

2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Ballarat Specialist School (4762)



- 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 01 May 2024 at 12:29 PM by Sam Sheppard (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 01 May 2024 at 12:35 PM by Kerrie Franc (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

Ballarat Specialist School is situated in Lake Gardens, a suburb of Ballarat, with a total student enrollment of 428 students and about 25 children attending our kindergarten. Our staff consists of 73 teachers (several part-time), 19 casual relief teachers (CRTs), and close to 150 educational support staff, including nurses, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, physiotherapists, exercise physiologists, social workers, and allied health assistants. We also have nine administrative staff, four maintenance staff, and six principal class staff.

Ballarat Specialist School's vision is to be a community of inclusive, innovative, and inspired learners. Three core values support this vision:

- **Respect:** Appreciating diversity and being considerate of how people think and live.
- **Responsibility:** Empowering students to take ownership of their learning and actions.
- **Safety:** Learning the skills to access the curriculum and community safely.

In 2023, our Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE) index was 0.5581. Our educational programs provide a balanced and personalised curriculum where student achievement is acknowledged and celebrated. Ballarat Specialist School is a dual-campus K-12 school organised by five stages of learning: kindergarten, early years, primary school, middle school, and senior school.

Our K-9 students are accommodated at our main Gillies Street Campus. The Early Learning Centre (ELC) caters to both 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten. Educators in this area of the school and the Early Years work according to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). The primary and middle years areas utilise the Victorian Curriculum, which incorporates the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) suite. All Prep to Year 9 students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Our Senior School students (Years 10-12) are based at our Senior Campus on Norman Street. Senior students engage in the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) learning opportunities. Learning in the Senior School focuses on student pathways and preparation for independent living post-school. In 2023, we had four students who received their VPC and 28 who completed a Certificate II in their chosen VET area.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Ballarat Specialist School continues to take pride in our achievements in student learning outcomes. In 2023, we focused on our strategic plan goal of improving achievement levels and learning growth across the curriculum, particularly for students accessing the curriculum between levels A to C. Throughout the year, the A to C learning specialist collaborated with staff from the High Support Mini School and early Primary School to develop a consistent, best-practice, whole-school approach to teaching the A to C curriculum. This effort has enhanced staff knowledge and skills, enabling them to strengthen their teaching practices and develop a consistent instruction and differentiation program for all students.

We also strategically amalgamated the Allied Health Team with the Wellbeing and Curriculum Team, forming the Integrated Services Team (IST). The IST aims to streamline the support teachers need to help students access the curriculum. This initiative will continue into 2024 and be reviewed for the 2025 year.

Additionally, we continued to support other schools in our network through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) initiative. In 2023, as a link school, we supported other schools using the PLC inquiry model. This primarily involved aiding schools with the Disability Inclusion Profile and assisting in adjusting curriculum levels. Our Inclusive Outreach Coach worked with 12 schools across our network to support this effort. We also employed an additional Assistant Principal to further our PLC work and develop the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS), a framework designed to provide a holistic approach to the individual support each child requires to access the curriculum.

We are proud of these advancements and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve student outcomes in 2024 and beyond.

Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing support continued to be prioritised for staff, students, and their families at Ballarat Specialist School during 2023. Mental health support was a significant focus, with the school actively engaging in positive mental health activities within mini-

schools and, for the first time since 2020, in whole-school professional learning. We concentrated on psychological safety and utilised the expertise of Michelle Bihary. Additionally, we provided extra support to families through meal deliveries and other individual assistance. We collaborated with various care teams and supported families and carers with service providers, NDIS supports, and both government and private organisations.

In 2023, BSS embedded the use of Compass and Seesaw to monitor student progress and facilitate home-school communication. This allowed for notifications to parents, booking parent meetings, and electronic access to IEPs and reports. Seesaw continued to be used as a general classroom communication tool.

We employed a learning specialist focused on wellbeing and engagement, whose crucial work involved re-embedding the Murrang initiative and developing Tier 2 and Tier 3 programs across the school. This learning specialist also oversees positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS), respectful relationships, and attendance.

We now have the most accurate behavioural data we have ever had. Staff are completing primary behaviour forms, and we have established a process through the Integrated Service Team (IST) to allocate support based on this data. Our Student Management Tool, Compass, has assisted staff in completing these forms and tracking data on a school-wide level. While our current information serves as baseline data, we look forward to developing trend data on the effectiveness of our SWPBIS interventions.

The Respectful Relationships program, launched at BSS in 2020, saw significant progress. We completed the requirements to become a Respectful Relationships school and have been designated a lead school. After completing the curriculum training, staff began implementing the program in 2023.

Engagement

In 2023, Ballarat Specialist School promoted the importance of school attendance using a whole-school approach. Classroom teachers regularly monitored attendance data for early identification of at-risk students. Both the classroom teacher and the Leading Teacher were responsible for following up with parents when an explanation for an absence was not provided. The assistant principal oversaw the strategies and implementation for school attendance in each mini-school.

Ballarat Specialist School recorded higher absences in 2023 compared to previous years. This data is difficult to interpret given the circumstances around the pandemic, lockdowns, and some students' difficulty re-engaging with school. To support student engagement, the school focused on student transitions in 2023, facilitating smooth transitions from kinder to prep, primary to secondary, and secondary to pathways or employment. The Ballarat Specialist School transition program effectively supported students into their next journey.

The Pathways program continued to provide students with valuable knowledge, skills, and opportunities to plan for future careers. In 2023, we also emphasised camps, excursions, and incursions to promote student engagement further. For the second consecutive year, we organised camps for primary, middle, and senior school students at various times throughout the year. These strategies positively impacted our students, as evidenced by our Attitudes to School Survey, which indicated an increased sense of connectedness and improved management of bullying.

Other highlights from the school year

The school navigated our Capital Works project while maintaining a strong focus on student outcomes. Our staff and students are to be commended for their adaptability and flexibility. Overall, the initial demolition and building works had minimal impact on the school, which is a credit to everyone within the school community.

Based on parent feedback, we changed the transition process from the K-9 campuses to the Senior Campus. This included how students selected their VET courses, with parents, carers, and the school working closely together in this decision-making process.

Financial performance

The Annual Implementation Plan continued to provide the framework for the school council's allocation of funds to support school programs and priorities. Ballarat Specialist School's 2023 Financial Performance and Position report shows an end-of-year surplus. The school continued to face extensive costs during the global pandemic, including unanticipated additional casual relief staff costs throughout the year.

The introduction of a new funding model (DIP) in 2023 will make future student resource packages more challenging to plan and account for. We only received funding outcomes for 68 of the 94 students we uploaded to the portal. Despite this, the initial funding outcomes have been positive, and we have invested this additional funding into staffing our Integrated Services Team (IST).

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.ballaratss.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 439 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 141 female and 298 male.

2 percent of students had English as an additional language and 9 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).

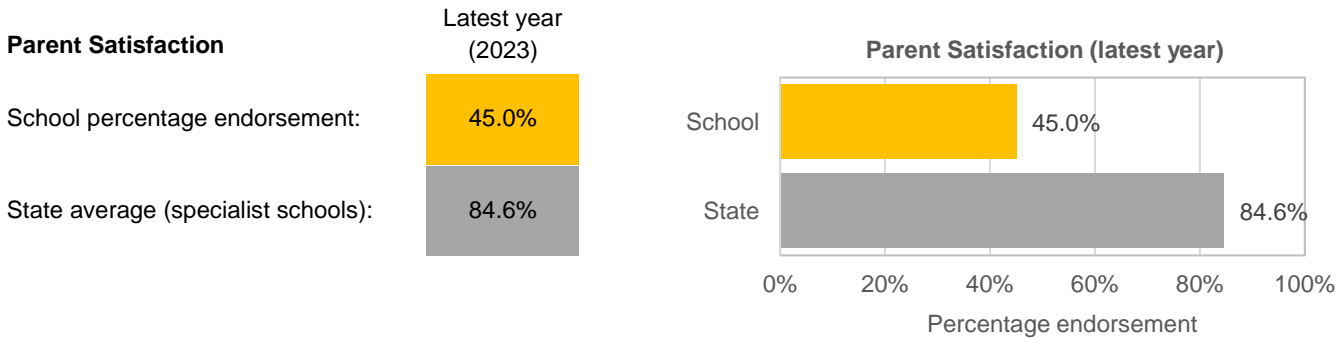
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

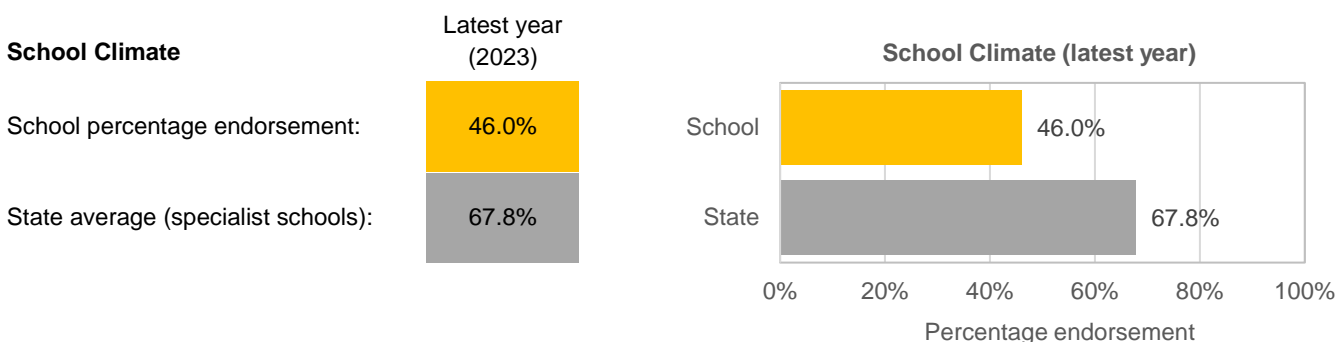


School Staff Survey

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.



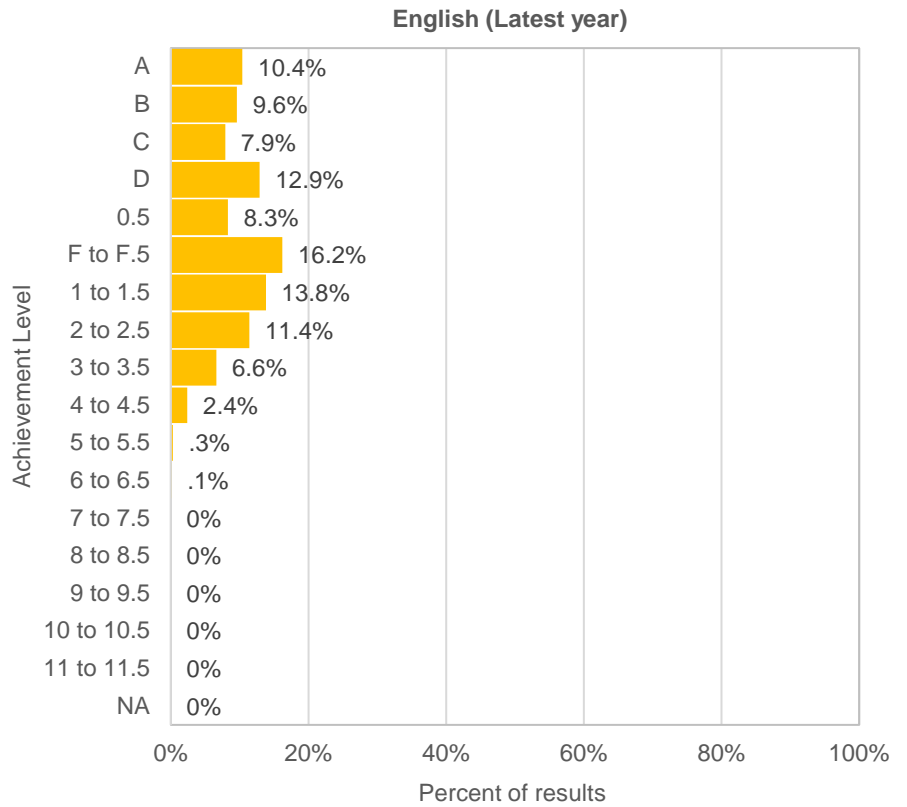
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

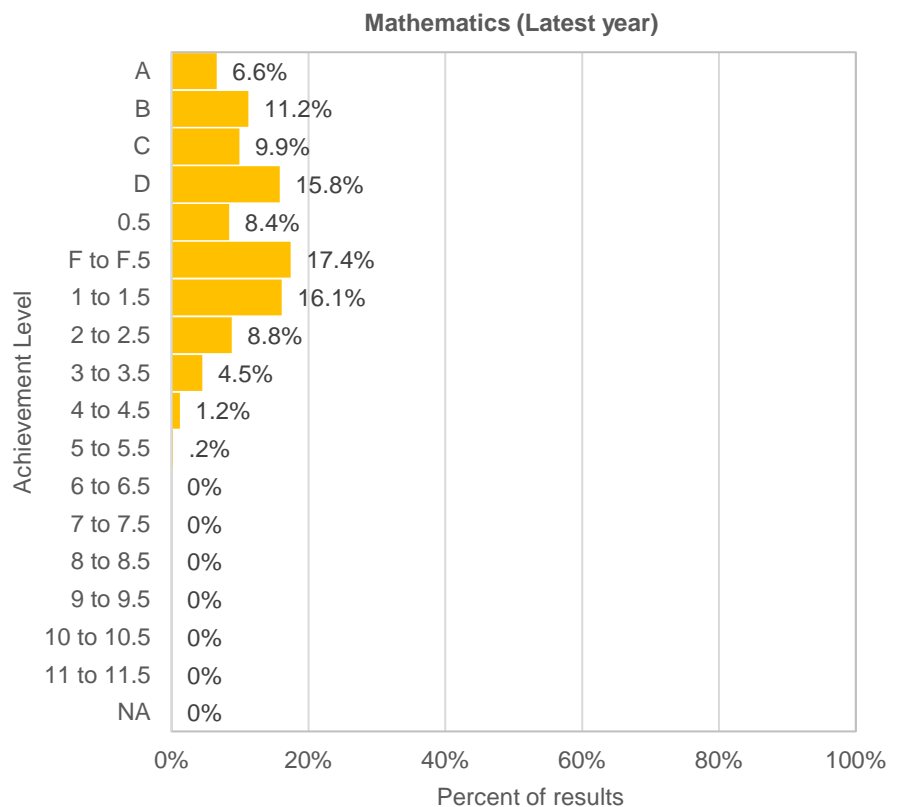
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	10.4%
B	9.6%
C	7.9%
D	12.9%
0.5	8.3%
F to F.5	16.2%
1 to 1.5	13.8%
2 to 2.5	11.4%
3 to 3.5	6.6%
4 to 4.5	2.4%
5 to 5.5	0.3%
6 to 6.5	0.1%
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	6.6%
B	11.2%
C	9.9%
D	15.8%
0.5	8.4%
F to F.5	17.4%
1 to 1.5	16.1%
2 to 2.5	8.8%
3 to 3.5	4.5%
4 to 4.5	1.2%
5 to 5.5	0.2%
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:	34.8	32.4	44.9	39.9	38.0

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:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$19,180,312
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,783,327
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$12,860
Government Grants State	\$205,894
Revenue Other	\$107,137
Locally Raised Funds	\$211,768
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$22,501,298

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$489,631
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$489,631

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$17,779,402
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$5,380
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$117,320
Communication Costs	\$10,825
Consumables	\$350,960
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$165,183
Professional Development	\$110,404
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$247,923
Property Services	\$553,024
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$1,214,025
Support Services	\$1,321,141
Trading & Fundraising	\$249,053
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$21,558
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$165,063
Total Operating Expenditure	\$22,311,261
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$190,037
Asset Acquisitions	\$153,627

- (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	\$894,383
Official Account	\$210,680
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$1,105,062

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$715,783
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$336
Provision Accounts	\$10,483
Funds Received in Advance	\$40,000
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$1,800
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$291,661
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$45,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$1,105,062

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.