Who does what in school improvement?
My focus is on only one aspect of school improvement:

• improving the quality of teaching and learning (and thus student results/outcomes).
I will address two questions:

1. What do we know about effective strategies for achieving whole-of-school improvements in teaching and learning?

2. What are the respective roles of the Board and Principal in leading whole-of-school improvements in teaching and learning?
1. What do we know about effective strategies for achieving whole-of-school improvements in teaching and learning?
one popular strategy: performance incentives

“A simple idea that pervades economics is that incentives have powerful effects. In the case of schools, few incentives relate to the object of interest – student performance.”

“A promising candidate for improvement is the specific form of accountability that aims incentives directly at teachers.”

“Merit pay for teachers – such as that recently introduced into British schools – or rewards to entire schools imply moving to a direct pay-for-performance relationship.”

(Hanushek, 2002; Hanushek & Woessman, 2010)
“The research to date suggests that the benefits of test-based incentive programs over the past two decades have been quite small... Unfortunately, the guidance offered by this body of evidence is not encouraging about the ability of incentive programs to reliably produce meaningful increases in student achievement.”

US National Research Council’s Committee on Incentives and Test-Based Accountability, 2011
“Many of the reforms we studied failed to deliver improvement because they had little effect on what happened inside the classroom.”

Barber & Mourshey, 2007
Improved student outcomes depend on the implementation of practices that have been demonstrated to produce improved outcomes.
some practices of highly effective schools
An Explicit Improvement Agenda
An Explicit Improvement Agenda

• The leadership team has established and is driving a strong improvement agenda for the school.

• This agenda is expressed in terms of measurable improvements in outcomes for students.

• Explicit, clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set, with accompanying timelines.

• There is a strong and optimistic belief on the part of all school staff that further improvement is possible.
Analysis and Discussion of Data
Analysis and Discussion of Data

• A high priority is given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of data on student outcomes.

• The school has a plan for the systematic collection, analysis and use of student data.

• Data are used throughout the school to monitor progress and to inform decision making.

• A high priority is given to building teachers’ and leaders’ data literacy skills.

• Teachers routinely use objective data on student achievement to evaluate their teaching effectiveness.
A Culture that Promotes Learning
A Culture that Promotes Learning

• The school ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to academic excellence.

• There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.

• Classrooms are calm but busy and interruptions to teaching time are kept to a minimum.

• Parents, school leaders and teachers work together in a mutually supportive way.
Targeted Use of School Resources
Targeted Use of School Resources

• The school applies its resources in a targeted manner to meet the learning needs of all students.

• Staff are deployed in ways that make best use of available expertise and interests.

• Discretionary school funds are applied to initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for students.

• The broader community is used as a resource in the development and delivery of learning.
An Expert Teaching Team
An Expert Teaching Team

• Teachers are experts in the subjects they teach and have very high levels of pedagogical knowledge.

• Teachers and leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improved student learning.

• School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff.

• Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver and review the effectiveness of lessons.
Systematic Curriculum Delivery
Systematic Curriculum Delivery

• The school has a clearly documented whole school plan for curriculum delivery.

• The plan makes explicit what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn.

• Considerable attention has been given to ensuring ‘vertical’ alignment across the years of school.

• Term and unit plans, classroom teaching, and regular assessments are aligned with the curriculum plan.
Differentiated Teaching and Learning
Differentiated Teaching and Learning

• Leaders promote differentiated teaching as a strategy for engaging every student in learning.

• The school recognises that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs.

• Individual learning plans have been developed for at least some students.

• Regular data are used in all classrooms to make judgements about individual learning needs.
Effective Pedagogical Practices
Effective Pedagogical Practices

- School leaders have accepted personal responsibility for promoting improvements in teaching.
- School leaders have well-known positions on the kinds of teaching that they wish to see occurring.
- All teachers and leaders are committed to identifying and implementing better teaching methods.
- School leaders work with teachers to improve their teaching practices, including by providing feedback.
School-Community Partnerships
School-Community Partnerships

• The school uses partnerships strategically to access resources/expertise not available within the school.

• Partnerships address identified student needs and are formed with partners who can assist with those needs.

• The details of partnership programs are carefully planned and partner roles and responsibilities are clear.

• The benefits to all partners have been considered, and plans exist for evaluating the impact of partnerships.
National School Improvement Tool
improving practice

Outstanding
High
Medium
Low
2. What are the respective roles of the Board and Principal in leading whole-of-school improvements in teaching and learning?
The Board has a role to play in supporting the Principal’s leadership of all aspects of a school improvement agenda.
Specifically, the Board can play a valuable role in:

• setting priorities for improvement  
  (an explicit improvement agenda)
• monitoring progress in achieving improved student outcomes

(analysis and discussion of data)
• sourcing resources to support the school improvement agenda
  
  *(targeted use of school resources)*
• facilitating external partnerships to advance the school improvement agenda

(school-community partnerships)
thank you