



Fogarty EDvance (part of the Fogarty Foundation)

www.fogartyedvance.org.au

Innovation

Fogarty EDvance (FED) aims to improve the educational outcomes of children attending schools located in low socio-economic communities. The focus of this case is FED's School Improvement Program (SIP), designed to build school leadership capability and increase a school's effectiveness. A total of 20 schools are currently undertaking the SIP, as part of two separate cohorts, with their participation lasting three years.

The SIP is designed for the school's principal and leadership team, with a key output from the Program being the creation and delivery of a major school improvement plan. Support from the SIP includes: regular one-on-one mentoring and coaching; a customized and carefully spaced program of course work and skill building; access to, and implementation of, diagnostic inventories of effectiveness; and facilitated and regular face-to-face cohort meetings. These meetings serve as a support network and opportunity for leaders to share expertise and reflections on the change process.

The SIP's on-the-job learning program has been made all the more powerful by the presence of the mentors who support individual schools throughout the three years of the Program. Principals and leadership team members have found these mentors invaluable in assisting them to process, reflect on and apply the lessons learned through workshops and cohort meetings as they effect change at their individual schools. In addition, the mentor component allows the program deliverers to 'stay close' to each school without being a noticeable presence or influencing the journey directly.

Outcomes

Equity in education remains a significant issue in Australia and schools in low SES communities are facing increasing challenges and complexity. After researching interventions that have shown to be successful in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and also by considering best practice in business, a cross-sectoral team was brought together from government,





education, philanthropy and business to develop the program that has now become Fogarty EDvance. The program is based on the lessons learned from reviewing other successful initiatives, namely that a longitudinal and highly supportive program could yield significant improvements in educational outcomes for students in low SES communities. Consistent with this proposition, and as part of the SIP process, each school identifies what it needs to focus on and then implements change with the support of the SIP. As a result, there is a wide spectrum of outcomes sought and improvements that schools are noticing (evidence and approaches). In addition, the SIP monitors three key outcome areas across all the schools: student attendance, student behavior and student, staff and parent engagement.

The outcomes and improvements listed in the following table do not reflect everything that the schools are focused on and neither do the examples pertain to each school that is involved in the SIP. Instead, the list is an illustrative example.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through... Evidence and approaches, such as
<p>Quality teaching</p>	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of appropriate learning technologies (IT) in the classroom (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand teacher confidence and capability in the use and application of learning technologies across the curriculum). • Seeking to understand specific areas of student learning and achievement (e.g. sight-word knowledge and spelling performance using testing standards such as the SA Spelling Test). <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-primary exit scores for reading and mathematics (e.g. using Performance Indicators in Primary Schools – PIPS data). • Achievement in various school's tests of literacy and numeracy (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand student achievement in numeracy relative to national minimum standards and/or state averages) and other national testing standards such as PIPS, PATR, PATM). • Percentage of students studying Stage 2 English or Maths through monitoring enrolment records. • Gain and growth scores in NAPLAN reading and numeracy looking for a reduction in red flags on relevant dimensions.

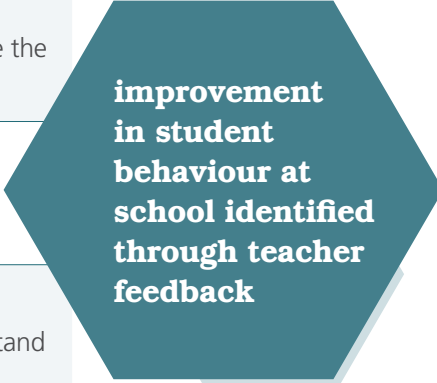
continued





Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through... Evidence and approaches, such as
School leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to understand and then build leadership skills and capabilities pre-SIP and at key points throughout the SIP (e.g. Principals complete a leadership measurement tool, such as AITSL Principal Standards). • Leadership staff use of research based tools and strategies to plan their school improvement plan (e.g. the University of Queensland’s Diagnostic Inventory of School Alignment, which maps the student, staff and parent views of the school’s operations against a suite of key criteria that align with the core content of the SIP’s workshops and framework) • Seeking to understand the overall school morale, teacher and staff engagement via the use of independent, external diagnostic tools.
Student attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full or part day student attendance data from state system records and comparing this to school level records of student attendance, paying particular attention to improvements in attendance of students who have historically attended school the least.
Student retention and Year 12 outcomes	<p>Evidence gathered through education system data of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of students entering Year 11 who then complete Year 12. • Percentage of students achieving a Certificate II qualification or higher or a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). • Percentage of students achieving an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR score) due to being able to complete the necessary requirements
Student behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improvement in student behaviour at school identified through teacher feedback, regular surveys or education system statistics about classroom behavior.
Student and teacher engagement	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External, independent surveys of students seeking to understand student motivation <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External, independent surveys of teachers seeking to understand teacher engagement and the quality of teaching • All staff familiar with Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) requirements for future years (e.g. one school has developed its own method for understanding its teachers’ familiarity with these requirements so that lesson planning can be improved).



continued





Examples include

Improving

What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through... Evidence and approaches, such as

Family engagement

- Percentage of Aboriginal families participating actively in supporting their child’s education in the home (e.g. one school has developed its own tool to understand family engagement by mapping how well connected the student is with the school, his or her family and his or her community. This then enables an action plan to be developed).
- Involvement of parent members in the School Board or Council (e.g. evidence in membership and meeting records)
- Seeking to understand parent involvement in, and engagement with the school, through response rates, and responses to, independent, external surveys of involvement.
- Parent attendance at meetings, events and functions (e.g. schools are monitoring how many parents attend key events and aim to increase attendance over the time of the SIP and beyond)
- The number of parents providing help in primary classrooms (e.g. one school has developed its own approach to engaging parents in the early years classrooms, in support of their children’s learning and adjustment to the school environment)

Lessons learned

Sustainable school improvement takes time: The first cohort of schools is participating in its third year of the program and has shown positive improvements as a result of its involvement. The pace of change observed by us, however, is consistent with the view of leading academics in the field that significant, sustainable change takes between 5 and 7 years to achieve. As a result, our program has worked to establish a solid foundation for change within each participating school – through a strong, aligned culture, reduction in behavioural issues, etc – so that the journey can continue beyond the school’s three year involvement with our program. Awareness of this issue also saw us focus on ensuring each cohort group is very strong so that the Principals and leadership team members participating in the program are able to stay connected and support each other beyond the end of the SIP. In addition, we are also creating an alumni program so that schools can remain focused on the improvement agenda and we can continue to support their learning and networks in a positive manner.





Choose your metrics wisely: Although conscious at the beginning of the program that social change is complex, and given that major, sustainable change takes significant time, we are encouraging our second cohort to focus on lead indicators (e.g. engagement, attendance, behaviour) more than lag indicators (NAPLAN results) as the former may be the most appropriate for improvement programs that are limited to the short term (e.g. three years or less). In addition, lessons from our first cohort (participating from mid-2012 to mid-2015) have shown that schools can have a tendency to take on too many improvement initiatives and thus may achieve better results by prioritising, so we are being more directive with our cohort two schools as they set their KPIs by the end of 2014. In addition, schools in the first cohort set targets that may not be able to be measured on an annual basis, thus making it difficult to track progress over the duration of our program. Future participants are encouraged to identify more frequently measured progress markers in addition to more significant, longer-term KPIs.

