

2024 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Mildura Specialist School (5251)



- 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 17 March 2025 at 10:56 PM by Penny Hale (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2024 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 2025 at 10:56 PM by Penny Hale (Principal)

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').

About Our School

School context

Mildura Specialist School provides educational programmes for primary and secondary school-age students, with a mild to severe intellectual disability.

Students attend daily from 9.00am-3.00pm. Mildura Specialist School is located in the Sunraysia area in close proximity to the New South Wales and South Australian borders. As the only facility of its type in this large and remote geographical area it is a major resource for students with an intellectual disability. In the north it caters for a number of students from NSW. The nearest Victorian facility of a similar type is at Swan Hill two hundred and thirty-five kilometres to the South East.

A total of 171 students were enrolled in 2024; 46 female and 124 male. There was considerable movement in student numbers during the year with 9 students leaving for various reasons including relocating interstate and internationally.

Students are taught in small groups, having access to teaching staff, many with special education qualifications supported by teacher assistants. In developing Individual Education Plans consideration is given to each student's needs strengths and interests. Classes are staffed with a teacher and one or more education support staff depending on the needs of the students. Staffing comprised 68.2 staff (EFT) including 21.3 teachers and 40.6 teaching support staff.

The curriculum is based on the Victorian curriculum. Mildura Specialist School engages students to develop their communication and independent living skills. Our vision is to provide a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment, with a focus on developing individual responsibility and student social and academic growth. All staff explicitly teach the values of being safe, respectful and responsible through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework and restorative practices. Every day starts with Connections / Circle Time where staff and students connect, revise the day's schedule and complete administrative tasks.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2024, Mildura Specialist School supported all students to extend their learning in English and Numeracy. In term one, teachers and education support staff established classroom routines and created Working With Me documents with each student. Teachers met with parents and carers to set goals in Student Support Group Meetings.

The numeracy learning specialist devised school wide assessments and supported teachers to complete them at the beginning and end of the school year. Teachers completed Abilities Based Learning and Education (ABLES) mid and end of year to inform report writing and classroom planning.

In term two, teachers met in professional learning communities to practice a teaching strategy to increase engagement during maths lessons. Strategies trialled included guided student practice, checking for understanding, providing models and scaffolding the learning. Teachers shared their positive results and used the strategies in other lessons. The leadership team conducted class visits to review the application of strategies in action.

Teachers planned in teams and developed units of work with reference to Aboriginal Perspectives. Extra time was provided to teachers for curriculum planning with a restructuring of the specialist timetable. This work was complemented by professional learning about Aboriginal Perspectives, organised by our leading teacher with a teaching fellowship from the Teacher Excellence Program.

The curriculum team revised our Teaching and Learning Book to reflect our current practices. Work program documentation was simplified with routines separated into a stand-alone document. Teachers moderated in teams to inform assessments for teacher judgement and report writing. In term four, students celebrated their achievements with parents and carers during Student Led Conferences.

Our school hosted visits from a local primary and secondary school where staff visited rooms and toured the facilities.

The principal completed Leading School Improvement course and teachers engaged in learning about the new phonics curriculum.

Wellbeing

Staff continued to explicitly teach to the schoolwide values of being safe, respectful and responsible. During Circle Time / Connections every class reviewed the daily visual schedule and discussed changes and expectations for the day. Students were acknowledged for displaying positive behaviours with Principal and Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support Awards presented at weekly assemblies. Class acknowledgement systems provided regular opportunities to recognise student success. Secondary students and staff met each week to nominate students for their positive behaviour in the class and the yard. The school nominated for a Silver, School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Award at the end of 2024. Members of the leadership team continued with the SWPBS training with completion of Universal Prevention B and Classroom Systems training.

A Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS) teacher commenced at the beginning of 2024. The MHiPS teacher developed an At Risk template to collect data about students requiring additional support. The Principal and MHiPS teacher completed two days of training and modules. As the year progressed, it was identified that additional staff were needed to support staff to meet the needs of students. Additional education support staff were employed throughout the year, including a student mentor.

The student wellbeing coordinator presented schoolwide incident data to staff. Teachers and education support staff discussed and reviewed plans for students in need of extra support. Several staff completed an anti racism course. The Principal and leading teacher completed an

Innovating for Student Engagement course which involved the completed of a project and two visits to other schools.

Focus groups were established throughout the year to cater for different student needs. Groups included an indigenous group and a Girls Group. Student Representative Meetings were held to provide opportunities for students to plan engaging, fun activities.

Engagement

Although average number of absence days increased from 29.1 in 2024 from 27.3 in 2023, attendance improved for more students in 2024. 32% students attended 95-100%; 20% students attended 90-95%; 19% students attended 80-90%; 10% students attended 70-80% and 19% attended less than 70%. This was an improvement from 2023 where 21% attended below 70% and 11% attended below 70-80%. The Student Wellbeing Coordinator met regularly with our Koorie Education Support Officer to monitor attendance rates and support attendance. Most of the absences in 2024 were for medical illness followed by parent choice, school approved.

Eleven students graduated at the end of 2024 with seven moving into TAFE studies. Students visited local businesses and TAFE to learn about industry and post school options.

All staff were involved in the development of a Student Engagement Plan and a Staff Values and Behaviours document. Staff talked about and agreed to support each other and to elevate student behaviour restoratively. Restorative conversations were held with students to resolve problems and to maintain an orderly environment. Senior classes developed a code of conduct which was revisited as needed. Teachers awarded Principal and School Wide Positive Behaviour Support certificates to students at weekly assemblies. All classes developed Acknowledgement Systems relevant to their class cohort.

Two students participated in an external Horticulture Program, facilitated by the school, which received very positive feedback. The program aimed to provide students with hands-on experience and insights into the Horticulture Industry and related sectors. They engaged in activities that fostered connections with the local industry, developed awareness of local jobs, STEM applications, and emerging technologies, and attended industry immersion experiences, including worksite visits. The program included daily farm horticultural/farm work, industry excursions, and on-site demonstrations, focusing on educational outcomes, work readiness, and information on study pathways.

Other highlights from the school year

In term one, several Indigenous students participated in an Indigenous Camp. Students were immersed in aboriginal culture and mixed with other indigenous students from other schools. For the first time a Swan Hill Camp was held. This was designed to coincide with Swan Hill Sports Day. Secondary students travelled to Swan Hill and participated in activities at the Pioneer Settlement, a boat cruise and sound / light show before attending the interschool sports day. Students again participated in day trips to Lake Cullulleraine.

Active School grants were expended on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Boxing classes for Upper Primary and Secondary classes. Students engaged positively in these classes. During Term 4 students attended Pickle Ball classes at the local Sports Precinct.

In 2024 a new venue was trialled for our Sports Day. This was a successful setting for our event. Some classes participated in games in our school courtyard. Student feedback showed that they enjoyed travelling on a coach to access a local sporting facility. Parents and carers attended in high numbers both at school and at the facility.

Graduations were held at the end of the year to celebrate the completion of primary and secondary schooling. These events were well attended by parents, carers and agencies.

Financial performance

In 2024 refurbishment continued in the Main Building with two classrooms repainted and carpets and lino replaced. New air conditioners were installed in four classrooms and the kitchen. The discoloured hydrotherapy pool was resurfaced.

Equity funding was used to support camps and excursions and incursions as well as fuel for buses. Funding was used to pay for our part time physiotherapist and our Student Wellbeing Coordinator and to supplement the professional learning budget.

The wheelchair bus was traded in and a utility was purchased for use by maintenance and administration personnel.

Active Schools Grants were expended on programs in the community with students participating in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Boxing and Pickle Ball.

We started the 2024 school year without two teachers and were fortunate to fill these positions with teachers from agencies, at significant cost.

In 2024 the school gained Good standing in the School Council Financial Audit.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.mildss.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 171 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 46 female and 124 male.

3 percent of students had English as an additional language and 24 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).

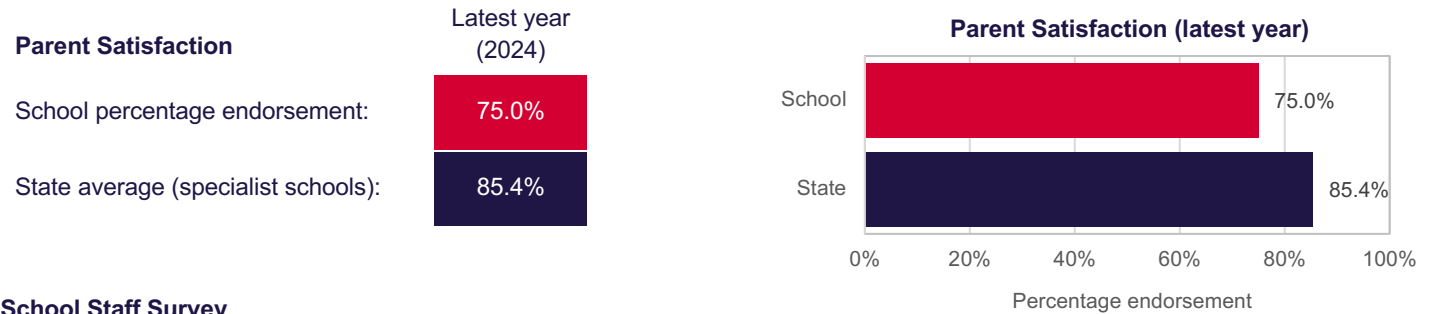
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

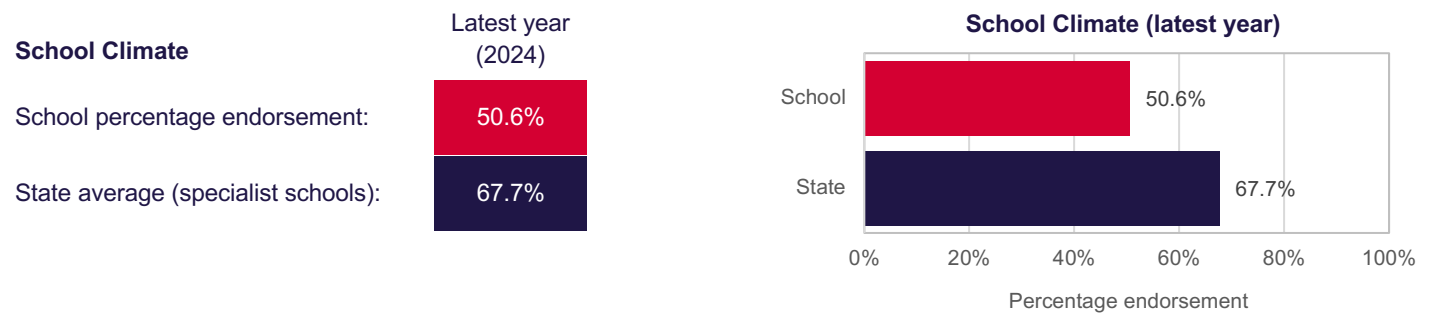


School Staff Survey

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.



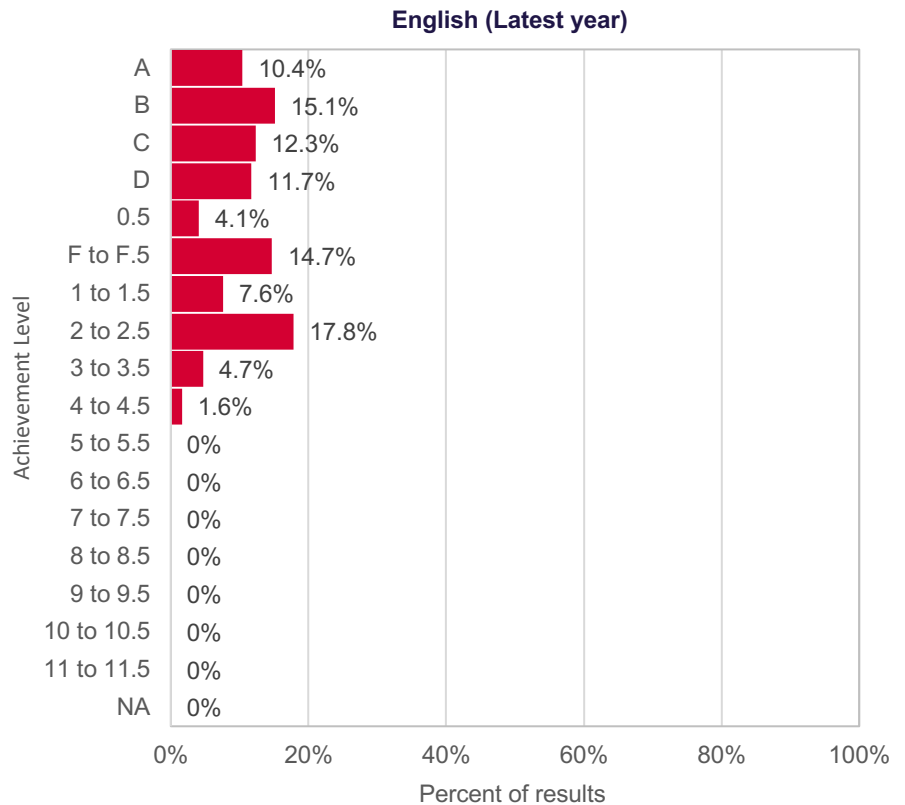
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

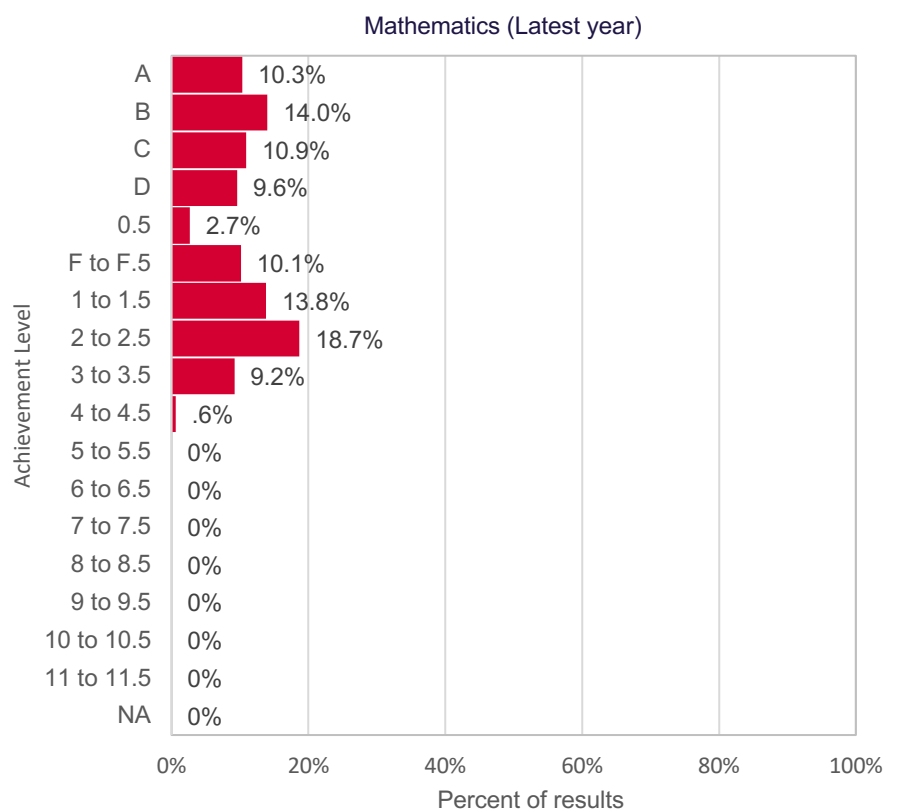
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2024)
A	10.4%
B	15.1%
C	12.3%
D	11.7%
0.5	4.1%
F to F.5	14.7%
1 to 1.5	7.6%
2 to 2.5	17.8%
3 to 3.5	4.7%
4 to 4.5	1.6%
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 (2024)
A	10.3%
B	14.0%
C	10.9%
D	9.6%
0.5	2.7%
F to F.5	10.1%
1 to 1.5	13.8%
2 to 2.5	18.7%
3 to 3.5	9.2%
4 to 4.5	0.6%
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	2021	2022	2023	2024	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	20.8	17.9	27.3	29.1	23.8

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	2021	2022	2023	2024	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 2024

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$8,322,099
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,127,453
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$0
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$74,129
Locally Raised Funds	\$84,176
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$9,607,857

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$545,217
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$545,217

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$7,363,363
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$22,821
Communication Costs	\$3,908
Consumables	\$100,741
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$62,486
Professional Development	\$23,008
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$117,541
Property Services	\$240,503
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$553,957
Support Services	\$223,239
Trading & Fundraising	\$16,977
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$4,723
Travel & Subsistence	\$8,843
Utilities	\$44,677
Total Operating Expenditure	\$8,786,787
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$821,071
Asset Acquisitions	\$353,667

- (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 2025 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 2024

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$574,420
Official Account	\$23,492
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$597,912

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$227,176
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$28,062
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$141,325
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	\$200,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$224,882
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	\$821,445

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.