

Student Feedback & Progressive Reporting

Part 1 of 4 - Introduction & Landscape



Foreword

It's a truism to say that all parents want their children to succeed in life and be happy; a child's education is a pivotal aspect to this. For parents, being provided with an adequate level of information is vital to help them react and support their child's success. Indeed it's every parent's right.

For hundreds of years, schools have provided feedback to students and parents in the form of a semester school report. Arguably this document has been parent focused. Over the years this important document has taken many forms and has become a document that enshrines the school's culture and values along with information on how a student has performed. It is common practice in schools that if you want to indicate something is important, you place it in the report.

Contemporary research has shown us that students are best served with timely feedback, which clearly articulates the goal students were to reach and the gap between their performance and that goal (Hattie, 2007). It is hard to accept that the current school reporting cycle meets this need.

There is a clear disconnect between what has become the normal school reporting cycle and where research shows the best outcome for students. Schools are often reluctant to change this important document for fear they will disenfranchise parents about the school and their children's education. This report seeks to understand the attitudes of today's parents in relation to the feedback they receive from schools and what their preferred modes and frequency of feedback are.

We've surveyed:



In order to:

- Assess the current K-12 landscape and define what's important to the parents
- Unpack the importance of feedback, the channels, the frequency and the use of that feedback
- Evaluate the value parents put on their child's education
- Establish the level of parental and family support in student coaching
- Understand better what impacts student performance
- Define the impact of curriculum planning and the balance of social engagement and traditional curriculum

By engaging with parents on the aforementioned, we hope to better understand the information they receive from their child's school, as well as the frequency and through which channels. We also want to understand what parents do with the feedback they receive on their child.

In the current technological age where we can access information at anytime and anywhere from a number of devices, parents increasingly expect and demand 'as it happens' feedback on their child's education. Whether the context of that feedback is behavioural, task-orientated or the progression against student outcomes, parents want insight into how their child is performing.

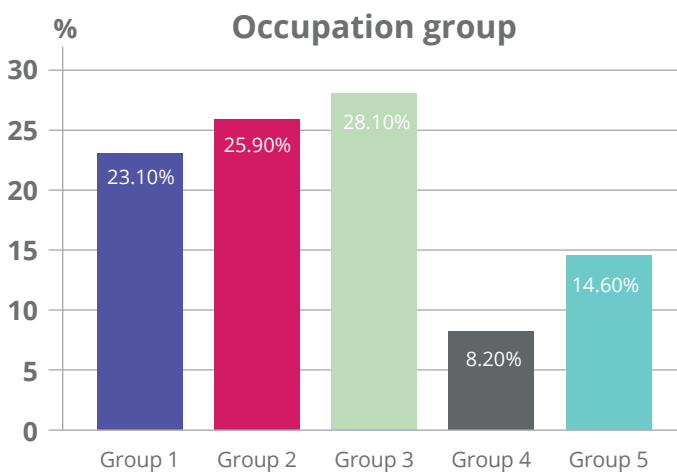
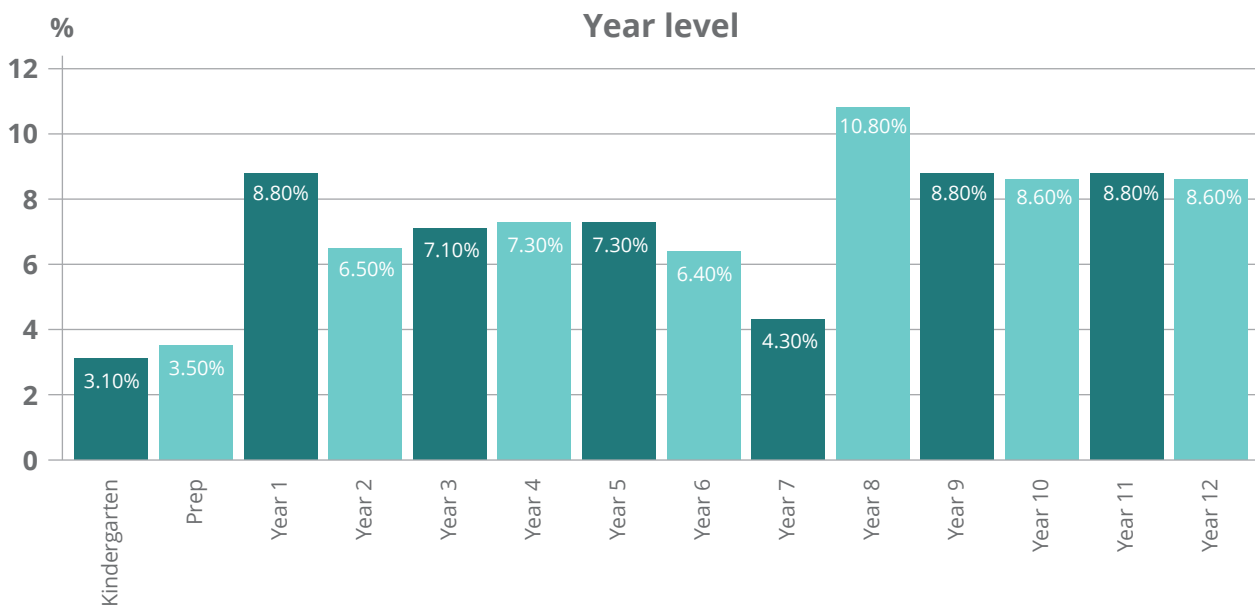
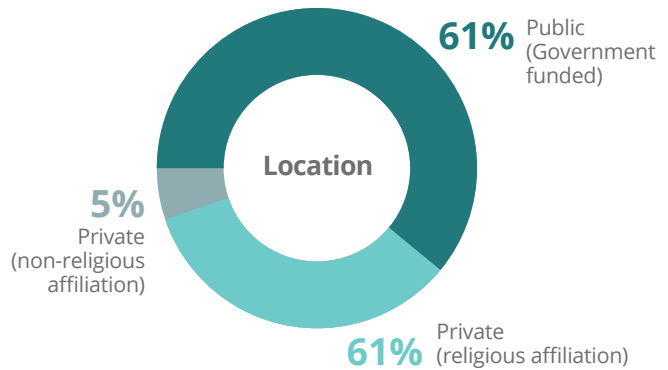
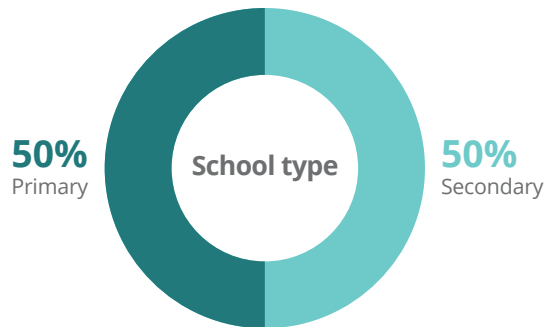
At Edumate, our core reason for being is to facilitate, support and encourage student success by helping teachers, parents and schools to teach and guide students through their learning journey. By helping to formulate a process of engagement with parents, guardians, extended family members, students and teachers, we hope to be able to support schools by providing a framework for student feedback and progressive reporting. This will help build a community around the student and increase the likelihood of their success.

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The survey framework



- Group 1:** Senior management in large business organisation, government administration and defence, and qualified professionals
- Group 2:** Other business managers, arts/media/sportspersons and associate professionals
- Group 3:** Tradesmen/women, clerks and skilled office, sales and service staff
- Group 4:** Machine operators, hospitality staff, assistants, labourers and related workers
- Group 5:** Currently not employed

The K-12 landscape

Feedback

- Over 80 per cent of parents say that feedback is essential.
- There is a big gap between what schools are providing in the way of feedback and what parents actually want.
- Parents don't feel they are getting the right information in a timely manner to support and coach their children.
- Parents commented that the feedback they currently receive is too late to action as the moment in time has passed.
- Parents prefer reporting based on their child's progression rather than measurement against a benchmark (despite popular belief). This reflects the need for progressive reporting using a method such as the Hattie feedback and reflection model (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, pp. 86-87).

Coaching and parent involvement

- Parent involvement decreases dramatically as a child progresses through education.
- Other family support decreases dramatically as a child progresses through education.
- Schools which integrate social activities and teamwork into the curriculum (not just by making the kids play sport) have happier parents/students.
- Students who participate in task reflection with their parents on a weekly basis are more likely to be an A grade average student than students that participate in task reflection on a less frequent basis.

Performance

- Parents indicated they're spending quality time with their child reflecting on their schooling, but are not being provided with enough information to make the most of this feedback.
- 6.1 per cent of parents were unable to state their child's grade as they didn't feel they'd receive enough information to make an informed judgment.

Learning environment

- 29 per cent of parents somewhat disagree that their school tailors curriculum to their child. This trends downwards considerably as students get older.
- When asked if schools create social learning environments, parents overwhelmingly responded about bullying in schools where social learning was not present.

The importance of feedback

The data shows that parents unsurprisingly would like feedback on everything. However, if you narrow the results down to the nuances, there is a marked difference in the type of feedback they want to see.

Figure 1: The importance of feedback

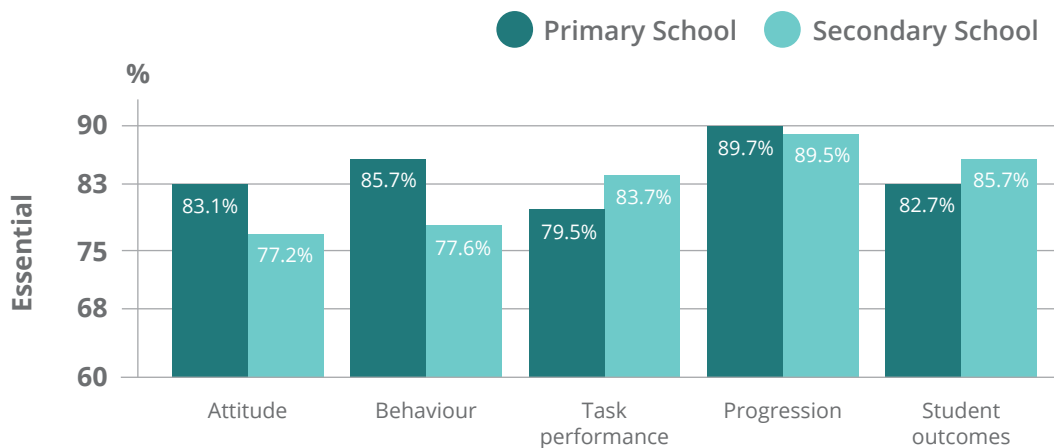


Figure 1 shows an important trend in the data, which is that parents intuitively want to see how their child is progressing. Progression is defined as measuring a student against themselves rather than an external benchmark (student outcomes). Parents want to see how their child is developing first, followed by how they compare to others.

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Parents say feedback is essential.
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It has been our experience working in the K-12 sector that schools often believe that parents are keen to know how their child is placed according to the rest of the year group. However the data above shows that while this is an important element, it is not the main request. The most important element in which parents are concerned is how their child is progressing against their own development. Progression also scored lowest on the ‘nice to have’ and ‘not needed’ answers.

This data disproves the notion that parents are most concerned about rankings. Instead parents are most concerned with their child’s development. These findings parallel with what we know to be beneficial for the child (Duncan, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Spiller, 2009), reconfirming that feedback on how a student performed and what they need to focus on is more important than measurement against an outcome.



One on one feedback is essential for my child to help her excel.

Parent, public secondary school, NSW

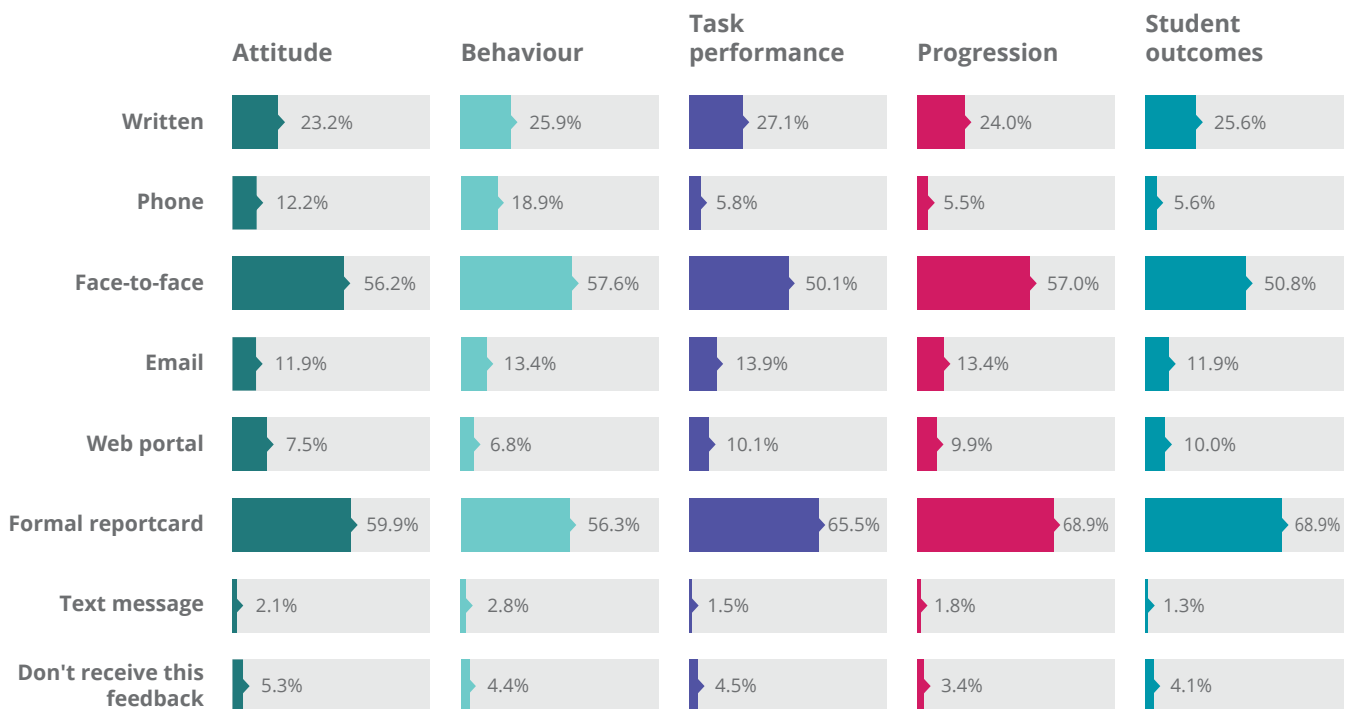


Channels

The results in Figure 1 are perhaps unexpected, although many schools have debated many of the nuances of where parents place importance.

In this survey we've learnt the most common channels in which feedback is provided. School feedback is primarily given through face-to-face (parent/teacher night) and formal report cards. Commonly, these events occur approximately four times per year, resulting in very few opportunities for parents to intercede or offer students a chance for meaningful reflection. The qualitative data in the survey showed parents raising concerns that they're receiving feedback after the fact, rather than as and when it happens, allowing them little opportunity to coach and support their children to improve before the next task or learning experience.

Figure 2: Types of feedback received from schools





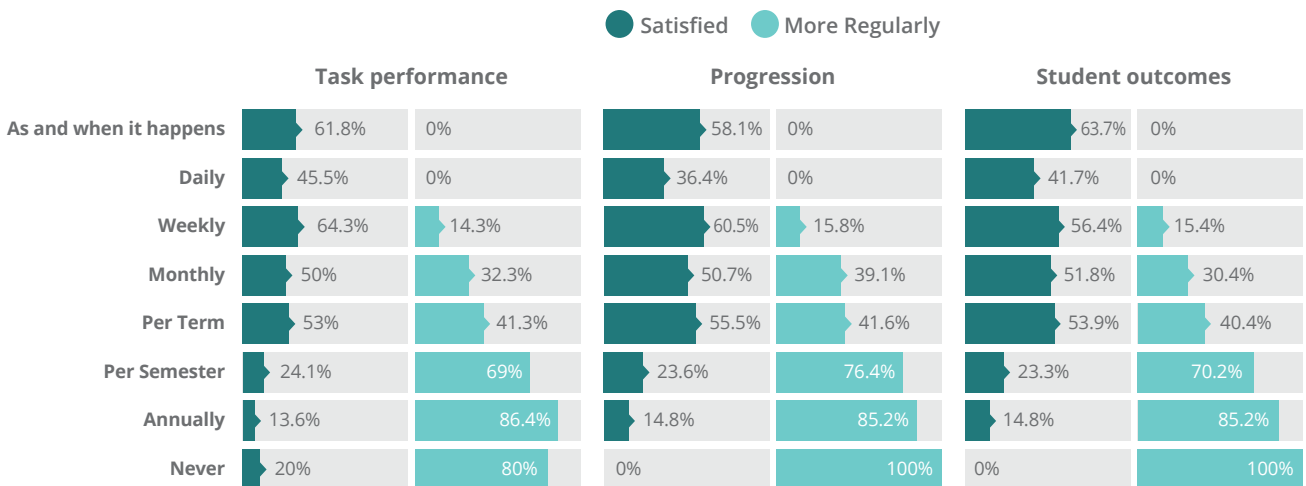
51.6% of parents want feedback more often than once per term.



Frequency

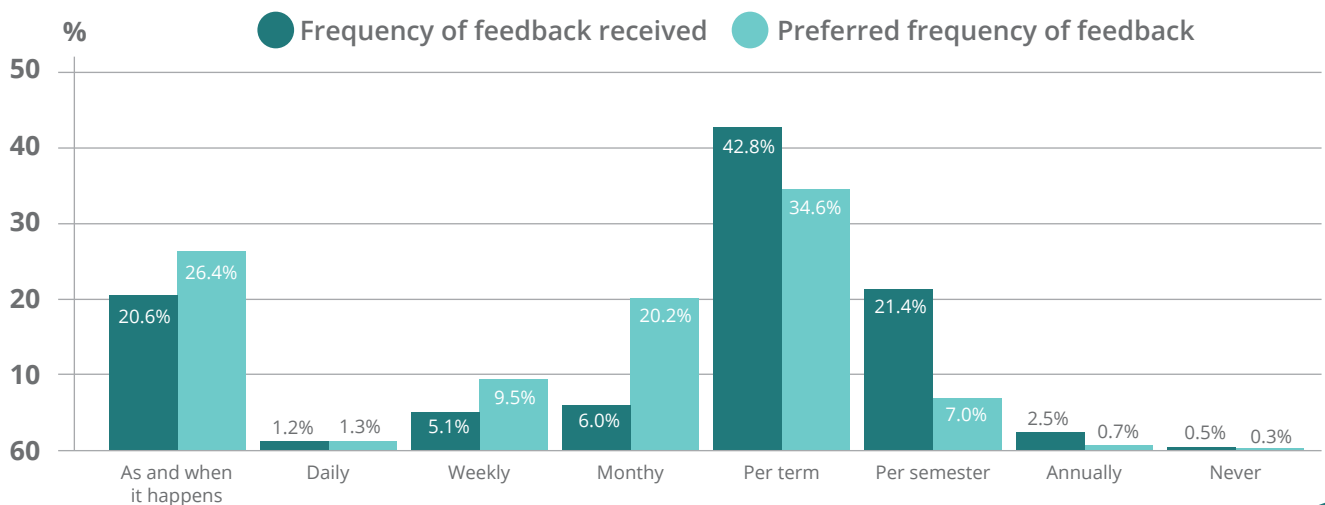
On average 51.6 per cent of parents want feedback more often than once per term, while 71.9 percent of parents want feedback more than once per semester. This is most prevalent in the area of student progression at 76.4 per cent. This highlights the importance and relevance of timely progressive reporting to parents.

Figure 3: Parent satisfaction with frequency of feedback



The preferred frequency of feedback sits between weekly and monthly, with a high proportion of parents wanting to receive feedback as and when it happens. Such a cycle would be impractical within the current paradigm of formal report cards. However our experience has shown it is easily achievable with a progressive reporting engine that allows teacher feedback to be captured when grading, with the feedback then distributed to students and their parents. Without such a framework, this is almost impossible to achieve.

Figure 4: Frequency of feedback



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My child goes to a good school but I would like more details on curriculum and more regular feedback on behaviour and performance.

Parent, private secondary school, VIC

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We can see in the responses that in the current landscape, figures are stacked for per term and semester reporting. Not surprising considering the traditional methods of reporting in schools, such as the end of term academic report, which doesn't always facilitate parent and teacher engagement. This is more to do with current school capabilities to report regularly than a reflection of parent requirements.

A concerning finding from the survey was that 6.1 per cent of parents were unable to state their child's average grade as they felt they didn't received enough information in order to make informed judgment. This solidifies the need for more regular, clear progress reporting on students' aggregated performance.

Parents seem clear that their preference is not to simply have an end of term/semester report, but instead want to receive timely feedback, based around student progression and then outcomes. Arguably this would also help them support their child's education better at home.

In a meta study of parental involvement in adolescent development, Hill & Tyson (2009) found that parental involvement was positively associated with achievement, particularly in the case of parental help with homework. Involvement that reflected academic socialisation had the strongest positive association with achievement. It has also been found that the discussion of school-related activities at home has a strong association with academic achievement (Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996).

It seems clear that by giving parents more data to assist in the learning process we are not only meeting their needs but also benefiting the student. We know from Hattie et al that even without parent involvement, we are affording the opportunity to the student to reflect and change learning behaviours. Compounded with the parental needs above, this has great potential to change student outcomes.



About Edumate

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