned a range of other changes they thought of as significant, though less commonly. These included having more time to get things done and having access to additional resources they would not have had before (e.g. reading resources and funding to develop new activities). Some also described positive changes in school culture or environment—like openness to new change and ways of working, a positive atmosphere around student learning, and an innovative culture—as well as increased ownership, responsibility and accountability for outcomes within schools.

While there were also some references to improved planning processes and improved leadership capacity and practices as significant, the changes in these areas are more evident in the quantitative data provided in the descriptive report. But in the case of leadership, the findings are somewhat mixed and perhaps reflect why this did not emerge as a major change in the qualitative data. While principals and executives from schools already implementing SSNPs were positive about the changes in their leadership capacity and most principals said they were more able to provide leadership opportunities for teaching staff at all levels, only about 60% of teachers reported having increased opportunities for leadership. Teachers were not asked about the leadership provided within the school more broadly, so it is difficult to draw broader conclusions.

8.5 Principals, executives and teachers are seeing positive outcomes for students and teachers from the changes introduced

Respondents believe the ‘significant’ changes introduced in their schools have generated positive outcomes, particularly in terms of **improved student outcomes, increased student engagement** and **teacher-related changes**.

The separation of the three questions on significant change, reasons for significance and outcomes of changes makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about links between changes and outcomes. The quantitative analysis is better placed to consider associations between activities and higher order outcomes (see chapter 7), but there are indications from the qualitative data of at least some associations between:

- professional development and teacher attitude or ability
- use of evidence and targeting student need
- changes to programming and targeting student need
- having more time for, and improvements to, collaborative practice
- changes to teacher practice and student engagement, student learning or student outcomes.

As in the quantitative data provided in the descriptive report, a minority of respondents perceived negative changes. These generally related to additional demands on teaching staff and low morale due to pressures and workload, as well as issues with providing

8.5.2 Teacher-related changes

As an outcome, some respondents also described higher level changes in teacher attitude, ability or practice. These included having staff that are more enthusiastic, positive or engaged and having staff with understanding and skill to meet student needs.

Box 7 Illustrative quotes from teachers about how their teaching has improved

I feel the quality of my teaching (related to reading) has really improved.

I feel I am a better teacher after having undertaken this training.

My pedagogy has improved and it has become second nature.

8.6 Respondents perceive a range of challenges in implementing the SSNPs¹⁴

As expected, given the scope of reforms under the SSNPs, respondents identified a range of challenges to implementation. While the challenges are many, it is important to note the things some respondents perceived as challenges are related to what others (or, in a minority of cases, the same respondent) described as successful approaches.

Figure 65. Perceived challenges associated with implementation of the SSNPs



¹⁴ This section draws on coded responses from ALL principals and includes only n and e survey data as this question was not relevant for nor asked of p survey respondents. *Created from data coded in Nvivo with wordle.net

8.6.1 Workload, time and resources required for implementation

The SSNPs involve a range of activities, and the workload, time and resources involved in implementation are predominant among the perceived challenges. Respondents of all types referred to the **large amount of work** involved or the increase in workload, but there were different opinions about whether this affects all or just some staff.

Respondents also mentioned **the amount of time** it takes to implement SSNP-related activities or difficulty finding time for these activities like planning, management and monitoring, collaboration, professional development and implementing new programs. Some respondents noted a lack of what they perceived as **required resources** for implementation, like casual teachers, in-class support for students with behavioural issues and sets of suitable class literature.

Principals raised the full range of issues, while executives' comments tended to centre on the amount of time required and finding the time for activities, and teachers' comments covered the time to absorb, trial, assess and implement new programs and more effective approaches, to plan together, and to identify resources.

In their comments, some principals referenced coming from a small school with few staff as enhancing these challenges. Some with a dual role within the school— teaching principals and teacher leaders—also reported increased difficulties because they must balance their own class work with their leading roles.

Box 8 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face in implementing a perceived increase in workload

Increased pressure on staff, particularly executive members in leading change within the school. Increased workload on DPs and APs who have increased their instructional leadership but, despite support in this area using SSNP, still carry too much of their previous load. [Principal]

Demands on staff participating as teacher leaders need to be balanced against their commitments to their own classes and colleagues. [Principal]

Being a very small school it has been challenging trying to put all the SSNP structures in place when there are only a handful of staff to do the work. [Principal]

Time. As a principal I felt significant pressure through planning and implementation. While the Partnership provided an outstanding opportunity to move the school forward I found myself struggling to keep up with everyday principal requirements. [Principal]

Teacher burn-out. Not enough time to keep up with everything. [Executive]

Time! There is never enough time for planning and implementing changes or even to get out of the classroom to attend personal development courses. [Teacher]

...need to continually check in and keep people motivated. Keeping focus when there are lots of distractions wanting to hijack the learning. [Principal]

Being able to sustain staff momentum towards a fairly big change. [Teacher]

Some respondents described the negative impacts they perceived as stemming from these issues, including staff burn out, stress, and disruptions to classes or classroom practice. This challenge is also likely one of the factors related to the difficulties some respondents described with **maintaining momentum**—in terms of staff enthusiasm, motivation and focus— during implementation.

8.6.2 Issues associated with professional development

While professional development was predominant among the strategies perceived as successful, issues related to professional development are also a dominant challenge. **The main issues identified include making arrangements to cover classes while teachers attend professional development, planning, managing and coordinating professional development schedules** and the **amount of time off class** it entails. In some cases, particularly in more isolated and some regional locations, the difficulty is in finding casual staff to cover classes at all; in others it is finding appropriate or good quality casuals. Some respondents also noted the disruptions are more significant in small schools.

In regional or isolated locations, some respondents have identified difficulties accessing professional development at all. Others have found it difficult to find appropriate training (either for all teachers or for targeted subject? areas), and to get the right balance between whole school and individual needs and having relevant training.

Training new staff and staff returning from leave, and having trained staff move on to other positions are also issues, and these may grow as a challenge to sustainability when schools no longer have the same level of funding for ongoing professional development.

Other issues raised relate to dissemination of knowledge from training and getting all staff up to speed with new approaches. For some, equity of access to professional development is a problem, for example where the school has a lot of part-time staff or where there are not opportunities for ESL or special needs teachers to participate.

Perhaps as a reflection of the administrative and management focus of their roles, this challenge seems to be somewhat more prevalent among principals and executives than teachers. Teachers, however, raised issues with the extent of time spent off class and the negative impact this can have on students. Some principals and executives said some teachers do not want to be away from their classes for professional development and others noted that parents expect teachers to always be on class. While comments generally related to the challenge of preventing negative impacts on students from disruption to class stability and continuity—given that it can be difficult to get continuity of access to the same casual staff—some respondents reported negative impacts occurring regardless.

Box 9 Illustrative quotes about issues schools face in implementing professional development under the SSNPs

It is impossible to run a successful Low SES school when people have big blocks of professional learning during school time. Indeed it is counter-productive. [Principal]

Maintaining stability within the school while employing casuals to support professional learning by teachers. The increased use of temporary and casual teachers to support SSNP programs has put a strain on the casual pool and sometimes no suitable teachers are available. [Principal]

The next most significant challenge is finding time for teacher professional learning that doesn't interrupt the learning cycle too greatly to the disadvantage of students. [Principal]

Being a small school, having a large percentage of staff out for training at times created issues with finding casual teachers who could continue the good work of class teachers. [Principal]

Appropriate additional staff for covering new programs and professional development - small country towns do not have the right casuals available at times, especially when the best are employed in Nat Partnership programs already. [Executive]

Allowing teachers time for training and planning has meant they have had to have time off class. Many of the teachers don't like too much time off as the students can become unsettled. We have tried as much as possible to be consistent with the casuals we employ to maintain continuity in the classes. [Executive]

Staffing issues. It has been hard to maintain consistent casual teachers on classes as teachers are released for training. As a result of this, student behaviour has become a concern in most classes. [Teacher]

Making sure every staff member is up to date with use of the new pedagogy and ensuring consistency across the school. [Teacher]

Making sure all workshops etc are really worthwhile, not just rehashing familiar content. [Teacher]

8.6.3 Issues associated with staffing arrangements

While staffing arrangements are one of the main reforms perceived as successful, issues related to staffing arrangements are also a major challenge to implementing/sustaining the SSNPs. Reflecting their respective roles, this appears to be a more significant challenge among principals and less so among teachers. Some schools noted increased challenges related to their regional location, and this did emerge as a predominant issue for remote schools.

Respondents identified the **main staffing-related challenges as finding staff**—who are experienced, appropriate, high quality, right for the school and the position—**to fill new roles or to deliver programs, and finding staff to act as mentors.**

The **other major staffing-related challenge is staff churn**; mostly among teachers, but also among principals and temporary staff leaving for permanent roles. Staff also leave for regional and SSNP-related positions. Churn can make it difficult to embed change and, as noted in the comments about professional development, can create extra

training demands to ensure new staff are ‘up to speed’. Again, this may grow as a challenge to sustainability when schools no longer have access to SSNP funding.

Having teachers on leave, particularly maternity leave, long service leave, extended leave, sick leave and personal leave that cannot be predicted in advance, can be another challenge for SSNP implementation and continuity. Respondents also reported that different types of staff can create challenges—young and inexperienced staff, ageing and retiring staff, or staff in permanent part-time or job-share positions are all mentioned.

8.6.4 Engaging staff in the SSNP reforms and dealing with resistance to change

Reflecting the breadth and depth of changes required under the SSNPs, engaging staff in SSNP reforms and dealing with resistance to change are key among the perceived challenges. Reflecting their respective roles, these challenges seem somewhat more important among principals and executives than teachers.

For some, the difficulty was **engaging all staff in SSNP implementation**, particularly in the initial stages. There were references to needing to convince staff or get them to understand the need for change, some to establishing collective responsibility, and others to ensuring staff did not see the changes as overwhelming.

There were also reports of **resistance to change**, from staff including executives, older teachers, teachers with long-standing habits of poor practice, ‘entrenched staff’ and experienced staff; the latter categories reflecting the references to difficulties with ageing and retiring staff referred to in relation to staffing arrangements (see above). Some respondents described difficulties encouraging staff to be open to and comfortable with change, ensuring staff did not feel threatened, overcoming fears, de-privatising the classroom, implementing lesson observations and working with other schools.

Box 11 Illustrative quotes about the challenges of engaging staff in SSNPs reform agenda

The most significant challenge has been 'deprivatising' the classroom practice, encouraging teachers to be open to new learning, reflection on good practice. [Principal]

The attitude of our more entrenched staff members who have found the programming, planning of maths very daunting. For many years they have taught out of text books, had no scope and sequence and did not teach at point of need. Many of these staff found the concept of constructive student feedback very alien and did not know how it should look in a classroom. Extending the program down into K-2 has been challenging in terms of time and attitude. [Principal]

Some opposition to change of practice that has been current for many years. Older members of staff who have been in school for decades who know best. [Principal]

The biggest challenges initially were getting the whole staff as a group to come on board with the whole C4E concept. [Executive]

Addressing and changing teachers' existing practices. Addressing the needs and practices of poor quality teachers; many who have been operating with entrenched, unacceptable practices for many years. [Executive]

Some staff have found 'change' a challenge to embrace and have found it hard to alter teaching and learning. [Teacher]

The challenge is getting teachers to open up their classrooms for other teachers to see different perspectives. [Teacher]

8.6.5 Accountability and administrative requirements

The SSNP funding has associated accountability and administrative requirements, and these are among the main challenges perceived to implementation, particularly for principals further along with implementation. The issue seems to be stronger among respondents from provincial schools, possibly because they are smaller with fewer staff to help meet requirements. It also seems to be stronger among respondents from schools in the LSES, perhaps because of differing or additional requirements under funding arrangements.

One of the main concerns relates to the time taken to complete SSNP **administrative and accountability requirements** – particularly given they are additional to regular requirements like school and annual plans. Some of the most time-consuming examples identified were surveys, evaluation and situation analyses. This supports quantitative findings of a high level of agreement amongst principals that sectors had increased monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, both teaching and learning activities, and the implementation and maintenance of the SSNPs. Not all respondents portrayed these increases in a positive light; some described negative impacts, such as taking principals' time away from planning and leadership roles in the school, taking teachers' time away from class and student support, and taking executive time away from other day-to-day duties, as well as causing stress.

The quantitative data also showed a comparatively lower level of agreement among principals (than for other system-related questions) that system policies and processes

are more flexible to support implementation and maintenance of the SSNPs. The issues raised in the qualitative data regarding **the timing of administrative requirements** may provide some explanation for this. Issues raised include requirements are out of sync with other planning cycles (e.g. annual planning), the continual nature of requirements, short timeframes allowed for completion, the expectation of earlier reporting on changes when changes take time, and having reporting requirements before implementation.

Other perceived difficulties relate to the **changes made to requirements, templates and tools**, which make meeting reporting requirements harder to fulfil. There were also some who identified duplication among certain requirements, like surveys; and others who saw requirements, or specific requirements like situational analysis, as not useful. These comments, along with the other issues raised, may explain why there was little mention of system support as either one of the significant changes or effective strategies under the SSNPs in the other qualitative questions. Some comments raised lack of sector support or the type of sector support received as a particular challenge. These data suggest issues to be explored in the non-school based survey and interviews.

Box 12 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face meeting new accountability and administrative requirements under the SSNP

The extent of the accountability procedures, the continual change in formats of accountability documents are taxing on a 'new' principal and relieving executive, especially when the school is involved in other equity programs - management of these programs can sometimes come at the expense of the leadership role in the school. [Principal]

Administratively the changing demands of reports and the intensity of the reporting requirements. Very difficult in small schools, particularly when only short timeframes were given. [Principal]

The deadlines for reporting are difficult - we need to present our School Plan and ASR well before the due dates for other schools and with 3 other reports to complete (with NO experienced executive staff) I find the deadlines very stressful. [Principal]

National Partnerships has made us so busy with paperwork that the everyday duties that we need to perform, i.e. running a faculty, examinations, student discipline and management, parent contact, etc. have been neglected. It also seems that our 'everyday' duties are considered not important by senior executive and school administrators. [Executive]

The best teachers are out of the classroom more as they are constantly engaged in assessing school outcomes and completing paperwork. [Teacher]

The process of employing paraprofessionals was also time consuming and not always effective the first time round so some projects did not begin until half way through the year. The paraprofessional conditions of working, which is 7 hour days and also during school holidays is unrealistic for school situations. We wanted to engage our professional for .5 to allow the person to work every day for half a day - which suited the employee but this did not fit the guidelines. The best candidate withdrew as she had school age children and could not work the time required. I would use the SLSO category next time which is disadvantaging the candidate as the pay rate is less. [Principal]

8.6.6 Funding-related issues

Issues related to funding are also perceived as challenges; as for the accountability and administrative challenges, these seem more an issue among principals, respondents from provincial schools and those from schools implementing LSES.

Major issues raised include **difficulties with budgeting, managing the funding, monitoring the funding, accountability processes for the funding** (and, in some cases, their interaction with accountability requirements for other funding), **making effective decisions on spending to ensure sustainability, restrictions on the funding, the funding cycle, as well as an insufficient budget and lack of directions** provided. Issues were also raised with employment policy, including industrial relations, restrictions on employment arrangements, having to hire someone for certain hours per day and payroll issues.

Some said the funding model, based on funding per enrolment, is inequitable; suggestions for change included basing funding on student need or on teacher experience or competence. Others raised issues with the funding management model, for example the corrections/ adjustments done at the system level that can make it hard

to know what budget the school has available, and a suggestion that the management be school not sector-based.

Box 13 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face managing SSNP funding

The increased budgeting requirements for two Partnerships has also been challenging, especially when you are trying to creatively combine effectiveness and efficiency in the professional development of literacy AND numeracy in a short timeframe without too much disruption and teacher burnout. [Principal]

Insignificant funds allocated for the number of students who need intervention - MULTILIT funding was on numbers enrolled, not on numbers who needed this program. We have high numbers of students with learning difficulties. Balancing the budget with RPTs incorrectly calculating costs. Money should have been held at school and there would have been no overspends. In a small school overspends are catastrophic. [Principal]

Difficulties in planning and integrating expenditure of funds sourced from a number of tied grants - including National Partnerships, Priority Schools Program, Country Areas Program, Digital Education Revolution, etc. [Principal]

Smart decision-making regarding the expenditure on such a funding increase - keeping our eye on the sustainable development of structures. [Executive]

Lack of funds to adequately develop new directives and initiatives; lack of funds to build the capacity of teachers effectively. [Teacher]

8.6.7 Planning-related issues

The SSNPs involve significant planning, and issues related to this are also identified as a challenge; seemingly more so for respondents from schools implementing the LSES, which have more choice and flexibility in implementation, and for principals. It also seems more important to those newer to the SSNPs; probably because they most recently completed the planning stage, so remember it more vividly.

Respondents raised a range of issues related to planning, including **the amount of time and work it requires**, the **short timeframes** provided for planning, the **lack of support** or best practice examples provided, and **the timing for planning being out of sync with data availability**. For some, these issues related, in particular, to the situational analysis they had to undertake. Others described trying to find out about and understand program requirements and planning tools when commencing the SSNPs, as difficult. And others still found prioritising the challenge because of the range of things schools can focus on. Another related issue is arranging timetables to fit things in and avoid a negative impact on teaching.

Box 14 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face in planning under the SSNP

It has been so time consuming doing the Situational Analysis, School Improvement Plans, RPT, etc when we don't have all the data we need, e.g. we used last year's HSC and SC data, + attendance rates. As a secondary school, our data sheets arrive in February. We have to do all planning by the end of October! Ridiculous. It would be much more productive to have all analysis and planning documents due by the end of first term. They would then all align!! [Principal]

The initial start up process of writing plans, employing staff and implementing effective initiatives was incredibly demanding as it was on top of usual school demands. Now that we have passed the critical planning and development stage the benefits are becoming evident. It nearly killed myself and the HAT initially! [Principal]

Organisation of timetables for all the programs operating and not causing too much movement or changes for staff and students. [Executive]

National Partnerships came in over the top of already existing school plans and targets and pushed these aside. [Principal]

This is really focussed in the primary school so manufacturing something of relevance for the high school has been difficult. [Executive]

8.6.8 Sustaining gains

Given that many of the strategies— like new programs, additional staffing positions and professional development—that are seen as successful were made possible by the additional resources provided under the SSNPs, it is unsurprising that **sustaining these initiatives beyond the funding cycle** is among the major perceived challenges. As expected, this is more of a concern among principals from schools further along in implementation and respondents from schools implementing LN who had reached the end of their funding.

Some of the concerns about maintaining changes, though, are not specifically related to funding. These include sustaining structural changes, cultural changes and sustaining changes in practice.

Comments suggest a school's staffing context, particularly the rate of turnover, can enhance difficulties sustaining outcomes. Knowledge and skill gained through professional development provided by the SSNP funding can be lost when staff members move on and, without further funding, it might be difficult to bring new staff 'up to speed' and maintain the change in practice.

It is as yet unclear how schools will fare with sustaining changes because no schools in this survey cohort had yet been a year without SSNP funding. The future Cross-sectoral Impact Surveys will follow this up.

Box 15 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face in sustaining gains under the SSNP

I would like to think we could continue with this program after 2013. Our school has worked hard to implement sustainable change, however with an aging staff and attrition due to promotions, etc, the fear is we will not be able to continue the outstanding professional learning that we have undertaken without additional funding. [Principal]

Planning for sustainability in areas like AL will be challenging as there is a constant turnover of staff due to an age group taking regular maternity leave. Temporary teachers get the training and move on to permanent positions. [Principal]

What happens at the end of the 4 years? Having access to this funding for PD, Teacher Quality and Community Engagement is fantastic and we are putting it into many sustainable practices. However, I am concerned that our standards may regress with changes of staff and without the funds to support ongoing projects. [Executive]

8.6.9 Collaboration within schools and communication

Collaboration, which is key among perceived strategies and changes, is far less frequently noted as a challenge. But some respondents experienced difficulties related to **encouraging a consistent approach to SSNP reforms across the school, working as a whole school and maintaining quality time for collaboration**. Some teachers identified difficulties with cross-stage collaboration in particular.

Another related difficulty is communications, including ensuring staff understand SSNP goals and directions and roles they are to take, as well as keeping all staff up to date and informed.

Box 16 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face collaborating within schools under the SSNP

We became part of this program and were told what programs we had to follow to meet requirements. There's an old saying in sporting clubs 'Success begins at the front office'. Unfortunately the left hand didn't know what the right was doing or anything else for that matter. [Executive]

Myself and many colleagues don't know what this SSNP initiative is or when it took effect. However we have started having a greater focus on whole school initiatives from the principal and executive and analysing student result data, e.g. NAPLAN to plan. [Teacher]

8.6.10 Collaboration with external stakeholders

Collaboration with external stakeholders—other schools, parents, community and external consultants or universities—is more commonly perceived as a successful strategy than a challenge, but it still emerges as an issue. There are too few responses to identify trends, but difficulties working with other schools seem more important to those implementing ITQ, and difficulties working with parents to those implementing LSES. Issues with external collaboration also seem more important among provincial and remote schools, most likely a reflection of the challenges that come with geographical isolation.

Issues collaborating with other schools include coordinating schedules, sharing resources and sharing knowledge and developing collaborative practices in the ITQ. It can be difficult for schools to agree on focus areas, particularly when schools and their staff have differing needs and existing knowledge and skills. Lack of technologies to aid collaboration, such as videoconferencing, is also an issue for some schools.

With parents the challenges relate mainly to engagement and changing attitudes. Community engagement it is also a challenge, as is increasing communications, obtaining input and encouraging stakeholders to collaborate.

Box 17 Illustrative quotes about the challenges schools face collaborating externally, either with other schools or academic institutions or parents under the SSNP

Geographical isolation has remained a significant challenge. ...We did not have any video conferencing facilities until mid-way through the Partnership. We would often 'hear' about effective practice through an email, i.e. we had a question as to how our data walls were going and we didn't even know what these were. (We do now!) As with any isolated school, it is difficult to improve beyond the knowledge and expertise of what you already have in the school. [Principal]

Having other schools really want to share what could be good, not just piggybacking or in it to get something. [Principal]

Having a Highly Accomplished Teacher has been invaluable to our school. At times it has been difficult sharing her with other schools and therefore this has meant that she has been spread too thinly on occasions. I don't believe the making of partnerships with high schools and universities has been as successful as it has with primary schools. [Executive]

Parent and community engagement of all the strategies we have tried to implement have not come to fruition due to lack of numbers. Difficulty in engaging the community in different activities. [Principal]

The question for us is how do we effectively access what is available outside of the school given our special status and the internal pressures of the students and families we deal with. How does it fit us? [Principal]

8.6.11 Other challenges

Some other challenges also emerged, though in lesser proportions.

- **SSNP timeframes:** Respondents generally had difficulties with the short timeframe for implementation, with some describing it as unrealistic. Some raised issues with the delays to start-up and others with the pace at which change was introduced or is being implemented. Others see the timeframes as impacting negatively on their ability to achieve reform aims and significant, long-term changes.
- **Issues with new programs and interactive technology:** Some respondents—though a smaller proportion than those who saw them as successful strategies—raised issues with particular programs, including Accelerated Literacy, Reading to Learn and TOWN. For some, the problem is not the program itself but being able to access programs; for others, it is coordination of these programs and balancing priorities. Some also raised issues with learning and implementing new technology.
- **Use of evidence:** Some respondents described issues with finding appropriate tests, collecting and recording data, analysing data and using it to inform teaching, as well as obtaining reliable data, due to student turnover.
- **Student-related challenges:** Some respondents noted challenges associated with poor student attendance and difficulties engaging and motivating students or encouraging them to cooperate. Others described issues with students being at different levels of academic performance and raising all students to an appropriate level to progress to the next stage. Some noted challenges working with particular student populations, including those from ESL backgrounds or who have learning disabilities or mental health issues. Other issues include student turnover, retention and behavioural issues.

Additionally, some respondents noted challenges related specifically to their school context, including being a small school, a high school or a special school, or related to their school's existing plans and programs, culture or physical environment.

9. Descriptive report conclusions

9.1 The function of the descriptive report

The function of the descriptive report is to present detailed responses for each survey question by respondent group and information about where change is occurring, and for whom.

9.2 Respondents' views prior to commencing the Partnerships (p survey)

The p survey was sent to schools that were due to commence the SSNP in 2012. It asked about developments since early 2010 to establish a baseline of the change already occurring in schools. Principals, executives and teachers responding to this survey were very positive about the level of change already underway in their schools before commencing in the SSNP, suggesting that other initiatives to improve education standards are also driving change in schools. Even though they had not yet started SSNP activities, many reported moderate, large or very large improvements in the areas of accountability, leadership, school planning and access to professional development. Many principals, executives and teachers also reported increased skills and capabilities across a range of areas. However, a much lower proportion reported that they are effectively increasing parent, local and Aboriginal community and NGO involvement with schools.

All respondent groups completing the p survey reported that the overall quality of teaching in their school had improved to some extent since 2010; teachers were more positive about this change than principals and executives. Overall, 80% of principals, 74% of executives and 86% of teachers reported that the overall quality of teaching in their school had improved to some extent in the previous 18 months, without the input of SSNP activities.

This cohort of teachers was also more positive than principals and executives about the change in time focused on teaching practices in staff meetings and in teachers' planning to meet individual student needs.

While principals, executives and teachers all rated the increases in collective responsibility, higher quality professional dialogue and improved collaboration with peers similarly, principals were slightly more likely to define the level of change as small.

9.3 Respondents' views in the first year of participation in the SSNP (n survey)

This cohort of schools had only been implementing the LSES and ITQ Partnerships for a relatively short time period—an estimated nine months—when they completed the survey. Even so, the results show that schools are implementing many SSNP activities, and respondents perceived they have already achieved some change in practices, particularly those related to professional development and learning. But this cohort reported more gains at the activity level than in teacher practices and a relatively low proportion of respondents reported that they were more effectively engaging parents and local communities—Aboriginal groups in particular—in their schools. For LSES schools, all respondent groups said there has been little change in how much they are collaborating with their peers and other professionals outside of the school; higher levels of collaboration were reported by ITQ schools.

All respondents reported that the overall quality of teaching had improved to some extent since the SSNP started (compared to immediately prior to its start). Overall, 94% of principals and executives and 84% of teachers surveyed within their first year of participation in the Partnerships said that the overall quality of teaching in their school had increased as a result of the Partnerships.

Further, respondents reported a relatively high level of take-up of some activities, for example, a similar proportion of principals, executives and teachers reported that more time is focused on teaching practices in staff meetings, and a high proportion of all groups that collective responsibility for teaching/ learning is stronger.

In general, a higher proportion of principals and executives than teachers reported positive changes. In particular, fewer teachers than executives or principals reported that planning to meet individual student needs or use of student data had increased. And more principals reported collaborating with their peers than executives or teachers.

Across most survey items, respondents involved in the ITQ Partnership are reporting less positive change at this early stage of implementation. The exception is in the area of collaboration: a higher proportion of respondents involved in the ITQ Partnership reported collaborating more with teachers outside their school and university staff compared with respondents in the LSES.

9.4 Respondents' views in the second year of participation in the SSNP (e survey)

A high proportion of the principals, executives and teachers responding to the survey after almost two years of implementing the LSES, LN and ITQ SSNP in their school reported moderate, large or very large increases in many of the practices and impacts of the SSNP. The overall patterns are similar to those reported by respondents in the first

year implementation (n survey), but the extent of reported increases or impacts is greater.

Sizeable proportions of principals and executives reported large positive changes in areas such as management reporting and accountability practices, leadership capacity and practice and the standards of teaching, learning and professional development, compared with the period prior to commencing the SSNP. Teachers also reported increases in the quality and availability of professional development and consequent improvements in their practice, although on the whole they reported less change. Overall, 98% of principals, 94% of executives and 89% of teachers surveyed in the second year of participation said that the overall quality of teaching in their school had increased as a result of the Partnerships.

Engagement with parents, local and Aboriginal communities, NGOs, other schools and universities remain areas of least reported change, although there is some variation in these areas by Partnership. Respondents from LSES schools generally reported higher levels of increased engagement of parents, NGOs and local and Aboriginal communities than LN or ITQ schools. Respondents from ITQ schools generally reported higher levels of increased collaboration with universities and other schools than either LSES or LN schools.

The interpretive analysis indicates that the SSNPs are leading to positive changes in schools over and above what was already occurring. In particular there are positive associations between the work occurring around teaching, learning and professional development and collaborative practice with reported improvement in teaching capacity. Initiatives work around instructional leadership and planning and policy are associated with reported increases in executive leadership capacity. While some differences have emerged in changes observed within the individual Partnerships, these need to be confirmed by the state-level strategic evaluations focused on the reforms of each Partnership.

9.5 Successful strategies, significant changes and challenges

The qualitative data show that a range of reforms were already occurring in schools prior to the implementation of the SSNPs—particularly a focus on literacy and numeracy and the use of specific literacy and numeracy programs. Partnership reforms have built on pre-existing initiatives, with quantitative analysis taking account of the changes over time.

Reflecting the broad reforms under the SSNPs and the varying activities under each, principals, executives and teachers described a range of strategies as having the most significant impact within their schools. The most common were providing professional development, new staffing arrangements, use of new programs, collaborative approaches, and use of relief funding or additional staff and scheduled meetings to provide the time to implement the reforms.

Respondents reported a range of other significant changes in teacher and student outcomes as a result of successful strategies such as collaborative practices.

There were many perceived challenges in implementation—particularly the administrative requirements, funding issues, workload, time and resources involved. But many of the challenges were in the implementation of strategies judged as worthwhile or successful.

PART 3: INTERPRETIVE REPORT

10. Extent of change over time: significant gains were seen at different times for principals, executives and teachers

The descriptive report showed a high level of change already taking place in schools prior to participation in the SSNPs, as well as in the early phase of implementation and after two years' involvement. But respondents that had been involved in the SSNPs for longer generally reported higher levels of change across the range of domains targeted by the SSNPs and measured by the surveys.

10.1 Introduction

The interpretive analysis in this section looks at the SSNPs as a whole, and explores whether differences in the extent of change are statistically significant according to duration of SSNP participation. It looks across respondents who have been involved in the SSNPs for varying lengths of time, comparing respondents' ratings of the degree of change for summary variables and for key outcome questions that were identified by the CSIS Project Reference Group. This analysis can provide some indications about when change occurs over the course of an SSNP, to be more thoroughly investigated when pre- and post-data for a cohort becomes available through future administrations of the CSIS. Commentary on the approach used for the analysis is given in Appendix 2.

The chapter examines two research questions:

- Does participation in the Partnerships increase changes in schools over and above what was already happening? (change p to n survey)
- Does the extent of change increase for those schools that have been in the Partnerships for longer? (change n to e survey)

10.1.1 The development of summary variables

The CSIS survey spans six domains for principals and four domains for executives and teachers. To facilitate analysis, strategies and impacts within each of the domains were grouped as summary variables (table 8). The construction of the SSNP summary variables by domain and testing of the robustness of the approach is shown in Appendix 1, Figure 69.

The CSIS survey was not initially designed as a hierarchy across all domains. This means that not all domains have summary variables at each stage of the hierarchy, for example, there is an activity level summary variable for 'management and accounting', but not for 'teaching, learning and professional development'; this is particularly an issue for the teacher survey in which the questions fall into fewer domains.

The SSNP summary variables were used to identify those domains most strongly associated with gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity. Teacher capacity and executive capacity were selected as outcomes due to their positioning in the overall impact section of the survey and were not included in any SSNP summary variables.

Table 8. Which groups were asked questions about what domains

Respondent	Management and accountability	Teaching, learning and PD	Instructional leadership	Planning and policy	SSNP effects on sector support	School/system alignment
Principals	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate (in-school) ▪ Intermediate (external) ▪ Long-term (in-school) ▪ Long-term (external) ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy
Executives	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term impacts ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate (in-school) ▪ Intermediate (external) ▪ Long-term (in-school) ▪ Long-term (external) ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy
Teachers	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy

* Respondents were only asked questions making up the summary variables listed in black. Greyed out titles indicate that this summary variable did not exist for that group (either at this level of the hierarchy, or for the entire domain).

10.2 For principals, most significant gains were seen early in their school's SSNP participation

Principals appear to experience relatively rapid gains as a result of their school's SSNP participation. In their own instructional leadership and on all summary variables and key outcome questions, there was a statistically significant difference in the extent of change reported by principals in the first year of implementation (n) compared with those yet to start their involvement (p).

Given these large early gains, it is not unexpected to find a lesser extent of change between principals involved for two years (p) compared to those in their first year of implementation (n). Significant differences between respondents to the (p) and (n) surveys were confined to items that measured changes in planning and policy, teaching capacity and quality, instructional leadership and student engagement, which might be expected to take more time to achieve. The findings suggest that these are all areas in which change commences at the start of participation in the SSNPs and then continues to increase as the activities and impacts of participation continue. But the differences in the reported extent of change on these items, while significant, were small.

Differences in extent of change between pre and early stages of SSNP participation

There was a statistically significant difference in the level of change reported by principals yet to commence the SSNPs (p) and those at early stage implementation (n) for all summary variables and key outcomes questions, but the size of these differences varied by summary variable or outcome.

The greatest differences in the extent¹⁵ of change reported by principals were predominantly related to 'Teaching, learning and professional development'; the development of activities, and the impacts anticipated in the short, medium and longer term. Large differences were also seen for the following key outcomes within this domain:

- ability to arrange instructional support for individual teachers
- mentoring being more widely established and supported
- in school/ in class professional learning having supported the development of teacher capacity.

A large difference was also observed in the summary variable of intermediate impacts related to 'External planning and policy', which includes survey items relating to how well schools are engaging with parents, communities and other schools.

¹⁵ A large effect size(r) is about 0.5.

Moderate differences¹⁶ were observed on most of the other summary variables and key outcome questions, including the domains of ‘Management and accountability’ and ‘Internal planning and policy’.

Differences in principals’ responses to summary variables related to ‘Instructional leadership’ were more varied; some were only small¹⁷, and there was no consistent pattern across the levels of the outcomes hierarchy. As anticipated, given the comparison is based on schools in the early stages of involvement, only a small difference was found between the reported extent of change in the long-term impacts of ‘External planning and policy’.

Table 9. Significant changes and effect sizes between principal cohorts

Principal variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs n	Effect size n vs e
Summary variable: Activities, Management and accountability	✓		-0.29	-
Summary variable: Activities, Instructional leadership	✓		-0.37	-
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Management and accountability	✓		-0.35	-
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓		-0.49	-
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Instructional leadership	✓	✓	-0.28	-0.13
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Instructional leadership (different scoring scale items)	✓		-0.19	-
Key outcome: Student achievement data and analysis is used more in the school strategic planning process	✓		-0.26	-
Key outcome: You are more able to arrange for instructional support to be provided for individual teachers	✓		-0.52	-
Key outcome: Improved the quality of your collaboration/networking with other principals around teaching practices and student learning	✓		-0.23	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Management and accountability	✓		-0.30	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓		-0.53	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Instructional	✓		-0.20	-

¹⁶ A moderate effect size (*r*) is about 0.3.

¹⁷ A small effect size (*r*) is about 0.1.

Principal variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs n	Effect size n vs e
Leadership				
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓		-0.41	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, External planning and policy	✓		-0.45	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Instructional leadership (different scoring scale items)	✓		-0.32	-
Key outcome: Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established and supported in this school	✓		-0.45	-
Key outcome: In school/ in class professional learning/ development has further supported the development of teacher capacity in this school	✓		-0.56	-
Key outcome: Teachers in this school now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs	✓	✓	-0.36	-0.14
Key outcome: The shared school improvement goals in this school are more focused	✓	✓	-0.29	-0.13
Key outcome: Strategies to engage parents are more effective	✓		-0.40	-
Key outcome: Strategies to engage local communities/ NGOs/ community groups are more effective	✓		-0.31	-
Key outcome: Strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities are more effective	✓		-0.37	-
<hr/>				
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓		-0.47	-
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.30	-0.15
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, External planning and policy	✓		-0.24	-
<hr/>				
Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.38	-0.15
Key outcome: Students in this school are more engaged with teaching and learning	✓	✓	-0.35	-0.16
Key outcome: The overall quality of teaching in this school has improved	✓	✓	-0.38	-0.12

Notes: The table shows significant differences with a tick, and large (approximately 0.5) and medium (approximately 0.3) effect sizes in blue and light blue respectively.

Differences in extent of change by stages of participation

There were fewer significant differences between the extent of change reported by principals in the early stages of participation in the SSNPs (n survey) and those who

have been involved for around two years or less (e survey). The differences were only significant on three summary variables and four key outcomes items:

- Summary variable: short-term impacts related to ‘Instructional leadership’
- Key outcome: teachers in this school now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs
- Key outcome: the shared school improvement goals in this school are more focused
- Summary variable: long-term impacts related to ‘Internal planning and policy’
- Summary variable: long-term policy impacts related to ‘Teaching, learning and professional development’
- Key outcome: students in this school are more engaged with teaching and learning
- Key outcome: the overall quality of teaching in this school has improved.

These increases, though significant, were small. This suggests that these are all areas in which change commences at the start of participation in the SSNPs, and then continues to increase at a lesser rate as the activities and impacts of participation continue.

Principals from schools already implementing the SSNPs were also asked about ‘SSNP effects on sector support’ and ‘School/ system alignment’. There was a significant increase in the extent of reported change between principals at early stage implementation and those who had been participating for about two years, on all three of the summary variables relating to ‘School/ system alignment’, but all of these differences were small.

Table 10. Change in principals’ views on sector support and alignment

Principals’ variables for sector support and alignment	Significant increase n to e	Effect size n vs e
Summary variable: Activities, SSNP effects on sector support		-
Summary variable: Activities, School/ system alignment	✓	-0.16
Key outcome: Sector/ System/ Regional/ Diocesan/ AIS support for the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNP(s) is stronger		-
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, SSNP effects on sector support		-0.08
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, School/ system alignment	✓	-0.11
Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts, School/ system alignment	✓	-0.13

Notes: The table shows significant differences with a tick, and large (approximately 0.5) and medium (approximately 0.3) effect sizes in blue and light blue respectively.

10.3 For executives, in most areas significant gains continued over time throughout their SSNP participation

Executives reported more consistent change in the survey items across the different phases of participation in the SSNPs, compared to principals. The difference in reported changes between time points, though, was smaller, possibly because changes were spread over time. On the majority of summary variables and key outcomes there were significant differences between the levels of change reported by those yet to commence in the SSNPs (p) and those early in their participation (e), as well as between those in the early stage of participation and those that had been participating for about two years. The differences on some summary variables and key outcomes, though, were significant in one of these comparisons but not the other, suggesting significant changes in some areas occur at different times.

Differences in extent of change between pre to early stage SSNP participation

Executives new to the SSNPs (n) reported a greater extent of change than those yet to commence (p), on all summary variables relating to the domains of

- 'Management and accountability'
- 'Teaching, learning and professional development'
- 'Internal planning and policy'
- 'External planning and policy'.

The differences were also significant for the key outcomes that sit within these summary variables, except for increased use of student achievement data in strategic planning, suggesting this change may take longer to achieve.

The other area in which change appears to emerge to a lesser extent is 'Instructional leadership', where the pattern of responses was mixed. In this domain, the gains were more evident in leadership opportunities provided, collaboration around teaching skills, implementation of existing leadership skills and development of instructional leadership skills, and less so in perceived ability to implement effective strategies to lead or improved leadership practices¹⁸.

The differences between the extent of change reported by executives at pre and early stage involvement were not as large as those reported by principals. Only on three summary variables and two key outcomes relating to 'Teaching, learning and professional development' and on the key outcome of improved teacher capacity were the differences moderate¹⁹.

¹⁸ The lesser extent of change occurred only for the Instructional Leadership items with the different scoring scale—items scored out of 5 not 7. The restricted scale size may have made it harder to detect change.

¹⁹ A moderate effect size (r) is about 0.3.

Table 11. Significant changes and effect sizes between executive cohorts

Executive variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs. n	Effect size n vs. e
Summary variable: Activities, Management and accountability	✓	✓	-0.21	-0.12
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Management and accountability	✓	✓	-0.19	-0.18
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.11	-0.12
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Instructional leadership	✓	✓	-0.11	-0.14
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Instructional leadership (different scoring scale items)		✓	-	-0.12
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.22	-0.14
Key outcome: Student achievement data and analysis is used more in the school strategic planning process		✓	-	-0.18
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Management and accountability	✓	✓	-0.19	-0.18
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.34	-0.16
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Instructional leadership	✓	✓	-0.19	-0.11
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Instructional leadership (different scoring scale items)		✓	-	-0.12
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.23	-0.11
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, External planning and policy	✓		-0.21	-0.07
Key outcome: Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established and supported in this school	✓	✓	-0.28	-0.13
Key outcome: Teachers in this school now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs	✓	✓	-0.22	-0.16
Key outcome: Your leadership practices have improved		✓	-	-0.12
Key outcome: The shared school improvement goals in this school are more focused	✓	✓	-0.21	-0.11
Key outcome: Strategies to engage parents are more effective	✓		-0.18	-
Key outcome: Strategies to engage local communities/ NGOs /community groups are more effective	✓		-0.11	-

Executive variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs. n	Effect size n vs. e
Key outcome: Strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities are more effective	✓	✓	-0.14	-0.10
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.25	-0.16
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.20	-0.12
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, External planning and policy	✓		-0.15	-
Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts, Teaching, learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.26	-0.16
Key outcome: Students in this school are more engaged with teaching and learning	✓	✓	-0.25	-0.13
Key outcome: The overall quality of teaching in this school has improved	✓	✓	-0.23	-0.18

Notes: The table shows significant differences with a tick, and large (approximately 0.5) and medium (approximately 0.3) effect sizes in blue and light blue respectively.

Differences in extent of change at different stages of SSNP participation

The pattern of differences between the levels of change reported by executives at the early stages of SSNP implementation (n) and those that had been involved for about two years (e), as compared with the changes from pre to early stage implementation (p to n surveys), suggests that in many areas increases continued, while in others, increases were seen quickly and then slowed down, and in others, still it took longer for increases to become apparent to a significant extent.

Increases were seen more quickly in 'External planning and policy' (which incorporates the key outcomes of engagement of parents and community groups) but then slowed down (i.e. differences were significant from pre to early stage implementation, but not between pre and late stage implementation), except on the key outcome of engaging Aboriginal communities.

Momentum appeared to continue in the domains of

- 'Management and accountability'
- 'Teaching, learning and professional development'
- 'Internal planning and policy'.

The key outcomes that sit within these domains generally showed the same pattern of continuing increases. The only exception was the use of student achievement data in school strategic planning, which appeared to take longer to achieve (i.e. significant difference only between n and e surveys).

As noted above, the ‘Instructional leadership’ items regarding executives’ perceived ability to implement effective strategies to lead and improved leadership practices also took longer to become apparent to a significant extent.

10.4 For teachers, in some areas significant gains were seen at different times, and in others gains continued over time

The comparison between teachers’ responses at different points of involvement in the SSNPs showed significant gains continuing over time in some areas, early gains slowing down over time in others, and changes taking longer to become apparent to a significant extent in others. It is not unexpected that changes in some activities, attitudes and practices appear to take longer to diffuse down to teachers than the executive staff and principals. As for executives, for whom changes were also spread more over time, the size of the difference in reported changes between time points is smaller than for principals.

Differences in extent of change between pre to early stage SSNP participation

Teachers in the early stage of implementation reported a greater extent of change than those yet to commence, on all summary variables relating to ‘Teaching, learning and professional development’, ‘Instructional leadership’ and ‘External planning and policy’, and on the majority of key outcomes that sit under these summary variables. There were only two key outcomes—‘Increased understanding of what is needed to be a more effective teacher’, and ‘Improvement in teaching skills’—for which the differences were not significant. This may be because within the relatively short time schools had been implementing the SSNPs (less than 12 months), teachers were less likely to have seen improvements in their own individual capacity than for staff in the school as a whole.

The differences were greatest for changes in ‘Teaching, learning and professional development’ at the activity level: that is, in the increased amount of time teachers have had to develop their skills and participate in professional development/ training; teachers’ improved access to in-class professional support and mentoring; and improved quality professional development. But the gains were only moderate²⁰.

²⁰ A moderate effect size (r) is about 0.3.

Table 12. Significant changes and effect sizes between teacher cohorts

Teacher variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs n	Effect size n vs e
Summary variable: Activities, Teaching, Learning and PD	✓		-0.32	-
Key outcome: The quality of the personal professional development you receive has increased	✓		-0.26	-
Key outcome: Effective mentoring is now more readily available to you	✓		-0.30	-
Key outcome: The availability of in school/ in class professional learning support for teachers has changed	✓		-0.34	-
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Teaching, Learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.13	-0.09
Summary variable: Short-term impacts, Instructional Leadership	✓		-0.11	-
Key outcome: Your understanding of what you need to do to be a more effective teacher has further improved		✓	-	-0.12
Key outcome: The extent to which your teaching skills have improved is		✓	-	-0.10
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Management and accountability		✓	-	-0.08
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Teaching, Learning and PD	✓	✓	-0.13	-0.11
Key outcome: The quality of your collaboration/ networking with other teachers around teaching practices and student learning has improved	✓	✓	-0.10	-0.05
Key outcome: The sense of collective responsibility for teaching and learning in this school has changed	✓	✓	-0.17	-0.12
Key outcome: Your students' engagement with teaching and learning has changed	✓		-0.09	-
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, Internal planning and policy		✓	-	-0.08
Summary variable: Intermediate impacts, External planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.20	-0.01
Key outcome: Parents are now more involved in your classroom/ school	✓	✓	-0.18	-0.01
Key outcome: Local communities/ community groups are now more involved in this school	✓	✓	-0.10	-0.01
Key outcome: Local Aboriginal communities are now more involved in this school	✓		-0.08	-
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, Internal planning and policy	✓	✓	-0.09	-0.07

Teacher variables	Significant increase p to n	Significant increase n to e	Effect size p vs n	Effect size n vs e
Summary variable: Long-term impacts, External planning and policy	✓		-0.15	-
Key outcome: You are more engaged with the shared school improvement goals in this school	✓	✓	-0.09	-0.07

Notes: The table shows significant differences with a tick, and large (approximately 0.5) and medium (approximately 0.3) effect sizes in blue and light blue respectively.

Differences in extent of change at different stages of SSNP participation

Similar to executives, the pattern of change amongst teachers in early and later stages of Partnerships implementation (n to e survey) compared to the pattern of change amongst teachers in pre and early stages of SSNP implementation (p to n survey) indicated that: some changes were maintained at a steady state over time; some changes appeared quickly then slowed down; and some changes took longer to become apparent to a significant extent.

A comparison of teachers in the pre and early stages of SSNP implementation showed significant differences between: gains related to ‘Teaching, learning and professional development’; short-term impacts related to ‘Instructional leadership’; the involvement of Aboriginal communities; and long-term impacts related to ‘External planning and policy’. Conversely, there were no significant differences in these areas from early to mid/late stage implementation.

Significant gains continued, however, in short and intermediate impacts related to ‘Teaching, learning and professional development’, suggesting continued growth in areas such as planning to meet individual student needs, collaboration with other teachers, and collective responsibility for teaching and learning. Ongoing increases also occurred in intermediate impacts related to ‘External planning and policy’ and long-term impacts related to ‘Internal planning and policy’.

Changes that appear to have been slower to occur to a significant extent relate to teachers’ own assessments of their increased skills, and their involvement with some ‘Management and accountability’ and ‘Internal planning and policy’ processes.

10.5 Conclusions

This chapter shows the pattern of change amongst survey respondents and those schools at different time points in implementing the reforms. The interpretive analysis confirms that participation in the SSNPs has increased the extent of change in schools over and above what was already happening in schools. But there were differences in the reported extent of change between principals, executives and teachers and in the kinds of areas where change is being reported.

Principals reported the greatest changes in both their own instructional leadership capacity and in their schools across all key measures, in the school's first year of involvement in the SSNPs. But for principals involved for two years compared to principals in their first year, a statistically significant difference in changes was confined to the measures of planning, policy and resources, which could be expected to take more time to achieve.

In contrast, the rate of change was more even (and in smaller increments) across the years of participation for executives and teachers, although the changes occurred at different time points for different activities and impacts.

The survey data does not provide evidence to explain the patterns of change that have emerged. But the data does lend itself to the generation of hypothesis based on behavioural change theories and the acknowledged role of effective school leadership in driving change in a school. The diffusion of innovation theory²¹ says that new ideas or practices are taken up at different rates by the population. In schools, principals are responsible for introducing new ideas and practice (leading innovation) and in the SSNP this role has been clearly articulated with principals being ultimately responsible for implementing the SSNPs. This leads us to hypothesise that principals are likely to take an early and intense interest in getting SSNP activities up and running, and to adopt a positive perspective of the extent of change. Teachers and executives are likely be followers, with ideas and practices taking longer to diffuse to other staff members, leading to a lesser extent of change being observed early and at the mid-point of the intervention. The results probably also reflect the time taken to establish SSNP reforms—principals need time to establish activities, undertake school improvement planning and develop instructional leadership skills before they can influence other staff.

²¹ Diffusion of Innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology, popularized the theory in his 1962 book *Diffusion of Innovations*.

11. How different SSNP initiatives influence improvements in teaching capacity and executive leadership capacity

This chapter builds on the findings of the descriptive report, which indicates that most schools are reporting moderate or large increases in teacher capacity as a result of their involvement in an SSNP with the impact becoming stronger over time. Further, respondents also report positive changes in management and reporting, accountability practices, leadership capacity and practices and in the amount and standard of teaching, learning and professional development being provided in the school compared to the period prior to the SSNPs.

The chapter explores what specific SSNP initiatives under which domains are influencing positive changes in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity. Chapter 12 explores the influence of context on these outcome measures.

11.1 Introduction

SSNPs aim to improve the quality of teaching and instructional leadership capacity of senior staff members in NSW schools; over and above what the schools themselves and the education sectors that support them are already doing in this area. Both the quality of teaching and strong instructional leadership from senior school staff members are known to influence students' academic performance (amongst other factors)²².

As there is currently no pre- and post-data on these outcomes for the same cohorts, we used regression modelling to explore associations between different SSNP initiatives being implemented by schools and the self-reported gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity within the overall impact section of the CSIS survey. For these questions, each group was given a different question: principals and executives were asked to rate changes in teaching capacity; teachers to rate changes in their own skills; and executives to rate changes in their own leadership capacity. The SSNP summary variables were used to identify those domains most strongly associated with gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity. Teacher capacity and executive capacity were selected as outcomes due to their positioning in the overall impact section of the survey and were not included in any SSNP summary variables.

²² Rowe, K.J., 2003 The importance of teacher quality as a key determinant of students' experiences and outcomes of schooling, ACER, Improve Learning, discussion paper prepared on behalf of the Interim Committee for a NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2003.

Important considerations in interpreting the findings

The CSIS survey was not initially designed as a hierarchy across all domains. This means that not all domains have summary variables at each stage of the hierarchy, for example, there is an activity level summary variable for ‘management and accounting’, but not for ‘teaching, learning and professional development’; this is particularly an issue for the teacher survey in which the questions fall into fewer domains.

While regression models do identify ‘predictors’ of change, the fact that all questions were asked at a single time point limits our ability to talk about one area as ‘causing’ change in another. The analysis at this stage can only suggest that certain changes in some areas (e.g. ‘teaching, learning and professional development’) appear to influence outcomes. Sections 11.2 to 11.3 explore patterns of responses by domain, commencing with the most influential domains. All assumptions underlying the regression model were checked, to ensure that the use of this analysis was statistically valid. Details on these statistical considerations are provided in the technical appendix (Appendix 1).

Finally, as noted in the introduction to this report, it is important to recognise that the CSIS survey data is observational, self-report, cross-sectional data, and the survey was not constructed around hypotheses of change. Therefore all analyses undertaken were exploratory, and any associations found at this point need to be subject to further exploration with longitudinal datasets.

11.2 Improving teacher capacity and skills

All survey respondents were asked to rate the extent to which being in an SSNP had impacted on teacher capacity. Teachers rated the impact on their own teaching skills and principals and executives the impact on teacher capacity in the school (box 11.1).

Initiatives targeting teaching, learning and professional development and instructional leadership appear to be having the greatest influence on improving teachers’ capacity in the school (table 13). For executives, the short-term impacts arising from implementing planning and policy initiatives are also significantly associated with greater gains in teacher capacity.

Initiatives in management and accountability, SSNP effects on sector support and school system and alignment were not positively associated with gains in teacher capacity.

These findings are explored in detail in sections 11.2.1 to 11.2.4 below.

Box 11.1 Survey questions measuring reported changes in teacher capacity

Principals and executives were asked, *‘To what extent has this school’s participation in the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) so far improved teacher capacity in this school, over and above what was already being done?’*

Teachers were asked, *‘The extent to which your teaching skills have improved is?’*

Table 13. Domains and their association with gains in teacher capacity/ skills

Respondent	Management and accountability	Teaching, learning and PD	Instructional leadership	Planning and policy	SSNP effects on sector support	School/ system alignment
Principals	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate (internal) ▪ Intermediate (external) ▪ Long-term (internal) ▪ Long-term (external) ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy
Executives	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate (in-school) ▪ Intermediate (external) ▪ Long-term (internal) ▪ Long-term (external) ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy
Teachers	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy	Activities Impacts ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy

*XX = Significant Positive Association, XX = Significant Negative Association

11.2.1 Teaching, learning and professional development domain is associated with improvements in teacher capacity/skills

Teaching, learning and professional development initiatives directly target teachers and are aimed at improving their teaching skills and understanding of pedagogy. Our analysis shows that providing teachers with more opportunities to further develop their professional skills and understanding impacts on teacher practices, school culture and the way the school organisation offers support for professional learning – which in turn appears to be effective in improving teacher capacity. . There were significant positive associations between summary variables for activities and short-term and intermediate impacts in the teaching, learning and professional development domain and gains in teacher capacity (table 13).

Feedback from respondents to the open-ended questions provides additional evidence to support the findings that teaching, learning and professional development initiatives are making a difference to teacher capacity. Respondents commonly said the way professional development and support is being provided had changed for the better and that these initiatives are working well in schools. In particular, having staff to provide support for teachers' professional learning in the school was commonly perceived as a key success factor. For example, respondents commonly mentioned mentoring and coaching and being able to access expert advice in-school or in-class as strategies that were working well. Some also mentioned specific approaches used to provide in-class support as working well or improving their professional knowledge —the use of lesson observations, lesson studies, modelling and demonstration. Teachers also found being trained in specific literacy and numeracy programs, the use of technology, and use of data very valuable. Some teachers explained that professional learning and professional development work well to increase teachers' capacity because they lead to more dialogue and discussion and help improve teaching practices and pedagogy.

Although the association between improved teaching, learning and professional development opportunities and increased teacher capacity holds in general, there were different patterns of associations across teachers, executives and principals.

Principals and executives

Principals and executives are reporting improvements in teacher capacity at their schools over and above what was already being done. For example, 84% of principals and 76% executives of schools involved in an SSNP for two years reported large to moderate increases in teacher capacity.²³

Where principals and executives are seeing the impacts of 'teaching, learning and professional development' initiatives then they are reporting greater improvements in teacher capacity. We found significant positive associations between changes in the intermediate summary variable and the long term policy variable in the domain of

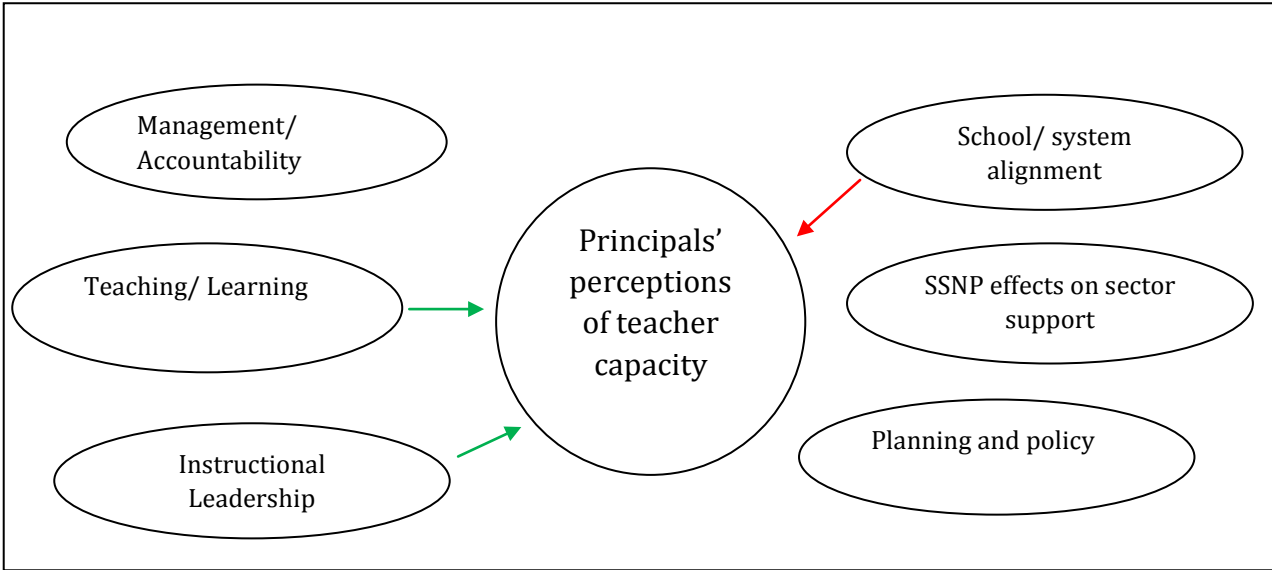
²³ See Part 2: CSIS Descriptive report, originally completed in April 2012

'teaching, learning and professional development' in both these groups' ratings of teacher capacity (figures 66 and 67 and table 13). Principals and executives were asked the same questions at the intermediate impact level in this domain, for example, questions about the extent of change the school has made in actions to support teacher learning and/or whether these are effective.

The long-term policy impact summary variables for principals and executives is made up of just two questions; whether students are more engaged in teaching and learning and whether the overall quality of teaching has improved. Given that teacher capacity is an important component of teacher quality, it is unsurprising that principals' and executives' ratings for teacher capacity and teacher quality are significantly and positively associated.

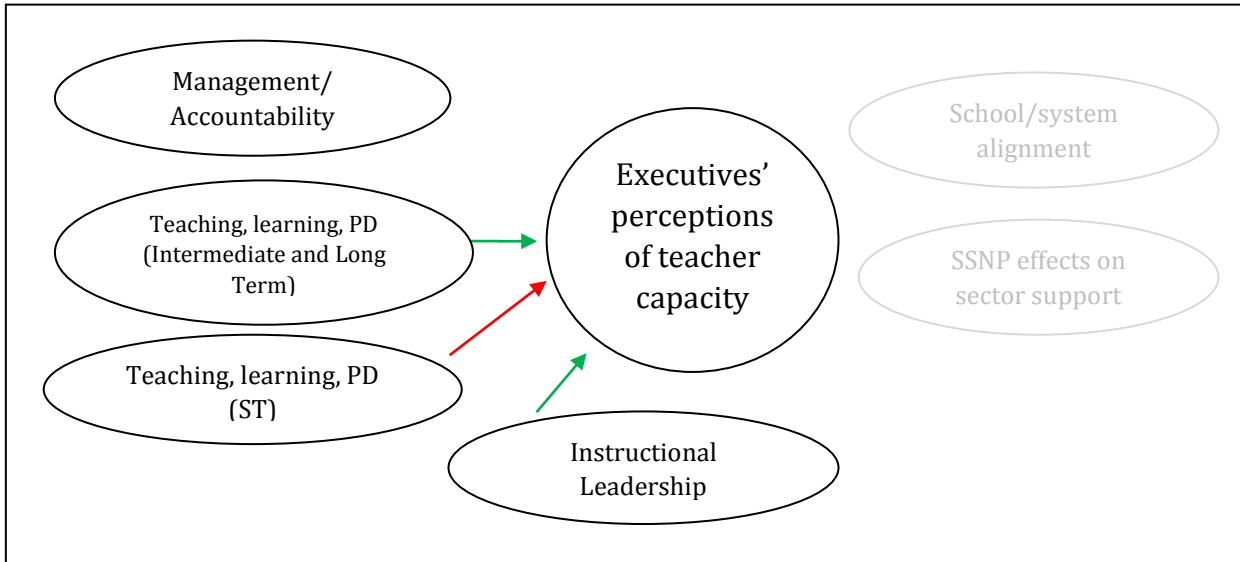
For executives only, greater changes at the short-term impacts level, that is, executives' rating of their own ability to personally provide instructional support for individual teachers was significantly associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity. We have no information from the qualitative feedback that might explain this negative association, especially given the significant positive associations between reported gains in executive instructional leadership capacity and increases in summary variables within the 'teaching, learning and professional development' domain (see section 11.3).

Figure 66. Domain and summary variables associated with improved teacher capacity (principal survey)



→ = significant positive association ← = significant negative association

Figure 67. Domain and summary variables associated with improved teacher capacity (executive survey)

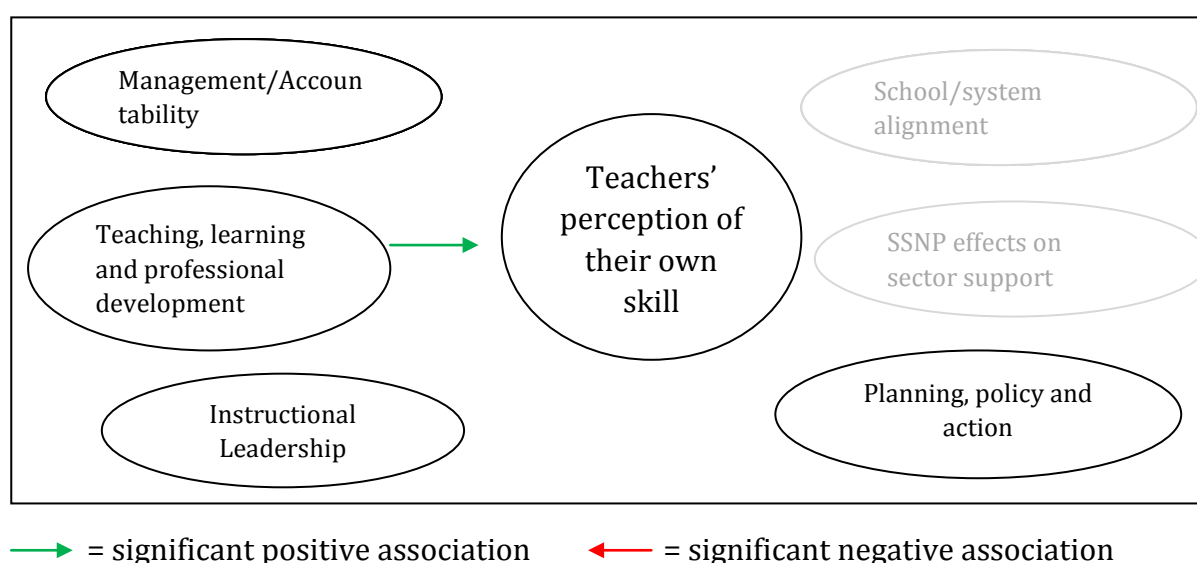


→ = significant positive association ← = significant negative association

Teachers

For teachers, the domain of ‘teaching, learning and professional development’ was the only domain significantly (and positively) associated with changes in teachers’ perceptions of their own teaching skills. This domain includes the summary variables capturing activities schools are implementing to support teaching, learning and professional development initiatives and those variables capturing the short term and intermediate impacts of these activities on teachers’ own understanding and teaching practices. The activity summary variables include questions relating to increased opportunities to develop teaching skills and more time for professional learning. Short term and intermediate impacts level questions include questions about teachers’: better understanding of what is needed to be an effective teacher; use of student achievement data; greater involvement in collaborative teaching practices; and planning lessons to meet student needs. All the questions making up the activities summary variable for teachers are shown in Appendix 1, Figure 69.

Figure 68. Activities and impacts relating to improved teacher skill (teacher survey)



11.2.2 Instructional leadership domain is significantly associated with gains in teacher capacity/ skills

Principals and executives are expected to provide instructional leadership for their schools. They are expected to lead by example and be actively involved in school processes aimed at improving students’ performance. Examples of good instructional leadership practices are: getting involved in decisions about the curriculum; being seen

to use evidence based planning; and promoting the use of evidence to inform planning amongst teachers.²⁴

Most executives and principals involved in SSNPs reported their instructional leadership skills had increased; for example, 77% principals and executives of schools involved for two years indicated they had further developed their skills or capabilities in instructional leadership.²⁵

Where principals reported greater gains in their ability to provide leadership opportunities for other teaching staff at all levels, this was significantly associated with greater perceived changes in teacher capacity.

For executives, changes at the intermediate impacts level in the instructional leadership domain were associated with greater perceived changes in teacher capacity change. But this is not the case for principals or teachers, where summary variables at the short-term? impact and intermediate impact level for instructional leadership were not significantly associated with gains in teacher capacity.²⁶ Questions included in the intermediate impact summary variable are whether the respondent had further developed their instructional leadership, whether their leadership practices had improved, whether they had improved the quality of their collaboration around teaching practices and whether they had facilitated the wider implementation of existing leadership skills.

We have no clear explanation for the difference in findings between executives and principals but note that the survey included only a couple of questions about how principals and executives are providing instructional leadership. It may be that the survey is simply not capturing leadership activities well or that some of these activities are not directly impacting on gains in teacher capacity. It is evident from the responses to open-questions that principals and executives are leading many changes in their schools, with the most common mentioned being in the use of evidence to inform planning. Those respondents also more commonly link leadership activities to improving student performance and changing school culture (particularly around collaboration) rather than increasing teacher capacity.

The use of evidence is also something respondents said had changed significantly as a result of the schools' involvement in SSNPs (open-ended responses). In some schools, respondents said teachers are more able to use data, in others the focus on data has reportedly increased, and in others, there are now more conversations among staff about data and using evidence from research. Some respondents mentioned using particular data more often or better, including NAPLAN, SMART data, research and attendance data; while some described improved access to or knowledge of data tools,

²⁴ Personal communication from the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Evaluation Unit

²⁵Part 3: CSIS Descriptive Report, originally completed in April 2012

²⁶ Teachers were only asked one question in this domain a short-term impact item, *You have more leadership opportunities*

for example, rubrics and assessment tasks and tools to track students' academic progress.

At the school level, use of data is perceived to facilitate better planning and monitoring of school plans, provide direction and focus and increase accountability. At the class and student level, use of data is perceived to help teachers better identify student needs, plan lessons and interventions, track and monitor student progress and reflect on practice; some respondents described data-driven teaching and 'assessment for learning, not of learning'.

11.2.3 'Planning and policy' domain is associated with gains in teacher capacity for executives

Although all respondent groups were asked about planning and policy activities and impacts, this domain only showed a significant association with gains in executive rated teacher capacity. For executives, greater planning and policy changes at the short, intermediate external and long-term internal level were positively associated with greater reported changes in teaching capacity. Short-term impacts related to executives' level of contribution to the school plan, and greater time spent on improving and developing teaching skills. Intermediate impacts related to the external engagement with parents, other schools and local communities, whilst long-term impacts related to internal school issues, including the perception of a stronger culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for school outcomes.

It is the changes in the collaborative culture in the school and shared responsibility for school outcomes that stand out in responses to open-ended questions about what has been successful for schools. Both principals and executives said that improved collaborative practices amongst all levels of staff are an important significant change arising out of the SSNP. Some principals and executives described their school as now having a shared direction or focus, whole school implementation of particular strategies/ programs or greater consistency of approaches. These changes were said to bring staff together, increase collegiality and sharing, help develop a common language, and encourage staff to leave their comfort zone and change their practices. All these changes were said to contribute to improving the quality of teaching at the school. Collaboration between staff members was also seen as an effective way to improving student learning.

Responses to the open-ended questions do not provide an explanation for the association between improvements in engaging parents and the community more broadly and executive rated gains in teacher capacity.

11.2.4 Three domains were not positively associated with gains in teacher capacity

Three domains with initiatives targeting organisational and system level processes and school improvement rather than staff skills or capacity were not significantly or positively associated with gains in teacher capacity or skills. Only principals were asked questions asked about initiatives under the ‘SSNP effects on sector support’ and school/ system alignment’ domains.

The domains of ‘management and accountability’ and ‘SSNP effects on sector support’ were not significantly associated with reported gains in teacher capacity.

The ‘school/ system alignment’ domain was negatively associated with changes in teacher capacity. Where principals reported greater alignment and sharing of system and school goals, they reported smaller gains in teacher capacity. Reasons for this negative association are not evident in the current quantitative or qualitative data, and may require further exploration if repeated in subsequent waves of the survey. The descriptive report showed a comparatively lower level of agreement among principals (than for other system support questions) that system policies and processes are more flexible to support the implementation and maintenance of the SSNPs. System-level supports (e.g. advice, support, guidance, resources for school improvement and planning) were rarely mentioned among successful strategies or significant, educational changes in feedback to open-ended questions. Some principals commented that a lack of sector support or the type of sector support being received was a particular challenge for their school.

Expectations and requirements related to managing SSNP funding and accountability processes were amongst the common challenges cited by survey respondents. Issues raised include requirements being out of sync with other planning cycles, the ongoing nature of meeting accountability requirements, short timeframes allowed for completion, the expectation of earlier reporting on changes when changes take time, and having reporting requirements before implementation. Indeed, some principals specifically mentioned negative impacts of fulfilling accountability tasks such as taking principals’ time away from planning and leadership roles in the school, taking teachers’ time away from class and student support, and taking executive time away from other day-to-day duties, as well as causing stress.

These issues may be explored more thoroughly through the survey of non-school-based staff and through the strategic evaluations which focus on management and accountability reforms.

11.3 Improving executive leadership capacity

Only executives were asked to rate the impact of SSNP participation on executive's leadership capacity (box 11.2).

11.3.1 Instructional leadership domain is associated with gains in self reported leadership capacity

Our analysis indicates that initiatives which directly target executive leadership capacity appear to be making a difference.

We found a positive association between the domain of 'Instructional leadership' and gains in executive leadership capacity. Greater gains at the short-term and intermediate level in this domain were significantly associated with greater gains in self-rated leadership capacity. Short-term impact level items related to increased use of student achievement data for school planning, increased opportunities for leadership, increased understanding of how to be a more effective educational leader, and executive's abilities to implement effective leadership strategies. Intermediate impact level questions related to development of leadership skills, improved collaboration around teaching practices, wider implementation of existing leadership skills and improved leadership practices.

11.3.2 Policy and planning domain is associated with gains in self reported leadership capacity

The domain of 'Planning and policy' was also significantly associated with the extent of change in executives' perceptions of their leadership capacity. Specifically, greater changes at the short-term and intermediate external level were associated with greater self-rated change in leadership capacity by executives. Short-term impact level items included increased time spent developing teaching skills and making a greater contribution to the School Plan, while intermediate impacts level items included more effective strategies to engage parents, local communities and local Aboriginal communities as well as greater collaboration with other schools.

Feedback from executives in open-ended questions provide little evidence to explain the positive association between gains in engaging parents and local communities and gains in executive leadership capacity. Responses to the open-ended questions about the most significant, educationally important changes and why or what strategies have been most successful contained few references to initiatives to engage parents or others in the community, and few direct references to increases in leadership capacity as an outcome. In the few mentions made about work to engage the community, this initiative was mostly mentioned as a successful strategy rather than a challenge. The paucity of information about community engagement initiatives in the open-ended questions was

Box 11.2 Survey questions measuring reported changes in executive leadership capacity

Executives were asked: *'To what extent has this school's participation in the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) so far improved your own leadership capacity over and above what you were already doing?'*

mirrored by the finding from the descriptive report that smaller changes were reported in initiatives to engage parents and local communities than for other initiatives.

Table 14. Summary variables significantly associated with executive self-rated leadership capacity

Respondent	Management and accountability	Teaching, learning and PD	Instructional leadership	Planning and policy	SSNP effects on sector support	School/system alignment
Executives	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy 	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy 	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy 	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate (internal) ▪ Intermediate (external) ▪ Long-term (internal) ▪ Long-term (external) ▪ Long-term policy 	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy 	Activities Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term ▪ Intermediate ▪ Long-term ▪ Long-term policy

*XX = Significant Positive Association

11.4 Conclusion

Our analysis indicates that SSNP initiatives that directly target teachers’ and executives’ practices, skills and understanding (e.g. pedagogy and use of evidence) appear to be effective. As schools make gains in these areas, then we see greater reported improvements in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity. The findings of a significant association between the domain of ‘teaching, learning and professional development’ and gains in teacher capacity are consistent across teachers, executives and principals. Teaching, learning and professional development initiatives are commonly reported as being successful strategies and as being a significant, educational change occurring in schools as a result of the SSNP.

Where an executive reports gains in understanding of effective leadership, more opportunities to apply these skills and a greater confidence in doing so, then improvements are seen in leadership capacity.

But at this stage, the gains in organisational and system level processes and policies do not appear to influence gains in teacher capacity, even though we know that principals in general are reporting changes over time in these areas. Activities and impacts in the domains of ‘SSNP effects on sector support’ and ‘Management and accountability’ were never significantly associated with changes in ratings of teacher capacity/ skill, nor executive leadership capacity.

At this stage, the findings are indicative and will be further tested when pre- and post-data for the different cohorts of schools become available through future administrations of the CSIS.

12. The influence of context on changes in teaching capacity and executive leadership capacity

This chapter examines how contextual factors influence the extent of change reported by principals, teachers and executives in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity.

A small number of contextual factors influence the extent to which teacher capacity/skills and executive leadership capacity are reported to be improving. However, the significance of the association between the contextual factor and the gains reported varies between respondent groups. Some contextual factors have some influence, but that influence appears to be ameliorated by participation in an SSNP. Several contextual factors identified as having the potential to influence the SSNP outcomes are not significantly associated with the extent of reported gains in teacher capacity or executive leadership capacity.

The findings are described in detail below in sections 12.2 to 12.4.

12.1 Introduction

Analysis involved using regression modelling to explore the influence of contextual factors on gains in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity. New activities related to the SSNP vary between Partnerships, and also between schools. The outcomes related to these activities will also vary between schools. As this variation could also influence gains in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity, further analysis involved compensating for the effects of these new SSNP related activities and their outcomes. This further analysis was undertaken using the summary variables described in the introduction and outlined in more detail in Appendix 1 (figure 69).

The analysis examined the relationship between the magnitude of change in teacher capacity and executive capacity and contextual variables, while at the same time compensating for the effects of the new SSNP related activities and outcomes. To assess the impact of contextual factors, we used a series of hierarchical regression models. In each model, contextual factors were added in a single block. Then, survey summary variables were added in the next block, to see which (if any) contextual factors were still important once SSNP related variables were included in the model. Hierarchical regression is commonly used to determine whether new variables explain additional variance above and beyond the first set, and in the case of the current analysis, it was found that the addition of SSNP summary variables explained a significant additional amount of variance in teacher capacity ratings over and above what was explained by context. Where contextual variables were categorical, dummy variables were created

and added into the regression model (see Appendix 1 for full details of the dummy variable method).

If the effects of contextual variables on teacher capacity or executive capacity were no longer significant when SSNP variables were added into the model, SSNP changes taking place in the schools, as described through the summary variables, could be considered to have ameliorated, counteracted or overcome the effects of the contextual variables. However, as noted in the methodology and previous chapter, all current findings must be qualified in terms of the nature of the data available and the nature of analyses used. Specifically, due to the cross-sectional, self-report nature of the data, we can currently only draw conclusions about associations between certain contextual factors and certain outcomes. All findings should be viewed as preliminary, and need to be replicated in longitudinal datasets in subsequent waves of the survey to confirm our preliminary conclusions. In using regression analyses, all assumptions underlying this type of analyses were checked, and no violations of these assumptions were identified within the dataset (further details in Appendix 1).

Changes to teacher capacity and skills were measured using the survey questions:

- Principal and executive questionnaires: *To what extent has this school's participation in the SSNP so far improved teaching capacity in this school, over and above what was already being done?*
- Teacher questionnaire: *The extent to which your teaching skills have improved is?*

Changes to executive leadership capacity were measured using the survey question in the executive questionnaire:

- *To what extent has this school's participation in the SSNP so far improved your own leadership capacity over and above what you were already doing?*

These outcome questions were drawn from the overall impact section of the survey and were not included in the SSNP summary variables (see Appendix 1 for further detail).

12.1.1 Which contextual factors were tested and why

ARTD and the CSIS Project Reference Group identified a broad range of contextual factors, with the potential to influence the implementation and functioning of any educational program (table 15).

Consideration was given to testing the influence of highly accomplished teachers (HATs) (or their equivalents in non-government schools), because of the importance of this reform was expected to have on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, implementation of this reform is not consistent across sectors, and the influence of these roles on teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity was not explored in this analysis due to this cross sector inconsistency. Moreover a strategic evaluation project of this reform is currently underway.

Table 15. Contextual factors tested and reason for testing

Contextual factor	Type of variable	Categories	Reason for testing
SSNP type	Categorical	LSES NP ITQ Hub NP ITQ Spoke NP LN NP Multiple NPs	Different reform foci may have variable impact
School type	Categorical	Primary Secondary Combined Special	May impact on ability to engage
Location	Categorical	Metropolitan Provincial Remote	May impact on ability to engage
ICSEA scores	Continuous	N/A	Proxy for parental educational advantage
Kinds of students enrolled in a school ▪ Proportion of refugee enrolments ^a ▪ Proportion of ESL enrolments ^b ▪ Proportion of ATSI enrolments ▪ Full team enrolments	Continuous	N/A	May impact on ability to direct resources
Teachers' years of experience in role ^c	Continuous	N/A	Association between experience and skill
Executives' years of experience in role	Continuous	N/A	Association between experience and skill
Principals' years of experience in role	Continuous	N/A	Association between experience and skill.
Number of teachers	Continuous	N/A	May impact on ability to direct resources
Number of paraprofessionals	Continuous	N/A	May impact on ability to provide PD or modify outcomes
NAPLAN Scores	Continuous	N/A	Control for base school performance

Notes: a. Refugee enrolments not provided for CEC schools and individual AIS schools indicated yes/no about whether they had refugee enrolments. b. ESL enrolments not provided for AIS schools, as data collected in 2010 was for NESB not ESL students. c. Years of experience was a demographic question asked of all survey respondents.

12.2 Contextual factors that influence the extent of improvement in teacher capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity

The analysis identified a small number of contextual factors influencing the magnitude of improvement in teacher capacity and/or executive leadership capacity reported by schools involved in the SSNPs (tables 16, 17, 18).²⁷ These contextual factors remained significantly associated with improvement in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity when changes due to new activities associated with the SSNPs were compensated for.

12.2.1 The type of SSNP influences reported gains in teacher capacity/ skills

The extent of reported improvements in teacher capacity/ skills appears to be influenced by the particular SSNP in which schools had participated. It was the ITQ NP schools that most often differed from other SSNPs (see table 16). Overall, principals and executives from ITQ NP spoke schools reported significantly smaller changes in teaching capacity/skill than those in other partnerships (this pattern was not significant in teacher responses). However, principals of ITQ NP Hub schools reported significantly *greater* gains in teacher capacity when compared to all other SSNPs, whilst teachers from ITQ NP Hub schools and, to a lesser extent, executives from ITQ NP Hub schools reported significantly *smaller* gains in their own teaching skills compared to those in other partnerships.

All three SSNPs incorporate strategies to improve teacher capacity, recognising international evidence that high quality teaching is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes.²⁸ Whilst each SSNP focussed on different strategies and techniques, feedback from teachers, principals and executives in the open-ended survey questions did not provide any strong indication of why one SSNP might be more effective at improving teacher capacity than another. Rather, respondents from all SSNPs commonly identified that the quality of their teaching had improved as a result of SSNP activities.

The differences in effectiveness of SSNPs on improving teacher capacity are expected to be clearer when the state strategic level evaluations are complete. These differences will be also explored in future analysis of subsequent waves of the CSIS.

²⁷ Contextual factor is significantly associated with smaller or greater gains in teacher capacity or leadership capacity in a regression model, when SSNP summary variables are added to the model

²⁸ Rowe, K.J., 2003 The importance of teacher quality as a key determinant of students' experiences and outcomes of schooling, ACER, Improve Learning, discussion paper prepared on behalf of the Interim Committee for a NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2003.

12.2.2 The type of school influences reported gains in teacher capacity/skills (executive responses only)

For executives, the type of school was significantly associated with the extent of reported improvement in teacher capacity (table 16). Executives from secondary and combined schools reported smaller increases in teacher capacity than those working in primary schools. This association did not hold for principals or teachers when changes due to new activities associated with the SSNPs were compensated for. Feedback supplied in open-ended questions did not provide any ready explanation for why executives in primary schools were reporting greater gains in teaching capacity. The pattern of challenges reported by secondary schools was broadly similar to those reported by primary schools (see chapter 4.) Where they were different, these differences generally reflected the three SSNPs' different reform foci rather than being specific to the type of school. Examples of the main challenges identified across all types of schools are the increased workload in implementing SSNPS, time and resources involved. Some challenges relate to strategies others (or, in a minority of cases, the same respondent) see as being successfully implemented. For example, schools commonly identified administrative requirements and funding issues as challenges but others perceived these to be successful strategies.

12.2.3 Teachers' level of experience influences reported gains in teachers' skill

Generally, teachers' level of experience was significantly associated with self-reported change in teacher capacity (table 18); that is, teachers with fewer years of experience reported greater improvements in their teaching skills as a result of participating in an SSNP. It may be expected that less experienced teachers are further from reaching their full teaching capacity than more experienced teachers. Feedback from responses to open ended questions suggested they may also be more open to improving their skills through professional learning. In addition, some of the commentary in the responses to open-ended questions suggested that some more experienced staff have engaged less in the reform that involved opening up their classrooms for observation by other teachers, such as highly accomplished teachers or their equivalents. However, individual responses varied.

12.2.4 The proportion of refugees in a school influences reported gains in executive leadership capacity

Executives working in schools with higher proportions of refugees tended to report smaller gains in executive leadership capacity (table 19). Again no consistent information from the open-ended feedback explained this significant association.

12.3 SSNP activities and impacts may counter the influence of some important contextual factors on SSNP outcomes

The analysis also identified some contextual factors that had a significant impact on outcomes in a context-only model, but which became non-significant when SSNP variables were added to the model. One potential interpretation of this shift in significance²⁹, which will require further exploration with longitudinal data, is that implementation of the SSNPs³⁰ may be ameliorating the influence of some contextual factors on changes to teaching capacity and/or executive leadership capacity; particularly from the executives' perspective (table 16).

The following factors were associated with reported improvements in teacher capacity but were no longer significantly associated when changes due to new activities associated with the SSNPs were compensated for (tables 16 and 17):

- the type of SSNP. In addition to the main patterns explained in section 12.2.1, there were some additional significant associations between partnerships and teacher capacity at the context-only level of analysis. These patterns are represented below in section 12.7, Table 16.
- the type of school. For principals and teachers, being from a secondary school was significantly associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity compared to primary schools. For teachers, being from a special school was also significantly associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity compared to mainstream primary schools. This is notable as there were only a small number of teachers (n=56) who responded from special schools.
- the location of the school. For executives only, being at a provincial school was significantly associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity compared to metropolitan schools.
- the ICSEA value of the school³¹. For executives only, a higher the ICSEA value was associated with greater reported gains in teacher capacity.
- the proportion of refugees enrolled at the school. For executives only, a higher proportion of refugees was associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity.

²⁹ As regression models are sensitive to the order in which variables are inputted, it is important to note that all current findings are preliminary, and that significant findings will require replication in longitudinal datasets. The potential interpretations posed in this chapter are exploratory, and suggest ways to interpret patterns identified, in order to help generate hypotheses for further exploration. For example, an alternative explanation for contextual variables losing significance is that some shared variance is absorbed by the SSNP variables, resulting in non-significance as more factors are added to the regression model.

³⁰ SSNP activities and impacts covered in questionnaire

³¹ ICSEA scores as a proxy for parental advantage. ICSEA is a socio-economic status construct based on the predictive relationship between schools' NAPLAN performance and parents' SES background, proportion of Aboriginal students in the school and school remoteness.

- the proportion of students with ATSI backgrounds at the school. For executives only, a higher the proportion of students with ATSI backgrounds was associated with greater reported gains in teacher capacity.
- the proportion of ESL students at the school. For teachers only, a higher proportion of ESL students was associated with greater gains in teacher self-reported.

Just two contextual factors were associated with improvements in executive leadership capacity as reported by executives, but these were no longer significant when SSNP summary variables were accounted for (tables 17 and 19):

- the proportion of ESL students at the school. A higher proportion of ESL students was associated with greater gains in executive leadership capacity.
- years of experience in an executive role. Less experienced executives reported greater gains in leadership capacity.

12.4 Contextual factors that do not influence gains in SSNP teacher and executive leadership capacity/skills

A range of contextual factors, most of which relate to student population and staffing levels, did not appear to influence the extent of reported gains in teacher capacity or executive leadership capacity (tables 16-19) in SSNP schools within the current survey administration.

Factors which were not associated with reported improvements in teacher and executive leadership capacity are:

- **Size of the school and number of teachers at a school:** It was assumed larger schools might be better able to direct resources to implementing the SSNPs and therefore be more successful in achieving outcomes due to increased flexibility provided by increased staff numbers. However, results suggest that with respect to reported improvement in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity, this is not the case. Some survey respondents did indicate in open-ended comments that being in a smaller school and having fewer staff did pose challenges in implementing the SSNPs.
- **NAPLAN scores³² (academic performance of students):** The academic performance of students is known to be related to the quality of teaching³³ Our analysis suggests the baseline academic performance as measured by 2011 NAPLAN scores was not related to reported increases in teacher capacity for schools participating in the SSNPs or executive leadership capacity

³² NAPLAN scores were provided by all schools for years 3, 5, 7 and 9. On the guidance of Dr Geoffrey Barnes, a factor analysis of literacy and numeracy scores for primary and secondary schools were carried out, and factor scores (an average of the standardised means) were used in analyses.

³³ Rowe, K.J., 2003 The importance of teacher quality as a key determinant of students' experiences and outcomes of schooling, ACER, Improve Learning, discussion paper prepared on behalf of the Interim Committee for a NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2003.

- **Years of experience of the school principal:** Analysis suggests that the number of years of experience as a principal was not significantly related to reported improvements in teacher capacity or executive leadership capacity.

Additional contextual factors that did not influence improvements in executive leadership capacity as reported by executives were:

- **Proportion of students with ATSI backgrounds.** Aboriginal students are a key target group of all the SSNPs. Recent results show a significant gap in NAPLAN data between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students³⁴. There was no specific hypothesis that linked change in executive leadership capacity to proportion of ATSI students.
- **ICSEA values for the school.** ICSEA is a scale that represents average levels of educational advantage for students at a school, developed from a combination of student family background data and ABS Census data. ICSEA was considered to be a potentially confounding factor on the impact of the SSNPs outcomes, including executive capacity.
- **Location of the school.** Recent results show a significant difference in the performance of students (as measured by NAPLAN results) between students in regional and remote areas and those in metropolitan areas.³⁵ It is important to understand the extent to which SSNPs are helping to address the differential in academic performance between regional and remote schools. The hypotheses that the location of the school might impact on the school's ability to direct resources to SSNPs does not appear to hold for gains in executive leadership, but it was a contextual factor for executives ratings of teacher capacity.

12.5 The influence of staffing related changes on principals' perceptions of increased teacher capacity

Funding from the SSNPs has made staffing-related changes possible, especially for those schools in the LSES NP and ITQ NP. Schools in these SSNPs might have used funding to create new positions (e.g. Highly Accomplished Teachers, Leaders of Pedagogy or Teacher Educators) and/ or to take on additional staff in existing roles. How funding is being used varies between the sectors.

Principals were asked to rate whether changes in staffing and conditions of employment since early 2010 had either positively supported or impeded implementation of the SSNPs. Employment related factors covered were the relative experience of staff, staff turnover, new/ part-time and casual executive or teaching staff, acting/ relieving executive team members and teachers in special areas.

Amongst principals who perceived the staff mix of part-time, casual and inexperienced teachers as positively supporting the implementation/ maintenance of the SSNPs, greater gains in teacher capacity were reported (i.e., compared to principals who

³⁴ <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/garrett/press-conference-parliament-house-canberra-23-january>

³⁵ <http://ministers.deewr.gov.au/garrett/press-conference-parliament-house-canberra-23-january>.

perceived this staffing mix negatively). That is, a teaching staff-mix positively supporting implementation was significantly associated with greater gains teacher capacity (table 20). This association held even when changes due to new activities associated with the SSNPs were compensated for, which indicates that staff-related changes are very influential strategies in improving teacher capacity. This finding was supported by feedback from respondents to open-ended questions, who commonly indicated that changes to staffing arrangements was one of the main SSNP strategies perceived as being successful. The specific new teaching positions cited as being effective were head teachers or teachers with a specific focus, for example, on literacy and numeracy, quality teaching, welfare, ESL, Best Start and Technology, Highly Accomplished Teachers (HATs) and their equivalents in the non-government sectors (Teacher Educators or Leaders of Pedagogy). Respondents also mentioned non-teacher support staff such as teacher's aides, Support Teacher Learning Assistants, Aboriginal-specific support staff and also other professionals like Speech Pathologists, and paraprofessionals as being successful strategies in SSNPs.

Principals who perceived the mix of part-time, casual and inexperienced executive staff as positively supporting implementation also reported greater gains in teacher capacity (i.e., compared to principals who perceived this staffing mix negatively); however, the association did not remain once changes due to new activities associated with the SSNPs were compensated for (table 20).

Negative influences on the implementation of the SSNPs as a result of new staffing arrangements did not appear to impact on the extent of gains in teacher capacity. There was no significant association between employment factors rated as having a negative influence and the extent of change in teacher capacity (table 20). Despite this finding, principals indicated that managing staffing arrangements and employing new staff were common challenges; for example, finding the right staff to fill new roles, or embedding change when experiencing staff churn. The findings suggest that schools can deal with these challenges without adversely affecting improvements in teacher capacity. Respondents' comments about the challenges associated with dealing with staffing arrangements are discussed more fully in chapter 8.

12.6 Conclusion

The findings indicate that the context in which schools are implementing SSNPs can influence the impact of SSNPs, where self reported improvements in teacher capacity and executive leadership capacity are used as measures of outcomes.

But the picture is complex and the strength of the influence of certain contextual factors, particularly the type of SSNP, varies according both to the respondent group reporting changes, and also as a result of participation in SSNPs. All SSNP have focus on improving teacher quality and all have resulted in some gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity. But one emerging finding is that the ITQ NP with its hub and spoke model has resulted in smaller gains in teacher capacity than other SSNPs, particularly for Spoke

schools as seen from the perspective of principals and executives and Hub Schools as seen from the perspective of executives and teachers (although this viewpoint was not shared by principals). The implication is that the hub and spoke model may be less successful at improving teacher capacity than other SSNPs. However, other explanations are also possible - for example, the starting point for teacher capacity in the ITQ NP may have been at a relatively higher point, with the reported amount of change relatively less. The two other SSNPs use multiple strategies to improve their schools' performance so another possible explanation is schools may need to address multiple aspects of school improvement to achieve further gains in teacher capacity. The relative influence of the wider range of reforms and the effect of implementing combinations of reforms is expected to be clearer when the state strategic level evaluations are completed.

The findings also suggest that the influence of contextual factors such as the type, location of schools and type of students enrolled should be explored further in state strategic level evaluations. In addition, education sectors may wish to review resources allocated to improving teacher capacity in secondary, combined and provincial schools, if other evaluation work confirms the associations found in this analysis.

Lastly, the association between improvements in teacher capacity and years of teaching experience suggests that more experienced teachers are coming from a higher base and there a lesser amount of improvement can be achieved amongst this group.

Differences in the influence of contextual factors will be explored in analysis of future administrations of the CSIS.

12.7 Tables summarising significance of contextual factors

To assess the influence of all contextual factors a regression model which tested whether a factor was significantly associated with gains in teacher capacity or executive leadership capacity was built. Within the regression model, categorical and continuous factors were treated differently for statistical reasons. Where possible, the majority of contextual factors were entered in continuous form (e.g. proportion of ESL, years of experience of teachers) as this provided more power to detect a significant effect. For these continuous variables the model simply identified if the effect was significant and if it was positive or negative.

Where contextual factors were categorical in nature (e.g. school type) a base group was set, and all other categories were compared to this base group. This analysis therefore identified whether the comparison group reported significantly larger or smaller effects than the base group. To explore the impact of partnership, every partnership was compared to every *other* partnership using a series of pairwise comparisons, as shown below in table 16. This exploratory approach was used as at the time of analysis there were no definitive hypotheses about which partnerships may have the strongest impacts on teacher capacity.

Questions about the impact of staffing related changes (employment changes) were only asked of principals. The 18 questions were subjected to factor analysis, which resulted in four main areas into which the 18 items could be grouped, as shown in the table 20.

Table 16. How partnership type, school type and the location of the school influence gains in teacher capacity

Are the Base group reporting significantly larger (>) or smaller(<) increases in teacher capacity than the comparison group, and is the difference between the two groups significant after SSNP summary variables are accounted for?							
Base Group	Comparison	Principals		Executives		Teachers	
		Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model
Partnership							
LSES	ITQ Hub	Yes<	Yes <	Yes >	No	Yes >	Yes >
LSES	ITQ Spoke	Yes >	No	Yes >	Yes >	No	No
LSES	LN	No	No	No	No	No	No
LSES	Multiple SSNP	Yes <	Yes<	No	No	No	No
LN	ITQ Hub	No	No	Yes>	No	Yes>	No
LN	ITQ Spoke	Yes>	No	Yes>	Yes>	No	No
LN	Multiple SSNP	No	No	No	No	No	No
ITQ Hub	ITQ Spoke	Yes>	Yes>	Yes>	Yes>	No	No
ITQ Hub	Multiple SSNP	No	No	Yes<	No	Yes<	Yes<
ITQ Spoke	Multiple SSNP	Yes<	No	Yes<	Yes<	No	No

Location						
Metropolitan	Provincial	No	No	Yes <	No	No No
Metropolitan	Remote	No	No	No	No	No No
School Type						
Primary	Secondary	Yes >	No	Yes >	Yes <	Yes < No
Primary	Combined	No	No	Yes >	Yes <	No No
Primary	Special	No	No	No	No	Yes < No

Notes: Due to the large number of contextual variables investigated, and the amount of pairwise comparisons involved, significance was set at $p=0.01$ to avoid inflated Type 1 error rates. All contextual variables with a p value below this level are recognised as significant. Green shaded=factors influencing teacher capacity/ skills when SSNP variables accounted for.

Table 17. How partnership type, school type and school location influence gains in executives’ ratings of their own leadership capacity (executive survey only)

Base Group	Comparison	Are the Base group reporting significantly larger (>), smaller(<) increases in teacher capacity than the comparison group, and is the difference between the two groups significant after SSNP summary variables are accounted for?	
		Significance of factor	Significance with SSNP variables added to model
Partnership			
LSES	ITQ Hub	Yes >	No
LSES	ITQ Spoke	Yes >	Yes >
LSES	LN	No	No
LSES	Multiple SSNP	No	No
LN	ITQ Hub	No	No
LN	ITQ Spoke	Yes>	Yes>
LN	Multiple SSNP	No	No
ITQ Hub	ITQ Spoke	Yes>	Yes>
ITQ Hub	Multiple SSNP	Yes<	No
ITQ Spoke	Multiple SSNP	Yes<	No
Location			
Metropolitan	Provincial	No	No
Metropolitan	Remote	No	No
School Type			
Primary	Secondary	Yes <	No
Primary	Combined	Yes <	Yes <
Primary	Special	No	No

Table 18. How the student profile of schools, years of experience of staff in role and student performance influence gains in teacher capacity

The direction of association between continuous contextual variables and gains in teacher capacity and is the association significant after SSNP summary variables are accounted for?						
	Principals		Executives		Teachers	
Factor	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model
% refugees	No	No	Yes - Negative	No	No	No
% ESL	No	No	No	No	Yes - Positive	No
% ATSI	No	No	Yes - Positive	No	No	No
Years of experience	No	No	No	No	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
ICSEA	No	No	Yes - Positive	No	No	No
NAPLAN	No	No	No	No	No	No
School Size (FTE Enrols)	No	No	No	No	No	No
Number of teachers	No	No	No	No	No	No
Number of para-professionals	No	No	No	No	No	No

Notes: Green shaded=factors influencing teacher capacity/ skills when SSNP variables accounted for.

Table 19. How the student profile of schools, years of experience of staff in role and student performance influence gains in executive’s ratings of their own leadership capacity (executive survey only)

The direction of association between continuous contextual variables and gains in teacher capacity and is the association significant after SSNP summary variables are accounted for?		
Factor	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model
% Refugees	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
% ESL	Yes - Positive	No
% ATSI	No	No
Years of experience	Yes - Negative	No
ICSEA Values	No	No
NAPLAN Scores	No	No
School Size (FTE Enrols)	No	No
Number of teachers	No	No
Number of para-professionals	No	No

Notes: Green shaded=factors influencing teacher capacity/ skills when SSNP variables accounted for.

Table 20. How employment variables influence principal’s ratings of gains in teacher capacity

Employment variable	The direction of association between continuous contextual variables and gains in teacher capacity and is the association significant after SSNP summary variables are accounted for?	
	Is factor significant	Is factor significant with SSNP variables added to model
Positive influences stemming from teaching staff types (proportions of part-time, inexperienced and casual staff)	Yes- Positive	Yes - Positive
Positive influences from executive staff types (part-time, inexperienced and casual staff) and all staff turnover	Yes - Positive	No
Negative influences stemming from executive staff types and all staff turnover	No	No
Negative influences stemming from teaching staff types	No	No

13. Interpretive report conclusions

This chapter provides the overall conclusions arising from the interpretive analyses of the CSIS responses.

13.1 The function of the interpretative report

The interpretive report is the second of two reports produced about the findings from the 2011 CSIS. The descriptive report reproduced as Part 2 of this report presents the detailed responses for each survey question by respondent group. This shows where respondents perceive shifts to be occurring, in their practice and in their school, providing clear signposts for CESE AC, state and Commonwealth policy makers and state level evaluators of where change is occurring, and for whom. The conclusions from the descriptive report highlight the areas of greatest and least change.

This interpretative report examined in greater detail the nature of the changes uncovered in the descriptive report, with a focus on when change occurs. It examines where the greatest gains are seen and what survey-related and other contextual variables are most strongly associated with overall outcomes of improved teaching capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity.

13.2 The strength of the statistical evidence

The CSIS collects information about changes to education practices and the impacts of these on a range of outcomes from three viewpoints; teachers, executives and principals. The information being collected is both relative and retrospective—the survey asks respondents to compare where they are now to prior to participating in the SSNP. This allows the survey to account for different subjective starting points and to ask about the added value of being involved in an SSNP.

The results of the 2011 CSIS interpretative analysis are indicative only, providing some insights for CESE AC, state and Commonwealth policy makers and state level evaluators about the contexts in which change is and is not occurring, and about the extent and duration of change. In itself the survey is only one source of evidence at one time point (cross-sectional data) and the findings need to be corroborated by state level strategic evaluations and in subsequent waves of the CSIS.

The strength of the evidence generated from the statistical analysis is impacted by the nature of the data, which is observational and self-reported. Only one round of the survey has been implemented so there is not yet any pre- and post-data for any one cohort. The survey was not constructed based on a specific hypotheses about change, so all the analyses undertaken for the interpretative report are currently exploratory in nature. We have drawn both independent and dependent variables from the CSIS survey

to understand more about preliminary patterns in the data, from which hypotheses may subsequently be formed.

13.3 Evidence about the effectiveness of the SSNP

The results indicate that at the broadest level, SSNPs are successfully driving reform in NSW schools: in general, schools' and individuals' educational practices and teaching capacity continue to improve the longer they are in an SSNP. This change is over and above changes that were already occurring in NSW schools prior to the SSNPs.

But no one coherent story about the effectiveness of the SSNPs has emerged from the analysis.. The gains across the reform areas are differential with the extent of improvement varied across the five domains—teaching, learning and professional development; management practices and accountability; instructional leadership; planning and policy; and sector support and school/ system alignment. The extent and magnitude of change amongst teachers, principals and executives also differs as does the influence of different SSNPs on key outcomes measures. Context also matters in that certain factors appear to mediate the extent of change being achieved in the reform areas by individuals and at the school level.

What the interpretive report is able to shed light on is what change is occurring for which group, which domains or reform areas are seeing the greatest change and contextual factors are associated with hindering or enabling change.

13.4 When change is occurring for which group of respondents—teachers, principals and executives

Individuals participating in SSNPs across NSW report changing education practices and implementing school improvement reforms, with principals initiating organisational change in their school. But there were differences in principals', executives' and teachers' reports of the extent of change; when change occurred; and what kinds of gains were made in what areas.

In general, principals appear to be taking up SSNP activities and changing practices earlier in their SSNP participation, and to a greater extent, than either executives or teachers. In contrast, the rate of change was more even (and in smaller increments) across the years of participation for executives and teachers, although the changes occurred at different time points for different activities and impacts. These changes are highlighted in section 13.6 and described in detail in chapter 10.

The survey data does not provide evidence to explain the patterns that have emerged of when change is occurring. But it does lend itself to the generation of hypotheses based on behavioural change theories and the acknowledged role of effective school leadership

in driving change in a school. The diffusion of innovation theory³⁶ says that new ideas or practices are taken up at different rates by the population. In schools, principals are responsible for introducing new ideas and leading innovation in practices and learning. In the SSNPs, this role has been clearly articulated, with principals being ultimately responsible for implementing the SSNPs and improving the professional learning, school improvement and organisational culture in their schools. In addition, the SSNPs have invested resources into improving principals' capabilities to do so. This leads us to hypothesise that principals are likely to take an early and intense interest in getting SSNP activities up and running and to adopt a positive perspective about the extent of change occurring. Teachers and executives are likely to be later adopters, with ideas and new or changed practices taking longer to diffuse to other staff members and some practices needing professional development to assist in the take up, leading to a lesser extent of change being observed early and at the mid-point of their SSNP participation. The results may also reflect the time taken to establish SSNP reforms and change school culture—principals need time to establish activities, undertake school improvement planning and develop instructional leadership skills before they can influence other staff.

At this stage, the data does not lend itself to assessing the differences in gains over time for the individual SSNPs. The impact of period of exposure for cohorts within individual SSNPs will be explored in future CSIS waves.

13.5 Shifts in educational practices critical to achieving SSNP outcomes: where the greatest gains and least gains are seen

All the educational practices critical to achieving SSNP outcomes were reported to have shifted to some extent over time. Although it was apparent that schools were already addressing at least some of the reform areas being targeted by SSNPs, this change was over and above what was already occurring in schools.

Greatest gains in individual teacher, executive and principal practices

Activities that target teaching practices, skills and understanding, and collaborative practice appear to be successfully improving the quality of teaching in schools.

For teachers the greatest gains in practices are the growth in teachers' use of planning to meet individual student needs, collaborating with other teachers and embracing of collective responsibility, availability of in-class support.

The two areas related to changed practices in classrooms and schools strongly positively associated with perceived increases in teacher capacity are increases in the availability

³⁶ Diffusion of Innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology, popularized the theory in his 1962 book *Diffusion of Innovations*.

of professional development for teachers and increases in instructional leadership for principals and executives.

For principals, reflecting their position and role in the school, other reform areas where they are reporting the greatest gains are aspects of instructional leadership; that is, the ability to arrange instructional support for individual teachers, and mentoring being more widely established and supported. Large gains were also found for aspects of 'external planning and policy', which includes survey items relating to how well schools are engaging with parents, communities and other schools. At this stage, it was not possible to analyse what gains across the reform areas are associated with gains in principals' instructional leadership capacity.

For executives, no moderate or large gains were seen; rather, they reported smaller gains across a range of practices. But where an executive reported gains in understanding effective leadership, more opportunities to apply these skills and a greater confidence in doing so, then there was a significant association with increases in their own rating of their leadership capacity.

Greatest gains at the school level

Where the SSNPs appear to be having the greatest impact is on improving how teaching, learning and professional development are made available in schools, and teachers' abilities to access high quality professional development.³⁷ The greatest gains in teacher capacity are associated in the early stage of implementation with professional development for teachers being more available and of higher quality and with mentoring and in-class support being more widely available. Teachers continue to make gains the longer they are in an SSNP in planning to meet individual student needs, collaboration with other teachers, and collective responsibility for teaching and learning (small effect size).

The positive association between the availability of professional development and gains in teacher capacity are consistent across teachers, executives and principals. This is reflected in their comments about improvements in professional development being one of the significant, educational changes occurring in schools as a result of the SSNP.

Gains in instructional leadership for principals and executives are also moderately associated with greater gains in teacher capacity.

Changes are also occurring in other organisation and system level processes - for example, the use of evidence, management and management accountability, policy and practice and SSNP effects on sector support - but these did not show a relationship with increased teacher capacity.

The least gains are being achieved in a schools' engagement with the community (parents, local and Aboriginal communities) and external partners.

³⁷ See tables 2, 4 and 5, chapter 3

13.6 How contextual factors influence change in schools

The context in which schools are implementing SSNPs can influence the magnitude of the impact of SSNPs, where self reported improvements in teacher capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity are used as measures of change in schools.

The context in which schools are implementing SSNPs can influence the magnitude of the impact .of reforms, where self reported improvements in teacher capacity/ skills and executive leadership capacity are used as measures of change in schools.

But the picture is complex and the strength of the influence of certain contextual factors, particularly the type of SSNP, varies both with the respondent group and with participation in particular SSNPs. All SSNPs have a focus on improving teacher quality with were many reforms in common across the Partnerships and all have resulted in some gains in teacher capacity and executive capacity.

The ITQ NP was implemented using a hub and spoke model in government schools and some Catholic schools, where the hub school (recognised as a high performing school) provided support to spoke schools. One emerging finding is that the ITQ NP has been associated with smaller reported gains in teacher capacity than other SSNPs. Amongst spoke schools, this pattern is particularly prominent in principals' and executives' responses. Amongst hub schools, this pattern is particularly prominent in executives' and teachers' responses (although this view was not shared by hub-school principals).

There are several possible explanations for these differences, based on the nature and foci of the intervention. ITQ NP hub schools were chosen because they were high performing schools so might be harder to see improvement from a higher starting base. On the other hand, ITQ NP spoke schools received no SSNP funding directly, and some may not have realised that their involvement in reform activities initiated by a 'hub' school equates participation in the SSNPs – which would have affected the perceived relevance of the survey questions.

Contextual factors that influence the magnitude of improvements for teacher capacity are the type of school, the teachers' years of experience, the location of the school, ICSEA score value and type of students. But for some factors, the association appears to disappear when SSNP summary variables were added to the model, particularly from executives' perspective. One potential interpretation of this shift in significance, which will require further exploration with longitudinal data, is that implementation of the SSNPs may be ameliorating the influence of these contextual factors on changes to teaching capacity and/or executive leadership capacity.

Lastly, the association between improvements in teacher capacity and years of teaching experience suggest that more experienced teachers are coming from a higher base, meaning there is less room for improvement.

Contextual factors that influence the magnitude of improvement in teacher capacity are the type of school, the teachers' years of experience, the location of the school, ICSEA value and students' characteristics or backgrounds (ESL, ATSI and if refugees). But for some factors, the association appears to disappear when SSNP summary variables were added to the model (e.g. ICSEA value). Others such as the type of school (secondary, combined or provincial schools) remain significantly associated with gains in teacher capacity when SSNP summary variables are added (for at least one group of respondents, executives). One potential interpretation of this shift in significance, which will require further exploration with longitudinal data, is that implementation of the SSNPs may be ameliorating the influence of the some but not other contextual factors on changes to teaching capacity and/or executive leadership capacity (table 16).

Lastly, the association between improvements in teacher capacity and years of teaching experience suggest that more experienced teachers are coming from a higher base level of skill, and that a less improvement can be expected amongst this group.

13.7 State strategic level evaluations – areas for further exploration

The CSIS provides a rich source of data for state strategic level evaluations and highlights areas that may be further explored as part of their work. These include the

- mechanisms driving the differential improvements and take up of practices between teachers, principals and executives. These may be explained by behavioural theory, or other reasons to be determined.
- true extent of the increase in teacher capacity, given that principals, teachers and executives report different magnitudes of improvement
- relative impact of the different SSNPs on key outcome measures, in particular whether the ITQ NP hub and spoke model is having a lesser impact on teacher capacity and why
- impact of initiatives to align school and system on other SSNP activities
- reasons behind the lesser impact on schools' effectiveness in engaging local communities, local ATSI communities, parents, external partners
- different perspectives of principals and teachers about the magnitude of change, particularly in regard to increases in teacher skills and capacity
- influence of contextual factors such as the type, location of schools and characteristics of students enrolled.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Detailed approach to quantitative analysis of responses to closed survey questions

This section details the approach used to analyse the survey responses to closed-questions or items. Our quantitative analysis used survey responses from all three respondent groups (principals, executives and teachers) to look at three main questions

- When are the greatest gains seen?
- Which elements of the SSNPs are significantly associated with changes in teaching capacity/ skill and executive leadership capacity?
- Which contextual factors are significantly associated with changes in teaching capacity/ skill and executive leadership capacity?

These analyses used summary variables developed from the survey domains and the outcomes hierarchy (Figure 69).

Examining when greatest gains are seen

This part of the analysis compared the extent of change reported across responses from the surveys at the three time points—p (pre), n (new, <12 months), e (end or mid-point) and c (end or mid-point Catholic virtual centres of excellence schools). The analysis also investigated the impact of the different SSNPs on reported changes. The survey respondents in the p, n and e surveys represent different cohorts and there is as yet (after only one administration of the CSIS) no pre- and post-data from any one cohort.

Because the survey items for the e and c surveys were identical and the sample size for the c survey small, the responses to the principal, executive and teacher e and c surveys were grouped together.

The descriptive report showed a high level of change already taking place in schools prior to commencing in the SSNPs (p survey), as well as in the early phase of participation (n survey) and after almost two years (e survey). The interpretive analysis aimed to determine whether these changes were statistically significant according to duration of participation in the SSNPs, and whether there were differences by SSNP.

Due to significant violations of the assumption of normally distributed data, we used non parametric tests. First, we used the Kruskal-Wallis one way analysis of variance by ranks as an omnibus test, to look for differences between mean ranks of responses across the p, n and e surveys. Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were found for all items (summary variables and key outcomes) for all respondent groups (principals,

executives, and teachers). We then undertook post-hoc testing to pinpoint the location of the differences between the p, n and e surveys, using the Mann-Whitney U test of mean rank³⁸, and calculated the effect size³⁹.

Because we do not have pre- and post-data for the same cohort, the analyses are comparing different groups of schools, in different SSNPs, at different stages of involvement—comparing those yet to start in the LSES partnership in 2102 (p), and those who commenced in the LSES and ITQ in 2011 (n) to explore the first question, and comparing those who commenced in the LSES and ITQ in 2011 (n) with those who commenced in the L&N, LSES and ITQ 2009 and 2010 (e) to explore the second.

The nature of the data under discussion is also an important consideration. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of increase in a particular activity or outcome since commencement in the SSNPs (n and e surveys), or over the previous two years (for p survey respondents). On items for which there was a significant difference between two points in participation (e.g. between p and n), there was an increase on the extent of change. Even on items where there was not a significant difference, there were still increases in the prevalence of that activity or outcome in the majority of respondents' schools.

Examining the activities and impacts significantly associated with changes in teacher and executive leadership capacity

The next stage of analyses sought to identify which factors were significantly associated with changes in teacher capacity/ skill and executive leadership capacity using 'n' and 'e' survey respondents only (as respondents in the 'p' variant had not yet participated in the SSNPs). We used regression analyses to identify the activities and impacts (grouped by summary variables) that were most strongly associated with greatest changes in these overall outcomes. The overall outcomes questions and domains to examine were chosen on the advice of the CSIS Project Reference Group.

As there is currently no pre- and post-data for the same cohorts, we have used regression analyses as a way of looking at associations between SSNP activities and impacts and the two higher order outcomes questions.

- **Teacher capacity/ skill:** The analysis for principals and executives uses the question 'To what extent has this school's participation in the Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) so far improved teaching capacity in this school, over and above what was already being done?' The analysis for teachers uses the question 'The extent to which your teaching skills have improved is?'
- **Executive leadership capacity:** Only executives were asked about this outcome. The analysis uses the question 'To what extent has this school's participation in the

³⁸ Significance was calculated at $p < 0.025$ for post hoc testing, following the Bonferroni correction.

³⁹ Effect size was calculated by $r = z / \sqrt{n}$ (Field 2005).

Smarter Schools National Partnership(s) so far improved your own leadership capacity over and above what you were already doing?’

As noted in the report, these two outcome questions were selected because they were the only quantitative questions included in the overall impact section within the CSIS survey, and was the only quantitative question not part of a specific survey section (eg management, leadership etc). These two outcome questions were not included in any of the summary variables to avoid confounding analysis.

As part of the preliminary assessment of data, all the assumptions underlying regression analyses were checked, and no violations of these assumptions were found. In particular, as both dependent and independent variables were drawn from the same survey, collinearity diagnostics were closely observed. All VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values were below 10 (the traditional cut-off point. Values greater than 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity).

Important notes in interpreting the regression analyses

While regression models do identify ‘predictors’ of change, the fact that all questions were asked at a single time point limits our ability to talk about one area as ‘causing’ change in another. The analysis at this stage can only suggest that certain changes in some areas (e.g. ‘teaching, learning and professional development’) appear to be associated with changes in other areas (i.e. ‘overall teaching capacity’).

Examining which contextual factors are significantly associated with changes in teacher and executive leadership capacity

To assess the impact of contextual factors we used a series of hierarchical regression models. In each model, contextual factors were added in a single block. Then, survey summary variables were added in the next block, to see which (if any) contextual factors were still important once SSNP-related variables were included in the model. The hierarchical regression is commonly used to determine whether new variables explain additional variance above and beyond the first set. The analyses answer two questions:

- Which contextual factors show significant associations with longer term change in teaching capacity and executive leadership capacity?
- Which contextual factors are still significant once survey variables are accounted for?

As above, assumptions underlying regression analyses were checked, and no violations were identified.

Treatment of categorical contextual variables

When contextual variables were included in the analysis they were classified differently if they had more than two categories (e.g. the remoteness variable has three levels: metropolitan, provincial and remote). In these cases, we transformed them into 'dummy' variables to determine where the significant differences lay. As there were no hypotheses at this point, and all analyses were exploratory, dummy variable pairwise comparisons were made for all partnership groups, as this was a key contextual variable of interest. In other cases, the group with the largest number forms the base group to which others are compared. For example, when looking at remoteness of schools as a contextual factor, the majority of schools were metropolitan, and differences between metropolitan and provincial, and differences between metropolitan and remote schools are both tested in the regression model.

There was a difference in the nature of the questions asked of teachers compared to those asked of executives and principals. Teachers were asked more about their individual skills, while executives and principals were asked to provide a rating of teacher capacity within their school. This may have contributed to the different contextual factors identified for different respondent groups.

Also, as response data was provided for only 393 principals, it is possible that there was not sufficient statistical power to detect significant influences of all contextual variables, which may account for why fewer contextual variables were significantly associated with principal-rated teacher capacity. That there are differences in the schools represented in each cohort may also contribute to the differences between contextual factors important for each cohort.

Questions assessing the impact of employment factors on SSNP implementation (principal survey) do not identify the magnitude of staff turnover or proportions of new staff. This means that we can only comment on the impact of staff turnover and composition, without knowing how many new staff have come and gone from the school and what the proportions of new/ inexperienced staff are.

Employment factors

The principal survey had 18 employment questions or items, which were also considered within these analyses. Due to the small size of the principal respondent group (n=393), the 18 items were subjected to factor analysis to reduce the number of items in the regression model. Factor analysis suggested the following four factors, and these were used in contextual analyses.

1. **Positive influences stemming from staff churn and executive staff type/ experience.** This variable contained items related to positive support resulting from changes in executive and teaching staff, changes to staff in specific areas, and proportion of part-time executive and inexperienced executives.

2. **Positive influences relating to teaching staff type/ experience.** This variable contained items related to positive support resulting from proportion of part-time, casual and inexperienced teachers.
3. **Negative influences stemming from staff churn and executive staff type/ experience.** This variable contained items related to impeded implementation resulting from changes in executive and teaching staff, changes to staff in specific areas, and proportion of part-time executive and inexperienced executives.
4. **Negative influences relating to teaching staff type/ experience.** This variable contained items related to impeded implementation resulting from proportion of part-time, casual and inexperienced teachers.

Generating summary variables for analysis

We used regression models to explore the relationships between survey variables, contextual factors and overall outcomes. Within this type of statistical analysis, adequate sample size is crucial, and guidelines suggest a minimum of 10–15 respondents per factor added to the regression model. Given that we had a relatively small sample size for principals (n=393) compared to the number of possible items to be entered into the regression (approximately 48 survey items, 12 questions or items on employment and 10 demographic variables), the first step of the quantitative analysis was to group the survey items into summary variables.

Creating the outcomes matrix

In our plan for this work, we considered two approaches to creating summary variables—one based on the existing sub-sections of the CSIS survey, and one on the different sections of an outcomes matrix that groups the questions in the survey by activity/ impact level and by domain (e.g. ‘teaching, learning and professional development’). For both approaches, analyses of Cronbach’s alphas indicated very high levels of internal consistency. We selected the matrix approach because it was likely to be more informative.

To ensure that the summary variables generated by the outcomes matrix were uni-dimensional (all assessing a single underlying construct) we used principal components analysis⁴⁰. We found that summary variables were uni-dimensional in all but two cases: intermediate and long-term ‘planning and policy’ impacts. The variables of intermediate and long-term ‘planning and policy’ impacts demonstrated a two-factor structure, suggesting that internal planning and policy actions (e.g. shared school goals) were

⁴⁰ Direct oblimin rotation was used, and scree plot, eigen values and component matrix extraction were all assessed when determining dimensionality of factors. The sample size was deemed adequate. Correlations were assessed, and all correlations were above 0.3 (with one exception as detailed below). Bartlett’s test of sphericity were always significant and KMO was above .5 in all cases (deemed lowest acceptable) and above .6 in most cases (deemed generally acceptable).

separate to external actions (e.g. strategies to engage external groups). To reflect this difference, we created two separate unidimensional variables—internal and external—at the intermediate and long-term level for ‘planning and policy’ impacts

There were also three leadership items in the principal and executive surveys, for which the responses were on a scale of 5 not 7 (because they did not have a ‘decreased’ option or a ‘not applicable’ option); for these we also had to create separate summary variables.

The composition of the summary variables for each respondent group is shown below.

Validating the outcomes matrix

To explore the validity of the outcomes matrix, we used a series of regression analyses to assess whether

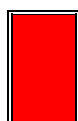
- changes in actions predict short-term impacts
- changes in short-term impacts predict changes in medium-term impacts
- changes in medium-term impacts predict changes in long-term and policy impacts.

Results of these analyses suggested a clear flow of associations, wherein each level of the matrix had significant predictors from the level below.

Figure 69. Summary variable matrices

Management and accountability

P =Principal survey question
 E= Executive survey question
 T=Teacher survey question



Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>		<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
Your School Plan/AIP/NP Plan (or equivalent) is more of a working document	P E	Your School Plan/AIP/NP Plan (or equivalent) is more evidence based	P E	Evidence from collaborative classroom practice/lesson observations is used more in the strategic/whole school planning process	P E			
		Student achievement data and analysis is used more in the school strategic planning process	P E	The culture of school self evaluation/self review has become stronger	P E			
		Monitoring of the effects of new initiatives and strategies is more rigorous	P E	Accountability for teaching and learning activities in this school has increased	E			
				You are more aware of your School Plan/AIP/NP Plan (or equivalent)	T			
				You are more involved in contributing to your School Plan/AIP/NP Plan (or equivalent)	T			
				You are more involved in monitoring the effects of new initiatives and strategies in this school	T			

Teaching, learning and professional development

P =Principal survey question E= Executive survey question T=Teacher survey question		Key outcome question							
Summary variable: Activities		Summary variable: Short-term impacts		Summary variable: Intermediate impacts		Summary variable: Long-term impacts		Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts	
Opportunities for you to further develop your teaching skills have now increased	T	You are more able to arrange for instructional support to be provided for individual teachers	P	Effective mentoring of staff is more widely established and supported in this school	PE	Collective responsibility for teaching and learning processes in this school is stronger	PE	Students in this school are more engaged with teaching and learning	PE
The amount of time you have spent engaged in professional learning to improve and develop your teaching skills has increased	T	You are more able to personally provide instructional support for individual teachers in your school	PE	More time is focused on teaching practices and student learning in staff meetings	PE	Professional dialogue around teaching and learning processes in this school is of higher quality	PE	The overall quality of teaching in this school has improved	PE
The availability of in school/in class professional learning support for teachers has changed	T	You are more able to implement effective classroom practice, planning and learning strategies	T	In school/in class professional learning/development has further supported the development of teacher capacity in this school	PE				
In school/in class professional learning support for teachers (e.g. the work of the Professional Learning Consultant / HAT/ SSNP funded AP or DP/ TE/ LOP /Facilitator/ Coordinator/ Classroom Leader) All/Government Schools/Catholic Schools	T	School Learning Support staff (have enhanced your teaching skills)	T	The SSNP funded School Learning Support staff have enhanced teacher capacity in this school	PE				
Effective mentoring is now more readily available to you	T	Your interactions with teachers from other schools (have enhanced your teaching skills)	T	Teachers in this school now more often plan their teaching to meet individual student needs	PE				

P =Principal survey question
 E= Executive survey question
 T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

Summary variable: Activities		Summary variable: Short-term impacts		Summary variable: Intermediate impacts		Summary variable: Long-term impacts		Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts
The quality of the personal professional development you receive has increased	T	The extent to which your teaching skills have improved is	T	Teachers in this school are more regularly involved in team teaching and/or shared planning				
You have participated in training to analyse and use student data for lesson planning	T	Your understanding of what you need to do to be a more effective teacher has further improved	T	Teachers in this school are contributing more to improving teaching and learning processes				
				Your teaching practices have improved	T			
				You are more involved in collaborative teaching practices	T			
				Your use of student achievement data to inform lesson planning has increased	T			
				You now more often plan your teaching to meet individual student needs	T			
				You contribute more to improving teaching and learning in your school	T			
				The quality of your collaboration/networking with other teachers around teaching practices and student learning has improved	T			
				There is an increased focus on teaching and learning practices in staff meetings (e.g. teacher professional learning or stage meetings etc.)	T			
				The quality of professional dialogue among teachers in this school around teaching and learning processes has changed	T			

P =Principal survey question
 E= Executive survey question
 T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>		<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
				The sense of collective responsibility for teaching and learning in this school has changed	T				
				The quality of interactions with your students around teaching and learning processes has changed	T				
				Your students' engagement with teaching and learning has changed	T				

Instructional leadership

P =Principal survey question

E= Executive survey question

T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>		<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
Enabled you to provide leadership opportunities for teaching staff at all levels more extensively	P	You have gained a better understanding of what you need to do to be a more effective educational leader	P E	Further developed your instructional leadership/leadership for learning capacity/skills	P E				
		You feel more able to implement effective strategies to lead	P E	Your leadership practices have improved	P E				
		Your analysis and use of student achievement data for school planning has increased	P E	Improved the quality of your collaboration/networking around teaching practices and student learning	E				
		Improved the quality of your collaboration/networking with other principals around teaching practices and student learning	P	Facilitated the wider implementation of your existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity in your school	E				
		Facilitated the wider implementation of your existing leadership skills to further develop teaching and learning capacity in your school	P						
		Provided you with more leadership opportunities	E						
		You have more leadership opportunities	T						

Planning and policy

P =Principal survey question
E= Executive survey question
T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>	<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
	You have spent more time on improving and developing teaching skills in this school	E	The shared school improvement goals in this school are more focused	PE	There is a stronger culture of collaboration and shared responsibility for outcomes in this school	PE		
	You are more involved in contributing to your agreed School Plan/AIP/NP Plan (or equivalent)	E	You are more able to support Executive team members to spend more time on improving teaching skills in this school	P	This school is more engaged in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching and learning practices	P		
			Executive team members in this school are more involved in contributing to your agreed School Plan/AIP/NP Plan	P	You are more engaged with the shared school improvement goals in this school	T		
			Shared school improvement goals in this school are more actively promoted	PE	You have been involved in collaborative activities with universities around improving teaching and learning practice	ET		
			Strategies to engage parents are more effective	PE				
			Parents are now more involved in your classroom/school	T				
			Strategies to engage local communities/ NGOs /community groups are more effective	PE				
			Local communities/community groups are now more involved in this school	T				
			Strategies to engage local Aboriginal communities are more effective	PE				
			Local Aboriginal communities are now more involved in this school	T				

P =Principal survey question
E= Executive survey question
T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>	<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>
		This school now collaborates more with other schools around improving student outcomes	P	
		You are more involved in collaborating with other schools around improving student outcomes	E	
		You are more involved in collaborating with teachers from other schools around improving teaching and learning practice	T	
		Implementing the shared school improvement goals in your school is a higher priority for you	T	

SSNP effects on system support

P =Principal survey question
E= Executive survey question
T=Teacher survey question

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>		<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>	<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
Sector/System/Regional/Diocesan/AIS support for the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP(s) is stronger	P	Sector/System/Regional/Diocesan/AIS monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP(s) in this school are stronger	P				
Sector/System/Regional/Diocesan/AIS monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP(s) in this school are stronger	P	More useful and higher quality tools to support school improvement planning from Sectors/Systems/Regions/Dioceses/AIS are currently available	P				
Sector/System/Regional/Diocesan/AIS support for the SSNP(s) have been more adequate for this school's needs	P						
Advice, support, guidance and follow up from Sector/System/Regional/Diocesan/AIS staff around the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP(s) has been more substantial	P						
The quality of resources and materials to support school improvement planning for SSNP(s) from Sectors/Systems/Regions/Dioceses/AIS is higher	P						

School/System alignment

**P =Principal survey question
 E= Executive survey question
 T=Teacher survey question**

Key outcome question

<i>Summary variable: Activities</i>		<i>Summary variable: Short-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Intermediate impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term impacts</i>		<i>Summary variable: Long-term policy impacts</i>	
System policies and processes are more aligned to support the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP initiatives in schools	P	DEC/Regional/Diocesan monitoring of, and accountability requirements for, teaching and learning activities in this school have increased	P					System and school goals are more aligned and shared	P
System policies and processes are more flexible to support the implementation/maintenance of the SSNP initiatives in schools	P								

Appendix 2: Detailed approach to analysis of responses to open-ended survey questions

Sample for analysis

The main qualitative analysis drew on answers from 651 of the 4,476 respondents who completed the survey⁴¹. Respondents answering the p survey were not asked questions asking about the impacts of the SSNP so far.

We drew a stratified random based on respondents' school sector and school type, proportional to schools' participation in the SSNPs.

Table 21 shows the number of surveys selected for the sample. The number of responses from special schools was low for the CEC and AIS sectors; additional surveys were included from DEC schools to maintain the proportional representation of special schools.

Table 21. Number of surveys selected for qualitative analysis

		Combined	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
AIS	Count	13	6	5	0	24
	% of Total	2.00%	0.90%	0.77%	0.00%	3.69%
CEC	Count	6	68	31	1	106
	% of Total	0.90%	10.48%	4.76%	0.15%	16.28%
DEC	Count	35	363	99	24	521
	% of Total	5.39%	55.71%	15.28%	3.69%	80.03%
Total	Count	54	437	135	25	651
	% of Total	8.29%	67.10%	20.77%	3.79%	100%

We coded more responses from principals to get a more balanced understanding of their views as compared to other respondents, because the initial sample of principals was so small. We also found that principals often made detailed comments that provided valuable additional insights.

⁴¹ As the analysis is primarily qualitative in nature there is no set number of randomly selected responses required in order to generate a representative sample of all survey responses or allow for comparisons of responses from different types of schools. We initially proposed 650 as we estimated it would include about 10% of responses.

As originally planned, we also analysed responses from principals (who responded to the n and e surveys) to two questions:

- What were the two most significant and cost effective strategies that you have used so far?
- What have been the most significant challenges so far for your school in implementing/ maintaining the SSNP(s)?

Analysing and interpreting the qualitative data

From Nvivo 9 we produced reports with responses from each code for each question. These were used to analyse responses to each code, reflecting on similarities and differences within the code.

It was not possible to look at differences in response for all demographic characteristics because the sample was stratified only by sector and school type. For this reason, the main focus is not on differences by respondent type except in very common themes. In these cases, where there were larger coded references to work with, we were more able to consider patterns across survey respondent types and partnership types.⁴² Some respondents also related their comments to their school's contextual situation and we have used this information in the report where relevant.

While the codes were the same for the questions on change, significance and consequence, the analysis for each of these questions was initially separated. We then developed queries to explore linkages between the three questions where possible.

Creating Word clouds

To help illustrate the findings for the qualitative questions, we used Wordle⁴³ to create word clouds from the respondents' text, which provide an additional descriptive picture of the kinds of issues respondents are raising. Wordle is a program that allows the researcher to generate word clouds, which give prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text; in this case the responses to the open questions.

The word clouds for the two questions for which responses from all principals were coded—*What were the two most significant and cost effective strategies that you have used so far?* and *What have been the most significant challenges so far for your school in*

⁴² We did not explore differences for the question about why changes were significant because the question was interpreted differently by different respondents, and because differences might only reflect different interpretations. We also did not explore differences for the question about what the school was building on because of the small numbers involved as only principals and executives answered this question.

⁴³ Wordle is a program developed by Jonathan Feinberg, an employee of IBM; www.wordle.net

implementing/ maintaining the SSNP(s)?—draw on the coded responses from all principals, so slightly more weight is given to their views.⁴⁴

We created word clouds from the top 300 most common words that were coded at any node relevant to the open question they correspond to. The most common words were identified through a word frequency query in Nvivo 9 that identified these words in the coded data,⁴⁵ while automatically merging together common stemmed words (e.g. individual, individuals, individually). To ensure the relevance of words that appeared in the final word cloud, we manually merged synonyms, similar concepts (e.g. PD, tpl and pl) and parts of common phrases that appeared in the list (e.g. professional and development). We also eliminated from the lists words that would have been meaningless on their own (e.g. our, we, all, what).

Word clouds are descriptive only and should not be interpreted as precise calculations in the manner of quantitative data.

Developing, testing and refining the coding framework

We developed the coding framework (with specific codes for each question) by analysing a sample of responses from all respondent groups to ensure the framework adequately covered the full range of responses. Most of the qualitative questions were the same or similar across all survey types, so the decision to have the same coding framework for all meant we could try to identify similarities and differences between respondent groups' views on the same topic.

We found significant overlap in the responses to three questions—*What have been the most significant changes? Why have they been significant? What have been the consequences of these changes?*—sometimes because of the different ways in which respondents interpreted 'significant' and 'consequence' and sometimes because of the different stages of progress commented on. For example, for some an activity might be the change and it is significant because they have not previously had the funding to do it; for others, improved practice might be the change and it is significant because it has flow-on effects on student outcomes. For this reason, we developed an overarching set of codes for all three of these questions.

Once the team had discussed and refined the framework, we then tested it for reliability between coders, using a sample of responses from all respondent groups. Due to the way Nvivo 9 calculates the percentage of agreement between coders and the Kappa Coefficient (using the dataset for each survey type as a source), very small differences in coding (such as extra letters/ lines referring to the same theme) can affect the calculation. Consequently, we found that the results of the coding comparison were unrepresentative of the actual level of agreement among coders. We examined many of

⁴⁴ The Wordles for other questions also draw on coded data from an additional small number of principals whose responses were coded but who were not part of the initial sample.

⁴⁵ Only coded data was incorporated to reduce meaningless references.

the codes that were identified as having low levels of agreement (and low Kappa Coefficients) and found that the differences in coding were immaterial—almost always extra words (or even extra spaces) coded while referring to the same overall statement. We found very few nodes with no agreement at all and we reviewed the coding of these to correct any differences in our understanding of the code definitions.

This process did identify some challenges with responses that could potentially be coded differently or coded in more than one way, so we set up an internal review process to troubleshoot difficult-to-code responses throughout the process. Once all initial coding was complete and the framework was stable, to ensure consistency we also went through each node and re-coded where necessary, particularly where new codes had been added during the coding process.

We used the framework to code the full sample of qualitative data in Nvivo 9. The coding framework reflects the initial review of responses, but was progressively refined through several iterations during the course of coding as new themes or variations on a theme emerged. When changes were made they were discussed and agreed on to maintain consistency between coders.

Significant changes, why they are significant and their consequences

We used the same codes for the first three qualitative questions about significant changes, the reasons they were significant and their consequences. Responses to these three questions, while different in nature, fell within the same broad categories, though some nodes were only relevant to one or two of the three questions.

Table 22. Coding framework: significant changes, why and consequences

Focus area	Significant change/ reason, consequence
Teacher-level	Professional development/ training/ mentoring
	Focus on teaching/ pedagogy/ quality teaching
	Teacher attitude
	Teacher ability/ skills
	Teacher practice/ improved teaching
	Programming/ class arrangements
	Targeting student need/ ability
	Support for teachers to implement change
School-level	New/ better initiatives/ programs/ projects/ ICT
	Staffing arrangements
	Resources (other than funding for staff)— increased
	More time/ scheduled meetings/ days

Focus area	Significant change/ reason, consequence
	Using evidence (data/ research)*
	Shift in school culture and improved school environment
	Leadership
	Improved/ increased planning
	Improved collaboration/ coordination/ whole of school approaches
	Ownership and accountability
	Resources—increased
	Fit with school context
Community-level	Working with other schools
	Involving parents
	Involving community
	External expertise/ professionals
Student-level	Increased student engagement
	Changes to student learning
	Improved student outcomes (academic)
	Improved student outcomes (not academic)
System support	System-level support (Q2 only)
	SSNP driving/ accelerating progress (Q2 only)
None/ negative/	None/ Not aware/ not been involved
	Too early to tell
	Negative—related to SSNP (Q1 and 3)
	Negative—contextual (Q1 and 3)
	There's more work to do (Q3 only)
	Limitations(Q3 only)

*Also at the teacher level

Most significant challenges

Stakeholders described a range of challenges in implementing the SSNPs at various levels: teacher, school, community, the NP/ system or student. Others noted that it was too early to tell or described some success in overcoming challenges. These are built into the framework.

Table 23. Coding framework: most significant challenges

Focus area	Nature of change
SSNP-level	Funding issues / overall DEC policy issues Accountability and administration requirements Timeframes of SSNPs Planning related Workload/ resources to implement New initiatives/ programs/projects/ ICT related Lack external support (regional, diocese, AIS) Keeping momentum Sustainability Other
Teacher level	Professional development / training mentoring Changing staff attitude/ ways of working*
School-level	'Fit' with school context Staffing arrangements Collaboration/ coordination/ whole-of-school Communication Use of evidence (data/ research) 'Other'
Community-level	Working with other schools Involving parents Involving community External
Student	Student attitudes Student aptitudes, abilities Student - other
Overcoming challenges— 'case stories'	Successfully overcome
None/ too early to tell	None/ Not aware/ not been involved Too early to tell Made inroads

*Includes other staff.

Most successful/ cost-effective strategies

Respondents described a range of strategies as effective, some spoke about specific programs while others described broader activities, like working on whole-of-school approaches. The coding framework reflects the types of things mentioned.

A word search of literacy and numeracy programs, in addition to the coding framework, can also help to understand the types of literacy and numeracy programs most often mentioned.

Table 24. Coding framework: most successful/ cost-effective strategies

Focus area	Strategy type
Reference to specific programs under the NP	Literacy and numeracy related programs
	Other programs/ interventions
Reference to teacher-level strategies implemented under the NP	Professional development/ training / mentoring
	Targeting student need/ ability
	Support for teachers in the classroom
Reference to school-level strategies implemented under the NP	Use of ICT
	Hiring/ having access to more skilled staff
	More time / meeting and development days
	Use of evidence (data/ research)
	Leadership
	Collaboration/ coordination/ Whole of school approaches
	Changes to programming/ new ways of working/ teacher practice
	Resources and funds- NOT STAFF
Planning	
Reference to community-level strategies implemented under the NP	Working with other schools
	Involving parents
	Involving community
	External expertise/ professionals
DEC System level strategies	Regional/ DEC level support/ strategies
Other	None
	Negative
	Too early to tell
	'Other'

What was the National Partnership Building on in your school?

The focus of this question was pre-existing programs (that may help as a precursor to SSNP activities or act as a distraction to undertaking SSNP activities) and on the school’s strengths (which might include things like community partnerships) that the SSNP could build on. In practice, it was not always clear whether respondents were speaking of deficits they wanted to address or strengths they were building on.

Secondary focus area	What the school wanted to improve/ what the school was building on
Teacher-level	Teaching practice, existing good teaching
	Professional development / mentorship
	Targeting student need/ ability
	Programming
	Support for teachers in the classroom
School-level	Existing focus on numeracy, literacy
	Specific numeracy or literacy interventions already in place
	Other interventions, programs, initiatives already in place
	Use of ICT
	Use of evidence (data/ research)
	Leadership
	Existing school plans/ policies/ approaches, overall management approach
	Collaboration/ coordination
Anything about the context of the school, i.e. high achievement culture, or school demographics	
Community-focused	Community-level collaboration
Student-focused	student engagement
	student outcomes/ learning
Other	Nothing
	N/A
	Not sure
	‘Other’

Is there anything you would like to tell us that we haven’t already asked about the Smarter Schools National Partnership in your area?

Responses to this question often overlapped significantly with previous questions or reflected unique experiences/ contexts/ situations. New data (i.e. that provided new

information useful to understanding the SSNPs in schools and that did not simply repeat a response to a previous question) was either:

- coded under the current framework where possible for previous questions (for example, if providing data on an additional challenge faced in implementing the SSNPs this is coded under the appropriate code for the question on challenges)
- coded in an additional four categories.

Table 25. Additional codes

Code
7A. Suggested improvements to the program
7B. Positives about the NP
7C. Negatives about the NP
7D. Other

Appendix 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS

Table 26. Characteristics of participating schools

Variable	Values	Frequency	Percent
Affiliation ⁴⁶	AIS	31	3.3%
	CEC	158	16.9%
	DEC	747	79.8%
Type	Primary	628	67.1%
	Secondary	194	20.7%
	Combined	78	8.3%
	Special	36	3.8%
Region	Hunter/ Central Coast	95	10.1%
	Illawarra and South East	81	8.7%
	New England	79	8.4%
	North Coast	139	14.9%
	Northern Sydney	27	2.9%
	Riverina	75	8.0%
	South Western Sydney	193	20.6%
	Sydney	21	2.2%
	Western NSW	130	13.9%
	Western Sydney	96	10.3%
Remoteness	Metropolitan	460	49.1%
	Provincial	434	46.4%
	Remote	42	4.5%
Partnerships	LN	97	10.4%
	LSES	528	56.4%
	ITQ	199	21.3%
	LN and LSES	44	4.7%
	LN and ITQ	3	0.3%
	LSES and ITQ	62	6.6%
	LN, LSES and ITQ	3	0.3%
Enrolments	FTE	Mean = 333	Range = 5-1866

⁴⁶ May be analysed but not reported beyond oversight purposes.

Table 27. Characteristics of respondent schools (schools returning one or more surveys)

Variable	Values	Frequency	Percent
Affiliation ⁴⁷	AIS	31	3.3%
	CEC	100	14.3%
	DEC	568	81.3%
Type	Primary	480	68.7%
	Secondary	135	19.3%
	Combined	62	8.9%
	Special	22	3.1%
Region	Hunter/ Central Coast	73	10.4%
	Illawarra and South East	53	7.6%
	New England	60	8.6%
	North Coast	102	14.6%
	Northern Sydney	11	1.6%
	Riverina	61	8.7%
	South Western Sydney	157	22.5%
	Sydney	14	2.0%
	Western NSW	100	14.3%
	Western Sydney	68	9.7%
Remoteness	Metropolitan	346	49.5%
	Provincial	316	45.2%
	Remote	37	5.3%
Partnerships	LN	84	12.0%
	LSES	422	60.4%
	ITQ	93	13.3%
	LN and LSES	40	5.7%
	LN and ITQ	3	0.4%
	LSES and ITQ	54	7.7%
	LN, LSES and ITQ	3	0.4%
Enrolments	FTE	Mean = 325	Range = 6-1866

⁴⁷ May be analysed but not reported beyond oversight purposes.

Appendix 4 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 28. Demographic data: principals (based on completed survey data)

Variable	Values	e survey	n survey	p survey
Time in current position, any school	< 1 year	19 (8.2%)	12 (10.4%)	4 (8.9%)
	1-3 years	39 (16.7%)	28 (24.3%)	10 (22.2%)
	3-5 years	38 (16.3%)	19 (16.5%)	8 (17.8%)
	5-10 years	75(32.2%)	29 (25.2%)	13 (28.9%)
	> 10 years	62 (26.6%)	27 (23.5%)	10 (22.2%)
Time in current position in current school	< 1 year	20 (8.6%)	15 (13.0%)	4 (8.9%)
	1-3 years	208 (89.3%)	94 (81.7%)	39 (86.7%)
	3-5 years	2 (0.9%)	1 (0.9%)	1 (2.2%)
	5-10 years	2 (0.9%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0%)
	> 10 years	1 (0.4%)	3 (2.6%)	1 (2.2%)
Employment-acting/relieving	Yes	20 (8.6%)	9 (7.8%)	6 (13.3%)
	No	213 (91.4%)	106 (92.2%)	39 (86.7%)
Role in instructional leadership	Own	207 (89.6%)	95 (84.8%)	42 (97.7%)
	Delegated	24 (10.4%)	17 (15.2%)	1 (2.3%)

Table 29. Demographic data: executives (based on completed survey data)

Variable	Values	e survey	n survey	p survey
Time in current position, any school	< 1 year	83 (9.3%)	46 (16.3%)	20 (12.8%)
	1-3 years	213 (23.9%)	57 (20.1%)	27 (17.3%)
	3-5 years	112 (12.6%)	44 (15.5%)	23 (14.7%)
	5-10 years	202 (22.6%)	67 (23.7%)	34 (21.8%)
	> 10 years	282 (31.6%)	69 (24.4%)	52 (33.3%)
Time in current position in current school	< 1 year	103 (11.5%)	76 (26.9%)	18 (11.5%)
	1-3 years	722 (80.9%)	183 (64.7%)	126 (80.8%)
	3-5 years	17 (1.9%)	10 (3.5%)	3 (1.9%)
	5-10 years	21 (2.4%)	8 (2.8%)	4 (2.6%)
	> 10 years	29 (3.3%)	6 (2.1%)	5 (3.2%)

Variable	Values	e survey	n survey	p survey
Employment-acting/ relieving	Yes	217 (24.3%)	71 (25.1%)	31 (19.9%)
	No	675 (75.7%)	212 (74.9%)	125 (80.1%)
Employment- Full-time/ part-time	Full time	801 (89.8%)	249 (88.0%)	145 (92.9%)
	Part time	86 (9.6%)	34 (12.0%)	11 (7.1%)

Table 30. Demographic data: teachers (based on completed survey data)

Variable	Values	e survey	n survey	p survey
Time in current position, any school	< 1 year	18 (1.1%)	32 (5.6%)	9 (1.8%)
	1-3 years	190 (11.3%)	77 (13.4%)	85 (17.4%)
	3-5 years	202 (79.2%)	66 (11.5%)	60 (12.3%)
	5-10 years	370 (21.9%)	111(19.3%)	118 (24.1%)
	> 10 years	907 (53.8%)	290 (50.3%)	217 (44.4%)
Time in current position in current school	< 1 year	37 (2.2%)	59 (10.2%)	14 (2.9%)
	1-3 years	1551 (91.9%)	472 (81.9%)	446 (91.2%)
	3-5 years	20 (1.2%)	6 (1.0%)	6 (1.2%)
	5-10 years	31 (1.8%)	21 (3.6%)	11 (2.2%)
	> 10 years	48 (2.8%)	18 (3.1%)	12 (2.5%)
Employment-full-time/ part-time	Full-time	1348 (79.9%)	475 (82.5%)	420 (85.9%)
	Part-time	339 (20.1%)	101 (17.5%)	69 (14.1%)
Employment-permanent, casual, temporary	Permanent	1322 (78.4%)	437 (75.9%)	395 (80.8%)
	Temporary	351 (20.8%)	131 (22.7%)	89 (18.2%)
	Casual	14 (0.8%)	8 (1.4%)	5 (1.0%)
Highest level of education to date	Undergraduate diploma	230 (13.6%)	39 (6.8%)	38 (7.8%)
	Bachelor degree	903 (53.5%)	348 (60.4%)	267 (54.6%)
	Graduate diploma or graduate level certificate	331 (19.6%)	92 (16.0%)	89 (18.2%)
	Masters degree	172 (10.2%)	79 (13.7%)	83 (17.0%)
	Doctoral degree	3 (0.2%)	2 (0.3%)	0 (0%)
	Other	48 (2.8%)	16 (2.8%)	12 (2.5%)
NSW Institute of Teachers highest level of teacher accreditation to date	Professional Competence	756 (44.8%)	263 (45.7%)	242 (49.5%)
	Professional	100 (5.9%)	28 (4.9%)	32 (6.5%)

Variable	Values	e survey	n survey	p survey
	Accomplishment			
	Professional Leadership	40 (2.4%)	14 (2.4%)	8 (1.6%)
	Other	791 (46.9%)	271 (47.0%)	207 (42.3%)
NSW Institute of Teachers level of accreditation currently undertaken	Not currently undertaking further accreditation	1168 (69.2%)	363 (63.0%)	321 (65.6%)
	Professional Competence	195 (11.6%)	119 (20.7%)	71 (14.5%)
	Professional Accomplishment	157 (9.3%)	40 (6.9%)	49 (10.0%)
	Professional Leadership	25 (1.5%)	13 (2.3%)	9 (1.8%)
	Other	142 (8.4%)	41 (7.1%)	39 (8.0%)
Age group	30 and under	339 (20.1%)	148 (25.7%)	134 (27.4%)
	31-40	415 (24.6%)	120 (20.8%)	110 (22.5%)
	41-50	381 (22.6%)	135 (23.4%)	120 (24.5%)
	51-60	469 (27.8%)	135 (23.4%)	99 (20.2%)
	over 60	60 (3.6%)	30 (5.2%)	18 (3.7%)
	Prefer not to say	23 (1.4%)	8 (1.4%)	8 (1.6%)