

LITERATURE REVIEW – SEVEN LEVERS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

In the pursuit of educational excellence, school leaders are constantly on the lookout for strategies that can elevate student outcomes, foster positive and constructive learning environments, build teacher confidence and expertise, and ensure sustainable improvements. Now, a wide range of studies reinforce the strong connection between effective and strategic improvement in these areas, and key organisational elements of a school. Indeed, as Kyriakides and Creemers (2012) point out, school improvement reflects the synergy between classroom factors (including of course highly confident and capable teachers delivering high quality instruction) and whole school organisational factors, with school leadership being a crucial element in bringing the two together for the greatest impact.

This literature review explores and considers the seven organisational and cultural levers identified in educational research as most pivotal to embedding improvement over time: governance and anchor documents; strategic planning cycles; leadership and professional culture; data-driven decision-making; curriculum and assessment design; student engagement and agency; and professional growth. Each of these levers form part of an interconnected organisational framework, though they should also be considered carefully in their own right. Success in one area can amplify outcomes in others, creating a synergistic effect on the entire school ecosystem. However, trying to focus on too many levers at the same time can diminish impact, create confusion and spread energy too thin.

By considering contemporary educational theories and practices, this review aims to provide school leaders with the knowledge to make informed decisions, acknowledging that school improvement is highly complex, requiring both the application of proven strategies and an understanding of the specific contexts in which schools operate.

1. Governance, Anchor Documents, and Sustainable Directions

Governance structures and the creation of “anchor documents” are pivotal in both embedding and amplifying the values, vision and purpose of a school, ensuring they are highly visible and modelled across all facets of school life. Richard Elmore (2000) describes how governance structures bolster distributed leadership models, which can elevate and reinforce the intended school values. In turn they can empower stakeholders including teachers, families, and community members, to co-create and champion the school’s



vision and purpose. Through governance mechanisms like regular stakeholder forums and transparent decision-making processes, school directions can be woven into the fabric of school life. Further, anchor documents, such as purpose statements, serve as living testaments to the school's identity, clearly communicated and enacted through robust processes that resonate with all involved.

Fullan (2009) complements this by arguing that governance structures reflecting clear, participatory processes are essential for embedding the school's values and vision, while being translated into sustainable practices. Fullan highlights how governance can elevate visibility by establishing frameworks like school councils or vision committees that regularly revisit and refine these core elements, ensuring they remain dynamic and relevant. This is corroborated by Balarin et al.'s (2008) "School Governance Study," which finds that schools with high-performing governance structures—marked by systematic strategic planning reviews, clearly defined roles for governors and relevant staff, and a steadfast commitment to articulating their vision—consistently outperform others academically. These structures amplify the profile of the school through public-facing initiatives, such as celebrating success within a vision statement or using community engagement events to reinforce school values.

Effective governance thus provides a strong link between the leadership of the school and its relationship with its community particularly using structured processes to guide both internal priorities and external relationships. Leithwood and Jantzi (2009), in their review of school size effects, note that vibrant governance bodies—such as advisory boards or parent-teacher associations—can integrate community perspectives into the school's purpose, raising its visibility through shared ownership and reinforcing values like inclusivity in visible policy actions. Similarly, Spillane and Kenney (2012), in "School Administration in a Decentralized Governance Structure," argue that governance enhances the enactment of the school's vision by establishing sub-committees or task forces dedicated to promoting its values, ensuring flexibility in their expression while keeping them anchored in highly visible anchor documents.

By leveraging such governance structures—ranging from formal boards to informal working groups—schools can ensure that their values, vision, and purpose are meticulously documented, consistently communicated through newsletters, assemblies, and public forums, and robustly implemented across all levels, fostering a cohesive identity that drives sustainable improvement and educational excellence. It is that sense of organisational cohesion that can carry the greatest strategic impact over the long term.



2. Strategic Learning Improvement – Plans and Cycles

Many academic studies and systemic models mount a compelling case for a pragmatic, cycle-based approach to school improvement (Hopkins, 2014). Schools need to engage in ongoing cycles of inquiry, where planning, action, monitoring, reflection, and evaluation are part of a dynamic, iterative process. This approach encourages schools to critically assess current practices, experiment with new strategies, and continuously refine methods based on empirical feedback. This methodology aligns with the broader educational movement towards evidence-based practice, where schools are seen as laboratories for educational innovation. This is reinforced by Hargreaves and Ainscow (2015), who argue for the creation of adaptive schools where cycles of improvement are central to handling educational challenges and reforms.

This cyclical approach is affirmed by the South Australian Department for Education's (2018) School Improvement Model, which provides a structured, evidence-informed framework for raising student outcomes across its public schools. This model emphasizes a five-step improvement cycle guided by clear performance indicators and foundational school-specific data. It prioritizes raising the visibility of school goals through anchor documents like the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which articulates measurable targets in literacy, numeracy, and engagement, ensuring that strategic planning is both intentional and adaptable. The report, "Making Time for Great Teaching" (see Jensen 2014) complements this by advocating for structured improvement cycles that focus on enhancing teaching quality through collaborative planning and reflection. Jensen emphasizes the need for schools to allocate time for teachers to engage in iterative cycles of professional learning and practice refinement, a principle that dovetails with the South Australian model's focus on collaborative improvement strategies tailored to local contexts. Rather than being treated as powerless robots within such cycles, teachers are energised through their participation and grow in confidence as their contributions are translated into meaningful action. (Prenger et al., 2017)

This is further supported by Coburn et al. (2016), who emphasize how strategic inquiry cycles can enhance teacher practice and student achievement by fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. Earl et al. (2011) add a more nuanced appreciation of such an approach by detailing how inquiry can be embedded as a core school improvement strategy. They propose that schools adopt a systematic inquiry approach where aspects of teaching and learning can be collaboratively considered, refined and applied to practice in an ongoing way. (see also, Vahasantanen et al., 2023)



The effectiveness of strategic learning improvement cycles also relies heavily on robust implementation and monitoring processes, which ensure that educational interventions are not only executed as intended but also continuously refined to achieve sustainable impact on student learning. The Education Endowment Foundation (2019) highlights that successful implementation involves a structured process of identifying evidence-based practices, planning their execution with collective precision, and monitoring their impact through systematic evaluation, thus enabling schools to adapt strategies dynamically to meet evolving needs. Similarly, Hopkins et al. (2014) emphasize the role of feedback within inquiry cycles, noting that monitoring processes ensure that each improvement step is considered for impact and adjusted progressively. Additionally, Hallinger and Heck (2010) demonstrate that schools with strong monitoring mechanisms, such as regular progress reviews with those that are enacting a plan, foster collaborative accountability and reinforce the critical link between implementation fidelity and sustained educational progress.

Thus, the achievement of strategic learning improvement goals through plans and cycles, as evidenced by a very wide range of studies and systemic models, underscores the importance of melding a dynamic, evidence-based approach with rigorous implementation processes. Further, allocating time for collaborative iterative professional learning reinforces the necessity of aligning improvement efforts with high-impact teaching practices. Together, these perspectives highlight that sustainable school improvement hinges on robust, adaptable cycles that foster continuous inquiry, teacher collaboration, and a relentless focus on student success, positioning schools as thriving ecosystems of educational excellence. (Jensen, 2014)

3. Leadership and Professional Culture

Leadership is at the heart of creating an environment where learning thrives, particularly driven by a collective aspiration to enhance professional practice for improved student learning outcomes. Leithwood et al. highlight how leadership influences student learning through vision-setting, staff development, and collaboration (2004). This is particularly the case when leaders model and reinforce shared agreements about having high expectations and articulating a clear set of professional values. This leadership approach ensures that the entire school community is aligned towards excellence, with leaders who can reinforce shared agreements that elevate effective teaching practices and positively influence colleagues' approaches.



This is supported by Day et al. in "10 Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership" link effective leadership practices with positive school culture and student success (Day et al., 2010). They argue that effective school leadership is pivotal in shaping a professional culture that promotes educational excellence. The study identifies leadership as a key driver in creating an environment where teachers are motivated, supported, and engaged in continuous professional development, directly impacting student learning outcomes. It highlights that leaders who foster a culture of collaboration, shared vision, and high expectations can significantly enhance the professional practices within the school. This is further enriched by Robinson et al. (2008), who highlights that instructional leadership—where credible leaders focus on improving teaching quality through direct engagement and feedback—has a profound effect on creating a supportive, excellence-oriented professional community.

The notion of sustainable leadership, emphasizing longevity and consistency in educational leadership practice, is crucial to the embedding of improvement structures and processes (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Similarly, Kyriakides and Creemers explore how leadership can enhance educational effectiveness through their dynamic model, focusing on teaching quality and policy (Kyriakides and Creemers, 2008). They assert that it is leadership that is the key adjunct between high quality teaching and learning and the organisational conditions that amplify these. This resonates with Hallinger and Heck's (2010) findings which demonstrate that collaborative leadership structures—such as peer mentoring and team-based reflection—foster a climate where teachers actively enhance each other's practice. It is in this sort of environment that teacher/leaders, those highly capable teachers who are extremely influential though hold no positional power, can flourish to the school's advantage (see Yorke-Barr, 2004). Their influence fosters a collaborative culture that improves instructional quality and are essential catalysts for elevating the work of their peers.

Together, these studies affirm that leadership is the linchpin in establishing a professional climate where all leaders and teachers aspire to excellence, embrace feedback as a catalyst for improvement, and collectively elevate teaching practices, driving sustained educational success.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making for Improvement

One of the most powerful tools for educational improvement has been repeatedly shown to data-driven decision-making. The "Data Wise Improvement Process" from Harvard University, originally introduced in 1996 and subsequently refined on a regular basis, showcases how data can lead to effective educational



strategies (see Harvard Education Publishing Group, 2005). Indeed, the careful use of appropriate sets of data can lead to more equitable learning outcomes when associated with clear evidence-based intervention strategies. (see Mandinach et. al., 2006) Hamilton and colleagues stress the practical benefits of using data to inform instructional decisions (Hamilton et al., 2009). They also reinforce the importance of teachers being data-confident and using common methods of analysis. The more time spent on ensuring that teachers are confident in their analysis of data, the more effective their responses will be over time.

Similarly, there is considerable argument emphasizing that more sophisticated approaches are important to better support schools in using data to drive improvement, emphasizing the need for complex analytical techniques to understand and enhance educational practices (Kyriakides, Creemers, and Sammons, 2010). This strategic use of data helps schools to make informed, evidence-based decisions while being discerning about which data sets are most appropriate. Further, it is vital to understand where to situate the responses to the analysis of data for them to be most effective.

By extension, Schildkamp and Poortman (2015) examine how data teams can operate within strategic cycles to positively impact on student learning outcomes. They highlight the necessity of organizational support and team dynamics for effective data use, pointing out that strategic data cycles are crucial for translating data into actionable school improvement strategies. This perspective is complemented by Lai and McNaughton (2016), who explore how data-driven inquiry cycles can lead to significant improvements in student literacy outcomes. They reaffirm the importance of applying and spreading the learning developed out of cycles of inquiry to all teachers' classroom practice over time.

5. Curriculum and Assessment Design

Curriculum and Assessment Design plays a pivotal role in the overall health and effectiveness of a school, particularly through the establishment and application of learning standards at each year level. These standards are essential for ensuring both progress measurement and curriculum continuity across the entire school, fostering an environment where every student's educational journey is cohesive and progressively challenging.

Paul Black and Dylan William's "Assessment and Classroom Learning" (1998) emphasizes the shift towards assessment practices that support learning at every level. By aligning assessments with learning standards,



schools can ensure that each year's curriculum builds on the last, with assessments serving not just as endpoints but as dynamic tools for guiding student progress. This approach helps in crafting a school-wide culture where assessments are used to provide immediate feedback while also enabling teachers to adjust their instruction to best effect, thereby ensuring that each student's educational experience is tailored to their developmental stage and teachers grow professional through the process. The significance of this strategy is further highlighted by Hattie and Timperley (2007), who stress the importance of feedback in relation to clear standards for enhancing student achievement across all grades, as well as informing teachers' insight into the impact of their classroom approach.

The importance of embedding assessments within the curriculum to support the continuity of learning is also affirmed by Stiggins (2005) who finds that when assessments are designed to reflect learning standards at each year level, they become tools for both measuring progress against these standards and for informing teachers about necessary instructional adjustments to maintain curriculum continuity. This integration aids in creating an engaging and responsive learning environment where students are clear about their progress towards year-specific standards, (Heritage, 2008) while also driving curriculum adjustments over the longer term where progress has not been uniformly satisfactory.

This is further extended by Wiggins and McTighe's "Understanding by Design" (2005) which advocates for a backward design approach, where curriculum planning starts with the end learning standards in mind. This methodology ensures that each level's curriculum is designed to meet specific, sequential learning standards, providing a continuous and coherent educational pathway. By starting with what students should know or be able to do according to these standards, schools can align their curriculums to ensure each year's learning objectives logically build upon the previous ones, fostering a seamless educational progression. This concept has been further developed by McTighe and Ferrara (2019), who emphasize the importance of curriculum coherence for maintaining educational standards across grade levels.

More broadly, by incorporating assessments that support the introduction of learning standards into the curriculum, schools can foster a culture where learning is seen as a continuous journey rather than a series of tests. Shepard (2000) argues that assessments must be part of a school culture that values learning aligned with standards. This cultural shift ensures that curriculum across different years is not disjointed but part of a unified educational strategy, promoting deep understanding and skill development from one year to the next. This approach supports a school-wide commitment to progress monitoring and curriculum coherence,



as echoed by Tomlinson (2014) in her work on differentiated instruction based on clear, standards-based assessments.

Integrating learning standards into curriculum and assessment design at each year level is not just about measuring individual student progress but about teacher professional growth, as well as ensuring a whole-school commitment to educational continuity and excellence. This integration allows for a curriculum that is progressively challenging and systematically aligned, ultimately enhancing the overall educational quality and student outcomes across the school.

6. Student Support, Engagement, and Agency

Student support and engagement are key components of both student educational success and school improvement more broadly. A wide range of studies have collectively underscored how fostering student engagement and agency resonate with factors such as the role of professional success-oriented school culture and illustrate how student-centred strategies integrate with and amplify these efforts to pursue educational excellence.

A key element in this area ties student engagement directly to academic achievement and retention, (see Fredricks, 2004) echoing the strategic learning improvement cycles as discussed by Hopkins et al. (2014) and Earl et al. (2011). Engagement, as a multi-dimensional notion—behavioural, emotional, and cognitive—requires schools to implement evidence-based practices, such as interactive teaching and supportive relationships, which parallel the inquiry processes advocated in strategic planning frameworks. This alignment suggests that fostering engagement is not a standalone effort but part of a broader school improvement approach where data on student involvement (akin to Schildkamp and Poortman, 2015) can inform adjustments to whole school approaches, cohort-oriented initiatives, as well as classroom practices, thus ensuring a cohesive enhancement of student engagement and success.

Reichert and Hawley's "I Knew I Could Do This: The Relationship Between Engagement and Achievement" (2010) focuses on high school seniors, emphasizing how engagement predicts success when students feel competent and valued—an idea that dovetails with the leadership and professional culture insights from Day et al. (2010) and Leithwood et al. (2004). This study highlights the necessity of a school-wide culture, cultivated by effective leadership, where emotional support and recognition are embedded in daily practice,



fostering a professional environment that supports teachers in engaging students. Such a culture aligns with the notion of distributed leadership (Spillane and Kenney, 2012), where the responsibility for student engagement extends beyond individual classrooms to a collective school effort, enhancing overall performance.

When advocating for autonomy-supportive school environments, Deci and Ryan (2000) assert that schools should design curricula that offer students choices and align with year-level standards to provide a sense of ownership over learning—a strategy that ensures curriculum continuity and progress measurement. This approach complements the curriculum and assessment design principles from Black and Wiliam (1998) and Wiggins and McTighe (2005) and integrates with Fullan’s (2001) emphasis on reflective practice in educational change, where fostering agency becomes part of an evolving school system that adapts to student needs. Reeve (2012) extends this, showing that autonomy-supportive teaching enhances engagement, tying learner agency to the broader goal of sustained school improvement.

Together, such works demonstrate that student support, engagement, and agency are not peripheral but integral to the cyclical, leadership-driven, and standards-based approaches to school improvement, amplifying their collective impact on educational excellence. It affirms that one of the most important contributions to heightened student engagement and their perceptions of self-efficacy is when they are highly successful at learning tasks that they have helped construct and against criteria that they understand. (See, Lee et al., 2022 and Beetham et al., 2023)

7. Performance Development and Professional Growth

Professional growth and development are cornerstones of school improvement, particularly when they are strongly aligned to the school’s long-term improvement agenda and when directly influencing the quality of teaching practice. The studies by Guskey (2000), Timperley et al. (2007), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), and Yoon et al. (2007) collectively provide a robust framework for understanding how professional performance development can be structured to support school improvement. These works resonate with earlier references to such aspects as the cyclical nature of strategic planning, the pivotal role of leadership, and the integration of data-driven practices, illustrating how professional growth serves as a linchpin in fostering a culture of continuous growth and educational excellence.



Guskey (2000) offers a foundational perspective by outlining a five-level evaluation model—reaction, learning, organizational support, use of new knowledge, and student learning outcomes—to assess the effectiveness of performance development and growth programs. Guskey argues that these must transcend mere participation and lead to tangible changes in teacher practices, which then positively impact student learning. This emphasis on outcomes aligns with the strategic learning improvement cycles discussed by Hopkins et al. (2014), where professional growth and development becomes part of an iterative process of planning, implementation, and evaluation aimed at refining educational practices. Further, Guskey's work affirms the importance of school leaders creating the conditions where professional growth is supported and its effects are monitored, reinforcing its role in whole-school improvement.

Helen Timperley et al.'s "Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration" (2007) provides a comprehensive synthesis from New Zealand, detailing how performance development should be structured to maximize its impact on student outcomes. The study emphasizes sustained, content-specific, and collaborative professional learning, arguing that one-off workshops are insufficient compared to ongoing development embedded in teachers' daily work. This approach dovetails with Fullan's (2001) concept of reflective practice within educational change, where professional growth and development is seen as part of an evolving school system that adapts to student needs. Additionally, the work of Borko (2004) supports this by highlighting how sustained it enhances teacher expertise, further amplifying its contribution to school-wide improvement.

A crucial aspect of performance development and professional growth is the provision of high-quality feedback on practice, which flourishes within a professional culture that values openness to learning and professional trust. Performance feedback, as detailed by Hattie and Timperley (2007) in "The Power of Feedback," delivers specific, actionable insights into instructional practices, enabling teachers to refine their skills to meet student needs and school goals, mirroring the formative assessment principles of Black and Wiliam (1998). This feedback is most effective when it is timely, tied to clear standards, and fosters reflection, shifting the focus from evaluation to a continuous improvement cycle that enhances teacher efficacy and student outcomes. Such an approach requires a trusting culture, as emphasized by Bryk and Schneider (2002), where educators feel safe to experiment and engage in honest dialogue, making feedback a tool for empowerment rather than criticism.



This sort of supportive environment is further strengthened by structured opportunities for reflection, such as peer reviews or coaching, which align with Knowles' (1980) adult learning theory, emphasizing active participation in professional growth. When feedback includes detailed observations on classroom dynamics or curriculum alignment, it provides teachers with a clear path for enhancement, contributing to both individual and collective instructional quality. This process ties into the cyclical improvement strategies of Hopkins et al. (2014) and the leadership-driven culture outlined by Day et al. (2010), positioning feedback as a vital lever for systemic school improvement. By embedding feedback within a culture of trust and collaboration, schools ensure it drives ongoing development, aligning with broader goals of educational excellence.

Team approaches to professional growth, such as those explored by DuFour et al. (2006) in their work on professional learning communities (PLCs), foster collaboration among teachers, allowing them to share best practices, analyse student data collectively, and co-develop strategies that elevate classroom instruction across the school. Classroom walkthroughs, as discussed by Downey et al. (2004), offer leaders and peers a structured method to observe teaching in action, providing immediate, context-specific feedback that reinforces relevant initiatives and ensures their practical application, thus linking directly to Desimone's (2009) call for coherence between performance development and classroom practice. Together, these strategies create a dynamic feedback loop that strengthens continuous improvement.

Together, these studies illustrate that performance development and professional growth are not isolated teacher-focused activities but integral to broader school improvement efforts. Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) "Effective Teacher Professional Development" report synthesizes evidence on what makes PD effective—collaboration, modelling, reflection, and sustained duration—directly linking these qualities to enhanced teacher practices and student learning outcomes, echoing Leithwood et al.'s (2004) findings on leadership's role in fostering a learning culture. Yoon et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis, affirms that the impact of sustained, job-embedded professional development strongly depends on its integration into a school's systemic improvement strategies over time.

Conclusion:

Our review of the seven most important levers for school improvement underpins the excellent school, where each lever contributes to a strategy for collaboratively enhancing school improvement. Together, these levers form a blueprint for schools to become places of innovation and with high educational achievement. Governance sets the direction, strategic planning ensures it is followed through, leadership cultivates the culture, data informs the journey, curriculum and assessments guide the learning, student engagement fuels motivation, and professional development keeps educators at the cutting edge. The evidence establishes a strong foundation for school leaders to share and enact change with their schools.

This of course presents a significant challenge for school leaders who must weave these interdependent elements into their strategic planning, always aiming for student success and educational equity, adapting their methods to their unique school contexts while continuously evaluating and adjusting their approaches. At the same time, leaders need to carefully consider which of these levers will have the greatest positive effect on their strategic improvement goals and strategies. Sometimes, where all seven levers are already healthy and vibrant, this will involve decisions about which levers have the greatest potential for impact – indeed, have the greatest leverage. In other circumstances, leaders will need a clear assessment as to which of the seven levers are not as healthy as they could be and what will need to be done to address this.

The various studies and explorations above reinforce the complexity of school leadership. Not only are leaders having to concentrate on developing their school improvement goals and the direct actions by which to achieve these, they also have focus on the monitoring of the implementation of these actions to ensure impact and of course evaluate them effectively. At the same time, leaders are having to “read” the state of the school levers described above, consider carefully which of these are not as healthy as they could be and respond, all the while making sure they assist the improvement agenda as well as possible. This underpins the skill of the leader in being able to operate on a variety of direct and indirect school improvement levels and arenas at the same time – developing some slowly and moving quickly on others.

Most importantly, when such constructs as the Excellent School Quality Framework, that encompass the seven levers, are shared across professional networks, they help develop a common language and shared points of experience where leaders can learn from each other about effective practices and their applications. This significantly reduces any sense of isolation that often arises for leaders.



References

- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and Classroom Learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Balarin M., Brammer S., James C. and McCormack M. (2008) *The School Governance Study*. London : Business in the Community.
- Beetham, H., Collier, A., Czerniewicz, L., Lamb, B., Lin, Y., & Witthaus, G. (2023) 'Student agency in learning design: a catalyst for school improvement', *Australian Educational Researcher*, 50(2), pp. 421–439
- Bryk, A.S. and Schneider, B., (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Coburn, C. E., Russell, J. L., Kaufman, J. H., & Stein, M. K. (2016). Supporting Sustainability: Teachers' Use of Classroom Assessment Data in Improvement Cycles. *Educational Researcher*, 45(3), 155-164.
- Connell, J.P. and Wellborn, J.G., (1991). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system processes. In *Self processes and development*. Psychology Press, pp.43-77.
- Creemers, B. P. M. (1994). *The Effective Classroom*. Cassell.
- Creemers, B. P. M., & Kyriakides, L. (2008). The Dynamics of Educational Effectiveness: A Contribution to Policy, Practice and Theory in *Contemporary Schools*. Routledge.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q., Brown, E., Ahtaridou, E., & Kington, A. (2010). *10 Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership*. National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services.
- Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M., (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behaviour in *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), pp.227-268.
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development: Toward Better Conceptualizations and Measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181-199.
- Earl, L., Katz, S. and Ben Jaafar, S., (2011). *Cycles of inquiry in schools*. Corwin Press.
- Education Endowment Foundation, (2019). *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*. Education Endowment Foundation.
- Education Scotland, (2019). *Curriculum for Excellence*. Government of Scotland.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a New Structure for School Leadership*. Harvard Education Press.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Fullan, M., (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2009). Large-Scale Reform Comes of Age. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2-3), 101-113.
- Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating Professional Development*. Corwin Press.
- Hallinger, P. and Heck, R.H., (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership & Management*, 30(2), pp.95-110.
- Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*. RAND Corporation.
- Hargreaves, A. and Ainscow, M., (2015). *The top and bottom of leadership and change*. Corwin Press



- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). *Sustainable Leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Harvard Education Publishing Group. (2005). *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Harvard Education Press
- Hattie, J. and Timperley, H., (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), pp.81-112.
- Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Stoll, L., & Mackay, T. (2014). *School Improvement for Real*. Routledge.
- Jensen, B., (2014). *Making time for great teaching*. Grattan Institute.
- Knowles, M.S., (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Cambridge Adult Education.
- Kyriakides, L., & Creemers, B. P. M. (2008). The Dynamics of Educational Effectiveness: A Contribution to Policy, Practice and Theory, in *Contemporary Schools*. Routledge.
- Kyriakides, L., & Creemers, B. P. M. (2012). *Improving Quality in Education: Dynamic Approaches to School Improvement*. Routledge.
- Kyriakides, L., Creemers, B. P. M., & Sammons, P. (2010). *Methodological Advances in Educational Effectiveness Research*. Taylor & Francis.
- Lee, D., Reynolds, C., & McInerney, D. M. (2022) 'Empowering student voice in standards-based reform: impacts on engagement and self-efficacy', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 60(4), pp. 345–362.
- Leithwood, K. and Jantzi, D., (2009). A review of empirical evidence about school size effects: A policy perspective. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), pp.464-490.
- Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. The Wallace Foundation.
- Mandinach, E. B., Honey, M., & Light, D. (2006). A Conceptual Framework for Data-Driven Decision Making. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(4), 575-602.
- OECD (2015). *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*. OECD Publishing.
- Poortman, C.L., Schildkamp, K. and Van der Veen, J.T., (2016). The role of school conditions in the implementation of data teams. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(5), pp.762-785.
- Prenger, R., Poortman, C.L., & Handelzalts, A. (2017) 'Factors influencing teachers' professional development in networked professional learning communities', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 68, pp. 77–90.
- Reeve, J. (2012). A self-determination theory perspective on student engagement. In *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. Springer, pp.149-172.
- Reeve, J. (2013). How Students Create Motivationally Supportive Learning Environments for Themselves: The Concept of Agentic Engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 579-595.
- Reichert, M. C., & Hawley, R. A. (2010). *I Knew I Could Do This: The Relationship Between Engagement and Achievement*. Teachers College Press.
- Robinson, V.M.J., Lloyd, C.A. and Rowe, K.J., (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: Analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), pp.635-674.

Schildkamp, K. and Poortman, C.L., (2015). *Factors influencing the functioning of data teams*. Teachers College Record, 117(4), pp.1-42.

South Australian Department for Education (2018) *A Model for School Improvement*. Government of SA.

Spillane, J.P. and Kenney, A.W., (2012). School administration in a decentralized governance structure. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(5), pp.566-587.

Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., & Fung, I. (2007). *Teacher Professional Learning and Development*. New Zealand Ministry of Education.

Vahasantanen, K., Hökkä, P., Paloniemi, S., & Eteläpelto, A. (2023) 'Teachers' perceived opportunity to contribute to school culture transformation', *Journal of Educational Change*, 24(4), pp. 829–852.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

York-Barr, J. and Duke, K., (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), pp.255-316.

