## Positive Climate for Learning

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE

### The use of evidence

A high threshold was set to determine the priorities and initiatives of the *Framework*. An evidence hierarchy was used to include a mix of meta-analyses, systematic reviews of randomised control trials, as well as pre-post studies, quasi-experiments and evaluations of current programs used in Victoria.

While the research includes average effect sizes, it does not rely entirely on them as indicators of effective school improvement. This is because effect sizes can be problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it is difficult to accurately compare effect sizes from meta-analyses where different methods are used in estimating average effect sizes. Secondly, some meta-analyses estimate average effect sizes using only a limited number of studies and findings may be less reliable or applicable more broadly. Further, the way in which some effect size categories are developed may be of limited use operationally in schools.

### Evidence of strongest impact on student outcomes

* Research has shown that relationships can affect student learning – there are effects for both positive and negative relationships (Roorda et al, 2011). Negative relationships can make students less happy about coming to school or participating in class. Teachers can improve relationships by showing they understand and care about individual students and trying to see student perspectives (Hattie, 2009).
* Hattie found an effect size of 0.72 for teacher-student relationships (Hattie, 2009).
* PISA results shows that (OECD, 2013):
  + drive, motivation and confidence in one’s self are essential if students are to fulfil their potential
  + students who are in schools where student-teacher relations and disciplinary climate are poor are more likely to have low levels of engagement with and at school
  + teachers can help students develop perseverance and motivation by supporting students in their efforts to meet high expectations
  + teachers’ practices can promote students drive and willingness to engage with complex problems, such as use of cognitive-activation strategies, and helping them to learn from mistakes
  + teachers and parents can hold high expectations and reward each student who achieves specific learning goals
  + student motivation and self-beliefs are impacted by whether other students are performing better than them in the class or school
  + streaming students into different schools can negatively impact student motivation and drive for learning.
* Experts support the promotion of student voice in schools, and point to the importance of linking student voice with action. ‘Authentic’ student voice is not simply to provide data for others to make decisions, but it should encourage young people’s active participation in shared decision making and consequent actions (Fielding, 2001; Hargreaves, 2005; Holdsworth, 2005).

#### Key references

Fielding, M. (2001) Beyond the Rhetoric of Student Voice: new departures or new constraints in the transformation of 21st century schooling? FORUM, 43(2), 100. doi:10.2304/forum.2001.43.2.1

Hargreaves, D. (2005) Personalising Learning: Next Steps in Working Laterally In Children Taken Seriously in Theory, Policy and Practice. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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Holdsworth, R. (2005) Taking Young People Seriously Means Giving Them Serious Things To Do In *Children Taken Seriously in Theory, Policy and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

OECD (2013) Education at a Glance 2013. OECD Publishing, OECD Publishing Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/educationataglance2013-indicatorsandannexes.htm

Roorda, D., Koomen, H., Split, J., & Oort, F. (2011) The Influence of Affective Teacher-Student Relationships on Students’ School Engagement and Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Approach Review of Educational Research, 81(4), 493–529.