

An abstract graphic on a teal background. The top half features vertical columns of binary code (0s and 1s) and a network of white lines connecting circular nodes. The bottom half shows a dense, fan-like pattern of white lines radiating from a central point, also connecting to nodes.

**LEADERSHIP TRENDS REPORT 2020**

## Context

How do teachers perceive leadership in their organisation?

How do leaders perceive their own ability?

What strength and opportunity areas do our leaders have in common?

Do site, experience, tenure or position impact perceptions of leadership performance?

To answer these questions, Sentis Education has conducted a two-year longitudinal study of 71 state and independent Queensland schools to uncover the strengths and development opportunities of school leaders.

The Leadership Efficacy and Development Quotient (LEADQ 360) Leadership Trends Report is based on detailed interviews with 412 leaders who were asked to rate their own performance against eight leadership dimensions - the results of which were then compared with the ratings of their peers, their managers and the people they led.

Participants received personal feedback and coaching sessions based on the survey results. At the same time, the main findings of the interviews were analysed and compiled into a report that shows striking, state-wide trends in the work situations of leaders and in their strengths and development needs.

## Scope of Data



The LEAD-Q provides leaders with increased self-awareness and comprehensive feedback to support them in the next step of their development. Based on observable leadership behaviours rated by self, plus at least five others - including an individual's direct leader, direct reports, and colleagues - the LEAD-Q delivers the information necessary to understand an organisation's current leadership strengths and areas of opportunity.

## Process



### NOMINATE

Participants complete self-assessment and nominate colleagues as 'raters' to provide detailed feedback across each LEAD-Q dimension.



### ASSESS

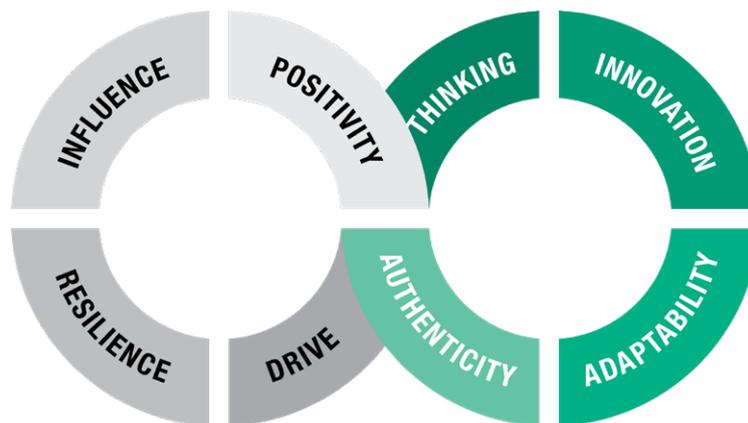
Perceptions and feedback provided anonymously via online survey.



### DEBRIEF

Remote discussion with individuals to explore report trends and implications and to undertake action planning for improvement

## LEAD-Q Dimensions



### 8 DIMENSIONS OF LEAD-Q

The LEAD-Q 360 completed by all participants measured their performance across eight capabilities which are fundamental to leadership excellence and ultimately, organisational success: Adaptability, Authenticity, Drive, Influence, Innovation, Resilience, Thanking and Positivity.

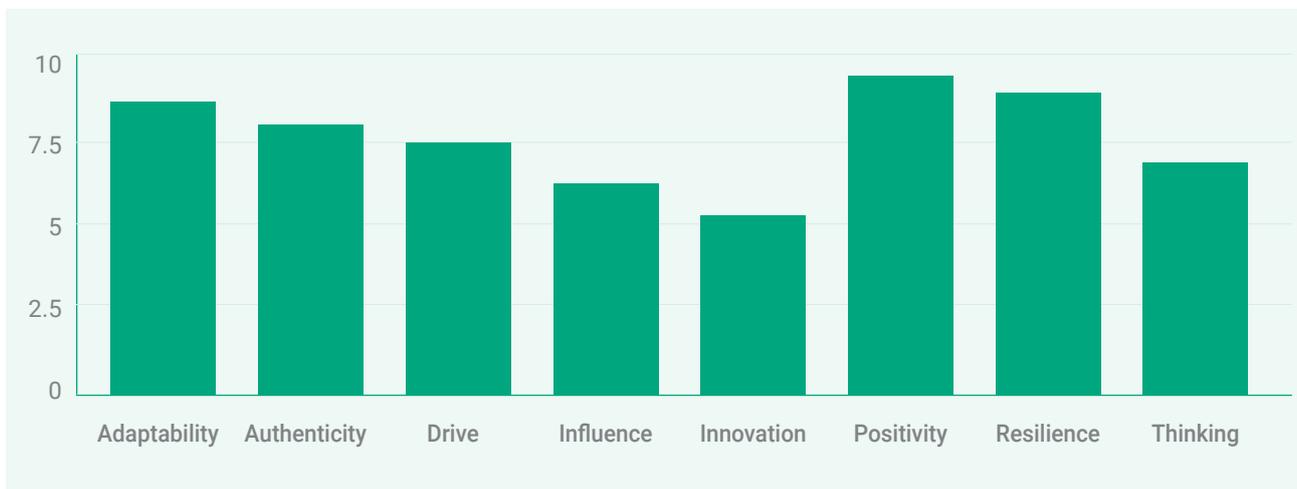
Evidence-based and extensive in its scope, the assessment provided detailed feedback for participants across each of the eight dimensions of leadership efficacy:

LEAD-Q Dimension	Measures a leader's ability to:
Adaptability	Adapt with ease to changing circumstances by responding effectively when confronted with changes and thriving in the face of uncertainty.
Authenticity	Forge authentic relationships by displaying awareness of one's own motives and intentions, and using these to guide actions towards others.
Drive	Act with conviction by creating challenging goals and actively pursuing these with intention, focus and energy.
Influence	Transform others' attitudes and actions by creating an inspiring vision, demonstrating behaviour in line with that vision, and challenging individuals' current perspectives to stimulate new thinking and behaviour.
Innovation	Lead for innovation by identifying opportunities for improvement, generating creative ideas, and transforming these into innovative solutions that push past current boundaries.
Resilience	Be resilient in the face of challenge by using effective coping strategies and leveraging the resources necessary to withstand job demands and recover from adverse work situations.
Thinking	Make strategic decisions by using complex reasoning skills to critically assess the situation, judge the available alternatives, and make effective forward-thinking decisions
Positivity	Approach work from a positive perspective to demonstrate engagement in one's own work and to create an effective working environment for others.

## Results by Dimension

Each of the 8 dimensions are assessed against a set of demonstrable leadership behaviours (sub-dimensions) which will be explored in the next sections.

The diagram below outlines the **total average score for each LEAD-Q dimension across the respondent group** and clearly identifies POSITIVITY as the most observed leadership capability and INNOVATION as being observed the least.



## General Observations

Some sharply similar topics of discussion arose throughout the 412 debrief and coaching conversations.

Below are some of the key common themes:

- 100% of participants are highly passionate about education and love their jobs.
- All participants reported selecting a spread of respondents (raters) from among their allies AND their 'challengers'.
- 97% of leaders reported a lack of access to staff as having a negative effect on their ability to support and develop their people.
- 73% of leaders had not attempted to explicitly align their faculty/team vision to the wider school vision and strategic priorities. Having time available to undertake the process - and strategies to do so - were identified as supports they would require.
- 64% of leaders mentioned that they feel they 'mostly work in isolation' - even within their peer teams.
- 100% of participants reported struggling with maintaining momentum across a range of priorities. 48% complete detailed longitudinal plans with checkpoints and deadlines to support their leadership of initiatives across a term/semester/year.
- Many leaders reported a lack of confidence - despite many years of experience and clear expertise.
- Female leaders reported having 'imposter syndrome' 9 times more regularly than their male counterparts - regardless of age, experience and tenure.
- 67% of respondents reported feeling that their inability to directly articulate policy diminished their capacity as a competent leader.
- Within each dimension, 92% of leaders possess high levels of skills at the intrapersonal level with clear opportunity to extend and develop these skills in others.



## 5 Most Observed Behaviours

Aggregate results for each rater group

SELF	MANAGER	PEER	DIRECT REPORT
<p><b>1. AUTHENTICITY</b> Acting with integrity</p> <p><b>2. ADAPTABILITY</b> Thriving in crisis situations</p> <p><b>3. DRIVE</b> Striving towards goals with vigour</p> <p><b>4. POSITIVITY</b> Displaying positive emotions</p> <p><b>5. RESILIENCE</b> Promoting resiliency</p>	<p><b>1. AUTHENTICITY</b> Acting with integrity</p> <p><b>2. POSITIVITY</b> Exuding self-confidence</p> <p><b>3. POSITIVITY</b> Displaying positive emotions</p> <p><b>4. DRIVE</b> Striving towards goals with vigour</p> <p><b>5. POSITIVITY</b> Creating positivity in others</p>	<p><b>1. AUTHENTICITY</b> Acting with integrity</p> <p><b>2. DRIVE</b> Striving towards goals with vigour</p> <p><b>3. POSITIVITY</b> Displaying positive emotions</p> <p><b>4. POSITIVITY</b> Exuding self-confidence</p> <p><b>5. ADAPTABILITY</b> Thriving in crisis situations</p>	<p><b>1. AUTHENTICITY</b> Acting with integrity</p> <p><b>2. DRIVE</b> Striving towards goals with vigour</p> <p><b>3. POSITIVITY</b> Displaying positive emotions</p> <p><b>4. POSITIVITY</b> Exuding self-confidence</p> <p><b>5. POSITIVITY</b> Expressing optimism</p>

General correlation between each respondent group in terms of dimensions of strength.

**ADAPTABILITY** was observed as an area of strength among participants and their peers. Coaching conversations identified that this may be due to the fact that it is the 'thriving in crisis situation' events that are most visible - and more likely to be discussed during at-level/peer meetings.

Acting with integrity (defined as "acting in a manner consistent with one's underlying beliefs and values") is identified as top capability across all rater groups. Key elements of this sub-dimension are transparent communication and ethical decision-making.

**POSITIVITY** is the most prolifically observed dimension, yet was most commonly mentioned as something participants felt they 'fake' during a work day. Many reported that although they often feel less than positive, they constantly 'reframe' their attitude and draw on the strong element of meaning and purpose behind their work. All participants were 'relieved' that any lack of positivity was in no way observed by others.

**DRIVE** - 'striving towards goals with vigour' - is defined as 'engaging on goal-orientated activities with visible enthusiasm and passion'. DRIVE is a key factor of successful leaders and it can be surmised that individuals with drive set challenging goals and work to achieve them. Of interesting note, however, is that a strength in this intrapersonal skill was often accompanied by opportunities that lay entirely in building such skills in others.

**RESILIENCE** appears only in the Top 5 for the Self rater group, with 'promoting resiliency' defined as 'serving as a resource for guidance and support to others as they cope through work challenges'. Participants expressed an intention to purposefully build resilience in others, often in the background to their visible, operational work.

## 5 Least Observed Behaviours

Aggregate results for each rater group

SELF	MANAGER	PEER	DIRECT REPORT
<b>1. INFLUENCE</b> Persuading others by challenging current reality	<b>1. INFLUENCE</b> Promoting influence in others	<b>1. INFLUENCE</b> Promoting influence in others	<b>1. INNOVATION</b> Exploiting the circumstances
<b>2. INFLUENCE</b> Promoting influence in others	<b>2. INNOVATION</b> Exploring the possibilities	<b>2. INFLUENCE</b> Persuading others by challenging current reality	<b>2. INNOVATION</b> Exploring the possibilities
<b>3. INNOVATION</b> Exploiting the circumstances	<b>3. INFLUENCE</b> Persuading others by challenging current reality	<b>3. INNOVATION</b> Exploring the possibilities	<b>3. INFLUENCE</b> Promoting influence in others
<b>4. INNOVATION</b> Exploring the possibilities	<b>4. INNOVATION</b> Promoting innovation in others	<b>4. INNOVATION</b> Exploiting the circumstances	<b>4. INFLUENCE</b> Persuading others by challenging current reality
<b>5. INFLUENCE</b> Inspiring others to action	<b>5. INFLUENCE</b> Exploiting the circumstances	<b>5. INNOVATION</b> Promoting innovation in others	<b>5. INNOVATION</b> Having the vision

The lowest scoring sub-dimensions at the bottom end are concerned with transforming others' attitudes and practice (INFLUENCE), as well as identifying opportunities for improvement and generating creative solutions (INNOVATION). These sub-dimensions were frequently identified as opportunities for school leaders at all levels.

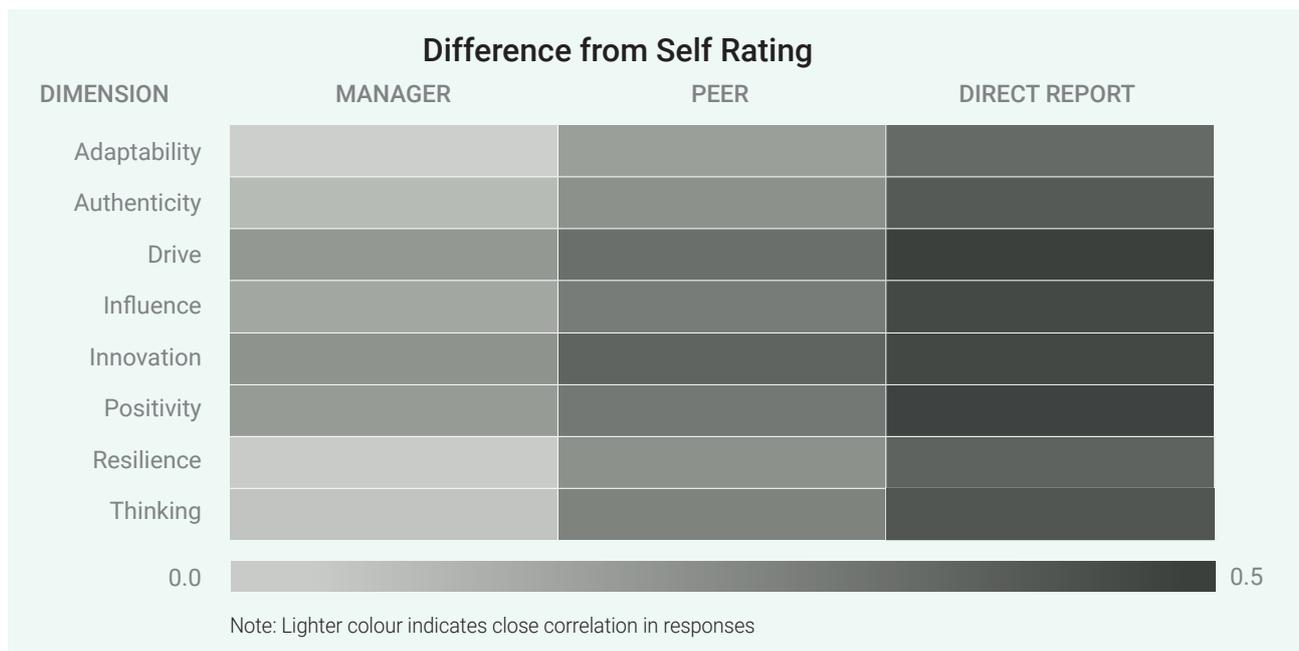
The individual report for 92% of participants identify one or more areas of opportunity within the **INFLUENCE** and **INNOVATION** dimensions. Of the 5 sub-dimensions within **INFLUENCE**, the 2 most commonly represented at the bottom end of the data focus in challenging the current thoughts, feelings and behaviours of others to prompt reflection and the motivation to act - particularly in a mentoring capacity and/or via straight talk processes to develop capability.

The recurring sub-dimensions within **INNOVATION** - "exploiting the circumstances" and then "exploring the possibilities" - share a central idea of considering how to best use existing and new resources to achieve improvement in desired outcomes. They require the generation of creation deployment and personnel, physical and finance resources to generate a new/refined way of working. Many participants noted that they were aware that this was an area where they struggled, due to time restrictions and the like.

The final sub-dimension of **INNOVATION** - "promoting innovation in others" - identified at the bottom end involves leaders establishing and actively promoting a culture of sharing and 'failure' where it is safe to try new approaches, review progress, share practice and (by nature of the process) position team members as leaders of innovation themselves.

## Comparing the Ratings

The table below explores how closely individuals' self-assessments align with each respondent group:



Discussion identified a variety of possible reasons for this close correlation between self and manager, with the most common responses being:

Managers and other leaders possess a greater understanding of leadership processes, so are better positioned to identify gaps.

Most respondents reported, however, that they felt their manager/s would most likely have less knowledge of 'how they do their job' than direct reports would, particularly in terms of their ability to problem-solve in the moment, directly drive initiatives and articulate reasons behind decisions.

### Seasonal Trends

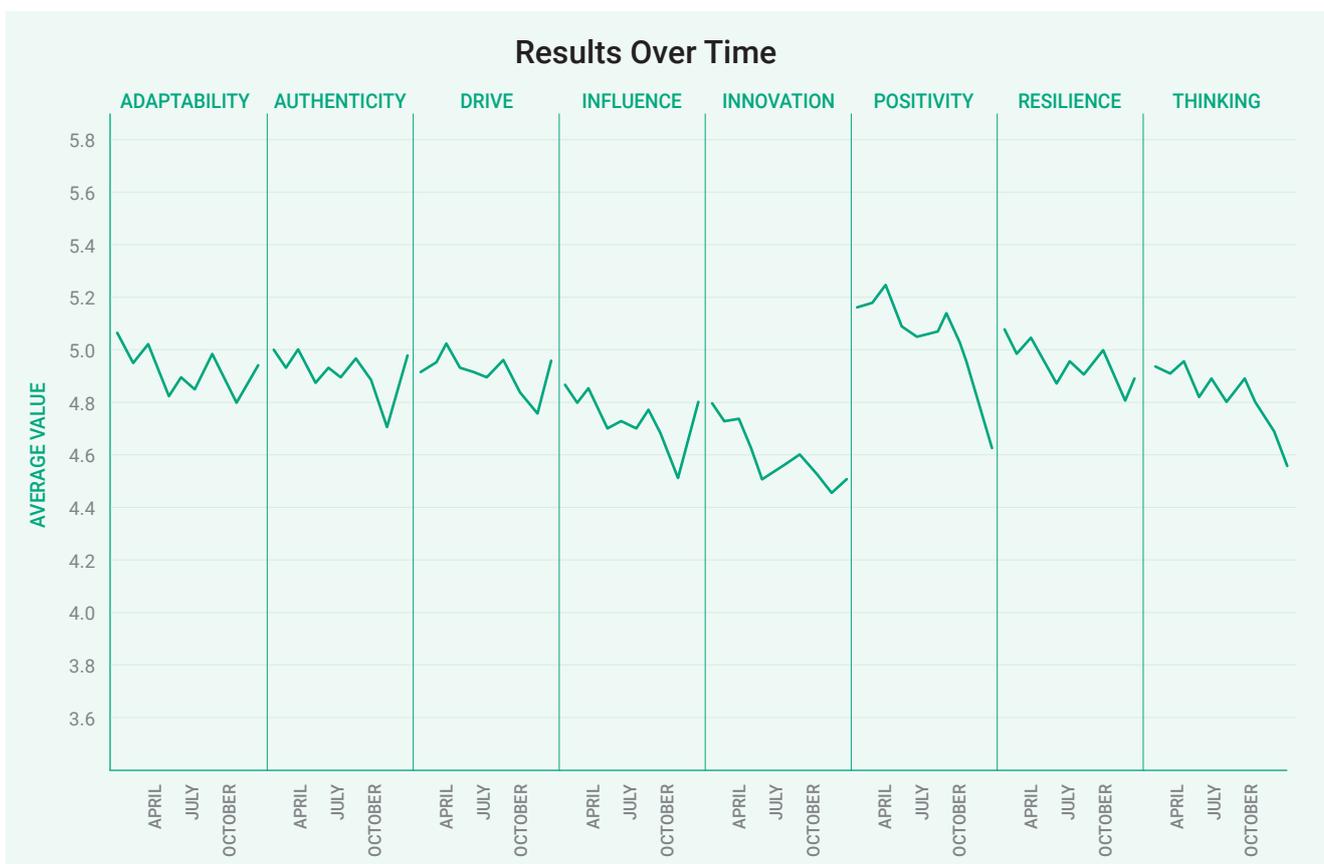
LEADQ 360 assessments were repeatedly completed across the entire school year with participants from a range of schools surveyed. School and systemic requirements at different points across a year are clear determinants of staff feeling and performance.

#### Influence on Top 3 Dimensions:

- **POSITIVITY:** As the highest-rating dimension overall, of interest is that data tracks downward across the year from an average response total of 5.2 (high) in March to 4.6 (average) in December.

## Influence on Top 3 Dimensions (continued):

- **RESILIENCE:** Peaks occur in March, May, July, late September and December - immediately preceding or following school holiday periods.
- **ADAPTABILITY:** Dips occur in April, June and November, perhaps influenced by reporting periods at these times.
- **INNOVATION:** General downturn in data across the year with a lowest score of 4.5 in November. Highest responses occur in March, May, September and December.
- **INFLUENCE:** This dimension involves aligning teams, inspiring change and improvement and driving accountability. Indications are that leaders drive these processes most often at the start and end of the school year.
- **THINKING:** There is a relatively consistent downturn in data across the year, with a dramatic drop obvious in Term 4.



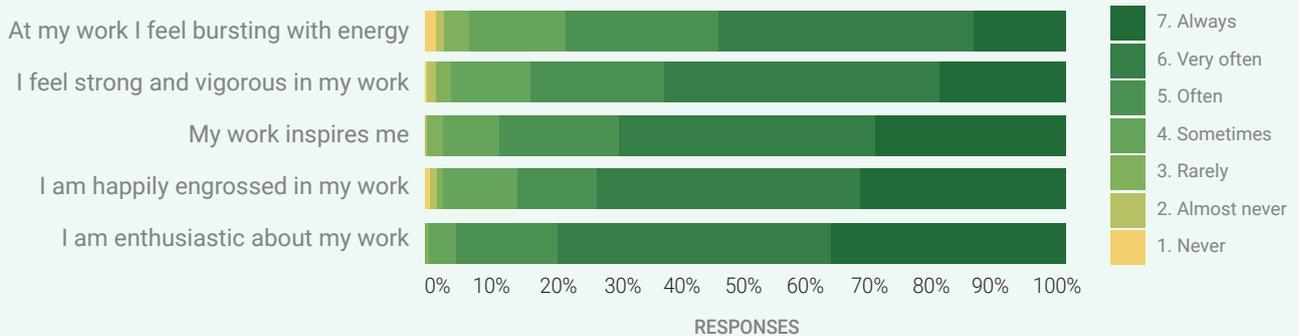
The **Results Over Time** graph shows that leadership is rated more highly at the beginning of the year than when the same participants are surveyed later in the year. Data and anecdotal evidence suggest that leadership strengths may decline due to limited time because of increased operational demands.

## How Leaders Feel About Their Work

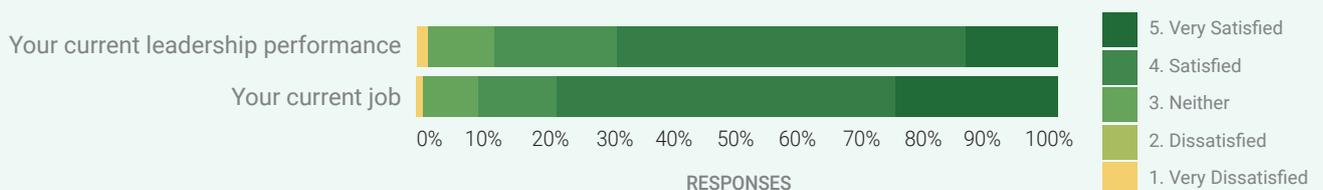
The LEAD-Q360 also asks participants to nominate the levels to which they feel energised and satisfied throughout the completion of their work:

- Top response was “I feel strong and vigorous in my work a few times a week” at **45.09%**
- **14.36%** of school leaders feel energised by their work. 14.11% report feeling energised “a few times a month”.
- **19.45%** feel strong and vigorous in their work every day.
- **31.49%** of participants feel inspired in their work every day.
- **32.79%** feel happily engrossed in their work every day.
- **37.53%** feel enthusiastic about their work every day.
- **69.70%** of leaders are satisfied or very satisfied with their current leadership performance.
- **81.56%** of participants are satisfied or very satisfied with their current job.

### Work Affect (How often do you feel this way at work?)

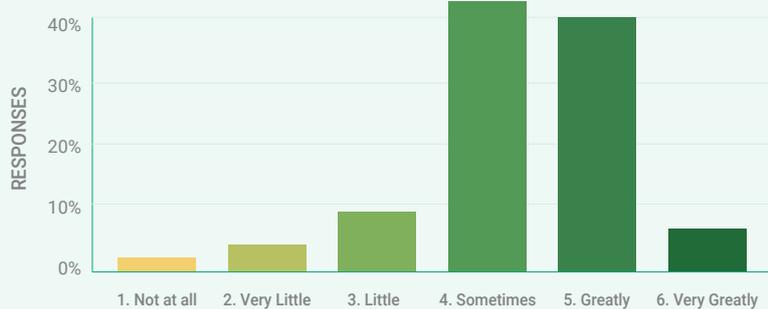


### Work Satisfaction (How satisfied are you with the following?)

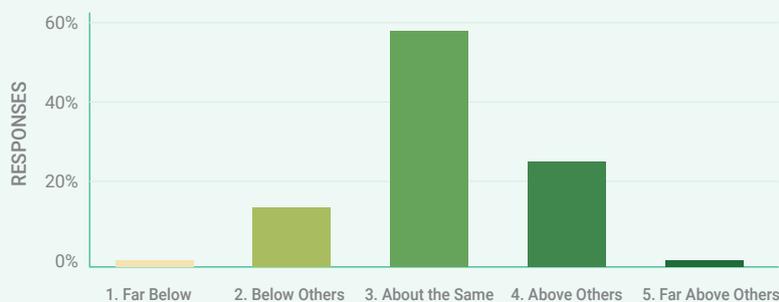


## How Leaders Feel About Their Work

To what extent do you feel that your organisation values your contributions as a leader?



Compared to other leaders in your organisation, how would you rate your effectiveness as a leader?



Sample size: 397

### Participant job satisfaction ratings

In terms of feeling valued and aligned/comparable to the performance of other leaders in their organisation, participants responded that:

- **42.57%** feel valued to some extent, **39.29%** to a great extent and **6.05%** to a very great extent
- **15.11%** feel that their comparative effectiveness as a leader is 'below others', **57.68%** feel that they are 'about the same', **25.19%** feel 'above others' and **1%** feel their performance falls 'far above others' in their organisation.

## Common Obstacles

The survey produced consistent data about the things that make it difficult for leaders to do their jobs. Here are the common obstacles according to identified themes.

1

**Operational** 'The communications, organisation and resource management required within the school to maintain the smooth and effective running of day-to-day operations.\*\*

- High staff turnover and inconsistent induction procedures.
- Timetabling that facilitates lesson observations and peer feedback processes.
- Short turnaround for some tasks.
- Limited advance preparation for key decisions.

2

**Relational** 'Consultation and feedback in order to establish, develop and enhance relationships with students, staff, community and other stakeholders, both internal and external to the school, to ensure a shared culture and vision.\*\*

- Often limited access to teams to build relationships beyond addressing compliance issues.
- Limited meeting time diminishes ability to drive priorities with consistency and commitment.
- Very little focus on aligning team behaviours and workflow to achieving overarching school vision.
- Many admit to being 'accidental diminishers' in that they personally complete many tasks that could/should be delegated as they are aware of the work demands and/or non-compliance of their team members.

3

**Strategic** 'Optimising relational, organisational and management thinking to effect and monitor change, in order to realise short and long term school goals. Allocating regular time to focus on driving priorities over 'busy work' more often.\*\*

- Having time to monitor goal-setting and improvement strategies among staff.
- Regularly revising and tracking progress across multiple priorities within portfolios. Most often engaged in 'busy work' across a day.
- Acting roles often feel an inferred 'place-keeper' attitude among other leaders which diminish opportunities to grow as a leader.
- Effective leadership practice irregularly shared across teams.

4

**Systematic** 'Access their own and the school's effectiveness, and work to build networks, collaborate with educational groups, and make connections beyond their own school and system to influence and lead educational impact\*\*

- Limited opportunities for 'hands-on' sharing and observations of best practice at other sites.
- Network often focus on operational elements.
- Lack confidence in addressing non-compliance with school and organisational standards.
- Maintaining high expectations and standards in times of change.

\*AITSL Leadership Emphasis Lens

## Frequent Action Items

During the individual debriefing sessions after the survey, leaders worked with coaches on action plans to build on their leadership strengths and work on areas that needed development. Here are some of the action items common to many participants.

1

### Operational

- Exploiting existing platforms to share process and articulate thinking.
- Developing a communications plan to keep priorities and initiatives front of mind for team members
- Dedicating time to complete strategic 'big picture' work
- Planning to deploy new and existing resources purposefully to maximise uptake by staff
- Chunking strategic tasks into daily items to maintain traction while still allowing for instances where they may be 'sidelined' by the immediate needs within their portfolio
- Drive intentional collaboration across curriculum and peer teams
- Provide clear definition of 'innovation' within teams that extends beyond associations with technology and 'the new'.
- Modeling and regularly discussing 'innovative practice'.

2

### Relational

- Establish and deploy 'champions/ambassadors' for priorities/initiatives to develop shared culture and uptake of strategies, etc. Many participants were surprised to hear that it is beneficial to have multiple voices behind their initiatives and that they didn't have to be the sole keeper of expertise and/or answers within their portfolio.
- Establish purposeful delegation processes to build capability of others.
- Develop 'checkpoint' meetings with teams to monitor progress and establish needs
- Conduct visioning exercises at team/faculty level to align with greater school vision and encourage shared accountability.

3

### Strategic

- Develop team norms/accepted ways of behaving and working within teams.
- Purposefully sharing thinking - decision making and strategic reasoning - within team meetings.
- Providing feedback and addressing non-compliance reported as difficult for most. Working through practice scenarios and developing key questions to deal with potentially difficult situations was identified as helpful to many leaders and formed part of their post-debrief action plan.
- Using meetings, newsletters, email to share practice, showcase achievements and regularly revisit progress across priorities and goals.
- Engage in purposeful change management processes.

4

### Systematic

- Initiate more regular collaboration across peer and faculty/teaching teams.
- Share process and articulate more of the 'why' in all team meetings to facilitate alignment and collaboration
- Contribute regularly and strategically in executive and network team meetings.

\*AITSL Leadership Emphasis Lens

## Participant Comments

The first thing I'm going to do is work with my team to develop a collaborative vision.

I can see how articulating my strategic thinking would greatly benefit our faculty's outcomes.



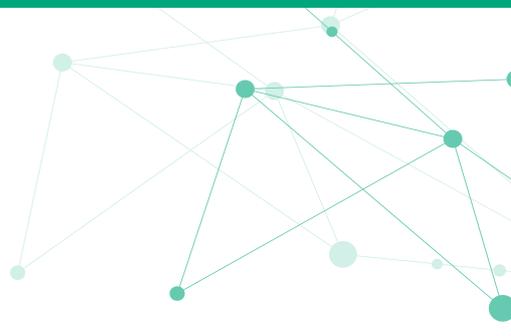
It has been so valuable to be able to identify my blind spots. It is clear that much of what I am doing would be enhanced through better communication.

Really appreciate the time to be able to focus on this - practical and immediately applicable.

I wish my whole leadership team would do this so that we could be on the same path. Lots of individual learnings that I will take away.



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