

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Wangaratta District Specialist School (5226)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2021 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

Attested on 29 April 2022 at 11:30 AM by Alysha Jackson (Principal)

- This 2021 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

Attested on 03 May 2022 at 06:23 PM by Ruth Crawford (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the 'About Our School' commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school, an outline of the school's performance over the year and future directions.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics and special programs.

The 'Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)' section includes the improvement initiatives the school has selected and the progress they have made towards achieving them through the implementation of their School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools

Achievement

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

- how many exiting students go on to further studies or full-time work

Results are displayed for the latest year and the average of the last four years (where available).

Considering COVID-19 when interpreting the Performance Summary

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations in 2020 and 2021. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances. Absence data may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Schools should keep this in mind when using this data for planning and evaluation purposes.

How to read the Annual Report (continued)

What does 'NDP' or 'NDA' mean?

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The Department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs

'Levels A to D' are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

About Our School

School context

Wangaratta District Specialist School is a multi-mode specialist school catering for students with mild to profound intellectual and associated disabilities from five to eighteen years of age. We strive to provide a purposeful, comprehensive learning environment meeting the social, emotional and educational requirements of every student. Currently more than 70 Teaching, Educational Support and Allied Health staff are passionately committed to working with families, carers, specialists, relevant outside agencies and the local community to ensure students achieve their maximum potential and targeted educational outcomes. The 2021 school year ended with 164 students enrolled. WDSS is located in the Rural City of Wangaratta and draws enrolment from four local government areas - Wangaratta, Benalla, Indigo and Alpine council areas. Six buses transport students from within Wangaratta and the many towns in surrounding districts.

The school's philosophy is reflected in its motto, 'Together We Will'. This is based on the belief that children learn best in a co-operative environment that is happy, challenging, supportive and non-threatening. Strong and respectful relationships between all members of the school community are encouraged as is the active involvement and participation of students, staff, parents, caregivers, volunteers and the wider school community. This is reflected in the strong relationship the school has with all its stakeholders and the high regard with which the school is held in the wider community.

Currently the school is organised as a junior, middle and senior school, with 20 classrooms grouping students based on a variety of criteria, with a view towards helping students achieve short term goals as stepping stones towards a long term post school outcome. Class sizes vary from 5 students to 12 students and are staffed according to the student need in each classroom. The 2021 school year saw 17 classrooms located on the main campus with three satellite classrooms operating out of Wangaratta Primary School.

All students have an individual learning plan established in consultation with parents and relevant professionals. In the last three years of school the focus is on transition to adult programs and this includes work experience, participation in TAFE programs and increased responsibility around the school and community.

2021 saw a renewed focus on student achievement in literacy and numeracy, and a focus on improvement to student voice and agency to enhance student engagement and wellbeing.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

Key Improvement Strategy 1 saw the school work towards embedding a whole school approach to literacy, which is the FISO dimension of Building Practice Excellence. The work for the year centered around fully embedding the Reading Instructional Model and engaging in rigorous assessment practices in Reading to track student learning growth and inform teaching and learning. A Professional Learning Community was developed to improve student data within literacy, more specifically, comprehension skills. Our PLC built strong leadership teams within each area of our school, and had a shared vision in improving resource management and student growth in literacy. Our teams worked closely with the FISO cycle to help evaluate, prioritise, develop and implement our goals. This work was monitored by regular conversations at the Data Wall, using protocols such as Notice and Wonder and commenting on the growth of student learning in Reading and Comprehension.

When presented with Stage 3 lockdown our students and school were forced into a Remote and Flexible Learning environment. Staff had a large focus on the anxiety levels of how our students with disabilities would cope with this significant change to routine and structure, and how we could keep them engaged in their learning. Once again our teaching and support staff worked together and developed a wealth of learning activities that were engaging and purposeful. As a school, we worked collaboratively and successfully together to reach the needs of each of our students and their families. We were able to provide devices to those who needed them, reaching students through various apps such as Google Classroom and Seesaw, connecting via Webex videos both as a whole class, individually or in small groups. Hard copy learning packs were sent home via school buses for those students who preferred more tactile resources, and these were rotated on a needs basis. Our Allied Health team provided a variety of activities suited to the needs of each child, including independent living skills, personal hygiene, communication and sensory activities. WDSS was also able to provide supervision for those children who needed to complete Onsite Learning. Our focus for the students and families during Remote and Flexible Learning was to try their best, attempt activities,

complete preferred activities, provide social connection between staff, students and each other. This was a very difficult time for many of our families and students, and our Wellbeing team played a major role in maintaining communication between home and school. Overall, we were very proud of our staff for being so flexible and creative during this time, we were proud of our students for building resilience and learning new skills, and our families for acknowledging the importance of student learning and communication.

Achievement

In 2021, Covid lockdowns and having to remain open the majority of the time, meant that student learning outcomes were dictated by their attendance and mental wellbeing. This was a focus for teachers and with the implementation of the PLC process into the school year. The PLC focus for the year was to develop clear teaching strategies for the implementation of comprehension into the school to further increase student outcomes in the area of reading.

Teachers also developed assessments that focused on the comprehension of what pre readers are looking at and functional use of reading for those within the senior area with low reading comprehension skills.

A combination of assessments were trialed throughout the year and using these assessments teachers were able to determine student learning outcomes. The different assessments used were: CARS & STARS; Blanks; Language for Thinking; Colourful Semantics (School developed Assessment); Essential Assessments; Level 0 Assessment (School developed Assessment); PM Reading Assessment (Focus on Comprehension)

The student learning outcome data is as follows:

134 students have data from the start and end of the school year. 14 students had only 1 data entry and 16 students were in VCAL.

33 students increased their level - 12 students initially went down a level and then went back up; 12 went up a level by the end of the year; and 9 students went up two or more levels

4 students went down a level

97 students remained on the same level - 56 remained on the same level as the start of the year; 23 students initially went up a level and then remained there for the rest of the year; and 17 students went down a level and remained on the lower level

Of our 16 students enrolled in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (Foundation), 7 were in their final year. 4 students were able to successfully achieve their certificate. Of the 7 who finished: 1 secured a school-based apprenticeship, 2 secured employment in supported workplaces, 1 secured employment at a workplace following Structured Workplace Learning, 1 participated in Structured Workplace Learning, and 2 enrolled in further study skill courses.

By continuing to have 1:1 iPad's across the majority of the classrooms, this has allowed students to utilise familiar technology to access reading and comprehension tasks that are directed towards their individual learning needs.

Engagement

The School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework or PBS for short, has been part of our school for almost 10 years. It ensures that students and staff at our school are working on the premise that 'together we will be safe, be learners and be respectful'. Through explicit teaching and modeling we aim to ensure our young people are reaching their potential both at school and within the community. At the end of 2021 we went from bronze award level within SWPBS to silver award level.

The school has a Stand Out Group which includes members and advocates of the LGBTQIA+ community. Their goal is to support each other and to educate the school community on LGBTQIA+ issues and inclusivity.

The school also has a Jandra Group to support and include the voices of our First Nations students. Students engage with a local Elder on a regular basis for cultural activities and celebrate their achievement at Proud and Deadly Awards at the end of the year. First Nations activities included in the WDSS teaching schedule for celebration are Sorry Day, Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week.

Students with poor attendance or engagement issues are referred to the Wellbeing Team, who work with the students and their families to eliminate any barriers.

Wellbeing

The Wellbeing Team consists of a Leading Teacher, three Social Workers and a Chaplain. They work collaboratively to support our young people with their social, emotional and physical needs. The LT for Student Engagement meets regularly with both the Social Workers and Chaplain to discuss strategies, new developments and supports available for students and their families.

The team also works closely with our Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) to run our Jandra Program for students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our local Youth Liaison Officer from Victoria Police joins the Wellbeing Team each Friday. The Wellbeing team can refer families to external services for extra support and liaise with those services who are already engaged with our families.

Finance performance and position

2021 End of year position was a surplus of \$120,509.

Total revenue was \$1,072,637 that included \$916,506 term cash grants.

Locally raised funds were made up of a combination of CSEF (\$4132) Conveyance allowance (\$10,998) Essential Student items (\$24,285) Bank interest of (\$612), advance funding of (\$9725).

Expenditure total was \$952,128 (\$2229 less than 2020).

Replacement staff were again our biggest expenditure with Non-Teaching \$246,551, Teaching \$67,021 and on costs of \$34,226.

\$347,797 total staffing - a decrease of \$40,483 from the previous year - due to COVID.

Class materials (consumables) were \$104,335.

Contract cleaning cost a total of \$58,175 against a budget of \$60,000.

Motor vehicles expenses were \$59,625 including the subsidised Rutherglen bus.

Utilities expenditure of \$32,594 against a budget of \$40,000.

Telephones \$11,911, Photocopying \$15,607 and bank charges \$550 were all slightly over budget.

\$38,140 (budget \$20,000) was spent on Furniture and \$22,813 on staff Professional Development against a budget of \$75,000.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at

<https://www.wangarattass.vic.edu.au/>

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes.

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of 156 students were enrolled at this school in 2021, 47 female and 109 male.

NDP percent of students had English as an additional language and 14 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).

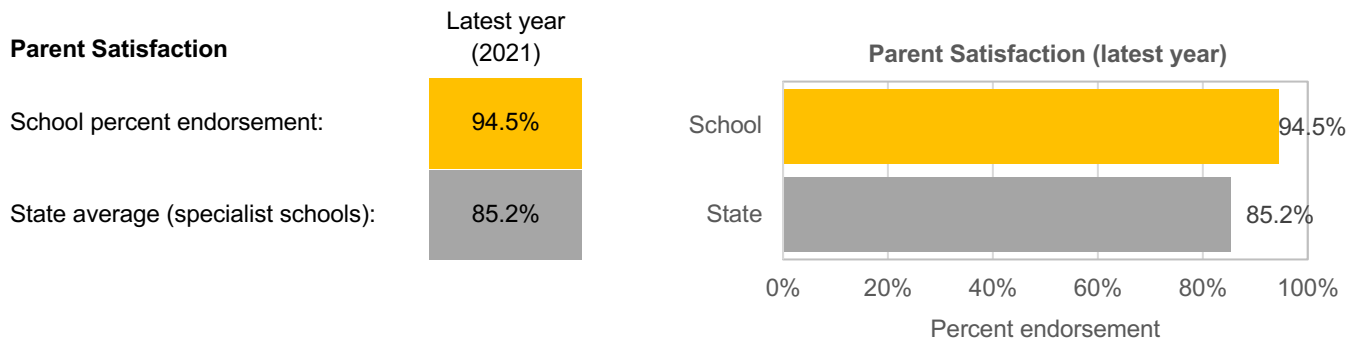
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

This school's SFOE band value is: High

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their school satisfaction level, as reported in the annual Parent Opinion Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

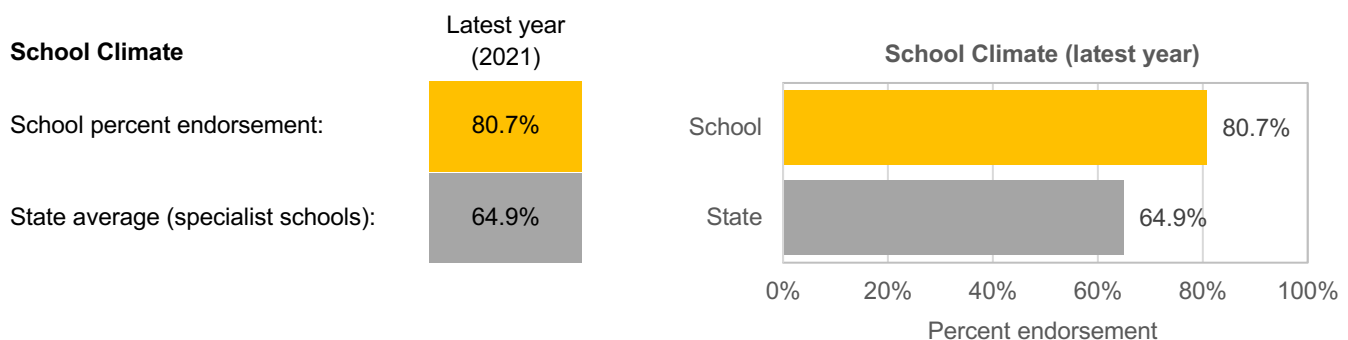


School Staff Survey

The percent endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



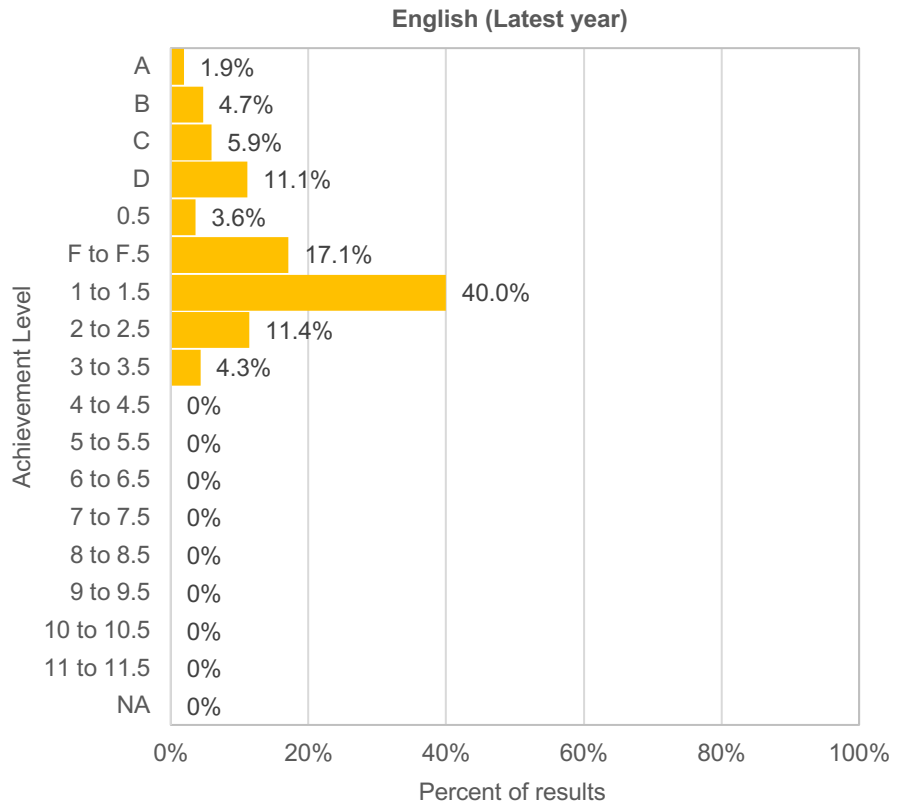
ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

Percent of results at each achievement level in English and Mathematics.

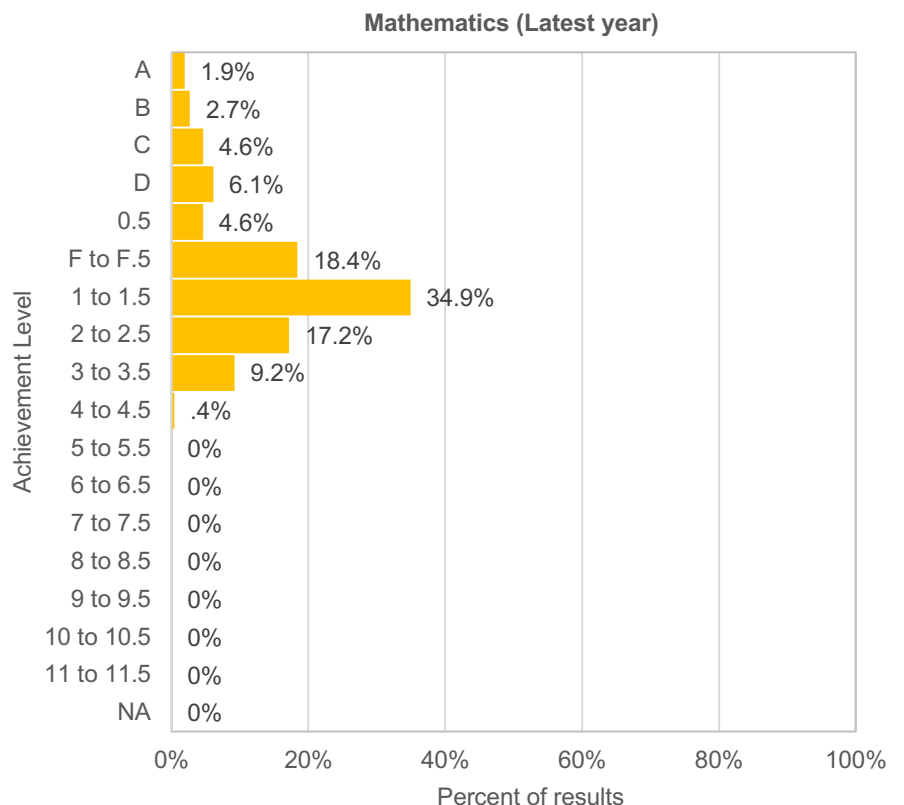
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	1.9%
B	4.7%
C	5.9%
D	11.1%
0.5	3.6%
F to F.5	17.1%
1 to 1.5	40.0%
2 to 2.5	11.4%
3 to 3.5	4.3%
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	1.9%
B	2.7%
C	4.6%
D	6.1%
0.5	4.6%
F to F.5	18.4%
1 to 1.5	34.9%
2 to 2.5	17.2%
3 to 3.5	9.2%
4 to 4.5	0.4%
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



ENGAGEMENT

Average Number of Student Absence Days

Absence from school can impact on students' learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays. Absence data in 2020 and 2021 may have been influenced by COVID-19.

Student Absence	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	32.1	29.6	28.5	29.3	29.9

Students exiting to further studies or full-time employment

Percentage of students going on to further studies or full-time employment.

Note: This measure refers to data from the previous calendar year. Data excludes destinations recorded as 'Unknown'.

Student Exits	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	NDP	100.0%	NDP	NDP	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2021

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$5,745,132
Government Provided DET Grants	\$944,836
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$4,900
Government Grants State	\$19,400
Revenue Other	\$28,055
Locally Raised Funds	\$75,446
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$6,817,769

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$328,551
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$328,551

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$5,475,307
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$32,791
Communication Costs	\$16,444
Consumables	\$194,882
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$19,635
Professional Development	\$23,468
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$121,759
Property Services	\$94,857
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$347,797
Support Services	\$6,790
Trading & Fundraising	\$1,377
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$59,625
Travel & Subsistence	\$109
Utilities	\$32,594
Total Operating Expenditure	\$6,427,435
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$390,333
Asset Acquisitions	\$552

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 25 Feb 2022 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$192,589
Official Account	\$23,308
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$215,897

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$155,562
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$155,562

All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.