

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Waratah Special Developmental School (5144)



- 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 of the previous calendar year 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 17 March 2023 at 10:19 AM by Bronwyn Welch (Principal)

- This 2022 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 17 March 2023 at 11:46 AM by Linda Bollas (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 and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

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 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

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

Learning

- 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 had a significant impact on normal school operations over the past three years. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary, particularly when interpreting trend data.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances, and NAPLAN was not conducted in 2020. Further, absence and attendance data during this period may have been affected by the level of COVID-19 in the community and may be influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Readers should keep this in mind when viewing and interpreting the data presented in the Annual Report.

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

Waratah Special Developmental School (SDS) is located in the suburb of Bellfield, 12 kilometres north of the Melbourne Central Business District. The school provides high quality educational programs for students with an intellectual disability aged 5 -18 years. There are approximately 70 students and many students have an additional diagnosis including autism (approx. 50- 60%); communication disorders; sensory or physical impairments; and/or medical conditions. Students are transported to the school by a contract bus service from the inner northern suburbs and parts of the municipalities of Banyule, Yarra, Moreland, Darebin and the City of Melbourne. The school community encompasses a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds with over 20 different nationalities represented in the school population. The school recognises and values the individuality of our students and provides a range of innovative teaching and learning opportunities for each student.

The curriculum structure embeds the Victorian Curriculum and is differentiated for the individual needs of students. Specialist programs are offered in Art, Physical Education, Food Technology, Drama and ICT in facilities designed for these programs. Our strategic intent is to maximize students' communication skills, raise levels of social competence and maximise independence and self-worth. A functional and integrated approach is taken to student learning with communication a key focus. Alongside speech we use a range of alternative and augmentative communication systems with opportunities for communication incorporated into all aspects of the school day.

Waratah SDS has led the way in the implementation of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support and has mentored other schools. Our school values are to Act Responsibly, Act Safely and Show Respect. The students are actively taught how to do this and acknowledged and rewarded when they demonstrate these behaviours.

The school uses video modelling as a strategy to teach new skills and behaviours. The school promotes healthy life style habits for the whole school community. We focus on learning about making healthy food choices and having regular exercise. Our breakfast program, cooking program, physical education, bike education and swimming programs and "Healthy Living Week" are all key initiatives in this area.

The school works in close partnership with parents, carers and the community to maximise opportunities and improve learning outcomes for our students. Our welfare officer provides support and assistance to families.

The use of a school app to enhance communication with families and the employment of a Somali worker to help engage these families are recent initiatives to enhance this partnership. The highly skilled and dedicated multidisciplinary staff of 40 (33.8 EFT) includes - 2 principal class, 16 (13.4 EFT) teachers and 21 (17.4 EFT) Education Support Staff. The Education Support Staff include 14 (16.7 EFT) teacher assistants, 0.8 speech pathologists, a 1.0 occupational therapist, 0.2 physiotherapist, a full time therapy aid, a 0.4 welfare officer and a 1 full time business manager. The staff work as a cohesive transdisciplinary team to deliver a broad curriculum with therapy programs incorporated into all aspects of the school program.

The school is located in purpose built facilities with all classrooms having interactive whiteboards and access to toilets and kitchens. The school is situated on a large site and the grounds are designed to be external learning areas and provide spaces for students to meet their sensory needs and self-regulate. The grounds include two in-ground trampolines, a cycle court with path, storage shed and teaching space, climbing equipment, two outdoor exercise gyms, swings, sand play areas, a kitchen garden and sensory garden. During 2022, preparations started towards the building of a new Senior Transition centre, with works anticipated to begin towards the end of 2023.

The school has recently entered into a partnership agreement with the Farm Raiser group to create an Urban farm on land at the rear of the school.

A Satellite Unit at Brunswick South West PS provides inclusion programs for primary aged students. As well as benefiting from the special education program provided by Waratah SDS staff, students at the satellite participate in mainstream classes where appropriate and are able to play and socialise with their mainstream **peers**.

VISION Independence for Every Student, Every Day, Everywhere.

MISSION To build the capacity of every student to be independent and to develop social skills and readiness for post school life.

OBJECTIVE To ensure that all students are provided with individualised learning and support to enable them to: - develop their literacy and communication skills to communicate effectively with others. - learn prosocial skills to effectively interact with other others in a variety of situations - learn strategies to regulate their emotions - develop self-care and independent living skills - access the Victorian Curriculum at an appropriate level.

VALUES

RESPECT - Always listening to and respecting others

CARE - Showing empathy and compassion for all

RESPONSIBILITY - Working cooperatively towards shared goals

SAFETY - Creating an environment in which everyone feels safe and able to thrive

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The achievement of ILP goals and the development of meaningful Literacy programs have been the areas of work during 2022. Student progress towards their Individual Learning Goals have been tracked through data sheets, and a new data tracking system - Student Maps - was introduced so that teachers could track progress over multiple years. When students were identified as not meeting the expected progress, additional strategies were discussed in the fortnightly MTSS (Multi Tiered Systems of Support) meetings. These meetings involved looking at strategies and supports that were currently in place, creating hypotheses about why learning was not progressing as expected, and then implementing changes in strategies and programs. Results from the Staff Survey indicated that teachers had increased their understanding in collecting and analysing data by significant amounts.

Literacy has been a high priority focus for 2022. Three different types of literacy programs were implemented across the school, and teachers worked in Professional Learning Communities to develop their practice. A number of students in Early Years and Middle Years were targeted to work in the Little Learners Love Literacy program. This program teaches children an understanding of letters, phonics, and blending sounds. As this is a program written for mainstream students, some adaptations were required to ensure that the program met the needs of our students. Our Literacy Leader created additional assessments for teachers to use to ensure that the learning of our students was being recorded, and that gaps in their learning could be quickly identified and addressed. This data was part of the hand over information that was given to the new (2023) classroom teacher.

A number of our students have participated in the Shared Reading program. This program focuses on the varying parts of a story, understanding who the story is about, and what was happening. A variety of ways of engaging our students in these sessions was used, including the use of props and sensory items. Individual student communication systems (such as Core Words and Fringes) have been used to introduce and explore new vocabulary with these students.

Our Senior Students have moved to a Functional Literacy program. This recognises that literacy occurs in different formats in everyday experiences, and teaches students skills around literacy in a variety of hands-on programs. Work Experience programs (both within the school and external to the school) provide students with a rich opportunity to develop their literacy skills with explicit teaching. Specialist programs (ICT, Homecrafts, Gardening and PE) provide students with opportunities to increase their literacy skills within these very different programs.

Wellbeing

Waratah's wellbeing focus has been around fostering resilient, socially competent and emotionally regulated students.

Staff have used several different strategies in order to teach students about social skills, resilience, and emotional regulation. Zones of Regulation has continued to be taught to all students. Individual student tool boxes have been provided to all students so that they can access activities and strategies to help them manage differing emotional states, such as being frustrated, excited, tired, and calm and ready to learn. The school's Occupational Therapist has worked consistently with all teachers to ensure these toolboxes are updated and relevant to the changing needs of the students.

Video modelling has been developed throughout all sections of the school. Teachers and ES staff have worked in Professional Learning Communities to develop their skills in making video models using relevant software, identifying the skills to target in video modelling, and then using these in the regular classroom programs.

Positive Behaviour Support continues to have a strong focus at the school, with students being explicitly taught expected behaviours in a range of situations.

Our Multi Tiered Systems of Support meetings have included a Wellbeing focus. Students who have been identified as requiring additional support in this area have been able to access services from our Mental Health Practitioner. For other students, additional support around the family has been identified as being a factor that would increase student wellbeing. Regular Care Team Meetings are held for a number of students where school staff work with NDIS therapists and/or support staff to help to support the family and student. During 2022, Waratah SDS employed a Somali cultural worker who worked with some of our Somali families to support them around a variety of issues.

The school continues to employ a Welfare Officer two days per week. She works directly with families around issues relating to NDIS, Centrelink, health concerns, and with a variety of external agencies.

School attendance continues to be a priority for the school and it has been noted that a percentage of students have had ongoing anxieties relating to returning to school following Covid. To support these students, school leadership, Department Psychologists and the Attendance Officer have worked with individual families to devise strategies around getting these students to reengage with school. Other causes for increased absences have included the Covid Isolation procedures and extended holidays.

Engagement

Waratah's area of focus around Engagement has prioritised two areas. Firstly, the school continues to work with students around developing student voice, agency and leadership. In order to do this, teachers completed training and then a reinforcement inventory to help to identify motivators and interests. This provided valuable information around student interests that continue to change as students grow and develop.

The School Staff Survey found that all staff agreed that there was a priority in promoting student ownership of learning goals.

A whole school focus continues around developing student communication skills. All students at the school have an individualised communication system, which are often provided by the school, or sometimes in conjunction with NDIS therapists. Many students continue to develop their skills using a low tech communication book (or PODD book) which has a variety of individualised pictures that reflect student interests. Some students use a voice output device on an iPad. Staff have been trained in these individual systems and use them consistently through the day, both in classrooms and in non classroom settings.

The second area of focus around engagement centred on building partnerships with external providers, particularly for our Senior Students. Work Experience programs were run with Farm Raiser, where our students helped to pack veggie boxes and deliver them to the local community each week as part of their Vocational program. Discussions were held with the For Change Cafe around providing work experience programs in 2023 at the Bellfield Community Hub.

Other highlights from the school year

The school was fortunate to receive a number of funding grants during 2022, and much of the planning around these grants occurred during the year, with some of the work being completed during 2022 and other projects scheduled for 2023.

The Early Years playground had a major grant where activity boards were placed around a courtyard, providing students with opportunities for interact with and explore the equipment. A large shade sail was also erected over the sandpit.

Two additional shade sails were erected, one near the bike track, providing much needed shade when students are getting bikes in and out of the shed, and pumping up tyres. A second shade sail was erected over the Kitchen Garden, allowing additional shade for students who are working in the gardening program.

Three additional hoists (for students who have limited mobility) were approved for installation in classrooms and the PMP Room. This will allow our students with more opportunities to get out of their wheelchairs and move about on the floor.

The State Government provided the school with a \$6.8 million grant to replace the Senior Portable building with a new permanent structure. Planning for this commenced in mid 2022, and the building work will start at the end of 2023.

Financial performance

At the end of 2022, the school had a surplus of \$84630. The school received \$33185 in equity funding which was used to employ staff to support students communication and the development of prosocial skills. Three Active Schools grants, totalling \$47958 were received and these funds were put towards an upgrade to the PMP room (a hoist and equipment) and a variety of PE equipment. The school was also successful in obtaining a Greener Government Schools Building Grant which meant that solar panels could be installed on the rooves of several buildings. The cost of this will be paid back in instalments over the next 5 years and will be offset by a reduction in the school's electricity costs.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.waratahsds.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 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

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 72 students were enrolled at this school in 2022, 20 female and 52 male.

37 percent of students had English as an additional language and 11 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).

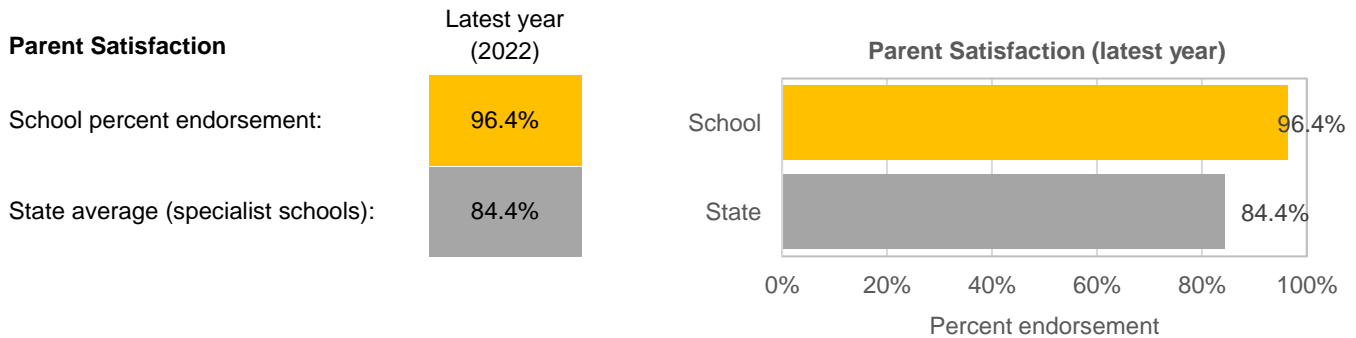
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

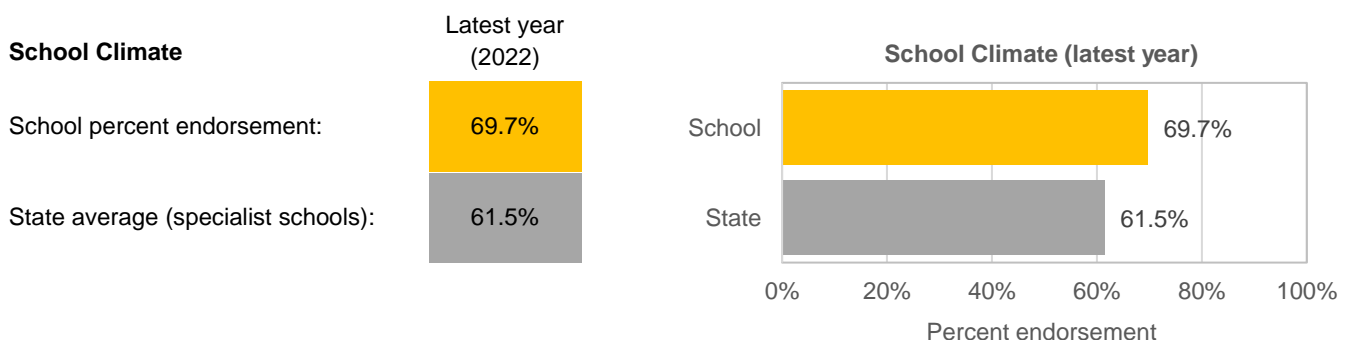


School Staff Survey

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.



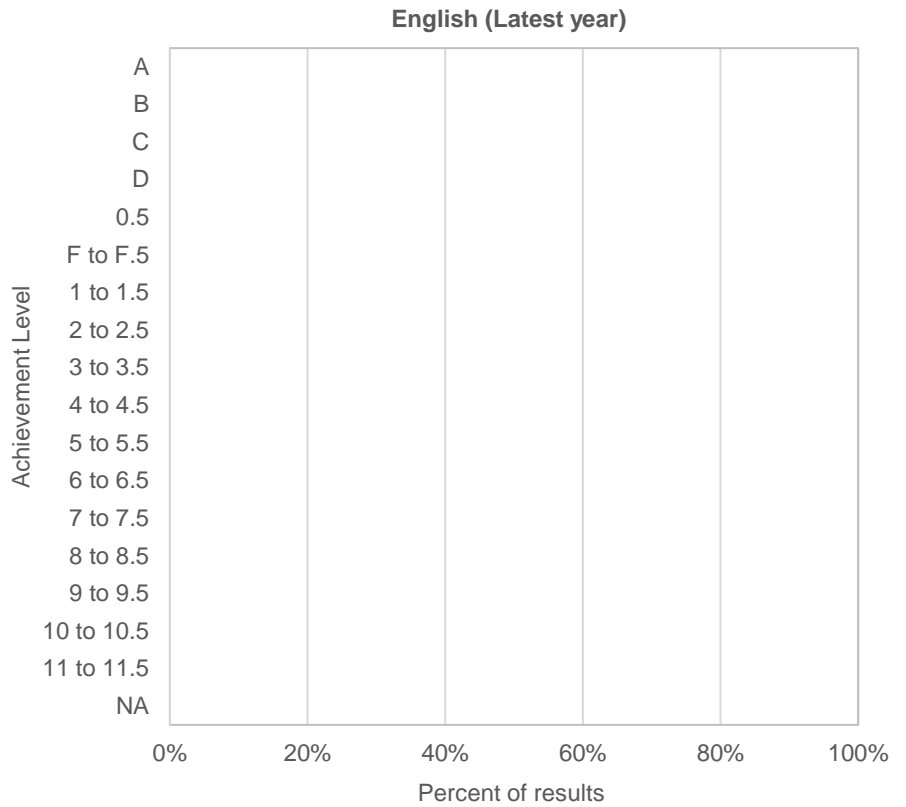
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

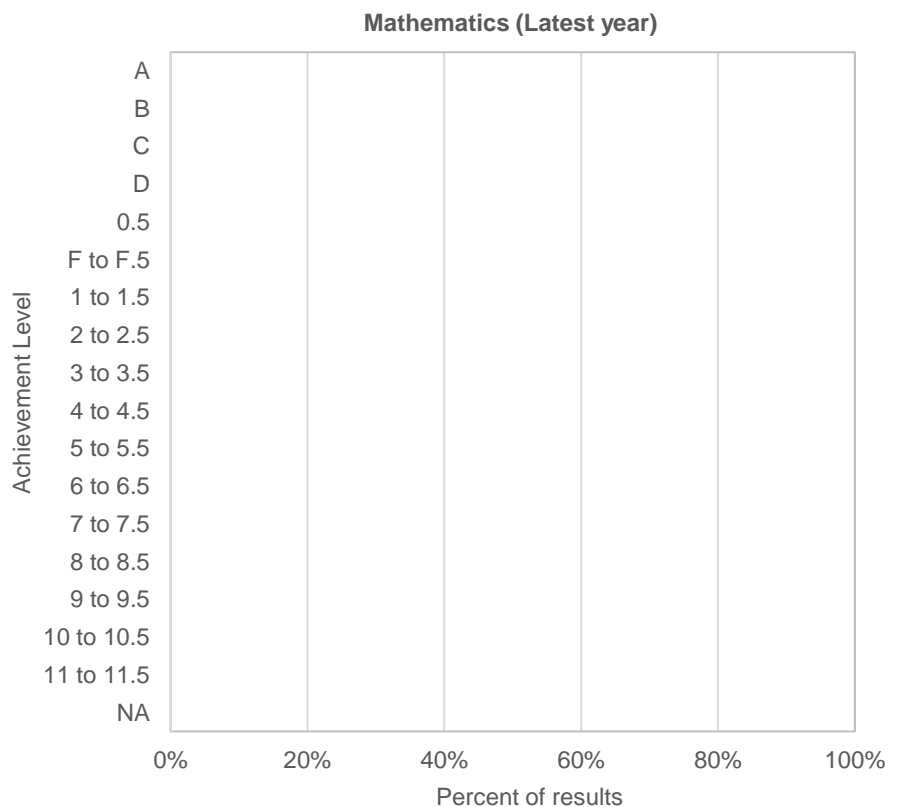
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2022)
A	NDA
B	NDA
C	NDA
D	NDA
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
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 (2022)
A	NDA
B	NDA
C	NDA
D	NDA
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
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



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.

Student Absence	2019	2020	2021	2022	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	30.1	31.6	39.0	48.8	37.4

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	NDP	NDP	NDP	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2022

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$3,763,906
Government Provided DET Grants	\$507,826
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$161,037
Government Grants State	\$34,958
Revenue Other	\$51,147
Locally Raised Funds	\$21,165
Capital Grants	\$17,251
Total Operating Revenue	\$4,557,290

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$67,221
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$67,221

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$3,679,276
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$1,783
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$4,207
Communication Costs	\$8,269
Consumables	\$27,132
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$6,591
Professional Development	\$8,691
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$50,142
Property Services	\$64,295
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$231,869
Support Services	\$49,621
Trading & Fundraising	\$548
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$4,902
Travel & Subsistence	\$106
Utilities	\$29,267
Total Operating Expenditure	\$4,166,702
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$373,337
Asset Acquisitions	\$62,262

- (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 24 Feb 2023 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 2022

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$633,968
Official Account	\$42,031
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$676,000

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$74,793
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$211,207
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$120,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$210,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$60,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$676,000

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.