



# Leading Australian Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic

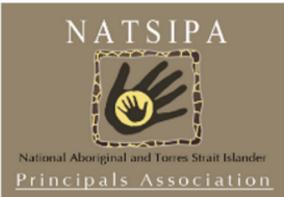
**Lessons from 2020  
Research Overview**



In late 2020, Pivot Professional Learning, in partnership with the Coalition of Australian Principals, surveyed 456 school leaders across the country about how their work changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, what they are planning for 2021, and what types of support would be most valuable. A formal whitepaper will be released in February 2021 detailing our findings and recommendations.



In partnership with



# Respondents

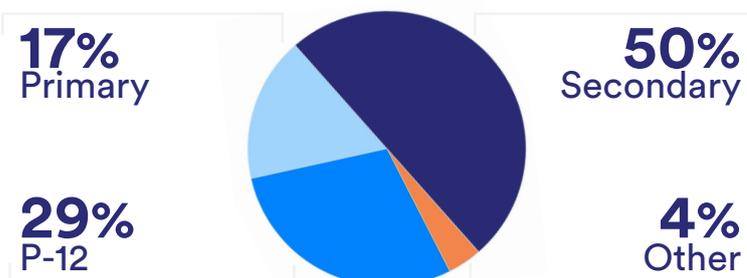
Respondents\* served in a range of leadership roles in a variety of school settings across Australia.



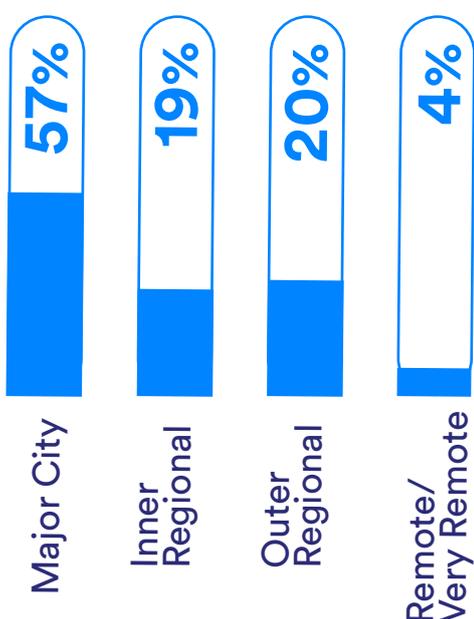
### Number of Respondents by State



### School Configuration



### Location Profile



### School Enrolment



### School Sector



\*62 respondents held positions other than leadership roles. These responses are not reported in this document.

# Rising to the Challenge

## Leader Relationships



**76%**

Reported stronger relationships with their teachers



**72%**

Reported stronger relationships with families

**59%**

Reported stronger relationships with students



## Many schools expanded services to their wider school communities



**59%**

Increased mental health support

**49%**

Increased community advocacy



**24%**

Increased meals or food support



## Family Engagement with School



**68%**

Reported increased family engagement with teachers



**68%**

Reported increased family engagement in academic learning



**73%**

Reported increased family engagement in student wellbeing

# Impact on Leaders



**97%** reported that their workload had increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic



**30%** reported a decrease in their job satisfaction



**15%** said they were less likely to continue working in school leadership

## Top three skills for leading during the pandemic

Knowledge of Staff



Crisis Planning



Communication



## Top three sources of support for leaders during the pandemic

Professional Association



The Government body that employs you



Colleagues



# The Pandemic's Impact on Teachers and Students

## Impact on Teachers

**8 out of 10**  
thought the impact on teachers' mental health was **negative**



**2 out of 3**  
thought there was a **positive** impact on teachers' relationships with students



**6 out of 10**  
thought there was a **negative** impact on teachers' work-life balance



**2 out of 3**  
thought there was a **positive** impact on the quality of teachers' instructional practice



## Impact on Students



**73%**  
of leaders thought the pandemic had a **negative** impact on student mental health.

Leaders thought the top three challenges students faced during the pandemic were all related to social-emotional wellbeing.

- Top Challenges for Students:**
1. A lack of face-to-face contact with friends
  2. Fewer social activities
  3. A lack of consistency/routine



# Differences by Socioeconomic Status of Schools

---

Leaders of schools with an ICSEA\* score higher than 1000 were **more than twice as likely** to report a successful transition to remote learning than those leading schools with ICSEA less than 1000.

Leaders of lower ICSEA schools were **significantly more likely** to say that their school had insufficient technology access.

---

## Access to Technology Concerns

	ICSEA <1000	ICSEA >1000
Devices for staff and students	26%	4%
Home internet access for staff and students	45%	11%
Information technology support	30%	8%
Online learning programs/software	26%	7%
Professional learning	30%	13%

\*ICSEA Value: Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale that represents levels of educational advantage. The ICSEA score is derived directly from information in student enrolment records, such as parental occupation and their educational level.

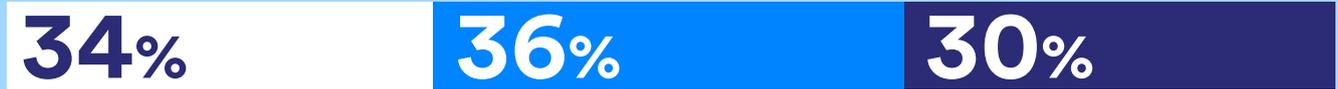


# COVID-19's Impact on Student Learning

ICSEA <1000



ICSEA >1000

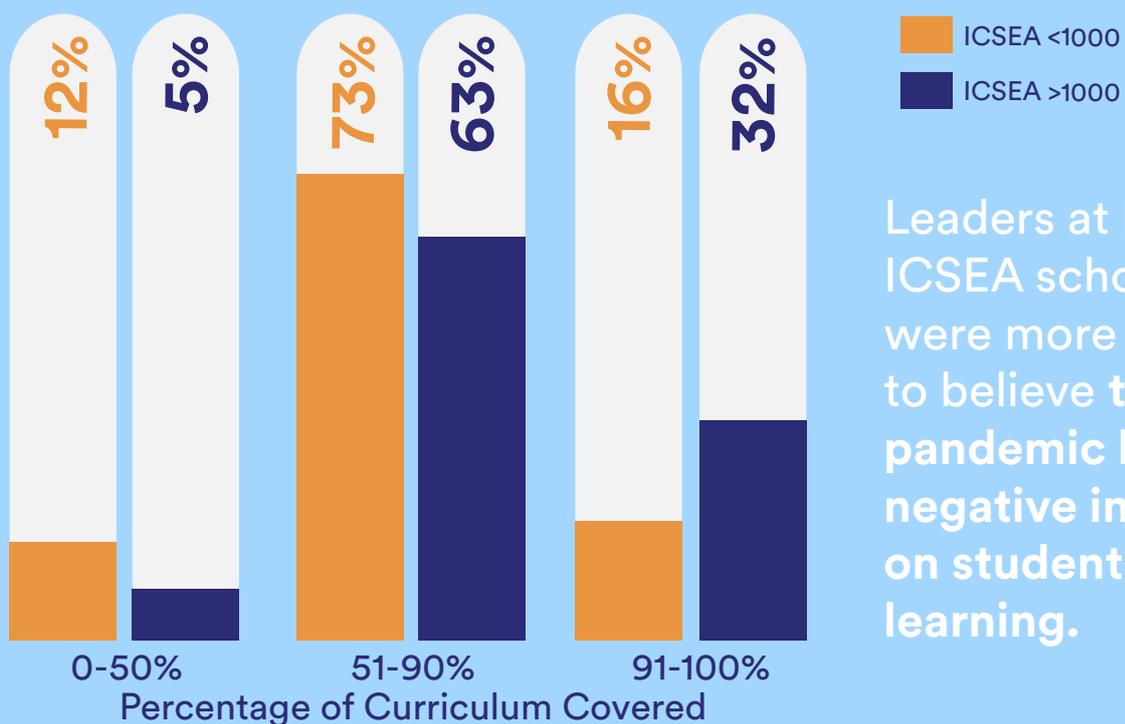


Positive Neutral Negative

Most leaders estimated that students had learnt **51-90%** of the curriculum in the past six months.

Leaders at higher ICSEA schools were **twice as likely** to report that students had learnt **91-100%** of the curriculum.

## Impact of the Pandemic on Student Learning



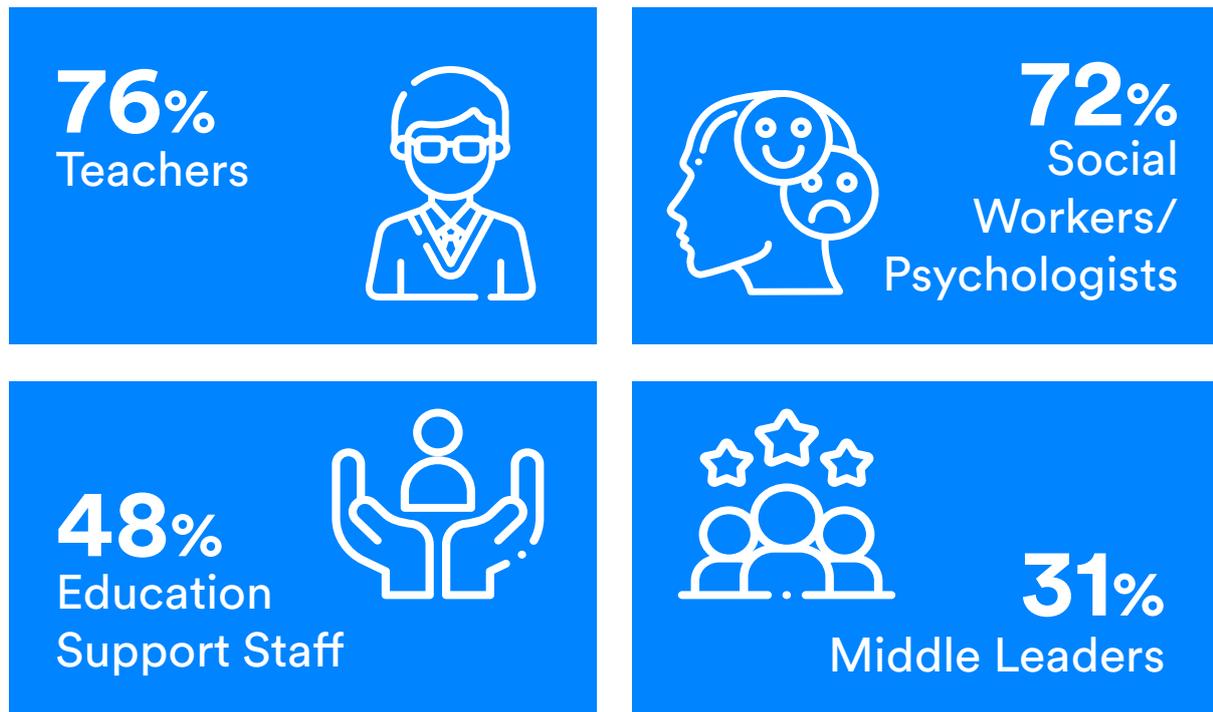
Leaders at lower ICSEA schools were more likely to believe the pandemic had a negative impact on student learning.



# Highest Needs for 2021

The top three most frequent priorities for investment in 2021 were related to **school staffing**.

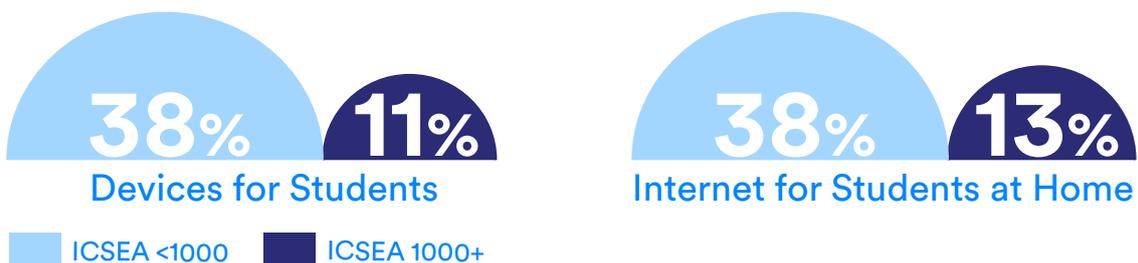
## Most Important Roles for Staffing Investment:



Leaders at low ICSEA schools more frequently selected **investment in technology** as one of their top three priorities for investment in 2021.



## Priorities for Investment in 2021



With the exception of technology investments, leaders' top priorities in terms of preparing for additional closures in 2021 were very similar, irrespective of school ICSEA level.

---

## Top Two Priorities

**80%** Digital pedagogy training      Training in supporting student wellbeing **74%**

---

# For Further Information

Register for updates and to receive the whitepaper directly to your inbox via our website:  
[www.pivotpl.com/landscape-of-school-leadership-2020/](http://www.pivotpl.com/landscape-of-school-leadership-2020/)

Whitepaper launch: **17th February 2021**

Contact Us: [hello@pivotpl.com](mailto:hello@pivotpl.com) | 0481 874 868

