



MENZIES
SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP
INCUBATOR

INVESTIGATING LEADERSHIP
BUILDING INSIGHTS
PROVOKING ACTION

POWERED BY



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**School leadership that
cultivates collective efficacy**
Emerging Insights 2022

School leadership that cultivates collective efficacy: Emerging insights 2022

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Foreword

The Menzies Foundation aspires to build a leadership movement which encourages Australians to reflect on leadership, pivot to purpose, build their leadership capability and contribute to the 'greater good'

We learn about leadership by identifying leadership challenges and building multi-sector incubators to address these challenges at scale. These incubators are designed to identify, ideate, test and scale solutions to address these leadership challenges.

Despite significant investment in leadership development, the school leadership pipeline is in crisis. Amplified by the pandemic, principal positions are increasingly difficult to fill, those in leadership positions report elevated levels of stress and feel ill equipped to lead in the increasingly and challenging school context.

Education systems across the globe recognise the critical role that school leaders should play in focusing efforts on improving the quality of teaching and fostering the conditions conducive to learning and development. We know that collective efficacy is a key element of school improvement and that high levels of collective efficacy significantly and positively impact student outcomes.

And yet, our work in the Incubator demonstrates that collective efficacy is not well understood nor cultivated in our schools, and that to address this challenge we need a new approach to developing leaders who are able to foster and develop deep collaborative capacity and manage the transformational change process required to drive improved student learning outcomes. The Incubator has focused on developing a deeper understanding of the individual attributes that contribute to building collective efficacy, and the conditions that are required to lead others in the complexity of the school system. Leadership of self, leadership of others and leadership of systems lie at the heart of our enquiry process. This report outlines our insights to date.

I am delighted to announce that in 2023, in partnership with Rising Team, we will be piloting Rising Team for Schools, a digitised wrap around ed-tech platform which provides an accessible Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool and a series of kits to support the development of collaborative capacity in schools.

On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Incubator team, and acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the Menzies School Leader Fellows, who are featured in this Report and are so central to our work.

Finally, we invite you to join us in 2023 – sign up for Menzies School Leadership Incubator Updates, register for the 2023 Menzies School Leadership Webinar series, and/or apply to join the Rising Team for School pilot program.

Liz Gillies
Menzies Foundation

Commentary

Laureate Professor John Hattie

The notion of collective efficacy has been researched and discussed for some time, but it still remains elusive and hard to implement. Schools are often peopled by independent contractors with contrived togetherness, and we have claims to autonomy to teach as we wish, share what we want, and adapt new ideas to fit with previous notions of teaching. Staffrooms and professional learning focus more on curriculum, student attributes, assessment, and it is hard to focus on the impact of teaching, the desired models of student learning, and the ways teachers can work together collectively to have a more substantial effect than merely the sum of each teacher.

But the research on collective efficacy shows that when all educators work together, they have a great impact. Together, teachers become greater risk takers and receptive to new ideas, more likely to stay in teaching, have more positive attitudes to diversity, create a deeper implementation of school improvement, and more open to testing new approaches to teaching, and collectively have greater impact on student progress, achievement, social and emotional engagement (Donohoo, 2017).

The Menzies team knew the power and conundrums when starting their work. They called on the best researchers and implementers worldwide and across many disciplines. They completed research reviews, visited schools to see collective efficacy in action, and critically evaluated their early programs. They realised the critical power of the school leader to create the conditions in the school for collective efficacy to thrive, the underlying skills of developing their own 'I' and 'We' skills as well as those among the teachers, and ensuring the optimal problems were the focus of the collective. This Report provides a synopsis of their current thinking that underpins their incubator.



I have watched and been a critical friend since the outset, learned so much from their work, and encourage them to develop their incubator – as we are all winners from their work.



Executive Summary

Despite significant investment in leadership development, the school leadership pipeline in Australia is in crisis. The work of the Menzies School Leadership Incubator suggests we need a new approach to leadership that supports school leaders to better manage transformational change and deepen collaborative capacity necessary to cultivate collective efficacy to improve student learning outcomes.

This leadership challenge requires that we think about school leadership in new ways. The increasingly complex and challenging contexts within which schools operate can be more effectively navigated when leaders are focused on deepening collaborative capacity such that schools more efficiently and effectively harness multiple expertise, aligned, and focused on improving student learning outcomes. The education system currently focuses on the development of leaders, however, to build collective efficacy we need to focus on both leader and leadership development, a combination of leadership of self, leadership of others and leadership of systems.

Collective Efficacy

In schools, efforts to build collective efficacy are often programmatic in orientation and worked on through initiatives, projects, or programs. The Menzies School Leadership Incubator suggests that collective efficacy is more usefully conceived as a strategic pillar that underpins improvement efforts and organizational transformation. For this shift to take place, the education sector must develop a more nuanced and deeper understanding of collective efficacy. To support this process the Incubator has developed a Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool. The Tracking Tool consists of three inter-related domains in which collective efficacy can be enacted (the school, the leader, the teacher) and four phases of maturity at which collective efficacy may develop and be tracked in the school (awareness, emerging, establishing and sustaining). The Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool has played a significant role in supporting schools to understand, diagnose and cultivate collective efficacy.

Leadership Domains

Importantly, the Incubator has identified five leadership domains which underpin the leadership of Collective Efficacy:

- Understanding Collective Efficacy
- Systems Leadership
- Change Leadership
- Team Leadership
- Collaborative Capacity

Each of these domains are underpinned by technical and adaptive leadership skills. Many approaches to school leadership provide limited opportunities to foster these skills. The four main leader advancement points in schools - teacher, leading teacher, assistant principal and principal - lack nuanced descriptive power, and a lack of emphasis and progression in technical and adaptive skills. Finer-grained role descriptions and clearly articulated career pathways that enable the acquisition of both technical and adaptive leadership skills are needed to grow and advance leadership in the profession.

Rising Team for Schools

To support schools to strengthen collective efficacy and build high functioning teams, the Incubator is collaborating with a technology company to create an online platform: Rising Team for Schools. The platform aims to empower school leaders and teams to track collective efficacy and build engaged, connected and successful teams. The prototype (beta version) was tested in 2022, with a full pilot program planned for 2023.

In addition, drawing on the insights to date, in 2023 the Incubator will focus on articulating a more detailed and nuanced description of the principal's role and codifying the technical and adaptive skill sets required to lead in the complexity of the education system. The next stage of the Incubator's work includes developing a wrap around digitised leadership development platform to complement Rising Team for Schools and support school leaders to strengthen the technical and adaptive skills required to foster collective efficacy.

Call to Action

The Incubator aspires to build stronger networks and connectivity with those interested in leadership in the education sector. We invite you to connect, join and collaborate as we continue to develop and pilot a new approach to school leadership which equips and empowers leaders to lead in increasingly complex and challenging contexts.



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Menzies School Leadership Incubator Advisory Board
Menzies School Leader Fellows



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THE CHALLENGE

Despite significant investment in leadership development, the school leadership pipeline in Australia is in crisis. We need a new approach to leadership that supports leaders, to better manage transformational change and deepen collaborative capacity to cultivate collective efficacy to improve student learning outcomes.

This paper provides a description of the work of the Menzies School Leadership Incubator ("the Incubator") and insights generated so far.

Written against the backdrop of the need to build a pipeline of school leaders equipped to lead in increasingly complex and challenging environments, the challenge is well documented and persistent.

With growing complexity in the workplace, increasing demands of the principal role and associated wellbeing issues, fewer people are putting up their hand to take on the role and across Australia there is a struggle to fill principal vacancies. Alongside this shortage of school principal candidates, there is limited evidence of strategic and systematic approaches to developing leadership in schools, and audits suggest that many current leadership programs are not meeting the needs of today's school leaders (AITSL, 2015, 2017; DET, 2018).

A growing body of research on collective efficacy suggests that to improve student outcomes in schools, we need leaders and staff who believe in their collective ability to promote student learning and who understand that through working together, they can have a positive impact on student outcomes (Donohoo, 2017; Eells, 2011; Goddard et al., 2000; Hattie, 2015). This collective belief can transpire into actions, given the right conditions.

Leaders are critical in this endeavour, building a collective belief among staff that together they can make a difference to student outcomes and setting the conditions in a school for educators to be successful.

The leadership challenge guiding the Menzies School Leadership Incubator is to investigate what it will take to strengthen the supply of school leaders who are equipped and empowered to lead in an increasingly complex role, and to understand the leadership attributes that build collaborative capacity in order to lift student outcomes across the education system.

The Incubator's inquiry is:

"How might we build a pipeline of school leaders equipped to grow collective efficacy that positively impacts student outcomes in increasingly complex and challenging contexts?"

Two papers written in 2020 detailed the Incubator inquiry, outlining the leadership challenge, providing justification for the fellowship design, and describing the 'sandpits' used to design, test and learn within the Incubator.





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INSIGHTS

- Reimagining school leadership
- Collective Efficacy: a strategic pillar for school improvement
- Understanding collective efficacy
- Supporting schools to cultivate collective efficacy
- Technical and adaptive leadership skills to lead collective efficacy

1

Reimagining school leadership

The leadership challenge in focus demands that we think about school leadership in new ways. The increasingly complex and challenging contexts within which schools operate can be more effectively navigated when leaders are focused on deepening collaborative capacity. This view of school leadership sees leaders sharing a sense of purpose, drawing on one another's expertise, supporting each other to cultivate collective efficacy, and being committed to growing and developing other leaders within their school.

If I lead for efficacy building, the outcomes will come, and the impact of that will actually be increased. Whereas, if I lead simply for success or results, I'm not necessarily building the capacity of the organisation. They're two quite separate approaches to leading. - Principal

Distinguishing 'leader' and 'leadership'

The field of leadership consists of many schools of thought about what leadership is, why it is important, and how it emerges (Antonakis & Day, 2018). Despite this, many contemporary schools of thought define leadership as a process of social influence that positively impacts the system in which it is nested. In this context, leadership can be enacted by leaders, teams, and broader collectives.

The Incubator is working with a conception of leadership that includes the individual and the collective. This is in recognition of the inherently complex role of principals, the complex contexts within which they work, and the fact that collective efficacy is inherently collective.

Research into the development of leadership in individuals and collectives is still relatively nascent (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). However, it seems important to distinguish leader development from leadership development (Day, 2000). Leader development involves developing individual leaders' mindsets, behaviours, and other intrapersonal attributes. Leadership development involves developing the relationships, systems, and contexts in which individual leaders are nested.

Leadership of collective efficacy

In the context of the Incubator, it has become evident that cultivating collective efficacy involves three distinct aspects of leadership: leadership of self, others and systems.

Leadership of self involves understanding and developing individual attributes that contribute to building collective efficacy.

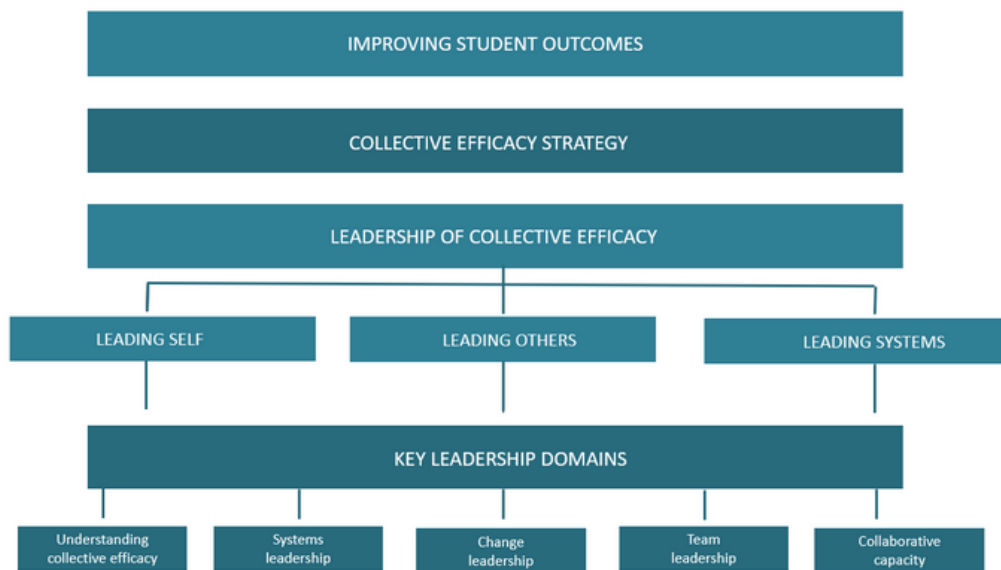
Leadership of others involves creating the learning conditions in which others (individuals or teams) can develop the capabilities identified as relevant to cultivating collective efficacy, and also creating relationships that lead to the emergence of collective efficacy.

Leadership of systems focuses on making changes to aspects of the school systems which contribute to cultivating collective efficacy. Changes to systems may include ways of working, processes and policies, governance, etc.

System thinking doesn't seem to be highly regarded or understood, yet it's critical to scaling improvement. How do we support leaders to see themselves in the systems within which they are working and to lead in and through these?

These three aspects of leadership are central to the work in the Incubator's School Leader Fellowship. The Fellowship involves school leaders exploring and developing the leadership of collective efficacy in their schools. Details of the Fellowship are provided in the supplementary information section. Figure 1 displays the inquiry model being used in the Fellowship to investigate the leadership of collective efficacy.

Figure 1. Leadership of collective efficacy inquiry model



The core focus of the work is Improving Student Outcomes, underpinned by a collective efficacy strategy, where leaders apply or enact approaches to the leadership of collective efficacy.

As noted earlier, the three aspects of collective efficacy leadership include: leading self, leading others and leading systems. The lower level of the figure highlights five key leadership domains hypothesised to underpin the leadership of collective efficacy: understanding collective efficacy, systems leadership, change leadership, team leadership and collaborative capacity.

The first domain involves understanding collective efficacy. The second domain is systems leadership and refers to understanding and acting on the systemic nature of collective efficacy, and the systemic nature of schools in which collective efficacy is nested. The third domain, change leadership, focuses on implementing and embedding change, and the fourth, team leadership, refers to the interpersonal skills that are required to lead and develop leadership teams..

The final domain refers to collaborative capacity which involves building leadership teams' ability to work together effectively as they engage in collaborative learning, creative thinking, problem-solving and decision making.

2

Collective Efficacy: a strategic pillar for school improvement

The sandpits within the Incubator have provided opportunities to grapple with the nature of collective efficacy and how to develop it. Through this work, a deeper understanding of collective efficacy has evolved in schools involved in the Incubator. This understanding signals a shift from developing collective efficacy using a programmatic approach towards regarding it as a critical underpinning strategy for improving student outcomes. Rather than being implemented as an initiative, project or program, collective efficacy is more usefully conceived as a strategic pillar that underpins improvement efforts and organisational transformation.

One of the key pillars of implementing a collective efficacy strategy is prioritising deeper horizontal and vertical collaboration across the school. This involves developing team leaders' instructional leadership capacity and their capacity to build effective, supportive and safe teams. We're acknowledging that effective collaboration is an important precursor for collective efficacy.

-Principal

As a strategic pillar, collective efficacy has become the foundation for driving and supporting efforts across all areas of school improvement. Regardless of learning areas, year levels, and priorities for student learning, the development of strong collective efficacy supports improvement efforts.

As a foundational pillar, collective efficacy must be strategically planned for and deliberately cultivated.

A 'mindset, skillset, toolset' framing is a helpful way to think about collective efficacy as a strategic pillar, as illustrated in Figure 2. Just as there is strength in a triangle, if the development of collective efficacy involves each aspect – mindset, skillset, toolkit – the result is a strong foundation.

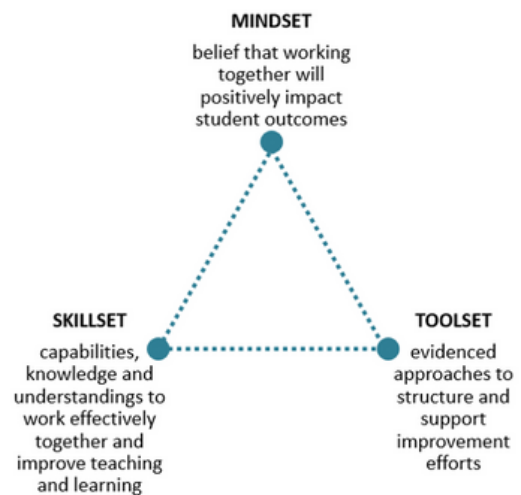


Figure 2. A framing for collective efficacy as a strategic pillar for school improvement

Schools involved in the Incubator have found that this foundation is strengthened when their leadership teams work in partnership to develop and support a strategic approach to improving student outcomes. Fostering shared commitment across teams and a culture of ongoing learning and development has led to agreed ways of thinking and working to align improvement efforts.

Collective efficacy has become a strategic pillar supporting schools to work collaboratively on approaches to improve student outcomes.

3

Understanding collective efficacy

Collective efficacy has a strong presence in education policy and reforms. This interest in collective efficacy stems from a long tradition of research highlighting the influence of beliefs and expectations on human behaviour and more recent research emphasising the impact of collective efficacy on student achievement. Researchers have found that when teachers are encouraged and supported to engage in activities where they can learn with and from each other and in doing so improve teaching and learning, their collective confidence is strengthened and student outcomes improve (Ells, 2011; Goddard et al., 2000; Hattie, 2009; Ross & Gray, 2006).

A strong sense of collective efficacy consists of the belief that all students can learn, and together, educators can influence student outcomes. A strong sense of collective efficacy feeds normative practices where it is agreed that 'we work together to improve'. When this occurs, educators are more likely to set higher expectations, persevere when faced with challenging circumstances or setbacks, and continuously work together to improve teaching and learning (Donohoo et al., 2018; Goddard, et al., 2017).

Intuitively, it makes sense that educators who effectively work together on teaching and learning and share a collective belief that they make a difference to the students in their care, will have a greater impact on student outcomes. However, despite a growing interest in collective efficacy, the Incubator's analysis of relevant literature found a lack of descriptions of collective efficacy in schools, and the leadership required to foster it (Elliott & Hollingsworth, 2020).

Possibly due to the nebulous nature of the term and how it is often used interchangeably with 'collaboration', collective efficacy has come to mean many things to many people, and nothing to some.

Collective efficacy becomes a misnomer for staff working together, however it's so much more than that. It's actually having the mindset that we can make a difference in the lives of students and for our students to see themselves as successful learners. - Principal

A core focus of the Incubator's work has been articulating precise ideas about the nature of collective efficacy and the leadership required to cultivate it. The Incubator's work intends to understand how leaders can build collective efficacy in schools, understand more about its impact on student outcomes, and open up conversations about the best ways to cultivate it. Through prototyping, testing and learning in innovation sandpits, the Incubator has started to gain insights about leadership that influences mindsets, raises expectations, and cultivates collective efficacy to influence student outcomes.

As part of its work in understanding collective efficacy, the Incubator has developed:

- an elaborated description of collective efficacy
- a description of areas that comprise the essence of collective efficacy
- a tool to support schools in diagnosing and cultivating collective efficacy.

For leaders to be successful, we need a different appreciation of how collective efficacy is the fulcrum in which to explore how to improve student learning outcomes.



Describing collective efficacy

A shared understanding of collective efficacy is being developed in the Incubator that moves beyond traditional conceptions that focus on shared belief, collaboration, or generic school conditions.

The Incubator has found that collective efficacy has many parts, encompassing mindsets, beliefs, actions, and practices. These parts are interrelated, influencing each other and the systems in which people work.

A way of conceiving collective efficacy that acknowledges these parts and applies across industry sectors is:

People working together in a complex system believe in, enact and grow their collective capability to achieve a shared goal.

In schools, this can be interpreted as:

Staff working together in schools believe in, enact and grow their collective capability to positively impact outcomes for all students.

When schools involved in the Incubator have successfully developed strong collective efficacy, staff have been motivated to work collaboratively and evaluate the impact of their practice on student outcomes. However, building and growing collective efficacy in such a way is neither simple nor easy.

I've believed in collective efficacy for a long time, however I didn't have the language to describe it. We're deepening our understanding of collective efficacy and attempting to explicitly develop it in our school. - Principal

The essence of collective efficacy

Some important aspects of collective efficacy have been identified through the Incubator sandpits that capture the essence of collective efficacy. These aspects, Collective Will, Collective Skill, Intellectual Humility and Curiosity can be observed and developed, and sit at the heart of collective efficacy. Descriptions of each aspect and the leadership practices that promote them are provided below and examples of each are presented in Table 1.

Collective Will is about the shared intent to work together to achieve a desired outcome. This includes the attitudes, beliefs and values staff have about working together to improve student outcomes in a school setting. Collective Will is fed by seeing value in working together, and individuals having confidence that by working together they will come up with something better than what they could achieve by themselves. Staff who value working together to improve, and who believe that all students can learn, are more likely to engage in collaborative activities and more willing to contribute constructively and effectively. Leadership practices that promote Collective Will include building a narrative around the 'why' working together is better, developing shared language related to collective efficacy, and co-constructing expectations about working together.

When we realised that they were 'all our students' we moved from cooperative to collaborative.
- Principal

Collective Skill is about the capabilities among group members that enable them to work effectively to positively impact student outcomes. Collective Skill includes two types of capabilities. One refers to the professional skills (knowledge, expertise, etc.) that group members bring to implementing quality teaching and learning, and the other refers to their capability to work together effectively.

Working together effectively includes skills such as taking an active role, taking turns, and demonstrating empathy and social sensitivities. Leadership practices that promote Collective Skill include structuring and supporting opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, and modelling and building effective collaboration skills.

It's about mindset and skills. Do staff know how to use data effectively, do they know interventions that are going to have the biggest impact, do they have the skills to collaborate and inquire? - Principal

Collective Will and Collective Skill refer to the emotional and cognitive investment in collectively improving student outcomes, promoted through exploration, learning and evaluating impact. These aspects of collective efficacy are mutually reinforcing and both need to be explicitly attended to when building collective efficacy.

To lead for collective efficacy, to authentically involve people in decision making requires a new way of leading – relinquishing control – from helping and protecting teachers to empowering them.
- Principal

Intellectual humility is about being open to learning. It is about feeling comfortable saying you don't have all the answers and being willing to consider information that doesn't fit your current thinking. It is also about being willing to hear other points of view and explore solutions with others (Brown, 2021).

Intellectual humility feeds collective efficacy and promotes confidence in a group so they believe they can come up with a better solution together. Leadership practices that may demonstrate Intellectual Humility include displaying an openness to learning and harvesting and utilising the knowledge and expertise of staff.

Curiosity is about being open to considering possibilities, including seeing what's here and what's not, and being invested in finding possible solutions. Building collective efficacy means exploring what's positively impacting student outcomes and what might be getting in the way and being open to trialling new approaches. Leadership practices that may build Curiosity include promoting inquiry and exploring solutions together.

Framing the work as a learning challenge highlights the complex nature and interdependence of work and sets the rationale for input and voice (Edmondson, 2018).

Table 1. Leadership practices for cultivating collective efficacy

	Leadership practices for cultivating collective efficacy	Examples from school leaders involved in the Fellowship
Collective will	<i>Build a narrative around the 'why' working together is better</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and have agreement on the why. • Make processes and protocols visible and embed these. • Work and learn together. Be explicit that learning involves risk taking, i.e., 'if we can't learn to fail, we will fail to learn'.
	<i>Develop shared language related to collective efficacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with staff directly about mastery experiences, social persuasion, etc., explain how these are the ingredients for building collective efficacy and refer to how we are explicitly developing it.
	<i>Co-construct expectations about working together</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish protocols and norms collectively for how we work together. Make these visible and embed them into the school culture.
Collective skill	<i>Structure and support opportunities to enhance teaching and learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the teaching and learning approaches that are going to have the 'biggest bang for your buck'. • Support teachers to get on the same page about these skills and develop their understanding of good teaching and learning. • Understand what staff need to learn next to build their skills and provide opportunities for collaboration and deepening teacher learning.
	<i>Model and build effective collaboration skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the collaboration skills staff need to work together effectively and make them visible. • Have clearly articulated descriptors of collaborative practice. • Model active listening - consciously asking inquiry-based questions, keeping quiet, pausing, paraphrasing, to improve collaboration.
Intellectual humility	<i>Display an openness to learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask clarifying questions. • Be authentic and don't pre-determine the answer. • Listen and try to understand rather than assume you know the answer. • Establish safety, be present and visible. • Acknowledge with staff when it's uncomfortable, be aware of this, and pause.
	<i>Harvest and utilise the knowledge and expertise of staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel comfortable in failure. • Draw on multiple expertise to find the best in people so they work together in a way that they feel empowered to act. • Listen and then ask staff 'how might we respond?' and then gather relevant expertise. • Release some of the controls around you and allow others to be participate.
Curiosity	<i>Promote inquiry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose questions rather than directives to open the capacity for dialogue and exploratory questions, i.e., why is it like this? • Ask specific questions about the school data and invite solutions from the team, i.e. how (as a team) will we address this, what actions might we take? • Be inquisitive, open-minded, curious, and encouraging
	<i>Explore solutions together</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and lead other people to find the solutions, i.e. What's the fundamental change in pedagogical practice that we are going to commit to support student learning and why? Why are we reflecting on that? Why are we picking this strategy? How is that going to get us further? How are we going to measure our impact?

4

Supporting schools to cultivate collective efficacy

Having articulated a description of what collective efficacy is, and the elements that represent the essence of collective efficacy, a question remains about how schools can identify, understand and cultivate collective efficacy in their individual contexts. There are validated surveys that measure perceptions of collective efficacy in schools (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998) and perceptions of the conditions that promote it (Donohoo, 2017). In exploring ways to support schools to understand, diagnose and develop collective efficacy, work in the Incubator has resulted in the development of a Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool.

The Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool draws on national and international research findings and the experience of school leaders involved in the Incubator in their work to cultivate collective efficacy.

The Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool consists of three inter-related domains in which collective efficacy can be enacted: school, leaders and teachers. The tool also outlines four phases of maturity at which collective efficacy may develop in a school: awareness, emerging, establishing and sustaining. Each phase of maturity includes indicators to support schools in diagnosing the extent to which collective efficacy is evident in their school, and to identify areas of focus for development. Each domain includes indicators are grouped into five core elements:

- 1 Trust:** People feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, and challenge one another.
- 2 Shared sense of purpose:** People believe they can make more progress together than on their own.
- 3 Structures and support:** There is an infrastructure that supports authentic opportunities to learn with and from one another.
- 4 Evidence-informed priorities:** Priorities for improving student outcomes are based on school-based evidence and on research.
- 5 Quality teaching and learning:** Effective practices are continually developed and shared.

While diagnosing the phase of maturity at which collective efficacy has been developed in a school, teams identify evidence to support their diagnostic decisions against each indicator within the domains.

Although the Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool has been designed to enable a judgement in relation to each domain separately, experience with similar diagnostics suggests that the most effective way to use the Tool is to make observations and gather evidence broadly about a school's practices before focusing on individual domains. Following diagnosis, schools can identify areas of priority for further development and plan ways to progress to indicators at the next phase of maturity for these areas. An annotated example of a section of the Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool is displayed on the following page. It shows annotations for one element, trust, in one domain, school.

I'm working on intentional culture-building to create an environment of impact and measure where we are adding value to the outcomes of our students. I think about this on a continuum of maturity where we are going through processes of growth and development in building collective efficacy. - Principal

An example of a section of the Collective Efficacy Tracking tool showing annotations for one element, trust, in one domain, school.

Domain: SCHOOL				
	Phase: AWARENESS	Phase: EMERGING	Phase: ESTABLISHING	Phase: SUSTAINING
Element: TRUST	There's recognition of a need to build greater trust within the school to foster a collective approach to improving student outcomes.	Building trust is prioritised using deliberate and intentional strategies.	Staff are developing trust in their immediate colleagues due to established norms and protocols for how to work together.	A broader, school-wide sense of trust in colleagues has developed into a sense of collective responsibility for all learners.

Evidence used:
Discussion with the Leadership Team and recent school review data.

Current state commentary:

We've worked hard to build trust within the Leadership Team and this team has been working hard to have the trust and confidence of staff.

We've established protocols about how we work together, however we need to revisit these.

Some staff comment that they feel clear about their roles and what they are accountable for, and that there is a great deal of trust with each other and the leaders. This varies between teams.

The School Staff Survey indicates levels of 'trust amongst colleagues' has increased from a 35% positive endorsement (in 2020) to 75% positive endorsement (in 2021).

Future state commentary:

We'd like to build a broader sense of trust across the school so that we share responsibility for all learners. To do this, we're going to look at further developing goals and cycles of inquiry, across teams, to strengthen ownership and connection to the school improvement priorities and we're going to spend more time across faculties getting to know each other.

5

Technical and adaptive leadership skills to lead collective efficacy

The Incubator has identified five leadership domains which underpin the leadership of collective efficacy:

- Understanding collective efficacy
- Systems leadership
- Transformational change leadership
- Team leadership
- Collaborative capacity.

Each of these are underpinned by technical and adaptive skills. Technical skills relate to leader's specialised knowledge and expertise to perform specific tasks. Adaptive skills relate to leader's ability to respond and adapt to changing circumstances to drive continuous improvement and transformational change.

The 4 A's of adaptive leadership (Ramalingam, B. et al 2020) include:

- Anticipation of likely future needs, trends and options
- Articulation of these to build collective understanding and support for action
- Adaption so that there is continuous learning and adjustment of responses as necessary
- Accountability, including maximum transparency in decision making process and openness to challenge and feedback.

Many approaches to school leadership provide limited opportunities to foster technical and adaptive skills. Career development and progression is often based on a combination of years of service and opportunities available within the context in which you work, rather than a strategic and systematic approach.

In school systems across Australia, there are few advancement points from a teacher role through to the role of school principal (DET, 2018). Generally, there are four main advancement points: teacher, leading teacher, assistant principal and principal (different terms are used for these categories across jurisdictions).

Often at the teacher level, incremental advancements occur each year until a ceiling point is reached. Advancement to the remaining categories assumes certain leadership capabilities to fulfil the demands of these roles. However, compared to other professions, there is limited precision around descriptions of, and the skills required, for various school leadership roles.

School leaders have told us that to identify and develop leadership in others, they really need to have a framing or a model that they can draw on to think about the skills that they need to develop in others and what these might look like.

As shown in Figure 3, a pathway in the corporate context includes fine-grained leadership roles that more explicitly build capability, according to a progression. Each level details increasing leadership responsibilities and capabilities, and signals a shift in development to include a stronger emphasis on adaptive skills.

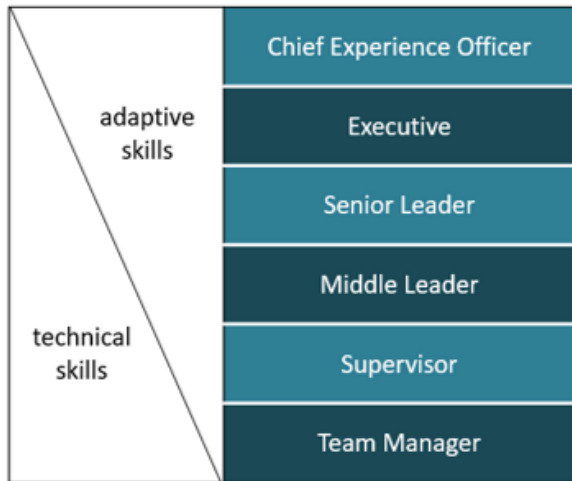


Figure 3. A leadership pathway in the corporate sector

The four main advancement points in the school sector suffer both a lack of nuanced descriptive power, and a lack of emphasis and progression in technical and adaptive skills. Finer-grained role descriptions and clearly articulated career pathways that enable technical and adaptive leadership skills to be developed, are needed in schools to grow and advance leadership in the profession.

The work of the Incubator has identified the need for strategic and systematic ways to develop leadership skills to ensure that leadership development in schools is not based on assumed readiness for advancement, or left to chance based on available (and inconsistent) opportunities.

School leaders involved in the Incubator have identified the important and unique opportunity the Fellowship has provided for their own development, including the strong emphasis on adaptive skills. They have also indicated that the focus on supporting their leadership teams to cultivate collective efficacy has positively impacted how they grow and develop leadership across all school levels.



2019 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Christopher Short, Principal,
Berwick Chase Primary School



2019 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Karen Snibson, Principal,
Phoenix P-12 Community College



2021 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Maria Karvouni, Principal,
Auburn High School



2022 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Anthony Boys, Principal,
Marist Catholic College



NEXT STEPS

As signalled in the leadership challenge, the school leadership pipeline is in crisis. The work of the Incubator indicates that to address this crisis, we need to rethink and reframe how school leadership development occurs, acknowledge collective efficacy as a strategic pillar for school improvement, and support schools to understand and cultivate collective efficacy. This is imperative to leaders being equipped and empowered to lead effectively in increasingly complex and challenging contexts.

Digitising the Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool

As described earlier, the Collective Efficacy Tracking Tool has played a significant role in supporting schools to understand, diagnose and cultivate collective efficacy. Until recently, the Tool was available in a static text form, with users manually selecting and highlighting the elements and phases related to their context, and adding commentary regarding evidence for their selections. While this approach worked well on a small scale, it became apparent that the Tool's format could be improved to make it more effective.

The Tool is currently being digitised to facilitate accessibility and ease of use, and to enrich processes for sharing perspectives and tracking development. Each of these will support scalability.

The digital version of the Tool is housed in an online platform in the form of learning 'kits'. The kits enable teams working together in schools to:

- increase their understanding of the different elements of collective efficacy and how it can be developed along phases of maturity.
- diagnose the status of collective efficacy in their context
- identify areas and plan possible actions for strengthening collective efficacy.

Fostering strong teams to build collective efficacy

High functioning teams are essential to cultivating collective efficacy. However, simply providing opportunities for people to work in teams does not assure productive outcomes. Effective team work requires strong relationships, collaborative skills, and shared purpose, which all need to be built.

We needed to work out what collective efficacy was, we needed to pull it apart. The Collective Efficacy Tool supported our staff to understand what it is, and how to develop it. - Principal

To support schools to strengthen collective efficacy and build high functioning teams, the Incubator is collaborating with a technology company to create an online platform, Rising Team for Schools.

The platform aims to empower leaders and teams to track collective efficacy and build engaged, connected and successful teams. It does this through a series of kits that school teams work through together, completing one kit approximately every six weeks. Each learning kit takes between 60 and 90 minutes to complete and focuses on a particular team skill or an aspect of collective efficacy. Examples of these kits include Psychological safety, Appreciation, Natural talents, and Collective Efficacy at School.

Unlike traditional leadership and team development methods that might be delivered through training courses (without the tools to engage teams), or through facilitators (that can be expensive and don't afford scale), the Rising Team for Schools platform provides software-driven, interactive team sessions.

This year the prototype (beta version) has been tested, with a full pilot planned for next year. Expressions of interest to join this pilot are being sought in early 2023.

Benefits of the Rising Team for Schools platform include:

- it helps leaders learn key concepts and actively practice them with their teams
- it gets people reflecting, discussing and connecting
- it's easy to work through, with discussion prompts, embedded interactive activities, and action items with reminders in each kit
- everyone gets to keep the results
- it can be used anytime, online or face to face
- it scales affordably to every team, and includes team members, helping them feel valued
- it can be customised at the school level with kit selection based on needs and context.



Codifying approaches to collective efficacy leadership

As noted earlier, finer-grained role descriptions are needed in schools to support leadership development and articulate the kinds of leadership required to build collective efficacy in complex and challenging contexts. Understanding the school leadership pipeline at a more granular level is imperative to addressing the leadership challenge.

To support this endeavour, the Incubator is working on articulating a detailed and more nuanced description of the principal role and codifying the technical and adaptive skill sets required for school leadership.

This will involve identifying the definitional aspects of the principal role and describing the requisite skills and attributes that leaders must display to perform in this role successfully. For example, this will include consideration of key stakeholders, decision-rights, cognitive skills, and behavioural competencies, and so forth.

The next stage of the Incubator's work, includes developing a wrap around digitised leadership development platform to compliment the Rising Team for Schools tool and support school leaders to strengthen the technical and adaptive skills required to foster collective efficacy.

It's actually about exploring and building a more sustainable and systemic approach to educational leadership at the school and broader system level.

Join us

The Incubator is strongly committed to sharing insights and learning from others. We believe that together we can have a greater impact in provoking action at policy and practice level to strengthen the leadership pipeline.

We invite you to join us in 2023

- Sign up for the Menzies School Leadership Incubator Updates
- Register for the 2023 Menzies School Leadership Webinar Series
- Apply to join the Rising Team for School Pilot
- Contact us if your research/work connects with any of the questions we are exploring

Contact us





2022 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Anne Stout, Principal,
Port Melbourne Secondary College



2022 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Nick Lovering, Principal,
Katherine High School



2021 Menzies School Leader Fellow
Michelle Carroll, Principal,
St Catherine's School



SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: MENZIES SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR

The Menzies School Leadership Incubator provides a testing and learning space for deep inquiry into the school leadership challenge. This section provides an overview of the Incubator's purpose, partnership, and process, and describes the Menzies School Leader Fellowship activities.



The Incubator

Purpose

As noted earlier, the leadership challenge is focused on systemic changes needed to build a pipeline of school leaders who are equipped to lead well in increasingly challenging and complex school contexts – ultimately, a pipeline that will result in improved outcomes for all Australian school students.

Applying core features of business incubation such as a range of dedicated supports and resourcing, together with deliberate and cultivated practices of shared reflection and sense-making, and specific systems for measuring, monitoring and evaluating progress and results, the Menzies Incubator acts as a catalyst for school leadership development.

The Incubator focuses on leading collective efficacy in the school environment, acknowledging that collective teacher efficacy is a critical element of school improvement and educational outcomes. Working as an incubator provides an ideal testing and learning space for deep inquiry into this challenge – inquiry that is innovative and solution oriented, strategic and scalable.

The complexity of the school leadership roles across Australia is seen to be beyond the capacity of a single leader in a school; collective efficacy provides a way to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of school leaders, and build engagement and leadership of their colleagues (Field, 2021).

The Incubator seeks to impact leaders' schools, generate evidence-based innovations and practice-based evidence of what helps and hinders growing a pipeline of school leaders. It aims to spread and scale successful approaches to the leadership challenge through partnerships and collaborations with others across the education system, and contribute to lasting change in Australian schools.

The Fellowship is a power boost, a sharpened focus on how to build collective efficacy and how to lead differently. – Principal

Partnership

The Menzies School Leadership Incubator is a multi-sector collaboration that brings together creative minds from education, corporate and philanthropic sectors. The Incubator is led by ACER, working in partnership with the Menzies Foundation and cross-sectoral experts including, school leaders, an advisory board and a collaborative team. These experts support 'sandpits' of innovation, and work together to generate insights, codify (document and record) processes, and identify levers for systemic change to address the leadership challenge.

The intention is that this grouping of experts will collectively create outcomes that are more than the sum of separate individual efforts.

Process

The Incubator has been investigating approaches to empowered leadership in challenging and complex school contexts, with an explicit focus on increasing the capabilities of leaders to build collective efficacy.

With the leadership challenge as the focus, the Incubator is employing a design, test, learn and adapt – sandpit – approach to understand the leadership required to lead and grow collective efficacy, and develop such leadership capabilities. Through a series of sandpit 'play', including a fellowship of leadership development activities and school-based collective efficacy strategies, new ways of working, forms of collaboration, and insights are emerging. These insights are shared in this paper's 'What we're learning' section.

Since the Incubator was established in 2019, several publications and tools have been produced, and a national symposium conducted. Since this time, three cohorts of school leaders have been involved in the Menzies School Leader Fellowship.



The Fellowship

Acting as the primary sandpit for the Incubator, the Fellowship engages cohorts of school leaders in a two-year leadership development initiative that harnesses the cross-sector expertise within the Incubator to understand how to build a pipeline of talented school leaders to take on the challenges and complexities of the role. Unlike typical approaches to school leadership development, there is an explicit focus on increasing the capability of leaders to build collective efficacy, and codifying these approaches. The Fellowship gives school leaders the opportunity to trial strategies and interventions focused on enhancing collective efficacy within their school and leader-colleague teams.

This is singularly the most impactful leadership development that I've done in my 30 years in education. - Principal

The Fellowship is intentionally adaptive and responsive to needs and insights, and as such it has evolved over time. This evolution has included the development of an inquiry model that informs the Fellowship design (see Figure 1).

The Fellowship includes a suite of activities designed to inform and develop the leadership of collective efficacy to improve student outcomes.

The suite includes:

Diagnostics: A variety of diagnostics to inform understanding of leaders and their contexts.

Implementation of collective efficacy strategy: Opportunities for leaders to trial and codify approaches to building collective efficacy.

Group practice sessions: Collaborative sessions to build on and learn about relevant skills.

Individual practice: Deliberate daily practices for leaders to build relevant capabilities.

Leadership coaching: Individual sessions to support leadership efforts focused on building collective efficacy.

Peer learning: Working with colleagues to engage in reflection and sense-making.

These Fellowship activities inform the Incubator inquiry through regular data collection and analysis cycles, sense-making, and reporting.



Menzies School Leadership Incubator Advisory Board

Advisory Board Members include:

- **Tom Bentley** (Chair), Executive Director for Policy and Impact, RMIT
- **Dr. Sean Butler**, Foundation Principal, Preston High School
- **Adam Canwell**, Global Lead, Leadership Services, EY
- **Dr. Kerry Elliott**, Senior Research Fellow, ACER
- **Liz Gillies**, CEO, Menzies Foundation
- **Kathryn Greiner AO**, Director, Menzies Foundation
- **Emeritus Laureate Professor John Hattie**, University of Melbourne, Chair, Board of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- **Katherine Henderson**, Honorary Senior Fellow, University of Melbourne
- **Dr. Hilary Hollingsworth**, Principal Research Fellow, ACER
- **Frances Maguire**, Director, Menzies Foundation
- **Rachael McLennan**, Executive Director, People for Purpose
- **Anna Young**, Executive, Leadership and Talent, NAB

Menzies School Leader Fellows

2019:

- **Georgia Heffernan**, Deputy Principal at Catholic Ladies College, Eltham, VIC
- **Tim O'Leary**, Director of Learning at St John's College, Preston, VIC
- **Christopher Short**, Principal at Berwick Chase Primary School, Narre Warren South, VIC
- **Karen Snibson**, Principal at Phoenix P-12 Community College, Sebastopol, VIC
- **James Taylor**, Assistant Principal at Richmond High School, Richmond, VIC

2021:

- **Michelle Carroll**, Principal at St Catherine's School, VIC
- **Kate Dullard**, Principal at Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School, VIC
- **Kate Fogarty**, Principal at Assumption College, VIC
- **Maria Karvouni**, Principal at Auburn High School, VIC
- **Aaron Petersen**, Assistant Principal at Glen Eira College, VIC
- **Judith Weir**, Principal at Our Lady of Mercy College, VIC

2022:

- **Carolyn Blenden**, Principal at Warakirri College, Fairfield and Blacktown, NSW
- **Anthony Boys**, Principal at Marist Catholic College North Shore, NSW
- **Nick Lovering**, Principal at Katherine High School, NT
- **Anne Stout**, Principal at Port Melbourne Secondary College, VIC

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About the authors



Dr Kerry Elliott

Kerry works as a Senior Research Fellow at ACER. Kerry has extensive experience in the education sector and works nationally and internationally to advance education policy and practice. She has worked in various education sectors including positions as a researcher, school leader, university lecturer and designer of teacher and leader development initiatives. Her research interests include school leadership, collective efficacy, teacher professional learning, and school improvement.



Dr Hilary Hollingsworth

Hilary is a Principal Research Fellow at ACER and has over 30 years of experience working in a wide range of educational contexts nationally and internationally. She has expert knowledge in the fields of teaching quality; teacher and leader professional learning; teacher standards; instructional leadership; classroom observation frameworks and the use of video; communicating student learning progress, and mathematics teaching and learning. Hilary's work is strategically focused on enhancing and shaping teaching and school leadership policy and practice.



Aiden Thornton

Aiden has over 20 years of global experience across Australia, Asia, Europe and North America in management consulting, industry and academic roles. As a leadership consultant, Aiden is frequently sought after to collaborate on critical interventions. He brings a depth of experience working at senior management and executive levels in multiple industry sectors. As a leadership scientist, Aiden is deeply immersed in leadership theory and research which has emerged over the past 80+ years. He has a general interest in integrative conceptions of leadership, and a specific interest in the intersection between leadership and global complexity.



Liz Gillies

Liz was appointed CEO of the Menzies Foundation in 2018 and in this capacity launched a catalytic strategy to address pressing leadership challenges, raise the profile and importance of 'outstanding leadership' and build a leadership movement that encourages Australians to reflect on leadership, pivot to purpose, build their own leadership capability and contribute to the 'greater good'. She has had over twenty-five years' experience in a range of fields that compliment working for social impact and has held roles in multiple sectors and academia.



Katherine Henderson

Katherine has extensive experience in education and leadership including roles in the education and health sectors. She has held positions as Deputy Secretary Education and Regional Director in the Department of Education and Training Victoria, and as the CEO Health in the Northern Territory.

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