

# Using Student Voice to Shape Student Wellbeing

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*Brisbane Grammar School*

**Student voice**

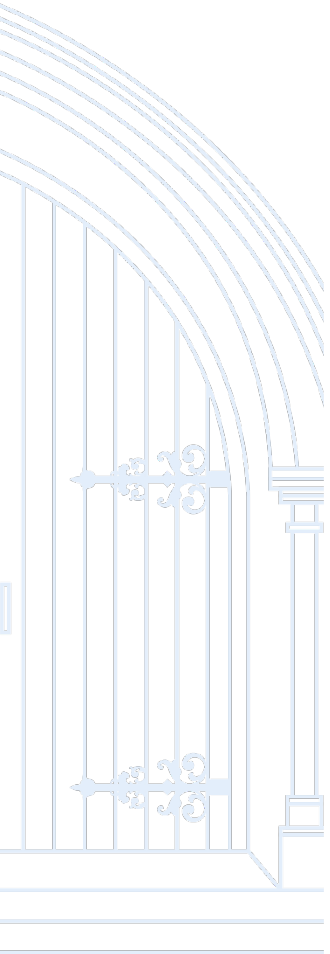


“Data, I think, is one of the most powerful mechanisms for telling stories. I take a huge pile of data and I try to get it to tell **stories.**”

Steven Levitt, co-author of *Freakonomics*



**Student wellbeing**



# Stories we will share ...

- ACER Social – Emotional Wellbeing (BGS case study)
- Student Transitions (The Timperley Project)
- BGS Safety Audit ('Bullying' survey)
- Taking the Pulse



# Our Story:

- Non-denominational boarding and day Grammar school
- Situated within Brisbane's central business district
- 1700 boys
- Middle School 5 to 8
- Senior School 9 to 12
- Form Tutors
- Heads of Year (travel with group from 7 to 12)
- Assistant Heads of Year (travel with the group from 9 to 12)
- Student Wellbeing curriculum
- Commitment to professional learning

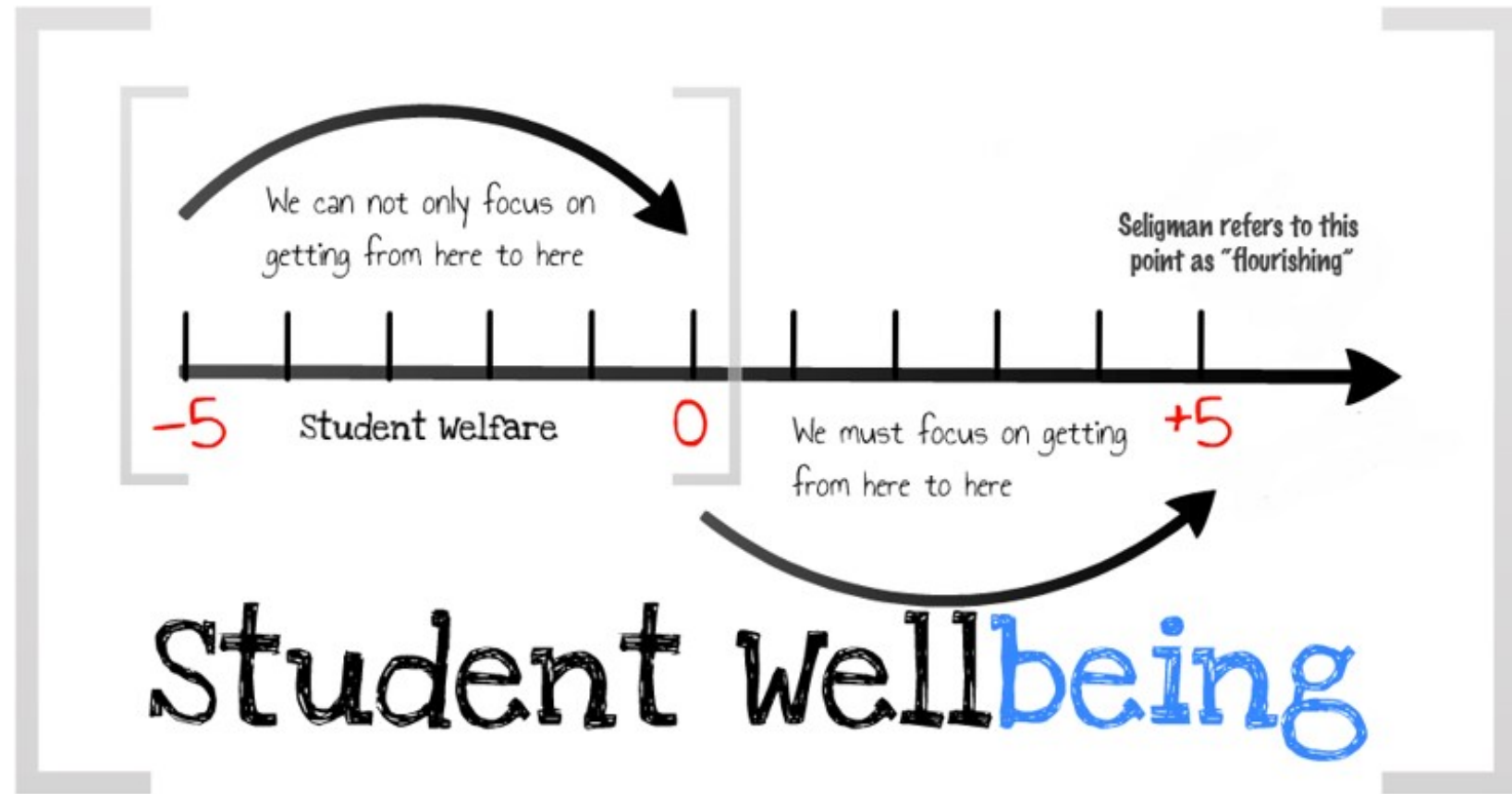


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# The context of our story:

- Our actions are governed by *Atmosphere of Caring*
- As a school and as a student wellbeing team, we want to infiltrate student voice throughout
- It is one of BGS' strategic imperatives to have students record their own data (academic, co-curricular and, importantly, wellbeing)
- Stemming for the Royal Commission into institutional abuse, the second recommendation encourages the **empowerment of student voice**





- Genesis in Positive Education
- BGS reframe this: student voice to lead to a **child-safe school**
- **An environment where students are secure, supported and protected.**

# Pitstop #1

*Take a moment to share your school's story with your neighbour*



# ACER Social-Emotional Wellbeing

## *BGS Case Study*



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**The Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) Survey** is an anonymous strength-based survey for students aged 3-18 years, which provides an ecological view of students' wellbeing by assessing:

**Indicators of students' social-emotional wellbeing**

- Positive and negative emotions and behaviours

**Students' social-emotional competencies:**

- Resilience, attitudes and coping skills
- Social skills and values
- Work management and engagement skills

**‘Environmental’ influences:** (measured in the secondary survey only)

- Perceptions of **home** life, **school** life, and their **community**



# Year 10, 2016

- What did this year group tell us?
- Markedly above national average -  
High levels of stress, along with a  
level of disconnection with each  
other and as a year group
- What did we do?



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## ● Strengthening unity and connections

- Happiness, friendship, connections / social skills / belonging, connection to school

- *Recommended actions:*

- Form Tutors to be (re-)briefed on importance of this aspect of their role
- Investigate possibility of Form Tutors on grounds duty in Year 11 areas or Utility supervision
- Implement Year 11 student committees (similar to existing Year 12 groups)
- Use of Utility periods primarily for student collaborative work and more regular/short cohort meetings
- Year level activities (student-led, with possible prefect involvement)

## ● Setting up senior school success

- Confidence, Persistence, Organisation

- *Recommended actions:*

- Use of Utility periods as outlined above (esp. student collaborative work), with optional general learning skill/department-based sessions offered throughout term 1
- Strong promotion of various academic support options (seniors, departmental, etc) to both cohort and parents
- Parent evening (as part of the 'Year10-11 Transition program') regarding expectations/conditioning to Year 11
- Student briefing (as part of the 'Year 10-11 Transition program') regarding key staff introductions and senior systems (especially re assessment)



## ● Stress management

- *Recommended actions:*

- Presentation (as part of the 'Year 10-11 Transition program') or using external speaker.

## ● Public Purpose focus

- *Recommended actions:*

- Continued encouragement and discussion of the importance of involvement in this program (focus on Orange Sky and Nursery Road programs, Indigenous immersion and the regular community service program)
- Student presentations detailing experiences to the cohort

# Year 11, 2017

- We asked for the cohort's voice once more
- Did we do all that we could to shift trends of previous year?
- What did we find out?



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- The students feel more connected to their peers, home and school community  
Feeling of loneliness has decreased  
Feeling of belonging increased  
Overall Home Life, School Life and Community Life has increased dramatically
- Sense of stress, worry, sense of failure is still evident. HOWEVER, students know how, where and who to connect with to manage the stress (these areas all increased significantly).

Students still identify as

- *Feeling stressed and worried*
- *Sense of failure if they do badly on schoolwork*
- *Worried they 'don't have what it takes to be successful'*

Positively, they know who, what and how to manage stress

- *Identify people, teachers, parents and community to help them manage stress and calm down (increase by 10% in all areas, most of time the All Schools score decreased)*
- *Able to control stress and calm down quicker*
- *Use of physical exercise to relieve tension (this increased, all Schools decreased)*



# Recommendations for Year 12, 2018

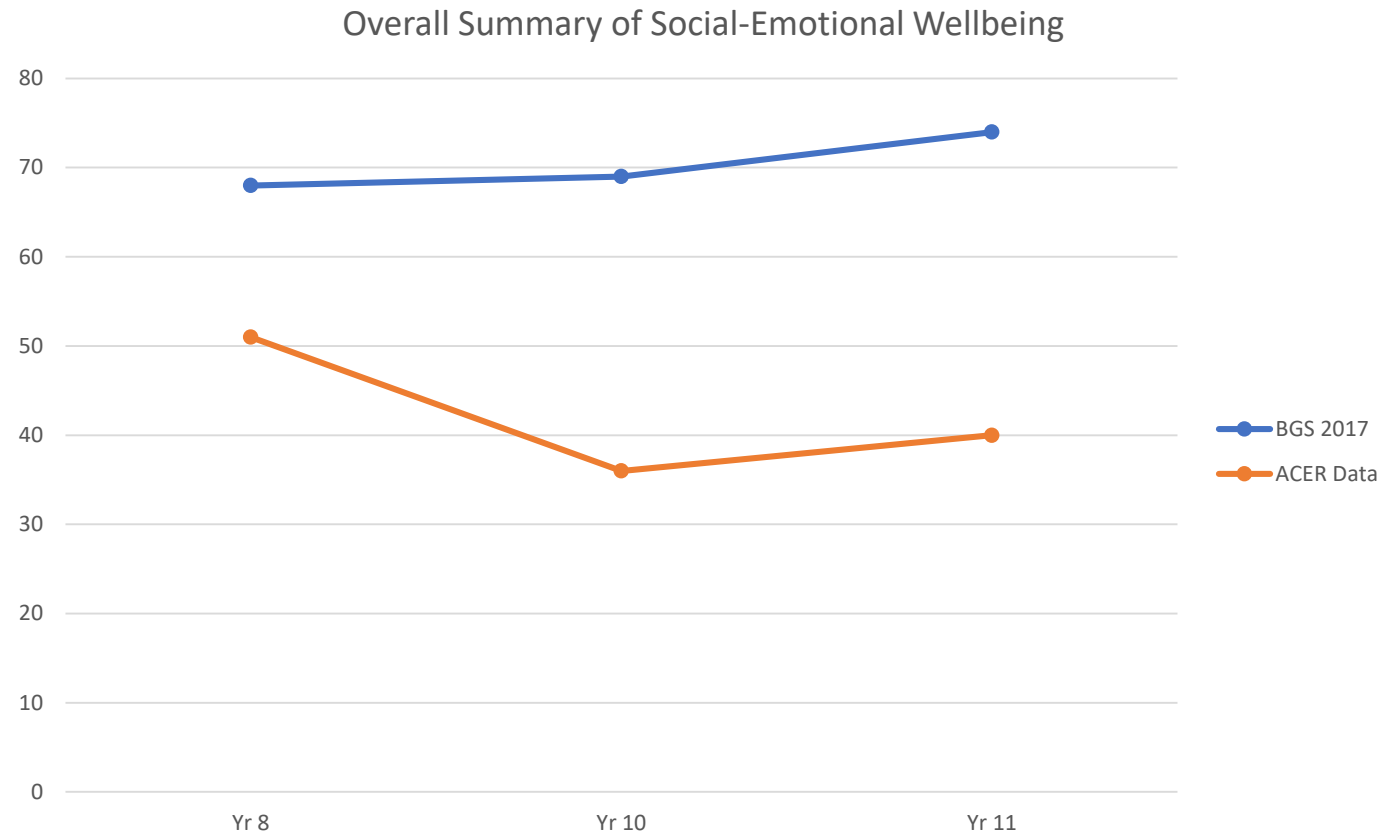
1. **Continue to develop sense of community and connection with the cohort**
  - a. BBQ in Week 6 or 7, 2017 (Term 4, 2017)
  - b. Find opportunities in 2018 to continue to connect as a form class / cohort (2018)
2. **Promote messages via form tutor / HOY / students leaders**
  - a. There are already avenues for support with Academics eg tutorials / utility
  - b. Student leaders to give positive messages about what strategies work – where you go for help / working to support one another (2018)
  - c. Throughout Year 12, Form Tutors:
    - i. Discuss stress can help and hinder you
    - ii. Identify change in behaviour and put in SWR
    - iii. Create opportunities whereby stress can be relieved – cake day / basketball game / cards
3. **Create a Study Management Plan for School Leaders who attend camps (Term 4, 2017, 2018)**
4. **Share ACER results with HoDs and have a conversation with them about how students might need more study guidance throughout 2018. (Term 4, 2017)**
5. **Be agile and responsive to student(s) needs throughout Year 12 (2018)**



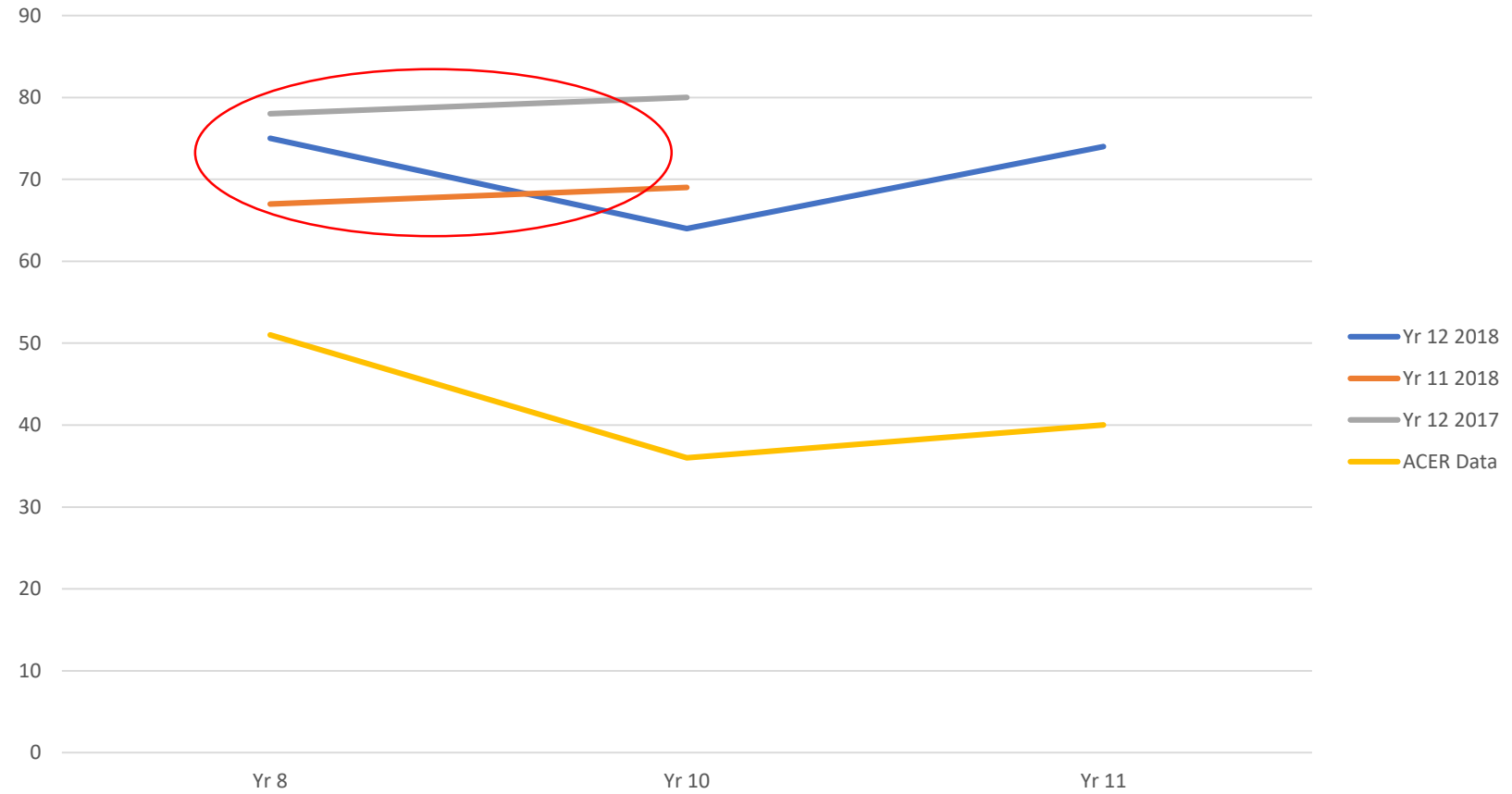
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# Using the data to tell a story:



# Cohort Comparison



## Pitstop #2

*How do you listen to student voice in your context?*



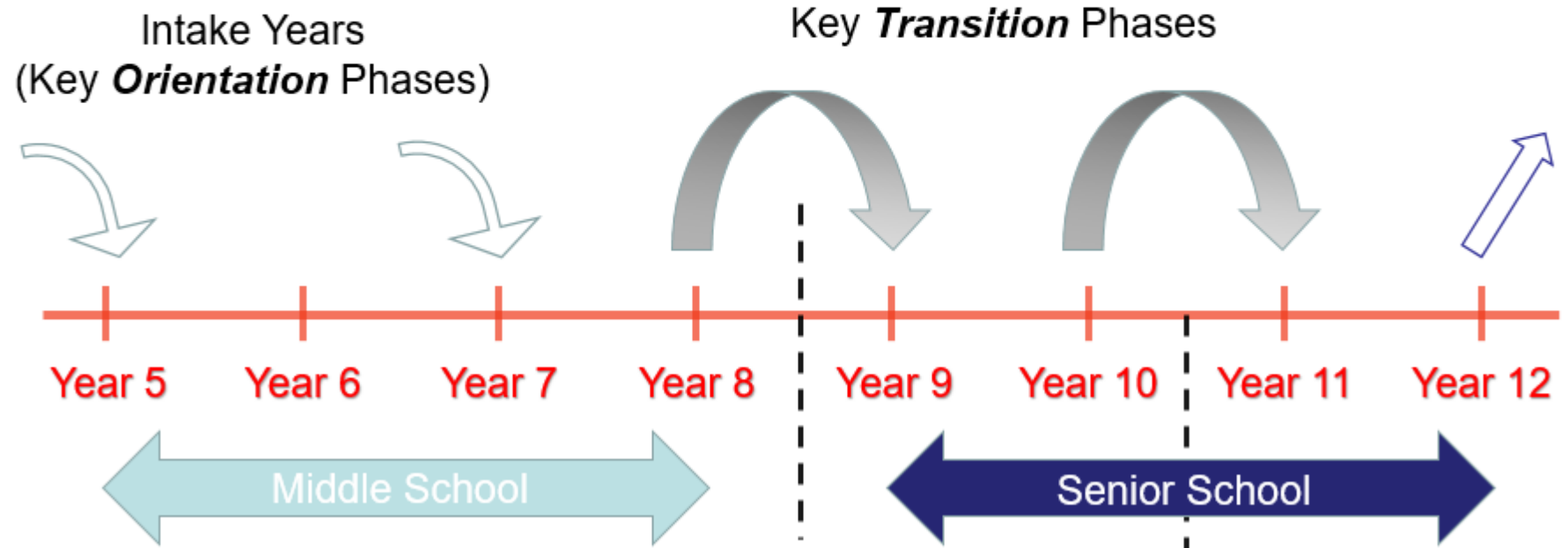
# Student Transitions

## *The Timperley Project*

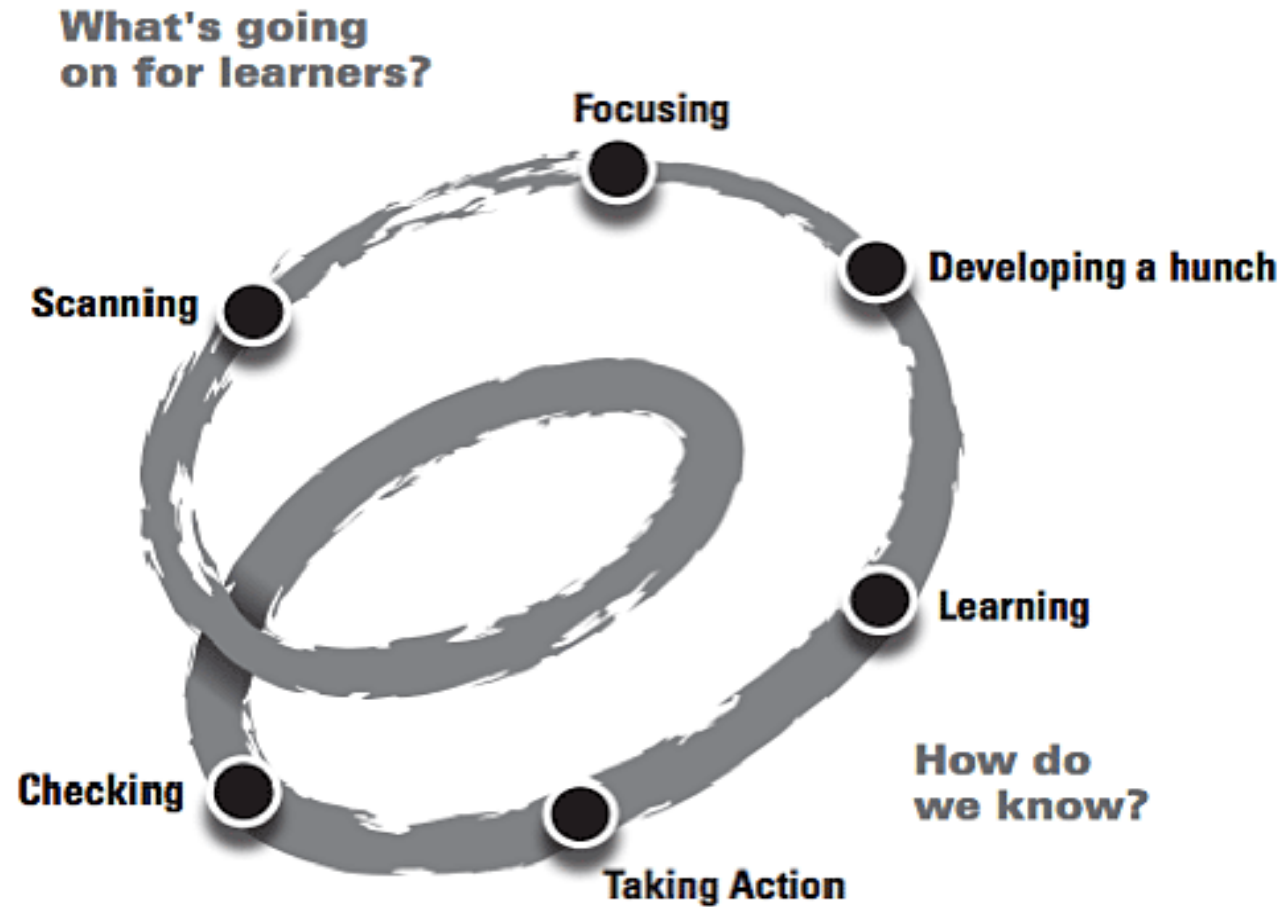


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# Orientation v Transition



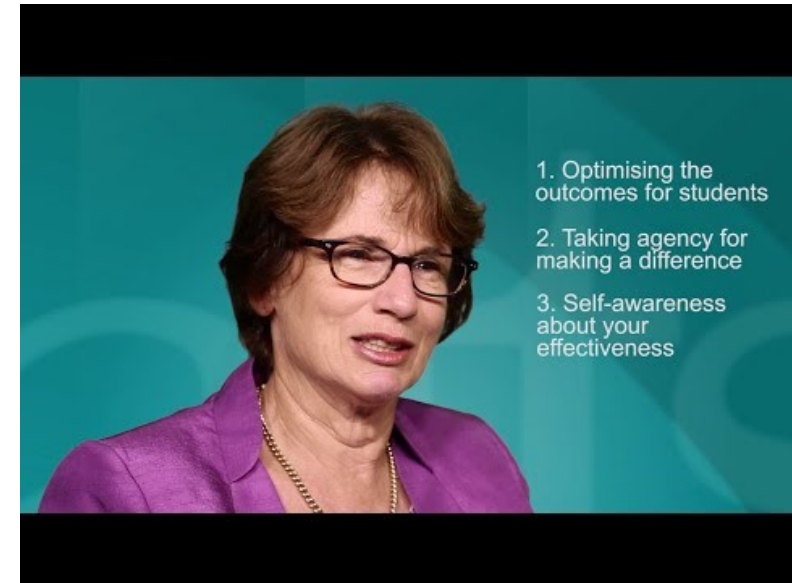
# Spiral of Inquiry (Timperley)



<http://blog.core-ed.org/blog/2015/06/building-collaborative-teaching-as-inquiry-teams-using-spirals-of-inquiry.html>

# Managing a change / Adaptive expertise

- Professor Helen Timperley (University of Auckland)
- Adaptive expertise
- Spirals of Inquiry
- Effective Professional Conversations



# Project Overview:

With its genesis in the Timperley Project, since 2015 the Student Wellbeing Team has undertaken a body of work which points to the need to provide meaningful experiences for boys transitioning at key times at Brisbane Grammar School.

Surveys highlighted the areas of concern and are informing transition practices in an attempt to prepare boys for their perceived challenges.

The project aims to build capacity, 'adaptability' and resilience among boys while developing an understanding of the key role all staff play in this process.



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# Our process

- ***Focus***

- Is what we currently do in preparing boys with key transitions having the most positive impact on student wellbeing?

- ***Hunch***

- That our transition processes are successful for the majority of boys, but how do we address the needs of the entire cohort?
- Is there a shared understanding among staff and parents about modelling more independent behaviours as part of the transition?



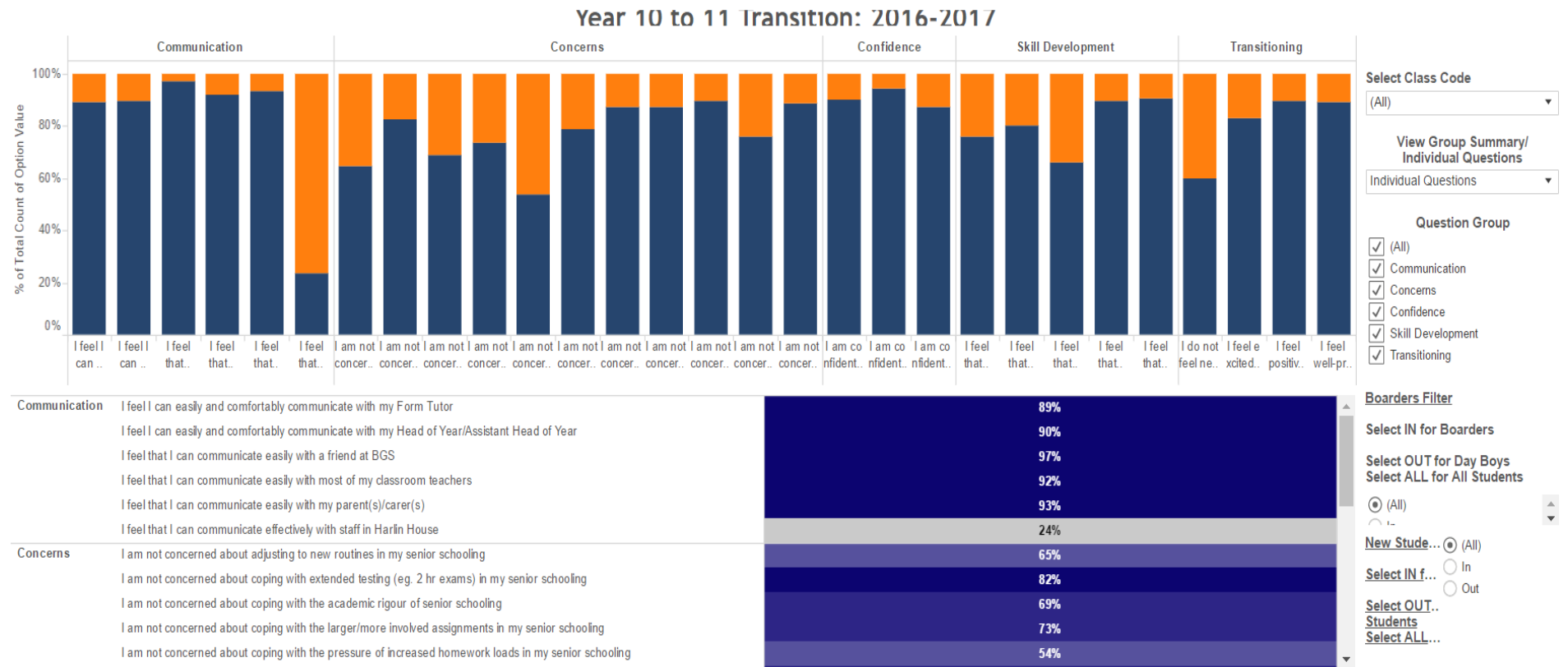
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# The Survey: 10 into 11

- All Year 10 boys in 2016 and 2017 were surveyed in 5 categories:
  - Communication
  - Concerns
  - Confidence
  - Skill development
  - Transitioning
- Plus the opportunity to respond to two open ended questions – greatest concerns (if any) regarding senior schooling, and suggestions to benefit the cohort moving forward



# Initial Data (Year 10 to 11)



# 2016: What did we find out?

- Again, our initial hunch was correct - most Year 10's felt reasonably well prepared and ready for the transition to Year 11
- Some areas of particular concern identified – Communication, Time Management, Senior Systems
- A couple of questions may need to be reworded or changed



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# 2016:

## Strategies employed (Year 10 to 11)

- A variety of actions across various levels – Cohort, Tutor Group, Interest Groups, Individual, Staff and Parents – covering the concerns identified
  - Senior student Q&A panel
  - Tutor Group discussion
  - Regular sessions targeting skills – study, time management etc.
  - Presentations on senior systems and expectations
  - Introduction to key Senior school staff
  - Stress management unit
  - Parent evening (covering much of the above)



# Year 11, 2018

*No two year groups are the same*

- At both points 30% of the group reported feeling nervous about the transition (same 30% ? probably not)
- Discussing and preparing the boys undoubtedly lessened this nervousness and anxiety
- Peer input (Year 11's to Year 10's ) had a significant impact
- Maintaining standards or benchmarks of previous Year group a significant concern , as were academic expectations and the feeling that basic skills like time management & organisation were a problem
- Boys reported that post transition perceptions were different to realities



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# The benefits:

- Identification of issues that were “important to the boys”; identification of agreed best practice
- Transition activities tailored to the year group’s concern
- Generated greater ownership and buy in from students
- Buy in from key staff – promotion of professional conversations
- Professional development & the building of capacity for staff involved
- An effective data catchment system to inform current & future practice
- **Strategies employed for students with greatest concerns by default assisted the transition of all students**



# THE FUTURE OF TRANSITIONS AT BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

With its genesis in the Timperley Project, since 2015 the Student Wellbeing Team has undertaken a body of work which points to the need to provide meaningful experiences for boys transitioning at key times at Brisbane Grammar School. Surveys highlighted areas of concern and are informing transition practices in an attempt to prepare boys for their perceived challenges. The project aims to build capacity, adaptability and resilience among boys while developing an understanding of the key role all staff play in this process.

**30%**

OF BOYS AT BGS STATE THAT THEY ARE NERVOUS ABOUT TRANSITION.



**20%**

OF BOYS AT BGS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO REACH OR MAINTAIN BENCHMARKS SET BY PREVIOUS YEAR GROUPS.



**27%**

OF BOYS AT BGS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT MEETING ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS.



**21%**

OF BOYS AT BGS FEEL THAT THEY LACK KEY SKILLS SUCH AS ORGANISATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT.



Key areas of transition at BGS include:

- Middle School to Senior School;
- year 10 to 11;
- entry into year 5; and
- new boarders.

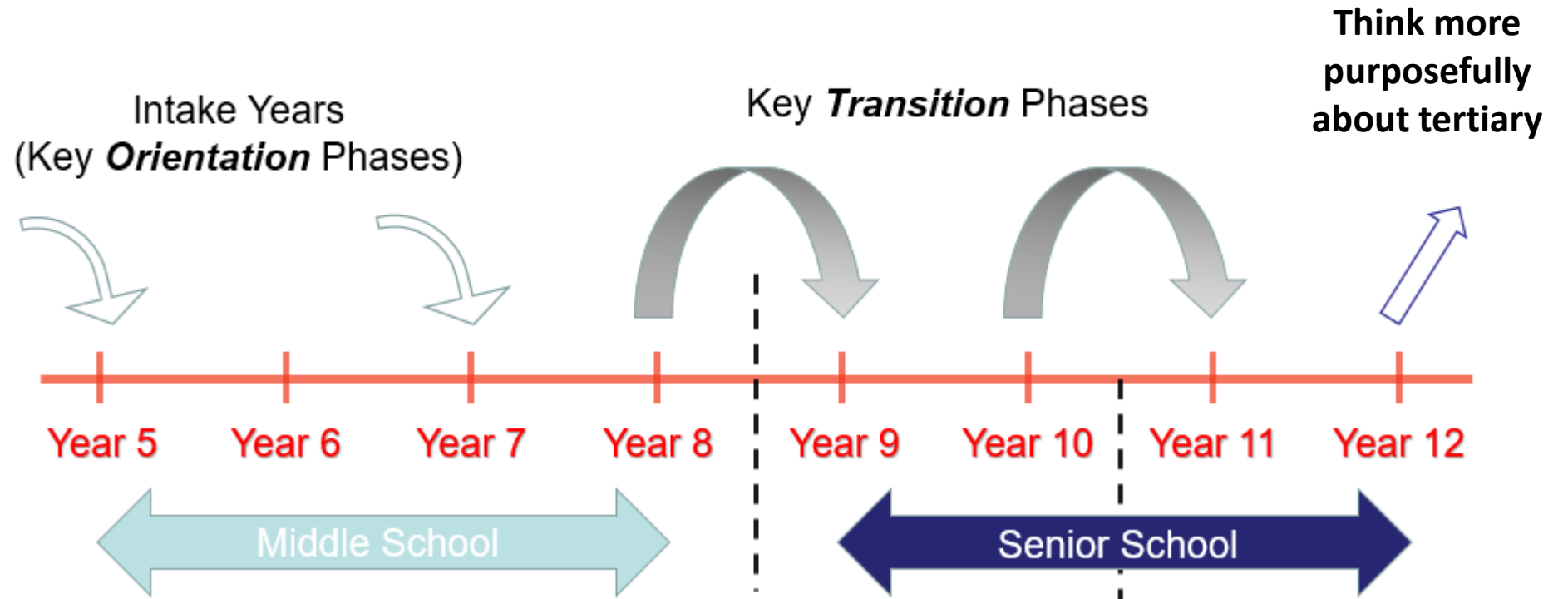
Our aims:

- maximising the positive effects of the transition process for all boys;
- minimising the effects of stress and anxiety associated with transition;
- developing a culture of professional practice and capacity building; and
- establishing links with the existing elements of the Student Wellbeing Program.





# Orientation v Transition



# BGS Student Safety Audit



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# Student Safety Audit

- Same survey conducted annually (mid-year) since 2009.
- Completed by all students (response rate typically 80 – 95%).
- Anonymous.
- Data traditionally reported back to all staff at beginning of following year (although data utilised immediately by SWB team).



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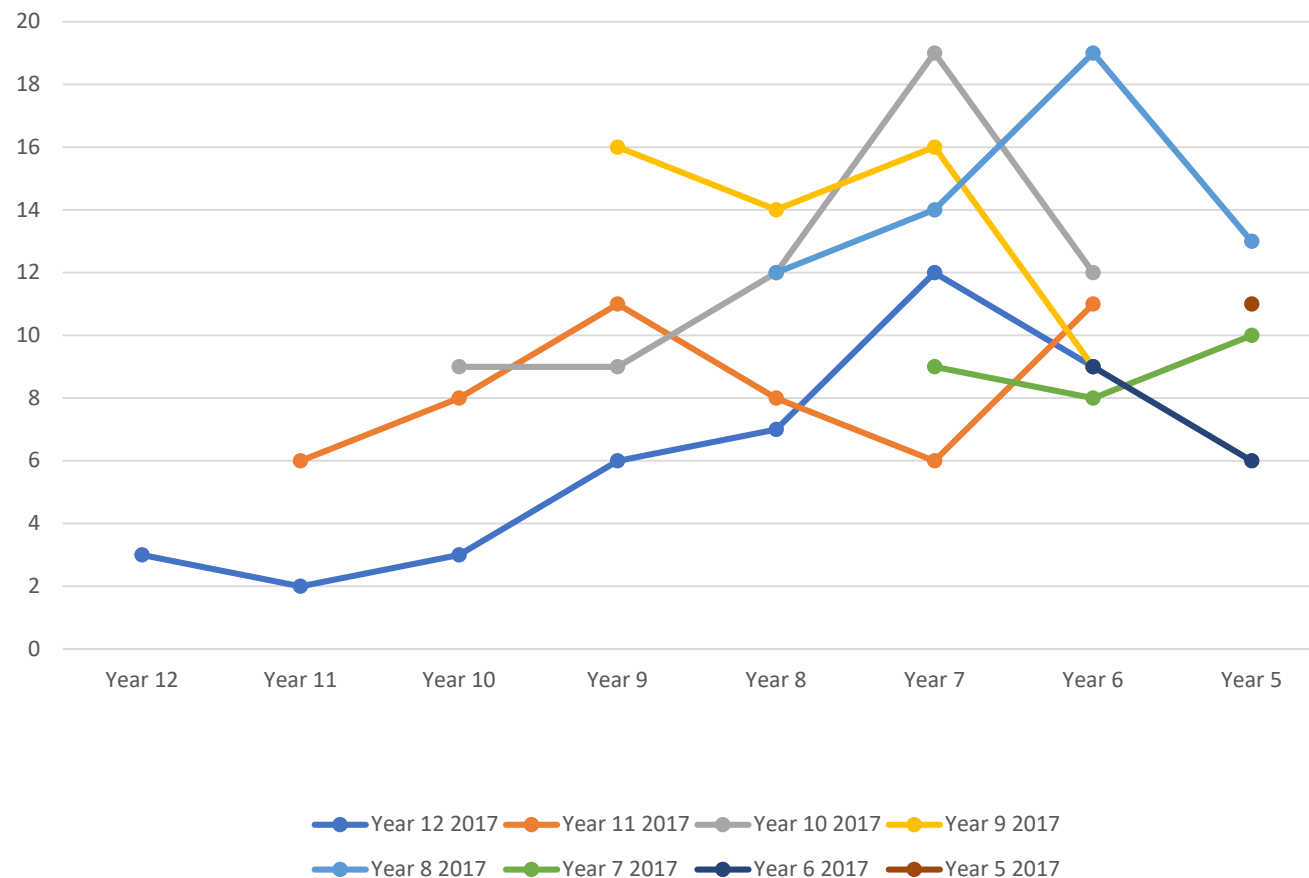
# Safety Audit fits into broader data picture.

- Observation.
- Structured surveys.
- Conversations with students, teachers and parents.
- **RELATIONSHIPS.**



# Historical data

Bullying Percentages - National Average 28.4%



# Case Study 1: Current Year 10

GRADE	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	MEAN
5						13	10	6	11	10.0
6		4	9	11	12	9	19	8	9	10.1
7		16	12	12	6	19	16	14	9	13.0
8	11	10	10	7	7	8	12	14	12	10.1
9	17	16	6	12	9	6	11	9	16	11.3
10	19	13	10	5	8	8	3	8	9	9.2
11	11	11	12	6	2	2	4	2	6	6.2
12	10	8	5	10	4	2	5	3	3	5.6
MEAN	13.6	11.1	9.1	9.0	6.9	8.4	10.0	8.0	9.4	9.4



# Case Study 1: Current Year 10

Issue: Reported bullying rates elevated in Year 7, 8, 9.

Hypothesis: interruptions to usual SWB processes.

Intervention:

- Proactive communication with relevant groups (students, staff, parents).
- Regular tracking (Termly audits).
- Swift response to audit data (meeting with all relevant students, feedback to positive bystanders, feedback to whole cohort).

Outcome: Semester 1 Y10 reported rates of bullying on audits extremely low (1.5% – 3%).

Caveats: not anonymous, different questions from official audit. Next official data due Week 3 Term 3.



# Case Study 2: Middle School 2014-15

GRADE	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	MEAN
5						13	10	6	11	10.0
6		4	9	11	12	9	19	8	9	10.1
7		16	12	12	6	19	16	14	9	13.0
8	11	10	10	7	7	8	12	14	12	10.1
9	17	16	6	12	9	6	11	9	16	11.3
10	19	13	10	5	8	8	3	8	9	9.2
11	11	11	12	6	2	2	4	2	6	6.2
12	10	8	5	10	4	2	5	3	3	5.6
MEAN	13.6	11.1	9.1	9.0	6.9	8.4	10.0	8.0	9.4	9.4





# Case Study 2: Middle School 2014-15

Issue: Reported bullying rates elevated in Year 7, 8, 9.

Hypothesis: increased student numbers (extra 400 students) leading to conflict over space.

Intervention:

- Focus on lunch time interactions.
- Regular tracking (Termly audits).
- Strong staff presence.
- Staff and students training re: conflict resolution.

Outcome: decreased rates in following year.  
Expanded space. Timetable initiatives.

# Lesson:

Student voice should lead to visible action. The boys need to know that their voice has been heard.



# Taking the Pulse



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# 3 Questions:

- How well do you think you are coping with and meeting the demands and challenges of Year 12?
- How well do you think the year level is striving towards its academic goals for 2018?
- How effective has the year level been in fulfilling your student leaders' vision for 2018?





## Year 12 "PULSE" - Term 2, Week 3

191  
Responses

01:06  
Average time to complete

Closed  
Status

...

[View results](#)

 [Open in Excel](#)

1. How well do you think you are coping with and meeting the overall demands and challenges of Year 12?

[More Details](#)

191  
Responses

6.87 6.87 Average Rating

2. How well do you think the year level is striving towards its academic goals for 2018?

[More Details](#)

191  
Responses

7.38 7.38 Average Rating

3. How effective has the year level been in fulfilling your student leaders' vision for 2018?

[More Details](#)

191  
Responses

7.18 7.18 Average Rating



# Sharing Responses:

## 1. Feedback to student cohort about their collective response

Pulse Check  
Week 4



### INDIVIDUAL : WELLBEING



- Completed in a time of high expectations and deadlines
- Check reveals many responses above this average
- What about if you rated yourself less than this result?
- Shared responsibility to ensure our mates are OK.

### COLLECTIVE : ACADEMIC GOALS



- A promising start
- Ask yourself the hard question - *Will this level of response achieve the strongest outcomes for our cohort?*
- We can continue upward movement starting next lesson and, importantly, QCS tomorrow!

### COLLECTIVE : LEADERSHIP



- This is everyone's responsibility.
- How are you enacting the vision of your leaders?
- Are you committed to the long haul of vision and legacy?

# Sharing Responses:

## 2. Individual tracking

1202		7	7	7
1202		7	9	8
1202		7	8	8
1202		8	8	9
1202		4	8	8
1202		5	8	10
1203		7	6	6
1203		3	2	5



# To conclude our story

## Building horizontal connections

Links to the Student Wellbeing Curriculum

Growth mindset

Mindfulness

Emotional intelligence

Character strengths

Friendship

Neuroplasticity

Public purpose

Connections to our Student Services staff



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# Our big lesson:

- Changes and outcomes have not occurred by accident
- We have deliberately and strategically targeted student voice to hear what they are saying and feeling.



# Pitstop #3

*Questions?*

