

Improving Learning

Earning and Learning Research Project

Report to the

Department for Education, South Australia

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ACRONYMS

ACER	Australian Council <i>for</i> Educational Research
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
CICA	Career Industry Council of Australia
DfE	Department for Education
FLO	Flexible Learning Option
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
LCA	Latent Class Analysis
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
NSW	New South Wales
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
SA	South Australia/South Australian
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SRC	Social Research Centre
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WETR	Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the Earning and Learning Research Partnership was to explore the reasons why a substantial proportion of successive cohorts of students in South Australia had not completed the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) or were identified as potential non-completers. The project officially commenced in September 2019 and was completed in August 2020.

The research particularly aimed to capture the student voice behind young people's earning and learning pathway choices, specifically identifying:

- why students in Years 10, 11, or 12 leave school without a documented "valid"¹ reason (**leavers**); and
- why some Year 12 students remain enrolled in high school but appear to be at risk of not completing SACE² (**stayers**).

To actively seek the student voice, information was collected by means of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI). This mode of data collection meant that attempts were made to contact all members of the two target populations of leavers and stayers by experienced interviewers from a demographics similar to the interviewees.

Where possible, project findings were also meant to inform policy or operational considerations within the Department for Education (DfE).

Summary of findings

School experiences

Stayers were two to three times more likely than leavers to strongly agree that school was a place where "the things I learned were important to me", "I enjoyed what I did in class", "I felt I belonged", and "I felt safe".

Three profiles underlying leavers' (n=348) school experiences could be identified:

1. The unstressed satisfied: (32.4%)	Enjoyed school as a good learning environment, with engaging teachers, sufficient subject and VET choices, enough individual support and career and post-school information, not stressed.
2. The marginally satisfied: (42.8%)	Lower levels of satisfaction than the first group whereby satisfaction of respondents in this group with teachers and subject choice is relatively higher compared with their enjoyment of school and the learning environment.
3. The disenchanted uninformed: (24.8%)	Low levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the schooling experience, feeling uninformed about career and post-school options and highly stressed.

¹ As recorded in the enrolment census data. "Valid" reasons include students who have left the school system either to seek employment or further study, or have left to an interstate, overseas or a non-government school.

² Stayers are considered "at risk" if they are in Year 12 but have not completed one or more compulsory SACE requirements (from PLP, Literacy and Numeracy) by the beginning of Year 12.

The profiles did not differ in that no leaver group found school to be too difficult and all were happy to have left school. Demographic subgroup differences were such that more female than male leavers were in the “disenchanted uninformed” profile and more leavers without a school card than with one were in the “marginally satisfied” group.

Three profiles also emerged from the stayers’ school experiences (n=204):

1. The unstressed satisfied: (58.8%)	Very likely to find school enjoyable and a good learning environment, with engaging teachers, sufficient subject and VET choices, enough individual support and career and post-school info, not stressed.
2. The reasonably satisfied: (33.3%)	Lower levels of satisfaction than the first group whereby satisfaction of respondents in this group with teachers and subject choice is relatively higher compared with the amount of VET choices or career and post-school info.
3. The stressed dissatisfied: (7.8%)	Unlikely to agree that school is enjoyable or a good learning environment and very likely to be stressed.

Demographic subgroup differences were such that more Flexible Learning Option (FLO) than non-FLO students were in the “stressed dissatisfied” profile and relatively fewer stayers with a school card were in the “unstressed satisfied” group.

Reasons for leaving or planning to leave school

Young people give a wide variety of reasons for leaving school and/or not completing SACE, ranging from “pull” factors relating to post-school opportunities to “push” factors relating to schools and school-work, student well-being and other personal and family reasons. The most common “main reasons” for leaving school identified by leavers include having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to or wanting to get one; not liking school or not thinking school was useful; and mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons.

The majority of stayers indicated that nothing in particular would make staying at school until the end of the year or completing SACE difficult for them. However, among the stayers who identified potential difficulties, three common challenges emerged: personal/family challenges; mental health challenges; and difficulties with school work.

Factors helping young people to stay at school

Responses by stayers and leavers (n=580) regarding factors which kept them at school as long as they have fell into five groups:

1. Encouraging friends & nice teachers: (55.2%)	Find teachers nice and friends encourage them to attend.
2. Family encouragement: (16.4%)	Parents and family are encouraging them to be at school.
3. Instrumentalists: (15.0%)	School is useful for the future and gets them into the course they want.
4. Socialising with friends: (12.4%)	They get along well with their class mates/friends.
5. School learners: (1.0%)	They like school and studying.

While no demographic subgroup differences emerged more stayers and fewer leavers than expected were in the “Instrumentalist” group. Also, more leavers and fewer stayers than expected were in the “Socialising with friends” and “Encouraging friends & nice teachers” groups.

Responses by leavers (n=348) regarding factors which could have helped to keep them at school fell into four groups:

1. More of everything: (38.8%)	Likely to say “yes” to anything offered, be it wider subject choice, better teachers, more counselling or mentoring
2. Greater flexibility: (16.4%)	Particularly keen on a wider range of VET and Year 11/12 subjects and more flexible or part-time hours
3. Nothing: (14.4%)	No factors could have helped to keep them at school.
4. Better learning support: (12.4%)	Particularly keen on better teachers, more mentoring and counselling and more help with learning problems

In terms of demographic subgroup differences, only gender differences emerged with female leavers more likely to want “More of everything” and male leavers being more likely to feel that “nothing” would have helped them to stay at school.

Interestingly, these groups of factors for leavers aligned well with the factors stayers mentioned when asked about what might help them to complete SACE/Year 12.

Pathways and their negotiation

- Overall, more than half of leavers (60%) were in education, training or employment, somewhat challenging the notion that leaving school early necessarily results in unsuccessful pathways.
- Stayers comprised a sample of young people at risk of not completing Year 12/SACE. Interviews revealed that just over half of stayers reported enrolment in or completion of the four compulsory SACE requirements in early March. Also, three quarters of stayers (78%) identified no particular difficulties that would prevent them from completing the SACE.
- Stayers were three times more likely than leavers to report that it was very important or extremely important to their parents that they finish Year 12 or achieve their SACE certificate.
- Parents and caregivers were the most common group of people that young people spoke to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work. “Other teachers” were the second most common group.
- Only 56% of leavers agreed that they knew where to get information about the options they had after leaving school, and only 57% agreed that they had enough information about what they wanted to do when they decided to leave school.
- 41% of leavers were unaware that there were various ways to complete SACE after leaving school.

Findings regarding data validation

Several discrepancies emerged between the administrative data available to the Department and information obtained from respondents. For leavers, this includes being at school at the time of data collection or reportedly having completed the SACE. For stayers, this includes reporting not to be at a government school at the time of data collection or not being a Year 12/13 or FLO student.

Another information gap relates to discrepancies in information regarding compulsory SACE requirements (i.e. PLP, English, Mathematics, Research Project) with respondents reporting

either (a) doing a subject when records indicated that they weren't or (b) not having started a subject, having stopped a subject before finishing it or having left school before the relevant year level when administrative records indicated a "yes" for this subject.

Finally, 9% of leavers report to be doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of their SACE after leaving school but this information does not appear in the administrative records.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

The South Australian Department for Education (DfE), Department for Innovation and Skills, and the SACE Board all collect enrolment census data to support their services. Data from between 2011 and 2015 show that only 50–53% of the Year 8 student cohort went on to achieve the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE³, which may include VET). While figures such as these for student retention and certification are known, what is less well known is the motivation for why some young people finish SACE and others do not.

The aim of the Earning and Learning Research Partnership, therefore, is to explore the reasons why successful senior secondary school outcomes have not been achieved for a substantial proportion of successive cohorts of students in South Australia.

In late 2018, the DfE called for expressions of interest to investigate the reasons behind SACE non-completion or potential non-completion. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was engaged by the Department and the project officially commenced in September 2019.

Project aims

This research aims to capture the student voice behind young people’s earning and learning pathway choices, specifically identifying:

- why students in Years 10, 11, or 12 leave school without a “valid”⁴ reason (**leavers**), and
- why some Year 12 students remain enrolled in high school but do not appear to be on a SACE/VET pathway⁵ (**stayers**).

Project findings may also inform policy or operational decisions within the DfE.

Research questions

The project aims were addressed using the following research questions:

Leavers

1. Why do school non-completers leave the system? / What were the issues faced by non-completers when they were at school?
2. What could be done to retain some of these students?
3. What are non-completers currently doing? / Are they on an earning or learning pathway?
4. What are the issues faced by non-completers after leaving school?
5. Does the survey data align with the departmental information on “not a valid reason for leaving school” code?

³ Department for Education – Senior School Retention and SACE Completion, 2018 (3-page info sheet, source: *Department for Education Enrolment Census 2009–2017, SACE Board Enrolment Data 2014–2017, Department for Industry and Skills VET data 2015–2017*).

⁴ As recorded in the enrolment census data. “Valid” reasons include students who have left the school system either to seek employment or further study, or have left to an interstate, overseas or a non-government school.

⁵ SACE pathways include students undertaking VET as part of their SACE

Stayers

1. What are students who do not appear to be on a SACE pathway currently doing? What pathways are they on?
2. Why did students stay at school but not on a SACE pathway, including influences and reasons for subject choices?
3. What are the issues faced by students who remain at school but are not on a SACE pathway?
4. What could be done to get some of these students back on the SACE certificate track?
5. Does the survey data align with the departmental information on whether or not students are on SACE pathways?

Approach to the study

The project focuses on two groups of young people identified as being “at risk” by the DfE: “leavers” and “stayers”. It is important to note that the leaver group is restricted to early school leavers *who left school without a validated reason*, while the stayer group is restricted to students *who were at risk of not completing SACE*. Consequently, the report findings cannot be generalised to all early school leavers or all Year 12 students.

The ACER research team worked in consultation with DfE to refine the project aims, general and specific research questions, and methodology.

The aim of the study was to hear the student voice. A CATI survey methodology was adopted so as to maximise coverage of the study population while still allowing interviewers to build rapport with study participants to elicit open and honest responses.

Questionnaire design was informed by literature, and consultation with key stakeholders from the DfE (through focus groups and interviews) and current and former students (through cognitive testing of selected questionnaire items).

COVID-19 pandemic

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has impacted the lives of South Australians and had implications for the design of this study. The World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 pandemic on 11 March and a public health emergency was declared by the South Australian Government on March 15 (SA Health, 2020; WHO, 2020). Increasingly restrictive measures were put in place by the Australian and South Australian governments in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus. By the last week of March, the state's borders had been closed, social distancing regulations were in place, and a range of non-essential businesses and activities were closed resulting in substantial job losses. Job vacancies in South Australia decreased by 41.9% in the three months to May 2020 (ABS, 2020a). During this period among 14-24 year olds in South Australia, employment decreased by 17,776 persons and the unemployment rate increased by 1.4 percentage points (ABS, 2020b).

Schools were also impacted, with four pupil free days declared in SA government schools ahead of the Term 1 holiday in order for schools to prepare for new models of school based and home based learning for Term 2 (SA DfE, 2020c). However, the unfolding situation meant that schools

were able to transition back to physical attendance earlier than initially anticipated. On April 22, in the last week of the term holidays, a letter from the South Australian Chief Public Health Officer was sent to parents noting very low levels of COVID-19 in SA at that time and encouraging students to physically return to school for Term 2 (SA DfE, 2020b). In weeks 1 and 2 there was a mixed model of school delivery, but by week 3 most students had returned to school campuses.

Concerns have been expressed about the potential immediate and longer-term impacts of schooling at home and the labour market downturn for groups of young people already considered “at risk” (e.g. Education Endowment Foundation, 2020; Hamilton et al, 2020; Noble et al, 2020).

Data collection for this project commenced on Wednesday 29 April 2020 (the first week of Term 2 in South Australia) and concluded on Sunday 24 May (end of the fourth week of Term 2). The unfolding situation in the lead-up to fieldwork had necessitated adjustments to the data collection instrument. Questionnaire revisions were made to capture information on young persons’ situations before and during the pandemic. The focus of the study was on the time up to early March 2020 (“pre-pandemic”). However, study participants were also asked how their situations had changed between early March and the time of interview in late April/May 2020. This provides a timely opportunity to capture the initial effects of current social and economic upheaval on two vulnerable groups of young South Australians.

Structure of the report

Section 2 provides an overview of previous research and the presents the conceptual framework underpinning the study.

Section 3 describes the study methodology in detail.

Section 4 presents the study results, organised thematically, to give insights into factors associated with leaving or staying on at school.

Section 5 presents the conclusions and implications for schools and education policy in relation to SACE completion and what matters to “at risk” young people.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of previous research on early school leavers and young people at risk of not completing school in the Australian context. It includes themes arising from recent reviews and reports, as well as state and national surveys.

Previous research

Recent reviews and reports

An annotated bibliography of relevant reviews and reports relevant to the current research project is included in [Appendix A](#), and a brief overview is provided below.

In recent years, numerous government reviews have investigated general issues related to senior secondary schooling and the transition from school to life after school in Australia (Gonski, et al., 2018; Government of South Australia, 2018; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, 2018; Shergold, et al, 2020), as well as more specific topics such as careers education (Career Industry Council of Australia, 2019; Dandolopartners, 2017; Parliament of Victoria, Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, 2018), vocational education and training in schools (Government of South Australia, 2019; Joyce, 2019), and regional, rural and remote education (Halsey, 2017). These reviews examined existing evidence, consulted widely with a range of stakeholders, and identified a number of issues of relevance to the completion of Year 12 and SACE as outlined below.

Career information and advice: Stakeholders suggest that career education in many schools is not meeting student needs, and many students report that their career education is not useful (Dandolopartners, 2017). A need for more up-to-date and relevant career information and advice in order to facilitate informed subject and pathways choices by young people is commonly raised (e.g. Career Industry Council of Australia, 2019; Gonski, et al, 2018; Halsey, 2017; Joyce, 2019; Parliament of Victoria, Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, 2018; Shergold, et al, 2020). In addition, stakeholder feedback and a background paper for the National Careers Institute note anecdotal evidence that young people are accessing informal advice such as that provided by parents, but that this advice may be based upon a limited understanding of the current and future labour market, as well as the influencers' own values, biases and assumptions (National Careers Institute, 2019; COAG Education Council, n.d; Parliament of Victoria, Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, 2018). Sources of career advice and information, and young people's perceptions of its usefulness were also noted in other research (e.g. Carlisle, et al, 2019; Government of South Australia and Year13, 2019; Shipley & Stubley, 2018; Shipley & Walker, 2020).

VET in schools: VET in schools is viewed sometimes as contributing to the career education for all young people, and sometimes as a means of engaging and retaining low-achieving young people in school. However, the number of students undertaking school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and other VET in school decreased in South Australian Government schools between

2017 and 2018 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2019b). Barriers to the uptake of VET in schools and VET pathways include a perceived bias by schools, parents and students against VET pathways in favour of more academic pathways (Career Industry Council of Australia, 2019; COAG Education Council, n.d.; Government of South Australia, 2019; Halsey, 2017; Joyce, 2019; Parliament of Victoria, Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, 2018; Shipley & Stubble, 2018). Joyce (2019) noted current limitations regarding information on secondary students enrolled in VET, their motivations for enrolling, their course satisfaction, and their post-secondary outcomes. However, research evidence indicates that while VET in school is associated with favourable short-term outcomes, positive longer-term labour market outcomes are only observed for school-based VET which includes a workplace learning component (Misko, Chew & Korb, 2020; Moschion, Polidano & Castillo, 2019; Polidano & Tabasso, 2020).

Generic skills: The need for transferrable or generic skills to equip students for the changing nature of work and careers is another theme emerging from various reviews. These skills include literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capabilities, employability skills, critical and creative thinking, entrepreneurial capabilities, financial literacy, interpersonal skills, and ethical, civic and intercultural understanding (Gonski, et al, 2018; Shergold, et al, 2020).

Equity issues are raised in relation young people's school completion plans and pathways, including in relation to each of the above issues (e.g. students in regional, rural and remote areas, low SES students, Indigenous students and students with a disability) (Gemici, et al, 2014; Government of South Australia, 2019; Halsey, 2017; Ranasinghe, et al, 2019; Shay, 2019; Tomaszowski, Perales & Ziang, 2017).

Other factors: The research literature also points to a multitude of other factors which influence the engagement of young people in school, Year 12 completion or non-completion, and post-school pathways. These include factors relating to schools, student well-being, young people's interests and aspirations, and a wide range of other factors impacting on young people's lives (e.g. Bills, et al; Carlisle, et al, 2019; Davies, et al, 2011; Gemici, et al, 2014; National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 2019a; Nguyen & Blomberg, 2014; Ranasinghe, et al., 2019; Smyth, 2003). Details are provided in [Appendix A](#).

Evidence gaps: A number of reviews note that current data gaps limit understandings of senior secondary and post-secondary pathways (Career Industry Council of Australia, 2019; COAG Education Council, n.d.; Joyce, 2019; Shergold, et al, 2020). The need for longitudinal data on specific "at risk" subgroups in South Australia is also noted in the research literature (e.g. Bills, Armstrong & Howard, 2019) - an issue further explored in the following section on existing surveys.

Existing surveys

Existing surveys considered to be relevant to the current project were reviewed. They included state-based surveys of school leavers as well as a survey of current senior secondary school students and national surveys of young people.

The South Australian Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research (WETR) Project tracked the pathways of students from three cohorts of early-school-leavers and school-completers in 18 government schools in South Australia between 2012 and 2014. WETR was conducted on behalf of the then Department for Education and Child Development. Results showed that what could

have helped non-completers to stay at school included more flexible hours and/or part-time options, more relevant courses, better mentoring from teachers, being allowed to return to school at a later stage, more help with learning needs, a wider range of VET subjects to choose from, more engaging teachers, more tutoring offered or available at school, and offering vacation coaching or catch-up. Areas for future research included:

- How families can be involved in the provision of up-to-date pathway information to young people that takes into account young people's strengths and attitudes.
- The factors that influence differences in the awareness and uptake of VET subjects. For example, differences were found in the pathways of students who took VET subjects in-school and students who did not.
- How to raise awareness of careers advice and support services after leaving school, as about one-third of WETR respondents had asked about such services.

Other state-based surveys of school completers and early school leavers are currently conducted in the ACT, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. These surveys were cross-checked against WETR to identify potential topics for consideration in this project. These surveys tend to focus on initial post-school destinations. However, their coverage of attitudes and other factors which may influence student pathways is typically less extensive than that addressed in WETR.

In contrast to WETR and other state-based surveys, the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) is national in scope and tracks young people from age 15 through to age 25. LSAY collects detailed information on the characteristics of young people, their pathways, and their attitudes and aspirations. These data have been analysed extensively, and a number of reports were included in the literature review for this project. While the LSAY sample size precludes the use of LSAY data for in-depth analysis of young people in South Australia, the questionnaires administered when young people were in school or in their first year post-school, and national-level reports based upon the LSAY data, were nevertheless of relevance for identifying important themes.

A number of surveys conducted for more specific purposes and the Canadian Future to Discover Project were also consulted. A description of each of the surveys consulted is provided in [Appendix B](#).

In summary, this review of existing literature and surveys identified the need for a survey that:

- Was specific to the South Australian government school context;
- Would capture data not only from young people who left school prior to completing the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) but also from stayers identified as being at-risk of not completing the SACE;
- Would actively solicit the student voice at a time convenient to them (even though an appropriate data collection mode, such as CATI, seeks to conveniently contact all leavers and stayers by phone);
- Would recognise that there are a range of factors which potentially influence young people's pathways such as their school experiences in the previous ten or so years of schooling, reasons for leaving school, factors that might help to complete school, and factors and people influencing subject choice, navigating pathways and definitions of success.

Conceptual framework

Underpinning the South Australian Pathways project are the twin concerns of improving Year 12 and SACE completion rates, and understanding earning and learning pathways from the perspective of young people who have been identified as “at risk” by the DfE. The student voice is at the centre of the conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1.

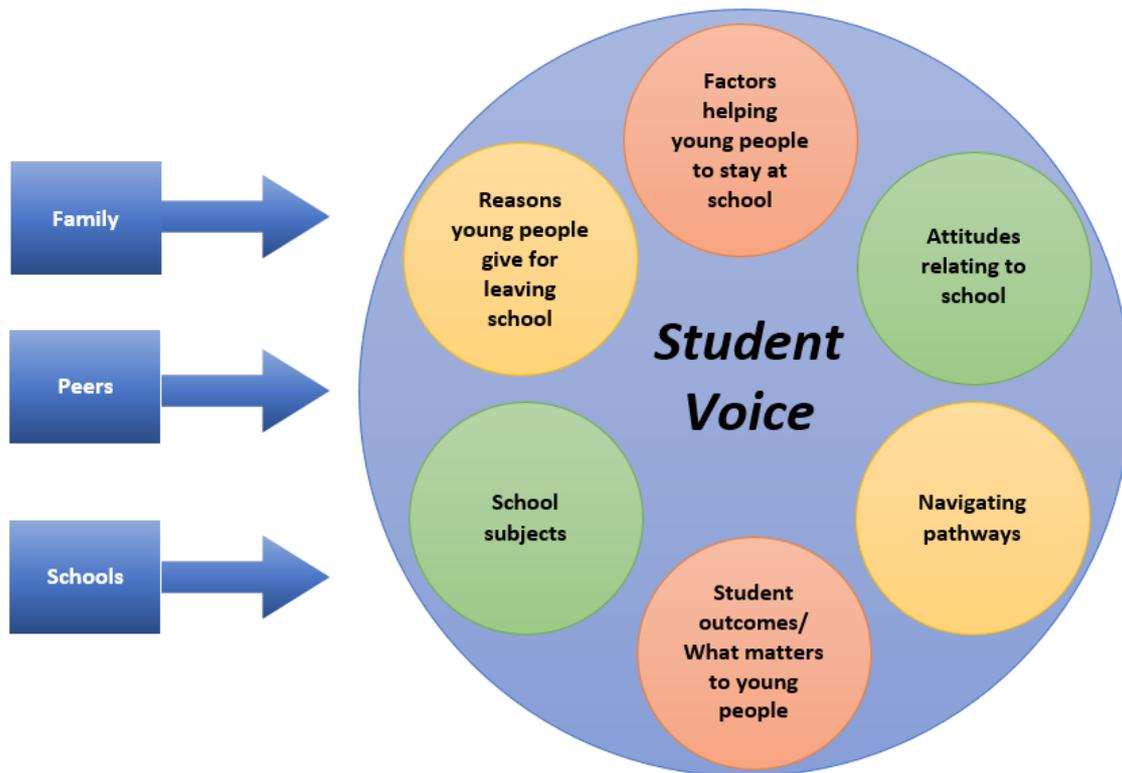


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

The framework comprises six themes and each theme is examined from the viewpoint of “at risk” young people. The first two themes incorporate broad overviews of the key factors as perceived by young people (reasons young people give for leaving school, and factors helping young people to stay at school). The next three themes focus in on specific factors identified in the literature and in consultation with DfE project management team and key stakeholders (attitudes relating to school, school subjects including VET, and navigating pathways: career planning, significant others and support services). The final theme examines how to define success; what matters to early school leavers and “at risk” students is considered alongside standard measures such as completion of compulsory SACE requirements in school and engagement in earning and learning activities after leaving school.

3. METHODS

Overview

This section describes the approaches in this project taken to sampling, questionnaire design, development and pre-testing as well as data collection and analysis.

Questionnaire development consisted of two components. The first component of questionnaire development, described in the previous section, involved a desktop review of the literature and existing questionnaires, which were considered relevant for the intended aims and target groups.

The second component of questionnaire development, described in this section, comprised qualitative work. This work sought direct feedback via focus groups on draft questionnaire materials from stakeholders with pertinent insights into current cohorts of senior school students. In addition, feedback was sought from potential respondents of the two target groups themselves via cognitive interviews.

A description of the quantitative component of the study is also provided, including questionnaire categories, fieldwork, means of data collection, population and target sample, and the achieved sample.

Qualitative work

The qualitative work sought input and feed-back on draft questionnaire materials from two groups of informants. One group comprised departmental staff who provide course selection and pathways advice to senior secondary students. The second group were students or former students who could potentially be questionnaire respondents.

Department staff input and feed-back

To ensure the questionnaires' relevance for the South Australian context, input was sought from Department staff who have direct contact with schools and students who would fit into the research groups. Initial input was facilitated through focus groups with:

- SACE Achievement Officers and Project Officers (N=22) on Friday, 25 October 2019; and
- Further Education and Pathways Team Leaders (N=3) on Tuesday, 29 October 2019.

An email consultation was also sent to Pathways Managers, with some feedback provided in late November.

Feedback obtained from these Department staff members is outlined below with further details provided in [Appendix C](#).

General feedback

Points arising from the general discussion around the project's aims at the beginning of the focus groups included:

- Schools have more-detailed internal knowledge and recording of students' reasons for leaving.
- Release of results is on a delayed timeline for some SACE options, particularly VET.

- Some students perceive the structure of SACE to be high-stakes, resulting in academic anxiety.
- Some students have non-school-related challenges that affect their enrolment, attendance and success rate that might not be clear from their enrolment status.

Priority ratings

Participants were asked to rank the draft questionnaire items as *high*, *medium*, or *low* priority, or *not relevant*.

- Most questionnaire content was rated as high priority.
- The “most essential” questions included those on reasons for leaving and alternative pathways (*leavers*), and plans to complete Year 12 and the facilitators and barriers to staying at school (*stayers*).
- The “less essential” questions included those eliciting advice for other early school leavers and whether post-school plans had been followed (*leavers*), and questions that were considered too broad/open-ended (*stayers*).

Specific feedback

Participants also provided feedback that was specific to question concepts, as well as feedback specific to language and phrasing, including:

- Questions regarding learning experiences should guide respondents to a conceptual response rather than a teacher-related response.
- Timeframes should be relatively short (e.g. two years) when asking respondents to remember or predict.
- Students often are not aware of their SACE registration status, or school or Department jargon.
- Reasons for leaving or staying in school are often related to complexities of life rather than anything specifically education- or school-related.
- Many students will need response prompts to assist with comprehension or the intent of a question.
- Students could be asked about their definition of “school success”.

Further details are provided in [Appendix C](#).

Cognitive interviews

Cognitive interviews are an essential element of questionnaire design to examine if participants understand and respond to survey items as intended by researchers, and are recommended to precede any survey implementation (Drennan, 2003; Willis, 2015).

Cognitive interviews with young people from the two respondent target groups using draft questionnaire materials were undertaken in early 2020. Feedback obtained from these interviews is outlined below with further details provided in [Appendix D](#).

The purpose of the cognitive interviews were to:

- Reduce the number of questions through further prioritisation of content as the questionnaires were, at that stage, too long.
- Test respondents’ understanding of some of the wording, particularly that of new questionnaire material.
- Get a sense of the usefulness of the current data validation questions.
- Test the process of contacting respondents through their parents/caregivers.

- Obtain some indication as to where further clarification through examples or prompts may be required to assist understanding of questions and response options.

A total of 81 students were identified by the DfE as being similar to students who would be identified for the live survey. After receiving research ethics approval to proceed, telephone calls to request and conduct cognitive interviews were initiated by ACER staff. The success rate for cognitive interviews from these calls is shown in Figure 2.

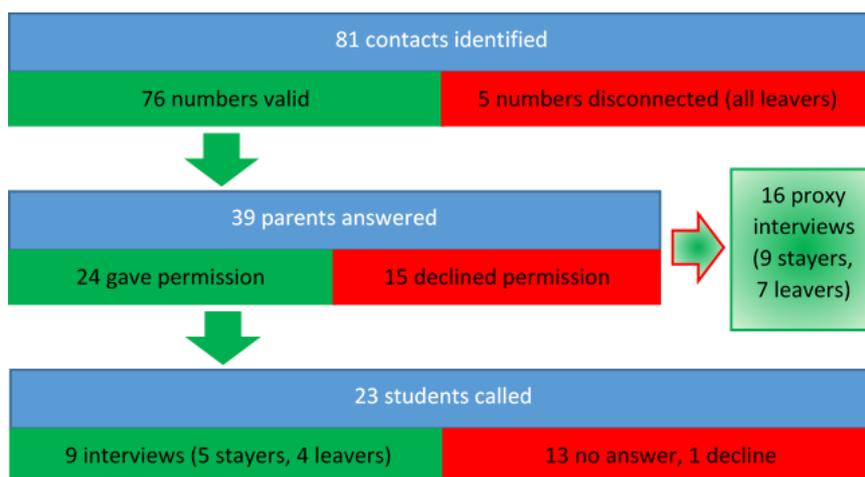


Figure 2. Overview of telephone calls for cognitive interviews

General debriefing opportunities were used throughout the survey so that interviewees could ask questions or comment on difficulties as they progressed. Broad observations were made by ACER staff with regard to general comprehension and response time.

Interviewees took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete the interview, noting that the cognitive interview was little more than half the full survey at that stage. Overall, interviewees indicated that the survey design, content and language was generally understandable. However, there was very specific feedback on challenges related to response codes, vocabulary and phrasing, and more general logistical challenges. These challenges are detailed in [Appendix D](#).

An emergent finding from the cognitive interviews was that there were a number of parents who, despite declining the interview for their child, were quite willing to answer questions on their child's behalf. This was particularly noticeable when the parent reported that their child had a disability. These parents provided highly useful information. As a result it was decided to ensure proxy questions would be available for parents during the live survey, to be offered when a student was reported as unable to respond due to disability. Proxy interviews would be capped at the same percentage as students identified with a disability code in the DfE student lists for interviews.

The cognitive interviews were useful in refining the protocols, procedures and interviewer training for the live survey. Refer to [Appendix D](#) for further information on findings.

Quantitative work

Questionnaire

The final questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Section A: Introduction and screening questions
- Section B: Post-school activities (early March) (leavers only)
- Section C: Leaving school
- Section D: Staying at school
- Section E: Assessment of the transition from school
- Section F: School subject choice
- Section G: Education/career planning (before leaving school)
- Section H: Update since early March and future goals
- Section I: Career planning (post-school) and requests for information about education and work support
- Section J: Final questions

In order to separate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from other factors influencing the lives of young people in South Australia, the time frame for most questions was up until early March 2020. A small number of additional questions were included to assess whether young peoples' activities and aspirations changed between early March and the time of the interview in late April/May 2020.

The questionnaire is provided in [Appendix E](#).

Fieldwork

The Social Research Centre (SRC; www.srcentre.com.au), a research and evaluation centre owned by the Australian National University, was engaged by ACER to operationalise the questionnaire and conduct the computer-assisted telephone interviews. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions at the time of fieldwork, SRC interviewers were working from home via secure, locked-down access to the project sampling frame.

ACER provided the SRC with the questionnaire and sampling frame from which potential interviewees could be contacted. Data collection for this project commenced on Wednesday 29 April (during the first week of Term 2 in South Australia) and concluded on Sunday 24 May (end of the fourth week of Term 2).

Means of data collection

A CATI mode of data collection was adopted to:

- maximise coverage of the study population in that attempts were made to contact all members of the two target populations (stayers & leavers).

- allow trained interviewers from a demographic similar to those interviewed to build rapport with respondents to encourage participation and elicit open and honest responses.
- lessen the possibility of mainly respondents with strong views participating in the study.
- enable “on the spot” clarification by interviewees.
- negotiate a time for interviews convenient to the respondents.
- reach interviewees regardless of their location across South Australia.
- avoid individual respondents being influenced by others as can be the case with data collection methods such as focus groups.
- have greater confidence that responses are obtained from actual members of the target population than with data collection methods such as online surveys.
- increase the likelihood for respondents to give their full attention to the interview, with the interviewer being able to deduce the quality of each response and probe for further information or elaboration where needed. This was particularly important given the study sought specifically to obtain the “student voice” on the issue.

As it happened, with COVID-19 pandemic leading to disruptions to public life in general and school closures in particular, the CATI data collection method enabled the project to proceed as planned, at the time envisaged, with relatively slight modifications to the questionnaire.

Population and target sample

The two populations for the current study were defined, namely “leavers” and “stayers”, as follows:

Leavers: Students who were enrolled (i.e. had a status of “active”) in Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12 in 2019 and who left school during 2019 without a documented valid reason (i.e. had not completed SACE or IB, changed to a non-government school, moved interstate or overseas, or left due to illness). This group was further restricted to persons under 21 years of age as at 1 July 2019.

Stayers: Students whose administrative year level in 2020 was Year 12 but who were not on track to complete SACE⁶. This group was further restricted to persons under 21 years of age as at 1 July 2020.

Thus, the two study populations were students who left a South Australian Government school without completing the SACE (leavers) and students who are at risk of not completing SACE (stayers). As students are linked to schools, school characteristics were used to form the sampling frame based on data supplied by the Department. To sample students, we allocated each student to the school they attended, or had last attended, and used that school’s information as sampling strata.

⁶ Students not on track to complete SACE were identified as:

- Students whose compulsory SACE requirements were not met or assumed not to be met for two or more of the Personal Learning Plan (PLP), the literacy requirement, and the numeracy requirement as of 2019; or
- Students who met two of these compulsory requirements but had less than 110 points in 2019 (based on VET and SACE data from the SACE Board).

Sampling frame

The two sampling frames for the two populations were developed based on two lists of students provided by the Department, one for students who had left school (the “leavers”) and one for students who were at risk of not completing SACE (the “stayers”). These lists contained contact information for parents and caregivers as well as additional student information along with a link to which Government school in South Australia they attend or had attended.

The leaver list contained records for 4149 students and the stayer list contained records for 1534 students.

We excluded 358 eligible students from the leaver sampling frame and 113 eligible students from the stayer sampling frame for a variety of reasons which are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Student exclusions from sampling frames

Reason	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	% of full list	N	% of full list
Already approached in cognitive testing of surveys	14	<1	-	-
No valid telephone or email contact information	271	7	83	5
Student literacy level Pre-Foundation	13	<1	4	<1
Student literacy level Foundation – Year 2	95	2	31	2
No date of birth for student	-	-	1	<1
Total number of students excluded*	358	9	113	7

Note: *Some students were in more than one exclusion category so numbers do not sum to total.

Table 2 and Table 3 show a summary of the characteristics of the students in each sampling frame. Table 2 lists the school characteristics for each student while Table 3 provides details regarding the student characteristics. The leaver sampling frame included a total of 3,791 students after exclusions and the stayer sampling frame a total of 1,421 students after exclusions. The two sampling frames have very similar distributions overall. Leavers are slightly more likely to have attended schools in remote and regional areas, and fewer reached Year 12 before leaving school compared to stayers. There are slightly more boys in the leaver group than the stayer group. During the development of the survey design a decision was made to enable proxy interviews by parents or caregivers where students listed as receiving disability support may not be in a position to respond to a phone interview. It was also decided that the proportion of proxy interviews in the achieved sample should not exceed the proportion of students receiving financial assistance due to a disability in the population.

Table 2. Summary of students in the sampling frames: school characteristics

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
School type				
Secondary	2659	70	1045	74
Combined	837	22	248	18
Other	295	8	128	9
Geographical Location				
Metropolitan	2479	65	1101	78
Regional	1174	31	292	21
Remote	138	4	28	2
Socio-economic status based on ICSEA*				
Low (Below 950)	1111	29	422	30
Medium (950-1000)	1677	44	485	34
High (Above 1000)	1003	27	514	36
Total	3791	100	1421	100

Notes: *Nationally, the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) has an average of 1000.

Table 3. Summary of students in the sampling frames: student characteristics

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
SACE completion information				
No information provided	N/A	N/A	625	44
SACE information provided	N/A	N/A	796	56
Disability support*				
Yes	534	14	212	15
No	3257	86	1209	85
Student identified to be of Aboriginal origin				
Yes	340	9	151	11
No	3451	91	1270	89
Gender				
Female	1521	40	690	49
Male	2270	60	731	51
Census year level				
Year 10	176	5	-	-
Year 11	1479	39	1	<1
Year 12	2043	54	1373	97
Year 12 plus	22	1	14	1
Special class in non-special schools	40	1	13	1
Special school or unit	31	1	20	1
Literacy level if below expected				
Year 3 – Year 6	183	5	61	4
Year 7 – Year 10	75	2	10	1
Not applicable	3533	93	1350	95
Reason for leaving school				
Attending university in SA	46	1	-	-

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
Exemption	6	<1	-	-
Parenting	32	1	-	-
Paid employment in SA	771	20	-	-
Attending private training institution in SA	151	4	-	-
Seeking employment in SA	954	25	-	-
Transferred to SA Government school	218	6	-	-
Attending Vocational Education in SA	170	5	-	-
Unknown	1443	38	-	-
Total	3791	100	1421	100

Notes: *Students classified as ever being in a special school unit or class, or receiving supplementary, substantial or extensive support were categorised as yes.

Intended sample

We used a stratified random sampling approach to sample 400 students to whom the interviews were administered in each group. Both groups were stratified by school socioeconomic status (measured by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)) and location with the stayer sample having an additional stratum indicating whether or not SACE completion information was available for a student.

School ICSEA was categorised as three groups (i.e. low, medium, high) based on the national distribution. Schools were also grouped in terms of three locations, namely schools in metropolitan zones as metropolitan, inner and outer provincial zone schools as regional, and remote and very remote schools as remote. As the stayer sample had the additional stratum of SACE completion, and in order to maintain reasonable cell numbers, school location was combined into two groups with schools classified as regional and remote combined into one group to generate the stayer sample.

Table 4 shows the distribution of students in the leaver sampling frame by ICSEA group and location. Table 5 shows the distribution of students in the stayer sampling frame by ICSEA group, location and SACE information. The number of students included in each sample from each stratum was proportional to the number of students in each stratum of the sampling frame. For example, about 2% of students in the leaver sample were in remote low ICSEA schools because 2.4% of the students in the sampling frame fell into this category.

Table 4. Sampling strata for students in the leaver sample

Location	ICSEA %		
	Low	Mid	High
Metropolitan	18.4	22.2	24.8
Regional	8.5	21.4	1.1
Remote	2.4	0.7	0.6

Table 5. Sampling strata for students in the stayer sample

SACE info provided flag	Location	ICSEA %		
		Low	Mid	High
No	Metropolitan	5.0	9.1	24.9
	Non-Metropolitan*	1.2	3.5	0.3
Yes	Metropolitan	16.7	11.2	10.6
	Non-Metropolitan*	6.8	10.3	0.4

Notes: *Regional and remote categories have been combined into a non-metropolitan category to reduce the number of sample strata cells.

Sampling was carried out using a random number generator in the software environment SPSS. This process randomly selected students to be contacted first in the surveys.

If a student declined the invitation to participate, another student with the same school ICSEA and location characteristics – and SACE information if from the stayer sample – was selected as a replacement. This process continued until either the target number of responses of 400 per sample was achieved or the sampling frames were exhausted.

Achieved sample

Response rates

Table 6 shows response rates for students from both samples. The leavers group was only 39 students short of the initially intended target of 400 students. The stayers group was much harder to reach than originally anticipated and just over half of the intended number of interviews was achieved. Each sampling frame was exhausted with up to six attempts to contact every student. Further information regarding non-contact, refusal and reasons for non-response is provided below.

Table 6. Response rates

Survey	n	%	Target n	Target %
Leavers	361	9.5	400	10.6
Stayers	219	15.4	400	28.1

Sample acquittal

Table 7 shows the distribution of students for each group broken down by contact result. In this context, it should be noted that the contact information available were the e-mails and phone numbers of parents and caregivers for the large majority of students and former students. As the large majority of students and former students were minors, parental consent was required before the target respondents could be contacted.

Despite pre-survey contact through email and SMS notifying of the call, and up to six attempts to call the contact number provided during the interview period, 65% of leavers and 57% of stayers could not be reached. These non-contact percentages included calls that were not answered, calls that went to an answering machine, or engaged numbers. No message was left if the call went to answering machine as experience suggested that ringing a number again would be more successful.

Table 7. Contact results for students

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
Interview completed				
Yes	361	10	219	15
No	3430	90	1202	85
Interview not completed				
Refusals	273	7	133	9
Appointments	15	<1	7	<1
Other contact	377	10	138	10
Non-contact	2466	65	810	57
Unusable sample*	299	8	114	8
Total	3791	100	1421	100

Notes: *Student contact was classified as unusable sample if the telephone numbers listed had incoming call restrictions, were disconnected or for a fax, or not residential. Unusable sample also includes named person not known.

This meant that contact⁷ was made with 1026 leavers and 497 stayers leading to 361 (35%) and 219 (44%) interviews respectively.

Refusals and other contacts

Table 8 shows more information regarding refusal reasons and where contacts did not lead to completed interviews (=“other contacts”) for stayers and leavers. For both groups, the most common refusal reason was by parent or caregiver at either the introduction or survey explanation. This meant that no direct (former) student contact information could be obtained. Some (former) students were away for the duration of the interview period and some parents or caregivers were too old, or frail, or in ill-health to take the call.

Table 8. Reasons for refusal and other contacts

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
Refusals				
Refusal	22	8	8	6
Email refusal	19	7	3	2
Parent/Caregiver refusal	132	48	87	65
Respondent refusal after introduction	70	26	16	12
Refusal at confidentiality spiel	8	3	1	1
Remove number from list	5	2	4	3
Midway termination	17	6	14	11
Total	273	100	133	100
Other contact				
Claims to have done survey	3	1	1	1
Away for duration	94	25	25	18
Too old/frail/ill-health	25	7	14	10
Unreliable	5	1	2	1

⁷ Contact is defined as interview completed, refusal, appointment, “other contact” or “other”. That is, it excludes non-contact and unusable sample.

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
Language Other Than English	16	4	8	6
Stayer – not at Government school	0	0	21	15
Stayer – not in Year 12, Year 13, or FLO	0	0	54	39
Leaver – not at Government school	7	2	5	4
Leaver – not at school last year	69	18	7	5
Leaver – at school in March 2020	93	25	1	1
Completed SACE	65	17	0	0
Total	377	100	138	100

For the leavers, 45% of the “other contacts” were out of scope as they

- did not attend a Government school last year
- did not attend school in 2019, or
- were still attending school in March 2020.

Another 65 students (17% of “other contacts” for the leavers) stated that they had completed SACE.

For the stayers, 54% of the “other contacts” were out of scope as they

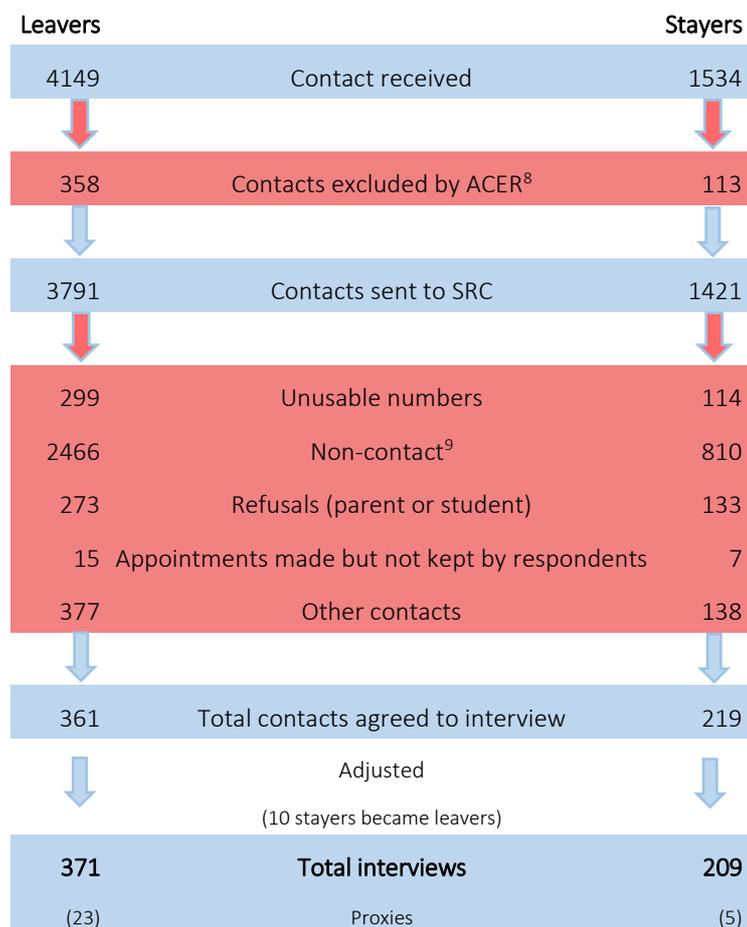
- did not attend a Government school, or
- were not in a year group of interest.

Another ten percent (total) of other contact for the stayers were reclassified as leavers but were still out of scope for the interviews for undocumented reasons (for example, did not attend Government school or school at all in 2019).

Refusal reasons given by parents or caregivers in the leaver group ranged from “*bad school experience*” to “*parent has no contact with child so cannot provide contact details*”. Refusal reasons given by leaver students were mostly health or disability related such as “*autistic*” or “*mental illness*”. One leaver student simply said, “*I don’t like learning*”.

Refusal reasons given by parents or caregivers in the stayer group ranged from “*bad school experience, done with it*” to “*asked son and he said no*”.

A summary overview of the development of numbers from the when the sampling frame was received from the DfE to the final sample of respondents for both stayers and leavers is given below.



Achieved sample characteristics

The following tables show how the achieved samples for leavers (Table 9) and stayers (Table 10) compare with the students in the sampling frame, by school socioeconomic status (using ICSEA as a guide) and location. The stayer sample has an additional comparison by whether SACE subject records were available for a student. Each of the tables compares the percentages of responses in each category to the percentages of students in the sampling frame in each category. There are some small discrepancies between the sampling frame and the achieved sample. There is some underrepresentation of students who attend or attended schools in the low ICSEA group and in remote areas. This is often found when running surveys where respondents from higher socio-economic status groups and metropolitan areas tend to be more likely to respond. None of the discrepancies are statistically significant differences.

⁸ Main reasons for exclusion involved no valid contact information and student's literacy level at F-Year2.

⁹ Non-contact included calls that were not answered, that went to answering machine or were engaged. This is in addition to pre-survey email and SMS and up to six attempts to call the number during the contact period

Table 9. Comparison of students in the achieved sample and the sampling frames: leavers

	Achieved sample		Sampling frame	
	N	%	N	%
Geographical Location				
Metropolitan	220	61	2479	65
Regional	129	36	1174	31
Remote	12	3	138	4
Socio-economic status based on ICSEA*				
Low (Below 950)	87	24	1111	29
Medium (950-1000)	188	52	1677	44
High (Above 1000)	86	24	1003	27
Total	361	100	3791	100

Note: *Nationally, ICSEA has an average of 1000.

Table 10. Comparison of students in the achieved sample and the sampling frames: stayers

	Achieved sample		Sampling frame	
	N	%	N	%
SACE completion information				
No information provided	110	50	625	44
SACE information provided	109	50	796	56
Geographical Location				
Metropolitan	172	79	1101	78
Regional	47	22	292	21
Remote	0	0	28	2
Socio-economic status based on ICSEA*				
Low (Below 950)	57	26	422	30
Medium (950-1000)	71	32	485	34
High (Above 1000)	91	42	514	36
Total	219	100	1421	100

Note: *Nationally, ICSEA has an average of 1000.

Table 11 shows the student characteristics in the achieved samples based on the sampling frame information. For the stayer group, there were slightly more males than females in the sampling frame (51% and 49% respectively) (Table 3), but in the achieved sample there were fewer males than females (47% and 53% respectively). For the leaver group, the difference between the sampling frame and the achieved sample is minimal (e.g. male leavers comprise 60% of the sampling frame and 59% of the achieved sample).

Table 11. Summary of student characteristics in the achieved samples

	Leavers		Stayers	
	N	%	N	%
Disability support*				
Yes	56	16	27	12
No	305	85	192	88
Student identified to be of Aboriginal origin				
Yes	22	6	17	8
No	339	94	202	92
Gender				
Female	147	41	116	53
Male	214	59	103	47
Census year level				
Year 10	15	4	-	-
Year 11	141	39	0	0
Year 12	198	55	212	97
Year 12 plus	3	1	4	2
Special class in non-special schools	3	1	1	<1
Special school or unit	1	<1	2	1
Literacy level if below expected				
Year 3 – Year 6	18	5	8	4
Year 7 – Year 10	10	3	1	<1
Not applicable	333	92	210	96
Reason for leaving school				
Attending university in SA	5	1	-	-
Exemption	1	<1	-	-
Parenting	2	1	-	-
Paid employment in SA	88	24	-	-
Attending private training institution in SA	9	3	-	-
Seeking employment in SA	89	25	-	-
Transferred to SA Government school	15	4	-	-
Attending Vocational Education in SA	29	8	-	-
Unknown	123	34	-	-
Total	361	100	219	100

Note: *Students classified as ever being in a special school unit or class, or receiving supplementary, substantial or extensive support were categorised as yes.

Reclassification of some stayers

Screening questions at the start of the CATI interview were used to identify out of scope respondents. This information provides useful insights for administrative and reporting purposes around non-completion of SACE. Information from the screening questions was presented in Table 8.

From the screening questions, ten students were reclassified as early school leavers for the purposes of interviewing and data analysis during the screening stage. This was because they stated that they had left a government school in South Australia before March 2020.

Therefore, all results presented in the following section refer to the reclassified variable. Based on this variable, **there are completed interviews with 371 leavers and 209 stayers.**

Data analyses

In the main, analyses undertaken for this report involved frequency analyses of responses first in absolute number and second in percentages. In addition, crosstabulations are undertaken to obtain an indication of the significance of findings.

In order to shed light on some of the data validation aspects of the project, information obtained from participants is compared against administrative records.

In addition, analyses were undertaken to reveal potential patterns underlying responses by leavers and stayers to a number of questions which were central to the project. One analytical technique to classify individuals based on their responses to survey data is latent class analysis (LCA). LCA is a special case of finite mixture modelling in which the latent classes explain the relationships among the observed dependent variables – in other words the actual responses to survey questions (Muthén & Muthén, 2005).

Focus of LCAs

The focus of the current study was to understand the experiences of students who have left school or are at risk of leaving and possible ways in which they might be encouraged to stay at school. Hence, the questions in section D of the questionnaire regarding school experiences and factors helping to stay at school were subjected to a number of LCAs to explore response patterns underlying:

1. Leavers' school experiences (D2a-l)
2. Stayers' school experiences (D2a-j)
3. Factors which helped both stayers and leavers to stay at school as long as they did (D401-D410)
4. Potential factors which could have helped leavers to stay at school (D6a-p)

Steps in LCAs

Each LCA consisted of six steps. First, the "don't know" and "refusal" responses were set to missing. Second, a data file was created which could be used in *Mplus* (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2005). To read in and subject the data to an LCA, an *Mplus* input file was created as the third step. The first LCA always specified a two-class model, increasing the number of classes by one in each subsequent analysis until the model was found not to be significant anymore, indicating that no more significant differences in the underlying response patterns remained (Lo, Mendell & Rubin, 2001; Vuong, 1989). In the fourth step, the probabilities of the respondents in each class "strongly agreeing" and "agreeing" with each item in the particular analysis were plotted to interpret the classes and assign labels to each class. As the fifth step, the class allocation – in other words which respondent was allocated to which class – was exported and merged back onto the main data file with all other answers respondents had given. In the sixth and final step, cross-tabulations and associated significance tests were undertaken between the classes and a number of demographic variables to explore whether or not classes differed in terms of:

...whether respondents

- were male or female
- lived in metropolitan Adelaide or elsewhere

...and whether or not respondents

- had a disability
- had ever been a FLO student
- were an international student
- had ever had a school card
- identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders

Further technical details of the LCAs undertaken for this report are provided in [Appendix H](#) using the LCA of leavers' responses to statements regarding their school experiences (D2a-l) as an example.

4. RESULTS

Results are presented by theme. To set the context, the sociodemographic and school enrolment characteristics of early school leavers and “at risk” stayers are provided. Next, a broad overview of young people’s perspectives on the influences on their decision-making processes – the reasons young people give for leaving school and the factors helping them stay – is presented. Attention then turns to more specific themes: young people’s attitudes regarding school; school subjects including VET in school; how young people navigate earning and learning pathways; and indicators of success including what matters to young people.

Throughout this section, “leaver” refers to young people who left school before the completion of Year 12 and SACE, while “stayer” refers to current Year 12/13 students which the DfE considers to be at risk of not completing Year 12 and SACE. Consequently, it must be emphasised that the results pertaining to the “stayer” group are not generalizable to all current Year 12 students.

All results are disaggregated by school leaver status (leaver/stayer). For selected key indicators, further breakdowns are provided by gender, socioeconomic status, disability support, FLO status, and whether participated in VET in school in the “Further analysis” section.

Socio-demographic and enrolment characteristics of leaver and stayer groups

Sociodemographic characteristics

The sociodemographic characteristics of the leaver and stayer groups are reported in Table 12¹⁰. Compared with “at risk” stayers, leavers are more likely to be older, male, from a non-metropolitan area, from schools with a medium ICSEA score (group 2), from areas of higher relative disadvantage, and to have held a school card. There are no statistically significant differences between leavers and stayers in terms of whether they received disability support while at school.

¹⁰ The characteristics of the sample reported in Table 11 in the previous section are based upon the classification of sample members in the sample information provided by DfE. Based upon screening questions administered to respondents at the start of interviews, a small number of respondents from the DfE stayer group were reclassified as leavers for survey administration and analytical purposes. The results reported in Table 12 are based upon the latter classification and will therefore differ from the results reported in Table 11.

Table 12. Socio-demographic characteristics

	N			%		
	Leavers	Stayers	All	Leavers	Stayers	All
Age***						
Less than 18	125	161	286	33.7	77.0	49.3
18 and above	246	48	294	66.3	23.0	50.7
Gender**						
Female	150	113	263	40.4	54.1	45.3
Male	221	96	317	59.6	45.9	54.7
Disability support (severe disability)^a						
Yes ^a	58	25	83	15.6	12.0	14.3
No	313	184	497	84.4	88.0	85.7
Disability support^b						
Yes ^b	68	29	97	18.3	13.9	16.7
No	303	180	483	81.7	86.1	83.3
Location^{c***}						
Metropolitan	230	162	392	62.0	77.5	67.6
Regional	129	47	176	34.8	22.5	30.3
Remote	12	0	12	3.2	0.0	2.1
ICSEA***						
Low (Below 950)	87	57	144	23.5	27.3	24.8
Medium (950-1000)	193	66	259	52.0	31.6	44.7
High (Above 1000)	91	86	177	24.5	41.2	30.5
SEIFA quintiles (within state)^{d***}						
1 (most disadvantaged)	130	57	187	35.4	27.7	32.6
2	80	28	108	21.8	13.6	18.9
3	26	9	35	7.1	4.4	6.1
4	69	30	99	18.8	14.6	17.3
5 (least disadvantaged)	62	82	144	16.9	39.8	25.1
School card **						
0	144	109	253	38.8	52.2	43.6
1	227	100	327	61.2	47.9	56.4

Note: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Includes the following types of disability support: extensive, substantial, supplementary and special school unit or class. Excludes disability support met with existing resources and other disability support (not funded).

b. Includes all types of disability support including extensive, substantial, supplementary and special school unit or class, disability support met with existing resources and other disability support (not funded).

c. Based upon school location.

d. Seven respondents were not assigned a SEIFA score.

Source: Data on student characteristics were provided by DfE.

Sample: Leavers and stayers who participated in the study, including proxy respondents.

School enrolment characteristics

The school enrolment characteristics of leavers (when they last attended school) and stayers (in March 2020) are reported in Table 13. A small proportion of leavers left school when they were in Year 10, while the majority of leavers left school when they were in Year 11 or Year 12. The majority of stayers were in Year 12, with a small proportion in Year 13. Around 22% of leavers and 28% of stayers were identified as FLO students by the DfE; this difference was not statistically significant.

Among stayers, 59% were studying full-time, 12% were studying part-time, and the remainder were FLO students or did not know their study load. One-third of stayers had a part-time job in early March.

Just under one in ten leavers reported that they were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course in early March as part of SACE, suggesting their understanding is that they are still be on a SACE pathway.

Table 13. School enrolment characteristics

	N		%	
	Leavers	Stayers	Leavers	Stayers
Year level^{a***}				
Year 10	19	n/a	5.1	n/a
Year 11	133	n/a	35.9	n/a
Year 12	197	197	53.1	94.3
Year 13	3	5	0.8	2.4
Year level not supplied	19	7	5.1	3.4
FLO student^b				
Yes	82	59	22.1	28.2
No	289	150	77.9	71.8
Enrolment status^c				
Full-time	n/a	123	n/a	58.9
Part-time	n/a	24	n/a	11.5
FLO student	n/a	60	n/a	28.7
Don't know	n/a	2	n/a	1.0
Doing an apprenticeship, traineeship, or VET course in early March as part of SACE^{d***}				
Yes	35	63	9.4	30.1
No	320	141	86.3	67.5
Don't know	16	5	4.3	2.4
Had a job while at school (early March)^e				
No job	n/a	138	n/a	66.7
Yes, worked 1-5 hours/week	n/a	10	n/a	4.8
Yes, worked 6-10 hours/week	n/a	27	n/a	13.0
Yes, worked > 10 hours/week	n/a	32	n/a	15.5

Notes: *** p<0.001

- Source: Questions A8 and A16. A small number of respondents indicated FLO, other or don't know when asked their year level. Note that results are based upon questionnaire data, rather than the administrative data reported in Table 11. Sample: Leavers and stayers.
- Source: Sample information provided by DfE. Sample: leavers and stayers.
- Source: Question F1. Students identified by DfE as FLO students were not asked whether they were studying full-time or part-time. One additional respondent could not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time but instead indicated they were a FLO student. Sample: Stayers.
- Source: Question C4. Sample: Leavers and stayers.
- Source: Questions F23 and F24. Sample: Stayers.

Reasons young people give for leaving school

Highlights

Young people give a wide variety of reasons for leaving school and/or not completing SACE, ranging from “pull” factors relating to post-school opportunities to “push” factors relating to schools and school-work, student well-being and other personal and family reasons.

The most common “main reasons” for leaving school identified by leavers include:

- Having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to (10%) or wanting to get one (9%)
- Not liking school (10%) or not thinking school was useful (9%)
- Mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons (13%).

The most common “main reasons” identified by stayers who did not plan to stay at school or complete SACE included:

- Not thinking school was useful (18%)
- Mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons (16%)
- FLO reasons (taking longer to complete Year 12) (13%)
- Results not being good enough (11%)
- Wanting to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (9%).

The majority of stayers indicated that nothing in particular would make staying at school until the end of the year and completing SACE difficult for them (78%). However, among the stayers who identified potential difficulties, three common challenges emerged:

- Personal/family challenges
- Mental health challenges
- Difficulties with school work.

Reasons given by leavers:

The majority of leavers made the decision to leave school when they were in senior secondary school. Thirty-five percent of leavers decided in Year 11 and a further 49% decided in Year 12 (Table 14).

Table 14. Year level when made the decision to leave school

	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer ^a	Leaver	Stayer
Year 8 or below	4	0	1.1	0.0
Year 9	9	0	2.4	0.0
Year 10	32	4	8.6	25.0
Year 11	128	6	34.5	37.5
Year 12	183	5	49.3	31.3
Other/DK/Refused	15	1	4.1	6.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: Source: Question C5.

Sample: Leavers (all) and stayers who did not plan to stay at school.

Leavers gave a wide variety of reasons for leaving school and/or not completing SACE¹¹. These ranged from the “pull” factors of post-school opportunities to “push” factors relating to schools and school work, student well-being, and other personal and family reasons. Leavers who nominated multiple reasons were also asked to indicate their main reason for leaving. The results are presented in Table 15 (*n*) and Table 16 (%).

Focusing on the main reason for leaving:

- *Post-school employment, education or training*: Having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to, or wanting to get one, were among the top main reasons for leaving school (10% and 9% respectively). Far less common were wanting to do study or training that wasn't available at school (3%), continuing to study elsewhere (2%), or financial reasons (<1%).
- *School and school work*: Not liking school and not thinking school was useful were also among the top main reasons for leaving school (10% and 9% respectively). Less prominent were issues relating to school, for example, school being too hard (5%), the school suggesting they leave (5%), difficulties with teachers and peers (4%), and poor results (2%).
- *Student well-being*: Mental health or other health/illness/disability reasons were the main reasons for leaving school for 13% of leavers, with mental health being more commonly cited than other health reasons. Less commonly cited student well-being issues included school being too stressful (3%), and bullying or feeling unsafe at school (2%).
- *Personal and family reasons*: Relatively few leavers indicated that various other personal and family reasons were their main reason for leaving school early (5%).
- 12% of leavers indicated that they had finished school but did not get a SACE certificate, and did not provide any further reasons.

The main reasons for leaving given by various sociodemographic groups are reported in the section on ‘Further analysis’.

Reasons given by stayers:

In early March, very few of the stayer sample were planning to leave school (*n*=16). Of those who did plan to leave, the majority had made the decision in Year 11 (38%) or Year 12 (31%) (Table 14).

Stayers who planned to leave school before the end of the year or did not plan to complete SACE were asked to indicate their reasons for leaving, including their main reason (Table 15 & Table 16). The most common main reasons included:

- Not thinking school was useful (18%)
- Mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons (16%)
- FLO reasons – taking longer to do Year 12) (13%)

¹¹ An open-ended question was used to ask students and former students about reasons for leaving school. Interviewers could select from a list of pre-codes or type the verbatim response, which was subsequently coded by the research team. Respondents who provided more than one reason were also asked to indicate their main reason for leaving.

- Results not being good enough (11%)
- Wanting to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (9%).

These results should be treated with caution as relatively few stayers planned to leave before the end of the year and/or complete SACE (n=45).

Table 15. Reasons for leaving school (n)

	Reasons		Main reason	
	Leaver (n=371)	Stayer (n=45)	Leaver (n=371)	Stayer (n=45)
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	44	0	44	0
FLO reasons - taking longer to do Year 12	0	6	0	6
Leaving for interstate/overseas	1	1	1	1
Post-school employment, education and training				
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	43	1	37	1
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	42	4	35	4
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	12	2	10	2
Continued studying somewhere else	9	1	6	1
Financial reasons	3	0	1	0
School and school work				
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	55	2	36	1
Didn't think school was useful	47	9	34	8
School was too hard/difficult	27	3	17	3
The school suggested that they leave	22	0	17	0
Difficulties with teachers or peers	22	0	15	0
Results at school were not good enough	12	6	8	5
Student well-being				
Mental health	44	3	32	3
Other health/illness/disability reasons	21	4	15	4
School was too stressful	25	2	12	2
Bullying/felt unsafe at school	13	0	9	0
Personal/family issues (no further information)	12	0	10	0
They or partner were expecting a child/parenting own child	5	0	4	0
Left to take care of someone in family (excluding own child)	4	0	4	0
Personal and family reasons				
Travel time/too far to travel	2	0	2	0
Had completed enough for own purposes	3	0	2	0
Other (Unclear)	12	3	11	3
Don't know	3	1	8	1
Refused	1	0	1	0

Notes: Leavers: Reasons left school. Stayers: Reasons planned to leave school (if applicable)

Source: Question C7 and variable derived from Questions C7 and C8.

Sample: Leavers (all) and stayers who indicated they did not plan to stay at school until the end of the year/Year 12 and/or did not plan to complete SACE. 14 respondents who gave multiple reasons for leaving were not asked to indicate their main reason for leaving.

Table 16. Reasons for leaving school (%)

	Reasons ^a		Main reason	
	Leaver (n=371)	Stayer (n=45)	Leaver (n=371)	Stayer (n=45)
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	11.9	0.0	11.9	0.0
FLO reasons - taking longer to do Year 12	0.0	13.3	0.0	13.3
Leaving for interstate/overseas	0.3	2.2	0.3	2.2
Post-school employment, education and training				
Had a job or apprenticeship to go to	11.6	2.2	10.0	2.2
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	11.3	8.9	9.4	8.9
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	3.2	4.4	2.7	4.4
Continued studying somewhere else	2.4	2.2	1.6	2.2
Financial reasons	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.0
School and school work				
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	14.8	4.4	9.7	2.2
Didn't think school was useful	12.7	20.0	9.2	17.8
School was too hard/difficult	7.3	6.7	4.6	6.7
The school suggested that they leave	5.9	0.0	4.6	0.0
Difficulties with teachers or peers	5.9	0.0	4.0	0.0
Results at school were not good enough	3.2	13.3	2.2	11.1
Student well-being				
Mental health	11.9	6.7	8.6	6.7
Other health/illness/disability reasons	5.7	8.9	4.0	8.9
School was too stressful	6.7	4.4	3.2	4.4
Bullying/felt unsafe at school	3.5	0.0	2.4	0.0
Personal and family reasons				
Personal/family issues (no further information)	3.2	0.0	2.7	0.0
They or partner were expecting a child/parenting own child	1.4	0.0	1.1	0.0
Left to take care of someone in family (excluding own child)	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.0
Other reasons				
Travel time/too far to travel	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0
Had completed enough for own purposes	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.0
Other (Unclear)	3.2	6.7	3.0	6.7
Don't know	0.8	2.2	2.2	2.2
Refused	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0

Notes: a. Leavers were asked why they left school last year. Stayers were asked why, back in early March, they did not plan to complete Year 12/SACE this year or stay at school until the end of the year (if applicable).

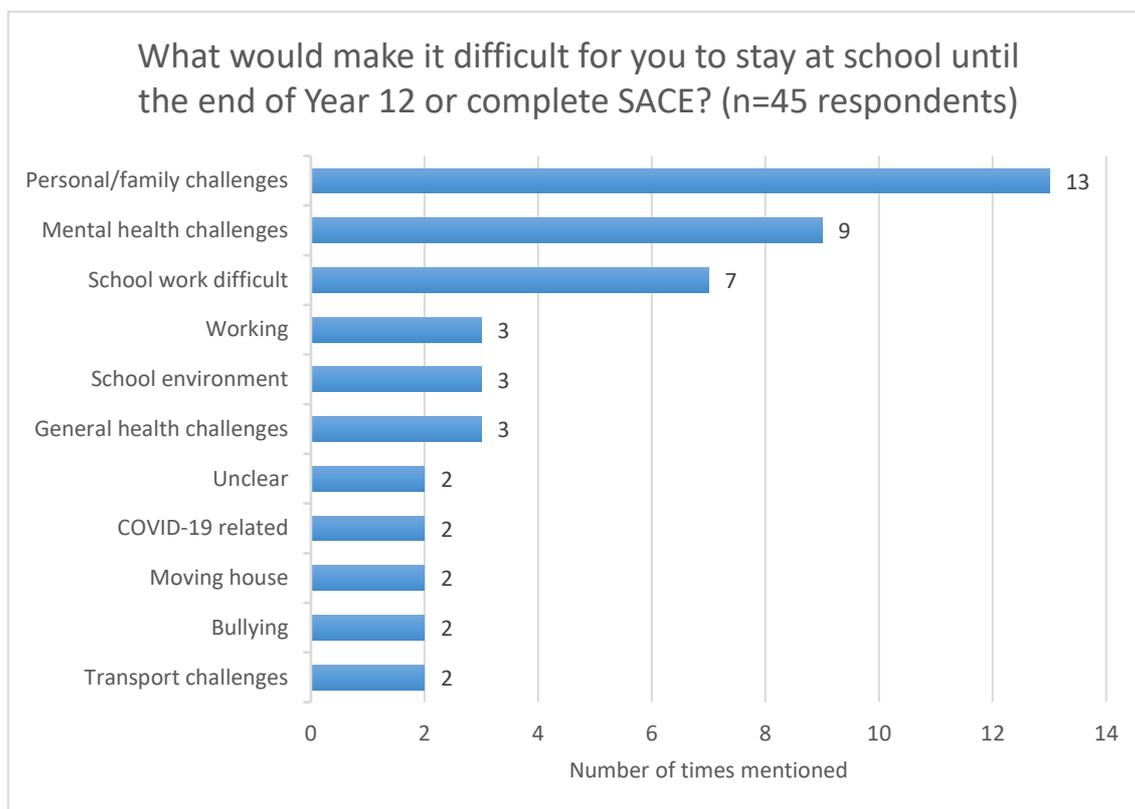
Source: Question C7 and variable derived from Questions C7 and C8.

Sample: Leavers (all) and stayers who indicated they did not plan to stay at school until the end of the year/Year 12 and/or did not plan to complete SACE. 14 respondents who gave multiple reasons for leaving were not asked to indicate their main reason for leaving and are excluded from the "Main reason" results.

Factors that may make it difficult for stayers to remain at school

All stayers (n=209) were asked whether there was anything that may make it difficult for them to stay at school until the end of the year. A clear majority of stayers (74%) indicated that nothing in particular would make staying at school difficult. This increased to 78% when considering the response of "nothing" to a follow up question which requested respondents to specify their difficulties.

The remaining 45 stayers (22%) provided some indication of what they thought may make it difficult for them to stay at school until the end of Year 12 or SACE. Three common challenges arose, namely, personal/family challenges, mental health challenges, and difficulties with school work (Figure 3).



Notes: Source: Question C6.

Sample: Stayers who reported factors that may make it difficult for them to stay at school

Figure 3. What would make it difficult for you to stay at school until the end of Year 12 or SACE? (n=45 respondents with 48 responses)

Personal/family challenges were reflected in comments such as, “It was just stressful with family and stuff”, or, “I have missed a lot of school in previous years”. Comments such as, “I dealt with a lot of mental health issues”, or, “I struggled with speaking to people, anxiety and doing work” signalled mental health issues. School work difficulties were illustrated by comments such as, “I had a bit of trouble with the Research Project”, or, “I didn’t complete semester one English and Maths and had subjects owing”.

For this question, respondents had been encouraged to think about how they were feeling before the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect their life, however, two respondents still focused on this reason as a difficulty.

Factors helping young people to stay at school

Highlights

Factors that helped young people stay at school as long as they did

Significant others such as friends, parents and teachers were among the most common factors that young people felt helped them to stay at school as long as they did (leavers) or up until March 2020 (stayers).

Stayers also commonly reported future prospects, interests and motivations as factors helping them to stay at school. These factors were less commonly reported by leavers.

Stayers and leavers (n=580) could be allocated to five groups depending on the factors they had found helpful for staying at school as long as they had (Figure 4). These were those who found their teachers nice and had friends' encouragement (55%), those who had family encouragement (16%), the instrumentalists (15%), those socialising with friends (12%), and the school learners (1%).

Factors that may have helped leavers not to leave school

Leavers were asked whether a range of factors related to school may have influenced them not to leave school. More than one-half of leavers felt that the following factors may have helped: more flexible hours or part-time options; better mentoring from teachers; more help with learning problems; a wider range of subjects; better teachers; being allowed to return to school at a later stage; better courses; and more or better counselling.

Four profiles of leavers emerged (Figure 6) given the factors they thought might have helped them to stay at school, namely those who would have liked "more of everything" (39%), "greater flexibility" (35%), "nothing" (14%) and "better learning support" (12%). Interestingly, these groups of factors aligned well with the factors stayers mentioned when asked about what might help them to complete SACE/Year 12.

Factors that may help young people complete Year 12 and SACE

Stayers were asked what would help them to complete Year 12 and SACE. The most common responses included: more personal or attitudinal support; opportunities for extra tutoring at school; and an awareness of their own role in attending school and focusing on their work.

Factors that helped young people stay at school as long as they did

An open-ended question was used to collect information on factors that helped young people stay at school as long as they did (leavers) or up until early March (stayers). Interviewers could record respondents' answers by selecting from a set of pre-coded options or typing the verbatim response which was subsequently coded by the research team. Table 17 shows the factors reported by respondents, grouped into five themes: the role of significant others; future prospects; positive aspects of school; interests and motivations; and other factors.

For both leavers and stayers, significant others such as friends, parents, and teachers were among the most commonly cited factors that young people felt helped them to stay at school. For

example, 25% of respondents reported that their friends encouraged them, 21-22% reported that they got along well with their class mates, 20%-23% reported that parents / family encouraged them, and 20%-23% reported that their teachers were nice.

Stayers also commonly reported future prospects, interests and motivations – such as thinking school was useful to their future (20%), needing to finish school to do the course or apprenticeship they wanted (14%), liking school / finding it interesting (9%), and liking studying (8%). Each of those reasons was less commonly reported by leavers.

Both leavers and stayers reported that the extra things or lessons they could do helped them to stay at school (8%-10%). A range of other less commonly cited factors are also included in Table 17.

Table 17. Factors that helped young people to stay at school

	N		%	
	Leaver (n=370)	Stayer (n=208)	Leaver (n=370)	Stayer (n=208)
The role of significant others				
+My friends encouraged me	94	52	25.4	25.0
+I got along well with my class mates / friends	80	44	21.6	21.2
+My parents / family encouraged me	74	48	20.0	23.1
+My teachers were nice	86	42	23.2	20.2
+The staff at school treated me well**	38	8	10.3	3.9
Case manager, counsellor or youth worker	11	6	3.0	2.9
Future prospects				
+I thought school was useful to my future**	39	41	10.5	19.7
+I needed to finish school to do the course / apprenticeship I want***	12	28	3.2	13.5
Positive aspects of school				
+The extra things / lessons I could do	36	16	9.7	7.7
Tutoring / extra help afforded	8	4	2.2	1.9
Flexibility in subject choice or delivery	6	1	1.6	0.5
Safety at school / good school environment	5	3	1.4	1.4
Convenient location	2	1	0.5	0.5
Interests and motivations				
+I liked school/found it interesting*	15	18	4.1	8.7
+I liked studying***	6	17	1.6	8.2
Personal motivation	9	10	2.4	4.8
I wanted to finish	8	4	2.2	1.9
Other factors				
Couldn't leave (too young) / no other choice*	16	1	4.3	0.5
Unsure what to do otherwise	7	3	1.9	1.4
Other	4	1	1.1	0.5
Don't know	19	14	5.1	6.7

Notes: * p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could report more than one factor.

Source: Question D4

Sample: Leavers and stayers. Two respondents refused to answer this question and are excluded from this table.

+Factors in the latent class analysis.

Responses by both stayers and leavers (n=552) to those ten factors which had been pre-coded (indicated by+ in Table 17) were subjected to the LCA.

To describe the five classes identified in the LCA, respondents' probability to respond in the affirmative was plotted (see Figure 4).

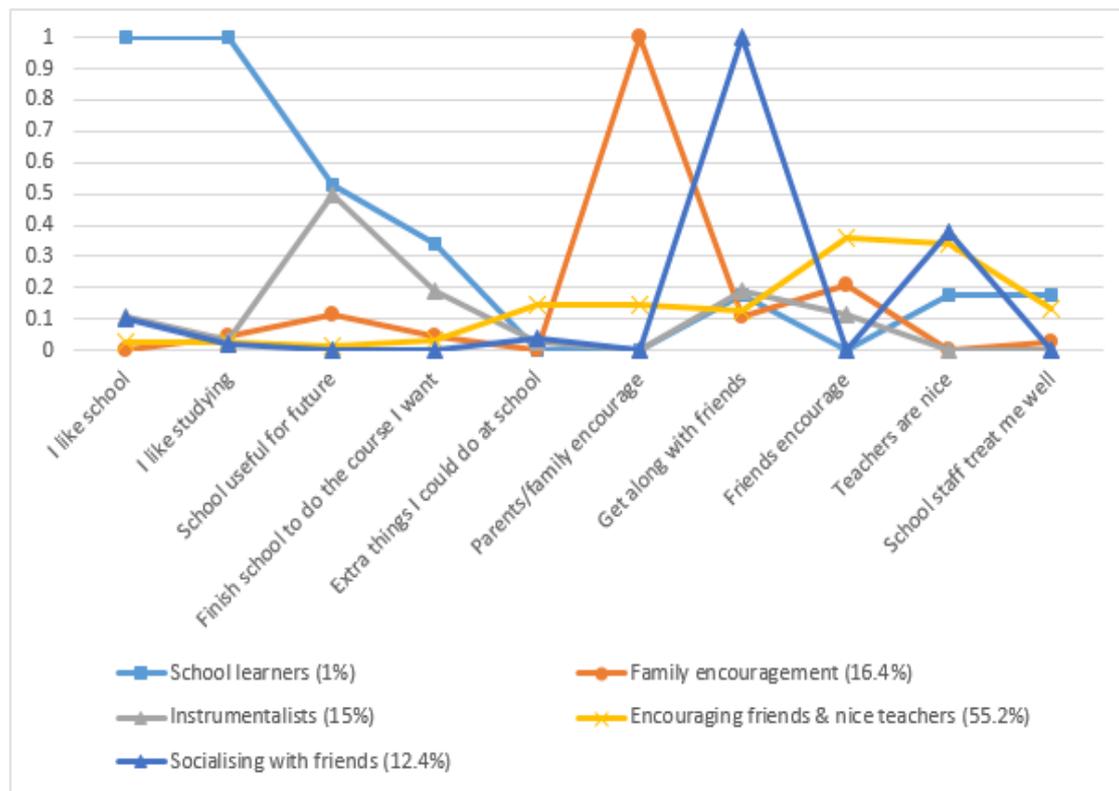
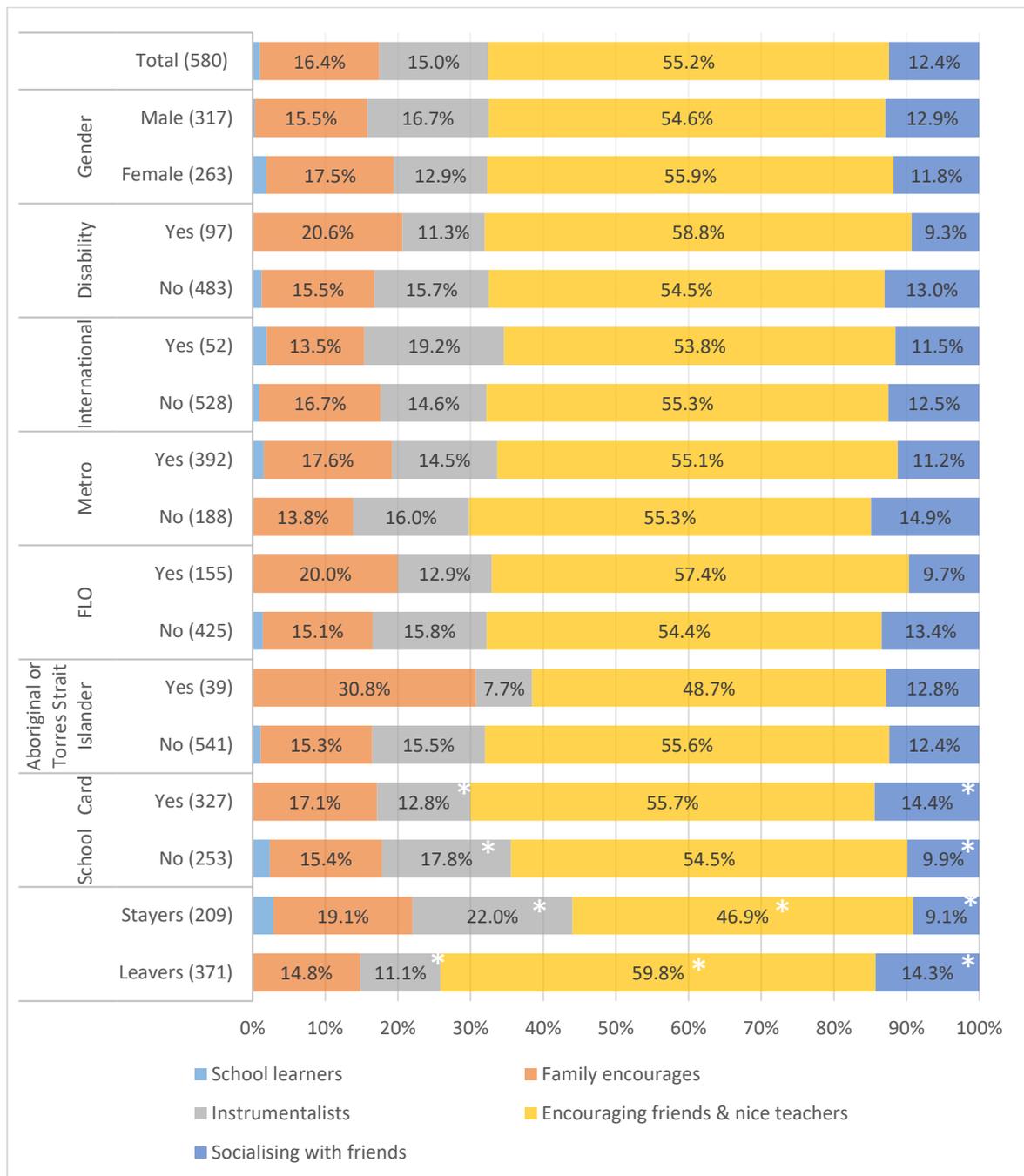


Figure 4. Probabilities of stayers and leavers in five classes responding “yes” to various factors having helped them to stay at school (n=580; complete sample, including proxies)

The “peaks” in Figure 4 which indicated that respondents in this class had a 100 percent likelihood to saying that this factor helped them staying at school enable an easy interpretation of the classes. Thus, the light blue line indicates respondents who liked school and studying and were therefore labelled “school learners”. The orange line’s peak indicates respondents who had a 100 percent likelihood of parents or family encouraging them to stay at school. Hence, this class is labelled “Family encouragement”. The dark blue line’s peak are respondents agreeing that getting along well with their class mates or friends helped them to stay at school which was thought to be reflected by the label “Socialising with friends”. Responses illustrated by the grey line have a low probability of finding any of the factors helpful, except for seeing school as useful for the future or doing the course or apprenticeship they want, considered to be captured by the term “Instrumentalists”. Finally, the group of respondents illustrated by the yellow line – while also relatively low on finding anything helpful – show a relatively higher likelihood of finding encouraging friends and nice teachers helpful, which is the label assigned to this class.

The top row in Figure 5 illustrates the proportions of the five classes of responses by both stayers and leavers to questions about factors helping students to remain at school. Comprising more than half of all respondents, the largest class (55%) contains those whose friends encourage them to stay at school and who find their teachers nice. The next three classes are relatively similar in size, with one class being characterised mainly by encouraging parents and family (16%), one by those who see the need to finish school to do what they want in terms of further training or study (=“Instrumentalists”, 15%) and one class for whom getting along well with their friends is helping or has helped them to stay at school (12%). One very small class, containing only one percent of all stayers and leavers, agree or strongly agree that they like school and studying.



Notes: *This proportion is significantly different to the proportion in the total stayer sample ($p < 0.05$ in Likelihood Ratio Chi Square Test). a = Some absolute numbers in these groups are lower than 5. Hence, nothing can be said regarding the significance of differences.

Figure 5. Demographics in the five latent classes of factors helping stayers and leavers remain at school (Question D401-D410 $n=580$; complete sample, including proxies)

The proportions for successive subgroups illustrated in Figure 5 show no significant differences for each of the five latent classes depending on gender, disability, international student status, whether former students lived in metropolitan Adelaide or elsewhere, whether they had ever been a FLO students or identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Differences did emerge, however, between respondents who were school card holders and those who had not ever had a school card as well as between stayers and leavers. Thus, respondents who had had a school

card at some stage were more likely to be at school to socialise with friends and less instrumentalist about being at school than respondents who never had a school card. The two main respondent groups differed significantly in terms of stayers being more likely to be instrumentalists than leavers, who, in turn, were more likely than stayers to agree that they had nice teachers and rate friends as being important for socialising and encouragement.

Factors that may have helped leavers not to leave school

Following the above open-ended question, leavers were read out a list of factors and asked to indicate which if any of these may have influenced them not to leave school; they could also specify other factors. The list focused on aspects of school, rather than the broader range of factors that young people raised in response to the previous open-ended question.

Table 18. Factors that may have influenced you not to leave school (leavers)

	N	%
+The school had more flexible hours or part-time options	234	63.2
+There was better mentoring from teachers	231	62.4
+There was more help with learning problems	225	60.8
+The school offered a wider range of other subjects in Years 11 and 12	210	56.9
+The teachers were better	208	56.4
+You were allowed to return to school at a later stage	197	53.2
+There were better courses	193	52.2
+There was more or better counselling	187	50.7
+There was more tutoring offered or available at school	177	47.8
+There was a wider range of VET subjects to choose from	169	45.7
+You had known how to access courses your school didn't offer	151	40.8
+There was vacation or catch-up	152	41.1
+There was more school-to-home communication	147	39.7
+There were evening classes	108	29.2
+The school was easier to get to	101	27.3
Other factors raised by respondents:		
Safer environment/social support	10	2.7
Better personal support	8	2.2
Mental health support	6	1.6
Life-after-school counselling and skills	4	1.1
Smaller classes / more teachers	3	0.8
More extra-curricular activities	3	0.8
Uniform issues	2	0.5
Online learning options	1	0.3
There was nothing that would have helped you stay at school	30	8.1

Notes: Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could report more than one factor.

Source: Question D6. Sample: Leavers. +Factors in the latent class analysis.

Table 18 shows that 8% of leavers indicated that nothing would have helped them stay at school. In contrast, more than one half of respondents felt that the following factors may have helped them stay at school: more flexible hours or part-time options (63%), better mentoring from teachers (62%), more help with learning problems (61%), a wider range of subjects (57%), better teachers (56%), being allowed to return to school at a later stage (53%), better courses (52%), and more or better counselling (51%). A range of less commonly endorsed factors are also listed in Table 18.

Figure 6 illustrates results of the LCA of the potentially helpful factors (those pre-coded and marked with “+” in Table 18) to profile patterns of responses. The group illustrated by the blue line captured those respondents who were likely to say “yes” to any of the potentially helpful factors. Hence, the label of “More of everything” was considered to capture this group well. The peaks of the red line indicated a very high likelihood of respondents in this group finding that better teacher with a greater mentoring capacity and more learning assistance would have helped them to stay at school. Therefore, “Better learning support” was thought to appropriately capture this group. The yellow line showed relative peaks indicating that respondents in this class might have found a wider range of Year 11 and Year 12 subjects and more flexible or part-time hours more helpful than other factors, resulting in the label “Greater flexibility” for this group. The group denoted by the grey line showed low probabilities of finding any of the suggested factors helpful, captured by the label that respondents in this class would have found “Nothing” helpful to stay on at school.

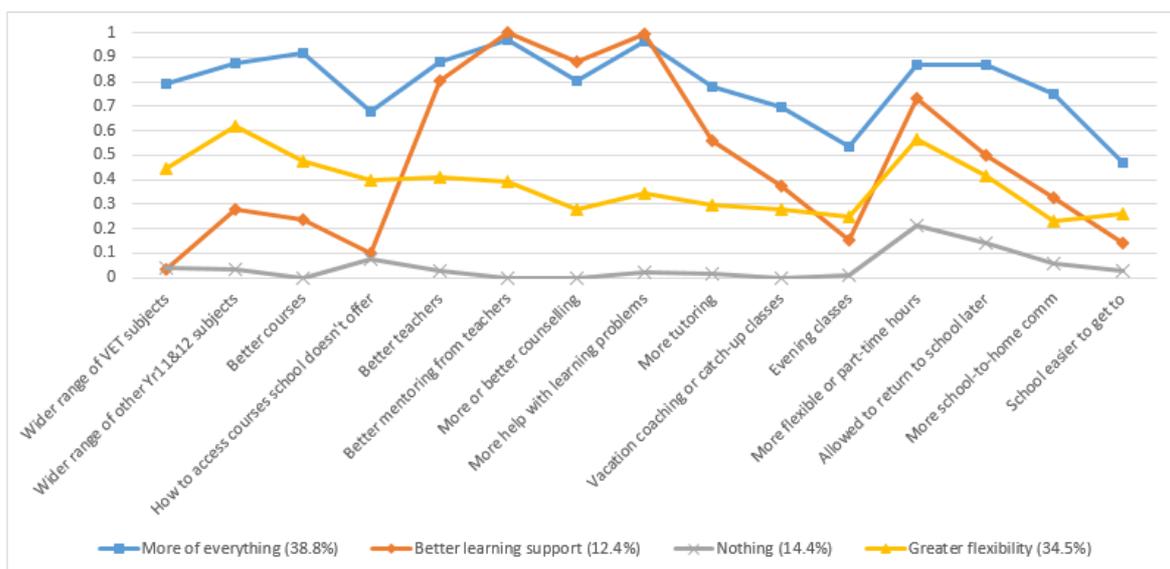
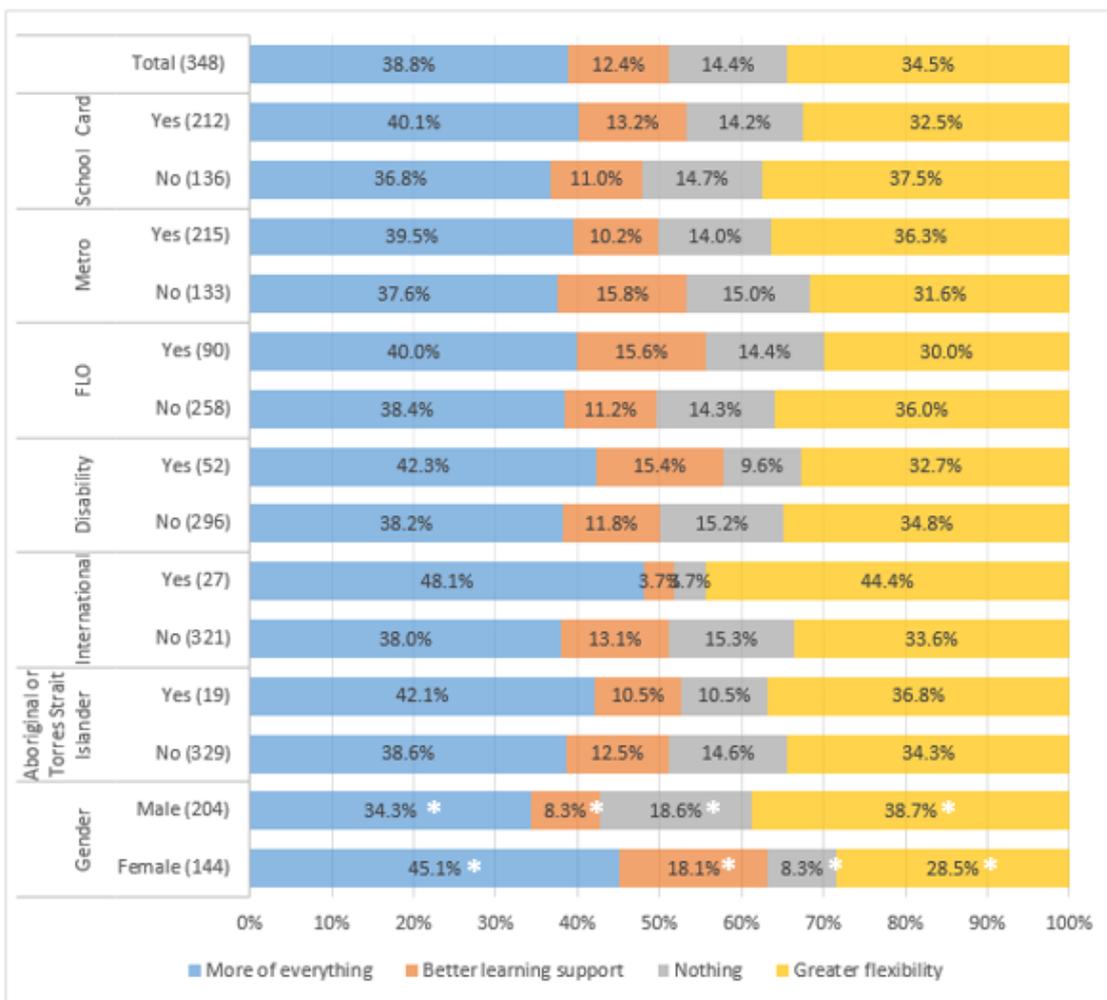


Figure 6. Probabilities of leavers in four classes responding “yes” to factors which might have helped them to stay at school (n=348; leavers only, without leaver proxies)

The top row in Figure 7 illustrates the proportions of the four classes of responses by leavers to questions about factors which could have helped students to remain at school. As can be seen the “More of everything” (39%) and the “Greater flexibility” (35%) captured the largest proportions with about one third of leavers each. The class of respondents whom “Nothing” would have helped (14%) and the class who indicated that “Better learning support” might have helped them to stay at school (12%) also captured similar proportions of leavers.



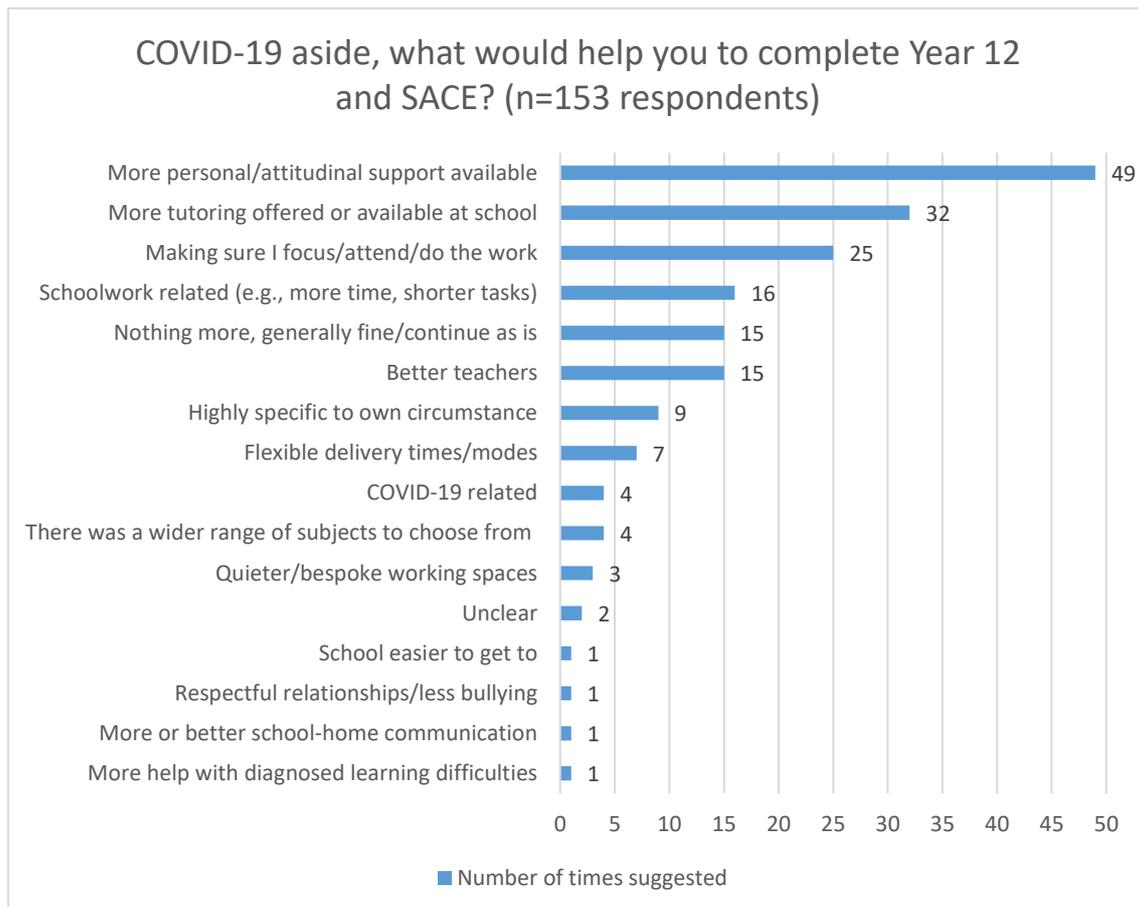
Notes: *This proportion is significantly different to the proportion in the total stayer sample ($p < 0.05$ in Likelihood Ratio Chi Square Test)
 a = Some absolute numbers in these groups are lower than 5. Hence, nothing can be said regarding the significance of differences.

Figure 7. Demographics in the four latent classes of potential factors which could have helped leavers remain at school (Question D6a-p)

The proportions for successive subgroups illustrated in Figure 7 show no significant differences for each of the four latent classes depending whether or not leavers ever had a school card, whether they lived in metropolitan Adelaide or elsewhere, whether they had ever been a FLO students or had a disability, international student status or whether they identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. However, gender differences did emerge with a greater proportion of male than female leavers expressing a desire for “Greater flexibility” or finding “Nothing” to be of help. In contrast, the proportion of female leavers compared to male leavers was larger in the classes who thought that “More of everything” and “Better learning support” might have helped them to stay at school.

Factors that may help stayers to complete Year 12 and SACE

Stayers were asked what would help them to complete Year 12 and SACE. This question was grouped with other items that were asking about factors that might be useful in helping keep students at school. Approximately three-quarters of stayers (n=153) provided suggestions regarding what would be useful in helping them complete Year 12 and/or SACE. Those who gave two suggestions as their response (n=32) were not asked which was their primary suggestion, therefore responses are aggregated in Figure 8.



Notes: Source: Question D5.

Sample: Stayers who provided suggestions regarding what would be useful in helping them to complete Year 12 and/or SACE.

Figure 8. Putting any problems due to COVID-19 to one side, what would help you to complete Year 12 and SACE?

Almost a third of responses (n=49) indicated that more personal or attitudinal support would be helpful. For example, “Being able to talk to teachers about school work, assignments and tests. Also being able to talk to friends and see how they are going in class, for support”, or, “Maybe more help from teachers, and more motivation for completing my work. Maybe more push from the school”.

Many respondents (n=32) were very specific about suggesting opportunities for extra tutoring to be available at school, for example, “Maybe more support. I think just help with assignments and that type of thing”, or,

“I think what would help me is tutoring and one-on-one with the teachers. We do have those events arranged at school but sometimes it’s difficult for the teachers to get around to everyone and there’s limited time. It would be good to have more people to ask or tutoring staff”.

There were also many respondents who showed a clear awareness of their own role in attending school and focusing on their work, and this was the third most-common response. For example, “Just focusing on my work and prioritising my school at the moment, instead of other things”, “If I keep my attendance up and keep doing the work, I will get there”, or, “It’s just up to me to complete it”.

It is interesting that the categories generated from these stayers’ responses to an open-ended question tend to mirror the classes emerging from leavers’ reactions to potentially helpful factors presented in the previous section. Thus, stayers’ mentioning of “more personal/attitudinal support” (n=49), “more tutoring” (n=32) and “better teachers” (n=15) finds its equivalent in the leavers’ class of “Better learning support”.

In addition, responses by a subgroup of both stayers and leavers indicate that there is nothing that could be done to help them to either complete school or to have stayed on at school. Stayers’ mentioning of “flexible delivery times/modes” (n=7) and “a wider range of subjects” (n=4) is captured by the leavers indicating that “greater flexibility” might have helped them to stay at school.

Two major categories arising from stayers’ responses, namely “making sure I focus on my work” (n=25) and “schoolwork related”, have no direct equivalent in leavers’ responses to factors that could have helped them to remain at school. Such activities, however, could be easily considered to be elements of the leavers’ expressing a desire for “better learning support”.

Attitudes relating to school

Highlights

Attitudes relating to various aspects of school were related to school leaving status.

Stayers expressed more positive views than leavers in relation to various aspects of school including subjects, school work, teachers, support, career advice, the relevance of their courses of study at school to what they intended to do after leaving school, and how well their schools prepared them for achieving their post-school goals.

Stayers were two to three times more likely than leavers to strongly agree that school was a place where “the things I learned were important to me”, “I enjoyed what I did in class”, “I felt I belonged”, and “I felt safe”.

Given their reactions to various aspects of their school experiences, leavers (n=348) could be assigned to three groups (Figure 9): the unstressed satisfied (32%); the marginally satisfied (43%); and the disenchanted uninformed (25%).

Given their reactions to various aspects of their school experiences, stayers (n=204) could also be assigned to three groups (Figure 11): the unstressed satisfied (59%); the reasonably satisfied (33%); and the stressed dissatisfied (8%).

Over one-half of leavers agreed or strongly agreed that nothing would have made them stay at school.

Aspects of school

Leavers and stayers were asked to indicate how much they agreed with a range of statements about various aspects of school. The results are reported in Table 19 (n) and Table 20 (%). There were significant differences between the attitudes of leavers and stayers.

In relation to subjects and school work, stayers were more likely than leavers to agree that the school offered courses or subjects that they wanted to do, their school had enough VET courses for them, their school was a good learning environment for them, and they enjoyed school. Leavers, on the other hand, were more likely than stayers to strongly agree that school was too stressful for them or their school work was too difficult (Table 20).

In relation to teachers, support and career advice, stayers expressed more positive views than leavers. Stayers were more likely than leavers to strongly agree that there were engaging teachers at their school, their school provided them with enough individual support, they received enough career advice at school, and the school provided them with enough information about their post-school options (Table 20).

Of particular interest, over one-half of leavers agreed or strongly agreed that nothing would have made them stay at school (Table 20). Further analysis of the statement “nothing would have made them stay at school” was conducted. There were no significant differences between males and female leavers’ responses to this item. However, among the leavers who somewhat agreed

or strongly agreed that nothing would have made them stay at school, males were more likely than females to be working full-time in a job, apprenticeship or traineeship in March 2020 (37% and 13% respectively), suggesting that some male leavers may view employment as an alternative pathway to Year 12 and SACE completion. However, 28% of males and 41% of females who had reported that nothing would make them stay at school were not engaged in earning or leaving activities (Table 21).

Table 19. Attitudes regarding school (n)

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
The school offered courses/subjects that I wanted to do^b ***						
Leavers	29	46	36	113	122	346
Stayers	7	14	9	74	99	203
The school had enough VET courses for me^b **						
Leavers	36	50	47	106	96	335
Stayers	10	23	27	47	87	194
The school was a good learning environment for me^b ***						
Leavers	74	78	42	87	66	347
Stayers	11	16	14	53	109	203
I enjoyed my last year at school/I was enjoying this year at school^a ***						
Leavers	91	65	53	107	54	370
Stayers	6	14	25	70	93	208
School was too stressful for me^b ***						
Leavers	49	50	36	95	118	348
Stayers	36	50	26	56	36	204
My school work was too difficult^b *						
Leavers	66	110	74	61	35	346
Stayers	50	79	25	37	13	204
There were engaging teachers at my school^b ***						
Leavers	14	39	45	144	99	341
Stayers	4	12	9	83	93	201
The school provided me with enough individual support/the school was providing me with enough individual support^b ***						
Leavers	71	53	26	100	97	347
Stayers	7	16	11	63	106	203
I received enough career advice when I was at school/I was receiving enough career advice^b ***						
Leavers	62	74	32	94	83	345
Stayers	7	20	21	78	77	203

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
The school provided me with enough information about my post-school options / The school was providing me with enough information about my post-school options^{b ***}						
Leavers	47	56	42	127	74	346
Stayers	10	21	20	76	76	203
Nothing would have made me stay at school^c						
Leavers	41	76	45	84	93	339
Stayers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p. <0.001

Source: Question D2(a)-D2(k).

Samples: a. Leavers and stayers. b. Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. c. Leavers, excluding proxy respondents. Respondents who refused or didn't know were excluded from the table.

Table 20. Attitudes regarding school (%)

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
The school offered courses/subjects that I wanted to do^{b ***}						
Leavers	8.4	13.3	10.4	32.7	35.3	100.0
Stayers	3.5	6.9	4.4	36.5	48.8	100.0
The school had enough VET courses for me^{b **}						
Leavers	10.8	14.9	14.0	31.6	28.7	100.0
Stayers	5.2	11.9	13.9	24.2	44.9	100.0
The school was a good learning environment for me^{b ***}						
Leavers	21.3	22.5	12.1	25.1	19.0	100.0
Stayers	5.4	7.9	6.9	26.1	53.7	100.0
I enjoyed my last year at school/I was enjoying this year at school^{a ***}						
Leavers	24.6	17.6	14.3	28.9	14.6	100.0
Stayers	2.9	6.7	12.0	33.7	44.7	100.0
School was too stressful for me^{b ***}						
Leavers	14.1	14.4	10.3	27.3	33.9	100.0
Stayers	17.7	24.5	12.8	27.5	17.7	100.0
My school work was too difficult^{b *}						
Leavers	19.1	31.8	21.4	17.6	10.1	100.0
Stayers	24.5	38.7	12.3	18.1	6.4	100.0
There were engaging teachers at my school^{b ***}						
Leavers	4.1	11.4	13.2	42.2	29.0	100.0

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
Stayers	2.0	6.0	4.5	41.3	46.3	100.0
The school provided me with enough individual support/the school was providing me with enough individual support^{b ***}						
Leavers	20.5	15.3	7.5	28.8	28.0	100.0
Stayers	3.5	7.9	5.4	31.0	52.2	100.0
I received enough career advice when I was at school/I was receiving enough career advice^{b ***}						
Leavers	18.0	21.5	9.3	27.3	24.1	100.0
Stayers	3.5	9.9	10.3	38.4	37.9	100.0
The school provided me with enough information about my post-school options / The school was providing me with enough information about my post-school options^{b ***}						
Leavers	13.6	16.2	12.1	36.7	21.4	100.0
Stayers	4.9	10.3	9.9	37.4	37.4	100.0
Nothing would have made me stay at school^c						
Leavers	12.1	22.4	13.3	24.8	27.4	100.0
Stayers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p. <0.001

Source: Question D2(a)-D2(k).

Samples: a. Leavers and stayers. b. Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. c. Leavers, excluding proxy respondents. Respondents who refused or didn't know were excluded from the table.

Table 21. Earning and learning activities in March 2020, by gender (leavers who agreed or strongly agreed that nothing would have made them stay at school)

	N		%	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Main activity				
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	9	38	13.2	37.3
Full-time university,/VET/other study	5	7	7.4	6.9
Part-time work, and/or part-time study	26	28	38.2	27.5
Not in work or study	28	29	41.2	28.4
Total	68	102	100.0	100.0

Notes: p<0.01

Source: Derived from Question B1

Sample: Leavers who somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that noting would have made them stay at school (Question D2k). 7 respondents did not provide information on hours worked or study load and are excluded from this table.

In addition to the descriptive analyses, the LCA was undertaken to profile patterns underlying responses leavers (n=348, leavers only, without leaver proxies) gave to the statements about

their school experiences. Three latent classes emerged. To describe the classes, the probability of school leavers in each of the three latent classes to agree with the statements – combining “strongly agree” (1) and “agree” (2) responses – was plotted (see Figure 9).

As can be seen, leavers’ response patterns captured by the green line were the most likely to agree with the first eight statements indicating that school was enjoyable, offered desired subject selection, including VET, as well as sufficient career advice and post-school information. Probably as a reflection of relative satisfaction with their schooling experience, respondents in this class were less likely than the two other classes to agree with the statement that school was stressful. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the “Unstressed satisfied”.

Leavers’ response patterns plotted by the blue line were the least likely to agree with the first eight statements, indicating relatively negative school experiences. More specifically, respondents in this class hardly agreed at all that they had had enough career advice and also showed a low probability of agreeing to have had sufficient post-school information. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the “Disenchanted uninformed”.

The response pattern indicated by the red line sat between the first and second class, indicating a probability of around 50% of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. Therefore, they were considered to be “marginally satisfied” with their schooling experience.

The three classes were closest in terms of their agreement regarding school work. All three classes were not very likely to agree with the statement that school work had been too difficult. In other words, respondents did not seem to really struggle in terms of the level of difficulty of their school work. The three classes were also close in terms of their likelihood to agree that nothing could have made them stay and that they were happy that they had left school.

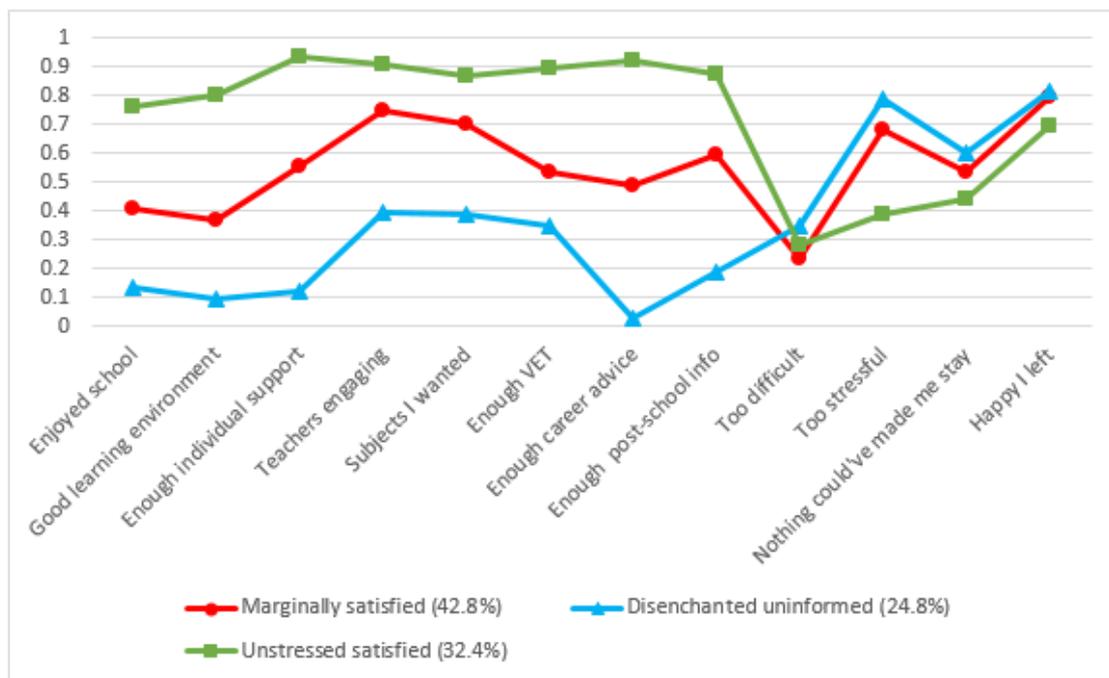
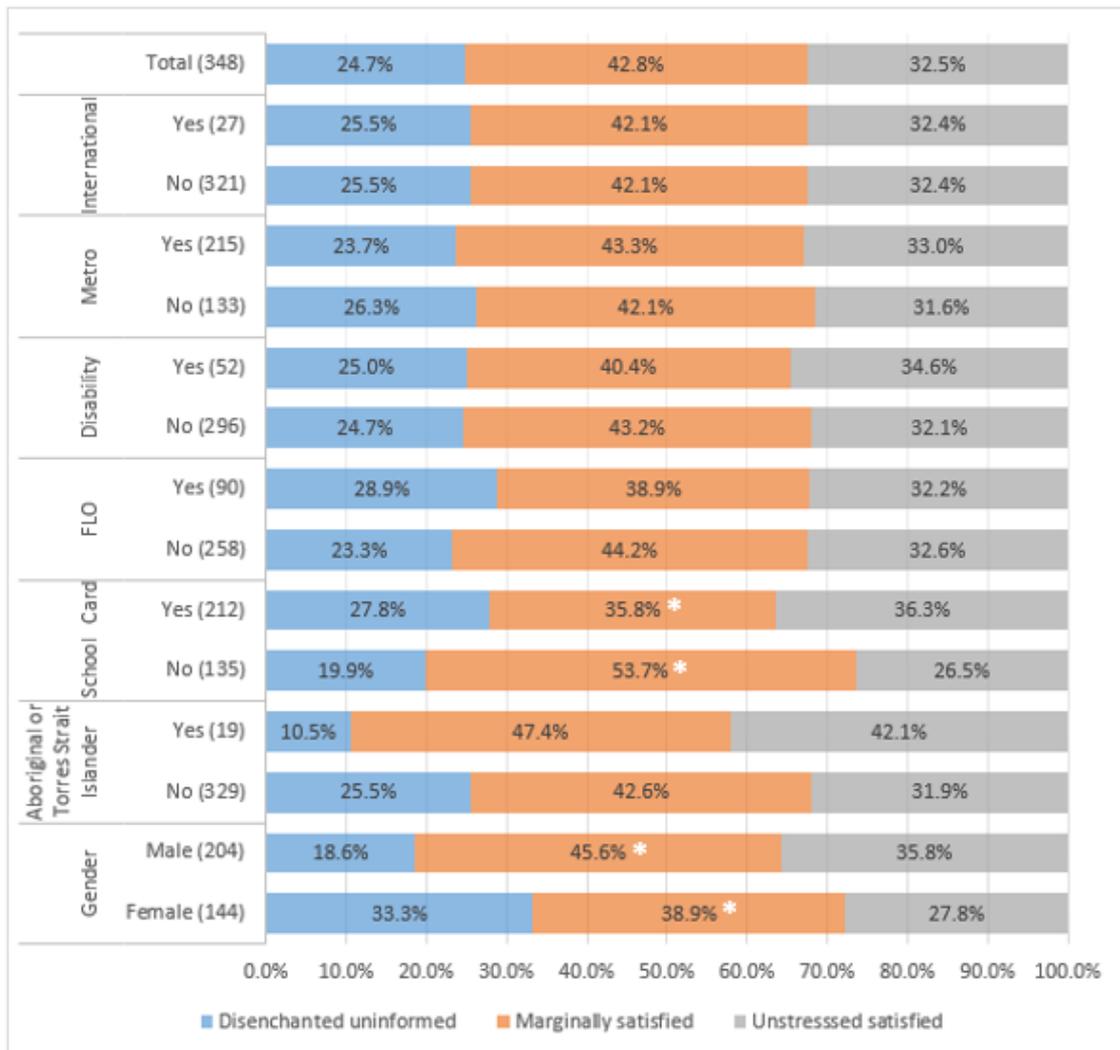


Figure 9. Probabilities of leavers in 3 classes “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” with each statement about school experiences (n=348; leavers only, without leaver proxies)

As the next step, crosstab analyses were undertaken to examine possible differences in response behaviours between various demographic subgroups of interest, including gender, location, disability, international student status, support as a FLO student, school card recipient or whether or not they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Results are presented in Figure 10.



Notes: *This proportion is significantly different to the proportion in the total leaver sample ($p < 0.05$ in Likelihood Ratio Chi Square Test). a = Some absolute numbers in these groups are lower than 5. Hence, nothing can be said regarding the significance of differences.

Figure 10. Demographics in the three latent classes of leavers’ school experiences (Question D2a-I; n=348; leavers only, without leaver proxies)

The top row in Figure 10 illustrates the proportions of the three classes in the total leaver sample. Thus, about one quarter (25%) of leavers are in the class that is disenchanted with school. The largest class with 43% contains those leavers who are marginally satisfied with their school experience and who have found school relatively stressful. About one third of leavers (33%) are those who are satisfied with their school experience and who are relatively unstressed.

The proportions for successive subgroups illustrated in Figure 10 showed no significant differences for each of the three latent classes depending on international student status, whether former students lived in metropolitan Adelaide or elsewhere, whether they had a disability or had ever been a FLO students. Differences did emerge, however, between leavers

who were school card holders and those who had not ever had a school card as well as between male and female leavers. Thus, former students who had had a school card at some stage were less likely to be only marginally satisfied with school than former students who never had a school card. A significant gender difference meant that, when compared with proportions in the total sample, a far greater proportion of female than male leavers was found in the disenchanted uninformed group.

Reactions stayers gave to statements about their school experiences were also subjected to the LCA (n=204, stayers only, without proxies). To describe the emergent three latent classes, the probability of stayers in each of the three classes selecting "strongly agree" or "agree" in response to the statements was plotted (see Figure 11).

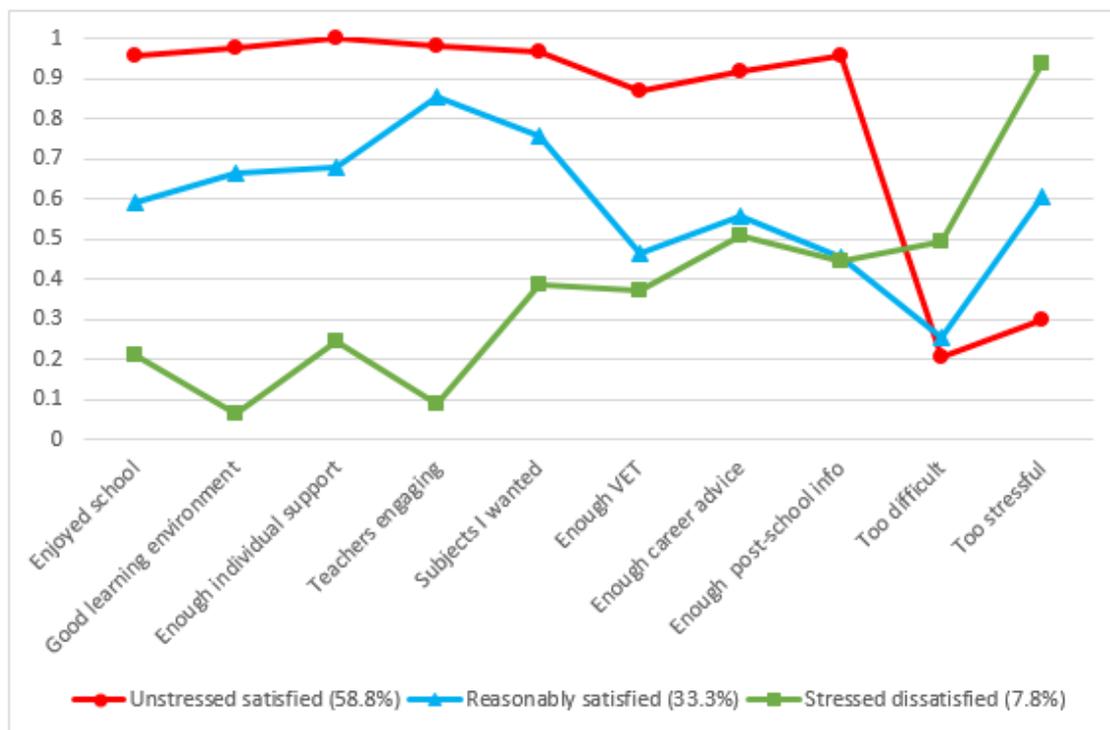


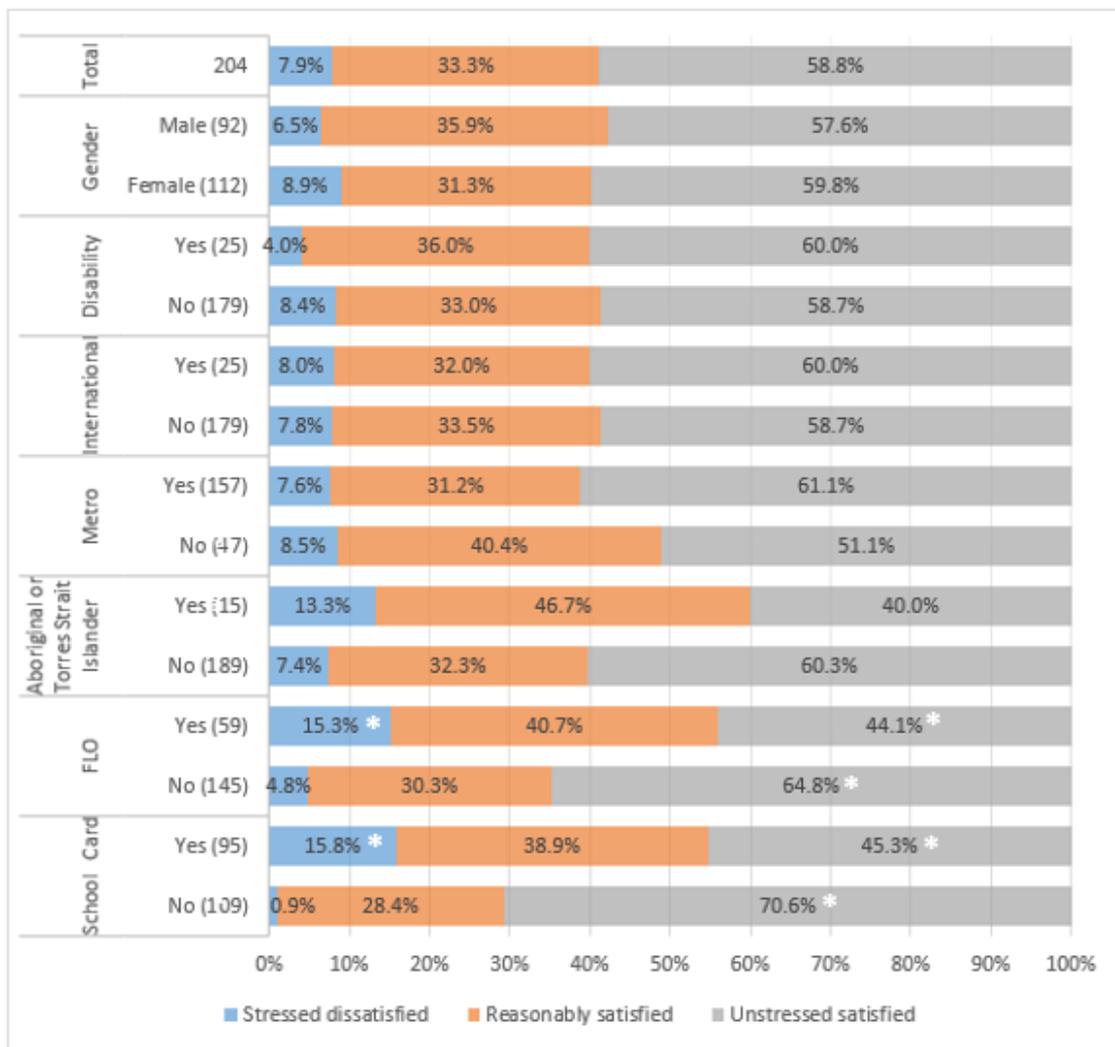
Figure 11. Probabilities of stayers in 3 classes "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" with each statement about school experiences (n=204; stayers only, without stayer proxies)

As can be seen in Figure 11, stayers in Class 1 (red line) were the most likely to agree with the first eight statements indicating that they enjoyed school as a good learning environment with sufficient individual support, engaging teachers, desired subject selection, including VET, as well as sufficient career advice and post-school information. Probably as a reflection of relative satisfaction with their schooling experience, respondents in this class were less likely than the two other classes to agree with the statement that school was stressful. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the "Unstressed satisfied".

Stayers in Class 2 (green line) were the least likely to agree with these first five statements, indicating relatively negative school experiences. Thus, they did not enjoy school or find school a good learning environment with engaging teachers and thought that they did not receive enough individual support offered. In addition, respondents in this class were about as likely to agree as disagree regarding whether they had experienced a sufficient breadth of subjects, including VET subjects, and whether they had received enough career advice or post-school information. In

contrast, respondents in this class were more likely than respondents in the other two classes to find school to difficult and were highly likely to have found school too stressful. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the “Stressed dissatisfied”.

Stayers in the third class (blue line) sat between the first and second class, indicating that they were “reasonably satisfied” with their school experience, with a particular agreement that their teachers had been engaging.



Notes: *This proportion is significantly different to the proportion in the total stayer sample ($p < 0.05$ in Likelihood Ratio Chi Square Test). a = Some absolute numbers in these groups are lower than 5. Hence, nothing can be said regarding the significance of differences.

Figure 12. Demographics in the three latent classes of stayers' school experiences (Question D2a-j; n=204; stayers only, without stayer proxies)

As the next step, crosstab analyses were undertaken to examine possible differences in response behaviours between various demographic subgroups of interest, including gender, location, disability, international student status, support as a FLO student, school card recipient or whether or not respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Results are presented in Figure 12.

The top row in Figure 12 illustrates the proportions of the three classes in the total stayer sample. Thus, more than half (59%) of stayers are in the “unstressed satisfied” class. One third (33%) of

stayers are captured in the class of stayers who are reasonably satisfied with their school experience and who have found school relatively stressful but not as stressful in the third class. This third and smallest class of stayers (8%) are those who are relatively dissatisfied with school which they have found stressful.

The proportions for successive subgroups illustrated in Figure 12 show no significant gender differences for the three latent classes. Similarly, while some differences seem to emerge depending on disability or international student status, location or Aboriginal and Torres Strait self-identification, no claims regarding the significance of these differences can be made given the small numbers on which some or the proportions in Figure 12 are based. Differences did emerge, however, between stayers who had been school card holders and those who had never had a school card as well as for students with and without FLO support. Thus, stayers who had had a school card at some stage were much less likely to be in the “unstressed satisfied” class (45%) than their counterparts who had never had a school card (71%). A similar difference emerged between FLO and non-FLO students. Indeed, the proportion of FLO students which was in the “stressed dissatisfied” class (15%) was three times as high as the corresponding proportion in the overall stayer sample (5%).

Finally, in this section of the questionnaire, both stayers and leavers were asked about their school satisfaction in terms of whether the things they learned were important to them, whether they enjoyed what they did in class and whether they felt school was a place where they belonged and felt safe.

As can be seen in Table 23 stayers were two to three times more likely than leavers to strongly agree that school was a place where “the things I learned were important to me”, “I enjoyed what I did in class”, “I felt I belonged”, and “I felt safe”.

Table 22. School satisfaction (n)

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
The things I learned were important to me ***						
Leavers	30	65	56	134	62	347
Stayers	6	16	19	72	90	203
I enjoyed what I did in class ***						
Leavers	49	75	52	124	47	347
Stayers	16	14	16	71	86	203
I felt I belonged***						
Leavers	84	75	46	84	57	346
Stayers	26	15	22	65	74	202
I felt safe***						
Leavers	39	30	43	111	124	347
Stayers	9	8	15	38	133	203

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p <.001

Source: Question D3.

Sample: Leavers and stayers. Excludes all proxy respondents. Respondents who refused or didn't know were excluded from the table.

Table 23. School satisfaction (%)

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
The things I learned were important to me ***						
Leavers	8.7	18.7	16.1	38.6	17.9	100.0
Stayers	3.0	7.9	9.4	35.5	44.3	100.0
I enjoyed what I did in class ***						
Leavers	14.1	21.6	15.0	35.7	13.5	100.0
Stayers	7.9	6.9	7.9	35.0	42.4	100.0
I felt I belonged***						
Leavers	24.3	21.7	13.3	24.3	16.5	100.0
Stayers	12.9	7.4	10.9	32.2	36.6	100.0
I felt safe***						
Leavers	11.2	8.7	12.4	32.0	35.7	100.0
Stayers	4.4	3.9	7.4	18.7	65.5	100.0

Notes: * p<0.05;** p<0.01; *** p <.001

Source: Question D3.

Sample: Leavers and stayers. Excludes all proxy respondents. Respondents who refused or didn't know were excluded from the table.

Relevance to post-school goals and aspirations

Leavers were less likely than stayers to perceive that their courses of study at school were relevant to what they intended to do after leaving school (Table 24) and were also less likely to agree that their school had prepared them well for achieving their goals after leaving school (Table 25). For example, 41% of leavers reported that their courses of study in the last year they were at school were irrelevant to what they had intended to do after leaving school, whereas only 12% of stayers felt that their courses of study are irrelevant to what they intend to do next year. Similarly, 45% of leavers strongly or somewhat disagreed that their school had prepared them well for achieving their goals after leaving school, whereas only 14% of stayers disagreed that up until early March their school had been preparing them well for achieving their goals after leaving school.

Table 24. Relevance of your courses of study

<i>Leavers: Thinking about the last year you were at school, how relevant did you think your courses of study were for what you intended to do after leaving school?</i>	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
<i>Stayers: How relevant do you think your courses of study have been to what you intend to do next year?</i>				
Irrelevant	141	25	41.1	12.4
Relevant	134	98	39.1	48.5
Highly relevant	68	79	19.8	39.1
Total	343	202	100.0	100.0

Notes: p <.001

Source: Question G4.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding all proxy respondents. Seven respondents who didn't know or refused to answer the question are excluded from the table.

It must be noted that the questions used for leavers and stayers are not directly comparable; the leavers were able to reflect upon their actual post-school experiences when responding to the

questions reported in Table 24 and Table 25. Nevertheless, the results do suggest a higher level of dissatisfaction among leavers.

Table 25. My school prepared me well/up until early March my school was preparing me well for achieving my goals after leaving school

	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Strongly disagree	82	9	23.6	4.4
Somewhat disagree	74	20	21.3	9.8
Nether disagree nor agree	74	22	21.3	10.8
Somewhat agree	83	72	23.9	35.3
Strongly agree	34	81	9.8	39.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: p <0.001

Source: Question G10a.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding all proxy respondents. One respondent who refused to answer the question is excluded from the table.

Young people were asked how school could have prepared them better for what they were doing in early March (leavers) or what they want to do next year (stayers). Roughly one-half of respondents provided one or more suggestions (Table 26).

Table 26. How could school prepare you better?

<i>Leavers: Thinking about what you were doing in early March, how could school have prepared you better?</i> <i>Stayers: Thinking about what you want to do next year, how could school prepare you better?</i>	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Career information and advice				
Give more/better information about what to do/what to expect in the various pathways after school	42	34	12.2	16.9
More personal contact/support/more personalised career advice	22	18	6.4	9.0
More information to help choose an industry/occupation	21	12	6.1	6.0
More specific information about my industry/occupation**	6	12	1.7	6.0
Job training & preparation for post-school life				
More specific job training/education	20	15	5.8	7.5
More advice/learning about post-school life skills	14	8	4.1	4.0
More work experience	5	3	1.5	1.5
Subjects and teachers				
Better teaching/teachers	26	11	7.5	5.5
More subject/course options available	19	5	5.5	2.5
More information/support when choosing subjects	14	10	4.1	5.0
Teach about referencing/independent learning/research skills	8	7	2.3	3.5
Other				
Personal/social support (including anti-bullying)	9	4	2.6	2.0
Other	12	5	3.5	2.5
Don't know/nothing I can think of	193	96	55.9	47.8

Notes: ** p<0.01. Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could report more than one issue

Source: Question G11.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding all proxy respondents. Six respondents refused to answer the question and are excluded from the table.

The most common suggestions related to career information and advice, such as more or better information on what to expect in the various pathways after school (12% of leavers; 17% of stayers), more personalised support and career advice (6% of leavers; 9% of stayers), more information to help choose an industry/occupation (6% of leavers and stayers), and more specific information about my industry/occupation (2% of leavers, 6% of stayers). Other suggestions mostly related to job training and preparation for post-school life, or to school subjects and teachers. In general, the responses of leavers and stayers were similar, with the exception of “more specific information about my industry/occupation”, which was more commonly suggested by stayers.

Subject choice and VET in School

Highlights

Choosing school subjects

The most common ways that student chose their subjects were:

- based on their interests and abilities (48% of leavers and stayers),
- based on their future plans (25%), and
- after consulting a teacher, their case manager, or other school advisory staff as part of the decision-making process (13%).

The most common types of people that young people spoke to about choosing their school subjects were:

- Teachers (41% of leavers, 46% of stayers),
- Parents and caregivers (25% of leavers, 36% of stayers), and
- Career advisors at school (11% of leavers, 22% of stayers).

11% of leavers and 6% of stayers spoke to no-one in particular about choosing their subjects.

Overall, leavers felt less informed than stayers when it came to choosing school subjects.

Compulsory SACE requirements

Young people who had not started or had stopped before completing each of the four compulsory SACE requirements, provided a number of reasons.

- For leavers, the most common reason was that they had left school before starting or completing these subjects. Other common reasons across many of the subjects included needing more support/the subject being too difficult, medical/affective reasons, and taking responsibility for non-completion upon themselves.
- For stayers, there was less consistency across the four subjects. However factors such as being a FLO student/having an alternative timetable were mentioned, as were medical/affective reasons and taking responsibility for non-completion upon themselves.
- Some additional factors were also prominent in relation to PLP, including unfamiliarity with the subject (stayers) and school transfer issues (leavers and stayers).

VET in schools

Around one-half of respondents reported participating in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and/or other VET subjects (52% of leavers and 45% of stayers). When other work experience is also considered, this rises to 70%-71% of young people.

15% of leavers and 26% of stayers reported that they did a VET subject at school to contribute towards finishing their SACE.

In general, over one-half of young people either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the various types of VET they had participated in had helped them to stay at school, with the exception of other work experience undertaken by leavers.

Choosing school subjects

Table 27 suggests that leavers feel less informed than stayers when it comes to choosing school subjects. For example, just over one fifth of leavers felt very well informed when choosing their courses of study for the year level when they left school, whereas nearly one half of stayers felt very well informed when choosing their courses of study for Year 11 and Year 12. Of concern, 19% of leavers and 11% of stayers felt “uninformed” when making their course choices.

Table 27. How informed did you feel when choosing your courses of study for school?

	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Uninformed	66	22	19.0	10.9
Informed	193	83	55.5	41.1
Very well informed	76	93	21.8	46.0
(Don't know)	13	4	3.7	2.0
Total	348	202	100.0	100.0

Notes: $p < 0.001$

Source: Questions G1.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. Two stayers refused to answer G1 and are excluded from this table.

How young people choose school subjects was explored in further detail, by asking respondents how they chose their subjects for senior secondary school, and who they spoke to about choosing subjects. In total, 85% of leavers (n=317) and 95% of stayers (n=199) indicated how they had chosen their subjects for senior secondary school.

As the most common response categories were the same for both cohorts, leaver and stayer responses are aggregated in Figure 13. Some respondents (n=130) gave multiple answers, however, as it is unclear which of these was their primary method for deciding upon subjects, responses are not distinguished by order of response.

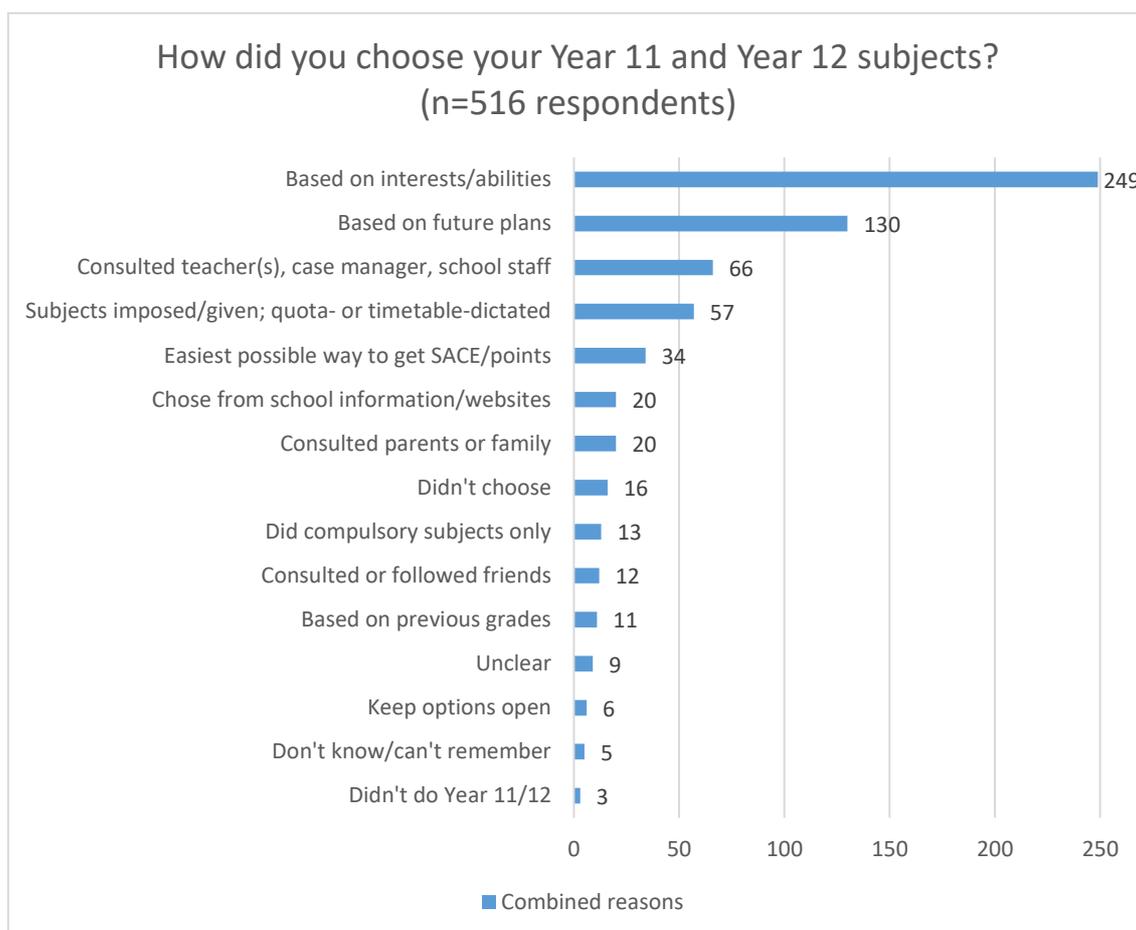
The most common response was overwhelmingly clear, with 48% (n=249) of all respondents stating that their subject choice was *based on their interests and abilities*. For example, “I mostly chose creative subjects because that's what I like pretty much. I didn't necessarily pick anything that would get me somewhere in the future, I just picked what I was into at the time”, or, “I chose them on what I would enjoy, what I thought I was capable of completing”, or, “I mainly looked for hands-on stuff”.

The second-most common response 25% (n=130) was that respondents had made their choice *based on their future plans*. For example, “I chose them based on what I wanted to do in the future and what will help me go to university...”, or, “I chose what would help me in my future career”. Many respondents offered a combination of the top two responses, such as, “I chose mine based on what I was most interested in and what I was looking to do outside school”, or, “Most of them were based off what I want to do when I'm older, so like child care and stuff. And things I enjoyed doing in previous years”.

Many respondents – 13% (n=66) – stated that they consulted a teacher, their case manager, or other school advisory staff as part of the decision-making process. For example, “Going through teachers and asking what I should take for my course”, “I had my SACE coordinator help me”, or, “We had an interview at school [to choose]”.

Interestingly, the fourth most-common response 11% (n=57) included students who felt their subjects had been *imposed* on them, or otherwise *dictated by school structures* such as class quotas or the subject timetable. For example, “Mine got chosen for me by someone at the school”, “I did not have the option as I was in the FLO program”, “I had to take whatever subjects were left”, or,

“At the end of the year they have you choose your subjects. As classes get full, some people don't get the ones they want. I was doing hospitality but was declined and it was too late to apply as there were no open positions”.



Notes: Source: Question F10.

Sample: Leavers who left school in Year 11 or later and all stayers.

Figure 13. We are interested in understanding how students chose their Year 11 and Year 12 subjects. How did you choose your Year 11 and Year 12 subjects?

The types of people that leavers and stayers spoke to about choosing their school subjects, and who helped the most, are reported in Table 28 (n) and Table 29 (%).

- Young people most commonly speak to teachers when it comes to choosing subjects (41% of leavers, 46% of stayers), followed by parents and caregivers (25% of leavers, 36% of stayers), and career advisors at school (11% of leavers, 22% of stayers).
- The same types of people were nominated as helping the most (or were the only people spoken to) in relation to subject choice: teachers (28% of leavers and stayers),

parents and caregivers (16% of leavers and 18% of stayers), and career advisors (11% of leavers and 15% of stayers).

- Stayers were more likely than leavers to talk to parents and caregivers, career advisors at school, and case managers. Leavers, on the other hand, were more likely than stayers to talk to school counsellors or psychologists.
- One area of potential concern is that 11% of leavers and 6% of stayers spoke to no-one in particular about choosing their subjects. A further 5% of leavers and 3% of stayers did not know who they had spoken to.

Table 28. Talking to people about choosing your school subjects (n)

	Who did you talk to about choosing your school subjects? ^a		Who helped you the most with selecting your school subjects?	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Teachers and school leadership				
Other teachers	143	94	97	57
Year co-ordinator, subject/course counsellor	21	18	19	14
School leadership team (e.g. principal, vice principal, head of senior school)	12	3	11	2
VET coordinator	8	1	7	1
Specialist teacher (disability, special education)	1	2	1	1
Support staff officer (SSO)	5	0	5	0
Counsellors and advisers				
Career advisor at school***	39	44	38	31
School counsellor/psychologist*	29	3	20	2
Case manager***	23	31	21	29
Family and friends				
Parents/caregivers**	88	73	55	37
Brothers/sisters	6	5	4	2
Other family	8	2	2	0
Partner	1	0	1	0
Class mates/friends	24	14	11	4
Other				
Former students	3	4	0	1
School website description of subjects	0	1	0	1
No-one in particular	37	12	37	12
Don't know	17	5	19	9

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Respondents could provide multiple responses

Source: Question G2 (who spoke to) and variable derived from G2 and G3 (who helped the most)

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One stayer refused to answer G2 and is excluded from this table.

Table 29. Talking to people about choosing your school subjects (%)

	Who did you talk to about choosing your school subjects? ^a		Who helped you the most with selecting your school subjects?	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Teachers and school leadership				
Other teachers	41.1	46.3	27.9	28.1
Year co-ordinator, subject/course counsellor	6.0	8.9	5.5	6.9
School leadership team (e.g. principal, vice principal, head of senior school)	3.5	1.5	3.2	1.0
VET coordinator	2.3	0.5	2.0	0.5
Specialist teacher (disability, special education)	0.3	1.0	0.3	0.5
Support staff officer (SSO)	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0
Counsellors and advisers				
Career advisor at school***	11.2	21.7	10.9	15.3
School counsellor/psychologist*	8.3	1.5	5.8	1.0
Case manager***	6.6	15.3	6.0	14.3
Family and friends				
Parents/caregivers**	25.3	36.0	15.8	18.2
Brothers/sisters	1.7	2.5	1.2	1.0
Other family	2.3	1.0	0.6	0.0
Partner	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0
Class mates/friends	6.9	6.9	3.2	2.0
Other				
Former students	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.5
School website description of subjects	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5
No-one in particular	10.6	5.9	10.6	5.9
Don't know	4.9	2.5	5.5	4.4
Total			100.0	100.0

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Percentages do not sum to 100.0 in the first two columns of results as respondents could provide multiple responses.

Source: Question G2 (who spoke to) and variable derived from G2 and G3 (who helped the most)

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One stayer refused to answer G2 and is excluded from this table.

Compulsory SACE requirements: Overview

Participation in each of the four compulsory SACE requirements is reported in Table 30 (*n*) and Table 31 (%).

- Among leavers, those who had left school earlier were less likely than those who left later to report having completed the compulsory SACE requirements. For example, around two-fifths of those who had left school in Year 10 reported completion of the PLP, compared with 64% of those who had left in Year 11 and 84% of those who had left in Year 12 or Year 13.
- Relatively high proportions of leavers reported stopping or not starting particular compulsory SACE requirements, especially Research Project¹² (PLP: 24% of all leavers; English: 27% of those who left in Year 11 or later; Mathematics: 27% of those who left in Year 11 or later; Research Project: 61% of those who left in Year 11 or later (or 52% of those who left in Year 12/13)).
- Smaller proportions of stayers (all of whom were in Year 12 or Year 13) reported stopping or not starting particular compulsory SACE requirements by March 2020 and could be

¹² Noting that Research Project is a Stage 2 subject, so generally undertaken in Year 12.

considered at risk of not completing SACE (PLP: 15% of stayers; English: 12%; Mathematics: 18%; Research Project: 28%). Again, Research Project was the least progressed or completed, however, this may relate to its nature as a Year 12 subject.

Table 30. Participation in compulsory SACE requirements, by school leaving status (n)

	Leavers				Total Leavers	Stayers ^a
	Year level when left school					
	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12/13	FLO/other		
PLP						
Completed	8	81	157	7	253	145
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18
Stopped before finishing	5	25	16	3	49	8
Had not started	6	14	11	5	36	23
Other/DK/refused ^b	0	6	3	1	10	10
Total	19	126	187	16	348	204
Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject						
Completed	n/a	74	137	3	214	102
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	70
Stopped before finishing	n/a	38	30	3	71	7
Had not started	n/a	6	11	5	22	17
Other/DK/refused ^c	n/a	8	9	5	22	8
Left before Year 11	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	19	n/a
Total	19	126	187	16	348	204
Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject						
Completed	n/a	80	135	3	218	108
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	49
Stopped before finishing	n/a	31	30	6	67	8
Had not started	n/a	9	15	4	28	28
Other/DK/refused ^d	n/a	6	7	3	16	11
Left before Year 11	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	19	n/a
Total	19	126	187	16	348	204
Research Project						
Completed	n/a	25	89	3	117	55
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83
Stopped before finishing	n/a	50	80	3	133	13
Had not started	n/a	51	17	10	78	44
Other/DK/refused	n/a	0	1	0	1	9
Left before Year 11	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	19	n/a
Total	19	126	187	16	348	204

Notes: a. For stayers, subject participation is measured up to early March 2020.

b. "PLP – Other" includes four respondents who had complications as a result of changing schools, and one respondent who was unsure if they had completed.

c. "English – Other" includes three stayers who were in an alternative English course.

d. "Mathematics – Other" includes three stayers who were in an alternative mathematics course.

Source: Questions A8, A16, F2, F4, F6, and F8.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

Table 31. Participation in compulsory SACE requirements, by school leaving status (%)

	Leavers					Stayers ^a
	Year level when left school				Total Leavers	
	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12/13	FLO/other		
PLP						
Completed	42.1	64.3	84.0	43.8	72.7	71.1
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.8
Stopped before finishing	26.3	19.8	8.6	18.8	14.1	3.9
Had not started	31.6	11.1	5.9	31.3	10.3	11.3
Other/DK/refused ^b	0.0	4.8	1.6	6.3	2.9	4.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject						
Completed	n/a	58.7	73.3	18.8	61.5	50.0
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	34.3
Stopped before finishing	n/a	30.2	16.0	18.8	20.4	3.4
Had not started	n/a	4.8	5.9	31.3	6.3	8.3
Other/DK/refused ^b	n/a	6.4	4.8	31.3	6.3	3.9
Left before Year 11	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject						
Completed	n/a	63.5	72.2	18.8	62.6	52.9
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24.0
Stopped before finishing	n/a	24.6	16.0	37.5	19.3	3.9
Had not started	n/a	7.1	8.0	25.0	8.1	13.7
Other/DK/refused ^b	n/a	4.8	3.7	18.8	4.6	5.4
Left before Year 11	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Research Project						
Completed	n/a	19.8	47.6	18.8	33.6	27.0
Doing subject	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	40.7
Stopped before finishing	n/a	39.7	42.8	18.8	38.2	6.4
Had not started	n/a	40.5	9.1	62.5	22.4	21.6
Other/DK/refused	n/a	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3	4.4
Left before Year 11	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: a. For stayers, subject participation is measured up to early March 2020.

b. "PLP – Other" includes four respondents who had complications as a result of changing schools, and one respondent who was unsure if they had completed.

c. "English – Other" includes three stayers who were in an alternative English course.

d. "Mathematics – Other" includes three stayers who were in an alternative mathematics course.

Source: Questions A8, A16, F2, F4, F6, and F8.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

The number of compulsory SACE requirements reported as completed or being undertaken are shown in Table 32. Just over one half of stayers reported that they were enrolled in or had completed all of the four compulsory SACE requirements in early March. In contrast, only 31% of those who had left in Year 12/13 had completed the four compulsory SACE requirements.

It should be noted that the one-half of stayers who reported that they had completed or were enrolled in all of the four compulsory SACE requirements may still be at risk of not completing SACE. For example, "completions" in the interview data are self-reported and do not take into account whether the student passed the requirement. In addition, the interview data do not

contain information on all subjects undertaken and so cannot assess the total number of SACE credits from other free-choice subjects.

A comparison of the survey data and administrative data on participation in compulsory SACE requirements is provided in [Appendix F](#).

Table 32. Number of compulsory SACE requirements^a completed or being undertaken, March 2020

	Leavers					Stayers ^a
	Year level when left school				Total Leavers	
	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12/13	FLO/other		
	<i>N</i>					
Number of subjects						
0	11	17	10	6	44	14
1	8	26	17	7	58	12
2	n/a	31	36	1	68	23
3	n/a	36	67	1	104	48
4	n/a	16	57	1	74	107
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>
	<i>%</i>					
Number of subjects						
0	57.9	13.5	5.4	37.5	12.6	6.9
1	42.1	20.6	9.1	43.8	16.7	5.9
2	n/a	24.6	19.3	6.3	19.5	11.3
3	n/a	28.6	35.8	6.3	29.9	23.5
4	n/a	12.7	30.5	6.3	21.3	52.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: a. Compulsory SACE requirements include PLP, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject, and Research Project.

Source: Derived from Questions A8, A16, F2, F4, F6, and F8.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

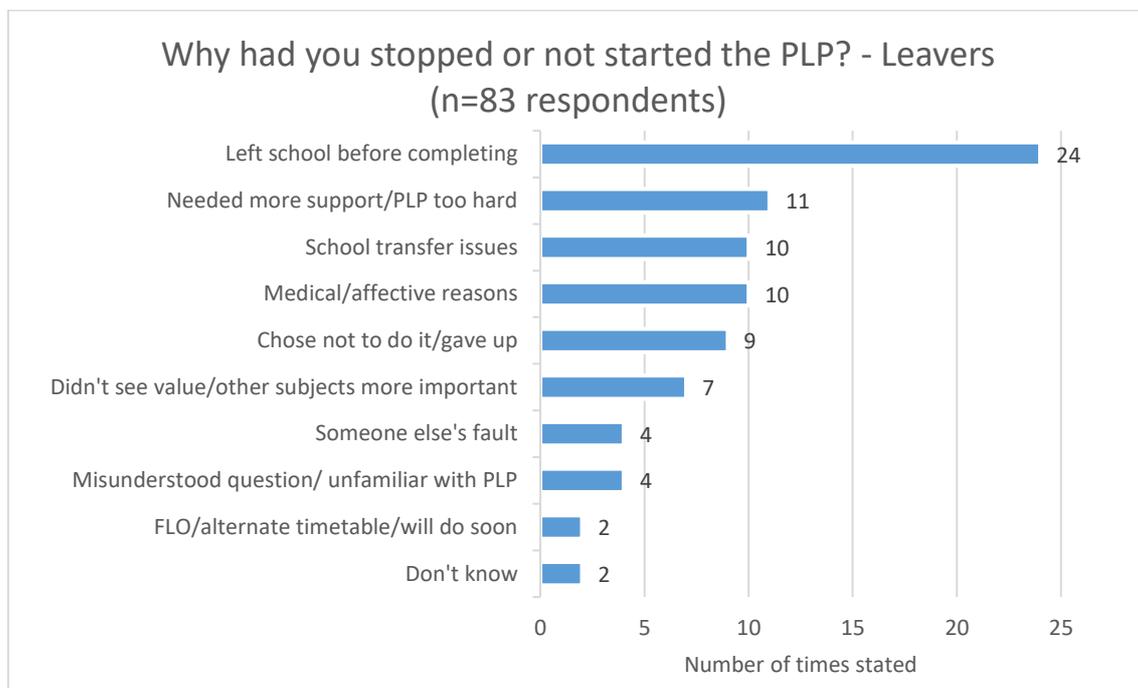
Compulsory SACE requirements: PLP

As noted above, 24% of leavers and 15% of stayers reported stopping or not starting PLP (Table 31). Persons who had not completed their PLP – or in the case of stayers, who were not still working towards their PLP – were asked to explain why.

Leavers

The results for leavers are shown in Figure 14. The most common reason for PLP non-completion for leavers was that the respondent had *left school* before starting or completing the PLP. This was followed by reasons of *needing more support* or that the *PLP had been too difficult*, for example, “Around the end I didn't hand in any work because it was getting too overwhelming and I had a lot of subjects due”, and, “I didn't know what I was doing”.

Leavers also noted *medical/affective reasons* and *school transfer issues* as contributing to non-completion. Examples of the former included conditions such as pregnancy, surgery, or mental health challenges; examples of the latter include, “It's because I came into the school during Year 10 after a stage that PLP was finished by most students”, or, “I lived in NSW for Year 10 and that's when they did the PLP”.



Notes: Source: Question F3.

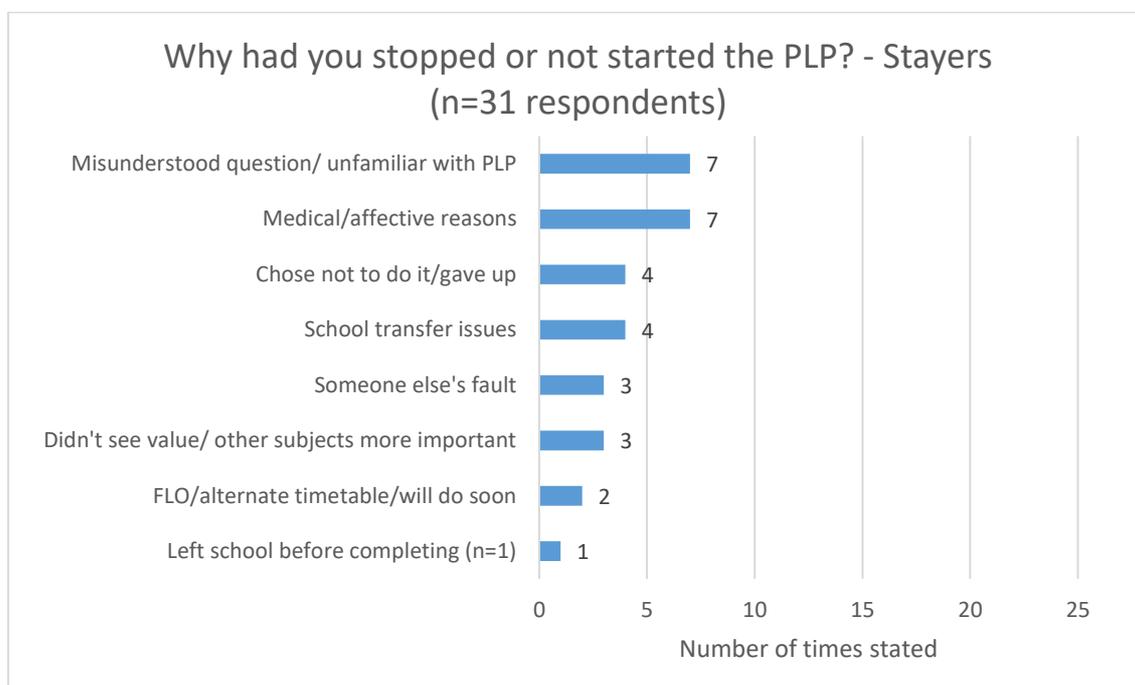
Sample: Leavers who had stopped before finishing PLP or did not start PLP. Eight leavers did not provide a response to F3 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 14. Why had you stopped or not started the PLP? – Leavers

Stayers

The results for stayers are shown in Figure 15. The most common reasons for stopping or not starting the PLP for Stayers was equally *medical/affective reasons* and *misunderstood question/unfamiliar with the PLP*. Examples of the former include, “Because I haven’t been going to school much since my mental health is really bad”, or, “I was really sick and I was in hospital for most of last year”. Examples of the latter include, “I’m not sure what a PLP is”, or, “It wasn’t one of my subjects that I had selected”.

The next most common reasons for stayers were *school transfer issues* and “*chose*” *not to do it/gave up*. School transfer issues were similar to leavers’ reasons, describing that the respondent was interstate or overseas during Year 10 or that their records had not been transferred from a previous school. Some respondents indicated that non-completion of the PLP was *their choice* or that they *gave up*, for example, “I didn’t want to do it”, or, “Can’t remember, I think I just gave up”.



Notes: Source: Question F3.

Sample: Stayers who had stopped before finishing PLP or did not start PLP. Four stayers did not provide a response to F3 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 15. Why had you stopped or not started the PLP? – Stayers

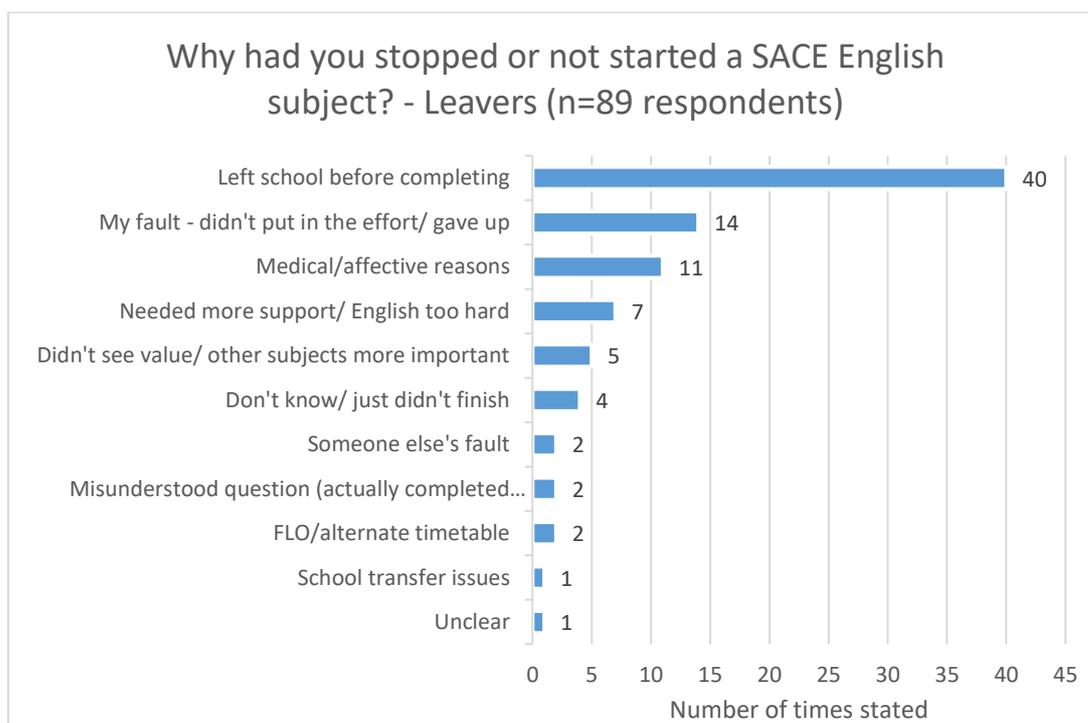
Compulsory SACE requirements: Stage I or Stage II English subject

As noted above in Table 31, 27% of young people who left in Year 11 or later and 12% of stayers reported stopping or not starting the compulsory English SACE subject. Persons who had not completed a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject – or in the case of stayers, were not still doing their English subject – were asked to explain why.

Leavers

The results for leavers are shown in Figure 16. The most common reason for non-completion of a SACE English subject for leavers was that the respondent had *left school* before starting or completing the English requirement, comprising 45% of the respondent cohort (n=40). This was followed by some respondents (n=14) taking responsibility upon themselves for non-completion, stating, for example, “I wasn’t exactly handing the work up to my best ability”, or, “I dropped it because I had too much on my plate”.

Leavers also offered *medical/affective reasons* for non-completion, which included examples such as, “I had a lot of time off school because of [medical issue] and then left with the stress of it all”, or, “Because it was a bit of a difficult learning environment”.



Notes: Source: Question F5.

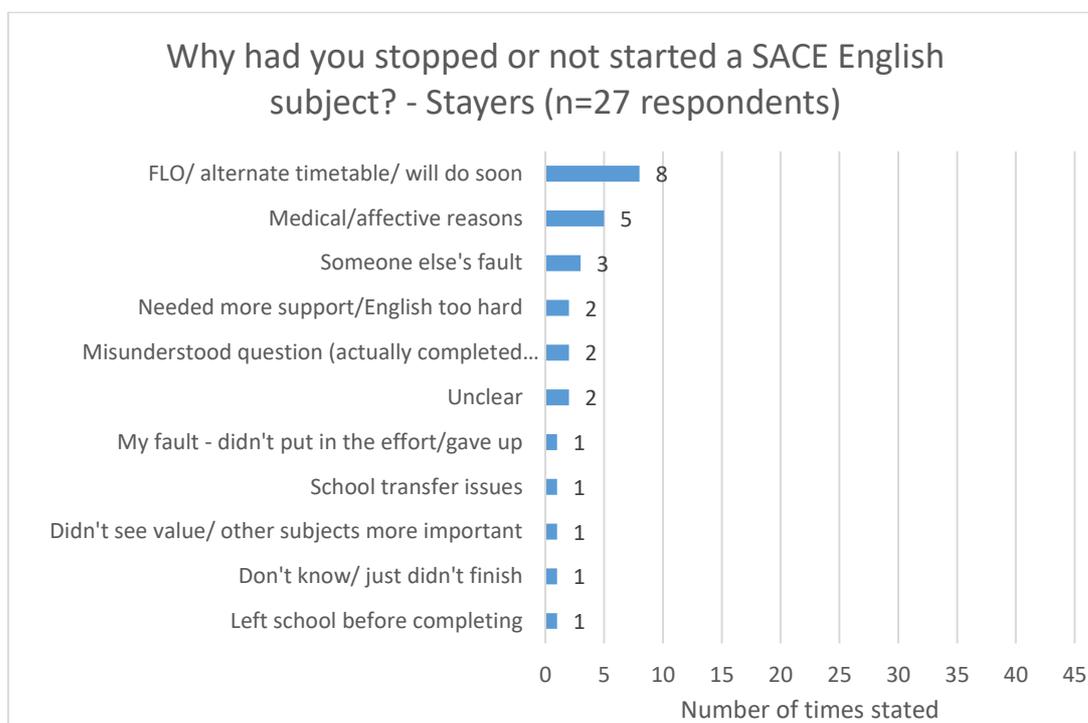
Sample: Leavers who left in Year 11 or later who had stopped before finishing, or did not start, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject. Seven leavers did not provide a response to F5 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 16. Why had you stopped or not started a SACE English subject? – Leavers

Stayers

The results for stayers are shown in Figure 17. The most common reason (n=8) for stopping or not starting a SACE English subject for students still in Year 12 was due to *being in FLO or another modified program*, with half indicating that they planned to begin or continue with SACE English soon. For example, “I’m just focusing on TAFE for now and I’ll be doing that [English] in second semester”.

Stayers also offered *medical/affective reasons* for non-completion, which included examples such as, “Surgery was more important than completing an English subject”, or, “I have a disability and have done modified classes since Year 8”.



Notes: Source: Question F5.

Sample: Stayers who left in Year 11 or later who had stopped before finishing, or did not start, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject. Four stayers did not provide a response to F3 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 17. Why had you stopped or not started a SACE English subject? – Stayers

Compulsory SACE requirements: Stage I or Stage II Mathematics subject

As noted above in Table 31, 27% of young people who left in Year 11 or later and 18% of stayers reported stopping or not starting their compulsory mathematics subject. These young people were asked to describe why they had stopped or not started a SACE mathematics subject.

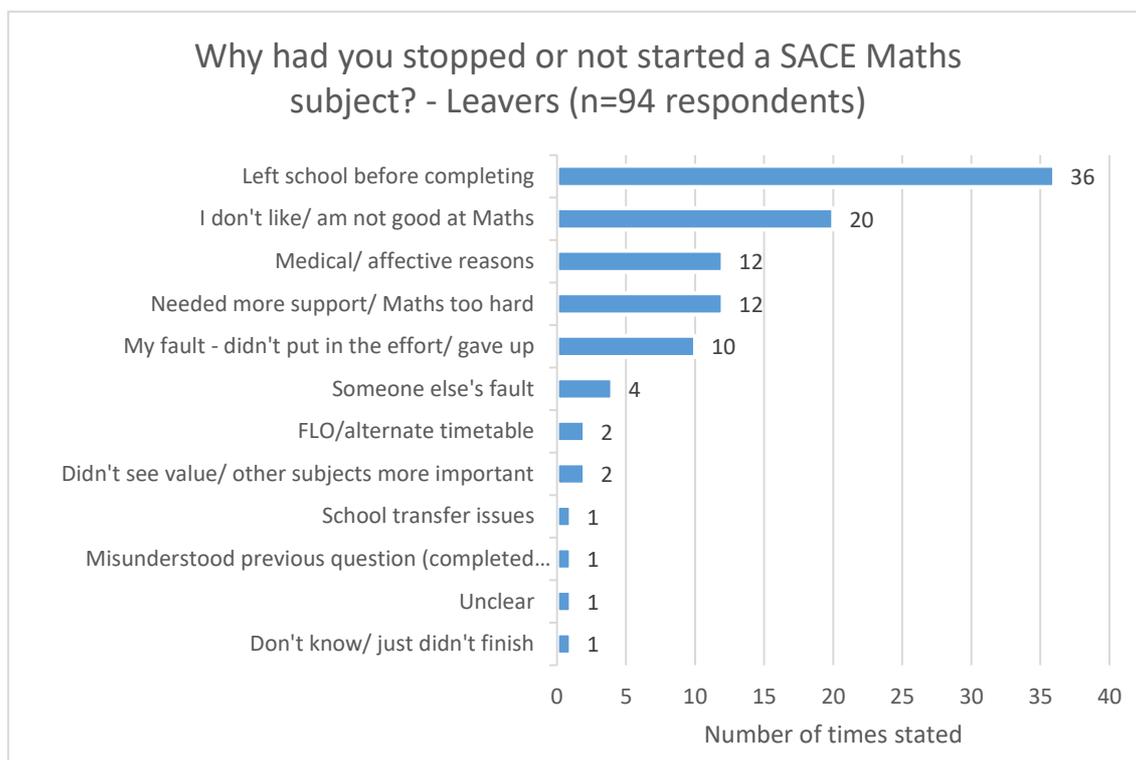
Leavers

The results for leavers are presented in Figure 18. Similar to the PLP and English, for the leaver cohort, the most common reason for non-completion of a SACE mathematics subject was that the respondent had *left school* before starting or completing the subject, comprising 38% of the respondent cohort (n=36). However, *medical/affective reasons*, for example, “The workload was too much and my mental health couldn’t handle it”, or, “Because I was pregnant”, was only the third most common reason for not completing the Maths requirement.

Interestingly, many respondents stated that they *don’t like or are not good at Maths*. This was the second most common reason for non-completion, comprising 21% of the respondent cohort (n=20). Respondent comments included, “I just don’t like Maths so wasn’t interested in it. Not my strong suit”, and, “Maths wasn’t for me. Not that it was hard, I just didn’t like it; I’m more of an English oriented person”.

Some respondents (13%, n=12) stated that they had needed more help to complete mathematics. Their comments include, “Maths got a lot more difficult and it was too difficult for me”, and, “I struggle a bit with Maths in school and didn’t have the best one-on-one help”. A similar number

of respondents took full responsibility for their non-completion of Maths, with 11% of respondents (n=10) stating that it was *their fault as they had not put in the effort*. For example, “I just didn’t finish it. Unmotivated”, or, “It was me not attending the classes”.



Notes: Source: Question F7.

Sample: Leavers who left in Year 11 or later who had stopped before finishing, or did not start, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject. Two leavers did not provide a response to F7 and are excluded from this figure.

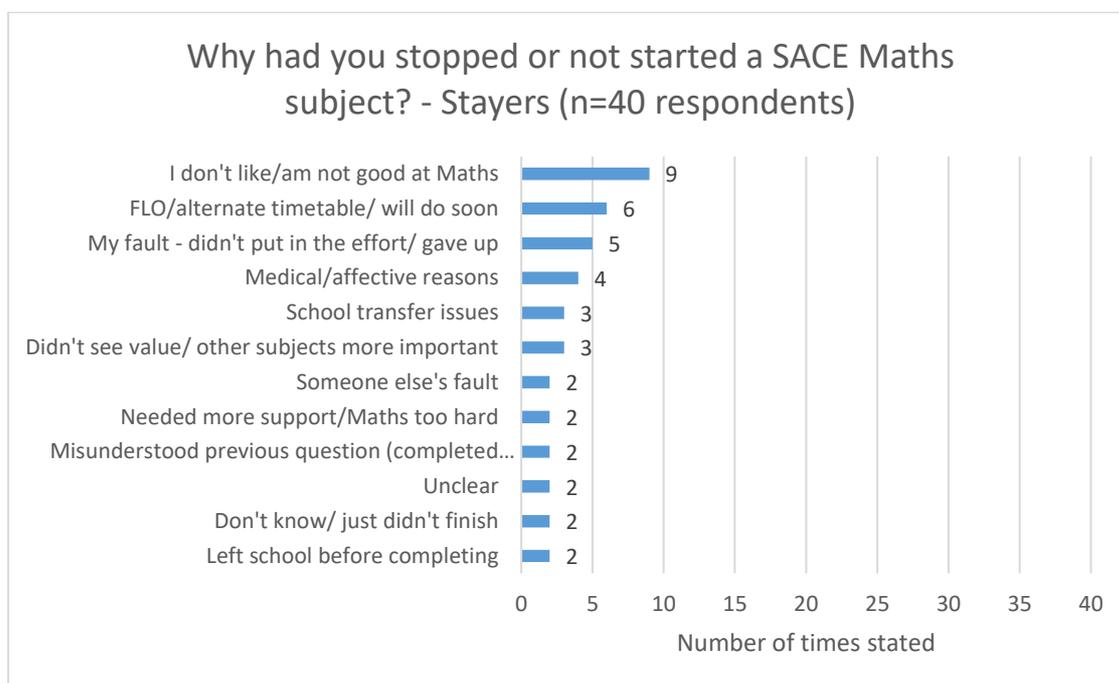
Figure 18. Why had you stopped or not started a SACE Mathematics subject? – Leavers

Stayers

The results for leavers are presented in Figure 19. For stayers, responses were more evenly spread. The most common response (23%, n=9), however, was that respondents *did not like or were not good at Maths*, for example, “I hate Maths, I do not want to do it”, or, “Because I’m trash at Maths”.

Some respondents (15%, n=6) noted that their timetable or course structure had affected their ability to complete a Maths subject by the time of the survey, stating, “I was doing a different kind of Maths”, or, “Because I have a negotiated education plan”. Two of these respondents indicated that they will begin Maths in the near future, for example, “I’m focusing on TAFE at the moment and I’ll do [Maths] next semester”.

Five stayer respondents (13%) *took full responsibility* for not having completed a SACE Maths subject, for example, “Because I haven’t been at school, I don’t have the motivation to do anything”, or simply, “I didn’t want to do it”. Four stayers (10%) claimed *medical or affective reasons* for non-completion, for example, “Because I had surgery”, or, “Because of personal problems”.



Notes: Source: Question F7.

Sample: Stayers who had stopped before finishing, or did not start, a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject. Two stayers did not provide a response to F7 and are excluded from this figure.

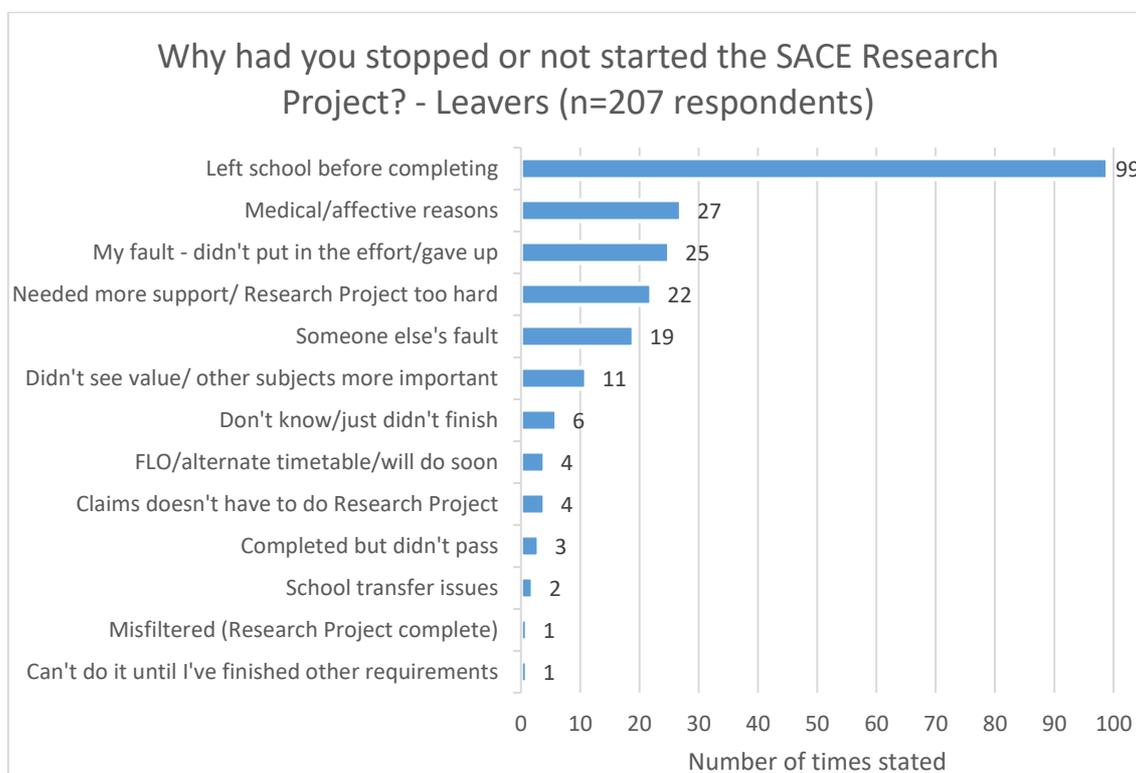
Figure 19. Why had you stopped or not started a SACE Mathematics subject? – Stayers

Compulsory SACE requirements: Research Project

As noted above in Table 31, 61% of young people who left in Year 11 or later and 28% of stayers reported stopping or not starting the compulsory Research Project. These young people were asked to describe why they had stopped or not started this subject.

Leavers

The results for leavers are presented in Figure 20. Similar to the PLP and English, the most common two reasons for non-completion of the SACE Research Project was that the respondent had *left school* before starting or completing, comprising 48% (n=99) of the respondent cohort, and *medical/affective reasons*, comprising 13% (n=27) of the respondent cohort. Medical or affective reasons included, “Because I was sick for most of it”, “I had a lot of stressful events going in my life at the time so it was very difficult for me to concentrate on something that was as difficult and important as that”, and, “It caused too much stress, and I didn't think it was necessary for my education”.



Notes: Source: Question F9.

Sample: Leavers who left in Year 11 or later who had stopped before finishing or did not start the Research Project. Seven leavers did not provide a response to F9 and are excluded from this figure.

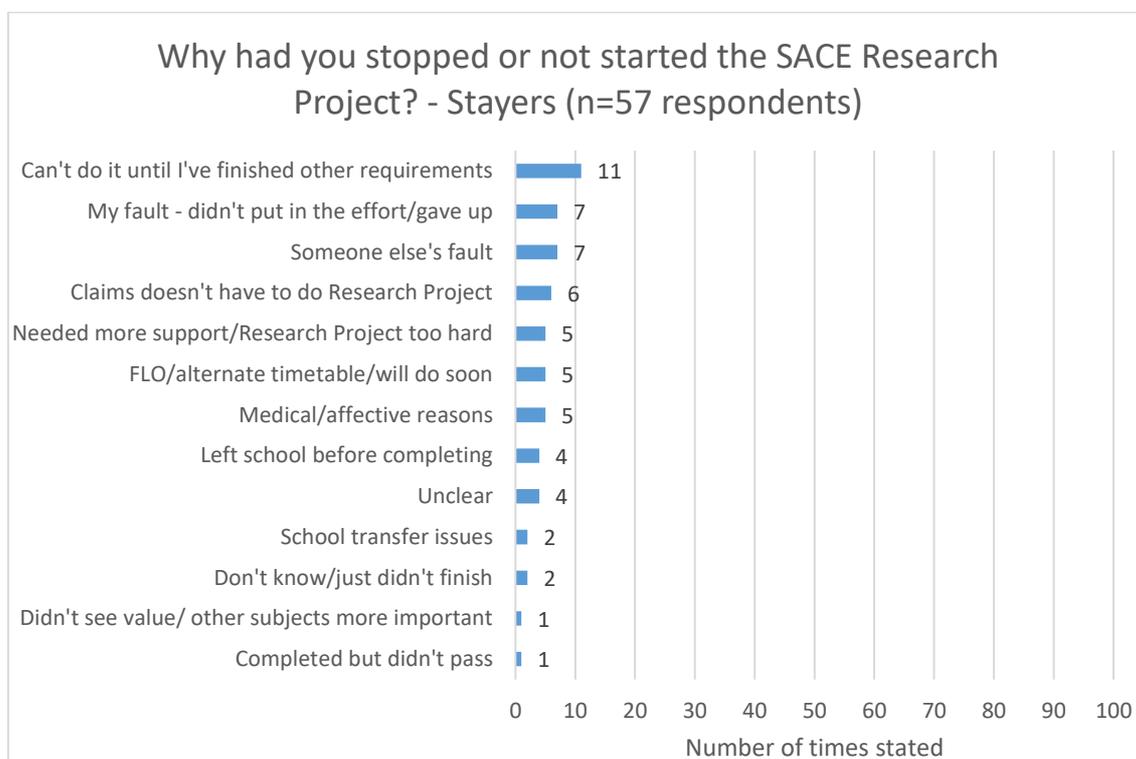
Figure 20. Why had you stopped or not started the SACE Research Project? – Leavers

Twelve percent of leaver respondents (n=25) indicated that they *had not made enough effort or given up*, for example, “Because it was really big and I didn’t pay attention or put time into it”, or, “I did not put the effort in and there was no time to finish before I left [school]”.

Eleven percent of leaver respondents (n=22) replied that the *Research Project was difficult and that they had needed more support*, for example, “I think because I was struggling to find information for the questions I was looking in to and I was unsure how to move on...”, or, “It was too difficult and I did not get enough support from the teachers”.

Stayers

The results for stayers are presented in Figure 21. The most common response from stayers (19%, n=11) was that they were not permitted to do the Research Project until they had completed their other SACE requirements. It was unclear from the responses whether this was a formal SACE rule or whether it was imposed by respondents’ schools. Examples include, “I am still finishing my English and Maths, and then I will be doing my Research Project”, or, “Because my school was wanting me to get my PLP, English and Maths done before I moved on to my Research Project”.



Notes: Source: Question F9.

Sample: Stayers who had stopped before finishing or did not start the Research project. Five stayers did not provide a response to F9 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 21. Why had you stopped or not started the SACE Research Project? – Stayers

An equal number of stayer respondents (12%, n=7 each) indicated that it was *their fault for not starting or completing* the Research Project, or that *the blame lay with someone else*. Examples of the former include, “The subject I had picked for my question wasn’t what I wanted to do anymore and it was too late to start again. I’d also missed a lot of classes and was behind”, or, “I stopped doing that because I didn’t want to do it”. Examples of the latter include, “Because my school didn’t give it to me at that time”, or, “I didn’t end up getting put into a Research Project [class] because it was too full”.

Eleven percent of stayer respondents (n=6) indicated that *they did not have to do the Research Project*, for example, “I was never asked to do one, [it was] never mandatory to do one”, or, “It’s not a part of my program; it’s not necessary”.

VET in School

Table 33 shows participation in school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, other VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation while the student was enrolled at school, workplace learning as part of a VET course, and other work experience. Nearly one in five respondents undertook a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. Other VET courses were more common (42% of leavers and 35% of stayers).

Table 33. Participation in VET and work experience when enrolled in school

Participated in ...	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Types of VET				
School-based apprenticeship or traineeship	64	37	17.3	17.7
Other VET courses	155	73	41.8	34.9
Workplace learning as part of a VET course	70	25	18.9	12.0
Other work experience	178	100	48.0	48.1
Summary measures				
School-based apprenticeship/traineeship and/or other VET subjects	192	95	51.8	45.5
School-based apprenticeship/traineeship and/or other VET subjects and/or other work experience	261	149	70.4	71.3

Notes: Source: Questions F12, F16, F18, and F20.
Sample: Leavers and stayers.

Work experience had been undertaken by just under one half of respondents (Table 33). A number of these students may have done work experience as part of their PLP. While this was not directly measured in this project, further analysis showed that over one-half of young people who had completed their PLP reported undertaking work experience (53% of leavers, 58% of stayers). In contrast, around one-third of young people who had not started their PLP reported undertaking work experience (33% of leavers, 30% of stayers).

Students may participate in more than one form of VET while enrolled at school. Two summary measures are also presented in Table 33. Roughly one half of respondents reported participating in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and/or other VET subjects (52% of leavers and 46% of stayers). When other work experience is also considered, this rises to 70%-71% of young people.

Young people who had participated in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and/or other VET subjects were asked why they did a VET course at school. Table 34 shows that the most commonly cited reasons are “to try out a potential career path” (28% of leavers, 22% of stayers), “to get a job in this area” (26% of leavers and stayers), and because “it looked like an interesting course” (24% of leavers, 22% of stayers). In addition, one of the reasons for doing a VET course most commonly cited by stayers was to contribute towards finishing their SACE (15% of leavers, 26% of stayers). A range of other less commonly reported reasons are also provided in Table 34.

Table 34. Reasons participated in a VET course at school

<i>Why did you do a VET course at school?</i>	N		%	
	Leaver (n=184)	Stayer (n=93)	Leaver (n=184)	Stayer (n=93)
To try out a potential career path	51	20	27.7	21.5
To get a job in this area	48	24	26.1	25.8
It looked like an interesting course	44	20	23.9	21.5
To contribute towards finishing my SACE	27	24	14.7	25.8
To learn a new skill	18	18	9.8	19.4
Wanted to do an apprenticeship or traineeship	16	8	8.7	8.6
To get certificates/qualifications (general)	8	4	4.4	4.3
Other subjects didn't interest me	5	2	2.7	2.2
My teachers or parents told me to do it	4	4	2.2	4.3
Other	16	7	8.7	7.5
Don't know	2	2	1.1	2.2

Notes: Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could provide multiple reasons.

Source: Question F22. Reasons cited by fewer than 5 respondents were combined into the "Other" category. These included a wide range of reasons, ranging from "thought it would have a low workload/be easy" to "wanted to learn in a more hands-on way" or "wanted a backup plan".

Sample: Leavers and stayers who had participated in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship or other VET subject while enrolled at school. Excludes all proxy respondents.

VET in school participants were asked how much they disagreed or agreed that the various types of VET they had done had helped them to stay at school. Leavers were asked this question in relation to staying at school as long as they did, while stayers were asked about staying at school until early March. Separate questions were asked for school-based apprenticeships or traineeships, other VET courses, workplace learning as part of a VET course, and other work experience. The results are reported in Table 35. In general, leavers tended to be less likely than stayers to agree that each of these forms of VET had helped them to stay at school, with the differences relating to workplace training and other work experience being statistically significant. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that leavers had already left school, whereas stayers were still enrolled at school in early March.

Among the various types of former VET in school participants in the leaver group, the highest proportions of participants strongly agreeing that VET had helped them to stay at school related to other VET courses (38%) and school-based apprenticeship or traineeships (30%). Among stayers, the highest proportions of participants strongly agreeing related to workplace training as part of a VET course (56%) or school-based apprenticeship or traineeships (43%). In general, over one-half of young people either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the various types of VET they had participated in had helped them to stay at school, with the exception of other work experience undertaken by leavers.

Table 35. Attitudes regarding VET in school

How much do you disagree or agree that the type of VET you did during school helped you to stay at school?	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
School-based apprenticeship or traineeship				
Strongly disagree	10	3	15.6	8.1
Some-what disagree	10	1	15.6	2.7
Neither disagree nor agree	12	7	18.8	18.9
Somewhat agree	13	10	20.3	27.0
Strongly agree	19	16	29.7	43.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Other VET subjects				
Strongly disagree	19	3	12.3	4.1
Some-what disagree	15	5	9.7	6.9
Neither disagree nor agree	31	17	20.0	23.3
Somewhat agree	31	25	20.0	34.3
Strongly agree	59	23	38.1	31.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>155</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Workplace training as part of a VET course*				
Strongly disagree	10	0	14.3	0.0
Some-what disagree	7	1	10.0	4.0
Neither disagree nor agree	11	5	15.7	20.0
Somewhat agree	24	5	34.3	20.0
Strongly agree	18	14	25.7	56.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Other work experience*				
Strongly disagree	45	13	25.3	13.0
Some-what disagree	27	10	15.2	10.0
Neither disagree nor agree	45	29	25.3	29.0
Somewhat agree	35	25	19.7	25.0
Strongly agree	26	23	14.6	23.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * p<0.05

Source: Questions F15, F17, F19, and F21. Leavers were asked whether the type of VET they did during school helped them to stay at school as long as they did. Stayers were asked if the type of VET they did during school helped them to stay at school until early March. "Don't know" responses were recoded to the midpoint (n=2).

Sample: Leavers and stayers who participated in the various forms of VET while enrolled in school.

Respondents who had participated in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship were asked whether they were continuing in this course in early March, and their reasons for stopping (if applicable). Table 36 shows that 70% of leavers and 43% of stayers were not continuing in their apprenticeships and traineeships. The most common reasons for stopping given by leavers were because they had been doing it though their school (29%) and because they had completed their course (26%). In contrast, the most common reason for stopping given by stayers was that they had completed their course (63%). The next most commonly cited reason was losing interest or deciding to do something else (leavers: 12%; stayers: 19%). However, these results should be treated with caution due to the small number of school-based apprentices and trainees in the sample who were not continuing in their course.

Table 36. School-based apprenticeship outcomes (early March)

	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Continuing in apprenticeship/traineeship in early March^a				
Yes	17	21	26.6	56.8
No	45	16	70.3	43.2
Don't know	2	0	3.1	0.0
Total	64	37	100.0	100.0
Reasons stopped apprenticeship/traineeship^b				
I was doing it through school	12	0	28.6	0.0
Finished/completed the course	11	10	26.2	62.5
Lost interest/decided to do something else	5	3	11.9	18.8
No time/too busy	3	0	7.1	0.0
Needed more support	3	0	7.1	0.0
Fired/dismissed/asked to leave course	2	0	4.8	0.0
Social difficulties/bullied	2	1	4.8	6.3
Health reasons	2	0	4.8	0.0
Company couldn't pay salary	2	0	4.8	0.0
Converted to full-time	2	0	4.8	0.0
Don't know	0	2	0.0	12.5

Notes: a. Source: Questions F13. Sample: Leavers and stayer who had participated in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

b. Source: Question F14. Sample: Leavers and stayers who were not continuing in their school-based apprenticeship or traineeship in early March (n=42 leavers, 16 stayers). Excludes all proxy respondents. Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could provide multiple reasons.

Navigating pathways: Significant others, career planning, and support services

Highlights

- Stayers were three times more likely than leavers to report that it was very important or extremely important to their parents that they finish Year 12 or achieve their SACE certificate.
- Parents and caregivers were the most common people spoken to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work.
- “Other teachers” were the second most common group spoken to about whether to continue at school, and for stayers, case managers were the third most commonly spoken to group.
- Before leaving school, leavers were less likely than stayers to access a range of career information sources such as university or TAFE information days, career expos, school career resource centres/libraries and career advisers at schools.
- Only 56% of leavers agreed that they knew where to get information about the options they had after leaving school, and only 57% agreed that when they decided to leave school then had enough information about what they wanted to do.
- 41% of leavers were unaware that there were various ways to complete SACE after leaving school.
- Over one-third of leavers and nearly one-half of stayers asked to be provided with information about support services. A link to a website listing a range of services was provided to these respondents.

Family

Young people’s perceptions of the importance that their parents place on them finishing Year 12 and achieving their SACE certificate are reported in Table 37.

Table 37. How important was it to your parents that you finish Year 12 and achieve your SACE certificate?

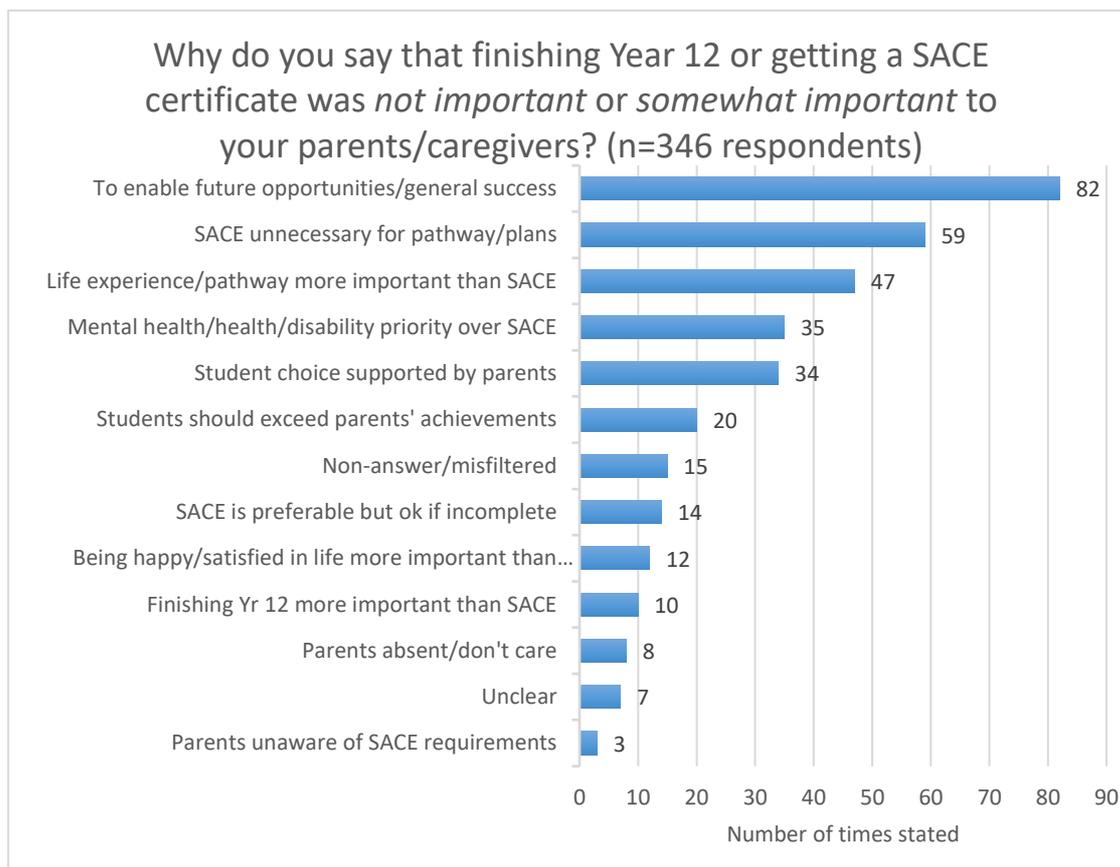
<i>Thinking about early March, how important was it to your parents/caregivers that you ...</i>	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Finish Year 12***				
Not important	78	7	21.9	3.4
Somewhat important	195	51	54.6	24.6
Very important	59	81	16.5	39.1
Extremely important	25	68	7.0	32.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Achieve your SACE certificate***				
Not important	93	19	26.1	9.3
Somewhat important	187	46	52.4	22.6
Very important	59	77	16.5	37.8
Extremely important	18	62	5.0	30.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: *** p<0.001

Source: Questions C9 and C10.

Sample: Leavers and stayers. Respondents who answered “don’t know”, “refused”, or “no such person” are excluded from the table.

Stayers were three times more likely than leavers to report that it was very important or extremely important to their parents that they finish Year 12 (24% of leavers; 72% of stayers) or achieve their SACE certificate (22% of leavers; 68% of stayers).



Notes: Source: Question C11.

Sample: Leavers and stayers who had indicated that that completing Year 12 and/or achieving their SACE certificate was not important or somewhat important to their parents. 35 leavers and stayers did not provide a response to C11 and are excluded from this figure.

Figure 22: Why do you say that finishing Year 12 or getting a SACE certificate was *not important* or *somewhat important* to your parents/caregivers?

Respondents who had indicated that that completing Year 12 and/or achieving their SACE certificate was not important or only somewhat important to their parents were asked a further question on why they their parents felt that way. The results are shown in Figure 22.

The most common answer was a positive response, clearly picking up on the *somewhat important* filter. Respondents stated that completing Year 12 or achieving SACE was somewhat important as this would *enable future opportunities or general success in life* (n=82), for example, “Because it will help me in my future to get a job”, “Because parents want their kids to finish school”, or, “So I can accomplish more in life”.

The second-most common answer was that *Year 12 or SACE was unnecessary for the respondent’s life pathway or plans* (n=59). For example, “I explained to [my parents] that the job I wanted to do does not require a SACE, and they were happy with me going down the pathway to get the job”, “Because I wasn’t going to be going to university, I was going to do an apprenticeship instead”, or, “Dad never finished Year 12 or got the SACE certificate – as he pointed out, you could always come back later and do courses to help you get a job”.

Fourteen percent of respondents to this question (n=47) indicated that their parents thought that an existing *life experience, pathway or opportunity was more important than finishing Year 12 or achieving SACE*. For example,

"I'm assuming that they wanted me to finish year 12 for the sake of it but they didn't care too much, so they said if you're not happy and want to leave and get a job, to do it."

Other respondents indicated that their parents knew there were different avenues to success, and, if a student had a job then parents were generally happy for them to leave school.

A significant number of respondents (n=35) indicated that their physical or mental health needed to be prioritised over completing Year 12 or achieving SACE, and some indicated that their disability made Year 12/SACE difficult. For example, "They realise that with my learning difficulties I would not be able to achieve it", or,

"[I was] More worried about my mental health and all of that, didn't worry about my SACE. Just my decision to leave school because I wasn't coping mentally or physically with school ... Parents more worried about my mental health and getting me out of that situation."

Many respondents (n=34) also indicated that while Year 12 or SACE may have been somewhat important to their parents, the respondent's choice was at least equally prioritised and supported by their parents. For example, "Because they made sure it was my decision and not theirs to finish", or, "Because they wanted me to [finish] but it was up to me, I guess".

Friends

The behaviours and attitudes of friends at school are associated with young people's school leaving status (Table 38). Over one half of stayers reported that none of their closest friends had a reputation for causing trouble, skipped classes once a week or more, or had left school before the end of Year 12, compared with 37%-46% of leavers. Additionally, 63% of stayers reported that most or all of their friends thought finishing school was important, compared with 52% of leavers.

Table 38. Friends at school

Leavers: Think about your closest friends at the time you were at school. How many of these friends ... Stayers: Think about your closest friends. Before early March of this year. How many of these friends ...	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Had a reputation for causing trouble**				
None of them	159	114	45.7	55.9
Some of them	124	73	35.6	35.8
Most of them	44	6	12.6	2.9
All of them	9	2	2.6	1.0
(Did not have any friends or don't know)	12	9	3.5	4.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Skipped classes once a week or more**				
None of them	135	111	38.8	54.4
Some of them	128	64	36.8	31.4
Most of them	45	12	12.9	5.9
All of them	16	6	4.6	2.9
(Did not have any friends or don't know)	24	11	6.9	5.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Left school before the end of year 12**				
None of them	127	105	36.5	51.5
Some of them	141	70	40.5	34.3
Most of them	44	14	12.6	6.9
All of them	10	2	2.9	1.0
(Did not have any friends or don't know)	26	13	7.5	6.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Thought it's okay to work hard at school				
None of them	12	9	3.5	4.4
Some of them	93	45	26.7	22.1
Most of them	139	75	39.9	36.8
All of them	88	69	25.3	33.8
(Did not have any friends or don't know)	16	6	4.6	2.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Thought finishing school was very important**				
None of them	20	6	5.8	2.9
Some of them	134	57	38.5	27.9
Most of them	133	82	38.2	40.2
All of them	47	47	13.5	23.0
(Did not have any friends or don't know)	14	12	4.0	5.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * p<0.01; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001

Source: Question C12.

Sample: Leavers and stayers. Excludes all proxy respondents.

Career advice and information

Types of people consulted

Respondents were asked about the type of people they had talked to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or go out to work. Around 45% of leavers and 46% of stayers reported speaking to only one type of person, while 40% of leavers and 38% of stayers reported speaking to a wider variety of people. Of concern, 15% of leavers had not spoken to anyone about

this issue when they were still at school. A similar proportion of stayers (16%) did not report speaking to anyone up until early March of this year.

The types of people that leavers and stayers talked to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work, and who they felt helped them the most with planning what to do are reported in Table 39 (n) and Table 40 (%).

Table 39. Types of people leavers and stayers talked to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work (n)

	Types of people consulted ^a		Types of people that helped the most	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Teachers and school leadership				
Other teachers	102	50	48	18
Year level/subject co-ordinator, subject/course counsellor	13	4	11	3
Other school staff	42	16	9	1
School leadership team	15	3	7	3
VET co-ordinator	3	3	1	2
Support staff officer	2	0	1	0
Specialist teacher	1	0	1	0
VET teacher	1	0	1	0
Counsellors, advisers and other support				
Case manager*	51	46	30	32
Career adviser at school*	42	39	14	18
School counsellor/wellbeing counsellor**	26	1	15	0
Therapist/psychiatrist/doctor	4	2	4	0
Social worker/youth worker	0	4	0	3
Family and friends				
Parents/caregivers	167	112	118	77
Classmates/friends	58	39	6	5
Other family	25	22	7	4
Partner	21	5	8	0
Brothers/sisters**	17	23	2	3
Other				
Personal contact (future boss, employer, co-worker)	6	1	2	1
No-one in particular/don't know	53	33	62	34
Total			347	204

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Leavers were asked these questions in relation to the time before they left school; stayers were asked in relation to the time up until early March. Respondents could provide multiple responses.

Source: Question G6 (who spoke to) and variable derived from Questions G6 and G7 (who helped the most).

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One respondent refused to answer G7 and is excluded from the last two columns of the table.

Table 40. Types of people leavers and stayers talked to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work (%)

	Types of people consulted ^a		Types of people that helped the most	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Teachers and school leadership				
Other teachers	29.3	24.5	13.8	8.8
Year level/subject co-ordinator, subject/course counsellor	3.7	2.0	3.2	1.5
Other school staff	12.1	7.8	2.6	0.5
School leadership team	4.3	1.5	2.0	1.5
VET co-ordinator	0.9	1.5	0.3	1.0
Support staff officer	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.0
Specialist teacher	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0
VET teacher	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0
Counsellors, advisers and other support				
Case manager*	14.7	22.6	8.7	15.7
Career adviser at school*	12.1	19.1	4.0	8.8
School counsellor/wellbeing counsellor**	7.5	0.5	4.3	0.0
Therapist/psychiatrist/doctor	1.2	1.0	1.2	0.0
Social worker/youth worker	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.5
Family and friends				
Parents/caregivers	48.0	54.9	34.0	37.8
Classmates/friends	16.7	19.1	1.7	2.5
Other family	7.2	10.8	2.0	2.0
Partner	6.0	2.5	2.3	0.0
Brothers/sisters**	4.9	11.3	0.6	1.5
Other				
Personal contact (future boss, employer, co-worker)	1.7	0.5	0.6	0.5
No-one in particular/don't know	15.2	16.2	17.9	16.7
Total			100.0	100.0

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Leavers were asked these questions in relation to the time before they left school; stayers were asked in relation to the time up until early March. Respondents could provide multiple responses.

Source: Question G6 (who spoke to) and variable derived from Questions G6 and G7 (who helped the most).

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One respondent refused to answer G7 and is excluded from the last two columns of the table.

Parents and caregivers were the most commonly reported group. Roughly one half of the young people in the study had spoken to their parents or caregivers about whether to continue at school (48% of leavers and 55% of stayers), and over one-third of the young people in the study said that of the people they had spoken to, parents and caregivers had helped the most with planning what to do (34% of leavers and 38% of stayers).

“Other teachers” were the second most common group spoken to about whether to leave school (29% of leavers and 25% of stayers). Around 14% of leavers and 9% of stayers felt that other teachers had helped them the most in planning what to do.

For stayers, case managers were the third most commonly spoken to group. Around 23% of stayers spoke to case managers about whether to leave school, and 16% felt that they had helped the most in planning what to do.

While classmates and friends were also commonly spoken to (17%-19%), they were rarely nominated as the people who helped the most with planning what to do (2%-3%).

Career information

The types of career information used by young people and the perceived usefulness of these sources are reported in Table 41 (n) and Table 42 (%). Respondents were asked about websites, university or TAFE information days, career expos, school career resource centres/libraries, and “other” information sources. Respondents who had previously indicated that they had talked to a career adviser at school about choosing subjects or whether to continue at school, do other training, or go out to work were also asked about the perceived usefulness of this information source.

Table 41. Sources of career information and perceived usefulness (n)

	Looked for career information from... ^a	How useful would you rate the information source? ^b				
		Not useful	Some-what useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total
Websites						
Leavers	187	12	100	56	18	186
Stayers	127	2	65	43	17	127
University or TAFE information days**						
Leavers	142	6	77	39	18	140
Stayers	111	2	55	39	14	110
Careers expos***						
Leavers	87	4	44	27	11	86
Stayers	84	0	36	30	18	84
School career resource centre/ library***						
Leavers	47	7	31	7	2	47
Stayers	61	4	39	13	5	61
Other information source						
Leavers	43	1	13	12	15	41
Stayers	24	1	6	10	5	22
Career adviser at school**						
Leavers	71	12	33	15	5	65
Stayers	64	2	13	25	18	58

Notes: *p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Persons responding “Yes”. Leavers were asked this question in relation to the time before leaving school.

Source: Questions G2 (talked to career adviser about choosing school subjects), G6 (talked to career adviser about whether to continue at school, do other training, or go out to work), G8 (other sources of career information). Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. Respondents who answered “Don’t know” or refused to answer an item are excluded from the results for that item.

b. Source: Question G9. Sample: Leavers and stayers who had looked for career information from the source, excluding proxy. Respondents and respondents who answered “Don’t know” or refused to answer an item are excluded from the results for that item.

Table 42. Sources of career information and perceived usefulness (%)

	Looked for career information from... ^a	How useful would you rate the information source? ^b				
		Not useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total
Websites						
Leavers	54.4	6.5	53.8	30.1	9.7	100.0
Stayers	62.3	1.6	51.2	33.9	13.4	100.0
University or TAFE information days**						
Leavers	41.3	4.3	55.0	27.9	12.9	100.0
Stayers	54.4	1.8	50.0	35.5	12.7	100.0
Careers expos***						
Leavers	25.3	4.7	51.2	31.4	12.8	100.0
Stayers	41.2	0.0	42.9	35.7	21.4	100.0
School career resource centre/ library***						
Leavers	13.6	14.9	66.0	14.9	4.3	100.0
Stayers	30.2	6.6	64.0	21.3	8.2	100.0
Other information source						
Leavers	12.4	2.4	31.7	29.3	36.6	100.0
Stayers	11.8	4.6	27.3	45.5	22.7	100.0
Career adviser at school**						
Leavers	20.4	18.5	50.8	23.1	7.7	100.0
Stayers	31.4	3.5	22.4	43.1	31.0	100.0

Notes: *p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Persons responding "Yes". Leavers were asked this question in relation to the time before leaving school.

Source: Questions G2 (talked to career adviser about choosing school subjects), G6 (talked to career adviser about whether to continue at school, do other training, or go out to work), G8 (other sources of career information). Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. Respondents who answered "Don't know" or refused to answer an item are excluded from the results for that item.

b. Source: Question G9. Sample: Leavers and stayers who had looked for career information from the source, excluding proxy. Respondents and respondents who answered "Don't know" or refused to answer an item are excluded from the results for that item.

Of these sources of career information, the most common sources used by young people in the study were websites (54% of leavers, 62% of stayers), university or TAFE information days (41% of leavers, 54% of stayers), and career expos (41% of stayers). In general, leavers tended to be less likely than stayers to have used each of the listed sources, with the differences being statistically significant for university or TAFE information days, career expos, school career resource centres/libraries and career advisers at schools.

Among the young people who consulted the various career information sources listed in Table 41 and Table 42, very few rated the information sources as "not useful". For most information sources, at least one-half of leavers and stayers who had looked for career information from the source rated it as "somewhat useful", with smaller proportions rating the information source as "very useful" or "extremely useful". The exceptions were somewhat more favourable ratings for career advisers at school (by stayers who had used this source), and ratings for other information sources (by stayers and leavers who had specifically named other information sources).

Leavers and information about options after leaving school (including SACE completion)

Of concern, only 56% of leavers somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to get information about the options they had after leaving school (Table 43). Similarly, only 57% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that when they decided to leave school they had enough information about what they wanted to do.

Table 43. Leavers: Information about options after leaving school

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
	N					
I knew where to get information about the options I had after leaving school	38	54	61	126	65	344
When I decided to leave school I had enough information about what I wanted to do	54	56	40	98	100	348
	%					
I knew where to get information about the options I had after leaving school	11.1	15.7	17.7	36.6	18.9	100.0
When I decided to leave school I had enough information about what I wanted to do	15.5	16.1	11.5	28.2	28.7	100.0

Notes: Source: Question G5.

Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents and respondents who answered "don't know".

Leavers' awareness of options to complete SACE after leaving school is reported in Table 44. Just under 10% of leavers were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of SACE, and a further 50% were aware that there were various ways to complete SACE after leaving school. However, 41% of leavers were unaware of such options.

Table 44. Leavers: Awareness of options for completing SACE after leaving school

	N	%
Doing an apprenticeship, traineeship, or VET/TAFE course after leaving school (early March) as part of SACE	35	9.5
Aware there are various ways to complete SACE after leaving school	183	49.6
Not aware there are various ways to complete SACE after leaving school / Don't know	151	40.9
Total	369	100.0

Notes: Source: Questions C5 and H9.

Sample: Leavers. Two respondents refused to answer H9 and are excluded from this table.

Suggestions for further assistance after leaving school

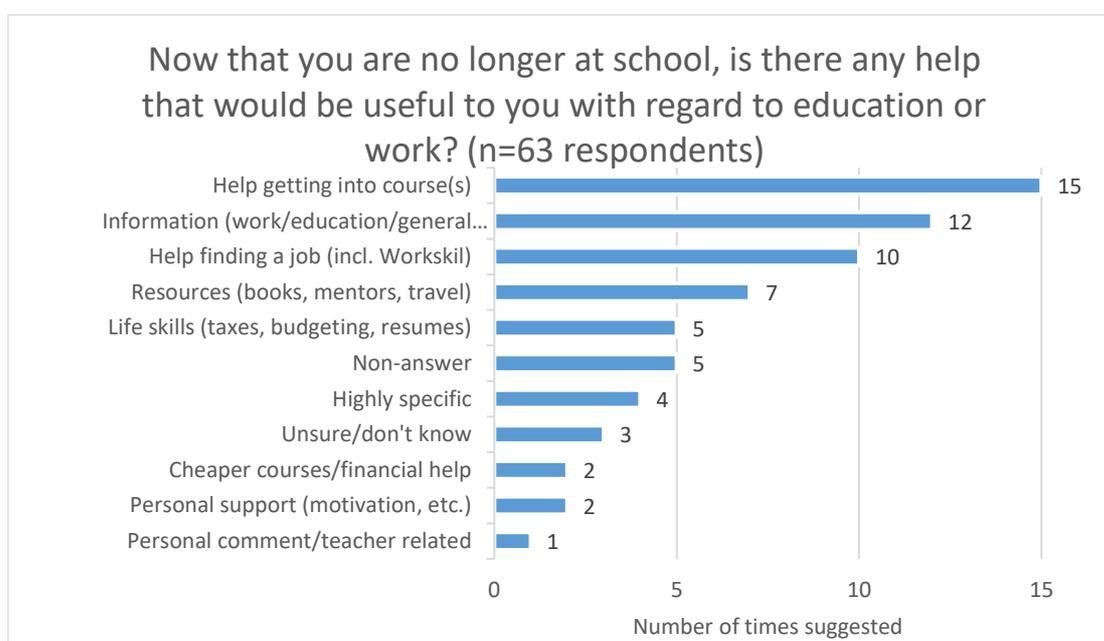
Leavers were asked, now that they were no longer at school, whether there is any help that would be useful to them with regard to education or work. Over 80% of leavers indicated that they could not think of anything or that they didn't know (Table 45). The 18% of leavers who indicated that there was help that would be useful to them suggested various forms of help. The four main types of help identified were *help getting into courses, information on work, education or general post-school pathways, help finding a job, and resources* (Figure 23).

Table 45. Leavers: Now that you are no longer at school, is there any help that would be useful to you with regard to education or work?

	N	%
Yes	63	18.1
No/can't think of anything	256	73.6
Don't know	27	7.8
Refused	2	0.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: Source: Question I1.

Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.



Notes: Source: Question I1.

Sample: Leavers who indicated that, now that they had left school, help would be useful to them with regard to education or work (n=63). Three respondents gave two reasons. As respondents were not asked which their main suggestion was, responses are aggregated in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Now that you are no longer at school, is there any help that would be useful to you with regard to education or work?

Help getting into courses (n=15) included respondents who wanted assistance in finding ways to complete SACE after having left school, for example, completing subjects online or from home, or attending evening classes. This category also included respondents who wanted help in getting into TAFE or getting into other courses that do not require SACE completion.

Information on work, education or general post-school pathways (n=12) mostly included requests for advice and information on where to go (online and in-person) to find further education and employment services. Interestingly, when immediately offered information about education or employment services in the following item (I2), three respondents (who had indicated they wanted information) declined the offer.

Some respondents (n=10) indicated that *help finding a job* would be useful, including, “Better access into services that will get you into a position where you are looking for an apprenticeship or a traineeship”, or, “Just easier ways to find apprenticeships and jobs around [regional location]”. Respondents who suggested that *resources* would be helpful (n=7) included examples such as course textbooks and computer hardware, as well as getting back in touch with former school staff or employers who might be able to offer help.

Requests for information about support services

While only 18% of leavers could suggest a form of help that would be useful to them regarding education or work (Table 45), 36% of leavers asked to be provided with information about support services (Table 46). A larger proportion of stayers requested such information (48%). A link to a website listing a range of services was provided to these respondents (either via text message or read out by the interviewer).

Table 46. Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support that is available?

	N		%	
	Leaver	Stayer	Leaver	Stayer
Yes	132	100	35.6	47.9
No / Don't know	239	109	64.4	52.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: p<0.05

Source: Question I2. The question for leavers was “Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support which is available to you, including options for completing SACE after leaving school?”

Sample: Leavers and stayers.

How to define success – Earning and learning pathways

Highlights

Stayers:

- The proportions of stayers who were enrolled in or who reported completion of the compulsory SACE requirements ranged from 68% for the Research Project, to 77% for the numeracy unit, 80% for PLP, and 84% for the literacy unit.
- Just over one-half of stayers reported that they were enrolled in or had completed all four compulsory SACE requirements by early March. However, it should be noted that these students may still be at risk of not completing SACE, as this measure does not take into account grades (for completed subjects), nor total credits undertaken.
- 46% of stayers reported that they had started a school-based apprenticeship, traineeship or other VET courses in Year 11 or Year 12.

Leavers:

- 31% of leavers were in full-time education, training or employment in early March, and a further 28% were in part-time education, training or employment.
- 41% of leavers were not engaged in earning or learning activities.
- There are various options for completing SACE after leaving school, including VET. In early March of the year after leaving school, just under 10% of leavers reported that they were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of their SACE.

The earning and learning pathways of leavers and “at risk” stayers are addressed in this section. This addresses the research questions of “What are stayers who do not appear to be on a SACE pathway currently doing?”, and “What are leavers currently doing?”

Stayers: School subjects

Students’ participation in the mandatory SACE requirements and VET in school have been described above in the section on Subject choice and VET in School. To recap, for the stayers:

- The proportions of stayers who were enrolled in or who reported completion of the compulsory SACE requirements ranged from 68% for the Research Project, to 77% for the numeracy unit, 80% for PLP, and 84% for the literacy unit.
- Just over one-half of stayers reported that they were enrolled in or had completed all four compulsory SACE requirements in early March. However, it should be noted that these students may still be at risk of not completing SACE, as this measure does not take into account grades (for completed subjects), nor total credits undertaken that could count towards their SACE.

Around 46% of stayers reported that in Year 11 or Year 12 they had started a school-based apprenticeship, traineeship or other VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation.

Leavers: Post-school pathways

Leavers were asked to describe what they were doing in early March of the year after leaving school (2020). More than one activity could be reported. Table 47 shows the earning and learning activities of leavers. Overall, 31% of leavers reported being in full-time work, education and/or

training and a further 28% of leavers were in part-time work, education and/or training. However, 41% of leavers were not in employment, education or training (Table 47, main activity). The sociodemographic and enrolment characteristics of leavers in each of these groups are reported in the section on “Further analysis”.

Of the leavers in employment, 54% reported being in casual work, and a further 5% reported having both a casual job and another job (Table 48). Further analysis showed that 30% of those in full-time work were in casual jobs, compared with 76% of those employed in part-time jobs.

A more detailed activity breakdown is provided in Table 49. More than one activity could be nominated. Of the leavers who were not in employment, education or training:

- 42% were looking for work, 5% were looking for study, and 3% were looking for an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- 10% reported that they were unable to work or study and a further 26% indicated they were not working and not looking for work.
- 5% were caring for another person.
- A small number of leavers indicated they were doing unpaid work – in an internship, practicum or as a volunteer – playing sport, or travelling.

There are various options for completing SACE after leaving school, including VET. As noted earlier in the report, just under one in ten leavers reported that they were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of their SACE in early March (after leaving school) (Table 13). The challenge of completing SACE after leaving school is returned to later in the report.

Table 47. Leavers: Post-school earning and learning activities in March of the year after leaving school

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Work, apprenticeship or traineeship		
Yes, full-time	84	22.6
Yes, part-time	92	24.8
Yes, hours not specified	2	0.5
Not in work, apprenticeship or traineeship	193	52.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>100.0</i>
University/VET/other study^a		
Yes, full-time	27	7.3
Yes, part-time	18	4.9
Yes, hours not specified	10	2.7
Not in study or training	316	85.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Main activity^{bc}		
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	84	23.4
Full-time university/VET/other study	27	7.5
Part-time work and/or part-time study	101	28.1
Not in work or study	147	41.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: a. Excludes apprenticeships and traineeships. b. Respondents who nominated several activities are classified by the first relevant activity that is listed. Source: Derived from Question B1.

Sample: Leavers. Twelve respondents could not be classified due to missing data on hours worked (n=2) or whether their study was full-time or part-time (n=10).

c. A further break down by year left school requested by the DfE suggested that those who leave in Year 10 do better in the transition from school (e.g. 26% Year 10 leavers, 38% of Year 11 leavers and 42% of Year 12 leavers were not in work or study). However, only 19 leavers were in Year 10 when they left school, so the cell sizes are quite small and the results do not reach statistical significance. The table has not been included in the report due to the small cell sizes.

Table 48. Leavers who were in employment, apprenticeships or traineeships: Casual work in March of the year after leaving school

	N	%
Employed as a casual		
Yes (casual job only)	95	54.0
Yes (casual job + other job)	8	4.6
No	70	39.8
Don't know	3	1.7
Total	176	100.0

Notes: Sample: Leavers who were in employment, apprenticeships or traineeships. Missing data for 2 persons in employment, apprenticeships or traineeships.

Source: Question B5.

Sample: Leavers who were in employment, apprenticeships or traineeships in early March

Table 49. Leavers Post-school earning and learning activities in March of the year after leaving school – detailed breakdowns

	N		% ^a	
	Leavers not in employment, education or training (n=147) ^a	All leavers (n=371)	Leavers not in employment, education or training (n=147) ^a	All leavers (n=371)
Working	0	164	0	44.2
Apprenticeship/traineeship	0	20	0	5.4
Looking for work	62	66	42.2	17.8
Looking for apprenticeship/traineeship	4	4	2.7	1.1
Studying at university	0	10	0	2.7
VET/TAFE course	0	34	0	9.2
Studying elsewhere	0	13	0	3.5
Looking for study	7	8	4.9	2.2
Unable to work or study	15	15	10.2	4.0
Not working and not looking for work (excluding unable to work or study)	38	39	25.9	10.5
Caring for another person	8	9	5.4	2.4
Playing sport	3	3	2.0	0.8
Working unpaid as a volunteer	2	2	1.4	0.5
Working unpaid in an internship/practicum	1	1	0.7	0.3
Travelling	1	2	0.7	0.5
Other (unclear)	9	11	6.1	3.0
Don't know	11	11	7.5	3.0

Notes: a. Percentages may not sum to 100% as respondents could nominate more than one activity.

Source: Question B1.

Sample: Leavers

How to define success – What matters to young people?

Highlights

The plans and aspirations of young people indicate that the majority of young people view themselves as being on an earning and/or learning pathway.

- Most stayers plan to stay at school until the end of the year and complete SACE. Post-school, most stayers plan to look for/start paid employment, a course of study or vocational training.
- Over half of all leavers (60%) were engaged in earning or learning activities, with a further 37% expecting to start paid employment, a course of study or vocational training in the next few years.

Many leavers expressed satisfaction with their transition from school. For example:

- Four out of five leavers felt that, all things considered, leaving school had been the right decision for them; and
- 65% of leavers were very happy with what they had achieved after leaving school.

However, the experiences of leavers did vary:

- For the 70% of leavers who agreed that they had successfully made the transition from school, their most common explanations were that they were engaged in work, further education or parenthood, or that they were able to follow their life plans.
- The 13% of leavers who neither agreed nor disagreed that they had made a successful transition may have been overly optimistic, given that their most common explanations were that post-school life *hasn't worked out as planned* or that *some things have worked out but some haven't*.
- For the 17% of leavers who disagreed that they had successfully made the transition from school, the most common reason was that they *felt unprepared for, or were struggling with, life after school*.

Study participants were asked what sort of advice they would give on how to design the ideal school that would help them to achieve their future goals. The most popular themes were:

- Personalised support (27%);
- More flexibility or differentiation in delivery (22%); and
- More subject or course options (18%).

Study participants were also asked what they thought schools should be helping students with. The four main offerings that they thought should be in schools were:

- Post-school life skills (37%);
- Social and collaborative skills (31%);
- Intrapersonal skills (22%); and
- Information and training specific to work or higher education (20%).

Young people's plans and aspirations

Year 12/SACE completion plans

The stayer cohort was drawn from young people who the DfE had identified as being at risk of not completing Year 12/SACE. Stayers were asked whether they had planned, in early March, to complete Year 12 or whether they planned to complete SACE this year or at a later stage.

- Over 90% of the “at risk” stayers planned to stay at school until the end of the year (Table 50).
- 78% planned to complete SACE this year and a further 8% planned to complete SACE at a later stage. 14% were not planning to complete SACE or were unsure (Table 51).
- Restricting attention to those who planned to stay at school until the end of the year, 84% planned to complete SACE this year and a further 8% planned to complete SACE at a later stage (Table 51).
- In contrast, among those who did not plan to stay at school until the end of the year or were unsure if they would stay, two-thirds ($n=13$) had no plans to complete SACE (Table 51).

The sociodemographic and enrolment characteristics of students in each of these groups are reported in the section on ‘Further analysis / School pathways (stayers)’.

Table 50. Stayers: School and SACE completion plans in early March

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
	N			
Planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12/the year	190	16	3	209
Planned to complete SACE this year	163	41	5	209
Planned to complete SACE at a later stage (if not planning to complete this year)	17	23	6	46
	Row %			
Planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12/the year	90.9	7.7	1.4	100.0
Planned to complete SACE this year	78.0	19.6	2.4	100.0
Planned to complete SACE at a later stage (if not planning to complete this year)	37.0	50.0	13.0	100.0

Notes: Source: Questions C1, C2, and C3.

Sample: Stayers

Table 51. Stayers: SACE completion plans in early March

	Yes, this year	Yes, later stage	No or don't know	Total
	N			
All stayers	163	17	29	209
Stayers who planned to stay at school until the end of the year	159	15	16	190
Stayers who did not plan to stay at school until the end of the year or were unsure	4	2	13	19
	Row %			
All stayers	78.0	8.1	13.9	100.0
Stayers who planned to stay at school until the end of the year	83.7	7.9	8.4	100.0
Stayers who did not plan to stay at school until the end of the year or were unsure	21.1	10.5	68.4	100.0

Notes: Source: Derived from Questions C2, and C3.

Sample: Stayers.

Post-school plans

Study participants were also asked about what they planned to do after leaving school. This was asked as an open-ended question and more than one activity could be reported. Table 52 provides a summary of leavers' and stayers' post-school earning and learning plans. Leavers were more likely than stayers to have had plans to start or look for a job, apprenticeship or traineeship after leaving school (57% of leavers and 35% of stayers).

Table 52. Post-school earning and learning plans

	N		% ^a	
	Leavers (n=347)	Stayers (n=204)	Leavers (n=347)	Stayers (n=204)
Earning activities: Start or look for job, apprenticeship or traineeship^{***}				
Yes	196	72	56.5	35.3
No	87	108	25.1	52.9
No real plans/don't know	64	24	18.4	11.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Learning activities: Start or look for university, VET or other course^{a ***}				
Yes	72	103	20.8	50.5
No	211	77	60.8	37.8
No real plans/don't know	64	24	18.4	11.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Summary: Start or look for earning and/or learning activity				
Yes	253	164	72.9	80.4
No	30	16	8.7	7.8
No real plans/don't know	64	24	18.4	11.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; *** p<0.001

a. Excludes apprenticeships, traineeships, and continuing school elsewhere.

Source: Leavers: Derived from B1, B3, B4, C13 and C14. Stayers: Derived from Question C14.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One respondent refused to answer relevant questions and is excluded from the table

Counterbalancing this, leavers were less likely than stayers to have had plans to start or look for a university, VET or other course after leaving school (21% of leavers and 51% of stayers). Overall, however, the post-school plans of the majority of leavers and stayers included starting or looking for some form of earning and/or learning activity (73% of leavers and 80% of stayers).

A more detailed activity breakdown is provided in Table 53. The most common plans of leavers when they made the decision to leave school were to start a job, apprenticeship or traineeship on a full-time basis (27%) or part-time basis (16%), look for a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (14%), or start a VET/TAFE course (15%). Interestingly, for stayers, all of whom were considered "at risk" of not completing Year 12/SACE by the DfE, the most common plan was to start studying at university after leaving school (38%).

Further analysis of those who had post school plans that did *not* include starting or looking for earning and/or learning activities (n=30 leavers and 16 stayers) revealed that their plans were varied, with no one activity standing out.

Table 53. Post-school earning and learning plans– detailed breakdowns

	N		% ^a	
	Leavers (n=347)	Stayers (n=204)	Leavers (n=347)	Stayers (n=204)
Earning activities				
Start in a full-time job, apprenticeship or traineeship (or hours not specified)	94	42	27.1	20.6
Start in a part-time job, apprenticeship or traineeship	56	13	16.1	6.4
Join defence force	7	3	2.0	1.5
Look for a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	49	23	14.1	11.3
Learning activities				
Start studying at university	15	78	4.3	38.2
Start a TAFE or VET course	51	28	14.7	13.7
Continue school elsewhere	5	4	1.4	2.0
Study elsewhere (not at school)	9	3	2.6	1.5
Look for study	3	0	0.9	0.0
Other activities				
Have a gap year	1	10	0.3	4.9
Not work and not look for work	7	1	2.0	0.5
Unable to work or study	1	0	0.3	0.0
Recover from illness	2	0	0.6	0.0
Start own business	3	1	0.9	0.5
Focus on sport	0	1	0.0	0.5
Work, unpaid, as a volunteer	1	1	0.3	0.5
Care for another person, unpaid	3	1	0.9	0.5
Travel	4	4	1.2	2.0
Move location	2	1	0.6	0.5
Other (unclear)	7	1	2.0	0.5
Had no real plans when left school/don't know*	64	24	18.4	11.8

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100% as respondents could nominate more than one activity.

Source: Leavers: Derived from Questions B1, B3, B4, C13, and C14. Stayers: Question C14.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding proxy respondents. One respondent refused to answer relevant questions and is excluded from the table

In early March, just over one-half of the leavers were doing what they had planned to do after leaving school, 33% were doing something else, and 16% had no plans when they left school or didn't know if they were following their plans (Table 54). This is examined in further detail in Table 55. Of concern, 65% of those who had no plans when they left school and 51% of those who were not doing what they had planned to do, were not engaged in work, education or training in early March. This can be contrasted with 24% of those who were doing what they had planned, illustrating the importance of having a well thought out post-school plan.

Table 54. Leavers: In early March, were you doing what you had planned to do after leaving school?

In early March, were you doing what you had planned to do after leaving school?	N	%
Yes, I was doing what I had planned to do	180	51.7
No, I ended up doing something else	114	32.8
I had no real plans / don't know	54	15.5
Total	348	100.0

Notes: Source: Question C13.

Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.

Table 55. Leavers: Whether following post-school plan, by post school earning and learning activities

	In early March, were you doing what you had planned to do after leaving school?		
	Yes	No	No plans / don't know
Post-school earning and learning activities	N		
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	60	16	6
Full-time university, VET or other course	15	8	4
Part-time work and/or study	57	30	9
Not in work or study	41	55	35
<i>Total</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>54</i>
Post-school earning and learning activities	%		
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	34.7	14.7	11.1
Full-time university, VET or other course	8.7	7.3	7.4
Part-time work and/or study	33.0	27.5	16.7
Not in work or study	23.7	50.5	64.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: p<0.001

Source: Question C13 and variable derived from Questions B1 and C14.

Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents. Twelve respondents could not be classified due to missing data on hours worked (n=2) or whether their study was full-time or part-time (n=10).

Future plans and expectations of leavers (next few years)

Leavers who were not engaged in earning and learning activities were asked about their plans and expectations for the next few years (Table 56).

Table 56. Leavers: Plans and expectations for the next few years

	N	%
Do you expect to start paid employment in the next few years?^a		
Yes, definitely	113	58.6
Yes, perhaps	52	26.9
No	13	6.7
Don't know	15	7.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>193</i>	<i>100</i>
Do you intend to start a course of study or vocational training in the next few years?^b		
Yes, definitely	103	35.6
Yes, perhaps	93	32.2
No	80	27.7
Don't know	13	4.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>100.0</i>
What type of course or training would that be?^c		
A University Course	30	15.3
A TAFE or other vocational course	104	53.1
An Apprenticeship	35	17.9
A Traineeship	7	3.6
Combination of the above	2	1.0
Other (Unclear)	1	0.5
Don't know	17	8.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>100</i>

Notes: a. Source: H7. Sample: Leavers who were not in a job, apprenticeship or traineeship. Two respondents refused to answer this question and are excluded from the table. b. Source: H5. Sample: Leavers who were not in post-school education/training. 28 respondents did not answer this question and are excluded from the table. c. Source: H6. Sample: Leavers who intend to start education/training.

Around 86% of leavers who were not in a job, apprenticeship or traineeship expected to start paid employment in the next few years. Similarly, around 68% of leavers who were not undertaking a university, VET or other post-school course expected to start a course of study or vocational training in the next few years, with TAFE or other vocational courses being the most commonly nominated.

Bringing together earning and learning activities and plans

Summary measures of earning and learning pathways are reported in Table 57. These measures bring together study participants' activities in early March and with their plans and expectations for after leaving school (stayers) or the next few years (leavers).

Table 57. Earning and learning pathways: Summary measures

	N			%		
	Yes	No/ Don't know	Total	Yes	No/ Don't know	Total
Stayers						
Completed/doing the 4 compulsory SACE reqs.	107	97	204	52.5	47.6	100.0
+ Plans to complete Year 12/SACE	102	102	204	50.0	50.0	100.0
+ Post-school plans include earning and/or learning activities	83	121	204	40.7	59.3	100.0
Leavers						
In earning and/or learning activities ^a	224	147	371	60.4	39.6	100.0
OR Expects to start earning and/or learning activities in next few years	358	10	368	97.3	2.7	100.0

Notes: a. The numbers and percentages in this row differ slightly from those reported in Table 47. Table 47 included a consideration of full-time/part-time status and was based upon a slightly smaller number of leavers due to missing data on hours worked and study load.

Source: Derived from Questions B1, C1-C4, C13-C14, F2, F4, F6, F8, H5 and H7.

Sample: Stayers, excluding proxy respondents, and leavers. Three respondents refused to answer relevant questions used in second summary variable for leavers.

For stayers, the summary measures take into account participation in the four compulsory SACE requirements (by early March), Year 12 and SACE completion plans, and post-school earning and learning plans. These represent the common SACE pathway of the completion of senior secondary school followed by participation in post-school earning and learning activities. As already noted, 53% of stayers reported that they were enrolled in or had completed the four compulsory SACE requirements. After taking into consideration plans and expectations:

- 50% of stayers were enrolled in/had completed the four compulsory SACE requirements *and* planned to complete Year 12 and SACE.
- After also taking into account post-school plans: 41% of stayers were enrolled in/had completed the four compulsory SACE requirements, planned to complete Year 12/SACE, *and* had post-school plans which included earning or learning activities (that is, they planned to start or look for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, a VET course or other post-school study).

It should be noted, however, that many of the stayers who had not yet met the four compulsory SACE requirements embedded in these measures had nevertheless planned to complete Year 12/SACE and/or engage in post-school earning and learning activities. Further research is required to examine whether these young people are able to achieve their plans.

The summary measures for leavers take into account their post-school earning and learning activities (in early March), as well as their expectations for starting earning or learning activities in the next few years. Sixty percent of leavers were engaged in earning or learning activities in early March¹³. Of those leavers not in earning or learning activities, nearly all expected to start earning or learning in the next few years. While it is not necessarily the case that these expectations will be met, this summary measure suggests that most leavers anticipate being on an earning or learning pathway. Whether or not these intentions will be realised, it also means more than half the leavers were on an earning or learning pathway

Satisfaction with the decision to leave school and the transition process

Four out of five leavers felt that all things considered, up until early March, leaving school had been the right decision for them (Table 58). In contrast, 13% of leavers felt it had not been the right decision for them, and 7% were undecided. Leavers' explanations for these responses are provided below.

Table 58. Leavers: All things considered, up until early March, do you think that leaving school was the right decision for you??

	N	%
Yes	296	80.0
No	49	13.2
Don't know	25	6.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: Source: Question E1.

Sample: Leavers. One respondent refused to answer this question and is excluded from the table.

Leavers who reported that, up until early March, leaving school had been the *right* decision for them were asked to explain why. This was asked as an open-ended question, and interviewers could either select from a set of pre-coded options or record the verbatim response which was subsequently coded by the research team. A wide range of explanations for why leaving school had been the right decision were given (Table 59).

Two of the most common reasons related to student well-being: mental health reasons (18%); and school being too stressful (12%). Another two of the most common reasons given by leavers related to school and school work: not liking school or not finding it interesting (15%); and school not meeting the student's needs (12%). Finally, two other commonly reported reasons related to post-school opportunities: having a job (13%); and having an apprenticeship or traineeship (9%). A range of other less commonly reported reasons are also shown in Table 59.

¹³ This differs slightly from the percentage reported in Table 47 due to the treatment of missing values. Table 47 excluded respondents who could not specify whether they were working or studying part-time or full-time. The summary measure used in Table 57 does not distinguish between part-time and full-time status and is therefore able to include these respondents.

Table 59. Leavers: Reasons that leaving school was the right decision for them (n=294)

	N	%
Student well-being		
Mental health reasons	52	17.7
School was too stressful	35	11.9
Bullying at school	9	3.1
School and school work		
Didn't like school / didn't find it interesting	45	15.3
School couldn't meet my needs	35	11.9
School work was too hard / difficult	23	7.8
Learn better outside of school	21	7.1
My results at school were not good enough	8	2.7
Post school opportunities		
Had a job in early March	39	13.3
Had an apprenticeship, traineeship in early March	27	9.2
Because I'm happy now / doing as planned	26	8.8
Was doing a course in early March	21	7.1
Wanted to be independent / move out / find work	18	6.1
Other		
Had own plans / motivations for leaving	13	4.4
Finished what I wanted to do / didn't need Year 12	12	4.1
Needed to care for someone	8	2.7
Other	4	1.4
Don't know	7	2.4

Notes: Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could report more than one reason.

Source: Question E2.

Sample: Leavers who reported that leaving school was the right decision for them. Two respondents who refused to answer E2 are excluded from this table.

Leavers who reported that, up until early March, leaving school had been the *wrong* decision for them were also asked to explain why. Again, this was asked as an open-ended question. The results are reported in Table 60 but should be treated with caution due to the low sample size (n=48). Many of the explanations related to the perceived benefits of staying at school – in general (25%), or more specifically for helping to get the young person into a job (15%) or a course (13%). Around 10% of leavers who felt that leaving had been the wrong decision said that they had felt forced out.

Further analysis showed that leavers' post-school activities are associated with leavers' assessments of whether leaving school was the right decision for them, confirming some of the above results. The proportion of leavers thinking that leaving was the right decision was highest for leavers who were in a full-time job, apprenticeship or traineeship (95%), and lowest for leavers who were not in employment, education or training (69%) (Table 61).

Table 60. Leavers: Reasons that leaving school was the wrong decision for them (n=48)

	N	%
Benefits of staying at school		
Staying at school would have helped (general)	12	25.0
Staying at school would have helped me get a job	7	14.6
Staying at school would have helped me get into a course	6	12.5
Staying at school would have helped me get an apprenticeship/traineeship	2	4.2
Post-school activities		
Not doing much in early March	3	6.3
Out of work in early March	1	2.1
Life hasn't gone as planned/not ready for life after school	1	2.1
Other		
Confirms regret leaving	10	20.8
Felt forced out	5	10.4
Don't know	3	6.3
Other	4	8.3

Notes: Percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could report more than one reason.

Source: Question E3.

Sample: Leavers who reported that leaving school was the wrong decision for them. One respondent who refused to answer E3 is excluded from this table.

Table 61. Leavers: "All things considered, up until early March, do you think that leaving school was the right decision for you?", by main activity

<i>All things considered, up until early March, do you think that leaving school was the right decision for you?</i>	N			%		
	Yes	No/ Don't know	Total	Yes	No/ Don't know	Total
Main activity^{a, ***}						
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	80	4	84	95.2	4.8	100.0
Full-time university/VET/other study	23	4	27	85.2	14.8	100.0
Part-time work and/or part-time study	83	17	100	83.0	17.0	100.0
Not in work or study	101	46	147	68.7	31.3	100.0

Notes: * p<0.01; ** p<0.05; *** <p<0.001

a. Respondents who nominated several activities are classified by the first relevant activity that is listed.

Source: Derived from Questions B1 and E1.

Sample: Leavers. Excludes respondents with missing data on hours worked or whether their study was full-time or part-time.

Leaver's satisfaction with the decision to leave school and the transition process are further examined in the following three tables:

- Over three-quarters of leavers somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy that they made the decision to leave school (Table 62).
- 65% of leavers were very happy with what they had achieved after leaving school (Table 62).
- Just over one-half of leavers were doing what they had planned to do (Table 63).
- Among the leavers in a job, apprenticeship or traineeship, 58% reported that it was the type of job they would like to do long-term (Table 64).
- 70% of leavers agreed that they had successfully made the transition from school (Table 62).

Table 62. Leavers: Satisfaction with the decision to leave school and the transition process

	Strongly disagree	Some-what disagree	Neither	Some-what agree	Strongly agree	Total
	<i>N</i>					
I am happy that I made the decision to leave school ^a	24	23	32	64	197	340
Up until early March I was very happy with what I had achieved since leaving school ^a	32	50	40	107	117	346
By March this year, I had successfully made the transition from school ^b	19	43	48	119	132	361
	<i>%</i>					
I am happy that I made the decision to leave school ^a	7.1	6.8	9.4	18.8	57.9	100.0
Up until early March I was very happy with what I had achieved since leaving school ^a	9.2	14.5	11.6	30.9	33.8	100.0
By March this year, I had successfully made the transition from school ^b	5.3	11.9	13.3	33.0	36.6	100.0

Notes: Source: Questions D2(l), G10(b), and D1.

a. Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents and respondents who answered “don’t know” or who refused to answer the question.

b. Sample: Leavers, excluding respondents who answered “don’t know” or who refused to answer the question.

Table 63. Leavers: Are you doing what you planned to do after leaving school, or did you have other plans when you left school?

	N	%
Yes, I was doing what I had planned to do	180	51.7
No, I ended up doing something else	114	32.8
I had no real plans when I left school	47	13.5
Don't know	7	2.0
<i>Total</i>	348	100.0

Notes: Source: Question C13.
Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.

Table 64. Leavers: Is the job, apprenticeship or traineeship you had in early March the type of job you would like to do long-term?

	N	%
Yes	99	57.9
No	68	39.8
Don't know	4	2.3
<i>Total</i>	171	100.0

Notes: Source: Question E4.
Sample: Leavers who had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship in early March, excluding proxy respondents. Two respondents with missing data are excluded from this table.

Leavers were asked to explain why they agreed or disagreed with the latter item (“I had successfully made the transition from school”). Figure 24 shows the explanations grouped into *Agree reason* (including agree and strongly agree), *Disagree reason* (including disagree and strongly disagree), and *Neither agree nor disagree reason*. It should be noted that a relatively high number of respondents indicated “don’t know” in response to this question.

The most common explanations given by leavers who agreed or strongly agreed that they had successfully made the transition from school were that they were engaged in work, further education or parenthood, or that they were able to follow their life plans. For example, “I have a full time job and making money for myself, making a living”, “Because I’m happily doing my TAFE course and it’s going really well, I’m loving everything at the moment”, “Because I don’t feel like a school kid anymore, I feel like a mother”, or, “Just because I’m set up for life now, this is all I wanted to do”.

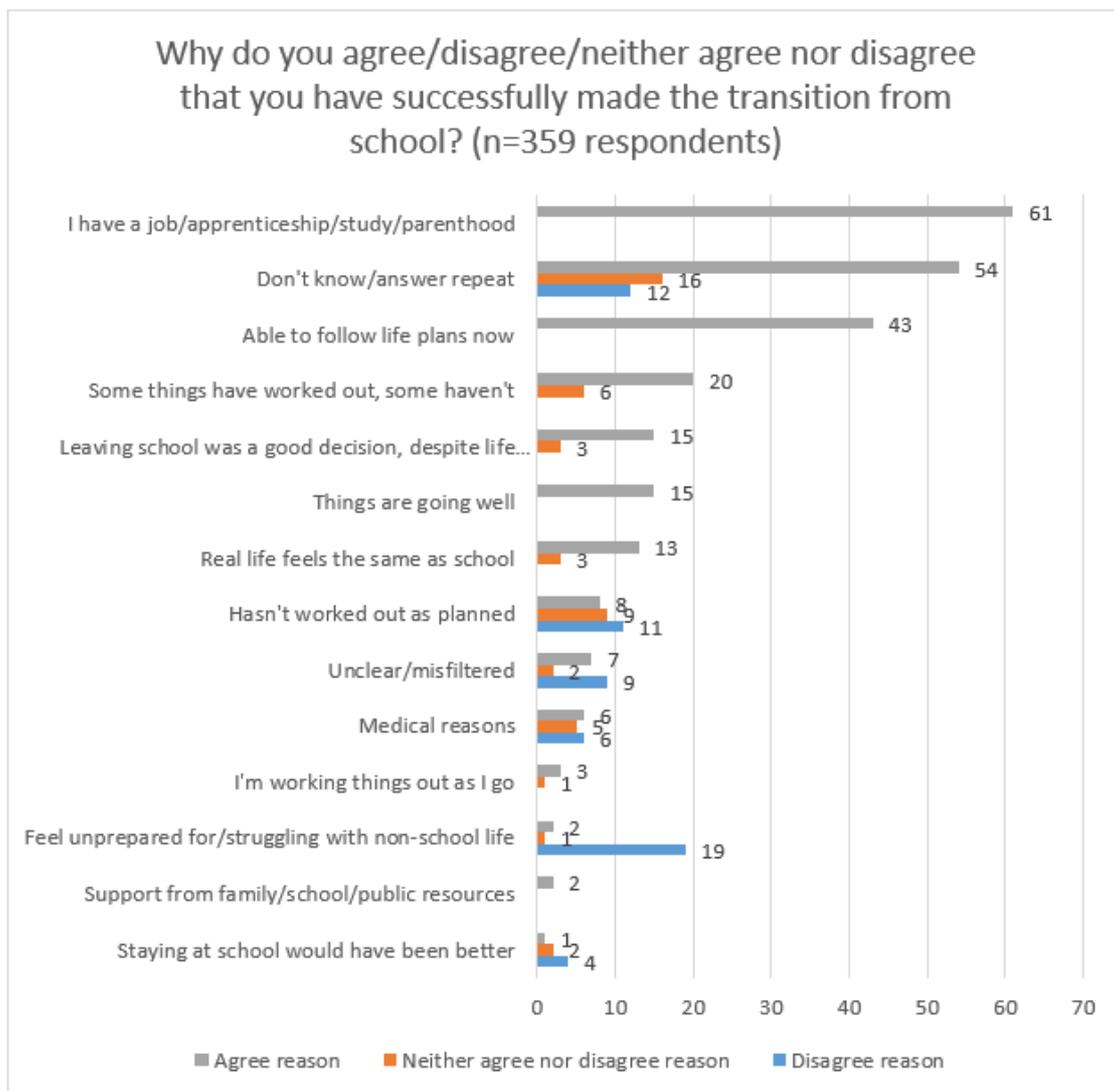
Leavers who neither agreed nor disagreed that they had made a successful transition may have been overly optimistic, given that their most common explanation was because post-school life *hasn’t worked out as planned*, with the second-most common reason that *some things have worked out but some haven’t*. For example, “Because I haven’t been able to find some part time work to start transitioning yet”, or, “Because I’m decently on track but I thought I’d be more on track”.

For leavers who disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had successfully made the transition from school, the most common reason was that they *felt unprepared for, or were struggling with, life after school*. For example,

“I felt like I could have been better prepared for the real world, the lack of financial education made a big difference - I had to learn myself in the real world how to manage my money, and become a functioning member of society”,

“... [I] don't think I transitioned well from a structured routine with friends around me, to having to find my own routine”, and the more general, “Because school doesn't prepare you for the real world and the next step”.

The next most common reason for leavers who felt that they had not made the transition successfully was that because things *hadn't worked out as planned*, providing further comments such as, “It wasn't as simple as I thought it would be”, or, “Because I haven't found a job and am struggling to find a job”.



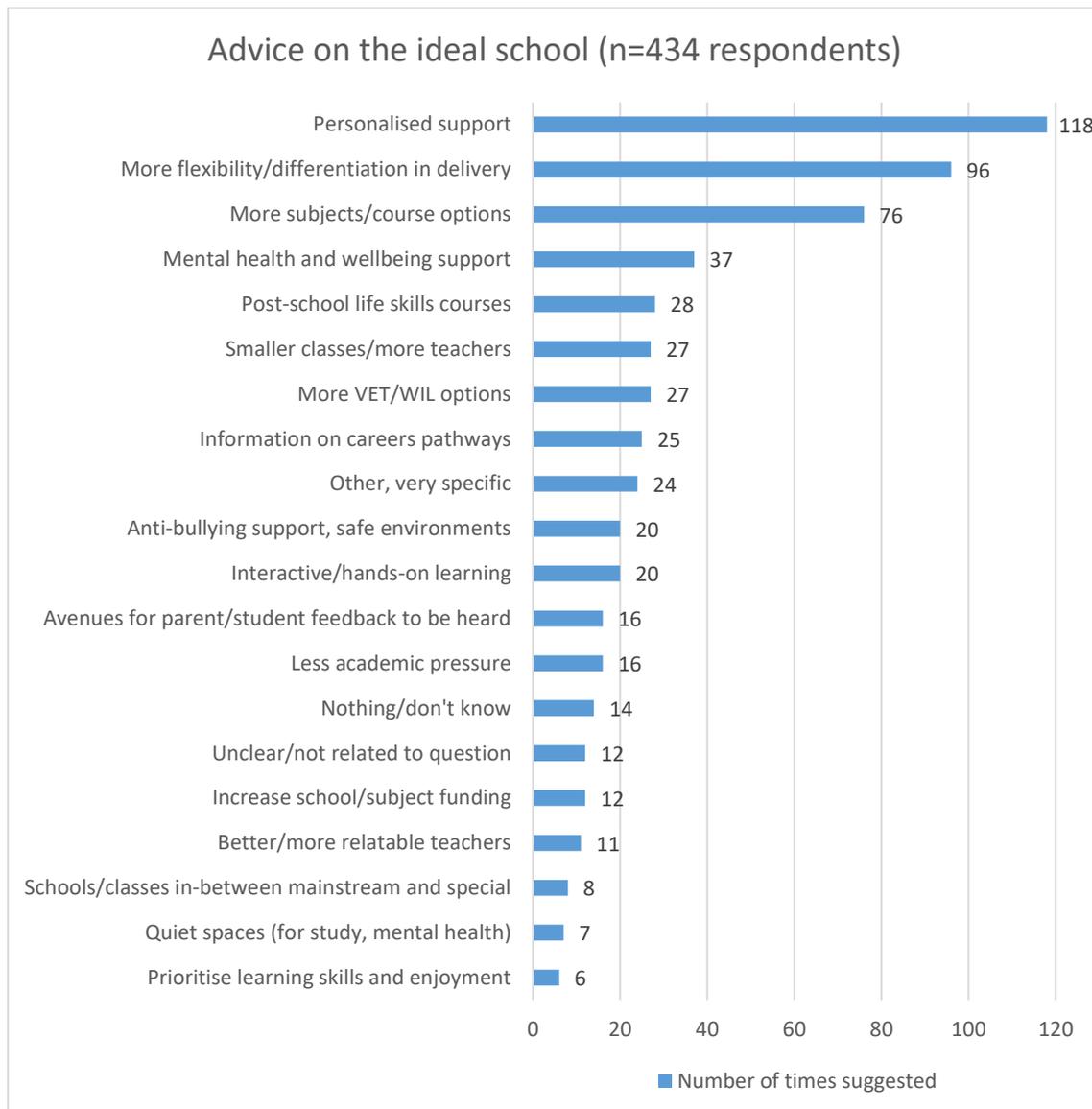
Notes: Source: Question D1b.
 Sample: Leavers, excluding persons who refused to answer D1 or D1b.

Figure 24. Why do you agree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree that you have successfully made the transition from school?

Young people's thoughts on the ideal school

In the final section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to reflect on their school experiences with the goal of providing suggestions for improvements to South Australian government senior school offerings. Firstly, respondents were asked what sort of advice they

would give on how to design the ideal school that would help them to achieve their future goals. The results are presented in Figure 25. Three-quarters of respondents provided suggestions (n=434). Many respondents shared multiple ideas, however, since they were not asked which idea was a priority, ideas are aggregated in Figure 25.



Notes: Source: Question J1.

Sample: Leavers and stayers, excluding respondents who answered "don't know" or refused to answer the question.

Figure 25. If you could give advice to the government on how to design the ideal school that would help you to achieve your future goals, what would you tell them? (n=434 respondents; some multiple responses)

The three themes that emerged clearly as the most popular when asked about an ideal school that would help respondents to achieve their future goals were:

- *Personalised support (27%),*
- *More flexibility or differentiation in delivery (22%), and*
- *More subject or course options (18%).*

Suggestions for more *personalised support* included one-on-one teaching or tutoring support so that individual students could access academic, social-emotional or wellbeing assistance when needed. Respondents elaborated that this could take the form of smaller classes, after-school study groups, or having more tutors or school support officers on site. Within this category, some respondents also felt that they had followed a “one size fits all” curriculum and wished that subject and course selection could be expanded to better suit individual needs and pathways.

Ideas around *more flexibility or differentiation in delivery* included feedback at both the school and student levels. Suggestions included that students should be able to access subjects both face-to-face and online and that, at senior level, students should only need to attend for scheduled classes, similar to the university model of attendance. Some respondents felt that the school environment could also be made more comfortable so that students are encouraged to study, for example, by having flexible study areas and a variety of modular furniture types, as well as locations where students could bring their own children to class. Respondents also made suggestions towards differentiation of teaching and learning so that students who were struggling had opportunities to catch up, or to present their understanding in different ways.

Some respondents managed to suggest both of the top two ideas, for example,

“I think probably ... just ... I think schools need to be a bit more flexible. I think schools get too big and you are just one student out of many. I think that then you do not get extra help when you need it. I think that they need to be more understanding about the fact that people’s lives can affect their education and they need to offer more one on one support when people need it”.

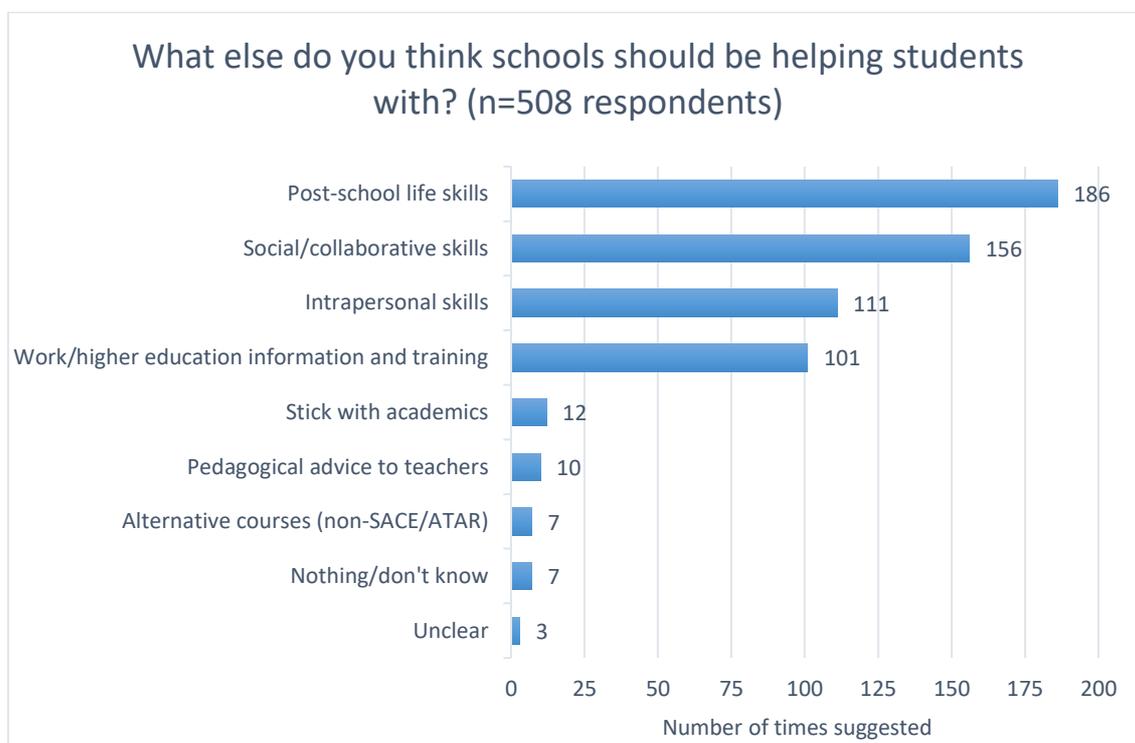
The suggestions for more subjects or course options ranged from very broad suggestions, for example, “a bigger variety of subjects relevant to different interests”, to very specific suggestions like, “more agricultural subjects”, “more trade-based subjects, like trade-English”, or, “energy tech”.

The *Other, very specific* category collated responses that described very personal experiences like reactions to expulsion, discipline or uniform enforcements, or comments on particular school staff. Within this category, however, there were also three very positive comments about the adult learning environment that a particular senior college is providing and that perhaps an ideal school could learn from this example.

What young people want schools to help students with

The final section of the questionnaire continued with respondents being asked what they thought schools should be helping students with. Around 88% of respondents provided suggestions (n=508). Respondents were very much aligned on the main four offerings that they thought should be in schools, namely:

- Post-school life skills (37%),
- Social and collaborative skills (31%),
- Intrapersonal skills (22%), and
- Information and training specific to work or higher education (20%) (Figure 26).



Notes: Source: Question J2.
Sample: Leavers and stayers

Figure 26. Many people say that school is all about getting good grades or completing SACE. What else do you think schools should be helping students with?

Respondents identified *post-school life skills* as important (or soon to be important) in their daily, adult lives, yet they noted that such skills were a) not usually part of the school curriculum and b) not necessarily employment-related. Respondents gave numerous examples of life skills that could be covered at senior school level, for example,

- How to find housing, pay rent or acquire a mortgage,
- How to manage their own finances, pay taxes and bills, and understand systems of credit (for example, credit cards, bank loans, other credit-based systems) and investments,
- How to register to vote,
- Motor vehicle maintenance (for example, changing a tyre, checking oil and other fluids),
- Home maintenance (for example, setting up Wi-Fi or utilities, cooking and cleaning for daily life)

Respondents indicated that schools should be explicitly helping students with their *social and collaborative skills*. This ranged from learning how to make friends and generally socialise and communicate with other people on an everyday basis, to learning social and collaborative skills for particular environments. For example, respondents stated that being able to work collaboratively with others, even if the group did not always agree, was an important skill, as well as having an understanding of social conventions expected outside the school environment.

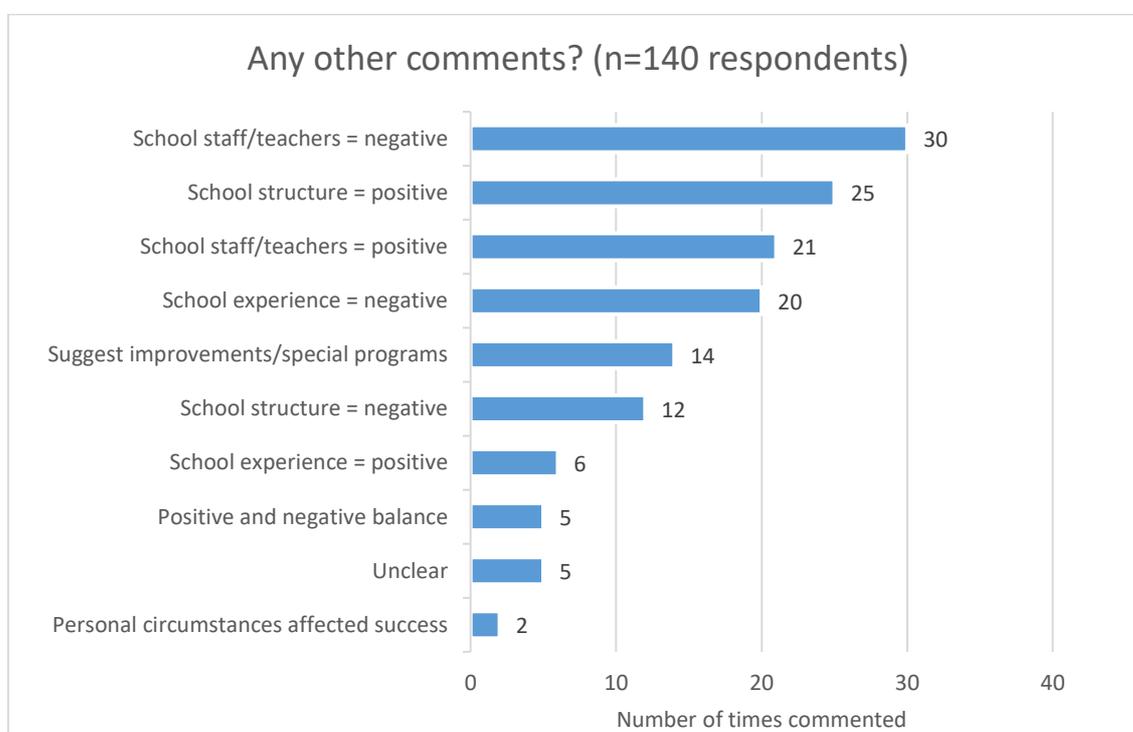
Intrapersonal skills included suggestions on how to self-manage for daily life purposes, and included domains such as mental health and how to address mental distress, general aspects of personal wellbeing and how to manage their life outside of school. More detailed suggestions

included education centred on morals and values, manners and behaviour, character development, understanding of emotions, resilience and personal growth.

Information and training specific to work or higher education was seen as the fourth main priority for schools to help senior students. While acknowledging that this already exists in schools, respondents indicated that a focus on preparing for higher education or the workforce was very important at senior school level. Suggestions ranged from very broad comments like, “figuring out where they want to go in life” and “getting set up for a career” to very specific comments like, “getting licences – construction, driving”, “preparing resumes” or more information on industries or non-university pathways. Some respondents noted that it was very important to be prepared for the transition from school to working life.

Final comments by young people

The final question in the interview asked respondents whether they had any further comments. Only 24% (n=140) of all respondents chose to make a final comment, of whom about two-thirds were leavers (n=97; stayers n=43). The results are presented in Figure 27.



Notes: Source: Question J3.

Sample: Leavers and stayers

Figure 27. Finally, are there any other comments you want to make about your experiences at your school?

Nearly half (44%) of the final comments were negative and focused on school staff (n=30), respondents’ own school experience (n=20), or school structure (n=12). Examples of each of these categories include respectively, “Teachers don’t seem to care as much as they’re supposed to, some teachers were making the experience harder”, “[There was] too much pressure on trying to get a decent ATAR”, and, “There needs to be a better system in place for people with educational disabilities”.

Many respondents (41%, n=57 total), however, provided a positive or a balanced comment, across four categories. Examples of balanced comments include that one student's experience in Year 11 was poor but this improved significantly in Year 12; another student commented that previous schools had been fine but that their current school was lacking. Positive comments were largely focused on teachers who had helped students individually, and respondents wanted to convey their gratitude, such as, "[I was] definitely struggling through most of it, honestly, there were some teachers that helped me immensely. I'd like to say thank you." One respondent was particularly descriptive and complimentary towards the FLO program structure, stating,

"The part of the school that I attend, FLO, has individualised counselling for each student and it was open at any time. Teachers were available to educate students from home, and it was convenient from home. I have a learning disability and they were accommodating for my learning disability ... they helped me get out of the loop that my disability put me in and how to react to everything around me. The teachers were open and comforting, and supportive."

Some respondents (n=14) did suggest improvements such as making school more accessible for people who live out of home or struggle financially, more support for students with disabilities or those who have been bullied, or reinforced comments about offering subjects that are more relevant for individual students.

Further analysis

Highlights

- Some groups of students experienced more successful pathways than others. For example, leavers who had undertaken VET in school were twice as likely as other leavers to be working full-time, and were more likely than other students to strongly agree that they were very happy with what they had achieved since leaving school.
- Other groups of students were more likely to experience difficulties. For example, FLO students were less likely than other students to be undertaking or have completed the four mandatory SACE subjects, to be planning to stay at school until the end of the year, or to be planning to complete SACE this year. Among leavers, former FLO students were more likely than other students to not be in employment, education or training, were less happy with what they had achieved since leaving school, and were less likely to strongly agree that they had successfully made the transition from school.

In this section, attention turns to particular subgroups which are of current policy interest. These include females, males, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds (measured by having ever held a school card), young people with a disability (measured by receipt of disability support at school), FLO students, and young people who had participated in apprenticeships, traineeships or other VET courses while enrolled at school.

As was noted earlier in the report, gender and socioeconomic background are related to whether “at risk” students remain at school or leave before the completion Year 12. Males and young people who have ever held a school card are overrepresented among leavers (Table 12). Other student characteristics examined in this section do not have a statistically significant association with school-leaving status, namely disability (Table 12), FLO status (Table 13), and VET in school status (Table 33).

Key indicators relating to school and post-school pathways will be examined for each of these subgroups next.

School pathways (stayers)

The number of compulsory SACE requirements reported as either complete or currently being undertaken are reported in Table 65. This table is restricted to the stayer cohort. Of the groups of stayers considered in this table, FLO students were the least likely to have completed or be undertaking all four of the compulsory SACE requirements (17%), followed by students who had ever held a school card (33%). This can be contrasted with 66% of the stayers who were not undertaking FLO and 70% of the stayers who had never held a school card. Differences between the number of compulsory requirements undertaken by FLO students and other stayers, and between school card holders and other students were statistically significant. Other differences, by gender, disability support status and VET in school status, are not statistically significant.

The Year 12 and SACE completion plans of stayers are reported in Table 66. Again, the table is restricted to stayers and only differences by FLO status and school card status are statistically significant. While the majority of FLO students and school card holders planned to stay at school

until the end of the year and planned to complete SACE this year, they were less likely than other students to plan to do so. FLO students and school card holders were more likely than other stayers to be planning to complete their SACE at a later stage or to not have any plans for completing SACE.

The post-school earning and learning plans of stayers are reported in Table 67. Females were more likely than males to have plans which included post-school earning or learning activities.

Table 65. Stayers: Number of compulsory SACE requirements completed or being undertaken, by selected sub-groups

	Gender		School card***		Disability support		FLO student***		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	<i>N</i>										
0-2	24	25	37	12	8	41	32	17	22	27	49
3	25	23	27	21	3	45	16	32	25	23	48
4	63	44	31	76	10	97	10	97	46	61	107
Total	112	92	95	109	21	183	58	146	93	111	204
	<i>%</i>										
0-2	21.4	27.2	39.0	11.0	38.1	22.4	55.2	11.6	23.7	24.3	24.1
3	22.3	25.0	28.4	19.3	14.3	24.6	27.6	21.9	26.9	20.7	23.5
4	56.3	47.8	32.6	69.7	47.6	53.0	17.2	66.4	49.5	55.0	52.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001.

Source: Number of compulsory SACE requirements derived from Question B1. Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

Table 66. Stayers: Year 12 and SACE completion plans, by selected sub-groups

	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	<i>N</i>										
<i>Planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12/the year</i>											
Yes	102	88	85	105	24	166	48	142	85	105	190
No/don't know	11	8	15	4	1	18	11	8	10	9	19
<i>Total</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>209</i>
<i>Planned to complete SACE</i>											
Yes, this year	87	76	66	97	17	146	34	129	69	94	163
Yes, at a later stage	10	7	12	5	1	16	9	8	11	6	17
No/don't know	16	13	22	7	7	22	16	13	15	14	29
<i>Total</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>209</i>
	<i>%</i>										
<i>Planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12/the year</i>				**				**			
Yes	90.3	91.7	85.0	96.3	96.0	90.2	81.4	94.7	89.5	92.1	90.9
No/don't know	9.7	8.3	15.0	3.7	4.0	9.8	18.6	5.3	10.5	7.9	9.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Planned to complete SACE</i>				***				***			
Yes, this year	77.0	79.2	66.0	89.0	68.0	79.4	57.6	86.0	72.6	82.5	78.0
Yes, at a later stage	8.9	7.3	12.0	4.6	4.0	8.7	15.3	5.3	11.6	5.3	8.1
No/don't know	14.2	13.5	22.0	6.4	28.0	12.0	27.1	8.7	15.8	12.3	13.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001.

Source: Plans derived from Questions C1, C2, and C3. Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Stayers.

Table 67. Stayers: Post-school completion plans, by selected sub-groups

	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	<i>N</i>										
Start or look for earning and/or learning activity		*									
Yes	97	67	90	74	15	149	50	114	79	85	164
No/no real plans/don't know	15	25	19	21	6	34	8	32	14	26	40
<i>Total</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>146</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>204</i>
	<i>%</i>										
Start or look for earning and/or learning activity		*									
Yes	86.6	72.8	82.6	77.9	71.4	81.4	86.2	78.1	85.0	76.6	80.4
No/no real plans/don't know	13.4	27.2	17.4	22.1	28.6	18.6	13.8	21.9	15.1	23.4	19.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001.

Source: Derived from Question C14.

Sample: Stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

Post-school pathways (leavers)

The main post-school earning and learning activities of leavers are reported in Table 68. Key results include:

- Males were more likely than females to be in full-time work, while females were more likely than males to be in part-time earning or learning activities.
- Young people who had held a school card, received disability support at school, or been a FLO student were more likely than other leavers to not be in some form of earning or learning activities.
- Leavers who had undertaken apprenticeships, traineeships or other VET courses while at school were less likely than other leavers to not be in some form of earning or learning activities. Conversely, they were two times more likely than other students to be working full-time.

As noted earlier, young people give a range of reasons for leaving school, which can be grouped into the “pull” factors of post-school opportunities (employment, education or training), “push” factors relating to schools and school work, student well-being, and other personal and family issues. The top six *main* reasons given by leavers (and “other health/illness/disability” reasons) are listed in Table 69 (n) and Table 70 (%), and the full list of main reasons given by each of the leaver subgroups is provided in [Appendix G](#), Table 82 (n) and Table 83 (%).

- The main reasons nominated by more than ten percent of female leavers included finishing school but not getting a SACE certificate (16%) and mental health (14%), whereas for males the most common main reasons centred on having or wanting to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (25%).
- Among school card holders, the most common main reasons were wanting to get a job or apprenticeship (15%), finishing school but not getting a SACE certificate (13%), not liking school or not finding it interesting (10%), and mental health (10%).
- Among disability support recipients, the most common main reasons were mental health (16%), finishing school but not getting a SACE certificate (12%), and not thinking school was useful (10%).
- Among former FLO students, the most common reasons related to the “push factors” of not liking school or not finding it interesting (15%), and the school suggesting that they leave (13%).
- Among leavers who had participated in VET in school, the most common reasons were having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to or wanting to get one (25%), and finishing school but not getting a SACE certificate (13%).

Leavers’ satisfaction with their transition from school is reported by selected subgroups in Figure 28 to Figure 30. Three aspects are considered: whether leavers were happy that they had made the decision to leave school; whether they were happy with what they had achieved since leaving school; and whether they felt that they had successfully made the transition from school .

- FLO students were less likely than other students to strongly agree that they were happy that they had made the decision to leave school, that they were happy with what they had achieved since leaving school; or that they had successfully made the transition from school

- School card holders were more likely than other students to disagree that they were happy that they had made the decision to leave school or that they were happy with what they had achieved after leaving school.
- Leavers who had received disability support at school were less likely than other students to agree that they had successfully made the transition from school.
- Leavers who had undertaken VET in school were more likely than other students to strongly agree that they were very happy with what they had achieved since leaving school.

Table 68. Leavers: Post-school earning and learning activities in March of the year after leaving school, by selected sub-groups

Main activity	Gender***		School card*		Disability support**		FLO student**		VET in school***		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	<i>N</i>										
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	18	66	45	39	7	77	12	72	59	25	84
Full-time university/VET/other study	12	15	17	10	2	25	5	22	12	15	27
Part-time work or study	54	47	55	46	12	89	15	86	57	44	101
Not in work or study	59	88	103	44	36	111	46	101	60	87	147
<i>Total</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>281</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>359</i>
	<i>%</i>										
Full-time work, apprenticeship or traineeship	12.6	30.6	20.5	28.1	12.3	25.5	15.4	25.6	31.4	14.6	23.4
Full-time university/VET/other study	8.4	6.9	7.7	7.2	3.5	8.3	6.4	7.8	6.4	8.8	7.5
Part-time work or study	37.8	21.8	25.0	33.1	21.1	29.5	19.2	30.6	30.3	25.7	28.1
Not in work or study	41.3	40.7	46.8	31.7	63.2	36.8	59.0	35.9	31.9	50.9	41.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001.

Source: Main activity derived from Question B1. Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Leavers. Twelve respondents could not be classified due to missing data on hours worked or study load.

Table 69. Leavers: Most common main reasons given for leaving school, by selected sub-groups (n)

Reasons for leaving	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	24	20	19	25	7	37	5	39	24	20	44
Post-school employment, education and training											
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	9	28	14	23	3	34	4	33	25	12	37
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	7	28	21	14	3	32	8	27	22	13	35
School and school work											
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	12	24	15	21	4	32	12	24	17	19	36
Didn't think school was useful	9	25	13	21	6	28	6	28	17	17	34
Student well-being											
Mental health	21	11	17	15	9	23	3	29	11	21	32
(Other health/illness/disability reasons)	(7)	(8)	(12)	(3)	(5)	(10)	(3)	(12)	(5)	(10)	(15)

Notes: Source: Reasons derived from Questions C7 and C8 Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

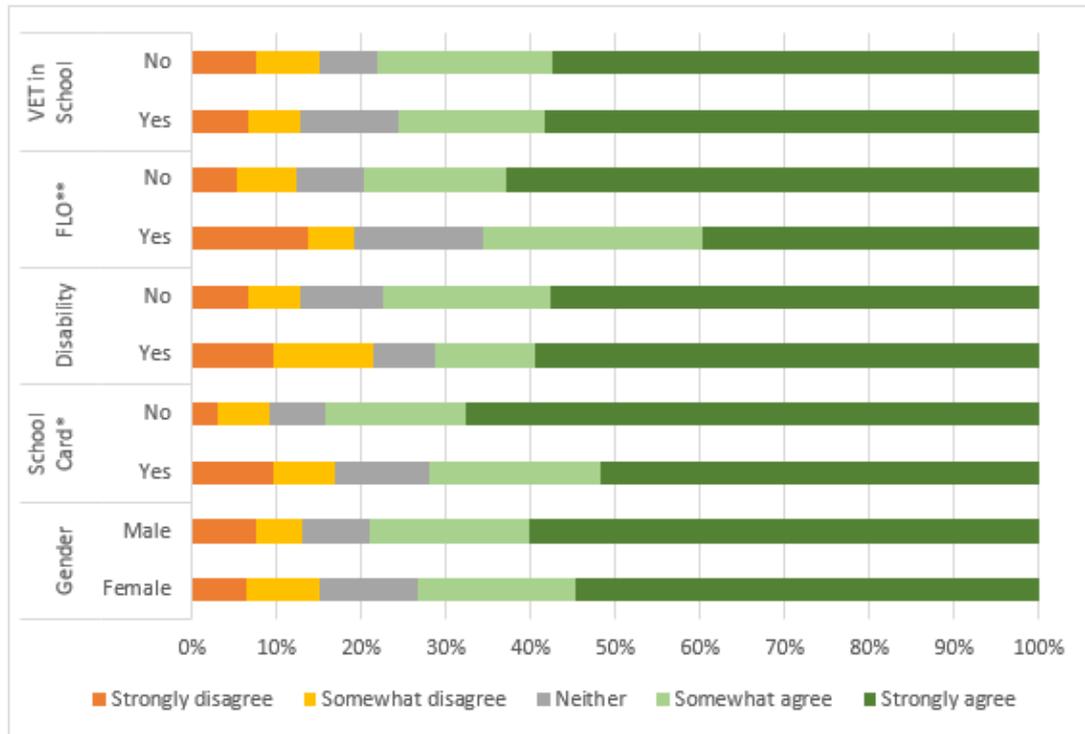
Sample: Leavers.

Table 70. Leavers: Most common main reasons given for leaving school, by selected sub-groups (%)

Reasons for leaving	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	16.0	9.1	13.2	11.0	12.1	11.8	6.1	13.5	12.5	11.2	11.9
Post-school employment, education and training											
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	6.0	12.7	9.7	10.1	5.2	10.9	4.9	11.4	13.0	6.7	10.0
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	4.7	12.7	14.6	6.2	5.2	10.2	9.8	9.3	11.5	7.3	9.4
School and school work											
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	8.0	10.9	10.4	9.3	6.9	10.2	14.6	8.3	8.9	10.6	9.7
Didn't think school was useful	6.0	11.3	9.0	9.3	10.3	9.0	7.3	9.7	8.9	9.5	9.2
Student well-being											
Mental health	14.0	5.0	10.4	7.5	15.5	7.4	3.7	10.0	5.7	11.7	8.6
Other health/illness/disability reasons	4.7	3.6	2.1	5.3	8.6	3.2	3.7	4.2	2.6	5.6	4.0

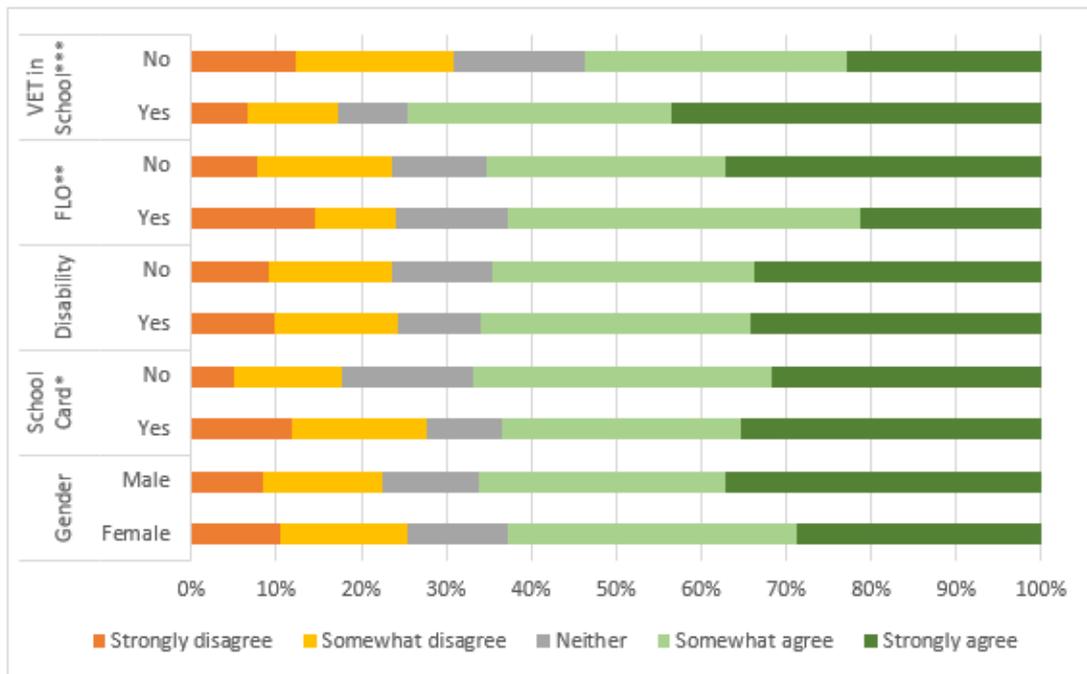
Notes: Source: Reasons derived from Questions C7 and C8 Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Leavers.



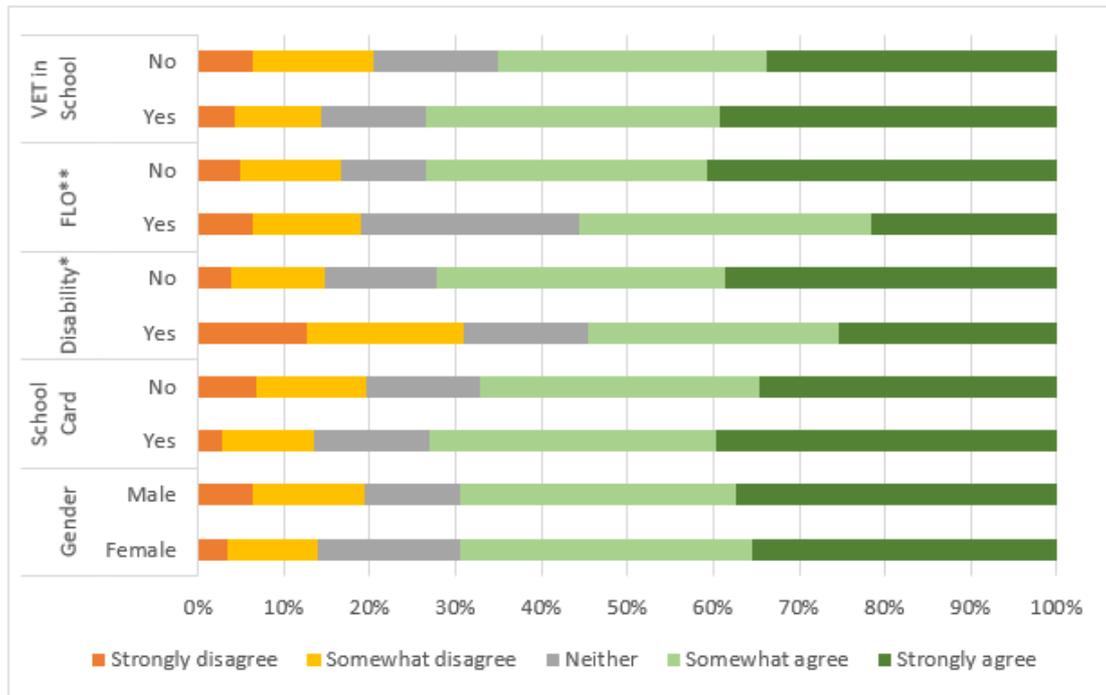
Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001. Source: Question D2(l). Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16. Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.

Figure 28. I am happy that I made the decision to leave school, by selected sub-groups



Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001. Source: Question G10(b). Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16. Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.

Figure 29. Up until early March I was very happy with what I had achieved since leaving school, by selected sub-groups



Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.001. Source: Question D1. Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16. Sample: Leavers, excluding proxy respondents.

Figure 30. *By March this year, I had successfully made the transition from school*

Post-script: COVID-19

Highlights

Stayers

Significant changes in the way schooling was undertaken occurred throughout the fieldwork period as a result of the loosening of restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. By the third week of interviews, the proportion of stayers going into school campuses had risen (from 36% to 64%), while the proportion doing school work from home had declined (from 36% to 25%) as had the proportion not doing school work but still enrolled (from 29% to 6%).

Between early March (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) and the time of interview in late April/May:

- A small number of stayers left school (4%, n=8).
- The proportion of stayers planning to leave before the end of the year increased by two percentage points to 11%.
- The proportion of stayers not planning to complete SACE rose slightly between these two time points (from 22% to 26%).

Leavers

Between early March (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) and the time of interview in late April/May:

- The overall proportion of leavers engaged in post-school earning or learning activities remained unchanged (60%).
- The overall proportion of leavers who felt that leaving school had been the right decision for them remained stable (80% in early March and 79% in late/April/May).
- Focusing on the movement of individuals into and out of earning and leaving activities, just under one-third of leavers were not engaged in earning or learning activities in either early March or late April/May.

Disruptions to education, training and employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to severely impact the young people in this study. In this study, respondents were asked about how their situation changed between early March (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) and the time of the interview (late April/May).

Year 12 and SACE

There are concerns that for some school students already considered “at risk” of not completing Year 12 and SACE, the temporary shift to schooling from home may have resulted in additional difficulties with undertaking schoolwork and in some cases, withdrawal from school altogether.

Changes in schooling

Stayers were asked if the way they did their schooling had changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the results are reported in Table 71. A small number of stayers indicated that they had left school without completing SACE (n=8, 4%). The situation regarding COVID-19 in South Australia and the location of schooling (at home or on school campuses) changed during the interview period. Interviewing commenced in the middle of the first week of Term 2 and the survey was conducted over three weeks, with a small number of interviews (n=11) conducted in

a final, fourth week. In the first week of interviews, 36% of stayers were going into school and a similar proportion were doing school work at home, while 29% were still enrolled but not doing school work. By the third week of interviews, the proportion of stayers going into school campuses had risen (from 36% to 64%), while the proportion doing school work from home had declined (from 36% to 25%) as had the proportion not doing school work but still enrolled (from 29% to 6%).

Table 71. Stayers: Changes in schooling since early March

	Interview in the week beginning ...				Total
	29 April	4 May	11 May	18 May	
N					
School attendance					
Still going into school	10	64	34	6	114
Doing school work at home	10	35	13	5	63
Not doing school work but still enrolled	8	12	3	0	23
Left school without completing SACE	0	5	3	0	8
<i>Total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>208</i>
%					
School attendance					
Still going into school	35.7	55.2	64.2	54.6	54.8
Doing school work at home	35.7	30.2	24.5	45.5	30.3
Not doing school work but still enrolled	28.6	10.3	5.7	0.0	11.1
Left school without completing SACE	0.0	4.3	5.7	0.0	3.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Notes: Source: Derived from Questions A9 and A18.

Sample: Stayers. One stayer could not be classified.

School completion plans

Table 72 shows how stayer's school completion plans have changed since early March. The majority of stayers reported that they planned to stay at school until the end of the year at both time points (91% in early March, falling to 85% in late April/May). Conversely, around 9% of stayers indicated in early March that they planned to leave before the end of the year. By late April/May a small number of stayers (4%, n=8) had left school and a further 11% (n=23) planned to leave. Overall, 7% of stayers had changed their school completion plans since the start of the pandemic (with the majority of these moving towards planning not to complete) and 4% actually left school.

Table 72. Stayers: Changes in plans to stay at school until the end of the year

	N		%	
	Early March	Late April/ May	Early March	Late April/ May
Plans				
Plan to stay	190	178	90.9	85.2
Not plan to stay/Don't know	19	23	9.1	11.0
Left school since early March	n/a	8	n/a	3.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Whether plans changed				
Plan stayed the same		186		89.0
Plan changed		15		7.2
Left school since early March		8		3.8
<i>Total</i>		<i>209</i>		<i>100.0</i>

Notes: Source: Derived from Questions C1, H3a, H3b, and H3c.
Sample: Stayers.

SACE completion plans

Table 73 shows how stayer's SACE completion plans for this year have changed. Roughly three-quarters of stayers planned to complete their SACE this year. In early March, 78% planned to complete SACE, falling slightly to 74% in late April/May. Overall, 12% of stayers reported a change in their SACE completion plans between early March and late April/May. Movement occurred in both directions: some stayers who had initially planned to complete SACE changed their plans, as did some stayers who had initially planned not to complete their SACE.

Table 73. Stayers: Changes in plans to complete SACE this year

	N		%	
	Early March	Late April/ May	Early March	Late April/ May
Plans				
Plan to complete SACE this year	163	155	78.0	74.2
Not plan to complete SACE/Don't know	46	54	22.0	25.8
Whether plans changed				
Plan stayed the same		184		88.0
Plan changed		25		12.0

Notes: Source: Derived variables (from Questions C2, H4a, H4b, H4c).
Sample: Stayers.

Post-school earning and learning pathways

Labour market conditions have deteriorated and many post-school education and training courses have been paused or moved online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are concerns that this has the potential to impact leavers now, and both leavers and stayers into the future.

Earning and learning activities

The post-school earning and learning activities of leavers are reported in Table 74. The proportion of leavers in employment, apprenticeships or traineeships fell slightly between early March and late April/early May (from 48% to 45%), while the proportion undertaking university, VET or other study rose slightly (from 15% to 20%). The overall proportion of leavers engaged in earning or learning activities remained unchanged (60%).

Table 74. Leavers: Post-school earning and learning activities, early March and late April/May

Post-school earning and learning activities	N		%	
	Early March	Late April/ May	Early March	Late April/ May
Work, apprenticeship or traineeship				
Yes	178	168	48.0	45.4
No	193	202	52.0	54.6
University/VET/other study^a				
Yes	55	72	14.8	19.5
No	316	298	85.2	80.5
Earning or learning (summary)				
Yes	224	223	60.4	60.3
No	147	147	39.6	39.7

Notes: a. Excludes apprenticeships and traineeships; includes 2 respondents who returned to school by late April/May.

Source: Derived from Questions B1 and H2.

Sample: Leavers. One respondent refused to answer H2 and is excluded from the late April/May results.

Also of interest is movement by individuals between these broad activity groupings (Table 75). A relatively low level of movement by individuals was evident. Of those who did move between the broad activity groupings:

- Slightly more leavers moved out of employment than into employment (8% and 5% respectively).
- However, slightly fewer leavers moved out of study than into study (3% and 7% respectively).
- Overall, 8% of leavers moved into earning or learning activities between the two time points, and a similar proportion moved out of earning and learning activities.

In contrast, over one half of the leavers were engaged in earning and learning activities in both March and early April/May. Of potential concern, 32% were not engaged in earning and learning activities at either time point.

This analysis has been based upon very broad activity groupings and a few important caveats should be noted. First, the survey did not measure whether earning and learning activities were being undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis at the second time point so it is not possible to assess whether the number of hours individuals worked had decreased during the pandemic. Second, no information was collected on whether the type of work/study undertaken had changed during the pandemic. Finally, the effect of JobKeeper may have temporarily dampened some of the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the earning and learning activities of this group.

Table 75. Leavers: Change in post-school earning and learning activities between early March and late April/May

Post-school earning and learning activities	N	%
Work, apprenticeship or traineeship		
Yes, March and April/May	150	40.5
Yes, March only	28	7.6
Yes, April/May only	18	4.9
No	174	47.0
University/VET/other study^a		
Yes, March and April/May	45	12.2
Yes, March only	10	2.7
Yes, April/May only	27	7.3
No	288	77.8
Earning or learning (summary)		
Yes, March and April/May	195	52.7
Yes, March only	29	7.8
Yes, April/May only	28	7.6
No	118	31.9

Notes: a. Excludes apprenticeships and traineeships; includes 2 respondents who returned to school by late April/May.

Source: Derived from Questions B1 and H2

Sample: Leavers. One respondent refused to answer H2 and is excluded from this table.

Satisfaction with the decision to leave school

Leavers were asked whether in early March they felt that leaving school was the right decision for them, and whether their attitude had changed by the time of the interview. The results are reported in Table 76.

- 80% of leavers felt that leaving school was the right decision for them in early March, and a similar proportion (79%) felt this way at the time of the interview in early April/May.
- Some leavers reported changing their attitude between early March and the interview. Change occurred in both directions: 6% of leavers reported a positive change in attitude (changing to the “right” decision), while 8% reported a negative change in attitude (changing from the “right” decision to the “wrong” decision or “don’t know”).

Table 76. Leavers: Changes in attitude regarding whether leaving school was the right/wrong decision

Whether leaving school was the right/wrong decision	N		%	
	Early March	Late April/ May	Early March	Late April/ May
Leaving school was the ...				
Right decision	296	290	80.0	78.8
Wrong decision	49	61	13.2	16.6
Don’t know	25	17	6.8	4.6
Whether attitude changed				
No change – right decision		268		72.8
No change – wrong decision/don’t know		50		13.6
Positive change (from wrong/don’t know to right decision)		22		6.0
Negative change (from right decision to wrong/don’t know)		28		7.6

Notes: Source: Questions E1, H1a, H1b, H1c

Sample: Leavers. 1 respondent refused to answer E1 and is excluded from the Early March results. 3 respondents refused to answer H1a, H1b or H1c and are excluded from the late April/May results.

5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Report aims and research questions

The overarching aim of this research was to capture the student voice behind young people's earning and learning pathway choices, specifically identifying: why students in Years 10, 11, or 12 leave school without a documented "valid" reason ("leavers"); and why some Year 12 students remain enrolled in high school but do not appear to be on a SACE/VET pathway ("stayers").

The project aims were addressed using the following research questions:

Leavers

1. Why do school non-completers leave the system? / What were the issues faced by non-completers when they were at school?
2. What could be done to retain some of these students?
3. What are non-completers currently doing? / Are they on an earning or learning pathway?
4. What are the issues faced by non-completers after leaving school?
5. Does the survey data align with the departmental information on "not a valid reason for leaving school" code?

Stayers

1. What are students who do not appear to be on a SACE pathway currently doing? What pathways are they on?
2. Why did students stay at school but not on a SACE pathway, including influences and reasons for subject choices?
3. What are the issues faced by students who remain at school but are not on a SACE pathway?
4. What could be done to get some of these students back on the SACE certificate track?
5. Does the survey data align with the departmental information on whether or not students are on SACE pathways?

Approach

The aim of the study was to hear the student voice. A CATI methodology was adopted so as to maximise coverage of the study population while still allowing interviewers to build rapport with study participants to elicit open and honest responses. Questionnaire design was informed by the literature as well as consultation with key stakeholders from the DfE (through focus groups) and current and former students (through cognitive testing of selected questionnaire items).

The focus of the CATI interviews was on the time up to early March 2020 (before the COVID-19 pandemic). However, study participants were also asked how their situations had changed between early March and the time of interview (in late April/May 2020). This provides a timely opportunity to capture the initial effects of current social and economic upheaval on two vulnerable groups of young South Australians.

Interviews were completed with 371 leavers and 209 stayers. It is important to note that the leaver sample is restricted to early school leavers *who left school without a documented validated reason*, while the stayer sample is restricted to students *who did not appear to be on a SACE pathway*. Consequently, the report findings cannot be generalised to all early school leavers or all Year 12 students. The findings do, however, provide insights for two key groups of “at risk” young people.

Key findings

Reasons young people give for leaving school/issues faced by young people at school

Young people give a wide variety of reasons for leaving school and/or not completing SACE, ranging from “pull” factors relating to post-school opportunities to “push” factors relating to schools and school-work, student well-being and other personal and family reasons. The most common “main reasons” for leaving school identified by leavers include having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to or wanting to get one; not liking school or not thinking school was useful; and mental health and other health/illness/disability reasons.

The majority of stayers indicated that nothing in particular would make staying at school until the end of the year or completing SACE difficult for them. However, among the stayers who identified potential difficulties, three common challenges emerged: personal/family challenges; mental health challenges; and difficulties with school work.

Factors helping young people stay at school

Significant others such as friends, parents and teachers were among the most common factors that young people felt had helped them to stay at school as long as they did (leavers) or up until March 2020 (stayers). Stayers also commonly reported future prospects, interests and motivations as factors helping them to stay at school. These factors were less commonly reported by leavers.

Looking forward, stayers were asked what would help them to complete Year 12 and SACE. The most common responses included more personal or attitudinal support, opportunities for extra tutoring at school, and an awareness of their own role in attending school and focusing on their work.

More than one-half of leavers felt that the following school-related factors may have helped them not to leave school: more flexible hours or part-time options; better mentoring from teachers; more help with learning problems; a wider range of subjects; better teachers; being allowed to return to school at a later stage; better courses; and more or better counselling.

Attitudes relating to school

Stayers expressed more positive views than leavers in relation to various aspects of school such as subjects, teachers, career advice, and how well they felt their schools prepared them for achieving their post-school goals. Stayers were two to three times more likely than leavers to strongly agree that school was a place where “the things I learned were important to me”, “I enjoyed what I did in class”, “I felt I belonged”, and “I felt safe”.

School subjects and VET in school

Choosing school subjects

The most common ways that students and former students chose their school subjects were based on their interests, abilities, and future plans, and after consulting a teacher, their case manager, or other school advisory staff as part of the decision-making process.

The most common types of people that young people spoke to about choosing their school subjects were teachers, followed by parents and caregivers. Of concern, 11% of leavers and 6% of stayers spoke to no-one in particular about choosing their subjects, and leavers felt less informed than stayers when it came to choosing school subjects.

Compulsory SACE requirements

A substantial number of young people in the study had not satisfied the mandatory SACE requirements. For example, PLP is typically undertaken in Year 10. However, only 71%-73% of leavers and stayers reported that they had completed PLP. Overall, just over one-half of stayers - all of whom were in Year 12, Year 13 or FLO – reported that they had either completed or were undertaking all four compulsory SACE requirements (PLP, literacy unit, numeracy unit and Research Project).

Young people who had not started or who had stopped before completing each of the four compulsory SACE requirements, provided a number of reasons for this. For leavers, the most common reason was that they had left school before starting or completing these requirements. Other common reasons across many of the requirements included needing more support or a subject being too difficult, medical/affective reasons, and taking responsibility for non-completion upon themselves. For stayers, there was less consistency across the four requirements. However factors such as being a FLO student/having an alternative timetable were mentioned, as were medical/affective reasons and taking responsibility for non-completion upon themselves. Some additional factors were also prominent in relation to PLP, including unfamiliarity with the subject (stayers) and school transfer issues (leavers and stayers).

VET in schools

Around one-half of respondents reported participating in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and/or other VET subjects (52% of leavers and 46% of stayers).

The most common reasons given for participating in school-based apprenticeships, traineeships and/or other VET subjects were “to try out a potential career path”, “to get a job in this area”, and because “it looked like an interesting course”.

In general, over one-half of young people either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the various types of VET they had participated in had helped them to stay at school.

Navigating pathways

The role of parents and teachers

Across a range of factors, the importance of parents are highlighted. For example, parents' educational expectations for their children are related to school leaving status. Parents are among the most common factors that young people felt helped them to stay at school. Parents are the second most common type of people that young people spoke to about choosing their

school subjects, and the most common person spoken to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work.

Teachers are among the most common factors that young people felt had helped them to stay at school, are the most common types of people that young people spoke to about choosing their school subjects, and the second most common people spoken to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work.

Career planning and support services

Before leaving school, leavers are less likely than stayers to speak with career advisers at schools or access a range of career information sources such as university or TAFE information days, career expos, and school career resource centres/libraries.

There is clearly scope for supporting young people in their career planning. Only 56% of leavers agreed that they knew where to get information about the options they had after leaving school, only 57% agreed that when they decided to leave school they had enough information about what they wanted to do, and 41% of leavers were unaware that there were various ways to complete SACE after leaving school. Over one-third of leavers and nearly one-half of stayers in this study asked to be provided with information about support services.

Student outcomes: Earning and learning pathways

Leavers

There are various options for completing SACE after leaving school, including VET. Just under one in ten leavers reported that they were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of their SACE.

More broadly, 31% of leavers were in full-time education, training or employment in early March of the year after leaving school, and a further 28% were in part-time education, training or employment. However, 41% of leavers were not engaged in earning or learning activities.

Nearly all leavers, if not already engaged in earning or learning activities, expected to start paid employment or a course of study or vocational training in the next few years. While it is not necessarily the case that these expectations will be met, this summary measure suggests that most leavers anticipate being on an earning or learning pathway.

Stayers

The stayers comprised a sample of young people considered by the DfE to be at risk of not completing Year 12/SACE, and the survey data on participation on the mandatory SACE subjects, discussed above, suggests that many were not on track to complete SACE. However, stayers were optimistic about their futures. In early March, over 90% of the stayers were planning to stay at school until the end of the year. Of these, the majority planned to complete SACE this year or at a later stage. Looking further forward, the post-school plans of 80% of stayers included starting or looking for some form of earning and/or learning activity, with the most common plan being to commence university study.

Comparisons

Leavers, when they made the decision to leave school, were more likely than stayers to have had plans to start or look for a job, apprenticeship or traineeship after leaving school. Stayers, on the

other hand, were more likely than leavers to have plans to start or look for a university, VET or other course after leaving school.

Student outcomes: What matters to young people

Leavers and stayers' plans and aspirations indicate that the majority view themselves as being on an earning and/or learning pathway. Most stayers plan to stay at school until the end of the year and complete SACE. Post-school, most stayers plan to look for/start paid employment, a course of study or vocational training. Nearly all leavers were either engaged in earning or learning activities or expect to start paid employment, a course of study or vocational training in the next few years.

Many leavers expressed satisfaction with their transition from school. However, the experiences of leavers did vary. For the 70% of leavers who agreed that they had successfully made the transition from school, their most common explanations were that they were engaged in work, further education or parenthood, or that they were able to follow their life plans. The 13% of leavers who neither agreed nor disagreed that they had made a successful transition may have been overly optimistic when leaving school, given that their most common explanations were that post-school life hasn't worked out as planned or that some things have worked out but some haven't. For the 17% of leavers who disagreed that they had successfully made the transition from school, the most common reason was that they felt unprepared for, or were struggling with, life after school.

Young people's suggestions for change

Young people were asked how school could have prepared them better for what they were doing in early March (leavers) or what they want to do next year (stayers). The most common suggestions related to career information and advice, such as more or better information on what to expect in the various pathways after school, more personalised support and career advice, more information to help choose an industry/occupation, and more specific information about my industry/occupation.

Study participants were asked *what sort of advice they would give on how to design the ideal school that would help them to achieve their future goals.* The most popular themes were personalised support, more flexibility or differentiation in delivery, and more subject or course options.

Study participants were also asked *what they thought schools should be helping students with.* The four main offerings that they thought should be in schools were post-school life skills, social and collaborative skills, intrapersonal skills, and information and training specific to work or higher education.

COVID-19

This study provided an opportunity to examine some of the early impacts of the pandemic for young people in South Australia. Concerns have been expressed about the potential immediate and longer-term impacts of schooling at home and the labour market downturn for groups of young people already considered "at risk" (e.g. Education Endowment Foundation, 2020; Hamilton et al, 2020; Noble et al, 2020). In an attempt to mitigate some of these effects, a number of strategies have been put in place for school students and the general population.

Between early March (pre-COVID-19 pandemic) and the time of interview in late April/May, a small number of stayers left school (4%, n=8) and there was a slight increase in the proportion of stayers planning to leave before the end of the year. For leavers, however, the proportion engaged in post-school earning or learning activities remained unchanged, as did the proportion who felt that leaving school had been the right decision for them. However, the study did not measure factors such as changes in hours worked, and it may be the case that the effect of policies such as JobKeeper may have temporarily dampened some of the negative labour market impacts of COVID-19 for this group.

Data validation

Comparisons between administrative data and responses to survey screening questions revealed some discrepancies in the classification of young people as leavers or stayers, their year level, or whether they had attended a South Australian government school in 2019/2020. Further comparisons between the administrative data and survey responses revealed some potential discrepancies in relation to participation in compulsory SACE requirements, and the use of VET to contribute to SACE after leaving school. These are detailed in [Appendix F](#).

Implications for future research

The vast majority of young people in this study are optimistic about remaining on an earning or learning pathway, whether that be completing Year 12 and SACE (in the case of the stayer sample) or being in a job, course of study or vocational training in the next few years (both leavers and stayers). However, further longitudinal research is required in order to assess whether “at risk” young people are able to achieve their plans and expectations.

Young people are facing a unique time in South Australian history arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Further research using more detailed labour market measures will be required to assess short, medium and longer-term effects on young people’s earning and learning pathways.

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APPENDIX A. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The annotated bibliography comprises two parts, namely recent reviews and initiatives as well as other recent research. The focus is on Australia, and the descriptions highlight issues of relevance to the current project rather than providing an overall description of the source.

Recent government reviews and initiatives

NATIONAL –Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration builds upon and updates the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians. The declaration includes two goals:

- The Australian education system promotes excellence and equity: and
- All young Australians become: confident and creative individuals; successful lifelong learners; and active and informed members of the community.

In working towards these goals, the roles of the following groups are highlighted: young Australians, their parents, carers and families; teachers, educators and leaders; and all Australian Governments.

REPORT: Council of Australian Governments Education Council. (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

NATIONAL – Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education (Halsey review)

The Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education aimed to investigate issues, challenges and barriers that impact on the learning outcomes of regional, rural and remote students; and to identify innovative approaches to support improved access and achievement of these students in school and in their transition to further study, training and employment. The review was informed by an extensive literature review, submissions, and consultations.

Issues relating to regional, rural and remote education of relevance to this project include:

- Availability and uptake of VET in Schools: Barriers include distance, low numbers, thin markets, availability, access and costs, higher value placed on university pathways, and less understanding of VET pathways than university pathways.
- Careers advice/transitions from school: Thinness of advice and up to date information about employment, careers and how to prepare for them was noted.
- Diversity issues included issues relating to Indigenous students, low SES students, a lack of experienced staff and limited services for students with a disability, and a lack of ESL-trained teachers for refugees and other migrants
- Other issues related to transport/provision of school buses, distance education, and boarding.

LITERATURE REVIEW: *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education. A review of the literature 2006-2016 for the development of a discussion paper, a call for submissions and a national program of consultations.* Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/50286>

DISCUSSION PAPER: Halsey, J. (2017). *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education: Discussion Paper.* Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/44526>

FINAL REPORT: Halsey, J. (2018). *Independent Review into Regional Rural and Remote Education—Final Report.* Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Retrieved from https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/01218_independent_review_accessible.pdf

NATIONAL – Inquiry into School to Work Transition (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training)

The Inquiry into School to Work Transition looked at ways to ensure students are supported from school to work by measuring gain in schools and how this contributes to supporting students for post-school education and training. The inquiry also looked at opportunities to better inform students of appropriate post-school education and training using employment outcomes as a measure of course suitability. Recommendations of relevance to this project relate to:

- Incorporating soft skills into the curriculum to prepare students for post-school education, training and work.
- Increasing the delivery by secondary schools of work experience and volunteer work, adult learning environments, and career guidance programs and information.
- Ensuring careers counselling in school emphasises VET, apprenticeships, and alternative post-school pathways to the same extent as higher education

REPORT: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training. (2018). *Unique Individuals, Broad Skills: Inquiry into school to work transition.* Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Employment_Education_and_Training/School_to_WorkTransition/Report

NATIONAL – National Career Education Strategy

The Australian Government's National Career Education Strategy defines career education as "the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings to assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life". The strategy includes six objectives:

1. Students have transferable skills that equip them for the future of work.
2. Career education meets the needs of all students.

3. Partnerships thrive between schools, education and training providers, employers, parents and carers, and the broader community.
4. Communities create local solutions and flexible pathways to meet the needs of students and employers.
5. Everyone is informed and involved.
6. There is a strong evidence base.

Of particular relevance to this project, “informed and involved” includes supporting tailored and high quality career education; providing information and advice about labour market data, workforce requirements, trends and supporting schools to engage better with employers; and improving accessibility to, and promoting information about, education pathways and job opportunities.

The role of parents and carers and teachers, as well as career practitioners are noted; and as is the need to ensure that they and other influencers have support to ensure currency of information about study and work opportunities.

STRATEGY: Australian Government. Department of Education and Training. (2019). *Future ready: A student focussed national career education strategy*. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/52421>

WEBSITE: <https://www.education.gov.au/national-career-education-strategy>

NATIONAL – National Careers Institute

The National Careers Institute was established in 2019 to simplify and strengthen Australia’s career development system. Its establishment was recommended in the Review of Australia’s Vocational Education and Training Sector (Joyce Review).

A background paper outlines the National Careers Institute, the nature of career development in Australia, challenges facing the system, and the features of a quality career development system.

Career development services include:

- Career advice, including professional guidance as well as informal advice from parents and other influencers
- Career education, including skills such as CV writing, communication and presentation
- Career information, which is largely delivered online and targeted at young or unemployed people
- Career pathways, including a broad range of initiatives, activities and support to link those in education and training or seeking employment to the workplace
- Career technology, including technologies to assist navigation of career information.

Of relevance to the current project:

- Anecdotal evidence suggests that young Australians are listening to informal advice, such as advice from parents, over professional guidance. However, informal career advice may be based on the person’s own values, biases, assumptions, and a limited understanding of the labour market.
- There is a wealth of career information, but it is often fragmented, disjointed, outdated, or not relevant to the person’s circumstances. It can be difficult to locate the most relevant information.

- The quality of formal career guidance in schools is inconsistent.

BACKGROUND PAPER: Australian Government, Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, National Career Institute (2019) *National Careers Institute Consultations and Co-design. Background paper*. Retrieved from <https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/national-careers-institute-consultations-and-co-design-background-paper-october-2019>

WEBSITE: <https://nci.dese.gov.au/>

NATIONAL – Review of Australia’s Vocational Education and Training Sector (Joyce review)

The review of Australia’s vocational education and training sector, led by the Honourable Steven Joyce, was announced in November 2018 and the final report was delivered in March 2019. The review proposes a six point plan to strengthen the VET sector – including strengthening quality assurance, speeding up qualification development, simpler funding and skills matching, better careers information, clearer secondary school pathways, and greater access for disadvantaged Australians – and makes 71 recommendations.

Issues of relevance to the current project which were raised in the review include:

Better career information

- There is a need for the provision of “timely, accurate and useful information that would help students and their families choose vocational pathways”.
- A large amount of careers guidance information on jobs and education and training pathways is fragmented across a range of websites, making it difficult to find clear information to make informed choices about post-secondary options.
- There is a perceived bias in the school sector against VET in favour of university pathways.
- The review recommended the establishment of a National Careers Institute to provide a single, authoritative government source of careers information.

Clearer secondary school pathways

- There is currently only limited information on secondary students enrolled in VET, their motivations for enrolling, their satisfaction with their course, and their post-secondary outcomes. The review recommended the introduction of a student identifier or similar mechanism for all secondary students to allow governments to research students’ education/training and employment pathways and outcomes.

REPORT: Joyce, S. (2019). *Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia’s Vocational Education and Training System*. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Retrieved from https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/strengthening-skills-independent-review-australia-vets_1.pdf

WEBSITE: <https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/vet-review>

NATIONAL – Review of Senior Secondary Pathways into Work, Further Education and Training (Shergold review)

The review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training, chaired by Peter Shergold, was established in response to a recommendation in *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*.

A background paper and a discussion paper identify challenges facing senior secondary students when they are making decisions about subjects and post-school pathways. Selected issues of relevance to the current project include:

- Young people have a stronger understanding of university pathways than other pathways such as VET, and many students, parents and schools value university pathways more highly than other pathways such as VET.
- Parents are the biggest source of career advice for young people, so it is important that they have accurate and up-to-date information in order to assist students make informed choices.
- School-based career guidance must also be based upon clear and accurate information on the current labour market and the skills needs of the future.
- Students who leave school early need to be aware of options to complete Year 12 or an equivalent.
- Current data gaps limit understandings of senior secondary and post-secondary pathways.

The final report identified eight key outcomes for success:

1. All students leave with essential skills (including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, employability skills, creativity and entrepreneurial capabilities, financial literacy, interpersonal skills and civic understanding)
1. All students leave with a Learner Profile
2. All pathways be equally respected (including VET)
3. All students will benefit from informed decision-making (including career information through the National Careers Institute, and individualised career guidance that schools, students and parents can access)
4. All schools will have strong partnerships with industry
5. All students will start to prepare their Education Passport (for lifelong learning)
6. All students will be provided with equal opportunities for success
7. Government policies will be informed by evidence (including through longitudinal studies, data integration projects across sectors and states and territories, and the development of a Unique Student Identifier from Year 10 onwards).

BACKGROUND PAPER: Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council. *Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training. Background paper.* Retrieved from <https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/pathways/190919%20FINAL%20Background%20Paper%20-%20Web%20Accessible%20post%20design.pdf>

DISCUSSION PAPER: Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council. *Review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training. Discussion paper.* Retrieved from <https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/pathways/190919%20FINAL%20Discussion%20Paper%20-%20Web%20accessible%20post%20design.pdf>

FINAL REPORT: Shergold, P., Calma, T., Russo, S., Walton, P., Westacott, J., Zoellner, D., & O'Reilly, P. (2020). *Looking to the Future - Report of the review of the senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training.* Education Services Australia. Retrieved from <https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/pathways/Final%20report%20-%202018%20June.pdf>

WEBSITE: <https://www.pathwaysreview.edu.au/>

NATIONAL – Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (Gonski review)

The Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, chaired by David Gonski, was established in 2017 to investigate how school funding should be used to improve student outcomes. Selected issues identified which are of relevance to the current project include:

- Giving more prominence to the acquisition of the general capabilities (literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology capability, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding, and intercultural understanding); and
- Reviewing senior secondary schooling to equip students with skills for the future, including the provision of informed and consistent careers advice to students.

REPORT: Gonski, D., Arcus, T., Boston, K., Gould, V., Johnson, W., O'Brien, L., Perry, L-A., & Roberts, M. (2018). *Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools.* Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/through-growth-achievement-report-review-achieve-educational-excellence-australian-0>

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Review of Career Counselling

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) prepared a report on career counselling for the South Australian DfE. The overarching aim was to identify which models of effective career counselling and development practice could be implemented in government secondary schools in South Australia. It included an examination of the needs of school leavers, issues facing educators, the role of parents/caregivers in supporting career decision-making, and the needs of students in regional areas of South Australia. Six domains were examined: school leadership; learning for life beyond school; work exploration and employer engagement opportunities; awareness of various pathways; career advice and information; and addressing individual student needs. Fieldwork was conducted in 2019 and included case studies of three schools, stakeholder

interviews (n=12), and a sector-wide survey (n=324). Selected findings of relevance to the current project (completing Year 12 and SACE) include:

- There is no evidence of employment of professional or associate career practitioners in every school.
- Without destination data, there is no easy way to assess effectiveness of career development interventions.
- Career development seems to be primarily conceptualised as course choice.
- Work experience regulations have resulted in barriers for work exploration, and in many instances it appears that schools are opting out of work experience due to the bureaucracy involved.
- There are few supported opportunities for students, staff and parents to access career pathway information.
- There is a perception that VET options are second choice options (compared with higher education).
- There is little evidence that career information is regularly updated in school settings.
- There are no systematic or school-wide career development approaches to predict difficulties in the transition, although once a problem is identified there are a range of options available (e.g. flexible learning options and flexible apprenticeship schemes).

REPORT: Career Industry Council of Australia. (2019). *Review of Career Counselling*. Victoria: CICA.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Review of VET for School Students

A review of VET for students was conducted in 2019. An issues paper outlined the challenges in how VET is delivered to secondary school students in South Australia. A consultation outcomes report provided a summary of consultations undertaken by Price Waterhouse Cooper and an investigation into international best practice. A separate report outlined the results of an online survey of young people in South Australia, conducted by Year 13. These reports informed the South Australian VET for School Students policy.

Issues raised in the consultation paper that are of relevance to the current project include:

- Perceptions: Students view VET pathways as inferior to university; parents are “key influencers” but their views may not accurately represent the modern VET landscape; and career counsellors and VET coordinators have inconsistent understandings of VET.
- Access: Access challenges for school students (especially those living in regional and remote areas) include access to public transport, not having a drivers licence, availability of work placements, a lack of course diversity resulting in students accepting second or third course preferences, and financial barriers associated with enrolment fees, travel, accommodation, clothing and equipment expenses.
- Quality: Career counsellors and VET coordinators were identified as needing greater support and access to relevant information.

The online survey of young people in South Australia aimed “to find out how young students view VET, how they choose their post-school education pathway by better understanding their decision-making processes, and ultimately what can be done to change perceptions around VET.” The survey was conducted in 2019 and collected information from 1319 young people living in

South Australia. Just under 60 percent of respondents were still in school; 70% of respondents were female; and 38% had studied or were currently studying VET in school. Selected findings of relevance to the current project included:

- The most common reason for studying VET at school was to try out a skill or potential career path, followed by learn a new skill, good post-school prospects, sounds fun, direct link to a desired career, being disengaged from other/traditional school subjects, or to earn good money after graduation (least common reason).
- The most common influence for choosing post-school pathway was parents (selected by 56% of respondents), followed by teachers (39%); friends (38%), and the internet (37%). The least common influences were career expos (26%), careers advisors (24%), open days (20%), and workshops in schools (13%).

The VET for School Students policy focuses on three areas of reform: clearly articulated pathways; enhanced career education; and improved student outcomes. Of relevance to the current project, the measures of success included improving SACE completion rates for students on a vocational pathway, as well as increasing the number of school students completing VET qualifications at school.

ISSUES PAPER: Government of South Australia Department for Education. (2019) *Vocational Pathways to Employment: A Review of VET for School Students*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/vet-issues-paper.pdf?v=1559870914>

CONSULTATION: Government of South Australia. (2019). *A Review of VET for School Students: Consultation outcomes report*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/consultation-outcomes-report-vet.pdf>

SURVEY: Government of South Australia and Year13. (2019). *VET Pathways Survey: Research results, findings and conclusions*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/vet-pathways-survey-year13.pdf>

POLICY: Government of South Australia. (2019). *VET for School Students: Repositioning VET within secondary education in South Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/vet-for-school-students.pdf>

WEBSITE: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/reviews-and-responses/vet-school-students>

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – SACE Stage 2 Review

A review into the Stage 2 requirements of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), led by Wendy Johnson, was conducted in 2018. The review was informed by submissions, face-to-face meetings and over 1500 survey responses, and resulted in 16 recommendations. Recommendations of relevance to the current project included those relating to: the Research Project; VET; entrepreneurial learning; and determining the causes and possible solutions to

issues such as the stress levels and wellbeing of secondary students, and the low completion rates of specific cohorts.

REPORT: Government of South Australia. (2018). *SACE Stage 2 Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/sace-stage-2-review.pdf>

WEBSITE: <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/about/sace-improvement/consultation/review>

VICTORIA – Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools.

An inquiry into the extent to which school career development was meeting the needs of Victorian students and how it could be improved was conducted in 2017 to 2018. School career advice across all school sectors was considered. While career development was conceptualised as ‘an ongoing process that develops individuals’ skills and knowledge to make decisions about their education, work and career throughout their lifespan’, secondary school was viewed as a pivotal time. Evidence was collected from students and recent school leavers, school career practitioners, principals, employers, industry groups and higher education providers. Selected findings of relevance to the current project include:

- Career development services in Victoria are not meeting the needs of students.
- Students want more individualised support, more workplace exposure and work experience, and the earlier introduction of career development at school.
- School career practitioners want more time and resources to provide guidance and to keep up-to-date.
- Employers and industry groups are concerned that students are not receiving accurate and up-to-date information.
- Some schools do not prioritise career development.
- Workplace exposure is an important component of career development but not all schools offer work experience.
- Several studies have found that parents are the most important influence on young people’s career planning.
- Young people and their parents require better access to accurate and up-to-date information on current career opportunities and labour market trends.
- The wider community perceives VET pathways as inferior to higher education pathways.
- Students in regional areas and students facing disadvantage have additional career development challenges (e.g. culturally diverse students, young people with a disability, young people in out-of-home care, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds).
- Current Victorian data collections do not provide adequate measures of the quality and effectiveness of school career development services. The collection of longitudinal data and investigation of data linkage were recommended.

Forty-six recommendations on how to improve school career development were provided.

REPORT Parliament of Victoria, Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee. (2018). *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools*. Retrieved from https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/EEJSC_58-04_Text_WEB.pdf

VICTORIA – Review of Career Education in Victorian Government Schools

Dandolopartners were commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training to undertake a review of career education in Victorian government schools in 2017. The review included interviews, surveys of principals and persons responsible for career education in their school, public feedback, and focus groups with groups of Year 10 students from six schools.

Career education was seen to help “students understand themselves, the opportunities they have, and what they need to do to realise them” and that when “delivered effectively, career education supports student engagement and achievement both within and beyond their time at school”. However, the review found wide variation in provision of career education in Victorian government schools. Examples of good and bad practice were provided.

Findings of relevance to the current project included a consensus among stakeholders outside schools that career education is not meeting student needs, and many students reporting that their career education is not useful. Most career practitioner time is spent with students in Years 10-12, meaning that students who have disengaged by Year 10 are less supported.

A number of areas were identified for improvement at the school and system level. In particular, career education should reflect the changing world of work, engage parents “to ensure they are equipped with informed and accurate perspectives on the modern world of work”, differentiate delivery to different cohorts, and be explicitly incorporated into the curriculum.

REPORT Dandolopartners. (2017). *Review of Career Education in Victorian Government Schools. Key Findings.* Retrieved from https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/Dandolo_Review_Key_Findings.pdf

VICTORIA – Transforming career education in Victorian Government Schools

The Victorian State Government’s plan for transforming career education in government school includes initiatives to ensure that students have access to high-quality career education, and make more informed career and pathway decisions. The initiatives relate to three key areas identified in the Review of Career Education in Victorian Government Schools: starting early (in Year 7); connecting to work; and making career education a priority in government secondary schools.

PLAN Victoria State Government Department of Education and Training. (n.d.) *Transforming career education in Victorian Government Schools.* Retrieved from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/transforming-career.aspx>

Other recent research

Bills, A., Armstrong, D., & Howard, N. (2019). Scaled-up 'safety-net' schooling and the 'wicked problem' of education exclusion in South Australia: problem or solution?' *The Australian Education Researcher*, published online 30 September 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00353-z>

This paper investigates the South Australian Interagency Community Action Networks (ICAN-FLO) Flexible Learning Options (ICAN-FLO) program. The ICAN program provides access to case management and tailored learning for school students at risk of disengagement. Issues of relevance to this project:

- While students enrolled in ICAN-FLO are remaining attached to some form of learning, very few complete SACE (e.g. ICAN-FLO SACE completion rate of 5% in 2014).
- Key themes from interviews with 207 early school leavers, reported in *Listen to Me I'm Leaving* (Smyth et al. 2000), included: schooling is not inclusive; schooling is over-disciplinary, poor teacher-student relationships; student-bullying issues; and school learning regimes being boring. Other research suggests that cycles of suspension and absenteeism can lead to exclusion or "dropping out" of school.
- An absence of quantitative data on school completion rates and post-FLO outcomes was noted. The authors called for longitudinal data on whether FLO students go on to take up *secure* job opportunities or commence tertiary study.

Carlisle E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Perrens, B., Perdriau, A., & Plummer, J. (2019). *Youth Survey Report 2019*. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia. Retrieved from <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey>

The 2019 Mission Australia Youth Survey was a national online survey of 25,126 respondents aged 15-19 (including 3,242 South Australian respondents). Results are presented by state/territory. South Australian results of relevance to the current study include:

- Of those that were still at school, 95% stated that they intended to complete Year 12.
- Around 45% of respondents reported that there were barriers that may impact upon the achievement of their post-school study/work goals. The top three barriers were academic ability, mental health, and financial difficulty.
- Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year. The most common issues of personal concern for young South Australians were coping with stress, mental health, and school or study problems.
- Bullying at school/TAFE/university had been experienced by 84% of males and 77% of females over the past year.
- The main sources of help with important issues in their lives that young South Australians would turn to were friends (85%), parents (77%) and relatives/family friends (60%). This can be compared with teachers (38%) and school counsellors (32%).

It should be noted that the above results were not reported separately for current school students, school completers, and early school leavers. Separate reports are available detailing the 2019 results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and young people in cities and regional areas. Separate reports are also available detailing the 2018 results for young people whose

families or peers experienced problems with alcohol and/or drugs, and economically disadvantaged young people.

Davies, M., Lamb, S., & Doecke, E. (2011). *Strategic Review of Effective Re-Engagement Models for Disengaged Learners*. Melbourne: State of Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/revreengage.pdf>

This review examined practices and strategies that work to help improve educational participation and attainment of low skill and disengaged adult learners. It comprised a review of national and international literature, as well as consultations. Low skill and disengaged adult learners were defined as 15-64 year olds, without Year 12 or equivalent (Certificate III or above), either unemployed, not in the labour force or in low skilled jobs.

Of particular relevance to this project, Chapter 3 outlined four sets of key factors contributing to disengagement:

- *Access*: Barriers limiting access include poor knowledge of education/training options, no interest in finding out about opportunities, low aspirations and low confidence in learning ability, and financial/time/distance constraints on access.
- *Achievement*: Low achievement is linked to poor prior experiences of learning, language, literacy and numeracy needs, learning anxiety, early school leaving, and long periods without study.
- *Application or commitment to study*: Barriers undermining application or commitment to study include family commitments, childcare needs, disability/health problems, poverty, English language needs, refugee status, and living circumstances.
- *Aspiration*: Low aspirations are compounded by no career plans, poor information on work and opportunities, and a lack of careers advice or planning.

A range of effective interventions to help re-engage adult learners were identified, and funding models were discussed.

Dommers, E., Myconos, G., Swain, L., Yung, S., & Clarke K. (2017). *Engaging young early school leavers in vocational training*. Adelaide: NCVET. Retrieved from https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1390700/Engaging-young-early-school-leavers-in-vocational-training.pdf

Many early school leavers disengage from VET before completion, while others do not enrol in VET as an alternative to school completion. This research investigated what approaches would maximise successful entry into and engagement with VET for disadvantaged young people? Qualitative data were obtained from young people, training providers, and organisations providing support services to young people across 16 sites in Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria.

Of relevance to the current project, the main sources of information about VET identified by young people were family members such as parents and siblings (who may themselves have a tenuous knowledge of the VET sector).

Barriers to VET included factors such as:

- Negative perceptions of VET (relative to university study) held by some parents, schools, and communities
- Lack of sufficient information about VET to make informed decisions (e.g. the range of courses and qualifications; costs associated with training)
- Lack of course options in regional and remote areas
- Lack of a driver's licence and access to a vehicle/access to transport services to training settings
- Perceived and actual cost of courses
- Difficulties associated with the enrolment process.

The report also included a literature review which identified over 100 factors that influence engagement in VET.

Education Endowment Foundation. (2020). *Impact of school closures on the attainment gap: Rapid Evidence Assessment*. London: Education Endowment Foundation. Retrieved from [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF_\(2020\)_-Impact_of_School_Closures_on_the_Attainment_Gap.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF_(2020)_-Impact_of_School_Closures_on_the_Attainment_Gap.pdf)

The aim of this paper was to explore the potential impact of school closures due to COVID-19 on learning in the UK, including any differential impact on socioeconomically disadvantaged students. A review of international literature on the effect of past school closures was conducted. The results suggest that negative effects on learning from the move to schooling from home will disproportionately affect disadvantaged students and that it is highly likely that the achievement gap will have widened by the time students return to school. Recommendations include the use of targeted support after students return to school to compensate for the lost learning. A major limitation of the study is the type of school closures that have been studied in the past tend to focus on summer holidays and younger ages, rather than lengthy, unplanned closures.

Gemici, S., Bednarz, A., Karmel, T., & Lim, P. (2014). *The factors affecting the educational and occupational aspirations of young Australians*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/the-factors-affecting-the-educational-and-occupational-aspirations-of-young-australians>

This report examines factors associated with young people's plans to complete Year 12, aspirations to participate in university in the year after leaving school, and occupational aspirations. Data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth are used to examine the effects of socioeconomic background characteristics, parental and peer influences, academic performance at age 15, and young people's perceptions of school (attitudes toward school, relations to teachers, perceived disciplinary climate at school, and perceived quality of teachers at school). Key findings included:

- Academic performance at age 15 had the strongest impact on young people's plans at age 15 to complete Year 12.
- Parental expectations were the second strongest predictor of Year 12 completion plans, and the strongest influence on young people's university and occupational aspirations.

- Other factors related to Year 12 completion plans included gender, immigration background, socioeconomic background, attitudes to school, and teacher-student relations.

The authors argued that a “key insight from this study is just how critical parental influences are in driving young people’s educational and occupational aspirations” (p.30). The Parents as Career Transition Supports program was provided as an example of a successful parent-focused intervention, providing parents with advice on educational pathways and how to communicate with young people about careers.

Gillett-Swan, J. (2019). *The wellbeing of students who don’t like school*. Paper presented at the Privileging the voice of the disenfranchised learner: Research Showcase 2019. Brisbane: Queensland Government & Australian Association for Research in Education.

This presentation focused on the voices of students who do not like school, and the development of a wellbeing framework. The study involved surveys of staff and students, focus groups, a student inquiry group, the collaborative development of a wellbeing framework, a follow-up student survey on the proposed framework, and a staff-student forum on the way forward. The follow-up survey found that 24 percent of students did not like school. Reasons included “can’t express self”, feeling unsafe, boring, and the student doesn’t matter. This research is part of a larger study on the wellbeing perspectives of students in grades 7-10 at a low SES school in south-east Queensland.

Government of South Australia Department for Education. (n.d.). *Senior School Retention and SACE Completion: 2019 Updates*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/senior-school-retention-sace-completion-report-2019.pdf>

Longitudinal enrolment records, as well as SACE and VET records, were used to calculate student retention rates, transition rates, and SACE completion rates. Data were sourced from the DfE, the SACE Board, and the Department for Innovation and Skills. The Year 12/13 to SACE completion rate was 58-59 per cent (2015-2018), and the Year 12/13 to SACE completion rate for students aged 17-18 years was 62-64 per cent (2015-2018). These rates may differ from other rates published on the data.sa.gov.au and SACE websites due to the use of different methodologies.

Hancock, K.J., & Zubrick, S.R. (2015). *Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school*. Western Australia: Commissioner for Children and Young people. Retrieved from <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/media/1422/report-education-children-at-risk-of-disengaging-from-school-literature-review.pdf>

This report provides an extensive literature review on student disengagement from school, with a focus on Australian studies published between 2010 and 2015, plus relevant international literature. Questions addressed include:

1. How can disengagement be defined and understood?

2. Why does disengagement matter (including post-school outcomes for early school leavers)?
3. What are the risk factors associated with disengagement?
4. How many Australian students are disengaged?
5. What do students, teachers and others have to say about disengagement?
6. What does the literature say about interventions and programs addressing student disengagement?

Hamilton, L.S., Grant, D., Kaufman, J.H., Diliberti, M., Schwartz, H.L., Hunter, G.P., Setodji, C.M., & Young, C.J. (2020). *COVID-19 and the State of K–12 Schools: Results and Technical Documentation from the Spring 2020 American Educator Panels COVID-19 Surveys*. California: RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA168-1>

This report outlines how public schools in the United States supported students' learning while schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is based upon preliminary findings from two nationally representative surveys of teachers (n=1000) and principals (957). Survey results are presented for target schools (those serving large populations of students of colour and students from lower-income households), non-target schools and the total sample. Selected results of relevance to the current project include:

- Teachers in target schools were less likely than teachers in non-target school to report that their students had completed the distance learning activities which had been set.
- Principals at target schools were more likely than principals at non-target schools to report that a range of factors – such as lack of internet access for students, a lack of technology devices for students, an inability to communicate with students and families, and financial constraints – limited the amount or type of distance education materials that schools have been able to provide to students.
- Compared with fall 2019, 78 percent of principals were expecting a decrease in student achievement in fall 2020. One-third of principals were expecting a decrease in achievement among high achieving students, but 86% of principals were expecting a decrease in achievement among low-achieving students.

Mills, M. (2019). *Alternative provision in England: Voices of the excluded*. Paper presented at the Privileging the voice of the disenfranchised learner: Research Showcase 2019. Brisbane: Queensland Government & Australian Association for Research in Education.

This presentation focused on the voices of young people in alternative provision in England (those who have been excluded from or unable to secure a place in mainstream schools). Qualitative data collected from young people, their teachers and other workers was used to consider what it means to be a young person in such a school, highlight the role of exclusion as a means of addressing student behaviour, and to consider how education systems might better meet student needs. Issues raised included: the importance of understanding young people's lives outside of school; and the importance of listening/meaningful conversations between teachers and learners.

Misko, J., Chew, E., & Korbel, P. (2020). *VET for secondary school students: post-school employment and further training destinations*. Adelaide: NCVET. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-for-secondary-school-students-post-school-employment-and-further-training-destinations>

This report investigates whether students who undertook a VET for Secondary School Students Program (VfSSS) were in work and/or further study four to five years after leaving school, using linked data from the 2011 National VET in Schools Collection and the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. The study also compares outcomes for VfSSS and non-VfSSS students, using data from the 2009 commencing cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY).

The authors note that the goals of VfSSS programs include: “preparing students for the ‘world of work’; enabling an alternative pathway for those students not generally interested in or capable of higher academic education; and catering to those who are mainly interested in vocational pathways, including training for the trades” (p.21).

Findings of relevance to the current project include:

- VfSSS students were less likely than non-VfSSS students to complete Year 12.
- There were a number of statistically significant differences in the post-school pathways of VfSSS and non-VfSSS students. For example, four to five years after leaving school, VfSSS students were more likely than non-VfSSS students: to have completed an apprenticeship or VET studies; to be in full-time and permanent ongoing employment; and to be employed as technicians, trade workers or hospitality, retail and service managers. Conversely, they were less likely than non-VfSSS students to have a bachelor’s degree as their highest qualification, to be currently studying, or to be employed in a professional occupation.
- There were also differences within VfSSS students. Students who undertook a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship as part of a VfSSS program were more likely than other VfSSS students to have a job five years later, and to be in an occupation relevant to their VfSSS course.

Moschion, J., Polidano, C., & Castillo M. (2019). *Vocational pathways and post-school transitions from VET delivered to school students*. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute, the University of Melbourne. Retrieved from https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/3194403/Vocational-pathways-2019.pdf

This study investigates the long-term (seven year) education and labour market outcomes of three broad types of school-based VET – (a) classroom-based VET without workplace learning; (b) classroom-based VET with workplace learning; (c) apprenticeships/ traineeships – and compares these with the educational and labour market outcomes of students who did not undertake any VET subjects in upper secondary school. This differs from previous research which has tended to focus on shorter-term outcomes of school-based VET. Analysis is based upon three cohorts of young people from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth. Findings of relevance to the current project include:

- *Short-term outcomes:* Participation in upper secondary VET programs is associated with a higher likelihood of full-time employment and a higher chance of being employed in a “career job” in the first year out of school. While positive effects were noted for each of the three types of VET, they were largest for school-based apprenticeships/traineeships, lower for classroom-based VET with workplace learning, and lowest for classroom-based VET without workplace learning.
- *Seven-year outcomes:* The labour market benefits of upper-secondary school VET decline over time are not observed by the seventh year out of school. However, long-term labour market benefits are observed for upper secondary VET with workplace learning (including apprenticeships and traineeships) that is coupled with further study after school.

The authors conclude that VET programs in school can help smooth school-to-work transitions, but that outcomes could be improved by (a) supporting school students to access workplace learning; and (b) providing more information on VET graduate outcomes in school career counselling to support student choice.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019a). *Australian vocational education and training statistics: VET student outcomes 2019*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from https://www.ncver.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0041/8289671/VET_student_outcomes_2019.pdf

This report provides a range of results from the National VET Outcomes Survey. A range of topics are addressed, such as reasons for undertaking VET, employment and further study outcomes, reasons for not continuing training (VET participants who did not complete a qualification), and satisfaction with training. For example, level of VET qualification is related to employment outcomes, with students who completed a qualification at certificate III or higher having better outcomes than those who completed a Certificate I/II (p16). It should be noted that the results exclude students under 18 years of age and students who undertook VET delivered in schools, where training activity was undertaken as part of a senior secondary certificate.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019b). *Generation Z: leaving school*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from <https://www.lsay.edu.au/publications/search-for-lsay-publications/generation-z-leaving-school>

This infographic is based upon data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth. A cohort of young people were followed from age 15 (in 2015) to age 18 (in 2018). Of relevance to the current project:

- Around 84% of this cohort had completed Year 12 by age 18.
- The top five reasons for early school leaving were: having a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to (20%); wanting to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (16%); not liking school (13%); not doing well at school (11%); and wanting to do study or training that was not available at school (7%).
- For many young people who had attended school in 2017 (age 17), their post school activities in 2018 differed from their post school plans.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019c). *VET in Schools 2018*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-in-schools-2018>

This report provides statistics on VET in schools, both nationally and for South Australia.

- Nationally between 2017 and 2018, the number of VET in Schools students decreased. Decreases were evident for both school-based apprentices/trainees and students undertaking other VET in Schools programs.
- Consistent with national trends, the number of school-based apprentices and trainees in South Australia decreased over this period. However, the total number of VET in school students in South Australia increased between 2017 and 2018, driven by an increase in students undertaking other VET in Schools programs.
- For trends in government schools in South Australia, see NCVER (2019d).

National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019d). *VET in Schools 2018: data slicer*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/all-data/vet-in-schools-2018-data-slicer>

This file permits breakdowns of VET in schools by state and school sector. In South Australia between 2017 and 2018:

- The number of students undertaking school-based apprenticeships/traineeships decreased in government and Catholic schools but increased in independent schools.
- The number of other VET in Schools students (and the total number of VET in schools students) decreased in government schools but increased in Catholic and independent schools.

Nguyen, N. & Blomberg, D. (2014). *The role of aspirations in the educational and occupational choices of young people*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved from <https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/file/0022/46264/role-of-aspirations-2710.pdf>

This briefing paper synthesises research from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth and presents new findings on the role of aspirations in the educational and occupational choices of young people. Findings of relevance to the current project include:

- Young people's educational intentions at age 15 are a strong predictor of Year 12 completion.
- Educational aspirations measured at age 15 years remain relatively stable as students grow older, suggesting the need for early interventions.
- A range of factors influence educational aspirations. One study of Year 12 aspirations found that the effects of parental expectations and peer influences are stronger than the effects of academic performance and perceptions of school.

The authors suggest that “strategies to raise educational aspirations might focus on influencing students' and parents' attitudes towards school and study, and promoting the importance of a career plan” (p.1).

Noble, K., Hurley, P., & Macklin, S. (2020). *COVID-19, employment stress and student vulnerability in Australia*. Melbourne: Mitchell Institute for Education and Health Policy, Victoria University. Retrieved from <https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/schooling/covid-19-employment-stress-student-vulnerability>

This report explores the impact of parental employment stress arising from COVID-19 on student wellbeing in Australia. Data from the Australian Census and modelling by the Grattan Institute is used to map unemployment in Australia in 2016 and 2020, while a review of the international literature is used to examine the potential impact of increased unemployment on child wellbeing, including the impact on learning and early school leaving among secondary school students. The report argues that low income families and outer suburban and regional areas will be most impacted by rising unemployment; that distance learning during school closures presented challenges for many students; and that the challenges faced by vulnerable students will continue for months or years after schools re-opening.

O'Connell, M., Milligan, S., & Bently, T. (2019). *Beyond ATAR: A proposal for change*. An Australian Learning Lecture Position paper on transforming the transition from school to higher education, life and work. Melbourne: Koshland Innovation Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.all-learning.org.au/programs/beyond-atar-proposal-change>

This position paper outlines three proposals aimed at supporting young people to thrive in a changing world. The proposals are based upon a review of recent Australian research and current innovative practices, and focus on the period from Year 10/age 15 to the first year post-school/age 19. The proposals relate to supporting young people throughout this transition period to develop knowledge, skills and capabilities; the use of nationally comparable Learner Profiles to represent the full range of school and non-school accomplishments of young people during their this period; and the adoption of broader, more transparent entry pathways for tertiary education.

Polidano, C., & Tabasso, D. (2020). Initial outcomes from VET in Schools programs in Australia. In C. Forrest & C. Scobie (Eds.), (2020). *25 years of LSAY: Research from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth* (pp. 56-62). Adelaide: NCVET. Retrieved from <https://www.lsay.edu.au/publications/search-for-lsay-publications/25-years-of-lsay-research-from-the-longitudinal-surveys-of-australian-youth>

This study compares the education and employment outcomes in the first year out of school of students who had participated in various types of VET in Schools programs in upper secondary school, with those who had not. The analysis is based upon data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (Y03 and Y06 cohorts). Students who left school before the commencement of Year 11 were excluded from the analysis. The analysis controlled for a wide range of differences in student characteristics such as past academic achievement, aspirations, socioeconomic background, local labour market opportunities and differences in the characteristics of the schools attended.

Twenty-nine percent of students undertook at least one VET subject in senior secondary school. Three types of VET in School participants – those who had undertaken classroom-based VET without workplace learning; those who had undertaken classroom-based VET with workplace learning; and those who had undertaken apprenticeships/traineeships – were compared with students who did not undertake any VET in School.

The study found that participation in VET in school can have a positive effect on school completion and initial labour market outcomes such as full-time employment in the first year after school and being in a job the young person would like as a career. However, these effects were limited to VET in School which had a workplace learning component (in the form of either classroom-based VET with workplace learning, or apprenticeships/traineeships).

Ranasinghe, R., Chew, E., Knight, G., & Siekmann, G. (2019). *School-to-work pathways*. Adelaide: NCVET. Retrieved from https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/6547412/School_to_work_pathways.pdf

This report draws upon data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) to explore school-to-work transitions of young people from age 16 (in 2007) to age 25 (in 2016). Five key pathways were identified through sequence analysis and cluster analysis:

- Pathway 1: Higher education and work (60%)
- Pathway 2: Early entry to full-time work (short spell of post-school education or training (mostly VET) leading to full-time work approximately one year after leaving school; also includes a combination of training full-time work that extend beyond the early post school years as part of an apprenticeship or traineeship) (23%)
- Pathway 3: Mix of higher education and VET (extended period of higher education and VET activity, combined with short and intermittent episodes of employment, eventually leading to employment or further VET activity) (8%)
- Pathway 4: Mixed and repeatedly disengaged (repeated labour market changes, with periods of “not in the labour force” or “not in education, employment nor training”) (5%)
- Pathway 5: Mostly working part-time (4%).

A range of factors were associated with the type of pathway undertaken. Of particular relevance to the current project:

- Pathway 4 had the highest proportion of early school leavers. Pathways 2 and 5 also had relatively high proportions of early school leavers.
- Studying a vocational subject at school age was positively related to being in Pathways 2-5, particularly Pathway 2 (multinomial logistic regression results).
- Demographic factors such as gender, Indigenous status, overseas background, socioeconomic status, teenage marriage, teenage parents and disability were also associated with type of pathway undertaken.

Shay, M. (2019). *“Everyone unites”*: Listening to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people on education. Paper presented at the Privileging the voice of the

disenfranchised learner: Research Showcase 2019. Brisbane: Queensland Government & Australian Association for Research in Education.

This presentation drew on the author's research and practice experience in flexi schools in Queensland to show what can be learned when we make space to listen to the voices of young people. Findings included reasons indigenous students were in flexi schools, and students' perspectives on how to make education more engaging.

Shiple, B., & Stuble, W. (2018). *After the ATAR II: Understanding How Gen Z Make Decisions About Their Future*. Australia: Year13.

The aims of this report included understanding how young people make decisions about their post-school options. Analysis was based upon two Australian online surveys of young people aged 15-25, conducted in 2018 (n=4810). Just over one-half of respondents were currently in school, and just under one-half were post-school. Results were presented for the total sample, but were not broken down by whether the young person was currently at school, had left school before the completion of Year 12, or had completed Year 12.

Findings of relevance to the current project include:

- Issues faced by young people include mental health issues; and stress caused by senior secondary school and the ATAR system.
- There are concerns that senior schooling has become more focussed on the ATAR and academic achievement rather than setting students up for post-school success, leading to negative impacts on engagement levels at school and mental health of students.
- The majority of young people received career advice from parents (56%). This can be contrasted with other sources such as the internet (42%), teachers (40%), and career advisors (38%).
- Young people said that the following would help them to receive better career advice: more personalised advice (76%); access to mentors/industry professionals (60%); access to unbiased advice (52%); an advisor I can relate to/connect with (47%); higher quality advice (44%); more online access (38%); access over a longer time period (35%); more time with an advisor (34%); and more offline access (16%).
- Young people were more likely to report understanding university pathways than other pathways such as VET. (e.g. in Year 12, 37% report having a good/strong understanding of university pathways, but only 12% report a good/strong understanding of apprenticeship pathways). Furthermore, young people felt that their parents had a greater understanding of university pathways than apprenticeships, traineeships and other VET pathways.

Shiple, B., & Walker, I. (2020). *After the ATAR III: The Role of Passion and Purpose in Connecting Youth to Meaningful Education and Employment*. Australia: Year13.

This report presents the results of three national surveys of Australian youth, conducted between May and December 2019. A sample of 4681 respondents between the ages of 15 and 24 was sourced from social media and Year 13's electronic direct mail database. Two-thirds of respondents were aged 16 to 18. The proportion of the sample who early school leavers, school

completers, or still in school is not reported, and results are not broken down by school completion status. Nevertheless there are some broad themes of relevance to the current project.

The focus of the report is passions and purpose, where passions are defined as “the goals and dreams our respondents have for their life and career, even if they view these goals as too far-fetched or out of reach to achieve” (Ch. 1). Around 46% of the young people surveyed had a passion or passions that they are seriously dedicating themselves to.

Family is the largest source of support in pursuing passions (81%), followed by friends (75%), while less than one half reported that their school supported them pursuing their passions (45%). Two-thirds of young people reported that someone in their life is holding them back (Figure 1.4). Other commonly cited barriers to following passions include money (76%), time (61%), fear of failure (49%), skills (38%), understanding/knowledge (32%), location (32%), and mental health (31%) (Figure 1.5).

Pursuing a passion is related to:

- Having goals for what they want to achieve in life and detailed plans for reaching these goals.
- Feeling in control of their future, being more likely to feel excited, passionate, happy and confident about their future, and being less likely to feel stressed, fearful, frustrated, anxious, depressed, and indifferent.

Based upon this research and previous *After the ATAR* reports, the authors conclude that there are three key areas in which young people require support in the transition from school: happiness and wellbeing; financial literacy; and career advice that encompasses a range of educational pathways (including VET), the future of industries (including areas of skill shortage or future growth), and the pursuit of meaningful work. The authors advocate a move away from single-metric measures of school achievement such as ATAR towards an adoption of scorecard approach based on the post-school success of students.

Smyth, J. (2003). The Making of Young Lives with/against the School Credential. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(2), 127-146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1363908032000070657>

This article focused on the student voice by examining how young people experience their lives during the post-compulsory years of schooling, and how this contributes to their decisions not to complete school. The article is based upon an ARC qualitative study of 209 young people in South Australia who had chosen not to complete their secondary schooling (“leavers”), or who were at risk of leaving before completing Year 12 (“stayers”). The sample was drawn from 67 predominantly low SES schools and interviews were conducted between 1997 and 2000.

Issues raised, which are of relevance to the current project included:

- The perceived relevance of schooling to the rest of their life was an important factor; there was a perceived mismatch between senior secondary school credentials and (non-university) aspirations.
- Drudgery, boredom, or the uninspiring nature of school, leading young people to seek other alternatives.

- The intensification of workload in out of school hours as they moved from Year 10 into senior secondary school.
- Academic difficulties, problems with workload, finding it hard to keep up the pace and meet deadlines, and the pressure associated with satisfying SACE requirements while trying to balance study with the demand of outside employment and domestic responsibilities

For further details, refer to the full report: *Listen to Me, I'm Leaving Early: Early School Leaving in South Australian Secondary Schools*.

Stubley, W. (2019). *Beyond the Data. Understanding the psychographics of youth*. Year 13 Webinar presented on 10 December 2019.

This webinar provided an overview research based on data collected by Year 13 from 12,377 young people over 12 months. Just over half of respondents were still at school and the remainder had recently left. Key messages of relevance to this project included: a lack of understanding around careers and pathways options (including VET) is resulting in poor decisions; the importance of mental health; and the importance of connecting students to a sense of purpose and passion (e.g. why going to school or doing a subject).

Tomaszowski, T., Perales, F., & Ziang, X. (2017). *School experiences, career guidance, and the university participation of young people from three equity groups in Australia*. Perth: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Perth. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/TomaszewskiUQ.pdf>

This study examined the effects of attitudes towards school, relationships with teachers and career guidance on participation in university by young people from three equity groups (low SES backgrounds, from regional/remote areas, and from non-English-speaking backgrounds). It is based upon young people who were 15 years of age in 2003, followed until age 25 as part of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth. The study found

- Young people from low socio-economic backgrounds and from regional/remote areas were less likely to enrol into university than young people who were not in these equity groups.
- Students who held positive attitudes towards school and had positive relationships with their teachers were more likely to enrol at university
- Some forms of career guidance had positive associations with university participation, such as talks by a TAFE or university representative and schools' career advisors. Other forms of career guidance had negative associations with university participation, such as employer representative talks and group discussions about careers.
- Some of these attitudinal and careers guidance factors have stronger effects on university participation amongst students from equity groups.

The authors conclude that policy initiatives aimed at improving these school factors will result in expanded university enrolments, and smaller enrolment gaps, especially for young people from equity groups.

APPENDIX B. EXISTING SURVEYS

This appendix provides a brief overview of the surveys consulted as part of the questionnaire design process for this project.

ACT – Post School Destinations and Pathways Survey

The ACT Education Directorate has two post-school destination surveys. One is an annual survey of Year 12 graduates and Year 9–12 school leavers. The other is a longitudinal survey of Year 12 graduates and Year 9–12 school leavers from the 2015 cohort. These surveys elicit information on student destinations and earning and learning pathways.

Report: ACT Government. (2019). *ACT Post School Destinations and pathways in 2018*. Canberra: ACT Government. Retrieved from

https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1319552/ACT-Post-School-Destinations-and-Pathways-in-2018.pdf

Questionnaire: Not publicly available; provided upon request.

ACT – Student Survey used for the Review of Vocational Education and Training in ACT Public Schools

This survey was aimed at examining and evaluating the current model/models of VET implemented in ACT public schools, to identify best practice educational and resource-effective approaches and proposes future directions to strengthen VET provision.

Report and questionnaire: Centre for International Research on Education Systems. (2015). *Review of Vocational Education and Training in ACT Public Schools: Future Directions. Report prepared for the Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate*. Melbourne: Victoria University. Retrieved from

https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/772233/Final-Report_Review-of-VET-in-ACT-Public-Schools-2-Dec.pdf

Australia – Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)

The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) aim to track young people in their transitions from school to further education, employment and other destinations. They collect information on a wide range of school and post-school topics such as achievement, aspirations, attitudes, social background, earning and learning pathways and life satisfaction. Survey participants complete the surveys once per year between the ages of 15 and 25.

Reports: various, including National Centre for Vocational Education Research. (2019). *Generation Z: leaving school*. Retrieved from

<https://www.lsay.edu.au/publications/search-for-lsay-publications/generation-z-leaving-school>

Questionnaire: National Centre for Vocational Education Research. *LSAY questionnaires and frequency tables*. Retrieved from

<https://www.isay.edu.au/publications/user-support-and-documentation>

Canada – Future to Discover Project

This questionnaire was administered by Statistics Canada to elicit information on education, training and work in order to examine major transitions and analyse patterns and influences in young people's lives.

Questionnaire: Statistics Canada. *Future to Discover Project: Self-completed questionnaire* (2004-2005). Retrieved from

http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Instr.pl?Function=getInstrumentList&Item_Id=50760&UL=1V

NSW – School Leaver Surveys

These surveys collect information about students' main destinations in the year after graduating Year 12 or leaving school. It aims to elicit data on destinations and learning pathways in order to inform education, training and employment policy.

2017 report and questionnaire: Social Research Centre. (n.d.). *NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations and Expectations. 2017 Annual report*. Melbourne: SRC.

2018 questionnaire: Not publicly available; provided by the ACT Education Directorate upon request.

Queensland – Next Step Survey

This survey is administered annually to students who are identified as either Year 12 Completers or Early School Leavers, from all school sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent) in Queensland. The surveys aim to identify study, work or other destinations for students after leaving school.

Questionnaires:

Queensland Department of Education. *2018 Early School Leavers survey questionnaire*. Retrieved from <https://qed.qld.gov.au/det-publications/reports/earlyyears/Documents/esl-questionnaire.pdf>

Queensland Department of Education. *2019 Next Step survey questionnaire*. Retrieved from <https://qed.qld.gov.au/det-publications/reports/earlyyears/Documents/year-12-leavers-questionnaire.pdf>

SA – VET Pathways Survey (part of the SA Review of VET for students)

This survey was administered in mid-2019 by *Year13*, who collected data on behalf of the Government of South Australia. The survey aimed to elicit information on students' perceptions of VET, student choices that led to VET engagement, and how perceptions of VET could be managed.

Report: Year 13. (2019). *VET Pathways Survey: Research results, findings and conclusions*. Year 13. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/vet-pathways-survey-year13.pdf>

SA – Western and Eastern Suburbs Transitions Research Project (WETR)

The South Australian Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research (WETR) Project tracked the pathways of students from three cohorts of early-school-leavers and school-completers in 18 government schools between 2012 and 2014. Results showed that what could have helped non-completers to stay at school included more flexible hours and/or part-time options, more relevant courses, better mentoring from teachers, being allowed to return to school at a later stage, more help with learning needs, a wider range of VET subjects to choose from, more engaging teachers, more tutoring offered or available at school, and offering vacation coaching or catch-up. Foci for future research included:

- How families can be involved in the provision of up-to-date pathway information to young people that takes into account young people's strengths and attitudes.
- The factors that influence the differences within schools and between schools in the awareness and uptake of VET subjects. For example, differences were found in the pathways of students who took VET subjects in-school and students who did not.
- How to raise awareness of careers advice and support services after leaving school, as about one-third of WETR respondents had asked about such services.

Reports and questionnaires:

McMillan, J., & Fallas, J. (2014). *Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research Project: 2014 Eastern Suburbs Interim Report*. Report prepared for the Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

McMillan, J., & Fallas, J. (2014). *Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research Project: 2014 Eastern Suburbs Longitudinal Report*. Report prepared for the Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

McMillan, J., & Fallas, J. (2014). *Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research Project: 2014 Western Suburbs Interim Report*. Report prepared for the Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

McMillan, J., & Fallas, J. (2014). *Western and Eastern Suburbs Transition Research Project: 2014 Western Suburbs Longitudinal Report*. Report prepared for the Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Victoria – On Track Survey

This survey is also administered annually to students who are identified as either Year 12 Completers or Early School Leavers, and aims to identify students' post-school destinations and pathways. The survey aims to monitor school leavers' transitions, report information to relevant

stakeholders, enable analysis of transitions for different groups of leavers, and provide a referral service for school leavers.

Report: Victoria Department of Education and Training. (2018). *On Track 2018: Destinations of Victorian School Leavers*. Retrieved from

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/research/OnTrack2018/snapshot-ontrack-2018.pdf>

Questionnaire: Not publicly available; provided from the Victorian Government upon request.

WA – Post School Destination Survey

The Western Australian Department of Education conducts a short post school destinations survey. Survey data and administrative data on the placements of Year 12 school leavers at WA public universities and with TAFE WA are used for the reporting of post-school destinations for WA public school students.

Questionnaire: Not publicly available; provided upon request.

WA – Post School Intentions and Student Satisfaction Survey 2019

This is a compulsory survey for Year 12 students in Western Australia, linked to their Student Number. The survey is designed to provide data to various stakeholders in the education system so they can assist school leavers with post-school options.

Questionnaire: WA Department of Education. *Year 12 – Post School Intentions and Student Satisfaction Survey 2019*. Retrieved from

<http://det.wa.edu.au/accountability/detcms/education/evaluation-and-accountability/binary-files/school-performance/year-12.en?title=Year+12+Post+School+Intentions+Survey+2018>

APPENDIX C. SUMMARY REPORT FROM QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK MEETINGS

Earning and Learning Pathways Project

Qualitative Feedback Meetings – Findings

Background

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) conducted research for the Department for Education's (DfE) Earning and Learning Pathways project in 2019-20. This project aimed to identify:

- why students in Years 10, 11, or 12 leave school without a documented "valid" reason, and,
- why some Year 12 students remain enrolled in high school but do not appear to be on a SACE/VET pathway.

A questionnaire was administered to a random sample of about 400 students in each of these two groups through computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) in Term 2 (April-June), 2020. Design of the two questionnaires was informed by previous research and other Australian school-leaver surveys.

To increase the questionnaires' relevance for the South Australian context, input was sought from DfE staff who were employed in a position with direct contact with schools and students in this domain. Initial input was facilitated through focus groups with:

- SACE Achievement Officers and Project Officers (N=22) on Friday 25 October 2019; and
- Career Pathway Officer Team Leaders (N=3) on Tuesday 29 October 2019.

Further input, including follow-up comments, was sought via e-mail from SACE Achievement Officers and Career Pathway Officers during November 2019. Input gained from these stakeholders is summarised in this appendix.

Meeting format

The first focus group was split into two – due to number of participants (22) – to increase the opportunities for feedback whereas the second focus group was conducted with a single group of three participants. Each focus group began with an introduction to the research and its aims, followed by a general discussion of the research questions with the participants. This was followed by seeking comments on the current overview of topics covered in the questionnaires. Here, participants were first given time to read through the draft questionnaires and provide written feedback by rating the priority of items and writing comments on specific topics or items. This was followed by a discussion which enabled participants to provide verbal feedback.

This appendix summarises the information collected from these meetings. First, it captures the notes which were taken during the general discussions with participants. Second, it summarises

participants' verbal and written feedback on the questionnaire content, including participants' priority rankings of questionnaire items.

Summary of feedback – general discussions

The focus groups began with a general discussion of the research questions. Participants were prompted to discuss each question as a group, with the aim of eliciting potential answers (or partial answers), even if anecdotal. The ACER team analysed the notes that were taken of these discussions and main underlying concepts were thematically grouped, as follows.

- Known reasons for leaving: Schools often already know why students have left but this information may not yet have been transferred to the DfE. For example, “some students need to earn an income” or “have already chosen a pathway that does not require either SACE or remaining at school”.
- Data collection systems and processes: Some students have completed SACE or VET requirements; however, the recording of their results may be delayed, partly because SACE and VET data systems are not automatically connected. Participants also commented that students who have changed schools may experience data transfer issues.
- Current high-stakes nature of the SACE: Some students found the pressure of the certification structure (200 credits, mostly within Years 11-12) too stressful to continue; the psychological effect of SACE can be considerable, resulting in anxiety for some students.
- Some students had intermittent success rates in the years leading up to senior school, for a variety of reasons – including for example, learning challenges, illness or disability, social, family or financial challenges. These reasons may contribute to leaving school early or to enrolling in less than a full-time study load in senior school. They may also add to schools' and teachers' assumptions regarding what students are being expected (or not) to be able to do in senior school.

Participants highlighted the plans for the new Educational Management System (EMS), due for implementation in 2020, and noted that this may mitigate some of the data collection and data transfer challenges identified in the discussions. Participants also strongly recommended that schools be contacted as part of the research as they can often give further insight into students' pathways and the reasons underpinning students' choices. Finally, it was suggested that the current research project might give rise to some questions about earning and learning pathways of school leavers which could be integrated into the new EMS to enable systematic data collection of this information.

Summary of feedback – questionnaire review

After the general discussion of the research questions, participants were asked to read the draft questionnaires and provide feedback on the questionnaire content. Feedback was provided in three forms:

1. a written priority rating of “high”, “medium”, “low” or “not relevant” of specific questionnaire items;

2. written comments on specific questionnaire items; and
3. verbal feedback on specific items through the focus group discussions.

A summary of the underlying concepts from feedback on the draft questionnaires are as follows (note that highly-specific suggestions for question wording were compiled separately).

Priorities

- Most draft questionnaire content was rated as being of high priority.
- Questions that were notably rated as *most* essential included: reasons for deciding to leave school, and whether the students had transitioned to an alternative “Earning or Learning” pathway (leavers survey); whether students planned to complete Year 12, and the facilitators or barriers to staying at school (stayers survey).
- Questions that were notably rated as *less* essential included: advice for other early school leavers, and whether students are doing what they had planned to do upon leaving school (leavers survey); or questions that were too open-ended (stayers survey). This suggestion was made not because of the question content but because participants felt that young people may benefit from having prompts to generate responses (see below).

Verbal and written comments

Questionnaire design-specific

- Response format: Participants suggested that the current open-ended questions would benefit from having prompts so that students could have exemplar answers while taking care not to ask leading questions;
- Language: Some of the technical terms (“FLO”, “post-school pathway”, “full study load”) may need to be clarified for interviewees; in addition, some questions assume that “academic” and “vocational” are separate activities whereas students’ pathways could be a blend of the two. Many participants suggested that the language of the questionnaire be set at an upper primary level.
- Learning focus: Questions need to focus on the students’ own learning experiences rather than externalities (quality of school or similar).
- Time-related questions: Students who have left school will answer differently depending on the length of time they have been out of school; also, asking students to predict five years ahead is too long – two years is more appropriate for this age group.
- Engagement: Participants felt that students might be reluctant to speak with a stranger about their school experiences and so methods of interviewee recruitment would need deeper consideration. Online, written completion options were also suggested.

Existing answers to research questions (including anecdotal)

- Many answers continued the themes from the *general discussion* (see earlier section).
- Location challenges: Transport is a significant challenge for students, particularly those in regional Australia and it was suggested that this should be included as a response option.

- Registration: Students may not be aware of their own SACE, VET or subject registration as this is a school responsibility.
- Subject choice: Other potential reasons for students' subject choice (or school subject offerings) include, "We have teachers who can teach it", "It fits into the timetable", "It suits a student's post-school pathway", and "My friend was doing it".
- Life complexity: Students have many other influences – such as family and other communities with which they are engaged – that affect their educational choices and sense of belonging. Note also that some students enjoy particular subjects at school and that this is enough for them to stay on.

Further suggestions

- Specific questions: Students could be asked about health care or specific learning plans that may have been in place; whether the level of curriculum is (or was) too difficult; how important SACE completion is to them; what sort of school structures might be (or would have been) helpful; whether they felt safe at school; or what students could have done differently to support themselves. These questions would also need response options to help prompt students.
- A broader discussion needed to be held on the concept of "finishing" school and what represents a successful schooling experience for young people. For example, is staying at school for 13 years enough, does achieving the SACE represent "success", is it "successful" to complete SACE over 5-10 years?
- Acknowledge that some students will have left school with no real plan and what they end up doing is not a result of intentional plans.

Revision process

Findings from the qualitative feedback meetings and follow-up emails were incorporated into the subsequent iteration of the draft questionnaires. The next stage of consultation was to be the cognitive interviewing sessions with students from the two target groups to ensure the content and language of the questionnaires were appropriate, before finalising the questionnaires for administration. Findings from these sessions are detailed in [Appendix D](#).

APPENDIX D. COGNITIVE INTERVIEWS

Subsequent to the input and feedback from departmental staff, as detailed in [Appendix C](#), the draft questionnaire was revised and refined by ACER in continued consultation with the Department for Education (DfE). This next iteration of the draft questionnaire was used in cognitive interviews with students identified as similar to those who would be identified for the live survey in April/May 2020. Only questionnaire items that were new or that had been modified were scheduled for cognitive interviews; items that had come from existing tried-and-tested surveys were not cognitively tested.

Cognitive interviews are an essential element of questionnaire design to examine if participants understand and respond to survey items as intended by researchers, and are recommended to precede any survey implementation (Drennan, 2003¹⁴; Willis, 2015¹⁵). The cognitive interviews were also used to test how the request for survey participation would be received by parents.

The DfE approached a selection of schools to provide information on the research project and to corroborate the Department's identification of respondents from both research groups. In general, it was intended that feedback from these cognitive interview sessions would be used to inform the final drafts of the questionnaires. More specifically, the purpose of the cognitive interviews was to:

- Reduce the number of questions through further prioritisation of content as the questionnaires were (at that stage) too long.
- Test respondents' understanding of some of the wording, particularly that of new questionnaire material.
- Get a sense of the usefulness of the current data validation questions.
- Test the process of contacting respondents through their parents/caregivers.
- Obtain some indication as to where further clarification through examples or prompts may be required to assist understanding of questions and response options.

Two ethics applications for the project: an internal ACER ethics application (Ref: 402, 26 Sept 2019) and an application to the SA DfE (Ref: 2019_0045, 10 Dec 2019) had been submitted and approved in late 2019. The cognitive testing followed the same protocols as approved in those applications, including:

- Selection of respondents
- Permissions required from parents/caregivers of respondents
- Contact with respondents who may be minors
- Communications with external stakeholders (e.g. schools, principals, teachers, parents/caregivers, broader school communities, relevant associations)
- "Referrals" for respondents after the survey (earning, learning, and wellbeing)

¹⁴ Drennan, J. (2003). Cognitive interviewing: verbal data in the design and pretesting of questionnaires. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 42(1), 57-63.

¹⁵ Willis, G. B. (2015). *Analysis of the cognitive interview in questionnaire design*. Oxford University Press.

Cognitive testing of the draft questionnaire with students and parents was held between 21 January and 14 February 2020. This testing was carried out by ACER staff via telephone during business hours. All staff involved in the testing adhere to and comply with the Australian Information Privacy Act 1988 and possess the required Working With Children Checks.

A total of 81 students were identified by the DfE as being similar to students who would be identified for the live survey. That is, students had either left school before completing SACE, or they remained at school but were at risk of not completing SACE. From this total of 81 contacts, 39 parents answered the initial call and 24 of these parents gave permission for their child to be surveyed. The success rate for interviews from the subsequent calls is shown in Figure D1 below.

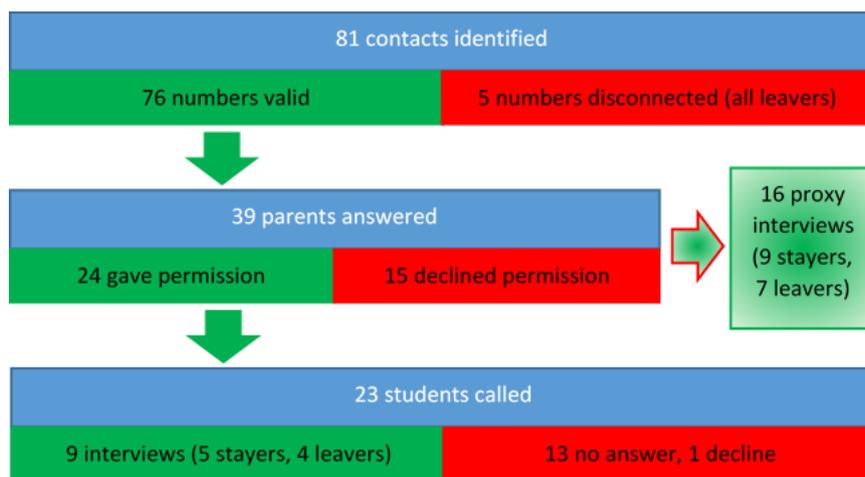


Figure D1. Success rate of telephone calls for cognitive interviewing with students and parents

General debriefing opportunities were used throughout the survey, where necessary, so that interviewees could ask questions or comment on difficulties as they progressed. The following observations were made.

Comprehension and response time: Students were generally positive about the survey design and content, stating that the language was generally understandable, notwithstanding the particular items noted further below. Students generally took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete the cognitive test, keeping in mind that the cognitive test was a little more than half of the full survey. The students who took longer were those who were more amenable to conversing about the survey topics; those who took less time were those who answered the questions but did not elaborate in depth (two students took as little as five minutes). There were signs of fatigue from two students towards the end of their testing sessions.

Even though students generally understood the questions, there were some who were unsure which SACE or VET subjects or courses they had completed.

Response codes: Where response codes were used (for example, 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Neither disagree nor agree, 4. Somewhat agree, 5. Strongly agree), it was important that interviewees were only presented with the word-answer options rather than words and numbers. Presenting words and numbers was confusing and caused some interviewees to respond with mixed codes, for example, in the manner of, “That’s a 1, I strongly agree” (where 1=strongly disagree).

Occasionally, interviewees wanted the opportunity to provide more detail in their answers, rather than adhere to the response codes, for example, I agree in “...” context but not in “...”. These response codes and respective question items were noted for further review.

The role of “case manager” appeared to be significant in the lives of students who were enrolled under the Flexible Learning Option (FLO), and this was added to the response options where appropriate.

Comments on, and modifications to, vocabulary: Some vocabulary items proved to be consistently difficult to understand. “Adequate”¹⁶ was the only linguistically difficult word: this was understood better when adjusted to “enough”. “Vocational courses” was unfamiliar terminology, however, interviewees understood when this was exemplified as “VET courses”. Conceptually difficult words included “transition” and “counsellor/counselling”. Some interviewees needed explanation of the idea that the change from school to work or other study was a “transition”. This was especially problematic for interviewees who were unemployed and not studying. These explanations were subsequently maintained in the instructions for interviewers. Some interviewees interpreted “counselling” as related to psychology rather than the academic- or career-counselling context in which it was used. “Counsellor/counselling” has been adjusted to “advisor/advice/advising” wherever practicable.

Comments on specific items: When verifying demographic information, it was noted that FLO is not easily correlated with Year levels or a full-time/part-time split. Response options were modified to clearly allow for this distinction.

An early question item of, “What are you doing now?”, in the context of work or study, proved problematic in terms of interviewees taking the question literally and answering, “watching TV” or “eating”. This has been exemplified further in the interviewer instructions.

There were some items in questionnaire Section F regarding TAFE or VET courses that were clearly identified as needing to be more concise. Question length in Section F, and its potential to incite boredom, was specifically commented on by some interviewees.

General findings: There were a number of more generalised findings from the cognitive interviews that have been incorporated into interviewer instructions or predicted response rates. These include:

- Most parents who consented to their child participating in the interviews provided the relevant telephone number at the time of the call. At times, parents needed to be coached through the process of finding their child’s number on a mobile telephone while remaining on the call.
- When parents gave consent but did not provide a telephone number, indicating the students would call the ACER number at a later time, no students called back. When parents indicated they would text through a contact telephone number for the student, this did not eventuate. These cases emphasised the need to acquire a contact number for potential interviewees while remaining on the call to the parent.
- When voicemail messages were left, no parents returned the call; when no voicemail was left, some parents called back the “missed number” – these calls then had a similar permission-given rate to parents who directly answered their phone.

¹⁶ Item example, “I have received adequate career counselling”

- When a parent's English was clearly not strong enough to provide informed consent, consent was not taken, even if the parent said, "yes".
- It was noted that some students may feel they need to give socially acceptable answers if they are on speaker-phone or if a parent/caregiver is able to hear their conversation.
- Some interviewees answered liberally with quite personal responses about their family life, personal challenges or complaints regarding schools or staff.

An emergent finding from the cognitive interviews was that there were a number of parents who, despite declining the interview for their child, were quite willing to answer some questions on their child's behalf. This happened noticeably often when the parent reported that the child had a disability. These parents provided highly useful information: as a result it was decided to ensure proxy questions would be available for parents during the live survey, to be enacted when a student was reported as unable to respond due to disability, and if the parent was willing to answer some questions on their behalf. Proxy questions would not be offered in the case of parents providing more-general reasons for declining an interview (for example, student would not have time/would not be interested). Proxy interviews were to be capped at the same percentage as students identified with a disability code in the DfE student lists for interviews.

The cognitive interviewing process was also highly useful for testing the student identification procedures within the DfE. For the live survey, up to 5000 students who had left a Government school in Years 10, 11, or 12 (without continuing study at a non-Government, interstate or overseas school), and up to 2000 students who remained enrolled but who were at risk of not completing their SACE studies, were to be identified through DfE records. The identification of students for cognitive interviewing followed procedures planned for the live interview study, and assisted in streamlining processes for data extraction and aligning them to the study. These modifications included further reviews of reasons listed for students having left school, reviews of availability of parent contact information (this is provided to the Department via individual schools), and inclusion of more-detailed disability codes and SACE achievement to date.

The cognitive interview process was also useful in identifying the rate at which parents declined interviews due to student disability (particularly disabilities that implied an inability to converse on the telephone), and the rate at which students were identified in one category but belonged in the other (for example, student identified as enrolled-but-at-risk but who had actually left school by the time of the interview). These findings related to data extraction and validation were useful in refining the protocols, procedures and interviewer training for the live survey.

APPENDIX E. QUESTIONNAIRE

Themes and sub-themes

Section A – Survey administration/data validation

- Introduction
- Screening questions

Section B – Post-school activities (early March)

- Main activities (leavers only)

Section C – Leaving school

- Year 12/SACE completion plans
- Barriers to completing Year 12/SACE
- Reasons for leaving school
- Completing Year 12/SACE: Parent expectations and friends' plans
- Post-school plans

Section D – Staying at school

- School satisfaction, school connectedness, learning engagement
- Things that helped you stay at school
- Things that could help you complete Year 12/SACE
- Would you have stayed at school if ...

Section E – Assessment of the transition from school

- Was leaving school the right decision?
- Is your job the type of job you would like to do long-term?
- (Other relevant items appear elsewhere in questionnaire)

Section F – School subject choice

- Full-time or part-time study load
- Compulsory SACE requirements – participation / reasons for not doing or completing these requirements
- Reasons for subject choice
- VET (Apprenticeship/traineeship, other VET (incl. workplace training), and other work experience)

Section G – Education/career planning (before leaving school)

- School subject choice – sources of advice, etc.
- Career advice
- Career information
- Career preparation activities
- Preparation for after leaving school
- How could school prepare you better?

Section H – March update and future goals

- Still feel that leaving school was the right/wrong decision for you? (leavers)
- Current earning and learning activities (leavers)
- Whether Year 12/SACE completion plans have changed (stayers)
- (Immediate post school plans – asked in Section C)
- Plans for next 2 years (limited subsample)
- Future goals (5 years)
- Awareness of options to complete SACE after leaving school

Section I – Career planning (post school)

- Further help

Section J – Final questions, close and termination scripts

- Advice on the ideal school
- What do you think schools should be helping students with?
- Other comments you want to make
- Survey administration

Demographic variables:

Sample information provided by DfE included:

- Gender
- Indigenous status
- International status (visa status)
- Age (on 1 Jan 2020)
- Home postcode
- School name
- School region
- FLO
- Disability flag
- Disability type
- Census year level
- ESL

Questionnaire

SA DfE Pathways Questionnaire

ACER, July 2020

Overview of the questionnaire:

- There is only one questionnaire, with skip instructions for various subsamples.
- The variables used to filter respondents through the questionnaire vary as you move through the questionnaire.

SAMPLE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DFE:

The variable **SAMPLE** divides the sample into:

- 1 = DfE leaver sample**
- 2 = DfE stayer sample**

INTRODUCTION:

At the end of this section, the variable S1DUM is generated to further distinguish between target respondents and proxies.

SECTION A:

S1DUM is used to filter respondents through Section A:

- 1 = Target respondent from the DfE leaver sample**
- 2 = Target respondent from the DfE stayer sample**
- 3 = Proxy from the DfE leaver sample**
- 4 = Proxy from the DfE stayer sample**

At the end of this section, the variable S2DUM is generated. S2DUM is based upon S1DUM but re-classifies some respondents based upon their answers to questions in Section A. In particular, some of the DfE stayer sample may be treated as 'leavers' or proxy (leavers) in S2DUM.

SECTION B ONWARDS:

S2DUM is used to filter respondents through Sections B onwards:

- 1. Leaver**
- 2. Stayer**
- 3. Proxy (leaver)**
- 4. Proxy (stayer)**

- The questions from Section B onwards were colour-coded to assist when developing the skip instructions, as specified below:
 - ALL RESPONDENTS
 - LEAVER (incl proxy);

- **STAYER (incl proxy)**
- Every respondent gets sent to the beginning of each section so as to make it easier to keep track of where various types of respondents are being sent throughout the questionnaire. There are two ways a section can commence:
 - If the first question of a section only applies to a subsample, then the section begins with a set of skip instructions (e.g. see Section B, PREB1).
 - If the first question of a section applies to all respondents, then the section simply starts with that question (e.g. see Section D, Question D1).
- The format of each question is as follows:

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN WORK/TRAINEEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP)
 (S2DUM=1,3 & B1=1,3)

B5 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Are you employed as a casual?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Is <CHILD'S NAME> employed as a casual?

PROMPT IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE OR DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE TERM CASUAL: Generally you are casual if you do not receive either annual leave or sick leave and you organise your employment on an hourly, or shift, basis rather than always working set hours.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

Questionnaire presentation conventions

All questions single response unless '(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)'

'^s' denotes mutually exclusive code in multiple response frame

Options presented in brackets e.g. '(Don't know / unsure)' are not read out.

All questions are read out unless otherwise stated

Upper case text on new line denotes interviewer instructions (not read out)

Upper case text in mid-sentence denotes emphasized word

'DUM' questions are 'dummy questions / variables' (not asked of respondents) to assist with sequencing / checking

Re-coding of 'other', 'don't know / unsure', and item level refusals in data

All 'Other' to be recoded as '97' in data

All 'Don't know' to be recoded as '98' in data

All item level refusals to be recoded as '99' in data

Call outcome categories

No answer

Answering machine

FAX machine / Modem

Busy (engaged)

Telstra message / Number disconnected

Wrong number / Respondent not known at this number

Not a residential number

Claims to have done survey

Respondent not available / Away for duration of survey

Remove number from list

Terminated midway in survey (see ALLTERM for breakdown)

Stopped interview (appointment)

Incoming call restrictions

Note: training material will explain the use of these call outcome codes

Sample items used in questionnaire

FNAME:	(Student given name(s))
SNAME:	(Student surname)
GENDER:	(Student sex)
PGFNAME:	(Parent / guardian given name)
PGSNAME:	(Parent / guardian surname)
PGRELA:	(Parent / guardian relationship to student)
SCHNAME:	(School name – text)
AGE:	(Student age – 1= under 18; 2=18 years and older)
DISABILITY:	(Student disability flag – 1=Yes, severe disability; 2=No)
FLO:	(FLO status – 1 = FLO student; 2 = Other student)
SAMPLE:	(Sample frame – 1=DfE leaver sample; 2= DfE stayer sample)
TELTYP:	(Number type – 1= Parent mobile; 2= Home phone; 3= Student mobile)
TELNUM:	(parent mobile from sample, else home landline, else student mobile)
ALTNUM1:	(home landline, else student mobile)
ALTNUM2:	(student mobile)
PGMOB:	(feed into recontact)
STMOB:	(feed into recontact)
HOMENUM:	(feed into recontact)
ALTNUM:	(feed into recontact)

Important notes regarding sample / questionnaire interface:

If survey data contradicts sample items (e.g. SAMPLE, FLO), survey data will be accepted unless otherwise specified.

Counts of completed surveys by sample type will be based on sample type from S2DUM (1=Leaver; 2=Stayer; 3=Proxy (leaver); 4=Proxy (stayer))

***SURVEY ADMINISTRATION**DISPLAY AT FIRST SCREEN:

FNAME: (Student given name(s))
 SNAME: (Student surname)
 GENDER: (Student sex)
 AGE: (Student age – 1= under 18; 2=18 years and older)
 DISABILITY: (Student disability flag – 1=Yes, severe disability; 2=No)
 SAMPLE: (DfE sample – 1=DfE leaver sample; 2= DfE stayer sample)
 PGFNAME: (Parent / guardian given name)
 PGSNAME: (Parent / guardian surname)
 PGRELA: (Parent / guardian relationship to student)
 TELTYP: (Number type – 1=Parent mobile; 2= Home phone; 3= Student mobile)

DISPLAY THROUGHOUT SURVEY:

FNAME: (Student given name(s))
 SNAME: (Student surname)

PREINTRO1A IF AGE=1 GO TO INTRO1A; IF AGE=2 GO TO INTRO1B

*(PHONE ANSWERER IF TARGET RESPONDENT IS AGED UNDER 18) (AGE=1)

INTRO1A: Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is (.....) calling on behalf of the South Australian Department for Education from the Social Research Centre. Could I please speak to <PGFNAME>?

REINTRODUCE AS NECESSARY

1. Continue (already talking to parent/guardian) (GO TO PREMOB1)
2. (NOT USED)
3. MAKE APPOINTMENT
4. Parent / guardian refusal (GO TO RR1)
5. Target respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)
6. Language difficulty (COLLECT LANGUAGE AND GO TO TERM1)
7. Wants information about reason for call (GO TO INFOA)
8. Wants to know how got telephone number (GO TO TEL)
9. Back to SMS

*(PHONE ANSWERER IF TARGET RESPONDENT IS AGED 18+) (AGE=2)

INTRO1B: Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is (.....) calling on behalf of the South Australian Department for Education from the Social Research Centre. Could I please speak to <FNAME>?

REINTRODUCE AS NECESSARY

1. Continue (already talking to target respondent) (GO TO PREMOB1)
2. Child unable to participate due to disability but parent/guardian willing to answer on child's behalf (GO TO PREMOB1)
3. MAKE APPOINTMENT
4. Parent / guardian refusal (GO TO RR1)
5. Target respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)
6. Language difficulty (COLLECT LANGUAGE AND GO TO TERM1)
7. Wants information about reason for call (GO TO INFOB)
8. Wants to know how got telephone number (GO TO TEL)
9. Back to SMS

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTION: ONLY SHOW OPTION 2 IF DISABILITY=1 AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS *NOT* BEEN REACHED

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTION: ONLY SHOW THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION WHEN OPTION 2 IS DISPLAYED (IE DISABILITY=1 & MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS *NOT* BEEN REACHED)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: ONLY SELECT 2 IF PARENT/GUARDIAN INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS NOT CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY DUE TO THE NATURE/SEVERITY OF THEIR DISABILITY

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTION: ONLY SHOW THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION WHEN OPTION 2 IS NOT DISPLAYED (IE ONCE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS BEEN REACHED):

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: IF PARENT/GUARDIAN INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS NOT CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY DUE TO THE NATURE/SEVERITY OF THEIR DISABILITY, SELECT "4. PARENT/GUARDIAN REFUSAL", THEN REASON FOR REFUSAL (RR1)= "12. UNABLE TO DO SURVEY DUE TO NATURE/SEVERITY OF DISABILITY"

PREMOB1 IF CALLING A MOBILE CONTINUE, ELSE GO TO PREINTRO2

*(MOBILE PHONE SAMPLE)

MOB1 Could I just check whether it is safe for you to take this call at the moment.... If not, we'd be happy to call you back when it is more convenient for you.

1. Safe to take call (GO TO PREINTRO2)
2. Not safe to take call
3. Respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)

*(MOBILE PHONE SAMPLE, NOT SAFE TO TAKE CALL)

MOB2 Do you want me to call you back on this number or would you prefer I call back on your home phone?

1. This number (TYPE STOP, MAKE APPOINTMENT)

2. Home phone (TYPE STOP, MAKE APPOINTMENT, RECORD HOME PHONE NUMBER)
3. Respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)

*(WANTS INFORMATION ABOUT REASON FOR CALL)

INFOA (Parent/guardian): We are calling parents/guardians of people who left school last year or are currently in Year 12.

We are hoping your child will be able to participate in a study to help find out why students in South Australia complete or don't complete high school. All they need to do is answer a survey over the phone about their school experience, which will take about 15 to 20 minutes.

The information collected will help schools to better support current and future students.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Refer parent/guardian to website if further information or re-assurance that this is a SA Department for Education project is required.

1. Snap back to previous question (INTRO1A)

INFOB (Target respondent): We are calling people who left school last year or are currently in Year 12 to help find out why students in South Australia complete or don't complete high school.

The information collected will help schools to better support current and future students.

1. Snap back to previous question (INTRO1B)

*(WANTS TO KNOW HOW GOT TELEPHONE NUMBER)

TEL This phone number was sourced from the South Australian Department for Education administrative records, and will only be used for the purpose of contacting you for this research.

1. Snap back to previous question (INTRO1A/INTRO1B)

PREINTRO2 IF AGE=1 GO TO INTRO2A; IF AGE=2 GO TO INTRO2B

*(PARENT/GUARDIAN WHERE TARGET RESPONDENT IS AGED UNDER 18) (AGE=1)

INTRO2A We are calling people who left school last year or are currently in Year 12 to help find out why students in South Australia complete or don't complete high school.

IF NECESSARY: The information collected will help better support current and future students.

Do you give permission for <CHILD'S NAME> to take part in this study? It will take about 15 to 20 minutes to run through the questions.

1. Yes, and child is available to participate now (ASK PARENT TO HAND OVER PHONE OR COLLECT PHONE NUMBER FOR CHILD; WHEN CHILD IS ON THE PHONE, GO TO INTRO2B)
2. Yes, but not available to participate now (COLLECT CONTACT DETAILS FOR CHILD/BEST TIME FOR CALLING/MAKE APPOINTMENT IF POSSIBLE)
3. Parent/guardian willing to answer on child's behalf, and available to participate now (GO TO INTRO3)
4. Parent/guardian willing to answer on child's behalf, but not available to participate now (MAKE APPOINTMENT)
5. Refusal (GO TO RR1)

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTIONS: ONLY SHOW OPTIONS 3 AND 4 IF DISABILITY=1 AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS *NOT* BEEN REACHED

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTION: ONLY SHOW THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION WHEN OPTIONS 3&4 ARE DISPLAYED (IE DISABILITY=1 & MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS *NOT* BEEN REACHED)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: ONLY SELECT 3 OR 4 IF PARENT/GUARDIAN INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS NOT CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY DUE TO THE NATURE/SEVERITY OF THEIR DISABILITY

PROGRAMMER INSTRUCTION: ONLY SHOW THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION WHEN OPTIONS 3& 4 ARE NOT DISPLAYED (IE ONCE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISABILITY PROXIES HAS BEEN REACHED):

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS: IF PARENT/GUARDIAN INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS NOT CAPABLE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY DUE TO THE NATURE/SEVERITY OF THEIR DISABILITY, SELECT "5. REFUSAL", THEN REASON FOR REFUSAL (RR1)= "12. UNABLE TO DO SURVEY DUE TO NATURE/SEVERITY OF DISABILITY"

*(TARGET RESPONDENT) ((AGE=1 & INTRO2A=1,2) OR (AGE=2))

INTRO2B We are calling people who left school last year or are currently in Year 12 to help find out why students in South Australia complete or don't complete high school.

IF NECESSARY: The information collected will help better support current and future students.

It will take about 15 to 20 minutes to run through the questions – I'll be as quick as I can...

1. Continue
2. Make appointment
3. Refusal (GO TO RR1)

*(CONFIDENTIALITY SPIEL) (ALL)

INTRO3 All the data collected is confidential. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, just tell me so I can skip over them. Participation is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview at any time. Are you happy to participate in this study?

IF NECESSARY: If you have any concerns, you may contact the South Australian Department for Education on 8226 0960 or go to <https://tinyurl.com/DfESA2020>.

1. Yes
2. Refused (GO TO RR1)

*(MONITORING SPIEL) (ALL)

INTRO4 Before I begin, just to let you know that this call may be monitored by my supervisor for quality assurance and / or training purposes. Is that ok with you?

1. Monitoring allowed
2. Monitoring not permitted

S1DUM AUTOCODE: Programming instructions to classify the sample into “target respondent” or “proxy” for the purposes of filtering respondents through Section A.

1. Target respondent from leaver sample
(SAMPLE=1 & AGE=1 & INTRO2A=1,2 & S1=1,2) OR
(SAMPLE=1 & AGE=2 & INTRO1B=1 & S1=1,2)
2. Target respondent from stayer sample
(SAMPLE=2 & AGE=1 & INTRO2A=1,2 & S1=1,2) OR
(SAMPLE=2 & AGE=2 & INTRO1B=1 & S1=1,2)
3. Proxy from leaver sample
(SAMPLE=1 & AGE=1 & INTRO2A=3,4 & S1=1,2) OR
(SAMPLE=1 & AGE=2 & INTRO1B=2 & S1=1,2)
4. Proxy from stayer sample
(SAMPLE=2 & AGE=1 & INTRO2A=3,4 & S1=1,2) OR
(SAMPLE=2 & AGE=2 & INTRO1B=2 & S1=1,2)

*SECTION A: CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS (LEAVER/STAYER/OUT OF SCOPE)

PREA1 IF S1DUM=1,3 GO TO A10

IF S1DUM=2,4 GO TO A1

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – ALL) (S1DUM=2, 4)

A1 We recognise that many people’s situation has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): In the first part of the survey we would like you to think about what were you were doing BEFORE the pandemic started to affect your activities. Later in the survey there will be a chance for you to say how things have changed for you in recent weeks.

PROXY (S1DUM=4): In the first part of the survey we would like you to think about what <CHILD NAME> was doing BEFORE the pandemic started to affect <his/her> activities. Later in the survey there will be a chance for you to say how things have changed for <him/her> in recent weeks.

INTERVIEWER PROMPT: COVID-19=CORONAVIRUS

INTERVIEWER PROMPT: The pandemic began to impact the way many South Australians live their lives during March of this year.

1. Continue

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) -ALL) (S1DUM=2,4)

A2 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): Thinking back to early March this year, were you attending a school or senior college?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): Thinking back to early March this year, was <CHILD’S NAME> attending a school or senior college?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- If studying from home, home schooling, or schoolwork online, code as “1. Yes”
- If enrolled but not attending BEFORE PANDEMIC, code as “3. NO”

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. (Yes, but not attending due to pandemic)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREA3: IF A2=1,2 GO TO A4, ELSE CONTINUE

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – NOT ENROLLED EARLY MARCH)
(S1DUM=2, 4 & A2=3,4,5)

A3 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): Still thinking back to early March this year, were you doing an off campus program or were you a FLO student?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): Still thinking back to early March this year, was <CHILD'S NAME> doing an off campus program or was <he/she> a FLO student?

PROMPT: FLO=Flexible Learning Option

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. (Yes, but not attending due to pandemic)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PRE A3B: IF A3=3,4,5 GO TO PREA10, ELSE CONTINUE

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – SELF-IDENTIFIED FLO STUDENT)
(S1DUM=2,4 & A3=1,2)

A3B TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): When I ask about your experiences at school, please answer those questions about the period you have been at school INCLUDING the off campus program or the time you have been a FLO student.

PROXY (S1DUM=4): When I ask about <CHILD'S NAME>'s-experiences at school, please answer those questions about the period <he/she> has been at school INCLUDING the off campus program or the time <he/he> has been a FLO student.

PROMPTS (TARGET RESPONDENT)(S1DUM=2):

If you have attended more than one school, please answer about the school you-attended most recently-

If you attended more than one school at the same time, please answer about the school where you spend the most time.

PROMPTS (PROXY)(S1DUM=4):

If <CHILD'S NAME> has attended more than one school, please answer about the school <he/she> attended most recently.

If <CHILD'S NAME> attended more than one school at the same time, please answer about the school <he/she> where <he/she> spent the most time.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Continue

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – CONFIRMED IN SCHOOL IN EARLY MARCH) (S1DUM=2,4 & (A2=1,2 OR A3=1,2))

A4 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): Our records show that you were enrolled at <SCHNAME> in early March this year. Is that correct?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): Our records show that <CHILD'S NAME> was enrolled at <SCHNAME> in early March this year. Is that correct?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREA5: IF A4=1 GO TO A8, ELSE CONTINUE

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – AT A SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL IN MARCH (S1DUM=2,4 & A4=2,3,4)

A5 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): What type of school were you enrolled at? Was it:

PROXY (S1DUM=4): What type of school was <CHILD'S NAME> enrolled at? Was it:

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

PROMPT: Private schools include Catholic schools and other independent schools

PROMPTS (TARGET RESPONDENT)(S1DUM=2):

If you have attended more than one school, please answer about the school you-attended in March of this year most recently-

If you attended more than one school at the same time in March, please answer about the school where you spend the most time.

PROMPTS (PROXY)(S1DUM=4):

If <CHILD'S NAME> has attended more than one school in March, please answer about the school <he/she> attended most recently.

If <CHILD'S NAME> attended more than one school at the same time in March, please answer about the school <he/she> where <he/she> spent the most time.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- Open Access College is a government school (code=1)
- School of Languages: If respondent is enrolled at the School of Languages, they will also be enrolled at another school. Record answer for that other school.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. A government/public school
2. A private school
3. (Other, Specify _____) (ONLY USE IF CANNOT CODE AS "1" OR "2")
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREA6: IF A5=1 GO TO A6
IF A5=2,3,4,5 GO TO TERM2 (NOT GOVT SCHOOL)

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – AT A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL IN MARCH (S1DUM=2,4 & A4=2,3,4 & A5=1)

A6 Was that school located:

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. In South Australia
2. In another Australian State or Territory
3. Overseas
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREA7: IF A6=1 GO TO A7
IF A6=2,3,4,5 GO TO TERM2 (NOT SCHOOL NOT IN SA)

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – AT A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL IN MARCH (S1DUM=2,4 & A4=2,3,4 & A5=1 & A6=1)

A7 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): And what was the name of the school where you were enrolled in March this year?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): What was the name of the school where <CHILD'S NAME> was enrolled in March this year?

PROMPTS (TARGET RESPONDENT)(S1DUM=2):

If you attended more than one school in March, please answer about the school you attended most recently.

If you attended more than one school at the same time, please answer about the school where you spent the most time.

PROMPTS (PROXY)(S1DUM=4):

If <CHILD'S NAME> attended more than one school in March, please answer about the school <he/she> attended most recently.

If <CHILD'S NAME> attended more than one school at the same time, please answer about the school <he/she> where <he/she> spent the most time.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Specify _____;
2. (Don't know);
3. (Refused)

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – IF ENROLLED AT SAMPLE SCHOOL OR ANOTHER GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN SA IN EARLY MARCH)

((S1DUM=2,4) &

(A2=1,2 OR A3=1,2) &

(A4=1 OR (A5=1 & A6=1))

A8 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): Still thinking about early March this year, what year were you in at school?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): Still thinking about early March this year, what year was <CHILD'S NAME> in at school?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If the respondent is/was at two schools at the same time, with two different year levels, record the highest year level.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: Use the 'Year 13' code if the respondent says they are in 'Year 12 Plus', 'Repeating Year 12', or 'Repeating Year 12 subject(s)'.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Year 9 or below
2. Year 10
3. Year 11
4. Year 12
5. Year 13
6. (FLO)(ONLY USE IF RESPONDENT CANNOT PROVIDE A YEAR LEVEL)
7. Other (Specify_____)
8. (Don't know)
9. (Refused)

PREA9: IF A8=1,2,3,7,8,9 GO TO TERM2 (CURRENT STUDENT NOT IN YEAR 12/13/FLO)
IF A8=4,5,6 GO TO A9

*(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – IF ENROLLED IN YR 12/13/FLO AT SAMPLE SCHOOL OR ANOTHER GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN SA IN EARLY MARCH)

((S1DUM=2,4) &

(A2=1,2 OR A3=1,2) &

(A4=1 OR (A5=1 & A6=1) &

(A8=4,5,6))

A9 The way some students do their secondary schooling has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=2): Which best describes you?

PROXY (S1DUM=4): Which best describes <CHILDNAME>?

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(SINGLE ANSWER)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- IF RESPONDENT INDICATES THEY HAVE REDUCED THEIR STUDENT LOAD (EG BECOME PART-TIME) THEN SELECT "1" IF STILL GOING INTO SCHOOL, OR "2" IF NOW STUDYING AT HOME
- IF RESPONDENT INDICATES THEY HAVE "DROPPED OUT" THEN SELECT "4"
- IF RESPONDENT INDICATES THEY HAVE COMPLETED SACE THEN SELECT "4"

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR TARGET RESPONDENT (S2DUM=2)

1. I am still going into my school
2. I am doing my school work at home
3. I am not doing school work but I am still enrolled
4. I have left school since early March
5. Other (specify_____)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR PROXY (S2DUM=4)

1. <He/she > is still going into <his/her> school
2. <He/she > is doing <his/her> school work at home
3. <He/she > is not doing school work but <he/she > is still enrolled
4. <He/she> has left school since early March
5. Other (specify_____)

PREA10: IF A3=3,4,5 GO TO A10
 IF A9=1,2,3 GO TO S2DUM
 IF A9=4,5 GO TO A18

*((DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – ALL) OR
 (DFE STAYER SAMPLE:(TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY)– NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL IN
 MARCH 2020))
 (S1DUM=1,3 OR (S1DUM=2,4 & A3=3,4,5))

A10 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): Did you attend school or senior college last year?

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): Did <CHILD'S NAME> attend school or senior college last year?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If enrolled but not attended, code as "2. NO"

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREA11: IF A10=1 GO TO PREA12
 IF A10=2,3,4 GO TO A11

*((DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL LAST
 YEAR) OR

(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL/FLO IN EARLY MARCH & DID NOT ATTEND SCHOOL LAST YEAR))

(S1DUM=1,2,3,4 & A10=2,3,4)

A11 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): Did you do an off campus program or were you a FLO student last year?

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): Did <CHILD'S NAME> do an off campus program or was <he/she> a FLO student last year?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. (NOT USED)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREA11B: IF A11=1 THEN GO TO A11B

IF A11 =3,4,5 GO TO TERM 3 (NOT AT SCHOOL LAST YEAR)

* (DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – IF FLO LAST YEAR) OR
(DFE STAYER SAMPLE: TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY – IF NOT IN SCHOOL/FLO IN MARCH BUT WAS FLO LAST YEAR)

(S1DUM=1,2,3,4 & A11=1)

A11B TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): When I ask about your experiences at school, please answer those questions about the period you were at school INCLUDING the off campus program or the time you were a FLO student.

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): When I ask about <CHILD'S NAME>'s experiences at school, please answer those questions about the period <he/she> was at school INCLUDING the off campus program or the time <he/she> was a FLO student.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Continue

PREA12:IF S1DUM=1,3 GO TO A12

IF S1DUM=2,4 GO TO PREA13

* (DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – WAS AT SCHOOL LAST YEAR)
(S1DUM=1,3 & (A10=1 OR A11=1))

A12

TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1): Our records show that you were enrolled at <SCHNAME> last year. Is this correct?

PROXY (S1DUM=3): Our records show that <CHILD'S NAME> was enrolled at <SCHNAME> last year. Is this correct?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. (NOT USED)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PRE A13: IF A12=1 GO TO A16

IF A12=3,4,5 GO TO A13

IF S1DUM=2,4 & (A10=1 OR A11=1) GO TO A13

*((DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) –AT A SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL) OR
(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) –NOT IN SCHOOL IN MARCH BUT WAS AT SCHOOL LAST YEAR))
((S1DUM=1,3 & A12=3,4,5) OR
(S1DUM=2,4 & (A10=1 OR A11=1))

A13 TARGET RESPONDENT (SDUM1=1,2): What type of school were you enrolled at? Was it:

PROXY (SDUM1=3,4): What type of school was <CHILD'S NAME> enrolled at? Was it:

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

PROMPT: Private schools include Catholic schools and other independent schools

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- Open Access College is a government school (code=1)
- School of Languages: If respondent was enrolled at the School of Languages, they would have also been enrolled at another school. Record answer for that other school.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. A government/public school;
2. A private school;
3. (Other, Specify_____)
4. (Don't know);
5. (Refused)

PREA14 IF A13=1 GO TO A14

IF A13 =2,3,4,5 GO TO TERM3 (NOT A GOVT SCH)

*((DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) –AT A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL) OR
(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) –NOT IN SCHOOL IN MARCH BUT WAS AT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL LAST YEAR))

((S1DUM=1,3 & A12=3,4,5 & A13=1) OR
(S1DUM=2,4 & ((A10=1 OR A11=1) & A13=1))

A14 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): Was the school you were enrolled at last year located: ...

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): Was the school <CHILD'S NAME> was enrolled at last year located: ...

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. In South Australia;
2. In another Australian State or Territory;
3. Overseas;
4. (Don't know);
5. (Refused)

PREA15 IF A14=1 GO TO A15

IF A14 =2,3,4,5 GO TO TERM3 (SCH NOT IN SA)

* (DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – WAS AT A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL LAST YEAR BUT NOT SAMPLE SCHOOL) OR
(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – NOT AT SCHOOL IN MARCH THIS YEAR BUT WAS AT SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL LAST YEAR)
(S1DUM=1,3 & A12=3,4,5 & A13=1 & A14=1) OR
(S1DUM=2,4 & (A10=1 OR A11=1) & A13=1 & A14=1))

A15 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): What was the name of the (last) school you were enrolled at last year?

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): What was the name of the (last) school <CHILD'S NAME> was enrolled at last year?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If the student attended more than one school, ask about the school they attended most recently.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If the student attended more than one school at the same time, ask about the school where they spend/spent the most time

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Specify _____;
2. (Don't know);
3. (Refused)

* (DFE LEAVER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – WAS AT A SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL LAST YEAR) OR
(DFE STAYER SAMPLE (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – NOT AT SCHOOL IN MARCH THIS YEAR BUT WAS AT SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL LAST YEAR)

((S1DUM=1,3 & (A10=1 OR A11=1) & (A12=1 OR (A13=1 & A14=1))

OR

(S1DUM=2,4 & (A10=1 OR A11=1) & A13=1 & A14=1))

A16 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): What year were you in at school last year?

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): What year was <CHILD'S NAME> in at school last year?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF THE RESPONDENT IS/WAS AT TWO SCHOOLS AT THE SAME TIME, WITH TWO DIFFERENT YEAR LEVELS, RECORD THE HIGHEST YEAR LEVEL.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: USE THE 'YEAR 13' CODE IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS THEY ARE IN 'YEAR 12 PLUS', 'REPEATING YEAR 12', OR, 'REPEATING YEAR 12 SUBJECT(S)'.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Year 9 or below
2. Year 10
3. Year 11
4. Year 12
5. Year 13
6. (FLO)(ONLY USE IF RESPONDENT CANNOT PROVIDE A YEAR LEVEL)
7. Other (Specify_____)
8. (Don't know)
9. (Refused)

PRE A17: IF S1DUM=2,4 GO TO S2DUM
IF S1DUM=1,3 GO TO A17

*(DFE LEAVER SAMPLE – EXCLUDING PERSONS ALREADY SENT TO TERM SCRIPTS) (S1DUM=1,3)

A17 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1): Which of the following best describes you? In early March of this year:

PROXY (S1DUM=3): Which of the following best describes <CHILD'S NAME>? In early March of this year:

(READ OUT)

(SINGLE ANSWER)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RESPONDENT IS ENROLLED BUT INDICATES THEY ARE NOT ATTENDING/HAVE "DROPPED OUT" USE CODE "3. NO LONGER AT SCHOOL"

1. TARGET RESPONDENT: I was still at <USE SCHNAME FROM SAMPLE IF A12=1; ELSE USE NAME SPECIFIED IN A15>
PROXY: <He/she> was still at < USE SCHNAME FROM SAMPLE IF A12=1; ELSE USE NAME SPECIFIED IN A15>
2. TARGET RESPONDENT: I was enrolled at another school
PROXY: <He/she> was enrolled at another school

3. TARGET RESPONDENT: I was no longer at school
PROXY: <He/she> was no longer at school
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PRE A18 IF A17=1,2 GO TO TERM4 (DfE leaver sample but still at school)
IF A17=3,4,5 GO TO A18

*(DFE LEAVER & DFE STAYER SAMPLES (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – IF INDICATED NO LONGER IN SCHOOL) ((S1DUM=1,3 & A17=3,4,5) OR (S1DUM=2,4 & (A2=3,4,5 & A3=3,4,5) OR (A9=4,5))

A18 TARGET RESPONDENT (S1DUM=1,2): Have you achieved a SACE certificate?

PROXY (S1DUM=3,4): Has <CHILD'S NAME> achieved a SACE certificate?

INTERVIEWER INFORMATION:

The SACE Board issues two types of certificates, which the student may receive directly from the SACE Board, electronically, or through their school:

- (1) RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT - an academic transcript listing all subjects completed and results.
- (2) SACE CERTIFICATE - a certificate stating that the student has fulfilled all SACE requirements.

In addition, students may receive another certificate from their school, for example as part of an end of year ceremony (e.g. a 'School Certificate').

Who receives certificates?

- Students who have fulfilled all SACE requirements receive BOTH a RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT and a SACE CERTIFICATE.
- Students who have not fulfilled the SACE requirements but have completed at least one Stage 2 SACE subject receive ONLY a RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT.

It is possible to finish Year 12 but not meet all the requirements for a SACE certificate.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREA19:IF A18=1,3 GO TO A19
IF A18=2,4 GO TO S2DUM

*(DFE LEAVER & DFE STAYER SAMPLES (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY) – IF ACHIEVED SACE CERTIFICATE) (S1DUM=1,2,3,4 & A18=1,3)

A19 Students may receive a number of certificates. Can I just confirm whether you have you received any of the following certificates?

(CERTIFICATES)

- (a) A Record of Achievement, which lists any SACE subjects you may have done
- (b) A certificate at a graduation ceremony at your school
- (c) A SACE Certificate, which states that you have fulfilled all the requirements of the South Australian Certificate of Education

(RESPONSE CODES)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. (Don't know)
- 4. (Refused)

PRES2DUM: IF A19C=1 GO TO TERM5(COMPLETED SACE)
ELSE GO TO S2DUM

*(DFE LEAVER & DFE STAYER SAMPLES (TARGET RESPONDENT OR PROXY)(S1DUM=1,2,3,4 & IN SCOPE)

S2DUM AUTOCODE: Programming instructions to (re)classify the sample into 1. Leavers; 2. Stayers; 3. Proxy (leavers); 4 Proxy (stayers) for the purpose of filtering respondents through the remainder of the questionnaire.

LEAVERS / PROXY (LEAVERS) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

* In DfE leaver sample & respondent confirmed they attended a government school in SA last year & are not currently enrolled at school & have not achieved a SACE certificate (all year levels accepted);

* In DfE stayer sample & respondent indicated that they attended a government school in SA last year but were not enrolled in early March 2020 and have not achieved a SACE certificate

STAYERS / PROXY (STAYERS) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

* In DfE stayer sample & respondent confirmed they were a Year 12/13/FLO student enrolled at a government school in SA in early March 2020.

OUT OF SCOPE (THESE GROUPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SCREENED OUT):

* DfE leaver sample but:

(a) indicated they are current students (any year level)

(b) indicated they have completed SACE

(c) indicated they did not attend a government school in SA last year

* DfE stayer sample but:

(a) indicated they are currently in Year 11 or below

(b) indicated they have left school and achieved a SACE certificate

(c) indicated they did not attend a government school in SA last year or before March this year

1. Leaver

S1DUM=1 & (A18=2,3,4 OR A19C=2,3,4)

OR

S1DUM=2 & A2=3,4,5 & (A18=2,3,4 OR A19C=2,3,4)

2. Stayer (current Year 12/13/FLO student)

S1DUM=2 & (A2=1,2 OR A3=1,2) & A8=4,5,6

3. Proxy (leaver)

S1DUM=3 & (A18=2,3,4 OR A19C=2,3,4)

OR

S1DUM=4 & A2=3,4,5 & (A18=2,3,4 OR A19C=2,3,4)

4. Proxy (stayer)

S1DUM=4 & (A2=1,2 OR A3=1,2) & A8=4,5,6

B POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (EARLY MARCH 2020)

PREBINTRO IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO BINTRO
IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO PREC1

*(LEAVERS, LEAVER PROXY;)(S2DUM=1,3)

BINTRO

LEAVER (S2DUM=1 & S1DUM=1): We recognise that many people's situation has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the next part of the survey we would like you to think about what were you were doing BEFORE the pandemic started to affect your activities. Later in the survey there will be a chance for you to say how things have changed for you in recent weeks.

LEAVER (S2DUM=1 & S1DUM=2): In the next part of the survey we would like you to think about what were you were doing BEFORE the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect your activities.

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3 & S1DUM=3): We recognise that many people's situation has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the next part of the survey we would like you to think about what <CHILD NAME> was doing BEFORE the pandemic started to affect <his/her> activities. Later in the survey there will be a chance for you to say how things have changed for <him/her> in recent weeks.

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3 & S1DUM=4): In the next part of the survey we would like you to think about what <CHILD NAME> was doing BEFORE the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect <his/her> activities.

INTERVIEWER PROMPT: COVID-19=CORONAVIRUS

INTERVIEWER PROMPT: The pandemic began to impact the way many South Australians live their lives during March of this year.

1. Continue

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1,3)

B1 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): What were you doing in early March?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): What was <CHILD'S NAME> doing in early March?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RESPONDENT INDICATES THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE ALREADY BEING AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC IN EARLY MARCH, ASK THEM TO ANSWER FOR THE TIME BEFORE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN TO AFFECT THEIR ACTIVITIES

1. </he/she> was working
2. </he/she> was looking for work
3. </he/she> was doing a traineeship / apprenticeship
4. </he/she> was looking for a traineeship / apprenticeship
5. </he/she> was studying at a university

6. </he/she> was doing (a) VET / TAFE course(s)
7. </he/she> had returned to study, at another school
8. </he/she> was studying elsewhere (not at school)
9. </he/she> was unable to work or study
10. </he/she> was not working and not looking for work (excluding 'unable to work or study')
11. </he/she> was working, unpaid, in an internship/practicum
12. </he/she> was working, unpaid, as a volunteer
13. </he/she> was caring for another person
14. </he/she> was travelling
15. Other (Specify_____)
16. (Don't know)^s
17. (Refused)^s

PREB2: IF B1=5,6,8 GO TO B2; IF B1=7, GO TO TERM4; ELSE GO TO PREB3

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN POST-SCHOOL STUDY OR TRAINING) (S2DUM=1,3 & B1=5,6,8)

B2 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Were you enrolled full-time or part-time (in early March)?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Was <CHILD'S NAME> enrolled full-time or part-time (in early March)?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Full-time
2. Part-time
3. (Mix of full-time and part-time)
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREB3: IF B1=1,3 GO TO B3; ELSE GO TO PREC1

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN WORK/TRAINEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP) (S2DUM=1,3 & B1=1,3)

B3 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): How many hours per week did you work on average in your <job/traineeship/apprenticeship>?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): How many hours per week did <CHILD'S NAME> work on average in his <job/traineeship or apprenticeship>?

IF 'NONE' PROBE: In a usual week (when work was available), how many hours would it be?

IF RESPONDENT HAS MORE THAN ONE JOB/TRAINEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP, ASK FOR TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Hours given (Specify____) (RANGE 0.5 to 168) (GO TO B5)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused) (GO TO B5)

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – HOURS WORKED NOT GIVEN IN PREV QU) (S2DUM=1,3 & B3=2)

B4 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Did you usually work full-time or part-time hours (in early March)?

PROXY (LEAVER)(S2DUM=3): Did <CHILD'S NAME> usually work full-time or part-time hours (in early March)?

PROMPT: Full time is 35 hours or more per week.

IF RESPONDENT HAS MORE THAN ONE JOB/TRAINEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP, ASK FOR TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Usually worked full-time hours
2. Usually worked part-time hours
3. (Mix of full-time and part-time hours)(ONLY USE IF RESPONDENT CANNOT SELECT 1 OR 2)
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN WORK/TRAINEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP) (S2DUM=1,3 & B1=1,3)

B5 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Were you employed as a casual (in early March)?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Was <CHILD'S NAME> employed as a casual (in early March)?

PROMPT IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE OR DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE TERM CASUAL:
Generally you are casual if you do not receive either annual leave or sick leave and you organise your employment on an hourly, or shift, basis rather than always working set hours.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. Yes (had casual job and another job)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

C LEAVING SCHOOL

PREC1 IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO C4
IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO C1

*(STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=2,4)

C1 STAYER - IN YEAR 12 (S2DUM=2 & A8=4):

Back in early March, did you plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12?

STAYER - IN YEAR 13 OR FLO/YEAR LEVEL NOT SPECIFIED (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6):

Back in early March, did you plan to stay at school until the end of the year?

PROXY STAYER - IN YEAR 12 (S2DUM=4 & A8=4):

Back in early March, did <CHILD'S NAME> plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12?

PROXY STAYER - IN YEAR 13 OR FLO/YEAR LEVEL NOT SPECIFIED (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6):

Back in early March, did <CHILD'S NAME> plan to stay at school until the end of the year?"

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=2,4)

C2 STAYER (S2DUM=2): And (in early March) did you plan to complete your SACE this year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): And (in early March) did <CHILD'S NAME> plan to complete his/her SACE this year?

INTERVIEWER INFORMATION: IT IS POSSIBLE TO FINISH YEAR 12 BUT NOT MEET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SACE CERTIFICATE.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes (GO TO C4)
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) – DOES NOT PLAN TO COMPLETE SACE THIS YEAR) (S2DUM=2,4 & C2=2,3,4)

C3 STAYER (S2DUM=2): Did you plan to complete your SACE at a later stage?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Did <CHILD'S NAME> plan to complete his/her SACE at a later stage?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

C4 LEAVER - MAIN ACTIVITY IS TRAINING (S2DUM=1 & B1=3,6):

Earlier you indicated you were doing <an apprenticeship/traineeship/VET/TAFE course> in early March. Were you doing this as part of your SACE?

STAYER OR (LEAVER - MAIN ACTIVITY IS NOT TRAINING) (SDUM2=2 OR (S2DUM=1 & B1 NOT 3,6):

In early March, were you enrolled in a VET course that you were doing as part of your SACE?

PROXY (LEAVER) - MAIN ACTIVITY IS TRAINING (S2DUM=3 & B1=3,6):

Earlier you indicated that <CHILD'S NAME> was doing <an apprenticeship/traineeship/VET/TAFE course> in early March. Was <he/she> doing this as part of <his/her> SACE?

PROXY (STAYER) OR (PROXY (LEAVER) - MAIN ACTIVITY IS NOT TRAINING) (S2DUM=4 OR (S2DUM=3 & B1 NOT 3,6)):

In early March, was <CHILD'S NAME> enrolled in a VET course that <he/she> was doing as part of <his/her> SACE?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREC5 IF S2DUM=2,4 & C1=1,3,4 GO TO C6, ELSE CONTINUE

*(LEAVERS – ALL,
 PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL ,
 STAYERS – NOT PLAN TO STAY AT SCHOOL,
 PROXY (STAYERS) – NOT PLAN TO STAY AT SCHOOL)
 ((S2DUM=1,3) OR (S2DUM=2,4 & C1=2))

C5 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): What year of school were you in when you made the decision to leave school?

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): What year of school was <CHILD'S NAME> in when <he/she> made the decision to leave school?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Below Year 7 / Always wanted to leave;
2. Year 7;
3. Year 8;
4. Year 9;
5. Year 10;
6. Year 11;
7. Year 12;
8. Other (Please specify _____);
9. (Don't know);
10. (Refused)

PREC6 IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO C7, ELSE CONTINUE

*(STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=2,4)

C6 STAYER - IN YEAR 12 (S2DUM=2 & A8=4): Thinking back to early March, was there anything that may have made it difficult for you to stay at school until the end of Year 12 or complete your SACE?

STAYER - IN YEAR 13 OR FLO/YEAR LEVEL NOT SPECIFIED (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6): Thinking back to early March, was there anything that may have made it difficult for you to stay at school until the end of the year or complete your SACE?

PROXY (STAYER) – IN YEAR 12 (S2DUM=4 & A8=4): Thinking back to early March, was there anything that may have made it difficult for <CHILD'S NAME> to stay at school until the end of Year 12 or complete <his/her> SACE?

PROXY (STAYER) – IN YEAR 13 OR FLO/YEAR LEVEL NOT SPECIFIED (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6): Thinking back to early March, was there anything that may have made it difficult for <CHILD'S NAME> to stay at school until the end of the year or complete <his/her> SACE?

PROMPT: What would that be? Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.

INTERVIEWER NOTE FOR STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) (S2DUM=2,4): If a COVID_19 related reason is given, encourage the respondent to think about how they were feeling BEFORE the pandemic started affecting their life/to leave everything COVID-19 aside. Later in the survey, there will be an opportunity to talk about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their life.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Yes (Specify _____)
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREC7: IF S2DUM=1,3, GO TO C7
 IF S2DUM=2,4 & (C1=2 OR C2=2), GO TO C7
 IF S2DUM=2,4 & C1 NOT 2 & C2 NOT 2) GO TO C9

*(LEAVERS & PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL; STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) – NOT PLAN TO COMPLETE YEAR 12/THIS YEAR)

(S2DUM=1,3 OR
 (S2DUM=2,4 & (C1=2 OR C2=2)))

C7 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Why did you leave school last year?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=4): Back in early March, why didn't you plan to complete <Year 12> <and/or> <SACE> this year?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6): Back in early March, why didn't you plan to <stay at school until the end of the year> <and/or> <complete SACE> this year?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Why did <CHILD'S NAME> leave school last year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=4): Back in early March, why didn't <CHILD'S NAME> plan to complete <Year 12> <and/or> <SACE> this year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6): Back in early March, why didn't <CHILD'S NAME> plan to <stay at school until the end of the year> <and/or> <complete SACE> this year?

(DO NOT READ)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

INTERVIEWER NOTE FOR STAYERS & PROXY (STAYERS) (S2DUM=2,4): If a COVID-19 related reason is given, encourage the respondent to think about how they were feeling BEFORE the pandemic started affecting their life. Later in the survey, there will be an opportunity to talk about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their life.

1. Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to
2. Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship
3. Continued studying somewhere else
4. Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school
5. School was too hard / difficult
6. Their results at school were not good enough
7. Didn't like school / didn't find it interesting
8. Didn't think school was useful
9. They or their partner were expecting a child / parenting own child
10. Left to take care of someone in their family (excl own child)
11. Financial reasons
12. School was too stressful
13. Mental health
14. Other health/illness/disability reasons
15. The school suggested that they leave

16. Bullying/felt unsafe at school
17. Travel time/too far to travel
18. Finished school but didn't get a SACE certificate
19. Other (specify _____)
20. (Don't know/unsure) ^s
21. (Refused) ^s

PREC8: IF MULTIPLE RESPONSES GIVEN IN C7 GO TO C8; ELSE GO TO C9

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – PROVIDED MULTIPLE RESPONSES FOR C7)

C8 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): And which of those would be the MAIN reason you left school last year?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): And which of those would be the MAIN reason you planned to leave school before the end of <this year/Year 12/SACE>?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): And which of those would be the MAIN reason <CHILD'S NAME> left school last year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): And which of those would be the MAIN reason <CHILD'S NAME> planned to leave school before the end of <this year/Year 12/SACE>?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=1)
2. Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=2)
3. Continued studying somewhere else (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=3)
4. Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=4)
5. School was too hard / difficult (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=5)
6. Their results at school were not good enough (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=6)
7. Didn't like school / didn't find it interesting (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=7)
8. Didn't think school was useful (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=8)
9. They or their partner were expecting a child / parenting own child (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=9)
10. Left to take care of someone in their family (excl own child) (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=10)
11. Financial reasons (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=11)
12. School was too stressful (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=12)
13. Mental health (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=13)
14. Other health/illness/disability reasons (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=14)
15. The school suggested that they leave (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=15)
16. Bullying/felt unsafe at school (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=16)
17. Travel time/too far to travel (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=17)
18. Finished school but didn't get a SACE certificate (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=18)
19. <OTHER REASON FROM PREV QU> (DISPLAY IF PREV QU=19)
20. (Don't know)
21. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

C9 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): How important was it to your parent(s)/caregiver(s) that you finish Year 12? Was it ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Still thinking about early March, how important was it to your parent(s)/caregiver(s) that you finish Year 12? Was it ...

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): How important was it to you that <CHILD'S NAME> finish Year 12? Was it ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Still thinking about early March, how important was it to you that <CHILD'S NAME> finish Year 12? Was it ...

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

PROMPT: (S2DUM=1,2) Please answer in relation to your parent or caregiver (such as a guardian, step-parent, or foster parent), if there is one.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If respondent has two parents/caregivers with differing opinions, record the 'highest importance' response (e.g. if respondent indicates "1. Not important" and "3. Very important", then record "3")

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Not important
2. Somewhat important
3. Very important
4. Extremely important
5. (No such person)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREC10: IF C9=5 GO TO PREC12; ELSE GO TO C10

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

C10 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): And how important was it to your parent(s)/caregiver(s) that you achieve your SACE certificate? Was it ...

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3, 4): And how important was it to you that <CHILD'S NAME> achieve <his/her> SACE certificate? Was it ...

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

PROMPT (STAYERS & LEAVERS): Please answer in relation to your parent or caregiver (such as a guardian, step-parent, or foster parent), if there is one.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION (STAYERS & LEAVERS): If respondent has two parents/caregivers with differing opinions, record the 'highest importance' response (e.g. if respondent indicates 1 (not important) and 3 (very important), then record 3

PROMPT (DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMPLETING YEAR 12 & SACE): It is possible to finish Year 12 but not meet all the requirements for a SACE certificate.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Not important
2. Somewhat important
3. Very important
4. Extremely important
5. (No such person)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREC11: IF C9=1,2 OR C10=1,2 GO TO C11, ELSE GO TO PREC12

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – IF ANSWER TO EITHER OF THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS = "1. NOT IMPORTANT" OR "2. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT") (S2DUM=1-4 & (C9=1-2 OR C10=1-2))

C11 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): Why do you say that <finishing Year 12><or><getting a SACE certificate> was <not important><or> <somewhat important> to your parents/caregivers?

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): Why do you say that <CHILD'S NAME> <finishing Year 12><or><getting a SACE certificate> was <not important><or> <somewhat important> to you?

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

PREC12:IF S2DUM=1,2 GO TO C12
IF S2DUM=3,4 GO TO D1

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS - ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

C12 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Think about your CLOSEST friends at the time you were at school.

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Think about your CLOSEST friends. Before early March of this year

...

(READ STATEMENT)

- a) How many of these friends had a reputation for causing trouble? Would it be ...?
- b) How many of these friends skipped classes once a week or more?
- c) How many left school before the end of Year 12?
- d) How many thought it's okay to work hard at school?
- e) How many thought finishing school was very important?

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR FIRST STATEMENT, AND READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS IF NECESSARY)

(MULTIPLE ITEMS)

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. None of them
2. Some of them
3. Most of them
4. All of them
5. (Did not have any friends)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREC13:IF S2DUM=1 GO TO C13
IFS2DUM=2 GO TO C14

*(LEAVERS - ALL) (S2DUM=1)

C13 LEAVER: In early March, were you doing what you had planned to do after leaving school, or did you have other plans when you left school?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes, I was doing what I had planned to do (GO TO D1)
2. No, I ended up doing something else
3. (I had no real plans when I left school) (GO TO D1)
4. (Don't know) (GO TO D1)
5. (Refused) (GO TO D1)

*(LEAVERS – IF ENDED UP DOING SOMETHING ELSE; STAYERS – ALL) ((S2DUM=1 & C13=2) OR S2DUM=2)

C14 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): When you made the decision to leave school last year, what did you plan to do after leaving school?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): In early March, what did you plan to do after leaving school?

PROBE AS NECESSARY

(DO NOT READ OUT)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Start in a full time job, apprenticeship or traineeship
2. Start LOOKING FOR a full time job, apprenticeship or traineeship
3. Start in a part time job, apprenticeship or traineeship
4. Start LOOKING FOR a part time job, apprenticeship or traineeship
5. Start studying at university
6. Start a TAFE or VET course

7. Continue school elsewhere
8. Study elsewhere (not at school)
9. Have a gap year
10. Not work and not look for work
11. Care for another person unpaid
11. Work, unpaid, as a volunteer
12. Travel
13. Other (Specify _____)
14. Don't know ^s
15. Refused ^s"

D STAYING AT SCHOOL

PRED1 IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO D1
IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO D2

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1,3)

D1 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statement. By March this year, I had successfully made the transition from school. Do you ...

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statement. By March this year, <CHILD'S NAME> had successfully made the transition from school. Do you ...

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, ANSWER FOR MOST RECENT/CURRENT SCHOOL.

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PRED1B IF D1=1-5, GO TO D1B
IF D1=6,7, GO TO D2

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – IF D1 =1-5) (S2DUM=1-4 & D1=1-5)

D1B Why do you say that?

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Response given (Specify___)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

D2 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): I am now going to present you with a number of statements about the school you last attended. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of these statements.

STAYER (S2DUM=2): I am now going to present you with a number of statements about your school. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each

of these statements. When answering these questions, think about how you felt up to early March of this year.

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree that ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Thinking about the time up to early March of this year, please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree that ...

(STATEMENTS)

- (a) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): I enjoyed my last year at school. Do you ...
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): I was enjoying this year at school. Do you ...
 PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): <CHILD'S NAME> enjoyed <his/her> last year at school. Do you ...
 PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): <CHILD'S NAME> was enjoying this year at school. Do you ...
- (b) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): There were engaging teachers at my school
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (c) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): The school offered courses/subjects that I wanted to do
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (d) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): I received enough career advice when I was at school
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): I was receiving enough career advice
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (e) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): The school had enough VET courses for me
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (f) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The school provided me with enough individual support
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): The school was providing me with enough individual support
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (g) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): The school was a good learning environment for me
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (h) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The school provided me with enough information about my post-school options
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): The school was providing me with enough information about my post-school options
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (i) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): My school work was too difficult
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED
- (j) LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): School was too stressful for me
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED

(k) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Nothing would have made me stay at school
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): NOT ASKED
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED

(l) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): I am happy that I made the decision to leave school
 STAYER (S2DUM=2): NOT ASKED
 PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): NOT ASKED

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR FIRST COUPLE OF STATEMENTS TO S2DUM=1,2.
 [S2DUM=3,4 ONLY RECEIVE FIRST STATEMENT.] READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR
 LATER STATEMENTS IF NECESSARY.)

IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, ANSWER FOR MOST
 RECENT/CURRENT SCHOOL.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION FOR STATEMENT (k): This item and response codes
 include a double negative. Be careful when selecting response code/check respondent
 understanding

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PRED3: IF S2DUM=1,2 GO TO D3
 IF S2DUM=3,4 GO TO D4

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS - ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

D3 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): I am now going to read out some more statements about the
 school you last attended. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree
 with each of these statements.

STAYER (S2DUM=2): I am now going to read out some more statements about your
 school. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of these
 statements. Again, think about how you were feeling up until early March.

(STATEMENTS)

- a) My school was a place where the things I learned were important to me. Do you ...
- b) My school was a place where I enjoyed what I did in class
- c) My school was a place where I felt I belonged

d) My school was a place where I felt safe

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS IF NECESSARY)

IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, ANSWER FOR MOST RECENT/CURRENT SCHOOL

IF RESPONDENT BECOMES DISTRESSED, REFER TO HELPLINES

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

D4 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): What things helped you to stay at school as long as you did?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): What things helped you to stay at school up until early March?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): What things helped <CHILD'S NAME> to stay at school as long as <he/she> did?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): What things helped <CHILD'S NAME> to stay at school up until early March?

(DO NOT READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. I liked school / found it interesting
2. I liked studying
3. I thought school was useful to my future
4. The extra things / lessons I could do
5. I got along well with my class mates / friends
6. I needed to finish school to do the course / apprenticeship I want
7. My teachers were nice
8. The staff at school treated me well
9. My parents / family encouraged me
10. My friends encouraged me
11. Other (Specify _____)
12. Don't know ^s
13. Refused ^s

PRED5 IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO PRED6

IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO D5

*(STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=2,4)

D5 STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=4): Putting any problems due to COVID-19 to one side, what would help you to complete Year 12 and SACE?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6): Putting any problems due to COVID-19 to one side, what would help you to stay at school until the end of the year and complete SACE?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=4): Putting any problems due to COVID-19 to one side, What would help <CHILD'S NAME> to complete Year 12 and SACE?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6): Putting any problems due to COVID-19 to one side, what would help <CHILD'S NAME> to stay at school until the end of the year and complete SACE?

INTERVIEWER PROMPTS:

- Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.
- IF COVID-19-RELATED ANSWER IS GIVEN: Please think back to before the COVID-19 pandemic affected you.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

PRED6: IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO D6
IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO PREE1

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1,3)

D6 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Now I am going to ask about a number of factors that may have influenced you NOT TO leave school. Please answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each one. Would you have stayed at school if...?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Now I am going to ask about a number of factors that may have influenced <CHILD'S NAME> NOT TO leave school. Please answer 'Yes' or 'No' to each one. Would <CHILD'S NAME> have stayed at school if...?

(STATEMENTS)

- a) There was a wider range of VET subjects to choose from
- b) The school offered a wider range of other subjects in Years 11 and 12
- c) <You/he/she> had known how to access courses <your/his/her> school didn't offer
- d) There was more tutoring offered or available at school
- e) The teachers were better
- f) There was vacation coaching or catch-up offered
- g) There were evening classes
- h) The school had more flexible hours or part time options

- i) You were allowed to return to school at a later stage
 - j) There was more or better counselling
 - k) DELETED
 - l) There was more help with learning problems
 - m) There was better mentoring from teachers
 - n) There were better courses
 - o) There was more school-to-home communication
 - p) The school was easier to get to
 - q) <Your/his/her> school did anything else (specify_____)
- r) Nothing would have helped <you/him/her> stay at school (IF RESPONDED 'NO' TO EACH OF ABOVE, CATI WILL AUTOCODE D6r=1)

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Specify_____)
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

E ASSESSMENT OF TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL

PREE1: IF S2DUM=1,3 GO TO E1
IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO PREE1

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1,3)

E1 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): All things considered, up until March did you think that leaving school was the right decision for you?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): All things considered, up until March did you think that leaving school was the right decision for <CHILD'S NAME>?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO E3)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO PREE4)
4. (Refused) (GO TO PREE4)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – LEAVING SCHOOL WAS RIGHT DECISION) (S2DUM=1,3 & E1=1)

E2 Why do you say that?

(DO NOT READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Had a job in early March
2. Had an Apprenticeship/Traineeship in early March
3. Was doing a course in early March
4. School work was too hard / difficult
5. My/his/her results at school were not good enough
6. Didn't like school / didn't find it interesting
7. School was too stressful
8. Mental health reasons
9. Bullying at school
10. Other (Specify___)
11. Don't know ^s
12. Refused ^s

PREE3: IF E1=1 GO TO PREE4

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – LEAVING SCHOOL WAS NOT RIGHT DECISION) (S2DUM=1,3 & E1=2)

E3 Why do you say that?

(DO NOT READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Not doing much in early March
2. Out of work in early March
3. Staying at school would have helped me/him/her get a job
4. Staying at school would have helped me/him/her get an Apprenticeship/Traineeship
5. Staying at school would have helped me/him/her get into a course
6. Other (Specify _____)
7. Don't know ^s
8. Refused ^s

PREE4 IF S2DUM=1 & B1=1,3 GO TO E4
 IF S2DUM=1 & B1 NOT 1,3, GO TO PREF1
 IF S2DUM=3 GO TO PREF1

*(LEAVERS – IN WORK, APPRENTICESHIP, TRAINEESHIP) (S2DUM=1 & B1=1,3)

E4 Is the job, apprenticeship or traineeship you had in early March the type of job you would like to do long-term?

PROMPT: If respondent has more than one job, ask about the job in which they work the most hours.

PROMPT: Is this the type of job you would like as a career?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

F SCHOOL SUBJECT CHOICE

PREF1: IF S2DUM=1 & A16=2-9 (LEFT SCHOOL IN YR 10 OR LATER) GO TO F2
 IF S2DUM=1 & A16=1 (LEFT SCHOOL BEFORE YEAR 10) GO TO F11
 IF S2DUM=3 GO TO F11

IF S2DUM=2,4 & FLO=2 GO TO F1
 IF S2DUM=2 & FLO=1 GO TO F2
 IF S2DUM=4 & FLO=1 GO TO F11

*(STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – EXCEPT FLO STUDENTS) (S2DUM=2,4 & FLO=2)

F1 STAYER: In early March, were you studying full-time or part-time?

PROXY (STAYER): In early March, was <CHILD'S NAME> studying full-time or part-time?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Full-time
2. Part-time
3. (FLO student) (ONLY USE IF RESPONDENT CANNOT ANSWER 1 or 2)
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PRE F2: IF S2DUM=4 GO TO F11

*(LEAVERS – LEFT SCHOOL IN YEAR 10 OR LATER; STAYERS – ALL)
 ((S2DUM=1 & A16=2-9) OR S2DUM=2)

F2 LEAVERS (S2DUM=1): The next questions are about SACE subjects. First, I would like you to think about your PLP. Which of the following best describes you?

STAYERS (S2DUM=2): The next questions are about SACE subjects. First, I would like you to think about your PLP. Which of the following best described you in early March?

PROMPT: PLP is Personal Learning Plan.

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(SINGLE ANSWER)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR LEAVERS (S2DUM=1):

1. I have completed my PLP
2. (NOT AN OPTION FOR LEAVERS)
3. I stopped before finishing my PLP
4. I did not start my PLP
5. (Other, Specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR STAYERS (S2DUM=2):

1. I had completed my PLP before then
2. I was doing my PLP in early March
3. I had stopped before finishing my PLP
4. I had not started my PLP
5. (Other, Specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREF3: IF F2=1,2,6,7 GO TO PREF4

IF F2=3,4,5 GO TO F3

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – STOPPED OR DID NOT START PLP) (S2DUM=1,2 & F2=3,4,5)

F3 Why is that?

PROMPT: Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

PREF4: IF S2DUM=1 & A16=3-9 (LEFT SCHOOL IN YR 11 OR LATER) GO TO F4

IF S2DUM=1 & A16=1,2 (LEFT SCHOOL IN YEAR 10 OR EARLIER) GO TO F11

IF S2DUM=2 GO TO F4

*(LEAVERS – LEFT SCHOOL IN YEAR 11 OR LATER; STAYERS – ALL) ((S2DUM=1 & A16=3-9) OR S2DUM=2)

F4 LEAVERS (S2DUM=1): Now thinking about Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subjects, which of the following best describes you?

STAYERS (S2DUM=2): Now thinking about Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subjects. Which of the following best described you in early March?

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- If commenced more than one English subject, answer for the "most complete" subject.
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 subjects can be done in either Year 11 or Year 12.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR LEAVERS (S2DUM=1):

1. I have completed a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject
2. (NOT AN OPTION FOR LEAVERS)

3. I stopped a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject before finishing it
4. I did not start a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject
5. (Other, Specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR STAYERS (S2DUM=2):

1. I had completed a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject before then
2. I was doing a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject in early March
3. I had stopped a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject before finishing it
4. I had not started a Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject
5. (Other, Specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREF5: IF F4=1,2,6,7 GO TO F6
IF F4=3,4,5 GO TO F5

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – STOPPED OR DID NOT START ENGLISH SUBJECT) (S2DUM=1,2 & F4=3,4,5)

F5 Why is that?

PROMPT: Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS – LEFT SCHOOL IN YEAR 11 OR LATER; STAYERS – ALL)
((S2DUM=1 & A16=3-9) OR S2DUM=2)

F6 LEAVERS (S2DUM=1): Now thinking about Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subjects. Which of the following best describes you?

STAYERS (S2DUM=2): Now thinking about Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subjects, which of the following best described you in early March?

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

- If commenced more than one Maths subject, answer for the "most complete" subject.
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 subjects can be done in either Year 11 or Year 12.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR LEAVERS (S2DUM=1):

1. I have completed a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject
2. (NOT AN OPTION FOR LEAVERS)
3. I stopped a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject before finishing it
4. I did not start a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject
5. (Other, specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR STAYERS (S2DUM=2):

1. I had completed a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject before then
2. I was doing a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject in early March
3. I had stopped a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject before finishing it
4. I had not started a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Maths subject
5. (Other, specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREF7: IF F6=1,2,6,7 GO TO F8
IF F6=3,4,5 GO TO F7

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – STOPPED OR DID NOT START MATHS SUBJECT) (S2DUM=1,2 & F6=3,4,5)

F7 Why is that?

PROMPT: Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS – LEFT SCHOOL IN YEAR 11 OR LATER; STAYERS – ALL)
((S2DUM=1 & A16=3-9) OR S2DUM=2)

F8 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Thinking now about the Research Project, which of the following best describes you?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Thinking now about the Research Project, which of the following best described you in early March?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If respondent does not understand the term “Research Project”, select “5. Other” and type out their response.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR LEAVERS:

1. I have completed the Research Project
2. (NOT AN OPTION FOR LEAVERS)
3. I stopped before finishing the Research Project

4. I have not started the Research Project
5. (Other, specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR STAYERS:

1. I had completed the Research Project by then
2. I was doing the Research Project in early March
3. I had stopped before finishing the Research Project
4. I had not started the Research Project
5. (Other, specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREF9: IF F8=1,2,6,7 GO TO F10

IF F8=3,4,5 GO TO F9

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – STOPPED OR DID NOT START RESEARCH PROJECT) (S2DUM=1,2 & F8=3,4,5)

F9 Why is that?

PROMPT: Please describe in as much detail as you can. This could be anything at all.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS – LEFT IN YEAR 11 OR LATER; STAYERS – ALL)

((S2DUM=1 & A16=3-9) OR S2DUM=2)

F10 We are interested in understanding how students chose their Year 11 and Year 12 subjects. How did you choose your Year 11 and Year 12 subjects?

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

F11 LEAVERS & STAYERS (S2DUM=1,2): Next I am going to ask you some questions about the types of VET that you may have done WHILE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL. VET, or vocational education and training, can be an apprenticeship, a traineeship, or other VET subjects that you have done at school, a TAFE or elsewhere.

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): Next I am going to ask you some questions about the types of VET that <CHILD'S NAME> may have done WHILE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL. VET, or vocational education and training, can be an apprenticeship, a traineeship, or other VET subjects that <he/she> has done at school, a TAFE or elsewhere.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Continue

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

F12 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): While at school did you start a school-based apprenticeship (or traineeship)?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): In Year 11 or Year 12, did you start a school-based apprenticeship (or traineeship)?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): While at school did <CHILD'S NAME> start a school-based apprenticeship (or traineeship)?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): In Year 11 or Year 12, did <CHILD'S NAME> start a school-based apprenticeship (or traineeship)?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO F16)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO F16)
4. (Refused) (GO TO F16)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – STARTED SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIP) (S2DUM=1-4 & F12=1)

F13 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): In early March, were you continuing in this apprenticeship/traineeship?

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): In early March, was <he/she> continuing in this apprenticeship/traineeship?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes (GO TO F15)
2. No
3. (Don't know) (GO TO F15)
4. (Refused) (GO TO F15)

PREF14:IF SDUM2=1,2 & F13=2 GO TO F14
IF SDUM2=3,4 & F13=2 GO TO F15

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – STARTED BUT NOT CONTINUING SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIP)
(S2DUM=1,2 & F13=2)

F14 Why is that?

(DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Finished/completed the course
2. Lost interest/decided to do something else
3. Fired/dismissed/expelled from/asked to leave course
4. Too difficult
5. I was doing it through school
6. No time/too busy
7. Other (specify_____)
8. Don't know ^s
9. Refused ^s

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – STARTED SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIP) (S2DUM=1-4 & F12=1)

F15 Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:

LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship I did during school helped me to stay at school as long as I did. Do you ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship I <did>/<was doing> helped me to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship <CHILD'S NAME> did during school helped <him/her> to stay at school as long as <he/she> did. Do you ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): The school-based apprenticeship/traineeship <CHILD'S NAME> <did>/<was doing> helped <him/her> to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree not agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

F16 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Did you do any (other) VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation while you were enrolled at school?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): In Year 11 or Year 12, have you started any (other) VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Did <CHILD'S NAME> do any (other) VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation while <he/she> was enrolled at school?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): In Year 11 or Year 12, has <CHILD'S NAME> started any (other) VET subjects at school, TAFE or another training organisation?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: VET = Vocational Education and Training.

(IF NECESSARY) Many people do VET-in-School courses such as Hospitality or Construction, for example.

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO F20)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO F20)
4. (Refused) (GO TO F20)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – STARTED OTHER TAFE/VET SUBJECTS) (S2DUM=1-4 & F16=1)

F17 Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:

LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The (other) TAFE or VET course(s) I did during school helped me to stay at school as long as I did. Do you ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): The (other) TAFE or VET course(s) I started helped me to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...;

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): The (other) TAFE or VET course(s) <CHILD'S NAME> did during school helped him/her to stay at school as long as he/she did. Do you ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): The (other) TAFE or VET course(s) <CHILD'S NAME> started helped <him/her> to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – DID A VET COURSE WHILE AT SCHOOL) (S2DUM=1-4 & F16=1)

F18 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Did you do any workplace training AS PART OF A VET COURSE WHILE YOU WERE ENROLLED AT SCHOOL?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Have you done any workplace training AS PART OF YOUR TAFE OR VET COURSE(S)?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Did <CHILD'S NAME> do any workplace training AS PART OF A VET COURSE WHILE HE/SHE WAS ENROLLED AT SCHOOL?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Has <CHILD'S NAME> done any workplace training AS PART OF <HIS/HER> TAFE OR VET COURSE(S)?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO F20)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO F20)
4. (Refused) (GO TO F20)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – DID WORKPLACE TRAINING) (S2DUM=1-4 & F18=1)

F19 Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:

LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The workplace training I did during school helped me to stay at school as long as I did . Do you ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): The workplace training I did helped me to stay at school until early March. Do you ...;

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): The workplace training <CHILD'S NAME> did during school helped him/her to stay at school as long as <he/she> did . Do you ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): The workplace training <CHILD'S NAME> did helped <him/her> to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

F20 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Did you do any (other) work experience WHILE YOU WERE ENROLLED AT SCHOOL?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Have you done any (other) work experience?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Did <CHILD'S NAME> do any (other) work experience WHILE <HE/SHE> WAS ENROLLED AT SCHOOL?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Has <CHILD'S NAME> done any (other) work experience?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Relates to work experience organised by / through the school

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO PREF22)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO PREF22)
4. (Refused) (GO TO PREF22)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – DID WORK EXPERIENCE)
(S2DUM=1-4 & F20=1)

F21 Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statement:

LEAVER (S2DUM=1): The work experience I did during school helped me to stay at school as long as I did. Do you ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): The work experience I did helped me to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): The work experience <CHILD'S NAME> did during school helped <him/her> to stay at school as long as <he/she> did. Do you ...

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): The work experience <CHILD'S NAME> did helped <him/her> to stay at school up until early March. Do you ...

INTERVIEWER NOTE: This question relates to work experience organised by / through the school

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREF22 IF S2DUM=1,2 & (F12=1 OR F16=1 OR F18=1) GO TO F22, ELSE GO TO PREF23

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – DID VET IN SCHOOL) ((S2DUM=1,2) & (F12=1 OR F16=1 OR F18=1))

F22 There are a number of reasons why people do a VET course at school. Why did you do a VET course at school?

(DO NOT READ RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. I wanted to do an apprenticeship or traineeship
2. To get a job in this area
3. To try out a potential career path
4. To learn a new skill
5. It looked like an interesting course
6. To contribute towards finishing my SACE
7. Other subjects on offer didn't interest me
8. My teachers/parents told me to do it
9. I thought it would have a low workload/be easy
10. My friends were doing VET
11. I wanted to learn in a more hands-on way
12. Other (Please specify _____)
13. Don't know ^s
14. Refused ^s

PREF23 IF S2DUM=1,3 THEN GO TO PREG1

IF S2DUM=2,4 THEN GO TO F23

*(STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=2,4)

F23 STAYER (S2DUM=2): In term 1, up to early March, did you have a job or jobs? Please do not include jobs you did at home to help out for pocket money.

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): In term 1, up to early March, did <CHILD'S NAME> have a job or jobs? Please do not include jobs <he/she> did at home to help out for pocket money.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RESPONDENT LEFT/LOST A JOB AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC, USE CODE "1. YES"

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO PREG1)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO PREG1)
4. (Refused) (GOT TO PREG1)

*(STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – HAS A JOB) (S2DUM=2,4 & F23=1,2)

F24 STAYER (S2DUM=2): How many hours per week did you usually work in all your jobs?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): How many hours per week did <CHILD'S NAME> usually work in all <his/her> jobs?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF HOURS VARY OR HAVE CHANGED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ASK: Thinking back to February, how many hours per week, on average, did <you/CHILD'S NAME> work?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Record hours _____ (GO TO PREG1)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused) (GO TO PREG1)

*(STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – HAS A JOB/DON'T KNOW HOURS) (S2DUM=2,4 & F24=2)
F25 STAYER & PROXY (STAYER): Would it be ...

(READ OUT)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF HOURS VARY OR HAVE CHANGED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ASK: Thinking back to February, how many hours per week, on average, did <you/CHILD'S NAME> work?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. 1 to 5 hours per week
2. 6 to 10 hours per week
3. More than 10 hours per week
4. (Only worked during school holidays)
5. (Did not work in term 1 before early March)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

G EDUCATION/CAREER PLANNING (BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL)

PREG1 IF S2DUM=1,2 GO TO G1
IF S2DUM=3,4 GO TO PREH1

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G1 (S2DUM=1 & A16=1 OR 2, LEAVER AND YEAR LEFT SCHOOL 10 OR BELOW): How informed did you feel when choosing your courses of study for < INSERT RESPONSE FROM A16>?

(S2DUM=1 & A16=3-6, LEAVER AND LEFT SCHOOL YEAR 11 OR ABOVE): How informed did you feel when choosing your courses of study for senior secondary school?

(S2DUM=1 & A16=96, 98 OR 99, LEAVER AND LEFT SCHOOL IN OTHER YEAR, REFUSED OR DON'T KNOW) How informed did you feel when choosing your courses of study for senior secondary school?

(S2DUM=2, STAYER) How informed did you feel when choosing your courses of study for <INSERT RESPONSE FROM A8>? Was it ...

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Uninformed
2. Informed
3. Very well informed
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G2 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Who did you talk to about choosing your school subjects?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Who did you talk to about choosing your subjects for Years 11 and 12?

(DO NOT READ)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Career advisor at school
2. Other teachers
3. Parents / caregivers
4. Brothers / sisters
5. Other family
6. Class mates / friends
7. Partner
8. Case manager
9. Other (Specify_____)
10. No-one in particular ^s
11. Don't know ^s
12. Refused ^s

PREG3: IF MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE SELECTED IN G2, GO TO G3
ELSE GO TO G4

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – IF SELECTED MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY IN G1) (S2DUM=1,2 & >1
OPTIONS SELECTED IN G2)

G3 Of those, who helped you the MOST with selecting your school subjects?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Career advisor at school (DISPLAY IF G2=1)
2. Other teachers (DISPLAY IF G2 =2)
3. Parents / caregivers (DISPLAY IF G2 =3)
4. Brothers / sisters (DISPLAY IF G2 =4)
5. Other family (DISPLAY IF G2 =5)
6. Class mates / friends (DISPLAY IF G2 =6)
7. Partner (DISPLAY IF G2 =7)
8. Case manager (DISPLAY IF G2 =8)
9. Other (____)(DISPLAY OTHER PERSON SPECIFIED IF G2 =9)
10. (Don't know)
11. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G4 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Thinking about the last year you were at school, how relevant did you think your courses of study were for what you intended to do after leaving school? Were they ...

STAYER (S2DUM=2): How relevant do you think your courses of study have been to what you intend to do next year? Are they ...

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Irrelevant
2. Relevant
3. Highly relevant
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PRE G5 IF S2DUM=1 GO TO G5
IF S2DUM=2 GO TO G6

*(LEAVERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1)

G5 Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statements:

(STATEMENTS)

(a) I knew where to get information about the options I had after leaving school. Do you ...

(b) When I decided to leave school I had enough information about what I wanted to do

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree or agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G6 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Before you left school, who did you talk to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Up until early March, who had you talked to about whether to continue at school, to do other training, or to go out to work?

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Career advisor at school
2. Case manager
3. Other teachers
4. Other school staff
5. Parents / caregivers
6. Brothers / sisters
7. Other family
8. Class mates / friends
9. Partner
10. Other (Specify_____)
11. No-one in particular ^s
12. (Don't know) ^s
13. (Refused) ^s

PRE G7: IF SELECTED MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY IN G6, GO TO G7
ELSE GO TO G8

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS - SELECTED MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY IN G6) (S2DUM=1,2 & >1
OPTIONS SELECTED IN G6)

G7 Which of these people helped you the MOST with planning what to do?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Career advisor at school (DISPLAY IF G6=1)
2. Case manager (DISPLAY IF G6=2)
3. Other teachers (DISPLAY IF G6=3)
4. Other school staff (DISPLAY IF G6=4)
5. Parents / caregivers (DISPLAY IF G6=5)
6. Brothers / sisters (DISPLAY IF G6=6)
7. Other family (DISPLAY IF G6=7)
8. Class mates / friends (DISPLAY G6=8)
9. Partner (DISPLAY IF G6=9)
10. Other (_____) (DISPLAY OTHER PERSON SPECIFIED IF G6=10)
11. (Don't know)
12. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS - ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G8 LEAVERS (S2DUM=1): Before leaving school, did you look for career information from any of the following?

STAYERS (S2DUM=2): Have you looked for career information from any of the following?

(STATEMENTS)

- (a) University or TAFE Information Days
- (b) Careers Expos
- (c) Websites
- (d) School career resource centre / library
- (e) Other

(RESPONSE CODES FOR STATEMENTS (a) - (d))

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

(RESPONSE CODES FOR STATEMENT (e))

1. Yes (Specify _____)
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

G9 How useful would you rate the following information source(s)?

(STATEMENTS)

- (a) University or TAFE Information Days. Were they ... (DISPLAY IF G8a=1)
- (b) Careers Expos. Were they ... (DISPLAY IF G8b=1)
- (c) Websites. Were they ... (DISPLAY IF G8c=1)
- (d) School career resource centre / library. Was that ... (DISPLAY IF G8d=1)

(e) <Response from other>. Was that ... (DISPLAY IF G8e=1)

(f) Careers adviser at school (DISPLAY IF G2=1 OR G6=1)

(READ RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR FIRST COUPLE OF STATEMENTS. CONTINUE TO READ OUT RESPONSE OPTION FOR REMAINING STATEMENTS IF NECESSARY.)

(RESPONSE CODES)

1. Not useful
2. Somewhat useful
3. Very useful
4. Extremely useful
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2))

G10 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statements.

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Please tell me how much you disagree or agree with the following statement.

(STATEMENTS)

- (a) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): My school prepared me well for achieving my goals after leaving school. Do you ...
STAYER (S2DUM=2): Up until early March, my school was preparing me well for achieving my goals after leaving school. Do you ...
- (b) LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Up until early March I was very happy with what I had achieved since leaving school. Do you ...
STAYER (S2DUM=2): NOT ASKED

(READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither disagree nor agree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2))

G11 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Thinking about what you were doing in early March, how could school have prepared you better?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A9=1-3): Thinking about what you want to do after leaving school, how could school prepare you better?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A9=4,5): Thinking about what you want to do next year, how could school prepare you better?

(DO NOT READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. More specific information about my industry/occupation
2. More work experience
3. More specific job training / education
4. More information to help choose an industry/occupation
5. Give more / better information about what to do / what to expect in the various pathways after school
6. More personal contact / support /more personalised career advice
7. Better teaching / teachers
8. More information / support when choosing subjects
9. Teach about referencing / independent learning / research skills
10. Other (specify_____)
11. Nothing I can think of ^s
12. Don't know ^s
13. Refused ^s

H MARCH UPDATE AND FUTURE GOALS
--

HINTRO: Things have changed for some people in recent weeks. For the next questions, I want you to think about your current situation.

1. Continue

PREH1 IF S2DUM=1,3 & E1=1, GO TO H1A
 IF S2DUM=1,3 & E1=2, GO TO H1B
 IF S2DUM=1,3 & E1=3,4, GO TO H1C
 IF S2DUM=2,4 GO TO PREH3

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN MARCH LEAVING SCHOOL = RIGHT DECISION)
 (S2DUM=1,3 & E1=1)

H1A LEAVER (S2DUM=1): You said that, back in early March, you felt that leaving school was the right decision for you. Do you feel that way now?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): You said that, back in early March, you felt that leaving school was the right decision for <CHILD'S NAME>. Do you feel that way now?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH1B:IF H1A=1-4, GO TO H2

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN MARCH LEAVING SCHOOL = WRONG DECISION)
 (S2DUM=1,3 & E1=2)

H1B LEAVER (S2DUM=1): You said that, back in early March, you felt that leaving school was the wrong decision for you. Do you feel that way now?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): You said that, back in early March, you felt that leaving school was the wrong decision for <CHILD'S NAME>. Do you feel that way now?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH1C:IF H1B=1-4, GO TO H2

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – IN MARCH LEAVING SCHOOL DECISION=DK/REFUSED)
(S2DUM=1,3 & E1=3,4)

H1C LEAVER (S2DUM=1) All things considered, do you think that leaving school was the right decision for you?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3) All things considered, do you think that leaving school was the right decision for <CHILD'S NAME>?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(LEAVER, PROXY (LEAVER)) (S2DUM=1,3)

H2 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Could you just update me on what you are doing now?

PROXY (LEAVER)(S2DUM=3): Could you just update me on what <CHILD'S NAME> is doing now?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If you are in any way unsure how to code the response, select "15" and type the response.

- If a respondent indicates they are not currently working (e.g. stood down or a casual not currently getting shifts) but they are receiving the JobKeeper payment through their employer, select "16" but do NOT select "1".

- If a respondent indicates they are working and receiving the JobKeeper payment, select "1 Working" and "16"

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. </he/she> is working
2. </he/she> is looking for work
3. </he/she> is doing a traineeship / apprenticeship
4. </he/she> is looking for a traineeship / apprenticeship
5. </he/she> is studying at a university
6. </he/she> is doing (a) VET / TAFE course(s)
7. </he/she> <have/has> returned to study, at another school
8. </he/she> is studying elsewhere (not at school)
9. </he/she> is unable to work or study
10. </he/she> is not working and not looking for work (excluding 'unable to work or study')
11. </he/she> is working, unpaid, in an internship/practicum
12. </he/she> is working, unpaid, as a volunteer
13. </he/she> is caring for another person
14. </he/she> is travelling
16. </he/she> is receiving the Job Keeper payment
15. Other (Specify _____)
16. (Don't know)^s

17. (Refused)^s

PREH3 IF S2DUM=1,3, GO TO PREH5
 If S2DUM=2,4 & A9=4, GO TO PREH4
 IF S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1, GO TO H3A
 IF S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2, GO TO H3B
 IF S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4, GO TO H3C

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH STILL AT SCHOOL & PLANNED TO STAY AT SCHOOL)

(S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1)

H3A STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1): You said that, back in early March, you planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12. Do you still feel that way?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1): You said that, back in early March, you planned to stay at school until the end of the year. Do you still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1): You said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> planned to stay at school until the end of Year 12. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=1): You said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> planned to stay at school until the end of the year. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH3B:IF H3A=1-4, GO TO PREH4

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH STILL AT SCHOOL BUT DID NOT PLAN TO STAY AT SCHOOL) (S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2)

H3B STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2): You said that, back in early March, you did NOT plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12. Do you still feel that way?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2):): You said that, back in early March, you did NOT plan to stay at school until the end of the year. Do you still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2): You said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> did NOT plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=2): You said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> did NOT plan to stay at school until the end of the year. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH3C: IF H3B=1-4, GO TO PREH4

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH STILL AT SCHOOL & DK IF PLANNED TO STAY AT SCHOOL)

(S2DUM=2,4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4)

H3C STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4): Do you now plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12?

STAYER (S2DUM=2 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4): Do you now plan to stay at school until the end of the year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=4 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4): Does <CHILD'S NAME> now plan to stay at school until the end of Year 12?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4 & A8=5,6 & A9 NOT 4 & C1=3,4): Does <CHILD'S NAME> now plan to stay at school until the end of the year?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH4 IF S2DUM=2,4 & C2=1, GO TO H4A
IF S2DUM=2,4 & C2=2, GO TO H4B
IF S2DUM=2,4 & C2=3,4, GO TO H4C

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH PLANNED TO COMPLETE SACE THIS YEAR)
(S2DUM=2,4 & C2=1)

H4A STAYER (S2DUM=2): You (also) said that, back in early March, you planned to complete SACE this year. Do you still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): You (also) said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> planned to complete SACE this year. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No

3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH4B: IF H4A=1-4, GO TO PREH5

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH DID NOT PLAN TO COMPLETE SACE THIS YEAR)
(S2DUM=2,4 & C2=2)

H4B STAYER (S2DUM=2): You (also) said that, back in early March, you did NOT plan to complete your SACE this year. Do you still feel that way?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): You (also) said that, back in early March, <CHILD'S NAME> did NOT plan to complete <his/her> SACE this year. Does <he/she> still feel that way?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH4C: IF H4B=1-4, GO TO PREH5

*(STAYERS AND PROXY (STAYERS) – IN MARCH DK IF PLANNED TO COMPLETE SACE THIS YEAR)
(S2DUM=2,4 & C2=3,4)

H4C STAYER (S2DUM=2): Do you now plan to complete your SACE this year?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Does <CHILD'S NAME> now plan to complete <his/her> SACE this year?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

PREH5 IF S2DUM=1,3 & B1 NOT 3-8 & F13 NOT 1 GO TO H5

IF S2DUM=1,3 & (B1=3-8 OR F13=1) GO TO PREH7

IF S2DUM=2 GO TO PREH8

IF S2DUM=4 GO TO PREI1

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – NOT IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION/TRAINING IN EARLY MARCH) (S2DUM=1,3 & B1 NOT 3-8 & F13 NOT 1)

H5 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Do you intend to start a course of study or vocational training in the next few years?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Does <CHILD'S NAME> intend to start a course of study or vocational training in the next few years?

PROMPT: Do you intend to start a course of study or vocational training in the next 2 to 3 years?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes (definitely)
2. Yes (perhaps)
3. No (GO TO PREH3)
4. (Don't know) (GO TO PREH3)
5. (Refused) (GO TO PREH3)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – INTENDS TO START STUDY/TRAINING) (S2DUM=1,3 & H5=1,2)

H6 What type of course or training would that be?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. A University Course
2. A TAFE or other vocational course
3. An Apprenticeship
4. A Traineeship
5. Other (Specify _____)
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

PREH7 IF S2DUM=1,3 & B1 NOT 1,3 GO TO H7
ELSE GO TO PREH8

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – NOT IN WORK, APPRENTICESHIP OR TRAINEESHIP)
(S2DUM=1,3 & (B1 NOT 1,3)

H7 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Do you expect to start paid employment in the next few years?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Does <CHILD'S NAME> expect to start paid employment in the next few years?

PROMPT: Do you expect to start paid employment in the next 2 to 3 years?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes (definitely)
2. Yes (perhaps)
3. No
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

PREH8: IF S2DUM=1,2 GO TO H8
IF S2DUM=3 GO TO PREH9

*(LEAVERS, STAYERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1,2)

H8 Now for a few questions about your future goals. In five years from now, do you hope....

(STATEMENTS)

- (a) To be working
- (b) To have your own business
- (c) To have obtained or enrolled in a university degree (bachelor or honours)
- (d) To have successfully completed an apprenticeship / traineeship
- (e) To have achieved a Certificate III or IV
- (f) To have completed SACE (ONLY DISPLAY IF S2DUM=1)

(RESPONSE CODES)

- 1. Yes;
- 2. No;
- 3. (Don't know);
- 4. (Refused)

PREH9 IF S2DUM=1,3 & C4=1 GO TO PREI1
IF S2DUM=1,3 & C4=2,3,4 GO TO H9
IF S2DUM=2 GO TO PREI1

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS) – EXCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE USING VET TO COMPLETE SACE)
(S2DUM=1,3 & C4=2,3,4)

H9 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Are you aware that there are various ways you can complete your SACE after leaving school?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Are you aware that there are various ways that <CHILD'S NAME> can complete <his/her> SACE after leaving school?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. (Don't know)
- 4. (Refused)

I CAREER PLANNING (POST-SCHOOL)
--

PREI1: IF S2DUM=1 GO TO I1
IF S2DUM=2,3,4 GO TO I2

*(LEAVERS – ALL) (S2DUM=1)

I1 Now that you are no longer at school, is there any help that would be useful to you with regard to education or work?

(DESCRIPTION)

1. No / can't think of anything
2. Response given (Specify _____)
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

I2 LEAVER (S2DUM=1): Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support which is available to you, including options for completing SACE after leaving school?

STAYER (S2DUM=2): Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support which is available to you?

PROXY (LEAVER) (S2DUM=3): Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support which is available to <CHILD'S NAME>, including options for completing SACE after leaving school?

PROXY (STAYER) (S2DUM=4): Would you like to be provided with some information about education or work support which is available to <CHILD'S NAME>?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO J1)
3. (Don't know) (GO TO J1)
4. (Refused) (GO TO J1)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – WOULD LIKE INFO ABOUT SUPPORT SERVICES) (S2DUM=1-4 & I2=1)

I3 IF RESPONDENT IS ON LANDLINE: Do you have a pen and paper? Links to a range of support services are available at <<https://tinyurl.com/DfESA2020>>;

IF RESPONDENT IS ON MOBILE: After the interview, we will send a link to a range of support services to this mobile. <TEXT MESSAGE WITH DfE PROJECT URL TO BE AUTOMATICALLY SENT TO MOBILE>

1. Text message sent to mobile
2. Interviewer read out URL

J	FINAL QUESTIONS
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*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

J1 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): If you could give advice to the government on how to design the ideal school THAT WOULD HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR FUTURE GOALS, what would you tell them?

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM3,4): If you could give advice to the government on how to design the ideal school THAT WOULD HELP <CHILD'S NAME> TO ACHIEVE HIS/HER FUTURE GOALS, what would you tell them?

PROMPT: What would you would like to change? It could be anything.

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

J2 Many people say that school is all about getting good grades or completing SACE. What else do you think schools should be helping students with?

(DESCRIPTION)

1. Specify _____
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

J3 LEAVER & STAYER (S2DUM=1,2): Finally, are there any other comments you want to make about your experiences at your school?

PROXY (LEAVER & STAYER) (S2DUM=3,4): Finally, are there any other comments you want to make about <CHILD'S NAMES>'s experiences at his/her school?

(DO NOT READ OUT RESPONSE OPTIONS)

(MULTIPLES ACCEPTED)

1. Loved / enjoyed school / my school
2. More (personalised) support for choosing further education / career path
3. More maths / programming / music / PE / English / sewing / other specific classes
4. Offer training that prepares for university
5. Some teachers / staff were not that good
6. Teachers were nice / good
7. Work hard / take advantage of time at school / other tips for Yr 12 students
8. Other (Specify _____)
9. (Don't know / no further comments) ^s
10. (Refused) ^s

K	CLOSE AND TERMINATION SCRIPTS
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*(LEAVERS, PROXY (LEAVERS), STAYERS, PROXY (STAYERS) – ALL) (S2DUM=1-4)

CLOSE: That brings us to the end of the interview. Thank you so much for your time today.

This research has been carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you have provided will be used only for research purposes. I can provide you with a link to our privacy policy if you like? (SRC-specific URL)

Just in case you missed it, my name is <INTERVIEWER NAME>, calling on behalf of the South Australian Department for Education from the Social Research Centre. Thank you for your participation.

*(TERMINATION SCRIPTS)

TERM1 Thanks anyway, for this survey we are conducting interviews in English.

TERM2 Thanks anyway, for this survey, we are looking to talk to people who were in Year 12 or Year 13 at a South Australian public school in March this year.

TERM3 Thanks anyway, for this survey, we are looking to talk to people who were enrolled at a South Australian public school last year.

TERM4 Thanks anyway, for this survey, we are looking to talk to people who left school last year.

TERM5 Thanks anyway, for this survey, we are looking to talk to people who have NOT completed their SACE.

*(SUMMARY OF TERMINATIONS)

ALLTERM

1. Intro1a/b=4 (parent / guardian refusal at introduction)
2. Intro1a/b=5 (student refusal at introduction)
3. Language difficulty (INTRO1a/b=6)
4. Mob1=3 (mobile refusal)
5. Mob2=3 (mobile refusal)
6. Intro2a=5 (parent refusal at survey explanation)
7. Intro2b=3 (student refusal at survey explanation)
8. Intro3=2 (parent/student refusal at confidential spiel)
9. S1=3 (parent/student refusal at consent to continue)
10. A5=2,3,4,5 (stayer – did not attend government school)
11. A6=2,3,4,5 (stayer – did not attend SA school)
12. A8=1-3,7-9 (stayer – not in Year12/13/FLO)
13. A11=3-5 (leaver – not at school last year)
14. A13=2-5 (leaver – did not attend government school last year)

15. A14=2-5 (leaver – did not attend SA school last year)
16. A17=1,2 (leaver – at school in March 2020)
17. A19c=1 (completed SACE)
18. All other

*(REASON FOR REFUSAL)

RR1 OK, that's fine, no problem, but could you just tell me the main reason you do not want to participate, because that's important information for us?

1. No comment / just hung up
2. Too busy
3. Not interested
4. Too personal / intrusive
5. Don't like subject matter
6. Don't believe surveys are confidential / privacy concerns
7. Silent number
8. Don't trust surveys / government
9. Never do surveys
10. Survey is too long
11. Get too many calls for surveys / telemarketing
12. Unable to do survey – due to nature/severity of disability
13. Unable to do survey – other (e.g. other health reason)
14. Not a residential number (business, etc.)
15. Language difficulty
16. Going away / moving house
17. Respondent unreliable / drunk
18. Asked to be taken off list
19. Other (Specify_____)

*(REFUSAL RE-CONTACT TYPE)

RR2 RECORD RE-CONTACT TYPE

1. Definitely don't call back
2. Possible conversion

APPENDIX F. COMPARISON OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SURVEY DATA

A comparison of the administrative and survey data was conducted in order to:

- Assess whether the survey data aligns with the classification of young people as stayers or leavers derived from the administrative data.
- Provide insights into leavers whose reason for leaving code in the administrative data was “unknown”.
- Assess the leavers’ research question “Does the survey data align with the departmental information on ‘not a valid reason for leaving school’ code?”
- Assess the stayers’ research question “Does the survey data align with the departmental information on whether or not students are on SACE pathways?”

Out of scope cases and cases requiring re-classification

Screening questions at the start of the CATI interview were used to identify out of scope respondents and respondents requiring re-classification. This information also provides useful insights for administrative and reporting purposes around non-completion of SACE.

Among the persons classified as stayers in the DfE sample list, 54% of the “other contacts” – that is, young people/parents of young people in the study samples who were contacted but completed interviews were not obtained – were out of scope as they had indicated that they were not attending a Government school in South Australia in March 2020, or were not in a year group of interest. Another ten percent of ‘other contacts’ for the stayers were reclassified as leavers but were out of scope for the interviews for undocumented reasons, for example, did not attend a Government school or did not attend a school at all in 2019 (Table 8). A further ten respondents from the stayer group were reclassified as leavers for the purposes of interviewing and reporting.

Among the persons classified as leavers in the DfE sample list, 45% of the “other contacts” were out of scope as they indicated that they had not attended a Government school in South Australia at any time in 2019 or were still attending school in March 2020. Another 17% of “other contacts” indicated that they had already completed SACE (Table 8). In addition, nine percent of leavers who completed an interview indicated that they were doing an apprenticeship/ traineeship or VET course in March 2020 and were using this to contribute towards their SACE (Table 13).

Administrative and survey data on reason left school

The DfE data on the reason for a student leaving school are reported in Table 77.

- One-third of leavers who completed an interview had the DfE reason left code “unknown”, and an additional 3% of leavers did not have a code because they had been incorrectly classified as stayers in the DfE sample information.
- The next largest DfE reason left categories were paid employment (24%) and seeking employment (24%) in South Australia.

- The most common DfE education reason category was attending vocational education (8%), followed by transferred to a South Australian government school (4%), attending a private training institution (2%) and attending university (1%) in South Australia.
- Less than 1% of leavers who completed an interview had the reason left codes “parenting/carer” or “exemption”.
- No leavers who completed an interview had the following DfE reason left codes as these groups were out of scope and therefore not included in the sample lists provided to the research team: attending a non-government school in South Australia (NG); left for interstate or overseas (AC, NS, NT, OV, QL, TA, VI, WA); deceased (DE); and illness (IL).
- Leavers with who had been suspended/excluded (SU) were in scope for this study but no leavers in this category completed an interview.

Table 77. Leavers: Administrative data on reason left school

Administrative data	N	%
No information		
Unknown (U)	123	33.2
Respondents from DfE stayer sample who were reclassified as stayers on the basis of interview screening questions (BLANK)	10	2.7
Employment		
Paid employment in SA (PE)	88	23.7
Seeking employment in SA (SM)	89	24.0
Education and training		
Attending university in SA (AT)	5	1.3
Attending vocational education in SA, e.g., TAFE (VE)	29	7.8
Attending private training institution in SA (PT)	9	2.4
Transferred to SA government school (TG)	15	4.0
Attending non-government school in SA (NG)	.	.
Other reason		
Parenting/Carer (PA)	2	0.5
Exemption (EX)	1	0.3
Left SA for another state or overseas (AC, NS, NT, OV, QL, TA, VI, WA)	.	.
Deceased (DE)	.	.
Illness (IL)	.	.
Suspension/exclusion (SU)	.	.
Total	371	100.0

Notes: Source: The administrative data is based upon the variable “latest_reason_leave1” provided by DfE. A small number of cases also had data for “latest_leave_reason2”. Of these, only one case had different values for “latest_leave_reason1” (VE) and “latest_leave_reason2” (TG).

The survey data on reasons for leaving school and activities March 2020 are used to provide some insights into the DfE “unknown” group and the validity of the other DfE reason left codes listed in Table 77. Two caveats should be noted. First, the survey data on reasons for leaving includes activity-related and health factors similar to those used in the administrative classification, but also attitudinal factors. Therefore there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two classifications. That is, a leaver was able provide an attitudinal reason in their interview rather than being restricted to the reasons comprising the DfE measure. Second, the survey data on activities refer to early March 2020 rather than the time immediately after leaving school.

Insights into leavers whose reason for leaving code is “unknown” in the Departmental data

Survey data on main reasons for leaving school and post-school activities are described below for the 123 leavers who had an “unknown” (U) reason for leaving code in the DfE data.

Main reason for leaving (survey data) (Table 78):

- 31% (n=38) of the leavers in the “unknown” (U) group left for school-related reasons, including five leavers whose school had suggested that they leave.
- 22% (n=27) of the leavers in the “unknown” (U) group said that their main reason for leaving was that they had finished school but did not get a SACE certificate.
- 22% (n=27) left for well-being reasons, including 11 respondents whose main reason for leaving was mental health and eight respondents whose main reason was other health, illness or disability.
- 14% (n=17) left for various post-school employment, education or training reasons, comprising nine respondents whose main reason for leaving was that they had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to, seven respondents who wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship, and one respondent who wanted to do study or training that was not available at school.
- 6% (n=7) left for personal and family issues, including three respondents whose main reason was pregnancy or caring for their child and one respondent who left to care for someone else in their family.
- 1% (n=1) left school because they were leaving for interstate or overseas.
- 5% (n=6) left for other reasons (i.e. completed enough for their own purposes, other, or don't know).
- The shaded categories in Table 78 show the cases which could potentially be assigned a DfE reason for leaving code on the basis of the survey data on main reason left.

Activities in March 2020 (Table 79):

- 47% (n=58) of the leavers in “unknown” (U) group were in employment, education or training in March 2020, with the majority of these indicating that they were working.
- Among the 53% (n=65) of the leavers in the “unknown” (U) group who were NOT in employment, education and training, the most commonly reported activities were looking for work (n=26), and not working and not looking for work (excluding “unable to work or study”) (n=19). Other less commonly nominated activities included unable to work or study (n=7), looking for study (n=5), caring for another person (n=5), working unpaid as a volunteer (n=2), travelling (n=1), and playing sport (n=1).

Table 78. Main reason for leaving reported by leavers who had an “unknown” reason for leaving code in the DfE data

	N	%
Finished school but didn't get a SACE certificate	27	22.0
Post-school employment, education and training		
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	9	7.3
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	7	5.7
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	1	0.8
School and school work		
Didn't like school / didn't find it interesting	12	9.8
Didn't think school was useful	10	8.1
School was too hard / difficult	3	2.4
The school suggested that they leave	5	4.1
Difficulties with teachers or peers	4	3.3
Their results at school were not good enough	4	3.3
Student well-being		
Mental health	11	8.9
Other health/illness/disability reasons	8	6.5
School was too stressful	4	3.3
Bullying/felt unsafe at school	4	3.3
Personal and family reasons		
Personal/family issues (no further information)	3	2.4
They or their partner were expecting a child / parenting own child	3	2.4
Left to take care of someone in their family (excl own child)	1	0.8
Other reasons		
Leaving for interstate/overseas	1	0.8
Had completed enough for own purposes	1	0.8
Other (Unclear)	4	3.3
(Don't know)	1	0.8
Total	123	100.0

Notes: Source: Derived from Questions C7 and C8.

Sample: Leavers who had an “Unknown” reason for leaving code in DfE administrative data.

Table 79. Activities of leavers who had an “unknown” reason for leaving code in the DfE data, March 2020

	N	%
Main activity (n=123)^a		
Employment, education or training	58	47.2
Not in employment, education or training	65	52.8
<i>Total</i>	123	100.0
Activities of leavers who were in employment, education or training (n=58)^b		
Working	48	82.8
Doing an apprenticeship or traineeship	1	1.7
Studying at university	2	3.5
Doing a VET/TAFE course	8	13.8
Studying elsewhere	1	1.7
Activities of leavers who were NOT in employment, education or training (n=65)^{ca}		
Looking for work	26	40.0
Unable to work or study	7	10.8
Not working and not looking for work (excluding “unable to work or study”)	19	29.2
Looking for study	5	7.7
Caring for another person	5	7.7
Working, unpaid, as a volunteer	2	3.1
Travelling	1	1.5
Playing sport	1	1.5
Other (unclear)	2	3.1
Don't know	4	6.2

Notes: a. Source: Summary measure derived from Question B1. Percentages sum to 100%. Sample: Leavers who had an “unknown” reason for leaving code in the DfE administrative data.

b. Source: Question B1. Percentages do not sum to 100% as respondents could nominate more than one activity. Sample: Leavers who had an “unknown” reason for leaving code in the DfE administrative data and indicated in the survey that they were in employment, education or training in March 2020.

c. Source: Question B1. Percentages do not sum to 100% as respondents could nominate more than one activity. Sample: Leavers who had an “Unknown” reason for leaving code in the DfE administrative data and did NOT indicate in the survey that they were in employment, education or training in March 2020.

Does the survey data align with the departmental information on “not a valid reason for leaving school” code?

For each of the remaining reason left groups in the administrative data, the administrative codes were checked for consistency with survey respondents’ activities in early March 2020. For some administrative codes (such as “parenting/carer” and “exemption”), insights were also gained from checking for consistency against survey respondents’ stated reasons for leaving. For other administrative codes, however, the latter consistency checks did not yield particularly useful insights. This is because a large proportion of survey respondents with those administrative codes had provided attitudinal or affective reasons for leaving in their interviews.

DfE “paid employment in SA” (PE) code (n=88):

- 85% (n=75) of the leavers with a “paid employment in SA” (PE) code were in a job, apprenticeship or traineeship in March 2020.
- Comparisons with the survey data on reasons for leaving were less clear. Only 42% (n=37) of the leavers with a PE code said that their main reason for leaving school was that they

had or wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship. The remaining 58% (n=51) of leavers with a PE code provided a wide variety of reasons for leaving, such as not thinking school was useful, finding school too difficult, not liking school, mental health, and various other factors.

DfE “seeking employment in SA” (SM) code (n=89):

- 25% (n=22) of leavers with a “seeking employment in SA” (SM) code had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship in March 2020, and 29% (n=26) were looking for work.
- Again, comparisons with the survey data on reasons for leaving were less clear. Only 9% (n=8) said that their main reason for leaving school was because they had or wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship. Main reasons provided by similar or higher proportions of leavers in the SM group included not liking school, not thinking school was useful, the school suggesting they leave, and that they had finished school but not received a SACE certificate.

DfE “attending tertiary education in SA” (AT, VE, PT) codes (n=43):

- 53% (n=23) of leavers with DfE attending tertiary education codes (AT, VE, PT) were undertaking university, VET or other post-school study in March 2020. Examining the AT, VE and PT codes separately:
 - Of the five respondents with an “attending university in SA” (AT) code, four were undertaking university study and one was working in March 2020, indicating a high level of consistency between this administrative code and the survey data.
 - Of the 29 respondents with an “attending vocational education in SA” (VE) code, 24 were in employment, education or training in March 2020 (14 respondents were doing a VET/TAFE course, two respondents were studying at university or elsewhere, one respondent was in an apprenticeship/traineeship, and seven respondents were working but not undertaking study).
 - Of the nine respondents with an “attending private training institution in SA” (PT) code, two respondents were doing VET courses, one respondent was doing other study, three respondents were working but not studying, and three respondents were not in employment, education or training.
- Only 14% (n=6) of leavers in the AT, VE and PT groups said that their main reason for leaving school was because they wanted to do study or training that wasn’t available at school, or to continue studying elsewhere. Other main reasons reported by leavers with AT, VE and PT codes included that they had finished school but not received a SACE certificate, mental health, not liking school, and a variety of other factors.

DfE “Transferred to SA government school” (TG) code (n=15):

- Two-thirds (n=10) of the “transferred to SA government school” (TG) group were in employment, education or training in March 2020.
- The leavers with a TG code provided a range of reasons for leaving school, with no particular reasons standing out.

DfE “Parenting/carer” (PA) code (n=2):

- Two leavers in this study had the DfE reason for leaving “parenting/carer” (PA) code. The survey data is completely consistent with these codes: one of these respondents

indicated that their main reason for leaving was pregnancy or looking after their child, while the other respondent left to take care of someone else in their family.

DfE “Exemption” (EX) code (n=1):

- One leaver in this study had the DfE reason for leaving “exemption” (EX) code. This respondent indicated that their main reason for leaving was that they had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to, and that they were in a full-time job in March 2020, which is potentially consistent with having an EX code (see “Reason – exemption” in the DfE (2020) *Data Dictionary*).

Does the survey data align with the departmental information on whether or not students are on SACE pathways?

Table 80 provides a detailed comparison of the survey data on compulsory SACE requirements and administrative data for 552 students. It should be noted that data from the two sources are not strictly comparable. The administrative data includes a consideration of actual/potential subject results, while the survey data is based upon student reports of subject participation/completion irrespective of their results or potential results in that subject. Nevertheless, a comparison of the two sources highlights a number of consistencies and inconsistencies, which are summarised in Table 81. Overall:

- The two data sources were most consistent in relation to PLP (71% agreement) and Research project (72% agreement). Lower levels of consistency were observed for Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject (63% agreement) and Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject (57% agreement).
- Inconsistencies arose where students reported they were doing a subject but had a “NULL” or “No” code in the administrative data. This was most commonly noted for Research Project (13% of cases) and English (12% of cases).
- Inconsistencies also arose where students reported that they had stopped the subject before finishing it, not started the subject, “other”, or left school before relevant year level but had a “Yes” code in the administrative data.

Because student results were not collected in the survey data, it is not possible to assess consistencies where students indicated they had completed the subject but were recorded as “NULL” or “No” in the administrative data. It may be the case that these students had “completed” but not passed the subject (hence, the “No” code in the administrative data), or that they had passed but this had not been recorded in the administrative data.

It should also be noted that just under one in ten leavers reported that they were doing an apprenticeship, traineeship or VET course as part of their SACE in early March (after leaving school) (Table 13).

Table 80. Compulsory SACE requirements: Comparison between DfE administrative data and survey data (leavers and stayers combined)(n)

	Administrative data ^a											
	PLP			Stage 1 or Stage 2 English subject			Stage 1 or Stage 2 Mathematics subject			Research Project		
	Null	No	Yes	Null	No	Yes	Null	No	Yes	Null	No	Yes
Survey data												
Completed subject	85	17	296	65	77	174	68	42	216	41	38	93
Doing subject (early March)	5	8	5	33	32	5	21	20	8	49	22	12
Stopped before finishing	9	24	24	6	52	20	10	39	26	6	139	1
Had not started subject	18	30	11	9	24	6	14	27	15	16	105	1
Other/don't know/refused	4	7	9	4	19	7	4	15	8	5	5	0
Left before Year 11	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	15	0	4	12	3	4	14	1
Total	121	86	345	121	219	212	121	155	276	121	323	108

Notes: a. In the administrative data, Yes = requirement met or assumed pass, based on actual and potential subject results. This measure assumes a student will receive C/C- grade in subjects enrolled in but not yet completed.

Source: Administrative data and Questions F2, F4, F6, and F8.

Sample: Leavers and Stayers, excluding proxy respondents.

Table 81. Compulsory SACE requirement: Summary of consistencies and inconsistencies between DfE administrative data and survey data (leavers and stayers combined)

	Survey data (student response)	Admin data	PLP	English	Maths	Research Project
N						
Agree	Completed subject or still doing it	"Yes"	301	179	224	105
	Stopped before finishing, not started, "other" or left school before relevant year level	"NULL" or "No"	92	133	125	294
Disagree	Doing subject	"NULL" or "No"	13	65	41	71
	Stopped before finishing, not started, "other" or left school before relevant year level	"Yes"	44	33	52	3
Uncertain	Completed subject	"NULL" or "No"	102	142	110	79
<i>Total</i>			552	552	552	552
%						
Agree	Completed subject or still doing it	"Yes"	54.5	32.4	40.6	19.0
	Stopped before finishing, not started, "other" or left school before relevant year level	"NULL" or "No"	16.7	24.1	22.6	53.3
Disagree	Doing subject	"NULL" or "No"	2.4	11.8	7.4	12.9
	Stopped before finishing, not started, "other" or left school before relevant year level	"Yes"	8.0	6.0	9.4	0.5
Uncertain	Completed subject	"NULL" or "No"	18.5	25.7	19.9	14.3
<i>Total</i>			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: a. In the administrative data, Yes = requirement met or assumed pass.

Missing data: Proxy respondents were not asked to provide information on compulsory SACE requirements (23 leaver proxies and 5 stayer proxies).

Summary

Discrepancies between the survey and administrative data on school enrolment and mandatory SACE requirements were detected where:

- Young people indicated they had not attended a government school in South Australia in 2019 or 2020 but appeared in the administrative data for that year.
- Young people indicated that they were at school in 2020 or had completed SACE but were identified as leavers in the administrative data.
- Young people reported being in a year level which was different to that specified in the administrative data.

- Young people indicated that they had left school in 2019 but were identified as stayers in the administrative data.
- Students reported they were doing a compulsory SACE requirement but had a “NULL” or “No” code for that subject in the administrative data.
- Young people reported that they had stopped a compulsory SACE requirement before finishing it, not started the requirement, “other” or left school before relevant year level but had a “Yes” code for that subject in the administrative data.

The survey data provide some insights into the group of leavers who have an “unknown” (U) reason for leaving code in DfE administrative data. For example, of the leavers in the “unknown” (U) group:

- Just under one-half were in employment, education or training in March 2020, with the majority of these indicating that they were working.
- Just over one-fifth indicated that their main reason for leaving was that they had finished school but did not get a SACE certificate.
- Just over one-fifth indicated that their main for leaving was related to well-being issues, including mental health.
- Very few left for parenting/carer reasons, or to leave for interstate or overseas.

The survey data provided some limited insights into the validity of the remaining reason for leaving codes in the DfE administrative data.

- The administrative data and survey data were consistent for the small number of survey respondents who had the DfE code “parenting/carer” (PA), and is potentially consistent for the one respondent with an “exemption” (EX) code.
- There was a relatively high level of concordance between the survey data and two further DfE codes (“paid employment in SA” (PE) and “attending university in SA” (AT)).
- There was less consistency between various other DfE administrative codes and the survey data (i.e. “seeking employment in SA” (SM), “attending vocational education in SA” (VE), “attending private training institution in SA” (PT), and “transferred to SA government school” (TG)). As the administrative codes and survey questions were not directly comparable, this finding is not surprising.

APPENDIX G. SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table 82. Leavers: Main reason for leaving school, by selected sub-groups (n)

Reasons for leaving	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	24	20	19	25	7	37	5	39	24	20	44
Leaving for interstate/overseas	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Post-school employment, education and training											
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	9	28	14	23	3	34	4	33	25	12	37
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	7	28	21	14	3	32	8	27	22	13	35
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	3	7	3	7	0	10	0	10	5	5	10
Continued studying somewhere else	2	4	3	3	1	5	2	4	3	3	6
Financial reasons	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
School and school work											
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	12	24	15	21	4	32	12	24	17	19	36
Didn't think school was useful	9	25	13	21	6	28	6	28	17	17	34
School was too hard/difficult	8	9	9	8	2	15	2	15	9	8	17
The school suggested that they leave	4	13	1	16	2	15	11	6	9	8	17
Difficulties with teachers or peers	6	9	7	8	5	10	1	14	11	4	15

<i>Reasons for leaving</i>	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Results at school were not good enough	1	7	4	4	2	6	2	6	3	5	8
<i>Student well-being</i>											
Mental health	21	11	17	15	9	23	3	29	11	21	32
Other health/illness/disability reasons	7	8	12	3	5	10	3	12	5	10	15
School was too stressful	6	6	9	3	2	10	2	10	5	7	12
Bullying/felt unsafe at school	5	4	7	2	1	8	3	6	2	7	9
<i>Personal and family reasons</i>											
Personal/family issues (no further information)	5	5	6	4	1	9	3	7	8	2	10
They or partner were expecting a child/parenting own child	4	0	4	0	1	3	2	2	2	2	4
Left to take care of someone in family (excluding own child)	4	0	3	1	0	4	0	4	1	3	4
<i>Other reasons</i>											
Travel time/too far to travel	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	2
Had completed enough for own purposes	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	2
Other (Unclear)	4	7	7	4	3	8	5	6	6	5	11
Don't know	6	2	7	1	0	8	4	4	2	6	8
Refused	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
<i>Total n</i>	150	221	227	144	58	313	82	289	192	179	371

Notes: Source: Reasons derived from Questions C7 and C8 Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Leavers.

Table 83. Leavers: Main reasons for leaving school, by selected sub-groups (%)

Reasons for leaving	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Finished school but didn't get SACE certificate	16.0	9.1	13.2	11.0	12.1	11.8	6.1	13.5	12.5	11.2	11.9
Leaving for interstate/overseas	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.3
Post-school employment, education and training											
Had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship to go to	6.0	12.7	9.7	10.1	5.2	10.9	4.9	11.4	13.0	6.7	10.0
Wanted to get a job, apprenticeship or traineeship	4.7	12.7	14.6	6.2	5.2	10.2	9.8	9.3	11.5	7.3	9.4
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	2.0	3.2	2.1	3.1	0.0	3.2	0.0	3.5	2.6	2.8	2.7
Continued studying somewhere else	1.3	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.7	1.6	2.4	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.6
Financial reasons	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	1.2	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.3
School and school work											
Didn't like school/didn't find it interesting	8.0	10.9	10.4	9.3	6.9	10.2	14.6	8.3	8.9	10.6	9.7
Didn't think school was useful	6.0	11.3	9.0	9.3	10.3	9.0	7.3	9.7	8.9	9.5	9.2
School was too hard/difficult	5.3	4.1	6.3	3.5	3.5	4.8	2.4	5.2	4.7	4.5	4.6
The school suggested that they leave	2.7	5.9	0.7	7.1	3.5	4.8	13.4	2.1	4.7	4.5	4.6
Difficulties with teachers or peers	4.0	4.1	4.9	3.5	8.6	3.2	1.2	4.8	5.7	2.2	4.0
Results at school were not good enough	0.7	3.2	2.8	1.8	3.5	1.9	2.4	2.1	1.6	2.8	2.2
Student well-being											
Mental health	14.0	5.0	10.4	7.5	15.5	7.4	3.7	10.0	5.7	11.7	8.6

<i>Reasons for leaving</i>	Gender		School card		Disability support		FLO student		VET in school		Total
	F	M	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Other health/illness/disability reasons	4.7	3.6	2.1	5.3	8.6	3.2	3.7	4.2	2.6	5.6	4.0
School was too stressful	4.0	2.7	2.1	4.0	3.5	3.2	2.4	3.5	2.6	3.9	3.2
Bullying/felt unsafe at school	3.3	1.8	1.4	3.1	1.7	2.6	3.7	2.1	1.0	3.9	2.4
<i>Personal and family reasons</i>											
Personal/family issues (no further information)	3.3	2.3	2.8	2.6	1.7	2.9	3.7	2.4	4.2	1.1	2.7
They or partner were expecting a child/parenting own child	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.7	1.0	2.4	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.1
Left to take care of someone in family (excluding own child)	2.7	0.0	0.7	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.5	1.7	1.1
<i>Other reasons</i>											
Travel time/too far to travel	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.6	1.2	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.5
Had completed enough for own purposes	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.6	1.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5
Other (Unclear)	2.7	3.2	2.8	3.1	5.2	2.6	6.1	2.1	3.1	2.8	3.0
Don't know	4.0	0.9	0.7	3.1	0.0	2.6	4.9	1.4	1.0	3.4	2.2
Refused	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: Source: Reasons derived from Questions C7 and C8 Gender, school card, disability support and FLO status provided by DfE. VET in school derived from Questions F12 and F16.

Sample: Leavers.

APPENDIX H. EXAMPLE LATENT CLASS ANALYSIS (LCA)

To examine whether former students could be grouped according to their experiences at school a latent class analysis (LCA) was undertaken of responses by school leavers to the following twelve items regarding the last school they attended:

D2_a. I enjoyed my last year at school.

D2_b. There were engaging teachers at my school.

D2_c. The school offered courses/subjects that I wanted to do.

D2_d. I received enough career advice when I was at school.

D2_e. The school had enough VET courses for me.

D2_f. The school provided me with enough individual support.

D2_g. The school was a good learning environment for me.

D2_h. The school provided me with enough information about my post-school options.

D2_i. My school work was too difficult.

D2_j. School was too stressful for me.

D2_k. Nothing would have made me stay at school.

D2_l. I am happy that I made the decision to leave school.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with these statements on a 5-point Likert scale with the following labels: 1 “strongly disagree”, 2 “somewhat disagree”, 3 “neither disagree nor agree”, 4 “somewhat agree” and 5 “strongly agree”. “Don’t know” or refusal to answer the question were not among the options read out but were recorded when offered by respondents. Proportions of answers in all seven categories are presented in Figure H1.

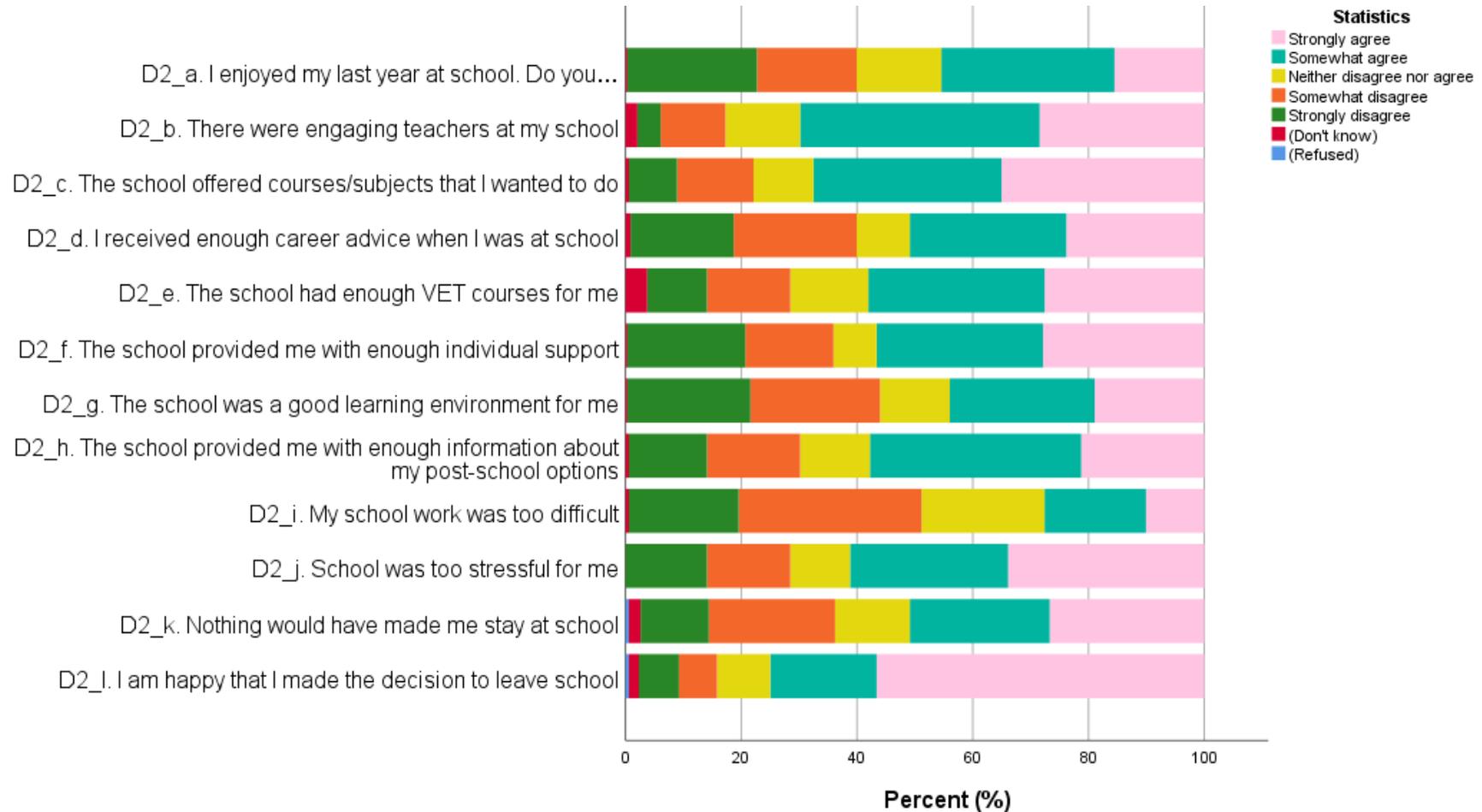


Figure H1. Responses to statements about leavers' school experiences (n=348; leavers only without leaver proxies)

The responses to these items were then written to a “.dat” file with any missing responses set to “-1”. This data file was subsequently accessed in *Mplus* by the input file illustrated in Figure H2 which specified a two-class LCA model. Two further analyses specified a three-class and a four-class model respectively by adjusting the number in brackets in the command “Classes = class(2)” to “3”, then “4”.

```
Title: SA DfE pathways LCA for leavers using D2a to l.
Data: File is leaversd2_1.dat;
Variable: Names = Resp_ID a b c d e f g h i j k l;
Classes = class(2);
Categorical = a b c d e f g h i j k l;
Usevariables = a b c d e f g h i j k l;
Missing are all(-1);
Analysis: Type=mixture;
Starts=1000 100;
Plot: type is plot3;
Series is a (1) b (2) c (3) d (4) e (5)
f (6) g (7) h (8) i (9) j (10) k (11) l (12);
Savedata: file is leaversd2.txt;
save is cprob;
format is free;
Output: tech1 tech8 tech11 tech14;
```

Figure H2. Illustrative *Mplus* input for a two class LCA

Information from these three analyses about the fit of a two-class, three-class and four-class LCA model of leavers’ responses to statements about their school experiences is presented in Table H1.

Table H1. Model fit of LCA models of statements regarding leavers’ school experiences

	2 classes	3 classes	4 classes
Entropy	0.867	0.87	0.89
H0 Loglikelihood Value	-6166.947	-5756.493	-5597.262
2 Times the Loglikelihood Difference	820.908	318.462	178.192
Difference in the Number of Parameters	47	49	49
Mean	129.896	118054.758	101137.934
Standard Deviation	93.252	160872.287	112243.374
P-Value	0.0004	0.7679	0.8158

Model selection was undertaken in line with recommendations by Lo, Mendell & Rubin (2001) and Vuong (1989). The authors state that if the probability-value for a model is less than 0.05 it indicates that there are still differences underlying the data that can be explained by additional classes. Therefore, additional classes are added until the p-value for the statistic is greater than 0.05, indicating that no significant differences in response patterns remain.

As can be seen in Table H1, while the two-class model had a significant p-value, the three-class model's p-value was not significant, indicating that a sufficient number of classes to explain the underlying response patterns had been reached. Results of the model with four classes were also not significant. However, as the three-class model was the first one to be not significant, it was selected as the model which best reflected the underlying response pattern.

In order to interpret the three classes, the "plot" function in *Mplus* was used to illustrate the response patterns of respondents in each class, combining the categories "strongly agree" and "agree" for each item (see Figure H3).

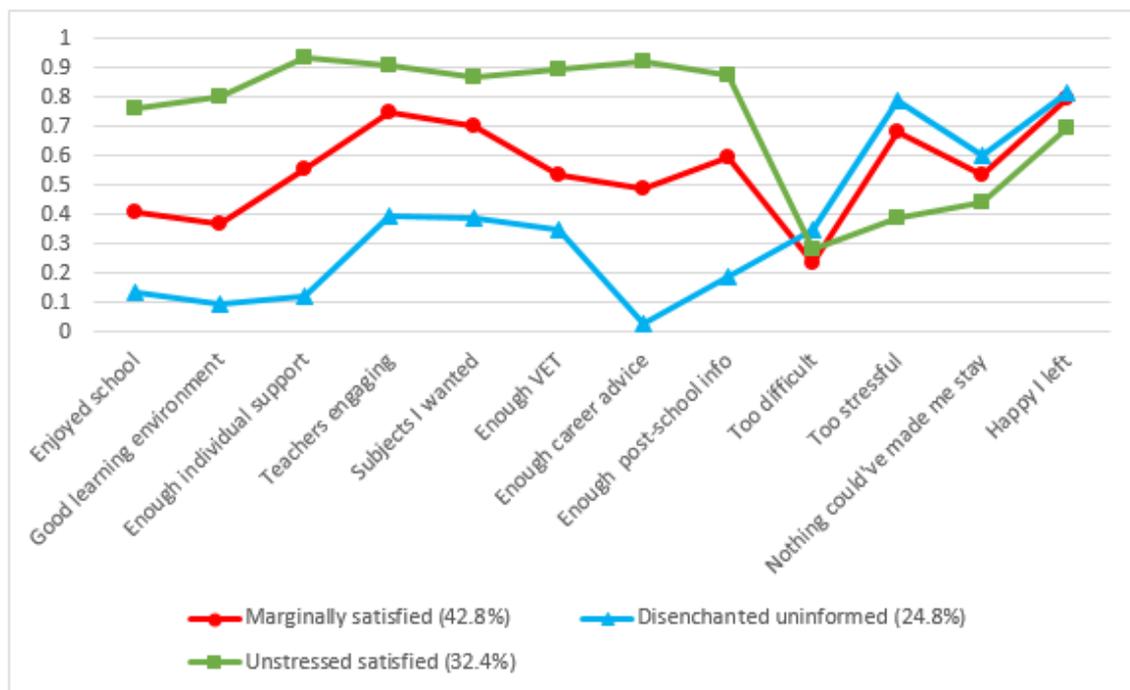


Figure H3. Probabilities of leavers in three classes "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" with each statement about school experiences (n=348; leavers only, without leaver proxies)

As can be seen, leavers' response patterns captured by the green line were the most likely to agree with the first eight statements indicating that school was enjoyable, offered desired subject selection, including VET, as well as sufficient career advice and post-school information. Probably as a reflection of relative satisfaction with their schooling experience, respondents in this class were less likely than the two other classes to agree with the statement that school was stressful. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the "Unstressed satisfied".

Leavers' response patterns plotted by the blue line were the least likely to agree with these first eight statements, indicating relatively negative school experiences. More specifically,

respondents in this class hardly agreed at all that they had had enough career advice and also showed a low probability of agreeing to have had sufficient post-school information. Hence, this class of respondents was labelled as the “Disenchanted uninformed”.

The response pattern indicated by the red line sat between the first and second class, indicating a probability of around 50% of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. Therefore, they were considered to be “marginally satisfied” with their school experience.

The three classes were closest in terms of their agreement regarding school work. All three classes were not very likely to agree with the statement that school work had been too difficult. In other words, respondents did not seem to really struggle in terms of the level of difficulty of their school work. The three classes were also close in terms of their likelihood to agree that nothing could have made them stay and that they were happy that they had left school.