

2023 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 \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 25 March 2024 at 11:58 AM by Bronwyn Welch (Principal)

- This 2023 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 15 April 2024 at 06:42 PM 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).

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

NDP and NDA

'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').

Updates to the *'Performance Summary'* in the 2023 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2023 Annual Report to align with changes to departmental and public reporting products.

Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey, School Staff Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey

The calculation of the percentage endorsement for all survey measures has been revised to no longer include skipped responses. This applies to all survey measures reported in the Performance Summary. The change to the calculation reduces the negative impact of skipped responses on school results, particularly where there were a small number of respondents to the survey.

Additionally, the Parent Satisfaction measure has been revised to use the percentage endorsement of the 'General School Satisfaction' factor of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey only. Previously, this measure reflected an average of multiple factors in the survey. The change to reporting a single factor is consistent with how Parent Satisfaction is reported to schools and in other public reports.

About Our School

School context

Waratah Special Developmental School (SDS) is located in the suburb of Bellfield, 12 kilometers north of the Melbourne Central Business District. The school provides high quality educational programs for students with an intellectual disability aged 5 to 18 years. Many of the students have an additional diagnosis, including autism (approximately 60%), communication disorders, sensory or physical impairments and/or medical conditions. Students are transported to the school by a contract bus service from the municipalities of Banyule, Yarra, Merri-bek, Darebin and the City of Melbourne.

In 2023, the school had 71.4 equivalent full time enrolments. Waratah's SFOE was 0.5601. The Waratah community is diverse, and over one third of families are identified as having English as an Additional Language. Interpreters are often used by staff to assist with Student Support Group meetings and general day to day clarification of information.

Waratah SDS is divided into 3 subschools - Early Years (for students aged between 5-9 years), Middle Years (for students aged 9-14 years), and Senior Transition. The school has one class located at Brunswick South West Primary School.

The school has led the way in the implementation of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support. Our school values of Act Responsibly, Act Safely and Show Respect are actively taught and reinforced in classrooms and external settings throughout the day.

Staff at the school work in close partnership with parents, carers and the community to maximise opportunities and improve learning outcomes for students. Our Welfare Officer provides support and assistance to families as requested.

Waratah SDS has 14.8 full time equivalent teachers, 16.3 equivalent full time Education Support staff, a business manager, 2 principal class and a Welfare Team consisting of a full time Occupational Therapist and Speech Therapist, and part time physiotherapist, Navigator and Welfare Officer.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2023, 75% of students at Waratah SDS achieved their Communication ILP goal, and 77% of students achieved their Independence ILP goal that related to schedules, and 70% of students achieved their Independence ILP goal that related to daily living skills. Excitingly, 89% of students achieved their Social ILP goal. Targeted teaching of skills, and the collection of information about student progress has been important in monitoring how students are progressing with their learning, and what skills and knowledge need to be taught next. Throughout the year, and at the end of the year, families and carers receive photos and videos of their child progressing through their learning.

The school continued with a focus of developing the Literacy capabilities of students across the school. A number of students worked through the Little Learners Love Literacy program developing their understanding of the sounds of letters and how these blend together, as well as learning to recognise the high frequency Heart Words. Other students participated in the Shared Reading program where they learn about the layout of books, that text and pictures hold meaning, and that books can be a source of information and recreation. Our senior students continue to work on their Functional Literacy skills and experience and learn about text in community settings that will be useful for their life beyond school.

Highlights in 2023 relating to Learning include the expansion of the hands on learning component of the Senior student's Vocational programs. In partnership with Farm Raiser, a not for profit organisation who works on DET land at the rear of the school, a number of students were involved in propagating, harvesting, packaging, selling and delivering vegetables to the local community. With the opening of the Bellfield Community Hub came opportunities for several of our students to participate in work experience programs at the For Change cafe. Other students were involved in school based work experience programs involving the Laundry program, collating and delivering items for the Office, and stocking the school with essential supplies.

Wellbeing

Understanding of how to manage your own behaviour, in both the class and non classroom settings has continued to be a focus for all students. Zones of Regulation has been embedded into all classroom programs, whereby staff assist students in identifying the emotions that they may be feeling at any given point in time, and then assist the students in regulating themselves.

Waratah SDS has a proportionate number of students requiring Tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions. Our PBS Learning Specialist has worked closely with staff across the school to understand behaviour with specific cohorts of students, and has developed plans with

classroom staff on how to identify the triggers for behaviours, the best way to intervene when triggers occur, and how to teach replacement behaviours. This information has been shared with families and Care Teams when required.

MTSS (Multi Tiered Systems of Support) meetings were held fortnightly throughout the year. MTSS Tier 2 meetings were run by classroom and therapy staff to identify students who required some additional supports, and then develop an understanding of how to implement these supports. MTSS Tier 3 meetings were attended by Leading Teachers, Principal class and the Therapy and Welfare team to establish which students required the most intensive supports, what these supports would be, and then the best way to implement the supports.

The school has a strong connection to NDIS providers and attends Care Team meetings on a regular basis. By all parties working together, we have the greatest chance of having successful outcomes for our students.

A small number of students were identified as being eligible to have input from the Department's Board Certified Behaviour Analyst. Following observations and discussions with staff and families, programs were implemented to teach specific students new behaviours that would provide them with increased opportunities in the future.

Engagement

100% students had positive endorsement in the Attitude to Schools survey. A small number of students contributed to their Independent Learning Plan by assisting in constructing goals about what they wanted to learn next.

Working in partnerships extended to families through the use of Video Models. Teachers continued to develop their knowledge on how to create video models using ipads, and identify which specific skill needed to be targeted to progress student learning. Families were encouraged to use these video models with their child at home as teachers learnt to upload the video models onto Seesaw.

In 2023, the Student Representative Council (SRC) flourished and students from both the Middle Years and Senior sections of the school met regularly to discuss opportunities and things that they would like to improve. The SRC members gave input into what they would like to see in the new building that was being designed. They also helped to plan and run several whole school events, such as an event to raise awareness about Epilepsy, and Wear it Purple Day, with the theme 'It's OK to be different' (promoting a better understanding of gender diversity).

Weekly assemblies (held in a hybrid mode of in person and online) allowed students from all over the school be recognised for their achievements, particularly in the area of the School Values (Acting Safely, Acting Responsibly and Showing Respect). Certificates were awarded at every assembly to students who had demonstrated these school values. A highlight of assembly was the sharing of class videos, where each class showcased their work to their peers and families through a 3-5 minute video.

School attendance has been an issue during 2023 with several senior students becoming school refusers. Staff worked closely with these student's families and extended supports to try and re-engage these students back at school. We had some success in getting these students back to school for specific programs that they were of high interest.

Other highlights from the school year

Two camps were held at Blackwood Outdoor Education Centre, each of 2 nights duration. The Blackwood environment provides a unique experience for students who live in inner city Melbourne. Several students participated in day visits or shorter camps, depending upon their individual needs.

Waratah was honored to have two staff members winning the annual PASS (Principals Association of Specialist Schools) Awards for the third year in a row. Meg Ogle-Mannering won the Middle Leaders Award for her work in developing an online system that tracks student achievement over time. Samsam Hersi won the Allied Health Award for her work with families.

During 2023, plans for the new building work - a new Hall, Canteen and two classrooms - were developed and finalised.

Financial performance

The school ended the year with a surplus of \$180 000, which was due to a gradual increase in enrolments during the year.

Like many schools, Waratah employed many more casual staff in 2023 than in previous years. An increase in staff illness and isolation requirements from Covid-19 has contributed to the increase in need for casual staff.

Waratah received equity funding which was put towards creating additional communication resources for individual students. A small number of students have a voice output communication device funded through NDIS, however many students do not have

such a device and have a communication disorder. Equity funding has allowed the school to create PODD or Communication Books for individual students so that all students have a way to communicate.

The school also received funding through Active Schools, and this allowed the school to build an inclusive path at the back of the school so that all students (especially those who have impaired mobility) can access the Farm at the back of the school, and that some students can extend their bike riding skills as they learn to navigate intersections and look for others using the path.

At the end of 2023, the school was successful in being accepted into the first intake in the Navigator program, creating closer links between the school and NDIS services.

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 69 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 21 female and 48 male.

41 percent of students had English as an additional language and 7 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).

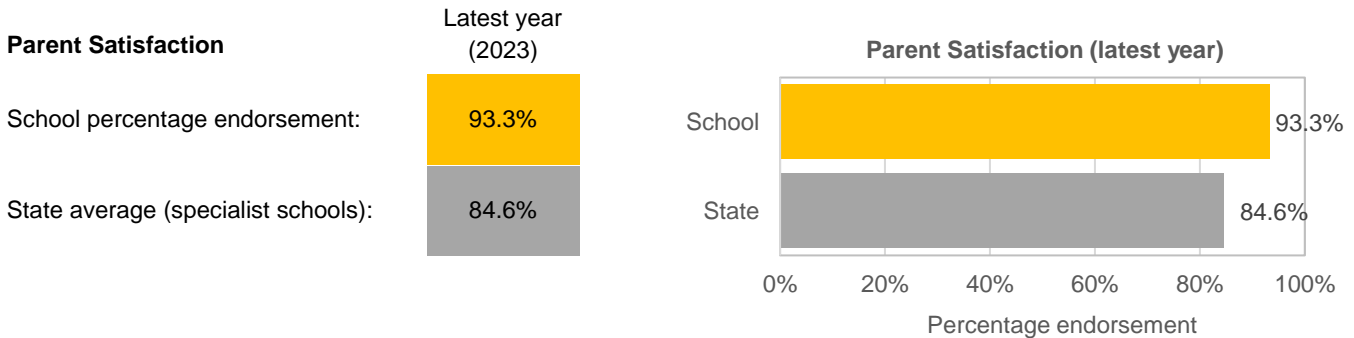
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

This school's SFOE band value is: High

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percentage endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey.

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

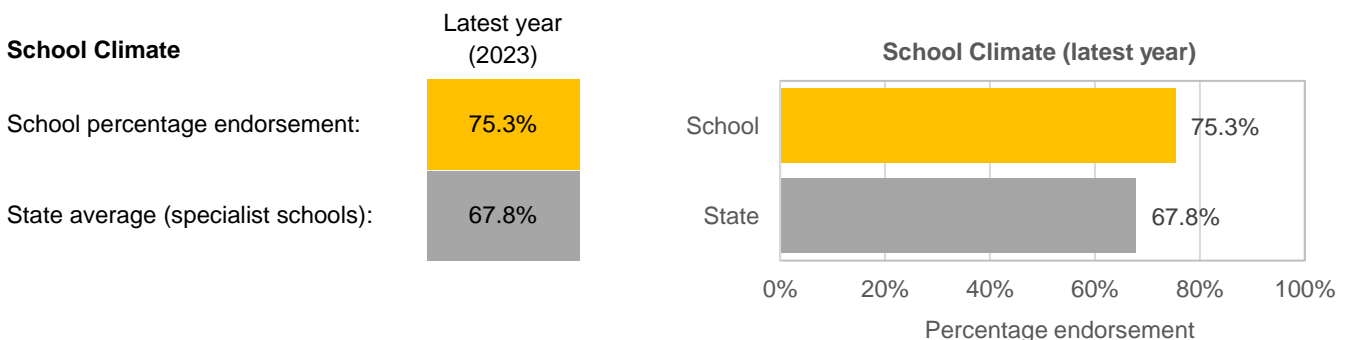


School Staff Survey

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

Percentage 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.



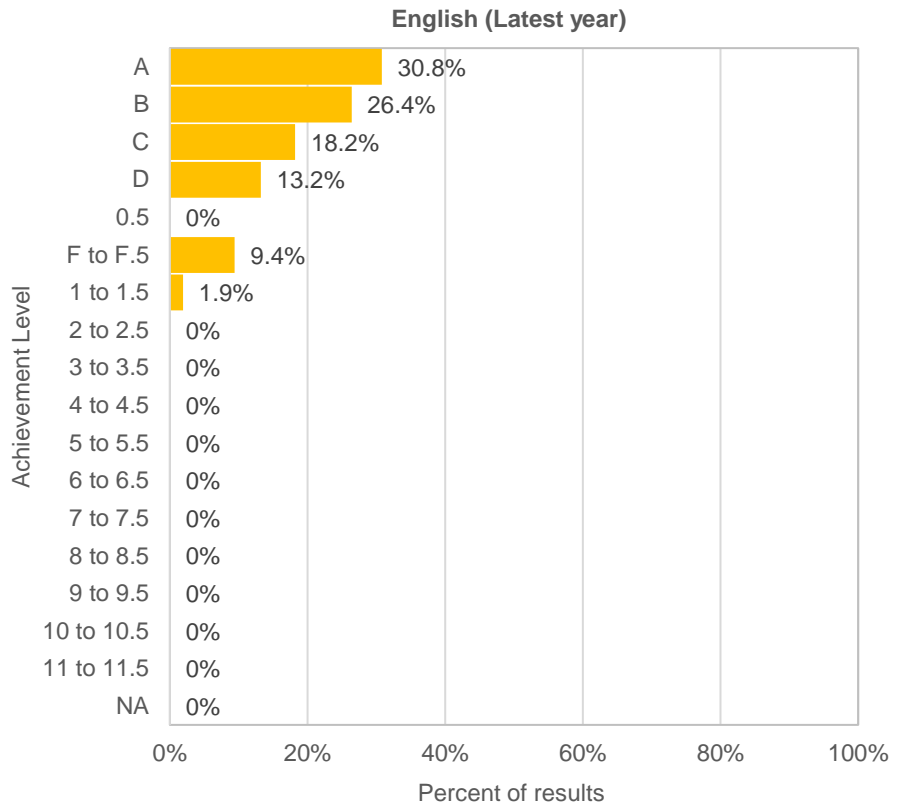
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

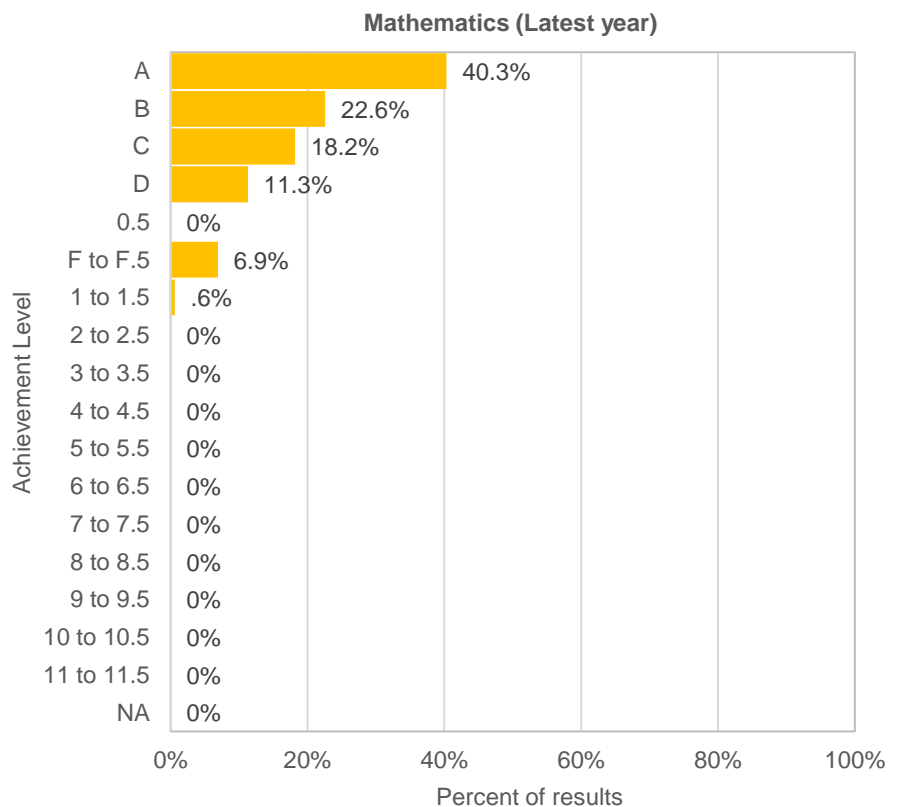
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	30.8%
B	26.4%
C	18.2%
D	13.2%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	9.4%
1 to 1.5	1.9%
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 (2023)
A	40.3%
B	22.6%
C	18.2%
D	11.3%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	6.9%
1 to 1.5	0.6%
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	2020	2021	2022	2023	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	31.6	39.0	48.8	47.8	42.0

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	2019	2020	2021	2022	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, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$3,621,302
Government Provided DET Grants	\$735,689
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$11,879
Government Grants State	\$6,818
Revenue Other	\$56,086
Locally Raised Funds	\$20,642
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$4,452,415

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$87,092
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$87,092

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$3,428,722
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$910
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$7,812
Communication Costs	\$2,401
Consumables	\$30,954
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$10,180
Professional Development	\$12,070
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$43,936
Property Services	\$65,156
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$322,150
Support Services	\$179,108
Trading & Fundraising	\$1,204
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$5,057
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$15,704
Total Operating Expenditure	\$4,125,364
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$327,051
Asset Acquisitions	\$55,825

- (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 16 Feb 2024 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 2023

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$722,693
Official Account	\$27,304
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$749,996

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$109,792
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$200,000
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$100,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$240,204
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$100,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$749,996

All funds received from the Department of Education, 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.