



Identification of Future School Leaders in NSW Public Schools

A preliminary report compiled in August 2020 by the NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute

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1 Glossary of terms

For the purpose of this report terms are defined as follows:

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Behaviour | A specific leadership characteristic or indicator |
| Capability | A collection of associated leadership behaviours |
| Future School Leader | An identified teacher leader who is prepared to undertake a leadership development program |
| Leadership Mentor | A trusted colleague (with formal leadership experience) who guides leadership development |
| Leadership for Learning Analysis (L4LA) | A framework designed to be used for a 360° analysis of leadership behaviours |
| Middle Leader | A Head Teacher or Assistant Principal |
| PDF | Performance and Development Framework |
| PDP | Performance and Development Plan |
| Preparedness | Readiness to undertake a leadership development program |
| Sphere of Influence | The extent to which a teacher (leader) can exert a positive effect on the learning of other colleagues and students |
| Teacher Leader | A classroom teacher whose sphere of influence extends beyond their immediate classroom and self |

2 Executive Summary

This preliminary report has been compiled to support the validation of the School Leadership Identification Framework¹ (SLIF). The SLIF is aimed at identifying and developing teacher leaders with the potential to become future school leaders. The report analyses the data collected from a survey that was conducted across NSW to inform the construction of the SLIF. This rigour ensures that the SLIF is purpose built for the NSW public school context. In particular, this report analyses:

- behaviours and capabilities of teachers that indicate their readiness for leadership development;
- relationships (or correlations) between leadership behaviours and capabilities;
- the alignment of the SLIF to the NSW Department of Education's Performance and Development Framework; and
- how teaching staff within the NSW Department of Education perceive teacher leader behaviours and capabilities.

The first section of this document sets the context for the research, while the second section explores the methodology and findings. The final section of the document provides conclusions, directions for future research and appendices.

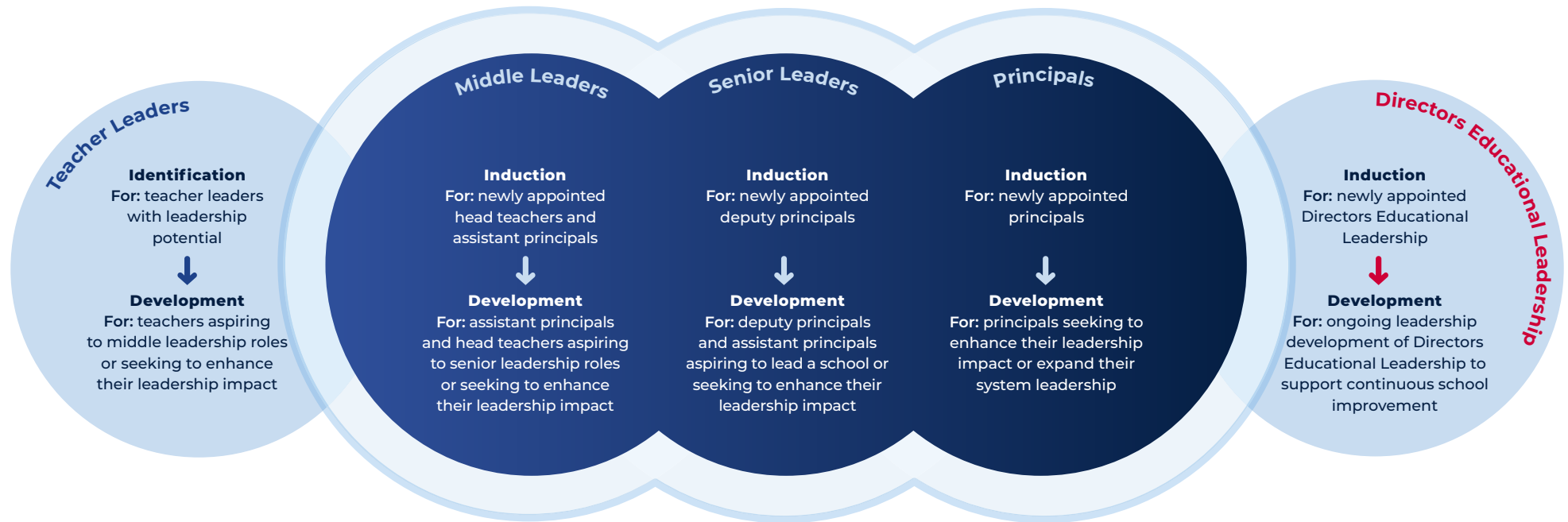
3 Research Context

Investing in the identification and development of teachers who demonstrate potential for formal leadership is an essential element of the School Leadership Strategy. The School Leadership Identification Framework (SLIF) has been developed to provide the NSW Department of Education system with suitably prepared leaders for formal middle and senior leadership positions. It seeks to develop the leadership capabilities of all teacher leaders.

The SLIF has been developed as a result of extensive input, rigorous review, current research and validation by a range of school-based teaching staff and leaders in NSW. It is a resource that enables transparent and consistent judgements to identify teacher leaders who demonstrate capabilities which signal the potential for formal leadership development. It also guides the developmental processes for teacher leadership.

The School Leadership Development Continuum (*Figure 1*) provides the foundation for a cohesive strategy to develop the leadership capacity of all school leaders at each stage of their career. The Continuum articulates opportunities for leadership learning through a well-defined and sequential pathway. At each stage, the learning focus is on developing skills and capabilities to enhance leadership impact to enable leaders to expand their sphere of leadership influence on the learning of teachers and students in NSW public schools. The Continuum also identifies key transition points into broader leadership roles.

School Leadership Institute Development Continuum



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Figure 1.

4 Research aim

This report aims to establish the key behaviours of a teacher leader that form the foundation for further leadership development and the relationships or correlations between these behaviours. It serves to validate and support the SLIF as a reliable resource for identifying and developing future school leaders in the context of the NSW Department of Education.

Much of the research literature speaks to teacher leaders being those who are focused on leading teaching and learning in an informal way; a *teacher leader* in the NSW public school context who is prepared to undertake formalised leadership learning is termed a *future school leader*.

5 Identification and development of future school leaders

Teachers who exhibit key leadership behaviours may be considered *teacher leaders*; those teachers whose sphere of influence extends beyond themselves and their own students and impacts positively at a year or stage, school or even a system level. There are multiple ways to conceptualise these behaviours, however, for the purpose of the SLIF, the Leadership for Learning Analysis (L4LA) serves as a reference framework of key leadership behaviours and their associated capabilities (*Figure 2*). Supervisors, mentors and teachers are able to make on-balance judgments using the L4LA to establish whether there is sufficient evidence for a teacher to be considered a teacher leader. A teacher leader then considers their preparedness to undertake learning for formal leadership or to increase leadership capacity.

| Vision and Values | Innovation and Improvement | Strategy and Solutions | People and Performance | Health and Happiness |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Personal Values and Beliefs | Continuous Improvement | Administration and Organisation | Feedback | Leadership Resilience |
| Communication Skills | Consultative Leadership | Decision Making | Developing Self and Others | Creating a Positive Culture |
| Interpersonal Skills | Leading Teaching and Learning | Systems and Resources | Engagement of Community | Personal Health and Well Being |

Figure 2.
L4LA Capabilities and Behaviours

The SLIF is the first time that the NSW Department of Education has produced a framework aimed at developing teacher leaders. The motivation for this report is derived from an extensive literature review conducted by the School Leadership Institute (SLI)². From this review, three key themes emerged that highlighted the significant need for teacher leadership development in the NSW context:

1. **Teacher retention:** this theme spoke to the importance of providing teacher leaders with an opportunity to have their voice heard, to be recognised for their work and to engage in differentiated professional development.
2. **Positive school cultures:** this theme pointed to the importance of collaboration and networking within and beyond the staffroom, the significance of professional development to staff wellbeing as well as the significance of timely and relevant feedback.
3. **System improvement and leader empowerment:** this theme examined the role of the teacher leader to drive teacher, school and system improvement. It also considered NSW public school data, highlighting trends related to leadership applications.

6 Research methodology

6.1 Target population

The research basis of this report was drawn from an initial focus group of NSW public school educators, a statewide survey and a review of relevant literature.

The initial focus group was undertaken in November 2019 to gather data from teachers and leaders in NSW public schools. The group had a total of 33 teachers from a range of directorates, substantive positions, gender, school type and experience who were then split into smaller focus groups.

The participants were grouped according to their substantive position, mitigating the potential dominance of the opinions of more senior leaders. Corporate staff including Directors Educational Leadership were not part of the focus groups.

All groups were asked a series of questions in two separate sessions around the processes of identifying and developing future school leaders, including various leadership behaviours and capabilities and developmental strategies (see Appendix 9.1).

A thematic analysis was undertaken to identify trends emerging from this data which informed the subsequent survey design. Emerging data trends demonstrated connection to established leadership capability frameworks and highlighted inter-framework relationships. In particular, the Australian Professional Standard for Principals³ and the L4LA had significant connection to the behaviours which emerged in the focus group data.

The NSW-wide survey was emailed to a random sample of 3000 educators of whom

906 responded. This survey asked participants to reflect on those behaviours relevant to teacher leaders using a five point Likert scale. Participants reflected on how frequently each behaviour - derived from the AITSL Principal Standard and adapted for the teacher leader context - was demonstrated in a teacher leader. This constituted a series of 47 questions. Participants were given the opportunity to respond to two open-ended questions exploring typical teacher leadership behaviours and to provide further comments.

Future surveys of this nature may be strengthened by the:

- consideration of a broader Likert scale such as a 7 or 10 point scale to provide further granularity to responses;
- consideration of different descriptors on the scale with a view to further spread responses;
- careful construction of survey questions in order to avoid unintended ambiguity;
- random ordering of behavioural questions between capabilities; and
- consideration of strategies to increase the retention rate and sample size

6.2 Demographic characteristics

6.2.1 The experience of respondents

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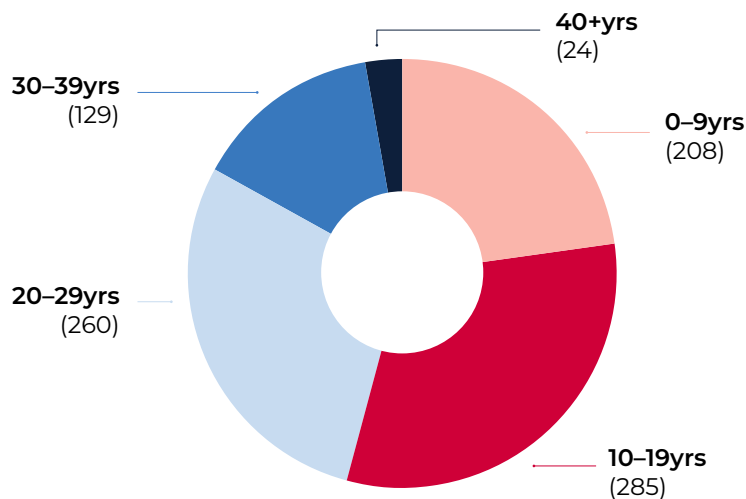


Figure 3.
The experience of respondents

The majority of respondents reported somewhere between 10-29 years of experience with the NSW Department of Education. The minimum total number of years of experience of all respondents is estimated at more than 13,000 years with a mean of approximately 14 years.

6.2.2 Gender and Aboriginality

6.2.2 Gender

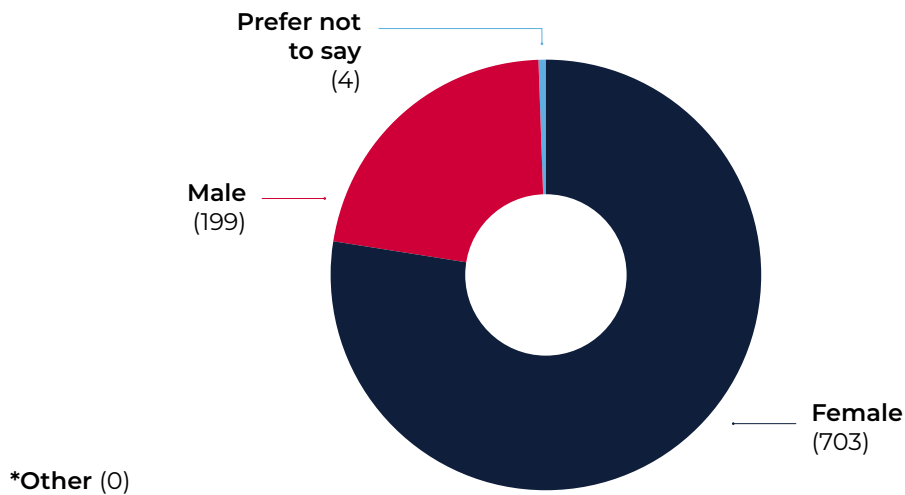


Figure 4.
Gender

The percentage of female respondents in the survey sample is 78% which approximates the actual percentage within schools of 76%.

6.2.2 Aboriginality

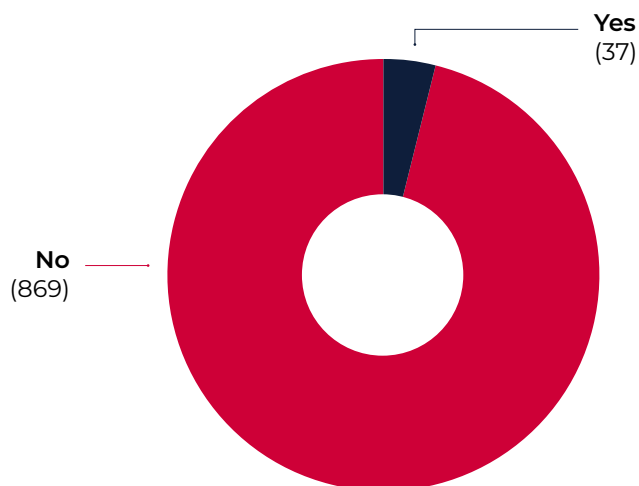


Figure 5.
Aboriginality

The percentage of respondents who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander was 4.26% as compared with the actual percentage of 2.6% across the Department. Information regarding the percentage of Aboriginal teachers in the random sample was not available.

6.2.3 Substantive position

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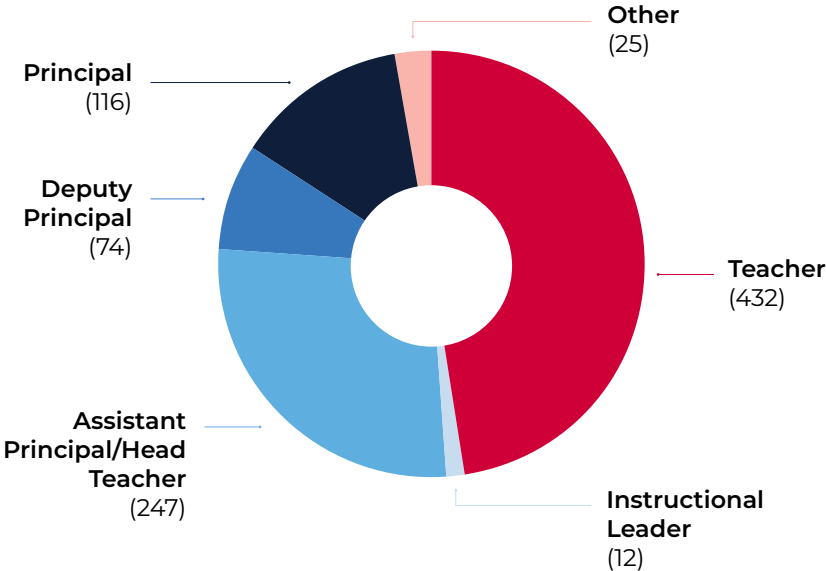


Figure 6.
Substantive position

The percentage of respondents by substantive position is shown in *Figure 7* below. It compares the percentage for that position within the Department to that of the percentage for that position within the random sample.

| Substantive Position | Department Population /% | Respondents/% |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Principal | 4 | 13 |
| Deputy Principal | 2 | 8 |
| Head Teacher / Assistant Principal | 15 | 27 |
| Instructional Leader | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher | 77 | 48 |
| Other | 1 | 3 |

Figure 7.
Respondents as a percentage of the Department and the random sample

While there was no significant difference between the random sample and the department population for substantive position, the percentage of respondents for executive positions is relatively higher. In particular, principals responded at three times the rate of the random sample.

6.2.4 Teacher accreditation

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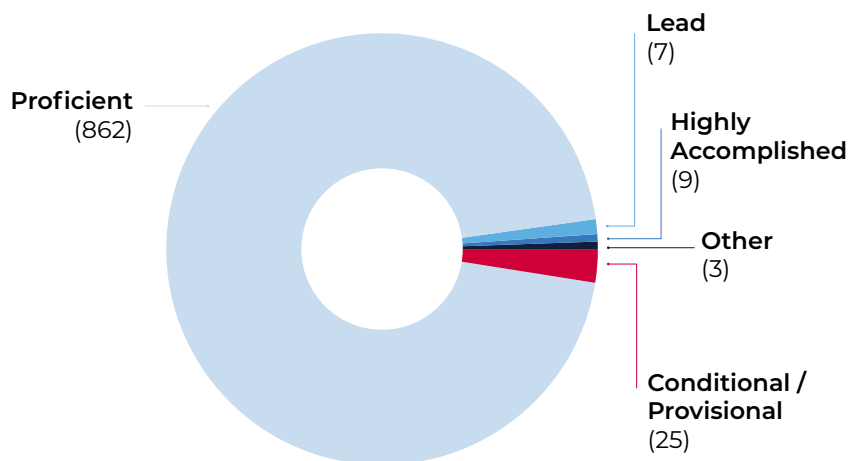
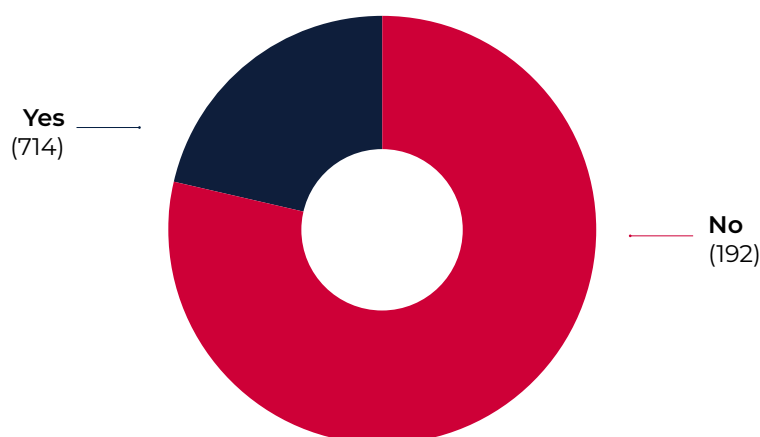


Figure 8.
Teacher accreditation

There was a high percentage of respondents accredited at proficient. Although numerically small, it is noteworthy that a higher than anticipated number of teachers accredited at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) levels responded to the survey as shown in *Figure 8* at a sample rate ten times greater than exists in the department population.

6.2.5 Experience in mentoring

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"...the practice of mentoring may be widespread across the system..."

Figure 9.
Experience in mentoring

This question was of particular interest in terms of validation of the respondent data as the SLIF suggests that mentoring is central to best practice for developing future school leaders. Of all respondents, 79% had some experience of informally or formally mentoring a teacher who did not hold a formal leadership position. This suggests that

the practice of mentoring may be widespread across the system. It shows that the respondents had wide ranging experience in observing and developing teacher leader behaviours and capabilities.

7 Findings

7.1 Trends for capabilities and behaviours

The following section details the responses to the 47 questions on the capabilities and associated behaviours of future school leaders in their current context.

7.1.1 Personal values

The behaviours in this capability align with the 'Vision and values' requirement of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

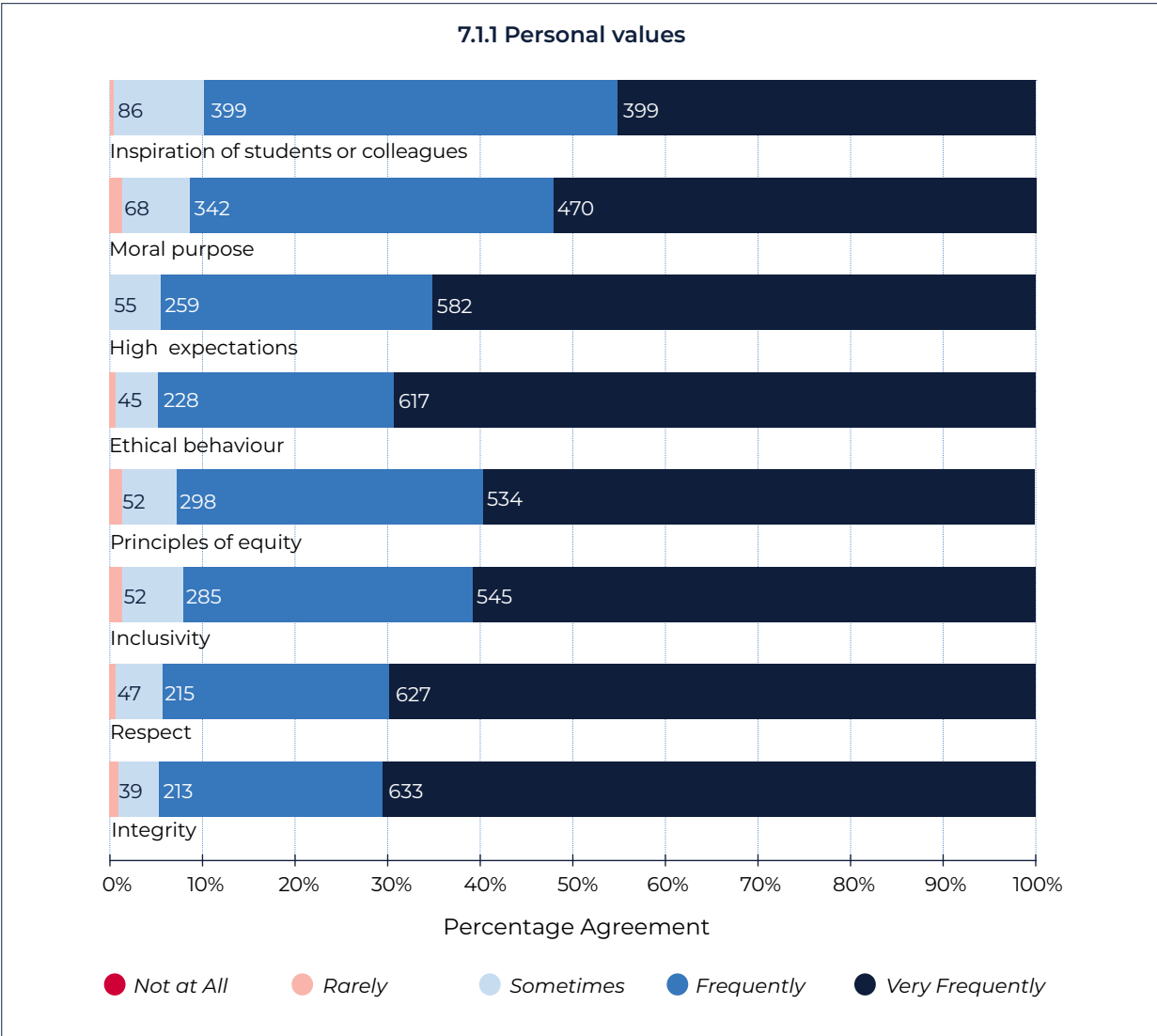


Figure 10. Personal values

The aggregation of frequently and very frequently responses was extremely high in this capability, ranging from 90.8% for 'Moral purpose' and up to 94.5% for 'Integrity' with an average value of 93.2%.

7.1.2 Knowledge and understanding

The behaviours in this capability align with the 'Knowledge and understanding' requirement of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

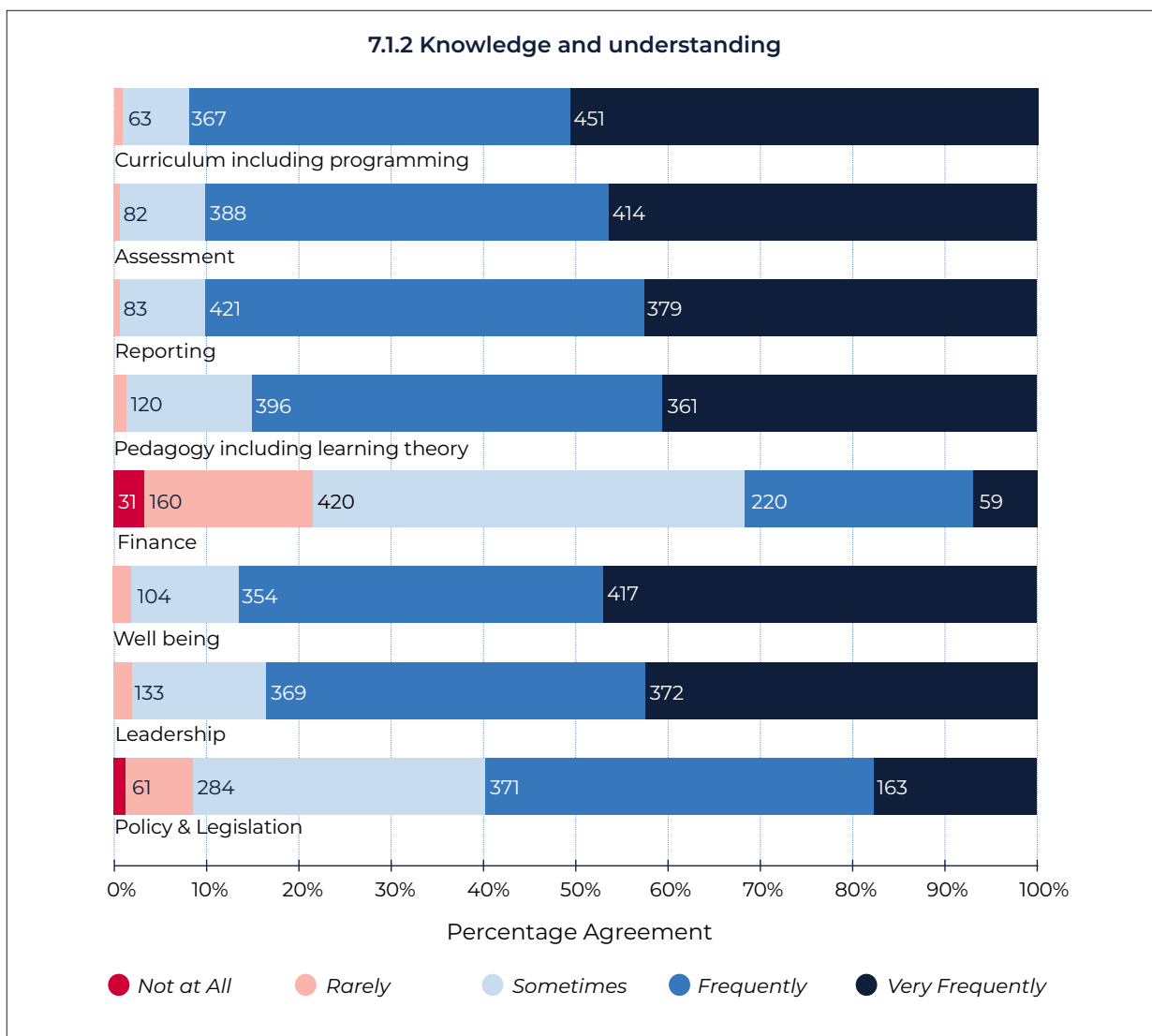


Figure 11.
Knowledge and understanding

This capability showed that 'Finance' was a lowly rated behaviour in teacher leaders (31.6% positive responses), followed by 'Policy and Legislation'. This demonstrates that these behaviours are viewed as less important in the context of the teacher leader. However, the other behaviours in this capability were highly valued.

7.1.3 Interpersonal and social skills

The behaviours in this capability align with the ‘Personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills’ requirement of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

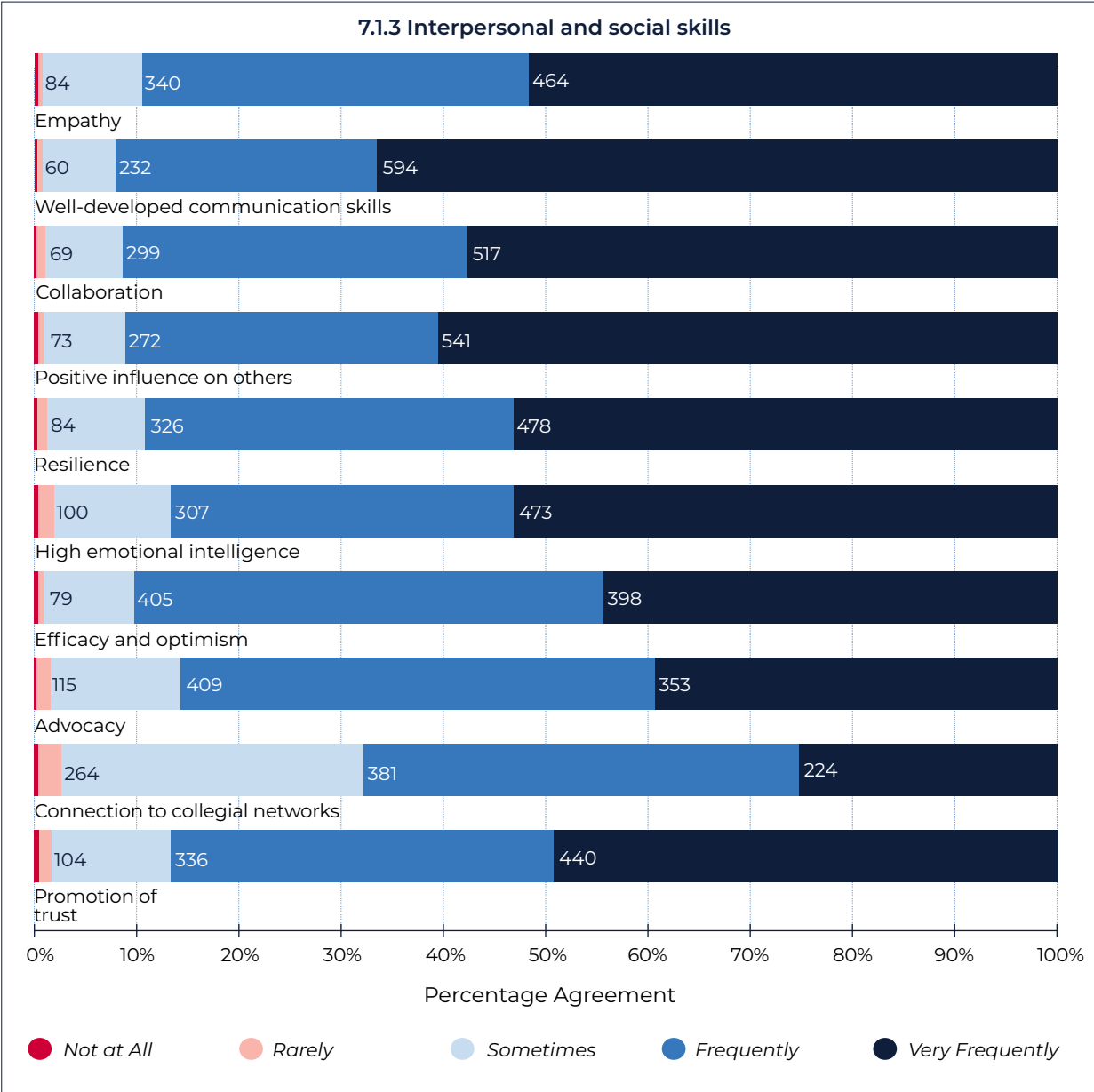


Figure 12.
Interpersonal and social skills

The most highly valued behaviour in this capability was ‘Communication skills’ (at 92.5% positive). The lowest rated behaviour was ‘Connection to collegial networks’ (at 68.3% positive). This lower rated behaviour may be due to the perception by respondents that the connection of teacher leaders to networks beyond their classroom settings is outside of their sphere of influence.

7.1.4 Teaching and learning skills

The behaviours in this capability align with the 'Leading teaching and learning' practice of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

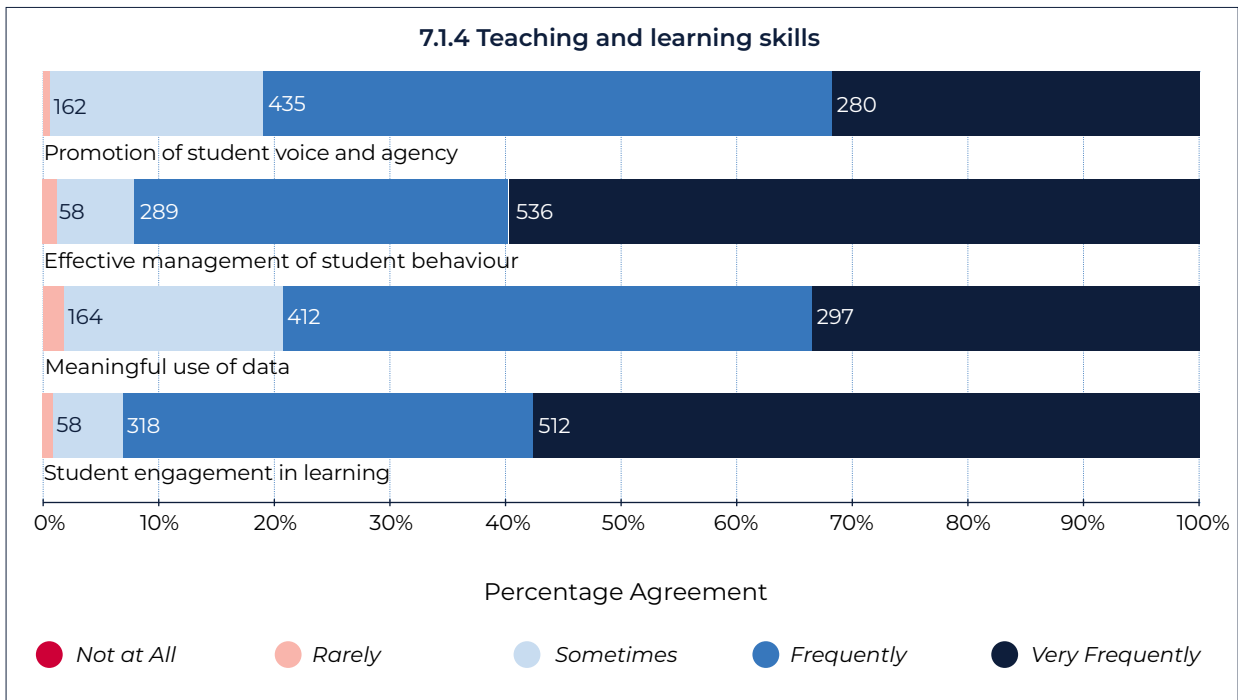


Figure 13.
Teaching and learning skills

Unsurprisingly, the behaviours of 'Effective management of student behaviour' and 'Student engagement in learning' (at 92.3% positive) are the most highly valued by respondents in this capability as they speak to the core business of teaching and learning.

7.1.5 Professional development

The behaviours in this capability align with the ‘Developing self and others’ practice of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

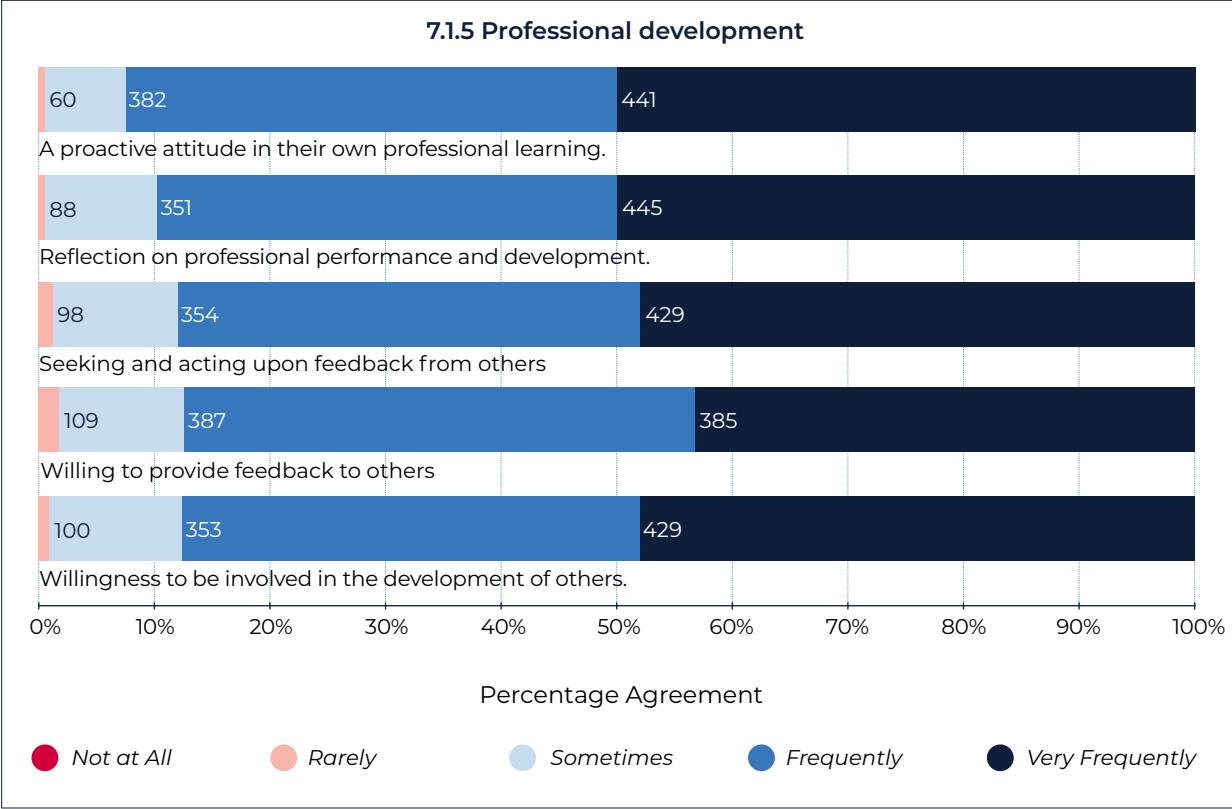


Figure 14. Professional development

The ‘Professional development’ capability showed similar aggregate percentages for all behaviours. This suggests that professional development and its related areas are all perceived as consistently important for teacher leaders.

7.1.6 Improvement, innovation and change

The behaviours in this capability align with the 'Leading improvement, innovation and change' practice of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

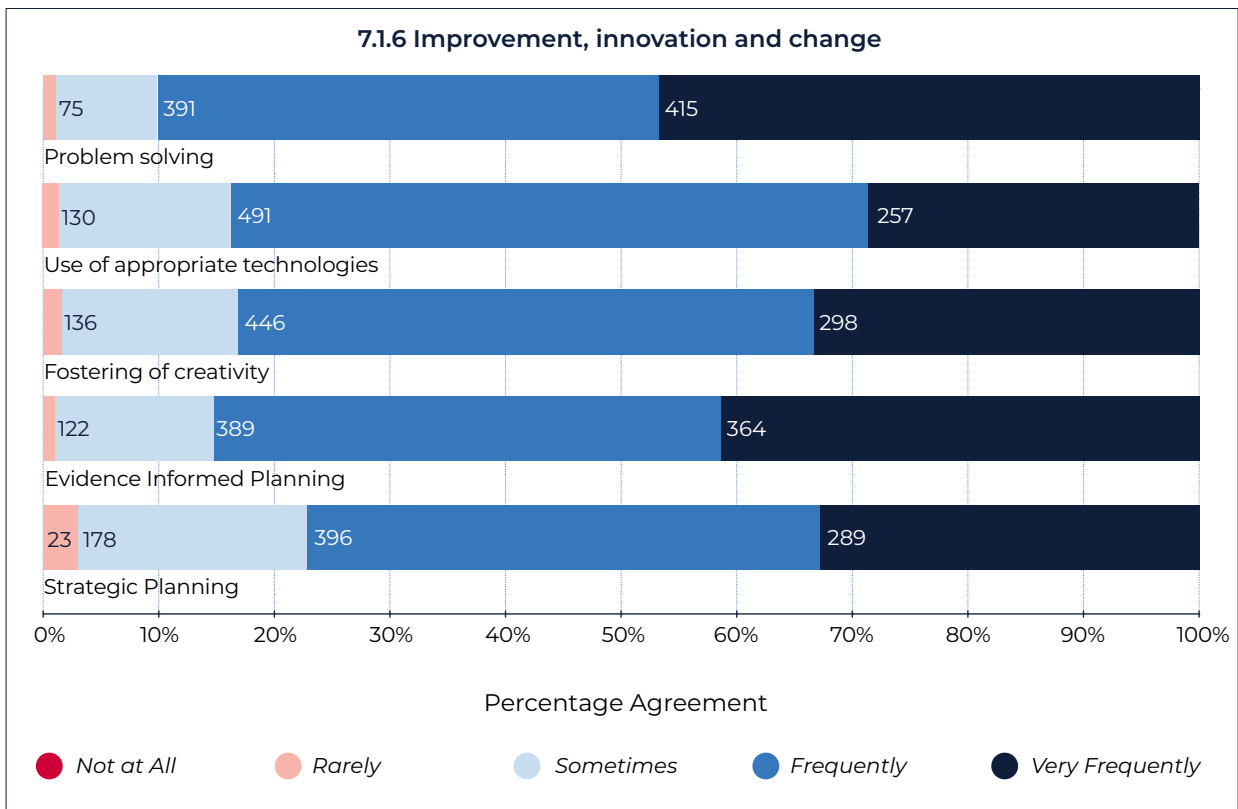


Figure 15.
Improvement, innovation and change

The high percentages of agreement showed that respondents valued these behaviours as important to the work of teacher leaders. However, compared to other capabilities there was an overall higher number of responses to these behaviours which were less positive.

7.1.7 Management and administrative skills

The behaviours in this capability align with the ‘Leading the management of the school’ practice of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

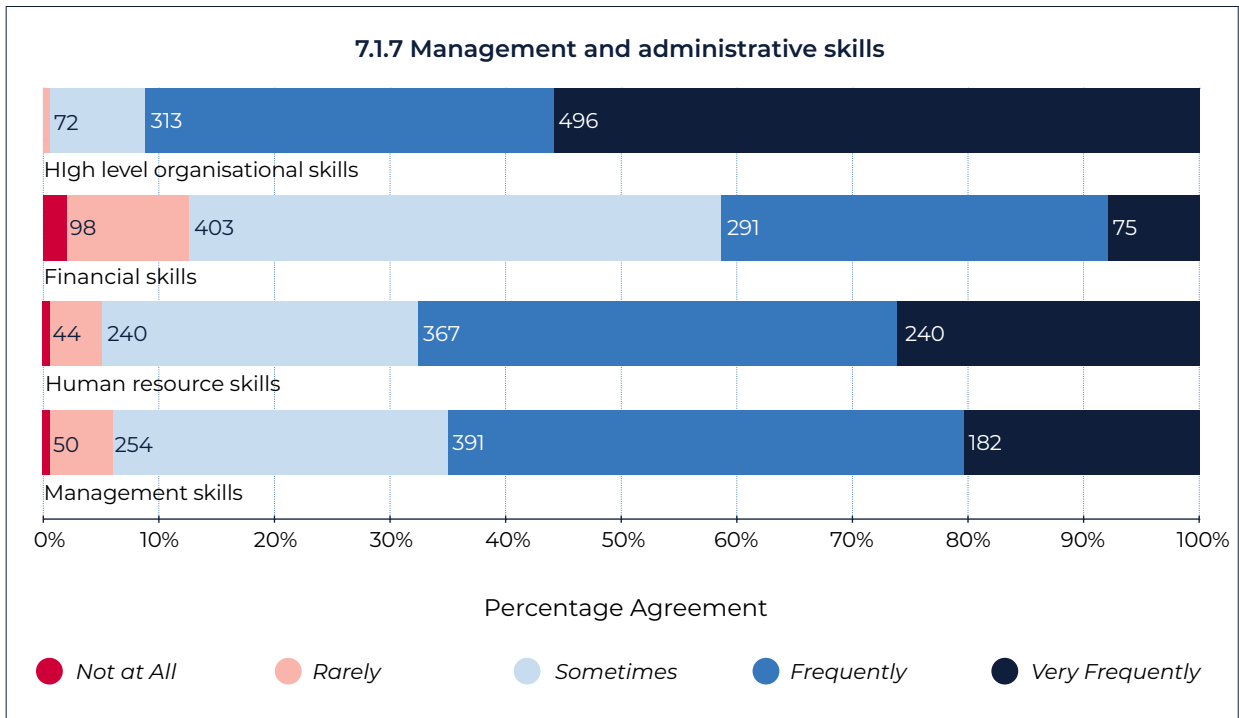


Figure 16.
Management and administrative skills

The behaviour of high organisational skills was strongly valued by respondents with a measure of 54.7% for very frequently relevant to teacher leaders. Conversely, this capability showed that financial skills were overwhelmingly seen as less important for the teacher leader, with 59.6% of respondents viewing this behaviour as either sometimes, rarely or not at all relevant. This again speaks to the context of the work of the teacher leader as being more focussed on teaching and learning rather than administrative duties. Similarly, human resource skills and management systems were viewed by respondents as less relevant to the work and leadership skills of teacher leaders.

Note that the question pertaining to finance skills was asked twice in the survey as an inbuilt check to gauge the integrity of respondent data. In both cases, the weak connection between teacher leadership and finance skills showed that respondents were still carefully considering the relevance of each behaviour at this point in the survey (see Appendix 9.2).

7.1.8 Engaging and working with the community.

The behaviours in this capability align with the 'Engaging and working with the community' practice of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

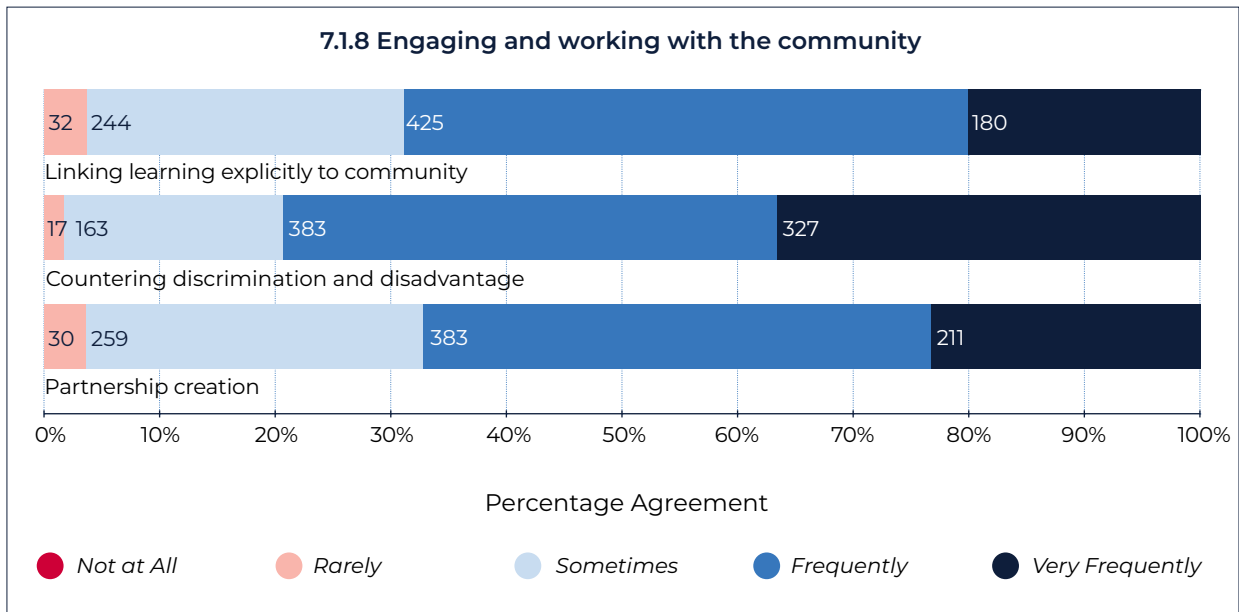
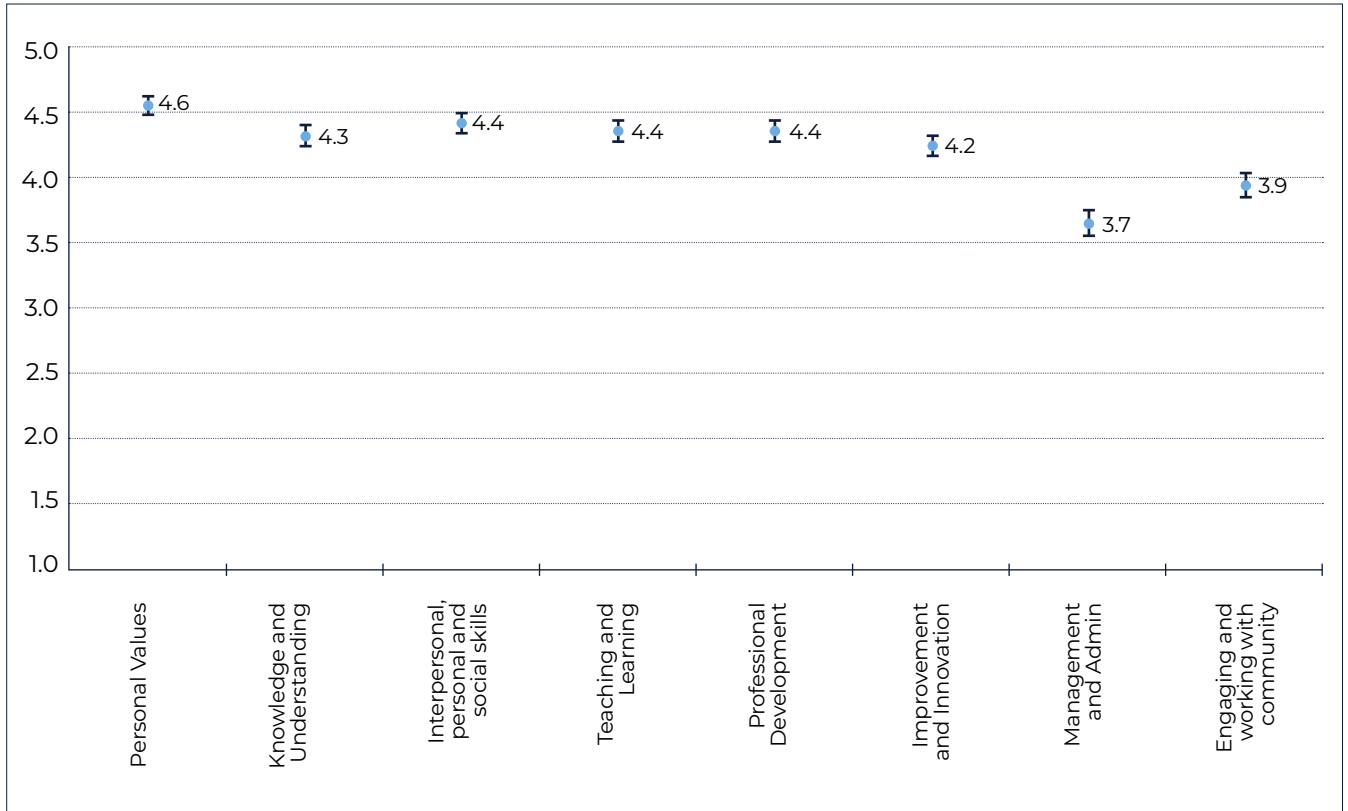


Figure 17.
Engaging and working with the community

This capability had an average of 72.1% for the combined responses of very frequently and frequently. However, the wider spread of responses across the scale indicates that the relevance of this capability to the work of the teacher leader attracted a greater range of views.

7.2 Average Likert response for all capabilities (with standard deviations)



The range of responses from the actual sample for each capability varied from 3.7 – 4.6 (on a 5 point scale) with an average of 4.2. Notably, the ‘Management and administration’ capability and the ‘Engaging and working with community’ capability were the lowest value at 3.7 and 3.9, respectively, which may be related to the context of a teacher leader’s core work. Standard deviations varied from 0.55 – 0.79 with ‘Management and administration’ and ‘Engaging and working with community’ capability also having the widest dispersion of views. While this report does not offer any explanation for either the similarity or differences in the reported averages or standard deviations for capabilities in terms of their relative performance, it does suggest that there is a high level of agreement between capabilities.

7.2.1 Thematic analysis of responses regarding teacher leader behaviours

In addition to the Likert style questions discussed above, respondents were given the opportunity to record up to three additional behaviours they believed were important for teacher leaders to demonstrate. Of the 906 participants, 426 responded to this open-ended component of the survey (47%).

Data analysis was used to code and categorise the responses, considering the meaning and implication of each. Following this process of coding and categorising, 38 distinct behaviours of each greater than 3 responses were identified by participants. Of these, six were identified as being unique to those explored within the Likert scale questions:

Adaptable/flexible: 43 participants (or 10% of the open-ended question respondents) pointed to 'adaptability' or 'flexibility' as an important behaviour demonstrated by teacher leaders.

Approachable: 43 participants (10%) referred to the importance of approachability as a behaviour of teacher leaders linked to relational trust. These responses referred to teacher leaders requiring an 'approachable manner', with some adding that this included being available and 'real'.

Motivated and committed: 42 participants (9.8%) spoke about the importance of teacher leaders being motivated and committed with this behaviour type referring to teacher leaders demonstrating initiative, grit, a drive to succeed and the singlemindedness to achieve a set goal. Participant responses in the category included notions of 'determination', taking the initiative to help others, and being 'proactive' and 'self-motivated'.

Future-focused: 30 respondents (7%) emphasised that having a 'vision for the future' was an important behaviour of teacher leaders. These respondents detailed that teacher leaders should focus on the 'big picture', have a 'vision' and 'bring in future focused resources'. This behaviour speaks to the concept of the sphere of influence and context of leadership; such behaviours are valuable in teacher leaders as they may develop over time and manifest as school-wide vision in senior leaders.

Student-centred: 29 respondents (6.8%) prioritised student learning and strong relationships with students as important behaviours of teacher leaders. This category incorporated a focus on student outcomes, as well as student improvement and development. It also emphasised the importance of focusing on the education of all students, including differentiating for student ability and integrating student strengths in learning. Responses in this category also referred to the importance of building student relationships and prioritising welfare for students.

Valuing wellbeing: 27 participants (6.3%) spoke of the importance of care for staff and self. This category incorporated those behaviours that placed a focus on the health of oneself and one's colleagues. Participants emphasised the importance of teacher leaders being prepared to practice self-care and demonstrate a sense of humour, understand the welfare needs of staff and advocate for staff well-being.

7.3 The SLIF’s connection to the Performance and Development Plan

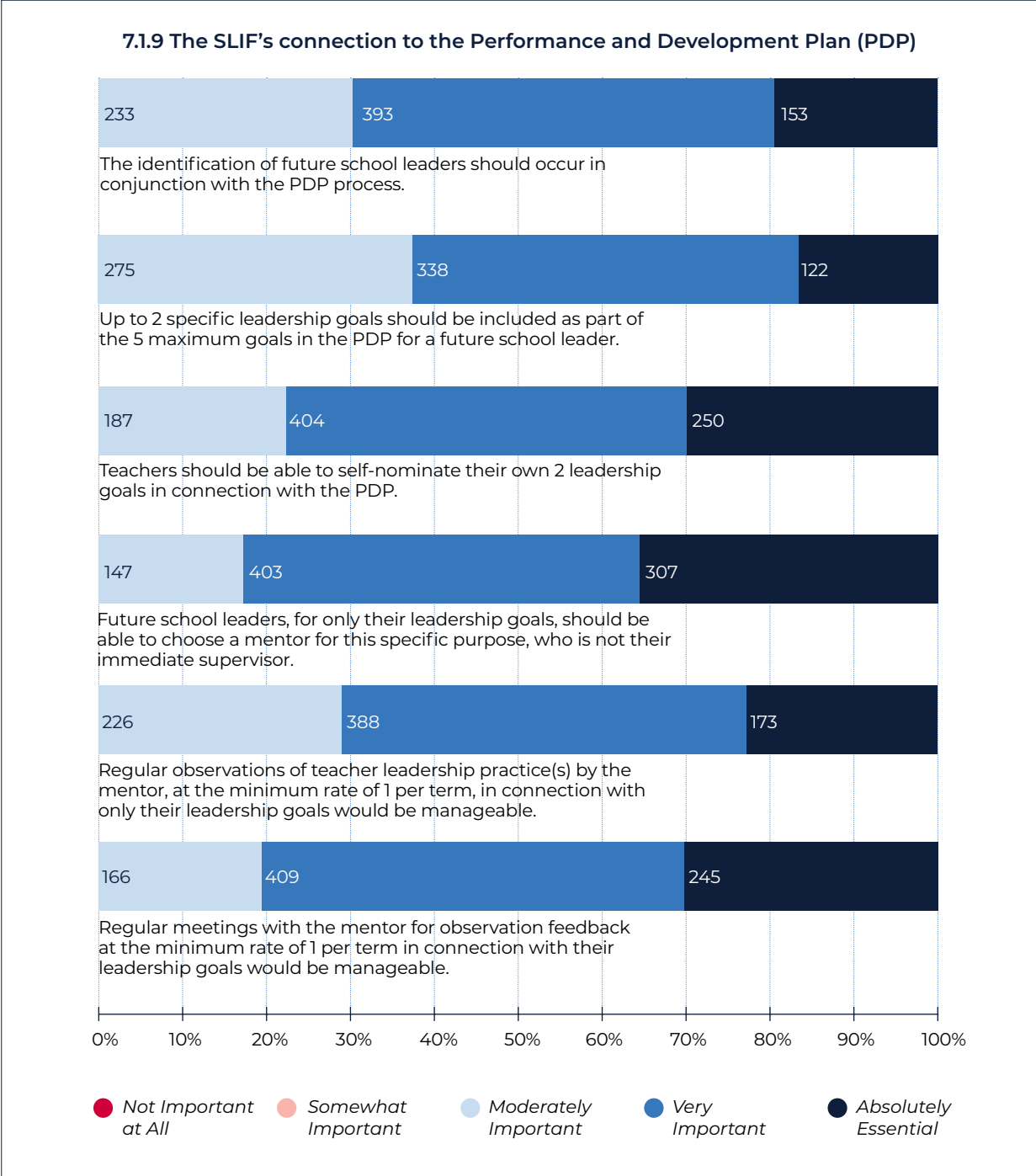


Figure 18.
The SLIF’s connection to the PDP

The alignment of the SLIF to the PDF, as proposed by the initial focus groups, resonated with respondents statewide. Respondents rated the alignment of the two processes in the top two categories in a range from 50.8% – 78.4% positive. This validates the

alignment of the SLIF to the PDP as demonstrated in the design of the SLIF resource guide.

7.3.1 Thematic analysis of responses regarding teacher leadership development

Participants were subsequently asked to make an additional comment in 'connection to the leadership development of teachers.' This open-ended question provided the opportunity for participants to share their views on the potential of the SLIF to impact teacher development, as well as to share those features of teacher development they thought important to incorporate. There were 295 responses to this question (representing 32.6% of all participants). The summary below details the most significant concerns and issues raised by respondents regarding the development of the SLIF and its impact on teacher leader development.

1. Alignment of the SLIF to the Performance and Development Framework (PDF)

Reflecting on the potential alignment of the SLIF process to the PDF, the majority of respondents expressed concerns, claiming that 'tying to PDP [would be] an artificial means which very possibly leads to an artificial end' and 'the PDP process is NOT taken seriously in most schools as it not seen as a usual tool to improve practice'. This may speak to concerns about the value and impact of existing processes for performance and development. A common reflection was that the SLIF should provide a more flexible and less restrictive method of leadership development.

These concerns were considered in the design of the SLIF, with any alignment to the PDF a voluntary one. However, many of the resources of the SLIF can be used in conjunction with the PDF process, and the term-based goal setting and mentoring processes of the SLIF can be easily integrated with the yearly cycle of PDF planning and review. Rather than constituting an 'artificial' connection between the two processes, the integration has the potential to enrich and strengthen both; the SLIF provides opportunities for further reflection on strengths, setting of goals and planning mentoring and collaborative practices to achieve these, whilst the PDF process mandates collegial discussions around goal setting, mentoring and professional development. Thus, in combination the two processes are complementary and support one another.

In addition to the open-ended questions, the alignment of the PDP to the SLIF was also considered in the Likert scale questions. The correlation of these responses established a degree of dependency between the parameters proposed for the alignment of the SLIF to the PDF by the initial focus group (see Appendix 9.3). The strongest correlation (0.825) was between the suggestion that regular observations by the mentor and regular feedback meetings with the mentor, should occur at the minimum rate of one per term. Participants in the initial focus group consistently spoke about both the frequency and quality of feedback meetings, from their experience citing the absence of this in traditional PDP review meetings. The other correlation of note was the relationship between teacher leader identification and the leadership goals being directly aligned to the PDF process. In response, the SLIF has been designed to accommodate multiple observations and review meetings. This had been suggested widely in the initial focus group meeting.



2. Equity, resourcing and workload

A common response to the open-ended question related to the need for an equitable system of leadership development regardless of school size, nature of employment and geography. There was an imperative amongst respondents that the SLIF support all future teacher leaders regardless of their working circumstances. Respondents proposed access to funding as a way of ameliorating issues of access and equity for future teacher leaders, 'just like there is funding for beginning teachers'.

Another consistent theme was ensuring that leadership development was done in such a way that it did not excessively burden the teacher or entail onerous time commitments. These concerns were evident in comments such as 'ensure that this is not simply extra administration work being placed onto prospective teacher leaders' and 'time needs to be allocated ... teachers in schools are desperately short of time'.

The flexible application of the SLIF means that each school can consider whether it allocates resources, based on the context of the school and the development needs of the teacher leader. The SLIF provides guiding resources whereby participants self-reflect on their needs, with the support of their mentor, to scaffold a leadership plan. As such, the SLIF requires an allocation of time and does not call for additional funding for resourcing. The school context will drive the construction of each individual program of leadership development. For example, a school priority may drive the allocation of RAM funding to leadership learning.

With regard to concerns of equity, participants in the SLIF are encouraged to consider and access school-based and external support mechanisms. For example, this allows for those in small and/or rural schools to connect with collegial and professional networks beyond their school for support and collaboration.

Addressing concerns of workload, the SLIF is a non-compulsory development resource intended to support teachers to improve their practice, rather than add an administrative load. Its potential to complement and support other aspects of leadership and learning development – such as improved teaching practice, HALTS and PDF – as well as its cycle of leadership development means that the SLIF is not intended to be an additional administrative task. Rather, its focus is in skill development. Therefore, its potential to connect the SLIF to the PDF process may work to make the latter a more targeted and developmentally rich and ongoing task, rather than an administrative task.

3. Access to leadership development opportunities

A significant concern raised in this open-ended question was the potential for 'gatekeeping' to occur during the SLIF process; that is, those provided with leadership development opportunities would be selected through professional nepotism rather than merit. An additional concern was that opportunities would be given to the same, select group of teachers within a school as, according to one respondent, 'being friends with the principal does not classify someone as a leader'. Interestingly, one respondent suggested that an overt link to the PDF process could help negate this. Many respondents recognised the importance of flexibility in the identification process and advocated for self-identification for a leadership development process.

The need for classroom teachers 'to be given opportunities across the school' and 'to observe, participate and complete leadership roles across a variety of contexts' were given weight as important considerations for leadership development. A number of respondents advocated for the benefit of networking opportunities 'as early as possible' for 'sharing of ideas' and to possibly 'work with other future school leaders on an action research project with similar interests'. The SLIF acknowledges the importance of developing teacher leaders as researchers of their own and others' practice; it does so through the incorporation of the Leadership for Inquiry and Innovation (L4I&I) Framework.

The majority of respondents who reflected on mentoring spoke of the importance of mentors who cultivated 'relationship(s) built on trust, respect and honest conversations'. A range of suggestions were proposed to promote this, including ensuring autonomy and flexibility in mentor choice (including mentors outside the school context) and that time afforded for regular meetings was important. As one respondent articulated, effective mentorship 'requires the investment of time from both parties'. There was broad support for the practice of observation underpinning leadership development but some conjecture around the frequency and the source of the observation, with support for 'observations by more than one mentor for a more accurate representation...' and the incorporation of 'selective student and collegial/peer feedback aimed at identifying important qualities' as alternatives to simple mentor observations.

In the development of the SLIF, these issues were considered when developing processes relating to the selection of teacher leaders and their mentor. The SLIF allows for self-identification as a teacher leader through a process of reflection on performance and preparedness, and in consultation with their supervisor. Moreover, to combat concerns of favouritism and being overlooked, teacher leaders can select mentor(s) within and beyond the school, and this person need not be their direct supervisor. Additionally, consultation, shadowing and collaboration with communities of practice outside of the teacher-mentor and school context is encouraged within the SLIF process.

4. Suitability

Some respondents expressed concerns about the selection of suitable candidates for leadership development. They emphasised that potential leaders should have a mastery of classroom practice 'in order to lead others in the science and art of teaching' as well as a minimum level of experience, commenting that in some cases 'newish teachers climb the ladder too quickly'.

This concern regarding the selection of future teacher leaders is addressed in the SLIF, with participants required to reflect on their preparedness and performance according to the behaviours of leaders, to discuss these with their supervisor who can approve or delay participation, and to identify areas for improvement during the SLIF process. The SLIF is a framework that describes in detail those attributes found in a teacher leader. It also provides resources to establish both teachers' strengths and areas for future development.

The SLIF is not a direct pathway to formal leadership but emphasises developing leadership skills and improved practice through a cyclical process of planning, observation, reflection, mentoring, shadowing, feeding back and feeding forward.

7.4 Correlation of behaviours and capabilities

This study investigated the correlation of the capabilities and behaviours that are indicative of teacher leaders. Correlations are essentially a measure of the degree to which two variables covary or are related. In this case, it is a measure of the relationship or dependence between both leadership behaviours and the capabilities of teacher leaders.

In this study a correlation:

- is useful because it helps promote understanding of the relationships between the behaviours and capabilities of educational leadership
- is calculated and expressed mathematically on a scale of -1 to 1, where the further the value from zero, the more closely the behaviours or capabilities are related
- shows the strength & direction of the relationship between two behaviours or two capabilities
- with values near or at 1 mean the behaviours or capabilities are closely connected in their relationship
- does not show or suggest the cause of any dependency or relationship
- does not indicate the driving behaviour or capability
- may be influenced by one or more hidden or unknown behaviours or capabilities

A correlation of all behaviours and capabilities is displayed in a correlation matrix. This matrix is represented as a table with over 1000 values of behavioural relationships. For ease of analysis, value ranges have been assigned colours and associated descriptions of their strength as shown in *Figure 19*.

The data in this study provides a valid opportunity to move beyond discrete identification and affirmation of both teacher leader behaviours and developmental strategies. A more detailed understanding of teacher leader behaviours and their relationships to other factors enables an opportunity to construct and validate leadership capability frameworks. This may inform the design and development of leadership learning for the NSW public school context. It also promotes an improved understanding for both aspirant and current educational leaders as to the interplay between the various components of leadership. This may inform how to develop specific and combinations of leadership capabilities to enhance impact at both a local and a system level. It speaks to the suite of leadership capabilities and behaviours that together become more powerful than the sum of the parts.



Of particular interest in this study are the correlations which measure the relationships between behaviours within a capability (see Appendix 9.2). A comparison of these values reveal moderate to strong correlations in each quadrant. This pattern is not repeated in any other quadrant of the wider table. There were nine correlations in the moderate (but notable) range outside of these quadrants, representing 1% of a possible 944 correlations.

Within these quadrants the distribution of correlation values from a total of 112 correlations was as follows:

- 22 strong (20%)
- 31 moderate but notable (28%)
- 32 moderate (28%)
- 23 small (20%)
- 4 weak (4%)
- 0 very weak (0%)

This is highly suggestive of the strong relationships that exist between behaviours within each capability and therefore affirms their place within that capability.

A factor analysis was also conducted and confirmed the validity of combining related behaviours into single group or construct of correlation values. This was done to enable highly related behaviours to be conceptualised in broader terms as a single value and allow broader behavioural relationships to be understood. The results of the combined behaviour correlations are shown in *Figure 20*.

Of the 28 capability correlations calculated:

- 14 were strong (50%)
- 8 moderate but notable (29%)
- 5 moderate (18%) and
- 1 small. (3%)

'Interpersonal skills' and 'Personal values' showed the highest number of strong correlations, linked to 'Teaching and learning', 'Professional development' and 'Improvement and innovation'. This may be an indicator of their importance and interplay. 'Interpersonal skills' and 'Personal values' may be the driving force to enhance

the impact of teacher leaders. Intuitively, 'Interpersonal skills' and 'Personal values' help form a human connection which facilitates mentoring and the transfer of other leadership skills. Any possible causality between these capabilities, however, would require further investigation.

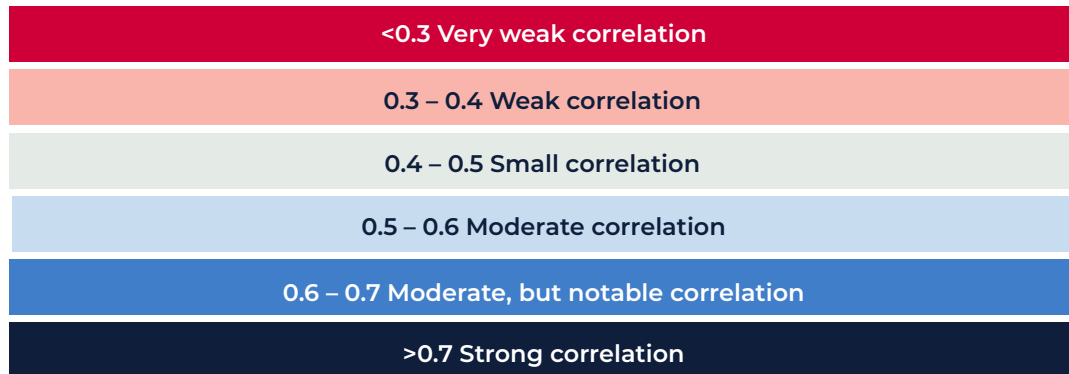


Figure 19.
Legend for correlation tables

7.4.1 Capability correlations

| Capability | Personal Values | *Knowledge and Understanding | Interpersonal, personal and social skills | Teaching and Learning | Professional Development | Improvement and Innovation | *Management and Admin | Engaging and working with community |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Personal Values | 1 | | | | | | | |
| *Knowledge and Understanding | 0.63 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Interpersonal, personal and social skills | 0.78 | 0.66 | 1 | | | | | |
| Teaching and Learning | 0.73 | 0.72 | 0.87 | 1 | | | | |
| Professional Development | 0.70 | 0.66 | 0.82 | 0.85 | 1 | | | |
| Improvement and Innovation | 0.69 | 0.71 | 0.83 | 0.85 | 0.87 | 1 | | |
| *Management and Admin | 0.42 | 0.50 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 0.62 | 0.71 | 1 | |
| Engaging and working with community | 0.54 | 0.52 | 0.65 | 0.68 | 0.70 | 0.77 | 0.69 | 1 |

Figure 20.

Capability correlation based on all behaviours in each capability (*'Student wellbeing' behaviour from 'Knowledge and Understanding' and 'Finance' behaviour from 'Management and administration' have been removed to ensure validity).



“...the correlations describe a student centred model of educational leadership...”

Expressing the detailed leadership behaviour correlations as aggregated values is powerful. It enables a broader lens to be used when thinking about the way in which leadership capabilities are related and promotes an overall understanding of the interdependencies between capabilities. It is immediately apparent that all correlations are noteworthy and are overwhelmingly strong in their presentation throughout the table. In particular, the capabilities of ‘Personal values’, ‘Interpersonal skills’, ‘Teaching and learning’, ‘Professional development’ and ‘Innovation, improvement and change’ show particularly strong interdependencies. This degree of interdependency is logical when reflecting on how these capabilities interact in the daily work of a teacher leader. Similarly, visual examination of *Figure 20* highlights the consistently lower values of the ‘Management and administration’ capability when compared to all other capabilities. It has the lowest correlation value at 0.42 (with ‘Personal values’) and consistently lower values throughout the table with an average of 0.55 across all 6 comparison capabilities. In terms of the work of a teacher leader the focus of their work is typically on teaching and learning. In essence, the correlations describe a student centred model of educational leadership.

8 Research conclusions and further directions

The aim of this preliminary research was to examine the applicability of a nuanced version of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals to the context of the teacher leader. This study drew on both the data gathered from an initial focus group and an extensive statewide survey of NSW public school teachers and leaders. The data gathered has a confidence level of 99% with 5% error. The study validated those behaviours and capabilities that applied in this context and were reliable indicators of teacher leadership. This finding enabled the construction of a specific framework for the identification and development of teacher leaders.

Research Conclusions:

The following conclusions are derived from an analysis of the data collected:


1. Extensive quantitative and qualitative evidence in this study identified behaviours

and capabilities as reliable indicators of teachers who have transitioned to teacher leaders. These could be used to identify those teacher leaders who have the potential to undertake further leadership learning and prepare for formal middle leadership positions or enhance their impact on student and teacher learning. Importantly, the grouping of teacher leader behaviours into the capabilities as described in this report show overall moderate to strong levels of correlation.

2. The strong respondent data justifies connecting the SLIF to existing processes, policies and procedures. In particular, the study found that there were high levels of support for aligning the SLIF to the PDP process. Respondents also strongly supported the process of self-nomination as a teacher leader, the ability to select a mentor and a higher frequency of observations and feedback meetings as key features of the SLIF.

Future Directions:

The SLIF resource guide uses the findings from the data analysed in this report to ensure that it is purpose-built for the context of NSW public schools. It provides a method for identifying teacher leaders based on validated groups of associated behaviours and capabilities. It also guides the teacher leader to assess their preparedness to undertake leadership learning and provides a flexible development cycle through which to build leadership goals. The reliability and validity of the SLIF as a resource will be tested during a pilot study in 2021.



“Understanding the relative importance of behaviours and capabilities has the potential to guide ... leadership development...”

The pilot study will be implemented across approximately 60 schools in a variety of contexts and across all operational directorates. It will test the reliability of the SLIF in identifying and developing teacher leaders within the diversity of NSW public schools. Within this pilot, the concerns and issues raised in this Preliminary Research Report and addressed in the formulation of the SLIF will be tested for effectiveness. This will seek to affirm the data in this report and test the design features of the SLIF which have been developed to address concerns raised by respondents in the open-ended questions. This additional data will be gathered and analysed in the latter part of 2021 with resulting adjustments made before full implementation in 2022.

An area of further investigation to emerge from this study is the relative importance of teacher leader behaviours and capabilities. Understanding the relative importance of behaviours and capabilities has the potential to guide how resources should be assigned to leadership development and how designers of leadership learning should focus their attention on the curriculum they deliver. This is a logical extension of the concepts explored in this study and is worthy of further investigation to support system priorities.

9 Appendix

9.1 Initial focus group questions by session

Session 1: Identifying Future School Leaders

1. What are the indicators or attributes of a future school leader?
 - Focus on the best leaders at all levels that you have worked with during your career.

2. What formal or informal identification processes exist in your school?
 - What opportunities are present in the current PDP process for identifying teachers who have the performance, potential and readiness for development? What works well or could work well in this process?
 - Beyond the Performance and Development Framework (PDF) process, what would best practice look like in your school context?
 - What role, if any, do the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) play? (Please refer to the NESA standards document and list the relevant standards and standard descriptors.)
 - What role could they play in the future?

3. Is there planned formal discussion around identifying teachers in your school? If so, who are the staff involved in this discussion? Do these discussions have any formal structure? If so, what works well or could work well?
 - What are the conditions that enable you to convey your considered response to questions regarding your development?

Session 2: Developing Future School Leaders

1. What opportunities or processes (formal or informal) exist in your school context to develop teachers as leaders? Please illustrate this with at least ONE example.
 - What works well in these formal or informal developmental processes? What works well or could work well in this process?

2. Generally, how well do teachers engage in the developmental processes? How could engagement and impact of these developmental activities be improved?
 - What resources are available to support the developmental activities? How could this support perhaps be improved?

3. What opportunities are present in the current PDF process for developing teachers

who have shown performance, potential and readiness for leadership?

- Please recount the developmental experience that has had the greatest impact for a future school leader. Propose the reason(s) as to why this was the case.

4. Are there formal discussions around developing teachers in your school? If so, who are the staff involved in this discussion? Do these discussions have a formal structure? If so, what works well and what could work well?

- How has quality feedback contributed to your development as a future school leader? What do you consider to be the best feedback practice in your school context?
- How do you demonstrate a practice of seeking, reflecting and acting on feedback?
- Is there a role for the NESA Standards in providing quality feedback? (Please refer to the NESA standards).

5. Who is the best person(s) or organisations to support the development of future school leaders? Is this occurring in your school context or beyond? If not, why do you think this is the case?

6. Please feel free to share any other thoughts with the group in connection to how future school leaders may be developed and supported in the NSW Department of Education context.



9.2 Notable behaviour correlations

Personal Values

| Behaviour | Inspiration of students or colleagues | Moral purpose | High expectations | Ethical behaviour | Principles of equity | Inclusivity | Respect | Integrity |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Inspiration of students or colleagues | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Moral purpose | 0.6391 | 1 | | | | | | |
| High expectations | 0.5654 | 0.592 | 1 | | | | | |
| Ethical behaviour | 0.5419 | 0.6558 | 0.6072 | 1 | | | | |
| Principles of equity | 0.5761 | 0.6442 | 0.5572 | 0.7573 | 1 | | | |
| Inclusivity | 0.5709 | 0.6281 | 0.557 | 0.6735 | 0.8026 | 1 | | |
| Respect | 0.555 | 0.6337 | 0.6258 | 0.7548 | 0.7346 | 0.7875 | 1 | |
| Integrity | 0.5876 | 0.6514 | 0.5763 | 0.7546 | 0.7282 | 0.7181 | 0.8161 | 1 |

Figure 21.
Correlation table for Personal values

Knowledge and understanding

| Behaviour | Curriculum including programming | Assessment | Reporting | Pedagogy | Finance | Wellbeing | Leadership | Policy & legislation |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Curriculum including programming | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Assessment | 0.8153 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Reporting | 0.7574 | 0.8237 | 1 | | | | | |
| Pedagogy | 0.6548 | 0.6677 | 0.6279 | 1 | | | | |
| Finance | 0.3497 | 0.3835 | 0.4052 | 0.4226 | 1 | | | |
| Wellbeing | 0.4575 | 0.4628 | 0.4541 | 0.4657 | 0.3489 | 1 | | |
| Leadership | 0.4837 | 0.5115 | 0.4874 | 0.5137 | 0.45 | 0.5717 | 1 | |
| Policy & legislation | 0.3815 | 0.4031 | 0.4133 | 0.4262 | 0.6652 | 0.4536 | 0.5781 | 1 |

Figure 22.
Correlation table for Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding versus Administration and organisation

| Behaviour | Curriculum | Assessment | Reporting | Pedagogy | Finance | *Wellbeing | Leadership | Policy & Legislation |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| High level organisational skills. | 0.4937 | 0.4704 | 0.4406 | 0.3932 | 0.2967 | 0.3994 | 0.4454 | 0.3729 |
| Financial skills | 0.3395 | 0.3798 | 0.3809 | 0.392 | 0.7477 | 0.3644 | 0.4767 | 0.6368 |
| Human resource skills | 0.3638 | 0.3899 | 0.379 | 0.3767 | 0.52 | 0.4284 | 0.5116 | 0.5005 |
| Management systems | 0.3602 | 0.3939 | 0.3641 | 0.4204 | 0.5912 | 0.3772 | 0.5027 | 0.5577 |

Figure 23.

Correlation table for 'Knowledge and understanding' and 'Administration and organisation.' Note: This table specifically shows the correlation value between the two questions linked to finance skills. This was an inbuilt mechanism to test the validity of responses in light of possible respondent 'survey fatigue'. The strong correlation value of 0.7477 would suggest that respondents were still answering questions reliably towards the end of the survey.

*Note that the Wellbeing data was removed to ensure validity for the aggregated correlation values in Figure 19.

Knowledge and understanding

| Behaviour | Empathy | Communication skills | Collaboration | Positive influence on others | Resilience | High emotional intelligence | Efficacy and optimism | Advocacy | Connection to collegial networks | Promotion of trust |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Empathy | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Communication skills | 0.6501 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Collaboration | 0.6329 | 0.6957 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Positive influence on others | 0.6567 | 0.7217 | 0.7461 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Resilience | 0.5701 | 0.6543 | 0.6067 | 0.6694 | 1 | | | | | |
| High emotional intelligence | 0.6584 | 0.6853 | 0.633 | 0.6902 | 0.7089 | 1 | | | | |
| Efficacy and optimism | 0.619 | 0.6266 | 0.6387 | 0.6552 | 0.663 | 0.697 | 1 | | | |
| Advocacy | 0.6512 | 0.601 | 0.6354 | 0.6744 | 0.6305 | 0.6785 | 0.725 | 1 | | |
| Connection to collegial networks | 0.4142 | 0.4054 | 0.4878 | 0.4289 | 0.4765 | 0.4549 | 0.5512 | 0.5496 | | |
| Promotion of trust | 0.6834 | 0.6518 | 0.6451 | 0.6818 | 0.6305 | 0.6815 | 0.6703 | 0.7214 | 0.5363 | 1 |

Figure 24.
Correlation table for Interpersonal skills

Teaching and learning Skills

| Behaviour | Promotion of student voice and agency | Effective management of student behaviour | Meaningful use of data | Student engagement in learning |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Promotion of student voice and agency | 1 | | | |
| Effective management of student behaviour | 0.4897 | 1 | | |
| Meaningful use of data | 0.5233 | 0.5443 | 1 | |
| Student engagement in learning | 0.5606 | 0.7132 | 0.5501 | 1 |

Figure 25.

Correlation table for Teaching and learning skills

Professional development

| Behaviour | A proactive attitude in their own professional learning. | Reflection on professional development. | Seeking and acting upon feedback from others. | Willing to provide feedback to others. | Willingness to be involved in the development of others. |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| A proactive attitude in their own professional learning. | 1 | | | | |
| Reflection on professional development. | 0.696 | 1 | | | |
| Seeking and acting upon feedback from others. | 0.5938 | 0.7097 | 1 | | |
| Willing to provide feedback to others. | 0.536 | 0.5249 | 0.6261 | 1 | |
| Willingness to be involved in the development of others. | 0.5423 | 0.5824 | 0.6682 | 0.7496 | 1 |

Figure 26.

Correlation table for Professional development

Innovation, Improvement and change

| Behaviour | Problem solving | Use of appropriate technologies | Fostering of creativity | Evidence informed planning | Strategic planning |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Problem solving | 1 | | | | |
| Use of appropriate technologies | 0.4454 | 1 | | | |
| Fostering of creativity | 0.5735 | 0.5838 | 1 | | |
| Evidence Informed planning | 0.5675 | 0.4387 | 0.5745 | 1 | |
| Strategic planning | 0.5444 | 0.3937 | 0.5195 | 0.7021 | 1 |

Figure 27.

Correlation table Innovation, improvement and change

Management and administration

| Behaviour | High level organisational skills. | *Financial skills | Human resource skills | Management systems |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| High level organisational skills. | 1 | | | |
| Financial skills | 0.4059 | 1 | | |
| Human resource skills | 0.4899 | 0.6829 | 1 | |
| Management systems | 0.4932 | 0.7172 | 0.7474 | 1 |

Figure 28.

Correlation table for Management and administration

*Note that the Finance skills data was removed to ensure validity for the aggregated correlation values in Figure 19.

Engaging and working with the community

| Behaviour | Linking learning explicitly to community | Countering discrimination and disadvantage | Partnership creation |
|--|--|--|----------------------|
| Linking learning explicitly to community | 1 | | |
| Countering discrimination and disadvantage | 0.6477 | 1 | |
| Partnership creation | 0.7364 | 0.6964 | 1 |

Figure 29.
Correlation table for Engaging and working with the community

9.3 Correlation responses for the alignment of the SLIF to the PDP

| | Statement (See key) | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---|
| Statement (See key) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | 0.6512 | 1 | | | | |
| 3 | 0.2808 | 0.3568 | 1 | | | |
| 4 | 0.1863 | 0.2466 | 0.4951 | 1 | | |
| 5 | 0.3896 | 0.4384 | 0.3291 | 0.3336 | 1 | |
| 6 | 0.3776 | 0.4283 | 0.3393 | 0.3807 | 0.825 | 1 |

Figure 30.

Correlation responses for the alignment of the SLIF to the PDP

Statement Key:

1. The identification of future school leaders should occur in conjunction with the PDP process
2. Up to 2 specific leadership goals should be included as part of the 5 maximum goals in the PDP for a futures school leader
3. Teachers should be able to self-nominate their own 2 leadership goals in connection with the PDP
4. Future school leaders, for only their leadership goals, should be able to choose a mentor for this specific purpose who is not their supervisor
5. Regular observations of teacher leadership practice(s) by the mentor, at the minimum rate of 1 per term with only their leadership goals would be manageable
6. Regular meetings with the mentor for observation feedback at the minimum rate of 1 per term with only their leadership goals would be manageable



10 References

1. The School Leadership Identification Framework NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute, 2020.
2. 'School Leadership Identification Framework: Review of the Literature', NSW Department of Education School Leadership Institute, 2020.
3. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2014, Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles, AITSL, Melbourne.

