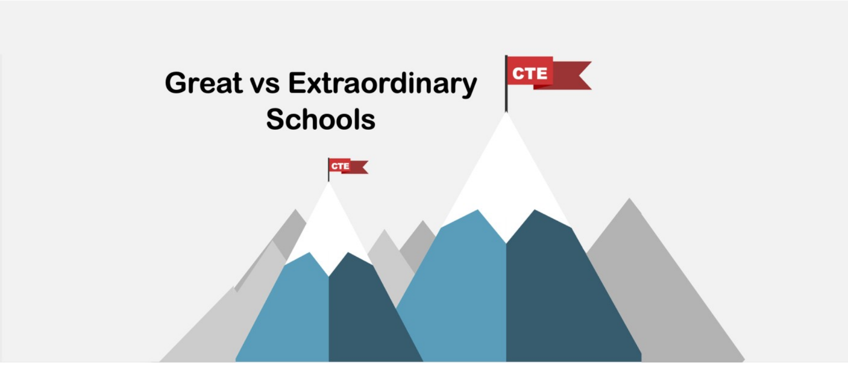


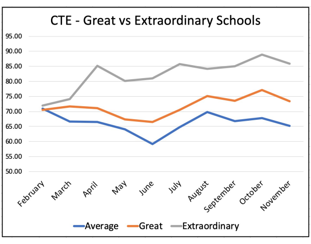
Collective Teacher Efficacy: Great vs Extraordinary Schools

With Alistair Kerr
LinkedIn Video Summary HERE

Extremely High Collective Teacher Efficacy…

"Wow – Now that is an Extraordinary School!"

Our research team was in awe. We were fully 'nerding out' on the annual data sets of a couple of High Performance Schools in our ongoing quest to identify the critical success factors that separate 'Good' schools from 'Great' schools…



One school's data set really peaked our interest. "*I've never seen such sustainably high levels of Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) over a full calendar year – substantially higher than many of the 'great' schools we have worked with over the years. Yet they're comparable on all workforce characteristics, student achievement and behaviour outcomes and even began the year with similar CTE levels…*

….What on earth is going on here? How were they able to build such high levels of collective efficacy (sustained over the entire calendar year) – so much higher than other High Performance Schools who also had very high levels of CTE?"

High Performance Schools: Staff & Students Flourishing

A High Performance School is a 'place where both staff and students can flourish'. We know that students flourish when they are engaged in quality teaching and learning in a supportive classroom environment within a wider school that has consistent best practice approaches to both pedagogy and behaviour management. We know that staff flourish when they work in High Performance Teams – with explicit ways of working across 4 KPIs – interacting within an activity cycle that is optimised to maximise both staff wellbeing and performance.

We can measure 'students flourishing' by focusing on maximising academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes. We can measure 'staff flourishing' by focusing on maximising levels of collective efficacy (a combination of job satisfaction, performance feedback, peer support and work/life and wellbeing) across teaching and non-teaching teams.

Staff Flourishing: Great vs Extraordinary Schools

As you can see in the snapshot presented in the Table below (using some of the most widely available and comparable indicators of school performance), High Performance Schools are characterised by student growth in literacy and numeracy throughout the calendar year, low incidences of behaviour problems compared to peer schools, higher levels of student attendance, and higher levels of staff satisfaction on annual opinion surveys and higher levels of Collective Teacher Efficacy.

HPS 1 & 2 Comparative Analysis 1: Annual Outcomes

VARIABLE	MEASURE	Average School	HPS 1 - Great	HPS 2- Extraordinary
Collective Efficacy	Team Pulse Data (%)			
	CTE (total)	66	71.69	82.20
	Job Satisfaction	67	71.29	81.45
	Performance Feedback	65	72.22	82.95
	Peer Support	70	76.65	88.63
	Work/Life & Wellbeing	63	66.59	75.77
Literacy	English AC x Sem Growth	NA	Yes (4%)	Yes (2%)
Numeracy	Maths AC x Sem Growth	NA	Yes (5%)	Yes (3%)
Attendance	Student Attendance	91	93%	93%
Behaviour	SDAs (%)	80k (14%)	28 (4%)	51 (4%)
	Enrollments	Statewide 550K	650	1,151
SOS - Staff	Q69 enjoy (%)	94	95	98
	Q74 beh. man	82	86	93
	Q75 supported	82	83	95
	Q76 opinions heard	81	89	95

What was particularly interesting in this data was the significantly higher CTE scores in High Performance School 2 (HPS 2) compared to HPS 1. Why did one school have markedly higher levels of CTE than the other? What caused such a difference in the CTE data? Given the similarities in student academic growth, attendance and behaviour, was such a difference simply a matter of timing, luck and/or local circumstances or were there some reliable and repeatable strategies any school can use to maximise the level at which staff can flourish?

In this article we delve deeper into what 'staff flourishing' looks like and compare and contrast two High Performance Schools to explore the characteristics that determine 'Great' vs. 'Extraordinary' schools.

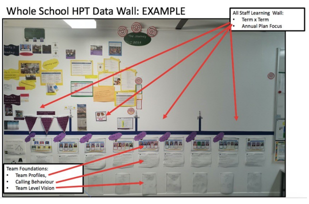
Great vs. Extraordinary Schools: What's The Magic?

As you can see in the next Table, both the High Performance Schools in our case study had embedded the High Performance Teams system for teaching (and non-teaching) teams throughout their schools, and implemented recommended Team Meeting Systems, the Team Pulse System and a School Wide Data Wall. They had also implemented other key components of the High Performance Schools systems however, in retrospect, the 'devil was in the detail' about how some of the other team and school system implementation occurred. Let's unpack these details now…

HPS 1 & 2 Comparative Analysis 2: HPT Systems (School & Team)

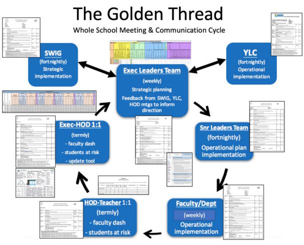
HPT School Wide Systems	HPS 1 - Great	HPS 2 Extraordinary
Whole School Data Wall	Y	Y
Whole School Mtg & Comm Cycle Map	Partial	Full
Time Tabling Full Team Activity Cycle	Partial	Full
50:40:10 Leadership Dashboard System	Partial	Full
HPT Team Systems	**HPS 1 - Great**	**HPS 2 Extraordinary**
HPT Team Data Walls	N	Y
HPT Team Pulse	Y	Y
Monthly Pulse Scorecards Completed by Teams	N	Y
HPT Team Meeting System	Y	Y
HPT Team Meeting Freq	2 in 3	Weekly
Team Activity Cycle Engagement	Partial	Full

Part 1: HPT School Wide Systems



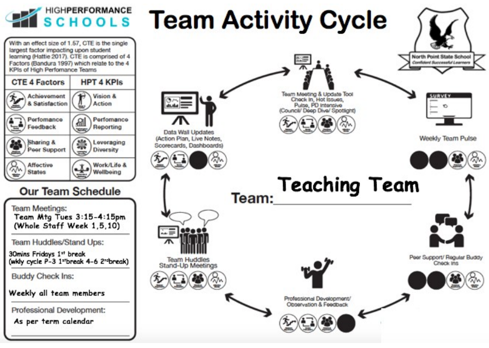
Whole School Data Wall: There are a number of school wide systems High Performance Schools rely on to ensure staff and students flourish. These include a whole school data wall which maps (at the minimum) the organisational structure (professional teams, improvement groups and reporting lines), key workforce characteristics across teams and school wide teaching, learning and behaviour strategies and goals. School wide data walls also typically track progress on collective efficacy levels and the achievement of milestones within the annual school improvement plan. Both High Performance Schools in our case study had developed whole school data walls which addressed these critical success factors.

Whole School Meeting & Communicational Cycle Map:



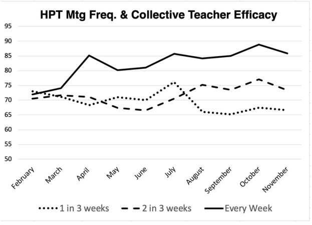
We've previously written about the importance of establishing a 'Golden Thread' – a school wide meeting and communication cycle that ensures 'passive communication' such as updates and newsletters keep everyone informed in real time of any relevant information and 'active communication' (i.e., meetings) are scheduled in a co-ordinated fashion on an adequate frequency (to ensure teams do not 'under' or 'over' meet) to maximise team performance. In the analysis of our two High Performance Schools, the building of the Golden Thread was only partially completed in HPS 1 (which had a comprehensive meeting and communication cycle for teaching teams but had not yet synced this with non-teaching teams and the leadership team – thus relying on their general staff meetings for some of their essential information sharing processes) whilst HPS 2 had built a comprehensive cycle ensuring adequate meeting and information sharing cycles were occurring across the school.

Timetabling of Full Team Activity Cycle: Teaching Team Activity is more than simply holding team meetings. In a High Performance Team there are a range of team activities beyond scheduled team meetings including Team Huddles (optional short stand up meetings to (1) collaboratively solve problems as they emerge in real time and (2) maintain the collective focus on their strategic goals), Buddy check-ins (quick status updates to connect with and support fellow team members) and Team Professional Development Time (team learning time that (1) explicitly links to the team's purpose and goals; (2) has clear learning intent and success criteria that are operationalised and internalised; and (3) reinforcement of learning outcomes at the conclusion of the PD Time).

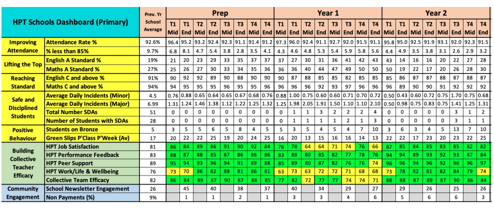

HIGHPERFORMANCE SCHOOLS
Team Activity Cycle
North Point State School
Confident Successful Learners
With an effect size of 1.57, CTE is the single largest factor impacting upon student learning (Hattie 2017). CTE is comprised of 4 Factors (Bandura 1997) which relate to the 4 KPIs of High Perfomance Teams
CTE 4 Factors
HPT 4 KPIs
Achievement & Satisfaction
Vision & Action
Perfomance Feedback
Perfomance Reporting
Sharing & Peer Support
Leveraging Diversity
Affective States
Work/Life & Wellbeing
Our Team Schedule
Team Meetings:
Team Mtg Tues 3:15-4:15pm (Whole Staff Week 1,5,10)
Team Huddles/Stand Ups:
30mins Fridays 1st break (wkly cycle P-3 1st break 4-6 2nd break)
Buddy Check Ins:
Weekly all team members
Professional Development:
As per term calendar
Team Meeting & Update Tool Check In, Hot Issues, Pulse, PD Intensive (Council/ Deep Dive/ Spotlight)
Data Wall Updates (Action Plan, Live Notes, Scorecards, Dashboards)
SURVEY
Weekly Team Pulse
Team: Teaching Team
Team Huddles Stand-Up Meetings
Peer Support/ Regular Buddy Check Ins
Professional Development/ Observation & Feedback

Whilst teams are responsible to implement such activities, the school leadership team is responsible for the provision of time within the timetable for some of these activities to occur. In particular, team huddles and team meetings require clever planning and timetabling solutions from the school leadership team. As you can see in the activity cycle diagram above, schools with an allowance of only 1 hour per week meeting time can still achieve 3 or 4 weeks per monthly meeting cycle and weekly team huddles with some clever planning of the timetables.

In HPS 1 they timetabled for 2 out of 3 weeks and left Team Huddles to be a voluntary non-scheduled activity whilst in HPS 2 they timetabled for the full activity cycle every week. You can see the impact of meeting frequency on collective efficacy in the accompanying chart.



50:40:10 Leadership Dashboard System: Schools leaders have access to a wide array of data. In most schools leadership teams analyse their data through '80:20' Dashboards – where 80% of data is student focused (academic, attendance & behaviour) and 20% of the data focused on staff and parent satisfaction. Leadership Teams from Extraordinary Schools take a different approach to data and dashboarding with 50:40:10 Leadership Dashboard Systems – where 50% of data focuses on students (academic results / attendance & positive and negative behaviour), 40% on staff (collective efficacy, job satisfaction, professional feedback, peer support and wellbeing) and 10% on parent & community engagement (engagement/ participation).

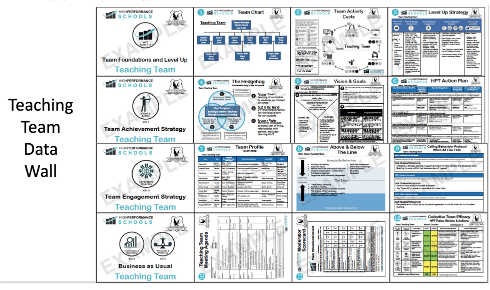


HPT Schools Dashboard (Primary)		Prev. Yr School Average	Prep								Year 1								Year 2							
			T1 Mid	T1 End	T2 Mid	T2 End	T3 Mid	T3 End	T4 Mid	T4 End	T1 Mid	T1 End	T2 Mid	T2 End	T3 Mid	T3 End	T4 Mid	T4 End	T1 Mid	T1 End	T2 Mid	T2 End	T3 Mid	T3 End	T4 Mid	T4 End
Improving Attendance	Attendance Rate %	92.6%	96.4	95.2	93.2	92.4	92.3	91.1	91.4	91.2	97.3	96.0	92.4	91.1	92.7	92.0	91.5	91.1	95.8	95.0	92.5	91.9	93.1	92.0	92.3	91.5
	% less than 85%	9.7%	6.8	8.1	4.7	5.4	3.8	2.8	3.5	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.8	5.3	5.4	5.9	5.8	5.6	4.4	4.9	3.5	3.8	3.1	2.6	2.9	3.2
Lifting the Top	English A Standard %	19%	21	20	23	29	33	35	37	37	37	27	30	31	36	41	42	43	43	14	16	16	20	22	27	28
	Maths A Standard %	27%	25	26	27	30	33	34	35	36	36	36	40	44	47	49	50	50	50	19	22	17	20	26	28	30
Reaching Standard	English C and above %	91%	90	92	92	89	90	88	90	90	90	87	88	85	85	82	85	85	85	86	87	87	88	87	88	87
	Maths C and above %	94%	94	95	95	95	96	95	95	96	96	96	96	92	93	97	96	96	96	89	90	90	91	92	92	92
Safe and Disciplined Students	Average Daily Incidents (Minor)	4.5	0.76	0.88	0.65	0.64	0.65	0.67	0.68	0.76	0.88	1.00	0.75	0.60	0.60	0.71	0.70	0.72	0.50	0.43	0.60	0.72	0.75	1.70	0.75	0.68
	Average Daily Incidents (Major)	6.99	1.31	1.24	1.46	1.38	1.12	1.22	1.25	1.32	1.25	1.98	2.05	1.91	1.50	1.10	1.10	2.10	0.50	0.98	0.75	0.83	0.75	1.41	1.25	1.31
	Total Number SDAs	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2
	Number of Students with SDAs	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1
Positive Behaviour	Students on Bronze	5	3	5	5	6	5	8	4	5	5	3	5	4	5	4	7	10	3	6	3	4	5	13	7	10
	Green Slips P'Class P'Week (Av)	17	20	22	22	25	19	20	24	25	16	20	13	15	16	16	14	13	22	22	17	23	20	23	22	25
Building Collective Teacher Efficacy	HPT Job Satisfaction	81	86	84	89	86	91	90	92	84	76	78	64	64	71	74	76	66	87	85	84	85	83	85	82	82
	HPT Performance Feedback	83	88	87	88	85	87	86	86	86	83	88	80	85	82	77	78	76	94	94	89	93	92	93	87	84
	HPT Peer Support	89	95	94	93	96	94	91	89	88	85	89	80	87	82	76	76	74	96	96	94	96	92	96	96	97
	HPT Work/Life & Wellbeing	76	73	70	86	82	88	81	86	81	63	73	63	72	72	71	68	68	73	78	82	81	82	84	79	74
	Collective Team Efficacy	82	86	84	89	87	90	87	88	85	77	82	72	77	77	74	74	71	88	88	87	89	87	90	86	84
Community Engagement	School Newsletter Engagement	26		45		40		38		37		40		34		29		27		29		26		25		26
	Non Payments (%)	9%		1		1		2		1		3		3		4		6		5		6		6		3

Both of our 'Great' and 'Extraordinary' case study schools had implemented 50:40:10 Leadership Dashboards. When comparing the two, the main focus of our audit was in the analyses of the "50:40" aspect – the visual linking of staff and student data sets on the dashboards. In HPS 1, they had a strong focus on student learning and attendance on their leadership dashboard but did not integrate their staff metrics such as pulse data on the same reporting sets (lessening their dashboard system's ability to reveal interaction effects in real time), whilst in HPS 2 they had an integrated reporting suite visually connecting staff and student data which gave them greater ability to examine interaction effects between collective teacher efficacy and student attendance, learning and positive and negative behaviour (see example).

Part 2: Teaching Team Systems

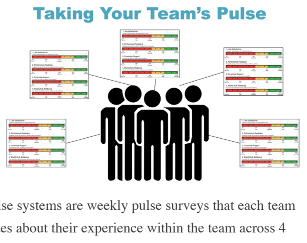
Team Specific Data Walls: Team data walls contain key documents that help teams to track and bring clarity to their processes – their visual nature acts as a constant reminder of what's working well and what could be improved upon so that the team can achieve more while fully supporting each other. By their nature data walls are quite simple, they contain a collection of critical documents that help teams to understand their (1) Foundational Elements, (2) Team Achievement Strategy, (3) Team Engagement Strategy, and (4) Business as Usual (BAU) activities.



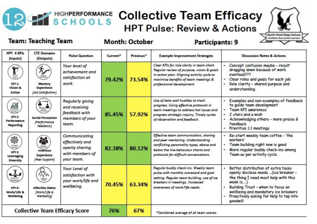
Team data walls should act as 'living wallpaper' that is updated as team needs change over time. When following best practice, team data walls serve as a key focal point during team meetings and huddles.

When we compare the two High Performance Schools in focus, HPS 1 put the main focus of their data wall strategy on the 'whole school' data wall and added some of the team specific components to this wall – however the limiting factor to this was that teams did not meet where the whole school data wall was located and as such could not directly refer to it as a visual point of accountability and update it during team meetings. Contrasting this, HPS 2 implemented both whole school and team specific data walls with team data walls on mobile boards that could be moved around and easily utilised as a reference point during team meetings.

Team Pulse Systems: Too often teams don't take the time to pause and reflect on their progress as a team. However, High Performance Schools are very deliberate in their approach to tracking team progress through using Team Pulse Systems. Team pulse systems are weekly pulse surveys that each team member anonymously completes about their experience within the team across 4 factors which reflect Banduras (1997) four elements of Collective Teacher Efficacy. Once a month these results are scorecarded up as group averages for the team to discuss and reflect on – setting goals to continuously improve in each of the four areas whilst gaining a unified snapshot of the teams functioning as opposed to each individuals' viewpoint. In both of our comparison schools the team pulse system was fully implemented and there was full engagement in completing the pulse regularly across the school.



Monthly Pulse Scorecards: The Monthly Pulse Scorecard captures the average scores from the team pulse and provides an overall Collective Team Efficacy score. The scorecard also displays suggestions on how teams can improve their Collective Efficacy, and provides space for teams to capture their discussions on

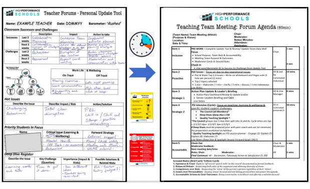


12 HIGHPERFORMANCE SCHOOLS Collective Team Efficacy
HPT Pulse: Review & Actions
North Point State School
Confident Successful Learners

Team: Teaching Team Month: October Participants: 9

HPT 4 KPIs (inputs)	CTE Domains (Outputs)	Pulse Question	Current*	Previous*	Example Improvement Strategies	Discussion Notes & Actions
KPI 1: Vision & Action	Mastery Experience (Job Satisfaction)	Your level of achievement and satisfaction at work.	79.42%	73.54%	Clear KPIs for role clarity in team chart. Regular review of purpose, vision & goals in action plan. Aligning activity cycle to maximise benefits of team meetings & professional development.	• Concept confusion maybe - result dragging down because of work overload??? • Clear roles and goals for each job • Role clarity - shared purpose and understanding
KPI 2: Performance Reporting	Social Persuasion (Performance Feedback)	Regularly giving and receiving feedback with members of your team.	85.45%	57.92%	Use of data wall huddles to track progress. Using effective protocols in team meetings to address hot issues and progress strategic inquiry. Timely cycles of observation and feedback.	• Examples and non-examples of feedback to guide team development • Team KPI awareness • 2 stars and a wish • Acknowledging others - more praise & feedback • Prioritise 1:1 meetings
KPI 3: Leveraging Diversity	Vicarious Experience (Peer Support)	Communicating effectively and openly sharing with members of your team.	82.38%	80.12%	Effective team communication, sharing and peer mentoring. Understanding conflicting personality types, above and below the line behaviour charts and protocols for difficult conversations.	• Re-start weekly team coffee - 'the workers' • Team building right now is good • More regular buddy check-ins among Team as per activity cycle
KPI 4: Work/Life & Wellbeing	Affective States (Work/Life & Wellbeing)	Your Level of satisfaction with your work/life and wellbeing.	70.45%	63.34%	Regular buddy check-ins. Weekly team pulse with monthly scorecard and goal setting. Regular team building, use of ice breakers in meetings. Increased awareness of work/life needs.	• Better distribution of extra tasks openly disclose needs ...(ice breaker - the thing I need most help with this week is....) • Building Trust - when to focus on wellbeing and mandatory ice breakers • Proactively asking for help to tap into goodwill
Collective Team Efficacy Score			76%	67%	*Combined average of all team scores	

any improvements that they elect to implement within the team. In HPS 1 the scorecard was displayed and discussed at team meetings and general commentary of next steps was noted in meeting minutes at the discretion of teams. We recommend both the systematic analysis and recording of forward actions for each indicator on the actual pulse report scorecard which is then displayed on the team data wall (as well as live noting any such actions in meeting notes) which was the strategy employed by all teams in HPS 2.


HIGHPERFORMANCE SCHOOLS
Teacher Forums - Personal Update Tool
HIGHPERFORMANCE SCHOOLS
Teaching Team Meeting: Forum Agenda (60min)

Team Meeting System: High Performance Schools use comprehensive yet flexible meeting agendas which ensures the right mix of inclusive, supportive, proactive, strategic and accountable meeting items are discussed, a meeting Chair and meeting Moderator and a live note system which feeds into the team data wall. Both HPS 1 and HPS 2 implemented the full HPT Teaching Team Meeting Strategy, agenda and roles of Chair and Moderator with great success.

Team Meeting Frequency: Regular, high-quality meetings are necessary for effective team functioning. Regarding meeting frequency, in Australian public schools it seems that the sweet spot is weekly 60-minute meetings. However, team meetings are not the only meetings that are necessary inside of a school. Given this, schools need to consider their meeting cycles to best accommodate the different types of meetings. HPS 1 adopted a 2 out of 3 weekly cycle of teaching team meetings followed by a general staff meeting. This frequency was set partly due to the level of communication needs and systems within the school at the time (see timetabling discussion in previous section). In HPS 2 they adopted a weekly team meeting cycle – scheduling specialist lessons during planned teaching team meeting times. We know from research weekly 60 minute meetings (of a high quality) are proposed to be optimal for teaching teams and the CTE data appears to support this conclusion.

Team Activity Cycle Engagement: Whether formalised or not, all teams have an ‘Activity Cycle’ – activities that teams engage in to support team functioning (see activity cycle diagram in earlier section). Many teams view their activity cycles as limited to team meetings, however we know that for optimal performance team activity cycles extend well beyond team meetings. Some of these team activities are purely information/data focused (i.e., completing short team pulse surveys and updating the team data wall), whilst other team activities are primarily communication focused (i.e., team meetings, buddy check ins, team huddles and professional development).

In HPS 1, team engagement around the activity cycle was not measured and managed across the school and teams were allowed to opt out of components at the discretion of their line manager (other than scheduled team meetings). In HPS 2 team engagement around the activity cycle was measured and managed by having the line manager who participated in, and coordinated all, team activities.

Extraordinary Schools: Findings & Recommendations

In this article we have attempted to understand the differences between a ‘Great’ school and an ‘Extraordinary’ school in terms of Collective Teacher Efficacy. In doing so we have created a map of some 'next steps' that any school can follow to become extraordinary.

As our research into Collective Teacher Efficacy deepens, this article has highlighted several key findings that indicate that the High Performance Team systems and strategies positively impact staff and students flourishing through increased CTE, decreased student behavioural incidents, and more positive learning outcomes. We have shown that:

1. Schools that also use team level HPT data walls do better than schools with only whole of staff data walls;

2. Schools with higher teaching team meeting frequencies do better than those that meet less frequently. Especially when their team meetings use HPT Protocols which ensure meeting are inclusive, supportive, proactive, strategic and accountable;

3. Schools that actively monitor team pulse data (at the team level) monthly and display results and targeted agreed actions on their team data wall do better than those that monitor team pulse data only at a whole school level, infrequently, or are too general in defining next steps;

4. Schools that adhere to Activity Cycles timetabled within recommended guidelines do better than those who only partially commit to their team Activity Cycles; and

5. Schools with clear and balanced 50:40:10 Ratioed Dashboard Systems do better than those who are overly focused on a particular portion of their data.

Based on these observations the roadmap of 'next steps' to becoming an Extraordinary School seems pretty clear:

1. **Team Meeting Frequency**: Scheduling team meetings for 1 hour every week (using HPT Protocols) is ideal. In the extraordinary school this was achieved via specialist lesson timetables with a weekly 60 minute general staff meeting as well. Where schools can’t create more team meeting time, a 3:1 (Team Meeting: Staff Meeting) monthly ratio is adequate as long as the school’s communication cycle is adequately keeping all staff ‘in the loop’ and ‘up-to-date’ between meetings.

2. **Team Time for Huddles:** Within the Activity Cycle shorter stand up meetings or huddles are often left to the discretion of the team without being scheduled into timetables - usually resulting in low uptake. Team Huddles (short stand up meetings) can, and should be provisioned for, in school timetables by scheduling weekly 30min huddles per team via well organised playground rostering systems;

3. **Data Walls**: In addition to a whole school data wall, Teaching Team specific data walls are essential for maximising clarity on both team processes and teaching and learning goals;

4. **Team Pulse Systems**: Full use of team pulse scorecards and actively recording forward actions in meeting notes and scorecard templates is important to allow teams to take charge of their own wellbeing and improvement; and

5. **50:40:10 Leadership Dashboards**: A 50:40:10 ratioed approach to leadership dashboards gives a more balanced view of whole school performance and assists in understanding the interaction effects between Collective Teacher Efficacy and student attendance, achievement and behaviour.

Extraordinary Schools are those that fully embed the systems and structures needed to ensure that teams of teachers can work together as High Performance Teaching Teams. As a result both staff and students flourish - thus meeting our definition of a High Performance School.

Is it time for your school to take the next steps in building High Performance Teaching Teams? Which of these strategies are you most keen to implement to help take your school to the next level?... Let us know in the comments below!

Dr Pete Stebbins PhD