

# 2023 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 26 April 2024 at 02:29 PM by Penny Hale (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 28 April 2024 at 03:13 PM by Connie Aldamiz (School Council President)

# How to read the Annual Report

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## 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.

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## 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

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## School context

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

We aim to provide a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment, with a focus on developing individual responsibility and student social and academic growth. Mildura Specialist School explicitly teaches the values of being safe, respectful and responsible through the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework and restorative practices.

Students attend daily from 9.00am-3.00pm. Of the 193 enrolled students, 73% male and 27% female. 25% students identify as Indigenous. Five students were dual enrolled, attending other local primary and secondary settings.

Students are allocated classes based on their age group, social and academic needs within the Primary and Secondary areas. Primary comprises Early Years (5-7 Years) and Upper Primary (8-12 Years).

Secondary groups include students working in Personal and Applied Learning (13-17/18 Years) and Pre - Victorian Pathways Certificate (13-15 Years), Victorian Pathways Certificate (16-17/18 Years).

Students were taught in 18 classes by classroom teachers and education support staff with art being a specialist subject. Staffing included Principal, Assistant Principal, 3 Leading Teachers - non teaching (Wellbeing, Inclusion and Curriculum), 17.2 Classroom Teacher 2, 2.4 Learning Specialists (Literacy and Numeracy), 4.5 Classroom Teacher 1, .8 Learning Tutor, 39.4 Education Support staff.

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.

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. The curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum. Students in their senior years worked towards their Victorian Pathways Certificate.

Twenty Six students graduated from year 12 and were very proud to talk about their achievements, friendships and positive relationships at the local Sporting Precinct. Following this event a graduation assembly was held and this was also well attended by families. Year six students had a special assembly at school with many parents attending to celebrate and mark this special occasion.

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## Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

### Learning

Teachers and education support staff set the students up for success with consistent class displays and the implementation of getting to know you activities at the beginning of the year. Staff and students collaborated to create a working with me document for each student. The leadership team conducted learning walks with a focus on Differentiated Learning and Consistency of Practice with Pedagogical Model with feedback provided to teachers. Leaders found that students followed the routine; verbal, gestural and visual prompts were provided for students as needed and most of the students could say what they were doing. Some students had individualised lists of steps to complete the project and some students were working on different tasks to others in the room. Concepts were modelled at the point of need.

Teachers partnered with families through student support group meetings to determine individual education plan goals. The Disability Inclusion Profile templates assisted with this collaboration with the use of student voice tool and the overall process through the changing of Student Support Group meeting templates and the collation of information for the Disability Inclusion Plan profiles.

A leading teacher conducted an inquiry based on student voice as part of the Teaching Excellence Program. Students chose authentic and engaging individual assessment tasks, and self-reflected against collaboratively created rubrics. The final artefacts ranged from traditional PowerPoints, to oral presentations and outstanding annotated pieces of artwork. The students were then filmed reflecting on the process, where two students stated that they had a sense of control in their learning. Inquiry Two was based on questioning to support student reflections. A series of questions were posed via a work sheet designed for students to fill in at the end of a lesson that demonstrated their levels of learning. The questions scaffolded the students' thinking about what they learned (during the lesson), how they learned and what stopped the students from learning. The questionnaire was designed with higher order thinking to be applied so that students and/or the teacher could apply strategies suited for each particular students' point of

need. Leading Teacher evidenced professional readings detailing how to and activate student voice, and detailing effective questioning strategies during the Teaching Excellence Program. It was a highlight for the school when our leading teacher was selected to give one of the two valedictorian speeches on the final day of the program.

Students from Pre-Victorian Pathways Certificate classes were scheduled for a term to work with the Hospitality teacher to develop skills and knowledge for later years' work in the canteen. Students developed their communication and financial skills by visiting staff in advance to offer the purchase of a cooked lunch as shown on the professional cafe style flyer. Students then prepared and delivered the meals on the given day.

Teachers met to moderate work samples and provided explanations about their placement of students within achievement standards to promote consistency of practice.

Teachers highlighted curriculum trackers for each student to show coverage of content descriptors and achievement standards.

Teachers collaborated with education support staff to complete ABLES.

ABLES data showed that in Mathematics, 38.7% of students showed growth, and that 65% of students assessed are working between the Victorian Curriculum levels of Foundation and Level 3. Reading & Viewing data showed 41.2% of students showed growth over the previous 12 months. 37.9% of students showed growth in the Speaking & Listening strand of the curriculum, with 71% of students working between levels A - F.

## Wellbeing

Mildura Specialist School focused on implementing the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework (SWPBS) with increased fidelity. An Annual Implementation Plan activity was to strengthen the tier one supports to students including the explicit teaching of the school's values of being respectful, safe, and responsible. Members of the leadership team undertook Universal Prevention Part A training in term one. Following this training an action plan was developed, implemented and evaluated. The principal and student wellbeing coordinator met with the SWPBS coach regularly which was invaluable in maintaining our momentum. The meeting structure was reorganised with wellbeing meetings held fortnightly to review incident data. Data was shared with staff and new visuals were developed for staff to support them to identify the tiers of supports.

In term three, teachers worked to consolidate their practices for Connections / Circle Time, held daily on arrival at school. An important essential feature was for every student to be greeted and supported to be ready for the day ahead. We were thrilled to increase our tiered fidelity score from 47% to 90% and the invitation to put in for a blue and bronze award. A Circle Time Planner was developed for personal and social learning. This assisted with access to resources. Student peer nominations in secondary continued. Team leaders completed walk throughs for the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) for School Wide Positive Behaviour Support.

A partnership with Real Schools and work with our expert facilitator saw an increase in staff understanding about the role of staff in developing a positive school culture. A pupil free day was held where staff learnt about positive priming and restorative practices. Anecdotally we have noticed that students are showing a readiness to engage in restorative conversations to solve problems. Classes throughout the school are developing students' emotional vocabulary. Staff developed their skills to interact with students to connect emotions with behaviours and to understand that actions affect others, to build empathy.

The Mental Health Practitioner ran girls groups to develop confidence and problem solving.

The leadership team developed a recording system to record interventions to support with attendance, behavioural and engagement concerns.

## Engagement

Attendance - The average number of absence days decreased in 2023 from 46.6 days in 2022 to 39.8. The main reason for absence was medical illness. Six students had no / limited attendance due to parent choice and school refusal. 63 students had equal to or greater than 90% attendance. 25.7% of our indigenous cohort recorded an attendance rate equal to or greater than 90% and 22.8% attended 80-89%. The Wellbeing Coordinator met with the Koorie Engagement Support Officer fortnightly to put supports in place to improve attendance and wellbeing.

The Principal and Wellbeing coordinator met with the Student Wellbeing Engagement Officer - Mallee Area to discuss cases and to ensure strategies were in place. Families were invited to Student Support Group Meetings, home and off site visits were organised for individuals and members of the leadership team called families to check in and attended care team meetings. Leaders and teachers built collaborative relationships with families and communities to create a shared understanding of how to support students' participation and engagement through feedback, raising concerns and shared decision making.

Secondary store - Senior Secondary students produced items such as tie dyed bags, decorated frames and plants and sold products to the school community making a \$646.33 profit.

Senior secondary students met outcomes for their Victorian Pathways Certificate with their research for Anzac Day. Students ran an

Anzac ceremony for the school. Classes created window displays and made poppies to demonstrate their learning.

Education Support Staff engaged in professional learning about writing Xuno reports and watched a Smiling Minds webinar on Working with Students with Trauma. Education Support staff also had their own session with our partnership leader from Real Schools.

Teachers planned for excursions and developed a Big Picture document to reflect the adjustments required for students to attend successfully. Feedback and support was provided to teams with members of the leadership team driving buses and supporting student supervision at school and on excursions. Planning involved teams of teachers reflecting on the needs of the group and adjusting for future sessions. There was an emphasis on providing the most appropriate activities for cohorts of students, for example Early Years students attended Park for Play as did the Personal and Applied Learning team. Secondary students accessed the community with dance and gym visits, funded through the Active Schools Grant. Year 10-12 students visited industry sites including Coles and McDonalds. Students completing Certificate 2 in Retail gained practical experience at Bunnings and Red Cliffs IGA. Enrolment meetings were held to ensure transfer of information. A team from a local Primary School visited to learn about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

## Other highlights from the school year

A highlight in 2023 was our inclusion in the Northern Mallee Horticultural Immersion Project. During term one and term two eleven students participated and graduated from a special horticultural project designed in partnership with the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network and Chaffey Secondary College. Students conducted a research project to determine the best conditions for tomato growth and presented their findings at the graduation. The group visited local agricultural work sites to learn about the role technology plays in agriculture. Two students completed a block of work experience through their involvement in this program.

Sporting achievements - In September students aged 12 and above left the school early in the morning to attend the Swan Hill interschool Sports Day. Mildura Specialist School students were very proud on their return to show everyone the two school trophies.

The Debutante Ball was held in September with students participating with partners from school and from outside. Families, friends, staff and agencies attended to make this such a successful and celebratory night for our senior students.

International Disability Awareness Day One was celebrated through our involvement in an event sponsored by Mildura Rural City Council and Community Music Victoria. Mildura Specialist School's senior students worked on a themed project depicting themselves in colour and words to represent their public and personal thoughts in a positive outlook. The art works, Here I am – This Is Me! were exhibited in The Basement Gallery of the local Powerhouse precinct.

## Financial performance

Last year the school continued to significantly invest in infrastructure development, including Solar Panels, door fob access and glass window replacements, a nest swing and a pool water heater replacement. The school purchased laptops for the secondary students.

Active Schools Grant enabled us to purchase a Rifton trike. Classes attended dance and gym sessions which increased their opportunities to access community venues.

Equity Funding that we received was used to fund teaching and support staff as part of the Student Resource Package. These funds were used to supplement incursions and excursions so all students could attend. Equity funding paid for the physiotherapist contracted one day per week and also supplemented the primary welfare officer's salary to make this a full time position. Funds were also used to release learning specialists to enable their work across the school with teachers.

The total funds available to the school at the end of the school year and its overall financial position remains strong and allows the school to fund future improvement projects e.g. Pool upgrade to replace the air change filter which stopped working in 2023.

**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 185 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 52 female and 133 male.

3 percent of students had English as an additional language and 25 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).

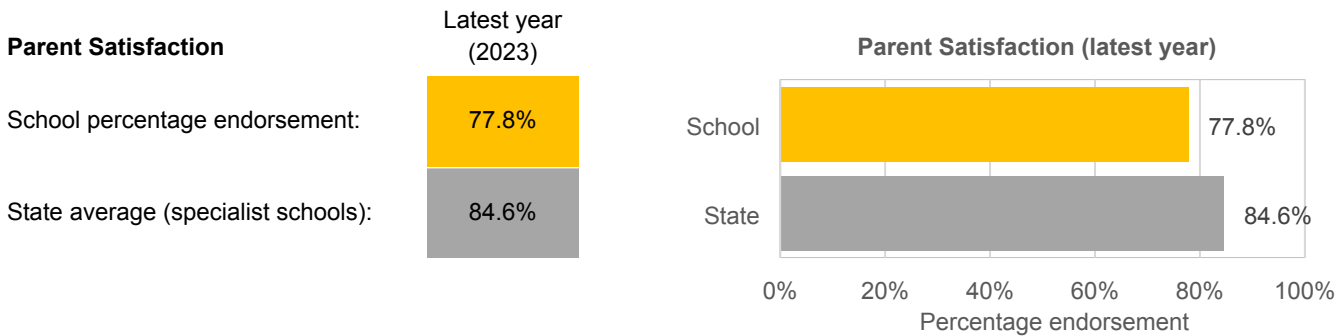
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

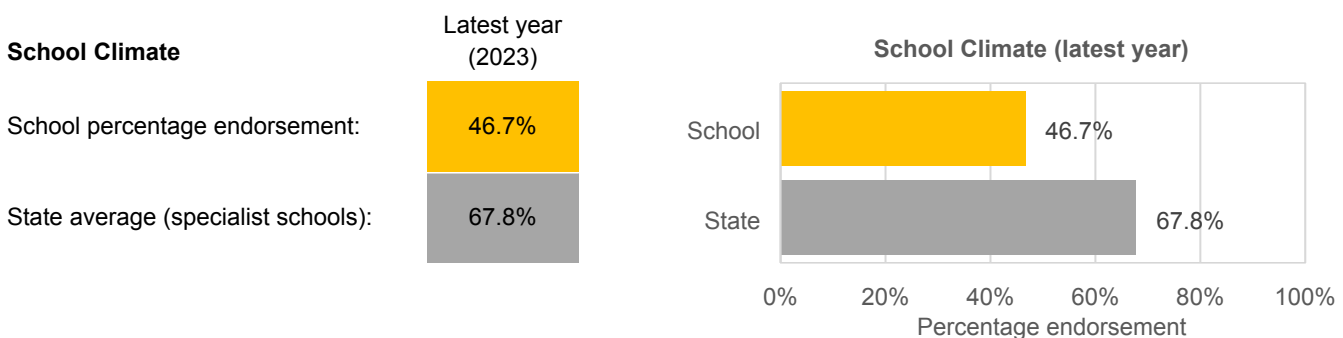


### School Staff Survey

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**

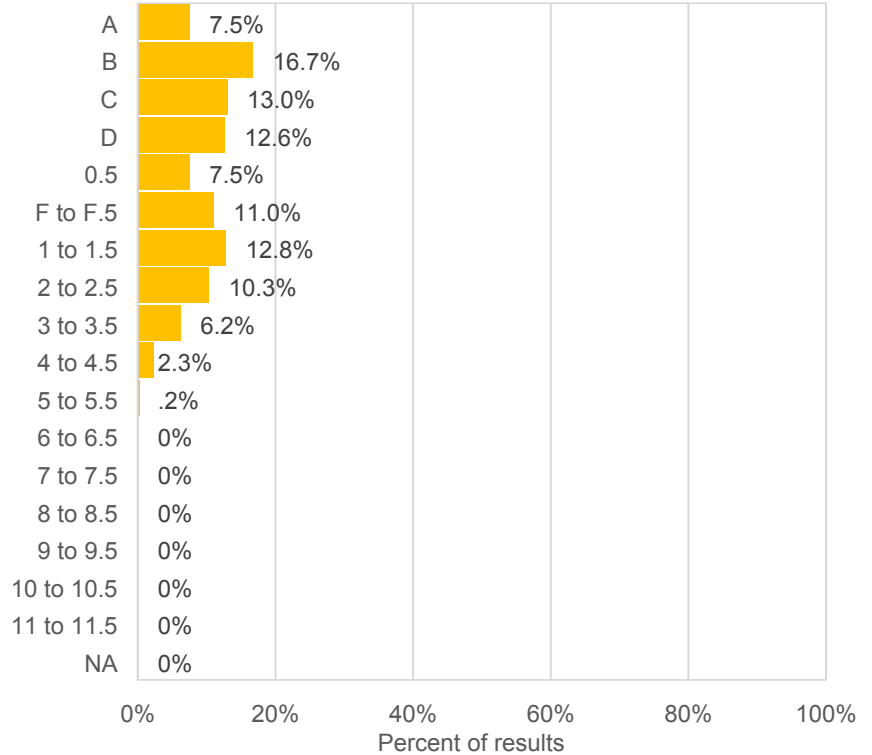
Percent of results at each achievement level in English and Mathematics.

**English**

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	7.5%
B	16.7%
C	13.0%
D	12.6%
0.5	7.5%
F to F.5	11.0%
1 to 1.5	12.8%
2 to 2.5	10.3%
3 to 3.5	6.2%
4 to 4.5	2.3%
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

Achievement Level

**English (Latest year)**

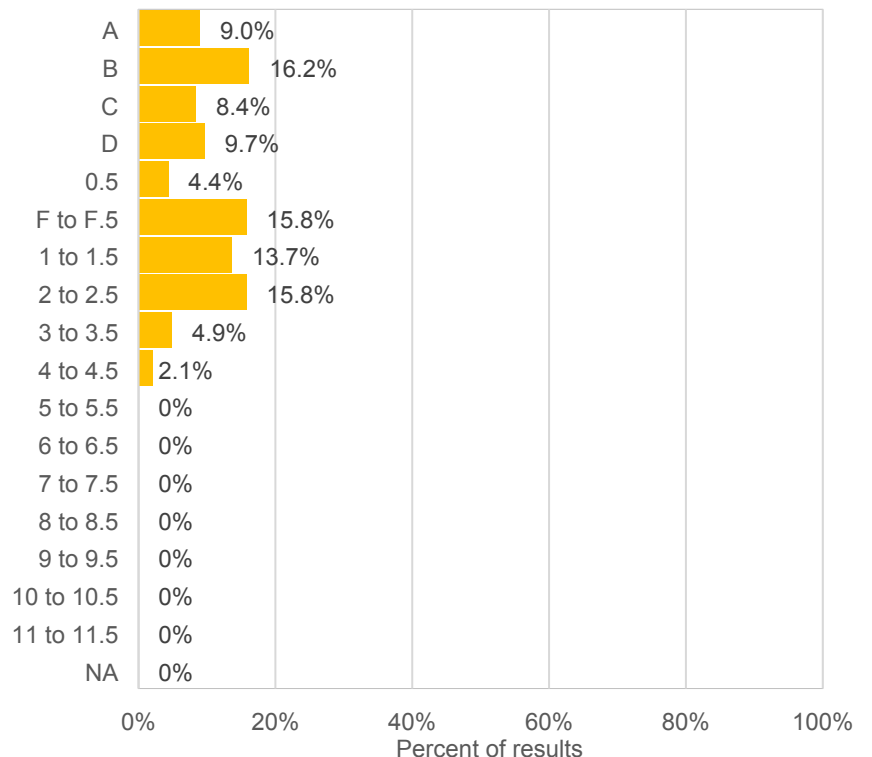


**Mathematics**

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	9.0%
B	16.2%
C	8.4%
D	9.7%
0.5	4.4%
F to F.5	15.8%
1 to 1.5	13.7%
2 to 2.5	15.8%
3 to 3.5	4.9%
4 to 4.5	2.1%
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

Achievement Level

**Mathematics (Latest year)**





## 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:	29.3	29.5	46.6	39.8	36.2

### 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	\$8,826,700
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,445,653
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$0
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$61,888
Locally Raised Funds	\$125,299
Capital Grants	\$0
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,459,540</b>

Equity <sup>1</sup>	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$553,346
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
<b>Equity Total</b>	<b>\$553,346</b>

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package <sup>2</sup>	\$7,398,383
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$10,584
Communication Costs	\$12,437
Consumables	\$73,154
Miscellaneous Expense <sup>3</sup>	\$42,782
Professional Development	\$25,788
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$133,379
Property Services	\$256,865
Salaries & Allowances <sup>4</sup>	\$333,542
Support Services	\$107,471
Trading & Fundraising	\$22,512
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$2,302
Travel & Subsistence	\$7,917
Utilities	\$66,059
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$8,493,175</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit</b>	<b>\$1,966,365</b>
<b>Asset Acquisitions</b>	<b>\$107,346</b>

- (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

<b>Funds available</b>	<b>Actual</b>
High Yield Investment Account	\$972,154
Official Account	\$31,283
Other Accounts	\$0
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$1,003,437</b>

<b>Financial Commitments</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Operating Reserve	\$169,775
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$13,287
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$73,922
School Based Programs	\$154,597
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	\$262,754
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>\$874,335</b>

*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.*