

2024 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Heatherwood School (4871)



- 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 23 April 2025 at 09:52 PM by Paul Hills (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 07:37 PM by Paul Hills (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

Heatherwood is a secondary school for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The focus of the school is on student engagement in learning and personal growth. Its goal is to continually increase the school's ability to improve the outcomes for its students, academically, personally and socially and their ability to successfully participate in post school in the community options they choose.

It currently has a staff consisting of 42 teachers and 30 education support staff. The school has appointed a social worker to work 4 days per week and a behavior analyst 3 days per week. In addition, a staff member was employed to assist with data analysis and how data could be used to support individual student planning and growth. The curriculum is currently focused on implementing the Victorian Curriculum from year 7 to year 10 and Year 11 and 12 is VPC and VET based. Across the school there is a great emphasis on Differentiation, Individual Education Plans and Individual 5-week Goal Setting.

Heatherwoods Designated Transport Zone (DTA) is very extensive, and its students come mainly from the Outer East. While the school's student numbers of 228 indicates a slight decrease. Numbers have been consistent for several years but may be impacted upon in the future by funding changes and facility issues. Heatherwood is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). It has established a range of vocational training certificate courses on the school's scope including Certificates in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations), Retailing, Active Volunteering, Sport and Recreation, Agrifoods and Employment Pathways. Challenging and innovative programs, including those offered through ADVANCE, Protective Behaviours programs and STEM / Science, emphasise building self-esteem, confidence, and resilience.

As a result of ongoing assessment and review, program content is regularly updated to ensure relevance and provide suitable student outcomes and learning opportunities. Heatherwood recognises the importance of having a strong partnership with its community. It greatly values and actively seeks the involvement and contribution of parents and carers. Feedback is also actively sought and greatly valued.

The continuing establishment of curriculum and planning teams provides an opportunity for leadership, personal professional growth, and ongoing consultation. Professional Learning Communities is also a feature of planning, curriculum development and implementation processes to support teachers. Transition and community support programs are constantly reviewed and modified to support families and students moving from school to post school careers.

Heatherwood continues to reach out to the communities where our families live to establish partnerships, possible support links and potential opportunities for our students to engage in their immediate social environments.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Heatherwood believes every student can and has the right to learn. In practice, this means that student programs need to be individualised and goals set to ensure success and growth. Explicit teaching, differentiated planning, involving establishing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with key long term educational and personal goals, short term clear, achievable five-week goals and priorities for each student is a vital aspect of the teaching and learning process at the school. Students are challenged, encouraged, and supported to achieve their goals.

A range of assessment strategies are used to collect data that provides evidence of student growth which assists with future planning. Through the establishment of joint planning times, curriculum teams and curriculum leaders' meetings supported by the Professional Learning Community, ongoing curriculum development and implementation can be monitored and enhanced. Curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum for Years 7 – 10, and on the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) - Foundation Level and a variety of Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate 1 & 2 Courses on the Heatherwood scope.

A significant number of specialist programs support and maximise student learning opportunities. Programs such as, Digital Technology, Physical Education, Food Technology, Science, Active Life, Outdoor Education, Horticulture, Protective Behaviours and Visual Arts provide opportunities for students to develop and extend their skills and knowledge. It is through such programs that transferable skills can be taught and reinforced with the aim of having the student demonstrate them at home, in the workplace or in other community environments and situations. Literacy, Numeracy and Protective Behaviours are ongoing priorities across the school. Central Assessments is a web-based program used to assess and track student progress. The establishment of a data wall for literacy and numeracy adds to the school's ability to identify students' levels and ensures appropriate planning to achieve growth. Explicit teaching is supported by digital technologies which play a major role in the school. Opportunities are being created to ensure that technology can be integrated into all areas of teaching and student learning. The school ensures that all technology is current and reflects what is used in the community. This is reflected by use of individual ipads in Years 7 & 8, laptops for years 9 to 12 and for staff. Heatherwood recognises that technology is not only motivational, it is increasingly important in everyday life, but it needs to be used responsibly and with a focus on cyber safety.

Wellbeing

Heatherwood is strongly committed to the development and wellbeing of its students. It provides challenging programs to develop, reinforce and extend students academically, socially and personally. Building self-confidence, resilience, and the ability to interact safely and successfully are the focus particularly of transition programs. The school has a strong Student Representative Council which seeks out student views and advocates on their behalf with regular meetings and feedback at section assemblies. Students take significant roles and responsibilities for a range of

activities including fundraising for identified support agencies or charities. SRC members meet with the principal termly to present ideas and provide feedback about issues within the school.

Heatherwood has a full-time Assistant Principal who has the responsibility of student wellbeing, developing both behaviour management and student wellbeing plans. If necessary, the school will financially support any student to access a school uniform and to participate in camps. The school employs a Social Worker 4 days a week to support and link families with appropriate support agencies (where possible within their local community). The role also is to assist families to access NDIS planning and applying for Disability Support Pensions.

A Behaviour Analyst is employed 3 days a week to assist staff with developing behaviour management strategies for disengaged or students of concern. Students are involved in developing their 5-week goals and are also encouraged to participate in SSGs. Student voice and feedback is encouraged, valued, and is sought at a variety of levels. Heatherwood continues to focus on engaging students in their learning. It understands that students learn in different ways and many benefit from hands on learning and explicit teaching. Through flexible programming, one on one support and practical programs students are given the opportunity to engage in their learning to maximise their strengths and to provide strategies for supporting areas of weakness.

Engagement

Heatherwood aims to provide a variety of learning opportunities to build the skills, attitudes and behaviours that will be required for students to maximise current and future opportunities and to allow them to successfully participate and engage with their communities. The school continues to link with a variety of external agencies to ensure students can access a wide variety of community learning opportunities through work experience and work placement programs. To some extent this is achieved through the delivery of programs that focus on building student confidence, self-esteem and resilience. By presenting a wide range of practical programs, the school attempts to engage and maximise student involvement in their learning and for them to develop and practice transferable skills. Through building individual programs around student interests Heatherwood aims to maximise student levels of motivation and commitment.

The school is also committed to presenting learning opportunities in real life situations and accessing opportunities in the community so that students can see the relevance of what they are doing. The school recognises the need to have a variety of strategies to engage students in their learning, including individual learning plans, flexible timetables and time fractions. Heatherwood recognises the need to understand the different ways that students learn and provides a range of programs that cater for the students' individual needs.

This includes:

- Individual timetables.
- Explicit teaching.
- Hands-on learning experiences.
- Balancing classroom work with motor skill programs.
- Using motivational resources including digital technology resources.
- Incursions.

To ensure transferable skills are developed and reinforced, Employability Skills profiles are established. Career Education and support programs such as Work Experience and ADVANCE provide avenues for consolidation.

Opportunities for students to be engaged in their learning are also reflected by:

- Involving students in developing five week learning goals.
- Documenting learning intentions at the beginning of sessions so that students understand what is expected of them.
- Individual development of flexible programs to meet student specific needs.
- Individual behaviour management plans targeting disrespectful behaviours.
- Maintaining ongoing communication links with the school community.
- Developing wellbeing and safety plans to support students to feel safe and valued.

Financial performance

Heatherwood understands the need for careful financial planning as the school's financial situation can and does fluctuate dramatically. The school is significantly financially vulnerable due to changes in student funding levels, and this combined with student transfers, can impact substantially on staffing and therefore on intended teaching and learning outcomes and support programs for students. The impact on student numbers due to translation to the NDIS and a new funding model will increase the school's vulnerability to funding fluctuations and a possible reduction in income to the school.

Heatherwood will continue to acknowledge its responsibilities to support families who suffer financial hardships and will continue to ensure that students access to educational program opportunities are not limited by financial stress.

In its financial planning the school considers the increasing cost of maintenance, upgrading facilities and resources and increasing staffing costs. It also recognises the many competing financial needs it has to address on a limited and potentially fluctuating financial base. The schools budget process has been streamlined to ensure that all teaching programs are well resourced, and this combined with transparent and strong accountability processes maximises the use of its financial resources.

There are several complexities that need to be considered when reviewing the school's financial data. Included in the school's financial figures are the funds allocated to the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC) - as we act as their banker school. The need for careful financial planning can also be highlighted by the need to consider the cost of purchasing resources that will result from the two new extensive building programs to which the school has committed monies and the need to upgrade facilities including the basketball courts.

Without the school's ability to budget well and save for such major outlays, students would be disadvantaged. Heatherwood received equity funding which was allocated to support the staffing of the science / stem program and to support digital resources across the school for all students to have access and to ensure the consistency of curriculum delivery across the school.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.heatherwood.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 228 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 92 female and 136 male.

6 percent of students had English as an additional language and 4 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).

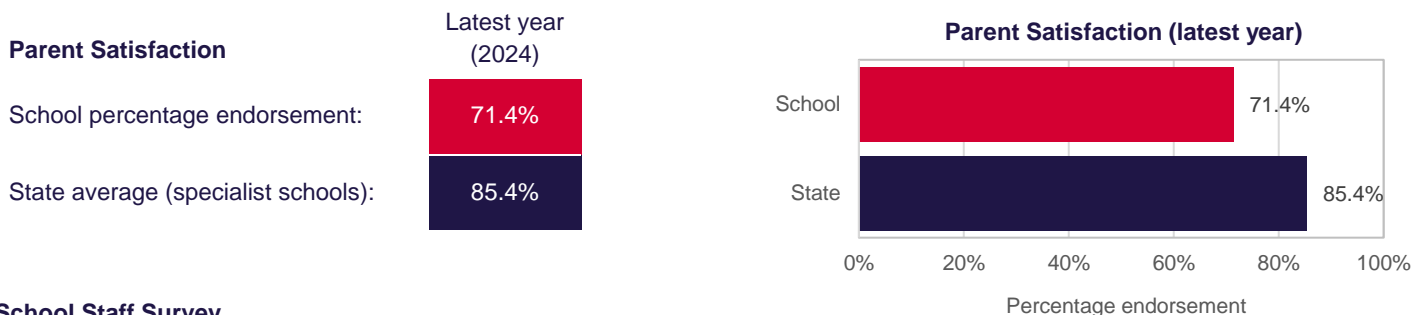
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

This school's SFOE band value is: **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.

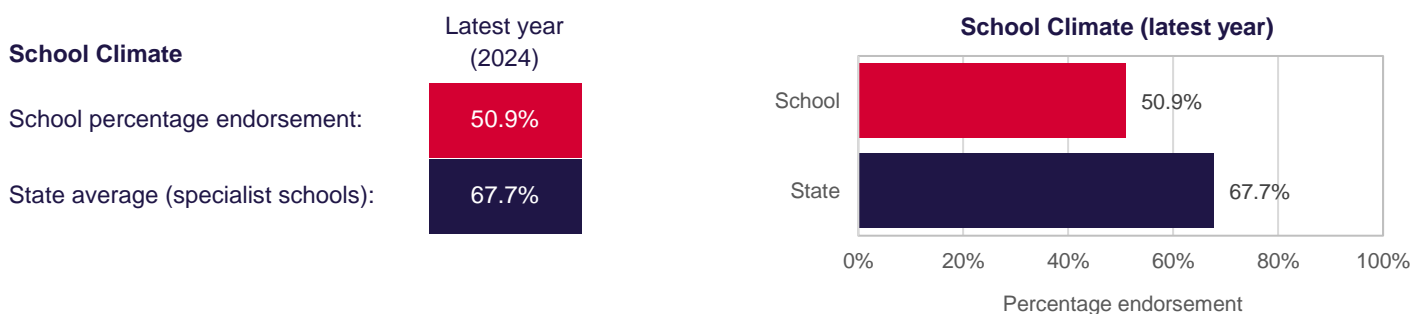


School Staff Survey

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.



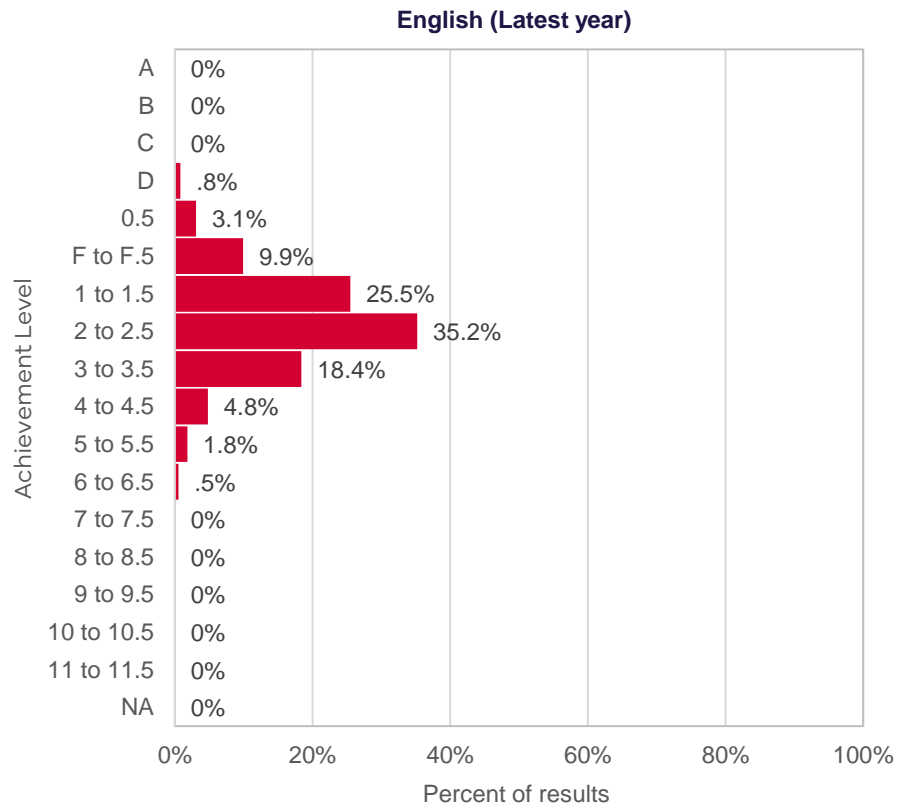
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

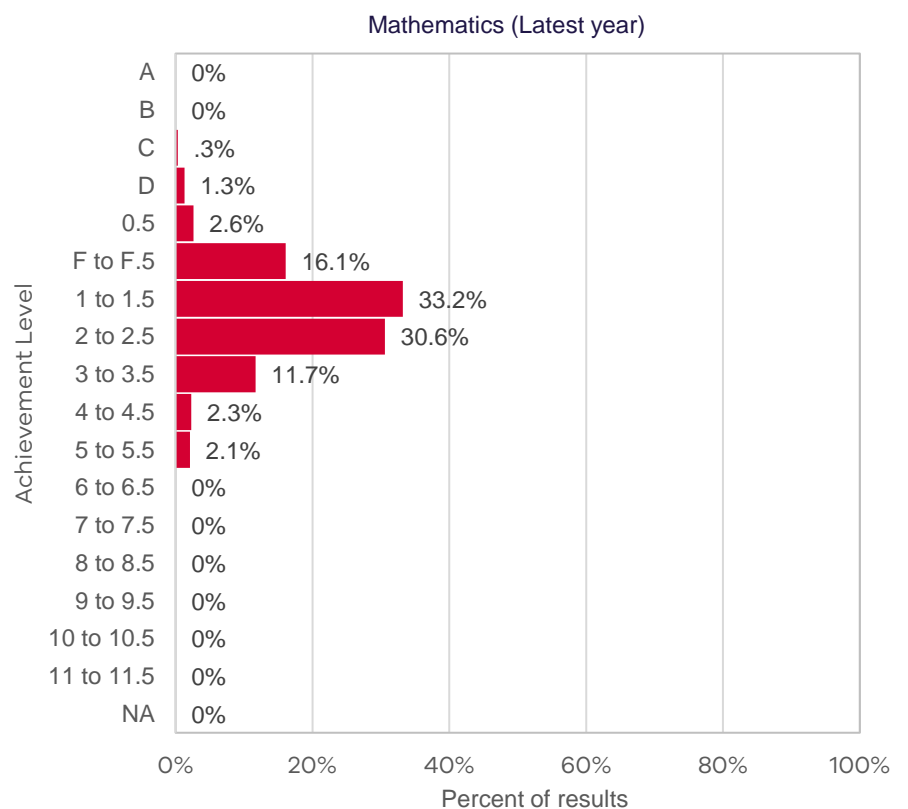
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2024)
A	NDA
B	NDA
C	NDA
D	0.8%
0.5	3.1%
F to F.5	9.9%
1 to 1.5	25.5%
2 to 2.5	35.2%
3 to 3.5	18.4%
4 to 4.5	4.8%
5 to 5.5	1.8%
6 to 6.5	0.5%
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	NDA
B	NDA
C	0.3%
D	1.3%
0.5	2.6%
F to F.5	16.1%
1 to 1.5	33.2%
2 to 2.5	30.6%
3 to 3.5	11.7%
4 to 4.5	2.3%
5 to 5.5	2.1%
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:	72.2%	60.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.7%



Financial Performance and Position

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

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$9,199,123
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,788,734
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$967
Government Grants State	\$9,800
Revenue Other	\$167,016
Locally Raised Funds	\$259,255
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$12,424,895

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$115,065
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$115,065

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$8,901,744
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$1,529
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$213,917
Communication Costs	\$28,633
Consumables	\$180,368
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$1,048,914
Professional Development	\$29,644
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$445,076
Property Services	\$156,606
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$331,668
Support Services	\$107,984
Trading & Fundraising	\$51,098
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$52,184
Travel & Subsistence	\$21,877
Utilities	\$53,448
Total Operating Expenditure	\$11,624,690
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$800,205
Asset Acquisitions	\$64,936

- (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	\$2,995,147
Official Account	\$131,493
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$3,126,640

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$453,832
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$104,054
School Based Programs	\$1,097,936
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$342,265
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$317,026
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$250,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$2,000,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$4,565,113

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.

