



SenateSHJ's Schools Advisory Services

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Culture review

Our culture review process helps you gain a clear understanding of your cultural strengths and issues so you can build a culture that inspires and attracts staff, supports and engages students and instils pride in the community.

Signs you might need a culture review:

- The school's culture is not supporting the school's vision and priorities
- Leaders are not modelling values
- Conflict between staff
- Staff are 'coasting'
- High turnover
- Complaints
- Lots of reviews
- Department or School Board advice for a cultural review.

What you can expect



1. Diagnose

We review available data and insights then use one or more diagnostic tools to understand your school's cultural strengths and hotspots. Tools include interviews, surveys, focus groups, workshops or observing meetings. Insights are summarised in a report and sense-making discussions can be held. A cultural benchmark is established from which to measure progress.



2. Design

We help you design a culture change roadmap with actionable strategies to achieve your desired future state. We consider whole school, team and individual dynamics, the role of leaders, communication and engagement. We work with you and your leaders to ensure proposed actions are appropriate for your school. The culture change roadmap includes practical ways to monitor progress and address potential issues as they emerge.



3. Deliver

Culture change is about defining the culture you want, supporting leaders to model that culture and holding each other to account. It's about creating a shift in everyday mindsets and behaviours. We can help as much or as little as needed to implement the plan, be a critical friend, coach or conduct check-ins.

Organisation design

Our offering helps your school deliver its strategic goals and your staff do their job more easily. You will notice things like clearer links between teams, easier decision-making, simpler processes and improved accountability.

Signs you might need to review your school's organisation design:

- Confusion about roles and responsibilities
- Issues around accountability
- Duplication or inefficiencies in functions
- Declining performance and outcomes
- Leaders have insufficient time to focus on strategic priorities
- The structure is out of step with the needs of the school.

What you can expect



1. Diagnose

We meet 1:1 with the principal to understand key issues and scope, review the school's strategic plan. The scope of organisation design projects varies but often include structure, roles, capability, culture and ways of working. From here we typically survey and/or facilitate a workshop with leaders to validate issues and opportunities. We refine the design objectives and process, as well as deliver an early analysis of the current state.



2. Design

We don't spend weeks in discovery sessions. We design by doing – facilitating workshops to build, test and iterate design options. A review of best practice school organisation designs informs this stage. We involve your stakeholders (e.g. staff and community) as needed. Along the way we identify change implications, issues and risks, communication and engagement opportunities.



3. Deliver

We document your school's new design so you're ready for the next step. Documentation could include new organisational charts, role descriptions, KPIs and performance cycles, meeting protocols, or processes. We can help as much or as little as needed to implement the structure, support change management and communication. Our school leadership expert, a former principal, can provide ongoing mentoring or advice as required.

Leadership cohesion and performance

Our leadership programs uncover your team's strengths and challenges, build trust, and create a shared focus on what matters most. By working with us, your team will unite behind shared priorities, seek each other's opinions, debate difficult ideas and balance ownership and teamwork.

Signs your leadership team might benefit from independent support:

- There is no shared view of priorities
- Important things are not discussed in meetings
- Leaders don't model the right values and behaviours
- There is limited collaboration with other areas to solve shared problems
- There is a lack of accountability
- Decision-making is slow or happens in the wrong place.

What you can expect



1. Diagnose

We meet with the principal to discuss observations of leadership team dynamics, including strengths, issues and early focus areas. We may shadow one or two leadership team meetings and/or conduct surveys or interviews with team members to understand their current experience. We will document key observations and our suggested approach in a short report to discuss with the principal.



2. Design

We design a two-day program to strengthen cohesion and improve performance of the leadership team, drawing on a range of proven frameworks. The program may focus on building trust, creating a shared vision, leading together, modelling behaviours and engaging others.

Depending on your needs, the program can be expanded to include additional workshops, training or 1:1 coaching.



3. Deliver

The program can be delivered over two full days or four half-day sessions. These can be held consecutively or spread across terms.

We prepare the program agenda and materials, including any work that may be required out of session. We develop a summary report after the program to share with the team, recapping on key concepts and commitments. We can also support principal communications before, during and after the program. Our school leadership expert, a former principal, can provide ongoing mentoring or advice as required.

Community and stakeholder engagement

Engagement with your school community and stakeholders is a critical part of strategic planning. SenateSHJ can work with you to develop and implement an approach for focus groups, interviews and innovative consultation approaches that deliver meaningful insights.

Engagement is an opportunity to shape your school's future.

You might want to:

- Uncover insights from your school community that you need to shape the school's Strategic Plan
- Create meaningful and inclusive engagement to build on the learnings and successes of the previous strategic planning cycle
- Energise and engage your staff and broader school community in shaping the vision for your school's future
- Explore a particular issue or opportunity as a one-off project.

What you can expect



1. Diagnose

SenateSHJ will meet with the principal and school leadership to understand current engagement practices, the insights that have come from them and any gaps or new areas to explore. Additional meetings may be proposed to shape the engagement process design.



2. Design

From the diagnose phase, we craft a program that can include one-on-one discussions, focus groups and surveys to gain the insights you need. The design of this phase is critical to ensuring that your community can participate in ways that are meaningful to them and that can help you achieve your purpose.

In school settings, we find stories and personas are particularly powerful at helping to capture the priorities for the future. They also help to bring content alive for your target audiences. For example, a chat with a parent and their early years child could help to tell the story of the family's aspirations for the school and inform the Strategic Plan.



3. Deliver

We capture both qualitative and quantitative data as we deliver the agreed program of engagement and report it back in ways that can be readily incorporated into strategic planning and engaging staff and the school community. Our school leadership expert, a former principal, can provide ongoing mentoring or advice as required.



Have a question? We're here to help.

SenateSHJ's Schools Advisory offers a range of consultation and coaching services for government, faith-based and independent schools. Services are designed to meet leaders' and school's needs and we provide leadership coaching and strategic planning.

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