

2024 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Northern School For Autism (5219)



- 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 30 April 2025 at 10:59 AM by Pamela Mathieson (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 30 April 2025 at 11:00 AM by Pamela Mathieson (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

Northern School for Autism was established in 2006. The school has two campuses. One is located in the suburb of Reservoir 13 kilometres north of the central business district of Melbourne. This campus caters for Early and Middle Years' students. The other campus is in the suburb of Lalor a further five kilometres north and caters for students in the Later Years. The school also co-ordinates a Satellite Program in three classrooms at Norris Bank Primary School. The school provides for the educational needs of students with autism ranging in age between five and 18 years.

The Reservoir Campus is a purpose-built facility. All 28 classrooms have access to an outdoor courtyard. In addition to the classrooms there are Play Therapy, Music, Visual Arts and Multi-Purpose rooms. There are also three gymnasiums, a student kitchen and a library. The grounds contain secure modern, age-appropriate playgrounds with discrete secure play areas including bike riding tracks.

At the Lalor Campus was 17 classrooms. There is a Multi-Purpose Room, a student recreational/library room, kitchens and a canteen. Current technologies are available in all classrooms. Outdoor facilities at the Lalor Campus include a secure, age appropriate, outdoor recreation area with shaded seating, a rope climbing course, fitness equipment, a large oval, a bike track and a student garden,

Enrolments in 2024 at the Reservoir Campus 310.1 and at the Lalor Campus 186.3. The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.3398 at the Reservoir Campus and 0.4106 at the Lalor Campus.

The staffing profile of the Northern School for Autism includes a principal, three assistant principals and 79.25 equivalent full-time (EFT) teaching staff. In addition, there are 127.88 EFT Education Support (ES) staff comprised of 93.6 EFT classroom aides, 11.4 EFT speech pathologists, 12.28 EFT occupational therapists and 10.6 EFT administrative staff.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2024, the Annual Implementation Plan for Northern School for Autism continued to focus on maximising students' outcome. All students have an individual learning plan. A significant body of work the leaders and teachers commenced was investigating a variety of literacy programs. A literacy committee was established and there was an audit of the literacy programs delivered across the school and the assessment. Little Learners Love Literacy program was introduced at the Reservoir Campus and MultiLit was re-introduced at the Lalor Campus. The leaders and some teachers were provided with external professional learning and then professional learning was delivered to all staff at NSA.

Students have been participating in a range of maths activities based on the concepts introduced in the NSA maths Curriculum Map that runs over a two-year cycle. The leadership team has developed this curriculum map to streamline the topics taught from the Victorian Curriculum and to encourage more collaborative planning between teachers across the school. The Leadership Team also introduced a standardised maths planner for all teachers to use consistently to develop and plan structured and sequential maths sessions. The Learning Specialist and Leading Teachers have also modelled structured maths sessions to upskill teachers. In Semester 1 staff engaged in Professional Learning Communities with a focus on literacy and STEM. Staff used assessment data to formulate an inquiry question that aligned with the maths curriculum map. This was an opportunity for all staff to develop their understanding of the Literacy and STEM curriculum, how to plan sequential lessons and execute them with a structured teaching approach using High Impact Teaching Strategies.

The students at Northern School For Autism have also experienced a variety of excursions and camps throughout the year.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing of our students, staff and family continued to be a major priority for 2024. Breakfast Club was continued. After school care and the Holiday Program continued to be supported by Northern School for Autism. School uniforms have continued to be encouraged and State School Relief continued to provide uniforms to students. The Allied Health Team has continued to expand and develop professionally with a further move in the area of the importance of using a variety of AAC's, self regulation strategies and professional learning of classroom staff. The Leadership Team works together to support students and families with complex behavioural issues. A holistic approach was taken to better support these students. Students with complex needs were assigned one key staff member responsible for all communication with relevant professionals and the collection of all communications and reports. Round-table discussions allowed for regional level of support and other professionals becoming involved in supporting better the specific educational needs of the student. Many of the senior students participated in the Check and Chat Program. Workshops were held as part of an 8-week curriculum over the school term. The focus was on consent and respectful relationships. The School Council will continue to review the Child Safe Standard Policy so that school practices comply with all DE and the Child Safe requirements.

The school continued the whole school focus on School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS). Staff members continue to implement structured teaching and the school rules.

The Respectful Relationship committee continued to attend network meetings and engaged the staff at Northern School For Autism The Lalor Campus leaders created a scope and sequence for the staff to follow when teaching this RR curriculum.

A Mental Health Practitioner was appointed at the Lalor Campus and started working with students individually or in small groups.

Engagement

Student engagement in learning is critical if students are to attain deep and sustained learning. Northern School for Autism strives to provide an educational environment, which is engaging,

stimulating, safe and challenging where students are acknowledged and celebrated. In 2024, the school continued to explore diverse contexts for learning based on student strengths and interests. Structured Teaching and School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) provides the framework for the staff to engage and connect with students in the school.

The school continues to have a strong focus on increasing the engagement and involvement of our parent community. The Special Events Committee was meeting onsite regularly and planning Special Lunches, STEM Expo and Run 4 Fun Fundraiser. Across the school the staff and students had a fabulous day!

There has been a high level of engagement of parents and carers in the Student Support Group (SSG) meetings. These SSGs continue to play an essential role in the school for both teachers and parents in the learning partnership between the school and the home. The school will continue to promote the importance of these meetings to the school community and set high expectations for student learning. Parent endorsement for these expectations.

The Leadership Team and the classroom teaching teams are committed to ensure all students are attending school regularly. Teaching teams will communicate with families if students are finding the transition to school difficult. Generally teachers will send home behaviour scripts or social stories to encourage students to attend school - students who find the transition difficult will often be given a reinforcer when they arrive at school.

Other highlights from the school year

OT (Occupational Therapy) team:

What the focus has been:

- **Setting up the Blue, Green, and Middle Years Gyms:** Ensuring that these spaces are optimized for student use and therapy activities.
- **Building OT Resource bank:** Conducting a thorough audit of OT equipment throughout the school and implementing necessary maintenance processes to ensure everything is in working order and in stock.
- **School Bus Restraints Policy and Procedure:** Developing and updating a comprehensive policy and procedure for school bus restraints, ensuring it aligns with current safety standards. Setting up regular check-ins with leadership and executive leadership team to update policies, processes, and protocols related to bus restraints, including the use of buckle covers and harnesses, to ensure safe travel for students.
- **Mentoring Program for Therapists:** Establishing a mentoring program for all therapists on the team, in line with AHPRA regulations, to ensure continuous professional development and support.
- **Group Work with Students:** Continue to implement a model where students are grouped based on their needs across different classroom in order to help OTs target specific clinical areas, support student engagement, and develop group work skills. Students have become more adept at working in diverse groups and environments.

- **Cross-Therapist Collaboration:** Increased collaboration between Speech Pathologists (SP) and Occupational Therapists (OT) across both campuses to build clinical knowledge in order to support complex student profiles and addressing areas with overlapping interventions.
- **Teacher-OT Collaboration on Personal Goals:** Therapy team has been working on their competency of Collaboration with teachers on setting personal goals and ways in which it can improve the integration of therapy activities into the broader work program.
- **Increased PD Opportunities for Staff:** The OT team has had more opportunities to provide professional development to staff, enhancing their understanding and application of therapeutic practices.

Speech Pathology Team:

What the focus has been:

- **Visual library:** Ensuring consistent visual and environmental supports for students that utilise alternative communication systems as the school has grown by an additional 6 classrooms
- Implementing consistent visual and symbol libraries across the school with a greater variety of sizes to support students with fine motor difficulties
- **AAC assessment and tracking:** Implement ROCC assessment to track the progress of students who use AAC
- **Allied Health Assistant program:** Develop new Allied Health Assistant program to support current school goals and therapy programs across the school
- **CAS:** Continuing the Communication Accessible Schools or CAS committee program and achieving NSA's 2025 goals
- Consistency implementing school wide receptive language supports including student's visual schedules and Aided Language Displays or ALDs outside of the classroom
- **Service delivery models:** Implementing best practise service delivery models that support existing and new staff to feel confident when working with therapy equipment and strategies. The school is continuing to make suitable adjustments to the collaborative model that best supports the school
- Supporting classroom staff to implement and provide a barrier free environment for students with complex communication needs or CCN and students with Augmentative Alternative Communication or AAC
- Providing sessions that focus on student's accessing the curriculum and practicing functional skills
- Providing strategies to classroom teams that support students to achieve their Individual learning goals and maintenance goals throughout the week
- **Providing professional development and participating in the speech community:** Increasing staff access to internal professional development and training opportunities
- Extending our contribution to the autism community by participating as speakers in the AGOSCI conference. This includes collating and presenting data on selected areas such as service delivery and communication accessibility schools

Financial performance

The Annual results

The Accumulated Funds for 2024 are \$1,889,033.15. Based on the financial commitment summary report for 2024, the School Operating reserve is \$842,123.67, NSA committed \$415,870.00 to Furniture for new LC building. We also committed \$627,861.98 to Capital Works to pay for the new playground at LC & School Contribution to the DET.

Extraordinary revenue or expenditure items

- CRT expenditure for the year was \$ 2,917,788.00 for replacing the absent staff and the service providers were Tradewind, Anzuk, AGA, The Teaching Initiative & Randstad.
- School Contribution to LC Project \$600,000.00.
- RC New Playground 6 costs were \$116,462.68



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 487 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 93 female and 394 male.

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

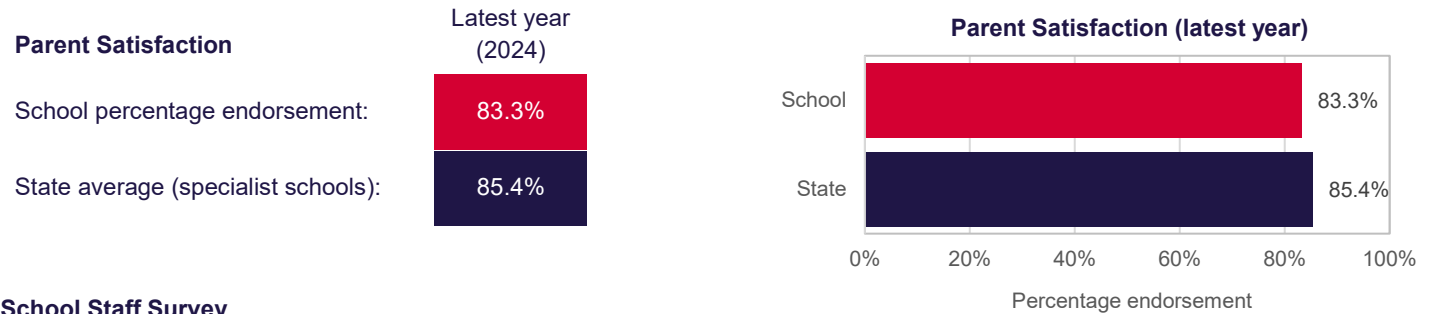
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

This school's SFOE band value is: **Low - Medium**

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.

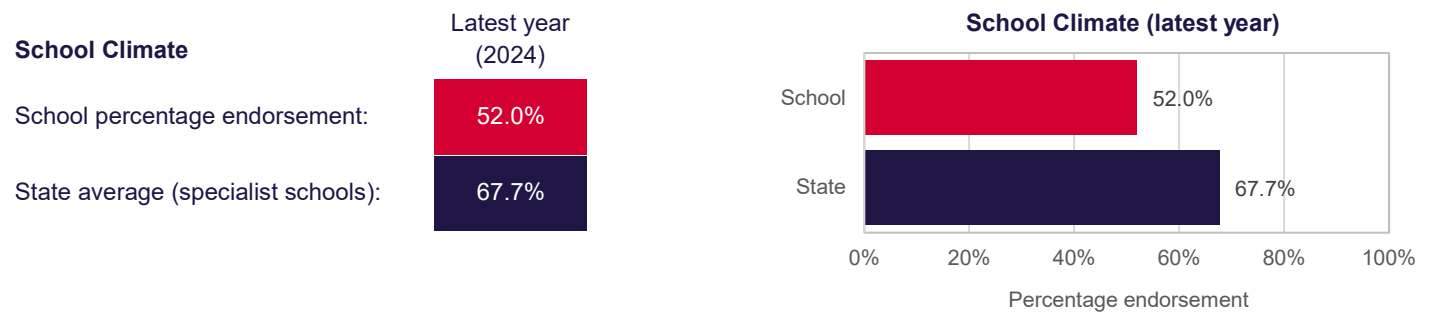


School Staff Survey

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.

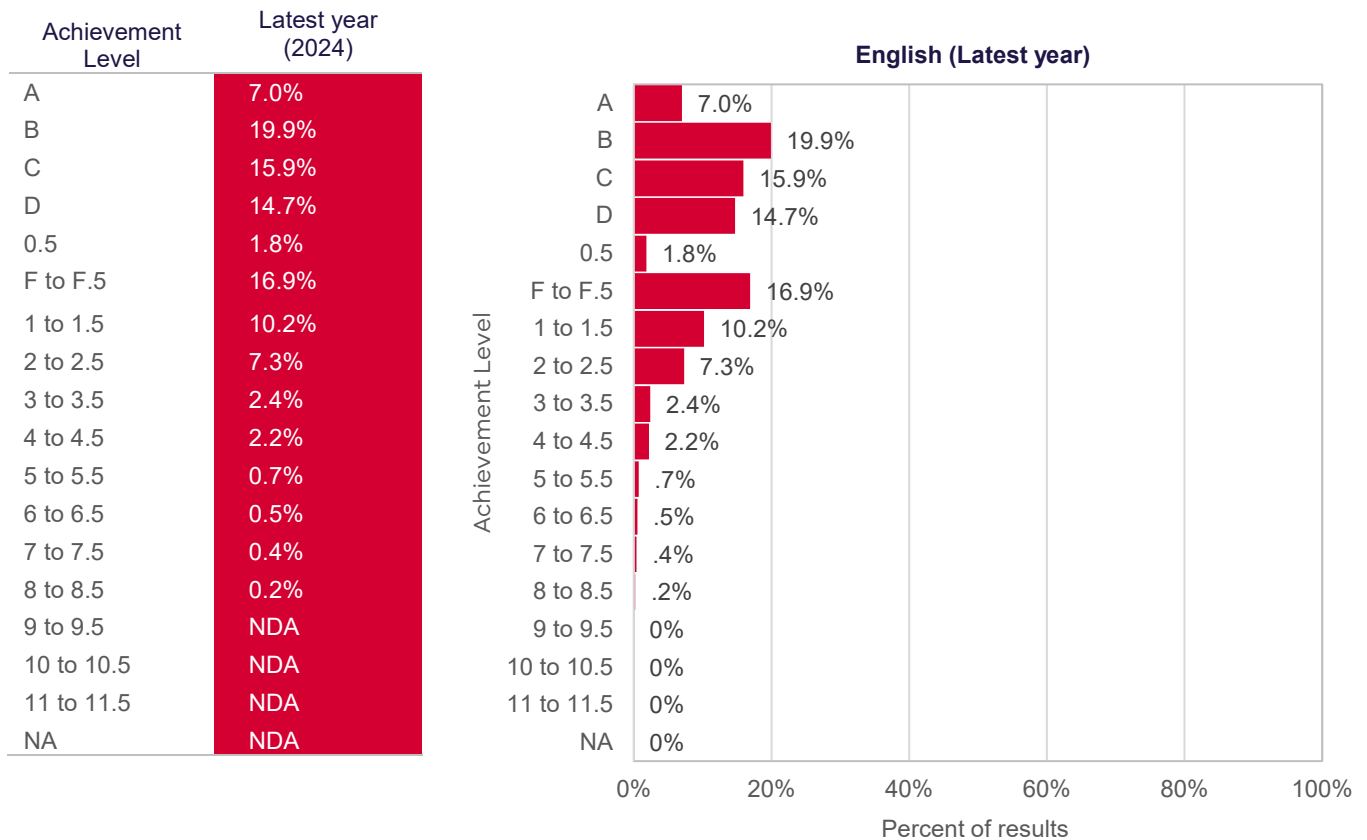


LEARNING

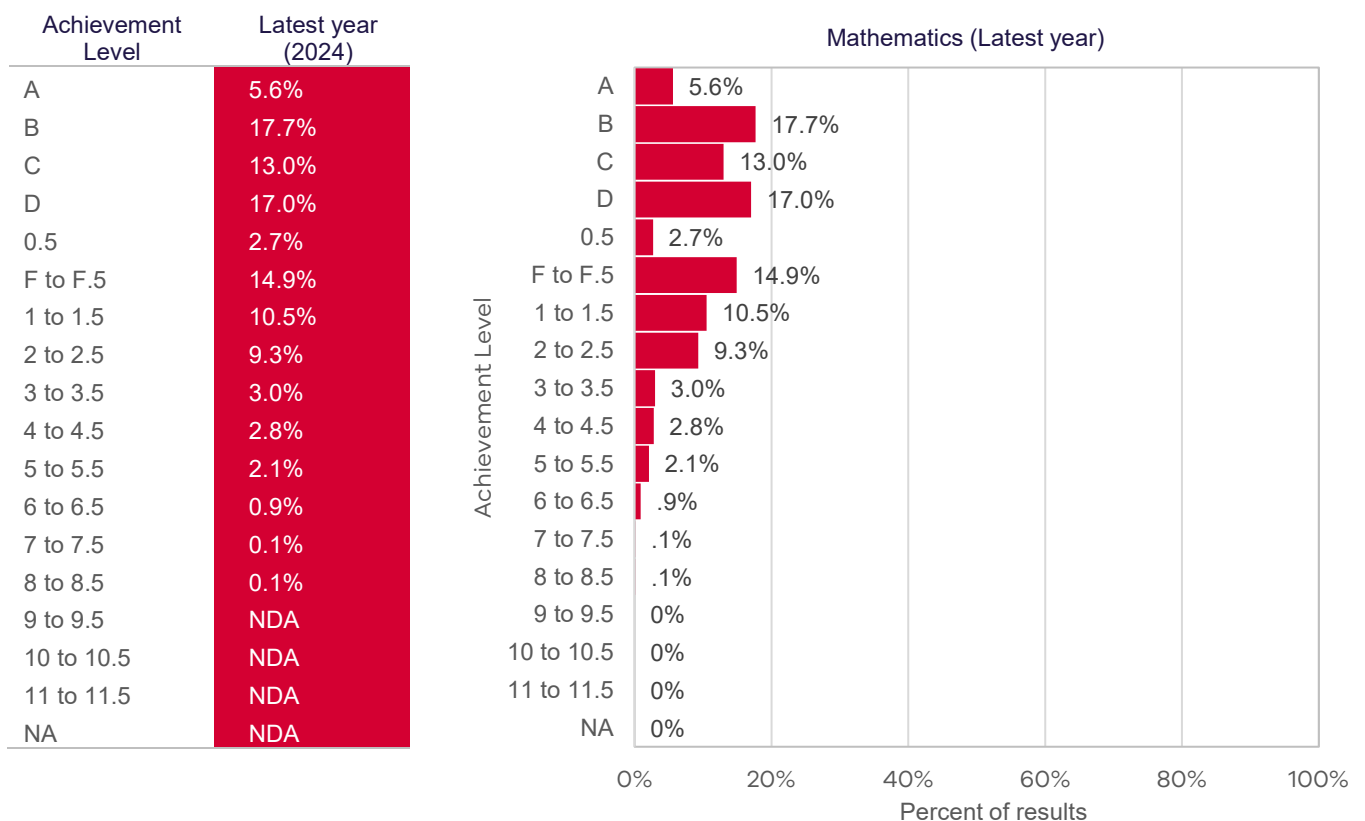
Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

English



Mathematics



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:	96.9%	93.9%	97.9%	95.5%	96.3%



Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$25,759,438
Government Provided DET Grants	\$5,518,068
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$14,260
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$495,715
Locally Raised Funds	\$131,893
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$31,919,374

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$124,814
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$124,814

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$21,792,792
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$320,611
Communication Costs	\$11,053
Consumables	\$546,048
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$86,250
Professional Development	\$68,197
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$259,637
Property Services	\$534,173
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$361,274
Support Services	\$2,652,419
Trading & Fundraising	(\$9,588)
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$8,315
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$209,893
Total Operating Expenditure	\$26,841,074
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$5,078,300
Asset Acquisitions	\$851,679

- (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	\$1,848,761
Official Account	\$40,272
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$1,889,033

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$842,124
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$3,178
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$415,870
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$627,862
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	\$1,889,033

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.