



# Year 8, 10 and 12 students' views and experiences in Collective ed. schools in 2021

Report for the Independent Impact Evaluation of Outcomes for Students from Collective ed.

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# Table of contents

Executive summary .....	i
Section 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Research aims .....	1
1.2 Research approach .....	2
1.3 Response rate .....	3
1.4 Paper versus online surveys .....	4
1.5 Straight-line responses .....	4
1.6 Outline of the report .....	4
Section 2: Findings .....	5
2.1 ACARA general capabilities .....	5
2.1.1 Literacy .....	6
2.1.2 Numeracy .....	7
2.1.3 Information and communication technology capability .....	8
2.1.4 Critical and creative thinking .....	9
2.1.5 Personal and social capability .....	10
2.1.6 Ethical understanding .....	11
2.1.7 Intercultural understanding .....	12
2.2 Engagement .....	13
2.2.1 Behavioural engagement .....	13
2.2.2 Emotional engagement .....	16
2.2.3 Cognitive engagement .....	18
2.3 Social capital .....	20
2.3.1 Social capital – part 1 .....	21
2.3.2 Social capital – part 2 .....	22
2.4 Value of completing Year 12 .....	24
2.5 Mobility .....	26
2.6 Plans for the future .....	27
Section 3: Conclusion .....	29
Reference list .....	30

## List of figures

Figure 1: 2019 and 2021 survey response rates .....	3
Figure 2: ACARA general capability: literacy.....	6
Figure 3: ACARA general capability: numeracy.....	7
Figure 4: ACARA general capability: ICT.....	8
Figure 5: ACARA general capability: Critical and creative thinking.....	9
Figure 6: ACARA general capability: personal and social.....	10
Figure 7: ACARA general capability: ethical understanding .....	11
Figure 8: ACARA general capability: intercultural understanding .....	12
Figure 9: Behavioural engagement .....	14
Figure 10: Behavioural engagement (reversed items).....	14
Figure 11: Behavioural engagement, average responses (based on all items) .....	15
Figure 12: Emotional engagement.....	16
Figure 13: Emotional engagement (reversed items) .....	16
Figure 14: Emotional engagement, average responses (based on all items) .....	17
Figure 15: Cognitive engagement – learning strategies .....	18
Figure 16: Cognitive engagement – additional effort.....	19
Figure 17: Cognitive engagement, average responses (based on all items).....	19
Figure 18: Social capital: work experiences .....	21
Figure 19: Social capital: leisure experiences .....	22
Figure 20: Social capital: importance of various people’s advice about future plans .....	23
Figure 21: Value of completing Year 12.....	24
Figure 22: Where do you think you will live after school? .....	26

## Glossary

ACARA	The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DoE	Department of Education Tasmania
ICT	Information and communication technology
MCEETYA	Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UTAS	University of Tasmania

## Executive summary

Collective ed. is an initiative hosted by the Beacon Foundation, working to identify and test practices aimed at improving Year 12 attainment, or equivalent, as well as post-school pathways for students in six Tasmanian communities between 2017-2021.

The Beacon Foundation has commissioned the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania to undertake an independent impact evaluation of the project focusing on outcomes for students.

This report provides findings from a student survey conducted with Year 8 (n=272), Year 10 (n=225) and Year 12 (n=43) students at the six schools in Term 2 and 3, 2021. The overall response rate was 50.5%.

The survey focused on valued elements of outcomes from Collective ed. collaboratively determined by key stakeholders through several workshops in 2017.

### ACARA general capabilities

The ACARA general capabilities represent the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that are valued as outcomes from Collective ed. The survey had two items for each of these seven general capabilities.

Below are the proportions of students who agreed or strongly agreed their school helped with each item.

- Literacy:
  - 45% Put my ideas clearly in writing
  - 43% Explain my ideas clearly when talking to people
- Numeracy:
  - 47% Solve problems with mathematics
  - 44% Use mathematics in day-to-day life
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
  - 52% Know what online information is trustworthy
  - 52% Create documents with computer programs
- Critical and creative thinking
  - 50% Come up with creative ideas
  - 43% Figure out the best solution to problems I am facing
- Personal and social
  - 60% Work well with others to complete a task
  - 54% Get on well with other people
- Ethical understanding
  - 60% Treat others fairly
  - 51% Stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree
- Intercultural understanding
  - 73% Respect people from different cultures
  - 38% Understand about my own culture

## Engagement

It is widely recognised that engagement is not only about behaviour but has multiple dimensions. This research distinguishes between behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement, and used an existing validated instrument on those dimensions, supplemented with three questions about attendance.

Below are the proportions of students with high and low engagement on each dimension.

- Behavioural engagement
  - 59% High
  - 11% Low
- Emotional engagement
  - 21% High
  - 42% Low
- Cognitive engagement
  - 19% High
  - 57% Low

## Social capital

In the context of Collective ed., social capital relates primarily to relationships, resources and opportunities that can act as enablers or constraints that influence whether young people in Tasmania complete upper secondary education and move into meaningful post-school pathways.

Below are the proportions of students who 'very often' or 'all of the time' engage in specific activities outside school.

- Work-related
  - 62% Help my family (e.g. helping around the house, caring for family members)
  - 26% Work for pay
  - 13% Unpaid work experience
  - 7% Volunteer work
- Leisure related
  - 59% Spend time with friends online
  - 51% Spend time with friends in person
  - 40% After-school activities (e.g. music, sport, drama)

Below are the proportions of students who considered advice from the following people 'very important' for thinking about their plans for the future.

- Family
  - 73% Parents/guardians
  - 36% Brothers/sisters
  - 36% Other relatives
- Other adults
  - 35% Adults at my school
  - 26% Adults in my workplace
  - 17% Adults in my community
- Friends
  - 37% Friends at school
  - 32% Friends outside of school

## Completing Year 12

The ultimate goal of Collective ed. is to help more young Tasmanians to finish Year 12. In the survey we asked students their views about the possible value of completing Year 12, as an indication towards this goal.

Below are the proportions of students who agreed with each item.

- Completing Year 12 will ...
  - 73% Help me get skills for a job
  - 71% Help me develop my career goals
  - 70% Be useful if I want to go to university
  - 68% Open up more opportunities for me
  - 67% Be useful to get an apprenticeship
  - 65% Make my family proud
  - 52% Be a good way of staying with my friends

## Mobility

Staying in or moving away from one's location is related to social capital and also has implications for young people's future

Below are the proportions of students for three options.

- Where do you think you will live after high school?
  - 36% In the same area where I live now
  - 35% In a different area in Tasmania
  - 29% Outside Tasmania

## Conclusion

Collective ed. is not an experiment taking place under 'laboratory' conditions. Rather, it has occurred alongside many other changes in schools and communities that influence the impact the project intends to have, such as the implementation of the Education Act 2016 and of the extension school model, as well as changes that are specific to certain localities.

Therefore—as is usual in longitudinal and applied social research—it is impossible to unequivocally attribute outcomes to Collective ed. The purpose of this report is simply to describe the responses to the survey, which we hope is useful information for the schools and the Collective ed. team.

In our final report at the end of 2022, we will synthesise analyses of all the data to document various outcomes for young people in the six schools, develop insights into how Collective ed. has contributed to these, and answer the project's research questions.

# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Research aims

Collective ed. is an initiative funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation and the Tasmanian state government, and led by the Beacon Foundation.<sup>1</sup> The project aims to identify and test practices for improving Year 12 attainment, or equivalent, as well as post-school pathways for students in six Tasmanian communities between 2017-2021. The six Tasmanian schools taking part in the project are:

- Bayview Secondary College
- Deloraine High School
- Jordan River Learning Federation – Senior School
- Port Dalrymple School
- Sorell School
- Ulverstone Secondary College

The Beacon Foundation has commissioned the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania to undertake an independent impact evaluation of the project. The key aim of this impact evaluation is to assess to what extent and how Collective ed. contributed to benefits for students. Additional evaluation of other aspects of Collective ed. is undertaken within the Beacon Foundation and by other agencies.

The research questions below guide the impact evaluation and are based on the Collective ed. Theory of Change developed collaboratively with a range of stakeholders in 2017:

- 1) In the participating schools, by the end of Collective ed.:
  - a. To what extent has the proportion of students completing upper secondary education (Year 12 or equivalent) changed from the starting point?
  - b. To what extent do students move into meaningful post-school pathways, locally and elsewhere?
  
- 2) In the participating schools, through Collective ed.:
  - a. What kinds of connections and social capital do students gain access to (and how?)
  - b. What signs of behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement with learning do students demonstrate?
  - c. What kinds of 21<sup>st</sup> century capabilities are fostered in students (and how?)

Questions 1a and 1b address the core outcomes expected from Collective ed.

Questions 2a, 2b and 2c address additional valuable outcomes that also form contributors to the core outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.beaconfoundation.com.au/what-we-do/collective-ed/>



This impact evaluation consists of four phases:

- Phase 1
  - a. Collection of baseline data through a survey of Year 8 and 10 students at the six schools
  - b. Follow up survey two years later
- Phase 2 – scan of Collective ed. activities in the six schools to establish the landscape of initiatives
- Phase 3 – selection of a small number of initiatives from the landscape to develop as case studies
- Phase 4 – collection of data from the Department of Education Tasmania (DoE) and the Collective ed. team, for comparative purposes

The Peter Underwood Centre completed Phase 1a of the impact evaluation in 2019 and the report is available at the Centre's website:

<https://www.utas.edu.au/underwood-centre/publications-and-resources/reports>

This report provides findings from Phase 1b of the in 2021.

## **1.2 Research approach**

The primary objective of the survey was to capture data in relation to three specific aspects of the Theory of Change for Collective ed. (research questions 2a, 2b and 2c):

- Connections and social capital
- Behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement with learning
- 21<sup>st</sup> century capabilities

While research questions 1a and 1b can only be measured after completion of the Collective ed. intervention, a secondary objective of the survey was to gauge insight for research questions 1a and 1b by asking about the value of completing Year 12 and offering the opportunity for students to specify their plans for the future.

The 2019 report provides detailed information about the development of the survey instrument. The same instrument was used in 2021.

The initial implementation of the survey in 2019 received approval from the Research Assessment and Approval Committee (RAAC) of DoE [ref 2018-56] and from the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania [ref H0017699]. In 2021 these approvals were updated through an amendment process with each committee, for implementing the survey in Term 3, 2021 with Year 8, 10 and 12.

For parents/carers the research team received permission from both committees to use passive consent with an opt-out process, by providing information about the survey to parents/carers in advance. For students, active consent was sought through the information to participants and consent embedded as the preamble to the survey; as well as a user-friendly flyer. Students were made aware through both the preamble and flyer that they could decline to take part by simply not completing and submitting the survey.

The survey was anonymous, protecting the identity of students who contributed their views and experiences.

### 1.3 Response rate

Across the six schools, there were 1069 students in Years 8, 10 and 12, of whom 540 participated in the survey. This makes for an overall response rate to the survey of 50.5%, which is high for a voluntary survey with young people.

However, there was variance in response rates between schools, with four schools having over 50% of students responding, but two schools around one-third. The graph below indicates the response rate for each school (labelled A-F for confidentiality) in 2019 and in 2021.

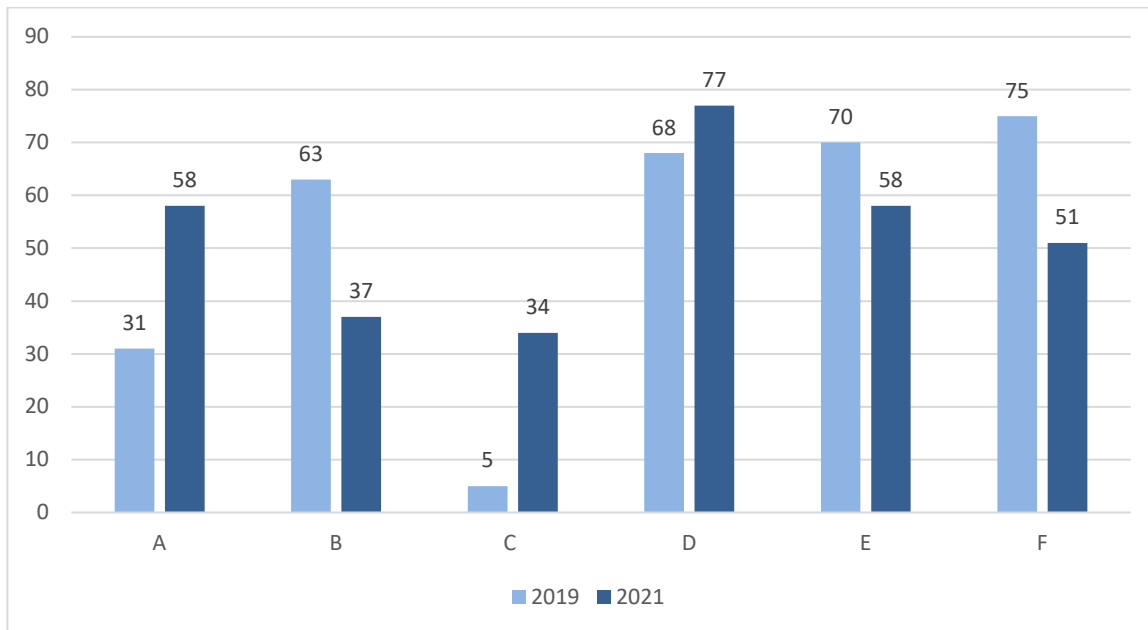


Figure 1: 2019 and 2021 survey response rates

The proportion of student from each school varies significantly between the two time points. Therefore, in this report we are not providing comparisons between the 2019 and 2021 responses across the full six schools, since these differences may be due to that variation. Instead, we will conduct more fine grained analysis later this year to determine any change over time.

Of the 540 students who took part:

- Year 8 – 272
- Year 10 – 225
- Year 12 - 43

Further, students identified as:

- Female – 233
- Male – 257
- Other – 37
- Didn't provide any information about gender – 13
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander – 122
- Non-Aboriginal – 400
- Didn't provide any information about background – 18

## ***1.4 Paper versus online surveys***

It is worth noting that some of the students who submitted a paper survey did not complete all of the questions, whereas those students who submitted an online survey were required to complete all of the questions to reach the 'submit' button.

If a student did not answer all of the questions in the paper survey but provided information about the school they attend and their year level, their responses were still counted in the individual school reports. If a student did not answer all of the questions in the paper survey and also did not mark the school they attend, their responses cannot be counted in the reports we will provide to each individual school. However, they are counted in the findings in this report.

We see their submission of the paper survey to the teacher administering it as evidence that they wished their responses to be counted. The research team realised that missing responses can bias the overall results, but considered it more important to respect the effort made and contribution by these students. Paper responses were manually entered into SurveyMonkey prior to analysis.

## ***1.5 Straight-line responses***

While analysing the survey results, the research team identified nine respondents from three schools for whom it appeared that they engaged in 'straight-lining' throughout the entire Collective ed. survey – that is, they chose answers down the same column on a page. This seems to indicate that they did not reflect on or provide genuine responses to the questions, perhaps to complete the survey more quickly.

Cole, McCormick & Gonyea (2012, p. 3) note that straight-lining on a given set of survey items does not in itself signify a data quality problem, as 'a respondent may have thoughtfully considered and responded to each item, but the end result is a set of identical responses'. Cole et al. (2012) looked at how frequently sets of items were straight-lined in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and found that in some sets it was as many as one in five respondents. The literature on straight-lining advises that such responses can be 'cleaned-out' of the data before analysis, but we have chosen not to remove these types of responses from our analysis:

- As only a small number of respondents engaged in straight-lining (2.2%);
- In recognition of the fact that these students did choose to complete and submit the survey.

## ***1.6 Outline of the report***

Findings are presented in section 2, for six key aspects:

- 2.1 ACARA general capabilities
- 2.2 Engagement
- 2.3 Social capital
- 2.4 Value of Year 12
- 2.5 Mobility
- 2.6 Specific plans for the future

The report ends with a brief concluding section, outlining next steps for the research.

## Section 2: Findings

We have used stacked bar charts to show the overall results of the survey across all six schools. Each bar displays the total percentage (100%), broken down into sub-amount percentages (rather than absolute values). The exception to this is Figure 20 where a number of students selected 'N/A' as their response to some of these categories. We have not included these responses in the bar graph. Please note that percentages may not always add up to a total of 100% due to rounding.

We also ran analyses to determine any differences between groups, for example based on year level, gender and Aboriginal background. Where there was a difference of 10% or more in responses between groups, this has been reported in the relevant 'key take-away points' section. An exception was applied to this when looking at responses from students who identified their gender as 'other'. Given that this applied to such a small number of students (N=37, or 7%), we note differences in responses of 25% or more, rather than 10%.

### 2.1 ACARA general capabilities

In the Collective ed. project, the focus is not only on increasing the 'quantity' of students who attain Year 12 but also on the quality of their learning experience so that young people are ready to enter the new world of work. There is widespread agreement about the importance of foundational capacities for this, that are not tied to any specific learning area or discipline (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009; Care & Luo, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2016).

In Australia, these kinds of 21<sup>st</sup> century capabilities are represented well by the ACARA general capabilities, as these general capabilities 'encompass knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (ACARA, n.d.). In the Australian Curriculum, students are considered to have developed capability when they apply such knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in their learning at school and in their lives outside school.

The general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum are:

1. Literacy
2. Numeracy
3. Information and communication technology (ICT)
4. Critical and creative thinking
5. Personal and social
6. Ethical understanding
7. Intercultural understanding

Below, we provide a summary of the trends in the data across all schools for the seven ACARA general capabilities, each of which is represented by two items.

Across all fourteen items a minority of students (ranging from 6% to 19%) disagreed that school helped them to develop a particular capability and a relatively large proportion (ranging from 20% to 43%) gave a neutral response. There are, however, differences between the seven capabilities and fourteen items, as shown below.

### 2.1.1 Literacy

In the Australian Curriculum, students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society. Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts. Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school.<sup>2</sup>

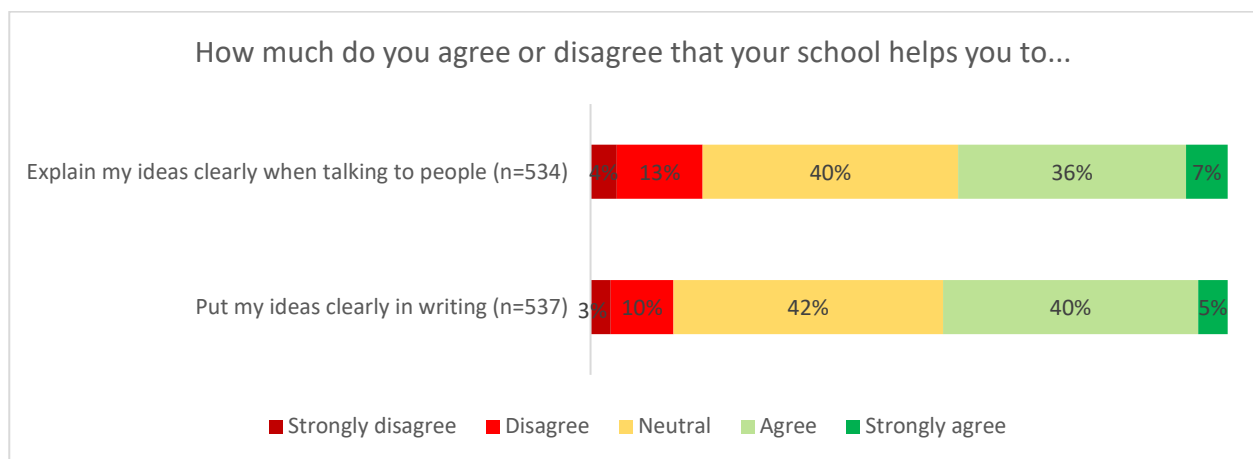


Figure 2: ACARA general capability: literacy

The key take away points are:

- Less than half of all students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them in relation to written literacy (45%) and oral literacy (43%).
- The proportions who strongly agree are low for both literacy and numeracy compared to the other general capabilities.
- Of the 14 statements included in the ACARA general capability question, literacy received amongst the highest neutral response across both items.
- There was some difference in responses between students of Aboriginal background (N=121, or 23% of the students) and those who are not:
  - A lower proportion of Aboriginal students (34% vs 48%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to put their ideas clearly in writing.

<sup>2</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/>

### 2.1.2 Numeracy

In the Australian Curriculum, students become numerate as they develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics confidently across other learning areas at school and in their lives more broadly. Numeracy encompasses the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations. It involves students recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.<sup>3</sup>

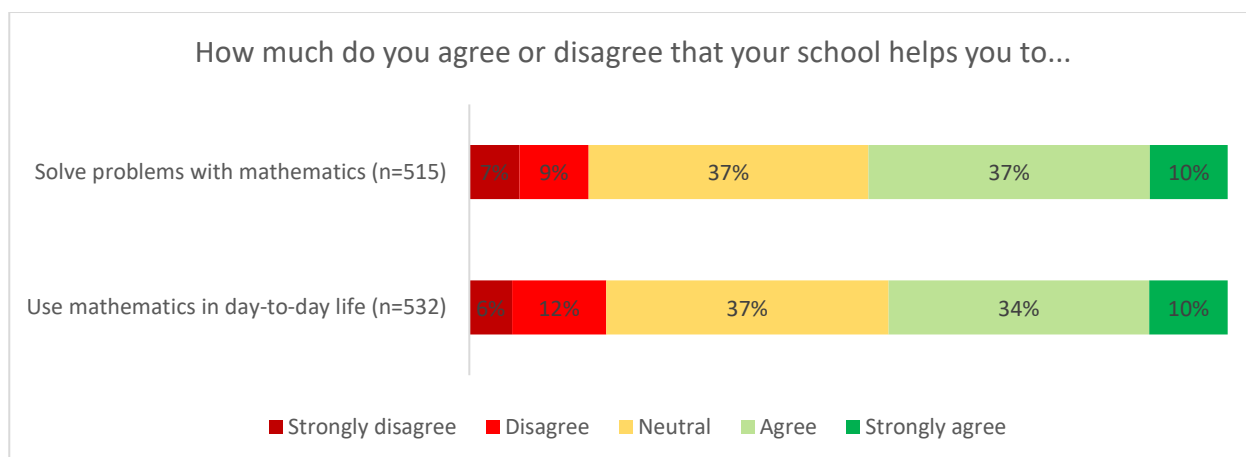


Figure 3: ACARA general capability: numeracy

The key take away points are:

- Almost half (47%) of all students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to solve problems with mathematics.
- 18% are negative about using mathematics in day-to-day life, and 16% of students are negative about help from school in relation to solving problems with mathematics.
- There was some difference based on gender:
  - a higher proportion of male than female students (62% versus 46%) agreed or strongly agreed that 'school helps them to use mathematics in their day-to-day life'.
- There was some difference based on Aboriginal background:
  - a lower proportion of Aboriginal students (34% vs 51%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to 'solve problems with mathematics'.

<sup>3</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/numeracy/>

### 2.1.3 Information and communication technology capability

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school. ICT capability involves students learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

To participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future, students need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ICT work for them at school, at home, at work and in their communities.<sup>4</sup>

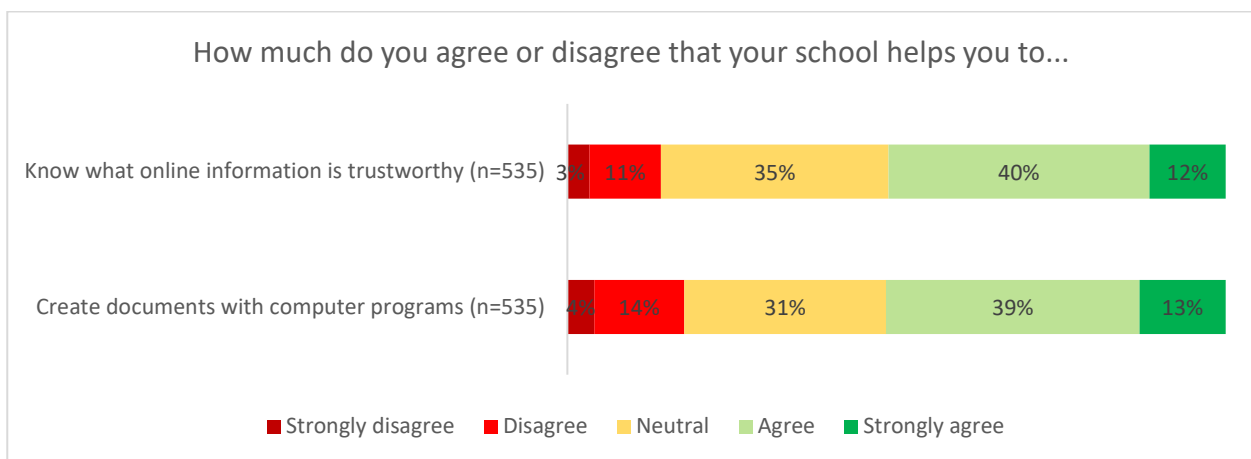


Figure 4: ACARA general capability: ICT

The key take away points are:

- Over half of all students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to ‘know what online information is trustworthy’ (52%) and to ‘create documents with computer programs’ (52%).
- This is one of three capabilities where half or more of students responded positively to both items.
- There was some difference based on Aboriginal background:
  - a lower proportion of Aboriginal students (42% vs 54%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to ‘know what online information is trustworthy’.

<sup>4</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability/>

### 2.1.4 Critical and creative thinking

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking involves students thinking broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.<sup>5</sup>

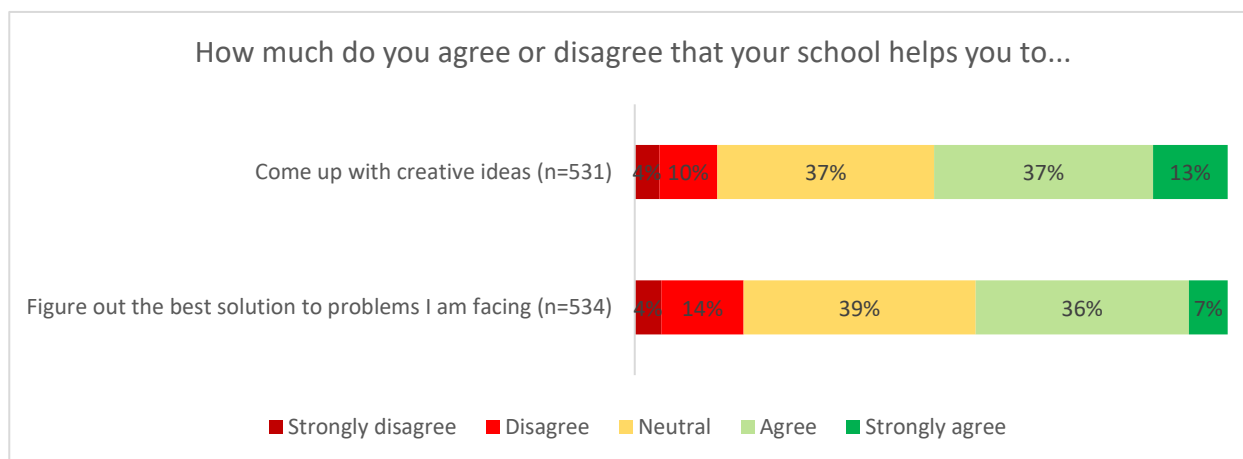


Figure 5: ACARA general capability: Critical and creative thinking

The key take away points are:

- Half (50%) of all students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to come up with creative ideas.
- A lower proportion (43%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to figure out the best solution to problems you are facing.
- There was some difference based on Aboriginal background:
  - a lower proportion of Aboriginal students (36% vs 45%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps you to figure out the best solution to problems you are facing.
- There was some difference based on year level:
  - 41% of Year 8 and Year 10 students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to figure out the best solution to problems you are facing, compared to 58% of Year 12 students.

<sup>5</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/critical-and-creative-thinking/>



### 2.1.5 Personal and social capability

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

Personal and social capability supports students in becoming creative and confident individuals who, as stated in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008), 'have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing', with a sense of hope and 'optimism about their lives and the future'.<sup>6</sup>

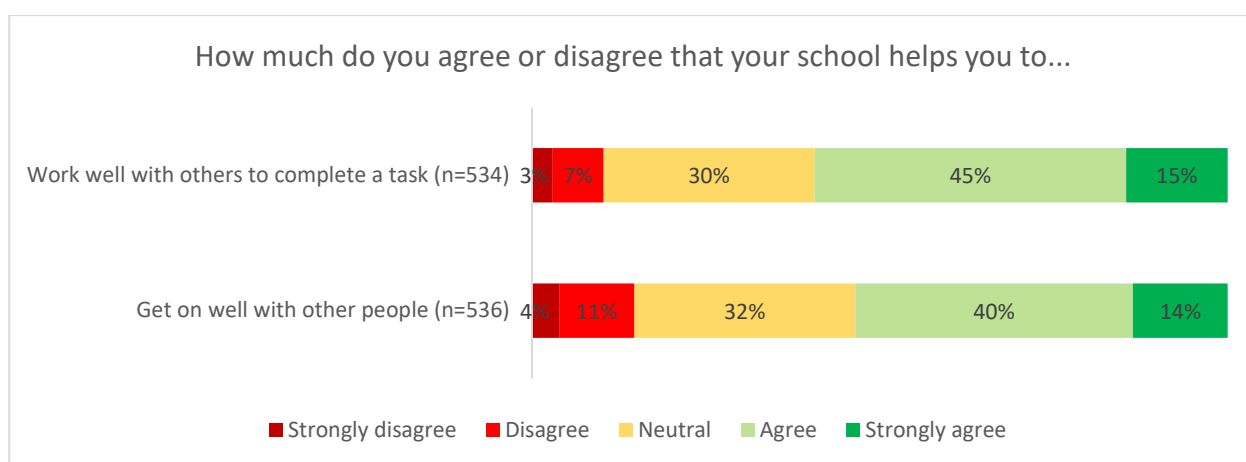


Figure 6: ACARA general capability: personal and social

The key take away points are:

- This is one of the capabilities where students responded most positively to both items, with 60% and 54% agreement (respectively) that school helps them to collaborate and get on well with their peers.
- It also has relatively low levels of disagreement: 10% and 15% respectively.
- There was some difference based on gender:
  - a higher proportion of male than female students (63% versus 47%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them get on well with other people.
- There was some difference based on year level:
  - 75% of Year 12 students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to get on well with other people, compared to 55% of Year 10 students and 49% of Year 8 students.

<sup>6</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>

### 2.1.6 Ethical understanding

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop ethical understanding as they identify and investigate the nature of ethical concepts, values and character traits, and understand how reasoning can assist ethical judgement. Ethical understanding involves students building a strong personal and socially oriented ethical outlook that helps them to manage context, conflict and uncertainty, and to develop an awareness of the influence that their values and behaviour have on others. It does this through fostering the development of ‘personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others’, and the capacity to act with ethical integrity, as outlined in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008, p. 9).<sup>7</sup>

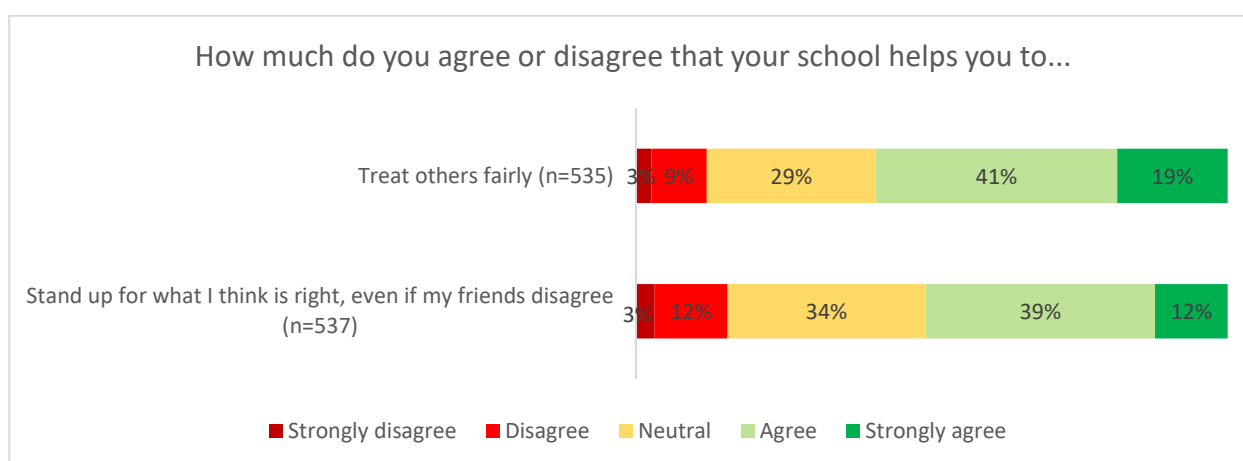


Figure 7: ACARA general capability: ethical understanding

The key take away points are:

- This is one of three capabilities where half or more of students responded positively to both items.
- Over half of all students agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to ‘treat others fairly’ (60%), while just over half agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to ‘stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree’ (51%).
- There was some difference based on gender:
  - A considerably lower proportion of students identifying as other (34%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them to ‘treat others fairly’, compared with female (61%) and male (62%) students.

<sup>7</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/ethical-understanding/>

### 2.1.7 Intercultural understanding

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. Intercultural understanding involves students learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.<sup>8</sup>

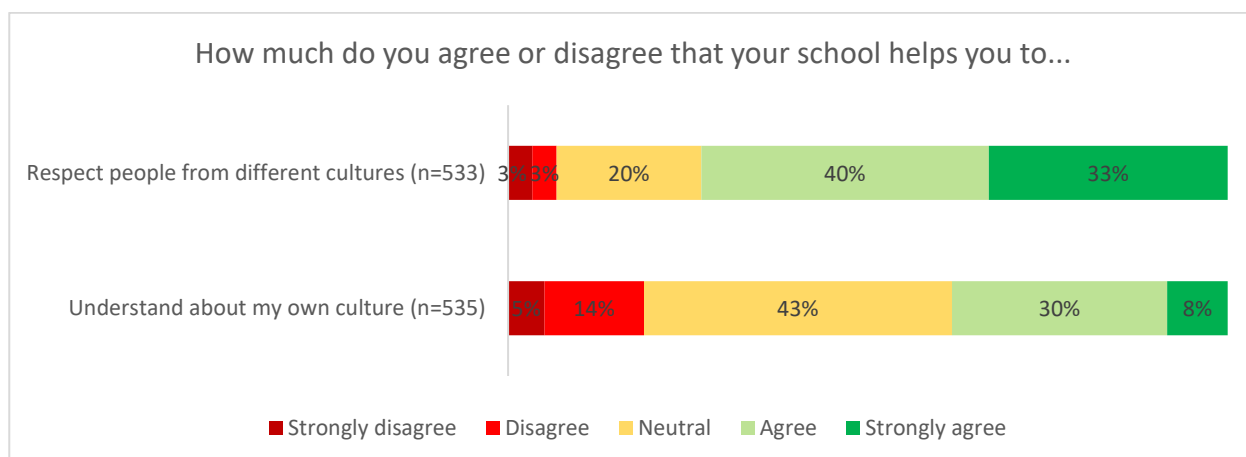


Figure 8: ACARA general capability: intercultural understanding

The key take away points are:

- This general capability has the biggest variation between its two items of all general capabilities, with students far more positive about school helping them to respect people from different cultures than to understand their own culture.
- Of all the items about general capabilities, help from school for:
  - 'respect people from different cultures' had the largest proportion of positive responses (73%) and the smallest proportion of negative responses (6%).
  - 'understand about my own culture' had the largest proportion of negative responses (19%) and the smallest proportion of positive responses (38%)
- There was some difference based on gender:
  - a higher proportion of male than female students (63% versus 39%) agreed or strongly agreed that school helps them understand about their own culture.

<sup>8</sup> <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/intercultural-understanding/>

## **2.2 Engagement**

While the target of achieving Year 12 or equivalent has always been at the forefront in the project rationale of Collective ed., it has not been considered in a vacuum. The project has also been purposely designed to consider how the delivery of education can be improved. This supports best practice research showing that Year 12 attainment is not critical in and of itself – but that it is also necessary for students to be engaged, motivated and connected to their education. As Goss and Sonnemann (2017, p.3) put it quite simply: “When students are engaged in class, they learn more”. They go on to point out that this matters because “Disengaged students are one to two years behind their peers” (p.3).

Collective ed. is based on the premise that engagement is “malleable and can be influenced by the circumstances individuals encounter and the opportunities that they are given” (OECD, 2013, p.33). As explained in the *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement* (Christenson, Reschly & Wylie, 2012, pp v-vi):

Engagement is not conceptualized as an attribute of the student but rather as an alterable state of being that is highly influenced by the capacity of school, family, and peers to provide consistent expectations and supports for learning [...] both the individual and context matter.

Research by the Grattan Institute in Australia has shown that as many as 40% of students are ‘unproductive’ because they are not engaged in school in a given year (Goss & Sonnemann, 2017).

It is widely recognised that engagement is not only about behaviour but has multiple dimensions. A fruitful distinction is between behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement (Archambault et al., 2009; Fredricks et al., 2004).

This part of the survey replicates the well-validated School Engagement Measure (Fredricks et al., 2004) supplemented with three questions about attendance. Below, we provide a summary of the trends in the data across all schools for behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement.

In the survey, all items are phrased as statements, asking students to indicate how often the statement is true for them. There were major differences in the responses to individual items, as demonstrated below.

Overall, student responses were most positive in relation to behavioural engagement and least positive for cognitive engagement.

### **2.2.1 Behavioural engagement**

Behavioural engagement draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out. (Fredricks et al, 2004, p. 60)

Three statements about behavioural engagement are phrased positively and five are phrased negatively. Below we first show results for the positive statements and then for the negative statements. The scores for the negative statements have been reversed to enable consistency of interpretation (i.e. the green shades on the right of the diagram are desirable, indicating higher engagement).

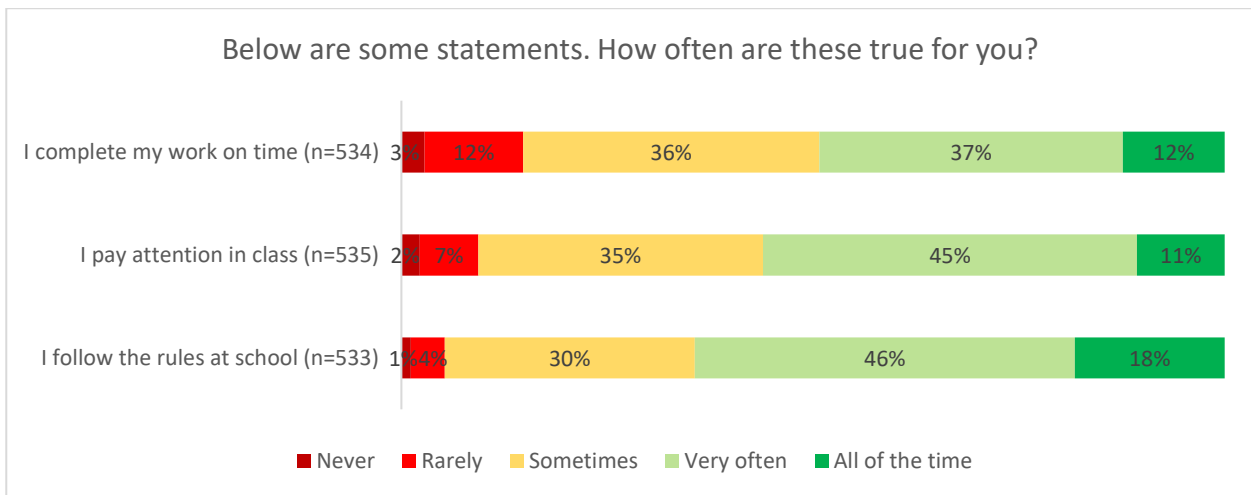


Figure 9: Behavioural engagement

The key take away points from these first three statements are:

- The vast majority of students selected ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’ as their response to the statement ‘I follow the rules at school’ (64%). Almost half of the students said that they complete their work on time (49%) and pay attention in class (56%) ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’.
- There was very little difference based on year level or gender.
- There was some difference based on Aboriginal background for all three behavioural items. A lower proportion of Aboriginal students indicated they
  - complete their work on time (37% vs 54%);
  - pay attention in class (46% vs 59%); and
  - follow the rules at school (55% vs 67%).

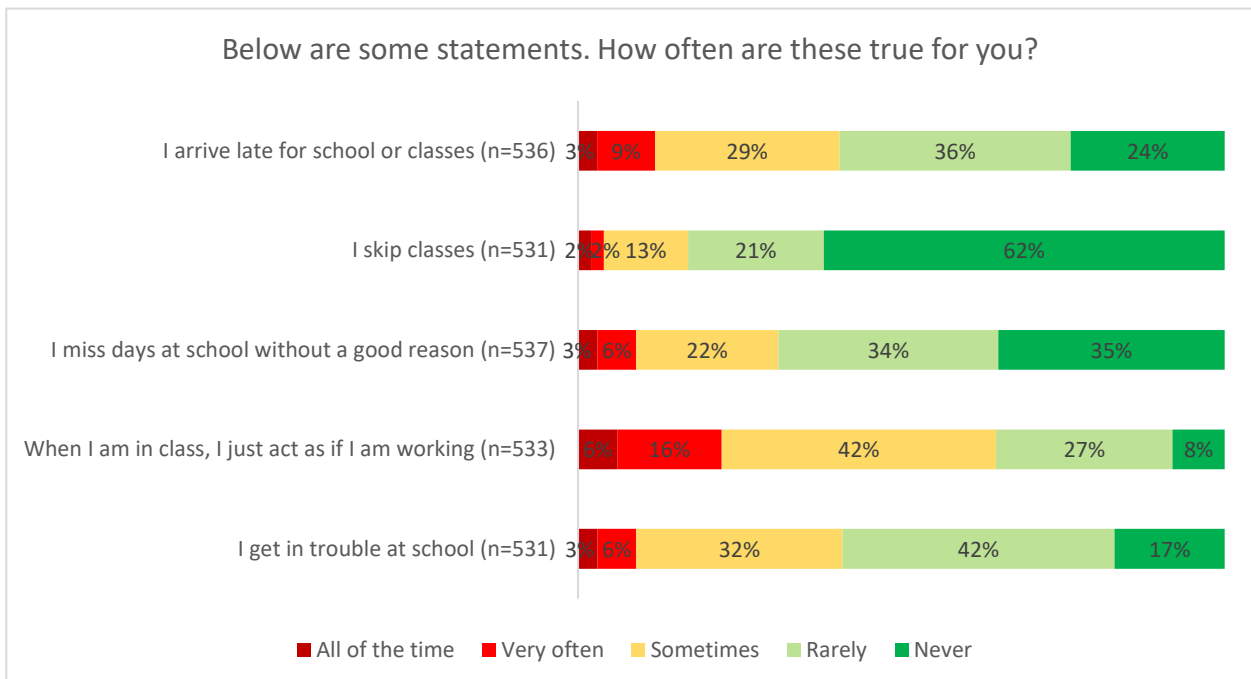


Figure 10: Behavioural engagement (reversed items)

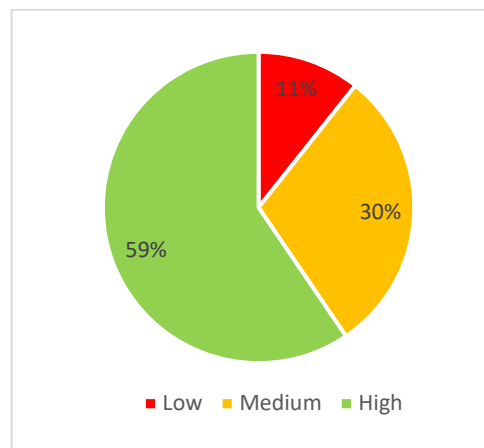
The key take away points from Figure 10 are:

- The first three items in Figure 10 are the extra statements the research team added in relation to attendance, with largely positive findings.
  - The vast majority of students specified that they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ skip classes (83%), ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ miss days at school without a good reason (69%), and ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ arrive late for school or classes (60%).
  - However, between 4% and 12% of students responded ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’ to these questions, indicating problematic attendance.
- In relation to discipline, 59% of students indicate they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ get in trouble at school, and Figure 9 shows 64% tend to follow the rules at school.
- In terms of less visible disengagement, more than a fifth (22%) agree that ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’ they just act as if they are working in class – however 56% responded positively to ‘I pay attention in class’ in Figure 9 which provides a different perspective.
- There were large differences based on year level:
  - 32% of Year 8 compared to 82% of Year 10 and 83% of Year 12 students selected ‘never or rarely’ as their response to the statement ‘I skip classes’.

Overall, based on all eight items about behavioural engagement, on average:

- 59% of student responses fall into the high range of engagement.
- 30% of student responses fall into the medium range of engagement.
- 11% of student responses fall into the low range of engagement.

This is shown in Figure 11.



*Figure 11: Behavioural engagement, average responses (based on all items)*

### 2.2.2 Emotional engagement

Emotional engagement encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work (Fredricks et al, 2004, p. 60).

Five statements about emotional engagement are phrased positively and one is phrased negatively. As before, the scores for the latter have been reversed to enable consistency of interpretation.

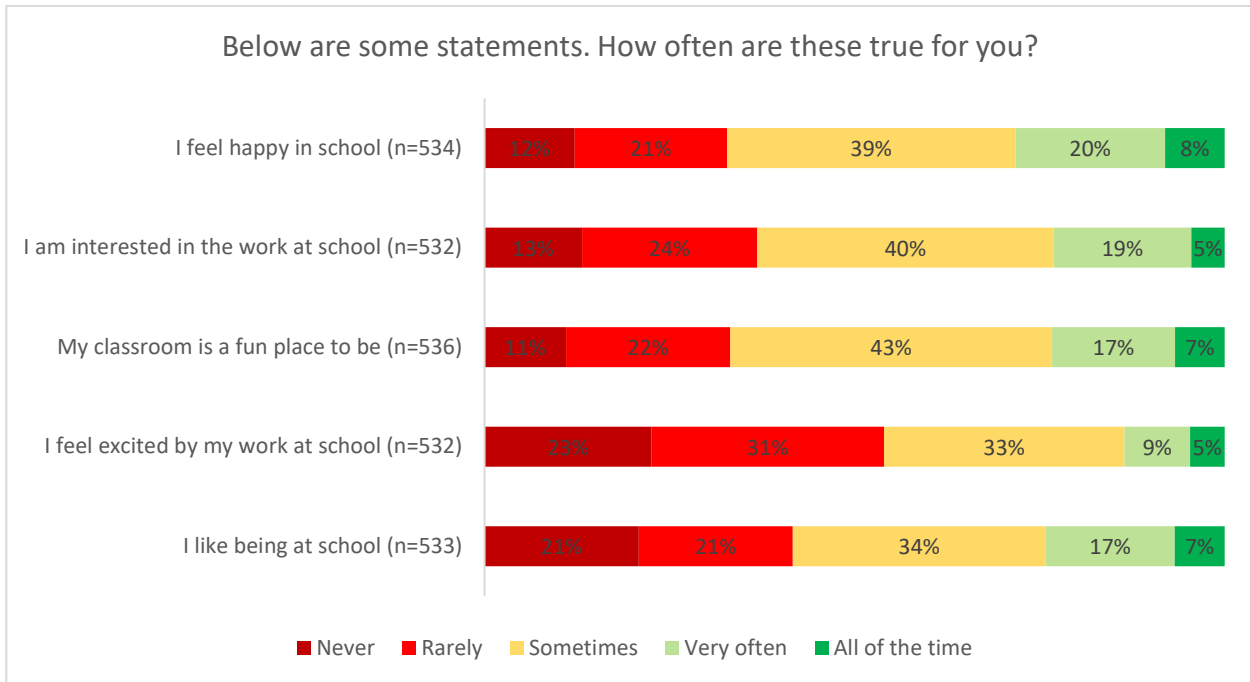


Figure 12: Emotional engagement

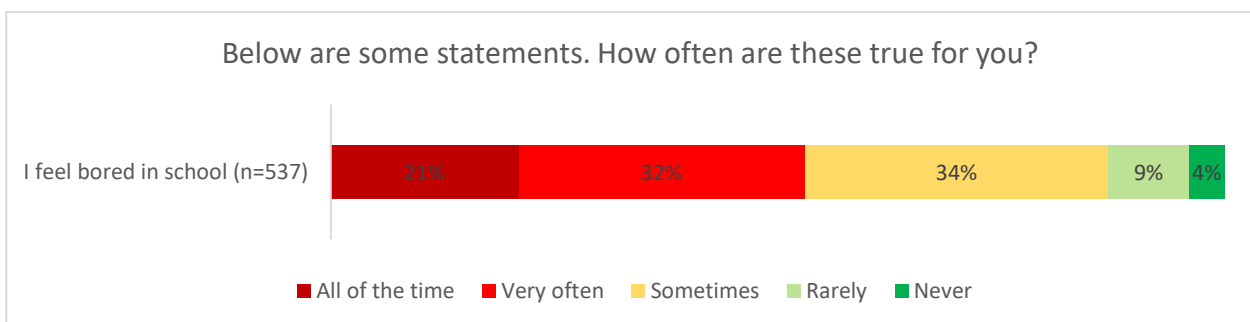


Figure 13: Emotional engagement (reversed items)

The key take away points are:

- In terms of interest, a large proportion of students indicate emotional disengagement, with responses of 'never' or 'rarely' in relation to:
  - feeling excited by their work at school (54%);
  - interest in school work (37%);
  - the classroom being a fun place to be (33%); and
  - moreover, 53% indicate feeling bored at school 'very often' or 'all of the time'.
- Similarly, a large proportion of students are negative in relation to general emotions about school, with responses of 'never' or 'rarely' in relation to
  - liking being at school (42%); and
  - feeling happy at school (33%).
- A pattern appeared across the year levels for many of the items relating to students' emotional engagement. To summarise, Year 8 and 10 students indicated greater emotional disengagement than Year 12 students. Examples of how this appeared in the data include:
  - Higher proportions of Year 8 and 10 students (53% and 57%) than Year 12 students (35%) said that they were 'very often' or 'all of the time' bored in school.
  - Higher proportions of Year 8 and 10 students (40% and 37%) than Year 12 students (16%) said that they were 'never' or 'rarely' interested in the work at school.
  - Higher proportions of Year 8 and 10 students (34% and 35%) than Year 12 students (14%) said that they 'never' or 'rarely' feel happy in school.

Overall, based on all six items about emotional engagement, on average:

- 42% of student responses fall into the low range of engagement.
- 37% of student responses fall into the medium range of engagement.
- 21% of student responses fall into the high range of engagement.

This is shown in Figure 14.

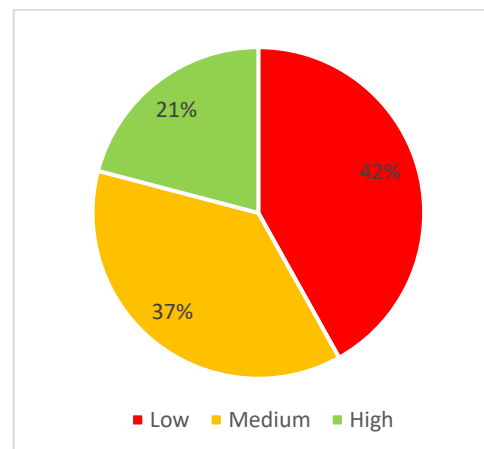


Figure 14: Emotional engagement, average responses (based on all items)



### 2.2.3 Cognitive engagement

Cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills (Fredricks et al, 2004, p. 60).

Below we first provide results for four times in relation to applying learning strategies, and then for four items in relation to additional effort for cognitive engagement outside of school.

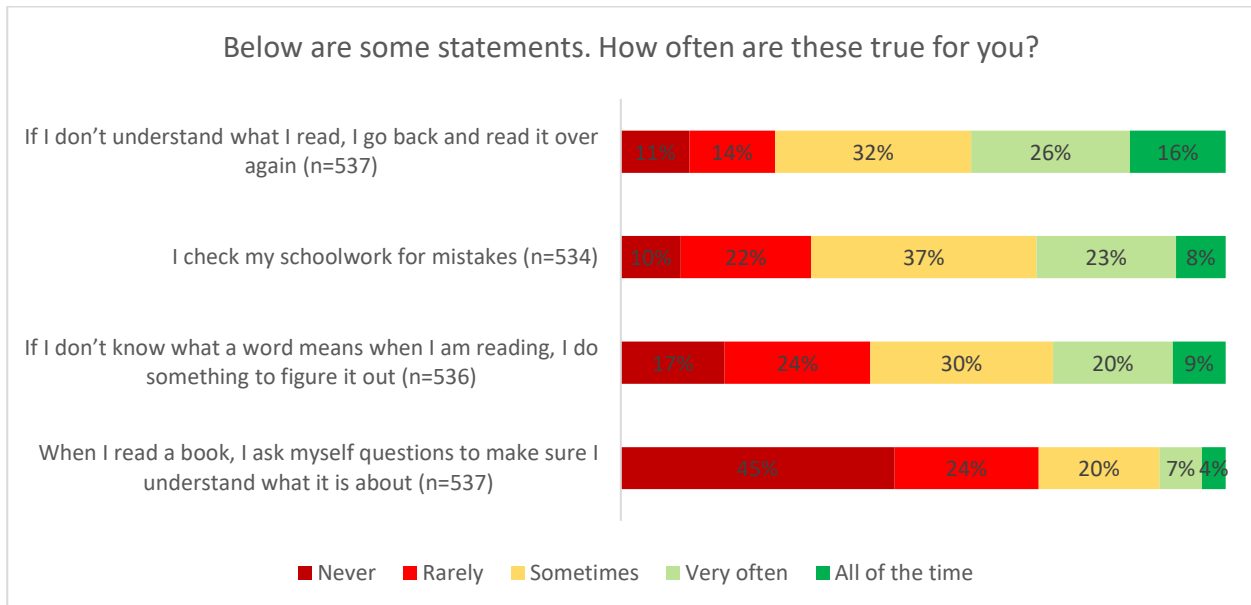


Figure 15: Cognitive engagement – learning strategies

The key take away points in relation to learning strategies are:

- 42% of the students 'very often' or 'all of the time' use the strategy to go back and read something again if they don't understand what they read, but a quarter (25%) 'never' or 'rarely' do so.
- Almost a third (31%) of the students 'very often' or 'all of the time' use the strategy to check schoolwork for mistakes, but another third (32%) 'never' or 'rarely' do so.
- 29% of the students 'very often' or 'all of the time' use the strategy to do something to figure out the meaning of a word they don't know, but another 41% 'never' or 'rarely' do so.
- Only 11% of the students 'very often' or 'all of the time' use the strategy to ask themselves questions about a book they're reading to make sure they understand, but two-thirds (69%) 'never' or 'rarely' do so.
- There was some difference based on Aboriginal background:
  - a higher proportion of Aboriginal students (45% vs 27%) report that they 'never' or 'rarely' check their schoolwork for mistakes.
- There were differences between Years 8, 10 and 12 in relation to learning strategies:
  - 70% of Year 8 and 10 selected 'never' or 'rarely' in response to the statement 'When I read a book, I ask myself questions to make sure I understand what it is about', compared to 59% of Year 12 students.

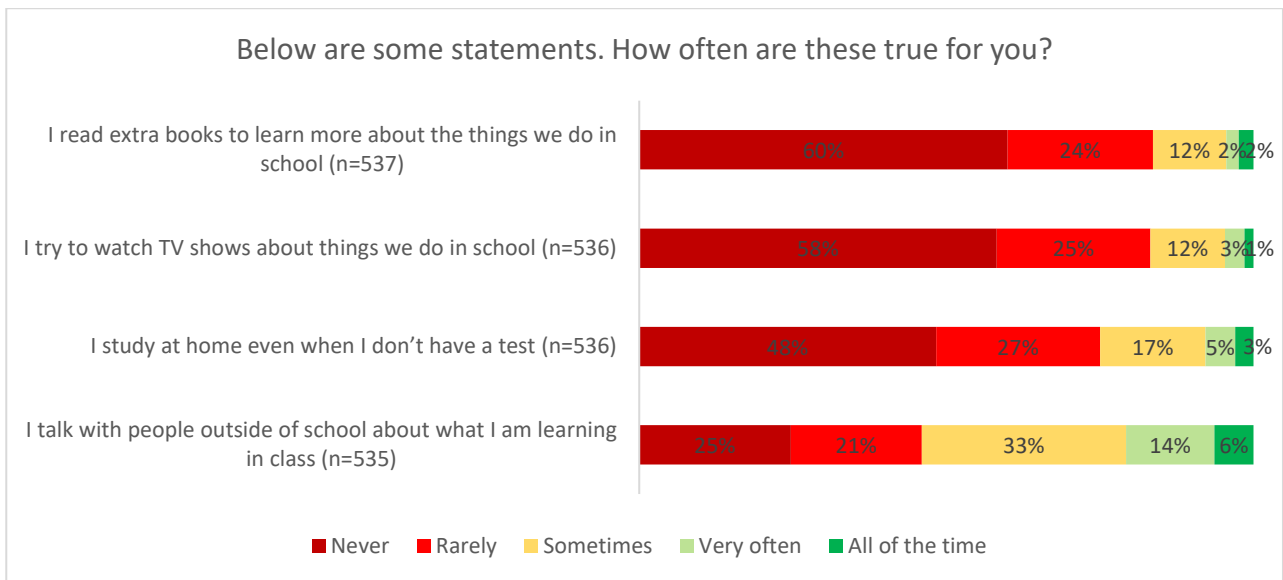


Figure 16: Cognitive engagement – additional effort

The key take away points in relation to additional effort outside school are:

- The most positive response is in relation to talking with people outside school about what they're learning in class, but even this is uncommon: 20% do this often or always, and 46% 'never' or 'rarely'.
- For the other three items, very few students 'very often' or always do those, and the vast majority 'never' or 'rarely' do.
- There was some difference between year groups:
  - 89% of Year 8, 79% of Year 10 and 71% of Year 12 selected 'never' or 'rarely' in response to the statement 'I try to watch TV shows about things we do in school'.

Overall, based on all eight items about cognitive engagement, on average:

- 57% of student responses fall into the low range of engagement.
- 24% of student responses fall into the medium range of engagement.
- 19% of student responses fall into the high range of engagement.

This is shown in Figure 17.

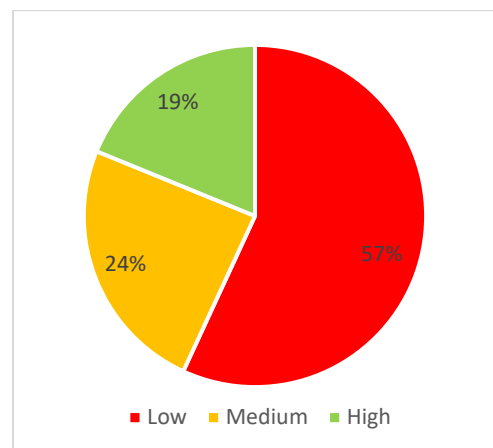


Figure 17: Cognitive engagement, average responses (based on all items)

### **2.3 Social capital<sup>9</sup>**

In the literature, across all definitions, social capital generally includes a social relationship element (e.g. social network ties) and a resource or benefit element (e.g. trust) at either the individual or collective level (Cornwell & Eads, 2017).

The concept of ‘capital’ reflects the various kinds of resources available in a community.

The basic idea of social capital is that an individual’s family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and leveraged for material gain (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Social capital has two complementary elements (Panth, 2010):

- Bonding refers to the social networks that link people with others like them.
- Bridging refers to social networks between socially heterogeneous groups.

In the context of Collective ed.:

“connections and social capital” relate primarily to relationships, resources and opportunities that can act as enablers or constraints that influence whether young people in Tasmania complete upper secondary education and move into meaningful post-school pathways.

In the survey, connections and social capital have been operationalised in terms of:

- activities outside school (part 1), and
- the importance of the input from various people for students’ future plans (part 2).

Elements of both bonding and bridging social capital are present within each of those aspects.

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<sup>9</sup> We are grateful to Galina Laurie from the Paul Ramsay Foundation for her work to help define social connections and social capital.

### 2.3.1 Social capital – part 1

Extracurricular activities are a vitally important source of social capital for many young people. It is in these activities where young people make friends and have repeated, face-to-face interactions with others (Saguaro Seminar, 2001, p. 82).

The items that fall under ‘social capital – part 1’ asked students to identify the frequency that they undertake certain activities outside of school. This is an indication of the social connections students have and the social capital resources they access and contribute to.

Figure 18 includes four items related to paid, unpaid and informal work experiences. Of these helping out at home is related to bonding capital, while the other three are more likely to indicate bridging capital (it is impossible to be sure, since we do not know the nature of the work).

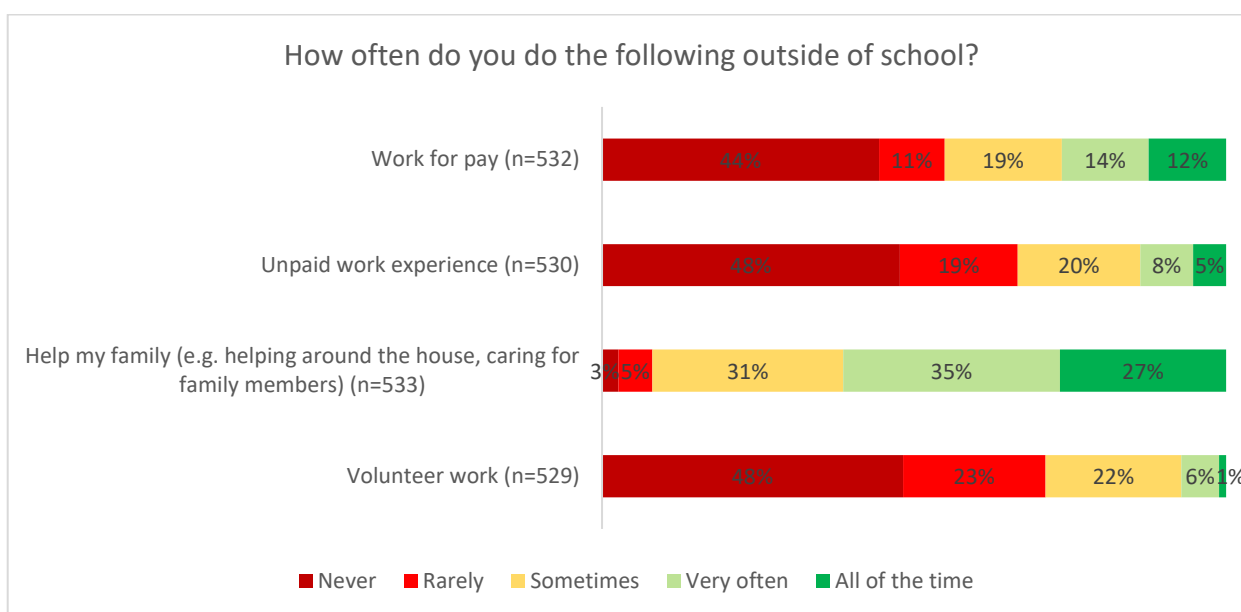


Figure 18: Social capital: work experiences

The key take away points in relation to work experiences are:

- Formal paid and unpaid work experiences are relatively uncommon. The majority of students indicate that they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ do volunteer work outside of school (71%), do unpaid work experience outside of school (67%), or do paid work (55%).
- On the other hand, 62% of students help their family ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’, and only 8% ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ do so.
- There was some difference between year groups for this item:
  - 37% of Year 12 and 33% of Year 10 students specify that they work for pay outside of school ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’, compared to 18% of Year 8 students.

Figure 19 includes three items related to leisure experiences. Of these, time with friends relates to bonding, while organised activities outside school are likely to include bridging (see Semo & Karmel, 2011).

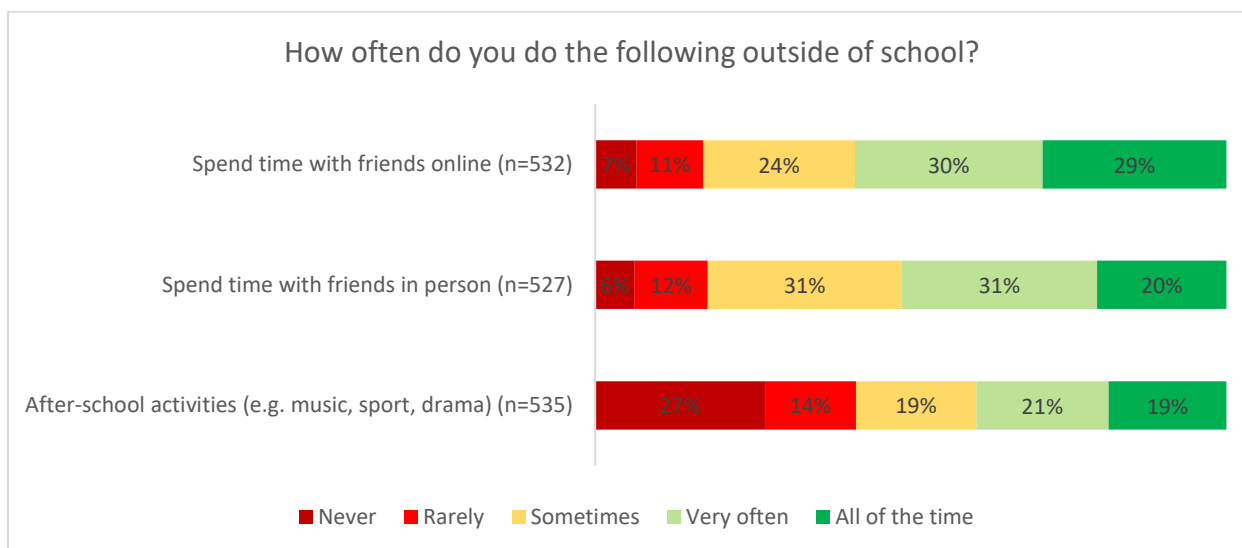


Figure 19: Social capital: leisure experiences

The key take away points in relation to leisure experiences are:

- Over half of the students ‘very often’ or ‘all the time’ spend time with friends outside school, both online (59%) and in person (51%). However, a significant minority does so ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ (18% both for online and for in person).
- 40% of students ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’ participate in after-school activities such as music, sport or drama, but a third (41%) indicate they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ do this.
- There was some difference between year groups for this item:
  - 51% of Year 12, 44% of Year 10, and 37% of Year 8 indicated they ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ participate in after-school activities.

### 2.3.2 Social capital – part 2

Young people are embedded in three types of communities: their school, their extracurricular groups (which include religious communities, clubs and sports leagues, and informal communities of friends), and their family. It is in these three categories of places that young people meet and associate with the most important people in their lives: parents, siblings, friends, coaches, teachers, and mentors. And it is in these places that young people learn what is expected of them and what to expect from others, especially adults. In short, it is in these places that young people learn powerful lessons, both good and bad, about the role of the individual in society. These three communities all create social capital and depend upon it (Saguaro Seminar, 2001, p. 76).

The items that fall under ‘social capital – part 2’ asked students to identify how important various social relationships are when planning for the future. These consist of bonding relationships (with others like themselves, i.e. family and friends) and bridging relationships (with people different from themselves) (see Semo & Karmel, 2011).

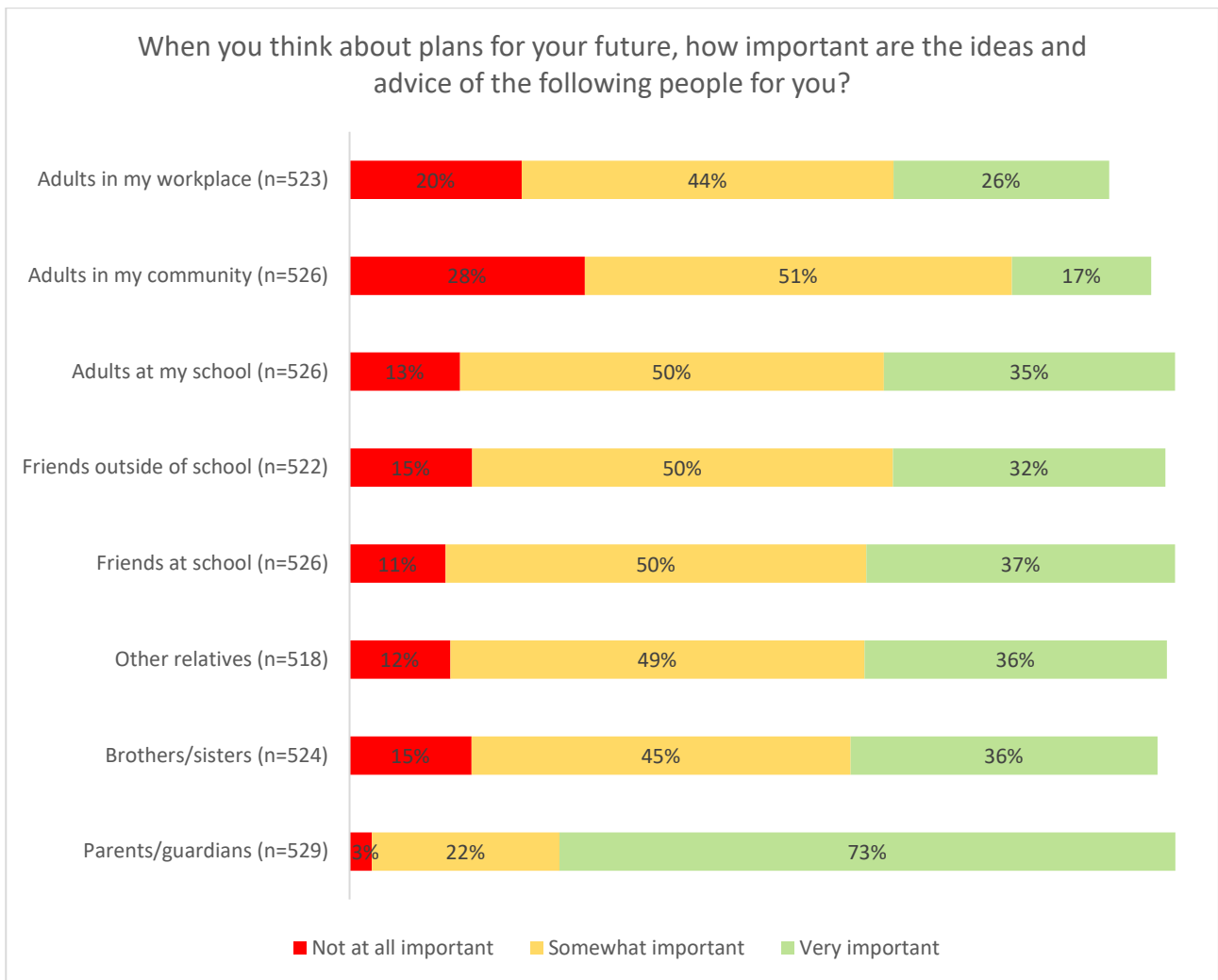


Figure 20: Social capital: importance of various people's advice about future plans

Please note – some students selected 'N/A' as their response to several categories. Hence the bars do not add up to 100%.

The key take away points are:

- By far the most important influence comes from parents/guardians: 73% of students indicate that parents/guardians are 'very important' when they are thinking about their plans for the future.
- The least influential are adults in the students' community, with only 17% indicating these are 'very important' and 28% of students choosing 'not at all important' as their response.
- The other groups have broadly similar responses, with about a third of students considering their ideas and advice 'very important'.
- There were differences based on Aboriginal background for several of the items:
  - A lower proportion of Aboriginal students (61% vs 77%) indicated that ideas and advice from parents/guardians are 'very important'.
  - A higher proportion of Aboriginal students (47% vs 34%) indicated that ideas and advice from friends at school are 'very important'.
  - A higher proportion of Aboriginal students (47% vs 34%) indicated that ideas and advice from adults at school are 'very important'.
  - A higher proportion of Aboriginal students (40% vs 30%) indicated that ideas and advice from friends outside of school are 'very important'.

## 2.4 Value of completing Year 12

Success in learning in many countries is measured, at least in part, in terms of completion of upper secondary education. The OECD (2012, 9) argues that: ‘Reducing school failure pays off for both society and individuals’ and defines failure largely as ‘dropping out before finalising upper secondary education’.

In Australia in 2009 all state, territory and federal governments through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions set a target of ‘a national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015’ (CoAG 2009, 4)<sup>10</sup>. A major report by the Productivity Commission points to the economic, social and personal benefits of improved educational attainment (McLachlan, Gilfillan & Gordon, 2013).

In this context, the Tasmanian Education Act 2016 has made it compulsory for young people to continue to participate in education and training until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III, or they turn 17 years of age (whichever occurs first). In 2020, the minimum leaving age increased to 18<sup>11</sup>.

The ultimate goal of Collective ed. is to help more young Tasmanians to finish Year 12. In the survey we asked students their views about the possible value of completing Year 12, as an indication towards this goal.

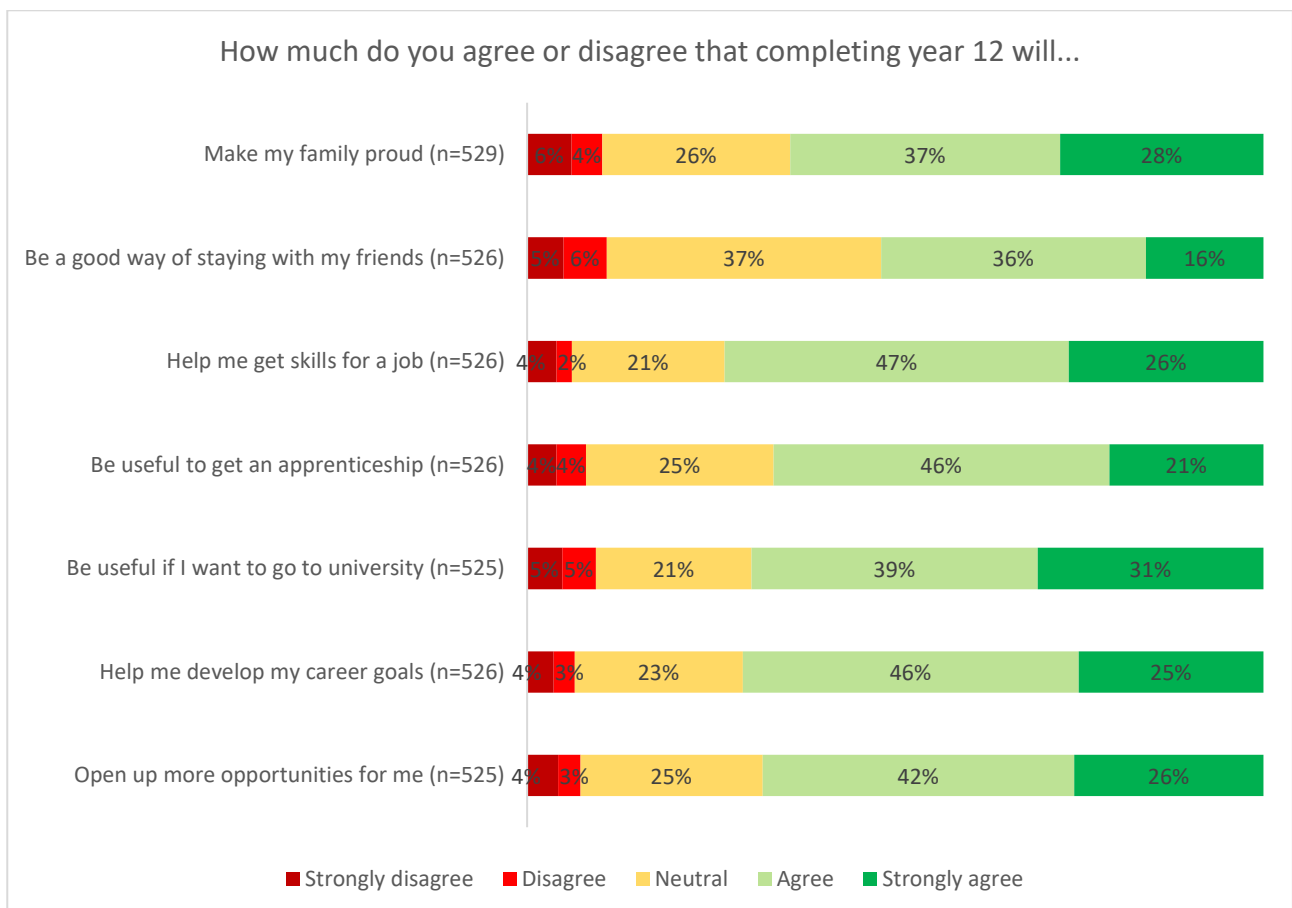


Figure 21: Value of completing Year 12

<sup>10</sup> The target was not met: in 2017, 79% of 20-24 year-olds had completed Year 12 or equivalent (ABS 2017).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/legislation/education-act/>

The key take away points are:

- Overall, the vast majority of all students agree with all the statements included in this question, and many strongly agree. This indicates broad agreement with the value of Year 12. Between 6% to 11% of students disagree or strongly disagree with these items.
- As a broad indication of *general* perceived benefit of completing Year 12, 68% of all students agree or strongly agree that this will 'open up more opportunities for me'.
- At a *personal* level, family pride is more important than social contact with friends at school:
  - 65% agree or strongly agree that completing Year 12 would make their family proud.
  - 52% agree or strongly agree that completing Year 12 is a good way of staying with friends. This item had the largest proportion (37%) of neutral and of negative (11%) responses.
- A strong majority of students agree or strongly agree with specific aspects of the utility of completing Year 12:
  - 73% agree or strongly agree it will help get skills for a job,
  - 71% agree or strongly agree it will help develop career goals,
  - 70% agree or strongly agree it is useful if they want to go to university,
  - 67% agree or strongly agree it is useful to get an apprenticeship.
- There were differences based on Aboriginal background for several of the items:
  - A lower proportion of Aboriginal students (61% vs 72%) agreed or strongly agreed that completing Year 12 will 'be useful if I want to go to university'.
  - A lower proportion of Aboriginal students (60% vs 73%) agreed or strongly agreed that completing Year 12 will open up more opportunities for them.
  - A lower proportion of Aboriginal students (56% vs 67%) agreed or strongly agreed that completing Year 12 will make their family proud.



## 2.5 Mobility

At the suggestion of colleagues from the Collective ed. team, we included a question in the survey asking students where they thought they will live after school.

In part, this question links with social capital. When bonding relationships are much stronger than bridging relationships, people are more likely to prefer continuing to live in their community.

Wierenga (2008) highlights how the extent to which young people's outlook is more global or more local is associated with available resources, and resource flows in turn rely on relationships of trust with individuals, groups, and institutions.

Moreover, staying or moving also has implications for young people's future. The ability to embrace post-school opportunities depends in some part on mobility: some opportunities are well-supported in one's local community but others require a young person to move. The impact of this on young people in rural and regional areas has been well-documented in Australia (Cuervo & Wyn, 2012; Wierenga, 2008).

The key take away points are:

- Overall, the students are split fairly evenly in their response to where they think they will live after school:
  - 36% in the same area where they live now,
  - 35% in a different area in Tasmania, and
  - 29% outside of Tasmania.

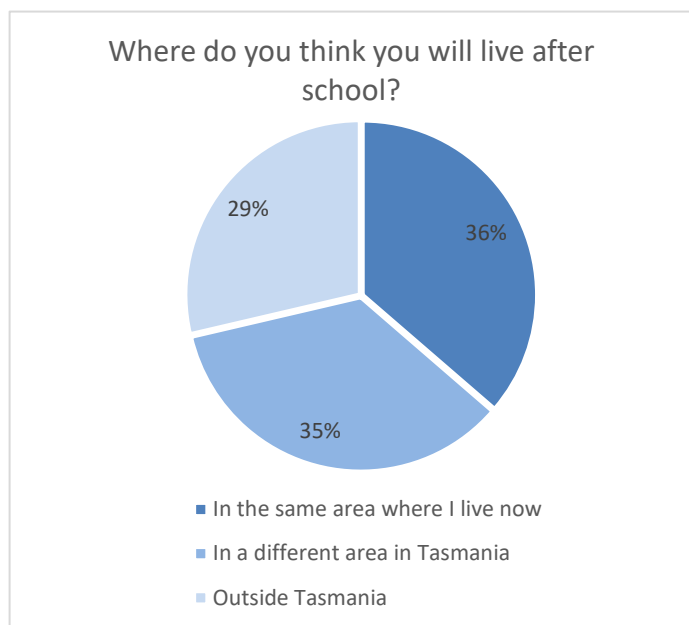


Figure 22: Where do you think you will live after school?

- There were large differences between year levels:
  - Among Year 8 students, 41% think they will stay in the same area and 25% think they will live outside Tasmania.
  - Among Year 10 students, 28% think they'll stay in the same area and 32% think they will live outside Tasmania.
  - Among Year 12 students, 51% think they'll stay in the same area and 28% think they will live outside Tasmania.

## 2.6 Plans for the future

The survey was designed with almost entirely Likert scale or 'tick box' type questions. This enhances ease of completion as well as providing a basis for future analyses to compare the 2019 and 2021 results. Other parts of the impact evaluation (as well as of the work done within the Collective ed. initiative) include more open opportunities for students to have a say. This is important because, as Wyn and White (1998) point out:

... the voices of young people need to be heard if we are to appreciate fully the ways in which social constraints and institutional structures both impinge upon them, and provide possibilities for personal and collective development (1998, p. 35).

We therefore also included one 'open response' question in the survey, as the final substantive question. This gave students an opportunity to respond in their own words to the question or to any other aspect of the survey.

The question asked students: 'Is there anything else you want to tell us about your plans for the future?'. About 360 students (66%) left this question blank or simply wrote 'no' or something similar. As is common with anonymous surveys, some students wrote answers that were not serious. Several categories were surfaced in the remaining responses, as shown below.

Category	Example responses
<b>Career goals</b>	
<b>Professional</b>	Students nominated professions such as teaching, zoology, journalism and "being a vet".
<b>Trade</b>	Eight students wrote of plans to undertake an apprenticeship in their future. One student was very specific about their plan 'I would like to get an apprenticeship as a builder then either go and open my own building business or become a VET teacher'.
<b>Defence /Police</b>	'I want to be a police officer'; 'I'm going into the Air Force!'
<b>Creative</b>	'I'd like to go to an acting school in Sydney or Adelaide after completing year 11&12'
<b>Sport</b>	'I want to teach gymnastics class and coach netball teams'
<b>Study plans</b>	'I plan to go to uni to study for a medical degree and a bachelor's degree because i would like to become a forensic pathologist'. 'I would really like to be a zoologist or a teacher for children with special needs'.
<b>Living arrangements / travel</b>	Students expressed intentions to 'move to the mainland', 'to do my job in Queensland' or to 'travel overseas'.

There were responses that suggested some students held limited aspirations about their future. In particular this comment from one student: 'I don't really have a plan, I don't see myself getting that far in terms of education and work'.

The opportunities that Tasmania presented for the future was the focus of another student's comments: 'Tasmania is far too limited to stay. I'd be missing out on so many people and opportunities by staying'.

Some students took the opportunity to reflect on their future in a deep and detailed way:

I kind of want to live in town at [Town]. Working/living at a farm is nice and fun and all, but it's not something I want to do forever. I kind of want to be a game/website designer, or something to do with video games, movies, books, etc. and I feel like [Town] would be better internet and accessibility wise. Also it would be cheaper.

I plan on either having a gap year and getting part-time work so I can save up some money to move the following year to the Gold Coast and then start my Bachelor of primary education, or I plan on going to University next year and then moving to the Gold Coast and then continuing my studies online from the Gold Coast whilst still having a part time job.

It was also evident that some students were already enacting their career planning: 'I have already started working on my career within the aged care sector', or it was on the near horizon: 'I'm going to do 11,12 online because I have a full time job for when I'm 16'.

Seeking the approval of others, and in particular family pride, was evident in some students' comments:

I want to go to university and own a restaurant, to [achieve] my goals and make my parents proud.

I just want to make it. I want to make my friends and family proud.

Get a good job, have a good family in the future, make my family proud and go well in sport.

The COVID-19 pandemic also factored into one student's planning: 'Melbourne when there is no coronavirus'.

We conclude with one comment which appears to summarise the contemporary condition for students:

I have very little idea. Too many decisions to make and too many options.

## **Section 3: Conclusion**

Collective ed. is not an experiment taking place under ‘laboratory’ conditions. Rather, it has occurred alongside many other changes in schools and communities that influence the impact the project intends to have, such as the implementation of the Education Act 2016 and of the extension school model, as well as changes that are specific to certain localities.

Therefore—as is usual in longitudinal and applied social research—it is impossible to unequivocally attribute outcomes to Collective ed. The purpose of this report is simply to describe the responses to the survey, which we hope is useful information for the schools and the Collective ed. team.

Next steps for the research team in 2021 will include more fine grained analysis to compare the 2019 and 2021 surveys, as well as ongoing data collection and analysis for the case study component. In 2022 we will request system data for the six schools from Education Performance and Review in the Department of Education to add a further layer of data analysis.

In our final report, we will synthesise analyses of all the data to document various outcomes for young people in the six schools, develop insights into how Collective ed. has contributed to these, and answer the project’s research questions.

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