2022

Survey Guide

Perspectives
Your school in focus

Introduction by the Chief Executive

Dr Geoff Newcombe AM
Chief Executive

Throughout our history, AISNSW has maintained a strong commitment to provide the highest quality services to our member schools, and to act as the peak body representing all independent schools in NSW.

The Independent School Sector in NSW is undergoing rapid growth. Demographers and state planners forecast that the sector is likely to grow by up to 50,000 additional students, by 2031.

In this scenario our challenges are many, but of particular significance are the provision of infrastructure and choice of quality schooling. If we are to continue to provide this quality choice of schooling for these additional parents, we must be able to clearly articulate each School's value proposition.

One of the key factors that enables school leaders to do this well is developing a clear understanding of their whole school community. When you understand who your audience is, and all stakeholders' perceptions of your school, you can explain how your value proposition meets your community needs. Highlighting the strengths of your school's current offerings, identifying areas of opportunity for innovation and improvement, while focusing on the quality and value of your education service, is critical. To do this well you need access to quality data.

AISNSW has developed the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* suite of surveys to collect rigorous and robust data enabling independent schools to make informed decisions. I am proud that AISNSW can offer this service to independent schools.

Dr Geoff Newcombe AM
Chief Executive

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Introduction

Every school has the potential to make progress in the areas in which they aspire to do well. Opportunities to grow, develop, improve performance, and celebrate strengths and achievements only need to be identified.

To support member schools in their continuous improvement endeavours AISNSW has developed a contextualised suite of surveys, designed to meet the specific needs of independent schools – *Perspectives: Your school in focus*. The surveys are designed to reflect the unique, multifaceted and dynamic nature of independent schools.

Data collected provide relevant information to schools as they investigate a variety of ways to better meet the needs of their whole school community. When triangulated with other school data, *Perspectives: Your school in focus* data can be used to inform future school priorities, goals and targets. These are the starting point for successful planning for future growth and development.

Perspectives: Your school in focus	Included	Additional cost
Access to *Perspectives* Full Statistical and Text Reports	✔	
Access to your school's *Perspectives* dashboard	✔	
Two hour data interpretation capacity building session	✔	
Single sign on access for Principals and delegates via AISNSW Profile	✔	
Access to Parent survey in additional languages including Arabic, Chinese (Simplified) and Korean	✔	
Access to International Baccalaureate Dimension items	✔	
Customised survey items		✔
Perspectives Comparative Summary and Comparative Stakeholder Reports		✔

Continuous school improvement

Independent schools use continuous improvement cycles to meet their contextual and strategic needs. These cycles may be used in different areas of the school and at different times. These often range from a whole-school to individual classroom focus, and incorporate short cycles (monthly) through to annual cycles. Longer-term improvement cycles may take 3-5 years or more. It is critical to understand where your school is in its continuous improvement cycle before undertaking any additional data collection.

Improvement cycles depend on the disciplined use of quality evidence to make sound judgements for the delivery of better learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students. *Perspectives: Your school in focus* generates quality data ideally suited to inform this improvement process. Used alongside existing school data, schools can use *Perspectives* data to accurately identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth and change.
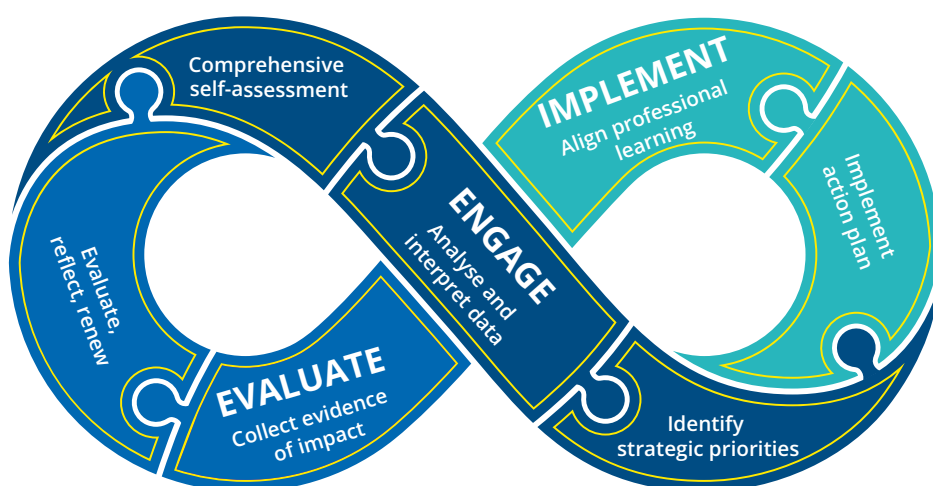
Figure: AISNSW School Improvement Cycle

The data collected by *Perspectives: Your school in focus* are best suited to the long-term cycle of continuous improvement and support the tracking of longitudinal trends within and across your school.

Perspectives: Your school in focus

Perspectives: Your school in focus is a multi-dimensional suite of surveys designed to provide a holistic view of your school.

Surveying stakeholders

To provide a comprehensive view of the whole school community *Perspectives* collects opinions from six important stakeholder groups – teachers, students, school leaders, parents/guardians, non-teaching staff and board members.

Each stakeholder group has their own experience of school life, and collectively these six groups constitute the lived reality of your school. There are often similar and divergent views and perceptions of that reality among stakeholder groups and individuals within these. Capturing this diversity can enrich and strengthen efforts undertaken to improve school culture, climate and educational outcomes.

Stakeholder surveys reveal experiences relevant to each group. When brought together these help provide a multi-faceted view of your school.
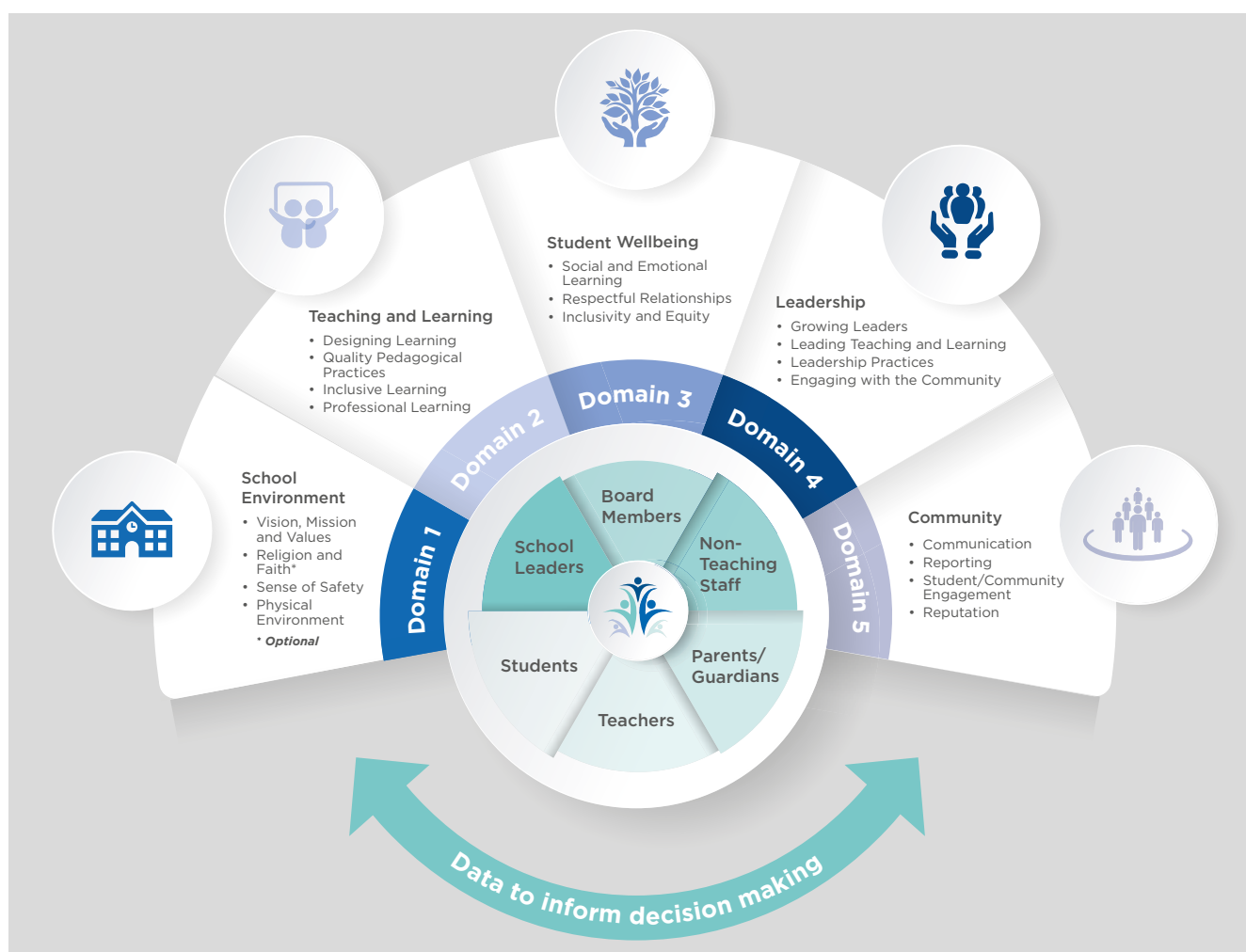
*Non-faith based schools can request the omission of the **Religion and Faith** dimension.

Survey domains

Research on school improvement and effectiveness identifies core areas of school life integral to success. The five domains surveyed in *Perspectives: Your school in focus* reflect this research base, whilst covering important additional terrain for independent schools.

The five domains are school environment, teaching and learning, student wellbeing, leadership, and community.

Each of these five domains canvas a number of crucial dimensions important to providing a well-rounded view of independent schools. In the following domain descriptions these dimensions are bolded.

School environment

The **school environment** is a critical element of each student's school experience and contributes significantly to success. Research shows that successful schools demonstrate a strong alignment between their **vision, mission and values**, and the actions they take. Vision, mission and values establish the direction for the school and impact on school climate. This survey examines how well these are known by the school community and how they are used to guide school direction.

For faith-based schools, the contribution of religious education plays a significant role in the spiritual development of students. **Religion and faith** are an integral part of a school's learning environment. This optional survey dimension explores the role of religious education and its contribution to school life.

It has long been recognised that establishing a school environment that provides a **sense of safety** for all members is a basic requirement for learning. Safe schools enable students to flourish and succeed. The survey focuses on the role of school rules and expectations in establishing a sense of safety for all and the consistency with which these are applied.

How much a school's **physical environment** is valued contributes to the overall student experience. The physical environment affects teaching, learning, school engagement and school morale. The survey focuses on how well the school's building and grounds are maintained.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is at the core of a school's purpose. This includes evidence-based decision-making processes which maximise student learning outcomes. Active and purposeful teaching and learning supports students' academic achievement, growth and school success. Research indicates there are several factors important for cultivating and maintaining a dynamic teaching and learning culture.

Learning experiences designed to meet the individual needs of every student consistently prove to be highly efficacious. This involves educators **designing learning** based on an understanding of every student and how they learn, and their sound knowledge of curriculum, to plan for effective teaching and learning. The survey examines how well teachers know their students and the curriculum, and how this informs their planning.

Evidence demonstrates that teacher practice is integral to learner success. At the core of this are **quality pedagogical practices** — effective approaches used for teaching, learning and assessment. The survey explores high impact teaching and learning strategies including assessment and feedback, digital technologies, future focused learning and flexible learning spaces.

Inclusive learning environments ensure every student experiences a rigorous, meaningful and dignified education. Schools which respond to the uniqueness of individuals increase their sense of presence, access, and engagement within the learning environment. This creates conditions in which every student is more likely to succeed. The survey targets equitable access, full participation for all students, and challenging and authentic learning experiences.

Educating for the future requires currency of teacher knowledge and pedagogical practices which substantially impact student achievement and growth. Teacher **professional learning** is pivotal to both teacher and student success. Effective professional learning is characterised by a culture of collaboration and feedback, evidence informed practice focused on improving student outcomes and a lifelong learning orientation. This survey captures the school leadership's commitment to professional learning and its value to the school.

Student wellbeing

Many schools place equal importance on cultivating **student wellbeing** and academic success. Students who learn well, often feel well. For young people to grow and flourish, it is essential that they develop a healthy sense of self and can establish and maintain positive relationships. Safe, supportive and respectful school learning environments foster positive student wellbeing.

Social and emotional learning supports young people to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve goals, build resilience and undertake self-reflective practices. The survey explores these areas of social and emotional learning.

Young people thrive when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships. At the core of **respectful relationships** is a sense of belonging and connection. Students at the school feel accepted, valued and supported by adults and peers alike. The survey focuses on these areas, and respectful behaviours and interactions including anti-bullying and online safety.

Respect for difference and diversity are important aspects of school life. For young people to truly flourish they must feel free from discrimination and exclusion based on their gender, race, language, sexual orientation, ability, religion, culture or socio-economic background. This dimension focuses on **inclusivity and equity**, capturing the school's efforts to build a culture of belonging by actively valuing the dignity of all young people.

Leadership

Leadership plays a pivotal role in improving outcomes and opportunities for all learners. Leaders draw on their knowledge and experience when working with others to create necessary changes to systems and practices. Research reiterates the value of progressive and inclusive leadership practices and the impact these have on establishing and maintaining positive school cultures. Leadership responsibilities extend beyond middle leaders and senior executives, with leadership opportunities being created and supported across all areas of the school. Developing leadership capacity in all staff is considered an effective means of furthering the priorities of the school whilst building a culture of collective effort and vision.

Effective leadership develops and draws on the strengths of staff to increase capacity for growth and change. The dimension **growing leaders** focuses on the practices that reflect shared leadership, including mentoring, coaching and generating opportunities to lead.

Creating a learning culture that challenges and supports educators to improve is the core work of effective leaders. A focus on instructional leadership helps to ensure that pedagogically sound teaching practices positively impact on learner outcomes. **Leading teaching and learning** examines effective leadership practices such as modelling, collaborative planning, and evidence-based decision-making to improve teacher efficacy.

Leaders who create strong cultures of learning empower their staff to be actively engaged in their own professional growth. They responsibilise individuals and work with them to extend their capacities and positively contribute to change within the school. The **leadership practices** section explores the modelling of leadership practices and effective change management strategies.

Effective leaders capitalise on resources and knowledge in their extended school community to proactively build positive relationships that support students. They build meaningful partnerships with groups and organisations to further the priorities of the school. The dimension **engaging with the community** examines the quality of these school partnerships.

Community

Families are the first educators of children and schools recognise their importance for ongoing student success. Research indicates that high levels of parent and student engagement with the school are important for wellbeing and academic success.

Communication between schools, parents, students and the community form the foundation for developing and maintaining positive relationships. This area focuses on the quality of the school's communications and how well they meet family needs.

Opportunities for young people to engage in co-curricular activities, sport and service learning are a vital part of an enriching education and an essential part of independent school life. The **student/community engagement** section explores the quality of these offerings.

For parents to fully appreciate the learning experience and progress of their children, schools need to communicate effectively and in timely and relevant ways. The **reporting** section examines the effectiveness of the school's reporting processes.

Items in the **reputation** section provide a measure of parental satisfaction across a range of indicators including choice, pride and quality of education.

Essential service

It is suggested that the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* suite of surveys be administered every two years or integrated into longer-term improvement cycles. Some schools choose to make use of the surveys annually. Perspectives is available as a co-contribution model.

Schools are supported throughout the survey process and can access advice, information and support documentation as needed.

Upon completion of the surveys, school principals access their results via an online dashboard. Here, survey data may be filtered, providing a nuanced view of each stakeholder group's experience of the school. As schools collect data over multiple years they can examine longitudinal trends and track growth and change. Principals delegate dashboard access to relevant staff. Comprehensive reports are also provided, presenting a more detailed examination of the data in Full Statistical and Full Text Reports.

Schools can access a two hour data interpretation capacity building session designed to further support the analysis and interpretation of their data.

No adjustments are to be made to the *Perspectives* survey items as this will impact the validity and reliability of the tool. However, non-faith based schools can request the omission of the **religion and faith** dimension. Additional services include the availability of the International Baccalaureate dimension and parent cohort surveys in a range of additional languages.

Schools can access specialist support for interpreting dashboards, report and data.

Customised Service

In addition to the Essential Service provided, some schools wish to further ensure the survey accurately reflects their context. To facilitate this, schools can provide up to ten additional, contextually relevant items. The Evidence Institute will help to ensure these are well-targeted and collect robust data. This service is provided at the current member school consultancy rate.

Consultancy support is also available to develop action plans and strategies based on priorities identified in the data, supporting the school's ongoing improvement cycle.

Schools may request additional data analysis to investigate relationships within the data, whether between domains or stakeholder groups. This data may be accessed through the purchase of the Comparative Summary Report or Comparative Stakeholder Report.

Perspectives in your school

The following documentation provides support for how schools might administer *Perspectives: Your school in focus*. It is organised into five stages, each describing important activities recommended to ensure the smooth and successful administration of the survey.

Stage 1. Preparing for *Perspectives: Your school in focus*

Stage 2. Planning and communication

Stage 3. Survey administration

Stage 4. Accessing *Perspectives* dashboard

Stage 5. Reporting and using the data

Each stage contains important information, templates and useful materials to support schools in engaging their stakeholder groups.

Resources	Purpose	Stage	Page Number
Readiness Checklist	To help determine the school's readiness to administer *Perspectives*	2	35
Sample letter to staff	To communicate with parents the details of *Perspectives*	2	36
Sample letter to parents/ guardians	To communicate with staff the details of *Perspectives*	2	38
Sample text for school newsletter	To communicate with the school community about *Perspectives* and the school's intention to administer the surveys	2	41
Sample email text to stakeholders	to provide information and access to the survey for nominated stakeholder groups	2	42
Sample action planning template	To support action planning process	6	43

Stage 1: Preparing for *Perspectives: Your school in focus*

Before commencing the survey administration process, it is recommended that leaders consider their school's readiness to survey. This helps ensure the process is smooth, stakeholder groups are prepared and supported to complete the survey, and the quality of the data is robust. Questions leaders may wish to consider include:

- Where is the school in its continuous improvement cycle, and will collecting survey data be of benefit?

- How often do we collect survey data in our school?

- Do we have the time required to prepare adequately for *Perspectives: Your school in focus*?

- Do we have staff available to support the administration of *Perspectives: Your school in focus*?

- What important events or commitments are scheduled for the school, and will these impact on the timing of survey administration?

- What is the best time of the year to survey our community on a regular basis?

- Will stakeholders have access to devices required to complete the survey?

It is recommended leaders review the suggested requirements before committing to the survey administration process. For support exploring these questions beyond the information provided in the Survey Guide, contact The Evidence Institute via evidence@aisnsw.edu.au

Where is the school in the continuous improvement cycle?

Identifying where your school is in the continuous improvement cycle is important when deciding if further data collection is necessary. *Perspectives: Your school in focus* is a powerful tool that can support schools to engage in data-informed decision-making practices within the existing cycle of improvement. A clear view of where the school is in this cycle will determine whether this is the right tool to provide relevant, meaningful information.

There are several important phases in the continuous improvement cycle where the collection of *Perspectives* data can add value and insight.

Collect baseline data using *Perspectives*

- Analyse and interpret *Perspectives* data
- Triangulate *Perspectives* data with additional school data

Use identified strategic priorities to develop action plans

- Longitudinal monitoring of progress against the goals, targets and baseline data
- Use domain specific surveys for deeper examinations

Use triangulated datasets to help identify strategic priorities and goals

Preparing for survey administration

Perspectives is designed to be administered based on your school's continuous improvement cycle.

First-time administration will generate baseline data, providing both a snapshot of where your school is today, as well as a starting point from which to track longitudinal trends and measure progress over time.

Stakeholder experience can differ depending on the time of year the survey is administered. For this reason, it is recommended that leaders identify the most appropriate time of year to survey in their school context and incorporate this into long-term planning. *Perspectives* should be run at the same time of year each time it is administered. For some schools early in the year might be best, whilst for others late in the second semester might be more appropriate. School leaders know their communities and are best placed to make judgements about survey scheduling.

Taking the time to ensure administration of *Perspectives* is well planned and executed will contribute to the strengthening your school's culture of data collection. Once staff are familiar with the administration process, and stakeholders with the survey, ongoing data collection may require less time and effort.

Stage 2: Planning and Communication

Initially, the principal will register their school's interest in administering *Perspectives* via the Expression of Interest button on the [AISNSW website](#). A member of The Evidence Institute will contact the school to discuss the survey process and requirements in detail.

When the principal determines that the school is ready to administer *Perspectives*, Planning and Communication can commence. Planning and clear communication during this process is critical for the successful administration of the surveys.

Planning for survey administration

To support the effective administration of *Perspectives*, it is important to identify the right staff to assist the whole school community. Several roles are described below, and the staff who fill these require specific skills to ensure responsibilities are effectively met.

Roles may be allocated to a single person, or several people, depending on staff availability and capacity. These roles are appointed by the principal or senior leadership team.

Survey Administrator

The Survey Administrator coordinates the administration of *Perspectives: Your school in focus*. This person is responsible for the logistics of the survey process as outlined in this Guide. The Survey Administrator either undertakes or supervises others to complete tasks, ensuring a timely process.

The Survey Administrator may be:

- a member of the senior leadership team

- a Year or Subject Coordinator

- an accomplished educator with an interest in school improvement

- the school's Business Manager.

The Survey Administrator:

- plans and coordinates the administration of *Perspectives* with the school leadership team, including tasks such as timetabling, communications, supporting teachers in administering the survey in class, liaising with Technical Support

- sets and attends scheduled planning meetings and participates in discussions about the survey administration process

- communicates clearly and regularly with the school leadership team to keep them informed of progress

- communicates and liaises with AISNSW to ensure a smooth administration process

- provides clear communication and answers questions from staff

- supports the Survey Liaison (if this is another staff member) to answer stakeholder queries as they arise

- is responsible for the administration of *Perspectives* surveys for all stakeholder groups as per this Guide

- maintains confidentiality.

Survey Liaison

The Survey Liaison supports and assists in the administration of *Perspectives*. This person acts as the primary contact for all school stakeholder groups and answers questions about *Perspectives*. They support members of the community who are unable to access the survey online or who may need assistance with completing the survey (such as those with a background other than English).

The Survey Liaison may be:

- a member of the school leadership team
- an accomplished educator with a key interest in liaising with the school community
- a member of the school's administration team
- a staff member who is well-known to the school community
- a member of the school community.

The Survey Liaison:

- communicates clearly and regularly with the Survey Administrator

- supports the Survey Administrator in administering *Perspectives*

- works collaboratively with the school community to answer questions from all stakeholder groups

- attends scheduled planning meetings and participates in discussions

- maintains confidentiality.

Technical Support

The Technical Support oversees the technical administration of *Perspectives*. This role requires interacting with end users and troubleshooting potential hardware or software issues. The survey administration process requires careful planning and active technical support before and during the survey period.

The Technical Support:

- ensures that the school meets the technical requirements to complete surveys e.g. bandwidth requirements, device access and support, firewall configurations
- attends scheduled planning meetings and participates in discussions
- assists in administering *Perspectives* for all stakeholder groups
- provides flexibility and options so that all stakeholders have access and can complete survey links e.g. hardware requirements
- maintains confidentiality.

Scheduling *Perspectives*

AISNSW recommends allocating a two-week survey period for the administration of *Perspectives*. All stakeholder groups should complete the survey within the same survey period.

If intending to use *Perspectives* regularly, scheduling should factor in the school's long term strategic plans that may impact administration of the survey. *Perspectives* should be administered at approximately the same time of the year each time it is used.

Scheduling should take into account:

- school events and commitments that may impact on school resourcing and/or the presence of students/staff on campus
- staff availability
- student assessment requirements
- access to IT resources e.g. devices, computer labs
- events or commitments that may impact other stakeholder groups' capacity to complete the survey
- unanticipated events which may negatively impact the school community and its capacity to engage with the survey.

The identified survey period should allow sufficient lead-in time – ideally 6-8 weeks – for effective planning and organisation. Reviewing the *Perspectives* timeline (sent by email) is recommended to ensure important deliverables are met.

Stakeholders can access *Perspectives* either via direct email or by using a generic link provided to the school. It is likely that schools will make use of a mix of these methods. To enable access via direct email the school must provide email contact details for survey respondents who will access *Perspectives* this way. An Excel template is available for the **Survey Administrator** to record these details (supplied via email).

To support schools in reviewing their readiness to administer *Perspectives*, a Readiness Checklist is provided in Appendix 1.

Committing to survey

When the principal has decided that *Perspectives* will be of value to the school and is ready to survey, they complete and return the provided *Perspectives Survey Agreement*.

At this time details of the survey's administration are confirmed between AISNSW and the school.

Planning for communication

Clear, consistent and timely communication is critical to ensure that the whole school community is aware of the intention and purpose for surveying. If communication is effective this will increase the likelihood of stakeholder participation.

Regular and multiple methods of communication are recommended, including formal and informal modes. These might include:

- letters to stakeholder groups (see Appendix 2 and 3)
- school newsletters and publications (see Appendix 4)
- collaborative meetings (staff, parent and community, students)
- professional learning communities
- student notices
- social media channels.

Planning for technical requirements

Perspectives is an online survey and can be accessed using a PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone. Schools can leverage their in-house equipment, or student and staff devices when considering how to administer the survey.

Individual survey access does not require significant bandwidth. However, if schools are planning to have whole classes or groups complete the survey simultaneously, ensuring a stable internet connection is essential. A review of the school's internet services should be undertaken to ensure sufficient bandwidth and connection stability. This will enable all students and teachers to access the survey without interruption.

The surveys are hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform which is compatible with the following browsers:

- Apple Safari
- Google Chrome
- Microsoft Edge
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Mozilla Firefox.

Please note *only* those browser versions still supported by their developers are compatible with the Qualtrics platform – for example Internet Explorer 7 and 8 are no longer supported.

If your school has firewall or anti-spamming software, it may be necessary to configure this. This will ensure that links and emails featuring AISNSW and Qualtrics URLs or domain names are accessible by your internal stakeholders.

The following recommendations are suggested to help schools mitigate access issues:

- add @aisnsw.edu.au and @qualtrics email addresses to your safe sender lists and permitted sender lists.

- add the qualtrics.com and aisnsw.edu.au domains to your web filter whitelist.

- to bypass your firewall, allowlist the following IP ranges to ensure emails Qualtrics sends on behalf of AISNSW when distributing surveys links are not rejected: 162.247.216.0/22 and 139.60.152.0/22

Data security

Data security is of paramount importance to AISNSW. We will not disclose any data to third parties and treat all data as highly confidential. AISNSW maintains strict control over access to school data. The only employees permitted to access the school data are those with a business need to know for service provision to the school – and only once principal permission has been sought.

Principals access their school data using the single sign-on service provided via their password protected AISNSW Profile. Access to school data requires direct ownership (principal as school representative) or delegate, provided via the AISNSW Profile.

Stage 3: Survey administration

Access to the surveys can be provided either via a direct email or generic link. A mix of these methods may be used. Consequently, administration of the surveys may vary across stakeholder groups.

It is recommended that schools administer *Perspectives* using the direct email method as this reduces the potential for unanticipated respondents completing the survey. Individual links will be sent to each stakeholder on the first day of the survey period, or as scheduled in consultation with the school. A reminder email is sent at the midpoint to those yet to respond. Schools may customise the direct email and reminder email text which will be sent to stakeholders (see Appendix 5).

To ensure scheduled access to the surveys, a complete list of stakeholder email addresses is required two weeks prior to the start of the survey period.

Generic links may be shared with stakeholders via the school portal or similar. Schools selecting to use generic links will be provided these at the start of the week prior to commencement of the survey period.

A note on personal contact information

AISNSW treats all *Perspectives* data with confidentiality, and holds personal details in strict accordance with our data security and privacy protocols.

Stakeholder contact information provided by the school is used solely for the purpose of disseminating survey links. At the end on the data lifecycle – survey completion – all personal contact data are destroyed.

Administering the student survey

Perspectives is suitable for students in Year 5-12 only and takes on average 20 minutes to complete. Surveys should be completed in one sitting where possible, to ensure consistency of response. However, the survey can be completed over more than one setting if necessary. Please ensure that students have sufficient time when responding to the survey. It is suggested that the scheduled time be generous enough to allow **every** student to complete.

Students may exit the survey anytime they wish. Supervising staff can provide support to students about how to complete the survey, for example how to select a response or to move through the survey. However, they should refrain from interpreting the survey for students where possible.

Suggestions for facilitating student administration

Below are some considerations for scheduling student surveys:

- Create a school-wide survey schedule.

- Utilise existing scheduling opportunities such as Homeroom.

- Rotate classes into a computer lab/s.

- Use a laptop cart to administer to whole classes, one classroom at a time.

- Consider using text-to-speech or other differentiation supports for students who may have difficulty reading the survey independently.

- If using a generic link, create a bookmark to the survey that is readily accessible on devices.

- For schools using BYOD, ensure students have timely access to devices.

Accommodations for students with additional needs

Students with additional needs should be provided with access to the survey. Some items may need to be interpreted to enable students to answer them, but this should be minimal. The survey may be read aloud, or extra time given to students as needed. Any accommodations made for a student must protect the confidentiality of the student's responses.

Instructions for students

Access the link provided, either via direct email or generic link. This will take students to the landing page below.

Instructions for supervising staff

Before beginning the survey, supervising staff members can provide the following instructions to students:

1. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you finish before this time, please sit quietly until the rest of the class is finished. There is no need to rush. If you need longer than 20 minutes, that will be fine as we have allocated extra time.

2. All your answers are anonymous – no one will know how you have answered the survey. This includes the last question in the survey where you can write some feedback to the school. However, if anyone writes something that indicates they or someone else is in danger then the team that runs the survey for the school are legally required to tell the Principal.

3. The survey is voluntary – you do not have to complete it. However, this is your chance to let the school know what it is like to be a student here. The information you provide will help the school to improve. Please try to answer all the questions.

4. Please try to complete the survey on your own. If you have a question or get stuck, ask me, not your classmates.

5. Once you have finished the survey please let me know, and then wait quietly for the other students to finish. [If you have activities for students to continue with, you may wish to alert them to this here.]

Administering the parent/guardian surveys

The *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey is to be completed by **one** parent/guardian per family who has responsibility for caring for students at home. In instances where families are split, both parents/guardians should complete the survey.

The parent/guardian survey takes on average 20 minutes to complete. Surveys should be completed in one sitting where possible, to ensure consistency of response. However, the survey can be completed over more than one setting if necessary. Please encourage parents/guardians via school communications to ensure they allow sufficient time to complete it.

Accommodations for parents

It is possible that some parents or guardians may require technology or English as an additional language/dialect support to complete this survey. In these circumstances, it would be appropriate for the school to provide support via methods relevant and usually utilised within their community. The Survey Liaison might provide this support.

Please note that *Perspectives* is available in a number of languages for parents or guardians, and the addition of other languages may be requested. Please contact The Evidence Institute on evidence@aisnsw.edu.au to discuss options.

Suggestions for facilitating parent/guardian survey administration

- Share information about survey participation with parent community via letters and newsletters.

- Encourage survey participation.

- Engage parents support groups to encourage broad community participation.

- Invite parents/guardians without technology access to complete surveys on-site.

- Invite parents/guardians with English as an additional language/ dialect to complete surveys on-site, with support from native language speakers.

Administering the teacher and non-teacher surveys

Perspectives is completed by school staff in the following positions:

- Teachers
  - Permanent full and part-time teachers
  - Full and part-time contract staff on contracts of one year or more
- Non-teaching staff
  - Teaching assistants and other teacher support staff
  - Administration staff
  - Maintenance and grounds staff
  - IT staff
  - Finance staff.

It is recommended that the following staff not complete the survey as their experience of the school may not be commensurate to those listed above.

- Student teachers
- Substitute or casual teachers.

The teacher and non-teaching staff surveys take on average 20 minutes to complete. Surveys should be completed in one sitting where possible, to ensure consistency of response. However, the survey can be completed over more than one setting if necessary. Please encourage staff to allocate sufficient time.

Alternatively, time can be allocated for the surveys to be completed within school hours – for example, during staff meetings or planning periods. Again, it is important to allow sufficient time for survey completion in one sitting.

Suggestions for facilitating school staff survey administration

- Share information about survey participation via staff meetings and communications.
- Establish expectations for participation.
- Provide time during school hours, for example staff meeting, for survey completion, if possible.

Administering the school leaders and board members survey

Perspectives can be completed by school leaders and board members.

School leaders are those who occupy the following positions:

- Principals
- Senior executive
- Executive
- Middle leaders
- Faculty heads
- Department heads
- Leaders of learning
- Year coordinators
- Pastoral coordinators
- Subject coordinators.

Only board or council members voted onto the board or council should complete the survey – this excludes proxies.

The school leader and board member surveys take on average 20 minutes to complete. Surveys should be completed in one sitting where possible, to ensure consistency of response. However, the survey can be completed over more than one setting if necessary. Please encourage school leaders and board members to schedule sufficient time to enable completion.

Surveys may be completed outside of school hours or time can be arranged for school leaders and board members to complete the survey within scheduled meeting hours – for example during staff or board meetings.

Suggestions for facilitating leaders and board members' administration

- Share information about survey participation via meetings and communication.
- Establish expectations for participation.
- Provide time during school hours, such as staff meeting time, for completion of the survey.
- If a board meeting is scheduled within the survey period, provide time in the agenda for survey completion.

Stage 4: Accessing *Perspectives* dashboard

Perspectives dashboards

The *Perspectives* dashboards provide key information for school leaders and are the initial reporting tool for the suite of surveys.

The dashboards summarise the data collected over multiple pages. School specific data including demographic information, domain and dimension data are presented using a range of visualisations. All data within the dashboards can be filtered by gender, stakeholder and student year.

Pages within the dashboards reflect the *Perspectives* domains: School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Community. Each domain page features visualisations of stakeholder groups and related key dimension data.
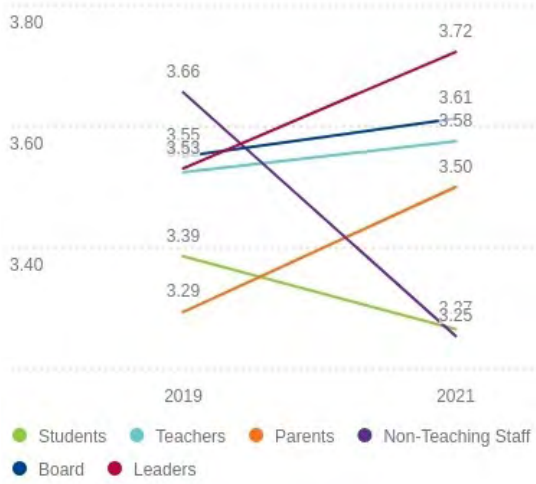
Initially schools are provided with access to a dashboard displaying a single dataset for their first year of data collection – their *Perspectives* baseline data. As schools continue to administer *Perspectives* every one or two years, they then access multiple datasets via a longitudinal dashboard. Here they see up to three rounds of data collection (three separate datasets), and visualisations display trends over time. This enables schools to identify the impact of changes they make as a result of strategic planning and implementation, and other contextual factors.

Access to *Perspectives* dashboard

The school principal has control of, and manages access to, the *Perspectives* dashboards. They are able to delegate additional access to the dashboards via their AISNSW Profile. Delegate access to the *Perspectives* dashboards means that additional users have the same access and view as the school principal by default. Should principals require filtered views of the dashboards for specific members of staff, they should contact The Evidence Institute to discuss options.

Perspectives dashboard visualisations

Name	Visualisation	Description
Bar Chart		Bar Charts allow you to view response options and data as rectangular bars. The length of each bar is proportional to the number of respondents who selected the assigned value. One axis of the visualisation shows the specific answer options being compared, and the other represents a specific value (e.g., counts, percentages of respondents with that option, or means).

Stacked Bar Chart	 Students by Year – 2019 **30** Responses	Stacked Bar Charts allow you to look at how your respondents answer choices compare to each other as components of the whole. The possible answer choices are each represented as a segment of the bar, taking up space proportional to how many respondents selected the assigned value. These charts can be vertical or horizontal.
Gauge Chart		Gauge Charts can help to quickly determine how a given domain is performing based on the average of all respondents. The visualisation displays the mean response for the domain.
Rolling Calculation	3.1	Rolling calculations provide the mean score for the specific dimension for all stakeholder groups.
Trend Graphs		Trend graphs allow you to identify changes over time. Data points on the left represent the oldest mean scores for each cohort, whilst the data points on the right represent the newest mean scores. The line connecting the means helps represent the change in scores from one data collection period to the next. Lines that slant down represent a decline in scores, whilst lines that slant upward represent an increase in scores. Cohorts can be compared by looking at how close the lines are together, and whether they slant in similar or different directions.

Stage 5: Reporting and using the data

Survey reports

School leaders can receive up to three reports presenting the key results from the *Perspectives* suite of surveys. The reports provide relevant context and rigorous data that will help independent schools to better meet the needs of their community. Data presented in these reports highlight results that are of both statistical and practical significance.

Full Statistical Report: An in-depth look at survey domains and dimensions, organised by stakeholder group. This report provides an alternative view of results when compared with the interactive dashboard. This enables leaders to gain deeper understandings of trends from each stakeholder group's perspective.

The Full Text Report: Verbatim responses to the open-ended question at the end of the survey, organised by stakeholder group. Review these to identify sentiments that unpack survey question results, or to hear views not captured by the items in the survey.

Support for data interpretation

Schools can access a two hour data interpretation capacity building session designed to further support the analysis and interpretation of their data as part of this member service. An AISNSW consultant will present results of a detailed analysis of the school's data. The principal and their team will then participate in data analysis capacity building so that they can continue interrogating their data in the school's context.

Additional support for in-depth interpretations of the *Perspectives* dashboard and report is available at a fee for service. Engaging with external expertise can enhance and facilitate school improvement processes.

AISNSW provides opportunities for schools to access face to face support for:

- data analysis and interpretation

- comparison of results across stakeholders and domains

- sharing of specific significant findings and recommendations

- use of quality data to identify starting points for action

- leveraging data to inform decision-making processes

- goal setting for improvement

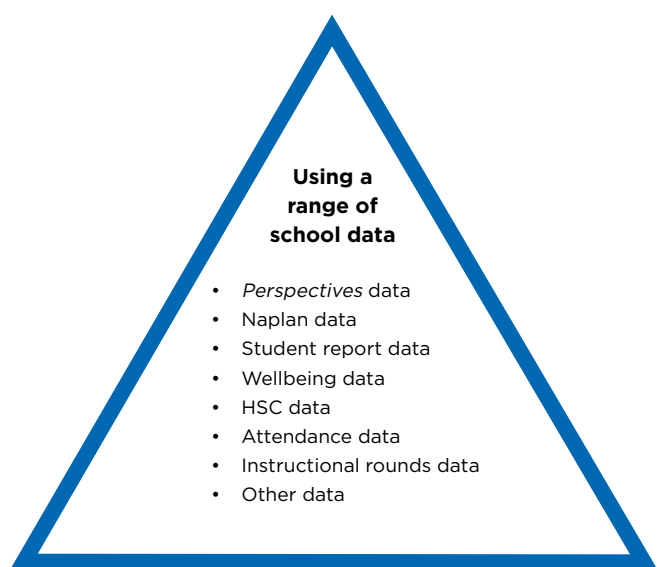- referral to a wide range of support, services and resources.

Data triangulation

The *Perspectives: Your school in focus* surveys aim to provide data that help reveal potential strategic priorities for schools. Schools are encouraged to use *Perspectives* data alongside existing school data. This will allow for a thorough investigation and evaluation of current practices and trends, and provide robust evidence to inform ongoing improvement initiatives.

Triangulation involves the collection of rich data from a diverse range of sources. Use of qualitative and quantitative data can help to identify:

- existing strengths of the school

- opportunities for improvement.

Informed by relevant data and feedback from the whole school community, schools can prioritise areas for improvement and consider strategic opportunities for development.

Using a range of school data

- *Perspectives* data
- Naplan data
- Student report data
- Wellbeing data
- HSC data
- Attendance data
- Instructional rounds data
- Other data

Action planning

The data collected, analysed, interpreted and triangulated will reveal areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement or prioritisation. Developing clear action plans helps to ensure that school teams consolidate and effectively implement the strategies identified to meet these priorities.

Essentially, an action plan is a list of tasks that must be achieved for priorities to be realised. Action plans focus on what needs to be done, who will perform set tasks to help achieve the priority, as well as detailing the roles of other members of the school community.

Action plans often include information about:

- the actions or changes that will occur

- who will perform the changes

- when changes will take place, and dureation

- the resources (e.g., staff) required to effect the changes

- communication.

A sample action plan is available in Appendix 6.

Survey data protection and privacy

The Qualtrics survey platform complies with strict data privacy laws to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of data. Data are stored electronically in approved password-protected databases on industry-standard secure servers.

Survey participants cannot be identified, and all reporting data is presented in aggregate form, further protecting an individual's identity.

Schools/school principals own and control all school data collected by *Perspectives: Your school in focus*. No data will be shared or distributed to a third party.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can I contact to find out more about *Perspectives: Your school in focus*?

Contact AISNSW via email at evidence@aisnsw.edu.au

How long does it take from Expression of Interest until *Perspectives* survey links are sent to my school community?

As both the school and AISNSW have tasks to complete to ensure a smooth survey process, it is recommended schools allow 6-8 weeks from the time they commit until surveying begins.

Which stakeholder groups in our school community can be surveyed?

- Parents/Guardians (with children K-12, but not pre-K)

- Students: Primary (Years 5 and 6) and Secondary (Years 7-12)

- Staff: Teaching and non-teaching staff (see page 25)

- School leaders

- Board members

How long does it take to complete the survey?

Survey completion time will vary dependent on the individual. Surveys take on average 15-20 minutes to complete.

How can the survey be completed?

The online survey can be completed on any computer, tablet or smartphone with internet access.

Can I change the survey items, or exclude ones I don't want?

No, *Perspectives* is a standardised tool. Any changes to items will impact the survey's reliability and validity. Changes also render your dataset invalid for inclusion in the aggregated comparative schools dataset. Consequently you will not be able to benchmark against other schools. However, custom items can be added to the surveys.

What are custom items, and how many can I have?

These are survey items that are bespoke to your school. They may be items you have used in other surveys in the past, or new items you develop which ask about factors that are of particular importance to your school. As *Perspectives* is a wide-ranging survey, the number of additional items is capped at 10 to ensure response rates are not adversely impacted. The Evidence Institute will work with you to ensure any additional items collect quality data. This is a fee for service addition.

How do stakeholders gain access to the survey?

Schools provide lists with contact details of stakeholders in each of the six stakeholder groups. Individual links are then emailed directly to each stakeholder from the Qualtrics survey platform. This ensures that, for every link sent, only one response can be collected, protecting data quality and security. This process also enables The Evidence Institute to monitor response rates and send reminder emails only to those who have yet to complete the survey.

Does the survey ask for personal information?

No, but it does collect a small range demographic data that cannot be used to identify individuals, for example, year levels and gender. Because reports and dashboards provided to the school aggregate all responses, individual responses are not identifiable.

In addition, text response data is deidentified before it is sent to the school to ensure each individual's confidentiality and anonymity. However, should a respondent (student or otherwise) disclose information which indicates that there might be a serious threat to the life, health or safety of that (or other) individual/s, their identity, where it can be determined, will be disclosed to the Principal in confidence.

Where is the survey data stored?

Perspectives survey data are collected and stored by Qualtrics. This platform strictly complies with privacy legislation ensuring the security and confidentiality of all school data.

Stakeholder contact information is secured by The Evidence Institute in accordance with strict data protection policies. Only members of the *Perspectives* delivery team have access to this information. Once a school has completed the *Perspectives* process, all stakeholder information is deleted from all systems.

Who will see the survey data?

The school principal will have access to school data and controls the staff delegation process via their AISNSW profile.

Can my school compare survey data with other similar schools?

Schools electing to undertake a comparison of their school's results can request a variety of reports, and bespoke analyses. Reports compare individual school against the aggregate data of schools that have completed *Perspectives* to date. The reports compare results at the domains and dimension levels. Additional reports may be provided upon request.

Appendix 1: Readiness Checklist

Use the checklist below to help identify and review your school's readiness to survey.

Task	Completed
Identify Survey Administrator	
Identify Survey Liaison	
Identify Technical Support	
Identify support for EAL/D (English as an additional language/dialect)	
Review Internet connection, bandwidth and stability	
Review device and hardware suitability and availability	
Review devices to ensure they meet minimum browser requirements (Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox)	
Review school firewall and anti-spam configuration (see page 22 for supporting information)	
Identify appropriate survey period	

Appendix 2: Sample letter to staff

Your school's
logo here

[Date]

Dear Staff

We are excited to announce our school's participation in the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* suite of surveys. These surveys focus on five important domains: School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Community. Gathering information about these areas will be of significant benefit to us as a community to help identify our school's strengths and opportunities for future improvement.

We will ask you and the school community to complete a confidential and anonymous survey. The online survey takes approximately 20 minutes and can be taken on any device. It will be available between [date] and [date], and details about how to access the survey will be emailed to you. More information about this opportunity can be found below.

Should you have any questions regarding the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* suite of surveys, please contact [Survey Liaison].

Thank you for partnering with us to improve the learning experience for everyone at our school. Your input is important to the success of our continuous school improvement process.

With thanks

Principal

[school name and details]

Survey Information

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of completing the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey is to obtain your thoughts on our school and your experiences at the school. The information collected will help us to improve. The survey will be administered to the following stakeholder groups in our community:

- Students
- Teachers
- School leaders
- Parents/guardians
- Non-teaching staff
- Board members [delete those not applicable]

Confidentiality

All information collected will be anonymous and confidential. You will not be asked to supply any identifying details, and all raw data will be held in a survey database and analysed independently by AISNSW. Aggregate results for each stakeholder group will be reported.

Voluntary

All school staff are invited to participate in the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey. Completion of the survey is considered consent to participate.

Risk

There is no direct risk involved in completing the survey.

Benefits

The data collected will provide the school community with the information needed to identify our strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Enquiries

Questions regarding the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* surveys are welcome. Please contact the school's Survey Liaison, [insert name] if you have any questions or concerns.

Appendix 3: Sample letter to parents/guardians

Your school's logo here

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian

We are excited to invite you to participate in the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey. This is a school-wide survey for staff, students, parents/guardians, leaders and board members to assist in the growth and development of our whole school community.

The purpose of the surveys is to gather your insights and *Perspectives* on how our school community can continue to lead improvement, innovation and change. Your input and contribution are important as we review and reflect on current practices.

The survey focuses on five important domains: School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Community. Collecting information about these areas from our school community members ensures we continue to meet your needs.

We will ask you, your child/ren in Years 5-12, and the school community to participate in this confidential and anonymous survey. The online survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete on any device and will be available from [date] to [date].

Only one parent/guardian from each household/family should complete the survey. If you have more than one child currently at the school, please respond considering the child with the next birthday.

You will be emailed details about how to access the survey shortly. Should you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact [Survey Liaison].

If you do not wish your child/ren to participate in the survey, please complete the Opt-out Option form below and return to the school by [date].

As a valued member of our community, we thank you in advance for engaging with the survey and sharing your feedback and thoughts.

With thanks

Principal

[school name and details]

Survey Information

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of completing the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey is to obtain your thoughts on our school and your experiences at the school. The information collected will help us to improve. The survey will be administered to the following stakeholder groups in our community:

- Students
- Teachers
- School leaders
- Parents/guardians
- Non-teaching staff
- Board members [delete those not applicable]

Confidentiality

All information collected will be anonymous and confidential. Neither you nor your child/ren will be asked to supply any identifying details, and all raw data will be held in a survey database and analysed independently by AISNSW. Aggregate results for each stakeholder group will be reported to the school.

Voluntary

All school staff are invited to participate in the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* survey. Completion of the survey is considered consent to participate.

Risk

There is no direct risk involved in completing the survey.

Benefits

The data collected will provide the school community with the information needed to identify our strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Enquiries

Questions regarding the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* surveys are welcome. Please contact the school's Survey Liaison, [insert name] if you have any questions or concerns.

Your school's logo here

Perspectives
Your school in focus

Opt-out Option form

I have read the letter provided. I understand that my child/ren's participation in the survey is voluntary. I do not want my child/ren listed below to complete the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*.

Please return this form to the school at your earliest convenience.

Names of child/ren who will not participate in completing the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*.

_____
First and last name

_____
First and last name

_____
First and last name

_____
First and last name

_____
Parent signature

_____
Child's class

_____
Child's class

_____
Child's class

_____
Child's class

_____
Date

Appendix 4: Sample text for school newsletter

[Please edit the text below to reflect your school's context.]

Our school is using the *Perspectives: Your school in focus* suite of surveys developed by AISNSW to support our school improvement endeavours. The information gathered will assist in furthering the growth and development of our school community. We will use the survey results to help inform and direct future school planning and improvement strategies.

These surveys have been specifically designed to assist schools in gaining an understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of five important areas: School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Wellbeing, Leadership and Community. All staff, students, parents/guardians, leaders and board members will be invited to participate.

The surveys will be available from [date] to [date] and are conducted **online**, taking approximately **20 minutes** to complete.

Your input and contribution are important to the success of our continuous school improvement process as we aspire to improve the learning experience for everyone at our school.

For any enquiries about the surveys please contact the school for more details.

Appendix 5: Sample email text to stakeholders

Invitation

Subject Line: *Perspectives: Your school in focus* - survey

Dear ${m://FirstName},

Our school is participating in the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*. This is a school-wide survey for staff, students, parents/guardians, leaders and board members to assist in the growth and development of our whole school community.

The completion of this survey is voluntary, but your participation will support us in improving our school. It should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and will be available between [dates]. Although it is recommended that the survey be completed in one sitting, if circumstances do not allow this, you may use this link to access the survey again and continue from where you left off. Please note that if you do not complete the survey before [date] your responses will not be counted.

[Only one parent or guardian per family is requested to complete the survey. If you have more than one child at the school, please complete the survey for one child only - the child with the next birthday. PARENTS ONLY]

Follow this link to the Survey:

> ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your Internet browser:

> ${l://SurveyURL}

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. If you have any questions please contact [name and email].

Kind regards,

[principal name]

Please do not reply to this email
Follow the link to opt out of future emails for this survey:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Reminder 1

Subject Line: Perspectives: Your school in focus - survey

Dear ${m://FirstName},

[School name] values your insights about our school and seeks to gather these through the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*. The completion of this survey is voluntary, but your participation will support us in improving our school. Please click the link below to take you to the survey, which requires 15-20 minutes of your time. If you have already answered part of this survey, you can complete it using this link.

[Only one parent or guardian per family is requested to complete the survey. If you have more than one child at the school, please complete the survey for one child only - the child with the next birthday. PARENTS ONLY]

Follow this link to the Survey:

> ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your Internet browser:

> ${l://SurveyURL}

The survey will be available to you until [end date].

If you have any queries regarding the survey, please contact [name and email].

Kind regards,

[principal name]

Please do not reply to this email
Follow the link to opt out of future emails for this survey:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Final Reminder

Dear ${m://FirstName},

I am emailing to remind you about [School name]'s participation the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*. To enable you to share your valued insights about our school, access to the survey is available until 11pm on [Date].

Please click the link below to take you to the survey, which requires 15-20 minutes of your time. If you have already answered part of this survey, you can complete it using this link.

Follow this link to the Survey:

       ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your Internet browser:

       ${l://SurveyURL}

If you have any queries regarding the survey, please contact [name and email].

Kind regards,

[principal name]

Please do not reply to this email
Follow the link to opt out of future emails for this survey:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Extension Reminder

Dear ${m://FirstName},

I am emailing to remind you about [School name]'s participation the *Perspectives: Your school in focus survey*. This survey gathers your valuable insights, which we will use to support us in improving our school.

To enable you to participate, we have extended access to the survey, which will now be available until [Date].

The completion of this survey is voluntary, and your responses anonymous. Please click the link below to take you to the survey, which requires 15-20 minutes of your time. If you have already answered part of this survey, you can complete it using this link.

Only one parent or guardian per family is requested to complete the survey. If you have more than one child at the school, please complete the survey for one child only - the child with the next birthday.

Follow this link to the Survey:

      ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your Internet browser:

      ${l://SurveyURL}

If you have any queries regarding the survey, please contact [name and email].

Kind regards,

[principal name]

Please do not reply to this email
Follow the link to opt out of future emails for this survey:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

Appendix 6: Sample Action Planning Template

Domain focus	Key objectives What are we trying to achieve as a school community?	Measures of success How do we know when we have achieved our objectives?	Actions What specific actions will we take to achieve the key objectives?	Resources and supports What practical resources do we need to support this?	Roles and Responsibilities Who will be responsible for monitoring and completing each action?	Timeline When will this be completed?

Perspectives
Your school in focus