

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

How schools promote and sustain student empowerment



Providing feedback

This resource is the result of the collaboration of numerous educational leaders from across Victoria. Their input and feedback was essential in tailoring the guide to meet schools' needs. This is the first version of the resource and your feedback will assist the Department in further improving the guide. You can provide input into the development of future versions by emailing fiso@education.vic.gov.au

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide	5
Principles	5
How to use the guides	5
EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE: EVALUATE AND DIAGNOSE	6
Assess the school’s readiness to build and sustain student empowerment	6
Find the main student empowerment challenges	7
Examine existing student empowerment efforts	8
Gather key student data	9
Work together to make sense of the evidence	10
EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE: PRIORITISE AND SET GOALS	11
Differentiate and prioritise student empowerment goals	11
EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE: DEVELOP AND PLAN	12
Use a theory of action to plan backwards from goals	12
Develop actions to enhance student empowerment	14
Target professional learning to build teacher capability in empowering students	15
Develop a plan for students at risk of disengagement	16
EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE: IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR	17
Implement plans to promote and sustain student empowerment	18
Case studies of schools excelling in student voice, agency and leadership	18
Student-directed learning in practice: Preston High School	19
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES	20
Links to key resources	20
References	20

INTRODUCTION

To achieve school improvement goals, effective implementation is required. Schools have different strengths, starting points and contexts — there is no one-size-fits-all model for school improvement. To sustain and accelerate improvement, schools need to identify the right evidence-based improvement strategies, plan for effective implementation, and translate these strategies into the day-to-day work of staff.

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) Implementation Guides describe the professional practices of effective implementation within the improvement cycle. This includes identifying the education challenges where efforts will be prioritised, planning for how the prioritised challenges will be addressed, identifying and celebrating what is working, and adapting when barriers are encountered or changes occur.

IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



The guides aim to support schools to effectively implement strategies in six FISO dimensions.

This guide focuses on **empowering students and building school pride**. That is, it guides schools in empowering students to develop a confident voice, a capacity to act in the world and a willingness to lead others.

The six FISO Implementation Guides focus on the following dimensions:

BUILDING PRACTICE EXCELLENCE

CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE

SETTING EXPECTATIONS AND PROMOTING INCLUSION

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

STRATEGIC ENABLERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide

Complementing this guide, the [FISO Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#) aims to support schools to reflect on and strengthen four common enablers:

1. Self-evaluation capability throughout a school
2. Real-time data monitoring implementation
3. Leadership capability for school improvement
4. Robust implementation structures

Strengthening these enablers in schools supports implementation across all dimensions. The FISO Strategic Enablers guide contains guidance, research and supports for school improvement and leadership teams. Use the FISO Strategic Enablers guide in conjunction with this guide.

Principles

Three key principles underpin decision-making and ways of working when using this guide:

1. All school staff, students, families and members of the wider school community have a role to play in school improvement and implementation work.
2. School leaders actively engage other staff members, students, families and members of the wider school community in school improvement and implementation work.
3. Everyone in a school has perspectives, experiences and information that can help schools better understand context and educational successes, needs and challenges.

How to use the guides

The guides can support schools to use the improvement cycle to implement improvement initiatives, for example as part of the school review process, for annual planning and monitoring or as part of Professional Learning Communities inquiry cycles. In this guide, the referencing of goals and actions can be related to four-year School Strategic Plans, Annual Implementation Plans or shorter cycles as established by your school.

In school review: School leaders, in partnership with the School Improvement Team (SIT) and school community, can use the guides to gather and examine evidence to inform the pre-review self-evaluation and reflect on the effectiveness of past improvement initiatives and their implementation. The guides can also be used by the school review panel, in partnership with the school community, to develop a new four-year strategic plan.

In annual implementation planning and monitoring: The School Leadership Team, in partnership with the school community, can use the guides to develop the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) targets, actions and activities during Term 4. The SIT can also use the guides to reflect on how the school monitors progress each term, and during mid-year monitoring activities.

In regular cycles: Professional Learning Communities/Teams (PLCs/PLTs) can use the guides to plan and implement inquiry cycles, using real-time evidence to monitor, evaluate and celebrate student progress and reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE

EVALUATE AND DIAGNOSE

Student-centred challenges in the areas of empowering students and building school pride can be complex to define. The opportunity at this stage of the improvement cycle is to work with the wider school community to find the challenges where investing time and effort will have the greatest impact.

This is helped by working together to define the challenges, better understand the causes and build commitment around identified areas of improvement. Engaging in these challenges is important, because students who find their voice in supportive schools are more likely to develop confidence, self-efficacy and a willingness to lead others.

A rigorous systematic review of 50 studies highlighted the importance of having a shared vision of the school ethos and a learning environment that involves students, the wider school, family, kin and community. At the school level, a focus on instruction, problem-solving, positive communication and strategies to support collaboration with students and parents were features of effective strategies (Goldberg, et al., 2019).

Assess the school's readiness to build and sustain student empowerment

The first step at this stage is to determine the school's readiness to implement change. The school can use the discussion points, FISO dimensions and key questions in the table below to reflect on readiness, using a range of information and evidence to inform the discussion.

The following resources can support schools in getting ready to empower students and build school pride:

- Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM) [Practice Principles](#)
- VTLM [Vision for Learning](#)
- [Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Workforce Practice Model](#)
- [School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support](#) (SWPBS)
- [Student Voice Practice Guide \(Amplify\)](#)



Download and edit a template of the [Assessing readiness table](#) (below).

DISCUSSION POINTS	FISO DIMENSIONS	KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK
A shared vision that articulates the school community's aspirations, values and desired achievements	Vision, values and culture	Does our vision communicate that student voice, agency and leadership is valued?
A safe learning environment that is respectful, trusting and supportive for teachers, staff students and families	Health and wellbeing Setting expectations and promoting inclusion	Do we foster positive, trusting and supportive learning environments where students' needs are met? Do we foster collaborative and supportive environments for staff professional learning?
An established Student Representative Council (SRC) that gives students opportunities to develop a range of skills, including communication and leadership	Empowering students and building school pride	Are structures in place to democratically elect student representatives to the SRC? Are structures in place to ensure that student voice is representative and not confined to a select group of students?

Find the main student empowerment challenges

The second step in this stage is for a representative group of leaders and staff to gather and interpret evidence to understand the challenges they want to solve, and which will have the greatest impact.

As a starting point, reflect on the following key questions:

- What assumptions guide how school staff partner with students to improve the school?
- Are we ready to learn from our students?
- Who are we listening to? Who are we missing?
- Are students acting more as leaders or followers?
- Have multiple students from diverse cohorts had the opportunity to validate the above assumptions?
- Are decisions informed by research evidence?

What does the research evidence say?

- Celebrating achievement and acknowledging the potential for all students to succeed builds school pride and drives sustained school improvement (Bonell et al., 2013).
- Student agency activities benefit student learning and engagement in school, which drives improved academic outcomes (Mitra & Goss, 2009).
- Authentic student voice occurs when students have genuine opportunities to participate in shared decision-making and consequent actions (Baroutsis et al., 2016)
- Students become more engaged in learning when they have opportunities to:
 - exercise agency in their own learning
 - contribute to the communities in which they learn
 - improve the learning program for themselves and their peers (Hattie, 2009).

Further research evidence supporting the empowering students and building school pride dimension can be found in the [positive climate for learning evidence base](#).

Examine existing student empowerment efforts

Once the school's readiness to support a focus on empowering students and building school pride is gauged, the quality of existing efforts can be examined.

The SIT, in partnership with the student voice leader, can consider how current structures and processes support student voice, agency and leadership in the classroom and across the school.

Consider the extent to which the following structures have been established and championed:

- student representative bodies (for example, SRCs, student parliament, student house captains)
- a clear link between the SIT and student representative bodies, or student representation in the SIT
- additional supports such as teacher positions of responsibility, with time to support student voice
- celebration and showcases of the school's arts, including dance, music, drama, visual arts, media arts and visual communication design.

The SIT, student voice leader, and student representatives can carry out classroom observations or 'learning walks', or student focus groups, and meet with PLTs/PLCs to identify and assess:

- how students contribute to school decision-making about what they learn, how they learn, and how their learning is assessed
- the extent to which student voice, agency and leadership is built into the school's pedagogical model
- the extent to which student voice, agency and leadership are included in curriculum planning and assessment
- the extent to which teaching practices create spaces for student voice and empowerment for all students
- the extent to which student achievements are recognised and celebrated
- the extent to which practices that embed voice, agency and leadership as part of a positive climate for learning are consistent across the whole school.

Gather key student data

After examining the effectiveness of existing efforts, identify all relevant sources of data to be gathered by the SIT.

Use improvement measures in our system

- Attitudes to School Survey — the ‘school connectedness’ and ‘student voice and agency’ factors
- School Staff Survey — the ‘use student feedback to improve practice’ and ‘trust in students and parents’ factors
- Parent Opinion Survey — the ‘school pride and confidence’ and ‘student agency and voice’ factors
- NAPLAN achievement and growth
- Student Demographics Dashboard

Collect data and information from students and teachers

- Support student-led gathering of data and analysis to inform reflections and monitoring. This could include the design and distribution of short student ‘pulse’ surveys, or the facilitation of ‘circle time’ to monitor student opinions and matters of concern.
- Conduct classroom-based student surveys to identify perceptions of school culture and classroom practice. These may be developed by your school or purchased through a provider.
- Guide teachers to complete the [Teacher self-reflection tool](#) for Practice Principle 3 (Student voice, agency and leadership empower students and build school pride) at a whole-staff meeting.

Some parents may face additional barriers to participating in surveys (for example, English as Additional Language parents, parents from refugee backgrounds or parents with disabilities). All government schools have access to [interpreting and translation services](#).

Schools can also gain the perspectives of these parents through focus group discussions, and by inviting parents to share their perspectives in non-written forms, such as drawings and other images.

Engagement data can be used to track students’ observed engagement over time, particularly when a new interventions or approaches are used. A meta-synthesis that summarised the characteristics of 21 student engagement instruments found that measures were mostly at the class level, in particular subjects, or specific skills such as reading. Moreover, analysing engagement data should compare students’ self-reported data from surveys and informal feedback with those of the teachers and observations (Fredricks and McColskey, 2011).

Work together to make sense of the evidence

Once all data, information and assessments of existing efforts have been gathered, the SIT can work to ‘triangulate’ assumptions — that is, use multiple methods and sources to test their validity. This will help the SIT thoroughly understand the root causes of challenges, and identify and prioritise areas for focus.



The **Making sense of data and evidence** table is designed to help in this process. It can be downloaded as a template and edited.

SENSE-MAKING ACTIVITIES	REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS AND SENTENCE STEMS	ACTIONS TO SUPPORT PRIORITISING AND SETTING GOALS
Identify patterns in student engagement data	What were the trends? “In general I noticed...” What surprised you? “I wasn’t expecting to see...” Were there contradictions? “On the one hand... On the other hand...”	Document perspectives from each member, highlighting where multiple members agreed.
Test assumptions about student perspectives and data	What has worked in the past to empower students? How do we know? What do we think are the highest-priority areas for building school pride? How do we know? Are there other things the data is telling us? How can we be sure?	Document perspectives on the highest-priority needs. This may also make it clear that more data is required. If so, data should be gathered and brought back to the group.
Build consensus on priority areas of focus	Allow each team member to respond to these questions: Where is the data telling us we can better promote student empowerment? Where is the data telling us we need to focus efforts to build school pride? What are the root causes of challenges in those areas?	Record responses from each member. If there is not a clear consensus, ask members to justify their responses, seek additional data or use a voting system

A meta-analysis of 18 studies on ‘mastery learning’ found an average of five months’ learning impact when student learning is ‘scaffolded’ in sequential steps to attain a high level of success before progressing to the next unit. Mastery learning is particularly effective when teachers plan learning content and time carefully to support students’ progress more quickly. Importantly, students work with teachers to set high expectations and work individually and cooperatively with peers to support each other’s progress (Evidence for Learning, 2020).

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE

PRIORITISE AND SET GOALS

Use the data, discussions and assumptions developed in the evaluate and diagnose stage to decide where to focus improvement efforts. These may be the areas of greatest need, or where opportunities exist to maximise impact. Each school's goals will be specific to its context, including its community demographics, performance strengths and challenges, and staff climate and capability.

Differentiate and prioritise student empowerment goals

EMERGING | EVOLVING

Schools which are 'emerging' or 'evolving' in empowering students and building school pride, or which are beginning to focus improvement efforts in this dimension, could consider:

- identifying and building knowledge and skills to facilitate student voice and empowerment
- identifying and building the skills students need to express themselves effectively
- identifying any barriers which may be preventing students from participating in engagement activities
- developing structures and processes that facilitate meaningful student engagement
- increasing opportunities for student leadership and input into school improvement activities
- targeting the needs of any students or group of students not actively engaging, and determining steps to address this
- building trust between students and teachers in decision-making.

EMBEDDING | EXCELLING

Schools which are 'embedding' or 'excelling' in empowering students and building school pride, or which have sustained improvement efforts in this dimension, could consider:

- involving students in actions across the school planning and improvement process
- continuing to monitor student engagement, and involving less-engaged students meaningfully
- increasing opportunities for students to showcase their artistic skills and build school pride
- letting students know how their suggestions have been included
- continuing to build and maintain trust between students and teachers in decision-making
- embedding opportunities for student leadership and input into school improvement activities.

Key resources:

- [VTLM Pedagogical model, Practice Principles \(#3\)](#)
- [VTLM High Impact Teaching Strategies \(metacognitive strategies\)](#)
- [Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership](#)
- [FUUSE Amplify toolkit \(specifically 3 – setting goals\)](#)
- [VicSRC: Student Voice and the Education State resource](#)
- [Student Action Teams: How-to manual](#)

Download and edit the [Identifying where efforts will be prioritised](#) template to help with this process.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE

DEVELOP AND PLAN

Once goals have been set and prioritised, the SIT can develop plans for how these will be achieved, mapping out all the possible actions and approaches, then selecting those most likely to have the greatest impact given the school's context.

Use a theory of action to plan backwards from goals

Schools may choose to develop a theory of action to explain how change will be achieved. This describes the relationships between the intended impact, outcomes, outputs and actions to help schools see the changes that will need to occur for implementation to succeed.

Along the way, the SIT can test the theory using questions such as:

- What assumptions are being made about the relationships?
- Whose perspectives are we including? Whose are we excluding?
- Are the proposed actions informed by research evidence?



Download and use the [Theory of action](#) template.

Illustrative practice case study

At one school, AToSS data, classroom observations and focus groups indicated that students felt that they did not have a voice, and that they were passive in classes. In focus groups, students also identified that they had trouble following along with the lessons. And on 'learning walks', many students could not explain what they were learning, or how they would be asked to demonstrate their learning.

A theory of action was developed to improve student engagement through creating meaningful opportunities for student agency.

Leaders may need to put implementation structures such as teams and schedules in place and ensure professional learning plans are aligned to teachers' and students' learning needs. For more information about leading change and structures for implementation, see the [Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#).

Common barriers include time constraints, and improvement strategies being too broad or ambitious. Schools should develop plans with a limited number of achievable actions.

Impact indicators

- Improved student engagement in lessons.
- Growth in NAPLAN and teacher assessment results.

Outcome indicators

- The percentage of teachers reporting positively against collective focus on student learning and academic emphasis items in the staff survey increases.
- Feedback received from students is positive and teachers use feedback to inform planning.

Output indicators

- Collation of research and feedback.
- Feedback from students and the school council observations of the instructional model in action.
- Increase in the number of teachers using the instructional model.

Impact

- Percentage of students reporting positively against effective teaching time and stimulating learning environment increases.
- Increased student academic performance.

Outcomes

- Whole-staff endorsement of the instructional model.
- Increased student agency in classes and improved student capability to explain the lesson objective and how they will demonstrate their learning.

Outputs

- Student council collected evidence and input from their year levels on what was working and what needed to change.
- A co-design instructional model to be tested with sample of classes across the school.
- Professional learning for staff on the features of each section of the instructional model, visits with the student council to network with schools with strong practices in this area.

Actions

- Engage students in the co-design of an instructional model.
- Build teachers' understanding of how a whole-school instructional model can improve the quality and consistency of lessons, and provide a common language to support teachers in discussions about practice.
- Strengthen student leadership roles by enabling students to contribute to decision-making and have a tangible impact.

Develop actions to enhance student empowerment

In planning to empower students and build school pride, the SIT can discuss, adapt and document the following suggested actions, or add actions specific to their school's context.



Download and complete the [Mapping possible actions](#) template to ensure the benefits and potential barriers for each action are considered.

EMERGING | EVOLVING

Schools which are 'emerging' or 'evolving' in empowering students and building school pride, or which are beginning to focus improvement efforts in this dimension, could consider:

- establishing a common understanding of the meanings of student voice, student agency and student leadership, and displaying these definitions in classrooms and assemblies
- creating clear openings, opportunities and obligations for students wanting to change something about the school
- actively involving school representative bodies and student voice/action teams in the planning process through a clear link with the SIT
- encouraging students to take ownership of their learning, including goals, content, methods, assessment and evaluation
- strengthening students' individual goal-setting in-line with the teaching goals and intentions for lessons
- celebrating student success by introducing a system of positive behaviour rewards, communicating rewards to parents/carers/kin and holding special celebrations'
- building a system of school houses or sub-schools to strengthen students' social connections
- encouraging students to review their learning using questions such as:
 - How well have I done in achieving this goal?
 - How well have I done against my learning intentions and goals?
 - How can I show my learning?

EMBEDDING | EXCELLING

Schools which are 'embedding' or 'excelling' in empowering students and building school pride, or which have sustained improvement efforts in this dimension, could consider:

- facilitating the formation of specific support groups (for example, for LGBTIQ students, Koorie students, EAL students, students from refugee backgrounds, students with disabilities or younger students) to foster voice, agency and leadership
- ensuring adequate participation of students in the design and implementation of school programs and policies (for example, in secondary schools, through student representation on the school council)
- providing opportunities for students to showcase their artistic skills at events such as recitals, musicals and art exhibitions
- strengthening the link between the SIT and student representative bodies through regular and scheduled meetings, protocols and processes, including active student participation and representation in the SIT
- building the capabilities of sub-school and house leaders to strengthen student culture in their areas
- analysing student feedback as a whole school to inform teachers about curriculum and classroom climate
- strengthening the consistency of student-to-teacher feedback processes on aspects of the lesson and how learning needs are being met.

In developing actions, the SIT should discuss whether they meet the characteristics of effective implementation:

- ☑ Are actions and activities sufficiently 'bite-sized'?
- ☑ Are actions easy to understand? Is it clear what will be implemented?
- ☑ Can actions be embedded in the school's everyday structures and routines (making them easier to prioritise and adapt to)?
- ☑ Is it clear who will be responsible for what, and when? Are there systems for monitoring this?
- ☑ Are timelines and monitoring cycles short? (Completion builds satisfaction, opportunity for celebration, acknowledgement of achievement and momentum for further work.)

Target professional learning to build teacher capability in empowering students

Effective professional learning is **active**: it includes opportunities for discussion and to and apply what is learnt during training and between sessions (Garrett et al., 2019, Timperley et al., 2007). Professional learning for empowering students and building school pride should ensure that teachers:

- understand the meaning, importance and benefits of student voice, agency and leadership
- explore attitudes towards young people and their capabilities and roles within learning and the community
- use a common language to describe programs and interventions which the school is implementing
- are responsive to student feedback and have the knowledge and skills to enable students to be active participants in their learning
- enable shared decision-making with students about individual and group goals, and about processes, strategies and implementation.

Actions documented in professional learning and development plans may be delivered through PLCs/PLTs.

Questions that can help to establish a well-targeted plan include:

- Which teachers in our school have outstanding skills in this domain? How could they meaningfully share this knowledge and help to build the capacity of others?
- Which teachers in our school would benefit most from professional learning on how to improve their approach to student empowerment?
- Does our school need to allocate time to certain teachers so they can coach others?
- What professional development will sustain improvements to practice?

Teach the Teacher is a student-led professional development program for school staff. The program supports the development of stronger and more effective relationships, explores improvements in teaching and learning practices and is tailored to suit the needs of schools.

Develop a plan for students at risk of disengagement

Schools should ensure that approaches to student voice, agency and leadership consider the needs of at-risk students and students who are less engaged in school life. They can do this by:

- making sure students at risk are involved in decisions made about them, if they are unable to make their own decisions
- using the [Staying in Education Model](#) to identify students in Years 7–10 who are at risk of disengaging
- using the Department's [Students At-Risk Planning Tool](#) to assist the school's wellbeing team to identify students who may be vulnerable and require supports to maintain engagement and connection with education
- identifying indicators of disengagement from academic progress, student behavioural data, attendance, communication with home, and wellbeing data
- establishing school-wide agreement on the processes for collecting disengagement data, and plans for who will respond, how and when
- understanding the interests of at-risk students and ensuring engagement approaches tie in with their interests
- where possible, prioritising time and resources for at-risk students to engage in small group learning focused on mastery of specific skills
- prioritising the participation of students who are less actively engaged in school life in general school activities they are interested in, as a way of engaging them
- connecting students through mentoring and buddy programs.

For more information about identifying and taking action for students at risk of disengagement, see the [Evidence for Learning 2020 report](#).

A study of a series of professional development sessions that focused on supporting teachers to enact student-driven pedagogy in Science found a positive impact of three months of learning (0.22), with greater impacts of five months learning impact for students from low socio-economic status backgrounds (0.38). Importantly, the training did not aim to provide a set of 'off-the-shelf' lesson plans, but tools that support students in thinking and justifying their understanding that teachers can try out and evaluate their effectiveness between sessions (Hanley, et al., 2015).

EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND BUILDING SCHOOL PRIDE IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR

The success of any plan depends on how well it is implemented. Implementation is not a one-off event, but an iterative process of actioning what is planned, identifying and celebrating what is working, and adapting when barriers are encountered, changes occur or plans fall behind schedule.

Identify how actions to build school pride will be monitored

Monitoring enables leaders to know what practices are changing in their school, and what impact those changes are having. Monitoring also identifies barriers to implementation early so that approaches can be adapted, and strategies put in place to get back on schedule. Monitoring usually involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data.

Sometimes, data collected across Victoria (available in Panorama) will assist with monitoring and assessing impact from year to year. At other times, schools will need to develop tailored tools to monitor implementation in real-time over shorter regular cycles, or at the end of each term.



Download and use the [Identifying how actions will be monitored](#) template to document this.

Sources of data for monitoring implementation of actions to empower students and build school pride include:

- student surveys — school-wide, or of a select group of students or participants in a specific program
- interviews or focus groups with students or teachers
- staff feedback on professional learning focused on empowering students and building school pride
- observations of changes to classroom practices to increase student agency
- documentation of frameworks, policies or programs which enhance student voice and agency and build school pride
- participation of students in leadership committees, in the SIT or on school council, and changes resulting from this
- student attendance and student participation in extracurricular programs and clubs.

Survey tips

- Short, focused surveys with a clear purpose are most effective for monitoring.
- Questions need to be carefully designed for your audience, use clear, accessible language and be presented in a logical order (Taherdoost, 2016).
- Pre-test surveys with a small group for feedback before sharing more broadly.
- Combine all monitoring questions for the same group into one survey. Consider other ways you can minimise the burden of completing surveys.

For more information about real-time data monitoring, see the [Strategic Enablers for Implementation Guide](#).

School improvement is an iterative process in which data plays an important part. A study of a literacy program that used evidence to support instruction showed significant improvements in reading achievement. Teachers collaboratively analysed student data, classroom observations and teacher and student surveys to profile students' learning needs (Lai, et al., 2014).

Implement plans to promote and sustain student empowerment

Once goals have been set, plans have been developed and monitoring tools are in place, leaders can implement changes effectively by:

- ensuring sufficient time is allocated to build relationships and engage with students to support the implementation of actions
- identifying students and teachers who can be champions of the work and seeking to engage them early
- regularly revisiting the importance of empowering students and building school pride and promoting the expectation that all teachers contribute to the school's plans in this area
- establishing and celebrating implementation milestones
- using and adapting monitoring tools regularly, using a variety of evidence to understand changes to student empowerment and school pride
- using the improvement cycle over shorter periods to diagnose challenges and adapt implementation.

Case studies of schools excelling in student voice, agency and leadership

- [Aspendale Primary School](#): Student agency was enacted when students and staff collaborated to plan learning and instructional approaches that are responsive to students' interests and needs.
- [Blackburn Lakes Primary School](#): To move students from 'fixed mindsets' to 'growth mindsets', teachers and students co-designed a Year 5 mathematics program.
- [Canterbury Primary School](#): A Year 6 teacher embarked on an innovative project with her students, creating a radio program, then inviting celebrities to be interviewed. Social media was used to capture and reflect on the process.
- [Clifton Springs Primary School](#): Clifton Springs Primary School's dedication to empowering student voice has led to major changes. SRC is now an important part of running the school, which was named 2018 Primary Schools VicSRC of the Year.
- [Diamond Valley Special Developmental School](#): The school-wide implementation of an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system has amplified student voice across the school.
- [Ivanhoe East Primary School](#): Students and teachers co-designed a new 'school pride and school connectedness' unit. This led to new planning processes which engaged students and teachers in an authentic teaching and learning partnership.
- [Lalor East Primary School](#): Students were engaged in the co-design of an instructional model to improve learning outcomes through a concerted focus on students' needs, interests and abilities.
- [Rosanna Primary School](#): The school has developed 'deep learning protocols' which define what deep learning looks like and provide an agreed language and focus for discussing learning in the classroom.
- [Roxburgh College](#): The implementation of 'Learning Walks' has elicited insights from the perspectives of students and teachers.
- [Traralgon Senior College](#): Student voice teams and student action teams have been the key enablers of several initiatives, including co-designed learning behaviours, curriculum co-design and student participation in school decision-making.

Student-directed learning in practice: Preston High School

Preston High School's innovative approach to teaching high-ability learners centres on maximising differentiated learning and inspiring students' engagement with their education.

The school's Learner Growth Approach successfully embeds high-impact teaching strategies and Practice Principles, both essential elements of FISO. By aligning this dynamic, evidence-informed learning approach with the Victorian Curriculum, the school supports high-ability students to learn years in advance of their age-group peers.

Preston High School's developmentally focused approach and curriculum creates a dynamic academic environment where each student is empowered to shape their learning by what fascinates them. In the school's Academic Enhancement Program, students apply their learning to make a positive impact in their communities, boosting opportunities to demonstrate student agency, engagement and leadership.

The school's outstanding success in achieving positive student outcomes is supported by data: in both NAPLAN and the Student Attitudes to School Surveys, students rate well above state and similar-school averages.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Links to key resources

- [Australian Youth Research Centre, Student Action Teams](#)
- [Centre for Multicultural Youth, Student Voice](#)
- [DET Amplify](#)
- [FISO Continua of Practice for School Improvement](#)
- [FISO Implementation Toolkit](#)
- [FISO Improvement Cycle](#)
- [Student Voice Hub – Students on School Council](#)
- [VicSRC – Student Voice and the Education State](#)
- [VicSRC – Teach the Teacher program](#)
- [VTLM Practice Principles](#)

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