

2020 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Southern Autistic School (5253)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006*. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December 2020 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in *Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School*.

Attested on 18 March 2021 at 03:39 PM by Bruce McPhate (Principal)

The 2020 Annual Report to the school community:

- has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council
- will be publicly shared with the school community.

Attested on 01 April 2021 at 09:53 AM by Rochelle Pettit (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What has changed for the 2020 Annual Report?

Improved appearance

The appearance of the Performance Summary has been updated to more clearly represent information and to assist interpretation and comparison of individual school's data with state averages.

School performance data

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances. Absence data may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Schools should keep this in mind when using this data for planning and evaluation purposes.

What does the 'About Our School' section refer to?

The About Our School section provides a brief background on the school, an outline of the school's performance over the year and future directions.

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 'Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)' section includes the improvement initiatives the school has selected and the progress they have made towards achieving them.

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

Achievement

- 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).

How to read the Annual Report (continued)

What does 'NDP' or 'NDA' mean?

'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. For the 2020 Student Attitudes to School survey, specifically, the similar school group averages are replaced by 'NDP' where less than 50% of schools in a given similar school group did not participate in the 2020 survey.

'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 a disability 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

Southern Autistic School (SAS) is a Victorian State Government specialist school located in Bentleigh East and services a vast catchment area from the South East Metropolitan Region. The population reflects a broad socio-economic range and cultural diversity, with nearly one fifth of our students having English as an additional language. SAS's vision is for our students is to develop as lifelong learners who have a sense of belonging. Students are encouraged to implement their skills and knowledge to make choices and accept responsibility for their decisions. Our values are "I am Safe, I am a Learner and I Belong". These values are central to life of the School and how all members of the school community are expected to conduct themselves.

The School exclusively addresses the needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and significant language needs. Students range in age from 3 to 18 years with student enrolment totalling 271 students, 39 female and 232 males. Our Early Education Program was attended by 24 three and four year old's. To enrol in the school aged program, students must meet the Program for Students with a Disability and ASD eligibility. The school aged program commences in the foundation years and extends through to Senior Secondary School, including the implementation of VCAL classes in 2020.

Individualised Learning Plans are developed and implemented to support the students in consultation and collaboration with parents. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in termly student support group meetings and their input and goals for their child are valued. Teachers write learning outcomes for students based on Victorian Curriculum indicators.

Our 40 classes (including our EEP program) generally comprise of a teacher and an educational assistant with five to nine students. Additional educational staff may support classrooms where required to ensure participation and engagement in learning. Our staff compromise of highly committed teachers, educational support staff, four speech and four occupational therapists, ICT technicians, a school psychologist (0.4) and two part time social workers. The school is further supported by a leadership team of a Principal, two Assistant Principals, four Leading Teachers (that support each sub school) and three Learning Specialists. The school has 115 full time equivalent staff, including 43.7 classroom/specialist teachers and 44.9 teacher assistants.

Towards the end of 2020 the exciting first stage of the building program commenced as SAS looks forward to improved facilities to further meet the needs of our school community.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

Under the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) model the school had continued to focus on Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Curriculum planning and Assessment) and Positive Climate for Learning (Empowering Students and Building School Pride).

Four working parties that consist of Curriculum, Assessment, Student Voice and Agency and Student Wellbeing (SWPBS) help drive School Improvement. They are supported through the School Improvement Team, driving improvement through the implementation of the Annual Implementation Plan and the School Strategic Plan. During 2019, assessment practices were embedded through the use of the tracking document on G Suite and clearly established term schedules. Staff were supported to implement and analyse assessments during Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) and offered support from Learning Specialists. Moderation and collaboration continued to be a focus and work in this area will continue in the future.

Whilst Southern Autistic School continued the agreed core English teaching model, some of the associated AIP actions were modified due to remote learning. Whilst the vast majority of staff demonstrated the implementation of the Letters and Sounds program, and this was further embedded in assessment, these activities continued during remote learning. It should be noted that Letters and Sounds is a direct instruction program. Extensive resources were focused on professional development of staff to improve teaching and learning across SWPBS, Behaviour Management, Student Voice and Agency, Hand Writing without Tears and Communication.

The Student Representative Council constitution was developed with resources to support the implementation when students returned. Significant work continued in SWPBS with building school pride through all staff completing the

modules for Respectful Relationships, the “I am Safe” lesson modules and support documentation completed and the trialling of a positive acknowledgment system.

Achievement

The introduction of a VCAL program provided a significant enhancement to our senior program, providing further opportunities for our senior students.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 presented a significant challenge with the necessity to alternate between traditional onsite learning and to move rapidly to an online learning delivery model. Throughout the periods of ‘remote and flexible learning’, SAS teachers were able to rapidly refine practice and deliver an improved, comprehensive and quality online educational program for students. Staff upskilled in technology and used different platforms to connect with students and families.

Significant training in communication (particularly around the use of LAMP) was a particular focus with a curriculum day devoted to this area, including receptive and expressive language. Communication boards have been made and installed in the playground for use during outside play. Handwriting without Tears was trialed in focus rooms for implementation in 2021, and the Letters and Sounds Program enhanced the teaching of phonics and our instructional program.

We continue to embed the Victorian Curriculum and support our students with evidence based strategies and utilize strategies for the Hanen Program, STAR and Links. Learning specialists developed term planners for trial and continued to provide training in STAR and Links.

Engagement

Within the FISO model of improvement the school has focused on empowering students and building school pride. The school continued the focus on developing Student Voice and Agency with much ground work completed. The Constitution for the Student Representative Council was established and shared with Staff and School Council. This included the job descriptions and roles and responsibilities and preliminary meetings were held with the Social Workers/Psychologist and the SPOT Team.

Professional development for staff to inform and demonstrate how Student Voice and Agency links to FISO, High Impact Teaching Strategies and School Strategic Plan, and how it relates and its significance to our specific cohort. To support student transition to remote learning, many students were provided with hard copy resources and packs. Quite a number of students were loaned technology so that all students could access the online learning platform (Seesaw). Seesaw provided a means to keep connected with families – sharing tasks, photos and videos from home and messages. Google Meets provided opportunities for classes to all meet and connect for group time, class celebrations and even to celebrate children’s birthdays.

Some families thrived during remote learning and some found the experience very difficult. Staff and leaders communicated with parents regularly through various means of communication. The use of Seesaw and the improved use of Compass as a communication tool has continued post COVID-19 restrictions.

Student absence increased however there is evidence that COVID-19 impacted on this area quite significantly. Parent Opinion Surveys suggested that we were slightly higher than the state, however we always continue to seek to improve in this area.

Many events planned had to be postponed including parent information sessions, celebrations such as the Year 12 graduation and expos. Transition and new parent information sessions were modified during remote learning with online information sessions held. We are looking forward to having the face to face connection with our parents as we celebrate the achievements and successes, and work together to share information, knowledge and skills in 2021.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing for the community was a priority in 2020 and will no doubt continue in 2021. Our Social Workers and School Psychologist continued to have an exceptionally busy year despite working for months of the year remotely. Many parents linked with school wellbeing staff, particularly during remote learning. Our Speech Therapists and

Occupational Therapists supported student regulation and communication. Whilst our school modified the delivery of the wellbeing supports during 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions and remote learning, communication through other forms of media and links with external therapists (including behaviour therapists) still occurred. The school continued to commit to working with outside agencies to support the wellbeing of our students and families including a variety of NDIS family services, Autism Partnerships and linking with Alfred CYMHS to improve outcomes and the wellbeing of our families and students.

All staff underwent and completed training in Respectful Relationships, managing challenging behaviour online modules and staff modified and developed behaviour management plans for students to support engagement and wellbeing. A whole program to support the "I am Safe" behaviour expectation was developed as part of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support framework. To further enhance and enforce consistent practices across the school, the Thumbsters app was investigated as the whole school positive acknowledgement system.

The school engaged in the Be You Network – this network is about creating a mentally healthy learning community for everyone, including educators, staff, families, children and young people. This will be a focus of the 2021 healthy communities and student wellbeing.

As part of the School Focused Youth Service grant, we trained and welcomed Sammi, the school therapy dog, to SAS. Sammi has continued to provide wellbeing for students, staff and the wider community.

Financial performance and position

Southern Autistic School's 2020 net operating surplus was \$167,591. This is primarily due to the difference between SRP revenue and expenditure. SRP salaries increased by 11% in 2020 in order to support a growing student population. After SRP salaries, the greatest expenditure is Support Services (employment of casual agency staff and contractors). Due to COVID-19, locally raised funds and fundraising opportunities were considerably less than 2019. Increased ICT expenditure was required to support periods of remote learning.

Our financial position is strategically linked to our Annual Implementation Plan and our four year Strategic Plan. Construction of a new two storey specialist and administration building (managed by the Victorian School Building Authority) commenced in 2020. This new infrastructure will provide purpose built specialist learning spaces and support increased enrolments. A second stage building program is expected to commence in 2022.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.southernautistic.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.

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 271 students were enrolled at this school in 2020, 39 female and 232 male.

19 percent of students had English as an additional language and NDP 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) which takes into account parents' occupations and education.

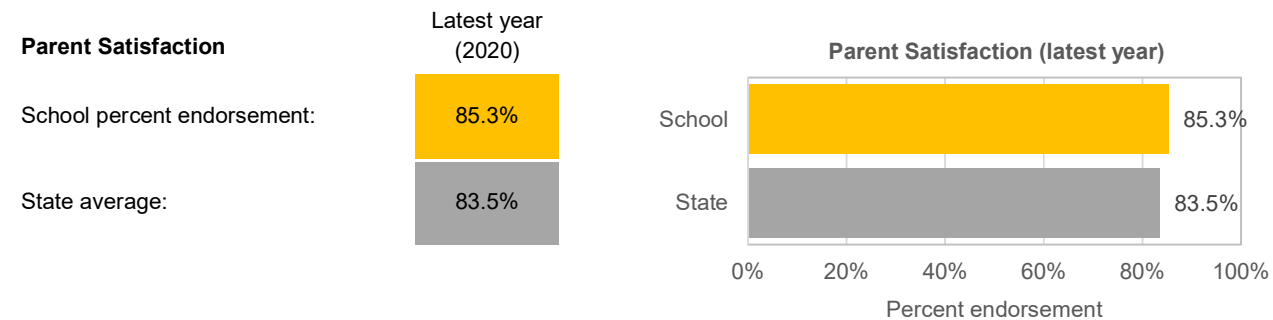
Possible socio-economic band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High.

This school's socio-economic band value is: Low - Medium

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their school satisfaction level, as reported in the annual Parent Opinion Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

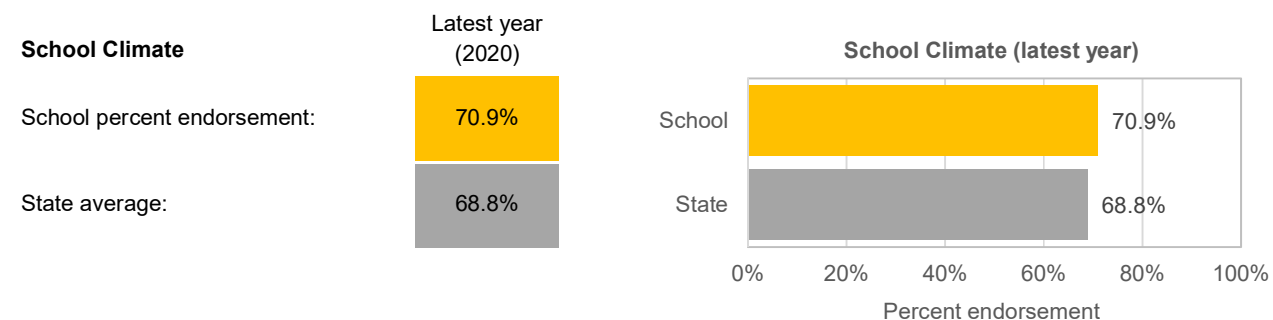


School Staff Survey

The percent endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percent 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.



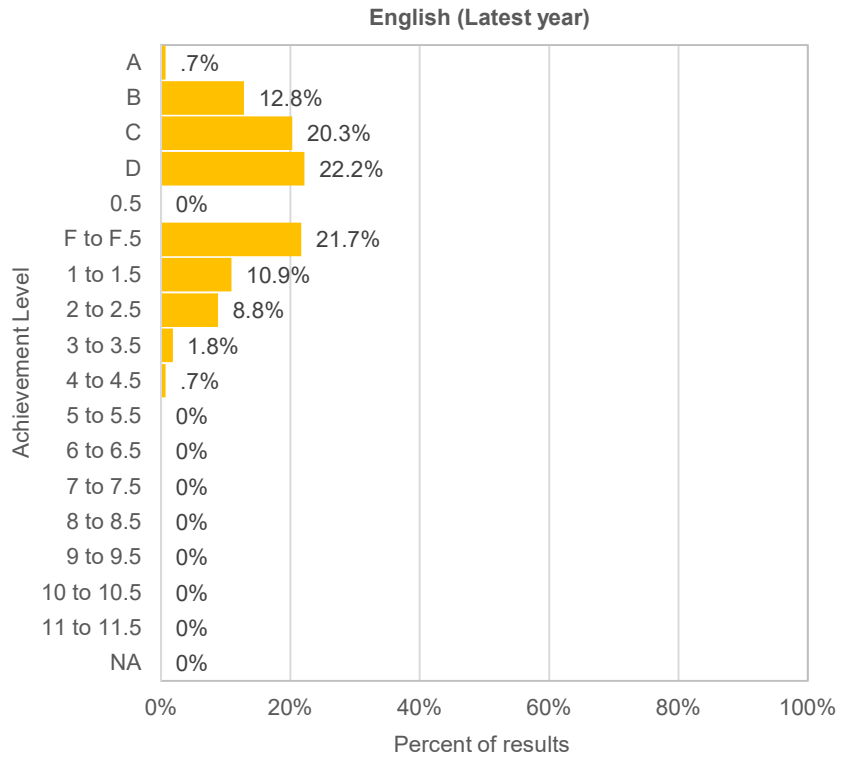
ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

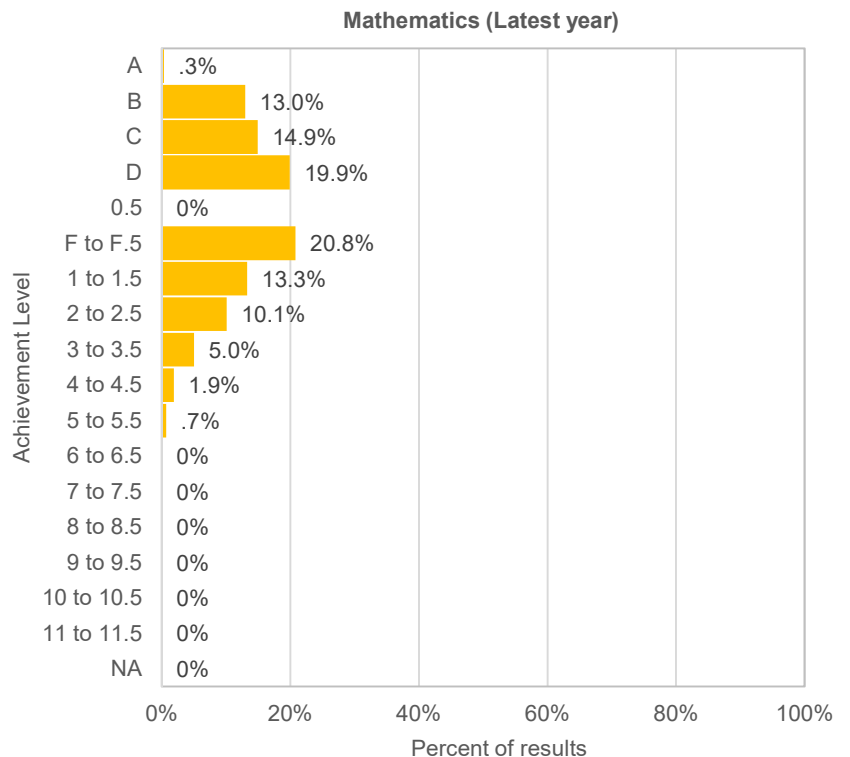
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2020)
A	0.7%
B	12.8%
C	20.3%
D	22.2%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	21.7%
1 to 1.5	10.9%
2 to 2.5	8.8%
3 to 3.5	1.8%
4 to 4.5	0.7%
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 (2020)
A	0.3%
B	13.0%
C	14.9%
D	19.9%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	20.8%
1 to 1.5	13.3%
2 to 2.5	10.1%
3 to 3.5	5.0%
4 to 4.5	1.9%
5 to 5.5	0.7%
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. Absence data in 2020 may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Student Absence	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	20.9	20.8	23.7	25.4	22.9

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	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	100.0%	96.4%	100.0%	98.9%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2020

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$10,713,863
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,633,162
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$14,037
Government Grants State	\$2,000
Revenue Other	\$14,108
Locally Raised Funds	\$57,903
Capital Grants	NDA
Total Operating Revenue	\$12,435,073

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$34,683
Equity (Catch Up)	NDA
Transition Funding	NDA
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	NDA
Equity Total	\$34,683

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$10,523,804
Adjustments	NDA
Books & Publications	NDA
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$28,555
Communication Costs	\$10,519
Consumables	\$196,343
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$13,019
Professional Development	\$44,203
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$88,729
Property Services	\$156,546
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	NDA
Support Services	\$1,110,814
Trading & Fundraising	\$12,059
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$11,787
Travel & Subsistence	\$118
Utilities	\$70,987
Total Operating Expenditure	\$12,267,482
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$167,591
Asset Acquisitions	\$25,194

- (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 02 Mar 2021 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 2020

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$1,502,443
Official Account	\$36,812
Other Accounts	NDA
Total Funds Available	\$1,539,255

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$274,535
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$9,086
Provision Accounts	NDA
Funds Received in Advance	\$9,762
School Based Programs	\$380,021
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	NDA
Cooperative Bank Account	NDA
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$17,083
Repayable to the Department	NDA
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$21,680
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$114,690
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$28,929
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$176,500
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$426,970
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$79,998
Total Financial Commitments	\$1,539,255

All funds received from the Department, 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.