



School Improvement: The start of a Contributive Learning Journey

ROBINA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

ROBINA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

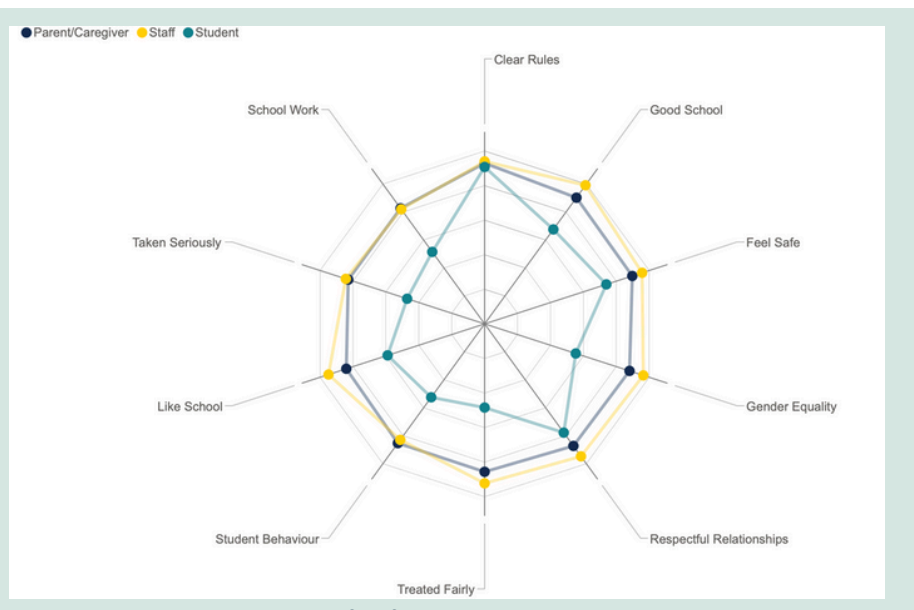


Robina State High School serves 1500 students and has 180 staff members. Of their students, 4.5% are First Nations and 16.5% are NCCD. They have a 85% attendance rate, 100% QCE, 46% ATAR Eligible and 30% of their students go to university when completed.

Robina and The Learner First have partnered since October 2023.

Leading for Deep and Sustainable Change

Principal Ben Weeks recognized the need for change. Despite Robina State High School achieving its best academic performance to date, student attendance was a concern. Analyzing data from the 2023 school opinion survey revealed a stark contrast: while staff and parents felt the school was "doing great," the students expressed a different sentiment.



"I don't want an off the shelf product, I want someone to walk along side us."

Ben Weeks, Principal



School transformation is a comprehensive process. The Learner First partnered with Principal Ben Weeks and his leadership team in late 2023 to initiate this crucial work. The transformation efforts were categorized into three key areas of importance.

2023 school opinion survey

Learning Culture

The Robina leadership team, consisting of the principal, deputies, and heads of departments, worked to establish their "why," understand contributive learning, and prepare an "Action Research Team" to engage with the Contributive Learning Design Framework.

To begin their journey, the team examined the Five Capabilities for School Success and decided to intentionally focus on two of these capabilities to drive their school transformation.



The Robina SHS Deputy Principals with Mary Coverdale, Executive Director at TLF

"[Using the system capabilities]...gave us a sharp, narrow focus - not too big so we could feel success."

Ben Weeks, Principal
October Presentation

System Capabilities of Focus

Identifying and Measuring What's Important

Setting up a system of measurement rooted in learning-partner engagement and reliable, evidence-based practice

Creating a Culture of Learning, Belonging, and High Expectations for All

Fostering an environment in which everyone is learning and in which every learner is genuinely known, celebrated, and expected to succeed

The team utilized their data and evidence from the capabilities to set short-term goals for specific dimensions to foster the desired culture at Robina.

Example of Short Term Action Plan at Robina State High School

Capability: Creating a Culture of Learning, Belonging, and High Expectations for All

Dimension: Providing the freedom to learn, share, celebrate, and improve

Short Term Goal

Provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their skills in crafting effective learning experiences.

Actions

Identify teachers who are already practicing these types of learning experiences and have them present and share their methods at a staff meeting.

Have teachers review a unit plan, collaborate, and commit to trying one new or different strategy for crafting the learning experience.

Outcomes

Teachers will have seen and heard about crafting learning experiences from their colleagues.

Teachers will have been given time and permission to try something new or different within a unit plan.

Building Capacity

As the Executive Leadership Team implemented small short-term goals, they continued to build an understanding of their current reality, recognizing a gap between the perceptions of adults and students at the school. Through their deep dive, it became apparent that wellbeing was a "black spot" at Robina—an area that had not been adequately addressed. As the team learned about Contributive Learning, they began to identify this as the missing link at Robina.

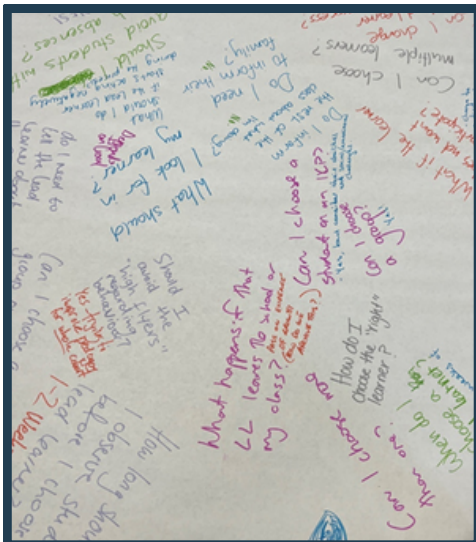


Contributive Learning centres on the idea that education should not only impart knowledge but also foster well-being and a sense of purpose among learners.

Based on their findings and understanding, the Executive Leadership Team developed a clear theory of action to guide their current and future work, with learners at the center.

Theory of Action

*If we establish a common and shared vision and authentically integrate formative assessment, ensuring all students can access the curriculum and assessments, **then** learner agency will be maximized. This will provide increased opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the Achievement Standards, **leading to** improved student engagement, confidence, and outcomes.*



The ARG used chart paper to brainstorm potential FAQ's

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) stepped into 2024 school year with a focus on developing a consistent whole-school approach and an explicit focus on how wellbeing can be taught through the curriculum.

The Action Research Group (ARG) joined the work at the end of 2023. As they became familiar and understood the importance of Contributive Learning for all students, they brainstormed and then answer their own "frequently asked questions" that they believed their colleagues may have when the team began to spread the ideas, processes, and tools to support Contributive Learning come alive at Robina State High School.

Term 1

Continue to develop understanding for Contributive Learning

Engage in Contributive Learning Design Workshops

To build confidence in the ARG as teacher leaders, the team participated in the Contributive Learning Design Workshop series in Term 1. They followed a sequence of actions and utilized tools and resources from TLF, with each member designing a learning experience from the perspective of their lead learner, focusing on connecting, designing, measuring, and assessing student academic and well-being.

In addition to engaging in the design workshops and their own learning, the ARG began to build capacity in themselves and their colleagues during Terms 2-4 of 2024.

Term 2

Develop Confidence with Contributive Learning

FAQ developed

Develop bank of resources for each Wellbeing dimension (Self-Understanding, Connection, Competency)

Term 3

Showcase work at faculty level

Bring on board early adopters (created dedicated Professional Learning Team in each faculty)

Continue resource development

Term 4

Mentor and lead PLT

Finalize bank of resources

Plan for 2025 whole staff adoption of Contributive Learning Design

Classroom Experiences

Key outcomes from the ARG showcase

- **Contribution to positive rapport building with students:** Students felt seen, heard, and valued.
- **Wide array of new strategies trialed:** Teachers experimented with new approaches outside of their comfort zones.
- **Reflections on the impact of practice shifts:** Meeting the needs of one student led to growth and development for others, both socially, emotionally, and academically.



“Mindset, be it positive or negative, has the power to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instilling a feeling of self-believe can be a powerful tool in helping students engage with the curriculum and maximise their learning outcomes.”

-ARG Member

ARG members shared their Contributive Learning Journey with each other at the Collaborative Moderation Showcase, the last workshop in the series of six.

Robina has already seen many positive outcomes as they embark on their contributive learning journey. These outcomes come in various forms, including implementation, student achievements, and capacity building. Evidence and data, both qualitative and quantitative, highlight the positive growth and continued commitment to each student's success at Robina.

The journey began with the executive leadership, senior leadership, and a few self-selected teachers. Despite being in the early stages of full school implementation, the gains have been tremendous, reflecting a significant shift in school culture across all facets, even with a limited number of staff participating. The 2024 School Opinion Survey showed increases across most indicators. Notably, the three key areas that prompted this work—student interest in schoolwork, teachers' interest in student wellbeing, and students feeling their opinions are taken seriously—each saw positive gains of 3-7%.

“The purpose of education is to learn to contribute—not in a specific or standardized way, but in personally relevant, purposeful ways unique to individuals’ interests and goals.”

Joanne McEachen
Founder
The Learner First

Other data points from the survey align with the ongoing work at the school, further supporting the positive impact of their contributive learning journey.

99%

staff who participated agreed that “This school looks for ways to improve.”

92%

students who participated agreed that “My school work challenges me to think.

96%

students who participated agreed that “My teachers expect me to do my best.”

Teacher Comments/Learning from November Showcase from Faculty PLTs

- *If student confidence grows marks will follow*
- *Increased my confidence in enabling students to drive the learning -I'm braver than I was*
- *Instead of focussing on data – I forgot about numbers focussed on the individual*
- *I'm braver in my approach to teaching*
- *Connect before content has become my religion*
- *Focussing on relationships enabled better communication between the students in the class*
- *Let's try to do this across all subjects*
- *You can outsource most things to AI but not personal relationships*

The leadership team has created an annual plan that is grounded in their Contributive Learning Journey. The key principles of Contributive Learning are present across the plan, showcasing their commitment to their theory of action.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF CONTRIBUTIVE LEARNING

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

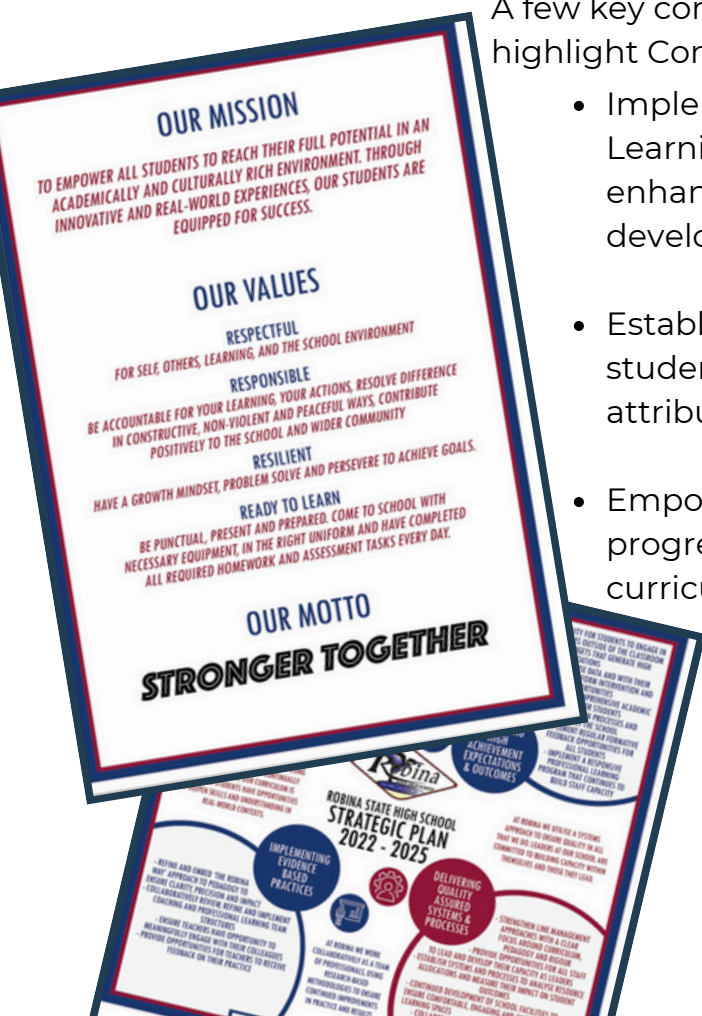
REAL-WORLD RELEVANCE

STUDENT AGENCY

COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

A few key components of the 2025 implementation plan that highlight Contributive Learning are:

- Implement the Lead Learner approach (Contributive Learning Design/Sequence of Actions) across the school to enhance student agency and progress toward development of social emotional attributes.
- Establish a collective definition of success among staff and students to align school goals to develop a set of graduate attributes.
- Empower students to take ownership of their learning progressions by embedding self-reflective practices into curriculum planning and student led conferencing.
- Collaboratively design and implement mechanisms to increase parental engagement with our school and their child's learning.
- Collaboratively design a program to increase opportunities for the mentoring of students to support their sense of belonging, academic and personal growth.



Robina State High School 2025 Annual Implementation Plan



Refining Curriculum to Promote Learning	Implementing Evidence Based Practices	Promoting High Achievement Expectations	Quality Assured Systems & Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Lead Learner approach across the school to enhance student agency and progress toward development of social emotional attributes. • Through an instructional leadership approach, embed the revised RSHS Approach to Pedagogy to enhance consistency and engagement. • Deepen moderation processes using the BAAE model across subject areas to ensure principles of quality assessment are adhered to. • Review the use of formative and summative (AMMA) assessment to deliver timely feedback and make informed, balanced judgments about student progress. • Integrate general capabilities and cross-curricular priorities into all programs to foster comprehensive skill development and interdisciplinary connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the Robina State High School Collegial Engagement Strategy, embedding structured observation, modelling, and feedback cycles for sustained instructional improvement. • Implement research-based literacy (reading) and numeracy (problem solving) to support foundational skills development and targeted strategies to support all students. • Further empower teachers to utilise data to inform differentiation and refine teaching practices for all student groups, including high achievers. • Develop and implement a contemporary school homework policy to reinforce expectations and support academic growth. • Develop a case management approach and clear guidelines to enable multi-tiered systems of support relating specifically to attendance and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a collective definition of success among staff and students to align school goals to develop a set of graduate attributes. • Develop a portfolio framework to track, celebrate, and document student achievements and growth toward agreed graduate attributes. • Communicate clear targets for student achievement and attendance to whole school community. • Collaboratively design a program to increase opportunities for the mentoring of students to support their sense of belonging, academic and personal growth. • Empower students to take ownership of their learning progressions by embedding self-reflective practices into curriculum planning and student led conferencing. (consider linking back to moderation junctures) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen line management practices to promote rigour and high expectations through structured instructional leadership approaches that include student voice as a key contributor. • Commence trial implementation of QLearn as the Robina SHS Learning Management System with key staff ready for a 2026 whole school launch. • Collaboratively design and implement mechanisms to increase parental engagement with our school and their child's learning. • Align staff and student wellbeing initiatives to foster a supportive school community. This includes Positive Behaviour for Learning, Respectful Relationships Education and Restorative Practices. • Review the three phases of learning to ensure each phase has a strongly defined identity, purpose statement and approach to transition in line with Equity and Excellence • Ensure that the RSHS Assessment policy aligns to the three principles of quality assessment. • Analyse resource allocation linked to student outcomes, ensuring targeted investment that enhances learning outcomes

Conclusion

The Robina SHS improvement journey has been marked by several key factors that have collectively driven its success. Central to this journey is a deeply held belief that the work being undertaken is the right work, which has provided a strong foundation and sense of purpose. This belief has been complemented by a consistent and persistent approach to building capability across the school, ensuring that all staff members are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to support student success.

A clear change management process has been instrumental in guiding the school through various phases of improvement, providing a structured approach to implementing new initiatives and practices. This process has been supported by the personal energy and commitment of staff, driven by the conviction that their efforts will lead to improved student wellbeing.

The ability to counter resistance with the compelling story of “Why” has been crucial in maintaining momentum and securing buy-in from all stakeholders. This narrative has helped to align everyone with the school’s vision and goals, making it easier to navigate challenges and push forward with the improvement agenda.

Furthermore, the continued application of leadership strategies has ensured that the focus on improvement is never lost. This ongoing commitment to leadership and strategic action has kept the school on track and moving towards its goals.

These factors have collectively contributed to the school’s readiness to scale Contributive Learning to the entire school in Semester Two of 2025. The foundation laid by these efforts provides a strong platform for further growth and development, positioning Robina SHS for continued success in its mission to enhance student outcomes and wellbeing.

