

2021 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 2021 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 24 March 2022 at 04:27 PM by Julia Sadler (Principal)

- All teachers employed or engaged by the school council meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- To the extent that the school council is responsible, 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 2021 from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- To the extent that the school council is responsible, 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 24 March 2022 at 04:51 PM by Rochelle Pettit (School Council President)

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, 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 through the implementation of their School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

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).

Considering COVID-19 when interpreting the Performance Summary

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations in 2020 and 2021. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 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.

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.

'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

Southern Autistic School (SAS) is a specialist school for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The criteria for attendance are significant deficits in speech and language and a diagnosis of ASD. The school is a state government school located in Bentleigh East, servicing a large catchment area in the South Eastern suburbs. The population of the school represents a vast demographic of socio-economic and culturally diverse range of families. SAS encourages a culture of lifelong learning, with a meaningful sense of community belonging. Students are encouraged to live by the values of the school which are “I am Safe, I am a Learner and I Belong”. These values are embedded into the core of the school and are the foundation for every interaction that the members of our school community have.

The school caters to an age range of 3 years to 18 years, all with significant needs relating to their ASD diagnosis and/or their deficits in core language skills. Enrolment for 2021 totalled 272.8 FTE school age students plus 19 Early Education Program (EEPs) children. The EEP catered for children aged 3 and 4 years, enrolment criteria are Program for Students with a Disability and an ASD diagnosis. Students enrolled in the school age program commence in prep and continues through to Senior School. In 2021, the successful implementation of the VCAL program continued. Every student, including those in the EEPs, have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). They are developed and implemented by the classroom teachers in collaboration with parents and carers during a termly Student Support Group (SSG) meeting. Parent contribution to the ILP process is highly valued by the SAS community. Teachers write goals in three areas – communication, social and adaptive skills – using the Victorian Curriculum learning outcomes as a guide.

We have 40 classes, including our EEP program, which comprise of a classroom teacher and an education support (ES) staff member. Each class comprises of between 6 and 9 students. Some classes may also have additional ES support to support engagement in learning. The classes also receive support from a team Speech Therapists (3), Occupational Therapists (4), and psychologist (.4) and two social workers. We have onsite two ICT technicians. Students participate in specialist classes each week including, ART, STEAM, Music and PE. The senior classes also participate in Media and Tech Design.

The school is supported by a leadership team comprising of a Principal, two Assistant Principals, four Leading Teachers and three Learning Specialists. The Leading Teachers are out of the classroom and each support a sub-school of ten classes. An Inclusion Coach joined the SAS team and has worked with staff to ensure a proactive, inclusive approach to education with further development of the SAS inclusion and diversity policy.

In term four, the school was able to access improved facilities via completion of the first stage of the building program, providing extra classrooms for specialist programs and much needed staff working areas.

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).

The School Improvement Team continued to drive school initiatives through the four working parties that consist of Assessment, Curriculum, Student Voice and SWPBS. The teams support school improvement by implementing initiatives to support the School Strategic Plan (SSP) and the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The Curriculum and Assessment Teams have continued to embed the continued cycle of Teaching and Learning, focusing setting meaningful learning outcomes and tracking success with the Google Drive tracking documents. Staff have had continued support from the Learning Specialists to ensure consistent classroom practice. The Professional Learning

Team's (PLTs) have provided a forum for continued moderation. Classroom Teachers have planned collaboratively using the new Term Planner document, which is implemented across 100% of classrooms and has provided consistent way of supporting Learning Outcomes.

Due to a continued remote learning environment, some AIP goals were modified and extended to next year due to the need for face to face explicit teaching with SAS's student cohort. During curriculum days, SAS engaged external presenters, providing professional development on core universal strategies relating to ASD, investigating current research and teaching methods for students on the spectrum. Staff continued to teach students using the programs implemented by the curriculum team, with resources purchased to continue to support Letters and Sounds.

Achievement

The continued COVID-19 pandemic into the 2021 school year presented significant challenges, however provided an alternate forum for fostering relationships within the whole school community. Parents and carers developed further insight into the curriculum through often being present during delivery of lessons or supporting students in their learning at home. Staff developed and implemented a bank of online resources to support student learning in the event of further restrictions. Remote learning provided opportunities to extend staff capacity when using technology to support and connect with SAS's student and parent community. Students in the VCAL program engaged in online learning activities daily to support the requirements of the VCAL and SBAT program.

Staff participated in extensive communication professional development to continue to support use of AAC devices in classrooms. This Professional development was provided in conjunction with core ASD strategies provided by the Autism Teaching Institute, ensuring consistent universal strategies were in use across all sub-schools.

The SWPBS implementation has received Bronze accreditation, providing an excellent springboard to full accreditation in 2022. Classroom Teachers worked on lesson plans for each sub-school, providing staff with the tools to explicitly teach and embed the school behaviour matrix.

SAS continued to support the teaching of the Victorian Curriculum using evidence-based programs such as Hanen, STAR/LINKS, Letters and Sounds and Handwriting Without Tears.

During Remote learning, lessons were delivered using Seesaw and the models of delivery was flexible depending on the student needs. Staff utilised online resources for content delivery and consequently developed different ways of differentiating for our students.

Students involved in the Tutor Learning Initiative demonstrated some pleasing growth in areas of phonemic awareness and this program will continue targeting a broader group of students.

Engagement

Parents and the community are encouraged to participate in school committees, collaboration of student learning goals and well being of as part of a strong relationship. We were fortunate to have a few parents sessions onsite prior to Covid restrictions such as the Post School Expo including a presentation from NDIS and the Brotherhood of St Lawrence. Centrelink, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, I CAN Network and Family Planning Victoria provided presentations through online platforms.

Compass continued to be our main form of communication to families, however during remote learning the focus shifted to Seesaw, particularly for classroom and parent/student interactions whereby lessons, photos, videos and resources could be easily shared. Remote learning was difficult for many families and whilst some did not engage always with the academic lessons, they continued to stay connected with the staff through sharing of photos of students at the park or cooking with their families.

A high proportion of student absences in 2021, not unlike the previous year, may have been impacted by COVID, with remote learning being challenging for many families. There were strong processes to follow up with families, connecting with class staff, leadership and well being staff. Attendance is carefully monitored and referrals to principal class and social workers if needed. Whilst many of our students attend on a regular basis, a few students with significant comorbidities such as anxiety have extensive absences and this is reflected in the absence data. Attendance monitoring will continue.

Parent Satisfaction survey highly endorsed the school and was higher than the state however there was a small sample of parents who completed the survey.

Wellbeing

The School Well being team included two part time Social Workers (0.6 + 0.4), a School Psychologist (0.4) and a Mental Health Practitioner (0.4) to support the well-being needs of students, working with families, outside agencies and therapists to support students and families with complex needs. They continue to focus on Student Well being as a priority to deliver health and well being supports to students and families as schools transition back to full onsite learning.

Student Support Group Meetings continued to be held termly, often remotely either through phone calls or online platforms and parents are encouraged to contribute to student goals and share aspirations for their child. Individual Learning Plans focus on communication goals, social interaction and skills goals and adaptive behaviour goals to specifically support our student cohort.

All students have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan that continues to be reviewed and utilised to support student well being. The implementation of the Respectful Relationships lessons and the Prevent, Teach, Reinforce process across the school further supports student well being. Continued care team meetings continue to promote collaborate partnerships working together to enhance student well being. Well being will continue to be a priority in 2022.

SAS continued it's partnership with the School Wide Focused Youth Services which in previous years had provided the school with the opportunity to have Sammi, the Therapy dog. In 2021 the school received funding to implement an Equine Therapy program to enhance student well being and improve attendance. Funding also supported the delivery of the Family Planning Program for for students to support understanding of puberty, child safety and their personal development. This was delivered remotely and onsite to groups of senior and upper students.

Finance performance and position

Southern Autistic School's 2021 net operating surplus was \$230,802. This is primarily due to the difference between SRP revenue and expenditure. Student population growth continued in 2021 with a 4.92% growth. After SRP salaries, the greatest expenditure is Support Services (employment of casual agency staff and contractors). The cost of agency staff increased markedly in 2021, to support our onsite students during periods of remote learning. Additional support was also required to transition from remote learning to onsite schooling.

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 concluded in 2021. Second stage infrastructure commences early 2022 and concludes term 3 2023. This will provide students with a purpose-built library, food technology and early education learning spaces. The school will also contribute funds to this VSBA project.

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 281 students were enrolled at this school in 2021, 43 female and 238 male.

24 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).

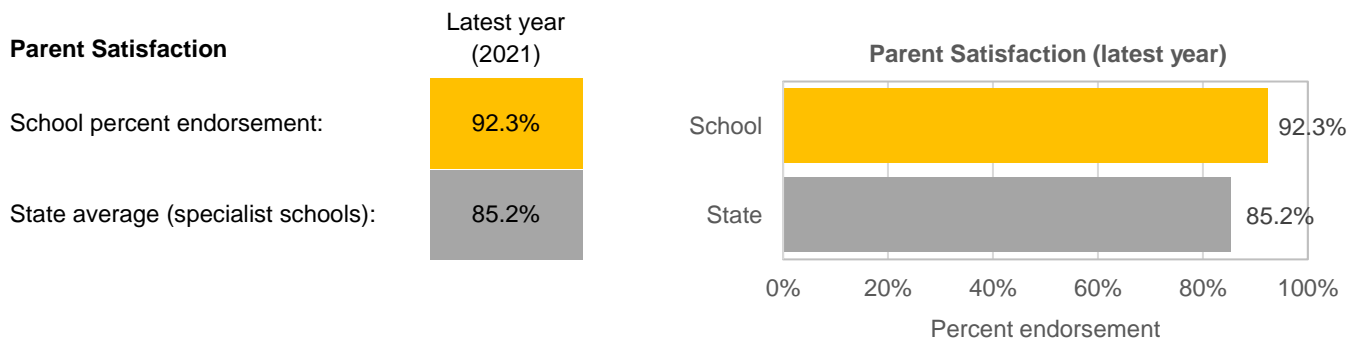
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

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

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The 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.

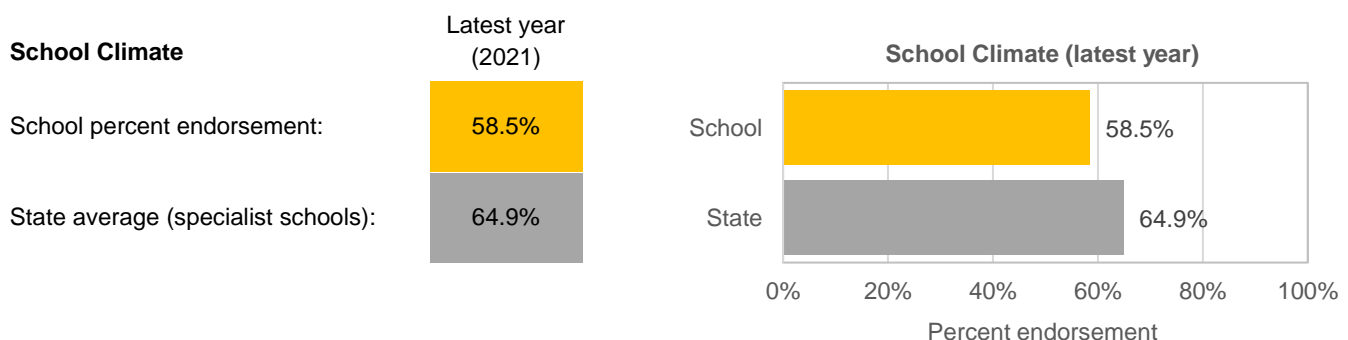


School Staff Survey

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.



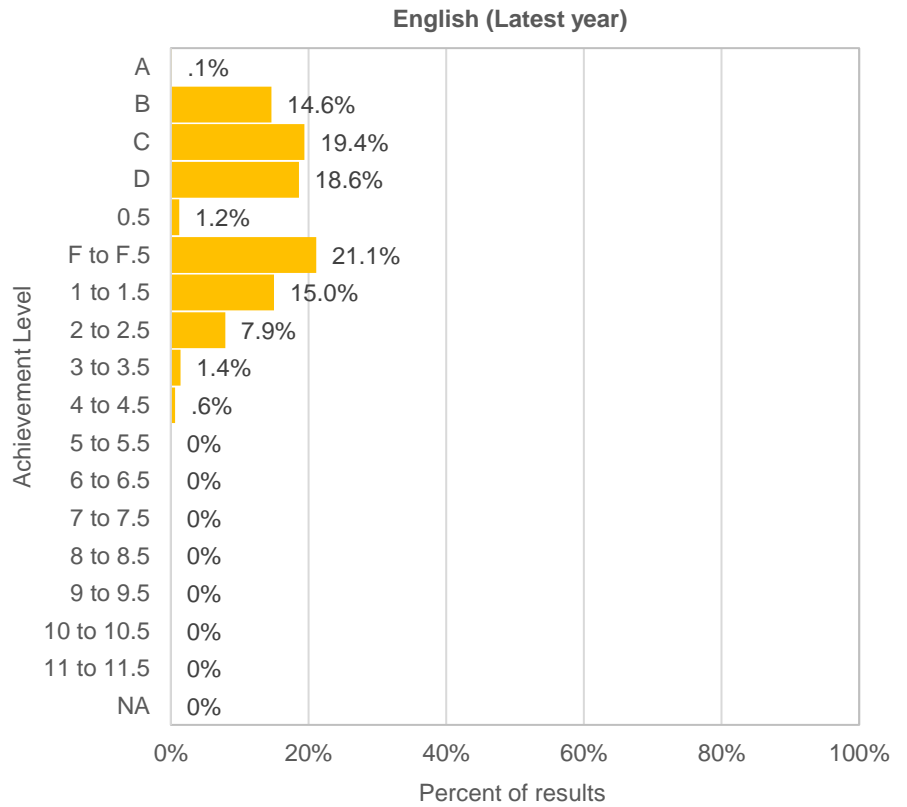
ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

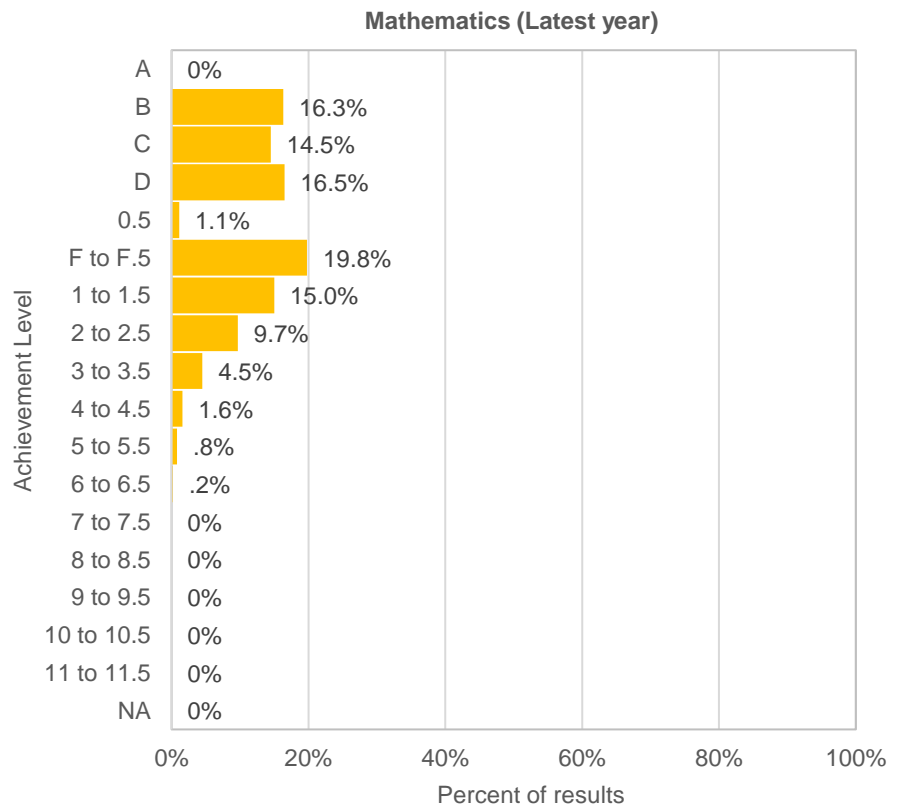
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	0.1%
B	14.6%
C	19.4%
D	18.6%
0.5	1.2%
F to F.5	21.1%
1 to 1.5	15.0%
2 to 2.5	7.9%
3 to 3.5	1.4%
4 to 4.5	0.6%
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	NDA
B	16.3%
C	14.5%
D	16.5%
0.5	1.1%
F to F.5	19.8%
1 to 1.5	15.0%
2 to 2.5	9.7%
3 to 3.5	4.5%
4 to 4.5	1.6%
5 to 5.5	0.8%
6 to 6.5	0.2%
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 and 2021 may have been influenced by COVID-19.

Student Absence	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	20.8	23.7	25.4	25.1	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	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	96.3%	100.0%	100.0%	98.8%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2021

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$11,156,392
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,243,958
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$9,906
Government Grants State	\$2,000
Revenue Other	\$9,397
Locally Raised Funds	\$73,391
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$13,495,044

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$44,189
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$44,189

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$10,840,428
Adjustments	\$279
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$40,324
Communication Costs	\$15,331
Consumables	\$182,210
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$17,663
Professional Development	\$70,594
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$188,879
Property Services	\$152,894
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$0
Support Services	\$1,648,744
Trading & Fundraising	\$20,464
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$8,548
Travel & Subsistence	\$46
Utilities	\$77,838
Total Operating Expenditure	\$13,264,242
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$230,802
Asset Acquisitions	\$76,263

- (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 25 Feb 2022 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 2021

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$1,360,511
Official Account	\$12,155
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$1,372,665

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$390,413
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$11,343
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$14,176
School Based Programs	\$280,219
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$22,511
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$27,080
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$227,177
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$9,109
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$54,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$262,528
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$74,000
Total Financial Commitments	\$1,372,557

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.